

**14 February 2019**

**Report for the Quarter Ending December 2018**

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Gateshead Council**

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**Purpose of the report**

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

**Metrology Laboratory**

**Operational**

1. The laboratory continues to support the five authorities of the Tyne and Wear region offering specialist services, equipment and personnel.
2. Training in metrology for trading standards candidates was paused this year as the professional body are changing the qualification and therefore there is a hiatus in training courses.
3. There has been an unprecedented demand on the laboratory with all staff working flat out to meet customer's demands and turn-around times have increased as a result.

**Aid and Advice to Industry**

4. Local weighing machine repairers, chemical, pharmaceutical and aeronautical companies continue to submit their test weights, scales and length measures for calibration and equipment hired.
5. Checks have been made to operational fuel dispensers at Park Road and Cowan Road in Gateshead to ensure that stock levels are reported correctly for audit purposes and calibration certificates issued for their equipment.
6. A small calibration company has asked for specialist help in using accelerometers to determine flow-rates of liquids through pipework.
7. Another local authority laboratory has asked for help on health and safety considerations in their metrology facility as well as providing specialist metrology advice.
8. Northern Ireland laboratory has asked for advice on quality assurance matters for their metrology facility particularly in relation to their UKAS accreditation.

9. An Irish scale company asked for help in preparing uncertainty of measurement budgets to satisfy their customers and their own quality management system.
10. A Gateshead company has approached the laboratory for help with uncertainty of measurement to clear the UKAS non-conformances that were raised at their last audit.
11. The laboratory is currently working with a dairy farmer in Northumberland to prepare and fabricate templates to aid in bottling milk to ensure legal compliance with the Packaged Goods Regulations.
12. A small start-up business from York has started producing stuffed toys and has come to the laboratory on advice with complying the Toy Safety Regulations and submitting some samples for testing.
13. A small start-up business from Gateshead is producing “mud kitchens” and has approached the laboratory for advice on compliance issues and submitted a kitchen for testing.

### **EC Verifications**

14. During this period, the laboratory has undertaken EC Verifications for several weighbridges for weighing vehicles and scales used in chemical companies.

### **UKAS Calibrations**

15. Weights continue to be submitted for calibration and issue of UKAS Calibration Certificates.
16. The laboratory underwent its annual audit by UKAS immediately after Christmas. There were minor issues to deal with, which was expected as the quality standard was changed and this was the first audit against the new version of the standard.

### **Toy Safety**

17. Again only a few samples were submitted by the authorities and they were found mainly to be compliant with relevant legislation.
18. Samples have been submitted via the available funding from OPSS to test various consumer products, this included for example the ballistic velocity for toy guns.

### **Electrical Safety**

19. Samples have been submitted by Hartlepool, in the form of home-made sunbeds as well as the Tyne & Wear authorities.

### **Cigarette Samples**

20. Samples of cigarettes were submitted to the laboratory for reduced ignition propensity testing and were found to be non-compliant with legislation, reports and witness statements were prepared for many authorities outside the Tyne &

Wear region. Of the samples submitted very few passed the tests detailed in the Standard which is a concern.

21. One sample was submitted on behalf of Norfolk Fire and Rescue, with the evidence to be submitted to the Coroner's court.

### **National Agenda Meetings**

22. The laboratory was represented at the UK Legal Metrology Experts Panel.

### **Recommendation**

23. The Committee is asked to note the information contained in this report.

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