

News Update

ESS Website

12 June 2026

## **Environmental Standards Scotland launches investigation into the delivery of contaminated land duties in Scotland**

Today Environmental Standards Scotland (ESS) has announced it has launched an investigation into the delivery of the contaminated land duties in Scotland and the effectiveness of the regime. The investigation will consider how local authorities are fulfilling their duties under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, as well as the effectiveness of the wider system that supports the identification and remediation of contaminated land.

Mark Roberts, Chief Executive of ESS, said: “Scotland’s long industrial history has left a legacy of land impacted by past activities including manufacturing, mining and waste disposal. If not properly identified and managed, this contamination can present real risks to human health, our water environment and wider ecosystems.

“Despite the requirement of Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 on local authorities to inspect their areas to identify contaminated land, our pre-investigative work has identified widespread issues, including limited inspection activity, outdated or unrevised inspection strategies and a potential over-reliance on the planning system to address contamination.

“As a result, we have taken the decision to move to a full investigation into the delivery of the contaminated land duties in Scotland and the effectiveness of the regime. We will provide any updates on this investigation on our website and will publish the outcome once the investigation is concluded.”

**ENDS**

Read the [full background statement](#) on the investigation announcement including key FAQs.

For more information, please contact [press@environmentalstandards.scot](mailto:press@environmentalstandards.scot)