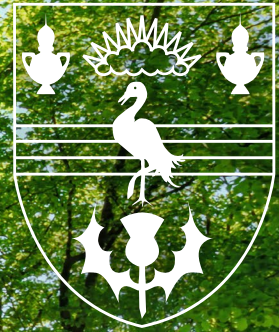


Environmental Health *Scotland*

The Journal of the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland



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Food Labelling in Scotland

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THE PRESIDENT'S VIEW



Louise Cunningham.

It is almost 14 years to the day that I began my student placement with Aberdeenshire Council, on my Easter break of my second year at Strathclyde University. I had a lot to learn, especially when it came to Doric being spoken in the office. Little did I think I would still be at Aberdeenshire now, let alone hold the position of President of the Institute, something of which I am incredibly proud.

I still have a lot to learn, and that is one of the joys of a profession such as Environmental Health. Working on the Forum programme for June has reminded me how our profession can be so rewarding and challenging in equal measure. I may have had a reasonably short career so far but even in these 14 years, I have noted the changes within the profession as we continue to tackle and meet challenge after challenge that we are faced with, and which I know we will continue to face for the remainder of my career.

My route to becoming President is thanks to Karen Keeley. Karen, with whom I shared an office from my first day at Aberdeenshire Council, introduced me to the Northern Centre and mentored me through my practical training placement. Karen was the first to attempt teleconferencing for the Northern Centre at a time when technology was completely unreliable but through her perseverance, we were able to conduct business without the need for travel, something that was no longer permitted for many members to partake in meetings, ensuring as many people as possible could contribute. Thanks to this foundation and a huge improvement in available technology, virtual meetings

have become the norm for committee meetings and training events.

The year began with tremendous shock and sadness at the sudden passing of Past President and Council Member, Martin Keeley, husband of Karen. Martin was a well-known figure within the profession and an active Council Member, holding several key roles within the Institute and as representative on many different groups such as SFLEC, ASH Scotland, IFEH and the EFEH. Testament to this was the many messages of condolences received from around the world in the days following his passing and the comforting turnout of so many Environmental Health colleagues at his funeral. Martin really did live life to the fullest, something that we should all try to do.

The Institute was also very sad to learn of the sudden death of Joe Harkin, a Chartered EHO and member of the Institute.

I look forward to working with Evonne Bauer and Lynn Crothers, who were elected at the AGM in November as Senior and Junior-Vice President respectively, as we continue to work on delivering our charitable aims on behalf of our members. I also look forward to working with the full Council, the Chief Executive Jackie McCabe, and all the Institute's staff. I would formally like to welcome Sandra Williamson to her role of Director of Training. It has been a busy six months since Sandra joined the Institute as we start to see a return to more in-person training and work being progressed on additional qualifications.

The current third-year students at the University of the West of Scotland are the first cohort of students to benefit from the integrated placement, the culmination of many months of hard work from our partners at the University and Society of Chief Officers of Environmental Health in Scotland along with the Institute. The students are on placements facilitated by Local Authorities arranged via the Society. They will return to University for their fourth year after the Summer, before completing a further placement with the Local Authority at the end of fourth year and, all being well, present for the professional examination in September 2023.

Just like money, Environmental Health Officers and Food Safety Officers sadly don't grow on trees.

However over the last few years the work to increase the pathways to qualification whilst maintaining the utmost professional standards for these roles is now starting to produce our workforce of the future. There is no quick fix to the continuing recruitment challenges but the Institute is committed to working towards securing further pathways to the profession.

Finally, good luck to those students attending the first of this year's diet of exams in May, at our new venue of the Carnegie Conference Centre in Dunfermline. I wish you a peaceful year ahead with the opportunity to enjoy many freedoms that have been absent over the last couple of years.

* * *



REHIS ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FORUM
THURSDAY 16 JUNE 2022

HYBRID EVENT AT THE ABERDEEN SCIENCE CENTRE OR MS TEAMS

'THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROFESSION'

We are delighted to announce the Institute will present this year's Annual Environmental Health Forum as a hybrid event based at the Aberdeen Science Centre on **Thursday 16 June 2022**.

We have an exciting programme planned and the Forum will provide an ideal opportunity for the Environmental Health community in Scotland to:

- *Listen to an excellent line up of speakers covering a wide range of topical updates relevant to professionals working in both the public and private sectors.*
- *Hear about all the recent updates and changes.*
- *Meet fellow Environmental Health professionals, REHIS members and REHIS staff.*
- *Celebrate with the award winners and achievers.*

The full programme and booking details will be available soon on www.rehis.com.



MARTIN KEELEY - AN APPRECIATION



Martin Keeley.

Scotland's Environmental Health community was shocked and saddened to learn of the sudden death of Martin Keeley at home on Sunday 9 January 2022. Martin was a Chartered Environmental Health Officer, past President, Fellow, and Council member of the Institute. The following appreciation was written as a collaboration by those who knew him as a colleague, and as a friend.

Martin Keeley was born on 28 October 1970 in East Kilbride, the youngest of three siblings. During his teenage years, Martin had many jobs, before deciding on a career in Environmental Health. He attended Glasgow College of Food Technology for two years, then Strathclyde University to complete his Honours degree. Martin qualified as an EHO in 1994 after completing his training with the then Monklands District Council.

David Duffy, Council Member and Past President, recalls meeting Martin in 1989. *"I met him at Strathclyde University Reds Bar when his mate [Tony K] who was in my study year, brought two of his pals from East Kilbride along for a drink. Next time I met him he was parking an old banger of a Mini decorated in hand-painted*

flowers behind the Court building where Monklands' Environmental Service offices were based, starting work as a student. Both times he made an impression on me.

"Martin could speak confidently across a wide range of subjects. The voids left within the Profession are massive. The sudden loss of someone of the same age, from roughly the same area in Lanarkshire, with very similar life and professional journeys reminds me that time is precious. Martin's unfair early departure shows that we should all try to fill our own time in the way Martin clearly did his, with interests that enthuse us. Martin was his own man throughout his career and his life."

"Martin's unfair early departure shows that we should all try to fill our own time in the way Martin clearly did his, with interests that enthuse us."

Since his days at Monklands, he worked in several local authorities including Glasgow City Council, South Lanarkshire Council and East Dunbartonshire Council.

Evonne Bauer, Senior-Vice President and Executive Officer at East Dunbartonshire Council, worked with Martin for many years and remembers him as a loyal, trustworthy colleague and a dear friend. His enthusiasm allowed him to lead on a range of high-profile firsts, including the smoking ban in 2006, and the Anti-Social Behaviour Night Noise service where he was undeterred by the constant night shift work from Friday to Tuesday.

“Unsurprisingly for those who knew him, Martin used his ‘spare’ time during the week to further the Environmental Health Profession, and was regularly contributing at a national level on policy and work programmes. We were also REHIS Southern Centre Committee Chair and Secretary through these years, and busy organising events and training opportunities for members.

“Martin was knowledgeable, intelligent and quick-witted, and a true ambassador for the Profession.”

Martin worked latterly as Environmental Health Service Manager at West Dunbartonshire Council, where he was a well-respected and highly-valued member of the management team.

Peter Hessett, Chief Officer at West Dunbartonshire Council, writes: *“Like all his friends and colleagues, I am devastated by the sudden loss of Martin. Throughout the nine years I worked with him, I was always impressed with his detailed knowledge, his loyalty to his colleagues and his dedication to doing his utmost to helping residents and local businesses.*

“Martin and his team’s achievements were many, including outstanding audits by Food Standards Scotland. During the last two years Martin shone as the Council’s primary public health liaison for the Scottish Government. Martin used his expertise and enthusiasm to benefit the area as well as raising the profile of the Environmental Health Profession across Scotland and is greatly missed at West Dunbartonshire Council.”

Martin was always first to volunteer for groups which could influence improvement in public health or further the Environmental Health Profession and was actively involved with the Society of Chief Officers of Environmental Health in Scotland, the Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee, Scottish Coalition on Tobacco, and more than one group within the Scottish Health Protection Networks.

