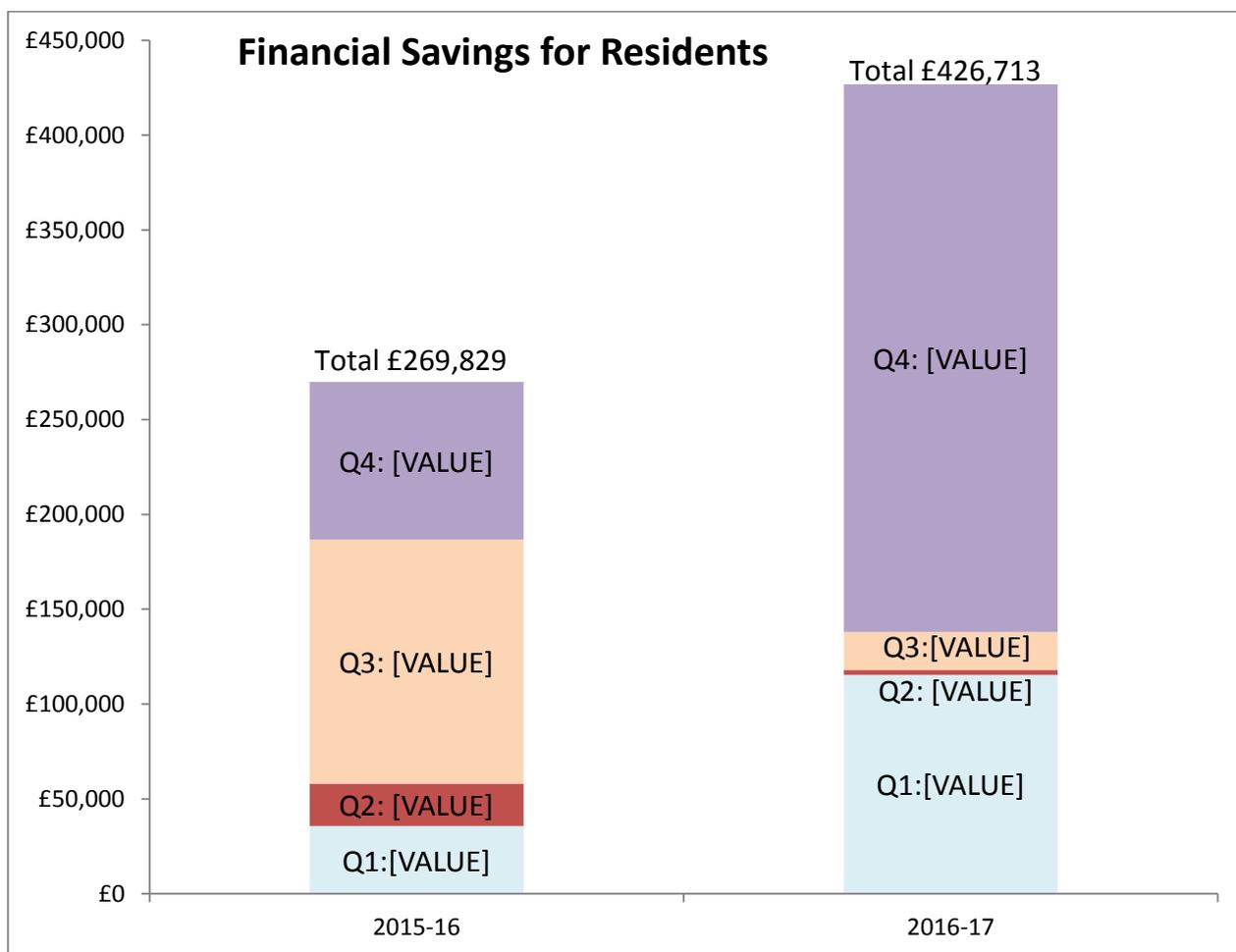


KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
FULL YEAR REPORT
2016/17



KPI -1 Increase the financial savings for residents as a result of our interventions and investigations.



Financial savings for residents consists of compensation awarded by the Courts to victims of crimes where the Service has prosecuted; compensation awarded as part of Proceeds of Crime Act confiscation proceedings; redress which the Service has obtained for customers when intervening in trading disputes; compensation which has been agreed under the new 'enhanced measures' provisions of the Enterprise Act; and money which the Service has stopped reaching a potential criminal through its intervention.

In this financial year, KPI 7 records additional savings from other scam interventions and are not included here in KPI 1. This is because the Service started recording KPI 7 savings in this way from April 2016. Combining KPI 1 and KPI 7 gives a more complete picture of overall savings achieved for residents in 2016/17.

In the course of last year several cases led to substantial sums being awarded to victims in Proceeds of Crime compensation hearings. In the biggest example of this in February 2017 £222,000¹ was awarded to the victims; in May 2016 £97,650 was awarded to the victims and in January 2017 £15,000 was awarded to victims. Elderly and vulnerable victims were targeted in all three cases which related to home improvement fraud and money laundering.

¹ Nb This amount was originally set at £241,000 but was varied by a court order in July 2017.

In 2016-17 the Service obtained £2,000 compensation for a resident of a park home by making our first use of the new Enhanced Measures under The Enterprise Act. Enhanced measures, which were brought in by The Consumer Rights Act 2015 aim to ensure that consumers who suffer loss as a result of breaches of consumer law are able to receive redress (in particular compensation, but also the right to terminate a contract). In addition to signing a voluntary undertaking to comply with relevant legislation in future, the trader in this situation also compensated the victim for the cost of their work. Whilst this approach won't always be appropriate, it does add a new tool which will at times be fitting to the circumstances.

Where the Service receives information that a doorstep crime is in progress or a trader is due back to a site we work with the Police to ensure a rapid response. In addition to this sometimes being the start of a criminal investigation, where it is appropriate and possible the team will attempt to stop any further money reaching the trader. This may be stopping a cheque or being present with the victim to give them confidence that they do not have to hand over cash and explaining to the 'trader' why. At times this will include the victim signing over authority to us to act on their behalf in relation to the transaction, taking the potential stress away from them.

Urgent assistance request

During the year the Service has seen two urgent assistance requests. Quarter three saw an intervention at a doorstep crime incident involving a vulnerable Surrey resident with social and mental health problems. Subsequent investigations identified the resident had been targeted on more than occasion, being scammed by two separate rogue trader gangs out of £64,000 and £59,000 respectively and leaving the property in a severe state of disrepair.

In addition to referring the resident to partners within the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) it was identified during the course of our enquiries that the property required urgent remedial work.

The resident had been defrauded out of the entirety of their life savings. However, recognising the seriousness of the situation and following careful consideration it was agreed to use the proceeds of crime to fund emergency repairs, much to the relief and gratitude of the resident.

