



WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN

2015-2017

Introduction

This Food Law Enforcement Service Plan is dedicated to the food law enforcement functions carried out by the Environmental Health and Licensing Section of Community and Customer Services under the provisions of the Food Safety Act 1990 and relevant European Food Hygiene legislation.

It relates to the years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 and is an expression of the Council's commitment to the continued support and development of the food service and is required by the Food Standards Agency (FSA), the body that monitors and audits local authorities' activities on food law enforcement.

The FSA's Framework Agreement promotes the importance of service planning to ensure that national priorities and standards are addressed and delivered locally.

Our Service Plan has been drawn up in accordance with the guidance in the Framework Agreement and follows a service plan template. This is to enable the FSA to assess our delivery of the service and to allow local authorities to easily compare service plans.

The Framework Agreement requires Service Plans to be approved at the relevant level established for that local authority, to help to ensure local transparency and accountability, and to show their contribution to the authority's corporate plan. In Watford the Service Plan is recommended by the Licensing Committee for approval at Full Council.

Key achievements in recent years:

1. Migration to the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (section 3.1)
2. A project to improve food hygiene in butcher's shops (section 3.1)
3. A project to review all childminder activity (section 3.1)
4. Implementation of Food Standards Agency's E.Coli Guidance (section 3.1)
5. Adoption of an optional advisory visit for new businesses (section 3.4)
6. New procedures set up with Public Health England to allow secure notification of infectious disease cases electronically (section 3.6)
7. Continued positive feedback for the in-house Food Hygiene training course and the passing of a related Chartered Institute of Environmental Health audit (section 3.9)
8. Amended procedures to reflect the introduction of Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 (section 5.1)
9. Review of all notice templates to ensure consistency with the Food Standards Agency's model ones (section 5.1)

10. Tailored food inspection forms pre-loaded with inspection data from the food premises database (section 5.1)
11. As part of internal quality assurance protocols, a schedule of accompanied inspections designed to monitor competency and ensure consistency (section 5.1)
12. Improved procedures designed to make food registration / first inspection more efficient (section 5.1)

Key challenges for the next two years

In addition to normal planned service delivery there are a number of key issues for the service to take forward over the next two years:

1. Changes to the Food Standards Agency's Code of Practice

The FSA is proposing changes to the competency and qualification requirements for officers undertaking food enforcement work. Whilst we already have a robust system in place for ensuring that officers are competent, the proposed changes may require a more detailed assessment of officers' skills. There are also proposed changes to the way in which mobile food businesses are registered and inspected, designed to promote the exchange of information between inspecting authorities and reduce the inspection burden on businesses. The changes may lead to an increased administration burden on local authorities.

2. The Food Information Regulations

In December 2014, the labelling requirements that were already in place for pre-packed food were extended to non-prepacked and loose foods. This meant that food businesses must ensure that they are aware whether any food that they make or sell contains any of a prescribed list of allergens (such as nuts, dairy and eggs). Businesses must also ensure that this information is readily available to customers. In Watford we are advising businesses of the change in the legislation during routine food hygiene inspections, and advising them where they can access resources to help them implement the changes.

3. Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Inter Authority Auditing

In 2015-2016 the food service will be participating in a Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire wide 'Inter Authority Audit' on the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. The purpose of this is to check consistency and ensure that we are administering the scheme correctly.

1. Service Aims and Objectives

1.1 Vision -

The Vision of the Environmental Health and Licensing Section is:

"To improve the health, quality, safety and economic prosperity of our town through a high performing efficient team delivering excellent outcome and customer focussed services."

Every year each council service produces a Service Plan that sets out priority projects for the year, The Food Law Enforcement Service Plan is listed in 2014-15 corporate plan.

1.2 Links to corporate objectives and plans -

The service contributes to the following objectives laid out in the 2014-18 Corporate Plan:

1. Making Watford a better place to live
2. To provide the strategic lead for Watford's sustainable economic growth
3. Promoting an active, cohesive & well informed town
4. Operating the council efficiently and effectively

2. Background

2.1 Profile of the Local Authority

Watford is a major town, situated in the South West of Hertfordshire. It has developed into a sub-regional shopping centre and an important centre for cultural and recreational facilities. It now boasts a number of nationally known firms locating their headquarters in the town.

