

Appendix 1

VARIANCE REPORT

AND

ANALYSIS

OF

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

DEPARTMENTAL PLAN

2006/2007

1 May 2007

**VARIANCE REPORT AND ANALYSIS OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
DEPARTMENTAL PLAN 2006/2007**

Food Safety

Proactive Work

ACTIVITY	PLANNED	ACTUAL	VARIANCE
Inspections			
Food Hygiene Inspections	465	464	-1
Revisits	163	64	-99
Food Standards Inspections	162	174	+9
Revisits	11	2	-9
Other visits (advisory, sampling, complaints investigations, food poisoning follow up)		FH – 616 FS – 86	
Samples – micro	276	359	+83
- chemical	140	185	+45
Product Specific Premises	17	24	+7

Food Hygiene Training Courses

ACTIVITY	PLANNED	ACTUAL	PERSONS TRAINED
Basic	6	9	168
Intermediate	2	3	36
Advanced	1	2	60
HACCP	3	8	77
General Food Talks	0	0	0
Total Number of Trainees			341

Reactive Work

ACTIVITY	ANTICIPATED	ACTUAL	VARIANCE
Food Alerts	91	79	-12
Food Poisoning Investigations	65	59	-6
Voluntary Surrender of Food	9	18	+9
Food Safety Complaints Investigated	125	125	NIL
Self Catering Inspections	70	77	+7

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During the year the Food Safety Function was reduced from 4½ equivalent Environmental Health Officers to 4. This was to reflect the changing profile of the department's premises which has shown a marked reduction in the number of high risk premises. This has occurred following a province wide initiative by the Food Standards Agency to standardise how premises are risk rated across the UK. The numbers of inspections carried out by the team was on average consistent with the numbers that were planned for the year with the exception of revisits, which is significantly lower than the planned figure. This is due to officers following guidance contained in the Food Standards Agency's Food Law Code of Practice which determines when revisits should be considered. This move has been reflected in this year's Food Service Plan.

During the year Council re - approved 7 product specific premises under new European legislation and has approved a further 2 premises. In addition 8 butcher's premises were authorised to remove bovine vertebral column from animals aged 24-30 months which is a higher number than was anticipated.

The department has continued to train a significant number of food handlers in food hygiene courses. The CIEH has changed the names and syllabi of their accredited courses which has resulted in a considerable amount of resources being spent on bringing our courses into line. In spite of this the department delivered nearly double the number of courses as was planned for the year. The only exception to this is that an Advanced Food Hygiene course was not delivered. This was due to a lack of businesses requiring this training following on from the successful course which was run the previous year. It is anticipated that this course will be run again in the future when a suitable number of delegates are identified.

There was also a doubling of requests for voluntary surrender of food from premises and a drop in food poisoning notifications.

The Department has exceeded its minimum sampling numbers for both microbiological and chemical samples and has taken part in a number of surveys. In addition chemical samples were taken of meat products from butchers and bakery premises to verify meat contents as part of an initiative to promote compliance. This year has also seen the launch of the Food Surveillance System which has involved sampling officers being trained in the use of the software. This system is now being successfully used for both chemical and microbiological samples.

Changes in legislation in 2006 also meant that all food establishments have to have in place a food safety management system based on HACCP principles. This has resulted in officers encouraging businesses to comply by provided a variety of different packages, such as Safe Catering and Safer Food Better Business.

Health and Safety

Proactive Work

ACTIVITY	PLANNED	ACTUAL	VARIANCE
Inspections	396	399	+3
Revisits		65	+65

Reactive Work

ACTIVITY	ANTICIPATED	ACTUAL	VARIANCE
Complaints	45	37	-8
Accidents	20	11	-9

Initiatives

Various targeted initiatives as outlined below contributed not only to an increased number of issue specific inspections but were aimed at known high risk work activities.

It is anticipated that this theme will continue next year.

Health & Safety Initiatives

1) GAS SAFETY

The Environmental Health Department have continued with an initiative targeting LPG installations throughout the Borough. This initiative was prompted by a number of recent serious incidents, the most recent being investigated by Derry City Council when an explosion in a restaurant resulted in 3 buildings being demolished.

The Coleraine initiative focuses on a number of work places, including restaurants, take-aways, retail and wholesale premises together with residential homes. Premises were asked to be “WISE” about the safety of their gas system. This involved

- a. **W** - work on gas systems should only be undertaken by appropriately
 - i. Registered CORGI installers
- b. **I** - instruct staff on how to operate equipment correctly and safely
- c. **S** - service appliances in accordance with manufacturer’s instructions
- d. **E** - ensure adequate ventilation in premises at all times.

