



**United Utilities Water Limited**  
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**Our ref:** EIR/ID544  
**Date:** 16/10/2025  
**Email:** [EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk](mailto:EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk)

Dear [REDACTED],

EIR Reference: EIR/ID/544

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:**

- 1. A detailed list of all chemicals and substances added to the drinking water supply by United Utilities Water, including their concentrations and the reasons for their use.*
- 2. A comprehensive report on the processes and protocols used in waste treatment and how treated waste is managed, particularly in relation to its reintroduction into the water supply.*
- 3. Any documented studies, reports, or internal assessments related to the safety and quality of the water supply, including data on faecal contamination and other health risks.*
- 4. The number of sewage spills and related incidents that have occurred over the past five years, including any corrective actions taken by United Utilities Water.*

**Our response:**

Thank you for your request for environmental information. 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:

- 1. A detailed list of all chemicals and substances added to the drinking water supply by United Utilities Water, including their concentrations and the reasons for their use.**

Water Companies collect samples daily from water treatment works, service reservoirs (storage tanks) and customer properties. All samples are tested in an accredited laboratory using approved analytical methods to make sure the water quality meets the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016.

The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016 contains a comprehensive list of parameters which water companies must monitor for, where to test (e.g. our customers' properties) and the maximum level of each parameter which is acceptable in drinking water. These are known as Prescribed Concentrations or Values (PCVs) or put more simply, the regulatory or legal limit. 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 (DWI) website by following this link: [Drinking Water Standards and Regulations - Drinking Water Inspectorate](#).

With respect to water 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 monitored closely to ensure that the minimum amount required is added.

A fact sheet accompanies this letter titled '**Water Treatment Chemicals**' (attached as appendix A). 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.

United Utilities treatment processes are adapted and optimised according to the type and quality of the raw water source. Therefore, the water treatment methods may vary from site to site.

The first step in water treatment involves removing particles from the raw water. This is done by adding substances called coagulants, such as aluminium or ferric sulphate, which help these particles stick together. A flocculant aid (polymer) is added to improve this process along with adjusting the pH of the water. This adjustment is done via the addition of sodium hydroxide, lime, or sulphuric acid.

Once the particles have clumped together, they are removed through filtration systems, which vary from site to site, but all serve the same purpose. After filtration, the water goes through disinfection to remove any harmful bacteria. This is usually done using sodium hypochlorite (chlorine), although some sites also use ultraviolet (UV) light. The amount of disinfectant used is carefully controlled and only the smallest amount possible is added whilst ensuring the water is safe to drink.

Before the water is sent out to homes and businesses, a small amount of phosphate is added. This helps protect against lead dissolving into the water from old pipework, especially in properties that still have lead pipes. Final adjustments can also be made to the pH to ensure the water is stable and suitable for distribution.

The water supplied to your local area (Water Supply Zone (WSZ) 307), is a blend of water from several different water treatment works. As noted above all of our water treatment works are designed specifically for the raw water that they need to process, which means that the processes and the chemicals that are added can vary slightly between water treatment works to ensure that the water is safe to drink, but all follow similar processes using the chemicals mentioned above.

All of the results from our regulatory water quality samples are made available through our website. The latest water quality data for the water supplied to your area on our website at <https://www.unitedutilities.com/help-and-support/your-water-supply/>. If you input your postcode into the box, then it will return the results of samples taken in the last 12 months for your area.

I have downloaded the report, for your postcode, from the website and included it with this response. Please refer to attachment '**Drinking Water Register – SK10 1DE**' (attached as Appendix B). I have also included a useful factsheet called '**Your Drinking Water Quality**' (attached as Appendix C), this will help you understand the information included within this report.

**2. A comprehensive report on the processes and protocols used in waste treatment and how treated waste is managed, particularly in relation to its reintroduction into the water supply.**

Our wastewater treatment processes are designed to treat the wastewater and return it to the environment.

We do not have any wastewater treatment works where the treated wastewater is directly reintroduced to the water supply. The vast majority of our raw water comes from upland impounding reservoirs. All of these sources are carefully monitored to ensure that there is no deterioration in the raw water quality and that the processes we describe in the answer to the first question are fully optimised to ensure that we produce safe clean drinking water.

**3. Any documented studies, reports, or internal assessments related to the safety and quality of the water supply, including data on faecal contamination and other health risks.**

Ensuring the safety and quality of our drinking water is crucial to the service we provide to our customers. Since 2004, we have implemented a Drinking Water Safety Plan (DWSP) approach to understand potential risks to water quality and water sufficiency across the water system.

The DWSP approach is endorsed by the World Health Organisation and we follow its water safety planning framework. This involves a 'source to tap' risk management approach that identifies and proactively manages risks to drinking water quality. This approach is central to the way in which United Utilities ensures a continuous supply of safe drinking water now and in the future. There are three key elements that are considered, these are: hazard characterisation and risk assessment, identification of control measures and associated monitoring and finally verification and continuous review.

During this DWSP process we assess the potential impact of any changes to the water 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 (WHO) 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 WHO guidance advises on the levels that can be present in drinking water which do not cause concern for human health (4<sup>th</sup> edition of the drinking water quality guidelines which 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.

At present, for your specific water supply zone, there have been no reported incidents or events relating to water quality, faecal contamination or other health risks. I'm pleased to reassure you that the water quality in your water supply zone meets the required standards.

**4. The number of sewage spills and related incidents that have occurred over the past five years, including any corrective actions taken by United Utilities Water.**

UUW and other water companies record spills from storm overflow using Event Durations Monitors (EDMs). EDMs record spill start and stops times and therefore record the number of spills and the duration of the spills. An explanation of the process that UUW uses to record and validate spills together with a drop down box that will allow you to download EDM data from 2020 to August 2025 date can be found on our website at the following link - [Storm overflow performance](#).

Water companies, including UUW, also began providing storm overflow spill data in near real-time to the public in 2025, a requirement mandated by the Environment Act 2021. This near real time data together with some frequently asked questions and information about our plans to improve storm overflow discharges can be found on our website at the following link - [Storm overflow map | United Utilities - Better Rivers](#)

You can also find full details of the number and duration of storm overflow discharges from UUW's storm overflows from 2020 to 2024 on the UK government website – [Event Duration Monitoring - Storm Overflows - Annual Returns](#).

We have significantly reduced the number and impact of spills from our storm overflows over recent years and have made several commitments to continue to improve the region's rivers, lakes, and seas. You can find more information about these commitments on our website via the following link: [What we are doing](#). Additionally, I have attached a copy of our **Better Rivers Report for 2024** (attached as appendix D), which outlines each commitment and provides a detailed update of the progress made throughout the year.

We hope that this response answers your request. However, if you are not satisfied with how we have 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](mailto:EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk), addressing your request to [REDACTED], and explaining why you are unhappy with our response. We will 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.

Kind regards