Brian Lawrie, Chair of the Society of Chief Officers of Environmental Health in Scotland, says Martin was a *“dedicated professional who was committed to the promotion of Environmental Health in its wider sense”*. Craig Brown, Vice-Chair of the same society, remembers him as *“always willing to participate in working groups and other forums to promote and improve Environmental Health and Public Health”*.

Lorna Murray, Head of Enforcement Delivery at Food Standards Scotland (FSS), recalls that Martin was a keen contributor to policy and enforcement delivery.

“His opinions were considered and based on a wealth of experience, a passion for his profession and appreciation of the big picture. He was an Opinion Leader in his field, his views being sought on numerous matters inputting into our FSS Science strategy, leading our Food Crime Champions initiative and bringing value to our Regulatory Strategy.

“Never afraid to challenge, his contributions were always based on putting the common interest first. On a personal note, Martin was a valued colleague with an unrivalled work ethic, a master of legendary one-liners and an excellent companion at our SFELC dinners.

“His untimely passing leaves a tangible gap and sense of loss for us all.”

Ian McWatt, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Policy, Science and Operations at FSS, says that he will always hold Martin in the highest regard.

“His experience and passion for all things related to the Environmental Health Profession as well as his sense of commitment, his energy and indeed the range of issues and national policy he helped to shape are hugely impressive.

“He leaves behind a real sense of loss for all of us who had the pleasure of working alongside him and I know I will miss his wry smile, his sense of humour and his support in all of the food safety and public health work FSS and local authorities are involved in.”

Andrew Morrison, chair of the Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee, says Martin was a key member of SFELC and the Executive Committee as both the REHIS representative and member of the West of Scotland Liaison Group.

“He was heavily involved and led a multitude of the work streams of the Committee and had a phenomenal capacity to be involved in projects. His views and contributions were always well-informed, insightful and helped to shape opinions. Additionally, his sense of humour and personality always enhanced meetings and ensured they were enjoyable. He is a great loss to the Committee and is sorely missed.”

In addition to his demanding full-time job at West Dunbartonshire Council, Martin enthusiastically and proudly completed private work in his own time, not least the Scottish Housing Survey, third-party audits through different organisations and two weeks of hygiene monitoring at the recent COP26 event in Glasgow.

“His opinions were considered and based on a wealth of experience, a passion for his Profession and appreciation of the big picture.”

A Chartered Environmental Health Officer, Martin embraced his profession and participated in the Institute's activities, initially through the Southern Centre and for many years as a member of the Council. Martin was always fully involved as the Institute's representative for food law and tobacco-related matters.

The Institute's Honorary Secretary, Martin Henry, recalls one project that the pair became heavily involved in, the NHS Scotland Smoke Free Hospitals.

“There was a national working party and I requested that a REHIS representative be invited. The chair of the group, a well-known NHS Chief Executive, also thought that an experienced EHO could add something to the group. Martin kindly agreed to assist.

“Some of the multi-discipline group were a bit hesitant about having what they viewed as an enforcement officer present. Martin arrived at his first meeting (probably the group's third) and was his usual lively self, offering up a range of opinions based on his experience. At the next meeting, he continued to provide helpful advice and suggested strategies which could prevent the group from taking decisions which might be difficult to progress.

“After that Martin was well embedded. At a later meeting, he was running a few minutes late and I advised the chair of this fact and he decided to hold up the meeting for 10 minutes until Martin arrived. Martin went on working with the group until the policy was implemented and gained everyone's respect ... no easy thing, and a measure of the force that was Martin.”

Martin was engaged in many areas of the Institute. He was courses co-ordinator, a REHIS examiner for the Diploma in Environmental Health, and a Scottish Food Safety Officers' Registration Board (SFSORB) examiner for qualifications awarded by the Board. In 2012 Martin was awarded Fellowship of the Institute. Fellowships are awarded to Members deemed to have rendered outstanding and distinctive service to the Institute. In 2015 he was exceptionally proud to hold the position of President.

“His sense of humour and personality always enhanced meetings.”

The Institute's Chief Executive from 2005 to 2020, Tom Bell, recalls Martin as the “ultimate all-round public and Environmental Health professional”.

He writes: *“All incoming Presidents bring their own unique strengths to the role of President. Martin's strengths were many – his full commitment to everything*

he did, his commitment by example to our ‘generalist on qualification’ Profession, his sharp intellect, his quick wittedness and pithy sense of humour, his enthusiastic commitment to the work of our Institute and to the Profession and Service in Scotland.

“Martin was a straightforward President to work with. He respected my role and I his. He was interested in, and supportive of, the roles of the Institute's staff. He believed in good corporate governance of the Institute and of the IFEH. On the Councils of both these organisations, he was a strong supporter of proper procedure, of respecting and defending the rights of representatives to be heard and of all views to be considered. Anyone who appeared to disrespect these values would be vigorously but politely challenged by Martin.

“Martin's loss to our Institute, the Profession and the Service will be felt for a long time to come.”

Martin was one of the Institute's three representatives on the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) and spent many evenings and weekends overseas or on virtual calls. He was recently appointed Chairperson to the European Federation of Environmental Health but will sadly not now have the chance to implement his ideas.

Bernard Forteath, Past President of REHIS and IFEH, had the pleasure of working with Martin for many years.

“Martin had a huge capacity for life. He was involved with many activities both within and outwith his professional career, and to all these activities he applied himself with the utmost dedication.

“He was the consummate professional Environmental Health Officer who applied a clear and incisive mind to his work. He had boundless energy and the ability to research subjects and absorb the information gained like no one else I know.

“He would deny he was the font of all knowledge, but he came pretty close to it on many occasions. He hated injustice and was quick to round on anyone who tried to avoid following procedure. He was elected to chair the European Group of the IFEH just before Christmas and in this role he hoped to champion good governance and adherence to procedure.

“Martin was great company, full of fun and good stories, liked good food and wine, and would always be first to the buffet. He was a good friend and colleague and someone who will be sadly missed. He is a loss to our Institute and to the Profession but our loss is minimal compared to the loss suffered by Karen and his family.”

“Martin's loss to our Institute, the Profession and the Service will be felt for a long time to come.”

Colin Wallace, Council member, Past President and IFEH representative, remembers Martin as a colleague and a friend.

"I was fortunate to spend a lot of time with Martin over the years through REHIS, Local Authority and IFEH/ EFEH events. Many of these involved travelling and extended stays when it is easy to get to know the real person and we shared much more of ourselves than one would normally expect. Certainly, much more than through casual work connections.

"It is widely known that Martin was a very committed, diligent, extremely capable Chief EHO, who championed REHIS at every opportunity, which is a massive loss to the Profession. What is perhaps more important and possibly less well-known, is that Martin was a proud, loving and passionate family man. I have lost a good friend and colleague. However that pales into insignificance in comparison to the loss felt by his family and Karen in particular, which is immeasurable."

"He hated injustice and was quick to round on anyone who tried to avoid following procedure."

Martin was truly committed to Environmental Health and to the Institute, and his loss will be felt throughout the Profession for many years.

For his wife Karen Keeley, his passing is both a hugely personal and professional loss. Karen, the Institute's Director of Professional Development, met Martin through membership of the Institute Council. They were married in 2013. His untimely death leaves a huge gap in the lives of his two children, Kern and Arran, his mum, siblings and the wider family.

Karen, along with Martin's family, wishes to express gratitude to the many people across the Profession who sent words, cards, and flowers, and to those who attended the funeral service. It is clear that Martin's work and life had a positive impact on so many people, locally, nationally and internationally. The Institute hopes that the universal acknowledgement of his legacy will provide Karen and the family with a measure of comfort as they attempt to process his loss.

* * *

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH UPDATE, NOVEMBER 2021

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

by Lisa McCann



Lisa McCann.

Good morning everyone. It is good to be at an event with a face-to-face element again. It has been two years since the last REHIS face-to-face event that I attended. Today is a first, both in being back to face-to-face and in having a hybrid event, with an audience both here in the Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline, my hometown, and virtually via MS Teams.

The venue today looks much different to when I was here last, as it played host for many months this year to a mass vaccination centre for the Dunfermline area. Thanks to the venue for allowing the use for that public health purpose.

