

## Carron Valley WTW 'Earthy or musty' taste and odour consumer complaints January-December 2025

Event No. 16189

Between 01 January 2025 and 12 December 2025, 139 'earthy or musty' taste and odour consumer complaints were received within the Carron Valley Water Operational Area. Most of these complaints occurred between July and October. The rate of consumer contacts started to rise from 01 July 2025 reaching a peak of 13 'earthy/musty' contacts in a single day (09 July 2025). Sampling undertaken by Scottish Water showed that 40 samples from the water treatment works final water sample point were above the taste threshold for geosmin and 98 samples were above the taste threshold for 2-Methylisoborneol (MIB). 87 consumer enquiry samples and 104 scheduled samples were taken from April to December 2025 and none failed for taste and odour. Five of these samples were tested for geosmin and MIB and found to be above the taste threshold for MIB. Information about the incident was provided on the Scottish Water website.

The incident was caused by a seasonal increase in raw water geosmin and 2-MIB concentrations from the Carron Valley WTW catchment and an inability of the treatment process to adequately remove the compounds. This was despite Scottish Water following its Operational Response Plan.

Scottish Water attempted to try and remove taste and odour forming compounds by dosing Powdered Activated Carbon (PAC) promptly on the 16 April 2025. Weekly operational meetings began on the 22 April 2025 increasing to twice weekly on 11 July 2025 to review sample results and consumer contact numbers and adjust the PAC dose accordingly. There

were no reported issues with the PAC dosing or treatment system that were thought to have exacerbated the issue.

Despite the actions taken, the incident was not fully resolved. DWQR acknowledges that resolution of this issue is difficult without further investment in additional treatment stages.

The event has been categorised as serious. DWQR made two additional recommendations and will monitor to ensure they are completed prior to signing off the incident.

