

# TYNE AND WEAR TRADING STANDARDS JOINT COMMITTEE AGENDA

**Thursday, 21 June 2018 at 10.00 am in the Whickham Room - Civic Centre**

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From the Chief Executive, Sheena Ramsey

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Item Business

**1 Appointment of Chair**

The Committee is requested to appoint a Chair for the 2018/19 Municipal Year

**2 Appointment of Vice-Chair**

The Committee is requested to appoint a Vice-Chair for the 2018/19 Municipal Year

**3 Constitution of the Committee**

The Committee is asked to note the Constitution for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

Authority	Member	Substitute
Gateshead Council	Councillor K Dodds	Councillor J McElroy
	Councillor M Foy	Councillor S Hawkins
	Councillor T Graham	Vacancy
	Councillor I Patterson	
South Tyneside Council	Councillor S Dean	Councillor A Kerr
	Councillor T A Dixon	Councillor A Donaldson
	Councillor A Ellison	
	Councillor J Perry	
Sunderland City Council	Councillor A Wilson	Councillor M Beck
	Councillor D Waller	Councillor N Macknight
	Councillor J Blackburn	Councillor D Snowden
	Councillor J Fletcher	Councillor K Waters
North Tyneside Council	Councillor C Burdis	Councillor J Hunter
	Councillor S Graham	Councillor J O'Shea
	Councillor J Harrison	Councillor P Oliver
	Councillor J Stirling	Councillor C Johnson
Newcastle City Council	Councillor N Kemp	Vacancy
	Councillor L Wright	
	Councillor M Lawson	
	Councillor P Lovatt	

- 4 **Apologies for Absence**
- 5 **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 10)  
The Joint Committee is asked to approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 6 **Report and Statistical Return for the Quarter Ending March 2018** (Pages 11 - 14)  
Report of the Strategic Director, Communities and Environment, Gateshead Council
- 7 **Provisional Outturn Report as at 31 March 2018** (Pages 15 - 18)  
Report of the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources
- 8 **Update on Business Plan**  
Verbal Update
- 9 **Code of Practice on Product Safety Recalls** (Pages 19 - 22)  
Report of the Strategic Director, Communities and Environment, Gateshead Council
- 10 **Scams Awareness Month 2018** (Pages 23 - 26)  
Report of the Strategic Director, Communities and Environment, Gateshead Council
- 11 **Trading Standards Responsibilities under the Tenants Fees Bill 2017-2019** (Pages 27 - 28)  
Report of the Strategic Director, Communities and Environment, Gateshead Council

Contact: Sonia Stewart, Tel: 0191 433 3045, Date: Thursday, 14 June 2018

## GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

### TYNE AND WEAR TRADING STANDARDS JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, 22 February 2018

**PRESENT:** Councillor K Dodds (Chair)

Councillor(s): Councillor J Fletcher, D Duggan, M Foy, T Graham, Earley, Hunter, Councillor A West, Councillor J Blackburn, Councillor D Huddart, Councillor S Lambert and Councillor M Lowson

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor(s): Councillor J Perry, Councillor M Mordey, Councillor A Wilson and Councillor Nick Kemp

#### **TW14 MINUTES**

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting on the 12 October 2017 be agreed as a correct record.

#### **TW15 REVENUE ESTIMATES 2018/19**

The Committee received the Budget Estimates for 2018/19 and the projected outturn for 2017/18. The salary estimate includes a pay increase of 0%. It has also been assumed that current income levels will be maintained.

RESOLVED - That the Committee approved the latest budget estimate of £338,811 for 2018/19.

#### **TW16 REPORT AND STATISTICAL RETURN FOR THE QUARTER ENDING DECEMBER 2017**

The Committee received a report to inform them of the work of the Metrology Laboratory for the quarter ending December 2017.

The Laboratory is continuing with its calibration work, EC Verifications and cigarette samples are still coming in. The laboratory manager has attended court as a witness for a case in Middlesbrough.

The Laboratory Manager is continuing to train Trading Standards Candidates and the recent cohort have all passed. Newcastle officer wanted his thanks placed on record for the work undertaken by the Laboratory Manager to get the Newcastle candidate through their training.

