

# Local Authority Monitoring Programme Audit Report

Under the *European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2023*, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the supervisory authority in relation to Local Authority’s monitoring functions of regulated private drinking water supplies. This audit was carried out to assess the performance of Westmeath County Council in carrying out its 2024 compliance monitoring programme of regulated private supplies in its functional area.

The audit process is a sample of the performance of a local authority in carrying out its monitoring functions of regulated private drinking water supplies.

Audit Detail	
<b>Date of Audit</b>	08/10/2025
<b>Local Authority</b>	Westmeath County Council
<b>Representing the Local Authority</b>	Deirdre Reilly, Ambrose Clarke, Elizabeth Whelan
<b>EPA Inspectors</b>	Lisa Noone, Michelle Roche

Report Detail	
<b>Audit Specification</b>	2024 Regulated Private Drinking Water Supply Compliance Monitoring Programme and Regulated Private Drinking Water Supply Register
<b>Issue Date</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> November 2025
<b>Prepared By</b>	Lisa Noone, Inspector, EPA

## > Summary of Key Findings

The audit of Westmeath County Council's Compliance Monitoring Programme found a number of shortcomings in relation to the assessment of the quality of Private Water Supplies during 2024.

1. Westmeath County Council did not monitor Private Water Supplies for Group B parameters as required. Monitoring for Group B parameters was not undertaken in most Private Water Supplies, nor was compliance monitoring for colony count or conductivity taken for a number of small private supplies.
2. The Private Supply Register for 2024 was not in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations and did not contain up-to-date and accurate data regarding treatment, location and volume/population.

## > Introduction

Each Local Authority is required under Regulation 13 of the *European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2023 (S.I. 99 of 2023)* to establish a Compliance Monitoring Programme and monitor all Private Water Supplies in its functional area, other than exempted supplies, to determine whether they comply with the standards and other requirements of the Regulations.

This audit was carried out in accordance with *Regulation 30(3)* of the *European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2023 (S.I. 99 of 2023)*, to assess the performance by Westmeath County Council of its statutory functions in relation to the monitoring of regulated Private Water Supplies to ensure the provision of clean and wholesome drinking water.

Prior to the audit, the EPA assessed the 2024 monitoring returns submitted to the EPA by Westmeath County Council to identify any areas of discrepancy between the required number of samples to be taken and analysed and that reported to EPA. Using a questionnaire as a guide, Westmeath County Council staff were interviewed to ascertain the principles and methodology for establishing its Private Supply Register and Compliance Monitoring Programme.



		Answer
1.1	Does the Private Supply Register contain all that is required by Regulation 14(5) of the <i>European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2023 (S.I. 99 of 2023)</i> ?	No
<b>Observation</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Westmeath County Council currently has 51 regulated Private Water Supplies on its current register, made up of 11 public group water schemes (PUGs), 3 private group water schemes (PRGs), and 37 small private supplies (SPS; supplies serving a commercial or public activity such as hotels, crèches, schools, and restaurants, etc.).</li> <li>2. There are two separate registers in place, one for PUGs and PRGs, and another register for SPSs only.</li> <li>3. There were gaps in information for treatment type and location/Eircode for a number of SPSs on the register.</li> <li>4. The register does not contain the supply code/name of the water treatment plants supplying PUGs.</li> </ol>		

		Answer
1.2	Is the Private Supply Register maintained and kept up to date as required by Regulation 14(7) of the <i>European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2023 (S.I. 99 of 2023)</i> ?	Yes
<b>Observation</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Westmeath County Council updates its register when new supplies are identified or when details of existing supplies change.</li> <li>2. The EPA contacted Westmeath County Council on 03/10/2024 via a letter to the Director of Services stating that the number of SPS registered in County Westmeath is low when compared to other local authority areas of a similar size, and that they should take proactive steps to identify and register each SPS in their functional area.</li> <li>3. Westmeath County Council acknowledged, both in its response letter and during the audit, the need to identify and register additional supplies that may be subject to the Drinking Water Regulations.</li> <li>4. Westmeath County Council liaise with other stakeholders, such as the HSE National Environmental Health Service (Longford-Westmeath), to determine other small SPSs, such as food businesses, that should be on the register.</li> <li>5. Westmeath County Council utilises online maps to identify new businesses which may be SPSs within their functional area.</li> </ol>		



2.1

	Answer
Have sampling locations been pre-determined for each water supply zone as required by Regulation 13(6) of the <i>European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2023 (S.I. 99 of 2023)</i> ?	Yes
<b>Observation</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The HSE carry out compliance monitoring on behalf of Westmeath County Council. Sample analysis is contracted out to a laboratory for accredited analysis.</li><li>2. For the Compliance Monitoring Programme, the type and number of samples (Group A/Group B) required are pre-determined by Westmeath County Council at the beginning of the year.</li><li>3. The locations and timeline for sampling are selected by the HSE based on the sampler's knowledge of the water supply zone. Westmeath County Council liaise with the HSE in this regard when finalising the Compliance Monitoring Programme.</li></ol>	

