

REFERENCE

2425279

RELEASE DATE

August 2024

SUBJECT

Water Source by Council area

REQUESTS & RESPONSES

1. *Can you tell me what areas - Council areas - of Northern Ireland source drinking water from Lough Neagh?*

Regulation 6(1)(b) of the EIR states that “Where an applicant requests that the information be made available in a particular form or format, a public authority shall make it so available, unless the information is already publicly available and easily accessible in another form or format.”

NI Water has a page dedicated to providing information and guidance about Lough Neagh-related blue-green algae queries at the link below. The webpage includes [a map](#) (also at the bottom of the page), that provides the raw water source of a supply zone by clicking on the area of interest.

NI Water’s water supply zones are categorised by District Metered Area, not by Council area, and, as such, the map would be an available means of providing you with the requested information, as this not held by Council area (Annex A refers).

<https://www.niwater.com/bga/>

NI Water also have a dedicated Water Quality Results page, which includes information on raw water source, water hardness and the preceding calendar year’s Water Quality Report for specific supply zones on input of a full postcode.

<https://www.niwater.com/water-quality-results/>

2. *Can you say how often this drinking water is tested for safety?*

NI Water's number one priority is the quality and safety of the drinking water we provide. Our multibarrier treatment process will effectively deal with and remove cyanobacterial cells, algae toxins and other organisms, for effective drinking water treatment, to ensure that drinking water supplied to customers meets strict drinking water quality standards.

Where there is a risk for algae to be present in the raw water, the drinking water treatment processes are designed to deal with this risk.

NI Water has in place a programme of sampling and analysis for Microcystin-LR, of the raw water and in the treated drinking water, at the water treatment works that use Lough Neagh as the raw water source and also at other water treatment works where there is a potential for algae to be present in the raw water. Testing for Microcystin-LR in drinking water by NI Water is in line with the Recast Drinking Water Directive and the WHO Guidelines for drinking water quality (Cyanobacterial toxins: Microcystins).

For queries on Blue Green Algae please contact the lead agency the NIEA.

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/blue-green-algae>

On a daily basis, we monitor our raw water intakes from all sources, at our treatment works and at customer taps to ensure that drinking water supplied meets strict quality standards.

NI Water has a robust testing and sampling system which sees over 120,000 samples lifted and analysed each year. Sampling and analysis are carried out 365 days per year. Samples are taken from customer homes, reservoirs and treatment plants.

Drinking water supplied from the water treatment works which use Lough Neagh as their raw water sources are designed with the potential for algae to be present and robust treatment processes are in place to manage this effectively.

We increase the frequency of algae monitoring over the summer months when the risk for algae in the raw water would generally be higher.

Increased levels of algae can cause an unusual taste and smell to water from your tap but do not pose a risk to health in the treated drinking water. The taste and smell can be earthy and/or musty. Therefore, while the water from your tap can be used in the normal way, we fully appreciate some customers might notice a difference in the taste and/or odour to their drinking water at this time.