

Dartford and Sevenoaks Environmental Health Partnership

Food Law Service Plan 2015/2016

Environmental Health Partnership
Dartford and Sevenoaks
Dartford Borough Council
Civic Centre
Home Gardens
Dartford
Kent
DA1 1DR

(Tel) 01322 343434

(Fax) 01322 343963

www.dartford.gov.uk

www.sevenoaks.gov.uk

Food Law Enforcement Plan

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Introduction

This service plan has been prepared using the guidance provided by the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement. To set it in context with other Environmental Health responsibilities, it should be read in conjunction with current versions of:

- Service Management Overview (SMO) – Environmental Health
- Environmental Health Enforcement Policy
- Environmental Health Strategic Service Plan 2015/16
- Environmental Health Service Manual for ISO9001

This plan will be reviewed annually to ensure it reflects the current legislative position and the priorities of both Dartford and Sevenoaks councils.

1. Service aims and objectives

1.1 Aims and objectives

Aim

To reduce the risk to public health from food purchased, produced or eaten in the Dartford Borough and the Sevenoaks District, by ensuring that it is fit and safe to eat. To encourage good practice amongst those responsible for preparing, handling and cooking food and to ensure they comply with their statutory obligations.

Objectives

- Implement a comprehensive and appropriate inspection programme for all premises rated as high risk
- Implement an appropriate inspection programme for all newly registered premises
- Design and implement an intervention programme including training and questionnaires for lower risk premises
- Provide an effective response service able to deal proportionately with complaints regarding food safety and / or incidents of food poisoning.
- Develop and deliver a food sampling programme appropriate for the shared district in accordance with the Local Government Regulation (LGR) Guidance and National programme.
- Develop and utilise partnerships both professional and commercial to enhance quality and effectiveness of the service
- Consider the needs of those employed in the food industry and those using it to develop and deliver a programme of appropriate courses, workshops or other means of improving access to relevant information for purposes of promoting food safety.

1.2 Links to corporate objectives and plans

The Food Service Plan is delivered by the Commercial Team in the Environmental Health Partnership, whose broad spectrum of work impacts on the themes and values of both local authorities, with particular reference to the Health and Wellbeing of those who live, work and visit the areas. In particular the Environmental Health role of supporting economic growth is valid to each of the Council's visions.

2. Background

2.1 Profile

Dartford and Sevenoaks Environmental Health Partnership was formed on 2nd April 2012. The objective of bringing the Environmental Health Service for two adjoining authorities together was to not only make financial savings, but also to increase the resilience of the service and to increase the depth of skills and knowledge available into one team. The service is located at Dartford Borough Council offices with a satellite facility of six desks at Sevenoaks District Council offices. The office addresses are:

Dartford Borough Council
Civic Centre
Home Gardens
Dartford
Kent
DA1 1DR.

Telephone number 01322 343434

Fax number 01322 343963

Out of office hours (Pinnacle) 01322 343434 (17:15 till 08:00 Monday to Friday and 24 hours Saturday and Sunday)

Email eh.support@dartford.gov.uk

The satellite office facility available at:

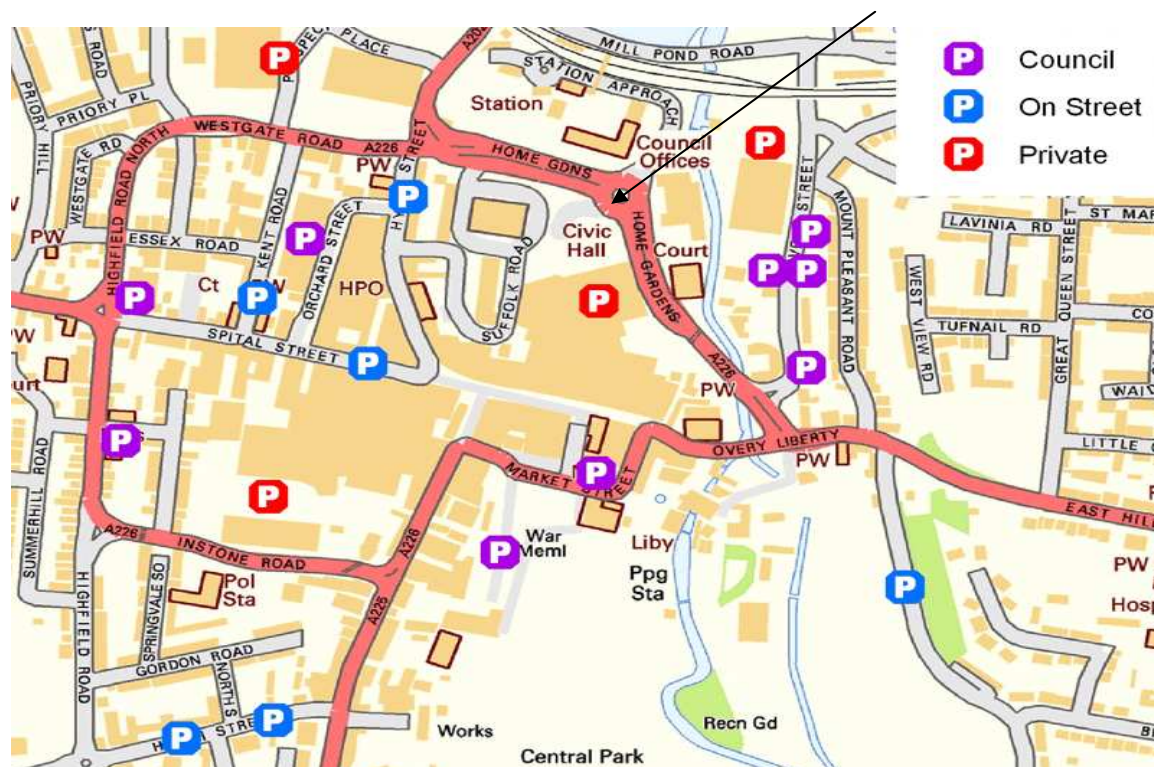
Sevenoaks District Council
Council Offices
Argyll Road
Sevenoaks
Kent
TN13 1HG

