

Meeting of:	Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, 18 December 2024
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	All Scrutiny Committees
Report Title:	Shared Regulatory Services Overview and Update Report
Purpose of Report:	This report provides an update on the work undertaken by the Shared Regulatory Service (SRS)
Report Owner:	Director of Environment and Housing
Responsible Officer:	Head of Shared Regulatory Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	No Elected Members have been consulted. The following officers have been consulted; Assistant Director Street Scene, Cardiff Council, Chief Officer Legal, Regulatory and Human Resources, Bridgend County Borough Council
Policy Framework:	This is a matter delegated to the Joint Committee
Executive Summary:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report appraises the Committee of the work of the service and progress toward completing the actions contained in the SRS Business Plans. 	

Recommendations

The Joint Committee is asked to:

1. Consider, note, and agree the contents of this report
2. Approve the 2024-25 Port Health Plan
3. Authorise the Head of Shared Regulatory Services to make administrative amendments to the Port Health Plan 2024-25, should the need arise.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. The report appraises the Committee of the work of the service and the progress toward completing the actions contained in the SRS Business Plans.
2. To ensure that the Shared Regulatory Service has the necessary arrangements in place to deliver its obligations in respect of Port Health.
3. To enable minor changes to be made, should the need arise during the lifetime of the Port Health Plan, without the need for it to be brought back to the Joint Committee.

1. Background

- 1.1** SRS Business Plans are developed in consultation with stakeholders; they inform and direct the work of the service and contribute toward the corporate priorities of each partner Council. The service has five key aims, namely:

- Improving Health and Wellbeing
- Safeguarding the Vulnerable
- Protecting the Environment
- Supporting the Local Economy
- Maximising the use of resources

This report contains information outlining how the service is working to achieve better outcomes for residents and businesses within the region through a series of different actions and work programmes. The report provides an overview of Q2 performance and other activities undertaken up to the end of November 2024.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

Human Resources

- 2.1** The sickness absence level at the end of Quarter 2 was 3.78 days per FTE person overall.

	Short Term Days Lost per FTE	Long Term Days Lost per FTE	Total Days lost Per FTE
Q2 2024-25	0.92	2.85	3.78
Q2 2023-24	0.75	1.54	2.29
Q2 2022-23	1.40	4.89	6.29
Q2 2021-22	0.61	3.15	3.76

When compared with the same time frame in 2023-24, Q2 saw an increase in the SRS sickness absence figure from 2.29 days per full time equivalent member of staff. Within this there was a slight increase in the short-term days lost to 0.92 days per FTE and a more significant increase in the long-term sickness absence rate to 2.85 days lost per FTE. The level of long-term sickness absence is however well below that seen historically in the same quarter of 2022-23 and 2021-22. Once again, there are no discernible trends behind these figures, and sickness absence for the Shared Service compares favourably with that of other service areas.

2.2 Staff retention across SRS has been more stable during this financial year than at any point during its near 10-year history, with just one officer vacancy at the present time. It certainly seems to be the case that the various strands of the ‘*Growing our Own*’ approach of recent years have contributed to this stability, and the Service has an enviable skillset spanning the regulatory services sphere.

2.3 A recent Directors of Public Protection Wales (DPPW) Workforce survey has shown that nearly 20% of both Environmental Health staff and Trading Standards staff are over the age of 55. This figure rises to some 26% in the case of Licencing. Members will recall that to date however, no regulatory apprenticeship has been available in Wales. Given the above statistics, this has been a cause of frustration, particularly as the Level 4 Regulatory Compliance Officer apprenticeship has been available in England since 2018 and has proved to be transformational in recruitment into the regulatory professions.

2.4 SRS has led on the development of a similar apprenticeship for Wales and this journey has so far taken five years. In a major step forward in May of this year, the necessary qualification was designated by Qualifications Wales as the Level 4 Diploma in Regulatory Compliance (see the [Agored Cymru Level 4 Diploma in Regulatory Compliance](#)).

More recently, on 1st November 2024, the apprenticeship framework was published (see <https://acwcerts.co.uk/web/framework/regulatory-compliance>), and this means that the recruitment of regulatory apprentices into the Service is now within touching distance. This is a hugely positive development for the sustainability of the regulatory professions well into the future.

Financial Position Quarter 2

- 2.5** The financial monitoring report for the period 1st April to 30th September 2024 is attached at **Appendix 1**. It has been prepared from the consolidated figures gathered from each Authority for this period. The Service is forecasting an outturn position at year end of a £264k overspend against the 2024-25 gross revenue budget. This position includes an historic Authority-specific shortfall in the region of £200k relating to taxi licensing in Cardiff.

Performance Monitoring

- 2.6** Joint Committee members are provided with data on activity levels to help reassure local members at each council that SRS activity continues to tackle issues across the region. Performance data for quarter 2 of 2024-25 is set out at **Appendix 2** and reported to each Council in line with their performance management regimes and existing service plans.
- 2.7** The statutory 2024-25 Food Law Enforcement Service Plan for SRS (approved by the Joint Committee at its last meeting in September) references the historic staffing shortfall the Service has in relation to its responsibilities for Food Hygiene and Food Standards. As set out in the 2024-25 Food Law Enforcement Service Plan, this shortfall in budgeted posts stands at 6.5 officers when compared to the number needed to meet the demands placed on the Food Safety service in delivering the full food programme in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice. Contractors paid on a per-visit basis, have traditionally helped to plug this gap and this has continued, albeit to a lesser extent in the current financial year, with a significant positive impact on the Q2 food performance figures.
- 2.8** The Service updates below provide more detail and context for the Joint Committee on some of the key areas of work during the quarter.

Improving Public Health

Port Health Plan 2024-25

- 2.9** The document attached at **Appendix 3** is the Port Health Plan for 2024-25, the last of the SRS operational plans for the year. It sets out how the Shared Service is fulfilling its role of protecting public health by carrying out a range of health controls.
- 2.10** The Plan explains how the Port Health Team prevents and controls infectious disease coming into Cardiff, Barry and the surrounding areas via the ports and airport to protect the health of the public. The Plan also details the delivery mechanisms for the statutory obligations in relation to food safety, imported food control, ship sanitation, disinsection, waste control and animal health.

Food Standards Agency audits

- 2.11** The Food Law Code of Practice requires food authorities to ensure that there are documented procedures in place for dealing with food emergencies or incidents. This includes any serious hazard incidents notified to the local authority by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) or from other sources, both inside and outside normal office hours. Responding to urgent incidents outside normal working hours is crucial in ensuring food safety and to protect public health.

2.12 In order to test out the effectiveness of the systems in place across Wales, the FSA carried out **an audit of out of hours arrangements** across all 22 authorities. On Saturday, 27th July, an FSA Auditor attempted to get in touch with SRS using the contact list held by the Agency. Notification has recently been received that:

‘Auditors were able to confirm that Shared Regulatory Services has effective arrangements across all three local authorities to deal with emergencies outside of normal working hours.’

2.13 The November 2024 FSA report on the Audit of Local Authority Out of Hours Emergency Response in Wales is attached as **Appendix 4**. It shows that a total of 18 of the 22 authorities fully passed the audit with appropriately authorised officers being spoken to in a timely manner. The success of SRS in this audit is due in no small part of course to the professionalism and goodwill of staff.

2.14 At the end of November, notification was received from the FSA that the Service will also be subject to a broader-based audit in early February 2025. This **audit of Food Hygiene and Food Standards delivery** will have as its focus the extent to which the Service has been able to recover its performance post-COVID to full compliance with the Food Law Code of Practice. The audit in the New Year will also explore how recommendations made by the FSA in its last audit of the Service (pre-COVID) have been addressed. Members will be advised in due course on arrangements for the February audit and of course the outcome.

Safeguarding the Vulnerable

New offences for supplying corrosive substances to the under 18s

2.15 The use of acid and other corrosive substances in violent attacks has been on the increase in recent years with devastating and often life changing consequences. Data collated by the Acid Survivors Trust International charity suggests that in the UK, 710 violent acid attacks were reported in 2022 compared with 421 in 2021, an increase of nearly 70%. A range of motivations have been reported as leading to these dreadful attacks (including robbery, organised criminality, gang related, domestic abuse, hate crime and honour-based violence), with around a fifth of offenders using corrosives being under 18 (in cases where the age of the offender was known).

2.16 Now fully in force, the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 creates new offences for:

- Selling an age-restricted corrosive product to a person under the age of 18
- Delivering, or arranging to deliver, corrosive substances to residential addresses or to lockers (in the case of remote sales)

Enforcement responsibility falls to Trading Standards, and a small amount of direct grant Home Office funding has been made available to councils in England and Wales for the 22-23, 23-24 and 24-25 financial years. The purpose of this earmarked funding is to enable the delivery of business education initiatives, as well as enforcement, in respect of underage sales of corrosive substances.

Licensing Gambling Policy

- 2.17** The Gambling Commission is the unified regulator for gambling in Great Britain and it is responsible for granting operating and personal licences for commercial gambling operators. However, the responsibility for licensing land-based premises, as well as functions in relation to issuing permits and regulations, rests with local authorities. The Gambling Commission issues statutory Guidance on the manner in which local authorities are to exercise their functions under the Gambling Act 2005.
- 2.18** The Council, as a licensing authority, must publish on a three-year basis a Statement of Licensing Principles, governing the policy, regulation and decision-making process relating to gambling premises. The approval of the Statement of Licensing Principles is a Council function and carries out a number of regulatory functions, including to:
- Licence premises for gambling activities (betting shops, bingo, adult gaming centres).
 - Grant permits for gaming and gaming machines in clubs and miners' welfare institutes.
 - Regulate gaming and gaming machines in alcohol-licensed premises.
 - Grant permits to family entertainment centres (FECs) for the use of certain lower stake gaming machines.
- 2.19** In 2024, Cardiff, Bridgend and the Vale Councils each carried out a consultation on a review of their Statement of Licensing principles. The reviews indicated no evidence of new trends or concerns in land based gambling in their areas, and therefore no major policy changes are proposed. It is possible that Government may introduce changes to legislation which impact on land based gambling over the next two years. We will keep the policy under review over this period in case legislative changes require amendments to the policy.
- 2.20** The Statement of Licensing Principles has been endorsed by the Vale and BCBC at full Council and the intention is to seek approval from Cardiff in January 2025.

Licensing Enforcement

- 2.21** Within Cardiff, Licensing Enforcement Officers recently took enforcement action against unauthorised food sellers operating outside Cardiff University Student Union following complaints received from the university. Files are being compiled for consideration of prosecution in three cases against individuals for offences under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 (illegal street trading), and the Licensing Act 2003.
- 2.22** The Licensing team is also working with South Wales Police on a joint operation carrying out visits of licensed premises to ensure compliance with their licence and conditions in the run up to the festive period. Other operations scheduled include an operation targeting vehicle standards with the DVSA and South Wales Police and a mystery shopper exercise to test compliance with the Equality Act in relation to licensed taxis.

- 2.23** Across Bridgend and the Vale, Officers have recently undertaken two mystery shopper operations for taxis and private hires using an assistance dog to test compliance with the Equalities Act. We are pleased to report that all those vehicles approached were fully compliant. We aim to repeat this at some point in the New Year. The team has also carried out a number of joint operations with the school transport team in both the Vale and Bridgend; checking vehicle and driver compliance on the school runs.
- 2.24** In Bridgend, a joint operation with Immigration Officers has taken place in respect of licensed premises within the area and we have scheduled dates with South Wales Police to carry out visits to licensed premises to ensure compliance in the run up to the festive period.

Supporting the local economy

- 2.25** The Service continues to support a range of local, regional and national businesses through the Primary Authority scheme. Members will recall that our commitment to the Primary Authority principle brings benefits to the various business partners and also to ourselves as regulators through the ability to recover costs in this area of work.
- 2.26** The Service has recently entered into a new Primary Authority partnership with the National Hair and Beauty Federation (NHBF). The Federation has around 5,000 members across England and Wales and is committed to driving up standards in the hair and beauty sector. This latest Primary Authority partnership will focus primarily on the areas of Health and Safety and Trading Standards, including age restrictions and pricing. As a co-ordinated partnership, the reach of the Service through this arrangement is significant and is a good example of how we connect right across the business spectrum from small independents to multi-national concerns.
- 2.27** With the Welsh Government Special Procedures licensing regime having been launched on 29th November, applicants will need to demonstrate that they hold the statutory qualification to become licensed, namely the Level 2 Award in Infection Prevention and Control for Special Procedures Practitioners. As an accredited training centre for this course, SRS has been providing this training for some time and anticipates an uptick in interest over the course of the 9-month window for practitioners to transition to the new licensing regime. In addition, a contract has recently been agreed with a major retailer to train a minimum of 30 members of staff.

National Safeguarding Week

- 2.28** National Safeguarding Week took place recently (18th – 22nd November 2024) . As part of this week of action, officers from SRS ran a series of rogue trader days across each of the three Local Authority areas. These events allowed officers to speak to nearly 50 separate traders to offer them advice and guidance to ensure that they were fully aware of all relevant consumer protection laws. A number of trader advice packages were also provided to some traders.

In addition, officers provided training to nearly 60 Women's Institute Members on doorstep crime and awareness, as part of a Senedd event entitled Stay Safe, Keep Safe.

Recent Awards Celebrating Success

- 2.29** The service has won two awards over recent weeks recognising some key areas of work of the service. At the 2024 South Wales Police Awards, one of our Investigators and a Sergeant from South Wales Police won the Problem Solving in Partnership Award, for their work on Operation Usk. As Members will be aware this operation investigated and dismantled an organised crime group who used several stores in Cardiff, Barry and Bridgend as a front for selling unlawful tobacco products and/or psychoactive substances. It allowed them to launder money totalling £1.8 million, which is thought to be one of the biggest cases of illegal tobacco supply in Wales. The award recognised the case as an excellent example of how two agencies came together to address a problem that was negatively affecting local communities.
- 2.30** Our Wales Illegal Money Lending Team won a Credit Union Partner Award at the Credit Unions of Wales Awards 2024. This award recognised the team's commitment to promoting the benefits of and access to credit unions, and preventing vulnerable people from becoming victims of illegal lending and turning to unscrupulous loan sharks.

Making the best use of resources

- 2.31** The Service continues to identify smarter ways of working and embracing digital transformation principles to make the very best use of resources. Work to perfect the use of handheld devices during Officer inspections continues in this regard, as does exploration of options to streamline the booking system for businesses to book staff onto SRS training courses.
- 2.32** Continuing this theme, a recent internal audit has focussed on the infrastructure for payments into the Shared Service. It is hoped that the audit will identify ways in which payment options can be made sleeker and more intuitive for customers while at the same time bringing efficiencies to the Service. The SRS Senior Management Team looks forward to working through the audit outcomes and considering its recommendations.

Protecting the Environment

Trading Standards Impacts and Outcomes framework

- 2.33** In 2018, the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers (ACTSO) launched its *Impacts and Outcomes* framework as a means of demonstrating the vital contribution of Trading Standards Services in England and Wales in:
- Tackling Detriment and Preventing Harm
 - Supporting the Local Economy, and
 - Promoting Health and Wellbeing

Rather than following a 'league table' format, the Impacts and Outcomes framework reports annually on the *combined* effect of Trading Standards Services across a range of key outputs. The national report for the 2023-24 financial year has recently been published and is included as **Appendix 5**. The report is packed full of compelling facts and figures, not least the headline finding that during the year, Trading Standards Services across England and Wales collectively saved over £905 million in consumer and business detriment.

This equates to an incredible £8.39 saved for every £1 spent on Trading Standards Services.

- 2.34** SRS has contributed performance data into the Impacts and Outcomes framework each year since its launch and it was pleasing to see the national report for 23-24 highlight the contribution of the Service in a good practice case study on our minimum energy efficiency standards work (MEES). Further analysis of the contribution of SRS to Trading Standards impacts and outcomes will be provided at the March 2025 meeting of the Joint Committee by which time the Wales-only report will have been received.

Enforcement Activity

- 2.35** Details of recent cases investigated by the SRS that have resulted in prosecution are set out in **Appendix 6** to this report.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires the SRS to underpin decision making by contributing to the seven well-being goals of the Act, following the five ways of working, and consequently undertaking actions that will have a positive impact on people living in the future as well as those living today. Consequently, SRS seeks to work in the following ways:

- Looking to the long term
- Taking an integrated approach;
- Involving a diversity of the population in the decisions affecting them;
- Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions
- Acting to prevent problems from occurring or getting worse.

- 3.2** The fundamental purpose of the SRS (here defined as trading standards, environmental health and licensing) is to protect residents, consumers, businesses and communities. The broad range of responsibilities can make it difficult to demonstrate succinctly their impact and value in terms of the wellbeing; the SRS Business Plans provide members with detail and articulate how those statutory responsibilities, and subsequent activities, contribute toward wellbeing across the region. This update report reflects some of the activities undertaken in recent months to promote the sustainable development principle.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1 One of the key strategic themes for the Shared Regulatory Service is *Protecting the Local Environment*.
- 4.2 The SRS Business Plan articulates the work carried out under this theme to deliver on the corporate priorities for the participant Councils, including their ambitions to minimise climate change and impacts on the natural environment.
- 4.3 In this context, the Joint Committee is regularly updated on the contribution of the Shared Service to this agenda, for example through its work in the areas of animal health and welfare, air quality, contaminated land, energy efficiency in the private rented sector and investigating greenwashing claims or environmental fraud.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1 The Participants' contribution towards the Shared Regulatory Service is recharged on a quarterly basis, based upon the approved budgets for 2023/24. Accounting for the full year is reported to the Committee at the Annual General Meeting.

Employment

- 5.2 There are no immediate employment implications associated with this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3 There are no immediate legal implications associated with this report.

6. Background Papers

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Q2 2024-25 Financial report (includes Annex 1)
- Appendix 2 SRS Performance measures - Q2 2024-25
- Appendix 3 Port Health Plan 2024-25
- Appendix 4 FSA Audit Report - Local Authority Out of Hours Emergency Response
- Appendix 5 National Trading Standards Impacts and Outcomes report 2023-24
- Appendix 6 Details of concluded SRS prosecutions

Meeting of:	Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, 18 December 2024
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Homes and Safe Communities
Report Title:	Q2 2024/25 Shared Regulatory Services Revenue Monitoring Report
Purpose of Report:	To Provide the Partner Authorities with the Financial Performance of Shared Regulatory Services
Report Owner:	Matt Bowmer - Head of Service/s151 Officer
Responsible Officer:	Miles Punter – Director of Environment & Housing
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Head of Service for Shared Regulatory Services
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Shared Regulatory Services

Executive Summary:

- The £8.813m 2024/25 Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) Budget was agreed by Committee on the 31st January 2024. The net budget increase of £168k included an assumed 4% pay award.
- As at Q2, the SRS is forecasting overall overspend of £264k. This position includes an historical Cardiff Authority specific budget shortfall of circa £200k relating to Taxi Licensing. The forecast outturn position is illustrated in the following tables:

	Gross Budget	Forecast Outturn	Outturn Variance
Authority	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Bridgend	1,917	1,882	35
Cardiff	5,152	5,443	(291)
Vale	1,744	1,752	(8)
Total Gross Expenditure	8,813	9,077	(264)

	Core	Authority Specific	Total
	(Over)/Under spend	(Over)/Under spend	(Over)/Under spend
Category	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Bridgend	(20)	55	35
Cardiff	(43)	(248)	(291)
Vale	(15)	7	(8)
Total (Over)/Underspend	(78)	(186)	(264)

Recommendations

1. That the position with regard to the 2024/25 forecast outturn position is noted.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. That the members are aware of the position with regard to the 2024/25 forecast outturn position pertinent to the Board and relevant Scrutiny Committee.