The Laboratory Manager advised the Committee that there is an opportunity to submit a bid for funds around electrical safety. The theme of the bid is about the risk of fire due to misuse or lack of maintenance thereof. Councillors were asked to think about any issues they may have in their wards and the team may be able to help out

if they are successful in the bid for funding.

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

## **TW17 METROLOGY LABORATORY REVIEW 2018**

A report was presented to Committee to provide an update on the current internal review which is being undertaken in order to future proof the Metrology Laboratory.

In the Short Term it is proposed that the following actions are undertaken:

- Maintain the laboratory in its present form offering required working standard calibrations and UKAS to E2
- Increase M1 and F2 capability to 50 kg
- Develop a capital replacement programme for business critical comparators, thereby ensuring continuance of business (see Appendix 2)
- Develop a professional web presence so new clients can be aware of services
- Establish a costing for services that is competitive and realistic with regard to overheads
- Develop training programme for all staff

In the medium term it is hoped that the following actions can be undertaken:

- Create room within the Met Lab to allow adjustment of cast iron 20 kg masses, thereby minimising the manual handling of same
- Develop a business continuity plan to include facilities, equipment and staffing to ensure no interruption to offered services
- Consideration given to developing training packages for metrology users
- Marketing campaign to raise the profile of the Met Lab in the North East and UK
- Market research to gain an understanding of Northern England calibration requirements at E2 level
- Attaining accreditation for weighing machines under UKAS
- Researching possible market for UKAS accreditation in volume measures
- Develop a staff recruitment and retention policy for the laboratory

In the long term the proposals are as follows

- Investment of new climate control for M1 laboratory to allow F2 calibrations freeing space in the E2 laboratory
- Have built in redundancy with regards to comparators
- Providing more office and laboratory space utilising the existing building footprint but building a second floor. This would allow conferences, training facilities and meeting rooms for the Tyne and Wear Authorities.

It is proposed that the Committee receive a progress report at its June meeting.

RESOLVED - That the information in the report be noted.

**TW18 NEW ADVERTISING STANDARDS AUTHORITY RULING AND THE EFFECTS FOR THE MOTOR INDUSTRY**

The Committee received a report to provide an update on a recent ASA ruling of what constitutes material information when purchasing a used vehicle.

The ASA considered that vehicles that had been leased out for business purposes and used by multiple users were more likely to have been subjected to wear and tear compared to vehicles that were previously owned by a private owner. They accepted the argument that ex-business single use vehicles might be at least as well maintained as ex-private vehicles but they had not seen evidence to demonstrate this was generally the case.

They considered that if a dealer was aware that a vehicle was ex-fleet because it had previously been used for business purposes, then that was material information likely to influence a consumer's decision to purchase it. Also if a dealer knew that ex-fleet vehicle had been used by multiple users, then that too was material information for consumers to make an informed decision. Because the ads had omitted material information regarding the cars having been previously used for business purposes whilst part of a fleet, they concluded that there were misleading.

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

**TW19 REPORT ON THE CHANGES ON CHARGING FOR THE USE OF DEBIT AND CREDIT CARDS**

The Committee received a report to provide an update on recent legislative changes which affect charges for the use of debit and credit cards.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2018 the Consumer Rights (Payment Surcharges) Regulations 2012 were amended and so brought into force the second EU Payment Services Directive.

Payment surcharging is when a fee is charged for the use of a particular means of payment, such as a debit card, credit card or e-money account. Merchants and retailers themselves will usually incur a payment processing fee for the use of certain payment methods, such as the merchant service charge for processing debit and credit card transactions.

Surcharges were often cited in the airline sector but are also imposed by some retailers in other sectors, including rail, event tickets, cinemas, car dealerships and hotels. The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) estimated that consumers spend around £300 million on payment surcharges in 2010 in the airline sector alone.

New rules prohibit traders from levelling a surcharge in relation to a wide variety of transactions and surcharges are limited in some other circumstances. So for example, cinema or theatre can still charge a booking fee and an airline can charge for choosing a seat.

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

## **TW20 TRADING STANDARDS RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE CARE ACT 2014**

The committee were provided with a report to update on the continuing role of Trading Standards services under the Care Act 2014.

