

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (REIGATE & BANSTEAD)

DATE: 12 DECEMBER 2016



**LEAD OFFICER: DAVID BULLEN
SENIOR TRADING STANDARDS OFFICER**

**SUBJECT: BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND SURREY TRADING STANDARDS
WORK IN REIGATE AND BANSTEAD IN 2016**

DIVISION: ALL REIGATE AND BANSTEAD DIVISIONS

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

A report to provide an update on the work of Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards Service, particularly within the Borough of Reigate and Banstead in 2016.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Reigate & Banstead) is asked to note that Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards Service:

- (i) Reacts to any local issues specifically drawn to Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards in respect of Reigate and Banstead consumer issues.
- (ii) Responds to any Trading Standards and consumer issues highlighted by intelligence gathering and reporting. This routinely includes the Reigate and Banstead local area in any project and routine undertakings including test purchasing and sampling as appropriate.
- (iii) Responds to business enquiries and bespoke/chargeable requests from businesses based in Reigate and Banstead focusing on Small/Medium Enterprises (SME) and national businesses. Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards actively promotes membership to the Better Regulation Delivery Office Primary Authority Partnership scheme.
- (iv) The following is for information. Please note the report content which is for information and not recommendation.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

This report is for information only and does not contain any recommendations.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

1.1 Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards - an update on the Joint Service:

Our Trading Standards service exists to:

- protect individuals, communities and businesses from harm and financial loss,
- help business to thrive by maintaining a fair trading environment,
- improve the health and wellbeing of people and communities, and
- fulfil the council's statutory responsibilities to deliver consumer and public protection services.

Since the formation of the joint service in April 2015 the service has continued to perform well and deliver excellent results against key performance indicators. The service is achieving all the savings projected in the business case and is exceeding income generation targets for the year.

The service has six key performance indicators and these are:

- Increase the financial savings for residents as a result of our interventions and investigations.
- Protect residents by stopping rogue traders operating in Buckinghamshire and Surrey
- Prevent residents becoming victims through expanding the use and reach of social media alerts, TSAAlerts, volunteers and other preventative initiatives to raise awareness of scams, rogue traders and unsafe products
- To increase the number of Primary Authority Partnerships
- Increase membership of trade approval schemes.
- Work with partners to tackle illegal sales of age restricted products; to explore new ways to reduce harm from the use and consumption of unsafe products; and to tackle poor food quality and nutrition

1.2 Trading Standards Approved Trader Schemes:

Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards Service is continuing to work with Checkatrade to ensure residents can easily find reputable traders in their area. We have over 2000 Checkatrade/Trading Standards Approved members, of which 299 members are in Reigate and Banstead. Businesses are removed from the scheme where intelligence suggests that they are not suitable to receive our approval.

To become a Checkatrade/Trading Standards Approved trader and to obtain our new 'double' accreditation, businesses must meet set standards and pass rigorous background checks. The minimum standards we set will be maintained for any future partnerships we may enter into with any other trade approval scheme operators.

We have been exploring options for developing similar partnerships with other trade approval schemes and we will be launching a similar option for Trustmark scheme members in the new-year. TrustMark is the only government endorsed accreditation scheme listing traders who work in and around the home. Working



in partnership with Trading Standards will add local assurance to this national recognition.

1.3 **Volunteering Scheme:**

Trading Standards aims to create an environment of "Confident Consumers and Trusted Traders" through advice and enforcement. Our volunteers will be an integral part of this purpose; increasing the consumer knowledge and confidence of residents and helping us to improve customers' experience of using businesses in Buckinghamshire and Surrey.

We offer our volunteers an exciting and enjoyable experience, a chance to do something completely different with new people from a variety of backgrounds. It also gives volunteers an opportunity of learning new skills and gaining practical work experience; most importantly, volunteers will have the satisfaction of being able to make a real difference in their local communities.

Volunteers enable Trading Standards to do more. For example, one Volunteer has visited more than 300 food businesses to provide guidance leaflets about allergen labelling and see what information is already given to the public by each business about this issue. Our volunteer Product Safety Market Surveyors look in their local shops for items that might not comply with safety requirements and we also have Volunteers who are available to give talks within their communities about Trading Standards issues.

Details of our current Volunteering opportunities are available at <https://do-it.org/organisations/surrey-trading-standards-vams>

1.5 **Work on scams and protecting the vulnerable**

Protecting the vulnerable and tackling scams continues to be a key priority for our service. We are continuing to work closely with the National Trading Standards Scams Team (NTSST) and we receive details from them of potential scam victims based in Surrey who we will go and visit to provide advice and support. On 25th January we will be running a Scams Conference at Epsom Downs Race Course aimed at existing and potential partner organisations that can have a role to play in reducing the impact of scams. This is being run in conjunction with the NTSST.