2) DISEASE REDUCTION

- a) During the period officers visited these premises, to raise awareness of Health and Safety issues and in particular the risk associated with the debilitating skin disease

dermatitis, which leaves hands dry, red, flaky, itchy, cracked and blistered, making normal activities very difficult.

The condition, which is caused by exposure to products like shampoo or hair-dye and even by prolonged wet-work, may affect nearly 50% of the 130,000 hairdressers in Great Britain at some point in their careers.

To support these businesses Officers produced a free information pack providing details on numerous Health and Safety issues including young persons at work, first aid, electricity at work etc. Businesses were also encouraged to follow five simple steps to help prevent dermatitis:

- Wear disposable non-latex gloves when rinsing, shampooing, colouring, bleaching etc.
- Dry your hands thoroughly with a soft cotton or paper towel.
- Moisturise after washing your hands, as well as at the start and end of each day.
- Change gloves between clients.
- Check skin regularly for early signs of dermatitis.

Free copies of this Information pack are available from the Environmental Health department.

- b)** The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 empowers Council to regulate ear piercing, tattooing, acupuncture and electrolysis by requiring registration and observance of Council bye-laws.

Article 31 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 amends this 1985 Order, to include cosmetic piercing (piercing of the body including the ear) and semipermanent skin-colouring (the insertion of semi-permanent colouring into a person's skin) in the list of businesses which councils have powers to regulate.

These measures are intended to increase health protection. Cosmetic piercing and semi-permanent skin-colouring carry a potential risk of Blood Borne Virus transmission such as HIV, hepatitis B and C, if infection control procedures are not observed (e.g. the use of sterile equipment for each client). A decision taken by Coleraine Borough Council in March 2007 will now require businesses offering these services to register and observe byelaws relating to the cleanliness and hygiene of premises etc.

The new provisions will give councils specific powers relating to persons carrying on such businesses. Councils will be able to require persons:

- to register themselves and their premises; and
- to observe byelaws relating to the cleanliness and hygiene of premises, practitioners and equipment.

3) FALLS FROM HEIGHT

District councils are currently responsible for ensuring the provisions of the Health and Safety at work legislation are met in retail fuel storage depots. During this period officers from the department spent time visiting the numerous depots within the Coleraine Borough Council area. Officers provided advice and assistance to the owners of these premises on the significant risks to their employees and members of the public arising from issues such as work at height, the storage of gas and oil, electrical safety etc.

4) MUSCOSKELETAL DISORDERS

Manual Handling is a major cause of back injury. One in five of those who suffer work related ill-health have back pain – bad for both people and businesses. As part of a province wide initiative (working in partnership with colleagues from the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland) officers visited local premises to help employers reduce the risk of work-related back injury. This involved identifying routine lifting, and carrying activities and assessing the risk to employees. Information was provided on the use of handling aids, workplace adaptation, training and action plan selection to reduce the risk.

5) ASBESTOS

During May 2006 on the third anniversary of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (NI) 2003 Officers from the department in conjunction with the Asbestos Advisory Service highlighted the 'duty on those who own, occupy or have responsibilities for premises to manage' asbestos.

Approximately half a million commercial, industrial and public buildings in the UK are likely to contain asbestos materials. Unless this material is properly managed, building and maintenance workers may be at risk of exposure to harmful asbestos fibres when carrying out everyday jobs. The legal duty is about managing any asbestos in a building, not about removing all asbestos

As such Duty holders were encouraged to

- Find out whether their building contains asbestos, it's location and condition
- Assess the risk, e.g. if it is likely to release asbestos fibres;
- Make a plan to manage that risk.
- If a person has control or has information about the building, they must co-operate with the dutyholder. For instance, landlords must pass on relevant information to new tenants and leaseholders must permit access for inspection by managing agents.

Air Quality

Monitoring data gathered in 2006 illustrates that the Coleraine Borough generally has good air quality and that the results for all the monitored pollutants currently meet the national standards.

The department continues in its work in monitoring levels of air pollution and have recently submitted a Progress report to the Environment and Heritage Service.

Consumer Protection

Proactive Work

ACTIVITY	PLANNED	ACTUAL	VARIANCE
Inspections	160	137	-23
Hazard Warning Visits		12	

Reactive Work

ACTIVITY	ANTICIPATED	ACTUAL	VARIANCE
Samples	16	24	+8
Complaints	10	19	+9
Hazard Warnings	15	13	-2

Prohibition on Novelty and Non Child Resistant Cigarette Lighters

The potential danger of cigarette lighters, particularly to young children has been of significant concern for many years, with accidents occurring as a result of burns, fire and explosion.

