

## **H** Technical Advice on Drinking Water Issues, Policies and Standards

- **The Inspectorate provides scientific and engineering advice to Ministers and officials of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Welsh Assembly Government (the Assembly Government) on drinking water issues, policies and standards.**
- **The Inspectorate is involved with National, European and International organisations and the development of standards and guidelines for drinking water quality and treatment.**

### **General**

The Inspectorate's staff have wide-ranging experience and expertise in the scientific and engineering aspects of drinking water supplies, including treatment, distribution, sampling and analysis, and other quality-related matters.

This enables the Inspectorate to provide technical advice to the policy divisions of Defra and the Assembly Government, on a wide range of drinking water issues. It also enables the Inspectorate to represent Defra, the Assembly Government and the Government generally on national, European and international organisations.

The Inspectorate's advice is informed and underpinned by its initiation and management of a substantial research programme on drinking water issues and associated matters.

### **Private Water Supplies**

The Inspectorate is providing advice on the transposition of the new EC Directive 98/83/EC into the new Regulations in respect of private water supplies, and also the associated guidance to assist local authorities with the implementation of the new Regulations.

The Inspectorate's advice is informed by its experience in advising local authorities and users on private water supply regulation and quality, and its understanding of the technical issues.

### **Regulation of Consumers' Installations**

The Inspectorate provides technical advice to policy divisions of Defra and the Assembly Government on matters associated with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. It also provides advice on issues of protection against contamination of water supplied and of water conservation.

The Inspectorate has a particular interest in the protection of the public water supply system against contamination by backflow from consumers' and other installations.

The Inspectorate has observer status on the Water Regulations Advisory Committee, and provides advice to water companies, manufacturers, trade organisations and consumers on the implementation of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations, the Guidance Document, and other associated issues.

## The Water Bill and Competition

During 2002 the Inspectorate provided technical advice to the Defra policy division with lead responsibility for the new Water Bill.

The Inspectorate also provides technical advice to the Office of Water Services (Ofwat) on water quality issues relating to competition in the water industry and the use of common carriage.

## Security Matters

During 2002 the Inspectorate had considerable involvement with other Government Departments on issues associated with maintaining the supply of safe drinking water. There was also regular contact with non-Government bodies and research organisations both nationally and internationally during the past year to ensure that the Inspectorate is kept up to date with current technology and relevant research.

The Inspectorate has also been involved with a number of groups to ensure the relevance of operational protocols within the water industry.

## Representation on National and International Organisations

Several of the Inspectorate's staff are recognised as national or international experts in the field of drinking water treatment, distribution, quality and regulation. They represent Defra, the Assembly Government and the Government on a wide range of national, European and international organisations and their committees.

The organisations on which the Inspectorate is represented include the following:

- Water Regulations Advisory Committee
- Standing Committee of Analysts
- Public Health Laboratory Service Advisory Committee on Water and the Environment
- British Standards Institution – several working groups
- European Committee for Standardisation – several working groups
- Informal Network of European Drinking Water Regulators
- International Water Association – several committees
- OECD Biotechnology and Health Activities Group
- EPSRC Water Research Management Group
- DG Enterprise Regulatory Group Construction Products – Drinking water
- CIRIA Water Engineering Advisory Panel
- Gas and Water Industry National Training Organisation

A full list of the working groups and committees on which the Inspectorate serves is given on its web site.