



Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request the following information.

For the purposes of this request, 'tradespeople' refers to any individual providing professional services in skilled trades, such as plumbing, building, electrical work, carpentry, and other related manual or technical services.

1. The number of open investigations that Wigan Borough Council Trading Standards has into tradespeople suspected of breaching consumer protection law.

Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) relieves a public authority from the obligation to comply with a request for information where the estimated time required to locate, review and extract the information exceeds a certain threshold set out in Regulations.

The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/3244) set out the rules in relation to the cost limit (otherwise called the "appropriate limit"). These Regulations are published by the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) and are viewable on their web site from this link:

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/uksi_20043244_en.pdf

The Regulations set out the cost limit for Government departments and for other public authorities. For local government, Regulation 3 states that the cost limit is £450 and Regulation 4(4) states that the prescribed hourly rate is £25. Regulation 4(4) further provides that where the local authority estimates the time taken to gather the information would exceed this limit (which based on the prescribed hourly rate, equates to 18 officer hours), it may refuse the request under section 12 of FoIA. I am satisfied the cost limit applies to your request and will explain why this is the case.

We are unable to provide this as our database does not have a specific code for accurately identifying by a trader type.

Such complaints would be recorded under a generic code of Fair Trading. The service receives approximately 1000 Fair Trading category complaints per year.

It is not possible to retrieve the information requested without an officer manually reading the text within the complaints. An estimated minimum of 5 minutes per complaint equates over 18 hours officer time.²

Only those complaints relating to "tradespeople" resulting in a full investigation and enforcement action can be identified as per answer 2.

2. The number of times Wigan Borough Council Trading Standards took enforcement action against tradespeople suspected of breaching consumer protection law during the following years: 2025, 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021, and 2020.	2020- 3 2021 -5 2022-1 2023- 6 2024 10 2025- 8	It is not possible to retrieve the information requested without an officer manually reading the text within the complaints. The service receives approximately 1000 Fair Trading category complaints per year. An estimated minimum of 5 minutes per complaint equates over 18 hours officer time.
3. The frequency with which breaches of CMA guidance were cited in complaints submitted to Wigan Borough Council Trading Standards concerning tradespeople.		
4. The number of staff employed by Wigan Borough Council Trading Standards during the previous five years (2025, 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021).	2021 -7.5 2022-7.5 2023- 7.5 2024 7.5 2025-7.0	
5. The number of staff who have left Wigan Borough Council Trading Standards in 2025 during the previous five years (2025, 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021), through each of the following ways (moved roles internally, left Wigan Borough Council Trading Standards voluntarily, made redundant).	2021 -1 2022-1 2023- 1 2024 1 2025-2	
6. Budget allocated to Wigan Borough Council Trading Standards during the previous five years (2025, 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021).	2021/22 2022/23 2023/24 2024/25 2025/26	356,079 351,771 367,340 400,368 407,207