

Meeting of:	Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, 24 June 2026
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Live Well Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Shared Regulatory Services Business Plan
Purpose of Report:	To seek Joint Committee approval for the Shared Regulatory Services Business Plan 2026-27
Report Owner:	Christina Hill - Head of Shared Regulatory Services
Responsible Officer:	Trevor Baker - Director of Environment and Housing Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Committee Reports – Legal and SRS – Accountant
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for the Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee
Executive Summary: - The report sets out the process by which the draft SRS Business Plan for 2026-27 has been developed - The draft plan requires ratification by the Joint Committee and forms a part of the SRS Annual reporting process set out in the Joint Working Agreement.	

Recommendations

1. That the Joint Committee notes the content of this report and approves the SRS Business Plan for 2026/27.
2. That the Head of the Shared Regulatory Service is authorised to make administrative amendments to the 2026/27 Business Plan should the need arise.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. The Joint Working Agreement (JWA) specifies (at clause 14) that each year, the Head of Shared Regulatory Services will develop a draft Business Plan under the direction of the Management Board.
2. The purpose of the Business Plan, as specified by the JWA, is to update the information contained in the previous Business Plan; and to identify the proposals for service activities, business and financial objectives, efficiency targets, business continuity planning, risk management, indicative staffing levels and changes, performance targets, costs and income. The JWA further specifies that a draft Business Plan is submitted to the Joint Committee for approval, and that once approved, it is circulated to each participant authority's Head of Paid Service.
3. Authorising the Head of Shared Regulatory Services to make administrative amendments to the Business Plan will enable minor changes to be made, as and when needed during the year, without the need to bring the matter back to the Joint Committee. As well as reducing the burden on the Joint Committee this approach means that minor changes can be made promptly in response to any issues that arise

1. Background

- 1.1 The draft SRS Business Plan reflects the aspirations set out in each of the participant Council's corporate plans, along with the national priorities agreed for Regulatory Services in Wales. Performance is monitored and measured with quarterly and annual reviews by the SRS management team and SRS Management Board. The SRS Business Plan seeks to ensure that the partner Councils continue to meet statutory requirements and to continuously improve service delivery.
- 1.2 The draft SRS Business Plan has a 'golden thread' or 'line of sight' to the corporate priorities of the respective Councils. The strategic themes of the Shared Regulatory Service identify the areas of work that are delivered in support of these corporate priorities.

- 1.3** In 2019, The Wales Audit Office recommended that the SRS Business Plan should contain a clear distinction between statutory and non-statutory services to ensure that statutory responsibilities and powers are weighed and prioritised appropriately alongside discretionary services. Schedule 4 to the Joint working Agreement contains the following text:

Some of the functions the Shared Regulatory Service will provide are legally mandated, statutory requirements: the role of the Weights and Measures authority, the duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act etc. Others are optional, non-statutory, but have been adopted to support the core Regulatory function and to support the corporate objectives of each partner Council: examples include, consumer advice, accreditation of landlords.

The collaborative arrangement defines a Core Service in terms of ensuring public health, helping customers to access information and knowledge and in securing a safe, healthy, fair, environment. This requires the use of both statutory and non-statutory legislation to achieve service and corporate goals. For example, Consumer Advice and safeguarding initiatives are non-statutory, but are an essential set of tools in protecting the vulnerable and vital in the achievement of other corporate goals.

- 1.4** To meet the WAO recommendation additional commentary has been included in the plan, however achieving effective outcomes involves the use of many “tools” and often non-statutory functions are most effective in resolving challenges.

This year, the Business Plan reflects the achievements of the Shared Service and the demands placed on it during 2025-26 at a time of continuing budgetary pressures across the three partner authorities.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** The draft 2026/27 Business Plan has been developed through the SRS business planning process to reflect the input of Officers and Team Managers, while at the same time acknowledging at a strategic level, the need for our work to respond to local, regional, and national agendas; as well as to global events as and when required. The draft Plan presents a realistic acknowledgement of the challenges and resource limitations within which SRS will deliver essential services. There is broad support for continued use of the existing four strategic themes namely:

- Improving health and wellbeing
- Safeguarding the vulnerable
- Protecting the local environment
- Supporting the local economy

All of which are underpinned by a fifth strategic priority, that of *Maximising the use of resources*

- 2.2** The 2026/27 draft Plan, like those previously approved by the Joint Committee, sets out the services provided by SRS, providing an indication of the activities planned for the 2026/27 period, the financial projections for the year, and a review of performance for 2025/26.
- 2.3** The Plan contains proposed service improvement targets aligned with the Wellbeing Objectives and Corporate Health priorities. Proposed targets are set out, together with all relevant performance indicators that will enable the partner Councils to demonstrate progress against achieving their Corporate Plan Wellbeing Objectives. Members are asked to approve the draft 2026/27 SRS Business Plan.

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

- 3.1** The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act requires the SRS to underpin decision making by contributing to the seven wellbeing 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. The draft SRS Business Plan contains a number of initiatives that contribute to the wellbeing objectives. Section 6 of the plan illustrates how the SRS priorities interface with the well-being goals on matters such as safeguarding the vulnerable and protecting the environment.
- 3.2** The fundamental purpose of the SRS (here defined as Environmental Health, Trading Standards, 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 wellbeing; the SRS Business Plans provide members with greater detail and articulate how those statutory responsibilities, and subsequent activities, contribute toward wellbeing across the region. This Business Plan highlights the activities undertaken last year to promote the sustainable development principle and the proposed forthcoming programmes of action.
- 3.3** Aligning the Wellbeing Goals of the Act enables us to evidence our contribution to the National Wellbeing Goals. Promoting the five ways of working is reflected in our approach to integrated business planning. Setting consistently challenging yet realistic steps and performance improvement targets, the SRS can clearly demonstrate progress towards achieving the national goals. Importantly we seek

to connect everything we do to the work of our partners. SRS cannot deliver its priorities alone, so we take a joined-up approach to policy, strategy and delivery.

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 financial resource implications arising from budget reductions in this period have been considered previously as part of the budget preparation for 2025/26. The programmes of work identified in the plan can be delivered within budget.

Employment

- 5.2** There are no employment matters associated with the plan. The SRS budget reductions in previous years have seen a reduction in human resources available within the service and performance metrics and some aspects of scope of the SRS have been amended accordingly.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3** There are no legal and Human Rights implications arising from the draft SRS Business Plan.

6. Background Papers

The Joint Working Agreement between Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils on the provision of a Shared Regulatory Service dated 2015 and revised in 2017.



Shared Regulatory Services

Business Plan

2026/27

Appendix 1



Gwasanaethau
Rheoliadol
a Rennir





FOREWARD FROM THE HEAD OF SHARED REGULATORY SERVICES

After 11 years, Shared Regulatory Services continues to thrive, delivering high-quality Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing functions across Cardiff, Bridgend and the Vale of Glamorgan.

This marks my first year as Head of Service, and I am incredibly proud to be leading the service into its next chapter. We have a strong foundation, and I am confident that we will continue to develop and grow from strength to strength.

While SRS benefits from its scale and regional approach, we remain a lean service delivering a wide and complex range of functions. This presents both challenges and opportunities, and it is clear that continued innovation and development are essential to ensuring long-term resilience and success.

To support this, we are embedding four key pillars into our forward planning: **communication, workforce, digital, and innovation**. These will help ensure the service is well-positioned to meet current and future demands, while maintaining the high standards we strive to deliver. I look forward to seeing the tangible outcomes from these important workstreams.

The strength of SRS lies in its people. Our dedicated and professional officers are at the heart of everything we do. Their commitment to protecting public health, preventing consumer detriment, and safeguarding the most vulnerable in our communities is both evident and commendable, and I remain sincerely grateful for their continued efforts.

This business plan clearly sets out the breadth and diversity of our work, and I look forward to seeing the far-reaching impact of the actions it contains.

Christina Hill

Head of Shared Regulatory Services

1. Who are Shared Regulatory Services

Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) is a collaborative service established on 1 May 2015 between Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils. It delivers an integrated regulatory service under a single management structure, encompassing trading standards, environmental health and licensing. Shared governance arrangements ensure full involvement of elected members.

SRS operates under a Joint Working Agreement (JWA). The Head of SRS reports to a Joint Committee made up of elected members from the three Councils, supported by an Officer Management Board which oversees operations and supports the development and delivery of the service's vision and strategy.

The JWA sets out the detailed delegations of policy and function, including the scope of the service, governance arrangements, staffing, host and partner responsibilities, and the financial operating model.

SRS works across all three Councils, supporting relevant committees and, where required, Cabinets to deliver regulatory functions. Governance arrangements include quarterly meetings of the Officer Management Board, followed by Joint Committee meetings, with outcomes reported to each Cabinet. Joint Committee meeting details and reports, outlining the service's development and future direction, are published on each Council's website.

Area Profile

Shared Regulatory Services serves the communities of Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, covering an area from St Mellons in the east to Maesteg in the west and supporting around 670,000 residents. The region includes the capital city of Wales alongside coastal towns, rural communities and areas with strong tourism and agricultural traditions.



Cardiff, the capital city of Wales, is the country's largest city, with a population of almost 370,000. It is the centre of Welsh government and a major destination for business, culture and leisure. Cardiff's population increases each day as people travel into the city for work, education and events. Its lively city centre, shopping areas, entertainment venues and Principality Stadium attract large numbers of visitors, particularly during major sporting and cultural events.

Bridgend County Borough is located along the south Wales coast and around the M4 corridor. It is home to over 140,000 residents and includes a mix of urban centres, valleys communities and coastal towns. Bridgend town is the main commercial and employment hub, while Maesteg serves the northern valley communities. Porthcawl, a well-known seaside resort, attracts significant numbers of visitors during the summer months and has a strong sense of local community.

The Vale of Glamorgan stretches from the M4 motorway to the Severn Estuary and includes over 50 kilometres of coastline. With a population of more than 130,000, it combines rural landscapes with vibrant towns such as Barry, Penarth and Dinas Powys, as well as the historic market towns of Cowbridge and Llantwit Major. Barry is the largest town and an important employment and seaside destination. The Vale also benefits from a strong agricultural sector, Barry Docks and Cardiff International Airport.

Together, these areas represent a diverse mix of city, town, coastal and rural communities, each with its own character and needs, all supported by Shared Regulatory Services.

Staff Resources

Our organisational structure is built around generic and multi-disciplinary working, while retaining the flexibility to develop and deploy specialist professional expertise where required. This approach allows staff to be deployed in a variety of ways, enabling the service to deliver income-generating activities alongside its core statutory functions.

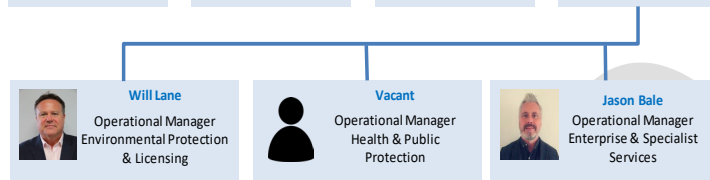
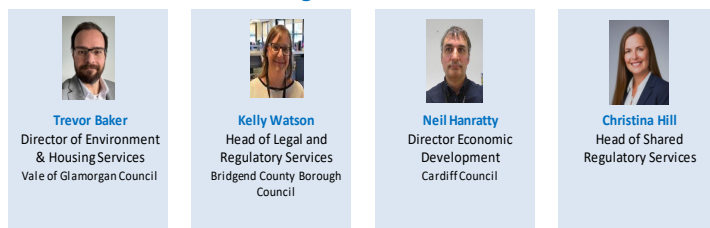
The service currently employs 175 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff operating across three distinct service areas. These teams are largely comprised of professionally qualified Environmental Health and Trading Standards Officers who focus on complex and high-risk work, supported by Technical Officers who undertake monitoring, screening, and triage activities. In addition, a number of discrete specialist roles support the service in meeting its regulatory, investigative, and operational responsibilities.

SRS Management and Governance Arrangements

Joint Committee



Management Board



Environmental Protection & Licensing

Neighbourhood Services deal mainly with activities related to residential premises or have an impact on the local community and include:-

- Noise & Air Pollution
- Environmental Permitting
- Housing safety in private rented properties
- Licensing

Health & Public Protection

The main function of Commercial Services is to ensure that businesses comply with a host of consumer and public protection requirements in areas such as:-

- Food Safety & standards (retail)
- Health and Safety
- Trading Standards (retail)
- Communicable Disease
- Port Health
- Public Health & Health Protection

Enterprise & Specialist Services

Enterprise & Specialist Services incorporates existing or potential income generating services with a commercial approach to marketing council services together with discrete specialisms including:-

- Contaminated Land & Air Quality
- Animal health & welfare
- Major investigations & safeguarding
- Stop Loan Sharks Wales
- Paid for advice and training
- Primary Authority Partnerships
- Health & Safety, Food Safety & Trading Standards (non retail & events)
- Metrology Laboratory
- Pest Control (Vale only)
- SRS Business Support

Service overview

The service delivers a diverse and comprehensive range of functions that safeguard the health, safety, and economic wellbeing of consumers, businesses, and residents. These functions span the core regulatory areas of environmental health, trading standards, and licensing, and address issues which can have a significant impact on individuals, communities, and businesses when compliance fails or risks are poorly managed. Essentially the service aims to:-

- Protect individuals from harm and promote health improvement;
- Ensure the safety and integrity of the food chain to minimise risks to human and animal health;
- Promote a fair, just, and compliant environment for citizens and businesses; and
- Improve the local environment to enhance quality of life and promote sustainability

Core Regulatory functions



Food Hygiene and Standards protect public health by ensuring that the food we eat is without risk to the health and safety of consumers and is correctly described throughout the food chain. This is achieved through regular food and feed safety and standards inspections of food business and guest caterers, operating the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, providing practical advice, investigating food safety and standards complaints, carrying out food and water sampling and undertaking checks on imported food and feed. The service also inspects animal feed on farms, supporting animal health and ensuring that farm to fork standards are consistently upheld.



Fair Trading protects consumers and businesses by maintaining and promoting a fair and safe trading environment. This area of work ensures that businesses comply with a host of consumer protection statutes including those relating to: Product safety; Age restricted sales; Counterfeiting; Environmental safety; Weights and measures; and False claims about goods and services. The Service investigates complaints, participates in criminal investigations and enforcement exercises, conducts inspections of businesses, undertakes a sampling programme, and helping businesses improve their trading practices.



Our safeguarding work ensures we investigate cases of malpractice including rogue traders, scams and doorstep crime. We provide consumer advice to vulnerable residents and help them obtain redress.



SRS has the only UKAS accredited **Metrology** laboratory in Wales providing calibration of weights and measures of length and capacity.



Housing Safety protects public health by working with private landlords to ensure warm, safe, and healthy homes. Officers license and inspect Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), improving housing standards and management. They investigate tenant complaints—such as damp, mould, heating issues, and nuisance—and address problems linked to empty, deteriorating

properties. The service also leads and coordinates strategies across three councils to bring vacant homes back into use.



Noise Pollution

Pollution also protects public health by controlling noise and air emissions in the environment. The service investigates noise complaints about issues such as amplified music, DIY activities, house and car alarms, barking dogs, and construction sites. It investigates air pollution complaints involving smoke, dust and odour and illegal burning, undertakes environmental monitoring, local Air Quality Management and regulates emissions from industrial processes.



Air Pollution



Port Health

Port Health prevents the import of infectious and animal disease into the UK, ensuring ships comply with international agreed public health sanitation standards and improves the safety and quality of the food chain.



Contaminated Land

Contaminated Land protects public health by reviewing and implementing the Contaminated Land Strategy which ensures the identification, inspection and remediation of historically contaminated sites. Private water supplies used for both domestic and commercial purposes (such as drinking, cooking, and washing) are regulated and Environmental Information Requests and Planning application consultations are responded to.



Health and Safety at Work

Health and Safety protects the health, safety and welfare of staff, contractors and any member of the public affected by workplace activities by working with others to ensure risks in the workplace are managed properly. This is achieved by undertaking planned inspections and targeted initiatives, investigating reported accidents, diseases, dangerous occurrences and complaints, providing advice and guidance to employers and employees and securing safety standards at outdoor events.



Communicable Disease

Communicable Disease protects public health by controlling and preventing cases and outbreaks of infectious disease by investigating confirmed sporadic and outbreak cases of communicable disease. The service provides and reviews advice and guidance on infection control, cleaning and disinfection, case and contact exclusions, provides training on food hygiene, nutritional and infection control, enforces health protection legislation to minimise the spread of communicable disease and contamination from radiation and chemicals that threaten health and leads on local and national communicable disease surveillance programmes.



Animal Health and Welfare

Animal Health and Warden Services ensure the wellbeing of animals generally. This includes ensuring feeding stuffs provided to animals are safe and that animals are transferred humanely and animal movements are monitored to prevent the spread of diseases such as Blue Tongue, Swine Fever, Rabies and Foot and Mouth. Our Wardens respond to complaints about straying animals such as dogs and horses.



Licensing

Licensing determines applications for the grant, renewal, variation and transfer of many different authorisations which are the responsibility of the Councils. Applications for licences, certificates, registrations and permits are processed and enforcement undertaken in respect of statutory requirements such as alcohol, public entertainment, gambling, street trading, taxi licences, charitable collections and animal related licensing.

Specialist and Commercial Activities



Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit

The **Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit** is one of only 4 units operating across the UK. The Unit covers all 22 Local Authority areas in Wales with the key aim of tackling the problem of illegal money lending. The Unit is both proactive and reactive in its work providing education and promotion across Wales to various social groups and highlighting the dangers of illegal lending. The Team also carries out detailed investigations with a view to prosecuting offenders and has the capabilities to act swiftly where necessary to deal with victims of loan sharks.



Working with Business

Shared Regulatory Services has adopted a more commercial approach by developing paid for services and marketing them to businesses. These commercial activities enhance and complement existing statutory services and provide income generation for the service. They include:-

- Bespoke and accredited training solutions to businesses to assist in achieving legal compliance;
- Paid for business advice visits and 'health' checks from our highly skilled and experienced officers to help and support businesses to comply with legislation;
- Developing Primary Authority partnerships for businesses that trade across council boundaries where they can enter into a legally recognised partnership with the Service, receiving an agreed package of advice and support;
- Marketing the only UKAS Metrology Laboratory in Wales providing calibration of weights and measures of length and capacity;
- Extending and reviewing training offerings to meet business needs;
- Identifying new funding sources;
- Exploring potential income generating services and developing paid for services.

Pest Control offers services to the Vale area for the treatment of pests and infestations. This could include, rats, wasps, mice, fleas, cockroaches etc.

Health Protection - The unprecedented challenges of the Covid-19 outbreak saw SRS adapt and work in partnership to reduce the transmission of the virus across the region. This continues to be achieved through our Health Protection Team who work with the Health Boards and partner agencies to continue to provide support to care homes and other high risk settings in respect of Covid-19 and the wider health protection agenda.

Statutory and Discretionary Context

The SRS delivers a range of statutory duties for the partner Councils and also functions where the Council has been given powers in legislation to safeguard and protect local communities. Determining the relative importance and value of council services when deciding on where to make savings or service reductions is not easy. Often the debate starts with a focus on determining whether a service is 'statutory' or 'discretionary'. Defining services as 'statutory' or 'discretionary' is perhaps unhelpful. Services that keep people healthy, well and safe; support businesses to flourish and thrive; protect and enhance our environment are essential. In this plan we have sought to clarify the legal basis for a service or how it contributes to wider council responsibilities, but many SRS functions cannot be easily defined in this way; some are extensions of 'statutory' activity whilst other services have developed over time to become longstanding, highly valued and central to the work of each council.

