



Review of the National Inspection Plan for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems 2022-2026

Environmental Protection Agency

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Summary

The National Inspection Plan for domestic waste water treatment systems is prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency and implemented by local authorities in accordance with the Water Services Act 2007 (as amended). This document presents a review of the 2022-2026 National Inspection Plan.

The review included focus group meetings with key stakeholders and analysis of the outputs from the 2022-2026 National Inspection Plan including data from inspection system supports, inspection numbers, risk-based allocation of inspections, inspection findings to date, enforcement of advisory notices and public engagement activities. The review identifies twelve recommendations to inform the preparation of the next plan for 2027-2031.

This review document and the draft 2027-2031 National Inspection Plan will be published in parallel for public consultation. The Environmental Protection Agency will take the comments received into account and finalise the 2027-2031 National Inspection Plan prior to the end of 2026.

1. Introduction

Homeowners are required under the Water Services Act 2007 (as amended) to ensure their Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (DWWTS) are not a risk to human health or the environment and comply with regulations ¹.

In the Water Action Plan 2024 (Ireland's third River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027) ² discharges from DWWTS were identified as the sixth most prevalent significant pressure in Ireland, impacting approximately 9% of all waterbodies 'At risk' of not achieving their environmental objective under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). In total, there were 148 water bodies that were characterised as being significantly impacted by domestic waste water discharges.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is required to produce a National Inspection Plan for the inspection of DWWTS by local authorities (referred to in legislation as Water Services Authorities). The EPA must review the National Inspection Plan at least every five years and make revisions if necessary. There have been four plans since inspections commenced: 2013-2014, 2015-2017, 2018-2021 and 2022-2026. The EPA also produces an annual implementation report which summarises the extent and findings of the inspections undertaken. The national inspection plans and annual implementation reports are available on the EPA website ³.

The National Inspection Plan is implemented by local authorities. The EPA has a supervisory role over the implementation of the National Inspection Plan and provides support to local authorities including hosting the inspections database, provision of guidance and annual reporting. Other stakeholders such as the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) and the Health Service Executive have been involved in developing engagement materials for homeowners.

¹ [Water Services \(Amendment\) Act 2012](#)

² [Water Action Plan 2024 A River Basin Management Plan for Ireland](#)

³ [EPA Website – Compliance & Enforcement: Wastewater](#)

This document presents a review of the *National Inspection Plan for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems 2022-2026*⁴ and makes recommendations to inform the next National Inspection Plan for 2027-2031.

2. Scope

The National Inspection Plan covers inspections of DWWTS by local authorities. The legislation underpinning the National Inspection Plan defines it as a plan for ‘*inspection and monitoring*’ of DWWTS. In addition to legislative requirements, the 2022-2026 National Inspection Plan also includes an engagement strand to improve homeowners understanding of the risks to human health and water quality from poorly maintained systems and what to do to ensure that their DWWTS is correctly maintained. The review process covers both inspection and engagement activities.

There are several other regulatory interventions related to DWWTS, including grant schemes, catchment assessments under the national river basin management plan, the Code of Practice for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems, planning control, building control, construction product control and related standards (Appendix A). While the National Inspection Plan has regard to those interventions, they are outside its scope and the scope of this review.

Several changes have been made to DWWTS grants since the 2022–2026 National Inspection Plan began. In 2024, grant schemes increased from €5,000 to €12,000 and removed the requirement for 2013 registration. Grants are now available under three scenarios as follows:

- following a failed inspection under the National Inspection Plan.
- where the DWWTS is in a Prioritised Area for Action (PAA) with the River Basin Management Service (RBMS, formerly the Local Authority Water Programme or LAWPRO) notification.
- where the DWWTS is within a High-Status Objective Catchment Area (HSOCA).

⁴ [National Inspection Plan for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems 2022-2026](#)

In 2025, the DHLGH issued 460 grants worth €4.77m. Total grants approved have increased annually from around 200 in 2022 to 460 in 2025.

3. Review Process

The review process included qualitative and quantitative assessments of available data sources. The EPA gathered and analysed data from the 2022-2026 National Inspection Plan. In addition, the EPA conducted focus group meetings with key external stakeholders during February - June 2026 to provide an overview of the review process and seek their initial views. These organisations were:

- The Water Forum;
- Irish Environmental Network;
- Network for Ireland's Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (Steering Committee and Septic Tank Inspectors Network);
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- RBMS

The feedback received was considered and incorporated in preparing this review document.

This outcome of the National Inspection Plan review process is presented in section 4 “Inspections” and section 5 “Engagement” and includes twelve recommendations to inform the preparation of the 2027-2031 National Inspection Plan.

4. Review of Inspections

4.1 Inspection system supports

Consistency of inspections and enforcement is extremely important to the integrity of the domestic waste water inspection system. The supports in place for DWWTS inspections include specialised training, EPA appointment of inspectors, EPA hosted DWWTS database and the Network for Ireland's Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (NIECE).

The Local Authority Services National Training Group run a two-day course which must be completed by prospective DWWTS inspectors. In conjunction with the course, Inspectors are provided with *Guidance Manual for the Inspection of Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems* which provides detailed guidance on performing DWWTS inspections and pursuing follow-up enforcement where required. Local authority staff are appointed as DWWTS inspectors by the EPA. Once LA staff have the required qualifications/experience and have completed a two-day training course, they can apply to the EPA for appointment.

Appointments are for three years and can be renewed through submitting an application for renewal to the EPA along with an application fee. The EPA has appointed 273 inspectors since 2013. There are 128 inspectors currently appointed, varying from 1-9 inspectors per local authority (Figure 4.1). Most local authority Inspectors are not dedicated full time as DWWTS inspectors and have other assigned work areas.

