

# Local Government Metrology Focus Group

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# Overview

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- Introduction
- Structure of local Government
- Context of Metrology enforcement by Local Weights & Measures authorities
- Co-ordination
- The Community of Practice
- Challenges being faced
- Working together
- Industry questions

# Introducing the speaker

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- ◉ Daniel Maxim
- ◉ Lead Officer for Metrology with Lancashire County Council
- ◉ Head of UKAS calibration laboratory
- ◉ Chairman of North West Metrology Group
- ◉ March 2011 became Chair of the national focus group

# Local Government Context

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- Weights & Measures enforcement undertaken by Trading Standards (TSS)
- 200+ TSS in UK (DET in N. Ireland)
- Legal status as Local Weights & Measures Authorities
- Around 50 LG notified bodies for NAWI initial verification
- TSS are the primary enforcer of many other consumer protection laws.
- Handling many thousands of consumer and business complaints annually
- Most TSS do not have a discrete Metrology unit, many are small in Officer number generally
- Public sector spending cuts contraction of many LA services, some by 30%
- Welsh Assembly debating a national TSS at present, may be a model for future co-operation in other regions

# Co-ordination

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- There are 12 regions of trading standards in the UK eg TSNW CEnTSA etc
- Each region has a number of specialist focus groups, including Metrology
- Representation from each region forming national focus group
- Regional groups consider local issues and any with national implication or requiring a technical interpretation referred to national group.
- Most work done by electronic communication
- Meetings when required usually twice annually

# Policy & support

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- ◉ Until April 2011 LACORS hosted 2 policy officers for metrology.
- ◉ Funding cuts means that this support no longer available.
- ◉ Community of practice established.
- ◉ Means for metrology practitioners to share knowledge, experience and skills.
- ◉ Opinions from national focus group shared as documents, records of meetings, best practice etc

# Policy & support cont'd

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- Collaboration with NMO to validate opinions, ensure consistency
- general 'Regulatory Support Unit' being set up by LGG
- No dedicated national policy body for Metrology
- Annual seminar for legal metrology officers (7/2/12)
- UKWF HA agreement with Herts CC
- Each business has access to the TSS where they are based to reinforce HA support

# Enforcement challenges

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- ◉ Major budget reductions
- ◉ Loss of experienced Officers
- ◉ Policy co-ordination
- ◉ Reduction in enforcement capacity
- ◉ Lack of national priorities featuring W&M
- ◉ Trend towards 'localism'
- ◉ Absence of new installation notifications
- ◉ Competence and training, modular approach
- ◉ Inconsistent across the country



# Enforcement challenges (cont'd!)

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- ⦿ Pockets of knowledge and expertise
- ⦿ Reduced numbers of LWMA notified bodies
- ⦿ Economic situation business necessity to provide a service that is profitable
- ⦿ Non compliance not identified, corners being cut?
- ⦿ Inadequate type approvals?
- ⦿ Inconsistent application of rules across EU

# Key Messages

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- Areas of common ground
- Shared best practice
- Support with competence development
- Sharing of information
- Build relationship with local TSS
- Get TSS input at the right stage of contract review with your customer.
- Report issues
- Make proposals through UKWF
- Involve TSS in auditing
- Joint inspection / calibration visits for W&M cert purposes.