Commissioning Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards approved CheckaTrade traders, the urgent repairs were completed efficiently and effectively. An example of some of necessary work undertaken can be seen below.



Before



After

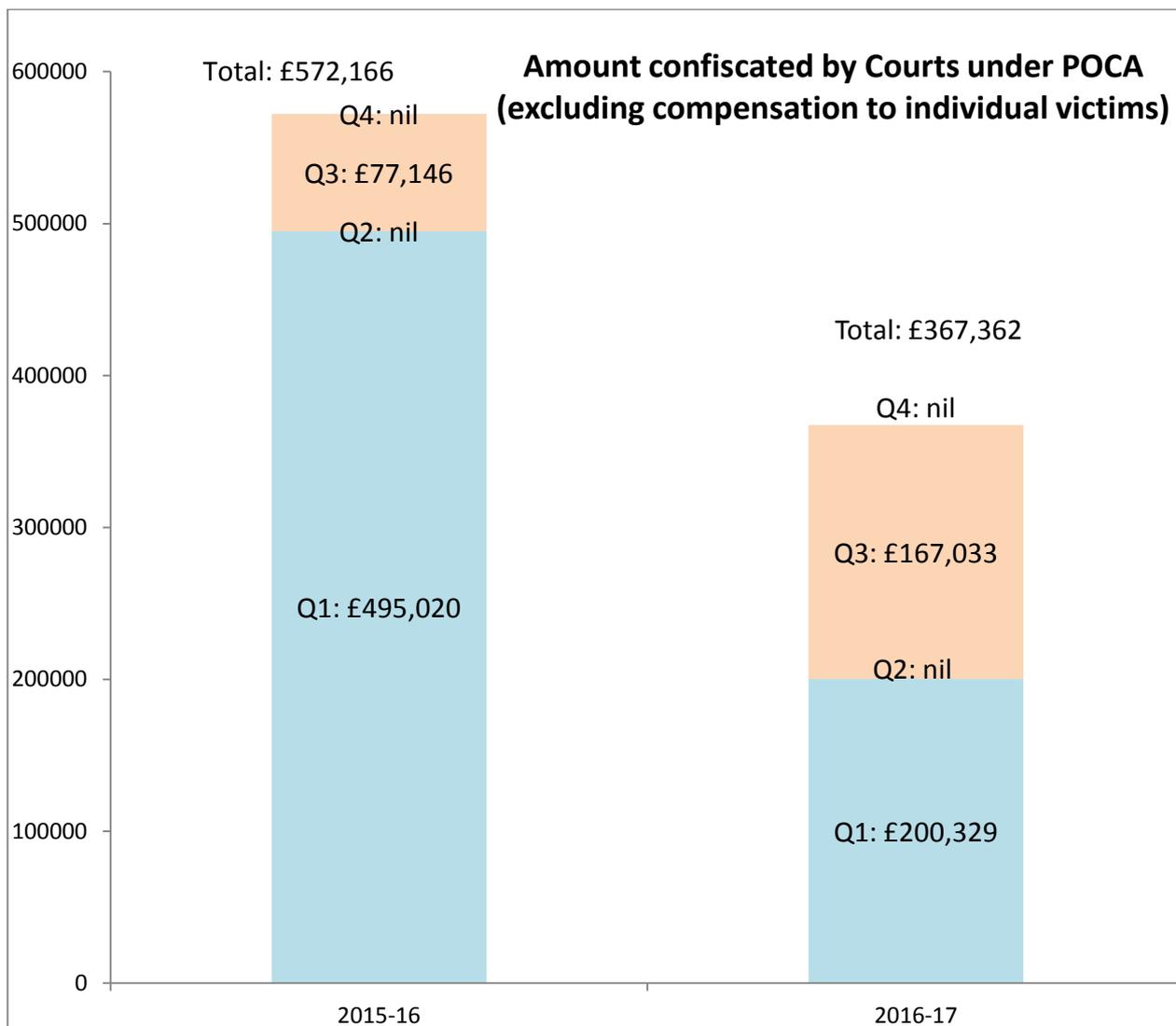
The victim said: "... Trading Standards organised remedial work at my property following a bad experience I had with a previous trader, repairing my roof to a high standard and I am now confident that I will no longer experience damp problems on the first floor of my property."

KPI -2 Protect residents by stopping rogue traders operating in Buckinghamshire and Surrey.

Note: These are indicators only. There are no targets set in relation to these as it is for the courts to decide convictions and the appropriate penalties. We expect the figures to fluctuate, and there may be considerable variations, but they provide useful context as to the extent of offending that the Service is dealing with. In some graphs the quarters have been separately highlighted to show the variation in amounts. 2015 – 16 was an exceptional year, seeing the highest ever number of cases leading to custodial sentences in any one year. The results for 2016 – 2017 remain higher than for years prior to 2015-16.



Numbers of doorstep stickers/packs distributed = **21,891**



Convictions during the year largely related to money laundering and fraud linked to doorstep crimes, consumer protection offences and illicit tobacco.

Quarter One saw the successful prosecution of three rogue traders for doorstep crime offences. All three targeted vulnerable residents with cold calls, persuading them to undertake overpriced, unnecessary and poorly executed works. In one instance the trader used threatening behaviour to control the victim. Following our intervention and investigation, trader one was sentenced to a 12 month community and supervision order with an unpaid work requirement, trader two received a custodial sentence of 3 years 3 months, and trader three was sentenced to three years six months. Trader three was also subject to proceeds of crime proceedings. It was established that he had benefitted from his criminal conduct to the figure of £549,313.41, with available assets identified as £297,979.43. The court ordered £97,650 to be paid to the victims within three months or risk an additional two years being added to his sentence.

During Quarter Two, the Service obtained 6 Enterprise Act undertakings from directors and salespeople involved in unacceptable commercial practices relating to the sale of double glazing products. Undertakings are a formal way to bind people's future conduct to comply with relevant legislation. The Company pleaded guilty to 10 offences under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations but these are not included in the above figures as sentencing did not

occur until June 2017 (The financial penalty imposed of £80,000, and costs awarded of £250,000 will appear in the performance summary for 17 -18).

Quarter Three saw the sentencing in a long running case for the Service where 3 defendants were found guilty of a variety of charges including money laundering, fraud and participating in a fraudulent business. In one instance a victim paid £83,850 for work to their property which was later valued at £14,000. The 3 defendants were awarded prison sentences of 4 years, 21 months and 8 months, the latter of these being suspended and combined with a 180 hours unpaid work order. The first hearing with regard to confiscation proceedings under proceeds of crime legislation was been set for April 2017 with proceedings ongoing at the time of report writing.