During the period Environmental Health Officers contacted and produced guidance for local importers of Novelty cigarette lighters. New legislation in effect from 11th March 2007 means that it is no longer permissible to place any Novelty cigarette lighter on the market, and all lighters placed on the market after this date must be child resistant.

A “child resistant lighter” is defined as a lighter designed and manufactured so that it cannot under reasonably foreseeable conditions of use be operated by children under 51 months of age, because of the force needed to operate it, its design etc.

A “novelty lighter” means any flame producing product commonly used to ignite cigarettes, cigars, pipes etc that resembles another object commonly recognized as appealing or intended for use by children younger than 51 months. It includes lighters, the shape of which resembles characters, toys, telephones etc. Examples of Lighters found in the Coleraine Borough Council area prior to the introduction of this legislation included:



The Children and Young Persons (Protection from Tobacco) (NI) Order 1991

Test Purchase Survey March 2007

There is little doubt that the consumption of cigarettes and tobacco products leads to suffering and misery for many individuals and their families. Smoking contributes to the single greatest cause of avoidable illness and premature death in Northern Ireland claiming between 2,700 and 3,000 lives in Northern Ireland each year.

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety 5-year Tobacco Action Plan aims to create a tobacco-free society through the furtherance of 3 objectives, namely:

- i) Preventing people from starting to smoke;
- ii) Helping smokers to quit; and
- iii) Protecting non-smokers from tobacco smoke.

Three target groups were identified:

- i) Children and young people;
- ii) Adults, particularly disadvantaged adults who smoke; and
- iii) Pregnant women who smoke.

Whilst important issues such as protecting non-smokers from tobacco smoke will be achieved the introduction of the Smoking Order on April 30th 2007, Council has

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recognised the need to take a proactive and rigorous approach to preventing young people from starting to smoke by the enforcement of The Children and Young Persons (Protection from Tobacco) (NI) Order 1991.

Under the above order it is an offence to sell cigarettes or tobacco products to any person under the age of 16 years. It is also an offence to sell single cigarettes to any person. This legislation is enforced by district councils.

Over the past number of years Council has participated in a number of promotion and awareness raising initiatives regarding the health issues associated with smoking and the prohibition on the sale of cigarettes to young people, including test purchases of cigarettes by children.

A test purchase exercise was carried out during March 2007 using a 12 year old girl. Of the 16 premises targeted none sold to the girl. During the exercise officers noted a significant increase in signage and general information informing the public that cigarettes could not be sold to under 16's and that check-out staff were aware of the need to establish the age of younger customers.

Noise Complaints

CATEGORY OF SOURCE	2005/2006	2006/2007	VARIANCE
Industrial	13	12	-1
Commercial and Leisure	34	22	-12
Domestic	364	417	+53
Construction	14	26	+12
Transport	14	11	-3
Noise in Street	15	19	+4
<u>Total</u>	<u>454</u>	<u>507</u>	<u>+53</u>

The Environment and Heritage Service from January to March 2006 launched a media campaign "Too Loud" – You are allowed to complain". This awareness raising campaign on noise and the role of local authorities has contributed to the increase in noise complaints to the Department.

The Department has purchased a RION sound level meter to assist in monitoring complaints and an additional dog warden will be employed by the Department.

Partnership working with NIHE and PSNI at the Anti-Social Behaviour Forum has been developed as a mechanism for dealing with noise and other nuisance complaints. In addition the Department continues to work with community groups, voluntary agencies, and other interested parties in tackling anti-social behaviour.

Public Health

Proactive Work

ACTIVITY	PLANNED	ACTUAL	VARIANCE
Public Water Samples Private Water Samples, Drinking Water Inspectorate Samples	293	352	+59
Recreational Waters	238	198	-40
Planning Consultations	999	741	-258

Reactive Work

ACTIVITY	ANTICIPATED	ACTUAL	VARIANCE
Complaints	660	830	+170
Rent Order Inspections	4	1	-3
Property Certificates	2075	2097	+22

Pollution Control

IPC Industrial Pollution Control

	No of Premises	Programmed Visits	Revisits	Complaints	Application	Pre-application	Surrender	Monitoring
High	2	4	1	12	0	0	0	1
Medium	3	10	5	0	0	0	1	0
Low	24	22	18	0	5	6	0	0
Unscored	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	29	36	24	12	5	6	1	1

Air Quality (NO₂, SO₂, Pm₁₀)

Sites	12
Samples	156(NO ₂) 20 (SO ₂) (Bubbler shut down Pm ₁₀)
Total	176

Licence / Regulatory**Proactive Work**

ACTIVITY	PLANNED	ACTUAL	VARIANCE
Caravan Site Inspections	28	28	NIL
Poisons Order	14	11	-3
Amusement Permits	20	15	-5

