



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Drains & Sewers

What should I do if the Public Sewer is blocked or overflowing?

If the public sewer is blocked or discharging contact Southern Water on 0845 2780845.

My property was built before 1937 so is it on a private or public sewer?

If your house was built prior to 1937 it is likely that the sewer, unless your property is on a private estate, is the responsibility of Southern Water and was formerly known as a Section 24 Sewer. Not all Section 24 Sewers are mapped so you may have to persuade Southern Water to do the work or prove the age of your house.

What Can I do to try and avoid blockages?

Blockages and problems can be minimised by good housekeeping:

- Do not dispose of fat or oil by pouring it down the sink, toilet or drain (let it solidify, bag it & bin it)
- Do not dispose of bulky sanitary items like nappies, nappy liners, baby wipes or feminine hygiene products down the toilet
- Use cheaper toilet paper, it tends to break up more easily than luxury brands
- Do not put kitchen roll down the toilet
- Do not cover manhole covers, inspection chambers or rodding eyes as they provide quick access to underground pipework
- Choose positioning of trees carefully as tree roots can penetrate pipework and cause serious blockages
- If your buildings insurance doesn't cover underground services such as pipes consider getting additional cover as repairs can be expensive



For further information please contact the Environmental Protection Section of Environmental Services on 01233 330645 or 01233 330571

Drains & Sewers

What is a Drain and whose responsibility is it?

A drain is a pipe taking wastewater, whether foul or surface water from one property only. The owner or occupier of that property is solely responsible for the maintenance and repair of that drain. It is your responsibility to engage a reputable contractor to act on your behalf. To clear blockages it is possible to purchase your own drain rods but you should take care when undertaking this type of work and call in a specialist if a repair is required.

Unless this drain joins other properties you are still responsible for it until it meets up with the public sewer usually outside the boundary of your property.

Ashford Borough Council is not responsible for any sewers or drains

What is a sewer?

A sewer is a pipe carrying foul or surface water away from more than one property.

What is a Private Sewer?

If your drain joins another drain from a neighbouring property it will become a private sewer at the point of connection. If the private sewer is blocked it is the joint responsibility of all property owners or occupiers in the run of those properties to clear the blockage.

What do I do if the Private Sewer is blocked?

You should jointly agree to employ a reputable contractor to sort the problems out and to share the cost equally between each of the properties. Always get a quote before proceeding with the work.

The Council does not mediate between individuals when there is disagreement about responsibility for maintenance of a private sewer. It is important to remember that you are still responsible for its maintenance and repair until it meets the public sewer usually found in the road.

If you cannot agree the work between you, the Council can become involved and Officers will serve notices on all affected properties requiring them to clear the blockage. If after 48 hours the blockage remains, works will be carried out in default and the Council will not only charge for the cost of the works but additional costs will be added for Officer time in dealing with the problem. This will be recharged to each of the properties concerned.

Failure to comply with a formal legal notice is an offence and may lead to prosecution.

Your buildings insurance may cover the cost of repairs, you should check this with your insurance company.

What if I rent my property?

You should contact your landlord if any problems occur with your drainage.

What is a Public Sewer?

This is a sewer adopted and maintained by the Sewerage Undertaker (Southern Water). These sewers are usually found under the highway, but can be anywhere. The Council and Southern Water hold maps of public sewers.