



 **United
Utilities**
helping life flow smoothly

Drinking water
safety plan

Introduction

A continuous supply of safe clean drinking water is vital to maintain public health. Every day United Utilities provides high quality drinking water to approximately 3.2 million homes, factories and offices, serving 7 million people across the north west of England. Ensuring the quality of that drinking water is fundamental to the service we provide to our customers. We do this by ensuring that the risks to drinking water quality are identified and managed.

The World Health Organisation says:

“The most effective means of consistently ensuring the safety of a drinking-water supply is through the use of a comprehensive risk assessment and risk management approach that encompasses all steps in water supply from catchment to consumer.”

What is a Drinking Water Safety Plan?

We've adopted this risk management approach and developed a Drinking Water Safety Plan (DWSP) that is central to the way in which we ensure safe clean drinking water now and in the future. Not only is it the right thing to do, it's also consistent with the regulatory requirements governing drinking water in England and Wales. Crucial to this process is the role of stakeholders in developing and maintaining a shared responsibility for drinking water quality across the entire chain, from source to tap.

Benefits to our customers, stakeholders and the business

Why do it? Well, the application of the DWSP provides customers and our regulators with confidence in the quality of the water we supply each and every day. It enables us to do this not only today but in the future by anticipating what risks may arise – such as the effects of climate change – and investing our customers' money in the most cost-effective way.

Understanding the risks allows us to implement effective controls that safeguard water quality during the operation and maintenance of our treatment works and network of water mains. This proactive approach to managing risks means that we can anticipate problems and protect public health.



How does it work?

A Drinking Water Safety Plan consists of three core elements shown in the diagram on this page:

When assessing the risks to drinking water quality we rank the likelihood and consequence of hazardous events, using a matrix to give a numeric risk score. This was repeated, taking into account the control measures to produce an estimate of the residual risk. Engaging with employees was crucial - holding workshops to consider the risks to catchments, treatment works, distribution systems, and within customers' premises. In recognition of a key feature of our water supply system, we looked at Large Diameter Trunk Mains (LTDMs) separately from the distribution systems. LTDMs are strategic assets that provide flexibility in managing supply and demand in the region.

In total almost 250 workshops were held with our people from Water Operations, Asset Management and technical teams to develop DWSPs which are now reviewed on an annual basis.



Where are we up to?

We have made excellent progress. To date we've completed risk assessments for all our 184 raw water reservoir facilities, 83 water treatment works, 359 service reservoirs, and 42,000 km of mains including 2000 km of LDTMs.

The findings are submitted to the Drinking Water Inspectorate each year, as required by the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations and since then these assessments have been kept under review. Information obtained from the risk assessments supports our operational activities and final business

plan, submitted to Ofwat in 2014. This plan defines the level of investment in maintaining and enhancing water supplies during the five year period from April 2015.

We have also listened to the views of key stakeholders regarding the development of our DWSP and measures being taken to manage risks to drinking water quality. These included the health community across our region (Public Health England, NHS, and local authorities), our regulators (DWI, EA, Natural England) and the Consumer Council for Water, which represents the views of our customers.





Where we are going

Our DWSP is key to the way in which we will manage risks to drinking water quality in the short, medium and long term. Risks are kept under continual review and the effectiveness of controls are verified to make sure that the DWSP remains effective.

Central to embedding the DWSP framework into our business is the provision of training and guidance for our people involved from source to tap. They will be supported by a business process that provides consistency and assurance. In parallel we've invested in a dedicated database and reporting tool that enables performance measures to be tracked electronically.

Recently, the DWI has created industry standard reporting, this allows the DWI to see across our whole DWSP and compare us against the other water companies across England and Wales.

Our DWSP enables us to identify and prioritise where we need to invest funds to maintain and improve drinking water quality for the benefit of our customers and stakeholders. Embracing the DWSP approach to proactive and effective risk management is an important part of our journey to meet the promise we made to customers to provide safe clean drinking water.

For further information about drinking water quality

United Utilities

unitedutilities.com/waterquality

World Health Organisation

who.int/wsportal/en

The Drinking Water Inspectorate

dwi.defra.gov.uk

The Environment Agency

environment-agency.gov.uk

Consumer Council for Water

ccwater.org.uk

This leaflet is one in a series of publications containing useful information for our customers. Others that may be of interest to you are:

- **A simple guide to pipes, drains and sewers**
- **Water meter application pack**
- **Testing your household water meter**
- **A simple guide to your water meter**
- **A guide to our Priority Services**
- **A guide to using water wisely**
- **WaterSure application pack**
- **Our complaints procedure**
- **Replacing lead and common supply pipes**
- **Our standards of service**

You can download any of our leaflets from our website: unitedutilities.com/leaflets, or write to: United Utilities, PO Box 459, Warrington WA55 1WB. Alternatively, our most frequently requested leaflets are available through our 24-hour automated service on **0800 980 6050**.

All our booklets are available in large print, Braille and on audio CD or cassette. Please call us on **0345 672 2888** to order a leaflet in any of these formats.

If English is not your first language, our key booklets are also available in Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Chinese, Bengali and Punjabi on our website unitedutilities.com/translations



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In case you need to contact us:



To talk to us about your bill:
0345 672 2888 if you don't have a water meter
0345 672 2999 if you have a water meter

Opening hours: 8am - 8pm Mon to Fri; 8am - 4pm Sat

To talk to us about your water and wastewater services:
0345 672 3723

Opening hours: for emergencies we are open 24 hours.

You can also call this number to check the identity of one of our representatives.

If you have hearing or speech difficulties, and use a textphone, please dial **18001** followed by the number you require.



You can write to us at:
United Utilities, PO Box 459, Warrington WA55 1WB



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unitedutilities.com

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You can now manage your water account online.
Register now at: unitedutilities.com/myaccount

