

SEWERAGE ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

Wessex Water
YTL GROUP

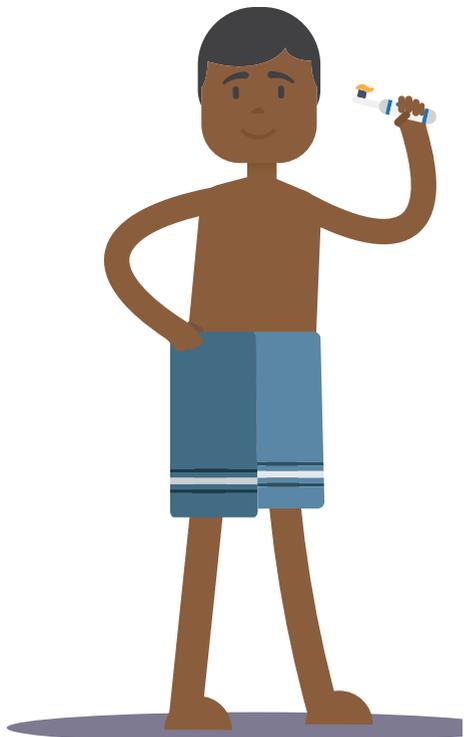


FOR YOU. FOR LIFE.



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HERE TO HELP YOU

We're one of the leading water and sewerage companies in England and Wales.

We provide sewerage services to the south west of England, including Dorset, Somerset, Bristol, most of Wiltshire and parts of Gloucestershire and Hampshire.

We own the sewerage network consisting of public sewers and water recycling centres and it's our duty to make sure it's properly operated and maintained.

We aim:

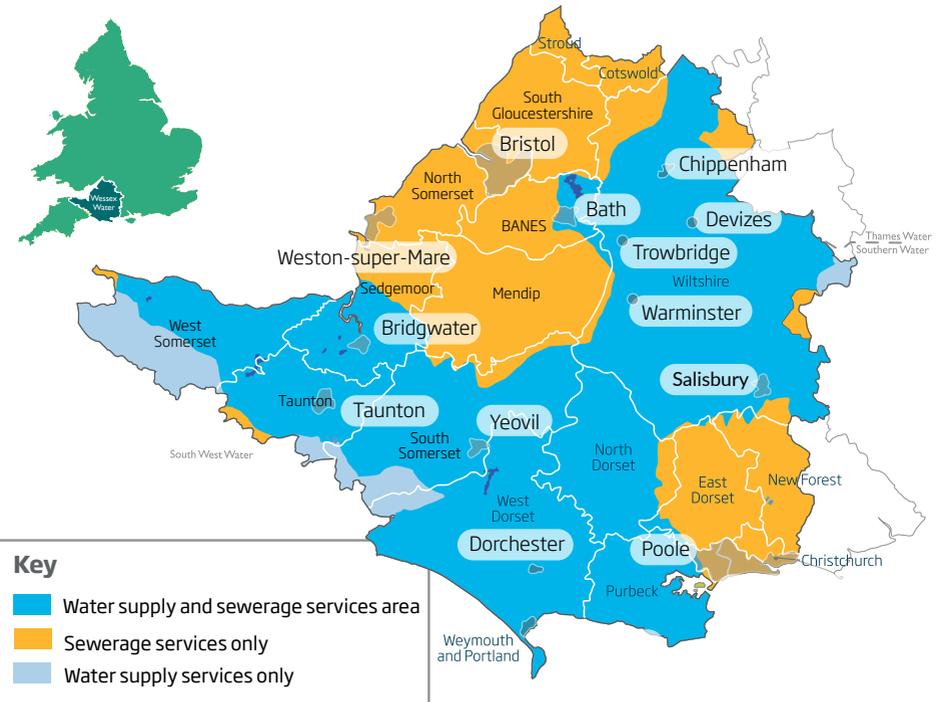
- to treat sewage and sludge appropriately so it can be safely returned to the environment
- to contribute to the biodiversity of the region we serve

- to work with others to maintain biodiversity on land affected by our operations.

