

# Summary Report

## 2021/22

northern ireland  
water



Delivering what matters





## Water sits at the heart of a prosperous society

Largely unseen, our infrastructure underpins every aspect of life in Northern Ireland. It is the foundation for public health, it can unlock economic growth and help restore the natural environment.

NI Water can only continue to play this vital role if we are able to invest today to meet not only the increased demand for our services, but also the combined challenge of the climate emergency and the biodiversity crisis. In the last year NI Water has led the way in developing approaches to tackle these pressures. Now we need to work with our stakeholders to make this a reality through innovation, collaboration and the right sense of urgency.

*POK*

Dr Leonard J. P. O'Hagan CBE DL  
Chair of the Board  
29 June 2022

We have completed the first year of our six year PC21 Business Plan (2021-27). Our performance is set in the context of COVID-19, climate change, extreme energy price volatility, significant inflationary pressures across our supply chain, and the continued uncertainty over PC21 funding.

Despite these challenges, we have largely delivered against the targets set by the independent Utility Regulator for 2021/22. This is a tremendous credit to our colleagues and business partners who have continued to deliver what matters. Some of the notable highlights over 2021/22 are provided below and further details on progress are contained in our Annual Report.

*Sara*

Sara Venning  
Chief Executive  
29 June 2022



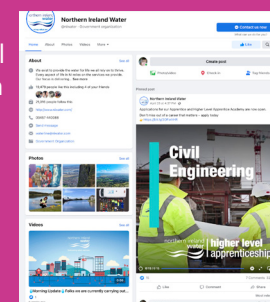
Wellbeing at Work Award  
Winner 2021



## Strategic areas of focus

### Right place, right time, right channel

During 2021/22 we increased the operational hours of our social media platforms and Web Chat Service. Our customer base for web self-serve also continues to grow and we had our best ever year in terms of unwanted customer contacts.



One of NI Water's digital communication channels.

### Caring for you

Our Customer Care Register offers a range of free additional services for those customers who need extra help. Around 2,700 customers/organisations are registered. We continue to work with Health Trusts, Councils and other Utilities to promote our Customer Care Register.



### Getting smarter

Intelligent Operations is a new approach to how we operate. It comprises smarter ways of working that exploit digital technology and co-locate a number of teams in one place. Our Intelligent Operations centre opened in 2021/22 and brings together around 180 of our dispersed operational staff to work together in a more collaborative and intelligent way. Automation for processing sewer blockages has enabled quicker response times. Our 'Knowledge Base' tool uses chatbot technology and artificial intelligence to provide answers to a wide range of customer questions and our interactive voice response offers greater convenience for transactions such as bill payment.



NI Water's Intelligent Operations Centre.

### Protecting you

Cyber crimes are increasing in both frequency and in their disruptive potential. These crimes could lead to an interruption in the delivery of our essential services, damage our computer control systems, or lead to a data breach.

We continue to liaise and collaborate with the National Cyber Security Centre to keep at the forefront of an ever changing threat landscape and be aware of new methods of attack as they develop.





## Strategic areas of focus

### Improve at source

As one of the largest land owners in Northern Ireland, we are working to improve the water quality at source in our catchments. The Tullychurry and Lough Bradan forest to bog restoration projects in Counties Fermanagh and Tyrone received a Green Apple Award 2021 in the climate change category. NI Water featured in a documentary at COP26 for the work that we are doing on climate change and biodiversity at the Garron Plateau, County Antrim.



NI Water staff marking the Green Apple award at Tullychurry forest, County Fermanagh.



### Enough water for all

Our changing climate is bringing more frequent and severe weather events such as heavy rainfall, heatwaves and extreme cold.

Tankering of water during the heatwave high demand event in July 2021.

### Tasty, clean and safe

Drinking water compliance is underpinned by investment in our water infrastructure.



Completion of the £13m investment at Drumroad water treatment works in County Down to benefit a quarter of Northern Ireland's population.

### Drive down leakage

Leakage was reduced by over 2 million litres per day over 2021/22 to 155.6 million litres per day through use of leakage detection techniques such as ground microphones.



Detecting leaks using a ground microphone.

### Always on

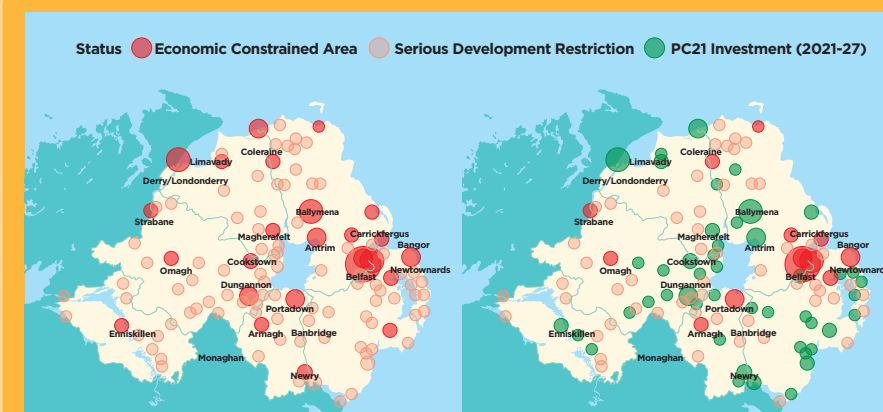
A major burst during an already challenging high demand period impacted an otherwise strong performance on supply interruptions. Our 'Every minute counts' ethos helps to focus at ways to improve our performance and explore innovative solutions such as the deployment of emergency response trailers.