The population estimate for Watford provided by the 2011 Census was 90,300. This is a 13% increase in population since the 2001 census when the population was 79,726.

On 26th June 2014, the Office of National Statistics released the mid-2013 estimates, suggesting Watford's population on the 30th June 2013 was 93,700.

The White British population in Watford decreased between 2001 to 2011 and is now 62% of the Watford population. All ethnic categories except for White British and White Irish have increased in this period, with notable percentage increases in White Other, Indian, Pakistani and Black African.

2.2 Organisational Structure

The food service is within the Environmental Health and Licensing Section of Community and Customer Services.

Overall co-ordination of the Council's food enforcement is the responsibility of the Environmental Health and Licensing Section Head who reports to the Head of Community and Customer Services.

The Environmental Health Manager with the portfolio for food and infectious disease has been nominated as the Lead Officer with responsibility for food hygiene and safety.

Formal microbiological analysis of food samples and faecal samples is carried out by Public Health England.

Physical and chemical analysis of food is carried out by Kent Scientific Services, who have been nominated as our Food Examiner by Hertfordshire County Council Trading Standards Department.

2.3 Scope of the Food Service

The food service covers the following specific areas: -

- Food safety and hygiene enforcement.
- Infectious disease investigations.

The food service is provided by two generic Environmental Health teams, who also deal with housing, health and safety, environmental protection and public health.

Use of Contractors

Outside contractors are used to carry out programmed food hygiene inspections, subject to the following conditions: -

- There is a backlog of inspections, which can not be completed by the existing officers, due to sickness, vacancies or other unforeseen pressures on the service.
- The external contractor meets the requirements of The Food Safety Act 1990 Code of Practice.
- The contractor is also subject to the monitoring and auditing regime for inspections and proves satisfactory competence.
- The contractor's programmed inspections are concentrated on lower risk inspections, Category C and below.
- The cost of the work is met within existing budgets.

In recent years, the number of inspections carried out by contractors has been as follows:

2011/12	79
2012/13	114
2013/14	71
2014/15	35 (estimate)

2.4 Demands on the Food Service

As of 31st March 2014, there were 819 food premises registered with the Authority, broken down as follows:

Primary Producers	1
Manufacturers and Packers	13
Distributors / Transporters	10
Retailers, such as supermarkets and delicatessens	203
Caterers, such as restaurants and takeaways	592

The number of food businesses has increased in recent years due to legislation requiring childminders to register, and also the popularity of home caterers such as cake makers.

Approved Premises

Some premises that manufacture food, typically using meat, fish or dairy products need specific approval to undertake such activities and must to have detailed procedures in place. On 31st January 2015 there were two such approved premises in the borough, a sausage manufacturer and a cheese manufacturer.

Access to the Food Service

The food service is located at Wiggshall Depot, Wiggshall Road, Watford. The Environmental Health Section's Duty Environmental Health Officer is situated in the Customer Service Centre at the Town Hall and remains the first point of contact for food safety matters. Customers of our service can contact us by the following means: -

- In person, at the Customer Service Centre from 845am to 515pm (445 on Fridays).
- By telephone to the Customer Service Centre: 01923 226400 or 01923 278503.
- By fax: 01923 278627
- By e-mail: envhealth@watford.gov.uk.
- Through the Council's website: www.watford.gov.uk
- For emergencies, i.e. a food poisoning outbreak or notification of a Serious Food Incident, the Out of Hours Service on 01923 226400.

2.5 Regulation Policy

The 2014-2019 Enforcement Policy covering all aspects of Environmental Health & Licensing enforcement activity received Member approval in July 2014 at the Licensing Committee.

The Food Law Enforcement aspect of this policy takes account of the Food Standards Agency's Code of Practice and the Regulators' Code issued under the Regulatory and Effective Sanctions Act 2008.

