



Water Health
Partnership
for Wales

Private Water Supplies TAF Group Guidance on PWS Insufficiency

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Water Health Partnership - Private Water Supplies TAF Group

Guidance on PWS Insufficiency

The aim of this document is to provide guidance for local authorities when receiving enquiries from members of the public regarding private water supplies which are, or likely to become insufficient primarily during periods of prolonged dry weather. However, it can be used as a guide to deal with other types of insufficiency or contamination.

Private water supplies are defined by The Private Water Supplies (Wales) Regulations 2017 as those intended for human consumption ("water intended for human consumption" means - all water either in its original state or after treatment, intended for drinking, cooking, food preparation or other domestic purposes).

Insufficiency of a private water supply can arise:-

- when the supply has dried up – through prolonged drought conditions or additional draw on the water and the supply can no longer cope with demand
- from a problem with the distribution network – frozen pipes, airlock, another blockage (usually short-term and easily fixed)
- deliberate or inadvertent disconnection (can involve legal disputes – see DWI guidance below)

DWI Guidance on Sufficiency of PWS (*guidance is obtained from the DWI website*)

The relevant person(s) is responsible for ensuring the sufficiency of the supply at all times and therefore should have plans in place to deal with insufficiency, drought, or contamination. Having a contingency plan in place will reduce the time it will take to respond to and manage any issue and it may help reduce costs. These plans should include procedures for the provision of an alternative supply to all consumers of the supply during the period of insufficiency, or whilst any remedial action to mitigate contamination risk is being carried out.

These procedures should include as a minimum:

- The total number of consumers supplied
- Typical amounts of alternative water required for each consumer
- The type of alternative water arrangements (e.g. provision of bottled water, bowsers or tankers)
- Plans to cope with a long (e.g. a prolonged drought) and short (e.g. during minor repair work) duration of insufficiency
- Communication arrangements during the period

The Water Industry Act 1991 gives local authorities, if required, the power to serve a Section 80 Notice on a relevant person(s) to take appropriate action to address actual or potential insufficiency.

<http://www.dwi.gov.uk/stakeholders/guidance-and-codes-of-practice/pws-alt-supplies.pdf>

Guidance for local authorities on serving notices, and templates/examples of notices for insufficiency at <http://www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supply/local-auth/notices.html>

Local authorities also have a role to play by identifying any previous problems with insufficiency, or deficiencies in contingency/alternative supply plans, through the risk assessment process.

Action Levels

To assist local authorities to carry out their duties, plan for periods of prolonged warm/dry weather, and provide useful information to the public to help prevent/reduce the effects on private water supplies, action levels have been prioritised below:-

- **Green** - business as normal, no issues, be proactive.
- **Yellow** - warm/dry weather, no reports, but prepare with press release/advice, speak to emergency planners.
- **Amber** - first report of dry supply, use checklist.
- **Red** - X no. of reports, need to involve emergency planning/further assistance required – individual LA's to decide number.

GREEN Action level

- Consider duties on local authorities to keep themselves informed about the wholesomeness and sufficiency under [Water Industry Act 1991](#) and the requirement to keep records under [PWSWR 2017](#) of **all** PWS (including single domestic supplies)
- Gather/review/update information on all PWS with the LA's area (if necessary, using powers to serve notices to require information – S85 WIA)
- Ensure adequate contingency plans are in place for supplies when carrying out/reviewing risk assessments
- Ensure clear/easy to understand PWS information is available on LA website
- Consider further proactive measures (local stakeholder groups, mass letter drops, social media, information at local shows)

YELLOW Action level

- Monitor weather forecasts <http://www.hydoutuk.net/>
- Review PWS insufficiency information on website
- Prepare press release / advice letters / [PHW advice](#)
- Speak to emergency planners, review any dry weather plans
- Review/update vulnerable consumers list

AMBER Action level

On receiving the first call regarding an insufficient private water supply, the following checklists and suggested actions can be used.

