

REFERENCE

2526108

RELEASE DATE

July 2025

SUBJECT

What is NI Water's best current estimate of how reported wastewater compliance would change if flow were to be taken into consideration as part of the compliance for all of its wastewater treatment works serving more than 250 people.

RESPONSE

As flow is not part of NI Water's regulatory compliance regime at this time, we do not have sufficient information at present to assess wastewater treatment works flow compliance as per the Northern Ireland Environment Agency's (NIEA) draft Regulatory Operational Guidance on Assessing Flow Compliance at Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTWs) under the Water Order (NI) 1999.

Water Order Consent standards are set by NIEA to control the discharge of wastewater and NIEA recognises that flow should be considered as part of compliance. NIEA is leading the work that is providing NI Water with clarity on the flow monitoring systems we must install to record the volume treated and the use of Event Duration Monitors to determine what is happening at discharge points from WwTWs.

NI Water holds measured flow data (total daily volume) for treatment works only where flow monitors are installed. There are 85 WwTWs with certified flow meters and verified total daily volume flow data is shared with NIEA on a monthly basis.

We do not have instrumentation at all sites or the full range of instrumentation required to undertake the flow compliance assessment in line with the Draft Regulatory Operational Guidance indicated above. Without the necessary instrumentation at all WwTWs, NI Water is unable to give an estimate of how reported wastewater compliance would change for NI Water if flow were to be taken into consideration.

NI Water openly addresses wastewater performance in our **Annual Report**. We acknowledged that our current compliance measurement does not fully cover flow

compliance for WwTWs or sewer networks, noting this as an incomplete view of environmental performance.

For the reasons detailed above, the information you have requested is not held at this time 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.

I would like to remind you about NI Water’s published **Information Request Disclosures**, which include previous requests on this topic (see 2425366, 2425349 and 2425458). I would ask that you check the above link in the first instance for previous requests that may provide what you are looking for, before submitting your requests.