

Sustainable drainage compulsory from next year

SuDS make use of landscape and natural vegetation to control the flow of surface water and reduce the risk of flooding. Designs can include ponds, permeable paving and swales, which slow down the discharge of surface water more than conventional piped drainage.

Surface runoff water can also be a major source of pollution, both directly and from overwhelmed sewers discharging into rivers. SuDS are designed to improve water quality while being more resilient and longer lasting than conventional drainage.

As part of the regulations, 'SuDS Approving Bodies' or 'SABs' will be set up within every local authority to approve drainage plans. The SAB or local planning authorities will have powers to issue enforcement notices to a developer who breaches the requirements. Developers will have a right of appeal to Welsh Government against the decision of a SAB.

The Environment Minister, Hannah Blythyn, said:

"Surface water flooding can have a devastating impact on communities and our economy. The recent flooding we've seen in parts of Wales have underlined the need to adapt to the challenges of climate change.

"Around 163,000 properties in Wales are at risk of surface water flooding. Employing sustainable drainage systems are estimated to reduce flood damage by up to 30%.

"Until now, the uptake of SuDS has been low. These regulations will help reduce flood risk and improve water quality, while also introducing homes for wildlife within new housing developments."