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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

AND

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

For the Year 1956

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HEALTH COMMITTEE

—o—

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J. J. HESLOP
T. R. HUMBLE
T. W. PULKINGHORN
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J. RIDLEY
J. L. STOKOE

—o—

OFFICERS OF THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH :

MADGE HOPPER, M.B., B.S., B.HY., D.P.H.

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR :

W. G. TWEDDLE, M.A.P.H.I.

CLERK AND SHORTHAND-TYPIST : Miss J. GRAY

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year Ended 31st December, 1956

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit the Annual Report for the year 1956.

The vital statistics for the year show slight variation but little significant change. The death rate rose slightly and the infant mortality rate increased considerably to 66.6 per 1,000 live births compared with 30.5 in 1955. This rise was due to the unfortunate deaths of three sets of twins within a few days of birth. Infection as a cause of infant death was entirely eliminated.

A slight increase in the number of deaths from malignant disease was also noticed to a total of 23 from 17 in 1955. The increase was chiefly in deaths due to malignant disease of the stomach and of sites other than the particular sites classified by the Registrar General. There was one death only from malignant disease of the lungs compared with three in the previous year.

The general trend in the country is an increasing mortality from cancer of the lung. Greater efforts towards the reduction of atmospheric pollution and an endeavour by all educational means to dissuade young people from starting to smoke are now, in view of recent research, of prime importance.

With regard to tuberculosis, if the deaths at the Prudhoe and Monkton Hospital Sanatorium are excluded, the mortality rate for residents remained static.

It is encouraging to observe that the incidence of tuberculosis, both pulmonary and non-pulmonary, showed a welcome decline, if these hospital cases are excluded.

The combined impact of earlier diagnosis, newer and better methods of treatment, tracing of contacts, B.C.G. vaccination for children at risk, combined with better housing and general living conditions appears to be having its effect.

There are as yet no grounds for complacency but this should spur us on to still greater efforts.

The outbreak of food poisoning due to *Salmonella Typhi-murium* in May is described in the report. For the first few weeks, the resources of the Health Department were taxed to the utmost. Through the co-operation of all concerned and attention to detail, the outbreak remained circumscribed.

This report would not be complete without reference to the immense strides taken by this Council in re-housing in recent years.

The whole aspect of the Prudhoe Urban District is changing and changing rapidly. Anyone just passing through can notice the progressive elimination of the old back-to-back colliery houses. With these, of course, go the old and unlamented ash-privies.

In addition to the removal of privies by slum clearance, their replacement in other houses in the district has been steadily going on. In 1956, 37 ash-privies were removed and replaced by W.C.s in addition to a further 30 under slum clearance.

It is interesting to note that in the last ten years, over 500 ash-privies have been removed and when Mickley Square, Eltringham and West Wylam slum clearance houses are demolished, the number remaining will be relatively small and efforts should then be made to eradicate them completely.

The number of privies in use at the end of 1956 was 400, serving over 500 houses.

May I express my thanks to the Chairman and Members of the Health Committee for the continued active interest they have shown in the work of my department all through the year, to the staff of the Health Department, particularly Mr. Tweddle, the Senior Public Health Inspector for his usual keen and thorough work during the year, to Miss J. Gray for her high standard of clerical work and to the Clerk and other Officers of the Council for their co-operation and help.

I am,

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

M. HOPPER,

Medical Officer of Health.

I.—VITAL STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

Area (in acres)	3,889
Population (Registrar General's estimated mid-year Home Population)	9,950
Inhabited Houses	2,893

The main occupations in the district are Coal Mining and Chemical Works, the latter of considerable size.

POPULATION.

According to the Registrar General's mid-year estimate of the population there was an increase of 220 persons on that of the previous year. There has been a slight steady increase in population during the last few years.

BIRTHS.

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	75	59	134
Illegitimate	—	1	1
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	75	60	135

In 1956, a total of 135 births was registered, compared with 131 in 1955. There were 15 more male than female births, in contrast to the previous year when there were four more female births.

The number of illegitimate births has declined during the last two years, one only being registered in each year, whereas in 1954, there were five.

The birth rate (corrected for age and sex distribution) was 12.5 per 1,000 population, the same figure as in 1955.

The rate for the country generally was 15.7 per 1,000 population.

Two still births were registered during the year, compared with one the previous year. The still birth rate was 14.6 per 1,000 live and still births and the national rate was 23.0.

Still Births.

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	1	1	2
Illegitimate	—	—	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1	1	2

DEATHS.

The total number of deaths registered during the year was 127, 24 of these deaths occurred at the Prudhoe and Monkton Hospital. This was a slight increase on the number registered in 1955, when the total was 110, and the deaths at the hospital numbered eleven.

Accordingly, the death rate (corrected for age and sex distribution) rose slightly to 14.2 per 1,000 population, compared with the rate of 13.4 in 1955 and the national rate of 11.7 per 1,000 population in 1956.

Natural Increase of Population.

If the deaths which occurred at the Prudhoe and Monkton Hospital are excluded, the excess of births over deaths in the urban district number 32, as in the previous year.

Infant Mortality.