In quarter three, there was an additional compensation amount of **£164,106** relating to a proceeds of crime investigation undertaken by the Service's financial investigators which has not been included in the above figures. The proceeds of crime case followed the defendants' conviction of 14 offences of fraud relating to benefit claims, including the Disabled Living Allowance, and direct payments for social care. The compensation has not been included in the above figure because it did not go directly to residents, however it will indirectly benefit residents as it is being split between Surrey County Council (£109k), the Department of Work and Pensions (£45,553) and Reigate and Banstead Borough Council (£7,371).

The fines during the year related to the supply and labelling of illicit tobacco. These offences were discovered with the assistance of a sniffer dog as part of a proactive, intelligence led operation. In addition to the fines, forfeiture orders were issued for the destruction of the contraband material.

Modern slavery

In response to the Modern Slavery Act 2015, Trading Standards has been asked to join the Buckinghamshire Anti-Slavery Network and by extension this includes membership of the wider Thames Valley Network. The service's work on doorstep crime has increasingly over the last few years brought us into contact with both the perpetrators and victims of forced labour. The victims, generally vulnerable and homeless men, have been befriended by members of the organised crime gangs seeking workers for their home improvement frauds. They offer them a roof over their head, food and clothing and friendship. The reality however is beatings, squalid living accomodation and sometimes virtual starvation without wages, which was the case in the high profile case of the Connors family based on the Buckinghamshire/Bedfordshire border back in 2011.

Trading Standards is now part of the network of organisations in both the public sector and 3rd sector who are charged with the early identification of potential cases of forced servitude and the implementing the statutory referral mechanisms. Of course forced labour also operates in the context of other business models and in our interactions with business, officers are mindful of any activity that might be construed as modern slavery.

Quarter three saw the Investigations Team assist Surrey Police to execute a warrant on an itinerant site in relation to offences under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The target is subject to a simultaneous investigation by Trading Standards for fraud relating to doorstep crime offences. As a result of this operation three slaves (Romanian, Bulgarian and Polish) were identified and

taken to a place of safety. The suspect has pleaded not guilty to holding a person in slavery with a trial set for July 2017. The Trading Standards investigation is ongoing.

The Bucks Herald

Man jailed after fleecing elderly couple



Court

By
EMILY HEARNE

Published: 15:42
Thursday 14 July 2016



An elderly Buckinghamshire couple were fleeced by cowboy roofers of around £300,000 for work that was valued at £577 in 2013. Although, they thought their luck had changed when Trading Standards officers turned up to say they had recovered the money, only to ask for £600,000 in 'up front fees' to get the money back. Yet it turned out these officers were part of the same cowboy roofers company.

It didn't take long for the Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards who were working alongside the Thames Valley police, to uncover a trail that linked £435,000 of the Amersham couple's payment to a company called Construction Connected.



getSURREY NEWS IN YOUR AREA WHAT'S ON

'Puppet master' of rogue roofing work jailed for four years

Dozens of householders across the Home Counties were approached over a three-year period, a c



John Green Snr (Image: Hertfordshire Police)

A roofing contractor who masterminded a scam that left elderly and vulnerable householders across Surrey out of pocket was jailed for four years on Tuesday (October 18).

John Green Snr, 49, and an accomplice would call unannounced at victims' homes to tell them their roofs needed repairs, Guildford Crown Court heard.

"The work was often unnecessary, poorly performed and grossly over-priced," said Ethu Crie, prosecuting.

"Consumers were not always provided with written notification of their cancellation rights."

Following complaints from many residents, Buckinghamshire and Surrey county councils' trading standards teams launched an investigation.

Bucks Free Press

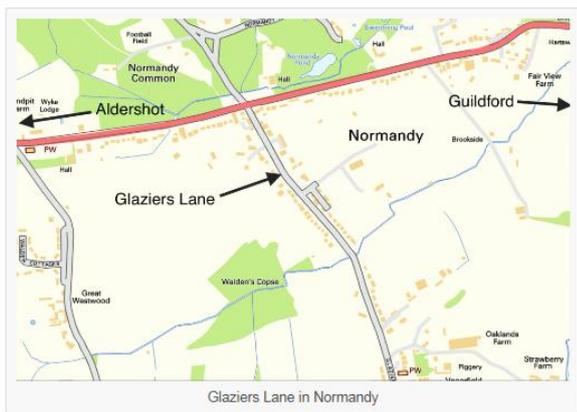
18th October 2016

Illegal cigarette and tobacco haul costs Micklefield Superstore shopkeeper, Surja Singh Sethi, nearly £2,000

Jasmine Rapson @Jasmine_BFP
Reporter



Normandy Man Pleads Not Guilty to Slavery Charge



A Normandy man, charged with slavery offences, pleaded not guilty at Guildford Crown Court yesterday (January 12).

Following a multi-agency operation, Patrick Cash, 38, of Glaziers Lane, Normandy, was charged on December, 20 (2016) with holding a person in slavery.

Mr Cash is believed to have connections with the traveller community in Normandy and is understood to work in the building and horticulture trade.

A trial date has been set for July 10, 2017 at Guildford Crown Court.

A shopkeeper has been fined hundreds of pounds after haul of illegal cigarettes and tobacco were discovered in a filing cabinet at his High Wycombe shop.

Surja Singh Sethi was fined £600 and ordered to pay £1,230 in costs by Wycombe Magistrates on Wednesday, October 12 after 100 packs of 20 cigarettes and 3kg of rolling tobacco were uncovered at his shop, Micklefield Superstore, in Gayhurst Road in February.

They were found in a filing cabinet in the storage room by Buster – a Trading Standards sniffer dog, provided by specialist company Wagtail.

KPI -3 Prevent residents becoming victims through expanding the use and reach of social media alerts, TS Alert! Volunteers, and other preventative initiatives to raise awareness of scams, rogue traders and unsafe products.

The Service has a strong social media presence, making frequent use of Twitter (with 3751 followers and total impressions regularly reaching over 300,000 throughout the year); Facebook (with 766 followers and the most popular post during the year reaching 11,814 people) and Linked In (with over 500 connections). During the year the Service started to use Instagram to widen its social media audience and has been steadily growing its followers, standing at 114 at the end of the year.

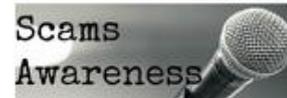
The Service also has a weekly email newsletter (TS Alert!) which has been regularly sent to over 2,500 subscribers throughout the year and updates subscribers on the latest work of the service, scams and product recalls to keep themselves safe.

Would you like to hear about scams?

We currently have volunteers working with us to provide presentations to community groups on scams.

Some of these are generic talks through the [Friends Against Scams](#) initiative, although we do also have a more specific talk regarding online scams.

