

Drains and Sewers Information Leaflet

Drains and sewers

What is a drain?

A drain is an underground pipe that serves a single property. If the pipe runs from the property and joins a public sewer system directly, it remains a drain until it joins the public sewer. If the pipe runs along and joins a neighbour's drain it is a drain up to that point. A drain is always private and therefore the responsibility of the owners / occupiers of the property.

What is a sewer?

A sewer is a pipe that serves more than one property. As above, when the drain joins a neighbouring drain, it then becomes a sewer. A sewer can be either private or public.

Ownership and responsibility

Public sewers

Public sewers are (usually) larger diameter sewers, which often run in the highway or across fields picking up private sewers along the way. These are the responsibility of Yorkshire Water in the Harrogate District.

Section 24 sewers

These are a special category of sewer and are public sewers provided they meet certain conditions. There must be more than one property connected to the sewer, the properties must have been occupied prior to 1st October 1937, and must have been in separate ownership at that time. If you suspect that there is a problem with a public sewer then you should contact Yorkshire Water ([opens in a new window](#)).

Private sewers

Owners/occupiers are responsible from the point of connection to the junction with the public sewer. Therefore everyone connected upstream of a blockage or problem has a joint responsibility to keep the sewer flowing freely. The house furthest away from the public sewer is responsible for its drain until the second house joins, from then on both properties become responsible for the next section and so on until the sewer joins the public sewer.

NOTE - the sewer will remain private until it joins the public system, even if the pipe runs under fields, roads or other people's land, and remains the responsibility of those connected.

What is our responsibility?

We have a statutory duty in the interests of public health to ensure blocked/foul smelling drains are cleared and/or repaired. Notices can be served on all those connected upstream of the problem. These notices allow the persons affected a set amount of time to clear the blockage or repair the sewer or drain.

