

Warwickshire Trading Standards

2024-2025 Business Plan

Priorities, Key Areas and Emerging Trends

March 2024

Mission Statement

To create a fair and safe trading environment, supporting growth of legitimate businesses, and protecting consumers

Our Priorities

PRIORITY 1 - PROTECT
Protecting those at risk from the highest harm

PRIORITY 2 - PREVENT
Preventing harmful products from entering the market

PRIORITY 3 - PARTNERSHIP
Establishing strong partnerships to keep our communities safe

EFFICIENT AND RESPONSIVE SERVICE

STRONG COMMUNICATION

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

INTELLIGENCE

PRIORITY 1

PROTECT

Protecting those at risk of the highest harm

This includes supporting those who have suffered harm which is directly caused by a criminal offence. Harm includes physical mental, emotional or psychological, including financial loss.

- **Key Areas**

- Doorstep Crime and Rogue Trading
- Scams
- Crime committed on-line
- Weights and measures
- Fraud

- **Emerging Trends**

- Raising awareness of scams and financial abuse in partnership with the National Trading Standards (NTS) Scams Team.
- Cost of living crisis.

What does the data tell us?

- According to UK Finance, £580 million was stolen by criminals through fraud in the first six months of 2023.
- According to the Office for National Statistics, there were 3.2 million fraud offences in England and Wales for the year ending September 2023.



- Between January 2022 – January 2024, food prices rose by 24.8% according to UK parliament.
- In the past 12 months, 425 complaints were received in relation to doorstep crime by Warwickshire consumers. This figure has stayed consistent from the last year.
- According to Friends Against Scams, 73% of UK adults have been targeted by scams, with 35% losing money.

PRIORITY 2

PREVENT

Preventing harmful products from entering the market

- **Key Areas**

- Food safety including allergens
- Animal health and disease control
- Food and feed hygiene
- Used cars and vehicle safety
- Product safety including construction products
- Supply of illicit tobacco including nicotine inhaling products (vapes)

- **Emerging Trends**

- Imported food
- Be responsive to new legislation on allergen labelling for restaurant menus
- Research and testing within the market of novel foods
- Fulfilment houses

What does the data tell us?



- Between April 2023 – March 2024, 517 used cars complaints were made to Citizen's advice regarding Warwickshire Traders.
- 103 Animal Health visits were conducted between April 2023 and March 2024, 80 of which were visits to farms in the Warwickshire area.
- Warwickshire Trading Standards have visited 41 retailers which are selling imported food products, including 11 food importers.

- According to Kent County Council, thousands of illegal vapes are being bought into the country via the Port of Dover. Last year more than a million were examined and half seized.
- In the last 12 months, since April 2023, Warwickshire Trading Standards have seized 12,087 unsafe oversized illegal vapes.



PRIORITY 3

PARTNERSHIP

Establish strong partnerships to keep our communities safe

- **Key Areas**

- Housing and the private rental sector
- Intellectual property
- Petroleum and explosives
- Age-restricted sales
- Sale of knives including zombie knives and machetes

- **Emerging Trends**

- Widen out market work to protect consumers and protect legitimate businesses.
- Working with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue on fires caused by unsafe products.
- On-line age restricted sales.
- Making better use of social media to keep consumers and businesses informed.

What does the data tell us?

- Between April 2023 – March 2024, 129 Test Purchases were carried out by Warwickshire Trading Standards. Approximately 12% of premises sold age restricted goods (including vapes, alcohol, tobacco, and knives) to an underage person. This is an 11% decrease from the previous year.
- Out of 25 Warwickshire retailers visited, 24% sold a knife to an underage person.
- According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS), the West Midlands saw an increase of 5% of knife enabled crime from September 2022 – September 2023.
- The ONS also reports that, between March 2022 and March 2023, 3,314 young persons aged between 10-17 in England and Wales were found in possession of a knife or offensive weapon resulting in caution or conviction.
- In the last 12 months, Warwickshire Trading Standards have seized 906,920 illegal cigarettes and 129.3kg of hand rolling tobacco.



How we measure our impact

EDUCATION

- % feedback survey response rate
- % satisfaction with Trading Standards action
- No. of communications published
- Social media reach (likes and shares)

ENFORCEMENT

- No. of successful prosecutions / court actions
- No. of other enforcement outcomes
- Value of monies recovered / financial losses prevented
- No. of websites taken down

COMPLIANCE

- No. of visits across the service and % of those compliant
- % of premises compliant with food labelling legislation
- No. of farm animal welfare inspections carried out
- No. of visits and other enforcement activities against counterfeit vapes and tobacco
- No. of age restricted test purchase operations

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