So far this financial year we have contacted about 300 scam victims whose details were sent to us via the NTSST and they have all been sent a scams pack and we estimate that we have saved over £300,000 through our interventions and by stopping people responding to scam mail.

Trading Standards and Adult Services are concerned about the effect that nuisance calls have on local residents. To reduce these problems we are arranging to programme and fit devices on vulnerable resident's landline telephones to stop them receiving scam and nuisance telephone calls.

We are loaning these trueCall Care devices to selected residents free of charge. Units installed in Reigate and Banstead are being funded by money we have recovered from criminals using the Proceeds of Crime Act.

On average, 44% of the calls made to participants are nuisance calls. This initiative, as a whole, has now blocked almost 25000 scam and nuisance calls.

So far there are 16 participants in our trueCall project who live in Reigate and Banstead. These units have been installed between October 2015 and September 2016.

Residents have said,

"I feel safer now knowing that the call is unlikely to be a nuisance call" MB

"The new apparatus is absolutely marvellous. I have had no nuisance calls since it was installed." MB

"Since having the truecall device I feel much safer answering the phone" EQ

"Really pleased. Has eliminated so much aggravation. Anyone not on my list who gets through seems to have a genuine reason for wanting to speak to me." PB

"Since the Truecall device has been installed we have not had a single nuisance/cold call. We are now so much more relaxed when answering the phone. The device has blocked all nuisance calls and it is simple to add trusted callers. Excellent device. Hopefully we will be able to keep it" PB

Information for residents is available at <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/business-and-consumers/trading-standards/finding-the-right-trader/rogue-traders-scams-and-cold-callers/phone-fraud-and-nuisance-callers>.

1.6 **Social media:**

Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards issue regular information about our service on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and through TS @lerts.

TS @lerts is a weekly email news bulletin that contains information and alerts about rogue traders, frauds, the latest scams, prosecutions taken, product safety recalls, new legislation and much more. We currently have around 2700 subscribers to TS@lerts, however, the actual number of recipients is far higher as it links with the National Trading Standards Scams Team and cybersafe surrey, neighbourhood watch and local police beats. It also gets posted on social media. Residents and businesses can subscribe to the news bulletin via <http://scc.newsweaver.co.uk/trading-standards> and clicking subscribe.

We currently have over 3500 twitter followers and one recent tweet reached over 6000 people. We have 724 'likes' on our Facebook page and popular posts reach over 2000 people, the most popular being in May that reached approximately 10,000 + people. We have over 500 connections on LinkedIn with colleagues, partners and businesses. We also have a separate Primary Authority group set up on LinkedIn.

1.7 **Eat Out Eat Well:**

The Eat Out Eat Well Award has been developed to reward caterers who make it easier for their customers to make healthy choices when eating out. It has three levels – Bronze, Silver, and Gold, and is symbolised by an apple logo in the shape of a heart. The level of award is based on a scoring system that takes into account the type of food on offer, cooking methods, and how the meals are promoted to customers. This scheme benefits both caterers, by promoting their businesses, and consumers, by helping them make healthier choices when eating out.

The Eat Out Eat Well award is assessed and managed by Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards Service and the local Environmental Health Service.

This year we were highly commended in the Regulatory Delivery Primary Authority Awards 2016 for helping to support 33 branches of Sports and Leisure Management Ltd T/A Everyone Active leisure centres to achieve Gold assessments in the Eat Out Eat Well healthy eating award. The judges described it as “An innovative example of Primary Authority improving public health enabling consumers to make healthy eating choices.”

There are currently 15 Eat Out Eat Well members in Reigate and Banstead out of 222 in Surrey. Members include:

- East Surrey Hospital
- Canon UK
- Bombay Mela, Redhill

1.8 **Business Advice Service:**

Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards Service has extensive experience of advising a variety of businesses from small family companies to international blue-chip corporations. Our Trading Standards Officers provide advice to businesses to ensure that a business is fair, competitive and legal.

Our chargeable business advice service continues to be successful. There are 103 businesses in Reigate and Banstead that have registered with us for business advice out of 907 throughout Surrey. We also continue to promote the Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO) Primary Authority Partnership (PAP) scheme to businesses, which offers them the choice of more protection from inconsistent advice or even prosecution by other Authorities from around the country. In 2015 the service was a finalist at the BRDO Primary Authority of the Year Awards and an officer was nominated for Primary Authority Officer of the year.

In Reigate and Banstead 9 businesses have entered into a Primary Authority Partnership with us, including Pfizer and Toyota. Within Buckinghamshire and Surrey there are a total of 84 Primary Authority Partnerships. We tailor each PAP to the needs of the business and we can be required to provide a wide range of advice and support. We recently provided support to some PAP's to work more effectively with OFCOM and the ASA.

