

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

**REPORT OF THE INTERIM ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF
REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT
TO THE LICENSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

23 JUNE 2021
ALL WARDS

REGULATION & ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY REPORT
FEBRUARY & MARCH 2021

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 Birmingham City Council's Regulation and Enforcement Division covers range of statutory functions including enforcement activities.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with information as to the scale and type of activities that have been ongoing in the current financial year. This period covers the month of February and March 2021.

2. **Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the content of the report be noted.

Contact Officer: Paul Lankester, Interim Assistant Director Regulation & Enforcement
Telephone: 0121 675 2495
E-mail: paul.lankester@birmingham.gov.uk

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The range of functions exercised by officers on behalf of the City Council are varied and occur across all parts of the city. The overview of activities in February and March 2021 is set out in the Appendix to this report.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 No public consultation has taken place, as this is an information report.

5. Implications for Resources

- 5.1 None

6. Implications for Policy Priorities

- 6.1 None

7. Public Sector Equality Duty

- 7.1 No further equality issues have been identified, as all enforcement activities are carried in accordance with the adopted enforcement policy, which was the subject of an equalities impact assessment.

INTERIM ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Background Papers: Nil

REGULATION & ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY REPORT **FEBRUARY & MARCH 2021**

Introduction

The way the Council enforces its regulatory activities under the terms of the relevant legislation has altered significantly since the outbreak of Covid 19. Changes have been made to comply with national guidance and the introduction of new legislation. This report provides a snapshot of enforcement activity for the services in Regulation and Enforcement since lockdown. While services are seeking to enter the recovery phase, many services are reliant on changes to Government legislation and guidance.

Detailed Action

The table below sets out the activities undertaken in Q1 (April to June); Q2 (July to September) Q3 (October to December) and Q4 (January to March 2021)

Environmental Health and Trading Standards

Activity	Env. Health				Trading Standards			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Prosecution agreed	57	76	75	69	7	7	1	11
Simple Cautions	4	4	3	1		4	1	2
Statutory Notices served	26	58	44	74				
Coronavirus Enforcement	254	1,709	2,142	1,225				
Requests for Actions Received	10,946	13,617	10,248	3,938	1,118	1,364	1,206	1,370
Requests for Actions closed	10,307	12,687	9,123	3,038	1,252	1,348	1,240	1,360

Activity Table for Environmental Health and Trading Standards

Environmental Health

	Q1	Q2	Q3		Q4		Year Total
Work type	RFA Total	RFA Total	RFA Total	PI Target met	RFA Total	PI Target met	RFA Total
Accidents	92	109	76	76	23	23	300
Dogs	415	549	487	484	172	169	1,623
Infectious Disease	122	169	159	151	45	44	495
Pest Control	4,159	5,292	3,514	3,475	1,147	1,136	14,112
Request for Assistance	6,158	7,498	6,012	4,327	2,551	2,106	22,219
Total	10,946	13,617	10,248	8,513	3,938	3,478	38,473

Analysis of Requests for Assistance (RFA)

The analysis of the types of activity in Environmental Health is shown above.

The Service continues to undertake inspections and provide advice on Covid compliance. Through monies provided by the Director of Public Health we are recruiting 8 extra officers solely focused on Covid compliance checks.

Additionally, the Government has announced nationally the investment of £30m for increased Enforcement and Compliance checks. Birmingham's share of this is £889k to be spent in the four months ending February 2021.

The Environmental Health Covid Response Team (Enforcement, compliance, outbreaks and contact tracing) consists of Enforcement Officers and Covid Marshals. The Compliance and Enforcement Grant (Government Covid grant monies) has financed 32 Covid Marshals, three Covid Marshal supervisors, two business support staff and an additional three Enforcement Officers. These additional temporary staff have complimented the Environmental Health substantive Covid response team and management.

From March 2021 the Compliance and Enforcement programme is due to cease and at present there is no indication from Government as to whether further funding will be allocated to continue this service.

Since November 2020, 14,500 city businesses have been checked for compliance by the Marshals and Covid Enforcement Officers

Covid Marshals

The Covid Marshals are the non-regulatory, customer facing Covid service of the City Council. This uniformed service provides advice, support, mitigations, encouragement and a presence to residents, visitors and Birmingham businesses.

Their day to day role includes patrolling the streets of Birmingham - Covid Marshal have been deployed in 100% of City Wards since their introduction - particularly in high footfall areas and where the infection rate is highest. Such areas include shopping centres, parades, internal shopping malls; school gates and similar parent waiting areas in response to requests from School Heads for assistance. The work undertaken is to encourage the wearing of face coverings; informing and discussing with businesses Covid mitigations and controls; sharing of good practice from one business to another; assisting with social distancing for queuing outside businesses such as food banks, click and collect stations and latterly at surge testing sites.

Since November 2020 the Covid Marshals have assisted 3,040 business and fielded 3,728 queries from members of the public whilst on patrol. The service is a 6-day service (Monday to Saturday).

