

Introduction

We live in a complex society with high expectations regarding health, safety and economic wellbeing. Local Authorities have legal responsibilities to protect the public, to lead their communities and to tackle the underlying causes of health inequalities. The current (2012-14) gap in life expectancy between the electoral wards with the highest and lowest values is 10.1 years.

The Public Protection Service (PPS) plays a significant role in protecting people from harm caused by the air, the food and the water they consume, from the products they use and from the environment in which they live. These are the basic building blocks of Public Health.

Mission statement

To make a valuable contribution to the health, safety, environmental, economic and social well-being of those living in, working in and visiting Plymouth.

Core Functions

“Local authorities are democratically accountable stewards of their local populations’ wellbeing. They understand the crucial importance of “place” in promoting wellbeing. In other words, the environment within which people live, work and play, the housing they live in, the green spaces around them, and their opportunities for work and leisure, are all crucial to their health and wellbeing”(Dept. of Health, 2011. Factsheet - Public Health in Local Government)

The Public Protection Service is a combination of key Regulatory Services delivering essential public health and economic outcomes. These statutory services provide protection of the health, safety and the economic well-being of the public, commercial customers and their employees.

These key services are:

- Environmental Health (Environmental Protection)
- Environmental Health (Food Safety)
- Licensing
- Trading Standards

Note: These areas reflect new ODPH structures which will become operational on 1st April 2016.

Our work extends its protection from the City, across the Region and the Country and into international markets. This protection covers all stages of our lives, from the cradle to the grave, from field to the fork, from the safety and environmental impact of our own homes, gardens and leisure activities to ensuring our working conditions are safe and don't threaten our future health, with protection extending from individuals to international companies.

We seek to maximise our contribution to the achievement of the City Vision by: -

- Ensuring people have increasing confidence that food and drink intended for human consumption is safe, and of the correct quality and composition
- Reducing ill health in people and animals by controlling communicable diseases
- Protecting the health and safety of employees and members of the public from work related activities
- Reducing crime, disorder, and nuisance and increasing public safety and child protection
- Reducing consumer detriment, and the risk of ill health and injury, through the creation of a knowledgeable, skilled and an aware public, who can make informed choices

- Supporting economic activity and employment opportunities by ensuring an equitable and safe trading environment and by protecting and supporting legitimate businesses
- Protecting and improving the quality of our environment through regulatory activity
- Becoming an excellent regulatory body that is consistent, proportionate, targeted, accountable and transparent in our regulatory activities.

Where possible we work with businesses and residents to achieve compliance, however, where necessary enforcement powers are used and can include:

- Fixed penalties notices
- Licence reviews – licences revoked or requirement for additional conditions
- Statutory notices – require things to be done to remove the hazard or risk
- Seizure – remove items for them to be made safe or removed from use
- Simple caution – admission of guilt without the need for a prosecution
- Prosecution – penalty issued by the Courts
- Proceeds of crime recovery – Since 2010 £155,300 has been confiscated from criminals. PCC receive 18.75% of any order.

Appendix I provides a summary of our enforcement activity.

Demand for PPS services

The demand for Public Protection Service arises from the population of Plymouth, people who reside in its travel to work area, visitors to Plymouth and consumers outside the city who use Plymouth businesses. There are also regional and national demands. The Public Protection Service enforces over 300 pieces of primary legislation, is responsible for regulating the activities of over 7,000 business premises, dealing with problems arising from the 115,000 domestic households, and protecting population of at least 250,000 residents.

Reactive demand – received by all channels

PPS receives 11,300 complaints or service request pa received by telephone, face to face, post, email or digitally. Licensing receive approximately 5,300 applications for all types of licence, permit, registration etc. **This gives a total reactive demand of 16,600 requests pa**

Appendix I contains an analysis of the demands that result in a record on the Flare back office system.

PPS undertakes approximately 3,800 visits pa, 1,400 pest treatments and samples over 900 products for analysis

Staff and asset profile

Table I – Full time equivalent staff count and budget

2015 Number of FTEs	2016 Number of FTEs	Change
63.2	47.4	-25%
Expenditure	Expenditure	Change
£2.698M	£2.157M	-20%
Income	Income	Change
£648K	£648K	0%

Integrated Enforcement Approach

The Public Protection Service operates with very lean structures and has adopted integrated working as a means of mitigating the impact of these staffing levels. This approach requires strong and technically competent management who are required to invest a disproportionate amount of resources on dealing with absence / vacancies, constant change and reprioritisation of work. Management focus has been concentrated on a cycle of cost cutting, consolidation and rebuilding each year.

Analysis of Current Service

The work of the service is based on intelligence led targeting of resources and ensures maximum outcomes and value for money through:

- Collaborative working with stakeholders and other agencies
- Effective use of technology
- Effective communications
- Resource-based prioritisation of work
- Training to enable multi-disciplinary team working
- Working with neighbouring authorities and regionally
- Increased reinvestment of income through commercialisation opportunities

The Public Protection Service works in support of the Plymouth Plan's individual policy aspirations through, for example, controls on fast food locations, betting offices, fixed odds betting terminals, air quality, etc. The Team is working with colleagues in Strategic Planning to develop details within the Plymouth Plan (Supplementary Planning Guidance) and the guidance issued to support, for example, night time economy management, nuisance, etc. The Team is particularly effective in working in partnership with trade and community representatives to deliver services.

