



#END SEWAGE POLLUTION

[v1 - 2025]

ACTION GUIDE - GET YOUR MS TO SPEAK OUT



**SURFERS
AGAINST
SEWAGE**



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INTRO

Wales' seas, lakes and rivers are being choked by a water system that is failing people and planet. Sewage is still being poured into our blue spaces day after day, while vital investment in infrastructure is kicked down the road. Instead of action, we get patchy data, weak excuses and endless delay. Nature is suffering. Communities are paying the price.

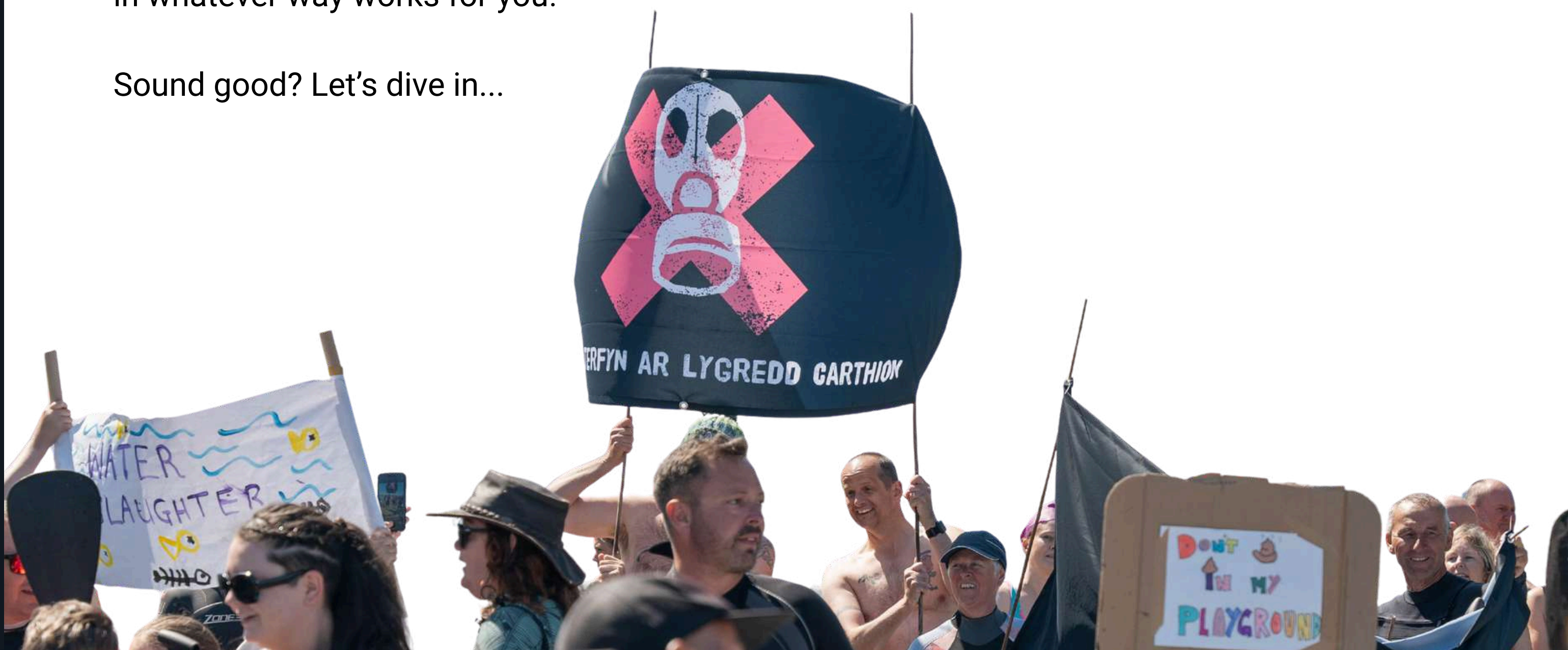
This is where you come in...

From community clean-ups to citizen science, people power is already making waves to protect our blue spaces. But to truly turn the tide against pollution and failure, we need to make our voices heard in the Senedd. MSs have the power to demand action, reform the system and fight for our waters – but they won't act unless we push them. Loudly. Relentlessly. Together.

We made this guide to help you do just that. Step-by-step. Scenario-by-scenario. So you can get your MS to listen, act, and fight for clean water in Wales.

Don't feel like you must read this guide all in one go. If you already have a bit of experience engaging with MSs, feel free to jump ahead to the bits that are most relevant to you. Equally, if you're brand new and unsure where to start, get going with the basics before moving on. Use it in whatever way works for you!

Sound good? Let's dive in...



THE PROBLEM IN NUMBERS



118,276

The number of times Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water discharged sewage in 2024, lasting a staggering **968,340 hours**.

1 every 4 minutes

The average frequency of sewage discharges into Welsh waters last year

629

The number of sewage discharges recorded at Llanfairfechan in 2024, making it the most impacted location in Wales. Other hotspots included Swansea Bay (493), the River Usk (468), and Llyn Padarn (417)

47

The average number of discharges per overflow in Wales in 2024. Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water has only committed to reducing this to 30 by 2030 – far weaker than the England and Wales average target of 21

256

The number of jobs that have recently been cut at Natural Resources Wales (NRW) - weakening the regulator's capacity to enforce environmental regulations.

0

The number of days between January-March 2025 without a sewage discharge somewhere in Wales.



To learn more about the broken water system, check out our

WATER QUALITY REPORT '25



OUR VISION FOR WATER



Wales' seas, lakes and rivers should be a national treasure, not dumping grounds for sewage. But routine pollution, crumbling infrastructure, and weak oversight mean our blue spaces are being sacrificed. This scandal won't be solved with half-measures or hollow promises. It demands bold action, genuine accountability, and system-wide reform.

That transformation must be guided by **five key principles to end sewage pollution in Wales:**



Protect Public and Environmental Health

No one should have to choose between enjoying the water and risking their health. People and nature must no longer be put in danger by failing infrastructure or corporate negligence. Protecting our communities and ecosystems must come first – always.



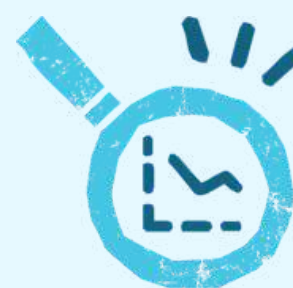
Strengthen Independent Regulators

Wales needs regulators with teeth. They must be independent, properly resourced, and empowered to hold Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and Hafren Dyfrdwy to account. That means enforcing the law, defending environmental protections, and acting without political interference. Anything less is a betrayal of the public trust.



Democratic decision making

Water is life, and decisions about it should not be stitched up behind closed doors. Communities, citizens, campaigners, engineers, and experts deserve a real say in how water systems are governed. Democracy in water must be meaningful – not a box-ticking exercise.



Ensure Transparency

The public has a right to know when and where sewage is being discharged – and what's being done about it. Data, decisions, and accountability must be open and accessible, not hidden away. If you're concealing the truth, you shouldn't be trusted with our waters.



Value for money

Bill payers deserve better. That means making sure money goes where it's needed: into fixing infrastructure and investing in long-term, nature-based solutions, bringing climate and biodiversity wins with them.

OVERVIEW: WHAT DO MSs DO?



MSs (Members of the Senedd) sit in the **Welsh Parliament (Senedd) in Cardiff** and represent the people of Wales. As of the Senedd elections in 2026, there will be 96 MSs representing 16 constituencies – with each constituency electing 6 MSs. **Their job is to make laws and decisions that affect everyday life in Wales.**

Unlike MPs (Members of the UK Parliament in Westminster), MSs don't deal with UK-wide issues like foreign policy - but they do hold power over many of the issues that matter most when it comes to tackling sewage pollution, such as the **environment, water quality, public health, agriculture and local government**. That means your MS is a key person who we need on our side to make Wales a greener (and bluer!) place.

MSs can demand action, call out weak enforcement of environmental regulations, propose new laws, and raise your concerns directly with ministers in the Welsh Government. And they're far more likely to act when their **constituents speak up and put on the pressure**.

