



DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE

Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

Enquiries: 0300 068 6400

E-mail: Marcus.Rink@defra.gov.uk
DWI Website: <http://www.dwi.gov.uk>

05 July 2019

**To: Lesley Griffiths AM,
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs**

I am pleased to inform you that *Drinking water 2018* will be published on 11 July 2019. The report is the 29th published by the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) and it covers both private and public water supplies.

Drinking water 2018 provides a record of the work of the Inspectorate in checking that water companies and local authorities have taken the appropriate action to maintain confidence in drinking water quality and to safeguard public health.

In 2018, the figure for public water supply compliance with the EU Drinking Water Directive was 99.97% in Wales. This figure is certainly good news and would indicate that the drinking water supply is excellent. It remains largely unchanged since 2004 but represents the high standards for compliance in Wales recorded since 1990.

In 2016, the Inspectorate introduced a new measure called the Compliance Risk Index (CRI), designed to allocate a numerical value to risk. Unlike Mean Zonal Compliance (MZC), it assigns a value to the significance of the failing parameter, the proportion of consumers potentially affected and the quality of the company response. CRI is a measure designed to illustrate the risk arising from treated water compliance failures, and it aligns with the current risk-based approach to regulation of water supplies used by the Drinking Water Inspectorate. The measure has been introduced as a common performance commitment for the Periodic Review 2019 by the Financial Regulator (OFWAT), who are responsible for setting any financial measures through agreement with companies. The introduction of CRI recognises that the level of water quality in Wales remains one of the best in the world and new innovative methodology was required to focus on the few areas requiring attention which matter to the water industry and consumers alike.

In 2018, for companies wholly or mainly in Wales, the CRI in 2018 was 4.15. This is a small increase on 2017 which was 2.63. This reflects the continuing and repeated iron and manganese failures compounded by a coliform failure in June at Sluvad Works, (Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water) and a bromate failure in May in Newton zone, (Dee Valley Water). My report highlights that consumers in Wales contact water companies about discoloured water almost three times more frequently than consumers, on average, in England and that there has been little progress in reducing numbers of contacts in recent years.

In 2017, a new drinking water quality measure called the Event Risk Index, (ERI), was introduced to illustrate the risk arising from drinking water quality events which also aligns with the current risk-based approach to regulation of water supplies used by the DWI. Like CRI, it assigns a value to the significance and duration of the event, the number of consumers potentially affected and the quality of the company's response. Similar to CRI, the Financial Regulator (OFWAT) has made this measure available as an asset health performance commitment for PR19, should companies wish to be measured by it. The ERI for Wales in 2018 was 32, an improvement on the 55 recorded in 2017. Contributing to this figure was the interruption of supply and discoloured water in Merthyr Tydfil in Feb 2018 due to freezing of temporary pumps and prolonged supply interruptions in Blaenau Ffestiniog, Mid Ceredigion, St. Davids and Llandona in Anglesey as a result of the inclement weather in March 2018. Both these events are highlighted in my report for wider learning. There were no prosecutions or Cautions of companies in Wales.

The picture in relation to private water supplies, whilst improving, continues to require keen focus with 6.1% of tests failing to meet the drinking water standards. Nonetheless, this figure represents an improvement when compared to the 9.6% of tests that failed in 2010, the year when reporting for private supplies was first introduced. The number of private supplies that have been risk assessed was 1,236 in Wales covering over two thirds (69%) of all relevant private supplies. In comparison with the previous two years, figures were very similar and indicate a stalling of progress towards completion of all required risk assessments. Additionally, in 2018 there were 136 supplies in Wales that were a potential danger to human health where local authorities had to require the owners to make improvements and take steps to protect public health. In Wales, nearly three-fifths (58%) of these failing private supplies are large supplies or supply commercial premises or premises where the public may access water e.g. B&Bs, cafés and tourist attractions.

During 2018, there was one private water supply event in north Wales, reported for wider learning. This supply is a long standing water quality risk, first served with a Notice in 2011. It is derived from a stream with a history, over many years, of elevated iron levels and periodic detections of microbiological indicator organisms associated with the source water. The supply serves around 100 residential chalets, some of which are occupied as permanent dwellings, while some are let as holiday homes. Consumers continue to experience discoloured water and detections of *E. coli* that present a potential risk for safety and acceptability.

The Inspectorate's main legislative remit for private water supply regulation is to provide technical advice to the regulator (the local authority), and as such, have met with the local authority concerned at their office in north Wales. While my Inspectors can offer advice, it remains the duty of the local authority to act on behalf of consumers.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marcus Rink', written in a cursive style.

Marcus Rink
Chief Inspector of Drinking Water