Incident Summary

North Hoy WTW Microbiology failure

23 December 2019

DWQR Inspector:
Bill Byers

Event No. 10777

Event Category: Significant

The final water sample taken from North Hoy Water Treatment Works on 23 December was reportedthe next day as having failed with a count of 34 E.Coli and 34 Coliforms. Arrangements were made totake resamples from the works but due to the imminent Christmas break, it was not possible to get flights for couriering the samples until 26 December, nor ferries off North Hoy until 27 December. Due to these difficulties, a boil water notice was issued to consumers with the intention of lifting thisfollowing three consecutive passing samples being recorded. A programme of sampling within the distribution system and at consumer's taps was also instigated. It transpired the 28 December sample from the works was not taken due to an error and a courier problem with the replacement sample on 30 December, meant the third sample was not analysed until the following day. In the interim period, investigations at the treatment works could find no indication in water quality monitoring trends of changes in water quality, or of possible ingress to the treated water storage tank. With this information and all samples at the works and at consumer's taps being clear of anyindication of microbiological contamination, the boil notice was removed on 1 January 2020.

Scottish Water staff carried out an investigation of the site and found that cleanliness within the works was poor and that these conditions may have led to the sample bottle being contaminated during the handling of the bottle or in the taking of the failing sample. I am content that this is thelikely cause of the incident and there was no issue around the quality of water produced.

The event has been categorised as Significant. Scottish Water has identified six actions which DWQRaccepts are appropriate and will monitor to ensure they are completed prior to signing off the incident. DWQR made no additional recommendations.