In preparing for today, it gave me an opportunity to reflect not only on my time as President of the Institute but also on my environmental health experiences to date, which started more than 20 years ago.

My first experience of environmental health was a student placement while studying for an HND in Environmental Sciences at Fife College, with Fife Council Environmental Health's Dunfermline office. In fact, one of the officers (Richard Hyde) who took me on visits during my placement is here today.

That placement confirmed that environmental health was the profession for me, and I headed off and got my degree at that time from Strathclyde. From there, it

was a trainee position with West Lothian Council. After qualifying I came to work for Fife Council and still do to this day, and it is nice to see both some of my Team here today along with my Convenor Councillor Ross Vettrano, an EHO and former Director of Environmental Health himself.

I have been fortunate that I have had an employer that has enabled me to give back and support the profession and believe and realise that they also get the benefits of this. This has allowed me to be part of various liaison groups, working groups, become an examiner for the REHIS professional exams, become involved with the REHIS Southern Centre and then Council. To me this is important: Environmental Health is a relatively small community, and we all need to contribute.

What we have here in Scotland is an Environmental Health community that has strong networks and interconnections not just within Environmental Health but with our various partners as well, which is a strength, and something others look at as a positive.

It is that strength that has served us well and continues to do so in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Two years ago, no one had heard of COVID-19. It emerged at the end of 2019, and in 2020, it gave us the biggest public health crisis of our lifetimes.

For everyone, life changed in some form or other. Everyone has been impacted directly or indirectly through the lockdowns, restrictions and measures being taken to combat COVID-19.

Environmental Health Officers in Scotland qualify as generalists in various public and environmental health-related fields. We are also problem solvers, who along with others in the fields of Environmental Health and Public Health, have been a key part of the resources and measures taken to help the COVID-19 pandemic efforts.

This has included Environmental Health engaging with colleagues in the public, private, third, regulatory, and training sectors. This has included Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland, Local Health Boards, other Local Authority Departments, other regulatory partners (such as the Health and Safety Executive and Food Standards Scotland), businesses, and the public – whether it was looking at new legislation and guidance, investigating complaints and concerns, providing advice, or helping investigate and control local clusters and outbreaks.

In Environmental Health – whether public, private, third sector, regulatory or training – we have all contributed to the good fight.

A special mention goes to the work of the ETC – The Environmental Health & Trading Standards Covid Group – which was formed in the very early days of the pandemic and which still meets regularly to provide a forum that allows liaison with stakeholders including Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland and Regulatory partners. Work includes policy reviews, sometimes with very short notice and turnaround times, and providing direction and consistency throughout Scotland. All involved deserve thanks and recognition for providing a great example of working in partnership.

The Institute, in common with every other business, organisation or charity, has had to face the challenges of the pandemic, lockdown, restrictions, and guidance while still operating effectively. We achieved this by moving as much of the Institute's work as possible virtual, including meetings of the REHIS Council, Committees, Centres and Working Groups such as the Health & Safety Co-ordination Group, Public Health & Housing Working Group and Scottish Pollution Control Co-ordinating Committee, along with working to help our Approved Training Centres deliver REHIS Community Training Courses virtually and/or blended (depending on level of restrictions). Thanks to all those involved, led by our Chief Executive, in making this happen.

While the impact of the pandemic unfortunately meant that we were unable to hold professional exams in 2020, we did hold a successful diet in spring of 2021, with some adjustments to normal arrangements to comply with the COVID restrictions of the time. Arrangements are well under way for the 2022 professional exams.

On a positive note, I was delighted to see the “new” undergraduate Environmental Health Degree course at the University of West of Scotland have its first 3rd year placements from September. This is the result of tripartite efforts between the University, the Institute, and the Society of Chief Officers of Environmental Health in Scotland. Undergraduate students now complete the professional practice or practical element required to qualify as an EHO during their 3rd year and the later part of their 4th years. This means that they should be able to sit the professional exams following graduation.

The Scheme of Professional Practice – the “bible” for those undertaking their practical training for the REHIS Diploma in Environmental Health – has also been updated.

In another significant development, the Institute and the Scottish Food Safety Registration Board have brought in an alternative pathway to registering on the higher certificate(s) required to become a Food Safety Officer. In addition a new Higher Certificate in Food Practice has been developed, combining the three existing Higher Certificates into one.

The Institute has also engaged with the Scottish Government, including a meeting with Minister for Public Health in March to promote the work of the Institute and Environmental Health. Further engagement work with the newly appointed Minister following the Holyrood elections in May is under way.

Ahead of the Holyrood elections the Institute reviewed, updated, and published its manifesto “An Environmental Health Manifesto for Scotland” in March, which was sent to parties ahead of the election and to all elected MSPs after the election.

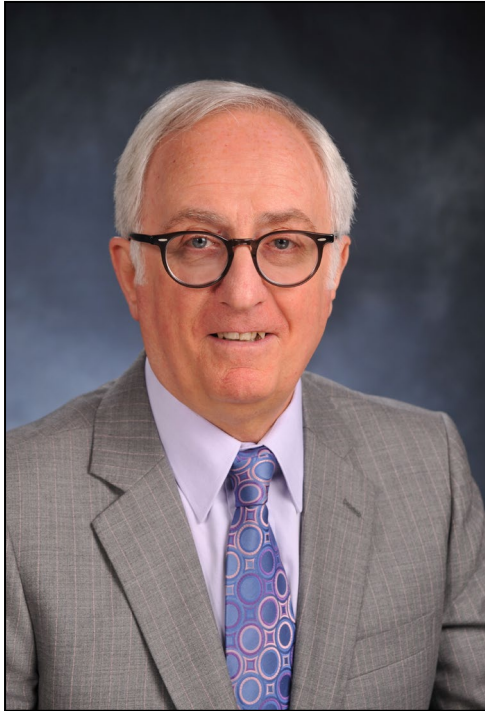
Work with international Environmental Health colleagues has also continued, through liaison with the Environmental Health Association of Ireland and both the European and International Federations. These networks and continued co-operation are important, as the pandemic has reminded us that the world is a small place.

Closer to home, the Institute adapted and ran virtual training courses, including a selection of professional courses including the Food and Health and Safety updates. REHIS also supported the training for Public Health Compliance/COVID Officers following creation of these posts in Local Authorities through temporary funding from the Scottish Government.

In conclusion, the last two years have been a whirlwind, not just for me and the Institute, but for the Environmental Health community at large. Thank you all.

MERITORIOUS ENDEAVOURS IN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AWARD - 2021

by Jackie McCabe, Chief Executive



Bernard Forteath.

The name Bernard Forteath is synonymous with high standards of professionalism in Environmental Health practice; with positive and proven leadership and delivery of the Environmental Health service within the local authority sector in Scotland; with wholehearted dedication to the important work of the Institute; and with diplomacy and constructive contribution to the world of international Environmental Health.

It was for these reasons and more that on behalf of the Institute, Lisa McCann was delighted to present the Meritorious Endeavours in Environmental Health Award to Bernard Forteath in acknowledgement of a long and distinguished contribution to Environmental and Public Health protection and improvement.

The Meritorious Endeavours in Environmental Health Award is presented annually to an individual or organisation who has/which has significantly contributed to the improvement and protection of health and well-being in Scotland and/or overseas.

Bernard began his career in Environmental Health as a Student Environmental Health Officer in 1965. Once qualified, he worked his way through various positions to eventually become Executive Director of Renfrewshire Council until his retirement in 2006. Bernard is a Chartered Environmental Health Officer and a Fellow and Honorary Member of the Institute.

Since joining the former Sanitary Inspectors' Association of Scotland in 1965, Bernard has maintained a close interest in his professional association. He was President of the Scottish Institute of Environmental Health in 1980 and was a member of the team involved in setting up REHIS in 1982. For the first few years he was the Honorary Secretary and the Public Relations Officer of REHIS and was elected President in 1987, 2006 and in 2012.

