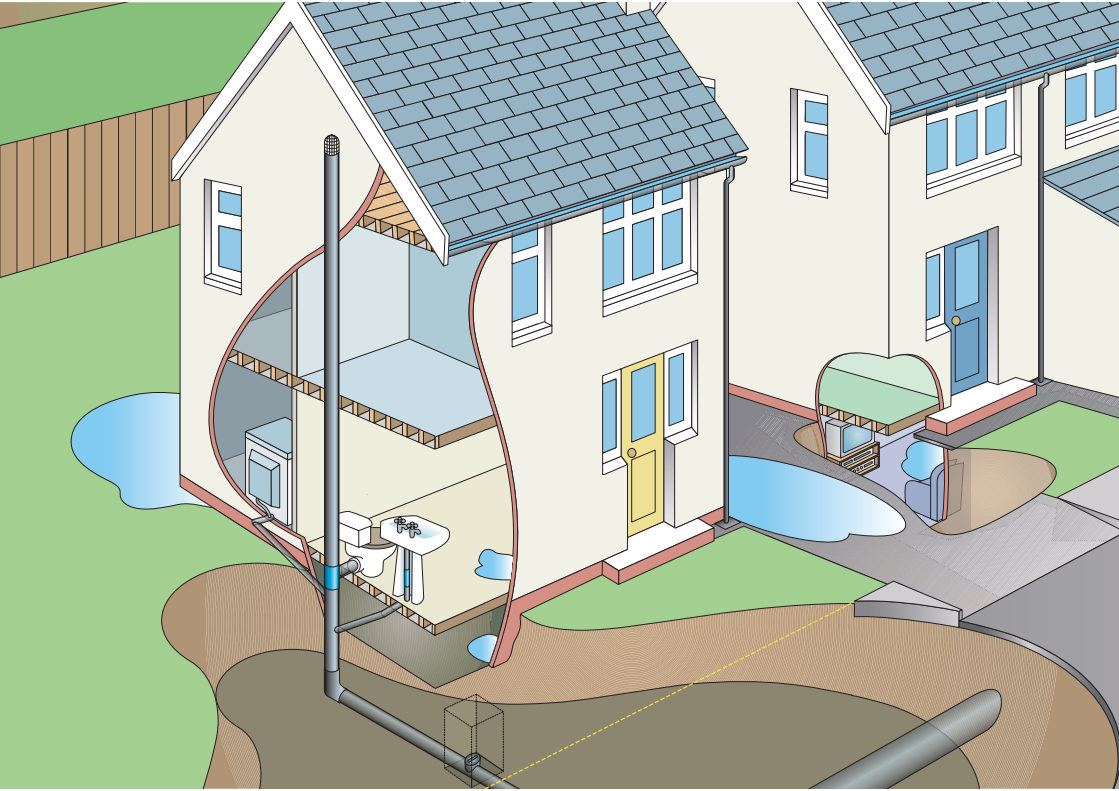




**Scottish  
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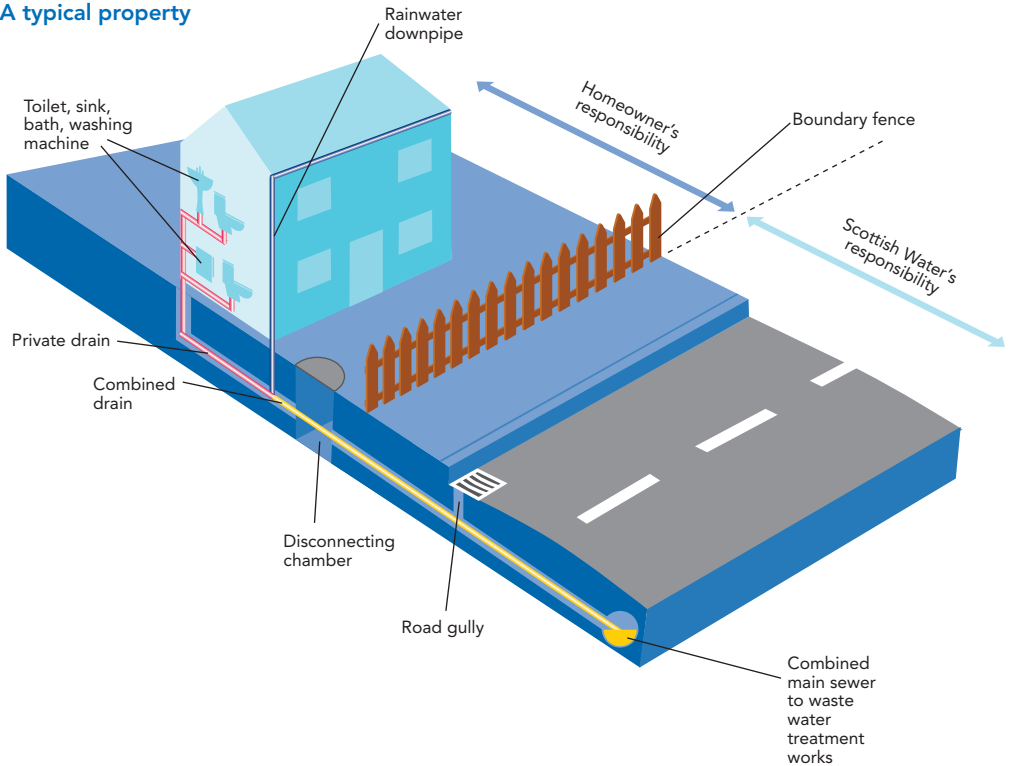
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**A guide to drains and sewers**

# A guide to drains and sewers

## A typical property



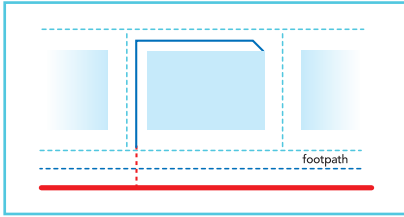
The diagram above shows a typical layout of how a property connects to the public sewer. Showers, baths, toilets, sinks and water using appliances such as washing machines are all connected and waste and waste water is carried from a private pipe to the main sewer.

In general, from the point that the drain leaves the curtilage (which is usually the land surrounding a building that belongs to the owner) of your property, or joins up with drains coming from within a separate curtilage of another property, it becomes a public sewer. Some curtilages can contain a number of properties (for example a block of flats) and the common drainage systems within that curtilage will remain private.

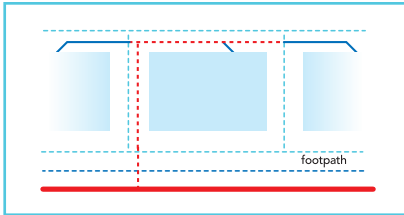
Examples on the next page show the usual responsibility for pipework within a number of different property types. Our waste water standards have developed over the years and these examples are typically historical layouts. Current standards for new waste water infrastructure aims to ensure that a dedicated individual foul pipe serves each property (terraced, semi, detached or self-contained block of flats). However, there can be more complex situations which are not covered in this document.