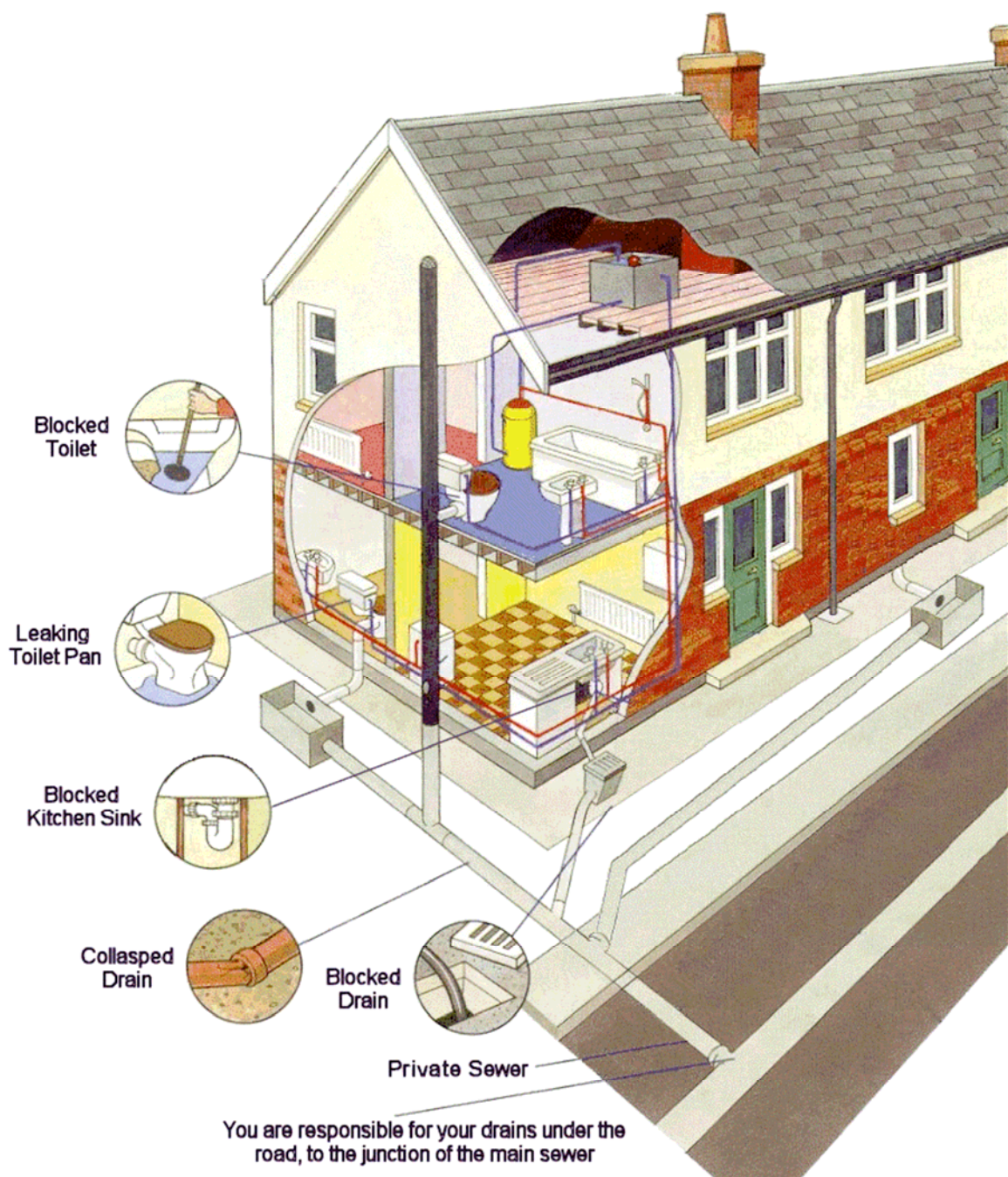
Problems

Smells

Sewage smells - these should not be in the home or even obviously present in the surrounding area. If there is a strong smell, this could indicate a fault on the system. In these cases contact us for advice on 01423 556633.

Blockages

From time to time sewers can block, but with care this can be made a rare occurrence. Large amounts of fat, cooking oil and food waste can become a major nuisance especially in combination with debris such as nappy liners, wipes and sanitary items, which can catch on any small imperfection in the pipe. Ideally, bathroom and kitchen waste items should be '**bagged and binned**'.

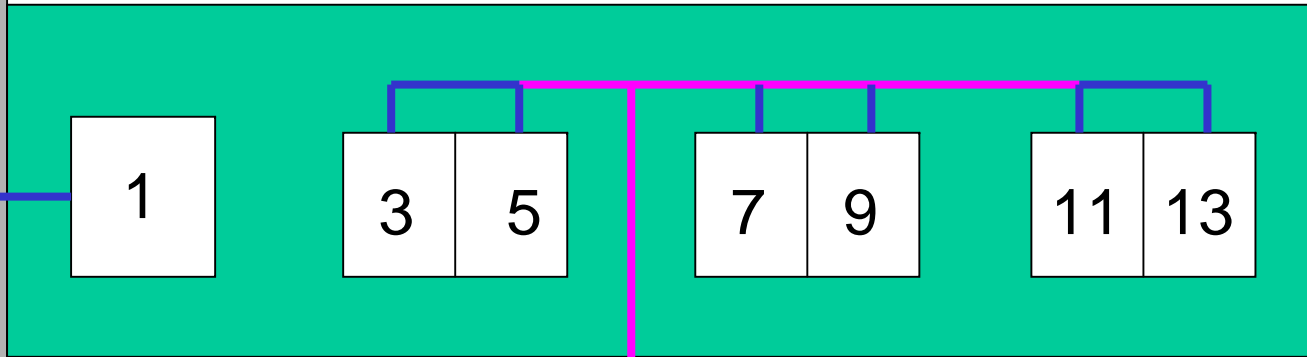


Harrogate Borough Council
 Environmental Protection
 Springfield House
 Kings Road
 Harrogate
 HG1 5NX

Tel: 01423 556633
 Fax: 01423 556820

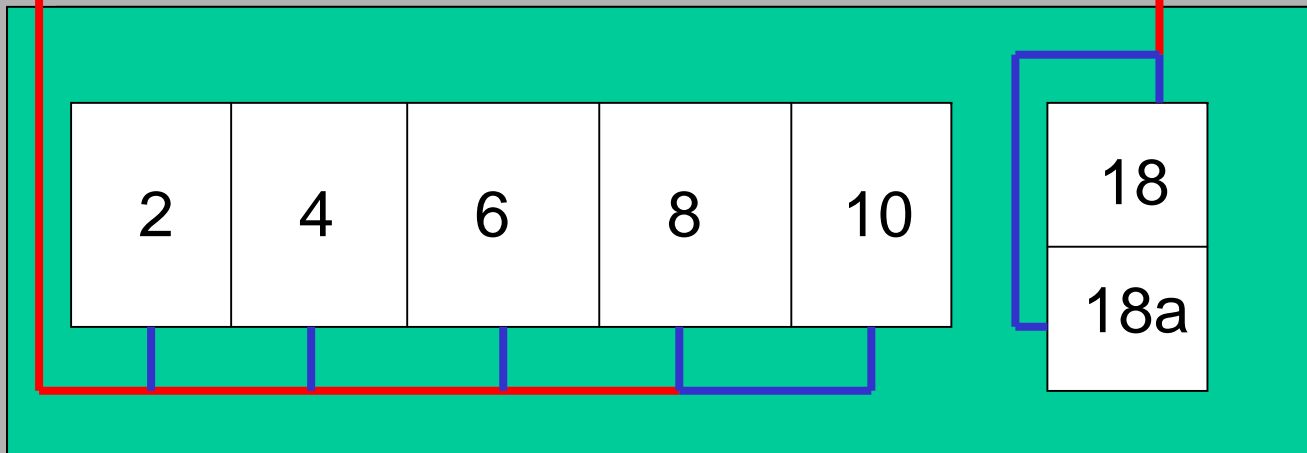
environmentalprotection@harrogate.gov.uk

Houses 1-13 Side Street all built after 1st October 1937



Main Road

Side Street



Public Sewer ———
Private Sewer ———
Private Drain ———

Houses 2-18a Side Street all built before 1st October 1937