

Safer City Partnership Strategy Group

Tuesday 3 March 2015

Public Protection Service (Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards) update

Economic Crime – The City of London Trading Standards Service working in partnership

- The City of London Trading Standards Service is continuing with two large investigations; Operation Addams and Operation Curie with the assistance of the City of London Police, the Metropolitan Police and the Tri-Regional Scambusters Team; a third investigation, Operation Wade still under review.
- The investigations are into the fraudulent selling of alternative investment commodities such as diamonds, gold, wine and carbon credits. There are still over 500 victims involved and more than £1 million in consumer detriment, but the teams now have more than enough statements and evidence to take this forward to prosecution.
- Following arrests in Essex made in connection with Operation Addams (with assistance from the City of London Police and Essex Police), all seized evidence and recordings of interviews under PACE caution are currently being analysed and may result in further follow up actions.
- Operation Rosa, a proactive initiative targeting criminality associated with Mail Forwarding Businesses across Greater London has now ceased, as no further funding was made available by the National Trading Standards Board (NTSB). However the NTSB is still considering the most appropriate way forward to deal with the criminality associated with Mail Forwarding Businesses nationally.
- The City's Trading Standards Service is continuing to take part in Operation Broadway, a joint operation with the City of London Police, the Metropolitan Police, National Fraud Intelligence Bureau, the Financial Control Authority and HM Revenue and Customs.
- This operation is addressing the problem of "boiler rooms" that perpetrate these frauds and which are based at serviced and virtual offices across within the City of London. The operation is now being rolled out into other areas, with a pilot being conducted in the London Borough of Camden. The operation continues to be successful to date, and a full report was submitted to the Port Health & Environmental Services and will go to the Police Committee on 26 February.

Street Trading

- No further Street trading licences have been issued for temporary trading and there appears to be limited demand for this facility at present as foreseen in the City Street Trading Policy.
- Currently there is very limited street trading activity in City, mainly ad hoc occasional nut sellers on the south side London Bridge/Millennium Bridge.

- Further operations to deter nut sellers have been undertaken and no traders were found on the City side on a January Sunday operation whereas 7 were trading south of the river between Millennium and London Bridge
- A final warning has been issued to a trader at the City end of Middlesex Street Market to stop trading with rails placed extensively across the street outside the bounds of their pitch. This appears to have been effective so far on re-visits

Late Night Levy

- The Levy came into effect on 1 October 2014. 70% of levy goes to City of London Police for activities involving improving the impact of Licensing on the night time economy, and 30% to the City Corporation.
- The number of premises now paying the Levy due to them selling alcohol after midnight is currently 224.
- Many of these invoices include an amount for the Levy, due to be paid by the premises only because they are selling alcohol after midnight on New Year's Eve. It was originally thought that nearly all of these would submit variations but this has not been the case.
- To date (including February invoices) 76 premises have paid the levy due to them selling alcohol after midnight. A further 16 premises have paid due to a condition on their licence permitting them to sell alcohol after midnight on New Year's Eve.
- Further, late applications for Safety Thirst, and obtaining the 30% discount, has exacerbated the situation. It is important to note that income forecasts for 2014/15, and eventually actual income, may not be a guide to income in 2015/16 as more premises are expected to apply for the discount and the number of premises applying for variations will diminish.
- The Levy raised to date (including February invoices) amounts to £136k.
- If this pattern of payment continues throughout the year the amount raised by the Levy will be almost £400k.
- A report to Licensing Committee has been requested after six months of operation on 6 May 2015, and accounts will be the subject of public report after a year -October 2015.

Safety Thirst

- 29 awards were made on 8 October, of which 25 are eligible for the Levy discount. The majority of these premises applied in order to try and achieve the reduction. Of the additional 26 late applications a maximum of five are expected to satisfy the criteria for the award. Most have indicated they will apply again after the Christmas period when they have more time to prepare.
- Following a review of the scheme further improvements are to be incorporated prior to seeking applicants for the 2015, which will commence in February. These include specific sections for different sectors, e.g. pubs, hotels and restaurants.
- A further seven premises have been inspected since the safety thirst presentation in October 2014. None of them has reached the standard required in order to be granted the award.

- Five more premises have still to be inspected but it is not now expected that the original twenty-nine awards will be added to.
- Applications for 2015/16 will be invited from March 1 2015 to 30 June 2015. The awards date will remain at the beginning of October 2015.
- Application forms are also in the process of being tailored to particular premises. Certain criteria applicable to night clubs will clearly not be applicable to a supermarket. This will make the application form easier to complete and assist granting awards for different types of premises such as pubs, hotels and restaurants comparing like with like.
- The criteria for passing the award are also in the process of being re-assessed. This will assist in introducing different grades of premises award. The likely grades being a pass (which will also meet the requirements for a 30% reduction in the late night levy), highly commended and an award for the best premises.
- Assessment criteria are also being prepared to help officers considering whether a particular premises meets the safety thrust requirements. This will speed up the inspection process and make it easier for a wider range of officers to carry out the inspections in a uniform and consistent manner. The same criteria will be made available for the applicants.

Noise Service

- The Pollution Team dealt with 117 noise complaints between December to February 2015 of which 93.2% were resolved. In addition, they also assessed and commented on 182 Planning, Licensing and construction works applications and 135 applications for variations of work outside the normal working hours.
- The Out of Hours Service dealt with 56 complaints in December to end of January and response (visit) times were within the target performance indicator of 60 minutes in 100% of cases, and often only 30 minutes.
- Noise nuisance service training to update practice and procedures was carried out on February 3 2015, to maintain competency in line with Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO) guidelines, or Environmental Health Officers (EHO's) and for Street Environment Officers (SEOs) from the Department for the Built Environment (DBE) who have provided first response for the City noise and other environmental concerns outside usual office hours since April 2014.
- The Safer City Partnership will facilitate the City's response to the new 'Community Trigger' under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act which can be sought by individuals affected by repeated incidents, and the Pollution Team will be represented on the panel considering case reviews as they arise. To date the powers have not been needed or invoked.

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