



Annual Contestability Summary 2026

**Northumbrian Water Group (including
Northumbrian Water and Essex &
Suffolk Water)**

Version 1

31 January 2026

Introduction

The Water Code for Adoption was implemented on 1 January 2021. WaterUK has issued guidance in relation to water asset adoption on behalf of the water sector.

The sector guidance documents can be found on the following web page:
<https://www.water.org.uk/water-sector-guidance-approved-documents/>

Each Water Company is required to publish an Annual Contestability Summary that sets out those activities that are contestable and are capable of being performed by a Self-Lay Provider (SLP).

The Annual Contestability Summary (ACS) for Northumbrian Water Group that includes Northumbrian Water and Essex & Suffolk Water for 2023 is contained within this document. Further information about contestability can be found in sections 9.3 to 9.6, inclusive, of our Design & Construction Specification (DCS). Our DCS is published on the following web pages:
<https://www.nwl.co.uk/services/developers/self-lay/> <https://www.eswater.co.uk/selflay>

ACS table

	Work categories by number of properties potentially affected by work or strategic nature of Existing Main			
	<50	50-199	200-499	500+ or Strategic main
Selection of a proposed POC to serve a Site/Development from records of Existing Mains				
Construction of new mains and service connections				
Construction of new mains as part of reinforcement of Network extension or associated Site diversion work				
Design of new water network				
Chlorination and pressure testing of Self-Lay Works				
Meter installation in conjunction with new service connections				
Undertaking Water Quality samples				

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Analysing Water Quality samples (subject to paragraph 17.3 of DCS)				
Construction of routine mains connections (CRMC) connections				
Main and/or service connection: up to 63mm PE/barrier pipe to: Parent Network: <12" nominal bore* DI/CI/SI/PE/AC/barrier pipe/steel. Permanent Connections (piece through).				
Connection: 63mm to 300mm PE / Barrier Pipe to: Parent Network: <12" nominal bore* CI/SI/DI/AC/PE/barrier pipe/steel. Operational pressure: up to 50m				
Connections: 63mm to 300mm PE/Barrier pipe to: Parent Network: 12" nominal bore* to 18" nominal bore*/300mm to 450mm nominal bore* DI/CI/SI/AC/PE/barrier pipe/steel. Operational pressure: 50m to 75m				
Connections: over 300mm to: Parent Network: 18" nominal bore* & above, or high risk parent Network: material (such as steel). Operational pressure: above 75m				
Valve operation in relation to commissioning new Self-Lay Works				
Self-certification of SLP for Site water distribution systems designs				
Any size connection to GRP/PVC Network				
Design of Network Reinforcement (upsizing of existing assets) and/or design of Network diversion(s).				
Pipe sizing criteria, and the approval of design by others				
Assessment of network risk & operating live network				
Commission telemetry links (meters/field equipment)				
Connection, commissioning and/or decommissioning of diverted Network				

*Notes:

1. All references to PE are to all Polyethylene pipe materials
2. PE pipe sizes are identified by outside (OD) diameter and other pipe materials and sizes refer to internal (nominal bore) diameters
3. Strategic main defined by reference to potential impact of work on key customer such as a hospital
4. See further paragraph 11.7 of the DCS

Activities shaded green in the ACS

All activities shaded green in the table are capable of being performed by SLPs. These greenshaded activities will apply where the SLP has the relevant WIRS or other accreditation (see section 7 of the WSG¹).

Activities shaded amber in the ACS

The activities that are shaded amber are capable of being performed by an SLP where the SLP complies with the requirements as set out below.

1. SLP has the relevant WIRS or other accreditation (see section 7 of the WSG).
2. To undertake tasks shaded amber relating to constriction/installation activity and valve operations within the ACS, the SLP will be required to provide NWG with a satisfactory Method Statement and Risk Assessment for the proposed activities.
3. NWG experience indicates that there is an elevated incidence of bursts on networks constructed of AC and PVC material, thus heightening the risk of structural failure during connection activity. Where SLPs request to make connections to AC mains, NWG will require Risk Assessment and Method Statement that demonstrates that the risk of structural failure of the main has been substantially removed.
4. NWG experience indicates that there is an elevated incidence of structural failure when making under pressure connections where the connecting pipe is the same diameter as the host main. Where SLPs request to make such connections NWG will require Risk Assessment and Method Statement that demonstrates that the risk of structural failure of the main has been substantially removed.
5. Regarding the Self-certification of designs for site distribution systems, SLPs are invited to apply for self-certification status and NWG will determine whether the design work meets the competency required. SLPs may demonstrate competency by providing evidence of its successful design approval record with NWG and/or providing details of design work that it has carried out to a satisfactory standard for other Water Companies.

Activities shaded red in the ACS

Activities shaded red are currently considered high risk and are unlikely to be contestable in most conceivable circumstances. However, if an SLP wishes to carry out this work, it may contact Northumbrian Water Group directly to determine whether conditions can be agreed that enable the SLP to carry out the requested activity.

Contact Details:

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¹ Water Sector Guidance - <https://www.water.org.uk/technical-guidance/developers-services/water-asset-adoption/>

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