

Glendye Water Supply Zone Iron Failure 29 August 2011

DWQR Inspector:
William Byers

Summary of Incident

On 29 August 2011, a sample taken from a consumer's tap at Kirkton of Durriss near Banchory showed a very high iron content of 1644 mg/l and also low bacteriological failures for the coliform and enterococci standards. A resample was not taken until some two weeks later and this showed the bacteriological parameters to be within specification but there was again an iron failure. Further samples were taken but it was not until 19 December that the supply was shown to be compliant. The original sample was taken in response to a consumer complaint of particles in the water.

DWQR declared this an incident due to the length of time before water quality was proven to be restored.

DWQR Assessment of Cause of Incident

The original water quality complaint concerned the water supply within the church. The draw on the water supply is occasioned by the monthly services and this means there is no or very low flows to the church for much of the time. This creates an area where sediment may collect in the mains and extensive pipework to the church and this is disturbed and transported when taps are turned on.

DWQR Assessment of Actions Taken by Scottish Water

Scottish Water carried out flushing of the mains to clear the deposits and with the running of taps in the church, water quality has been restored. Scottish Water also set up a regular maintenance task to carry out weekly flushing of this section of water main. DWQR considers these to be appropriate measures.

DWQR however considers the time taken to fully investigate the cause of the sample failure to be unacceptable. The case shows unnecessary delays between stages of the investigation and failure to take resamples within reasonable timescales.

DWQR made two recommendations following this incident :