

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Summary – April 2023 to mid-March 2024





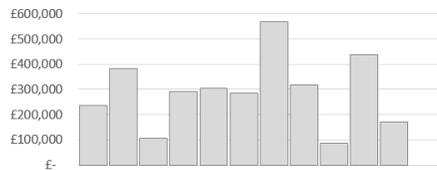
Service Priority Area 1

Protecting the most vulnerable. Tackling fraudulent illegal and unfair trading practices, including serious and organised crime.

- To increase the financial impact of our investigations and interventions including with scam victims.
- Actions to stop rogue traders operating in Buckinghamshire and Surrey
- Social media reach
- Number of vulnerable residents supported

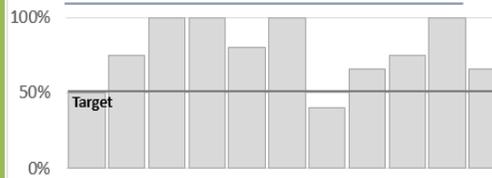
Increase the financial impact as a result of scam and fraud interventions

£172,383 ▲



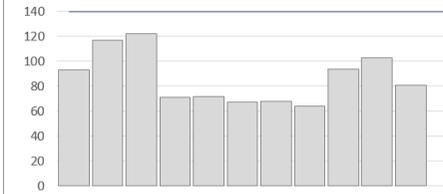
% of cases completed in 200 working days

66% ▼



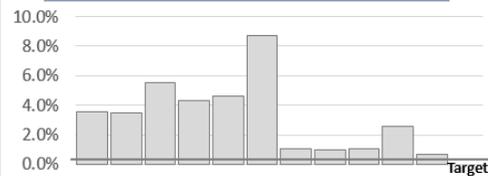
Number of vulnerable residents supported

81 ▼



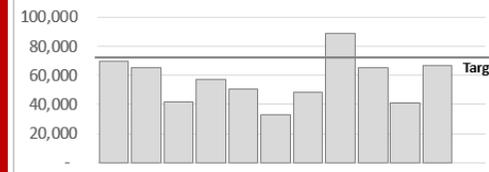
Social Media Reach - keep residents safe from scams (Engagement)

0.7% ▼



Social Media Reach - keep residents safe from scams (Impressions)

66,638 ▲





Commentary

As a result of scam interventions undertaken by the Service, to the end of February the Service had saved residents over £3.1 million (compared to just under £2.9m last year). This included £155,000 voluntarily returned to the victim of fraud by a defendant who had pleaded guilty last year and had been sentenced with immediate custody. Proceeds of Crime confiscation proceedings against the criminal remain ongoing.

Since the start of April the Service has supported 952 people subject to scams to help stop this happening again (compared to 642 last year). The Service has installed 106 call blockers this year, with now a total of 649 649 active call blockers installed preventing nearly 50,000 thousand scam and nuisance calls from reaching vulnerable residents. With an additional 18 installed this year, there are now a total of 49 door cameras installed by the Service in the homes of our most vulnerable residents.

Problems in the court system persist, having a detrimental effect on all concerned. Alongside other authorities in the Southeast we have written to the Minister for Justice to suggest how the situation could be improved. A total of 55 investigations have been completed this year into a range of illegal and unfair trading practices including unfair trading, fraud, underage sales, money laundering, supplying illegal tobacco and vapes, counterfeit goods, food and animal welfare.

The four convictions during the year have come from three guilty pleas and one person being found guilty following a one-day trial. The trial conviction related to a food business failing to declare allergens in its' takeaway food despite repeated advice verbally and in writing and being given a Food Improvement Notice requiring them to comply with this legal requirement. The business was ordered to pay a fine and the Service's costs. The second conviction related to the sale of vapes to underage test purchasers. The defendant initially made a sale and was given advice but four months later sold again. They were fined and ordered to contribute to the Service's costs. One company is awaiting sentencing after admitting the supply of illegal tobacco and the final guilty plea relates to money laundering offences and is awaiting sentence.

During the year intelligence identified a problem with prolific levels of counterfeit goods being sold at a local market. In September 2024, along with partners and Police colleagues, we conducted a day of action to remove illegal goods and inform and educate all parties involved. Since then Trading Standards officers have worked closely with the land owners and the market operators to enable a safe and legal market to operate. We are pleased to report the volume of illegal goods being sold has significantly reduced (estimated value £3.2 million) allowing other traders selling legal goods at the market to thrive. This work continues.

