

REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE AGENDA



Thursday 24 September 2015

at 9.30 am

**in Committee Room B
at the Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

MEMBERS: REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

Councillors S Akers-Belcher, Clark, Cook, Cranney, Lindridge, Morris and Thompson

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 28 August 2015 (*previously published*)

4. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

No items

5. KEY DECISIONS

- 5.1 Amendments to the Compass Choice Based Lettings System (*Assistant Director (Regeneration)*)

6. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

- 6.1 Quarterly Housing Report April - June 2015/16 - *Assistant Director (Regeneration)*
6.2 Health and Safety Service Plan 2015/16 - *Director of Public Health*



7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

No items

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

FOR INFORMATION

Date of next meeting – Friday 23 October 2015 at 9.30am in the Civic Centre,
Hartlepool



REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

24 September 2015



Report of: Assistant Director (Regeneration)

Subject: AMENDMENTS TO THE COMPASS CHOICE BASED
LETTINGS SYSTEM

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

- 1.1 Key Decision test (ii). Forward Plan Reference No. RN 11/15.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 Members of the Committee are asked to approve amendments to how properties are advertised on the Compass Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Scheme.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The amendments that are proposed to the current system have been developed as part of a response to the Welfare Reform Act 2012 to make it more flexible and responsive to housing need and demand.
- 3.2 Since the implementation of the Welfare Reform Act 2012, Registered Providers and Local Authorities have experienced low demand for certain types of accommodation in specific locations.
- 3.3 The five Tees Valley Local Authorities and the Registered Provider partners who form the Compass CBL Partnership have consulted on improvements to the way that properties are currently advertised.
- 3.4 It is important to note that these amendments will not change or amend the existing priority groups or the order in which applicants will qualify for a property. The assessment for a priority will remain the same as per the current Compass Common Allocation Policy.
- 3.5 Lettings will continue to be made timely and smartly, offering choice and transparency and there will be no change to this process which has been well received by customers.

3.6 The following amendments are proposed as to how properties are allocated on the CBL Scheme.

- Enable a property to be added to the Compass scheme any day of the week. This will reduce delays in waiting to advertise a property that becomes available and should lead to quicker relet times, therefore reducing rent loss.
- To advertise properties for one week or longer (if no one has bid) until a bid has been received.
- After a week's advertising cycle the landlord has the facility to end and allocate the property if there is a customer interested for an immediate offer of accommodation, meeting the policy and property criteria.
- Allow customers to make unlimited bids for available properties to maximise their chance of qualifying for a property. This will effectively remove the current 3 bid restriction.
- Take details of customers' areas of choice to enable an auto bid function for any properties not being advertised for a full week to ensure no one waiting on this area or property type will miss out on an offer. The current areas that applicants can choose from will be reviewed where necessary and larger areas such as Owton Manor will be divided up to allow applicants more choice. In addition applicants will be able to have more than 3 areas of choice when making their housing application, although they will still be able to specify their 1st, 2nd and 3rd preferred areas. Applicants will also still be able to bid on properties that they are not directly matched to.
- In specific circumstances, some immediately available properties may be advertised on the system allowing for an immediate allocation by triggering an auto bid facility. This means that everyone registered on the system requesting this area and property type will be put forward for the property within a priority order without having to make a bid themselves. The text on the property advert will clearly state any properties that may be advertised for less than a weeks' bidding cycle.

3.7 The existing 3 offer policy will still apply in Hartlepool and any decision about an unreasonable refusal will only apply to bidders and not for automated bid matching.

3.8 Efficiencies will derive from the new way of working and improved information and advice will be offered to applicants. Advice and assistance will be available at the front end of the process to avoid confusion with applicants.

- 3.9 Applicants will, however, need to be advised to check the Compass website more often to see when new properties are added during the week. However, the majority of properties will be continue to be advertised on the traditional bidding cycle (currently Thursday to Tuesday).

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Consultation took place between 20th July and 24th August 2015 via the CBL website, partner organisations websites and a questionnaire with customers. In addition Councillors were offered a briefing session via Members Services.
- 4.2 There were a total of 652 respondents to the consultation across Tees Valley. The results from the consultation are summarised in Section 5.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Question 1 within the scheme consultation asked, *“Do you agree that properties should be advertised any day of the week?”*
- 5.1.1 The majority of responses to the consultation replied **yes** to this question (82.52%).
- 5.2 Question 2 within the scheme consultation asked, *“Do you agree that properties can be advertised on a continuous cycle if there is no demand?”*
- 5.2.1 The majority of responses to the consultation replied **yes** to this question (89.72%).
- 5.3 Question 3 within the scheme consultation asked, *“Do you agree that when a property has been advertised for a week and there have been no bids that landlords can allocate to the next customer who meets the criteria?”*
- 5.3.1 The majority of responses to the consultation replied **yes** to this question (83.90%).
- 5.4 Question 4 within the scheme consultation asked, *“Do you agree that the restriction on the number of bids you can place (currently 3) should be removed so customers can bid on as many available properties as they wish?”*
- 5.4.1 The majority of responses to the consultation replied **yes** to this question (73.77%).
- 5.5 Question 5 within the scheme consultation asked, *“Do you agree that customers should be asked to provide more detail on all their areas of choice and property requirements so that an automatic bid can be*

triggered and therefore ensuring that they do not miss out on an offer of accommodation?”

5.5.1 The majority of responses to the consultation replied **yes** to this question (73.47%).

5.6 Question 6 within the scheme consultation asked, “*Do you agree if a property is immediately available to let that the landlord can make an immediate allocation by creating a shortlist directly from Compass using the automatic bid facility as described in question 5 (Note – the shortlist will still be in order of priority)?*”.

5.6.1 The majority of responses to the consultation replied **yes** to this question (68.56%).

6. RISK IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no risk implications from this report.

7. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Amendments to the scheme will result in a number of changes that will need to be made to the existing ICT system. It is not expected that these costs will be excessive, all partners involved in the scheme will make an equal contribution and these costs are usual in the ongoing maintenance of the allocations system.

8. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 The proposed amendments have taken into account existing housing legislation, statutory and regulatory guidance.

9. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY

9.1 There are no child and family poverty implications from this report.

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

10.1 There are no equality or diversity implications from this report.

11. SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 CONSIDERATIONS

11.1 There are no Section 17 Implications from this report.

12. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.1 There are no staff considerations from this report.

13. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 13.1 There are no asset management considerations from this report.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 Committee is recommended to approve the proposed amendments to how properties are advertised on the Compass CBL Scheme.

15. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 Adoption of the scheme amendments is recommended in order to enable available properties to be advertised in a more flexible way on the CBL System whilst maintaining choice and transparency for customers.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 16.1 There are no background papers for this report.

17. CONTACT OFFICER

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REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

24 September 2015



Report of: Assistant Director (Regeneration)

Subject: QUARTERLY HOUSING REPORT APRIL - JUNE
2015/16

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Non key decision.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To update the Regeneration Services Committee about progress across key areas of the Housing Service relating to Empty Homes, Enforcement activity, Selective Licensing, Disabled Facilities Grants, Housing allocations, Housing Advice & Homelessness Prevention and Housing Management activity during the first quarter of 2015/16. The Local Lettings Agency.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 This report provides an update on progress and benchmarking across key areas of the Housing Service during Quarter 1, 2015/16 and updates the last report presented to the Regeneration Services Committee on 16th July 2015.

4. PROPOSALS

4.1 The report contains no proposals and is for information only.

5. EMPTY HOMES UPDATE

5.1 The target for bringing long term empty homes back into use during 2015/16 is 60 and a total of 17 properties have been brought back into use during the first quarter of the year.

5.2 In line with the Empty Homes Strategy the Council continues to take forward enforcement activities to encourage and enforce owners to bring long term empty homes back into use. The enforcement activity is led by the Council's 'Top 20 empty homes' list.

- 5.3 During the course of Quarter 1, Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) activity has been progressed with regards to one property. This CPO enforcement action could take a further 6 to 18 months depending on whether the owner(s) come forward and appeal against the CPO.
- 5.4 The Council successfully acquired 8 properties through the Empty Property Purchase Scheme (EPPS) Phase 2 during the first quarter of 2015/16. Following the refurbishment of these properties they will be let at 80% of market rent. This has proved very popular with the tenants who have rented properties from Phase 1 of the Empty Property Purchase Scheme. There are a further 52 empty properties to be acquired by 31st March 2018.
- 5.5 Much of the work that was ongoing at the end of Quarter 4, 2014/15 was completed during Quarter 1 as part of the Baden Street Scheme. Since the scheme commenced, 19 properties have been brought back into use from being long-term empty homes (eight of which have been acquired, refurbished and let through the EPPS).
- 5.6 There was one remaining landlord who is considering options for bringing his empty property back into use through the scheme; selling the property or as part of the Empty Property Lease scheme operated by Housing Hartlepool.

6. ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

- 6.1 The enforcement update encompasses a number of key areas, including housing conditions, housing related statutory nuisance and problematic empty properties.
- 6.2 Table 1 sets out the requests that have been received by the service during the course of the year so far. The previous year's figures are shown in brackets for comparison purposes.

