

Walleys Quarry Landfill Site

22 April 2021

We recognise the ongoing difficulties that odour has caused in Silverdale, Newcastle under Lyme and surrounding areas, and understand the impact it is having on people's lives.

We continue to regularly visit the area to monitor for odour and to carry out both announced and unannounced visits to the landfill to assess the operations and progress with the actions we've instructed Red Industries to take.

LATEST INFORMATION

- We have shared the first monthly report for the air quality monitoring being carried out in the area with Public Health England (PHE). PHE advice will be shared through health partners and we will make the verified data available as soon as possible.
- Following the installation of a third Air Quality Monitoring Unit, we are installing a fourth unit and will now keep all four units in place until 31st August. We will share the data with PHE, Staffordshire County Council and Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council.
- Due to the pandemic, we are not able to come out to visit and talk to communities as we would like to. We have, therefore, sent 46,000 residents a letter that covers our role, what regulatory action we've taken and air quality monitoring.
- Progress continues by Red Industries to complete the capping works, as required by the enforcement notice we issued the company on Friday 26 March. We will continue to monitor the works closely.
- This week officers have completed four visits to the site and wider area. In these visits we monitored the odour levels, in varying locations and at different times of the day, and assessed the progress Red Industries is making on the works we've required them to carry out.
- Please continue to report by email any problems with odour to ics@environment-agency.gov.uk or click the 'contact us' link on this webpage.
- See [Staffordshire County Council website](#) for the latest on public health impacts of odours in the Silverdale and wider Newcastle under Lyme area.
- We are updating the information on this webpage every week. To receive notifications when these updates happen email your contact details to:

Engagement_WestMids@environment-agency.gov.uk and we will add you to our mailing list.

Air quality monitoring data

We know communities are keen to see information about our air quality monitoring. We have collated and validated the data for March and have sent this to Public Health England (PHE) for their independent assessment and scrutiny.

It is expected that PHE's assessment will be shared with other multi-agency partners, Staffordshire County Council and Newcastle under Lyme next week. Multi-agency partners will then make a decision about when the reports, health information and data will be shared.

We know that there was a peak in the recorded levels of hydrogen sulphide on the 7 and 8 March, where one of the monitoring stations off Galingale View registered data for concentrations of hydrogen sulphide above the World Health Organization's (WHO) 24-hour health-based guideline value of 150 µg/m³.

We appreciate communities continue to be impacted by odour, and we remain committed to regulating Walleys Quarry landfill site. Our primary focus continues to be doing everything within our power to bring its operation into compliance with its permit as quickly as we can. We recognise that many want to see faster action. Whilst we understand this and are setting the operator a challenging timetable we must also make sure there is enough time to do the work properly.

See [Staffordshire County Council website](#) for the latest on public health impacts of odours in the Silverdale and wider Newcastle under Lyme area. Here is the specific information from their website where readings exceeded WHO guidance:

Some of the readings exceeded the WHO guidelines, does this effect health?

Exposure to concentrations of hydrogen sulphide above the WHO 24-hour health-based guideline value does not necessarily mean health effects will occur. Due to the brief time period of elevated concentrations we would not expect there to be any long-term health consequences, however individuals may experience unpleasant odour and occasional nausea, headaches, dizziness, or irritation of eyes and airways.

At the levels monitored so far, Public Health England (PHE) does not expect there to be any long-term health consequences from the levels of hydrogen sulphide detected around Walley's Quarry Landfill Site. However, PHE recognises that odour is a nuisance which can cause stress and anxiety. Some people may experience symptoms such as nausea, headaches or dizziness even when a substance that causes the smells is not harmful to health at the levels experienced.

Air quality monitoring units

Air quality monitoring will continue until 31 August 2021. We've recently added a third air quality monitoring unit at Maries Way, Newcastle under Lyme, and we are installing a fourth unit on Friday at Newcastle Community fire station.

We will now keep all four units in place until 31 August, when previously they were due to be in place until May. All data will be shared with PHE, Staffordshire County Council and Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council.

The monthly reports and independent assessment by PHE will be published here. The data will also be available in due course.

Groundwater and leaking pipe samples

We have worked with the Coal Authority, Severn Trent Water and Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council to investigate Red Industries' statement of 25 March about hydrogen sulphide odour coming from other sources.

We are awaiting feedback from the Coal Authority on their assessments.

We will publish the findings as soon as they are available.

Letters to wider community

Due to the pandemic, we are not able to come out to visit and talk to communities as we would like to. Hopefully late summer we will be able to run a drop in community event, in the meantime, we will continue to share updates here.

We've also sent letters to 46,000 letters to residents in the local area. The letter covered our role, what regulatory action we've taken, air quality monitoring and how you can get in contact. We wanted to make sure that as many people as possible can receive up to date information.

Site visits

We usually visit the site once a week and carry out amenity check of the surrounding area, the other days, last week we visited the area 4 times in total. This doesn't include the meetings we hold with the company remotely.

Number of complaints

The number of reports of odour in the Newcastle under Lyme area for week from 12 April to 19 April is 2212.

Red Industries capping work

We have been checking Red Industries' progress of the capping work required for the enforcement notice we issued on 26 March 2021. We are encouraged by the progress they have made in capping the cells. We will continue to monitor the works and that they complete the capping on time.

Multi-agency roles and responsibilities

- The Environment Agency regulates the two environmental permits held by Red Industries RM Limited ('the operator') for the landfill. The permit covers on-site activities with the aim of minimising the impact on the local environment in terms of air quality, noise, odour, dust, leachate and impacts to groundwater. We enforce that permit through monitoring and undertaking site visits (both announced and unannounced) and where needed we take enforcement action to address compliance issues.
- Staffordshire County Council is responsible for determining planning permission

across the area. The Environment Agency comments on planning applications. The Council also has responsibilities for traffic movement. This is part of planning permission for the site and is not included in the Environment Agency permit conditions.

- Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council is responsible for regularly monitoring air quality across the area, to ensure that it does not impact human health.
- Public Health England is an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care, and a distinct organisation with operational autonomy. They provide government, local government, the NHS, Parliament, industry and the public with evidence-based professional, scientific expertise and support. They have no statutory powers in relation to odorous sites and therefore work with multi-agency partners to ensure public health is protected.

Where possible, we ask residents to report odours in the local area surrounding Walleys Quarry via email. To report an odour issue related to Walleys Quarry, please [Click Here](#). This will open a template email for you to complete and send to our Incident Communications Service (ICS).

Our incident hotline is primarily there to help people report new things about which we do not know and are not yet acting on. The volume of calls we are receiving on this issue is leading to a very real risk that we will miss a call on a different, new and urgent issue. We understand the odour issues that are being experienced at Walleys Quarry and that the ability to report them to us is important. We are taking this very seriously and reporting via email will ensure that we continue to capture and log all submitted odour reports.