



Public Protection Service

Trading Standards

What was new in 2007

December 2007

Christmas Toys

Trading Standards Officers have seized a large quantity of counterfeit toys and clothing from a short term leased shop in New George Street, Plymouth. Most of these products are of Chinese origin and a range of the seized items have also been sent for safety testing.

Peddling a yarn

Pedlars selling pashminas in Plymouth have had to display clear signs advising the public that the pashminas are made from viscose. Traditional pashminas are made from a type of cashmere often mixed with silk but cost much more than £6 or two for £10!

November 2007

Counterfeit designer clothing seized at docks

A lorry on its way from Portugal to the Midlands was stopped by Customs Officers off the Spanish ferry and during a search officers discovered 270 cartons of suspected counterfeit clothing. Plymouth City Council Trading Standards were able to confirm that many thousands of individual items were counterfeit, including Disney branded scarves and Playboy branded scarves and hats. Other branded goods included Armani, Diesel, Boss, Calvin Klein, Versace, Henry Lloyd, Paul Smith and Timberland. In all, over five tonnes of counterfeit clothing have been seized by Trading Standards and an international investigation commenced.

October 2007

Underage Sales – Fireworks and Knives

Underage volunteers were used to make test purchases of fireworks from 20 outlets in Plymouth. Thankfully not a single shop sold them.

Test purchase attempts have also been made at 23 shops to buy knives, following the rise in the age for their purchase from 16 to 18. One shop sold a kitchen knife to a boy and is being investigated.

Building Better Business – Mobile Phone Shops

Problems about mobile phone contracts continue to be a considerable source of consumer complaints so a training event for mobile phone shops has been held for those who attended to gain the Plymouth Trading Standards Awareness Certificate for that trade sector. The event enabled a greater understanding of the issues involved to be gained on both sides.

September 2007

South West Illegal Moneylending Team announced

The Government has announced the funding from the Financial Inclusion Fund of illegal moneylending teams to cover each region of the country. In the South West the team will be based in Bristol but Plymouth has been identified as an area which is likely to also have problems with illegal money lending from loansharks.

Counterfeit DVDs

An itinerant Chinese DVD seller has been arrested after being found going around pubs offering them to customers.

August 2007

Restructure affects Plymouth Trading Standards

The Trading Standards Unit is now one of five units within the newly created Public Protection Service of the Environmental Services division of Plymouth City Council. The other four units are Food Safety and Standards / Safety, Health and Licensing / Environmental protection and Monitoring / and Neighbourhood and Environmental Quality.

Chris Brennan has been appointed Manager – Trading Standards

July 2007

Building Better Business – Car Boot Sales

A Plymouth Trading Standards Awareness Certificate training event has been held for operators to enable them to be more aware of the consumer protection issues which can be found in the products sold at car boot sales. Counterfeit and pirate goods, unsafe electrical items and disguised traders were all on the agenda.

June 2007

National Rogue Trader Day

Friday 15th June 2007 was National Rogue Trader Day when Trading Standards departments throughout the country, working with the police, stopped and searched vehicles of known rogue traders that were identified using the police Automatic

Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system. In Plymouth we also distributed leaflets at various points around the City to raise consumer awareness of typical rogue trader scams and how to avoid them.

May 2007

Customer satisfaction

Our results for 2006-7 have been processed and show 91.7% business satisfaction and 81.7% consumer satisfaction. We are a little disappointed with the consumer result but analysis shows it is due to an expectation that we can do more than we actually can in some consumer disputes.

April 2007

Lilos have a meeting

We don't want to get all blown up about it but the first meeting has taken place of the Trading Standards LILOs 'Local Intelligence Liaison Officers' in the South West. They are the local contacts for our new Regional Intelligence Network needed as so much of our work crosses local council borders

March 2007

Pirates beware!

From 6 April 2006 trading standards have new powers under copyright law to take action against pirated articles like downloaded films and songs. Until now the department's emphasis has been on counterfeits using the Trade Marks Act.

Operation liquorice 2

Underage Sales Patrol Trading Standards staff participated in a second multi-agency exercise focusing on licensed premises. All the bar staff in 5 clubs were spoken with to emphasise the necessary measures to avoid underage sales. Earlier in the evening 10 convenience stores were visited and the issue discussed with their staff.

Sterling work?

The hallmarking of precious metals is one of the earliest forms of consumer protection; since the 14th century it has been an offence to offer for sale any article purporting to be made of a precious metal unless it bears the stamp (hallmark) of one of the recognised Assay Offices.

We had 15 items described as silver tested. They included conventional jewellery, belly button rings, an ashtray and a knife. Two were found to be wrongly described and how the businesses involved came to do this is being investigated.

February 2007

Sainsbury's prosecuted for selling firework to child

Sainsbury's Supermarkets Limited were convicted at Plymouth Magistrates Court on 26th February, after a trial lasting 3 days, of selling a firework to a person under 18, namely a 15 year old girl, contrary to the Fireworks (Safety) Regulations 1997 and the Consumer Protection Act 1987. The company was fined £3000 and ordered to pay £3439.09 in costs

The case arose from a test purchase exercise by Plymouth Trading Standards in October 2005 when Sainsbury's in the Armada Centre was the only premises out of 19 which sold fireworks. The company argued that it had done enough to satisfy the statutory defence. In giving its judgment the bench said that it noted the lack of any entries for fireworks in the refusals book, which covered two firework seasons, and a gap of 3 months with no entries.

Toddlers Togs

We recently looked at the security of buttons and fasteners on children's clothing. If they pull off too easily they can become a choking hazard for young children.

Four out of the five samples that we submitted for testing had at least one button that was found to detach far too easily and below the required standard. We are discussing these disturbing results with the relevant retailers.

January 2007

Building Better Business

The first of a new series of training courses for businesses opened with one especially for the motor industry. Plymouth City Council's Trading Standards Awareness Certificate for the Car Trade attracted over 30 small traders who learnt about contractual liability and the various laws and regulations governing their particular business. A second session is to follow for those who could not attend this one.

Further courses are planned for other trade sectors identified as needing our advice and assistance in trading fairly.

Car trader prosecuted

A Plymouth car trader was prosecuted for the sale of a Vauxhall Tigra in an unroadworthy condition and advertising it as having 2 months MOT when it only had a few days left. He was ordered to pay £2468.75 in compensation, costs and a fine.

Big year for Trading Standards ahead

Chris Brennan of Plymouth Trading Standards says 2007 is going to be a very significant year. "We have been tasked with enforcing Home Information Packs from

1st June. What is novel about this is that we shall be policing activity by the public rather than businesses. At the end of the year on 12 December the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive will come into force and significantly increase the protection for consumers by in general making any unfair trading illegal.