We all use water in the home - for cleaning teeth, showering and bathing, washing the dishes and laundry, and flushing the toilet. This used water, known as sewage, goes down your drains and we are responsible for taking it away, treating it and returning it safely to the environment.

We also transport and treat rainwater from roads, roofs and gardens as well as industrial effluent - mainly liquid organic waste from industries such as food factories and dairy product manufacturers.

We've put together this booklet to give you some information about what we do.



WASTE WATER AND SURFACE WATER RESPONSIBILITY

Types of sewer system

Modern homes normally drain into what's called a separate system, where there are two sorts of public sewers.

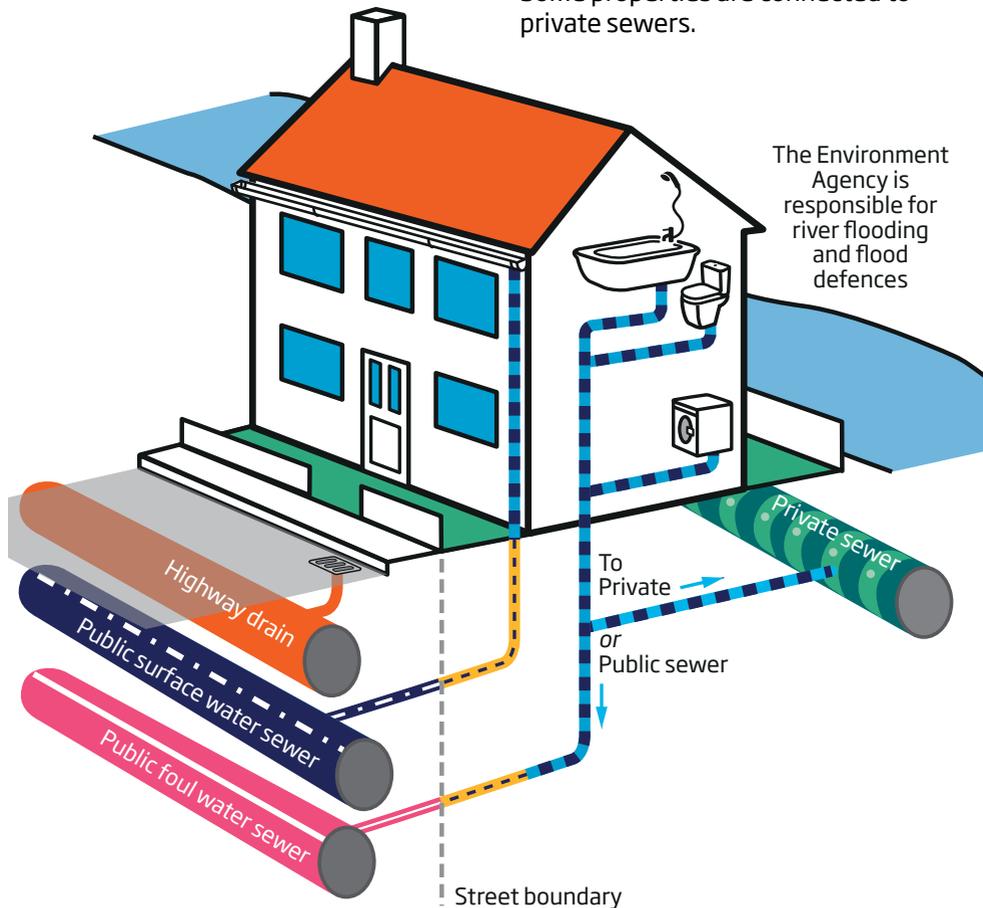
One is a foul sewer and this takes sewage from washing machines, sinks and toilets.

The other takes surface water or rainwater that drains off roofs and

driveways. This goes straight to rivers or the sea as it doesn't need to be treated.

Sometimes older properties are connected to a combined system where one sewer takes both the sewage and the surface or rainwater and transports it to a water recycling centre (see P6).

Some properties are connected to private sewers.



