



TRADING STANDARDS NEWS

Issue 28

Winter 2006

Who are Trading Standards?

The Trading Standards Service is part of Wigan Council's Environmental Services Department. Our aim is to achieve a fair, safe and honest trading environment within Wigan borough. Whether you are a consumer or a trader, you are equally important to us.



The Keys to a Good Deal...Look out for the logo!

The re-launch of the Fair Play Charter marked the start of the National Consumer week this November, when the theme was "Hey big spender...take a little advice from us!"

Trading Standards aimed to help the motorist, when buying a new car or having your old one serviced. The team put on a display at Tesco in Wigan, and Asda in Leigh, and gave out information on the Fair Play Charter, with lists of members and handy hints on how to get a fair and honest deal.
Chief Trading Standards

Officer Alan Blundell says "The Fair Play Charter makes it easier for people to identify a reputable motor trader, and we only accept companies on to this scheme who give a commitment to fair and honest trading."

The Fair Play Charter is designed to give consumers the confidence that they are getting a good deal...and this has never been more important, as a recent Trading Standards survey proves. Recent inspections on cars for sale on local forecourts across the borough revealed that 20% of all the cars



inspected would be classed as unroadworthy., many had minor problems, but may have failed an MOT. In the majority of cases the dealers were instructed to repair the defects, but in two cases the cars were taken off the road. If you look for the logo, you can be assured you would not encounter such problems!

Two local car dealers, Foxfield of Wigan and Kings of Leigh, who are Fair Play Charter members, agreed to provide some display cars for the day, and the eye - catching display attracted many shoppers, who took away free carrier bags and key fobs advertising the Fair Play Charter.

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Two visitors to the display get advice and information from Fair Trading Officer Jean Glover (right)

Fair Play Charter Members

<p>Circular Garage</p> <p>Kings Automobiles</p> <p>Roundhouse Tyres</p> <p>Standish Service Station Ltd</p>	<p>Acton Garage</p> <p>Gordons Honda Wigan</p> <p>County Garage (Leigh) Ltd</p> <p>Foxfield Garage Ltd</p>	<p>Spring Street Garage</p> <p>Athertons Auto Repairs</p> <p>Leyland Mill Lane Motors Ltd</p>
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Cold Shoulder for Cold Callers

The Doorstep Crime Team used National Consumer Week, to tell the public about what they can do to guard against con-men and cold callers.

The theme of the National Consumer Week extended to all major purchases, and Wigan's Team chose Home Improvements, knowing local residents would be rightly concerned to be wary of getting conned by opportunist callers, pretending to be tradesmen, trying to get you to agree to house repairs, you may not want or need, for an inflated price.

Victims Support teamed up with

Trading Standards to put on a display at Leigh's Asda about cold calling and how to protect against the con-men.

A new project for the borough is a 'No Cold Calling Zone' and more details will be available in the New Year.

Our team on the day did a survey of customers, and 91% of all people asked gave a resounding **YES!** to **NO COLD CALLING.**

To have your say, turn to the back page of this Newsletter and complete and return the questionnaire. Its freepost to return, and will help our Doorstep Crime

Team identify the areas most in need.



Bogus Callers Corner

In the last few weeks, innocent Wigan householders have been victims of Bogus Callers....don't be caught out!



A 90 year old man in Leigh was approached in the street by a man selling cardigans from a suitcase. The man insisted he had to go into the pensioner's house to show him the cardigans, but luckily the elderly man's son arrived

and the cardigan seller left in a hurry! The bogus caller was described as about 5' 7" tall, wearing a burgundy turban, with a black beard with some grey.

Please be warned never to allow strangers into your home, and it isn't wise to buy from people in the street.



In Atherton last month, a man was approached in his driveway by a man in a white VW van, who offered to sell him a 3 piece leather suite.

He was described as white male in his early 20's, with short black hair and a local accent. Trading Standards have already put out an alert, warning Wigan residents not to buy furniture being sold from the back of a van, as we have already received a number of complaints from victims of conmen, who have sold sub-standard, and possibly dangerous furniture.

Remember, if you do buy one and then find problems, you will not be able to contact the person who sold it to you!

In Ashton, Leigh and the Scholes area of Wigan, council residents have been cold called by a company claiming to be from the Council, and were fitting door alarms.

Tenants were then charged between £10 and £20 for the alarms, which can be bought for less than £1 each.

The alarm fitter was a white male, between 40 and 50 years old, with a moustache. He was well dressed and possibly not local, and was definitely not from the council!

Wigan Trading Standards advise householders not to buy from anybody who cold calls them, and not to let anyone into their homes without verifying they are who they say they are.



If you have been a victim of any scams, or have anything to report, please call Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06

Who Needs Instructions

Hands up everyone who has bought something and tried to use it or build it without reading the instruction booklet first!

