

Trading Standards & Licensing Service Performance 2006/07

The overarching goals of Stockton's Trading Standards and Licensing Service can be described as follows:

- To create informed confident consumers
- To create informed successful businesses
- To enforce a safe and fair trading environment

As a means of working towards these goals and in turn helping to meet local and government objectives, we have developed 10 service priorities for the forthcoming year:

1. To empower consumers by providing high quality advice and information
2. To prevent people being the victims of commercial crime in their own home
3. To ensure fair competition through goods and services being safe, correctly described and priced and accurately measured
4. To ensure quality food standards for healthy consumers
5. To promote good business practice and to help reputable businesses to flourish
6. To disrupt traders operating in the informal economy
7. To prevent harm to children and reduce nuisance caused by young people from access to age restricted goods
8. To ensure the implementation of a fair, transparent and effective gambling regime
9. To reduce crime and disorder in licensed premises and vehicles to help promote a safe and diverse night time economy
10. To develop, modernise and continually improve service provision

Under each priority we have listed key actions and activities for the forthcoming year. These will be used by the Service to focus attention on work priorities for the forthcoming year and as benchmarks by which performance can be measured.

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility	Annual Performance	Comments
To provide a high quality, specialist consumer advice, casework and conciliation service	To ensure that the Consumer Advice Centre maintains the government's Community Legal Service Specialist Quality Mark, the highest standard possible	To pass the post Specialist Quality Mark audit carried out by the Legal Services Commission		J Jones	Quality Mark maintained	LSC only now plan to audit holders of Specialist QM – audits will be delayed. No details yet as to expected date of next audit
To ensure that consumers have easy access to consumer advice provision at a level appropriate to their need	To maintain close contact with Consumer Direct North East and ensure a seamless transition both in terms of technological issues and customer service	Respond to all Consumer Direct referrals within 3 working days	Within 3 working days	P Chilver	100%	--
		To report to the Section's Quality Management Meetings on the interaction between Consumer Direct and the Consumer Advice Centre To raise matters of concern with Consumer Direct	Monthly	P Chilver	Target met	--
			Where appropriate	P Chilver	Target met	--
To ensure that the Consumer Advice Centre continues to meet the needs of the residents of Stockton	To review the work of the Consumer Advice Centre in light of the introduction of Consumer Direct	Carry out the review	Oct 2006	J Jones	Target met	--
	Carry out a satisfaction survey of all those consumers for which the Consumer Advice Centre has undertaken casework	A minimum satisfaction level of 95%	March 2007	J Jones	NPF satisfaction index 98.1%	NPF target is 75%

Priority 2

To prevent people being the victims of commercial crime in their own home

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility	Annual Performance	Comments
To deter doorstep criminals and protect vulnerable consumers	Offer immediate response in conjunction with Operation Strongbow to reports of doorstep crime	To respond to 100% of requests for attendance at incidents of doorstep crime	When needed	P Chilver	100% response to requests for attendance	--
Reduce the level of doorstep selling in designated neighbourhoods	Consider the feasibility of introducing "no cold calling zones" in Stockton	Analysis of intelligence to identify particular areas where this type of incident is prevalent	June 2006	F Russell	Two areas identified	--
		Consultation with local residents in any area identified to gauge support	Sept 2006	F Russell	Two consultation exercises carried out	Residents in both areas were in favour of the proposed NCCZ
		Feasibility report with view to launch within 1 month	December 2006	F Russell	Target met	Official launch Feb 2007
To improve intelligence information and develop partnership working in area of doorstep crime	Continue participating with the Operation Strongbow network for the collection and distribution of intelligence	To pass all reports of doorstep crime to the Operation Strongbow co-ordinator	When appropriate	P Chilver	Target met	--

Priority 3

To ensure fair competition through goods and services being safe, correctly described and priced and accurately measured