1. Background

- 1.1 The 2024/25 Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) Gross Revenue Budget was approved on 31st January 2024.
- 1.2 Currently, the Service has one member of staff on secondment on a 0.5 FTE basis. The associated salary costs are being recovered from Public Health Wales.
- 1.3 The revenue position for 2024/25 continues to be challenging for the SRS both operationally and financially, due to the ongoing implications of the Cost-of-Living Crisis where prices are continuing to rise in excess of available funds. The SRS has continued to see additional pressure across the Service in the form of the annual pay award. On a positive note, the income generation ability of the Service has finally recovered after the impact of the COVID pandemic.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 The Gross Revenue Budget and forecast outturn position for 2024/25 are shown in the tables below, with the position in respect of each of the partners detailed to include both Authority Specific (overspend £186k) and Core expenditure positions (overspend £78k). The service is forecasting a £264k overspend against a gross revenue budget of £8.813m, as illustrated in the following table:

Table 1

	Gross	Forecast	Outturn
	Budget	Outturn	Variance
Authority	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Bridgend	1,917	1,882	35
Cardiff	5,152	5,443	(291)
Vale	1,744	1,752	(8)
Total Gross Expenditure	8,813	9,077	(264)

- 2.2 Over the last few quarters, the ability of the Service to recruit into key roles has improved and retention levels have been more encouraging than in recent years. Given the difficult recruitment landscapes for regulatory services across the country however, there is no room for complacency. The 'growing our own' approach is now firmly embedded with staff being developed both in their roles and in the gaining of professional qualifications, enabling them to progress within the Service as future vacancies arise.
- 2.3 A full breakdown of the outturn position is shown in Annex 1.
- 2.4 In the context of the projected overspend the service will take a number of steps to help mitigate the overspend position during 2024/25. This includes roll out of a digital solution for inspection work (hand-held devices), and a ramping up of capacity for income generation. In addition, there is a concerted corporate focus within the host authority on debt recovery.

Authority Specific Services

- 2.5 The approved gross budget of £2.691m in respect of Authority Specific (AS) Services has a forecasted overspend of £186k as detailed in the following table:

Table 2

	Gross	Forecast	Outturn
	Budget	Outturn	Variance
Authority	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Bridgend	463	408	55
Cardiff	1,663	1,911	(248)
Vale	565	558	7
Total AS Services	2,691	2,877	(186)

Bridgend

- 2.6 The £55k forecast underspend at Bridgend, relates directly to a £40k underspend within The Bridgend Licensing Team, additionally we are currently forecasting a £14k underspend within Stray Dog Kennelling and Vets which is very much consistent to activity levels experienced in previous years.

Cardiff

- 2.7 The £248k overspend at Cardiff predominantly relates to the £211k overspend within the Licensing Section which is consistent with performance in previous years. Additionally, we are forecasting a £35k overspend within the port health service area caused by additional recharges of £2k and £34k for audit and precept fees respectively from Cardiff Council. These overspends are partially offset with a series of minor over and underspends across the remaining authority specific Cardiff service areas.

Vale

- 2.8 Overall, the Vale has an aggregate £7k underspend.
- 2.9 Taxi Licensing, Burials and pest control are all close to reporting an on-budget position with a total overspend of £2k.
- 2.10 Stray dog Kennelling and Vets are forecasting a £9k underspend, which is consistent with performance in previous years.

Core Services

- 2.11 The approved Core Services Budget for 2024/25 is £6.122m, which as at quarter 2 is forecasting an overspend of £78k. The Core Service's budget is allocated in line with the information included in the Revenue support grant published by Welsh government, across the participating authorities. As illustrated in the following table:

Table 3

		Gross	Forecast	Outturn
		Budget	Outturn	Variance
Authority	%	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Bridgend	23.75%	1,454	1,474	(20)
Cardiff	57.00%	3,489	3,532	(43)
Vale	19.25%	1,179	1,194	(15)
Total Core		6,122	6,200	(78)

- 2.12 The £27k forecasted underspend within Animal Services consists of a currently vacant post along with a series of other small, forecasted underspends.
- 2.13 Environmental Services is reporting an overspend of £31k, which is made up of smaller variances forecasted within this heading.
- 2.13 The Food Services current forecasted position is a £75k overspend. -This forecast is based on agency costs over the year to achieve as much of the Food programme

as possible (there being a Food officer shortfall of 6.5 FTE on the SRS establishment).

- 2.14 Housing Services forecasted position is an overspend of £61k. The overspend is attributable to additional salary expenditure which is the result of the impact of additional staffing needed to meet service area demands.
- 2.15 The Health & Safety and Communicable Disease budget heading comprises three cost centres spread across two SRS teams. A forecasted £42k overspend is reported at year end, this being driven by a temporary increase in staff costs and the provision of business support within certain elements of the service.
- 2.16 Pollution Services are currently forecasting a £64k underspend.
- 2.17 The 'Trading Standards' budget comprises a few cost centres spread across three different SRS teams and also includes an element of the Food service (separate to that outlined in 2.13 above). This service sector is currently forecasting an underspend of £40k.

Reserves

- 2.18 The Shared Regulatory Service have built up some reserves which can be utilised to fund planned investment in service expenditure but also emerging pressures within the service.
- 2.19 *Table 4*

	Opening Balance	Drawdown in the year	Transfer from Reserves	Transfer to Reserves	Forecast Balance
	01/04/24				31/03/25
Reserve	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
SRS General Fund Reserve	427	0	0	0	427
POCA Reserve	24	0	0	0	24
Total Usable Reserves	451	0	0	0	451

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1 The revenue budget has been set in order to support services in the delivery of the SRS Well-being objectives. It is therefore important for expenditure to be monitored to ensure that these objectives are being delivered.

- 3.2 The revenue budget has been set and is monitored to reflect the 5 ways of working.
- 3.3 **Looking to the long term** – The setting of the revenue budget requires planning for the future and takes a strategic approach to ensure services are sustainable and that future need and demand for services are understood.
- 3.4 **Taking an integrated approach** – The revenue budgets include services which work closely with other organisations to deliver services such as Cardiff & Vale e.g. Health Boards via Health Protection Support Officers (HPO's).
- 3.5 **Involving partners in decisions** – As part of the revenue budget setting process there is open engagement between the SRS partners.
- 3.6 **Working in a collaborative way** – The SRS was created as a collaborative service in 2015, with the split of funding split in line with the population data which is updated on an annual basis.
- 3.7 **Understanding the root cause of issues and preventing them** – Monitoring the revenue budget is a proactive way of understanding the financial position of services in order to tackle issues at source and as soon as they become apparent.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1 The SRS Annual Business Plan illustrates how the Service is working towards reducing the carbon footprint of the service with consideration also given to nature implications, such as investigating noise and air emissions through environmental monitoring, including regulating emissions from industrial processes.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1 As detailed in the body of the report.

Employment

- 5.2 There are no employment implications

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3 There are no legal implications.

6. Background Papers

None

Forecasted expenditure breakdown to 31st March 2025

Annex 1

	Bridgend			Cardiff			Vale			Total		
	Budget	Outturn	Variance	Budget	Outturn	Variance	Budget	Outturn	Variance	Budget	Outturn	Variance
Authority Specific												
Bridgend Licensing	389	349	40							389	349	40
Bridgend Empty Homes	42	41	1							42	41	1
Vets & Kennelling Fees (Bridgend)	32	18	14							32	18	14
Cardiff Licensing				832	1,043	(211)				832	1,043	(211)
HMO Cathays				222	224	(2)				222	224	(2)
HMO Plasnewydd				309	311	(2)				309	311	(2)
Student Liason				71	71	0				71	71	0
Night Time Noise				68	66	2				68	66	2
Cardiff Port Health				161	196	(35)				161	196	(35)
Vale Licensing							426	424	2	426	424	2
Burials							1	10	(9)	1	10	(9)
Pest Control							118	113	5	118	113	5
Vets & Kennelling Fees (Vale)							20	11	9	20	11	9
Sub total	463	408	55	1,663	1,911	(248)	565	558	7	2,691	2,877	(186)
Core Services												
Animal Services	103	97	6	247	232	15	84	78	6	434	407	27
Environmental	55	63	(8)	133	150	(17)	45	51	(6)	233	264	(31)
Food Services	385	403	(18)	925	967	(42)	312	327	(15)	1,622	1,697	(75)
Housing Services	135	149	(14)	323	358	(35)	109	121	(12)	567	628	(61)
HS & CD	138	148	(10)	331	355	(24)	112	120	(8)	581	623	(42)
Pollution Services	226	211	15	542	505	37	183	171	12	951	887	64
Trading Stds	412	403	9	988	965	23	334	326	8	1,734	1,694	40
Sub total	1,454	1,474	(20)	3,489	3,532	(43)	1,179	1,194	(15)	6,122	6,200	(78)
Gross Expenditure Budget	1,917	1,882	35	5,152	5,443	(291)	1,744	1,752	(8)	8,813	9,077	(264)

Shared Regulatory Services

Quarterly Performance Report 2024-25

Quarter 2



Gwasanaethau
Rheoliadol
a Rennir



High Risk Food Hygiene Inspections

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2024-25	Bridgend	SRS/FH/001	Qtr 2	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat A & B) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	24	48	50.00%	Green	All high risk businesses rated A and B due an inspection by the end of Qtr 2 were completed at premises that were operating and available for inspection.	100%
2024-25	Cardiff	SRS/FH/001	Qtr 2	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat A & B) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	74	158	46.84%	Green	All high risk businesses rated A and B due an inspection by the end of Qtr 2 were completed at premises that were operating and available for inspection.	100%
2024-25	Vale of Glam	SRS/FH/001	Qtr 2	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat A & B) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	40	62	64.52%	Green	All high risk businesses rated A and B due an inspection by the end of Qtr 2 were completed at premises that were operating and available for inspection.	100%
2024-25	SRS	SRS/FH/001	Qtr 2	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat A & B) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	138	268	51.49%	Green	All high risk businesses rated A and B due an inspection by the end of Qtr 2 were completed at premises that were operating and available for inspection.	100%

High Risk Food Hygiene Inspections

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2024-25	Bridgend	SRS/FH/002	Qtr 2	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat C) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	133	332	40.06%	Amber	All high risk businesses rated C due an inspection by the end of Qtr 2 with the exception of 9 inspections were completed at premises that were operating and available for inspection. The availability of contractors to assist officers in undertaking programmed inspections was limited during Qtr 2 requiring some inspections to be re-allocated to other officers at short notice. This subsequently caused delays in completing the programme.	90%
2024-25	Cardiff	SRS/FH/002	Qtr 2	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat C) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	410	769	53.32%	Amber	All high risk businesses rated C due an inspection by the end of Qtr 2 with the exception of 5 inspections were completed at premises that were operating and available for inspection. The availability of contractors to assist officers in undertaking programmed inspections was limited during Qtr 2 requiring some inspections to be re-allocated to other officers at short notice. This subsequently caused delays in completing the programme.	90%
2024-25	Vale of Glam	SRS/FH/002	Qtr 2	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat C) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	139	310	44.84%	Amber	All high risk businesses rated C due an inspection by the end of Qtr 2 with the exception of 10 inspections were completed at premises that were operating and available for inspection. The availability of contractors to assist officers in undertaking programmed inspections was limited during Qtr 2 requiring some inspections to be re-allocated to other officers at short notice. This subsequently caused delays in completing the programme.	90%
2024-25	SRS	SRS/FH/002	Qtr 2	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat C) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	682	1411	48.33%	Amber	All high risk businesses rated C due an inspection by the end of Qtr 2 with the exception of 25 inspections were completed at premises that were operating and available for inspection. The availability of contractors to assist officers in undertaking programmed inspections was limited during Qtr 2 requiring some inspections to be re-allocated to other officers at short notice. This subsequently caused delays in completing the programme.	90%

New Businesses—Food Hygiene

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2024-25	Bridgend	SRS/FH/003	Qtr 2	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment during the year for food hygiene.	97	135	71.85%	Red	Results for Qtr 2 show good progress in ensuring that new business registration inspections received during the year have been completed, together with the remaining backlog of overdue inspections at new businesses that were operating and available for inspection compared to the same period last year.	90%
2024-25	Cardiff	SRS/FH/003	Qtr 2	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment during the year for food hygiene.	277	318	87.11%	Amber	Excellent progress has been made in ensuring that new business registration inspections received during the year have been completed, together with the remaining backlog of overdue inspections at new businesses that were operating and available for inspection compared to the same period last year. This has been achieved through the appointment of contractors as an additional resource to assist the efforts of Food officers to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice.	90%
2024-25	Vale of Glam	SRS/FH/003	Qtr 2	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment during the year for food hygiene.	110	144	76.39%	Red	Results for Qtr 2 show good progress in ensuring that new business registration inspections received during the year have been completed, together with the remaining backlog of overdue inspections at new businesses that were operating and available for inspection compared to the same period last year.	90%
2024-25	SRS	SRS/FH/003	Qtr 2	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment during the year for food hygiene.	484	599	80.80%	Amber	Some excellent progress has been made in ensuring that new business registration inspections received during the year have been completed, together with the remaining backlog of overdue inspections at new businesses that were operating and available for inspection compared to the same period last year. This has been achieved through the appointment of contractors as an additional resource to assist the efforts of Food officers to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice.	90%

Broadly Compliant Food Premises

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2024-25	Bridgend	PAM/23	Qtr 2	Percentage of food establishments which are 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene standards.	1280	1314	97.41%	Green	Target exceeded.	94%
2024-25	Cardiff	PAM/23	Qtr 2	Percentage of food establishments which are 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene standards.	3180	3316	95.90%	Green	Target exceeded.	94%
2024-25	Vale of Glam	PAM/23	Qtr 2	Percentage of food establishments which are 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene standards.	1225	1262	97.07%	Green	Target exceeded.	94%
2024-25	SRS	PAM/23	Qtr 2	Percentage of food establishments which are 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene standards.	5685	5892	96.49%	Green	Target exceeded.	94%

High Risk Trading Standards Inspections

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2024-25	Bridgend	SRS/TS/001	Qtr 2	The percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected, for trading standards.	4	8	50.00%	Green	All high risk businesses due an inspection by the end of Qtr 2 were completed at premises that were operating and available for inspection.	100%
2024-25	Cardiff	SRS/TS/001	Qtr 2	The percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected, for trading standards.	5	20	25.00%	Amber	All but one high risk businesses due an inspection by the end of Qtr 2 were completed at premises that were operating and available for inspection. The one outstanding inspection related to a food standards inspection which was completed early October.	100%
2024-25	Vale of Glam	SRS/TS/001	Qtr 2	The percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected, for trading standards.	3	5	60.00%	Green	All high risk businesses due an inspection by the end of Qtr 2 were completed at premises that were operating and available for inspection.	100%
2024-25	SRS	SRS/TS/001	Qtr 2	The percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected, for trading standards.	12	33	36.36%	Amber	All but one high risk businesses due an inspection by the end of Qtr 2 were completed at premises that were operating and available for inspection. The one outstanding inspection related to a food standards inspection which was completed early October.	100%

New business—Trading Standards

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2024-25	Bridgend	SRS/TS/003	Qtr 2	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment visit during the year, for food standards and animal feed.	124	184	67.39%	Red	Results for Qtr 2 show some good progress in ensuring that new business registration inspections received during the year have been completed, together with the remaining backlog of overdue inspections at new businesses that were operating and available for inspection compared to the same period last year.	80%
2024-25	Cardiff	SRS/TS/003	Qtr 2	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment visit during the year, for food standards and animal feed.	317	571	55.52%	Red	Results for Qtr 2 show some good progress in ensuring that new business registration inspections received during the year have been completed, together with the remaining backlog of overdue inspections at new businesses that were operating and available for inspection compared to the same period last year.	80%
2024-25	Vale of Glam	SRS/TS/003	Qtr 2	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment visit during the year, for food standards and animal feed.	145	238	60.92%	Red	Results for Qtr 2 show some good progress in ensuring that new business registration inspections received during the year have been completed, together with the remaining backlog of overdue inspections at new businesses that were operating and available for inspection compared to the same period last year.	80%
2024-25	SRS	SRS/TS/003	Qtr 2	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment visit during the year, for food standards and animal feed.	586	993	59.01%	Red	Results for Qtr 2 show some good progress in ensuring that new business registration inspections received during the year have been completed, together with the remaining backlog of overdue inspections at new businesses that were operating and available for inspection compared to the same period last year.	80%

Noise and Air Pollution

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. re- sponded to within tar- get	No. re- ceived	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2024-25	Bridgend	SRS/LC/008	Qtr 2	Percentage of domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days.	127	140	90.71%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%
2024-25	Cardiff	SRS/LC/008	Qtr 2	Percentage of domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days.	344	409	84.11%	Amber	Summer is the busiest period for noise and air complaints. This, together with the service not being fully resourced until recently and the need to deal with some major planning applications, a number of live music events and the South Wales Metro Project all contribute to the shortfall against target.	90%
2024-25	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/008	Qtr 2	Percentage of domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days.	104	110	94.55%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%
2024-25	SRS	SRS/LC/008	Qtr 2	Percentage of domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days.	575	659	87.25%	Amber	Target exceeded in Bridgend and Vale, however there was a shortfall against target in Cardiff. Summer is the busiest period for noise and air complaints. This, together with the service not being fully resourced in Cardiff until recently and the need to deal with some major planning applications, a number of live music events and the South Wales Metro Project all contributed to the shortfall against target.	90%

Noise and Air Pollution

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. re- sponded to within tar- get	No. re- ceived	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2024-25	Bridgend	SRS/LC/009	Qtr 2	Percentage of commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day.	56	70	80.00%	Green	Target exceeded.	75%
2024-25	Cardiff	SRS/LC/009	Qtr 2	Percentage of commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day.	80	139	57.55%	Red	Summer is the busiest period for noise and air complaints. This, together with the team not being fully resourced until recently and the need to deal with some major planning applications, a number of live music events and the South Wales Metro Project all contribute to the shortfall against target.	75%
2024-25	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/009	Qtr 2	Percentage of commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day.	51	81	62.96%	Red	Summer is the busiest period for noise and air complaints. This, together with the team not being fully resourced until recently and the need to deal with some major planning applications, a number of live music events and the South Wales Metro Project all contribute to the shortfall against target.	75%
2024-25	SRS	SRS/LC/009	Qtr 2	Percentage of commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day.	187	290	64.48%	Red	Target exceeded in Bridgend however there was a shortfall against target in Cardiff and Vale. Summer is the busiest period for noise and air complaints. This, together with the service not being fully resourced in Cardiff until recently and the need to deal with some major planning applications, a number of live music events and the South Wales Metro Project all contributed to the shortfall against target.	75%

