

saferbromley news

Supporting Safer Bromley Partnership

Winter 2018



Welcome to Safer Bromley News



Safety underpins so much of what we do and is the reason that many of our services exist. The scale of the job and the wide ranging nature of

public protection mean that we all need to play our part. Working together is key and the Safer Bromley Partnership reflects this with the Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade and London Ambulance Service all members of the partnership, alongside others, including representatives from the voluntary sector.

Please look at the articles in this latest edition of Safer Bromley News as it contains information to help to protect you. Also you might want to consider discussing the issues outlined with family and friends, especially if they could be seen as vulnerable. Your sensitive guidance will help keep them safer.

You may notice there are several examples of where we have prosecuted offenders, the prosecution of rogue traders for instance. Be warned, where we prosecute, we will always publicise this, to warn residents and also to deter others from committing similar offences. The loss of reputation, by naming and shaming people, is actually more of a punishment for some than the Court fine that is also received. If the Council has prosecuted you, you can expect to be included in our wall of shame.

Finally, we can all take measures to help protect us or keep us safer, like keeping valuables out of sight for instance and your help with this is greatly appreciated. It is part of the reason that our Borough continues to have a reputation for being a safe place to live, work and spend leisure time.

Councillor Kate Lymer
SCAmbassador and Executive Councillor for Public Protection and Enforcement

Looking out for you

Residents are being reminded to be on their guard and be aware of doorstep crime and deception, especially at this time of year.

Trading Standards protect residents and consumers from various issues including scams, rogue traders, illegal products and age restricted goods but residents still need to exercise caution.

Recently, our Trading Standards team prosecuted a business selling illegal skin lighteners and cosmetics. All samples failed the labelling requirements with some of the items containing restricted and banned substances.

Some of the skin lighteners being sold contained Hydroquinone which is prohibited in cosmetic products, including skin lighteners, as this substance can leave people more prone to skin cancer.

In the run up to Christmas, people need to be more wary than ever about illegal goods, fake items or dangerous products. Report issues to Bromley Trading Standards via the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 03454 04 05 06 or visit www.adviceguide.org.uk

Beware of rogue traders

Choosing tradespeople can be a daunting task but if they advertise that they're a member of a recognised trade organisation they must be okay, right?

That's what a resident thought. Following an investigation by Trading Standards, the builder he chose gave the impression that by using the Federation of Master Builders logo he was a member when he wasn't. Also, despite demanding a VAT payment from the resident, he was not VAT registered with HM Revenue

and Customs (HMRC) and he also failed to install the fire sprinkler system the resident had paid for.

If a cold caller offers property repairs or gardening work for instance, or if someone you know is having difficulties with a trader, call 07903 852 090. For advice on rogue traders and scams visit www.bromley.gov.uk/tradingstandards To help find the right tradesperson, download the app or search www.bromley.gov.uk/checktrade



HGVs used for fly-tipping

The summer saw four articulated trailers containing rubbish dumped in the borough.

The 40ft abandoned articulated trailers were spotted in Beckenham with waste that had been baled and wrapped in black plastic wrapping. The dumped trailers were in such poor condition taxpayers had to pay more than £80,000 for the specialist removal and disposal operation.

The investigation remains open but it is believed to be organised crime in which people paid for their waste to be disposed of properly but the perpetrators dumped it instead. Anyone with information is advised to contact the council particularly if they saw something which may not have appeared suspicious at the time. Report the details in confidence at www.bromley.gov.uk/enviocrime

Householders must always check the credentials of a person or company before employing them to remove their waste. They must be a registered waste carrier and hold a valid waste carrier's licence as proof. If they don't, businesses can be fined up to £5000 for not registering and householders can also be prosecuted for using an unlicensed waste carrier.

Report fly-tipping problems and more, quickly and easily on the council's website www.bromley.gov.uk/report. In emergencies, when a road is completely blocked by fly-tipping for instance, report by phone so that we give it priority.

Private land responsibilities

Although we aren't responsible for removing fly-tipping or anything else from privately-owned land, we have the power to enforce the landowner to comply with Untidy Site Notices, contrary to section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

This means that if the condition of the land adversely affects the amenity of the area, we may serve a notice on the owner of the land requiring that it is tidied up within 28 days. If the notice is not complied with, we can prosecute the owner for the offence of non-compliance.

Land at Blackbrook Lane Bickley, is a good example. The privately-owned land, divided into 35 different plots with various owners who have responsibility for keeping their section of land tidy, was subjected to fly-tipping. While some cleared their plots of the mess, others failed to comply with Untidy Site Notices and were prosecuted.

Now this green belt land is once again free of dumped rubbish.



