

REPORT TO PERFORMANCE & OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10th June 2025

PUBLIC PROTECTION PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024/25

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Since 2015 annual performance reports on Public Protection services have been provided to Scrutiny Committees. This has proved beneficial for Members to understand the broad range of services provided by the teams, overall performance and how this compares to previous years. It has also triggered follow-up reports on specific issues that Members have requested.
- 1.2 The Public Protection division, which sits within the Social Care & Health Directorate, comprises of four distinct teams:
 - (i) Environmental Health, Commercial
 - (ii) Environmental Health, Public Health
 - (iii) Licensing
 - (iv) Trading Standards & Animal Health

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of Public Protection (PP) services can be summarised as follows:
 - a. Protect people from harm and promote health improvement.
 - b. Promote a fair and just trading environment for the public and businesses.
 - c. Improve the local environment to positively influence quality of life and promote sustainability.
 - d. Ensure the safety and quality of the food chain to minimise risk to human and animal health.
- 2.2 These four outcomes contribute to the seven well-being goals set for public bodies in Wales. They directly help achieve a more prosperous, resilient, healthier and more equal county. It also resonates with this Council's Community & Corporate Plan 2022/28, which sets out the Authority's goals under the current administration. PP services contribute to the goals of making Monmouthshire (a) a safe place to live, (b) a fair place to live, (c) a green place to live and work, and (d) a thriving and ambitious place.

3. RESOURCES

3.1 Staff resource

- (i) Environmental Health – Commercial:
 - 6 Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) including a Principal EHO (job share) at 5.8 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs).
 - 2 Commercial Services Officers (2 FTE).
 - 1 Graduate Student Trainee EHO (1 FTE – fully funded by an ABUHB Allocation).
- (ii) Environmental Health – Public Health:
 - 6 EHOs, including Principal EHO, at 6 FTEs.
 - 2 Technical Officers, 1.9 FTE's.
- (iii) Licensing:
 - 5 Licensing Officers, including Principal, 4.5 FTE's.
 - 1 Systems Administrator.
- (iv) Trading Standards & Animal Health:
 - 3 Trading Standards Officers, 3 FTE's (including TS&AH Manager post)
 - 1 Senior Fair Trading Officer, 0.6 FTE
 - 2 Fair Trading Officers, 1.6 FTE
 - 4 Fair Trading (Animal Health) Officers, 3.8 FTE (1 temp to 31st March 2026)

Animal Licensing Project attached to TS but Wales wide:

- 1 Project Manager/Regional Co-ordination role, funded by Trading Standards Wales
 - 9 Animal Licensing Officers
 - 1 Animal Licensing System Coordinator
 - 2 Support Officers
- (v) Support team:
 - 4 Support Officers, 3.5 FTE's

Above staff resource adds up to a total of 37 Officers, 33.7 Full Time Equivalents, excluding the national Animal Licensing team of 13 Officers. The Public Protection division also comprises the Authority's Registrar service, but this report covers 1.2 services only, as directed by Members in January 2015. The Head of Public Protection retired at the end of September 2024.

3.2. **Financial resource**

In 2024/25, the budget allocation and actual spend is shown below:

SERVICE	BUDGET	NET SPEND	UNDER / OVER-SPEND
Environmental Health – Commercial	£580,714	£538,420	£42,294 under
Environmental Health – Public Health	£547,657	£528,560	£19,097 under
Trading Standards & Animal Health	£543,383	£497,999	£45,384 under
Licensing	£94,064	£77,577	£16,487 under
Management & generic costs (eg software)	£178,607	£116,222	£62,385 under
Total	£1,944,425	£1,758,778	£185,647 under

The Public Protection budget position for the 2024/25 year in total was an underspend of £185,647. The underspend is primarily due to:

- The Head of Public Protection retiring on 30th September 2024 and the post not being filled.
- Income generated through the work of the teams to more than projected at the start of the year.
- Delays appointing to a number of vacant positions in the teams.

In addition to the £185,647 underspend, funds of £92,279 generated in previous years through the Proceeds of Crime Act were transferred to the corporate centre to support the MCC financial position.

4. **PERFORMANCE**

- 4.1 Internal performance monitoring – the four teams within Public Protection each complete an annual Business Service Plan. These outline annual targets, specific projects etc. and progress is reviewed regularly (i) by the teams themselves, (ii) Policy & Performance team, and (iii) Departmental Management Team.
- 4.2 External reporting – regular returns are made to the Food Standards Agency, Health & Safety Executive, Office for Product Safety and Standard (including metrology), Drinking Water Inspectorate, Welsh Government and other organisations.
- 4.3 **2024/25 Performance** (and comparison to previous years)

The right-hand columns summarises performance during the 2024/25 year. The left-hand columns cover the previous 4 years, to enable comparisons to be made.

The following table summarises performance data from the four service teams –

<u>Service</u>	<u>2020/21 Performance</u>	<u>2021/22 Performance</u>	<u>2022/23 Performance</u>	<u>2023/24 Performance</u>	<u>2024/25 Performance</u>
Food safety full inspections	28 - suspension of programme due to Covid response and businesses closed, (same as all other Welsh LA's)	152 full inspections	681	551	630
Other interventions – sampling, verification etc (Not H & S)	287	160	260	343	281
Total	315	312	941	894	911

Number of new businesses opened	101	76	126	210	186
Broadly compliant food businesses (high risk)	Proactive visits suspended	94.4.%	95%	96.9%	96.1%
Broadly compliant food businesses – All	As above	97.4%	99%	95%	94.9%
Service Requests - food safety	453 (78% within target)	533	450	699	687
Food Hygiene training	Nil (courses cancelled due to Covid pandemic)	Nil	Nil	39 food handlers trained	78
Communicable Disease cases	3,826 Covid & 142 other notifiable diseases	15,584 Covid, 217 notifiable diseases	915 Covid, 287 notifiable diseases all contacted within the target response times	246 notifiable diseases, all contacted within target response times	344 notifiable diseases, all contacted within target response times
Total Service requests, including H&S, TEN's, food & food standards, ID outbreaks etc.	1,792 but more likely ~2,500 due to under-reporting during pandemic	1321	1142	1699	1566