The number of deaths of infants under one year of age rose slightly to a total of nine registered during the year, compared with four, in 1955 and two, in 1954. This increase was due to the deaths within a few days of birth of three sets of twins.

Of the nine deaths, six were due to prematurity and three to cerebral haemorrhage. All these deaths occurred within the first week of life and were entirely neo-natal. No death was accredited to an infective cause.

The infant mortality rate was therefore high, being 66.6 per 1,000 live births compared to the previous rate of 30.5 in 1955 and the national rate of 23.8 for 1956.

Antibiotics and the new drugs combined with meticulous infant care have virtually wiped out infection as a cause of infant mortality but ante-natal causes, particularly prematurity, still exact a considerable toll, as evidenced in this infant mortality rate for 1956. Of course in the small numbers dealt with, the deaths of three sets of twins in one year stand out more forcibly than when larger numbers are concerned. As all the infant deaths occurred before the end of the first week of life, the neo-natal death rate (i.e., deaths occurring before the end of the first month of life) was the same as the infant mortality rate. The neo-natal death rate was 16.9 per 1,000 related births for England and Wales in 1956.

Deaths of Infants under four weeks of age.

			<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	..	..	7	2	9
Illegitimate	..	..	—	—	—
			<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
			7	2	9

Maternal Mortality.

One death from pregnancy and childbirth was registered in 1956, as in 1954. In the intervening year, no death from these causes took place.

The maternal mortality rate for the country was 0.56 per 1,000 total live and still births.

Individual Causes of Death.

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Tuberculosis, respiratory	4 (3)	1
Tuberculosis, other	1 (1)	—
Syphilitic disease	—	—
Diphtheria	—	—
Whooping cough	—	—
Meningococcal infections	—	—
Acute poliomyelitis	—	—
Measles	—	—
Other infective and parasitic diseases	—	—
Malignant neoplasm, stomach	1	6
Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus	1	—
Malignant neoplasm, breast	—	2
Malignant neoplasm, uterus	—	1
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	6	6 (1)
Leukaemia, aleukaemia	1 (1)	—
Diabetes	—	1
Vascular lesions of nervous system	10 (8)	9 (3)
Coronary disease, angina	12	7
Hypertension with heart disease	—	4
Other heart disease	5	3 (1)
Other circulatory disease	2	—
Influenza	—	—
Pneumonia	3 (1)	2 (2)
Bronchitis	6	—
Other diseases of respiratory system	1	1
Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	1	—
Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	—	—
Nephritis and nephrosis	—	1
Hyperplasia of prostate	1	—
Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	—	1
Congenital malformations	—	2
Other defined and ill-defined diseases	11 (3)	7
Motor vehicle accidents	2	1
All other accidents	1	3
Suicide	—	—
Homicide and operations of war	—	—
	69 (17)	58 (7)

Figures in brackets denote deaths in the Prudhoe and Monkton Hospital.

A slight diminution was shown in the total number of deaths classified in the group of "Heart and Circulatory Diseases", which was 33 compared with 37 the previous year. Twelve of these deaths occurred at the Prudhoe and Monkton Hospital.

An even greater decrease was in the number of deaths, classified as due to "Vascular lesions of the nervous system", which dropped to 19 in 1956 from 26, in 1955.

Deaths from "Malignant neoplasm" of all types increased to a total of 23, in 1956 from 17, in the previous year.

The increase was mainly in the number of deaths due to malignant neoplasm of the stomach which rose to 7, in 1956 from four, in 1955.

There was one death from Malignant neoplasm of the lung, compared with three in the previous year. Deaths classified as due to Malignant and lymphatic neoplasms other than in the classified sites rose to a total of twelve from seven the year before. One death in this group occurred at the Hospital.

Thirteen deaths from respiratory causes were registered during the year, an increase of three on the previous year. Three of these deaths took place at the Hospital.

Unfortunately, deaths from "Motor vehicle accidents" were three in 1956, compared with one, in 1955.

Four deaths were classified as due to "All other accidents".

During the last two years, the number of deaths from these accidents has increased. In 1955, there were three, whereas in 1954, no death from an accident other than from a "Motor Vehicle" one was registered.

Three of the deaths from accidents were of elderly females, of ages ranging from 77 to 90 years, from falls at home.

The other death was due to a colliery accident.

No death from suicide was registered as in the previous year.

**TABLE OF DEATH AND BIRTH RATES
COMPARED WITH ENGLAND AND WALES.**

Year	General Death Rate per 1,000 Population		Infant Mortality Rate		Birth Rate per 1,000 Population	
	Prudhoe	England & Wales	Prudhoe	England & Wales	Prudhoe	England & Wales
1945	8.9	11.4	67.6	46.0	15.3	16.10
1946	10.16	11.5	60.8	43.0	15.8	19.1
1947	10.1	12.0	60.24	41.0	17.95	20.5
1948	9.2	10.8	51.7	34.0	18.73	17.9
1949	9.5	11.7	52.9	32.0	16.16	16.7
1950	10.2	11.6	51.8	29.8	14.23	15.8
1951	9.2	12.5	47.6	29.6	13.3	15.5
1952	9.6	11.3	30.3	27.6	14.05	15.3
1953	12.5	11.4	6.7	26.8	14.67	15.5
1954	13.08	11.3	16.9	25.5	11.25	15.2
1955	13.4	11.7	30.5	24.9	13.5	15.0
1956	14.2	11.7	66.6	23.8	12.5	15.7

II.—TUBERCULOSIS

A total of six deaths (5 pulmonary and 1 non-pulmonary) from tuberculosis was registered during the year, compared with two, (1 pulmonary and 1 non-pulmonary) the previous year.