Table 1 – Enforcement Team Service Requests

| Request Type | Number and % of Total Number by Quarter 2015/16 | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|-----------|--|-----------|--|-----------|--|
| | Quarter 1 | | Quarter 2 | | Quarter 3 | | Quarter 4 | |
| Disrepair | 36 (47) | | (57) | | (72) | | (89) | |
| Empty & Insecure Property | 41 (32) | | (39) | | (34) | | (30) | |
| Empty property Nuisance | 22 (15) | | (28) | | (8) | | (23) | |
| Unauthorised Encampment | 6 (1) | | (3) | | (0) | | (0) | |
| Nuisance from Adjacent Property | 4 (19) | | (20) | | (14) | | (12) | |
| Nuisance from Occupied | 76 | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--|-------|--|-------|--|-------|--|
| Property | (93) | | (58) | | (29) | | (49) | |
| Filthy & Verminous | 2 (2) | | (1) | | (0) | | (0) | |
| Defective Drainage | 3 (3) | | (5) | | (5) | | (6) | |
| HMO Advice/ Complaint | 5 (3) | | (9) | | (7) | | (3) | |
| Immigration Visit | 2 (2) | | (0) | | (1) | | (2) | |
| Total Number of Requests | 197 (217) | | (221) | | (166) | | (214) | |

- 6.3 The majority of these service requests fall into three main areas:
- Disrepair
 - Empty Properties
 - Nuisance
- 6.4 The overall number of service requests received during the quarter reduced from the same quarter in 2014/15 and compared to the previous quarter were down by 10%.
- 6.5 The number of disrepair complaints dropped sharply from the previous quarter and was lower than the same quarter in 2014/15 by 23%.
- 6.6 Hazards were removed from 11 privately rented properties during this quarter through a combination of enforcement and informal action. One legal notice was served to remedy a housing defect.
- 6.7 The number of complaints regarding insecure empty properties increased this quarter from the previous quarter and the same quarter last year. 12 properties require the serving of legal notices to make them secure, 5 of which were not complied with and works were carried out in default, which meant that the Council organised the works and re-charged the owner.
- 6.8 There was an increase in complaints about nuisance properties (both occupied and empty) from 84 in the previous quarter to 102 in this and these accounted for more than half of all complaints received during the quarter.
- 6.9 In addition to the reactive work carried out, officers have undertaken proactive work in relation to identifying problematic empty and nuisance properties and those with the potential to be dealt with using Section 215 powers, through area based targeting in a number of areas, including the Carr/Hopps Street Regeneration area, Belle Vue, Burbank Street, Everett Street, Oxford Road and Cornwall Street areas.
- 6.10 During regular surveys of the Carr/Hopps regeneration area, properties in the ownership of the Council are monitored so that any issues with nuisances or security are dealt with promptly. During this quarter there were 36 properties where issues were identified and rectified following such surveys.

- 6.11 Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 215 action was undertaken in relation to 17 properties at various locations across Hartlepool. This action focused on improving the visual external appearance of properties and improving the amenity of the local area.
- 6.12 Mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) requires HMOs, 3 or more storeys in size with 5 or more occupants to be licensed. These licences remain in force for 5 years, unless there are circumstances that require a variation or revocation. Whilst a number of requests were made for HMO advice and application packs during Quarter 1, no further licences were issued as properties fell outside of HMO licensing requirements. The total number of HMO licences in force at the end of this quarter was 15.

7. SELECTIVE LICENSING UPDATE

- 7.1 Following approval by Committee in January, the second Selective Licensing designation was due to come into force from 6th July 2015 and will remain in force for 5 years, coming to an end on 30th June 2020. All potential licence holders were identified and informed of the requirement to be licensed if they rent out a property in any of the thirteen streets included in table 2.

Table 2 – Streets included in Second Selective Licensing Designation

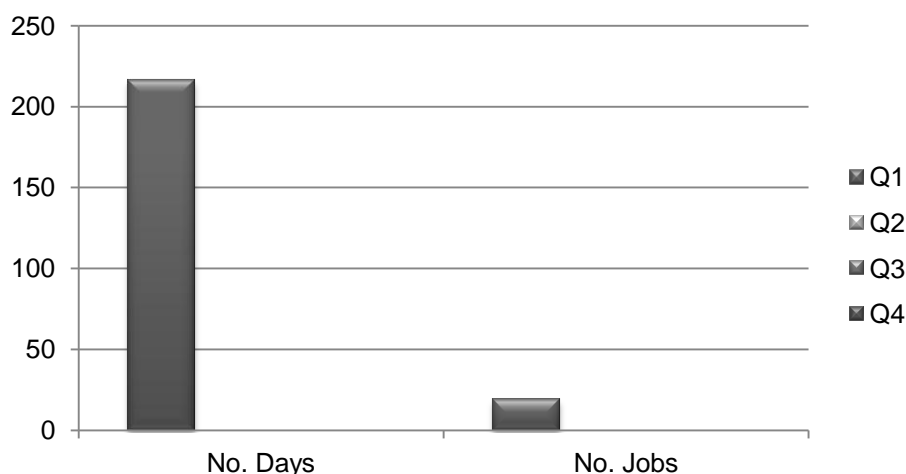
| | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Victoria Ward | Dent Street | Furness Street | Sheriff Street |
| | Straker Street | Stephen Street | |
| Burn Valley Ward | Richmond Street | Cornwall Street | Rydal Street |
| | Kimberley Street | | |
| Foggy Furze Ward | Sydenham Road | Borrowdale Street | |
| Jesmond Ward | St Oswalds Street | | |
| Headland and Harbour Ward | Burbank Street | | |

- 7.2 To complement the mandatory licensing scheme a Voluntary Landlord Scheme is also being developed as a collaborative model between the Council and the National Landlord Association: Landlords who sign up for membership will be regulated by the national providers system of compliance and will be offered a package of practical tenancy management support and guidance.
- 7.3 In addition to the licensing and voluntary scheme work is also underway to develop a General Register of Landlords to encompass all remaining landlords operating throughout the town. This register will allow officers to regularly disseminate relevant housing related information, to ensure all landlords are kept fully informed of their legal obligations and raise awareness of any opportunities they may wish to take advantage of in order to improve the standard of private rented accommodation available in the town.

8. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS (DFG) BENCHMARKING DATA

- 8.1 During the first quarter of 2015/16, 19 DFGs were completed in Hartlepool and the average time taken was 216 days. Figure 1 illustrates the time taken to complete DFG works in Hartlepool during the year.

Figure 1 - Time Taken to Complete DFG Works in Hartlepool – 2015/16



- 8.2 Benchmarking data is not available from the other members of the North East Adaptations Group for Quarter 1. This will be reported in Quarter 2.
- 8.3 At the end of Quarter 1, the number of applicants on the waiting list for a DFG was 131 at an estimated cost of £568,900. The DFG budget for 2015/16 received from the Government is £545,849. £201,000 funding has also been brought forward as a re-phased budget from 2014/15. The total funding for 2015/16 is therefore approximately £747,000.
- 8.4 Following Regeneration Committee in July 2015 a further report on DFGs is being prepared for a future to Finance and Policy Committee.

9. ALLOCATIONS SUMMARY

- 9.1 Choice Based Lettings (CBL) activity and performance is monitored on a quarterly basis and compared with our sub regional partners by the Sub Regional CBL Steering Group.
- 9.2 The number of applicants who are 'live' on the system and able to bid increased every quarter during 2014/15 and this trend has continue during the first quarter of 2015/16. The figure for Quarter 1 is set out in Table 3 and includes last year's figures in brackets for comparison purposes. 26% of the waiting list is made up from Housing Hartlepool applicants wanting a transfer.

Table 3 – Total number of 'live' applicants (able to bid)

| No 'live' applicants | Hartlepool | Sub Regional Total |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Quarter 1 | 3,390 (2,620) | 19,821 (16,383) |

- 9.3 To ensure that applicants in the greatest need are given preference for an allocation of accommodation, levels of housing need are categorised into bands. Analysis shows that the percentage of applicants whose level of housing need has put them into a 'priority' band has remained static, with around two thirds of applicants consistently having no priority in Band 4. Table 4 shows the number of 'live' applicants within each band for Quarter 1 and the previous year's figures are shown in brackets for comparison purposes.

Table 4 – Total number of 'live' applicants (able to bid) within each Band

| | Band 1 | Band 2 | Band 3 | Band 4 | Total |
|-----------|--------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|
| Quarter 1 | 321 (288) | 594 (565) | 118 (74) | 2,357 (1,693) | 3,390 (2,620) |

- 9.4 At the end of Quarter 1 the number of decant¹ applicants in Hartlepool was 6.
- 9.5 Some applicants within the three Priority Bands (1, 2 and 3) may also have cumulative needs. During Quarter 1, the number of applicants in Band 1 with cumulative needs has reduced from 28 to 25. In Band 2 the number has decreased slightly from 53 in the previous quarter to 51. There was one applicant in Band 3 with a cumulative need.
- 9.6 The number of bids made on advertised properties in Hartlepool during Quarter 1 has increased slightly from the previous quarter. Table 5 shows the numbers of bids made per band within Hartlepool. Last year's figures are shown in brackets for comparison purposes.

Table 5 – Bids per Band (within Hartlepool)

| | Band 1 | Band 2 | Band 3 | Band 4 | Total no. bids |
|-----------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| Quarter 1 | 634 (945) | 1,432 (1,615) | 170 (178) | 2,888 (2,437) | 5,124 (5,175) |

- 9.7 During Quarter 1 bidding activity has decreased across the sub region. 28,392 bids were placed in total as shown in Table 6. Last year's figures are shown in brackets for comparison purposes.

