

Compliance Assessment Report CAR_NRW0042730

Permit being assessed: BJ0077401

For: RHYDOWEN STW LLANDYSUL, held by CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION C C
At: RHYDOWEN STW LLANDYSUL, LLANDYSUL, LLANDYSUL, LLANDYSUL,
LLANDYSUL.

Type of assessment carried out: Site Inspection, Reason: Incident Response (Incident number: 2303893).

On 30/05/2023, between 11:20 and 11:45.

Parts of permit assessed: 8(a); 8(b)

NRW Lead Officer: Bethan Lewis.

Report sent to: Cari Barker, STW Project Manager, on 02/11/2023.

1. Summary of our findings (full details in section 4)

Part of permitted activity assessed (criteria)	Assessment result	Permit condition
WQ-C1 - Emissions and monitoring - Emissions to water	Action only (X)	

Result types are explained in more detail in the 'Important Information' section below.

2. What action is required?

Criteria	Action needed	Complete by
WQ-C1	Complete an additional site visit at Rhydowen Sewage Treatment Works (STW), during which the outfall will be checked, and update NRW on your findings. Also confirm whether the STW will be emptied and refilled with final effluent from other STWs, and if so, confirm the date when this will be undertaken.	14/12/2023

Action criteria codes are listed in the 'Important information' section below.

3. What will happen next?

Any non-compliance we have identified and recorded on this form is an offence. It can result in criminal prosecution and/or suspension or revocation of your permit.

At this time, we do not intend to take any further action.

This statement does not stop us from taking additional enforcement action if further relevant information comes to light or offences continue.

4. Details of our assessment

On 25 May 2023, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) received a report concerning an odour and possible sewage fungus within the final effluent discharge from Rhydowen Sewage

Treatment Works (STW) (permit number: BJ0077401) (incident number: WIRS 2303893). The discharge was also reported to be cloudy.

In response to the above report, NRW Officer Bethan Lewis inspected the outfall of Rhydowen STW at 11:20 hours on 30 May 2023. With the river level low on this day, final effluent was found to be discharging directly onto shingle prior to discharging into the Afon Clettwr. As shown in photograph 1 below, sewage fungus was visible within the discharge prior to entering the Afon Clettwr. The discharge itself however appeared clear, although the NRW Officer did notice a slight odour.



Photograph 1: Final effluent outfall at Rhydowen STW

Despite the odour and sewage fungus noted above, water within the Afon Clettwr appeared clear at the point of entry of the final effluent as shown by photograph 2 below. Something fungus-like was observed on the riverbed surrounding the outfall, however this was observed for several 10s of metres upstream and was restricted to the shallow portion of the river. It was therefore suspected that this could have been a natural occurrence given the warm, dry weather and low flows experienced over the preceding weeks.



Photograph 2: Final effluent entry point into the Afon Clettwr

Rhydowen STW's permit is descriptive meaning that there are no numerical limits for parameters such as Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD), ammoniacal nitrogen, suspended solids etc. within the final effluent. Ceredigion County Council (CCC) will only be considered to have breached the permit if the works are not operated in such a way as to prevent *"matter being present in the effluent to such an extent as to cause the receiving waters, or any waters of which the receiving waters are a tributary, to be poisonous or injurious to fish in those waters, or to the spawning grounds, spawn or food of fish in those waters, or otherwise cause damage to the ecology of those waters: and the treated effluent from having any other adverse environmental impact"* (condition 8). At present, CCC are not considered to have breached permit BJ0077401 due to the limited impact observed within the Afon Clettwr. Given the presence of sewage fungus in the final effluent prior to its entry into the Afon Clettwr on the 30 May 2023 however, it is clear that there is a possibility that a breach may occur in future if intervention and/or monitoring is not undertaken by CCC.

CCC were made aware of the above report and observations on the 31 May 2023. On 21 September 2023, NRW held a meeting with CCC to discuss Rhydowen STW. CCC were not immediately aware of the cause of the odour and sewage fungus noted above. CCC therefore intended to undertake an additional visit to the site, during which the outfall would be checked. CCC also stated that the site could be brought back to optimum condition by emptying and refilling the STW with final effluent from other STWs. As part of this Compliance Assessment Report (CAR), NRW therefore ask CCC to complete the additional site visit mentioned above and update NRW on their findings. NRW also ask CCC to confirm whether the STW will be emptied and refilled with final effluent from other STWs, and if so, confirm the date when this will be undertaken. NRW ask that CCC do all of this by no later than the **14 December 2023**.

