

Public Document Pack

Thursday 6 June 2024 at 6.00 pm
To be held as an online virtual meeting

Trading Standards Joint Advisory Board

The press and public are welcome to attend this meeting by viewing the live webcast. The link to view the meeting is available [HERE](#)

Membership:

Members	Representing	Alternate Members	Representing
Councillors:		Councillors:	
Pritesh	Harrow	Blackman	Harrow
Stevenson	Harrow	Greek	Harrow
Suresh	Harrow	Kalu	Harrow
Crabb	Brent	Farah	Brent
Kennelly	Brent	Miller	Brent
Sheth	Brent	Chohan	Brent

For further information contact:

(LB Brent) Abby Shinhmar, Governance Officer Tel: 0208 937 2078: Email: abby.shinhmar@brent.gov.uk

(LB Harrow) Rita Magdani, Senior Democratic Services Officer Tel: 07707 138582; Email: rita.magdani@harrow.gov.uk

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Notes for Members - Declarations of Interest:

If a Member is aware they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent and must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If a Member is aware they have a Personal Interest** in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent.

If the Personal Interest is also a Prejudicial Interest (i.e. it affects a financial position or relates to determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission, or registration) then (unless an exception at 14(2) of the Members Code applies), after disclosing the interest to the meeting the Member must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item, except that they may first make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to the matter, provided that the public are allowed to attend the meeting for those purposes.

***Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:**

- (a) **Employment, etc.** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit gain.
- (b) **Sponsorship** - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of election; including from a trade union.
- (c) **Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between the Councillors or their partner (or a body in which one has a beneficial interest) and the council.
- (d) **Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.
- (e) **Licences**- Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.
- (f) **Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which the Councillor or their partner have a beneficial interest.
- (g) **Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

****Personal Interests:**

The business relates to or affects:

(a) Anybody of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management, and:

- To which you are appointed by the council;
- which exercises functions of a public nature;
- which is directed is to charitable purposes;
- whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy (including a political party of trade union).

(b) The interests a of a person from whom you have received gifts or hospitality of at least £50 as a member in the municipal year;

or

A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting, to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the electoral ward affected by the decision, the well-being or financial position of:

- You yourself;
- a member of your family or your friend or any person with whom you have a close association or any person or body who employs or has appointed any of these or in whom they have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000, or any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are a director
- any body of a type described in (a) above.

Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Item	Page
1 Election of Chair	
To be appointed from the London Borough of Harrow membership for this meeting.	
2 Apologies for Absence and Clarification of Alternate Members	
3 Declarations of Interests	
Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, any relevant personal or disclosable pecuniary interests in the items on this agenda.	
4 Minutes of Previous Meeting	
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 20 March 2024.	
5 Matters arising	
6 Deputations (if any)	
7 Annual Report 2023-2024	1 - 16
This report provides Members with information of the key outcomes delivered by the Trading Standards Service from April 2023 to March 2024.	
8 Analysis of Trading Standards Service Requests	17 - 28
To provide Members with an analysis of service requests received by Brent and Harrow Trading Standards Service which will assist further to help identify where the Service's resources should be deployed to achieve the biggest impact.	

9 Report on Vapes 29 - 32

This report is an update on the government's proposals to ban vapes containing tobacco.

10 Funeral Directors Report 33 - 34

This report notifies members of a letter sent to council Leaders and Chief Executives regarding the current concerns and public confidence in the funeral director profession.

11 Date of Future Meetings

Members are asked to note the remaining schedule of meetings agreed between Brent & Harrow for the 2024-25 Municipal Year:

- Wednesday 6 November 2024 at 6pm to be hosted (online) by the London Borough of Brent
- Wednesday 19 March 2025 at 6pm to be hosted (online) by the London Borough of Harrow

12 Any Other Urgent Business

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Head of Chief Executive and Member Services (London Borough of Brent) or their representative before the meeting in accordance with the constitutions of both councils.



Trading Standards Joint Advisory Board

Minutes

**Held as an online meeting at 6pm on
Wednesday 20 March 2024**

Present (in remote attendance):

Chair: Councillor Tom Miller London Borough of Brent

Councillors:

Stephen Crabb	London Borough of Brent
Harbi Farah	London Borough of Brent
Anjana Patel	London Borough of Harrow
Norman Stevenson	London Borough of Harrow
Krishna Suresh	London Borough of Harrow

In Attendance

Simon Legg (Head of Regulatory Service)	London Borough of Brent
Anu Prashar (Senior Regulatory Service Manager)	London Borough of Brent
Emma Phasey (Head of Licensing & Enforcement)	London Borough of Harrow
Samuel Abdullahi (Senior Enforcement Officer)	London Borough of Brent

1. **Election of Chair**

RESOLVED: That Councillor Tom Miller (London Borough of Brent) be elected as Chair for the meeting.

2. **Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members**

Apologies for absence were from Councillor Kennelly (London Borough of Brent) with Councillor Miller attending as a substitute.

3. **Declarations of interest**

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

4. **Minutes of previous meeting**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 1 November 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

5. **Matters arising**

None.

6. **Deputations (if any)**

No requests for deputations had been submitted for the meeting.

7. **Joint Advisory Board Report on Fees and Charges 2024-25**

The Board received a report, presented by Anu Prashar (Senior Regulatory Service Manager, Brent Council) providing Members with information concerning the proposed level of fees and charges to be made by the Brent & Harrow Trading Standards Service during 2024/25.

In considering the report the Joint Advisory Board noted that in accordance with paragraph 13(f) of the Consortium Agreement between the London Borough of Brent and the London Borough of Harrow, the Joint Advisory Board was required to consider and make recommendations on the level of fees and charges to be made in respect of any part of the service. The Board was advised that Trading Standards fees fell into the following categories:

- 1) Statutory fees (set by legislation, although some offered discretion to vary the amount up to a maximum value);
- 2) Retail Price Index (RPI) linked fees (agreed previously by Brent's Executive); and
- 3) Discretionary fees (there was discretion to vary the value charged).

Statutory fees were set nationwide by the Government, with local authorities having no discretion to change the fees although on occasions, the legislation would permit a fee to be set locally up to a maximum value.

Having outlined the proposed charges under each of the above categories, including the Primary Authority fees, Weights & Measures fees & Financial Investigator fees the Board thanked Anu Prashar for her report and **RESOLVED** to note and endorse the Joint Advisory Board Report on Fees and Charges for 2024-25.

8. **Trading Standards Work Plan 2024-25**

Anu Prashar (Senior Regulatory Service Manager, Brent Council) presented a report detailing the proposed 2024/25 work plan for Brent & Harrow Trading Standards.

In considering the report the Board noted:

- The work plan aimed to set out priority areas for the coming year and provide a guide to the expected levels of performance for each of the boroughs' teams whilst also offering flexibility to assist in meeting unexpected demands and to adapt service delivery as required, to meet emerging threats or respond to

- major investigations or assist our Primary Authority businesses on complex and legal matters.
- The assumptions on which the work plan had been set, as set out within the Work Plan attached as Appendix 1 to the report. The Plan had also been designed to incorporate priority areas of work identified by the National Trading Standards Board and London Trading Standards as well as reflect the key corporate priorities within each borough's Corporate Plan.
 - The High Priority areas of work identified within the Plan for 2024-25, which included illicit tobacco and vape products and underage sales.
 - The ongoing focus within the Plan on activities in relation to the cost of living and consumer complaints, such as testing weighing scales, price comparisons and promotions to make sure that consumers were not being misled.
 - The medium and lower term priorities outlined within the Plan for 2024-25 along with work volumes across the service, which were subject to continual review to ensure priorities were being implemented effectively.

The following issues were then raised by Members of the Board in response to the update provided:

- Clarification was sought regarding the National Trading Standards Board's priority regarding animal feed and how relevant that was to the service. Anu Prashar explained that this work was focussed around the avoidance of contamination with regular site visits undertaken to ensure animal feed was not contaminated. The Service checked that the right controls and procedures were in place similar to HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) used in food safety to ensure little to no contamination. These included visits to supermarkets as well as farms to monitor the quality of the animal food supply chain.
- Clarification was sought on whether pet food was also considered by the Service. Anu Prashar said that pet food was the end product of animal feed and analysing pet food may be the second stage of the project including taking samples of pet foods and ensuring that the statutory declaration was adhering to labels.
- Further details were sought on whether consideration was given to harm when identifying priorities within the Plan and how these were agreed between the joint boroughs. It was clarified that consideration was given to harm as well as national and local priorities. The vulnerabilities of residents were considered as well as signposting to partners like the Citizen's Advice Bureau. Criminal breaches were rated and if the criminal breach was of low value that it would be signposted whereas a criminal breach of high value would be investigated, but each case was bespoke with further work being undertaken to consider how best to capture harm and reflect this within the priorities and monitoring of the work plan. The priorities were also subject to regular and ongoing discussion between lead officers within each authority.
- Members remained keen to ensure that the monitoring of specific trends in terms of service activity continued as a means of assisting to focus priorities, with comparisons provided between the current and previous year in terms of work volume.
- Members welcomed the support being provided by the Trading Standards teams across each borough in terms of advice and guidance and as part of ward visits. Details were also provided in relation to the Friends Against Scams

awareness raising training which had recently been provided for members in Brent and it was felt would also be beneficial for Harrow Councillors to attend, which officers agreed to progress.

