



*Environmental Services
Environmental Protection Division
Trading Standards & Licensing Group*

Trainee Trading Standards Officers

Information Pack For Applicants

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications supplied separately

www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/oldham

Last Updated March 2006

Welcome

Thank you for expressing an interest in training to become a *Trading Standards Officer* in Oldham. We hope that you will find all of the information you need to be successful in your application in this pack, but if not, please feel free to call on 0161 911 4471 or visit our website at www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/oldham for more information.



Help keep standards high

This information pack sets out our new broadband competency based structure and is one of the first in the UK to implement the qualifications criteria of the *Trading Standards Institute (TSI)*.

What does Oldham Trading Standards Service actually do?



Protect the vulnerable from exploitation

Oldham is an innovator and leader in the *Trading Standards* service. Our philosophy is not to simply respond to complaints or try to forestall problems through inspections, but to change the conditions giving rise to recurring problems – a truly intelligence-led approach. We do this through strong partnership and careful deployment of our resources to meet our Local Area Agreements – see <http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/oldham/images/LAA%20Leaflet.pdf> for more information.

We have eight strategic objectives that govern which areas of work we get involved in. These are:

To take **action** in **Oldham** now to:

1. Prevent people being the victims of commercial crime in their own home;
2. Disrupt traders operating in the informal economy;
3. Prevent harm to children and nuisance caused by young people from access to restricted goods;
4. Promote a safe, diverse night time economy;
5. Reduce crime and disorder in licensed premises and vehicles;
6. Ensure fair competition through goods and services being accurately measured, correctly described and priced;
7. Prevent unsafe goods from entering the market place; and
8. Ensure quality food standards for healthy consumers.

Every three months, we set out what activities we are going to get involved in to assist with meeting these objectives. This strategic assessment is available on our website at <http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/oldham/link2.htm>.

Then, every two weeks, we produce a tactical assessment to review how our tactics are working in practice and who or what specific activities we ought to

be targeting that are having an adverse affect on our objectives. This is a restricted document, so it is not, therefore, published.

Who do you employ?

We look for people that have a strong sense of civic duty and wish to protect the most vulnerable in society from unscrupulous traders.

All our officers are trained professionals and we offer full support with that training and continuing professional development. We have a strong relationship with Manchester Metropolitan University for qualifications provision and all of our officers are enrolled on the *Trading Standards Institute's* Competency Framework.



We offer employment for people wishing to become *Trading Standards* Officers at three levels:

- Undergraduate** We will support you through a TSI approved qualifications course. Our usual provider is Manchester Metropolitan University, but there are others. We will also pay you a salary on a *pro rata* basis for working during your vacation periods with us. This will be 0.35 times the full time salary of between £13,854 and £14,523. We also provide other support, see below.
- Final Year** If you have already completed two years of a TSI approved course, we will pay you on a higher scale of between £14,787 and £15,825. this will be paid full time, if you are undertaking a sandwich year, or at 0.35 times the full time salary if you are at University. We also provide other support, see below.
- Postgraduate** If you have already completed a non *Trading Standards* degree, you may be able to convert this to a TSI approved qualification. Again, our usual provider for this qualification is Manchester Metropolitan University, but there are others. We will pay you whilst you undertake this course between £16,137 and £17,985. This will be paid at 0.70 times the full time salary, if you are undertaking a two year part time conversion course and 0.35 times the full time salary if you are undertaking a one year full time course. We also provide other support, see below.

Switching careers? – We are keen to attract people from similar careers who might consider a change, for certain careers, such as the Police Service, Environmental Health or other Regulators we will give you credit for your law

enforcement experience and offer you a position at an appropriate level on the scale frozen until you have completed conversion training for *Trading Standards* skills and knowledge. For more details about this, please see our Information Pack for Applicants for Trading Standards Professionals.

What do I need to do at school in order to get into *Trading Standards*?

There is no fixed set of subjects that you need to take, but we would normally ask you to meet the entry requirements of our qualifications partner, Manchester Metropolitan University. These include:

UCAS <i>Tariff Points</i> :	200
Advanced Qualifications:	80
GCSE Qualifications:	<i>English, Maths & Science</i>
International Baccalaureate	18 points

We would also strongly recommend that you become engaged in community or voluntary work. This can be an effective way of demonstrating a sense of civic pride and care for the community.

