

Freshwater Data Insights
Water Regulation and Enforcement
Division



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Our reference: DAERA/26-98

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25 February 2026

Dear ██████████,

Environmental Information Regulations 2004

I refer to your request for information received by the Department on 10 February 2026. Below outlines the questions you asked in **bold** and the associated response from DAERA:

Persistent foam Lagan River -

- 1. Is there continuous monitoring of water composition in the river? E.g. sensor monitoring to certain pollutants? And is this data public?**

NIEA undertakes routine monitoring to assess water quality under the requirements of the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017.

The Regulations identify the water quality parameters and frequency of monitoring required for each type of waterbody. There is no continuous monitoring of water composition in the River Lagan. Within the Lagan catchment macrophytes, diatoms, fish, and hydro-morphology are surveyed at least once every six years. General physico-chemical elements including nutrients, specific pollutants, and priority substances are monitored monthly.

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.

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The frequency of monitoring of trace organics, including PFAS chemicals, is based on a risk assessment process with a differing suite of chemicals monitored monthly each year. One of the sites selected for this monitoring is the Lagan River above Stranmillis weir. Water quality information requests for specific water bodies, parameters or time periods can be made to the Department at waterinfo@daera-ni.gov.uk.

2. I would suggest to take samples of the foam gathered at the Stranmillis weir for testing

Sampling was not required due to the natural origin of the foam.

3. Could the foam be exiting at the Newtownbreda water works?

NIEAs Water Pollution and Response Team have advised that the foam appeared to be natural in origin. The increase in organic matter due to leaf fall and intense wind/rainfall can cause release of surfactants into our waterways causing foam

What agreement is there for discharging into the Lagan and are there any limits or approved chemicals that can be dumped by the the water works?

'Under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, the discharge of trade or wastewater to any waterway, or any water contained underground requires the consent of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. This includes waste from any commercial, industrial or domestic premises not connected to the public sewer.

Newtownbreda Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) is owned, operated and maintained by Northern Ireland Water Ltd. The WwTW is consented under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 to discharge tertiary treated wastewater into the River Lagan at Irish Grid Reference 333930 370320. It is also consented to discharge settled storm wastewater and screened storm wastewater into the River Lagan at Irish Grid Reference 334040 370350 under certain storm conditions. The WwTW consent stipulates that the final effluent must meet the consented standards 95% of the time (otherwise termed 95 percentile limits) of 15mg/l Biological Oxygen Demand, 30mg/l Suspended Solids and 5 mg/l N Ammoniacal Nitrogen. Further, the consent has parameter limits for pH, total copper, total iron, dichlorovos, total phosphorus and total nitrogen.

If you require any clarification, believe that any part of your request has been overlooked, misunderstood or misinterpreted, please contact me in the first instance to see if it is a matter that can be resolved.

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If you are unhappy with the manner in which your request for information has been handled or the decision to release/withhold information, you have the right to request a formal review by the Department. If you wish to do so, please contact The Review Section either by e-mailing daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk or by post at The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Data Protection & Information Management Branch, Floor 2, Jubilee House, 111 Ballykelly Road, Ballykelly, Limavady BT49 9HP, within two months from the date of this letter.

If after such an internal review you are still unhappy with the response, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, CHESHIRE SK9 5AF, who will undertake an independent review of the Department's decision.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

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