

Agenda Item No. 3(b)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

24 May 2016

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities

**DERBYSHIRE TRADING STANDARDS SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS -
RESPONSE TO THE RED TAPE CHALLENGE**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To advise the Cabinet Member of the latest Government Review into Trading Standards and other Regulatory Services, and to provide details of support provided to local business by the Trading Standards Division.

(2) **Information and Analysis** As the Cabinet Member will be aware, in the summer of 2015, Government announced a review of the Trading Standards Service in response to a report jointly commissioned by the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Chartered Institute of Trading Standards (CTSI) and conducted by the Institute of Local Government Studies at the University of Birmingham (inlogov).¹ It was announced that the Review, conducted by the Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO), would inform the Autumn Settlement. However, the outcome of the Review was delayed and in March this year, the Cabinet Office announced that it would be seeking feedback from businesses about all local authority regulatory services as part of its continuing 'Red Tape Challenge'.

Led by the Cabinet Office and working with BIS and the Department for Local Government and Communities (DCLG), the objectives of the Review are to: *'...identify and remove unnecessary regulatory barriers to growth and associated costs placed on businesses by local authorities, while ensuring necessary protections are maintained, and also gather evidence of where regulation imposes unnecessary or avoidable burdens and costs on local government... The review will take into account burdens imposed by planning and building control, construction regulations, food safety, standards and hygiene, environmental protection and health and safety amongst others... it*

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https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/420218/bis-15-139-the-impact-of-local-authority-trading-standards-in-challenging-times-r2.pdf

will build on the existing review of Trading Standards going beyond that current review and present all findings and the government response to the findings on Trading Standards alongside the rest of this review.'

The full announcement is available in Appendix 1 below and via the following link:

<https://cutting-red-tape.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/local-authorities/>

The Trading Standards Division has a statutory duty to enforce a wide range of legislation on behalf of the Local Authority and does so through a combination of activities including advising and supporting businesses to comply. The traditional role of the local 'weights and measures' authority was to inspect weighing and measuring instruments in 'use for trade' to check their accuracy and ensure that members of the public were getting what they paid for. County archives indicate that many local traders were taken to court if they were found to be selling 'short measure'. As commerce has become more sophisticated, the role of the Local Authority has changed from one of inspection and enforcement to advice and support for local businesses. Trading Standards staff fully appreciate the importance of an industrious and thriving local economy, and regularly provide help and advice to local businesses to explain what they need to comply.

Not all traders, however, are willing to comply and there is a minority of rogue traders and organised criminal groups whose sole intention is to take advantage of vulnerable members of the public. In doing so, they also take away business from legitimate local traders and so the Trading Standards Service has an important role in 'levelling the playing field' to enable businesses to compete on a fair and equal basis.

As well as responding to requests for assistance from local businesses, the Division does carry out annual programmes of visits to businesses based on an assessment of the risk to the public if breaches occur. The factors that will determine the level of risk include:

- The type of product or legislative area – for example the risks associated with the safety of goods or animal disease outbreak.
- The size of the business and whether it trades locally or nationally.
- The previous history of the business – whether there have been complaints or problems in the past.
- The level of confidence in the management of the business – whether they have adequate quality control systems for the type and size of the business. This might include staff training, as well as the quality of record keeping.

Any breach of trading standards legislation will be dealt in a proportionate way and in accordance with the Division's Compliance Policy. Verbal or written

advice will always be the starting point, but if there is a breach of a legal duty the business owner or proprietor may receive a warning letter or face some other sanction ranging from a formal Notice or Caution through to Conditions placed on their trading (usually associated with a licensable activity; eg to sell alcohol) or on very rare occasions, prosecution through the Courts.

As resources for the Trading Standards Service has declined, so to have the number of advisory visits also fallen. However, a variety of sectors still receive a programmed visit from Trading Standards staff. Examples of just some of these are provide below.

