

**14 November 2024****Report for period to November 2024**

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**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 with 5 out of 6 full-time members of staff. Our Senior Support Assistant has submitted her notice and is moving to a new role within the NHS. We hope to find a suitable replacement and return to full strength as soon as possible.
  - Laboratory Supervisor
  - Technical Supervisor
  - Metrology Technicians x3
  - Senior Support Assistant (currently vacant)

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

This structure above is continuing to be a success, specifically with regard to turnaround times of calibration items and assisting TSO's with their metrology related tasks such as:

- fuel forecourt inspections
  - inspections within food manufacturers and suppliers
  - checking of baggage scales at Newcastle airport.
2. Staff training continues to be a priority. Dave Malone and Steve Rudd are booked onto the UKAS Uncertainty of Measurement Course in March 2025. An essential course as part of the Laboratory's UKAS accreditation.

Courses for the 3 Metrology Technicians over the last couple of months have included:

- Introduction to Metrology - A course covering the theory of metrology, aimed at giving the technicians a better understanding of both the legal work they do for Trading Standards and the accredited calibrations they do for local industry.
- Forklift Truck - An essential qualification for the day-to-day running of the laboratory.
- Manual Handling – Due to the nature of the work carried out at the lab, we arranged a course for all members of staff that will hopefully assist how we work and help prevent injuries. This is a course additional to the online H&S course we do within Gateshead Council.

3. Annex 1 gives the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter totals for 2024, plus the corresponding figures for 2023 for comparison purposes. Submissions to the Laboratory are continuing to increase.
4. With the first phase of the building refurbishment now complete, the plans for stage 2 are at an advanced stage. Stage 2 includes the addition of a second dedicated weight calibration laboratory, general repairs and painting and decorating. A second lab should allow for increased productivity and reduced turnaround times. No date has been agreed but we're aiming for the work to be carried out early in 2025.
5. The Laboratory is continuing to work with North East Trading Standards Association (NETSA), acting as a hub for Trading Standards trainees throughout the region, including those from Tyne & Wear. The equipment and facilities at the laboratory are ideal for legal metrology training.

### **Aid and Advice to Industry**

6. The weighbridge test unit (WBTU) is booked for the week of 11-15 of November and each of the 5 Tyne and Wear authorities are allocated the WBTU for a day. The WBTU is used to check weighbridges in the region are operating legally and customers are being charged the correct amount.
7. In this reporting period the laboratory's hire weights have been used by our external partners to assist with the calibration of platforms at paint, pharmaceutical and fertiliser manufacturing sites. They have also been used to assist with the verification/reverification of scales within the region by approved Trading Standards Officers.
8. The public weighbridge continues to be utilised by regular business customers to assist with their day-to-day operations.

### **United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) Calibrations**

9. Annual submissions have once again increased, and the numbers are presented in Annex 1.
10. The laboratory's next UKAS audit is booked for January 2025. Audits are carried out on an annual basis and over a 4-year period carry out a 100% check of the laboratory's quality management system and accredited calibrations. The mass calibrations we carry out, provide a vital service to local industry including pharmaceutical, engineering and food manufacturer's.

### **Product Safety**

11. The laboratory continues to operate as the sampling hub for the North-East, Yorkshire and Humberside regions, managing a budget of £25,000 to be used for product safety on behalf of the Office for Product Safety and Standards. Recently, North Tyneside Council Trading Standards has utilised the budget to cover the costs of testing products seized from a furniture warehouse. The budget covered the cost of transportation to Manchester and accredited testing. All products tested, failed.

### **Recommendation**

12. The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

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## Annex 1

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Totals 2024

Submissions		Items
161	UKAS M1	780
21	UKAS F2	73
132	UKAS F1	525
46	UKAS E2	225
<b>Total UKAS Submissions</b>		<b>1603</b>
19	Sec 74(4)	21
0	NAWI	0
1	Volume	0
0	Traders	0
0	Verification	4
<b>Total Submissions</b>		<b>1628</b>
<b>UKAS Certificates</b>		<b>247</b>
<b>Non UKAS Certificates</b>		<b>8</b>

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Totals 2023

Submissions		Items
151	UKAS M1	682
13	UKAS F2	41
128	UKAS F1	533
48	UKAS E2	278
<b>Total UKAS Submissions</b>		<b>1534</b>
18	Sec 74(4)	28
0	NAWI	0
2	Volume	0
0	Traders	0
0	Verification	2
<b>Total Submissions</b>		<b>1564</b>
<b>UKAS Certificates</b>		<b>261</b>
<b>Non UKAS Certificates</b>		<b>6</b>