

serious**
a quick guide to...

your options



In a perfect world, we'd all be connected to mains drainage and no one would have to give their waste a second thought. In reality, it doesn't quite work like that. Mains connection can be pricey, especially if you're a little off the beaten track.

It's no disaster – there are plenty of other options. They all have their good points, and a few not-so-good ones. Pull on your wellies and we'll give you the guided tour. You'll thank us later.

pumping to the mains sewer

Look on this as the investment option. It might be expensive to put in place, but once the pumps are installed they'll only need a little maintenance.



good because...

No maintenance is needed apart from having the pumps serviced regularly, so this is relatively cheap once it's up and running.



on the other hand...

The initial costs might put you off first. We can't give a quote until we know your exact location, so talk to us to find out the damage.

cesspools

Cesspools are watertight tanks for storing sewage. Because they have no outlet, they're good in areas where pollution would cause a problem – for example where ground conditions wouldn't allow the waste to soak away, or there's no watercourse for treated waste to discharge to. Also because they have no outlet, neglecting to check when they're full or arrange for them to be emptied could lead to some serious leakage.



good because...

They're cheap to install, and don't need any maintenance other than checking when full.



on the other hand...

Tanks could overflow if you take your eye off the ball, and because the waste isn't treated the consequences could be unpleasant. You'll also need to arrange for the tank to be emptied regularly.

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septic tanks

Septic tanks allow solid waste to settle and liquid waste to drain away naturally. They can only be used if the soil in your area is suitable.



good because...

They're relatively cheap to install, and because the sewage is broken down by naturally occurring bacteria it's not left completely untreated. For you, maintenance means making sure your tank is desludged properly and regularly.



on the other hand...

Grease and scum can build up on top of the liquid layer, while sludge will settle underneath it. If this build-up isn't removed it can cause solids to escape from the tank as well as liquids. A correctly sized tank will need clearing at least once a year to keep it working properly. And the system's generally only suitable for homes or small developments.

sewage treatment plants

Sewage treatment plants use various mechanical and biological processes to treat waste more thoroughly than a septic tank would, meaning the waste can safely drain into a nearby watercourse. Treatment plants are often the preferred option of the Environment Agency, and are useful where space is limited.



good because...

The higher standard of treatment allows waste to be discharged to a nearby watercourse. Water companies use these for villages as they can be built to cope with populations of over 1,000 people.



on the other hand...

Systems need to be connected to an electricity supply, and need a specialist engineer to service the system, as well as tanker visits.

a word about fats, oils & grease

Even if you are connected to the mains, food wastes like fats, oils & grease (FOGs) need to be dealt with separately. Put them down the sink or drain and they'll quickly clog pipes, potentially causing a huge health hazard and incurring a huge fine to match. We can help you there too, with a combination of some very clever devices and a specialist collection service.

bedtime reading

For more info, see the Environment Agency's Pollution Prevention Guideline No 4, 'Disposal of sewage where no mains drainage is available'.

Not surprisingly, installing and maintaining small treatment works is a job that's best left to the experts. You'll find guidance in various British Water publications, including: Flows & Loads 3: Sizing Criteria, Treatment Capacity for Small Wastewater Treatment Systems; Guide to the Installation of Small Wastewater Treatment Systems; Guide to the Desludging of Small Wastewater Treatment Systems; and A Guide for Users of Small Wastewater Treatment Systems. See www.britishwater.co.uk/publications/Publications_and_Technical_Guides.aspx

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