Ageing Well in Bromley

As part of our Ageing Well initiative, some older residents have asked how to find a trusted trader. Whilst there is advice at www.bromley.gov.uk/tradingstandards, including the need to potentially seek a number of different quotes for comparison purposes, it can be difficult to find reputable traders in the area.

The Council's Trading Standards team are working in partnership with Checktrade to vet traders who have applied for special accreditation. Each trader who has successfully applied can display a special 'Trading Standards approved working in partnership with Checktrade logo'.

Please note it is recommended that consumers ask to see relevant qualifications and documentation from the contractor before accepting a quote. Neither Bromley Council nor Checktrade can be held responsible or liable for the quality of workmanship or service of any of the listed trades and services.

Visit www.checktrade.com/bromley for details.



Binned off

Throwing away your rubbish in a bin? You might think you're doing the right thing but you'd be wrong!

A Bromley resident did just that – only he tried to place it in a school's waste container which was locked and ended up throwing his 3 bags of rubbish over the school's railings. Not only is this the same as fly-tipping, the school pay for their waste to be collected and disposed of. Definitely not the right thing to do.

He was caught on CCTV and prosecuted at Bromley Magistrates' Court after pleading guilty to the fly-tipping offence under section 33(1)(a) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.



Fly-tippers *we're watching you*

We all want to live in a safe borough but fly-tipping and enviro-crime can give a negative impression.

You may have seen our campaign 'Fly-tippers – we're watching you' which aims to tackle all forms of fly-tipping – from a small bag of rubbish left on the street to a lorry load of construction waste dumped in a green space.

Besides prosecuting fly-tippers, we can issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs), use CCTV surveillance, vehicle 'stop and search' operations, seize vehicles from those involved in fly-tipping and from those unable to prove they are legitimate waste carriers.

You can help too. Make sure you abide by your duty of care and dispose of all your waste legally and responsibly, without being hazardous to health or harming the environment. Always report enviro-crime to the Police and give us the details too, including useful information such as a description of the offender, a vehicle registration or photo if you have one.

Any information that helps us successfully prosecute an offender means you could receive up to £500 as a thank you. Report confidentially at www.bromley.gov.uk/envirocrime



Crime summit told new technology and partnerships are key

The Annual Crime Summit, organised and funded by the Bromley Safer Neighbourhood Board (SNB), has taken place.

Residents and community groups found out about the range of support and services available such as neighbourhood watch and trading standards, while Bromley youth council gave a presentation on their anti-gang campaign.

The Metropolitan Police's Borough Commander Jeff Boothe, responsible for the new South Borough Command Unit (BCU), gave a comprehensive presentation on the new structure and his teams and responsibilities. He emphasised the importance and benefits of partnership working and confirmed his commitment to delivering for Bromley.

Key note speaker Assistant Commissioner Martin Hewitt QPM, reiterated the importance of collaboration and highlighted new technology and stronger partnerships being at the heart of modern day policing.

The event concluded with a Question and Answer session with the panel joined by temporary superintendent Craig Knight and Councillor Kate Lymer Executive Councillor Public Protection and Enforcement.

Sharon Baldwin, Independent Chair of the Safer Neighbourhood Board said "I would like to express my thanks to all who participated. The SNB is committed to working on your behalf and representing your views."

The SNB focuses on all aspects of safety affecting residents and businesses and as part of this, also works with the Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) in the borough, including Orpington1st, where Sharon is the Executive Director.

The SNB is one of 32 groups from across London funded by the Mayor's Office on Policing and Crime (MOPAC).

For details of the SNB's future community meetings and local safety news you can 'like' the SNB's Facebook page www.facebook.com/BromleySNB



Don't be fooled

Scams are dishonest ways of tricking people out of their money or getting them to pass over private information and includes different methods such as post, internet and telephone.

Our Trading Standards team took part in London Trading Standards week during September, warning residents about cons and fraudsters who were claiming to be from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). They phoned and try to trick people into paying bogus debts and taxes and in many cases, they ask for payment in iTunes gift card voucher codes.

The advice is that if you are approached in person, by phone or by email, however plausible the person may sound, be extremely wary of anyone asking for money or your personal details.

Don't be pressured in agreeing anything – take time to think, talk it through with family or friends and consider very carefully whether what you are being told is genuine as often these scammers are highly professional in their approach.

Report any concerns to our Rapid Response team on 07903 852090 or go to www.bromley.gov.uk/tradingstandards to find out more.

Noise nuisance

Lots of us will be enjoying the festivities at a party this year but please consider the noise and how it might affect others.

Noise is part of everyday life, but excessive noise can be a real nuisance. So, if you, or somebody else is being affected by a noise nuisance – whether it's loud parties, intruder and car alarms or something else, contact us and we can give advice and take action when appropriate.

