

Trade effluent explained

Your guide to discharging trade effluent
in the Anglian Water region



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Introduction

This booklet has been produced to provide information about the discharge, treatment and regulation of trade effluent within the Anglian Water region.

It deals with non-domestic effluent discharged from premises via drains and pipes into public sewers. We aim to explain:

- the purpose of trade effluent control
- our role as a regulator
- the importance of obtaining a consent to discharge trade effluent and complying with its conditions

We've answered the most frequently asked questions but if you're still unsure, please contact your retailer and they'll answer your query or contact us on your behalf. You must not contact us directly if you're a business customer. If you're a business customer and you do not have a retailer you should select one. You can find out more about selecting your water and/or wastewater retailer on the [Open Water website on page 21](#).

If you discharge trade effluent from a household premises, you can contact Anglian Water directly for advice on trade effluent services – you'll find our contact details on [page 21](#) at the back of this booklet.



First a brief look at legislation...

In the UK, the need to effectively stem the increasingly serious problems caused by the uncontrolled discharge of industrial waste waters was recognised in most quarters by the turn of the nineteenth century.

In 1903 the Royal Commission on Sewage Disposal recommended that local authorities should be required to provide sewers and sewage treatment works of sufficient capacity to take trade effluent as well as domestic sewage.

In 1937 the first piece of dedicated trade effluent control legislation was introduced in England and Wales. This legislation gave the occupier of a trade premises the right to discharge trade effluent into the public sewer subject to the consent of the regulatory body. It became an offence under criminal law, punishable by a fine, to discharge without consent or in breach of conditions included in a consent. Subsequent Acts of Parliament extended and strengthened the powers of the regulator in controlling trade effluent discharged to public sewers and also made provision for the recovery of costs in respect of their reception, treatment and disposal.

Today, trade effluent control in England and Wales is carried out under the Water Industry Act 1991 by the Water Services Companies in their role as sewerage undertakers. This Act of Parliament consolidated all previous trade effluent legislation. Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own legislation although the content is similar. At a European level the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive 1991 required all member states to implement a trade effluent control regime, to pre-authorise such discharges and to review those authorisations on a regular basis.

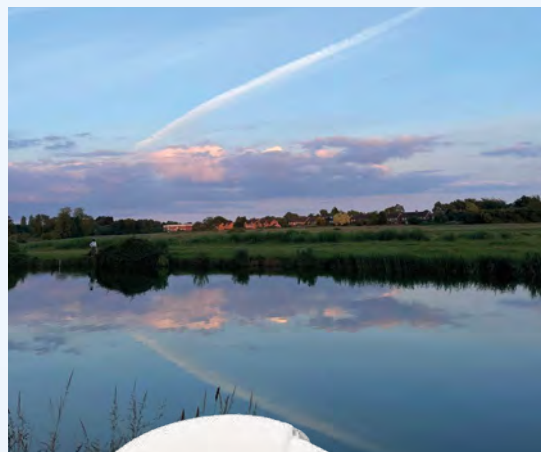


The new market came into effect in April 2017 and applies to most trade effluent dischargers. It enables eligible businesses to choose and switch their retailer.



This was translated into law through the Urban Waste Water Treatment (England and Wales) Regulations 1994. The Water Industry Act 1991 also enables us to meet all of these requirements.

The Water Act 2014 introduced competition for non-household customers and the concept of wholesalers and retailers. Anglian Water is a wholesaler and is responsible for the infrastructure, treatment processes and the regulation of trade effluent discharges made into its sewers. Retailers undertake billing, meter reading and customer services activities. The new market came into effect in April 2017 and applies to most trade effluent dischargers. It enables eligible businesses to choose and switch their retailer. [You can read more about retailers on page 15.](#)



Anglian Water treats around
63 million litres
 of trade effluent every day



What is trade effluent?

Trade effluent is any effluent that is produced from a process or activity undertaken at premises that are used to carry out a trade or industry.

However, it doesn't include domestic sewage – for example used water from hand-washing and flushing of toilets. Trade effluent is produced from the manufacturing processes associated with many everyday items and also through activities that many of us enjoy. These include:

- food and drink production
- chemical manufacture
- engineering
- swimming pools and leisure centres
- laundries
- vehicle washing
- metal plating and finishing
- breweries and alcohol production

There are more than **3800 consented discharges** of trade effluent in the Anglian Water region including...

Over
40
chemical
manufacturers




Over
240
swimming
pools and
leisure
facilities




Around
1600
vehicle
washes




Over
150
engineering
companies




Many essential services, such as hospitals and local authorities, may also produce trade effluent.

Water used by industry and the discharge of trade effluent to the foul sewer forms an important part of human interaction with the water cycle.

Useful advice



You can find the full legal definition of trade effluent in [section 141 of the Water Industry Act 1991](#), or you can contact your retailer for further advice.