Buckinghamshire & Surrey
trading standards



f Facebook

Top Post
Fraudsters are targeting people completing their tax returns, sending fake emails asking them to create a "government gateway account", which then requests their personal banking details
<http://www.mirror.co.uk/money/never-hmrc-scam-email-thats-9611469>
Top post reach 4082

t Twitter

When reporting doorstep crime, try to remember key details about the trader such as their appearance, name & car reg
[#scamaware](#)
pic.twitter.com/381brg9oYz
6278 IMPRESSIONS

f Facebook

Top Post
Consumers are being warned to question written correspondence from their banks following a new and sophisticated scam targeting Lloyds customers:
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/personal-banking/savings/would-fall-latest-ingenuous-bank-scam/>
Top post reach 3834

Volunteers

The Service has around 70 volunteers, from a wide range of ages and backgrounds who supported the Service with over 900 hours of their time during the year.

Following the respective corporate approaches to the use of volunteers, volunteers in Surrey usually join the Service for a single piece of work at a time, whereas those in Bucks join as volunteers and are called in when the required work matches their skill sets which may be for a short period of time but is often on a more regular basis over a longer period of time.

Work continues to develop our volunteer capacity. Due to social isolation being a significant risk factor in people targeted by scammers, our Scams work offers a variety of opportunities to involve volunteers for the benefit of residents, for example: by becoming mail marshals; by speaking at our scam conferences (more information on these is detailed in KPI 7) or by connecting isolated people with their local communities. More detail of one way volunteers help is given in the case study below.

In March we spoke at a “Victim Support” Conference held for their volunteers. This was well received and has led to a stronger working relationship.

People have a variety of reasons to volunteer, and the impact volunteering can have on those who volunteer themselves should not be underestimated as the quote from one of our Volunteers shows:

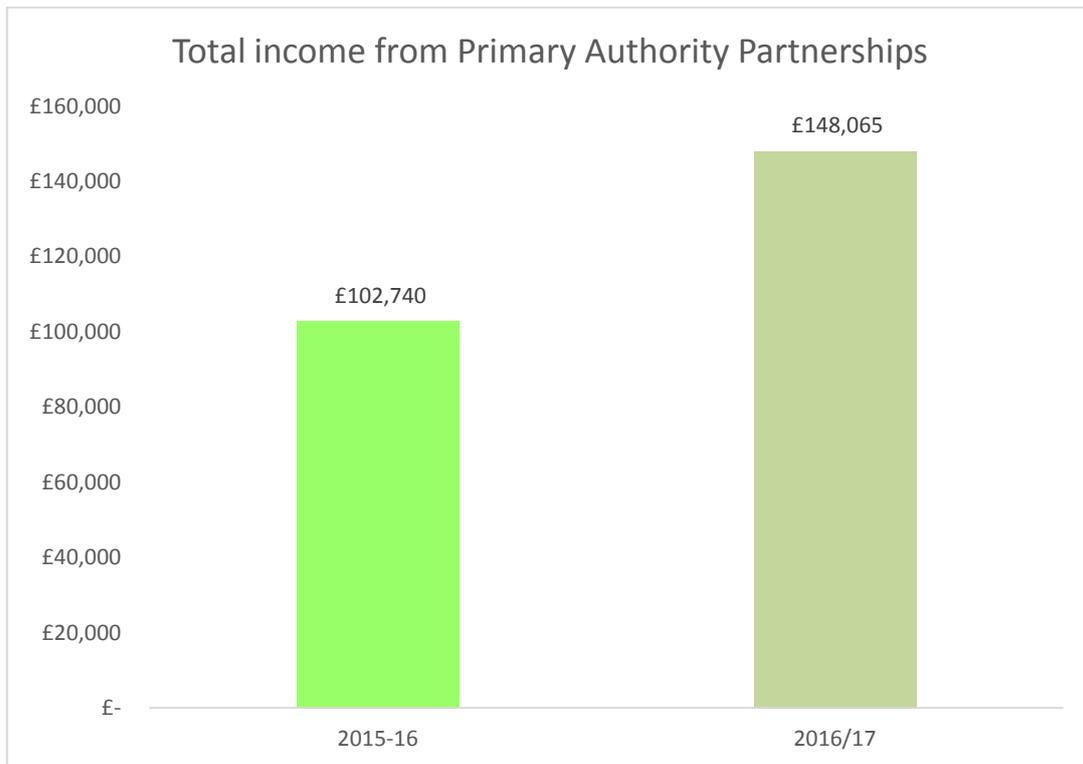
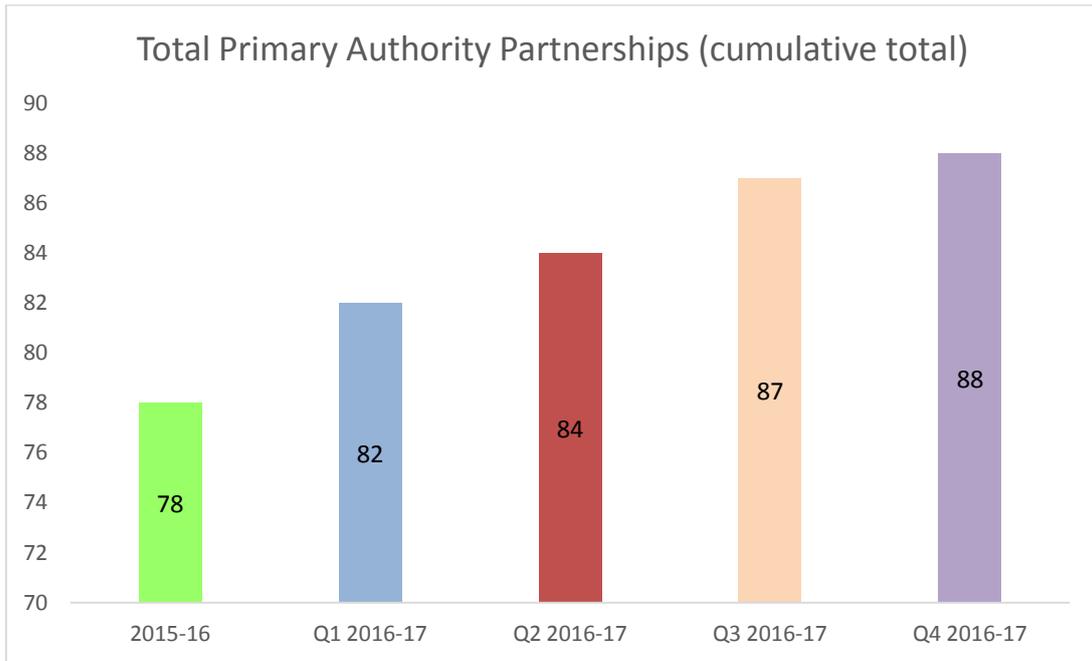
“I just wanted to email to let you know that I've been offered a place at Hertford College [Oxford] for law next year and to say thank you for all of your hard work teaching me about Trading Standards, it definitely made me much more confident for my interviews.”

