

We've contributed significantly to improvements in river and coastal water quality. Waste Water Treatment Works are now working to a higher standard than ever before. Waste water is rigorously treated prior to being discharged, and this has helped to improve the state of our rivers, watercourses and coastal waters.

How is the quality of the treatment monitored?

The Environment Agency monitors the quality of the discharges from our treatment works. Results of the samples taken are recorded in a register available for public inspection.

If you have a query, you may contact the EA by telephoning or by writing to:

**The Environment Agency
Rivers House
21 Park Square South
Leeds
LS1 2QG**

Telephone: 08708 506 506

E-mail: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Minicom: 08702 422 549

What happens to the sewage 'sludge'?

There are strict rules about how we can dispose of the biosolids known as sewage sludge, which are a by-product of the waste water treatment process.

Where possible, we recycle it by turning it into a useable substance such as soil enhancer or topsoil substitute.

Some sewage sludge is spread on agricultural land. This is only permitted if both the sewage sludge and the soil meet requirements laid down in the Sludge (Use in Agriculture) Regulations.

Due to its industrial nature some sewage sludge is incinerated. A high proportion of the resulting ash is recycled but some has to be put into landfill sites.

How do I report a problem relating to your waste water works?

If you experience a problem relating to our waste water works, including nuisance or inconvenience caused by noise, odours or flies, or a problem relating to any other part of our sewerage system, please telephone us on 0845 1 24 24 24.

What can I do if I'm not happy?

We aim to provide a high standard of service and to treat you with courtesy and fairness at all times. We welcome any comments you may have, and we try to answer queries and resolve complaints quickly and in full.

Please contact us as soon as possible if you're not satisfied with our service. We'll then investigate your complaint and try to resolve it to your satisfaction.

Where your complaint is justified, we'll apologise and do everything we can to put things right as soon as possible.

If we've failed to meet any of our standards, we'll pay compensation in accordance with our Customer Charter. If our actions or inaction cause you particular hardship or inconvenience, we'll consider making a goodwill payment. We'll consider each case individually.

We send a copy of our Customer Charter to every customer each year. If you'd like another free copy, please contact us.

If you're not satisfied with the way we've handled your complaint or with the outcome, you may request a review of your complaint. This review will be independent of the original investigations and may overturn the original decision if appropriate.

If you're still unhappy with the outcome of your complaint, you may request an independent review, by telephoning or writing to:

**Consumer Council for Water
Northgate House
St. Augustine's Way
Darlington
DL1 1XA**

Lo-call number: 0845 7 08 93 68

(or call 01325 469 777)

E-mail: yorkshire@ccwater.org.uk

Text telephone: 0121 345 1044 (minicom)

The Consumer Council for Water (CCWater) is an independent national body set up to protect your interests and to champion customer issues. CCWater ensures that customers' collective voice is heard in the national water debate and has undertaken research to understand customers' views and use this to influence decision makers within the industry.

CCWater will investigate customer complaints relating to our business activities. The regional office and committee may then act on your behalf to try to resolve your complaint with us.

Under the Water Industry Act 1991, the industry regulator, Ofwat, or an independent arbitrator may settle certain disputes. Where this is appropriate, we'll explain the action you can take – or you may prefer to seek advice from CCWater or another independent advice agency.

Services for customers with additional needs

We provide information in large-print, Braille and audio formats. If you'd like information about our free Helping Hands services, please contact us on 0800 1 38 78 78.

How can I contact you?

Our contact centre is open 8am-8pm Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm Saturday

We're open 24 hours a day for emergency calls

Call us

All enquiries	0845 1 24 24 24
Request other information or leaflets	0845 1 24 24 24
Bogus caller checks on Identity cards	0800 1 38 78 78
Leakage	0800 57 35 53

Additional services:

Asian language	0845 1 24 24 21
Text telephone/minicom	0845 1 24 24 23
24 hour automated services	0845 1 24 72 47

Fax 01274 372800

Visit our website yorkshirewater.com

Or write to us Yorkshire Water PO Box 52
Bradford BD3 7YD

Codes of practice:

Additional needs
Charges, bills and payments
Complaints & compliments procedure
Customer Charter
Debt recovery
Leakage from customers' supplies
Responsibility for pipework
Sewerage and waste water
Water meters
Water supply services

yorkshirewater.com

Yorkshire Water Services Limited
Western House Halifax Road Bradford BD6 2SZ
Registered in England and Wales No.2366682

code of practice

Where your water goes

Sewerage and waste water



YorkshireWater

Sewerage and waste water treatment services

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) deals with all aspects of policy relating to the water industry, and we operate under a licence granted by the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Our waste water services and operations are regulated and monitored by the industry regulator, Ofwat and by the Environment Agency (EA), which works to protect and improve the environment.

This code of practice is approved by the industry regulator, Ofwat. Here we tell you about the sewerage system and how we treat waste water. We also explain how you can contact Ofwat and the EA, as well as the Consumer Council for Water, which is an independent body set up to represent consumers' interests.

You may also be interested in reading our Code of Practice leaflet, "Responsibility for pipework". Please refer to the back cover for a list of other codes of practice for domestic customers. These are free and available on request.

Serving Yorkshire

We serve just over two million households and non-domestic properties.

We provide waste water services to the Yorkshire region, covering the counties of North, East, West and South Yorkshire; from towns and cities like Whitby in the far north-east to Chesterfield on the edge of Derbyshire in the South; and from Hull in the East to Skipton in the West.

