

## Lintrathen WTW Aluminium failures 5-8th January 2026

Event No. 16670

### Event Category: Significant

Samples taken from Lintrathen WTW final water on 7th and 8th January did not meet the standard for aluminium, although concentrations remained below health-based guideline values. There were no microbiological failures and no associated consumer complaints. Distribution sampling was not carried out until 13th January; these results indicated elevated aluminium levels but remained within regulatory limits.

During a period of exceptionally poor raw water quality, exceeding the design capability of the WTW, aluminium dosing was manually increased to maintain coagulation performance and manage turbidity, in the absence of front-end pH control. As a result, the treatment process was unable to adequately remove the additional aluminium, leading to concentrations above the prescribed standard entering the network.

The increases in dosing were implemented in a controlled and incremental manner, with full engagement from process science, operational management, ICC, and the public health team. Despite effective internal communication throughout the incident, I am concerned that no distribution sampling was undertaken until after the event had concluded. It is my opinion that earlier monitoring within the network would have identified non-compliant aluminium levels during the incident.

Short-lived turbidity spikes were observed at the onset, prior to the increase in aluminium dosing.

However on reviewing the trends on site I am satisfied that disinfection was not significantly impacted.

The event has been categorised as significant. Scottish Water has identified four 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.