Telephone number 01732 227000

Fax number 01322 343963

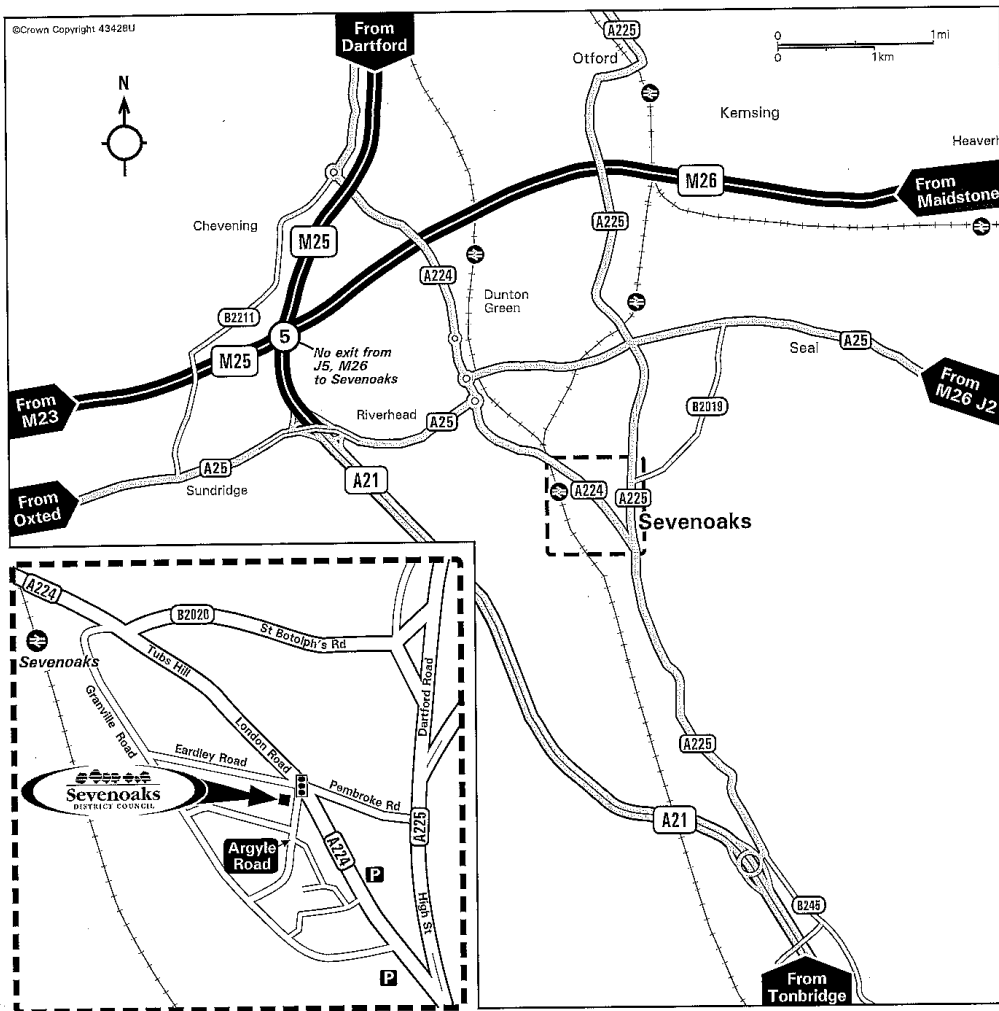
Out of office hours 01732 227000 (17:00 till 08:00 Monday to Friday and 24 hours Saturday and Sunday)

Dartford Council Offices



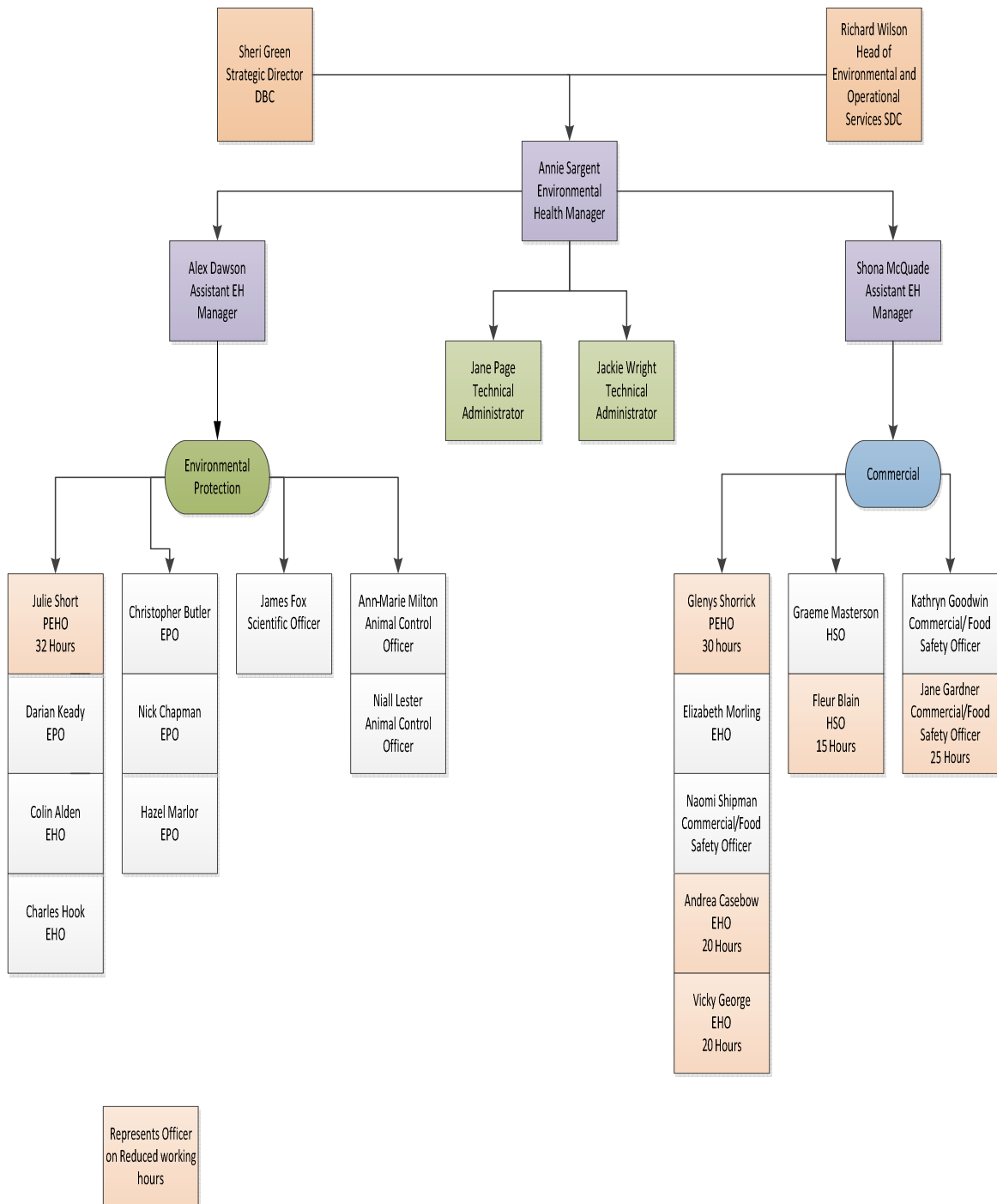
The offices are open between 08.45 and 17.15 Monday to Thursday and 08.45 and 16.45 on Friday. Although Officers will most often be off site, appointments can be made.

