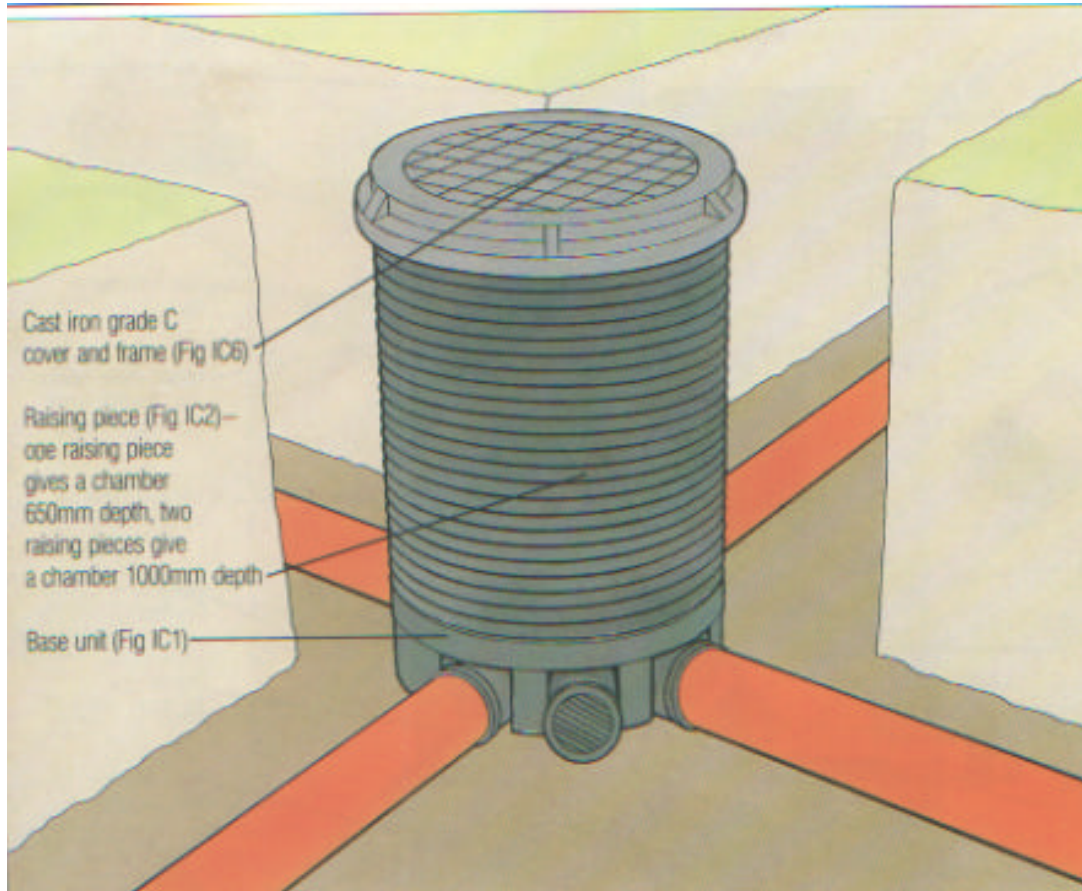


GUIDELINES



ON DRAINAGE RESPONSIBILITIES



2002-2003
Neighbourhood Renewal

Guidelines on Drainage Responsibilities.



Introduction

The laws relating to sewers and drains are extremely complex, and as a result, this leaflet is designed purely as a guideline on who to contact as a general rule if you have a problem with your drains. Resolving problems relating to drains and sewers can be time consuming, as it is not always apparent precisely what is the cause of the problem, although the use of new camera technology help this process.

An important factor to reduce the number of blockages that occur in any system is to ensure that care is taken over what items are pushed, poured or flushed into a drain or sewer. The following are examples of items that should never be put down a drain, however it is not an exhaustive list.

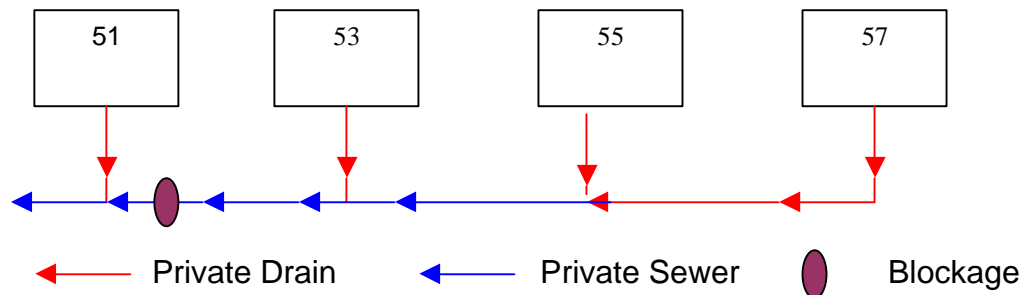
Cement slurry, rubble, concrete, stones, engine oil, chemicals, fats, newspapers, magazines, nappies, sanitary products and other bulky items.



