



TYNE AND WEAR TRADING STANDARDS JOINT COMMITTEE AGENDA

Thursday, 13 July 2023 at 10.00 am in the Whickham Room - Civic Centre

From the Chief Executive, Sheena Ramsey

Item Business

1 Appointment of Chair

The Committee is requested to appoint a Chair for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

2 Appointment of Vice-Chair

The Committee is requested to appoint a Vice-Chair for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

3 Constitution

The Committee is asked to note the Constitution of the Committee for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

AUTHORITY	MEMBER	SUBSTITUTE
Gateshead Council	Councillor K Dodds	Councillor D Bradford
	Councillor C Buckley	Councillor S Hawkins
	Councillor T Graham	Councillor J McElroy
	Councillor I Patterson	
Sunderland City Council	Councillor C Rowntree	Councillor P Gibson
	Councillor P Walker	Councillor M Mordey
	Councillor J Fletcher	Councillor D Snowdon
	Councillor J Heron	Councillor M Walker
Newcastle City Council	Councillor P Maines	Councillor K Robinson
	Councillor M Lawson	
	Councillor S Lambert	
	Councillor P Lovatt	
South Tyneside Council	Councillor A Best	Councillor R Porthouse
	Councillor S Dean	
	Councillor J Keegan	
	Councillor A Lamonte	
North Tyneside Council	Councillor S Graham	Councillor P Oliver
	Councillor J Hunter	Councillor M Fox
	Councillor T Mulvenna	Councillor J Shaw

	Councillor J O'Shea	Councillor J Mudzingwa

4 Apologies for Absence

5 Minutes (Pages 3 - 8)

The Joint Committee is asked to approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting.

6 2022/23 Final Outturn Budget for the 2023/24 Financial Year (Pages 9 - 10)

Report of the Strategic Director, Resources and Digital

7 CTSI Social Media Marketplace Survey (Pages 11 - 12)

Report of the Service Director, Economy Innovation and Growth

8 Update on the Implementation of New Environmental Legislation (Pages 13 - 14)

Report of the Service Director, Economy, Innovation and Growth

9 Update on Governments New Fraud Strategy (Pages 15 - 16)

Report of the Service Director, Economy, Innovation and Growth

10 OPERATION MILLIE - Prosecution Against Sunderland Based EHIC Card Scammers (Pages 17 - 18)

Report of the Service Director, Economy, Innovation and Growth

11 Update on Government Plans to cut smoking rates and tackle underage vaping (Pages 19 - 22)

Report of the Service Director, Economy, Innovation and Growth

12 Metrology Laboratory Report - July 2023 (Pages 23 - 26)

Report of the Service Director, Economy, Innovation and Growth

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

TYNE AND WEAR TRADING STANDARDS JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, 2 March 2023

PRESENT: Councillor K Dodds (Chair)

Councillor(s): Councillor J Fletcher, C Buckley, I Patterson, Heron, P Walker, Councillor J O'Shea, Hunter, Mulvenna and Councillor M Lawson

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor(s):

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): C Rowntree, Councillor S Graham, S Dean, J Keegan, ALamonte and Lovatt

TW79 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

TW80 MINUTES

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 23 June 2022 be approved as a correct record.
 - (ii) that the notes of the inquorate meeting held on 24 November 2023 be noted subject to it being noted that Councillor T Mulvenna and Councillor J Hunter were also in attendance.

TW81 REPORT AND STATISTICAL RETURN FOR PERIOD TO MARCH 2023

The Committee were provided with an update on the current position at the Metrology Laboratory. The lab is currently operating at full staff, with a Senior Trading Standards Officer post recently being advertised.

Submissions to the lab are consistent and in fact slightly up. There is some business improvement going on in the Saltmeadows area and a share access car park, some car park improvements have been made to make safe for customers and visitors.

The public weighbridge continues to bring in a regular stream of income and the weighbridge test unit is booked in for May when all weighbridges in each of the 5 local authorities are tested.

The annual UKAS audit has been undertaken with a few minor points raised with overall positive feedback on the day.

The lab have been successful in another bid from the OPSS funding, a separate report has been submitted to the Committee.

RESOLVED - That the information contained within the report be noted.

TW82 PROJECTED OUTTURN AS AT 31 JANUARY 2023 - DRAFT BUDGET FOR THE 2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR

The Committee received a report to provide an update on the Projected Outturn for the Metrology Laboratory and the draft budget for 2023/24.