More than
300
discharges
from the
production
of food



Over
200
launderettes
and laundries



Around
130
discharges from
metal plating
and finishing



More than
80
from breweries
and alcohol
production



How does my business fit into the water cycle?

Fresh water is a precious resource. This is particularly true in our region which is both the driest in the UK and experiencing significant growth. It's a limited resource which we all need to use carefully.

Anglian Water may implement restrictions on the amount of water provided to a business premises for new connections or requests to increase their current supply. Your retailer can support you in becoming more water-efficient by offering various tools and services designed to help your business reduce water usage and lower your bills.

The water you use is abstracted from rivers, reservoirs and groundwater sources before being treated and put into the network of pipes which deliver water to your door. Most uses of water will result in the generation of effluent.

This effluent is usually disposed of into the foul sewer. It then travels through the sewers to the local water recycling centre where it is cleaned by various physical, chemical and biological processes before being discharged safely back into the environment. This may be a river from which water is abstracted before being treated for drinking water purposes or one that is used for irrigation or recreational activities.

The water recycling treatment process also produces solid material known as Biosolids which is generally recycled to land as valuable soil conditioner.

1. Reservoirs, boreholes and rivers

When served by Anglian Water, your water starts its journey in one of around 400 groundwater sources (which we access through boreholes), 8 reservoirs and 13 rivers.

2. Water treatment works

We operate over 140 water treatment works, monitoring and safeguarding your water supply 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

3. Water towers and service reservoirs

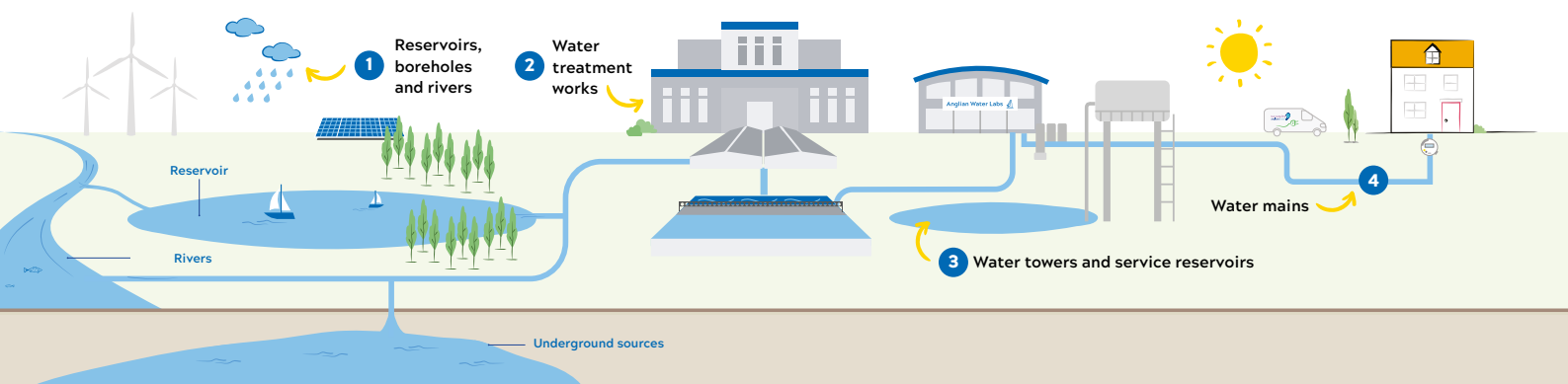
More than 320 water towers and service reservoirs store water ready for supply across our region.

4. Water mains

We supply over a billion litres of water every day, pumping it through over 38,000 kilometres of water mains.

This diagram below will help you understand where you are within this process.

As you can see, we all play a part in the cycle.



Our goal: no pollutions



Our sewers and water recycling centres form part of a complex, regulated, used water management system. They are there for everyone's benefit and play a vital role in protecting public health and maintaining a clean, healthy environment – one that we can all enjoy. When used appropriately, that's exactly what they'll do, but if the system is misused it can have serious consequences for both people and the environment.

We all need to play our part in ensuring that sewerage systems are only used for the purpose for which they've been designed. Within industry this means making sure that all trade effluent is discharged legally in accordance with a consent. [We talk more about consent on page 12.](#)

For all of us, whether at home or at work, it means preventing fat, oil, food waste, wipes, nappies and sanitary items being flushed into the sewer. These can cause blockages within our sewers and pumping stations which may result in the flooding of properties or the pollution of watercourses. You can find out more about keeping our sewers clear on our [website](#).



Why does Anglian Water need to control trade effluent?

One of our key roles is to support businesses by offering an effective trade effluent collection and treatment service.

However, we also need to make sure that public health, including that of our staff and contractors, our operations and the environment are fully protected. This includes complying with Environmental Permits issued to Anglian Water by the Environment Agency for our own discharges from water recycling centres into rivers and other watercourses. We control trade effluent to ensure that all of this happens.

