

Water Advisory Body publishes latest report on Irish Water

- WAB continues to have concerns regarding Irish Water's progress in fulfilling key metrics -

Dublin, Ireland – 27 July 2021: In its latest report, the Water Advisory Body (the WAB) is disappointed that the number of supplies on the Remedial Action List has increased. The WAB notes the EPA's concern that the progress made during 2020 was reversed during Q2, and that there are now 48 supplies on the Remedial Action List serving 1,010,117 consumers. This represents an increase of 5,120 consumers being served by the most "at risk" supplies.

The WAB does note Irish Water's improved performance in certain areas – continuing to exceed their 2020 target of replacing lead connections and a continued decrease in the number of consumers on a Boil Water Notices.

Chairperson of The Water Advisory Body, Paul McGowan, noted: *"The WAB welcomes the publication of the Water Sector Transformation Policy Paper by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage. This is an important step towards ensuring Irish Water can be held accountable to its customers and Irish society, in a transparent manner"*.

Some of the key findings in the report include:

- ✓ **First Fix Free Scheme** – There has been a continued and disappointing drop-off in the total number of lead repairs completed under the scheme since mid-2016. However, the WAB anticipates that the expansion of the *First Fix Free Scheme* as well as the implementation of the Household Water Conversation Policy later this year, will result in higher numbers of leak repairs in the future.
- ✓ **Remedial Action List (Water)** – Progress that was being made in 2020 was reversed during the last Quarter. Currently, there are now 48 supplies on the Remedial Action List and eight supplies on this list for which Irish Water has not submitted a completion date.
- ✓ **Priority Urban Areas** - The WAB notes the Environmental Protection Agency's concerns that further delays in connecting wastewater treatment plants to towns and villages in need, will lead to a continued discharge in raw sewage from these areas even after 2024.
- ✓ **Lead service connections replaced** – As per last report, Irish Water only expects to replace 7% of remaining public side lead connections by 2024, indicating that it will fall short of its goal of replacing all lead services by 2026.
- ✓ **Boil Water Notices** – A decline in the total number of consumers on Boil Water Notices at the end of Q1 2021. All 17 notice in place at end of Q1 2021 were in "long term" boil water notices, meaning the notice was in place for more than 30 days.
- ✓ **Urban Waste Water Treatment Plants** – Population served by Urban Waste Water Treatment Plants that are not compliant has increased from 25% to 28%. The percentage of urban regions achieving their license standards has declined slightly, according to the report.

Chairperson of The Water Advisory Body, Paul McGowan, concluded by saying: “The WAB welcomes the development of the National Water Resources Plan, and we look forward to its timely conclusion in 2022. We believe that this plan will play a fundamental role in highlighting the investments needed to deliver the capacity and quality of water on a sustainable, national basis.”

ENDS

Notes for the Editor

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About the WAB

The Water Advisory Body (the WAB) is an independent statutory body established under Part 7 of the Water Services Act 2017. The WAB was formally established on 1 June 2018. Irish Water’s Strategic Funding Plan is a public document and available on Irish Water’s website www.water.ie. Every three months the WAB prepares a report on Irish Water. This report sets out the WAB’s view on how Irish Water is performing against its own Strategic Funding Plan. Each report is prepared for the Oireachtas and is published on the WAB’s website. This is the third quarterly report of the WAB and covers Q3 2020. For further information on the WAB, including this and previous reports, see www.wateradvisorybody.ie