Sevenoaks Council Offices



2.2 Organisational Structure

- 1) The Food Service Plan is delivered by officers in the Commercial Team which reports to the Environmental Health Manager (EHM). The EHM reports to the Strategic Director for Dartford Borough Council and the Head of Environmental and Operational Services for Sevenoaks District Council. A structure chart for the service is provided below:



2.3 Scope of the Food Service

The Commercial team is responsible for:

- Implementing the proactive programme for food hygiene inspections and subsequent revisits for high risk premises
- Investigating reported cases of food poisonings and potential outbreaks in accordance with Public Health England (PHE) guidance
- Investigating requests for service regarding the hygiene of food premises, or food safety issues relating to foods purchased or produced in Dartford and Sevenoaks
- Developing and delivering a programme of appropriate interventions for lower risk premises
- Registration of food premises
- Responding to food alerts
- Delivering a food sampling programme in line with local and national programmes
- Provision of training, advice and support to existing and prospective food business operators and the users of the service
- Implementing projects and campaigns that promote good food hygiene
- Development and maintenance of partnerships and liaisons to the benefit of the Food Service
- Health and Safety inspections in new food business premises
- Delivering the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme
- Ensuring that food business operators providing non-prepacked food give appropriate advice on allergens.

(Note: All food standards, labelling and feeding stuffs enforcement is undertaken by Kent County Council Trading Standards Department and so no reference to these will be made in this document).

2.4 Demands on the Food Service

Dartford Borough has approximately 880 food premises. The number of premises as at 31st March 2015 within each of the categories identified by the Food Standards Agency is shown in the table below:

| Premises type | Number |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Primary Producer | 1 |
| Manufacturers & Packers | 12 |
| Importer/Exporter | 6 |
| Distributor/Transporter | 17 |
| Retailer | 201 |
| Caterer | 645 |
| Total | 882 |

Sevenoaks Borough has 821 food premises registered as trading in the borough. The number of premises as at 31st March 2015 within each of the categories identified by the Food Standards Agency is shown in the table below:

| Premises type | Number |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Primary Producer | 2 |
| Manufacturers & Packers | 37 |
| Importer/Exporter | 1 |
| Distributor/Transporter | 13 |
| Retailer | 155 |
| Caterer | 613 |
| Total | 821 |

Sevenoaks area has again seen an increase in the number of food businesses operating in the borough up by 10 on last year's figures. Dartford, after an unexpected increase last year of 13, has again seen a decline in the number of food businesses, down by almost 30. Some of the reduction in Dartford area can be accounted for through the closure of the last remaining businesses that were trading in the Lowfield Street redevelopment area. Demolition of some of the commercial units has started, but the developers have put the regeneration of the area on hold with no planned commencement date.

Turnover in business ownership remains high in both areas with 240 new food business registrations being received during the year. This equates to about 14% of businesses changing ownership during the year. There continue to be a number of commercial units remaining empty for long periods. This trend is typical of many areas in the country and is partly down to consumers' purchasing habits changing and High Street chains going into receivership. The changes in consumers' buying habits can be seen in the number of new Home Caterers that are starting up in both areas.

New developments and the expansion of existing businesses in both areas are generating additional work with the team being asked to comment on planning and licensing applications. Local businesses expanding their markets are increasingly exporting product outside the E.U. and these food products require to be accompanied by an export certificate from the inspecting officer certifying that the produce has been made in accordance with the requirements of current Food Legislation. Both authorities have received a number of enquiries from business, which if they go ahead, will require "Approval" (where products of animal origin are produced/processed).

Although the country's economy is improving, this is not being reflected in an increase in High Street businesses in the Dartford area. There is significant regeneration and a number of new developments planned which include a mix of commercial units, schools and light industrial. These will also have an impact on the team both at planning stage and when they become operational. The most significant of these are the proposed development of a Theme Park on the Swanscombe peninsular and the planned extension to Bluewater shopping centre which will see an increase by around 33% in retail and catering units along with a hotel on the site. Building in the area designated as Ebbsfleet

Garden City has started with houses in the first phase of the development already occupied. The second phase of the development includes a secondary school and a hotel.

In the Sevenoaks area some of the private estates are developing their commercial operations as a means of bringing in more income. This includes shooting parties, weekend events involving mass catering and wedding venues.

2.5 Enforcement Policy

The Councils have adopted the Better Regulation Delivery Office Regulators Code, and previously the Enforcement Concordat for all appropriate services. The Environmental Health enforcement policy has been developed in line with best practice and advice/guidance from a number of National bodies and has been adopted by both Councils.

3. Service Delivery

3.1 Food Premises Inspections

The majority of the food outlets in Dartford and Sevenoaks can be inspected during office hours. There are a few premises in Sevenoaks area which are only accessible during the evening. There is a much greater number of this type of business in Dartford area. Additional to this there are several premises that only trade at weekends in both authorities areas. It is sometimes necessary to make special arrangements or appointments to get access to these businesses. Where a business operates from domestic premises, then inspections will be arranged by appointment.

The planned inspection programme is undertaken in accordance with the Councils' enforcement policies and in line with recognised best practice. The frequency of inspections is determined by the inspection rating system set out within the Food Safety Law Code of Practice.

The Code of Practice requires that newly registered premises will be inspected within twenty eight days of a completed food registration form being received. Where an unregistered food business is found trading in the area, then an inspection will be undertaken as soon as it is practical to do so and the business will be required to complete a registration form.

