

Water Advisory Body concerned by increase in number of boil water notices

- The Water Advisory Body publishes latest report on Irish Water-

Dublin, Ireland – 11 January 2022: The Water Advisory Body (the WAB) notes with concern that 7,029 people were on boil water notices at the end of Q3 2021 which is an increase of 1,344 people compared to the previous quarter. Furthermore, 11 of the 14 boil water notices (serving 2,152 people) were in place for more than 30 days.

Also highlighted in the WAB's latest report is the increase in the number of water supplies on the Remedial Action List. There are now 455,097 consumers being served by 55 "at risk" supplies, an increase of 11,282 consumers from Quarter 2 2021. This corresponds with the Environmental Protection Agency's recent statement that the progress made during 2020 continues to be reversed during 2021.

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

- ✓ **Remedial Action List (Water)** – The number of water supplies has increased on the Remedial Action List (55) by two since the last report. These 55 supplies now serve 455,097 consumers, an increase of 11,282 consumers from Quarter 2 2021.
- ✓ **Lead service connections replaced** – Irish Water is on track to exceed its 2021 target for replacement of lead connections. However, the WAB notes Irish Water's target to replace an additional 7% of remaining public side lead connections up to the end of 2024, means it is highly unlikely that Irish Water will be able meet the targets of replacing all lead services by 2026
- ✓ **Boil Water Notices** – The WAB is concerned at the increase in number of people on boil water since the previous quarter and the length of time that these notices were in place (with the majority more than 30 days in duration). The WAB would like to see boil water notices in place for as short a period as possible – this requires significant investment by Irish Water.
- ✓ **Non-Domestic Tariff Framework** – The WAB welcomes the new Non-Domestic Tariff Framework introduced on the 1st of October 2021 which implements harmonized, transparent, cost reflective and equitable water charges for businesses across the country.
- ✓ **Water Quality** – The WAB found that compliance with microbiological standards generally is high, remaining over 99% in the period 2014-2020. However, three instances in 2020 were reported that failed to meet the standards of E.coli. The WAB will continue to monitor the success of Irish Water in its attempt in decreasing the number of public water supplies that do not comply to the microbiological standards.

Chairperson of The Water Advisory Body, Paul McGowan, concluded by saying: "A welcome and key development for Irish Water is the introduction of the Non-Domestic Tariff Framework while in contrast, a less welcome development is the significant compliance investigation by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities into Irish Water's handling of issues arising at Bailieborough Public Water Supply

Scheme. Regrettably, the findings highlight some significant failings in Irish Water’s customer protection service”.

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