

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Ofwat P and O](#)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Comments on Southern Water's performance  
**Date:** 19 October 2021 12:56:17

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Dear OFWAT,

I understand that following the deadline of October 21st you will be reviewing comments from all customers and stakeholders in regards to the performance of Southern Water in 2020-21.

As a customer of Southern Water I would ask you to consider my comments when reviewing their performance.

In July this year a sewage pipe burst at my nearby beach in Bulverhythe. This caused the beach to be closed for around a week and affected marine life, the local fishing industry and all beach users, not to mention the beach huts that were flooded with raw sewage and to this day are unusable. A group of us, primarily sea swimmers, got together to discuss this and as more people joined the conversation it became clear just how dreadfully - and in fact criminally - Southern Water have behaved in the past. News of their court case and £90m fine broke at around the same time:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/record-90m-fine-for-southern-water-following-ea-prosecution>

<https://www.sas.org.uk/news/southern-water-slammed-with-record-fine-for-sewage-pollution/>

The problem is, it hasn't stopped them! In 2020 alone, Southern Water was responsible for over 20,000 separate storm overflow events, with a duration of over 201,000 hours in total (the true figure is likely higher). That is equivalent to almost 23 years:

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/dataset/21e15f12-0df8-4bfc-b763-45226c16a8ac>

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Please find attached some photos which I took personally on the beach in front of our beach hut in July 2019. This waste had been all along the tide line of the beach and had clearly washed up. As you can see the main component is tampon applicators, which are likely to have been flushed down the toilet.

Also attached is an image of the waste outflow at Bulverhythe (this from 2011.) Prior to this, there was a defect in the same storm overflow in 2000-1 according to the Environment Agency:

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles/profile.html?site=ukj2202-14150>

It states that 'A drop in water quality occurred in 2000 and 2001 following periods of wet weather. Southern Water Services reported a defect in a storm overflow on Seaside Road, which discharges via a surface water outfall to the west of the bathing water. The defect was repaired subsequently. Under the programme of works for Southern Water (from 2020 to 2025) investigations within the catchment will be carried out. This will help to identify where bathing

water improvements may be needed in the future'

So, there had been a defect in this area previously, in 2001, the picture shown of the outfall was 10 years later in 2011, investigations are supposed to have begun to be carried out last year, and then a pipe bursts this year 2021. For over 20 years, it appears they've still not sorted out the problem properly, which begs the question: are Southern Water competent to do this at all? Should there not be some independent investigation into them, considering their blatant flouting of the laws against illegal sewage dumping alongside their apparent inability to properly look after these sewers?

I have copied in the local Clean Water Action Group who I'm sure will be very interested to hear the outcome of your consultation.

Kind Regards,

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