In welcoming the update and supporting the positive work being undertaken by Trading Standards, the Chair thanked Anu Prashar for her report and having commended officer for their efforts it was **RESOLVED** to endorse and note the update and Trading Standards Work Plan 2024-25.

09. Dates of future meetings

NOTED the dates for future meetings of the Advisory Board agreed for the 2024-25 Municipal Year, as follows:

- Thursday 6 June 2024 at 6pm to be hosted (online) by the London Borough of Harrow.
- Wednesday 6 November 2024 at 6pm to be hosted (online) by the London Borough of Brent.
- Wednesday 19 March 2025 at 6pm to be hosted (online) by the London Borough of Harrow.

10. Any other urgent business

None.

The meeting closed at 6:36pm

COUNCILLOR TOM MILLER
Chair

**London Boroughs of Brent & Harrow
Trading Standards Joint Advisory Board
6 June 2024
Report from the Senior Service Manager**

FOR INFORMATION

TRADING STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report presents the Trading Standards annual report for the year 2023/2024.
- 1.2 It is a requirement of the Trading Standards Consortium Agreement that an annual report is presented to the Joint Advisory Board which includes details of the work undertaken during the financial year to which it relates.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Joint Advisory Board Members take note of the report and provide comment where appropriate.

3.0 Details

- 3.1 The Trading Standards Service operates on a joint consortium basis between the London Borough of Brent and the London Borough of Harrow, with Brent being the host authority. In accordance with the contractual terms between the two boroughs, an annual report must be presented to the Trading Standards Joint Advisory Board.
- 3.2 The Service carries out the local authority's statutory duties relating to the legislation enforced by a Weights and Measures Authority. This gives the Service responsibility of enforcement and legal powers to enforce, hundreds of Acts of parliament or statutory instruments. The 2023/2024 annual report is attached for Members' information and consideration showing some of the work carried out in that financial year.
- 3.3 The Service seeks to promote and maintain a fair and equitable trading environment for consumers and businesses alike, creating a level and equal marketplace in which consumers can spend in confidence, business can confidently trade and our local economy can grow. Our duties extend to all business types including those who trade online and the growing internet marketplace, our local high streets, commercial business parks, trading estates, those who trade from their homes and door to door tradespeople.

3.4 A copy of the report for the year 2023/2024 is attached as an Appendix for Members' information and consideration showing some of the work conducted and our achievements during that financial year.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The Trading Standards Service for 2023/2024, was provided within its agreed net budget.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.0 Equality Implications

6.1 The proposals in this report have been screened to assess their relevance to equality and were found to have no equality implications.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

7.1 There is no requirement to specifically consult Ward Members about this report as it affects all wards across both Boroughs.

8.0 Human Resources Implications

8.1 There are no staffing or property implications arising from this report.

Contact Officer

Any person wishing to obtain more information should contact Anu Prashar, Senior Regulatory Service Manager, Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley Middlesex HA9 0FJ. Telephone: (020) 8937 55215, anu.prashar@brent.gov.uk

ANU PRASHAR
SENIOR REGULATORY SERVICE MANAGER



**Brent and Harrow Trading
Standards Service**

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Annual Report 2023/24

Introduction

This Annual Report has been written to highlight some of the key outcomes delivered by the Trading Standards Service from April 2023 to March 2024. The Service is managed by Anu Prashar with Samuel Abdullahi covering the Team Leader role.

The Service Manager reports to the Head of Regulatory Service, with the team working as part of the wider Regulatory Services provision within the Environment and Leisure, now known as the Public Realm directorate.

Over the years the Trading Standards team has suffered from the continued local authority austerity measures however, with 3.5 Enforcement Officers for Brent and 2.5 for Harrow the team's work continues to focus on protecting residents, communities, and businesses from harm and financial loss, and maintaining a confident marketplace supporting businesses and the local economy growth. The Service fulfils the local authority's statutory role of a 'weights and measures authority' tasked with enforcing more than 250 pieces of legislation.

Service Requests

The Service continues to work with our partners Citizen's Advice Consumer Service. Any enquiries they receive that concern either a Brent or Harrow resident or business are referred to us if an alleged criminal breach is identified. Unfortunately, we cannot investigate or deal with every request received, so we prioritise the most serious ones to ensure our resources are applied to those situations where they are needed the most.

Citizens Advice Consumer Service provides first-tier advice to members of the public giving them the ability to resolve their disputes or enforce their contractual rights in the marketplace.

The Service received 4297 service requests from all partners including the Ports Teams, Police, other Trading Standards Services, trade industries, consumers, and businesses. 1143 were further analysed by the Brent team and 718 by the Harrow team, which resulted in 331 service requests in Brent and 169 service requests in Harrow being investigated.

Supporting Our Businesses

Businesses continue to need advice and support from Trading Standards to navigate the wide range of laws that govern how they trade.

We have provided almost 200 hours of advice to businesses through our Primary Authority Partnerships covering areas such as Product Safety, Fair Trading, age-restricted sales, and Trade Marks. We have maintained the number of partnerships which include IKEA and River Island who have a partnership with Brent and Premier Decorations who have a partnership with Harrow. Brent delivered 174 hours and Harrow 20 hours of Primary Authority advice. This is a 36% increase on last year and was due in part to issues arising regarding the supply of goods onto the European market.

The Service continues to contribute towards both borough's objectives of supporting business growth by delivering effective regulation for the benefit of legitimate businesses and officers have responded to 100 separate requests for advice and information from our local businesses (Brent 55 and Harrow 45) a 24% increase from the previous year, and conducted 274 compliance inspections (Brent 138, Harrow 136).

As part of our ongoing engagement with local businesses and in support of Operation Sceptre, we provided local retailers who sell knives with a training pack to try and prevent knife sales and other age-restricted products from getting into the hands of children.

A follow-up test purchase operation was carried out using child volunteers and all the shops where the children attempted to buy knives, refused to sell them. This is a great result.

We have signed up and audited 22 Businesses to our Responsible Trader Scheme, to further support our business community and protect young people from accessing age restricted goods.



The scheme provides guidance to assist our businesses with the training of their staff regarding age restricted products.

It promotes best practice and allows businesses to demonstrate a commitment to protecting our young people.

The training pack provides advice on a whole range of age restricted products including knives, vapes and corrosive substances.



We discovered an importer of non-compliant food grinders in terms of its labelling and instructions for use. The product was safe, but posed some risks to users as the instructions and labels were missing. Whilst we have powers to force cessation of the supply of the goods, the business showed it was willing and able to co-operate with us and we were able to give detailed advice on how to bring the products in to compliance. Following a rework, the grinders met the necessary obligations and the removal of 600 units was not necessary. This saved the business approximately £30,000.

Working Together

We continue to participate in enforcement operations on Wembley Stadium event days to deliver a strong message that illegal sellers and counterfeit merchandise will be targeted. Working in partnership with the Metropolitan Police, the FA and brand protection teams, we seize goods, issue warnings, and where necessary, prosecute.



We have seen a huge improvement in compliance levels on event days, with a substantial decline in the number of illegal street traders, making the events much more pleasurable for all who attend.

We contribute to the Weeks of Action in Harrow working alongside the police, Environmental Health and Community Safety teams. We have conducted checks on local businesses to ensure compliance with the sale of knives and vapes and provide information concerning our responsible trader scheme.

Three separate teams from Regulatory Services tackled a major fireworks issue in November when a joint inspection uncovered over 600kg of illegally stored fireworks. Formal undertakings were obtained from the business which resulted in the immediate return of the fireworks back to the wholesaler and the business surrendered their license.



The Service issued 34 fireworks licences to businesses to store and sell fireworks. The team has a statutory duty to carry out market surveillance and enforcement activities concerning the storage and sale of fireworks and is responsible for enforcing the legal provisions requiring that fireworks sold in the boroughs are manufactured to the relevant standard and that they are not sold to minors (under 18s).

