

Brent and Harrow

Trading Standards

Annual Report
2020/2021



Regulatory Covid team including Trading Standards staff before visiting businesses.

Introduction

This Annual Report highlights some of the key work outcomes delivered by the Trading Standards Service for the period of the April 2020 to March 2021. The service is managed by Anu Prashar with Samuel Abdullahi covering a Team Leader role. The Service

Manager reports to the Head of Regulatory Service, Simon Legg, who has overall responsibility for Food Safety, Air Quality, Licencing and Health and Safety. This team sits within the wider Regeneration and Environment directorate.

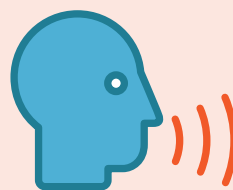
Covid 19 Pandemic

The Trading Standards Service work has been dominated by the national response to the Covid 19 Pandemic and our need to respond to issues that have arisen during this time. There has been rapid changes and issuing of new legislation, some of which, with relatively short notice. Officers had to get to grips with interpreting this legislation, enforcing it and training up colleagues in other Services. The Trading Standards team continues to be at the fore front in providing rapid and very responsive solutions to the interpretation and implementation of the various legislative changes imposed on the nation and the regional tiers, as we have progressed through dealing with the pandemic.



COVID ENFORCEMENT ACTION

43 Prohibition Notices were issued to non compliant traders and
15 Fixed Penalty Notices issued
resulting in a total of
£14,500
in penalties.



13,332
businesses visited and
checked and
2,985
businesses advised
verbally and in writing.

The team
have had almost

40
pieces of
new legislation
on Covid to enforce.



Product Safety

Advisory work remains a constant for local businesses on safety issues including support around due diligence, compliance, risk assessments and importation of goods. We have worked with our national regulator, the Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) to identify sellers of unsafe products in our area and online.

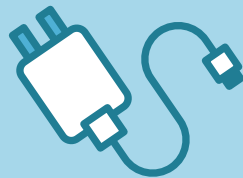


The team intercepted the importation of **2000 fire blankets** and **2300 hair clippers**.

These were found to be unsafe, and destroyed. The same items were found on the sites of 37 other national sellers which had their listings removed.

100 unsafe

mobile phone adapters seized from a trader



100

non compliant cosmetics removed from sale preventing any risk or harm to consumers



The sites of online sellers have been suspended following intervention by the team

1,000 expanding decorative balls which failed to comply with General Product Safety Regulations were removed from its selling platform.



68

used car dealers advised on their legal obligations. The Service consistently receives high numbers of complaints including unroadworthy and unsafe cars.



Consumer Advice

The Service continues to work with our partners Citizen's Advice Consumer Service. Any enquiries they receive which concern either a Brent or Harrow resident or business are referred to us if an alleged criminal breach is identified. Unfortunately, we cannot investigate every complaint so we continue to operate a system of risk assessing each enquiry and prioritise the most serious ones to ensure our resources are applied to those situations where they are needed the most.

679

complaints investigated by the team



Doorstep Crime



7 rapid response visits

to our most vulnerable residents who were targeted by rogue traders for unnecessary work and inflated costs. These crimes include aggressive business practices. Over £11,000 saved by our consumers as a result of our interventions.

We have supported those residents by overseeing the appointment of new, legitimate builders to resolve damage caused by rogue traders.

We have

8 video doorbells

which are in the homes of our most vulnerable residents, including those who have been victim of doorstep crime.



Ports work

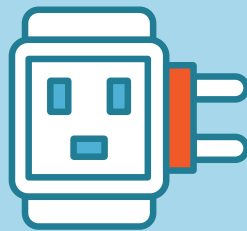
We continue to deal with referrals from the Ports team of non-compliant products stopped at the borders designated for our area. Following Brexit in order to avoid delays at the borders, the team supervised importations from our businesses to check compliance at a local level. This includes cosmetics, personal protective equipment (PPE) and electrical goods. We have dealt with over a million items of non-complaint PPE/Medical masks and thousands of litres of hand sanitiser. Visits have been carried out to large scale importers supplying PPE nationally to small cottage enterprises with little or no knowledge on the legal requirements of these items. We have worked with Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and OPSS to ensure non compliant items do not enter the UK, are removed from the market, or repurposed where possible.



