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-875
Date: 04/08/2026
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). As your request contained a number of specific questions, this response restates each part of the request (in bold) and then follows this with our response.

Your request:

I am writing to request environmental information held by United Utilities Water Limited ("UU") under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the "EIR"). This request relates to a claim I have made against UU in respect of sewer flooding at my property, [redacted], which occurred on 20 September 2025. UU's claims reference for this matter is [redacted]. I understand that UU is a public authority for the purposes of the EIR by virtue of being a statutory sewerage undertaker exercising functions of a public nature under the Water Industry Act 1991. I further understand that information relating to the condition, maintenance, and performance of the public sewer network constitutes environmental information within the meaning of Regulation 2(1) of the EIR.

Information requested

I request the following information in respect of the public sewers serving [redacted] (and the immediately surrounding area where relevant to the drainage of [redacted] properties), for the period from 1 January 2020 to the date of this request:

Our response

We have provided answers to each of your questions in turn below. However, we thought it would be useful to provide some general background information. Following the [redacted] flooding incident in September 2025, our investigations revealed evidence of a blockage/restriction within the sewer network, which reduced the available capacity of the system at the time of the event. The flooding occurred during a significant rainfall event, meaning rainfall volumes and intensities were much greater than those expected during normal operating conditions. Under these circumstances, sewer flows increase rapidly and can exceed hydraulic capacity, particularly where a restriction or accumulation of silt is present. While the restriction was identified as the primary operational defect requiring attention, the storm substantially increased flows within the network and was a significant contributing factor to the flooding experienced.

1. Maintenance and inspection records

(a) All records of planned and reactive maintenance carried out on the sewers serving [redacted], [redacted] including but not limited to silt removal, jetting, de-silting, cleaning, and any other remedial works.

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A summary of the reactive maintenance carried out on the sewers on [redacted] can been found in Appendix 1.

We do not hold any records of planned maintenance carried out on the sewers serving [redacted], as this area is not on the planned maintenance programme. Therefore, in line with Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR, we are unable to supply you with the requested information.

(b) All CCTV survey records, inspection reports, and condition assessments for the sewers serving [redacted], [redacted]

For inspection reports, please find the required information in Appendix 1 (these notes also set out that no condition defects have been identified). Please find the required CCTV survey records in Appendix 2. Due to the size, this is formatted in the following OneDrive link, which you will receive access to in a follow up email shortly after this response.

(c) Any maintenance schedules, planned inspection programmes, or risk assessments applicable to the sewers serving [redacted].

Following the flooding at [redacted], we completed a CCTV survey (see Appendix 1 and 2 for further details). No defects were identified as part of this investigation. Therefore, no follow on refurbishment was required. The survey confirmed that the flooding was caused by hydraulic capacity issues, rather than any underlying structural defects.

(d) Records of the silt removal that UU has confirmed was carried out following the flooding incident on 20 September 2025, including the date the work was carried out, the volume or quantity of silt removed, and the location within the network from which it was removed.

Please find the required information in Appendix 1. For the incident on 20 September 2025, this information is found on row 2, which sets out the date and location. Please note, that there is not a record of the volume of silt removed, and therefore in line with Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR, we are unable to supply you with the requested information.

2. Incident and flooding records

(a) All records of flooding incidents (whether internal or external, affecting any property) reported to UU in respect of [redacted], or attributed to the sewers serving [redacted]

We are unable to share this information with you, because the records themselves contain personal information, this in line with EIR Regulation 13 surrounding personal data.

(b) All records of flooding incidents reported to UU in January 2025 on or in the vicinity of [redacted], including the dates, locations, causes identified, and any remedial actions taken.

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There are no records of flooding incidents reported to United Utilities in January 2025. Therefore, in line with Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR, we are unable to supply you with the requested information.

(c) All records of the flooding incident at [redacted] on 20 September 2025, including job sheets, engineer visit reports, call logs, internal notes, and any investigation or root cause analysis carried out.

For records of the job sheets, engineer visit reports and investigations, please find the required information in Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 – these notes contain details of initial investigations carried out on site. CCTV surveys were also completed to investigate the cause of the flooding, which have been shared in Appendix 2.

(d) Any records of complaints, reports, or contacts from residents of [redacted] or the surrounding area concerning sewer performance, flooding, surcharging, or odour issues.

Please find a summary of complaints, reports and contacts about sewer performance, flooding, surcharging or odour issues in Appendix 5. Please note these have been redacted in line with Regulation 13 surrounding personal data.

3. Network design and capacity

(a) The design standard (storm return period) to which the sewers serving [redacted] were originally constructed or most recently assessed.

