

BATHING WATER PROFILE

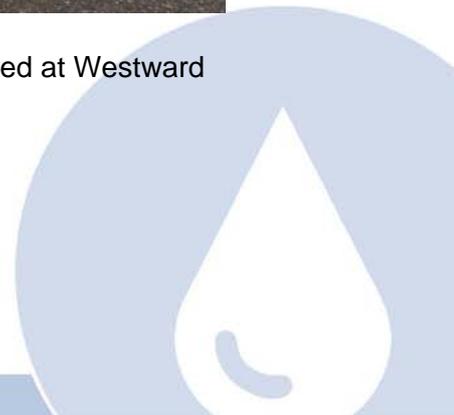
We have produced a profile for each European designated bathing water in England and Wales. The profile gives information about the bathing water including any improvements made to provide better water quality for bathers. Bathing water profiles are a requirement of the revised Bathing Water Directive 2006/7/EC and supporting regulations.

All bathing water profiles will be reviewed and updated by May 2012. We would like your feedback and comments to contribute to this review. If you wish to [comment on the profile](#) please send an email to bwpsw@environment-agency.gov.uk between 24 March and 30 September 2011.

Westward Ho!, Devon, England



The image above shows the European designated bathing water located at Westward Ho!, Devon, England



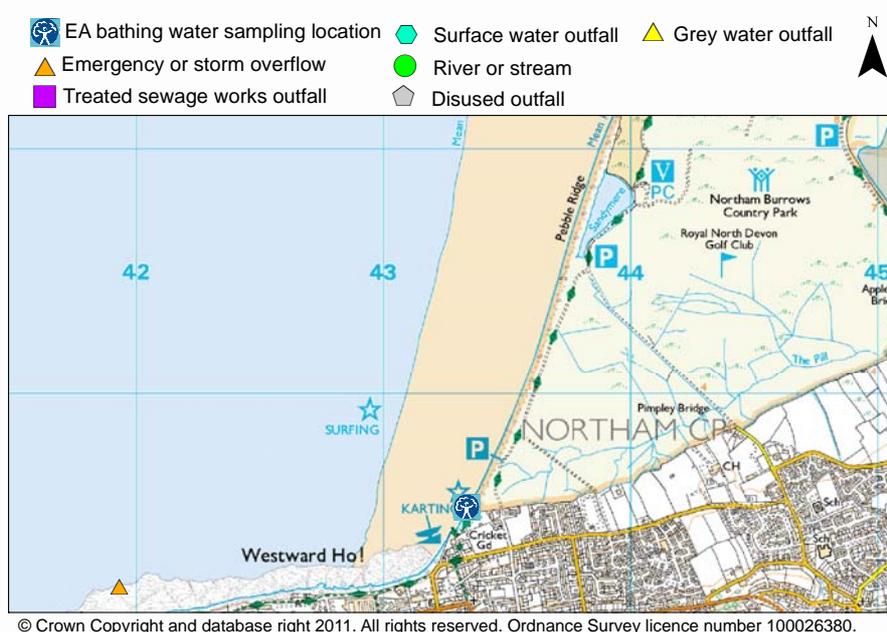
Designation details under the current Bathing Water Directive (76/1160/EEC)

Local Authority: Torridge District Council

- Environment Agency Region: South West
- Year designated: 1988

The Environment Agency monitors and assesses bathing water quality at each designated bathing water in England & Wales annually between May and September. The [monitoring results and annual compliance are all published on the Environment Agency website via our interactive map service.](#)

Bathing water map



Bathing water description

Westward Ho! is south of the Taw/Torridge Estuary on the north coast of Devon. It is a large sandy beach resort, approximately 1.7 kilometres wide, backed by a pebble ridge. Many rock pools are visible at low tide.

