



11 November 2025

Dear ,

ATISN 26274 - Contaminated school

Information requested

Thank you for your request which I received on 20 October 2025. You asked for the following information below in respect of the following line “PFAS contamination on a school site, g/w re-contaminating the clean cap” contained within the information released in the freedom of information request [ATISN 25030 - Minutes of Welsh Contaminated Land Working Group](#).

1. Which school site that is contaminated with PFAS was being discussed – it is not listed in the index?
2. Any email exchanges between Welsh government contaminated land officers regarding this site?
3. The minutes of all Welsh Land Contamination Group meetings since 20th March 2024 (when this site was mentioned).
4. Any documents relating to the contaminated site that the Welsh government holds – in any and all formats.

Our response

Following a search of our paper and electronic records, I have established the information you require regarding questions 1, 2 and 4 is not held by the Welsh Government.

The information you requested regarding question 3 is enclosed. I have provided copies below of all minutes provided by the group’s secretariat which Welsh Government has recorded. All redactions in this document relate to personal information only. The justification for this is outlined in Annex A

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government’s handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government’s Freedom of Information Officer at: Information Rights Unit, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely

Welsh Land Contamination Group

Minute of Meeting

18/9/24

Present:

- Chair (FCC) - (REDACTED)
- NRW - (REDACTED)
- NRW - (REDACTED)
- WG - (REDACTED)
- UKHSA (REDACTED)
- Camarthenshire (REDACTED)

Apologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (REDACTED)• (REDACTED)• (REDACTED)
Election of Chair and Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (REDACTED) was re-elected as Chair of the Group.• (REDACTED) is happy to continue to take notes but not on a permanent basis. Secretarial role for minute taking to take place on a rolling basis. To be reviewed next year.
ToR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewed and accepted. Some contact information will need to be updated separately.
Welsh Government update	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letter to CPO – no further update. ACTION – (REDACTED) to chase up.• Training budget approximately £4,000 - ACTION (REDACTED) to confirm to Chair.• WG have attended recent meetings with England / Scotland counterparts to discuss issues – further meetings are planned.• Supporting Caerphilly over an historical landfill site. Have provided funding to Caerphilly to complete leachate monitoring via a consultant.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Hazards workshop recently held at Welsh Gov. with NRW. Topical issues such as coastal landfills, metal mines and coal tips discussed. More meetings may follow, a decision to be made on next steps.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (REDACTED) webinars are available to attend, some are free of charge. Consideration to be given to inviting (REDACTED) to present at future training even if there's a relevant topic or case. <p>Other potential topics include,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metal mines. Climate change / extreme weather. Planning policy & grey land. Mine gas risk assessment (preferred) ACTION – (REDACTED) and (REDACTED) will contact training provider to discuss possibility of a MGRA / ground gases / validation and verification training day. Potentially in person or online. To report back in 4 weeks. If need be, an extraordinary meeting just to discuss training event can be arranged.
NRW update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance being drafted regarding piling on contaminated sites, including human health risks. CIRIA guidance on climate change and extreme weather events progressing as consultancy has been appointed to author guidance. NRW will input on guidance. Interim Environmental Assessor for Wales has received request asking whether existing contaminated land framework is fit for purpose, particularly around PCB sites and climate change. Queries also raised around whether the regime compliments the WG Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Increased PFAS considerations on sites.
UKHSA update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rapid PFAS review - specifically looking into communities surrounding industrial land uses.
SWW regional update	<p>Powys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very busy with planning work;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having significant issues with planners as advice being overruled repeatedly. <p>Neath Port Talbot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently short staffed • Very busy with planning – lots of big projects around the Port Talbot docks area, and TATA Steel. • Some Part 2A work ongoing – they are currently liaising (REDACTED) regarding a determined site about redesignating the site due to reduced human health risk. Controlled Waters issues still remain and NRW are involved. • Strategy update on hold due to resource constraints. <p>Swansea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a confidential site with PFAS issues which is still on-going and they are regularly in dialogue with consultants on this. • Strategy update also on hold due to resource constraints. <p>Pembrokeshire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have returned to in-house planning screening. CLO is now more involved with planning. Previously they had external consultant providing comments. All going OK currently. <p>Carmarthenshire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning work busy; • Asking for pre-commencement information up front rather than via conditions; • Updated Inspection Strategy • In the process of updating webpage. <p>SRS – Bridgend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busy with planning work. <p>Ceredigion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Update Provided
North Regional update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCBC busy on coal tip work. • FCC requesting pre-commencement information upfront. Causing less issues and reducing workloads. Developer guide setting out requirements has been

	<p>successful. Quality of submissions thought planning has improved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning related work is busy across the board. • FCC continue to progress with a Part 2A site and Inspection Strategy is up to date.
Date/time next meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10:30 am, November 6th 2024 – regarding training if required. • 10:30 am, January 15th 2025.

