

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

### **Scotland-wide awareness campaign to highlight consumer protection issues**

SCOTSS (the Scottish trading standards chief officers' organisation) has launched Scottish Trading Standards Week, a five-day consumer protection campaign, aimed at raising awareness and highlighting the good work that is carried out by local authority trading standards in Scotland.

The campaign commences on 16 September and will focus on a range of core problem areas affecting the public, consumers and businesses in Scotland. The majority of consumer protection legislation is also EU derived, so Brexit has a clear impact of on this area of regulation.

With such a wide breadth of work conducted by trading standards services, each day of the week-long campaign will showcase different areas of trading standards work including product safety, Intellectual Property Crime especially around online markets, sales of tobacco and NVPs to underage children, motor vehicles, Weights and Measures, and also work done to prevent people being scammed, particularly vulnerable groups.

SCOTSS is a coordinated partnership of 31 local authority trading standards services across Scotland, sharing intelligence and good practice, and working collaboratively to ensure an effective consumer protection service despite severe cuts to public resources.

SCOTSS are also launching their new 'Approved Trader Portal', which draws together the approved trader schemes of seventeen different Scottish councils and is a one-stop-shop for consumers, presenting information to consumers about approved traders nearest to where they are. All traders on the list are fully vetted by trading standards and provide services locally using customer feedback as an assessment tool. The portal can be found at [www.approvedtrader.scot](http://www.approvedtrader.scot)

Also highlighted are new and innovative ways that Trading Standards are finding to protect residents from scams, embracing technology such as call blocking equipment and doorstep cameras to deter and detect predatory fraudsters. These scam prevention interventions are helping to keep our most vulnerable residents safe, confident and more able to maintain independent living, and with an estimated loss in excess of £9billion to scams annually across the UK, helping prevent organised criminals leaving a trail of personal and financial misery and loss across Scotland.

As an example, a nuisance call blocking initiative that identified residents at high risk of being scammed resulted in some compelling outcomes:

- 2,831 call blocking units installed
- 2.1 million Nuisance calls blocked
- Every £1 spent saved £59 (estimated individual and public expenditure savings)
- £8.5 million in savings

SCOTSS Chair and Trading Standards Manager for Dumfries & Galloway Council, Sandra Harkness says: "This is a great opportunity for Trading Standards to showcase what it does to protect consumers and support businesses right across Scotland. Work carried out by trading standards officers is crucial to local communities that they serve, not only in consumer protection but also in health, economic development and more."

The Trading Standards Week campaign will focus daily on the following areas:

- Day 1: Monday 16 September – Tobacco, NVPs and Underage sales
- Day 2: Tuesday 17 September – Used cars
- Day 3: Wednesday 18 September – Weights and Measures
- Day 4: Thursday 19 September – Online markets and IP Crime
- Day 5: Friday 20 September – Product Safety

Trading standards services and partners across Scotland will be taking part in related activities each day, for example with detection dogs used to sniff out illicit tobacco, public events at shopping centres advising consumers on how to protect themselves when buying goods and services across the internet, as well as showcasing all sorts of counterfeit goods to highlight the serious risks that they present, and the use of specialist equipment in the field to test high capacity weighing equipment.

Leon Livermore, Chief Executive at the Chartered Trading Standards Institute, said: "I'm a great supporter of SCOTSS and what they have done for local authority trading standards services over the past twenty years. Raising awareness of vital consumer issues in Scotland comes at just the right time and CTSI is fully supportive."

The joined-up approach that authorities in Scotland have adopted is the way forward to counter the wide-spread resource cuts to trading standards and is resulting in the best service possible for consumers and businesses."

Scottish TS Week takes place 16-20 September 2019. Follow @socotss for full updates and follow #ScottishTSweek2019 for updates from across Scotland.

Full details of the week are available on [www.tradingstandards.scot](http://www.tradingstandards.scot)

ENDS

Notes for Editors:

For press queries, email [coordinator@scotss.org.uk](mailto:coordinator@scotss.org.uk)

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 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. Further daily information on the week's activities can be found on [www.tradingstandards.scot](http://www.tradingstandards.scot) including further information on scams prevention work

4. Consumers may report complaints, or information on consumer protection issues to Trading Standards via Advice Direct Scotland on 0808 164 6000 [www.consumeradvice.scot](http://www.consumeradvice.scot) or to their local Trading Standards authority <https://www.tradingstandards.uk/consumers/support-advice>

5. Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)

CTSI is a training and membership organisation that has represented the interests of the Trading Standards profession since 1881 nationally and internationally. We aim to raise the profile of the profession while working towards fairer, better informed and safer consumer and business communities.

CTSI's members are engaged in delivering frontline trading standards services in local authorities and in businesses. [www.tradingstandards.uk](http://www.tradingstandards.uk)