

Protecting the Public and Supporting Business - From Pandemic Recovery to the Cost of Living Crisis

The Impacts and Outcomes of Local Trading Standards Services 2021/22 in Wales

The Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers (ACTSO) created the Impacts and Outcomes Framework in 2018/19 to provide national data for England and Wales on work done by local authority Trading Standards Services. This is the second report for Wales and this document contains a summary of the highlights of work done in 2021/22.

This year, across all areas of work, the risks associated with the cost of living crisis on consumers and businesses is apparent. The need for effective business advice and a level playing field for legitimate businesses is going to be crucial to keep them afloat in difficult times. Risks to consumers around the safety of cheap or illicit goods and false claims relating to prices, costs and energy efficiency are growing and the impact of losing money to scammers is bigger than ever.

In 2021/22 local Trading Standards Services have:

- Prevented over **£3 million** of detriment, equating to **£3.26** saved for every **£1** spent
- Saved scam victims almost **£2.5 million**
- Provided over **1,000 hours** of advice to businesses through primary authority partnerships
- Carried out over **10,857 compliance checks** to ensure businesses meet their legal responsibilities and to provide them with advice on site

TACKLING DETRIMENT AND PREVENTING HARM

One of the key functions of Trading Standards is to prevent consumer and business detriment (financial and non-financial), tackle the criminal behaviour that leads to it and support victims. The Government's 2022 Consumer Protection Study estimated that there was **£54 billion** in unaddressed detriment across Great Britain.

Key statistics for 2021/22 included:



87 defendants were prosecuted



Prison sentences of over **39 years** were handed down. This includes both immediate and suspended sentences



Defendants were ordered to pay over **£695,000 in Proceeds of Crime**



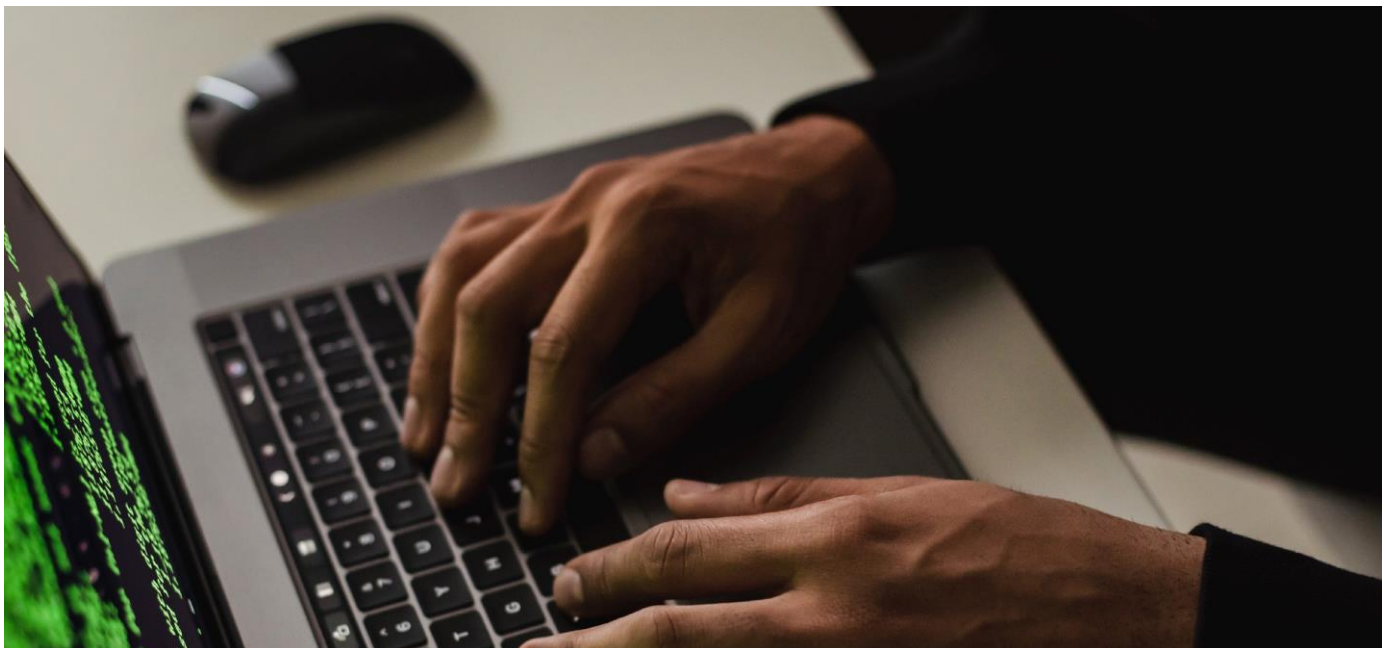
Local authority Trading Standards provided support to over **1,317 scam victims**



