

Our Reference: DAERA/26-498

Water Pollution Response &

Enforcement Team

NIEA Lisburn

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Tonagh

Lisburn

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Telephone: 0800 80 70 60

Email: WMU.FOI@daera-ni.gov.uk

Reply via email

25 August 2026

Dear [REDACTED],

Environmental Information Regulations 2004

Thank you for your Environmental Information Request (EIR) received by the Department on 25 July 2026, seeking information on Water Pollution Incident Ref WR 3/26/0098 relating to the Inver River, Larne. I can advise that the Department has completed its search and can confirm that it holds the information you requested.

On 24 July 2026, an NIEA Water Quality Inspector (WQI) quickly travelled to the Inver River following multiple reports of a discolouring of the river and of stressed or dead fish. The NIEA Inspector, aided by members of the Angling Club and Council staff, attempted to trace the source of the pollution that had killed the fish in the river. Unfortunately, as the investigation proceeded upstream towards a source, the discoloured discharge was observed to peter out as it was a transient plug of pollution that was migrating downstream. This being the case, no active discharge was identified and, unfortunately, no definitive source could be identified. An investigative sample was collected, during the NIEA investigation, in an effort to identify the pollutant and/or its source.

On 29 July 2026, NIEA received further reports of a similar discharge to that noted on 24 July 2026. The NIEA Inspector was again deployed. As previously, the polluting discharge was of a short duration not traceable to an active discharge or source. On this occasion, fish were observed to be stressed but no mortalities were recorded.

On 6 August 2026, NIEA received further reports of a discharge to the Inver River and, despite another rapid response by the Inspector, the plume of pollutant had migrated downstream and the source was not traceable. No stressed or dead fish were observed.



Based on observations made during the above three investigations, NIEA believe we have identified the outfall that was the discharge point for the repeated discharges. The outfall is in the ownership of Northern Ireland Water Ltd, however, from further investigation with them, no operational issues were identified in the area at the time of the discharges. Rogue discharges from a tanker to the river, via NI Water infrastructure, is one possible source of the pollution, that would be consistent with the short duration pollutant plugs observed, however, there is no evidence available to substantiate this and no suspicious activity in the area has been highlighted to NIEA to date.

NIEA are currently awaiting the results of the investigative sample taken on 24 July. It is clear, however, from the impact on the river, that the pollutant is a strong organic based substance.

Please pass NIEA's thanks to those Angling Club members who assisted our Inspector during these investigations. We depend on our stakeholders, such as Larne Angling Club, to report water pollution incidents. As a reminder to all club members, contact is possible on a 24/7 basis via the NIEA Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60, or, for less urgent matters, by email at emergency-pollution@daera-ni.gov.uk. Early reporting enables the department to respond effectively and in a timely manner.

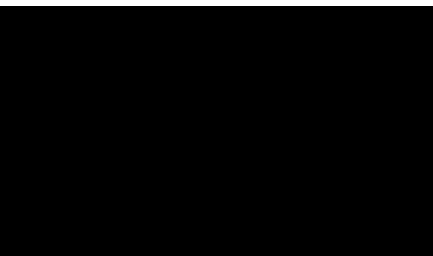
If you require any clarification, believe that any part of your request has been overlooked, misunderstood or misinterpreted, please contact me in the first instance to see if it is a matter that can be resolved.

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,



Water Pollution Response & Enforcement Team



An Agency within the Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Gníomhaireacht de chuid na Roinne
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
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