Welsh Land Contamination Working Group

19 March 2025 Teams Meeting at 1.30pm

Notes & Actions

Present:

(REDACTED) Flintshire County Council (Chair)
(REDACTED) Carmarthenshire County Council
(REDACTED) Powys County Council
(REDACTED) Natural Resources Wales
(REDACTED) Welsh Government
(REDACTED) Wrexham County Borough Council
(REDACTED) Caerphilly County Borough Council

Apologies:

(REDACTED) Natural Resources Wales

Welsh Affairs Select Committee Call for Evidence – The Group responded with a comprehensive document and received acknowledgement of receipt of their submission. Attendance may be invited for a future meeting. NRW have attended a meeting already.

Dear CPO Letter – A response is awaited. WG will contact the appropriate team to enquire over progress and the publication timescales.

Welsh Government Update

- i) there has been media interest in legacy landfill sites and land contamination. Deputy First Minister (DFM) has asked for a Briefing on it and where things stand, opposition parties are also interested.
- ii) there has been a one off payment to Caerphilly Council in relation to a landfill site.
- iii) WG met with DEFRA & Scotland. The State of Contaminated Land Report update is delayed - it was due to be 2025. English LAs helping the Environment Agency to tailor the survey. The DFM is aware of it but no decision yet on a Welsh update at present.
- iv) A suggestion was made that now could be a good time to write a funding request letter to the DFM, refer to the recent public interest, request multi-year fund etc. Reference was made to the information already provided to WG and within the Group's response to the Call for Evidence.

Action: Draft DFM letter re: funding request.

Training & Training Budget

- i) Confirmed the last event went very well, and CPD certificates have been emailed.
- ii) £5k for 2025/26 designated CLO training budget has been requested, considering increasing the amount if it can be justified.
- iii) Look at something after Easter with a view to delivering an event for Autumn.

NRW update:

- i) NQMS has moved up the agenda again, the sub group is under CL:AIRE. Has a new Chair who is trying to re-invigorate it. NRW hasn't received sufficient Declarations to form a view on it yet. Group commented that CLO's haven't received sufficient, if any, reports with NQMS either.
- ii) there are a number of vacancies within NRW Team at present.
- iii) NRW is attended a Call for Evidence Select Committee meeting and will cover both land contamination and coal tips.
- iv) NRW are very busy with Planning related work lately.
- v) SOCL report update, England due to update it so WG may want to too.

LA regional updates

Pembrokeshire – Now reviewing reports themselves, they did have a consultant doing this for them.

Caerphilly – received WG funding for improvement works on an historical landfill. Works to be completed by 31st March, including bank retention works, surface water improvement works & the installation of some new boreholes. Not all works were able to be undertaken due to tight timescales and other constraints.

Date/Time of next meeting: 03 July 2025 10.30am.

Welsh Land Contamination Working Group
03 July 2025 Teams Meeting at 10.30am
Notes & Actions

Present:

(Chair) (REDACTED) Flintshire County Council
(REDACTED) Natural Resources Wales
(REDACTED) Natural Resources Wales
(REDACTED) Welsh Government
(REDACTED) Wrexham County Borough Council (minute taker – on rotation)
(REDACTED) Caerphilly County Borough Council (SE Group)

Apologies:

(REDACTED) Carmarthenshire County Council
(REDACTED) Powys County Council

Welsh Government – A change to WG representation at these meetings is to take place. A permanent attendee will be confirmed by WG in due course.

Training & Training Budget –

A request of £5000 for a designated training budget for CLO's has been submitted by WG and confirmation of the outcome is awaited.

A full day in person CLO training event at a suitable location is proposed. An online lunchtime session is also to be considered.

Ideas: a) In-person - following on from mines gas risk assessment, reviewing reports.
 b) On-line - online DETS training recently held, 1hr, ask to run for WLCWG, similar set up as previously done.

Actions: (REDACTED) Confirm if budget request approved.
 (REDACTED) to look into DETS online training.
 Group to consider in time for next meeting.

TAN & CPO Letter – WG aware that this has been followed up with the appropriate team on multiple occasions but to date, no further response has been received. An assurance of publication had been assured and is therefore awaited from WG by the Group.

Select Committee recognise there is a guidance and funding deficit. Only area that doesn't have a TAN is land contamination. (REDACTED) speaking to Deputy Director and equivalent in Planning to seek feedback on the next steps and timescales.

Action: (REDACTED) to report on feedback from Deputy Director

State of Contaminated Land Report – WG have not requested an update version as yet. The Environment Agency is considering funding options for an England-related update.

WG considering other data collection options so a Welsh version could have a wider remit and be more meaningful. Discussion proposed with Deputy First Minister but may not be until after the Election.

