

REFERENCE

2425216

RELEASE DATE

August 2024

SUBJECT

Sewage treatment sludge disposal in the Lough Neagh catchment area

REQUEST

Information about sewage treatment sludge disposal in the Lough Neagh catchment area, to include details of the ways in which these sludges are disposed of and of the locations at which this disposal occurs.

RESPONSE

Wastewater sludge generated at Wastewater Treatment Works in Northern Ireland are collected by sludge tanker (where required) and processed at designated sludge thickening sites to approximately 3%-5% dry solids content. All thickened sludges are then further dewatered to a sludge cake (with a dry solids content of approximately 22-30%) at one of 11 regional dewatering centres across Northern Ireland.

All sludge cake from the regional dewatering centres is transported to Duncrue Street Sludge Disposal Facility in Belfast (an NI Water facility operated by a third party under a 25-year public-private partnership contract). All sludge cake is then either (i) incinerated in one of 2 IPPC licenced sewage sludge incinerators at Duncrue Street or, in periods of incinerator unavailability, (ii) disposed of via 3rd party licenced sludge treatment and spreading facilities in Northern Ireland or (iii) former opencast colliery land reclamation sites in Scotland.

- Incineration is at Duncrue Street Sludge Facility Incinerators
- Lime Treatment & Farm Spreading (Farmland Advanced Disposal) at Donnybrewer (Limavady), Highlands Road (Limavady) and Mountfield Road (Claudy).
- Former Opencast Coal Colliery (OCC) Land Reclamation at House of Water OCC, East Ayrshire, Skares OCC, East Ayrshire, Ponesk OCC, East Ayrshire and Garleffan OCC, Ayrshire.

- *If any sludge is incinerated, then I also need to know how and where the incineration residues are disposed of.*

In accordance with the IPPC permit, flue gas residuals are precipitated out for landfill disposal and incinerator residual ash is also disposed of to landfill. Currently the flue gas residue is transported as a hazardous waste under EWC code 19 01 05* to the Irish Waste Transfer Station located on Duncrue Street. Once delivered to the Irish Waste Transfer Station, Irish Waste will store and bulk export with similar materials to specialist third party disposal sites in the UK. The incinerator ash EWC Code 19 01 14 is recovered by Recon Waste to their site in Portadown.

- *If there are a number of different methods and locations used for sewage treatment sludge disposal then please provide me with the corresponding quantities for each.*

The tonnage of sewage sludge disposed of through incineration, recycling and reclamation varies each year and is reported in the Company's Annual Information Return to the NI Authority for Utility Regulation. For the most recent published period (AIR2023) the split was as follows:

- Incineration: 34,297 tonnes dry solid
- Farmland Advanced: 2,227 tonnes dry solid
- Land Reclamation: 0 tonnes dry solid