They may not control everything - for example, water company regulation in England can still have an impact on Wales - but MSs have real power to improve monitoring, enforcement, and protections for the communities and waterways in their constituencies.

In short: **your MS is your voice in the Senedd**. If we want a cleaner, healthier future, we must put that voice to work.



STEP-BY-STEP: HOW TO INFLUENCE YOUR MS



In the 4 steps laid out in this section, we are going to walk through the process of **finding out a bit about your MS, getting in touch, meeting with them** and then – most importantly – making sure you **follow up afterwards to keep them accountable**.

If you are at the start of your journey influencing your MS to take action on sewage pollution, following these 4 steps is a good way to get going. If you're a little bit further along in engaging your MS on the sewage scandal or aren't sure if a meeting is the best first tactic to use, consider jumping ahead to the next section, '**Dive Deeper – Finding the Best Strategy to Influence Your MS**' on page 16.

1 - Do Your Homework – Who are your MSs and what makes them tick?

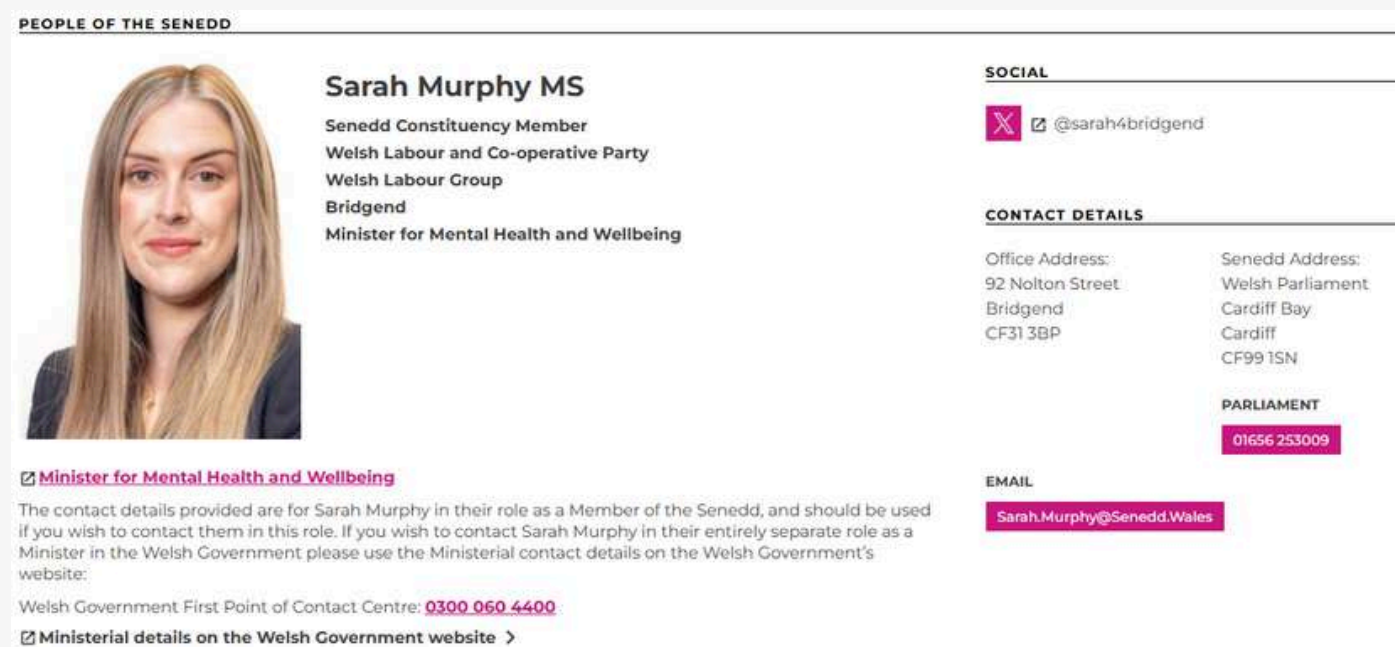
Action Summary:

- *Search your postcode on the [Senedd Cymru Welsh Parliament](#) website to find your MS's profile.*
- *What is your MS's name?*
- *What party do they belong to?*
- *What is the name of your Senedd constituency?*
- *What does your MS's voting summary say about their interests?*

You'd never get in the water without first checking the conditions and thinking about the best spot to dip – we hope! Similar rules apply when thinking about how to influence your MS. You need to know who it is you want to influence, and a little bit about their interests so you can employ the best strategy to win them over.

The quickest way to find out who your MSs are is to visit the '[Find a Member of the Senedd](#)' page on the Senedd website and enter your postcode in the search bar. This will let you know who your MSs are for your constituency and you region. It will also let you know the name of the Senedd constituency you live in – this is useful information particularly if you want to get other residents in your constituency involved in your campaigning.

As an example, let's imagine you live in Porthcawl. Entering your postcode should bring up the profile for **Sarah Murphy MS**.



As we can see, the first page already gives us some useful information to note down. We now know that Sarah Murphy represents the **Bridgend constituency** (of which Porthcawl is a part) and is a member of the **Welsh Labour and Co-operative Party**. Knowing your MS's party affiliation is crucial, because this can help give you an idea of their beliefs as well as who they're accountable to, aside from their constituents – MS's are often expected to hold their party's official line on certain issues and may face repercussions if they don't, though this doesn't mean they will never disagree with their party's leadership.

If you scroll down to the '**My Senedd Activities**' section, you will find an archive of your MS's activities in the Senedd – including questions submitted, motions tabled and speeches given. This information can help give you an indication of how active they are in the Senedd and what issues are important to them.

From her profile, we can also see that Sarah Murphy MS is also the **Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing** in the Welsh Government – which is an indication that the positive impacts of blue spaces on mental health could be a good way to convince her to act on sewage pollution!

2 - Get In Touch

Action Summary:

- **Find your MS's contact information.**
- **Set out the key points for your first message to your MS: 'you, your community, the immediate issue'.**
- **Clarify whether you would like a slot at their drop-in advice surgery or a separate, longer meeting.**

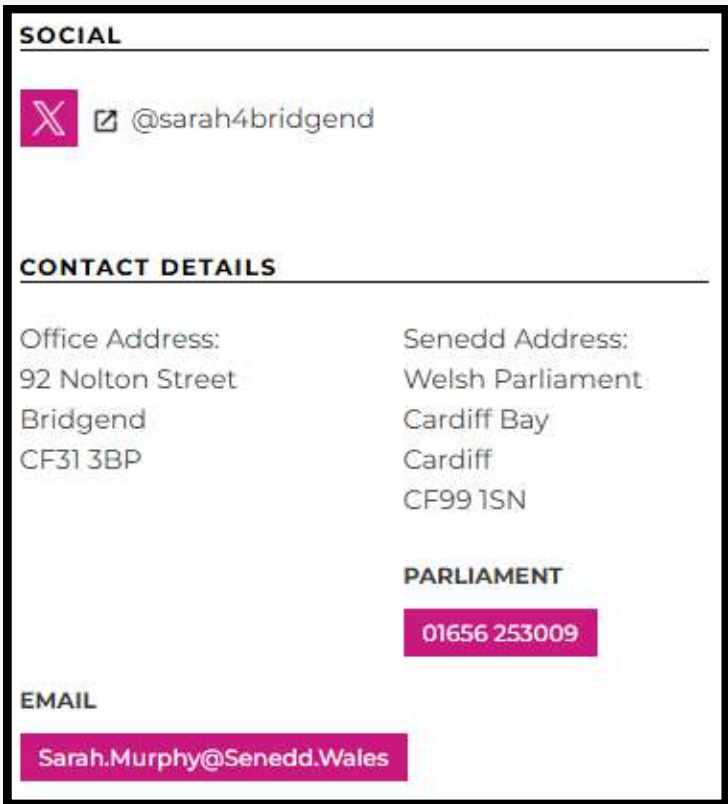
Now you've got an idea of who your MS is and what might be the best way to approach them, it's time to reach out! This can feel daunting, but it's easier than you might think. Remember, it's your MS's job to represent your views as one of their constituents.

The most straight forward way to get in touch with your MS is to **send an email** or **give their office a call**. You can also **send them a letter** if you want, but MSs often prefer it if you email them.

You can also make introductions with your MS in a quick session at one of their **drop-in advice surgeries** – this can be a good way to break the ice and then follow-up with a longer meeting. However, you will likely still need to get in touch by email or phone to book a slot at the drop-in.

Where to Find Your MS's Contact Information

Your MS should have all of their contact details listed on their profile on the Senedd Website. Here is an example from Sarah Murphy MS's profile:



The Key Things to Communicate

As tempting as it may be to fill your first message to your MS with complex, heavily detailed information, this isn't always the best way to influence them. Your MS and their team will likely be receiving lots of long policy briefings every day from many different sources. That doesn't mean you can't get into sharing and discussing the deeper detail with them too, it's just always a good idea to try and build a rapport first.

When it comes to communication from their constituents, your MS will usually want to prioritise people who need help of some kind. So, if you want to cut through the noise, your initial contact should focus on **you, your community** and the **immediate issue**:

You

Who are you? What has motivated you to get in touch? Opening with some concise points about your own experience is a great way to communicate the problem - bringing it to life in a way that can't be easily dismissed.

Remember, MPs can only act on behalf of people living in their constituency. So, it's important to specify that you are one of your MP's constituents. Making sure to include details like your address and postcode will allow your MP to verify they're able to take up your concerns.

Your community

How has sewage pollution impacted the wider community? Have there been cases of sickness caused by sewage in your area? Have local businesses been impacted in some way? Any information that demonstrates how the issue you want to discuss with your MP has wide-reaching implications for their constituency will really help get their attention.

The immediate issue

What is the specific thing that has pushed you to get in touch with your MS? It may be the number of sewage discharges at your local spot or a vote coming up in Parliament on an important bill. Or maybe you've just gotten sick after using the water and you want to raise the alarm. Whatever it is, don't forget it, because this information will allow you to then introduce your **ask** – i.e. **the practical thing you want your MS to do**.

Lastly, do make sure to specify what kind of meeting you would like – whether that is a quick slot at their next drop-in advice surgery, or a longer, separate meeting so you can go into a bit more detail.

If it helps, we've made a template email that you can customise and use to get in touch with your MS!



3 - Meet Your MS

Action Summary:

- *Prepare your case ahead of meeting your MS – think about breaking it down into: Personal introduction, immediate problem, wider problem, solution.*
- *Find common ground by giving space to your MS to respond to your concerns. Use gentle questioning to really figure out their position, if necessary.*
- *Make sure that you have a clear ask for your MS that includes a concrete action they can take to help tackle sewage pollution. If they're not so onside, then it's okay to start small and work up to bigger asks.*

The time has come to meet your MS! It's normal to be anxious, but it's important at this stage to try and leave any pre-conceived ideas you may have about your MS at the door. By going into the conversation prepared and open-minded, you'll have a greater chance of getting your MS to lower their defences and really hear what you have to say.

When you're preparing to meet your MS, try keeping things as simple as possible. A successful MS meeting can be broken into 3 parts: **Setting out your case**, **finding common ground** and **clarifying your ask**:

Setting Out Your Case

Often, when an MS is feeling under pressure in a meeting, they may try to control the conversation. This is a common defensive behaviour. The best way to try and prevent this from happening is to have what you want to say well prepared. This should recap and expand on the information you put in your first message to your MS.

Here's how you can structure your case to highlight your connection to the problem and show your MS why they should care:

Personal introduction

"I love wild swimming, it's one of the best things about living here, and so many in our community feel the same."

The immediate problem

"But sewage dumping at our local spot means we've had to cancel swims, and local businesses renting paddleboards and kayaks are losing income."

The wider problem

"This isn't just local, it's national. Sewage is being poured into waters across the UK, people are getting sick, and water companies are rewarding bosses with bonuses instead of fixing the problem."

The solution

"This has to change. We need full transparency, proper monitoring of sewage overflows, and real consequences for polluters, so our community can enjoy clean, safe waters again."

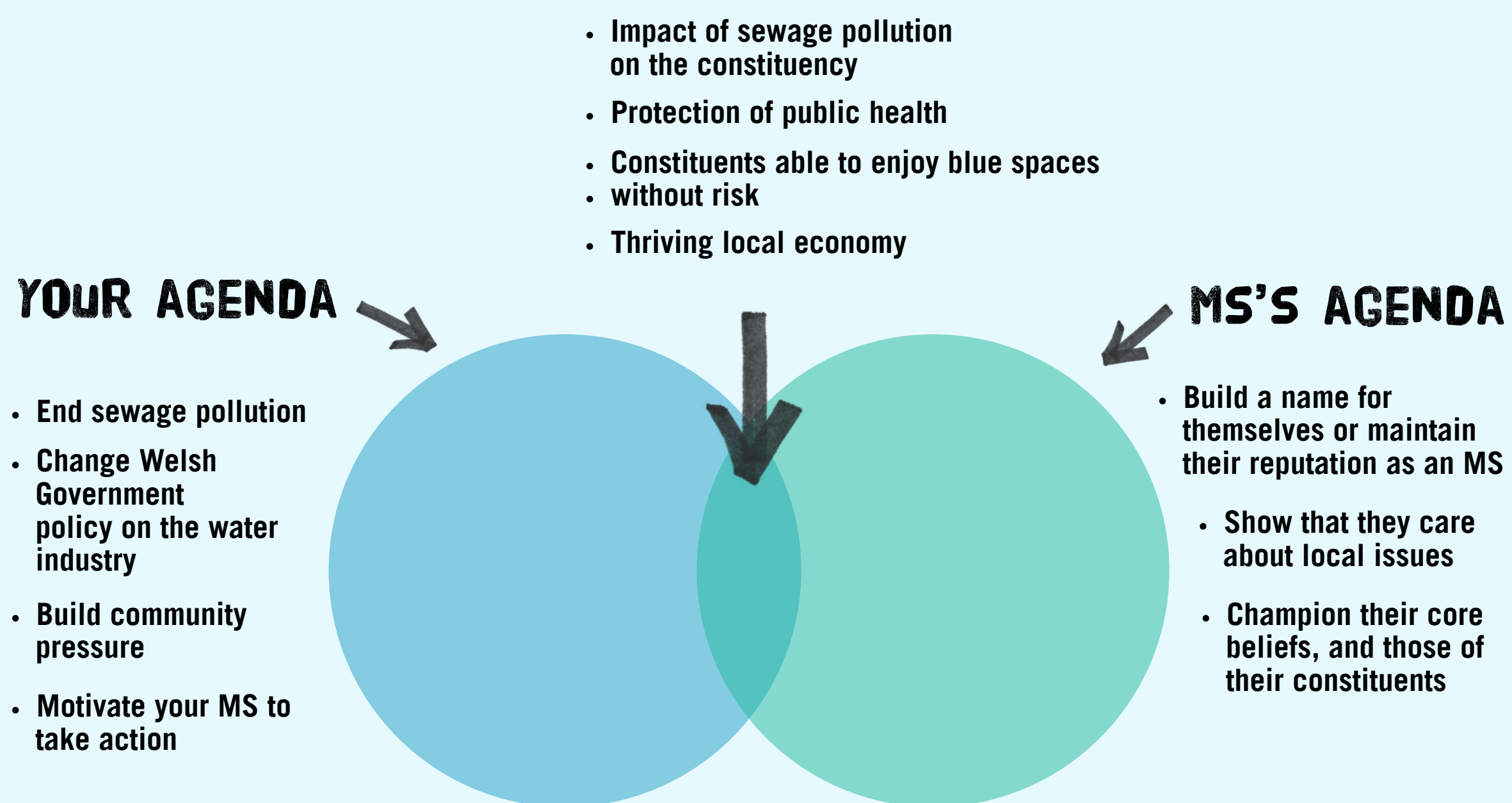
Try to back your story up with stats and figures to show the scale of the problem. You don't need to be an expert – the **Safer Seas & Rivers Service (SSRS) app** and **SAS Data HQ** have everything you need, from sewage discharge data to local sickness reports, ready to use to help make your case stronger!