Trade effluent discharges range in size from just a few litres to hundreds of thousands of litres entering our sewers every day. As well as the volume, the composition of trade effluent discharges can vary considerably. It's this variability, together with varying capacity in our sewers, treatment works and the watercourses into which they discharge, which means that we need to carefully assess and regulate all discharges of trade effluent made into our sewerage systems.

Anglian Water treats used water from a population equivalent to over

6.7m people

Anglian Water treat over

1.6b litres

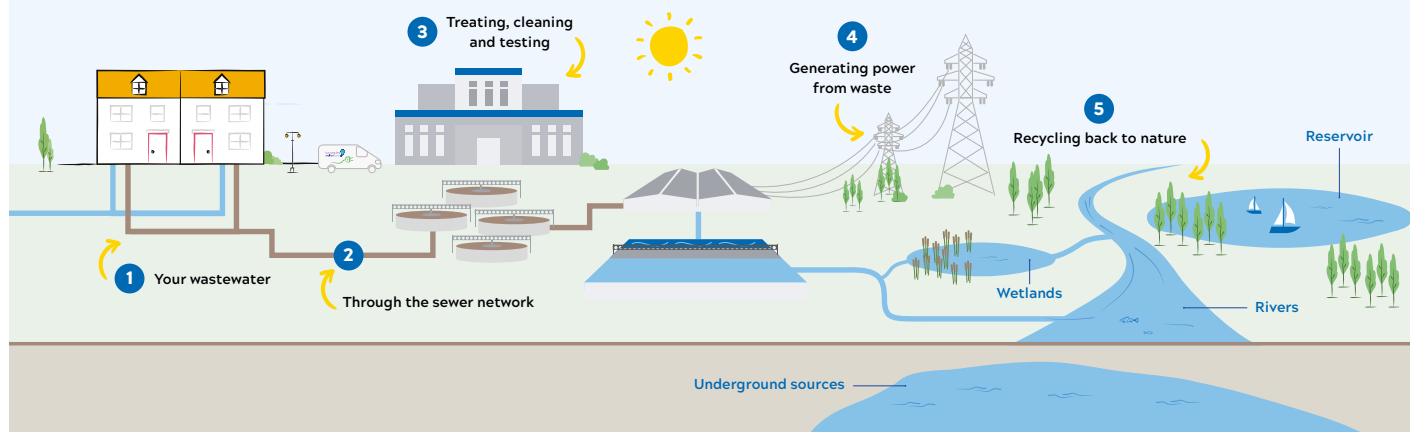
of used water every day – this includes both domestic sewage and trade effluent

Out of the 1.6 billion litres of treated used water, around

63m litres

is trade effluent

The illustration below shows an example of a sewerage system.



For example, the effluent from a small launderette will usually be a low volume and will contain detergents and residues from the washing of clothes. This is different to trade effluent from a food processor, which may contain a significant organic load. Trade effluent produced during an electroplating process may be a large flow and may contain persistent and potentially toxic substances.

As technology and science advances, our understanding of the effects of chemicals and emerging substances on the environment is increasing. It is the responsibility of the discharger to be aware of hazardous pollutants in their trade effluent and to declare these on their application form. If you have an existing trade effluent consent, you must still self-declare these.

You can contact us for a list of the substances we're currently interested in, or you can find this on our [website](#). [You can find our contact details on page 21](#).

As legislation and other drivers are updated by our regulators, we may look to add additional limits for hazardous pollutants to your consent. You may be required to install pre-treatment prior to discharge to the public foul sewer, in order to meet the required standards. We will not implement these conditions on your consent without discussion with you and your retailer.