¹ a decant applicant is defined as one who is losing their home through a recognised regeneration scheme and they are awarded the greatest priority

Table 6 – Bidding activity by type of property (within the Sub Region)

| | 1 bed | 2 bed | 3 bed | 4 bed | 5 bed+ | Other property type (e.g. studio flat) |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------|------------|--|
| Quarter 1 | 9,309 (10,158) | 10,884 (12,611) | 7,248 (7,013) | 615 (507) | 49 (49) | 287 (503) |

- 9.8 Table 7 demonstrates that the majority of lettings in Hartlepool continue to go to those on the waiting list rather than to Housing Hartlepool transfer applicants. Last year's figures are shown in brackets for comparison purposes.

Table 7 – Lettings Information for Hartlepool

| | Total no. lets | Direct Lets | Transfers |
|------------------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| Quarter 1 | 169 (92) | 19 (0) | 32 (17) |

- 9.9 The number of lets within each Band, as shown in Table 8, illustrates that more than half of lettings went to applicants within Band 4. Figures for the numbers of lets within each band for the previous year are shown in brackets for comparison purposes.

Table 8 – Lets within each Band (within Hartlepool)

| | Band 1 | Band 2 | Band 3 | Band 4 | Total no. lets |
|------------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|----------------|
| Quarter 1 | 36 (28) | 31 (10) | 10 (5) | 92 (49) | 169 (92) |

- 9.10 The numbers of offers that are refused are also monitored. During Quarter 1 the number of refusals of Housing Hartlepool properties decreased from 67 in the previous quarter to 65, the main reasons including 'dislikes area', 'no longer wants area' and 'circumstances changed'.
- 9.11 The Sub Regional CBL Policy allows for cross boundary mobility as shown in Table 9.

Table 9 – Cross Boundary Mobility

| | Area applicant moved from: | Area applicant re-housed to: | Number |
|------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------|
| Quarter 1 | Middlesbrough | Hartlepool | 1 |
| | Hartlepool | Stockton | 4 |
| | Stockton | Hartlepool | 2 |

- 9.12 The percentage of properties let on first offer is also monitored across the sub region and in Hartlepool has decreased to 76% in Quarter 1 from 84% during Quarter 4.

10. HOUSING ADVICE AND HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION ACTIVITY

- 10.1 During Quarter 1, active casework has been carried out with 238 clients to resolve their housing issues. Table 10 provides a breakdown of the enquiry types clients have presented with, alongside the previous year's figures (shown in brackets) for comparison purposes.

Table 10 – Housing Advice Casework

| Enquiry Type 2014 to 2015 | Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4 |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Debt Advice* | 57 (54) | (58) | (84) | (31) |
| Relationship Breakdown | 35 (43) | (58) | (47) | (16) |
| Asked to Leave | 60 (60) | (83) | (49) | (25) |
| Possession Proceedings | 41 (98) | (87) | (82) | (26) |
| Tenancy Advice | 60 (33) | (27) | (31) | (23) |
| Seeking Accommodation | 74 (96) | (94) | (93) | (206) |
| Total Enquiry Types | 327 (384) | (407) | (337) | (327) |
| Total Clients | 238 (258) | (304) | (258) | (316) |

* includes mortgage and rent arrears

- 10.2 From 1st April 2015 to 30th June 2015 active casework has prevented 14 households from becoming homeless. Table 11 provides a breakdown of the number of households where homelessness has been prevented per quarter with last year's figures shown for comparison purposes.

Table 11 – Homeless Preventions

| | Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4 |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Households where homelessness prevented | 14 (73) | (78) | (66) | (80) |

- 10.3 Where casework has not resolved homelessness, a number of households have been accepted as statutorily homeless and provided with alternative secure accommodation. Table 12 provides a breakdown of those cases, with last year's figures shown in brackets for comparison purposes.

Table 12 – Homeless Duty Accepted

| | Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4 |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Households accepted as statutorily homeless | 7 (6) | (1) | (10) | (10) |

11. HOUSING MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY

- 11.1 At the 1st April 2015, the stock level stood at 183, of which: 82 were new build units developed in 2010; 100 units acquired under phase 1 of the Empty Property Purchasing Scheme; and one additional unit handed back by the management agent. In the pipeline there are a further 60 empty properties to be acquired in the period 2015-18, plus a further 10 new build units in 2015/16.
- 11.2 At the end of Quarter 1, the stock level had increased to 186 with the acquisition of 3 houses on Whistlewood Close and 147 properties were tenanted.
- 11.3 There were 20 lets during Quarter 1 and the average re-let time was 20.5 days (based on 5 re-lets). In addition, 6 tenants terminated their tenancy with the Council during the quarter.
- 11.4 During Quarter 1 the housing management service had not undertaken any major adaptation work to its stock, evicted any tenants or received any formal complaints.
- 11.5 Three reports of anti-social behaviour were recorded during Quarter 1 and there was one hate crime reported.
- 11.6 Rent collection data will be reported from Quarter 2 onwards due to the ongoing arrangements with Housing Hartlepool who continued to collect rent on the Council's behalf during its first quarter. This arrangement was made to allow the Council's new system to be effectively established and managed during Quarter 1.
- 11.7 During Quarter 1, 9 planned maintenance jobs were carried out on Council stock and these were all annual gas checks. In addition there were 140 reactive maintenance repairs carried out, of which 31 were void repairs. Building Design and Construction reported that 100% of repairs were rectified within the agreed timescales. From Quarter 2 onwards, tenant satisfaction surveys will be sent out to all tenants following notification of a completed repair and satisfaction with the repairs service will be reported to Committee.

12. SOCIAL LETTINGS AGENCY

- 12.1 Work has been ongoing to prepare for the delivery of new property management services through the Social Lettings Agency (SLA); a complementary initiative to improve property and management standards in the private rented sector. The Agency will provide similar services to a commercial 'high street' letting and management agent, working closely with a landlord and tenant to help establish and sustain tenancies for the longer term.
- 12.2 Members will be updated on the progress of this service through the quarterly reports during 2015/16 once the service 'goes live'; this will include performance monitoring data on the numbers of customers using the new service.

13. HOUSING REPORTS ON FORWARD PLAN

13.1 RN11/15 – Amendments to the Choice Based Lettings System

On today's agenda Members will be presented with a report which details amendments that are proposed to the current system to make it more flexible and responsive to housing need and demand. Lettings will continue to be made timely and smartly, offering choice and transparency.

- 13.2 The following amendments are proposed to how properties are allocated on the CBL Scheme.
- Enable a property to be added to the Compass scheme any day of the week.
 - To advertise properties for one week or longer (if no one has bid) until a bid has been received.
 - After a week's advertising cycle the landlord has the facility to end and allocate the property if there is a customer interested for an immediate offer of accommodation, meeting the policy and property criteria.
 - Allow customers to make unlimited bids for available properties to maximise their chance of qualifying for a property. This will effectively remove the current 3 bid restriction.
 - Take details of customers' areas of choice to enable an auto bid function for any properties not being advertised for a full week to ensure no one waiting on this area or property type will miss out on an offer.
 - In specific circumstances some immediately available properties may be advertised on the system allowing for an immediate allocation by triggering an auto bid facility. This means that everyone registered on the system requesting this area and property type will be put forward

for the property within a priority order without having to make a bid themselves.

14. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 There are no risk implications relating to this report.

15. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 15.1 There are no financial considerations relating to this report.

16. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 16.1 There are no legal considerations relating to this report.

17. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY

- 17.1 There are no child and family poverty considerations relating to this report.

18. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 18.1 Impact Assessments have been carried out on all housing services strategies that are relevant to this report.

19. SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 CONSIDERATIONS

- 19.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires Local Authorities to consider crime and disorder reduction in the exercise of all their duties, activities and decision-making. This means that all policies, strategies and service delivery need to consider the likely impact on crime and disorder. This legal responsibility affects all employees of the Council as well as those agencies that are contracted by, or that legally contract to work in partnership with the Council in the provision of services.
- 19.2 Hartlepool Borough Council recognises that Community Safety affects all our lives, people, communities and organisations. People need to feel safe and this means developing stronger, confident and more cohesive communities. Community Safety includes reducing crime and disorder and tackling anti-social behaviour, offending and re-offending, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, promoting fire safety, road safety and public protection. The key areas of Housing Services have been developed with the reduction of crime and anti social behaviour in mind.

20. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

20.1 There are no staff considerations relating to this report.

21. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

21.1 There are no asset management implications relating to this report.

22. RECOMMENDATIONS

22.1 Committee Members to note the contents of the report and the progress made across key areas of the Housing Service for information purposes.

22.2 To decide which, if any, other key areas need to be included in future reports, for information purposes.

23. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

23.1 To ensure that Committee Members are informed about key activities across the Housing Service.

24. BACKGROUND PAPERS

24.1 There are no background papers.

25. CONTACT OFFICER

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REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

24 September 2015



Report of: DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Subject: HEALTH & SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2015/16

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Non-Key Decision

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To consider the Health & Safety Service Plan for 2015/16, which is a requirement under Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Health & Safety Executive has a key role in overseeing local authority enforcement activities. They have duties to set and monitor standards of local authorities as well as carry out audits of enforcement activities to ensure that authorities are providing an effective service to protect public health and safety.
- 3.2 The Health & Safety Executive has issued guidance to local authorities, which provides information on how local authority enforcement service plans should be structured and what they should contain. Service plans developed under this guidance will provide the basis on which local authorities will be monitored and audited by the Health & Safety Executive.
- 3.3 The service planning guidance ensures that key areas of enforcement are covered in local service plans, whilst allowing for the inclusion of locally defined objectives.
- 3.4 The Health & Safety Service Plan for 2015/16 is attached as **Appendix 1** and takes into account the guidance requirements. The Plan details the Service's priorities for 2015/16 and highlights how these priorities will be addressed.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The Service Plan for 2014/15 has been updated to reflect last year's performance.
- 4.2 The Service Plan covers the following:
- (i) Service Aims and Objectives;
 - (ii) The background to the Authority, including the scope and demands on the health and safety service;
 - (iii) Service delivery, including intervention programmes, service requests, complaints, advice, liaison and promotion;
 - (iv) Resources, including financial allocation, staff allocation and staff development;
 - (v) Quality assessment; and
 - (vi) Details of the review of the Plan.

5. SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES RAISED IN THE PLAN

- 5.1 During 2014/15 the service completed health and safety interventions in a total of 358 premises equating to 68.1% of all programmed interventions planned for the year. The shortfall arose as a result of prioritising resources in relation to undertaking food hygiene interventions and an unprecedented amount of reactive work across all aspects of work undertaken by the Public Protection service. The outstanding interventions will be added to the programme for 2015/16.
- 5.2 In addition to the planned interventions officers carried out 29 revisits to monitor compliance with contraventions identified during these interventions. They also undertook a range of interventions, which involved working with 79 new businesses during the year.
- 5.3 During 2014/15 the Authority undertook 531 enforcement visits to assess compliance with smoke free legislation which came into force on 1st July 2007, a proportion of which were carried out in conjunction with health and safety interventions.
- 5.4 Promotional/campaign work was undertaken to engage with the Public Health Agenda. This included:
- Inspecting salons participating in the Tattoo Hygiene Rating Scheme; a voluntary scheme which was introduced in April 2014. All four salons maintained the top rating of '4 – Very Good'.

- Work commenced on the Saving Our Skins Campaign. This involved visiting sunbed salons and carrying out tests to assess the irradiance level of tubes used on the sunbeds. In total 55 sunbeds were tested and 18 were found to be non compliant; representing a 33% failure rate. Follow up visits were undertaken to ensure that sunbed tubes were replaced to meet permitted levels.
- 5.5 During the year the service carried out 60 visits in response to 50 complaints / service requests relating to health and safety conditions and working practice. This represented a significant increase on the 18 visits carried out during the previous year. The initial response to these requests have been undertaken all within our target of 2 working days
- 5.6 The service received 72 accident notifications during the year, a significant increase from the previous year. All were responded to within 1 working day. These notifications generated 23 visits by enforcement staff.
- 5.7 During 2014/15 it was necessary to serve 11 Notices comprising 9 Prohibition Notices and 2 Improvement Notices. Six Notices (4 Prohibition Notices and 2 Improvement Notices) were served in relation to electrical installations / equipment, 2 Prohibition Notices were issued in relation to unsafe stock storage, a further 2 related to the use of an autoclave used for sterilizing equipment and another for a missing machinery guard.
- 5.8 No Simple Cautions were issued however legal proceedings were concluded in relation to an investigation in to a fatality which occurred in 2012, involving a resident falling from a first floor window of a residential care home. The case was heard at Teesside Crown Court where the defendant pleaded 'Not Guilty' to two charges for breaches of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The jury returned a 'Guilty' verdict in respect of both charges and the defendant received an 8 month custodial sentence.
- 5.9 Currently we are the enforcing authority for 1,300 premises in Hartlepool. In planning our intervention programme for 2015/16 we have had regard to the 'National Local Authority Enforcement Code Health and Safety at Work England, Scotland & Wales'. The Code was developed by HSE as an outcome of the Government's Red Tape Challenge on Health and Safety and was issued in 2013.
- 5.10 The Code is given legal effect as HSE guidance to LAs under section 18(4) (b) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and is designed to ensure that LA health and safety regulators take a more consistent and proportionate approach to enforcement.
- 5.11 We recognise that we have a vital role to play in ensuring that the regulatory system is focused on better health and safety outcomes and not purely technical breaches of the law. During 2015/16 we will carry out a range of interventions based on risk, local intelligence, performance history, RIDDOR reports, complaints and local occupational health data.

- 5.12 The Code states that proactive inspection must only be used to target the high risk activities in those sectors specified by HSE or where intelligence suggests risks are not being effectively managed. For this purpose HSE have published a list of high risk sectors (and the key activities that make them such) that are to be subject to proactive inspections by LAs.
- 5.13 The Code provides flexibility for LAs to address local priorities alongside the national priorities set by HSE. During interventions officers will focus on specific risks which are the key causes of workplace accidents, injuries and ill health. We have identified the following local priorities which can be addressed during our contact with businesses, including through other areas of work e.g. food inspections and licensing visits.

| Local Priority | Estimated no of premises that topic is applicable to |
|--|---|
| Sun Safety in Nurseries | 15 |
| Asbestos Management | 352 |
| Electrical & Gas Safety in Commercial Premises | 99 |
| Deliveries / Workplace Transport | 132 |
| Health & Safety in Car Hand Wash Stations | 12 |
| Occupational Disease e.g. Dermatitis | 46 |
| Managing Risks from Legionella | 3 |
| Violence at Work | 27 |
| Falls from Height | 18 |

- 5.14 The Section 18 Standard places a requirement on councils to assess whether there is sufficient capacity within the authority to undertake their statutory duties and to deliver an effective service. The Service Plan sets out the resources determined necessary to deliver the health and safety service in 2015/16. Whilst we have determined that with the existing compliment of staff we have adequate capacity to discharge our duty under the Standard we are facing unprecedented budget pressures and will therefore need to monitor whether the Authority can continue to service its workload and fulfil its requirements under the Standard.
- 5.15 During 2015/16 we will carry out work with colleagues to secure improvement in Public Health through the Health Protection and Improvement Elements of the Core Public Health Strategy.
- 5.16 In particular we will target our resources effectively using a range of interventions, including providing advice to businesses, with the aim of influencing behaviours and improving the management of health and safety risks which will have impact on wider public health outcomes. We plan to continue a programme of sampling to monitor and raise awareness in relation to occupational health and will continue to explore how we can contribute to the Public Health Outcomes Framework and access funding streams to support this area of work.

6. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 If the Health & Safety Service Plan 2015/16 is not adopted we will not meet the requirements of Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

7. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications for this report.

8. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 If the Health & Safety Service Plan 2015/16 is not adopted we will not meet the requirements of Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

9. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 There are no child and family poverty implications for this report.

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.1 There are no equality and diversity implications for this report.

11. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 There are no staff implications for this report.

12. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.1 There are no asset management implications for this report.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 That the Regeneration Services Committee approves the Health & Safety Service Plan for 2015/16.

14. APPENDICES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST, IN THE MEMBERS LIBRARY AND ON-LINE

- 14.1 Health & Safety Service Plan 2015/16 Appendix 1

15. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 The Health and Safety Service Plan 2015/16 needs to be adopted to comply with the requirements of Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 There are no background papers for this report.

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Hartlepool Borough Council

Health & Safety Service Plan 2015/16

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INTRODUCTION

This Service Plan details how the Health and Safety service will be delivered by Hartlepool Borough Council.

The Plan accords with the requirements of the mandatory guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA).

In May 2013 HSE published the National Local Authority Enforcement Code (the Code). The Code was developed in response to the recommendation in “Reclaiming health & safety for all: an independent review of health & safety legislation” by Professor Ragnar Löfstedt for HSE to be given a stronger role in directing Local Authority (LA) health and safety inspection and enforcement activity and as an outcome of the Government’s Red Tape Challenge on health and safety.

The Code is designed to ensure that LA health and safety regulators take a more consistent and proportionate approach to their regulatory interventions. It sets out the Government expectations of a risk based approach to targeting. Whilst the primary responsibility for managing health and safety risks lies with the business who creates the risk, LA health and safety regulators have an important role in ensuring the effective and proportionate management of risks, supporting business, protecting their communities and contributing to the wider public health agenda.

This Plan sets out the Council’s aims in respect of its health and safety enforcement service and the means by which those aims are to be fulfilled.

Whilst focussing primarily on the year 2015/16 longer-term objectives are identified where relevant. Additionally, there is a review of performance for 2014/15 and this aims to inform decisions about how best to build on past successes and address performance gaps.

The Plan is reviewed annually and has been approved by the Regeneration Services Committee.

1 SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Service Aims and Objectives

Hartlepool Borough Council aims:

- to carry out our enforcement duties and deliver high quality services through the efficient and effective use of resources;
- to supplement our enforcement role by providing targeted education and advice;
- to encourage innovation through actively seeking out best practice and working in partnership with other agencies;
- to actively contribute towards achieving nationally agreed strategic aims and objectives; and

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- to ensure our actions are consistent, proportionate and targeted and that we are transparent and open about what we do.

In its delivery of the service the Council will have regard to directions from the Health and Safety Executive, Health and Safety / Local Authority Liaison Committee (HELA), Approved Codes of Practice, the Regulators' Code, and any other relevant guidance.

1.2 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans

This service plan fits into the hierarchy of the Council's planning process as follows:

- Hartlepool's Community Strategy - the Local Strategic Partnerships (the Hartlepool Partnership)
- Corporate Plan
- Public Protection Service Plan
- Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan - sets out how the Council aims to deliver this statutory service and the Consumer Services section's contribution to corporate objectives.

Overall Aim / Vision

The Council's overall aim is:

“To take direct action and work in partnership with others, to continue the revitalisation of Hartlepool life and secure a better future for Hartlepool people.”