Noise and Air Pollution

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. re- sponded to within tar- get	No. re- ceived	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2024-25	Bridgend	SRS/LC/010	Qtr 2	Percentage of alarm complaints re- sponded to within one day.	3	3	100.00%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%
2024-25	Cardiff	SRS/LC/010	Qtr 2	Percentage of alarm complaints re- sponded to within one day.	16	22	72.73%	Red	Alarms are always dealt with the day that they are received by the team, however there are occasions where calls logged over the weekend or late in the day are not passed to the team on the same day, which con- tributes to the shortfall against target.	90%
2024-25	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/010	Qtr 2	Percentage of alarm complaints re- sponded to within one day.	2	2	100.00%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%
2024-25	SRS	SRS/LC/010	Qtr 2	Percentage of alarm complaints re- sponded to within one day.	21	27	77.78%	Red	Alarms are always dealt with the day that they are received by the team, however there are occasions where calls logged over the weekend or late in the day are not passed to the team on the same day, which con- tributes to the shortfall against target.	90%

Licensing

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No deter- mined	No. received	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2024-25	Bridgend	SRS/LC/004	Qtr 2	Percentage of licensed premises ap- plications received and determined within 2 months.	52	52	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2024-25	Cardiff	SRS/LC/004	Qtr 2	Percentage of licensed premises ap- plications received and determined within 2 months.	144	144	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2024-25	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/004	Qtr 2	Percentage of licensed premises ap- plications received and determined within 2 months.	41	41	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2024-25	SRS	SRS/LC/004	Qtr 2	Percentage of licensed premises ap- plications received and determined within 2 months.	237	237	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%

Licensing

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No deter- mined	No. received	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2024-25	Bridgend	SRS/LC/005	Qtr 2	Percentage of licensed personal appli- cations received and determined within 2 months.	25	25	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2024-25	Cardiff	SRS/LC/005	Qtr 2	Percentage of licensed personal appli- cations received and determined within 2 months.	48	48	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2024-25	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/005	Qtr 2	Percentage of licensed personal appli- cations received and determined within 2 months.	16	16	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2024-25	SRS	SRS/LC/005	Qtr 2	Percentage of licensed personal appli- cations received and determined within 2 months.	89	89	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%

Licensing

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No deter- mined	No. received	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2024-25	Bridgend	SRS/LC/006	Qtr 2	Percentage of Gambling Premises ap- plications received and determined within 2 months.	0	0	0.00%	Green	No applications received during Qtr 2.	100%
2024-25	Cardiff	SRS/LC/006	Qtr 2	Percentage of Gambling Premises ap- plications received and determined within 2 months.	2	2	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2024-25	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/006	Qtr 2	Percentage of Gambling Premises ap- plications received and determined within 2 months.	0	0	0.00%	Green	No applications received during Qtr 2.	100%
2024-25	SRS	SRS/LC/006	Qtr 2	Percentage of Gambling Premises ap- plications received and determined within 2 months.	2	2	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%

Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. im- proved to an E or above EPC	No of prop- erties where engagement has taken place with landlord	Percentage achieved	Column1	Column2	Target
2024-25	Bridgend	SRS/MEES/001	Qtr 2	Percentage of private rented sector properties where energy efficiency has been improved through direct action from SRS.	7	50	14.00%	Amber	<p>A further 50 landlords of properties that were identified as not having an EPC in place were engaged with during Qtr 2. This has resulted in a further 5 EPCs being received rated C to E. Furthermore 2 improved EPCs have been received in respect of previous engagement at properties identified as having F and G ratings which are now rated D.</p> <p>A new annex to the SRS Compliance and Enforcement Policy has been created to tackle failings in respect of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards. The annex has now been approved by the SRS Joint Committee enabling compliance and fixed penalty</p>	50
2024-25	Cardiff	SRS/MEES/001	Qtr 2	Percentage of private rented sector properties where energy efficiency has been improved through direct action from SRS.	52	0	0.00%	Green	<p>Despite there being no engagement with landlords during Qtrs 1 and 2, the work undertaken during 2023-24 has seen a number of improved certificates being received this year. A further 46 new EPCs were received in respect of properties identified as not having an EPC in place. Furthermore 6 improved EPCs have been received in respect of previous engagement at properties identified as having F and G ratings which are now rated D to E.</p> <p>A new annex to the SRS Compliance and Enforcement Policy has been created to tackle failings in respect of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards. The annex has now been approved by the SRS Joint Committee enabling compliance and fixed penalty notices to be issued in cases of properties in continued non-compliance.</p>	100
2024-25	Vale of Glam	SRS/MEES/001	Qtr 2	Percentage of private rented sector properties where energy efficiency has been improved through direct action from SRS.	25	51	49.02%	Green	<p>A further 51 landlords of properties that were identified as not having an EPC in place were engaged with during Qtr 2. This has resulted in a further 19 EPCs being received rated B to E since April. Furthermore 6 improved EPCs have been received in respect of previous engagement at properties identified as having F and G ratings which are now rated D to E.</p> <p>A new annex to the SRS Compliance and Enforcement Policy has been created to tackle failings in respect of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards. The annex has now been approved by the SRS Joint Committee enabling compliance and fixed penalty notices to be issued in cases of properties in continued non-compliance.</p>	50
2024-25	SRS	SRS/MEES/001	Qtr 2	Percentage of private rented sector properties where energy efficiency has been improved through direct action from SRS.	84	101	83.17%	Amber	<p>A further 101 landlords of properties that were identified as not having an EPC in place were engaged with during Qtr 2. This has resulted in a further 70 EPCs being received rated B to E since April. Furthermore 14 improved EPCs have been received in respect of previous engagement at properties identified as having F and G ratings which are now rated D to E.</p> <p>A new annex to the SRS Compliance and Enforcement Policy has been created to tackle failings in respect of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards. The annex has now been approved by the SRS Joint Committee enabling compliance and fixed penalty notices to be issued in cases of properties in continued non-compliance.</p>	200

Prosecutions

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. of prosecutions cases in court	No. concluded successfully	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Column1	Target
2024-25	Bridgend	SRS/PRO/001	Qtr 2	Percentage of SRS investigations resulting in prosecution that were successfully concluded.	1	1	100.00%	Green	In this case a Bridgend rogue trader engaged in misleading and fraudulent trading practices in his dealings with customers resulting in significant financial loss to multiple customers amounting to over £200,000. As well as the financial loss, customers suffered months of distress as they fought to get home projects completed or get their money refunded. Witness statements illustrated the misery brought on customers through jobs starting and not finished, goods not ordered despite specific payments being made, poor workmanship, failure to obtain necessary planning and building consents. He relied on a facade of stock images from Pinterest and other websites passing them off as his company's previous work. He even coerced customers and manipulated situations to convince them that they would have their money back if they took down negative reviews and withdrew their participation in an investigation by BBC X-ray. The defendant pleaded guilty to a number of fraud offences and was sentenced to an immediate custodial sentence of 5 years, discounted as there were no previous convictions meaning that he would serve a total of 43 months (3 years and 7 months). Half the sentence to be served in prison and half on licence.	100%
2024-25	Cardiff	SRS/PRO/001	Qtr 2	Percentage of SRS investigations resulting in prosecution that were successfully concluded.	7	7	100.00%	Green	Seven cases were concluded in Cardiff during Qtr 2. These comprised of 2 health and safety at work cases, one housing enforcement case, 3 food hygiene cases and one trading standards case relating to product safety. One significant success during Qtr 2 was the successful prosecution of 2 companies for Health and Safety at Work offences after an employee was seriously injured when a heavy gate fell onto her while assisting a colleague in opening up at a Cardiff premises one morning. The injuries sustained by the employee have been life changing and she has been affected physically, mentally and financially as a result. During the investigation it became apparent that 2 linked companies shared responsibility for maintenance of the gate. Both companies pleaded guilty to 2 counts, with the first defendant company being fined £45,000 and the second defendant company fined £12,000. Both companies were ordered to pay costs of £11,397.15 each and costs of £170 each.	100%
2024-25	Vale of Glam	SRS/PRO/001	Qtr 2	Percentage of SRS investigations resulting in prosecution that were successfully concluded.	1	1	100.00%	Green	In this case a Vale of Glamorgan based defendant contracted with residents to undertake landscaping works. Customers had been taken in by competitive prices quoted and almost immediate start dates offered, but costs of the jobs spiralled. In one case by more than £20,000. Multiple excuses were given for the price increases and for poor progress of work, including inflation and the cost of materials, together with various personal challenges including the death of his own mother (who, it was established, was alive and well). The defendant pleaded guilty to charges and was given an immediate custodial sentence of 9 months.	100%
2024-25	SRS	SRS/PRO/001	Qtr 2	Percentage of SRS investigations resulting in prosecution that were successfully concluded.	9	9	100.00%	Green	Nine cases were concluded across the SRS region during Qtr 2. These comprised of 2 health and safety at work cases, one housing enforcement case, 3 food hygiene cases and 3 trading standards cases relating to product safety and rogue trading. Details of some of these cases are outlined above.	100%

Shared Regulatory Services



Port Health

Port Health Service Plan

2024/25



Shared
Regulatory
Services



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6. Action Plan

Appendix A – Corporate priorities and key outcomes of partner local authorities

Appendix B – Sampling Plan

1. Introduction

The Seaports of Cardiff and Barry, and Cardiff International Airport, provide entry points into the UK and require Shared Regulatory Services to carry out a range of health controls. These controls are provided by Port Health Officers from Shared Regulatory Services who enforce regulations on behalf of central government.

The responsibilities of these officers include monitoring the safety of imported food and feed at the point of import, undertaking ship inspections, enforcing food safety and hygiene standards and general public health law. The control of infectious disease is managed jointly by the Port Health Officers and Lead Officers in Communicable Disease.

This Operational Plan has been produced to inform interested parties of the arrangements Shared Regulatory Services have in place to regulate Port Health. It explains how the Port Health Team will fulfill its purpose of preventing and controlling infectious disease coming into Cardiff, Barry and the surrounding areas via the ports and airport to protect the health of the public. The Plan also details how the statutory obligations in relation to food safety, imported food control, ship sanitation, waste control, welfare of crew and animal health will be delivered.

In 2023, the heightened risk of infectious diseases like African swine fever and M pox underscored the critical need for vigilance at UK borders. The introduction of strict controls on personal imports, particularly high-risk items like pork products, highlighted the importance of preventing the entry of African Swine Fever that could devastate agriculture. Public awareness campaigns played key roles in managing the risks of M pox and African Swine Fever.

Preparedness strategies therefore remain essential to safeguard the significant economic and ecological impacts of imported infectious diseases at our borders. Such strategies can only succeed with a joint working approach between relevant organisations which will continue to be championed by this Service.

Christina Hill

Operational Manager Commercial Services

2. Background

2.1 Profile of Cardiff Port

The district of Cardiff Port Health Authority extends from Sully Island to the River Rhymney, from low water mark to a point three miles seaward, including all docks, harbours, and vessels within these limits.

Cardiff Port Health Authority was originally established by a Provisional Order in 1882, becoming permanently constituted by the Cardiff Port Order (1894) and consolidated by the Cardiff Port Order (1938) and the Port Health Authorities (Wales) Order (1974).

The history of Cardiff docks began in 1794 with the completion of the Glamorganshire Canal which linked Merthyr to the small town of Cardiff. A small basin was built which linked the canal to the Bristol Channel and this provided a means for exporting the rich coal and iron reserves present in the South Wales Valleys.

The export of coal and iron grew rapidly during the early 19th century and led to the construction of West Bute Dock (1839), East Bute Dock (1859), Roath Dock (1887) and the Queen Alexandra Docks (1907). By 1913, Cardiff had become the biggest coal exporting dock in the world.

A fall in the demand for Welsh coal, the Great Depression in the 1930s and the outbreak of World War II contributed to the gradual decline of the port. Today, however, the port of Cardiff remains active and is a mixed cargo port.

Last year the port received 140 ships from all over the world: mainly handling cat litter, steel, forestry products, and dry and liquid bulks. There is no longer any routine container activity associated with this port.

2.2 Profile of Barry Port

The Port of Barry is nine miles west of Cardiff. In the second half of the 19th century the Port of Cardiff, the main coal exporting port in Wales became too small to handle all exports other than those of the owners. In 1883 a group of mine owners, sought permission to build a dock at Barry, serviced by a new railway. Work began on the new dock at Barry on 14 November 1884, along with the construction of the new railway link. Everything was completed in double quick time and the dock opened for trade in 1889.

In due course, further docks were added and while exports in the first year were just one million tons, by 1903 they had multiplied to over nine million. By 1913, the year before the outbreak of World War One, Barry had surpassed both Cardiff and Penarth to become the largest coal exporting port in the country.

The collapse of the Welsh coal trade after the war left Barry Port struggling for survival. In 1959 bananas were imported from the West Indies but moved out in the 1980s.

The docks, whose road links were dramatically improved with the opening of the Docks Link Road in 1981, now have direct road access with the M4 motorway. The docks can handle vessels up to 23,000 tones and the first-class tidal position close to the deep-water channel of the Severn Estuary, allows for scheduled sailings

Last year the port received 23 ships from the UK and EU only. Most vessel movements are associated with handling liquid bulks for the local chemical industry Dow Corning.

2.3 Profile of Cardiff Airport

Cardiff International Airport is a relatively small international airport located on the outskirts of the village of Rhoose, in the Vale of Glamorgan, approximately 12 miles (19km) south-west of the Welsh capital, Cardiff. The airport is a major facility for the area serving all business and tourist traffic for south and mid Wales. The nearest comparable international airport is at Bristol. The airport is multi-purpose and versatile, being served by scheduled, low-fare and charter carriers and also supporting corporate and general aviation as well as having maintenance facilities.

Cardiff is the only airport in Wales offering international scheduled flights. The maintenance hangar is one of the largest in the world (at 250m x 175m / 820ft x 574ft) and provides heavy airframe and engineering maintenance for the British Airways fleet and third-party carriers.

In early 2019, after investing in additional facilities to safely support aircraft during an emergency landing, the airport gained divert status .

2.4 Aims and Objectives

The Port Health Team as part of the Communicable Disease and Food Safety Service is committed to preventing and controlling the import of infectious and animal disease into the UK, ensuring ships and aircraft comply with international agreed public health standards and maintaining the safety and quality of the food chain.

The overall aim of the Service is:-

Protect the citizens of Cardiff, Penarth, Barry and the surrounding areas from the import of infectious disease and ensure the health and wellbeing of crew and passengers aboard ships and aircraft entering the Ports of Cardiff, Barry, Penarth Marina and Cardiff Airport

To support this, the Port Health Service has adopted the following 5 delivery priorities:-

- Check and identify the food and feed imported through the ports to ensure it is permitted to enter at the point of entry and that it meets legal requirements.
- Control and investigate cases of notifiable communicable disease including food poisoning and other infectious disease on-board ships and aircraft.
- Investigate and respond to incidents of international public health concern to safeguard public health.
- Protect the public health and wellbeing of crew present on ships.
- Prevent the spread of animal health diseases from vessels entering the ports.

2.5 Links to the Corporate Plan

As a regional organisation providing regulatory services across three local authority areas, we place the corporate priorities and outcomes of the three councils at the heart of all that we do. (Appendix A). In developing our own strategic priorities for Shared Regulatory Services, we have considered the priorities of all the three authorities, together with the needs and aspirations of our partners and customers so they translate into priorities that meet local needs.



The SRS priority particularly relevant to the delivery of the port health function is 'Improving health and wellbeing':-



The Port Health Officers implement suitable controls to minimise the risk of importation of diseases that may pose a significant risk to public health. This is achieved by monitoring the quality of imported food and animal feed, vector monitoring and control and acting on notifications of infectious disease in passengers or crew. It is also ensured that ships and aircraft comply with internationally agreed public health sanitation standards.

Nationally, the service also contributes to the Welsh National Enforcement Priorities for Wales for local regulatory delivery which highlight the positive contribution that regulatory services, together with local and national partners, can make in delivering better outcomes:-

- Protecting individuals from harm and promoting health improvement

- Ensuring the safety and quality of the food chain to minimise risk to human and animal health
- Promoting a fair and just environment for citizens and business
- Improving the local environment to positively influence quality of life and promote sustainability.

2.6 Enforcement Policy

Fair and effective enforcement is essential to protect the economic, environmental, and social interests of the public and business. Decisions about enforcement action and in particular the decision to prosecute, has serious implications for all involved and for this reason, the Shared Regulatory Service has adopted a Compliance and Enforcement Policy.

The Compliance and Enforcement Policy sets out the standards that will be applied by the Service when dealing with issues of non-compliance, and what residents, consumers and businesses can expect. Such a policy helps to promote efficient and effective approaches to regulatory inspection and enforcement and balances the need for improvement in regulatory outcomes with minimising unnecessary burdens on business.

Traditionally based upon the principles of the Enforcement Concordat and the Regulators Compliance Code, local authority Enforcement Policies must now reflect the Regulators Code of 2014 and the regulatory principles required under the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006

The Regulators Code is based upon six broad principles:

- Regulators should carry out their activities in a way that supports those they regulate to comply and grow.
- Regulators should provide straightforward ways to engage with those they regulate and hear their views.
- Regulators should base their regulatory activities on risk.
- Regulators should share information about compliance and risk.
- Regulators should ensure clear information, guidance and advice is available to help those they regulate meet their responsibilities to comply.
- Regulators should ensure that their approach to their regulatory activities is transparent.

