

Trading standards - FOI questions for LAs

What is the name of the Local Authority your Trading Standards Service covers?

If you operate as a combined service, please enter the names of all the Local Authorities that fall within your service.

Answer: COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Section 1 - Resources

What was the total budget for your local authority Trading Standards Service for the 2023-24 financial year (1st April 2023- 31st March 2024)?

Answer: £382,680

What was the total budget for your local authority Trading Standards Service for the 2022-23 financial year (1st April 2022- 31st March 2023)?

Answer: £357,343

What was the total budget for your local authority Trading Standards Service for the 2021-22 financial year (1st April 2021- 31st March 2022)?

Answer: £290,159

In the 2023-24 financial year (1st April 2023- 31st March 2024), what proportion of your Trading Standards Service's funding came from the following sources?

If you do not have the exact figure, please provide an approximation

Source	% of funding (please sum to 100%)
Central government local authority funding	0
Other central government or regulator funding for specific functions	HMRC (Cece, circa £2,300)
Devolved government funding	0
Regional funding	£19,188.57 (Centsa Feed including Sampling)
National Trading Standards or Trading Standards Scotland funding	0
Primary Authority Partnership funding	0

Other, please specify	£14,000 (HC Public Health Funded Food Allergen sampling 23-24)
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How many full time equivalent staff, including contractors, work in your service? Please enter a numerical value next to each category.

Staff type	Permanent full time	Contractors	Part time
Professionally qualified staff undertaking Trading Standards work (this includes staff holding DCATS, CTSP, DTS or equivalent qualification).	8	0	1
Other professionally qualified staff undertaking Trading Standards work e.g. Environmental Health Officers	0	0	0
Other staff undertaking Trading Standards work e.g. apprentices	0	0	0
Administrative/support staff.	1 shared	0	0

For which of the following do you have Trading Standards officers with specialist competencies in the area?

Specialist competency	Yes/No
Unfair commercial practices	YES
Consumer Rights Act breaches	YES
Prices and pricing practices	YES
Motor trade	YES
Travel and holiday industry	NO
Renewable energy and home improvements	YES
Doorstep crime, including rogue trading	YES
Product safety	YES
Intellectual Property	YES

Metrology / weights and measures	YES
Age-restricted sales	YES
Food standards	YES
Animal feed	YES
Animal health and welfare	YES
E-crime - this includes email scams, phishing, fake websites or copycat websites	YES
Consumer Advice	YES
Other (please specify) Petroleum & Explosives, School Absence Enforcement	YES

Do you share any of the following services with Trading Standards departments in other local authorities? If so, who do you share with?

Area	Shared? Y/N	Who with?
Fair trading	N	N/A
Product safety	N	N/A
Intellectual Property	N	N/A
Metrology / weights and measures	N	N/A
Age-restricted Sales	N	N/A
Food Standards	N	N/A
Animal feed	N	N/A
Animal health and welfare	N	N/A
E-crime - this includes email scams, phishing, fake websites or copycat websites	N	N/A
Consumer advice	N	N/A
Other (please specify)	N	N/A

Section 2 - Demand and prioritisation

How many referrals and notifications did you receive to your services in the April 2023-March 2024 financial year in the following categories?

Category	Referrals	Notifications
Overall	1,398	966
Doorstep crime - this includes all rogue trading that takes place at the consumer's home	209	200
Scams - this includes mail fraud, telephone scams, and any other outright criminal activity that takes place from a distance (but excludes online fraud)	8	0
E-crime - this includes email scams, phishing, fake websites or copycat websites	20	6
Food Standards	24	0
Motor vehicle sales	85	241
Motor vehicle repairs	23	88
Travel and holiday industry	14	26
Renewable energy and home improvements (* Included in Doorstep Crime Figures above as have been coldcalled at home)	0	0
Illegal tobacco & alcohol	13	0
Offensive weapons sales	0	0
Vapes	40	0
Property – including lettings and estate agents	4	13
Fair trading - including pricing, terms and conditions and descriptions of goods	189	389
Animal health	260	0
Product safety	12	3
Other- Animal Feed	11	0
Other- Alcohol Premise Licensing Consultations	71	0
Other- School Absence Enforcement	415	0

How many of the referrals received in the financial year 2023-24 did you take forward / investigate?