The Care Act 2014 has consolidated existing care legislation and sets out the local authority's responsibility for both older people and people who care for them. It seeks to improve communication between all agencies that have a role to play in terms of safeguarding older and vulnerable people who may be at risk of harm, whether through deliberate act or by neglect.

Trading Standards services have sought to prioritise support for older and vulnerable people by providing advice and working with groups around the following areas:

- Doorstep Crime
- Scams
- National Trading Standards Scams Team
- Illegal Money Lending Team

The Home Office is currently conducting a series of regional seminars which will bring together stakeholders at working professional level from law enforcement, local authorities, the health sector, community groups and third sector organisations with the aim of building the understanding of crime impacting on older people and explore ways to collaborate to improve our response.

RESOLVED - That the information within the report be noted.

## **TW21 UPDATE ON THE VOLUNTARY BAN ON THE SALE OF CORROSIVE SUBSTANCES**

A report was presented to Committee to provide an update on the response provided nationally to the safety issues which concern the safety of corrosive substances.

In March 2016 to April 2017 police recorded more than 500 attacks in England and Wales, double the number five years ago, with the majority of incidents in London.

It is feared that the true level of acid crimes may be much higher than official records show. A Freedom of Information request submitted by the BBC found the Metropolitan Police alone recorded more than 450 noxious or corrosive fluid incidents in London in 2016,

The Government issued a consultation in October 2017 on a proposal to introduce new legislation to tackle offensive and dangerous weapons. A response was submitted on behalf of the region by the North East Trading Standards Association.

In January 2018 quite a few of the UK's largest retailers agreed to voluntarily stop sales of acids to customers under 18 years old. A number of DIY Stores have

signed up to the ban, which will apply to some corrosive substances, including concentrated acids. The Home Office has already proposed new laws to limit the sale of corrosive substances amid continuing concern over rising numbers of acid attacks.

The restrictions will apply to drain cleaners containing sulphuric acid, as well as paint strippers, limescale removers and other cleaning products with an acid concentration of more than 10% or 12%.

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

## **TW22 ILLICIT TOBACCO - "KEEP IT OUT" CAMPAIGN**

A report was presented to Committee to provide an update on the latest activities relating to the control of illicit tobacco.

Illicit tobacco comes in three forms;

- Smuggled – this is tobacco produced by legitimate companies that had been diverted from its intended market and sold in the United Kingdom
- Counterfeit – This is tobacco whether cigarettes or hand rolling tobacco, marketed illegally in packaging simulating legitimate brands
- Cheap Whites – Tobacco produced in factories with no legitimate retail market purely for the purposes of evading taxation and other laws.

In July/August 2012, Fresh North East, a body funded by the 12 regional local authorities ran a campaign called “Keep It Out” aimed at raising awareness of the harm of illegal tobacco and inviting members of the public to report sales of illegal tobacco. The campaign was very successful and a second campaign was undertaken between October and November 2017. Activities included a leaflet drop in target areas, press releases and advertising.

One of the key desired outcomes for the campaign was to supply intelligence to the Trading Standards sections of the local authorities in the region. Across Tyne and Wear there were over 100 separate intelligence reports made relating to individuals both at residential addresses and online as well as retailers.

The intelligence received has led to a number of enforcement activities. Newcastle City Council undertook 17 enforcement visits that netted just over 142,000 cigarettes and 23 kg of hand rolling tobacco. In Sunderland over 10,000 cigarettes were found at a retailer’s shop and his residential address and a raid on an online seller discovered a further 26,000 cigarettes. In addition Newcastle seized 74 bottles of alcohol and Sunderland seized a significant quantity of other counterfeit goods found on the same premises as the counterfeit cigarettes.

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

## **TW23 UPDATE ON PRODUCT SAFETY**

The Committee received a report on the latest developments with regards to Product Safety.

On 9 January 2018, the House of Commons, Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee published an updated report related to the “Safety of Electrical Goods”. The Committee decided to look at the safety of electrical goods, following their identification as the cause of several high-profile fires recently, such as Grenfell and Shepherd’s Bush Green. The number of fires they cause each year is persistently high.

The Committee found that reductions in funding for both local Trading Standards and National Trading Standards are inevitably having an impact on the adequacy of the existing system of product safety in the UK.

