United Utilities Water Limited
Haweswater House
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Lingley Green Avenue
Great Sankey
Warrington WA5 3LP

Telephone: 01925 237000

unitedutilities.com

Our ref: EIR-511
Date: 16/09/2025
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 as United Utilities is not subject to the Freedom of Information Act, your request has been carefully considered in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

As your request contained a number of specific questions, this response restates each part of the request (in bold) and then follows this with our response:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am writing to request detailed information regarding the chemical composition of the water supplied by United Utilities North West.

Specifically, I would like to request:

1. **A full list of all chemicals and substances added to or present in the water supplied to customers, including but not limited to:**
- **Disinfectants (e.g. chlorine, chloramine)**
- **Fluoride compounds**
- **Corrosion inhibitors**
- **Any other treatment chemicals**

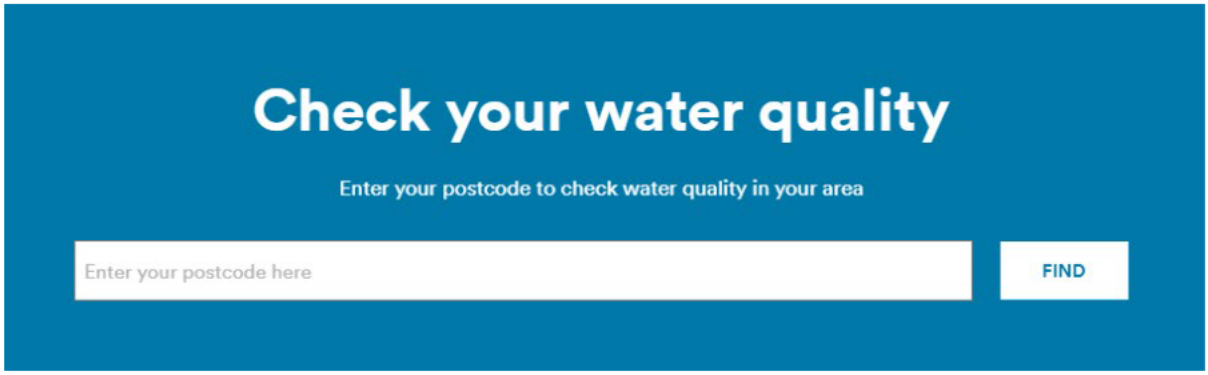
Water Companies collect samples daily from water treatment works, service reservoirs and customer properties. These samples are tested in an accredited laboratory using approved methods to ensure that the water quality meets the requirements set out within the relevant legislation and regulations.

The Regulations specify the list of parameters which companies must monitor for, where the monitoring should occur (e.g. at a customer's property) and the maximum level which is acceptable in drinking water; these levels are known as a Prescribed Concentration or Values (PCV) or more simply the 'regulatory standard' or 'legal limit'.

It is also worthy of note, that PCVs are set based on several factors and most exceedances of the regulatory standard would not be considered a risk to health. A full list of the parameters that Water Companies must monitor for, including the PCVs, can be found on the Drinking Water Inspectorate's website by following this link: Drinking Water Standards and Regulations - Drinking Water Inspectorate.

All of the results of the regulatory samples that UU take are made available to the public through our

website and you can view the latest water quality data for the water supplied to your area at https://www.unitedutilities.com/help-and-support/your-water-supply/. If you input your postcode into the postcode search box, then the website will return the results of samples taken in the last 12 months for your area.



With respect to treatment chemicals, almost all drinking water treatment involves the use of chemicals to make the water safe to drink. Raw water needs to be treated to ensure that it is safe to drink; drinking raw water would cause illness. This is done via carefully controlled and automated processes. All chemicals that are used in the treatment process have to meet strict requirements that are set out in the relevant British Standards. The amount of chemical added to the raw water as part of the treatment process is also monitored closely to ensure that the minimum amount required is added.

We have provided a fact sheet to accompany this letter titled '**Water Treatment Chemicals'**. This fact sheet lists all the chemicals used throughout the treatment process but please be aware that this sheet lists all the possible chemicals that can be used. We do not necessarily add every chemical on this list at every one of our treatment sites and the amount of chemical we add is dependent on the quality of the raw water.

I note that your request referenced fluoride and chlorine specifically. As mentioned above, the results from your postcode area for the past 12 months, met the water quality standards. There is no specific regulatory maximum level of chlorine in drinking water in England, the World Health Organisation has set a guideline maximum value of 5 mg/l for chlorine. The levels detected at your tap are well below these levels and are not unusual for public water supplies in the United Utilities area. United Utilities have agreements in place with the Secretary of State to add fluoride to the water leaving two of our water treatment works, one in Cheshire, and one in West Cumbria. The

agreements date back to the 1970s. I can confirm that water supplies to Runcorn are not fluoridated.

We have interpreted your point around corrosion inhibitors as relating to phosphate in drinking water supply. When phosphate is added to the water supply it forms a coating on the inside of the lead pipes, which minimises the amount of lead that can dissolve from old pipework within a customer's property.