Checklist – details to be recorded when receiving reports of insufficiency

- Name, address, status (owner/occupier, landlord/tenant, user, relevant person, etc.)
- Confirm details about the supply (source; use – high risk? nursing or care home, etc; no. of properties/consumers)
- Confirm details about the consumers (identify consumers who may be vulnerable including the elderly, young children, pregnant, bottle fed babies and the ill (including those requiring water for medications and/or with high laundry needs). Consider anyone who may be fasting e.g. during Ramadan.
- Current status - Is it running low or dry? How long has it been dry?
- Is it discoloured, any sediment/odour?
- What checks have been carried out (source, storage tanks, distribution pipework, blockages/airlocks)?
- What contingency plans in place (access to mains water, alternative supply, neighbouring property, IBC/containers available)?
- Confirm details about the consumers (any vulnerable - elderly, ill, young children?)
- Can they get to shops/friends/neighbours to purchase bottled water or fill containers?

LA options to action / provide assistance

- Advise – check supply/monitor water levels, methods to minimise water usage, short term solutions (IBC/containers, neighbours, bottled water), long term solutions (increase storage, organise back-up supply or more reliable source e.g. borehole)
- Visit (sampling/risk assessment) – inspect source, storage, distribution; sample as required (if water available, to determine any deterioration)
- Enforcement action – S.80 notice / landlord.
- Provide bottled water – as temporary measure/for vulnerable persons?

Additional considerations in relation to Coronavirus COVID-19

- Are the consumers in a vulnerable group (shielding, >70, self-isolating)?
- Have they got access to help (for food/medication) who may be able collect drinking water?
- Do they have any symptoms? Or members of the family?
- Are they aware of social distancing requirements to collect water from others?

RED Action level

When to decide further assistance is required from water companies?

- How many supplies are dry?
- Is that a % of all supplies?
- Is the forecast for prolonged warm, dry weather / drought conditions?

Individual local authorities will need to decide depending on the number of pws in their area, when to contact emergency planners and whether this a widespread issue for Local Resilience Forums (disruption to 'pws' only may not lead to a full multiagency response, the expectation being local intervention and advice only).

Assistance from water companies

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water and Hafren Dyfrdwy have provided the following guidance which sets out the general principles and contact details.

Guidance Information Supplied to Local Authorities

General principles

- A. In the first instance of a request for support from a Local Authority (LA) in relation to developing insufficiency of private water supplies, a pallet of water will be donated to that LA to support their initial response. Thereafter, support will be guided by the principles set out below.
- B. The provision of assistance/alternative supplies by the water company will be to the LA for onward distribution or management.
- C. Exceptions to principle B will be by agreement only if, for example, residents at a property are vulnerable, require additional assistance with other essential supplies (e.g. food) and all other solutions have been exhausted.
- D. After the initial donation, the water company will recover costs from the Local Authority. The water company will not profit from the activity.
 - Please note, costs may vary depending upon the method of provision, the location and other local factors.
 - Costs for the same service offering may also differ between water companies, due to their differing internal arrangements and contracts.
- E. The invoicing and repayment process and details should be established as an integral part of the alternative supply arrangements.
- F. Please note, the provision of alternative supplies may need to be altered, reduced or suspended if there is an over-riding competing need for those resources to enable the water company to meet its legal obligations to its customers.
- G. All enquiries received by the water company directly from private supply owners will be redirected to the relevant LA.
- H. The arrangements described above relate to the provision of drinking water for domestic use. Please note, there is no obligation for the water company to support non-domestic requests.
- I. Water companies recognise that private water supplies may be deemed “insufficient” for a range of quantity or quality issues (e.g. they may have become unwholesome or contaminated) and all requests will be responded to as described.

An overview of the process followed by the water company in regard to support for insufficient private water supplies is shown in figure 1 below:-

