



**Red Snapper**  
Managed Services

# Case Study: Operation Oak: Statement Taking



**Statement Taking**



**18 months**

## Why?

To obtain further evidence to support the case in a timely manner.

## How?

Deployment of investigative practitioners to obtain statements from witnesses.

## Outcome:

Completion of a detailed matrix showing times, dates and persons of interest within the given timeframe.

**420**

Statements obtained since 2018

**126**

Statements obtained on one case,

**95.5%**

Success rate with statements submitted

**3**

Successful prosecutions on this case

Due to the highly scrutinised nature of statement taking, it can be a costly and time-consuming process. Trading Standards (TS) often work within limited timeframes on their investigations and statement taking can therefore cause a challenge in terms of operational efficiency.

Red Snapper Managed Services (RSMS) has delivered statement taking services to a variety of specialist consultancy and project services.

Despite the lengthy processes involved in statement-taking, RSMS can swiftly mobilise a team of consultants and streamline investigative processes to meet the needs of clients on investigations nationwide.

Since 2018, RSMS have obtained in excess of 420 witness and victim statements to support investigations managed by Trading Standards and the wider law enforcement community, including the police and central government. During this period, RSMS have exhibited a 95.5% success rate with statements submitted. Consultants are with the victim within 3 hours, and thus far, every investigation that RSMS has worked on has led to a successful prosecution.

## Operation Oak: Statement Taking

RSMS began supporting a nationwide statement-taking operation with Trading Standards in April 2018 looking into door to door sales of fish. This investigation focused on door to door sellers suspected to be targeting areas commonly housing elderly people and using forced sale tactics to intimidate the buyers into purchasing at higher prices and/or in larger quantities. In most cases the areas that they were visiting were located in No Cold Caller zones issued by Trading Standards and other local authorities, such as the police.

In order to streamline this operation, RSMS used a specialised online system to record and save sensitive data. The Red Snapper Group (RSG) Investigation Management System (IMS) is a secure platform used to manage every action on an investigation. It stores the information of the victim/witness, including their name, contact details and copies of electronic documentation relevant to the investigation.

Use of IMS has enabled RSMS to improve efficiency and lower costs associated with lost data, by collating it into one digital network. This is evidenced by the fact that the utilisation of the IMS system by Investigative Practitioners has resulted in the attainment of over 126 witness and victim statements on this case alone.

The RSMS Investigative Consultants are provided, through IMS, the relevant contact information of their designated witnesses. IMS enables all electronic documents to be saved securely. These documents range from blank copies of statements, exhibits labels and pro-formas, through to copies of completed questionnaires from the victim/witness, copies of exhibits such as emails and photos and other appropriate information.

IMS is accessible to authorised users only, such as the TS Manager, OIC, RSMS Investigative Consultant and the RSMS Project Manager through a controlled, web based secure browser.

The security of IMS is ensured by frequent penetration tests, as necessitated by a Cyber Essentials Scheme (5497371446941637) accreditation - a recent penetration test performed by a National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) accredited penetration testing organisation showed the IMS system was above standards.

The quality of RSMS statement-taking services is assured by regular scrutiny. Every statement undergoes a robust review to ensure a high quality is achieved and to establish if there are any issues with the statement. The RSMS quality assurance process is completed by a statement Quality Assurance Consultant (QAC) who is a former detective from the police and a senior investigator with Trading Standards.

This is reviewed using a pre-determined matrix system which is created at the very start of each project:

Grading	Level	Description
1	Poor statement	Statement does not have the relevant points, missing information, does not read well and poor level of grammar used.
2	Satisfactory statement	Quality meets minimum expectations but more information is required.
3	Satisfactory statement	Covers all relevant points, improvements can be made to increase quality.
4	Good statement	Covers all the relevant points required.
5	High quality statement	Exceeds expectations.

The success of this methodological approach to statement-taking can be seen in the high volumes of evidence provided by RSMS to support authorities with ongoing investigations.

**“** The information in the statements is excellent and is identifying even more breaches of the legislation. Can you thank the Investigators who took them.

I have received (the) statement. You probably don't get much feedback so I thought I would let you know that this is an excellent statement.

**John Peerless**

Principal Trading Standards Officer  
Brighton and Hove Council