

**2018/19**

# THE VALUE OF TRADING STANDARDS REPORT

The impacts and outcomes of local  
trading standards services

A report by the Association of Chief





## Detriment and redress

Supporting victims is of paramount importance to local trading standards services. Where victims have suffered at the hands of criminals, redress and compensation can be secured

actively prevented potential victims from handing over cash supported people to help them obtain redress, included:

### Case study: Fraud and money laundering

A rogue trader in Kent conned thousands of pounds driveways and patios. The fraud was sophisticated, persistent, carefully planned and professionally executed, many of his victims were elderly or vulnerable.

The trader made claims that were completely false or created a false impression such as that the

years and had completed major works at well-known sites to encourage his victims to enter into contracts with his company. He used a variety of aliases in correspondence with customers to give the impression of a large company with multiple departments, despite being a one-man band. When his victims made complaints to the business they were threatened with court action or ignored, in

Kent trading standards prosecuted and the rogue trader pleaded guilty to nineteen offences of fraud and one of money laundering. He was banned from being a company director and sentenced to more than three years imprisonment.

### Case study: Grooming vulnerable victims

borough council prevented two vulnerable siblings, a brother and sister, from losing their house to criminals. Over a number of years, the pair in

known rogue trader who eventually attempted to

Not only did the man attempt to befriend the pair but he knew the parents of the two victims and used this relationship to portray himself as a friend of the family. When the siblings visited the bank with the criminal and requested a mortgage statement with a view to selling the house, bank staff fortunately alerted trading standards despite the siblings believing they were selling their house to a close

to prevent the worst from happening and safeguard the family's property and stop the sale.

Royal Greenwich trading standards had to take

that they were embroiled in a scam. An appointee has been put in place to help the victims manage

## CHAPTER 2: SUPPORTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

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An important part of trading standards services is the support and advice provided to businesses operating in a complex global marketplace. While most businesses are keen to work within the law and want to ensure their products are safe, the landscape can be complicated to navigate. To support legitimate businesses, trading standards offers advice and training on consumer protection legislation as well as policing the marketplace to safeguard businesses and ensure that companies are

**CHAPTER 3:** PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING

## Reducing the availability of illicit products

than the legitimate product as it avoids paying duty upon entrance into the UK. Another proportion of products on sale are counterfeit products which are cheaply produced cigarettes or tobacco in copied packaging. The presence of such goods in local shops undermines government attempts to reduce levels of smoking as it is price, as well

Moreover, sellers of illicit goods often have little concern for observing the law on underage sales. As a result, products are more easily available to children, damaging attempts to prevent underage smoking and drinking.

Illicit products are not manufactured in regulated environments resulting in limited controls on their composition. Illicit alcohol may contain excessive quantities of methanol which can cause blindness and even death whilst counterfeit cigarettes may not be designed to self-

can be fatal. Also, as with other counterfeit goods, sales of illicit tobacco and alcohol are often linked to other offences. The case study mentioned below shows a link

organised criminal activity such as money laundering through the sale of illegal products.

- Illicit tobacco was seized from **944** premises
- **15,331,050** illicit cigarettes were seized, worth an estimated **£7,665,525**
- **3,444,012** grams of illicit hand-rolling tobacco was seized, worth **£1,033,203**
- **72,274** niche tobacco products



- least **£35,898**
- Illicit alcohol was seized from **85** premises
- **49,480** litres of alcohol was seized

## Alcohol case study



The detection of trading standards offences can lead to the discovery of other illegal activities. Southwark trading standards were investigating a Peckham convenience store for breach of its fan for ventilation which was housing two illegal workers, paid well below the minimum wage.

The conditions were described by the District Judge as akin to modern slavery. During this and follow up visits the council uncovered the sale of smuggled super strength lagers and the store failed a test purchase

## Tobacco case study

After an initial seizure of illicit tobacco at premises in Hertfordshire, complaints continued to be made to trading standards. A test purchase resulted in the sale of more illicit products. An

uncover an extremely elaborate concealment system involving a hole cut through the wall to an

resulting seizure was the largest single seizure made by Hertfordshire trading standards.

## Illicit tobacco case study

Evidence from trading standards suggests that in most cases of tobacco seizures, the shops were restocked and selling the next day. Medway trading standards has devised an innovative solution to this problem by reducing the availability of premises to criminals. Relying on the money laundering provisions of the Proceeds of Crime Act, they contact landlords explaining that the rent