The Committee found that progress on improving the safety of electrical goods has been painfully slow, despite a widely-supported set of recommendations made by Lynn Faulds Wood’s independent review, published nearly two years ago.

The Committee expressed concern that there appears to be a significant risk associated with plastic-backed fridge freezers, based on the number of fires associated with them and on testing that demonstrates their flammability. The Committee believes that manufacturers should act now to use safer materials in advance of regulatory changes and that these products should be properly marked so that they can be identified following a fire.

Finally the Committee recommended that due to the fragmented nature of the existing system and the slow pace of change, the Government should carry out and publish a cost benefit analysis of the options for reallocating and concentrating existing resources, both centrally and locally, with a view to combining into a single national policy product safety agency.

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

## **TW24 SAFETY OF LASER POINTERS**

The Committee received a report on the response provided nationally to the safety issues which concern laser pointers.

The misuse of laser pointers reported in the press has caused public concern over the safety of these devices.

The Government issued a Call for Evidence in August 2017 on the market for laser pointers and how they are used.

High strength laser pointers, those with a strength of more than 5mW are easy to make, obtain and use. Shining a laser pointer can be fun and many users have good intentions. However, the Government is concerned that, in recent years, there

have been an increased number of reported incidents of the deliberate misuse of laser pointers with consequences which could have been fatal, examples include shining laser beams into the cockpits of aircraft as they take off and land and young children suffering permanent eye damage as the result of having beams from 'toy' pointers shone directly into their eyes.

The Government pledged additional support to local authority ports and borders teams to stop high-powered laser pointers entering the UK. This includes supporting local authority teams to carry out increase checks at the border, including testing products to ensure they are safe. The support will also ensure local authority teams have access to the necessary scientific, technical and testing expertise.

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**

**21 June 2018**

**Report and Statistical Return for the Quarter  
Ending March 2018**

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**Paul Dowling, Strategic Director, Communities and Environment, 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 ending March 2018.

**Operational**

1. The laboratory continues to support the five authorities of the Tyne and Wear region offering specialist services, equipment and personnel and conducting petrol verifications.
2. The two students who were trained for their practical and oral examinations at the laboratory have since passed their qualification and been awarded their certificates from the Chartered Trading Standards Institute.

**Aid and Advice to Industry**

3. Local weighing machine repairers, chemical, pharmaceutical and aeronautical companies continue to submit their test weights, scales and length measures for calibration and equipment hired.

**EC Verifications**

4. During this period, the laboratory has undertaken only 1 EC Verification.

**UKAS Calibrations**

5. Weights continue to be submitted for calibration and issue of UKAS Calibration Certificates.

**Toy Safety**

6. Again only a few samples were submitted by the authorities and they were found to be compliant with legislation.

**Electrical Safety**

7. Samples have been submitted by Hartlepool as well as Tyne & Wear authorities.

### **Cigarette Samples**

8. Samples of cigarettes were submitted to the laboratory for reduced ignition propensity testing and were found to be non-compliant with legislation, reports and section 9 witness statements were prepared for many authorities outside the Tyne & Wear region.

### **Statistical Return**

9. The statistical return for the period January and March 2018 is contained within Appendix 1.

### **Recommendation**

10. The Committee is recommended to note the report and statistical information.

## METROLOGY LABORATORY

## STATISTICAL RETURN FOR THE QUARTER ENDING March 2018

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Number</b>
S.74 (4) (b) verifications	18
UKAS Accredited calibrations	1300
Sales new weights	
Weighbridge	200
Hire of weights	3
PAT testing	22
EC Verification	1
RIP testing	76

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

**21 June 2018**

**Provisional Outturn as at 31 March 2018**

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**Darren Collins, Strategic Director, Corporate Resources, Gateshead Council**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To advise the Joint Committee of the provisional outturn for 2017/18, subject to the Audit of Gateshead's Accounts.

**Background**

2. From April 2015 onwards the accounts of the Trading Standards Joint Committee are being reviewed as part of Gateshead Councils Final Accounts process. Details are shown in Appendix 1.

**Recommendation**

3. The Joint Committee is recommended to -
  - Be advised of the details contained in the provisional outturn report at Appendix 1.