1.9 **Reported Complaints:**

There were 1109 complaints reported to Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards Service by Reigate and Banstead residents between 1st November 2015 and 31st October 2016 and during the same period 478 complaints were made about businesses based within Reigate and Banstead.

Details of our latest court action against rogue traders, the selling of counterfeit goods and other unlawful trading practices in Buckinghamshire and Surrey can be found on our website by visiting: <http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/business-and-consumers/trading-standards/news-from-trading-standards/prosecutions-and-other-court-actions>

1.10 **Doorstep Crime/Rogue Trading:**

We are committed to protecting residents from being taken advantage of by rogue traders and also from feeling pressured on their doorsteps to make decisions that they would not otherwise make.

We have a Rapid Action Team made up of dedicated officers who respond to calls for help from consumers by attending the scene of doorstep crime incidents. We work closely with Surrey Police and other agencies to help reduce incidents of distraction burglary and rogue trading in Surrey. Our Rapid Action Team are on duty Monday to Friday from 9am until 5pm, and can offer residents a range of support from providing information and assistance, to intervening, disrupting activities and taking enforcement action against doorstep callers.

Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards Service have received 25 doorstep crime complaints from Reigate and Banstead residents between 1st November 2015 and 31st October 2016.

One incident in Reigate has involved working to try and protect a vulnerable man who is a repeat victim of doorstep crime. In this particular case the victim was reluctant to receive our assistance as he saw the perpetrator as a friend due to the actions the perpetrator had taken to befriend him. Officers have worked with Adult Social Care and it is hoped that the victim may now be better protected in the future and have other support needs addressed.

1.11 **Food Quality Standards:**

Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards Service is responsible for enforcing food standards, for example the labelling and quality of food, to ensure consumers are not misled. We carry out this function in partnership with our colleagues in Environmental Health who are responsible for food hygiene and safety. As well as giving advice and dealing with enquires and complaints we also visit food businesses to ensure they are trading fairly.

Trading Standards and representatives of each of the 11 District and Borough Environmental Health Services meet quarterly to discuss issues of joint interest and to ensure consistency of approach. Included in this are areas such as Eat Out Eat Well, Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and Primary Authority. Public Health England and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) are also represented on the Group.

Matters which arise on a day to day basis requiring joint working or where we hope to assist each other are dealt with by officers making direct contact. We also worked with Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) across the County to develop and deliver an allergens training package to business and EHOs.

We are currently undertaking an allergens project focusing on caterers and are sampling food from caterers to ensure they are providing accurate allergen information and that the food sampled is free of the requested allergen. This project is focused on all areas of the county, including Reigate and Banstead.

1.12 **Animal Health:**

Animal health legislation exists to protect both human, through the food chain, and animal health. This prevents the introduction of serious diseases such as Foot and Mouth and includes requirements for maintaining records and ensuring livestock are identified. Measures also exist to protect the welfare of livestock, whether on farms, in transit or at abattoirs. The county of Surrey is currently designated as 'TB free' and we play a role in maintaining this designation by ensuring TB testing is done on any 'high risk' cattle entering the county and through a 4 yearly TB testing programme for all holdings with cattle.

Trading Standards have a contingency plan with the Local Resilience Forum for exotic disease in livestock e.g. Foot and Mouth and Avian Influenza and we work closely with Emergency Planning.

We have seen an increase in the sale of 'illegal puppies' in recent years. We enforce the Rabies Act and are responsible for ensuring that all dogs have a rabies vaccination prior to entering the UK and this should be recorded in an approved 'Pet Passport'.

In Reigate and Banstead we have a record of 80 livestock keepers, many of whom may just have a few pigs, sheep or goats as 'pets'.

In the last 12 months we have only received one complaint in Reigate and Banstead regarding a lame sheep. Upon visiting the holding it was determined that the keeper was compliant in all areas and the sheep was being cared for appropriately.

In November this year we ran a free session for livestock owners on complying with animal health legislation.

1.13 **Underage Sales:**

Historically the focus of trading standards work was on test purchasing and enforcement, however since early 2013 we have increased the number of advice visits carried out at retail premises.

Premises are targeted for advice visits on the basis of intelligence and risk assessment. We aim to work closely with local businesses providing advice and support to assist them to comply with their legal responsibilities in relation to age restricted products. In addition, intelligence led test purchasing is carried out in partnership with Surrey Police in accordance with the Code of Practice for Regulatory Delivery for Age Restricted Products.

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Between 1st November 2015 and 31st October 2016 we received four complaints about alleged underage sales within Reigate and Banstead and we carried out three compliance/enforcement visits. One test purchase exercise was undertaken and the business passed.

