

Mr D Roberts
Her Majesty's Coroner
Fairfield
Station Road
Cockermouth
Cumbria
CA13 9PT

31 August 2016

Dear Mr Roberts

**Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013
Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths
Regarding the Late Polly Connor and Andrew Coates**

I write with reference to your Regulation 28 letter dated 27th January 2016, in respect of the storage of fireworks at Larch Cottage, Ecclerigg, Windermere. Please accept this letter and Cumbria County Council's letter of the 24th March 2016 as the Council's complete response to you Regulation 28 letter.

Within your letter you raised concerns and recommended that the Council should "fully and carefully review the decision making and inspection process of explosive stores in the county. This is to include the manner of construction and content of the structures and the scope of licences". Our letter dated the 24th of March 2016, detailed the actions taken to that date, however due to the flooding in Cumbria in December 2015 we had been unable to arrange for the external audit of our processes and licensed stores.

It was agreed that Cumbria County Council would take the following action by the 31st August 2016:

- Ensure that all officers who are conducting firework licencing inspections will receive training on the requirements of the Explosives Regulations 2014, and will specifically examine storage requirements.
- Conduct an external review of Quality Assurance procedures.
- Externally validate the large firework stores in Cumbria, so that expert opinion on the construction, suitability and compliance with the regulations could be sought.
- Review of existing licences by external expert.

In our letter dated 24th March 2016, we advised you that the HSE were to conduct the external audit of our processes and licensed stores. The HSE were subsequently unable to conduct the audit. Therefore Cumbria County Council, contracted [REDACTED] an independent expert, to validate the firework stores licencing and review the Council's licenses and procedures. [REDACTED] is the Lead Officer for Explosives

for the Chartered Trading Standards Institute, and is a Fellow of the Association for Petroleum and Explosive Administration with over 25 years experience.

I can confirm that the following actions have been undertaken to address your concerns:

- Training - on 17 June 2016, [REDACTED], provided training to all operational Trading Standards Officers and fireworks administrators in respect of The Explosives Regulations 2014. This training specifically covered the storage of fireworks and construction of firework stores, separation distances, hazard types of fireworks and licensing requirements.
- Quality Assurance Procedures and Review of Existing Licenses - [REDACTED] reviewed the fireworks quality assurance procedures and work instructions implemented by Cumbria Trading Standards. He identified some minor amendments to the procedures in his report, which have now been incorporated into the Council's procedures and practices.
- Firework Store review - [REDACTED] also conducted an audit of the large Cumbrian fireworks stores and their associated licenses. In respect of the mandatory legal requirements he identified one issue over the quantity and then the subsequent separation distances specified in one licence. This has now been rectified. There were also some issues identified with the best practice requirements which the businesses determine how they comply with these requirements. Compliance of these issues has been agreed with the businesses concerned.

I am pleased to advise you that Cumbria County Council has addressed the issues which were identified in [REDACTED]'s report, and the licensing procedures and Firework Stores in Cumbria were compliant with the Explosive Regulations 2014. The Council has also provided additional training for all staff involved in firework licensing.

I hope that the independent report and our interim response dated 24th March 2016 provides you with reassurance that Cumbria County Council is now fully meeting its statutory responsibilities under the Explosive Regulations 2014, as the enforcing and licensing authority.

Should you wish to discuss the content of the letter or attached report further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



[REDACTED]
Assistant Director – Economy & Environment