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility	Annual Performance	Comments
To ensure that reputable businesses flourish and to prevent illegal trading	<p>Carry out a risk based programme of comprehensive business inspections</p> <p>Carry out intelligence led visits in response to complaints and other information received</p>	<p>To inspect: 100% high risk businesses 50% medium risk businesses 20% low risk businesses</p> <p>2500 total enforcement visits</p>	March 2007	L Wilford	<p>100%</p> <p>44%</p> <p>18%</p> <p>2294</p>	
To ensure that businesses comply with the law	Carry out a scheduled programme of revisits to those businesses that are found to be flouting the law in order to ensure compliance	95% of premises to be brought to compliance by the end of the year	March 2007	J Jones	--	Final figure expected June 07 – will be no less than 96%
To ensure that goods and services available within the Borough are safe, accurately described and correctly priced	<p>Targeted project based sampling to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety of Toys • Hallmarking of jewellery • Safety of children's clothing • Sunglasses • MOT testing of cars <p>Holiday pricing</p>	Test 5000 items	March 2007	L Wilford	5278	
To ensure that local traders offering credit comply with consumer credit advertising requirements	<p>To take part in OFT sweep looking at consumer credit advertising in local newspapers</p> <p>Continue with monitoring of credit adverts in local newspapers</p>	<p>Carry out sweep and follow up with written advice where needed</p> <p>Monitor local newspapers with trader advice and referrals to other authorities as appropriate.</p>	<p>April 2006</p> <p>Quarterly</p>	<p>J Allwood</p> <p>J Allwood</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>4 sweeps done</p>	--

Priority 4

To ensure quality food standards for healthy consumers

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility	Annual Performance	Comments
To ensure effective and efficient food law enforcement	Update our Food Enforcement Plan in line with Government targets & priorities	Update and publish the Plan in conjunction with Environmental Health Section	Aug 2006	L Wilford	Completed	
To ensure that reputable food businesses flourish and to prevent illegal trading	Carry out a risk based programme of comprehensive food business inspections	To inspect: 100% high risk businesses 50% med risk businesses 20% low risk businesses	March 2007	L Wilford	Against Plan 100% 100% 91% (overall 97%)	
To ensure that food available in the Borough is accurately described and meets any relevant compositional requirements	Targeted project based sampling to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species of meat present in cooked meat products • Authenticity of spirits sold in pubs • Presence of peanuts in foods • Vitamin C in fruit juice • Level of salt in bread • 'Five fruit a day' claims Use of inferior ingredients in catering establishments	Test 400 samples	March 2007	L Wilford	323 samples	
To ensure that local sampling reflects national priorities	To participate in national FSA food sampling projects	To submit 8 samples as part of the FSA project looking at meat content declarations in butchers and food manufacturers.	May 2006	J Allwood	Completed	
		Participate in other FSA food sampling projects	When appropriate	L Wilford	Exotic fruit & veg project completed	

Priority 5

To promote good practice and to help reputable businesses to flourish

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility	Annual Performance	Comments
To improve standards in the retail car market and improve consumer confidence when buying cars	Develop a 'Good Garage' scheme in conjunction local car dealers and other neighbouring authorities	To identify, recruit and audit suitable garages	May 2006	F Russell	6 Stockton garages successfully admitted	
		Launch the scheme	Nov 2006	F Russell	Scheme launched	
To ensure traders are aware of their legal responsibilities with regard to the sale of age restricted products	Distribute an Age Restricted Sales CD outlining the law and giving examples of best practice	Distribute information to all retailers, pubs, clubs, petrol sites and other sellers of age restricted products	July 2006	L Wilford	Distributed to all retailers, pubs& petrol sites	
To ensure that establishments in the animal feed chain are aware of recent changes with regard to registration and approval requirements	Distribute information packs on the new requirements	Contact all manufacturers, wholesalers and farms handling animal feeding stuffs	October 2006	J Morley	Completed	
To ensure that the Service continues to meet the needs of local businesses	Carry out a satisfaction survey of local businesses that have had contact with the Service	A minimum satisfaction level of 90%	March 2007	L Wilford	Business satisfaction index 90.8%	
To encourage street café culture within the Borough	Produce a street café policy	Obtain Cabinet approval for the policy	September 2007	D Kitching	--	Timescales delayed
	Review our current consent street trading policy	Carry out the review	September 2007	D Kitching	--	

