

New advice film launched on taste and smell of tap water in Northern Ireland

A new film about the taste and smell of drinking water has been launched by experts in the water industry.

The film, which has been produced by WaterSafe, the national register for approved plumbers in the UK, features advice from a water company quality expert and is supported by the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) for Northern Ireland.

It offers an insight into different tastes and smells in tap water, the causes behind them and simple steps to help prevent them. It features chlorine, metallic or antiseptic-tasting water, a musty or sewage smell and bitter water.

The film follows the release of the annual report of the DWI, which shows that while tap water quality in Northern Ireland remains among the best in the world, a small number fail taste and smell tests.

In its 2017 Annual Report, the Inspectorate confirmed that 99.88 per cent of tests passed stringent water quality standards in 2017. However, of the small number of samples which failed at household taps in Northern Ireland, there were 21 contraventions reported due to either taste or odour.

A proportion of these can be linked to poor plumbing in the home, wrongly connected pipework, poor materials and fittings, inadequate protection from water 'flowing back' into internal pipework from dishwashers and toilet cisterns and poor tap hygiene.

The WaterSafe approval register, which is backed by the DWI and Northern Ireland Water, wants to help homeowners tackle these problems with its new information film.

Julie Spinks, Director of WaterSafe, said: "Households in Northern Ireland enjoy fresh, healthy tap water which is among the best in the world and we want to make sure it tastes and smells fresh and healthy too.

"Many people don't realise there are many things which can affect the taste and smell of water so we're highlighting a few of the most common complaints, with advice on how to find out what's causing them and simple steps to put them right.

"This could be as simple as changing a washer on a tap, to wiping around taps regularly with disinfectant, to installing check valves on hoses connecting dishwashers and washing machines."

Catriona Davis DWI Northern Ireland, Chief Inspector, added: "Consumers expect their water to meet the regulatory standards and not to smell or have a strong taste. It is important they feel confident it's safe to drink.



“We suggest watching this useful information film from WaterSafe to help consumers be aware internal plumbing may play a part in imparting a taste or odour to their drinking water. However, if you are concerned about an abnormal taste or odour in your water supply, then don’t hesitate to contact Northern Ireland Water on their helpline number 03457 440088 for more advice. I’d also urge households not to take any chances and always be sure to employ a qualified plumber.”

Plumbers approved on the national WaterSafe register all have specific training in the Water Fittings (Supply) Regulations designed to maintain the high quality of water and avoid the risk of contamination.

To find your nearest WaterSafe approved plumber, enter your postcode online at watersafe.org.uk or to watch the film and read more advice visit watersafe.org.uk/taste.