Four of these deaths in 1956 occurred at the Prudhoe and Monkton Hospital. Three were due to the pulmonary form of the disease and one to tuberculous meningitis.

In 1955, the scope of the Hospital was extended to include the treatment of tuberculosis among mentally defective patients from all parts of the region. This has materially affected the number of deaths for this disease allocated to the urban district, as deaths occurring in this institution are not transferable.

Excluding these institutional deaths, the number of residents who died during the year from this disease numbered two, giving a rate of 0.20 per 1,000 of the population, the same figure as in 1955. The rate for the country generally in 1956 was 0.121 per 1,000 population.

As regards the incidence of the disease, there was a definite, very welcome decline in both the pulmonary and non-pulmonary forms among residents of the urban district. Seven cases of pulmonary tuberculosis (3 male and 4 female) were notified in 1956 compared with ten cases (6 male and 4 female) the previous year.

In 1956, one case only of non-pulmonary tuberculosis was notified, whereas in 1955, there were two notified cases. The decline in incidence was among males, notification of female cases remained similar in both years.

In addition, the number of new cases notified at the Hospital was seven cases of pulmonary tuberculosis (4 male and 3 female) compared with eight cases in 1955, making a total of 15 cases of pulmonary tuberculosis and one of the non-pulmonary form of the disease during the two years.

TUBERCULOSIS REGISTER.

	<i>Pulmonary</i>		<i>Non-Pulmonary</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	
31st December, 1947	13	13	11	16	53
31st December, 1948	16	8	8	10	42
31st December, 1949	15	8	9	8	40
31st December, 1950	20	14	9	9	52
31st December, 1951	21	17	12	10	60
31st December, 1952	20	18	11	11	60
31st December, 1953	18	22	6	4	50
31st December, 1954	33	26	9	4	72
31st December, 1955	42	30	14	4	90
31st December, 1956	43	34	14	5	96

Classification of New Cases Notified in 1956.

(Excluding Prudhoe and Monkton Hospital)

	<i>Pulmonary</i>		<i>Non-Pulmonary</i>	
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Under 1 year	—	—	—	—
1—5 years ..	—	1	—	—
5—15 years ..	—	—	—	—
15—25 years ..	—	1	—	—
25—35 years ..	1	1	—	—
35—45 years ..	2	—	—	—
45 and over	—	1	—	1
	3	4	—	1

**Classification of Prudhoe and Monkton Hospital Cases
Notified in 1956.**

	<i>Pulmonary</i>		<i>Non-Pulmonary</i>	
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Under 1 year	—	—	—	—
1—5 years ..	—	—	—	—
5—15 years ..	—	—	—	—
15—25 years ..	—	3	—	—
25—35 years ..	—	—	—	—
35—45 years ..	3	—	—	—
45 and over ..	1	—	—	—
	4	3	—	—

Patients from the district are under the care of the Consultant Chest Physician at the Hexham Chest Clinic and are admitted to the various sanatoria of the region as required. Admission to a sanatorium usually occurs within a few days of diagnosis. Family contacts are kept under surveillance, especially children at risk and B.C.G., vaccination is given to children as necessary both at clinic and school, with the parents consent.

MASS RADIOGRAPHY.

During 1956, the No. 2 Unit of the Newcastle Regional Hospital Board held public sessions in Prudhoe on the 3rd and 4th July when a total of 677 persons (315 males and 362 females) attended.

Visits were also made to the Prudhoe and Monkton Hospital on the 3rd, 4th and 5th April and the 25th and 26th September, where a total of 2,170 persons (1,060 males and 1,110 females) were examined.

These figures have been kindly supplied by Dr. J. R. Beal, the Chest Physician.

III.—GENERAL EPIDEMIOLOGY

The notifications of acute infective fevers are set out in a separate section of the report.

The total number notified in 1956 was 186, compared with 282 in 1955, and 188, in 1954.

Measles.

There was a marked decline in the incidence of Measles, 33 cases only being notified, a considerable decrease to the number of 239 cases notified in 1955, which was the year of biennial increase.

Scarlet Fever.

Seven cases of Scarlet Fever of a very mild type, with one exception, were notified compared with only one case in the previous year.

Whooping Cough.

During the year, 66 cases of Whooping Cough were notified compared with 24 in the previous year. The majority of the cases occurred in the autumn during the months of August, September and October, with one or two exceptions the disease was of a mild type.

An increasing number of parents are having their children immunised against Whooping Cough, especially with combined Whooping Cough and Diphtheria prophylactic. Immunisation certainly tends to lessen the severity of an attack, in fact, occasionally an attack is so mild that the diagnosis can be in doubt for a time.