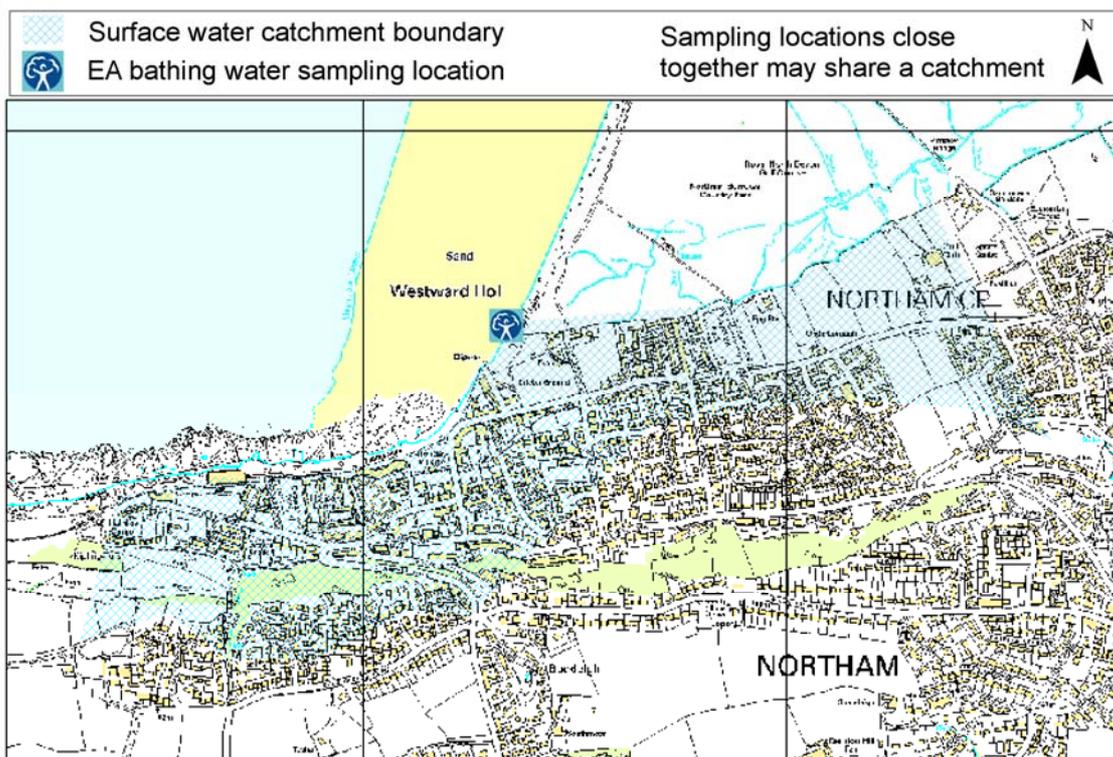
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08708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
0845 988 1188

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Catchment map



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Catchment description

The catchment surrounding Westward Ho! is approximately 85 hectares. There are no streams discharging directly to the bathing water, however, the Taw/Torridge Estuary enters the sea approximately two and a half kilometres north of Westward Ho! The catchment is urban.

Pollution management

Water quality at a bathing water is dependent upon the type and area of land (the catchment) draining to the water and the activities undertaken in that catchment.

It is the Environment Agency's role to drive improvement of water quality at bathing waters that are at risk of failing European standards. The following sections give an indication of potential sources of pollution, conditions under which they may arise and measures put in place to improve water quality.

Streams and rivers

There are no streams or rivers directly affecting this beach. However this beach is close to the Taw/Torridge Estuary which could affect the bathing water at certain states of the tide.

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Our investigations

We are using a DNA tracing technique to help us identify whether sources of faecal pollution are human or animal. This will help us target further investigations to pinpoint pollution problems and improve water quality at the bathing water.

Working with water companies

History

In the past this bathing water was affected by continuous and intermittent discharges of sewage to the Taw/Torridge Estuary. The South West Water sewage treatment scheme for the area collects sewage from the various settlements around the Taw/Torridge Estuary. It is split into two schemes centred on the Ashford (Barnstaple) sewage treatment works (STW) (North Scheme), and a works at Cornborough (South Scheme).

