

**END SEWAGE POLLUTION COALITION**  
**OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE NEW GOVERNMENT**

**OUR WATER SYSTEM IS BROKEN.**

Across the UK, there were at least

**604,833 DISCHARGES**

in 2023. In England alone, untreated sewage was discharged for

**3.6 MILLION HOURS.**

**WE ARE CALLING FOR A PUBLIC INQUIRY TO REFORM THE WATER SYSTEM.**

**PRIORITY**

We are calling on the new government to immediately launch a UK wide statutory public inquiry to deliver transformational reform of the water system and set the country on a trajectory to end sewage pollution. The inquiry should be launched, completed and recommendations being actioned within the first year of the new government.

The inquiry and resulting recommendations must learn from the clear failures in the current regime and address how regulators and the water companies are set up, operate and financed. The reform of the regulatory landscape must ensure a fair, equitable and transparent system that prioritises public health, the environment, value

for customer money and that delivers healthy rivers, lakes and seas.

The inquiry must have long-term transformational environmental improvement at its heart but also achieve short-term progress in dealing with immediate issues, including holding polluters to account.

**COALITION**





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# THE INQUIRY AND RESULTING RECOMMENDATIONS SHOULD DELIVER THE FOLLOWING



### ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAW

- Ensure that regulators enforce legislation. In particular, preventing illegal discharges occurring outside of exceptional circumstances.
- Ensure regulators are sufficiently resourced to carry out the monitoring, enforcement and prosecution that will ensure full legal compliance and dramatic environmental improvement.



### ENDS POLLUTION FOR PROFIT:

- End bonuses and dividends for water companies who break the law and deliver consistently poor environmental performance.



### PRIORITISES PUBLIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

- Prioritise action to protect the health of the thousands of people who use the water for physical and mental health benefits.
- Safeguard and restore our most precious and sensitive natural environments including Sites of Special Scientific interest.



### MAINSTREAMS USE OF NATURE BASED SOLUTIONS:

- Mainstream and prioritise the use of innovative and effective nature-based solutions, to help tackle the causes of sewage pollution and deliver co-benefits for biodiversity and climate mitigation and adaptation.



### REVEALS THE TRUTH

- Provide the public with consistent and easily understandable information to protect water users health.
- Creates transparency across the system to ensure water companies can be held to account.

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## IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

### IN ADDITION WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE GOVERNMENT IMMEDIATELY DELIVERING THE FOLLOWING URGENT POLICY ACTIONS.

- 01** Increasing funding of regulators to carry out the monitoring, enforcement and prosecution required to deliver on the government's manifesto commitments.
- 02** Directing the economic regulator to ensure water company plans for the next 5 years end sewage pollution affecting popular recreational waters and high-priority nature sites by 2030, prioritising nature-based solutions where effective.

- 03** Re-opening bathing water applications for 2024 whilst continuing to reform the Bathing Water Regulations to extend the bathing season year-round, expand the definition of bathers to include all recreational water users and test for emerging pollutants.