The Council's aim is based on, and virtually identical to, the Hartlepool Partnership's long term vision, agreed in July 2008, looking 20 years ahead, which is:-

‘Hartlepool will be a thriving, respectful, inclusive, healthy, ambitious and outward-looking community, in an attractive and safe environment, where everyone is able to realise their potential.’

The Council has adopted eight themes that the Partnership has agreed forms part of the sustainable Community Strategy:-

- Jobs and the Economy
- Lifelong Learning and Skills
- Health and Wellbeing
- Community Safety
- Environment
- Housing
- Culture and Leisure and Community Learning
- Strengthening Communities

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The Council has a ninth theme, which covers what the Council is doing to sustain its capacity to deliver excellent, value for money services in the future:-

- **Organisational Development**

To contribute to the Council's overall aim/vision, through this Health and Safety Service Plan, the Commercial Services team has made a commitment to ensure safe working practices and high standards of compliance with health, safety and welfare law.

This Health & Safety Service Plan contributes towards the main themes in the following ways:

- **Jobs and the Economy**

By providing advice and information to new and existing businesses to assist them in meeting their legal requirements with regard to health, safety and welfare, and avoid potential costly action at a later stage;

- **Lifelong Learning and Skills**

By providing advice as regards to what training is appropriate for particular jobs. This advisory role is supplemented with enforcement action where necessary to ensure that the appropriate training is provided to employees. The team also provides seminars on current health and safety issues to the wider community;

- **Health and Wellbeing**

By ensuring that businesses meet their obligations as regards health and safety the well being of both employees and the public will be protected;

- **Community Safety**

By encouraging awareness amongst businesses of the role they can play in reducing problems in their community by keeping premises in a clean, tidy and safe condition;

- **Environment**

By encouraging businesses to be aware of environmental issues which they can control, such as proper disposal of hazardous waste;

- **Culture and Leisure and Community Learning**

By exploring ways to promote high standards of compliance with health, safety and welfare law in hotels, other tourist accommodation, public houses and other catering and retail premises. This also applies to ensuring events to which the public are admitted are held safely.

- **Strengthening Communities**

By developing ways of communicating well with all customers, including proprietors of businesses whose first language is not English, and ensuring that we deliver our service equitably to all.

- **Organisational Development**

To contribute towards the key outcomes of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation and to deliver effective customer focussed services, meeting the needs of diverse groups and maintaining customer satisfaction.

The Council is committed to the principles of equality and diversity. The Health and Safety Service Plan consequently aims to ensure that the same high standards of service is offered to all, and that recognition is given to the varying needs and backgrounds of its customers.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Profile of the Local Authority

Hartlepool is situated on the North East coast of England. The Borough consists of the town of Hartlepool and a number of small outlying villages. The total area of the Borough is 9,390 hectares.

Hartlepool is a unitary authority, providing a full range of services. It adjoins Durham County Council to the north and west and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to the south. The residential population is 92,028 of which ethnic minorities comprise 3.4% (2011 census).

The borough contains a rich mix of the very old and the very new. Its historic beginnings can be traced back to the discovery of an iron-age settlement at Catcote Village and the headland, known locally as “Old Hartlepool” is steeped in history. On the other hand, the former South Docks area has been transformed in to a fabulous 500-berth Marina.

The tourist industry impacts upon recreational opportunities, shopping facilities and leisure facilities, including the provision of food and drink outlets. There are currently 1300¹ businesses in Hartlepool for which the Council is the enforcing authority.

2.2 Organisational Structure

Hartlepool Borough Council is a democratic organisation. Following a referendum held on 15th November 2012, Hartlepool Borough Council has agreed a Constitution which sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.

¹ Total number of premises as at 01/4/2015
15.09.24 6.2 PH Health Safety Service Plan 2015-16 Appendix 1

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The Council moved from operating under an Elected Mayor and Cabinet model of governance to an arrangement based on Committees of 32 elected Councillors who are responsible for agreeing policies about provision of services and how the Council's money is spent.

Under the Council's governance arrangements, most day-to-day decisions are taken by five Policy Committees. These Policy Committees cover the following main service areas:

- Finance and Policy Committee
- Adult Services Committee
- Children's Services Committee
- Neighbourhood Services Committee
- Regeneration Services Committee

The Regeneration Services Committee provides political oversight for health and safety law enforcement.

The Council is made up of four Departments:

- Chief Executives
- Child and Adult Services
- Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
- Public Health

The health and safety service is delivered through the Public Protection section of the Public Health Department.

2.3 Scope of the Health and Safety Service

The Council's Commercial Services team is a constituent part of the Public Health Division and is responsible for delivery of the health and safety service.

Service delivery broadly comprises:

- Carrying out interventions including inspections;
- Investigating complaints regarding health and safety and associated issues;
- Investigating workplace accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences;
- Providing advice and information;
- Taking action (formal and informal) to ensure compliance with legislation;
- Responding to asbestos notifications;
- Registering premises and persons offering personal treatments e.g. body piercing, tattooing, acupuncture etc;
- Acting as a Statutory Consultee for applications made under the Licensing Act 2003; and
- Enforcing smoke free legislation in public places.

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To achieve strategic aims and objectives it is necessary to work in partnership with other local authorities, the Health and Safety Executive and businesses. The Council aims to ensure that these joint working arrangements are in place and that officers of the service contribute and are committed to the ongoing development of these arrangements.

2.4 Demands on the Health and Safety Service

The Health and Safety Executive and Local Authorities are the principal enforcing authorities for Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSWA) in Great Britain.

The primary purpose of the HSWA is to control risks from work activities. The role of the HSE and LAs is to ensure that duty holders manage and control these risks and thus prevent harm to employees and to the public.

The type of premises/nature of work activity falling to local authorities for enforcement is dictated by Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) Regulations 1989 with further guidance provided by Health and Safety / Local Authority Liaison Committee (HELA) which is the formal enforcement liaison committee between the HSE and LAs.

There are currently 1,300 premises in Hartlepool for which the Council is the Enforcing Authority for Health and Safety. Such premises include: retailers, wholesalers, offices, catering premises (including hotels and guest houses), leisure and consumer services and residential care homes. The businesses are predominantly small, medium and micro businesses (employing less than 10 employees).

Other premises within the borough, including premises within local authority control, are within the enforcing remit of the Health & Safety Executive (HSE).

The table below provides a profile of the premises within the borough.

| Premises Type | No of Premises (As at 01/04/15) |
|------------------------|--|
| Retail Shops | 409 |
| Wholesale | 22 |
| Offices | 141 |
| Catering Services | 245 |
| Hotel/residential | 16 |
| Residential Care Homes | 38 |
| Leisure and Cultural | 223 |
| Consumer Services | 202 |
| Other (Miscellaneous) | 4 |
| Total | 1300 |

The delivery point for the health and safety enforcement service is at:

Civic Centre
Victoria Road
Hartlepool
TS24 8AY

Telephone: (01429) 266522

Members of the public and businesses may access the service at this point from 08.30 - 17.00 Monday to Thursday and 08.30 - 16.30 on Friday.

A 24-hour emergency call-out also operates to deal with Environmental Health emergencies which occur out of hours. Contact can be made on (01429) 869424.

2.5 Enforcement Policy

The Council has signed up to the Enforcement Concordat and has in place a Public Protection Enforcement Policy, which was approved by the Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder in June 2011. This policy covers health and safety enforcement.

The Health and Safety Executive Enforcement Management Model (EMM) will be used to inform the service's decision making process. Officers also have reference to the HSE's Enforcement Guide and the Work Related Deaths Protocol.

3 SERVICE DELIVERY

The Council is committed to meeting its obligations under Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

3.1 Regulatory Reform

There have been significant changes in regulatory approach over the last few years. The key objective is to free up business growth by transforming regulatory enforcement.

In his report "Reclaiming health & safety for all: An independent review of health and safety legislation", commissioned by the then Minister for Employment, Professor Lofstedt recommended that HSE be given a stronger role in directing Local Authority (LA) health & safety inspection and enforcement activity.

In response to this recommendation and as an outcome of the Red Tape Challenge on Health and Safety the 'National Local Authority Enforcement Code Health and Safety at Work England, Scotland & Wales' (the Code) was developed and published in 2013.

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The Code is given legal effect as HSE guidance issued to LAs under section 18(4) (b) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. It is designed to ensure that LA health and safety regulators take a more consistent and proportionate approach to their regulatory interventions.

The Code acknowledges that whilst the primary responsibility for managing health and safety risks lies with the business who creates the risk, LA health & safety regulators have an important role in ensuring the effective and proportionate management of risks, supporting business, protecting their communities and contributing to a wider public health agenda.

The Code provides direction to LAs on meeting these requirements, and reporting on compliance. To assist LAs understand and implement the code, supplementary guidance was published on 29 June 2013.

In drawing up this service plan we are setting out the approach we intend to take to comply with the Code and ensure that we use a risk-based, targeted and proportionate approach to our interventions and enforcement in accordance with the principles of good regulation which requires enforcement to be demonstrably targeted, proportionate, consistent, transparent and accountable.

The Service Plan sets out the risks which we consider we need to address and the range of interventions which we will use to influence behavioural change in the way business manages or undertakes its work.

Officers carrying out regulatory interventions will ensure that every effort is made to reduce administrative burdens on businesses. At the same time they will take efficient, effective and proportionate enforcement, concentrating on poor performers who present the highest risk to the health and safety of workers and the public.

Hartlepool Council is an active member of the Tees Valley Health and Safety Liaison Group. Through this group the five local authorities have collectively identified targeted work areas for 2015/16 based on:

- national priorities
- local priorities based on intelligence and evidence

A joint work plan has been prepared and we aim to deliver this along with other interventions that are required at a local level.