The key points are that:

- all enforcement decisions will be fair, independent and objective.
- they will not be influenced by age, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religious or political belief, disabilities or sexual orientation.
- due regard will be taken when dealing with juveniles or other vulnerable people.
- decisions will not be affected by improper or undue pressure from any source, including councillors.

As part of our work under the Better Business For All agenda we have also adopted a county-wide Regulator's Charter. This is shown in Appendix B.

3. Service Delivery

3.1 Interventions at Food and Feedingstuffs establishments

Risk Based Inspection Programme

Food Businesses are risk rated from A (high risk) through to E (low risk) according to the type of the operation being carried out, who the business supplies, and the standard of food hygiene at the premises. Businesses that carry out a complicated operation, or supply a large number of people (or people in vulnerable groups such as young children

or the elderly) or have poor standards of hygiene, are likely to fall in one of the higher risk categories. Smaller, simple operations, and those where hygiene standards are good, are likely to fall in one of the lower risk categories.

Examples of premises in these categories, with the recommended inspection frequencies laid down in the Food Standards Agency's Code of Practice are:

- A A poorly run restaurant or takeaway
- B A residential care home
- C A well run restaurant
- D A public house that doesn't serve food
- E A well run off newsagent selling only pre-packed drinks, crisps and sweets

On 31st March 2014, the 819 registered food businesses were risk rated as follows:

A	B	C	D	E	Unrated
1	26	346	125	236	85

There is always a number of unrated businesses (those that are newly set up) and their inspection is prioritised on the basis of the risks their activity presents. This year we have introduced a target of 28 days from registration to inspection to reduce the number of unrated businesses. Typically these businesses are childminders and home bakers.

The Food Standards Agency's Code of Practice specifies the frequency that businesses should be proactively inspected as follows:

Premises Category	Inspection Frequency
A	Every 6 months
B	Every year
C	Every 18 months
D	Every 2 years
E	Using an Alternative Enforcement Strategy

It is the Council's policy to ensure that food premises inspections are concentrated on high-risk premises and that they are carried out in accordance with the Food Standards Agency's Code of Practice and Practice Guidance.

For some businesses that are consistently well run and compliant with the law, lighter touch 'verification' inspections can be alternated with full inspections.

Also for low risk food businesses such as newsagents, some other small retailers, and some home caterers, local authorities can assess compliance with food hygiene legislation by means other than inspection. Accordingly over the next two years we will be rolling out an 'Alternative Enforcement Strategy' for these businesses. This will involve some degree of self assessment as well as some validation inspections.

Based on the current premises profile it is estimated that the number of full and verification inspections that will be carried out in each of the next two years will be:

Premises Category	Number of Full Inspections	Number of Verification Inspections
A	6	0
B	45	0
C	125	85

D	33	33
E	10*	0
NEW	90	0
Total	309	118

**as part of the alternative enforcement strategy*

Food Standards Agency E.Coli Guidance

Following a number of recent food poisoning outbreaks the Food Standards Agency has issued guidance on how businesses can control E.Coli by avoiding cross-contamination between raw and ready to eat foods, and effective cleaning. We have made sure that this guidance is integral to the food inspections that we carry out.

Butchers' Shops

On 31st March 2014 there were 15 specialist butcher shops in the Borough in addition to those operating within the larger supermarkets. Most of these are halal butchery counters operating within small retail units. In 2014, following the introduction of the Food Standard Agency's E.Coli guidance we decided to look closely at these operations to try and improve hygiene standards, focussing on:

1. The elimination of cross contamination between raw and ready to eat food
2. Written Food Safety Management Systems
3. Traceability
4. Training
5. Disposal of Animal By-Product waste

Bespoke inspections and individual coaching have been undertaken at all of these businesses. These will finish in 2015 after which the project will be evaluated.

Childminders

In 2014 childminders no longer had to register directly with local authorities as food businesses. Instead their OFSTED registration with a county council was deemed to be sufficient. Liaison with Hertfordshire County Council identified a number of childminders that we were unaware of and we have been working with these businesses to establish the scope of their operation and to ensure that the food they are serving to children is safe. This has involved sending out questionnaires to 125 childminders, 46 of which we knew about and 79 of which we didn't. At the time of writing we had received over 100 responses and are working with any business to improve food hygiene standards if there are any concerns. This project will conclude in 2015, after which time we will assess new childminders as they become registered with OFSTED.