Higher risk premises will all be inspected in accordance with the Food Safety Law Code of Practice. Reports are prepared during the inspection and left on site with the manager or other responsible person. This indicates the nature of any works required by law, or recommended to comply with good practice.

Lower risk premises may be monitored by means of alternative interventions at a frequency of not more than every other programmed intervention. The exact nature of the intervention will vary according to the risks presented by the

premises and the detailed work programme for the team, but will be appropriate for the business concerned. This will follow the good practice proposed by FSA to include training opportunities, workshops, use of advisory leaflets, web based information, questionnaires and other similar means of working with local businesses.

Revisits are not carried out as a matter of routine, but will be undertaken where the initial intervention identifies significant issues and/or the business has been given a Food Hygiene Rating of less than three i.e. not Broadly Compliant.. Responsibility is placed on the business owner/manager to ensure compliance with the issues raised. In cases where statutory notices have been served or particular concerns have been identified, then follow up visits will be undertaken to ensure that serious non compliance found at the time of inspection has been rectified. Decisions will be carried out in accordance with the authority's revisit policy.

The profile of premises falling into each category (A to E) has an impact on the number of inspections that officers need to undertake each year to meet the FSA inspection plan.

Inspection frequencies:

| Category | Inspection Rating | Minimum inspection frequency |
|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| A (High Risk) | 92 or higher | at least every 6 months |
| B | 72 to 91 | at least every 12 months |
| C | 52 to 71 | at least every 18 months |
| D | 31 to 51 | at least every 2 years. An alternative enforcement strategy can be used when and where it is deemed to be appropriate for every alternate inspection. |
| E (Lowest Risk) | 0 to 30 | at least every 3 years. An alternative enforcement strategy can be used when and where it is deemed to be appropriate due to the low risk nature of the business.. |

The average number of inspections scheduled over a year can be calculated by multiplying the number of premises in each category by the frequency of visits. In reality the number of inspections varies from year to year as the programme is influenced by businesses closing and new businesses starting up. The number and nature of food businesses in the borough varies year on year and is impacted upon by changes in the community, changes in purchasing habits and the amount of disposable income. The C and D Bands changes introduced from 1st April 2014, has had a significant impact in the rating profile for both authorities with around 33% of businesses previously rated as C moving into the D Band. This change will help with future inspection programme planning as the

number of premises liable for inspection falls thereby creating capacity for some of the expected increase in premises.

The changes in the food business profiles for both authorities can be seen in the tables below.

Year 2012/13

| Category | Sevenoaks | Dartford | Total |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| A | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| B | 56 | 36 | 92 |
| C | 360 | 327 | 687 |
| D | 99 | 128 | 227 |
| E | 205 | 352 | 557 |
| unrated | 20 | 54 | 74 |
| Total | 744 | 900 | 1644 |

Year 2013/14

| Category | Sevenoaks | Dartford | Total |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| A | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| B | 47 | 31 | 78 |
| C | 364 | 333 | 697 |
| D | 130 | 134 | 264 |
| E | 246 | 363 | 609 |
| unrated | 20 | 54 | 74 |
| Total | 811 | 913 | 1724 |

Year 2014/15

| Category | Sevenoaks | Dartford | Total |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| A | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| B | 41 | 32 | 73 |
| C | 279 | 220 | 499 |
| D | 233 | 262 | 495 |
| E | 250 | 343 | 593 |
| unrated | 61 | 40 | 101 |
| Total | 867 | 899 | 1766 |

The total number of food businesses in Sevenoaks is increasing year on year. Over the last 5 years there has been a 20% increase in the number of food premises in the area. Over the same period Dartford has seen a reduction of 16% in the number of registered food businesses operating in the area.

The number of businesses falling into A or B categories remains relatively consistent across the two authorities. The businesses that fall into Category B

are predominantly those that attract an additional score of 22 because their services are specifically for people that fall into vulnerable categories e.g. hospitals, care homes and pre-school nurseries. The change in the score bands for Category C and D premises has resulted in around a third of businesses that were previously Category C moving down a band to category D.

Across the partnership a significant number of new food business registrations are received each year. During the first year of the partnership (2012/13) some 220 registrations were received. During 2013/14 a total of 288 registrations were received and in 2014/15 a further 240 registrations were received making a total of almost 750 registrations received over a three year period. As a result of the huge numbers of applications officers have struggled to keep up with the inspection of new businesses resulting in a year on year increase in the number of unrated businesses recorded at the end of each financial year.

In 2014/2015 the following Food Premises Inspections were scheduled for an intervention in each authority area

Dartford Borough Council

| Risk category | Number due | Number completed |
|---------------|----------------------|---|
| A | 4 (2 premises twice) | 6 (both were re-scored to another category at the first inspection and 4 businesses were scored an A at the first inspection) |
| B | 35 | 35 |
| C | 238 | 226 |
| D | 54 | 50 |
| E | 122 | 93 |
| unclassified | 95 | 95 |
| TOTAL | 552 | 505 |

Sevenoaks District Council

| Risk category | Number due | Number completed |
|---------------|----------------------|--|
| A | 6 (3 premises twice) | 7 (all were re-scored to another category at the first inspection and 4 businesses were scored an A at the first inspection) |
| B | 53 | 53 |
| C | 229 | 193 |
| D | 53 | 48 |
| E | 45 | 35 |
| unclassified | 85 | 85 |
| TOTAL | 471 | 421 |

As stated above, the two authorities received 240 new food business registrations during the year to 31 March 2015. These inspections are not

identified in the planned schedule for the year and equates to an additional 26% on top of the original number of inspections due.

Both authorities use UNiform/IDOX as their corporate IT database for the recording of food hygiene inspections. The food premises database is held as two separate databases for statistical monitoring purposes.

| |
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| Local Performance Indicators for Dartford and Sevenoaks Partnership: |
| <i>100% completion of higher priority graded inspections (Category A and B)</i> |
| <i>90% completion of lower priority graded inspections (Category C, D and E)</i> |
| <i>85% of premises rated as Broadly Compliant</i> |

The partnership completed 100% of premises inspections for Category A and B. Dartford completed 92% of all other Category inspections and Sevenoaks achieved 90%.

At 31st March 2015 both authorities had 91% of premises rated as Broadly Compliant (awarded a food hygiene rating of 3 or better).

