



DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE

Area 7E, 9 Millbank
c/o Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

Enquiries: 030 0068 6400

E-mail: milo.purcell@defra.gsi.gov.uk
DWI Website: <http://www.dwi.gov.uk>

2 May 2014

Information Letter 03/2014

To: Board Level and Day to Day contacts of Water and Sewerage Companies and Water Companies in England and Wales

Dear Sir/Madam

Drinking Water Quality Improvement Programmes – changes to progress reporting requirements

Purpose

1. The purpose of this letter is to advise water companies¹ of changes to the frequency of progress reporting requirements for current and future improvement programmes, and to remind companies of the information requirements for closure of legal instruments following completion of improvement programmes.

Background

2. Information Letter 07/2010, dated 7 June 2010, sets out the process to be followed when a company reports on progress with, seeks to alter, or completes, a statutory water quality improvement programme. The requirements of that Information Letter, including the reporting templates in its Annexes, remain unchanged.

Changes to the frequency of improvement programme reporting

3. In addition to bespoke reporting requirements specified within a legal instrument, the Inspectorate currently requires bi-annual reporting to a defined format for all drinking water quality improvement programmes. The reporting periods are January to June and July to December of each calendar year, from the date of issue of the Notice or from the date of acceptance of an Undertaking.

¹ This term refers to water undertakers, water supply licensees and inset appointees

4. The Inspectorate wishes to better facilitate reporting requirements in accordance with a risk based approach, and to reduce the administrative burden on companies, as well as to bring greater focus on the key delivery stages within improvement programmes. A more bespoke approach is also more suited to the changing nature of improvement programmes, which typically contain greater emphasis on preventative steps and catchment measures.
5. Consequently, for all current and future drinking water quality improvement programmes the automatic bi-annual reporting requirement is withdrawn with immediate effect. There will be no requirement to submit a progress report for the period January to July 2014, unless associated with a specific bespoke reporting stage. Bi-annual reporting is to be replaced by a single annual reporting requirement for the period January to December of each calendar year for all improvement programmes using the guidance set out in Information Letter 07/2010, to be submitted to the Inspectorate by 31 January of the following period. Reports are required from the date of issue of the Notice or from the date of acceptance of an Undertaking until the agreed work has been completed. Bespoke reporting should continue as per individual scheme requirements.

Other matters

6. The Inspectorate wishes to remind companies of the evidence required for the closure of legal instruments, as specified in Information Letter 07/2010. The date for submission of a completion report is specified within each legal instrument, and the report must contain the evidence to demonstrate delivery of the outcome required as the benefit accruing to consumers. Companies should ensure that they are mindful of the information requirements for closure of a legal instrument during all stages of progress with improvement programmes, to ensure that this is readily available for inclusion in the completion report. A failure to satisfy closure requirements may result in further regulatory intervention. Companies should note that there may be specific requirements for some improvement programmes, for example, for schemes involving the provision of ultraviolet treatment. Companies are advised to discuss appropriate closure criteria for such schemes with the Inspectorate at an early stage.
7. The attention of companies is drawn to Section 207 of the Water Industry Act 1991 and the importance of providing accurate information at all stages of the reporting process.

Enquiries

Any enquiries regarding this letter should be made to Kate Parkin on 0300 068 6438 or by email to kate.parkin@defra.gov.uk.

Copies of this letter are being sent to Pamela Taylor, Chief Executive, Water UK; Carol Skilling, Water Resources Management, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Paul Harrison, Water Management Team, Welsh Government; Sue Petch, Drinking Water Quality Regulator for Scotland; Margaret Herron, Drinking Water Inspectorate for Northern Ireland; Tony Smith and Chairs of the Regional Consumer Council for Water; Claire Daniel, Ofwat; Ian Barker, Environment Agency; Liz Stretton, Food Standards Agency; and Frances Pollitt at Public Health England.

This letter is being sent electronically to Board Level and day to day contacts. Please acknowledge receipt by email to dwi.enquiries@defra.gsi.gov.uk. Hard copies are not being sent but the letter may be freely copied.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Milo Purcell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Milo Purcell
Deputy Chief Inspector (Regulatory Strategy)