Commentary Continued

The Service has undertaken a range of activities to inform residents and equip them with knowledge and support to reduce the chance of them losing money to scams. During the year this included running webinars (some with British Sign Language interpretation) about scams, running a "Snow Room for Scammers" campaign around Christmas, attending community events to talk to residents about scams, vapes and illegal tobacco as well as maintaining active social media sites and groups dedicated to our amazing Scam Champion volunteers who have contributed over 7,000 hours to share their knowledge about scams and to support their local communities to be more resilient to frauds.

Two examples of residents being supported include a 90-year-old Buckinghamshire resident was targeted by fraudsters into handing over her life savings through what transpired to be an extremely complex fraud. When our officers became aware of the situation, they were able to intervene and recover the resident's money in full and install a call blocker to help with future targeting. In another case Mr C, an elderly, isolated and vulnerable Surrey Resident was being prolifically targeted by postal scammers. Through prolonged interventions by our Prevention Team Mr C has disengaged from the multiple fraudsters that were targeting him and he no longer receives scam mail. He has trained to become a Scam Marshal, sending all postal items he identifies as fraudulent on to the National Trading Standards Scams Team. Our intervention has also empowered Mr C to cancel the multiple subscriptions he had signed up to saving him vast sums of money. Mr C has fed back that through engaging with our officers he has renewed confidence in coping with the challenges he faces and feels much happier.

Since the autumn of 2023 we have adopted a different approach to our communications work. Subscriptions to the TS bi-weekly TA Alert! newsletter increased, along with requests for call blockers as a result of our Christmas campaign. The post on the right shared on Facebook resulted in a total of 23,346 impressions.



Stop! Think fraud



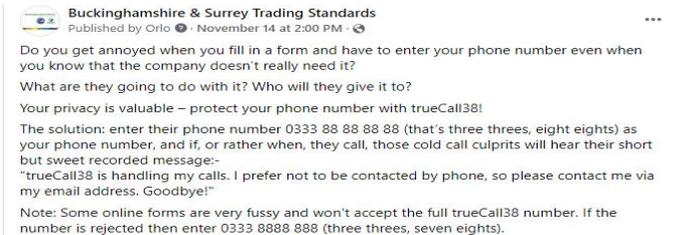
In just one year, 1 in 17 adults were victims of fraud. What's the risk of fraud happening to you? Find out why anybody can become a victim of fraud and why everyone should take steps to protect themselves.



Trading Standards @Bucks... · 27/12/2023 ...

If you are meeting with loved ones at this festive time, why not have a conversation about phone scams. We have FREE call blockers that can put a stop to them. orlo.uk/O4Ncb

There is snow room for phone scams at this or any other time of year!

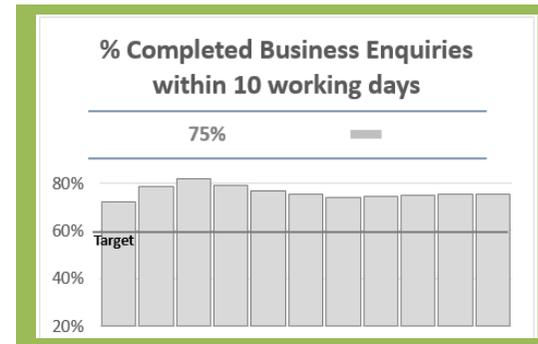
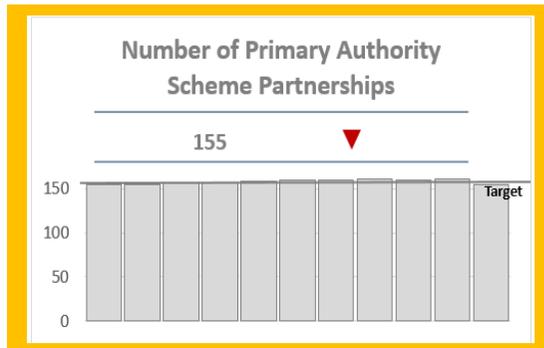




Service Priority Area 2

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.

- Supporting businesses to understand and deliver compliance through Primary Authority Partnerships.
- Percentage of requests for business advice completed within 10 working days.





planning and business
Authority service
at service happy with service
business planning professional
Authority Partnership
overall service business decisions

business compliance authority agreement
helpful to our business answers for business
service business primary partnership
Excellent service
grateful for this service
primary authority
Buckinghamshire Business



ACS | the voice of local shops

Commentary

There is significant turbulence in the business advice market. The economic environment is continuing to show in changes to business operation and structures with various enterprises merging or leaving Primary Authority. This has been accompanied by a lack of capacity within our Single Point of Contact (SPOC) network for Environmental Health and Fire and parallel changes in our own operation.

