



iCAN membership continues to rise!

Membership is now over 3600 across Warrington & Halton but we still want more! If you would like to register and be among the first to know of the latest scam to hit our towns or receive good quality consumer information then ring Linda on 01925 443319, email lcookson@warrington.gov.uk or visit www.tswarrington.co.uk/ican to complete a registration form online.

Warrington Borough Council Public Protection Service

Reorganisation within the Borough Council earlier this year has led to the bringing together of Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Licensing of Pubs, Clubs and Off Licences under a single Public Protection Service. This will enhance the ability of Warrington Borough Council in having a more consistent and joined up approach to compliance with laws that the council enforces in relation to protecting the public and businesses throughout the borough. The joint Warrington and Halton Trading Standards Service operates from within Public Protection.

iCAN will continue to do all the good things that you are used to across Warrington and Halton but will be able to provide more information and advice across a wider range of public protection issues than previously.



Contact Us

Phone: 01925 443319

Email: lcookson@warrington.gov.uk

Website: www.tswarrington.co.uk

Email: tradingstandards@warrington.gov.uk

Consumer Direct - Phone: 08454 04 05 06



Hello

If you are reading this newsletter for the first time - welcome to the Consumer Alert Network. Hope you will enjoy reading through and find the contents both interesting and informative.

Membership is now over 3600 and continues to grow at a daily rate. If you would like to register yourself or know of anyone who you think would benefit from receiving the alerts please ring me on 01925 443319. It's easy, you can join over the phone or I can send you out a form.

Maybe internet is your thing? Go to our website www.tswarrington.co.uk/ican and complete the online form and you will start to receive the messages in whichever method you choose....and it's FREE!

Look forward to hearing from you

Take care

Linda

iCAN Development Officer



Housekeeping

Are you getting your messages?

We strive to ensure details are entered correctly on the iCAN database but sometimes mistakes happen.

If you are not getting any or all of the messages broadcast, or maybe you have changed some of your contact details then please ring Linda on 01925 443319 or email lcookson@warrington.gov.uk

Getting rid of rubbish

Did you know that YOU could be the one liable if someone you employ to carry out work in your home flytips the rubbish or trade waste they take away with them?

If you employ someone to remove waste from your property you must check that they have a licence to carry waste. Legitimate traders will be happy to show their credentials and to dispose of waste legally. Don't get caught out and find that the bargain you thought you had isn't quite what it seems.

If you don't check the licence and the rubbish is then dumped illegally, you may leave yourself open to prosecution.

Don't forget flytipping is illegal and carries a maximum penalty of £50,000

For further advice contact the Environment Agency on 08708 506 506

Remember....If a trader cold calls and you agree to work which is more than £35 you must be given a seven day cancellation notice. If you have agreed to have work done following a cold call and have any concerns contact Consumer Direct on 08454 040506.

The Council's Enforcement Team continues to work hard at stopping environmental crime.

iCAN Conference - date for your diary

Dates for the iCAN Conference have now been set.

Halton members are invited to their first iCAN Conference. This will be held at the Stobart Stadium on 22nd February 2011 commencing at 6:30pm with light refreshments.

Warrington members are invited to the Council Chamber in Warrington Town Hall on the evening of 24th February 2011 commencing at 6:30pm with light refreshments. You will receive further details nearer to the date.

During the evening we will be asking you to answer a short questionnaire. The results will help us understand what your concerns and priorities are and to measure awareness and confidence in dealing with consumer matters.

NOISE

The Public Protection Team deals with over 1,000 domestic noise complaints a year. These complaints can range from barking dogs to amplified music and anti-social behaviour. Often the disturbance is caused by bored and lonely dogs or a party that goes on into the night. There has even been a complaint about revving of a motorbike in a living room!

We encourage people to try and resolve any neighbour issues themselves but if you do decide to complain to the Public Protection Team about the noise, your complaint will be taken seriously and investigated in accordance with our noise investigation procedures.

In order to investigate a complaint we must have the following information from you:

- Your name, address and contact telephone number;
- The address of the property or the name and address of the company where the noise is coming from;
- A description of the noise you are experiencing for example a barking dog.

Please contact Public Protection on 01925 443242



Results of 2010 Survey

In March of 2010, 858 Warrington iCAN members, 129 Halton iCAN members and a random sample of the local population kindly returned our questionnaire and the results were clear. iCAN members feel better informed about consumer rights, are more confident about where to go for consumer advice and feel much better protected from unfair trading practices and unsafe goods.

Thank You to ALL

Some comments made by our members

“ This is a really good service the council is providing. Mrs R ”

“ Keep up the good work! Mr H ”

“ We are longstanding iCAN members and value the service... Mrs Taylor ”

“ Great service! Mrs Hamblett ”

Protect yourself from fraud

Although fraud comes in many forms, there are some simple steps you can take to protect yourself from the crime.

