

**Environment, Marine and Fisheries
Group**
Marine Strategy Division



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

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department of

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Our Reference: **DAERA/26-200**

██████████ via Email

██████████

Marine Strategy and Catchments
Environment, Marine and Fisheries Division
17 Antrim Road
Tonagh
Lisburn
BT28 3AL

Email: BathingWaters@daera-ni.gov.uk

17 April 2026

Dear ██████████,

Environmental Information Regulations 2004

With regard to your request for information as received by the Department on 18th March 2026 in which you sought the following information:

All DAERA action plans for bathing waters that exist for 2026, or the equivalent, to show where improvements are planned or where there are plans to investigate sources of pollution that impact bathing waters. I am requesting any plans of action and investigation that exist for bathing waters that are classified as 'excellent', 'good', 'sufficient' and 'poor'.

I can advise that the Department has completed its search and that it holds the following information detailed below.

DAERA works in partnership with stakeholders to manage our bathing waters and beaches through the Better Beaches Forum. The Forum meets bi-annually to discuss a wide range of matters relating to bathing waters around Northern Ireland. Please see Appendix 1 for the most up-to-date Action Plan and Appendix 2

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for the most up-to-date minutes from the Forum (personal information has been redacted as required under Regulations 12(3) and 13(1) EIR 2004), which include planned actions for throughout 2026.

The next Better Beaches Forum will occur online on the 20 May 2026 where potential activities for throughout 2026 are further developed and discussed in partnership with other government departments, local authorities and stakeholders. If you have not received an invite and would like to attend, please email the bathing waters team at: BathingWaters@daera-ni.gov.uk

DAERA monitors all 33 identified bathing waters weekly throughout the bathing season, between 1st June and 15th September, under The Quality of Bathing Waters Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008. If a bathing water fails or suffers from suspected pollution, investigations are launched, and additional samples are taken to ensure public safety. The requested information is available to the public on the DAERA website and therefore the Department has engaged Regulation 6 EIR 2004 and provided the information at the following locations:

How bathing water quality is tested, including in 2026, is available at:

[About Bathing Water Quality | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

How water pollution in Northern Ireland is investigated, including bathing waters in 2026, is available at:

[Pollution response in Northern Ireland | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

Throughout 2026, the Department will continue to lead on the delivery of the Interagency Blue-Green Algae Monitoring Protocol, working with other public agencies and local councils to deliver a specifically developed blue-green algae surveillance and monitoring programme. To help safeguard the public, despite the bathing season not beginning until 1st June, the Department is already carrying out monitoring at identified bathing waters that are susceptible to blue-green algae, so to provide any needed water quality advice for the public and bathing water operators. Monitoring includes visual assessments for blue-green algae followed by biovolume and toxin analysis when necessary.

Please see Appendix 3 for the 2026 update of the Interagency Blue-Green Algae Monitoring Protocol.

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

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, Ballykelly 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,

Marine Strategy and Catchments Team

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