



# News Release

13 October 2004

## **PLUMBING BLUNDERS POLLUTE LOCAL BROOK**

Environmental protection experts from Thames Water have completed a painstaking investigation that has revealed over 100 plumbing problems at properties in Finchley that have been polluting a local brook.

Mistakes by plumbers and DIY enthusiasts at 115 homes have resulted in appliances including washing machines and toilets being plumbed into rainwater sewers, which lead to nearby Mutton Brook. They should instead be connected to foul sewers that take household waste to sewage works for treatment.

As a result sewage and dirty water has been depleting oxygen levels and making it difficult for wildlife in the brook to survive - and unpleasant for local residents.

Thames Water staff and contractors have completed house-to-house checks using a variety of methods to pinpoint the properties in question. These include the use of coloured dyes, wire baskets to trap evidence of waste in rainwater sewers and CCTV cameras inside the pipes.

The majority of property owners whose drains have been contributing to the pollution have now carried out corrective work. Details of the remaining properties have been passed to environmental health officers at the London Borough of Haringey, who have powers to ensure the necessary improvements are made.

Matt Prior, Thames Water's Environmental Protection Team Leader, said: "We're pleased that we've been able to identify all the sources of pollution affecting the brook – but shocked that we found so many.

"Tracing the households responsible for the pollution has proved a long and laborious process, and we would urge homeowners working on their drains to use a reputable, qualified plumber."

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# News Release

Thames Water and the Environment Agency have produced a leaflet giving customers advice on how to check their own drains are not wrongly connected. It is available free from Thames Water's 24-hour customer centre on 08459 200 800.

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**For further information, please contact Thames Water's press office:** Chris Shipway on 0118 373 8924 or [Christopher.shipway@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:Christopher.shipway@thameswater.co.uk)