

# **Hertfordshire Trading Standards Service Plan** **2008/2009**

## **Our Vision is to:**

### **Achieve a safe and just trading environment by protecting consumers and businesses, challenging criminality and inspiring others to do the same**

To achieve this we will align our work to complement and contribute to the wider agendas in Hertfordshire. In particular as a Service we have established key performance indicators that will contribute to Hertfordshire's Local Area Agreement. Our vision will be delivered by a motivated, committed and competent workforce and we will continue to support and develop our staff and provide a working environment conducive to achieving this vision.

The focus of the Service will be on the following three key areas

- **Taking action to prevent people being the victims of commercial crime in their own home**
- **Taking action to disrupt traders from operating in the informal economy; and**
- **Taking action to prevent harm to children and nuisance caused by young people from access to restricted goods**

*(ref. Trading Standards Institute Local Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategies; The role of trading standards services – November 2005)*

Our work in these roles will contribute to the following four main cross cutting agendas of both the County Council and Government.

#### **Safer & Stronger Communities**

#### **Healthy Communities & Older People**

#### **Children & Young People**

#### **Economic Development & Enterprise**

*(ref. Hertfordshire Local Area Agreement; 2006 -2009)*

Our work will also impact on the key areas for improvement as identified in the Hertfordshire Forward document:

**Sustainable Community Strategy to 2021 (Hertfordshire 2021: A Brighter future):**

- Jobs, prosperity and skills
- Safer & Stronger Communities
- Children & Young People
- An Ageing Population
- Health & Wellbeing
- Affordable Housing & Quality neighbourhoods
- Transport & Access
- Sustaining Hertfordshire's Unique Character and Quality of Life
- Promoting Sustainable Development

Hertfordshire Forward is a partnership of key agencies in the County including our Chief Executive, our Leader of the County Council, Chief Constable, Director of Public Health, Chair of Herts Police Authority, Chief Exec of Herts Primary Care Trusts. The Strategy underpins the next Local Area Agreement which will run June 2008-2011. It is a three year contract between central government and partners in Hertfordshire. Performance indicators have been set to monitor performance in these key areas.

## **Safer and Stronger Communities**

**We will:**

- Work in partnership with the Police, Herts Forward (under the Local Area Agreement agenda), Local Strategic Partnerships, East of England Trading Standards Authorities EETSA, , Financial Investigators for the Police and Region, Victim support, Herts Drug & Drugs Strategy Unit, Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships, Neighbourhood Watch and others to prevent crime and disorder, and reduce the fear of crime
- Protect people from becoming victims of crime, by targeting bogus trading, scams, doorstep mis-selling and protecting against harassment
- Educate consumers of problems associated with doorstep trading
- Set up and promote 'No cold calling areas' as appropriate across the County
- Reducing drug (tobacco), and alcohol misuse in areas of deprivation particularly drugs in Watford and alcohol abuse in East Herts, Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield ref: Hertfordshire 2021: A Brighter future : Carry out planned operations in partnership with Crime Reduction Partnerships and Licensing Authorities to achieve this objective
- Protect consumers and businesses from rogue traders through effective partnership enforcement with the Police's Operation Manhunt Team and others. Look to increase this area of work to joint investigations, and joint response units

- Work with all relevant enforcement agencies, and bring before the Courts criminal offences (and civil Enterprise Act actions if necessary) in relation to rogue companies, directors and individuals. Explore the use of new approaches (such as post-conviction “AntiSocial Behaviour Orders ASBOs”) to effectively tackle rogue traders
- With partners reduce alcohol related crime and disorder in our town centres, particularly in Watford and Stevenage ref: Hertfordshire 2021: A Brighter Future
- With partners reduce anti-social behaviour and disorder ref: Hertfordshire 2021: A Brighter Future
- With partners reduce the fear of crime, in particular; anti-social behaviour and drug dealing Ref: Hertfordshire 2021: A brighter future

