

Irish Water

Leakage Reduction Programme

First Fix Leak Repair Scheme

For Domestic Water Customers

Quarterly Report

Q3 2017



1. Introduction to the Leakage Reduction Programme¹

Water is one of our most valuable resources. Clean potable water is expensive to produce and distribute and one of Irish Water's key priorities is to reduce the level of water wasted through leakage. Irish Water produces 1.7 billion litres of treated water every day. Some 600 million litres (35%) per day is utilised by domestic households; 300 million litres (18%) per day is provided to non-domestic operation and the remaining 800 million litres (47%) is lost through leaking pipes. Almost half of the clean water we produce is lost through leakages.

In October 2015, Irish Water announced a €5.5 billion investment to improve drinking water quality and wastewater infrastructure up to 2021. This plan will see the investment in water conservation and network improvement initiatives double to €512m in the period 2017 to 2021 through the implementation of a targeted programme of works, called the **Leakage Reduction Programme**.

The overall aim of these works is to reduce leakage on a national scale to economically sustainable levels, leading to improved water network performance and reliability. The Leakage Reduction Programme and associated works will ensure a clean, safe and reliable public water supply now and into the future to support our growing population and economy.

For this programme, Irish Water has sub-divided the country into eight regions and is working in partnership with local authorities and regional contractors to plan and complete activities. Details of the Leakage Reduction Programme regions and contractors can be seen below.

¹ As reported in the last two quarterly First Fix Leak Repair Scheme Reports (Q1 and Q2 2017), following the completion of the Metering Programme in Q1 2017, the First Fix Leak Repair scheme moved to become part of the wider national Leakage Reduction Programme.

The scope of the works included in the Leakage Reduction Programme (LRP) includes undertaking improvements under the following seven principal work streams;

1. DMA (District Metering Area) Establishment

This involves the identification of groups of premises and the installation of a district meter to monitor water usage. This identifies works needed within the DMA to ensure efficient operations.

2. Find & Fix

The Find & Fix scheme involves leak detection crews undertaking surveys using sounding equipment to locate leaks on pavements and other public areas. If a public side leak is identified, Irish Water will carry out the necessary repairs.

3. First Fix Free

The First Fix Free scheme offers free leak investigations and free repairs for qualifying properties where a constant flow of water is found on the external water supply pipe. Irish Water estimates that over 109 million litres of water per day have been saved as a result of this scheme to the end of Q3 2017. Further information on the First Fix Free scheme can be found at <https://www.water.ie/water-supply/first-fix/>.

4. Mains Renewal including Shared & Backyard Services

Water mains renewal works usually include the replacement or renewal of ageing public water mains to improve water quality and supply. As our water pipes are underground, we need to dig down to inspect the pipes and carry out any necessary repairs or replacements.

A shared service connection means that two or more properties are fed by a single water pipe. These connections pipes are often made of iron or lead and prone to leaks.

In some older properties water connections may be installed to the back of the property and run through customer's back gardens. These connections are prone to leaks and can cause reduced levels of service and poor water pressure.

5. Lead Services

Lead in drinking water is a recognised health concern. We will be investigating the pipes that connect individual properties to the public water mains and replacing any lead pipes with new plastic pipes.

6. Non-Domestic Metering

Irish Water is replacing old non-domestic meters installed by the Local Authorities with new meters that have Automatic Meter Reading technology. The new meters allow for more accurate and timely billing for customers and better identification of leakage on non-domestic customer sites.

7. Pressure Management

Pressure management works are required to improve the quality and security of water supply to customers. The aim of these works is to reduce leakage within the mains network and to ensure a consistent supply of water to all customers. Too much pressure in the network can result in burst pipes and leakage. This can then result in a low water supply pressure for customers at the tap.

2. Overview of First Fix Free Scheme

In May 2014 the Government announced funding of €51m for a scheme to address water leakage on pipework within customer properties under a “First Fix” scheme². Following a public consultation in August 2015 the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) approved Irish Water’s proposed First Fix Leak Repair Scheme. The First Fix Leak Repair scheme was mobilised under the national Domestic Metering Programme.

Under the First Fix Leak Repair scheme, Irish Water assists customers by notifying them where suspected leakage is occurring within the boundary of their property. Leaks which are identified on the external supply pipe serving a property are offered a free leak repair. The First Fix Leak Repair scheme does not apply to leaks within a dwelling.

Utilising meter read data to identify the most significant leaks has proven key to operating the First Fix Leak Repair scheme efficiently. Prior to the introduction of the First Fix Leak Repair scheme, leakage programmes had been based around time-consuming and labour intensive sampling of areas in order to seek to detect anomalies on pipework. The Irish Water domestic metering programme has provided both the platform and the technology based solution to address this challenge. Data obtained from meter reading information highlights unusual water usage patterns and allows Irish Water to isolate the source of leaks to a particular property, thereby reducing the time required for leak investigation.

Given the need to prioritise water conservation, Irish Water prioritises repairs under the First Fix Leak Repair scheme by size, based on the volume of water lost. A constant flow of water, (that is 6 litres per hour over a 48 hour period), will trigger a constant flow alarm (CFA) on the meter, indicating a potential leak. The largest leaks wasting the most water are priorities to be fixed first.

It is estimated that over 109 million litres of water per day is being saved as a result of First Fix repairs completed under the Metering Programme.

3. How to avail of the scheme

Customers can avail of the scheme, once they are aware of a leak on their property. The CFA alarm is triggered where a constant flow of water to the property is identified (6 litres per hour over a 48 hour period). When a CFA alarm is recorded, customers are issued with a letter from Irish Water, indicating a potential leak on their property.

Customers with a visible leak on their property can also contact Irish Water to avail of a free leak investigation. Following the findings of the Joint Oireachtas Committee in 2017, Irish Water is engaging with the CRU in 2018 to assess how the benefits of the First Fix policy can be further applied to leaks on the customer side of unmetered properties.

² As outlined in section 8 of this report, IW is currently working within this original revenue allowance.

4. Initiatives to increase Customer Engagement Levels

Following the completion of the First Fix Scheme under the Metering Programme in February 2017, Irish Water analysed engagement levels in order to establish initiatives to improve the First Fix process and increase productivity.

The First Fix scheme is relying on the following in order to achieve water reduction;

- The First Fix letter reaching its desired destination to inform the customer of the possible leak.
- The customer engaging with Irish Water in order to arrange a leak investigation.
- The customer returning the signed waiver allowing Irish Water to repair the leak on their property.

The following initiatives have been implemented:

First Fix Letter

In an attempt to increase customer engagement, it was decided to include the following additional information;

- Eircodes: This has been a huge success as we can now contact customers with a non unique address and no contact name by matching the WPRN to the Eircode of the property. In Quarter 3, Irish Water sent 1,496 First Fix letters to properties using the Eircode system. These properties are using an average of 13,649 litres per day. 229 of these customers contacted Irish Water to avail of the free Leak Investigation with 83 qualifying for a repair. It is estimated that these 83 properties will give an average daily saving of 1.1ML per day once repaired (1.5% of the UFW)
- The average daily usage of the property and the expected daily usage of 125 litres per person per day. This informs the customer of the quantity of excess usage at their property and will encourage the customer to engage with us in order to arrange a leak investigation.
- In order to improve customer engagement, Irish Water has revised the previous CFA notification issued during the metering programme by the inclusion of additional information on the latest CFA letters, to make the communication as informative as possible to customers.

Waiver Return Process

Under the metering programme, waivers were posted to customers that qualified for a leak repair following the investigation. The customer was required to sign the waiver and post it back to Irish Water. It was found that there was a delay in customers returning the waivers and in some cases the waiver was not returned.

This process has been amended to increase the return of the signed waivers;

- Upon completion of the Leak Investigation, the crew issue the waiver to the customer and answer any questions the customer may have. If the customer is willing to sign the waiver at the time, the

crew will return the signed waiver to Irish Water and a repair can be scheduled. They will also leave a copy of the waiver with the customer for their own reference.

- If the customer is not willing to sign the waiver at this time, the crew will issue the waiver and a pre paid envelope to the customer in the hope the customer will sign the waiver and post it back to Irish Water.

Irish Water is also encouraging our contractors to be pro-active and contact customers that have received a first fix letter but have not engaged with the scheme.

5. First Fix Update

In the period of the transition of the First Fix Leak Repair scheme from the Metering Programme to the LRP, there was a temporary postponement on the issuance of CFA notifications from the end of Q4 2016 until the end of Q2 2017. This was to facilitate procurement competition for the LRP. During this period, Irish Water and its interim contractor continued to engage with Customers reporting possible leaks and carried out investigations to assess qualification and repair. Irish Water recommenced the issuance of CFA notifications under the LRP upon contractor mobilisation in August 2017.

In Q3, letters were sent to customers that appeared on the CFA list starting with the highest users. It was found that 4,161 properties that were using more than 5,000 litres per day based on meter readings and were accountable for over 49 million litres of Unaccounted for Water (58%).

