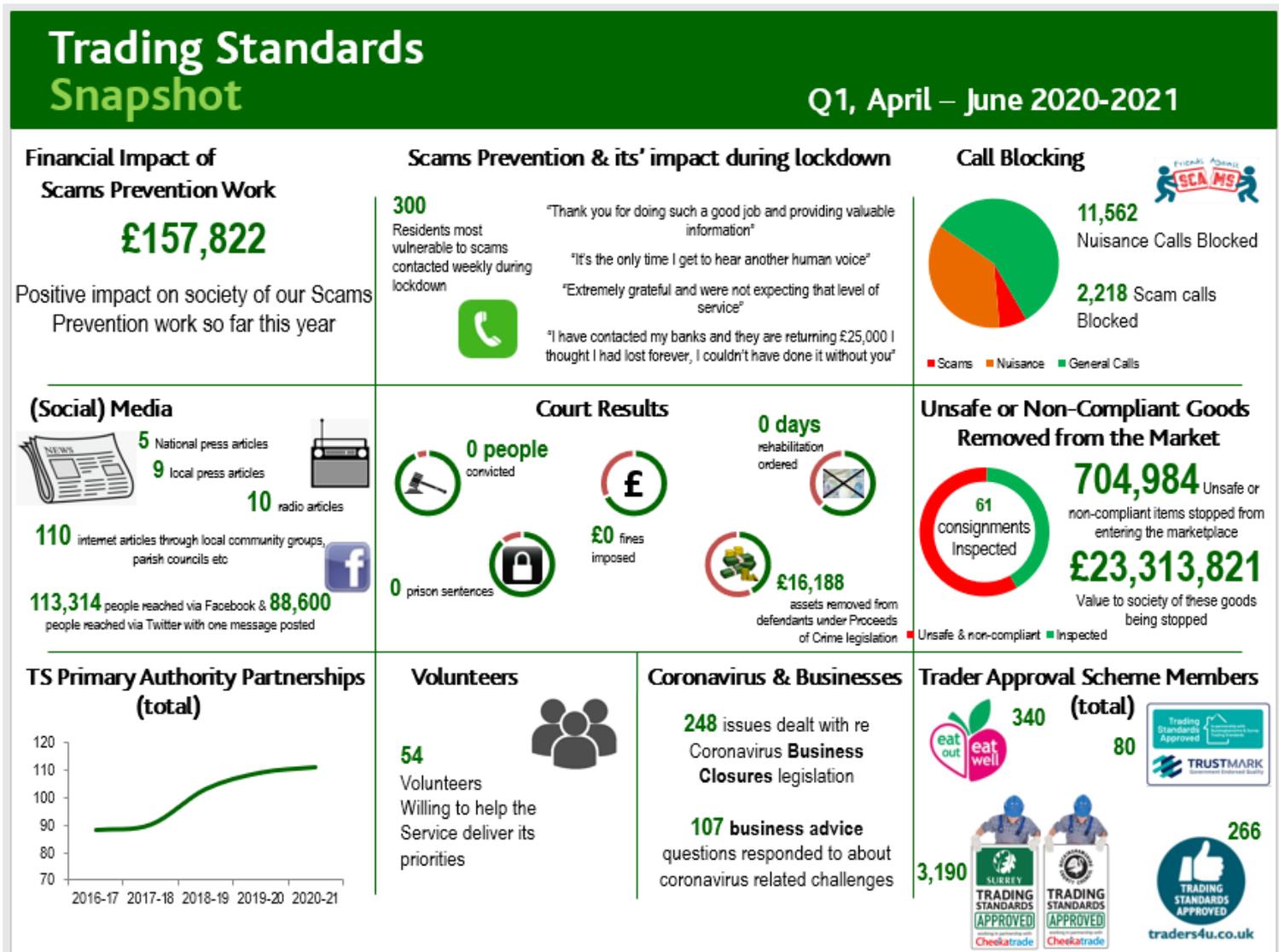


## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### Summary - Quarter 1 (April to June) 2020/21



## **April to June 2020**

The first quarter of this year has been heavily affected by the Covid pandemic, with the Service undertaking new work, extending some areas of work and reducing others to ensure an appropriate response to the situation. Likewise, other connected services, such as the criminal justice system, Police and Environmental Health teams have also been affected having knock on implications to our work.

As a consequence, the data for quarter one looks quite different in some areas than a usual year.