3.2 Food Complaints

All incoming requests for service (complaints) regarding food and/or premises hygiene are risk assessed and prioritised. Those where circumstances are perceived to present a significant risk to public health or a persistent source of concern to the public in those premises will be investigated as soon as is practicable. If the complaint relates to premises which are outside of the Borough we will work with the relevant authority to investigate the complaint.

Requests for service regarding food standards will be investigated in accordance with the agreement between Kent County Council and the local authority. Where appropriate, complainants will be redirected to the county council. Food complaints which indicate “a significant risk to public health” or “are a persistent source of concern to the public” will be investigated fully.

| |
|---|
| Local Performance Indicators for Dartford and Sevenoaks Partnership: |
| a. To respond to 90% of received Requests for Service within 5 working days |
| b. To respond to 100% of all received Requests for Service within 10 working days |

For the year 2014/15 both authorities responded to 95% of all Requests for Service within 5 days and 99% within 10 days.

3.3 Primary and Home Authority Principle

The Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008, regulated by the Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO), introduced measures to secure coordination and consistency of regulatory enforcement by local authorities by establishing a Primary Authority scheme. Businesses operating in more than one local authority area that choose to have a Primary Authority Partnership will benefit from improved consistency of advice and enforcement across local authority trading standards, environmental health, licensing and fire and rescue services. The Councils will comply with the legislation and guidance issued by BRDO.

The Councils acknowledge the Primary Authority and Home Authority Principle and will act in accordance with LGR guidance. At present neither Council acts as a Primary or Home Authority for any local food producers. However, Dartford as Originating Authority for Gala Coffee, investigates any complaints about their products in accordance with LGR guidance. Sevenoaks as Originating Authority for Jardox, investigates any complaints about their products in accordance with LGR guidance.

3.4 Advice to Business

The need for clear advice for business in helping to secure compliance is understood and implemented within both Councils from the point of first contact through to individual enforcement officers. Where possible, measures are put in place to ensure contact with the Authority is right first time and the need for duplicate or unnecessary interventions is reduced. This includes the regular review of written paper advice in the form of letters or leaflets to ensure that they adhere to the authorities' plain English policies. Where there are communication barriers with food business operators both authorities have access to translation services and specialist services such as producing written information into Braille.

The service makes good use of the 'Safer Food, Better Business' pack that assists small businesses to comply with Regulation (EC) 852/2004 Article 5 paragraph.

Both authorities have identified "Channel Shift" as a priority and work started on completely reviewing the commercial team web pages during the second half of 2013. This work was put on hold early in 2014 as both authorities' websites were being upgraded. The delays in the implementation of the upgrades to the websites had an impact on the ability of the commercial team to review and update customer information on both authority websites. The redesigned web pages were available for customers from January 2015.

Both Councils are currently running the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. The role of advice and encouragement coupled with inspection has been shown to be a powerful tool in raising the standards in many food premises. Sevenoaks

transferred all businesses within the scope of the scheme from “Scores on the Doors” to the National Scheme on 1st March 2012. Dartford phased introduction of the scheme where-by businesses were brought into the scheme at their first food hygiene inspection after 31st March 2011 was essentially completed during 2014. Only a handful of Category E businesses that had an alternative enforcement strategy questionnaire at the last inspection due date have not yet been incorporated into the scheme.

The commercial team is participating in the Kent and Medway Better Business for All initiative and is looking at forming stronger regulatory relationships with local businesses. Advice and support for businesses is also provided via our link with Sevenoaks District Council’s “Team Around Your Business” which is a single point of contact for businesses.

3.5 Food Inspection and Sampling

The Commercial Team participates in all national sampling surveys for microbiological quality of food. The sampling programme is published annually to cover all new and emerging risks to food safety. It is recognised that issues and trends are often only established through targeted projects where a number of similar samples are taken in a short time frame. To this end the Kent Sampling Group has teamed up with colleagues in Sussex and Surrey to put together a local sampling project commencing 2015/16. Additional sampling is undertaken by officers as necessary as risks present themselves. Food and environmental swabbing has been removed as a performance indicator for both authorities however, the informal target for the team remains at a minimum of 75 samples per annum. The authorities actively participate in all national and local sampling projects as it is recognised as an effective monitoring tool.

The sampling plan for 2015/2016 includes participating in national and local surveys and sampling of food imported from producing counties outside the EU. The microbiological swabbing of food preparation surfaces in catering establishments and manufacturing premises is also becoming an important element of food inspections with the use of test kits that can give results in minutes.

The Councils have appointed Public Health England (PHE), (to undertake microbiological and faecal specimens and Kent County Council for chemical testing using accredited laboratories to carry out analysis and/or examination.

| Microbiological | Faecal | Chemical |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| PHE Food, Water and Environmental | Pathology Department Darent Valley Hospital | Kent Scientific Services 8 Abbeywood Road |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Microbiology Network Colindale Hospital, Colindale Avenue London NW9 5DH | Darenth Wood Road Dartford Kent DA2 8DA FOR OUTBREAKS Microbiology Laboratory Royal Sussex Hospital, Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 5BE | Kings Hill West Malling Kent ME19 6YT |
|--|---|--|

3.6 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Diseases

All reports and notifications of food related infectious disease and outbreaks where a public health risk is considered likely, are investigated by the food team in accordance with the PHE guidance and / or specific requests from the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC) .

The trend across the two authorities is that year on year there are only minor variances, up or down, in the number of reported food poisoning cases. There tend to be roughly double the number of cases in the Sevenoaks area compared with Dartford. Based on previous years' trends, it is estimated that the demand on the service during 2015/16 will be in the order of 365 reports and notifications of food poisoning, food borne diseases and infectious diseases. Whilst the numbers of food poisoning cases associated with many food poisoning bacteria is on the decrease, the number of reported cases of campylobacter is increasing.

3.7 Food Alerts

A national system exists for notifying local authorities of food safety or allergy alerts for food manufactured or imported into the UK. Alerts may be generated for the inclusion of banned substances into products, or the inadvertent inclusion of an allergy trigger such as nuts.

Where the Food Standards Agency requires any action/responses by the local authority, these will be clearly specified. Food alerts will be dealt with in accordance with the Food Safety Act Code of Practice. During 2014/15 no action was required by either authority on and alerts issued by the food standards Agency. It is anticipated that the number of Food and Allergy Alert Reports during 2015/16 will be approximately 40.