SEWER AND PIPEWORK OWNERSHIP

Sewer type	Description	Owner
Highway drain 	Highway gullies and drains located at the edge of roads are used to take surface water from overland flow, ordinary watercourses and groundwater.	Local council
Public surface water sewer 	Takes away water that drains from roofs and driveways. This does not need to be treated so is returned to rivers or the sea.	Wessex Water
Public foul water sewer 	Takes waste water away from bathrooms, kitchens and utilities, to our water recycling centre.	Wessex Water
Private sewer 	Pipework which drains more than one property which has not been transferred to Wessex Water, and does not connect with a public sewer.	Property owner(s)
Private pipework and plumbing 	Internal pipework up to the property boundary	Property owner
Service pipe 	Pipe between the internal and sewer pipework	Property owner but we will help with maintenance

FACT FILE

Our sewerage network serves approximately **2.8 million** people in homes, business and industrial premises.

- The sewage travels through our network of more than **34,700km (21,561 miles)** of public sewers to one of our water recycling centres where it is treated and safely returned to the environment.
- Our **409** water recycling centres achieve extremely high compliance with discharge consents set by the Environment Agency.

DRAINAGE RESPONSIBILITY

Our pipework

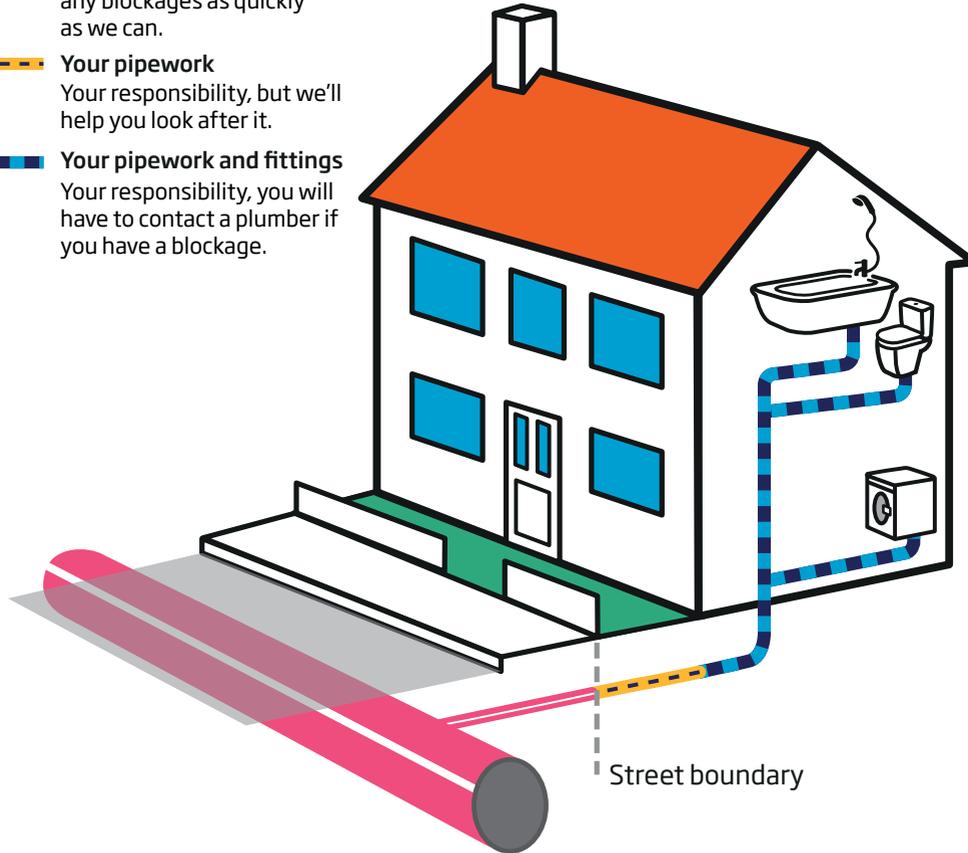
We maintain it and will clear any blockages as quickly as we can.

Your pipework

Your responsibility, but we'll help you look after it.

Your pipework and fittings

Your responsibility, you will have to contact a plumber if you have a blockage.



