

Private Water Supply Policy

**Yorkshire Water's policy for supporting
non-YW customers during instances of
insufficiency of private water supplies**

For External Use



YorkshireWater

Document Control

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1. Introduction

A private water supply is any supply, not provided by a water company, where the water is intended for human consumption or for any food undertaking where the quality of the water may affect the final product.

About 1% of the population of England use a private water supply. Most of these supplies are situated in remote, rural areas and can originate from a range of sources including boreholes, natural springs and watercourses. Local authorities act as the regulators for these private water supplies.

A private water supply that is insufficient is one that fails to provide enough water for the purposes of human consumption.

Such instances of insufficiency can occur because of interruption to the normal volume of supply expected. This can arise due to challenging weather conditions, for example during prolonged warm and dry periods when the source dries up or during severe cold weather when the source freezes. Undetected leaks on pipes and/or tanks, pipe bursts, pump failure, inadequate supply arrangements, the disconnection of pipework and maintenance work can also all result in insufficiency.

2. Aim

This document outlines Yorkshire Water's policy for supporting non-YW customers during periods of insufficiency of private water supplies. It sets out the circumstances in which Yorkshire Water may and may not be able to support, with recognition that in cases where there is a danger to human life or health that an appropriate level of response is required.

3. Responsibilities

The following responsibilities of water companies, local authorities and relevant persons related to the ownership or management of the private water supply are defined in the DWI guidance for "Managing Insufficiency of Private Water Supplies". The below is an extract of the responsibilities relevant to this policy. For full details of the DWI guidance, follow the link that can be found in section 6 of this policy.

Planning for insufficiency:

- Relevant person(s) should ensure that clear and achievable documented contingency procedures are in place to mitigate risks when supplies are temporarily interrupted for any reason, for example for periods of drought, planned maintenance work on distribution systems or when reactive unplanned work is necessary. Procedures should include arrangements for alternative supplies of water.
- Local authorities should ensure that this documentation is in place through their regulation 6 risk assessments and five yearly reviews and require their development when missing or deficient.

In the event of insufficiency:

- If a private water supply should become insufficient due to drought conditions, a relevant person(s) should refer to their contingency plan.
- Where a contingency plan is not yet in place, the relevant person(s) may seek advice from the local authority or the water company, but there is no obligation on either to provide an alternative supply of water except where the local authority considers the circumstances to pose a danger to life or human health. In this case, the local authority has power to require, if practicable at reasonable cost, the local water company to supply water (by means other than in pipes) for a specified period (for example, a supply of bottled water, or water supplied in tanks or bowsers). In this situation the costs for providing the supply would be recoverable from the relevant person(s) to which the supply is provided.

4. Yorkshire Water's Approach

Based on DWI guidance and the Water Industry Act 1991, all requests (domestic and non-domestic) for support relating to private water supply issues should be **directed to the relevant Local Authority in the first instance** for an initial assessment.

Our communication to Local Resilience Forums (LRF), which includes Local Authorities and other partner agencies, regarding these situations is as follows:

"Yorkshire Water has received a handful of requests for advice and/or support from LRF partners regarding some communities and areas which are not supplied by Yorkshire Water. Often these rural communities are supplied by natural springs or boreholes, referred to as private water supplies. It may be the case that these supplies run dry or freeze due to severe weather conditions, such as prolonged warm and dry periods or periods of severe cold.

We ask that LRF partners proactively review their contingency plans for these areas and ensure they can be enacted. If there are areas which suffer from an immediate loss of their water supply, Yorkshire Water will support LRF partners and the community, until such contingency plans are enacted. This would be in the form of supplying bottled water for any establishments and members of the public which are vulnerable. This is on a best endeavours basis, LRF partners should understand that if our resources are required for any operational issue or interruption to Yorkshire Water customers, this would take precedence."

5. Our Support Arrangements

The below details the process by which Yorkshire Water will manage requests for support in instances of insufficiency of private water supplies.

5.1 Urgent Requests

Step 1: Local Authority and relevant persons related to the private water supply should enact **local contingency plans** firstly, for example gaining access to water supplies from local village halls, leisure centres etc.

Step 2: Local Authority and relevant persons related to the private water supply should seek the **purchase of bottled water** or other alternative water supplies from private third parties (Yorkshire Water can share contact details of private third parties where possible to support this).

Step 3: If the loss of supply is immediate and the above steps have been exhausted, then Yorkshire Water will provide support in the form of **delivering bottled water** for up to 3 days for circumstances that pose a danger to life or human health. During these 3 days, the Local Authority and relevant persons related to the private water supply should arrange their own contingency measures if the disruption is expected to continue beyond 3 days.

5.2 Non-Urgent Requests

Step 1: Local Authority and relevant persons related to the private water supply should enact **local contingency plans** firstly, for example gaining access to water supplies from local village halls, leisure centres etc.

Step 2: Local Authority and relevant persons related to the private water supply should seek the **purchase of bottled water** or other alternative water supplies from private third parties (Yorkshire Water can share contact details of private third parties where possible to support this).

Step 3: Local Authority and relevant persons related to the private water supply should seek a **new supply connection** to Yorkshire Water's piped network via Yorkshire Water Developer Services team (<https://www.yorkshirewater.com/developers/water/water-connections>).

Step 4: Local Authority and relevant persons related to the private water supply should seek to access water from Yorkshire Water's piped network via a **metered standpipe** (<https://www.yorkshirewater.com/business/standpipes>).

Step 5: Only once the Local Authority and relevant persons related to the private water supply can demonstrate that the above steps have been exhausted, then Yorkshire Water will provide support in the form of **delivering bottled water** for up to 3 days for circumstances that pose a danger to life or human health. During these 3 days, the Local Authority and relevant persons related to the private water supply should arrange their own contingency measures if the disruption is expected to continue beyond 3 days.

5.3 Considerations for Farms

Yorkshire Water is unable to support requests for non-potable use. If the relevant persons have a metered supply, then this must be used for non-potable use including irrigation for farms.

Yorkshire Water may be able to offer static tanks to support, but this is based on best endeavours. In such case, the recipient may retain our assets for an agreed period but must replenish the water themselves.

Priority for supporting farms will be given in the following order, as per NFU guidelines: pigs and poultry firstly, followed by dairy and beef, followed by arable and horticulture.

5.4 Considerations for Firefighting

In the interests of protection of human life and relief of suffering, Yorkshire Water will support firefighting efforts where insufficient water supplies are available to the Fire & Rescue Service. This is as per our business as usual practice.

However, please note that if a private reservoir provides water for firefighting purposes and a request is made to Yorkshire Water to replenish the reservoir during a period of insufficiency, then Yorkshire Water will be unable to do so as this could cause an environmental impact and constitute as a pollution event.

6. Related Documents

Document	Link
Water Industry Act 1991	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/56/contents/
Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/618/contents/
Private Water Supplies (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2018	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/707/contents/
Managing Insufficiency of Private Water Supplies (DWI Guidance October 2021)	https://www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supplies/guidance-documents/pws-regulations/managing-insufficiency-of-private-water-supplies/