Shared Regulatory Services in Numbers

10,000+

Businesses
regulated



£132,000+

Income
2025/26

670,000

Residents served
across the 3 LA
areas

200

employees

17,000+

Service
requests
received
2025/26

33

Successful
Prosecutions
2025/26



3

Local authority areas that
SRS delivers services to :
Bridgend, Cardiff & Vale

400+

Councillor
And
MP enquiries



9.023m

Budget



2. Service aims & strategic priorities

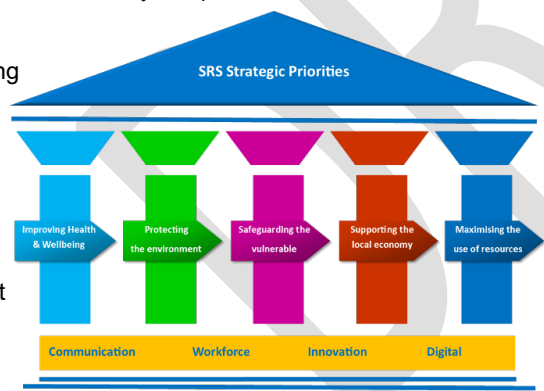
Shared Regulatory Services plays a key role in delivering the priorities and aspirations of Bridgend County Borough Council, Cardiff Council, and the Vale of Glamorgan Council through the delivery of a wide range of regulatory and protection services. The service has developed a clear vision, supported by a suite of strategic priorities, which sets out its ambition to be a progressive, innovative, and high-performing organisation. This approach enables the delivery of high-quality, customer-focused services that safeguard the environmental, social, and economic wellbeing of communities across the region.

Our vision

To be the leading provider of regulatory services that safeguard the health, safety and economic wellbeing of the region

As a regional service operating across three local authority areas, Shared Regulatory Services places the corporate priorities of the partner councils at the heart of everything it does. In developing our own strategic priorities, SRS aligns its work with these priorities while meeting the needs of partners, businesses, and residents. This approach ensures locally responsive, consistent and effective regulation.

Our priorities of improving health and wellbeing, protecting the environment, safeguarding the vulnerable, supporting the local economy and maximising the use of resources, are delivered through clear outcomes set out in this Business Plan. These are underpinned by four improvement pillars: communication, workforce, innovation and digital..



Corporate priorities and outcomes of partner Councils

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
	- Creating great places to live, work and visit - Respecting and celebrating the environment - Giving everyone a good start in life. - Supporting and protecting those who need us. - Being the best Council we can be.	- Creating great places to live, work and visit - Respecting and celebrating the environment - Giving everyone a good start in life. - Supporting and protecting those who need us. - Being the best Council we can be.

In addition, the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** sets out seven well-being goals that public bodies, including local authorities, are required to work towards. These goals provide a framework for focusing activity on long-term outcomes and sustainable delivery for the wellbeing of Wales. Shared Regulatory Services' core activities, outcomes, and strategic priorities are closely aligned and make a significant contribution to achieving these goals. How the service supports and delivers against the well-being goals through its strategic priorities is set out below.

Delivering our vision, aims and priorities

SRS Strategic priorities

Wellbeing goals

	Improving Health & Wellbeing	Safeguarding the vulnerable	Protecting the environment	Supporting the local economy	Maximising the use of resources
A prosperous Wales				✓	✓
A resilient Wales	✓		✓		
A healthier Wales	✓	✓	✓	✓	
A more equal Wales	✓	✓			
A Wales of cohesive communities	✓	✓			
A globally responsible Wales	✓		✓	✓	✓



3. Challenges

Delivering a service across three local authority areas is an exciting but challenging role. In this context, we define challenges as new or demanding events that will require additional effort and determination to manage successfully; something that goes beyond our existing norms. Understanding the challenges ahead is therefore crucial to delivering the vision set out in section 2. Even after 11 years, the Service continues to balance the development of a new and innovative operating model along with the expectation of delivering “business as usual”. There are many factors crucial to our success and the following information demonstrates the actions for the Service in 2026/27 and our risk management approach (Appendix 1).

Delivering the SRS in the future – The creation of SRS reflected the Welsh Government collaboration agenda, with one of the main drivers being to realise significant cost savings. These, and subsequent savings have been made by SRS over the years, and we continue to deliver the SRS with a reducing resource. Furthermore, over that time SRS has taken on additional responsibilities under new legislation and areas of regulation. Any further reductions will require the need to consider and introduce new ways of prioritising our services, or the charging for some services, as well as difficult decisions about the level of service provision. Simply put, SRS has no assets, with the service being made up of staff, so any budget savings inevitably mean reductions in staffing which the service cannot sustain without significantly impacting on service delivery. (RR1)

Managing complex financial processes – Managing resource in the Service is complex, but critical. Understanding the cost of providing a service funded through three local authorities is fundamental. Crucial to this is reflecting the provision of ‘core’ services that are consistently applied across all three areas and ‘authority specific’ services that are those that are specific to one or two authorities so that finances are understood. (RR3)

ICT – The success of Shared Regulatory Services is in part due to embracing the opportunities presented by technical and mobile working solutions. Agile working is the norm for the service, yet we know that better facilities now exist to support officers carrying out their duties and the SRS will work with officers and ICT Services to understand the benefits of exploiting these newer technologies to ensure that our officers can continue to operate as efficiently as possible within financial constraints. Similarly, as systems across the 3 authorities are upgraded it has become increasingly important to ensure continued access to the systems of the partner authorities to safeguard the effective delivery of services. (RR4)

Recruitment and retention – We have always committed to the resourcing of training to develop people within the organisation to ensure competency within their

roles. Our focus however has been more toward the immediate needs of officers to enable delivery of our five strategic priorities. It is clear that a longer term strategy for recruitment and retention is needed as SRS, in common with regulatory services across Wales, experiences difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff in certain roles. The cause of the problem appears to be multi-faceted, with factors such as a limited pool of qualified staff, accessibility of the professional qualifications and an ageing workforce all contributing to something of a perfect storm. SRS has been at the forefront of taking forward the Directors of Public Protection Wales ‘*Building for the Future*’ strategy, and in successfully making the case to Welsh Government for a regulatory apprenticeship in Wales. Now that the Regulatory apprenticeship for Wales is in place, the Service looks forward to continuing to use it and in turn creating a route into regulatory services, particularly for young people. Further refinement of our approach to recruitment and retention will be taken forward by the SRS management team during 2026-27 and will form part of the workforce pillar. Ultimately, our goal is to recruit and retain our officers, ensuring that they achieve the job satisfaction that underpins service excellence. (RR2 and RR5).

Remaining relevant to the three Councils – The creation of SRS to deliver services across the three local authority areas resulted in the transfer of the administration of services and staff to the Vale of Glamorgan Council which acts as the host authority for the Service. The Service, although jointly funded by the participant authorities, also has a single consistent identity and branding which is not associated with any one Council. The Covid-19 pandemic put the service very much in the spotlight during the last few years, and this area of work continues through our role in the wider Health Protection Partnership. More recently our work on the minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) demonstrates how we contribute to the climate change agenda of the partner authorities. Notwithstanding this, we recognise there is still a need to actively promote the Shared Regulatory Service and the important services we provide across the three Councils to ensure continued visibility and support. The communication pillar will have regard to this. (RR8)

New legislation – The implementation of new legislation and any requirements imposed by such legislation can place additional burdens on the Service. It requires, amongst other things, new processes to be developed, awareness raising to be undertaken with stakeholders, staff training and additional inspections to be undertaken. It is not always easy to predict the impact that new legislation may have on resources, as the last few years has shown. We are prepared to adapt the Service accordingly to ensure businesses can continue to function and consumers are not disadvantaged. The great uncertainty is the quantum of change and the unknown time scales within which that change must take place. (RR6)

Out of Hours - SRS operates an “out of hours” duty rota to enable the service to respond to incidents that arise outside normal office hours. These responses include responding to nuisance calls relating to burglar alarms, food incidents, etc. To date, officers have operated the rota on a voluntary basis across the service. However,

the number of officers willing to participate in the rota is reducing to the extent that the service delivery is becoming uncertain. (RR7)

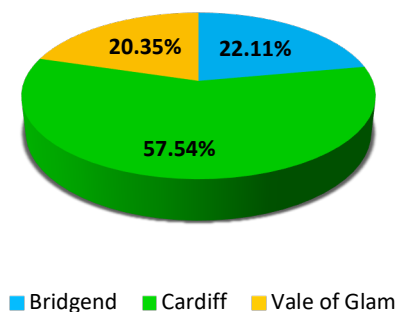
The cost of living crisis – The harms of the cost-of-living crisis continue to be felt, and without doubt will continue to impact SRS in two broad respects. Firstly, in our role as regulator, at a time when residents are struggling to make ends meet and rogue traders will waste no time in exploiting the situation. When times are hard financially, even normally legitimate traders may feel under pressure to cut corners, for example through the passing-off of inferior products or ingredients for the genuine article. Likewise, this is a time when already struggling residents are at risk of falling into the hands of loan sharks and all the misery that illegal money lending can bring. The other concern caused by cost of living pressures has been the impact on the wellbeing of our staff. Managers will continue to be alert to the warning signs of difficulty among team members so that all available support can be provided. (RR1).

4. Budget

Financial allocation

Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils fund Shared Regulatory Services jointly through an agreed formula. The Joint Committee approved the proposed Shared Regulatory Services budget for 2026/27 when it met in February 2026. The budget for the Service is £9.032m, reflects a net increase of £194k and models cost pressures for the pay award shortfall in 2025/26 and the national insurance increase which was not reflected in the 2025/26 budget due to uncertainty regarding funding streams. There is also an adjustment reflecting the reduction in pension contributions made for all SRS employees. The methods of apportionment for operating the core service and the cost contribution percentages are set out in the Joint Working Agreement and based upon the population of each Council. This will not revise the bottom line position of the budget. There are also arrangements in place to deliver "authority specific" services to individual partner Councils.

Financial apportionment of Shared Regulatory Services 2026/27



Resource Implications (Financial and Employment

The following table summarises the gross expenditure budget for the Service.

SRS Gross expenditure budget 2026/27			
Area	Core £'000	AS £'000	Total £'000
Bridgend	1,387	453	1,840
Cardiff	3,611	1,717	5,328
Vale of Glam	1,277	587	1,864
Total	6,275	2,757	9,032

The budgets detailed above summarise the overall budget contribution agreed by each of the partner authorities. Each contribution consists of two elements – core and authority specific services.

Core services are those functions common to the partner authorities as they share statutory responsibility for the activity, such as trading standards. Core service costs are then pooled and recharged to the partner authorities based on the relative population split within the three authorities.

Authority specific budgets such as Licensing are unique to each partner authority and it is the sole responsibility of each authority to fund its own provision.

The approved authority specific services are as follows:-

Bridgend	Licensing Kennelling & Vets Costs Empty Homes Public health burials
Cardiff	Licensing Additional HMO Licensing at Cathays & Plasnewydd Empty Homes Night time Noise Port Health Student Liaison
Vale	Licensing Kennelling & Vets Pest Control Public health burials Port Health Empty Homes

Both core and authority specific services are recharged to partner authorities inclusive of a management charge, which incorporates management, admin and hosting costs. These include the provision of a multifunctional administration team, professional support in the form of finance, IT and HR, together with the senior management within the Shared Regulatory Service.

The budget is monitored quarterly via the Management Board and Joint Committee, and the details of such monitoring form part of the quarterly update reports, available at the websites of each partner Council.

Maximising resources

The creation of SRS reflected the Welsh Government collaboration agenda, with one of the main drivers being to realise significant cost savings. The reshaped SRS continues to eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy and to simplify processes.

Our goals of supporting the local economy and maximising resources now challenge us to operate in a more commercial and entrepreneurial way. For our business customers, we aim to deliver high quality technical services. We have created an environment that allows us to focus upon supporting local enterprises enabling them to operate successfully in an increasingly competitive business environment.

Our agile working practices allow our specialist officers to use technology to deliver improved productivity, efficiency savings and better customer service. Furthermore, these practices provide opportunities to reduce the accommodation footprint of the Service across the region, reducing operational costs.

We pride ourselves on our partnership working and the opportunities this provides to further maximise the use of resources to improve service delivery.

As we generate additional income through our paid for services, such as advice visits, training and primary authority partnerships, we are able to enhance service delivery and support to business by ensuring resilience in the SRS moving forward. With the continued pressures on public sector finances, now more than ever, the establishment of new income streams and cost recovery will play a crucial role in protecting and sustaining the service.

Understanding the costs involved in providing services is crucial. We review regularly SRS fees and charges across the three authorities to ensure we know what it costs to provide services and ensure that we recover those costs wherever possible.

We listen to our customers and stakeholders to understand their needs and expectations. We seek to develop our services so they are easier for customers to access and are as efficient and effective as possible. We believe that better engagement will help us make better decisions and consequently deliver better outcomes.

We recognise the need to understand, measure and manage our performance across the Service. We continue to refine our measures to ensure performance is managed effectively and in a meaningful way, and that we are having a positive impact on those customers that interact with us.

5. Workforce Development

Operating a Shared Regulatory Service across three distinct areas presents many challenges for the Service and its workforce. We aim to use our Workforce Pillar to ensure our officers have the right mix of experience, knowledge and skills required to fulfil our goals. As a service it is important that we encourage and support our officers to develop new skills and work in different ways and ensuring succession planning is in place. Investing in people is a fundamental element of our maximising resources priority.

Continued Professional Development (CPD) is actively encouraged, and officers are offered opportunities to attend a wide range of training courses, seminars, meetings and briefings to help maintain competency and improve technical, legal and administrative knowledge. A number of employees have been supported to undertake post graduate training gaining Masters degrees in areas such as environmental health and leadership and management. In addition, 'in house' technical training days support cross discipline training and increase awareness of related enforcement activities. The service has continued to provide legal competence training for officers along with a number of professional development courses. While this is a cost effective way of increasing the skills base of our workforce, perhaps the greater consequence is the potential to forge a stronger team.

Following on from the introduction of the Regulatory Compliance Officer apprenticeship scheme, SRS has been fortunate to employ 2 members of staff for this purpose utilising external grant funding. These roles are now embedded in the structure, and a full training programme is in place to ensure development and support of the apprentices.

Work has also been ongoing within the service to develop individuals as future management potential. A number of employees have undertaken an ILM level 4 and or 5 qualifications. This work is in important part of succession planning and developing staff into more senior roles.

We intend our workforce pillar to drive our organisational development, both through preparing us for the future by being able to forecast likely challenges and by a more effective process of talent identification, identifying skill gaps, and retaining our officers within the organisation.

Developing one organisational culture

- Developing an SRS culture that promotes the right behaviours and attitudes to the way we approach our work.

People development

- Developing employee potential by ensuring knowledge, experience and skills are reviewed, developed and improved.

Leadership and management capability

- Improving leadership and management capability by developing current and future managers.

Recruitment, retention and progression

- Recruiting and retaining the best and providing opportunities for progression

Communication and employee engagement

- Providing open, honest and up to date information and opportunities for staff feedback.

Employee performance management

- Recognising achievements and dealing with poor performance.

6. Emerging themes

Section 3 of this Business Plan highlighted the key challenges that face SRS as a collaborative service working across 3 local authority areas. Sitting behind these challenges are a range of issues and additional pressures that influence the ability of SRS to deliver services. These emerging issues are detailed below and encompass themes such as new legislation, national and world affairs, changes to the regulatory landscape, cost of living, climate change, recruitment and retention and ICT and infrastructure. Linking all of these is a crosscutting theme of resources and capacity, which can be severely impacted at a time when services are facing significant budgetary pressures.

New legislation

Tobacco and Vapes Bill – Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2026 and represents the most significant reform of tobacco control legislation in a generation. The central provision of the Act is the creation of a smoke-free generation. It will become illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009, with the age-of-sale changes coming into force on 1 January 2027. The effect is that the legal age of sale for tobacco will rise by one year each year for the affected cohort, so that those individuals can never legally be sold tobacco products.

The measure applies not only to cigarettes and other tobacco products, but also to herbal smoking products and cigarette papers. From a local government perspective, this will create a novel enforcement model, as retailers and enforcement officers will need to work with a progressively changing age threshold rather than a fixed age-of-sale rule.

The Act also introduces a broad set of powers intended to reduce the appeal of vaping and nicotine products to children and young people. These powers include the ability to restrict or prohibit advertising, promotion and sponsorship, as well as powers to regulate displays, product presentation, branding, flavours and other characteristics that may be designed to attract underage consumers.

The Act also strengthens the enforcement framework by providing stronger powers to tackle illicit tobacco and vape sales and by enabling the introduction of a retail licensing scheme. These powers are potentially significant for Welsh local government because they suggest a future model in which local authority services will be expected not only to enforce age-of-sale restrictions and product controls, but also to operate or support a more formal regulatory regime for retailers.

The Food (Promotion and Presentation) (Wales) Regulations 2025.

came into force from March 2026, introducing restrictions on the promotion and placement of high fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) foods in medium and large businesses, as part of the Healthy Weight Healthy Wales strategy to tackle obesity. The enforcement of this work falls to SRS to deliver.

Awaabs Law - In December 2025, Welsh Government announced an amendment to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (effective April 2026) requiring social landlords to respond promptly to serious hazards such as damp and mould where there is a risk of imminent harm. This follows the death of Awaab Ishak and increasing focus on housing conditions.

In February 2026, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales also confirmed an investigation into how social landlords handle disrepair complaints.

Although Shared Regulatory Services does not enforce these requirements, alongside the Renting Homes Act duty for properties to be fit for human habitation, these developments are likely to **raise awareness and increase demand for assistance**, particularly in relation to damp and mould cases.

Regulatory landscape

Meeting the required frequency of food inspections – The Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice sets out the criteria that local authority food law regulatory services need to follow and stipulates the required frequency of food business inspections according to risk, with those of a higher risk requiring more frequent inspections. For example those rated as Category A, require inspections every 6 months, Category B annually and Category C every 18 months etc. While SRS successfully inspected those businesses with the highest ratings (A, B and C) during the last year, this was only made possible through the appointment of contractors to support existing Food Officers in completing these inspections which also consisted of a significant backlog of C rated inspections. There are certain unique challenges facing SRS in delivering the full food hygiene and standards programmes which result from the sheer number of food businesses within our footprint (around 20% of all those in Wales), the diverse and vibrant nature of the food scene locally, and the very frequent churn of new business start ups. Given that the Food service within SRS is not adequately resourced to undertake current programmes of inspection without the aid of contractors, this presents a significant risk for SRS in balancing current budgetary pressures with the need to meet specific requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice, the failure of which could lead to the service being placed in 'special measures'.

New Food Businesses – Food businesses are required to register with the service if a new business is planned, the nature of an existing business changes or if there is a change of ownership following the creation of new legal entities such as a new limited company, sole trader and partnership. All new businesses are required to be inspected and the Food Law Code of Practice requires that where possible, they be inspected within 28 days of opening. This requirement places a significant impact on the resources of the Food Safety and Trading Standards functions due to the large number of applications received. These require inspections alongside the planned programme of inspections. This is further exacerbated if businesses have poor compliance on initial inspection, requiring the need for further intervention.

New Food Standards Delivery Model - Food Standards activity focuses on ensuring that food is safe, accurately described, and correctly labelled, giving consumers confidence in the products they purchase. This includes verifying product composition, presentation, and the correct declaration of ingredients and allergens, as well as ensuring claims such as “reduced fat,” “high protein,” or “Halal” are accurate and not misleading. The introduction of the Food Standards Delivery Model (FSDM) represents a significant shift towards a more intelligence-led, risk-based approach to regulating food standards, ensuring greater consumer confidence in food safety, composition, and labelling. Replacing the previous fixed inspection frequency system, the FSDM assesses businesses using a combination of inherent risk factors and compliance levels, enabling more targeted and proportionate interventions. Key features include enhanced data sharing between regulators, more flexible inspection frequencies based on a risk matrix, and stricter timescales for inspecting new businesses. While the model improves the accuracy and effectiveness of oversight, it is expected to substantially increase inspection activity, particularly for higher-risk premises, placing additional demands on local authority resources. With implementation anticipated mid-year, there are recognised operational challenges, including system adaptation and resource alignment, and work is underway to prepare for delivery, including the potential use of shadow running ahead of formal rollout.

Smoke free compliance in hospital grounds – The Smoke-free Premises etc. (Wales) Regulations 2007 were introduced to protect employees and the public from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke. This legislation prevented smoking in ‘enclosed’ or ‘substantially enclosed’ public places, including workplaces and vehicles. In March 2021 further changes were made to the legislation which extended the smoke-free requirements to more places such as hospital grounds, schools grounds and public playgrounds, as well as outdoor day care and child-minding settings to be smoke-free. SRS is responsible for enforcing these regulations and in doing so recognises that the requirement for all hospital sites to be smoke-free promotes healthier care environments and supports smokers using hospital services, or visiting or working in hospitals, to quit. Arrangements are in place to provide an educational phase in hospital grounds in the region. This includes identifying non-compliance, sign posting to smoking cessation programmes and collation of data including demographic of non-compliance, hotspots and any

deficiencies in management duties. This work is designed to inform any future enforcement of smoke-free requirements on hospital grounds to optimise staff efficiency.