Ensuring the Safety of Consumer Products

We continue to undertake a wide range of activities to protect our residents and promote the well-being of our communities. A few examples of some of the work we have delivered in this field are detailed below.

We investigated a line of child swim vests/buoyancy aids deemed to present a serious risk of drowning. We met with the product importer and examined the documents to evidence compliance with Regulation (EU) 2016/425 on personal protective equipment. Test certificates were incomplete and poorly drafted, and the products themselves failed to bear the necessary labels and warnings. As a result, the importer was instructed to remove 16,000 units from supply and a recall was successfully instigated by the importer.

We managed to provide advice on three other swim lines imported by the business which required re-working to bring them into compliance, as a result, this saved the business over £100,000 in potential losses.

Button and coin batteries pose a significant risk to children due to the hazards presented by their ingestion, such as severe tissue damage from chemical burns.

We have offered extensive advice to a manufacturer of a light, operated via two-coin batteries which formed part of a teeth whitening kit.



The product did not bear any warnings regarding the presence of the coin batteries. Also, the battery cover could be removed by simply turning the handle allowing access to the batteries. Our engagement and support resulted in the necessary changes being put into place and thereby safeguarding our more vulnerable consumers.

6 Brent businesses were inspected following intelligence that an electrically operated hotplate that posed a serious risk of electric shock to consumers, was available to buy.

Most of the shops had already removed the products but one had 14 still in stock.

These were removed from sale for return to the supplier and each shop was issued with a Recall Notice to display to alert customers who had already purchased the products.



We have acted on intelligence provided by the Ports Team on items including baby walkers, cosmetics, toys, electrical hair products, and kitchen appliances. We always act on this intelligence to ensure the products people buy, are safe. As a last resort, we will take formal action such as prosecuting but where we can work with businesses to bring a product into compliance, we will always seek to take that path.

Tackling Criminal Behaviour

One of the key functions of Trading Standards is to protect consumers and support legitimate businesses. We have an array of penalties available to us where businesses deliberately break the law, ignore our advice or cause serious harm. This ranges from monetary penalties and undertakings to fines and imprisonment.

We continue to deliver operation CeCe across the boroughs to tackle the sale and supply of illicit tobacco products such as cigarettes, hand-rolling tobacco, and shisha. There hasn't been much change in the quantities we seized from last year, but we have noticed lower amounts of stock are being held on the business premises. This year we seized over 40,000 cigarette sticks, 25 packs of hand-rolling tobacco; and over 100 kg of Smokeless/oral tobacco in Brent, and over 5,700 cigarette sticks, and 7.72kg of chewing tobacco in Harrow. The approximate value of the illegal tobacco was £24,500.



In Brent we issued four simple cautions and one letter of warning to businesses and individuals found to be in possession of illicit tobacco. In Harrow, we issued two simple cautions and seven letters of warning.

In Brent three businesses and their directors were prosecuted with fines totalling £4,800 issued and costs of £4,600.

In Harrow, a butcher on Greenford Road was fined £900 and was ordered to pay costs of £750 for supplying illicit tobacco. The director was also fined £900 and was also ordered to pay £750.



We seized a range of counterfeit phone cases and lanyards with a retail value of £7,330 from a mobile phone accessory shop in Harlesden.

There was no history of previous non-compliance with this business and following our seizure, the business was reinspected and found to be compliant. As a result, the owner was issued with a Simple Caution.

Age Restricted Products and Sales to Minors

As part of our ongoing commitment to protect consumers and our communities, preventing children from accessing age-restricted products is one element that feeds into that. Throughout the year we provide training and advice to businesses selling products such as vapes and alcohol online and in-store and we run a test purchasing operation using child volunteers to test businesses processes when selling these goods.

This year we have conducted 85 visits using our volunteers to try and purchase products such as alcohol, cigarettes, vapes, fireworks, knives, solvents, and butane. 42 visits were carried out in Brent and 43 visits in Harrow. 85% of businesses tested, did not sell to our children, this is a positive increase of 5% from last year and is excellent in comparison to national figures which estimate a 43% failure rate across age-restricted products in general.

	TPs	Sold	% Sold
Brent	42	6	14.29%
Harrow	43	7	16.28%
B&H	85	13	15.29%

In Brent, we tested 17 shops for vape sales, and 4 sold. In Harrow, 12 businesses were tested and 4 out of these sold a vape. Across both boroughs, none of the shops sold cigarettes.



A Brent business was prosecuted for selling a can of Butane to our 15 year old volunteer.

The business was fined £1,000 by Willesden Magistrates court and the director £500.



A sole trader in Wealdstone was prosecuted for selling two vapes to a 15-year-old girl, even after asking the volunteers' age and she responded 15!

The Magistrates gave him a fine of £646 and he was ordered to pay £258 victim surcharge and our costs of £1,136, a total of £2,040.

In addition to the prosecutions, a further three simple cautions and five letters of warning were issued in Brent and Harrow issued two simple cautions and three letters of warnings.

We continue to face challenges in executing these operations due to a lack of child volunteers, but we are promoting our work internally and encourage our colleagues to consider putting their children forward to assist.

The Service is committed to the protection of children from harm and underage test purchasing operations remains a priority area of work.

Ensuring a Level-Playing Field

The crisis around the cost of living has had a huge impact on our residents and businesses. We delivered several projects in response to this which aimed to support our legitimate businesses and raise consumer confidence in the goods and services they buy.

We are intelligence-led and have focused resources around our high-risk and most complained-about businesses, from used car dealers and cosmetic importers to small convenience shops. We have conducting compliance visits, providing detailed advice and information to 56 of these businesses (25 in Harrow, 31 in Brent) and where necessary seized goods and investigated.

Following a product recall last year concerning plug in wall heaters, we undertook additional market surveillance work with online retailers to identify whether these products had made there way back on to the market. The items are marketed as "cost saving" and "low energy" and naturally appeal to consumers looking to save money. We have found that many have a sheathed earth pin, no safety testing and pose a serious risk of electric shock. In worse case scenarios, these items could catch fire in the home.



Earlier this year, we were able to identify these items back on sale and our intervention resulted in the removal of hundreds of these dangerous items from the online marketplace.

We continue to pro-actively deliver enforcement around the lettings industry. With the general cost of living, increased mortgages and property maintenance costs, there is a concern that landlords may attempt to increase revenue through hidden charges to tenants.

A total of 15 Notice of Intent (NOI) to issue monetary penalties against agents that have been found not to comply in the past

12 of the NOIs issued have resulted in monetary penalty notices officially known as Final Notice being issued to a total of £26,850.00 (£12,250 for Brent & Harrow £14,600)

We have created new partnerships with our housing teams to share information and intelligence and conduct in-person and online inspections of agents actively advertising property rentals.

Earlier in March, we manned a stall at a private renters fair to engage with landlords, agents and tenants and provide advice and information on tenant fees, redress scheme membership and client money protection.



Private Renters Fair Event

To reassure consumers who are making price-focused purchasing decisions that what they pay for, is in fact what they receive, we have continued to deliver our project around accurate weighing, testing the scales in use for trade in our local shops and grocers. 88 weighing scales have been tested across both boroughs where 32 have so far been found to be non-compliant, they were either unstamped or out of tolerance at the higher end.

Four have been taken out of service in its entirety, four have been verified and the remaining are in the process of being verified which requires officers to revisit the businesses to ensure they are compliant.



Thus far, any of the scales that have been not within the permitted tolerance are in fact to the benefit of the customer in that they are weighing less than the actual weight. 26

businesses have been visited in Brent and 22 businesses have been visited in Harrow concerning weights and measures visits.

We remain committed to ensuring safety standards continue during these difficult times and consumers seeking more economical purchases may be inclined to buy second-hand tyres (part-worn tyres) rather than new ones.



We wrote to over 20 businesses that supply and sell part-worn tyres to provide guidance on practical steps they should adopt to ensure that they comply with the consumer protection law relevant to this industry. 4 businesses (2 in Brent and 2 in Harrow) have also been visited and their tyres inspected. Further visits will be conducted in the 2024/25 year.

Financial Investigations

- 11 confiscation orders totalling - £1,165,409.00
- 2 restraint orders
- 15 new case referrals
- 36 production orders

The confiscation orders were nearly double than the previous year and this is also reflected in the total confiscation amount being nearly double.

Case study

A landlord who used a fake name to evade detection was hit with £485,000 in fines after illegally renting out a shed as five flats. The owner of the sheds which were located in Sudbury also previously pleaded guilty to letting a house at the same premises as two flats without planning permission. Brent Council was tipped off by neighbours who reported the property back in 2013. Officers served a planning enforcement notice to stop the premises being let as seven flats, but the landlord failed to comply.

