

Ein cyf/Our ref: ATI-08294a

Eich cyf/Your

Dyddiad/Date: 12/10/15

Dear [REDACTED],

I am writing in respect of your recent request for information (ATI-08294a) under the provisions of the Environmental Information Regulation.

Your request for information was:

1. *To your knowledge, how many separate run-of-river hydroelectric power schemes are currently operating in Snowdonia National Park with an NRW water abstraction licence?*

104 Hydroelectric Power Schemes licenced by NRW in Snowdonia National Park.
Please see Map attached.

2. *How many of those operations have been visited for monitoring and/or inspection by, or on behalf of, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) in 2015?*

33 Licenced schemes in Snowdonia National Park were visited by NRW between January 2015 and August 2015.

3. *What is the total number of inspection visits in 2015, and what is the breakdown of visits by month or quarter-year?*

Q4 Jan-Mar: 17 Completed.

Q1 & Q2 Apr-Sep: 53 Completed.

Q3 Oct-Dec: 32 Planned.

Total planned: 102 site inspections across North Wales, including HEP and non-HEP sites. 33 of these visits are to HEP Schemes in Snowdonia National Park.

4. *In how many cases (ie on how many different sites) was the operation found or suspected to be non-compliant with the water abstraction licence issued by NRW? Again if this can be broken down by month or quarter year that would be helpful.*

Ffôn/Tel 03000654958

Ffacs/Fax 01248 355 505

Ebost/Email mathew.parry@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

www.cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

Natural Resources Wales Maes Y Ffynnon

Penrhosgarnedd Bangor LL57 2DW

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Correspondence welcomed in Welsh and English

7 licenses were found to be non-compliant with either the abstraction or impoundment licence or both (of which 2 in Jan-Mar 2015 and 5 in Apr – Jun 2015).

5. *In how many cases was it found or suspected that deliberate steps had been taken to block the low flow notch on the intake weir?*

5 confirmed deliberate. We will not give figures about suspected actions as this is subjective.

6. *What other types of non-compliance with the abstraction licence (and other environmental regulations) were found or suspected?*

Identified non-compliances with an abstraction licences:

- No blanking plate to secure seasonal variations in abstraction
- Over abstraction (maximum daily quantity)
- Blocked Hands off Flow / residual flow notches/orifice pipes
- Not submitting their abstraction returns

At some sites more than one type of non-compliance was identified.

7. *In how many cases was it concluded or suspected that breach of the abstraction regime was likely to have harmful effects on biota or ecology of the watercourse, or would have such harmful effects if continued?*

Licenses are written to protect the flow in the watercourse and the environment. Breaches of most license conditions have the potential to cause environmental damage. The scale of the damage can vary and is dependent on the flow in the watercourse at the time. In two of the above cases the flow in the watercourse downstream of the impoundment was notably low. Action taken restored the flow. As no baseline study exists for these watercourses we were unable to prove impact on biota or ecology.

8. *Do you have data which quantifies how much water was being taken at non-compliant sites above the limits of the abstraction licences? If so please can you provide the data in a form which allows the number of sites involved to be clearly interpreted?*

Returns for the period up to and including March 2015 have not yet been processed. We are hoping to process all returns for this period in the next couple of months. Returns for the period April 2015 – March 2016 have not yet been submitted.

9. *In how many cases has further action being taken in respect of an actual or suspected breach of licence or regulations?*

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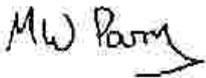
We have, or are planning to take action in all of the above cases. In five of these cases enforcement action is complete. Enforcement responses can include prosecution, formal caution, fixed monetary penalty, warning letter or advice and guidance depending upon the individual case.

10. In how many cases is further action planned to be taken?

Two cases are still under investigation and so we are unable to comment on these until enforcement action is complete.

We now consider that we have complied with your request. However, if you are dissatisfied with our response you are entitled to pursue this matter through our appeals procedure, a copy of which is below.

Yours sincerely,



Mathew Parry,
Access to Information Lead Officer

Rights of appeal

If you are not satisfied with our response to your request, you can contact us to ask for our decision to be reviewed, please write to:

Clive Thomas
Director of Governance
Natural Resources Wales
Rhodfa Padarn, Llanbadarn Fawr,
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 3UR
clive.thomas@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

If you are still not satisfied following this, you can make an appeal to the Information Commissioner, who is the statutory regulator for Freedom of Information. The address is:

Office of the Information Commissioner,
Wycliffe House, Water Lane,
Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Tel: 0303 123 113

Fax: 01625 524 510.

E-mail: casework@ico.org.uk.

Website: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk>

Ffôn/Tel 03000654958

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