Inspections and interventions – Health & Safety (H&S)	23 project 4 hazard spotting (Most work in relation to Covid restrictions regs. Not all work recorded due to time constraints, e.g. Covid responses to schools and care homes).	2 project 15 hazard spotting 1 proactive (Most work in relation to Covid restrictions regs. Not all work recorded due to time constraints, e.g. Covid responses to schools and care homes).	45 project (electrical safety and gas safety) 20 hazard spotting 2 proactive	60 project (electrical safety and gas safety) 15 hazard spotting	55 project inspections (gas safety/electrical safety); 1 sports grounds regulated stands inspection. 5 large event safety visits. 10 low sill heights scoping project visits in coffee shops and hospitality premises. 5 interventions involving written advice being provided to premises offering 'lambing live' events (i.e. crypto infectious disease risks). 75 cellar access safety checks. 10 Hazard spotting visits.
Service requests – Health & Safety	127	121	131	133	190
Event Safety Advisory Group	No LAE1 return (covid)	49	62	90	118

(ESAG) notifications responded to (triaged for risk)					
RIDDOR (accident) notifications	54	42	44	53	51
H&S Notices served (improvement and prohibition)	1	4	5	4	3
EH Public Health					
Housing service requests (SR's)	105 Total	110 Total 79 within 3 working days = 71.8%	207 Total 162 within 3 working days = 78.3%	156 Total 117 within 3 working days = 75%	132 Total 88 within 3 working days = 66.7%
Noise	366 Total. 300 within 3 working days = 82% 199 closed within 3 mths = 54.4%	388 Total.308 within 3 working days = 79.4% 211 closed within 3 mths = 54.4%	405 Total. 319 within 3 working days = 78.8% 217 closed within 3 mths = 53.6%	385 Total. 285 within 3 working days = 74% 219 closed within 3 mths = 56.9%	370 Total. 237 within 3 working days = 64.1% 176 closed within 3 mths = 47.6%
Statutory nuisance, excluding noise	236 Total. 209 within working 3 days = 88.6% 155 closed within 3 mths = 65.7%	182 Total. 153 within working 3 days = 84.1% 114 closed within 3 mths = 62.6%	166 Total. 131 within working 3 days = 78.9% 96 closed within 3 mths = 57.8%	153 Total. 122 within working 3 days = 79.7% 93 closed within 3 mths = 60.8%	158 Total. 111 within working 3 days = 70.3% 89 closed within 3 mths = 56.3%

Environmental Protection (fouling, littering, fly tipping etc.)	705 Total. 651 within 3 working days = 92.3% 534 closed within 3 months = 75.7%	743 Total. 697 within 3 working days = 93.8% 598 closed within 3 months = 80.5%	771 Total. 721 within 3 working days = 93.5% 616 closed within 3 months = 79.9%	619 Total. 525 within 3 working days = 84.8% 440 closed within 3 months = 71.1%	542 Total. 383 within 3 working days = 70.7% 316 closed within 3 months = 58.3%
Pest Control	Total 113. 95 within 3 working days = 84%	Total 129, 96 within 3 working days = 74.4%	Total 109, 82 within 3 working days = 75.2%	Total 131, 98 within 3 working days = 74.8%	Total 109, 79 within 3 working days = 72.5%
Licensing					
Applications dealt with by Licensing	1142 applications - 31% decline from previous year as a direct result of Covid lockdown and restrictions. 2 TEN's due to ban on events	1515 applications, including 210 TEN's. Big increase due to events recommencing after lockdowns.	1603 applications, including 373 TEN's – over 50% more previous year due to lifting of all restrictions.	1582 applications including 546 TEN's –, TEN's which has a 24 hour window to process, increased by 46%	1721 applications including 567 TEN's (increase of 139 applications) –, TEN's which has a 24 hour window to process, increased by 4%
Inspections carried out	237 inspections (no risk rated premises were included this year; team concentrated on Covid advice/enforcement).	212 inspections. Still dealing with Covid restrictions and impact on hospitality sector.	60 premises inspected – lower number due to changeover of staff and training requirements. Risk rated inspections of premises to recommence 2023-24.	314 premises inspected – increase of 254 inspections on previous year – this follows reintroducing risk rated inspections.	286 premises inspected – decrease of 28 inspections on previous year

Service Requests carried out	922 service requests - 92% with a 3 day turnaround for first response, (on target).	873 service requests - 93% on target for first response.	643 service requests – 92% on target for first response. Drop due to less Covid-related requests.	833 service requests – increase of 190 requests on previous year – 95% on target for first response.	773 service requests – decrease of 60 requests on previous year – 90% on target for first response.
Trading Standards & Animal Health					
Trading Standards Visits	115	78	50	58	46
Trading Standards Complaints/Advice	1018	622	725	520	479
Citizens Advice Consumer Service	341 Referrals 956 Notifications	352 Referrals 962 Notifications	372 Referrals 981 Notifications	316 Referrals 879 Notifications	227 Referrals 407 Notifications
Animal Health Visits	231	244	327	269	258
Animal Health Complaints/Advice	282	293	198	295	362
Inspections at our: High Risk premises, Upper Medium premises.	No formal programme of inspection due to other pressures.	No formal programme due to other pressures.	No formal programme due to other pressures.	No formal programme due to other pressures.	No formal programme due to other pressures but looking to commence in 2025/26.
Feed Law Enforcement	Visits were suspended with database cleansing	68% - 93/136 64 ceased operations	94% - 117/124 additional inspections undertaken 30 due to regional shortfalls.	92% - 138/150 Total of 142 including revisits.	100% - 118/118 Total of 122 including revisits and ceased trading.
Programmed animal health inspections	No formal programme due to Covid	Combined with feed inspections.	Combined with feed inspections.	Combined with feed inspections.	Combined with feed inspections – additional high risk

					to be programmed for 2025/26.
New Business Visits	61% TS (32/52) 74% AH (52/70)	51% TS (48/95) 48% AH (32/66)	23% TS (35/153) 79% AH (57/72)	33% TS (36/108) 83% AH (48/58)	23% TS (46/196) 63% AH (102/162)
Animal Welfare Complaints responded to within 3 working days.	74.5%	68%	95%	95%	96.2%
Vulnerable Scam Reports	0 visits due to Covid 187 individuals (running total)	0 visits due to Covid 214 individuals (running total)	4 visits 219 individuals (running total)	3 visits	4 visits
Other					
FOI Requests (PP Total)	39	79	51	199	110
Events requiring advice via Safety Advisory Group	39, 30 cancelled due to national restrictions	63	118	124	161