If you do not formally collect this information, please provide an estimate

Category	Number of referrals investigated
Overall	1,137
Doorstep crime - this includes all rogue trading that takes place at the consumer's home	209
Scams - this includes mail fraud, telephone scams, and any other outright criminal activity that takes place from a distance (but excludes online fraud)	8
E-crime - this includes email scams, phishing, fake websites or copycat websites	20
Food standards	24
Motor vehicle sales	0
Motor vehicle repairs	0
Travel and holiday industry	0
Renewable energy and home improvements (* Included in Doorstep Crime Figures above as have been coldcalled at home)	0
Illegal tobacco & alcohol	13
Offensive weapons sales	0
Vapes	40
Property – including lettings and estate agents	4
Fair trading - including pricing, terms and conditions and descriptions of goods (estimated)	50
Animal health	260
Product safety	12
Other - Animal Feed	11

Of those referrals that you did not take forward, how often have the following been reasons why?

Reason	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
We did not have the staff hours required		X			
We did not have the relevant specialist skills				X	
The referrals did not merit investigation		X			
The referrals did not fall into our priority areas			X		
Other, please specify- Intel gathering for majority of individual incidents	X				

Approximately what proportion of your investigations pertain to the online activities of a business?

1. 0-10%
2. 10-20%
3. 20-30%
4. 30-40%
5. 40-50%
6. More than 50%

Answer: 0-10%

What are the top three priority issues for your service?

Answer: Rogue/fair trading, tobacco and vapes, animal health.

Can you set out any aspects of your remit that you have had to de-prioritise over the past five years?

Answer: Civil advice and 1-2-1 assistance for consumers, non-food or non-funded animal feed routine inspections, Metrology, Trade Marks, new burdens from central government.

Section 3 - Enforcement activities/outcomes

In the 2023-24 financial year (1st April 2023- 31st March 2024):

1. How many routine (i.e. not responding directly to a complaint) inspections on businesses did you carry out?

Answer: 583

2. How many seizures of unsafe/non-compliant products did you make?

Answer: Illegal cigarettes – 23860 sticks or 1193 packets.
Illegal vapes – 776 (mainly oversize), 5.2kg of illegal hand-rolling tobacco.
Food – 2 unauthorised additives

3. How many hours of advice did you provide for businesses on their obligations under consumer law (excluding Primary Authority advice)?

Answer: 0

4. How many hours of advice did you provide for businesses for which your service holds a Primary Authority relationship?

Answer: 0

5. How many voluntary undertakings did you secure from businesses?

Answer: 1

6. How many test purchases did you carry out?

Answer: 73

7. How many cautions did you issue?

Answer: 0

How many enforcement orders and formal warning notices did you serve in the following categories in the 2023-24 financial year?

Category	Formal warning notices	Enforcement orders
Overall	14	0
Food standards	9	0
Motor vehicles (sales & repairs)	0	0

Home improvements	0	0
Travel and holiday industry	0	0
Illegal tobacco & alcohol	0	0
Property – including lettings and estate agents	0	0
Fair trading - including pricing, terms and conditions and descriptions of goods	0	0
Product safety	0	0
Other - ANIMAL FEED	13	0
Other- Weight and Measures	1	0

How many criminal prosecutions and civil enforcement actions did you bring forward in the 2023-24 financial year?

Category	Criminal	Civil
Overall	16	7
Doorstep crime - this includes all rogue trading that takes place at the consumer's home	5	7
Scams - this includes mail fraud, telephone scams, and any other outright criminal activity that takes place from a distance (but excludes online fraud)	0	0
E-crime - this includes email scams, phishing, fake websites or copycat websites	0	0
Food standards	0	0
Motor vehicles (sales & repairs)	0	0
Illegal tobacco & alcohol	5	0
Offensive weapons sales	0	0
Property – including lettings and estate agents	0	0
Fair trading - including pricing, terms and conditions and descriptions of goods	1	0
Animal Health	4	0

Product safety	1	0
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Please could you provide a copy of your latest enforcement policy?

Answer:

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1472/enforcement_and_prosecution_policy

Please enter any other comments or additional information that you feel is relevant.

Answer: You have not asked how much money we have saved for consumers in the 23/24 year by direct intervention, including compensation orders as part of convictions/Enterprise Act Enforcement Orders. This is something that is very important, yet has been missed out. In 2023/24 Herefordshire Council Trading Standards intervened and saved/recovered a total of £115,044.00 for consumers.