

Vital free safety checks on electric blankets

Around 40 Trafford residents went to St Matthew's Church Hall in Stretford at the beginning of October to have their electric blankets tested.

Faulty electric blankets are the cause of over 5000 fires nationally every year, which result in nearly 20 deaths. On the day 18 blankets were confiscated because they were faulty, half price vouchers were given out to people whose blankets failed the test.

Miss Lillian Clarke, from Sale, said: "The blanket I had checked today was bought after an earlier testing showed my previous one was faulty. I think it is really important people make use of these events so they can feel safe in bed at night."

Executive Councillor for Environmental Services, Jonathan Coupe, added: "By preventing fires caused by faulty electric blankets we are helping to save lives and property. The message is clear - sleep safe, get your blanket checked."



On the Stretford beat by Inspector Alistair McDonald



Inspector Alistair McDonald of Stretford NPT

At Stretford Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) we are continually developing how we work with the community. Currently, we have daily links with local councillors, schools, businesses and residents so that the community can make a difference to what is happening in their area and tackle issues with the police and partners.

Recently, Stretford NPT became aware of problems around two parks and local shops and this information was passed to the police via councillors, residents and several partnership agencies.

A special neighbourhood forum was set up at which the police and partners discussed the issues, while residents were informed that crime in this area was on a downward trend with a low number of reported incidents.

However, it became clear from the residents and businesses that anti social behaviour was their biggest concern. The police explained what could be done and took away the comments of the residents.

Within weeks, we had gathered evidence, worked with our partners and successfully applied for a dispersal order. This order gives the police and partners powers to deal with anti-social behaviour, but also identifies those individuals that are causing problems.

We have also recently held ward walks with councillors and the council's area services team. These walks highlight areas of concerns on your wards brought forward to the partners and we are working to address issues raised at these walks.

Earlier this year we also ran a successful truancy sweep. This identified children who were absent from school and showed how parents were encouraging their behaviour. We have more of these planned for the near future.

Six month dispersal order

A six-month dispersal order to address anti-social behaviour around the Victoria Park and Moss Park areas of Stretford began on 28 August.

This comes after Trafford Council and Greater Manchester Police took action to combat complaints from local people about anti-social behaviour in these areas.

If there are concerns about the young people's behaviour and they are not acting responsibly, the order gives the police additional powers meaning that they can instruct a group of two or more people to disperse, instruct a group of two or more who do not live in the area to leave and not return for up to 24 hours and instruct anyone who is aged under 16 and unsupervised in the area, between 9pm and 6am, to return home.

The dispersal order runs until 27 February 2009 and will then be subject to review.

Volunteer recognised

The Mayor of Trafford was called upon to honour a special volunteer from Citizens Advice Trafford.

Joan Ford was presented with a certificate and a bouquet of flowers at the charity's AGM held on 11 September at St Matthews Church Hall, Stretford.

Joan has amassed a staggering 30 years as a volunteer advisor in the Citizens Advice Sale Bureau.

Sue Martin, district manager, said: "Joan's dedication

to supporting the people of Trafford is outstanding. I am delighted that we have had an opportunity to publicly recognise her contribution."

When asked to comment on the changes over the years, Joan described the struggle to deal with the vast IT developments since the paper based advice systems of the 1980s but said that the gratitude of the clients and the great team spirit had always stayed the same.