Major events - SRS plays an important role in the successful staging of major events across the three local authority areas. In addition to dealing with any licensing matters and noise monitoring associated with a particular event, SRS plays an essential role in ensuring that food sold at these events is safely prepared, stored and labelled correctly. In the case of stadium concerts and sporting events, input may be required to assist brand holders to protect trademarked goods and safeguard against the supply of counterfeits. Major events staged through the participant Councils go through a detailed planning process via the respective Events Safety Advisory Group in Bridgend and the Vale of Glamorgan, and in Cardiff via the Events Liaison Panel. While summer is traditionally the busiest time for events, we are seeing a pattern of exceptionally busy periods where events are being held back to back putting a great deal of pressure on the Service. This is due in part to the success of the City of Cardiff Council in promoting itself on the world stage as the home of successful events. This has an impact on the service in terms of meeting demand from other areas of responsibility, at a time of diminishing staff resource, and in covering weekend and evening work.

On-line retailing - The internet is undeniably driving change, and large retailers have responded by embracing multi-channel sales strategies. While the high street has not, as yet, been put out of business, there is a danger that traditional, physical stores will increasingly become secondary outlets to this strong online presence. It would seem inevitable that, in the longer term, the size and composition of the high street will be significantly impacted, as on-line shopping becomes a far more mainstream activity. Information technology and the fast developing digital environment are also causing a change in the way people interact, including in the way they interact commercially. Modern consumers increasingly access goods and services across the world through the tap of a phone screen or the click of a mouse. The internet presents an enormous opportunity for consumers and this became even more evident during the covid pandemic, as shops were required to close, and customers relied heavily upon the ability to shop online, whether it be to order groceries, or other consumer products.

The internet is the most empowering tool consumers have ever had. A consequence of this for the law enforcement agencies like the SRS is that the “visible” high street has moved to an activity undertaken behind closed doors. Monitoring the market place through traditional market surveillance methods thus needs to change else the SRS will only be able react to incidents and not prevent them.

Ageing population - On a national level, we are living in an ageing population with increasing levels of loneliness and cognitive impairments such as dementia. Nearly half of all people over 75 live alone. In addition, the Social Services and Well-Being

Act 2015 creates a duty of care to protect persons at risk from financial abuse; with partnership working and cooperation at the heart of this approach.

Preventing crime, and supporting safe, confident, resilient communities, is a key aspiration that SRS shares with the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner. Shared areas of work might include scams and cyber crime, night time economy and licensing, victim support and safeguarding, general intelligence sharing and substance misuse together with underage sales, including knife crime. This is putting further strain on already stretched resources as the potential number of victims to scams and doorstep crime increases and expectations of successful interventions rise.

Awareness raising activities are crucial to crime prevention, but they invariably increase the demand for the service. We will support South Wales Police as it delivers the Police and Crime Plan and will endeavour to enhance the protection available to the most vulnerable in our communities.

Increase in Illegal dog breeding – As demonstrated by the successful prosecutions carried out by SRS, the high value of certain dog breeds together with the increase in consumer demand for puppies has led to an increase in complaints to the service. On-going investigations show that a number of these cases are complex, with multi agency involvement and links to organised crime. The largest illegal dog breeding case uncovered evidence of unlicensed breeding, the over-breeding of dogs, illegal importation and mutilation. We are also now seeing incidences of cuckoo breeding where breeding bitches are left with other people, then if puppies are not up to standard, the breeders refuse to take the puppies leaving them with the person looking after them. Investigations into illegal dog breeding have highlighted a hidden industry with a particular area of concern being that of 'backyard' breeding. As a result, there appears to be an increasing incidence of unlicensed breeding and sick puppies. Officers will continue to work with partner agencies to investigate such reports and take appropriate enforcement action.

Building Safety – The Senedd voted to pass the Building Safety (Wales) Bill into law on 10 March 2026. Welsh Government is now moving to the implementation phase, and SRS is heavily engaged with the various stakeholder groups and other local authorities in taking this agenda forward. As some aspects of the Bill will be introduced through secondary legislation, there will be further public consultation on these elements. SRS continues to represent the Directors of Public Protection Wales group on the Building Safety Stakeholder Group which acts as a strategic, independent advisory group for Welsh Government on matters relating to the Welsh Building Safety Programme.

A number of important amendments to the Bill were previously agreed, including:

- A duty on the Welsh Ministers to make Regulations identifying a local authority as the Building Safety Authority for each of the three Fire and Rescue Authority areas
- A power for Building Safety Authorities to issue Fixed Penalty Notices in respect of some offences.

The current anticipated timeline for implementation predicts that three local authorities will be designated in April 2027 with commencement of the legislation pertaining to category 1 buildings in December 2027 and category 2 buildings in June 2028. This is of course subject to potential change. The SRS has expressed an interest in potentially hosting the South Wales Building Safety Authority, however, discussions are at an early stage. It is likely that further funding will be provided by WG to local authorities to work on the implementation of the legislation and SRS will examine how we may participate in that process with other local authorities in the South Wales region.

The Joint Inspection Team (JIT) has undertaken an inspection programme across Wales with several reports having been produced for buildings within the SRS footprint. An evaluation of the JIT is currently taking place and a decision on future funding of the team will take place following that piece of work.

Welsh Government has re-iterated its commitment that it does not expect leaseholders to bear the cost of repairing fire safety issues that are not of their making and the remediation programme in Wales continues to take place in 2026/2027.

There remains a great deal of work to be done in this area and SRS continues to represent the three partner authorities in the various stakeholder groups helping to inform Welsh Government and shaping the legislative programme as it moves forward.

Public Health Funerals - Under Section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984, local authorities have a statutory duty to arrange the burial or cremation of individuals where no suitable arrangements have been made. This provision safeguards public health and ensures all individuals are treated with dignity. Non-statutory government guidance supports local authorities in delivering these services respectfully. A public health funeral is required where there is no next of kin, next of kin cannot be located, or relatives are unwilling or unable to arrange or fund the funeral.

Responsibility for delivery varies across the region. In Cardiff, Bereavement Services manage these arrangements. In Bridgend and the Vale, Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) undertake key responsibilities including death registration, liaison with funeral directors, and completion of statutory documentation. Referrals are typically

received from the Coroner's Office or hospices. Where necessary, SRS officers attempt to trace next of kin; if unsuccessful, the duty transfers to the local authority.

The average cost of a public health cremation is approximately £1,500, initially funded by the Council. Costs may be recovered from the deceased's estate, with funeral expenses taking legal priority over other debts. Officers undertake property and asset searches to support cost recovery and identify any relevant personal or religious considerations.

Demand is increasing, driven by factors such as social isolation and financial hardship. During 2025/26, SRS arranged 22 funerals (6 in Bridgend, 16 in the Vale). While volumes are relatively low, cases are resource-intensive and rely on a small number of trained and experienced officers.

Artificial Intelligence - Artificial intelligence presents a growing challenge for regulatory services due to the speed at which the technology is evolving and the difficulty in applying existing legislation to new, complex systems. AI can enable more sophisticated forms of fraud, misleading practices, and automated decision-making that are harder to detect, investigate, and regulate. There are also concerns around transparency, bias, and accountability, particularly where AI systems operate as "black boxes." As a result, regulatory services must adapt quickly, develop new capabilities, and work collaboratively to ensure public protection keeps pace with technological change.

Cost of living

The cost-of-living crisis continues in the UK and across the world. We have seen food and energy prices rise markedly together with price increases of consumer goods and services. The financial pressures this puts on both businesses and individuals impacts many of the services delivered by SRS. Businesses may seek to cut corners resulting in a drop in standards, while consumers may be tempted to purchase cheaper alternatives which could negatively impact the health and safety of our communities. This inevitably places greater demands on SRS at a time when the service itself is facing budgetary pressures. The following examples highlight some of these emerging issues.

Increase in food banks – The cost of living crisis has seen a significant increase in the number of food banks available to support people who struggle to afford to buy enough food to eat. These food banks are usually operated by volunteers relying heavily on donations from supermarkets, schools, churches and businesses. Like any food business, these food banks are regulated and inspected to ensure compliance with food safety requirements. Often the food donations come from supermarkets where food supplied is close to expiry of the use by date which gives food banks only a limited time to distribute the food. Food with a best before date

can be legally sold, redistributed, and consumed after the date if judged to be of sufficient quality to be donated and made available to be eaten. There have been incidences of food past its use by date being supplied by a food bank and this emerging issue has prompted greater engagement and the provision of advice to these charitable organisations.

Consumers finding themselves with less disposable income may be tempted to engage rogue traders to undertake work in their homes, to purchase illegal tobacco, and counterfeit goods. These risks, and that of falling into the clutches of loan sharks and scammers, could all impact negatively on the health, safety and economic wellbeing of our communities.

Deterioration of private rental properties – The landscape of private sector rental housing in terms of property condition appears to be deteriorating and the service is seeing an increase in complaints. While this is believed to be, in part as a result of the covid pandemic and the decline in routine maintenance due to the lack of availability of contractors, the cost of living crisis is also contributing to the issues being experienced. Tenants struggling to pay for heating, may use it less, which in turn can cause damp and mould in a property about which they complain to SRS. This becomes difficult for officers in requiring landlords to improve the heating in properties when tenants can't actually afford to put the heating on and there is a need to be mindful of both the needs of tenants and landlords.

Economic impact on lending - The harsh economic consequences of the Covid pandemic and the current cost of living crisis have underlined concerns about the type of borrowing undertaken by individuals. People who are struggling to pay the bills can easily fall prey to loan sharks and scammers. Research commissioned by Stop Loan Shark Wales revealed a number of key findings that indicate how the crisis is driving people to borrow money. Of particular concern is that nearly half of the respondents who borrowed money did so informally through friends, family or co-workers, increasing the risk of these financially vulnerable people falling victim to illegal money lenders. In addition, the research showed that people aged between 18-34 are most susceptible to being targeted by illegal money lenders. The results suggest that this age group are most likely to consider borrowing money to pay for essentials and are also most likely to have engaged in borrowing in the last 12 months. Research also shows that 18–24-year-olds are most likely to have already used an unlicensed money lender but are less likely to know that this type of lending is illegal, so may unknowingly borrow from a loan shark. Furthermore the research revealed that illegal lending hotspots, including Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, and Swansea, saw the highest proportions of respondents aware of potentially illegal lending in their area.

Buy now pay later deals have increased dramatically during recent years. This unregulated form of credit allows consumers to delay payment for goods, without interest and has gained a foothold among the under 30s and those with tight finances. Companies such as Clearpay and industry leader Klarna give online

shoppers options to pay for products via instalments at the checkout and there are concerns that people are signing up for credit without fully understanding that this is the case and that it is being made easier for consumers to buy more than they can afford.

Dog ownership –During the covid pandemic the UK saw a significant rise in dog ownership as individuals and families who found themselves spending more time at home, sought the companionship of a dog. There were concerns during this time, that as people returned to work, this could lead to issues with separation anxiety, and that the economic fallout from the pandemic would result in a spike of straying and abandoned dogs which owners are no longer able to look after. Currently, the cost-of-living crisis is giving further cause for concern and we are seeing a rise in the number of dogs being housed in rescue centres, some finding their way there as 'fake strays'. The ban on XL Bully breeds has the potential to add an extra layer of complexity in this regard.

National and World Events

Refugees and re-settlers - Whilst recent international humanitarian emergencies have enabled SRS to welcome, and support, refugees and re-settlers into the region, it has necessitated the introduction of measures to ensure that diseases endemic in other countries are not introduced in the UK. This is particularly poignant for the importation of pets by refugees from countries where Rabies, tick and tapeworm infections, and conditions such as Brucella canis are prevalent.

Many re-settlers and refugees are also re-locating from conditions with limited sanitation; poor access to clean food and water; and over-crowded conditions. This could result in an increase of reported cases of Giardiasis; Tuberculosis and Shigella across the region that will require the service to formally exclude cases from school or work until medical clearance has been achieved; support the funding of cases to remain off work if they are required to undergo prolonged and complex medical treatment; and potentially ensure risks to public health are mitigated through the 'request to co-operate' and Part 2A Order mechanisms.

Public health and adapting to world events –SRS played a vital role in ensuring public health and public safety through the way in which we responded to the Covid-19 crisis and demonstrated how SRS is central to the public health agenda. It highlighted how, as a service our ability to adapt quickly and respond to emerging world events is key to delivering public health and safety, and how important it is to be able to respond in the same way going forward as issues emerge. This was also demonstrated in our response to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees into the region, which saw the Service undertake hundreds of property checks for the partner Councils under the Homes for Ukraine initiative.

Health Protection - Building upon the success of the co-production approach of partner agencies throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and recognising the huge importance of local authorities continuing to play a central role in the health protection system moving forward, SRS continues to work with the Health Boards and partner agencies transition towards an all-hazards, preventative service. The team's focus has therefore broadened to include work aligned with the priorities of the Communicable Disease and Health and Safety Team. In this context, an amalgamation of services has been undertaken to reposition the Health Protection Team within the Communicable Disease and Health and Safety Team.

This approach aims to enhance the resilience of the Communicable Disease and Health and Safety Team and ensure that priorities are delivered in line with statutory work programmes, including the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) priorities relating to health. It also supports the further strengthening of partnership working with the Health Board.

Exercise Pegasus - was the UK's largest national pandemic preparedness exercise, delivered in 2025 and led by the Department of Health and Social Care in partnership with the UK Health Security Agency. It was a Tier 1, cross-government simulation designed to test the country's ability to respond to a future infectious disease outbreak across all phases emergence, containment and mitigation, bringing together government departments, the NHS, devolved administrations and Local Resilience Forums (LRFs). Within this, SRS played a critical role as core members, supporting coordinating local multi-agency responses, supporting outbreak management, and ensuring that vulnerable communities were protected.

Animal Disease – Avian influenza is an infectious disease of birds caused by the influenza A virus. Birds are the hosts for most avian influenza viruses and domestic poultry are especially vulnerable and the virus can rapidly cause epidemics in flocks. Human infections with avian influenza are rare, however, some viruses have been associated with human disease. While the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone that was in place across the UK has been lifted, keepers are expected to remain vigilant, practising stringent biosecurity to protect the health and welfare of their birds. A more recent concern in terms of animal disease is Bluetongue Virus which is an infectious vector borne viral disease affecting wild and domestic ruminants such as sheep, goats, cattle, deer and camelids such as llamas and alpacas. The disease was confirmed for the first time along the east coast of England, in November 2023, and its incidence has crept closer to Wales since that time. Farmers are urged to be vigilant for signs of the virus in animals. Bluetongue does not affect people or food safety and is transmitted by midge bites.

South Wales Metro Construction – During 2023-24 SRS worked closely with Transport for Wales on controlling noise from works associated with the South Wales Metro Construction. The work includes the installing of cabling for the electrification, removal/replacement of footbridges, platform alterations and the construction of the

new stations and will continue during the year. As most of the work needs to be undertaken when there are no trains running, works tend to occur at night and on weekends/public holidays which are outside usual construction hours Mon-Fri 08:00-18:00, Sat 08:00-13:00, no noisy works on Sundays/Public Holidays. As a result, this requires Transport for Wales to apply for permission to conduct the work outside these hours and SRS needs to ensure that they are using the best practicable means to reduce disturbance to residents as much as possible and to ensure they are effectively communicating with residents. Transport for Wales are providing some funding towards an officer to support this work.

ICT and Infrastructure

ICT Interface with Legacy Authorities – Since the inception of SRS, officers have been provided with access to the systems of the 3 legacy authorities of Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. This enables officers to access the essential IT systems they need to fulfil their duties for the relevant authorities. While this has worked well, more recent updates to systems and software have impacted on the continuity of current arrangements affecting connectivity and access. SRS maintains good relationships with the ICT departments of the legacy authorities to deal with issues as they arise, however it has become evident that there is a need to consolidate the long term access requirements of SRS, particularly in Cardiff, to ensure continued access and smooth running of systems in order to provide seamless delivery of essential services.

Review of ICT and mobile working solutions – An essential component of the operating model for SRS was the introduction of technical and mobile working solutions that enable employees to work remotely. This has contributed to the success of the service, but as agile working becomes the norm for many within the service, we are finding that the technology deployed is becoming outdated. It is clear that as technology improves, better facilities now exist which could further enhance the work of SRS and its remote working capabilities as we move forward. SRS will continue working with staff and ICT to explore options for improving equipment with a view to introducing tablet devices for officers to conduct inspections to ensure that we deliver services to our customers both efficiently and effectively. This work aligns with the digital pillar.

Customer engagement – Customer engagement is key to understanding the needs and expectations of our customers. It helps us know what we are doing well and what we could do better and informs policy development and procedural changes within the service. Within SRS we engage with customers in a number of ways via public consultations, customer satisfaction surveys, citizens panels and the monitoring of complaints and compliments. While response levels via these various mechanisms have traditionally been low, more recently we have seen a significant reduction, particularly via customer satisfaction surveys which is of concern. It is likely that this reduction is as a result of moving surveys online, as opposed to the

sending out of hard copy questionnaires which whilst more cost effective for the service, requires a level of effort by customers to navigate their way to the relevant questionnaire. SRS recognises the need to improve customer engagement in this area during the coming year to maximise the important feedback we receive and will take steps to address this.

Recruitment and retention

Recruitment and retention – Recruiting into certain roles has been challenging in recent years, and the shortage of applicants with the right skills, abilities and experience in the different professions has created a more competitive market. Across Wales, the Directors of Public Protection Wales has identified immediate issues of capacity and resilience along with challenges for the future as the demands and expectations on regulatory services continue to grow. The *Building for the Future* report details the key issues confronting local government regulatory services; the challenges faced in terms of workforce pressures, the need for better coordination and oversight.

New and innovative ways of advertising roles have begun to ensure our roles are reaching the correct target audience and showcasing the innovative nature of the SRS. Recruitment cuts across all four of the services work pillars—**communication, innovation, digital, and workforce**.

7. Turning actions into outcomes

We continue to work to integrate our vision, priorities, outcomes and our performance to provide a comprehensive picture of the work the service undertakes and the positive impact it makes.

The following section of this Business Plan brings all these different elements together in order to highlight our achievements and performance during the last year together with the actions we aim to take forward in 2026/27 to deliver on the strategic priorities. This framework will be continually reviewed to ensure it remains relevant and meaningful to stakeholders.

