



**DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE**

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10 August 2018

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

**Southern Water fined for drinking water offence**

At a sentencing hearing today in Newport Crown Court, Southern Water was fined a total of £65,000 and additional costs of £44,620.99 were awarded.

On 27 July 2018, Southern Water pleaded guilty to supplying water unfit for human consumption from Cooks Castle service reservoir between 31 January and 12 February 2013.

The charge was brought by the Drinking Water Inspectorate and in response, Marcus Rink, Chief Inspector of Drinking Water said

*'Following a lengthy investigation which commenced in 2016, a previously undisclosed and significant water quality incident from 2013 was uncovered where there was a failure to protect consumers. Flagrant disregard for regulatory duties and consumer protection will always result in action by the Inspectorate in the public interest'.*

**Notes to Editors**

The Drinking Water Inspectorate checks that water companies in England and Wales supply drinking water that does not put consumers at risk and that is wholesome and acceptable to consumers.

It is a criminal offence to supply water that is unfit for human consumption. The Drinking Water 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 to avoid the offence and exercised all due diligence, and when such a prosecution is regarded as being in the public interest.

## **Summary of the event**

The offence admitted was that Southern Water Services Ltd supplies water unfit for human consumption to premises served by Cooks Castle Shanklin Water Supply Reservoir, situated off Wroxhall Road on the Isle of Wight contrary to section 70(1) of the Water Industry Act. The water was discoloured and highly turbid.

At the time of the offence, the treated water reservoir supplied approximately 17,743 consumers.

The site was known to be vulnerable to subsidence and the event occurred as a result of exploratory investigations into ground conditions around the reservoir involving on-site drilling. The outlet main was ruptured by the drilling rig on 23 January 2013 allowing soil and debris to enter the network however there were deficiencies in Southern Waters investigation into, and handling of the event that meant the location of the leak was not initially identified until 1 March 2013.