



# Trading Standards

ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

Public Protection Group



**TRADING  
STANDARDS**

# Trading Standards

## OUR DUTY:

To create and maintain a safe and fair trading environment where Kent businesses can operate and grow and Kent consumers can engage in their economic activity with confidence.

## SERVICE OBJECTIVES

**Animal Health** • Protect the Kent farming and tourist economy from the disastrous effects of an outbreak of disease, such as Foot and Mouth Disease in farm animals. Protect the welfare of animals at markets and during commercial transport.

**Public Health** • Restrict access to tobacco and alcohol by children and young people. Restrict the supply of counterfeit tobacco and alcohol. Restrict the supply of unsafe and mis-described food, including alcohol. Disrupt unlawful trading in relation to the high street supply of new psychoactive substances

**Public Protection** • Restrict the supply of unsafe goods to Kent residents and UK consumers and ensure regulated goods are stored safely. Educate and inform consumers, particularly vulnerable consumers, about scams, rogue traders, unsafe goods and how to report and deal with consumer issues. Educate young consumers about their consumer rights.

**Rogue Trading** • Protect consumers and business from the adverse effects of rogue trading and deal with rogue traders according to the Rogue Trader Plan.

**Supporting Business** • Provide a fair and legitimate trading environment for Kent businesses to thrive and grow and give Kent consumers confidence in Kent businesses.

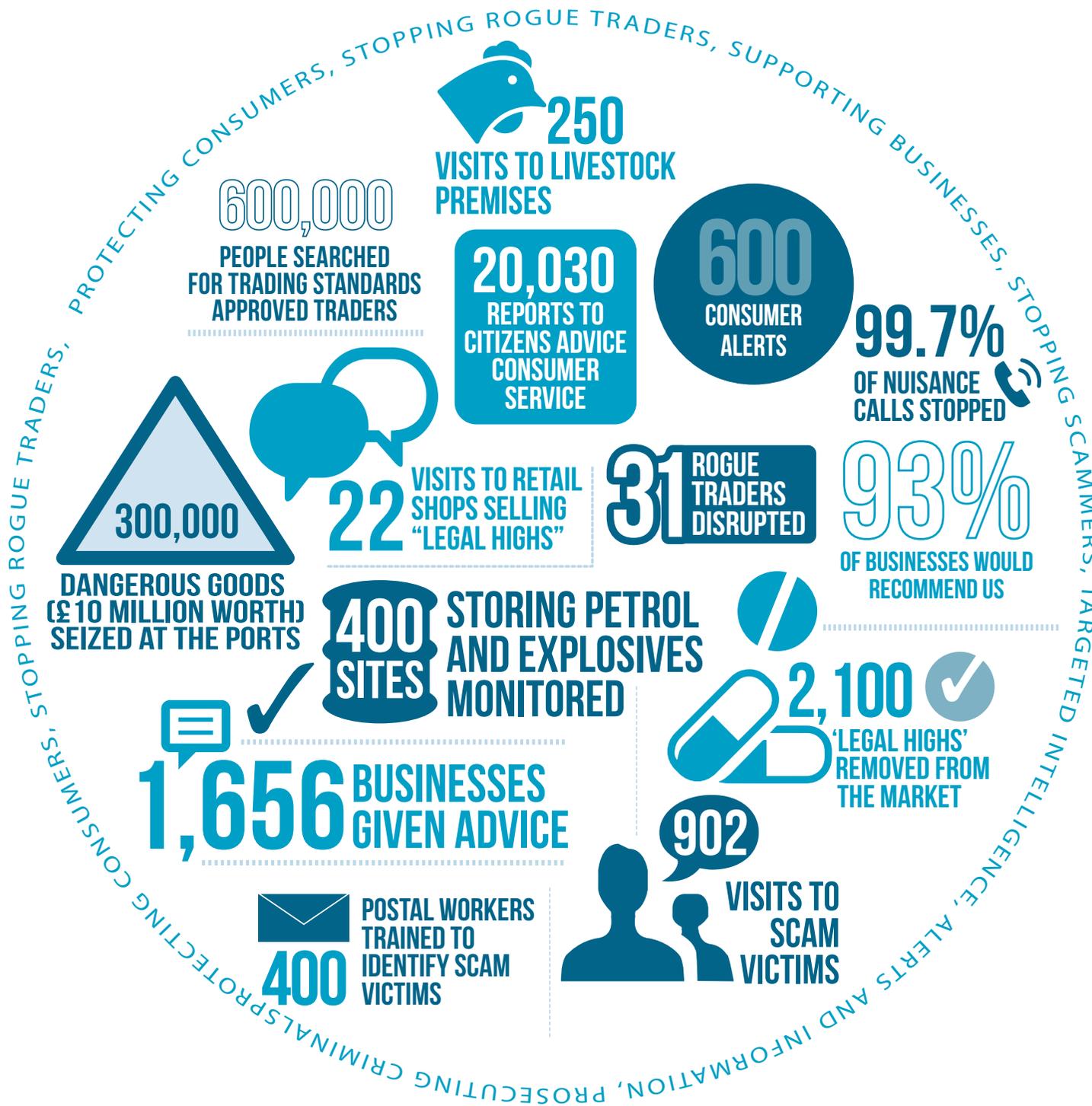
“ THE QUERY RELATED TO A VERY DETAILED AREA OF THE LAW. I RECEIVED AN EXCEPTIONALLY PROFESSIONAL HIGH QUALITY RESPONSE DELIVERED IN A FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL MANNER. A VERY POSITIVE EXPERIENCE. ”

