

## Check your connection

Help us to reduce river pollution in Harrow.

Most people don't think about the impact the drains beneath their feet can have on the local environment. When they think of river pollution they think of sources like factories, farms and industry.

Yet in many cases, the pollution comes from a much less obvious source – our homes. Incorrect plumbing in your home could mean that waste water from your dishwasher, washing machine, sinks, baths and even your toilet is being flushed directly into your local river.



For further information please contact your Local Lead Flood Authority, Harrow Council on

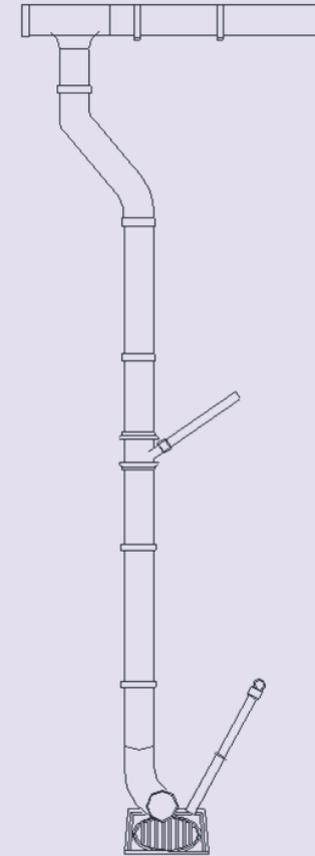
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## Are you polluting Harrow's Rivers?

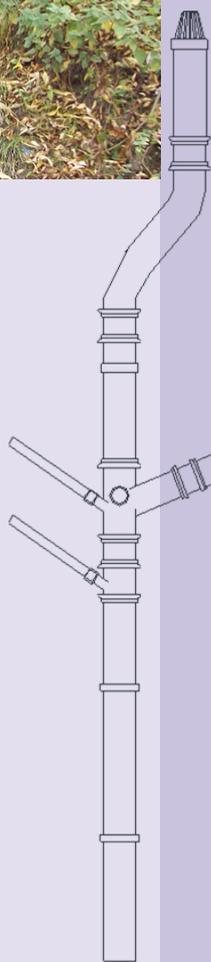




Most properties on mains drainage have two drains:

- **The foul water drain** carries waste water from toilets, sinks, baths and household appliances to a sewage plant for treatment.
- **The surface water drain** (or 'storm' drain) carries rainwater from roofs and open grates in the street direct to the local river. Any discharge into this drain flows into the river untreated.

Thames water estimates that 1 in 20 houses in London have misconnected drains. This is a major problem for London's environment as it causes serious water pollution. The affect can be seen in local rivers where untreated sewage effluent causes a mat of grey sewage fungus to grow on the river bed. This is damaging to water life and is a health risk for people using the rivers for recreation.



*A toilet waste pipe is usually larger in diameter than a roof drainpipe and often has an air vent at the top.*

### Who is responsible?

The chances are that you were not responsible for plumbing in your own appliances. Unfortunately, you are responsible for putting it right.

Wrong connections are not only harmful to the environment, they are illegal. Failure to take corrective action could lead to **prosecution** by the Environment Agency or your local authority.

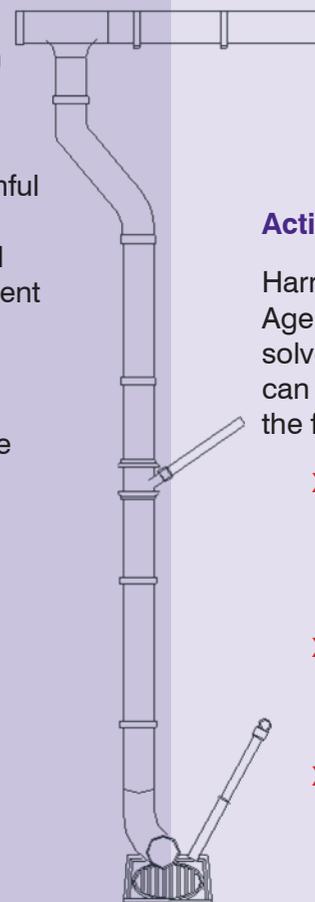
### How to spot a misconnection

Checking whether your house has the right connections is very simple:

Look at the outside of the house to check where any outside waste pipes run. If they connect to a toilet waste pipe then you are correctly connected.

If the waste pipes lead into a roof drainpipe or grating at the bottom of the drainpipe, then you have the wrong connection.

In most cases it will be a simple matter to reconnect the pipe to your rain water drain.



*A roof drainpipe is connected to the roof gutter and carries rainwater to the surface water drain.*



### Actions YOU can take

Harrow are working with The Environment Agency and Thames Water to identify and solve these misconnection problems. You can help us improve your environment in the following ways:

- ✗ Don't connect waste pipes from toilets, showers, baths, sinks and water-using appliances into roof water downpipes or gullies.
- ✗ Don't ignore existing wrong connections. Remember you could be prosecuted.
- ✗ Don't dispose of oil, garden and household chemicals, paint or detergent in drains or gutters in the road. Use your local civic amenity site for the disposal of such waste.
- ✓ Do check your drains. If you find a wrong connection, put it right by using a qualified plumber.
- ✓ Do ensure that if you are buying a house there are no wrong connections. Ask your surveyor to include this in the survey report.
- ✓ Do make the right connection and help to keep rivers and streams clean for us all to enjoy.