5. **ANALYSIS AND ACTIVITY 2024/25**

Each section provides the following narrative for their work last year -

5.1 **Environmental Health – Commercial**

5.1.1 **Food safety (food hygiene and food standards)**

In 24/25 the Commercial team delivered a full programme of high-risk premises inspections (A-Cs) whilst continuing to level out the post-Covid backlog of lower risk inspections (D-E's) and new business registrations, using the full range of enforcement options available to us to secure compliance and protect public health. Indeed, out of Monmouthshire's 1133 food premises in 24/25, 94.9% are broadly compliant in terms of food hygiene requirements – indicating the Commercial team's commitment to the

improvement and maintenance of the very highest standards. As of financial year-end 24/25, the Commercial Team have fully caught up on high-risk food hygiene inspections under the post-Covid recovery plan put in place by the FSA. We efficiently align our food standards inspection frequencies alongside our hygiene programme, which includes the delivery of allergenic control interventions. The team works efficiently in delivering positive outcomes – it's renowned for its 'can-do' and problem-solving approach. The following extract is an example of the praise we have received for delivering our services from members of the community, testament to our vocational dedication to improving public health outcomes in support of businesses:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your help and guidance this past year we could not have got anywhere near five stars without your supportive guidance.

Fourteen months or so ago we were just two blokes with a burger van, an archery club and little to no idea of what we were doing, and now with your help, we have a nice van that's easier and more efficient to work in and a great idea of what we're doing, five stars 😊. Sam on a personal note you helped without threats or treating us like idiots, for that we thank you

5.1.2 Assisting businesses and income generation

We have supported new and improving businesses through our ACCESS consultancy scheme, alongside the delivery of our highly regarded Level 2 and 3 food hygiene training courses, which has generated income totalling £8511.05 in 24/25

5.1.3 Responding to complaints and service requests

The team continued to respond to a significant number of varied service requests in 24/25, totalling 1566 requests. These requests for service cover food hygiene and standards, allergen management, health and safety, infectious disease control and special procedures (tattooing and piercing etc).

5.1.4 Special Procedures Licensing (tattooing, piercing, acupuncture and electrolysis)

We continued to work closely with Welsh Government as a member of the Special Procedures Implementation Group (which has evolved into a Steering group for consistency) as Wales moved to a licensing scheme for tattooing, piercing, semi-permanent make-up, acupuncture and electrolysis in Autumn 2024. As a key deliverable of the scheme under WG funding, the Commercial Team have been responsible for procuring and implementing a national online register, which is now operational.

The licensing of special procedures practitioners and approval of premises represents a significant workstream for the Team from Quarter 4 of 24/25. We received 48 Special Procedures licence applications under the new licensing scheme (ongoing handling of applications and inspection work – to be reflected in Q1 stats 25-26).

5.1.5. Communicable Diseases

In 24/25 we again investigated all cases of statutory notifiable diseases; a total number of 344 notifications dealt with by the Commercial Team and Lead Officer for Communicable Disease. These included cases of Shigella, E Coli, salmonella and campylobacter, complying with the response times under the terms of PHW's Expert Rules. This key area of work is essential to prevent the spread of infectious disease in the community. The Lead Officer for Communicable Disease feeds into ongoing pandemic preparedness (an evolution of the TTP systems under the All-Wales Expert Panel), giving Monmouthshire an enhanced preparedness in terms of any future outbreak response. Part of this will see the Team involved in an extensive UK wide desktop operation to test outbreak response systems.

5.1.6 Health and Safety at Work

In 24/25 our Officers engaged in health and safety project work relating to gas safety and electrical safety in hospitality premises – aligned with HSE national priorities, exceeding inspection targets set by our intervention plan. We used a range of enforcement notices to deal with several dangerous premises, protecting the public and employees from harm.

Our work as a key member of the event safety advisory group (ESAG) saw the team respond to 118 ESAG notifications in 24/25. Liaising with partners such as the police, fire service, highways, SWTRA, and the Welsh ambulance service (amongst others), we provided important advice to event organisers on matters such as crowd safety, emergency egress and food hygiene, which included several site visits to higher risk events.

The team handled 51 RIDDOR (statutory workplace accident) notifications in 24/25, all subject to triage using the HSE's Incident Selection Criteria. 5 were serious enough to warrant a formal investigation by a visit to the premises.

5.2 Environmental Health – Public Health

5.2.1 Housing

Requests for service from persons in the private rented sector stabilised to pre covid levels with 132 enquiries. These triggered 23 inspections of residential properties, a drop from 23/24 (42 inspections). However, the number of hazards identified remained much the same with 74 hazards compared with 80 in 23/24.

Category 1 hazards are the most serious and 10 of the 19 identified (53%) were remediated by 31st March 2025.

A larger number of Category 2 hazards were found, with 24 of the 55 identified (44%) rectified by landlords during 24/25 following officer intervention.

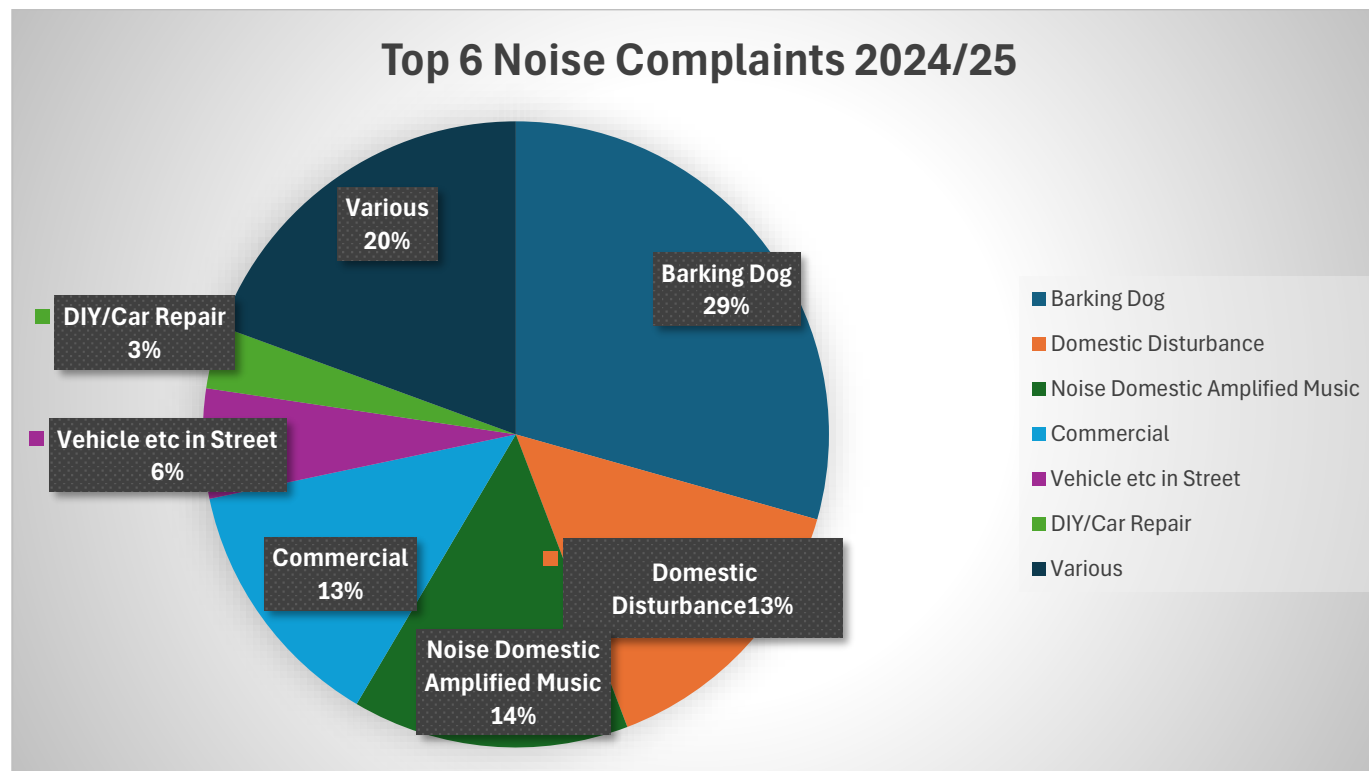
32 adults and 21 children were exposed to these hazards and engagement continues with the landlords to ensure all issues are addressed and the tenants protected.

