



**CREATING CHANGE:**

# DIRTY BUSINESS

June 2026



*Dirty Business* – the shocking real-life drama of victims, whistleblowers and England’s water companies – brought the issue of sewage pollution into the mainstream.

**Reaching 4.2m viewers** across streaming and linear, the three-part series challenged perceptions and drove behavioural impact. Viewers reported shock and anger at the scale of the issue, reporting declining confidence in UK water companies and increasing calls for tougher regulation and greater accountability.

## Direct impact

*Dirty Business* increased understanding of sewage dumping and its consequences, while prompting discussion and action. Viewers reported shifts in trust and personal behaviour, including supporting campaigns and reconsidering swimming in UK rivers and seas.

**Over half (54%)**

of viewers claimed they will stop swimming in UK rivers or the sea as a result of watching.

**8 in 10 (79%)**

said they’re more likely to pay attention to news or information about water quality after watching the programme.

**7 in 10 (71%)**

claimed they’ve talked to others about the issues raised.

**One-third (32%)**

of viewers said they intend to raise this matter with their local MP.

## Challenge with purpose

*Dirty Business* reinforced Channel 4’s reputation as a distinctive public service broadcaster that provokes debate, drives change and tackles issues others wouldn’t.

**88%**

said their confidence in UK water companies decreased after watching.

**97%**

agreed the Government needs to take stronger action to protect UK rivers and seas.

**97%**

agreed stronger action should be taken on the individuals involved in the sewage crisis (e.g. water company bosses).



“I told my family to watch the series and I wrote to my MP. I was shocked to find that sewage is still been dumped in the sea and rivers. Shameful.”

F 65-74



**Watch Dirty Business**  
Stream free on Channel 4

Channel 4 ‘Dirty Business’ Social Impact Study based on 237 viewers via a bespoke online study.