The UKAS fees have increased by 3%, it is important that the laboratory remains competitive, there is a 3% increase in contributions from the 5 Local Authorities.

It was noted that there has been an increase in utilities as with everywhere else. It was also noted that the budget for next year will be balanced.

RESOLVED - (i) That the projected outturn for 2022/23 be noted.
(ii) That the proposed budget for 2023/24 be noted.

TW83 UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEASEHOLD REFORM (GROUND RENT) ACT 2022

The Committee received a report to inform them of the implementation of the Leasehold Reform Act (Ground Rent) Act 2022 ('the Act').

The act puts an end to ground rents for most new long residential leasehold properties in England and Wales. Royal Assent was granted on 8 February 2022 and the Act was brought into force on 30 June 2022.

As of 30 June 2022, landlords of regulated leases must not require a leaseholder to make a payment of prohibited rent.

The Committee were advised that this was something which Trading Standards which would be responsible for enforcing.

RESOLVED - That the information presented in the report be noted.

TW84 LGA PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICES - A HANDBOOK FOR COUNCILLORS

The Committee received a report which informed them of an online publication that is available for Councillors which provides an overview of council Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing Services.

The handbook sits alongside related LGA handbooks on different areas of licensing and is intended to assist all councillors in understanding the key functions of these important but complex services and how they can be used to support a wide range of key council priorities.

Through their work, often although not exclusively with local businesses, public protection services protect different aspects of local life, including:

- Local businesses and the economy
- People, in their different roles as local residents, consumer, tenants, employees/workers etc
- Communities, as places where people live and work, and
- The environment, including animals

However public protection services are arranged there is value in them working collaboratively within or across organisations, as joining the dots between different elements of them is key to optimising practise and maximising increasingly scare resources.

It was suggested that this be circulated to all councillors in each authority.

RESOLVED - that the information contained within the report be noted.

TW85 UPDATE ON THE SUCCESSFUL FUNDING BID TO OPSS JANUARY 2023

The Committee received an update on a successful funding bid to the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) to conduct a safety information activity.

In January OPSS announced there was funding available to support public safety information projects relating to produce safety or legal metrology. They encouraged bids for funding aimed at the most vulnerable consumers, specifically the digitally excluded and those particularly impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. Funding was for short-term projects that could be completed within this financial year and could have been for either:

- Reports on the organisation's current activity
- Scoping proposals on future activity
- Conducting consumer awareness and education activity

After discussions with the 5 Tyne and Wear authorities, the laboratory submitted a scoping proposal.

Within the current financial climate there has been an increase in the use of food banks and other community-based groups to collect and distribute products other than food such as toys and small electrical products, possibly without understanding the safety implications of sharing such products.

The bid submitted to the OPSS was for Trading Standards staff from the 5 local authorities to visit both registered food banks and other community hubs during March 2023 and simply ascertain exactly what goods are being distributed.

Staff will be given a short questionnaire to complete for each site which will be used for returns to OPSS. This project give TS staff the opportunity to engage with community groups, build strong working relationships. Further work could include product safety talks, consumer advice or information on loan sharks or illicit tobacco.

At this time OPSS cannot guarantee further funding, but it is hoped that the scoping project can lead to more in-depth work within the community targeting product safety and those most vulnerable.

RESOLVED - That the information contained within the report be noted.

TW86 VAPING - CALL FOR CHANGE BY LGA AND ASH

The Committee received a report to inform them that in early February of this year, the Local Government Association issued a press release call for changes in the way vapes are packaged and sold in shops.

It has been reported to Committee previously and members of the Committee have previously express that vapes need to be 'out of sight and out of reach' to tackle underage sales.

LGA are seeking strict new measures to regulate the display and marketing of vaping products in the same way as tobacco to crack down on a rise in stores selling to children.

LGA is calling for:

- Vapes to be in plain packaging and kept out of sight behind the counter
- Mandatory age of sale signage on vaping products – it's currently voluntary
- A ban on free samples of vaping products being given out to people of any age

Sanctions should also be in line with those breaching the rules similar to those handed out under the tobacco display regulations.

In a survey by the Chartered Trading Standards institute, 60 per cent of local trading standards services reported high street shops selling illicit vapes or vaping products to children was the enforcement issue that most concerned them. Teams reported a significant rise in underage vape sales last year.