Finding Common Ground

Now that you've explained the problem and how it has impacted you, it's time to listen up. This part's about active listening. If your MS dodges the issue or starts waffling (another classic politician defensive behaviour), don't be afraid to ask clear, direct questions. Just remember, this is about gauging their position **so you can find agreement and move forward.**

How does the information you've presented make them feel? Do they share your concern about people being made sick and not being able to enjoy the area's natural blue spaces?

Even if it seems like your MP really isn't on side, it's still possible win them over - it just takes a smart approach and a bit of patience. Think about what drives them: most MPs want to be seen as responsive, effective, and popular in their patch. This is where you might start to find a place where your own agenda, as a campaigner, and your MP's agenda can overlap.



No MS wants to be seen ignoring public health or wrecking the local economy. Even the most lukewarm ones will claim they care about these basics. So, take note of any shared ground - even if it feels vague - then build from there. Use solid facts to show how sewage pollution threatens exactly the things they say they stand for. Do it calmly, not combatively. This isn't about catching them out - it's about connecting the dots.

Clarifying Your Ask

Many MS meetings fall flat at the end because the key action gets lost in general discussion. Don't let that happen. This final step is your chance to make sure it's crystal clear what you want your MS to do next. Here are a few things you can do to ensure there is zero confusion:

- **Be specific**

There are probably lots of things you want your MS to do! However, it's a good idea to be clear on what the priority is - what is the first thing you want your MS to do? You can always start simple and build up to bolder actions later.

Example: "i would be grateful if you could write to Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and Natural Resource Wales to ask for a full account of why the problem has become so bad locally, as well as how they plan to investigate and fix the issues."

- **Ask for a response**

Make sure you phrase your ask in a way that gets a verbal response from your MP, this helps you confirm that your ask has been understood, and it creates a polite but important expectation of accountability.

Examples: *"Is that something you'd be willing to do?"*

"Can I count on your support for this?"

"Will you commit to taking this step and update me when you've done it?"

- **Leave it in writing**

Summarise your main points and ask in a short document for your MS, that way there can be no doubt that they have an accurate record of what you have discussed. This could also be a good opportunity to detail any facts or findings you have on the impact of sewage pollution in your area so that your MS is able to refer back to those for any further action they take – however, if you're not able to bring together a large amount of detail, don't stress! The main points will be enough.

We've created a **template for an MS briefing** that you can use if that would be helpful!



**GET THE MS BRIEFING
TEMPLATE!**

4 - Follow Up

Action Summary:

- **Go to your MS meeting prepared with a plan to follow up and keep the pressure on.**
- **Have a think about your follow up timeline. What will you ask your MS: at the end of your meeting, 1 week later, 1 month later, 3 months later, 6 months later.**

This might just be the **most important step**, and the one most people forget: **follow up**. If you want your MS to become a real ally on sewage pollution, your first meeting isn't the end, it's just the beginning!

Following up doesn't mean pestering them every day. It means having a clear plan to **stay in touch, keep up the pressure**, and make sure they **actually do what they said they would**.

Here's how you can break down the timeline after meeting your MS to follow up and keep the pressure on:

- **1 week after the meeting**

Within 1 week following the meeting, send your MS an email thanking them for their time and confirming your ask/what your MS has agreed to do. This is a good way to be respectful of your MP's time but also reaffirm that they have committed to doing something.

- **1 month after the meeting**

Within 1 month of meeting your MS, get back in touch to check whether they have completed their agreed action – especially if your MS or their team have not already been in touch with updates.

- **3 months after the meeting**

Roughly 3 months after your meeting, it might be helpful to check what your MS has been up to – what they’ve been doing in the Senedd, what they might have been saying in the press or elsewhere. Have they continued to address sewage pollution and the water industry? If so, what further actions have they taken?

Do make sure to keep your MS and their team updated during this time with any new stats and facts about sewage discharges, sickness reports or dodgy dealings in the water industry.

- **6 months after the meeting**

If it’s been around six months, your MS followed through on your ask and they’re open to updates, it’s time to raise the bar. Book a follow-up meeting and think about your next move: what fresh, timely action could you ask for that pushes them to go further and be bolder?

On the flip side, if your MS hasn’t acted and has gone quiet, it’s time to switch tactics. Turn up the pressure with creative community protest, make noise on social media, and get the local press talking - whatever it takes to make them sit up and pay attention.

DIVE DEEPER: FINDING THE BEST STRATEGY FOR YOUR MS



In this section, we’ll dig a little deeper into what makes an MS ready to take real action on sewage pollution - and how you can tell where yours stands. We’ll look at the clues: **what action your MS may have already taken, where their party sits on the issue, the extent to which sewage pollution is a live concern in your constituency, and how tuned-in your MS is to their constituents’ concerns.**

For each of these factors, you’ll find simple criteria to help you score your MS. Go through each and add up your score to see whether they’re already primed to lead the charge for clean water in the Senedd or whether it’s time to turn up the public pressure and get them moving.

PAST ACTION ON SEWAGE

Scoring:

0 = **Nothing at all**

1 = **Mild Concern** - e.g. has mentioned issue once or twice

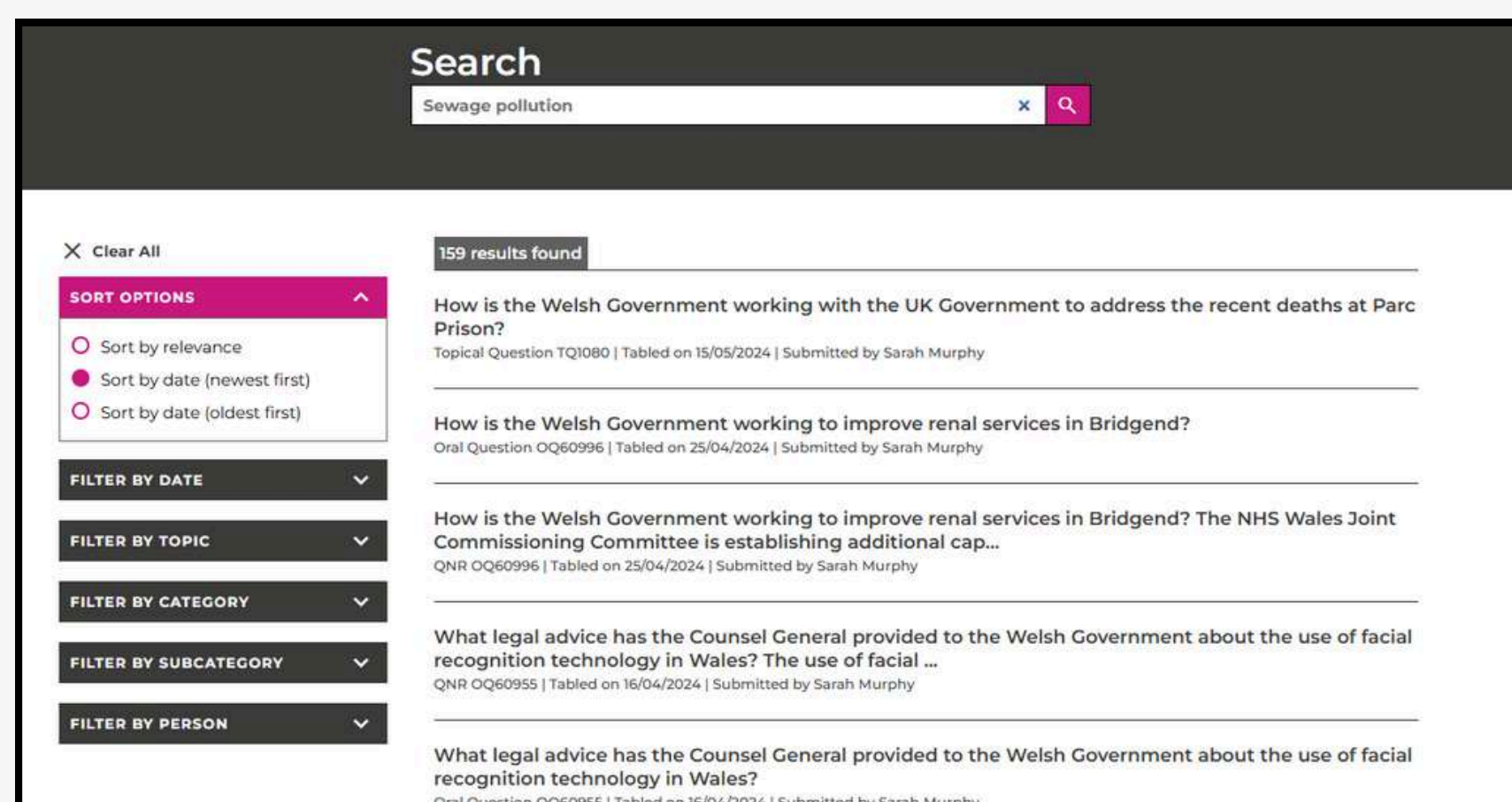
2 = **Vocal** – e.g. consistent public statements