The Food Standard Agency additionally issues Product Recall/Withdrawal Information Notices. Product recall notices are issued by the Agency when a supermarket chain or food producer recall their own product due to food safety issues that have been identified after the product has been released for sale to

the final consumer. These notifications would not normally require any action by the local authority except where the food has been produced within the borough or is known to be retailed or distributed within the borough. Where there has been a national recall of food that was produced within the borough, then officers will work closely with the manufacturer and the Food Standards Agency to ensure that the withdrawn product is safely removed from the market. Where the issue relates to the production process, then officers will work with the company's Quality Assurance Manager to ensure that robust safe production systems (HACCP) are in place to ensure food safety.

Discussions have been held with the Communications Teams of Dartford and Sevenoaks Councils to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to deal with the occasional need for local publicity to support National issues.

3.8 Food Information Regulations 2014

The regulations came into force in December 2014 after a two year lead in period to allow manufacturers to amend product labelling to meet the legal requirements. Trading Standards are the lead for the enforcement of the legislation in Kent. The expectation of the Food Standards Agency is that Environmental Health will have a role to play through the face to face contact with businesses that supply open food direct to the public. This is mainly food from restaurants, takeaways and supermarket delicatessen counters. During the months leading up to the implementation of the legislation officers were actively raising awareness with businesses, both via a mail shot and by including information dissemination during inspections. There is an ongoing expectation of businesses that specialist topics will be discussed as part of a routine inspection

3.9 Liaison with Other Organisations

The Commercial Team is committed to sharing data where permissible, learning from the experience of others and endeavouring to secure consistency. This is aided considerably by participating in County-wide or national professional networks.

- Kent Food Technical Group
- Kent Food Sampling Sub Group
- Liaison meetings with the CCDC/Kent PHE
- Kent Infection Control Committee (KICC)
- Kent Environmental Health Managers Group
- Kent Public Health Technical Group
- Kent and Medway better Business for All Steering Group

The importance of partnerships and joint working extends also to contacts within the Council which includes building control, development control, licensing, legal services, Community Safety Unit, CCTV and other parts of Environmental Health.

3.10 Food Safety and Standards Promotion.

Both authorities deliver food safety training, specifically the CIEH Level II in Food Safety in Catering. Both authorities, until August 2014, were in partnership with K College at Tonbridge along with Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells Councils for the delivery of Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Food Hygiene Training courses. Due to difficulties faced by the college, in August 2014 the four authorities decided to form a new consortium, independent of the college, for the delivery of food hygiene training. It is proposed to hold at least four courses which will be delivered at both Dartford and Sevenoaks Council Offices per annum. Opportunities will also be taken to run workshops or specialist forums as needs are identified or in combination with other campaigns. Ways of achieving more effective communication using targeted campaigns, texting or better use of e-mails or website are being explored particularly in relation to education and low level interventions.

Wherever practicable we will participate in national campaigns such as Food Safety Week, which is usually run in June each year. Efforts will be taken to focus the campaign to make best use of limited resources. For two weeks in June each year officers also participate in Safety in Action which promotes Food Safety and Health and Safety to Year 6 pupils at schools across Dartford and Gravesham.

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| Delivery target for Dartford and Sevenoaks Partnership: |
| a. Successful delivery of CIEH Level II Courses in Catering at Dartford and Sevenoaks as part of the West Kent Partnership |
| b. To investigate opportunities for the delivery of Level 3 Food Hygiene training across the West Kent local authority partnership |

3.11 Private Water Supplies and Private Distribution Networks

The Commercial team is responsible for undertaking routine samples of Private Water Supplies (PWS) to ensure the quality and portability of the water delivered to customers whether it is to dwellings or commercial premises.

A Food Safety officer is lead for Environmental Health on the work we are required to carry out in connection with Private Water Supplies (PWS) by 'The Private Water Supplies Regulations 2009'. This legislation tightened up the monitoring and enforcement of PWS in order to improve the safety of the water to consumers. Under previous legislation we relied on 'end product testing' i.e. by routinely taking samples from a tap or point of use; a more holistic approach now requires the risk assessment of each PWS (with the exception of private single dwellings), together with sampling, to ensure that all measures are in place to protect the supply from contamination.

Sevenoaks has 17 PWS in the borough, one of which supplies around 80 premises including Eagles Heights which is a major tourist attraction. Dartford has no registered private water supplies.

The 2009 Regulations identifies a further classification of water supply; a private distribution system (PDS). The water in these systems originates from the public mains supply to a property, but is then supplied onwards to additional properties.

DEFRA has provided clarity on the definition of a PDS and work is being undertaken to identify the number of supplies in the two boroughs. A number of Risk Assessments for the private water supplies are to be completed during the next financial year. This is the fifth year of a 5 year rolling programme. Over the period a number of changes have been made by DEFRA and a number of lessons have been learnt by the officers on writing risk assessments. It has been recognised that the function requires the input of more than one officer and as a result a small team has been established comprising commercial and EP Officers to draw upon different skill sets.

3.12 National Healthy Business Award scheme

Kent County Council, Public Health Team from April 2014 launched a Kent version of the award scheme. The County Council recognised that the local authority Environmental Health teams through their existing role of engaging with businesses were best placed to promote and deliver the award scheme. The Kent award is based around 9 themes which include healthy Eating and Health and Safety as two of the elements. A financial allocation is provided to the local authority for the delivery of the scheme which is used to back-fill inspections in both Dartford and Sevenoaks areas.

4. Resources

4.1 Financial Allocation

The Assistant Environmental Health Manager Commercial manages the budget for the whole team which includes Food Safety, Infectious Disease Control, Health and Safety, Skin Piercing, Event Safety Management Advice and the Corporate Health & Safety Advisory role for both authorities along with the delivery of the Business Wellbeing Award on behalf of Kent County Council for both authorities. The service having achieved a budget reduction of £360,000 per annum over the cost of the two services prior to the partnership arrangement has not been required to identify additional savings for 2015/16. Salary saving currently being accrued through one officer reducing their hours from full time and one officer currently on maternity leave are being used to appoint contractors, on a temporary basis, to undertake primarily food premises inspections and some customer service request investigations. The Commercial Team budget covers the functions of the team as a whole and is allocated according to the needs of the service. The service is supported also in part by the Environmental Health Manager and the two Technical Administration

Officers. In the event of outbreak or major incident, additional resources would be drawn on from either other parts of Environmental Health or neighbouring authorities.

