

NRW responds to slurry pollution on the Afon Honddu (Monnow / Wye catchment)

A quick response to a major slurry incident on Tuesday 4th April has resulted in averting a serious environmental incident on the River Monnow catchment. The incident happened after a retaining wall on a slurry lagoon failed causing a significant discharge into a small feeder stream of the River Honddu (see picture below).

We have been working with the Environment Agency (EA), Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water and the farmer concerned to contain as much of the slurry as possible to avoid further pollution. A network of ditches has been dug to channel the slurry into temporary catch pits and we have temporarily over-pumped the stream around the affected stretch. A large clean-up operation is ongoing and the slurry store has been emptied to reduce the risk of further discharges and allow repairs to be undertaken. All remediation work has now been taken over by the farmer's insurers, guided by NRW officers and the site is now secure with minimal risk of further pollution.

Thanks to a quick response from NRW, its partners, and prompt action taken by the farmer in reporting the incident, it is thought that up to three quarters of the 450,000 litres of slurry in the lagoon has been prevented from entering the Honddu.

Officers remain on site assessing the impact of the pollution on fish and other river life in the Honddu. Early indications seem to show that the actions taken have restricted the worst of the impact to the tributary of the Honddu with only a small number of dead fish (single figures) currently witnessed and only local impact to invertebrate life.

Evidence is currently being collected on site for potential enforcement action against the owner of the slurry lagoon.

Once we're happy that the remaining slurry has been dealt with and there is no further risk to the river, we'll be focussing our efforts on how this happened, and are keen to work closely with our partners including the farming Unions and Welsh Government to ensure we reduce the likelihood of this happening again.

We ask anyone who see signs of pollution to report it to our incidents team on 03000 65 3000.