3 = **Vocal and Active** – e.g. e.g. led debates, proposed reforms, campaigned locally

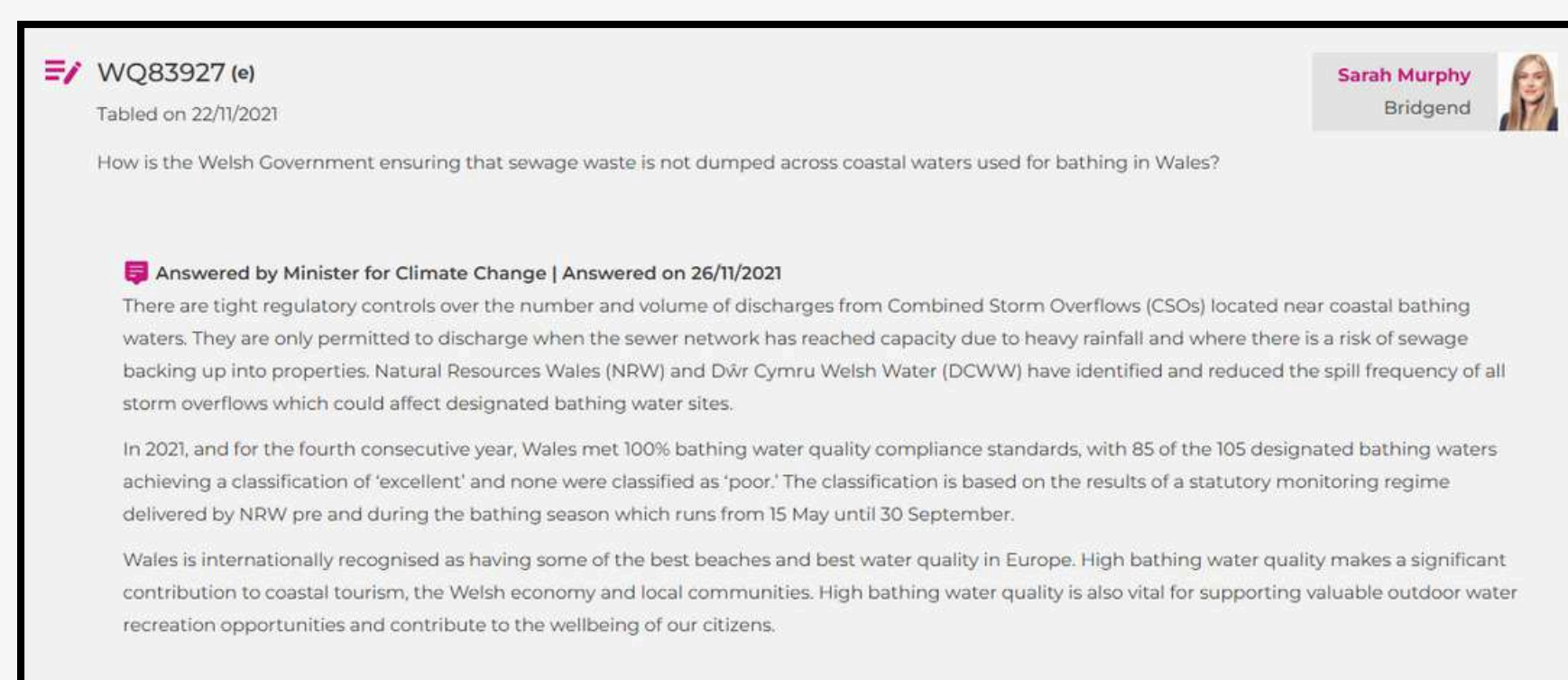
What to look for:

We're looking for anything that might give us an indication of whether your MS sees tackling sewage pollution as a priority and what they believe the solutions are.

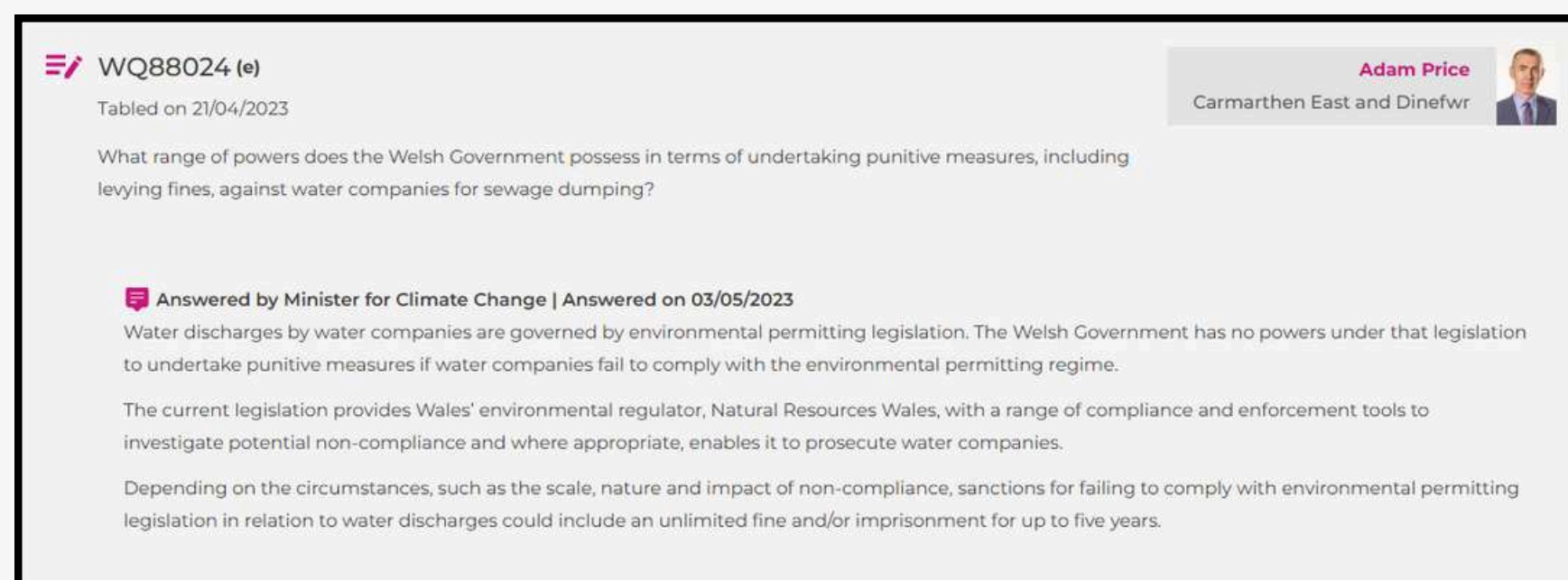
On your MS's [Senedd profile](#), click on 'more' under 'My Senedd activities' and that will bring up a search bar you can use to look for more specific topics your MS has spoken on in the Senedd. Search 'sewage pollution' and make a note of the times your MS has addressed the issue in the Senedd – though don't go on quantity alone, make sure to check it is exactly they've been saying.



