

Public Health England (PHE) response to the Air Quality Monitoring at Silverdale

“PHE has assessed the environmental air quality data provided by the Environment Agency (EA) (July 2017-February 2018, and January 2019-June 2019) and compared hydrogen sulphide data with the World Health Organisation (WHO) air quality health-based guideline value of 107 ppb as a 24-hour average. We note that these levels are low and would not expect there to be any long-term health consequences. However, due to the low odour threshold of hydrogen sulphide, the EA monitoring data shows a small percentage of periods of exceedance of the WHO short-term odour value of 5 ppb as a 30-minute average; therefore there will have been the potential for significant odour complaints to occur. The unpleasant odour may cause discomfort leading to transient nausea, headaches and dizziness. Odour can be a cause of stress and anxiety, even when the substances causing the odours are not harmful to health at the levels detected at these locations. In addition PHE has not received any analysis regarding site-related odour complaints related to either local meteorological conditions or on-site practices. Please also note the PHE position that living close to a well-managed landfill site does not pose a significant risk to human health (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landfill-sites-impact-on-health-from-emissions>).”

“In addition, from analysis of health syndromic surveillance data for the period up to December 2019, PHE has no evidence of an increase in GP consultations or calls to NHS 111 by the neighbouring population for symptoms of breathing difficulties or eye problems, and similarly for GP in-hours consultations for asthma and wheeze. If residents have health concerns they are advised to consult their local GP.”