Officers endeavour to liaise directly with landlords, clearly setting out the concerns identified and seeking their cooperation to address the issues in suitable timescales. The housing legislation though does provide a suite of enforcement powers, for use where necessary, such as the service of Improvement Notices and in the most serious cases Prohibition Orders. Fortunately, the team did not need to serve any of these Notices during the year.

The team had hoped to carry out a number of pro-active inspections in its programme of Housing Above Takeaways (HAT) scheme, where there is the potential for issues of particular concern in these mixed use buildings such as fire safety, overcrowding and excess cold. Unfortunately, because of service demands these inspections were not progressed, but are a priority for the forthcoming year.

5.2.2 Noise

Complaints of noise are a significant part of the team's workload with a similar number of service requests (370) to previous years. The main sources continue to be barking dogs, loud music and domestic disturbance, which totalled 217 (58.5%).



Complaints of noise from commercial sources, 49, slightly down from the 64 received the previous 23/24 year. The relatively low figure underlines the effective proactive work the team undertakes in liaising with promoters of the multitude of events and festivals which take place throughout the county. Early engagement through Licensing consultations and ESAG are key in assisting promoters meet noise control expectations and helping ensure that such events are a success for visitors and residents. It can be difficult to fully demonstrate the extent of the engagement our officers have and the importance of it.

Similarly, significant effort is put in by officers in the early stages of an investigation to try to deal with a noise complaint quickly, in the hope of limiting escalating tensions and ultimately enforcement action. Inevitably though enforcement action is needed at times with 2 noise abatement notices (barking dogs) served; and a case prosecuted in the magistrates court for breach of a noise abatement notice served in 2023 (again barking dogs).

5.2.3 Environmental Protection

This area of work covers enviro crime, including fly tipping, abandoned vehicles, dog fouling and littering. A slight reduction in service requests from 619 in 23/24 to 542. Actions of note include:

- Fly tipping: 2 successful prosecutions.
- Case 1, a collaborative prosecution with Newport CC and Torfaen CBC in Cardiff Crown Court for 12 separate fly-tipping offences (4 in Monmouthshire), over a 17-month period in 2023 and 2024, of a person collecting / removing waste from residential properties for money. Sentence included 30 weeks in custody, suspended for 18 months, 120 hours unpaid work and a Criminal Behaviour Order designed to stop the offender engaging in waste collection.
- Case 2, in Newport Magistrates Court, again for collecting waste for a fee. Sentence included 18 weeks in custody, suspended for 12 months, fine / costs of over £1700.
- Fixed Penalty Notices: 2 served and paid.
- Monmouthshire County Council (Dog Control) Public Spaces Protection Order 2024 was approved by Cabinet, became effective on the 1st June 2024 and will remain effective until the 31st May 2027. The Order introduced 5 restrictions designed to protect our public spaces:
 - Requires person in charge of a dog to pick up if it defecates in a public space.
 - Requires person in charge of a dog to have a means to pick up dog faeces (a bag).
 - Requires person in charge of a dog to put it on a short lead if asked to do so by an authorised officer, where the dog is considered to be out of control or causing alarm or distress or to prevent a nuisance.
 - Dogs on lead areas designated – 20 in total.
 - Dog exclusion areas designated – 180 in total.

5.2.4 Private Water Supplies

The team has the responsibility for fulfilling the Council's statutory duty of risk assessing every 5 years all private water supplies (PWS) in the county, other than those serving a single residential property, where water is intended for human consumption.

Some of these supplies are extensive providing water to commercial properties (Regulation 9 'large' supplies), or to a number of residential properties (Regulation 11 'small shared' supplies). The Council's duty includes sampling each 'large' supply every year and the 'small' supplies every 5 years.

The aim is to ensure a wholesome and sufficient water supply. Where a supply is considered to be high risk, improvements are required to be undertaken, if necessary by the service of a notice. Annual reports are provided to the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI).

This area of largely proactive work has been consistently highlighted in the last 5+ years in the service plan as an area of significant resource pressure.

The recruitment of an additional EHO in February 2023 has helped the team allocate some resource to this area of work, with significantly more risk assessments (42) completed in 24/25 than in recent years. However, a lot remains to be done:

- Regulation 9 'large' supplies: 70 are known, 37 of these are in the high risk category.
- Regulation 11 'small' supplies: 123 are known, 60 of these are in the high risk category.

5.2.5 Pest Control

Complaint levels remain very similar to previous years with 109 in total, the majority of these relate to rats (98). The team's role is essentially one of enforcement, which for example includes responding to complaints regarding accumulations of waste, residential properties in a poor condition, hoarding etc.

5.2.6 Air Quality

The team actively engages with a number of commercial / industrial businesses in the county to ensure they comply with Environmental Permits and Petroleum Certification designed to control pollution levels.

