

First-time sewerage

What you need to know



Rated: Dec 2021

 Trustpilot Excellent



Wessex Water
YTL GROUP

572_February 2022



Wessex Water
YTL GROUP

FOR YOU. FOR LIFE.

Wessex Water has a legal duty to work out the most economical and practicable way to provide effective drainage where the current drainage for two or more properties is unsatisfactory. This can include where there are environmental or amenity problems such as pollution of a ditch, stream or river from a septic tank or leaking cess pit, and odour, nuisance or public health problems.

What properties are eligible for first time sewerage?

By law, only properties with drainage for domestic sewage are eligible for consideration. Isolated single properties are not included. Funding for schemes serving new properties is the responsibility of the developer.

What should I do if I think my property is eligible?

Firstly, we suggest you look at the problems that you have with the current drainage system.

Consider whether it is possible to solve your drainage problem by repairing structural damage or replacing the existing system. Alternatively, improved maintenance of the system, for example regular emptying or desludging the contents of the unit, could be a solution.

If you are satisfied that the drainage problem cannot be solved in this way and you wish us to look at ways of improving the situation, please contact us.

How do I apply for first time sewerage?

Before applying we suggest you seek the support of other property owners because new public sewers are only practicable where several properties are involved. The best way of doing this is to seek co-operation from your parish or district council. We will send you a detailed explanatory leaflet and forms to complete so we have the necessary information to consider your case.

How will you consider my application?

Once we have the relevant information, we will liaise with the local Environmental Health Officer and the Environment Agency. We will then consider the options, costs and benefits in accordance with government guidelines. We will be responsible for providing a public sewer if our assessment:

- confirms environmental and amenity problems, and
- identifies that a public sewer is the most cost-effective way to provide satisfactory drainage.

We aim to make recommendations as quickly as possible, even if more detailed work is required for a scheme to progress.

Where the cost-effective solution is for the householder to improve and maintain a private system, it will remain the householder's responsibility. It is still possible for any single owner, occupier or local authority to requisition a drain or sewer to serve one or more properties but the cost of providing it will fall to them.

What happens next?

The proposed scheme will be the one that overcomes the environmental or amenity problems at least overall cost. This may not be the least overall cost to the property owner(s) or to Wessex Water, but to the community as a whole. Our funding for first time sewerage schemes is set in five-year periods. Therefore, even if we agree a public sewer needs to be built, it could be several years before the scheme goes ahead. A public sewer is unlikely to be cost-effective in many rural situations.

What can I do if I disagree with your decision?

If you disagree with the assessment made by Wessex Water or about the timescale for providing a public sewer, you may refer the matter to the Environment Agency and its decision will be final.

What are the costs involved?

If a public sewer is provided, Wessex Water will pay for it and any treatment system and subsequent maintenance. Property owners will be liable for:

- installing the private house drainage between their property and the property boundary
- obtaining building regulations approval from the local authority for the above works
- making safe the old private drainage arrangements to be abandoned (for example, a septic tank)
- payment to Wessex Water of the standard infrastructure charge (known as "Commitment Charge") which is a one-off payment
- annual sewerage charges from the date of connection to the live system.

Householders remain responsible for the operation, maintenance and effects of the existing drainage arrangements to their property, until such time as any new public system is formally commissioned and property connected.

Once connected they retain responsibility for the existing private drain within their property to the point of connection on the new system.

For more information

If you require further details about first time sewerage, please write to the relevant development engineer for your area:

Development North

development.north@wessexwater.co.uk
01225 522682
Wessex Water, Kennet Way, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8RN

Development West

development.west@wessexwater.co.uk
01823 225225
Wessex Water, Riverside, Chilton Trinity, Bridgwater, TA6 3JS

Development South

development.south@wessexwater.co.uk
01202 643461
Wessex Water, Poole STW, Cabot Lane, Poole, BH17 7BX