Enforcement approach

There are a number of enforcement options available to local authorities, ranging from advice and written warning through to closing premises down using prohibition powers and taking prosecution proceedings. Based on historical information it is anticipated that the following enforcement action will be taken in each of the next two years:

Writing Warnings	170
Improvement Notices	12
Voluntary Closures or Prohibition Procedures	2

Seizure and Detention of Food	2
Revisits following inspection	90

The food service has also recently developed a revisit policy to aid consistency.

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

In 2006, the council was involved in the setting up of a regional 'Scores on the Doors' scheme, whereby consumers could check the hygiene of a business before choosing where to eat or buy their food.

We migrated to the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme on 1st April 2012. Now businesses are awarded a rating from 5 (very good) to zero (urgent improvement necessary) after a food inspection. The ratings of businesses in Watford can be seen at:

<http://ratings.food.gov.uk/authority-search/watford>

The national scheme allows businesses to appeal against the rating they have been given, as well as request a re-rating visit once they have completed any work that may be needed following an inspection.

It is anticipated that 12 appeals or requests for re-ratings will be handled each year although this may go up as the familiarity of the scheme grows.

As at 15th January 2015, 574 of the 819 food businesses registered with the council fell within the scheme with ratings as follows:

5	Very Good	314
4	Good	127
3	Generally Satisfactory	53
2	Improvement Required	28
1	Major Improvement Required	47
0	Urgent Improvement Required	5

Whenever a business receives a rating of zero we work closely with them to ensure that there are no health risks associated with its operation.

Currently the display of rating stickers awarded following a food inspection is not legally required although there is national pressure for this to change and the food service supports this view.

In 2015-16, the council will participate in a regional inter-authority auditing exercise, designed to improve consistency when awarding Food Hygiene Ratings.

Year	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-15 estimate	2015-16 estimate	2016-17 estimate
No. of inspections	438	447	420	437	427
FTE needed	-	-	-	1.60	1.60

3.2 Feed and Food Complaints

The Environmental Health and Licensing Section deals with the following types of food complaint:

- Foreign body, unfit or mouldy food that has been bought or eaten
- Complaints about the hygiene of food businesses, such as food handling practices, refuse, drainage, etc.

We prioritise foreign body, unfit and mouldy food complaints that pose a risk to public health rather than purely a quality issue.

We prioritise complaints about food businesses that pose a high risk to public health rather than those that present a low risk.

Complaints about the quality rather than the safety of food are dealt with by Hertfordshire County Council's Trading Standards Section, with whom we liaise on a regular basis.

Year	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-15 estimate	2015-16 estimate	2016-17 estimate
Food complaints	15	17	13	15	15
Premises complaints	62	68	108	79	79
FTE needed	-	-	-	0.15	0.15

3.3 Primary Authority Scheme

The council has been the Primary Authority for TJX Europe (who trade as T K Maxx and Homesense in the UK) since December 2009. The Primary Authority Agreement covers food hygiene and health and safety.

The council feels that the Agreement with TJX Europe has been positive and beneficial for both parties and we would welcome the opportunity to enter into more agreements.

The resources needed to deliver the Primary Authority Agreement are paid for by the company on a cost recovery basis and do not impact on the service's ability to deliver the rest of its food enforcement work.

3.4 Advice to Businesses

In addition to carrying out enforcement, the service is committed to working with businesses to help them be successful, comply with the law and to encourage the use of good practice.

