

Turriff zone Connection of a new property to a Raw Water Main September 2017

DWQR Inspector:
William Byers

Event No. 8825

Event Category: Serious

A consumer contacted Scottish Water on 18 September 2017, to complain of intermittent discoloured water. A sample was taken at the property which failed the microbiological standards for Total Coliforms, *E.Coli*, Enterococci and *Clostridium Perfringens*. The results were discussed with the Consultant in Public Health Medicine and the householders were advised not to drink the water. Bottled water was provided whilst resamples were taken to determine the extent of the issue. The resamples and sampling of neighbouring properties identified the problem as being confined to the single property, which was a recently built house. Investigations found that the new connection for the property had been made in September 2016, to a 'private' 63mm MDPE pipe carrying untreated water to commercial premises. A new connection was made to an 8" PVC public water main on 6 October 2017, with all domestic pipework flushed and disinfected. Samples taken following this work met all water quality standards.

I consider the connection of a property to an untreated water pipe and the exposure of householders to potentially contaminated water to be a serious matter. I have been satisfied through my investigation that there have been no consequential health issues in relation to provision of the contaminated water supply.

Scottish Water's processes for the provision of new connections is a complex one, involving a number of different internal staff, external contractors and the site developer in the delivery chain. There were several points in the connections process that contributed to the incorrect connection. All of which demonstrates there are deficiencies in the process and also an issue of failures to adhere to processes. There is an element of coincidence that the intended and agreed connection would be made to a water main identical in size and material to the private raw water pipe. However, Scottish Water has been unable to satisfactorily explain why the developer did not excavate to the agreed connection point but to another location closer to the site, nor gain satisfactory explanation from their contractors of reasons for an aborted connection attempt. The lack of control demonstrated over the internal process, framework contractor and their sub-contractors is of significant concern.



The event has been categorised as Serious. Scottish Water has identified eight actions which DWQR accepts are appropriate and will monitor to ensure they are completed prior to signing off the incident. DWQR made one additional recommendation.

