

# Private Water Supplies Annual Data Return from Local Authorities

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Data return spreadsheet

#### The spreadsheet is not working. How do I enter data?

Please use the latest version of the data return template. Older versions are different and will not upload into the Government Gateway. The latest version and guidance can be found on the DWI [website](http://www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supplies/local-authorities/private-supply-annual-reporting) ([www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supplies/local-authorities/private-supply-annual-reporting](http://www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supplies/local-authorities/private-supply-annual-reporting)).

You may need to click on 'Enable content' or 'Enable editing' before you can add your data.

#### How do I unlock the spreadsheet?

If you are unable to copy and paste data into the spreadsheet or edit it, you are using the wrong template spreadsheet. Please note the spreadsheet for 2025 is provided unlocked.

Please be careful if you copy and paste data into the spreadsheet. Ensure you paste into the correct column.

#### How do I know what I am supposed to input in the columns?

If you place your cursor over the blue column title cells containing a small red triangle in the top right-hand corner, a comments box appears, explaining what is required in the column.

Please refer to the specification guidance which explains what information is needed in each column, including the options and if it is mandatory to complete. The specification guidance can be found on the DWI [website](http://www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supplies/local-authorities/private-supply-annual-reporting) ([www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supplies/local-authorities/private-supply-annual-reporting](http://www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supplies/local-authorities/private-supply-annual-reporting)).

Whilst there is the option to select 'unknown', as an answer it is becoming increasingly unacceptable to use this within the return and local authorities are encouraged to make enquiries to determine and report the actual status of the supply in every respect.

**The columns do not match our database.**

Some laboratories have produced an electronic report to assist local authorities with the completion of this section. You will need to discuss this with your IT provider or laboratory. Please ensure that the columns and options match the specification.

**Is this data return for 2025 or 2026?**

The 2025 data return covering calendar year, 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025, is due for submission by 31 January 2026.

The data should all be correct and up to date for 2025.

The year in Contacts column A should be 2025.

The year in Details column F should be 2025.

The dates in Data column E should all be for calendar year 2025.

If you have sample results dated January 2026, they should not be included in the data return for 2025, but included in the 2026 data return, due for submission 31 January 2027.

When you are ready to upload in the Government Gateway portal, remember to select Upload Annual Return on the row for Return Year 2025.

**We did not carry out any sampling in 2025. Do I have to submit a data return?**

Yes please. If there are private water supplies where authorities have not carried out any sampling or risk assessments in the reporting year, please complete the Contacts, Details and Total Single Dwellings worksheets. The Data worksheet can be left blank.

Provide sample results where testing has occurred in the calendar year 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025.

**We do not have any private water supplies in our area. Do I have to submit a data return?**

Yes please. If there are no private water supplies in your area, you are still required to complete and submit a data return. For a nil return you need to complete the Contacts and the Total Single Dwellings worksheets. The Data and Details worksheets can be left blank.

The Details worksheet must contain records for each supply that is used for domestic purposes (drinking, washing, cooking and toilet flushing) at any time during the reporting year.

## Contacts

### What is a CEO?

In the Contacts worksheet there should be at least two rows of data. A row of data with the contact details for the Environmental Health Officer dealing with private water supplies and a row of data with the contact details for the Chief Executive Officer/head of the local authority.

Each contact should be listed on a separate row.  
The first contact listed will receive the upload status email.

### How do I enter the address?

In column F, for each contact person, please enter the full postal address for the local authority in a single cell.

Column L Is contact CEO? Needs to be uppercase N or Y.

## Details

### Do I need to enter the population?

Yes this is a mandatory field and an important factor in determining the supply type.

### How do I know the grid reference for the sites?

The UK Grid Reference Finder <https://gridreferencefinder.com> can be used to identify 6 figure Eastings and Northings.

Please enter an estimate, rather than leaving the field blank.

### Can you provide more information on how to complete the radioactivity monitoring columns?

Detailed guidance can be found on the DWI website for [England](#) and [Wales](#).

If the answer in column AB is no, columns AC to AM can be left blank.  
If the answer in column AB is yes, columns AC to AM must be completed.

## Data

### Which sample type should I use?

In column F you must specify, the reason why this parameter was tested for.

The options are:

**Group A** parameter and frequency requirement

**Group B** parameter and frequency requirement

**Regulation 10** purposes

**Regulation 11** purposes (Wales only)

As part of an **investigation** (INV)

Where it was identified as a risk by the **risk assessment** (ARA). This would include regulation 8 supply samples.

Each parameter that was tested can only be for one of the above reasons.

Although there are some parameters in both the Group A and Group B list, the frequency may be different. A local authority should only test for parameters as part of either the Group A or Group B frequency requirement in any given sample, and record which one on the data return. If a parameter is already being tested as part of the Group A requirement, where the frequency is the same, there is no need to sample it again as part of the Group B requirement.

We are aware that the column F header refers to a 'Sample Type', which may be misleading as a sample may be analysed for more than one parameter. This should refer to the reason why the **parameter** was tested.

### Regulations:

#### England

Group A parameters are listed in [table 1](#) in part 1 of schedule 2 in the 2018 amended regs. You will need to select the parameters that are appropriate according to the circumstances shown in the table. Please note that some parameters apply to all supplies, others are specific only to some. The frequency at which you take these selected parameters is shown in table 2.

[Schedule 1, parts 1 and 2](#) specifies the general requirements for the monitoring of Group B parameters. However, you have to refer to the 2016 regulations to get the actual list of parameters. The frequency at which you sample these, is shown in table 3 in part 2 of schedule 2 2018 [amended regulations](#).