If we go back to our example of Sarah Murphy, MS for Bridgend, and do a **key word search for 'sewage pollution'**, we can see that it brings up just one comment she has made in the Senedd.



Her comment – a written question she submitted to the Minister for Climate Change – may not give us much information, but at least it's clear that she believes that sewage dumping needs to be stopped.



By comparison, this written question submitted to the Welsh Government by Adam Price – the Plaid Cymru MS for Carmarthen East and Dinefwr – gives us a little bit more information. It indicates to us that Adam Price MS likely believes that the Welsh Government should have more powers to hold water companies to account.

PARTY POSITION

Scoring:

0 = **Party opposes real change**

1 = **Party neutral or unclear**

2 = **Party generally supportive**

3 = **Party strongly supportive and campaigning on issue**

What to look for:

When it comes to weighing up a political party's position on sewage, we're looking for clear commitments to transform the way the water industry works, not just vague promises to reduce sewage discharges.

If it helps, you can refer back to the 5 key principles that we set out in our **Vision for Water**. When you are looking at a party's official policies, think about whether these policies would:



Protect public and environmental health.



Democratise decision making on water.



Create value for money for customers.



Ensure that industry regulators are tough and independent.



Make the practises of the water companies fully transparent.

To find out a party's policies, the first places to check are **policy positions** available on their website or their **manifestos from a recent election**.

Plaid Cymru calls for powers to address the "scourge of sewage" in Wales's waterways

Published
7 June 2023

Wales has "constitutional right" to power over water, to help tackle soaring bills – Delyth Jewell MS

Plaid Cymru has today (Wednesday 7 June) renewed its calls for Wales to have full control over its water resources to address the problem of sewage in waterways, and to help reduce water bills.

Plaid Cymru's spokesperson for Climate Change and Energy, Delyth Jewell MS said that the privatisation of water is a "failed model" and the current legislative framework "doesn't match Wales's powers over water to our borders."

This means that Wales lacks the ability to legislate to stop or control the transfer of water from Wales by private companies that are mainly based in England, but whose jurisdiction does extend into Wales, such as United Utilities, which owns the abstraction licence for the Llyn Efyrrwy (Lake Vyrnwy) reservoir.

While the Silk Commission recommended ending this anomaly, and matching Wales's powers over water to its borders - as is already the case in Scotland and Northern Ireland - Plaid Cymru recently revealed that Welsh Ministers requested that the devolution of Water, as set out in the 2017 Wales Act, be delayed.

Plaid Cymru is taking a debate to the Senedd that calls for Wales to have the full control over its water resources.

Wales needs a designated environmental watchdog to stop sewage dumping, say Welsh Conservatives

Post
Wednesday, 23 April, 2025
Senedd News



The Welsh Conservatives are calling for action from the Labour Welsh Government to protect Welsh Waterways, following recent figures on sewage dumping. Janet Finch-Saunders MS, has reiterated her past calls in the Senedd for the Labour Government to introduce a dedicated environmental watchdog to hold companies like Dŵr Cymru to account for their continued dumping.

Analysis of Welsh Water's figures show sewage was discharged 110, 276 times last year, which equates to an average of more than one sewage spill every five minutes. The total number of hours that sewage was discharged for was 968,340 in Wales last year, compared to more than 916,000 hours the year before. Meanwhile, Dŵr Cymru customers have seen their bills rise by 27% with the average annual bill going up from £503 to £639, with rises planned annually for the next five years meaning customers are set to pay the highest water bills in England and Wales.

End Sewage Dumping in Wales

Raw sewage was dumped into Welsh rivers, lakes and seas more than 100,000 times last year for nearly a million hours. This sewage is killing wildlife and poses a danger to public health.

Meanwhile, Dŵr Cymru is failing to deliver for both Welsh customers and the environment, violating environmental permits over 200 times in the last six years yet only getting fined twice.

Labour in both Westminster and Cardiff Bay have the power to stop this atrocious practice, but are continuing to let water companies get away with it.

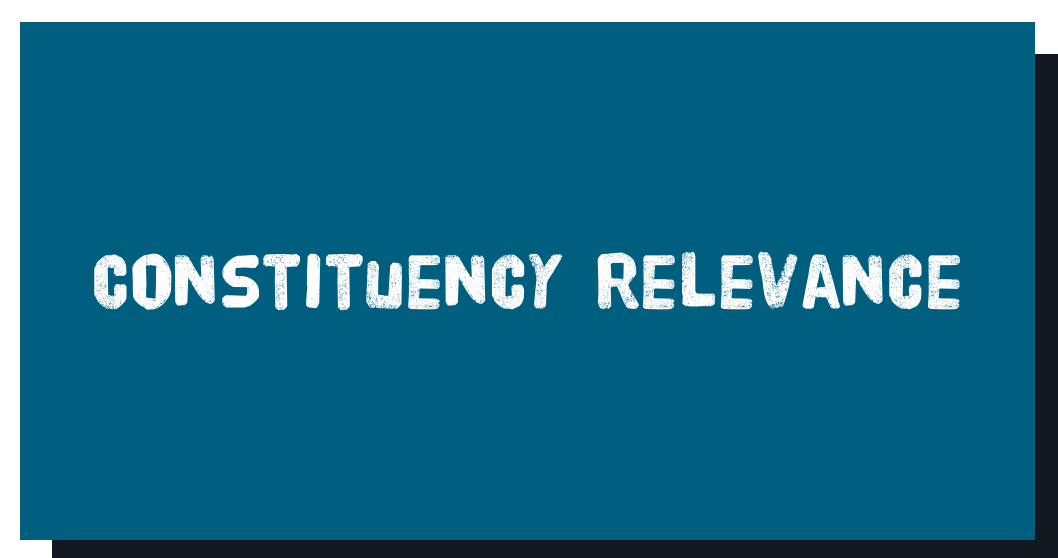
The Welsh Liberal Democrats want to:

- Ban bonuses for water company bosses and redirect funds into improving infrastructure.
- Demand the Welsh Government provides Natural Resources Wales with the funding and resources it needs to tackle & monitor pollution effectively.
- Install more phosphate removal facilities across our rivers.
- Introduce legislation to ban water companies from dumping raw sewage in our waterways.

Sign our petition below to demand Labour in the Senedd and in Westminster take action now to save our Welsh Waters and introduce legislation to stop sewage being dumped into our rivers, lakes and seas!

As an example, here are some relevant policy statements from the websites of the *Welsh Conservatives*, *Plaid Cymru* and the *Welsh Liberal Democrats*. In your opinion, what do they tell us about the approach and beliefs each party has on sewage pollution and the water industry?

Other good sources of information on a political party's position are **social media accounts**, **websites**, **news interviews** or **opinion pieces** connected to important figures within the party who cover the remit of water. These figures will often be the party's lead for issues such as the environment, climate change, or agriculture and rural affairs.



