

Proactive Protection For Critical Water Infrastructure

Yorkshire Water, UK



YorkshireWater

The Challenge

Cable theft was hitting Yorkshire Water's smaller, more remote wastewater sites repeatedly - and the problem was getting worse.

Sites in Humberside were sometimes even targeted, re-cabled, and hit again within days - including by organised gangs using heavy-duty equipment to cut buried, steel-armoured cables.

Over two years, the most effected sites had seen 38 thefts, racking up more than £500,000 in cable losses.

But the fallout went well beyond the cost of replacing the stolen copper; cutting cabling at a sewage treatment works risks untreated sewage discharging into local watercourses, causing environmental damage, impacting company reputation and attracting considerable fines.

With stakes that high, Yorkshire Water had to act fast - and yet within the constraints of water companies' five-year regulatory funding cycles.



The Solution

The Yorkshire Water team knew of DeterTech's successful deployment on other forms of critical infrastructure in the region.

They invited DeterTech to design a solution suitable for water.

Our team, carried out in-depth site surveys, then designed a flexible and rapidly deployable solution.

A six-month pilot was launched across the highest-risk wastewater sites, combining SmartWater forensic marking with highly visible deterrent signage at gates, fence lines, and access points.



The Impact

Thefts dropped by 84% to only 6 incidents, saving over 80% in cable loss - and the protective effect continues; these sites have remained incident-free beyond the trial period.

But the impact went far beyond costs; environmental pollution was prevented, operational continuity maintained and both fines and the burden of incident admin on internal teams was avoided.

On the back of the trial results, eight clean water sites have now been covered, and Yorkshire Water is pushing for approval to roll out DeterTech's solution across 500 sites. That would represent a significant, six figure investment - but the pilot has clearly proven its value - and that it would be eclipsed by the cost of doing nothing.



“ We’ve had a massive drop in losses. It’s been brilliant. ”

Dale Cunliffe
Protective Security Specialist
Yorkshire Water



“ If a sewage treatment works stop working, it could discharge a vast amount of sewage back into watercourses. It’s critical that it doesn’t happen.

The cable was replaced and two nights later it was stolen again. Some of these criminals were very organised - with heavy duty tools, cutting steel grates, stealing cables buried underground.

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It’s been brilliant. ”**

Dale Cunliffe - Protective Security Specialist - Yorkshire Water

If you have any questions about
our brand and marketing, please
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