

River pollution alert service extended

An online service updating the public on major pollution incidents in 6 London boroughs has been extended from today to cover another 16 areas of the capital and large parts of the northern Home Counties.

Anyone with an interest in the environment can sign-up for e-mail alerts on how the Environment Agency is responding to incidents, including river pollution where sewage or another substance has entered the water.

The service has been tested since March in Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.

Environment officers are currently investigating one of the worst pollution incidents to the River Lee in recent memory. In February 2018, several thousand litres of waste oil entered the Lee in Tottenham.

A joint clean-up from the Environment Agency and Canal and River Trust removed 100,000 litres of contaminated water and 100 tonnes of hazardous waste from the water. This is the type of incident that the new service will cover.

People who want to be kept posted on incident management can simply [log on](#) free of charge and submit their e-mail address.

They can select the river or rivers of interest from around 80 in London, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex and Hertfordshire. The Environment Agency will then issue regular updates. The number of e-mails sent out will depend on the size and scale of the incident.

Including all reports of suspected pollution in London and the northern Home Counties, from smells to fish in distress, the Environment Agency handled more than 55 incidents a month in the year to August.

Sam Lumb, Area Director for the Environment Agency in the northern Home Counties and London north of the Thames, said:

We're really pleased to be extending this popular service to those with a keen interest in the environment. It means the public can be informed about major water pollution incidents that might affect their property, business, wellbeing or their access to amenities.

We have already run a test service this year after several incidents in the 6 London boroughs that have the River Lee running through them – Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.

The feedback has been really positive, and a number of community groups asked us to include their local watercourse in the updates.

If, after a 6-month trial period, the alerts have proved popular, there are plans to extend the service in the future.

To report pollution incidents, call the Environment Agency's 24-hour incident hotline: 0800 80 70 60.

Local authority areas now included in the service: Barking and Dagenham; Barnet; Brent; Camden; Ealing; East Hertfordshire; Enfield; Hackney; Hammersmith and Fulham; Haringey; Harlow; Harrow; Hertsmere; Hillingdon; Hounslow; Islington; Kensington and Chelsea; Luton; Newham; Redbridge; St Albans; Three Rivers; Watford; and Welwyn and Hatfield

Areas partially covered: Brentwood; Central Bedfordshire; Chiltern; Dacorum; Epping Forest; Havering; North Hertfordshire; Richmond upon Thames; South Bucks; Spelthorne; Stevenage; Uttlesford; and Windsor and Maidenhead