Scoring:

0 = **No known relevance**

1 = **Low relevance**

2 = **Moderate relevance**

3 = **High relevance** - e.g. coastal/river community or known sewage hotspots locally

What to look for:

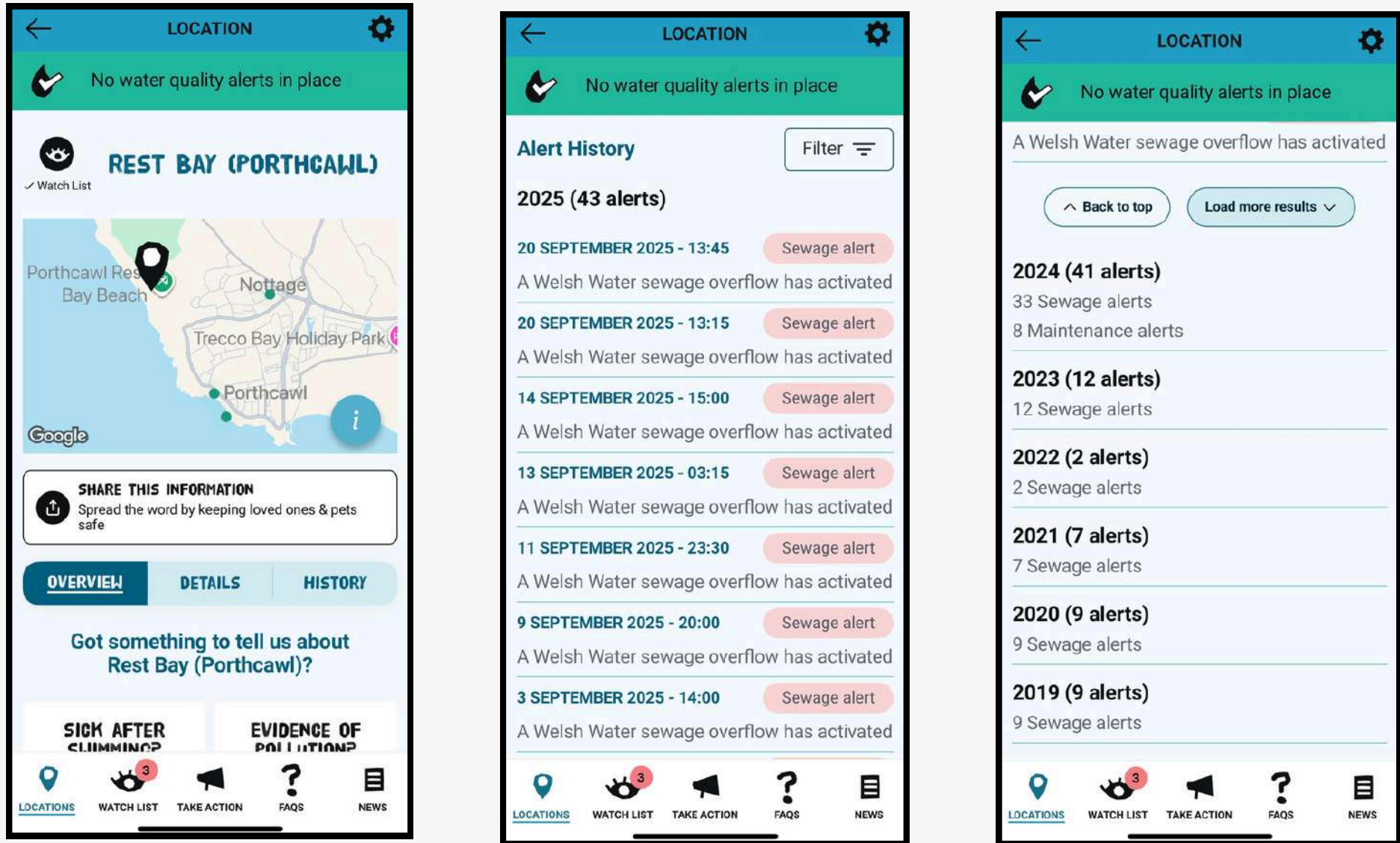
Since your MS is meant to represent the interests of your constituency, it's important to think about whether there are any specific, localised problems with sewage or issues with the way the water industry operates in your area. Here are some points to consider first:

- **Are there any bodies of water in your constituency that people are regularly dunking themselves in?**
- **If there is, how often is sewage being discharged into that body of water? Have you, or anyone else, been made sick as a result?**
- **Are you or anyone else in your area struggling with rising water bill costs?**

You may also want to consider whether any waters in your area have bathing water designation or if your area is well-known for any particular kind of water sport - or even local tradition that involves people getting in the water.

[Click here](#) to find out if any of the waters near you have bathing water designation.

The Safer Seas and Rivers Service App is a great source of information to find out how regularly sewage is being dumped in the waters near you. The app combines data from water companies and environmental regulators for 600 locations around the UK. All you need to do is download the app and search for your location – this should bring up a number of spots in your area.



By adding your spot to your ‘watchlist’ on the app, you can get live alerts when sewage is dumped there. On the location profile page for your spot, you can also look at the number of sewage discharges and ‘Pollution Risk Forecasts’ (PRFs) there have been in the past by clicking on the ‘History’ tab.

Using Rest Bay in Porthcawl as an example, it’s clear to see why Sarah Murphy MS should be concerned about sewage impacting her constituency!

Use the QR codes to download the SSRS app!

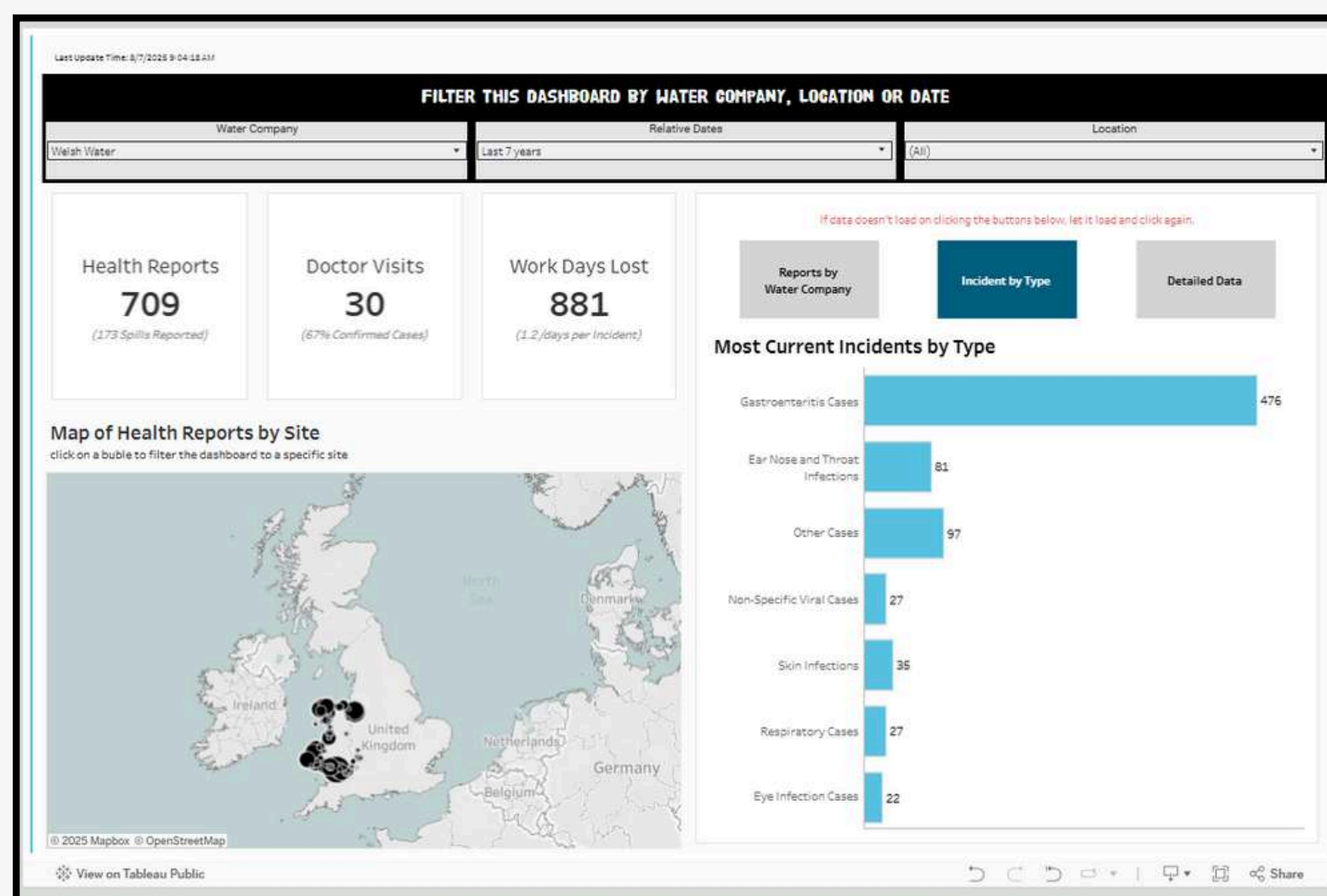
iPhone



Android



To find out about how many people in your area have been made sick as a result of coming into contact with sewage pollution, have a look at our [Sickness Figures dashboard](#) on the SAS Data HQ.