A Kent business

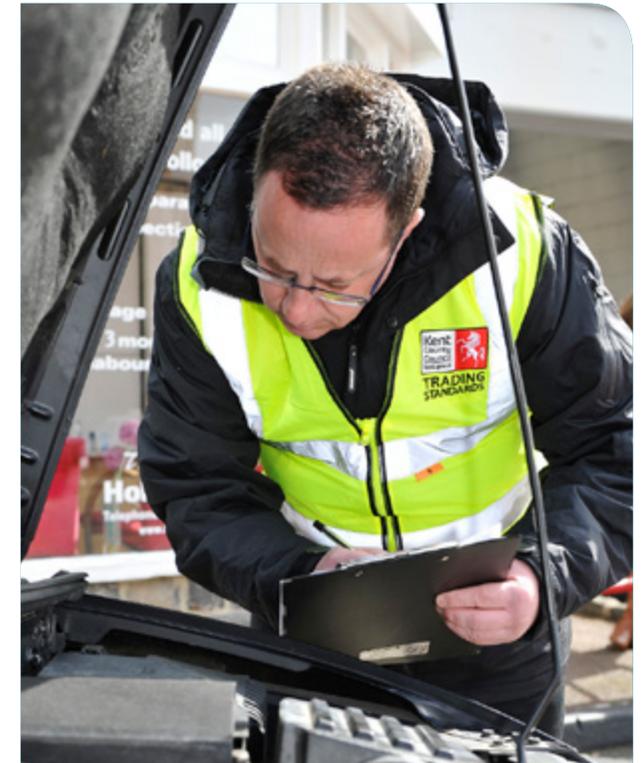
“ ...CONGRATULATIONS ON BEHALF OF ALL OF US AT THE BTHA. AN AMAZING RESPONSE AND GREAT COMMENTS. THANKS FOR ALL THE SUPPORT YOU GENERATE FOR THE COMPETITION (PLAYSAFE) IN KENT. ”

British Toy and Hobby Association





“ AS A NEW BUSINESS THE ADVICE GIVEN WAS INVALUABLE AND WE HAVE ALREADY RECOMMENDED YOU TO OTHER TRADERS. ”



“ WE HAVE ALWAYS RECOMMENDED AND PROMOTED KENT TRADING STANDARDS AS A FAIR AND ENGAGING ORGANISATION THAT SUPPORTS ITS PRODUCERS AND RETAILERS ALIKE. ”



## 2014/15 SUCCESSES

### CHECKATRADE PARTNERSHIP

KCC's ground-breaking partnership with Checkatrade is leading the way nationally. In this year we removed 73 known rogue traders from the scheme, consumer searches for Trading Standards approved traders increased by 68.22% and we set up a Primary Authority Partnership with Checkatrade to provide assured advice to 18,097 traders across England therefore improving the standard of fair trading across the UK.