Permit work can be complex with the varying nature of the industry involved. There are 26 permitted sites and 20 petroleum certified sites in the county. The team met its inspection responsibilities with a total of 47 inspections, with all businesses compliant by the year end.

Monitoring continued of traffic related pollution (nitrogen dioxide) in our 4 major towns and the team leads in meetings of the steering groups in the Chepstow and Usk Air Quality Management areas (AQMA).

Again, there were no exceedances in the county in 2024 (calendar year) of the nitrogen dioxide annual objective level, which builds on the previous four compliant years.

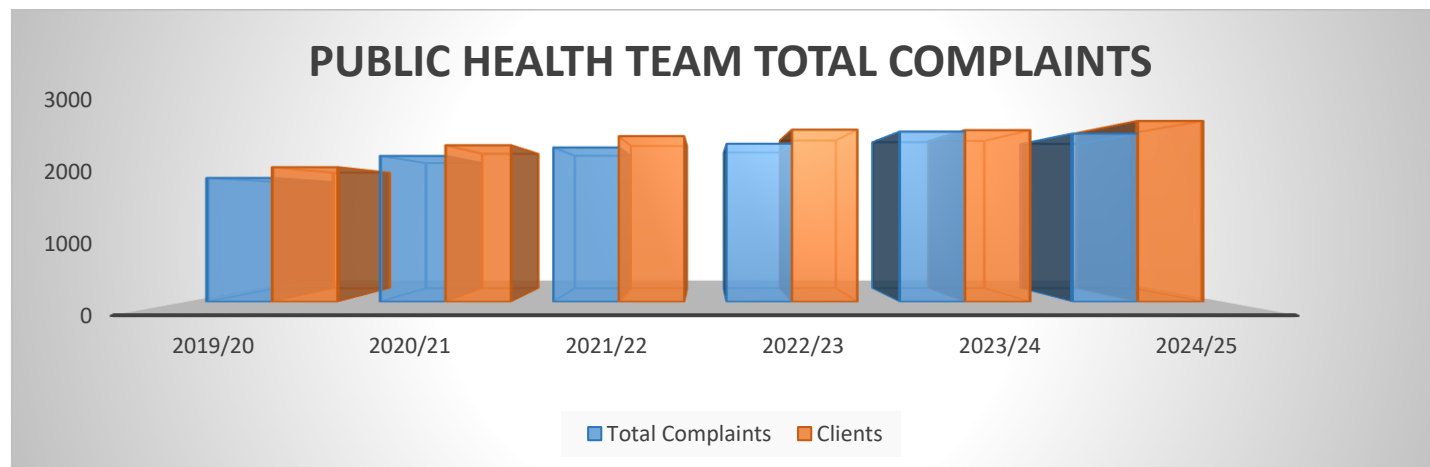
A pleasing update for the Usk AQMA as 2024 was the 10th year that the nitrogen dioxide levels were below the annual objective level of 40 µg/m³ and the 7th year below 36 µg/m³. This is the level Welsh Government advise an AQMA should be revoked if below it for 5 years. Making allowances for lower traffic levels during the 2 years of the covid pandemic, the aim for 25/26 will be to revoke the Usk AQMA.

5.2.7 Total Enquiries

A very slight reduction in the number of service requests received by the team with 2643 received compared with 2675 the previous year which was the highest ever recorded. However, of note, many service requests have multiple complainants and this total saw a significant increase with 2843 compared with 2699 in 23/24 (a 5.3% increase).

These service request levels are in stark contrast to the pre covid 2019/20 period where there were 2117 service request users compared with the 2843 in 24/25, a 34% increase.

This continuing pressure on reactive work makes it more difficult for the team to focus on very important areas of proactive work, as highlighted in the service plan, such as carrying out inspections of residential accommodation above takeaways which can be particularly high risk (fire safety etc) and private water supplies. The trend can be illustrated as follows:



