

Consumer Complaint Determination

2026/17

Illness

4th July 2026

Basis of complaint

The consumer contacted DWQR on 04 July 2026. She explained that she was unhappy with the quality of water being supplied to her property and exhausted the complaints process with Scottish Water.

Context of complaint

The consumer made a taste and odour complaint to Scottish Water on 01 May 2026 which was classed as earthy/musty in nature. Scottish Water arranged for an operative to attend to their property to investigate and take a sample. No odour, taste, particles, or discolouration were detected during the visit, and no issues were reported by neighbours. The sample passed for all parameters. The consumer logged a Stage 1 complaint on the 19 May 2026 and Scottish Water took a further sample on the 20 May 2026 which also passed for all parameters except for iron which failed the standard. A neighbouring property was sampled and passed for all parameters. A resample was taken from the consumers property and two neighbouring properties on the 28 May 2026 which passed for all parameters. The consumer logged a Stage 2 complaint on 28 May 2026. A pre- and post-flush sample was taken on the 03 July 2026 alongside a neighbouring property and again passed for all parameters.

Despite these actions, The consumer remains dissatisfied with the quality of their water. They believe it has caused chronic gastrointestinal and dermatological illness within her household and her immediate neighbours. The consumer escalated their complaint because they believed that Scottish Water's investigation was scientifically flawed, ignored physical evidence of ingress, and left their household exposed to ongoing public health risks.

DWQR Assessment of complaint and the actions taken

On receipt of the complaint from the consumer, We requested all relevant information from Scottish Water and requested this to be sent to us by 21 July 2026. We received the requested information on the 24 July 2026 and commenced an investigation and assessment.

The water quality from the five samples taken from the consumer's property complied with the standards for all parameters required by the Regulations except for one iron failure from a sample taken on 28 May 2026. Subsequent resamples passed. The consumer was informed by text message of the first set of results which were made available on the 19 May 2026. The consumer was contacted by telephone on the 26 May 2026 to explain the iron failure from the second set of results and to correctly re-assure her that it was not of health risk. A letter was also sent to the consumer with a copy of the sample results.

Scottish Water provided relevant factsheets to explain common water quality issues and outline the investigation process.

Samples collected from two other immediate neighbouring properties either side of the consumer's property were all satisfactory. Scottish Water have also confirmed that there have been no complaints of illness within the locality in the preceding 12 months.

All the evidence provided would indicate that there is no issue with the water being supplied to the consumer's property. We reviewed the sample data from the supply area and can confirm that the water supplied to the consumer's property is soft and has the potential to

corrode iron pipework. This is, as Scottish Water has clearly explained, due to the raw water being treated being of low alkalinity, which is typical of raw waters in Scotland. Whilst it is not ideal and can lead to fluctuations in dissolved iron concentrations, We can re-assure the consumer that the water remains safe to consume and will not be the cause of her reported illness.

The consumer reported that there was soil within her unvented hot water cylinder. Deposits within unvented tanks is not unusual and we are pleased that Scottish Water took two further passing samples (both pre- and post-flush) to demonstrate that the supplying mains water was compliant. There is no evidence to suggest that 'soil' or deposits have originated from the Scottish Water supply system. I would suggest that the consumer may wish to arrange for a plumber to check for any potential issues within their internal plumbing system and take this letter to her GP to examine other possible reasons for her reported illness.

The consumer also reported that Scottish Water did not test both supply lines to her property or test for all toxic metals. Scottish Water have confirmed that there is one communication pipe feeding water to the property and therefore water at the kitchen tap is representative of water entering the property. A sample taken on the 28 May 2026 included additional metals tests due to the consumers concerns regarding heavy metals.

Scottish Water has responded adequately to requests for information by DWQR.

DWQR doesn't uphold the complaint as Scottish Water has responded in a reasonable way, showing that the water being supplied to the consumer's and neighbouring properties is compliant.

Recommendations

We made no further recommendations.