On an operational basis, this is achieved through a range of mechanisms:

- Giving advice during the course of inspections and other visits
- Directing businesses to other sources of information such as the Food Standards Agency website
- Provision of 'Safer Food, Better Business' packs in a variety of languages to help small businesses with their Food Safety Management Systems
- Responding to business requests for advice and assistance
- Providing detailed food safety advice to new businesses as part of the registration procedure, as well as an optional visit
- Running small projects to assist particular types of business, such as the butchers project running in 2014 and 2015

In addition, acting as the strategic lead for Watford's sustainable economic growth, the service has also:

- Played a key role in developing the 'Better Business For All' forum, a local partnership between Businesses and Regulatory Services to promote growth through improved regulation. This has been done in partnership with all the other local authorities in Hertfordshire, national as well as local regulators and various business organisations such as the Federation of Small Business, Local Economic Partnership and Chambers of Commerce. The Food Standards Agency and the Better Regulation Delivery Office have both been involved in this initiative
- Played a key role in the development and implementation of 'Hertfordshire Charter' for all Regulatory Partners
- Put together a Hertfordshire wide course on Commercial Awareness Training for Regulatory Officers and made sure all our officer attended one of the courses
- As mentioned in section 2.5, we have adopted the statutory Regulators' Code issued under the Regulatory and Effective Sanctions Act 2008.
- Reviewed our enforcement policy for the years 2014 – 2019.

	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-15 estimate	2015-16 estimate	2016-17 estimate
No. requests for advice	205	260	280	248	248
No. advisory visits	-	-	60	60	60
FTE needed			0.15	0.15	0.15

3.5 Feed and Food Sampling

The sampling budget for 2014/15 consists of two parts:

1. Funding allocation from Public Health England for approximately 130 microbiological samples. These samples are sent to their laboratory in Colindale.
2. A departmental allocation of £1750 to allow for more complex physical and chemical sample analysis. These samples are sent to our designated Food Examiner, Kent Scientific Services.

In 2013 we purchased a handheld 'ATP' unit that allows us to monitor the effectiveness of cleaning in food premises, giving an instant result within the premises which we can share with the business.

In recent years we have looked at the microbiological quality of the following:

- Pasteurised and unpasteurised cheese
- Pre-packed salad
- Sandwiches from residential care homes
- Food from takeaways from businesses with a Food Hygiene Rating of 3 or less
- Wooden serving platters
- Products made by our Approved Premises

We will target our food sampling on the following criteria:

- Approved Premises within the Borough
- Businesses with a risk rating of A or B
- Businesses identified for sampling as part of a national, regional or local programmes
- Sampling initiatives co-ordinated by Public Health England

- Local intelligence

We will also use the 'ATP' monitor as a tool to educate Food Business Operators about cleaning and cross-contamination.

Finally, we will implement the Food Standards Agency's sampling database, allowing us to share sampling information with them and other food authorities.

	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-15 estimate	2015-16 estimate	2016-17 estimate
No. samples	8	19	25	40	40
FTE needed	-	-	-	0.03	0.03

3.6 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease

The Food Service will investigate notifications of food related infectious disease in accordance with the East of England Standard's Approach to Investigating Gastrointestinal Disease cases. This prioritises possible diseases into High, Medium and Low categories for investigation, for example:

High: E.Coli O157, Typhoid, Botulism
Medium: Salmonella, Listeria
Low: Campylobacter, suspected food poisoning

It also takes account of risk groups such as children under 6 months old, those over 65, these who are unwell, and those working in the food industry.

Investigations will be carried out in partnership with Public Health England.

Investigations of outbreaks will be undertaken in accordance with Public Health England's Communicable Disease Outbreak Management Guide. In the event that there is a major outbreak, the staff resources will be significantly increased due to the intense resource implications. Informal mutual aid agreements are in place with neighbouring councils to support any resource needs in these emergency cases.

	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-15 estimate	2015-16 estimate	2016-17 estimate
No. notifications	23	40	25	30	30
FTE	-	-	-	0.10	0.10

3.7 Feed/Food Safety Alerts

Food Alerts, Allergy Alerts and Product Recall notifications are sent to local authorities when there are serious public health implications concerning a type of food. Recent examples include the substitution of beef for horsemeat and the chemical contamination of baby milk powder. They are split into Action and Information Alerts. Action Alerts can require Local Authorities to issue a press release or visit food outlets to ensure that certain foods are not sold to the general public.

All Alerts are sent to the generic environmental health email inbox which is monitored daily. Action Alerts are also sent to the office pager during office hours, and out of hours the Out of Hours pager is used.

