

Cyhoeddir yr atodiad hwn yn yr iaith y'i derbyniwyd gan Gynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru.

EPT-10-00 (p 2)

PWYLLGOR YR AMGYLCHEDD, CYNLLUNIO A THRAFNIDIAETH

Dyddiad: Dydd Mercher 18 Hydref 2000

Lleoliad: Parc Treftadaeth y Rhondda, Trehafod, Pontypridd

Teitl: Nantygwyddon: Papur gan Awdurdod Iechyd Bro Taf

BRO TAF HEALTH AUTHORITY'S RESPONSES TO CONCERNS

ABOUT NANT Y GWYDDON LANDFILL

Role in the Planning, Regulation and Enforcement of Landfill Sites

Bro Taf Health Authority had no direct role in the planning, regulation or enforcement of operations at Nant y Gwyddon landfill site. The recent changes in the law concerning Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) states that in the future Health Authorities will be statutory consultees on plans of this sort. However, the evidence base on which it will be able to construct its advice to planning authorities is very restricted currently and the methodology of Health Impact Assessment is being developed currently.

Role in Responding to Health Concerns

Health Authorities have a responsibility, delegated from the National Assembly for Wales, to provide on behalf of the Health and Social Services Committee, the services to promote the health of the population residing within their district. This duty is discharged in two ways:

(1) purchasing health care services both in the community and in hospitals

(2) working with partners to address the determinants of health.

In order to monitor its performance of these duties, Health Authorities undertake population health surveillance to identify unmet health care needs and to identify sub-populations at special risk of ill health. The investigation of ill health claims around Nant y Gwyddon landfill

site fall into this second category.

Systems in Place to Investigate Claims of Localised Ill Health

By their very nature these claims are often difficult and time consuming to investigate. They often require human and data resources that are not readily available in Health Authorities. For this reason much of the work is commissioned by Health Authorities to be undertaken by independent outside bodies. In Wales, we are fortunate in that two organisations exist that considerably ease this process. The first is the Welsh Collaboration for Health and the Environment, and the second is the Welsh Combined Centres for Public Health.

Bro Taf Health Authority has considerably strengthened its systems by taking the opportunity of staff changes to appoint a Consultant in Environmental Public Health Medicine. As a result the lead responsibility for establishing and running environmental investigations is centralised and experience will enhance the response to future concerns.

Current Approach

As indicated earlier the ideal methods to investigate concerns are not well defined but there are a number of general principles that are followed. These are:

- (1) The Health Authority acts in conjunction with appropriate other agencies, including local representatives.
- (2) All concerns are taken seriously, from whatever source they come.
- (3) The initial concern must be refined into a testable hypothesis.
- (4) Routine data is reviewed to establish if there is evidence of a problem.
- (5) If evidence is found further specific investigation should be considered; if no evidence is found then the results should be discussed with the person who triggered the alert to confirm that the data held by them matches the data held by the Health Authority.
- (6) If further studies are required then they are considered within the usual commissioning process.

Response by Bro Taf Health Authority to Nant y Gwyddon

Bro Taf Health Authority followed this approach and undertook several studies itself and

commissioned others to undertake specific studies. Appended to this response is a list of the studies undertaken so far (Appendix 1). The recommendations made within these reports have been accepted by the Health Authority and are being acted on.

By their very nature these studies are iterative and take place at the limits of scientific knowledge. For this reason Bro Taf Health Authority is working with community based groups such as RANT both to increase public understanding of the epidemiological methods that can be employed and to harness their skills and local knowledge to inform the process.

The Future

It is likely that work such as this will grow not least for reasons given earlier. The current resource allocations to Health Authorities do not recognise the costs of this work. However, the resource implications should be considered as part of the planning process (HIP). There are difficulties in obtaining the data required to undertake the routine surveillance and initial investigations. In future, collaborative arrangements in Wales will have to be strengthened by enhancing the central databases, clarifying the legal position on access to identifiable patient data for this purpose, and enhancing the multidisciplinary skills required throughout Wales.

Briefing note prepared by:

Dr J M F Temple, Consultant in Communicable Disease Control, Bro Taf Health Authority and

Dr S Hopkins, Director of Public Health, Bro Taf Health Authority.

APPENDIX 1

HEALTH STUDIES UNDERTAKEN RELATING TO NANT Y GWYDDON LANDFILL SITE

All the studies listed were undertaken by, in collaboration with or commissioned by Bro Taf Health Authority.

COMPLETED AND RELEASED

- Bro Taf Health Authority Report on complaints of ill health perceived due to exposure to

landfill site. A descriptive survey. Dr A Mukerjee, T Deacon (Jan 1999).

- Survey of prevalence of sarcoidosis near Nant y Gwyddon. Dr G Richardson (Nov 1999).

WELSH COMBINED CENTRES FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

- Report on the health of residents living near the Nant y Gwyddon landfill site using routinely available data. Dr HM Fielder, Dr S Monaghan, Dr C Poon-King, Professor SR Palmer (Nov 1997).
- Assessment of impact on health of residents living near the Nant-y-Gwyddon landfill site: retrospective analysis. Dr HM Fielder, Dr CM Poon-King, Prof SR Palmer, N Moss, Prof G Coleman (Jan 2000).
- Report on the report on the study of Time to Pregnancy in the Rhondda Valleys. Dr HM Fielder, Mrs C Jones, Prof SR Palmer, Dr RA Lyons, Dr S Hillier, Dr M Joffe (July 2000).
- Welsh Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit. Cancer incidence in the neighbourhood of Nant Y Gwyddon landfill site. Dr J Steward (June 1999).

UK WIDE STUDY DUE TO BE RELEASED SOON

- Small Area Health Statistic Unit. Incidence of congenital abnormalities near landfill sites, UK wide study.

CURRENTLY BEING UNDERTAKEN

- Bro Taf Health Authority review of routine data on prevalence of diabetes in Bro Taf Health Authority.