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

Telephone: 01925 237000
unitedutilities.com

**Our ref:** EIR-798
**Date:** 07/05/2026
**Email:** EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your 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:**

I am a Regional Representative for Surfers Against Sewage for the North West including Cumbria.

We are looking into the huge increase in Sewage Discharges into Allonby Beach and Allonby South since 2021, even today as the sunniest day of the year there were 4 discharges at Allonby, these are dry spills and are completely illegal.

Why has there been such an increase in sewage alerts ?

2022 - 10 Sewage alerts
2023 - 5 Sewage alerts
2024 - 9 Sewage alerts
2025 - 499 Sewage alerts
2026 - already 136 Sewage alerts

This is not progress ?

Allonby South:
2022 - 10 Sewage alerts
2023 - 5 Sewage alerts
2024 - 7 Sewage alerts
2025 - 156 Sewage alerts
2026 - Already 49 alerts

Why such a massive increase ?

I would like the total hours of Sewage Discharges in each year for Allonby Beach and Allonby South stated from 2022 - 2026 and what is the total amount in either gallons/ litres ?

I would like to know why there has been such an incredibly large increase in this data.

I would also like the total amount and number of “Dry Spills” in each year from 2022 - 2026 inclusive, year on year. This is when United Utilities discharge Sewage when there has not been any storms or

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extremely heavy rain ? As said, this is illegal and there were 4 today, a beautiful dry sunny day.

I would also like the total amount of profit taken by United Utilities in each year from 2022 - 2026 inclusive and the CEO bonuses for each of those years.

**Our response:**

**'Sewage Alert' Data**
Copies of total spill duration for 2022 – 2024 is publicly available on the United Utilities website, and can be found in the EDM returns here: Storm overflow performance | United Utilities. Additionally, the total spill durations for 2025 can be found on the Environment Agency's (EA) website, here: Event Duration Monitoring - Storm Overflows - Annual Returns. The 2026 EDM data is also published monthly on our website: Storm overflow performance | United Utilities. This webpage also explains the methodology by which this data is collected, and the validation process.

For ease, I have included copies of the total spill duration in Appendix 1 under the first tab entitled 'Total discharges'. This contains a copy of the total duration of spills for each site that discharges to either Allonby Beach, or a watercourse that drains to / affects the beach, from 2022 to 2026. We do not differentiate between Allonby and Allonby South so we have provided you with the data for sites which impact upon Allonby as a whole. Additionally, please be aware that Allonby South is no longer a designated bathing water. Permits set out regulatory requirements for treatment and discharge of effluent and stormwater and are available from the EA's public register https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/index. There is no requirement to measure the volume of discharge under these environmental permits. We therefore do not hold this data and are unable to provide it in accordance with Regulation 12(4)(a) EIR.

We note that you refer to 'sewage alerts' in your request, which are the real time, semi-validated alerts from our EDMs. As I'm sure you will know, this data is reported on our storm overflow map and gives an indicative picture of a storm overflow discharging and will only be confirmed once all subsequent checks, assurance and verification has been completed.

The data in the first tab of Appendix 1 has been through our five-stage validation process, which you can read more about on our website. The validation process identifies and removes any erroneous data to ensure that the final information published about spills is reliable, accurate and complete. As we set out on our website, EDM returns are subject to internal and external assurance prior to submission to the EA.

During 2022 and 2023, we reviewed our EDM monitors to ensure they were set up correctly and accurately recording data. In some cases, this validation and calibration process resulted in significant adjustments to the monitors which, in some cases like Allonby, has resulted in an increase in the number of spills recorded.

We have subsequently implemented actions at some of the sites that affect the bathing waters at Allonby to reduce spills. If you compare 2025 with 2024 you can see a reduction of around 25%, which

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reflects the positive impact of work we have been undertaking such as investment at Gilcrux wastewater treatment works (WwTW) where we have installed a lamella unit (a specialised unit for removing solids), upgraded the flow to full treatment storm pumps, and reduced infiltration to the sewer network. You can read more about this here: https://cumbriacrack.com/2024/11/21/10-6m-scheme-to-improve-cumbrian-wastewater-treatment-works-makes-good-progress/.

**Dry Day spills**

Details of dry day spill can be found under the second tab in Appendix 1 entitled 'Allonby DDS'. We note that as per the EDM returns, we do not differentiate between Allonby and Allonby South so we have provided you with the data for sites which impact upon Allonby as a whole. Please note that we do not hold dry day spill data for the whole of 2022 – 2026, and as such have been unable to provide you with a full copy of the requested data in line with Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR. We have instead provided you with the data that we do hold, which covers the period January 2024 – December 2025.

The dry day spills listed in the spreadsheet occurred from assets that discharge to either Allonby Beach or a watercourse that drains to / affects the beach. The total spill count per day (column D) shows the number of individual spills that occurred that day. The total spill event duration (column E) is the total duration of all the individual spills that occurred that day. For example, row 12 shows that Prospect & Oughterside wastewater treatment works had a dry day spill on 02/02/2024 with 14 single start and stop activations and a total spill duration of 00:04:44.

The EA has established a nationally consistent methodology for identifying dry day spills. It defines a dry day as having no rainfall above 0.25mm on the day and the 24 hours beforehand. It should be noted that the EA dry day spill methodology has developed and evolved over the past two years, so the data provided reflects the best available data at that time. Historical data has not been subject to our current dry day spills data processing methodology and validation processes so it may contain some erroneous spill or duration information.

A storm overflow is only allowed, under the terms of an EA storm overflow discharge permit, to operate because of rainfall or snow-melt. So, if it spills on a dry day, that is an indicator that something unusual or unplanned may have happened in our sewer network or the wider drainage catchment it sits within. Common causes of dry day spills include:

- A blockage in the sewer, often from wipes, fats or debris, which restricts flow and causes levels to rise.
- Equipment failure, such as a pump or screen not working as it should.
- Groundwater infiltration, where water enters the system from saturated ground even when it isn't raining.
- Incorrect flows entering the system, for example from private drains connected incorrectly.
- River flows entering a storm overflow creating a false spill.
- Alternatively, the spill may be fully permitted – for example in a large catchment rainfall may fall in one place and take more than a day to drain down to another area where the spill occurs.

A dry day spill is not usually permitted under normal operating conditions, so when it happens, we

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treat it very seriously.

We use the EA dry day spill methodology to retrospectively review all storm overflow discharges. Where a suspected dry day spill is identified, this is reported to and investigated by the EA. In parallel, our Environmental Improvement Programme is proactively putting in place action plans to take steps to prevent dry day spills from happening again.

**Investment plans**
Between 2025 and 2030, we have work planned to reduce discharges at several sites linked to Allonby. We are carrying out projects at nine sites including Dearham WwTW, Hayton WwTW, Prospect & Oughterside WwTW and Westnewton pumping station.

**Financial information**
Profits for United Utilities Water are published each year in our Annual Performance Report (APR) and can be found in table 1A. A link to our Annual Performance Reports can be found here: United Utilities - Annual Performance Reports. The APR for 2025/26 will be published in the same location no later than July 15 2026. Additionally, information about executive bonuses is available in each APR and can be found within the Statement of directors' remuneration and standards of performance section (within the regulatory accounts section).

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], 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]

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.