



Water for the North West

United Utilities Water Limited

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Our ref: EIR/ID767

Date: 15/04/2026

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 could you tell me:

- *any changes in the capacity of Dalston WWTW from 2010 to date and any planned changes in capacity in the coming years*
- *Please identify the amount by which the capacity changed the date of the change and the reason for the change for example UU built a bigger tank or the EA reduced the permitted flow rate etc*
- *Please could you also tell me the current available headroom for Dalston WWTW in terms of m3 day and remaining percentage.*

Our response:

As you are requesting information relating to wastewater treatment works, we think it will be helpful to provide some background information on the operation and management of wastewater treatment works, before providing the direct responses to your specific points about Dalston WwTW.

More details on the purpose and operation of wastewater assets can also be found on our website via this link: [Wastewater services | United Utilities](#)

Background and Context

Wastewater treatment works (WwTW) operate under permits that are set by the Environment Agency. In principle, these permits are designed to protect river water quality and ensure that the discharges from our assets do not cause pollution, violate water quality standards, or harm aquatic life. With the specific requirements set out in each permit needing to ensure that the watercourse, and the discharges to it, comply with all relevant environmental regulations. With these environmental regulations having been progressively improving over time.

For WwTW, the permit conditions reflect the size and nature of the receiving water course as well as the incoming flows and “load” to the works. The load to a works is usually measured in terms of “Population equivalent,” which measure the household or domestic population in the catchment plus the equivalent load from any traders in the catchment. Typically, a WwTW permit will include consent conditions, for the flow rates that the works needs to treat and the maximum concentrations of various potentially polluting substances within the treated effluent that is discharged from the works.

United Utilities is responsible for the choice and size of the specific treatment processes that are installed at individual WwTW. With many WwTW having had new process stages added, or existing processes extended as a result of new environmental legislation or growth within the catchment. The nature and capabilities of the processes at any WwTW, need to be sufficient to ensure that each treatment works can consistently comply with its consent conditions, in both the short and longer term. We, therefore, continually monitor the performance of our WwTW to assess the potential risks against each of their consent conditions.

We use this information to both ensure that the assets are being operated and maintained effectively and to identify any potential risks to future compliance as a result of both actual and proposed future growth and development within the catchment. With the results of this analysis being used to develop and implement improvement schemes at these sites, in advance of the growth occurring and the works potential becoming unable to comply with its consent conditions. With respect to the capacity of treatment works, the appropriate measure of “capacity” varies for the different stages of each treatment process. Capacities are expressed in different formats, for example volume, flow, or load or remaining percentage. In practice, this means two identically “sized” works can have different population assessments depending on other variables. Therefore, the effective capacity of each works will, in practice, be based upon a series of different measures for the different process stages.

Our focus is therefore, on ensuring that the combined capability of each works is sufficient to treat the flow and load they receive, in line with their environmental permits. And to analyse the ability of our WwTWs to accommodate future population growth or other new requirements or changes in their catchments. As a result of this we do not routinely update “capacity” data for our WwTW’s. The process that we and other water companies use to assess the impact of potential future growth or new requirements for our WwTW is contained within our Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP), with plans being published both for the entire region and for a number of sub catchments within the region. The DWMPs are 25-year, holistic plans that cover all elements across drainage and wastewater. The latest versions of the DWMPs were published in May 2023 and the outputs can be viewed on the DWMP customer portal, with a link provided to this portal later in this letter.

The customer portal holds information across different aspects of drainage and wastewater, for example flooding, pollution, and WwTW capacity. For WwTW capacity, we assess the risk that our WwTW will not have the capacity to meet our permitted volumes as a result of forecast population and business use growth in the area. Within the portal, you can navigate across the Northwest and click areas of interest.

For each drainage area, the data presents risk/opportunities at the following design horizons:

- Current view for the drainage area (2020)
- Developing view for the drainage area
- Future view for the drainage area (2050)

For each design horizon, the drainage area is considered to be;

- No concern
- Minimal risk
- Potential area of focus

The latest versions of our DWMPs were published in May 2023 and can be accessed via this link: [Drainage and wastewater management plan](#). The outputs from these plans and links to the sub regional plans, can be viewed on the DWMP customer portal via this link: [DWMP Customer Portal Environment](#).

Specific responses to your request:

- *any changes in the capacity of Dalston WWTW from 2010 to date and any planned changes in capacity in the coming years*
- *Please identify the amount by which the capacity changed the date of the change and the*

reason for the change for example UU built a bigger tank or the EA reduced the permitted flow rate etc

We have not needed to increase the capacity or improve the treatment capability of Dalston Wastewater treatment works, since 2010, to allow it to comply with either the volumetric or quality consent requirements within its environmental permit.

We also have no current plans to increase the overall capacity of the works, or the flow through the works. We will, however, be enhancing the capability of the works, to allow it to meet a new consent requirement, a phosphate concentration of 0.25 mg/l, that will be required to comply with the Habitats Directive. Work on the design of this project is currently ongoing with a planned completion date before the end of 2028.

- *Please could you also tell me the current available headroom for Dalston WWTW in terms of m3 day and remaining percentage.*

As set out above, we do not routinely update “capacity” data for our WwTW’s and we therefore do not hold this information in the format you requested, therefore in line with Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR we are unable to supply it.

The specific information that we hold within our DWMP for Dalston WwTW, can be found via the [DWMP Customer Portal Environment](#) or within the Eden and Esk catchment DWMP which can be found here: [Eden and Esk catchment DWMP](#).

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