Emergency trailer for use during a supply interruption event.



## Strategic areas of focus



Development constraints across Northern Ireland at the end of year one of PC21 (2021/22).

Development constraints across Northern Ireland at the end of PC21 (2027).

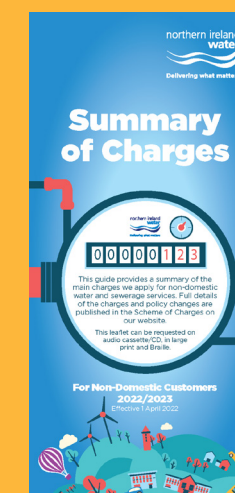
### Funding world class economic infrastructure

Our PC21 Business Plan sets out the investment required to start to address the wastewater capacity constraints in over 100 towns and cities across Northern Ireland.

### Efficient and affordable services

We have reduced operating costs and improved comparative efficiency with water companies in England and Wales. We are committed to eliminating the remaining 5.7% efficiency gap with the most efficient water companies by 2027.

Following approval by the Utility Regulator, NI Water increased its non-household water and wastewater tariffs by 6.6% on average from 1 April 2022. This increase means most of our customers will see their bills rise by less than inflation.



### Sustainable growth

We believe that our future infrastructure investment can support not only the transition to a more sustainable and resilient business but also help create an affordable, low carbon green economy for Northern Ireland.

NI Water can help to integrate more sustainable energy sources into our supply system and reduce the tax payer's subsidy for water services.

NI Water is our largest electricity user. Future electricity generation will be driven by the weather. NI Water will be rewarded by being flexible in our use.

Hydro pump storage schemes store water at height when energy is plentiful to generate electricity later.

The NI energy system will need to store energy when it is plentiful for subsequent use. NI Water will require large batteries for resilience and to operate efficiently.



## Strategic areas of focus



### More resilient network

Reducing the amount of surface water reaching the sewers can help reduce the risk of sewer flooding due to overcapacity.

*NI Water Project Managers at the arrival of the tunnel boring machine at a £8m sewer upgrade project in Belfast.*

### Sustainable solutions

The Living With Water Programme aims to deliver a long-term approach to drainage and wastewater management that will protect from flooding, provide a cleaner and greener environment and ensure that Belfast is open for business and investment.



*The Infrastructure Minister, the Belfast Lord Mayor and NI Water's Head of the Living With Water Programme visit the demonstration project at Cave Hill Country Park in Belfast.*



Clabby wastewater treatment works, County Fermanagh - Courtesy of BSG Civil Engineering Ltd.

We are committed to a more sustainable approach to wastewater treatment and have deployed a number of innovative approaches such as lower energy technologies and nature based solutions. This includes the use of natural reed beds at Clabby wastewater treatment works.

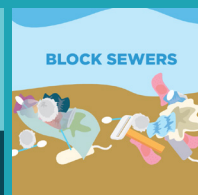


### Keep it clear

We deal with around 15,000 blockages of our sewers each year, over 11,000 of which could have been prevented.



*NI Water staff and Councillor William McCandless at the manhole at Christie Park, Coleraine, County Derry/Londonderry.*



### Towards zero carbon

We are looking forward to launching our Climate Change Strategy in 2022/23, which will set out our transition path to a carbon neutral and climate resilient business.



*NI Water staff and supplier representatives involved in the battery project.*

## Strategic areas of focus

### Powered by talent

We want to create a great place to work and ensure that NI Water is fit for the future by attracting, developing and retaining top talent.

*NI Water celebrated International Women in Engineering Day on 23 June by recognising some of the female engineers making a splash in the world of water.*



### Safe, happy and healthy workplace

NI Water's award-winning health and wellbeing strategy is designed with and for employees to support their physical, mental, social and financial health in the belief that prevention is better than cure.



*NI Water staff receiving the Business in the Community 'Wellbeing at Work' Award.*



*NI Water receiving the Team of the Year award at the Belfast Chamber Business Awards 2021.*

A diverse workforce is good for business, providing different perspectives, encouraging innovation, and fostering a more collaborative working culture. We hold the Bronze Diversity Charter mark and are working towards achieving the silver standard in 2022/23. In 2021/22, NI Water became the first company in Northern Ireland to sign up the UK Government's 'Levelling Up Goals' which seek to drive equality of opportunity and support social mobility. NI Water was named Team of the Year 2021 at the Belfast Chamber Business Awards. We were recognised for the vital role our essential workers played at the frontline of the pandemic in ensuring public health protection across Northern Ireland.



### Creating a legacy for our communities

Over 1,500 staff have volunteered in around 100 challenges to date, equating to over 10,000 hours of volunteering to help support communities across Northern Ireland.

*NI Water staff celebrating 10 years of volunteering with Cares Challenge scheme at Northern Ireland Children's Hospice, Newtownabbey, County Antrim.*





**WATER IS  
PRECIOUS**

**DON'T  
WASTE IT**

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