We have over

1000

water recycling centres

served by over

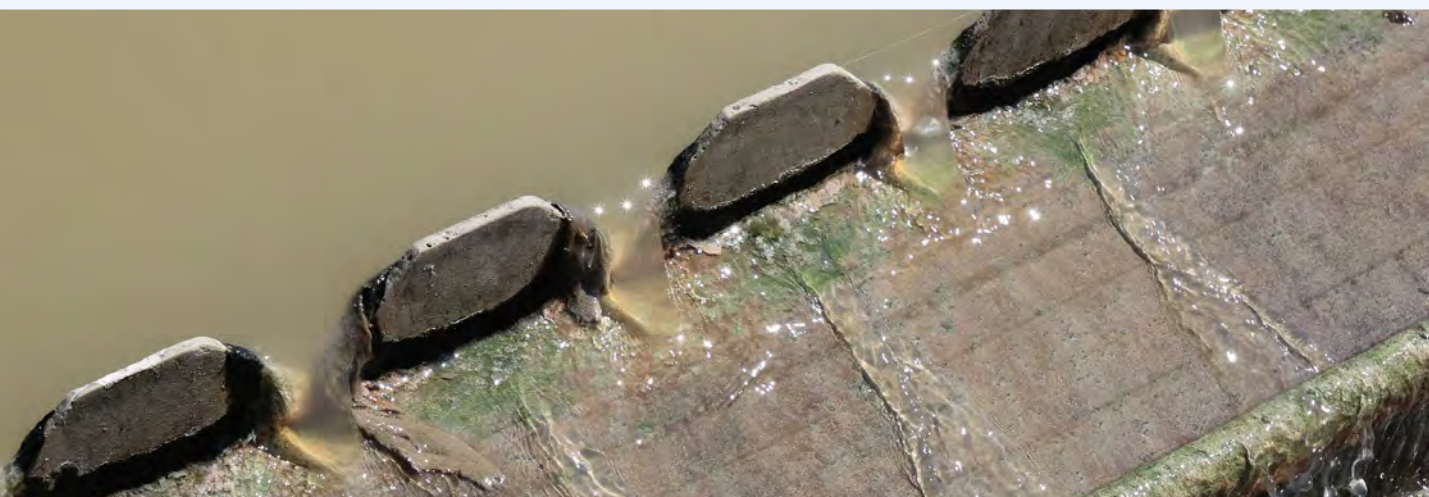
76,500

kilometres of sewers

... and over

4,700 used

water pumping stations



What is a consent?

A consent is a legal document issued by Anglian Water in our role as a regulator and under powers set out in the Water Industry Act 1991.

The consent will contain a number of conditions including those that control the quality and quantity of the discharge. Most consents will contain numeric limits for one or more of the parameters listed below.

In addition, the consent may also include conditions which limit or require the elimination of any persistent or potentially harmful substances – for example metals and flammable materials such as solvents.

To ensure that we set consent conditions consistently and scientifically, we use limit

setting methodologies that are applied throughout the Anglian Water region. Our approach comprises standard conditions for some sectors, statistical assessment, modelling and consultation both within Anglian Water and externally with the Environment Agency where required. As a result of this process, we also ensure that headroom (the difference between the actual discharge and the consent limit) is managed in a way that maximises available capacity for further economic growth.

Volume and flow rate

Volume and flow rate are controlled to prevent flooding and to make sure our sewers and water recycling centres are not overloaded.

pH

pH, which is a measure of acidity or alkalinity, is controlled to ensure that our sewers, pumping stations and water recycling centres, including their processes are protected.

Temperature

Temperature is controlled in order to protect our staff working in our sewers and to ensure that odours are minimised.

Chemical oxygen demand

Chemical oxygen demand, also known as COD, is a measure of the capacity of an effluent to consume oxygen during the decomposition of organic matter and the oxidation of inorganic chemicals. We control COD to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on our water recycling centre's biological processes.

Suspended solids

Suspended solids is a measure of the particles in the trade effluent. We control suspended solids to ensure that there are no blockages in the sewers due to settlement.

Sulphate

Sulphate is controlled to prevent the corrosion of concrete sewers and the production of odours.

Fat, oil and grease

Fat, oil and grease, also known as FOG, is controlled to prevent blockages in our sewers and pumping stations and to protect our water recycling processes.

Do I need a consent?

If you're within our region and are proposing to discharge trade effluent to the public foul sewer you will need the prior written consent of Anglian Water.

This map showing our sewerage boundary, which is different to our water supply boundary in some areas, will help you decide whether you're in our area. Your retailer will also be able to confirm which wholesaler's area you're in.

If you require a consent, or think that you might, we suggest that you contact your retailer as early as possible with your proposals. They can contact us on your behalf and we may be able to advise you in advance of any specific discharge requirements or restrictions that might be put in place. Please note that you may need more than one consent for your site.

If you think you may need a trade effluent consent in the future or are looking at increasing your trade effluent requirements, you can use the [growth enquiry process](#) via our website to understand what capacity is available.