Priority 6

To disrupt traders operating in the informal economy

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility	Annual Performance	Comments
To prevent the supply of counterfeit goods in the Borough	To carry out a programme of proactive enforcement at car boot sales and markets within the Borough	Surveillance of trading activities at local car boots	Quarterly	J Wynn	Both car boots visited	
		Take appropriate enforcement action based on surveillance undertaken	When needed	J Wynn	1 investigation on-going	
To ensure that operators of local car boot sales are aware of their legal obligations especially in relation to the sale of counterfeit goods	To provide advice and guidance to the operators of local car boot sales	Distribute advice to car boot operators	March 2007	J Jones	Not completed	Postponed due to ongoing investigation
To ensure that internet traders comply with the law and follow good business practices	To carry out an enforcement exercise aimed at identifying and auditing Stockton based internet traders	To bring 95% of those Stockton based traders identified to a state of compliance by the end of the year	March 2007	D Coulton	Completed	
To prevent illegal plying for hire and the use of unlicensed vehicles in the taxi trade	Undertake targeted test purchasing exercises	Undertake 4 exercises	March 2007	S Mills	4 completed	
	To ensure private hire operators have adequate recording of bookings and systems for recording vehicle and driver details	Visits to all operators twice in the year	March 2007	M Vaines	12 out of 26 operators visited	
	Carry out proactive enforcement in relation to taxi vehicles	Carry out 12 out of hours enforcement exercises	March 2007	C Barnes	10 exercises undertaken	

Priority 7

To prevent harm to children and reduce nuisance caused by young people from access to age restricted goods

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility	Annual Performance	Comments
To reduce the level of sales of alcohol, cigarettes and other age restricted products to youngsters	Undertake targeted test purchasing exercises of age restricted products with young volunteers	12 test purchase exercises with at least 8 in relation to the sale of alcohol to young children	One exercise per month	J Allwood	15 exercises 9 relate to alcohol	131 test purchases attempted with 20 sales
To ensure consistent and effective investigation of offences regarding the illegal sale of age restricted products	To carry a full review of our enforcement practices when carrying out under age sales exercises	To carry out the review	May 2006	J Allwood	Completed	
		To issue comprehensive updated guidance to Enforcement Officers	June 2006	J Allwood	Completed	
To encourage joint working with Community Safety Officers and the Police at a local level	To participate in targeted Operation SCARAB exercises	To participate in 75% of all Operation SCARAB exercises	March 2007	L Wilford	We attended 3 exercises = 100% of requests to attend	
To ensure that local enforcement reflects national priorities	To arrange participation in AMEC projects with NETSA partners	To participate in all AMEC projects	March 2007	L Wilford	Exercise undertaken prior to World Cup	
		Submit bids and secure funding via AMEC process	March 2006	L Wilford		
Increase awareness of alcohol harm amongst consumers	Distribute floor walkers & shelf markers promoting the "Think B4 U Drink" message to all interested retailers	Contact all regional & national retailers in the Borough	March 2007	D Kitching	Completed	
Reduce levels of smoking in public and work places	Publicise the Smoke Free Stockton initiative	To encourage 50% of licensed vehicles to operate "smoke free"	March 2007	D Kitching	Over 50% of licensed vehicles are now smoke free	

Priority 8

To ensure the implementation of a fair, transparent and effective gambling regime

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility	Annual Performance	Comments
To ensure that our actions under the new regime are transparent and clear to all parties affected	To produce a Gambling Policy Statement outlining the principles that we intend to apply when exercising our functions	Produce and publish the policy	December 2006	M Vaines	Policy approved	
To ensure our policy meets the needs of our stakeholders	To consult on our draft Gambling Policy with Police, businesses, consumers, councillors and other stakeholders	Carry out the consultation exercise	March 2007	M Vaines	Completed	
To ensure that all business are aware of the new rules and transitional provisions	To provide advice and information	Distribute advice to all businesses licensed under the current regime	April 2007	M Vaines	Completed	Legislation start date delayed from Jan 07 to May 07
To ensure a smooth transition to the new regime	To have systems in place to allow for advance applications to be accepted under the 2005 Act	Introduce systems and start accepting applications	April 2007	M Vaines	Completed	

