

ORGANISATION & ATTENDEES

Surrey County Council Trading Standards

Michele Manson, Economy & Environment Team Manager

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. 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.

RECENT SUCCESSES

The Rapid Action Team attended and intervened on behalf of consumers to deal with doorstep rogues during 51 live incidents. The total amount consumers saved due to these interventions in 07/08 is approx £100K.

We also gave reassurance, advice and victim support on a further 230 doorstep crime incidents.

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 Tandridge the rate in 06/07 was 0%, which rose to 15% for 07/08.

BWC – The scheme now has 289 members throughout Surrey of whom 18 are based in the Tandridge area. To raise awareness, the department conducted a promotional event over a March 2008 weekend at Morrisons in Oxted. Direct mailings to traders in the area are ongoing. Working with Tandridge District Council articles have been regularly placed on their website and local publication.

An Electric blanket testing project was run towards the end of 07. This saw 60 blankets tested with 24 failing safety checks.

A new No Cold Calling Zone was set up in partnership with Surrey Police in Hooley and launched in March 08. There are currently no zones within the Tandridge area.

The Animal Health team worked alongside Defra in battling the foot and mouth outbreak that occurred in the summer of 07.

ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- To be more intelligence-led and targeted in our work.
- Increase 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 and consumer awareness of the scheme.
- Closer liaison with Surrey Police over Rapid Action Team investigations
- Achieve an overall reduction of underage sales of alcohol and increase the potential for protecting vulnerable consumers from scams and doorstep crime.