

# Private Sewer and Lateral Drain Transfer 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011



Dŵr Cymru  
Welsh Water



## Waste Water Network Operations A guide on sewerage responsibilities from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011

**For Issue to:**

**DCWW Waste Water Network Team  
Operations Service Partners  
Operations Support Partners  
Repair & Maintenance Partners**

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q1. What exactly will be transferred to the water companies?**

Private sewers and lateral drains will be transferred and form part of the public sewer network.

•A **private sewer** is a pipe that carries rainwater and/or wastewater away from more than one property to the public sewer.

•A **lateral drain** is a pipe that carries wastewater away from a single property. The transferred asset will be the length located outside the property boundary. Many thousands of lateral drains run underneath roads or even railways so can be problematic to fix.

### **Q2. Are there any sewers that will not be transferred?**

Yes. There are some exceptions that will not transfer or will transfer in a later timeframe.

These include:

- Private drains within the property boundary
- Surface water sewers that drain direct to watercourses
- Land drainage and highway drainage
- Privately owned sewage treatment works and pipes connected to them
- Privately owned septic tanks and cesspits
- Large 'multi-occupier' commercial sites
- Private sewage pumping stations including rising mains (but it is proposed that these will gradually transfer and the government has set a provisional date of October 2016 for this)
- Private sewer and/or lateral drain owners who appeal against the transfer

### **Q3. What will the transfer mean to Dwr Cymru Welsh Water?**

The transfer will mean a dramatic increase in the amount of work we undertake on sewerage. We estimate that this could mean a doubling of our wastewater network. Overall the private sewers are thought to be in a worse condition than the public sewers.

We do not know the full extent of what we are taking on; this will only emerge once the transfer has taken place. Since this is a huge undertaking, in the first instance we will concentrate on short-term issues to ensure the network operates efficiently.

### **Q4. When will this happen?**

It is currently proposed that sewers and lateral drains will transfer to the water and sewerage companies on 1st October 2011. Pumping stations will be subject to a phased transfer which is due to be complete by 1st October 2016.

## **Frequently Asked Questions – continued**

### **Q5. How will the transfer take place?**

In order to take on ownership, the water and sewerage companies will have to use their existing statutory powers and serve a formal notice of their intention to adopt. We have written to all of our customers in advance of the transfer to them accordingly.

### **Q6. Will the sewers built in un-adopted highways be part of the transfer?**

Yes, they will transfer irrespective of the adopted status of the highway.

### **Q. I have a blockage in my sewer. I have read that you are now responsible. Please can you come and fix it?**

The changes which mean Welsh Water own the majority of the private sewer network will not come into place until 1st October 2011.

Up until 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011, responsibilities will not change. If a property was built in 1937 or later the pipe connecting the property to the public sewer (the drain) is the responsibility of the homeowner. If there are sections of the pipe that connect more than one property to the public sewer, then these are the joint responsibility of those properties served.

If the property was built before 1937, the drain that serves only that property is still the responsibility of the homeowner. However, the sections of the pipe that connect more than one property to the public sewer are owned and maintained by Welsh Water already.

### **Q7. Why does the responsibility for some drainage pipe work currently depend on whether the house was built before or after 1937?**