### KENT SCHOOLS CLEANUP

400 young people from Kent schools entered this year's Playsafe competition, a national toy design competition for Special, Primary & Secondary Schools. 5,157 people voted for their favourite Playsafe creation from Kent's top 20 designs in each category.

“ ...YOU MADE IT SIMPLE AND PUT IT IN LAYMAN'S TERMS FOR US AND THE EMAIL YOU SENT AFTERWARDS WAS FABULOUS, YOU BULLET POINTED EVERYTHING I HAD TO DO. IT WAS BRILLIANT. EVERYONE WHO HAS NOT HAD THIS DONE SHOULD BECAUSE WE THOUGHT WE WERE TICKING ALL THE BOXES AND WE WEREN'T. ”

Kent swept the board at the national finals taking 1st place and runner-up in the primary school category, 1st place in the special school category and 'Highly Commended' in the secondary school category.

### MJ AWARD FINALIST

Stop the Scammers Campaign is going from strength to strength. 70 Community Wardens have been trained, over 600 victims were visited in this year, 300 PCSO Sergeants briefed and 400 postal workers trained. The project was a finalist in the Local Government MJ Achievement Awards for its innovation in the area of customer insight and effective partnership working. The Community Wardens also received a Hero Award from the Chartered Institute of Trading Standards for going above and beyond with their visits to scam victims and changing the lives of so many vulnerable people.

“ .....I FEEL CONFIDENT THAT I AM TRADING LEGALLY, WHICH GIVES ME PEACE OF MIND. I WOULD SCORE 10 FOR THE ADVICE GIVEN AND HAVE ALREADY BEEN RECOMMENDING THAT OTHER PEOPLE THINKING ABOUT STARTING A BUSINESS CONTACT YOURSELVES. ”



**BUDGET**  
**GROSS EXPENDITURE**  
**£2, 110, 100**  
**INCOME**  
**£232,800**  
**NET**  
**£1, 877,300**

## 2014/15 HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS

### Facing the Challenge Review

This year a joint service review of Trading Standards and Community Safety was undertaken. Three high-level outcomes were identified; Delivery of challenging MTFP targets (2015-18) and controlling long-term costs; More effective demand management; Better efficiencies and outcomes. The main actions identified included strengthening the intelligence team, a better business advice service to SMEs, re-integration of legal officers into the service, a reduction in the number of managers, and a new joint Tasking and Commissioning Board with Community Safety.

### Multi-agency work to protect our borders

Trading Standards actively work with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and Port of Dover Police to ensure that the UK is protected from the risk of animal diseases such as rabies and tape worm.

Under an arrangement with Port of Dover Police, they intercept and investigate instances where individuals attempt to smuggle in animals, usually puppies, into the UK without the necessary pet passports or health vaccinations. This year, Trading Standards successfully prosecuted 4 individuals, issued 7 cautions and warned a further 7 people in connection with this activity. In all cases the animals were taken into quarantine or exported to protect the public.

Other work at the ports has resulted in close to 300,000 items that were unsafe, or couldn't be proven

to be safe, being stopped from entering the Kent, UK or EU market. The value is estimated to be in excess of £10 million. Seized products include; flammable nightwear, dangerous Christmas lights, dangerous toys, 1,200 dog water bottles, 8,500 counterfeit Nike Air Max trainers, 4,050 GHD hair straighteners and hairdryers and 500 boxes of chainsaws and grass cutters rendered unsafe and destroyed by Demelza, profiting the charity over £1000.