- **Food and feed businesses** – 77 ‘high risk’ food businesses (from a target of 77) were visited during the previous 12 months of which 43 were found not to be fully compliant. 31 of these were ‘brought into compliance’ through advice and support and follow-up action scheduled for the remainder. In the majority of instances, the non-compliance was associated with changes in legislation, for example, changes in food labelling requirements and, in particular, how the presence of allergens and other food additives are declared.
- **Age-restricted products** – 103 (slightly above the target of 100) local businesses selling tobacco and other age-restricted products were visited and advised on the systems and procedures required to ensure that they avoid selling cigarettes and other age-restricted products to young people under age. Staff training is the essential requirement to avoid making illegal sales. The Service always advocates the adoption of a ‘Challenge 25’ system which requires sales staff to challenge anyone they think could be aged under 25 to provide ‘proof of age’. Because it is difficult to assess someone’s age, 25 allows for a margin of error. Keeping records of refusals also helps demonstrate that a local business does have a system and it is being followed.
- **Illicit Tobacco Enforcement** – whilst tobacco undoubtedly causes cancer, it is still a legitimate product. Sales of illicit tobacco, that is counterfeit and non-duty paid, has risen sharply in recent years due to the increase in ‘under the cover’ businesses appearing on the high streets of market towns throughout the County. These businesses pose a threat to local consumers by making cheap tobacco readily available and thus increasing smoking prevalence, but also represent unfair and illegal competition to legitimate local retailers. The illicit tobacco also evades the taxing regime and so represents a loss to the public sector. The Trading Standards Division has actively pursued rogue traders selling illicit tobacco in Derbyshire and in the past 12 months has:
 - Received 94 complaints about illicit tobacco.

- Conducted 44 targeted enforcement visits to suspected offenders to search for illicit tobacco.
- Seized approximately 2 million illicit cigarettes and nearly 600 kg of hand rolling tobacco.
- Prosecuted 9 individuals for selling illicit tobacco.
- With the cooperation of landlords and in partnership with Derbyshire Police, closed down five shops selling illegal tobacco.

It is estimated that these actions will have prevented £1 million worth of tobacco being sold in Derbyshire in 2015-16.

- **Metrological Services** – any business wishing to sell, or buy, goods by reference to weight or measure, must ensure that the equipment (or ‘weighing or measuring instrument’) is ‘fit for use for trade’ and complies with legal requirements. These requirements include both the design and the accuracy of any such equipment which includes anything from supermarket scales to petrol pumps (or meters) at local filling stations. The responsibility for ensuring that equipment meets both the design and accuracy requirements is shared between the National Measures and Records Office (NMRO - now part of the Regulatory Delivery Directorate of the BIS) and the local ‘Weights and Measure Authority’ in this instance, Derbyshire County Council and delegated to the Trading Standards Division.

Over the past six years, the Division has been assisting a Chesterfield based company that provides weighing equipment that enables businesses that collect waste to accurately weigh the amount of waste that they collect. With the introduction of significant landfill taxation, the importance of accurately weighing the amount of waste collected and then subsequently deposited in landfill is self-apparent. The Division has helped the business with the design and testing of the weighing technology which has helped the business grow. Over this period, officers have spent some 90 days supporting the business; verification activity is a chargeable service and approximately £45,000 weights and measures verification fees have been earned. Further details about the relationship that has been developed is provided in Appendix 2 to this report where the company’s Managing Director describes the value of the service that his business has received.

- **Home Authority Principal (HAP)** – for many years the Trading Standards Service has supported the Home Authority Scheme. To ensure greater consistency of advice to local businesses, the HAP places responsibility on the local authority where a business (which trades in more than one locality) is based to take the lead in providing advice and support on legislative requirements. This is to prevent individual local authorities all contacting a business about the same or different issues that they may

have observed in their own locality. More recently, Government has encouraged local authorities and businesses to enter into a 'Primary Authority' relationship which means that any advice provided is 'assured' and cannot be challenged (unless shown to be misinformed and subject initially to arbitration by the Regulatory Delivery Department of BIS).

One recent example in March this year of how Derbyshire Trading Standards Service has assisted a local business for which the Authority has entered into a Primary Authority Agreement is when notification was received from the Food Standards Agency of an allegedly contaminated product supplied by a company in Belgium and used in the manufacture of chocolate. The Division immediately contacted the company concerned which were then able to quarantine both the raw material and the finished product that had used the 'at risk' raw material, as well as commission their own tests of the finished products. By liaising swiftly between the company and the Food Standards Agency, the Division was able to help determine that any contamination in the final product was well within acceptable limits, thus preventing the suspension and potential destruction of an estimated £1 million of chocolate just prior to Easter.

