

Gloucester City Council

Environmental Health Factsheet

DRAINS AND SEWERS

WHAT THEY ARE AND WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM

DRAINS

What is a drain?

A drain is an underground pipe, which carries either surface or foul water from a single property. It will usually discharge into a public or private sewer.

The drain serving your house may pass under the pavement, road or even under somebody else's garden before it joins up with a sewer.

Who is responsible for the maintenance of a drain?

The owner (or in some cases the occupier) of a house is responsible for maintaining, repairing and cleaning his/her drain until it empties into a sewer. This means that the owner or occupier is still responsible even if it passes through somebody else's land. The owner is also responsible for the joint with the sewer.

SEWERS

What is a sewer?

A sewer is an underground pipe, which carries the surface water or foul water from more than one property. Where two or more drains meet the pipe becomes a sewer.

Who is responsible for the maintenance of a sewer?

This depends on whether it is a public or private sewer.

Public sewers are maintained by the Water Authority - which in this area is Severn Trent. Private sewers are the responsibility of the owner or occupier of all properties draining into the length of pipe in question. If a defect occurs all properties upstream of the defect will be responsible for taking remedial action.



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Public sewers

These are sewers which: -

- Are owned and maintained by Severn Trent Water Authority.
- Have been "adopted" by Severn Trent Water Authority and should include all sewers serving houses that were built before 1st October 1937.

Private sewers

A private sewer is a pipe carrying surface or foul water from more than one house where the houses were built after 1st October 1937 and have not been "adopted" by the Water Authority. As with drains, the responsibility depends on who owns the properties concerned, not whose land the sewer passes through.

BLOCKAGES AND DEFECTS

Unfortunately, from time to time, drains and sewers become blocked.

Drains are the responsibility of the owner of the property concerned (irrespective of whose land they are on). The clearance of public sewers is carried out by Severn Trent Water Authority, telephone number 0800 7834444.

For private sewers, the responsibility ultimately lies with all the owners of the properties upstream of the defect or blockage.

If you are having difficulties in dealing with a defect or blockage to your private sewer, or if you have any queries, please contact the Environmental Health team on 01452 396396.