

Service Delivery- Environmental Health

Food Safety Service Plan

2023-2024

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Introduction

This Service Plan sets out how Sevenoaks District Council intends to provide an effective food safety service that meets the requirements of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement. The Food Standards Agency regards this as important to ensure national priorities and standards are addressed and delivered locally, The FSA also encourages local authorities to include locally defined objectives in their Plans which we have done.

It covers the functions carried out by authorised officers of the Food and Safety Team under the provisions of the Food Safety Act 1990, the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 and relevant regulations made under the European Communities Act 1992. To set it in context with other Environmental Health responsibilities, it should be read in conjunction with current versions of:

- The Council Plan
- The Environmental Health Enforcement Policy
- The Environmental Health Service Plan

1. Service aims and objectives

1.1 Aims and objectives

FSA Recovery Plan arrangements which set out guidance during the period of recovery from the impact of the pandemic came to an end on 31st March 2023.

From 1st April the service has reverted back to the intervention arrangements outlined in the Food Law Code of Practice.

We aim to ensure that all food and drink intended for sale for human consumption that is produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed in the Sevenoaks District is safe, hygienic and compliant with food hygiene legislation and that all food premises and food handlers comply with the Food Hygiene Regulations. We will encourage good practice

amongst those responsible for preparing, handling and cooking food and to ensure they comply with their statutory obligations.

This will be achieved through:

- Programmed and intelligence led food hygiene interventions and revisits
- Local delivery of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme
- Investigation of complaints regarding food sold or prepared in the district
- Investigation of complaints regarding hygiene standards or practices
- Investigation and control of infectious diseases including food poisoning and food borne disease
- Responding to food alerts issued by the Food Standards Agency
- Sampling initiatives in accordance with the Local Government guidance and National programme
- The provision of advice and information on food safety issues
- Promotional work
- Statutory consultation on relevant licensing and planning applications
- Use of questionnaires for lower risk premises
- Developing and utilising partnerships, both professional and commercial, to enhance quality and effectiveness of the service
- Ensuring that food safety guidance is provided to individuals and organisations that are starting new food businesses in the area.
- Monitoring of existing Approved premises as well as granting new approval applications
- Imported food control

1.2 Links to corporate objectives and plans

This Food Service Plan is delivered by the Food and Safety Team (within Environmental Health) whose broad spectrum of work is linked to the Council Plan with particular reference to the health and wellbeing of those who live, work and visit the area. Environmental Health also has a significant role in supporting economic growth.

2. Background

2.1. District Profile

Sevenoaks District Council is located in north-west Kent, is situated to the southeast of London, and administers an area which forms a major part of what is now “commuter belt country”. The population is approximately 121,400 people. The district covers an area of approximately 378km², and comprises a mostly rural land-uses, with the three major centres of population concentration, which occur in and around the towns of Swanley in the North, Sevenoaks and Westerham in the centre, and Edenbridge in the South of the district.

Our Food Safety service is delivered from:

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

Telephone number 01732 227000. Our offices are open between 09:00 and 17:00 Monday to Friday. environmental.health@sevenoaks.gov.uk

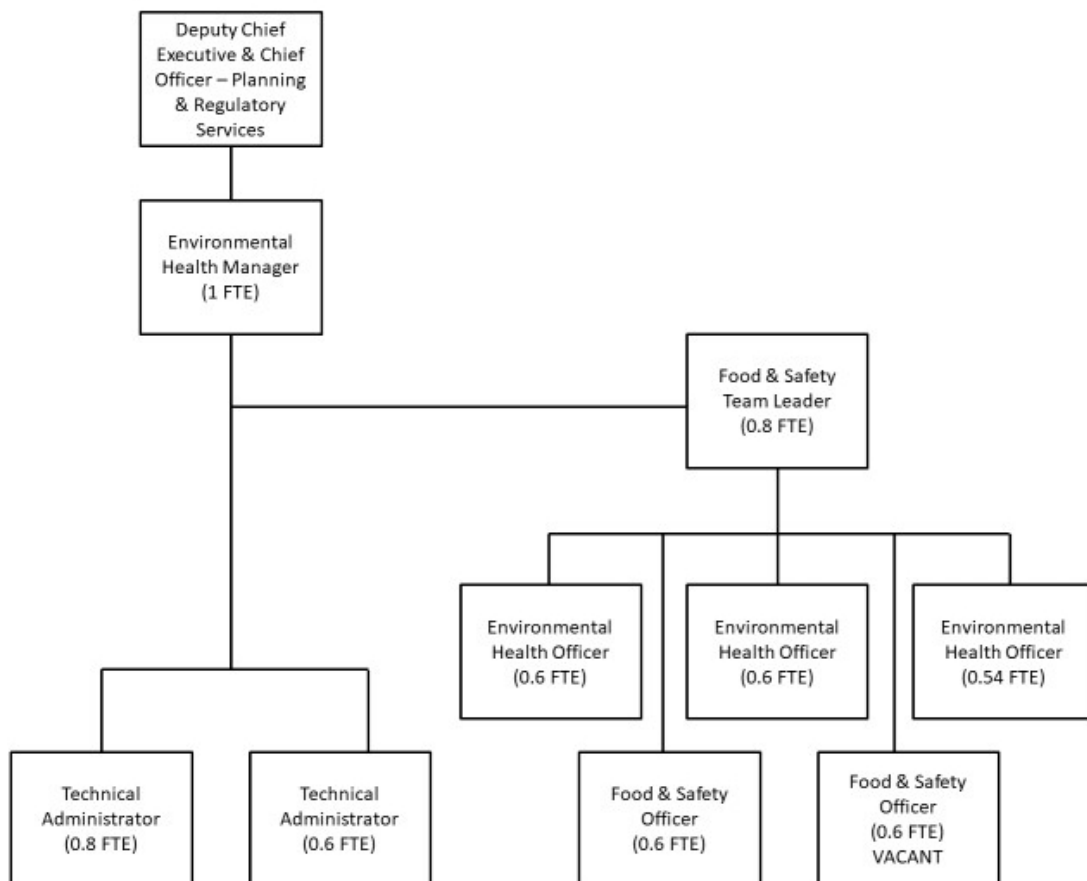
Outside of office hours, an emergency out of office service is provided via CCTV who will operate a cascade system to contact a suitably qualified and experienced Environmental Health Officer.

