



United Utilities Water Limited
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Great Sankey
Warrington WA5 3LP

Telephone: 01925 237000

unitedutilities.com

Our ref: EIR/ID973
Date: 03/09/2026
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).

Your request:

Please provide the following information, to the extent it is held by you:

1. Whether any trade effluent consent issued by you to a funeral premises specifies a concentration limit for formaldehyde, phenol, methanol or glycerine at the discharge point, and if so, what those limits are (in aggregate or by example, if individual consents cannot be disclosed).
2. Whether your trade effluent consent process, application forms, or standard conditions make any reference to, or requirement to disclose, pharmaceutical, cytotoxic or cytostatic drug residues potentially present in body or embalming fluids discharged from funeral premises.
3. Whether you hold any internal guidance, policy document, standard consent template, or draft standard specifically addressing embalming or funeral-premises wastewater, as distinct from general trade effluent guidance.
4. Whether you have at any time communicated with the Environment Agency, Water UK, or another sewerage undertaker specifically about formaldehyde or pharmaceutical residues arising from funeral premises, and if so, whether you can provide or describe that correspondence.

Our response:

In response to your request, we can provide the following information:

1. We do not currently hold any trade effluent consents issued to funeral premises. United Utilities' position is that funeral directors are not generally considered to undertake activities that give rise to trade effluent requiring consent under our trade effluent regulatory framework. Consequently, funeral premises are not normally required to obtain a trade effluent consent. As we do not hold any trade effluent consents for funeral premises, we do not hold information regarding concentration limits for formaldehyde, phenol, methanol, glycerine, or similar substances in relation to such premises. Accordingly, this information is not held, and Regulation 12(4)(a) of the Environmental Information

Regulations 2004 applies.

2. Our trade effluent consent application process associated application forms and standard consent conditions do not contain any specific references to, nor require disclosure of, pharmaceutical, cytotoxic, or cytostatic drug residues that may potentially be present in body fluids or embalming fluids associated with funeral premises activities. Where enquiries are received from funeral homes, our internal guidance advises staff to obtain information regarding site activities, discharge volumes and frequency, chemicals or cleaning products used, and drainage arrangements to assist in determining the nature of the discharge and whether any trade effluent controls may be required.
3. We hold internal operational guidance relating to enquiries from funeral care homes. This guidance sets out the information to be obtained from operators, including details of site activities, discharge volumes and frequency, chemicals or cleaning products used, and confirmation that discharges are made to the foul sewer. The guidance also identifies circumstances in which discharges from funeral homes may be regarded as domestic or de minimis in nature and therefore not considered trade effluent. This includes circumstances where discharge volumes are low and infrequent, the discharge is made to the foul sewer, and no chemicals or specialist substances are used, including where no embalming fluids enter the sewer.

We also hold broader internal guidance regarding the interpretation of trade effluent and trade premises under the Water Industry Act 1991, which identifies funeral directors as an activity not generally considered to give rise to trade effluent requiring consent. We do not hold any funeral sector-specific consent template, draft standard, or policy document establishing consent limits or specific controls for formaldehyde, pharmaceutical residues, cytotoxic drugs, or cytostatic drugs arising from funeral premises.

4. Following reasonable searches, we have not identified any correspondence held with the Environment Agency, Water UK, or any other sewerage undertaker specifically concerning formaldehyde or pharmaceutical residues arising from funeral premises activities. Accordingly, this information is not held, and Regulation 12(4)(a) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 applies.

For completeness, United Utilities is aware that Water UK has published guidance for healthcare wastewater discharges which includes indicative limits for certain substances associated with cadaver preservation activities within healthcare settings. However, United Utilities does not currently operate a corresponding published standard specifically applicable to funeral director premises and embalming activities.

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