

## Trading Standards Service - Investigations Criteria

**Status of this policy: Current**

**Last revision date: 15/11/2023**

Every year Leicestershire County Council Trading Standards Service receives thousands of complaints and requests for help. Unfortunately, we cannot investigate every complaint, nor respond to all requests, so we prioritise the most serious cases and use the others to help us to plan our prevention work.

On receipt of a complaint or reported incident we undertake a risk assessment to help us to decide which complaints we will escalate for further enquiries. Below are some examples of factors we take into consideration when deciding which incidents are prioritised for further investigation.

- The amount or scope of the financial gain or loss, vulnerability of the victim.
- The overall risk to public safety.
- The overall risk to public health.
- There are significant breaches of feed hygiene or animal health and welfare legislation creating an increased risk of the spread of animal disease, or harm to the integrity of the food chain.
- The business or individual has failed to comply with previous advice, a statutory notice, written advice or other formal commitment to comply with the law.
- The unfair trading practice relates to organised criminal activity.
- Further investigation or prevention activity is appropriate to protect legitimate businesses.

In addition, we consider the overall harm that a trading practice or product might cause. If we decide to initiate a criminal investigation, we will need to consider the likelihood of securing sufficient evidence, and that the investigation would be in the public interest.

### **What happens if we investigate or respond to a request for help?**

Not all investigations lead to a prosecution or court case. Sometimes other steps, such as issuing advice or a statutory notice, or working with a business to achieve compliance are more appropriate.

When responding to requests for help we will consider the most appropriate action to support and help the most vulnerable in our community.

**What happens if we don't investigate or respond to a request for help?**

Unfortunately, we cannot investigate every complaint, nor respond to every request for help, but all information received is reviewed regularly and helps us to decide the priorities for the future.

Visit [Citizens Advice consumer service](#) website for advice and assistance or call 0808 223 1133.

[Leicestershire Trading Standards Service Enforcement Policy](#)