

## **Q&A – January 2019**

### **Blue water in taps at Buchanan and St Ambrose High Schools and Townhead Community Centre**

We wrote to you previously and said that we would provide you with a further update of the issue of 'blue water' at Buchanan and St Ambrose High Schools. Please find below a second, updated Q&A:

#### **What is the update regarding blue water at taps in the school?**

Following reports from staff that there was blue water coming from taps at the school campus in Coatbridge, tests have been carried out at both schools, which indicated that there were higher levels of copper in the water in some areas of the schools. As all three properties are supplied from the one main water supply, with branched pipework supplying each location, tests were also carried out at the community centre but no evidence of blue water was present.

Although it can appear alarming due to the blue discoloration, this copper solution is caused due to corrosion in the pipework and has minimal impact on the quality of the water. Tests have also been carried out by Scottish Water which confirmed the main water supply to the building meets all drinking water standards.

To date we have replaced filters, are flushing the system twice a day which helps prevent a build-up of copper solution in the taps concerned and we are in the process of replacing all the copper pipework with plastic pipes in all three buildings. This work is 95% complete and has been carried out over the weekends and holidays and is due to be finished in February.

As the main water supply within the building is a copper pipe, we will consider replacing it during the Summer break as a precautionary measure.

#### **Is there still blue water present in the areas where pipes have been replaced?**

Samples have been taken from those areas and they confirm that the action being taken has addressed the issue. Results from the water samples show that readings are within tolerance levels and drinking water meets the required standards.

On completion, we will continue to undertake further water sampling to provide reassurance that the action taken has addressed the matter.

#### **Is a high level of copper harmful to people?**

Copper is an essential nutrient but consumption of very high levels can cause stomach upsets.

Until all the legs of copper piping have been replaced, bottled water has been provided for all pupils and staff.

**What are the results of the tests?**

We routinely test water at all council facilities and water samples were taken in mid-October for microbiological analysis which were clear. Following concerns from staff, a chemical analysis of the water was undertaken by an independent body, which showed there was evidence of copper in water at both schools that were out with the required tolerance levels. Following further sampling, there was evidence of inconsistency in the chemical analysis results which is why the decision was taken to replace all the copper piping within all three facilities.

**What is the council currently doing?**

As well as the ongoing replacement of the pipes, we have replaced filters, flushing the entire system daily and providing bottled water. We have engaged with unions and staff, and held meetings at both schools to update them on the progress we are making in tackling instances of 'blue water' at the St Ambrose/Buchanan High Schools campus in Coatbridge. Parents have also been provided with a Q&A, which is also available to community users.