

Key Lines of Enquiry Responses from South West Water

- 1. Please provide the 2023 statistics for the number of spills for each area in Torbay compared to previous years. Can we have hours and volume of discharge please. What spills in the last 18 months have occurred due to mechanical breakdowns?**

Please find attached the spill data taken from our annual return for Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) in Torbay. Spill count and spill duration are reported annually to EA and shared on our website. Spill volume is a calculated, rather than a measured metric, calculated by hydraulic modelling and is generally used for detailed analysis of spills and investments to reduce spills. As we don't measure it is not contained within the published return.

With the response to the number of spills in the last 18 months in the Torbay caused due to mechanical breakdowns we can say that from time to time spills are caused by mechanical breakdowns however when this occurs the teams work hard to rectify making the necessary repairs.

- 2. Please can you provide details of what action has been taken to reduce the number of spills and how this will enable you to meet your target of 20 per year by 2025 as a result of your WaterFit investment of £330m?**

As part of our WaterFit programme we have installed monitoring on all of our overflow sites and developed our Storm Overflow Action Plan (SOAP). In addition, we have optimised network storage and invested in surface water separation to reduce spills at 4 CSOs impacting Goodrington Beach and Paignton Sands. This work will continue in the period 2025-2030. Of the 31 CSO's in Torbay, 14 already have a long-term average spill count of less than 10 spills per year. This is mainly due to the existing and historical need to reduce overflow spills impacting on designated waters. There are 9 CSO sites where the long-term average spill count is greater than 20 per year. We plan to deliver improvements to 13 CSO sites in Torbay, in AMP8 (2025-2030), reducing spills in line with the Storm Overflow Discharge Reduction Plan, (SODRP). The SODRP has set out clear prioritisation process for water companies to follow which prioritises designated bathing waters, shellfish waters and spills impacting on ecologically sensitive sites.

3. How many leaks have been reported and repaired over the last 12 months?

During the last 12 months (1/9/23 - 1/9/24) the number of leaks that have been reported is 645 leaks reported in the Torbay area. Over 1427 leaks have been detected. Out of this total figure of 2072, 350 of these were customer leaks which are customer's own responsibility to repair.

4. What publicity has been undertaken to encourage people to use less water and to report leaks, including raising awareness of the free or financial help towards leaks, including leaking toilets?

In terms of encouraging customers to save water – we have our Water is Precious campaign. Please see the following link for more details - <https://www.southwestwater.co.uk/household/your-services/save-water/water-is-precious>. This campaign is all about how our customers can protect water resources now and into the future by changing their behaviour through the promotion of free water saving devices.

We had an out of home campaign run over the summer months encouraging customers and tourists alike to be more mindful when it comes to water usage and offered water saving tips on our website. Please see the following link for more information: <https://www.southwestwater.co.uk/household/your-services/save-water/visitors>

In terms of leaky loos, customers are able to order a free leaky loo strip to their property to test whether they have a leaking toilet. Please see the below link:

[Leaky Loo | South West Water](#)

5. What was the root cause of the cryptosporidium outbreak in Brixham and what was the timeline for the actions taken by South West Water and when do they expect this to be completely resolved? What mitigations have you put in place to prevent future outbreaks? Why did it take so long to rectify the problem and ensure that the water in the area was safe?

We understand that those affected by the outbreak want to understand how this outbreak occurred, but due to the ongoing nature of the inquiry, and to avoid potential prejudice to any future legal proceedings, we cannot answer

questions on root cause at this time. We continue to fully cooperate with the DWI in their ongoing investigation.

This was an extremely rare and we have put in I filters and UV treatment at Hillhead reservoir as part of our extensive efforts to remove cryptosporidium from our network. Following receipt of the sample results, we acted quickly to implement the Boil Water Notice to all customers using the Hillhead Service Reservoir, and also extended this to the Alston area on 15th May on a precautionary basis.

Since 15 May, SWW and its contractors worked 24/7 to clean the network, including flushing and ice pigging while also replacing sections of pipework where high velocity flushing was not possible. We also inspected, cleansed, and tested the service reservoirs. We continued sampling throughout these interventions to ensure that the water quality returned to our usually high standards over a period of time and only then did we start to lift the Boil Water Notices in a phased approach.

We have proactively compensated all customers in receipt of a Boil Water Notice: far in excess of the compensation payments within our Customer Promise. We have also worked with the local tourism industry and have compensated both customers and businesses.

6. What can Torbay Council, Councillors and our residents do to help improve water quality and reduce pollution?

We welcome the support of Torbay Council, Councillors and residents to reduce pollution. Pollutions and overflow spills can be caused by sewer blockages, which in turn can be caused by inappropriate items being flushed into our network. We are working hard to raise awareness of the impacts of unflushables, e.g., wet wipes. To tackle these blockages, we have for a number of years run two successful campaigns called 'Think Sink' and 'Love Your Loo' that address that things that should and shouldn't be entering our network. Alongside this we have a successful education campaign in local schools to educate young people on responsible sewer use including the 3 P's (Pee, Paper, Poo) We would ask residents and visitors to dispose of unflushable items responsibly, therefore reducing the risk of sewer blockages, pollution, and spills.