

COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATORS' CODE



Version 1.2, June 2014



**TRADING
STANDARDS**

BACKGROUND

The Regulators' Code has recently been introduced by Government to "provide a flexible, principles based framework for regulatory delivery that supports and enables regulators to design their service and enforcement policies in a manner that best suits the needs of businesses and other regulated entities."

Kent County Council's Trading Standards Service has reviewed its approach and considers that we operate in compliance with the code. The following outlines the evidence for this.

1. REGULATORS SHOULD CARRY OUT THEIR ACTIVITIES IN A WAY THAT SUPPORTS THOSE THEY REGULATE TO COMPLY

We are very aware of the need not to impose an unnecessary burden on business and avoid this by operating an intelligence led model which focuses our activity on robust interventions against clear rogues and a supportive approach to legitimate business. This also enables us to prioritise our work in areas that cause most detriment as opposed to highly regulatory work which has little positive impact on either businesses or consumers. Policies have all been reviewed in line with these principals and Officers have been trained and audited in this approach. Furthermore, all our officers are members of the Trading Standards Institute's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) scheme to ensure ongoing competence in their work.

2. REGULATORS SHOULD PROVIDE SIMPLE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD WAYS TO ENGAGE WITH THOSE THEY REGULATE AND HEAR THEIR VIEWS

We actively engage with businesses, both those who directly use our service and those who don't. This includes surveying all businesses that approach us for advice with a view to improving our service delivery and policies. Our officers clearly explain the reasoning for any action, distinguishing between advice and legal requirements. This is supported by the documents we issue to businesses which also clearly explain any appeals procedure and a route to making a complaint. This complaints procedure is also publicised on the County Council's website. In addition, businesses are encouraged to register with us so that they receive electronic bulletins which include a mechanism for feeding back on our approach.

3. REGULATORS SHOULD BASE THEIR REGULATORY ACTIVITIES ON RISK

We have fully adopted the national Intelligence Operating Model (IOM) which ensures we take a risk based approach to our work. We use the information we have and analyse it in context to provide intelligence to target our work in areas where they are most effective and beneficial to consumers and legitimate businesses. We fully recognise and respect the principle of earned recognition through our business partnership work and the Primary Authority Partnership scheme. In adhering to the IOM we have monthly Tasking and Co-ordination Meetings to review and adjust our delivery, together with an annual Strategic Assessment to ensure we target our resources effectively and appropriately (which is documented via our Business Plan).

4. REGULATORS SHOULD SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT COMPLIANCE AND RISK

We are committed to the principle of "collect once, use many times" and have developed protocols with many partners to share information where legislation permits to help target resources and work together effectively.



5. REGULATORS SHOULD ENSURE CLEAR INFORMATION, GUIDANCE AND ADVICE IS AVAILABLE TO HELP THOSE THEY REGULATE MEET THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES TO COMPLY

We use our website to offer comprehensive advice and guidance to business on all Trading Standards legislation. We also offer a signposting facility to direct towards other regulators who may have an impact on businesses. (eg Environmental Health via the District Councils). The website can be used for general advice or customised by businesses for their own needs. We also offer comprehensive personal business advice in further support of what we publish.

6. REGULATORS SHOULD ENSURE THAT THEIR APPROACH TO THEIR REGULATORY ACTIVITIES IS TRANSPARENT

We seek to be transparent in what we do and how we do it. Evidence of this is shown in the documents we publish, including:-

Enforcement Policy

Annual Report

Trading Standards Fees

Complaints and feedback procedure

BUSINESSES

We offer a number of services to local businesses including tailored business advice, dispute resolution advice, online training and more.

[Find out more and register.](#)

CONSUMERS

You can report a problem with a trader or product to Trading Standards by contacting the [national consumer helpline](#). By calling nationally, you are reporting locally - you don't need to call us directly because the national team will pass the details onto us.