In quarter one the main areas of focus have been:

- Preventing harm from Covid related scams – through both regular direct contact with those who we believed to be of highest risk from scams and through an extensive ongoing media push of information.
- Preventing harm from unsafe goods, including PPE, especially via Heathrow and being brought into use by the Logistics team in Surrey
- Supporting businesses by providing advice needed for the changing conditions (e.g. supply chain shortages)
- Shared enforcement of the new, and frequently changing, Business Closures legislation with Environmental Health and Police partners.

Some of the Service's work was paused during the outbreak. The reasons for this (and for some activities several of these reasons applied) include:

- Work not able to be done at a suitable distance, especially in the first, tightest, stage of lockdown
- Businesses not being open, or operating in very different ways
- Guidance, including from central government, advising us to stop certain activities, e.g. the Food Standards Agency re planned inspections of food businesses
- Work that is usually done alongside partners who had other priorities, or were unable to carry out the work at a safe distance, or had made decisions to suspend their activities
- Our priorities were elsewhere

We also saw the demand for some types of work drop away during the tightest lockdown, such as in relation to new doorstep crimes, although we have seen these rapidly return when the lockdown was eased.

The level of work going into Covid priorities has changed since the end of June, for example with less PPE being imported by air freight, and the re-opening of a much greater range of businesses. However, the work to prevent scams remains at a higher level than pre-pandemic.

The snapshot on the previous page shows performance against some of the key activities undertaken in quarter one.

**Service Priority Area 1 - Protecting the most vulnerable. Tackling fraudulent illegal and unfair trading practices, including serious and organised crime.**

Key Performance Indicator	Comments	Status
Increase the financial savings for residents as a result of our interventions and investigations	Savings for residents fluctuate year by year (and quarter by quarter) often due to factors beyond our control. Just over £100,000 of savings occurred in Q1, compared to a total of £387,000 in the full 19-20 year.	Green ↑
Actions to stop rogue traders operating in Buckinghamshire and Surrey	There were no convictions or sentences passed in Q1. This was due to the impact of coronavirus on the Criminal Justice System as most courts had to severely reduce their operating capacity and all jury trials were postponed for a time. The Service has a number of cases in progress but all have been delayed as a consequence, adding additional volatility to the data it is possible to report on. Investigations into criminal offences has continued, although some actions were postponed for a short time due to Covid restrictions. Activity to make people aware of potential Covid scams by rogue traders, and to encourage people not to become victims, has been a high priority for the Service with advice and information being regularly released by the Service and picked up across local, regional and national media.	Red ↓
Impact of our interventions with scam victims, as measured by the NTS Scams Calculator	Scams have been a particular concern during the Covid Pandemic so the Service has undertaken a range of work to prevent as many people as possible from becoming victims of scams. The detail of which is given below.	Green ↑

**Scam Prevention**

Due to Covid-19 personal visits to victims of fraud and scams were no longer possible. The Prevention Team drafted a letter and information pack which was sent to all residents identified as being vulnerable to scams. This letter, covering Covid security as well as scam information, was quickly recognised as best practice and shared across the Trading Standards South East (TSSE) region including all 19 “top tier” local authorities. The National Trading Standards (NTS) Scams Team adopted the wording of the letter and circulated it for all services across the UK to use if they chose to do so.

During this time, the Team also arranged for around 55,000 scam and doorstep sticker packs to accompany food parcels being distributed to shielded residents by both Counties, as well as via District and Borough Councils, local food banks and meals on wheels in Surrey.



### **Safeguarding Phone Calls:**

Since the start of lockdown, officers from Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards have made weekly calls to around 300 residents identified as being most vulnerable and potentially susceptible to fraud and scams. These residents were known to us due to previous interactions either because they had been victims of financial fraud or they had been referred to us via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs.

The aim was to prevent fraud, but in turn they also provided much needed wellbeing support – especially for those socially isolated or shielding. It has enabled timely interventions in incidents, nuisance and scam cold calls to be blocked using call blocking technology, and provided us with information which we then shared with the wider community.

Despite the UK being in a state of lockdown, residents continued to be targeted by fraudsters. The proactive telephone calls and dynamic responding to incidents meant that between January and March 2020 our interventions prevented £31,000 being lost to criminals. In the following three months an additional £101,100 was stopped, intercepted and returned to victims.

