



Joanne Mc Guinness
Wastewater Compliance Lead

Joanne Mc Guinness is a graduate of Sligo IT and Athlone IT, having studied Environmental Science and Technology (BSc), Mechanical Engineering and Renewable Energy (BEng) and a research MSc in the field of sludge treatment technologies.

“I became a scientist because I have always loved nature and the great outdoors applying science to the decision making process is what I enjoy most about my role.”

“I really enjoy the challenge and responsibility of my role. It’s a role that involves close collaboration with local authorities, the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and brings with it a lot of responsibility. My role is about safeguarding our environment and overseeing the compliance of our wastewater treatment plants across the region. We assess the performance of our wastewater treatment plants through a sampling and monitoring programme and we report on this performance to our regulators. We treat approximately 1.7 billion litres of wastewater every day and we are committed to returning treated effluent safely to the environment.”

“As a fan of the outdoors I’m passionate about small changes people can make. There are a range of issues that can have a direct impact on compliance such as

plant breakdowns and extreme weather. Every day 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.”