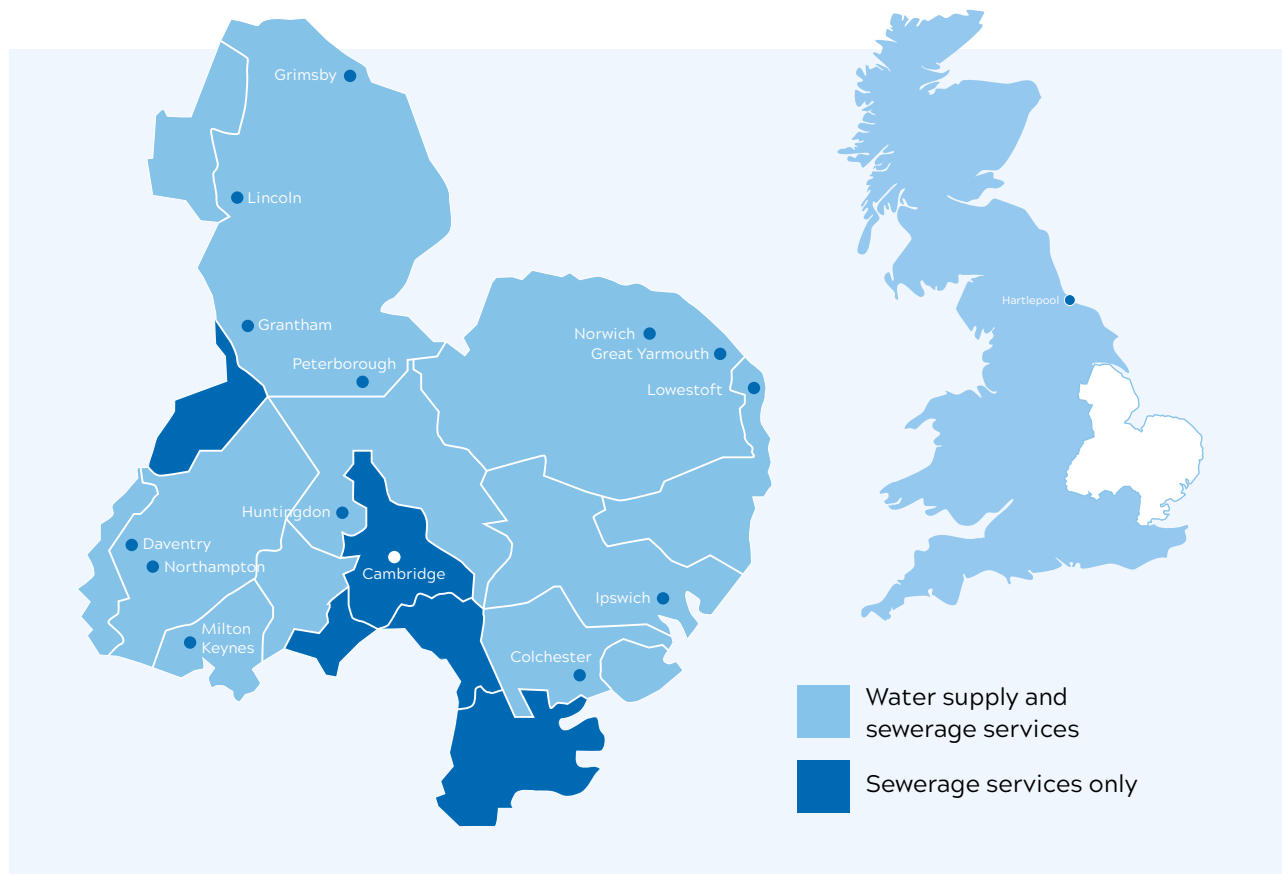
Useful advice



It is an offence under section 118 of the Water Industry Act 1991 to discharge trade effluent without consent, so it's important that you obtain one prior to making a discharge. Failure to obtain a consent may lead to enforcement action being taken by Anglian Water and this may result in prosecution.

You can find out more about our approach to enforcement on our [website](#) and in our [enforcement policy](#).

If you're currently discharging trade effluent without a consent you must contact your retailer immediately.



How do I obtain a consent?

If you're proposing to discharge trade effluent, you'll need to contact your retailer. They may help you complete an application form called a Trade Effluent Customer Application Form (TECAF).