Where compliance cannot be secured through informal means, non-compliance intelligence is forwarded to the Enforcing Officers. Recently, the Covid Marshals have been involved with a supermarket compliance project. They have handed out face coverings to shoppers who had forgotten their own as well as auditing the shopping experience by looking at signage, hygiene stands and the usage of customer messages on social distancing and face coverings. This has improved engagement by some stores in trying to manage their own Covid security.

In Birmingham Covid Marshals offer and distribute face protection to anyone not found to be wearing it. Since December 18,000 face masks have been given out to members of the public by the Covid marshals. If each was used in three shops on average on that day, this equates to 54,000 encounters where it is less likely the virus would have been spread. This was particularly important around the Christmas shopping season and latterly within businesses that can legally remain open.

In the Covid Marshal team are three Covid supervisors providing support to the Marshals. These are pivotal roles which set patrols, maintain marshal bubbles, provide training and supervisory health and safety cover for staff and deal with issues arising from their work. Each supervisor acts as an enforcement officer, when necessary.

Covid Marshals in Parks

Birmingham Parks deployed eight Covid Marshals to help alleviate some problems Birmingham's parks experienced throughout the early part of the pandemic. There were groups of people drinking and partying in parks. These became large gatherings during lockdowns, necessitating Police attendance on multiple occasions.

Two Covid Marshals were placed in the north of the city focusing on Sutton Park and other neighbouring parks. Sutton Park had been one of the sites disproportionately affected over the summer of 2020 with significant mass gatherings and very little social distancing. The other six Covid Marshals have provided a mobile task force which have covered other locations across the whole of the city.

Despite parks being quieter than at their peak in the summer months there has still been an increase in footfall compared to the same time last year. The Parks Covid Marshals have targeted those parks where there have been issues with gatherings and poor social distancing. The Park Covid Marshals provide a visible presence in parks, deterring poor adherence to current Covid guidance or making visitors think about their behaviours a little more. The Covid Marshals have been on hand to give advice, advise parks visitors of the current Covid guidelines, advise on where and how visitors can get tested, and to hand out masks to visitors where appropriate and needed. In the few months the Covid Marshals have been operational they have had over 300 interactions with park visitors giving advice and ensuring visitors stay safe. As the weather warms up and parks once again come into greater demand the work the Covid Marshals have been undertaking will become more essential.

Covid Enforcement Officers

The 10 officers provide a range of roles to complement the substantive Environmental Health Service Covid response. Each officer is authorised under the control of disease legislation and health and safety legislation (for powers of entry). They investigate Covid complaints and whistleblowing enquiries. Many of these complaints relate to face coverings and the lack of their use. In addition, we respond to complaints about businesses that have remained open and should be closed. They also look at business risk assessments to ensure the workers are safe and our customers.

Enforcement Officers play a pivotal role, through patrols, with encouraging compliance with business restrictions. These patrols are often with W.M Police and it means that we can tackle both business and individual compliance. A patrol is usually made up of two Police and two Enforcement Officers and last for four to five hours. They focus on large shopping areas and high streets, particularly the arterial routes. This means they can be looking at 400 to 500 businesses, albeit a lot of these are assessments to ensure they are closed in accordance with lockdown. These patrols are now directed to the wards with the highest incidence of Covid per 100k population. A total of 112 joint enforcement patrols have been undertaken.

Covid Enforcement Officers have been obtaining and assessing risk assessments for businesses. Lots of premises are compliant but they often find that the non-work areas (such as break-out areas, kitchens and smoking areas) have no supervision and control. Advising business owners on where to be vigilant is also a valuable contribution to avoid spread and lost trading days.

The enforcement officers are now being deployed in outbreak investigations and latterly provided support for contact tracing especially non-responsive (to telephone contact) and potentially non-isolating positive cases.

1,795 enforcement actions have been taken by Covid Enforcement Team, including 1,369 compliance visits following complaints from members of the public. Enforcement officers are seeing a reduction in compliance due to fatigue in the population and are now stretched in delivering their services.

A fuller report on this and further projects undertaken through these monies will be provided at a future committee.

The courts are now sitting, and hearing submitted prosecution cases and the City Council is again looking to submit cases rather than deal with matters via simple cautions in-line with our enforcement policy.

The service has been successful in agreeing a Primary Authority Partnership with Marks & Spencer PLC covering food safety, food hygiene and food standards. This adds to the current partnership with the company covering health & safety at work.

Inspections of food businesses continue in accordance with guidance from the Food Standards Agency. Inspections have been prioritised and include manufacturers and those where a complaint has been made, in addition to appropriate follow up activities including revisits. Officers are also providing substantial support to businesses to enable them to continue trading safely at this time.

The food statistics for December and January are:

- Programmed Inspections completed 166
- Enforcement revisits undertaken 54
- Ratings revisits requested and carried out 11
- Food business closures 2
- Statutory notices served 52
- Allergen stop requirements issued 62
- Business supported to ensure compliance 119

The service has provided an officer to support health and safety compliance, including Covid compliance, at the Birmingham Wholesale Market. The officer is undertaking individual health and safety and covid assessments at business units, in addition to reviewing site management practices covering Covid security, traffic management, waste collection services and pedestrian site access. This activity is reported through the Director of Neighbourhoods to the Wholesale Markets Board.

