*Version 1.1

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November 2026

Dear local authority colleague

You will be aware that the Inspectorate provides technical advice and support to local authorities on the regulation of private water supplies. As well as collecting the annual data returns from local authorities on behalf of the Secretary of State and Welsh ministers, the Inspectorate responds to around 250 enquiries on private water supplies each year and provides technical guidance to stakeholders via its website, and through various workshops, partnerships and conferences in England and Wales. Behind the scenes, it provides support to Defra's policy teams, responding to questions put to and coming from ministers. The Inspectorate has also worked proactively to develop potential solutions for policymakers to address the well-recognised issues with the current legislative framework. Up until recently, the Inspectorate has designated a small team to accommodate these unfunded, largely non-statutory activities, which it carries out in the best interest of consumers and other stakeholders.

However, the Inspectorate would like to make you aware that due to the pressing nature of other statutory priorities in relation to its duties as the regulator of public supplies, it has found it necessary to withdraw private water supply functions.

The Inspectorate will not be accepting 2026 data from English local authorities in January 2027. We will not be producing water quality reports for private water supplies in England or Wales in July 2027.

The Inspectorate has also supported the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) by monitoring and reviewing the CATG accreditation scheme of the ISO 17024 standard, which certifies persons that take and analyse samples of private water supplies. This support will be paused **however, the scheme and its requirements will continue.**

We will continue to respond to EIRs and FOIs relating to private water supplies, where we hold the relevant data.

Annual data returns, notices and risk assessment summaries should be emailed to Defra at drinkingwaterquality@defra.gov.uk, instead of uploading to the DWI's database or sending to any of the DWI's email addresses.

For all other enquiries, please contact Defra, instead of the DWI, via https://submit-an-enquiry-to-defra.service.gov.uk/start-now. The annual data return template can be downloaded from the website www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supplies/local-authorities/private-supply-annual-reporting.

I very much appreciate your patience during this period of transition.

Yours sincerely



Annabelle Edwards
Deputy Chief Inspector

*Version 1 sent to local authorities 18 November 2026.
Revised section in bold.