Contact: Renee Lindsay – Ext 3615

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## Appendix 1

	Budget 17/18 £	Outturn 17/18 £	Notes	Budget 18/19 £
<b>Income</b>				
Fees & Charges	113,000	106,621		123,215
S. 11 Stamping Fees	9,000	5,187		9,000
Levy on Constituent Authorities	218,869	218,869		218,869
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>340,869</b>	<b>330,677</b>		<b>351,084</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
<i>Employees</i>				
Direct Pay	215,986	213,613	1 x Senior Officer (K),	220,967
Indirect Pay	1,142	225	2 x Technical Officers (H),	1,142
	217,128	213,838	1 x Assistant (E), 1 x Technician (E),	222,109
			1 x Clerical Assistant (B/C)	
<i>Premises</i>				
Repairs & Maintenance	7,400	8,638		7,570
Utilities	10,870	11,066		11,393
Rates	8,400	8,039		8,400
Rent	4,160	5,312		4,160
	30,830	33,054		31,523
<i>Transport</i>				
Car Allowances	400	0		400
Vehicle Running Costs	940	1,789		940
	1,340	1,789		1,340
<i>Supplies &amp; Services</i>				
Furniture & Equipment	7,000	21,799		7,000
UKAS Fees	7,000	6,074		7,200
Telphones	1,240	875		1,240
Printing & Stationery	2,340	687		2,340
Insurance	7,120	5,671		6,120
Postage	800	1,296		800
Miscellaneous	24,500	11,166		7,500
	50,000	47,567		32,200
<i>Central Admin</i>				
Met Lab Central Admin	38,632	33,889	D&E recharge £14k, Finance £11k,	38,632
	38,632	33,889	ICT £3.5k, HR £2.7k & Chief Execs	38,632
			£2.5k	
<i>Joint Committee Expenses</i>				
Conference Expenses				
Central Admin	1,280	1,280		1,280
	1,280	1,280		1,280
<b>Total Revenue Expenditure</b>	<b>339,210</b>	<b>331,418</b>		<b>327,084</b>
<b>Capital Equipment Purchase</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10,275</b>		<b>24,000</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>339,210</b>	<b>341,693</b>		<b>351,084</b>

	Budget 17/18 £	Outturn 17/18 £	Budget 18/19 £
<b>Total Income</b>	340,869	330,677	351,084
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	339,210	341,693	351,084
<b><i>Contribution from Reserve</i></b>		(11,016)	
Reserve at 31st of March 2017		(106,891)	
Reserve at 31st March 2018		(95,875)	
 <b><u>Levy on Constituent Authorities</u></b>			
Gateshead Contributions		(39,663)	(39,663)
Sunderland		(54,579)	(54,579)
Newcastle		(55,504)	(55,504)
LACB South Tyneside		(29,344)	(29,344)
LACB North Tyneside		(39,779)	(39,779)
		<u>(218,869)</u>	<u>(218,869)</u>

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

21 June 2018

### Code of Practice on Product Safety Recalls

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**Paul Dowling, Strategic Director, Communities and Environment, Gateshead Council**

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#### **Purpose of the report**

To update the Committee on the latest developments with the important issue of Product Safety Recalls.

#### **Office of Product Safety and Standards**

1. The Government on the 21 January 2018 announced the creation of a new national oversight body tasked with identifying consumer risks and managing responses to large-scale product recalls and repairs.
2. The new Office for Product Safety and Standards is seen as enabling the UK to meet the evolving challenges of product safety by responding to expanding international trade, the growth in online shopping and the increasing rate of product innovation.
3. The Government has promised to continue to work with stakeholders such as consumer groups, manufacturers and retailers to ensure the office coordinates the UK's product safety regime as effectively as possible.
4. This will not lessen any of the legal responsibilities that sit with manufacturers, importers and retailers to present safe products to the market, and to take rapid effective action when safety issues arise with their products.
5. One of the key actions identified as part of the government's response to the working group include:
  - working with the British Standards Institute to provide guidance on product recalls and corrective action,

#### **Code of Practice**

6. In March 2018 the Office for product Safety and Standards teamed up with the British Standards Institute to launch the Code of Practice (PAS 7100) for product safety recall in the UK.
7. The Code of Practice includes details on how a business can monitor the safety of products and plan for a recall, and how Market Surveillance Authorities such

as local authority Trading Standards can support businesses in their monitoring of incidents and their implementation of corrective action.