As residents became more confident and fraud aware, the calls were reduced, finally drawing to a close for the majority of residents on 31 July. A select few were identified as continuing to be ‘at risk’ so these individuals continue to receive personal support.

The feedback and gratitude received from residents has been incredible with comments such as

*Lovely speaking to you as always  
Thank you for doing such a good job and providing valuable information  
It's the only time I get to hear another human voice  
Extremely grateful and were not expecting that level of service  
I am grateful you are checking on my mum, thank you  
I have contacted my banks and they are returning £25,000 I thought I had lost forever, I couldn't  
have done it without you*

Our officers developed strong bonds with their callers and residents have expressed their sadness that the calls are ending but all feel a lot more ‘savvy’ in how to deal with scams and how to seek help should they need to.

### **Scam Interventions – Case study**

One example of our dynamic interventions is Mr B, a grieving and socially isolated gentleman in his 60s who had previously been defrauded out of £70,000 in investment frauds. It quickly became apparent that Mr B was unfortunately struggling with his mental health and continued to be plagued by scammers. The only food he had was bread and milk and he was living off a box of cereal. More urgently he was contemplating suicide.

Following a frantic and distressing 24 hours, a member of the Trading Standards Prevention Team contacted key partners to raise urgent concerns. Unfortunately Mr B was not on the shielded patients list and had fallen between the cracks.

The officer liaised closely with Adult Social Care and a local support charity, and Mr B immediately received an emergency care package and funding was organised for him to receive meals on wheels 3 times a day.

Some weeks later, Mr B continues to receive meals on wheels as well as weekly calls from Trading Standards and charity volunteers. A call blocking device has been installed (which he loves) and

following ongoing support from Trading Standards, Mr B has had £25,000 worth of debt written off by his banks and has switched his utility company to get a cheaper tariff.

He continues to take one day at a time but says Trading Standards have turned his life around. He says he is now more confident to handle financial issues and is enjoying time in his garden and returning to his painting.

### **Call Blockers:**



Call blockers are an extremely effective way of stopping criminals accessing vulnerable residents. To combat cold call fraud and to give residents piece of mind Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards provides and installs call blocking technology free of charge to those who are being plagued by nuisance and scam calls.

We have distributed over 250 units so far which have prevented residents from receiving 189,361 nuisance calls and 36,187 scam calls. The financial savings for residents has been calculated at almost £400,000. If a resident feels either they or a relative may benefit from a call blocker they can email this request to us at [trading.standards@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:trading.standards@surreycc.gov.uk). One of our Prevention Team officers will then contact the resident and discuss how the call blocker works and assess whether this would be an appropriate solution for the resident. A simple form will be completed and the fitting of the call blocker will be arranged.

Recent feedback on call blockers we have installed has included the following qualitative feedback:

*“My husband & I are much happier now that we have the Truecall device. We don’t feel threatened now when we answer the phone.”*

*“I no longer am worried when the phone rings since the device has been installed. I am grateful for the loan of the device & would not like to be without it.”*

*“The device has eliminated nuisance calls completely. I feel much safer having it.”*

*“Excellent. I have recommended it to others.”*

*“This Truecall device is one of the best pieces of equipment we have ever had. We are most grateful for this device and it has solved the problem with nuisance callers - virtually overnight!”*

In addition to local feedback, the National Trading Standards Scams Team undertook some academic research alongside Bournemouth University into the use of call blockers, including measuring the respondent’s wellbeing at the point of installation and 3 months later using the nationally recognised 7-item Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS) to provide a measurable score of wellbeing. In this research 96% of respondents themselves reported a positive impact on their well-being; the remaining 4% reported little or no impact. No respondents reported a negative impact.

In terms of Wellbeing scores: At the time of application, respondents reported an average overall well-being score of 22 (63%), after three months they reported a significant increase in their well-being, with an average score of 26 (74%). This increase was most notable amongst those

respondents classed as vulnerable, who reported a lower average well-being score at installation: 20 (58%) at installation, increasing to 25 (72%) after 3 months.

### **Working with Partners**

SFRS is a key partner in our scams work, often people who are most vulnerable to a fire are also most likely to fall victim of a scam.

In June Mr Steve Owen-Hughes, Director of Community Protection & Emergencies for Surrey and SFRS Chief Fire Officer become a Scambassador, raising and promoting the work being done to educate and safeguard residents from fraud and scams. Soon after, SFRS was also recognised as an official Friends Against Scams Organisation.

