



Water for the North West

United Utilities Water Limited

Haweswater House
Lingley Mere Business Park
Lingley Green Avenue
Great Sankey
Warrington WA5 3LP

Telephone: 01925 237000

unitedutilities.com

Our ref: EIR-465

Date: 30/07/2025

Email: EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for environmental information. 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).

Your request:

As Councillor in Westmorland and Furness I have received a query from a resident of Milburn who is concerned that the mains water source for Milburn, and also I believe my own house, has a high level of nitrates. Please could you let me know what level of nitrates the Cliburn borehole has, how often you test for this and, if the level is higher than national average, why you think that this is the case.

Our Response:

The most informative way to understand the quality of the water supplied to a specific postcode, is to view a summary of water quality analysis on our website at <https://www.unitedutilities.com/help-and-support/your-water-supply/>.

This summary report, specific to your local water supply zone ("WSZ"), includes the results of laboratory analysis of the water we supply. The report covers a rolling 12-month period and is updated weekly. There have been no issues detected in the WSZ over the last 12 months. Nitrate is a regulatory parameter which means that we sample all of our water supplies for nitrate. The nitrate values are included in these results. For ease, I have downloaded the report, for the postcode provided and included it with this response. Please refer to attachment '**Drinking Water Register – [REDACTED]**'. I have also included a useful factsheet called '**Your Drinking Water Quality**', this will help you and the resident understand the information included within this report. In the UK, the water quality standards are set out in legislation and these strict regulations ensure that the water is safe to drink. They are based on Guidance provided by the World Health Organisation and take into account the lifelong consumption of drinking water. All samples taken in the last 12 months for this water supply zone have met the required standard.

Within this report, you can see that the samples for the previous 12 months have met the water quality standard for nitrate, which is 50 parts per million (50 mg NO₃/l). The abbreviation 'mg NO₃/l' stands for milligrams per litre of nitrate. The results for this supply are similar to other supplies where the source water originates from groundwater, such as a borehole. Water originating from groundwater sources tends to have higher concentrations of nitrates than surface water due to historic applications of nitrate fertiliser to land. The concentrations detected in Cliburn supply however are stable and the water quality meets the required standard.

In addition to the summary report, please find attached the individual nitrate results for the Water Supply Zone (WSZ) of the postcode provided, along with dates and times of when the samples were taken. The attachment is titled '**Nitrate Results – Cliburn Raw Water, WTW and WSZ**'. These results range from 01/07/2024 to 01/07/2025.

The regulations define the number of times that we need to test the water. For water treatment works it is based on the volume of water produced by the works. For water supply zones it is based on the population of the zone. We also take additional samples according to operational sample programmes and risk-based programmes. During the last 12 months we have taken 35 samples of the treated water at Cliburn WTW and 5 samples in the WSZ. *Should we receive an elevated result of nitrate at our water treatment works or within a water supply zone, a full investigation is undertaken to understand the root cause.*

I also note in your request that you have mentioned nitrate at your property. If you would like us to look into this further for you, please contact us with your address and we will be happy to assist you further.

I hope you have found this information useful. If the resident has specific concerns about the water at their property, we'd be happy to arrange a visit from one of our Water Quality Officers to take samples and investigate further.

We hope that this response answers your request. However, if you're not satisfied with our response, 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.