

OPSS delivery report 2025-2026

August 2026

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) has published its 2025–2026 [Delivery Report](#) (Delivery Report).

OPSS is the national product regulator for the UK (part of the Department for Business and Trade). The Delivery Report summarises a year of regulatory reform, enforcement action and a focus on delivering consumer protection alongside economic growth. As such, it provides useful insights for businesses supplying products onto the UK market, on trends in regulation and enforcement and possible areas of risk.

The Delivery Report covers the passage of the Product Regulation and Metrology Act 2025 (Act), which we explored in our frESH Law Horizons publication available [here](#).

The Delivery Report outlines that OPSS is consulting on major new reforms that will use the powers granted under the Act to further protect consumers from unsafe products. This likely refers to the recent consultations on the [UK's proposed new product safety framework](#) (which essentially proposes a mirroring of the post-Brexit EU General Product Safety Regulation (EU) 2023/988 and would extend to all products, both consumer and non-consumer), [market surveillance and enforcement](#) (which proposes civil monetary penalties alongside criminal offences) and [furniture fire safety](#) (which has as one of its stated aims, a reduction in the reliance on chemical flame retardants, with an associated proposal to introduce a "smoulder" test in line with testing in other jurisdictions, in place of the current "open-flame" test).

The Delivery Report also underscores OPSS' continuing role in supporting the operation of the Windsor Framework in Northern Ireland. OPSS worked across government to implement EU-origin product regulations applying in Northern Ireland, supported market surveillance and EU reporting obligations under the Withdrawal Agreement, as well as helping to develop enforcement arrangements for forthcoming EU legislation, such as the new EU Regulation on Machinery.

Product regulation and enforcement

During 2025–2026, OPSS took (and are taking) a risk-based approach to product regulation and enforcement. The Delivery Report notes that OPSS acted by a combination of proactive market surveillance, scientific testing and enforcement action, and that a significant proportion of their activity has been driven by novel hazards.

The e-commerce sector has a dedicated programme, with enforcement activities for online marketplaces including targeted test purchasing, testing for compliance and quick responses. It is clear that products are not simply being assessed/purchased by OPSS "off the shelf" in traditional bricks and mortar retailers – OPSS has undertaken joint operations with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and Border Force on the import of products intended for fulfilment houses and have stopped direct-to-consumer imports as well.

One of the most prominent interventions involved more than 103,000 heat-pump tumble dryers, which were found to present a fire risk. Following extensive investigation involving engineers, scientists and risk assessors, OPSS required the manufacturer to revise its repair programme and improve communications with affected consumers. This demonstrates that the regulator will act proactively to mandate corrective action in appropriate cases, where it considers that the steps taken by the relevant party may not go far enough to address the level of risk.

OPSS also took action against unsafe baby products, asbestos-contaminated play sand, dangerous aerosol products and noncompliant personal protective equipment sold online. Enforcement activity also focused on prohibited cosmetics, including skin-lightening products containing hydroquinone and teeth-whitening products exceeding permitted hydrogen peroxide limits.

The "call-out" of particular product-types, perhaps reflects the new sector-based delivery framework that has been developed during the year. The Delivery Report notes that this allows more targeted, risk-based regulatory action. The practical upshot of that for businesses, is a likelihood of greater scrutiny if they are supplying a product-type for which issues have been identified in the wider market. Horizon-scanning for such issues (for example by periodic monitoring of the public database of safety alerts and recalls) may help businesses to identify possible issues in their own supply chain (for example if products, or parts of products, originate from the same supplier or the same region, as a recent issue).

While enforcement remains a key tool, OPSS emphasised its commitment to helping compliant businesses thrive. The Delivery Report states that the regulator resolved more than 14,000 enforcement cases during the year, with most outcomes achieved through advice, guidance and compliance support rather than enforcement action.