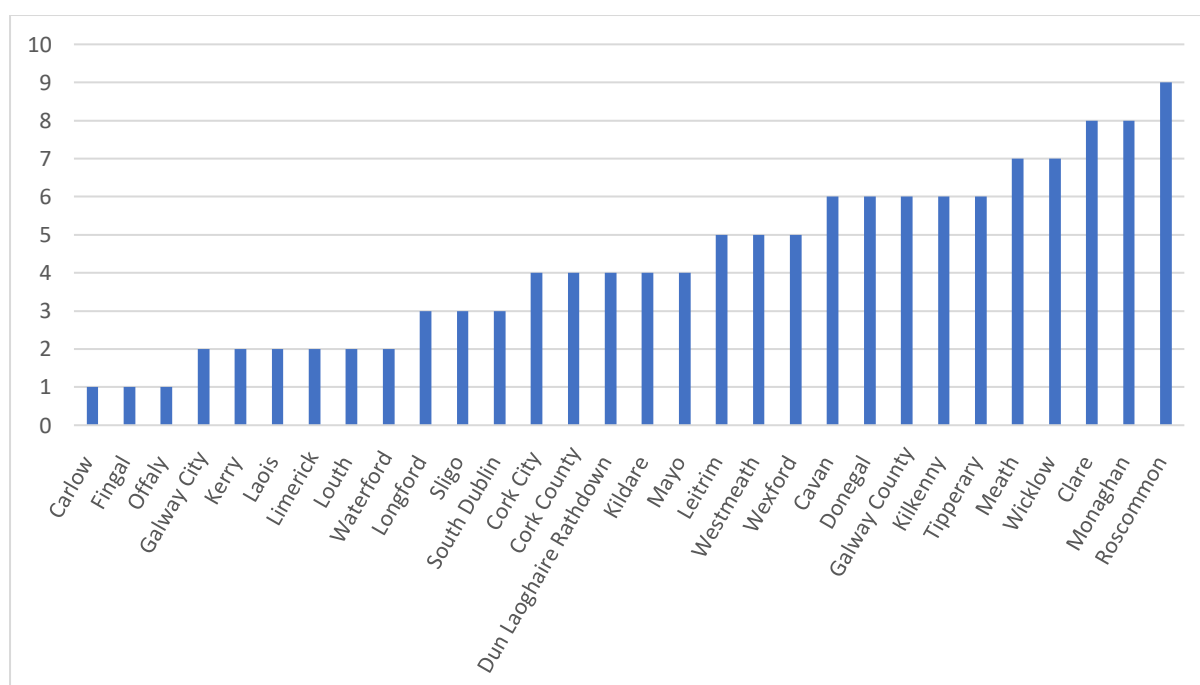


Figure 4.1 Number of inspectors per local authority currently appointed.

The EPA coordinates the Septic Tank Inspectors Network as part of the NIECE. This is a platform for DWWTS inspectors to meet, exchange information and develop guidance. The following NIECE Inspectors Network seminars were held during the 2022-2026 National Inspection Plan:

- Portlaoise on 24/11/2022: Enforcement and engagement.
- Birr on 14/03/2023: Enforcement and engagement.
- Athlone on 08/02/2024: Grant Schemes Change and Enforcement
- Athlone on 30/03/2026: National Inspection Plan review process, Engagement and Enforcement.

The following are available to inspectors through the NIECE Septic Tank Inspectors Network:

- templates for inspection reports, advisory notices and correspondence;
- enforcement flowcharts setting out actions and timelines; and
- guidance on determining risk and kit for inspections.

The EPA has highlighted in annual DWWTS inspection reports the inconsistent enforcement of advisory notices as an issue that needs to be improved (see below).

Recommendation 1: The 2027-2031 National Inspection Plan should continue to require inspections and enforcements to be completed in line with the Local Authority Services National Training Group training, and the associated manuals and guidance provided through the NIECE Septic Tank Inspectors Network.

4.2 Inspection Numbers

The 2022–2026 National Inspection Plan required a minimum of 1,000 inspections in 2022 and 1,200 per annum from 2023 to 2026, giving a total allocation of 5,800 inspections over the five-year National Inspection Plan.

The number of inspections completed per annum since 2022 is presented in Table 4.1. Some local authorities completed more than their minimum allocation. Some local authorities failed to meet their annual allocations in the past, but these were made up in subsequent years. Overall progress towards the 5,800 inspections provided for in the 2022-2026 plan remains on track and will likely be surpassed (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Inspections completed per annum.

Year	Completed Inspections (No.)
2022	1,143
2023	1,189
2024	1,390
2025	1,466
Total	5,188

In the preparation of the 2022-2026 National Inspection Plan it was considered that inspection numbers of 1,000 (2022) and 1,200 (2023-2026) were appropriate relative to the risk from DWWTS on a national scale⁵, the number of inspections carried out by authorities in relation to other risks to water⁶ and with consideration to the additional measures in place in relation to DWWTS.

It is important to note that the inspection numbers prescribed are a minimum requirement with a recommendation for additional inspections by local authorities if there is evidence at a local level that DWWTS are causing an issue in an area. This minimum allocation also does not include inspections in response to complaints, verification inspections to check DWWTS have been fixed, or work carried out by the RBMS (see below).

During stakeholder pre-consultation for this review, it was indicated that the minimum annual target of 1,200 inspections is too low relative to the number of DWWTS and the risks they present in Ireland. It was further highlighted that any increase in inspection levels would necessitate additional resources for local authorities. However, it should be noted that 1,466 inspections (266 more than the minimum number required) were completed under the National Inspection Plan in 2025.

Increased numbers of inspections would lead to increased identification and remediation of faulty DWWTS. By comparison, it is noted that since the start of the 2022-2026 National

⁵ [River Basin Management Plan](#)

⁶ [Local Authority Environmental Enforcement Performance Framework](#)

Inspection Plan the number of farm inspections carried out by local authorities under the National Agricultural Inspections Program⁷ has increased significantly.

Recommendation 2: The 2027-2031 National Inspection Plan should increase the minimum requirement of 1,200 inspections per annum, with additional inspections by local authorities if there is evidence at a local level that DWWTS are causing problems in an area.

4.3 Risk methodology

The core of the National Inspection Plan is a risk-based methodology (outlined below) which prioritises inspections in areas where failing DWWTS would pose a higher relative risk to the environment via pollution of waterbodies and human health via exposure to inadequately treated waste water or the contamination of drinking water wells. The initial methodology was developed by the EPA in conjunction with the Geological Survey of Ireland and other experts in 2013.⁸ This informed the first National Inspection Plan in 2013-2014, with adjustments made in subsequent iterations of the National Inspection Plan.

There are several core principles underlying the risk-based methodology which remain valid:

- all areas of the country are covered and are potentially subject to inspection;
- inspections are prioritised into areas of higher risk;
- risks to human health (e.g. contamination of household wells or direct exposure to ponded effluent) and the environment (surface and groundwater quality) are considered; and
- the methodology is based on the source-pathway-receptor model.

