

Chalkieside Service Reservoir Discolouration Event 12th July 2025

Event No. 15937

Event Category: Significant

135 consumer contacts reporting water quality issues were received between the 11th and 16th July 2025 including 132 discolouration contacts (55 brown/black and 77 aerated). The impact was spread across four District Metered Areas (DMAs) and sampling undertaken by Scottish Water showed that four samples failed the standard for manganese and two samples failed the standard for iron. Resamples collected on the 18th July and 20th July subsequently passed.

The incident was caused by a faulty level sensor at Chalkieside Service Reservoir (SR) which resulted in erratic inlet flow that was unable to meet demand and the subsequent emptying of the SR and depressurisation of the downstream network.

Consumer contacts reporting discoloured water were received by Scottish Water's Customer Excellence Centre once the water supply was restored and the network began to recharge, whilst 18 contacts were received from areas that were rezoned as part of Scottish Water's recovery plan.

Although alarms were triggered within Scottish Water's Intelligent Control Centre (ICC) by the faulty level sensor before the SR emptied, these were deferred due to the inlet and outlet flows appearing normal, which was normal practice at the time. This erratic level sensor was not escalated to the Network Team Leader.

On receiving a low outlet flow alarm from Chalkieside SR, the ICC quickly escalated to networks teams with flow into the tank subsequently restored within an hour and 15 minutes. Four rezones were implemented to reduce demand on the SR and aid recovery of the network, with a small number of water quality contacts (18) received from the rezoned areas. All supplies were restored by 17:00 on the 11th July.

29 water quality contacts were received on 11th July following the restoration of supplies, with a further 58 contacts on 12th July. Network flushing was carried out daily from the morning of the 12th July through until the 15th July to remove air from the network. The number of customer contacts reduced each day with no further complaints received after the 16th July.

A sampling response was enacted with six reactive samples taken from 12:49 on the 12th July and six samples taken in the morning of the 12th July across the two most affected DMAs. I am however critical that no samples were taken from Whitecraig & Wallyford DMA within which 6 consumer contacts were received from a discrete area.

The event has been categorised as significant. Scottish Water has identified five actions which DWQR accepts are appropriate and will monitor to ensure they are completed prior to signing off the incident. DWQR made zero additional recommendations.

