

Recently through the Parish Magazine I detailed with you one of my key roles as a County Councillor.

You may remember for the last two LCC years I served as Cabinet Support Member for Community Safety. I was also Cabinet Support member for the Leicestershire County Council Trading Standards Services & Development Control over the same period of time.

Leicestershire County Council Trading Standards Service aims to ensure that there is a fair and safe trading environment in Leicestershire, both for consumers and legitimate businesses. Trading Standards give advice and support to businesses on how to meet the rules and regulations that they need to abide by in order to trade fairly, e.g. weights and measures, descriptions and trading practices; they also take enforcement action against those traders who refuse to comply with the law. Examples of 'Rogue Traders' are those who falsify the mileages and other information about the second-hand cars they are selling; traders who sell counterfeit clothing, DVDs or alcohol; and traders who prey on the old and vulnerable e.g. when selling at the doorstep, by post or selling health aid products they do not need.

Trading Standards uses the intelligence gathered from consumer complaints made to Consumer Direct and other sources of information, to target their business inspections and food and non-food sampling work. They also provide information to the public, so that they better understand their legal rights when purchasing goods and services and to help them avoid rogue traders; this has extended through to helping local residents create No Cold Calling Zones and by educating young people to resolve their complaints.

Trading Standards is involved with the agricultural sector, including dealing with animal movement licenses, checking on disposal of carcasses; and advising and supporting farmers to comply with animal disease control legislation. Trading Standards Animal Health team also

regulates the transportation of livestock to market and checks compliance at livestock markets.

Trading Standards plays its part in protecting the food chain – ‘from farm to plate’. Our officers regulate the feeding stuffs given to farmed animals, visit businesses preparing large numbers of ready-packed meals and other food manufacturers. They examine and sample food at importers, wholesalers, retailers, fast food premises and takeaways. Also advising on labelling and compositional standards, to help ensure consumers gets what they pay for and their food is safe.

Product safety is another area of our work; Trading Standards have in the recent past sampled children’s clothing and investigated the safety of window blind cords, following the death of children in other parts of the country due to strangulation.

Trading Standards is responsible for preventing the illegal sale of a wide range of underage products such as alcohol and cigarettes. They provide retailers with practical advice and support to help ensure they do not sell products to those who are not of the age to do so.

Consumers may obtain consumer advice or report unfair or rogue trading to Trading Standards by contacting Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06 or by going to www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

Businesses can also contact our Business Advice Service for free, expert and friendly advice on trading laws and regulations by calling 0116 305 8000 or e-mailing tradingstandards@leics.gov.uk; advice can also be obtained on our website, www.leics.gov.uk/tradingstandardsbusiness.

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