

"Tapping into Trouble: Cork Students Question Drinking Water Quality"

'More than 60,000 people were affected by issues relating to water quality in Co Cork last year, with more than 35,000 people impacted by boil water notices' - the Echo. It's time to address the threats of Cork's water quality to continue Ireland's commitment to UN Sustainable Development Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation.

Cork is the second largest city in Ireland with a population of 224,004 people. It is an island between two channels of the River Lee and Cork Harbour, the world's second largest natural harbour. Wherever you go, water is always nearby. As Cork revolves around water, we assumed that water issues would be minimal in our city. However, it is clear from the many reports that consumed our research that contaminated water is a major problem faced by many Cork residents.

We were concerned to hear from friends and relatives that their home's water was unfit for consumption. This prompted us to investigate Cork's water quality. Once we began researching, we were flooded with newspaper articles stating the dire water situation in Cork. While there seemed to be an abundance of media coverage on this problem, we found a deficiency of reports with statistical and in-depth information listing the substances polluting our water. The last Cork County Council (CCC) report on water cleanliness dates to 2016, this information, now outdated by nine years, is inaccurate and unreliable.

We wonder if the current findings of our water might be so concerning that the CCC avoid sharing this new information. Our research found that the CCC lacks adequate government funding and thus a clear inefficiency to modernise water treatment. This funding gap contributes to ongoing water issues and a lack of transparency. We have contacted local politicians to put change in motion.

We are calling for relevant data from the CCC revealing the level of contamination in our drinking water. The resources and water are available to address this issue, but without transparency and urgent action, Cork's water crisis will only deepen. This crisis highlights the need for sustainable water management such as investment in improved filtration, stricter pollution controls, and public awareness. It's time for the government to prioritize safe water for all. Access to clean water is a basic human right.