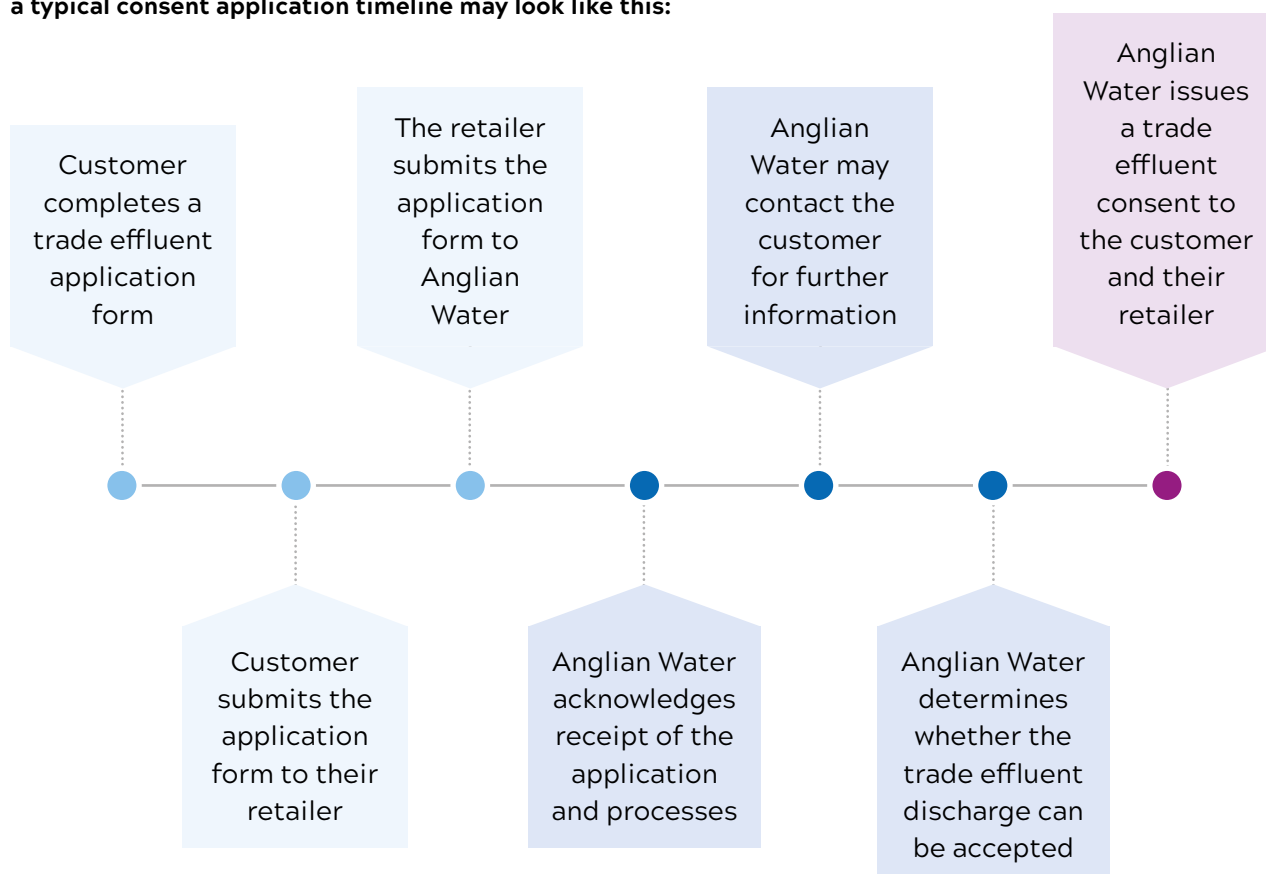
Anglian Water cannot issue a new consent without an application being served upon us by your retailer. Once we've received your fully completed application form, we'll begin processing your application. This will include assessing your requirements against the capacity available in our sewers and at our water recycling centre. Your retailer will be able to help you with any queries you have regarding the application process and any associated fees and charges. We'll acknowledge receipt of your application and keep your retailer informed of progress at key stages throughout the process.

You must provide information in your application form that will enable your trade effluent charges to be set-up. Once a consent is issued, you must send any changes or additional information during the initial charging set-up to your retailer.

If you need to make a connection into our sewerage network, you'll need to do this before you apply for a consent. Please contact your retailer for further information.

In some cases, a consent may not be appropriate and we may choose to regulate your discharge by another method, such as via a regulatory position statement. If this is the case, we'll let you and your retailer know.

If the trade effluent discharge can be accepted, a typical consent application timeline may look like this:



What is a retailer?

The Water Act 2014 introduced competition for non-household customers and the concept of wholesalers and retailers. In April 2017, the competitive water retail market opened. The market allows customers to choose and switch their retailer.

Anglian Water is a wholesaler and is responsible for the infrastructure, treatment processes and the regulation of trade effluent discharges into its sewers.

Retailers undertake billing, meter reading and customer services activities. Essentially, they buy wholesale services (the physical supply of water and/or the removal of wastewater) and sell this to eligible customers. Retailers do not serve non-eligible and household customers.

The market also allows customers to become their own retailer, so that they can self-supply.

For eligible customers, Anglian Water will receive information from and communicate with your retailer and will process a trade effluent consent into the market once it has been issued.

Can Anglian Water refuse to give consent?

Yes. If we feel that the proposed trade effluent is unsuitable for discharge into the sewer, we'll not issue a consent.

Similarly, we're not under any obligation to issue a consent which accommodates all requirements stated within your application. Consent conditions will be implemented to ensure that the trade effluent control objectives we've referred to earlier in this booklet are met. If we cannot accommodate any of your requirements you and your retailer will be advised of this at the earliest opportunity.

Is there an application fee?

Application fees may apply. You should contact your retailer for further information.



Do I need to comply with the consent conditions?

Yes. At all times. If you don't comply with the consent conditions, it is an offence under Section 121 of the Water Industry Act 1991.

You'll be informed when a sample taken by Anglian Water has failed one or more of the consent limits or when we become aware of any other breach of consent. However, it's your responsibility to ensure compliance with the consent and we expect you to take all steps necessary to achieve this at all times. We also encourage self-reporting of breaches so that we can take any necessary steps to protect the public, our staff, our assets and the environment.

We recommend that any member of your staff who may influence the quantity and/or quality of the discharge is made aware of the consent conditions. You will need to carefully manage your discharge using good on-site practice to ensure compliance. In some cases, this may require the installation of a trade effluent treatment plant on your site or the use of an alternative disposal option.

