

Organisation:

Surrey County Council Trading Standards

Attendees on 24th September (*name and role*)

Michele Manson Economy & Environment Team Manger
Amir Ali Senior Trading Standards Office Safer & Stronger Communities Team

What role does your organisation play in improving community safety?

Trading Standards works towards the goal of helping consumers feel safe, confident and empowered when buying goods and services and at the same time working to ensure that all traders who they deal with treat them fairly.

To achieve this the department has several operational teams, one of which is the **Safer and Stronger Communities Team**. This team is responsible for co coordinating a Rapid Action Team that deals with doorstep crime as it happens and then carries out enforcement action as appropriate, often in partnership with Surrey Police.

Officers within the team also undertake enforcement activities around under age sales, which is either intelligence led or project based. Two of the team contribute full time to working in partnership with Surrey Police tackling the sale of age-restricted products, mainly alcohol.

The team is also involved with No Cold Calling Zones, which is worked on in partnership with the Police, Neighbourhood Watches and local residents. The aim of these is to reduce doorstep crime and distraction burglary.

This team also carries out various initiatives to help protect the more vulnerable and elderly members of society.

The department's Economy and Environment Team operates a Buy With Confidence (BWC) approved trader scheme that has now been running for a 3 years. This vets and approves traders that have undergone rigorous checks to ensure they trade fairly.

The Animal Health section deals with animal food and feed and disease outbreaks such as foot and mouth, avian flu and bluetongue.

What successes have been achieved in 2007/08 by your organisation, either individually or in partnership with other organisations?

The Rapid Action Team attended and intervned on behalf of consumers to deal with doorstep rogues during 51 'live' incidents spread out over the whole county. As well as these they dealt with a further 282 reported doorstep crime matters, which were dealt with by investigations, advice to

consumer & business, and victim support. From the total of 333 cases, 28 involved residents from Mole Valley.

In 07/08 the rate of all Under Age Sales for the whole of Surrey was 15% (84 sales from 551 visits). This compares to the 06/07 rate of just under 14%. In Mole Valley the rate in 06/07 was 3% (1 sale out of 31 attempts) which rose to just under 10% in 07/08 (5 sales from 51 attempts)

BWC – The scheme now has 294 members 30 of whom are based in the Mole Valley area.

3 new No Cold Calling Zones in Mole Valley:

- 1st launched in Bookham on 1st September 08
- 2nd one due to be launched in Fetcham on 1st October 08
- 3rd will be launched in Ashted on 3rd November 08.

The Animal Health team (including the entire staff of the service) worked alongside Defra in battling the foot and mouth outbreak that occurred in the summer of 07.

Have there been any barriers to improving Community Safety in Mole Valley?

How can the Local Committee Members assist in overcoming these?

Trading Standards is a relatively small service, serving all 11 Districts and Boroughs within Surrey. It has responsibilities and reports work carried out to the Food Standards Agency, DEFRA, DBERR (formerly DTI) and the Office of Fair Trading to name a few.

Since 2004-05 (and following the County Council's Business Delivery Review), the service has seen a reduction from 80 posts, down to our current situation that is just over 65 posts. This has obviously had resource implications for the services Trading Standards provides. At the same time legislative changes and additional pressures have substantially increased the demands on the service.

What are your organisations aspirations for improving community safety over the next 2 years?

- To be more intelligence led and targeted in our work.
- Increased number of homes to be covered by the No Cold Calling Zones,
- We are looking to target crime hotspots and further the work of the Rapid Action Team,
- Increased partnership working,
- Work in the area of counterfeit goods which may pose a safety risk to consumers
- Increased membership of BWC members

- Closer liaison with Surrey Police over Rapid Action Team investigations
- Achieve an overall reduction of underage sales of alcohol and increasing the potential for vulnerable consumers from scams and doorstep crime.