1.14 **Preventing the sale and consumption of illicit tobacco**

Operation Henry 2 is a national operation funded by the Department of Health and coordinated by the Trading Standards South East (TSSE) Regional Tasking Group. The operation is aimed at disrupting the storage, supply and retailing of counterfeit or illicit tobacco products from retail premises.

Four businesses in Reigate and Banstead were visited as part of this operation and currently we have an ongoing investigation in the Reigate and Banstead area.

1.14 **Fireworks:**

Any business storing or selling fireworks is required to hold a fireworks license. The licenses are issued by Trading Standards. In Reigate and Banstead in the lead up to November 18 businesses renewed their fireworks licenses. Reigate and Banstead has one business licensed to sell fireworks all year round.

1.15 **Petroleum:**

Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards is responsible for ensuring that sites that store petrol for dispensing are storing it in accordance with legislation designed to prevent a risk of fire and explosion.

We are currently working with Asda at Burgh Heath. The store is going to open Surrey's first fully automated unmanned petrol station next year and we are working with them on procedures to ensure safety.

1.16 **Ensuring the safety of goods entering the EU**

The EU Regulation on Accreditation and Market Surveillance (commonly referred to as RAMS) came into force in 2008. This has introduced a duty on Member States to check the safety of products as they enter the EU from third countries. Consignments of goods arriving at ports of entry are processed through Enhanced Remote Transit Sheds (ERTS). Heathrow airport has a number of ERTS located near it and 12 of these fall within the boundaries of Surrey. As part of a regional project supported by the National Trading Standards Board we regularly receive notifications about potentially unsafe consignments of goods in the ERTS and we will inspect the consignments to ascertain if they are safe before Customs release them.

Since we began these checks various products identified as posing a risk to public safety have been prevented from entering the UK marketplace. Earlier this year we intercepted and seized 2,500Kg of powdered tobacco product in the

form of oral snuff. We secured a court order for the forfeiture and destruction of the product.

1.17 **Investment in staff:**

All relevant staff are now members of the Chartered Trading Standards Institute and are registered for their Continued Personal & Professional Development (CPPD) scheme. Eligible staff are also supported to achieve Chartered Trading Standards Practitioner status. This helps us to ensure the continued competence of staff and enables us to demonstrate this competence to businesses, consumers and other key stake holders. All staff are required to complete a minimum number of hours of training each year to receive their CPPD certification.

1.17 **Local Liaison and joint working:**

Earlier this year officers from Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards participated in a joint roadside stop operation in Reigate and Banstead organised by the Joint Enforcement Team and bringing together a range of partner organisations. We also took part in mobile patrols with Surrey Police on national Rogue Trader Day and this included patrols in Reigate and Banstead.

Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards Service regularly liaise with the Reigate and Banstead Police Teams and we work in partnership with them.

In recent months we have been working with the Fire Service to implement partnership working. We are assisting them in the production of community packs to be provided to vulnerable residents. The Fire Service are now actively looking to identify potential scam victims and they will notify us of any concerns. We also now give out the Fire Service "Safe and Well" cards when we visit victims of scams and doorstep crime.

One of our officers works closely with Adult Social Care, attending local safeguarding adult groups and we are represented on the Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board. We did a presentation to the Adults Social Care Summit Conference at Dorking Halls earlier in the year.

Earlier in the year we delivered talks to the Older People's Forum and CAB Volunteers, largely from the Redhill and Reigate Bureaux.

2. ANALYSIS:

2.1 This report is for information only

3. OPTIONS:

3.1 This report is for information only

4. CONSULTATIONS:

4.1 This report is for information only

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 There are no financial implications in this report

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 There are no equality and diversity implications in this report

7. LOCALISM:

7.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Local Committee on our work taking Reigate and Banstead.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

| Area assessed: | Direct Implications: |
|--|--|
| Crime and Disorder | The main areas that impact on community safety are age restricted sales and tackling doorstep crime and deception. We protect local residents in a range of ways and help to reduce the fear of crime |
| Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions) | No significant implications arising from this report. |
| Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children | No significant implications arising from this report. |
| Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults | We have a dedicated vulnerable person's officer based in Surrey who works in partnership with the Adult Social Care Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. |
| Public Health | The main areas that impact on public health are age restricted sales, tackling doorstep crime and deception and promotion of the 'Eat Out Eat Well' healthy eating scheme. An officer also represents our joint service at Smoke Free Surrey and we carry out initiatives to tackle the supply of illicit tobacco. |

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

9.1 The Local Committee is asked to note the report for information.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

10.1 This report is for information only.

Contact Officer:
David Bullen

Senior Trading Standards Officer
01372 371743

Consulted:

Officers of Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards Service.

Annexes:

None

Sources/background papers:

None

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