

**Title of meeting:** Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Safety  
Decision Meeting

**Date of meeting:** 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014

**Subject:** Tattooing Hygiene Rating Scheme

**Report by:** Alan Cufley, Head of Corporate Assets, Business & Standards

**Wards affected:** ALL

**Key decision:** No

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## **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1. In 2013, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Safety endorsed a consultation on the proposals for an amended Portsmouth City Tattooists Registration Scheme and the delivery of a new Charter of Good Practice. At that time, officers from Environmental Health [EH] were engaging with all the registered tattooists in Portsmouth and offering advice on good practice to safeguard cleanliness standards.
- 1.2. Our liaison demonstrated that tattooing businesses in Portsmouth widely supported our involvement to protect public health and that they welcomed our assistance and our new approach to challenging poor practices and poorly performing practitioners.
- 1.3. Since 2013, progress has been made in the delivery of some of the Charter's initiatives, however, prior to full implementation, EH would like to introduce and adopt a further scheme to rate tattooing studios in regard to their hygiene standards in a similar manner to our rating of food businesses. It is proposed that the two schemes be combined. Businesses will then be invited to participate, inspected and rated '1', '2' or '3' in accordance with defined rating schedules.
- 1.4. The purpose of this report is to set out the details of how the Tattooing Hygiene Rating Scheme [THRS] will work and to provide an update as to how the original Charter has been put into practice since its endorsement.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. **That the Cabinet Member for Environmental and Community Safety approves the proposal to adopt the Charter of Good Practice and the Tattooing Hygiene Rating Scheme in a single scheme and endorses the manner in which this will be implemented as detailed in *Appendix 1*.**

### 3. Background

- 3.1. The 2013 Charter comprised of eight guiding principles - that artists would:
- never tattoo anyone under the age of 18 years old;
  - always abide by the Byelaws;
  - keep exceptionally high standards of cleanliness;
  - only buy ink from reputable suppliers;
  - only buy needles from reputable suppliers;
  - test autoclave and ultrasonic cleaning devices yearly;
  - report poor practice in the industry to the council's enforcement officers;
  - agree to all inspections and recommendations of the council's enforcement officers.
- 3.2. Since the concept of the Charter was introduced by EH, a number of Local Authorities have also been exploring how to support tattooists registered within their own areas. As a result, several have introduced the THRS which has been devised in association with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health [CIEH].
- 3.3. The Portsmouth City THRS will differ from that devised by the CIEH in two significant regards. The first is that it will additionally contain the principals of the original Charter and secondly that it will not rate premises which fall below the minimum required standard as currently set out within the Byelaws.
- 3.4. Like the Charter, the THRS will be a voluntary scheme aimed at improving standards of tattooists and providing the public with better information with respect to the quality of the registered studios in relation to hygiene and infection control measures.
- 3.5. The THRS scheme aims to:
- inform the public about the hygiene standards in the premises at the time of the most recent inspection;
  - drive up standards and adoption of best practice across the industry; and
  - reduce the risk of incidents of infection and of transmission of infectious disease from tattooing procedures.
- 3.6. It is therefore proposed that the Portsmouth City THRS will incorporate the best principals of both the CIEH THRS *and* the originally proposed Charter.
- 3.7. Like the Charter, it is anticipated that participation in the THRS will continue to be by application and will incur a fee. Participating premises will be allocated a rating following an inspection. The rating can be displayed in the premises in certificate form and on the window of the premises in the form of a window sticker. Potential designs of the scheme logo have been devised and are likely to be a combination of the two proposals attached [see Appendix 2]
- 3.8. The main elements and operational status of the current Charter are as follows:

- The continuation of the registration scheme requiring the owners of tattooing businesses to register their premises with the local authority. Charges apply. **Status: On-going.**
- The amendment of the registration scheme requiring all tattooists to renew their registration with the Council *every 12 months*. Charges apply. **Status: Implemented and on-going.**
- That prior to registration, new businesses and artists are inspected and interviewed by an authorised officer to ensure that the conditions specified in the governing Byelaws are met. Once the officer is satisfied, a Certificate of Registration is issued. If the requirements of the Byelaws are not met, registrations are withheld until such times that compliance is likely. **Status - Implemented and on-going.**
- That, subject to an administration fee, artists registered with another local authority are entitled to practice within registered premises in the boundary of Portsmouth for a period of 12 months, following the submission of a registration certificate 28 days prior to undertaking any tattooing procedures. **Status - Implemented and on-going.**
- That subject to an administration fee, artists visiting to take part in conventions (or similar) are able to practice within the boundary of Portsmouth for a period of 3 months if they are able to demonstrate comparable registration with the relevant authority in their country of origin 28 days prior to undertaking tattooing. **Status: Delivery on-going.**
- That following interview, all artists willing to sign up to the Charter and achieving the necessary standards are to be issued with documentation confirming registration and accreditation for display. Participating artists are then highlighted on the Council's website as those which have exceeded the minimum standards required. Charges apply. **Status - incomplete.**

