

From: EIR Compliance

To:

Subject: 20250320 – EIR – Data Supplied

Date: 20 March 2025 11:03:00

Attachments: EIR – Question 3.xlsx

Reference Number: **EIR**

Dear

I refer to your request for information submitted to Yorkshire Water dated 20 February 2025.

Please find attached the data which you have requested. Included with this email are our responses to your questions.

We are writing to inform you that your request for environmental information has been partially refused in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) 2004. Under Regulation 12(3), this refusal is based on the grounds that the requested information constitutes personal data relating to an individual other than the applicant. Protecting the privacy and personal data of individuals is a fundamental principle, and as such, the provision of this information would contravene the data protection principles set out in Regulation 13. Regulation 13 stipulates that personal data shall not be disclosed if the release of such information would contravene any of the data protection principles in the UK GDPR or the Data Protection Act 2018.

While we strive to provide as much information as possible in response to environmental information requests, we must also balance this with our obligation to protect personal data. Therefore, the specific details that include personal data of a person other than the applicant cannot be released. In considering your request, your first and third questions ask for the location of the routine testing, we

are satisfied this amount to personal data as recorded above and as such will not provide this information. We have instead provided the water

supply zone that the property resides within as an alternative location in our response to satisfy your request.

1. I would like to know how many times in the last three years that routine testing has identified water that has lead levels higher than 10 µg/L. For each of these occasions I would like the location, the date and the reading.

There have been eleven regulatory compliance failures for lead on samples taken from customer properties from the years 2022-2024. Please see the table which details the water supply zones, dates, times and lead concentrations for these first draw samples. Yorkshire Water also proactively takes many additional 'non-regulatory' samples alongside the regulatory programme. All instances of regulatory and non-regulatory lead results exceeding 10µg/L are thoroughly investigated, written confirmation is provided and advice on next steps made available to the customer.

Lead results outside of regulatory limit for regulatory compliance samples			
Water Supply Zone	Date	Time	First Draw Lead (µg/l)
PUDSEY 2024 WSZ	07 January 2022	15:00	24.2
LEEDS HL BRAMLEY 2004 WSZ	11 January 2022	11:00	12.8
FRICKLEY 2024 WSZ	16 March 2022	15:45	11.2
HARROGATE SOUTH 2019 WSZ	24 May 2022	11:28	2390
LEEDS LL HORSFORTH AND TINSHIL 2019 WSZ	26 July 2022	11:10	17.5
HOLDERNESS 2019 WSZ	01 August 2023	14:45	15.3
DEWSBURY 2017 WSZ	05 September 2023	13:11	16.4
IDLE 2024 WSZ	10 January 2024	10:52	121

YEADON 2024 WSZ	05 February 2024	09:30	18.6
SUTTON INGS 2024 WSZ	10 September 2024	09:45	10.2
LEEDS HL WRTLY/ARMLY 2024	19 November 2024	13:15	11.9

2. I would like to know how many times the UKHSA has been notified of unsafe water levels in the last three years and how many were because of high lead.

Where levels of lead that are deemed unsafe have been identified the Company will implement formal '*Do Not Drink*' health protection advice to impacted customers. The responsibility for assessing the need for these notices lies with Yorkshire Water, although, we do consider the views of our health protection partners. Of course, the issue of health protection advice is a significant restriction on the impacted customers, and indeed has its own risks, so we take this responsibility extremely seriously.

For clarity, our approach to assessing what represents excessive levels of lead in water that require immediate intervention is periodically reviewed and has altered in the past three years. In our current approach every instance where lead exceeds the regulatory standard of (10 µg/l Pb) is immediately reviewed by our Public Health team, and a location-specific assessment of health risk is made based upon our understanding of the nature of the supply, the level of failure, and the specific needs of the impacted customers. Where there is evidence of a particular health risk, or lack of clarity on risk, we may choose to immediately implement public health protection notices. In all cases where water in supply to customers exceeds 50 µg/l Pb and cannot be reduced to below the regulatory standard by normal flushing, Do Not Drink notices are issued.

