

RELEASE



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TACKLING LEAKS THROUGH CAREFUL DESIGN AND INSTALLATION

There is a huge challenge facing water companies in tracking down existing leakage in water supply and encouraging homeowners and businesses to do the same in plumbing systems. Caroline Ayres, Director of the BPF Pipes Group asks "How do companies manage the very real risk of building leakage into new infrastructure? Where do you find the information to make informed decisions?"

We know that the key to success of any construction project relies on the correct specification of the goods and services; trusted design calculations; scheduling of works and good installation practices.

New networks can be made up of hundreds of different products and components, so realistically there won't be time to ensure the specification is the most current and up to date. Product specifications and design procedures are constantly being improved to reflect innovation, experience of products in service and changing network requirements. To take an example, the plastic pipes industry in the UK and across Europe has a comprehensive set of products standards – from hot and cold piping systems to large diameter structured wall pipes – which are being constantly reviewed and updated to ensure their relevance to the industries they serve. These specifications will continue to underpin construction contracts even as the regulatory regime changes in the UK.

For the public water supply network, CESWI (the Civil Engineering Specification for the Water Industry) is the 'go to' document for civil engineering contracts. Its purpose is to reflect the industry's requirements and signpost relevant specifications and latest technologies and working practices. However, as products are continually evolving there needs to be an agile way of providing current information to allow companies to make informed decisions on the most appropriate products and then correctly call for these in tender documents.

Water companies are now entering into long term contracts with suppliers under AMP7; how do those preparing tender documents keep up to date with the changes and find the correct information to specify and design water mains, joints, branch connections, service pipes and a myriad of other elements to ensure that leakage is not being built into new infrastructure?

As far as leakage is concerned, the public network is by no means the whole story. Steve Kaye, CEO of UKWIR, told WWT that around 20 per cent of drinking water is lost within the network – not just companies' pipes but from those inside homes and businesses. It is essential to tackle this, and plumbers, building services engineers and housebuilders also need access to accurate, practical advice. In the UK housing sector, approximately 95 per cent of new properties are built with plastic hot and cold piping systems. Many of the handbooks and training accessed by those working in, or starting out in these professions is based upon information handed down over many years of hands-on knowledge and experience.

As a key part of the drinking water supply chain, the British Plastic Federation Pipes Group is providing up to date, quick and easy to find technical and specification guidance on all aspects of plastic piping systems for water and wastewater inside and outside buildings. This can be found at <https://www.bfpipesgroup.com/support-downloads/>

The BPF Pipes Group is committed to making this the go-to resource for plastic pipe solutions, maintaining its value and relevance. Feedback from users of the documents, or the related products, is actively sought to help build on this goal and should be sent to secretary@bfpipesgroup.com