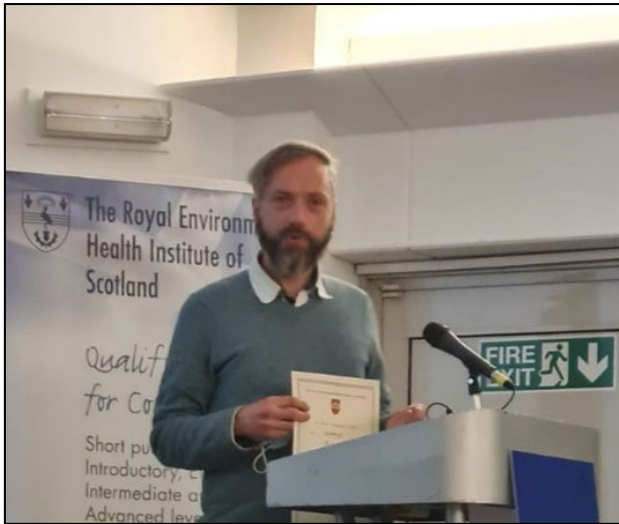
On the international front, Bernard was one of the Institute's three representatives on the Council of the International Federation of Environmental Health for many years. He was Secretary of the Eurocypria Group of the IFEH before it joined with the Nordic Group to form the IFEH Europe Group. Bernard became President of the IFEH in May 2008 and completed his term of office in September 2010. He was also Hon. Public Relations Officer of the Federation and Editor of their quarterly Newsletter until 2014.

He was a member of the Scottish Food Advisory Committee and the Health Protection Advisory Group, an independent group which reports to the Chief Medical Officer in Scotland and the Board of NHS Scotland.

Bernard was pleased and honoured to receive the esteemed award at the Institute's Environmental Health Update on Friday 19 November. As part of the Working Group established in the early 1980s between the Scottish Institute of Environmental Health and the Royal Sanitary Association of Scotland to explore the possibility of merging to form REHIS, Bernard gave a fascinating presentation about the Institute, and on how we got to where we are today and the importance of being a REHIS Member and of Environmental Health Officers pursuing Chartered EHO status.

PRESIDENT'S AWARD - 2021

by Jackie McCabe, Chief Executive



Chris Mantle of Edinburgh Community Food with the award.



Brenda Black speaking about the work of Edinburgh Community Food.

The President's Award is presented annually to an individual or organisation who/which has significantly contributed to the improvement and protection of health and well-being in Scotland through their activities in the Institute's Community Training.

In 2021, the worthy recipients were Edinburgh Community Food for the work they do as a REHIS Approved Training Centre, delivering cooking skills, food hygiene and food and health courses to the community of Edinburgh and beyond.

Brenda Black, Chief Executive, and Chris Mantle, Senior Food and Health Development Officer, received the award from Lisa McCann on Friday 19 November at the Environmental Health update and were absolutely thrilled. Brenda then went on to give an excellent presentation about their food activity during the pandemic.

Edinburgh Community Food is all about helping people enjoy delicious, fresh, healthy food and making sure everyone in the Edinburgh area has access to an affordable, healthy diet. They tackle health inequalities in low-income communities through their Food and Health development and promotion work, including cooking and nutrition courses.

When the pandemic first broke, Edinburgh Community Food were very quick off the mark to adapt their way of working to deliver courses remotely by having 'cook

along' sessions through social media and virtual training sessions. They also assumed telephone duties to give health promotion advice and support their community members. Prior to the pandemic they supplied fresh produce to many offices and homes but with lockdown, they changed to delivering to the homes of vulnerable, socially isolated and those facing financial hardship.

This has proved to be successful and has allowed them to continue their work in helping people in difficult times access training and support.

For more information about Edinburgh Community Food www.edinburghcommunityfood.org.uk.



WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MEMBER OF A REGISTERED SCOTTISH CHARITY

by Jackie McCabe, Chief Executive

The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland was established in 1983 following the merger of the Royal Sanitary Association of Scotland (founded 1875) and the Scottish Institute of Environmental Health (founded 1973). The Institute registered as a Scottish charity in May 1980 and was incorporated by Royal Charter in 2001.

The objects for which the Institute is established, and which are contained in its Royal Charter, are:

For the benefit of the community to promote the advancement of Environmental Health by

- stimulating general interest in and disseminating knowledge concerning Environmental Health.
- promoting education and training in matters relating to Environmental Health.
- maintaining, by examination or otherwise, high standards of professional practice and conduct on the part of Environmental Health Officers in Scotland.

The affairs of the Institute are managed by the Council which is elected by members. The role of the Council and the duties and responsibilities of its members are found in the Charter and Byelaws.

All Members of the Council are charity trustees of the Institute. Charity trustees are at the centre of running the Institute. They are the people who have general control and management and who give up their own time to discuss and decide on the work of the Institute. The duties are set out in law and charity trustees must follow them. If these duties are not followed, the OSCR (the Scottish Charity Regulator) may take action.

The Scottish Charity Regulator recently produced 'top ten' points of running an effective charity. These are:

1. Always do what is best for your charity

As a charity trustee you have a legal responsibility to put the interests of your charity above your own interests. All the charity trustees are collectively responsible for making sure that the charity is run properly.

2. Act with care and diligence

You have to protect your charity including its beneficiaries, assets and reputation.

3. Understand your charity's legal responsibilities

Make sure your charity is meeting its legal duties under charity law and other relevant laws.

4. Declare and manage conflicts of interest

All charity trustees have a collective responsibility to manage conflicts of interest and to act in the charity's interests.

5. Know and understand your charitable purpose(s)

Everything you do should be directed at achieving only the purposes set out in your governing document.

6. Have a copy of your governing document

Know what it says, understand what it means, and what you have to do.

7. Understand your charity's finances

All the charity trustees are responsible for the charity's finances and must have access to the financial records.

8. Send OSCR the correct information, on time

You must send us your accounts, Trustees' Annual Report, External Scrutiny report, and online annual return every year.

9. Make sure your charity's details on the Scottish Charity Register are correct and any changes made properly

You can update some details using OSCR online. It's a legal requirement for you to make sure Principal Contact details are up to date. If you want to make certain changes to your charity you must ask OSCR for permission first.

10. Give people the correct information

Make sure your charity publicises that it is a charity. Display your charity number.



Membership of the Institute

The Institute is established to promote the advancement of Environmental Health for the benefit of all sectors of the community.

There are personal benefits of being a member of the Institute such as:

- using the credentials of MREHIS after your name (dependent on category of membership)
- the opportunity to participate in the scheme of Continuing Professional Development and gaining a certificate each year
- members who are Environmental Health Officers can become Chartered Environmental Health Officers
- members can preview access to the Environmental Health Scotland Journal.
- members can attend seminars and training events on a wide range of Environmental Health topics, at reduced rates and some at no charge at all, helping you to develop your career
- members can attend the Institute's Annual Forum at a reduced rate
- opportunities to meet and liaise with organisations and individuals and colleagues representing the Environmental Health professions
- being part of your regional centre (Northern and Southern) offering networking and learning opportunities in your local area

- through the Institute's working groups, members are part of a wide network to share professional advice and guidance
- members can provide input into government and other organisations' consultations.

But for many of us, by simply being a member of the Institute, we are contributing to its charitable work. Our membership fees help the Institute deliver on many of its charitable aims, including programmes such as the Schools Initiative, where the Institute part-funds over 10,000 pupils achieving their Elementary Food Hygiene certificate each year. In Community Training, we have over 500 Approved Training Centres throughout Scotland which are delivering a vast range of training courses allowing people gain formal qualifications in areas and learn to improve health and well-being. These formal qualifications can help people gain employment.

By being a member, we are contributing to the work of the Institute and supporting the Environmental Health Profession in Scotland by providing the means to qualify the next generation of Environmental Health Officers and Food Safety Officers.

Being a member of the Institute is a source of pride. Membership is open to all persons with an interest in Environmental Health in its widest sense. If you are not a member of the Institute and would like to join, please do get in touch.

MEMBERSHIP

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

REHIS exists to improve and protect public health in Scotland through education, training and qualifications in Environmental Health.

REHIS is the awarding body for the professional titles 'Environmental Health Officer' and 'Chartered Environmental Health Officer', and has members across the UK and further afield.

