

WARMER AND DRIER SUMMERS



DRIVE DOWN LEAKAGE

Reducing leakage helps ensure there are resilient water supplies in the future. Lower leakage levels also help to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions associated with water production and reduce the volume of water that needs to be abstracted from the environment.

Leakage includes water lost from our 27,000 km of underground pipes and supply pipe losses from customers' pipes. Some leaks in water pipes are inevitable as pipes can wear out or be damaged by freezing weather or the weight of traffic on roads.

Total leakage in 2021/22 was 156 million litres per day against a target of 157 million litres per day. This level of leakage is around 25% of the water put into our distribution system and is enough water to fill just over 60 Olympic sized swimming pools.

Historically we have used engineering techniques to work out the sustainable economic level of leakage. This is the point at which the cost of fixing a leak outweighs the benefit. However, we recognise there is more we can do. We are exploring a range of new innovations to tackle leakage including satellite imagery and drones, alongside expanding our leakage team and upskilling staff on best practice detection and repair methods.

We estimate that around a quarter of leaks occur on customer properties, highlighting the importance of fixing any leaky taps and toilets in homes and other premises.

We will reduce leakage to the sustainable economic level of 150 million litres per day by 2027 and explore opportunities for further leakage reductions.

We are assessing the level of future leakage reduction as part of our Water Resource and Supply Resilience Plan, due for publication in 2023. The Plan will be based on the latest climate forecasts for Northern Ireland, taking into account the impact on greenhouse gas emissions and affordability.



Detecting leaks using a ground microphone.