

Dorset County Council has been very active in helping to ensure that their residents are not the victims of rogue traders because of switchover.

The council set up its own mystery shopping campaign to see what advice TV retailers and aerial installers were giving people. Trading Standards staff acting as consumers made a number of visits and were shocked by the lack of knowledge and misinformation they found. Only two of the 15 stores visited gave 100 per cent correct advice, while five actively promoted Sky or satellite and didn't mention Freeview. Nearly half of the aerial installers surveyed gave bad or misleading advice.

The council achieved a high level of media publicity for its campaign and has since contacted all the traders to ensure that they are now better informed and able to give accurate advice to customers. Follow up formal visits will also be used to check whether retailers and aerial installers were giving the right advice.

Dorset worked in partnership with Digital UK to conduct its campaign. It shared its results with Digital UK which ensured its Retail Support Team paid extra attention to these stores when carrying out regular training to encourage staff understanding of switchover and correct usages of the 'digital tick' logo.

Jon Harris, Principal Trading Standards Officer, says:

'Running an exercise like this is one way to identify rogue trading while also ensuring maximum education for your businesses and consumers.'