

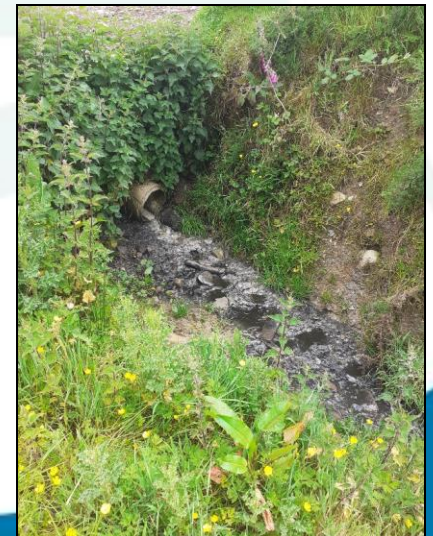
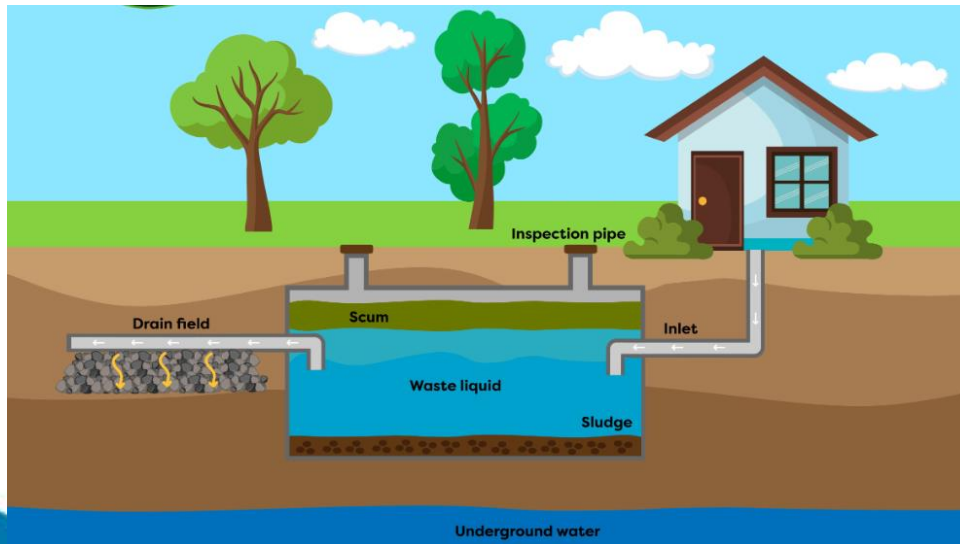
Review of the National Inspection Plan for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (DWWTS)



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Environmental Protection Agency
June 2026

Introduction

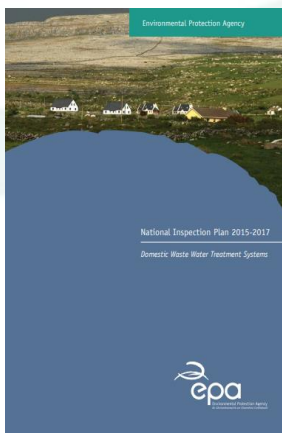
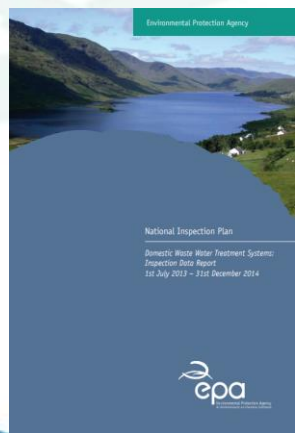
- Domestic wastewater treatment systems (DWWTS) - Septic tanks
- Approx 500,000 in Ireland.
- Issues with septic tank performance can lead to:
 - impacts on the **environment**.
 - impacts on **human health**.



National Inspection Plan

Water Services Act 2007 (As Amended)

- 70K. - (1) The Agency shall...make a national plan...referred to as ‘the national inspection plan’...with regard to the **inspection and monitoring** of domestic waste water treatment systems.
- 70K. - (2) the Agency shall have regard to relevant risks or potential risks to human health or the environment...
- 70K. - (3) The Agency shall...at least once in each period of **5 years**...**review** the plan and make such **revisions** thereto as it thinks fit.



Responsibilities and Implementation



HOMEOWNERS



Register DWWTS with
'Protect Our Water'
(www.protectourwater.ie)



Ensure DWWTS is not a risk
to health or the environment
and complies with regulations



Do not impede
DWWTS inspectors



Comply with an advisory
notice if the DWWTS
fails inspection



Further information on the
inspection process is available
on the EPA website.