We are responsible for 34,700km (21,561 miles) of public sewers.

These sewers and drains are generally found in gardens, roads or public open spaces and serve more than one property.

Sometimes our public sewer network runs through private land and then we have a legal right of access for maintenance purposes.

The law also allows us to prevent building over or near our sewers which could damage them or affect our ability to maintain them properly.

Private drains carry your home's sewage and surface water, and are your responsibility from your house to the point where they either leave your property boundary or connect to our public sewer, whichever comes first.

In addition, you are responsible for all the private pipework inside your property boundary which serves only your property.

If you'd like to find out who is responsible for a pipe, please contact us on 0345 600 4 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm).

Cesspits, septic tanks and pumping stations

If your property is connected to a cesspit or septic tank it is your responsibility to empty and maintain it

and manage the pipework associated with it.

Records

If you would like plans of the pipework near your property you can contact your local district council office. Or contact our asset enquiries team on 01225 526422 (Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 4.30pm, Friday, 8.30am to 4pm) or by email at asset.enquiries@wessexwater.co.uk

There will be a charge for this service.

FIRST-TIME SEWERAGE SCHEMES

If you live in an area without public mains drainage, you can ask us to consider providing a new sewerage system.

We accept applications from parish and district councils or groups of householders, and sometimes they are the result of the Environment Agency identifying pollution problems.



For more information contact us on 0345 600 4 600 (Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 4.30pm, Friday, 8.30am to 4pm) or visit the Developers section of our website, wessexwater.co.uk

PROTECTION AGAINST SEWAGE FLOODING

Sewage flooding is rare but when it does occur it can be devastating. Tackling it is particularly important for us and we're doing everything we can to prevent it from happening.

In the unlikely event that your property is flooded with sewage internally or externally, call our Sewage Floodline on 0345 850 5959 (24 hours) - it is essential that you contact us.



For a copy of our Sewage flooding guide - what to do if your home or property is flooded with sewage, contact us on 0345 600 4 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm).

If your property is flooded internally from a public sewer we will compensate you. For a copy of our leaflet, *Sewage flooding - important information about household flooding from public sewers*, contact us on 0345 600 4 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm) emergencies only at other times.

WATER RECYCLING

We treat 480 million litres of sewage at our water recycling centres every day. This includes household sewage, rainwater from roads, roofs and gardens and industrial effluent.

We've invested hundreds of millions of pounds over the last 20 years to improve sewage treatment processes and over the past five years our recycling centres have regularly achieved more than 99.0% compliance with environmental standards.

Most sewage is organic which is why we use natural, organic processes.