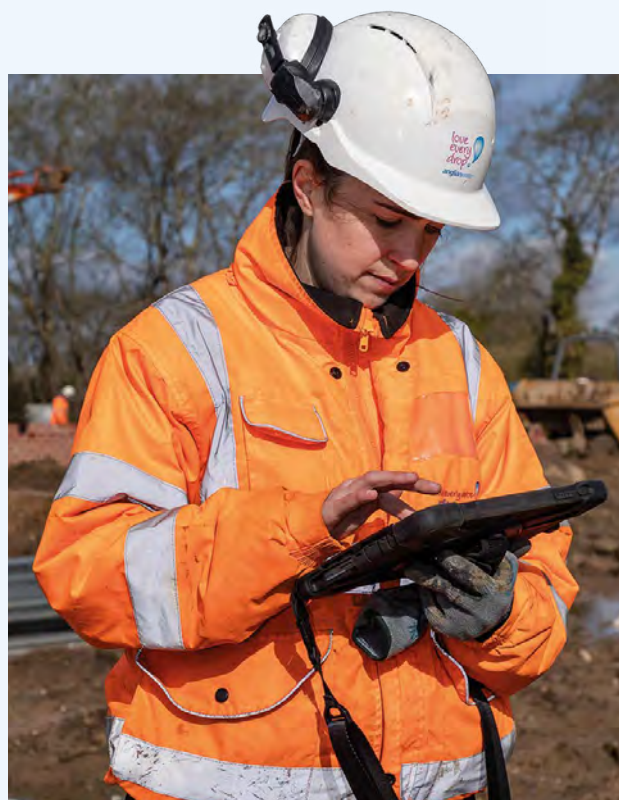
You must let us know immediately if an incident occurs from your premises where there is a discharge to our assets or the environment of any:

- unconsented substance or matter
- consented substance or matter that exceeds the consent limits

We can be contacted anytime by calling **03457 145145**. If you have a trade effluent consent, it would also be useful to provide your consent references when calling.

In summary, Anglian Water will not tolerate persistent non-compliance or discharges which impact, or have a potential to impact, upon public health, our operations or the wider environment. In these cases, enforcement action will be taken which may ultimately result in prosecution. We will look to recover costs of any incidents caused by a breach of consent conditions or by discharge of unconsented trade effluent.

You can find out more about our approach to enforcement on our website and in our enforcement policy.



Useful advice

Failure to comply with the consent may result in unlimited fines in the Magistrates Courts or Crown Court.



Will Anglian Water take samples of my trade effluent?

Yes. From time to time we'll visit your premises and may take a sample of your trade effluent discharge.

Samples are taken to assess compliance with the consent and may also be taken for wholesale charging purposes. It's your responsibility to ensure that a safe, accessible monitoring point is provided that will enable us to obtain representative samples of your trade effluent. The frequency that we take compliance monitoring samples will be based on an assessment of your effluent and the sewerage system into which you discharge. Some types of trade effluent are relatively innocuous and may not be sampled frequently but more significant discharges may be sampled on a more regular basis. In some cases, we may also ask you to monitor your effluent and provide us with sample results.

We take over

5000

trade effluent samples each year

...equating to over

60,000

individual chemical tests

Do Anglian Water staff have a right of access onto my site?

Yes. Our staff have a legal right of access under the Water Industry Act 1991 in order to carry out monitoring and enforcement activities.

This includes sampling of your trade effluent and investigating pollution incidents. All of our staff carry Anglian Water identification. You can also confirm their identity by calling us on **03457 145145**.

Who is responsible for the health and safety of Anglian Water staff whilst on my site?

You have a duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to identify and notify our employees of any health and safety risks that they may face whilst visiting your premises in connection with their trade effluent duties. All associated risk assessments must be made available to our employees on entering your premises and all significant hazards brought to their attention.

Our goal: no accidents



What if my circumstances change?

If you're proposing a change of process which may impact on the quantity or quality of your trade effluent or which is not stated in your consent, you must contact your retailer at the earliest opportunity and prior to the change being made.

You'll also need to contact your retailer if there's a change of name or occupier or you're to cease discharging.

These changes may require the issue of a variation to your existing consent, and you will need to apply for this via your retailer. Your retailer will be able to advise you if a charge will be made for the application. You'll need to comply with the consent that is in place at all times.

A consent to discharge trade effluent relates to a specific premises and cannot be transferred if you move site. If you do intend to move within our region and still wish to discharge trade effluent from your new premises, you must contact your retailer and apply for a new consent in advance. The original consent will need to be terminated if a discharge is not being made. As we've already said, the discharge of trade effluent without consent is an offence under the Water Industry Act 1991.

Will Anglian Water review the consent?

Yes. We'll review your consent on a regular basis to ensure that it remains appropriate and fully protects public health, our operations and the environment.

The review process may result in the need for Anglian Water to vary one or more of the conditions contained within your existing consent. If this is the case, we'll let you and your retailer know at the earliest opportunity. If through our review we discover a change that should have been notified to us, we'll advise your retailer and request that you formally apply for this. Your retailer will be able to advise you whether an application fee will be applied under these circumstances.



This is the typical lifecycle of a trade effluent consent



Does the Environment Agency also regulate trade effluent discharges?

