



Water industry must ‘clean up its act’

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Southern Water’s track record on leaks and environmental damage is patchy at best

GMB, the water union, has said the industry must ‘clean up its act’ as a one of the most senior executives at the Environment Agency leaves to join Southern Water.

Dr Toby Willison, director of operations for the EA, has joined Southern Water – despite the EA investigating the private water company for serious failures in the operation of its sewage treatment sites.

In 2019, Southern Water agreed to pay a record £126m in fines and payments to customers for “serious failures” in its sewage treatment works and for deliberately misreporting its performance.

Meanwhile GMB investigation found the boss of Southern Water pocketed more than £6 million in salary, bonuses, pensions and other benefits over a six year period – while the company lost more than 80 million litres a day in leakage.

Gary Carter, GMB National Officer, said:

“Southern Water’s track record on leaks and environmental damage is patchy at best.

“A revolving door between the Environment Agency and private water companies will be viewed poorly by consumers and employees.

“Rather than poaching staff from the regulator, Southern Water should concentrate on cleaning up its act.”