Tenants told officers their landlord was called Barry Jacobs but officers were only able to locate "Barry" in 2016 and were unable to prove who he was. The premises was later registered with the land registry under the name of the defendant (not Barry). In 2020, officers tracked down the defendant and took him to court, prompting three years of hearings.

The defendant was ordered to pay £60,000 in costs to the council, £1,000 fine to the court and a £424,000 confiscation order to the government for the criminal profit he made over several years.



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**London Boroughs of Brent & Harrow
Trading Standards Joint Advisory Board
6 June 2024
Report from the Senior Service Manager**

FOR INFORMATION

**Analysis of Service Requests Received by Brent and Harrow
Trading Standards from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide Members with an analysis of service requests received by Brent and Harrow Trading Standards Service which will assist further to help identify where the Service's resources should be deployed to achieve the biggest impact.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Joint Advisory Board Members consider the report and make recommendations or comments where appropriate.

3.0 Details

- 3.1 The analysis is contained within Appendix attached to this paper and looks to identify the main source of service requests, which internally are referred to as 'complaints' along with the types of products and/or services being complained about to help identify any patterns.
- 3.2 The analysis also looks into identifying any hotspots within the Boroughs of Brent and Harrow where the Service can concentrate its enforcement actions to achieve the biggest impact.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial considerations arising from this report as the staffing resource to implement this will be met from the existing Trading Standards revenue budget.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.0 Equality Implications

- 6.1 The proposals in this report have been screened to assess their relevance to equality and were found to have no equality implications.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

7.1 There is no requirement to specifically consult Ward Members about this report as it affects all wards across both Boroughs.

8.0 Human Resources Implications

8.0 There are no significant staffing implications arising from this report.

Contact Officer

Any person wishing to obtain more information should contact Anu Prashar, Senior Regulatory Service Manager, Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley Middlesex HA9 0FJ. Telephone: (020) 8937 55215, anu.prashar@brent.gov.uk

ANU PRASHAR
SENIOR REGULATORY SERVICE MANAGER

Analysis of Trading Standards Service Requests 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Introduction

Brent and Harrow Trading Standards Service is responsible for the enforcement of a wide range of legislation to help promote a fair, healthy, and safe trading environment in Brent and Harrow by ensuring compliance with regulatory legislation, protecting consumers, and supporting local businesses.

The Service fulfils the local authority's statutory role of a 'weights and measures authority' and is tasked with enforcing more than 250 pieces of legislation. In setting its priorities for the year the Service has had to consider priorities set at a National, Regional, and local level.

Over the years the Service has seen a reduction of staff and resources, however, it remains committed to delivering a worthwhile service to promote and ensure a safe, fair, and legal marketplace for both its residents and businesses.

This analysis report aims to help evaluate where the Service's demands come from, to assist in identifying any trends, to better understand why/how our customers are contacting us, and to assist with identifying where the Service's resources should be deployed to achieve the biggest impact relating to the types of service requests it receives. To achieve this, the analysis looks at the following;

1. Identify the main source of service requests along with the types of products/services we have received complaints about and identify any pattern.
2. Identify the hotspot within the Boroughs where the Service can concentrate its enforcement actions to achieve the biggest impact.
3. Identify the top 5 most complained about industries and types of breaches to enable the Service to consider these areas for future work and or projects.

The data used for the analysis was obtained from the services complaints/service requests database between 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

Complaints and service requests received from various sources have been recorded in the database.

Please Note: this report only provides an overview of the complaints and any further information needed into specific types of complaints/service requests will require further analysis.

Service Requests

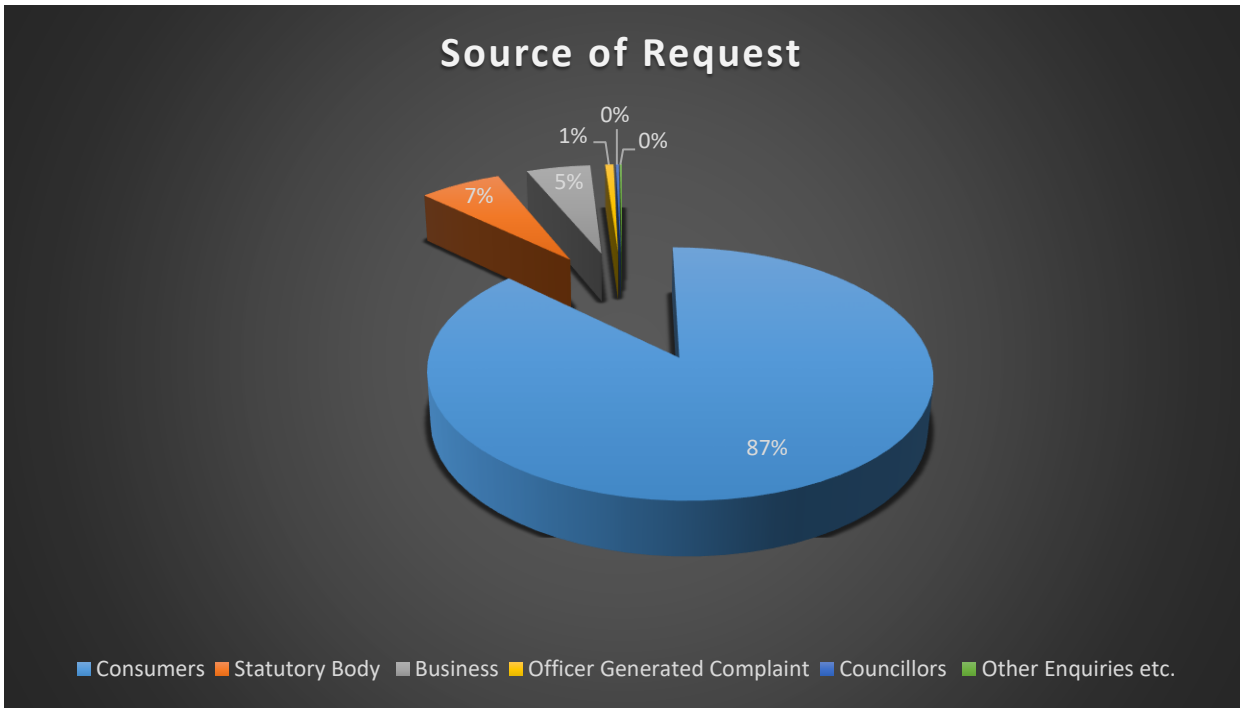
A total of **4297** service requests were received between 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. Like most other Trading Standards authorities nationally, we work with the Citizens Advice Consumer Service (CACS) and act as the public's first point of contact when they want help and advice with a consumer issue or to escalate a criminal breach to their local trading standards. **85.3% (3669)** of our service requests were received via CACS.

The public can contact CACS via their telephone helpline, via online chat, or by completing an online form. Their website offers advice, template letters, and sources of information regarding the most common areas of consumer complaint.

The telephone helpline is available Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm and there is no cost to phone it. Wait times are usually a few minutes and average call times are 8 to 10 minutes.

- **2420 were classified as NOTIFICATIONS** (this is used to indicate the transfer of cases from CACS for information purposes only where there is no commitment for Trading Standards to contact the enquirer as the help and advice has been provided by CACS). This data assists us in the monitoring of businesses and wider intelligence gathering purposes.
- **1249 were classified as REFERRAL** (this is used to indicate transfer of cases for further consideration by Trading Standards). We will individually consider, and risk assess all referrals received from CACS. CACS gives the service no obligation to contact the complainant in the first instant unless we need further evidence, as the matter could be determined to be a minor issue or something that has been determined as a low priority.

