

Guidance notes and procedure

These guidance notes will assist you in completing a new sewer adoption application. You should read the notes in conjunction with the Water Industry Act 1991. The relevant section is Section 102 – adoption of existing sewers.

What is a public sewer?

Most sewers that are shared by more than one property or lateral drains (pipe outside the property boundary but only serving one unit) are public, and will be owned and maintained by Wessex Water. There are some exceptions. The only sewers that remain private are those that:

- Only serve a single property within that property boundary
- Are maintained privately as part of a documented property management scheme
- Do not connect directly to the public system, for example a surface water systems that flow directly to a watercourse or soakaway, or foul drains connecting to a privately owned 'package plant' sewage treatment works.

Can Wessex Water adopt a private system?

You can ask us to consider adopting a private sewage treatment works. Generally it needs to serve 10 or more properties and we will expect to adopt at least one length of sewer upstream.

What do I need to do?

Step 1 Application

Contact your local Developer Services office. Contact details are at the end of these notes.

UK Water Industry Research has published a document which sets out a national standard for adopting sewage treatment works by Water Companies. It will guide you through the process and tell you exactly what is involved. The title is Wastewater Treatment Works for Adoption, UKWIR reference 13/RG/05/38, ISBN 1-84057-696-0. This can be freely viewed online via [https://ukwir.org/view/\\$UvwNrVe!/13/rg](https://ukwir.org/view/$UvwNrVe!/13/rg). You can also buy a hard copy of this document from the web site www.ukwir.org

Adopting a sewage treatment works is a complex procedure and we will help with further details when you apply. You may need to appoint a consultant to act on your behalf.

Step 2 Application complete and fixed fee payment

We will confirm when your application is complete, i.e. is there sufficient information for us to review.

Step 3 Survey and inspection

We will carry out inspection and testing of the installation. The sewage treatment site must comply with the requirements set out in document mentioned above.

Step 4 Review and monitoring

We will review the information and report what repairs are necessary before adoption. You will carry out any necessary improvements at your cost. Once we have confirmed the site is acceptable, we will monitor it for a minimum of six months. This is to check that the plant is functioning correctly and complies with the discharge consent.

Step 5 Adoption

After the monitoring period has finished, the land transfer is completed and access rights agreed, we will serve a formal notice of intention to adopt that asset. The notice is served on the current owner and any interested parties. If no objection is raised within a two month appeal period, we issue a Vesting Declaration to confirm that it is public. The sewer is added to our records and maintained in the future as public.

What information do I need to provide?

- Location plan
- Land ownership details
- Layout plan and relevant drawings
- A copy of the consent to discharge
- Copy of the operation and maintenance manual
- Health and safety file
- Original test certificates for all electrical installations and lifting equipment
- Effluent sampling results
- Any other relevant information.

How much will it cost?

Please refer to our Developer services charging arrangements.

You will be responsible for the cost of any remedial work identified.

Who will carry out the site inspection?

You will need to arrange testing and inspection with our site inspector. We will give you their contact details.

What happens if the sewer is in poor condition?

If the system is not in an adoptable state, Wessex Water will identify remedial repairs required to bring it up to an appropriate condition. In addition to the documents noted above, sewers should be constructed according to the current copy of 'Sewers for Adoption', which is available from the Water Research Council. You will be responsible for carrying out the works at your cost, followed by a further inspection and survey to confirm completion.

If remedial repairs cannot be agreed, the adoption is formally rejected and we will provide reasons.

What can I do if I disagree with the decision?

If you are not satisfied with our decision then you should first discuss it with the local Developer Services team. If we cannot agree a solution, then you may use the formal Wessex Water complaint system or contact OFWAT for a ruling.