Poliomyelitis.

Two cases were notified in 1956, one case, non-paralytic, a little boy of seven years, occurred in April. The illness was of a very mild abortive type with complete recovery.

The other case was notified in September, a baby of 1½ years. The child was removed to the Walkergate Hospital. The illness was of a fairly severe type with some paralysis of the legs. This baby was transferred to an Orthopaedic Hospital.

Dysentery.

During the first four months of the year, 39 cases of Sonne Dysentery were notified at the Prudhoe and Monkton Hospital, the peak month being April, when 19 cases occurred. After the end of May, no further case was notified at the Hospital to the close of the year.

As in the outbreak of 1954, of which this seemed to be a recrudescence, possibly due to a chronic carrier, close co-operation was kept with the Medical Superintendent of the Hospital.

Three cases were notified among residents of the district, one in May and two in September.

Food Poisoning.

Early in May, two cases of suspected Dysentery occurred but on examination of stool specimens, one was found to be a case of Food Poisoning due to Salmonella Typhi-murium.

This first case was reported on the 9th May, between this date and the 29th May, 23 further cases were notified occurring in sixteen families in various parts of the district.

In the first three cases, the illness was of a fairly severe type, in all the other cases, it was mild. Clinical signs of illness disappeared in about a week after infection but at the end of May, eighteen cases were still excreting the organism.

Extensive visiting of the families concerned and investigations were carried out. It was found necessary to exclude some food handlers from work for varying periods until clear.

The source of the outbreak appeared to be due to infected imported liquid egg used outside the district. The liquid egg was withdrawn from use. Specimens of other imported liquid eggs and stool specimens of local bakery employees proved negative.

By the whole-hearted co-operation of all concerned, particularly the general practitioners of the district, the outbreak was circumscribed.

After the 29th May, no fresh case occurred, but the task of clearing the 22 positive excreters, who were either convalescent carriers or symptomless excreters of the organism, still remained. By the end of June, all had been cleared except five and one of these persisted for some considerable time.

It was interesting to note, that the first patients in the outbreak, who had fairly severe illness, were the longest in becoming clear of the organism.

Two isolated cases of Food Poisoning occurred, one in July and the other in October. Both cases were mild and in the first no pathogens were isolated, but in the other case, *Salmonella Typhi-murium* was found in stool specimens. No link with food or other cases could be established.

In December, a single case was notified at the Hospital, a little girl of six years. On investigation, *Salmonella Panama* was isolated from the stools. The symptoms were mild.

Suitable precautions were taken and no further case occurred.

Influenza.

During the winter months, in conjunction with the general practitioners of the district, a watch was kept for any outbreak of Influenza as distinct from the common cold and its complications.

In February, for the week ending the 28th, there was an increase of 31.3% over the normal claims for sickness benefit in this district. Most of these were in respect of severe colds and subsequent complications.

No outbreak of Influenza occurred.

FOOD POISONING.

Food Poisoning Notifications (Corrected)

Returned to Registrar General.

1ST QUARTER.	2ND QUARTER.	3RD QUARTER.	4TH QUARTER.	TOTAL.
Nil.	24	1	2	27

OUTBREAKS DUE TO IDENTIFIED AGENTS :

Total outbreaks	..	1	Total cases	..	24.
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Outbreaks due to :—

(a) Chemical Poisons	Nil.
(b) <i>Salmonella</i> Organisms (<i>Typhi-murium</i>)	1
(c) <i>Staphylococci</i> (including toxin)	..	..	..	..	Nil.
(d) <i>Cl. botulinum</i>	..	..	..	..	Nil.
(e) Other bacteria	Nil.

OUTBREAKS OF UNDISCOVERED CAUSE :

Total outbreaks	..	Nil.	Total cases	..	Nil.
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SINGLE CASES :

Agent identified	..	2	Unknown cause	..	1	Total	3
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NOTIFICATIONS OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Smallpox	—
Scarlet Fever	7
Pneumonia	5
Puerperal Pyrexia	—
Diphtheria	—
Erysipelas	3
Measles	33
Dysentery	43
Malaria	—
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis	—
Whooping Cough	66
Poliomyelitis (Paralytic)	1
Poliomyelitis (Non-Paralytic)	1
Paratyphoid Fever	—
Food Poisoning	27
	186

LABORATORY FACILITIES.

The examination of faeces, sputum, swabs, milk, water and ice cream was carried out at the Public Health Laboratory, General Hospital, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Bacteriological Reports.

	<i>Results</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	
Faeces	115	151	266
Sputum	—	—	—
Throat swabs	—	3	3
Vaginal swabs	—	—	—
	115	154	269

IV.—NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948

Section 47—Removal to suitable premises of persons living in insanitary conditions and in need of care and attention.

Visits were made to several elderly persons under this section but no formal action was necessary.

The services of a Home Help were provided in some cases.

Section 50—Burial of the Dead.

No action was necessary under this section.

V.—HOUSING

During the year, the Council completed 141 houses on Stage II of the West Wylam Scheme.

Families from Beaumont Cottages, Etal Cottages and Aiston's Yard were re-housed.

The Council again gave high priority to all cases of tuberculosis.