Follow up on-site investigations, including repeat sampling, are always prioritised the same day that elevated lead results are identified. This further evidence is used to modify the assessment of risk. In the large majority of occasions, it is

demonstrated that flushing of kitchen taps is sufficient protection without the need for formal restriction of use.

Our approach to issue of health protection notices has been shared with UKHSA and our regulator the DWI.

Yorkshire Water will always include UKHSA in the formal notification process where '*Do Not Drink*' health protection advice is issued to customers. In the majority of cases, the source of the elevated level of lead leading to health protection advice is private lead pipework and/or fittings.

2022 – 11 notifications to UKHSA in relation to high lead concentration.

2023 – 10 notifications to UKHSA in relation to high lead concentration.

2024 – 18 notifications to UKHSA in relation to high lead concentration.

For wider context, every exceedance of the regulatory standard is advised to Environmental Health/Food Safety teams at the relevant local authority. Every exceedance of the regulatory standard is advised in writing to the impacted customers with an explanation of the next steps that Yorkshire Water will be taking, and the next steps which the property owner may wish to take.

We also advise customers where samples have not breached the regulatory standard but are in excess of 7.5 µg/l Pb in order that they can make an informed choice.

It is worth noting that irrespective of the outcome of follow up sample investigations, or the need for public health protection notices, Yorkshire Water will replace our communication pipes whenever there are failed samples and our pipe is found to be lead.

We have replaced more than 6639 of our communication pipes in proactive and reactive programmes in the last five years. And we plan to replace 8960 of our pipes in the 2025–2030 funding period.

3. Where customers have asked for their water supply to be tested in the last three years I would like to know how many times you identified water with lead levels higher than 10 µg/L. For each of these occasions I would like the location, the date and the reading.

In the years 2022–2024 there were 483 samples taken from customer properties, at the property owner/billpayer request, which had concentrations of lead greater than or equal to 10 µg/l. Please see the attached excel spreadsheet which details the water supply zones, dates, times and lead concentrations for these samples.

For context, lead was commonly used in the manufacture of water pipes prior to 1970. Lead pipework and fittings remain in place for many properties. The private section of pipework (between the property and the boundary with the water company's network) and the communication pipe (the water company's pipe which connects the water main to the pipe at the boundary of the property) could consist of lead.

In most case the company owned communication pipe is a much shorter element of pipework, while the private pipework outside the control of the company is a much longer length. As part of a national consultation in 2014 by the then government Yorkshire Water fed back that consideration should be given to transferring ownership of private pipework to water companies in order to facilitate planned interventions. The Government decided against transfer of ownership, and so the responsibility for private pipework does not lie with Yorkshire Water.

To support interpretation of the data is it important to note that as part of our investigation into reports of lead from customers Yorkshire Water will take "standing" samples, to represent water that has remained stood in contact with lead material and "flushed" samples, to reflect water quality after the tap has been run for at least three minutes. The standing result primarily represents the quality of water in contact with private pipework. The flushed sample result represents the quality of water supplied by Yorkshire Water's network.

Yorkshire Water inspects its communication pipe when any samples from a property show elevated levels of lead greater than 75% of the regulatory limit of 10µg/L. Where the communication pipe is found to consist of lead, it will be replaced with a suitable material (usually MDPE) as soon as possible.

Where elevated levels of lead are found in samples taken from customer properties, Yorkshire Water will advise the customer of this, which will include advice to replace the private lead pipework and fittings. However, as this is private pipework this would be at the expense of the bill payer.

4. In the last three years I would like to know how much money has been paid in compensation for high lead levels (where the reading was higher than 10 µg/L)."

As a result, no compensation has been issued to customers for high lead levels from 2022 to 2024. As such for the purpose of EIR we applied exemption 12(4)(a), a public authority may refuse to disclose information to the extent that it does not hold that information when an applicant's request is received.

We trust that the provision of this data satisfies your request. In accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, if you are not satisfied with this reply to your request you can ask for an internal review. A request for an internal review must be submitted within 40 working days by contacting the Data Protection Team.

Thank you for contacting Yorkshire Water.

Yours sincerely,

Data Protection Team

Email: EIR@Yorkshirewater.co.uk