**Please note the examples provided in this document are for guidance and illustrative purposes only.**

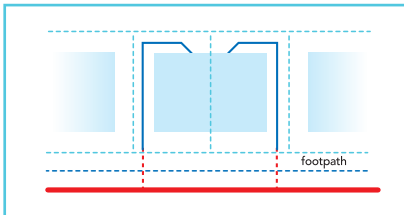
### 1. Detached Property



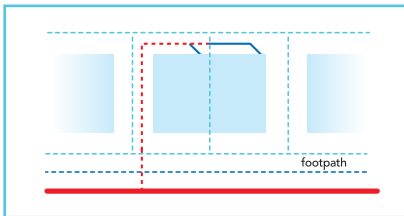
### 2. Detached Property



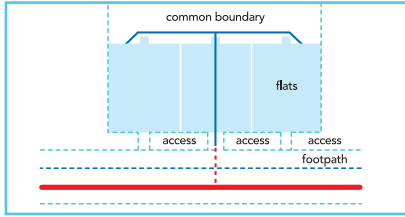
### 3. Semi Detached Property



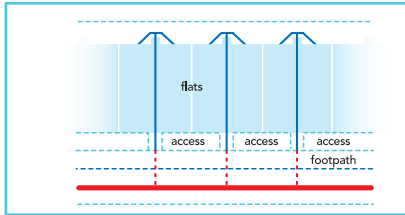
### 4. Semi Detached Property



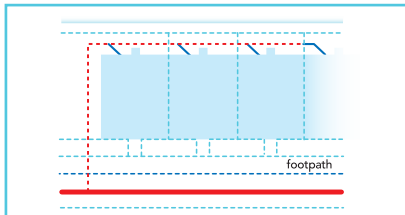
### 5. Flats



### 6. Flats

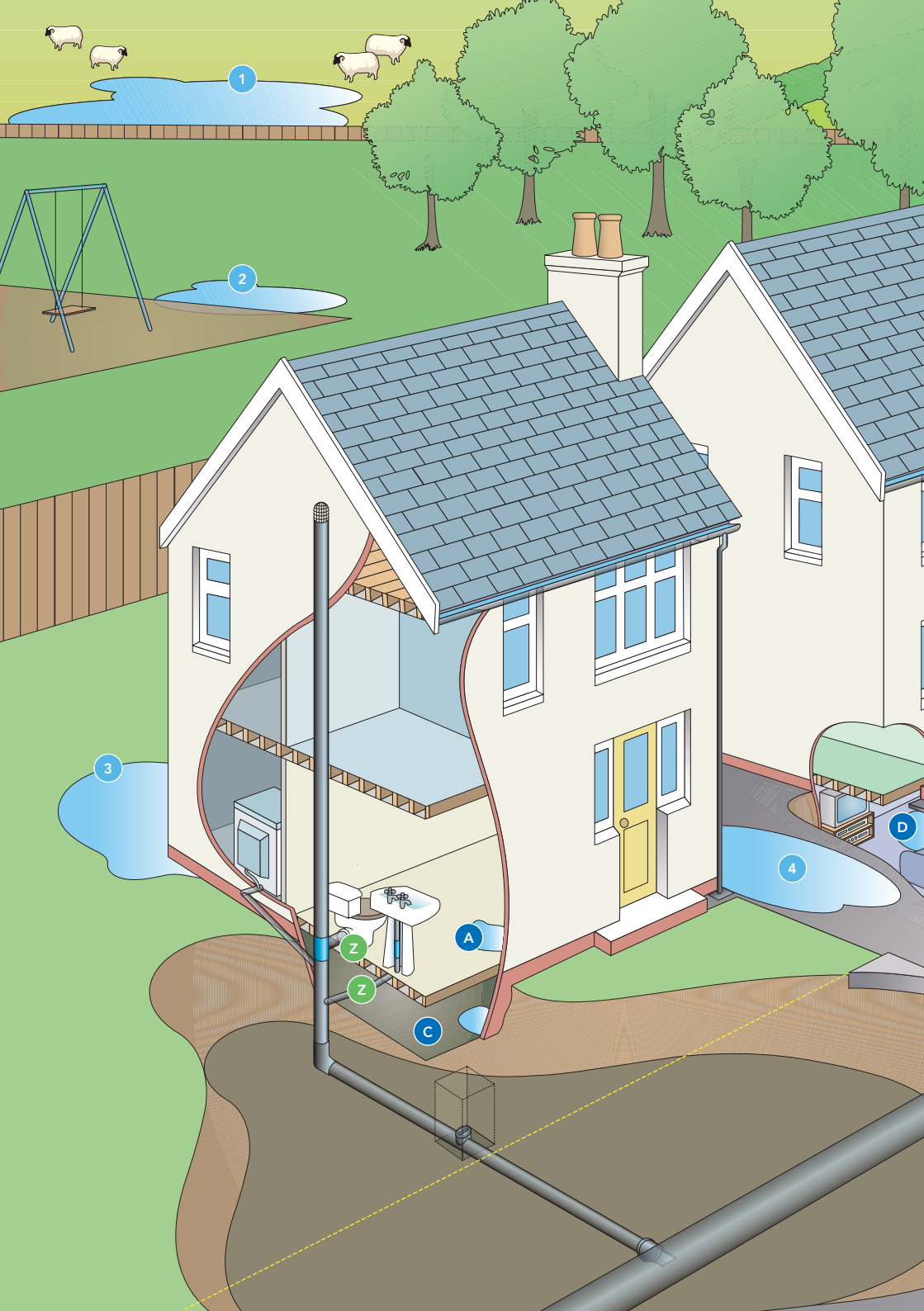


### 7. Terraced Property



### KEY

	Public sewer	Scottish Water's Responsibility
	Private drain	Homeowner's Responsibility
	Property	
	Footpath	
	Boundary	
	Main sewer	Scottish Water's Responsibility



