

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 15

meeting date: TUESDAY, 19 JANUARY 2016  
title: CAMPAIGN – TATTOOING, ELECTROLYSIS, ACUPUNCTURE AND  
EAR PIERCING  
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
principal author: HEATHER COAR, HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

## 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To promote and reinforce a campaign targeting tattooing, electrolysis, acupuncture or ear piercing within the Ribble Valley.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – To support and promote health, environmental, economic and social wellbeing of people who live work and visit the Ribble Valley.
- Corporate Priorities – To promote healthier environment and lifestyle.
- Other Considerations – None.

## 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Any person carrying on the business of tattooing, electrolysis, acupuncture or ear piercing in the Ribble Valley, and premises where these practices take place, must be registered with Ribble Valley Borough Council under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 ('The Act'). Registration is in place to protect people against public health risks, including the risk of diseases such as Hepatitis and HIV.

2.2 Registration only needs to be carried out once, provided the person and the premises do not change. If a person is practicing at premises which has a current registration, an individual need only register as a practitioner. Fees for registration are reviewed annually (Appendix 1).

2.3 It is an offence under the Act to undertake any of the skin piercing practices (listed below), if the premises and the person are not registered. Skin piercing practices other than those specified do not currently need to be registered with Ribble Valley Borough Council. However, all business operators still have a general duty to comply with health and safety legislation.

## 3 ISSUES

3.1 From 1 August 2011, new bye-laws have been adopted to ensure that businesses have adequate cleanliness in place for a wider range of cosmetic treatments. The new bye-laws under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 require persons to register with the Council before carrying out:

- Acupuncture;
- Tattooing;

- Semi-permanent skin-colouring (also known as semi-permanent make up or micro pigmentation);
- Cosmetic piercing (including body and ear piercing);
- Electrolysis.

3.2 Businesses already registered for activities under the previous bye-laws (including acupuncture, tattooing, ear piercing and electrolysis) do not have to re-register. The requirements of the bye-laws include:

- the premises, furniture and fittings are kept clean and in good repair;
- needles and equipment should be disposable or sterilized for each treatment;
- protective clothing, towels and cloths must be clean and in good repair;
- waste material from the treatments must be correctly handled and disposed;
- good personal hygiene standards of operators.

3.3 Registration is required for the premises where the activity will take place and also personal registration for each person who will carry out the treatment. It is an offence to carry on such a business without being registered, to carry on such a business in premises that is not registered for that purpose or to breach the bye-laws.

3.4 Following receipt of a fully completed application, premises will be inspected by an Environmental Health Officer to ensure that the bye-laws and relevant health and safety requirements are being complied with.

3.5 It is in the public interest that the application be processed before it can be granted. Unregistered, illegal tattooists known as “scratchers” pose a significant risk to the public. Using cheap tattooing kits bought online, they can advertise their work on social media sites such as Facebook, they can work from home, garden sheds or even do home visits.

3.6 People may be tempted away from registered tattooists by cheap prices offered by the scratchers. However, it is simply not worth the risk – it could have life changing consequences. The practice of tattooing poses a risk of viral infections such as Hepatitis and HIV and bacteriological infections.

#### 4 **CONCLUSION**

4.1 The Council will be conducting a campaign to ensure that relevant businesses get a licence in the next 12 months. This campaign will reinforce and reiterate that the Council’s Environmental Health team are dedicated to protecting the community’s public health.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE

#### BACKGROUND PAPERS

CIEH - Tattooing and Body Piercing Guidance: Toolkit  
Fees and Charges

For further information please ask for Heather Coar, extension 4466.

REF: HC/EL/19011712/H&H