

Who are Trading Standards?

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

The Great Trade Off - Charity gains from Criminal Capers

Who says crime doesn't pay?

Don't worry, it's not the bad guys who are profiting from the ill-gotten gains of some shady scam but rather one of Wigan's biggest charities.



Wigan Council's Trading Standards Team recently busted a series of major illegal commercial DVD pirating operations in the borough. Working with police, the team raided addresses across Wigan and Leigh and seized thousands of pounds worth of copying equipment and hundreds of counterfeit and genuine DVDs.

Wigan Council's Chief Trading Standards Officer Alan Blundell explains: "We were acting on information given to us by members of the public about these pirating operations. Some were even selling fake DVDs from their own homes."

"The equipment was used as evidence in the subsequent court cases. Those involved in these pirating operations received various sentences including hefty fines and community

service orders. "They also had to forfeit their equipment, which was placed into our care." While the fake DVDs were destroyed, the Trading Standards Team was left with computer equipment, DVD players and recorders, televisions and monitors and hundreds of genuine DVDs used for copying.

The only problem the team had, was what to do with it all. So the decision was made to donate it all to Wigan & Leigh Hospice.

"Rather than this equipment gathering dust in a storeroom at the Town Hall we decided it would be best to donate it to a worthy cause," says Mr Blundell. "And what better cause than Wigan & Leigh Hospice?" He adds: "Pirating DVDs is not a victimless crime. The copies are

usually of very poor quality and you have no recourse after buying one. Clearly people in Wigan who have fallen foul of pirating have acted by informing us and we have shown we are prepared to

take the strongest possible action against these counterfeiters. "Donating these items to the hospice is an ideal way to dispose of them and we look forward to continuing to do this in the future."

Wigan & Leigh Hospice Chief Executive Stuart Liptrot says the equipment would be put to good use. "We are extremely grateful to Trading Standards for donating this equipment," says Mr Liptrot. "The hospice needs £2m a year to operate and £1.5m of this must be raised from charitable sources." "We may keep some of the DVDs for our patients' library but we hope to sell the vast majority of this equipment through hospice sources to help us to reach our fundraising target."

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Fireworks

Did you know it's against the law –

- To carry fireworks in public if you are under 18
- To throw or set off fireworks in the street
- To let fireworks off during night hours (11 pm – 7 am) except Bonfire Night (midnight), Duvali, New Year, and Chinese New Year (1 am)
- For retailers to sell fireworks to Under 18s and to sell caps, party poppers, and throw downs to under 16s
- For unregistered/un-licensed sellers to store fireworks in their

- shops
- For registered sellers to sell fireworks other than between the periods 15th October – 10th November and 26th December- 31st December and 26th – 29th January 2007

Anyone found guilty of the offences are liable to a fine up to £5000. The Police have the power to issue fixed penalty notices for public disorder associated with fireworks, £80

for over 16s, £40 for 10-15 year olds.

REMEMBER, REMEMBER ONLY BUY FIREWORKS –

- Marked BS 71145
- From reputable shops

Don't buy from the back of vans, temporary stalls or from people in the street. And, finally, remember that over half of firework injuries involve children.



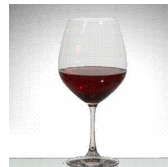
Trading Standards Officers go to the Pub



Trading Standards Officers, like many people, can often be found in pubs, hotels and

restaurants; but unlike the usual clientele they are not there for entertainment and beer. Officers regularly visit licensed premises throughout the borough to ensure that licensees are complying with the relevant trading laws and to follow up any complaints made by the public. During a pub inspection officers will be concerned with a number of issues relating to the fair and honest trading practices of the premises. From a weights and measures perspective all glasses used to measure and serve intoxicating liquor (beers and wines to us) must

bear the crown stamp, this is usually etched into the glass. Thimble measures and 'optics' used by the bar staff must also bear this stamp; officers will check the accuracy of 'optics' to ensure that customers always get a fair measure. Whilst at the bar officers check the spirits to ensure that they are what they say they are. A small minority of unscrupulous licensees have been discovered pouring cheap spirits into expensive branded bottles.



checked on the premises instantly to ensure that expensive spirits have not been substituted with a cheaper alternative. This method enables the officer to identify substituted spirits within seconds and can take further action on the spot.

Trading Standards officers carry out these checks and more at all licensed premises: The aim is to ensure that the drinkers of Wigan get a fair measure of the genuine article every time they order.

Something that we can all drink to!

If you have any complaints or concerns about any issues in your local watering hole or restaurant then please contact Trading Standards: 01942 827476



Substitution is not permitted by law and officers will take further action if a licensee is found to be engaging in this lucrative and illegal practice. Certain spirits can be

Hey Big Spender!

The Trading Standard Institute's National Consumer Week is going to take place from Monday 20th to Friday 24th November 2006, and its aim is to raise awareness and increase understanding of a particular consumer topic. This year the focus will be on the major purchases which people make, with the slogan: **'Hey big spender – Take a little advice from us'**

As part of the week's promotions, Wigan Trading Standards are 'manning' 2 displays in the Borough to give advice and information to the public on buying new and used cars.

The first display will be at the entrance to the **Tesco Extra Store in Central Park Way, Wigan on Tuesday 21st November 2006 and the second will be on Thursday 23rd November 2006 at the Asda Superstore in Priestners Way, Leigh.**



Rogue Traders Stopped In Their Tracks

Greater Manchester Police and Trading Standards are today urging all homeowners to report rogue traders who call on them at home offering to carry out repairs.

Following a report received by Wigan Trading Standards that the rogue traders were due to arrive at an 81 year old man's home, Trading Standards and Greater Manchester Police lay in wait for the men. On arriving at the house in Kitt Green, the three men were promptly arrested by the Police and taken into custody.

