# Enforcement Agencies

**Police**

**Brief History:**

The modern policing system in the UK started in 1829 when the then-Home Secretary Sir Robert Peel established the Metropolitan Police Service. It was the first professional and centrally organised police force and was meant to replace the earlier system of parish constables and watchmen. Policing is a component of law enforcement, public safety, and crime prevention. Their work has expanded over the years to include counterterrorism, cybercrime, and organised crime investigations. The police are regulated by legislations such as the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE), which defines their powers regarding stop and search, arrest, and detention

**Powers:**

Stop and search – The police are given the authority to stop and search individuals under laws such as Section 1 of PACE 1984 and Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

Seize property – The police can seize property or evidence related to a crime.

Detain and arrest – The police can arrest under PACE 1984 suspects of having committed an offence.

Fine and place in custody – They have the authority to fine for petty crimes and keep suspects in custody before trial.

**Example Case:**

A prominent example of the use of police powers was the arrest of Wayne Couzens in 2021. Couzens was a serving Metropolitan Police officer who was found guilty of the kidnap, rape, and murder of Sarah Everard. His case prompted broad public outcry regarding police wrongdoing and led to calls for the police forces to be more closely overseen.

**Border Force**

**Brief History:**

UK Border Force was established in 2012 as part of the Home Office, replacing the UK Border Agency. It is responsible for securing the UK's borders, preventing illegal immigration, and seizing contraband such as drugs, weapons, and counterfeit goods. Officers operate at seaports, airports, and border locations to implement immigration and customs controls (Home Office, 2020).

**Powers:**

Stop and search – Border Force officers can search individuals and their belongings at UK points of entry.

Seize property – They have the authority to confiscate contraband, undeclared cash, and forged documents.

Detain and arrest – The officers are entitled to detain and arrest suspected smugglers or immigration offenders.

**Example Case:**

In 2019, a small boat was intercepted in the English Channel by Border Force carrying a group of illegal migrants. This was during an increasing trend of small boat crossings, which led to increased border enforcement responses. The government has since introduced the Illegal Migration Act 2023 to address these issues more effectively (The Guardian, 2019).

**Trading Standards:**

**Brief History:**

Trading Standards is operated by local authorities and implements consumer protection law, fair trading, and product safety legislation. As a regulatory body under the Consumer Protection Act 1987 and the Consumer Rights Act 2015, Trading Standards officers investigate businesses that employ unfair practices such as fraud, deceptive advertising, and the sale of counterfeit goods (Department for Business and Trade, 2021).

**Powers:**

Stop and search – Officers can go to business premises to inspect goods and records.

Seize property – They can seize illegal or unsafe goods.

**Example Case:**

A good example was in 2021 when Trading Standards investigated a company selling fake COVID-19 testing kits. The business falsely claimed the products had government approval, which could have caused harm to consumers. The company was fined, and the fake kits were seized.

**Environmental Health [EHO]**

**Brief History:**

Environmental Health officers (EHOs) work within local authorities to manage public health, food hygiene, housing, and environmental protection. Environmental Health is a profession that has developed over the years, particularly with the introduction of the Food Safety Act 1990 and the Environmental Protection Act 1990, both aimed at ensuring safe working and living environments

**Powers:**• Stop and search – EHOs can inspect businesses and properties suspected of breaching health regulations.  
• Seize property – Contaminated water, unsafe food, or dangerous substances can be seized.  
• Fine – Individuals or businesses breaking health laws can be fined.

**Example Case:**

In 2022, Environmental Health officers shut down a London restaurant because of severe rat infestations and food contamination issues. The restaurant was fined, and its license was suspended until safety standards were met

**Health and Safety Executive (HSE)**

**Brief History:**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was created by the Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974 to regulate workplace safety. The HSE enforces safety regulations to enable employers to meet safety requirements to prevent accidents, injuries, and harm to the environment. The HSE has played a key role in ensuring safety in industries, construction regulations, and fire safety.

**Powers:**

Stop and search - HSE officers can also check workplaces to verify safety regulation adherence.

Seize property - They can take control of dangerous devices or chemicals.

Fine – Failure to meet safety standards can result in fines or even prosecution of companies.

**Example Case:**

In 2019, a construction company was also fined by the HSE when one of their employees was fatally injured when a scaffold was unsafe. The company was in disregard of safety regulations, hence a criminal prosecution was carried out (HSE, 2019).