

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig | Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee

Ymchwiliad Microblastigau | Microplastic Inquiry

PL 01

Ymateb gan : Unigolyn

Evidence from : Individual

- To what extent are microplastics, including synthetic microfibers, a problem within Wales' aquatic environment? How does this impact on environmental and human health?

It's hard to know the extent of a problem microplastics / fibres have within the aquatic environment without having done any studies however, I can only imagine that the problem is continually increasing and if microplastics / fibres haven't already been detected within our sealife / salt eg Halen Mon, then I'm sure it won't be long. At the microscopic level of life eg plankton and algae, microplastic / fibres will disrupt this part of the food chain which is the very basis of all life in the oceans

- What are the main sources of microplastic pollution, including microfibres?

Washing of clothes made from recycled plastics and poor quality cheap clothes that seem to be popular amongst people. Disposing of earbuds, babywipes, dental floss, contact lenses etc down the toilet. Just general litter in the street. It is also possible that people are still using make-up / toiletries that contain microplastics despite the ban on the sale of these items.

- How comprehensive is our knowledge about the scale of microplastic pollution and its effects? What should the research priorities be?

Quite minimal I would guess, although I know that Bangor University are conducting studies. Finding the sources to help eliminate them, determining the actually effect that these microplastics / fibres are having and finding a solution to remove what has currently not already been up taken by marine life.

- What is currently being done to minimise the release of microplastics into the environment? What more can be done, and by whom, to address this issue within Wales?

I'm not sure what is currently being done, but more education on the effects and dangers of microplastics / fibres in schools is probably one of the most effective ways of getting the message across. More litter pickers in the streets, whether paid for by the Council or volunteer run. More beach cleans run by the council on beaches that are hard to reach. A change in the type of packaging, either easier to recycle or biodegradable. Clearer warnings on packaging and instructions for disposal, this would need to be done by the supplier of the product.