

Jim Patterson, Assistant Director, Dorothy Hodgkin House, 12 Reading Lane, London E8 1HJ

Private and Confidential

Allotment Holders

Aden Terrace,
Church Walk
Queensbridge Road
Spring Hill (Plots 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11)

Our ref: ED/PCO/DF

Your ref: N/A

21st September 2005

Dear Allotment Holder,

Re: Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 78: Determination of Contaminated Land

This letter is to inform you of the results of the site specific quantitative risk assessment which involved Physiological Based Extraction Testing (PBET) of samples collected at the Aden Terrace, Queensbridge Road and Church Walk allotments and at Plots 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 at Spring Hill allotment.

Although contaminants, in our case lead and arsenic, are present in soils at the Aden Terrace, Church Walk Queensbridge Road allotments and in Plots 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 at Spring Hill allotments, at concentrations that exceed Environment Agency Soil Guidance Values, only a small percentage of the total concentrations of lead and arsenic in these soils actually poses a risk to human health.

PBET testing measures this % of the total concentration present in the soils that could potentially cause harm to human health.

Why does only a small percentage of the total concentration of contaminants found in soils actually pose a risk to human health?

Contaminants are often so tightly bound within the soil; that only a small percentage of this contamination present is actually mobile and could potentially pose a risk to human health. The remaining % of the total concentration of the contaminant is “stuck” to soil particles and therefore does not pose a risk to human health.

The PBET test measures the percentage of the contaminant present, which is not tightly bound within the soil and thus poses a risk to human health.

We have reviewed the results of the PBET testing with the Health Protection Agency and are confident given current understanding of PBET testing based on official guidance provided by the Environment Agency that we have accurately assessed the site specific risks to human health that the site poses.

Based on the results of the PBET programme we are pleased to inform allotment holders that the site, in its current condition, **does not pose a risk to human health.**

We regret if our initial assessment, that the site posed a risk to human health, may have caused you concern. However we are required to inform all potentially affected parties of any potential risks to human health that may exist within the London Borough of Hackney if we determine, based on generic guidance, that the allotments could pose a risk to human health whilst we consider site specific methods of assessment. In recognition of the disruption caused, we have agreed a period of one year's free rent with the Hackney Allotment Society.

We propose to further mitigate any residual risks, to provide all allotment holders with plots at Aden Terrace, Queensbridge Road Church Walk allotments and at Plots 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 at Spring Hill allotment with free provision of compost. This compost which will be mixed with in-situ soils will increase the organic content of the soils, thereby binding more of the lead and arsenic within soils, reducing further the percentage of those contaminants that can be released from the soils, potentially posing a risk to human health.

The Council will also be investigating what other measures can be taken to increase the quality and environment at the allotments and will discuss these with the Allotment Society over the coming months.

The London Borough of Hackney also advises, in further reducing residual risks to:

- thoroughly wash and peel vegetables and fruit grown at the aforementioned allotments before consumption.
- wear gloves when gardening
- wash your hands after working in the allotment and before handling food
- wash your children's hands after playing or working in the allotment and before handling food

In conclusion Aden Terrace, Church Walk, Queensbridge Road and Plots 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 at Spring Hill are safe for their intended use as an allotment.

If you require any further information, or require further clarification about this letter please do not hesitate to contact me at 020 8356 4827, and I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely

Donal Fitzgibbon
Pollution Control Officer
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