



Information Governance Team

Postal Address:
Coventry City Council
PO Box 15
Council House
Coventry
CV1 5RR

www.coventry.gov.uk

E-mail: infogov@coventry.gov.uk

Phone: 024 7697 5408

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Dear Sir/Madam

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

Request ID: FOI631060540

Thank you for your request for information relating to Trading Standards Service.

Please see the attached document.

Please note we have noted where we do not hold the information and therefore advising you as per Section 1(1) of the Act.

We are also relying upon the exemption(s) in Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which relates to 'information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means.' Some of the requested information is published and publicly available to view by accessing the Council website, the relevant webpage links have been provided.

The supply of information in response to a FOI/EIR request does not confer an automatic right to re-use the information. You can use any information supplied for the purposes of private study and non-commercial research without requiring further permission. Similarly, information supplied can also be re-used for the purposes of news reporting. An exception to this is photographs. Please contact us if you wish to use the information for any other purpose.

For information, we publish a variety of information such as: [FOI/EIR Disclosure Log](#), [Publication Scheme](#), [Facts about Coventry](#) and [Open Data](#) that you may find of useful if you are looking for information in the future.

If you are unhappy with the handling of your request, you can ask us to review our response. Requests for reviews should be submitted within 40 days of the date of receipt of our response to

your original request – email: infogov@coventry.gov.uk

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our review, you can write to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or email icocasework@ico.org.uk.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in your response.

Yours faithfully

Information Governance

Trading standards - FOI questions for LAs

What is the name of the Local Authority your Trading Standards Service covers?

Coventry City Council

If you operate as a combined service, please enter the names of all the Local Authorities that fall within your service.

Section 1 - Resources

What was the total budget for your local authority Trading Standards Service for the 2023-24 financial year (1st April 2023- 31st March 2024)?

£245,737 (Employee Salaries)
£414,051(Total Budget)

What was the total budget for your local authority Trading Standards Service for the 2022-23 financial year (1st April 2022- 31st March 2023)?

£243,433 (Employee Salaries)
£435,310(Total Budget)

What was the total budget for your local authority Trading Standards Service for the 2021-22 financial year (1st April 2021- 31st March 2022)?

£234,175 (Employee Salaries Budget)
£419, 738 (Total Budget)

In the 2023-24 financial year (1st April 2023- 31st March 2024), what proportion of your Trading Standards Service's funding came from the following sources?

If you do not have the exact figure, please provide an approximation

| Source | % of funding (please sum to 100%) |
|--|--|
| Central government local authority funding | 1.17% (of total budget) 2.1% (of employees salaries budget) |
| Other central government or regulator funding for specific functions | 0.28% (of total budget) 0.5% (of employee salaries budget) |
| Devolved government funding | N/A |
| Regional funding | N.A |
| National Trading Standards or Trading Standards Scotland funding | N/A |

Which?

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Primary Authority Partnership funding | N/A |
| Other, please specify | |

How many full time equivalent staff, including contractors, work in your service? Please enter a numerical value next to each category.

We have provided the current number of Officers working, however, there are vacant posts which we trying to recruit to.

Which?

| Staff type | Permanent full time | Contractors | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|--|--|
| Professionally qualified staff undertaking Trading Standards work (this includes staff holding DCATS, CTSP, DTS or equivalent qualification). | 1 (Partially qualified) | | | |
| Other professionally qualified staff undertaking Trading Standards work e.g. Environmental Health Officers | 0.6 FTE | | | |
| Other staff undertaking Trading Standards work e.g. apprentices | 3.6 FTE | | | |
| Administrative/support staff. | | | | |

For which of the following do you have Trading Standards officers with specialist competencies in the area?

| Specialist competency | Yes/No |
|--|--------|
| Unfair commercial practices | Yes |
| Consumer Rights Act breaches | Yes |
| Prices and pricing practices | Yes |
| Motor trade | Yes |
| Travel and holiday industry | Yes |
| Renewable energy and home improvements | Yes |
| Doorstep crime, including rogue trading | Yes |
| Product safety | Yes |
| Intellectual Property | Yes |
| Metrology / weights and measures | No |
| Age-restricted sales | Yes |
| Food standards | No (|
| Animal feed | No |
| Animal health and welfare | No |
| E-crime - this includes email scams, phishing, fake websites or copycat websites | Yes |

Which?

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Consumer Advice | Yes |
| Other (please specify) | N/A |

Do you share any of the following services with Trading Standards departments in other local authorities? If so, who do you share with?

| Area | Shared? Y/N | Who with? |
|--|-------------|-----------|
| Fair trading | N | |
| Product safety | N | |
| Intellectual Property | N | |
| Metrology / weights and measures | N | |
| Age-restricted Sales | N | |
| Food Standards | N | |
| Animal feed | N | |
| Animal health and welfare | N | |
| E-crime - this includes email scams, phishing, fake websites or copycat websites | N | |
| Consumer advice | N | |
| Other (please specify) | N | |

Section 2 - Demand and prioritisation

How many referrals and notifications did you receive to your services in the April 2023-March 2024 financial year in the following categories?

| Category | Referrals | Notifications |
|--|---|---|
| Overall | 1490 | 2924 |
| Doorstep crime - this includes all rogue trading that takes place at the consumer's home | 247 | 213 |
| Scams - this includes mail fraud, telephone scams, and any other outright criminal activity that takes place from a distance (but excludes online fraud) | 62 | 67 |
| E-crime - this includes email scams, phishing, fake websites or copycat websites | Unable to provide No CACS database code | Unable to provide No CACS database code |

Which?

