

Health Protection Team
Public Health Department
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Date 19th October 2016
Your Ref
Our Ref HH/aa
Enquiries to Hazel Henderson

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing in response to concerns raised by the Fairlie Community Council regarding whether complaints of dizziness and nausea could be linked to the towering wind turbines at Hunterston. Although the Public Health Department has not been contacted directly about these concerns, I have written to you because we have a lead role in protecting our population from environmental hazards. As such, I have investigated these concerns further, and write to present my findings. It is important to point out that I have no conflict of interest, and that my role is to provide an objective and scientific assessment of these concerns.

In order to assess whether complaints of dizziness and nausea could be linked to the wind turbines at Hunterston, I have conducted the following:

1. Reviewed the available international scientific research to establish whether wind turbines cause health effects.
2. Analysed (anonymised) local GP data going back 8 years to establish whether these symptoms had increased in the surrounding population since wind turbines became operational at Hunterston.

Conclusions from current scientific research

Use of wind turbines/wind farms is now common in many parts of the world, so there is a range of research available to allow assessment of whether wind turbines are known to cause health problems. I have used the highest quality research that is available, including evidence reviews conducted by independent bodies. Using these methods has enabled me to present an independent view based on the best research that is currently available at the time of writing.

Do wind turbines cause ill health?

The available literature concludes the following:

- There is no peer reviewed scientific data to support a claim that wind turbines are causing disease or adverse health effects in humans.

- There is no evidence for a set of health effects from exposure to wind turbines that could be characterised as a 'wind turbine syndrome'. The evidence research on which this claim has been made is of questionable quality and does not prove causation.
- Assuming that reported symptoms are solely related to an exogenous source (eg. wind turbines) without evaluating for other known causes of these symptoms is not consistent with best practice in medicine.

The scientific evidence does not support a causal link between wind turbines and ill health. However, in order to investigate your question more thoroughly, I have analysed general practice data from 2009 to 2016 to ascertain whether there was an increase in reporting of dizziness since the wind turbines began operating. The data, both for Fairlie and for other areas close to the turbines, do not show any increase in number of people reporting symptoms of dizziness to their GP, following the installation of the first wind turbine at Hunterston. The numbers have been relatively consistent year-on-year.

To conclude, there is no convincing evidence that the reported symptoms of dizziness and/or nausea in the Fairlie Community are caused by the Hunterston wind farm. Although the international literature suggests that wind farms can lead to concerns from the public, these concerns about health impact are not supported by good quality research.

I hope that the Fairlie Community Council is reassured by our investigations into their concerns. I would ask that you share this information with members of your Community Council to help allay any health-related anxieties the public may have about the wind turbines.

In the meantime, I would recommend that any residents who have significant concerns about their health seek medical attention. There are many different causes of dizziness and nausea and if symptoms are severe or ongoing, people would be well advised to seek further medical assessment from their GP.

Yours sincerely



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