

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL COMMITTEE - TANDRIDGE**Friday 5 October 2007****Place:** Community Hall, Church Lane, Oxted**Time:** 10:15am**Organisation:****Surrey County Council Trading Standards****Attendees:**

Steve Ruddy - Assistant County Trading Standards Officer
 Ellen Chase – Senior Trading Standards Officer

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 **Community Safety Team**. This team is responsible for coordinating a Rapid Action Team, which deals with doorstep crime as it happens and then carries out enforcement action as appropriate, often in partnership with Surrey Police.

Officers within the Community Safety Team also undertake enforcement activities around the sale of age-restricted goods, which is either routine or project based. Two officers contribute full time to the new multi-agency "Surrey Together" Teams, which tackle anti-social behaviour.

The team is also involved with No Cold Calling Zones, which is worked on in partnership with the Police. 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 members of society.

The department operates a Buy With Confidence (BWC) approved trader scheme, which has now been running for a couple of years. This vets and approves traders that have undergone rigorous checks to ensure they trade fairly.

Recent successes:

In 2006/07, the Rapid Action Team physically intervened on 47 occasions (+ 53 verbal interventions), where victims were being targeted by doorstep criminals in their own homes. The total amount consumers saved directly due to our interventions in 06/07 is approx £190,486.

The level of Under Age Sales for the whole of Surrey in 05/06 was approx 15% (30 sales from 202 visits) but due to an increased number of visits and sales (44 sales from 299 visits) this rose to 17.73% in 06/07.

In Tandridge in 05/06 it was 33% (6 out of 18) which fell to 0% in 06/07. So far in the first 5 months of 07/08, the rate is running at 15%. (3 out of 20)

A new No Cold Calling Zone was set up in the Horley area covering 2500 homes and one in Maybury, Woking covering approx 600 homes, bringing the total of houses protected by the scheme in Surrey now to approx 11,600.

A Trickster event is currently being arranged it to be held in Tandridge in September which is aimed at educating the more vulnerable and elderly members of society about the dangers of doorstep criminals.

BWC – The scheme now has 275 in members who are based all across the county, which Tandridge residents can access.

An Electric blanket testing project was run towards the end of 06. This saw 71 blankets tested with 32 failing safety checks.

Participation in a BBC3 TV production featuring officers working on doorstep crime incidents was aired in May/June 07.

Challenges:

Trading Standards is a relatively small service, serving all 11 Districts and Boroughs within Surrey.

Following the County Council's Business Delivery Review, the service has seen a reduction of 9 full time posts, which has had resource implications for the services Trading Standards provides.

Aspirations for the Future:

- 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,
- Electric Blankets Project to be rerun in partnership with the Fire Service,
- Increased partnership working,

- Closer involvement with the CDRP,
- Work in the area of counterfeit goods which may pose a safety risk to consumers i.e. sunglasses, cosmetics etc
- Work looking at Care Homes and the contract terms which they impose on their residents and patients
- Increased membership of BWC members
- Closer liaison with Surrey Police over Rapid Action Team investigations
- Further Trickster events within Surrey
- Achieve an overall reduction of underage sales of alcohol and increasing the protection for vulnerable consumers from scams and doorstep crime.