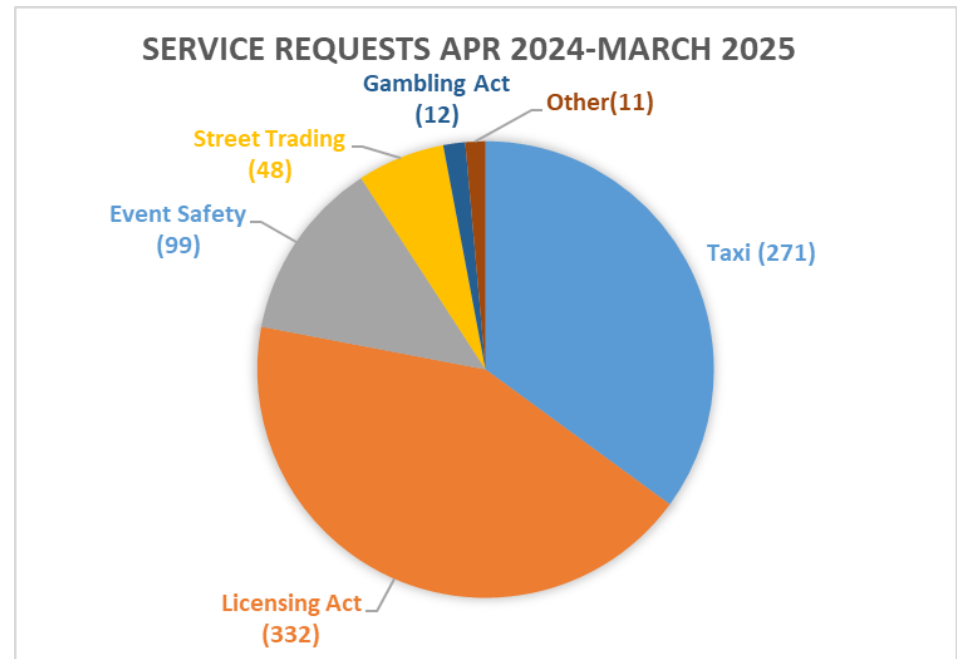
5.3 Licensing

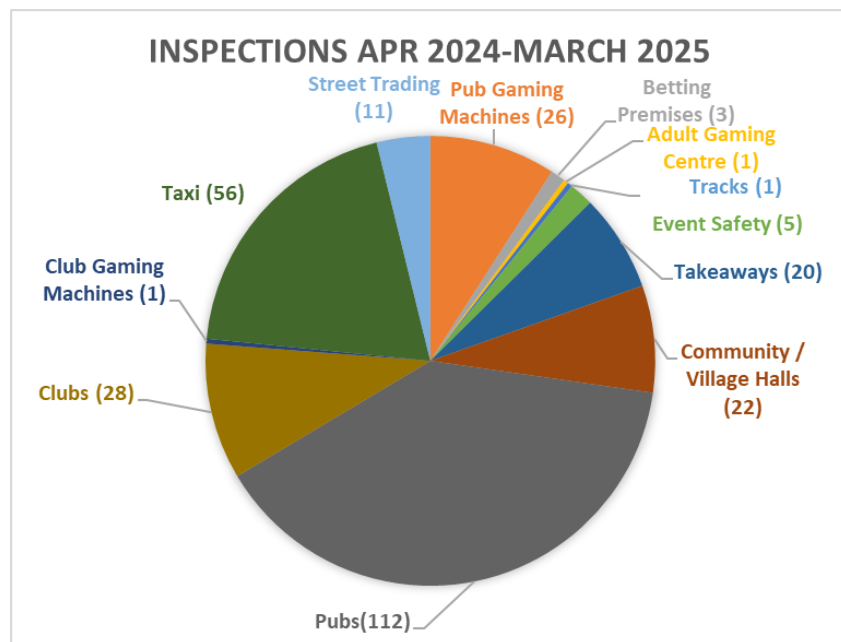
5.3.1 General

The Licensing team deals with a variety of licences, dealing with pubs, restaurants, off-licences and takeaways, taxis, street trading (e.g. burger vans), street/house to house collections, (e.g. charity collections in the street or bag drops at homes), gambling (e.g. betting shops, racecourse, one armed bandits in pubs/clubs, raffles etc.), scrap metal collectors and sites. The team are also authorised to deal with sex establishments, boats and hypnotism. Licensing has experienced pressures for such a busy small team due to absence of staff, with a shortfall of a licensing officer from November and long-term sickness within the team. The building a new licensing system to deal with applications and the transfer of data also added to service delivery pressures.

773 requests for service were processed by Licensing between April 2024 – March 2025 (98 of which were complaints). This is a decrease of 60 for the same period last year. A breakdown of the requests by licence types is shown opposite.

The predominant requests are for the Licensing Act, which deals with alcohol, entertainment, and late-night eating venues. These requests range from giving licensees advice or assisting the public who have concerns relating to antisocial behaviour, safety, and nuisance that the night-time economy can bring.





286 inspections were carried out by Licensing between April 2024 – March 2025. A decrease of 28 for the same period last year. A breakdown of the types of venues inspected is shown pictorially.

The predominant inspections being at pubs as this is where licensing also gets the biggest requests for assistance. We have also reintroduced a risk rating programme for such venues. The rating given to a premises will put them in a high, medium or low category, with high receiving 6 monthly visits, medium annual visits and low visited every 3 years. The risk rating programme ensures that those venues that are either being poorly managed or have the highest rate of incidents, will receive more visits. It also means that every premises will have a rating so no one gets overlooked. This has proved invaluable with licences also being updated to the needs of the licence holder following visits.

Other work carried out by Licensing during 2024/25 include:-

5.3.2 Pubs, Restaurants, Off-licences, Clubs and Takeaways

Event Safety

Event safety measures are crucial to protect attendees, staff and performers, minimizing accidents, injuries and emergencies. They also help meet legal requirements, build trust with attendees, and ensure a smooth, enjoyable experience. As such Licensing conducted the following during 2024/25:

- 99 Service requests to ensure licensing compliance and issue licences/permits where appropriate for events.
- 6th September 2024 - Joint inspection with Licensing and Environmental Health following concerns over management of a festival in Chepstow - landowner will no longer permit use of the land by festival organisers.
- 13th September 2024 - Joint inspection with Licensing and Environmental Health to give advice and recommendations to a proposed festival in Chepstow as part of Event Safety checks.

- 8th October 2024 – Multi agency with emergency services, Licensing and Environmental Health for use of a large concert at a venue in Chepstow to ensure event safety. Agreement of landowner regarding notifying the Local Authority prior to events of this nature taking place at the venue.
- 25th March 2025 – Multi agency site visit, which include emergency services, Licensing and Environmental Health at a concert venue in Chepstow – no issues.

Anti Social Behaviour and Breach of Licence/illegal sales

Measures addressing anti-social behaviour and breaches of licence conditions for alcohol premises are in place to protect the public. Alcohol related crime and disorder, including violence and public nuisance, can pose a significant threat to public safety. Alcohol related issues not only puts a strain on Licensing but also on public services like the police and health services. Excessive noise, littering and other behaviours associated with irresponsible drinking can create a nuisance for residents and other members of the public. As such Licensing conducted the following during 2024/25:

- 332 Service requests to ensure licensing compliance.
- 25th April 2024 - Joint operation between Licensing and Police to a hotel in Abergavenny following the venue not having a Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) - person in charge of alcohol sales. Advised not permitted to sell - ongoing monitoring of the venue.
- 15th October 2024 - Joint operation between Licensing and Police on 2 pubs in Abergavenny concerns over serving alcohol after permitted hours and breach of conditions. No proof alcohol sales so advice given. Warning letter issued for breach of conditions.
- 17th March 2025 - Police and Licensing visited a pub in Abergavenny following concerns of fighting at the venue. Licence holder acted appropriately by contacting emergency services in providing medical assistance and aimed to prevent the disorder at the time.

Underage Sales and Challenge 25

Ensuring compliance with licensing regulations is crucial for maintaining a safe and responsible drinking environment.

- 19th February 2025 - Police and Licensing visited a pub in Abergavenny concerns of underage drinking at the venue. Warning issued and Licence holder provided training to his staff to prevent this occurring again.

Immigration and anti-slavery

Immigration and anti-slavery measures are linked as both address issues of exploitation and vulnerability with licence holders requiring proof they can work in the UK before a licence is issued. Licensing systems can be used to monitor and regulate

businesses, making it easier to identify and address potential cases of modern-day slavery or illegal immigration. Licensing is the single point of contact for Public Protection should concerns be raised by officers in this directorate when officers are conducting visits at such venues.

- 27th April 2024 - Joint operation between Licensing and Immigration in Abergavenny following concerns raised that those employed at a restaurant did not have the right to work in the UK, with sleeping arrangements of staff which giving rise to possible modern-day slavery – No issues found at the venue.