2.2. Organisational Structure

The Food Service Plan is delivered by officers in the Food and Safety team which reports to the Environmental Health Manager (EHM). The EHM reports to the Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer Planning and Regulatory Services. A structure chart for the service is provided below.

The team is also tasked with delivery of the Council's statutory health & safety enforcement function and appropriately qualified, experienced and authorised staff carry out these day to day health & safety functions alongside their food hygiene responsibilities.

2.2.1. Organisational diagram showing the Food and Safety Team



2.3. Scope of the Food Service

The Food and Safety team is responsible for:

- Implementing programmed and intelligence led food hygiene interventions and revisits for non-compliant premises
- Investigating reported cases of food poisonings and potential outbreaks in accordance with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) guidance
- Investigating requests for service regarding the hygiene of food premises, or food safety issues relating to foods purchased or produced in Sevenoaks
- Developing and delivering a programme of appropriate interventions for lower risk premises
- Registration of food premises
- Monitoring of existing approved premises as well as granting new approval applications
- Responding to food alerts issued by the Food Standards Agency
- Delivering a food sampling programme in line with local and national programmes
- Provision of advice and support to existing and prospective food business operators and users of the service
- Consideration of planning and licensing applications relating to food premises.
- Implementing projects and campaigns that promote good food hygiene
- Development and maintenance of partnerships and liaisons to the benefit of the Food Service
- Delivering the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme
- Ensuring that food business operators providing non-prepacked food and food that is 'pre-packed for direct sale' (PPDS) are given appropriate advice on allergens.
- Issuing export certificates to local businesses that export food products
- Imported food control

(Note: All food standards 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. There is a Memorandum of Understanding between Kent County Council

Trading Standards and the twelve local authorities which provides Environmental Health with some legal powers under the Food Information Regulations 2014).

All food services are delivered by in house staff, except where analytical services are used. Contractors may occasionally be used to carry out inspections of medium risk premises to support our work and help us manage variances in demand and fluctuations in the inspection programme but this will depend on money available in the service budget. Work carried out by a contractor will be closely monitored by the Food and Safety Team Leader.

2.4. Demands on the Food Service

2.4.1. Food Hygiene Interventions

There are approximately 1,071 registered food premises and ten approved premises as of 30th September 2023. Approved premises fall outside of the scope of registration and therefore are not recorded in the table below.

Premises type	Number
Primary Producer	11
Manufacturers & Packers	11
Importer/Exporter	11
Distributor/Transporter	4
Retailer	176
Caterer	858
Total	1,071

Of these premises, approx. 500 are due for inspection each year. We receive approx. 10 new food registrations per month which need to be prioritised for inspection and then included in the inspection programme. Prior to the pandemic we received on average 6/7 new food business registrations. The increase is mainly the result of more home

caterers and mobile caterers registering. This reflects the fact that the general public are diversifying into different means of employment to support their income.

Between 1st April and 30th September 2023 we closed the records of 90 food businesses which had ceased trading, although some may have registered and never traded.

Businesses that have closed rarely advise us and it can be a time consuming exercise chasing food business operators for information about the status of their business.

Since 1st April to end December 2023 we have received 6 requests for a food hygiene re-rating inspections. Food businesses are able to request a re-rating after they have made improvements. We charge £205 for this service, as it requires a full additional inspection to be carried out. This is half the number of requests received the previous year.

However, we are currently finding poorer standards in many businesses inspected and consequently we are having to carry out more revisits to non- broadly compliant businesses to check that they have made the improvements required. Lack of staff and increased costs are likely to be contributory factors.

