



Telford and Wrekin - Environment Scrutiny Committee - River Pollution

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Definitions used

- **Sewers**

Sewers are underground pipes which receive sewage from domestic, commercial and industrial premises.

Transport foul drainage for treatment at a sewage works

- **Sewage**

Sewage is the dirty water from domestic and industrial activities

- **Sewage Incident**

Release of untreated sewage escape from the sewer system onto land or into inland or coastal waters

Severn Trent Water are responsible for making sure the foul sewage system and sewage treatment works are fit for purpose. Operate under permits issued by EA

Drainage Systems (Types of Sewers)

Three Types of Systems:

- **Surface Water Sewer**

Designed to collect uncontaminated rainfall to discharge to watercourses

- **Foul Water Sewer**

Designed to carry only sewage and trade effluents from domestic, commercial and industrial premises to be treated at a sewage works

- **Combined Sewer**

Designed to collect both rainfall hardstanding areas and foul sewage, which is collected for treatment at a sewage works

Sewerage Pollution Incidents

Common Causes:

- **Misconnections** – this is where foul drains are connected to surface water drains. Significant source of pollution in urban areas
- Leaking and/or Blocked Sewers
- Discharges from Combined Sewage Overflows (CSO) – another significant source of issues
- During rainfall events rainwater from roads, roofs and paved areas enters the combined sewer system.

What is a combined sewer overflow (CSO)?

- A combined sewer overflow is an overflow on a sewer system designed to overflow during heavy rainfall events and is designed to prevent sewage 'backing up' into properties and to protect the sewage works from damage caused by excess flow.
- Most urban sewer systems include these overflows, including Telford
- Water companies are responsible for ensuring CSOs only operate under strict high rainfall conditions and that the capacity in sewers and treatment works keeps pace with development.

What are we doing about sewage pollution in Telford

Love Your Rivers Telford

- Award-winning 5 year Environment Agency lead £600K project, which ended in 2018, designed to improve quality of streams in area.
- Partnership between EA, STW, T&W Council, Wildlife Trust local industry and others
- Identified 120 misconconnections and audited 80 businesses
- Created in-stream improvements, including new wetlands and re-naturalising streams and culverts
- Resulted in 6 of Telford's streams improving their water quality classification.

New regulations for water companies

- All water companies have now been required to install monitors on their Combined Storm Overflows and report how often they discharge to the EA. We are using this to assess whether discharges are within consent conditions and to target regulatory work.
- Some water companies already have on-line 'live data' of discharges from their CSOs
- **Operation Standard** – ongoing audit of water companies relating around the performance of their sewage works.

Overall picture in Telford area

- **Focus Area:** 105 reports of pollution incidents from sewage and misconnections within 10km of Ironbridge since 2019

What can you do?

- Report any pollution incidents to us straight away on our 24/7 pollution hotline

0800 807060