

The Regulatory Framework for Drinking Water

In Northern Ireland, the primary legislative powers for transposition of the Council Directive (98/83/EC) ("[the Drinking Water Directive](#)") relating to the quality of water intended for human consumption are contained in [The Water and Sewerage Services \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2006](#).

The Drinking Water Inspectorate is a statutory appointee, acting on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and has responsibility for the regulation of both public and private drinking water supplies.

Public Water Supplies

Northern Ireland Water Ltd (NI Water) began to operate as a government-owned company from 1 April 2007, and is the sole supplier of public drinking water in Northern Ireland.

The following legislation implements the requirements set out in the European [Drinking Water Directive \(98/83/EC\)](#), the amending [Directive \(EU\) 2015/1787](#) which revised the monitoring and analysis requirements in Annex II and Annex III of Directive (98/83/EC), and [Directive 2013/51/Euratom](#) in respect of public drinking water supplies:

[The Water Supply \(Water Quality\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2017](#)

These regulations also control the application and introduction of products and substances. The Drinking Water Inspectorate for England and Wales provides a technical resource to facilitate this approval in the United Kingdom. The current "[List of Approved Products for use in Public Water Supply in the United Kingdom](#)" can be obtained from the Drinking Water Inspectorate for England and Wales.

[The Water Supply \(Domestic Distribution Systems\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2010](#), which came into operation on 20 April 2010, require NI Water to report [to us] instances of water quality failures caused by the internal distribution system occurring within public buildings. It would then be our responsibility to assess the significance of these failures and, where required, ensure remedial action is undertaken by the person responsible for the building.

[The Water Supply \(Water Fittings\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2009](#) came into operation on 3 August 2009. These regulations make provisions for preventing contamination of drinking water by ensuring that all plumbing systems, water fittings and equipment connected to the public water supply are of an appropriate quality and standard. These regulations apply from the point where water leaves the water main and enters the property's service pipe. Owners and occupiers of premises and anyone who installs plumbing systems or water fittings must comply with these regulations.

Council Directive 2000/60/EC ("[the EU Water Framework Directive \(WFD\)](#)") came into force on 22 December 2000. Its aim is to protect all surface waters and ground waters and prevent any deterioration in quality. In the protection of drinking water sources, the WFD sets out a requirement to identify points for drinking water abstraction to be included in river basin

management plans. This Directive is implemented in Northern Ireland by [The Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2017](#).

Private Water Supplies

Private water supplies are defined in [The Water and Sewerage Services \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2006](#) as any supplies of water provided otherwise than by the water undertaker, namely NI Water.

You can view the legislation relating to private water supplies at the link below:-
[The Private Water Supplies Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2017](#).

The above Regulations implement the [Drinking Water Directive \(98/83/EC\)](#), amending [Directive \(EU\) 2015/1787](#) which revised the monitoring and analysis requirements in Annex II and Annex III of Directive (98/83/EC) and [Directive 2013/51/Euratom](#) in relation to private water supplies and the DWI is, for certain functions, facilitated by the Environmental Health departments of the district councils.

Private supplies to single domestic dwellings are not required to be monitored under the 2017 Regulations. We do, however, continue to offer appropriate advice to all private water supply owners and users. The regulations also exclude bottled water suppliers, who are regulated under [The Natural Mineral Water, Spring Water and Bottled Drinking Water Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2015](#), as amended by [The Natural Mineral Water, Spring Water and Bottled Drinking Water \(Amendment\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2017](#).

Under Regulation 6 there is a requirement for any newly installed products or substances, used in the provision of a private supply, to be approved for use with drinking water. Details of [approved products](#) are available through the Drinking Water Inspectorate for England and Wales web site.