- **Volunteer Case Study**

Community engagement, involvement and inclusion are key outcomes that the Buckinghamshire based ‘Ageing Population Task and Finish Group’ is keen to develop, with the aim of improving and sustaining the wellbeing of the post-retirement residents of Chilterns & South Bucks. One of the programmes currently being piloted involves the Trading Standards and Prevention Matters services creating additional welfare provision through the use of older volunteers working with the vulnerable victims of crime.

In Gerrards Cross a Trading Standards volunteer, recruited from the local Movers and Shakers Group, is working with three elderly victims of doorstep crime and scams in the vicinity. Aged 86 the volunteer, has worked with Trading Standards, Thames Valley Police and the Community Practice Worker to help target harden and reduce the isolation, through visiting (and indeed taking one of the vulnerable victims to Movers and Shakers) that has been a major contributory factor in their victimhood. The volunteer has been trained to look at the holistic situation of the victims, for example he assisted the victims with their typically chaotic financial affairs, advocated on their behalf, and acts as a speedy conduit when professional support has been needed.

KPI -4 To increase the number of Primary Authority Partnerships



The Service continues to provide excellent and varied support to businesses through our 88 Primary Authority Partnerships. Growth has been consistent although slower than anticipated with our focus being on maximising the benefits of each partnership.

Primary Authority is subject to significant change in the year ahead (2017-18) with new legislation scheduled for an October implementation. The service has actively engaged in the consultations and development of these changes – often being invited to speak at events hosted by the relevant Government Department – Business Enterprise and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

The previously established partnership with TrustMark, the only government endorsed trader approval scheme, went live in December with a trading standards approval offer for its membership. It now offers Trading Standards Approved membership (at the end of the financial year there were 45 Trading Standards Approved TrustMark members) and work has been completed to produce a handbook of guidance and assured advice for these scheme members. We expect this to be a growth area for the future.

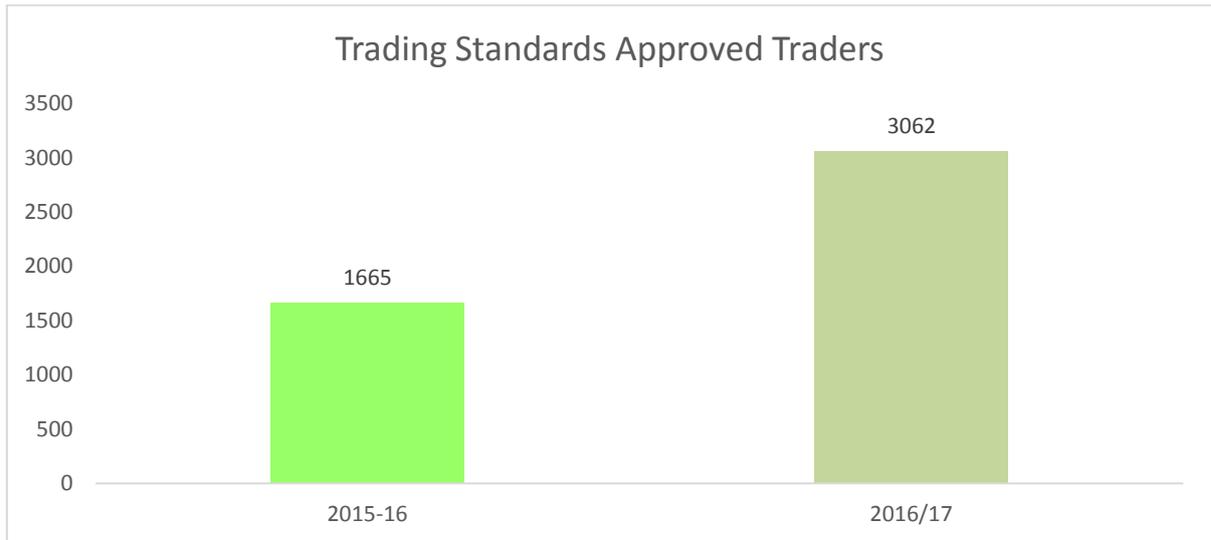
As a step towards a future Primary Authority Partnership we entered into a significant business consultancy service with a company importing a wide range of products from China. This is assisting the business in ensuring it is fully compliant with legal requirements, helping them grow and ensuring the compliance and safety of imported products.

Recognised for our innovative approach, the service finalised protocols for original new activities during the year. With increasing pressures on trading standards services across the country and intellectual property related issues falling to lower priority, two companies joined PA Partnerships with us to enable us to support their brand protection and product safety activities whilst helping to secure their continued economic success. Both submitted their first referral cases and they began to be investigated during the year.

New Partnerships we have welcomed during the year 2016-17 were:

- Delphic HSE Solutions Ltd
- Gift Universe Group Ltd (Menkind)
- Manning Impex
- Resource Experience Ltd
- The Health Foods Manufacturers Association
- Merisant UK
- Canon Europe Ltd
- James Finlay Ltd
- Green Motion Car & Van Rental Ltd
- Hills Pet Nutrition Ltd
- Lacka Foods
- Brand Enforcement UK Ltd
- Haier

KPI -5 Increase membership of trader approval schemes.



TS Approved members of Checkatrade continue to increase as the scheme maintains a robust presence, not only within Buckinghamshire and Surrey, but also across a wider geographical area.

As mentioned above, in December we launched a pilot scheme with TrustMark. Following a successful pilot the scheme has been offered more widely and by the end of the financial year we had 45 Trading Standards Approved Trust Mark members.

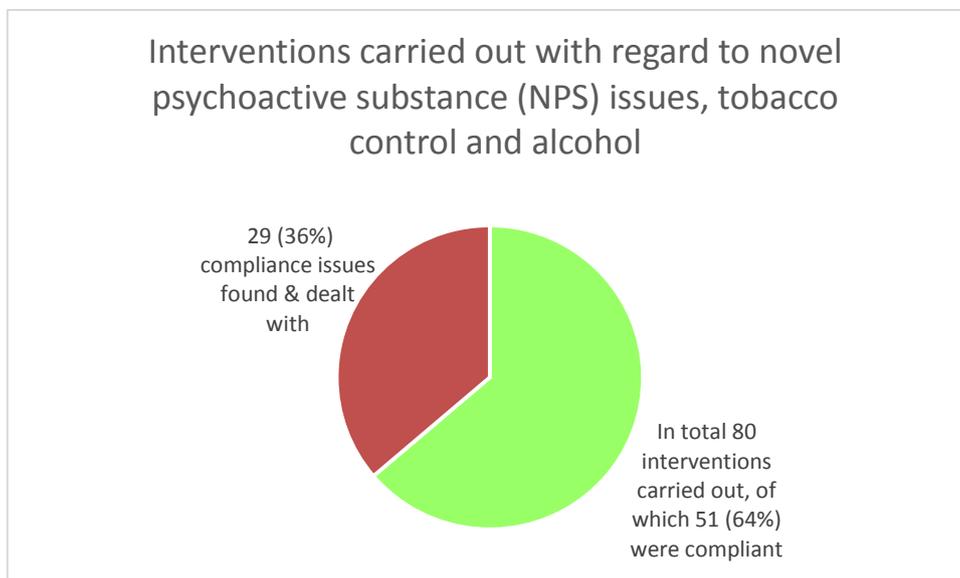


As both schemes grow numbers, so the choice and reassurance for consumers when seeking a trader also grows.

