# Northern Ireland company wound up amid £700m clean-up of Mobuoy illegal dump



A Northern Ireland company has been officially wound up by court order, following its involvement in one of Europe’s largest illegal dumps, the Mobuoy site near Londonderry. This operation, described as "one of the biggest environmental disasters in UK history," has drawn significant public concern and triggered ongoing regulatory scrutiny.

Located adjacent to the River Faughan, which serves as a primary drinking water source for Derry, the Mobuoy site witnessed the illegal deposition of over a million tonnes of waste before its closure in 2013. The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has spent more than £4 million managing the environmental risks stemming from the site, which remains contaminated and poses ongoing threats to public health. Despite various assessments, authorities have yet to determine effective strategies for remediation, a process that could potentially cost tens of millions of pounds and take years to complete.

Security around the Mobuoy site has become a growing concern, especially following reports of tampering with gates and unauthorised access. Local councils have called for a thorough review of security measures, highlighting the NIEA's limitations in implementing additional protections like CCTV, as it does not own the site. This inadequacy has led to inspections being conducted weekly, with tests of the neighbouring river ensuring that drinking water safety is maintained.

The legal ramifications of the environmental devastation caused by the illegal dumping have been protracted, with the sentencing of two men responsible for operating the Mobuoy dump having been delayed multiple times. They pleaded guilty three years ago to overseeing the dumping of approximately 1.6 million tonnes of waste, yet the case remains unresolved amidst a backdrop of legal aid disputes and procedural setbacks.

Recent estimates have significantly raised the potential clean-up costs—initially pegged at £107 million—suggesting figures could spiral to as high as £700 million. Environment Minister Andrew Muir remarked that consultants are rigorously evaluating these costs to develop a business case for remediation, particularly as the contaminated site stands in the way of important infrastructure projects, such as the A6 road upgrade.

The Mobuoy incident has also raised wider implications about the integrity of the waste management sector in Northern Ireland. A comprehensive review commissioned by the NIEA revealed rampant criminality within the industry, with links to organised crime and significant deficiencies in the regulatory framework that governs waste transportation. This illuminates a fragmented system unable to provide effective oversight, allowing environmental crimes like those at Mobuoy to proliferate.

As the legal proceedings continue and the community grapples with the ramifications of the dump, calls for enhanced regulatory measures and a commitment to pursuing accountability remain paramount. The Mobuoy case has not only damaged the local environment; it has also sparked a broader conversation about responsibility within the waste industry, and the urgent need for reform to prevent future environmental catastrophes.

### Reference Map

* Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/business/northern-ireland/ni-company-at-centre-of-illegal-mobuoy-superdump-wound-up-by-court-order/a730673279.html)
* Paragraph 2: [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-66789885)
* Paragraph 3: [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn0rvl894r8o)
* Paragraph 4: [[4]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/sentencing-of-pair-responsible-for-norths-largest-illegal-dump-delayed-again-a-decade-on-from-start-of-criminal-action-FTHGVKGALFAZFNV5F7LHQ6JI3A/)
* Paragraph 5: [[5]](https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/clean-up-costs-biggest-illegal-28667248)
* Paragraph 6: [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-25429617)
* Paragraph 7: [[7]](https://www.itv.com/watch/news/dumping-at-illegal-landfill-site-in-co-londonderry-was-deliberate-and-brazen-a-court-has-heard/s7fwt2y)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/business/northern-ireland/ni-company-at-centre-of-illegal-mobuoy-superdump-wound-up-by-court-order/a730673279.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-66789885> - The BBC reports that the Mobuoy site, located near Londonderry, Northern Ireland, is one of Europe's largest illegal dumps, with over a million tonnes of waste illegally deposited before its closure in 2013. The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has spent more than £4 million managing the site's risks to public health. The contaminated site is adjacent to the River Faughan, a significant source of Derry's drinking water. Despite ongoing efforts, officials have yet to determine the best options for making the site safe. The remediation process is expected to take several years and could cost tens of millions of pounds.
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn0rvl894r8o> - BBC News highlights concerns over security at the Mobuoy illegal dump near Londonderry. Councillors have called for a review after reports of people breaking into the site. The NIEA has reported tampered padlocks and cut chains securing gates. However, the NIEA cannot implement additional security measures like CCTV due to not owning the site. In February, it was revealed that fixing environmental damage at Mobuoy could cost up to £700 million, with estimates ranging from £17 million to £700 million. The NIEA inspects the site weekly and tests the nearby River Faughan, which supplies a significant portion of Derry's drinking water.
4. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/sentencing-of-pair-responsible-for-norths-largest-illegal-dump-delayed-again-a-decade-on-from-start-of-criminal-action-FTHGVKGALFAZFNV5F7LHQ6JI3A/> - The Irish News reports on the delayed sentencing of two men responsible for operating the Mobuoy illegal dump, Northern Ireland's largest known illegal dump. The pair pleaded guilty two and a half years ago to dumping an estimated 1.6 million tonnes of waste at the site near Derry, close to the River Faughan, the main source of drinking water for the city. Sentencing has been postponed multiple times due to ongoing disputes over legal aid, with the latest delay occurring in February 2025. The case has been before the courts for over a decade, with no one yet held accountable for the environmental crime.
5. <https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/clean-up-costs-biggest-illegal-28667248> - Belfast Live reports that the cost of cleaning up the Mobuoy illegal dump, described as the biggest illegal dump in Europe, could far exceed the previously estimated £107 million. Environment Minister Andrew Muir revealed that consultants have been working on potential costs to inform a draft outline business case. The Mobuoy site, located on the outskirts of Derry, was closed in 2013 after more than a million tonnes of waste were illegally dumped there. The contaminated site could also delay the completion of the A6 road upgrade.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-25429617> - BBC News reports on a review commissioned by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) into the widespread criminality in the waste industry, following the discovery of 516,000 tonnes of waste near the River Faughan in Mobuoy. The review found that criminality is widespread in the waste industry in Northern Ireland, with at least some involvement by organised crime. The report also highlighted deficiencies in the Waste Carrier Registration System and the inability of the regulator to track waste flows accurately, making it easy to conceal where waste ends up. The review called for a more robust regulatory framework to address these issues.
7. <https://www.itv.com/watch/news/dumping-at-illegal-landfill-site-in-co-londonderry-was-deliberate-and-brazen-a-court-has-heard/s7fwt2y> - ITV News reports on the deliberate and brazen nature of the illegal dumping at the Mobuoy site in County Londonderry. The court heard that more than a million tonnes of waste were illegally dumped at the site before it was shut in 2013. The case highlights the severity of the environmental crime and the challenges in holding those responsible accountable. The sentencing of the individuals involved has been delayed multiple times due to legal proceedings, with no one yet held accountable for the environmental damage caused.