Is there a Job Description for the post?

Each level within the scheme has its own job description. You do not need to indicate in your application which level you are applying for, we will assess this as part of the recruitment process and, if you are selected for interview, discuss this with you at interview.



**Ensure products
are properly
described**

The job descriptions for each level of appointment are included in a separate document, which can be downloaded from our website and should be enclosed with this pack if you have requested a paper copy.

Is there a specific type of person that you are looking for?

Each level within the scheme has its own person specification. You should look at these carefully and set out your application to demonstrate how you meet as many of the essential and desirable criteria as possible at each level. Person specifications are set out as education and qualifications requirements, experience, skills and abilities, knowledge and work circumstances.

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How do I find out more about qualifications and the course at MMU?

You can find detailed information about the qualifications, skills and knowledge requirements for becoming a Trading Standards Officer, by visiting the TSCareers website: <http://www.tscareers.org.uk/qualifications.htm>.

You can also find a course prospectus for the qualifications offered by Manchester Metropolitan University by visiting their website:
http://www.mmu.ac.uk/courses/course_detail.php?courses_id=4697.

What will I get when I qualify?

We offer an attractive career option for young people, with newly qualified officers earning from £20,895 and rising to £33,315 for our most experienced officers.

We also pay all of our professional officers a 7.5% flexibility allowance on their salary to take account of unsociable hours. For more information on our pay for professional officers, please see our Information Pack for Applicants for Trading Standards Professionals.

How often do you recruit trainees?

Oldham is a relatively small authority, so we are only able to recruit trainees at the rate of one every two years. However, we sometimes have need to recruit more trainees, so it is worthwhile checking our website for current recruitment plans. Also, you will find a Trading Standards Department in every big local authority, so it is worth contacting them as well.

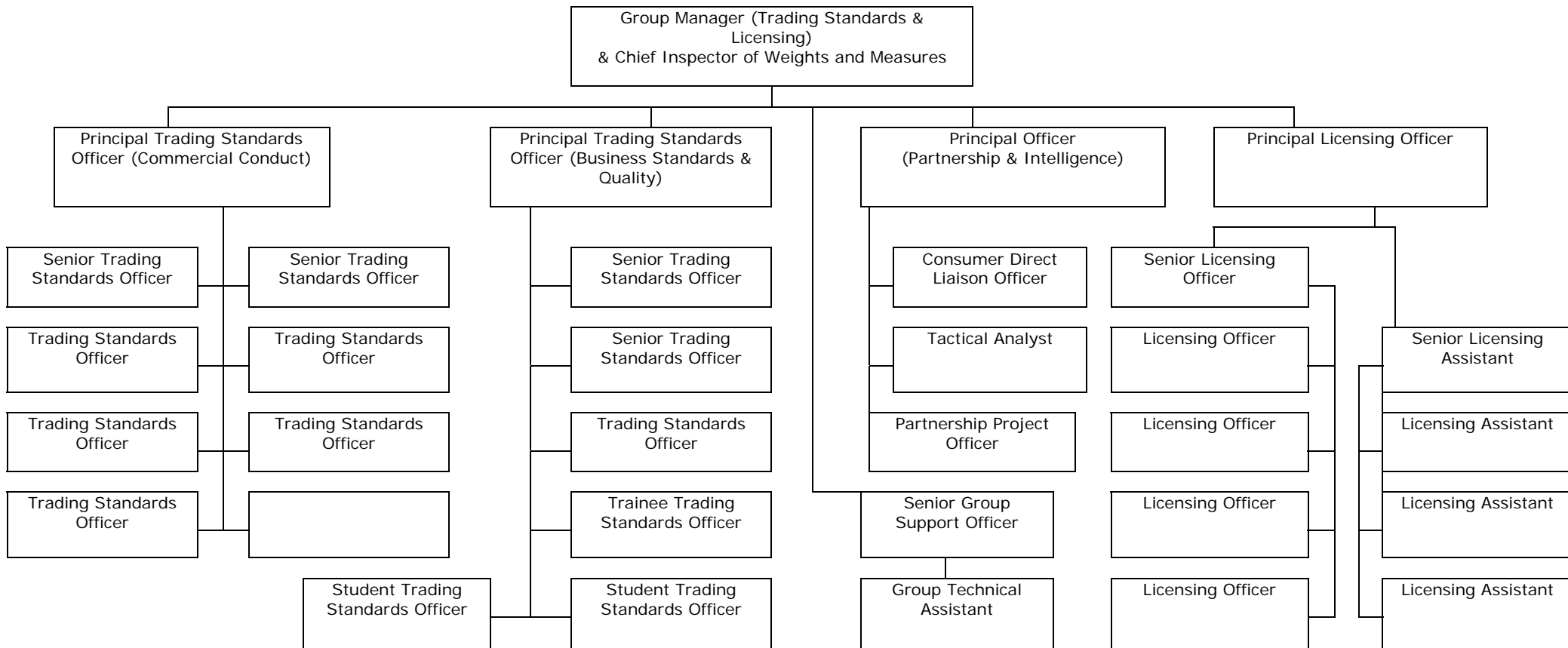
You do not need to have a sponsored job in order to start working towards qualification as a *Trading Standards* Officer. You could build on your skills whilst working somewhere else through a series of distance learning packages that are available. Alternatively, you could start the course at MMU and see if any vacancies come up during your course.

