

23 June 2022**Report for period to June 2022**

**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 some staff changes with both the Laboratory Manager and Admin Assistant serving notice periods before leaving in December 2021. Allan Winthrop, previously of Newcastle Trading Standards, has been recruited as Senior Trading Standards Officer along with two Technicians meaning the laboratory is now back to a full complement of 6 staff. However, Allan is working on a part time basis that has reduced from 3 days per week down to two days starting from 1st June 2022.
2. Currently and on a temporary basis the Laboratory Manager and Technical Manager role is split between David Malone and Stephen Rudd. Both are long standing members of the team at the laboratory, and both have relevant experience to bring to their new roles. Discussions are ongoing with a longer-term plan on structure of staff for the laboratory and we shall inform committee as and when we have anything approved.
3. The submissions to the laboratory have been constant and consistent with previous periods and years. Turnaround times in returning work to clients with being a staff member down were increased by an additional 3 days. We're pleased to say that turnaround times are now returning to pre-pandemic levels, assisting our customers as they return to normal working patterns.

Aid and Advice to Industry

4. Local weighing machine repairers, chemical, food manufacturers, pharmaceutical and aeronautical companies continue to submit their test weights, scales and measures in for calibration. During the pandemic, many customers expressed their gratitude that we were still providing a service as their businesses would suffer if we did not.
5. The laboratory does offer the facility to companies to hire some of our test weights and there have been several hires of a few tonnes of weights over the last few months.
6. The Public Weighbridge is still being utilised by our clients and providing an essential service to road haulage operators, especially those sending ISO

containers through the ports in line with the Safety of Live at Sea Regulations (SOLAS). The weighbridge has continued to have its six-monthly checks to ensure accuracy.

UKCA Verifications

7. There have been no UKCA verifications submitted in this period only re-verification of existing equipment that has already been placed on the market.

UKAS Calibrations

8. The submissions have been consistent, and the numbers are presented in Annex 1 where there have been more items submitted in 2021 than the previous year.
9. The laboratory underwent its annual audit by UKAS in February 2022. This was the first face-to-face audit for over 2 years due to Covid restrictions. A successful audit with only minor points raised for both mass calibrations and toy testing which have all now been signed off, so the accreditation remains in place for another year. It is expected that they will return for auditing in January/February 2023.

Product Safety

10. As was reported previously the laboratory has been appointed by Office of Product Safety and Standards as the product safety laboratory and sample hub for the North-East, Yorkshire and Humberside regions and as such have been organising the testing of products on behalf of the Local Authorities that we represent.
11. The laboratory has played a pivotal role in the successful prosecution of a trader who was hiring dangerous sunbeds to the public. The same trader was prosecuted by Sunderland Council many years ago before moving to Hartlepool and North Yorkshire. He continued to trade, with sunbeds from Hartlepool tested at the laboratory as part of the current prosecution. The trader will be sentenced in September.

National Agenda

12. The laboratory hosted a meeting between the Lead Officers of Metrology in the Chartered Trading Standards Institute and the new Chief Executive of the Institute to establish policy on metrology provision in the UK. The visit included an open discussion with all laboratory staff and a tour of our facilities.

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

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
Submissions		Items
310	UKAS M1	2533
23	UKAS F2	167
352	UKAS F1	1328
112	UKAS E2	485
Total UKAS Submissions		4513
50	Sec 74(4)	78
14	NAWI	49
37	Volume	65
14	Traders	14
0	Verification	0
Total Submissions		4719
UKAS Certificates		729
Non UKAS Certificates		64