



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

GUIDANCE, DOCUMENT

Designation and de-designation of bathing waters: guidance

How to apply for designation of a bathing water, or for an existing bathing water to be de-designated.

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Contents

Updated guidance

Decision making process, evidence requirements and timetable for designation and de-designation of a bathing water

Designation

De-designation

Process and timetable

Roles and Responsibilities

Notification of Decision

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Updated guidance

Following the release of the Bathing Water Review 2024 consultation results, we are in the process of updating the application guidance to give applicants more clarity when applying for bathing water designation. The updated guidance will be published in early summer, 2024.

Our current guidance to applicants will remain accessible online until they are replaced, as they continue to be relevant.

Decision making process, evidence requirements and timetable for designation and de-designation of a bathing water

Recommendations for designation and dedesignation will be accepted at any time from anyone by the Welsh Government. We recommend you contact your local authority and landowner at the earliest opportunity and well before submitting an application form to the Welsh Government, as they will often hold helpful information about the bathing water and are responsible for meeting various requirements under the Bathing Water Regulations 2013.

In order to ensure we can give full consideration to the applications received and undertake necessary processes, we also ask you to contact the Welsh Government's Water Branch when you are considering making an application for designations and dedesignations – email: water@gov.wales

It is important to include as much evidence and information as possible about bather numbers, and where possible, facilities in the area and views of the local community when requesting a designation or dedesignation of a bathing water.

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Bather numbers is the main criteria which the Welsh Government will apply when considering whether it is appropriate to designate or dedesignate a bathing water.

Designation

We are looking for evidence of large numbers of bathers at sites during the period 15 May to 30 September.

‘Large numbers’ is defined as a number which the competent authority (in this case the Welsh Government) considers to be large in relation to past trends, infrastructure or facilities provided, or other measures taken to promote bathing. The application form provides more information on the kind of evidence to provide.

De-designation

We are looking for evidence of no or low usage of bathers during the period 15 May to 30 September. The application form provides more information on the kind of evidence to provide.

Applications for dedesignation on water quality grounds will not be granted.

Process and timetable

All applications and evidence received by the Welsh Government will be

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acknowledged by letter or email.

Evidence will be assessed by the Welsh Government and if it meets the requirements of the Bathing Water Regulations 2013 it will be put on the Welsh Government's website for consultation.

If the evidence supplied does not meet the requirements, it will be returned, and the application will be placed on hold. We will write to the applicant to explain what further information needs to be provided.

The Welsh Government will formally write to Natural Resources Wales and the appropriate water company for information relating to the specific bathing water application.

A final decision by the Welsh Government will be published along with a response to consultation within 6 weeks of the consultation ending.

At any point during the process the applicant may be asked by the Welsh Government to provide further information. In this situation the public consultation may need to be restarted when the evidence is received.

Roles and Responsibilities

The primary criteria for designation and dedesignation is on bather numbers. We have not set a numerical figure on the numbers of bathers, as all bathing waters are different and one figure may not be suitable for all sites. We look for evidence of numbers of swimmers, people paddling at the water's edge. We consider anybody swimming or paddling in the water to be a bather.

The Welsh Government is responsible for designation and dedesignation in Wales and will base decisions on the evidence supplied in accordance with the

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set criteria for designation and dedesignation as set out in the Bathing Water Regulations 2013.

The Welsh Government will make the names of any organisations, or person representing an organisation or group who recommend a designation or dedesignation, known in the applications process. We will protect personal information of members of the public who recommend a designation or dedesignation.

Notification of Decision

The Welsh Government will notify the applicant, relevant local authority and appropriate Water Company of the decision made on designation or dedesignation.

The Welsh Government will inform Natural Resources Wales who will develop a bathing water profile for the site and take forward plans to monitor and protect the designated bathing water.

A summary of the decision will be published on the Welsh Government website.

This document may not be fully accessible.

For more information refer to our [accessibility statement](#).

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