Animal Welfare

The interest in buying puppies during lockdown has been widely reported and has resulted in high prices being sought and paid. This has led to an increase in dog breeding and on-line puppy sales. Officers have noticed an increase in welfare complaints in relation to puppies being bred in poor conditions. Officers provide advice to hobby breeders and have identified some that have required licensing. Advice is also provided to consumers on how to buy a puppy responsibly.

The owner and manager of a licensed pet shop was successfully prosecuted following an inspection of the premises revealed offences under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, the Pet Animals Act 1951 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Each were disqualified from keeping any animal for a period of 10 years and ordered to pay costs of £2,815 costs. A subsequent appeal was dismissed; however, one defendant had his ban reduced from 10 to 7 years.

Officers continue to deal with the emergency boarding of animals, where an animal's owner has been taken to hospital or detained under the Mental Health Act. This included dealing with a variety of animals including cats, dogs, rabbits, birds and also a corn snake brought into a hospital's accident and emergency department by its owner who was suffering from mental health issues. This continues to be a challenging area of work due to the complexity of cases and diverse types of animals encountered

Regional Mortuary

Following the peak in Covid cases through December and January there was a significant increase in deaths across the seven metropolitan authority areas, (Wolverhampton to Coventry) and Warwickshire County Council.

As a result, a decision was made by the authorities' Chief Executives to re-open the temporary mortuary at Birmingham Airport. Your officers are responsible for ensuring compliance with the Human Tissue Authority licence conditions. The team pulled together to reopen the facility within 48 hours. The operational side is run by Coventry Hospital and Birmingham Central Mortuary staff and West Midlands Police leading on security and control of access to the facility. The three partners have worked together extremely well to ease the pressures on the NHS mortuaries and any funeral directors who were finding difficulty in looking after bodies prior to funerals.

Licensing

Activity in the Licensing Service has increased of late and the service is close to returning to 'business as usual', though lockdown restrictions do impact on this extensively. Activity in Licensing Sub Committees did increase following the opening of the hospitality sector.

In total 140 matters have been finalised through the delegated process, which would have ordinarily come before the sub-committee. 29 of which were finalised in December /January.

During Q4 2021 no Summary / Expedited Review applications were submitted by West Midlands Police.

Activity	Licensing							
	HCPH*				General			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Prosecution agreed	8	1	1	0		1	2	
Simple Cautions	16	3	3	1			1	
Statutory Notices served								
Coronavirus Enforcement					33			
Licence applications	195	512	661	389	196	397	383	324
Licence sub-committees					14	31	21	18
Of which were reviews:								
Interim steps					1	1	5	0
Expedited					2	1	3	0
Standard					3	0	0	2
Licence renewals	343	1538	1717	1381	9	26	52	20
Requests for Actions Received	166	315	417	594				
Requests for Actions closed	287	268	390	625				

Analysis of RFAs

The breakdown of types of Requests for Assistance in Licensing is shown below.

	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
	Received	Closed	Received	Closed	Received	Closed	Received	Closed
Total	166	287	315	268	417	390	594	625
Hackney Carriage	4	22	24	19	20	22	68	72
Private Hire	104	190	206	175	319	297	453	453
Licensing Act 2003	51	64	76	63	64	58	65	91
Gambling Act 2005	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	1
Scrap Metal Dealers	7	7	7	9	9	10	5	6
Sexual Entertainment Venues	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Massage & Special Treatments	0	0	2	2	1	2	1	1
Charitable Street Collections	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Street Trading	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	1

Scrap Metal Dealers

There are currently 67 licences issued in Birmingham under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013. The breakdown of licences issued is as follows:

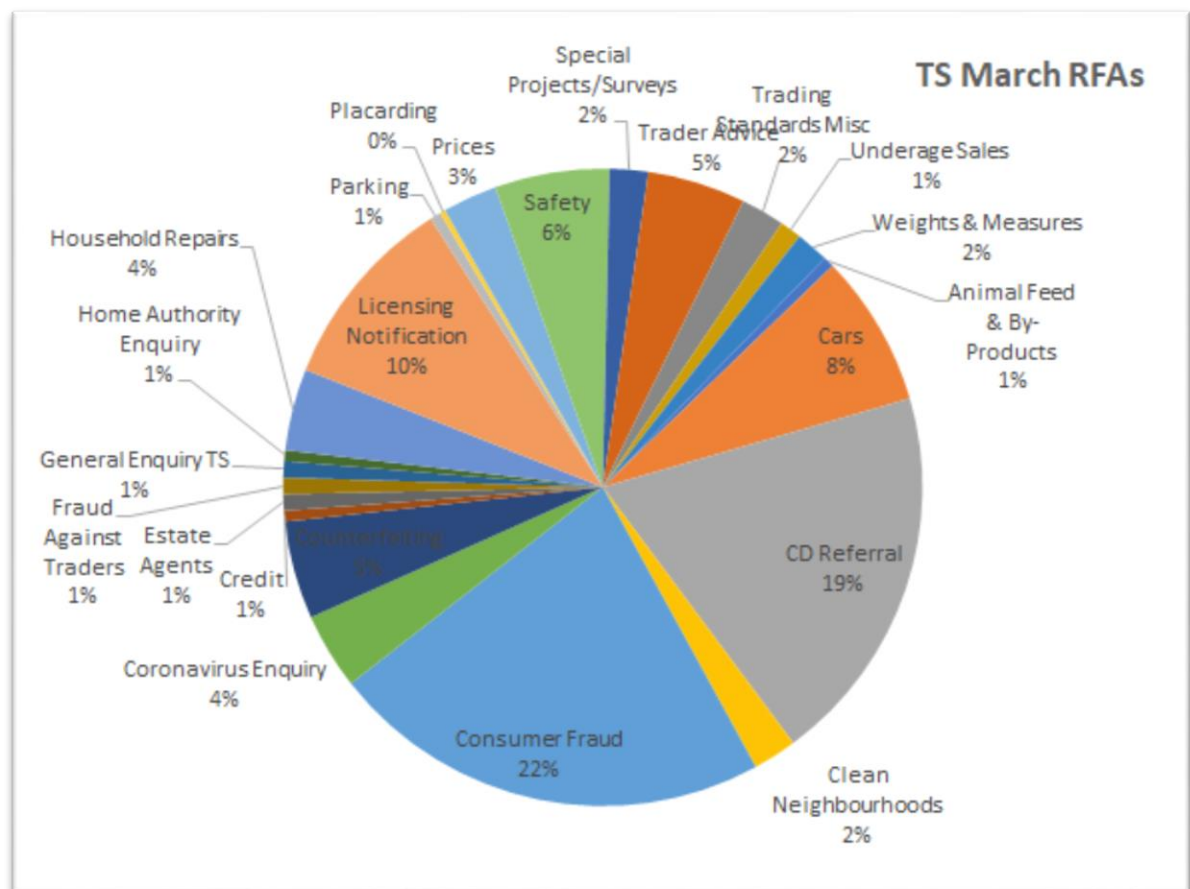
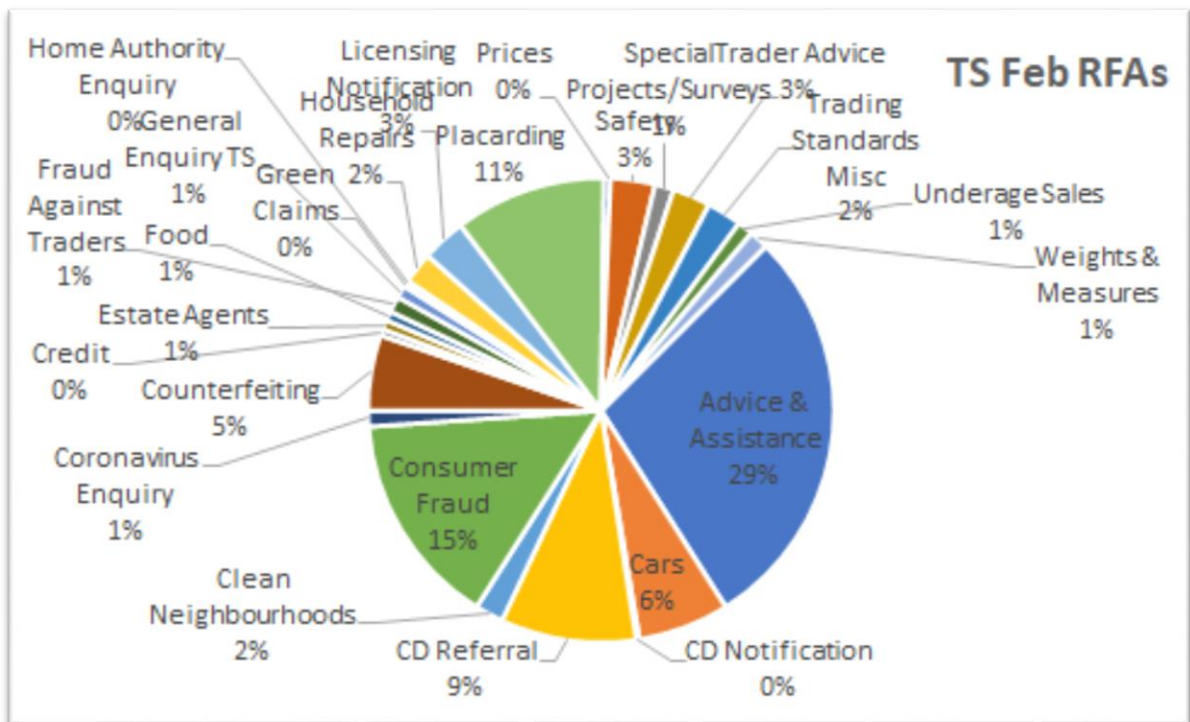
Type of Licence	Number of active licences
Scrap Metal Site Licences	35
Scrap Metal Collector Licences	32

There has been the following enforcement action with regards to Scrap Metal Site licences:

Type of Enforcement	October 2020	November 2020	December 2020	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021
Complaints	1	0	1	0	0	0
Inspections	3	4	3	3	2	3

Trading Standards – February and March 2021

The pie charts below show an analysis of the requests for assistance for the Trading Standards service per month.