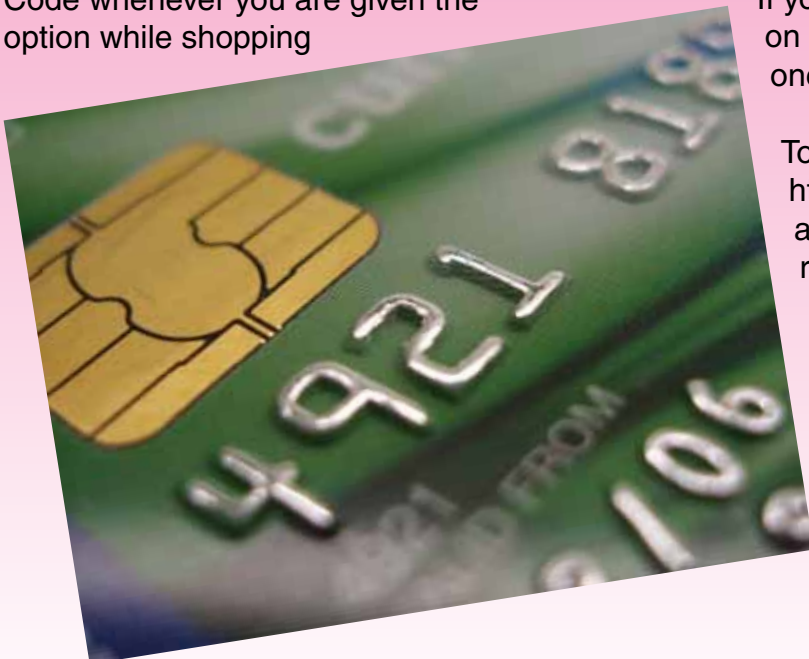
Do not give any personal information (name, address, bank details, email or phone number) to organisations or people before verifying their credentials.

Many frauds start with an email. Remember that banks and financial institutions will not send you an email asking you to click on a link and confirm your bank details. Do not trust such emails, even if they look genuine. You can always call your bank using the phone number on a genuine piece of correspondence, website (typed directly into the address bar) or the phone book to check if you're not sure.

Destroy and preferably shred receipts with your card details on and post with your name and address on. Identity fraudsters don't need much information in order to be able to clone your identity.

Make sure your computer has up-to-date anti-virus software and a firewall installed. Ensure your browser is set to the highest level of security notification and monitoring.

Sign-up to Verified by Visa or MasterCard Secure Code whenever you are given the option while shopping



online. This involves you registering a password with your card company and adds an additional layer of security to online transactions with signed-up retailers.

If you receive bills, invoices or receipts for things you haven't bought, or financial institutions you don't normally deal with contact you about outstanding debts, take action. Your identity may have been stolen.

You should regularly get a copy of your credit file and check it for entries you don't recognise. Callcredit, Equifax and Experian can all provide your credit file.

Be extremely wary of post, phone calls or emails offering you business deals out of the blue. If an offer seems too good to be true, it probably is. Always question it.

If you have been a victim of fraud, be aware of fraud recovery fraud. This is when fraudsters pretend to be a lawyer or a law enforcement officer and tell you they can help you recover the money you've already lost.

If you need advice about fraud, call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 to discuss your situation with one of their specialist fraud advisers.

To report a fraud, you can either go to http://www.actionfraud.org.uk/report_fraud and use their online fraud form or make your report by calling 0300 123 2040.

If you need general consumer advice contact Consumer Direct on **08454 04 05 06** or visit **www.consumerdirect.gov.uk**



Internet, Telephone and Postal Scams

It seems more and more that there are con men out there seeking to relieve you of your money in ever more ingenious ways. These can hit you when you least expect it and are now arriving by post, phone and the Internet.

If you open your post to be told you have won a draw, lottery or other exciting prize, check the small print carefully. Do you have to send money or phone a premium rate number? If so, chances are it's a con and the best thing to do is throw it away. If unsolicited material received in the post requests your bank or credit card details, be very suspicious.

If you receive a phone call out of the blue purporting to be from your bank or credit card issuer asking you to give or confirm personal details such as name, address, card number, security code, etc, be very careful. Banks don't do this but these callers can seem very plausible. Do not give any details and ring your bank or credit card company to advise of the incident.

Similarly, be very suspicious of any unsolicited approach to you by e-mail purporting to be your bank and requesting details. E-mail and the Internet can provide other traps for the unwary, sometimes resulting in the loss of very large sums of money. Websites can be operated from anywhere in the world. Be wary of anything that asks for cash up front or requires credit/debit card details.

