



**United Utilities Water Limited**  
Haweswater House  
Lingley Mere Business Park  
Lingley Green Avenue  
Great Sankey  
Warrington WA5 3LP

Telephone: 01925 237000  
[unitedutilities.com](http://unitedutilities.com)

**Our ref:** EIR-679  
**Date:** 11/02/2026  
**Email:** [EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk](mailto:EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk)

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your further request for environmental information. We appreciate your interest, and we want to let you know that your request has been carefully considered in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

**Your request:**

Thank you for your response to my Environmental Information Regulations request regarding ptaquiloside and bracken-derived toxins in United Utilities' drinking water catchments.

I am grateful for the clarity of your reply, particularly in confirming that ptaquiloside is not routinely monitored in either raw or treated water, and that your current position relies primarily on historic Drinking Water Inspectorate studies undertaken between 2014 and 2016.

I would be grateful for clarification on two closely related points arising from your response, which I hope can be addressed together.

First, ptaquiloside is known to be water-soluble, and its mobilisation from bracken is understood to be influenced by rainfall intensity, soil conditions, and hydrological connectivity. As such, any exposure risk is likely to be episodic rather than steady-state, with peak concentrations most plausibly occurring during or shortly after storm-flow events rather than being reflected in long-term average values. In the absence of routine monitoring, I would welcome clarification on how United Utilities currently accounts for the possibility of short-duration peak concentrations of ptaquiloside in upland, bracken-dominated catchments during heavy rainfall or storm-flow events. In particular, I would be grateful for any information held on whether such episodic risks are considered within existing catchment risk assessments, water safety plans, or internal reviews of emerging contaminants.

Second, for context, my interest relates specifically to upland headwater systems draining bracken-dominated slopes, in particular the Scandale Beck catchment. I would therefore be grateful if you could clarify whether any of the abstraction or sampling points included in the 2014–2016 Drinking Water Inspectorate work were hydrologically connected to Scandale Beck or its immediate sub-catchment, and, if so, the type of source involved (for example, spring, beck intake, river intake, or reservoir). If none of the historic sampling points were connected to that catchment, confirmation of that position would also be helpful.

I appreciate that ptaquiloside does not presently have a regulatory standard or guideline value. My interest here is therefore not one of compliance, but of understanding how hydrologically driven, event-based risks in specific upland catchments are approached in principle where monitoring data are limited or absent.



Water for the North West

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**Our response:**

I have liaised with our Water Quality Team, who have confirmed that the Drinking Water Safety Plan risk assessments take into account potential risks, whether they are present year round, or for example seasonally.

Additionally, when completing research projects, samples are generally taken from the raw water sources close to, or at, the intake to the water treatment works to provide information on the quality of the water that is being presented for treatment. Therefore, Scandale Beck catchment itself is unlikely to have been included in the study carried out by the DWI.

Should you have any further questions about this study, it may be helpful to contact the DWI directly.

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](mailto:EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk), addressing your request to [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



We'd love to hear your feedback on how we handled your request! If you have a moment, please complete our short survey [here](#) – your input helps us improve our service.