WATER SERVICES AUTHORITIES



Select inspection sites and complete
minimum inspection allocations in
line with this plan



Carry out inspections in line with
legislation and guidance



Follow up advisory notices, including
engagement and prosecution where
warranted



Complete public engagement
activities in line with this plan



Decide if additional inspections above
the minimum are required to protect
the local environment and public health.
Also responsible for grant scheme
administration, complaints, planning
and building control.



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY



Monitor implementation and
report annually on the national
inspection plan



Coordinate the Septic Tank
Inspectors Network

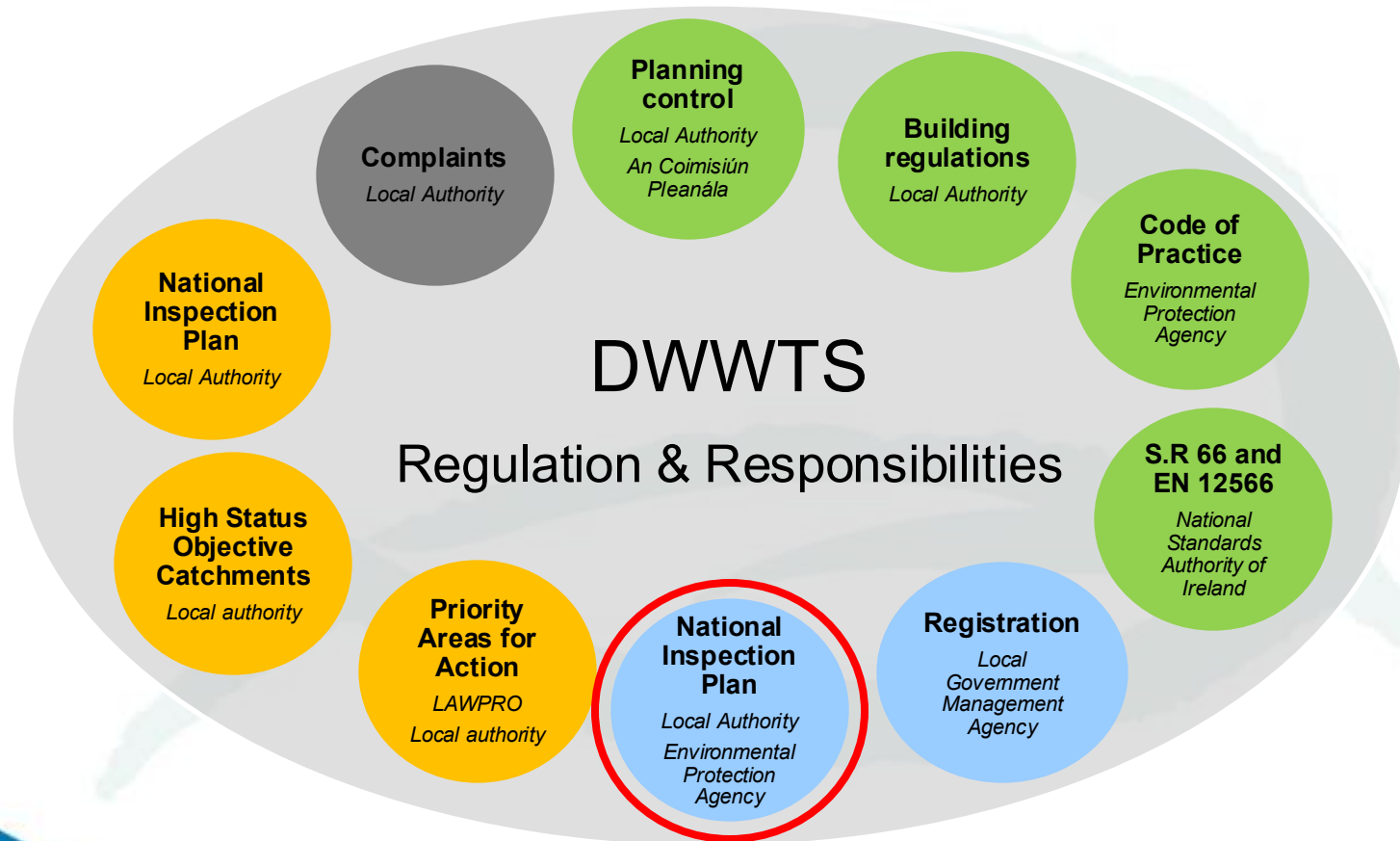


Host and provide technical support
for the DWWTS computer system
used by inspectors



