

Our ref: EIR-643
Date: 21/01/2026
Email: EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk

Dear [REDACTED]

You requested information relating to the amount of your wastewater that has been discharged into rivers and seas, from our storm overflows. We have treated this as a request for environmental information and want to let you know that your request has been carefully considered in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

In accordance with their environmental permits, water companies measure and report numbers and timings of discharges from our storm overflows, although there is no requirement to measure volumes of discharges. We therefore do not hold the volume of wastewater discharged and, in accordance with Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR, we are unable to provide it.

For context, sewerage networks have a finite capacity and storm overflows act like a pressure relief valve so that when there is too much rainfall, the excess storm water can be diverted to a separate pipe which then flows into a river or the sea. If there was no storm overflow in place, this sewage could enter homes and streets, as the wastewater would force its way out of the network of pipes to the surface, often rising up through manhole covers.

Storm overflows are governed by consents, which are set by the Environment Agency, and which set out the conditions when each overflow is allowed to discharge excess storm water into the river and sea. You can read more about storm overflows and the work that United Utilities is doing to reduce spills from these overflows in the Better Rivers section of our website. This can be found by typing "united utilities better rivers" into a search engine, such as google.

Information relating to the number of spills from all the overflows across the North West region is also publicly available on the storm overflow performance page, on the United Utilities website. This can be found by typing "united utilities storm overflow performance" into your search engine. Once on this page, if you then scroll to the 'download our data returns' section, you can view monthly spill data for 2025, as well as data for previous years.

When reviewing the 2025 data, it is important to note that:

- Raw telemetry data should not be treated as validated regulatory Event Duration Monitor (EDM) due to the potential for sensor malfunctions, data transmission errors or environmental interference (which are rectified when this data is validated). There may also be gaps in the data resulting from instrument failure or maintenance, for example.

- Whilst error codes from sensors are captured and inspected, they may still appear as erroneous data in this raw telemetry dataset, as erroneous and anomalous data will not have been removed.
- As this raw data has not gone through data validation it will likely be different to what is reported annually in our regulatory EDM return.

We hope that this response answers your request. However, if you're not satisfied with how we've handled it, you can request an internal review. To do this, please write to us at Environmental Information Office, Haweswater House, Lingley Mere, Warrington, WA5 3LP or email us at EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk, addressing your request to [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and explaining why you're unhappy with our response. We'll be very happy to review your request and ensure we've done everything we can to assist you.

Any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this response, and we will reply within 40 working days from receipt of the request for internal review.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]