#### 4. The proposal

- 4.1. In addition to the above elements of the Charter, it is intended to implement the following within the THRS. Businesses voluntarily participating will be rated into three categories:

**1 - Satisfactory**

**2 - Good**

**3 - Very Good**

- 4.2. This recommendation follows research by the CIEH showing that 93% of customers considering having a tattoo would be influenced by a rating scheme, and that 80% of tattoo studio operators interviewed thought it would be good for businesses.
- 4.3. Tattooists surveyed felt hygiene ratings would give recognition to well run parlours while driving out unregistered and unsafe practitioners who often operate from home, known in the trade as 'scratchers'.
- 4.4. Trade bodies such as the British Tattoo Artists Federation and the Tattoo and Piercing Industry Union have also expressed support for introducing a rating scheme.

- 4.5. The CIEH research also revealed confusion about the health risks posed by tattooing, which carries the risk of infection from life threatening diseases like HIV and hepatitis as well as unpleasant skin complications such as scarring and granulomas (knots /lumps that form around the site of the tattoo).
- 4.6. Other key findings of the research were:
- 93% of respondents said that they would only consider having a tattoo in a tattoo parlour if it had attained an 'excellent' hygiene rating;
  - Public are largely unaware of the health risks associated with tattooing;
  - 80% of respondents said that the present licensing scheme is not 'adequate' and it is too easy to set up a tattoo parlour from home or a studio;
  - 80% of tattoo parlour owners questioned thought that a hygiene rating scheme would benefit the industry by improving standards and driving out poor practice.
- 4.7. It is envisaged that when signing up to the THRS, premises agree to be rated by completing the application form. Premises within the scheme will be inspected annually at a cost of £110.
- 4.8. Implementation of the THRS is likely to further raise standards across the industry. Somewhat absent from the concept of the original Charter, it is intended that 'the rules' of the new rating scheme and how they will be scored, shall be available to businesses and the public.
- 4.9. It is anticipated that publishing these standards will better help businesses to understand what will be expected of them and against what measures their performance will be assessed.
- 4.10. Likewise, the publication of these standards will ensure that the public are better informed and therefore better able to choose the studios from which they wish to obtain tattoos.
- 4.11. It is likely that the THRS will help make the high street the location of choice for a tattoo and improve the reputation of the legitimate trade whilst highlighting the risks associated if people are tempted to go to 'scratchers' or use tattooing kits in their own homes.

## **5. Equality impact assessment**

- 5.1. An EIA has been undertaken for this report, and checked by Access & Equalities Team.

## **6. Head of Legal Services' comments**

- 6.1 Under provisions contained within the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, Portsmouth City Council is responsible for the registration of tattooists in Portsmouth. Byelaws for the purposes of securing the cleanliness of registered premises (and fittings therein), registered persons and the sterilisation of

instruments, materials and equipment used in connection with the practice of tattooing were made in 1986.

- 6.2. In the absence of occupational standards for practitioners, the approach that has recently been taken is to establish acceptable national standards of practice. To this end, the CIEH, Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive have been collaborating with the Tattooing and Piercing Industry Union to produce a Tattooing and Body Piercing Guidance Toolkit and to provide the public information as to the standards of tattooists via the introduction of the THRS.

**7. Head of Finance comments**

- 7.1. The additional resource secured from the Portfolio reserve is sufficient to fund the upfront costs of staff and activities to deliver the recommendations. The ongoing cost of providing this service will be funded by the annual inspection charges, which are based on the anticipated officer time and the associated costs involved in processing applications and undertaking inspections.

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Signed by: Alan Cufley, Head of Corporate Assets, Business & Standards

**Appendix A: Background list of documents:** The following list of documents discloses facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Appendix	Location and Title
1	The Tattooing Hygiene Rating Scheme Guidance Proposed ( <i>draft</i> ) artwork and logo designs
2	

The recommendations set out in 2.1 above were approved by the Cabinet Member for Environment & Community Safety on .....

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Signed by: Councillor Robert New, Cabinet Member for Environment & Community Safety