Data from ASH Smokefree GB Youth survey of 11 to 18 year olds in England showed that current vaping prevalence was 8.6 per cent in 2022, compared with 4 per cent in 2021. It was also found that over a fifth of youngsters bought vaping products from newsagents while 16.3 per cent bought them from a supermarket.

RESOLVED – that the information contained within the report be noted.

Chair.....

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**Report to the Tyne and Wear Trading
Standards Joint Committee**

13th July 2023

**2022/23 Final Outturn
Budget for the 2023/24 financial year**

Darren Collins, Strategic Director, Resources and Digital, Gateshead Council

Purpose of the Report

1.1 To advise the Joint Committee of the final outturn for 2022/23 and the budget for the 23/24 financial year.

Background

2.1 The actual revenue outturn for 2022/23 is set out in Appendix 1.

2.2 The budget for the 23/24 financial year is set out in Appendix 2.

Recommendation

3.1 The Joint Committee is recommended to:

- Note the details of the report at Appendix 1.
Note the details of the report at Appendix 2.

Contact: Michelle Pope, Email – MichellePope@Gateshead.Gov.Uk

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Report to the Tyne and Wear Trading Standards Joint Committee

13 July 2023

Report on the concerns of social media marketplace

**Anneliese Hutchinson, Service Director, Economy, Innovation & Growth,
Gateshead Council**

Purpose of the report

1. To inform the Committee of the recent survey carried out by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute which concludes that Social media giant's e-commerce arm causes most concerns for UK's Trading Standards.
2. A new national survey published by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) has revealed that Facebook Marketplace is the online marketplace which is causing Trading Standards and consumer protection professionals the most concern, with complaints about counterfeit, poor-quality and potentially unsafe goods being sold.
3. The online giant, which enables third-party sellers to trade goods on its platform, was criticised by Trading Standards Officers as being unresponsive or uncooperative when contacted about problem sellers. Facebook Marketplace was also criticised for being slow to take action against problem sellers and for enabling misleading product descriptions, counterfeit goods and potentially harmful products to reappear on its platform after being taken down.
4. Over half (53%) of respondents representing around 50 Local Authorities across the UK identified Facebook as the most complained-about online marketplace – more than all of the others combined. In the following order eBay, Amazon, Wish, OnBuy, AliExpress, Etsy, Vinted, TikTok Shop and NotOnTheHighStreet completed the list of online marketplaces most frequently complained about by consumers.
5. CTSI's survey – the first of its kind – also reveals that Trading Standards teams are unable to properly address problems with online marketplaces because of a 'triple whammy' of recurring issues: uncooperative businesses, unsuitable legislation and limited resources. Just 10% of Trading Standards Officers said they have been able to take action against online marketplaces as a result of these three obstacles.
6. Through its work with the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Consumer Protection, CTSI has been identifying issues affecting consumers using online

marketplaces. The APPG's evidence-gathering sessions coincide with the recent publication of the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Bill, which includes proposals to create a Digital Markets Unit which would have the power to hold online firms to account.

7. CTSI's survey found:

- Over half (53%) of Trading Standards Officers said Facebook Marketplace is the most-complained about online marketplace – more than all the others combined.
- The vast majority (90%) of Trading Standards Officers have been unable to take action against online marketplaces.
- Almost half (45%) cited a lack of cooperation from online marketplaces is a recurring problem.
- Nearly two thirds (63%) said the law as it stands is not fit for purpose
- 57% received no response when attempting to contact sellers on online marketplaces.
- 59% said they have been unable to locate details about where third-party sellers on online marketplaces are based.
- 29% said they are unable to deal with complaints about online marketplaces because of a lack of time and resources.

8. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

Contact: Alan Burnett. North Tyneside Council on (0191) 6436621
alan.burnett@northtyneside.gov.uk