8. The Code of Practice, developed by BSI, is the first major initiative for the new Office since it was launched by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in January. It follows a recommendation by the Working Group on Products Recalls and Safety to introduce such a Code to further strengthen the UK's already tough product safety regime.
9. The Code of Practice was created with the assistance of leading retailers, consumer interest groups and industry bodies, including Tesco, Samsung Electronics, British Retail Consortium, Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers.

Scott Steedman, Director of Standards at BSI said:

- *“Public interest in product safety is higher than it has ever been and whilst consumer products generally perform without problems, there are times when products can become faulty and require a repair or recall. The Code of Practice was created to ensure that corrective action by manufacturers is taken in a safe and systematic way. The launch of this guidance is an important step in ensuring even higher levels of product safety in the future”.*

10. The Code of Practice comes in two parts. The first part is focused on non-food consumer products and is intended for use by manufacturers, importers and distributors. It provides details on:

- how a business can plan for a recall, including establishing mechanisms to deal with any product safety issue identified,
- managing a possible safety related product recall or other corrective action,
- establishing mechanisms to monitor the safety of products,
- investigating any potential product safety issue,
- reviewing corrective action programmes to ensure that product safety responsibilities continue to be met.

11. The second part is aimed at regulators, specifically Market Surveillance Authorities including local authority Trading Standards. It details how they can carry out their role in ensuring businesses meet their responsibilities in respect of consumer product safety issues by:

- monitoring incidents and analysing data,
- supporting businesses in the preparation of their 'product safety incident plan' (PSIP),
- supporting businesses in their monitoring of incidents and their implementation of appropriate corrective action.

## **Training Event**

12. Officers from across the region attended a training event on the new Code of Practice which was hosted by the Office of Product Safety and Standards in Newcastle on the 23 April 2018.

## **Recommendation**

10. The Committee is asked to note the information contained within this report.

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Contact: David Ellerington, City of Newcastle Council on 0191 2116119 or e.mail  
[david.c.ellerington@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:david.c.ellerington@newcastle.gov.uk)

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

21 June 2018

### Scams Awareness Month 2018

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**Paul Dowling, Strategic Director, Communities and Environment, Gateshead Council**

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#### **Purpose of the report**

To update the Committee on the delivery of Scams Awareness Month in June 2018.

#### **Scams Awareness Month**

1. Scams Awareness Month is a yearly campaign which aims to create a network of confident, alert consumers who 'don't miss a trick' when it comes to scams. It is a true partnership event between Citizens Advice, the Chartered Trading Standards Institute and local authority Trading Standards services.
2. Whether you're an individual consumer looking to protect yourself and your family from scams, or an organisation or group representing consumers, all such efforts during Scams Awareness Month in June 2018 are important.
3. Across the region all local authority Trading Standards services will be engaging with local partners to deliver on Scams Awareness Month.

#### **General Scams**

4. The type of scams that consumers may experience and the types and sources of assistance can be accessed through the following:
  - [Friends Against Scams](#), a National Trading Standards Scams Team initiative, aims to protect and prevent people from becoming victims of scams by empowering communities to "take a stand against scams". Visit their website to learn more about the initiative, including scam awareness training.
  - [30+ Ways to Stop Scams](#) from Money Saving Expert. This guide explains what to look out for, how to protect yourself, and what to do if you're a victim of a scam.
  - [Take Five](#) is a national awareness campaign led by FFA UK (part of UK Finance), with a range of partners, that urges people to stop and think if what you're being told really makes sense. You can read more about the campaign and download resources on [their website](#).
  - Visit [www.takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/advice](http://www.takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/advice) to see their advice on spotting scams, including the "[Scam Academy](#)" [videos](#) and their "[Can you find the fraud?](#)" [quiz](#).