During the year, slum clearance areas were being prepared at West Wylam to practically remove the entire village.

The Ministry of Housing and Local Government confirmed the Order for the demolition of 80 back-to-back houses in Clive Street and Tyne Street, West Wylam.

VI.—ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION

The area is reasonably free from industry which is likely to pollute the atmosphere, but the West Wylam Colliery Spoil Bank was responsible for nuisance from time to time. This deposit has been on fire for some time and the National Coal Board have done a considerable amount of work to remedy the nuisance. At the end of the year, work was proceeding to control the burning areas.

A local laundry which had been the subject of much complaint for the past few years due to the emission of smoke, was closed down and the steam raising boiler and chimney were to be removed.

Observations of other large chimneys were made from time to time.

VII.—WATER SUPPLY

The urban district is supplied throughout from the water mains of the Newcastle and Gateshead Water Company who also have two service reservoirs within this area.

Sampling of the supply from domestic taps has shown the water to be satisfactory.

There are approximately 50 houses with external supplies chiefly in Eltringham Village.

VIII.—FOOD HYGIENE

No formal action was necessary under the Food and Drugs Acts.

The importance of food hygiene was again emphasised to all food handlers mainly during visits to food premises.

During the outbreak of food poisoning, short lectures were given and film strips shown to groups of food handlers.

Posters and leaflets were obtained at regular intervals and displayed.

IX.—SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT

The details of this section have been compiled by Mr. W. G. Tweddle, Public Health Inspector.

PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT.

(a) REGIONAL HOSPITAL BOARD.

Hospitals.

There is the Prudhoe and Monkton Hospital for mental defectives under the Prudhoe and Monkton Hospital Management Committee.

Cases of infectious diseases are admitted when necessary to the Hospital for Infectious Diseases, Walker Gate, Newcastle.

(b) **Tuberculosis.**

Cases from the urban district attend the Chest Clinic at Hexham under the Consultant Chest Physician. Institutional treatment is provided in sanatoria or at the Walker Gate Hospital.

The Mass Radiography Unit visits the district and the Hospital at intervals.

(c) **LOCAL AUTHORITY SERVICES, ETC.**

(Services 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 and the care of the building under Service 2 are administered by the South Area Health Sub. Committee of the Northumberland County Council).

1. **Midwifery and Home Nursing Service.**

There are three nurse/midwives in the Prudhoe Urban District Council's area, two working in Prudhoe and one in the Stocksfield and Mickley districts.

2. **Maternity and Child Welfare.**

Child Welfare Centre, Council Yard, Prudhoe.

Sessions for babies, children, expectant mothers and dental treatment are held at the above centre.

Children's Sessions : Every Wednesday, 9-30 a.m., to 12 noon.
1-30 p.m., to 4 p.m.

Ante-natal Sessions : Every Tuesday, 2-0 p.m., to 4 p.m.
1st and 3rd Friday, 2-0 p.m., to 4 p.m.

3. **Immunisation and Vaccination.**

Immunisation against Diphtheria is carried out at the Maternity and Child Welfare Centre, by the general practitioners of the district and at the schools.

In the succeeding paragraph the figures in brackets indicate those for the previous year, and are given for comparison.

At 31st December, 1956, 93% (92%) of the total child population of the urban district had been immunised against diphtheria at some time during their lives; 81% (79%) of the children (0-4 years) and 98% of the children (5-14 years) in both 1955 and 1956.

The **Immunity Index** which shows the number of children in each age group immunised during the last five years was introduced by the Ministry of Health in 1953 and now serves as a very useful indication of the more complete immunisation in a district.

At the end of 1956, the Index of Prudhoe was as follows :—

Children under one year :	35% (18%)
„ 1-4 years :	93% (93%)
„ 5-14 years :	67% (64%)

The total Immunity Index for all children under 15 years of age was 72% (66%).

This slight but overall increase during the year, especially noticeable in the under one year age group, is encouraging.

The aim of the campaign is still to secure the immunisation of not less than 75% of babies before their first birthday and to keep the immunisation at an adequate level throughout school life.

Altogether, 118 primary immunisations with a single antigen were completed during the year, 77 being of children under one year.

Refresher doses numbering 306 were also given. In addition, 116 primary courses with combined diphtheria and whooping cough prophylactic were given.

Altogether a total of 247 children received a primary course of immunisation against diphtheria either with a single or combined antigen.

Whooping Cough Prophylaxis.

A total of 126 children, 91, being children (under one year), 34, children (1—4 years), 1, (5—14 years) received prophylaxis against Whooping Cough, compared with a total of 37 children in 1955.

Combined diphtheria and pertussis prophylactic was used in the majority of the children. The use of combined vaccine has increased very considerably during the last few years.

Tetanus.

The triple antigen of Whooping Cough, Diphtheria and Tetanus was also used in immunising three children.

Vaccination against Smallpox.

Primary vaccinations against Smallpox numbered 27 in 1956, compared with a total of 20, in 1955 and five, in 1954.

There was one revaccination.

These figures show a slight improvement during the last two years but they are still extremely small and leave a considerable proportion of the population at risk should a case of Smallpox arise which, in these days of rapid travel, is an ever present danger.