Recommendation 3: The 2027-2031 National Inspection Plan should maintain the core principles of using a risk-based methodology.

⁷ [National Agricultural Inspection Programme](#)

⁸ [A Risk-Based Methodology to Assist in the Regulation of Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems](#)

The three risk zones and risk factors developed for the 2022-2026 National Inspection Plan are presented in Figure 4.2. The allocation of inspections to each local authority is presented in Appendix B, with 2,400 inspections required in both risk zones 1 and 2 and 1,000 inspections required in zone 3. Allocations were based on the estimated percentage of residential buildings in each risk zone in each local authority area.

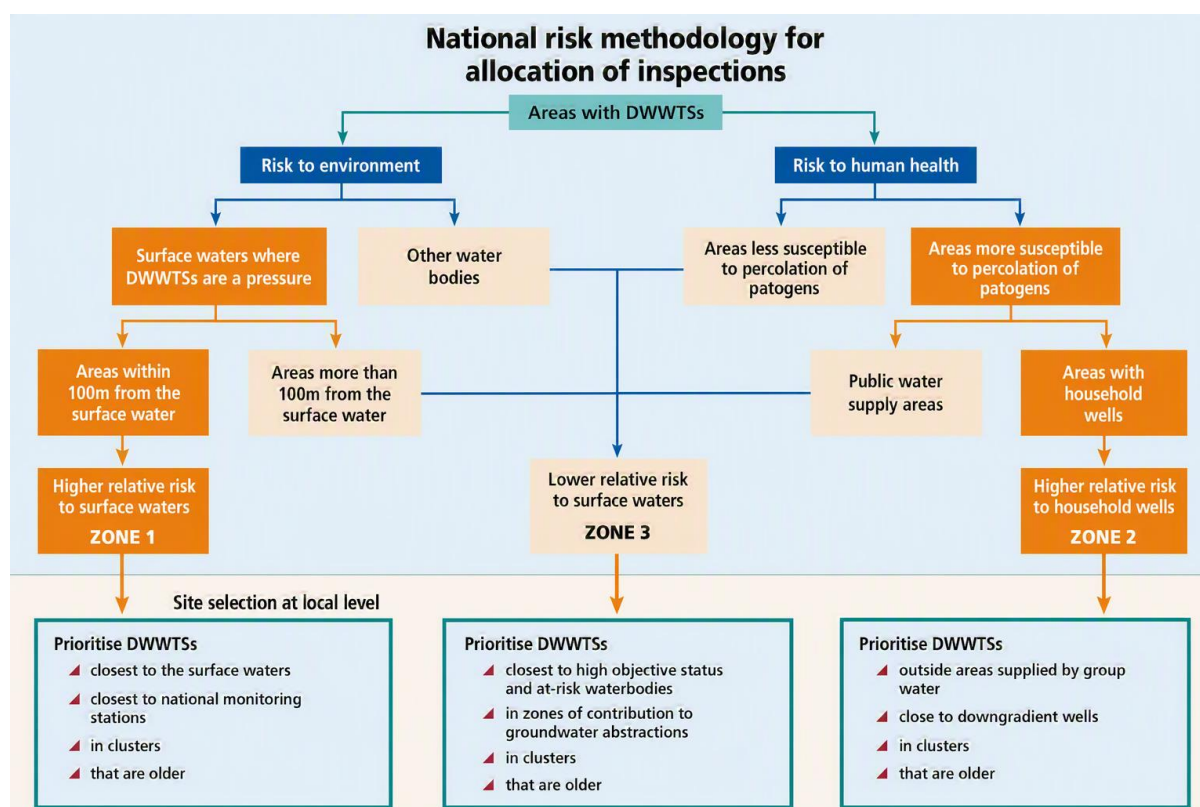


Figure 4.2 Risk zones developed for the 2022-2026 National Inspection Plan.

The three risk zones in the 2022-2026 National Inspection Plan were as follows:

Risk to the Environment (Zone 1): Areas within 100m of a surface waterbody where DWWTS were designated as a pressure on water quality under the national river basin management plan. The focus of inspection resources on these properties aimed to make significant progress in these areas as quickly as possible to contribute to the river basin management plan goals. There were approximately 6,000 residential buildings with DWWTS identified as being in Zone 1.

Site selection in Zone 1 at a local level could be further refined based on proximity to the surface water, proximity to a monitoring station, areas where DWWTS are clustered and older DWWTS. Where these areas intersect with Priority Areas for Action, local authorities were required to liaise with the RBMS when making annual inspection plans to align their DWWTS work programmes.

Risk to Household Wells (Zone 2): Household wells tend to be vulnerable to microbial contamination with DWWTS a known risk factor and potential source of pathogens. This is often exacerbated by the fact that household wells are often poorly constructed, and the abstracted water is often not treated prior to consumption. Household wells are not subject to systematic testing and reporting, so the location of contaminated household wells or problematic areas are not known specifically. However, surveys of private wells have shown 15-58% to be contaminated with coliform bacteria.^{9,10}

The 2022-2026 National Inspection Plan targeted inspections to DWWTS that are co-located with private wells in areas with 1m or less of soil or nearby karst features, which typically gives rise to increased groundwater vulnerability to contamination. There were an estimated 25,000 residential buildings with DWWTS in these areas. Site selection at a local level could be further refined based on proximity to downgradient wells, areas outside of group water schemes, areas where DWWTS are clustered and older DWWTS. Local authorities were also required to give greatest priority to areas where Zones 1 and 2 overlap.

Lower Risk to Human Health and the Environment (Zone 3): To ensure all areas of the country are covered and are potentially subject to inspection, all areas outside of Zones 1 and 2 were categorised in Zone 3. Site selection at a local level could be further refined based on proximity to high objective status and at-risk waterbodies, in zones of contribution to groundwater abstractions, areas where DWWTS are clustered and older DWWTS. The National Inspection Plan also stated that local authorities could use local knowledge such as information on known water pollution to refine site selection.

