

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL 5 September 2018

Adult Social Care

Staying Put Agency

1. Staff from the Staying Put Agency recently attended the National Home Improvement Agency Awards Ceremony at the House of Lords which honours the work of Home Improvement Agencies and Handyperson Services across England. The Agency were delighted to receive the prestigious award 'Home Improvement Agency of the Year'.
2. Organised by Foundations, the national body for Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs), the annual awards recognise the way in which the HIA sector is contributing to the prevention and early intervention agenda in helping to link up health, housing and social care.
3. Awards host Lord Best said: *"It's absolutely vital that we ensure vulnerable people are safe at home and enable them to live healthier, more independent lives as we shift the emphasis towards preventive services. These awards highlight how Home Improvement Agencies are rising to that challenge."*
4. Paul Smith, Director of Foundations, said: *"What's striking about this year's awards is the way in which HIAs across the country are finding innovative ways to maximise the impact of funding and resources. We're seeing more and more collaboration and that can only bode well for the integration of housing, health and social care."*

Public Health

Modernising Consumer Markets, Green Paper

5. The Government recently presented a Green Paper on a range of issues in relation to modern consumer markets. There are some key themes of the paper, which it is anticipated will form the basis for future legislative changes.
6. Competition is central to the Government's approach and barriers to competition should be removed when they arise. The Government is also keen to ensure that consumers should benefit from new technology, with competition and regulation working together in the consumer interest. Consumers should be able to get redress when things go wrong and consumer rights should be effectively enforced.
7. The paper highlights future measures in a number of areas of consumer protection which will affect Middlesbrough residents, including competition law, preparing for the future digital economy and improving protection for vulnerable consumers from bad pricing practices e.g. in the energy markets.

8. The most critical element of the proposals for Local Authority regulatory services is the debate on strengthening our system of public enforcement of consumers' rights. The Government has recently established the new Office for Product Safety and Standards to coordinate enforcement activity on unsafe goods (following the Grenfell enquiry). A similar approach is suggested for all consumer law enforcement whereby a national body with statutory powers and duties could provide leadership and expertise to local authorities. There is no suggestion of additional funding for local authorities.
9. Trading Standards Officers will review any changes in legislation and offer support to Middlesbrough businesses to ensure they are compliant with any consumer protection measures.

Shop closed after repeatedly selling counterfeit and illicit cigarettes

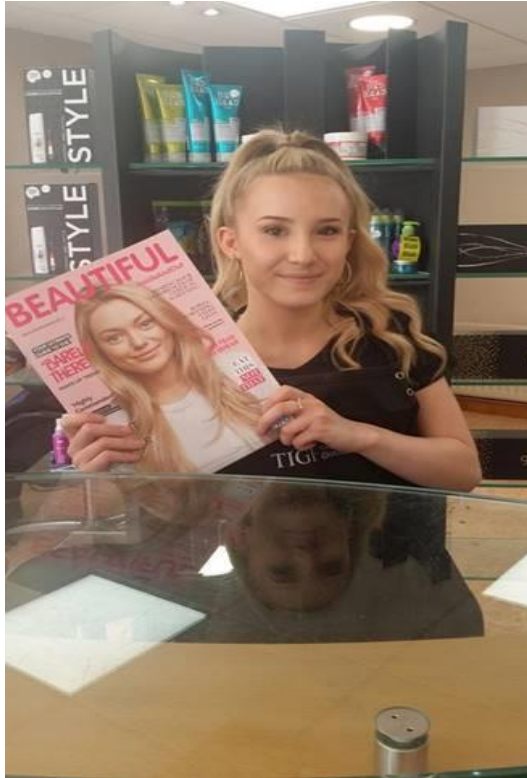
10. A shop in Middlesbrough has been ordered to close after being caught on a number of occasions selling illegal tobacco products. Trading Standards issued a 24-hour closure notice against a premises in Middlesbrough and on the 24th July at Cleveland Magistrates' Court a three-month closure order was issued. The premises - Peshmerga on Victoria Road in Middlesbrough - had been visited by Cleveland Police in May 2018 and cigarettes discovered in the shop and a large amount was found in a van parked outside.
11. Officers had initially given notice of intention to apply for a closure order on the premises in June 2018 but with assurances from the landlord that the lease with the tenants had been terminated this was not pursued. This incident confirmed intelligence that has been received about the increasingly sophisticated techniques being used to avoid detection by the operators of this lucrative illegal trade. During the inspection of the empty premises a chute was identified which ran from the flat above into a drawer in the shop; there were some cigarettes located in the chute which showed that the chute had been used to send illicit cigarettes into the shop. The landlord had given an assurance that this would be removed and that the flat and the shop would be leased separately.
12. In July information was received that the shop had reopened and the same people were doing the same thing in the shop. When officers made a return visit, they found the chute was still operational and the man who was present during the previous enforcement action was still there.
13. As no changes had been made to the premises and the assurances from the landlord had not been forthcoming the Council had no option but to apply for the closure order to prevent crime, disorder and nuisance to the community.

Noise Prosecution

14. The Environmental Protection team received a noise complaint in July 2017 about a house on Granville Road Middlesbrough. The noise complaint related to shouting, raised voices and impact noises/banging at the property, particularly during the night. Following investigations which included the use of noise recording equipment installed in the complainants' home, a noise abatement notice under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 was served, on one of the occupiers of the property in December.
15. The noise complaints continued following service of the notice, and investigations by officers confirmed that the notice had been breached. Following a decision to prosecute in court, during the first hearing on 31 July 2018 the perpetrator pleaded guilty, and was fined £150 and £200 costs. In mitigation, he claimed that his girlfriend was partially deaf and "had to shout in order to hear herself speak".

Salons for Screening

16. Our latest edition of the Beautiful magazine to promote cervical screening has been published. Targeted at hair salons as part of the Salons for Screening off-shoot of the cervical screening campaign, we now have over 100 hair salons, nail bars, tanning studios and a few barbers and tattoo shops engaged to pass on key messages and promote the magazine to their customers!



Community Builders – Time Credit Scheme North Ormesby

17. As part of the public health action plan for North Ormesby, a Time Credit scheme has been established aimed at building community capacity, increasing resilience and improving mental health. Taking learning from a similar model in Hartlepool, the idea is that for every hour someone spends giving up their time for the benefit of the local community (for example taking part in a litter pick, helping out at a community event, volunteering for a local group or promoting health messages within the local community) they receive one credit. These credits can then be turned into a range of different offers (such as fruit and veg vouchers for the market, books, fitness classes, days out etc). The scheme has been supported by a range of different partners who have offered opportunities to both earn and spend credits meaning that the scheme will be self-sustainable without the need of ongoing funding. A website and database has been developed using the Hartlepool model so people will have their own individual account which will enable them to receive references from organisations who support earning of credits, supporting routes into employment. The scheme will be ran as a trial period over summer with a small number of existing community groups to test out how it will work in practice and for feedback to be gained and acted on with the view to it being fully rolled out to the community of North Ormesby in September. Community Builders has been developed as a partnership between Public Health and Thirteen. The website can be viewed at www.community-builders.org.uk

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