OPSS (alongside the Regulatory Innovation Office) reportedly continued supporting innovation, engaging with emerging sectors including engineering biology start-ups to ensure regulation remains future-focused and not unduly burdensome.

Construction products

Another focus of OPSS is the construction products sector. The Delivery Report states that OPSS has established a “visible regulatory presence”, and driven an understanding among industry regarding the importance of product compliance through their “Moving Markets” framework.

Notable interventions cited include an investigation concerning fire-rated plywood products and unannounced inspections of heat-soaked thermally toughened glass manufacturers. The inspections revealed widespread failures in product documentation, testing records and declarations of performance, leading to multiple prohibition notices and significant corrective action across the sector.

Of course, the construction product safety regime is also evolving, with a [White Paper](#) on proposed reform published in February, setting out the government’s intention to introduce a general safety requirement, which will apply to all construction products not covered by designated standards, requiring an assessment of safety risks and obligations along the supply chain.

Pending the introduction of those changes, OPSS has sponsored a new Code of Practice for bringing safe construction products to market (PAS 2000:2026), which also addresses “life cycle” considerations along the supply chain, intended to be relevant to product manufacturers, importers and distributors; as well as building designers, owners and accountable persons (among others) and covering pre-market risk assessment through to market feedback.

Online marketplaces

A recurring theme throughout the report, is OPSS’ focus on holding online marketplaces to account. The Delivery Report recognises the safety concerns arising from emerging e-commerce platforms, and notes that OPSS is developing a programme dedicated to the sector, as summarised above in relation to enforcement. OPSS’ focus is on ensuring that online marketplaces take greater responsibility for preventing product related harm as the greatest impact comes from changing business attitudes and behaviours. OPSS has therefore intensified engagement with major platforms operating online marketplaces, encouraging stronger oversight of products sold through their services, in addition to the enforcement scrutiny and activities it has undertaken. OPSS has also collaborated with enforcement partners including HMRC, Border Force and local regulators to tackle noncompliant products entering the UK through online sales channels. As discussed above, this includes joint operational activity to target fulfilment houses and online supply chains.

OPSS is also working closely with domestic and international regulators to address the challenges posed by online marketplaces and increasingly complex global supply chains.

OPSS reports that it brings together regulators, industry representatives and e-commerce platforms to share intelligence, identify emerging risks and promote consistent approaches to product safety enforcement online. For example, the Delivery Report notes that OPSS has participated in a new e-commerce working group aimed at tackling online sales of noncompliant precious metal jewellery. We have [previously reported](#) on a trend of safety reports in both the EU and UK related to jewellery with excess levels of heavy metals (in particular, cadmium, nickel and lead), which presumably was a result of the activities of this working group.

In addition, OPSS has undertaken research to better understand consumer use of online marketplaces, including how consumers identify and assess product safety risks when shopping online and how they report product-related harm. The report states that this work is helping to inform a more effective and evidence-based approach to regulating online markets.

Environmental product compliance

Alongside its product safety responsibilities, the Delivery Report notes that OPSS continues to strengthen its focus on the environmental aspects of product compliance, recognising that product-related harms can extend beyond immediate consumer safety risks. This includes enforcement of environmental regulatory regimes that support the transition to a more sustainable and circular economy.

A key area of activity for OPSS is on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) and batteries, with OPSS intervention activity focusing on ensuring that waste products are managed through appropriate treatment and recycling routes, reducing the risk of harmful materials entering landfill and supporting the recovery and reuse of valuable resources. This work has covered both retailers (an example of a DIY retailer that was not meeting take-back obligations is cited, as well as referrals related to takeback requirements for vapes), and producers/suppliers (with OPSS having assessed data reported by battery producers and undertaken work to identify producers operating outside of the system, including e-bike and e-scooter producers).