Alerts are dealt with in accordance with the Food Standards Agency Code of Practice

and the action required by the alert itself.

	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-15 estimate	2015-16 estimate	2016-17 estimate
No. of alerts	60	90	90	80	80
FTE needed	-	-	-	0.06	0.06

3.8 Liaison with Other Organisations

Officers from the Food Service currently attend the following forums: -

- Heads of Service Food Liaison Group
- Public Health England Liaison Committee
- Herts & Beds Sampling Group
- Hertfordshire Regulators Forum (Chair)
- Better Business For All Steering Group

Officers have been regular contributors to the Food Liaison Group, with the council's Lead Officer for Food participating in various working groups in recent years and also holding the post of secretary for 4 of the last 6 years. This role has also meant regularly attending the Food Standards Agency's Regional Update meeting for liaison group Chairs and Secretaries.

Officers have an effective working relationship with Hertfordshire County Council's Trading Standards team, and have liaised regularly with the Better Regulation Delivery Office as part of the Better Business for All initiative outlined in section 3.4. Shadowing between Environmental Health and Trading Standards Officers is planned for 2015-16 to improve our working knowledge of priority areas and to improve signposting and advice to businesses.

	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-15 estimate	2015-16 estimate	2016-17 estimate
FTE needed	-	-	-	0.05	0.05

3.9 Feed and Food Safety and Standards promotional work, and other non-official controls interventions

Promotional work carried out by the service includes:

- Informal food hygiene talks to a variety of audiences such as hospitals and schools
- Regular informative press releases
- Giving advice during the course of inspections and other visits
- Provision of 'Safer Food, Better Business' packs in a variety of languages to help small businesses with their Food Safety Management Systems
- Providing detailed food safety advice to new businesses as part of the registration procedure
- Running small projects to assist particular types of business, such as the Butchers Project running in 2014 and 2015
- Targeted food safety information and advice to particular business sectors

Food Hygiene Course Training

The service is registered with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health as a

Training Centre for food hygiene courses.

Currently, the Level 2 Food Hygiene in Catering course is delivered in house by an officer who is an accredited food hygiene trainer. Administration of the course is undertaken by a member of the service's Support Team. Needs of the diverse community are served by course books and exam papers being provided in languages other than English and exams being taken orally when required.

At least 6 courses are scheduled each year, holding a maximum of 20 candidates each.

We also accommodate additional course requests, for example where a business would like to train a number of their staff at their own premises, where possible.

Each training course is assessed using an evaluation sheet completed by candidates at the end of the course.

The delivery of the course was audited by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health in November 2011 and we were awarded a score 84%. We devised an Action Plan to take forward the few issues that were identified and the audit was fully signed off in 2012. We continue to review the way the course is run.

	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-15 estimate	2015-16 estimate	2016-17 estimate
FTE needed	-	-	-	0.19	0.19

3.10 Issuing Health Certificates for Export

When businesses want to export food they may need the product to be accompanied by an appropriate 'Health Certificate' declaring that the food has been produced and or stored hygienically. A fee is charged for these certificates, which are issued by local authorities.

In Watford we issue about 200 Health Certificates every year. The vast majority of these are for two Watford companies, one that manufactures coffee and tea, the other that exports soft drinks, sweets and other dry goods..

	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-15 estimate	2015-16 estimate	2016-17 estimate
FTE needed	-	-	-	0.02	0.02

4. Resources

4.1 Financial Allocation

The 2015/16 budget associated with delivering the food law enforcement plan is as follows:

Non fixed costs*	£259,620
Equipment	£1,500
Sampling	£1,750
Delivery of food hygiene training course	£500
Additional food inspections by contractors if needed	£4,250

**officer salaries, building overheads, transport costs, charges for corporate services such as IT, Human Resources, Finance and Legal Services*

Where legal action becomes necessary, and we need to instruct Counsel then the financial costs will not act as a barrier to any necessary action.

In addition the following income is expected:

Food Hygiene Training Courses	£4,000
Issuing of Health Certificates	£4,000

It is not anticipated that the budget allocation for food enforcement work will change significantly over the next two years.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

Food law enforcement work is carried out by generic Officers undertaking the full range of environmental health functions. Support Officers also work across all environmental health areas.

