



Water for the North West

United Utilities Water Limited
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Telephone: 01925 237000

unitedutilities.com

Our ref: EIR-459

Date: 29/07/2025

Email: EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for reaching out with your request for environmental information, relating to Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) in your area. We appreciate your interest, and we want to let you know that your request has been carefully considered in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

We absolutely understand the public concern about the use of storm overflows and while we have made progress in reducing spills, we know there is much more to do.

We've already begun to reduce spills at 150 storm overflows across the region and more schemes are mobilising to improve nearly 200km of rivers. You can find out more about that [here](#).

Changing the sewer system and the way the North West is plumbed can't happen overnight, but we are committed to making the step change required. In the North West, there are more than 2,200 storm overflows and 54% of our sewer network is combined – which is above the average of 33% across England. Those combined sewers are typically never more than 15% full with sewage but when also filled with rainfall and at times of heavy downpours they can become overloaded. Storm overflows then act as a safety valve to prevent the sewers backing up and flooding people's homes and businesses.

We are now embarking on the largest multi-billion investment programme in a century, investing £13 billion between 2025 and 2030 to upgrade the water and wastewater infrastructure across the North West. In addition, the plan is securing 30,000 jobs in the wider supply chain across the region, of which 7,000 are new job opportunities, helping to support the local economy.

This programme will involve creating more storage capacity at our treatment works and separating surface water run off from the sewers. In addition we are also improving the day-to-day operation of our sewer system, we are installing thousands of sensors to give us a real-time view of what is happening below ground. This is already helping us to spot problems early and take action to remove blockages before they result in flooding or spillages.

Reducing the need for storm overflows to operate means we must also reduce the amount of rainfall getting into the pipes in the first place. United Utilities is therefore, working with others, such as local authorities and housing developers, on solutions to remove rainwater from the sewer network and slow the flow of water across catchment land, such as installing sustainable drainage on new build developments and limiting run off from highways.

In direct response to your request to know more about the combined sewer overflows in your area,

you can read more about what we're planning to do in Lancashire on our PR24 Business Plan, which is available here: [31899-UU-Customer-Summary-Lancashire-300923.pdf](#)

We hope that this response answers your request. However, if you're not satisfied with how we've handled it, you can request an internal review. To do this, please write to us at Environmental Information Office, Haweswater House, Lingley Mere, Warrington, WA5 3LP or email us at EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk, addressing your request to [REDACTED], and explaining why you're unhappy with our response. We'll be very happy to review your request and ensure we've done everything we can to assist you.

Any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this response, and we will reply within 40 working days from receipt of the request for internal review.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

We'd love to hear your feedback on how we handled your request! If you have a moment, please complete our short survey [here](#) – your input helps us improve our service.