

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 me with all information relating to untreated sewage being released into the environment on days when there has been no excess rainfall around greater Manchester.

Please provide information for the last 18 months.

I would like the data in an easy to read format, one that is understandable, showing a breakdown of events, along with a summary to confirm the amount of times it has happened.

Our response:

Please see attached the dry day spill data for Greater Manchester in Appendix 1, which covers the period 01/01/2024 to 31/03/2026. Prior to your review of this data, we would like to highlight the following important points.

The Environment Agency (EA) has established a nationally consistent methodology for identifying dry day spills. A dry day is defined by the EA as having no rainfall above 0.25mm on the day and the 24 hours beforehand.

A storm overflow is only allowed, under the terms of an EA storm overflow discharge permit, to operate as a result of rainfall or snow-melt. So, if it spills on a dry day, that is an indicator that something unusual or unplanned may have happened in our sewer network or the wider drainage catchment it sits within.

Common causes of dry day spills include:

- a blockage in the sewer, often from wipes, fats or debris, which restricts flow and causes levels to rise;
- equipment failure, such as a pump or screen not working as it should;
- groundwater infiltration, where water enters the system from saturated ground even when it isn't raining;
- incorrect flows entering the system, for example from private drains connected incorrectly; or
- river flows entering a storm overflow creating a false spill.



Water for the North West

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Alternatively, the spill may be fully permitted. For example, in a large catchment rainfall may fall in one place and take more than a day to drain down to another area where the spill occurs.

A dry day spill is not usually permitted under normal operating conditions, so when it happens, we treat it very seriously.

We use the EA dry day spill methodology to retrospectively review all storm overflow discharges. Where a suspected dry day spill is identified, this is reported to and investigated by the EA. In parallel, through our Environmental Improvement Programme we are putting in place action plans to take steps to prevent dry day spills from occurring.

The spreadsheet has been designed to set out each of the dry day spills that have occurred from assets that discharge within the Greater Manchester area. The total spill count per day (column D) shows the number of individual spills that occurred that day. The total spill event duration (column E) is the total duration of all the individual spills that occurred that day. For example, row 12 shows that Lock Lane CSO had a dry day spill on 06/01/2024 with 10 single start and stop activations and a total spill duration of 10 hrs 22 mins 00 seconds. Additionally, please note there were no dry day spills in February 2026.

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



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.