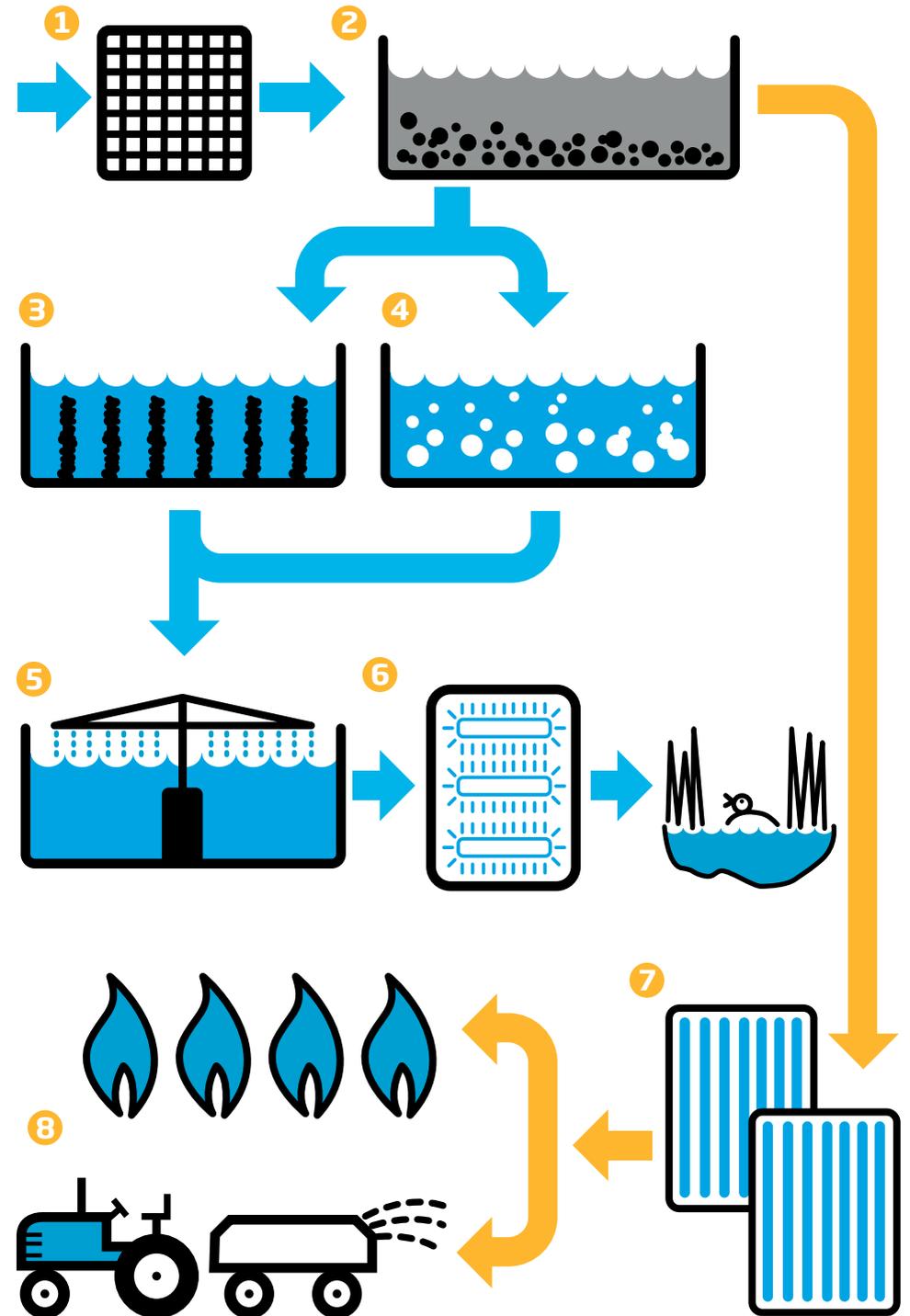
At the centres the sewage goes through the following processes:

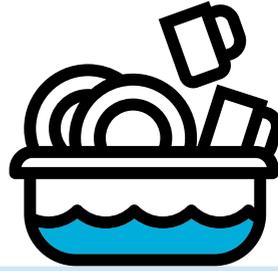
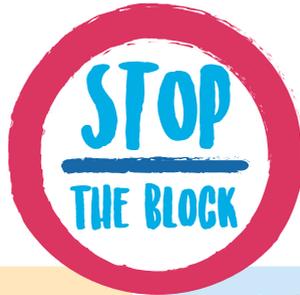
- removal of debris, rags and large objects using screens **1**
- separation of solids in settlement tanks **2**. Solids sink to the bottom and are removed as sludge. At many sites we also use chemicals to help enhance the removal of unwanted nutrients, such as phosphorus
- biological treatment of sewage **3**
 - the liquid passes through media on which bacteria grow, such as filters of stone or plastic. The bacteria feed off the waste, helping to clean the water

- we also use an alternative form of biological treatment - the activated sludge process - where bacteria are mixed with the waste in large tanks **4** using equipment which either blows or beats air into the mixture
- final settlement process - treated effluent enters tanks **5** where any remaining solids settle, leaving behind water which is ready to be returned to the environment.
- at many of our sites by the sea we also have a final disinfection stage **6** to remove bacteria which could potentially be harmful to bathers.
- the cleaned effluent leaves the recycling centres and flows into local rivers or the sea.

The sludge left behind, also known as biosolids, is a by-product of our treatment process.

We treat this in anaerobic digesters **7** to produce agricultural fertiliser and renewable energy **8**.