Owner Occupiers

The owners of private properties are responsible for their own drains within the curtilage (boundary) of their property and even under neighbouring land until they join with drains serving another property, the pipe is then referred to a private sewer. If a blockage or break occurs in a private sewer those people whose effluent would be held up by the problem are jointly responsible for sharing the cost of clearing or repairing the private sewer. Such problems often occur some distance from the owner's property and may not seem an immediate problem to them. If as a house owner, you are unaware as to whether you are on a private drain or sewer, then you should check with Anglian Water prior to calling out a contractor or contact the Solicitor who acted for you when the house was bought.

The example shown below may help you to clarify this situation.



Houses 51, 53, 55 & 57 all connect into a private sewer. The blockage is located prior to property 51 connecting into the sewer, but after properties 53, 55 & 57. Therefore the cost of resolving the problem will be the joint responsibilities of the owners of 53, 55 & 57 but **not** 51.



The Public Sewer

Unless a private sewer or drain goes to a private treatment plant or pumping station it will drain into a public sewer. This is usually under the main road and generally the responsibility of the sewerage undertaker, which, within Babergh District Council is Anglian Water. Should you encounter any problems with the main sewer or drains, then in the first instance, you should contact Anglian Water on 0345 145145.



Highways Gulleys

These are designed to take the surface water from roads and streets. They are not designed to take foul water. Should you encounter any problems relating to these gulleys, i.e. that they are blocked, overflowing or giving off odours, then you should contact Suffolk County Council Highways Department on 01473 830010 for the eastern area, or 01284 352000 for the western area of the district.



Council Houses

The sewers and drains that serve a Council House are generally under the control of Babergh District Council, and any problems relating to these should be referred to Housing Repairs on 01473 825776



EX Council Houses **Sold under the Right to Buy**

The general rule of thumb relating to these is similar to that of the owner-occupier. The owner is responsible for their own private drain within the curtilage of their property until it connects into either a private or public sewer. Once it connects into a public sewer, then Anglian Water will be the point of contact for any problems, which may arise. If you are unaware as to whether or not you connect into a private or public sewer, then you should check with the Housing Department, or Anglian Water.

If your property connects to a private sewer, then all the properties that connect to this who are above the blockage will be equally responsible for the cost of resolving the problem. However, if one or more of the properties affected are still owned by Babergh District Council, then the Council **may** still have some responsibility for the repairs and maintenance. In these circumstances you should contact Housing Repairs for advice, prior to calling out a contractor.

N.B. If all the properties on the private sewer are now privately owned, then Babergh District Council may have no further responsibility to maintain the sewer or drain, and it could well be down to the house owners.

Where a sewage treatment package plant or pumping station etc. serves several properties, which are now all or partly in private ownership, you may be responsible for a contribution towards maintenance and repair. Your deeds should tell you what the arrangements are in these circumstances. However if you are unclear then you should check with the Housing Division before any works are carried out.

Should you have any queries over these issues, then you should contact the Housing Repairs section for clarification. If you are unaware as to whether all the houses connected to your private sewer are in private ownership, then again you will need to contact the Housing Department.



Properties connected to a Cesspit, Septic Tank or a Private Sewage Treatment Plant.

These are all private drainage systems and as such, the responsibility for such systems falls on the householder(s) in the majority of circumstances. Anglian Water, Babergh District Council and Suffolk County Council may have some responsibility towards emptying, maintaining and carrying out repairs in certain circumstances.

You will need to consult the deeds of your property to ascertain this information. It may however, be the case, that one system is shared by two or more properties. Where this is the case, each householder is responsible for the drains on their property and up until the point where they reach the common parts of the system. Any works or maintenance required to the common parts is the joint responsibility of all householders served by that system.



Useful Contacts

Anglian Water	0345 145145
Environmental Health	01473 822801
Housing Repairs	01473 825776
Suffolk County Council (Highways)	01473 830010
	01284 352000



Private Contractors

Private contractors who can carry out the necessary works to clear, survey or repair drains can be found in the yellow pages under the heading **Drain and Pipe Cleaning**.