Targeting these users first will result in greater savings from fewer repairs and reduce the UFW more effectively. The remaining 55,240 properties using less than 5,000 litres per day accounted for almost 36 million litres of Unaccounted for Water (42%). The following table is calculated using information from the CFA list and figures from the CSO report in August 2017 suggesting an average household consumes 383 litres of water per day.

Table 1: Unaccounted for Water (UFW) summary Q3 2017

6. Reporting on the scheme

In April 2015, the CRU consulted on Irish Water's proposed First Fix Leak Repair Scheme for Domestic Water Customers and received eight responses. The CRU's decision on the policy, issued on 5 August 2015, was based on a review of the eight submissions received during the consultation period. Among its recommendations, the CRU expects Irish Water to strongly promote the scheme in order to increase customer awareness of the scheme and to encourage customers to engage with Irish Water on the scheme.

The CRU is monitoring the ongoing implementation of the scheme to ensure that the costs allowed are efficiently incurred and that benefits are achieved for customers. In line with the CRU Decision CER/15/178, Irish Water is to report on a quarterly basis on the progress of the First Fix Leak Repair scheme, the following section outlines the progress of the scheme to the end of Q3 2017.

7. Quarterly Summary

- **Constant Flow Advice Letters, Customer Response Rates and Engagement Levels**

The total number of constant flow advice letters issued at the end of Q3 2017 was 5,842.

A total of 1,863 customers have engaged with the scheme to date in Q3 2017, representing 32% of the 5,842 constant flow advice letters issued. This number is made up of the following;

- 754 Customers requesting a free leak investigation survey ;
- 1,062 Customer repairs completed from data collected from the meter; and
- 47 Customers contacting Irish Water to advise of non qualifying leaks.

- **Leak Investigations**

A total of 754 investigations were requested, which include repeat visits where customers installed an Internal Stop Valve (ISV) after an initial leak investigation visit.

Irish Water contacts customers within 10 business days to arrange a convenient time for an appointment to carry out the free leak investigation at a property. A total of 716 leak investigations had been undertaken by the end of Q3 2017. The remaining customers that had requested a leak investigation to the end of Q3 2017 either had appointments scheduled or were in the process of having appointments scheduled.

From the 716 completed leak investigations, 577 leaks on external supply pipes were identified. Irish Water has offered these customers with leaks on their external supply pipe a free leak repair under the scheme. The remaining 139 leak investigations identified non-qualifying leaks.

There were three main reasons why these leaks were non-qualifying:

- 1) A total of 21 properties surveyed did not have an operational Internal Stop Valve (ISV) and the survey could not be progressed. In many cases, the ISV was present but not operational. Customers are advised of the need to have a working ISV installed in order for the leak investigation to be completed.
- 2) In addition, a total of 25 properties have been identified through the First Fix process where the property does not qualify or the survey could not progress as it is served through a shared or backyard service.

3) The remaining leak investigations identified internal plumbing and other issues, which come under the remit of the home owner. As with all internal repair and maintenance in a customer's home, if a leak is confirmed internal to the house then it should be repaired by the homeowner.

- **Leak Repairs**

Customers are asked to review the terms and conditions of the leak repair offer and sign the offer documentation after which Irish Water will contact the customer to schedule the leak repair at a suitable time. On receipt of the documentation, Irish Water contacts customers within 10 working days to arrange a convenient time for an appointment to carry out the free leak repair at a property.

At the end of Q3 2017 Irish Water had completed 435 free leak repairs under the First Fix Leak Repair scheme. The remaining 142 customers to whom Irish Water offered a free leak repair either had a repair scheduled or had yet to accept the leak repair offer.

- **Customer Repairs**

From the data collected through meter reading we know that 1,062 customers have repaired leaks on their property themselves after receiving a constant flow advice letter. Irish Water would like to thank all customers who repaired leaks on their property. These repairs have made a significant contribution to national water conservation.

- **Water Savings**

The issuance of constant flow advice letters has targeted the largest leaks first and the result of this can be seen from the estimated incremental savings of 2.08 million litres of water per day achieved in Q3 2017 from contractor repairs and a further 2.85 million litres from customer repairs.