13 July 2023

**Update on the Implementation of New
Environmental Legislation.**

**Anneliese Hutchinson, Service Director, Economy, Innovation & Growth,
Gateshead Council**

Purpose of the report

Single Use Plastics

1. In January 2023 the Government announced that a range of polluting single-use plastics will be banned in England. The ban will include single-use plastic plates, trays, bowls, cutlery, balloon sticks, and certain types of polystyrene cups and food containers. This ban will be introduced from the 1 October 2023, allowing businesses time to prepare.
2. According to estimates, England uses 2.7 billion items of single-use cutlery — most of which are plastic — and 721 million single-use plates per year, but only 10% are recycled. If 2.7 billion pieces of cutlery were lined up they would go round the world over eight and a half times (based on a 15cm piece of cutlery).
3. From October 2023, people won't be able to buy these products from any business - this includes retailers, takeaways, food vendors and the hospitality industry.
4. Plastic pollution takes hundreds of years to break down and inflicts serious damage to our oceans, rivers and land. It is also a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, from the production and manufacture of the plastic itself to the way it is disposed.
5. Previous bans, such as banning straws, stirrers and cotton buds, have reduced the damage from these plastics. Before the products were banned, it was estimated straws, stirrers and cotton buds collectively contributed to around 5.7% of marine litter. After the ban, the Great British Beach Clean 2021 reported cotton bud sticks had moved out of the UK's top ten most common beach litter items.
6. The Government is also carefully considering further measures around other commonly littered and problematic plastic items, including wet wipes, tobacco filters and sachets, following the call for evidence on this issue.
7. Future steps that could be explored include banning plastic in these items, and mandatory labelling on packaging to help consumers dispose of these items correctly. A new research project will also look into the impact of wet wipes on blockages in the sewage system and will inform any future policy actions.

8. The ban will not apply to plates, trays, and bowls that are used as packaging in shelf-ready pre-packaged food items, as these will be included in our plans for an Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme – which will incentivise producers to use packaging that can be recycled and meet higher recycling targets. For example, this would include pre-packaged salad bowls and bowls filled with food at the counter of a takeaway.
9. Compliance monitoring of the scheme with retailers will lie with Trading Standards services.

Deposit Return Scheme

10. Recycling plastic bottles and drink cans is set to be easier for tens of millions of people thanks to a new deposit return scheme, the Government announced in January 2023.
11. New plans set out in a consultation response detail that, through small cash deposits placed on single-use drinks containers, people will likely be incentivised to recycle their drinks bottles and cans, reducing litter and plastic pollution.
12. The scheme would include special machines, known as reverse vending machines, and designated sites where people can return their bottles and receive their cash back. In most cases it would be the retailers who sell drinks covered by the scheme who would host a return point.
13. Every year UK consumers go through an estimated around 14 billion plastic drinks bottles and nine billion drinks cans, many of which are littered or condemned to landfill.
14. The new scheme, covering England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, is set to be introduced in 2025, following extensive work with industry to prepare for the necessary changes – including setting up infrastructure and amending labelling. It aims to ensure 85% fewer drinks containers are discarded as litter after three years of its launch.

Recommendation

15. The Committee is asked to note the information.
Further information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/single-use-plastics-ban-plates-bowls-trays-containers-cutlery-and-balloon-sticks#:~:text=Guidance-,Single%2Duse%20plastics%20ban%3A%20plates%2C%20bowls%2C%20trays%2C,use%20plastic%20items%20in%20England>.

Contact: David Ellerington – Newcastle City Council - 0191 211 6119 - david.c.ellerington@newcastle.gov.uk

13 July 2023

**Update on the Governments New Fraud
Strategy.**

**Anneliese Hutchinson, Service Director, Economy, Innovation & Growth,
Gateshead Council**

Purpose of the report

Fraud Strategy

1. On the 3 May 2023 the Government announced its new Fraud Strategy which set out a plan to stop fraud at source and pursue those responsible wherever they are in the world, reducing fraud by 10% on 2019 levels by 2025.

2. To deliver a 10% cut in fraud on 2019 levels by December 2024, the government will:

- establish a new national fraud squad with over 400 new posts and make fraud a priority for the police
- deploy the UK intelligence community and lead a new global partnership to relentlessly pursue fraudsters wherever they are in the world
- put more fraudsters behind bars through better investigation and prosecution processes for fraud and digital offences
- ban SIM farms which are used by criminals to send thousands of scam texts at once
- stop fraudsters from being able to send mass text messages by requiring mass texting services to be registered, subject to a rapid review
- Replace Action Fraud with a state-of-the-art system for victims to report fraud and cyber-crimes to the police
- ban cold calls on financial products so fraudsters cannot dupe people into buying fake investments
- stop people from hiding behind fake companies and create new powers to take down fraudulent websites
- work with industry to make sure that intelligence is shared quickly with each other and law enforcement
- change the law so that more victims of fraud will get their money back
- overhaul and streamline fraud communications so that people know how to protect themselves from fraud and how to report it
- make the tech sector put in place extra protections for their customers and introduce tough penalties for those who do not
- shine a light on which platforms are the safest, making sure that companies are properly incentivised to combat fraud