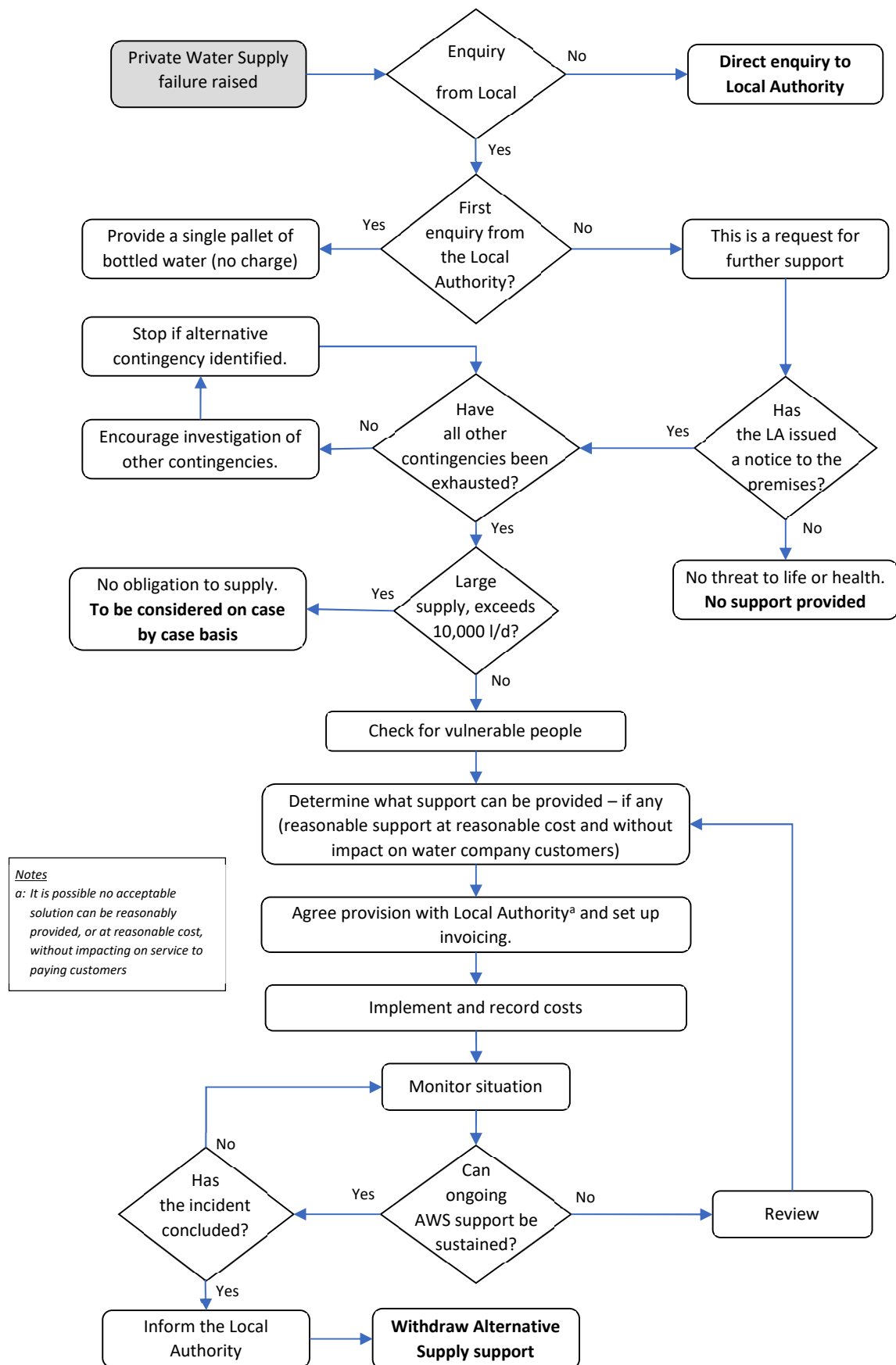


Figure 1: Overview of the assessment process

Contact Details



All requests for support from Dwr Cymru Welsh Water should be made by the Local Authority and directed to PWRequests@dwrcymru.com



All requests for support from Hafren Dyfrdwy should be made by the Local Authority and directed to groupresilience@severntrent.co.uk.

Organising bottled water distribution

- Where is it stored? – council offices, depots
- Who will distribute it? – officers, depot staff, collection only
- Who is eligible? – vulnerable persons (elderly/disabled, young families, self-isolating/shielding residents*) - explain locations of bottles and process of getting water, advise maximum no. of bottles per person/per visit.

**During Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic only*

Wales – Resilience Forums

The Welsh Government, emergency services, local authorities, health authorities and other emergency planning organisations work together to strengthen the resilience of services in Wales. The [Wales Resilience Forum](#) website has more information.

Liaise with your emergency planning contacts to check the details.

List of Suppliers

Bottled Water – supermarkets, bottled water suppliers.

Water containers – widely available online, camping suppliers.

Bowser Purchase/Hire – widely available online.