The expansion of the Eat Out Eat Well healthy eating award scheme has slowed down as the scheme has been reviewed by Public Health England in partnership with us. The scheme has a new highest award (platinum) and incorporates requirements that enable businesses to meet government buying standards. This is supportive for businesses and gives the scheme increased kudos. Surrey Public Health are working with us to expand the scheme into nurseries and early years settings, and other local authorities continue to buy into the scheme. There are currently 20 authorities operating the scheme. Bucks Public Health are currently reviewing their funding and operation of the scheme after the dedicated EOEW officer left the service.



KPI -6 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.



Compliance issues found include incorrectly foreign language labelled food, incorrectly displayed tobacco products and issues about under age sales. These were dealt with by advice and where appropriate improvement notices.

We continue to develop our partnership work with Public Health and other partners with regard to alcohol issues. We are also continuing projects on foreign labelling of food; dinitrophenol (DNP) issues; traceability of the disposal of surplus food and farm waste food; National Trading Standards (NTS) funded feed sampling; E-cigarette availability to under 18's; and tobacco control.

Risk based work relevant to this indicator is carried out under the Food and Feed Enforcement Plan and is covered in detail in that report (last considered at the November 2016 Joint Committee). As part of this in 2016-17 we submitted 224 samples to the Public Analyst for testing and had contact with more than 150 animal feed businesses to ensure that feed for livestock was safe. A summary of our Food and Feed Plan related work carried out in 2016-17 is on our website: https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/100221/Food-2016-2107.pdf

In addition to the work outlined above we also carried out work relating to:

Animal Health / Animal Disease Preparedness

Avian Flu has been an ongoing concern during the year and we have worked with our Resilience / Emergency Planning colleagues to raise awareness with poultry keepers to help deal with the avian flu issues that several isolated outbreaks have created.

During the year we have reviewed and updated our animal disease contingency plans in partnership with both Emergency Planning teams.

Fireworks and Explosives

The main firework season included the registration of new and previous premises to store and sell fireworks. Pre and post registration work was carried out to ensure businesses had adequate procedures in place and were storing their fireworks in a safe manner. Partnership work with Surrey Fire and Rescue was once again a valuable resource. Businesses were reminded of their responsibility to ensure explosives were not sold to persons under the age of 18.

Food Allergens

During the year we have built on the work in the previous year to ensure allergens in catering establishments are dealt with appropriately. The project now targets establishments most likely to endanger consumers by not declaring relevant allergens. The death of a person from anaphylactic shock when eating a curry in Yorkshire (and the subsequent conviction of the restaurateur for manslaughter) continues to highlight the need for this work. A range of food sampling projects has also been carried out looking at undeclared allergens in pre packed food and the presence of dangerous contaminants such as aflatoxins

Ports Project & Safety Issues

The Service works closely with the National Trading Standards Ports and Borders Team to prevent unsafe and non-complaint items arriving via Heathrow from being placed on the UK market. In 2016-17 the Service assessed 31,553 higher risk products at the point of entry, finding 2245 unsafe items and a further 1537 which were non-compliant in another way, for example with incorrect labelling or lack of instructions. Detaining unsafe goods at that point saves considerable additional work once the goods are spread across multiple wholesalers or retailers nationwide, and is an efficient and effective way to protect consumers from potentially harmful products.

Some examples of products detained and destroyed during the year were:

Skin-lightening products containing an ingredient linked to cancer. The products were seized because they contained the skin-bleaching ingredient hydroquinone which is banned in Britain and across the European Union. Cosmetics made with the chemical are thought to increase the risk of skin cancer by exposing the skin to more of the sun's rays and are also linked to thinning and discoloration of the skin as well as liver and nerve damage. The two consignments of cosmetics contained a total of 385 creams.

Foam 'Food' Keyrings – Too easy to tear into small parts, presenting choking hazard to child under 36 months. Could be mistaken for imitation food and therefore presented additional choking risk. Tested positive for Phthalates (a banned chemical) and failed labelling requirements.



Items presenting a choking hazard:

Baby Play Gyms – Nose and eye components of this product detached at low forces, presenting choking hazard. The soft toy parts also split apart revealing small rattle that could also be choked on, presenting serious risk to a child under 36 months.



Childs Drawing Mats – Lid of pen presenting choking hazard to a child under 36 months. Also failed labelling requirements.



Nappy Sacks & Baby Slings - The Service led on a research project funded by central government considering the labelling of nappy sacks and pouch style baby slings. Nappy bags made of light plastic can be dangerous because they are easy for babies to grasp and bring to their mouths. The products have been linked to at least 16 deaths from suffocation in England and Wales. The checks showed one in 10 packs of nappy bags carried no safety warnings and the findings have recommended that nappy bags are sold in rolls or in packets with clips to make it harder for babies to grab them.

The slings looked at as part of the investigation were those which cradle the baby's whole body in a fabric pouch, with no arm or leg holes. Care must be taken to ensure babies do not slip into a chin-to-chest position restricting their ability to breathe and that fabric does not become pressed against their nose and mouth. The research showed that 3 in 10 had no safety warnings. The report recommends that it should be mandatory for these type of baby slings and nappy sacks to carry warnings.

Sunglasses without safety markings – the Service prevented 6,000 pairs of sunglasses with no CE mark from being imported into the UK from Thailand. The CE symbol can only be used on sunglasses which pass safety tests. Sunglasses which do not pass safety tests may do more

damage to the eyes than not wearing sunglasses at all because the dark lenses encourage the pupils to dilate more, letting in more UV rays. Long term exposure to the sun's UV rays can increase the risk of cataracts and macular degeneration.

Illegal Oral Tobacco – the Service stopped 500kg of oral snuff which has been illegal in the UK since 1992 due to its links to oral cancer.