Increased efforts are still being made to persuade parents to have their babies vaccinated.

Vaccination against Poliomyelitis.

A limited amount of vaccine being available, a small number of registered children in selected age groups, received two injections of Polyvirin. This was done on a central basis. As supplies of the vaccine become more plentiful, vaccination of registered children will proceed on an area basis.

4. Ambulance Service.

The urban district is served directly by an ambulance and driver stationed at 4, High Row South, Mickley Square, Stocksfield. (Telephone No. 3110 Stocksfield). In addition, ambulances are available from the Throckley Station at Westway, Throckley. (Telephone No. 7-4535 Lemington).

On 21st April, 1956, the control system by radio was extended so that Wideopen depot receives all calls from 4-0 p.m., to 8 a.m., on weekdays and from noon on Saturdays to 8-0 a.m., on Mondays from the areas covered by the Ashington, Bedlington, Blyth, Prudhoe, Seaton Delaval, Throckley, Wallsend and Whitley Bay depots; in fact, from the whole of the southern part of the county—and relays them to their respective stations.

1956, saw the introduction of Diesel ambulances to the service and two were put into use at Wideopen.

During the year, the Prudhoe Ambulance made a total of 612 journeys, carried 3,675 patients, including 131 accident and emergency cases, and 271 stretcher cases and did a total of 25,413 miles.

Additional to this are the journeys made by ambulances of the Throckley depot in covering the district when necessary.

5. **Home Help Service.**

A total of 86 (83) patients resident in the urban district received the service of a home help for varying periods during the year. The cases included 2 (2) confinements, 5 (8) of acute illness, 79 (72) aged and infirm people.

The figures in brackets indicate the number of cases served during the previous year. The number of elderly and infirm people being served with home helps has increased. The hours worked in these cases per week are generally small but they do help to serve the needs of the old people.

6. **Nursing Care Committees.**

There are two Nursing Care Committees in the district, one at Prudhoe and the other at Mickley.

These committees are voluntary organisations who visit sick people on occasions and supply articles of nursing equipment to them, if required. The Honorary Secretaries of these committees are :—

Mr. B. NICHOLS, 27, High Row North, Mickley, Stocksfield.

Mrs. A. L. KNOX, 1, Grange Terrace, Prudhoe.

7. **Care and After-Care.**

The Newburn and Prudhoe After-Care Sub. Committee held regular two-monthly meetings throughout the year.

As previously, efforts were made to give aid to patients suffering from tuberculosis with milk, travelling expenses of relatives to hospital, etc.

The now much improved prognosis has resulted in fewer patients requiring this aid but has increased the importance of giving help towards rehabilitation.

At the end of the year, the Sub. Committee decided to extend their activities to include very necessitous cases of cardiac and chest diseases other than tuberculosis according to the lead given by the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis.

REPORT
OF THE
PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1956

To Dr. Madge Hopper,

I herewith submit my report.

INSPECTIONS AND VISITS.

Water Supply	24
Drainage	117
Stables and Piggeries	25
Fried Fish Shops	19
Tenements	8
Tents, Vans and Sheds	8
Factories and Outworkers	77
Bakehouses	23
Public Conveniences	82
Places of Entertainment and Licensed Premises	45
Refuse Collection and Disposal	242
Rats and Mice	101
Atmospheric Pollution	40
Schools, Shops and Miscellaneous Sanitary Visits	237
Public Health Acts	177
Housing Acts	82
Overcrowding	42
Filthy or Verminous Premises	22
Miscellaneous Housing Visits	298
Inquiries in cases of I.D.	250
Disinfection, etc.	15
Visits to Slaughterhouses, Butchers, Canteens, Dairies, Fish- mongers, Grocers, Greengrocers and Food Preparing Premises	266
Ice Cream Premises and Restaurants	34
Street Hawkers' Carts, etc.	47
Miscellaneous Food Visits	75
	2,356
Number of Nuisances Found	96
Number of Nuisances Abated	96
Number of Verbal Notices Served	84
Number of Verbal Notices Complied With	84
Number of Informal Notices Served	228
Number of Informal Notices Complied With	206
Number of Statutory Notices Served	3
Number of Statutory Notices Complied With	3

General Administration.

The number of complaints made to the Health Department covering many aspects of the Public Health and Housing Acts and other Orders and Regulations was 407.

All were investigated and suitable action taken.

Public Health Act, 1936.

Sixty seven ash privies were removed during the year, some in connection with slum clearance and others under Section 47 of the Act. At the end of 1956, there were slightly under 400 privies in use.

Drainage Work.

A considerable amount of drainage work has been done :—

Number of lineal yards of drains laid	874
Number of inspection chambers provided	38

This work has necessitated many visits for examination and testing.

Further extensive work has been carried out at the Prudhoe and Monkton Hospital where new drainage systems are being installed in connection with the various buildings under construction. Constant supervision has been maintained over this work.

Public Conveniences.

BRANCH END, STOCKSFIELD : For males and females.

ROAD ENDS, PRUDHOE : For males and females.

Supervision of these premises has been carried out at regular intervals and the attendants have kept the conveniences in a very clean state.

