



## **We need greater resilience in our water supply**

An Fóram Uisce | the Water Forum welcomes The *EPA Drinking Water Quality in Public Supplies Report 2019* released today. While some of the findings are welcome such as the fact that 99.9% of samples complied with bacterial parameter limits and 99.6% complied with chemical parameter limits it was very disappointing to note that 67 boil water notices were in place in 2019, affecting more than 650,000 people. Fifty nine of these notices lasted for more than 30 days thereby classified as long-term requiring significant investment in infrastructure to remediate. Such impacts are extremely inconvenient for Irish Water customers and not acceptable from a public health point of view. It is particularly worrying that more than 15,065 people remain on boil water notices across the country today and some of them like the 12,576 people in Lough Talt, Sligo have been dealing with boil water notices now for a number of years.

The finding that 52 treatment plants supplying water to over one million people are vulnerable to failure is also of great concern to An Fóram. These supplies, including Leixlip water treatment plant, are on the EPA Remedial Action List meaning they are prioritised for action by Irish Water. An Fóram pointed out again this week that Dublin water supply is particularly vulnerable as it relies on the River Liffey to supply more than 80% of the city's water needs and the main treatment plants at Leixlip, Vartry and Ballinacorney are at their maximum production capacity – they have no, or very little, 'headroom' for further drinking water production.

In response to the implementation of the Water Conservation Order, An Fóram Uisce reported the need for greater resilience in our water supply and today Laura Burke the Director General of the EPA states that *'while progress is being made the multiple failures at Leixlip water treatment plant last year highlight the serious lack of resilience in our water supplies'*.

An Fóram supports Dr. Burke's statement that *'Irish Water needs to urgently address the underlying causes for the delays and shortcomings highlighted in this report and prioritise investment to ensure that public supplies are safe and secure, and that public health is protected.'*

An Fóram has repeatedly stressed the vulnerability of Dublin's water supply. This concern is further emphasised in today's report.

With new Ministers taking up their seats this week, we trust they will prioritise water infrastructure upgrades, plan to implement innovative conservation measures and engage the public to protect water resources.

END

**Note to editors**

An Fóram Uisce|The Water Forum was established as a statutory body in June 2018 to facilitate stakeholder engagement and debate on issues relating to water as a resource, water quality, rural water concerns, issues affecting customers of Irish Water and issues associated with the implementation of the Water Framework Directive.

The Forum consists of 26 representatives from a wide range of organisations with direct connections to issues relating to water quality. These include consumer, community and water sports groups, business and trade unions, environmental sector, Irish Water consumers, the group water scheme sector and a range of other sectors including education, agriculture, fisheries and forestry. The Forum is chaired by Dr Tom Collins.

[www.thewaterforum.ie](http://www.thewaterforum.ie)

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