Reactive Work

ACTIVITY	ANTICIPATED	ACTUAL	VARIANCE
Fireworks	8	4	-4
Drinking in Public Places	120	97	-23
Lottery Applications	6	4	-2

Dog Control

ACTIVITY	PLANNED	ACTUAL	VARIANCE
Total Licenses	5493	6104	+611
Total Strays/Unwanted Dogs	475	337	-138
Attacks: Livestock/Persons	50	70	+20
Total Fixed Penalties	216	486	+270
Total Complaints:	1300	1587	+287

The dog wardens provided an afternoon of information and advice in the Dhu Varren estate, Portrush in the summer of 2006. This event was well supported by the local community and free microchipping was offered to dog owners on the day. A further four estates are identified and it is proposed that similar events will happen during 2007/2008.

A close circuit camera has been purchased by the Department to assist in enforcement duties, particularly dog fouling. It is hoped that this technology will assist with the identification of persons who permit their dogs to foul in public places, and allow our Department to take the necessary legal action.

Pit bull type dogs have received a lot of media coverage recently. Local residents are concerned about this type of dog being in their neighbourhoods. The dog warden service, along with the USPCA have introduced departmental procedures for screening the pit bull type of dog. Any dogs believed to exhibit pit bull type characteristics are then examined by a veterinary officer for an opinion and were the dogs are found to be or

have the characteristics of a pit bull they must be humanely destroyed, as the breed is illegal as per The Dangerous Dogs Order.

Home Safety

Home Safety Check and Equipment Scheme – Be Wise, Be Safe at Home

The Home Safety Equipment scheme was launched to Health professionals and voluntary and community groups in September 2006. The project which is funded by the Northern Investing for Health Partnership provides home safety equipment to families with children under five and the elderly living in high social need areas in Coleraine. Advice and information on good home safety practice is offered after a check around the home to identify possible sources of accidents. Everyone visited receives a Home Safety pack with information. Partnership working with health visitors, social workers, occupational therapists and district nurses has ensured the success of the project.

To date 26 visits have been made to families with young children and 60 visits to older people. Referrals are ongoing and at present there is a waiting list of 25.

Partnership working with the Causeway Trust, Falls Prevention Programme in Ballysally have made the check scheme available to these clients.

Home Safe Event

The over 60's in the Coleraine area enjoyed a Home Safe event organised by Coleraine Home Accident Prevention group in October 2006. The 'one stop' shop for home safety was an opportunity for people to talk to professionals about keeping their homes safe and pick up tips on staying healthy and preventing falls. It was estimated that over 150 people attended the event and enjoyed afternoon tea, a quiz and Tai Chi Demonstration.

HAP Activities

Coleraine Home Accident Prevention Group will be launching this year's theme 'Hot Water Burns like Fire' during HAP week in April. In partnership with the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service a 'Ban the Pan' chip pan demonstration was held in Coleraine Town Centre to highlight the dangers of using chip and grill pans, which continue to be one of the most common causes of house fires. Ongoing awareness raising will continue during the year to highlight the dangers of burns and scalds including a successful schools competition. Primary school children designed a snakes and ladders board game around the theme. The fitting of Thermostatic Mixing Valves to identified families at risk in the Coleraine Borough will aim to reduce bath scalds in young children during the next year.

Awareness Raising

Ongoing public awareness of home accident prevention, by regular articles in the media to highlight issues including safety in the home at Christmas, firework and summer safety and talks and presentations to all ages young and old, continues to be the most effective way to get the home safety message across. These have included talks to the Blind Centre, Focus on Family, Aghadowey Age Concern Garvagh and District Diamond Club, Hazlett Court Sheltered Accommodation, Foster Parents, Kilrea Baby Talk Clinic, 2nd Coleraine BB, etc. Various themes include falls and falls awareness, burns and scalds, carbon monoxide poisoning and fire safety.

Falls Prevention Week in June will be highlighted by a presentation to Abercorn Court Sheltered Accommodation. Each older person will receive a shoehorn, which will help prevent a fall.

Hazard House

Hazard House, Home Safety Education and Resource Centre has had a busy year. There have been 330 visitors to the House from July to December 06. Halloween was particularly busy with schools and youth groups visiting to learn about Firework Safety. A Christmas Open morning was held to raise awareness of the dangers of Christmas decorations and lights. No smoking day saw television and radio crews at Hazard House to record a Stop Smoking Event held in partnership with the Fire and Rescue Service to highlight the dangers of smoking in the home. A promotional DVD is available of this event. Plans for the next few months include summer safety and the introduction of Internet Safety for young people.