

Water Advisory Body publishes latest report on Irish Water

The WAB notes with concern, two significant incidents that affected drinking water in August of 2021 in the Ballymore Eustace and Gorey drinking water treatment plants.

Dublin, Ireland – 16 November 2021: In its latest report, the Water Advisory Body (the WAB) is concerned by two significant incidents that affected drinking water in August of 2021 in the Ballymore Eustace and Gorey drinking water treatment plants. The WAB is particularly concerned by the failings highlighted by these incidents, the risk to public health and failures in communication and escalation and Irish Water's lack of oversight of drinking water plants.

The WAB also has concerns regarding the Remedial Action List, which contains 53 water supplies, an increase of five supplies since its last report. There was however, a welcome decrease in the population served by supplies on the Remedial Action List mainly due to the removal of Leixlip from the list.

Some of the key findings in the latest WAB report include:

- ✓ ***First Fix Free Scheme*** – There has been a sustained drop off in the number of leak repairs carried out by customers, with the highest number of leak repairs carried out by customers to date being completed in Quarter 3 of 2016, whilst the lowest number was completed in Quarter 2 2020. However, the WAB welcome the introduction of the Household Water Conservation Policy, anticipating this will encourage customers to avail of the First Fix Free Scheme.
- ✓ ***Remedial Action List (Water)*** – There is cause for alarm with the number of water supplies on the Remedial Action List (53), an increase of five since the last report. However, there was a welcome decrease in the population served by supplies on the Remedial Action List due to the removal of Leixlip from the list.
- ✓ ***Lead service connections replaced*** – The WAB welcomes Irish Water's forecast that it will exceed its 2021 target for replacement of lead connections. However, the WAB notes it is highly unlikely Irish Water's target to replace all lead services by 2026 will be met.
- ✓ ***Boil Water Notices*** – The WAB is alarmed at the length of the boil water notices, with the last seven quarters reporting 'long-term notices' (in place for more than 30 days). The WAB would like to see boil water notices in place for as short a period as possible.
- ✓ ***Irish Water Performance Assessment Framework 2020-2024*** - The WAB welcomes the Commission for Regulation of Utilities review and update of the Irish Water Assessment Framework 2020-2024 which sets out the services areas, specific metrics and target levels of performance it will use to monitor Irish Water.
- ✓ ***Water Quality*** – The WAB welcomes the Environmental Protection Agency's published report assessing the quality of Ireland's lakes, rivers, estuaries and groundwaters. The WAB also notes the concerns raised in the report the Ireland's water quality is under threat with nitrogen pollution from agriculture.

Chairperson of The Water Advisory Body, Paul McGowan, concluded by saying: “The WAB welcomes the Commission for Regulation of Utilities review and update of the Irish Water Performance Assessment Framework 2020-2024. We believe this performance assessment framework will help Irish Water identify the key areas that need to be addressed to help achieve their target levels of performance for the Revenue Control 3 period.”

ENDS

Notes for the Editor

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About the WAB

The Water Advisory Body (the WAB) is an independent statutory body established under Part 7 of the Water Services Act 2017. The WAB was formally established on 1 June 2018. Irish Water’s Strategic Funding Plan is a public document and available on Irish Water’s website www.water.ie. Every three months the WAB prepares a report on Irish Water. This report sets out the WAB’s view on how Irish Water is performing against its own Strategic Funding Plan. Each report is prepared for the Oireachtas and is published on the WAB’s website. This is the third quarterly report of the WAB and covers Q3 2020. For further information on the WAB, including this and previous reports, see www.wateradvisorybody.ie