

## REFERENCE

2526032

## RELEASE DATE

April 2025

## SUBJECTS & RESPONSES

**Information on the quantity of discharges from Drumbeg Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) into the River Lagan.**

*Recorded, non-predictive data but limited to count/frequency & duration*  
Event Duration Monitors (EDMs) are being installed across our wastewater network to monitor and record discharges (commonly known as spills) from storm overflows. These measure the times when a spill is occurring (count) and for how long (duration).

NI Water are taking a phased approach to EDM installation. Our initial focus has been to install EDMs on storm overflows which spill into Northern Ireland's 26 designated bathing waters. To date, 122 EDMs across bathing waters and shellfish areas are operational and returning information on frequency and duration of spill. The storm overflow map shows where operational EDMs are monitoring the outlets of storm overflows, this does not include spill monitoring from Drumbeg Wastewater Treatment Works.

### *Volume of spills*

None of the storm overflows have meters to record the volume of spills. Flow meters are very expensive to install and maintain. They can cost up to £150,000 per storm overflow and NI Water endorses the assessment made by Water UK that the cost to install EDMs across the entire network is already significant and the investment required to upgrade this technology to monitor spillage volumes would be more effectively spent fixing the problems, rather than improving their measurement. There may be exceptions to this, depending on circumstances, and NI Water will remain open to these and alert to the application of any lower cost new technologies that may help.

*Non-recorded, predictive data but limited to count & spill volume only*

For those 2,318 Storm Overflows without operational EDMs, NI Water does not hold actual, recorded, spill data, but instead NI Water models use historical rainfall data to generate an annual average for frequency and volume of spills, i.e., a ‘typical year’ of spill performance.

*Drumbeg*

However, with specific relation to your request, Drumbeg is a small catchment (less than 2000 Population Equivalent (PE)). Therefore, the Drumbeg Discharge Area falls below NI Water’s threshold for undertaking a modelling study and generating predictive, modelled spill data at this time (Design PE: 1,919 Actual PE: 1,693). As such, the information that you have requested is not held and Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR applies.

Regulation 12(4)(a) (Information not held) provides that “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”.

All exceptions under the EIR are qualified and so, in deciding whether to disclose the requested information, NI Water must consider the public interest. However, this is not possible where the information is not held.

The following links may also be useful: -

- <https://www.niwater.com/siteFiles/resources/xls/EventDurationMonitorData.xlsx>
- <https://www.niwater.com/siteFiles/resources/2024/Wastewater/NorthernIreland'sWastewaterSystemMay2024.pdf>
- <https://www.niwater.com/storm/overflow/>
- <https://www.niwater.com/storm/event-duration-monitors/>
- <https://www.niwater.com/Storm/Overflow/performance/>
- <https://www.niwater.com/siteFiles/resources/xls/NIWaterModelledSpillsMay2024v2.xlsx>
- <https://www.niwater.com/siteFiles/resources/xls/NIWaterTreatedDischargesMay2024.xlsx>
- <https://www.niwater.com/information-request-disclosure/>

NI Water in partnership with the Northern Ireland Environmental Regulator, NIEA, is preparing for Regulation Reform which will come into effect during the Price Control 27 period (i.e., 2027/28 – 2032/33). We are at an early stage of developing the mechanisms to deliver the flow compliance that will be required and are progressing

our EDM and Flow Monitoring capabilities which includes development and embedding of essential verification systems in preparation for the future compliance requirements. Any flow monitoring that is undertaken at our WwTW at present is for process operation purposes only.

NI Water needs to be fully funded during the six years of PC21 (2021/22 – 2026/27) in order for the Company to be ready for the regulatory reporting requirements of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency during PC27.