## **Healthy Communities and Older People**

### **We will:**

- Work in partnership with Local Strategic Partnerships, Primary Care Trusts, Tobacco Alliance, Smoke Free Hertfordshire, Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Food Standards Agency and others to improve the health and welfare of individuals
- Look to the appropriateness of general claims, and health claims made in relation to food, and take action as necessary
- Work with our partners to promote healthier eating and nutrition, smoke free environments and effectively police the tobacco trade focussing on obesity in Broxbourne and Stevenage and smoking in Broxbourne, Stevenage and certain areas of Three Rivers ref: Hertfordshire 2021 :A Brighter Future
- Continue to work in partnership with DEFRA under the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy and look to maximize the effectiveness of our enforcement, particularly in response to outbreaks of animal disease
- Target educational activities towards help and advice for older people and to actions that help to build healthy communities
- Develop and deliver a food sampling plan that contributes to our work in this area
- Develop partnership working with HCC's Adult Care Services with a view to looking at the quality of meals provided for people in care
- Help older people maintain their independence by supporting independent living ref: Hertfordshire 2021: A Brighter future
- Improve the health and wellbeing of all our residents – particularly in Broxbourne, Stevenage and Watford ref: Hertfordshire 2021: A Brighter future

## **Children and Young People**

### **We will:**

- Increase our effectiveness in the area of age restricted sales, and consider promote the most effective means of identification for young people in this respect
- Educate traders with the aim of reducing sales of age-restricted products to underage children, with an emphasis on ID checks
- Take formal action against the most serious underage sales offenders
- Deliver targeted educational activities towards children and young people
- Target safety sampling towards goods used by children
- Continue with the success of Megadrive as a means of educating young people as to the pitfalls of buying cars
- Target scams aimed at or affecting young people
- Target resources from our food sampling budget at products aimed at children
- With partners reduce the number of children and young people who are either victims or perpetrators of crime and anti-social behaviour ref: Hertfordshire 2021: a Brighter Future

## **Economic Development and Enterprise**

### **We will:**

- Provide a comprehensive business advice service to all businesses in Hertfordshire
- Work with Consumer Direct to continue to deliver an advice service for both consumers and businesses, and in particular look to increasingly target our work through the information that such services provide
- Support businesses in complying with the law, and apply the principles of the County's 'Putting People First' to all of our work in this area
- Support the growth and retention of existing businesses and encourage high value inward investment (Hertfordshire 2021 : A Brighter Future)
- Work with the Local Better Regulation Office and our Home Authority Companies on the implementation of the outcomes of the Regulatory Enforcement Sanctions Bill
- Target criminal enterprise, whilst supporting legal business enterprise, redressing the balance of criminal enterprise
- Look to increasingly use information / education as a means of effective enforcement by 'helping people to help themselves'

- Work with East of England Trading Standards Authorities (EETSA) and Birmingham City Council on the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) Illegal Money Lending project
- Build upon the success of our website
- Contribute to and implement the outcomes of the Business Advice East project in improving business advice support
- Continue to use press releases as a means of information and education
- Implement a 'Good Trader Scheme' within Hertfordshire
- Work in partnership with the Business Link and others to target our business advice more effectively toward new business (contribute the to Local Area Agreement target in this area)
- Target visits to high risk premises and to those traders who are causing the most detriment to consumers/businesses
- Target safety sampling towards goods used / purchased by vulnerable or minority groups
- Investigate and tackle serious illegal or unfair trading practices
- Monitor and improve business compliance with trading standards legislation through targeted enforcement activities

## **Service Improvement**

### **We will:**

- Continue to work with Members to inform them as to the work of the Service
- Ensure our activities provide consumer and business satisfaction and value for money
- Produce baseline figures for the Central Government Department of Communities and Local Government's National Indicators 182 and 183
- Produce baseline figures for Trading Standards for the Department of Communities and Local Government's National Indicator 14 and contribute to County Council response
- Look to raise the profile of the Service in relation to both internal members, and the Trading Standards profession in general
- Look to improve communication taking into account the views of all staff
- Look to improve our back-up facilities for flexible working, utilizing where possible the most up to date information technology solutions
- Include in our Activity Plans performance indicators that look to measure the effectiveness of the Service in delivering our objectives, and making a difference in the areas targeted

