

## The science of wastewater

**Irish Water Scientist Christina Geraghty discusses her vital role in safeguarding the environment as part of Science Week 2021**



Irish Water is delighted to take part in National Science Week 2021 which runs from 7 - 14 November. The theme of Science Week is 'Creating Our Future' and Irish Water is profiling a number of our scientists and the vital work they do in the water and wastewater industry and the role that science has in safeguarding our water supplies and the environment.

Christina Geraghty works as Wastewater Compliance Analyst for Irish Water in the Eastern and Midlands region. Her role is to ensure that the discharge of wastewater is monitored and complies with regulatory and non-regulatory requirements in counties across the region. Christina studied Earth Science (BSc) in NUIG and went on to obtain a MSc in Applied Environmental Science from University College Dublin.

Speaking about why science interested her as a career, Christina said *"The reason I was interested in environmental science was my fascination of how the forces of nature work. I'm delighted that the theme for Science Week this year is 'Creating Our Future'. 'Creating our Future' is a public conversation on how science can improve our lives, our health, and our quality of life. I believe that if everyone made one small change to benefit the environment we could make a big difference in the grand scheme of things."*

Speaking about her role, she added "I love the fact that I am helping to protect the environment so that it will be there for future generations to enjoy. There are a range of issues that can have a direct impact on compliance such as plant breakdowns and extreme weather. Everyday thousands of wet wipes, cotton wool buds, sanitary products and other unsuitable items are flushed down toilets causing blockages in wastewater systems and sewer overflows leading to pollution in our environment.

The size and scale of the impact of flushing the wrong items is incredible, we remove over a hundred blockages from the sewer network across the country every week. It is really important that people recognise the impact of what they flush so the network can function efficiently and effectively. Placing a bin in the bathroom and disposing of wet wipes and other sanitary items appropriately has a hugely positive impact on the network and the environment."

Irish Water works in partnership with Clean Coasts to raise awareness and reduce these issues through the 'Think Before You Flush' public awareness campaign. Find out more at [www.water.ie/thinkbeforeyouflush](http://www.water.ie/thinkbeforeyouflush).

This year marks Science Foundation Ireland's 26th annual Science Week. Some of our scientists are sharing insights from their careers in the water industry and highlight the role science has in safeguarding our water supplies and the environment. For further information on the range of activities being organised by Irish Water as part of Science Week please visit [www.water.ie/scienceweek](http://www.water.ie/scienceweek)