



Surfers Against Sewage
Unit 2, Wheal Kitty Workshops
St Agnes, Cornwall, TR5 ORD

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Susan Davy
South West Water
Peninsula House
Rydene Lane
Exeter
EX2 7HR

17th June 2024

Dear Susan,

I am writing to express my disappointment in the lack of engagement that South West Water (SWW) is making with Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) in relation to sewage alerts and data provision - all of which is about keeping water users safe. It is our experience that over the last year, you have increasingly ignored our requests for data – including in response to Freedom of Information requests – and failed to provide answers to reasonable questions relating to incidents and sewage discharge events.

Our discussions have always been based on collaboration around the interests of water users and their safety. Unfortunately, we are now witnessing a rapid erosion of their trust due to your lack of interest in maintaining a useful alert service through the Safer Seas and Rivers Service (SSRS) app.

SWW has proven to be one of the more challenging water companies to work with. Despite many attempts on our part to resolve issues, you continue to present data on WaterFit Live for individual CSO discharges and not share this data with us. We have made significant efforts to cooperate with you, to ensure the public are receiving an accurate and consistent set of data and alerts. Your increasing lack of engagement in this is causing significant confusion among water users and communities across the region.

The SSRS app is a trusted source of information about sewage discharges and is used by hundreds of thousands of people on a regular basis. We are delighted that WaterFit Live attempts to provide the same information. In our view, it is vital that these two services complement each other and create a unified picture in relation to sewage alerts. This can only be achieved through collaboration on data sharing and generating a standardised approach to sewage pollution alerts. It is our perception that SWW is seeking to undermine the SSRS by making it more difficult to access and verify the information we receive from you.

Your actions are confusing the public and putting public health at risk.

In marked contrast, SAS have been working collaboratively with Welsh Water (WW) for the last 9 months on the data questions and API standards with productive outcomes:

- Welsh Water released their map with coastal locations and included a public API which SAS were able to use with the support of WW's technical team. SAS knew that this would mean 'over-alerting' on the SSRS app but discussed this at length with WW and they agreed to send us a mapping of CSOs to locations so that if any of those CSOs discharged we would issue an alert
- We collaborated on an FAQ to explain why people may see more alerts so that it was clear to the public
- We publicly commended Welsh Water on their transparency as we view more data as a better solution than not having access to CSO data that is in the public domain.





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We are calling for SWW to action the following with SAS:

- We want access to the data that informs WaterFit Live so we can share CSO information with water users to allow them to fully assess risk
- We want to be able to contribute to how the API looks and is shared
- We want to be linked with your technical team to start discussions about how we can better share data
- We want to start a conversation about how we bring in more alerts for inland locations from all your CSOs.
- We do not want SWW to say that 12.5 hours is the accepted standard for taking down sewage alerts to the public when we know this isn't the case and this is not accepted across the water industry
- We want SWW to actively engage with the UKWIR project so that we can collaboratively come to a more standardised sewage pollution alert.
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We would like a meeting to discuss our calls to action. Our aim is simple: a renewed commitment to cooperation and transparency around data provision moving forward that genuinely prioritises public health and the safety of water users.

For the Ocean

Giles Bristow
CEO

