

Clean Up Scotland's Sewage: How to engage with your MSP

Here are some tips and resources for speaking to your MSP about sewage pollution. If you have a specific concern about water pollution, [please contact us for free legal advice](#).

1. Email your MSP

In Scotland you have 8 MSP representatives – 1 constituency MSP and 7 regional MSPs. You are free to contact any of them. The only difference is that your constituency MSP represents a smaller geographical area and is therefore more local to you.

Find your MSP and their contact details by entering your postcode on [the Scottish Parliament website](#). [TheyWorkForYou](#) is also a helpful directory and resource for finding information about your elected representatives.

You can use our [template letter](#) to email them to request a meeting at your local watercourse, like a river or a beach.

To let us know, you can either CC sewage@ercs.scot into the email recipients or email us separately after.

2. Preparing for the meeting

Ahead of the meeting, it is a good idea to prepare the key points you want to get across and what your ask to the MSP is. In the next section, you will find tips from other campaigners.

Key points: Why are sewer overflows causing pollution, why are you concerned, what needs to be done to address it?

- Raise any local concerns about sewage pollution or how it has impacted your area. You may want to look at [the Scottish Water overflow map](#) or search for news coverage about pollution/spills in your area.
- [The campaign webpage](#) has a good overview of the problem and the four manifesto asks with key statistics.
- [The briefing on pollution from sewer overflows](#) has more detailed information about the gaps in regulations and weaknesses in their enforcement, along with detailed recommendations.

Ask: Will the MSP support [our four manifesto asks](#) in the next Scottish Parliament?



- If the MSP is supportive, you can ask to take a photo with them and the 'I support Clean Up Scotland's Sewage' sign (included in the resource pack, more information below) for social media. It is a great way to build public support for the campaign. Please tag your post with the MSP's handle, #CleanUpScotlandsSewage and @ercscot.

Inviting ERCS: You can invite ERCS to the meeting by emailing us at sewage@ercs.scot. We will try to attend, but as we are a small team mostly based in Edinburgh it may not always be possible.

Order a free resource pack

When you have confirmed a meeting time, you can order a free resource pack from us for the meeting. It includes:

- A campaign leaflet that doubles up as a 'I support Clean Up Scotland's Sewage'-sign
- [Briefing on pollution from sewer overflows](#)
- Summary of [ERCS's Advocacy Manifesto](#) asks.

The resource pack will be available to order from January 2026. If you would like to be contacted when it becomes available, please email sewage@ercs.scot.

3. Tips for engaging with MSPs

Local action groups [River Almond Action Group \(RAAG\)](#) and [SOSLeith](#) are experienced in speaking to their MSPs about sewage pollution. They have put together their best tips for you.

What to say

- **Be specific about how this affects you locally.** MSPs care about what is affecting their constituents in their place. It is a national issue, but it needs to resonate with something locally.
- **Make the messaging sound common sense.** State clearly the assumption that the MSP/councillor/MP you are writing to has no interest in promoting sewage in the water, and that you are all on the same page in wanting to tackle the problem.
- **Have a specific ask, not just a general comment.** Specifically ask your MSP to commit to supporting the four manifesto asks of the campaign.
- **Keep messaging non-partisan/political.** This is a cross-party issue.
- **Assume everything you write is an open postcard.** If the text is rude or aggressive that will backfire. Be neutral or positive in tone, and emphasise you are there to support them in doing the right thing.



- **Aim to secure clear verbal acknowledgement from you MSP that a) there is a pollution problem that has not been adequately addressed, and b) we need to scope its impact and commit to fixing it** (consistent with the campaign's four manifesto asks). The undercurrent to the conversation is that no party will want to take responsibility for putting large amounts of scarce public funds into renovating archaic infrastructure, particularly in densely populated areas; hence the reason there is not much activity in this area, with a few honourable exceptions.

Using media/social media

- **Something I have been stunned over is the influence of the local press/radio.** For SOSLeith, we get better responses if we are in the Edinburgh Evening News than we do if we appear in the "i" or The Times. If you can, anchor a letter to an elected official to a very recent op ed/interview/letter published in an outlet.
- **Follow up a letter to an elected official by posting the key points to your social media**, flagging the official.
- **MSPs love camera opportunities** to promote themselves supporting their constituents. We have had two MSPs who, after we established relations via the above, wanted to do a little walkabout with campaigners and as many locals as they can muster, videoed by their own staff or by taking selfies, which they post to their socials.

4. After the meeting

It is important to follow up the meeting with an email to make sure that your MSP does not forget about it and takes action to support the campaign asks.

1 week from the meeting:

- Email the MSP to thank them and include key points from the meeting.
- Post photos on social media. Tag the MSP's handle, #CleanUpScotlandsSewage and @ercscot.

1 month/before the Holyrood election in May:

- Email the MSP again to check what action they have taken to support the four campaign asks.

Share the campaign

Keep the momentum going by sharing the campaign in local Facebook groups, community bulletins/newsletters and WhatsApp groups you are part of.



Below are example posts that you can use.

- [Images](#)
- [Photos from campaign launch](#) (22 November 2025)

Social media

I am joining @ERCScot's call for all Scottish parties to protect our right to a healthy environment and #CleanUpScotlandsSewage.

We want:

- 🔍 100% monitoring of sewer overflows
- 💧 Better standards for water quality & sewage
- ⚖️ Accountability for polluters
- 🌱 Targets for sustainable infrastructure

Will my MSP, **[Tag the MSP's handle]**, commit to tackling sewage pollution and ensuring Scotland's lochs, rivers, and seas are safe for all to enjoy?

Sign the petition: <https://www.ercs.scot/clean-up-scotlands-sewage/petition/>

Newsletter

Sign the petition to Clean Up Scotland's Sewage

Sewage spills are polluting our rivers and coasts. Over 30 billion litres of raw sewage was discharged from overflows in 2024.

[Clean Up Scotland's Sewage](#) is a new campaign coordinated by the Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland to protect our right to a healthy environment, and make sure that our lochs, rivers, and seas are safe for all to enjoy.

Sign the public petition to demand that all Scottish parties make clean water a priority in their election manifestos.

Find out more and sign: <https://www.ercs.scot/clean-up-scotlands-sewage/petition/>

WhatsApp

Hi everyone!



I've signed a public petition to Clean Up Scotland's Sewage, which is part of a new campaign coordinated by the Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland to tackle sewage pollution. In 2024, there were over 24,000 sewage spills in Scotland – that's clearly not acceptable.

The petition calls on all Scottish parties to commit to four asks:

1. Make pollution visible
2. Stop routine pollution
3. Hold polluters to account
4. Build in resilience

What can you do to help?

> You can sign the petition here: <https://www.ercs.scot/clean-up-scotlands-sewage/petition/>

> Email your MSP, template letters here: <https://www.ercs.scot/clean-up-scotlands-sewage/take-action/>

Please share this far & wide on social media and any groups you're part of!

Thank you! If you have any questions, please contact sewage@ercs.scot.