



Water for the North West

United Utilities Water Limited
Haweswater House
Lingley Mere Business Park
Lingley Green Avenue
Great Sankey
Warrington WA5 3LP

Telephone: 01925 237000

unitedutilities.com

Our ref: EIR-382

Date: 27/05/2025

Email: EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for environmental information. We appreciate your interest, and we want to let you know that your request has been carefully considered in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR). Please see our comments, as follows:

Please can I ask the following under an EIR request –

- 1. Can you confirm how many (in Kms) of old asbestos water pipes have been replaced since privatisation?**

Our records indicate that 681km of asbestos cement water mains have been replaced since privatisation, however we note that this is likely to be an underestimate, as the material of many mains was not well recorded in the original records at privatisation.

- 2. Please can you confirm how many (in Kms) of these old decommissioned asbestos water pipes have been left in the ground since privatisation?**

Wherever possible, new water mains are laid inside the previous old main. This enables the most efficient renewal cost and minimises disruption during the renewal. Therefore, the old mains are left in situ. When whole mains are abandoned, these are typically left in-situ, again minimising disruption and reducing any risks associated with disturbing old mains. We therefore expect that the majority of the above 681kms of mains have been left in the ground.

- 3. Please can you confirm if the location of these old asbestos decommissioned pipes is being stored on your systems?**

It is our standard practice for all decommissioned mains records to be stored on our current corporate GIS system.

- 4. How can members of the public and developers find out if the land they are buying has these old decommissioned asbestos pipes left in the ground?**

Customers are welcome to view the public records via our online viewing facility for free. Viewings are by appointment only, and should be arranged via the Property Searches Team. The viewings are for perusal purposes only, therefore customers cannot take photographs or copies of the records using digital equipment. Sketches are permitted.

Alternatively, if customers require a hardcopy drawing of the apparatus, they can register on

[Property Searches](#). This is a paid for service and information on the products and prices can be found here: [Products & Services](#). The standard SLA is 48-hour turnaround for orders.

Please note that whilst our mapping system contains copies of most water mains, some mains may not be mapped. This is typically due to their age, and a lack of documentation from the time they were initially laid. Additionally, some mains which have been slip lined may not show both materials (e.g. asbestos cement and polyethylene).

5. Have old decommissioned asbestos water pipes been left in our public roads? If so, can you tell me how many Km have been left in the roads?

Of the recorded decommissioned asbestos cement water mains approximately 110kms are present in public highways. Many of these carry live, polyethylene water mains.

6. If old asbestos decommissioned water pipes have been left in our roads, how is risk of exposure to road contractors/utility firms being managed? Is there a list that contractors can inspect to assess risk of exposure to these old pipes?

United Utilities contractors and direct sub-contractors (with the exception of specialist registered Asbestos license holders) are prohibited, unless authorised by a Line manager or Client, from knowingly disturbing, working on, removing or disposing of any Materials that we know, or suspect may Contain Asbestos (ACM).

Contractors carrying out work on potential ACM should complete their own risk assessment prior to the start of works. This details points including, but not limited to:

- The site must be secured to prevent unauthorised access
- All work is to be carried out in accordance with the Risk Assessment
- Only personnel with the required training identified within the Risk Assessment are to work on the ACM
- Personnel working on ACM shall be briefed on the requirements of the Risk Assessment
- Personnel shall wear the appropriate PPE/RPE as defined in the Risk Assessment
- The ACM shall be kept wet throughout the work to minimise the release of asbestos fibres
- Only hand tools are to be used in the cutting of ACM – power saws are not to be used. Only approved hydraulic cutters are to be used as defined in the method statement.
- During area decontamination, visual inspection of the work area is required to ensure that it is clear of waste
- Upon completion of works, all tools and equipment that will be reused are to be wiped down as described in the method statement
- Upon completion of the works, personnel must complete personal decontamination as described in the method statement
- Smoking, eating and drinking is not permitted prior to decontamination
- All ACM must be placed into red asbestos waste bags immediately after works
- AC waste must not be allowed to build up on site, staff must clean as they go
- All ACM and contaminated PPE/ consumables must be bagged and disposed of as described in the method statement

We hope that this response answers your request. However, if you're not satisfied with how we've handled it, you can request an internal review. To do this, please write to us at Environmental Information Office, Haweswater House, Lingley Mere, Warrington, WA5 3LP or email us at EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk, addressing your request to [REDACTED], and explaining why you're unhappy with our response. We'll be very happy to review your request and ensure we've done everything we can to assist you.

Any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this response, and we will reply within 40 working days from receipt of the request for internal review.

Many thanks
EIR Team

We'd love to hear your feedback on how we handled your request! If you have a moment, please complete our short survey [here](#) – your input helps us improve our service.