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Raw sewage keeps swimmers away from UK beaches – 10th August 2023

Level 0

There is a sewage crisis in the UK. Water companies are pouring too much toilet waste into rivers and seas. Swimmers are getting sick in the sea. People hate the terrible smell on beaches and the brown sea water. A quarter of swimmers might not swim in the sea. Last week, 57 people got diarrhoea after swimming in a triathlon.

England and Wales are the only countries with privatized water. They sold their water to private companies in 1987. The companies promised to make services better. However, they did not spend enough money. There are still many leaks. The companies have not modernized systems. A campaigner blamed the UK government.

Level 1

The UK is experiencing a sewage crisis. Water companies poured toilet waste into rivers and seas for more than 300,000 hours in 2022. Swimmers got sick in the sea. People complained about the terrible smell on beaches and the brown sea water. A poll about people's opinions on water quality found a quarter of swimmers might not swim in the sea because of health risks. Last week, 57 people got diarrhoea after swimming in the sea at a triathlon.

England and Wales are the only countries with privatized water services. They sold their water to private companies in 1987. These companies promised to make services better. However, things are much worse. The companies did not spend enough money. They did not stop leaks or modernize systems. A campaigner said the water companies have failed to create a quality system. He blamed the UK government for not acting.

Level 2

The UK is experiencing "poonami" - a sewage crisis. Greenpeace said water companies poured toilet waste into rivers and seas for more than 300,000 hours in 2022. Many people got sick after swimming in the sea. Others complained about the terrible smell on beaches, or the brown colour of the water. A research company conducted a poll about people's opinions on water quality. A quarter of swimmers said they might not swim in the sea because of health risks. Last week, 57 people got diarrhoea in the UK after swimming in the sea at a World Triathlon Championship.

England and Wales are the only countries to have privatized their water services. They sold their water to private companies in 1987. These companies promised to spend billions of pounds to make services better. However, things have become much worse. The companies have not invested enough money. They have not stopped leaks or modernized systems. Since 1991, they have paid over £2 billion a year to their shareholders. A water campaigner said the water companies have failed to create a quality system. He blamed the UK government for not acting.

Level 3

The UK is experiencing "poonami" - a sewage crisis. The environmental group Greenpeace said water companies poured toilet waste into rivers and seas for more than 300,000 hours in 2022. Many people have complained about becoming sick after swimming in the sea. Others expressed concerns about the terrible smell on beaches, or the horrible brown colour of the water. The research company Savanta conducted a poll about people's opinions on the poor quality of water. Almost a quarter of swimmers said they might not swim in the sea this year because of the risk. Last week, at least 57 people got diarrhoea after competing in sea swimming events at a World Triathlon Championship.

England and Wales are the only countries in the world to have privatized their water and sewage services. The UK government sold its water to private companies in 1987. The companies promised to spend billions of pounds on making services better. However, many Britons have complained that things have become much worse. The privatized companies have not invested enough money in stopping leaks or in modernizing systems. Since 1991, they have paid over £2 billion a year to their shareholders. Water campaigner and ex-rock star Feargal Sharkey is angry with the water companies. He said they have failed to create a quality system. He also blamed the UK government for not acting.