



DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE
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6 November 2025

Special Reference Group – Water PR24 price redeterminations
Competition and Markets Authority
25 Cabot Square
London
E14 4QZ

Dear Special Reference Group members

Water PR24 Price Redeterminations – Update from the Drinking Water Inspectorate

Following the publication of the Draft Redeterminations, South East Water and Wessex Water have engaged with us on their lead and disinfection schemes respectively. We thought it prudent to provide a summary of the Inspectorate's related activities.

South East Water Lead

South East Water requested a meeting with the Inspectorate to understand the circumstances under which we might consider a change to the current section 19 undertaking, which imposes a legal obligation to deliver their AMP8 lead strategy. The Inspectorate reiterated its stated aim, to achieve lead free drinking water supplies in England and Wales as soon as possible. The water sector has previously stated an aim to be lead-free by 2050. As such, the Inspectorate would consider that an ambitious commitment in respect of lead pipe replacement could warrant the acceptance of a change to the undertaking.

The Inspectorate met with Ofwat on 5 November 2025 to discuss this matter, and a tripartite meeting between the Inspectorate, Ofwat and South East Water has been scheduled for Friday 7 November 2025.

At the time of writing, the lead strategy section 19 undertaking, in its original form, is still in force.

Wessex Water Disinfection

Wessex Water submitted details of disinfection improvement schemes for seven of their water treatment works ([REDACTED]). The company also presented the risk assessment approach it has taken to identify the prioritisation of these particular water treatment works for disinfection upgrades. The company has identified ultraviolet disinfection as the preferred solution.

The Inspectorate has commended these schemes for support on the basis that they reduce the likelihood of a disinfection failure, they increase the resilience of the water treatment works and that the water treatment works selected represent the highest risk. All seven schemes have now been formalised into Acknowledged Actions, which shall be tracked by the Inspectorate, throughout their delivery, to completion. We have made Ofwat aware of these actions, and both Ofwat and the CMA were copied into our formal acceptance letter to the company, for awareness.

I trust this letter is useful for summarising the interactions and actions taken between the Inspectorate and the two water companies in respect of their redeterminations. I also confirm that the Inspectorate has had no contact with any other water company in respect of the Draft Redeterminations.

If there are any further questions, or if the panel would benefit from discussing this or any other topic directly with us, we remain available for a call or to answer questions.

I am copying this letter to [REDACTED] at Ofwat and the Inspectorate's board level contacts at South East Water and Wessex Water.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Drinking Water Inspectorate

Cc [REDACTED], Ofwat

Cc [REDACTED] South East Water

Cc [REDACTED], Wessex Water