



guardians of drinking water quality

**DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE**

Area 7E, 9 Millbank  
c/o Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London.SW1P 3JR

Enquiries: 030 0068 6400

DWI Website: <http://www.dwi.gov.uk>

## EMBARGOED UNTIL 10.00 ON 5<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER

\*\*\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\*\*\*

### **Drinking Water Inspectorate releases investigation into Copeland drinking water event**

The Drinking Water Inspectorate, the independent regulator of drinking water quality in England and Wales, has today published the summary of investigations into the event caused by the changing of the nature of the drinking water supply to approximately 67,000 consumers in Whitehaven, Workington, Seascale and the surrounding area.

The event arose in June 2017, when water from boreholes was mixed with the original supply from Ennerdale in an agreement between the water company, United Utilities, and the Environment Agency. The arrangements were put in place as a temporary measure until a new pipeline is completed which will bring water from Thirlmere to the area. The arrangements were subsequently changed to reduce the amount of borehole water in the blend.

Consumers identified a number of concerns including the noise made by boiling kettles, a difference in taste and odour of the water and illness.

The investigation concluded that the water supplied was safe but changed from 'very soft' to soft and on occasions 'slightly hard' which was discernible to consumers. Public Health England concluded that there was no illness that could be attributed to the water supply.

The Drinking Water Inspectorate made nine recommendations to United Utilities to improve communications with consumers in advance of changes to water supplies, to ensure aesthetic characteristics are considered in the risk assessment of any future changes and to improve the handling of calls from consumers.

ENDS

## **Notes to editors**

The Drinking Water Inspectorate checks that water companies in England and Wales supply drinking water that is safe and that companies comply with the requirements of the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations.

The Inspectorate investigates all drinking water quality events in England and Wales and will bring prosecutions if it believes that it has reliable evidence that an offence was committed, where the company does not have a defence that it took all reasonable steps and exercised all due diligence, and when such a prosecution is regarded as being in the public interest.

The details of the findings can be found at  
<http://www.dwi.gov.uk/index.htm>

**Drinking Water Inspectorate  
December 2017**