We collect waste water via 30,300 km of sewers and treat it at over 600 waste water treatment works, in order to ensure that we meet demanding environmental standards for river and coastal life.

What is the sewerage system?

It's the system of pipes used to collect and carry rainwater, waste water and trade waste away from properties to a waste water treatment works or other place for disposal.

There are 2 basic types of system:

- Combined systems take both rainwater and used waste water from sinks and baths, and waste from toilets.
- Separate systems put rainwater through a surface water system, sometimes leading to a stream, river or soakaway, and used water through a separate foul system connected to a waste water treatment works or other means of disposal.

Are there different types of drainage pipes?

Yes, there are 3 types:

- Drains serving just one property.
- Private sewers serving more than one property.
- Public sewers serving more than one property.

All types could be laid in private land, footpaths, public roads, gardens or public open spaces. All drains and sewers can be designed for combined or separate systems.

As the Sewerage Undertaker, we own and maintain public sewers, usually located in public roads. They're normally displayed on public sewer maps, which you can see at our head office at Western House, Halifax Road, Bradford, or at the appropriate local authority office.

If you notice or experience a problem relating to our sewerage system, please telephone us on 0845 1 24 24 24.

In the case of private drains and sewers, the owners of the drain or sewer, or the occupiers of any property served by the drain or sewer are responsible. If you experience a problem with a private drain or sewer and require help, you should contact a plumber or drainage contractor.

What causes a sewer to flood?

There can be a number of causes. For example:

- An overloaded sewer.
- A blocked or collapsed sewer.
- A pumping station failure.

Tree roots may cause damage to sewers, and problems may also occur as a result of unsuitable items being put into the sewer, for example builders' rubble.

What can I do to help?

One of the most common causes of operational problems and sewer flooding is a 'soft blockage'. These blockages are caused by, for example, nappies being flushed down the toilet and (cooking) fat being poured down the drain. Please avoid putting anything down your sink, toilet or drains, unless you're absolutely sure that it's safe to do so.

How do you deal with sewage flooding?

A small number of properties are at particular risk from flooding due to overloaded sewers, and we're investing in a programme to reduce this. We'll let you know if your property is on our risk register, and keep you up to date on our progress. Unfortunately, in extreme weather conditions, such as major storms, we can't guarantee to prevent sewage flooding, even if we respond quickly. Where an incident occurs which could result in a property being flooded, we'll send a representative to assess the problem as quickly as possible. If sewage has entered your property, we'll treat this as a priority.

What happens if my property is flooded?

We understand sewage flooding is very unpleasant and distressing. Please telephone us on 0845 1 24 24 24 as quickly as possible, so that we can give you help and advice. If sewage has entered your home, we'll call you back within two hours to let you know what action we plan to take, in accordance with our Customer Charter. We offer a service to help to reduce the effects of sewage flooding by giving help as quickly as possible in cleaning up and disinfecting the affected area. You may also be entitled to a rebate of your sewerage charges; please refer to section 6 of our Customer Charter.

We send a copy of our Customer Charter to every customer each year. If you'd like another free copy, please contact us.

Can I make a claim for any damage to my property?

We don't accept liability for damage caused by flooding from a public sewer unless we've been negligent in some way, so you should notify your household insurer immediately.

We'll look at claims on a case-by-case basis, if:

- you're not covered by your own insurance, or
- you have to pay an excess on your insurance policy, or
- your premium increases if you make a claim on your policy for sewer flooding.

Your own policy may give you 'new for old' cover, but we take wear and tear into account when considering claims. In some circumstances, we'll also give you a rebate of your sewerage charges. Please see section 6 of our Customer Charter.

Where can I find more information on sewage flooding?

Please contact us if you'd like a free copy of our advice and information leaflet, "What Causes Flooding and Who's Responsible".

Can I connect my drain or sewer to your sewers?

Yes, as long as it's practical and you pay for all the work

involved.

You'll need to provide details of the drain or sewer concerned and how it will be connected. We can refuse permission if we think the connection will affect our sewers. For example, we won't connect a foul drain to a surface water sewer.

If you don't agree with our decision, you can appeal to the industry regulator, Ofwat. You may contact Ofwat by telephoning or writing to:

Ofwat
Centre City Tower
7 Hill Street
Birmingham
B5 4UA

Telephone: 0121 625 1300

E-mail: enquiries@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk

Text telephone: 0121 625 1422 (minicom)

How much does it cost to connect to your sewers?

As well as annual waste water services charges, you'll also have to pay:

- A fee for us to inspect the work, payable with your application.
- A fixed 'infrastructure charge' used to develop new, enlarged or extended sewers, pumping stations and treatment works to cope with the extra loading caused by connecting more properties to our sewers.

Will you provide a new sewer?

If there's no sewer available to serve your property, you can ask us (with or without your neighbours) to install a new sewer, as long as it's practical.

We can provide you with details of the costs and timescales involved.

If you don't agree with our decision, you can appeal to the industry regulator, Ofwat.

How do you treat waste water?

We operate over 600 waste water treatment works, designed to treat expected sewage volumes and meet the standards set by the Environment Agency. In inland areas, we usually carry out treatment in several stages and then return the treated waste water to a watercourse. In coastal areas, the treatment includes ultra violet disinfection before we return the treated waste water to the sea.

As far as possible, we try to limit environmental problems such as flies, odour and noise; and if we're building a new works, we take into account the possible effects on people living nearby. We're also carrying out a programme of improvements to provide extra waste water treatment capacity, to comply with conditions set by the Environment Agency and meet river quality and coastal water quality objectives.