Core TS Activities

Alcohol seizure

On 24 February 2021 officers seized 69 counterfeit bottles of Yellow Tail Wine and 3 bottles of Krakoff Vodka. This was following an intelligence report from West Midlands Police. Enquiries are ongoing.

Licence Review

On 8 February 2021 the Licensing Sub-committee revoked the licence for KVK Supermarket Ltd 243-245 Eachelhurst Road, Walmley, Birmingham B76 1DT and Mrs Davanayaki Vickneswaran was removed as Designated Premises Supervisor.

This was as a result of 41 counterfeit bottles of wine being seized from the shop; this was in addition to the 3 counterfeit bottles already sold to a customer who had reported it, and a further 5 sold to another member of the public who made a similar report.

During one visit to seize the stock, the company director produced an invoice from a local cash & carry to account for the purchase of the bottles of wine. Trading Standards informed the Sub-Committee that this invoice was later proven to be 'false' after direct investigation with the wholesaler. Furthermore, the wholesaler had carried out a national audit of their stock of 'Yellow Tail' branded wine and had not found any bottles within their organisation with the same batch codes as the counterfeit stock seized from KVK Supermarket. The explanation given by the company director to Trading Standards was that staff employed by her in the shop had purchased the counterfeit alcohol, without her knowledge, from somebody whom she described as 'a delivery man'.

Placarding

TS conducted a further placarding exercise over two days on 16 and 17 February 2021. Just over 200 placards were seized from across the city, identifying over 36 different businesses. Most of the areas selected were similar to before, however also included were some additional locations based on intel from staff themselves, and colleagues in Highways etc.

Whilst the high number of placards discovered is disappointing, 87 can be attributed to one, yet unidentified, promoting a free boiler scheme. It is known that some are also displayed outside Birmingham. The business only displays a phone number and an officer has made contact, but they would not provide trading details. Enquiries are ongoing.

Business Advice

During these testing times, citizens are looking for other sources of income to support themselves and their families. Trading Standards continue to support new and existing businesses by giving business advice. Birmingham Trading Standards service have given guidance in relation to the laws relating to cosmetic products, laser hair home treatments, children's printed personalised clothing and gifts, pet feed, bottle sizing requirements, importing goods and their legal obligations under the new EU Exit strategy.

TS are actively directing businesses to Business Guidance on their twitter account.

Proceeds of Crime

Financial investigators successfully obtained a Cash Forfeiture Order under the Proceeds of Crime Act for £38,589.51 (£38,250.00 plus interest accrued). The cash was seized during a warrant for counterfeit goods, under Operation Beorma. The cash was found stuffed in the back of a wardrobe in the suspect's bedroom. The suspect decided not to challenge the application to have the cash forfeited, and so the application was successful. The court hearing was on 8 January 2021, but they were allowed a month to appeal before the cash was paid over. The suspect did not appeal, so the cash was paid on 8 February 2021.

Underage knife sale court result

On 15 March 2021 Mr. Walee Mamadsi pleaded guilty to the sale of a knife to an underage person on 22 February 2020 from Zahir Supermarket 476-478 Bordesley Green Birmingham B9 5NS. He was the owner of the business. He was given a fine of £650.00 and ordered to pay full costs along with a victim surcharge; a total of £2,290.00 to be paid within 28 days.

The seller had received a Caution on 18 August 2020.

Sale of counterfeit cigarettes to underage volunteer

As a result of a seizure of a quantity of counterfeit cigarettes and tobacco Trading Standards included Bordesley Green Mini Market in an underage test purchase exercise of cigarettes.

A test purchase was made by one of our volunteers who was under 18 on 20 February 2020; a packet of 20 Benson & Hedges cigarettes by Miraj Ahmadzai who was working at the shop and was witnessed by an officer from Trading Standards. As well as the illegal sale of cigarettes to a person under the age of 18 the packet sold was confirmed to be counterfeit.

As a result of previous seizure and the sale offences were laid against the seller Miraj Ahmadzai (who had also been present at the earlier seizure) and the owner of the business Mirzaman Ahmadzai.

The case for the underage sale was heard in the Magistrates Court on 5 March 2021 where Miraj Ahmadzai pleaded guilty. The magistrates sentenced as follows: fine £225 reduced to £168 for credit (25%). Costs contribution of £185 ordered and victim surcharge £32. Total £385.

The Counterfeit element of the case was heard in Crown Court on 23 March 2021. Mr Miraj Ahmadzai pleaded guilty and was sentenced to an 18-month community order with a 15-day rehabilitation requirement. He was ordered to pay £2,400.00 in costs at £200.00 per month. He was also ordered to pay a victim surcharge. An arrest warrant has been issued for Mirzaman Ahmadzai who failed to attend court.