⁹ [The Impact of On-site Domestic Wastewater Effluent on Rivers and Wells](#)

¹⁰ [Development of a microbial contamination susceptibility model for private domestic groundwater sources](#)

The percentage of total inspections completed in each risk zone between 2022 and 2025 and the corresponding percentage of inspections required under the National Inspection Plan is presented in Table 4.2. There is an apparent under-allocation of inspections by local authorities to risk Zones 1 and 2 and an over-allocation of inspections to Zone 3. Local authorities are responsible for carrying out the number of inspections allocated by the National Inspection Plan per zone each year and are required to ensure that over the period of the National Inspection Plan that the required number of inspections per zone are completed.

Table 4.2. DWWTS inspections per risk zone.

	% inspections required to be completed in each zone 2022-2025	% of inspections completed in 2022-2025
Zone 1	41%	29%
Zone 2	41%	30%
Zone 3	18%	41%

The over allocation of inspections to zone 3 is likely due to local authorities either responding to complaints and information or requests for inspections from homeowners. This is supported by the significantly larger inspection failure rate in zone 3 compared to zones 1 and 2 (Table 4.3).

It is acknowledged that local authorities have several other responsibilities for DWWTS outside of the National Inspection Plan, including administration of the DWWTS grant schemes, responding to complaints and planning and building control. However, the National Inspection Plan 2022-2026 states that the minimum number of planned DWWTS inspections per annum excludes other responsibilities of Local Authorities.

Table 4.3. DWWTS inspection failure rate per each risk zone.

	Inspection failure rate 2022-2025
Zone 1	47%
Zone 2	41%
Zone 3	65%

Recommendation 4: The 2027-2031 National Inspection Plan should continue to prioritise inspections to areas where DWWTS have been identified as a significant pressure on surface waters and where DWWTS are co-located with household wells.

Recommendation 5: The number of DWWTS within each risk zone that haven't been inspected should be calculated by the EPA. This should be used by the EPA to inform the allocation of inspections across the risk zones for 2027-2031.

Recommendation 6: Local authorities should continue to co-ordinate with the RBMS when planning inspections in areas for action.

Recommendation 7: The 2027-2031 National Inspection Plan should continue to require local authorities to carry out the allocated number of inspections per risk zone. Checks should be made by the local authorities and EPA during the National Inspection Plan to ensure that the required number of inspections are completed per risk zone.

Recommendation 8: The 2027-2031 National Inspection Plan should continue to instruct that inspections are carried out in all areas of the country using specific refining criteria identified in Figure 4.2.

4.4 Inspection findings

From the commencement of inspections in 2013 to the end of 2025, 7,212 DWWTS failed inspection. Annual inspection failure rates ranged from 44% to 59% (Figure 4.3). Failures typically occurred in two broad categories; maintenance failures such as a lack of desludging, and structural defects such as illegal discharges to local waterbodies, leaks, effluent ponding and/or rainwater ingress. This is detailed in Figure 4.4.

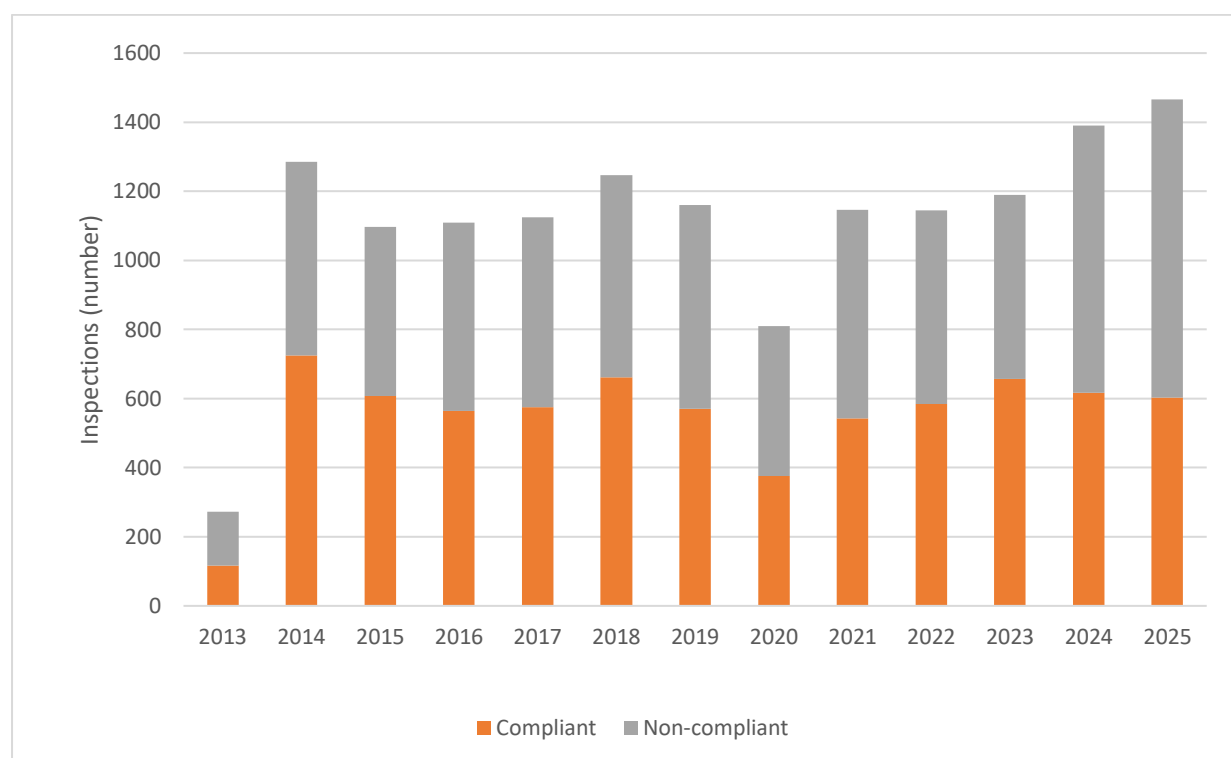


Figure 4.3 Inspection numbers and compliance status 2013-2025.