- Appoint our own Accredited Financial Investigator and undertake proceeds of crime investigations in tandem with formal investigations where appropriate
- Build upon the success of Consumer Direct by developing our Advice Service, in particular our intervention and mediation services
- Increase publicity for the Service
- Review our processes and ways of working to increase our customer focus
- Deliver the three year Peer Review Improvement Plan
- Explore opportunities for joint working across the public sector to improve efficiency and customer service ref: Hertfordshire 2021 : A Brighter Future
- Improve the efficiency, standards and connectivity of public services in Hertfordshire – ref: Hertfordshire 2021 : A Brighter Future
- Explore opportunities for joint working across the public sector to improve efficiency and customer service ref: Hertfordshire 2021 : A Brighter Future
- Continue to work within the Trading Standards East of England Trading Standards Authorities partnership to achieve value for money for the Service and the residents of Hertfordshire by:
  - Delivering Efficient and Value for Money Trading Standards Services by working together
  - Creating competent, confident “fit for purpose” Trading Standards staff both now and in the future
  - Delivering improved Services for everyone by working together and sharing best practice

	AREA OF WORK	TEAM(S) RESPONSIBLE	LINKS TO LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT (LAA) OUTCOMES AND OTHER STRATEGIC PLANS
1	Rogue Trader	Complaints and Investigations	<p>LAA SAFER COMMUNITIES BLOCK</p> <p>Sub-outcome A5: To reduce the fear of crime and improve public reassurance and confidence, addressing the imbalance between the public's perception of levels of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour with actual levels. Target S-A5.1 Increase the percentage of people surveyed who feel safer now compared to a year ago in their local area (target to be set during year 1 of LAA). .....</p> <p>Sub-outcome A6: Communities feel safer and public confidence in authorities responding to crime*, with a particular focus on domestic violence, is increased (*volume/British Crime Survey (BCS) comparator crime).</p> <p>Target S-A6.1 Reduce levels of all British Crime Survey (BCS) comparator crime in the County area in line with PSA1 targets.</p> <p>Target S-A2.2</p>

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			<p><b>a.</b> Reduce the number of recorded domestic burglaries (county-wide) by 20% by 2009.</p> <p><b>b.</b> Maintain the percentage of repeat victimisation for domestic burglary (county-wide) at 6% or under.</p> <p><b>LAA STRONGER COMMUNITIES BLOCK</b>  Outcome C: Communities are empowered to have a greater voice and influence over local decision-making and the delivery of services, and there is an increased sense of belonging and citizenship</p> <p>Target S-C10.2  Increase the percentage of people surveyed who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area by 2% by 2009.</p> <p><b>LAA HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES BLOCK</b>  <b>OUTCOME C:</b> To improve the quality of life and independence of all disabled people (including older people) and enable them to remain safely living at home for as long as possible.</p> <p>Target H-C5  <hr/> Increase the number of older people helped to live at home from 8901 to 9812 by 2009. (PAF PI C32)</p> <p>Helping People Feel Safe and secure – County Council Challenge, ref:HCC</p>
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			<p>Corporate Plan 06/09</p> <p>Supporting the Independence of old people – County Council Challenge, ref: HCC Corporate Plan 06/09</p> <p>Take action with partners to increase sanction detection rates and target prolific and other priority offenders. ref: National Policing Plan 2005 -2008</p> <p>Combat serious and organised crime within and across force boundaries Ref:National Policing Plan 2005-2008</p> <p>NI 183 Impact of local authority trading standards services on the fair trading environment Ref; Dept of Communities and Local Government</p>
2	<b>Product Safety Projects</b>	Compliance	<p>LAA Sub-outcome A1: To build respect in communities and a reduction in the levels of anti-social behaviour across the county, particularly where alcohol is a contributory factor, including a focus on hotspot areas, thereby improving feelings of safety and public reassurance.</p> <p>Target S-A1.1c: Reduce the percentage of people surveyed who consider people being drunk or rowdy in public spaces to be a big or fairly big problem in their local area by 4% by 2009.</p> <p>Target S-A1.4 Increase the number of test purchasing</p>

			<p>operations (countywide) carried out by 15% in year 1, 15% in year 2 and 10% in year 3</p> <p>LAA: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE BLOCK</p> <p>OUTCOME B: Children and young people recognise the dangers of the misuse of drugs and alcohol and are protected from their effects (H5)</p> <p>Target C-B4 Reduce the percentage of children who are regular smokers:</p> <p>A. Primary Pupils from 1% to 0% by 2009 B. Year 8 Pupils from 5% to 2% by 2009 C. Year 10 Pupils from 19% to 16% by 2009</p> <p>Target C-B5 Reduce average alcohol consumption</p> <p>A. Primary Pupils from 16% to 13% by 2009 B. Year 8 Pupils from 27% to 24% by 2009 C. Year 10 Pupils from 49% to 46% by 2009</p>
<b>3</b>	<b>Animal Health and Welfare</b>	Compliance	LAA:SAFER STRONGER BLOCK

			OUTCOME A: Being safe, feeling safe - To reduce crime
4	<b>Food Standards</b>	Compliance, Home Authority and Business Support	LAA: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE BLOCK  OUTCOME A: Children and young people have fewer preventable health problems by living healthy lifestyles in a healthy living environment (H1)
5	<b>Consumer Advice</b>	Complaints and Investigations	LAA: STRONGER COMMUNITIES BLOCK OUTCOME C: To improve the quality of life and independence of all disabled people (including older people) and enable them to remain safely living at home for as long as possible. Target H-C5 Increase the number of older people helped to live at home from 8901 to 9812 by 2009. (PAF PI C32)  LAA: SAFER COMMUNITIES BLOCK Sub-outcome A2: Provide an early intervention/preventative minor repairs/Home Security Service to the elderly, vulnerable and victims of crime within our communities. This service will improve their wellbeing and confidence to enable them to enjoy living independently and in a safer environment in their own homes.

			<p>Target S-A2.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Increase the number of homes secured by Hertfordshire Home Security Service (HHSS) by 15% in year 1, 15% in year 2 and 10% in year 3.</li> <li>b. Increase the number of minor repairs undertaken by 25% by 2009.</li> </ul> <p>NI 14 Reducing avoidable contact: minimising the proportion of customer contact that is of low or no value to the customer ref: Dept of Communities and Local Government</p>
6	<b>Consumer Education</b>	Complaints and Investigations	<p>LAA: SAFER COMMUNITIES BLOCK Sub-outcome A5: To reduce the fear of crime and improve public reassurance and confidence, addressing the imbalance between the public's perception of levels of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour with actual levels.</p> <p>Target S-A5.1 Increase the percentage of people surveyed who feel safer now compared to a year ago in their local area (target to be set during year 1 of LAA).</p> <p>Making sure that safeguarding children is everyone's business Corporate Plan 06/09</p>
7	<b>Fair Trading Projects</b>	Compliance	LAA SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES BLOCK

			Sub-outcome B7: Waste is sustainably managed.
8	<b>Business Education and Information</b>	Home Authority and Business Support	<p>LAA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE BLOCK</p> <p>Outcome A: To provide opportunities for every individual to participate in the success of Hertfordshire's economy, by enabling them to compete in the labour market</p> <p>Outcome A2: Increase the total entrepreneurial activity amongst the local population</p> <p>Target E-A4 Increase the total number of people seeking advice from Business Link (pre-starts) from 2908 to 3576 by 2009</p> <p>Target E-A5 Increase the number of Pre-starts who establish a business from 373 to 453 by 2009</p>
9	<b>Metrology (Laboratory, standards &amp; verifications, calibrations)</b>	Home Authority and Business Support	<p>LAA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE BLOCK</p> <p>Outcome A: To provide opportunities for every individual to participate in the success of Hertfordshire's economy, by enabling them to compete in the labour market</p> <p>Outcome A2: Increase the total entrepreneurial activity amongst the local population</p> <p>Target E-A4 Increase the total number of people seeking advice from Business Link (pre-starts) from 2908 to 3576 by 2009</p>

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			<p>Target E-A5 Increase the number of Pre-starts who establish a business from 373 to 453 by 2009</p>
10	Home Authority	Home Authority and Business Support	<p>LAA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE BLOCK Outcome A: To provide opportunities for every individual to participate in the success of Hertfordshire's economy, by enabling them to compete in the labour market Outcome A2: Increase the total entrepreneurial activity amongst the local population Target E-A4 Increase the total number of people seeking advice from Business Link (pre-starts) from 2908 to 3576 by 2009 Target E-A5 Increase the number of Pre-starts who establish a business from 373 to 453 by 2009 NI 182 Satisfaction of business with local authority regulation services ref: Department of Communities and Local Government</p>
11	Complaints and Investigations (including Intellectual Property)	Complaints and Investigations, Compliance Service Development and Legal Services	<p>LAA SAFER AND STRONGER BLOCK OUTCOME A: Being safe, feeling safe - To reduce crime NI 183 Impact of local authority trading standards services on the fair trading environment ref: Department of Communities and Local Government</p>

12	<b>High Risk Inspection</b>	Compliance, Home Authority & Business Support	LAA SAFER AND STRONGER BLOCK OUTCOME A: Being safe, feeling safe - To reduce crime  NI 182 Satisfaction of business with local authority regulation services Ref: Department of Communities and Local Government
13	<b>Approved Trader Scheme</b>	Complaints and Investigations	LAA: SAFER COMMUNITIES BLOCK Sub-outcome A5: To reduce the fear of crime and improve public reassurance and confidence, addressing the imbalance between the public's perception of levels of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour with actual levels. Target S-A5.1 Increase the percentage of people surveyed who feel safer now compared to a year ago in their local area (target to be set during year 1 of LAA).  LAA: SAFER COMMUNITIES BLOCK Sub-outcome A2: Provide an early intervention/preventative minor repairs/Home Security Service to the elderly, vulnerable and victims of crime within our communities. This service will improve their wellbeing and confidence to enable them to enjoy living independently and in a safer environment in their own homes.  <b>Target S-A2.1</b> c. Increase the number of homes secured by Hertfordshire Home

			<p>Security Service (HHSS) by 15% in year 1, 15% in year 2 and 10% in year 3.</p> <p><b>d.</b> Increase the number of minor repairs undertaken by 25% by 2009.</p>
	<b>AREA OF WORK</b>	<b>TEAM(S) RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT BLOCK TARGET/OUTCOME/PERFORMANCE MEASURE</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Safety of Sports Grounds</b>	Home Authority and Business Support	<p>LAA: SAFER AND STRONGER BLOCK</p> <p>OUTCOME A: Being safe, feeling safe - To reduce crime</p>
<b>15</b>	<b>Swimming pool and water testing</b>	Home Authority and Business Support	<p>LAA: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE BLOCK</p> <p>OUTCOME A: Children and young people have fewer preventable health problems by living healthy lifestyles in a healthy living environment (H1)</p>
<b>16</b>	<b>Legal Process</b>	Service Development and Legal Services	<p>LAA SAFER AND STRONGER BLOCK</p> <p>OUTCOME A: Being safe, feeling safe - To reduce crime</p> <p>Helping People Feel Safe and secure – County Council Challenge ref: Corporate Plan 06/09</p>
<b>17</b>	<b>Staff Training</b>	Service Development and Legal Services	<p>Highly trained and motivated staff- Corporate principle</p>

18	<b>Service support and improvement</b>	Service Development and Legal Service	Maximise efficiency savings-County Council Challenge ref: Corporate Plan 06/09 NI 14 Reducing avoidable contact: minimising the proportion of customer contact that is of low or no value to the customer ref: Department of Communities and Local Government
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