NEW MEMBERS ALWAYS WELCOME

www.rehis.com

HYGIENE PROTOCOLS AT COP26

by Dr Lisa Ackerley

Reckitt, as the hygiene partner at COP26, was responsible for providing product and protocols for the hygiene interventions at the event.

For this huge event, with an area spanning the size of 30 football pitches, and hosting 26,000 delegates, pre-planning was essential. Even then, when we first visited to assess the job, many areas were still car parks, so it was difficult to visualise what it might look like, and more importantly, what would need to be disinfected.

As strong advocates of 'Targeted Hygiene', where hygiene interventions are implemented where and when necessary, we needed to determine the protocols for the event – not just what needed to be disinfected, but when and how. This meant working out the customer journeys and use of the as-yet unbuilt spaces.

A team of 20 scientists from disciplines of virology, microbiology, chemistry, public health and behavioural science carried out over 1,000 hours of background research to create an 80-page justification document to support the development of the scientific risk assessment which formed the background to the protocols used by the cleaning teams. This was endorsed by London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

The process involved examining the journey of delegates through COP26 and determining risk levels dependent upon use, density of crowds in an area and the ability to completely clean between use of a location. For example, some meeting rooms could be cleared and cleaned between being re-occupied, making them a lower risk than areas where there was hot-desking. Because we looked at this through the lens of Targeted Hygiene, the process of making hygiene interventions when and where they really make a difference, we were able to determine the frequency of cleaning as well as the methodology, to ensure that disinfection was taking place often enough to make a difference. This was quite a different stance to that taken traditionally, where a "deep clean" may have been taken just at the end of the day; we understood that re-contamination of surfaces was an important factor, and simply cleaning once a day would not be the solution. Avoiding the "hygiene theatre" approach where chemicals may be sprayed indiscriminately, we wanted a more effective targeted and, as it turns out, sustainable solution by focusing on key touch points at times that really would make a difference.

We also recognised that it is not just surface disinfection that matters – hand hygiene was critical. This meant

encouraging the use of hand sanitisers and hand washing at basins in the toilets. We understood from the literature review that hand hygiene compliance has been shown to be quite poor in the past. For example, studies have shown that up to 50% of people may not wash their hands after using the toilet, so we wanted to try to get better compliance than this! Over 500 hand sanitisers were positioned carefully to encourage use at key points – again the targeted hygiene approach. This would be at the entry to the security zone, or outside meeting rooms, and even on the podium in the plenary rooms. Working with behavioural scientists at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, we also considered how to best use messaging to ensure uptake of hand hygiene interventions.

The result of this work (which took several months to produce) was protocol cards for each of the 12 types of locations, listing the frequently touched items that needed to be disinfected, and the frequency at which this must take place. Roving cleaning staff were needed to clean when people left hot-desks or food and beverage tables to ensure that the next occupants were sitting at a hygienic table. We approached a REHIS Approved Training Centre to deliver the REHIS Elementary Cleaning and Disinfection course to the cleaning staff to ensure they were all trained.

But we decided we needed more than this – we wanted to be sure that our protocols were being implemented and worked! So, I linked up with REHIS again to advertise to their members for some Environmental Health Officers to work with us on site, taking samples after cleaning had taken place to verify that our methods worked. From 24 applicants, three were selected, with two others agreeing to be "back up" in case anyone was not able to work. Bearing in mind the pandemic, we were conscious that even though the EHOs were fully vaccinated, they may have come into contact with those who were ill. The EHOs were perfect for the role, because their profession means they are practical scientists, who understand about the routes of infection, and the science behind disinfection (I am also an EHO by background).

We also teamed up with Hygiena, which makes ATP monitoring devices. ATP is short for Adenosine Triphosphate, which is the energy packet in cells. It is picked up on a swab, and when an enzyme is released onto the swab, the swab put into the machine, a reading is given from the light that is given off from the ATP. The higher the reading, the dirtier the surface.

By practising on many surfaces and working with Hygiena we determined a reasonable threshold level for pass or fail, based on their knowledge of sampling in many different locations. We set up a sampling plan based on the protocols to check every type of high touch items in the different locations. This was put onto six machines, three for the EHOs, and three for the cleaning teams.

A briefing session just before the event in Glasgow allowed us to train everyone (EHOs and cleaners) on how to use the new state of the art equipment and we tested the threshold levels out again on actual typical surfaces. The machines sent the results to the cloud

immediately which meant that we could examine the data remotely – that was where I came in. We agreed an escalation process in case a swab showed a failure, so the EHOs could coach and then re-test after further cleaning. In all circumstances, a pass was reached after a re-clean. They carried out observational checks and gave feedback.

Throughout the event, the on-site Reckitt team liaised with the EHOs and cleaning companies to feed back any issues with daily overview data submitted to the government and enforcement officers.



Catriona Cowan at COP26.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

by Karen Keeley, Director of Professional Development

Continuing Professional Development

Participants of the CPD Scheme, including EHO and non-EHO members, will be aware that CPD submissions for calendar year 2021 required to be with the Institute by 31 January 2022. Submissions were processed and Chartered status logos and Certificates of Compliance sent to those meeting the requirements of the Scheme. All should be very proud to hold the professional accolade.

Members of the Institute are encouraged to make CPD submissions to evidence their commitment to professional development. Members are also encouraged to promote Institute membership and Chartered status to their colleagues.

Professional Interviews

The next diet of professional interviews is scheduled for 3–4 May 2022 and will be held at the Carnegie Conference Centre in Dunfermline. There will be candidates sitting professional interviews for the REHIS Diploma in Environmental Health as well as qualifications awarded by the Scottish Food Safety Officers' Registration Board.

After May 2022, which is the professional examination diet postponed from September 2021, the diets will return to the annual programme with a single diet in the Autumn. 13-15 September 2022 is the next scheduled date.

Professional Courses

The annual Environmental Health Update was delivered in conjunction with the Institute AGM and the hybrid format, where delegates could choose how to attend, was well received. We had a range of speakers including Bernard Forteach, recipient of the Meritorious Endeavours in Environmental Health Award, and Brenda Black, recipient of the President's Award, to representation from the University of the West of Scotland, Environmental Standards Scotland, and the British Red Cross. Copies of presentations, where available, can be accessed at the members' only area of the Institute's website.

The first Environmental Public Health and Housing Update for a few years was delivered at the beginning of December 2021 and included a range of topical subjects in this field. The event was well attended and received good feedback, with many suggested topics for inclusion at future events.

A successful Crime Investigation and Statement Writing course was delivered virtually by Betty Bott on 1 and 2 February 2022. This was the last course to be delivered by Betty, who is now retiring. It is hoped a new trainer will be identified to deliver a similar course, as the content is invaluable to professionals in investigation of incidents and preparing for possible formal actions.

Should there be any queries regarding the above or indeed any other professional development matters, please contact the Director of Professional Development at contact@rehis.com.

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CHANGED JOBS / CONTACT DETAILS?

Help the Institute to maintain an accurate members' database by advising us of any changes to your employment or contact details.

Please click on the link below and complete and return the form to contact@rehis.com.

Thank you.

<https://www.rehis.com/page/update-members-database>

AN OVERVIEW OF REHIS AND SQA ACCREDITATION

by Sandra Williamson, Director of Training

In December 2020 REHIS was proud to announce that it had become an Accredited Awarding Body, allowing Approved Training Centres the opportunity to apply to the Institute to offer the Scottish Certificate for Personal Licence Holders (SCPLH) and Scottish Certificate for Personal Licence Holders (Refresher) SCPLHR courses.

These qualifications meet the requirements of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and anyone applying for a personal licence must hold a valid SCPLH certificate – the certificate by itself does not constitute a personal licence. As one of the main objectives of the courses was to ensure the responsible operation of licenced premises and the potential effect alcohol consumption could have on customers and businesses, the courses were deemed appropriate to be included in our suite of qualifications which all have the remit of contributing to improving public health through education and training.

The courses carry SQA Accreditation; their role is to approve awarding bodies i.e REHIS to deliver qualifications of social, economic, environmental or cultural benefit to Scotland. In addition, SQA Accreditation accredits and quality assures qualifications and regulates approved awarding bodies, thereby safeguarding the interests of learner, employers, parents, funding bodies and government.