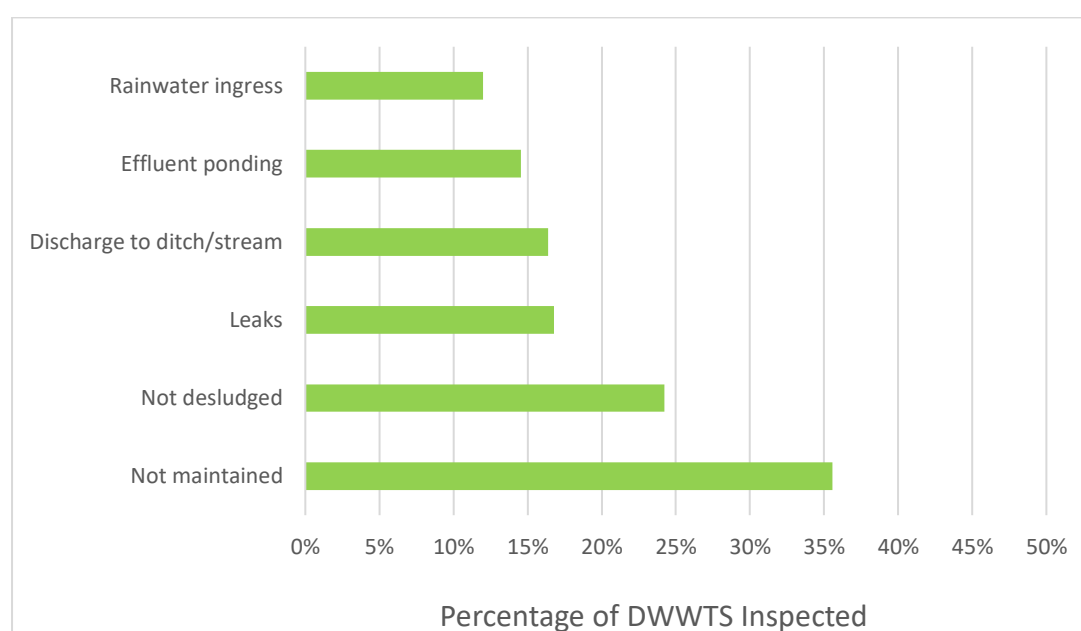


Figure 4.4 Reasons for inspection failures in 2025.

Approximately one quarter of DWWTs inspected were found to have failures that are a risk to human health or the environment. This category includes risk to water, air, soil, plants and animals; noise and odour nuisance; and adverse effects on the countryside and places

of special interest. Notwithstanding the broad nature of this category, these failures are of greater significance compared to other reported failures.

The failure rates vary across local authority areas (Figure 4.5). This may be partly attributable to differing ground conditions with, for example, more failures associated with ponding and illegal discharges to surface waters in local authority areas with more impermeable soils (Figures 4.6 and 4.7).

There is also variation in the compliance rate and type of non-compliance based on the age of systems. Older systems fail more frequently than newer systems (65% for DWWTS pre-1980; 58% for DWWTS 1980-2000; 45% for DWWTS post 2000). Older systems have more serious structural issues with maintenance/desludging failures predominating in newer systems.

Recommendation 9: The 2027-2031 National Inspection Plan should continue to prioritise inspections of older DWWTS.

