

TYNE AND WEAR TRADING STANDARDS JOINT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2015 AT 10.00AM

PRESENT:

GATESHEAD COUNCIL

Councillor K Dodds (Chair)
Councillor T Graham

NEWCASTLE CITY COUNCIL

Councillor M Lowson
Councillor N Kemp
Councillor D Huddart

NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL

Councillor J O'Shea
Councillor S Graham

SOUTH TYNESIDE CITY COUNCIL

Councillor A West

SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL

Councillor J Blackburn
Councillor L Scanlon

TW/26/15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Foy, Gateshead Council, Councillor M Mordey and Councillor D MacKnight, Sunderland Council, Cllr A McMillan and Councillor T Dixon, South Tyneside Council.

TW/27/15. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the last meeting held on 24 September 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

TW/28/15. REVIEW OF THE AUDIT IN RELATION TO 2014-2015 ACCOUNTS

The Committee received the findings from the 2014-15 Audit of Accounts, the Issues Arising Report and the corrected Annual Return.

RESOLVED - That the findings of the 2014-15 Audit of the Trading Standards Joint Committee be accepted.

TW/29/15. CHANGE IN AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee has been advised of changes in audit arrangements from the financial year 2015-16 onwards. Joint committees previously had a statutory obligation to prepare accounts but this was repealed on 1 April 2015. However, it was proposed that the accounts process should remain the same for this Joint Committee and that it should be included in Gateshead's statutory external audit process and be risk assessed by Gateshead's Internal Audit Section.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the proposal that the accounts' preparation process remains the same be accepted.
 - (ii) That the proposal that the Joint Committee/Metrology Laboratory be risk assessed by Gateshead's Internal Audit Section and placed within the Audit Plan be accepted.

TW/30/15. REPORT AND STATISTICAL RETURN FOR THE QUARTER ENDING SEPTEMBER 2015

The Committee received a report outlining the work of the Joint Metrology Laboratory for the quarter ending September 2015 and the statistical return for July to September 2015.

The laboratory is currently providing training for professional examinations and six candidates have confirmed attendance. The laboratory is also involved in advising industries around suitability of equipment. A number of local authorities continue to submit cigarette samples for testing.

It was suggested that that may be more opportunities to be proactive around the Metrology Laboratory's aid and advice to industry. Whilst acknowledging that there may be capacity issues it was considered that this was worth examining.

It was noted that the budget estimates for the forthcoming financial year would be presented to the next meeting of the Joint Committee on 25 February 2016.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

TW/31/15.

TRADING STANDARDS AND THE CARE ACT 2014

The Committee has been advised of the contribution that the Trading Standards Services make to safeguarding older and vulnerable people. The Care Act 2014 sets out local authority's responsibility for older people and carers.

Trading Standards work with partner agencies and teams, for example by passing intelligence and evidence to social care teams, community safety and safeguarding. In addition, registered trader schemes are in place in some authorities and Trading Standards respond to doorstep crime and scams by raising awareness amongst older more vulnerable people and neighbours about the potential harm.

It was agreed that a representative from the National Illegal Money Lending Team be invited to give a presentation on its campaign against loan sharks at the next meeting.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the information be noted.
 - (ii) That a representative of the National Illegal Money Lending Team be invited to the next meeting as outline above.

TW/32/15.

REPORT ON ACTIVITY AROUND FIREWORKS IN 2015

The Committee has been informed of the activities of the Trading Standards Services in relation to fireworks in the period preceding 5 November 2015.

Partnership work was carried out between the Trading Standards Services, Northumbria Police and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service. Joint visits were conducted to known retailers of fireworks. There was also a partnership focus on the 'Darker Nights' campaigns which are aimed to reduce anti-social behaviour, particularly in the run up to bonfire night.

Trading Standards visited premises and produced guidance around under age sales. Inspection of stock showed all stock was marked correctly. There were 10 test purchases made and from that there were no sales noted, which suggests that young people are less able to access fireworks. In addition, the number of premises registered to sell fireworks is reducing and the message around sales from private dwellings continues to be reinforced.

- RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

TW/33/15.

UPDATE ON THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN'S HALLOWEEN COSTUMES

The Committee has received an update on product safety in relation to children's Halloween costumes. BBC Watchdog publicised the safety of children's costumes and the Chief Fire Officer's Association called for children's fancy dress clothing to meet the same safety standards as children's nightclothes, and for further research into the labelling of adult clothing.

A Halloween safety poster campaign has been developed by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills following consultation with relevant partner organisations.

The Business Minister commissioned a sampling programme on the safety of Halloween costumes, coordinated by Newcastle City Council. 350 costumes were tested for compliance with British Standard EN71. The British Standards Institute has called a joint meeting in December to discuss the safety of toys and textiles.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted and further updates on this matter be received as appropriate.

TW/34/15.

UPDATE ON THE REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON CONSUMER AND COMPETITION POLICY FOR SCOTLAND

The Committee has been advised of a consumer policy by Scottish Government.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

TW/35/15.

UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE PRODUCT SAFETY FOCUS GROUP

The Committee has been updated on the latest safety developments of the national Product Safety Focus Group. The purpose of the group is to discuss key issues concerning the safety of consumer goods. The group consists of representatives from all regions and meets twice per year.

The current major issues of concern discussed by the group are sunbeds, niche cosmetic products, Hover Boards and children's costumes.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

TW/25/15.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 25 February 2015 at 10.00 am