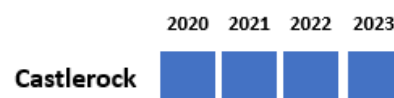


## Castlerock – Bathing Water Profile

Castlerock beach, County Londonderry, Northern Ireland



Key: ● Excellent ● Good ● Sufficient ● Poor

Current bathing water classification

### [Bathing Water Classifications](#)

Castlerock is one of six bathing waters in Northern Ireland for which daily bathing water quality predictions are being made as part of the SWIM NI project. SWIM NI is currently in the pilot stage, more information on which can be found at [Swim NI](#)

**There is general advice not to bathe during or up to 48hrs after heavy or prolonged rainfall.**

**Description** Castlerock bathing water is approximately 1km in length, composed entirely of sand, and backs onto a sand dune system and golf course at the eastern end and a promenade at the western end. The immediate catchment for this bathing water is urban with the town of Castlerock being immediately adjacent, however, the wider catchment contains improved grassland and arable horticulture. The River Bann flows out to the sea at the eastern end of Castlerock bathing water through the Barmouth, having travelled mostly through rural areas, but also through a number of towns such as Coleraine, Portglenone and Toome. Another smaller, unnamed river flows across the bathing water at the western end.

**Site Details** Local council area – Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Year of designation – 2006

Water sampling location – Lat 55.16853, Long -6.78381

### **Potential Pollution and measures to reduce impact on site:**

The potential sources of pollution have been split into three categories; wastewater (sewage) treatment works discharges, wastewater systems in urban areas and rural source pollution, including agriculture. DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division work with NIEA and other departments to identify and resolve sources of pollution.

#### **Wastewater (sewage) treatment works discharges.**

There is a major wastewater treatment facility between Portrush and Portstewart, with an outfall approximately 1km off the coast of Portstewart. This treated outfall is 6 km from Castlerock bathing water. The works treats wastewater from the wider Portrush, Portstewart, Castlerock and Coleraine areas and is subject to secondary treatment.

#### **Wastewater systems in urban areas.**

Castlerock town is a popular seaside location attracting visitors during the summer season. This urbanisation is a potential source of pollution, especially during periods of prolonged/heavy rainfall.

In the event of prolonged/heavy rainfall the wastewater system may become overwhelmed leading to an overflow/discharge of wastewater. **This is why there is general advice not to bathe during or up to 48 hours after prolonged/heavy rainfall.**

The collection and treatment of wastewater has the potential to cause pollution as all combined collection systems are designed to overflow in periods of extreme wet weather or following failure of the system. This prevents overflows into residential properties. Within the Castlerock area there are a number of combined sewer overflows (CSO) and wastewater pumping stations with associated emergency overflows, highlighted on Map 1.

NI Water has in the past made significant improvements to the sewer system in this area.

There is potential for misconnections between the sewer system and surface drains, which may allow untreated wastewater to enter the water environment. When these become apparent, NIEA pursues them as pollution incidents.

### **Rural source pollution – agriculture**

The wider catchment area of Castlerock bathing water has a significant amount of improved grassland containing neutral grass and arable horticulture. Areas within the catchment where agriculture is the dominant land use may be subject to inputs from chemical fertilizers and organic wastes. Prolonged periods of rainfall can cause surface runoff of these organic wastes, such as animal slurries, contributing to the bacteria content in the water environment.

Septic tanks also have the potential to cause localized pollution, but there is no evidence to suggest that this is impacting Castlerock bathing water.

### **Other potential sources of pollution.**

- Dogs
- Horses
- Litter
- Fly tipping

### **Management measures:**

You can find more information about Northern Ireland's water quality objectives and the protection of bathing waters in the North Western River Basin Management Plan, see below:

[Draft 3rd cycle River Basin Management Plan for Northern Ireland 2021-2027 0.PDF \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Within the River Basin Management Plan programme of measures there are several schemes to address sources of pollution:

- Nutrients Action Programme (NAP) 2019-2022
- Knowledge Advisory Service (KAS)
- Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS)
- Soil Nutrient Health Scheme (SNHS)

### **Macro-algae, phytoplankton, and cyanobacteria (blue-green algae)**

Castlerock bathing water may be subject to the presence of Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae). Blue-green algal blooms which form in Lough Neagh can be transported via the River Bann and affect the bathing water at Castlerock. Blue-green algae can be toxic, and harmful if swallowed and may cause skin rashes. If the presence of blue-green algae is confirmed the public shall be informed, and if levels exceed health guidelines the public will be advised not to bathe through signage at the bathing

water and through relevant local media posts. More information can be found at [Blue-Green Algae Infographic | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

### **What should I do if I see a pollution incident?**

If you see a water pollution incident, you should immediately contact NIEA through the Emergency Water Pollution Hotline, which is operated **24 hours**.

**Phone: 0800 807060**

When a pollution incident is reported or pollution is found to be affecting the water quality of a bathing water, an immediate investigation is instigated. All possible sources of pollution are checked. In addition, a resample will be collected to monitor whether the beach is still polluted. Bathing waters may be closed (by local authority or controlling body) until the water quality has improved and levels of bacteria are within mandatory standards.

### **Contact details**

For general information about bathing waters:

**DAERA** Marine and Fisheries Division  
17 Antrim Road, Tonagh, Lisburn, BT28 3AL  
Email: [Marine.InfoRequests@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Marine.InfoRequests@daera-ni.gov.uk)  
Website: [DAERA Bathing Water Quality](#)

**Local Authority** Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council  
Address: Cloonavin, 66 Portstewart Road, Coleraine, BT52 1EY  
Email: [info@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk](mailto:info@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk)  
Phone: + 44 (0) 28 7034 7034  
Website: [Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council - Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council](#)

Map 1. Castlerock Bathing Water