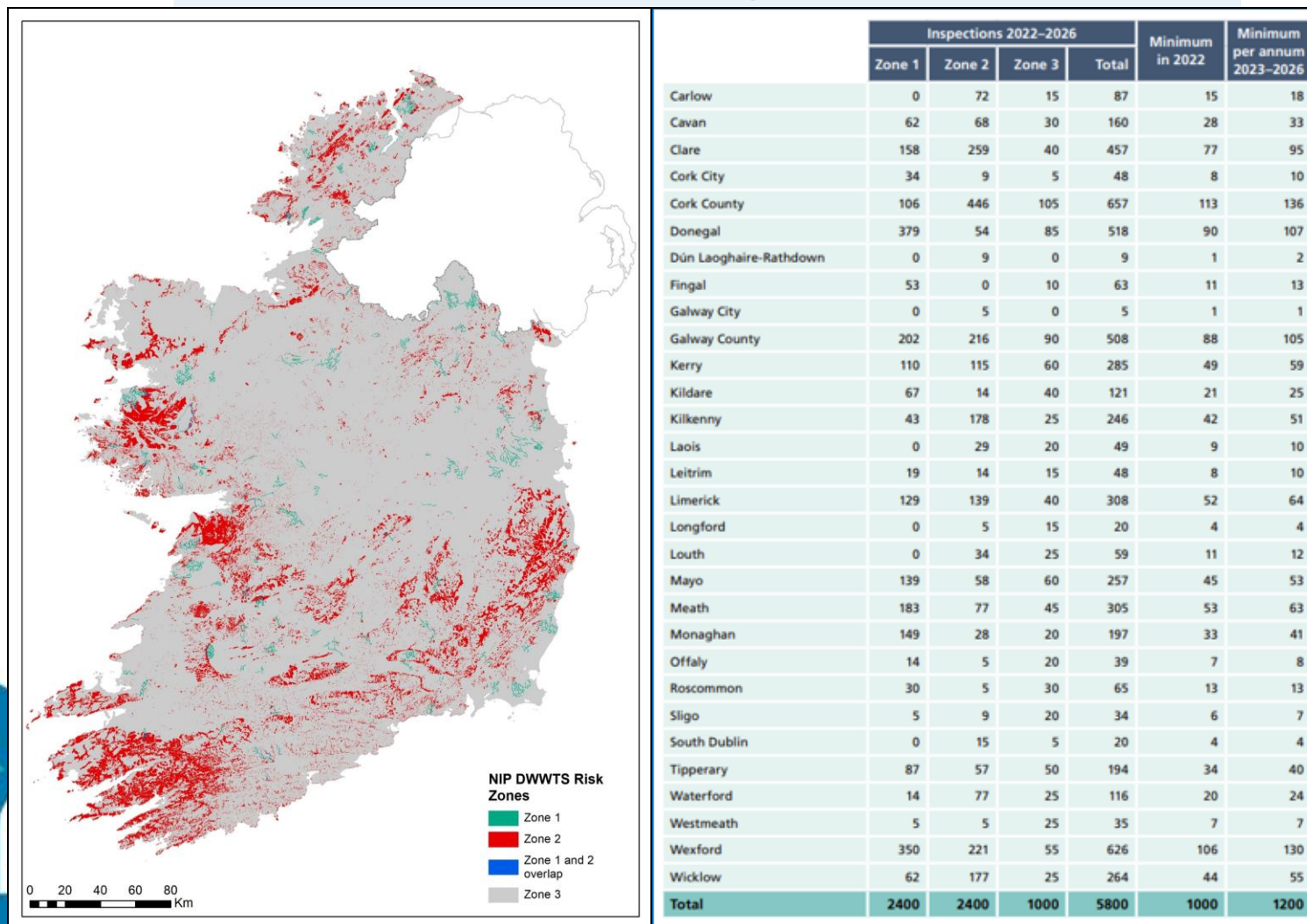
Undertake public engagement and
support public engagement by water
services authorities and other
stakeholders.

DWWTS Regulatory Overview



Risk Based Inspections

National risk methodology for allocation of inspections



2025 DWWTS Inspections Report

- **1,466** inspections completed with **59%** failure rate.
- 7,212 DWWTS failed inspection since 2013. **84%** of these have been fixed.
- Advisory Notices open > 2 years down from **523** (2024) to **442** (2025).
 - Changes to grant scheme.
 - Greater enforcement efforts by proactive LAs.
 - Increased supervisory activities by EPA.
- EPA calls for:
 - Consistent and sustained enforcement across all LAs to ensure faulty septic tanks are fixed asap.
 - Homeowners to perform routine maintenance on their septic tanks to protect health and the environment.