Recommendation

3. The Committee is asked to note the information.

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fraud-strategy>

13 July 2023

**OPERATION MILLIE - Prosecution Against
Sunderland Based EHIC Card Scammers.**

**Anneliese Hutchinson, Service Director, Economy, Innovation & Growth,
Gateshead Council**

Purpose of the report

To update the Committee on the outcome of an investigation which Sunderland City Council's trading standards team was involved in.

Overview

1. A family who made over £2 million using deliberately misleading websites to trick people into paying for European Health Insurance Cards (EHICs), which were freely available from the official NHS website, were sentenced on the 16th May 2023 at Leeds Crown Court, following an investigation led by the National Trading Standards eCrime Team, which is hosted by North Yorkshire Council and City of York Council. The team made test purchases and uncovered a range of misleading features on the site that undermined the NHS service and added no value for consumers. Nor did it provide the 'check and send' service for consumers that was claimed.
2. This case started as an Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) referral as part of NTS' role as their backstop when traders fail to comply with the ASA's requests. The family were repeatedly warned by the ASA and Sunderland City Council's trading standards officers to stop the offending and failed to make amendments to their website as requested.
3. Siblings Damien Sartip Zadeh (aged 32) and Dale Sartip Zadeh (aged 35) were directors of the companies behind the misleading websites, www.europeanhealthcard.org.uk and www.ehic-cards.org.uk. They were jailed for nine and a half years and eight years respectively after being found guilty of fraudulent trading and laundering the proceeds, between February 2013 and October 2019.
4. Damien was also convicted of engaging in aggressive commercial practices after threatening consumers who complained to prevent them pursuing refunds. Damien and Dale have both been disqualified from being directors for 10 years.
5. Their parents, Diane Sartip Zadeh (aged 60) and Mahmud Sartip Zadeh (aged 62) both of Angram Drive, Sunderland, were found guilty of money laundering and were sentenced to two years, suspended for two years. Both are also required to attend 10 activity rehabilitation days. Mahmud Sartip

Zadeh was also ordered to carry out 200 hours of unpaid work and disqualified from being a director for five years.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note the information.

Further information can be found at: https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/brazen-sunderland-scammers-made-2m-26919661?utm_source=linkCopy&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=sharebar

Contact: Darren Coulton – Sunderland City Council - 07887 339580 – Darren.Coulton@Sunderland.gov.uk

13 July 2023

**Update on the government plans to cut
smoking rates and tackle underage vaping.**

**Anneliese Hutchinson, Service Director, Economy, Innovation & Growth,
Gateshead Council**

Purpose of the report

1. In 2019 the Government set a bold ambition for England to be smokefree by 2030 i.e. reducing smoking rates to 5% or less.
2. One in seven adults (5.4m people) still smoke in England and tobacco remains the single biggest cause of preventable illness and death. Tackling smoking is one of the most evidence based and effective interventions that we can take to prevent ill health. It will help to deliver one of the Governments key priorities to cut NHS waiting lists. Reducing smoking rates not only improves health outcomes and reduces the burden on the NHS, but it also boosts productivity and economic growth.
3. On 11th April 2023, Neil O'Brien, the Public Health Minister, announced a fresh package of measures aimed at helping people give up smoking and stopping children from becoming hooked on addictive vaping products. A series of steps have been announced,
 - I. to stop children and non-smokers from starting vaping
 - II. to exploit the potential of vaping as a powerful tool to stop smoking
 - III. to help more people quit smoking, particularly where rates are highest

Step 1 Stopping the Growth of Vaping among Children

4. A specific call for evidence on youth vaping to identify opportunities to reduce the number of children accessing and using vape products was announced.
5. The consultation, from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities on youth vaping; "[Youth vaping – call for evidence](#)", closed on 6th June. Responses have been submitted from Public Health, North East Trading Standards Association and the Chartered Trading Standards Institute.
6. The Government will also explore issues such as,
 - Regulatory compliance looking at appearance and characteristics of vapes
 - Marketing and promotion

- Environmental impact of disposable vapes but exploit the huge potential of vaping to help adult smokers to quit.