In 2014/15 a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) of 1.95 was allocated for professional food law enforcement work. An FTE of 0.28 was allocated for administrative food law enforcement work. Staffing resources for the activities listed in section 3 above are shown in Appendix A.

The projected shortfall in estimated FTE required may be made up by external contractors if needed, a budget exists to enable this if needed.

4.3 Staff Development Plan

The Service will ensure that authorised officers undertaking food work are appropriately qualified and receive regular food related training to enable them to carry out effective food hygiene inspections and enforcement.

We will also make sure that they receive a minimum of 10 hours training in line with the Food Standards Agency's Code of Practice and the principles of Continued Professional Development (CPD) scheme administered by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health. Training needs will be identified in one-to-one meetings with officers and through the annual appraisal process. We will also use the Department of Business Innovation and Skills Regulators Development Needs Analysis Tool help is identify training needs.

As mentioned earlier, there may be changes to the competency and qualification requirements for officers undertaking food enforcement work. We will have regard to any changes that are introduced to make sure that we comply with the Code of Practice.

Training may take the form of in-house training, formal courses or vocational visits, and recent training undertaken by officers includes

- 'Sous Vide' cooking
- Consistency exercises
- Dealing with imported food
- E. Coli guidance and control
- Food allergens and labelling

Details of staff having a direct role in food enforcement, as well as competency levels are shown in Appendix A.

5. Quality Assessment

5.1 Quality Assessment and internal monitoring

The service has established the following monitoring arrangements to assess the quality of the service provided: -

- Documented sign-off procedure for new staff undertaking food duties
- Regular review of inspection, case and infectious disease paperwork
- A schedule of accompanied inspections involving by the Lead Officer for Food

In recent years we have worked with our database provider (IDOX) to produce a number of reports that allow us to check the integrity of the Food Premises database and compliance with the proactive inspection plan. Reports are also run to check that the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme is working correctly.

Finally, to ensure quality, procedures are kept under regular review.

6. Review

6.1 Annual Review against the Service Plan

Reviews against this two-year service plan will be undertaken every six months

6.2 Identification of any Variation from the Service Plan

Any variations from the service plan will be recorded in writing

6.3 Areas of Improvement

Any service issues identified during the Review process, performance monitoring or review of the service plan will be recorded in writing and an appropriate action plan formulated to address the issues.

APPENDIX A DETAILED RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND LEVELS OF COMPETANCY

Staffing Resources Estimated to be Required in 2015-16 and 2016-17

Activity	Full Time Equivalent required
Food Premises Inspections (section 3.1)	1.60
Food Complaints (section 3.2)	0.15
Primary Authority Principle (section 3.3)	0.00
Advice to Businesses (section 3.4)	0.15
Food Inspection and Sampling (section 3.5)	0.03
Food Related Infectious Disease (section 3.6)	0.10
Food Safety Incidents (section 3.7)	0.06
Liaison with other Organisations (section 3.8)	0.05
Food Safety Promotion (section 3.9)	0.19
Health Certificates	0.02
Total	2.35

Staffing Resources Available in 2015-16 and 2016-17

Designation	Full Time Equivalent Available
Environmental Health Officers	1.40
Environmental Health Technical Officers	0.20
Environmental Health Managers	0.30
Support Officers	0.28
Environmental Health Section Head	0.05
Total	2.23*

*the projected shortfall in FTE available may be made up by external contractors

Levels of competency

Levels of competencies are expressed with reference to the Food Standards Agency Code of Practice. Numbers are in terms of number of officers and not FTE's.

Competency Level	No. of officers
Inspection of HACCP based management control systems	5
Inspection of Category A-C	10
Inspection of substantial manufacturers	3
Inspection of Category D-F	10
Service of Improvement Notices	10
Service of Emergency Prohibition Notices (EPN) or voluntary agreements	7
Inspect, detain and seize foodstuff	10
Taking of informal samples	11
Taking of formal samples	11
Support activities	11

APPENDIX B HERTFORDSHIRE REGULATORS CHARTER

See attached document