Items presenting a suffocation risk – The Service prevented 200 toy playsets which had packaging which would present a suffocation risk because it was too flimsy (and were incorrectly labelled) from reaching the UK market. The batch was made up of mini play kitchens, dressing tables and projector sets.

Illicit Tobacco

In addition to tobacco detained and destroyed at the border, the Service prosecuted two traders for illicit tobacco in their retail premises. Both had been identified by using a specialist sniffer dog, targeting premises about which intelligence had been received. In addition to the fine, an alcohol license review following conviction saw one of the traders have more stringent conditions imposed

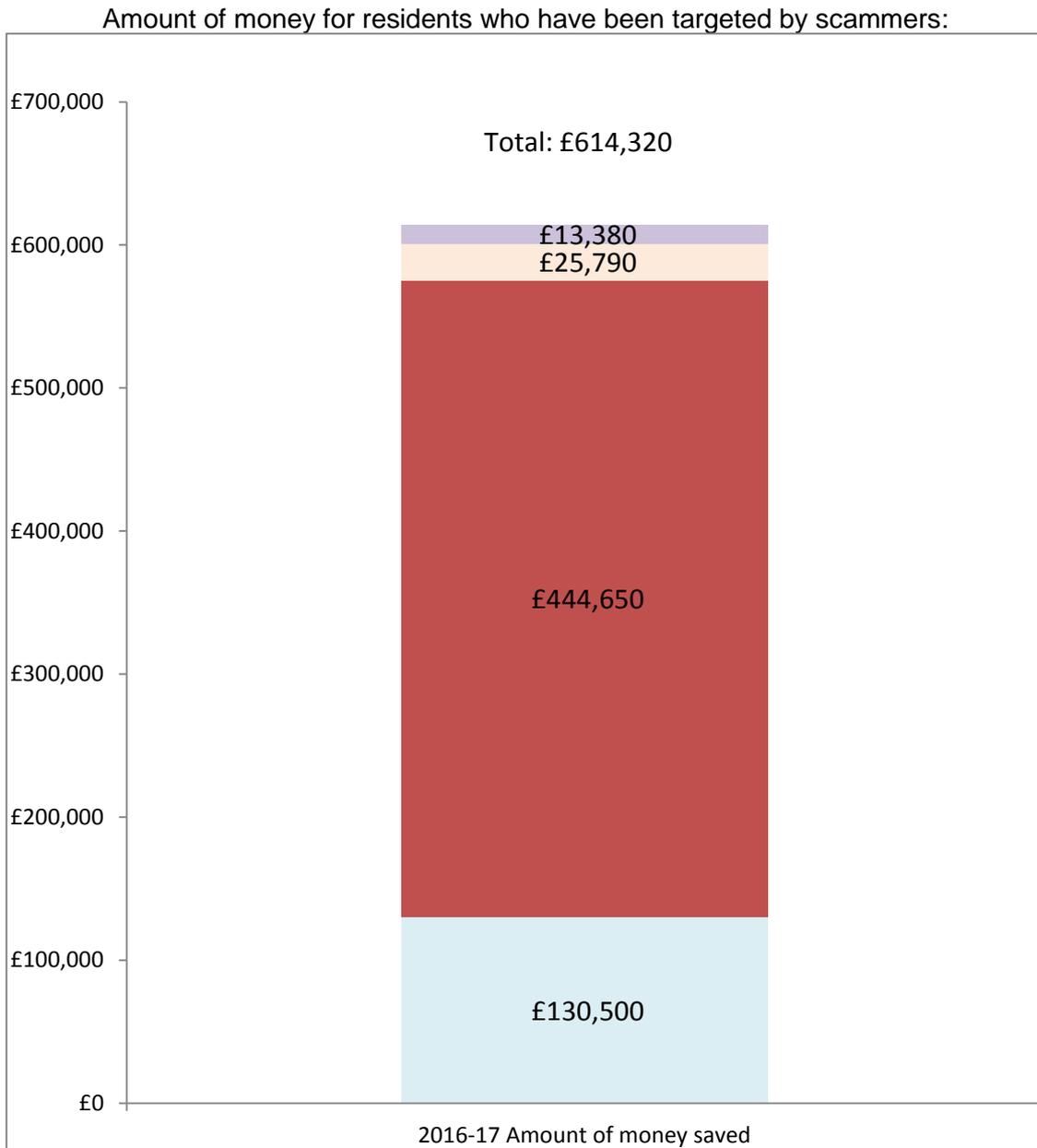
Food Standards Agency (FSA) Audit

The FSA audited the Surrey area of the Services' work in relation to Feeding Stuffs in July. We have carried out almost all of the actions agreed in the Action Plan (outstanding actions relate to the information on our databases). We met with the FSA lead for Feed issues to discuss how we could best ensure our database is fit for purpose and following this we worked with the FSA to produce guidance notes for other authorities on this topic.

Explosives (Fireworks) and Petroleum work

As planned in the Business Case the Service made the decision during the year to undertake all petroleum and explosives work from within the Service as of April 2017 leading to the delivery of a £20,000 saving. Consequently notice was given on a contract for the provision of this work by another local authority.

KPI -7 Scams (including activities carried out by volunteers)

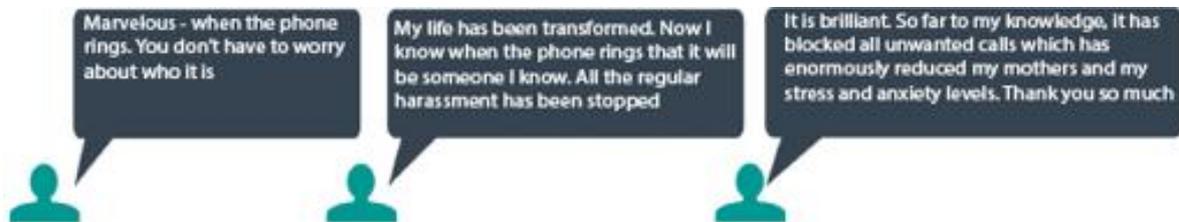


In 2016-17 the Service considered referrals about 389 people known to have been targeted by scammers, most of whom were referred to the Service from the National Trading Standards Scams Team; working closely with the most high risk, saving them **£614,320**. This data only began to be collected during the 2016-17 year and therefore there is no comparison data available for previous years. It is also for this reason that this saving for residents is currently kept separate to the savings recorded as part of KPI 1. More detail on this work is contained in the separate Joint Committee report on Scams.

In the second quarter the Service successfully worked with a particularly prolific and chronic responder to scams who had, for many years, been losing around £40,000 each year by responding to scams. Case studies are given below.

