

REFERENCE

2627230

RELEASE DATE

18 August 2026

SUBJECT

The locations of drinking water reservoirs across Northern Ireland, records demonstrating each reservoir level since 1 November 2025, and confirmation of whether NI Water provides water to, or receives water from, Irish Water.

RESPONSE

In relation to the locations of drinking water reservoirs, NI Water holds information falling within the scope of your request. However, NI Water considers that this information is excepted from disclosure under Regulation 12(5)(a) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Regulation 12(5)(a) permits a public authority to refuse to disclose environmental information where disclosure would adversely affect international relations, defence, national security or public safety. NI Water relies on the public safety and national security elements of this exception.

The withheld information identifies the locations of operational drinking water infrastructure. Disclosure under the Environmental Information Regulations is disclosure to the public at large. NI Water considers that disclosure of the withheld location information to the public would, on the balance of probabilities, increase the risk of deliberate interference with essential drinking water infrastructure.

NI Water has considered whether less sensitive location information can be separated from the withheld information and disclosed. NI Water has concluded that disclosure of the location information held within the scope of this request would reveal the information whose disclosure would give rise to the adverse effects identified above.

NI Water has also considered the public interest test and the presumption in favour of disclosure under the Environmental Information Regulations. NI Water recognises

the public interest in openness and transparency concerning the management of drinking water infrastructure and in enabling the public to understand the operation of assets used to provide drinking water. However, this must be balanced against the significant public interest in protecting essential drinking water infrastructure from deliberate interference, maintaining the security and resilience of the water supply and protecting public safety. NI Water considers that the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosure. The location information is therefore withheld under Regulation 12(5)(a).

In relation to reservoir levels, NI Water holds information that may fall within the scope of your request. NI Water holds level information concerning impounding reservoirs and service reservoirs. These are different categories of infrastructure, and it is not clear from your request whether the expression 'drinking water reservoirs' is intended to cover impounding reservoirs, service reservoirs or both.

To enable NI Water to identify the information intended by your request, please confirm whether you require level information for impounding reservoirs, service reservoirs or both

In accordance with Regulation 9, NI Water is providing the above explanation to assist you in clarifying the scope of your request. Once your clarification is received, NI Water will identify and consider the information falling within that clarified scope.

NI Water recognises the presumption in favour of disclosure and the public interest in access to information about reservoir levels. However, until the meaning of 'drinking water reservoirs' is clarified, NI Water cannot determine which category or categories of information fall within the intended scope. NI Water considers that the public interest in maintaining Regulation 12(4)(c) temporarily outweighs the public interest in disclosure while this clarification remains outstanding. NI Water will reconsider this part of your request promptly after receiving your clarification.

In relation to cross border water supplies, NI Water does not receive bulk water imports from Irish Water. NI Water does, however, receive one small cross border supply from the Republic of Ireland that serves three properties. NI Water also

provides 71 small cross border supplies to customers in the Republic of Ireland. Most of these customers are individually metered. The average combined volume supplied to those customers during the 2025 to 2026 financial year was 0.54 megalitres per day.