Environmental Health (Environmental Protection)

This service deals with a wide range of pollution issues, both commercial and domestic, that relate to land, air and water, including:

- contaminated land
- radon and radiation
- rubbish and refuse
- nuisance
- air pollution
- authorised processes
- noise
- drainage and sewage
- pest control

The service works proactively with businesses and individuals to provide advice and assistance on these matters but also investigates complaints and enforces legislation to protect our environment and health.

Environmental Health (Food Safety)

This service is responsible for carrying out regular checks on all food premises to ensure the public is protected and that high standards are maintained. They also undertake routine inspections of premises such as warehousing, offices, shops, care homes and hotel accommodation to ensure compliance with health and safety legislation. The service responds to complaints and investigates accidents, statutory notifications and cases of infectious disease (e.g. food poisoning).

The service provides guidance on how the law relates to businesses and offers a full training and advisory service. In addition the service is responsible for delivery of port health functions and for the monitoring and control of the quality of drinking and bathing waters.

Licensing

Licensing regimes are put in place in order to control processes or activities that have sufficient risk or hazard that they need to have some form of prior approval. This service is responsible for the licensing of establishments, businesses and individuals for following:

- Alcohol and entertainment (premises and personal licenses, late night refreshments, temporary events),
- Animals (zoos, boarding and breeding establishments, pet shops, dangerous wild animals)
- Beauty and body art (body piercing, tattooing, acupuncture, hairdressing)
- Caravan sites
- Gambling establishments (betting shops, casinos, bingo halls, amusement arcades, lotteries)
- Fireworks and explosives
- Petroleum storage
- Sex establishments (lap dancing and sex shops)
- Taxis (vehicles, drivers and operators)
- Charitable collections
- Scrap metal dealers and collectors
- Hypnotism
- Large event safety

Trading Standards

The service aims to protect and promote the safety and the economic and environmental interests of Plymouth consumers and businesses. It aims to ensure that Plymouth's prosperity is not jeopardised by unfair or illegal trading. The Service enforces laws concerned with the quality, quantity, marketing, description and safety of a whole range of goods and services. Particular consideration is given to the protection of customers who may be vulnerable. The service works using an Intelligence Operating model proactively, through inspections and sampling projects, and reactively investigating complaints. Some of the main work areas are:

- Consumer advice and support to vulnerable residents
- Business advice and support including the Buy with Confidence Scheme
- Illegal tobacco
- Underage sales e.g. Tobacco, knives, alcohol, fireworks
- Scams
- Doorstep crime and rogue traders
- Product Safety
- Fair trading issues e.g. second-hand cars, home maintenance, property rental
- Shadow economy e.g. Counterfeiting
- Animal health & welfare

Future pressures and direction

A number of recent events and Government reports, not least the Comprehensive Spending Review has changed the Regulatory Landscape. At this time there are a number of uncertainties regarding the future direction that Local Government Regulation will eventually

take. However for much of our work, the changes we need to make will depend on the detail that is yet to emerge.

The loss of 25% of staff over a short period has led to short term plans being actioned to manage workloads. This has resulted in reduced proactive projects, reducing regulatory visits and increasing evidence thresholds before investigations commence.

Going forward we are part way through an ODPH wide review of priorities, which will be influenced by:

- Local, regional and national regulatory priorities
- Local public health outcomes
- Local intelligence
- Statutory duties

Innovative partnership working will be key in delivering continued level of protection for residents. Working in partnership with business organisations, such as Chamber of Commerce, local best practice schemes, such as Best Bar None will support those businesses who wish to improve.

Regulatory activity will be directed to rogue individuals or businesses who have an unfair competitive advantage and create increased risks to our communities and environment.

Commercialisation will be explored to identify potential income streams, especially where they can add some social capital or community empowerment.

Summary

The breadth of regulatory activity undertaken by the team is extensive. Resources are targeted to those areas where there is a need or risk and our interventions and actions are transparent, consistent and proportionate. The service responds to changing priorities and new problems during the year. The flexibility and responsiveness of the service is a reflection of the quality and capability of the staff.

The service already operates significant levels of commercial activity which will be built on over the forthcoming years in order to support existing statutory duties and the aims of the service.

Appendix I

Table 2: Complaint demand type

Description	Average p.a.
Noise	1220
Nuisance / public health	382
Dogs	1667
Pest control	1484
Misc. nuisance	705
Enviro crime	2002
Food standards and hygiene	597
Infectious diseases	600
Licensing	396
Trading Standards	1500
Planning	1000
Total	11553

Table 3: Inspections and visits

Environmental Permit	10
Food Hygiene	990
Food Hygiene re-inspections	100
Food Standards	450
Health & Safety at Work Act EH	43
Licensing	720
Trading standards Visits	670
Taxi licensing, including roadside checks	450
Trading Standards advice visits	240
Waste - (EH)	190
Total	3863

Table 4: Average number of enforcement actions per year

Proceeds of Crime investigations	3
Prosecutions / Appeals	30
Simple Cautions	16
Restraining order / Bind over	1
Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction / Criminal Behaviour Order	1
Detention, Seizure or Forfeiture of articles or equipment	30
Warrants / Part 2A orders	30
Refusal or review of licence or permit	30
Fixed Penalty Notices / Penalty Charge Notice	49
Environmental Protection Team Notices	119
Food Hygiene Notices	64
Licensing Notices	195
Health and Safety at Work Improvement or Prohibition Notices	10
Written warning	1081
Total	1659