



REPORT REFERENCE: 2.3

LINCOLNSHIRE WASTE PARTNERSHIP

3 MARCH 2011

**SUBJECT : LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL TRADING
STANDARDS PACKAGING PROJECT**

REPORT BY: LISA FOSTER (PACKAGING TEAM LEADER)

CONTACT NO: 01522 552485

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In April 2008, Lincolnshire Trading Standards received funding from the County Councils Waste Department, to create a dedicated team to tackle the issue of excessive packaging. The intention was to actively work with consumers and businesses to reduce the amount of unnecessary packing making its way to landfill. The funding stream comes to an end on 31st March 2011 and the experience gained within the team will be used to mainstream packaging work within the Trading Standards Service. This report aims to highlight some of the major successes the team has had over the last 3 years. Some of the individual successes are on display for consideration.

ACHIEVEMENTS

CONSUMERS

As reported previously, from April 2006 – March 2008, the department received three complaints about excessive packaging. Since the team became fully operational in September 2008, to date over 100 complaints have been received.

Website: www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/packitin

Email: packitin@lincolnshire.gov.uk

* Over 1000 Lincolnshire residents on a consumer panel who can be called on to seek opinions about packaging and who have also received our consumer newsletter to keep them informed and engaged with the work of the team.

* Invited to give educational talks and presentations to WI's and a whole range of community groups, as word spread of the teams work

BUSINESSES

As a result of consumer complaints, a large number of companies have been contacted requesting their technical documentation to establish how much consideration has been given to the packaging.

Successful eco-design minimises the use of resources and the overall burden on the environment throughout the products lifecycle ...and saves money. The team have worked with local businesses and liaised with other trading standards departments across the UK, to ensure that everyone in the supply chain thinks about the environmental impact their packaging may have.

The majority of the challenges made to businesses about their packaging have resulted in changes being made and reductions.

Packaging seminars and drop-in days have taken place for local businesses to come along and obtain free, expert advice, run in partnership with other bodies such as Envirowise, and Select Lincolnshire.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The team have worked very closely with a number of district councils and other government agencies and key partners, such as WRAP, DEFRA and BIS.

The team have been heavily involved in the County Council's Sustainable Schools work and have been asked to attend many of the county's schools Environment Days and speak to Eco-Clubs. The team have been asked to give talks to students about packaging and have also facilitated competitions designed to engage the students in looking at packaging and redesigning it appropriately.

In partnership with other departments of the county council, including sustainability and sustainable schools teams, the team have been involved in the creation and development of the 'Rethink' initiative. The elements involved with this include the Rethink box/class toolkit, the Rethink DVD and the Rethink Packaging, all of which have been highly successful and well received.

Website: www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/packitin

Email: packitin@lincolnshire.gov.uk

PACKAGING AND TRADING STANDARDS

Enforcement activity in the area of packaging by trading standards services across the UK has been low, with only a handful of prosecutions since the regulations were introduced. Lincolnshire is viewed as one of, if not, the leading authorities in the country when it comes to securing compliance with these regulations. However, as the recognition of the teams work continues to expand, more and more trading standards services are beginning to engage in packaging work.

Lincolnshire are viewed as an example of best practice in this area and are contacted on a regular basis by other TS services wishing to gain information and advice from the team on its achievements. The contact with other Trading Standards Services has helped spread expertise and understanding of the issues throughout the UK.

During the 3 years, the team have built up extensive knowledge and expertise. Lisa Foster was appointed the Trading Standards Institute Lead Officer for the Environment and continues to represent the profession on all matters relating to enforcement and best practice of environmental legislation. In January 2010, Lisa was also appointed to the Government's Advisory Committee on Packaging, where she works alongside representatives from all sectors in the packaging industry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lincolnshire Waste Partnership is asked to note the report.

Lisa and her team would like to thank the officers and members of the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership, especially those on the Officer Working Group who have supported their work throughout the three years. Thanks are also given to the Recycling Officer Group who has assisted the team on road shows and other educational activities.

Without you all, the aims and objectives of the project and the successes achieved would not have been possible.