The budgets for the day to day operation of the service are located in a hub budget which is held by Dartford Borough Council. The commercial team does not deliver any services which are specific to one authority and not the other. Salary budgets remain separate with each authority. The training budget for Dartford staff is held within Environmental Health hub while the Sevenoaks staff training budget is held by Sevenoaks HR. Financial allocations are currently sufficient to meet the equipment and training needs of the team.

4.2 Staffing allocation

The key staffing resources delivering the Food Service are indicated below:

- From 2nd April 2012, the staffing resources of the commercial team were reduced by 27% across the two authorities. This was partly mitigated by the changes to the health & safety inspection regime which has seen a reduction in the number of programmed inspections that the authorities are required to undertake each year. The decision to retain specialised health and safety officers has also allowed for a more focused approach to both food and health & safety enforcement.
- The use of an alternative enforcement strategy (AES) for low risk premises was piloted during the first quarter of 2014/15 and the information gathered used to identify the types of business for which AES is appropriate.
- The change in the profile of Dartford based businesses from predominantly higher risk Category B's & C's to lower risk Category D premises has led to a significant shift in the profile of the inspection regime. Despite this the number of inspections due each year is in excess of 1,000 inspection or AES interventions with an additional 250 visits to new businesses.
- Reduction in the number of letters sent to businesses following a food hygiene inspection and an increase in the use of reports of inspection left with the proprietor of the business at the time of the initial visit. This has allowed officers to increase the number of revisits and advisory visits undertaken.
- Increased use of pre-prepared guidance leaflets and explanatory notes which are explained and left at the business at the time of the inspection.

| By Task | FTE |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Food hygiene inspection | 3.0 |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Food complaints | 1.6 |
| Primary & Home authority principle | 0.1 |
| Advice to business | 0.3 |
| Food Sampling | 0.1 |
| FP and ID investigations | 0.1 |
| Food Safety incidents | 0.02 |
| Liaison with other authorities | 0.1 |
| Food Safety Promotion | 0.1 |
| Training and Education delivery | 0.1 |
| Administration | 0.25 |
| Monitoring and review of service | 0.2 |
| National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme | 0.3 |
| CPD and team consistency training | 0.2 |
| Total | 6.47 |

| By Role | FTE |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| AEHM Commercial | 0.20 |
| Principal EHO | 0.50 |
| EHO | 1.40 |
| Foods Safety Officer | 1.50 |
| Senior Administration Officer | 0.03 |
| Total | 4.63 |

The team is currently supported by three contractors. Two of the contractors predominantly undertake food hygiene inspections, while the third undertakes both proactive and reactive food hygiene work. Although the food premises profile across both authorities is shifting towards businesses falling into Category D and E ratings, over 45% of all inspections undertaken each year are of Category C premises.

All officers undertaking inspections, investigating complaints, giving advice and taking food samples meet the qualifications and experience requirements as detailed by the Food Law Code of Practice. All officers undertaking food hygiene inspections have undertaken consistency training.

4.3 Staff Development Plan

The Council places significant importance on the development and training of staff to ensure that quality services are delivered to our customers. The Commercial Team Manager will ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified and receive regular training to maintain their level of competency and continuous professional development. The team undertakes regular training as part of team meetings to ensure that knowledge and interpretation of legislation and guidance is maintained.

Training needs are considered during the annual performance appraisals. All staff maintain a training and development file containing evidence of formal

qualifications and CPD certificates from external and internal course attended, together with details of agreed, planned training for the forthcoming year.

5. Quality Assessment

5.1 Quality Assessment

Dartford Environmental Health Department achieved ISO9001 registration in September 2008. As part of the shared service Sevenoaks Environmental Health was incorporated into the scheme at the start of the partnership on 2nd April 2012. The service is audited at least once year, by external auditors, internal peer review and internal auditors. The audit process assists with ensuring consistency and best use of resources. The team also self-assesses and reviews practices to allow officers to keep up to date with best practice guidance.

Peer review of officers' work is conducted by the Assistant Environmental Health Manager - Commercial to ensure consistency of standards is applied, and to identify opportunities or need for improvements.

All policies and procedures are reviewed regularly so they are up to date and reflect any guidance produced by the FSA, PHE, DEFRA, CCDC and other relevant bodies.

6. New and Emerging Issues

6.1 E. Coli Guidance

The Food Standards Agency in December 2014 issued Version 3 of the E. Coli 0157 Cross-contamination Guidance and a Factsheet for Caterers. Officers continue to hand the factsheet out at every inspection of a catering business and discuss the revised guidance with the food business proprietor. This requirement to disseminate additional information increases the time taken to undertake routine food hygiene inspections at catering premises.

6.2 Food Information Regulations

The Food Information Regulations 2014 (FIR) came into force in December 2014. The legislation makes it a legal requirement for food businesses to inform customers about food items which as part of their ingredients contains one or more of the fourteen named foods which are known allergens. The lead for the legislation is Trading Standards as it requires significant changes to the labelling of pre-packed foods. Environmental Health, because of the routine inspection regime for all food premises have been directed to incorporate providing information and advice about FIR where food is sold not in packaging. This includes food sold in restaurants, takeaways and shop delicatessen counters.

As a result this is an additional piece of work that needs to be undertaken at almost all food hygiene inspections.

6.3 Food Law Code of Practice Revision

The Food Standards Agency has issued a further revision to the Code of Practice. This includes a number of changes, the most significant of which is the change in requirements for professional competence and ongoing annual CPD. Officers undertaking food hygiene inspections will be required to complete at least 20 hours of food related CPD each year up from the previous requirement of 10 hours. In a team which is heavily dependent on part time officers, this could have a significant impact on resources.