Email ehs.customer@bromley.gov.uk 0300 303 8657 or if the problem is after 5pm or at the weekend or bank holiday, call the out of hours service on 0300 303 8671.

Blue Badge misuse

Having mobility difficulties means you can apply for a Blue Badge to park near your destination. Unfortunately, the system is abused by some penalising those in genuine need.



In a recent crackdown on misuse we discovered some people were using a Blue Badge they were not entitled to. Drivers would often use a badge belonging to a family member whilst they were not present, which goes against the rules. We recently produced a handy reminder on pharmacy bags in the borough but the full rules are on our website www.bromley.gov.uk/bebluebadgeaware

Blue Badge misuse is a criminal offence which can lead to a £1,000 fine and confiscation of the badge. If you suspect that a blue badge is being used for the benefit of a person who is not the badge holder, report your concerns at: www.bromley.gov.uk/reportbluebadge

Householder responsibilities

Legally, householders if they're the land owner, are responsible for their privately-owned land and its upkeep. As a last resort, we might issue them with an Untidy Site Notice asking them to clear the mess if it's unsightly and spoiling the amenity of the area - as we did for one such resident.

Reports of a settee, washing machine and several bags of garden waste left on privately owned land, were received. Despite giving the resident ample time to clear it, almost a year later it was still there leaving us with no other option but to issue an Untidy Site Notice.

Unfortunately, the Untidy Site Notice wasn't complied with and the next stage meant the resident was required to answer the charges in court. Having failed to attend, he was found guilty and ordered to pay over £1500 in total fines and costs.

Residents can take bulky waste and garden greenery for free to one of our reuse and recycling centres at Waldo Road or Churchfields Road. If he was unable to dispose of it himself, for a charge there are various options where we can collect and get rid of the waste. See website for details www.bromley.gov.uk/wastenews

Dedicated police response team

Bromley, London's largest borough, will continue to have a dedicated emergency police response team.

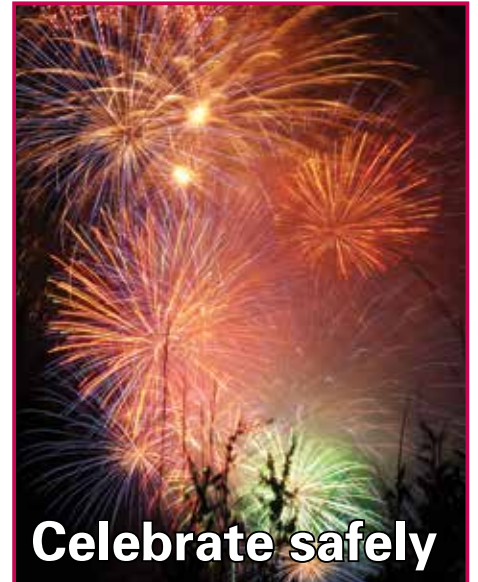
A reduction to 12 Basic Command Units (BCU) made up of two or three/four boroughs from a 32 borough policing model, was proposed earlier this year. The Metropolitan Police basic command units (BCU) of Bromley was considered suitable for merging with the boroughs of Croydon and Sutton but we consistently raised concerns about safety being compromised.

Bromley remains a safe borough compared to many other London boroughs. We are committed to working with the Police and the wider Safer Bromley partnership, including residents, to make sure that Bromley continues to be a low crime borough.

As well as the dedicated police response team, each ward will continue to have dedicated ward officers to tackle local priorities.



Chief Superintendent Jeff Boothe, Metropolitan Police South Area BCU Commander with Councillor Kate Lymer



Celebrate safely

Many of us will be celebrating the festive season with fireworks at home but did you know that they're an age restricted product?

Businesses selling to anyone below the age of 18 risk a heavy fine. Safeguarding children from dangerous products like fireworks and knives is important which is why we take this action when shops sell age restricted products to young people.

Often volunteers make test purchases on our behalf and the problem of underage sales was highlighted. In one instance, two volunteers were able to buy a large firework from a well-known local Bromley store without being challenged about their age. As they should have been asked for identification to prove they were 18, prosecution followed.

Trading Standards offer free advice to businesses in the borough about the sale of age restricted products. Simply email trading.standards@bromley.gov.uk for help.

Where age restricted products are suspected of being sold by retailers, residents should report for follow up investigation. Report by calling the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 03454 04 05 06.

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The Safer Bromley Partnership includes Bromley Council, Police, Fire Service, Health, Probation and Housing Associations working together to keep Bromley safe.

Contact us at:
community.safety@bromley.gov.uk
Follow us on [Twitter@saferbromley](https://twitter.com/saferbromley)