Source of Service Request

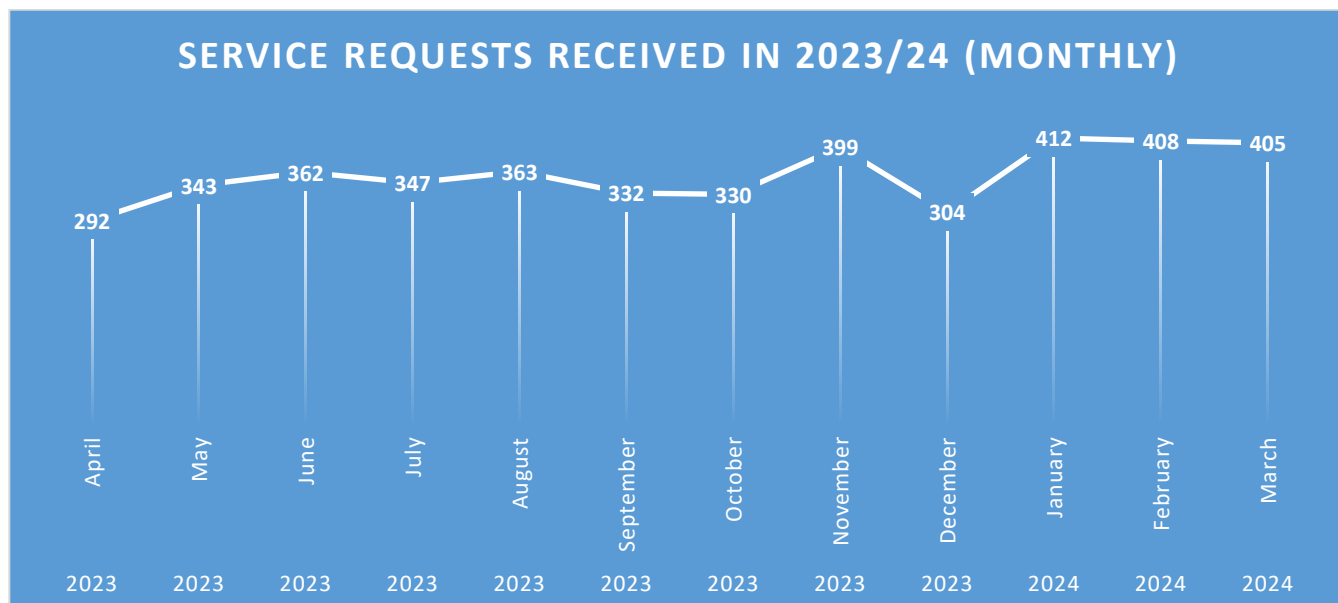


The Service received the majority of its requests at 87% from consumers. This shows how many members of the public are looking for help and advice from Trading Standards.

Source of Request	Quantity
Consumers*	3747
Statutory Body (Police, NTS, SCAMs, Ports, etc)	283
Business	221
Officer Generated Complaint	29
Councillors	10
Other Enquiries etc.	7
	4297

*(includes CACS referral and notification and other consumer enquiries received via email. Telephone etc)

Service Requests Received on a Monthly Basis



Intelligence does not show any particular pattern about when complaints are received, however, the overall number received per month has increased in 2024 with **412** in January 2024 and April 2023 with the lowest amount at **292**.

Types of Goods and/Services

The service had received requests about 400 different types of individual products and services; however, these have been grouped to consolidate the number to 68. The table below shows the top 20 types of goods/services received and the numbers against each

Top 20 Types of Goods	QTY
Used Vehicles	610
Building & Renovation Services	482
Clothing & Footwear	205
Furniture (Upholstered & Non-Upholstered)	172
Small/Medium Home Appliances	168
Media Devices, Accessories, and Repairs	163
Toiletries, Perfumes, Beauty treatments & Hairdressing	141
Motor Vehicle Repairs & Services	136
Alcoholic Drinks	125
Food & Drinks (Excluding Alcohol)	119
Holiday & Accommodation	118
Insurance	118
Air & Travel Agents	114
Other Motoring Costs	109
Professional & Legal Services	101
Core Communication Services	86
Education, Employment and Training	84
Letting and Property Management	83
Cigarettes & Other Tobacco	81
Energy Brokers Installers & Certifiers	74

Used Vehicles have the highest number of reported complaints with **610** in total since April 2023.

399 of these were about businesses based within Brent and Harrow.

The 2nd highest reported goods is concerning Building and Renovation Services with **482**.

247 of these complaints were about businesses based within Brent and Harrow.

Type of Breach/Request	Qty
Substandard Services	796
Defective Goods	784
Breach of contract	381
Customer service	223
Safety (Goods)	210
Failure/delay in providing service	144
Failure/delay in delivery	140
Unfair Business commercial practice	117
Bogus selling	111
Underage Sales	91
Licence Application/Review	76
Unsuitable goods provided	71
Other misleading claims/omissions	61
Unclear billing/charging	55
Labelling	49
Counterfeiting	49
Return of unwanted goods	48
Breach of fiduciary duty/responsibility (e.g., breach of trust)	45
Wrong goods provided	44
Safety (Services)	41

The main type of breach reported within both boroughs with **796** is Substandard Services and 2nd is Defective Goods.

Both these are often related to used vehicles or building renovation services

Further analysis will need to be considered to look at the 83 service requests that failed to have what type of breach recorded

From the analysis of the report, the following assessment has been reached

1. The Service will continue to receive complaints from general members of the public mainly via Citizens Advice Consumer Service
2. Used vehicles, building, and renovation services will continue to be the main goods and/or services that will be complained about. These are typically high-value transactions increasing the need for the public to complain if something goes wrong.
3. Defective Goods and Substandard Services will remain the top two types of breaches which is consistent with the two highest types of Service Requests.

Distribution of Complaints Received within Brent and Harrow

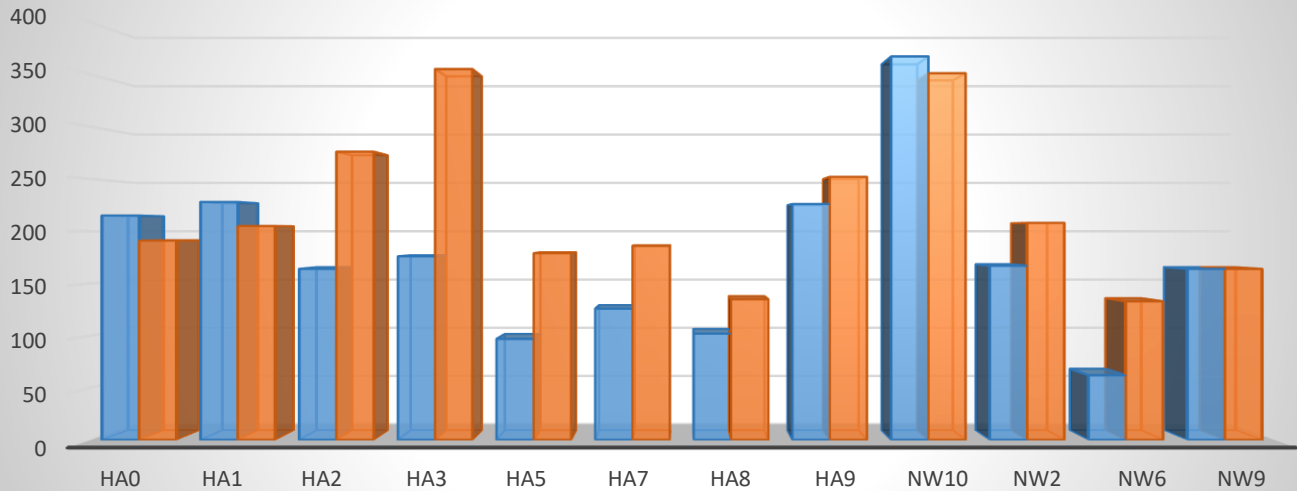
Complaints and service requests received are spread out across different areas within the boroughs. Below is a table and graph showing the distribution of complaints within Brent and Harrow.

The highest number of complaints are for businesses in the **NW10** postcode covering Willesden, Harlesden, Kensal Green, Brent Park, College Park, Stonebridge, and North Acton with **367**. This area falls within the London Borough of Brent but also borders Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington, and Chelsea.

HA1 with **228** has the second-highest number of complaints made against its businesses. This area is on the border of Brent and Harrow.

NW10 with **367** also sees the highest number of residents within this postcode raising complaints. With **355**, **HA3** which covers Harrow Weald, Weald, Kenton, Wealdstone, Queensbury, Belmont (west and south) is the second highest.

