

Boris Johnson's Sewage Crisis

Environment Agency data shows water companies are failing to monitor sewage discharges along the coastline including at British seaside resorts.

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Global Research, September 02, 2022

[The Ecologist](#) 22 August 2022

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Environment](#)

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Monitors being used for measuring the amount of sewage being pumped into the sea across the UK are faulty or not even installed, according to a new analysis of the data.

Environment Agency data shows water companies are failing to monitor sewage discharges along the coastline including at British seaside resorts.

The findings come as dozens of pollution warnings were put in place across beaches and swimming spots in England and Wales this week after heavy rain overwhelmed sewer systems, leading water companies to release sewage into the natural environment.

Discharges

Ministers are facing growing calls to clamp down on the water firms who are being criticised for not investing money back into the UK's outdated water infrastructure.

Boris Johnson's father Stanley blamed his son's administration for the sewage problem. Johnson Snr said in a radio interview:

“We have to blame the government for not pressing this matter as hard as it should've done.

“Absent the EU push as well, you can understand how the government felt able to not push this thing as it should've pushed.”

The Liberal Democrats, who conducted the data analysis, said water companies have either installed Event Duration Monitors (EDMs) that are frequently faulty or have not installed devices at all. EDMs are supposed to measure the number and length of sewage dumps from storm overflows.

In total, the party found 24 percent of sewage discharges went unmonitored last year while 1,802 monitors installed by water companies across the UK did not work for at least 90 percent of the time.

Sewage

Anglian Water has the highest rate of failure, with 49 percent of all its sewage discharges not measured due to faulty or no monitors installed, according to the party. This is followed by South West Water with 30 percent and Severn Trent Water with 29 percent.

One in eight of South West Water's sewage monitors installed at designated bathing locations across Cornwall and Devon are either faulty or not installed, the party said.

In Sussex, Southern Water was found to have altogether failed to install one at the popular seaside spot of Littlehampton Pier while one in Seaford was working only a third of the time.

It comes after a previous analysis by the Liberal Democrats found water companies dumped sewage in public swimming spots for more than 160,000 hours last year.

The Labour Party earlier this week said figures it obtained from the Environment Agency through Freedom of Information requests showed raw sewage has been pumped into UK waterways for a total of 9,427,355 hours since 2016.

Swamped

The party also said the data shows a 2,553 percent increase in the number of monitored discharge hours between 2016 and 2021, arguing the situation is "drastically worsening" under the Conservatives.

In light of the latest analysis on monitors, the Liberal Democrats say the amount of sewage could be "dramatically higher".

The party's environment spokesperson, **Tim Farron MP**, said:

"These water companies could be guilty of gross negligence by failing to install sewage monitors.

"This is a national scandal and these new figures stink of a cover-up. Britain's seaside resorts are being swamped by foul sewage yet the government is nowhere to be found.

"Why on earth are Conservative ministers letting them get away with this? Sussex has been devastated in recent days by disgraceful sewage dumps because of Southern Water.

Target

He added:

"The CEO of Southern Water should go to Seaford to check on this sewage monitor immediately. The public needs to know how safe, if at all, popular beaches are for swimming."

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) released a response to the

issue earlier this week outlining the action it is taking.

Steve Double, the water minister, said:

“We are the first government to take action to tackle sewage overflows.”

An Anglian Water spokesperson said:

“All [the places designated for bathing] have EDM monitors installed on them. Work to install EDM monitors on all the CSOs (combined sewer overflows) across our region is ahead of target.”

The PA news agency has also contacted Southern Water, South West Water and Severn Trent Water for comment.

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