



guardians of drinking water quality

DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE

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SEMBCORP BOURNEMOUTH WATER PLEAD GUILTY TO SUPPLYING WATER UNFIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION AND FAILURE TO ADEQUATELY OPERATE A TREATMENT PROCESS

Sembcorp Bournemouth Water pleaded guilty, on 25 March 2015 at Bournemouth Magistrate's Court, to four counts of supplying water unfit for human consumption and one count of failure to adequately operate a treatment process. The case related to an outbreak of Cryptosporidiosis in Bournemouth linked to the water supply.

The charges were brought under Section 70 of the Water Industry Act 1991 and Regulation 26 of the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulation 2000.

The Company was fined £20,000 on each of four counts of water unfit plus £5,000 for the count of failure to adequately operate a treatment process, totalling £85,000 and paid £48,772 towards prosecution costs and a £120 victim surcharge.

In response, Professor Jeni Colbourne, Chief Inspector of Drinking Water, said: *"This was a serious failure by the company which has been duly recognised by the court. Consumers can be reassured that the Inspectorate has required the company to make changes to ensure this will not happen again"*.

Notes to editors:

1. The Drinking Water Inspectorate was set up in January 1990. Its main task is to check that water companies in England and Wales supply wholesome drinking water and in doing so comply with the requirements of the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2000. The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) 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.
2. In May 2013, Public Health England (PHE) identified an outbreak of gastroenteritis in Bournemouth caused by the parasite *Cryptosporidium*. These human cases of infection were reported by hospital laboratories. PHE carried out an epidemiological study which

demonstrated a strong association between cases and the water supply.

3. When notified the Inspectorate immediately carried out an extensive investigation and obtained evidence that shortly before the time of the outbreak, a combination of deterioration in the water coming into Alderney water treatment works and changes made to the treatment process by the company lead to the parasite entering drinking water supplies in the area. The investigation identified failings in the operation and maintenance of the works. The DWI put in place a notice legally requiring Sembcorp Bournemouth Water to take steps to prevent a recurrence. The company has subsequently installed additional treatment (UV) as a further safeguard.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

To arrange an interview contact

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