Fraudulent Covid Business support grants

A Birmingham based business owner, who incorrectly claimed two Covid 19 business support grants for neighbouring businesses, has admitted two offences of fraud and has repaid the money in full. He has accepted caution, which will be recorded on a national database and taken into consideration should he come to light for offences in the future.

Fixed Penalty Fine

The service had a referral from Private Rented Services about a property that did not have an Energy Performance Certificate. The Officer had been in contact with the landlord's solicitor since August 2020, but they failed to provide one. On 30 March 2021 a £200 Fixed Penalty Notice was issued which was subsequently paid.

Consumer Redress

Compensation Awarded

On 18 March 2021 a consumer received £15,980 from her bank as a direct result of our intervention with the Banking Ombudsman. This is the sum of the payment she paid a builder that TS are prosecuting. She wrote to say a big thank to TS and the team for the support she had been given during this difficult time.

Civil compensation for car purchase

A consumer purchased a car for £12,000 from a dealer in Birmingham. A few months later she noticed certain faults, she took it to her local garage. The other garage stated that the car was dangerous and should never have passed the MOT. The consumer had a valid MOT when she bought the vehicle. The trader refused to take the car back, repair the faults or give her money towards getting them put right. After 5 months the trader exchanged the car and gave the consumer £400 back following Trading Standards intervention.

Enforcement Exercises

Counterfeit wine

TS seized a total of 510 bottles of counterfeit wine of the same brand from 4 different premises. A further 11 bottles of another brand have also been seized. In all cases a review of the Premises Licence will be submitted and consideration of legal proceedings.

Tobacco Enforcement 12 March 2021

On 12 March 2021 TS Officers visited 6 business premises in Birmingham that had previous history and intel that they were dealing in illegal tobacco. With support from West Midlands Police and Wagtail tobacco detection dogs 5 premises were found to have illicit and counterfeit tobacco and alcohol. The businesses are being investigated for offences.

Project Guardian Knives

On 17 March 2021 officers worked with police officers from the Project Guardian Task Force to test whether shops were requesting identification and age verification. They used a young looking 19-year-old to test the Challenge 25 system. 8 premises were visited 2 premises were closed, 4 sold without challenge; the purchases included multipacks of kitchen knives. As the purchaser was over 18 no offences took place however it was a lesson learnt by the businesses to ensure they adhere to the Challenge 25 initiative.

The shops were educated on best practices and have signed up for The Responsible Retailer Scheme.

Scams

Doorstep Scams

On 12 February 2021 TS officer witnessed his elderly, vulnerable neighbour being hassled by some workmen on his front drive. The Officer went out to see what was going on, he discovered that they had started power washing his drive without his permission. When challenged, the persons said that he had asked them for a free demonstration, however this was entirely false. It is believed that they were going to complete the work and then demand money from him. The Officer advised the workmen that he was going to call the police and they jumped in their van and sped off. The van was displaying Irish number plates and is suspected to be linked to other similar offences across the country. The intervention stopped the neighbour falling victim to the scam.

TS are currently investigating a roofing company that appear to be targeting older residents and charging large amounts for work that may not have needed doing in the first place. One householder was approached and told her she needed her ridge tiles repairing and he could do it for £70. Once he finished the job, he asked for £1300. She tried to do a bank transfer that did not go through. Her daughter contacted TS. With TS intervention they stopped the Consumer paying the £1000.

A second house was targeted on the same street the same trader approached the householder, an elderly man living on his own. They started work on his roof and told him he needed a few tiles replacing, and it will cost him £2600, which he paid cash. A few days later they told him it is going to cost him an extra £7400. With TS intervention they stopped the Consumer paying the £7400.

Enquiries are ongoing.

Scams Project - NTS Scams referrals

During the pandemic TS were unable to make personal visits to those who had responded to bogus prize draws. However, TS are still doing full background checks to see if any further support is required by Adult Social Care. TS continue to provide scam awareness advice to those who have entered bogus prize draws.

TS are receiving around 5 monthly scam victim referrals. TS are updating the National Trading Standards Scams Team on the outcome of the referrals.

Social Media

Twitter

For February, TS have 2,993 followers and gained 15 new followers. TS posted 123 tweets and there were 102k impressions, 2,335 profile visits and 41 mentions.

For March, TS have 2,993 followers. TS posted 144 tweets and there were 112K impressions, 1,952 profile visits and 54 mentions.

Website

In February 2021 there were 1,091 views to TS website.

In March 2021 there were 4,207 views to TS website an increase of 3,116 views from the previous month.

Financial Investigation

The service's two Financial Investigators (FIs) continue to focus their attentions on Covid Business Grant frauds. With the support of colleagues in the National Illegal Money Lending Team, warrants were recently executed at a number of premises in Birmingham. Two males were arrested on suspicion of being involved in a significant fraud against Birmingham City Council, other Local Authorities and Government agencies. It is believed that the two are part of a wider Organised Crime Group who have been targeting public funds in the wake of the pandemic. The total value of the fraud is estimated to be in the region of £6m. Both males have been charged and bailed to attend court at a later date and enquiries continue to hopefully identify further individuals involved.