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Food Standards | N/A (Environmental Health function) | N/A (Environmental Health function) |
| Motor vehicle sales | 380 | 798 |
| Motor vehicle repairs | 72 | 153 |
| Travel and holiday industry | 513 | 159 |
| Renewable energy and home improvements | 312 | 329 |
| Illegal tobacco & alcohol | 16 (CACS) 122 (other referrals) | 1 |
| Offensive weapons sales | Unable to provide No CACS database code | Unable to provide No CACS database code |
| Vapes | 10 (CACS) 122 (other referrals) | 0 |
| Property – including lettings and estate agents | 12 | 29 |
| Fair trading - including pricing, terms and conditions and descriptions of goods | 224 | 414 |
| Animal health | 1 | 11 |
| Product safety | 149 | 97 |
| Other | N/A | N/A |

How many of the referrals received in the financial year 2023-24 did you take forward / investigate?

If you do not formally collect this information, please provide an estimate

| Category | Number of referrals investigated |
|--|--|
| Overall | 963 |
| Doorstep crime - this includes all rogue trading that takes place at the consumer's home | 140 |
| Scams - this includes mail fraud, telephone scams, and any other outright criminal activity that takes place from a distance (but excludes online fraud) | 40 |
| E-crime - this includes email scams, phishing, fake websites or copycat websites | Unable to provide No CACS database code |
| Food standards | N/A (Environmental Health function) |
| Motor vehicle sales | 198 |

Which?

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Motor vehicle repairs | 41 |
|-----------------------|----|

Which?

| | |
|--|-----|
| Travel and holiday industry | 286 |
| Renewable energy and home improvements | 186 |
| Illegal tobacco & alcohol | 138 |
| Offensive weapons sales | 0 |
| Vapes | 132 |
| Property – including lettings and estate agents | 11 |
| Fair trading - including pricing, terms and conditions and descriptions of goods | 149 |
| Animal health | 1 |
| Product safety | 70 |
| Other | N/A |

Of those referrals that you did not take forward, how often have the following been reasons why?

| Reason | Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|--|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| We did not have the staff hours required | | x | | | |
| We did not have the relevant specialist skills | | | x | | |
| The referrals did not merit investigation | | x | | | |
| The referrals did not fall into our priority areas | | | | x | |
| Other, please specify | | | | | |

Approximately what proportion of your investigations pertain to the online activities of a business?

1. 0-10%
2. 10-20%
3. 20-30%
4. 30-40%
5. 40-50%
6. More than 50%

What are the top three priority issues for your service?

Illicit Tobacco and Vaping Products

Doorstep Crime / Scams

Product Safety (including motor vehicles)

Can you set out any aspects of your remit that you have had to de-prioritise over the past five years?

Animal Health & Feed Hygiene (due to low demand and lack of specialist knowledge)

Section 3 - Enforcement activities/outcomes

In the 2023-24 financial year (1st April 2023- 31st March 2024)...

1. How many routine (i.e. not responding directly to a complaint) inspections on businesses did you carry out? **189**
2. How many seizures of unsafe/non-compliant products did you make? **72 Seizures**
3. How many hours of advice did you provide for businesses on their obligations under consumer law (excluding Primary Authority advice)? **107 hours**
4. How many hours of advice did you provide for businesses for which your service holds a Primary Authority relationship? **Nil**
5. How many voluntary undertakings did you secure from businesses? **Nil**
6. How many test purchases did you carry out? **68**
7. How many cautions did you issue? **3**

How many enforcement orders and formal warning notices did you serve in the following categories in the 2023-24 financial year?

| Category | Formal warning notices | Enforcement orders |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Overall | | |
| Food standards | N/A | N/A |
| Motor vehicles (sales & repairs) | 14 | |
| Home improvements | Unable to provide No Data Held | Unable to provide No Data Held |
| Travel and holiday industry | 0 | 0 |
| Illegal tobacco & alcohol | 54 | 3 Closure Orders |
| Property – including lettings and estate agents | 12 | 9 |
| Fair trading - including pricing, terms and conditions and descriptions of goods | 8 | 0 |
| Product safety | 2 | 0 |
| Other | N/A | N/A |

Which?

How many criminal prosecutions and civil enforcement actions did you bring forward in the 2023-24 financial year?

| Category | Criminal | Civil |
|--|----------|-----------------|
| Overall | 0 | 13 |
| Doorstep crime - this includes all rogue trading that takes place at the consumer's home | | |
| Scams - this includes mail fraud, telephone scams, and any other outright criminal activity that takes place from a distance (but excludes online fraud) | | |
| E-crime - this includes email scams, phishing, fake websites or copycat websites | | |
| Food standards | | |
| Motor vehicles (sales & repairs) | | |
| Illegal tobacco & alcohol | | 4 Closure Order |
| Offensive weapons sales | | |
| Property – including lettings and estate agents | | 9 |
| Fair trading - including pricing, terms and conditions and descriptions of goods | | |
| Animal Health | | |
| Product safety | | |

Please could you provide a copy of your latest enforcement policy?

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/housing-enforcement/public-safety-housing-enforcement-policy>

This is currently under review and is being updated.

We also refer to housing enforcement policy <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/housing-enforcement/private-sector-housing-enforcement-policy>

Please enter any other comments or additional information that you feel is relevant.

Resources – Employee actual spend is lower than budget due to long term sickness and difficulties being able to recruit to posts as many Trading Standards Practitioners are leaving local authorities to work as contractors.

We are currently implementing a new database, therefore, the reported figures reflect the data held. However, some information is an estimation as suggested.