

Are you polluting Barnet's rivers?

HELP TO REDUCE RIVER POLLUTION AND CONTAMINATED SEWAGE FLOODING IN BARNET



Know your drains

Most properties on mains drainage have two drains

- **The foul water drain** carries waste water from toilets, sinks, baths and household appliances to a sewage treatment plant.
- **The surface water drain** (or 'storm' drain) carries rainwater from roofs and open grates in the street direct to the local river. Any discharge into this drain flows into the river untreated.

Thames Water estimates that 1 in 20 houses in London have misconnected drains. This is a major problem for London's environment as it causes serious water pollution.

The affect can be seen in local rivers where untreated sewage effluent causes a mat of grey sewage fungus to grow on the river bed. This is damaging to aquatic life and a health risk for people using the rivers for recreation.



Check your connection

Most people don't think about the impact the drains beneath their feet can have on the local environment. In many cases, pollution comes from an often overlooked source – our homes.

Incorrect plumbing in your home could mean that waste water from your dishwasher, washing machine, sinks, baths and even your toilet is being flushed directly into our rivers.

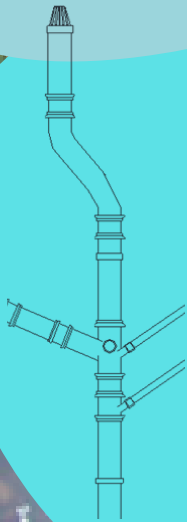
Such misconnections can also cause foul flooding in homes, parks, highways and public spaces.



Who is responsible?

The chances are that you were not responsible for plumbing in your own appliances. Unfortunately, you are responsible for putting it right.

Wrong connections are not only harmful to the environment, they are illegal. Failure to take corrective action could lead to prosecution by the Environment Agency or your local authority.

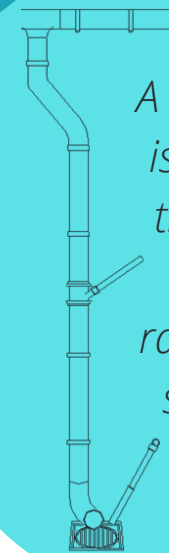


A toilet waste pipe is usually larger in diameter than a roof drainpipe and often has an air vent at the top.

How to spot a misconnection

Look at the outside of the house to check where any outside waste pipes run. If they connect to a soil waste pipe then you are correctly connected.

If a waste water pipe connects to a rainwater downpipe or directly to a gully grating then you have the wrong connection. In most cases it will be a simple matter to reconnect the waste water pipe to your foul water drain.



A roof drainpipe is connected to the roof gutter and carries rainwater to the surface water drain.

ACTION YOU CAN TAKE

- ✓ **Do** check your drains. If you find a wrong connection, put it right by using a qualified plumber.
- ✓ **Do** ensure that if you are buying a house there are no wrong connections. Ask your surveyor to include this in the survey report.
- ✓ **Do** make the connections right. Connect storm water to surface water drains and waste pipes to foul drains.
- ✗ **Don't** connect waste pipes from toilets, showers, baths, sinks and water-using appliances into roof water downpipes or gullies.
- ✗ **Don't** ignore existing wrong connections. Remember you could be prosecuted.
- ✗ **Don't** dispose of wet wipes, oil, garden and household chemicals, paint or detergent in drains or in gutters in the road.

REPORT IT

Report overflowing sewage with foul smell inside or outside your property, or in public spaces such as parks, to **Thames Water on 08003 169800**.

Report pollution of waterways (rivers, streams, canals, lakes) to the **Environment Agency on 0800 807060**.

Make the Council aware by emailing fwm@barnet.gov.uk