This service plan sets out the activities that the service intends to carry out in 2015/16 to meet this requirement within the resources available. The programme will be delivered using the following interventions:

3.2 Interventions

There are a range of intervention types available for the regulation of Health and Safety at Work. These include:

a. Proactive interventions:

Influencing and Engaging with Stakeholders, Others in Industry and Large Employers through:

- Partnerships
- Motivating Senior Managers
- Encouraging those at the top of the supply chain to use their influence to raise standards further down the chain
- Working with those that can improve health and safety by improving the design of processes and products
- Sector and industry-wide initiatives
- Enhancing the work done with people and organisations that can influence duty holders

Engaging with the Workforce and working with those at risk

Working with other regulators (including HSE, other LA regulators, the Police, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) etc.)

Creating Knowledge and Awareness of Health and Safety Risks and Encouraging Behaviour Change through:

- education and awareness
- intermediaries
- best practice
- recognising good performance
- proactive inspection (restricted to activities/sectors specified by HSE or where there is evidence that risks are not being effectively managed)

b. Reactive interventions:

- incident and ill-health investigation
- dealing with issues of concern that are raised and complaints

Health and safety interventions are carried out in accordance with the Council's policy and standard operating procedures and relevant national guidance i.e. the Code.

Information on premises liable to health and safety interventions is held on the APP computerised system. An intervention programme is produced from this system at the commencement of each reporting year.

During 2015/16 we will carry out a range of interventions based on risk, local intelligence, performance history, RIDDOR reports, complaints and national occupational health data.

3.2.1 Proactive Interventions including Inspections

The Code states that proactive inspection must only be used to target the high risk activities in those sectors specified by HSE or where intelligence suggests risks are not being effectively managed. For this purpose HSE have published a list of high risk sectors (and the key activities that make them such) that are to be subject to proactive inspections by LAs.

3.2.2 Delivery of local and national priorities

The Code provides flexibility for LAs to address local priorities alongside the national priorities set by HSE. Having identified their evidence-based priorities LAs are directed to address them using the whole range of regulatory interventions but preserve proactive inspection only for activities/sectors specified by HSE or where there is evidence that risks are not being effectively managed.

a) National Priorities

The HSE set a list of national priorities, which this year includes the following activities/sectors:

| No | Hazards | High Risk Sectors | High Risk Activities |
|----|--|---|---|
| 1 | Legionella infection | Premises with cooling towers/evaporative condensers | Lack of suitable legionella control measures |
| 2 | Explosion caused by leaking LPG | Premises (including caravan parks) with buried metal LPG pipework | Buried metal LPG pipe work (For caravan parks to communal/amenity blocks only) |
| 3 | e.coli/cryptosporidium infection esp. in children | Open Farms/Animal Visitor Attractions | Lack of suitable micro-organism control measures |
| 4 | Fatalities/injuries resulting from being struck by vehicles | Tyre fitters*/ MVR* (as part of Car Sales) High volume Warehousing/Distribution | Use of two-post vehicle lifts Workplace transport |
| 5 | Fatalities/injuries resulting from falls from height/ amputation and crushing injuries | Industrial retail/wholesale premises e.g. steel stockholders, builders/timber merchants | Workplace transport/work at height/cutting machinery /lifting equipment |
| 6 | Industrial diseases (occupational asthma/deafness) | MVR*(as part of Car Sales) Industrial retail/wholesale premises e.g. steel stockholders, builders/timber merchants | Use of Isocyanate paints Noise and dust |

| No | Hazards | High Risk Sectors | High Risk Activities |
|----|---|--|---|
| 7 | Falls from height | High volume Warehousing/Distribution | Work at height |
| 8 | Crowd control & injuries/fatalities to the public | Large scale public events/sports/leisure facilities e.g. motorised leisure pursuits including off road vehicles and track days | Inadequate consideration of public safety e.g. poor organisation and/or supervision of high speed or off-road vehicle movements |
| 9 | Carbon monoxide poisoning | Commercial catering premises using solid fuel cooking equipment | Lack of suitable ventilation and/or unsafe appliances |
| 10 | Violence at work | Premises with vulnerable working conditions (lone/night working/cash handling e.g. betting shops/off-licences/care settings) and where intelligence indicates that risks are not being effectively managed | Lack of suitable security measures/procedures |

b) Regional Priorities

The Authority has agreed to work in partnership with the other Tees Valley Authorities and HSE where appropriate to deliver local awareness based initiatives and enforcement focused on:

- Gas & Electrical Safety in Commercial Premises
- To Engage with the Public Health Agenda

All members of the Tees Valley Health and Safety Liaison Group have agreed to seek opportunities to engage with the public health agenda with particular emphasis on improving health in the workplace. Best practice and opportunities for partnership work with regards to public health will be shared.

c) Local Priorities

We recognise that we have a vital role to play in ensuring that the regulatory system is focused on better health and safety outcomes and not purely technical breaches of the law. During interventions officers will focus on specific risks which are the key causes of workplace accidents, injuries and ill health. Using local based intelligence we have identified the following priorities which can be addressed during our contact with businesses, including through other areas of work e.g. food inspections and licensing visits.

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| Priority Topics | Estimated no of premises that topic is applicable to |
|--|---|
| Sun Safety in Nurseries | 15 |
| Asbestos Management | 352 |
| Electrical & Gas Safety in Commercial Premises | 99 |
| Deliveries / Workplace Transport | 132 |
| Health & Safety in Car Hand Wash Stations | 12 |
| Occupational Disease e.g. Dermatitis | 46 |
| Managing Risks from Legionella | 3 |
| Violence at Work | 27 |
| Work at heights | 18 |

It is anticipated that consistent, high quality interventions by the service will, over time, result in a general improvement in standards, reducing the frequency for recourse to formal action.

An estimated 10% of interventions are of premises where it is more appropriate to conduct interventions outside the standard working time hours. Arrangements are in place to inspect these premises out of hours by making use of the Council's flexible working arrangements, lieu time facilities and, if necessary, paid overtime. In addition, these arrangements will permit the occasional intervention at premises which open outside of, as well as during standard work time hours.

Revisits will be carried out to check compliance with all statutory notices and where contraventions have been identified which may lead to risks to health and safety. Revisits other than for statutory notices will be made at officer's discretion.

The intervention programme for 2015/16 is expected to generate 30 revisits. A number of these premises revisits will be undertaken outside standard working hours and arrangements are in place to facilitate this.

The performance against targets for all health and safety interventions is reported quarterly as part of the Public Health Department internal performance monitoring. In addition, performance against targets is reported quarterly to the Regeneration Services Committee as part of the Public Protection update report.

3.2.3 Unrated Premises

During 2011/12 substantial work was carried out updating our premises database and this generated a significant number of unrated premises. Businesses have also commenced trading since this time. Currently there is no national guidance on how to address unrated premises, with the exception that premises must not receive an inspection without a reason.

We aim to identify businesses that fit in with national, regional and local priorities (e.g. by business directories, information from business rates and other intelligence) so that we can focus our interventions on those that present the greatest risk.

3.2.4 Combined Food & Health and Safety Interventions

A joint statement by Food Standards Agency, Local Regulation and Health and Safety Executive was published on 23 February 2011 providing clarification on implementing the Lord Young recommendation to combine food safety and health safety inspections. This statement emphasised that this approach should not result in an increase of inspections in accordance with government mandate.

We currently provide a combined food safety and health and safety service and have done so for many years to maximize resource use. We will continue with this approach and will where appropriate carry out targeted interventions.

3.3 Reactive Interventions

3.3.1 Health and Safety Complaints and Service Requests

In order to target those businesses that are poor performers and not meeting the requirements under health and safety legislation we will place significant emphasis on reactive work such as dealing with complaints, accidents and incidents.

It is intended that every complaint / request for service is responded to within 2 working days. The initial response is determined after assessment of the information received, and is based on the risk arising from the conditions that are the subject of the complaint.

Complaints are investigated in accordance with established procedures. The potential actions that are available vary from the provision of advice, often after liaison with the business, to full prosecution procedures in line with the Council's Public Protection Enforcement Policy. Officers also have regard to the Enforcement Management Model (EMM) when making enforcement decisions.

This reactive work is variable and unpredictable in nature and volume and includes complaints about poor working conditions, safety concerns and smokefree complaints. Based on the previous two years data it is estimated that 20 complaints / service requests will result in a visit being carried out.

3.3.2 Dealing with Matters of Evident Concern

The Code acknowledges that there will be other reasons that LAs undertake site visits to businesses, for example food hygiene or licensing, and there will be circumstances when officers may become aware of a significant health and safety issue. LAs are directed to deal with such matters at the time of the initial visit wherever possible and factor it into their assessment of how the company is managing its risks, rating the premises accordingly.

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Information relating to action taken in dealing with matters of evident concern has not previously been recorded as it forms part of the officer's role, but it is estimated as likely to require reactive health and safety interventions during approximately 30% of food safety inspections.

3.3.3 Accident/Disease/Dangerous Occurrences Investigations

Some accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences must be reported under the provisions of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR). To co-ordinate the reporting of these incidents nationally there is an online RIDDOR reporting system. Fatal and specified injuries can also be reported by telephone to The Incident Contact Centre who arranges for incidents to be notified to the appropriate enforcing authority.

Once a notification is received it is accessed from a secure website. This work involves administrative resource to filter, download, direct and redirect incidents. Once accepted a decision by a senior officer is made as to whether the matter requires further investigation using selection criteria. The investigation selection criteria are based on national guidance.