The number of grant fraud cases being referred to the FIs has slowed down, but there is still a significant list to work through, with the officers having to prioritise the most prolific offenders. It is likely that this work will continue for some time.

England Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT)

During February and March, the IMLT received 81 reports of illegal money lending (IML), with an increase of reports to the previous months and an increase compared to the same period last year. 30 of these reports can be directly linked to the work carried out by LIAISE officers, and 69 new illegal lenders were identified.

Enforcement activity during these months saw a husband-and-wife team cautioned for illegal money lending in the Ashton-upon-Lyne area of Manchester. As restitution, the couple also returned a total of £50,000 in interest payments to 24 people who had taken loans from them.

The Illegal Money Lending Team has launched a Partner Recognition Scheme to reward partners who support work to stop people using loan sharks. Applications are coming in thick and fast, and so far, the following agencies have been awarded Partner status:

- Runcorn Police
- Prima Group
- Rhubarb Farm
- Just credit union
- Cheshire East Trading Standards
- East Sussex Credit Union
- Together Housing Group
- Staffordshire Citizen's Advice

These agencies are now considering whether to apply for Partner Plus status. This involves achieving higher criteria of engagement and involvement with IMLT.

Over 2500 people were trained online during February and March. The team have extended their training packages and are now offering:

- What is a Loan Shark? – looking at the crime of illegal lending and how to identify a victim
- Overcoming Victim Barriers and Changing Lives – going into more detail about the reasons people don't engage with IMLT and overcoming them
- What is a Credit Union, and how do they help in the fight against loan sharks? – looking at partnership arrangements with CUs and how they can help steer people away from loan sharks
- Reflective training – become a Stop Loan Shark SPOC – a 3 session training event with "homework" allowing a small group to engage with the issues facing victims of illegal lenders

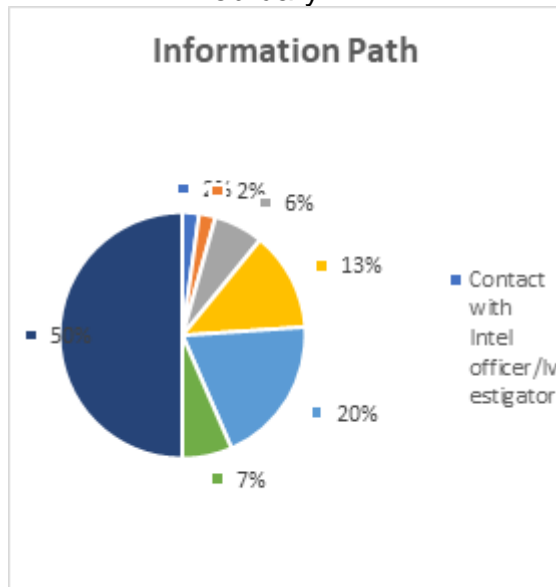
IMLT worked with partners to warn people about online loan sharks in the run-up to Valentine's Day. Reports have been received that illegal lenders are utilising online dating sites to befriend people and then offer them loans.



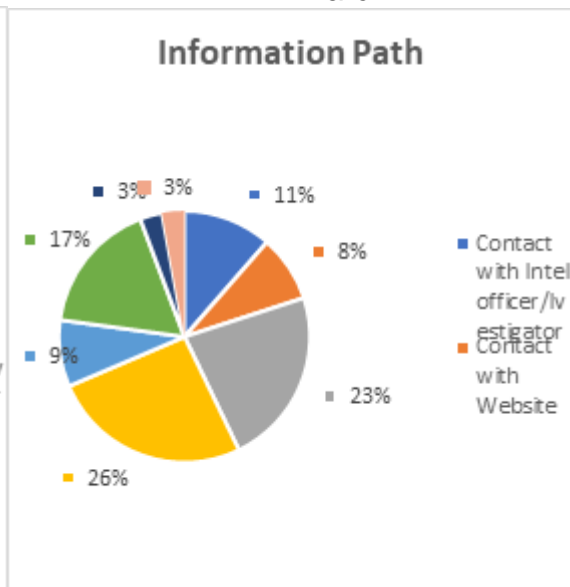
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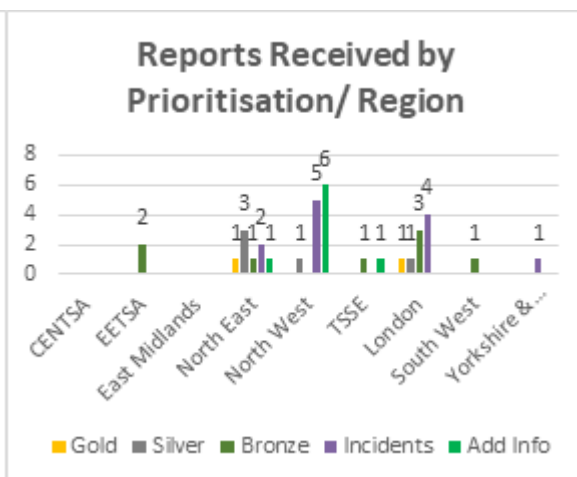
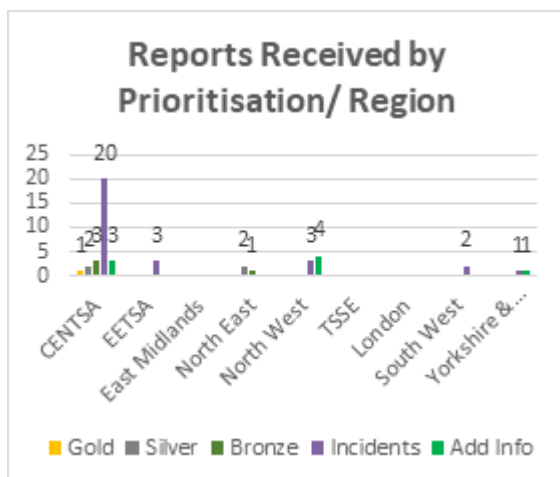
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Registration Service