- **Business Advice and Market Surveillance** - Another example was when the Division was alerted to a problem with extending ladders when a local company raised concerns with a particular design of ladder imported into the UK. Acting on these concerns, test purchases were made and the ladders submitted for tests against UK and European Safety Standards. A number of ladders were found to be non-compliant and one of the ladders of a similar design was involved in a fatal accident in Oxfordshire. Investigations into breaches of General Product Safety requirements were initiated resulting in a number of formal cautions being issued; the prosecution of a national retailer; and the removal of 1,000's of unsafe ladders. Derbyshire Trading Standards has also worked with the company to bid for funding from Government to support a project to test all extending ladders at the lower end of the market on sale in the UK. This action helps protect local legitimate businesses that take steps to ensure that their products comply with UK safety requirements.

The company in question, Werner UK Operations Ltd, formerly trading as Abru in Belper, Derbyshire, were willing to make the following statement in response to the 'Red Tape' Challenge:

"Founded in 1968, Werner UK which includes the Abru brand is a leading supplier of access equipment and laundry care product ranges to the DIY and home improvement industry. Over many years, Werner has enjoyed an excellent relationship with Derbyshire Trading Standards Department. From advice and guidance about legal requirements to helping address any concerns raised by other trading standards services, Derbyshire

Trading Standards have always been happy to help. They have also played a vital role in ensuring that we can compete on a fair basis by conducting regular market surveillance. We have been very happy to participate in a Government backed exercise to examine the safety of telescopic ladders manufactured abroad and imported into the EC. Serious safety concerns have been raised about some of these ladders which all claim compliance with UK and European safety standards, and at least one has been involved in a recent fatality. Without the enforcement role of trading standards, UK consumers are unknowingly buying unsafe products and UK businesses will lose out to foreign imports that are just not up to standard."

Derbyshire Trusted Trader Service

The most obvious example of how the Trading Standards Service supports local businesses is the Derbyshire Trusted Trader Scheme. Developed in November 2008 in response to growing concerns about the impact of a minority of rogue itinerant 'doorstep' traders preying on elderly Derbyshire residents, the scheme has also provided a boost to local legitimate traders. As well as seeking feedback from members of the public who have used the scheme, 94% who of whom are 'very satisfied' with the Trusted Trader that they found through the Scheme, the Division also regularly seeks feedback from businesses who are members of the Scheme.

Results from the most recent survey indicate:

- 91% of members felt that being a member of the Scheme has helped their business.
- On average, members felt that the Scheme had helped them increase their customer base by 20%.
- The average amount saved on advertising as a result of being a member of the scheme was £422.
- 89% believe that membership of the Trusted Trader Scheme represents good value for money.

The full survey results, together with a selection of comments from local traders about the Scheme, are provided within Appendix 3.

Derbyshire Trading Standards Survey of Businesses 2014-2015

As well as seeking feedback from members of Derbyshire Trusted Trader, the Division has also, in previous years, sought feedback from other businesses which have sought advice or have received some contact from Trading Standards Staff. The most recent survey took place in 2014-15. Of those businesses that responded, 97% were satisfied with the service that they had

received. Full results of the survey, which was sent to 161 traders, 35 of whom responded (22%), are available in the table below.

	Question Topic	Businesses
1	Were you treated fairly by staff?	91% of businesses either agreed (34%) or strongly agreed (57%) with this statement
2	Were staff helpful?	94% either agreed (40%) or strongly agreed (54%)
3	Did we give you advice or information which was easy to understand?	97% felt that the advice was either fairly easy (27%) or very easy (70%) to understand
4	Were staff courteous and polite staff at all times?	97% responded positively to this question
5	Did we make it clear to you what you needed to do to meet legal requirements?	86% of businesses that were not meeting legal requirements responded that it was made clear what they needed to do.
6	Following the contact, do you feel better equipped to comply with trading standards law?	82% of businesses felt better equipped to comply
7	How satisfied were you with our service?	97% of businesses were either satisfied (26%) or very satisfied (71%) with the level of service.

Quotes from local businesses that have had contact with Derbyshire Trading Standards

- *'We've benefitted from the advice from the team and continue to feel supported to ensure we are meeting both legal and customer requirements.'*
- *'The visit and time spent was totally necessary for a smallholding as ours.'*
- *'Everything was well explained, polite and pleasant service.'*
- *'Welcome visit to any business that wants to stay in the law and be safe.'*
- *'We have dealt with [name of officer] at Matlock and have always been informative and helpful.'*
- *'Your officer was helpful, sympathetic and was able to advise us on all aspects of labelling of our products.'*
- *'The visit that was made is good for the client's safety and safety at the work place, all the information was very helpful Thanks.'*

In conclusion, the Trading Standards Division will continue to seek to support local business to comply with legal requirements.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: financial, legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and

diversity, human resources, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(3) **Key Decision** No.