The work of SQA Accreditation is overseen by the Accreditation Committee (AC) which is accountable to Scottish Ministers and ensures appropriate governance mechanisms are in place for SQA Accreditation's functions. The AC delegates responsibility for decision-making on all Accreditation and Regulation operational activity to the Accreditation Co-ordination Group (ACQ).

SQA's Accreditation work is divided into 2 main areas – Accreditation and Regulation.

The Accreditation Section is responsible for:

- Advising in the development of National Occupation Standards and qualifications and supporting through the qualification product approval process
- Supporting and assisting awarding bodies (e.g REHIS) through the accreditation process
- Reviewing accreditation submissions
- Working with awarding bodies and standard setting bodies to determine Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) credit rating and supporting them through the credit rating approval process

The Institute's SCPLH and SCPLHR courses were credit rated on the SCQF at Level 6 and awarded 1 credit point in December 2020.

The Regulation Section is responsible for:

- Conducting awarding body audits and ensuring they remain compliant with Regulatory Principles
- Carrying out provider monitoring visits
- Reviewing the Quality Enhancement Rating of awarding bodies
- Supporting new organisations through the approval process
- Reviewing awarding self-assessment reports or action plans
- Investigating complaints and compliance issues and cases of malpractice or maladministration.

In October 2021 REHIS (Awarding Body) was audited by SQA Accreditation to determine if it met the criteria stipulated in each of the 18 Regulatory Principles. Despite being conducted remotely this was an in-depth and thorough scrutiny. Telephone verification calls were also carried out to randomly selected Approved Training Centres (referred to by SQA Accreditation as Providers). These sought to confirm that REHIS as an Awarding Body managed its Providers in alignment with its own policies and procedures and SQA Regulatory Principles.

The outcome was that although there were some issues raised in each audit, all received a "Low Risk" Rating. Overall REHIS was given a Green Rating indicating that full auditing would happen on a three-yearly cycle.

Action Plans were submitted to address the issues raised from the audits; the Action Plans outlined what would be done to eliminate or mitigate the issues raised. The supporting evidence provided by REHIS has now been fully signed off and closed out by the Accreditation Co-ordination Group (ACG).

Moving forward, that information will now be disseminated to our SCPLH Approved Centres, be monitored through Quality Assurance visits and form part of our Annual Self Assessment report that requires to be submitted.

HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

by HSE

New minister for HSE

During October, Chloe Smith MP, Minister for Disabled People, Health & Work, was announced as the new minister responsible for the HSE. Chloe is the MP for Norwich North and was first elected in July 2009. She served as Minister for the Constitution and Devolution at the Cabinet Office between 2020 and 2021, as Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office between 2018 and 2020, as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Assistant Government Whip between 2017 and 2018.

Health and safety at work statistics published for 2020/21

Year on year Great Britain has remained one of the safest places in the world to work. This is something we should be proud of. However, the release of HSE's annual statistics in December was a reminder that too many workers are still injured or have become ill as a result of their work. The key statistics for Scotland show:

- 17 workers were killed at work,
- 115,000 workers suffering from work-related ill health each year (annual average 2018/19-2020/21), and
- 41,000 non-fatal injuries to workers each year (annual average 2018/19-2020/21)

The devastating impact of every fatality was brought to light again recently. Two companies in Ayrshire faced heavy fines following an incident where a security guard working at a windfarm was found "face down and hypothermic in deep snow". He sadly died later that day. Safety measures such as sufficient means for the guards to communicate offsite, and a back-up generator for heating and lighting should the main generator fail, had not been put in place. Unfortunately, this was another tragic event which could have been avoided.

Full statistics for Scotland and Great Britain can be found on our website:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/regions/scotland-statistics.pdf>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/index.htm>

To measure the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, HSE's latest statistics for Great Britain include two new estimates:

- 93,000 workers self-reported catching COVID-19 at work; 52,000 of these worked in the human health and social work sector.
- 645,000 workers reported that their work-related illness was caused or made worse by the coronavirus pandemic; 70 per cent of these were cases of stress, depression or anxiety.

Last year HSE's chief executive Sarah Albon said: *"The latest figures on work-related stress reinforce our previous concerns around the scale of this issue in workplaces. Just last month we announced our new Working Minds campaign, in partnership with a number of key organisations, to help employers make recognising the signs of work-related stress routine."*

HSE's Working minds campaign

Mental health issues are the number one reason given for sick days in the UK. Factors such as tight deadlines, heavy workloads or a lack of managerial support can create or exacerbate stress. During 2019/20 more than 17 million working days were lost as a result of stress, anxiety, or depression. A total of 828,000 workers suffered work-related stress, depression or anxiety which is a similar figure to 2020/21 (822,000). HSE has acknowledged the concerning evidence relating to work related stress and in November 2021 launched **Working Minds**.



The campaign aims to help small businesses recognise the signs of work-related stress and make tackling issues routine. It provides employers and workers with easy to implement advice, including simple steps in its '5 Rs' principle to **Reach out**, **Recognise**, **Respond**, **Reflect**, and **make it Routine**.

HSE's chief executive Sarah Albon said: *"Work-related stress and poor mental health should be treated with the same significance as risks of poor physical health and injury. In terms of the affect it has on workers, significant and long-term stress can limit performance and impact personal lives."*

“No worker should suffer in silence and if we don’t act now to improve workers’ mental health, this could evolve into a health and safety crisis.

“The pandemic has highlighted the need to protect the health of employees who have faced unprecedented challenges; the Government is committed to building back better and we want to make sure good mental health is central to this.”

For more information on the Working Minds campaign, visit the Work Right campaign website:

<https://workright.campaign.gov.uk/campaigns/working-minds/>.

Follow the campaign on Twitter at [@H_S_E](#), on Facebook [@hsegovuk](#), or on LinkedIn.

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TRANSFORMING SCOTLAND’S WATERS

by SEPA

River Basin Management Plans

The River Basin Management Plans for Scotland set out a range of actions to address impacts on the water environment focusing on reducing resource use, eliminating waste and restoration of natural capital. The new plans for 2021-2027 were published in December and summarise:

- the state of the water environment
- pressures affecting the quality of the water environment where it is in less than good condition
- action to protect and improve the water environment
- a summary of outcomes following implementation.

The plans were developed and delivered collaboratively to set out a range of priority measures, including working with land managers to reduce diffuse pollution from agriculture, and supporting the passage of migratory fish such as salmon.

To complement these actions and ensure that rivers, beaches and urban waters are free from debris and reduce spills from sewers, Scottish Water has also published its own route map and announced plans to invest half a billion pounds in Scotland’s wastewater network.

This combined programme of work will ensure that Scotland’s rivers, lochs, estuaries, coastal areas and groundwater can continue to supply drinking water, support fisheries, offer an essential resource for business and agriculture, and serve as a source of recreation that promotes health and wellbeing.

Links:

River Basin Management Plans:

<https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/>.

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF FOOD LABELLING IN SCOTLAND

by Food Standards Scotland

Supporting Businesses Today and Beyond

There's no escaping the fact that food labelling requirements are changing. With recent updates to the labelling legislative landscape (both at home and neighbouring countries), as well as more savvy and conscious consumers, labelling can be a very daunting task for businesses. Especially small businesses in Scotland.

Most recently businesses have had to get to grips with a new labelling law, which came into force in October 2021, which made it a legal requirement for businesses of all sizes to include full ingredient lists and allergen information on food items prepacked for direct sale (PPDS).

To support businesses to meet consumer and legislative expectations, Food Standards Scotland (FSS) adapted its MenuCal tool with functionality to manage, store and track the information required for PPDS labels. The free online tool helps with recording recipes, identifying allergens and managing ingredient information.

Furthermore, FSS has training facilities available for businesses to build greater awareness and understanding of what they need to do when it comes to communicating allergies.

