

Organisation
Surrey County Council Trading Standards
Representative
Steve Harrison (on behalf of Michele Manson)
What role does your organisation play in improving community safety?
<p>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.</p> <p>To achieve this the department has several operational teams, one of which is the Safer and Stronger Communities Team. This team is responsible for 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The team is also involved with No Cold Calling Zones, working in partnership with the Police, Neighbourhood Watch and local residents. The main aim of the zones is to reduce the number of unwanted and uninvited callers to households soliciting services or goods, which in turn reduces doorstep crime and distraction burglary.</p> <p>This team also carries out various initiatives to help protect the more vulnerable and elderly members of society.</p> <p>The department's Economy and Environment Team operates a Buy With Confidence (BWC) approved trader scheme that has now been running for 4 years. This vets and approves traders that have undergone rigorous checks to ensure they trade fairly.</p> <p>The Animal Health section deals with animal food and feed and disease outbreaks such as foot and mouth, avian flu and bluetongue.</p>
What successes have been achieved in 2008/09 by your organisation, either individually or in partnership with other organisations?
<p>In 2008/9 the Rapid Action Team attended and intervened on behalf of consumers to deal with doorstep rogues during 62 'live' incidents spread out over the whole county. As well as these they dealt with a further 489 enquiries of which 102 reported doorstep crime matters, which were dealt with by investigations, advice to consumer & business, and victim support. Closer ties with the police led to the police themselves dealing with a further 14 investigations.</p>

From the total of 164 cases, 12 involved residents from Reigate and Banstead.

In 08/09 the rate of all Under Age Sales for the whole of Surrey was 14% (66 sales from 478 visits). This is a slight reduction from the 07/08 rate of 15%. In Reigate and Banstead the rate in 07/08 was 10% (5 sales out of 51 attempts). This rose to slightly less than 19% in 08/09 (5 sales from 27 attempts). These local test purchases related to sales of alcohol.

Buy With Confidence trader approval scheme – There are now 334 traders who have achieved membership of the scheme, 52 of whom are based in the Reigate and Banstead area.

There are currently 2 active No Cold Calling Zones in Reigate and Banstead (Hooley and Horley).

A further NCCZ is being considered across the Nork and Tattenhams wards.

Have there been any barriers to improving Community Safety in Reigate and Banstead?

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, DBIS (formerly DTI) and the Office of Fair Trading to name a few.

Since 2004-05, 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 organisation's aspirations for improving community safety over the next 2 years?

- To be intelligence led and target our work.
- Increased number of homes to be covered by the No Cold Calling Zones
- To target crime hotspots and further the work of the Rapid Action Team
- Work in the area of counterfeit goods which may pose a safety risk to consumers
- Increased membership of BWC members by 50% from 300 to 450 members
- Continued 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.