

Business services update

Buckinghamshire & Surrey's trading standards team have extensive experience of advising a variety of businesses from small family companies to international blue-chip corporations. Consumer protection law means businesses have to meet certain standards, which includes protecting their customers. Looking after their customers not only makes good business sense, but usually means that they will also be complying with the law.

Working with businesses on a cost recovery basis can therefore be seen as an alternative enforcement strategy or route to compliance and an essential part of an effective trading standards service.

Buckinghamshire and Surrey trading standards use a flexible modular approach to offer a range of services to businesses. This approach includes elements suitable for local or national businesses and the freedom to bundle selections to deliver the right level of support for their needs.



Leaflets
Training Information
Website Signposting
E-learning alerts
PAYG
Single Point of Contact
Advice
Fixed Fee helpline email
TSalert Mailshots
scam alert Facebook
Bespoke LinkedIn
Easy 123
Consultancy
Twitter

business.advice@bucksandsurreytradingstandards.gov.uk
0300 123 2329

E-learning; New for 2017-18

In partnership with the Chartered Institute of Trading Standards and Virtual College we provide a wide range of courses. We have been engaging with local regulators and business organisations to promote our "Skills for Work" branded offer.

Courses start at £15 and offer CPD certificates for training records



Self Service

Some businesses prefer to research an idea or subject matter at a time that suits them, which is why our range of self-service resource options are designed to fit in with individual needs.

- Signposting to information
- Website
- Twitter
- Mailshots alerts
- Business scam alerts
- Online information leaflets
- Dedicated helpline
- Dedicated email
- Facebook
- TS Alert!
- Education projects
- LinkedIn
- e-learning



Business Advice

Our dedicated telephone helpline and email address provide access to tailored and more detailed advice and information. Bucks & Surrey based callers qualify for a free half hour of advice; all other work is charged at our hourly rate.

The service suits one-off enquiries, prospective businesses and those who haven't previously spoken to a Regulator.

Advice acts as a gateway to our other services. It is an opportunity to demonstrate we are approachable and supportive. Helping us to build relationships for the future it can lead to Primary Authority Partnerships

2017-18 Improvements

By registering for advice, businesses provide consent to our terms and conditions and information about themselves.

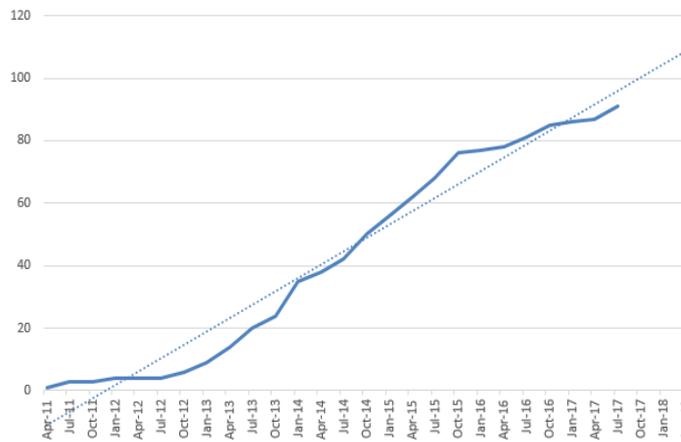
In 2017 to streamline the service and simplify the customer journey we plan to replace form-based registration with call recording.

Primary Authority

Primary Authority (PA) is our award winning, flagship business product. PA's are statutory partnerships established between a business and a regulator on a cost recovery basis, which can provide "Assured Advice" and "Inspection Plans" which have legal standing and can influence other enforcers' activities



Number of Primary Authority Partnerships



We offer Pay As You Go, Fixed Fee or Bespoke Partnership packages. We also offer Single Point of Contact whereby a business can add Environmental Health, Fire safety, and Welsh advice accessed through us.

94 Partnerships

14 Coordinated

9 Include Fire safety

28 Include Environmental Health

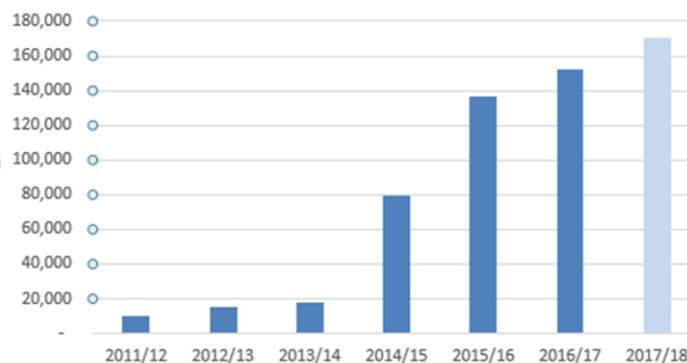
£148K income (2016/17)

Coordinated Partnerships

Where a regulator partners with a "coordinator" for a group of businesses who seeks advice on their behalf. Our largest coordinated partnership (ACS) has approximately 35,000 small business members.



