

Addressee only

Name/Job Title

Email:

Date: 07/06/2023

Dear

Industrial Emissions Directive

It is now nearly four years since we informed companies of their obligations under this Directive. I am writing to explain the actions we require from you in order to bring the permitting of your sewage sludge digesters to a satisfactory conclusion.

Background

In 2019 we wrote to all water and sewerage companies (WaSCs) to confirm that the biological treatment of sewage sludge was an activity regulated under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED), meaning that all sludge anaerobic digestion facilities would require an environmental permit in order to operate legally.

We set a timetable for the submission of permit applications and agreed that if a valid application had been received the facility could continue to be operated until such time as the application had been determined. Where an application is refused this arrangement ceases and the operation of the site would be treated as illegal.

All applications were received within the agreed deadlines. However we have found the vast majority of these applications are deficient, in most cases lacking sufficient detail to allow us to issue the permit. This means that despite a dedicated permitting team working on these applications for over 2 years we have to date only issued two permits. At this rate it will take 35 years to complete the permitting task. Clearly this would be unacceptable.

The original deadline for obtaining permits and complying in full with the requirements of the IED was 22 August 2022, that is 4 years after the publication of the [Waste Management Best Available Techniques Reference document](#), and over 3 years since we informed WaSCs of their legal obligations. In light of the lack of progress across the industry we have allowed a further 2 years to achieve compliance so that all aspects of the IED must be complied with on or before 31 December 2024.

What we require from you

In order to determine your permit applications and progress towards full compliance we need you to:

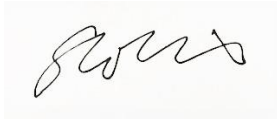
- Provide detailed proposals of how you intend to bring each facility up to the standard required by the IED and the BAT Reference document. Please ensure your current applications contain this information in full; if not you should provide the additional information as soon as possible.

- Commit to achieving full compliance with the BAT standards as soon as possible and no later than 31 December 2024.
- Commit the resources and carry out any necessary works within this timescale, if necessary in advance of the issue of the permit.

Your company has a legal obligation to obtain permits and comply with the requirements of the IED and the BAT Reference document for each of your facilities. Should you be unable to meet these commitments we will be unable to issue you with a permit. We would then need to consider the most appropriate form of enforcement action, including potentially prosecution and the use of legal notices requiring activities to cease where they pose a significant risk of serious harm to human health or the environment.

I would be grateful to receive by Monday 26 June your confirmation that you will commit to meeting these requirements in full. I am sharing this letter with John Leyland and Stuart Colville (Water UK) for information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Collins', is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Georgina Collins
Director, Regulated Industry