Refuse Collection and Disposal. (House and Trade Refuse).

The whole of the urban area is scavenged weekly, with the exception of two or three premises and the service has been very well carried out. In a mining district such as this, the amount of heavy household refuse is considerable and with the many steep inclines which are found on the new housing estates together with the large number of steps to negotiate, the work is extremely hard especially during the winter months.

As far as can be estimated, at least 6,000 tons of refuse is removed yearly and deposited at the Refuse Tip, West Wylam.

The number of houses scavenged increased as Stages I and II of the West Wylam Scheme were being completed and with the Council's progressive outlook on Slum Clearance, it is expected within two to three years that most of the ash privies will have been removed.

Four refuse vehicles are in daily use with drivers and eight men and one wagon is kept in reserve, as it is imperative that there should be no delay in the removal of privy refuse.

REGISTRATION NO.	YEAR PURCHASED	CAPACITY.
JVK 361	August, 1945	7 cu. yds.
KBB 118	March, 1946	7 cu. yds.
BJR 306	Dec., 1946	7 cu. yds.
ETY 298	May, 1951	7 cu. yds.
JNL 986	August, 1955	10 cu. yds.

Factories Acts, 1937 and 1948.

The register at the end of 1956 was as follows :—

Garages	11
Joiners' and Builders' Premises	8
Bakeries	2
Boot Repairers	4
Sanitary Pipes and Brickworks	3
Blacksmiths' and Light Engineering	2
Battery Charging	4
Chemical Works	1
Sand and Gravel Extraction	1
Miscellaneous	21
	—
	<u>57</u>

FACTORIES ACTS, 1937 and 1948.**Inspections for Purposes of Provisions as to Health.**

PREMISES.	Number on Register	Number of		
		Inspections.	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	26	31	—	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority ..	26	33	—	—
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises) ..	5	13	—	—
TOTAL ..	57	77	—	—

CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND

PARTICULARS.	Number of cases in which defects were found				No. of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred		
			To H.M.I.	By H.M.I.	
Want of cleanliness	2	2	—	—	—
Overcrowding	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation	1	1	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors	1	1	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences—					
(a) Insufficient	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	1	1	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	5	5	—	—	—

OUTWORK

NATURE OF WORK	NO. OF OUT-WORKERS IN AUGUST
Wearing apparel (Making, etc.)	—

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

There are three slaughterhouses in the district but they have not been used during 1956.

Meat supplies are brought into the district from Hexham and Newcastle.

Slaughter of Animals Acts, 1933 to 1954.

Eight persons held licenses to slaughter and stun animals.

FOOD INSPECTION

UN SOUND FOOD	Surrendered
Beef	135 lbs.
Pork	208 lbs.
Canned Goods, etc.	278 contrs.
Sausages	4 lbs.
Cooked Ham (Tinned)	63 lbs.
Jellied Veal, Ox-Tongue and Corned Beef, etc.	38 lbs.
Poultry	4 lbs.
Fruit	6 lbs.
Bacon	35 lbs.

Food and Drugs Act, 1955. Section 24—Sale of Horse Flesh.

There are no premises dealing in this commodity.

Food and Drugs Act, 1955. Section 13—Regulations as to Food Hygiene.

Regular inspection of food premises has been carried out and particular attention directed to hygienic food handling. The opportunity was taken to advise food handlers of the importance of thorough cleanliness.

Films were obtained and shown by means of a projector to small groups of persons engaged in the food handling trades.

**Food and Drugs Act, 1955. Section 16—Registration of Premises.
(Manufacture and Sale of Ice-cream and of Sausages, etc.)**

There are 40 premises registered under this section.

**Food and Drugs Act, 1955. Section 63—Licensing of Slaughter Houses
and Knackers' Yards.**

Slaughter houses licensed numbered three, one at Mickley Square and two at Prudhoe.

Food and Drugs Act, 1955. Section 13.**Public Health Act, 1936. Section 89.**

Public Houses .. 9. Licensed Clubs .. 4.

These premises have been visited from time to time and all were found to be generally satisfactory with the exception of one public house where the sanitation does not come up to modern standards.

Travelling Vans and Shops.

Routine inspections of the above vehicles have been carried out throughout the year and it has been found that washing accommodation is practically universal.

Inspection and Control of Milk Supplies.

A small quantity of raw milk is still retailed in the urban district as this area is not included in an Order where only Heat Treated or Tuberculin Tested Milk can be sold.

Nine samples of milk were collected for statutory or biological examination by the Public Health Laboratory, General Hospital, Newcastle upon Tyne. In each case, the result was satisfactory.

Milk (Special Designation) (Raw Milk) Regulations.

Number of licenses . . . 12.

Milk (Special Designation) (Pasteurised and Sterilised Milk) Regulations.

Number of licenses to retail Pasteurised . . . 14.

Number of licenses to retail Sterilised . . . 13.

Public Health Act, 1936. Section 269—Tents, Vans and Sheds.

There is only one licence in force.

Stables, Manure Pits and Piggeries.

There is one large stable still in use and regular inspections have been made of the other premises under this heading.

