

**London Boroughs of Brent & Harrow  
Trading Standards Joint Advisory Board  
12 October 2022  
Report from the Senior Service Manager**

**FOR INFORMATION**

**ONLINE MARKETPLACE PRODUCT SAFETY UPDATE**

**1.0 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To provide a briefing to the Joint Advisory Board Members on the implementation and interim results of the Trading Standards Service's participation in an online marketplace product safety project for the London Trading Standards (LTS) Region.

**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 LTS is comprised of 32 London member boroughs with many of these having individual officers who are involved in specialised groups that reflect the main areas of Trading Standards work. The LTS product safety group have been involved in many projects in recent years including the following, part worn tyres, skin lightening cosmetics, after market phone chargers and toy safety projects.
- 3.2 This year's project commenced in June 2022. It was agreed to make the best use of our resources, this product safety project would focus on identifying non-compliant and unsafe products sold via the two large online marketplaces, AMAZON and eBay. Both of these websites have Primary Authority agreements with two local authorities, which helped to facilitate the removal of any unsafe goods in an efficient manner and in many cases, immediately.
- 3.3 The Service had already worked with eBay prior to this project so we were able to utilise our pre-existing relationship which also assisted us.
- 3.4 Most products purchased online by Brent or Harrow based consumers, will be supplied from businesses that are outside of our areas or indeed sourced from overseas sellers. This can create issues identifying which local authority has jurisdiction over the seller and exactly where the goods and/or the trader is based. In this project, the removal of listings for non-complaint and unsafe products and potential sanctions imposed against sellers by the hosting website such as suspension of seller's accounts, enables a simplified route to remove unsafe goods from supply chains and I protect online consumers.

- 3.5 The project brief prioritised certain products based on intelligence and previous complaints received. These indicated a high level of concerns regarding items such as skin lightening cosmetics, products purporting to be cosmetics but are in fact unlicensed medicines, phone chargers, mothballs and electrical adapters.
- 3.6 Appendix A contains examples of unsafe products the Service was able to identify which were subsequently removed from sale.
- 3.7 The sample products shown in this report are just a small representative sample of the varied products that we have identified and had removed. A number of the unsafe products were listed as shipped from countries outside of the U.K. where these products are not subject to the same in-depth safety legislation. These countries include China, Jamaica, India and Sri Lanka.
- 3.8 To date, the Service has requested the removal of over 1,300 listings, relating to over 2000 individual products. The project is continuing until March of 2023 and therefore it is expected that these figures will increase significantly.
- 3.9 A number of previously undiscovered issues for example the decanting of larger cosmetics containers into smaller ones, where traceability and the safety of the product cannot be verified, a manufacturer of cosmetics outside of the UK placing their products on the market without evidence that the products are safe. These have been reported to the Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) who are currently undertaking their own supply chain investigation and sampling project.
- 3.10 The websites have also used our feedback to identify possible issues with their compliance procedures and have also improved their 'algorithm' system that automatically identifies illegal items listed by sellers. They have also suspended or removed seller accounts where continued non-compliance has been identified.
- 3.11 As the project continues, our work will feed into the wider LTS project. The Service will expect that both AMAZON and eBay to take the necessary steps to make sure that only safe products are listed and those that are not are removed. We will publicise the final results at the end of this project.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The up-front costs of test purchasing and testing are met by OPSS.

#### **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](mailto:anu.prashar@brent.gov.uk)

ANU PRASHAR  
**SENIOR REGULATORY SERVICE MANAGER**