Primary Authority income



Nationally, recognised for innovation in Primary Authority, we drive service development through asking businesses what they need. This approach led to our healthy Eating Award for Everyone Active cafes nationwide, training for Toyota, devolved advice from Wales, nutritional analysis via our Public Analyst and fire risk assessment inspections across the country.

Primary Authority is changing

Government reviews have revealed the wide range of benefits, financial and operational savings businesses are experiencing from Primary Authority. Development and expansion will therefore be implemented on the 1st October 2017. This requires a new statutory framework to be put into place and all existing partnerships to be transitioned across.

Establishing agreement to the revised terms and conditions and shepherding our partners through the process is a challenging and time consuming process for the team in August, September and October.

Easy 123

From October 2017 the benefits of Primary Authority will be available to smaller businesses and pre-start-ups who need advice.

To support our local businesses and encourage new enterprises we have developed a cost effective entry level partnership for £195 +VAT including 3 hours of advice and no sign-up fee.

To qualify

Businesses must have;
1 location in Bucks or Surrey and have traded for less than **2** years and have less than **3** employees.

New partners 2017-18



GREEN ELEPHANT TRADING LTD
Importer & Distributor of Quality Toys & Gifts

Training businesses

"The training was excellent, the team is much more confident in handling aggressive and difficult calls. The trainer was very responsive, tailoring delivery to current issues and experiences, even identifying ways he could help from overhearing a difficult call."

Rachel Rollason, Toyota GB PLC



Future Developments

The team are keen to ensure their offer to businesses remains fresh and relevant. We are therefore working to

- refresh the webpages and brochure to simplify the customer journey and introduce Easy 123
- introduce a customer satisfaction survey to inform improvements
- explore the capability to provide webinars on new legislation
- develop TSAlert to add a "business edition" page with tailored information

Listening to customers

We are valued for quality, flexible services and being open to and listening for innovative approaches.

Keeping it simple

Publicly available research indicates that presenting too many choices of product can cause confusion and inertia to customers.

We are therefore reviewing the way we present our offers to business from the existing "Refreshing Approach to Business Advice" to a simple transactional path based around four basic themes

- Self Service
- Business Advice
- Primary Authority
- Other Services

Home Authority

Home Authority is the traditional predecessor to Primary Authority for locally based business trading across regulatory areas. We have retained it for those businesses who want a relationship with us but cannot, for some reason, form a formal partnership.

A large number of trading standards services have already discontinued Home Authority. In Bucks and Surrey we have very few remaining and only one which accesses Home Authority augmented with additional chargeable services.

In order to update our offer to businesses and to make space for Easy 123 we propose no longer offering Home Authority to new customers after the 1st October 2017. This will also remove the need to explain the differences between Home Authority and Primary Authority.

Trading Standards Approved

Working in Partnership with

Checkatrade.com
where reputation matters



We help consumers make safer choices and traders to distinguish themselves from the rogues. Our input helps keep those schemes robust and generates income for the Authorities.

2704 Approved traders (2016/17 Q4)

£120,845 income for checks completed by trading standards

Shared learning

"It's really helpful to use our combined knowledge to help deliver business support. Both of us have referred enquirers to each other and the jointly delivered training has received great feedback. We are looking for ways to expand the relationship."

Tori Page-Morris, Delphic HSE Solutions Ltd



Delphic HSE

Legislation devolved to Scotland is currently excluded from Primary Authority. We have widened our SPOC network to include Inverclyde trading standards enabling us to ensure information contains locally relevant information.

Regulating Our Future Review

An ongoing review of food enforcement by the Food Standards Agency proposes alternative models for improving food regulation. This has the potential to merge food standards and food hygiene thus presenting various potential risks to a variety of our income generation activities.

From the 1st October all of our Primary Authorities will automatically include food standards unless they opt out. Prior to transition 56 positively chose food standards and 28 had also added Environmental Health through our Single Point of Contact option.



Contributing to workplace wellbeing and obesity agendas; Public Health support our Eat Out Eat Well healthy eating award scheme in Surrey.

Two of our Primary Authority partners have elected to implement the awards as a chargeable service throughout their nationwide businesses.

We are using all available professional routes to input into conversations and consultations on this review.

We seek to highlight our experience, professional competence and successful activities in food regulation

We currently offer food sampling and analysis to businesses through Kent & Hampshire Scientific services. One business elects to include the public analyst in site visits.

Representing an average income of £5k/yr;

Approximately 30% of business enquiries related to food standard matters during 2016/17.

Better communication

2017 Solent University students studying for their BA in Business Enterprise adopted our business advice service as a dissertation subject. Their research highlighted how small businesses use social media (mainly facebook and twitter) as an information and communication resource. It also revealed a lack of familiarity with the support we can offer. Businesses said they want to know what changes are coming and often don't have the time to find out.

We are now developing our popular TSalert newsletter to include a second page focusing on updates for business and we are also including more business related posts in our social media streams.

"It had long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them. They went out and happened to things."
Leonardo da Vinci

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