The elderly man had originally been visited on Saturday 15th July by two men in a white van. He had been lead to believe that he was required to have his drive



The man told Trading Standards and the Police "They made me think that

cleaned in preparation for some work that the council were doing. The men then claimed to have done some further work on his home and that the cost was £750. As he didn't have any money in the house, the men drove him to his bank to withdraw it. They then told him that they would return on Monday to carry out further work.

they were official and that what they were doing was free. It only took them 10 minutes and they then told me that I had to pay £750. When the men came back on Monday, I was glad that I had reported them because they were all arrested by the police as soon as they got to my house".

Chief Trading Standards Officer Alan Blundell said "These people are despicable and have no qualms about taking advantage of our most vulnerable residents. We must all be prepared to look out for our elderly neighbours and relatives and report all unwanted callers to either ourselves on **08454 04 05 06** or the Police on **0161 872 5050**. As can be seen in this case, both Trading Standards and the Police are determined to stop these traders".

Weight watchers - Trading Standards Style

As we are all aware, the higher speed at which we drive our vehicles, the greater the potential for serious injury for both passengers and pedestrians should an accident occur. Indeed, TV adverts are currently telling us that if you hit a child while driving at 30mph, their survival chance is 80%. But if you hit a child while driving at 40mph, their chances of dying rises to 80%. A sobering thought indeed.

However, it is also important that owners and drivers of goods vehicles are aware that the weight of their vehicle and any load that they are carrying can have serious consequences should the load be excessive or poorly distributed.

Safety

Overloading a goods vehicle has serious safety implications as it will suffer from reduced braking efficiency and poor handling.

Environment

Overloaded heavy goods vehicles have an adverse effect on road surfaces, structures and underground services. They can also cause unnecessary air and noise

pollution in built up areas.

Competition

By overloading his vehicles an unscrupulous operator gains an unfair trading advantage over his law abiding competitors.

All goods vehicles are marked with their maximum permitted weight and there are a number of 'public weighbridges' at which anyone can check how heavy their van or lorry is.

Overloads are liable to a maximum fine of £5000 for both driver and operator

At Wigan Trading Standards we routinely work with the Police and VOSA (The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency) carrying out vehicle weight and condition checks. It never fails to surprise us how often the drivers that are stopped to be checked are completely unaware of the weight limits of their vehicle. Drivers of overloaded vehicles and their employers could find themselves being prosecuted for being overloaded.



How to avoid overloading:

Look at the vehicle's handbook or VIN plate to find out the permitted maximum weight limits for your vehicle.

Distribute any load that you are carrying evenly.

Consider taking your vehicle to a public weighbridge and paying a small charge to have the vehicle, its load and any passengers weighed.

For more detailed advice on how to prevent vehicle overloading please visit the following website:

http://www.dvtani.gov.uk/uploads/compliance/VOSA_VehicleSafety_DangersofOverloading.pdf

No Ifs or BUTTS - it's 18

Smoking is the greatest single cause of preventable illness and premature death in the UK, and as half of those who continue to smoke for most of their lives will die of their habit, the Government feels it is essential to prevent children from buying tobacco – and Wigan Council wholeheartedly agrees! Community Protection Members strongly support the plan to raise the age when you can legally buy cigarettes and other tobacco products,

from 16 to 18 years of age, and welcome the proposed sanctions for retailers who repeatedly sell to underage children. Wigan Trading Standards already operate a programme which targets the bulk of its efforts on under age alcohol sales, and regularly do spot checks on off-licences in the borough. These checks sometimes lead to prosecutions for those retailers who regularly flout the law, and act as a deterrent and to prevent further sales.

By raising the age at which cigarettes can be bought, in line with alcohol laws, it will simplify the various legislation which controls under age sales on some goods, and make it easier to protect young people from these harmful products. Wigan Trading Standards already advise retailers, provide free statutory notices, and carry out a limited test purchasing programme on tobacco. This will probably increase to reflect the changes in the law, later this year.

Good Advice for Businesses - FAST!

One of the main objectives of Wigan Trading Standards is to help local businesses trade fairly and legally. This involves helping local businesses to know what legal obligations they have, and what they need to do to comply.

Some of the things we do:-

- We provide expert advice to local food businesses on correct labelling of their products.
- We run and promote the Fair Play Charter, which lets local car buyers know about car sellers who meet our "Fair Trading" Standards.
- We provide advice to off-licences on under age alcohol sales,

including display materials, staff training and other support.

- For businesses who sell country-wide, we provide "Home Authority" services, which save them having to deal with Trading Standards enquiries from every local authority.
- We give free advice on your legal obligations under "Sale of Goods" legislation, to help businesses who may be in dispute with a customer.

We have just contacted all petrol retailers with advice about price indications, if or when we hit the £1 per litre mark.

To get this good advice and information to you fast, we want to use e-mail, and

we want you to give us an email address where we can contact you. It doesn't have to be a business email address, just one where you can receive messages which may be useful to you in your business. In this way, we hope to be able to tell you much more quickly about changes to trading law which may affect you (but not bother you with changes which don't affect your business) You can tell us your email address by completing the slip at the bottom of the page, and returning it to the FREEPOST address. Or you can email the information to ts@wiganmbc.gov.uk

Please Complete the details below and return to the FREEPOST address - Community Protection Department, Wigan Council, Trading Standards Section, FREEPOST 5163f Wigan WN1 1BR or email the details to ts@wiganmbc.gov.uk

Business Name: _____

Business Type: _____
(eg 'butcher', 'grocer', 'used car sales', 'plumber' etc.)

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email address: _____ @ _____

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

Community Protection 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

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

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