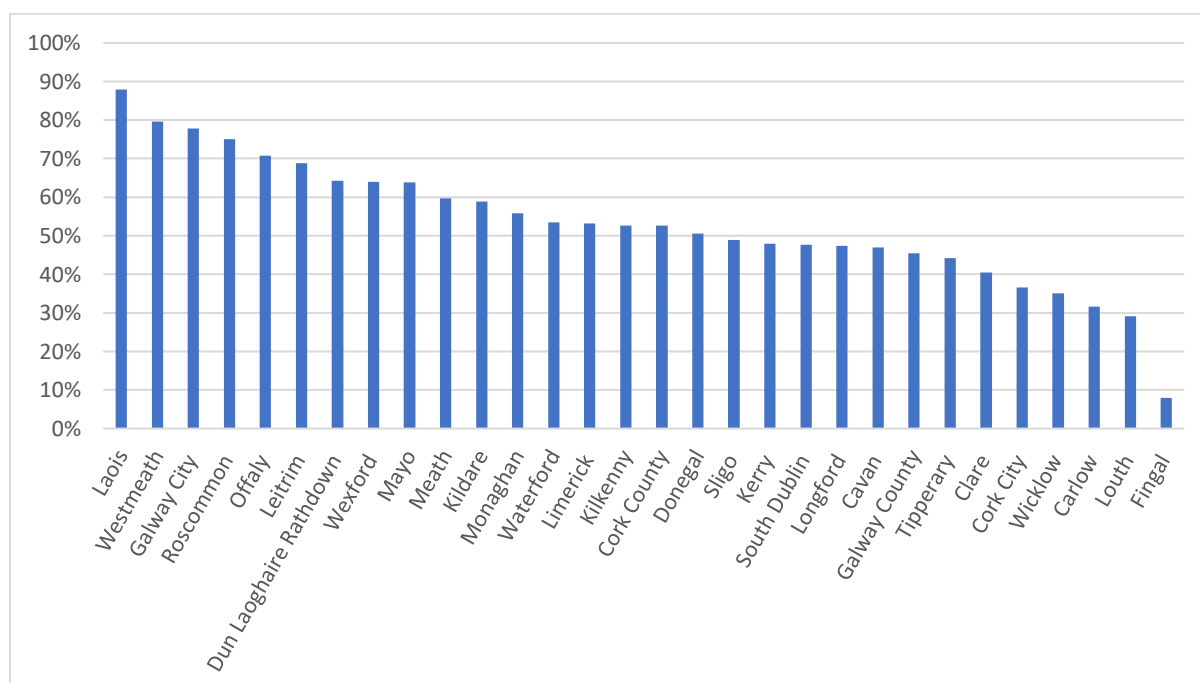


Figure 4.5 Percent of DWWTS failing inspection by local authority area 2022-2025

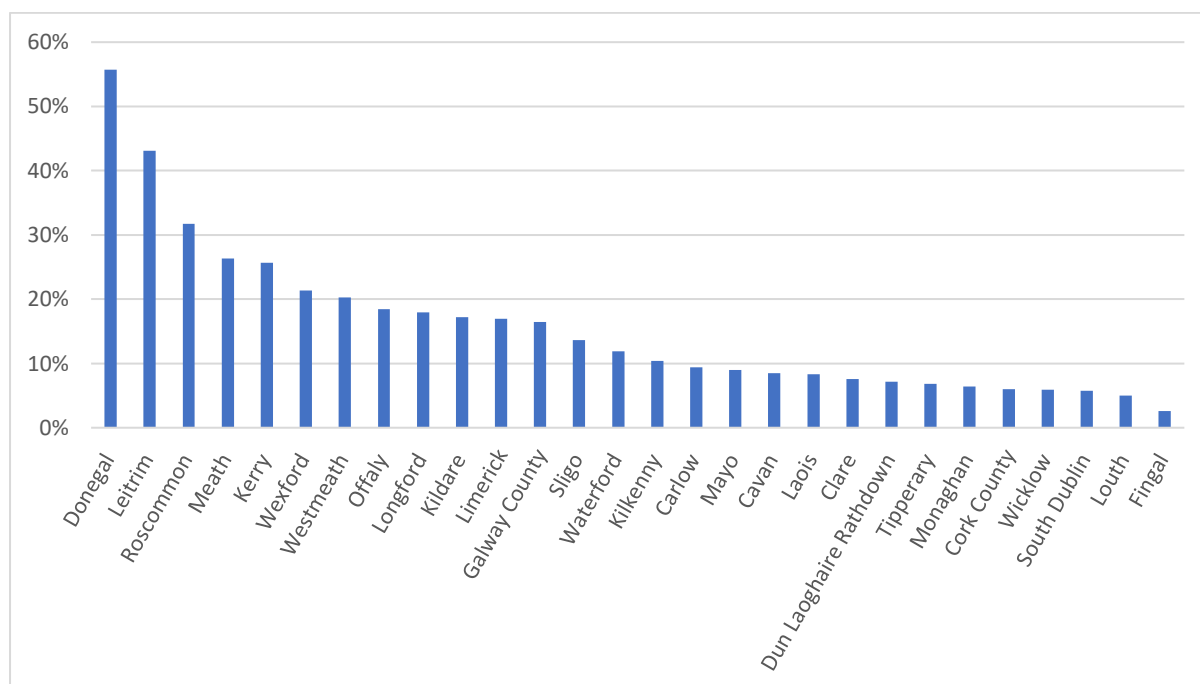


Figure 4.6 Percent of DWWTS failing inspection due to illegal discharges to surface water by local authority area 2013-2025

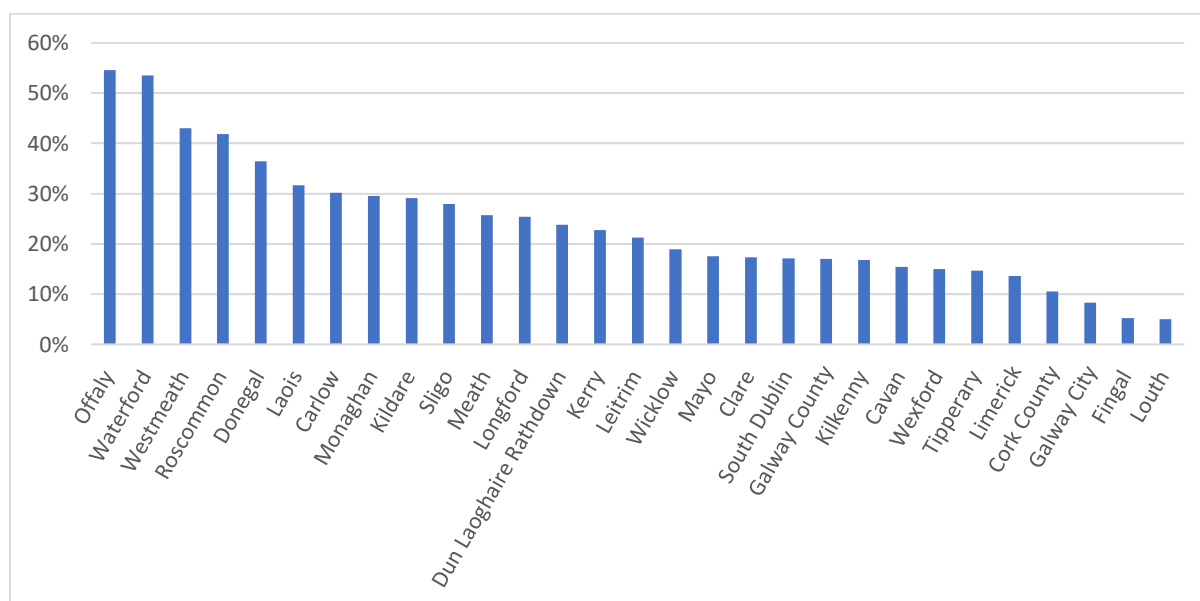


Figure 4.7 Percent of DWWTS failing inspection due to ponding by local authority area 2013-2025

4.5 Advisory notices

Local authorities issue an advisory notice to the homeowner if their DWWTS fails inspection. The advisory notice specifies the reasons for the failure, what measures need to be taken to fix the failures and timeframe for compliance. The *Guidance Manual for the Inspection of Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems* provided as part of the inspector training course sets out typical timeframes for remedial works from 1 to 12 months depending on the seriousness of the issue and scale of works required. There is an *Enforcement flow chart* available to Inspectors through the Septic Tank Inspectors Network which sets out the process for follow up on advisory notices by local authorities through engagement and enforcement to ensure they are complied with. Failure to comply with an advisory notice is a prosecutable offence with a potential fine of up to €5,000.

By the end of 2025, 84% (6,027/7,212) of all DWWTS that failed inspection from 2013–2025 had been fixed. This is an increase from 75% at the end of 2021 and represents continued improvement year on year in the number of DWWTS fixed after failing inspection.

The failure to resolve older cases and in particular the number of cases open for more than two years has been repeatedly highlighted as a key issue in recent years. The number of advisory notices open more than two years increased year on year since inspections began, to a high of 576 by the end of 2023. However, progress was made in closing older advisory notices in 2024 and 2025. The number remaining open for more than two years declined in consecutive years, falling from 523 at the end of 2024 to 442 at the end of 2025 (See Figure 4.8). This has been aided by the changes to the grant scheme for DWWTS remediation (see Section 4.2), greater enforcement by proactive local authorities and increased regulatory oversight of local authorities by the EPA.

Despite improvements, a considerable number of advisory notices remain open over long periods. This is something the EPA has highlighted in annual National Inspection Plan reports to be addressed as a priority by local authorities.

