

Date of EIA June 2005
 Directorate Environment and Leisure
 Function or policy to be assessed **Trading Standards**

Is it a policy or function	Function – Trading Standards comprises: Information and enforcement of trading standards Pest control Dog warden service Cemeteries Bracknell market Licensing e.g. entertainment, alcohol, taxi firms and drivers Illegal occupation of council land by Travellers and Gypsies
Is it a new or existing policy or function?	Existing
Aim / objective / purpose of the policy or function	To provide an effective and efficient Trading standards service to the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors to Bracknell Forest.
Who is responsible for the policy or function?	The Head of Trading Standards and his team carry out most aspects of this work. The main exception is Bracknell Market where day to day work is contracted out to one contractor.
With regard to the equalities themes, which groups might be impacted by the policy or function?	<p>Most aspects of the Trading Standards department's work is carried out within central government legislation and guidelines. Care is taken to apply them in a fair manner. E.g. when carrying out a project on illegal sales of products to under-age consumers.</p> <p>Faith groups could be affected through the services provided at the cemetery. Provision is therefore made in the council run cemetery for services and burials in a range of faiths e.g. Ba'hai, Christian Muslim. Annual meetings are held between the council, leaders of local faiths and funeral directors to ensure the service meets local needs.</p> <p>The costs of some TS services could deter people on low incomes using them. Pest control fees are therefore reduced by either 25% or 50% for people whose sole income is either benefits or pensions.</p> <p>People with limited mobility could be affected by taxi provision. The council therefore has a policy that by 2009 all licensed taxis must be wheelchair accessible.</p> <p>People with physical or mental disabilities or with low literacy skills may find it more difficult to pursue Trading Standards related complaints. The department therefore provides enhanced assistance to people in these groups when it is aware of their needs.</p> <p>Traveller and Gypsies are the main people affected by the TS</p>

	eviction of people illegally using council owned land. TS tries to reach an agreement when land is illegally occupied that allows the caravans to remain for a limited period (e.g. 48 hours) provided that the site is left clean and tidy.
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Which groups might be affected adversely ?	<p>The steps outlined above have been put in place to help ensure there is no adverse impact. There is no evidence of adverse impact through complaints or other indicators or resident satisfaction.</p> <p>Trading Standards regularly monitors the services to local residents through spot checks, routine monitoring of licensed premises, responding to complaints, review meetings, questionnaires, comments received at road shows and other events. There is no evidence from these sources to indicate that people in any of the equalities groups have been adversely affected in how the Council provides its Trading Standards service.</p> <p>There is limited anecdotal evidence that the test for new taxi drivers may have an adverse impact on people who find it difficult to read English.</p> <p>The main ways in which Trading Standards disseminates information to the public is via leaflets and the council's website. At present leaflets are not checked for Plain English nor is the council's website fully accessible for disabled people.</p> <p>Trading Standards ability to provide enhanced support for vulnerable people making complaints may be affected by the recent change to using the 'Consumer Direct' service.</p>
What evidence has been found to indicate this? (include any consultation undertaken)	The failure rate for some applicants from some ethnic minority groups appears to be higher than others.

On what grounds can adverse or differential impact be justified?	This could be justified if it can be shown that the ability to read English to a certain standard is a necessary requirement of being a licensed taxi driver.
What changes are proposed to the policy or function to reduce or remove adverse or differential impact?	<p>Over the next 12 months TS will collect and monitor more detailed records about the people who sit the new taxi driver test. This data will be used to assess the relative pass/ failure rates of different groups of applicants.</p> <p>TS will also monitor the numbers of vulnerable people referred to them by Consumer Direct over the next 6-12 months and compare this with the numbers of vulnerable people they assisted in equivalent period when the service was fully 'in house'. If the numbers are reduced they will discuss this with Consumer Direct to see if the service it provides can be amended.</p>

<p>In to which plan or strategy has the necessary action been incorporated?</p>	<p>The necessary actions are contained within written procedures and relevant service plans.</p>
<p>What monitoring arrangements have been put in place?</p>	<p>See above for current monitoring arrangements. Trading Standards will also be carrying out a major survey of local businesses of the services it provides. This is a national survey that is likely to include equalities monitoring questions.</p>
<p>What conclusions have been drawn or recommendations have been made?</p>	<p>Trading Standards will continue to monitor the services provided to ensure that businesses and residents receive an effective and efficient service. The Council does not have a policy to provide information in Plain English. Trading Standards would welcome a council wide policy and advice to do this. It also supports the planned work to make the council's website fully accessible for disabled people.</p>
<p>Has the information in this EIA been made publicly available?</p>	<p>Not yet</p>