If you would like to report a scam or require general consumer advice ring Consumer Direct on **08454 04 05 06** or visit www.consumerdirect.gov.uk



Useful contact details

Here are some useful contacts that you may want to make note of.

If you wish to reduce the amount of unwanted telephone sales calls, junk mail, sales and marketing faxes you receive then visit www.tpsonline.org.uk where you can register for each individual service. Each service is provided **FREE** of charge and generally takes 28 days to become effective.

If you would prefer to make your request by telephone then please call **0800 398893** to stop unwanted sales calls, **0845 703 4599** to stop junk mail and **0845 070 0702** to stop sales and marketing faxes.

To stop unaddressed mail and leaflets delivered by the postman you can register with Royal Mail's free Door-to-Door Opt-Out. You can request a form by sending an e-mail with your name and address to optout@royalmail.com

To stop unwanted silent calls register with Silent Call Guard on **0844 372 2325**

For general consumer information contact Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06 or visit www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

www.TSwarrington.co.uk
Tradingstandards@warrington.gov.uk

Visit www.TSwarrington.co.uk/iCAN to download the ten most recent messages in flyer format



Age restricted products

As a result of the adverse effects they can have on health and well-being the supply of a wide range of products to young people is prohibited. These products are often referred to as age restricted products, and the term 'under-age sales' is commonly used to describe their illegal supply to young persons.

Apart from the legal consequences for the retailer, underage sales can have a real effect on the health of the nation's young people. The following statistics show the reasons why these products have an age restriction placed upon their supply:-

- 450 children start smoking in Great Britain every day
- 22% of 15 year olds are regular smokers
- 80% of today's smokers took up the habit as teenagers
- On average, teenagers drink 4 pints of beer a week
- 58 % of the people injured by fireworks last year were under the legal age of purchase, of 18 years.

The Public Protection Service is committed to working to restrict the access of these products to young people. It seeks to do this by working with businesses, offering advice and guidance, investigating complaints, and by conducting test purchase exercises with young volunteers in order to assess the level of compliance. The most recent test purchase exercise carried out by the service found that only 3 premises out of 53 retailers tested sold cigarettes to a 16 year old volunteer.

Should you believe that underage sales are occurring at any outlets within Warrington and Halton, you can report the matter to us by contacting Consumer Direct on **08454 040506**.

Illegal Tobacco: Keep It Out

The Warrington & Halton Trading Standards service is currently involved in promoting the 'Illegal Tobacco: Keep It Out' campaign which is being run across the North of England. The campaign is seeking to engage with legitimate tobacco traders, partner agencies and members of the public in order to promote the problems surrounding the supply of Smuggled, Bootlegged and Fake cigarettes across the region. The campaign has been launched in response to the ease of access to illegal tobacco products across the region.

At a local level, in Warrington we have evidence that some illegal brands are being sold at just £2.50 for a packet of twenty cigarettes, whereas the average price for a packet of twenty cigarettes sold legitimately is currently in the region of £6.00. The low price of these products makes them particularly attractive to those who may have previously been dissuaded from taking up smoking due to the cost; children being the most obvious example.

More details about the campaign can be found at www.get-some-answers.co.uk. If you wish to pass information on about somebody who you believe is supplying illegal tobacco products you can do so anonymously by ringing Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



Top Marks for Approved Motor Traders

Two of the 17 council Approved Motor Traders in Warrington were recently given top marks by mystery shoppers checking standards of sales and service of 12 of their members. Top marks went to Warrington Vehicle Centre for sales and Frank Warburton and Sons for service.

Both are members of the Approved Motor Trader scheme which is run by the Warrington and Halton Trading Standards Team. All members have a strong track record of good customer service and fair trading.

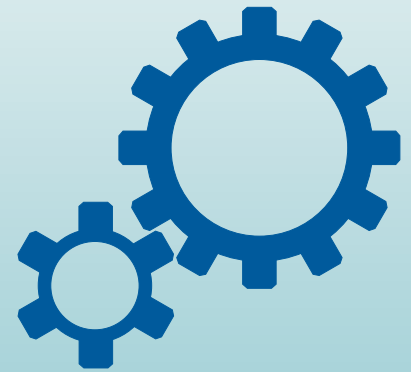
Car sales, servicing and repairs are a major source of complaints to Trading Standards throughout the country. Some result from a small number of 'cowboy traders.' Others arise when legitimate businesses are unaware of their legal obligations or fail to check that staff are doing their job correctly.

The scheme attempts to raise standards and consumer confidence in this area whilst improving the image of the motor trade in the town.