The North Scheme at Ashford (Barnstaple) STW, which provided secondary treatment and an outfall to the deep water channel of the Taw Estuary, was completed during 1996 and 1997. The STW was upgraded with ultraviolet (UV) disinfection in October 1997, and flows from the Velator STW were transferred to Ashford at that time.

The South Scheme at Cornborough STW, which provides secondary treatment and UV disinfection, was completed in 2003. The scheme included the transfer of sewage from the Rock Nose discharge and other continuous discharges from the south bank of the Taw Estuary to Cornborough STW, and discharge through a 600m outfall at Abbotsham.

A number of local sewerage systems with combined sewer overflows (CSO) in Bideford, Appledore, Velator, Fremington and parts of south Barnstaple were also improved or removed as part of the scheme. Improvements were made to eight storm overflows including Yelland CSO, Bideford pumping station (PS), and Instow 'A' PS in April 2004, and a further 22 storm overflows were improved by April 2005.

Sewage treatment works outfalls

Discharges from sewage treatment works have improved substantially in England and Wales since the 1980s.

Sewage from Bideford, Westward Ho!, and the surrounding area, is treated at Cornborough STW and then discharges to the sea three kilometres southwest of the bathing water.

Sewage from Barnstaple, Braunton, and the surrounding area, is treated at Ashford (Barnstaple) STW and then discharges to the Taw Estuary, eleven kilometres east of the bathing water.

Both of these discharges are disinfected, and designed to protect bathing water quality.

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Emergency/storm overflows

The majority of sewers in England and Wales are “combined sewers” and carry both sewage and surface water from roofs and drains. A storm overflow operates during heavy rainfall when the sewerage system becomes overwhelmed by the amount of surface water. The overflow prevents sewage from backing up pipes and flooding properties and gardens. An emergency overflow will only operate infrequently, for example due to pump failure or blockage in the sewerage system.

There is an emergency/storm overflow from the Northam pumping station marked by an orange triangle on the bathing water map. The overflow discharges to the sea at Rock Nose, one and a half kilometres from our monitoring point. The overflow prevents local homes from being flooded with sewage after very heavy rainfall or emergency breakdown at the sewage pumping station. The operation of the overflow can lead to a drop in water quality at the bathing water.

Working with Local Authorities

Heavy rain falling on pavements and roads often flows into surface water drains or highway drains, ending up in local rivers and, ultimately, the sea. The quality of bathing water may be adversely affected as a result of such events.

The urban area of Westward Ho! immediately behind the beach is served by a combined (surface and sewer) system. There are no outfalls from the system onto the beach. Surface water can flow into the Taw/Torridge Estuary from urban areas, outfall pipes and highway drains. This can affect bathing water quality, particularly after periods of rainfall.

Working with the farming community

There are no known agricultural sources directly affecting this bathing water. During and after periods of very heavy rainfall, runoff to the Taw/Torridge Estuary from agricultural land is greatly increased, and the quality of the bathing water can be reduced.

Algae

Seaweed (macroalgae) and phytoplankton (microscopic algae) are a natural part of the marine and freshwater environment. Below we note whether these have been recorded in quantities sufficient to be a nuisance.

Seaweed (macroalgae)

This bathing water does not have a history of large amounts of seaweed (macroalgae).

Phytoplankton(microscopic algae)

Phytoplankton (microscopic algae) naturally increase in number at certain times of the year. This process is known as a phytoplankton bloom. This bathing water does not have a history of phytoplankton blooms.

Further information

Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) establishes a common approach to managing water within the European Community. The environmental objectives for the WFD will be delivered through the actions described in the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). Actions identified in the RBMPs for other improvements, also contribute to improvements in bathing water quality. The [River Basin Management Plans are published on the Environment Agency website](#)

[A glossary for this profile is available](#) on the Environment Agency website.

About this document

Written: February 2011

Next update: April 2012

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