3. Service Delivery

3.1 Responsibilities

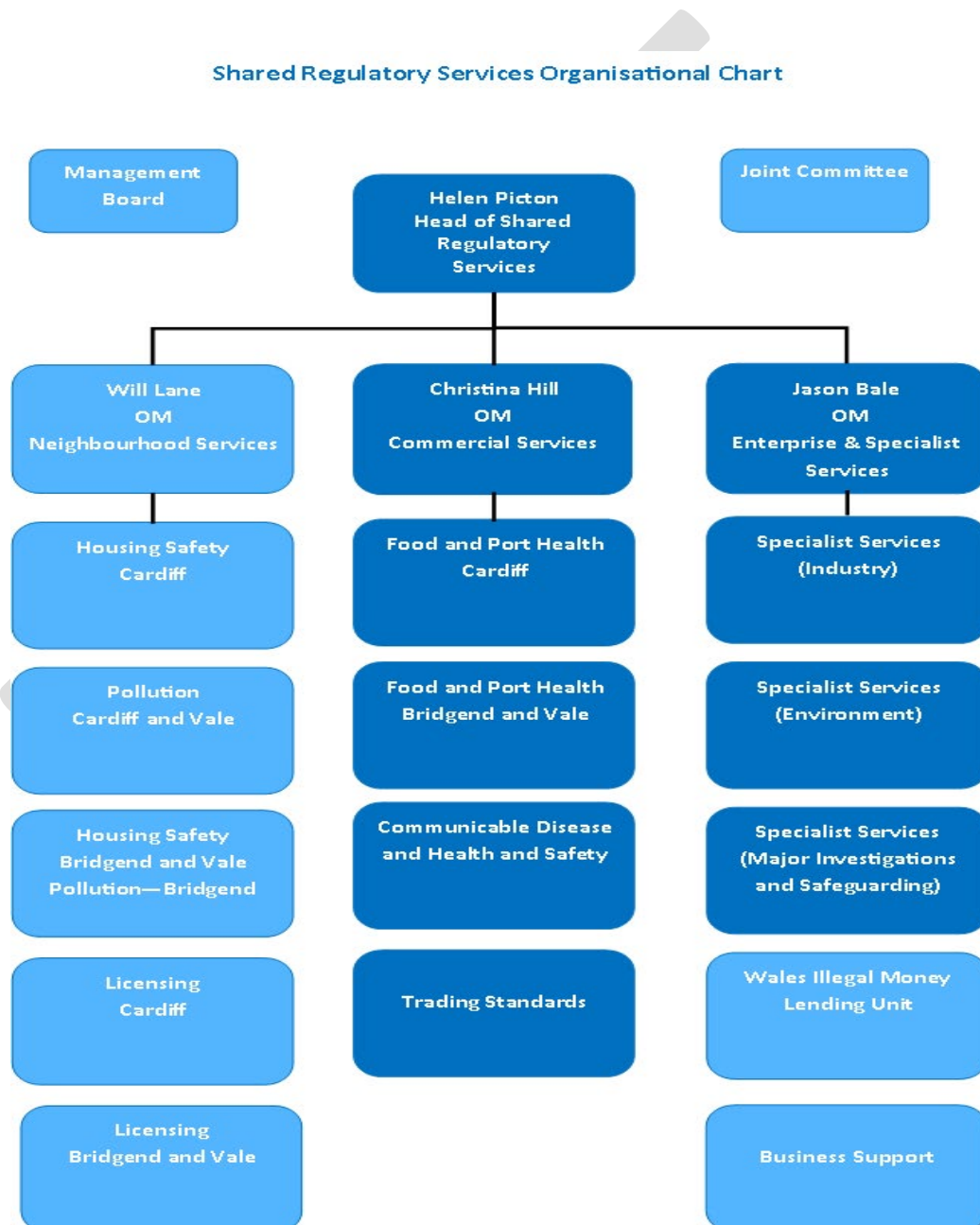
The key responsibilities of Shared Regulatory Service's Port Health Team are to prevent the import of infectious disease via the ports and to protect the health and wellbeing of the crew and citizens of the surrounding areas by carrying out statutory obligations in relation to food safety, imported food control, ship sanitation, aircraft disinsection and animal health. This encompasses the following activities: -

- Close monitoring of ship (vessel) and aircraft movements within the port authorities for the purposes of preventing the spread of infectious human and animal disease, ship and aircraft inspection and imported food controls.
- Responding to reports of food poisoning and infectious disease and implementing required control measures to safeguard public health.
- Checking ship and aircraft cargo to identify imports of food originating from within and outside the EU.
- Identifying food and feedstuffs which are not permitted to enter through the ports and arranging for their destruction, re-export, re-direction as necessary.
- Undertaking documentary, identity, and physical checks of imported food as necessary to ensure fitness and compliance with EU and UK legislation.
- Sampling foodstuffs for chemical and microbiological examination.
- Protecting animal health by ensuring vessels and aircraft correctly dispose of International Catering Waste.
- Inspecting the Port Health Authority areas and boarding ships and aircraft to check on sanitary conditions and act in accordance with the International Health Regulations and domestic legislation.
- Issuing Sanitation control or exemption certificates following a thorough inspection of a ship and extending a ship sanitation certificate if appropriate.
- Checking the water quality on board vessels and aircraft to ensure there are no risks to health.
- Undertaking food hygiene inspections of the galley and implementing any required measures to safeguard food safety.
- Checking the water quality standards of quayside and airport water supplies used by ships and aircraft.
- Act as Category 1 responders under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

- Liaising with other port health authorities, Food Standards Agency; Maritime & Coastguard Agency; Border Agency; cargo and baggage handling agents, cleaning services, airline operators, Welsh Government; port operator, airfield operations manager and shipping agents to ensure the efficiency of the service.

3.2 Organisational structure

Responsibility for delivering port health falls within the Food and Port Health Teams of Commercial Services Team within Shared Regulatory Services.



3.3 Interventions

3.3.1 Shipping Ports of Cardiff and Barry and Penarth Marina

Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Infectious Disease

Masters have a statutory duty under the Public Health Ships Regulations to notify the authority when illness and mortality occur on board their vessel using a Maritime Declaration of Health. In such instances, health clearance is required, “Free Pratique”, for the crew to disembark.

Port Health Officers will respond urgently to any notification of illness and will consult a Port Medical Officer as necessary to ensure health controls are implemented to protect public health.

Vessel Boarding

Officers board vessels arriving within its district to undertake boarding checks and inspections under the Public Health (Ships) Regulations prioritising those that have arrived from outside the European Union. A boarding check will involve recording the ships particulars, ensuring adequate provisions for the welfare of the crew, checking public and animal health related documentation, and reviewing the potable water management system. Vessels arriving from foreign ports will also need to show a valid sanitation certificate.

Sanitation Inspection

The authority has a legal requirement to carry out a sanitation inspection and issue a certificate upon request by a Master. Cardiff and Barry Port Health Authorities are listed by the World Health Organisation as ports authorised for issuing sanitation control certificates, sanitation exemption certificates and extending sanitation certificates.

A sanitation control certificate will be issued when the inspection reveals dangers to public or a risk of infection. The controls required to remove the risk to health will be clearly written on the certificate and the Master will be requested to undertake the work as quickly as possible. The progress of work will be monitored, and the next port of call will be notified if the vessel leaves before the work can be completed.

The Master will be charged for the issue of a certificate based on the Association of Port Health Authorities Ships Inspection Charges. The Association of Port Health Authorities reviewed the tariff for ship sanitation charges and have set the following national scale for 2024/25:

Ship Sanitation Inspection Charges 2024/25*

(with effect from 1 April 2024)

Gross Tonnage of Vessel	Old Rate (2023/24)	New Rate (2024/25)*
	£	£
Up to 1000	125	135
1001 – 3000	170	185
3001 – 10000	250	270
10001 – 20000	325	355
20001 – 30000	415	450
Over 30000	480	520
Vessels with 50–1000 Persons	480	520
Vessels with over 1000 Persons	820	890
Extensions	95	105

* Extra charges, based on actual costs, may be added for expenses incurred. These include launch hire; out-of-hours duty; travel and extended or re-inspections of ships due to 'Control Measures' etc.

The sanitation inspection involves a comprehensive inspection and covers the following matters:

- Ships Particulars
- Cargo information
- Potable Water Systems
- Food Safety
- Swimming & Spa Pools
- Waste Disposal & International Catering Waste
- Accommodation and Crew Welfare
- Pollution Control
- Animal Health
- Vermin and Pest Control
- Infectious Disease Controls

Ship Food Hygiene Inspections

The Food Safety (Ships & Aircraft) (Wales) Order 2003 amended the definition of food premises to include ships and therefore require ship galleys to comply with food hygiene and temperature control legislation.

A full hygiene inspection of the galley and related food areas will be undertaken as part of a Sanitation Inspection. A full inspection will also be carried out when a boarding visit reveals concerns about food hygiene on board.

The ports of Cardiff and Barry primarily receive merchant vessels and occasionally passenger vessels. Shared Regulatory Services is unable to develop an annual ship hygiene inspection programme as it is not possible to determine when a ship will next return to the port.

Food hygiene inspections will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant FSA and APHA guidance.

Fishing boats and land-based premises within the port health district will form part of the Shared Regulatory Services Food Hygiene Intervention Programme.

Complaints

The port health service occasionally receives complaints, for example, a crew member may be concerned about water quality on board a ship. Port Health Officers will respond quickly to complaints to protect public health and will ensure the complainant is kept regularly updated about the progress of their complaint and outcome.

Advice to Businesses

Shared Regulatory Services will provide advice and information for masters, agents, port operators, food importers, shipping companies, merchant navy welfare members and other stakeholders.

Shared Regulatory Services will proactively disseminate information to shipping agents and the port operator, marina management and other relevant parties when health protection controls need to be implemented to prevent the entry of infectious disease or in response to public health emergencies of international concern.

Food and Feedstuff Inspection

The UK Border Target Operating Model introduces new controls for goods entering Great Britain, being phased between January and October 2024 based on risk. These include health certifications, physical inspections, and checks for certain products, with stricter timelines and requirements for high-risk items like meat, dairy, and certain plant products. These updates reflect ongoing adjustments for EU Exit to improve food safety and adapt to new trade conditions.

Neither of the seaports have Border Control Post (BCP) status and therefore products of animal origin (POAO) and higher risk products not of animal origin (PNOAO) are not permitted to enter via these ports. In addition, there are no longer facilities at the seaports to permit the unloading of container ships which would carry food and a recent survey has shown no vessels transporting animal feed entering the seaports. Therefore, currently no detailed manifest checks are completed, but Port Health Officers keep in regular contact with the port health authority to identify if this situation changes. Any importation of food or feedstuffs identified would be further investigated and documentary or physical checks made with due regard to guidance issued by the Food Standards Agency and European Commission.

Food Incidents and Hazards

Shared Regulatory Services will respond to any warnings regarding imported food which is unfit for human consumption and requires action to ensure it is removed from the food chain.

Water Quality

Every port must be provided with a supply of potable water, and this should comply with International Standards for drinking water. Suitable controls should be in place to prevent contamination and ensure adequate disinfection of tanks, distribution systems and hoses.

A sampling plan has been devised to check the quality of water at shoreside as detailed in Appendix B. If water quality fails to meet legal requirements suitable remedial action will be taken if required.

Vessels must have a water management plan in place not only to ensure that a suitable supply of potable water is always available, but also to identify and manage the risks of Legionella bacteria by removing or reducing possible sources of contamination through risk assessment, routine maintenance and regular cleaning, to reduce the chance of infection.

Sampling will be done on board vessels only by request or if the Port Health Officer has concerns about the suitability of the supply, or as part of a ship sanitation inspection. Requested samples will be charged as detailed below and an invoice raised for the shipping agent:

Port Health - Freshwater Analysis

Type of sample	Analysis	Number of Sampling points	Sample Cost 2024-25	Labour Cost (per visit)* 2024-25
Drinking Water	Aerobic Colony Counts, E.coli & Coliforms	2	£29.00	£80.00
Legionella	Legionella sp	2	£69.00	£80.00
Chemical analysis	Various physio/chemical parameters	1	£168.00	£80.00

**Labour cost not applied if ship already being visited.*

Extra charges may be added for exceptional costs such as launch hire

Insects capable of transmitting disease

Increased global travel and trade, means there is a greater chance of disease vectors entering the country through accidental importation. Climate change may also mean there is a greater risk that imported tropical species could colonise and establish local populations.

Shared Regulatory Service participates in a national survey co-ordinated by United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKSHA) to establish the distribution and type of mosquito found in and around the ports and to prevent any potential mosquito vectors of disease from entering and establishing populations within the UK.

3.3.2 Cardiff Airport

Cardiff Airport has several different airlines that operate from it. Most are to European destinations, but there are also regular flights to and from Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam which is the world's third busiest airport with international passenger traffic; and a few flights to the Caribbean that operate in the winter for cruise travel.

A knowledge of the different flight paths is required to maintain an awareness of the prevalence of certain diseases in the countries involved to manage risk if illness is identified in passengers or crew. Such information is provided by collaborative working with Public Health Wales.

Investigation of incidents of infectious disease

The Commander of an aircraft has a statutory duty to inform the airport if there is someone on board who may have, or may have been exposed, to an infection. In addition, the Commander has the power to request a medical officer examine a person if there is good reason for believing that a passenger is suffering from an infectious disease or has been exposed to an infectious disease and the flight did not start within an expected area that is exempt from the controls of the Aircraft Regulations.

In such an instance the Port Health Officer will liaise with their colleagues in the Communicable Disease Team and a suitably authorised officer from Public Health Wales, to ensure appropriate action is taken in relation to the treatment of the patient/s, minimising the risk of the spread of infection and investigating the likely cause in accordance with Port Health Procedure for Cardiff International Airport. This may include:

- The collection of names, addresses and seat numbers of all passengers on board the aircraft
- Assist in arrangements to transfer of patient to clinical room and/or transfer to hospital
- Provision of faecal sample pots,
- Sampling food and water from aircraft
- Ensuring appropriate disposal or decontamination of soiled articles and sanitisation of aircraft

If the Port Medical Officer deems that there is a threat to public health; the Port Health Officer will liaise with the Duty Manager of the Airport and the airline about detaining all other passengers and possibly the aircraft.

To minimise the risk of spread of infection at the Airport Shared Regulatory Services periodically carries out audits to identify any improvements that can be made to cleaning procedures and practices.

Insects capable of transmitting disease

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has introduced regulatory requirements for disinsection of aircraft travelling from designated countries in which there is a risk of disease being spread by insects, e.g. Malaria, yellow fever, zika virus and dengue fever.

A Port Health Officer may require the Commander to assist in such steps as in the opinion of the Port Medical Officer are reasonably necessary for preventing the spread of infection, for disinsection and the destruction of vermin, and for the removal of conditions on the aircraft likely to convey infection, including conditions the existence of which might facilitate the harbouring of insects or vermin.

As for the seaports, Shared Regulatory Services participates in a national survey co-ordinated by United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKSHA) to establish the distribution and type of mosquito found in and around the airport and to prevent any potential mosquito vectors of disease from entering and establishing populations within the UK.

In-flight Death

Deaths that occur during a flight must be reported to Port Health unless the death was accidental, or the voyage commenced within the Expected Area and the aircraft did not touch down outside it.

If the death seems likely to be due to a communicable disease, then liaison with the Port Medical Officer will be made to investigate the cause and ensure appropriate controls are put in place to prevent the spread of infection.

Food Safety on Aircraft

Aircraft are treated as food businesses for the purposes of food hygiene regulations and officers have a power of entry to carry out interventions. Port Health Officers may inspect aircraft and will act in accordance with the Shared Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy if standards of food hygiene are not satisfactory.

Food and Feed Imports

Cardiff Airport is not a Border Control Post (BCP) so cannot receive products of animal origin or higher risk products not of animal origin from third countries. Products of animal origin arriving at the airport cannot be redirected to an approved BCP, they will be treated as an illegal import and refused entry into Europe.

In 2023 the UK faced increased risks of African swine fever due to outbreaks in Europe and Asia. To mitigate this the government tightened import controls banning personal imports of pork and pork products unless less than 2 kilogrammes and compliant with EU standards. Public awareness campaigns warned travellers against bringing contaminated items in

through the Airport. Preparedness strategies produced jointly with Border Force ensured readiness to respond to any import contrary to legal requirements being detected.

Potable Water

Every port must be provided with a supply of potable water, and this should comply with International Standards. Suitable controls should be in place to prevent contamination and ensure adequate disinfection of tanks, distribution systems and hoses.

3.4 Liaison with other organisations

Shared Regulatory Services will co-operate with its partners, organisations, working groups and associations to ensure the provision of an effective port health service. This will include:

The Food Standards Agency (FSA)
Welsh Government (WG)
Test Trace and Protect
Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
Public Health Wales (PHW)
UK Health Security Agency (UKSHA)
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
Association of Port Health Officers (APHA)
Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)
Border Force (Customs/Revenue and Immigration Services)
Port Health Authorities
Water Utility Companies
Port Operator
Shipping Agents
Merchant Navy Welfare Board

A representative of the Port Health function will attend the Directors of Public Protection Port Health Expert Panel. This panel consists of representatives from other local authorities, Welsh Government and Public Health Wales and provides a forum for promoting consistency of approach and discussing matters of a technical nature.

Port Health Officers also attend meetings of Merchant Navy Welfare Board and the Cruise Restart Group organised by the Association of Port Health Authorities

4. Resources

The Port Health Team forms part of Commercial Services for which overall responsibility lies with the Operational Manager Commercial Services. An organisation chart can be found within Section 3 of this Plan.

It consists of a small team of officers taken from both Food Safety and Port Health Teams. Each officer is qualified to carry out the port health functions and educated to Degree or Diploma standard in environmental health and possesses the relevant competency as required by the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice.

Officers are provided with on-going learning and development to ensure they are equipped with sufficient knowledge and skills to perform their duties which will include: -

- Port Health Induction Training
- Port Operator Induction Training
- Training needs identified through employee appraisal and team meetings.
- Professional and technical training to satisfy CPD requirements.

The competency of the Port Health Officers is continually assessed in accordance with the Internal Monitoring Procedure.

External Factors Impacting on the Service

Work demands- it is difficult to plan the level of resources required to meet the demands of the role of port health, due to their fluctuation being dependent on external factors. In preparedness for any sudden demands, it is important to maintain communications with relevant organisations to keep up to date with any proposed changes that could have a significant impact.

Associated British Ports (ABP) is looking to diversify the port at Port Talbot as part of its “Future Ports: Wales” strategy. This includes developing it for renewable energy projects, such as a floating offshore wind centre of excellence. This change in logistics along with the planned transition from blast furnace steel making to electric arc production at Tata Steel, Port Talbot, may increase the steel imports arriving at the seaport of Cardiff.

Cardiff Airport continues to look to expand its flight programme and is currently enquiring about the potential of becoming a border control post to permit the importation of products of animal origin and high-risk foods. This would require a significant port presence by the port health team if progressed.

Recruitment and Retention-the loss of staff has a significant impact on the small team due to the length of time required to train a replacement until fully competent. It is pleasing to note that the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Officers have recognised the need for

training events in the field of port health and has arranged several for the Summer of 2024 which should assist in meeting the training needs. It has also established a Port Health Advisory Group.

Review of International Health Regulations (IHR)- United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKSHA) is currently reviewing the core capacities required under IHR to be met by a designated port of entry with a view to standardising requirements across the UK. Cardiff Airport is the only designated port of entry in Wales and once this work is complete a gap analysis will be required to establish what additional resources (if any) are needed.

Service delivery points

Port Health related services are delivered from 2 service delivery points and while the service primarily operates office hours from Mondays to Fridays, weekend and out of business hours duties are carried out as the need arises. Shared Regulatory Services also operates an out of hours duty officer scheme for emergency situations on 02920 871658.

Contact Information		
Locations	Service Area	Office Hours
Cardiff Seaport <u>Contact:</u> Alexa Pieris, Team Manager Food Safety & Port Health <u>Address:</u> Shared Regulatory Services, Room 108, County Hall, Cardiff CF10 4UW <u>Tel:</u> 07970739588 <u>Out of hours:</u> 029 2087 1658 <u>Email:</u> porthealth-srswales@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk	Food and Feed Imports Food Hygiene Inspections & Ratings Food incidents and Hazards Potable Water Issues Vermin and Pest Control Waste Disposal Pollution Control Swimming Pools and Spas Sanitation Certificates Water Ballast	Mon - Thurs 08:30 - 17:00 Friday 08:30 - 16:30
Barry Docks/ Cardiff Airport <u>Contact:</u> Jane Peatey, Team Manager Food Safety & Port Health <u>Address:</u> Shared Regulatory Services, Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry CF63 4RU <u>Tel:</u> 03001236696/07860357482 <u>Out of hours:</u> 029 2087 1658 <u>Email:</u> porthealth-srswales@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk		
Cardiff Seaport/Barry Docks/Cardiff Airport <u>Contact:</u> Sarah Swaysland, Team Manager Communicable Disease and Health and Safety <u>Address:</u> Shared Regulatory Services, Room 108, County Hall, Cardiff CF10 4UW <u>Tel:</u> 02920 873819 / 02920 873832/07970738999 <u>Out of hours:</u> 029 2087 1658 <u>Email:</u> porthealth-srswales@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk	Death Infectious Disease	

The Shared Regulatory Services website provides information on the services provided and the website address is www.srs.wales

5. Assessment and review

5.1 Assessment and Review mechanisms

Shared Regulatory Services recognises the need to measure the effectiveness of its services and strongly supports the ethos of continuous improvement. The Service therefore participates and undertakes several activities to ensure that work is of a high standard and opportunities to identify and implement improvements are taken.