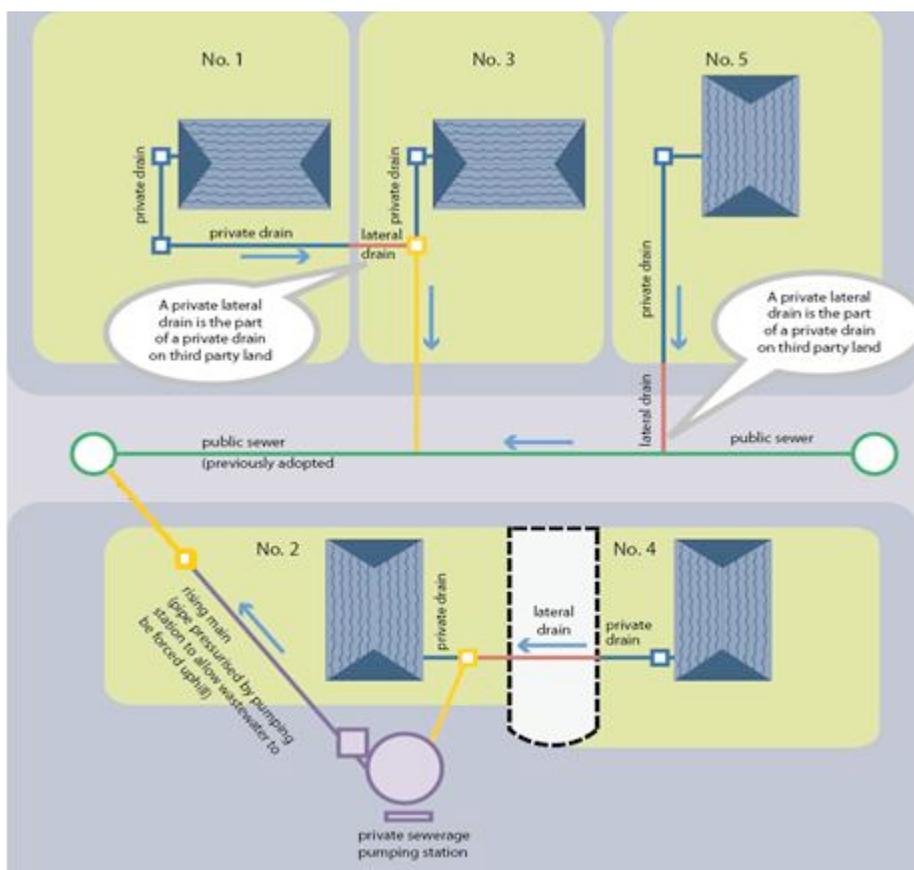
The 1936 Public Health Act set out a range of responsibilities for the operation and maintenance of sewerage systems. In simple terms, it meant that all sewers (which are defined as pipes serving more than one property) constructed prior to the 1 October 1937 would be classed as public sewers. As Welsh Water is now responsible for maintaining all public sewers, we will deal with problems on these 'pre-1937 sewers'. Sewers constructed after this date are not our responsibility unless the developer who constructed them applied for them to be formally adopted by Welsh Water and built them to a required standard.

### **Q8. How do I classify the incident on my mobile device and SAP?**

It is essential that we record the work activity against the asset type such public sewer, private drain, transferred lateral, transferred sewer, public sewer, this will allow us to record all of our incidents and costs when we have worked on assets that have transferred to us.

Figure 1 – Typical drainage layout and the likely impact of the transfer

Properties 1, 3 and 5 constructed after 1<sup>st</sup> October 1937. Properties drain by gravity into public sewer.



Properties 2 and 4 constructed after 1<sup>st</sup> October 1937 below road level and unable to drain by gravity into public sewer. Drainage travels by gravity into private sewage pumping station from where it is pumped upwards through purple pipe to a higher level.

←----- Direction of flow

### KEY

(Note: most properties have separate drainage for foul water and surface water. For simplicity, only one is shown in the Figure)

**Private drain – pipe serving a single property.** (*Responsibility currently rests with property owners & occupiers.*) Private drains (within the property boundary) will remain the responsibility of the property owners and occupiers.

**Private lateral drain – pipe serving a single property and lying outside of the boundary of that property, which has not been adopted by Welsh Water.** (*Responsibility currently rests with property owners & occupiers.*) The ownership and maintenance responsibility for gravity private lateral drains is expected to transfer to Welsh Water.

**Private sewer – pipe serving 2 or more properties, which has not been adopted by Welsh Water.** (*Responsibility currently rests with property owners & occupiers.*) The ownership and maintenance responsibility for gravity private sewers is expected to transfer to Welsh Water.

**Public sewer – pipe serving 2 or more properties, which has been adopted through statute or agreement by Welsh Water and which they already own and maintain.** (*Responsibility currently rests with Welsh Water.*)

**Private sewage pumping station and pumped 'rising main', which has not been adopted by Welsh Water.** (*Responsibility currently rests with property owners & occupiers.*) Private sewage pumping stations are expected to remain the responsibility of the property owners and occupiers after transfer of private sewers and lateral drains, but to transfer to Welsh Water no later than 1 October 2016.

The following diagrams have been produced to give an overview of different property types, curtilages and what Dwr Cymru Welsh Water will have responsibilities for operating and maintaining from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011 and what will remain as a private drain.

The following applies to all diagrams on pages 6 to 16 inclusive:

-  Dwr Cymru Welsh Water will have responsibility to operate and maintain from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011.
  
-  Private Drain – pipe serving a single property, responsibility rests with owners and occupiers.