1

2

3

4

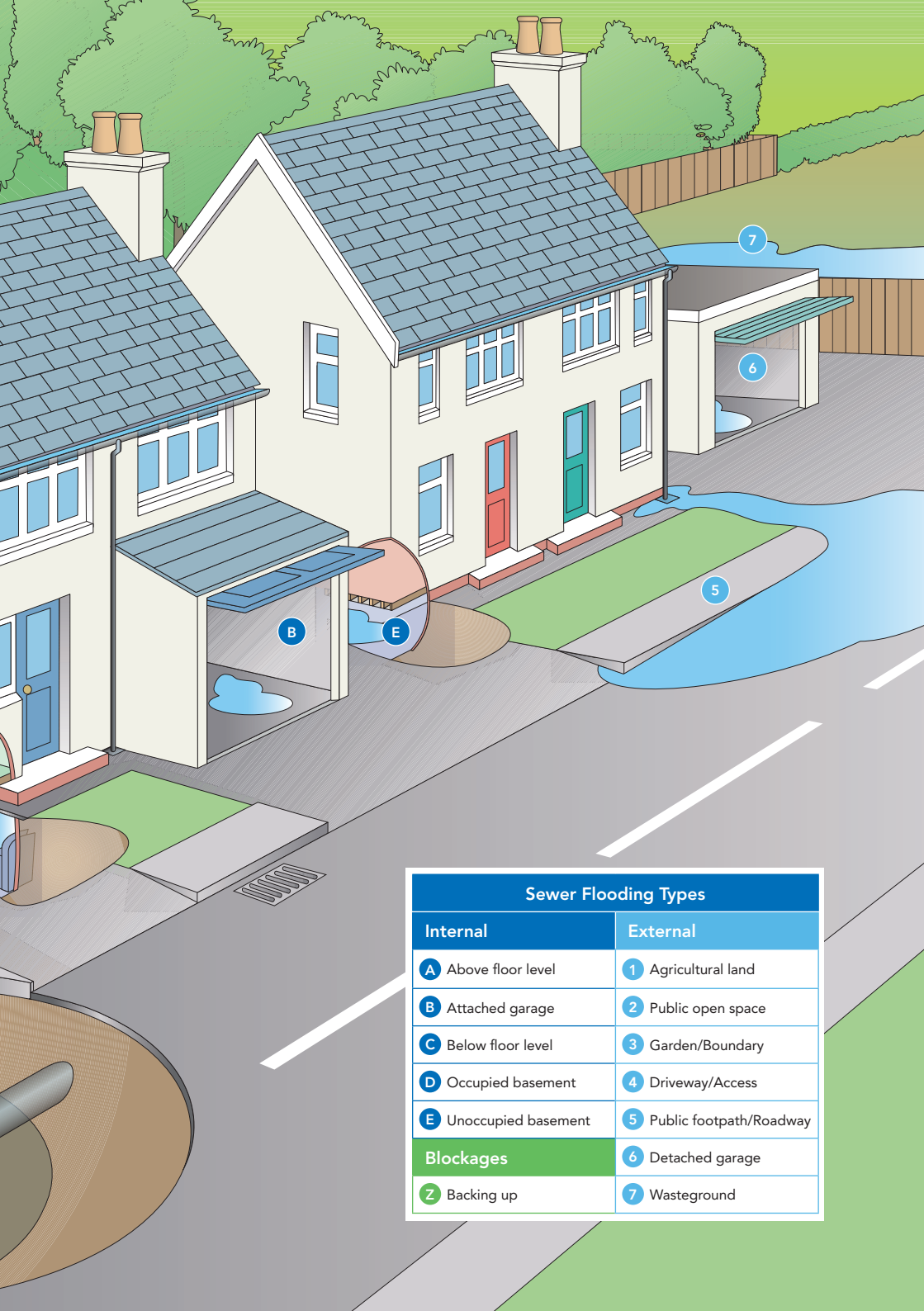
Z

Z

A

C

D



Sewer Flooding Types	
Internal	External
<b>A</b> Above floor level	<b>1</b> Agricultural land
<b>B</b> Attached garage	<b>2</b> Public open space
<b>C</b> Below floor level	<b>3</b> Garden/Boundary
<b>D</b> Occupied basement	<b>4</b> Driveway/Access
<b>E</b> Unoccupied basement	<b>5</b> Public footpath/Roadway
<b>Blockages</b>	<b>6</b> Detached garage
<b>Z</b> Backing up	<b>7</b> Wasteground

## Private pipework

If you have an issue with any of your private pipework, we would recommend you contact a licensed plumber or your landlord/Council if the property is rented.

