

21 March 2024**Report for period to March 2024**

**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 is operating at full-strength with 6 full-time members of staff.

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

All 6 members of staff are available to assist officers from the 5 authorities.

2. With what is still a relatively new workforce, investment is being made on relevant training courses. As previously mentioned, Dave Malone and Steve Rudd have completed the UKAS Laboratory Manager's Course. Steve has also completed a 2-part CTSI Technical Laboratory Management course.

Dave and Steve will be attending a UKAS Auditors course in June. To assist with internal auditing in the future, Tony Dunn from Gateshead TS may also attend this course.

Further courses have been identified as the Service looks to invest in staff and to enable staff competency.

3. Submissions to the laboratory over the 12-month calendar period have once again increased. Attached as Annex 1 to this report are annual totals of submissions for 2023, with 2022 added for comparison. Submissions are up by over 18%, which should have a positive effect on end of year finances.

There has also been an increase of 25% of working standards submissions from local authorities other than Tyne and Wear.

This has been a record year with regard to submissions and it is testament to the staff and new structure that turnaround times have remained constant.

4. There is now a confirmed start date for phase 1 of the building refurbishment. A full electrical re-wire will commence on Monday 6th May. As previously

mentioned, the aim is to remain operational during the work, keeping delays to customers to a minimum, as well providing the same level of service to stakeholders.

Training

5. Over the last year the laboratory has acted as a training hub for trainees from the North-East Trading Standards Association (NETSA). Officers from this group are now on the verge of qualifying as Trading Standards Officers.
6. There are current discussions with the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) to become a training site for future training courses.
7. All training facilities remain available for T&W officers for refresher training or to train new staff.

Aid and Advice to Industry

8. The laboratory has booked the weighbridge test unit (WBTU) for a week in May and November to enable each of the 5 Tyne and Wear authorities to check weighbridges in their areas. The WBTU is available to each authority for 1 day in May and November.

UKAS Calibrations

9. A record year for submissions, as reflected within in Annex 1.
10. The laboratory's annual UKAS audit is scheduled for 3rd and 4th of April.

Product Safety

11. As the Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) regional hub for product safety, the laboratory serves not only the North-East but also Yorkshire and Humberside. This year the whole sampling budget has not been utilised, but there has still been some essential testing carried out. Some of the products tested include: sunbeds, garden swings, electric blankets, bath bombs, electric nail lamps and a range of toys.

Recommendation

12. 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 2023

Submissions		Items
244	UKAS M1	4026
32	UKAS F2	280
257	UKAS F1	1965
66	UKAS E2	1063
Total UKAS Submissions		7334
42	Sec 74(4)	95
0	NAWI	3
2	Volume	2
0	Traders	0
0	Verification	2
Total Submissions		7436
Submissions		Items
373	UKAS M1	3475
37	UKAS F2	217
528	UKAS F1	1734
139	UKAS E2	731
Total UKAS Submissions		6157
36	Sec 74(4)	131
8	NAWI	2
1	Volume	1
12	Traders	0
8	Verification	1
Total Submissions		6292