We continue to deliver Scam Champion training to new fire officers and will be implementing a number of collaborative initiatives we have been working on. A key prevention focused initiative with SFR is multi-purpose visits to vulnerable residents covering both fire safety and scam awareness matters. As part of these, assessment is made of the benefit of installing a call blocker. Considering Covid-19 restrictions these visits may be conducted virtually. We have also been working on joint social media prevention campaigns.

### **Social Media:**

Social Media is integral to the work of the Prevention Team. Using all social media platforms and via our TS alert newsletter, sent to over 1,000 subscribers fortnightly, we provide information, guidance and alerts. Each of our TS Alert subscribers, such as Neighbourhood Watch, D&Bs and charities, distributes the information throughout their own organisations and in turn their followers share it further. During lockdown, one single message posted by the Prevention Team reached 113,314 people via Facebook and 88,600 via twitter.

The work undertaken by the Team has generated a lot of media interest, affording us the opportunity to also provide advice and guidance via local and national television and radio. **Over 100 (mainly scam related) articles relating to information shared by the Service have featured across press, internet articles, radio, and TV since the middle of March.**

Our post on 'brushing' fraud reached 42,433 people via twitter and was followed by an interview on BBC Radio Surrey.

**Service Priority Area 2 - Enabling businesses to get the help and support they need to thrive and grow. Delivering public protection through supporting businesses to comply with their legal responsibilities and ensuring a level playing field.**

Key Performance Indicator	Comments	Status
<p>To increase the number of Primary Authority Partnerships</p>	<p>During quarter 1 the Service has prioritised providing high quality, practical advice to businesses who have faced significant challenges, particularly around their supply chains; in understanding how new business closures legislation affects them; in understanding what rights and responsibilities they have when something has been adversely affected by the pandemic; and in responding to the new trading conditions.</p> <p>Some businesses with whom we have Primary Authority Partnerships were required to close, and some were very busy responding to new demands for their goods/services. One example of our activity in this area was to work closely with the Association of Convenience Stores (who have over 30,000 members nationally) and our partners in Environmental Health to develop complete guidance for convenience stores who wanted to set up new safe home delivery services to support people who were isolating at home (see below)</p> <p>The number of Partnerships we have has increased by 2 to 111 during the quarter.</p>	<p><b>Green</b></p> 
<p>Support to trader approval schemes</p>	<p>The service launched Traders4U early in the year, and despite Covid, there has been a gradual uptake of it during Q1. The Service continues to run “Eat Out, Eat Well” with the support of Health partners and continues to work in partnership with TrustMark. The recent announcement of the new Green Homes Grant is likely to cause an increase in our work with TrustMark in the coming months as any work carried out under the scheme must be completed by a TrustMark registered business.</p>	<p><b>Green</b></p> 

**ACS best practice**

**HOME DELIVERY GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL SHOPS**

This guidance is designed to provide reassurance to convenience store retailers who want to carry out local grocery deliveries to support people self isolating. There are regulations that can easily be followed through normal business practice, including on how you:

- Take orders and payments
- Manage data
- Keep food safe
- Physically deliver products

This guidance explains what these regulations are, and provides simple advice on conducting deliveries in a way that best promotes good hygiene and limits the risk of passing on Covid-19 and other viruses when doing so.

**How do you take an order?**

You can receive an order on the phone, through your own website or another online platform, for example WhatsApp, email, text, a Twitter direct message or a Facebook message.

Whichever approach you use, there are some important principles to consider:

- If you're providing a shopping list or order form, make sure it's clear what you're selling, the quantity (ACS Fair Trading Guide here) and food allergen information (ACS Managing Food Safety and Hygiene Guide here)
- If you're taking generic orders, try to confirm specific details on brand, quantity, it is acceptable to make a reasonable substitution.

You can promote that you are offering a temporary delivery service for customers using this template poster for your store and on your social media platforms. (Download the poster here)

**How do you take payment?**

You can take payment by any method, including:

- Customer and prepaid card payments - this means manually entering the customer's long card number and security code on your terminal.
- Use a Virtual terminal provider like PayPal or Worldpay and other online systems.
- Cash is perfectly acceptable and for best hygiene practice you should ensure handling of cash and food preparation (ACS Managing Food Safety and Hygiene Guide)
- You can offer credit at your discretion but you cannot add on a fee or a charge interest. Typically speaking this will mean allowing customers to take delivery of goods and pay you the agreed amount at a later date.