Records of the original construction standard are not available. This is typical across the sewerage network, both regionally and nationally, where assets have evolved over time through numerous modifications and extensions. Current design requirements for new sewers are set out in the Sewerage Sector Guidance, Appendix C, which is derived from BS EN 16933-2, which can be found on this webpage linked here: Sewerage Sector Guidance - approved documents | Water UK. This sets a 1 in 30 year storm return period as the standard design benchmark, which aligns with our internal asset standards at United Utilities. However, it is important to note that this represents a design target for new infrastructure, and it is not expected that the existing network in its entirety will achieve this level of performance.

(b) Any hydraulic modelling, capacity assessments, or flood risk assessments carried out in respect of the sewers serving [redacted]

There have not been any formal hydraulic modelling reports, capacity assessments, or flood risk assessments having been completed specifically for this location. Therefore, in line with Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR, we are unable to supply you with the requested information.

(c) Any records identifying the sewers serving [redacted] as being at risk of surcharging, flooding, or capacity exceedance, including entries on the DG5 flooding register (or its equivalent) for properties

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on or served by the [redacted] sewer network.

There is currently only one recorded incident of a sewer blockage/network restriction (as referred to in the response in above) with no incidents of flooding in lower-return-period storm events.

4. Storm event data

(a) The rainfall data, methodology, and calculations relied upon by UU to determine that the rainfall event on 20 September 2025 constituted a 1:117 storm return event, as stated in the letter from [redacted], dated 30 April 2026.

A storm return period is a way of describing how often a storm of a certain intensity is likely to happen. For example, a 1 in 20 year storm means that statistically a storm of that severity has a 1 in 20 chance of occurring in any given year, or about 5% chance annually. It doesn't mean the storm only happens once every 20 years, it could happen more often, or not at all for many years. Storm return periods are about a probability, not a prediction. A certain year may see numerous extreme events observed, followed by a year with no events.

Storm return periods are calculated using depth-duration-frequency rainfall data. United Utilities receives rainfall readings from the Met Office. This data is captured every five minutes, and details how much rain fell, at what time, and where. From the data, individual storm events can be identified. The Flood Estimation Handbook (FEH) methodology is then used to compare the rainfall depth and duration for a particular storm against long-term historical records. This estimates the frequency, based on patterns previously observed. A return period is then assigned to the storm, such as 1 in 1, 1 in 20, 1 in 100 based on how the storm compares to typical rainfall.

The FEH methodology is a method to enable recognised standard national methods for rainfall and flood estimation, and rainfall-runoff modelling. This method is approved by the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. Therefore, in line with Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR, we are unable to supply you with the requested information. However, you can read more about this approach on the UKCEH website Flood Estimation Handbook (FEH) | UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology.

(b) Any rain gauge data, telemetry data, or third-party data (including Met Office data) held by UU for the Altrincham area for 20 September 2025.

For the event on the 20 September, the radar rainfall data (as explained in above in 4a) showed a max depth of 77.74mm over a 12 hour period within the Altrincham drainage catchment. Using the FEH methodology, the storm return period was calculated at 1 in 117.579 year probability.

5. Operational procedures

(a) Any operational procedures, protocols, or policies in force on 20 September 2025 relating to the management of sewer surcharging during heavy rainfall events, including any procedures permitting or directing the release of water from main drains into lateral drains.

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We do not have any procedures permitting or directing the release of water from main drains into lateral drains. Therefore, in line with Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR, we are unable to supply you with the requested information.

(b) Any operational records showing that such procedures were activated or implemented on 20 September 2025 in the area serving [redacted].

As above, in line with Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR, as we do not have any procedures permitting or directing the release of water from main drains into lateral drains, we are unable to supply you with the requested information.

6. Claims and regulatory records

(a) Any internal correspondence, file notes, claims assessments, or legal opinions relating to the flooding at [redacted] on 20 September 2025 and my subsequent claim (reference [redacted]).

In accordance with Regulation 12(5)(b) regarding the course of justice, the ability of a person to receive a fair trial or the ability of a public authority to conduct an inquiry of a criminal or disciplinary nature, we are unable to supply this information.

(b) Any reports made by UU to Ofwat, the Environment Agency, or any other regulator in respect of the flooding incident on 20 September 2025 affecting [redacted].

There were no reports made by UU to Ofwat, the Environment Agency, or any other regulator in respect of the flooding incident on 20 September 2025 affecting [redacted]. Therefore, in line with Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR, we are unable to supply you with the requested information.

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.