Post Codes in Brent and Harrow For Businesses vs Consumers



	HA0	HA1	HA2	HA3	HA5	HA7	HA8	HA9	NW10	NW2	NW6	NW9
Business	215	228	164	176	97	126	102	226	367	167	62	164
Consumer	191	205	276	355	179	186	135	252	351	208	133	164

The table below shows which area the postcode covers and its local authority

Postcode	Area(s) Covered	Local authority area(s)
HA0	Wembley Central (west), North Wembley, Alperton, Sudbury (south)	Brent, Ealing, Harrow
HA1	Harrow, Harrow on the Hill, North Harrow, Northwick Park, Sudbury (north), Sudbury Hill	Brent, Harrow
HA2	North Harrow, South Harrow, West Harrow, Headstone, Rayners Lane (south)	Harrow
HA3	Harrow Weald, Kenton, Wealdstone, Queensbury, Belmont (west and south)	Brent, Harrow
HA5	Pinner, Eastcote (north and east), Hatch End, Rayners Lane (north), Carpenders Park (part)	Harrow, Hillingdon, Three Rivers
HA7	Stanmore, Queensbury, Belmont (north and east)	Brent, Harrow
HA8	Edgware, Burnt Oak, Canons Park, Queensbury	Barnet, Brent, Harrow
HA9	Wembley Central (east), Wembley Park, Preston, Tokyngton	Brent
NW2	Cricklewood, Dollis Hill, Childs Hill, Golders Green (part), Brent Cross (part), Willesden (north), Neasden (north)	Barnet, Brent, Camden
NW6	Kilburn, Brondesbury, West Hampstead, Queen's Park, Kensal Green (part), South Hampstead (south), Swiss Cottage (west)	Brent, Camden, Westminster
NW9	The Hyde, Colindale, Kingsbury, West Hendon, Wembley Park (part), Queensbury (part)	Barnet, Brent, Harrow
NW10	Willesden, Harlesden, Kensal Green, Brent Park, College Park, Stonebridge, North Acton (part), West Twyford, Neasden (south), Old Oak Common, Park Royal (north)	Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea

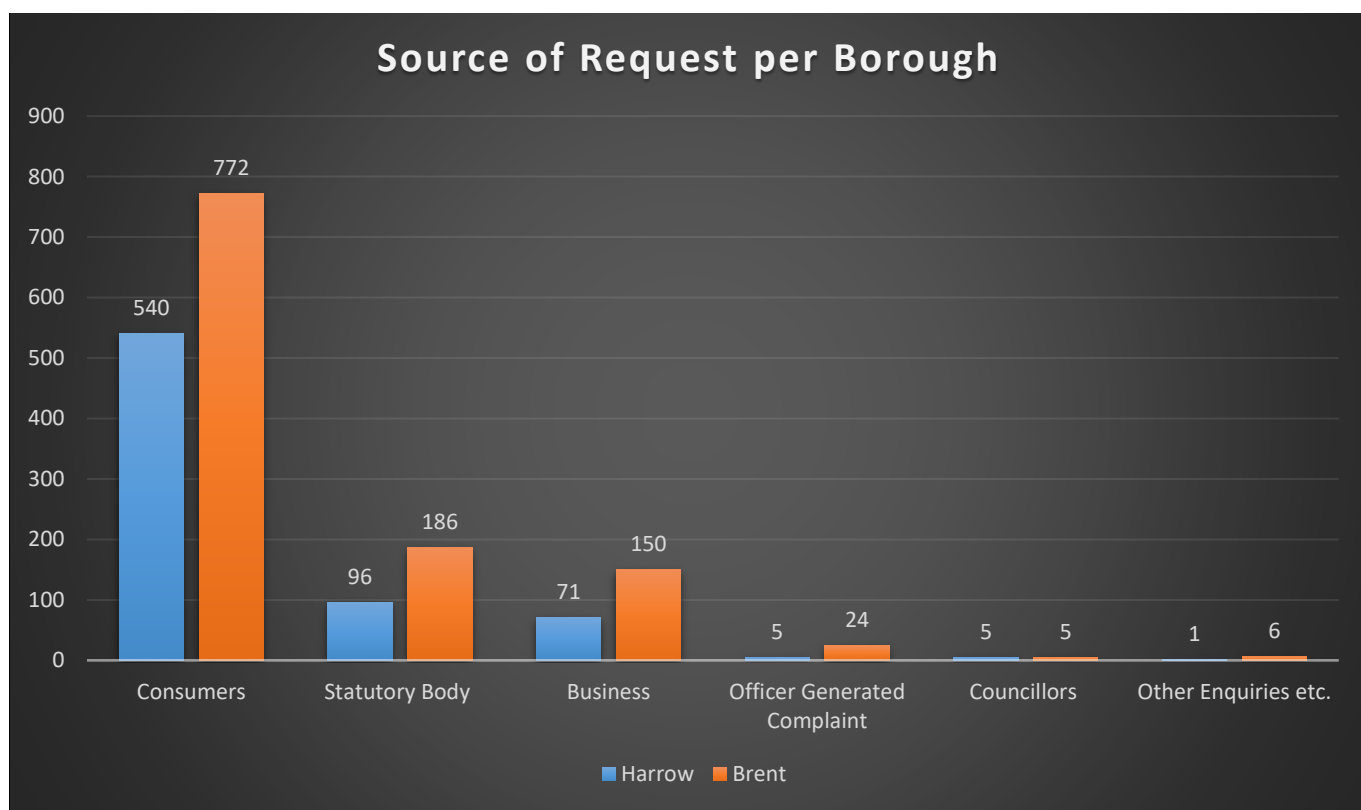
Looking at the distribution of complaints by each postcode area the following assessment has been reached.

1. The areas that have a large concentration of shops and footfall will generate the most complaints.
2. Residents of both Brent and Harrow will continue to shop or enter into contracts with businesses that are not based within the two boroughs as it is highly likely that businesses within both Brent and Harrow will have consumers that are not residents of the boroughs.

Brent and Harrow Allocated a Service Request for Further Investigation

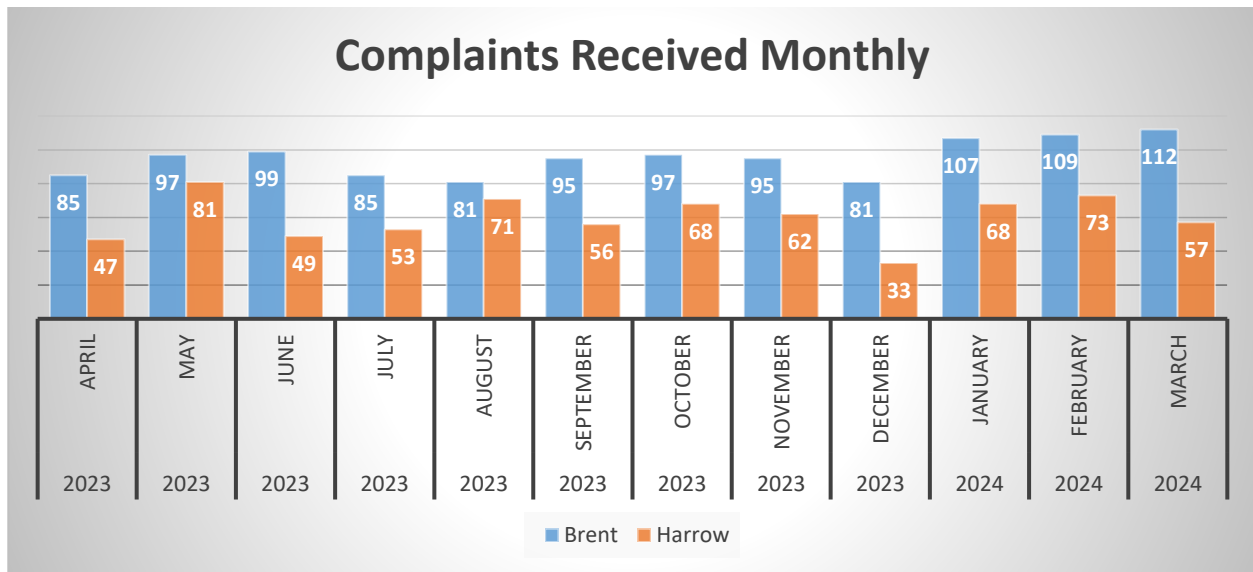
This section of the report only relates to complaints that were allocated to each borough for further consideration.

- Over the reported period there has been a total of **1143** complaints/service requests attributed to Brent and **718** to Harrow for further investigation.
- **75%** of Harrow’s requests came directly from members of the public whilst Brent’s was **67.5%**.



Source of Request	Harrow	Brent
Consumers	540	772
Statutory Body	96	186
Business	71	150
Officer Generated Complaint	5	24
Councillors	5	5
Other Enquiries etc.	1	6
	718	1143

Service Requests Received Monthly



March 2024 saw the highest number of requests attributed to Brent with **112** complaints with August 2023 and December 2023 with the fewest number of requests having received **81** requests.

February 2024 saw the highest amount for Harrow with **73** and December 2023 with **33** as the lowest for Harrow.

