

The Occupier

November 19, 2024

Dear Resident,

In July, Wyre Council launched an investigation into potential airborne pollutants from AGC Chemicals Europe Ltd at Hillhouse Enterprise Zone (the former ICI site) in Thornton Cleveleys.

The issue relates to historic use of a chemical called PFOA between the 1950s and 2012.

The Environment Agency has taken soil samples from a range of publicly owned sites within 1km of the Hillhouse site. These confirm PFOA is present at a level which indicates that more detailed testing is now required.

The Food Standards Agency has shared advice about the growing and eating of homegrown produce within 1km of the site.

The FSA advises:

- Everyone in the country is exposed to very low levels of PFOA, via their diet. Based on current information, local residents who regularly eat large amounts of vegetables and fruits grown in allotments and gardens could be increasing their exposure, while occasional or modest intakes are unlikely to greatly affect long-term background intakes.
- Various contaminants can be present in soil. The FSA advise to wash fruit and vegetables with water before consuming to remove soil and dust, as well as for general hygiene reasons such as removing harmful bacteria. Peeling vegetables can also remove more soil and bacteria.

At this time, neither the Environment Agency or the Food Standards Agency have any further advice to give. If the advice we receive changes, we will write to you again. We will also write to you again on the conclusion of the investigation. However, for general updates about the investigation, you can check the multi-agency webpage here: www.wyre.gov.uk/multi-agency. An email address has also been set up to receive questions about the investigation: multi-agency@wyre.gov.uk

We have provided some more information in the frequently asked questions document attached to this letter.

Yours faithfully,



Rebecca Huddleston
Chief Executive, Wyre Council

Frequently Asked Questions

Why has an investigation been launched?

The issue relates to a chemical called Perfluorooctanoic Acid which was used on the AGC Chemicals Europe Ltd site between the 1950s and 2012. In 2020, PFOA was added to the Stockholm International Convention on Persistent Organic pollutants and last year it was classified as carcinogenic to humans by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). It's important to find out whether any contamination has taken place on the site or in the surrounding area.

How long will the investigation take?

This is a complex investigation involving many agencies and different factors and naturally we are keen it is done thoroughly, so is likely to be a fairly lengthy process. We will continue to keep everyone updated on our webpages and we will also share the outcomes when it is complete

How can I find out more?

Wyre Council is committed to keeping the community updated on the investigation. In addition to the multi-agency webpage listed above, copies of a newsletter will be available for pick up at local libraries soon and resident drop-in sessions will be held early in the New Year.