

## Glenfarg WTW Taste and Odour 17<sup>th</sup> August 2025

Event No. 16120

### Event Category: Serious

On 15th August Scottish Water's Customer Engagement Centre started to receive an increase in consumer contacts from the Glenfarg network, reporting an earthy/musty taste and smell. Contacts peaked on the 17th August and persisted until 22nd August (170 contacts were received during this period). The public health team (PHT) initiated additional sampling, with 2-methylisoborneol (MIB) levels rising sharply from 14th August and remaining elevated (above 5ng/l which is detectable to the palate) until 26th August. MIB continued to be detected above 5ng/l in the final water throughout September. PHT held conversations with the relevant health boards and considered the risk to public health was low, as MIB has no SNARL and is primarily an aesthetic issue. No microcystin toxins were found in consumer tap samples.

The cause was a rise in naturally-occurring MIB in Glenfarg reservoir supplying Glenfarg WTW which was not removed by the treatment process. Glenfarg WTW has powdered activated carbon (PAC) dosing to remove organics during the treatment process. Dosing was increased, but this was not successful at removing MIB at the concentrations observed during the summer period. The PAC dosing was offline until 14th August for replacement. Scheduling this for summer when it was required is poor timing.

The event has been categorised as serious. 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 one additional recommendation.

