

## THINKING OF BUYING OR SELLING A HOME WITH A PRIVATE WATER SUPPLY?

Local authorities have powers and duties under the Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016 (as amended) in relation to private water supplies which are outlined on our website and also the Drinking Water Inspectorate's (DWI) website (<http://www.dwi.gov.uk/private-water-supply/index.htm>). The DWI website contains a host of information on technical, legal and practical issues around the provision of a private water supply

Almost weekly the private water supplies team in Environmental Health at Herefordshire receives requests for the sampling of a private water supply during a house sale. We charge for this service. A list of the Council's current charges can be found on the Council's website found at: - <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/23718/environmental-health-and-trading-standards-fees-and-charges>

Our policy is to only sample at the request and commission of the vendor and is to be paid for by the vendor. Normally a 'check' sample which contains a range of both microbiological and chemical parameters will be analysed. These parameters help to identify issues where remedial action may be required. It may take up to 3 weeks before we are able to visit and sample and it may take up to 3 weeks for a full set of sampling results to be received from the laboratory.

Should the results of the sample indicate that the water supply is a potential danger to health (not an infrequent result for supplies without disinfection treatment); the above Regulations specify that the council must serve a Notice. The Notice will temporarily require the supply to be prohibited, or its use restricted and for the supply to be improved in the medium to long term (to a stated deadline) to mitigate those risks. The Notice will be notifiable to the Council's land charges department.

The DWI has produced a useful information sheet for those buying a house on a private water supply, entitled 'House buyer's checklist', this can be found at: - Buying a dwelling with a Private Water Supply – What do I need to know? - Drinking Water Inspectorate. This checklist may also be of interest to those selling the property.

Vendors wanting their supply sampled can contact the Business Support Team in Environmental Health and Trading Standards email [ethelpline@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ethelpline@herefordshire.gov.uk).

It should be noted that the assessment of water quality from a sample is limited to the parameters being tested at the time. Furthermore water quality may be variable over time for a number of reasons (e.g. seasonal changes) and consequently a sample will only be representative of the quality of the water in the snapshot of time it was taken. Sample results are best used in conjunction with a risk assessment to judge the safety of a supply.

A risk assessment involves an assessment of the supply from source to tap. For further information on risk assessment refer to Council's website [https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200145/business/135/water\\_supplies](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200145/business/135/water_supplies)

If the private water supply supplies 2 or more dwellings and/or other properties or if the water at the dwelling is being used as part of a commercial or public activity including, where the dwelling is being rented by tenants (including short term lets, such as holiday cottages or bed and breakfast accommodation), in accordance with the Regulations regular routine monitoring and risk assessment of the supply will be required.