Step 2 Illicit Products

7. Operation CeCe, a UK-wide intelligence hub between HMRC and National Trading Standards, has resulted in more than £7 million worth of illegal tobacco products being removed from sale in its first year and prevented far more illegal activity.
8. In recent times, North East Trading Standards carried out visits providing advice to local businesses and have seized over 1.4 tonnes of non-compliant vapes. Unfortunately non-complaint vapes continue to be found in 2023 and seizures continue.
9. HMRC and Border Force will be publishing an updated strategy to tackle illicit tobacco. It will lay out strategically how we continue to target, catch and punish those involved in the illicit tobacco market.

Step 3 Illicit Vapes and Underage Sales – a new vaping task force

10. The Government has announced £3 million of funds to be deployed for Trading Standards to tackle vaping issues now referred to as “Operation Joseph”. To date the Department of Health and Social Care have not signed off any detail.
11. This however will be a coordination function, delivered by National Trading Standards and likely to be on a similar model to “Operation CeCe”. However due to limitations on the funds, there may be less money for actual operational work.

Step 4 Swap to Stop

12. A ‘swap to stop’ partnership is a scheme where smokers are provided with a vape starter kit alongside behavioural support to help them completely stop smoking.
13. Following successful local pilots of ‘swap to stop’ schemes in many areas, there will be funding for a new national ‘swap to stop’ scheme - the first of its kind in the world.
14. Working with councils and others a million smokers across England will be offered a free vaping starter kit. The scheme will run initially over the next 2 years targeting the most at-risk communities first.
15. The first wave of Local Authorities to act as pathfinders to start a joined-up delivery of a ‘swap to stop’ scheme includes South Tyneside.

Step 5 Incentive to Quit

16. Over half of all smokers i.e. 3 million people want to quit smoking. Some of the most cost-effective stop smoking treatments we have are not currently available in England however working with suppliers will provide access to prescribers to put licenced medications in the hands of people who would benefit the most from them. For example ensuring the availability of proven smoking cessation medicines such as Varenicline and Cystine.

Step 6 Smoking in Pregnancy- a national incentive scheme

17. Nationally, 9% of women still smoke in pregnancy which affects as many as nearly 1 in 4 births in some areas and it increases the risk of stillbirth, miscarriage and sudden infant death.

18. All maternity services in England are establishing pathways to ensure rapid access to stop-smoking support for all pregnant women including the rollout out carbon monoxide testing widely to mothers.

19. A financial incentive scheme will be offered to all pregnant women who smoke to quit by the end of 2024. These evidence- based schemes have proven their value through pilots with a return on investment of £4 for every £1 invested.

Step 7 Smoking in Mental Health – Quitting

20. Poor mental health increases smoking. Smoking increases poor mental health. People with mental health issues are twice as likely to smoke but quitting smoking is as effective at reducing anxiety and depression as anti-depressants.

21. To ensure more people with a mental health condition receive the support they deserve, support will be provided to mental health services to improve the signposting to evidence based support for smokers.

22. At a minimum, all mental health practitioners will be able to provide signposting to specially developed, evidence based, digital quit resources.

Step 8 Tobacco Packaging – Mandatory Inserts

23. The front of cigarette packs has contained ‘smoking kills’ warnings since 1991. This will continue, but there will be a consultation this year on introducing mandatory cigarette pack inserts with positive messages and information to help people quit.

24. In Canada, health-promoting inserts are required by law and have been in place since 2000. Evidence from the experience in Canada shows pack inserts are an effective measure to increase the number of people attempting to quit smoking.
25. To that end the University of Stirling has been commissioned to undertake testing with UK adult smokers and young people to get this right.
26. And this is what is believed to be the crucial points to ensure that England will reach Smoke Free status by the year 2030.

Conclusion

27. Stopping smoking not only has major health benefits as well as economic benefits and the evidence to back this up is overwhelming.

And for these reasons, the Government are;

- Stopping the growth of vaping among children
- Introducing new help for a million smokers to quit
- Increasing enforcement of illicit sales
- Expanding access to new treatments.
- Backing joined-up, integrated approaches
- Rolling out a national incentive scheme to help pregnant women quit,
- Consulting on new pack inserts using modern technology

Recommendation

28. The Committee is asked to note the information.

Further information can be found at: [Minister Neil O'Brien speech on achieving a smokefree 2030: cutting smoking and stopping kids vaping - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Contact: Judith Shewan Judith.shewan@southtyneside.gov.uk 0191 4247891

13 July 2023**Report for period to July 2023**

**Anneliese Hutchinson, Service Director, Economy, Innovation & Growth,
Gateshead Council**

Purpose of the report

To inform the Committee of the work of the Joint Metrology Laboratory for the period and operational duties to present.

