

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

DRAINS

Who is responsible for repairing or replacing manhole covers?

The owner of the drain, sewer or other service is responsible. Landowners however, have a "duty of care" to make sure their land is safe. If the manhole is in the road, telephone your Council.

What should I do if a road/entry gully is blocked?

Contact your Council but note, that in times of very heavy rain, road drainage gullies may not be able to cope for a short period. Only phone if the gully is blocked.

Who has plans for my drains?

Unfortunately, Councils do not have copies of private drainage plans. There may be plans with the property deeds, or for new houses the developer may have copies. Otherwise you will need to carry out a drain survey.

What am I responsible for?

Even if your property is connected to a main sewer, it may discharge through a drain or private sewer before connecting to the public sewer. The private section is your responsibility. A drain or private sewer may run under private land and most will also run under the highway at some point. Your responsibility only ceases after the connection to a public sewer.



ARE YOU RESPONSIBLE?

Local Authorities receive hundreds of calls each year about drainage problems.

Many of these drainage problems are not the responsibility of Local Authorities but are actually the responsibility of private households.

Here are the answers to the most frequently asked questions.

This leaflet will help you understand what drains you or other authorities are responsible for.

Please keep this information for future reference

What is a drain?

A drain is a pipe that conveys either foul water (sink/bath/toilet etc) or surface water (rain) from one house only.

What is a sewer?

A sewer is a pipe that conveys either foul water or surface water from more than one house. A sewer may be either private or public.

What is a public sewer?

A public sewer is owned and maintained by the local utility company. They are usually referred to as main drains and sewers. Most sewers built before 31st October 1937 are public sewers (by virtue of the Public Health and Water Industries Acts).

What is a private sewer?

A private sewer is a joint responsibility of the owners of the houses it serves. Most sewers built after 31st October 1937 are private sewers. This means that the owners of all houses upstream of a blockage or defect are responsible for clearance or repair.

What should I do if I think a drain or private sewer is blocked?

Contact your local council, who can advise you on what action can be taken.

What do I do if I suspect a public sewer is blocked?

Telephone United Utilities, whose customer service number is 0845 602 0406.

They will ask questions to help them decide if it is their sewer that is blocked, or whether it is your private sewer. If they think it could be theirs, they will send someone to investigate and unblock it, at their expense.

Why do Local Councils become involved?

If a defect or blockage occurs in a drain or private sewer and is not rectified, the Council has the power to take action to ensure that blockages are cleared and defects repaired to prevent conditions that are prejudicial to health. Action may include the service of legal Notices. The Council can also carry out work in default if work detailed in a

Notice is not carried out. Costs of work in default plus administration charges will be recovered from the owners of the properties affected.

What if the sewer serves other properties too?

The responsibility lies with the property owners served by the sewer irrespective of whose land the sewer is on or under, except for properties built before 31st October 1937 when responsibility is then likely to lie with United Utilities.

What if I am a tenant?

In nearly all cases the landlord is responsible for maintaining and unblocking the drains in private rented properties. Any problem with your drains should be reported to your landlord or managing agent. If they fail to act promptly to unblock the drain, then you should contact your Council for assistance and advice.