Priority 9

To reduce crime and disorder in licensed premises and vehicles to help promote a safe and diverse night time economy

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility	Annual Performance	Comments
To ensure enforcement is targeted at the most appropriate areas through a consistent risk based approach	To carry out a risk assessment of all premises licensed under the Licensing Act 2003 in the Borough	Complete risk assessments	Dec 2006	M Vaines	Work ongoing	Procedure now agreed with Police for public houses
To ensure that reputable businesses flourish and to prevent illegal trading	Carry out programmed inspections as well as intelligence led enforcement to target problem traders	Carry out 1200 licensing visits	March 2007	M Vaines	1041 visits	
To improve enforcement and surveillance capabilities	To obtain an enforcement vehicle equipped with CCTV	To have a vehicle in service and to introduce relevant work instructions	June 2006	D Kitching	Completed	
To ensure that enforcement work is targeted effectively at problem times and specific locations in conjunction with other agencies where appropriate	To devise and implement a plan for out of hours enforcement work in licensed premises in conjunction with the Police	Devise and introduce a plan	March 2006	M Vaines	Work on-going	
		Liaise monthly with the Police	Monthly	D Kitching	Monthly meetings take place	
		12 out of hours enforcement exercises	March 2007	C Barnes	9 exercise undertaken	
To ensure the Council's policies in relation to taxis reflects the needs of service users and are in line with government guidelines and best practice	To review our current policies relating to drivers, vehicles and operators	Carry out review	Dec 2006	M Vaines	Completed	Work on second draft on-going.
		Carry out a consultation exercise with stakeholders	March 07	M Vaines	Completed	Further consultation planned
		Obtain member approval as appropriate	March 08	M Vaines	Work on-going	

Priority 10

To develop, modernise and continually improve service provision

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility	Annual Performance	Comments
To identify areas where service improvements can be made through self assessment and 3rd party audits	To engage fully in the Peer Review process	At least 1 officer trained in the self assessment process	Dec 2006	J Jones	Completed	2 officers trained
		At least 1 officer trained in the peer review process	Dec 2006	J Jones	Completed	Self assessment carried out Nov/Dec 06
		Undertake self assessments and 3rd party audits	March 2007	J Jones	Completed	Peer review undertaken Feb 07
To ensure that the Service has a sufficient number of qualified Trading Standards Officers to help deliver a quality service	To ensure that the officers registered on the new training framework are able to work towards successful qualification	To implement a structured training plan	July 2006	L Wilford	Completed	
To ensure that the Council's Enforcement Policy is fair, clear and in-line with current government guidelines and best practice	To review our current policy	Carry out review	June 2006	J Jones	Completed	
		Obtain Member approval as appropriate	Nov 2006	D Kitching	Approved	
To ensure that our procedures for food standards enforcement are in line with the Food Standards Agency's Framework Agreement and recognised best practice	To review current practices and develop and document new work procedures	Review, develop and document new work procedures for food law enforcement	March 2007	J Jones	Work on-going	3 procedures documented & 2 drafted
To canvass the views of stakeholders to ensure our Service meets their needs	To carry out a consultation exercise with the Viewpoint Panel	Complete the consultation exercise	March 2006	L Wilford	Completed	

Priority 10

To develop, modernise and continually improve service provision

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility	Annual Performance	Comments
To ensure the Service has adequate resources to deliver the enforcement and administration of the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2003	To carry out a review of current resources and staffing levels	Report to Cabinet	Nov 2006	M Batty	Review undertaken	
To ensure that staff have the necessary knowledge to undertake their duties effectively and meet any "continuous professional development" requirements	<p>To utilise external training courses or arrange internal training sessions as required</p> <p>To review our current procedure for recording of training undertaken</p>	<p>Average of 75 hours training per officer per year</p> <p>Carry out the review</p>	<p>March 2007</p> <p>March 2007</p>	<p>L Wilford</p> <p>L Wilford</p>	<p>Average is 48.6 hours per officer</p> <p>Review completed</p>	