5.3.3 Taxis

Taxis and School Contracts

- 19th December 2024 - Joint operation by Licensing and Passenger Transport Unit, checking taxis and Private Hire Vehicles at a school in Caldicot – 5 vehicles inspected, no issues found.
- 25th March 2025 - Licensing and Passenger Transport Unit responded to concerns over faulty door of a vehicle which was being used for a school run in Abergavenny. Advised to repair faulty door but no concerns over safety as egress in case of emergency was still possible via other doors.
- This collaborative effort helps ensure the safety and reliability of transportation services for school children.

Taxi Compliance

- 11th October 2024 - Taxi operation conducted in Chepstow, where a large concert was taking place. To prevent illegal pick-ups by taxis that are not licensed by Monmouthshire and who has not been pre-booked.

5.3.4 Gambling

Licensing has introduced a new risk rating system for gambling premises as a proactive step to maintaining high standards of compliance within gambling premises. Inspections were carried out on the racecourse and all premises licenced for gambling namely, 6 adult gaming centres and 6 betting shops. All venues complied with the advice given for improvements.

Licensing conducted refresher e-learning with the Gambling Commission, and this proved to be beneficial, covering essential aspects such as local risk assessments and dealing with problem gambling. The thorough assessment and in-depth inspections that followed the training are indicative of a diligent effort to implement the new risk rating program effectively.

In 2024/25 Licensing updated its Gambling Policy. Under the Gambling Act 2005, the Council must publish a policy of how the Licensing Authority will carry out their functions of licensing all gambling activities, this excludes remote gambling, such as online

gambling as this is directly carried out by the Gambling Commission. The policy needs to be published every 3 years. The new Policy proposed by Licensing was adopted at Full Council on 24th October 2024 where they agreed to the policy, which was drafted following consultation. They further agreed to the proposal to uphold the resolution not to permit casino applications. This Policy came into force on 31st January 2025.

5.4 Trading Standards & Animal Health

5.4.1 Feed

The Feed Programme allocation for 2024/25 was fully delivered with 118 inspections achieved as allocated. As the regional lead it was pleasing to report that overall, the Gwent region achieved 91% of their high risk inspections (above the Wales average of 87%) and 113% of their primary production allocation (above the Wales average of 99%). Another member of the team has qualified and the animal health officers have all been enrolled in the new professional competency qualification to be undertaken during 2025/26.

5.4.2 Animal Health

The animal health team continue to develop as a small supportive team that have received many positive comments regarding their approach with dealing with many difficult situations. The Trading Standards and Animal Health Manager as strategic lead nationally for animal health matters, continues to be heavily involved in working with WG, to develop and deliver the Partnership Delivery Plan (PDP) and with key Programme for Government commitments. PDP funding was reduced by 50% for 2024/25 and impacted on all local authorities with markets and collection centres in their areas. The programme is based on a regional approach and mirrors the footprint of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal. Monmouthshire has approximately 50% of the critical control points and animal related premises within this region.

Two animal welfare prosecutions continue to sit within the judicial system with delays pushing them beyond this reporting period. There were a couple of fly grazing incidents on private land where the team were instrumental in supporting the land owners and facilitating the removal of horses by their owners, before more formal action was required.

The Trading Standards Wales (TSW) Local Authority Enforcement Project, now formally known as Animal Licensing Wales continues to be being led by Monmouthshire. It underpins the delivery of some of the Programme for Government commitments identified in the Animal Welfare Plan for Wales. During 2024/25 the team had further disruption through turnover in staff due to the uncertainty over longer term funding and maternity leave. Further funding (slightly reduced) was announced late in the financial year until the end of March 2026. This will impact heavily should it cease, as currently the team are there to provide specialist

support for all Local Authorities in Wales. Priorities are still being determined to progress the commitments including the regulation of establishments not currently caught by legislation such as sanctuaries. This has been impacted by the recent greyhound racing ban announcement and will be further impacted by the pending Senedd elections. The end of year update report contains more detailed information on the team's work.

5.4.3 Fair Trading

During 2024/25 work continued to be undertaken to react as quickly as possible to intelligence relating to illegal vapes and illicit tobacco, participating in the national coordinated disruption work known as Operation CeCe. The announcement of a ban on single use vapes was very much welcomed and work on a coordinated approach to ensuring all are aware, will commence in 2025/26.

During December there was a test purchase operation undertaken following allegations of underage sales taking place. This resulted in an enforcement visit and a written warning following one sale. Follow up checks did not result in a sale. As part of the strong partnership approach with Gwent Police, an officer undertook a presentation on under age sales to the police cadets who then participated in the operation.

TS continue to receive complaints regarding children accessing vapes. It's recognised the limited success that test purchase exercises can achieve in certain circumstances, so work has been done with local high schools, community policing teams and the Youth Service to help guide and inform our enforcement work. Safeguarding engagement is also being increased to ensure that understanding and awareness is shared as widely as possible. Targeted advice is planned for the pending single use vape ban.

Over 230,000 illicit cigarettes that were seized from a vehicle at Magor Services and passed to Avon & Somerset Police following intervention by the South Wales Regional Organised Crime Unit, resulted in a successful prosecution at national level.

5.4.4 Consumer Protection

Inspection visits were undertaken at the agricultural shows resulting in advice being given to a number of toy and children's clothing manufacturers, as well as metrology checks at the Abergavenny food festival. The animal health team also attended the agricultural show and advised re animal welfare and other good practice.

One of our officers who undertakes the Lead Officer role on environmental matters (for Monmouthshire and Trading Standards Wales) was heavily involved in work to create a Wales wide toolkit. Assisting officers undertaking the enforcement of the EPC (Energy Performance Certification) and MEES (Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards) regulations across Wales.

A presentation was undertaken in January at the Monmouthshire Citizens Advice AGM on work of TS, building on the long standing approach to supporting and protecting Monmouthshire residents. Funding was received from the Office for Product Safety and Standards for a focussed piece of work offering support to local businesses with an online presence, to provide free training on their product safety and trading obligations.

Monmouthshire have over 30 Cold Calling Control Zones which have been in place for many years. A much needed review of the signs has been undertaken, with numbers updated where they have changed and visibility ensured with cleaning/clearing.

5.4.5 Weights & Measures

Our participation in the Welsh Metrology project was primarily in support of residents affected by the cost of living crisis, particularly where there is a reliance on more traditional fuels. This followed work undertaken by officers in Scotland and North Wales where problems were identified with short weight pre-packed coal. Officers attended a number of premises across the County and weighed coal packed by a variety of suppliers, bags ranging in size from 7.5kg to 20kg. 194 bags of coal were checked and found to be compliant and not short weight.

