

Incident Assessment

Windyfield Rhynie Service Reservoir Microbiological Failure 24 July 2013

DWQR Inspector:
William Byers

Event No. 5459

Event Category: Serious

Summary of Incident

A sample taken from Windyfield service reservoir on 24 July 2013 failed the microbiological standards with a level of 11 Coliforms. The sample had been taken as a final check following the re-introduction of the reservoir to the supply system after it had been off-line for remedial works. The tanks were again bypassed to avoid any further potential for contamination of the supply to consumers. Discussion with the Consultant in Public Health Medicine resulted in a boil water notice being required to be issued to protect the 385 consumers in the Rhynie area. The Notice was lifted in the evening of 29 July following confirmation of a series of clear sample results.

In December 2012, Scottish Water ceased using the water treatment works (WTW) at Windyfield, utilising a new water main, which extended a supply from Mannofield WTW. The link had been made as part of a project to abandon the old works and the pipework arrangements in place enabled the storage tank to be bypassed to allow them to be refurbished. With those works complete, a series of samples had been taken to verify water quality and the results had shown no failure of the standards. The final microbiological samples however, whilst meeting the standards, had shown some activity on the 22° plate count. A decision was taken to refresh the water in the tanks and to put them into service with a final check sample to be taken. It was this check sample that failed.

DWQR Assessment of Cause of Incident

DWQR declared this event an incident due to the necessity to impose a Boil Notice on consumers over an extended period of time. Scottish Water's investigations have determined that the method of sampling the two compartments of the service reservoir has led to the sample failure. The apparatus used in taking dip samples is suspected to have caused the failure and DWQR accepts this is likely.

DWQR Assessment of Actions Taken by Scottish Water

DWQR considers the situation to have been avoidable given the length of time the service reservoir had been out of use for refurbishment. The reintroduction of the tanks into the supply route could have been held back until the results of the check samples were known. Had this been done, there would have been no impact on consumers and no necessity to impose restrictions on water use for 5 days. The event has been categorised as serious.

Scottish Water identified a number of actions from this incident. DWQR accepts that they are appropriate and will be monitoring to ensure they are completed prior to signing off the incident.