2.2

	Answer
Are sampling locations evenly distributed for each water supply zone and do they represent the quality of water throughout the year as required by Regulation 13(8) of the <i>European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2023 (S.I. 99 of 2023)</i> ?	No
<b>Observation</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The sampling locations within a water supply zone were not always evenly distributed.</li><li>2. For example, two locations were used more than once in Multyfarnham GWSS PRG during 2024.</li><li>3. The spread of sampling days/months was evenly distributed and represented the quality of water throughout the year.</li><li>4. Westmeath County Council has mapped the supply boundaries for all PUG and PRG Water Supply Zones within its functional area, as well as the location of all SPSs.</li><li>5. The sample location is not mapped. This should be incorporated into the sampling process to verify an even distribution of samples within the water supply zone.</li></ol>	

2.3

	Answer
<p>Was the required compliance monitoring for regulated private supplies undertaken during 2024 as required by Regulation 13(5) of the <i>European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2023 (S.I. 99 of 2023)</i>??</p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>Observation</b></p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Westmeath County Council was audited by the EPA's Local Authority Enforcement team in September 2024 to assess the performance of their statutory functions in relation to environmental protection. This audit identified that Westmeath County Council was not carrying out any monitoring of Group B parameters for Private Water Supplies.</li> <li>2. The findings of the audit of Private Water Supplies identified the same, bar one Group B sampling event carried out for Multyfarnham GWSS.</li> <li>3. Westmeath County Council stated during the audit that they have implemented the recommendations from the 2024 audit and have been carrying out monitoring for Group B parameters in 2025.</li> <li>4. Colony count sampling was not carried out for most Private Water Supplies in 2024 in error, and a number of other Group A parameters were not monitored, such as conductivity.</li> <li>5. Westmeath County Council's 2024 Compliance Monitoring Plan did not include the water supply's treatment type to inform if certain parameters are required to be monitored under the Group A or Group B monitoring frequency.</li> <li>6. Westmeath County Council's 2024 Compliance Monitoring Plan did not contain supply volumes/populations to inform the number of samples required to be taken in the year.</li> </ol>	



4.1

	Answer
Was 2024 data for Private Water Supplies reported accurately to the EPA (on EDEN) as required by Section 58 of <i>The EPA Act 1992 to 2007</i> ?	No
<b>Observation</b>	
<p>1. Some information provided by Westmeath County Council to the EPA via the EDEN portal regarding private supplies differed to that which was in the register:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) The volume of water supplied, and the population served differed between the two datasets for some supplies e.g., EDEN data suggests that Gartlandstown GWSS PRG supplies a population of 320 people, however the register contains a population of 120 people.</li><li>b) Volume/population was not provided for most SPSs on EDEN.</li><li>c) No treatment type was provided for most SPSs on EDEN. Some treatment types that were provided were inaccurate, for example, one SPS has UV treatment however no treatment was provided on EDEN. Similarly, Multyfarnham GWSS PRG has UV treatment and chlorination, however EDEN states that it has chlorination only.</li></ul>	
<p>2. The parameters' monitoring categories (Group A or Group B) for some supplies were incorrectly categorised on the 2024 compliance monitoring returns submitted to the EPA. For example, parameters such as aluminium and iron are required to be monitored as Group A only if a flocculant is used in treatment, otherwise they should be categorised on EDEN as Group B parameters. Aluminium and iron were categorised by Westmeath County Council incorrectly as Group A parameters regardless of treatment type.</p>	
<p>3. Monitoring data for a SPS was uploaded to EDEN under the incorrect supply name in error.</p>	



### Monitoring Programme Audit Recommendations

**Westmeath County Council is responsible for undertaking compliance monitoring of regulated private drinking water supplies and should implement the following recommendations without delay.**

#### **1. Private Water Supply Register**

- a) Ensure that the register is accurate, current, and properly maintained, and that it records all relevant information for each Private Water Supply in accordance with *Regulation 14(5) of the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2023 (S.I. No. 99 of 2023)*.
- b) Prioritise identifying vulnerable populations - such as crèches, schools, and nursing homes – served by SPSs, to ensure their inclusion in the register. Ongoing documentation relating to the maintenance of the register and the identification of new supplies should be recorded and retained.

#### **2. Compliance Monitoring Programme**

- a) Ensure that all regulated Private Water Supplies are monitored for Group A and B parameters at their required frequencies in accordance with the requirements of the *European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2023 (S.I. 99 of 2023)*.
- b) Ensure the spread of compliance samples are evenly distributed throughout the water supply zone. The spread of sample locations within a monitoring programme should be as wide as possible to ensure that compliance samples are representative of water quality consumed throughout the supply as required by *Regulation 13(8) of the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2023 (S.I. 99 of 2023)*.
- c) Put in place a formal and structured method of assessment to ensure the temporal and spatial distribution of sampling for Group Water Schemes (PRGs and PUGs) is reviewed each year to ensure *Regulation 13(8)* is met. The process should include documenting sampling locations during each sampling event and mapping the locations within the water supply zone annually.

#### **3. EDEN Database**

- a) Ensure that information on regulated Private Water Supplies entered into the EPA's database, EDEN, is accurate, reflects the list of regulated supplies on the local authority's register and continues to be updated annually.
- b) Ensure that Group A and Group B parameters are tagged correctly on EDEN.