

# End of season bathing water briefing note 2024

[information redacted]

## Poor bathing waters overview

Two bathing waters have received poor status this year: Ogmores-by-Sea [information redacted]. A separate briefing note will be provided for these beaches shortly.

### Ogmores-By-Sea

Ogmores-By-Sea was first classified in 2023 and was classified as 'Poor'. There were some particularly high results during the 2023 season, notably one in mid-August. A briefing note for the 2023 season was provided at the end of the season covering data analysis and observations. The results from 2023 meant it was not probable that the bathing water would improve classification this year. Generally, the sample results have been better in the 2024 season, despite the catchment receiving above average rainfall overall. There were six elevated sample results this year all following periods of wet weather. The bathing water is at the mouth of the Ogmores estuary, the wider catchment is large and there will be diffuse pollution from urban drainage, misconnections and rural land use present. Further Data analysis has been carried out and can be provided in a separate report. However, with only two years of data in the classification dataset and a lack of historic catchment data it is difficult to have definitive reasons for specific sample results being elevated or the main contributory factors at this stage.

An abnormal situation was declared at Ogmores-By-Sea bathing water beach this season, between 21<sup>st</sup> May and 18<sup>th</sup> June following a concern that a pollution incident which appeared to be ongoing could impact bathing water quality. Samples taken during this period are excluded from the classification dataset. The three additional compliance samples were scheduled through the remaining season following the lifting of the abnormal situation. Investigations into the pollution incident and subsequent investigation which led to the abnormal situation are ongoing. Significant team resources have been put into this investigation, analysis and subsequent requests for information and the officers will continue to strive for a conclusion to the matter.

Limited river samples were also taken during the 2024 season and additional catchment sampling of the Ogmores and Ewenny rivers has been requested by the local team for 2025 to coincide with bathing water monitoring. The local teams intend to prioritise compliance visits, for both water company and private discharges in this catchment. We

continue to engage with the Local Authorities, Shared Regulatory Services the local community and other stakeholders on this issue.

We are working on a bid to seek funding and resource from Welsh Government to enable a thorough catchment investigation to be undertaken to identify the reasons for poor water quality at Ogmore-By-Sea bathing water. The feasibility of suitable interventions to improve water quality will also need to be assessed, costed and planned to meet our obligations under Section 13 of the Bathing Water Regulations 2013. If this is granted, we will have a project officer in post for a period of 4 years who will be able to undertake the investigation, work with stakeholders and begin to implement changes in the catchment to lead to water quality improvements.

*[information redacted]*