

Walleys Quarry Landfill Site

13 May 2021

We have developed this weekly update to help us keep the community of Newcastle under Lyme up to date with developments around our regulation of Walleys Quarry.

We are sorry the community is continuing to live with the distress that odour causes and we are challenging Walleys Quarry Ltd (formerly Red Industries RM Ltd) every step of the way to take action on the odour levels produced from their operations and the impact these are having on local people.

We take all reports and complaints very seriously. In response to the rise in complaints from the community, we have made 17 site inspections and 49 odour assessments since 1 January 2021.

To report odour, please use our email address ics@environment-agency.gov.uk or click the 'contact us' link on this webpage. Reporting via email will ensure that we continue to capture and log all reports. You can still call our incident hotline, although this is generally used for new incidents that we are not already aware of.

News in brief

- Our officers visited the site and wider area six times last week to monitor odour in varying locations and at different times of the day. We also held remote meetings with the operator about the actions they need to take to manage the operations of their site.
- Hydrogen sulphide levels were well below the World Health Organisation (WHO) guideline level for impact on health, but were above the annoyance guideline level for between 6% and 48% for the week 3 May to 9 May.
- Our absolute priority is to reduce odour which is why we have requested Walleys Quarry Ltd to install a new gas flare on site to help manage odour. It was installed this week and will enable the operator to increase the amount of gas that can be collected and burnt off. Next week, the operator will be carrying out emissions testing on the gas flare to ensure it is destroying the odour producing gasses effectively. This should, along with other measures, reduce odour that the community are experiencing.
- Walleys Quarry Ltd has also produced an action plan for reducing odour, as we requested. We received this yesterday. As it is a complex, technical document we have our team of experts working on this. This will allow us to put targeted actions in place to reduce the odour further from the site. Once we have completed our review, we will share the next step on this weekly briefing. We also instructed Walleys Quarry Ltd to carry out a surface emissions survey, which we received yesterday. We will now be assessing this report.

- Walleys Quarry Ltd made the decision to resume normal waste operations at the site from Monday 10 May. This was not in consultation with the Environment Agency but we were informed of their decision.
- We have ensured that Walleys Quarry Ltd's waste acceptance processes provide increased assurance for us and them. They are required to check every load before disposal and on Monday 10 May, we were informed that four separate waste loads were rejected on the grounds that the waste did not comply with the type allowed by their permit.
- We are now actively auditing the supply chain of waste to the site. This will allow greater assurance that only appropriate waste is being deposited.
- Red Industries RM Ltd have decided to change their business name for the site to Walleys Quarry Ltd. We have been asked by Red Industries to change the company name on the permits held for the site to reflect the change of name. This is an administrative change and does not impact our regulation of the site or the contents of the permits.
- We received 1,276 odour reports in the Newcastle under Lyme area from 3 May to 9 May. See [Staffordshire County Council website](#) for the information 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 email your contact details to: Engagement_WestMids@environment-agency.gov.uk and we will add you to our mailing list.
- Unfortunately we have recently had inappropriate behaviour and threats directed towards our staff from a minority of people. Our staff will be professional and fair when they deal with members of the community. In return, we ask the community to respect our staff. We will not tolerate any abuse of our staff and will report any incidents to Staffordshire Police.

Waste acceptance

Last week we reported here that Walleys Quarry Ltd had made the decision to resume normal waste operations at the site. The operator voluntarily suspended taking on new waste material while it focused on the capping works we required in the enforcement notice issued on the 26 March.

We have seen public claims from the operator that we were consulted on their decision to resume normal operations. We were informed but had no say in their decision to resume their normal waste operations.

As the regulator, we have made it clear to Walleys Quarry Ltd that we expect them to review the processes they use to check the waste coming onto site. We want increased assurance from the company that they are only taking waste they are permitted to accept, and materials, such as gypsum, are not being accepted.

Types of waste accepted on site

We have required Walleys Quarry Ltd to check every load of waste before it is accepted for disposal on site.

Following our action, on Monday 10 May, we were informed that four separate waste loads had been rejected by the operator as they did not comply with the waste types allowed by their permit. As a result, Walleys Quarry Ltd will no longer accept waste from one of the companies who was trying to dispose of waste at the site.

For those waste operators whose waste was refused, we are investigating as they failed to correctly describe and dispose of their waste. We are also working with colleagues in Natural Resources Wales to investigate the waste producers in their areas whose loads were also rejected.

Air Quality Monitoring

We are continuing to review the air quality monitoring data and working with partners, specifically those with responsibilities for health, to understand the impact on the community.

We are committed to sharing the outcome of our monthly monitoring. However, we realise local people want to see more frequent information about recorded hydrogen sulphide levels compared to the WHO's 24-hour health-based guidance level. We will seek to provide this information every week in this update.

We are also able to share the hydrogen sulphide levels compared to the WHO's annoyance guidance level, above which WHO says there is likely to be complaints about odour annoyance.

Please note that this weekly data is based on raw data that has not yet been subjected to quality assurance checking or calibration. As a result this data may change once the quality assurance check and calibration have been carried out.

For the week 3 May to 9 May, hydrogen sulphide levels were well below the WHO guideline level for impact on health, but were above the annoyance guideline level for between 6% and 48% of the week.

Silverdale Road 21%
Galingale View 48%
Silverdale Cemetery 6%
Newcastle-under-Lyme Community Fire Station 6%

Multi-agency roles and responsibilities

- The Environment Agency regulates the two environmental permits held by 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.