

## PRESS RELEASE 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023

### **The Government needs to deliver an awareness campaign on how to manage septic tanks**

There are nearly half a million domestic wastewater treatment systems (DWWTS), mostly septic tanks, used by householders to treat sewage. The EPA report published today shows that half of those inspected have failed to meet environmental standards. Septic tanks can contaminate household wells, gardens and bathing waters with harmful bacteria and viruses. They can also release nitrogen and phosphorus that can cause pollution in rivers and other waters.

Domestic wastewater is the 6th most significant pressure on water quality, polluting 188 rivers and other waters across Ireland. Over half of the failures reported by the Local Authorities were due to systems were not being properly maintained or desludged. The Government and Local Authorities need to take a more proactive approach to reduce this failure rate by improving awareness of how septic tanks should be maintained and improving homeowner's knowledge of how to identify signs of failure such as increased vegetation or ponding near the septic tank.

*Dr Matt Crowe, Chairperson of the National Water Forum stated that 'This is not only an issue for water quality, but more importantly it is important for the health of homeowners and their families, so uptake of grants to remediate domestic wastewater systems should be promoted, encouraged and facilitated'.*

The Water Forum welcomes the approach of the new National Inspection Plan for septic tanks to focus inspections in areas where there is a risk to water quality or a risk to household wells, with an increased number of inspections per year. The Water Forum have recommended that inspections should also be carried out on new septic to ensure they are properly built or installed.

Private wells located close to septic tanks should be registered and tested regularly to protect the health of families. Adequate resources need to be made available to Local Authorities to carry out this work.

End

[Septic tanks grant scheme](#)

[EPA REPORT](#)

Civic Offices, Limerick Road  
Nenagh, Co. Tipperary

e: [info@nationalwaterforum.ie](mailto:info@nationalwaterforum.ie)

w: [www.thewaterforum.ie](http://www.thewaterforum.ie)



### *Note to the Editor*

The Water Forum (An Fóram Uisce) was established in 2018 to provide a platform for public engagement on all matters relating to water management in Ireland and the implementation of the Water Framework Directive. It consists of 25 members including representatives from a wide range of organisations and sectors with an interest in water issues that includes the environmental sector, the rural and agricultural sector, consumers including customers of Irish Water, the rural water sector, rivers trusts, angling, business sector, trade unions, the community and voluntary sector, fisheries, forestry, education, social housing and tourism. In accordance with the Water Services Act, 2017, the Forum has advisory roles in relation to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH), Irish Water (IW), the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) and the Water Policy Advisory Committee (WPAC). The Forum is chaired by Dr Matt Crowe.

Contact: [gretta@nationalwaterforum.ie](mailto:gretta@nationalwaterforum.ie)

[www.thewaterforum.ie](http://www.thewaterforum.ie)

Twitter: [@anforamuisce](https://twitter.com/anforamuisce)

