

Craigie Supply Zone Microbiological Failure 19 August 2011

DWQR Inspector:
William Byers

Summary of Incident

A microbiological sample taken following the repair of a water main in Dyce, Aberdeen on 19 August failed the standard with 2 Coliforms recorded. An incident was declared by DWQR due to a failure of management processes to ensure follow up resamples were taken to investigate the situation further or to demonstrate that water quality had been restored.

Investigation of the case showed that a follow up sample had in fact been taken on 21 August and that it was fully compliant. The investigation revealed a mix up of sample registration at the laboratory which had then prevented extraction of the required results in relation to the affected address.

DWQR Assessment of Cause of Incident

The problem arose from the incorrect sample number being provided at registration necessitating a replacement number being generated to permit the sample to be processed through the laboratory. Incorrect address details meant it was not possible to extract data using the property address and thus compounded the situation.

DWQR Assessment of Actions Taken by Scottish Water

Scottish Water took the necessary steps to ensure the original sample failure was followed up and DWQR is satisfied that had the resample shown a failure, the established exception reporting process would have flagged up the error allowing it to be investigated.

DWQR does however find it unacceptable that procedures established to ensure the restoration of water quality is demonstrated before closing off an event, did not stimulate investigation of the issue to reveal the sample registration error. It was only upon query of the event by DWQR that the situation was investigated. In addition, DWQR considers that greater care is required to be taken in the communication and registration of sample details.

DWQR made two recommendations following this incident: