



PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES – CASE STUDY (2011/03)

Effective application of the private supply regulations to benefit tourism and the local economy

A scheduled compliance sample from a small commercial supply was reported as containing *E.coli*. The local authority issued boil water advice in a Regulation 18 Notice while they carried out a Regulations 15 investigation by bringing forward the Regulation 6 risk assessment of the supply.

The private supply served four dwellings used as holiday lets. The groundwater source, a borehole, was found to be located on land grazed by livestock (cattle and sheep). The supply was UV treated before the water passed to each dwelling. There were no records to show that the UV system was being maintained and its functionality checked regularly.

The risk assessment found that the supply was at risk of contamination with faecal matter at source and risk mitigation was by a single barrier (UV) that was not being controlled. The Regulation 18 Notice set out the short-, medium- and longer-term control measures:

- Short-term: boiling or bottled water
- Medium-term: regular essential checks and maintenance of treatment system and associated record keeping.
- Longer-term: improvements to the source to protect against contamination from livestock and wildlife.



New stockproof fence and cover to protect borehole chamber

The Notice was revoked once the improvement works were completed, a system of checks and maintenance was in place, and a satisfactory verification sample had been obtained.

This case example illustrates how effective and timely application of the new regulations can benefit small business owners selling accommodation services. Tourism is an important part of the local economy, which would suffer reputational damage in the event of an outbreak of waterborne disease. By carrying out simple checks and maintenance to ensure equipment is working effectively and contaminants are kept out of the water source, this owner has safeguarded his business as well as public health. Annual compliance sampling by the local authority will provide verification going forward that all is working effectively. Such independent assurance, if included in customer information packs, will promote customer confidence generally and will be of particular use to the owner in dealing with letting agencies, insurers or a customer complaint.