What is the likelihood of getting a job at the end of my training?

Whilst we cannot guarantee a vacancy will be available, our experience suggests that we will have one. There is a national shortage of qualified *Trading Standards* Officers, so generally career prospects are very good.

What is your Group Structure like?

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES Trading Standards & Licensing Group



What other assistance will you provide whilst I am at University?

We offer a package of assistance to help our students through their course. This is in addition to assistance you can get from the Government and/or the University. Whilst at University, you are considered to be in full time further education for the purposes of benefits, housing, grants, etc.

Tuition Fees – We will pay your tuition fees if you agree to work for us for at least two years after full qualification (subject to us having an available post) and you pass all of your course requirements and examinations, with one resit allowed. If you fail a resit, you will have to pay your fees until you catch up with the course.

Books – We will contribute up to £400 towards your books and supporting materials for the course.

E-mail – We will provide you with an Oldham MBC e-mail address, that you can access from your University or Home PC. There are very strict rules about what this e-mail address can be used for, which we will provide you with on appointment.

Mentor – We will nominate a member of our staff to be your mentor during your studies. This will be a skilled and experienced member of staff who has had training in mentoring students.

Placements – We will fulfill all of the placement requirements of your University and support you with providing evidence of achievements.

TSI Accreditation – We will pay your registration fees and examination fees for gaining TSI accreditation and we will enroll you in TSI's Competency Assessment Service. Whilst we will not pay for your TSI membership, you are advised that this is free-of-charge whilst you are in full time education and we would encourage you to join.

How do you assess the skills and knowledge elements?

We will work with our qualifications partner, Manchester Metropolitan University, to assess your skills and knowledge. Our aim in doing this is to try to make sure that you have what it takes to get through the qualifications and become a fully qualified *Trading Standards Officer*. In addition, we also have some local skills and knowledge that we look for in candidates. These are within the person specifications.



**Make markets
work well for
Consumers**

What are the Conditions of Service like at Oldham?

All successful applicants will be appointed on the usual terms and conditions of employment in local government. For further information about these, please visit our website www.oldham.gov.uk.

Do I get any extra pay for overtime or working evenings and weekends?



Not until you have fully qualified, when we pay a flexibility allowance. However, we do encourage you to participate in the widest range of Trading Standards activities, which may involve some evening or weekend work. This will help you with gaining your qualification.

Will I get my Trading Standards Institute (TSI) Membership paid?

Oldham Council will not pay for TSI membership, but does subscribe to the TSI Competency Assessment Service, which provides many of the benefits of TSI membership except for membership of your local branch and the ability to stand for and/or vote in national or branch elections. The Council does, however, encourage its staff to be members of their professional body.

Where will I be appointed within the competency band?

If you are a successful applicant, you would normally be appointed at the bottom of the relevant band for your level of entry to the training framework.