Cllr Mike Biggin, Executive Board Member for Climate Change and Public Protection at the council said: "This important scheme offers consumers piece of mind in an area that can often cause confusion so I would urge all residents both young and old to use our approved local traders. I have had negative experiences in the past when buying a new car and don't want this to needlessly happen to other residents, help and advice is out there."



From left to right Melvin Warburton, Cllr Mike Biggin and Richard Cook



**TRADING
STANDARDS**
**APPROVED
MOTOR
TRADERS**
PEACE OF MIND

Richard Cook of Warrington Vehicle Centre said: "The scheme gives our customers peace of mind when buying new and used vehicles from our company and in-turn helps us keep providing a high standard of customer service and after-sales to our loyal customer base."

Melvin Warburton of Frank Warburton and Sons said "I am proud to be a Warrington Trading Standards Approved Trader. I am pleased that the public are being made aware that the Authority regularly monitors our work and also our premises. We have developed our business on past results and comments."

To find out more about the scheme and to see a list of all the approved traders visit www.AMTwarrington.co.uk or ring Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06.

Love food hate waste

In the UK we throw away 8.3m tonnes of food, most of which could have been eaten with a little thinking ahead. By planning our meals better and using up our leftovers, we can each save, on average, £50 a month. That's quite a lot of money in these cash-strapped times. We have lent our support to the Love Food Hate Waste campaign which aims to encourage us all to think about ways we can reduce the amount of perfectly good food we throw away.

The campaign is run by WRAP, an organisation funded by the Government, which also wants to encourage us to recycle more and increase the amount we compost at home.

For tips, recipes and more information about reducing your food waste visit:

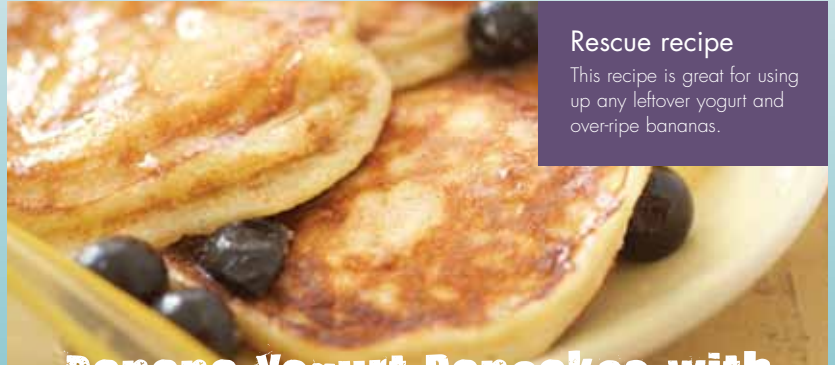
www.lovefoodhatewaste.com



If you want to find out what we're doing, visit our website

www.recycleforwarrington.co.uk

As well as recycling information, you can get a free cook book and a free Love Food Hate Waste Calendar, download more recipe cards and an iPhone Love Food Hate Waste application.



Rescue recipe

This recipe is great for using up any leftover yogurt and overripe bananas.

Banana Yogurt Pancakes with Apple and Berry Compote

By Caroline Marson

Feeds 2 adults

1 egg, lightly beaten
125ml milk
125ml natural yogurt
2 over-ripe bananas, mashed with a fork
150g plain flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 tablespoon brown sugar
Pinch of salt

Apple and Berry Compote

4 medium eating apples, peeled and bruises removed
100ml orange or apple juice
Pinch of cinnamon
Handful of berries such as blueberries, raspberries, strawberries

1. Mix together the egg, milk, yogurt and bananas.
2. Sieve the flour with the baking powder into a large bowl, then stir in the 'wet' ingredients, sugar and salt. The batter will look a little lumpy. Transfer to a mixing jug and allow to stand for 10 minutes.
3. Heat a lightly oiled frying pan over a medium heat until smoking hot. Turn the heat down and pour small batches of batter into the pan. Cook on each side until golden, using a palette knife to flip.
4. Put onto a plate in a warm place until you finish cooking all the pancakes.
5. Serve with the Apple and Berry Compote (see below) and extra yogurt if you like.

Apple and Berry Compote

1. Put the apples, orange juice and cinnamon into a heavy-based pan and cook over a low heat for about 10 minutes or until just tender.
2. Stir in the berries and serve warm with the pancakes.



Eyes and Ears

Trading Standards continues to receive information from members alerting us to suspicious activity. This information is invaluable in identifying and tracking movements of doorstep sellers and bogus repairers in and around the borough. **Please do continue to look out for suspicious activity and pass this on but...PLEASE DON'T EVER put yourself at risk to gain information.**

If you would like this information provided in another language or format including large print, Braille, audio or British Sign Language please telephone 01925 443322.