

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

Staffing Crisis for Local Authority Trading Standards in Scotland as workforce numbers dip to a historic low.

The 2025 biennial workforce survey carried out by SCOTSS across all Scottish local authorities has revealed a drop in numbers below 250 for the first time, and a worsening age demographic that shows 60% of staff are over 50 years of age.

As worrying, is the very low numbers of younger officers coming into the service, and inadequate support for modern apprenticeships, and training and development of other staff.

Without immediate government support, and action to increase resources, there is a clear risk that services will fail to adequately protect consumers across an ever-growing range of legislation and be able to offer little or no support to business in Scotland against a complex landscape of regulation.

The survey echoes the findings of a [Which? investigation](#) from February 2025 that exposed a trading standards postcode lottery, with woefully inadequate staffing levels in many areas - leaving millions of people exposed to crime, fake and dangerous products and scams.

SCOTSS Chair Alexandra Connell confirmed:

"This survey confirms what every SCOTSS member knows, that trading standards services in Scotland are at their lowest ebb and our ability to do our job is significantly hampered by a lack of human resource. Given the serious age demographic of staff, the service cannot continue to protect Scottish consumers for much longer without a serious look at how we operate and what funding is available."

John Herriman, CEO of the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) said:

"The findings of the SCOTSS workforce survey paint a stark picture of the challenges facing Trading Standards in Scotland. The current position is simply not sustainable for the future – consumers risk being left exposed to unsafe products, scams, and illegal sales, while businesses will be denied the support they need to navigate an increasingly complex regulatory landscape."

"This isn't just a Scottish issue – it is a UK-wide challenge. And while Trading Standards teams go above and beyond to protect the public and support businesses, with the right investment these services can deliver even greater protection, fairness, and confidence for consumers and businesses alike. Consumer protection is a cornerstone of a fair economy and a vital public service, and we call on both Governments to strengthen it through long-term planning and sustainable resourcing."

The Scottish Grocers Federation Head of Policy & Public Affairs, Luke McGarty, said:

"SGF believes in responsible community retailing and for many years we have worked closely with SCOTSS and the excellent Trading Standards teams in Scotland to deliver compliance across the sector.

"A well-resourced Trading Standards Service is crucial for ensuring fair and consistent trading conditions for Scottish retailers and helps to ensure customers have confidence that what's on the shelves is genuine and safe."

“However, it is now clear that Trading Standards are facing a debilitating resource crisis. Urgent action by government is essential to ensure they have the workforce and resources they need to clamp down on the growing market in illicit trade and shut down rogue sellers pushing unregulated and dangerous products. Without action, the situation will only get worse, putting the public at risk and adding to the pressure already felt by many lifeline local businesses that are now having to compete against cheap illegal traders.”

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Notes for Editors:

For press queries and further details on this work, email Ken Daly, SCOTSS Coordinator at coordinator@scotss.org.uk call 07720538349, or visit www.scotss.org

1. The Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland (SCOTSS) represents the 31 local authority trading standards services in Scotland. SCOTSS was established in 1996 and helps support and coordinate the activities of Scotland’s local authority trading standards teams. It is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC047951 and works closely with other governmental and regulatory organisations, such as the Competition and Markets Authority, the Office of Product Safety and Standards, Trading Standards Scotland, and the Scottish Government.
2. Trading Standards Officers in Scottish councils advise on and enforce laws that govern the way we buy, sell, rent and hire goods and services. Local authorities carry out inspections and monitor or investigate complaints, they work with businesses to help achieve compliance but ultimately, can instigate prosecutions or take civil actions against those who break the law.
3. SCOTSS conducts a biennial workforce survey to monitor the staffing resource available across Scotland to protect consumers and support business. This survey is a snapshot of full time equivalent (FTE) establishment working in trading standards services as of 31 July 2025. The full report is available on the [SCOTSS website here](http://www.scotss.org).