In some cases incidents can have a considerable impact on planned work as there is a need to react immediately. For example, accidents involving a fatality, major and/or multiple injury and those likely to affect the public will require immediate response, including out of hours if necessary.

The following data from the last five years gives some indication of the likely workload:

| | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 13/14 | 14/15 |
|--------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Number of reported Accidents | 78 | 61 | 54 | 47 | 72 |
| Number requiring investigation | 28 | 16 | 14 | 9 | 15 |

NB. Investigations may take several months to complete and can span financial years.

3.3.4 Supporting Businesses & Others

In support of local economic development and growth the Council considers that providing advice and support to business, especially new business start-ups, to help them to comply with the requirements of legislation, is one of our core activities. For health and safety issues the Council has a policy of offering comprehensive and usefully tailored advice to any business for which we are, or are likely to become, the enforcing authority. Feedback from businesses indicates that they value this type of contact.

Advice will be available during the course of routine visits and interventions, through information publications such as leaflets and booklets and in response to queries. We will signpost individuals/businesses to the Council and/or HSE website accordingly.

Advisory visits which are undertaken are distinct from regulatory visits and are made at the convenience of the business without recourse to the section 20 regulatory powers of entry provided by the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. Our focus may be broader than specific health and safety outcomes as advice and support given can impact on wider public health outcomes/health inequalities. In 2014/15 we worked with 27 new businesses.

3.3.5 Public Health Promotional/Campaign Work

- **Estates Excellence**

Estates Excellence is a non enforcement initiative which is delivered through a partnership of the HSE, Local Authorities, Fire and Rescue Service and industry partners. The initiative provides support to local business raising awareness to help businesses identify and manage their health and safety risks and protect their employees. The initiative also promotes good health and wellbeing among employees by providing training, which could reduce the risk of accidents as well as providing free occupational health screening to promote a healthy productive workforce.

There is a range of support available to businesses through participation in the initiative, including a free assessment of the workplace, free information, advice and health and safety workshops. The initiative is delivered locally, totally free of charge.

We ran a successful initiative during 2014 which involved visiting officers from Hartlepool Borough Council and partner agencies carrying out promotional visits during the first week of the initiative. This was followed up with a second visit and the delivery of awareness raising/training sessions on a range of health and safety topics. It was identified that the local authority had responsibility for health and safety enforcement in 49% of the businesses on the estate, with the remainder being HSE enforced.

As part of the initiative a range of health improvement interventions were also carried out by partner agencies e.g. healthy heart checks, lung function tests etc.

We aim to plan a similar initiative during 2015/16 which will be delivered during 2016/17.

- **Tattoo Hygiene Scheme**

During 2014 we implemented the Tattoo Hygiene Rating Scheme. The scheme, which is voluntary, is designed to inform members of the public about the hygiene standards in individual premises, drive up standards and help combat the risk of incidents of infection and of transmission of infectious disease from tattooing.

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Under the scheme, tattoo studios undergo a rigorous inspection from council environmental health officers before being rated in one of four categories. These are '1 - Needs Improvement', '2 - Satisfactory', '3 - Good' and '4 - Very Good'.

During 2015/16 we will re-inspect participating tattoo studios to assess their compliance with the scheme. We also plan to raise awareness of the dangers of getting tattooed by unregistered and unqualified individuals (commonly referred to as "Scratchers") who will carry out a tattoo in unhygienic conditions and frequently without using sterile equipment. This often results in a poor quality tattoo, infection (ranging from skin infections to serious blood-borne viruses, including HIV and hepatitis B and C) and people being scarred for life. This will involve working with the Hartlepool College of Further Education and local schools.

- **Saving Our Skins**

The scheme aims to raise awareness of the risk of skin cancer by developing strategies and planning interventions to tackle the incidence of skin cancer.

This involves:

- Promoting sun safe behaviour,
- Environmental measures including structural changes to provide protection from the sun by adequate shading
- Ensuring the safety of sun tanning establishments and controlled use of equipment

During 2015/16 we will carry out an initiative working with local nursery providers to promote sun safe behaviour amongst children aged 0-5 years.

- **Car Wash Initiative**

During 2015/16 we will carry out a joint initiative with Northumbrian Water Limited, which will involve visiting hand car wash stations to consider health and safety and the discharge of trade effluent.

3.3.6 Sampling

Where appropriate we will carry out a programme of sampling to provide useful data to enable more objective assessment of factors which can impact on wider public health outcomes / health inequalities. For example, samples may be taken in response to health and safety concerns e.g. in relation to *Legionella* or water quality.

3.4 Complaints against our Staff

Anyone who is aggrieved by the actions of a member of staff is encouraged, in the first instance, to contact the employee's line manager. Details of how and who to make contact with are contained in the inspection report left at the time of an inspection.

Formal complaints are investigated in accordance with the Council's corporate complaint procedure.

3.5 Liaison Arrangements

The Council actively participates in local and regional activities and is represented on the following:

- Tees Valley Health and Safety Liaison Group;
- Tees Valley Public Protection Heads of Service Group;
- North East Public Protection Partnership;
- North of England Regulatory Liaison Group.

The Authority receives and takes cognisance of guidance from a number of bodies but principally the Health and Safety Executive, Local Authority Unit the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health.

The service acts as a Statutory Consultee for applications relating to Premises Licences made under the Licensing Act 2003 and are consultees for commercial planning applications.

3.6 Lead Authority Partnership Scheme (LAPS) / Primary Authority Scheme

It is the Council's policy to comply with HSE's mandatory guidance in respect of the Lead Authority Partnership Scheme (LAPS) and Primary Authority Scheme.

In particular the Council will contact the Lead/Primary Authority and liaise over:

- issues arising in connection with inspection plans
- any proposed formal enforcement action
- service of Prohibition Notices
- shortcomings in the companies policies that have wide implications
- death, major injury, work related ill health or dangerous occurrences reportable under the Reporting of injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations

In Hartlepool, there are currently no formal Primary Authority arrangements in place however we continue to work closely with local businesses on an informal basis.

The level of resourcing will have to be reviewed if an opportunity to enter into a formal Primary Authority arrangement arises.

4. RESOURCES**4.1 Financial Resources**

The annual budget for the Commercial Services section in the year 2015/16 is:

| | £000.0 |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Employees | 581.0 |
| Other Expenditure | 73.2 |
| Income | (42.3) |
| Net Budget | 611.9 |

This budget is for other services provided by this section including Food, Animal Health, Trading Standards and licensing resources are allocated in accordance with service demands. The figures do not include the budget for administrative / support services which are now incorporated into the overall budget.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

Under Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 the Authority is required to set out their commitment, priorities and planned interventions; and put in place the capacity, management infrastructure, performance and information systems to deliver an effective service and comply with their statutory duties; operate systems to train, appoint, authorise, monitor and maintain a competent inspectorate.

The Director of Public Health has overall responsibility for the delivery of the health and safety service. The Head of Public Protection has responsibility for ensuring the delivery of the Council's Public Protection service, including delivery of the health and safety service, in accordance with the service plan.

The Head of Public Protection, with the requisite qualifications and experience, is designated as lead officer in relation to the health and safety function and has responsibility for the management of the service.

The resources determined necessary to deliver the service in 2014/15 are as follows:

1 x 0.20 FTE Head of Public Protection (with responsibility also for Food, Licensing, Trading Standards, Environmental Standards & IT)

1 x 0.33 FTE Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) (with responsibility also for Food and Animal Health)

3 x 0.25 FTE EHO (with requisite qualifications and experience)

1 x 0.10 FTE Part-time EHO

1 x FTE Technical Officer (Health & Safety)

Funding for an additional resource (1 x FTE EHO/Technical Officer) was secured via the Public Health Grant for the period 1.11.14 – 31.10.15.

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These are considered to be the minimum resources required to deliver the commitments set out in this Plan and to comply with the S18 Standard.

The Head of Public Protection has responsibility for planning service delivery and management of the Health and Safety Service, Food, Licensing, Public Health, Water Quality, Trading Standards, Animal Health and Welfare, Environmental Protection and I.T. as well as general management responsibilities as a member of the Public Health Management Team.

The Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) has responsibility for the day to day supervision of the Health and Safety Service, Food, Public Health, Water Quality and Animal Health and Welfare.

The EHO's are responsible for carrying out the health and safety premises intervention programme as well as the delivery of all other aspects of the health and safety service and will undertake complex investigations. In addition these officers undertake food and other enforcement work.

The Technical Officer (Health and Safety) is responsible for interventions including inspections, as well as revisits, investigation of less complex complaints, investigation of accidents and the provision of advice.

Administrative support is provided by the Public Protection Support Services team.

All staff engaged in health and safety law enforcement activity are suitably trained and qualified and appropriately authorised in accordance with guidance and internal policy.

4.3 Staff Development

The Council is committed to the training and personal development of its employees through the Investors in People (IIP) process and has in place Personal Development Plans for all members of staff.

The Staff Personal Development Plan Scheme allows for the formal identification of the training needs of staff members in terms of personal development linked with the development needs of the service on an annual basis.

To assess competence standards in respect of regulatory skills and knowledge and identify development needs, officers will also use the HSE's web-based Regulators' Development Needs Analysis (rDNA) tool for inspectors.

It is a mandatory requirement for officers of the health and safety service to maintain their professional competency. This is achieved in a variety of ways including through attendance at accredited short courses, seminars or conferences, by vocational visits, directed reading and e-learning and via access to the Guidance to Regulator's Information Point (GRIP).