Every day homes in your area are affected by blocked sewer pipes and many of these could have been avoided.

It's easy to protect your pipes from blocking and causing sewage flooding by putting items like wet wipes, and so-called "flushable" wipes, in the bin.

Baby wipes, facial wipes, hygiene wipes and surface wipes, don't break down in the same way as toilet paper. And sanitary products and nappies can cause problems too if they are flushed.

So, to stop the block in the bathroom, our advice is to only flush the three Ps:

- paper
- poo and
- pee.

FACT FILE

13,000 blockages in our area every year.

£5m spent on clearing blockages.



If you have any questions about the safe disposal of your waste, please contact customer services on **0345 600 4 600** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm).

In the kitchen pouring fats, oils and greases down the sink can also cause blockages.

Food waste and cooking fats in liquid form might not appear harmful, but they congeal when cooled to form blockages in pipes, drains and sewers.

Here are our top five tips to help you stop the block in the kitchen:

- avoid pouring cooking oil, fat or grease down your sink or drain
- wipe and scrape any leftovers off plates into the food waste bin before washing up
- use a strainer in your sink plughole and empty any contents into the food waste bin
- wipe oily or fatty pots and pans before putting them in the dishwasher
- wrap coffee grounds in newspaper and place them in the food waste bin.

If you don't it can lead to sewage backing up into your home and could also pollute streams, rivers and beaches.

Blocked sewer pipes are distressing and unpleasant for householders and harmful for the environment, and the clean-up costs after a blockage can be huge.

HOW WE CAN HELP

Extra support when you need it

PRIORITY SERVICES

Extra support when you need it

We want to give all our customers the best service at all times. We know that everyone's needs are different and we can help through Priority Services.

When you sign up for Priority Services you can:

- choose how you receive your bill and information
- extra assistance in the event of sewage flooding
- set up a password for when we visit.

Priority Services is a free service and anyone living in the Wessex Water region can sign up for it.

Spread the word - tell your family and friends about our service if you think it will help them.

Apply online today

visit [wessexwater.co.uk/priorityservices](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/priorityservices) or

call 0345 600 3 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm; Saturday, 8am to 2pm).

Energy providers offer a similar service - don't forget to register with them too.



We've had reports that customers have been phoned by people claiming to be from a debt agency and asking for an outstanding bill to be settled by credit card, even though the customer concerned has already paid their bill.

If you receive a call like this, call us on 0345 600 3 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm; Saturday, 8am to 2pm) to check whether the call was genuine.

CONTACT US

Questions about your water supply or sewerage

- Loss of supply • Leak • Water quality problem • Sewage flooding
- Blocked sewer

0345 600 4 600

(Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm, emergencies only at other times)

Submit an online enquiry via our website: [wessexwater.co.uk/contactus](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/contactus)

Bournemouth Water customers with enquiries about their water supply, billing or metering should call 01202 590 059.

Automated billing telephone services

0345 600 6 600 when connected PRESS:

- 1 Meter option leaflet
- 2 Surface water drainage leaflet
- 3 Charges explained leaflet
- 4 Submit meter reading after an estimated bill
- 5 Information on rateable value charging
- 6 Pension Credit discount leaflet

Questions about your bill

- Payment arrangements • Metering • Moving house • Problems paying
- High water use • Priority Services

0345 600 3 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm; Saturday, 8am to 2pm)

Submit an online enquiry via our website: [wessexwater.co.uk/contactus](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/contactus)

Write to: Wessex Water, 1 Clevedon Walk, Nailsea, Bristol BS48 1WA
[wessexwater.co.uk](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk)

This leaflet forms part of our core customer information, covering key aspects of our work including leakage, enquiries and complaints. All these leaflets can be found at [wessexwater.co.uk/policy](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/policy)
We welcome calls via the Next Generation Text service.

Calls to 0345 numbers from UK landlines cost no more than calls to standard UK landline numbers. If you're calling from a mobile please check with your service provider as sometimes calls can cost more. We may record telephone calls into our contact centres for quality, security and training purposes.