**ACS best practice**

**HOME DELIVERY GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL SHOPS**

**How to deliver to customers?**

- Check your vehicle insurance. Standard car insurance policies may not cover the use of the vehicle for business purposes and you may need to update your policy. Contact your insurance provider/broker to check if they can extend your business and vehicle insurance to cover home delivery.
- Chilled food can be kept at ambient temperature for a maximum of four hours in one continuous period, so you do not have to have chilled compartment or box for a short journey. However, if a chilled product is kept at a temperature of more than 5°C for more than four hours, it should be destroyed.
- Courtesy to other residents and drivers should be considered when making deliveries, and this sign can be printed and placed on your dashboard. Download the sign from ACS' website here.
- Parking restrictions apply as normal. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government advise that good practice in parking enforcement allows for a 10 minute grace period.

**How to operate a collection service**

All of the guidance on making deliveries will also apply to offering a collection service for customers, their neighbours or family, and local volunteers.

26% of retailers offer click and collect services

12% of convenience stores already offer home grocery delivery

**Reduce the risk of spreading Covid-19**

You should minimise the risk of spreading infection from Covid-19 or any virus. Good practice that should be followed at all times includes:

- Adopt sensible measures to minimise risk especially when delivering to people who have stated they are self isolating, notably by leaving deliveries at the front door. Do not enter their home or directly hand the delivery to them (see the Government's Stay at Home guidance here).
- Washing hands for a minimum of 20 seconds every time you return to the store, and at least every two hours.
- Avoiding shaking hands or direct contact with customers and others when delivering products.
- Cleaning on a regular basis surfaces you regularly touch, including phones, car steering wheels, bicycle handles and car handles.
- If you have less than 250 full time employees you do not have to apply the single use carrier bag charge.

**ACS best practice**

**HOME DELIVERY GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL SHOPS**

**How do you manage data security?**

**GDPR**

We recommend all retailers follow good practice in handling customer data. Retailers should ensure their systems are secure, and only retain customer details as long as it is justifiable to do so. The Secretary of State for Health has stated that "no one should constrain work on responding to coronavirus due to data protection law. Article 6(1)(g) states "processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller". For more information, visit the ICO website here.

**Age restrictions**

All product age restrictions apply, for more details on which products are age restricted and for specific policies on checking age for deliveries, see ACS' Preventing Underage Sales Guide here.

**About this guidance**

This guidance has been developed in consultation with Surrey and Bucks Trading Standards, and Woking Borough Council. ACS Assured Advice guides referenced here are part of ACS' Assured Advice scheme with Surrey & Bucks Trading Standards, Woking Borough Council and Brighthelm County Borough Council which means that ACS members are protected in law if they follow this advice.

All retailers can freely access this advice and follow it as good practice backed by national and local government departments.

**Where to go for help?**

- Speak to your wholesaler or symbol group to see if there are systems they use that you can link with.
- Speak to your card payments provider.
- There are a number of shopping apps and delivery partners you can work with.

**CONTACT**

For more details on this guidance, contact a member of the ACS team on 0202 250000. For more details on ACS: Visit: www.acs.org.uk Call: 0202 250000 Follow us on Twitter: @ACS\_Localshops

ACS | the voice of local shops

Although some enquiries from businesses have continued as normal, the first quarter of the year resulted in a new range of advice specific to the pandemic and reflecting the wide variety of businesses in our local area. Through the business advice line and our Primary Authority Partnerships we have continued to support our business community throughout lockdown.

Questions relating specifically to Covid-19 were answered free of charge and where businesses were furloughed, in recognition of this unique challenge, we suspended charging for the partnership whilst keeping it in place for their return.

Businesses have been supported with diversification to produce or import hand sanitiser, face coverings and PPE, food labelling, alternative ingredients, allergens, food delivery, takeaway, meals for vulnerable residents, and using caterers supplies for retail. Throughout this period there have been significant numbers of questions relating to businesses who could open, how to open and whether businesses should be open.

For our Primary Authority partners we amended the suite of guidance for the Association of Convenience Stores relating to Covid safe trading, deliveries (above) and terms and conditions. The range of advice to other partners included cancellation of contracts and frustrated contracts where installations are necessarily delayed, safe reopening of premises and how this applies in the context of devolution, converting ambient food to frozen food and using available but not current labelling to supplement national food supplies, multipacks and car showrooms.