6.4 New developments and construction sites

Dartford is an area of significant growth with a number of major development projects either underway, or due to commence within the next few months. The Construction, Design and Management Regulations 2015 includes a requirement for the provision of welfare facilities for employees. Even before the legislation came into force, this led to a significant increase in the number of catering facilities located on construction/re-development sites. Sevenoaks is also undergoing some redevelopment on brownfield sites. Current and future developments which have an impact of the food service include:-

1. Removal of the toll booths at Dartford River Crossing, re-alignment of roads and junctions (two site canteens).
2. Dartford Bridge Development – two site canteens and a planned local shopping centre
3. Ebbsfleet Garden City site canteens, schools, a hotel and sports facilities
4. Glaxo SmithKlein - site canteen, school and commercial units
5. Millpond – commercial hub including cafes and bars.
6. Paramount - planned leisure and entertainment facility
7. Bluewater – planned redevelopment to increase size by approximately 30%
8. Redevelopment of West Kent Cold Store site – site canteen

7. Review

7.1 Reviews against the Service Plan

The Dartford and Sevenoaks Partnership Service Plan for 2014/2015 contained measurable performance indicator for the Commercial team. All of the performance indicators were achieved. Additional statistical information has also been used to illustrate performance against the previous year in critical areas. With demands on the service increasing year on year the team has had to review how it delivers its' services. This has been done by reviewing and changing paperwork, increasing the amount of prepared advice that can be handed out to businesses, putting more information onto the council's website

and directing customers to it as a source of information. The number of new food registrations received each year continues to increase and by directing them to sources where they can self-help it is anticipated that this should reduce the amount of time that officers spend providing advice to new food business operators.

7.2 Food Premises Inspections

In 2015/2016 the following Food Premises Inspections are scheduled:

Dartford Borough Council

| Risk category | Inspections scheduled |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| A | 2 (4*) |
| B | 32 |
| C | 141 |
| D | 81 |
| E | 46 |
| Unrated | 56 |
| TOTAL | 360 |

Sevenoaks District Council

| Risk category | Inspections scheduled |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| A | 1 (2*) |
| B | 42 |
| C | 163 |
| D | 82 |
| E | 65 |
| Unrated | 69 |
| TOTAL | 423 |

* The total number "A" rated inspections completed will be twice the number of premises rated "A" as these premises are liable for inspection every 6 months.

These figures do not include any new food premises that will require an inspection during the year. Based on previous years it is likely that between 250 and 300 new food registrations will be received.

7.3 Responses to requests received from Food Premises and Food Safety issues

Dartford Borough Council

| Service Requests Received 2010/2011 | Service Requests Received 2011/2012 | Service Requests Received 2012/2013 | Service Requests Received 2013/2014 | Service Requests Received 2013/2014 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 271 | 250 | 361 | 323 | 288 |

Sevenoaks District Council

| Service Requests Received 2010/2011 | Service Requests Received 2011/2012 | Service Requests Received 2012/2013 | Service Requests Received 2013/2014 | Service Requests Received 2013/2014 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 146 | 149 | 310 | 281 | 320 |

There has been a small decrease in the number of service requests received. For both authorities the majority of service requests are "For Information and Advice" During the last year Dartford received 167 requests for information or advice and Sevenoaks received 221. The majority of requests for information and advice are enquiries about starting new food businesses or taking over existing premises. Other common enquiries are about food hygiene ratings, hygiene training and allergen advice and training.

The number of complaints about food and food premises is relatively small with 60 complaints received about Sevenoaks businesses and 121 about Dartford businesses. These figures include confirmed food poisonings where the patient has included a local business as being frequented during the relevant time frame. It also includes cases where food poisoning has not been confirmed but the customer is of the opinion that they have food poisoning as a result of eating at a local premises.

7.4 Food and Allergy Alerts Received from the Food Standards Agency

Food Alerts

During the year 2013/14 there were no food alerts issued by the Food Standards Agency required action from officers.

7.5 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Diseases

Dartford Borough Council

| 2010/2011 | 2011/2012 | 2012/2013 | 2013/2014 | 2014/2015 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 77 | 114 | 103 | 135 | 126 |

Sevenoaks District Council

| 2010/2011 | 2011/2012 | 2012/2013 | 2013/2014 | 2014/2015 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 204 | 196 | 231 | 221 | 206 |

The above tables suggest that there is a far greater issue around incidents of food poisoning in the Sevenoaks area than in Dartford given that the population of Sevenoaks District is 117,000 compared to Dartford 101,000. Population figures are Mid-2013 population estimate (Office of National Statistics). There are several possible reasons for this:-

There is a greater number of service requests received alleging food poisoning from residents of Dartford borough than Sevenoaks.

It is possible that residents of Sevenoaks are more likely to visit their doctor when unwell and therefore more likely to have an incidence of food poisoning confirmed.

Dartford is the most socio-economically deprived borough in Kent and some of the wards are in the lowest percentile for many of the health indicators. Outside Bluewater the majority of the restaurants and takeaways are fast food outlets. In Sevenoaks restaurants are more aligned to those found at Bluewater offering a wider range of eating experiences along with a number of independent restaurants. It is therefore possible that residents eating habits could be reflected in the reported incidence of food poisoning.

8. Identification of any Variation from the Service Plan

Should it be necessary to divert resources away from the priorities set out within this plan, the variance will be agreed with the Strategic Director, External Services for Dartford borough Council and Chief Officer, Environmental and Operational Services for Sevenoaks district council and involving the Portfolio Holders for both authorities where appropriate.

9. Areas of Improvement

Every effort has been put in to maintaining a high quality service to the public and maintaining a high inspection level.

During 2015/2016 the Commercial Team will be striving to improve in the following areas;

1. To improve the accuracy of UNiform database. This is a priority requirement to assist in the implementation of the new FSA Annual Reporting system

2. To reduce the number of 'A' rated Premises
3. To reduce the number of "B" rated Premises
4. To make contact with customers enquiring about starting a food business within 5 working days
5. To give advice and guidance to all customers planning to start a food business.
6. To inspect all new food businesses that fall into the higher risk categories within 28 days of the business starting trading
7. To give renewed emphasis to promote the healthy eating message
8. To promote the "National food Hygiene Rating Scheme". It has been demonstrated that this will improve the standards within food businesses. The success of this scheme should result in a decrease in enforcement action.
9. Investigating the possibility of establishing a flexible warrant scheme for those officers involved in food safety. This will allow for flexibility within the Kent local authorities to support each other for emergency contingency planning and for outbreak investigations, or other emergencies which are demanding on local resources.
10. To work with Kent county Council on the promotion and delivery of the Healthy Business Award.
11. To deliver a Level 3 Food Hygiene course for businesses within the training partnership.

Contact Officer:

Mrs Shona McQuade

Assistant Environmental Health Manager Commercial,
Dartford & Sevenoaks Environmental Health Partnership,
Dartford Borough Council,

Civic Centre,

Home Gardens,

Dartford

DA1 1DR

shona.mcquade@dartford.gov.uk