Metrology Laboratory**Operational**

1. The laboratory has undergone a series of staffing changes over the past 18 months, including the retirements of two Senior Trading Standard Officers (STSO). As previously reported, the post was advertised, but no suitable candidates were identified. For 15 months the laboratory has been operating successfully with Dave Malone as Laboratory Manager and Steve Rudd as Technical Manager and with the agreement of the 5 Trading Standards Managers, the following staffing structure has been approved:

- Laboratory Supervisor
- Technical Manager
- Technicians x3
- Senior Support Assistant

This structure leaves the laboratory without a STSO but all legal metrology can still be carried out, with Gateshead Officers acting as signatories. This strong structure will give the laboratory flexibility to best serve stakeholders and external customers.

2. To ensure the quality of service provided by the laboratory, all staff will be undergoing training relevant to their roles. The majority can be carried out in-house by senior staff, but some external courses are also required. Dave Malone and Steve Rudd will be attending a UKAS management course, directly linked to laboratory's UKAS accreditation. Steve will also be attending a technical management course.
3. Annex 1 gives the annual totals for 2022, plus the figures for 2021 for comparison purposes. 2022 was another record year with regard submissions, which is also reflected within the financial report. It is also worth noting that the first half of 2023 has been an exceptionally busy period.
4. Plans for a building refurbishment, including a full electrical re-wire, are at an advanced stage, with work due to start late 2023. The full schedule is yet to be confirmed but it is expected that all work will be complete by the end of the current financial year. The laboratory will remain open during the refurbishment and work will be managed to keep any disruption to a minimum. The

refurbishment also includes the introduction of an additional weight's calibration room to the building.

Aid and Advice to Industry

5. The weighbridge test unit (WBTU) was booked by the laboratory in May and each of the 5 Tyne and Wear authorities were allocated the WBTU for a day. The WBTU is used to check weighbridges in the region are operating legally and customers are being charged the correct amount.
6. The laboratory has renewed its contract with Northumberland Council to calibrate their weights and measures equipment and Cumbria County Council have set up a new contract to calibrate their equipment.
7. The laboratory is carrying out UKAS calibrations on behalf of 2 laboratories that are unable to carry out work within their UKAS scope of accreditation. West Yorkshire are having problems with their air conditioning and Lancashire have suspended their own accreditation. This should lead to increased submissions.
8. In this reporting period the laboratory's hire weights have been used by our external partners to assist with the calibration of platforms at paint and pharmaceutical manufacturing sites.
9. The Public Weighbridge continues to be utilised by local industry and other road users. During spring and summer there is always an increase in the number of customers checking their caravans and motor homes are road worthy.

UKAS Calibrations

10. Annual submissions have once again increased, and the numbers are presented in Annex 1.
11. As previously reported, the laboratory underwent its annual UKAS audit in January. All minor points have now been addressed, with accreditation confirmed for a further year.

Product Safety

12. The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) has confirmed the extension of product safety sampling budget for 2023/24. The laboratory will continue as the sampling hub for the North-East, Yorkshire and Humberside regions.

Recommendation

13. The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

Contact: David Malone, Gateshead Council, 0191 4784550 or davidmalone@gateshead.gov.uk

Annex 1

Annual Total 2022

Submissions		Items
244	UKAS M1	3475
32	UKAS F2	217
257	UKAS F1	1726
66	UKAS E2	734
Total UKAS Submissions		6149
42	Sec 74(4)	131
0	NAWI	2
2	Volume	1
0	Traders	0
0	Verification	1
Total Submissions		6284
UKAS Certificates		1174
Non UKAS Certificates		135

Annual Total - 2021

Submissions		Items
373	UKAS M1	3060
37	UKAS F2	222
528	UKAS F1	1959
139	UKAS E2	722
Total UKAS Submissions		5963
36	Sec 74(4)	50
8	NAWI	8
1	Volume	1
12	Traders	67
8	Verification	8
Total Submissions		6097
UKAS Certificates		1086
Non UKAS Certificates		56

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