

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****MEETING WITH CABINET MEMBER, HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES****20 January 2015****Report of the Strategic Director, Health and Communities****TRADING STANDARDS CONTRIBUTION TO THE  
SAFEGUARDING PROVISIONS WITHIN THE CARE ACT 2014****1. Purpose of the report:**

To inform the Cabinet Member, Health and Communities of the contribution that the Trading Standards Service makes to safeguarding older and vulnerable people in Derbyshire.

**2. Information and analysis:**

- 2.1 The impending Care Act 2014 is intended to consolidate existing care legislation and to set out the local authority's responsibility for both older people and the people who care for them. It also seeks to improve communication between all agencies that have a role to play in terms of safeguarding older and vulnerable people who might be at risk of harm – whether through a deliberate act or by neglect. The definition of Adult Safeguarding is given as; 'working with adults with care and support needs to keep them safe from abuse or neglect'. Safeguarding is aimed at people with care and support needs who may be in vulnerable circumstances and at risk of abuse or neglect. In these cases, local services are required to work together to spot those at risk and take steps to protect them.
- 2.2 The Trading Standards Division already works with key partner agencies such as Adult Care, Community Safety, Public Health and the Police to protect older residents, but the new Act may well require the Service to evidence that it is acting on intelligence about Safeguarding issues; is making appropriate referrals and has processes, procedures and auditable records to evidence that steps have been taken to protect those people at risk from abuse or neglect.
- 2.3 Care and Support Statutory Guidance<sup>1</sup> issued under the Care Act 2014 recognises that trading standards officers – along with other professional colleagues, need to be vigilant about adult care safeguarding and to look out for signs of abuse or neglect. (See para 14.29 via the link below). It is also suggested that a trading standards representative could be included as an additional partner to certain Safeguarding Adult Board meetings (para 14.117, p262).
- 2.4 The Trading Standards Division has sought to prioritise support for older and vulnerable people living in Derbyshire in a number of different ways.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/315993/Care-Act-Guidance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315993/Care-Act-Guidance.pdf)

## Derbyshire Trusted Trader Scheme

2.5 The Trusted Trader Scheme was launched in November 2008 in conjunction with Adult Care and Community Safety to provide an alternative to local residents, particularly older and vulnerable people, to the unsolicited call from itinerant traders offering home and garden maintenance-type services. Many local residents had been exploited by rogue traders who employ a range of illegal tactics to persuade residents into having work done resulting in poor quality work charged at exorbitant rates. The Scheme provides access to some 1,300 local businesses that are committed to providing a good service for a fair price. An essential part of the scheme is for Trade Members to address any complaints that they receive and to leave a customer satisfaction feedback card that is returned to the Trading Standards Division.

- The Trusted Trader website is searched by 10,600 potential customers each per month,
- We receive around 1,486 feedback cards each month from customers who've used a Trusted Trader
- Customer satisfaction is very high - 97.8% of customers are happy with the service they receive (either satisfied or very satisfied).
- 45% of those people who provided feedback were aged over 64; 93% of whom were very satisfied with the service that they had received from the trader. (See table below).

The table below shows the satisfaction ratings from members of the public who have engaged a member of the Derbyshire Trusted Trader Scheme and have provided feedback to the Trading Standards Division since the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.

**Table showing customer satisfaction with a Trusted Trader**

	<b>under 50</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>50-64</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>over 64</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Very satisfied</b>	2,754	94%	3,520	95%	5,233	93%	11,745	93%
<b>Satisfied</b>	117	3.99%	143	3.84%	318	5.67%	600	4.77%
<b>Neither satisfied or dissatisfied</b>	2	0.07%	8	0.21%	13	0.23%	24	0.19%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	15	0.51%	3	0.08%	1	0.02%	24	0.19%
<b>Very dissatisfied</b>	38	1.30%	41	1.10%	18	0.32%	106	0.84%
<b>Not indicated</b>	3	0.10%	6	0.16%	25	0.45%	68	0.54%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,929</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,721</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,608</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12,567</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Doorstep crime

2.6 'Doorstep Crime' is the name given to fraudulent transactions that are perpetrated in people's own homes, often – but not always – by itinerant traders that arrive unsolicited 'on the doorstep' offering to sell a variety of goods or services that might be particularly appealing to older residents. The initial approach might be an unsolicited call to the property or following an unsolicited telephone call. Whilst direct selling is perfectly legal, there are a minority of rogues who will seek to take advantage of vulnerable householders by selling goods (tarmac/block drive ways,

mobility aids, double glazing, etc.) or services (garden maintenance, energy assessments) at inflated prices and following pressurised selling techniques.

2.7 The law now allows a two week 'cooling off' period, but the Trading Standards Service still regularly gets complaints from local residents and/or concerned relatives, friends and neighbours. Such complaints are prioritised and officers will intervene – often with Police assistance – to ensure that contracts are cancelled and, if necessary, the rogues involved prosecuted. During the first six months the Division received 147 doorstep reports – including 76 relating to home improvements, 21 mobility aids and 9 relating to gardening services. Other subjects included the following:

- A group of men calling door to door offering to buy gold and jewellery
- A trader cold-calling offering roofing work
- Companies offering various legal services such as Wills, Power of Attorney and Asset Trusts at high cost
- Itinerant fish-sellers
- A trader cold-calling offering garden and property repair services
- Unsolicited telephone calls from a business selling expensive alarm systems

2.8 A key part of the Trading Standards response to doorstep crime is to raise awareness amongst older householders and their friends, neighbours, relatives and carers about the potential harm and to encourage them to make use of the Derbyshire Trusted Trader Scheme. 2,400 'No Cold Calling' stickers were supplied to Derbyshire residents and nine Derbyshire Alert messages were issued as well as a press release to warn consumers about scams and rogue traders.

### **Scams**

2.9 Raising awareness about the potential harm from 'scams' has formed part of trading standards activities for many years. Older residents in particular are targeted by scammers via telephone, mail and internet communication. Whilst most people recognise these communications for what they are, a significant minority are misled into parting with thousands of pounds. The scams come in a variety of guises. Some claim to be investment opportunities or lottery winnings, others offer goods or services. Relatively small sums of money are requested, but once successfully targeted the scammers will relentlessly pursue their victims some of whom become addicted.

2.10 Identifying those responsible is problematic as they are often based abroad. The trading standards response has been to seek to raise awareness about the scams through regular press releases and participation in initiatives such as the National Scamnesty, and has recently trialled a successful scheme to provide telephone 'call blockers' to reduce the risk of vulnerable people being taken advantage of. During the first six months of the year the Division received:

- 470 reports of which 150 via internet, 136 via phone, 23 via post
- Have issued five Derbyshire Alerts, three press releases, and conducted three radio interviews
- Have written to 290 Derbyshire residents identified by the National Scams Hub as having sent money to scams

- Have conducted 17 visits so far (three of those have lost a minimum £73,000)
- Have prevented local people continuing to respond to respond to scam mail saving them an estimated £100,000
- Have provided seven local vulnerable residents with a telephone call blocking facility which has prevented approximately 1,300 scam telephone calls over a 6 month period.

### **Liaison with other agencies**

2.11 The Care Act 2014 makes it clear that all those agencies that have a role in protecting older and vulnerable people from harm should have effective engagement mechanisms. The Trading Standards Division has regular engagement with Police and Community Safety colleagues and attends the Safer Communities Tasking and Advisory Group. For several years we had an officer seconded to the Police's Operation Liberal Team that was set up to tackle distraction burglary and doorstep crime and trading standards staff provide training for Police colleagues regarding areas of mutual interest. There is regular liaison with Adult Care regarding the Trusted Trader Scheme and training has been provided for Adult Care managers about the role that trading standards staff play in supporting and seeking to prevent older people from becoming victims of scams. Discussions are also on-going with Public Health colleagues over areas of mutual interest such as supporting food-banks and protecting local people from loan-sharks

### **3. Other considerations:**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered; legal, financial, prevention of crime and disorder, equality of opportunity; and environmental, health, human resources, property and transport considerations.

### **4. Background papers:**

None

### **5. Key Decision:**

No

### **6. Call-in:**

Is it required that call-in be waived for any decision on this report?

No

### **7. Officer's Recommendation:**

That the Cabinet Member, Health and Communities notes the report.

**David Lowe**  
**Strategic Director**  
**Health and Communities**