During the year Woking BC notified us they had to cease Primary Authority and we have been working with them to relocate their 22 partnerships for Environmental Health. Our partnership with the States of Guernsey ended as the regulatory structures there changed. More recently our SPOC partner in Wales has decided to leave the network and directly manage their partnerships which affects a further 4 businesses. On a positive note, Surrey Heath have been very supportive in helping with the moves and West Northamptonshire and Eastleigh Councils have both joined the network for Environmental Health which may increase capacity a little in the future. The changes will continue to dampen our overall partnership numbers as some leaving businesses will also take their trading standard partnership to their new provider. Whilst we are taking actions to mitigate the issue, our total partnerships have therefore fallen short of the target for the year, currently sitting at 155.

The business team continues to work with the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) to provide a legal backstop service with three referrals currently under investigation. The most recent referrals related to consumer protection legislation, potential breaches of the Cancer Act and claims relating to the treatment of health conditions. In addition to formal referrals, the Team supports the ASA with advice to assist them to fulfil their broader functions which has included training new ASA team members about the Backstop, providing an opinion for draft ASA enforcement notices relating to Vape advertisements and responding to a complaint about the ASA.

Following a successful pilot of a legal backstop arrangement with the Office for Students (OfS), we are pleased to report the funded contract has been extended for the 24/25 year. To date the referred establishments have positively worked with us to amend unfair terms and conditions, we have also advised the OfS where they have been considering specific terms and shared information about student scams and tools to support them. We have worked together to explore the OfS referral system and improve processes where possible.

Commentary Continued

The service continues to advise on a wide range of subjects with recent topics including calorie labelling, appliance safety recalls, food recalls, faulty products, food labelling for imports, the use of “plant based” stickers, age verification technology.

The voluntary business satisfaction survey has delivered 60 responses to date (results above) with examples of some positive comments being:

“the advice given was helpful, thorough, and prompt”

“He was clear in his advice, calm, reassuring and professional”

“Very efficient and extremely helpful service”

“Good relationship to discuss issues pragmatically”

“We find the support we receive as part of our Primary Authority partnership invaluable”

“He is always willing to accommodate our queries and provide helpful guidance and advice. We're very grateful for the assistance”

“I have been extremely anxious and stressed about the situation, but your staff have been exemplary - I would have been lost without them”

We have supported some of our partners with industry events attending and speaking where appropriate, always with the aim of improving compliance and educating businesses. We have also attended the OPSS National Shared Learning day which serves as an excellent update on all things Primary Authority and an opportunity to network with and learn from other providers.



The Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) Safe and Responsible Retailer Conference in Birmingham expert panel



The OPSS Shared Learning Day at Aston Villa Stadium



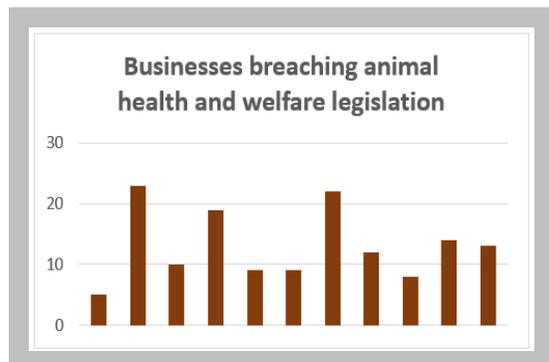
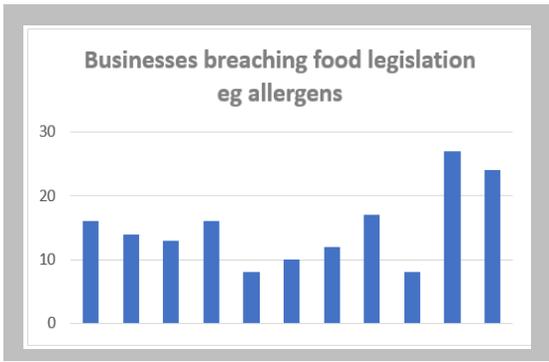
Delivering OPSS pilot offering free product safety support to provide tailored business support to UK- based online sellers.

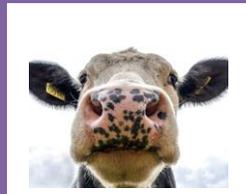


Service Priority Area 3

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.

