

No. 265/2020

21 May 2020

Our Ref: EX5/20

To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

HSENI (Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland) Release Covid-19 Complaint Stats

HSENI has confirmed that the total number of complaints received between 16 March 2020 and 4 May 2020 relating to individual companies was 481.

The total number of complaints received also include some multiple complaints against particular companies. However, each complaint is investigated on an individual basis. Inspectors will also take note of the number of complaints logged against a company and the common areas of concern raised.

Up to the start of May all COVID-19 complaints were dealt with remotely. While HSENI was still conducting site visits, these were restricted to functions such as the investigation of fatalities. COVID-19 complaints were dealt with through a variety of means, not solely telephone or email. Some of these complaints required clarification of the public health guidance and others required changes in work practices to comply with the guidelines. HSENI report that the volume of complaints received by HSENI, although not just as high as they were, is still high and remains constant.

The roll-out of strategic COVID-19 visits began on Monday 4 May 2020. These visits are initially being targeted at premises where there have previously been repeated complaints, including within the food processing sector. Part of the purpose of the visits is to determine that the early measures introduced by companies remain in compliance with public health guidelines. These are unannounced visits.

Seven inspections were completed last week and this week, 29 inspections have been completed to date (13.5.20 at 1pm) and a further 7 visits have been planned before the end of the week. HSENI currently employs 110 people and qualified inspectors make up 37% of the staff. HSENI currently has 28 inspectors who are able to deploy in the field.

Others who are not able to deploy in the field continue to respond to complaints remotely. On 30 March 2020 HSENI reported that it had received a 900% increase in complaints and a very high volume of requests for information and advice. The majority of this unprecedented volume of calls were about 'COVID-19' and 'social distancing' in the workplace. Local councils had also received a large number of requests for assistance to protect workers' health and safety.

Yours sincerely



Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer