

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Environment and Climate Change Committee

Does this report require to be approved? Yes No

Ref: AM/PB Date 09/11/22

Button Battery Awareness Pledge

From Head of Regulatory Services and Waste Solutions

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Executive Summary

Over the course of the last 18 months, 2 young children within the UK have died after swallowing a button or coin battery. Many more children have suffered life changing injuries. This report seeks to gain Committee approval for North Lanarkshire Council, as an organisation committed to public protection, to become a signatory to the Button Battery Awareness pledge <https://harperleefoundation.org.uk/pledge/>.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee:

- Supports North Lanarkshire Council becoming a signatory of the Button Battery Awareness pledge.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities

Ambition statement (14) Ensure the highest standards of public protection

Background

- 1.1 In the past 18 months, 2 young children have died after swallowing a button or coin battery; many more have suffered life changing injuries. The small, round batteries, that are similar in size to a 5p or 10p piece, can be found in a range of common household items including remote controls, car keys, kitchen scales, reading lights, thermometers, toys, greetings cards and torches. When swallowed the battery reacts with bodily fluids, such as mucus or saliva to create a substance like caustic soda. Children injured often have significant damage to the lining of their oesophagus (food pipe) and in some cases it may have burned through the oesophagus completely to form a hole, or through the blood vessels in the chest area, including the aorta (the main blood vessel leading from the heart).
- 1.2 Following the death of Harper-Lee Fanthorpe in May 2021, the Harper-Lee Foundation was formed to raise awareness of the risk of accident, death or injury caused by the ingestion of button and coin batteries: [Home - The Harper-Lee Foundation \(harperleefoundation.org.uk\)](http://harperleefoundation.org.uk) . Harper-Lee died after swallowing a button battery, believed to have come from a remote control. The Button Battery Awareness pledge was created to raise awareness of the risks associated with button and coin battery ingestion throughout local communities.
- 1.3 In December 2021, Motherwell toddler, Hughie McMahon, tragically died after swallowing a button battery from a toy. His parents reported being unaware of the dangers of button batteries.

2. Report

- 2.1 North Lanarkshire Trading Standards was represented on the Office of Product Safety and Standards' Ministerial Working Group to drive up safety around button and coin batteries. The group has identified public awareness as a key area to reduce incidence of button and coin battery ingestion and supports the Harper-Lee Foundation pledge. One of our Trading Standards officers, Michelle McKenna, was the 'Consumer & Public Interest Network' representative on the BSI Standards Committee Steering Group on PAS 7055:2021 'Button and coin batteries – Safety requirements'. <https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/blog/making-button-batteries-safer-for-consumers/>
 - 2.2 This Steering Group made significant changes to the content of the PAS, including a clause to include an indelible warning on products that contain button/coin batteries (prior to this the group had only considered warnings on the batteries and battery packaging) and changing the wording of the clause on the provision of information before purchase, to inform consumers that a product contains a button/coin battery when they purchase online.
 - 2.3 On 10th June 2022, a number of MPs signed up to the pledge during its launch at Westminster and Stoke on Trent Council became the first local authority to sign up to the pledge in July 2022.
 - 2.4 Given the risks highlighted above it is proposed that North Lanarkshire Council joins local authorities such as Stoke on Trent and becomes a signatory to the button battery awareness pledge and commences an awareness campaign within the Council area.
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3. Measures of success

- 3.1 Publicity of the initiative to raise awareness within our communities to the dangers posed by button and coin batteries with the intention of reducing the incidents of harm to children by button batteries.

4. Supporting documentation

Not applicable.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew McPherson".

Andrew McPherson
Head of Regulatory Services & Waste Solutions

5. Impacts (<http://connect/report-template-guidance>)

<p>5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.2 Financial impact Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts have been discussed and agreed with Financial Solutions? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.3 HR policy impact Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts have been discussed and agreed with People and Organisational Development? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.4 Legal impact Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts have been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic Solutions? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.5 Data protection impact Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.6 Technology / Digital impact Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>

Where the impact identifies a requirement for technology, has an assessment been carried out (or scheduled) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?

Yes No

5.7 Environmental / Carbon impact

Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

5.8 Communications impact

Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

The Council's Communications Team are aware of the initiative and will coordinate the awareness campaign if approved by Committee.

5.9 Risk impact

Is there a risk impact?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?