### Horsemeat Prosecution

When the horsemeat scandal broke in January 2013 we worked closely with the Food Standards Agency and were involved in taking many samples to ensure that meat products did not contain undeclared horse meat. Even after the scandal was understood to be over we continued to take samples focusing on meat originating from Eastern Europe where intelligence suggested there could be a problem. As a result, in October 2013 we took a sample of a pork sausage



product from a shop in Dartford which, when analysed by Kent Scientific Services, was found to contain 46% horse meat.

In October 2014, after a lengthy investigation, the food import company based in Enfield which supplied the product in Kent was prosecuted which resulted in a fine of £5,000. They admitted that despite the huge media coverage, they undertook no tests to ensure the authenticity of the products they were importing from Bulgaria.

Our action prevented the continued sale of these mis-described products and was the first prosecution of its kind in the UK. As a result the story received national recognition, both in the media and by the Food Standards Agency.

John Barnes, the Food Standards Agency's Head of Local Delivery said: "We are pleased that Trading Standards services continue to be vigilant to ensure food is correctly described to enable the public to make informed choices about what they eat. We fully support Kent County Council in the action it has taken."

### Trading Standards acts on Legal Highs

A unique campaign aimed at tackling the problem of New Psychoactive Substances (NPSs) - so-called "legal highs"- was launched in Kent in July 2014. In a co-ordinated series of raids, officers from Kent and Medway Trading Standards, with the support of Kent Police, seized 424 samples from 20 shops across the county and suspended the sale of a further 1,443.

Trading Standards Officers led the industry in using the General Product Safety Regulations 2005 to stop the products being sold. The Regulations

prohibit any unsafe product from being supplied and we submitted to the Magistrates Courts that, irrespective of disclaimers such as “not fit for human consumption”, the stores were aware that once sold, they would have been consumed. Three people have died in Kent as a result of taking them and



many more hospitalised. The courts agreed with our submissions and ordered the products to be forfeited and destroyed.

Karen Audino, whose son Jimmy Guichard, 20, died after taking synthetic cannabis believed to have been bought in a shop in Chatham, said “Anything that protects people and stops families like mine from being torn apart by these so called legal highs is a good thing. I don’t believe any of these products are safe and now that these shops are being told they must operate within the law I hope it will go some way to forcing their closure.”

Kent Police Superintendent Lee Russell said: “We are taking joint action with our partners at Trading Standards because we believe new psychoactive substances pose serious health risks to anyone who uses them. Just because people have been able to buy something legally, does not always mean that it is necessarily safe for human consumption and what worries us greatly is that no one knows precisely what each individual packet contains.”

### Man jailed for sales of Counterfeit goods via social media

When public safety is at a risk, Trading Standards will intervene in instances of large scale counterfeiting. In one case this year, a man was jailed for the sale of counterfeit make-up found to contain excessive levels of heavy metals.

Darren Hilton was jailed for 9 months after counterfeit goods, including clothing and cosmetics bearing well-known brand names, were seized from a number of Kent addresses in an operation led by Kent Trading Standards officers. Two others who were also involved received suspended prison sentences.

The matter first came to the attention of KCC Trading Standards when officers identified a social media site, the sole purpose of which was to supply counterfeit items to the public with a free delivery service to those in Kent. Test purchases were made and warrants were executed on a number of premises where the suspects were arrested by Kent Police. Various items were taken from home addresses and over 17,000 items seized from a self-storage facility. The counterfeit cosmetic products bearing the brand names of Mac and Bobby Brown were tested by Kent

Scientific Services and were also found to fail safety regulations due to dangerous levels of lead.

As a result of our actions this criminal conduct which was defrauding consumers and legitimate businesses across the south-east was stopped and countless consumers protected from these dangerous products.



### CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

Steve Rock  
03000 414137  
Steve.rock@kent.gov.uk

“ YOUR SERVICE WAS VERY GENEROUS AND EFFECTIVE. NOT ONLY DID YOU TELL US WHAT WE HAD DONE WRONG BUT THEN WENT ON TO PROVIDE EXTRA SUPPORT TO HELP MAKE SURE WE GOT IT RIGHT. ”