(4) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(5) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Communities Department. Officer contact details – Robert Taylour, extension 39830.

(6) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION** That the Cabinet Member notes the current Red Tape Review of Trading Standards and other regulatory services, and the level of support provided by Derbyshire Trading Standards Division to local businesses.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities

Appendix 1 – Cutting Red Tape review of Local Authorities

Cutting Red Tape – The Cutting Red Tape programme allows businesses to tell Government how it can cut red tape and reduce bureaucratic barriers to growth and productivity within their sector. You can also [tell us](#) which sector you think we should review in the future.

The Cutting Red Tape review of local authorities is a Government review led by the Cabinet Office, the Department for Local Government and Communities (DCLG) and the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS), working together with other Government departments and regulators. We want to identify and remove unnecessary regulatory barriers to growth and associated costs placed on businesses by local authorities, while ensuring necessary protections are maintained, and also gather evidence of where regulation imposes unnecessary or avoidable burdens and costs on local Government.

As part of the review, we want to hear from businesses, trade associations, local authorities, and others with an interest in this area. The review will examine any aspects of regulation and the way it is implemented or enforced which could be made simpler, more cost-effective, efficient, proportionate, or consistent.

The review will take into account burdens imposed by planning and building control, construction regulations, food safety, standards and hygiene, environmental protection and health and safety amongst others. Now that the Government is reviewing more broadly the implementation and enforcement of regulation by local authorities, it will build on the existing review of Trading Standards going beyond that current review and present all findings and the Government response to the findings on Trading Standards alongside the rest of this review. We will also build on and complement issues and evidence in relation to local authorities that emerged from the Cutting Red Tape review into Housebuilding. We will seek evidence on everything from how inspections and visits are conducted, how data is requested through to guidance, advice, and how accountable and responsive local authorities are to business needs. However, the scope of the review will not include fees and charges.

You can comment below or alternatively, email us at cuttingredtape@bis.gsi.gov.uk. This review closes for comment on Thursday 28 April.

Appendix 2 – Case Study – Metrological Support to Derbyshire Businesses

Vehicle Weighing Solutions Ltd (VWS) is based in Staveley near Chesterfield. It specialises in weighing systems incorporated in commercial vehicles for the collection of recyclable materials. VWS Ltd operates in a specialist market and has few competitors. Its vehicles are supplied on a national basis.

The users of the vehicles are able to charge or pay their customers for collection of recyclable material. Any weighing instrument that is used to determine the quantity (or weight) of goods must comply with UK weights and measures legislation (legal metrology). In order to sell its weighing system, VWS Ltd came to Derbyshire Trading Standards Service (DTSS) in September 2010 for advice in getting 'type approval' for its weighing instruments from the National Measurement and Regulation Office (NMRO) (a Government agency). This is a necessary step to ensure that the design of the weighing instrument complies with UK and European metrological requirements. The role of Trading Standards is to verify that these instruments conform to the approved design and legal metrology regulations implementing an EU Directive. To do this work for VWS Ltd, Derbyshire County Council maintains a 'Notified Body' approval for the Division's weights and measures verification service, which is awarded by the NMRO. This approval demonstrates the Authority's independence from the commercial sector.

Derbyshire Trading Standards worked with VWS Ltd to put together a test programme for its weighing instruments. Standard tests are not wholly applicable as the instruments incorporated into this type of vehicle are uncommon. The requirement to tilt vehicles to 8 degrees is a particularly stringent test to pass, particularly for an instrument that weighs automatically as a bin is raised and lowered. The Division has continued to advise the business regarding design changes where modifications to the NMRO type approval has been required. Officers have also been able to provide product testing results to support their application for amending the type approvals. Martin Lister manages the Chesterfield factory for VWS Ltd. The company's head office is in Reading. He commented that:

"the service that Derbyshire County Council provides to VWS Ltd is outstanding. Trading Standards do their best to accommodate our needs to provide a reasonable turn round for our customers which is essential in a fiercely competitive market".

Currently, weights and measures verified systems are expected to make up approximately one fifth of the vehicle mounted weighing systems supplied by the business. Martin Lister explained that the company is expanding its Chesterfield factory which should mean that more systems requiring trade

approval will be sold. As this happens, VWS Ltd will look to Trading Standards to help satisfy this market.

Martin says he believes independent verification of the products has been paramount to its success.