## Online scams

5. Online scams can target any victim, regardless of age and are not just targeted towards individuals.
  - Visit [www.cyberaware.gov.uk](http://www.cyberaware.gov.uk) for advice on the simple ways the public and small businesses can help protect themselves against cyber crime.
  - Visit [www.cyberaware.gov.uk/toolkit](http://www.cyberaware.gov.uk/toolkit) for free and downloadable materials such as posters and leaflets.
  - Visit [Barclays security page](http://www.barclays.co.uk/security). Consumers can see hints and tips on how to keep themselves safe online and protect themselves from fraudsters at [www.barclays.co.uk/security](http://www.barclays.co.uk/security).
  - Take the Barclays digitally safe [interactive quiz](#). You can also view their videos on how you can [take control of your personal data](#) and how to [protect your children's personal data on social media](#).

## Mail and phone scams

6. [Think Jessica Leaflet \[0.58 mb\]](#). [Think Jessica](#) work to protect elderly and vulnerable people from scams which come through the postal system and criminals who contact them by telephone.

## Employment scams

7. SAFERjobs offers free advice and help with problems encountered during the job search. You can [visit their website](#) for more information.

## Investment scams

8. ScamSmart is a communications campaign by the Financial Conduct Authority designed to help prevent investment fraud. The website [www.fca.org.uk/scamsmart](http://www.fca.org.uk/scamsmart) gives investors tips on how to spot the techniques used by fraudsters and hosts the FCA Warning List.
9. [The FCA Warning List](#) is an online tool that helps users find out more about the risks associated with an investment and check a list of firms the FCA knows are operating without its authorisation.

## Pension Scams

10. Visit [www.pension-scams.com](http://www.pension-scams.com) to learn more about pension scams, including how to spot the signs and protect yourself and others.

## **Property fraud scams**

11. Visit [www.gov.uk/propertyfraud](http://www.gov.uk/propertyfraud) for HM Land Registry's advice on how to protect your property from fraud.
12. Go to [www.gov.uk/property-alert](http://www.gov.uk/property-alert) to sign up to HM Land Registry's free Property Alert service which can help protect your property from fraud.

## **Recommendations**

13. The Committee is asked to note the information as contained within the report.

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

21 June 2018

### Trading Standards Responsibilities under the Tenants Fees Bill 2017-19

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**Paul Dowling, Strategic Director, Communities and Environment, Gateshead Council**

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#### **Purpose of the report**

To update the Committee on the proposed role of Trading Standards services under the Tenants Fees Bill.

#### **Context**

1. The private rented sector in England is home to 4.7 million households. Letting fees and high deposits are seen as adding to the affordability challenge for tenants seeking to access rented accommodation. The Bill's provisions are seen as sitting within the Government's aim of *"rebalancing the relationship between tenants and landlords to deliver a fairer, good quality and more affordable private rented sector"*.
2. There is currently no cap on the level of fees that letting agents can charge in England, although since 21 May 2015 agents fees have been required to display a tariff of fees.

#### **Government Proposals**

3. During the Queen's Speech 2017, the Government announced an intention to bring forward a Draft Tenants Fees Bill to tackle "unfair fees on tenants" and "make the private rental market more affordable and competitive". The Tenants Fees Bill received its second reading in the House of Commons on the 21 May 2018.
4. Other action the Government is involved with includes:
  - A new requirement for all landlords to be members of a redress scheme to give tenants easier access to dispute resolution,
  - A new requirement for all letting agents to be registered and members of a client money protection scheme,
  - The introduction of banning orders and a database of rogue landlords and agents,
  - Consultation on the benefits and barriers of longer tenancies in the private rented sector.

#### **Reactions from Interested Bodies**

5. The announcement of the fees ban and the capping of security deposits has been welcomed by organisations such as Shelter, the Consumers

Association/Which? and Citizens Advice. These bodies have actively lobbied for the regulatory/abolition of letting agent's fees.

6. Organisations such as the Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA), the Residential Landlords Association (RLA) and the National Landlords Association (NLA), whilst expressing support for wider regulation of letting/managing agents to drive up standards, do not support the abolition of letting agent fees.
7. These organisations argue that fees cover essential costs which must be met and that tenant's rents will increase because of the ban. There is also concern that the removal of the revenue stream will result in agency closures, job losses and less competition. There is doubt expressed within the sector that landlords will accept significant fee increases and that service levels might decline.

### **Recommendation**

8. The Committee is asked to note the information.

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Contact: David Ellerington, City of Newcastle Council on 0191 2116119 or email [david.c.ellerington@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:david.c.ellerington@newcastle.gov.uk)

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