## Wales

Group A parameters are listed in [table 1](#) part 1 of schedule 2 in the 2017 amended regs. You will need to select the parameters that are appropriate according to the circumstances shown in the table. Please note that some parameters apply to all supplies, others are specific only to some. The frequency at which you take these selected parameters in [table 2](#) part 1 of schedule 2.

[Schedule 1 parts 1 and 2](#) specifies the general requirements for the monitoring of Group B parameters. However, you have to refer to the 2016 regulations to get the actual list of parameters. The frequency at which you sample these, is shown in [table 3](#) in part 2 of schedule 2 2018 [amended regulations](#).

### **Some of the samples we have taken are not on the parameter code list. What should I do?**

Contact the DWI if the parameter is not on the list [dwi.pwsdata@defra.gov.uk](mailto:dwi.pwsdata@defra.gov.uk).

### **I have an error for a parameter code.**

Or type in the parameter code, without the name. For example A012.

### **I do not understand why I have an error.**

If you have attempted to upload the spreadsheet into the DWI's database but it failed, you will be emailed an error report. This error report can also be found by

Use the specification guidance [website](http://www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supplies/local-authorities/private-supply-annual-reporting) ([www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supplies/local-authorities/private-supply-annual-reporting](http://www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supplies/local-authorities/private-supply-annual-reporting)) to check what options are available for these cells.

Please correct the errors and re-upload.

### **What does data outside range mean?**

If the error message says 'data outside range', this could be because there is a blank row in the middle of your rows of data.

If it says 'data outside range' it will not upload the whole spreadsheet until that error is resolved. For example, deleting the blank row.

Please do not leave blank rows between rows of data. This will cause the upload to fail.

### **I do not understand why a sample result is being flagged as an error.**

Check if the result is above or below the standard/PCV limit.

If the result is a failure (has breached the standard), column G should contain an 'F'.

If the result is not a failure, check that the parameter result has been recorded in the correct units of measure. See Parameter List spreadsheet published alongside the data return template for more information. You will need to convert the result to the required units.

No results of less than zero ( $< 0$ ) are permitted. It is not possible for a result to be less than zero.

## Uploading

Please ensure you have downloaded the 2025 template from the DWI [website](http://www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supplies/local-authorities/private-supply-annual-reporting) ([www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supplies/local-authorities/private-supply-annual-reporting](http://www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supplies/local-authorities/private-supply-annual-reporting)).

### How do I submit my data return for 2025?

Data returns must be submitted online via the Government Gateway web portal. We no longer accept data returns by sent by email.

### How do I find Government Gateway web portal?

<http://dwi-reporting.defra.gov.uk>.

### How do I log in?

You should log into your Government Gateway account using the login details you created for the previous data return submission.

Unfortunately the 'I have forgotten my password' button does not work.

If you have forgotten your Government Gateway password or user ID, your colleagues set up as administrators can reset your password in the 'logon and manage my account' option of the login process.

If you do not have any other administrators set up, please email [dwi.pwsdata@defra.gov.uk](mailto:dwi.pwsdata@defra.gov.uk).

If your registered administrator/s has/have left and you need to register on the Government Gateway, please email [dwi.pwsdata@defra.gov.uk](mailto:dwi.pwsdata@defra.gov.uk).

## Government Gateway

In the Government Gateway you should register more than one **administrator**, to ensure somebody in your team maintains access to the account if the administrator is absent or leaves the local authority.

An **administrator** can edit and add new users, reset passwords and resend Government Gateway IDs.

A **standard user** has read access.

If you submit data returns for multiple local authorities, you will need separate Government Gateway accounts for each separate data return.

### **Saving**

The file format of the spreadsheet must be .xls and not .xlsx.

The filename must be in the correct format: XXX-privatewater-2025.xls  
XXX being your local authority's FSA code.

### **Has it uploaded?**

You should see a clock appear in the **Upload Status** field. This means please wait while the data is processed. It does not upload instantly.

This status should auto-refresh. If it does not, please refresh the page.

A green tick in the **Upload Status** field shows that the upload was successful. You will receive an email titled 'Private water upload status' confirming Status Uploaded.

The red cross in the **Upload Status** field shows that the upload has failed. You will receive an email titled 'Private water upload status' confirming Status Failed to Upload. Please note you cannot reply to this email address.

### **I have uploaded my data return, but the status email lists errors and warnings. What does that mean?**

**Errors** – Your data **has not** been loaded.

If your report contains errors in the Status column, these errors would have prevented the entire return from being uploaded into the database.

**Action: The errors must be fixed** and the return uploaded again.

**Warnings** – Your data **has** been loaded.

If your report contains warnings in the Status column, these warnings are to notify you that one or more sample result that you have uploaded is either very high, or very low compared with the relevant standard.

The value may be incorrect, so you should check that a transcription, typographical or copy and paste error has not occurred, and to also check whether the units of measurement are correct. Check on the Parameters List.

**Action: The errors must be fixed** and the return uploaded again. **The warnings do not have to be changed** unless necessary.

**I did not receive a status update email.**

The first contact listed in the Contacts worksheet, will receive the upload status email.

**How do I make changes after I have uploaded my data return?**

You can make changes to the spreadsheet and go through the same process to upload it. The subsequent submission should include all the data and not just the additions or changes, because **the upload will overwrite the first dataset.**

**I am unable to submit by the 31 January 2026. Can I submit it late?**

Local authorities should make an effort to provide a response on or before 31 January 2026. If local authorities do not have all their sample results in time, they should submit what they have by 31 January 2026.

Data returns submitted after this date will not be included in the Chief Inspector's annual report. However please do submit your data return or remaining results when you can.

**Please contact us if you have any further questions.**

**Telephone:** 0330 041 6501

**Email:** [dwi.pwsdata@defra.gov.uk](mailto:dwi.pwsdata@defra.gov.uk)