Although we're primarily responsible for controlling trade effluent discharged into our sewers, there are occasions where the Environment Agency is also involved.

The operation of some industrial processes may require an Environmental Permit and in some cases discharge conditions may be included in the permit. This normally applies to larger operations including chemical manufacture, landfill sites and larger electroplaters. If you need further clarification regarding the Environmental Permitting process, we suggest that you contact the Environment Agency – [see page 21 for details](#).

Similarly, the presence of certain Prescribed Substances or effluent derived from a Prescribed Process may require referral to the Environment Agency. These discharges are referred to as Special Category Effluent and the Environment Agency may wish to set discharge conditions which we'll need to incorporate into the consent. For more information regarding Special Category Effluent please contact your retailer.

Useful advice

If you wish to discharge directly to a watercourse via your own pipe, you must contact the Environment Agency.



Can my consent be viewed by the public?

Yes. Your consent will be placed on our Trade Effluent Register and will be visible to members of the public and to other businesses.

Maintaining a register is a legal requirement under the Water Industry Act 1991. A charge will be made for the provision of information from our Trade Effluent Register. This includes reports and document copies. No personal information is provided as part of the public register. Please note that a charge is also made for providing a discharger with a replacement copy of their consent. Please contact Anglian Water directly for further information.

Can I discharge trade effluent to a surface water sewer?

No. The discharge of trade effluent to the surface water sewerage system isn't allowed.

Surface water sewers must only be used for uncontaminated surface water because they'll ultimately discharge directly to a watercourse without any treatment. The discharge of trade effluent to a surface water sewer may result in the pollution of a river, stream or other waterbody. If you're currently discharging trade effluent to a surface water sewer you must cease the discharge. If you're unsure what type of sewer you're discharging into, you can contact your retailer for clarification. If your retailer cannot provide you with this information, [you can contact Anglian Water via the contact details on page 21](#). Please note that some sewers are 'combined' systems, handling both foul and surface water. All effluent in these sewers is treated at a water recycling centre.

Can I discharge trade effluent directly via tanker?

No. We don't allow any tankered effluent into our water recycling centres apart from domestic used water and sewage from cess pits and septic tanks.

If you wish to dispose of your trade effluent via tanker you will need to find alternative reception facilities. Information relating to licensed waste management companies offering this service will be available via the internet and local business directories.

What if I'm unhappy with Anglian Waters' service?

We aim to work closely with both dischargers and retailers and to address any issues that may arise. However, if you're unhappy with the conditions of a consent, our refusal to give you consent or the time it has taken us to process it, please contact your retailer who will contact us on your behalf, and we'll endeavour to resolve the problem. If we can't resolve the issue between us and you're still concerned, there is a formal appeal process through the Water Services Regulation Authority (WSRA, also known as Ofwat). Ofwat has produced an information note regarding appeals which should be available from your retailer or from the WSRA website.

For matters that Ofwat cannot help with, you can also contact the Consumer Council for Water (CCW), who will be able to offer further assistance and advice. [These contact details can be found on page 21.](#)

How does charging work?

For information on charging, you must contact your retailer.

Where can I get technical advice?

In our role as a regulator, we don't provide specific technical advice regarding trade effluent discharges. However, you can contact your retailer who may be able to help or alternatively there are a number of specialist companies who can offer you further advice regarding effluent management and compliance. Information on companies offering this service will be available via the internet and local business directories.



How can I contact Anglian Water?

Excluding emergencies, which are referred to below, your retailer will contact Anglian Water on your behalf. If you're discharging, or proposing to discharge trade effluent, from a non-household premise and currently do not have a retailer you should select one. If you're discharging from a household premises, you can contact us anytime as follows:

Call us on: **03457 145 145**

Write to us at: **Anglian Water, PO Box 4994, LANCING, BN11 9AL**

Go online at: anglianwater.co.uk/business/services/trade-effluent/

Please note that if you have an operational emergency which may impact on Anglian Water assets you must contact our Operational Call Centre immediately on 03457 145 145.

If you have hearing or speech difficulties, you can use Relay UK by dialling 18001 first, followed by our number.

Other useful contacts

Retailers

You should find contact details for your current retailer on your latest bill. A full list of retailers can be found online at open-water.org.uk

The Environment Agency

National Customer Contact Centre
PO Box 544, Rotherham, S60 1BY

Telephone: **03708 506506**

Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Website: gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency

Water Services Regulatory Authority (Ofwat)

Centre City Tower
Birmingham
B5 4UA

Telephone: **0121 6447500**

Website: ofwat.gov.uk

Consumer Council for Water (CCW)

23 Stephenson Street
Birmingham
B2 4BH

Telephone: **0300 034 2222**

Website: ccw.org.uk

Further information

Water UK is the national body representing the UK water and sewerage companies. More information regarding trade effluent can be found on their website at water.org.uk





Anglian Water Services Limited

Lancaster House
Lancaster Way
Ermine Business Park
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE29 6XU

anglianwater.co.uk