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**From:**  
**Sent:**  
**Subject:**

[REDACTED]  
28 August 2014 22:02  
CER/14/363

[REDACTED]

26/8/2014

Dear Commissioner,

The design of the access to the public waste water system in my neighbours homes, is one that means their waste passes over my property to make it way to the public pipes.

Blockages occur about twice a year. When these pipes are blocked the sewage rises in my garden. This poses serious health risks to myself and my family. The access to the blockage is also via my property. To date I have removed these blockages myself and then I use my homes water to wash away the waste from my back garden. On average that means washing the area with a pressure washer and it usually takes a few hours to do this job. The amount of water that is pumped through the pressure washer is significant. I have no idea precisely how much is used. In the event that this situation arises into the future I will have to pay for the water that will be used to clean away this waste. Apart from the obvious effort to remove the blockage.

Commercial companies have quoted me an average of €450 for removing the blockage.

In normal circumstances you might say that the home owners should contribute a sum of money to resolve this problem. The fact is they do not so it, and have never done it. The main reason is that the design of the sewage system allows them to flush their toilets as normal, while the waste ends up in my garden. As a result of this they do not see it as their problem.

I have written to Irishwater and Dublin City Council explaining this problem and seeking their assistance in resolving the problem. They were less than helpful, although Dublin City Council have acknowledged the problem exists (in writing) and have agreed to pay a share of the costs.

The situation I find myself in is: The pipes and the manholes are located on my property, and therefore any access to them by a private company means the bill will have to be paid by me. Irishwater has already stated publicly that I am responsible for the water pipes going into my home and will have to pay for the maintenance of these pipes. Logically it therefore follows that I will also have to pay for the maintenance for the waste water pipes.

Assuming that remains the Irishwater position, then, I have no intention of permitting my neighbours sewage to pass over my p[roperty to access the public waste pipes. I intend to block the pipe on my property. The result of this will mean my neighbours sewage will not travel over my property, but my own homes waste will flow freely away into the public system.

This will inevitably cause my neighbours to experience discomfort and most likely health hazards which will raise other problems. Essentially without access to the sewage systems, their homes will in effect become uninhabitable.

I cannot emphasise enough, how important it is, that this problem will be amicably resolved. Ignoring it will not make it go away.

As I see things your office in regulating Irishwater has a very important role in deciding how this problem is resolved. The design of this system was at a time when Dublin Corporation was the landlord of these properties, and when that was the case, then they assumed all responsibility for all maintenance issues. As these homes are no longer in public ownership, the owners have assumed the responsibility for their properties, but as I said earlier as the blockage never rises in their properties they do not care about it.

They will care about it when they cannot access the sewage systems and the waste backs up into their homes.

I intend to block the pipe on the day the first bill arrives into my home. The reason for this is that I do not want to allow a precedent to occur, that might erode my legal rights, and which may result in a court upholding that my position is unreasonable and it had been used before.

The fact is the precedent for having to pay separately for water is only now being implemented by Irishwater.

I therefore ask that you consider my position when assessing the cost you intend to permit Irishwater to apply to my home.

I am quite open to negotiate with Irishwater to find a reasonable solution, and a signed declaration that they will assume responsibility for all costs incurred in the event of blockages occurring, will suffice.

On another more general issue in relation to water charges. In the UK the companies have to provide compensation for various reasons, but the service falling down is the main reason. It seems to me that before Irishwater is allowed to charge us, then extremely high quality service level agreements with very serious consequences for non-compliance, should be established.

I feel the charter as outlined on your website does not go even close to being adequate, when considering such important, vital for life, water.

Yours sincerely

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