Documented procedures

To ensure the quality and consistency of our activities, processes and procedures identify responsibility for the work carried out and ensure that all changes identified through audit are completed in accordance with improvement procedures.

Food Standards Agency

The Food Standards Agency has powers to audit the Port Health Service in relation to food hygiene inspections and imported food. Port Health imported food data is supplied to this agency every year as part the Local Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS).

Complaints

The port health service is also covered by the Vale of Glamorgan Council's corporate process. Last year no adverse comments were received in relation to the port health service provided by the legacy authorities of the City of Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Councils.

Performance Measurement

A range of performance measures have been in place to monitor port health activity across the port health functions of Shared Regulatory Services. These can be found in Section 5.3.

Assessment and audits

The monitoring of the quality of our policies and procedures is assessed in several ways, namely: -

- Audits undertaken by the Food Standards Agency
- Feedback from shipping agents and port operator and airline operators and airport manager.
- Corporate complaints and compliments about the service

Review

To ensure continuous improvement, it is essential that performance is regularly monitored. Shared Regulatory Services has developed an effective performance management infrastructure for delivering, monitoring, and reviewing which is achieved through the following mechanisms: -

- The Port Health Plan and associated statistical information is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the service remains effective. Where variation is identified, reasons are investigated, and improvements put in place.
- The Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee are provided details of this Service Plan which sets out the work programme for the service and reviews performance against the programme on an annual basis.

- Performance of individuals is further strengthened through the Personal Performance and Development Scheme recently rebranded to #it's about me.

5.2 Summary of Achievements from the previous year

- A mosquito survey was undertaken at 4 locations in Cardiff Airport to contribute to the UKSHA National survey to identify the presence of any invasive species associated with human disease. None of concern were identified, but in September 2023 the need for surveillance was highlighted by the most Northern outbreak of the mosquito borne disease, dengue fever, being identified in several people in Paris with no previous travel history. Fumigation of areas of the French capital was completed to prevent the spread of disease.
- There has been an increased demand on food storage facilities and distribution since EU Exit. As a result, two external temporary storage facilities located near the Airport and registered with the Food Standards Agency were investigated to establish if they were now being used for food which would have required them to meet certain food hygiene standards. One was identified as no longer being approved and the other was not handling food.
- Due to large gaps in vaccination, 2023 saw a global surge in measles cases and outbreaks, which continues to this day. Procedures were updated to ensure that in the instance of identification of a positive case of the disease having travelled on an aircraft during their infectious period, a suitable process was in place to trace any contacts that may be at risk. None have been identified to date.
- During 2023 this Service contributed to the revision of the Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales which was issued in 2023. The Plan seeks to consolidate and further strengthen the commitment to partnership working arrangements in protecting the population of Wales from communicable diseases by making improvements from lessons learned and being updated to meet obligations under new legislation such as the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, The Health Security (EU Exit) Regulations 2021 and the Health and Social (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020.
- During a routine food hygiene inspection, it was identified that a business supplying flight catering services to aircraft operating from Cardiff Airport required approval under retained regulation EC no. 853/2004. Work was completed in collaboration with the company to ensure that additional food hygiene standards were met, and the approval granted.
- The target of boarding and inspecting at least 75% of vessels arriving from third countries was surpassed. The one vessel not being boarded did not require inspection due to having been boarded by the team in the last six months.
- Regular meetings were held by the Port Health Team to facilitate updates by the Lead Officer. The updates included changes to legislation, working practices and developments taking place at Port Health Expert Panel and Association of Port Health (APHA) meetings.
- Biannual meetings were held with appropriate representatives from Cardiff International Airport to ensure new procedures were agreed and effective lines of communication maintained.

- A boarding of a UK vessel revealed no water management plan and the presence of legionella in water samples taken. This issue was notified to the next port of call and an evidence report form attached to the ship sanitation exemption certificate to ensure that the matter was addressed.

5.3 Performance during previous year

Routine boarding was fully reinstated this year which had a positive effect on the number of boardings completed. This provided ample opportunity for the training of a new member of the team.

Shipping Ports of Cardiff and Barry and Penarth Marina

Monitoring of Ships

The provision of an effective port health service is dependent on closely monitoring the arrival and departure of ships within the port health district. The type of vessel, cargo and previous port visited, helps port health officers decide which vessels to board based on risk assessment. In 2023/24 there were 140 arrivals in the Port of Cardiff and 23 arrivals in the Port of Barry. During 2023/2024 no consignments of imported food or feedstuff were identified.

Boarding of vessels

The tables below illustrate the vessel movements through the ports of Barry and Cardiff over recent years and the estimated vessel movements for the coming year of 2024/25.

VESSEL MOVEMENTS AND BOARDING VISITS

	2021/22				2022/23				2023/24				Estimated Numbers			
	Cardiff		Barry		Cardiff		Barry		Cardiff		Barry		Cardiff		Barry	
	Arriving	Boarded	Arriving	Boarded	Arriving	Boarded	Arriving	Boarded	Arriving	Boarded	Arriving	Boarded	Arriving	To be boarded	Arriving	To be boarded
Arriving from UK	128	2	25	0	90	0	7	0	90	2	4	0	102	1	12	0
Arriving from EU Countries	77	0	30	0	51	6	24	0	45	5	19	0	58	4	24	0
Arriving from Third Countries*	20	0	0	0	16	2	0	0	5	4	0	0	14	11	0	0
TOTALS	225	2	55	0	157	8	31	0	140	11	23	0	174	15	36	0

*Target for boarding visits for vessels arriving from Third Countries is 75%

Currently the ships boarded are selected on a risk-based approach considering the priorities below and e.g. previous history, last destination and if first time in port.

Priority	Status of Vessel
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vessel has arrived from 3rd Country not within the EU (if not boarded in last 6 months) Food Safety Concerns Vessel requires chargeable water testing or ship sanitation certificate Complaint received alleging significant health risk
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All other vessels Complaint received that does not involve a significant health risk

Sanitation Exemption Certificates

It is a requirement under the Public Health (Ships) Regulations 1979 (as amended) and the International Health Regulations, that any ship arriving from a foreign port must have a valid Sanitation Exemption Certificate which is issued by an authorised Port Health Authority for a period of 6 months. When a request is made, the authority is required to carry out a full inspection and issue a Sanitation Exemption Certificate. Where the inspection reveals dangers to public health a Sanitation Control Certificate will be issued. An officer may also decide to carry out a Sanitation Inspection if a valid certificate cannot be produced or dangers to public health exist on board.

From the table below it can be seen that during 2023/2024, 4 sanitation exemption certificates were issued. The issuing of ship sanitation exemption lite certificate has now ceased since the lifting of covid restrictions. Based on the years from 2021-2024 it is estimated that 6 ship sanitation inspections will be required for 2024/2025.

	2020/21		2021/2022		2022/2023		2023/2024	
	Cardiff	Barry	Cardiff	Barry	Cardiff	Barry	Cardiff	Barry
Sanitation exemption certificates issued	0	0	2	0	4	0	4	0
Sanitation control certificates issued	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ship sanitation exemption lite certificates issued	0	0	9	0	N/A	0	N/A	0
TOTALS	0	0	11	0	4	0	4	0

Ships and Shore-side Water Quality Checks

Water on board ships must be wholesome and comply with international standards. Port Health Officers will routinely check the microbiological water quality on board vessels and submit samples to the laboratory. The officer will require the Master to carry out remedial measures if the quality of the water is found to be unsatisfactory.

In the last year 3 vessels were sampled from all of which were in Cardiff. During these visits samples were taken for checking the suitability of the potable water supply and/or the presence of legionella. One sample was found to be unsatisfactory for legionella and appropriate action was taken.

It is a requirement of the International Health Regulations 2005 that every port is provided with supply of pure drinking water. Whilst the targets of the sampling plan were not fully completed, due to the redirection of resources, samples were taken from a selection of shoreside sampling points at the ports of Barry and Cardiff with the assistance of Welsh Water for access purposes.

Sample location	Number of samples taken		Unsatisfactory Results	
	Bacteriological	Chemical	Bacteriological	Chemical
Cardiff Bay Yacht Club	0	0	0	0
Cardiff Marina	0	0	0	0
Cardiff Dock	0	5	0	1
Penarth Quay	0	0	0	0
Barry Docks	0	1	0	0
Penarth Pier	0	0	0	0

Details of samples taken:

Location of sample	Bacteriological results	Chemical result
Roath Dock (Cardiff) bollard 14	satisfactory	Unsatisfactory due to turbidity breach
Roath Dock (Cardiff) bollard 29 shed H	satisfactory	satisfactory
Queen Alexandra Dock (Cardiff) bollard 29	satisfactory	satisfactory
Queen Alexandra Dock (Cardiff) bollard 30 shed F	satisfactory	satisfactory
Britannia Quay (Cardiff)	satisfactory	satisfactory
Barry Dock bollard 68	satisfactory	satisfactory

The sampling points were different from the proposed sampling plan for 2023/24 due to Cardiff port having renumbered the bollards and in Barry port the hydrants being inaccessible due to pallets being stored. Due to these issues, it has been determined that the sampling plan for 2024/25 will specify the number of samples rather than the actual locations.

During the sampling exercise it was identified that the infrequently used standpipe connection points were generally covered with mud / sediment which made it difficult to sample and could potentially contaminate the water supply unless suitable cleaning procedures were introduced prior to its abstraction. This was brought to the attention of the port authority, Association of British Ports to address.

Cardiff International Airport

Insects capable of transmitting disease

Between April and November, the Service participate in the surveillance organised by United Kingdom Health Security Agency (previously known as Public Health England) to monitor for the presence of the Aedes mosquito that causes the transmission of Zika Virus. This involves the placement of 4 traps at Cardiff Airport. No mosquitos of concern were identified during the survey.

Food Safety on Aircraft

No inspections of food safety on aircraft were completed during 2023/24.

Food and Feed Imports

No commercial food or feed imports were made into Cardiff Airport during 2023/24.

No personal imports of pork and wild boar products from the EU contravening Special Measures introduced by Welsh Government to minimise the risk of introduction of African Swine Fever were identified. This is probably attributable to the cessation of direct flights to Eastern European countries during this time.

Potable Water

Water samples were not taken from Cardiff Airport this year due to them having been completed the previous year and any issues identified having been addressed late in the year.

Outstanding Issues from 2023/2024

Reactive work was prioritised during this year, resulting in some of the proactive work and internal monitoring not being completed due to resource issues . The outstanding issues to be completed in the coming year are therefore as follows:

- **Ensure the requirements of the Internal Monitoring Procedure are met to ensure consistency and quality of interventions performed by individuals within the team.**
- **Ensure the completion of the sampling programme for the potable water supply at shore side.**

5.4 Performance Targets for 2024/25

Measure	Target
Target vessels that are likely to pose the biggest public health risk with a boarding inspection.	Undertake 75% boarding inspections of vessels arriving from outside the EU.
Ensure suitable potable water supply at shore side.	Meet requirements of sampling programme
Investigation of complaints	Investigation of complaints with significant health risk within 1 working day and any other within a minimum of 5 days
Investigation of notifications of infectious disease	Ensure adequate response 24 hours/day 352 days/year

6. Action Plan

Objectives	Milestones	
Adopt the Port Health Plan 2024/25	Q3	Prepare the Port Health Plan 2024/25 and circulate to Joint Committee Members
Improve stakeholder awareness of port health requirements.	Q1-4	Hold biannual airport meetings with appropriate stakeholders. Review SRS website
Continue to meet performance targets	Q1-4	Implement measures detailed in 5.4 to meet required targets.
Ensure the Port Health function is undertaken appropriately by ensuring authorised, trained, and competent officers	Q4	Undertake validation assessment of port officers in accordance with internal monitoring procedure.
	Q4	Carry out a review to ensure the plan has been successfully implemented.

Appendix A – Corporate priorities and outcomes of partner local authorities

Bridgend County Borough Council

Priorities

Outcomes/Aims



- A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable
 - A County Borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns
 - A County Borough with thriving valleys communities
 - A County Borough where we help people meet their potential
 - A County Borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community
 - A County Borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community
 - A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives.
- Protect our most vulnerable
 - Fair work, skilled , jobs and thriving towns
 - Creating thriving valleys communities
 - Helping people meet their potential
 - Responding to the climate and nature emergency
 - Making people feel valued, heard and part of their community
 - Supporting people to be healthy and happy.

City of Cardiff Council

Priorities

Outcomes/Aims



- Cardiff is a great place to grow up
 - Cardiff is a great place to grow older
 - Supporting people out of poverty
 - Safe, confident and empowered communities
 - A Capital City that works for Wales
 - One Planet Cardiff
 - Modernising and integrating our public services
- Cardiff is a great place to grow up
 - Cardiff is a great place to grow older
 - Supporting people out of poverty
 - Safe, confident and empowered communities
 - A Capital City that works for Wales
 - One Planet Cardiff
 - Modernising and integrating our public services

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Priorities

Outcomes/Aims



- To work with and for our communities
 - To support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth
 - To support people at home and in their community
 - To respect, enhance and enjoy our environment
- A Vale that is:
- Inclusive and Safe
 - Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous
 - Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant
 - Active and Healthy

Appendix B

Sampling Plan for Shoreside Waters

Time period	Sampling location	No. of samples for chemical and bacteriological analysis
January to March	Cardiff – Queen Alexandra Dock	2
	Cardiff- Roath Dock	2
	Cardiff- Britannia Quay	1
	Barry Dock	2
	Cardiff Yacht Club	1
	Penarth Marina	1

15th November 2024

Mr Rob Thomas,
Chief Executive,
The Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council,
Civic Offices,
Holton Road,
Barry,
CF63 4RU.

SENT BY EMAIL

Food Standards Agency audit of Shared Regulatory Services' emergency out of hours contact arrangements – Saturday 27 July 2024

Dear Mr Thomas,

I refer to the recent remote audit undertaken by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to assess your authority's emergency out of hours contact arrangements.

The audit involved a telephone call with a suitably authorised officer in relation to a serious food incident (test exercise). Contact was made by using the latest version of the LA contact list which contains contact details supplied to the FSA by LAs. No prior notification of the exercise was given.

Audit Findings

Auditors were able to confirm that Shared Regulatory Services has effective arrangements across all three local authorities to deal with emergencies outside of normal working hours.

Next steps

This letter will not be published but the summary report attached in Annex 1 will be published on the FSA's website. It is, however, expected that the report letter be brought to the attention of relevant Members.

In order for us to continually improve, we would be grateful if you could complete the attached audit feedback questionnaire and return it to Mr Jonathan Davies, Head of Policy (Standards) and Consumer Protection at jonathan.davies@food.gov.uk. We would welcome any comments you and your officers may have on the conduct of this audit.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter, please feel free to contact me on Tel: 07870 362491 E-mail: wales.audit@food.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely



Craig Sewell
Senior Audit Manager
Regulatory Audit & Assurance Team

Enc: Annex 1: Out of hours audit summary report
Audit Feedback Questionnaire.

Cc: Helen Picton, Head of Shared Regulatory Services
Christina Hill, Operational Manager Commercial Services
Jason Bale, Operational Manager Enterprise and Specialist Services
Jane Peatey, Team Manager Food Safety & Port Health (Bridgend & Vale)
Jon Wood, Team Manager Industry
Alexa Pieris, Team Manager Food & Port Health (Cardiff)



Audit of Local Authority Out of Hours Emergency Response in Wales

November 2024

Foreword

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is the Central Competent Authority (CCA) responsible for feed and food safety and standards law and for ensuring risk-based official controls are carried out at feed and food business establishments in Wales, England, and Northern Ireland.

Feed and food official controls aimed at verifying food business compliance are fundamental to safeguarding public health and contribute to the FSA's strategic outcome that 'food is safe and what it says it is'.

Day-to-day monitoring and enforcement of feed and food business compliance is the responsibility of local authorities (LAs). LA funding for food work is included in the LA revenue support grant (RSG).

In Wales, the power to set standards and monitor LA feed and food law enforcement services was conferred on the FSA under Section 12 of the Food Standards Act 1999 and Regulation 7 of the Official Feed and Food Controls (Wales) Regulations 2009. The FSA is required to monitor and audit local authority feed and food law enforcement services under this legislation and the assimilated Official Controls Regulation (EU) 2017/625. In developing its audit arrangements, the FSA has taken account of the European Commission guidance on how such audits should be conducted.

In addition to assessing the delivery of official controls against legal requirements and statutory guidance, the audit process also provides the opportunity to identify and disseminate good practice and to provide information to inform FSA policy on the execution and enforcement of feed and food law.

FSA audit programmes assess local authorities' conformance against the requirements of the [Official Controls Regulation \(EU\) 2017/625](#) and the Feed and Food Law Enforcement Standard within the [Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities](#) (Framework Agreement). Assessments were also made against the [Food Law Code of Practice \(Wales\) 2021](#) along with related centrally issued guidance including the [Food Law Practice Guidance \(Wales\) 2021](#).

This report is available in hard copy from the FSA's Regulatory Audit and Assurance Team, Asiantaeth Safonau Bwyd yng Nghymru / Food Standards Agency in Wales, Llawr 4 / 4th Floor, Adeilad Llywodraeth Cymru / Welsh Government Building, Parc Cathays Park, Caerdydd / Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, and electronically on the [FSA's website](#).

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3.0 Conclusions

4.0 Summary of Recommendations

Annex A – Terms of Reference

1.0 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 Audits of local authority feed and food law enforcement services are part of the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) arrangements to improve consumer protection and confidence in relation to feed and food. Responding to urgent incidents outside of normal office hours is essential to protect public health and ensure the safety of feed and food in a timely manner.
- 1.2 This audit programme was developed to assess how local authorities were meeting their obligations for delivering out of hours incidents responses in accordance with statutory requirements and to provide assurance that statutory guidance in Wales has been effectively implemented.
- 1.3 Art 5(1)(i) of assimilated Official Controls Regulation (EU) 2017/625 (OCR 2017/625)) requires local authorities to have contingency plans in place and be prepared to operate such plans in the event of an emergency, where appropriate.
- 1.4 The Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) 2021 requires food authorities to ensure that their documented procedure for dealing with food emergencies and/or incidents including the effective response to a serious hazard incidents notified to them by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and from other sources, including those received outside normal office hours.
- 1.5 LAs should put in place procedures to ensure that responsible officers can be contacted in the case of an emergency. LAs should advise the FSA of emergency telephone number(s) to enable contact to be made outside working hours. LAs should advise the FSA of any changes to out of hours contacts.
- 1.6 As part of the development of the audit programme the FSA consulted with relevant stakeholders and produced an audit plan which is attached at Annex A.

Scope of Audit Programme

- 1.7 The assessment included all 22 LAs. Attempts were made to make telephone contact with a suitably authorised officer from each authority in relation to a serious food hygiene incident (test exercise). Contact was attempted using the latest version of the LA contacts list, which contains

recently updated contact details supplied to the FSA by LAs. No prior notification of the exercise was given to LAs.

2.0 Audit Findings

- 2.1 All 22 local authorities provided emergency out of hours contact telephone numbers.
- 2.2 Out of hours contact was made with an authorised officer with appropriate competency in 18 of 22 LAs, either via the emergency out of hours contact number or through direct contact with an officer. All contact with such authorised officers was made within 3 hours of first contacting each LA.
- 2.3 Of the remaining 4 LAs, contact was made with the appropriate LA service in two cases, however, this contact was with senior officers of the food enforcement service that did not possess the appropriate competency to respond to the emergency scenario. In both cases, contact was received from authorised officers with appropriate competency during normal working hours in response to a further email being sent to the LA. In the other two cases, contact was made with call handlers representing the LAs, but neither were able to provide access to the appropriate service or provide contact details for the relevant officers. Attempts to contact relevant officers directly were unsuccessful. In both cases, officers from the appropriate service responded to e-mail contact about the test exercise when normal office working hours had resumed.
- 2.4 In two cases where contact was made with the appropriate service or authorised officer, this was achieved by using a means of contact other than the out of hours number provided by the LA. In these cases, the out of hours number was not successful in providing the required response.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The audit demonstrated an effective emergency response to a serious food hygiene incident would be available across a large part of Wales. However, given the nature of such incidents, it is essential that such a response is available across the whole country to ensure a sufficient level of public health protection.
- 3.2 Actual officer authorisations and competency assessments were not checked as part of this exercise. LAs should review these documents

where appropriate to ensure that authorised officers have the required level of competence in accordance with the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) 2021.

- 3.3 Prior to the audit, most LAs had provided the FSA with updated/additional phone numbers. One LA has advised the FSA that it has updated the contact arrangements in response to the audit.
- 3.4 Two LAs advised that they have provided additional training and direction for call handlers and one LA has reviewed the signposting options available for persons calling the out of hours number. In addition, one local authority has revised the contact information immediately available to a senior officer and another has stated it will further update the emergency contact numbers that the FSA holds.
- 3.5 Of the four LAs where no out of hours contact was made with an authorised officer with appropriate competency, all have provided additional assurance through plans for revised or improved systems to facilitate future out of hours contact.
- 3.6 During the course of the audit, some LAs indicated that emergency out of hours response arrangements were either informal, based on good will of staff and / or not guaranteed. LAs are reminded of the need to ensure an effective response to food emergencies occurring outside normal working hours to comply with the law and Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) 2021.
- 3.7 The absence of a comprehensive effective response across all the LAs in Wales supports the undertaking of future audit assessments to test the ongoing effectiveness of emergency arrangements and any improvements made following this audit.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 The audit of the emergency food hygiene response by LAs in Wales identified the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

All local authorities must have contingency plans in place and be prepared to operate such plans in the event of an emergency and put in place procedures to ensure that officers responsible for taking action can be contacted out of hours in the case of an emergency.

[Article 5(1)(i) of Assimilated Regulation (EU) 2017/625;
5.7 Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) 2021]

Recommendation 2

All local authorities should advise the FSA of emergency telephone number(s), emergency contact name(s) and email addresses and proactively notify the FSA of any changes to these details as soon as practicable.

Article 5(1)(i) of Assimilated Regulation (EU) 2017/625;
5.7 Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) 2021]

Recommendation 3

Local authorities should ensure that out of office call handlers receive the appropriate training and direction and have the correct information available to provide the FSA with access to an appropriately authorised officer.

[Article 5(1)(i) of Assimilated Regulation (EU) 2017/625;
5.7 Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) 2021]

Programme Auditors: Craig Sewell
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Food Standards Agency in Wales

Local authority audit plan – Wales

April 2024 – March 2025

Programme Brief

Sarah Maddox

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Craig Sewell

Wales Lead Auditor – FSA in Wales

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Background

1. A key part of the FSA's remit in its role as a central competent authority (CCA) is to provide assurance for stakeholders and the public that competent authorities (CAs) such as LAs, are correctly delivering and implementing any legislation, advice and guidance issued in relation to the services they provide. This audit programme, provides a key element of the FSA's overall assurance framework.
2. In Wales, the power to set standards and monitor LA feed and food law enforcement services was conferred on the FSA under Section 12 of the Food Standards Act 1999 and Regulation 7 of the Official Feed and Food Controls (Wales) Regulations 2009.
3. The Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) requires food authorities to ensure that their documented procedure for dealing with food incidents includes the effective response to food alerts issued by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) including arrangements for alerts received outside normal working hours.
4. Local authorities (LAs) are required to put in place procedures to ensure that responsible officers can be contacted in the case of an emergency. LAs must advise the FSA of emergency telephone number(s) to enable contact to be made outside working hours. LAs must advise the FSA of any changes to out of hours contacts.

Programme Objectives

5. The primary objective of the programme is to provide assurance that local authority arrangements for responding to food incidents outside normal working hours are effective in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (Wales), in order to safeguard public health.
6. In addition, the programme will seek to:
 - identify and disseminate any areas of good practice and innovation to other LAs to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of responding to emergencies outside of normal working hours
 - gain a broader understanding of how LAs have responded and interpreted the requirements of FSA guidance
 - to highlight any emerging concerns or common issues affecting LAs in responding to emergencies
 - verify the emergency contact information LAs have provided the FSA

Scope of the Audit Programme

7. The assessment will include all of the LAs in Wales to assess the arrangements in place for responding to food incidents outside normal working hours.

Assessment Approach

8. The audits will involve a telephone call with a suitably authorised officer from each authority in relation to a serious food incident. Contact will be made using the latest version of the LA contact list which contains contact details supplied to the FSA by LAs.

Timing

9. No prior notification of the exercise will be given to LAs.

Assessment Report and Follow Up

10. All LAs will receive individual feedback on the findings of the out of hours test and a summary briefing will be produced. The briefing will include recommendations for LAs and the FSA in order to improve the response to responding to emergencies outside of normal working hours. The briefing will also highlight any common themes, emerging issues as well as any areas of good practice identified during the programme.

Planned Outcomes

11. **Immediate Outcomes**

- Provide assurance regarding the arrangements in place for responding to food incidents outside normal working hours
- Improvements and actions taken by LAs contribute to more effective local food law enforcement
- Wider dissemination of identified good practice will contribute to improvements in quality and effectiveness of LA response to food incidents outside normal working hours.
- Findings and recommendations will be fed back to relevant FSA teams to inform policy making
- The audits will ensure that the FSA is fulfilling its' role as CCA

12. **Strategic Outcomes:**

- The audits will raise the profile of the food service within LAs and help them maintain/enhance their resource allocation
- Robust assurance on the LA implementation of Official Feed and Food Control (OFFC) requirements
- Strengthened partnership between the FSA, LAs and key stakeholders
- Improved business compliance with food hygiene and standards contributes to improved public health and reduces the likelihood of foodborne illness, food incidents and food fraud
- Contribute towards FSA strategic risk management and compliance with UK obligations under OFFC requirements & the Food Standards Act 1999

Protecting the Public and Supporting Businesses – Trading Standards making an impact on your local community

The Impacts and Outcomes of
Local Trading Standards Services
2023/24 in England and Wales



FOREWORD

The Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers (ACTSO) represents heads of Trading Standards across England & Wales and currently 95% of local authorities are members. 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 its fourth report.

During 2023/24, cost-of-living issues remained high on everyone's minds. Cheap dangerous, illicit, and counterfeit goods appearing to be a "good deal" posed risks to consumers. Misleading price claims could cause consumers to miss out on fair deals, and businesses remained at risk from being undercut by unfair competition and businesses selling illegal goods and services.

As well as the usual three themes of Tackling Detriment and Preventing Harm, Supporting the Local Economy, and Promoting Health and Wellbeing, we have devoted specific sections to environmental regulation and work to support consumers and businesses with the cost-of-living crisis.

While Local Trading Standards Services remain stretched in terms of funding and staffing, they continue to have a big impact in protecting consumers and helping businesses. The headlines from this year's report are:

- Over **£905 million detriment was prevented** by Trading Standards' actions. This equates to **£8.39 saved for every £1 spent**.
- **Revenue budgets were £108 million**, a 1% increase from last year.
- Overall **staff numbers** are **2,034** a 4% reduction on last year.
- Referrals from **Citizens Advice reduced from 2022/23, by 16% to just over 476,000**. This is now lower than pre pandemic levels.
- This year **839 people or businesses were convicted of offences, an 18% increase on 2022/23**. This is possibly due to the reduced backlog placing fewer pressures on the Magistrates Courts, making the progress of simpler and less serious cases more straightforward.
- Trading Standards obtained almost **£9.6 million in non-scams related redress** for consumers.
- The amount of **money saved for scam victims was almost £59 million**, a reduction of 15% from 2023/23. This could be attributed to the

success in stopping scam mail reaching victims by working with partners to tackle the issue at source.

- Trading Standards provided over **22,000 hours of advice to businesses through primary authority partnerships**. This was an increase of 3% from last year. The total number of primary authority partnerships also increased by 7%.
- Almost **72,000 compliance checks** were carried out to ensure that businesses meet their legal responsibilities and to provide them with advice on site. This is an increase of 10%, most likely a result of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) asking local authorities to increase the number of compliance checks on food businesses.
- Almost 2.9 million unsafe or non-compliant products were seized or removed from the marketplace representing a saving to society of almost £114 million.
- Almost 6,600 premises were checked to ensure they were not selling age-restricted goods, such as alcohol and vapes to children.
- Over 19.1 million illicit cigarettes, over 5.1 tonnes of illicit hand-rolling tobacco and over 1.5 million illicit vapes were seized.

In summary, Trading Standards continues to demonstrate its huge value in protecting consumers, legitimate businesses, public health, and the environment. The impact of this work, alongside that which is delivered via National Trading Standards, highlights the results that Trading Standards achieves. Trading Standards is unique in having an infrastructure that can operate at local, regional, and national levels in this way and this is key to its success.

We want this report to inform Government's policy development, including funding for services, and to raise the profile of Trading Standards' work within local authorities.

Special thanks go to the 111 services covering 123 local authorities that submitted their data return. This covers over 70% of all local authorities in England & Wales.



Valerie Simpson
Chair of the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers



BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

Local authorities in England and Wales were asked to submit data for the financial year 2023/24.

A total of 111 services contributed, covering 123 out of 173 of local authorities in England and Wales. The responses cover an area with a population of almost 50 million, or 82.6% of the population of England and Wales.

To illustrate the estimated national impact of Trading Standards, figures have been adjusted to account for both population and the response rate for each question. These figures estimate impact and activity levels for the whole of England and Wales.

DEMAND AND RESOURCING

The approximate revenue budget allocated to Trading Standards was close to £107.9 million, a 1% increase from last year.

Over £20 million was received in income from a variety of sources including metrology, National Trading Standards' grants and Primary Authority income, a 10% increase from last year.

Of the **2,034 full time employees** employed on Trading Standards' work, over 87% are "operational" staff.

Trading Standards received just over 476,000 referrals and notifications to their services from the Citizens Advice consumer service. This shows how many members of the public are seeking advice and support from Trading Standards on consumer related problems and issues. This was a 17% decrease from 2022/23. Whilst the demands on Citizens Advice remain relatively high, the resources remain the same to address new and emerging challenges. In addition, they received almost 107,000 referrals from other partners.



SECTION ONE: TACKLING DETRIMENT AND PREVENTING HARM

One of the key functions of Trading Standards is to prevent consumer and business detriment. Trading Standards' work can include providing advice and support to the public on how to avoid being ripped off, as well as disrupting and taking enforcement action against criminal behaviour, to prevent harm and financial detriment. The former may be limited due to the financial constraints faced by local services and the need to focus on statutory activity.

The Consumer Protection Study 2022 estimated that there was £54 billion in unaddressed detriment across Great Britain.

1.1 Stopping Fraudulent, Illegal and Unfair Trading

Trading Standards Services will usually take formal enforcement action where people deliberately break the law, have caused serious harm, or have repeatedly ignored advice from officers. Trading Standards legislation carries a variety of penalties including imprisonment; fines; forfeiture of assets; fixed penalties; and undertakings to stop future non-compliance. Serious investigations are complex, lengthy and can take several years to bring to trial. This is being exacerbated by ongoing serious delays in the Crown Courts system. Government is continuing to increase options for the use of monetary penalties by Trading Standards.

In **2023/24**:

- Approximately 839 defendants were prosecuted.

- Prison sentences totalling over 446 years were handed down.
- Defendants were ordered to pay over £3.7 million in fines, a significant increase, almost four times the amount of last year, partly due to several exceptionally large fines in a handful of cases.
- Defendants were ordered to pay almost £9.2 million in Proceeds of Crime confiscation orders, an increase of 36%.
- Almost 230 penalty notices were issued for Trading Standards offences.

1.2 Detriment and Redress

Trading Standards can ask for the Court to issue a compensation order for victims as part of a prosecution process or get redress for victims through a variety of other means. In **2023/24**, it is estimated that the actions of Trading Standards Services resulted in:

- Almost £2.7 million compensation being awarded to victims by the courts.
- Over £4.5 million prevented from being handed over to criminals.

- Almost £2.4 million gained for victims through advice and intervention.

Overall Trading Standards actions prevented over £905 million of detriment to consumers and businesses.

This shows that Trading Standards continues to offer a cost effective and important service to local communities and individuals and demonstrates the seriousness of the offending being tackled by local services.

1.3 Supporting Scam Victims

Fraud is the most common crime in the country, accounting for 40% of crime in England and Wales, and affecting millions of people, at risk of substantial financial losses. Trading Standards Services play a key role in tackling fraud and protecting people from scams.

Trading Standards support victims to get the help they need to stop them from being scammed again. This includes the installation of call blocking devices and doorstep cameras alongside working with safeguarding agencies. Trading Standards can also make referrals to the National Trading Standards Scams and eCrime Teams to undertake disruption work such as getting telephone or payment systems removed and taking down websites. Most scams emanate from overseas where formal legal action by Trading Standards is not possible.

In **2023/24**, it is estimated that across England and Wales:

- **Local authority Trading Standards Services provided support to almost 12,800 scam victims.**
- **Work to disrupt mass marketing fraud mailings, stop outgoing payments and mail, saved consumers almost £59 million.**

While the number of scam victims supported has reduced by 12% this year, this could be attributed to the success in stopping scam mail reaching victims by working with partners to tackle the issue at source.

LB Islington: Tackling Mail Forwarding Businesses

Islington Trading Standards Service identified 274 new businesses using a single mail forwarding business (MFB) address. Of those, 57% were not clients of that MFB, and were falsely claiming to be based at that MFB address. Trading Standards took down 21 websites of those falsely using an MFB address, 13 traders removed the false address and, upon Trading Standards' advice, the MFB withdrew services from six that were clients but were breaching trading standards legislation.

Ongoing liaison is necessary to get the local authority, where the actual trader is based, to engage with or enforce the law against problem businesses using an MFB. To put this into context, one MFB alone can host around 40,000 businesses making it impossible for a single Trading Standards Service to tackle them all, simply because of the use of a mail forwarding address in their area.

Gateshead Council: Supporting Consumer with Civil Disputes

Gateshead Trading Standards Service has a highly active civil advice team of two officers, and they work to help complainants resolve their issues. In the last year, this advice team gained redress to the total of £130,505. Examples include:

Mr A had contracted with a business for a holiday that had to be cancelled due to Covid. He wanted a refund. The trader kept prevaricating and then went into administration. For two years no progress was made and attempts to claim via the bank and trade associations failed. The service engaged in numerous communications with the Travel Trust Association and

finally they agreed to refund the full £2,727.

Mrs B had a complaint against a furniture retailer. Her suite was faulty. Finally, after much negotiation, the business finally disclosed the contents of the complaint report. Following a faulty replacement, after five months Trading Standards obtained a full refund of £2,800 for Mrs B.

Gateshead Trading Standards Service was contacted by the son of a lady with dementia. She had contracted with a Company for roof repairs. The lady was encouraged to waive her cooling off period to allow the work to immediately commence. She had no recollection of the work being done. It was unclear the extent of any work completed. At Trading Standards' request, her GP sent a letter stating that she had dementia and would be unable to understand or have the capacity to enter complex contracts. Trading Standards had several conversations with the Company. They agreed to waive all payments and refunded the £550 already paid.



Pembrokeshire, Heart of the South West and Buckinghamshire & Surrey: Supporting Vulnerable Scam Victims

A vulnerable couple with learning difficulties requiring minor roof repairs were charged £800 to refit a single slipped tile. The trader then made false claims regarding the safety of their chimney stack and subsequently spent 30 minutes on the roof and charged the couple £4,500. This work was unnecessary, substandard, and the couple had been grossly overcharged. Pembrokeshire Trading Standards Service prosecuted the trader who pleaded guilty to four offences under the Fraud Act. He received a 15-month suspended prison sentence and a compensation order for £900 was awarded to the victims.

A social worker contacted Heart of the South West Trading Standards Service about a client who had lost £22,000 to scammers as he believed he was in a relationship with ITV's Good Morning presenter Susanna Reid. The deputy editor agreed to write a letter on Susanna's behalf saying that Susanna would never enter into a relationship with someone she had not met and would never ask anyone to send her money. The bank refunded his money which is now under a Court of Protection Order.

Mrs C had been cold called by a man giving his name as 'DC Tony Andrews' claiming to work for Action Fraud. He persuaded Mrs C to share substantial personal information and to transfer £130,000 to him. Once her savings had gone, he instructed her to obtain a loan. At this point bank staff alerted Mrs C, Trading Standards, and the police to the scam. Her bank cards were cancelled. Following an immediate safeguarding intervention, Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards

Service arranged for a call blocker and door camera to be installed. They secured a full refund from the bank. They also assisted Mrs C with preventative measures, including Protective Registration with the Identity Protection Service of Cifas and notifying HMRC that scammers have her National Insurance number. Repeat visits were necessary to help restore her confidence and increase her resilience to future fraud attempts. She said *"your help ... was very much appreciated. ... I received a full refund from Barclays without questions or a fight. Your visit ... was a great comfort at a really horrible time."*

LB Southwark and Stoke-on-Trent Council: Use of Call Blockers to protect Vulnerable Citizens from Scams

An elderly dementia sufferer was provided with a free call-blocker by Southwark Trading Standards Service, funded via National Trading Standards. For years, the resident had fallen victim to telephone scammers offering clairvoyant services. Estimated losses were over £20,000 but the spending was kept secret from his family. The device now blocks all such calls and the spending ended.

Stoke-on-Trent Trading Standards Service arranged for a call blocker to be fitted for a consumer after they attended a scams awareness talk. The consumer had expressed concern as their spouse had recently been diagnosed with dementia and they were receiving a high number of scam calls. The call blocker was fitted in October 2023 and, up to the end of March 2024, the consumer received 701 incoming calls, of which 437 were blocked as scam calls: 62% of those calls were scam calls. The consumer said *"It's the best thing I have had, if the phone goes off now it's someone we know. Its brilliant - no more nuisance phone calls at all."*



West Yorkshire Financial Exploitation and Abuse Team: Protecting Vulnerable Adults from Financial Abuse and Early Intervention in the Home Improvement Market

The West Yorkshire Financial Exploitation & Abuse Team is a specialist, multi-disciplinary team based within West Yorkshire Trading Standards Service. It was established in 2016 to tackle financial exploitation from rogue traders and other doorstep crime and was expanded in 2018 to undertake criminal investigations involving financial abuse of adults at risk, on behalf of the five West Yorkshire councils. Last year it dealt with 237 referrals, bringing the total number to 1,894, with a value of fraud of £14,726,000. Interventions have recovered or preserved over £5 million to date.

Operation Artemis is an early intervention and prevention initiative, by West Yorkshire Trading Standards Service, aimed at 'nipping in the bud' illegal trader behaviour that does not currently warrant large scale legal intervention but where vulnerable consumers have fallen victim to rogue tactics in the home improvement market. Early disruption helps prevent future offending. Information is gathered from the sector through a combination of business

engagement and site visits, alongside intelligence-based research. This assists with implementing short term proactive interventions when consumer complaints are received, and to identify malpractice or breaches of legislation. This may be by way of advice to assist the business in identifying common problems in their trading model or a more intensive disruption to prevent continuing offending. So far, 27 businesses have been identified and over £20,000 has been refunded to consumers.

Dorset Council: Counterfeit Vinyl Records

In April 2023, a longstanding investigation by Dorset Trading Standards Service, delayed due to Covid, was finally concluded. Vinyl Groove UK was convicted of 14 offences relating to the sale and distribution of counterfeit vinyl LP records. The case came to Trading Standards' attention after a purchaser made a complaint about poor quality records and refusals to give a refund. The defendant was sentenced to 4 months' imprisonment suspended for 2 years. He was ordered to do 250 hours of unpaid work, electronically tagged for 3 months with a curfew order, and ordered to pay £373,598 following a Proceeds of Crime Order. The outcome was published in several national newspapers including the Guardian, Independent and Daily Mail.

SECTION TWO: SUPPORTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Local economies and economic growth can only flourish where businesses have a level playing field and are not subject to unfair competition by those who break the law, and by being able to access good advice on how to meet regulatory requirements.

2.1 Businesses Get the Help and Support they need to Thrive and Grow

Having a thriving local economy is crucial for local authorities and for Government. Trading Standards' role in providing advice and support to businesses has never been more important.

There are currently **1,978 Primary Authority partnerships**. These partnerships enable assured advice is given to a business with multiple shops or sites via a single local authority. There was an increase in activity of 8% from 2022/23.

In **2023/24**, it is estimated that across England and Wales:

- Over 22,000 hours were provided by Trading Standards advising Primary Authority businesses.
- Trading Standards responded to almost 13,500 requests for advice from businesses that were not part of the Primary Authority scheme. This is a reduction of one-third. The reasons for this are unclear but it may be because Trading Standards have been more proactive in undertaking compliance checks and inspections that would enable businesses to ask for advice on site.

2.2 Creating and Maintaining a Level Playing Field for Safe and Fair Competition

Fair competition underpins economic growth. Unfair competition from those who fail to meet legal standards damages the economy and can cause legitimate businesses to fail, as well as putting consumers at risk.

Trading Standards Services follow a risk based and intelligence-led model. They will take action proportionate to the risk. Actions may include providing advice, seizing unsafe, counterfeit, and illicit products, and taking formal enforcement action where required.

Compliance visits have increased by 9% from 2022/23. This is largely because of the Food Standards Agency's requests for more food inspections.

In **2023/24**, it is estimated that across England and Wales:

- Almost 72,000 visits were carried out to businesses to ensure that they comply with the law and to provide advice to help them fix any non-compliance.
- Over 27,000 businesses were subject to an intervention, such as advice, investigation, or referral.

- 58% of Trading Standards Services operate an assured trader scheme to help increase consumer confidence. These tend to be targeted at specific trade sectors. This has remained steady but the number of participating businesses has significantly decreased year-on-year. Approximately, 12,000 businesses participate in these schemes.
- Almost 250,000 counterfeit products with a market value of over £41 million, which breach the intellectual property of legitimate businesses, were seized.

This is less than one-tenth of what it has been in previous years. The reason is unknown. This may be partly due to a shift of focus to vapes and tobacco work. Counterfeits may be being sold through social media groups rather than from physical premises, making large scale seizures less likely and intervention more difficult. We will monitor this in future years.

The illegal trade in counterfeit goods funds organised crime and damages legitimate businesses who manufacture, distribute, and buy licences to sell legitimate products.



Staffordshire County Council: Local Business Support

Staffordshire Trading Standards Service refreshed their support to local businesses and now offer all businesses free initial access to discuss their needs and receive next-step suggestions. They have implemented an online contact form that businesses can use to access:

- Free initial access to business support.
- Trading Standards' bite-sized bespoke guidance, payable in advance in 30-minute blocks, to receive advice about product and service-specific matters, including labelling, standards, and regulations.
- Primary Authority Partnerships for businesses that supply goods and services, both within Staffordshire and beyond, to receive 'Assured Advice' and ongoing support.

Essex County Council: Border Checks

Essex Trading Standards Service undertook work with Harwich International Port to ensure readiness for the new border checks required from 30th April 2024. Documentary and physical checks now apply on medium risk animal products, plants, plant products, and high-risk food and feed of non-animal origin from the EU. Trading Standards will be undertaking checks on any high risk non-animal origin feed entering the UK through the port's new Border Control facility. Working with representatives from the port, Feed Officers have undertaken training sessions at the Border Control Point to familiarise themselves with the checks required, as well as the physical equipment necessary to unload roll on/roll off vehicles and the data systems used to move freight through the port.

Cheshire East Council: Support for Food Business Expansion

Cheshire East Trading Standards Service undertook visits and provided guidance to local traders looking to expand products on a larger footprint. One grateful business owner fed back: *"Thank you for your email, and for our meeting earlier in the week. Whilst I am still mortified that any products were able to leave me lacking in labels, there is a part of me that is also glad it happened because the time you have invested in speaking to me has been invaluable for me as a small business. It was apparent that the labels I use still weren't quite right and I have already amended them to reflect the following wider actions..."* and *"I wanted to take the time to thank you again for the time you spent with me. It was clear that you are both very knowledgeable and passionate about this area – with good reason. But your approach in the first instance is one of support, guidance, and engagement with business owners, and I think that is an excellent approach. Allergens and labels etc. are a complex area and a tricky one for small businesses to navigate. I think it is very commendable the efforts you are going to, to not only protect consumers but also to help small business to survive, thrive and ultimately be safe and compliant."*

Neath Port Talbot: Food Standards Workshop for Takeaway Businesses

In conjunction with the local Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) coordinator, Neath Port Talbot Trading Standards Service ran a free food standards workshop for takeaway businesses. The BAME coordinator used their contacts to invite relevant businesses. The morning workshop session provided advice on all aspects of food standards, with a particular focus on allergens. It is hoped to continue this as a programme for forthcoming years.



Kent County Council: Outcome Based Cooperative Regulation

Kent Trading Standards Service works with their Primary Authority business partners to deliver cost efficient compliance and the highest levels of consumer protection. One food business, identified by another local authority as marketing a range of non-compliant products, withdrew all those bearing non-compliant health claims from supermarket chains nationally. Trading Standards assisted in reworking the range, bringing it into compliance before returning it to the market with minimum financial and reputational harm. Without this support, the total annual consumer detriment would have equated to almost £150 million.

Cornwall Council: Business Regulatory Support

Cornwall Council offer a dedicated Business Regulatory Support service that provides free signposting and chargeable services for advice, training, and support. This is based on full cost recovery across a range of disciplines and includes specific Trading Standards' elements such as bite-size advice, bite-sized guides, auditing, and bespoke training. The Council has close links with the

Chamber of Commerce, Growth Hub, and other local business partnerships to help build trust and confidence. Feedback included:

"I have a small natural skincare business and recently branched out into making skincare products. Trading Standards have been a real help, popping out to see me and advising me about labelling and helping me check my wording on products. They even saved me £1,000 with their advice on packaging of one of my products! Invaluable!"

"We asked the officer about T1 and T2 weights and he advised us where we could increase our tolerances. This has saved us a substantial amount of money due to rejecting less bars. There is no doubt that our business has benefited from our trading standards' visit and I am very happy to recommend the service to other businesses."

"We would like to share our appreciation for the help and assistance we have received from our local Trading Standards officer. Shortfalls in our compliance record keeping were highlighted which we have now worked on and rectified. We also now have peace of mind that as new directives, consumer rights and rules and regulations change with Brexit looming that we have the support we need as and when we need it."

SECTION THREE: PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The health and well-being of local communities is important to all local authorities and Trading Standards have an important part to play by ensuring consumer products meet safety standards, food is correctly labelled and animal health and welfare standards are maintained.

Trading Standards, in particular, enforce a very wide range of age restricted sales legislation to help to keep young people safe. Stopping the supply of age restricted products, such as vapes, cigarettes, alcohol, and knives, are a key priority in many local authorities.

3.1 Ensuring the Safety of Consumer Products

Product safety laws are in place to ensure that products do not cause deaths or personal injuries. Unsafe consumer goods such as cosmetics, toys and electrical goods can cause serious injuries, fires and even risk lives. As well as checking goods at retail and wholesale level, Trading Standards identify, check, and seize unsafe products at ports.

This year the number of items removed from the market has decreased by 40%. The reasons for this are unclear. It may be, partly, because figures on vapes are collected separately but this would not explain the full decline.

In **2023/24**, it is estimated that across England and Wales:

- Almost 2.9 million unsafe or non-compliant products were seized or removed from the marketplace following Trading Standards' interventions.
- The savings to society, in terms of product value and injuries and fires prevented, is almost £115 million.

3.2 Protecting the food chain

There has been an increased focus on food safety to protect consumers. The Food Standards Agency has increased its focus on the local authority role ensuring food standards are maintained. This is likely to be reflected in the increase in interventions as mentioned earlier in this report.

Food prices are higher than ever. This can increase the temptation for unscrupulous businesses to adulterate or falsely label food to enhance profits or gain a competitive advantage. Consumers need to be able to trust food labels and get good value for money. They also need to have clear, reliable information about food allergens which can cause serious injury or even death.

In **2023/24**, it is estimated that across England and Wales:

- Almost 9,500 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 3% increase on last year and a 35% increase from 2021/22.

In **2023/24**, it is estimated that across England and Wales:

- Over 6,300 businesses were found to be in breach of animal health and welfare legislation.

This has remained relatively constant in the last four years.

Animal disease outbreaks create risks to the UK economy and the farming industry. It should be remembered that the Foot and Mouth Outbreak of 2001 cost the UK economy £8 billion, and caused problems affecting tourism, farming, rural wages, and food production for many years afterwards.

In 2023/24, there were far fewer avian influenza cases than in the last few years, however Bluetongue disease became an issue. In 2023/24, local authorities dealt with 27 suspected and 76 confirmed cases of Bluetongue. In addition, they dealt with 34 suspected and 18 confirmed cases of avian influenza and one suspected case each of rabies and swine fever.

Ensuring proper animal health and welfare standards, and protecting animals from suffering, helps the rural economy and protects the food chain.

3.3 Reducing the risk of children accessing age restricted products

Trading Standards Services conduct test purchases to ensure businesses do not sell age-restricted goods to children, as well as providing businesses with advice on how to comply. Legislation outlaws the sale of age-restricted products, such as vapes, alcohol, cigarettes, knives, and fireworks to children, to protect them and their local communities from harm. This year there has been a continued national focus on the problems caused by the sale of vapes to children.

In **2023/24**, it is estimated that across England and Wales:

- Over 1,400 premises were tested for alcohol sales.
- The average failure rate for alcohol test purchases was 23%.

- Over 650 premises were tested for tobacco sales.
- The average failure rate for tobacco test purchases was 19%.
- Over 4,300 premises were tested for vape sales.
- The average failure rate for vapes was 25%.
- Over 1,200 premises were tested for other products.
- The average failure rate for other products was 20%.

Resources have been shifted towards vapes testing, resulting in less testing on other products.

3.4 Reducing the availability of illicit products

Illicit tobacco, vapes and alcohol can contain undeclared contaminants. Illicit vapes can also contain higher than permitted levels of nicotine.

Smoking remains a significant driver in health inequalities. Price has been shown to be a critical factor in determining whether people quit smoking. The presence of cheap illicit tobacco undermines attempts to get people to cut down and quit smoking. Packs of illicit cigarettes are often between a third and a half the price of legitimate products.

The amount of tobacco and vape products seized has increased enormously since 2022/23. This reflects the prevalence of vaping problems and the priority this work is being given within local authorities. The work is supported with some funds from National Trading Standards.

In **2023/24**, across England and Wales:

- Over 19.1 million illicit cigarettes were seized, worth an estimated £9.5 million. This is a huge 34% increase from 2022/23.

- Over 5.1 tonnes of illicit hand-rolling tobacco were seized, worth over £2.3 million. Again, this is a very large increase of 59% compared to 2022/23.
- Almost 1.5 million illicit vapes were seized by local authorities inland. This was, again, a significant increase of 59% on the previous year.

The Licensing Act 2003 allows for a review, and potential removal of a licence, by a local authority Licensing Committee, where failures to comply with any of the four licensing objectives occur. These objectives are preventing crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm. Activities by Trading Standards have resulted in 183 Licence Reviews being carried out, an increase of 24% from last year.





London Trading Standards Authorities: Illicit Tobacco and Vapes Enforcement and Work with Schools

A range of work is going on across many London Boroughs. Examples include:

Croydon Trading Standards Service has received Public Health funding to employ a specialist illicit tobacco and vapes lead officer. This enhanced the enforcement capability of a small team and ignited a new workstream with schools in the borough through the safeguarding lead. Trading Standards have contributed towards a safeguarding toolkit for young people, creating advice on disposable vapes for parents and schools and a 'scam alert' link service with bite-size warnings and information aimed at young people and their parents. This successful relationship has led to the offer for 2024/25 of funding for two more posts.

Haringey Trading Standards Service have collaborated with Public Health on a School Superzone Project. Their primary role is to ensure that businesses within 500m of specific schools are responsible retailers in relation to age restricted products. In 2023/24, Trading Standards carried out 40 visits within the superzone, with a failure rate of 18% (7 sales). They also produced a leaflet for business on the sale of vapes.

Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Trading Standards Service have worked in partnership with their Public Health team and local schools to devise a document that could become a roadmap for schools dealing with vape incidents. The document signposts to partners like the drug and alcohol partnership, school nurses and Trading Standards. As part of a Schools Superzone, Trading Standards undertook a targeted project of advice for sellers of age restricted goods, culminating in vape visits and an underage sales operation with the police. There were no sales in the 10 premises tested.

Staffordshire County Council: American Candy

In a pilot project funded by the Food Standards Agency, Staffordshire Trading Standards Service seized 3,378 items of American sweets and fizzy drinks with known links to hyperactivity and cancer in children. The products were found in small local retailers as well as larger retailers and supermarkets. They were also available through social media. American Candy has grown in popularity over the last few years due to its promotion on social media channels. Last year, £25m worth of US sweets were imported, a 70% increase from 2017. London alone has seen stores pop up in their hundreds across its high streets.

Consumers that buy them could be at risk from a lack of allergy labelling, or the inclusion of ingredients, in particular additives, which do not meet UK food safety standards. Several items were seized and there was significant local, regional, national, and international media coverage. The BBC ran an item in Morning Live featuring an investigation by Dr Punam Krishan. The project significantly raised consumers' understanding of the health risks associated with these products.

Hertfordshire County Council: Dairy Allergens in Vegan Food

Hertfordshire Trading Standards Service took over 300 samples for examination and testing. Over half had unsatisfactory results. In particular, 45% of sampled vegan food was found to contain an animal-based allergen; the most common being milk. Not only does this mislead those who wish to choose vegan food but also risks serious allergic reactions.



Derbyshire County Council: Protecting the Public from Allergens and Unsafe Pet Food

Derbyshire Trading Standards Service received eight complaints regarding allergen incidents in hospitality businesses, resulting in consumers becoming unwell. Officers supported the businesses to identify the cause and implement corrective actions.

Improvements were made to their allergen management procedures, staff training and signage/labelling.

A project to sample and test plant-based drinks for the presence of dairy milk proteins in barista style coffee was carried out at 10 businesses. Cross contamination can cause severe reactions for a person with a milk allergy. There has been a recent tragic case highlighted in the media where a teenage girl died. Five samples failed, with one containing 22.6mg/kg of casein (over 100 times the reference dose). Primary Authorities were advised and follow up visits were made to discuss findings and offer advice on the handling of allergens to prevent any further cross contamination and reduce risk to consumers with a milk allergy.

There has been a dramatic increase in the quantity of raw pet food for sale. Hospital admissions of pet owners who handle raw pet food have increased substantially, due to risks associated with salmonella and other bacterial infections. Trading Standards have worked with a large manufacturer of raw pet food to ensure that the feed that they supply is safe. The company in question manufactures around 4,200 tonnes of pet food per year. Due to Trading Standards' intervention in respect of a failed sample of raw pet food the company recalled a batch worth £32,000.

Lancashire County Council: Recipe for Health Scheme

"Recipe 4 Health" is a Lancashire Trading Standards Service's scheme for caterers. The Recipe 4 Health Award promotes businesses that focus on healthy eating, environmental issues, and social responsibility.

At each level, businesses have to show they are compliant with food safety, food standards, licensing, and age restricted sales legislation. In 2023/24, 15 Gold, 20 Silver and 47 Bronze Awards were given.

Manchester City Council: Prosecution for Unsafe Jewellery and Toys

Manchester Trading Standards Service were alerted to a consignment of toys imported by a Manchester-based business. They carried out an inspection of the importer and took a range of samples of products. Seized items included 422 'poppy' pins, 110 items of jewellery, 200 light up toys, 136 counterfeit "Marvel" toys and a further 73 toys that lacked the correct labelling. Jewellery was found to contain dangerous levels of heavy metals, including a ring containing 1,300 times the safe amount of lead. Light up toys had plastic caps and battery boxes that were not fitted properly which could have resulted in a child gaining access to the internal wiring. Other elements were found to pose a choking hazard. A prosecution was taken and the director pleaded guilty to various safety and counterfeiting offences. In total, fines of £8,000 were issued and costs of £4,300.

Isle of Anglesey County Council: Imported Vapes

Successful partnership working with North Wales Police resulted in a three-month Closure Order on a Vape Shop that resulted in a reduction in antisocial behaviour and underage sales to children affecting their health/school work. Anglesey Trading Standards Service also worked with UK Border Force at Holyhead, resulting in over 118,000 illegal vapes being stopped from entering the market. Over 2,800 were removed from sale in retail shops. The total street value of these vapes was almost £1.5 million.

SECTION FOUR: NET ZERO, ENERGY COSTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The Net Zero and Climate Change agenda continues to be important to local authorities. Many have this issue as a key corporate priority. The cost-of-living crisis has also meant that claims associated with energy efficiency and costs are attractive to consumers as they look to save money. While there is no specific data collected on this issue, figures will be included within the totals for compliance checks, business advice and prosecution figures in previous chapters. For example, some Trading Standards carry out work in relation to:

- Misleading claims on green energy products such as heat pumps and solar panels.
- Ensuring compliance with Energy Performance Certificates and Minimum Energy Efficient Standards.
- Misleading “greenwashing” claims.
- Enforcement of single use plastics bans.