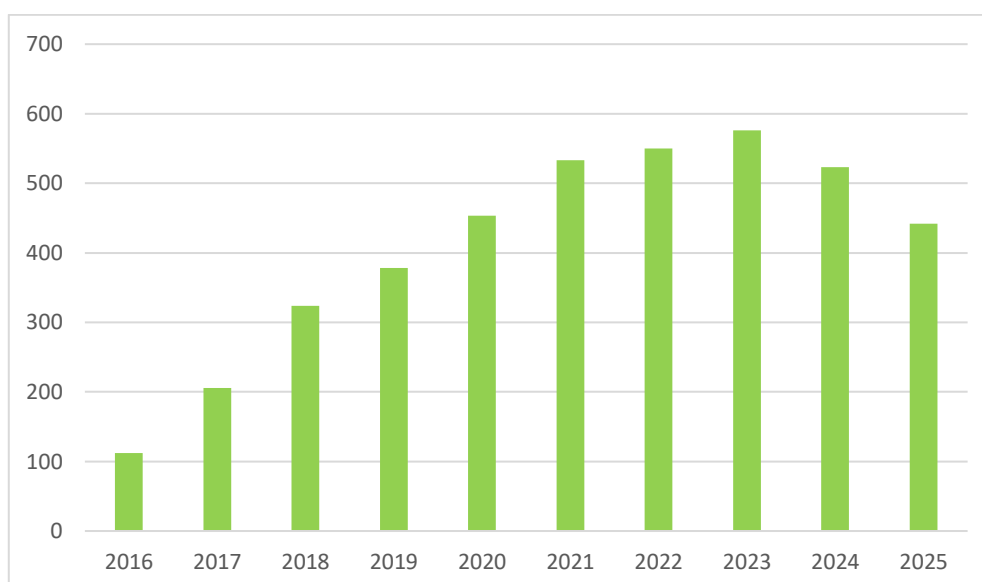


Figure 4.8 DWWTs advisory notices open more than two years at the end of each year.

The EPA has a statutory supervisory role regarding the performance of local authority functions in relation to DWWTs inspections. To improve advisory notice closure rates the EPA introduced a tracker in 2024 for under-performing local authorities. These local authorities report to the EPA quarterly with their progress on closing out advisory notices open greater than two years. A number of audits have also been carried out by the EPA with local authorities to assess performance in closing out advisory notices. Inspector workshops have been held through the current cycle of the National Inspection Plan to support improved performance overall. The EPA can issue a direction if a local authority fails to perform its functions. The EPA has twice issued legal Directions to local authorities which resulted in the inspection shortfalls being addressed. The penalty for failure to comply with a direction is prosecution on indictment.

The rates of closure of advisory notices varied across local authority areas and ranged from 29% to 100% closed at the end of 2025. Significant differences in how enforcement is escalated across local authorities is apparent. For example, the number of legal cases since inspections commenced in 2013 increased from 66 at the end of 2024 to 88 at the end 2025, however, 90% of those cases were taken by four local authorities, Wexford, Kerry, Mayo and Limerick. Nine local authorities had resolved less than 80% of advisory notices issued by them by the end of 2025.

In summary, while a reduction in the number of advisory notices open more than two years is positive, further efforts are needed across local authorities to ensure consistency in enforcement and continued improvement. All local authorities should follow the enforcement model fully including taking prosecutions where warranted. Some local authorities need to apply greater resources in this area.

Recommendation 10: The 2027-2031 National Inspection Plan should reinforce the requirement for local authorities to follow the enforcement model fully, including taking prosecutions where warranted.

5. Review of Public Engagement

The National Inspection Plan recognises that local authorities are responsible for ongoing communication and engagement with the public at a local level while the EPA oversees the implementation of the engagement by local authorities.

The EPA coordinates the Septic Tank Inspectors Network (Section 4.1). Workshops in 2022, 2023 and 2026 included specific sessions on engagement activities. The workshop in 2023 held an exercise to assess engagement across local authorities and to collate good examples of engagement activities. The level of activity reported was variable across local authorities. Local authorities reported the following engagement activities during the session:

- articles and advertisements in print (newspapers/publications)
- radio interviews and advertisements;
- social media posts;
- distribution of leaflets;
- stakeholder/public meetings and events;
- websites;
- targeted catchment work.

Good examples of engagement material in these categories were collated following the workshop and made available to all inspectors via the NIECE portal to promote their use by all local authorities.

The EPA publishes a report on the National Inspection Plan annually for the preceding year. This is issued with a press release highlighting the key messages for homeowners. This report receives significant coverage in national and local broadcast, print and electronic media, with EPA staff giving interviews on national and local radio. The report is also publicised on social media.

The EPA website contains DWWTS information on inspections, guidance for new builds, maintenance, remediation and grants. EPA webpages pertaining to DWWTS received approximately 19,000 views in 2024.

The EPA engages and exchanges information with other stakeholders in relation to the National Inspection Plan via different forums. The EPA presents an overview of the National Inspection Plan at the site suitability assessor's course. The findings of the National Inspection Plan have been presented at the EPA Water Conferences in 2023 and 2026.

The EPA research programme 2014-2020 included a project which examined DWWTS engagement.¹¹ The project examined ways to deliver risk-based messages effectively to improve knowledge and promote behavioural change. This set out the aims, objectives and guiding principles for an effective engagement strategy:

- use visual mechanisms and targeted messages to inform risk perception;
- provide information on how DWWTS work, maintenance requirements, how to properly detect signs of malfunctioning and recommended steps;
- engage at the local and national levels, across media spectrums, over a sustained period of time;
- communication should be positive yet emphasise family health implications;
- ensure that the National Inspection Plan is highly visible by reporting regularly;

¹¹ [Relay Risk Project: Examining the communication of environmental risk through a case study of domestic wastewater treatment systems in the republic of Ireland](#)

- ensure consistency of information on the financial costs;
- be aware of factors that influence public trust; and
- engage and work collaboratively with trusted organisations.

Research in 2013-2014 found that the National Risk Communication Strategy for DWWTS failed to engender a significant change in behaviour among DWWTS users in Ireland.¹² The study suggested:

- that organisations communicate information with a variety of audience profiles in mind and acknowledge the value of behavioural and cognitive theories in tailoring messages;
- the clarity and accessibility of technical information is an important further factor;
- demographically focused engagement approaches are recommended;
- implementation of more discursive, face-to-face communication mechanisms; and
- a communication campaign must be theoretically informed incorporating message framing, risk perception theory, and message tailoring.