MenuCal supports businesses by having everything in one place, including their own recipes, ingredients and menus. It allows business to create their own 'store cupboard' with the ability to select ingredients from the vast database of foods or manually input their own ingredients to use again in future recipes. This flexible tool also allows businesses to make amendments to any ingredient and/or recipe at any time, create an allergen matrix and download PPDS label information.

With new rules requiring calorie information to be displayed on menus and food labels in England taking force from 6 April 2022, this is something Scottish businesses are keeping a watchful eye on... MenuCal can also support businesses with providing calorie information for the food they serve.

As of 6 April 2022, all food business in England with more than 250 employees, including cafes, restaurants, and takeaways are now required to display calorie information of non-prepacked food and soft drinks. Menus (both printed and online), digital ordering platforms and food labels at the point a customer is making their selections **all** require calorie information to be clearly displayed.

Closer to home, Scottish Government announced its consultation on mandatory calorie labelling in the out of home (OOH) sector on Friday 8 April. This is part of a range of interventions to improve the out of home food environment and support a healthier diet for the population of Scotland. On average, people are visiting OOH establishments four times a week, frequenting coffee shops, convenience stores and food bought "on the go" most often. The pandemic has also brought with it a sharp rise in take away and home deliveries.

FSS welcomes the consultation and has championed mandatory calorie labelling since recommendations were made to Scottish Government in 2019. Research by FSS shows people are supportive of the proposal, admitting it was better to know than not know how many calories are in the foods they eat. Strong public support is mirrored in other surveys, such as one by Diabetes UK, that indicated around 60% of the public would be more likely to visit an establishment that offered calorie labelling on its menus.

The proposal for calorie labelling is not about discouraging "treats" all together, it's about enabling people to make an informed decision. Providing calorie information may lead to fewer calories being ordered and consumed compared with the absence of this information. Perhaps more powerful though is the potential for it to drive reformulation by businesses, with research showing that chain restaurants in the UK who have introduced calorie labelling have 31% less calories on their menus. This type of change will benefit everyone without the need for any conscious choice or decision making.

There is recognition that if calorie labelling requirements were introduced, there would be potential costs and resource implications for businesses and enforcing authorities, for example, time to calculate calories and print new menus/signage.

In the meantime, businesses are encouraged to explore and use FSS' free calorie calculator and allergen management tool, MenuCal, if businesses want to proactively provide calorie information to customers now.

Businesses are invited to register for the free tool here: [Menucal.fss.scot](https://www.fss.gov.scot/) and can take part in the consultation here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/consultation-mandatory-calorie-labelling-out-home-sector-scotland/>.

REHIS PRESENTERS' UPDATE – MARCH 2022

by Sandra Williamson, Director of Training

The annual REHIS Presenters' Update was held on Wednesday 16 March 2022 through MS Teams.

The half-day event was well attended with 85 participants from all over Scotland joining to hear the guest speakers provide an update on a range of topics.

After a warm welcome from our President Louise Cunningham, and an overview of Community Training from myself, the Update started with a presentation on Current Foodborne Illness statistics and the impact of COVID-19 from Dr Emma Agnew, Food Standards Scotland.

The morning continued with an Allergen Update from Dr Hazel Gowland, Allergy Action and in conjunction with the topic of allergens Grainne Gilson-Smith, Food Standards Scotland provided information about FSS 'Pre-packed for Direct Sale' support package and MenuCal*.

Liz Budde from Dumfries and Galloway College then gave an overview of the college's experience of delivering REHIS Licencing qualifications with the final session of the event being presented by Ian Ogilvie on Health and Safety in Swimming Pools and Hot Tubs.

I would like to thank all those who attended, for taking the time to provide feedback about the day and the method of delivery, and to the guest speakers for giving their valuable time.

**MenuCal is a free-to-use, web-based calorie calculator and allergen management tool. In March 2016, Food Standards Scotland (FSS) purchased a MenuCal licence for Scotland, with the aim of supporting small and medium food business operators (FBOs) in the out-of-home environment to provide calorie and allergen information on menus.*

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**REHIS WELCOMES THE
SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES FOR
PUBLICATION IN**

***ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
SCOTLAND***

**REHIS WELCOMES
REPORTS OF INTERESTING
COURT CASES FOR
PUBLICATION IN**

***ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
SCOTLAND***

SETTING UP AND RUNNING A COVID-19 COMMUNITY ASYMPTOMATIC TEST SITE (ATS)

by Chris Dalrymple, Chartered Environmental Health Officer, Renfrewshire Council

Introduction

Environmental Health should always be at the forefront of Public Health matters due to the experience and skillset within the profession. Unfortunately, over many years this has been seen to erode with events happening every so often that bring it back to the forefront of the minds of public, politicians and press (Barr butchers, the horsemeat scandal etc) before people ask, why wasn't more funding provided? It was always going to take something large to do this and a global pandemic brought it back into focus.

During the pandemic, Environmental Health and Trading Standards have been instrumental in regard to business enforcement but also with contact tracing (Test and Protect) due to the skillset for follow-up questions like those on infectious disease. This has been recognised nationally with funding starting to come through for additional posts such as Covid Compliance Officers.

In addition, Renfrewshire Council became involved with the Scottish Government and the NHS Greater and Glasgow Health Board to establish the first static asymptomatic test site in Johnstone Town Hall. This was to use Lateral Flow Devices (LFD) on people with no symptoms (asymptomatic) to understand the spread within a certain community.

As the Chief Environmental Health Officer for Renfrewshire Council, I was asked to implement and oversee the entire operation to ensure it was successful, and that the relevant outcomes were achieved.

Description

In November 2020, Renfrewshire had the unenviable title of having the highest number of positive cases per 100,000 in the whole of Scotland. As a result, the Chief Executive of Renfrewshire Council was pushing Officers and the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board for more to be done in understanding why this was the case. On Thursday 19 November 2020, GG&C Health Board met with the six Chief Executives to discuss the possibility of someone hosting an asymptomatic test site somewhere in Scotland. Proposals were to be submitted to the Scottish Government the following day (Friday 20 November 2020).

The Chief Executive was adamant that Renfrewshire should host this site due to the high positivity rate. The following Tuesday, 24 November 2020, the Scottish Government agreed that Renfrewshire Council and Johnstone Town Hall would host the first static

asymptomatic test site in Scotland. The site was due to open on Wednesday 2 December and run until Wednesday 9 December 2020. This gave me eight days to prepare the site – a huge logistical challenge and one that I couldn't do individually.

Considerations

There were a lot of considerations needed to ensure the site opened on time at 8am on Wednesday 2 December 2020.

The first thing to establish was the optimal site and size of operation. Johnstone Town Hall is large, well known and central within the town centre which made it ideal.

The site was to operate 12 hours per day (8am-8pm) for eight days, which meant staffing the site from 7am-9pm. A 12-booth model was chosen, following a site visit, to maximise the number of people on site and ensure a regular throughput.

One of the key early considerations was to identify who was to be tested. Whilst it was seen to be Johnstone and the four intermediate data zones, many areas immediately adjacent to Johnstone felt that they should be included. Whilst we decided that no one would be rejected, we did establish and maintain clear data so we could strip out anyone not from Johnstone. It led to just short of 17,000 residents being eligible. However, if you take in those that work in Johnstone and go to school in Johnstone from outwith the area, the figure was closer to 20,000.

One of the reasons for only running the site up to 9 December 2020, was to try and maximise attendance and minimise disruption i.e. if someone tested positive and close contacts were required to self-isolate for 14 days, it would mean they would be out of self-isolation for Christmas.

A command and control structure was quickly established (Gold, Silver and Bronze) to allow regular meeting and speedy escalation of issues. The structure was as follows:

- Gold – Chief Executive, Director, Chief EHO and Head of Communications
- Silver – Project Leads on Build, Health and Safety, Workforce and Planning, Communications, Project Management and Facilities Management
- Bronze – Operational Leads e.g. Workforce, Cleaning, Roads

Daily meetings were established with Silver Command project leads, but also with the Scottish Government and Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board leads. This was to allow everyone to understand how things were progressing and raise any issues. Part of the discussion was to learn lessons from previous sites in Liverpool and Merthyr Tydfil in Wales. The main aim was to understand the numbers of asymptomatic positive cases and establish a pilot for the use of Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs). LFDs were still in the early stages and unlike the conventional PCR test, LFDs could give a result within 30 minutes. This was seen as a huge advantage for an asymptomatic site.

