

# Consumer Complaint Determination

2017/21

pH of water supply and illness

4 May 2017

DWQR Inspector:  
Moira Malcolm

## Basis of complaint

Scottish Water has supplied water which causes skin irritation due to high pH.

## Context of complaint

The consumer contacted Scottish Water on several occasions between January and April 2017 regarding the quality of water and attributing the high pH of the water to the consumer's skin irritation. The complaint was investigated by Scottish Water. A water sample was taken which complied with regulatory parameters and a full written explanation of the sample results was provided by Scottish Water. The consumer was dissatisfied with the content of the letter and with subsequent investigation and discussions with Scottish Water scientific and public health staff. Scottish Water's final response on 12 June failed, in the consumer's eyes, to fully address the issues.

## DWQR Assessment of complaint and the actions taken

Scottish Water responded to the original complaint by taking a water sample within 2 days and reporting the results of analysis within 10 days. DWQR considers that Scottish Water's response to the initial contact was timely and appropriate.

The consumer subsequently called Scottish Water to discuss his dissatisfaction with the contents of the letter with a member of the public health team. Following further discussion with Scottish Water at public meetings and by telephone, the consumer received a final letter sent on 12 June addressing the issues raised in the complaint.

In consideration of the concern raised by the consumer regarding the pH of the water supply, DWQR consulted scientific literature on skin irritation and drinking water, extensive local water quality data, WHO guidelines, and discussed the matter with the NHS Consultant in Public Health Medicine.

## Recommendations

DWQR considers Scottish Water's response to the complaint to be within an appropriate timescale and well considered, with the views of the consumer taken seriously and the issues raised fully investigated. The information provided is in-depth but clearly explained and all data is accurate and pertinent.

DWQR is satisfied that Scottish Water has fully responded to the concerns of the consumer and that the public water supply meets the required standard and is safe to drink, use and bathe in.

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