

REFERENCE

2627174

RELEASE DATE

30 July 2026

SUBJECT

Request for information related to water use by data centres, new water supply connections, large non-household connection applications, planning related enquiries and related demand information.

RESPONSE

NI Water has undertaken searches for recorded information within the scope of your request. These searches included the relevant connection application records, customer account and consumption records, planning related records and records held by the business areas responsible for new connections, water demand and planning engagement. The searches covered the period specified in your request.

NI Water does not use a dedicated data centre category within its application or customer account records. An applicant may select 'Other' and provide a description of the proposed use. NI Water can therefore identify a development as a data centre from these records only where that description, or other recorded information within the application, identifies it as such.

Following searches of connection application records from 1 January 2024 to the date of your request, NI Water did not identify any new water supply connection application in which the proposed use was recorded as a data centre. Searches by the relevant business areas also did not identify recorded pre-development engagement concerning a proposed data centre during that period.

As no relevant connection application or pre-development engagement was identified, NI Water does not hold associated recorded information about the status, location or estimated annual demand of such an application, or any assessment of its effect on water resource availability during the requested period.

NI Water also does not record water consumption by reference to a separate data centre customer category. It therefore does not hold annual average or monthly

consumption figures compiled specifically for data centres by water resource or supply area.

NI Water identified a small number of metered accounts with recorded water consumption exceeding 500m³ per day. The records reviewed did not identify any of those accounts as relating to a data centre.

Searches of the relevant planning records did not identify any planning pre-application enquiry or statutory consultee response concerning a proposed data centre from 1 January 2024 to the date of your request.

NI Water does not require a non-household customer with projected demand exceeding 500m³ per day to enter into a demand limiting service level agreement or contractual maximum consumption agreement of the kind described in your request. NI Water therefore does not hold records showing the number of such agreements or any total maximum daily volume contracted under them.

As explained above, the searches also did not identify any connection application or recorded pre-development engagement from 1 January 2024 to the date of your request in which the proposed development was identified as a data centre.

Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR

As outlined above, NI Water searched the relevant records and business areas for recorded information within the scope of your request. NI Water does not use a dedicated data centre category in the relevant connection, customer or consumption records, and the searches did not identify records expressly concerning a data centre during the period covered by your request. NI Water also does not use the particular demand limiting agreements described in your request.

Regulation 12(4)(a) therefore applies to the requested recorded information that NI Water does not hold.

NI Water has applied the presumption in favour of disclosure required by Regulation 12(2) and has considered the public interest test under Regulation 12(1)(b). There is a public interest in transparency about significant water demand, new connections and the management of water resources.

However, NI Water cannot disclose recorded information that it does not hold, and the public interest test does not require the creation of new information. In the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosure.