

TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE PLAN 2022-23

Purpose

To provide a fair and safe trading environment for the consumers and businesses of Dorset through education, advice, enforcement, and collaborative working.

Our purpose is mainly derived from statutory responsibilities to enforce a range of trading law.

Service Priorities

- Support sustainable economic growth by providing the best advice to businesses, including farmers, to ensure they trade fairly and safely.
- Identify and tackle problem traders.
- Protect vulnerable consumers to help safeguard their independence, health and well-being.
- Ensure the food chain is safe and animal livestock disease spread minimised.
- Ensure compliance with legal environmental requirements that contribute to tackling climate change.

If required we will again respond to the need to support any Coronavirus controls, especially in relation to business closure controls and safe trading.

Activities

The key activities we undertake to support our service priorities are:

- guidance to businesses, business advice line and Primary Authority advice
- investigating complaints
- visits to premises, website checks and advertisement monitoring
- sampling and testing
- test purchases and seizure
- responding to other intelligence
- formal enforcement action
- promotion and operation of the [Buy With Confidence](#) trader approval scheme
- partnership with national [Citizens Advice Consumer Service](#), our front door for consumer complaints.

These activities cover the following areas of trading standards compliance work:

- product safety
- safe storage of petroleum and explosives
- sale of alcohol, tobacco and other controlled goods to children
- food and animal feed labelling and composition
- animal health, welfare and disease control
- doorstep crime
- scams
- false claims, misleading prices
- counterfeit goods
- weights and measures
- environmental labelling and energy consumption information
- other fair trading controls.

COMMUNITY & PUBLIC PROTECTION

Regional collaboration plays a significant role in achieving our aims through Trading Standards South West (a Community Interest Company) which features coordinated project work, shared intelligence, and the regional enforcement team for instance.

There are **specific plans** required by the Food Standards Agency to be produced setting out our approach to the delivery of Food Standards, Feed Standards (animal feed). An Under-Age Sales Enforcement Programme is also legally required. These are published annually on the Council website.

Key Performance Indicators and Risk Management

Key indicators of **performance** used for the Team are:

- Business satisfaction survey: overall satisfaction level of service, by quarterly feedback snap survey (Target 80%)
- Bringing major non-compliances found back into compliance within 28 days, calculated quarterly (Target 95%)
- Scam victim complaints outstanding
- Service requests and complaints against businesses allocated for investigation.

Key **risks** are failing to respond to a largescale incident, complaint source or animal disease outbreak; giving wrong legal advice and some residual risks following EU Exit, notably in the area of pet passports and non-compliant goods entering the country. The need to assist any broader response to Coronavirus or similar also brings a threat of service disruption.

Budget

Trading Standards has a revenue budget of £917,900 with no capital budget.

Staff related costs are 98% of this budget. Income and cost recovery account for £114,900 (13%).

Staff Structure

There are 21 staff (18.32fte) in the structure (March 2022), with one additional casual contract financial investigator financed from Proceeds of Crime Act confiscation and other POCA work. (Annexe TS/1 details the structure)

In recent years Community Development Workers (2.0fte) have worked with Trading Standards, within a Special Projects Team, on scam victim protection and prevention while being line managed and employed in the Customer Service, Libraries and Archives structure. This will continue this year with an aim of adding contribution from a volunteer working in the community.

The structure has been reduced by 1.5fte, since becoming a unitary Council, but is otherwise largely unaltered. This will need further consideration and all staff brought on to DC terms and conditions but is yet to be a priority, given the many changes throughout Community and Public Protection.

There are four trading standards teams with considerable flexibility and cross team work: a **Rural Team** focussing particularly on farmed animal health and welfare and animal feed quality; a **Special Projects Team** which has a main focus currently on rogue traders and scams, financial investigations and the Buy With Confidence approved trader scheme, **two Operational Enforcement Teams** dealing with routine complaint response, business advice and the other activities not picked up in the more specialist teams.