

Protecting the Public and Supporting Businesses

Trading Standards improving compliance and tackling crime

The Impacts and Outcomes of Local Trading Standards Services in Wales in 2024/25

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 fourth report for Wales, and this document contains a summary of the highlights of work done in 2024/25.

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 2024/25, the Trading Standards service in Wales had 294 full-time equivalent staff employed, of whom 267 were operational. They achieved the following:

- Prevented over £43 million of detriment to consumers.
- Removed over 21,800 unsafe or non-compliant goods and over 28,000 illegal vaping products from the market;
- Provided nearly 1,700 hours of advice to businesses through primary authority partnerships
- Saved scam victims over £2.5 million
- Seized over 747,000 illegal cigarettes
- Almost 24,000 compliance checks to ensure businesses meet their legal responsibilities and to provide them with advice on site.

TACKLING DETERIMENT 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 2024/25 included:



164 defendants were prosecuted.



Prison sentences of almost **142 years** were handed down. This includes both immediate and suspended sentences.



Defendants were ordered to pay almost **£1,400,000 in Proceeds of Crime**.



Local authority Trading Standards provided support to over **7000 scam victims**.



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



Almost **£300,000 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 navigate persistent cost-of-living challenges, rising operational costs, and increasingly complex supply chain requirements, the ability to access the correct advice and maintain consumer confidence has never been more important.

Key statistics for 2024/25 included:



Responded to almost **1,700 requests** for advice to businesses who are part of the Primary Authority scheme and responded to almost **1,200 requests** for other advice from businesses.



Over **18,800 visits** were carried out to businesses to ensure they comply with the law and provide advice to help them fix any non-compliances.



Over **2,440 businesses (13% of those inspected)** were found to have sufficient serious non-compliance to warrant further investigation or enforcement action.



Over **38,500 counterfeit products with a market value of over £6 million**, 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 2024/25 included:



Nearly **21,900 unsafe or non-compliant products were seized or removed from the marketplace** following Trading Standards' interventions.



Trading Standards services across Wales received **over 25,000 notifications and referrals** from the Citizens Advice Consumer Service as well as over **8,000** from other service partners.



Almost **1,990 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**. This was a **13% increase** on last year.



Almost **2,900 businesses** were found to be in **breach of animal health and welfare legislation**.



95 premises were tested for the underage sale of **alcohol**; the average failure rate was **12%**.



65 premises were tested for the underage sale of **tobacco**; the average failure rate was **2%**. The high compliance rate reinforces the effectiveness of Trading Standards enforcement and community efforts to reduce underage tobacco use.



Over **124 premises** were tested for the underage sale of **vaping products**; the average failure rate was **5%**.



Over **747,000 illicit cigarettes** were seized, together with **859,000kg of illicit hand-rolling tobacco** worth a combined street value of over **£856,000**.