After the site visit and establishing that the proposed layout would work, efforts shifted to the build. It was decided that 12,000 kits would be delivered to site to ensure capacity for approximately 75 per cent of the residential population. This was hugely optimistic, especially as Liverpool only saw a 10 per cent uptake in the early stages of its pilot.

We had to understand and put in place data collection as due to time constraints, obtaining timeous data from the UK Government site was going to be extremely problematic. We decided that over 150 staff members would be required with 53 operational staff working on any one shift. Two shifts were established: 7am to 2.30pm, and 2pm to 9pm, to allow a handover during the day. However, this came with the complication of keeping 100 members of staff two metres apart at handover time.

Health and Safety was going to be of paramount importance and therefore a lot of effort went into risk-assessing the site, advising what Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) would be required and that generally the site was safe and welcoming for both staff and visitors. By ensuring it was safe, this allowed trade unions to be approached to allow staff to work on site. Appropriate barriers, signage, hand sanitiser and cleaning equipment was ordered early, and a one-way flow was introduced alongside two-metre distanced queueing to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Agreement was reached with the UK Government, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) for equipment including booths, PPE, cleaning materials and waste facilities. Unfortunately, despite repeated efforts, the equipment either came piecemeal, was of insufficient quality or simply didn't arrive. As a result, Renfrewshire Council had to source everything itself including the use of Building Services to erect booths on Sunday 29 November 2020, just four days before the site was due to go live.

As things progressed operationally, alongside this, the

focus was on communications to maximise attendance and get as many people as possible to visit and get tested. A communications plan was devised to mobilise community influencers to spread the word, using the strapline "Please get tested. Do it for yourself, your loved ones and your town".

A couple of videos were prepared to assist with members of the public (Video 1), but also for other sites to learn from the ATS in Johnstone. I assisted with a walkthrough video and this is the second video link below (Video 2):

- Video 1 – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5F-mVwi1tmE>.
- Video 2 – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLqQYuQHrno>.

All staff were trained in every aspect of the site from assisting members of the public to using the lateral flow devices. To ensure staff were competent, all staff members were tested (by each other) on the Monday and Tuesday before opening to allow staff to get used to the testing but also show that everyone working on the site was negative.

One of the key priorities I established early was quality control. As LFDs were relatively new, I wanted to be able to show that the test was as accurate as possible. There are always accuracy challenges with "self-swabbing" but we got a Lead Nurse and EHOs to monitor the test site. As a further check, all staff were asked later in the week to undertake a confirmatory PCR test (at the MTU set up adjacent to Town Hall) to return a further negative to show the LFD was correct.

Finally, one of the key criteria established was to minimise people attending who were either vulnerable or in the shielding category. Therefore, I established there were 591 people within the Shielding category in Johnstone and we agreed to phone everyone, offer a Home Test Kit and if they wanted one, deliver and pick up during the pilot. This was another logistical challenge, but again maximised the number of people taking tests.

The outcomes show how well the site worked in testing the Johnstone population. Dedication and hard work by all staff provided a safe and welcoming environment, leading to over 5,000 tests being undertaken over the eight-day period. It was an extremely successful pilot as acknowledged by the Scottish Government and the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board.

Communication Campaign

- 33,000 total views on Council website (most visited webpage 28 Nov-9 Dec; interest peaked 30 Nov-2 Dec for ATS opening)

- 631 social media messages (tags, comments and questions) related to ATS, which represents 49 per cent of total social media customer service interaction from 28 Nov-9 Dec
- 1,226,499 social media activity (RC Facebook and Twitter only) total reach

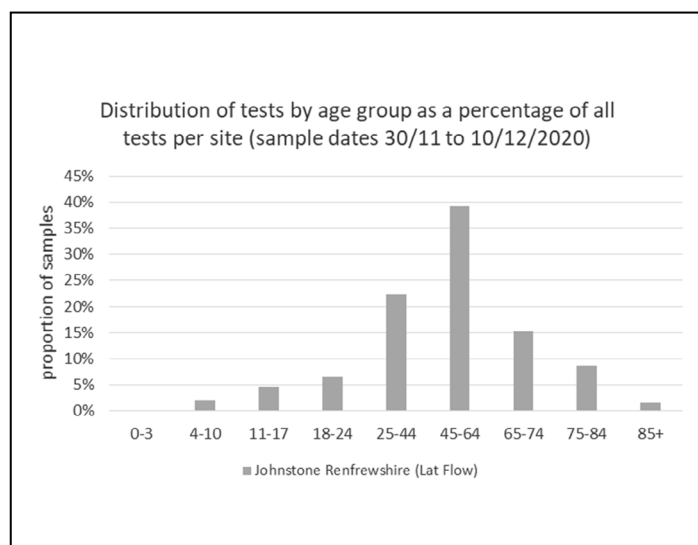
Test Results

- 5,031 people tested
- 4,857 (96.5 per cent) members of public
- 174 (3.4 per cent) staff or Elected Members
- 15 positive tests (0.3 per cent)
- 99.7 per cent negative
- 7 tests confirmed via PCR
- 0.01 per cent invalid
- 197 PCR tests at MTU

Home Test Kits

- 591 Shielding residents – phone calls
- 256 households and 443 kits requested
- 321 returned – 72 per cent return rate

Age demographic



Customer Feedback

- 92 per cent respondents would recommend attending test site
- 99.9 per cent (2,045) felt it was very safe/safe and very well organised
- 90.8 per cent found it easy/very easy to test themselves and
- 1.9 per cent stated difficult/not easy to take the test themselves (42)
- 99.9 per cent very satisfied/satisfied with their overall experience (95 per cent of this figure were very satisfied)

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to be the largest public health crisis that we will face as Environmental Health professionals. Unfortunately, at the time of writing, it is not letting up. However, with mass vaccination now taking place and wider community testing, every effort will continue to be made to minimise the spread and the impact.

The static Johnstone Asymptomatic Test Site remains the largest and most well used asymptomatic test site to date. The numbers were huge, during a time when LFDs were new and there were no vaccinations (“a perfect storm”). The site was an exemplar of best practice that could be scaled across Scotland and provided the Scottish Government and DHSC with actions for their Standard Operating Procedure. The workrate and dedication of the 150 staff was tremendous, and allowed other local authorities to take lessons on board and use the model successfully across Scotland.

A massive “Lessons Learned and Q&A” session was held on Microsoft Teams on 12 January 2021 with over 100 people from Local Authorities, Health Boards, Military and Scottish Government taking part.

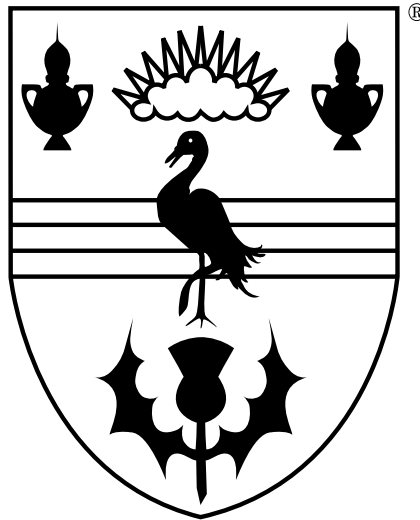
The site worked extremely well but we would probably run it differently now, using a mixture of booths and home-testing kits, which incidentally is now the main model used for asymptomatic testing.

As well as the community testing, the lessons learned from Johnstone were used in developing mass vaccination centres across the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board. A lot of the preparation and site management (communication, social distancing and queue management, Health and Safety, ICT testing and assistance, deliveries and storage, suitability of building and location) remains the same.

Setting up and running the site was hugely demanding but thanks to the appropriate Environmental Health skillset/background, it was a huge success and led to learning for the Scottish Government, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board and Renfrewshire Council.

Editor’s Note: Chris is a Chartered EHO and submitted the full report in compliance with the REHIS Scheme of Continuing Professional Development, showing personal new learning/development in the subject of public health.

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