Two examples of our work with Primary Authority Partners (the British Blind & Shutter Association and the Association of Convenience Stores) were recognised and shared by The Office of Product Safety and Standards (part of BEIS) with other Regulators as good practice to counter uncertainty during the pandemic crisis (see article to the right).

In relation to business closures, new legislation was introduced initially requiring many businesses to close. As the pandemic developed the legislation was regularly changed to reflect the latest understanding of levels of risk posed, often with very little time between the legislation being released and coming into force (often hours rather than weeks). Trading Standards is one of the Services with enforcement powers under this legislation, alongside Environmental Health Services and the Police.

We have been and remain in regular contact with our Environmental Health colleagues to ensure that resources are used appropriately and that we did not both start to deal with the same issue. This approach worked well.

Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Police received complaints about businesses operating when the complainant thought they should not be. Trading Standards directly dealt with 148 of these in Q1. In most cases, these related to businesses who were exempt under the legislation at the time and could therefore legally still be open. Where we had contact with a business that is permitted to remain open, we reinforced the social distancing messages in the guidance.



## Primary Authority News – May 2020

### How you are using Primary Authority to counter uncertainty

#### Providing key advice on contracts

The British Blind & Shutters Association and Trustmark sought advice from their primary authority partner Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards on how contracts for goods and services should be adapted due to coronavirus.

Topics included delays, cancellation rights, consumers no longer affording goods and dealing with home visits when consumers are self-isolating.

The Primary Authority Advice focused on the importance of maintaining effective communication between parties with their members.

#### Supporting thousands of retailers

To support local communities many Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) members diversified into home deliveries. ACS worked with their primary authority partners Woking Borough Council and Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards to get advice on adapting practices for click and collect, delivery charges, social distancing, cleaning, waste storage, alternative payment methods, managing data, transporting chilled foods and price increases. They have also worked with their primary authority partners to resolve enforcement issues.



Where a business was found to still be open when it should be shut, we took a measured approach to the situation, following the College of Policing guidance to: **Engage, Explain, Encourage** and **Enforce**.

There has generally been a high level of compliance by businesses and all businesses that we have received complaints about have engaged with us positively and no prohibition orders or fixed penalty notices have been issued by Trading Standards.

**Service Priority Area 3** - Improving wellbeing and public health; tackling the supply of unsafe, dangerous or age restricted products and working to maintain the integrity of the food chain, including food quality, nutrition, and animal health.

Key Performance Indicator	Comments	Status
Number and estimated value of unsafe/non-compliant goods removed from or prevented from entering the supply chain.	After reviewing nearly 5m items, over 700,000 unsafe or non-compliant products were stopped from entering the supply chain by the Service during Q1 with an estimated impact to society of over £23m. These products were mainly face masks and other protective equipment related to the outbreak of Covid. This is a very large increase in work in this area compared to last year (when around 25,000 unsafe/non-compliant items were prevented from entering the supply chain) as the supply of safe PPE became a national priority during the outbreak. Significant imports were (unusually) seen via Heathrow due to the speed of air freight vs the more usual sea freight for this type of product.	Green ↑
Number of premises tested for selling illicit or age restricted products inappropriately, and approximate value of seized goods.	No test purchases were carried out in quarter 1 due to other activities being prioritised by the Service and the Police whom we regularly work together with in this area, as well as publication of guidance not to use under age persons for this type of operation due to the potential risks to them.	Red ↓
Market surveillance projects carried out, including in relation to food	The Service prioritised market surveillance work around the supply of PPE during Q1. With the majority of the team's time spent at Heathrow, and Food Standards Agency guidance setting the expectation Trading Standards Services should not undertake proactive project work that required visiting shops/food businesses; no other market surveillance projects were carried out.	Red ↓

**Assessing the Compliance of PPE:**

In order to assess compliance and suitability of PPE the importers have been required to produce documentation to show that they meet the required protective standards. During the course of the checks carried out by officers numerous irregularities with the documentation have been discovered, including:

- missing information
- counterfeit documentation (see example to the right)
- misleading documentation purporting to show required compliance
- documentation showing compliance with standards that are for countries outside of the UK/EU (which do not meet our requirements)



Where face masks or other PPE being imported through Heathrow could not be shown to be safe as PPE and could not satisfactorily be repurposed as non-protective 'barrier masks' for general public use they were denied entry into the UK and Europe.