



The Role of Trading Standards

The aim of the Trading Standards team is to maintain a fair and safe living and trading environment for consumers and businesses. We help protect consumers and maintain a level playing field for businesses to thrive. We are involved in the following areas:

Descriptions - making sure no false descriptions are applied to goods or services such as car mileage or a plumber claiming to be registered.

Prices - everything made for sale should be priced and when aimed at consumers should be inclusive of all rates and charges such as VAT.

Safety - responding to complaints and monitoring safety in all products from exploding microwaves to lead in the paint of children's toys.

Intellectual Property - responding to complaints and seeking out counterfeits – from kitchen knives to hand-bags, DVDs to pharmaceuticals.

Under-age Sales - we do test purchases using child volunteers for alcohol, cigarettes, knives, spray paint and fireworks, mainly at premises that are 'high risk' (either they have sold before or we have received complaints from members of the public).

Weights & Measures – all aspects. For example, we check the scales at the supermarkets are accurate, that the petrol you get is correct, and that pubs give you what you pay for.

Food Standards - investigating adulteration and substitution as well as false or misleading labels and claims eg, a restaurant menu saying 'homemade' or a label saying '2% fat'. We also conduct inspections of supermarkets as it is an offence to sell anything past its use-by-date (but not an offence to sell past its best-before date).

Doorstep Crime - rogue traders. It is an offence not to give cancellation rights when the trader is in your home. We also run a trader approval scheme to help residents avoid rogue traders called Buy With Confidence.

Animal Health - we can take action against farmers who mistreat animals and we work in conjunction with central government during a crisis like foot & mouth.

Consumer Credit - making sure adverts for credit contain a true typical APR and that agreements comply with the law and do not contain unfair terms and conditions.

There are criminal offences within all these areas and we have powers to inspect premises, seize goods and documents and prosecute traders. With every criminal offence there will also be a civil angle too and we advise consumers on the best course of action to take in each case.