Priority

Improving health and wellbeing

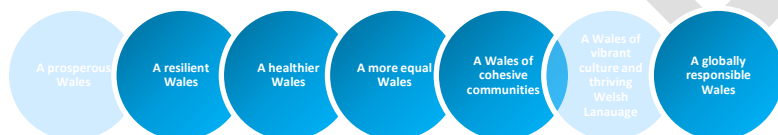
Outcomes



Outputs



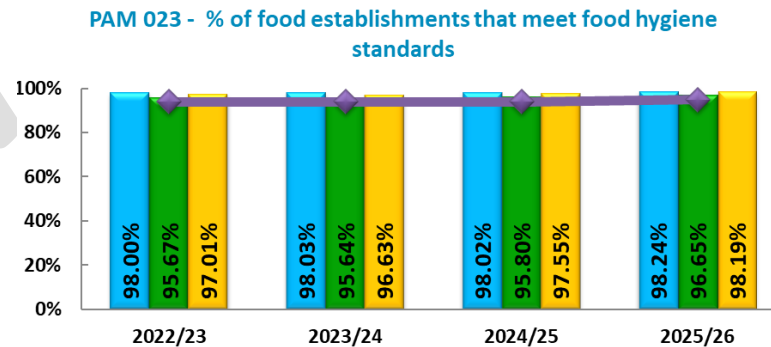
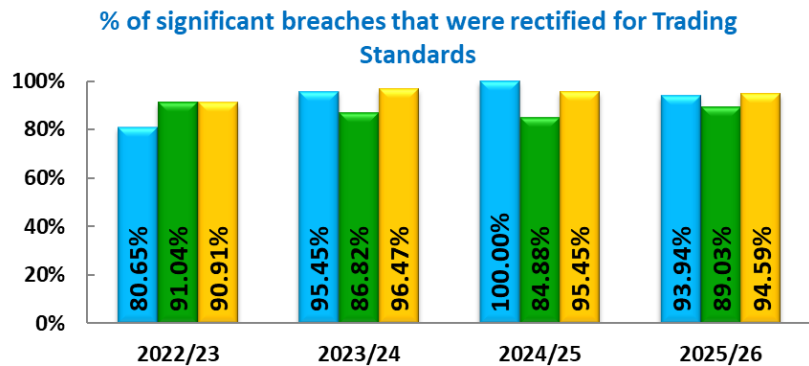
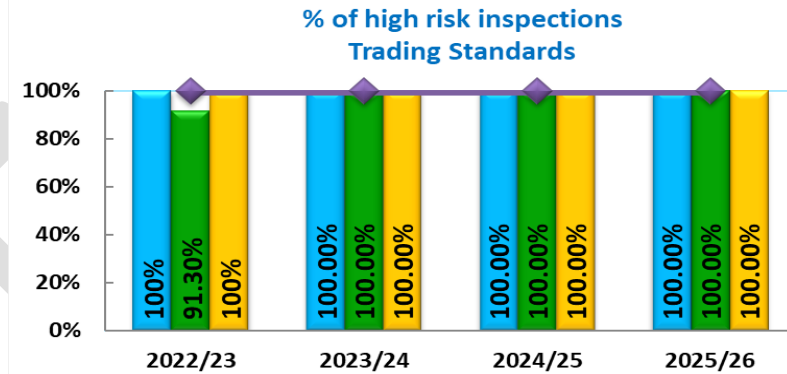
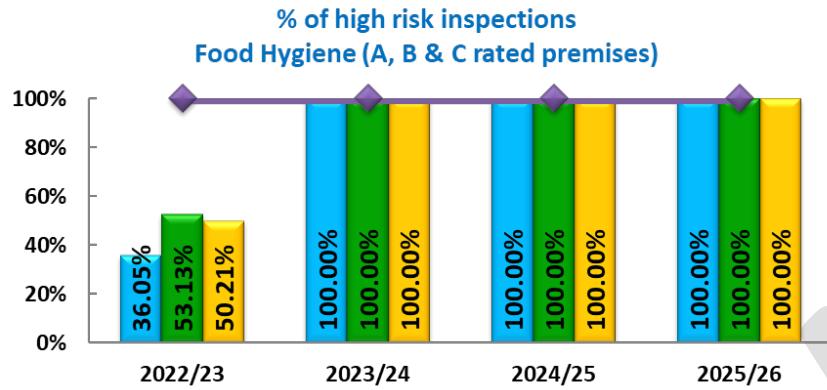
In addition, our outcomes also contribute to the following wellbeing goals:-



Improving health and wellbeing is a key priority for SRS. The Service delivers a diverse range of services to businesses, consumers and residents many of which are “taken for granted”. Their contribution toward our stated outcomes, and their impact upon communities, should not be overlooked. Work undertaken to ensure that food, from farm to fork, is safe, that infectious disease, noise and air emissions are controlled, that risks in the workplace are managed properly, allows people to live in healthy environments. Add to this our activities to ensure the quality of private rented property, the promotion of a safe trading environment and our regulation of licensed premises to ensure they operate responsibly and it is evident that the work undertaken by the SRS is hugely important to the health and wellbeing of the region.

How we performed

■ Bridgend
 ■ Cardiff
 ■ Vale of Glamorgan



What we have achieved

The Food chain is safe and free from risks

Food hygiene and food standards interventions - The Food Standards Agency sets the required frequency for food business inspections based on risk, with higher-risk premises inspected more often. Last year's Business Plan highlighted significant progress in clearing the backlog of food inspections. This backlog had built up due to the pause in visits during the pandemic, as well as ongoing challenges faced by SRS. These include the high number of food businesses in the area (around 20% of all those in Wales), a diverse and dynamic local food scene, and the frequent turnover of new business start-ups.

It is pleasing to report that this strong progress has continued throughout 2025/26. As a result, performance against food intervention targets has remained high, with all due inspections for high-risk food hygiene and food standards successfully completed.

Businesses that are broadly compliant - The proportion of food businesses achieving a food hygiene rating above 3 remains consistently high: 98% in Bridgend, 97% in Cardiff and 98% in the Vale are now considered broadly compliant.

These results demonstrate a positive year-on-year trend, with performance consistently exceeding targets. They also reflect the growing number of businesses improving their standards, which can be attributed to the success of the food business intervention programme. This programme ensures that any food safety issues identified are addressed through a combination of enforcement action, advice and training. Follow-up visits are then carried out to confirm that businesses have achieved and maintained compliance with food safety legislation.

Prosecutions – SRS is committed to enforcing the laws we are responsible for and pursues legal proceedings against those businesses or individuals that flout the law. During 2025/26, the service concluded a number of successful prosecutions against individuals/businesses in relation to food safety and standards offences. In total 9 cases against 14 offenders were concluded in the year, resulting in fines of £665,728 and costs of £18,640. In one case, the food business operator received an immediate custodial sentence. The following examples showcase the impact and value of this work.

Cardiff major supermarket fined £640,000 for food hygiene offences – During Food Safety inspections of a major supermarket in Cardiff, officers uncovered serious and repeated breaches involving the sale of prepacked foods beyond their use-by dates directly compromising public health. Significant quantities of out-of-date items were identified across multiple visits to one store and at a second outlet operated by the same company.

Over a four-month period, more than 100 food items were found to have exceeded their use-by dates, in some cases by up to 15 days. Critically, these included high-risk products such as meat and dairy, where consumption beyond the use-by date can lead to food poisoning and other serious health consequences. The presence of products marketed towards children further heightened the level of risk and concern.

The company pleaded guilty to four charges of selling unsafe food. The court heard that use-by dates are a vital legal safeguard designed to protect consumers from potentially hazardous food. Ignoring these dates undermines food safety controls and exposes the public to avoidable harm.

In sentencing, the Judge stressed that this was not an isolated incident but a systemic failure across multiple product lines and locations. The company's controls to prevent unsafe food reaching consumers were found to be wholly inadequate, posing a sustained risk to public health.

Although the company reported investing in improved systems, the seriousness of the offences was reflected in the penalty: a £640,000 fine, £15,115 in prosecution costs, and a £2,000 Victim Surcharge. The case drew widespread media attention, reinforcing the critical importance of robust food safety practices in protecting public health.

Fine for mobile catering vehicle operating in the Vale of Glamorgan – An inspection of a takeaway food trailer on Barry Island identified very poor hygiene practices, including an inadequate water supply for hand washing and for the cleaning of equipment. As a result of the public health risks posed, a Remedial Action Notice (RAN) was served to prevent the sale of ready to eat food, as well as two Food Hygiene Improvement Notices. The business was given a Food Hygiene Rating Scheme score of 0 (Urgent Improvement Necessary). While restoration of the water supply a few days later meant that the RAN could be lifted, the Food Hygiene Improvement Notices remained in place and over the course of summer of 2024, the Investigating Officer attempted to work with the defendant to resolve fully the remaining concerns. Disappointingly, a further inspection in August of 2024 identified further poor practices. The defendant entered guilty pleas to 11 food hygiene offences, but in mitigation blamed the landowner for intermittently turning off the water supply. It was demonstrated to the court that he was no longer working in the food industry, and that he had a low income. He was subsequently fined £650 and ordered to pay costs of £250, together with a victim surcharge of £256.

Cardiff wholesaler imprisoned – This case followed a prolonged investigation into a Cardiff-based wholesale supplier of chicken to ethnic restaurants and takeaways, which exposed serious and systemic failures. Investigators identified appalling hygiene standards, evidence of poultry being defrosted and refrozen, chicken retained two years beyond its durability date, incomplete temperature records, and the distribution of meat across Wales in unclean, unrefrigerated vehicles unfit for purpose. Critically, the company also falsely marketed its products as halal without any evidence to support this claim.

The company Director admitted multiple food hygiene and fraud offences at an early stage. In contrast, his co-defendant, an integral figure as the Food Business Operator (FBO) and shareholder denied all charges. Despite being disqualified from acting as a company director, he played a central role in the business's operations.

A two-week trial revealed that the FBO had deliberately constructed a network of companies to obscure his control and mislead investigators. Evidence showed that customers were deceived into believing they were dealing with different suppliers and were consistently purchasing halal chicken. In reality, during extended periods when no halal meat was sourced, non-halal chicken continued to be supplied under false pretences.

The jury found the FBO guilty of all 11 charges. At sentencing in Merthyr Crown Court, the Judge condemned his refusal to accept responsibility, noting his attempts to shift blame onto employees. She described the situation as “a disaster waiting to happen” and emphasised the significant public health and societal risks posed. The court found that customers would have been “horrified” had they known the truth about the lack of traceability, misuse of dates, and false halal claims.

While the Director received credit for his early guilty plea, prolonged uncertainty pending sentencing, and genuine remorse and having since left the food industry, the court ultimately determined that both defendants bore equal culpability for the serious misconduct.

The court imposed substantial penalties on both defendants, reflecting the seriousness of the offences and the risks posed to public health. The Food Business Operator, who pleaded not guilty, was sentenced to 4 years and 8 months in immediate custody, which includes a sentence relating to an associated insolvency offence. The company Director, who pleaded guilty, received a 24 month suspended sentence and has been ordered to complete 150 hours of unpaid work.

In addition, the court granted Hygiene Prohibition Orders against both individuals. As a result, they are now prohibited from being involved in the management or operation of any food business for a period of 10 years, providing a strong and lasting safeguard for consumers.

Health Protection Partnership – SRS continues to actively engage with partners in the Cardiff & Vale University Health Board and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board through its Health Protection Partnership Team (HPPT). This service is fully funded by Welsh Government, and the funds are distributed by the relevant Health Boards.

Although this work was previously undertaken by a separate team of officers, the continued reduction in COVID-19-related activity—now significantly lower than during the pandemic—has led to a transition towards an all-hazards, preventative service. While the team continues to support high-risk settings, its focus has broadened to include work

aligned with the priorities of the Communicable Disease and Health and Safety Team. In this context, an amalgamation of services has been undertaken to reposition the Health Protection Team within the Communicable Disease and Health and Safety Team.

This approach aims to enhance the resilience of the Communicable Disease and Health and Safety Team and ensure that priorities are delivered in line with statutory work programmes, including the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) priorities relating to health. It also supports the further strengthening of partnership working with the Health Board.

Risks in the workplace are managed properly

Phase 1 of the **Violence, aggression, mental health and wellbeing in the retail sector** intervention commenced during 2025/26, with initial focus on developing links with key partners, scoping out what arrangements are already in place in Cardiff city centre, and understanding the key challenges being experienced by businesses. The Service is now actively engaged with South Wales Police, City Centre Management & Development (Cardiff Council) and local business representatives. Through regular attendance at the weekly breakfast meetings at the Hilton Hotel, and a recent multi-agency meeting at the Utilita Arena, SRS has now established itself with partners in this arena and is now in a position to focus year 2 on working more closely with businesses to identify training needs and assess existing health and safety, and mental health and wellbeing, arrangements.

Cardiff Business prosecuted for health and safety failings— In this case SRS officers found exposed, live electrical wires in different locations in the rear room of the retail premises on Clifton Street, Cardiff. Officers gave advice on having a competent electrician rectify the problems urgently, with access to the rear room being restricted in the meantime. After attempting to work with the business to make the premises safe, officers were concerned on returning the next day to find that although work appeared to have been completed to remove / enclose the live wires, no proof could be provided that the work had been carried out by a competent electrician.

Despite service of Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act Improvement Notices on the company, no such information was provided, and despite being given additional time to comply, the required Electrical Installation Condition Report, and proof of ongoing electrical safety maintenance had not been forthcoming. Attempts to interview the company under caution had been similarly unsuccessful. The company was fined £4,000 and ordered to pay £570 in costs.

Infectious Disease is controlled and prevented

Infection Control Training for Special Procedures —Following the introduction of the Special Procedures licensing regime in 2024, work has continued to complete special

procedure compliance visits for all new personal licence and premises approval certificate applications. This piece of work has been the main priority for the Communicable Disease team during 2025/26, which has been the first full year of implementation of the new licensing regime and included the 9-month transition period.

Communicable Disease – The Communicable Disease Team is responsible for protecting public health by controlling and preventing cases and outbreaks of infectious disease. The team were at the heart of the Covid-19 pandemic, acting as the Regional Response team, which saw the focus of the team almost entirely shift to tackling Covid 19 during that time. Recent years, however, has seen the team return to 'business as usual'. During 2025/26, the team dealt with a total of **3884 cases** of communicable disease that were notified to SRS. Laboratory confirmed cases accounted for 95% of these (3692 cases), whilst unconfirmed gastrointestinal illness (suspected food poisoning) accounted for only 5% (192 cases).

Significant outbreaks across the SRS region were managed, including sickness and diarrhoea, including a Cryptosporidium outbreak in a farm in the Vale of Glamorgan. A total of 151 cases of gastrointestinal illness were reported by people who had attended the farm to participate in animal handling and feeding activities. Animal handling activities stopped on 29 April 2025 after SRS issued a Regulation 8 'Request to Co-operate' under health protection legislation. In another outbreak in a restaurant in Bridgend, 43 people reported gastrointestinal illness after eating Sunday lunch. The team conducted case interviews to confirm foods consumed, and arranged for faecal samples to be taken, to support investigation. The causative pathogen was confirmed to be Clostridium perfringens in 7 cases.

Noise and Air Emissions are controlled

Noise Pollution - Noise nuisance can have a negative effect on people's quality of life, affecting their health and wellbeing, and our officers deal with thousands of complaints each year. The volume of noise nuisance complaints that the service receives far exceeds that of any other service provided by SRS.

Licensed premises operate responsibly

Firework storage inspections - Retailers of fireworks are required to register with the local authority in order to ensure safe storage. Firework storage inspections play a vital role in ensuring that fireworks are kept safely and in line with legal requirements. Because fireworks are explosive materials, improper storage can lead to serious risks such as fires, explosions, and harm to people nearby.

Premises registered for the storage of fireworks are inspected by officers of the service to ensure that the conditions imposed by the registration are complied with, that the storage is safe and the business operates in a safe manner. In the run up to 'bonfire night' each year,

all premises across the region licensed for the storage of fireworks are inspected by SRS officers. to ensure the safety of firework sale and storage. Only minor non-compliances tend to be found in this largely well regulated sector however during 2025/26 38 premises were inspected, with one significant breach recorded and resolved with the Primary Authority. Firework safety offences.

One investigation that resulted in prosecution was concluded during the year involved the seizure of fireworks ahead of Bonfire Night 2024, following concerns they were being sold via Facebook. Videos suggested they were stored in a breeze block building. When officers attended the defendant's Cardiff address, they found a large quantity stored unsafely in an outbuilding.

Despite being accompanied by South Wales Police, officers were met with threatening verbal abuse when attempting to seize the fireworks, forcing them to leave for their safety. During this time, most of the fireworks were removed, leaving just over 2kg net explosive content.

Evidence showed the defendant had been storing fireworks in the outbuilding for at least a week. Conditions were clearly unsafe, with ignition risks (e.g. electrical appliances and flammable materials) and no safety measures such as proper containers, signage, or fire precautions.

The defendant declined interview and was charged with unsafe storage and supply of fireworks, and obstruction. An application was made to forfeit and destroy the seized fireworks. In court, the defendant pleaded guilty to the safety offences but not guilty to obstruction, which was subsequently withdrawn by the prosecution.

A safe trading environment is maintained

Single Use Vape Ban - The UK banned the sale and supply of all single-use, disposable vapes from 1 June 2025 to curb rising youth vaping and reduce environmental waste. The legislation forces a shift to rechargeable, refillable, and reusable alternatives. Since June SRS officers have inspected over 90 premises and removed over 4,700 non-compliant products.

Illegal vapes and tobacco— Illegal tobacco (i.e. counterfeit, or non-duty paid) continues to present a very real problem in our communities. Research indicates that at least 14% of all tobacco and tobacco products supplied are illegal, however, many smokers appear to be comfortable in purchasing illegal tobacco, presumably under the misapprehension that the only impact of its widespread use is the loss of revenue to HM Treasury. This thinking ignores the most serious harms caused by illegal tobacco. At around half the cost of legitimate product, illegal tobacco removes the price incentive for smokers to quit the otherwise expensive habit. Nicotine inhaling products such as vapes are a regulated

product that should comply with the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016. Which applies restrictions on the capacity of the refillable tank of the device which must not be more than 2 ml; that there is a nicotine limit of 20 mg per ml in nicotine containing liquids or containers; that products should contain prominent health warnings; and that all vapes and e-liquids are required to be notified to the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency before they can be sold.

In response to continued high levels of intelligence and complaints received, SRS officers undertook several exercises to identify the availability of such products during 2025/26. One notable exercise was **Operation Machanize**, a UK wide multi agency operation led by the National Crime Agency. The exercise targeted criminal exploitation of cash rich businesses including small shops tackling economic crime, money laundering and modern slavery. SRS carried out several multi agency operations seizing large quantities of illegal tobacco and vapes. 51 inspections were carried out and 34 of those resulted in enforcement action being taken. 4260 illegal vapes valued at £24,200, 3811 packs of illegal cigarettes valued at £36,480, and 267 packs of hand rolled tobacco valued at £8,400 were seized. In addition, 2 closure orders were obtained for the most prolific offenders. Investigations are still ongoing.

Over the year officers conducted 86 test purchases, securing 36 illegal sales, and carried out 95 inspections which resulted in 61 seizures. Illegal products included large quantities of cigarettes, hand rolling tobacco, vapes and SUVs, with an estimated combined value exceeding £445,000. 56 written warnings were issued to businesses as a result of this work.

The introduction of the **Environmental Protection (Single Use Vapes) (Wales) Regulations 2024**, ahead of the June 2026 ban, prompted proactive engagement where 397 advisory letters were issued, followed by 126 compliance checks which identified 49 non-compliant premises and resulted in 46 SUV seizures. Post ban intelligence indicates ongoing non compliance, requiring continued monitoring and enforcement.

The landlord project resulted in increased engagement and working with landlords to disrupt illegal trading from rented premises. Engagement with 20 landlords led to 4 tenant evictions and 4 additional notices being served on tenants by the landlord, demonstrating the value of landlord collaboration in tackling persistent offenders.

Cardiff store fined for trading in illegal vapes and tobacco - SRS officers repeatedly identified illegal vapes and tobacco products intended for sale at a Cardiff premises. During an inspection in July 2023, officers seized 692 non-compliant disposable vapes exceeding the 2ml tank limit and unregistered with the MHRA alongside illicit hand-rolling tobacco.

Despite receiving detailed guidance on multiple occasions, the company and its sole director continued to trade in unlawful products. The director failed to cooperate with the investigation, including not responding to correspondence and not attending an interview

under caution. There was also no evidence of an effective due diligence system to prevent such offences.

In court, the director claimed he had stepped back from his role at the time and was acting as an employee. However, this was not supported by Companies House records. The judge emphasised that, as a director, he remained responsible for ensuring compliance with all relevant laws and regulations. The company was fined a total of £5,000 with costs of £1048. The Director was also fined £1400 together with a further £1048 in prosecution costs and a Victim Surcharge of £560. Forfeiture of seized goods was also granted.

Unsafe counterfeit products Bridgend – Labubu Dolls– Product safety is a fundamental responsibility of trading standards services, aimed at protecting consumers from harm and ensuring that goods placed on the market meet legal safety requirements. Unsafe and counterfeit products can pose serious risks, including injury, illness, fire hazards, and, in the most severe cases, loss of life. As such, effective product safety enforcement is essential to safeguarding public health and wellbeing. SRS Officers play a critical role in monitoring and regulating the marketplace..

In an increasingly complex retail environment, particularly with the growth of online sales and global supply chains, the risk of unsafe or non-compliant products entering the market has increased. Proactive interventions, such as inspections, testing programmes, and targeted campaigns, are therefore vital. By identifying risks early and working with businesses to achieve compliance.

One example of this is the global collectable phenomenon of Labubu dolls that went viral on TikTok, with millions of posts and views. The downside of the popularity of these dolls has seen a growth in counterfeit versions that breach Trade Marks legislation and do not meet toy safety requirements. In 2025/26, SRS seized 1408 counterfeit labubu dolls, and submitted some for safety testing. The testing showed that as well as labelling non compliances the products failed for small parts becoming easily detached, the heads were easily removed and left a pointed plastic part exposed, and seams were not completed and the toy stuffing material was accessible and the eyes became detached under compression causing a choking hazard.



The quality of private rented property is improved

Cardiff landlord and management company fined a total of £54,000 – During 2025/26, several prosecutions were successfully concluded in cases where tenants had been living in unsafe and often unsanitary conditions. 2025 however saw the conclusion of a landmark case for housing enforcement in Cardiff that commenced in 2022. This case involved a limited company and its sole director who rented out 11 flats in Cardiff despite emergency prohibition orders (EPOs) being in place for each property. These orders were issued in 2018 following the identification of Category 1 hazards posing an imminent risk of serious harm.

The investigating officer made repeated attempts to interview both defendants under caution, but they failed to engage or provide requested information. This non-cooperation continued, including failure to comply with a section 235 notice under the Housing Act 2004 requiring details of occupiers and confirmation of safety systems.

In sentencing, the Judge found the company to be a vehicle used by the director to present a façade of legitimacy and rejected the defendants' financial evidence as unreliable. The offences were deemed serious and deliberate, with breaches of the EPOs continuing over several years. The properties remained occupied to generate profit, with rents of around £600 per month, despite lacking basic safety compliance and exceeding permitted planning use (11 flats instead of 6).

The Court concluded the company was generating significant income (around £80,000) and that the defendants had financially benefited by failing to carry out required works. Given the seriousness, persistence, and financial gain involved, the Judge determined that substantial penalties were warranted. The company was fined £32,400 while the director was fined £21,600. Both had to pay costs of £3000 each and surcharges of £2000 each.

New compliance Team - The ongoing cost-of-living crisis and the worsening housing emergency combined with new legislation introduced by the Welsh Government have created significant additional pressures and responsibilities for the Housing Enforcement Service.

To respond to these challenges, a business case proposing the establishment of a dedicated Compliance Unit within Cardiff was submitted and approved. The unit consisting of a Team Leader and four Environmental Health Officers will focus on improving compliance with statutory notices through increased enforcement and prosecution activity.

In addition, the new officers will undertake proactive work to identify and target rogue landlords, with the aim of removing them from the rental market.

The bid has been fully approved by Cardiff Council, and the funding has been incorporated into the base budget for 2026/27. Recruitment is currently underway for these posts.

What we plan to do next

**** - Cardiff Corporate Plan**

Improving health and wellbeing

Lead
Responsibility

The food chain is safe and free from risks

Protect public health through the delivery of actions set out within the Food and Feed Law Enforcement Plan 2026/27.

TBC

Protect public health through the delivery of actions set out within the Port Health Plan 2026/27.

TBC

Prepare for the implementation of the Food Standards Agency Delivery Model for Food Standards interventions.

TBC

Ensure effective and consistent enforcement of the Food (Promotion and Presentation) (Wales) Regulations 2025.

TBC

Risks in the workplace are managed properly

Protect public health through the delivery of actions set out in the Health and Safety Enforcement Plan 2026/27.

TBC

Implement enforcement and public awareness raising measures in respect of smoke-free requirements on hospital grounds

TBC

Participate in the aesthetics treatments sector pilot in the SE Wales region.

TBC

Noise and air emissions are controlled

Review and explore options for future proofing the Duty Officer Rota.

W Lane

Strengthen co-ordination, monitoring and communications for the Summer Concert Events, working collaboratively with Cardiff Council's Events Team and concert organisers.

W Lane

Build resilience to the Public Health Funeral function within SRS.

W Lane

A safe trading environment is maintained

Undertake seasonal product safety projects, for example in respect of Halloween and Christmas goods and novelties-

TBC

Conduct inspections to ensure that fireworks being supplied to the public meet relevant safety standards, are safely stored in appropriately licensed premises, and are subject to adequate policies to prevent underage sales

TBC

Licensed premises operate responsibly

Review and implement the Statement of Licensing Policy 2026-2031 in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan.

W Lane

The quality of private rented property is improved

Drive up standards in the private rented housing sector by undertaking robust enforcement action to deal with rogue agents and landlords letting and managing properties. **	W Lane
Ensure fire safety in homes by: - Continuing to work with Welsh Government and stakeholder organisations in the development of their Building Safety Programme for medium and high-rise buildings in the private sector. ** - Implement any changes required by new legislation/regulation including Shared Regulatory Services working with other local authorities to establish a regional lead aligned with the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service region. **	W Lane
Redeclare the Plasnewydd Additional Licensing Scheme in Cardiff.	W Lane
Prepare for the establishment of the new Housing Compliance Team in Cardiff, ensuring appropriate structures, resources, and processes are in place to support effective delivery of its statutory functions.	W Lane

Infectious disease is controlled and prevented

Protect public health through the delivery of actions set out within the Communicable Disease and Health Service Plan 2026/27.	TBC
Continue to input into the implementation of both the national and local health protection framework by collaborating with Cardiff & Vale and Cwm Taff Morgannwg Health Boards by working in partnership on community Infection Prevention and Control	TBC

What we will measure

Performance Measures 2026/27	Target
% of food businesses meeting food hygiene standards (broadly compliant).	95%
% of high risk businesses (category A & B) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	100%
% of high risk businesses (category C) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	90%
% of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for trading standards.	100%
% of significant breaches rectified by intervention during the year for trading standards.	N/A
The number of private rented sector properties where significant hazards (Category 1 and 2) have been removed following intervention by SRS.	Varies depending on authority

Priority

Safeguarding the vulnerable

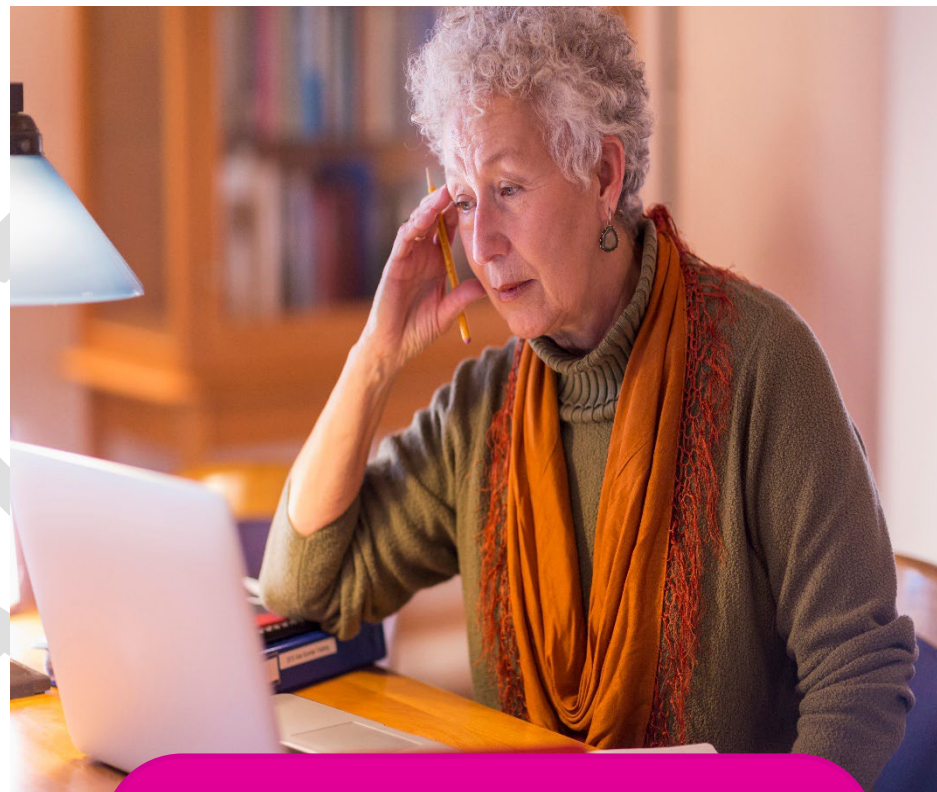
Outcomes



Outputs

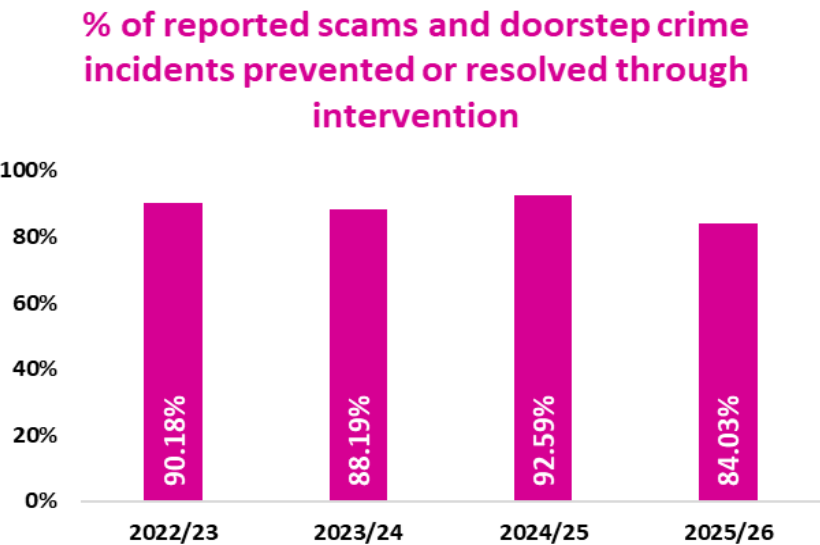


In addition, our outcomes also contribute to the following wellbeing goals:-



Our safeguarding work seeks to ensure that children are protected from harmful substances and products, that older and vulnerable people are protected from unscrupulous individual and traders, that illegal money lending activities across Wales, are challenged robustly and that the public feel safe when using taxis as public transport. We will do this in partnership with our Council colleagues and other agencies to help people who need our support. Safeguarding the vulnerable is a central theme to many of the activities undertaken by SRS.

How we performed



What we achieved

Older and vulnerable people are protected from unscrupulous traders and scams

Rogue traders, Doorstep Crime and Scams – SRS responds to instances of rogue trading, doorstep crime and scams, supporting the victims and families where possible. Often individuals are elderly and vulnerable, and these crimes can have a devastating effect on the emotional as well as the financial wellbeing of residents.

During 2025-26 SRS dealt with 222 scams and assisted 45 scam victims. The number of victims that received assistance reduced significantly due to a reduction in referrals from the NTS scams team and removal of duplicate notifications.

The year also saw 178 doorstep crime cases being identified, a slight increase on the previous year.

There was a slight decrease in the number of vulnerable civil cases dealt with by SRS, with 23 cases compared with 32 cases in 2024-25. Officers obtained a £514,463.00 redress for residents during the year, doubling the total for the previous year. The redress figure includes money that has been saved through early intervention thereby preventing financial loss, the completion of prosecution cases and officers contacting banks to assist victims in getting their money back.

Rapid Responses - During this period, officers received 9 warm transfers (via CACS or directly from SWP) relating to reports of doorstep crime/rogue trading, where traders were either present or due to return imminently. Victims of doorstep crime are often among the most vulnerable and isolated individuals in the community. Attending officers were able to identify potential criminal offences and intervene, preventing approximately **£50,500** in payments to rogue traders.

Disruption / Rogue Trader Days - A total of 9 rogue trading operations were conducted across SRS during 2025–2026: 5 in Bridgend, one in the Vale, and 3 in Cardiff. These operations are valuable for disrupting criminal activity, gathering intelligence, and demonstrating a visible presence within communities for both residents and legitimate traders.

- Bridgend - Of the five operations in Bridgend, two were static, multi-agency operations involving HMRC, DWP, VOSA, and SWP amongst others.

During one of the three mobile operations, **two arrests** were made. A stop check on traders working on a driveway raised concerns regarding their immigration status. Checks with Immigration confirmed that both individuals were absconders, and they were subsequently arrested.

- Cardiff - During one of the three mobile operations in Cardiff, officers identified potential offences and prevented a victim of doorstep crime from paying **£13,000**. During the same incident, **three labourers were arrested** as absconders under immigration legislation.
- Vale - Only one operation was conducted in the Vale. While it was relatively quiet, a wide area was covered showing our presence to legitimate traders and the community.

Education - Four engagement events were delivered during this period. One was held at the Senedd for the Women's Institute, with approximately 60 attendees.

Another successful event took place at Whitchurch Library Hub, providing an opportunity to strengthen links with partner agencies. The Community Wellbeing strategy team (Cardiff) has since offered to circulate our flyers across GP surgeries and hubs in Cardiff, and to include a segment in their newsletter.

Bridgend Rogue Builder and wife sentenced to imprisonment - A husband and wife were sentenced following an investigation by SRS officer into a series of fraudulent building offences that caused significant financial and emotional harm to multiple victims.

The husband, a builder in his seventies, falsely presented himself as a reputable and experienced professional, securing large upfront payments from customers. Projects were left incomplete or substandard, costs increased despite fixed-price agreements, and funds intended for materials and contractors were misused. He also falsely charged VAT despite not being registered, using bogus registration details to mislead clients.

Victims were left with unfinished or unsafe properties, facing substantial additional costs to rectify poor workmanship. Many reported severe emotional distress, with some losing life savings and experiencing long-term financial hardship.

The husband was sentenced to a total of 3 years and 6 months' imprisonment for four counts of fraud and three consumer protection offences. The wife received an 18-week suspended sentence, along with a six-month electronic tag and a curfew from 7pm to

6am. A Proceeds of Crime hearing was concluded in February 2026 and 206K was awarded in compensation to the victims.

Cardiff and Bridgend Rogue Builder sentenced to imprisonment – This case involved a prolific rogue trader operating across Cardiff, Bridgend and Swansea, affecting nine residents. Victims initially contracted him for legitimate property work, but were subsequently persuaded to authorise unnecessary additional works based on fabricated issues.

Total consumer detriment reached approximately £547,000, with customers paying significant sums for little or no work. Where work was undertaken, it was often substandard and, in some cases, dangerous. In one example, works quoted at £8,500 escalated to £22,000, yet were later assessed as having no value, with total losses, including remediation amounting to over £46,000.

The impact on victims was severe, causing financial hardship, emotional distress and, in some cases, structural damage to homes. Several individuals were forced to take loans, use overdrafts or access pension funds to rectify defective work. Some victims were elderly and vulnerable.

The defendant continued offending while on bail for similar offences and used false identities to avoid detection. The court described him as a "persistent rogue builder" who acted dishonestly, delivered work to an "appalling standard," and left properties in potentially dangerous conditions, including unsafe gas work.

The defendant was sentenced to a further 6 years in prison and a criminal behaviour order against him remains in place, severely restricting his ability to work in the UK again.

National Safeguarding Week took place recently, between the 10th and 14th of November. 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. Trader advice packs were also provided, with a number of new traders in particular seeking advice on consumer law. South Wales Police joined Officers during the 'rogue trader days', and a number of vehicles were stopped and checked in the process. One of these vehicles was seized by Police Officers for not having an MOT certificate. Also during National Safeguarding Week, officers provided online training to Patient Care Team Members on doorstep crime awareness. Officers also received requests from other groups such as Age Friendly Cardiff to provide future training on Safeguarding and Doorstep Crime issues.

Children are protected from harmful substances and products

Underage sales operations – Underage sales operations – During 2025-2026, SRS received 115 complaints or intelligence logs regarding underage sales of alcohol, tobacco, vapes, fireworks and knives. Although not currently age restricted, we also had reports of premises selling nicotine pouches. With the assistance of young volunteers, Officers responded by staging a total of 83 attempts to purchase a range of age restricted products during the year. 10 of these attempts to purchase resulted in a sale of either alcohol or vapes. The circumstances of each case were fully investigated, and appropriate enforcement action taken. While the Service will always recommend a stepped approach to enforcement, over the course of 2025-2026, 4 were referred to for prosecution, whilst the others received warnings for their conduct.

Taxi provision is safe and fair

Compliance with the law – A number of 'mystery shopper' exercises were carried out across the region as a means to reality check the extent to which taxi drivers and operators are fulfilling their responsibilities. In Cardiff, mystery shopper exercises were carried out with the assistance of Police volunteers, in respect of the fares charged by hackney carriage drivers. Joint operations were also conducted with partner agencies including South Wales Police, Newport Council, the DVSA and HMRC tackling a range of issues including unroadworthy vehicles. In both Bridgend and the Vale a number of school transport operations have taken place checking both vehicles and drivers are compliant on the school runs. One of these operations identified a significant issue in Bridgend where one driver was found to be unlicensed, and there is an on-going prosecution for this offence.

Cardiff Taxi Driver fined for refusing fare – In this case a Hackney carriage driver operating in Cardiff refused a legitimate hire request from two prospective passengers on Greyfriars Road. The individuals were test purchase volunteers acting on behalf of Licensing Enforcement Officers. Evidence indicated that while the driver initially appeared willing to accept the hire from the designated taxi rank, he stipulated that the journey would only proceed upon receipt of a £10 upfront cash payment. This condition was contrary to licensing requirements, which mandate the use of a taximeter to determine the fare.

The volunteers entered the vehicle with the intention of proceeding with the journey. However, after inadvertently losing a £1 coin in the rear of the vehicle, they were unable to provide the requested upfront payment. As a result, the driver became verbally

aggressive and instructed them to exit the vehicle, thereby refusing carriage. Based on standard tariff rates, the 0.5-mile journey would have cost approximately £5.67, which was within the £9 available to the passengers at the time. This indicates that the refusal was not due to an inability to pay the lawful fare, but rather the driver's insistence on an unauthorised payment arrangement.

During a subsequent interview under caution, the driver did not provide a credible explanation for the refusal. He stated that the passengers had intended to pay by card; however, this was not supported by the evidence gathered. In mitigation, the driver advised the Court that he had previously experienced issues with passengers, including instances of fare evasion, which had influenced his actions in this case. The driver was fined £100 and ordered to pay £150 prosecution costs and a £40 victim surcharge.

Illegal money lending activities are prevented

Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit (Stop Loan Sharks Wales) – We know from experience that illegal money lenders, more commonly known as loan sharks, seek to exploit people during times of crisis and it is apparent that there has been an uptick in offending while cost of living pressures continue to be felt. Dealing with the personal and 'social' fallout linked to the criminality of illegal money lending is difficult to quantify. Reporting rates are often low, and victims are sometimes unwilling to name the lender for fear of reprisal. During 25/26, 28 pieces of intelligence was received relating to suspected illegal money lenders, with 11 operations commenced and 6 illegal lenders identified. Linked to these investigations, 64 victims have been supported, with 23 having their debts written off at the point of intervention. A total of £124,000 direct/ actual savings for the victims has been calculated at the point of intervention. £11,000 cash has been seized as part of the operations.

Proceedings against 3 defendants were brought forward in 2025/2026 for offences of illegal money lending and money laundering. Two defendants, initially entered either no plea or not guilty pleas, and subsequently entered guilty pleas in early 2026/27, and sentencing for these two cases is awaited. A further suspect also pleaded guilty to illegal money lending and money laundering, and was sentenced to 14 months imprisonment suspended for 2 years with 250 hours community work. A proceeds of crime act hearing successfully concluded awarding compensation to the three victims identified ensuring they were reimbursed for the unlawful interest charged by the loan shark.

Illegal Money Lending Education and Training – The WIMLU works closely with other public agencies, including housing providers and third sector organisations whose position on the 'front line' means that they encounter the victims of loan sharks through their daily activities. These relationships provide the Unit with crucial intelligence of illegal

lending. To exploit this and to encourage reporting, WIMLU proactively seeks opportunities to present to these organisations on the work of the team and receives frequent requests for information and training of frontline staff and community-based public facing support services. In 2025/2026 the unit concluded its all Wales Roadshow events attending a number Councils including Newport, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Council, ensuring frontline staff from Housing, Antisocial Behaviour Teams, local police and trading Standards officers received updates on the work of the Unit. Training was provided to a further 12 organisations across Wales, including local health boards, utility companies, Citizens Advice staff, gambling addiction charities and housing associations. In total training was provided to 185 colleagues within these organisations.

Illegal Money Lending raising awareness – In addition to education and training, a number of Stop Loan Sharks Wales events have taken place throughout the year to raise awareness of illegal money lending and promote the assistance available from the team. In addition, during 2025-2026 the Unit benefitted from further national and UK-wide media coverage. The Unit also had a feature article in a quarterly magazine that is distributed to housing associations, advice organisation and foodbanks. The article featured a case study and an interview with the Team.

What we plan to do next

**** - Cardiff Corporate Plan**

Safeguarding the vulnerable

Lead
Responsibility

Older and vulnerable people are protected from unscrupulous traders and scams

Children are protected from harmful substances and products

Work in partnership to safeguard the vulnerable to ensure that children are protected from harmful substances and products, older people are protected from rogue traders and scams and vulnerable people are not subject to exploitation.

TBC

Conduct intelligence led underage sales exercises in relation to the sale of tobacco, alcohol, vapes, knives and other age restricted products.

TBC

Prepare for enhanced enforcement requirements and retail licensing required under the Tobacco and Vapes Bill 2026.

TBC

Illegal money lending activities are prevented

Raise awareness of illegal money lending and support individuals to access responsible lenders and debt advice, rebuild their finances and make a sustainable transition to legal credit. **

J Bale

Taxi provision is safe and fair

Undertake enforcement exercises with the taxi trade including mystery shopper exercises to ensure compliance with the Equalities Act, vehicle and licensing standards and fare refusals for short journeys .

W Lane

Develop and implement an overarching taxi policy that will fundamentally change the way in which taxis are licensed in Cardiff.

W Lane

Explore options for replacing taxi and private hire plates in Bridgend to reduce costs and enhance safety features.

W Lane

What we will measure

Performance Measures 2026/27

Target

- % of reported scams/doorstep crime incidents prevented /resolved through intervention.
- No. of people reached through education or training on scams and doorstep crime.

80%

500

Priority

Protecting the environment

Outcomes



The environment is protected from harmful emissions to land, air & water



People will use energy efficient buildings and products



Communities are protected from nuisance and are safer



Animals are treated humanely

Outputs

Remediate contaminated land and undertake water sampling

Monitor air quality

Regulate industrial processes through environmental permitting

Operate market surveillance programmes on energy efficiency

Bring empty homes back into use

Respond to noise and air complaints

Work with partners to improve student safety & their impact on the community

Enforce taxi licence conditions

Control stray dogs and horses

Inspect overloaded vehicles

Contribute to the planning process

Respond to environmental information requests

In addition, our outcomes also contribute to the following wellbeing goals:-

A prosperous Wales

A resilient Wales

A healthier Wales

A more equal Wales

A Wales of cohesive communities

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language

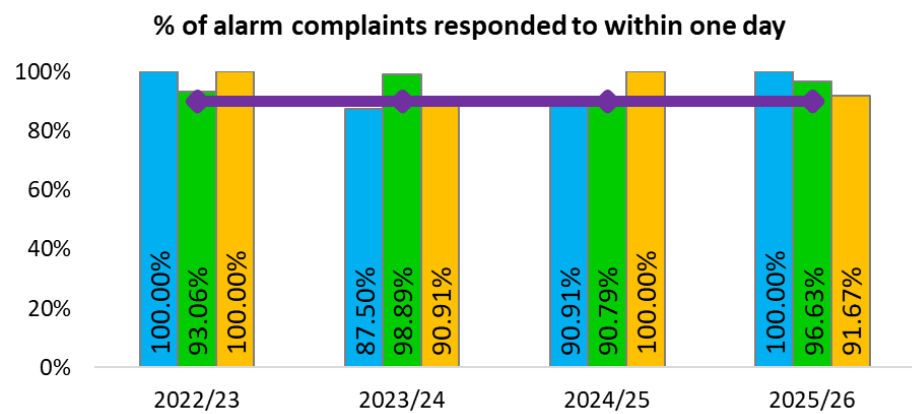
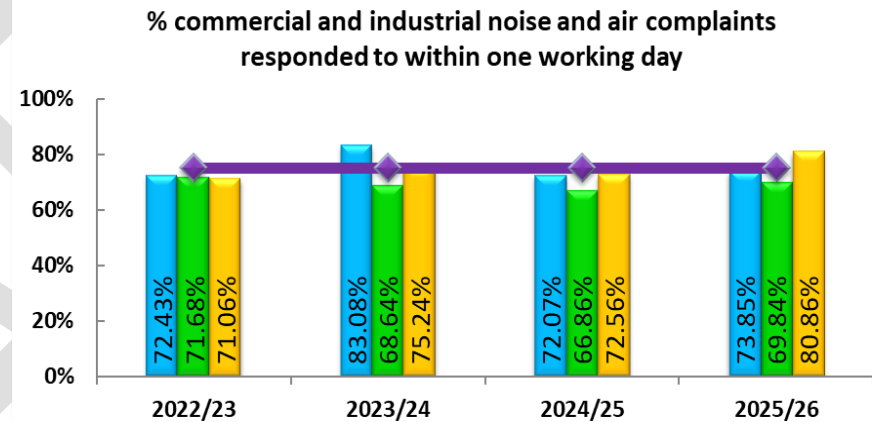
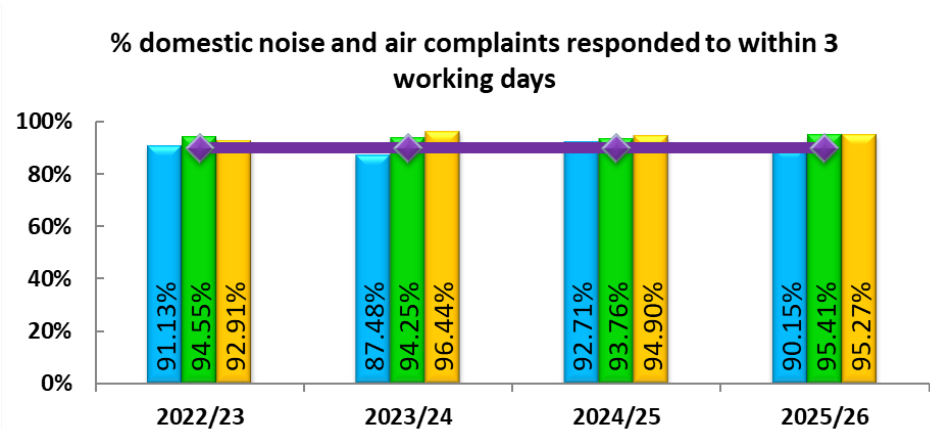
A globally responsible Wales



Protecting the environment is a core strategic priority of SRS. Many of the activities listed here such as water sampling, monitoring air quality, and remediating contaminated land contribute toward promoting a better environment which in turn means better long term prospects for the health and wellbeing of our communities. However, the work in protecting the environment goes further, we ensure communities are protected from nuisance and are safer by investigating noise complaints, dealing with stray dogs and horses. We have a key role to play in the wider climate change and future generations agendas through our enforcement role on energy efficiency controls on properties and products. The impact of these activities is less apparent in the short term for communities, but has an important role for future generations.

How we performed

■ Bridgend ■ Cardiff ■ Vale of Glamorgan



What we have achieved

The environment is protected from harmful emissions to land, air and water

Air Quality - The issue of Air Quality is never far from the headlines and the impact of poor air quality on health is well documented. Indeed air pollution continues to be the largest environmental risk linked to deaths in the population with long term exposure (over several years) contributing to a reduction in life-expectancy primarily due to an increased risk of mortality from cardiovascular and respiratory causes.

During 2025/26 SRS once again ensured that Bridgend, Cardiff, and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils met their statutory duties under Part 4 of the Environment Act 1995 by producing the Annual Progress Reports (APRs) detailing the results for the previous year's data for each area and reporting these to the respective Cabinets. Failure to produce these reports can lead to the receipt of a Welsh Government direction under Section 85(3) of the Environment Act 1995.

In Bridgend the APR demonstrated that only two sites, both located within the Park Street Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) still exceeded the air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide NO₂ as prescribed in the Air Quality (Wales) Regulations 2000 and the Air Quality (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2002. All other locations within Bridgend County Borough continued to meet all other relevant air quality objectives. The results for monitoring undertaken at two locations on Park Street residential facades, exceeded the annual average air quality objective set at (40 µg/m³) for NO₂. The locations recorded annual average figures of 43.6 µg/m³ and 44.6 µg/m³. A further monitoring site within the AQMA was compliant with the NO₂ annual objective for the first time since the commencement of monitoring at this location, with a result of 38.4 µg/m³

The APR also provided an update to Cabinet members on the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for the AQMA on Park Street. Cabinet agreed to retain measures in the plan, to allow an assessment as to whether there is a sufficient downward trend of NO₂ levels on Park Street as compliance has been modelled to be achieved by 2026. If exceedances show upward trends or other concerns are identified, then an assessment on the necessity to consider implementation of the retained measures or alternative measures may need to be undertaken.

In **Cardiff**, the APR demonstrated that out of the 99 non-automatic monitoring locations across the entire City, no monitoring sites recorded exceedances of the annual average objective set for NO₂ of 40 µg/m³. There remains a continued decreasing trend in NO₂ concentrations across Cardiff and average NO₂ concentrations at non-automatic diffusion tube sites across Cardiff, remain lower than those experienced during the pandemic and national lockdown periods. NO₂ levels have decreased by 36% since 2019 (pre-Covid).

The APR provided an overview of the concentrations within each of the 4 AQMAs in Cardiff. Monitoring in the AQMAs demonstrated that compliance was being achieved in each of them. NO₂ concentrations at one monitoring site in the Llandaff AQMA continue to show improvement with significant reductions recorded. NO₂ concentrations are currently below the threshold of within 10% of the annual mean NO₂ and government guidance details that a revocation of an AQMA should be considered following three consecutive years of annual mean NO₂ concentrations being lower than 36 µg/m³.

The latest data shows continuous improvements in all AQMAs, with pollutant concentrations below legal limits. Given this, the Council will assess whether to revoke the City Centre, Stephenson Court and Ely Bridge AQMA. Before the decision is made to revoke any AQMA, detailed assessments for projected air quality concentrations within each Cardiff AQMA will be undertaken. This will allow for robust justification for the potential revocation of AQMAs within Cardiff, which would be subject to public consultation and Welsh Government approval.

Work commenced on the development of an updated Clean Air Strategy for Cardiff. This work is being supported by funding from the Welsh Government Local Air Quality Funding. SRS has secured the services of an external consultancy to lead on this work and initial steering group of internal and external stakeholders commenced. This workshop was used to identify key areas of ongoing work within Cardiff Council aimed at improving air quality.

In the **Vale of Glamorgan**, the APR demonstrated that there were 41 specifically allocated non-automatic monitoring sites across the Vale of Glamorgan which monitored levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). From the 41 locations monitored throughout the Vale with the use of passive diffusion tubes, no sites breached the national NO₂ annual objective of 40 µg/m³ or the NO₂ 1-hour objective (200 µg/m³ not to be exceeded more than 18 times per year). Overall, the Vale of Glamorgan has seen a downward trend in NO₂ levels since before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Overall, in the Vale of Glamorgan we have seen a downward trend in NO₂ levels since before the Covid-19 pandemic. For existing monitoring sites, from the period of 2020 to 2024 annual average roadside NO₂ concentrations have decreased by 15% from 18µg/m³ to 15.3 µg/m³. A decrease of 6.5% from 17.2 µg/m³ to 15.3 µg/m³ in annual

average roadside NO₂ concentrations is also evident between 2023 and 2024. This displays an overall improving trend in NO₂ concentrations.

Pollution Control play a vital role in protecting public health and quality of life by managing environmental impacts such as noise, dust, lighting, and odour. This involves responding to complaints, advising on major developments, and working closely with organisers and contractors to ensure compliance with legislation and best practice. The following highlights examples of work in this area.

Event Monitoring – Blackweir and Cardiff Castle - SRS managed a high volume of noise complaints during major summer events, responding to over 100 complaints from Blackweir concerts in Cardiff and 48 from Cardiff Castle events. Officers provided prompt responses, handled related information requests, and worked closely with event organisers using real-time acoustic monitoring to ensure compliance with agreed Noise Management Plans. Post-event reviews were completed, with recommendations issued to improve future events.

South Wales Metro Works – Noise Management - The South Wales Metro Project will lead to huge improvements to the railway infrastructure in South Wales. Ongoing Metro works saw reduced disruption as major construction phases neared completion. The team processed 27 out-of-hours working applications and maintained regular liaison with Transport for Wales and contractors. This proactive approach effectively minimised noise disturbance, with no complaints received for work conducted under approved consents.

Planning Consultations and Major Developments - SRS continued to provide specialist input on planning applications and major developments, supported by additional funding. Officers delivered technical advice on environmental controls and worked closely with developers to ensure compliance with Construction Environmental Management Plans and planning conditions. Key projects included Cardiff Bay Arena, Velindre Hospital, the Cardiff Bay Multi Storey car park (located in close proximity to residential properties), and major flood defence works involving significant piling operations. Regular engagement with Planning colleagues has ensured coordinated oversight of emerging developments.

Environmental Sampling – SRS completed the assessment and sampling of all regulated commercial private water supplies across the region and ensured statutory returns were supplied to the Drinking Water Inspectorate as required. This involved 56 visits across the region to take water samples at private water supplies. 4 Compliance Notices were served for private water supplies improvements. Water samples were taken at 9 temporary events across the region.

Animals are treated humanely

Illegal dog breeding – Illegal dog breeding continues to be a lucrative business model for the unscrupulous, and it is often perceived as a lower risk activity in terms of the sanctions against offenders, when compared to other types of criminality.

By their nature such cases can be painstaking for the Officers investigating, and they can be extremely costly where dogs and puppies have to be seized on animal welfare grounds. As we know from experience, this cost can be further exacerbated when defendants contest the evidence against them and challenge attempts by the Council to get legal ownership of the animals through the courts, in order to rehome them.

Once again, officers have during the year been involved in a number of animal welfare investigations, linked to unlicensed, illegal dog breeding and it is clear that this unlicensed activity continues to operate across some sophisticated criminal networks, being seen as profitable business model where the risk of punishment is perceived to be less than that associated with other illegal supply chains. Ongoing intelligence and complaints received suggest that this trend is set to continue for some time.

Faced with the appalling conditions in which breeding dogs and puppies are being found, officers have no choice but to act on Veterinary advice and seize animals to remove them from further harm. While cases are dealt with as quickly as possible, seizures unfortunately result in significant costs for the Service in boarding and caring for the dogs pending the courts granting ownership to the Council. It is only at this point in proceedings that the rehoming process can begin. The reality is that at the conclusion of a case, costs may not be awarded in full, if at all.

During 2025/26, 3 cases were successfully concluded in the courts. One case involved a married couple and an associate who operated a sophisticated and highly profitable illegal dog breeding business through a network of linked companies. Despite operating at a scale requiring licensing, they deliberately avoided regulation. SRS investigations found they maximised profits by over-breeding dogs (primarily bulldogs and dachshunds) and undertaking veterinary-restricted procedures illegally. Over five years, the couple produced 259 puppies across 63 litters—over four times the legal limit—generating more than £400,000, with puppies sold for £1,000–£6,000. Their associate bred 24 litters in four years, earning £121,000.

Evidence presented in court included falsified records, unauthorised use of prescription-only medication, and the sale of puppies with undisclosed congenital defects. All three defendants pleaded guilty to fraudulent trading and offences under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and associated regulations.

The first defendant received a 23-month sentence suspended for 2 years plus 10 rehabilitation days and 180 hours of unpaid work. The second defendant received a 15-month sentence suspended for 2 years and 140 hours of unpaid work. Their associate received a 12-month sentence suspended for 2 years and 120 hours of unpaid work. A Proceeds of Crime hearing will follow.

In another case, an investigation began after neighbours in Cardiff reported a severe odour from a residential property, raising concerns of a possible deceased person. SRS Officers, supported by Police and veterinary surgeons, discovered 38 French Bulldogs and puppies living in overcrowded, appalling conditions. Puppies as young as 5 weeks were present, confirming the operation of an unlicensed breeding business. Basic welfare needs were unmet, with no adequate bedding, food or water, six adult dogs were confined in small cages and the bodies of 4 dead puppies were found in plastic bags in the freezer.

All dogs were examined and seized on welfare grounds. Two defendants were identified, and a court order under Section 20 of the Animal Welfare Act transferred ownership to the Vale of Glamorgan Council. Both defendants received lifetime disqualification orders, prohibiting them from owning, keeping, breeding, transporting, or otherwise being involved with dogs in any capacity. Both defendants received suspended prison sentences, of 18 weeks and 9 weeks, 20 Rehabilitation Activity Requirements and 150 and 120 hours unpaid work respectively. Defendant 1 was ordered to pay £20,000 in costs within 12 months.

SRS recognised in the RSPCA PawPrints Awards – Each year, the RSPCA recognises exceptional contributions and unwavering commitment to protecting, promoting, and enhancing animal welfare through its PawPrints awards. The aim of the organisation in giving these annual awards is to shine a light on the organisations that have 'gone the extra mile' for animals, and entries are judged by an external panel of animal welfare experts. Once again, SRS has been recognised in three categories, namely Stray Dog Services, Animal Licensing Activity and Kennelling.

The hard work of our Animal Wardens and Animal Health and Welfare Officers throughout the year resulted in the following being awarded in 2025:

- **Stray Dog Provision: Platinum**
- **Animal-related Licensing: Platinum**
- **Kennelling: Platinum**

This builds on last year's success where two Gold awards and a Platinum award were received). This means that the Service has achieved the highest award for each of the above categories, and is the only authority in Wales ever to do so. Platinum Awards

recognise those organisations consistently achieving the Gold standard in a particular category for at least 5 years.

People will use energy efficient buildings and products

Empty Homes – In **Bridgend** SRS are continuing to target long term empty properties of the top 20 properties in the action plan, 3 have become occupied this year and 4 properties are now sold STC and 5 remain under renovation. Work is continuing on one enforced sale and initiating a further enforced sale following recent works in default. Remaining properties are subject to informal action or are subject to review to determine the most appropriate course of action. A compulsory purchase order on a property in Maesteg has now been confirmed by Welsh Government and is the final stages of the legal process. Work continues on properties outside the top 20 utilising the 5 stage escalation letter process and enforcement provisions.

4 Welsh Government funding applications have been received which is supporting work in default and other enforcement actions.

SRS are working towards implementing and meeting the aims and objectives set out in the new Empty Homes Strategy 2025-2030. In particular, devising a communication plan for social media posts, and have also held a number of Empty Homes Support Session which was well received by empty property owners.

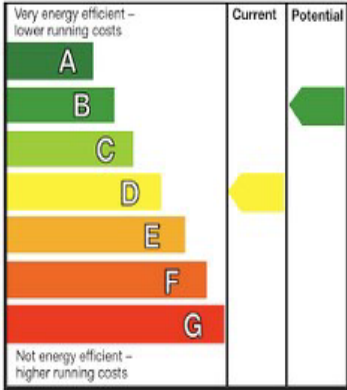
In **Cardiff**, SRS has continued to focus on tackling private sector empty homes across the city. This has included responding to complaints and enquiries and working proactively to engage with property owners providing assistance via site meetings, advice regarding property standards and rental requirements, referrals and signposting to other departments and avenues of financial assistance. This work has been further assisted with a corporate focus achieved through an empty homes working group. 162 properties were brought back into use during the last year, comfortably exceeding the target of 150, and continuing a year on year upward trend in performance. In this current year of the 162 properties brought back into use 151 had been empty for over 12 months.

The service continues to make focussed progress to address long empty properties within Cardiff, an area of important work during a cost of living crisis and shortage of affordable, available housing.

In the **Vale of Glamorgan**, SRS are currently working on 44 cases, several of which include a joint approach with planning, conservation and building control officers. Relevant action continues on high priority cases that have been subject to a risk assessment review. A new Vale of Glamorgan Empty Property Strategy (2025-2030) is

being facilitated by SRS to include commercial as well as domestic properties. A draft strategy has been produced for consideration by working groups.

The **Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations** set a minimum energy efficiency level for domestic private rented properties requiring properties that need an energy performance certificate (EPC) to have a minimum 'E' rating, or have a valid exemption registered. During 2025/26 SRS engagement took place with landlords of properties identified as not having an EPC resulting in a 129 compliant EPCs being validated across the region. A separate validation exercise highlighted a further 204 compliant properties. In terms of enforcement activity, 114 private rented sector properties were identified as non compliant with EPC ratings of F and G, and compliance notices were issued accordingly.



Communities are protected from nuisance and are safer

Straying horses and dogs - Our Animal Health and Welfare team has continued to work proactively across the area to reduce the instances of straying horses and associated welfare issues. Regular patrols have been carried out and stray dogs and other animals picked up, while at the same time, officers have taken every opportunity to work with residents across the region to improve responsible ownership.

Student Liaison -The Student Liaison Officer (SLO) is a role that sits in the Cardiff Student Community Partnership (CSCP) and is jointly funded by the universities in Cardiff and by Cardiff Council. The role focuses on facilitating work between Higher Education Institutions, the Local Authority, Police and Health Board including initiatives to address student-community issues and to collaborate with elected Members on strategic ambitions for the city.

What we plan to do next

**** - Cardiff Corporate Plan**

Protecting the environment

Lead
Responsibility

The environment is protected from harmful emissions to land, air and water

Updating the Clean Air Strategy in Cardiff following public consultation by September 2026. **

J Bale

Ensuring a continued downward trend of pollution levels across Cardiff including a review of Air Quality Management Areas with a view to consult on the revocation of three of the areas in late 2026, and formal submission to Welsh Government in early 2027 **

J Bale

Ensure good air quality by reviewing real time air quality data to assess and identify trends in pollution to assess further interventions that will further reduce air pollution. **

J Bale

People will use energy efficient buildings and products

Work with homeowners and landlords to return empty properties back into use through engagement, support, and where necessary taking appropriate enforcement action to deal with the worst long term derelict empty homes. **

W Lane

Review and adopt the Empty Property Strategy for the Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

W Lane

Engage with landlords and lettings agents to improve the energy performance ratings of private rented properties under the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations. **

TBC

Animals are treated humanely

Engage with Welsh Government regarding animal welfare concerns associated with unlicensed dog breeding and sales.

J Bale

Communities are protected from nuisance and are safer

Engage with students and residents during Freshers Week in Cardiff providing community advice on housing, environmental and social issues.

W Lane

What we will measure

Performance Measures 2026/27		Target
• % of domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days		90%
• % of commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day		75%
• % of alarm complaints responded to within one day.		90%
• % of empty private sector properties brought back into use during the year through direct action by the local authority .(Cardiff only)		7.7%
• Number of additional dwellings created as a result of bringing empty properties back into use. (Cardiff only)		30
• The number of private rented properties where energy efficiency has been improved through direct action from SRS.		Varies between authorities

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Priority

Supporting the local economy

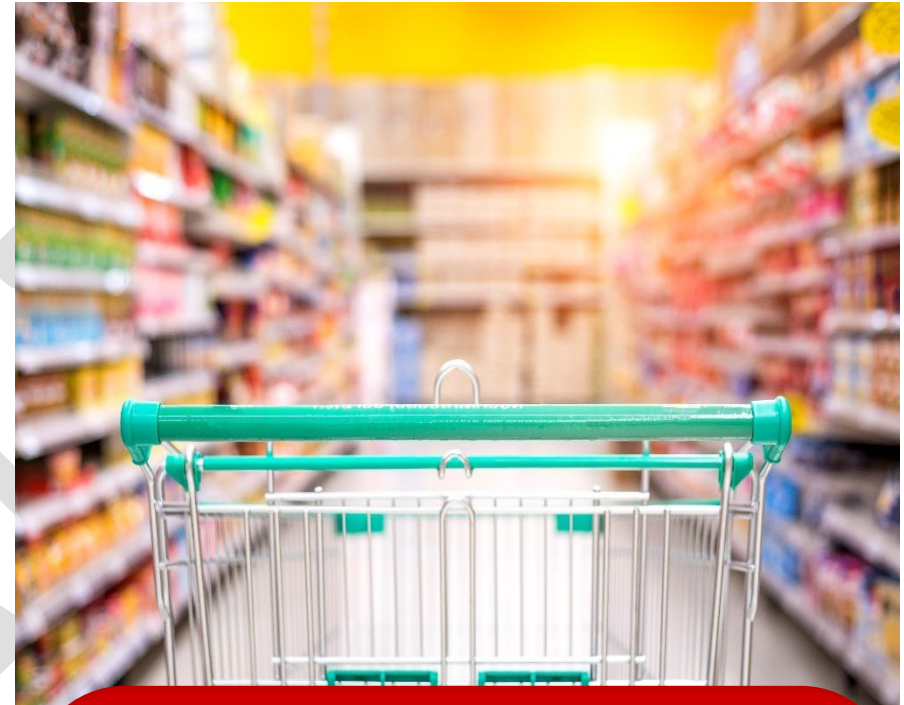
Outcomes



Outputs

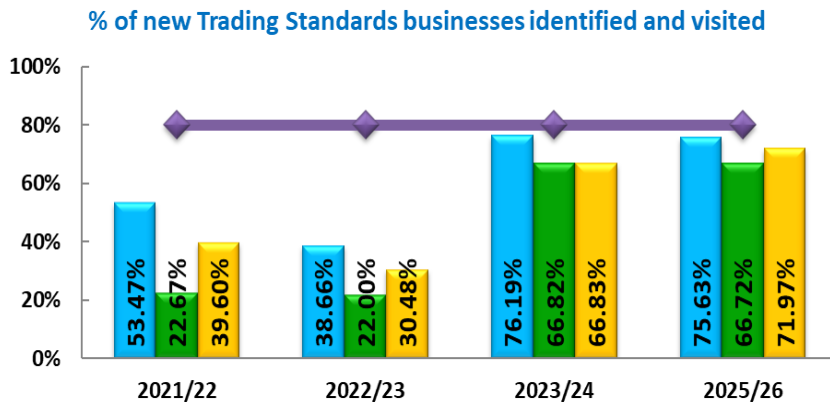
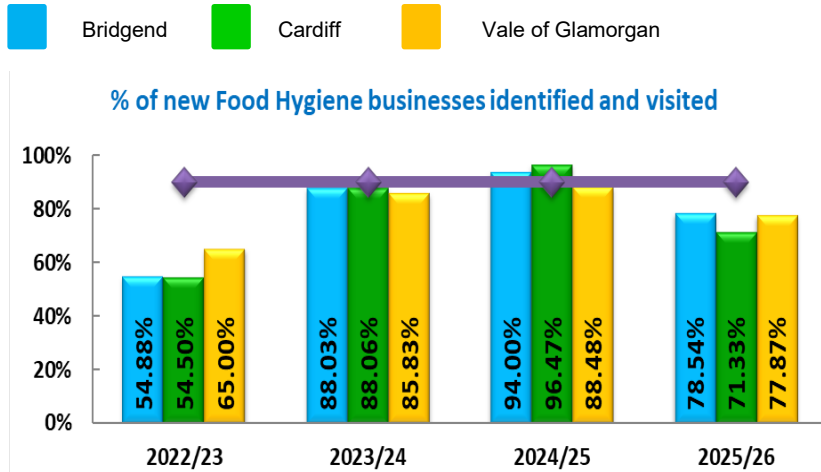


In addition, our outcomes also contribute to the following wellbeing goals:



A strong local economy is a key component in the quality of life experienced by local people. The work of SRS has a significant, but often unseen, impact upon the local economy. The provision of timely advice and guidance on regulation can benefit the economic viability of businesses resulting in improved business practices; our growing role in the field of Primary Authority is testament to this assertion. Much of our market surveillance activity focuses upon maintaining balance in the “marketplace”; the equitable enforcement of regulations helps businesses to compete on equal terms ensuring a fairer trading environment. Our role as regulator also extends to information and education to support consumers to enable them to become better informed and confident. In an age where people can purchase goods and services without leaving home, the importance of the principle of “*caveat emptor*” has never been more relevant.

How we performed



What we have achieved

A fair trading environment is maintained

Trading Standards Impacts and Outputs - Since the launch of the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers (ACTSO) Impacts and Outcomes framework back in 2018, the impacts and outputs of Trading Standards work is reported annually as a means of demonstrating the vital contribution of these services in England and Wales in

- tackling detriment and preventing harm
- supporting the local economy, and
- promoting health and wellbeing

The latest report highlights the work of local authorities in Wales during the 2024-25 financial year. Across Wales as a whole that year, over £43 million of detriment was prevented through Trading Standards actions.

It is pleasing to see the significant contribution of Shared Regulatory Services to Trading Standards outcomes in Wales. For example, across Wales in 2024-25, some 142 years of prison sentences (or suspended prison sentences) were handed down as a result of concluded prosecutions in Trading Standards cases. In the same period, the equivalent figure arising from SRS Trading Standards cases was 48 years and 4 months of prison sentences, or 34% of the total across Wales.

Weights and Measures in licensed premises – As part of the seasonal exercises undertaken by our trading standards team, SRS worked jointly with South Wales Police in the run up to Christmas 2025 to check compliance with on-licence premises to ensure compliance with Weights and Measures Act. This was to ensure that businesses were using correctly stamped measures and selling in the prescribed quantities. A total of 20 premises were visited in Cardiff and 8 significant breaches were recorded with 42 capacity serving measures seized as non compliant. Test purchases were also carried out and one investigation is ongoing for a premises that served a short measure.

Illicit tobacco – Illegal tobacco (i.e. counterfeit, or non-duty paid) continues to present a very real problem in our communities. Research indicates that at least 14% of all tobacco and tobacco products supplied are illegal, however, many smokers appear to be comfortable in purchasing illegal tobacco, presumably under the misapprehension that the only impact of its widespread use is the loss of revenue to HM Treasury. This thinking ignores the most serious harms caused by illegal tobacco. At around half the cost of legitimate product, illegal tobacco removes the price incentive for smokers to quit the

otherwise expensive habit. In addition, the way in which illegal tobacco is supplied means that mainstream tobacco control measures such as minimum age of purchase and the tobacco display ban are undermined. It is also important to remember that widespread availability of illegal tobacco undermines the viability of legitimate retailers selling genuine product, for it is not just the revenue from tobacco products that they are losing. Customers purchasing illegal tobacco elsewhere will also tend to purchase other goods elsewhere, for example the bread, milk and other essentials they pick up at the same time as their cigarettes.

SRS officers carry out regular exercises with partner agencies and the assistance of tobacco detection dogs to locate illegal product (which will usually be concealed) whilst on site. During 2025/26, **24,358 illegal cigarettes** and **1,364 packs of illegal hand rolled tobacco** were seized during SRS operations. The equivalent street value of that haul was £409,089. Supply chains for illegal tobacco are invariably linked to wider criminality, and such is their sophistication that retail premises are able to restock almost immediately after the seizure of illegal product.

While seizures of this kind remain a useful disruption tool, tackling the widespread availability of illegal tobacco requires a more targeted approach along the supply chain.

Improved business practices and operation

Training provision - During 2025-26, 44 training courses/ qualifications were delivered, covering a wide range of themes including Levels 1-3 Food Safety in Catering and Food Safety Refresher training, Allergens and the Level 2 Award in Infection Prevention and Control in Special Procedures. Three of these courses were three day Level Three qualifications. In addition, 5 webinars were delivered to hundreds of newly qualified tradespeople on how to comply with consumer protection law and bespoke training in areas such as HACCP and Intellectual Property were also created to support businesses with compliance. The training courses delivered were to a mixture of local businesses, schools, Health Boards and on behalf of other Local Authorities. Training was also provided to the Vale of Glamorgan Youth Services team and Big Fresh Catering.

The feedback from the delegates on the training received has been extremely positive and has improved on the success of last year, with 98% indicating they feel the training they receive will help them improve standards of compliance in their business, and 97% indicating the training will benefit their business.

In addition to the above achievements, SRS have agreed to provide training services on behalf of ALS Training on the Level Four Regulatory Compliance Apprenticeship, which

is a new qualification to help support the next generation of regulatory Officers. We deliver two of the modules on the Apprenticeship and are working closely with ALS Training to support the growth of this qualification. SRS trained 2 cohorts of apprentices in 2025-26 period and have two further cohorts scheduled for the coming months.

Accessible services responsive to business needs

Primary Authority - The Primary Authority scheme enables a business to enter into a statutory partnership with a local authority through which it can receive assured advice. Provided this advice is followed, the Primary Authority (PA) is able to challenge intended enforcement action by other local authorities. SRS has some 32 Primary Authority partnerships in place with both local and national businesses and is able to charge for the work done as part of these arrangements on the basis of full cost recovery.

Buy with Confidence scheme - [Buy with confidence](#) was created by a partnership of Local Authority Trading Standards Services in response to concerns about the practices of 'rogue traders.' The scheme provides consumers with the ability to search for approved businesses via the Buy with Confidence website or over the telephone, who have given their commitment to trading fairly. Before being admitted into the scheme, each business must undergo a series of detailed checks by Trading Standards professionals.

The 'Buy With Confidence Trading Standards Approved' logo helps residents in making the right choice of tradesperson whilst also giving member businesses the seal of approval that allows them to 'stand out from the crowd.' Membership also gives businesses access to invaluable advice from qualified Trading Standards personnel in areas including consumer protection and contract law. SRS now runs the Buy with Confidence scheme for a total of 12 local authorities in Wales, and are in discussions with several other Local Authorities to run the scheme on their behalf. There are 31 current business members in the scheme, with further applicants currently progressing through the approval process. The vision is to establish BWC, through Trading Standards Wales as a consistent approved trader scheme in Wales.



Oes gan eich busnes chi yr hyn sydd ei angen i gael cymeradwyaeth y Safonau Masnach?
Am ragor o wybodaeth ac i wneud cais, ewch i:
www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk



Does your business have what it takes to be Trading Standards approved?
To find out more and to apply simply visit:
www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk

Informed and confident consumers

As part of its Safeguarding role, the Service provides assistance to residents identified as being vulnerable in resolving difficulties encountered as a result of marketing scams and also more straightforward 'shopping' problems. In providing this service, the aim is not only to resolve the immediate difficulty facing a resident but to equip them as well as their families and carers with the knowledge and awareness to avoid similar issues arising in the future. This Plan has highlighted several prosecutions undertaken by SRS against rogue traders that have scammed individuals of money for work not completed and these examples demonstrate where SRS has been able to make a real difference to the lives of residents needing assistance to resolve problems of this type. With the investment of officer time to provide tips on avoiding similar problems in the future, the legacy of these interventions is one where even our more vulnerable residents and their families are far better equipped to make informed decisions.

What we plan to do next

** - Cardiff Corporate Plan

Supporting the local economy

Lead
Responsibility

A fair trading environment is maintained

Conduct intelligence led operations to investigate and disrupt businesses selling illegal vapes and tobacco products and raise public awareness of how to report it.

TBC

Informed and confident consumers

Continue to promote the 'Buy with Confidence' (responsible trader) scheme and seek to expand coverage of the centralised scheme for Wales under SRS administration.

J Bale

Improved business practices and operation

Explore options for extending training provision by developing and marketing courses meeting the needs of business, adopting a Learning Management System to streamline bookings and deliver online content.

J Bale

Accessible services responsive to business needs

Continue to review the primary authority framework to ensure the advice and support requirements for our current Primary Authority partners are appropriate.

J Bale

What we will measure

Performance Measures 2026/27

Target

- % of new businesses identified which were subject to risk assessment visit or returned a self-assessment questionnaire during the year for food hygiene.
- % of new businesses identified which were subject to risk assessment visit or returned a self-assessment questionnaire during the year for Trading Standards
- % of businesses who felt that interaction with SRS has helped them improve standards of compliance in their business.
- % of individuals who feel that the training they received through SRS will benefit their business.

90%

80%

85%

95%

Priority

Maximising the use of resources

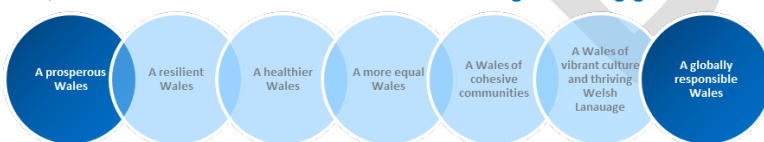
Outcomes



Outputs



In addition, our outcomes also contribute to the following wellbeing goals:-

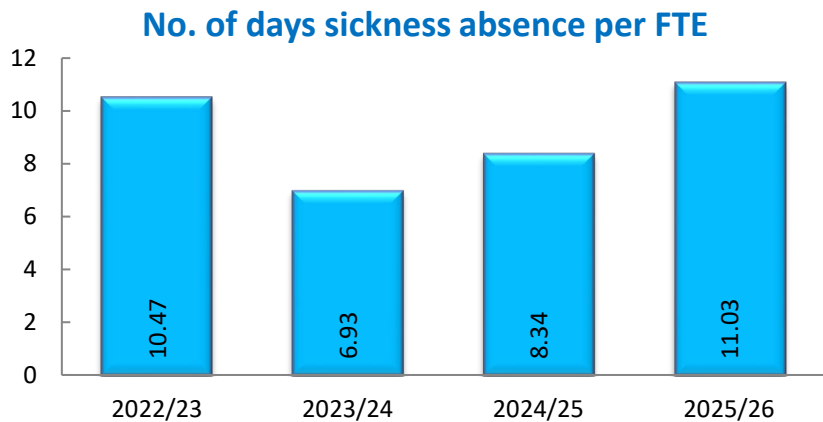


Maximising the use of resources was the original catalyst for creating SRS, and our work in this area continues. Reducing “triplication” of effort, introducing better processes, making our systems work without constant intervention, improving access into the service will all benefit our business and increase customer satisfaction.

We are generating income, where possible, to underpin service delivery; activities like marketing our metrology laboratory, offering paid for advice services, building Primary Authority partnerships and extending our training provision to business are examples of our more “commercial” culture.

Above all, we recognise that crucial to the success of SRS are the people who work within the service. We will ensure that our officers are effective in their roles by investing in learning and development opportunities, by engaging them fully in the development of the service, and by fostering an environment where people are encouraged to think, lead and innovate.

How we performed



What we have achieved

SRS operates effectively and efficiently across all 3 areas

Customer Satisfaction – SRS delivers a diverse range of regulatory services on behalf of Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils and we place great importance on receiving customer feedback which enables us to understand what we are doing well and what can be improved. As well as monitoring customer satisfaction through surveys, the results of which can be found throughout this plan, we also receive specific feedback from individuals or groups that we have helped expressing their gratitude for our intervention. During the last year, we received a number of such compliments, a selection of which follows :-

“I just wanted to drop you a line to say thank you very much for the efforts of your officer. I have found her to be completely professional. Without her intervention, my son and his co-tenants would still be living in squalor. Since she became involved, the landlord and letting agents have been busy improving the property to make it habitable... Sometimes

people only remember when things do not go right and it is important that employers can see good, professional work”. Housing Enforcement Team service user.

“Anyway I’ll finish off now with a compliment. Your emails have been prompt, clear and warm, which is a lovely combination, and I’d really like it if you showed our communications to your boss because an important public service such as yours needs to be accessible and professional. And it’s this mix that I think you’ve achieved”. Food poisoning case service user.

“I’m writing to let you know what a fantastic job your officer did in supporting us in getting money back after we fell prey to a scam by a rogue trader. He will be able to give you the details, but in short, over a year ago, a roofer scammed us out of £2,400. The bank refused to accept it fell under their definition of ‘scam’ and the ombudsmen ruled in favour of the bank. With your officer’s help, we’ve been able to recover the full amount, plus compensation from Checkatrade. He has been supportive, professional and thorough in persevering different avenues. I appreciate our case is concerning an amount far less than many of the cases your department deals with, so his diligence is all the more appreciated” Thank you to your team for sticking up for people like us in the face of large corporations and rogue traders alike. Trading Standards service user.

Tablet devices - In making the best use of its resources, SRS looks for opportunities to streamline how things are done in all areas of the Service. With this in mind, SRS continues to pilot the use of handheld tablet devices to replace the paper system currently being used to record the results of food inspections. This pilot was further extended during the year and the approach will be mainstreamed across the Food Service in 2026-27 to bring benefits such as the direct uploading of information onto the database avoiding the need for officers to spend time scanning multiple documents and the resulting delays in the uploading of information; reduction in the consumption of paper and lower printing costs; and less travel time for officers in having to pick up and drop off paperwork.

Public and stakeholders are able to access our services

Access to SRS services – Ensuring that the public and stakeholders can easily access SRS services is of paramount importance. The service actively utilises technology to promote accessibility, raise awareness, and enhance engagement wherever possible.

The following examples demonstrate how SRS facilitates access to its services:

- **SRS Website** – The website provides comprehensive information about SRS services, including guidance on how to get in touch. It is kept under continuous review to ensure an effective and user-friendly customer journey. During 2025/26, the SRS website recorded 116,456 page views. Noise and air pollution pages remained the most visited, with 17,243 views, followed closely by the 'Contact Us' page.
- **Social Media** – The service has evolved its approach to social media, moving away from X (formerly Twitter) to a stronger presence on Instagram. This platform is used to showcase the work of the service and provide advice to the public on relevant issues. Additional channels, such as LinkedIn, are also utilised where appropriate to reach wider audiences.
- **Noise App** – The SRS noise app enables customers reporting noise complaints to record short audio clips of disturbances and submit them directly to the service. This supports the effective triaging of complaints and can reduce the need for officer visits to monitor issues in person.
- **"Ask the Regulator" Podcast** – SRS produces its own podcast in partnership with Bro Radio. The podcast provides an accessible and engaging way for the public to stay informed about environmental health, trading standards, and licensing matters.

Income generation underpins sustainable service delivery

UKAS Accredited Metrology Laboratory - The Metrology laboratory based in Cardiff undergoes regular audits by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) to maintain its accreditation. The metrology laboratory was first established in 1995, but since the creation of SRS there has been a drive to enhance the income generating capacity of the laboratory. Calibration work has been undertaken for a broad range of businesses, the majority of whom are regular and returning customers. These businesses represent sectors including avionics, food, pharmaceutical and medical where accuracy and confidence in their weighing equipment is fundamental to their operations.

The provision of calibration services to business clients is well established and has been expanded over time as new markets have been identified. Over the course of 2025/2026, SRS has looked to relocate the UKAS lab to a new facility at the Alps Depot in Wenvoe. Work is now ongoing with UKAS to ensure the full accreditation of the new lab is completed and it is envisaged that this will be completed the early part of 2026/27. The

new lab location will enable SRS to undertake a comprehensive promotional campaign for the calibration services to increase the commercial viability of the UKAS lab.

Income generation – A key priority for SRS, is the further development of our commercial approach by increasing our 'paid for' services and marketing them to business. These commercial activities are aimed at complementing existing services whilst also providing income generation. We do this by developing Primary Authority partnerships with businesses of which we currently have 32 in place. The Service also provides 12 accredited training courses in areas such as food safety, health and safety and allergens. SRS was the first training centre in Wales to deliver the RSPH Level Two Award in Infection Prevention and Control for Special Procedures Practitioners. Income is also generated via our UKAS accredited Metrology Lab services, and we are expanding our environmental services with an increase in Air Quality Monitoring Services/Local Site Operator Licences. As a result, during 2025/26 the income generated by SRS was £132,274.

Staff are effective in their roles

Investing in Staff Learning and Development – SRS is committed to developing staff to ensure they are effective in their roles. Learning and development can take many forms from traditional study to the taking up of secondments. During the last year, the service has invested in a number of learning and development activities to support the business including the following examples:-

SRS continues to encourage SRS officers to engage in further study leading to recognised, higher level qualifications. For the past few years, support has been offered to a small number of staff by way of match funding, who have successfully demonstrated the benefits their desired qualification would bring to the service and to them personally. The qualifications attained since 2017 include:-

- MSc in Environmental Health
- MSc in Health and Public Services Management
- MSc in Leadership and Management
- MSc in Public Sector Leadership
- MSc in Public Health.

The success of the initiative is evident, not only in demonstrating how SRS values its staff and supports their development, but in equipping the service with the necessary skills and behaviours to shape future leaders. Alongside this a small cohort of managers or aspiring managers have also successfully completed an Institute of Line Management

qualification. This is a proactive way to further develop staff and provide inhouse opportunities for succession planning.

Secondments provide development opportunities for both the employee who is seconded and the employee who fills the empty position. Within SRS we now have one team manager seconded to a different stakeholder which has enabled their role to be filled on a temporary basis by an existing employee. The ability to 'act up' provides valuable development opportunities and experience for officers, whilst also contributing to the effective management and resilience of the service.

Looking to the longer term, the Service continued to work closely with Cardiff Metropolitan University offering a number of work placements for Environmental Health degree

students during the year. The service has also employed 2 Apprentices who are currently undertaking the Level 4 Apprenticeship qualification as part of the 'earn as they learn' programme and are clearly adding value to the service as well as beginning their careers in Regulatory Services.

All of the above will be further developed as part of the new workforce pillar, where we begin to explore new initiatives and what training and development is required within the Service.

What we plan to do next

** - Cardiff Corporate Plan

Maximising the use of resources

Lead
Responsibility

SRS operates effectively and efficiently across all 3 areas

Improve efficiency, accessibility and decision making by exploring and implementing digital tools, automation and data driven practices across the service.

J Bale

Enhance customer experience, increase efficiency and maximise income by providing secure, flexible and user friendly electronic payment options,

J Bale

Undertake a review of the SRS website and social media presence to optimise ease of access and user experience

J Bale

Public and stakeholders are able to access our services

Improve stakeholder engagement and consultation by reviewing feedback mechanisms.

C Hill

Improve efficiency, data quality and customer experience by introducing a unified digital case handling system to replace existing SRS web forms.

J Bale

Staff are effective in their roles

Complete the PDR process with all SRS employees.

All OMs /TMs

Progress the workforce pillar by strengthening recruitment and retention challenges, supporting the identification of workforce learning and development needs and utilising HR approaches to improve capacity and resilience.

W Lane

Improve recruitment and the quality of applicants by exploring and implementing new and innovative approaches to advertising vacancies.

C Hill

Improve transparency, engagement, and organisational alignment by enhancing the consistency, clarity, and accessibility of communications from senior management across Shared Regulatory Services.

C Hill

Strengthen staff engagement to ensure staff are actively involved in shaping the future delivery of services and identifying opportunities for improvement.

C Hill

Income generation underpins sustainable service delivery

Maximise opportunities for cost recovery and income generation by systematically identifying, evaluating and implementing chargeable services, funding streams, and efficiency mechanisms to support long term sustainable delivery.

J Bale

Undertake a marketing campaign for Metrology Laboratory Services including training provision to increase income generation opportunities.

J Bale

What we will measure

Performance Measures 2026/27		Target
Average days sickness per FTE.		8.00
% of SRS investigations resulting in prosecution that were successfully concluded.		95%

DRAFT

Appendix 1 – Risk Register

Possible Impact or Magnitude of Risk	Catastrophic	4 <i>MEDIUM</i>	8 MEDIUM/HIGH	12 HIGH	16 VERY HIGH
	High	3 <i>MEDIUM/LOW</i>	6 <i>MEDIUM</i>	9 MEDIUM/HIGH	12 HIGH
	Medium	2 LOW	4 <i>MEDIUM</i>	6 <i>MEDIUM</i>	8 MEDIUM/HIGH
	Low	1 VERY LOW	2 LOW	3 <i>MEDIUM/LOW</i>	4 <i>MEDIUM</i>
Low 1-2 Low/Medium 3 Medium 4-6 Medium/High 8-10 High 12-16		Very Unlikely	Possible	Probable	Almost Certain
Likelihood/Probability of Risk Occurring					

Risk Description	Inherent Risk Score (April 2024)		Risk	Comments What SRS are doing to mitigate risks	Residual Risk Score		Risk
	Likelihood	Impact			Likelihood	Impact	
RR1: Insufficient resources, and capacity to deliver planned services will result in loss of service provision and reduction in performance.	4	3	High 12	The creation of SRS generated significant cost savings at its inception and the service continues to deliver services with a reducing budget across 3 local authority areas. These, and the latest budget savings together with other factors, such as new and emerging legislation, the cost of living crisis, the rise in infringements and recruitment and retention pressures are all severely impacting our ability to deliver planned services. To mitigate this, the Service is examining new ways of prioritising some services and using risk based approaches to	4	3	High 12

Risk Description	Inherent Risk Score (April 2024)		Risk	Comments What SRS are doing to mitigate risks	Residual Risk Score		Risk
	Likelihood	Impact			Likelihood	Impact	
				activities in line with reduced resources, and through the recruitment of temporary staff and graduates. Serious concerns, do remain however in relation to the delivery of planned services as we enter the new financial year.			
RR2: Inability to recruit professional officers to vacant posts.	4	3	High 12	Recruiting to vacancies, particularly for roles requiring professionally qualified officers, continues to be challenging. A shortage of applicants with the necessary skills, abilities and experience across the relevant professions has created a more competitive labour market. This has been exacerbated by a significant reduction in the traditional supply of qualified officers from universities, alongside longer qualification times. In response to these ongoing workforce challenges, the Senior Management Team will be progressing the introduction of a new workforce pillar within SRS during the year. This focuses on strengthening recruitment and retention, supporting the identification of workforce learning and development needs, and utilising HR approaches to enhance organisational capacity and resilience. This strategic approach will be critical in addressing current workforce pressures and ensuring the sustainability of the service.	3	3	Medium/ High 9
RR3: The complexities of resource allocation may result in a lack of understanding and misalignment of resources.	3	3	Medium/ High 9	Dedicated accountant appointed for the Service. Governance arrangements in place to address lack of understanding. Review and standardisation of financial processes ongoing.	2	2	Medium 4

Risk Description	Inherent Risk Score (April 2024)		Risk	Comments What SRS are doing to mitigate risks	Residual Risk Score		Risk
	Likelihood	Impact			Likelihood	Impact	
RR4: The loss of critical ICT systems and appropriate support will be detrimental to working as a single service unit and the ability to work smarter and more efficiently.	3	3	Medium/ High 9	The service utilises a web based database that facilitates remote working and all staff have been issued with laptops and mobile devices which enables more agile working. There is however a need to improve our remote working capabilities together with the IT interface between the SRS and the partner authorities. Progress is being made in Cardiff to migrate across to a new way of accessing Cardiff systems and a successful pilot in the Food Team is being extended to enable tablets to be used to undertake food business inspections which will enable the service to deliver services more efficiently and effectively across all 3 areas.	2	2	Medium 4
RR5: Failure to identify and resource staff learning and development to address changes in roles together with the immediate needs and long term goals of the service, could result in staff capability issues which would affect the SRS ability to deliver services.	3	3	Medium/ High 9	SRS is committed to the resourcing of training to develop people to ensure competency and the corporate appraisal process <i>#it'saboutme</i> ensures performance reviews are undertaken annually and learning and development opportunities identified. A match funding offer to staff for personal development has resulted in a number of officers being supported in further development studies. Learning and development will also be a key theme in developing the workforce pillar being progressed by senior management during 2026/27.	1	3	Medium/ Low 3
RR6: Implementation of new legislation may create additional demands on service delivery.	4	3	High 12	Whilst workloads are reviewed and monitored and processes are in place to regularly report to partner authorities, it is not always easy to predict the impact that new legislation may have on resources, particularly when no additional funding accompanies its introduction, and recruitment and retention pressures still exist.	4	3	High 12

Risk Description	Inherent Risk Score (April 2024)		Risk	Comments What SRS are doing to mitigate risks	Residual Risk Score		Risk
	Likelihood	Impact			Likelihood	Impact	
RR7: An inability to recruit officers to the Duty Officer regime may result in inadequate cover and failure to deal with emergencies out of hours.	3	2	Medium 6	The Duty Officer regime operates on a 24/7 basis over 365 days a year providing a single point of contact out of office hours dealing with SRS emergencies. Cover is provided by officers on a paid voluntary basis however there can be periods where it is difficult to recruit officers resulting in shortage of cover. This has required managers to step in at short notice. While the policies and procedures have been reviewed and training provided for new officers to the rota there is still a lack of resilience with no further action that can be taken.	2	2	Medium 4
RR8: The positioning of Shared Regulatory Services under a host authority, together with unique branding may result in the Service becoming divorced from its constituent Councils or marginalised.	2	2	Medium 4	The Service remains relevant to all 3 authorities through links into the Corporate Plans of 3 authorities, attendance at the various Council/Executive meetings and maintaining strong links with members and senior officers within each legacy authority with opportunities to promote successes taken where possible.	1	2	Low 2
RR9: Failure to sustain the shared regulatory services partnership.	2	3	Medium 6	As a collaborative service SRS provides a diverse range of services to Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan under a single management structure with shared governance arrangements. The partnership generated significant cost savings at its inception while providing greater resilience to the important services SRS provides across all 3 areas. To break up the partnership would therefore be hugely detrimental to the delivery of these services and have significant financial implications for the partners. In terms of	1	3	Medium/ Low

Risk Description	Inherent Risk Score (April 2024)		Risk	Comments What SRS are doing to mitigate risks	Residual Risk Score		Risk
	Likelihood	Impact			Likelihood	Impact	
				mitigating measures, SRS maintains links into Corporate Plans of 3 authorities, attendance at the various Council/Executive meetings and has strong links with members and senior officers within each legacy authority with opportunities to promote successes taken where possible.			
RR10: Failure to align agendas and objectives with key partners and remain relevant to all.	2	3	Medium 6	SRS operates under a Joint Working Agreement (JWA) which sets out the functions to be carried out by the joint service, the terms of reference and constitution of the Joint Committee, the Management Board etc., the terms of staffing and services to be provided by the host and other partners, financing and other functional issues and the financial operating model. The Service aligns its objectives with those of the partner authorities. Recent budget savings however requested of SRS from the partners suggest possible disparities emerging which will make the delivery of services across SRS difficult to balance. The service however will continue to remain relevant to all 3 authorities through links into Corporate Plans of 3 authorities, attendance at the various Council/Executive meetings and maintaining strong links with members and senior officers within each legacy authority with opportunities to promote successes taken where possible.	1	3	Medium/low

Appendix 2 – Action Plan

** - Cardiff Corporate Plan

Improving health and wellbeing		Lead Responsibility
The food chain is safe and free from risks		
Protect public health through the delivery of actions set out within the Food and Feed Law Enforcement Plan 2026/27		TBC
Protect public health through the delivery of actions set out within the Port Health Plan 2026/27		TBC
Prepare for the implementation of the Food Standards Agency Delivery Model for Food Standards interventions.		TBC
Ensure effective and consistent enforcement of the Food (Promotion and Presentation) (Wales) Regulations 2025.		TBC
Risks in the workplace are managed properly		
Protect public health through the delivery of actions set out in the Health and Safety Enforcement Plan 2026/27		TBC
Implement enforcement and public awareness raising measures in respect of smoke-free requirements on hospital grounds		TBC
Participate in the aesthetics treatments sector pilot in the SE Wales region.		TBC
Noise and air emissions are controlled		
Review and explore options for future proofing the Duty Officer Rota.		W Lane
Strengthen co-ordination, monitoring and communications for the Summer Concert Events, working collaboratively with Cardiff Council's Events Team and concert organisers.		W Lane
Build resilience to the Public Health Funeral function within SRS.		W Lane
A safe trading environment is maintained		
Undertake seasonal product safety projects, for example in respect of Halloween and Christmas goods and novelties.		TBC
Conduct inspections to ensure that fireworks being supplied to the public meet relevant safety standards, are safely stored in appropriately licensed premises, and are subject to adequate policies to prevent underage sales		TBC
Licensed premises operate responsibly		
Review and implement the Statement of Licensing Policy 2026-2031 in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan.		W Lane

The quality of private rented property is improved

Drive up standards in the private rented housing sector by undertaking robust enforcement action to deal with rogue agents and landlords letting and managing properties. **

W Lane

Ensure fire safety in homes by:

- Continuing to work with Welsh Government and stakeholder organisations in the development of their Building Safety Programme for medium and high-rise buildings in the private sector. **
- Implement any changes required by new legislation/regulation including Shared Regulatory Services working with other local authorities to establish a regional lead aligned with the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service region. **

W Lane

Redeclare the Plasnewydd Additional Licensing Scheme in Cardiff.

W Lane

Prepare for the establishment of the new Housing Compliance Team in Cardiff, ensuring appropriate structures, resources, and processes are in place to support effective delivery of its statutory functions.

W Lane

Infectious disease is controlled and prevented

Protect public health through the delivery of actions set out within the Communicable Disease and Health Service Plan 2026/27.

TBC

Continue to input into the implementation of both the national and local health protection framework by collaborating with Cardiff & Vale and Cwm Taff Morgannwg Health Boards by working in partnership on community Infection Prevention and Control

TBC

Safeguarding the vulnerable

Lead Responsibility

Older and vulnerable people are protected from unscrupulous traders and scams

Children are protected from harmful substances and products

Work in partnership to safeguard the vulnerable to ensure that children are protected from harmful substances and products, older people are protected from rogue traders and scams and vulnerable people are not subject to exploitation.

TBC

Conduct intelligence led underage sales exercises in relation to the sale of tobacco, alcohol, vapes, knives and other age restricted products.

TBC

Prepare for enhanced enforcement requirements and retail licensing required under the Tobacco and Vapes Bill 2026.

TBC

Illegal money lending activities are prevented

Raise awareness of illegal money lending and support individuals to access responsible lenders and debt advice, rebuild their finances and make a sustainable transition to legal credit. **

J Bale

Taxi provision is safe and fair

Undertake enforcement exercises with the taxi trade including mystery shopper exercises to ensure compliance with the Equalities Act, vehicle and licensing standards and fare refusals for short journeys .

W Lane

Develop and implement an overarching taxi policy that will fundamentally change the way in which taxis are licensed in Cardiff.

W Lane

Explore options for replacing taxi and private hire plates in Bridgend to reduce costs and enhance safety features.

W Lane

Protecting the environment

Lead
Responsibility

The environment is protected from harmful emissions to land, air and water

Updating the Clean Air Strategy in Cardiff following public consultation by September 2026. **

J Bale

Ensuring a continued downward trend of pollution levels across Cardiff including a review of Air Quality Management Areas with a view to consult on the revocation of three of the areas in late 2026, and formal submission to Welsh Government in early 2027 **

J Bale

Ensure good air quality by reviewing real time air quality data to assess and identify trends in pollution to assess further interventions that will further reduce air pollution. **

J Bale

People will use energy efficient buildings and products

Work with homeowners and landlords to return empty properties back into use through engagement, support, and where necessary taking appropriate enforcement action to deal with the worst long term derelict empty homes. **

W Lane

Review and adopt the Empty Property Strategy for the Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

W Lane

Engage with landlords and lettings agents to improve the energy performance ratings of private rented properties under the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations. **

TBC

Animals are treated humanely

Engage with Welsh Government regarding animal welfare concerns associated with unlicensed dog breeding and sales.

J Bale

Communities are protected from nuisance and are safer

Engage with students and residents during Freshers Week in Cardiff providing community advice on housing, environmental and social issues.

W Lane

Supporting the local economy

Lead
Responsibility

A fair trading environment is maintained

Conduct intelligence led operations to investigate and disrupt businesses selling illegal vapes and tobacco products and raise public awareness of how to report it.

TBC

Informed and confident consumers

Continue to promote the 'Buy with Confidence' (responsible trader) scheme and seek to expand coverage of the centralised scheme for Wales under SRS administration.

J Bale

Improved business practices and operation

Explore options for extending training provision by developing and marketing courses meeting the needs of business, adopting a Learning Management System to streamline bookings and deliver online content.

J Bale

Accessible services responsive to business needs

Continue to review the primary authority framework to ensure the advice and support requirements for our current Primary Authority partners are appropriate.

J Bale

Maximising the use of resources

Lead
Responsibility

SRS operates effectively and efficiently across all 3 areas

Improve efficiency, accessibility and decision making by exploring and implementing digital tools, automation and data driven practices across the service.

J Bale

Enhance customer experience, increase efficiency and maximise income by providing secure, flexible and user friendly electronic payment options,

J Bale

Undertake a review of the SRS website and social media presence to optimise ease of access and user experience

J Bale

Public and stakeholders are able to access our services

Improve stakeholder engagement and consultation by reviewing feedback mechanisms.

C Hill

Improve efficiency, data quality and customer experience by introducing a unified digital case handling system to replace existing SRS web forms.

J Bale

Staff are effective in their roles

Complete the PDR process with all SRS employees.

All OMs /TMs

Progress the workforce pillar by strengthening recruitment and retention challenges, supporting the identification of workforce learning and development needs and utilising HR approaches to improve capacity and resilience.

W Lane

Improve recruitment and the quality of applicants by exploring and implementing new and innovative approaches to advertising vacancies.

C Hill

Improve transparency, engagement, and organisational alignment by enhancing the consistency, clarity, and accessibility of communications from senior management across Shared Regulatory Services.

C Hill

Strengthen staff engagement to ensure staff are actively involved in shaping the future delivery of services and identifying opportunities for improvement.

C Hill

Income generation underpins sustainable service delivery

Maximise opportunities for cost recovery and income generation by systematically identifying, evaluating and implementing chargeable services, funding streams, and efficiency mechanisms to support long term sustainable delivery.

J Bale

Undertake a marketing campaign for Metrology Laboratory Services including training provision to increase income generation opportunities.

J Bale