## Blockages

Every year there are over 36,000 blocked drains and sewers across Scotland. This can cause flooding, especially during periods of heavy rain, which affects you and your neighbours and pollutes rivers and burns in your local area. That's why we spend millions every year tackling the problems caused by waste. Around 80% of these blockages that clog up the cycle are caused by either inappropriate items being put down the toilet, or fat, oil and grease being put down the sink.

The waste water drain which runs from your house to the public sewer is usually about 4 inches wide. This drain is designed to only take used water from sinks, showers and baths and pee, poo and toilet paper from the toilet. Even though other things may seem to flush or pour away, they could be causing your drains to block.

We would always recommend the use of licensed plumbers. Scottish Water supports and promotes the WaterSafe scheme. WaterSafe is a dedicated online search facility to help customers to find the nearest qualified plumbing and heating professionals in their area. To find a licensed plumber in your area, visit WaterSafe:

**[www.watersafe.org.uk](http://www.watersafe.org.uk)**

We believe the best way to tackle blocked drains and sewer flooding is to work together with you to help prevent blockages that can clog up the cycle in the first place. We launched our Nature Calls campaign to promote this collaborative approach.

You can find more information about our campaign and how you can help to reduce the chance of your property being affected by sewer flooding on our website:

**[www.scottishwater.co.uk/naturecalls](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/naturecalls)**



# Flooding

To report a flooding incident which appears to be contaminated with sewage please phone our Customer Helpline on **0800 0778778**.

Scottish Water is working with key partners to reduce the impact of flooding. The responsibilities surrounding flooding are varied, and at present a number of agencies have responsibility for dealing with different aspects of flooding in Scotland.

Conventional urban drainage systems are made up of a complex network of sewer pipes, overflows, gullies, burns and culverts (covered watercourses). Ownership and duties are split between various agencies and landowners.

Scottish Water has the public drainage duty and is responsible for the drainage of rainwater run-off (surface water) from roofs and any paved ground surface within the property boundary. Private pipework or guttering within the property boundary remains the responsibility of the property owner.

Additionally, Scottish Water helps to protect homes from flooding caused by sewers either overflowing or becoming blocked.

Local Authorities are responsible for the drainage of local roads and public highways. They are responsible for dealing with tidal and river flooding and flooding caused by extreme rainfall. They are also responsible for providing flood defences and maintaining watercourses.

The Scottish Government is responsible for motorway and major trunk roads drainage through Transport Scotland. The Government is responsible for making national policy on planning, flood prevention and flood warning.

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is responsible for providing flooding advice and flood warnings that can be found on their website: **[www.sepa.org.uk/flooding](http://www.sepa.org.uk/flooding)**

The complex nature of flooding, with many agencies responsible for different aspects of sewer and drainage systems in communities, means that a partnership approach is needed to tackle this serious problem.



## We want to make it easy to **contact us** – here's how:

We always have someone here to take your call, you can write to us or alternatively you can contact us through our website.

### Visit



[www.scottishwater.co.uk](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk)

### E-mail



[help@scottishwater.co.uk](mailto:help@scottishwater.co.uk)

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[@scottish\\_water](https://twitter.com/scottish_water)

### Write



Scottish Water, PO Box 8855,  
Edinburgh, EH10 6YQ

### Call

Customer Helpline free 24/7



0800 0778778

Alternative formats of this leaflet can be made available free of charge. For information on Braille, large print, audio and a variety of languages, please contact us.

If you have a disability, medical condition or other reason where you may need additional assistance from Scottish Water then please contact us and we can add your name, address and requirements to our confidential Priority Services Register.

We record all calls for quality and training purposes.