

Council urged to dispense tablets

PLYMOUTH nuclear Dump Information Group is calling on the city council to distribute anti-radiation tablets in case of a radiation leak from Devonport Dockyard.

People living near the shipyard in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, have already received potassium iodate tablets, which are seen as the vital first defence against exposure to radioactivity.

The joint Royal Navy/city council nuclear emergency document notes that potassium iodate reduces radiation doses absorbed into the thyroid gland, if taken before or immediately after exposure to radiation.

The document defines a 2 km zone for which emergency plans should be made. This covers tens of thousands of residents in Saltash, Torpoint, Wilcove, Barne Barton, St Budeaux, King's Tamerton, Weston Mill, Camels Head, Ham, North Prospect, Keyham, Ford, Devonport, Stoke and Milehouse.

Kevin Owen, chairman of DIG, said: "With several nuclear submarines, radioactive wastes, spent fuel cores and decommissioned reactor in a city with four times the population of Barrow, we in Plymouth must potentially be at far greater risk.

"It must make sense to have prior instruction and immediate access to any measures like taking potassium iodate tablets, which could substantially reduce suffering following a nuclear accident."