

Consumer Complaint Determination

Reference 2022/33
Discoloured water supply complaint
Date of Contact to DWQR : 10th June 2022

DWQR Inspector:
Andrew Kennedy

Basis of complaint

Mr A contacted DWQR on the 10th June 2022 to advise that he was unhappy following an incident of discoloured (brown) water . He had complained to Scottish Water through its formal complaints process but was dissatisfied with the response.

Context of complaint

Records supplied by Scottish Water to DWQR show that Mr A first contacted Scottish Water with concerns about discoloured water on the 10th November 2021, following the fire hydrant outside the property being opened as part of Scottish Water flushing activities following a burst water main. The property was sampled on the 12th November 2021, and analytical results complied with the water quality standards set out in the Public Water Supplies (Scotland) Regulations 2014 ('the Regulations').

Following receipt of a written complaint from Mr A date 12th March 2022, a further sample was taken on the 24th March 2022, and analytical results again complied with the water quality standards set out in the Public Water Supplies (Scotland) Regulations 2014 ('the Regulations'). At the time of this sample, Scottish Water's operative discussed with Mr A the cause of cloudy water and a leaflet about this was subsequently provided by Scottish Water.

Having taken samples which complied with the water quality standards set out in the Public Water Supplies (Scotland) Regulations 2014 ('the Regulations'), Scottish Water offered to

relocate the external stop tap that supplies Mr A's Property 3 metres further along the footpath. This has the potential to slightly reduce the risk of discolouration at Mr A's property, however, as Scottish Water correctly highlighted, this risk cannot be completely removed. Mr A did not wish to proceed with this option due to not wanting an excavation made in the tar at that location and concerns over vehicles travelling over the main and point of connection. Further discussions were held with suggestions from Mr A about relocating the fire hydrant or installing a double check valve, neither of which Scottish Water accepted to undertake.

Scottish Water provided Mr A with a leaflet on Colour, Taste & Odour, along with a leaflet on Making a Claim.

During my investigation, Scottish Water has provided me with a range of information including water sample results, the Drinking Water Safety Plan and customer contact data for the area that supplies Mr A's property. Following examination of that information I make the following observations:

- 25 customer contacts were received by Scottish Water from Dalgety Bay East DMA from 1st August 2021 to 31st July 2022
- 22 of these customer contacts were reported as part of 5 operational events such as burst water mains, with customer contacts being clustered to specific streets and dates.
- The wider Water Operational Area has a known risk of discolouration from the trunk mains as highlighted in the Drinking Water Safety Plan, however Scottish Water's statutory sampling for the supply zone in which Mr A's property is located shows that metal concentrations and turbidity are generally low (Max Aluminium = 77µgAl/l Max Iron = 21µgFe/l Max Manganese = 17µgMn/l Max Turbidity = <0.3NTU)
- Scottish Water has been able to demonstrate, through provision of sample data that there is no microbiological or faecal contamination to Mr A's water supply. Sample data also showed that the water supply was compliant for metals and turbidity.

DWQR Assessment of complaint and the actions taken

The water quality from the samples taken from Mr A's property complied with the standards required by the Regulations.

Scottish Water have provided current and accurate information regarding discoloured water supply, and have also correctly advised that the following measures would not guarantee that discoloured water would not occur in the future:

- Relocation of the fire hydrant.
- Relocation of the external stop tap (although this may have reduced the risk at Mr A's property and was declined by Mr A)
- Installation of a double check valve on the network

Scottish Water has responded adequately to requests for information by DWQR.

DWQR does not uphold the complaint, as Scottish Water have responded in a reasonable and thorough way, showing that the water is now compliant along with providing appropriate and correct information and advice relating to discoloured water.

Recommendations

DWQR considers Scottish Water to have taken all reasonable steps in this case and has no recommendations.