Death Registrations

The service is processing death registrations in line with the Coronavirus Act and the direction of the General Register Office (GRO). In late March 2020 a new process for registering was enacted and the service implemented this and honed the processes to improve performance. The table below shows the level of death registration for April 2020 to March 2021 compared to the same period in 2019-20.

Deaths	2019/20	2020/21	% change
April 2020	819	2260	+176
May	863	983	+13.9
June	762	767	+0.65
July	802	800	-0.25
August	793	714	-9.95
September	802	804	+0.25
October	878	904	+2.96
November	844	1132	+34.11
December	896	1134	+32.15
January 2021	1159	1564	+34.95
February 2021	811	1391	+71.50
March 2021	943	967	+2.55
Year to date	10372	13420	+29.39

Birth Registrations

The Government reintroduced the registration of births in June, with an optional alternative procedure, both procedures require face to face meetings. For operational reasons the service followed the standard process and was fully operational from mid-June. As at 29 March there were 2201 outstanding birth registrations, of which 573 were over the statutory 42 days registration period- this is a continued reduction on previous months. The table below shows the level of birth registrations for June 2020 through to March 2021 compared to the same period in 2019-20.

Birth Registrations	2019/20	2020/21	% change
June	1,819	543	-70.15
July	1,880	2,820	+50
August	1,647	2,045	+24.2
September	1,956	2,376	+21.5
October	2,284	2,464	+7.89
November	2,004	2,542	+26.85
December	1,546	1,950	+26.15
January 2021	2069	1864	-9.91
February 2021	1956	1661	-15.09
March 2021	1144	2161	+88.90
Running Total	18305	20426	+11.59

Ceremonies

Following the first national lockdown, the Government announced the taking of notices of marriage and civil partnership, and ceremonies could recommence in Covid 19 secure venues from July 2020. In line with national guidance the Register Office implemented measures to recommence ceremonies from 4 July. During the second national lockdown, marriage and civil partnership ceremonies were suspended from 5 November to 2 December. Marriages and Civil Ceremonies were again suspended in January 2021 unless there were exceptional circumstances. Citizenship ceremonies were delivered remotely. The tables below show the level of ceremonies and notices from July 2020 to March 2021 compared to the same period in 2019-20.

Ceremonies	2019/20	2020/21	% change
July	188	45	-76.1
August	224	63	-72.75
September	150	121	-19.35
October	164	123	-20
November	140	12	-91.40
December	125	94	-24.8
January 2021	97	5	-96
February 2021	100	2	-98
March 2021	72	14	+80.56
Running Total	1260	470	-37.42

Notice of Marriage and Civil Partnership	2019/20	2020/21	% change
July	610	430	-29.95
August	522	365	-30.1
September	621	373	-39.95
October	566	478	-15.5
November	620	518	-16.45
December	473	461	-2.55
January 2021	621	405	-34.8
February 2021	548	424	-22.63
March 2021	443	584	+31.85
Running Total	5024	4038	-19.63

Citizenship Ceremonies	2019/20	2020/21	% change
July	268	156	-41.75
August	199	246	+33.2
September	281	170	-39.45
October	273	214	-21.65
November	220	203	-7.75
December	207	338	+63.30
January 2021	327	168	-48.7
February 2021	244	217	-11.07
March 2021	221	274	+23.99
Running Total	2240	1986	-11.34

City Centre Operations - Temporary Pavement Licences

The table below shows the activity that has taken place from when the temporary pavement licences were introduced to the end of March 2021.

Note – **New** equates to number of applications received where the applicant did **not** previously hold a Street Café Licence (Highway Act).

Current equates to number of applications received where the applicant previously held a Street Café Licences (Highway Act).

Month	Received	Approved	Refused/Rejected/Withdrawn	New	Current	City Centre	Local Centres
July	3	2	1	2	1	3	0
August	33	28	5	21	12	29	4
September	8	7	1	4	4	6	2
October	7	6	1	6	1	4	3
November	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
December	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
January	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
February	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
March	18	11	7	8	10	14	4
TOTAL TO DATE	72	57	15	41	31	57	15

23 June 2021

Paul Lankester
Interim Assistant Director Regulation and Enforcement