



Drinking Water Quality Regulator  
for Scotland

February 2011

# CPHM Newsletter

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## Welcome!

This is our second newsletter to CPHMs. We hope to produce these every six months as a means of keeping you informed about drinking water issues across Scotland, both in public and private water supplies.

By now you will probably have heard of the very sad death of Colin McLaren, the Regulator. Colin worked tirelessly for nearly 20 years to improve the quality of drinking water supplies in Scotland and was appointed as DWQR in 2005. Many of you will have worked closely with him and will share our sense of loss. We certainly miss his easy charm and firm but fair approach to his work.

The business of regulating drinking water quality goes on, and the DWQR staff aim to ensure that the improvements in the quality of Scotland's drinking water supplies continue wherever you are in the country. Work is already underway on behalf of Scottish Ministers to appoint a new Regulator, but in the meantime it is business as usual for our two branches – the Regulation Team under Philip Anderson, who manage legislative issues, private water supplies and data management, and Operations Team, consisting of Matt Bower and Bill Byers, who joined us in October from Scottish Water from where he brings a wealth of industry experience. Operations Team are concerned with the regulation of Scottish Water, including the investigation of events and incidents and the audit of Scottish Water activities.

We hope these newsletters continue to be helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any concerns or queries – relevant contact details are at the end of this bulletin.

## Public Water Supplies

### SW Response to Events and Consumer Complaints

In general, Scottish Water provides a good operational response to quality events and concerns from consumers about the quality of their drinking water. Recently, however, we have had a few occasions where we have had to prompt Scottish Water to provide the outcomes that we, and consumers, expect. DWQR has written to Scottish Water to request that there is more

consistent challenge of weak investigations and inadequate operational responses from elsewhere in the company to resolve problems and protect public health. This request has been copied to Operations and Customer Service managers so that they are aware of our expectations and will assist the Public Health Team in complying. We hope to see an improvement in the number of issues that are fully resolved prior to being reported to both you and us.

### INCIDENT SUMMARY

#### Newmore WTW, Easter Ross, Summer 2010

Problems were encountered with the polyelectrolyte and sodium hydroxide dosing at Newmore Water Treatment Works (WTW) leading to a failure of the treatment process. Problems continued at intervals through the Summer, resulting on occasions in loss of supply and elevated turbidities and aluminium concentrations. Some improvements were made to the dosing and these have undoubtedly helped, although some issues continue to be experienced by the works which is a mixture of a new treatment process and existing asset.

DWQR audited Newmore WTW on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2010 and has made a number of recommendations to Scottish Water on improvements required at the works. Scottish Water has agreed to complete these actions. Some concerns remain around the condition of the asset generally and the stability of the newly installed "Actiflo" process. DWQR will be watching the site closely in the coming months. DWQR will not be signing-off this new investment project until we are fully satisfied that it is operating effectively.

### Enforcement & Undertakings

These are two of the main tools available to DWQR to obtain a commitment from Scottish Water to implement required improvements to a specific supply. These tend to be used where it is felt that action is not proceeding at the required pace, often due to Scottish

Water concerns about funding. Currently the following supplies are the focus of our attention:

- **Loch Eck, Dunoon**

Second enforcement notice issued to construct manganese removal process at WTW by Dec 2012.

- **Forehill WTW, Peterhead**

Close to agreement on terms of undertaking from Scottish Water to secure compliance with pesticide standard.

- **Muirdykes WTW, Paisley**

Close to agreement on undertaking to install manganese removal and cleanse distribution system of deposits.

- **Shieldaig WTW, Wester Ross**

Likely to be subject of imminent action to resolve THM and *Cryptosporidium* issue.



Shieldaig WTW, Torridon, Wester Ross

## INCIDENT SUMMARY

### Glenlatterach WTW, Moray Summer 2010

A landslide carried away 30m of raw water main between the reservoir and treatment works and due to the difficult topography and unstable terrain, it was too dangerous to attempt an immediate online repair. Temporary pumps were set up at the reservoir and 1.5km of pipeline installed to supply the treatment works.

Only a reduced level of flow was achievable to the works and complete automatic control of treatment processes was not possible. The reliability and variability of flow and the need to manage process manually lead to aluminium and ammonium failures. The failures occurred in the initial period and whilst DWQR is satisfied with Scottish Water's response to the incident, a number of events have arisen at the works since then which give cause for concern. The works is subject to ongoing investigation and DWQR will be pressing Scottish Water to ensure robust measures are put in place to ensure reliable quality of water is produced.

## Investment in Public Supplies

The end of March 2010 saw the end of what is known as the Quality and Standards (Q&S) 3A investment period and the start of the next period known as Q&S3B. The focus in Q&S3B, amongst other things, will be on completing the task of developing Water Safety Plans for all of the drinking water treatment works, installing appropriate treatment for *Cryptosporidium* at a number of works, undertaking studies in water supply zones to understand water quality issues and, following these studies, commencing a programme of work to improve water quality in those zones that require it.

## Private Water Supplies

Despite a great deal of invaluable work being carried out by local authorities on private water supplies (PWS), it would appear that there remains a culture of indifference from many owners and users of the supplies to the risks posed by PWS. The DWQR is concerned about the water quality of many PWS, and even amongst supplies which have treatment, there continues to be an unacceptable number of microbiological failures, suggesting installation or maintenance issues. This is evidenced by a recent *E.Coli* O157 outbreak on an island private supply where treatment had been installed. The DWQR is a member of the *E. coli* O157 Action Group, and one of the recommendations we intend to make is a need for more effective communication of risks to health from PWS; advice and opinion from CPHMs on this matter would be most welcome.



Part of Papa Westray Community Supply, the first supply in Scotland to develop a Water Safety Plan (WSP).

The DWQR continues to promote the use of WSPs for PWS. These can be invaluable in the risk management of more complex supplies, and in the DWQR's 2010 Annual Report, we intend to provide further information on the benefits of their use.

### Can we help?

Please feel free to contact us via our website at any time. Alternatively we'd be delighted to discuss any issues:

Scottish Water (North and South Areas)

Matt Bower 0131 244 0743

Scottish Water (East and West Areas)

Bill Byers 0131 244 7330

Private Water Supplies

Colette Robertson-Kellie 0131 244 0278