2. **The typical concentration ranges (in mg/L or ppm) of these substances in the water supplied, broken down by region if applicable.**

The information you requested is publicly available on our Drinking Water Register (DWR) Water quality | United Utilities. If you input a postcode into the box, it will return the results, including minimum, maximum and averages for each parameter tested for. For ease, I have also included a copy of the DWR for your postcode in the document titled 'Appendix 1 – Drinking Water Register'. As mentioned above, all samples collected in your postcode area in the last 12 months met the water quality standards.

3. **Information on any by-products that may be formed during water treatment or distribution.**

Chlorine is applied to disinfect the water and ensure it remains safe on its way to the customer's tap. This is a matter of public health and therefore, our first priority. Chlorine degrades over time as it travels through our network of pipes. The concentration of chlorine is kept to a minimum to minimise the formation of disinfection by products.

The regulations we mention above require us to minimise disinfection by products. To be able to demonstrate this, we routinely test for trihalomethanes (THMs) across our water supply zones. The regulatory standard for total THMs is 100 µg/l and all samples we have taken in your water supply zone are lower than the standard.

In addition, whilst there is no current regulatory standard, or requirement to monitor for haloacetic acids (HAAs), we do test for them as part of our enhanced monitoring programme. The Water Quality Advisory Panel has recommended that HAAs are included in a revision to the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations in due course. The Water Quality Advisory Panel have proposed PCV of 80 µg/l for total HAAs. During the last 12 months, the samples taken as part of our enhanced monitoring programme confirm we are compliant with the proposed PCV.

4. **Copies of any internal or public reports from the past 5 years regarding the safety, regulation, or environmental impact of these chemicals in the water supply.**

We assess the potential impact of any changes to the system, for example new activity within the raw water catchment, the potential impacts from climate change on raw water quality, a change to a water treatment chemical or an emerging contaminant. If these assessments identify a particular risk, additional measures would be put in place to investigate that risk further, for example by introducing or increasing monitoring or carrying out further research. There are a number of options for carrying out this research, for example through UKWIR (UK Water Industry Research), OFWAT innovation fund, or company specific research engaging with subject matter experts from both industry and academia.

We also review the guidance documents provided by the World Health Organisation, the Drinking

Water Inspectorate, the UK Health Security Agency and key organisations associated with the supply of high quality in drinking water across Europe and Australia. For example, the World Health Organisation undertakes research and provides guidance on chemicals appropriate use and allowable concentrations in drinking water. These assessments take into consideration the proportion that may come from water and other sources, such as food.

The World Health Organisation guidance advises on the levels that can be present in drinking water which do not cause concern for human health (4th edition of the drinking water quality guidelines). This can be accessed at Guidelines for drinking-water quality: Fourth edition incorporating the first and second addenda (who.int).

In the UK, an Independent Water Quality Advisory Panel has been established that provides recommendations to government on the current water quality standards and any proposals for new standards. We actively review any of these recommendations and assess whether there are any additional measures that we need to take.

In addition, information relating to the safety and regulation of drinking water is available on the DWIs website: What we do - Drinking Water Inspectorate. As the authority responsible for maintaining the DWI list of approved chemicals for use in water treatment, the DWI also undertakes comprehensive environmental assessments to evaluate the potential impacts of these chemicals. By rigorously reviewing the safety, efficiency, and environmental consequences of each substance, the DWI ensures that any chemical permitted for water treatment not only meets strict regulatory standards but also poses minimal risk to the surrounding ecosystem. This thorough assessment process safeguards public health and helps maintain the balance of environmental protection alongside effective water treatment practices. You can read more about their research, and any of their reports here: Research - Drinking Water Inspectorate.

Additionally, I would like to inquire about any options available to individuals on lower incomes for assistance with paying their water bills. Specifically, I would appreciate details on any:

1. **Discount programs, including eligibility criteria**
2. **Payment schemes or flexible billing options for those who may be facing financial hardship**

We offer a number of schemes to help support those having difficulty paying their water bill. These include:

- The back on track scheme, which is suitable for customers either receiving benefits, or on a low income finding it difficult to pay their bill following a recent change in financial circumstances, such as a redundancy or a reduction in current income.
- WaterSure, which is a scheme for customers receiving benefits with a water meter who may need to use lots of water, but may struggle to afford it. Reasons for using a lot of water may include having numerous children living at home, or a medical condition like dialysis which requires you to use more water.
- Help to pay, which is suitable for customers who receive Pension Credit and are struggling to pay their water bill.
- Low income discount, whereby eligible customers receive a yearly discount of £50 which is automatically credited to their account.
- Payment Matching Scheme, which customers who have built up a large sum of water debt may be eligible for. For every £1 that a customer pays towards their outstanding debt, United Utilities will pay £1 too. If customers continue to make their regular payments, the Company will increase its contribution to £2 after 12 months until the debt is cleared.

- Financial Hardship Trust, which provides grants for customers experiencing severe financial hardship to help with water arrears, essential household items like white goods, or other priority bills.

To learn more about the schemes, including their eligibility criteria, please visit our website How we can help with your bill | United Utilities or alternatively, please contact our Affordability Team on 0800 072 6765.

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.

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.