Other compliance areas highlighted in the Delivery Report include restrictions on the use of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (RoHS), for which there has been testing at major retailers of products such as chargers, cables and power banks; and the timber supply chain, for which OPSS has undertaken enforcement activity in the furniture sector. This included engagement with industry, the provision of regulatory guidance and targeted inspections to verify compliance and assess the accuracy of supporting documentation. There are also references to activity supporting the transition to net zero (particularly, around compliance of radiators with British Standards and allegedly inaccurate claims, inspection of electric vehicle charging points, alternative fuel labelling and gas and the accuracy of gas and electric meters).

These areas of environmental compliance for products and the transition to net zero, have also been addressed in previous OPSS Delivery Reports, so in some ways this is not “new news”, but the examples of activity during the year do underline how environmental and sustainability-related requirements and considerations are increasingly interlinked with product compliance, and can be enforced in the same way as noncompliance with safety requirements.

In the EU, [Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1781](#) provides for products being accompanied in future by a digital product passport (DPP) that includes information, such as the unique product identifier, about the product. The purpose of the DPP is to enhance traceability and sustainability across the supply chain. Although DPPs have not been introduced in the UK, they have the potential to support many of the objectives highlighted in the Delivery Report. By providing readily accessible information on a product’s origin, composition, compliance status, environmental performance and end-of-life requirements, DPPs could enhance transparency across complex supply chains and support more effective market surveillance. They could also assist regulators, businesses and consumers in accessing reliable product information, complementing OPSS’s work to strengthen oversight of online marketplaces.

Given recent steps by the UK government to seek alignment between the UK and the EU in other areas of regulation, to help promote trade (for example, the ongoing negotiations on a Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement for food and feed), along with a clear focus on environmental and net zero considerations by OPSS, the adoption of digital product passports in the UK should not be ruled out in future. Indeed, a [call for evidence](#) on the introduction of a similar policy in the UK, has recently been launched (and closes for responses on 21 September 2026).

Technology and data driven regulation

The Delivery Report highlights the OPSS’ increased investment in scientific capability, digital tools and data-led enforcement.

OPSS’ laboratories completed hundreds of product tests during the year, covering products ranging from construction materials and e-bike batteries to cosmetics and household appliances. The organisation also expanded its use of artificial intelligence (AI) machine learning tools to analyse data and automate manual activities. The OPSS are exploring how AI tools can assist global work streams, for example to link product classification schemas to internationally recognised standards, and to automate notifying the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development of product recalls.

OPSS is not the only regulator exploring use of AI. Others have also reported use of such technology to assist with market surveillance and targeting of “risk” areas.

Conclusion

The Delivery Report portrays OPSS as a regulator increasingly focused on delivering consumer protection and economic growth objectives. As major reforms driven by the Act begin to take shape, OPSS is positioning itself to respond to emerging risks associated with online marketplaces, evolving technologies and increasingly complex global supply chains, while maintaining a proportionate and risk-based approach to regulation, with a focus on mitigating risks to people, property and the environment across the product lifecycle.

A notable feature of the report is a reflection of its new sector-based approach, combined with an emphasis on the construction products sector, where OPSS has intensified market surveillance, testing and enforcement activity in the wake of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. The Delivery Report also highlights a strong focus on technology and innovation. OPSS is expanding its work on consumer connectable products, AI-enabled technologies, e-bikes, battery systems and smart devices, while investing in data analytics, AI and enhanced testing capability to strengthen its regulatory oversight.

Overall, the Delivery Report suggests that OPSS is a regulator that is seeking to evolve alongside the markets it oversees, combining robust enforcement with business engagement, scientific expertise and regulatory reform to create a product safety framework, which is intended to be fit for a digital and increasingly complex economy.

Businesses should prepare for greater accountability, increased transparency requirements and a more integrated approach to product regulation.

Contacts



Nicola Smith

Partner, Birmingham
T +44 121 222 3230
nicola.smith@squirepb.com



Abigail Harcombe

Trainee, Birmingham
T +44 121 222 3117
abigail.harcombe@squirepb.com