1,000,000 counterfeit filtering face masks removed from the UK Market.

303,000 face masks removed and destroyed from the supply chain.

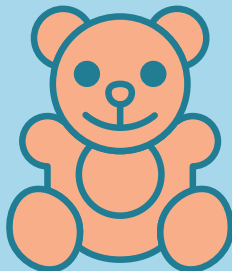
500,000 medical face masks quarantined/or repurpose as face coverings with labelling and instruction changes.



30,000 units of a Travel Adapter posing a risk of fire or overheating as a result of poor electrical connections. We worked with the business to take appropriate corrective action and a formal product recall was issued.



We intervened in the importation of over **150,000** hand sanitisers for incomplete labelling, or misleading anti-bacterial claims. These items were either refused entry and re-exported out of the UK, or are due to be destroyed.



The Service was notified about the importation of

1400 toys inadequately labelled. We worked with the importer on relabelling to bring the goods into compliance and Christmas orders could be met.

Business Advice

We continue to provide advice to businesses and traders to help enable and support economic growth during these difficult times. Our experience is that the majority of businesses and traders in Brent and Harrow seek to trade fairly and ensure they maintain necessary standards. Our support, increases business confidence, helps to streamline processes, reduce costs and maximise compliance with a wide ranging spectrum of legislation. We have publicised advice and guidance around the EU exit and the end of transition period to offer guidance to businesses whose economic role will alter thereafter. We have highlighted the new requirements of the UK based Cosmetic Product Notification (SCPN) to support our cosmetic importers and ensure they are up to speed with the new rules.

114

Traders and businesses given advice of over 100 hours on other areas not including Covid 19.



83 Hours

supporting our Primary Authority businesses with advice, assistance and dealing with their requests as a priority



Financial Investigations

The Financial Investigation team secured 17
confiscation orders secured totalling

£2,065,498.10

38

production orders were granted at Crown Court for
access to defendant's financial records, e.g. bank
accounts etc.

1

restraint order secured.

The service received

£431,017.34

from the Home Office as part of the Asset Recovery
Incentivisation Scheme

Intelligence

We fed

**107 intelligence
reports**



into the National Intelligence
database which has assisted in
prioritising our own work,
sharing information on a national
basis and identifying common
trends and threats to our
consumers and businesses.



Case details for the POCA order totalling £739k

On 12th February 2021 a Crown Court Judge ordered a landlord to pay back £739,263.58 in illicit earnings made from overcrowded properties in Willesden. It is believed to be the largest order for a planning breach made anywhere in the country this financial year (2020/2021). The enormous order was made following a prosecution brought by the London Borough of Brent. The Judge sitting at Harrow Crown Court, made the order against the defendant and told him that he would face a prison term of 5 years and 9 months if he did not pay the order in full within three months. The defendant was found guilty of failing to comply with planning enforcement notices in April 2018 at Willesden Magistrates Court, as a result of investigations by Brent Councils Planning Enforcement Team. The case was then referred to Harrow Crown Court for confiscation proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. Detailed investigations carried out by a Financial Investigator revealed the extent of the illicit earnings made by illegally renting out the properties, which were owned by the defendant and his father. The properties were used as houses in multiple occupation providing undersized and substandard accommodation. The defendant was also ordered to pay Brent council £30,000.00 to cover its legal costs in the long-running case.

Fireworks



29

firework licences
were issued by
the service.

Training

Staff received over

200 hours

training to enhance their
knowledge and skills.



Award



**Andy
Faulkner**

won the

'Judges Award'

in the Fighting Fraud and
Corruption Locally Awards 2020
for his hard work and
professionalism in bringing a
criminal gang to justice in 2019.