

REFERENCE

2425416

RELEASE DATE

December 2024

SUBJECT

Wastewater emissions to Ballyholme Bay, Bangor

REQUESTS

- a. How frequently and what type of water quality testing does NI Water perform to monitor the effects of their actions?
- b. How much (volume) and how often (number of occasions in 2024) has NI Water knowingly released sewerage into Belfast lough?

RESPONSES

- a) The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is responsible for the regular regulatory monitoring of bathing waters. Water monitoring sampling of the 26 identified bathing waters and 7 candidate bathing waters in Northern Ireland takes place between mid-May and mid-September. The results are provided during the bathing water season (1 June – 15 September) on the DAERA and NI Direct websites. NI Water undertakes announced sampling at its Wastewater Treatments Works to inform sanitary compliance (i.e., not at bathing waters themselves). The Company's wastewater modelling team is progressing a number of water quality studies across our networks, the primary aim of which is to inform modelling to better understand the impact of NI Water assets on the environment. This involves short-term (typically 18 months) sampling and water quality data collection – however, this is not a regulatory requirement, and the data is not as yet readily available.
- b) The volume and frequency of sewage released into Belfast Lough is based on predictive modelling. Please see below for modelled spill frequency and volume data.

Total <i>Predicted</i> Spill Frequency	Total <i>Predicted</i> Spill Volume (m ³)
2,520	3,159,702

In relation to actual, recorded data, this information is not held at this time and Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR therefore 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.