- Number and estimated value of unsafe/non-compliant goods removed from or prevented from entering the supply chain
- Number of premises tested for selling illicit or age restricted products inappropriately, and approximate value of seized goods.
- Market surveillance activity carried out, including in relation to food and
- Animal health e.g., samples taken, visits conducted, seizures made.





Commentary

Preventing unsafe items being imported through Heathrow: We have stopped over 80,000 unsafe and non-compliant items across 300+ products entering the UK market since April 2023. Most notably refused entry were light-up foam sticks for children's parties that had an easily removeable foam piece that was a choking hazard, a large shipment of Neswar Snuff that was for oral use and therefore banned, a range of electrical products with non-compliant plugs causing electrocution and fire risks, cosmetics and "lash lift kits" without appropriate labelling and supporting documentation, such as no ingredients and a consignment of 20,000 "0% nicotine" vapes that contained high levels of nicotine.

Age restricted sales – 110 underage test purchases have been made, with the priority on vapes (see separate report) but with a small number of test purchases of other products with partners (police, fire, and licensing teams) including alcohol (no sales), fireworks (no sales) and 1 nitrous oxide (no sale). Where sales are made to the underage volunteers, these are followed with investigation and licence reviews are requested when appropriate. One person was fined after pleading guilty to selling a vape to the underage volunteer and fined £276 by the Court. One person accepted a Simple Caution and 10 others have received written warnings/written advice for selling to underage children. All will be re-tested to ensure that they have taken on the advice given.

We are continuing to tackle the sale of **illicit tobacco** focusing on disruptive activities, including locating and seizing illegal stock. To the end of February the Service had seized nearly 100,000 cigarettes and over 16kg of hand rolling tobacco. Working with partners including the Police and HMRC on this activity, three cars linked to the supply of illegal tobacco were recently seized by the police during joint operations.

Following **cost-of-living projects** started last year, this year the Service has been working to check the accuracy of weighing and measuring equipment including petrol pumps and scales in use for sales of food. Scales in butchers, greengrocers, supermarkets, and corner shops, were tested to make sure that people get what they are paying for. Over 40 machines were inspected, with the vast majority found to be within tolerance. The 14% which were found to be outside of tolerance were in the consumers favour (they were getting more by weight than they were paying for), and 2 instruments found in use for trade were unstamped.

Commentary Continued

Electric blanket safety testing was undertaken in October/November and February/March (in Burnham, Chesham, Woking, Leatherhead, Horley, Woking, Farnham, Epsom, High Wycombe, and Aylesbury). A total of 146 blankets were tested with around 71% found to be unsafe compared to 80% last year. Unsafe blankets were destroyed and replaced for free due to a generous donation from one of our Primary Authority Partners, Dreams.

Food work – In addition to the prosecution of a business for not declaring allergens in their takeaway food despite extensive verbal and written advice and then a formal notice requiring them to do so, other examples of food issues dealt with include resolving a novel food being sold without appropriate authorisation from the Food Standards Agency (the business has responded to a formal notice and the product is no longer being supplied whilst authorisation is sought) and tracing back the ingredients used in a product sold locally that contained undeclared allergens (the 'gluten free' flour the local producer had bought was not gluten free as claimed).

Projects to take samples of foods and have them analysed to ensure they are safe and labelled correctly is ongoing, including: locally produced milk and milk powders tested for levels of lead in milk (none with excessive levels); locally manufactured beers (all satisfactory in relation to the declared alcohol content); locally imported snack foods, where 18 of the 19 samples were found to have non permitted additives, non-permitted health and nutrition claims and incorrect labelling.

Some examples of information shared with residents include:

 **Trading Standards @Bucks...** · 15/02/2024 ...
Success for Officers tackling the importation of illegal vapes!
A consignment of 20,000 mislabelled devices have been detained at Heathrow.
The devices all declared as 0% **nicotine**, exceeded the permitted max. strength of 2%.
The value is estimated to be £500,000.



 **Trading Standards @Bucks_SurreyTS** · 1d ...
Do you keep **poultry**?
To help manage potential disease outbreaks like Avian Influenza new mandatory registration requirements are being implemented for bird keepers in Great Britain.
Find out more-
orlo.uk/Bzphe



 **Trading Standards @Buck...** · 06/03/2024 ...
Did you know food labelled as **Vegan** may pose a risk to people with allergies and intolerances due to cross contamination.
Don't take the risk check the label.
Find out more-
orlo.uk/JGale