Work to disrupt mass marketing fraud mailings, stop outgoing payments, mail etc **saved consumers over £2.5 million**



Almost **£105,000 compensation** being awarded to victims by the courts



SUPPORTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Businesses have always needed advice and support from Trading Standards to help them navigate the range of laws that ensure they trade fairly and their products are safe. This year, as businesses continue to recover from the impacts of Covid, and face supply chain and energy cost issues, the ability to access the correct advice and have confidence has never been more important.

Key statistics for 2021/22 included:



Responded to over **4,000 requests** for advice from businesses that were not part of the primary authority scheme and over **887 hours of support** was provided via primary authority partnerships.



Almost 11,000 **visits were carried out to businesses to ensure they comply with the law and provide advice** to help them fix any non-compliance



Almost **3,200 businesses were subject to an intervention**, such as advice, investigation or referral



Over **20,500 counterfeit products with a market value of £316,000**, which breach the intellectual property of legitimate businesses, were seized

PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Trading Standards undertake a wide range of activities to protect and promote the health and well-being of local communities including ensuring that products people buy are safe, that food is correctly labelled, and that the health and welfare of livestock is assured.

Age restricted products, including vaping products, tobacco, alcohol, and knives, are also a significant area of focus for many authorities. Trading Standards enforce and advise on a very wide range of age restricted sales legislation to help to keep young people safe.

Key statistics for 2021/22 included:



Nearly **12,000 unsafe or non-compliant products were seized or removed from the market place** following Trading Standards' interventions.



The **savings to society**, in terms of product value and injuries and fires prevented, is almost **£427,000**



Over **1,400 businesses** were identified as **supplying food that was misdescribed, did not correctly declare allergens, contained toxic or illegal components or was involved in food fraud**



Over **1,100 businesses** were found to be in **breach of animal health and welfare legislation**



Over **200 premises** were tested for **alcohol sales**, the average failure rate was **16%**



36 premises were tested for **tobacco sales**, the average failure rate was **12%**



79 premises were tested for other products, including vaping products, the average failure rate was **16%**



Over **2.6 million illicit cigarettes** were seized, worth an estimated **£650,000**



Almost **0.5 tonnes of illicit hand-rolling tobacco** were seized, worth almost **£4,000**

SUPPORT FOR THE COVID RESPONSE

Trading Standards were a key part of the local authority Covid response. Whilst most activities were carried out in 2020-21, there is ongoing work across many local authorities. This includes supporting the general local authority efforts in relation to covid advice, track and trace, business advice etc. as well as dealing with specific covid related scams, ensuring claims relating to covid testing etc.

NET ZERO, ENERGY COSTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The Net Zero and Climate Change agenda are becoming more important each year, with the majority of local authorities seeing this issue as a key corporate priority.

Claims associated with energy usage and energy efficiency are going to be a real marketing point as energy costs rise so quickly and households will be looking to save money. More broadly "greenwashing" and green claims have become a concern and the Competition and Markets Authority issued a report on this.

There is no separate data collected on Trading Standards work to support this agenda, they will be included within the compliance checks, business advice and prosecution figures in the above figures.