

[REDACTED]

From: EIR
Sent: 24 December 2024 10:03
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Provision of requested information

Thank you for your request for information about misconnections, which we received on 2 December 2024. Your request has been considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Anglian Water started coding misconnections in September 2023 in our system. I have attached a spreadsheet showing these.

Since 1 September 2023 to 11 November 2024 we have 55 foul sewer to surface water misconnections.

There are many different ways these come to our attention. They are mostly from reports of pollution or odours, either from members of the public or the Environment Agency. They can also be found during our investigations linked to rective work or planned work. The attached spreadsheet shows a brief description of the misconnection taken from the job notes and the area where it was found.

In the same period 19 misconnections of surface water into the foul sewer network were discovered.

These are most likely to be found during high rain periods as the excessive rain water going into our foul network causes issues such as our customers being unable to use their toilets and flooding of our sewers. Surface water connections into our foul system also cause odour problems.

For foul water misconnections into surface water we would start with implementing mitigation to prevent any impact to the environment, this could include tankering the outfall to prevent the waste water entering the environment and placing measures in the watercourse to prevent the pollution spreading. The next step would be to locate the source. The usual method is to trace the surface water sewer looking for evidence of the misconnection, such as toilet paper or wipes. Chicken wire is placed in manholes to catch evidence. Once the run is pinpointed using CCTV the sewer is investigated looking for any misconnection. To confirm a misconnection a dye is used at the property. Where the asset is in private ownership we would liaise with the owner and impress on them the importance to implement mitigation to prevent any further impact and continue to monitor until the resolution is completed. Should the owner not take action this would be escalated to the Environment Agency.

Surface water misconnections into our foul network can overwhelm the network causing manholes to overflow causing the flooding of properties, storm overflows to be used, pumping stations to become overwhelmed and our waste water recycling centres to be inundated.

Unfortunately, I cannot supply you with misconnection information before September 2023. As Anglian Water has only started coding misconnections recently, previous misconnections identified would be impossible to find on our system without searching every job we have received. We have approximately 2 million jobs raised each year, so I have applied Regulation 12(4)(b) for the data from January 2014 to August 2023.

It is acknowledged that Anglian Water is a significant sized organisation, however, its primary role is the provision of drinking water and sewerage services to members of the public. To extract and collate the data would be time consuming. The request would inevitably distract the team members from delivering sewerage services.

Whilst it is difficult to fully assess the time estimate for complying with the request, it would take many, many months. This would create a disproportionate burden on Anglian Water and its resources.

Regulation 12(4)(b) - The public interest test

Regulation 12(4)(b) is subject to the public interest test set out in Regulation 12(1)(b). This specifies that a public authority may only rely on an exception if, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Whilst we acknowledge that information on misconnections could be viewed as an important public issue (and there may be wider interest in the material/value in it being disclosed), we conclude this does not outweigh the time which would be needed to comply which would in turn disrupt Anglian Water's ability to perform its core functions.

For the reasons given above we believe the time and cost of compliance is disproportionate to the public value of the request.

We ask the public to report anything they suspect as a pollution. Reaction time is the most important factor in avoiding any impact to the environment. If you have concerns about the smell of sewerage, or see any of the following:

- Sewage – including toilet paper, sanitary items, wipes, cotton buds in water
- Waste water in places where it shouldn't be or unusual water flow out of manhole covers
- Water that contains soap suds
- Discoloured water typically brown, orange, grey or milky
- Presence of foam, fatty oils or film of oil on the surface of the water
- Excessive silt or sediment
- Dead fish or other wildlife
- Fish gasping at the waters surface (suggesting low oxygen levels in the water)

Please report it to Anglian Water to investigate. You can report it in a number of different ways.

- Ringing 03457 145 145
- Going on the Anglian Water website via [Report an Issue](#)
- By contacting us on Facebook or Twitter (@Anglianwater)
- Let us know the location, time and conditions in the surrounding area and take photos where possible.

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If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to request an internal review, you should email EIR@anglianwater.co.uk or write to:

Legal Director, Anglian Water Services, Lancaster House, Lancaster Way, Ermine Business Park, Huntingdon PE29 6XU

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF

If you have any queries about this email, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

EIR Team

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Email EIR@anglianwater.co.uk