

Balmore G RSZ
Taste and Odour
18th September 2026

Event No. 16263

Event Category: Serious

A consumer contact for taste and odour was received on the 18 September 2025 following a new water connection made on 11 August 2025. The consumer was previously on a shared supply with three other properties and had requested a new dedicated connection to improve water pressure at their property. The property was erroneously connected to the terminal end of a 4" cast iron main with no downstream turnover or flushing capability. The water was sampled on the 19 September 2025 and found to have no residual chlorine, a pH of 10 and a strong hydrocarbon odour, later confirmed analytically to contain elevated polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and alkylated naphthalene's.

The impact was isolated to this single property. A public health risk assessment determined that there was a low risk to public health, with no acute or chronic health effects anticipated. All detected concentrations were several orders of magnitude below their 7-day Suggested No-Adverse-Response Levels (SNARLs) and a 5-week exposure at the levels measured was judged to be highly unlikely to pose a public health concern for two adults. Bottled water was provided.

The incident occurred due to Scottish Water having a live 430m section of water main that had poor turnover. An inadequate risk assessment failed to identify that this main was not suitable for a new connection.

Operatives trained and certified under the Distribution and Maintenance Strategy (DOMS) and EUSR National Water Hygiene did not complete the mandatory '5-point DOMS quality check' (flow, pressure, visual inspection, free and total chlorine, taste and odour) to verify that the water was safe for consumption prior to making the connection. Had this check been carried out, it would have immediately identified concerns that the water in the main serving the consumer was not suitable for consumption.

The event has been categorised as serious. Scottish Water has identified nine 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.

