



Hillhouse Watch

What has been found around the Hillhouse site, Thornton-Cleveleys, and what you can do.

An independent, sourced summary · September 2026

This leaflet summarises what official reports, research and the companies involved have said about contamination around the Hillhouse industrial site. Every figure is sourced on hillhousewatch.uk. It is general information, not medical or legal advice.

1 What is this about?

PFAS are a large family of man-made chemicals, often called "forever chemicals" because they do not break down naturally. From the 1950s until 2012 the Hillhouse site used **PFOA** to make PTFE, first under ICI and from 1999 under AGC Chemicals Europe. In 2023 the World Health Organization's cancer agency (IARC) classified PFOA as "carcinogenic to humans": a statement about hazard, not a prediction that anyone exposed will become ill.

AGC replaced PFOA in 2012 with **EEA-NH4**, which is newer and far less studied. The Environment Agency's 2023 assessment estimated about 800 kg a year was being discharged into the River Wyre. AGC has said production at Hillhouse is expected to cease by 31 December 2026. Closing the plant does not remove what is already in the ground.

2 What has been found

- **Soil:** PFOA detected in 187 of 199 samples taken within about 5 km of the site in 2024, and in 287 of 291 samples within 500 m in 2025. "Detected" means above the laboratory's detection limit; it does not by itself mean above a screening value. Contamination does not simply fade with distance: the highest reading in the garden soil survey (2025) was in a garden about 630 m south-east of the facility.
- **Gardens:** 71 gardens were sampled in autumn 2025. Most results were below the precautionary screening level for PFOA. Seven properties were placed in the council's internal "high risk" category, which is not a legal contaminated-land decision. In August 2026 the council said the Environment Agency's interpretive report was still awaited.
- **Eggs:** raised PFAS in every egg sample from the four poultry keepers tested.
- **Allotments:** the Environment Agency concluded that Occupation Road and Sandringham Avenue allotments meet the criteria for contaminated land under Part 2A. Formal determination is the council's decision, which we had not confirmed from public records by September 2026. Both allotments were closed as at September 2026.
- **Blood:** on 23 September 2026, 49 residents received results from testing arranged by the law firm Leigh Day. Press reports say most were above the level at which US guidance advises extra health screening. The results describe the people tested, not everyone living nearby, and a blood result alone cannot show whether PFAS has caused, or will cause, a particular illness.
- **Health:** Lancashire's kidney cancer assessment found 14 cases in the small area south-east of the site (2003 to 2022) where about 6 would be expected. It concluded that no further cluster investigation was needed; it used environmental data for context, not to assess exposure or cause. We do not claim PFAS caused anyone's illness.

3 Official advice, as at September 2026

Check Wyre Council's website for any changes.

- Do not eat eggs from poultry kept within 1 km of the Hillhouse site; birds kept for egg laying there should not enter the food chain.
- Wash and peel garden produce, and consider raised beds with fresh soil. Washing cannot remove PFAS taken up through a plant's roots.
- The UK Health Security Agency's advice, unchanged in August 2026, is that gardens can be used as normal: wash hands, and wash and peel produce.
- There was no warning on mains tap water, which comes from United Utilities.
- The 1 km zone is not a measured edge of the contamination, and no official map of it had been published.

4 What you can do

Leigh Day is the law firm investigating possible legal action. Hillhouse Watch is not connected to Leigh Day.

PFASEnquiries@leighday.co.uk · 020 7650 1200

In its September 2026 fact sheet, Leigh Day announced plans for an autumn 2026 community meeting with Dr David Megson and Professor Tony Fletcher. Contact the firm for details.

- **Your GP:** if you have health concerns, you may want to speak to your GP. As at September 2026 the NHS did not offer routine PFAS blood testing, but you can ask for your address and how long you have lived there to be recorded on your medical record.
- **Keep records:** where you have lived and when, whether you grow food or keep poultry, and the dates of any letters or advice you receive.
- **Your representatives:** the local MP, Lorraine Beavers (Blackpool North and Fleetwood), has raised the contamination in Parliament. Your Wyre borough councillors and your Lancashire county councillor depend on your address; find them on the Wyre Council and Lancashire County Council websites.
- **Stay informed:** join the Hillhouse Watch group on Facebook, and sign up to Wyre Council's updates.

5 Not yet established from the sources available to us (September 2026)

- How far the contamination reaches beyond the areas tested.
- Who is responsible for which part of it.
- What is in the groundwater: AGC said it had commissioned investigations; we had found no published results.
- Whether other illnesses are more common locally. Kidney cancer is the only condition for which we have found a published small-area study.



Read more, with every source

hillhousewatch.uk/start-here

A plain-English introduction, updated as new information is published. The website is the up-to-date version of this leaflet.

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