

# Wokingham Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Fraud and Unfair Trading

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Shared Trading Standards Service

# Offences Enforced by Trading Standards

- ▶ Fraud by False Representation
- ▶ Theft
- ▶ Fraudulent Trading
- ▶ Intellectual Property Crime i.e. trade marks and counterfeiting
- ▶ Money Laundering
- ▶ Customs and Excises Offences e.g. Tobacco Duty Marks
- ▶ Unfair Trading

# Acquisitive Crime

- ▶ Doorstep crime
- ▶ Vehicle sale related crime
- ▶ Counterfeiting and distributing counterfeit goods
- ▶ Advance fee fraud
- ▶ Business to business fraud
- ▶ Smuggled goods e.g. tobacco and cigarettes
- ▶ Money laundering of criminal assets
- ▶ Scams
- ▶ On-line fraud
- ▶ Illegal Money Lending

# Manifestations of Scams

- ▶ On-line phishing
- ▶ Direct mailing fraud (lotteries, mystics etc)
- ▶ Romance fraud
- ▶ 42 victims supported 2021/22
- ▶ 27 since call-blockers fitted
- ▶ 6 door-cams fitted

# Tackling Crime

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- ▶ Doorstep Crime Patrols
- ▶ Rapid Action Team
- ▶ No Cold Calling Zones
- ▶ On-line investigations
- ▶ Public awareness
- ▶ Intelligence gathering
- ▶ Joint operating model with TVP
- ▶ Financial investigations
- ▶ Confiscation



# Crime Case Study 1 - 2022/23

Trader receives sentence of 15 months imprisonment suspended for 18 months, and is ordered to pay compensation of £7,200 to homeowners. The trader entered guilty pleas at Reading Crown Court to five counts contrary to the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008. Specifically the prosecution case alleged that gardening work which had been paid for by a number of consumers was not completed, and the actual work undertaken was not to a professional standard. This case was the second prosecution of the same trader in relation to the same type of offending. The trader was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment to be suspended for 12 months, he was ordered to take part in the Thinking Skills Programme and to pay compensation in the sum of £7200.

## Crime Case Study 3 - 2022/23

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**Owner of a property management company convicted.** This prosecution concerned the business activities of a property management and letting company. The offending related to issues such as rental monies not being paid, maintenance not being done, failures to communicate, dishonesty in communication, and on some occasions making threats to customers. The individual entered guilty pleas to 7 offences contrary to the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008. The Court sentenced the offender by way of a Compensation Order of £10,856 and a Community Order for 12 months with 15 days RAR (rehabilitation activity requirement).

## Crime Case Study 3 - 2022/23

**Manager of a locksmith company convicted** after being found guilty of 3 consumer protection offences following a trial at Reading Magistrates Court. The defendant was charged as a manager of the business and convicted of 2 offences of aggressive practice and 1 offence of misleading action under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008. The defendant was fined £4,500 and ordered to pay £510.61 in compensation, £190 in surcharges and £4,000 towards prosecution costs.