

<b>Report on</b>	Gas Safety Initiative
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director, Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Melanie Patterson, Environmental Health Service Manager

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>  If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	x

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To provide Members with information on Council's participation in a joint 'Gas Safety' initiative between Environmental Health, Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI) and Gas Safe Register which aims to raise awareness of gas safety and the importance of maintenance of gas appliances in commercial catering and in residential care/ nursing homes.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Officers from the Environmental Health Service's health and safety section work in partnership with HSENI Inspectors and colleagues within the Gas Safe Register to improve standards and achieve compliance with gas safety legislation. The joint HSENI and District Council Gas Safety Regulators Group meet regularly to share knowledge and sector intelligence.
2.2	The safe installation and maintenance of gas equipment especially within the catering industry is of utmost importance, particularly as the industry is undergoing significant expansion and technological change in terms of gas composition, unconventional gas produced by emerging energy technologies and developments in gas appliances etc.
2.3	Badly fitted and poorly serviced gas appliances can cause gas leaks, fires, explosions, and carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, the outcome of which can be catastrophic. CO is a highly poisonous gas that can kill quickly without warning, it cannot be seen, and it is without taste or smell.
2.4	Gas safety legislation places duties on the responsible person (employer) at any place of work to ensure that all gas appliances, installation pipework and flues under their control, are maintained in a safe condition to prevent risk of injury: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gas equipment must be installed, commissioned, and maintained by an appropriately qualified Gas Safe registered engineer.</li> <li>• Gas Safe registered engineers must be appropriately qualified for the type of work to be undertaken. Not all Gas Safe registered engineers can work on all types of gas or appliances.</li> </ul>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	As part of regulatory work delivered through the health and safety partnership with HSENI, all Councils in Northern Ireland took part in a joint 'Gas Safety Initiative' with the Gas Safety Register.
3.2	The purpose of the initiative, which ran from September 2022 until September 2023 was to raise awareness of the 'duty to maintain' with local businesses and ultimately to help improve gas safety standards within the catering and care sector across Northern Ireland.
3.3	<p>The aim of the initiative was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a priority focus for the district council and HSENI partnership on gas safety activity during 2022/23;</li> <li>• Help reinforce the importance of gas safety within the catering sector.</li> <li>• Work in partnership with Gas Safety Register (GSR) to deliver key gas safety messages to relevant duty holders.</li> <li>• Improve communication and joint working arrangements between key gas safety partners.</li> </ul>
3.4	During the initiative, Mid Ulster District Council's Environmental Health Service focused on 175 newly registered food businesses. A mailshot advising business operators of the duty to maintain their gas installation was sent out, in addition to the signposting of relevant guidance on gas safety.
3.5	Following the mailshot, officers undertook inspections of catering businesses where gas safety was discussed as part of the initiative, some of which required a revisit to secure compliance with the legislation. A total of 185 visits were completed.
3.6	As a result of the initiative, enforcement action was taken in line with the Council's enforcement policy, resulting in 60 warning letters being issued. One Prohibition Notice was served when an officer identified a significant gas escape at a takeaway business. The gas escape was confirmed by a 'Gas Safe' registered engineer who disconnected the gas supply and significant works were identified to make the installation safe.
3.7	The Environmental Health Service also supported Gas Safety Week in September 2023 by sharing the campaign posts on a variety of gas related topics relevant to both businesses and homeowners via Council's social media channels.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
4.1	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: Officer time.

	Human: Officer time.
	Risk Management: N/A
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	To note the contents of this report.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	N/A