

# **Torbay Gas Safety In Catering Establishments Project 2012/5**

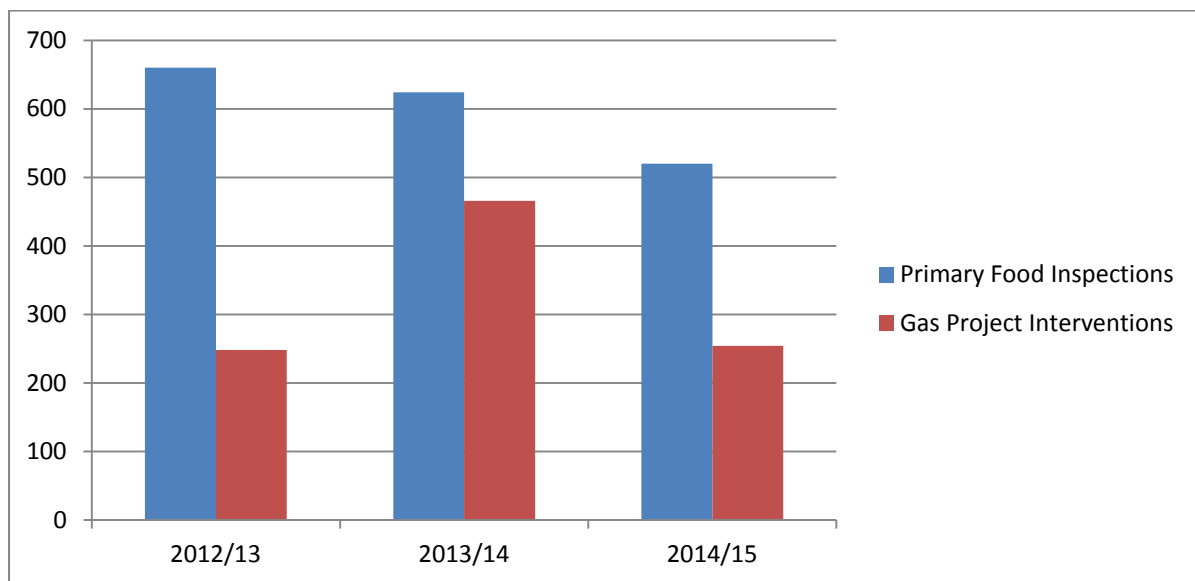
## **Background**

This report is based on data collected as a result of Interventions through the “Gas Safety In Catering Establishments” project run as part of the Devon Chief Officer Health and Safety Sub Group work plan between 2012 and 2015. Data was collected through a standardised pro forma and covered the three financial years 2012/3, 2013/14 and 2014/5. Gas Interventions were to be undertaken at all primary Food Safety Inspections. The project visits commenced in June of 2012 due to the need to undertake officer training prior to initiating the project.

## **Results**

Over the three years 1804 Primary Food Hygiene Inspections were carried out by officers authorised for Health and Safety. At these, a total of 968 "Gas Safety" interventions were undertaken

**Fig.1 Food Safety Inspections v Gas Safety Interventions 2012/15**

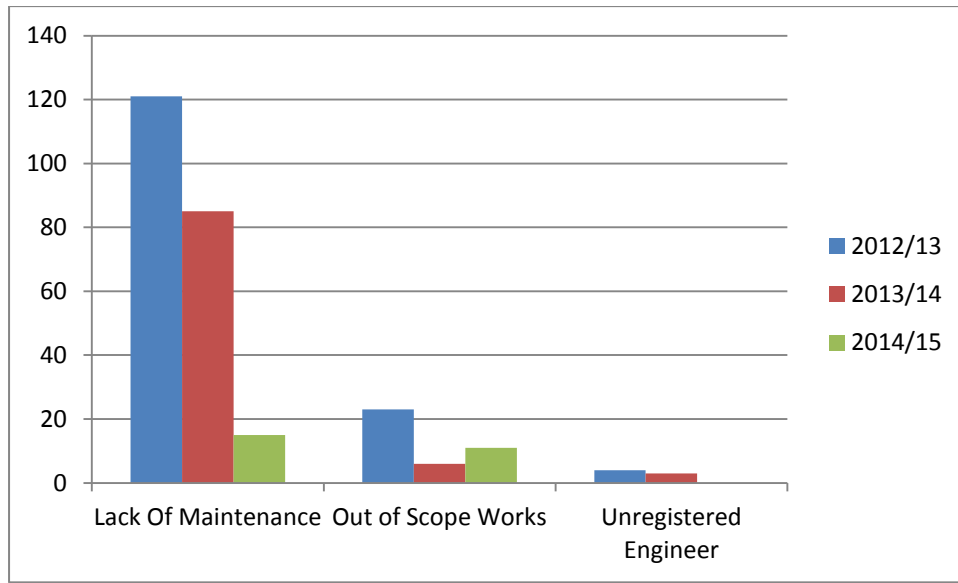


At these 968 Interventions, a total of 268 instances were identified as "matters of concern" under one of the three following headings:

