

Aycliffe Quarry Landfill – Odour Issues

January update:

Reports of odour in and around the Newton Aycliffe and Darlington areas were found to be coming from the landfill site at Aycliffe Quarry, operated by Ashcourt Group Limited. Initial investigations by the Environment Agency focused on the gas extraction system on site. Some identified improvements were required and were completed before Christmas by the site operator.

Subsequently, following a gas emissions survey on the surface of the site, an area was identified as needing some further work to reduce emissions. These works involved reprofiling a slope on site and applying a cohesive capping material to seal in emissions. This work has been ongoing since before Christmas but remains incomplete. The work has been hampered by poor weather which has limited the time available to regrade and cover the slope. The operator remains committed to completing the works and we expect this to be completed in 4 to 6 weeks. We have tested the areas that have been capped already and the results show that this has been effective.

In addition to the reprofiling works additional gas extraction wells will also be installed on the site. These works combined should act to significantly reduce landfill gas emissions across the site.

Whilst these works are ongoing the Environment Agency has been undertaking some targeted air quality monitoring at locations around the site and in the community. We have been using handheld monitoring units to measure both methane (as the predominant constituent in landfill gas) and hydrogen sulphide (as the key toxin of concern). So far we have found very low levels of both methane (CH₄) and hydrogen sulphide (H₂S). Our early results have been shared with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). They have confirmed that some of the higher readings would be noticeable by human senses but that the levels are far below any health-related standard. We will continue to send the data from our findings to the UKHSA and share their feedback with the public.

The Environment Agency is currently creating a public information page for the site that will be published soon where people can view information like air monitoring results, site updates and frequently asked questions. The Environment Agency will also continue to work with Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council where needed to address this matter.