Types of Goods/Services Reported

	Brent's Top 20 Types of Goods/Service	Qty
1	Used Vehicles	160
2	Building & Renovation Services	127
3	Alcoholic Drinks	75
4	Clothing & Footwear	72
5	Cigarettes & Other Tobacco	53
6	Media Devices, Accessories, and Repairs	51
7	Toiletries, Perfumes, Beauty treatments & Hairdressing	49
8	Small/Medium Home Appliances	41
9	Letting and Property Management	38
10	Food & Drinks (Excluding Alcohol)	35
11	Education, Employment and Training	27
12	Furniture (Upholstered & Non-Upholstered)	27
13	E-Cigarettes & Refills	26
14	Professional & Legal Services	25
15	Core Communication Services	21
16	Motor Vehicle Repairs & Services	21
17	Holiday & Accommodation	20
18	Other household goods and services	20
19	Vehicle Fuel and Charging Stations	18
20	Insurance	17

Brent

Used Vehicles have the highest number of reported complaints with **160** in total since April 2023.

Building Renovation Services with **127** is second.

	Harrow's Top 20 Types of Goods/Service	Qty
1	Building & Renovation Services	91
2	Used Vehicles	62
3	Alcoholic Drinks	43
4	Small/Medium Home Appliances	29
5	Toiletries, Perfumes, Beauty treatments & Hairdressing	28
6	Lasers & Psychoactive Substances	27
7	Media Devices, Accessories and Repairs	26
8	Professional & Legal Services	26
9	Cigarettes & Other Tobacco	23
10	Clothing & Footwear	23
11	Food & Drinks (Excluding Alcohol)	23
12	Letting and Property Management	21
13	Furniture (Upholstered & Non-Upholstered)	20
14	Betting, Competitions, Prize Draws	19
15	Air & Travel Agents	18
16	Core Communication Services	16
17	Motor Vehicle Repairs & Services	15
18	Other Motoring Costs	14
19	Energy Brokers Installers & Certifiers	13
20	Locksmith & Handypersons	13

Harrow

Building & Renovation Services have the highest number of reported complaints in Harrow with **91** in total since April 2023.

The 2nd highest reported breach is concerning used vehicles with **62**.

The tables below show the top 20 types of complaints received per borough.

	Brent's Top 20 Types of Breach	Qty
1	Substandard Services	134
2	Defective Goods	127
3	Safety (Goods)	127
4	Underage Sales	70
5	Bogus selling	60
6	Breach of contract	46
7	Unfair Business commercial practice	42
8	Labelling	37
9	Other misleading claims/omissions	31
10	Counterfeiting	29
11	Unsuitable goods provided	26
12	Failure/delay in delivery	24
13	Other problems with business practices	22
14	Failure/delay in providing service	22
15	(blank)	22
16	Customer service	21
17	Licence Application/Review	20
18	Verbal misrepresentation/misdescription	18
19	Self-Verification Notification	18
20	Other selling practices	15

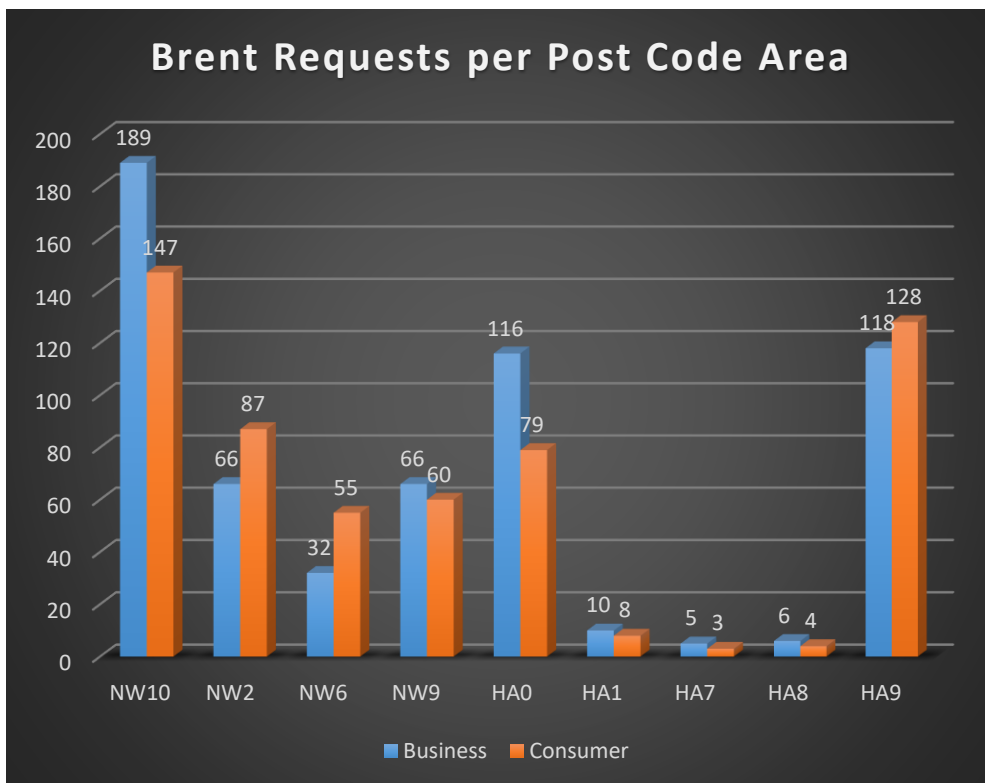
In Brent, reports of Substandard Services with **134** is the most reported breach, with Defective Goods and safety of goods in joint second with **127** reports each

These are in line with reports received concerning Building Renovations Services and used vehicles.

	Harrow's Top 20 Types of Breach	Qty
1	Substandard Services	97
2	Defective Goods	78
3	Licence Application/Review	59
4	Breach of contract	46
5	Safety (Goods)	38
6	Unfair Business commercial practice	33
7	Failure/delay in providing service	32
8	Bogus selling	29
9	Other misleading claims/omissions	22
10	Underage Sales	20
11	Failure/delay in delivery	19
12	Direct marketing to vulnerable groups	19
13	Counterfeiting	15
14	Customer service	15
15	Safety	14
16	Incorrect/misleading pre-shopping advice	14
17	(blank)	12
18	Labelling	12
19	Failure to provide cancellation rights	11
20	Breach of fiduciary duty/responsibility (e.g., breach of trust)	9

In Harrow, the reports of Substandard Services with **97** and Defective Goods with **78** are amongst the top types of breaches reported.

These are in line with reports received concerning Building Renovations Services and used vehicles



52.32%(598)Requests of the 1143 for Brent were against a business based in Brent and **49.96% (571)** were from a Brent resident.

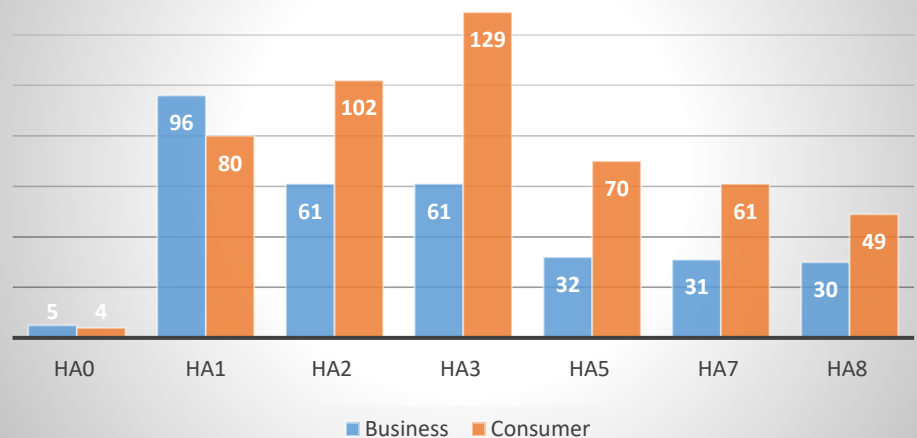
NW10 with **189** has the highest number of complaints made against a business based within this postcode area. It also has the highest number of residents making a complaint with **147**.

HA1, HA7, and HA8 these are areas that share a border with Harrow.

44.01% (316) service requests of the 718 Harrow figure were against businesses in Harrow and **68.94% (495)** of the 718 were made by a Harrow resident.

HA1 with **96** has the highest number of complaint made against a business within this area. recorded against this postcode whilst residents from **HA3** with **129** is the highest number of complaints made by residents within this area.

