

Report on	Office for Product safety and Standards and the ongoing work on product safety
Date of Meeting	11 th May 2021
Reporting Officer	Fiona McClements

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide members with an update relating to product safety work carried out by the Environmental Health Department, and update on expected continuing funding from the Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS).
2.0	Background
2.1	As previously reported, the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) was created in January 2018 to deliver on consumer protection and to support business confidence, productivity and growth.
2.2	The OPSS is the national regulator for all consumer products, except for vehicles, medicines and food. The OPSS is also the national regulator for legal metrology, ensuring weighing and measuring instruments are accurate and reliable.
2.3	The OPSS works with local, national and international regulators, with consumer representatives and with businesses to deliver effective protections and to support compliance. This includes the District Councils in Northern Ireland.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	In October 2020, the Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) issued an offer of grant funding to each individual District Council up until the end of March 2021. This funding offer was made to assist Northern Ireland District Councils enable the UK to meet the provisions of the EU Withdrawal Agreement and Northern Ireland Protocol (NIP). The funding was used to employ additional staff, on a temporary basis, to assist with progressing this body of work.
3.2	OPSS has indicated via email, at Appendix 1, that further funding will be provided to DCs in Northern Ireland for 2021/2022 to enable the work, with respect to assisting businesses with the provisions of the EU Withdrawal Agreement and Northern Ireland Protocol (NIP), to continue.
3.3	A work plan relating to product safety activities has been developed by the Northern Ireland Consumer Protection group (NICP), a subgroup of Environmental Health Northern Ireland (EHNI) and has been agreed with the OPSS. The work

	plan outlines the activities that will be undertaken for 2021/2022 to ensure that there are adequate arrangements in place for EU Exit, the NI Protocol, potential EU oversight and OPSS support, including funding. The content of the work plan has been developed based on the following:
3.4	<p>Key tasks and co-ordinated initiatives for 2021/2022 are detailed within the work plan. In addition to the key tasks and co-ordinated initiatives, it is anticipated that each DC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update their premises databases on an ongoing basis. • Continue to work with business, community and statutory bodies to implement a joined-up approach to improve the consistency of consumer protection enforcement across Northern Ireland.
3.5	The work plan will be regularly reviewed and adjusted to reflect relevant considerations such as the NI Protocol, new legislation and emerging priorities/intelligence, availability of resources and the impact of any local and national demands.
3.6	As was required for the OPSS funding provided in 2020/2021, governance around this further funding will be required. This will be in the form of each Environmental Health department completing a quarterly return outlining all relevant activities undertaken.
3.7	It is anticipated that the OPSS funding will be used to employ an additional Environmental Health Officer to assist with achieving the work plan outcomes. It is recommended that this is progressed when a confirmed letter of offer is received. The post will be in place for the period of time that the funding covers.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: to be confirmed when letter of offer received but previously at a rate of £70/hr which can be claimed for EHO work.
	Human: Additional officer time to undertake the activities outlined in the work plan.
	Risk Management: N/A
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	It is recommended that Council note the content of this report .
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 – Email from OPSS offered as a ‘letter of comfort’ in relation to funding.