

## Sewer adoption – existing sewage treatment works

These guidance notes are provided to help you apply for adoption of an existing sewage treatment works. The notes should be read in conjunction with the Water Industry Act 1991. The relevant section is Section 102 – adoption of existing sewers and disposal works.

### What is a public sewer or sewage treatment works?

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:

- Serve only 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 sewage treatment works?

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 number 1-84057-696-0. You can buy this document from web site [www.ukwir.org](http://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 Fee will be confirmed

Wessex Water will determine the suitability of the case, and advise you what the fee will be. The minimum charge is £500. There will also be an additional charge for legal fees, inspection fees, land conveyance and formal easement costs.

#### Step 3 Making payment

Payment can be by cheque made payable to Wessex Water Services Ltd, or we can invoice so you can pay by BACS.

#### Step 4 Survey

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 5 Review and monitoring

We will review the information and advise if any 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 6 Vesting

After the monitoring period has finished, the land transfer is completed and access rights agreed, Wessex Water 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?

- Land ownership details.
- Your solicitor's details.
- 4 sets of 'as constructed' plans and drawings.
- A copy of the consent to discharge.
- 3 copies of the Operation and Maintenance manuals.
- 2 copies of the Health and Safety file.
- Original test certificates for all electrical installations and lifting equipment.
- Any other relevant information, such as effluent sampling results.

## How much will it cost?

On receipt of the application, Wessex Water will advise you an all-in cost, which covers administration, legal and inspection fees. The minimum charge is £500. There will also be an additional charge for land conveyance and formal easement costs. VAT is not applicable on this all-in fee (0%) for either existing properties or new build properties.

If remedial works are identified to bring the site up to an adoptable standard, you will carry them out at your cost.

## What is vesting?

In law, vesting gives an immediately secured right to an asset that cannot be taken away by a third party. With regard to sewer adoption, this means the ownership and responsibility of the asset is transferred to the Water Company.

## What happens if the pipework and plant 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. 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 an 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 a solution cannot be agreed you may use the formal Wessex Water complaint system or contact OFWAT for a ruling.

## Send your application to:

**North** - Wessex Water, Kennet Way, Trowbridge, BA14 8RN  
Tel: 01225 522682  
email [development.north@wessexwater.co.uk](mailto:development.north@wessexwater.co.uk)

**South** - Wessex Water, Poole STW, Cabot Lane, Poole, BH17 7BX  
Tel: 01202 643461  
email [development.south@wessexwater.co.uk](mailto:development.south@wessexwater.co.uk)

**West** - Wessex Water, Riverside, Chilton Trinity, Bridgwater, TA6 3JS  
Tel: 01823 225219  
email [development.west@wessexwater.co.uk](mailto:development.west@wessexwater.co.uk)