- Lack of Maintenance - Where defects were identified with the system and there was no record or regular maintenance by a competent individual.
- Out of Scope Works - Where there was evidence that works had been undertaken on the gas system by someone without the necessary "Gas Safe" qualifications. For example a domestic qualified engineer working on a commercial system.
- Unregistered Engineer - Where work had been undertaken by an individual or company with no recognised "Gas Safe" qualifications.

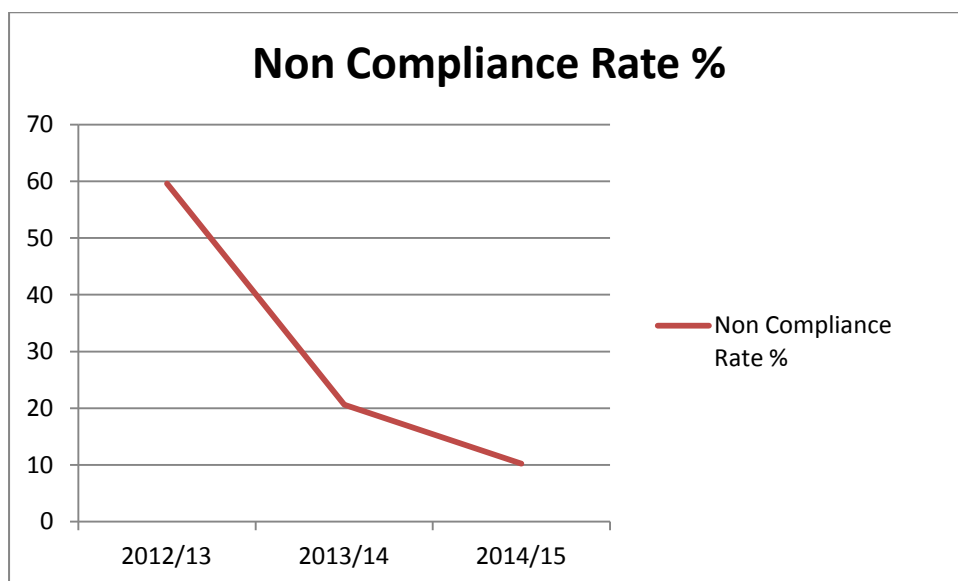
Lack of maintenance was identified in 221 cases, out of scope in 40 and unregistered engineers in the remaining 7. These issues were dealt with by a variety of means including written warnings and improvement notices as detailed below. In the case of unregistered engineers, given that sub standard work could result in serious personal injury, and that peripatetic work is enforced by the Health and Safety Executive, these matters were referred immediately to the relevant authorities. The affected businesses were then faced with commissioning a qualified engineer to certify their gas systems.

**Fig. 2 Gas Safety Intervention Outcomes**



From the initial phase of the project in 2012 through to its completion in 2015, the rate at which "matters of concern" arose fell sharply from an initial non compliance figure of just under 60% to 10%.

**Fig. 3 Non Compliance Rate 2012/5**



## **Conclusions**

As with other Devon LAs there was a disparity between the number of Food Safety visits undertaken and the corresponding Gas Safety Interventions. Whilst a portion of this may be attributed to the late commencement of the project in June 2012, as with other LAs, issues of officer confidence in dealing with Gas Safety and difficulty in completing relevant gas safety paperwork were highlighted as attributing to this gap. Additionally, with many food businesses falling into annual or 18 monthly inspection regimes officers did not undertake interventions where one had been carried out in the previous two years.

The three years covered by the data clearly indicated that at the initial phase of the project, serious issues with regard to Gas Safety in catering establishments existed. Of particular concern was the lack of maintenance of gas systems by businesses, and their apparent failure to adequately examine the qualifications of those contractors working on their gas equipment. However, in contrast by the end of the 2014/15 financial year, there is a clear trend towards compliance indicating that premises were now taking responsibility for Gas Safety at their establishments. The 10% non compliance rate at the end of this period may be the result of changes in business ownership, the poor economic climate and/or an underlying hard core on non compliant premises.

Whilst this three year project has now been completed, the knowledge and experience that officers have gained through undertaking these interventions will enable them to identify and deal competently with gas safety issues during future Food Safety visits.