Harrow Requests per Post Code Area



Assessments (Based on each allocated service request)

Based on the analysis of the complaints/ service requests per each borough the following assessment has been reached

1. The service will continue to receive service requests from general members of the public.
2. As with previous years, used vehicles, building and renovation services will continue to be among the main goods/services that will be complained about.
3. The areas with a large concentration of shops and footfall will generate the most complaints in this case in Brent- NW10, HA9 and HA0, in Harrow this is HA1 and HA3

Recommendations

1. Enforcement actions to be focused on the hotspot areas and most complaints about businesses to educate and encourage businesses to be responsible and fair.
 - **Pros:** Target areas identified as having issues based on complaints, will hopefully reduce the number of complaints and raise compliance within the sector allowing the Service to be more focused on emerging trends
 - **Cons:** other areas within the boroughs may suffer from a lack of enforcement/education
2. Raise awareness amongst members of the public concerning their rights when buying goods, specifically when dealing with building and renovation businesses.
 - **Pros:** educating members of the public with regards to the law may empower them to make more informed decisions and this could reduce complaints around this sector
 - **Cons:** reliant on members of the public to attend and will have additional cost and officer's time
3. Compare the Hotspot Areas of Activity based on complaints received against other reports such as anti-social/ theft within the borough to identify if there might be a bigger/wider issue.
 - **Pros:** better insight as to perhaps one of the likelihoods of antisocial behaviour and tackling other crimes this may also reduce antisocial behaviour, the chance of partnership working across the Council
 - **Cons:** Other mapping is not readily available to Trading Standards and will take time to compile and liaise with another department within the councils and Police

**London Boroughs of Brent and Harrow
Trading Standards Joint Advisory Board
6 June 2024
Report from the Senior Service Manager**

Government Announcement on Tobacco and Vapes- Update

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 This report is an update on government's proposals to ban vapes containing tobacco.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 For Members to consider the report and make recommendations where appropriate.

3.0 DETAILS

Proposed ban on disposable vapes and bill relating to tobacco and vape controls.

3.1 On the 28 January 2024, government announced that disposable vapes will be banned in the UK as part of plans to tackle the rise in youth vaping and protect children's health. The Environmental Protection (Single-use Vapes) (England) Regulations 2024 (SUVR), is planned to come into effect from April 2025.

3.2 On the 20 March 2024 the government introduced the Tobacco and Vapes Bill (T&VB), which aims to address the harms associated with smoking and vaping, particularly among young people.

Reducing Appeal and Availability of Vaping Products

3.3 The key provisions of T&VB include;

- **Regulating flavours and contents**
The T&VB provides powers for government to regulate the flavours and contents of vapes. This is important because flavours play a significant role in attracting young people to vaping and make the products significantly more appealing to users due to the range and novelty of flavours offered.
- **Retail Packaging and Product Requirements**
The government will have powers to regulate the retail packaging and product requirements of vapes.
- **Point of Sale Displays**
The T&VB will allow measures to be taken to restrict the display of vapes in retail settings, making them less accessible, moving them out of sight of children and away from products that appeal to them (such as sweets).

- **Age Restrictions**
The existing offence of selling nicotine vaping products to individuals under 18 will be extended to non-nicotine vapes.
- **Ban on Free Distribution**
A ban on the free distribution of vapes to individuals under 18 will be introduced.
- **Vape Notification System**
T&VB will provide powers to allow the existing vape notification system to be updated to align with future regulatory requirements.

Creating a Smokefree Generation

- 3.4 The T&VB intends to create the first ever smokefree generation by;
- Making it an offence to sell tobacco products to those born on or after 1 January 2009. This effectively phases out the sale of tobacco products to younger generations.
 - Amending existing legislation to prohibit anyone over 18 from purchasing tobacco products on behalf of those born on or after 1 January 2009, known as proxy purchasing.
 - Requiring retailers to update age-of-sale notices to read “It is illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009.”
- 3.5 To help ensure the success of a smokefree generation, government is providing £30 million new funding a year and will bolster enforcement agencies – including Border Force, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and Trading Standards – to implement these measures and stamp out opportunities for criminals.

Disposable Vapes Ban

- 3.5 Under the SUV disposable vapes will be banned. The ban is expected to come into force from April 2025. This is to tackle the rise in youth vaping and protect children’s health. Recent figures show that the number of children using vapes has tripled in the past three years. Among younger children (ages 11 to 15), 9% now use vapes.
- 3.6 Disposable vapes have been a key driver behind the alarming rise in youth vaping, with the proportion of 11- to 17-year-olds vapers using disposables increasing almost ninefold in the last two years.

Enforcement

- 3.7 The T&VB will bring in new measures to crack down on underage sales. There will be new penalties for shops in England and Wales which sell tobacco and vapes illegally to children. Trading Standards officers will be empowered to issue ‘on the spot’ fixed penalty notices to tackle underage tobacco and vape sales.
- 3.8 The T&VB will require the weights and measures authority (otherwise known as Trading Standards) to use any money received from issuing the fixed penalty notice return to tobacco enforcement.

SUV Regulations

- 3.9 The SUV will require a local authority to allocate enforcement powers to specific officers. Enforcement will be by notices of intent, fixed penalty notices, stop notices and undertakings.
- 3.10 The council will have to decide who will be authorised to enforce the SUV.
- 3.11 The council will have to publish information about enforcement action under the SUV. The council must go through a consultation process and publish guidance about the use of sanctions. In effect the SUV will require its own enforcement policy or be incorporated into the service's own policy.

Trading Standards Interests

- 3.12 The consortium holds membership of ACTSO (Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers) who are currently representing the profession liaising with government to ensure any proposals are workable, responding to questions and consultations, lobbying for appropriate funding for local authorities to conduct this work and representing our wider interests in this subject area.

3.13 Tobacco Group

The service is a partner in both boroughs' tobacco groups. We supply information on locations and areas we find illicit tobacco, underage sales of tobacco and vapes and outcomes of any investigations. The group also supply information which helps direct our resources.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications from this report at this stage. There will be implications in the future, when government confirms the extent of local authorities role and the new legislation is passed.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The expected legal implications are set out in this report. The full implications are not yet known until legislation is passed.

6.0 Equality Implications

- 6.1 The proposals in this report have been screened to assess their relevance to equality and were found to have no equality implications.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

- 7.1 There is no requirement to specifically consult Ward Members about this report as it affects all wards across both Boroughs.

8.0 Human Resources Implications

- 8.1 There are no human resource or property implications arising from this report.

Contact Officer

MEETING DATE: 6 June 2024
VERSION NO: 1

Any person wishing to obtain more information should contact Anu Prashar, Senior Regulatory Service Manager, Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley Middlesex HA9 0FJ. Telephone: (020) 8937 55215, anu.prashar@brent.gov.uk

ANU PRASHAR
SENIOR REGULATORY SERVICE MANAGER

**London Boroughs of Brent & Harrow
Trading Standards Joint Advisory Board
6 June 2024
Report from the Senior Service Manager**

FOR INFORMATION

FUNERAL DIRECTORS AND TRADING STANDARDS VISITS

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report notifies members of a letter sent to council Leaders and Chief Executives regarding the current concerns and public confidence in the funeral director profession.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Joint Advisory Board Members take note of the report and provide comment where appropriate.

3.0 Details

- 3.1 In April 2024 the Leader and Chief Executive received a letter from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC). This letter addressed the serious issues and concerns of the distressing incident at Legacy Independent Funeral Directors in Hull and East Riding.
- 3.2 The MOJ have the responsibility for funeral homes and the DLUHC are responsible for local government. The letter stated that they were concerned that this incident could affect public confidence in the funeral sector as this sector is largely unregulated. There is currently no statutory regulation of funeral directors, so councils do not have specific powers or responsibilities to oversee these businesses.
- 3.3 The government is looking is looking to introduce formal regulation and the MOJ will be launching a call for evidence in the coming months. But for now, they want to reassure the public that the sector as a whole is safe, professional, and cares for loved ones in the way we would all want.
- 3.4 The government has asked Trading Standards and Environmental Health officers, to visit local funeral directors to ensure compliance against a framework assessment that they have produced. The assessment will help to determine any future regulatory framework will include areas such as health and safety, operational procedures and care of the deceased.

- 3.5 At the time of report, officers have booked to attend a training seminar to learn exactly what government are intending with these inspections and the process for compliance.
- 3.6 It is expected that the events in Hull and East riding are in no way typical of the funeral industry but are necessary to provide reassurance to both customers and businesses.
- 3.7 The visits were supported by the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) and the National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors (SAIF) who have agreed that they will nominate a named, senior, and trusted funeral director within each local authority area, to be a point of contact for councils and help if needed.
- 3.8 Trading Standards will liaise with Environmental Health and our Funeral Service colleagues, the MOJ and the trade bodies as required.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Trading Standards Service expect these inspections to be carried out within the existing budget.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.0 Equality Implications

- 6.1 The proposals in this report have been screened to assess their relevance to equality and were found to have no equality implications.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

- 7.1 There is no requirement to specifically consult Ward Members about this report as it affects all wards across both Boroughs.

8.0 Human Resources Implications

- 8.1 There are no staffing or property implications arising from this report.

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