Suffolk County Council: Lorrywatch Scheme

Suffolk Trading Standards Service operate a “Lorrywatch” scheme with around eight member communities. This enables residents, in volunteer groups, to report the registration details of Heavy Goods Vehicles travelling through their villages or on bridges in apparent breach of vehicle environmental weight restrictions. The driver is identified and usually provided with advice in the first instance. The haulage company, if identified, is also provided with advice and intelligence is shared with the Transport Commissioner, where relevant. Hundreds of reports are received and subsequent advice letters are sent out every year. Generally, this is very successful and welcomed by the communities and politicians in which the scheme operates, with very low rates of re-offending. The scheme helps protect the environment of local villages by reducing noise and air pollution and damage to the natural and historic built environment.

Bath and North East Somerset: Road Weight Restrictions

Bath and North East Somerset Trading Standards Service dealt with reports of 30 potential breaches of vehicle weight restrictions. Five vehicles were exempt and warning letters were sent to the remaining offenders. In addition, Cleveland Bridge uses Automatic Number Plate recognition to send notices to vehicles appearing to breach the weight limit. Last year 569 notices were sent, with 51 cases being formally investigated by Trading Standards, resulting in 37 formal warnings and four prosecutions with other cases still being investigated.

Isle of Wight Council: Wood Fuel

Isle of Wight Trading Standards Service has been contacting local suppliers of wood for burning in domestic houses to ensure compliance with “Ready to Burn” requirements. These requirements are designed to reduce air pollution caused by the burning of unseasoned or wet wood. Follow up physical visits are planned for 2024/25.

Leicestershire County Council: Green Claims

Trading Standards East Midlands carried out intelligence work in respect of green claims. Government run schemes bring in an opportunity for businesses to exploit consumers. Often this involves fraudulently completing eligibility criteria applications and completing work that is often unnecessary. In partnership with colleagues across the region, Leicestershire Trading Standards Services is looking at some of these claims and issues brought about by past work in this area, such as loft insulation being substandard and unsuitable, leaving consumers unable to mortgage the property and experiencing issues when coming to sell.



Newport: Energy Efficiency

Work by Newport Trading Standards Service resulted in eight illegally marketed domestic properties brought into compliance from their failing F and G ratings. This will result in an annual reduction of 30.2 tonnes of CO₂ and savings to residents of £2,428 per year. Three entirely unrated domestic properties were identified and brought up to standard, resulting in a further reduction of 23 tonnes of CO₂ and savings to residents of £3,787 per year. The Team also saw 22 illegally marketed commercial properties brought into compliance from their failing F and G ratings, resulting in an annual reduction of 576 tonnes of CO₂. The amount of carbon removed from the atmosphere was the equivalent of planting 56,000 trees.

Shared Regulatory Services (Bridgend, Cardiff, and Vale of Glamorgan): Energy Efficiency

Trading Standards contacted owners, agents, and landlords of private rented properties across the three local authority areas to remind them of their duties under Minimum Energy Efficiency Regulations. The Team also signposted them to funding that may be available to assist in improving the energy rating of properties. The focus was properties appearing to fall into the forbidden F and G energy efficiency ratings, together with those for which there was no published rating. By the end of the year, a total of 138 properties were sufficiently improved to take them out of the F and G energy efficiency rating to become E rated or better. Also, some 127 previously unrated private rented properties now hold Energy Performance Certificates ranging from B to E. This resulted in a reduction of 406 tonnes in the amount of CO₂ produced at the improved properties and a reduction of almost 425,000 kWh needed to heat the improved properties.

Worcestershire County Council: Spray Foam

Worcestershire Trading Standards Service has been warning residents to be on their guard against those looking to supply insulation products, in particular, spray foam. Trading Standards saw a rise in doorstep and cold-call scams that seek to persuade householders to buy spray-in insulation. The trader either argues that spray foam is better than traditional methods of insulation, or that existing spray foam insulation in the property is either likely to cause damage or is soon to become illegal. People are then persuaded that they should opt for an alternative “spray-in” insulation which is sold at an inflated price. Residents have been advised to seek expert advice before agreeing to any work. It is also important to ensure that spray foam insulation is applied by trained professionals and that adequate ventilation in lofts and roof spaces is provided. Spray foam insulation has been known to lead to problems when the homeowner wants to sell, re-mortgage or release equity from their property.

Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council: Vape Disposal

Redcar and Cleveland Trading Standards Service have provided advice and guidance to all vape retailers to provide appropriate waste facilities in their premises. This legislation is designed to increase recycling and reduce environmental damage caused by discarded vapes.

SECTION FIVE: COST OF LIVING CRISIS

As referenced throughout this report, the cost of living crisis has continued to influence the work done by Trading Standards this year. Similarly to net zero, there is no specific data collected on this issue as figures will be included within the totals for compliance checks, business advice and enforcement activity.

Carmarthenshire County Council: Farmer Welfare Initiative

Carmarthenshire Trading Standards Service's Animal Health Team have responded to an increasing number of animal welfare complaints on farms, to find farmers are struggling financially and/or mentally. They brought together the Citizens' Advice Bureau (to offer debt/financial advice), and charities, Tir Dewi (offering practical support to farmers) and the DPJ Foundation (mental health charity for the farming community) so there are now mechanisms in place for four-way referrals between each of the organisations, ensuring farmers receive the support they need.

As an example, officers responded to one complaint and during a joint visit with the Animal and Plant Health Agency, found evidence of carcasses scattered throughout the property, a large quantity of slurry and very little grass, hay or straw. The farmer told officers that he was struggling, had no money or support and was a carer to his elderly mother who had recently attempted suicide. Initially, he was too proud to accept help, but after numerous visits by an officer, he agreed to meet with Tir Dewi and CAB who were able to provide practical and financial assistance, which allowed the farmer to resolve non-compliance and become more financially and emotionally stable.

Derby City Council and LBs of Brent & Harrow, Haringey, and Kingston: Ensuring the Accuracy of Scales and Prices in Shops

A range of work is going on across many local authorities to reassure consumers that they are getting what they pay for, especially on staple items. Examples include:

Derby City Trading Standards Service inspected 52 retailers. They tested 227 scales: 94% had the required markings and 3% were outside of the permitted limits of error, meaning a consumer could be given short weight. They checked over 5,300 individual packs of staples. Of these, only 0.6% packs were found to be below the "T2" permitted weight limit. They included ready meals, bread, noodles, and cheese. Over 4,700 shelf edge price labels were checked to ensure required pricing information was present and 94.6% were found to be correct. Compliance was higher (at 98.6%) in major

supermarkets. In total, 912 prices were scanned, of which 885 (97%) matched the price advertised on the shelf. Of the 27 that differed, seven were in the consumer's favour and 10 were to the consumer's detriment. Unit Pricing was checked in 32 retailers. Of 859 prices checked, 8.6% were found to be misleading. Overall compliance was high with unit pricing being the area with most problems.

Brent and Harrow Trading Standards Service tested the scales in local shops: 88 weighing scales were tested and 32 were found to be non-compliant.

Haringey Trading Standards Service checked pricing and weighing scales to ensure consumers received value for money: 98% of businesses inspected were compliant or brought to compliance within 30 days.

Kensington & Chelsea Trading Standards Service undertook visits to premises and a high number of non-compliances were found with weighing equipment. These have been dealt with through advice, with premises being brought back into compliance.

Buckinghamshire & Surrey Trading Standards: Car Boot Sales

Physical car boot sales are still a popular way for consumers looking for bargains. Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards Service carried out visits to car boot sales. It is estimated that 40% - 50% of all sellers at car boot sales were found to be businesses rather than members of the public selling second hand items. Trading Standards found 18% of stall holders appearing to sell goods with potential safety concerns. These goods included electrical items, toys, cosmetics and vapes.



Stoke-on-Trent City, Buckinghamshire & Surrey and Redcar and Cleveland Council: Electric Blanket Testing

Stoke-on-Trent Trading Standards Service reintroduced free electric blanket testing for residents, partnering with the Office for Product Safety and Standards to cover testing costs, and the Electrical Safety Council and their Council Beat the Cold and Groundworks partners to provide free replacement blankets. Sessions took place at Council Community Lounges, set up as a response to the cost of living crisis, and at Council Markets.

Funded by Electrical Safety First, Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards Service tested 63 blankets of which 45 failed. One was 55 years old. All consumers whose blankets failed, were given free replacements, donated by Dreams, a Primary Authority Partner.

Redcar and Cleveland Trading Standards Service conducted two electric blanket/electric appliances (heaters, Irons, etc) testing and provided free replacements with the assistance of a £5,000 grant from Electrical Safety First.

LBs Brent & Harrow: Part Worn Tyres

Purchasing part worn tyres can seem a very tempting way to reduce costs. Brent and Harrow Trading Standards Service conducted compliance checks

at retailers and publicised information to educate consumers on key points they should look for when buying part worn tyres and the increase in risks to the safety of drivers and passengers where part worn tyres are fitted.

Derbyshire County Council: Petrol Pumps

As part of a Cost-of-Living Project, Derbyshire Trading Standards Service tested 147 petrol pumps across the county. These pumps on average dispense 22 million litres of fuel per year, at a net value to the consumer of £33 million. All the pumps tested were found to be delivering fuel within permitted legal tolerances thus providing reassurance to residents.

Powys County Council: Bulk Fuel Deliveries

Powys Trading Standards Service carried out bulk fuel tests finding one tanker was delivering 14 litres short measure in every 1,000 litres. The cost to the individual consumer is estimated at a loss of approximately £10 per delivery of 1,000L. The trader is estimated to have gained approximately £8,250 over the year from short measure deliveries.

Appendix 6 - Summary of cases concluding between September and the end of November 2024

The following prosecution cases arising from investigations conducted across the Shared Service, have been concluded recently.

Case	Court date	Offence(s)	Outcome
1.	4.9.24	<p>Officers found very poor standards of hygiene at this kebab house / Restaurant in Cardiff. In addition, during one of the revisits to the premises to monitor compliance, a significant and active cockroach infestation of some longstanding was identified which necessitated closure of the premises.</p> <p>While a voluntary closure is often put in place as an agreed means for a food business to resolve food hygiene concerns, Officers were sufficiently concerned by the attitude of the defendants and the extent to which they could be trusted, that they opted instead to issue a Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice. This speaks volumes about the response of the defendants to the issues identified. The court later issuing a Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Order as part of this process.</p> <p>The legal food business operator was a limited company (having one Director), while the individual having the role of manager at the premises was clearly the natural food business operator. Each of the three defendants faced 21 charges under the Food Hygiene (Wales) Regulations.</p>	<p>Each of the three defendants was fined £100 and ordered to pay costs of £100 and a victim surcharge of £40, making a total of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fines £ 300 • Costs £300 • Victim surcharge £120
2.	18.9.24	<p>This rogue builder case resulted from an SRS investigation that established how the individual's trading practices resulted in significant financial loss to multiple customers, amounting to over £200,000. As well as the financial loss, the residents suffered months of distress as they fought to get their home improvement</p>	<p>The defendant was sentenced to an immediate custodial sentence of 5 years, discounted as there were no previous convictions, meaning that he would serve a total of 43 months (3 years and 7 months).</p>

		<p>projects completed or to get their money refunded.</p> <p>When the Bridgend county borough-based rogue trader first came to the attention of the Service, attempts were made to engage with him to provide advice, information and to seek an undertaking as to future conduct under the Enterprise Act. As the extent of his wrongdoing became apparent however a full criminal investigation ensued.</p> <p>Presenting himself as a competent businessman, the truth behind that image was quite different. The builder engaged in misleading and fraudulent trading practices in his dealings with customers, and using classic rogue trader practices, he ‘robbed Peter to pay Paul’ by continuing to take money from new clients in order to do at least some work for existing customers. Using a string of trading names, he created a web of deceit, including starting a new company when one went into liquidation and later using a completely different trading name to distance himself from the growing number of poor Trustpilot reviews being left by customers.</p> <p>The witness statements in this case illustrate in detail the misery brought on the residents over many months, through for example jobs started and not finished, goods not ordered despite specific payments having been made to him, poor workmanship, and failure to obtain necessary Planning and Building Control consents. He relied on a façade of stock images from Pinterest and other websites and passed them off as examples of his company’s previous work.</p> <p>Of particular concern was the fact that he coerced customers and manipulated situations to convince them that they would have their money back if they took down negative reviews and, withdrew their</p>	<p>Half the sentence to be served in prison and half on licence.</p>
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3.	30.9.24	<p>The Vale of Glamorgan based defendant contracted with residents to undertake landscaping works. The customers had been taken in by the competitive prices quoted and by the almost immediate start dates offered, but things took a familiar turn when the cost of the jobs spiralled, in one case to more than £20,000. Multiple excuses were given for the increasing price, and for the poor progress of work, including inflation and the cost of materials. The defendant also cited various personal challenges including the death of his own mother (who, it was established, was alive and well).</p> <p>He pleaded guilty under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falsely claiming photographs provided to consumers were examples of work done by the business • Failing to provide goods/and or services for which the business had received payment 	The defendant was given an immediate custodial sentence of 9 months.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking work in respect of which the business did not have the skill or experience to complete • Conducting work to a poor standard • Failing to complete work • Requesting more money than initially quoted • Claiming additional amounts from consumers on a false basis • Coercing consumers to pay further money • Requesting payments to be made into third party bank accounts <p>In sentencing, the Judge considered the early guilty plea entered by the defendant.</p>	
4.	22.10.24	<p>The defendant in this case is the freeholder of a three storey property in Cardiff which had been sub-divided into 4 self-contained flats. When in 2019 she was granted a licence for the property under part 2 of the Housing Act 2004, conditions required certain works to be completed within 3 months of issue, The repairs and improvements were needed in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the tenants.</p> <p>The licence also included restrictions on the number of persons permitted to occupy each of the flats. However, when SRS officers visited the address in 2023, they established that the works required by the conditions of the licence had not been completed. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overhauling fire doors and confirming the structural fire integrity of partitions • adequately fire protecting the electricity meter and 	<p>The defendant was fined a total of £850 for each of the four offences, giving a total fine of £3,400. She was ordered to pay costs of £2,800 as well as a victim surcharge of £1,350.</p>

		<p>consumer unit cupboards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision of adequate kitchens • repair or replacement of extractor fans • provision of adequate numbers of electrical sockets • adequate security to the property • the presence of damp • eliminating risks of falls. <p>Improvement notices were served requiring the necessary works to be completed by the end of June 2023. Nevertheless, subsequent visits to the property confirmed that the works required by the notices had still not been completed. The defendant was charged with four offences to which she subsequently pleaded guilty.</p> <p>In sentencing, the District Judge said that the defendant's management of the property and her communication with the Council had been wholly unsatisfactory.</p>	
5.	7.11.24	<p>In this case, a Cardiff resident had needed work done to the chimney breast at her home and engaged the trader to carry out the work. Once the work started, the trader advised that the damp problem was far worse than the surveyor had indicated, and the roof would work too. Despite claiming to be a 'general builder', the trader was a carpenter by trade. Very little work was done at the property despite more than £26,000 being taken.</p> <p>The victim never received a contract, or details of her cancellation rights, and wasn't given a breakdown of the tasks and costs</p>	<p>The Judge concluded that the defendant would be sentenced to 27 months imprisonment. This sentence is one of 3 years, reduced by 25% due to the defendant's early plea.</p> <p>It is hoped that victim compensation will flow from the Proceeds of Crime investigation, linked to the case.</p>

		<p>involved in the work.</p> <p>After many months, the work still wasn't done, yet the resident was not given a refund by the trader. Instead, when questioned, he sought to shift blame on to her for the lack of progress on the job.</p> <p>During the time that the case progressed through the court process, the trader had said that he would repay the victim, yet at the point of sentencing, he had failed to do so.</p> <p>Powerful victim impact statements were then read out in court to illustrate the impact of the trader's actions on the victim and her family. The aggravating factors of the case were length of time over which the fraudulent behaviour was carried out, the breach of trust that occurred, the sum taken from the victim and the fact that the trader was seen to have targeted the vulnerable.</p> <p>The Judge summarised the impact of his actions stating that he took victims 'for a ride', 'preyed on their insecurity, talked them down and persuaded them' to give him money for his fraudulent services.</p>	
6.	22.11.24	<p>This case arose as a result of the poor living conditions in which tenants were living in a 2 storey Cardiff property which had been converted into self-contained flats.</p> <p>The landlord of the property had allowed a range of failings to continue in the flats over a period of time, resulting in the tenants of both flats living in squalid and unsafe conditions. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to ensure that the means of escape is in good order 	The defendant was fined a total of £3,378 and ordered to pay £650 costs together with a surcharge of £1351.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to maintain the fire alarm system • Failure to fire protect the electricity meters • Defective elements in the electrical installation • Failure to ensure that the internal structure is maintained in good working repair • Failure to maintain kitchen work surfaces • Failure to maintain the bathroom facilities • Failure to ensure that every window and other means of ventilation are kept in good repair • Failure to ensure sufficient bins are provided. <p>The landlord was issued with notices under the Housing Act 2004 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, but he failed to comply, and the required information was not forthcoming. It was a cause of concern that he had been prosecuted for failings at the same property back in 2018. This suggested that he was fully aware of his responsibilities but chose not to honour them.</p> <p>The landlord pleases guilty to all offences which the magistrates separated into 3 categories, namely fire safety related offences, general maintenance/repair offences and failure to provide the required documentation.</p>	
7	28.11.24	The defendant is a private hire operator who knowingly recruited an unlicensed taxi driver to do airport pick up runs. The driver was stopped during a spot check by Police at Bristol airport, and when	The defendant was fined £241.00 for each of the two offences to give a total fine of £481, and was ordered to pay costs of

		<p>questioned by SRS Officers, the private hire operator tried to blame others for the offences, claiming that he had been told this was acceptable. It became clear at interview that the operator was more concerned about how smart and presentable a driver was than whether they were licensed and subject to the DBS check.</p> <p>The defendant pleaded to two offences, namely being a proprietor:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allowing an unlicensed driver to drive a vehicle, and 2. Operating an uninsured vehicle. 	£250, together with a victim surcharge of £191.
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Closure Orders under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

Closure order	Date granted	Details	Outcome
1.	22.11.24	<p>This corner shop had a long history of supplying illegal tobacco and vapes. Despite the very best efforts of officers to bring the business into compliance, the offending continued. The impact on the community was significant as a result of the public travelling to the area specifically to purchase cheap illegal tobacco products and vapes.</p> <p>Local Councillors and partner agencies provided impact statements as part of the application for the closure order. No one from the business was present in court when the evidence was presented. The Magistrates said that they were satisfied that the criminality was ongoing and that the Order was necessary to</p>	The Magistrates granted the Closure Order for the maximum period of 3 months. As a result, access by all persons is prohibited at all times, until 21 st Feb 2025 at 3pm.

		prevent criminality from continuing.	
2.	26.11.24	The premises had a long history of criminality and supplying illegal tobacco and vapes. Despite the very best efforts of officers to bring the business into compliance, the offending continued. The impact on the community was significant as a result of the public travelling to the area specifically to purchase cheap illegal tobacco products and vapes. Local Councillors and partner agencies provided impact statements as part of the application for the closure order.	The Magistrates granted the Closure Order for the maximum period of 3 months.