Causes of Blockages
Blockages are often caused by unsuitable items being disposed of into the drain. Food such as cooking fat and ghee, rice and vegetable peelings can solidify in the drain. Nappies, sanitary products, kitchen roll can also cause blockages. Such items should not be put down the drain.

Water in Cellars
Water in cellars can be caused by a number of sources:

- Blocked or leaking drains or sewers. The water may be foul smelling and cloudy. The source of the leak should be identified and dealt with as described above depending on whether it is a private drain or the responsibility of Yorkshire Water.

- Leaking mains water supply. The water will be clear and flow into the cellar at a constant rate. Yorkshire Water is responsible for the maintenance of the mains up to the stop tap at the property's boundary. It is the owner's responsibility from the stop tap to the house.

- Ground water. This is a water occurring naturally below ground. Water levels can fluctuate with rainfall. Property owners are responsible for dealing with ground water in cellars. Note that specialist advice should be sought before preventing water ingress by sealing walls externally or internally. A resulting external pressure build-up could cause structural damage.

ADVICE FOR TENANTS
Tenants of Housing Leeds, Housing Associations and private rented properties should report all defects to their Housing Officer, Landlord or managing agent.

USEFUL CONTACTS:
Yorkshire Water
Tel: 0845 1242429
www.yorkshirewater.com

Leeds City Council
Environmental Action Service
Tel: 0113 222 4406
Email:
environmental.action@leeds.gov.uk
Blocked Drains
Leeds City Council recognises that this is not a pleasant situation to be faced with. Although we are unable to offer a service to clear or repair your blocked drain or sewer we can offer advice on how to resolve the matter. Leeds City Council is not responsible for the upkeep or repair of sewers or drains.

The repair and maintenance can be the responsibility of Yorkshire Water or the owner of the property, depending on the type of pipe and the location.

Private sewers and lateral drains are now the responsibility of Yorkshire Water. Private sewers and lateral drains are the sections of sewer pipe or drain that are shared with another person’s property, or run through another person’s land. The homeowner will still be responsible for the sections of pipe between your property or building and the private sewer or lateral drain. There are many different scenarios for the layout of pipes around different properties. Please visit the website [www.yorkshirewater.com/public-affairs/the-private-to-public-sewer-transfer.aspx](http://www.yorkshirewater.com/public-affairs/the-private-to-public-sewer-transfer.aspx) for further guidance.

Sewers that connect to a private treatment works, connect to a septic tank or carry water directly to a watercourse are the responsibility of the property owner.

Clearing Private Drains
You may wish to try and unblock the drain yourself. Drain rods can be used to clear most blockages and are available from tool hire shops. You should locate the nearest clear inspection chamber and rod back towards the blockage.

Alternatively you should contact a competent local drainage contractor to unblock the sewer on your behalf.

If blockages occur regularly to a system it can mean that there is a defect such as a collapsed section of the pipe. In such cases a camera survey of the pipe by a specialist contractor will identify any defects.

Repairs can be expensive and it is recommended that a number of estimates are sought from different contractors to ensure value for money. You should also consult your house insurance company before starting any work to check whether your policy covers the costs.

Leeds City Council Powers
If there is a blockage or defect to a private drain we would expect the owner of the property to carry out a repair as soon as possible. If you do not and there is a risk to public health, the council have powers to serve a statutory notice on you to unblock the drain and repair it within a given time. If you still do nothing the council will carry out the work and reclaim all its expenses from you.

If the private drain from a neighbouring property is causing you a nuisance or public health risk the council can take action to have the drain repaired.