Hands up everyone who has bought something and tried to use it or build it whilst reading the instruction booklet and has had difficulty in understanding the instructions! Most of us would probably own up to experiencing at least one of the above situations.

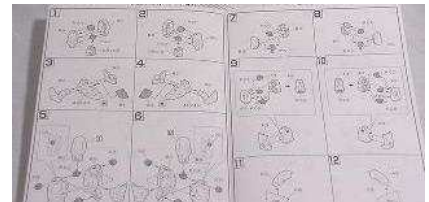
Fortunately, in most instances, the result is at worst a few heated words said under the breath, a wardrobe that looks like the leaning Tower of Pisa, or an expectant and impatient son or daughter looking at us as if our brain cells have gone away on holiday.



However, instructions can have a major impact upon product safety and manufacturers have a responsibility to make sure that instructions provided with their goods are both comprehensive and easy to follow so that the user is able to use the item safely. It is also important that we the user, take time to read and understand how to use a product safely.

In February 2005, Wigan Trading Standards were contacted by a consumer who had been scalded whilst making soup using an electric blender. The person who was injured required hospital treatment. As a result, we purchased an example of the product and sent it off for safety testing. Under testing the lid of the blender became detached, resulting in the contents of

the blender (hot water), spraying out. In effect, re-creating what had happened to the injured person. An investigation followed which revealed that not only were the user instructions very vague, but also that the company responsible for importing the product had not tested the product as it would be used by a consumer. The case eventually went to court where the company pleaded guilty and were fined £2,000. So whether Santa brings you a train-set or chainsaw this Xmas....**Read those instructions carefully!!**



Caught Counterfeiting...



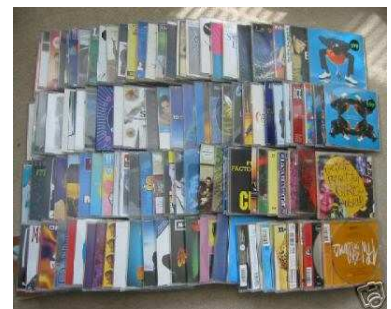
A dawn raid on a house in Wigan led to a man receiving an 8 month prison sentence, suspended for 18 months.

Magistrates heard that the Wigan man used computer equipment in the production and supply of thousands of counterfeit CD's, DVD's and computer games.

Police and Trading Standards seized thousands of pounds worth of fake items, as well as the computer equipment, and when the computers was examined, the evidence showed his illegal trade.

The man was also ordered to carry out 150 hours of unpaid work, and given a curfew order for 3 months, from 8pm till 6am, 7 days a week. He must also pay £500, in court costs. The hefty sentence reflects the

seriousness of the crime, and should act as a warning to all potential counterfeiters.



The Proceeds of Crime...

Wigan Trading Standards turns bad into good by donating past proceeds of crime to good causes.



Last month around £20,000 worth of fake goods were donated to International Aid

No Cold Calling Zone

A **No Cold Calling Zone** is a designated area, where doorstep callers are not welcome.

The zones are set up by Trading Standards, in conjunction with the police and local residents, and unwanted callers are told that local residents in the Zone will report them if they **do** call uninvited.

To help our Doorstep Crime Team with information about the cold callers in your area, and to give your vote for or against a No Cold Calling Zone where you live, please fill in the Doorstep Callers questionnaire below.

It's FREEPOST, and will help our team to identify the areas most in need.

Doorstep Callers Questionnaire

Experience of Cold Callers (people you don't know calling at your home without an appointment)

1. In the last 6 months, how often have cold callers been to your door?

- Regularly (more than once a week)
- Sometimes (at least once a month)
- Occasionally (less than once a month)
- Never

2. What Kind of Cold Callers have you had in the last 6 months?

- Property Repairs
- Sales People
- Charity Collectors
- Other

3. Would you want your area to be a designated No Cold Calling Zone?

- Yes
- No

Consumer Postcode _____

The address to return the questionnaire to is:

Environmental Services Department
Wigan Council
Trading Standards Section
FREEPOST 5163f
Wigan
WN1 1BR

HOW TO CONTACT US
(OPENING HOURS 9:00AM-5:PM MON-FRI)

Environmental Services Department
Trading Standards Section
Town Hall
Library Street
Wigan
WN1 1YN

Consumers - Phone: 08454 04 05 06
Traders - Phone: 01942 827476
Fax: 01942 488405
Email: ts@wiganmbc.gov.uk

We're on the Web
<http://www.wiganmbc.gov.uk/pub/ehcp/ts>

If you are a member of a
group or association and would
like to receive a regular supply
of this free newsletter
Ring Lynn
On:- 01942 827660