WHAT CAN HOMEOWNERS DO?
The failure detected in many DWWTS represent a risk to people's health, including the homeowner and their family, and the environment. Homeowners should ensure their DWWTS are properly built and maintained, and their drinking water wells are tested to protect the health of their family. You can get guidance on the EPA website if you are concerned about your [DWWTS](#) or [drinking water well](#). Details of [DWWTS grants](#) and [household drinking water well grants](#) are available on the DHEG website and from the local authorities who administer the grants.

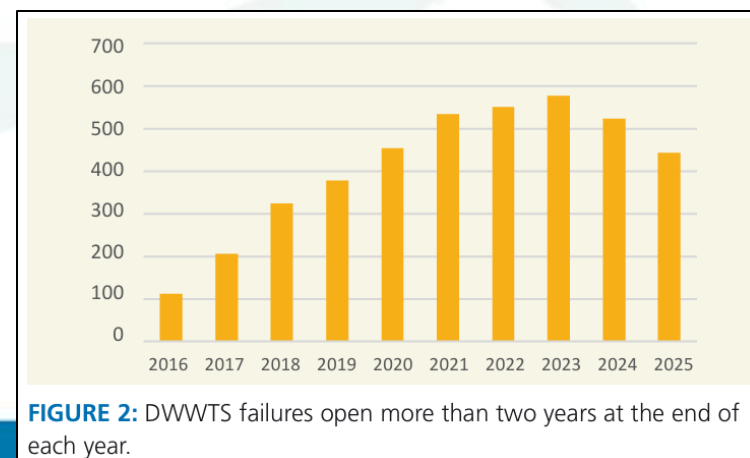
TABLE 1: Inspection findings by local authority area (ranked by percent of systems fixed)

WATER SERVICE AUTHORITY	Inspections required 2025*	Inspections completed 2025	Failure rate 2025	Systems failing 2013-2025	% Fixed at end 2025
Carlow	18	22	22%	53	100%
Wicklow	55	57	39%	184	98%
Fingal	13	1	100%	38	91%
Louth	12	13	38%	60	91%
South Dublin	4	4	25%	35	94%
Sligo	7	7	57%	154	94%
Longford	4	10	40%	47	94%
Offaly	8	47	96%	128	91%
Kildare	25	40	41%	203	89%
Mayo	68	65	75%	414	89%
Monaghan	41	50	52%	195	89%
Wexford	147	125	64%	949	88%
Carson	33	34	56%	188	88%
Galway	105	106	53%	466	86%
Kerry	59	75	61%	378	85%
Mayo	53	71	66%	588	84%
Galway City	1	5	100%	12	81%
Cork	136	136	56%	663	82%
Dun Laoghaire - Rathdoun	2	25	48%	42	81%
Clare	95	97	40%	316	80%
Lettlim	22	23	61%	170	80%
Tipperary	40	44	52%	205	78%
Donegal	137	126	67%	483	77%
Waterford City	24	24	75%	83	77%
Laois	10	22	95%	177	76%
Roscommon	13	13	85%	239	75%
Limerick City	125	126	80%	361	73%
Kilkenny	57	67	46%	249	69%
Westmeath	7	20	81%	65	57%
Cork City	19	77	62%	77	49%
Total	1320	1461	59%	7212	84%

* Includes minimum number of inspections allocated in the NP 2022-2025 and inspection shortfalls carried forward from 2024.

■ Local authorities who did not complete their inspection allocation in 2025 ■ High rate of DWWTS failure fixed ■ Moderate rate of DWWTS failure fixed ■ Low rate of DWWTS failure fixed

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National Inspection Plan - Review

NIP REVIEW

Item	Month Due	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Internal Stakeholder Pre-consultation	Jan												
External Stakeholder Pre-consultation	Feb-April												
DWWTS Inspectors Workshop	April												
NIP Review (EPA)	Feb-June												
2027-2031 NIP Draft	April-July												
Public Consultation	Mid Aug-Sept												
Review Consultation Feedback	Sept-Oct												
2027-2031 NIP Draft Finalised	November												
2027-2031 NIP Published	Nov - Dec												
Stakeholder Engagement	Nov - Dec												

NIP Review Focus

■ Inspections

- Number ~ 1200
- Where to inspect (risk based system)
 - **Surface Waters** >> 'At Risk' waterbodies under the Water Framework Directive
 - **Household Wells** >> DWWTS co-located with household wells

■ Enforcement

- Local Authority follow through on unresolved cases - consistent enforcement.

■ Engagement

- Ongoing engagement – Local Authorities, LAWPRO, EPA report, leaflets, websites.



THANK YOU

Any Questions?