Welsh Affairs Select Committee Call for Evidence – Action from last meeting, and the Group responded. A representative from the Group subsequently attended the meeting. A significant proportion of the meeting focused on specific sites and coal tip safety.

However, a point was made that land contamination affected all LA's, whereas the coal tips issue didn't and reiterated that funding for Part 2A work is deficient.

The need for a TAN and Dear CPO letter was raised and that the legacy of land contamination affects all of us, all LA's. Funding as a theme continued to be relevant throughout the meeting.

Following the meeting, concern was fed back to the meeting secretary and a question raised as to whether there would be another session that focused on land contamination, rather than coal tips.

It was noted that the Group had submitted a comprehensive response to the relevant call for evidence, all of which would be considered. Also asked if there would be an 'output' letter. It was noted by the Group that Part 2A questions were directed at two other participants, and not to the Group's representative.

Action: Draft supplementary response to send to the Committee

Welsh Government Update

- i) Vacant post in team not yet filled
- ii) IEPAW continues to consider land contamination
- iii) UK wide group catch up, included health related metal mine research DEFRA project.

NRW update

- i) 2 new CLOs in GSci Team, 1 for North and 1 for South.
- ii) Interim Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales (IEPAW) – suggested contact WLCWG. WG Ministers' report looking at how Regulations are being implemented, looking for improvements, not just in relation to Part 2A – no formal request for evidence yet. Looking into appointing a PhD student to do the work mid-late 2026.
- iii) LCRM updated 2-3 weeks ago. Brings SEPA on board, so now UK wide. Better section on pollution incidents, planning & Part 2A, more visible.
- iv) Piling on Contaminated Land sites guidance updated, CL:AIRE. Covers gas migration and human health risks.

LA regional updates

Wrexham – workload focus on planning sites & coal tip safety works. Received further Monsanto related enquiries.

Flintshire – reviewed 8 properties on a former lead mining area & considering assessment of a landfill. Priority areas include lead mining area but it's a v. large area with many complex considerations and is therefore under review. Planning-related work streams continue to be very busy, including several Development of National Importance.

Caerphilly – Met with IEPAW and NRW. Have undertaken a site visit with NRW. Working on a 2nd draft Part 2A report for one particular site A judicial review of a site has been requested but no decision has been made yet. Development Control work is on-going.

Date/Time of next meeting:

24 September 2025 10.30am – AGM. Terms of Reference to be checked, Chair and Secretary to be nominated/elected at the next meeting.

Annex A

Regulation 13– Personal data

Regulation 13(1) together with the conditions in Regulation 13(2)(a)(i) and 13(2)(a)(ii) provides an absolute exemption if disclosure of the personal data would breach any of the data protection principles.

‘Personal data’ is defined in sections 3(2) and (3) of the Data Protection Act 2018 (‘the DPA 2018’) and means any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual. An identifiable living individual is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of the individual.

We have concluded that, in this instance, the information requested contains third party personal data.

Under Regulation 13(1) of the EIRs, personal data is exempt from release if disclosure would breach one of the data protection principles set out in Article 5 of the GDPR. We consider the principle being most relevant in this instance as being the first. This states that personal data must be:

“processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject”

The lawful basis that is most relevant in relation to a request for information under the FOIA is Article 6(1)(f). This states:

“processing is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by the controller or by a third party except where such interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subject which require protection of personal data, in particular where the data subject is a child”.

In considering the application of Article 6(1)(f) in the context of a request for information under FOIA it is necessary to consider the following three-part test:-

- **The Legitimate interest test:** Whether a legitimate interest is being pursued in the request for information;
- **The Necessity test:** Whether disclosure of the information/confirmation or denial that it is held is necessary to meet the legitimate interest in question;
- **The Balancing test:** Whether the above interests override the interests, fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subject.

Our consideration of these tests is set out below:

1. Legitimate interests

Welsh Government acknowledges the general public interest in openness and transparency that release of the information would engender. However, we cannot identify any particular legitimate interest in the provision of personal data for individuals working in this area.

2. Is disclosure necessary?

We do not believe it is necessary to release the names of individuals for the discussions and exchange of information to be understood. The provision of this data would not add to the understanding of the information provided or provide any additional context.

3. The balance between legitimate interests and the data subject's interests or fundamental rights and freedoms

As we do not believe disclosure would further the understanding of the information released we do not believe any interest in accessing these details outweigh the data subjects' interests, fundamental rights or freedoms.

As release of the information would not be legitimate under Article 6(1)(f), and as no other condition of Article 6 is deemed to apply, release of the information would not be lawful within the meaning of the first data protection principle. It has therefore been withheld under Reg13(1) of the Environmental Information Regulations. Reg 13 is an absolute exception and not subject to the public interest test.