In this document 'Natural Resources Wales' means the Natural Resources Body for Wales established by Article 3 of the Natural Resources Body for Wales (Establishment) order 2012.

If you have any queries about this report, or to discuss completion of any actions, please contact the NRW Officer named above.

Important information

Legal status of this report

Your permit is issued to you under the Environmental Permitting Regulations. You have a responsibility to comply with the conditions of your permit and prevent pollution/harm to the environment. You must also ensure that you comply with any other relevant legislation that may apply to your site's operations.

This report explains the findings of our assessment and any action you are required to take. We categorise non-compliance using our guidance for assessing non-compliance at regulated sites.

When we find potential non-compliance/s we will normally give you advice on how to maintain compliance.

To correct non-compliance, we may:

- require you to take specific actions
- issue a notice
- review the conditions of your permit.

Any advice and guidance we give will be without prejudice to any other enforcement response that we consider may be required.

Assessment results and non-compliance categories (used in section 1):

Assessment result	Description
Assessed (A)	Assessed or assessed in part, no evidence of non-compliance found
Action only (X)	Action only relating to the activity assessment
Ongoing (O)	Ongoing non-compliance, not scored

Non-compliance category	Description
C1 Major	Potential to have a major, serious, persistent and/or extensive impact or effect on the environment, people and/or property
C2 Significant	Potential to have a significant impact or effect on the environment, people and/or property
C3 Minor	Potential to have a minor or minimal impact or effect on the environment, people and/or property
C4 No environmental impact	Non-compliance at a regulated site that cannot foreseeably have any impact on the environment, people and/or property

If your assessment result in Section 1 is suspended, what does this mean?

In line with our guidance, we may suspend non-compliance for up to six months to allow time for remedial action to be taken. These will be re-instated if the action is not completed.

Full list of water quality action criteria (used in section 1 and 2):**WQ A: Management**

- WQ-A1 General management

WQ B: Operations

- WQ-B1 Permitted activities
- WQ-B2 The site
- WQ-B3 Operating techniques
- WQ-B4 Improvement programme
- WQ-B5 Pre-operational conditions

WQ C: Emissions and monitoring

- WQ-C1 Emissions to water
- WQ-C2 Emissions to land
- WQ-C3 Emissions of substances not controlled by emission limits
- WQ-C4 Installation of monitoring boreholes

WQ D: Information

- WQ-D1 Records
- WQ-D2 Reporting
- WQ-D3 Notifications

Enforcement response

Any permit condition non-compliance is an offence and we may take legal action against you. Action we take can include prosecution, serving a notice on you and/or suspension or revocation of your permit. See our Enforcement and Sanctions Guidance for further information.

Data protection notice

You should make sure that anyone named in this report knows that the information it contains will be processed by Natural Resources Wales to fulfil its regulatory and monitoring functions and to maintain the relevant public register(s).

We may also use and/or disclose the report in connection with:

- offering or providing you with our literature or services relating to environmental matters
- consulting with the public, public bodies and other organisations (e.g. Health and Safety Executive, local authorities) on environmental issues
- carrying out statistical analysis, research and development on environmental issues
- providing public register information to enquirers
- investigating possible breaches of environmental law
- assessing customer service satisfaction and improving our service
- Freedom of Information Act or Environmental Information Regulations requests.

We may also pass it on to our agents or representatives to do these things on our behalf.

Disclosure of information – this report will be available to view on-line

If you think this report contains commercially confidential information that should not be placed on our public register, you must contact your local Natural Resources Wales office within **fifteen working days** of receiving this report, using the contact details in the accompanying email or letter. You must give a full explanation of why it should not be

added to our public register, including specifying which information is commercially confidential. We will assess your request and respond to you within 20 working days to let you know if we agree to your request.

What do I do if I disagree with the report or have a complaint?

If you disagree with this compliance assessment report, you should contact the lead officer without delay to discuss your concerns.

If you are unable to resolve the issue with the lead officer or their line manager you should contact our Customer Contact team on 0300 065 3000 (Monday to Friday 08:00 – 18:00), or email enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk for details of how to raise your dispute further through our Complaints and Commendations procedure.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can contact the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales by phone on 0300 7900203 or by email at ask@ombudsman.wales

Welsh Language Standards

We are committed to establishing Natural Resources Wales as a naturally bilingual organisation. We will provide compliance reports in your preferred language.