

Blocked and Defective Drains

Information Sheet

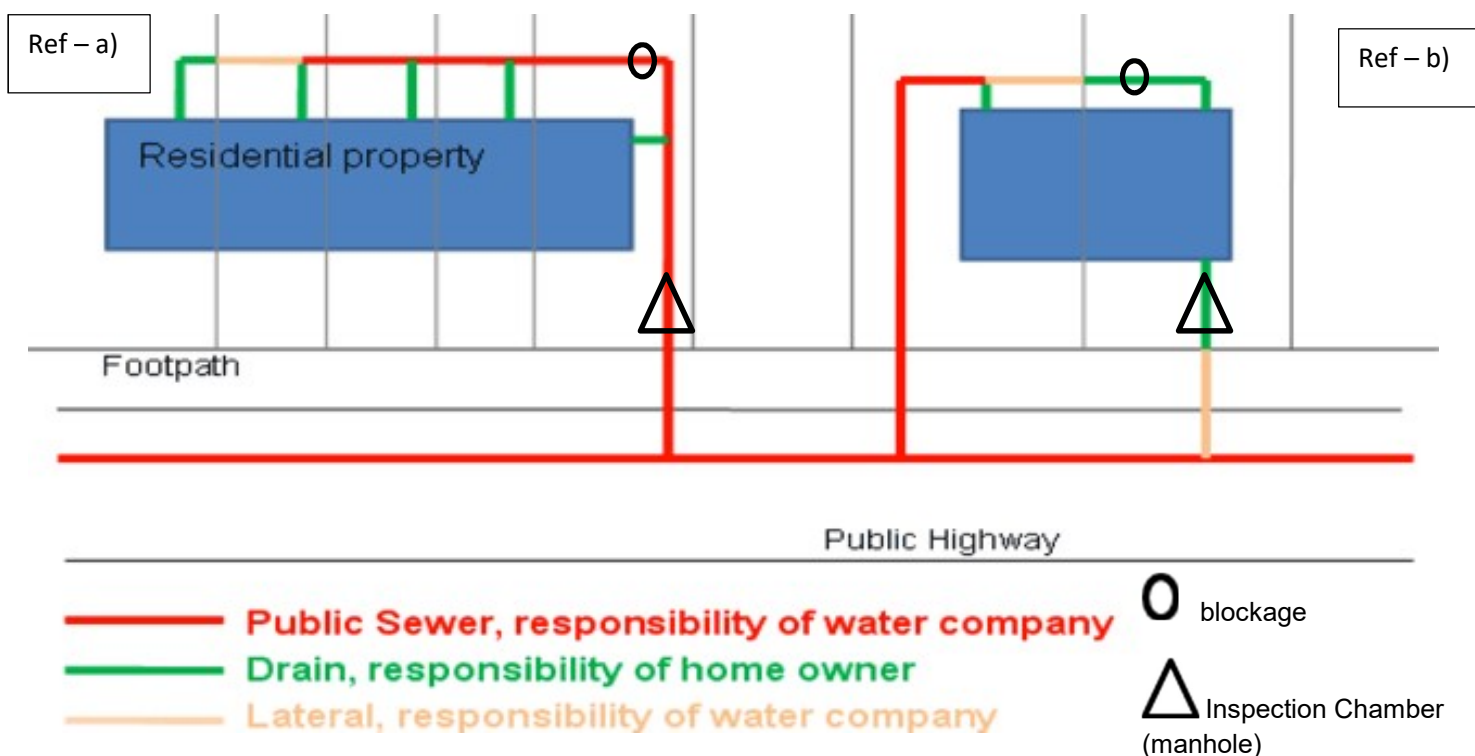
What to do when your toilet blocks.

As a householder, you are responsible for your drains up to the point where it crosses your boundary (underground) **unless** drains from neighbouring houses join up with yours. These 'shared pipes' are part of the public sewer called 'lateral drains' and they are the responsibility of United Utilities to maintain. You are still responsible for maintaining and unblocking from you WC to the point that this pipework joins the public sewer/lateral drain.

The Public Health (Domestic) Officers enforce the legislation that ensures that the drains remain running and our role is to instruct you to clear your drains, and undertake the work when/if you are unable to. There is a time consuming process to this which means that it will take a number of days for drains to be cleared/unblocked with our involvement.

If you suspect your drains are blocked you first should either call a drainage contractor or United Utilities depending on where the blockage is. If you're unsure, United Utilities are happy to help get the problem sorted, and the quickest way is to call them on 034 567 23723, or chat to them online between 9am and 8pm by clicking on the orange Live Chat box on the right. They'll be able to advise you on what to do next.

Diagram 1



Within Diagram 1 ref a) shows a block of terraced houses with a shared (public sewer) at the rear discharging to the front. The house at the right of the 5 will not be experiencing a blockage due to

where his soil vent pipe is situated. This takes the waste from his WC to the private drain (green Line) to the public sewer. This should be called through to United Utilities to resolve.

Ref b) shows a pair of semi-detached properties. The house on the right of the pair has a blocked WC in the bathroom (upstairs) however the downstairs WC is fine. The rear is connected with next door only at the rear of the left hand property, therefore, the occupant/owner of the house with the blockage is responsible. This householder should call a drainage contractor out to unblock this.

There are many reasons why drains block up, the main reason, however is often due to people putting things down the drain which should not be flushed away. United Utilities have identified some issues from the North West.

Defective Drains

Where blockages can be cleared with a high powered hose or rods, drains that are defective may require more disruptive intervention.

Defects can be either above or below ground, and get reported to the Public Health (Domestic) team because of a complaint or subsequent action. Many rat complaints can be attributed to a drainage defect which allows rodents out of the sewer system. Other complaints which come through to us here are ones of sewage leaks and smells from 'above ground' defects.

As above you are responsible for your drainage provision upto where it joins the public sewer or crosses your boundary line.

Where you are aware that there is a defect within your drainage you should make contact with a professional 'drainage company' in order to carry out the repairs, if you think the defect is on the public sewer or lateral drain (the section of your drains over your boundary) you should call United Utilities.

The Environmental Health (domestic) Team's involvement is to enforce the legislation that requires you to have drains that are connected and flowing correctly.