On the dashboard, you can search through the cases that we have recorded over the last 7 years by water company, date and location. This will also give you information on the types of illness water-users have experienced, and how much time off they have had to take due to getting sick.

Beyond the direct impact of sewage pollution, think about the noise your community is already making. MSs are far more likely to act when they sense real pressure from the people they represent. Petitions, protests, media coverage, or even a vocal local group can all turn up the heat.

Not sure if there's much happening? Have a quick scan of local news, community Facebook groups, or nearby surf and swim clubs. Even if there isn't a formal campaign yet, online discussions or letters in the paper often signal a growing wave of concern.

ACCESSIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS

Scoring:

0 = **Hard to reach**

1 = **Sometimes responsive**

2 = **Generally accessible and replies**

3 = **Highly responsive and engages proactively with constituents**

What to look for:

How much of a physical presence your MS has in your constituency will be a big factor in figuring how much effort you might need to put in to getting their attention. Some MSs are known for being open, responsive and active in their communities – others are more elusive or only respond under sustained pressure.

Remember, with this point, we're not just thinking about how often an MS is responding to queries from their constituents, but the quality of the response as well. Here are some key factors to consider:

- **Have you already contacted your MS about an issue previously?**

If you have, did you get a timely response from them to your query? Did the response feel generic and dismissive, or was it personalised and engaged? If you haven't contacted your MS before, has anyone you know done so?

- **Does your MS run regular constituency surgeries or drop-in sessions?**

Most MSs will run regular 'advice surgeries' or drop-in sessions to hear directly from constituents about the problems they're facing – which should be advertised on any websites, social media platforms or newsletters they manage. These sessions will usually work on a by-appointment basis and last 10-15 minutes per constituent. This isn't quite long enough to have an in-depth discussion with them, but it can be a good way to make introductions and arrange a follow-up meeting.

- **Are they active online/on social media?**

It can be useful to check if your MS is regularly posting online, particularly on social media platforms. Though, don't be fooled with this one, some of the MSs most active on social media might also be the least engaged in their communities! What we're looking for here is posts engaging with local issues and events or maybe even responding to constituents directly on social media.

- **Is your MS present in your community?**

If your MS can be regularly found in constituency attending events, speaking at meetings or briefing the local press, then that could be an indication that they're accessible. How do residents and journalists in your area speak about your MS, do they describe them as 'hands-on' or 'hard to reach'?



TOTAL SCORE:

0-3

Your MS may need serious pressure to get moving on tackling sewage pollution. You may want to think about using the media and creative action to amplify public concern and expose the problem – prompting your MS to take up a position. Just make sure you do also communicate with them directly while you're building public pressure.

4-6

Your MS could be persuaded to shift their opinion with a bit of effort. Combine building public pressure with direct engagement with your MS focused on evidence-based arguments and real-life impact stories. Just make sure to keep communication with your MS focused and your asks polite but firm.

7-9

Your MS is likely to be sympathetic, so don't hesitate in asking for a meeting and using that as an opportunity to start encouraging them to do more. They may need a little push to get them to go further and speak out, but when they do, they could be turned into a real ally!

10-12

Your MS is a potential champion for the cause! Activate them. Encourage public statements, media action, and policy leadership – they could make all the difference securing outcomes that clean up our waters for good.

COMMON SCENARIOS



In this section, we'll look at some of the most common sewage-related situations that might prompt you to reach out to your MP. Whether it's a fresh sewage dump at your local beach, evidence emerging of your water company breaking environmental rules, shareholder profiteering or an upcoming parliamentary vote, each scenario offers a different opportunity to push for change.

Use the examples and tips below to tailor your approach, build your case, and help your MP move from words to action.

"There has been a sewage discharge at my local spot"

Tips on how to broach this with your MS:

Be clear about what happened and its impact –

Start with the facts: when and where the spill occurred, how long it lasted, and who was affected. Use evidence like sewage alerts from the Safer Seas & Rivers Service (SSRS) app, stats from Data HQ, photos, or local news reports.

Make it personal –

MSs respond strongly when they see how their constituents are affected. Share how it's disrupted your regular swim, surf, or paddle spot, or how it's hurt local businesses, tourism, or wildlife.

Offer support, but set boundaries –

Suggest ways to help, like inviting your MS to meet affected residents or see the discharge site. But don't let the conversation stall in endless fact-finding. Be polite but persistent.

What your MS can do about it:

Hold the water company and NRW to account –

MSs can request official briefings, demand site visits, and press both the water company and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) for answers and remedies.

Shine a public spotlight on the problem –

They can raise the issue in the Senedd, speak to the press, or back your community campaign. Public statements and political support amplify pressure on the polluters.

“My water company has been dumping sewage illegally”

Tips on how to broach this with your MS:

Call it what it is –

These aren't just 'accidents.' If there's evidence that Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water has broken the law, say so. Use terms like “suspected breach of environmental law” if you're unsure, and back it up with evidence.

Bring evidence –

Use SAS Data HQ, SSRS, or NRW reports to show why you suspect unlawful activity. Note local weather conditions too – spills on dry days are often unlawful.

What your MS can do about it:

Raise it in the Senedd –

MSs can question the Minister for Climate Change, table Written Questions, or press the First Minister directly. This forces the Welsh Government and regulators to act.

Demand stronger enforcement –

MSs can scrutinise NRW's performance, call for investigations, and push for new regulations or tougher penalties on water companies that break the law.

“Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water have been paying their CEO a fortune while sewage-dumping continues”

Tips on how to broach this with your MS:

Know the facts –

Unlike English companies, Welsh Water is not-for-profit, but its executive pay packets often spark controversy. Point to recent figures in the media or annual reports showing big CEO salaries despite routine pollution.

Frame the fairness issue –

Even without dividends, it's still wrong that bosses are rewarded while discharges keep happening. Stress the unfairness of customers footing rising bills while leadership is well-paid and the system keeps failing.

What your MS can do about it

Challenge ministers and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water directly –

MSs can write to the Welsh Government and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water's leadership to demand transparency and fairer pay policies.

Push for reform of the water industry in Wales –

They can back calls for tighter regulation of executive pay in public-interest companies, and press for all money to be reinvested into tackling sewage pollution, not lining executives' pockets.

"There's a vote on an important new sewage law coming up soon in the Senedd"

Tips on how to broach this with your MS:

Stress the urgency –

Explain why this law matters for your community and what will be lost if it's missed. Show the difference it could make locally – cleaner beaches, safer rivers, healthier people.

Be clear about expectations –

Tell your MS that their constituents expect them to take this seriously and back real change.

What your MS can do about it:

Vote for stronger laws –

MSs can support, amend, or oppose legislation to clean up Wales' waters. Every vote counts.

Shape policy –

MSs can join Senedd committees (like Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure) to influence how new sewage laws are designed and scrutinised.

“My MS hasn’t said anything about sewage pollution EVER”

Tips on how to broach this with your MS:

Keep it simple –

Not all MSs are experts in water policy. Explain the basics: what’s happening, who’s responsible, and how it impacts health, nature, and local communities.

Don’t assume silence means disinterest –

They may not have spoken out yet because of competing priorities. Give them the facts and a chance to engage before assuming they don’t care.

What your MS can do about it:

Speak out publicly –

Even a simple statement on social media or in the Senedd helps raise awareness and starts them on the path to action.

See it for themselves –

Invite your MS to visit your local beach, river, or lake to meet those impacted. Seeing the problem first-hand makes it much harder to ignore.

RESOURCES



USEFUL LINKS

- [The Water Quality Report 2025](#)
- [Senedd Welsh Parliament Website](#)
- [Surfers Against Sewage Data HQ](#)

TEMPLATES

- [MS Email](#)
- [MS Briefing](#)
- [MS Follow-Up Plan](#)