



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

POLICY AND STRATEGY, DOCUMENT

Reducing visual impact: installation of screens: action plan

A plan for installing screens on overflows to reduce the amount of litter that can make its way to the watercourse.

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Overview

Storm overflows, as well as containing a mix of rainwater and dilute sewage, contain visible litter which is flushed down the sewer or put into drains. Screens can be installed on the overflows to reduce the amount of litter that can make its way to the watercourse. These screens are usually either a row of bars or a plate with perforations in where the material that settles on them is mechanically cleaned off to remove the rag from the flow of discharge. In addition to this, Water Companies, along with Welsh Government, NRW and CCWater will continue to promote campaigns to educate customer on what should and should not be put into the sewerage system.

The level of screening that is installed at each storm overflow is defined within the Water Companies Environmental Permit. This is determined by NRW in the document 'How to comply with your environmental permit: Additional guidance for: Water Discharge and Groundwater (from point source) Activity Permits EPR 7.01'. [Water Discharge and Groundwater \(from point source\) Activity Permits \(EPR 7.01\) \(naturalresources.wales\)](#). This looks at the amenity of the waterbody (how it is used) and the number of times the storm overflow is modelled/actually discharges and assesses the type of method that is suitable for limiting the discharge of solids matter, such as wet wipes, rags and large objects. This guidance is currently being revised by NRW to consider changes in modern design standards and river use.

Unfortunately, a lot of permits were set before the guidance was in place. Therefore, Water Companies need to undertake a programme of assessment against the new guidance to understand where screening is not currently in place and needs to be or, where it is in place, the permitted requirement may not be sufficient for modern amenity use. Water companies in Wales will work with the environmental regulator to determine assessment criteria and then carry out assessments by the end of July 2023. These assessments will identify where further screen installation is required and will inform companies' case for

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investment in AMP8 and subsequent investment programmes. These investment programmes are provided to the economic regulator Ofwat every five years and are challenged for both provision of the service provided and the affordability of the plans.

The scale of this investment could be significant. Across Wales there are over 2400 storm overflows, and it is estimated that up to half will require some form of improved screening provision. The rural nature of a significant proportion of the network in Wales, some storm overflows are in remote locations, with no power supply. and therefore the installation programme will be complex and require time to design and install safely. Affordable targets will be set and reviewed as part of that investment planning process.

Working with regulators and Welsh Government, Water Companies will be expected to identify and prioritise action at those assets that are deemed to require urgent and immediate attention, re-prioritising expenditure already agreed for the AMP7 Business Plans.

Our commitments

The actions being taken forward within this workstream are all aligned to the Welsh Government Programme for Government 2021-26 and the Wellbeing goals of:

- Building a stronger, greener economy as we make maximum progress towards decarbonisation.
- Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work.
- Embed our response to the climate and nature emergency in everything we do.
- Begin to designate Wales' inland waters for recreation, strengthening water

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quality monitoring.

Lead Organisation	Action	Why?	By When	October 2023 Update
DCWW	We will undertake assessment of our permits against our asset base to define the size of the programme required to provide evidence for target setting.	To understand the scale of the problem and the investment required to improve levels of screening on storm overflows.	December 2023	85% was completed by the end of July 23. 90% will be complete by the end of October 2023. A summarised report of dataset has already collected. This will outline and summarise the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Which assets have the required permitted screening in place and meet 7.01 guidelines2. Which assets have the required permitted screening in place but that requirement is substandard to 7.01 guidelines The outstanding 10% to be complete by December 2023.
DCWW	We will install screens at the appropriate assets according to updated design standards and will prioritise the installation in	To reduce the visual impact and long-term effects of items such as rag, wet wipes and other disposable, non-	2040-2050	100% installation of screens by 2050; with high priority screens installation by 2040.

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Lead Organisation	Action	Why?	By When	October 2023 Update
	high priority rivers.	degradable matter has on the environment.		
DCWW and NRW	We will set targets for the installation of screens on storm overflows according to the required modern design standard.	To reduce the visual impact and long-term effects of items such as rag, wet wipes and other disposable, non-degradable matter has on the environment.	December 2023	To be delivered following completion of the assessment of our permits against our asset base to define the size of the programme required to provide evidence for target setting.
HD	We will undertake assessment of our permits against our asset base to define the size of the programme required to provide evidence for	To understand the scale of the problem and the investment required to improve levels of screening on storm overflows.	December 2023	We have several SOAF investigations ongoing. In addition, we are undertaking a baseline review of our CSO assets to identify those already screened; once the revised NRW 7.01 guidance has been signed off, we can assess existing screens against the new guidance. Assets without screening conditions built into the permit will be reviewed and

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Lead Organisation	Action	Why?	By When	October 2023 Update
	target setting.			assessed with NRW to confirm screen installation required.
HD	We will ensure provision is made for the installation of screens during AMP8 (2025 to 2030) and beyond, according to the agreed targets.	To reduce the visual impact and long-term effects of items such as rag, wet wipes and other disposable, non-degradable matter has on the environment.	December 2023	We have several SOAF investigations ongoing. In addition, we are undertaking a baseline review of our CSO assets to identify those already screened; once the revised NRW 7.01 guidance has been signed off, we can assess existing screens against the new guidance. Assets without screening conditions built into the permit will be reviewed and assessed with NRW to confirm screen installation required.
HD	We will install screens at the appropriate assets according to updated design standards and will prioritise the installation in high priority rivers.	To reduce the visual impact and long-term effects of items such as rag, wet wipes and other disposable, non-degradable matter has on the	2040-2050	100% installation of screens by 2050; with high priority screens installation by 2040.

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Lead Organisation	Action	Why?	By When	October 2023 Update
		environment.		
HD and NRW	We will set targets for the installation of screens on storm overflows according to the required modern design standard.	To reduce the visual impact and long-term effects of items such as rag, wet wipes and other disposable, non-degradable matter has on the environment.	December 2023	SOAF investigations are still ongoing; outcomes of these will feed into the PR24 process to determine future investment needs for screens on storm overflows.
NRW	We will review the provision of screen requirements in the “how to comply with your environmental permit” guidance noted above.	To ensure the standards required of water companies are based on modern design standards and sound evidence.	October 2023	Guidance has been produced and is currently under review. It is expected to be published October 2023.
Taskforce	Targets and	To ensure	April 2025	

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Lead Organisation	Action	Why?	By When	October 2023 Update
	Water Company Investment programmes will be reviewed on a 5-year cycle, as part of the investment planning process.	an affordable balance of investment priorities.		
DCWW	We will ensure provision is made for the installation of screens during AMP8 (2025 to 2030) and beyond, according to the agreed targets.	To reduce the visual impact and long-term effects of items such as rag, wet wipes and other disposable, non-degradable matter has on the environment.	Complete	All SO's we improve under Water Quality we will upgrade the screening to guidance if necessary.

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