One of the ways in which the Service can support people not to respond to scams is by the installation of telephone call blocking devices, which prevent calls from those who are not willing

to identify themselves or from any number which isn't pre-registered. Installation of the units continued at a steady pace throughout the year with around 60 (seeking a more precise figure) installed during 2016-17 and 86 active units in place at the end of the year; with 47,376 nuisance calls known to have been blocked and the work having been shortlisted for the Excellence in Fraud Prevention category of the Government Counter Fraud Awards.



Scams Conferences in Buckinghamshire and Surrey

In November and January the Service worked with the National Scams Team to run Scams Conferences in Bucks and Surrey respectively, aimed at engaging partners and raising awareness of the extent of the problem of scams. These conferences were funded from the Proceeds of Crime Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme (ARIS). Over 80 delegates attended each event, and feedback was that participants found them informative and engaging and they have led to a raised awareness of the work being carried out in this area amongst other services and those in the charity sectors. This led to two key relationships being formed one within the Housing Sector and one within the Charity Community sector which has led to more awareness of Scams and recruitment of “Scam Champions” and “Friends against Scams” going forward. Having victims of scams and their families talk about their experiences was particularly hard hitting.



In early March the Service delivered its first “Scam Champion” training of the Volunteers willing to disseminate the “Friends against Scams” messages. As a direct result of this single training approximately 700 people have been spoken to about Scams and already we are aware of one Champion who called the Police during a doorstep fraud being carried out in Buckinghamshire.

Partnership Working: 'Hughenden Street Association'



Following a successful bid for funding from the Safer Bucks Partnership Board during the year a Project Support Officer was appointed to coordinate and drive the work to finalise the creation of the first "Street Association" to cover an entire parish in the UK leading which was launched in February. The project was aimed at creating a community-wide culture of neighbourliness across the seven villages that make up the Hughenden Parish. From the perspective of the partners in local government, public health and the police, the main focus is improving community care and protection for the most vulnerable in the Parish of some 9000 people and where 29 per cent of the population is over the age of 65 years. For the community, led by the various Residents Associations and the Parish Council, an improvement in levels of engagement, inclusion and cohesion is anticipated.

Examples of working with victims of scams include:

- **Courier Fraud Victim Support – Gerrards Cross and Beaconsfield Banking Protocol**

The victims of courier fraud, mainly elderly people, are hit especially hard both financially and psychologically when the realisation of their situation dawns upon them. The most common of the so-called 'courier frauds' is where the victim is phoned by someone purporting to be either their bank or indeed a police officer claiming that their account has been hacked or some suspicious activity has been noted. The fraudsters convince the victim that they will have to immediately change their card and that the bank/police will send a courier around to collect their current card. First, however, they must confirm their account details including existing card pin numbers. An accomplice then arrives at the door to collect the card and sometimes hand over a fake replacement. Once the card is in the criminals' hands they then go on a spending spree until the money runs out.

There has been a wave of these types of crimes, notably in and around Gerrards Cross and Beaconsfield, and some victims have lost many thousands of pounds. Therefore, in partnership with Thames Valley Police, Adult Social Care and local banks, Bucks and Surrey Trading Standards has been working not only to spread greater awareness in the district about these crimes, but has also implemented a number of target hardening actions, such as installing CCTV and call blocking technology to prevent re-victimisation. Furthermore, a local banking protocol has been established whereby bank staff are trained in dealing with and quickly reporting suspicious activity, to the police and Trading Standards, relating to vulnerable clients.

In November the partnership held an informal coffee morning in Beaconsfield and invited ten victims and family members to come along to help improve their sense of wellbeing and tell them what the partners were doing. The victims and family members seemed to find it cathartic to share their stories and also seek reassurance from the partnership professionals in attendance.

- **Case Study – chronic scam victim - Woking**

A 91 year old male in Woking is a chronic scam victim and has been responding to scam mail, including lotteries and clairvoyants. He is also a hoarder and likes to order all sorts of goods from catalogues. We visited him on a couple of occasions to try and dissuade him from responding to scam mail.

Trading Standards and Adult Social Care carried out a joint visit and took away 2 bags of scam mail with his consent. We have worked with him to let him know which mail that he is responding to is fraudulent and that, by responding, he is helping to fund criminal activity and he has become a Mail Marshal. We will be visiting him again over the coming months to see how that is progressing and considering befriending options.

- **Case Study – chronic scam victim - Caterham**

Another chronic scam victim is a lady living in Caterham. She was originally visited by us last year and the officer who visited returned some money to her which she had sent to Scammers. The Officer also wrote on her behalf to known Scammers asking them to stop sending her mail. She had agreed to this being carried out. In the last couple of weeks we visited with the local PCSO who had been advised by the local postman that she was still getting a lot of mail on a daily basis. We discussed known Scams and the PCSO arranged for her to make contact with a local day centre. She also agreed to become a mail marshal. As we were leaving the house 15 Scam letters were being delivered by the postal worker. The resident agreed to having them put in the first Mail Marshal freepost envelope.

- **Case Study – chronic scam victim - Guildford**

A n elderly Guildford resident, a retired Lecturer, responded to large numbers of prize draw letters, usually demanding an advanced fee (£20 -£40 each time), plus catalogue scams for overpriced vitamins. He was also plagued by scam telephone calls. A photograph of his home is shown below illustrating the sheer volume of scam materials he was being bombarded with. We removed several sacks of scam material. He had spent at least £10,000 responding to scams and was continuing to spend over £100 a week. Our intervention helped him understand that these were scams and he stopped responding. However a subsequent support visit found that he had again begun to respond. Finding the victims is sometimes just the start, ongoing support is needed and it is vital to engage other partners in that.

- **Case Study: Fake Clairvoyants - Aylesbury**

It is never easy to stop a victim of scam mail continuing to send off money when they sincerely believe they are going to receive a fortune in return. It is even harder when the victim has dementia and harder still when the fraud is aligned with the victim's inner beliefs, value systems and spirituality. Such is the case with the especially pernicious fake clairvoyant or medium scams. We are currently working with a 94 year old widow in Aylesbury, living with dementia who is entirely in thrall of three or four fake clairvoyants with whom she corresponds and sends off either cash or details of her debit card. To date we think the scammers have defrauded her

of over £21,000. She has stopped paying the lease on her small flat and is being pursued for £11,000 by solicitors acting on behalf of the landlord. Utility and other bills also remain unpaid.

Trading Standards is not only working on a one-to-one basis with the lady, trying to build her trust in us, rather than the criminals, but also in conjunction with other health and social care professionals, notably the district nursing team, who are very concerned about the lack of food and heat in the flat. Volunteers are working closely with the victim and Trading Standards Officers are seeking to intercede with the lady's creditors to help manage her indebtedness and maintain her in her own home.



91 year old Woking Scam victim

Retired Guildford Lecturer – scam mail retrieved