Disinfection of Premises.

Several houses have been disinfected after cases of infectious disease and disinfectants have been supplied free of charge where necessary.

Disinfestation of Premises.

A number of houses has been dealt with during the year.

Places of Public Entertainment. Circular 120, Ministry of Health.

Two cinemas in Prudhoe and one at Mickley. All are provided with adequate sanitation and are satisfactory.

Offensive Trades. Public Health Act, 1936. Section 107. Restriction on establishment of offensive trade in urban district.

There are no offensive trades in this area.

Pet Animals Act, 1951.

Under this Act, it is an offence to keep a pet shop unless licensed by the local authority.

There are no pet shops in this district.

The following table gives a list of various repair work which has been done after direction from the Public Health Department :—

Dampness abated	42
Walls and ceiling plaster renewed or repaired..	13
Roofs repaired or renewed	14
External walls repointed	27
Eaves gutters renewed or repaired	19
Floors renewed or repaired	14
Doors renewed or repaired	17
Window frames renewed or repaired	14
W.Cs. renewed, repaired or provided	38
Water pipes repaired	18
Yard surfaces renewed	7
Fireplaces renewed or repaired	12
Chimney stacks rebuilt or repaired	8
Drains cleared	62
Dustbins renewed and additional	115
Additional W.Cs. provided	16
Food stores provided or repaired	9
Accumulations removed	10
Scullery sinks provided	6
Old gullies replaced	10
Additional gullies provided	28
Drains repaired or reconstructed	20
New drains constructed	18
Hot water supplies to dwelling houses	10
Baths provided	10
Coal houses repaired	17
Staircases repaired	8
Privies and Privy ashpits abolished	36
Privies repaired	12

RODENT CONTROL, PESTS ACT, 1949.

I have again to report a very successful year in the eradication of rats and mice. The public are now very conscious of their responsibilities and the Health Department is kept informed of any infestation.

All sewers have been examined and treatment given but there is no evidence of rats.

	TYPE OF PROPERTY				
	(1) Local Author- ity	Non-Agricultural			(5) Agri- cultural
		(2) Dwelling Houses (inc. Coun- cil Houses)	(3) All other (including Business Premises)	(4) Total of Cols. (1) (2) & (3)	
1. Number of properties in Local Authority's District	12	2,923	84	3,019	27
2. Number of properties inspected as a result of :—					
(a) Notification	—	31	8	39	—
(b) Survey under the Act.	12	95	27	134	23
(c) Otherwise (e.g., when visited primarily for some other purpose)	—	67	25	92	4
3. Total inspections carried out - including re-inspections	28	238	53	319	27
4. Number of properties inspected (in Sect. 2) which were found to be infested by :—					
(a) Rats Major	—	—	—	—	—
Minor	7	29	—	36	—
(b) Mice Major	1	—	—	1	—
Minor	3	16	1	20	—
5. Number of infested properties (in Sect. 4) treated by the L.A.	11	45	1	57	—
6. Total treatments carried out including re-treatments	18	62	1	81	—

HOUSING.

NEW HOUSES COMPLETED DURING THE YEAR	With State Assistance	Unaided	Total
(a) By Local Authority ..	141	—	141
(b) By any other Housing Authority	—	—	—
(c) By private persons	—	3	3

Total number of Inhabited Houses in District .. 2,893

CLOSING AND DEMOLITION	No. of houses.
1. Houses demolished in Clearance Areas	16
2. Houses demolished not in Clearance Areas	3
3. Houses closed, not demolished	7
4. Any other houses permanently discontinued as dwellings and not included in above	1

REPAIRS

Houses made fit by procedure under either Housing or Public Health Acts :—

5. By informal action	54
6. By owners, following statutory notice	—
7. By local authority in default of owners	—
8. Demolition Orders revoked after reconstruction	—
Procedure under Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954 :—	
9. Houses in clearance areas patched for temporary accom- modation (Section 2)	—

IMPROVEMENT GRANTS : HOUSING ACT, 1949.

10. Applications submitted to local authority during year	28
11. Applications rejected	—
12. Applications approved	28
13. Approximate average grant approved per house ..	£185
14. Total number of houses approved for grant in your area since inception of scheme	66

LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSES

15. Total number of houses owned by the local authority ..	1,090
16. Number of temporary dwellings included in the above :—	
(a) Prefabs	152
(b) Huts, etc.	11
17. Number of outstanding applications for Council houses on the authority's lists at end of year	275

BYE-LAWS IN FORCE IN THE DISTRICT

9th October, 1950. Model Byelaws, Series (1), Ministry of Food.
 Section 15, Food and Drugs Act, 1955.
 For securing cleanly conditions and practices in
 connection with the handling, wrapping and
 delivery of food and sale of food in the open air.

31st December, 1953. Model Byelaws (Buildings).

Conclusion.

The year 1956 saw the Council's plan for the removal of sub-standard houses begin to take effect. Orders were confirmed by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government for 80 back-to-back houses and reports were being prepared to remove nearly a further 100 houses.

I have again to record my appreciation of the work done by Miss J. Gray.

Yours faithfully,

W. G. TWEDDLE,

Public Health Inspector.