“The independence of the verification process has proved to be a real benefit as far as sales are concerned. The test regime applied to each type of system ensures the integrity of the weighing performance. We’ve worked together to devise these tests which aren’t explicitly described in regulations. In working together for over 5 years, a great deal of trust has been built up between us and Trading Standards which makes getting things done much easier.”

Appendix 3 – Derbyshire Trusted Trader Scheme

The Derbyshire Trusted Trader Scheme was established by Derbyshire County Council's Trading Standards Service in November 2008. In partnership with Social Services and Community Safety colleagues, one of the primary objectives was to provide local people, particularly older people, access to local reliable businesses prepared to do a good job for a fair price. The scheme was in response to the minority of rogue traders that arrive, unsolicited, seeking to sell services, such as building and garden maintenance, on the doorstep. All too often, the resulting contracts have delivered poor quality service at inflated prices. In the worst cases, older people have felt intimidated into paying for shoddy work and then have been too scared or too embarrassed to make a complaint. In instances where victims have been willing to complain or family members have discovered what has happened, there is little that can be done if the identity of the perpetrators is unknown.

Not only does the Trusted Trader Scheme support local people and help them to live independently in their own homes, it also supports local legitimate businesses which are committed to doing a good job for a fair price. It also protects local businesses from unfair competition from those minorities of traders that are not prepared to abide by the rules and whose sole intention is to make money by deceiving their customers. An essential part of the Derbyshire Trusted Trader Scheme is a requirement for scheme members to issue feedback cards to their customers. These cards are returnable to the Trading Standards Service and enable the customer to rate the trader. As well as providing feedback via the cards, local residents can also provide feedback on-line via the Derbyshire County Council website. Based on the return of 13,262 feedback cards, 98% of residents were either satisfied (4.3%) or very satisfied (94.3%) with the service they received. This is very similar to feedback in previous years and to on-line feedback where 93% of responders were very satisfied.

When the Scheme was first introduced, consideration was given to providing the service free of charge to local businesses, however, it was decided that for local businesses to value the scheme a nominal charge would be preferable. This was set at £34 for small businesses and £49 for larger businesses. The target was to achieve 300 members within a year, which would have been similar to other local authority run schemes. In fact, the Derbyshire Trusted Scheme grew beyond expectations and peaked at around 1,350 members. However, due to budget cuts, it has been necessary to increase the membership fee which is now £70 for smaller businesses and £100 for larger ones. Although there has been a drop in membership, a consequence of the increase in fees, the scheme remains around 1,250.

As well as feedback from local residents who have made use of a scheme member, Derbyshire Trading Standards Service also seeks feedback from members of the scheme to assess and, if possible within existing resources, to improve the scheme. This report details feedback from local businesses who are members of the Derbyshire Trusted Trader Scheme. The survey was sent to 1,155 scheme members, 400 of whom responded, a response rate of 34.6%. It also compares responses to previous surveys.

Trusted Trader Members' Survey – 2016

Question 1 – Has being a member of Trusted Trader helped your business?

	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2010
Yes	91%	83%	87%	75%	78%	72%
No	2%	3%	3%	6%	7%	10%
Not Sure	8%	13%	10%	19%	15%	18%

Question 2 - Please help us to show the value of the Trusted Trader scheme by providing estimates of your (percentage) increase in customers as a result of Trusted Trader membership? (New for 2015).

2016	2015
Highest: 105%	Highest: 70%
Lowest: 0%	Lowest: 0%
Average:20%	Average 18%

Number of businesses	Increase in trade (%)
29	0
137	1 to 10
73	11 to 20
57	21 to 30
19	31 to 40
20	41 to 50
4	51 to 60
3	61 to 70
6	71 to 80
3	81 to 90
3	91 to 100
1	>100
355	Average 20.4%

Question 3 – The amount of money you save a year on reduced advertising costs? (new for 2015)

2016	2015
Highest: £20,000	Highest: £6,000
Lowest: £0	Lowest: £0
Average: £422	Average £484

Question 4 (new for 2016) – If your business has grown as a result of Trusted Trader membership, please tell us how (e.g. more staff, bigger premises, increased turnover, etc.)

The top four comments were:

Increased turnover	71 comments
More staff	20 comments
No change	20 comments
Not sure	8 comments

Question 5a - Are you happy that the Trusted Trader branding makes your customers more confident using you?

	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2010
Yes	95%	90%	96%	94%	91%	91%
No	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Not Sure	5%	9%	4%	5%	9%	7%

Question 5b - Do you believe that being a Trusted Trader gives you an advantage over competitors who are not members?