Engagement activities carried out by the EPA and local authorities in relation to DWWTS reported above reflect the guiding principles and recommendations from the research by:

- engaging at national and local level using a variety of media and methods;
- emphasis on the health implications and positive messages about what can be done and the assistance available;
- providing clear and simple information tailored to homeowners explaining how DWWTS work, the risks, critical signs of malfunction and what homeowners can do;
- collaboration between competent bodies and organisations; and
- regularly reporting and engaging in relation to the National Inspection Plan.

It should be noted that engagement is not specifically required under the legislation. Previous National Inspection Plans have not set specific requirements for local authority

¹² [Efficacy of a National Hydrological Risk Communication Strategy: Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems in the Republic of Ireland](#)

engagement activities. While recognising the challenges associated with engendering behavioural change, engagement activities should continue and be built upon.

It should be noted that during the stakeholder's pre-consultation, inspectors reported a lack of resources for engagement.

Recommendation 11: The 2027-2031 National Inspection Plan should build on the current engagement activities of both the EPA and local authorities. This should be supported by further development of standardised material through the Septic Tank Inspectors Network.

6. New Research

Since the development of the 2022-2026 National Inspection Plan, new EPA¹³ and ESRI¹⁴ research on DWWTS has identified key barriers to septic tank maintenance and remediation and recommends improvements in education, funding, enforcement, and communication. Relevant research findings will be considered as part of the development of the next National Inspection Plan. However, many findings relate to policy decisions that are beyond the scope of the National Inspection Plan.

Recommendation 12: The 2027-2031 National Inspection Plan should build on research findings to strengthen enforcement and engagement strategies.

7. Conclusion

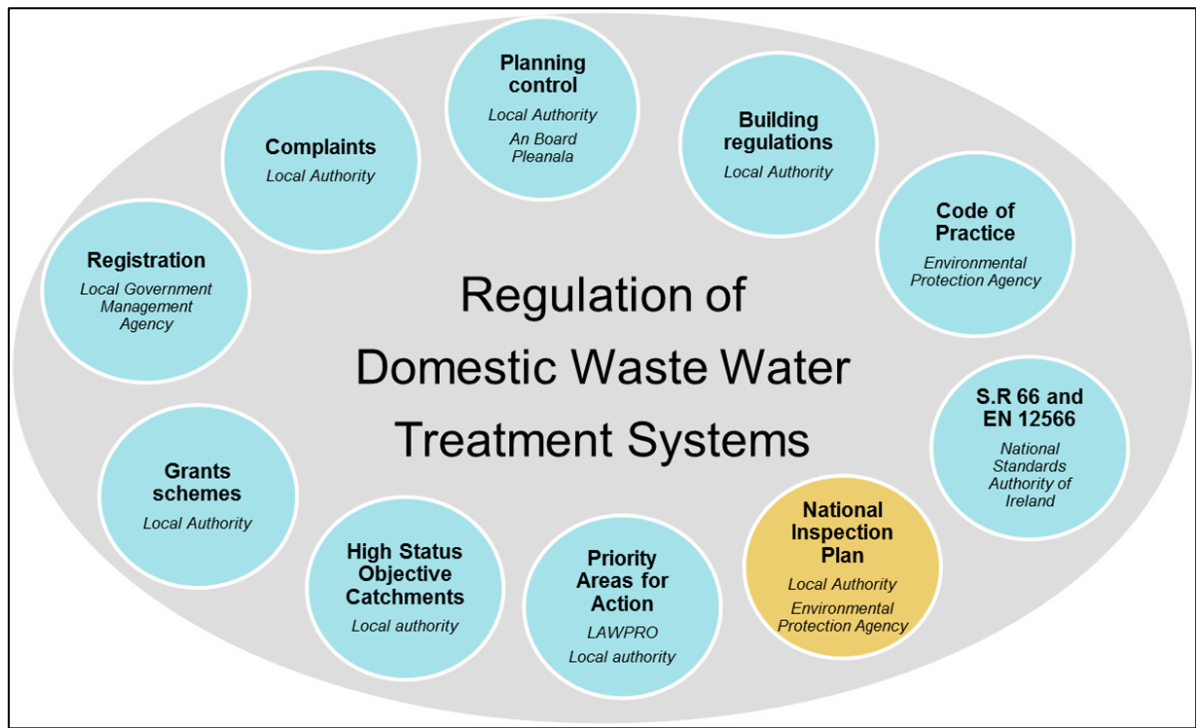
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¹³ [Remediation of Faulty Septic Tanks: A Mixed Methods Approach to Environmental Risk Communication \(REMARC\)](#)

¹⁴ [Drinking Water and Domestic Wastewater Treatment: Maintenance, Perceptions, and Priorities](#)

8. Appendices

Appendix A Regulation of DWWTS.



Appendix B. Allocation of inspections into risk zones in the National Inspection Plan 2022-2026.

	Inspections 2022-2026				Minimum in 2022	Minimum per annum 2023-2026
	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Total		
Carlow	0	72	15	87	15	18
Cavan	62	68	30	160	28	33
Clare	158	259	40	457	77	95
Cork City	34	9	5	48	8	10
Cork County	106	446	105	657	113	136
Donegal	379	54	85	518	90	107
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	0	9	0	9	1	2
Fingal	53	0	10	63	11	13
Galway City	0	5	0	5	1	1
Galway County	202	216	90	508	88	105
Kerry	110	115	60	285	49	59
Kildare	67	14	40	121	21	25
Kilkenny	43	178	25	246	42	51
Laois	0	29	20	49	9	10
Leitrim	19	14	15	48	8	10
Limerick	129	139	40	308	52	64
Longford	0	5	15	20	4	4
Louth	0	34	25	59	11	12
Mayo	139	58	60	257	45	53
Meath	183	77	45	305	53	63
Monaghan	149	28	20	197	33	41
Offaly	14	5	20	39	7	8
Roscommon	30	5	30	65	13	13
Sligo	5	9	20	34	6	7
South Dublin	0	15	5	20	4	4
Tipperary	87	57	50	194	34	40
Waterford	14	77	25	116	20	24
Westmeath	5	5	25	35	7	7
Wexford	350	221	55	626	106	130
Wicklow	62	177	25	264	44	55
Total	2400	2400	1000	5800	1000	1200