

Impact Report 2022-2025

Strengthening Enforcement Across Wales

The No Ifs. No Butts. reporting portal has become the leading public channel for reporting illegal tobacco, vapes and underage sales in Wales.

Since its launch in March 2022, it has **generated 1,171 reports, with 68% (796) from Wales**. The portal serves as a critical intelligence tool, directly supporting Trading Standards and multi-agency enforcement.



From Baseline to Breakthrough

2016/17 (Pre-Portal):

- **261 reports of illegal tobacco** received by Trading Standards across Wales (Apr 2016 – March 2017).
- **221 enforcement visits**, of which 81 led to seizures and 42 to prosecutions.
- **449,540 cigarettes and 1,528 kg of hand-rolling tobacco seized**.
- Public awareness low: only **13% said they would report to Trading Standards**, with most defaulting to the police.

2022-2025 (Portal Era):

- **In total 1,171 reports** logged through the portal (796 in Wales).
- **2025 projected to surpass 400 reports** - the highest annual total with public engagement growing year on year.
- Intel flows to enforcement teams on a **weekly basis**, identifying stash locations, corroborating existing intelligence, and justifying unannounced raids.
- The portal provides live intelligence enabling **raids, seizures, and shop closures**.

Impact: In four years, annual reports have nearly doubled those received by Trading Standards across Wales in 2016/17. The No ifs. No Butts. reporting portal is unique to Wales, gathering intelligence to strengthen enforcement at regional and national levels.

Enforcement Value

Joint Enforcement - “The No Ifs. No Butts. portal is essential for targeting illegal tobacco enforcement by Trading Standards in Wales. Crucially, the portal has encouraged joint Police and Trading Standards enforcement, identifying links to drugs, safeguarding concerns, and immigration offences.” - **Martin Tavener Regional Investigation Team - Operation CeCe**

Surveillance Time - 176 reports (15%) detailed stash locations in shops, cars, or homes. This intel has saved officers hours of surveillance and supports joint enforcement across Police, Trading Standards, and Immigration. It also builds community confidence, with repeat reports showing the public their intelligence leads to real results.

National Co-ordination - No Ifs. No Butts. intelligence directly supports the national effort to tackle illegal tobacco. Under Operation Cece, the joint HMRC and Trading Standards programme, **more than 6 million cigarettes have been seized in Wales since March 2021.**

Product Trends

Portal data reveals what communities are most concerned about and gives Trading Standards early warning of emerging problems. Illegal vapes now feature heavily in the reports:

- **Illegal tobacco: 66%** of reports.
- **Illegal vapes: 55%** of reports.
- **Cannabis: 16%** of reports.
- **Underage sales:** One-third of all reports reference children.

The portal is not only uncovering illegal tobacco but also maps crossovers with vape shops, underage sales, and drugs, helping officers target resources effectively.

Legislation Impact

- After the **June 2025 disposable vape ban**, vape-related reports in Wales jumped **58% in just three months** (48 in Jan–May vs. 76 in Jun–Aug).
- UK-wide, mentions of **underage sales more than doubled** in the same period (19 up to 45).

Community Engagement and Campaign Reach



57,000+ unique portal visitors since launch.



Campaign bursts consistently trigger **Google search spikes** for terms like “*report shop selling vapes to kids*” Campaign investment has delivered cost-efficient reach and conversions into reports:

Digital Ads:

- Since 2022, social media advertising campaigns have generated **1.3M+ impressions**, reaching **850,000+ people** and **generating over 50,000 clicks**.
- On Facebook and Instagram, the **cost per click** dropped from £0.68 in 2023 to just **£0.13 by summer 2025**, due to testing different colours, headlines and messages.
- Typical UK Facebook/Instagram campaigns cost £0.50-£1.50 per click. By summer 2025, clicks cost just £0.13, over 80% cheaper than the UK average, making No Ifs. No Butts. one of Wales’s most cost-effective campaigns.
- Snapchat ads delivered **32,961 click-throughs at £0.03 each**.

Radio and Audio:

- Across two phases, **campaigns delivered 343,000+ impressions** with **95-99.5% listen-through rates**, extending reach beyond digital platforms.

The No Ifs. No Butts. campaign was launched in 2022 with support from the Welsh Government, backed by a £50,000 media spend. Communications agency Freshwater led the initial project.

"As one of Wales's leading marketing and communications agencies, we are proud to see that No Ifs. No Butts. is one of the nation's most effective community-focused campaigns. Its success proves the value of brand growth and the importance of continued investment to sustain impact." - **Project lead Nicola Roberts, Director at Freshwater.**

Community Reporting Zones

- Newport (22%) and Cardiff (17%) account for nearly 40% of all Welsh reports.
- Newport also leads per capita (10.9/10k), followed by Denbighshire (4.9), Wrexham (4.5) and Cardiff (3.7).

Key Drivers of Reporting Hotspots

- Campaign bursts: North Wales saw a 600% increase in reports during the 2023 push.
- Visible enforcement activity: High-profile interventions, including sniffer dogs, raids, and widespread shop closures, created spikes in community reporting.
- Heightened community concern and awareness:

The portal's reporting hotspots mirror the **visibility of enforcement activity** (Newport) and the impact of **campaign activity** (North Wales). This demonstrates the system's capacity to increase public reporting likelihood when enforcement visibility and awareness campaigns are present.

The Scale of the Challenge

With 325,000 smokers in Wales and illegal tobacco estimated at **10% of the market**, around **142 million illegal cigarettes are smoked each year - nearly 400,000 every single day.**

The **seizure of 6 million illegal cigarettes** is impressive but **effective enforcement and strong public engagement must go hand in hand**. Campaign work and public awareness create the conditions for intelligence to flow, while enforcement ensures that intelligence is acted upon.

By building trust and engaging communities, the No Ifs. No Butts. portal ensures enforcement is informed, targeted, and more effective. To maximise this impact, we need close partnership to turn community intelligence into coordinated action.

Future Direction

With stable funding, the No Ifs. No Butts. portal can evolve into **permanent national infrastructure** for tackling illegal tobacco, illegal vapes, and youth access.

As Wales prepares for the implementation of the **Tobacco and Vapes Bill**, the portal is uniquely placed to:



Provide vital support to enforcement and compliance with the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, ensuring rapid public reporting of breaches and actionable intelligence for Trading Standards.



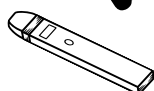
Enhance intelligence-sharing across agencies, enabling faster responses and stronger coordination.



Support targeted activity in hotspot communities, where illegal sales and youth access are most prevalent.



Strengthen Wales' ability to respond rapidly to emerging illicit products and changing tactics in the market.



Lock in momentum post-2025 disposable vape ban, sustaining the surge in public engagement and reports.