5.4.6 Product Safety

As part of the trading standards professional qualification, officers have to complete a number of projects and tasks to show competency and understanding. This year work was undertaken on the safety of cosmetics on sale in Abergavenny and led to advice being given. No problems were identified that required more formal action which is reassuring for both consumers and businesses.

5.4.7 TSW Partnership and Income Generation

Work continued on formalising the long standing relationship between all local authorities in Wales. This relates to work undertaken by trading standards through a regional coordination approach, allowing access to additional funding that is utilised more effectively and efficiently. The partnership agreement has been drafted, consulted on and agreed, ensuring;

1. A systematic and robust process exists for the administration and distribution of grants awarded on behalf of Trading Standards Wales.
2. Suitable budget and performance monitoring arrangements are in place and report appropriately to ensure the objectives of the Animal Health Function and Trading Standards Wales are achieved.

In 2024/25 feed work undertaken increased funding to approximately £36,600. Animal Health PDP regional co-ordination, and additional project work, brought in around £6,000.

5.5 Event Safety Advisory Group

A number of Public Protection staff are involved in Monmouthshire's Event Safety Advisory Group, (ESAG). This is a partnership designed to help organisers run safe and successful events. It is recognised a proactive advisory stance is preferable to reacting to problems after events have occurred. 161 events held in 24/25 received ESAG advice, which is significantly higher than the 124 events in 23/24.

This highlights the growing importance of the group to event organisers with advice sought and provided from all our typical organisers of music, sporting, agricultural, food events, etc. Some singular events, eg. a music event with 15,000 in attendance, can take a lot of Officer time via supporting the organiser, liaising with the site provider and other departments and partners. As referenced in sections 5.1.5 and 5.2.2 Environmental Health are heavily involved in providing advice from health and safety and noise control perspectives.

Public Protection Officers are well placed in providing holistic advice to event organisers and can signpost to different disciplines for specialist advice. This includes liaising with Gwent Police on reducing crime and disorder and counter-terrorism measures, Wales Ambulance Service on medical provision, Fire and Rescue regarding fire safety and evacuation, together with various other Council departments dependant on the type of event, eg. MonLife, Grounds, Environment, Highways and Emergency Planning.

5.6 Local Toilets Strategy

This involves mapping out all publicly available facilities via Data Map Cymru, updating what's available at each venue (disabled facilities, baby changing, opening times, etc.), liaising with Landlord Services on proactive maintenance work and incorporating comments from the public and Members. Environmental Health inspect the 18 publicly available 'traditional blocks' annually and report to those who manage the toilets, Town and Community Councils, etc. Progress is reported annually via Place Scrutiny Committee. Standards were found to be generally very good at the time the facilities were inspected.

2 new facilities have become available at churches which are on the Offa's Dyke path in Lanfangel Yestern Lywern and Llantilio Crosseny. Access to the Welsh Government Data Maps Cymru toilet 'layer' has been provided which means we can amend our own data.

6 SUMMARY & LESSONS LEARNT 2024/25

- 6.1 **Prioritisation** remains key with all services experiencing pressure following substantial increases in workload and expectations in recent years. With new legislation and additional responsibilities either commenced or due to, it is likely this pressure will be maintained or indeed increase further. Effective planning is crucial with regular evaluation of performance throughout the year against the targets set. The vast majority of Public Protection activities are statutory duties but there is some flexibility to enable a clear focus on the range of these duties to ensure that high value public protection outcomes are delivered. The individual Service Business Plans set out the planned actions and the outcomes achieved.
- 6.2 Full use of the **digital tools** available to assist officers keep on top of the flow of customer demands and be efficient in their reporting so they can get out on site visits, inspections and deliver on the front line. The team is moving to a new (cloud-based) software system, the implementation of which needs to be properly resourced so it can provide the much needed efficiency savings in the day to day work of officers. In recognition of this, an additional Systems Administrator was recruited on a temporary 12 month contract early 2025 to help drive the implementation forward.
- 6.3 **Collaborative and partnership working** is essential to provide an efficient public protection service. The problems faced in our communities are often multi-faceted where effective solutions can be provided by close working with the range of other external public services, Town and Community Councils, local working groups etc. Continuing to build on the existing trust, relationships and the good reputation of the service at all levels is vital. The links made with Public Health Wales and the Aneurin Bevan Health Board can continue to be developed and help the service better understand and focus on key health improvement objectives such as better living conditions, improved animal welfare, etc.
- 6.4 **Innovative working** continued to be progressed in the year, not least with the implementation of the Special Procedures work under the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 with the Commercial team responsible for procuring and implementing the national online register.

7 2025/26 AND BEYOND

- 7.1 The services will continue to deliver statutory responsibilities, prioritising activity to areas most needed. Our Service Business Plans 2025 – 28 endeavour to encapsulate the actions, performance and outcomes, reflecting on and integrating with the Council's Community & Corporate Plan 2022/28.
- 7.2 Public Health Wales and HSE national priorities focus on health outcomes and wider determinants for health for 2025/26, which will see the Commercial Team engaged in legionella and an asbestos duty to manage interventions, as well as targeting some local safety trends such as hot urn safety (following RIDDOR investigations of work-related accidents).
- 7.3 The Public Health team will progress the Housing Above Takeaway (HAT) project, proactively inspecting residential accommodation in multi – use buildings, where potentially some of our most vulnerable persons are living in homes posing the greatest risks. This fits in with aspects of the proposed Building Safety (Wales) Bill which will see local authorities taking on additional responsibilities for the regulation of multi – occupied residential buildings in Wales.
- 7.4 Trading Standards will have responsibility for ensuring new legislation is implemented appropriately across the authority's area. This includes the Environmental Protection (Single Use Vapes) (Wales) Regulations 2024, The Environmental Protection (Single-Use Plastic Products) (Wales) Regulations 2023 and The Food (Promotion and Presentation) (Wales) Regulations 2025.
- 7.5 The services enjoy an excellent reputation regionally and nationally and will continue to contribute to the wider agenda and core responsibility of public protection. The Head of Public Protection role, vacated September 2024, has not been directly back filled, which will need to be evaluated.
- 7.6 The Public Protection team will need to be involved in Exercise Pegasus, the government's UK wide pandemic response exercise, anticipated autumn 2025. The exercise is a whole system test. As Category 1 responders, under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, local authorities will be core participants. The UK government is leading on the design, scenario and sequence of the exercise.
- 7.7 Officers are confident they can sustain our high-quality, well-respected services, and PP will continue to report progress to DMT's, Members via this scrutiny committee and external national oversight bodies.

PP June 2025