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A Personal Development Plan that clearly prioritises training requirements of individual staff members will be developed and reviewed bi-annually. Detailed records are maintained relating to all training received by officers.

4.4 Equipment and Facilities

A range of equipment and facilities are required for the effective operation of the health and safety service.

The service has a computerised performance management system, Authority Public Protection (APP). This is capable of maintaining up to date accurate data relating to the activities of the health and safety service. A documented database management procedure has been produced to ensure that the system is properly maintained, up to date and secure. The system is used for the generation of the inspection programmes, the recording and tracking of all health and safety activities, the production of statutory returns and the effective management of performance.

5. QUALITY ASSESSMENT

The Council is committed to quality service provision. To support this commitment the health and safety service seeks to ensure consistent, effective, efficient and ethical service delivery that constitutes value for money.

A range of performance monitoring information will be used to assess the extent to which the health and safety service achieves this objective and will include on-going monitoring against pre-set targets, both internal and external audits and stakeholder feedback.

Specifically the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) will carry out accompanied visits with officers undertaking inspections, investigations and other duties for the purpose of monitoring consistency and quality of the inspection and other visits carried out as well as maintaining and giving feedback with regard to associated documentation and reports.

It is possible that the Health and Safety Executive may at any time notify the Council of their intention to carry out an audit of the service.

6 REVIEW OF 2014/15 HEALTH & SAFETY SERVICE PLAN

6.1 Review against the Service Plan

It is recognised that a key element of the service planning process is the rational review of past performance. In the formulation of this service plan a review has been conducted of performance against those targets established for the year 2014/15.

This service plan will be reviewed at the conclusion of the year 2015/16 and at any point during the year where significant legislative changes or other relevant factors occur during the year.

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It is the responsibility of the Head of Public Protection to carry out that review with the Director of Public Health.

The service plan review will identify any shortfalls in service delivery and will inform decisions about future staffing and resource allocation, service standards, targets and priorities.

Any relevant amendments to the Council's Corporate Plan will be incorporated into the service plan.

Following any review leading to proposed revision of the service plan Member approval will be sought.

6.2 Performance Review 2014/2015

This section describes performance of the service in key areas.

6.2.1 Health & Safety Interventions

Due to prioritising resources in relation to food hygiene interventions and an unprecedented volume of reactive work the health and safety intervention programme for 2014/15 did not reach the target of 100%.

In total interventions were carried out at 358 premises equating to 68.1% of the intervention programme. These were risk based and multiple priority topics were covered during some visits. The outstanding interventions will be added to the 2015/16 programme.

Below is a summary of the topics which were covered during the intervention visits:

| Topic | Estimated no of premises that topic is applicable to | No of interventions achieved |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| Asbestos Management | 352 | 118 |
| Gas Safety in Commercial Kitchens | 99 | 83 |
| Deliveries / Workplace Transport | 132 | 154 |
| Cellar Safety | 37 | 25 |
| Occupational Disease e.g. Dermatitis | 46 | 17 |
| Managing Risks from Legionella | 3 | 11 |
| Falls from Height in Social Care Settings | 32 | 28 |
| Violence at Work | 27 | 56 |
| Falls from Height | 155 | 174 |

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In addition officers made 29 revisits to monitor compliance with contraventions identified during planned interventions. This was a significant decrease from 2013/14 when 75 revisits were carried out.

It appears that the credit crunch is continuing to have an impact on standards. Financial pressures as a result of the recession has resulted in some businesses failing to carry out essential maintenance / repairs, consequently there has been an increase in the number of contraventions found. We anticipate that this trend of reduction in standards is likely to continue until the economic climate improves.

During 2014/15 the Authority undertook 531 enforcement visits to assess compliance with smoke free legislation which came into force on 1st July 2007, a proportion of which were carried out in conjunction with health and safety inspections. No complaints were received regarding this legislation.

6.2.2 Promotional/Campaign Work

During 2014/15 the following promotional/campaign work was undertaken:

a) National LPG Inspection Campaign

We did not receive any referrals from the HSE in relation to the LPG Inspection Campaign.

b) Work to Engage with the Public Health Agenda

Work was undertaken in the following areas.

Tattoo Hygiene Rating Scheme

On 1 April 2014 Hartlepool Council launched a Tattoo Hygiene Rating Scheme to rate the hygiene standards in tattoo studios. Although a Tattoo Hygiene Rating Scheme (THRS) had been running in Wales since September 2013, Hartlepool Council was the first local authority in England to launch such a scheme.

The scheme, which is voluntary, is designed to inform members of the public about the hygiene standards in individual premises, drive up standards and help combat the risk of incidents of infection and of transmission of infectious disease from tattooing.

Under the scheme, tattoo studios undergo a rigorous inspection from council environmental health officers before being rated in one of four categories. These are '1 - Needs Improvement', '2 - Satisfactory', '3 - Good' and '4 - Very Good'.

Under this new scheme, anyone wanting a tattoo will have access to the ratings and then be able to make an informed choice as to where to have their tattoo done. Once inspected, tattoo studios receive a certificate and a window sticker which clearly shows what their grading is. Studios can also appeal if they do not think that their grading is a fair one.

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Each year participating premises are revisited to assess compliance with the scheme criteria. During 2014/15 all 4 studios were inspected and maintained the top rating '4 - Very Good'.

Saving our Skins Campaign

Work commenced on the Saving Our Skins Campaign during 2014/15. All sunbed shops were visited as part of a Sunbed Safety Project. In total 55 sunbeds that were available for use in tanning studios were tested with 18 being found to be non-compliant at the initial inspection - a 33% failure rate. All sunbed shops that had non-complaint sunbeds worked with the Trading Standards Officers to have the sunbed tubes replaced to fall within the permitted irradiance level. The project is set to continue with officers aiming to test all sunbeds being offered for home use from Hartlepool traders.

6.2.3 Health and Safety Complaints & Requests for Service

During the year the service carried out 60 visits in response to 50 complaints / service requests relating to health and safety conditions and working practice. The initial response to these requests have been undertaken all within our target of 2 working days; however, they have had some effect on performance of the intervention programme.

Officers responded to all statutory consultations relating to applications made under the Licensing Act 2003.

6.2.4 Complaints against Our Staff

No complaints were made against our staff during 2014/15.

6.2.5 Compliments about our Staff

The Public Protection Service regularly consults with users of the Service to establish whether the contact had been helpful and fair.

In 2014/15 the final satisfaction figure was 87.5% (in 2013/2014 the figure was 85%). As a figure of 100% would mean every customer being very satisfied with both the fairness and helpfulness of the officer concerned a final figure of 87.5% is a very good result and a testament to the work of the team.

6.2.6 Accidents/Diseases/Dangerous Occurrences Investigations

The service received 72 accident notifications during the year a significant increase from the previous year, when 47 notifications were received. All were responded to within 1 working day. These notifications generated 23 visits by enforcement staff.

6.2.7 Formal Enforcement Action

During 2014/15 It was necessary to serve 11 Notices: 9 Prohibition Notices and 2 Improvement Notices. Six Notices (4 Prohibition and 2 Improvement Notices) were served in relation to electrical installations/equipment.

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A further 2 Prohibition Notices were issued in relation to unsafe stock storage, 2 related to the use of an autoclave for sterilising equipment and another for a missing machinery guard. No Simple Cautions were issued.

In November 2014 legal proceedings were taken against the sole proprietor of a residential care home, in relation to a fatality in October 2012, involving a resident falling from a first floor window.

The case was heard at Teesside Crown Court where the defendant pleaded 'Not Guilty' to two charges. The jury returned a 'Guilty' verdict in respect of both charges and the defendant received an 8 month custodial sentence.

6.2.8 Improvement Proposals 2014/15

The following areas for improvement were identified in the 2014/15 Health and Safety Service Plan.

1. The Public Protection Section continues to face significant financial pressures due to ongoing Council savings and, as such, the need to prioritise service delivery and maximise effectiveness remains paramount.

We have made make best use of our resources by

- Carrying out combined interventions wherever possible
- Targeting interventions according to risk
- Using staff flexibly across teams

2. During 2014/15 we will carry out work with colleagues to secure improvement in Public Health through the Health Protection and Improvement Elements of the Core Public Health Strategy.

In particular we will target our resources effectively using a range of interventions, including providing advice to businesses, with the aim of influencing behaviours and improving the management of health and safety risks which will have impact on wider public health outcomes.

During 2014/15 we have started work on a number of projects linked to improving public health

- 3 We will review and update our standard operating procedures to reflect current guidance.

This work has not been completed and therefore remains a priority for 2015/16.

7. KEY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT & CHALLENGES FOR 2015/16

In addition to committing the service to specific operational activities such as performance of the inspection programme, the service planning process assists in highlighting areas where improvement is desirable.

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Detailed below are specifically identified key areas for improvement that are to be progressed during 2015/16 and some of the main challenges facing the service.

1. During 2015/16 we will continue to carry out work with colleagues to secure improvement in Public Health through the Health Protection and Improvement Elements of the Core Public Health Strategy. In particular we will target our resources effectively using a range of interventions, including providing advice to businesses, with the aim of influencing behaviours and improving the management of health and safety risks which will have impact on wider public health outcomes. We plan to continue a programme of sampling to monitor and raise awareness in relation to occupational health and will continue to explore how we can contribute to the Public Health Outcomes Framework and funding streams to support this area of work.
2. We will continue to review and update our standard operating procedures to reflect changes in legislation and current guidance.