

REFERENCE

2526489

RELEASE DATE

19 February 2026

SUBJECT

Request for NI Water data on outdated wastewater pipes, repair trends (2021–2025), UIDs, untreated sewage discharges by water body, network connection needs, and capital investment by area.

RESPONSE

NI Water replies to each query in turn as follows:

- *Can NI Water confirm how many wastewater pipes across its system are deemed outdated and in need of replacement?*
- *Are you able to note how that has changed year on year for the past five years? (Ie is the number damaged and in need of replacement in 2021 to determine if that figure is higher or lower now.)*
- *Please note the number of outdated/damaged wastewater pipes that were deemed outdated/damaged for each year and how many have been repaired/replaced each year?*

In relation to the points above, NI Water does not classify its infrastructure on within our searchable corporate asset register using terms such as 'outdated' or 'damaged'. As such, we cannot perform a search of our system to provide you with the precise data that you seek. As a result, the specific information you are seeking is not held and Regulation 12(4)(a) of the Environmental Information Regulations applies, as explained further below.

However, NI Water does report annually on the number of collapsed (which could be described as damaged) pipes that have been repaired within a year. This information is available in Table 46, Line 34 of each Annual Information Return, which can be accessed at the link below for all years from 2007 onwards. This should allow you to establish any upward or downward trend in the numbers.

<https://www.niwater.com/about-us/about/publications>

If we have misinterpreted your intended meaning with regard to “damaged” or “outdated”, please do not hesitate to clarify in more descriptive terms what you are seeking. For example, might “outdated” mean “made of older materials” or “no longer having sufficient capacity? I will be happy to look anew at your request if we have misunderstood.

- *Can those figures for outdated/damaged pipes be broken down either into constituency area or council area (however you record them and sticking to that format for any subsequent questions)?*

NI Water does not hold the information in a format that allows retrieval at those geographic levels. This element of your request is therefore not held and Regulation 12(4)(a) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 again applies.

Regulation 12(4)(a) 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 we would normally consider the public interest in disclosure. In this case there is no information held to disclose, so the public interest test cannot be applied.

- *For the whole of 2025 can you detail the number of Unsatisfactory Intermittent Discharges (UIDs) across Northern Ireland? How does that compare to the years 2021-2024? (Noting the figures for those years.*

The number of Unsatisfactory Intermittent Discharges can be found on NI Water’s Storm Overflow webpage – as an Excel document titled ‘Modelled Spills November 2025’. This spreadsheet also includes the number of volume of spills as determined by predictive modelling. Please see the link below:

<https://www.niwater.com/about-your-water/storm-overflows>

Our Drainage Area Study (DAS) models are built and calibrated to industry best practice (Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management) and approved by the NIEA. The models are typically simulated using 20 years of historical rainfall to generate an annual average for frequency and volume of spills.

Therefore, the results of the models consider average performance in a typical year, not performance in one specific year for comparison against another year. Spill performance during years when Northern Ireland experiences abnormally low or high rainfall is not represented in the models.

- *Are you able to detail the number/volume of untreated sewage that was discharged into each water body in Northern Ireland? Identifying the water body and volume that was released into it during 2025? Can the same be done for 2021-2024?*

NI Water's previous response again refers. Please also note the following:

Around 700 Event Duration Monitors (EDMs) are planned to be operational by 2027 giving circa 30% coverage of all storm overflows (subject to funding).

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 33 designated bathing waters. To date, we have EDMs located in 28 of the 33 designated bathing waters. More recently, we have extended our coverage of

EDMs to storm overflows that spill into waterbodies which support shellfish growth and production and other inland waterbodies and rivers.

As of November 2025, 329 EDMs, including EDMs across bathing waters and shellfish areas are operational and returning information on frequency and duration of spill. A small number are still having their data and operability checked and their data will be published in due course. We are committed to improving our EDM coverage.

- *Can NI Water note how many properties need to be linked into the wastewater system in each council/constituency area?*

In July 2024, NI Water reported approximately 37,000 units that may want to connect to the wastewater system.

NI Water advised that circa 50% of these properties could connect, and the remaining 50% were unable to connect due to high polluting assets.

Additional funding received through the Monitoring Round process (Oct 2024 & June 2025) will enable a further circa 5k properties to connect once capital upgrade schemes are completed.

Since July 2024, NI Water has connected over 7,000 units and has received enquiries from approximately a further 25,000 units seeking connection.

In total, NI Water is now aware of 55,000 units that may want to connect to the wastewater system. Of these, approximately 37,500 can connect, with the majority requiring a developer self-funded, zero detriment solution. While

approximately 17,500 are unable to connect to the wastewater system as they are above high polluting assets, unsuitable for developer funded solutions.

Approximately one third of current enquires are unable to connect due to high polluting assets, i.e. they require NI Water Capital Intervention.

Table presenting enquiries requiring NI Water Capital Intervention by Council area

Council Area	Commercial & Industrial	Residential	Total Units
Ards & North Down	1	3345*	3346
Belfast	20	3195	3215
Lisburn & Castlereagh	5	2335**	2340
Derry City & Strabane	74	1855	1929
Fermanagh & Omagh	5	1846	1851
Mid Ulster	50	1290	1340
Newry, Mourne & Down	5	1070	1075
Mid & East Antrim	17	872	889
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	2	614	616
Causeway Coast & Glens	3	428	431
Antrim & Newtownabbey	15	337	352
Total	197	17,187	17,384

- *For each of the last five years can DfI note how much it has invested in each council/constituency area from NI Water's capital budget? And when doing so note how much investment that would be per 100,000 people in each area?*

In the following Table the investment is presented for Northern Ireland's 11 Council areas over the 5 financial years from 2021/22 to 2025/26. NI Water does possess information on investment per 100,000 of population by council area. NI Water uses best practice asset management principles to develop its Price Control business plan investment for Northern Ireland as a whole. This involves the consideration of the assessed needs across Northern Ireland's entire Water and Wastewater infrastructure asset base rather than population size and/or geographic size of Council areas or other political area demarcations.

All Price Control investments are developed in accordance with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Social Environmental Guidance. The Utility Regulator determines the level of funding required to deliver our agreed Price Control business plan. This should ensure that our financial resources align with regulatory expectations and customer needs. The Department for Infrastructure is NI Water's sole shareholder and DfI has a statutory duty to ensure the company is properly funded so the company can deliver essential services effectively.

Table of NI Water's Capital Investment from 2021/22 to 2025/26 in
Northern Ireland's 11 Council Areas

Councils	PC21 Yr 1 2021/22 (£m)	PC21 Yr 2 2022/23 (£m)	PC21 Yr 3 2023/24 (£m)	PC21 Yr 4 2024/25 (£m)	PC21 Yr 5 2025/26 (£m)
Mid and East Antrim	15.1	18.6	21.6	22.6	21.6
Antrim and Newtownabbey	14.2	20.3	18.3	21.5	26.1
Lisburn and Castlereagh	12.3	19.2	19.7	21.7	28.9
Fermanagh and Omagh	11.6	23.8	30.6	26.6	33.5
Ards and North Down	26.8	30.7	21.4	24.7	24.5
Causeway Coast and Glens	19.2	18.2	34.3	34.6	26.0
Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon	17.1	22.9	32.8	28.1	39.5
Newry Mourne and Down	22.5	26.7	30.4	29.4	45.4
Mid Ulster	12.8	25.3	40.1	40.9	39.4
Derry and Strabane	24.9	32.7	29.7	29.4	51.0
Belfast	28.7	33.7	34.4	40.0	42.8