

Date: 22 December 2025

Dear Residents of Burleigh Street and neighbouring streets

### **Ongoing Fire**

NHS Lanarkshire's Department of Public Health and North Lanarkshire Council would like to acknowledge the difficult situation you have been experiencing since the fire first started in the summer and the anxiety and concern this will have caused you and your families.

Over the past few weeks, the situation has been aggravated as the work onsite to control the fire has generated more dust than during earlier stages of the work. This dust is likely to be a combination of soot (particles that are produced when fossil fuels such as coal are burnt), ash and possibly windblown soil from the site. We are aware that this is landing in your gardens, cars and getting into your homes. We understand that you will be concerned about this and the impact this may be having on your health.

### **Health impacts of dust**

Exposure to dust containing soot and other tiny particles can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat. Exposure may also induce symptoms such as wheezing, shortness of breath and exacerbations of pre-existing lung conditions (for example, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) and underlying cardiovascular diseases. These symptoms could appear within hours of exposure or several days later.

For residents with pre-existing heart and respiratory conditions, such as asthma, please make sure you carry any necessary medication or inhalers at all times and seek medical advice if your symptoms worsen, by contacting your GP or NHS 24. With the festive period approaching, GP surgeries and chemists are likely to be closed or operating on reduced opening hours. Please check supplies and ensure you have enough prescribed medicines to take you through the festive period.

### **Ways to reduce exposure to the dust**

The process of extinguishing the fire will mean that unfortunately dust containing soot, ash and other materials will continue to be produced until the fire is out. Some days are likely to be worse than others.

On days when work is ongoing at the site and dust is being produced, we would advise residents to keep windows and doors closed to reduce the amount entering your home. We also recognize it is important to keep all homes well ventilated and therefore windows should be opened when necessary to continue to ventilate your home when there is no obvious dust being produced. The council has instructed its contractors to be mindful of ambient weather conditions and to cease work when there may be excessive dust being created and only to resume when conditions ease.

If you get dust on your hands, such as when putting rubbish in the outside bins, it is important to wash your hands to remove the dust and avoid touching your face and eyes until you have washed your hands.

As dust can be brought into the home on your shoes, we would encourage you to wipe your feet thoroughly as soon as you enter your home. You could also remove outdoor shoes while in the house.

Animals can also bring dust into the house on their paws, and we would encourage you to wipe their paws when coming in from a walk.

When walking round the area, please try to avoid any dust as much as possible, for example taking a different route where dust is less noticeable.

Minimise the contact that children have with play equipment that is covered with dust, such as the handlebars of bikes, by cleaning it before use.

### **Advice for gardeners**

The dust that has been produced will be accumulating on some resident's gardens.

- ensuring that protective clothing (including gloves) is worn when working in the gardens
- washing hands thoroughly after carrying out any kind of gardening work
- minimising the transport of soil from gardens on footwear, clothing or tools into the home
- minimising the contact that small children have with soils or surface water
- Thoroughly washing and peeling all home grown vegetables prior to consumption.

### **What monitoring is been undertaken**

Since the fire started North Lanarkshire Council has been monitoring the quality of the air at a number of points in the local area. This has included monitoring the levels of key pollutants, including particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5). Particulate matter is released into the atmosphere through human activities (for example, industry and vehicles) as well as from natural sources (for example, fires). The results from the monitoring have shown that the recorded particulate matter levels are within current Scottish air quality objectives.

North Lanarkshire Council is also monitoring the levels of a number of chemicals in the air which can be produced when materials burn. These results have also been within the permitted levels.

### **What additional testing will be undertaken**

Because of the large amount of dust that is now been produced, North Lanarkshire Council will be undertaking some additional testing of this dust and the chemicals within it.

NHS Lanarkshire will work with colleagues to assess the impact on health.

### **What additional measures are being taken to reduce exposure to the dust**

Unfortunately, the nature of the fire means that dust will continue to be produced until the fire is extinguished. North Lanarkshire Council are investigating additional measures that can be put in place on site to reduce the spread of the dust.

### **How long will this continue for?**

The nature of the fire means it is not possible to give a timescale for when the fire will be extinguished.

We appreciate the anxiety this lack of certainty is causing to local residents but work is proceeding as quickly and safely as possible

### **What happens once the fire is out?**

Once the fire has been extinguished North Lanarkshire Council will undertake testing of the burnt land and put measures in place to deal with any longer issues with the site.

The council will work with local residents for the recovery and restoration of the site.

Everyone involved in the response to the fire appreciates the difficult situation residents have been in and unpleasant conditions the fire has generated and are working to resolve it as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

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