	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2010
Yes	86%	80%	84%	81%	73%	67%
No	6%	6%	5%	4%	6%	3%
Not Sure	8%	13%	12%	16%	21%	24%

Question 5c (new for 2015) - Do you believe that Trusted Trader membership represents good value?

	2016	2015
Yes	89%	87%
No	4%	3%
Not Sure	7%	10%

Question 6 (new for 2016) - Are you happy with the way we deal with customer feedback about your business?

	2016
Yes	88%
No	3%
Not Sure	9%

Question 7 (new for 2016) - We keep feedback on the website for two years. Is that long enough for your business?

	2016
Yes	69%
No	24%
Not Sure	7%

Question 8 (new for 2015) - Do you tell your customers that they can give feedback online at

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/community/trusted_trader/rate_a_trader/default.asp?

	2016	2015
Yes	58%	59%
No	12%	12%
Will in future	30%	29%

Question 9 (new for 2016) - Are you happy with the communication you have with staff in the Trusted Trader scheme?

	2016
Yes	92%
No	3%
Not Sure	5%

Question 10 (new for 2016) - We send you email newsletters twice a year with reminders about the scheme and updates on the law (you can see these online at www.derbyshire.gov.uk/ttmembers). Do you read these newsletters?

	2016
Always	57%
Sometimes	39%
Never	4%

Question 10a (new for 2016) - If you read the newsletters, do you find them useful?

	2016
Yes	79%
No	3%
Not Sure	19%

Comments received about the Derbyshire Trusted Trader Scheme

What's the most significant benefit you've had from being a member?

- *"Customers trust the link to the council and trading standards."*
- *"It gives credibility and security to customers, the number of new customers that have found us from Trusted trader has increased."*
- *"Customers can see what other people have said about me before they even contact me."*
- *"Our reputation has been enhanced throughout Derbyshire and we have had work outside of Derbyshire due to recommendations off Derbyshire residents."*
- *Absolutely brilliant, loads of work from it. And all the staff are amazing if ever there is a problem."*
- *"The feedback from the clients really helps show to others what we can do. Also that the scheme is ran by the trading standards and you check our certificates each year gives peace of mind to the clients."*
- *"Having people trust you as soon as you walk through the door is a massive benefit."*
- *"Our high amount of reviews has meant we do get a lot of new customers saying they got us off trusted trader and they gave us a call because of us having so many reviews."*
- *"I would say that enquiries have doubled since we became a member."*
- *"It's fantastic how we can ask customers to leave feedback on our products and workmanship, we pride ourselves in what we do and are really proud of our feedback, I thank you very much for this."*
- *Being a sole trader working in the domestic appliance repair sector due to the limited amount of work that can be undertaken each day advertising can be very expensive resulting in costly repairs for the customer. Being a member of Trusted Trader for a small annual cost I have noticed that requests for services have increased reducing the need for advertising by other media and therefore I am able to keep the costs to the customer at a reasonable level. Customers are more satisfied knowing they can count on someone they can trust."*
- *"My trade reviews have helped me to engage with a larger audience, which has increased my business."*

- *"It's great to have a point of contact to assist in resolving issues. I believe this in itself benefits our business as we are able to handle issues quicker."*
- *"Got more work from it 80% of my jobs now say they have picked me because of my reviews."*

If your business has grown as a result of Trusted Trader membership, please tell us how (e.g. more staff, bigger premises, increased turnover, etc.)

- *"As a small family business we feel that we may now be able to purchase newer vehicles in the near future, and the possibility of taking on a further member of staff."*
- *"My business turnover has increased due to membership."*
- *"I have employed an apprentice since joining this scheme."*
- *"My business has grown with help from trusted trader with increased staff, increased turnover."*
- *"We have now had to go VAT registered because of the turnover, last year we turned over £82k and this year we are looking at £250k. I have took on a partner in the company and we also have taken on one member of staff and look at increasing any time within the next 6 months."*

Do you think that Trusted Trader membership represents good value?

- *"I would like to say that if it wasn't for the trusted trader scheme I wouldn't have the client base I have now."*
- *"Yes excellent value."*
- *"Yes lets customers know you've been checked out by independent people."*
- *"Being in TT is excellent value and gives an edge to your business, people trust that the council have checked us out to ensure they get what they want."*
- *"It's a fantastic scheme to give people including the elderly or vulnerable some guidance."*
- *"Great scheme and happy to be a part of it."*