2017	Irish Water First Fix Repair		Customer Repairs		2017 Total: Q1-Q3	
Quarter	Repairs #	Savings (ML/Day)	Repairs #	Savings (ML/Day)	Total Repairs	Total Savings (ML/Day)
1	420	2.25	475	0.65	895	2.9
2	233	0.96	4,774	5.95	5,007	6.91
3	435	2.08	1,062	2.85	1,497	4.93
4						
Total	1,088	5.29	6,311	9.45	7,399	14.74

Table 2: Estimated water savings from the First Fix Scheme and Customer Repairs for Q1-Q3 2017.

Since commencement of the First Fix Scheme total cumulative water savings are estimated at 109.8ML per day. A cumulative estimated total of 51 million litres per day has been saved through First Fix repairs and a further estimated 58.8 million litres from customer repairs. Savings are calculated from a comparison of meter data collected prior to and after the repair work being undertaken. For customer repairs, the constant flow alert is no longer active and the meter data shows a supporting drop in water usage over two read periods.

8. Project Expenditure

The project expenditure is reported quarterly in arrears. The cumulative total expenditure up to the end of Q3 2017 (end of September 2017) is €21,462,181 consisting of €9,939,985 for leak investigations, €7,965,864 for repairs and €3,556,332 for additional costs.

- **Next Steps**

Irish Water will continue to implement the First Fix Leak Repair scheme through the LRP and will issue the next quarterly report, for Q4 2017, to the CRU in Q3 2018.

Table 3: Overall Project Summary

1	Number of Continuous Flow Alarms Detected	Total	Q3 2017		
			59,401		
2	Number of Customer Notifications Issued	Period	Q3 2017	Cumulative FF Scheme Total	
		Region			
		North	336		106,401
		North West	881		
		South East	157		
		South West	617		
		Dublin	1555		
		North East	1321		
		Midlands	479		
		Midwest	496		
		Grand Total	5842		
A total number of 5,842 constant flow advice letters were issued in Q3. Irish Water will continue to sent letters in Q4					
3	Customer Responses requesting a Free Leak Investigation	Period	Q3 2017	Cumulative FF Scheme Total	
		Region			
		North	32		42,185
		North West	143		
		South East	48		
		South West	150		
		Dublin	201		
		North East	51		
		Midlands	60		
		Midwest	69		
		Grand Total	754		
754 customers requested a First Fix Free Leak Investigation with a further 47 advising of a non qualifying leak					
4	Leak Investigations Completed	Period	Q3 2017	Cumulative FF Scheme Total	
		Region			
		North	31		43,548
		North West	143		
		South East	48		
		South West	122		
		Dublin	191		
		North East	45		
		Midlands	72		
		Midwest	64		
		Grand Total	716		
716 Leak Investigations were carried out in Q3 under the Interim Contractor and WNP contractors.					
4a	Leak Repairs Created	Period	Q3 2017	Cumulative FF Scheme Total	
		Region			
		North	0		9,912
		North West	0		
		South East	0		
		South West	0		
		Dublin	0		
		North East	0		
		Midlands	0		
		Midwest	0		
		Grand Total	0		
80% of Leak Investigations carried out in Q3 qualified for a repair.					

9	Known Properties Without an Operational ISV	Period	Q3 2017	Cumulative FF Scheme Total
		Region		
		North		9,387
		North West		
		South East	1	
		South West		
		Dublin	18	
		North East	2	
		Midlands		
		Midwest		
Grand Total	21			
A total of 21 properties did not have an Internal Stop Valve and the Leak Investigation could not be progressed.				
10	Number of Non-Qualifying Properties Served Through a Shared or Backyard Pipe	Total	Q3 2017	Cumulative FF Scheme Total
			25	700
25 properties were identified as not qualifying for the scheme as they are served through a shared supply or backyard supply				
11	Counties in Each Region	North	Donegal, Cavan, Monaghan, Leitrim	
		North West	Galway, Galway City, Mayo, Sligo, Roscommon	
		South East	Carlow, Waterford, Waterford City, Kilkenny, Wexford	
		South West	Cork, Cork City, Kerry	
		Dublin	Dublin City, South Dublin, Dunleary, Fingal	
		North East	Longford, Louth, Meath, Westmeath	
		Midlands	Kildare, Offaly, Laois, Wicklow	
		Midwest	Limerick, Clare, Tipperary	

Note: All cumulative totals outlined in table 3 are for the First Fix Scheme from commencement to the end of Q3 2017.

Note: Meter read data is used to confirm that a customer repair has been carried out. Number of customer repairs and estimated savings will be included in the report once two confirmed meter readings are collected after the repair date. As such, the number of customer repairs noted above for each month is expected to increase in the next report as more confirmed readings are collected.