

## Bayhead RSZ Recurrent Microbiological Failures Nov 2013

DWQR Inspector:  
Matt Bower

Event No. 5736

### Event Category: Significant

#### Summary of Incident

A regulatory sample taken on 26 November 2013 from a property in Kirkibost on North Uist contained 5 coliforms. Resamples undertaken by Scottish Water on 28 November revealed a number of further low level coliform failures from the same area. Four days later on 2 December, Scottish Water undertook a wider sample survey consisting of 7 samples, all of which were clear of coliforms except for one property where 280 coliforms were detected. A boil water notice was issued to this property at the request of the CPHM, which was lifted on 7 December following several clear samples. Scottish Water have attributed the incident to the disturbance of biofilm following flow reversals due to operational work in the area on 2 December.

#### DWQR Assessment of Cause of Incident

DWQR is of the opinion that the low level coliform detections were, in all probability due to the flow changes in the water main to enable planned flushing operations, as suggested by Scottish Water. Chlorine concentrations were satisfactory throughout the system, and it is likely that the sample containing 280 coliforms was due to an issue with that sample itself and was not representative of water quality throughout the wider system.

#### DWQR Assessment of Actions Taken by Scottish Water

Scottish Water undertook sensible actions in response to the initial failure, by resampling promptly and investigating, although DWQR considers that the delay between the three samples failing on 28 November and resamples being collected on 2 December was unacceptably long. The flushing that was undertaken, the precautionary boil water notice issued to the one remaining failing property and the daily sample surveys on 4,5 and 6 December are all considered to be appropriate courses of action.