The full range of food safety interventions also includes advisory visits and food sampling visits.

Local businesses are also expanding their markets and are increasingly exporting products. As the United Kingdom is no longer in the European Union all countries are now classed as being 'third countries' 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. This creates additional work as consignments being exported to third countries require additional checks at point of production so that the certificates can be issued.

2.4.2. Approved Premises

We have 11 Approved premises which are inspected in accordance with our risk rating programme. Approval may be required where products of animal origin are produced/processed. The standards required and levels of product monitoring at an Approved Premises are far more stringent than for 'Registered Establishments'. As a result the inspection and monitoring programs as well as the frequency of product sampling is far more onerous than for routine food hygiene inspections.

We currently have:

- 3x milk pasteurising,
- 2x cheese makers,
- 1x kefir (dairy),
- 1x meat processing
- 4x egg packers

We also have 2 farms selling raw milk which are inspected by the Dairy Hygiene Inspector from the Food Standards Agency, however the bottling process comes under our remit.

A number of private estates have developed their commercial operations as a means of bringing in more income. This includes wedding and conference venues, music festivals and weekend events involving mass catering. The expanded use of rural land has seen a huge increase in the number of Event Notifications being received by Environmental Health. The Food and Safety team reviews and comments on event plans including the catering provision and an officer attends the Council's Safety Advisory Group (SAG) meetings.

2.5. Enforcement Policy

The Environmental Health service adopts the principles laid down in the Regulators Code (which states that enforcement must be fair, consistent and equitable) and the Enforcement Concordat for all appropriate services. The Environmental Health Enforcement Policy has been approved by Council.

The Council also has a formal complaints procedure available to any customer aggrieved by our processes or decisions, except where an appeal mechanism is available eg the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme safeguarding procedure.

3. Service Delivery

3.1. Food Premises Interventions

100% of our higher risk establishments (A and B rated) have received a programmed inspection within the month of their due date to ensure that the PI set for the department is met. Any establishment awarded a 2 hygiene rating or less is non-compliant with required food safety standards and is re-visited within an appropriate time frame. We currently have approx. 18 businesses with a 2 hygiene rating.

All new businesses are triaged and prioritised for inspection. They are then inspected and provided with a food hygiene rating as soon as possible. Inspection of unrated premises as well as inspection of high-risk establishments is a priority.

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 at the time of the inspection.

Lower risk premises (categories D and E) may be monitored by means of alternative interventions (normally via a questionnaire) following an initial inspection eg home bakers and pharmacies.

Category D premises that only handle low risk foods and pre-packed goods can be assessed by questionnaire however, a business that sits in this category but handles “high risk” foods must have a full inspection at every programmed intervention.

The information available to businesses on the Council’s website has been reviewed and re-written over the last few years. We have invested time in making these changes for several reasons:

- to give new and existing businesses on-line access to all of the information that they need to ensure that they are compliant with current legislation
- to reduce the amount of time that officers spend talking to new food business operators and repeatedly providing verbal answers to the same, or similar questions
- to reduce the amount of time taken to undertake “first inspections” as the operator has had access to all of the information they need in order to be at least ‘Broadly compliant’ (equivalent to a 3 hygiene rating).

3.2. Inspection Frequencies

The table below summarises the frequency of inspections for different risk categories where A is the highest risk. The category is defined by scoring premises around potential hazard associated with the business and food safety compliance, this then relates to the interval between inspections

As a rough guide, on average, around 50% of all registered food business will need to be inspected each year. This equates to around 500 inspections/interventions per year. The figure does not include inspection of new business or the inspection of Approved premises.

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 (AES) 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 AES can be used when and where it is deemed to be appropriate due to the low risk nature of the business. For business not considered as a food business by the public AES can be used for every scheduled inspection.

Between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024 the following inspections/interventions are due:

- A rated-2
- B rated-42
- C rated-152
- D rated-181
- E rated-75
- New businesses receiving an inspection approx. 10/month

3.2.1. Performance Indicators

The following performance indicators apply to the food service:

- 100% completion of higher priority graded inspections (Category A and B)

- 75% completion of lower priority graded inspections (Category C, D and E)

The team has met the target for higher risk inspections each month.

Progress against the planned inspection programme is monitored by the Food and Safety Team Leader and statutory activity returns and quarterly 'temperature check' surveys are provided to the Food Standards Agency.

As the team has been carrying a part time Food Safety Officer vacancy since 1st April 2023 a contractor is employed when necessary to carry out inspections. This is to ensure that we are able to inspect the majority of our due C and D category inspections (exceeding the 75% PI), avoiding inspections being carried forward into next year's inspection programme.

3.3. Food and Food Premises Complaints

Food complaints received and investigated by the service fall into one of two broad categories -food contamination or complaints about food businesses (hygiene and practices).

Investigations are carried out in accordance with guidelines issued by the FSA. In 2023 we received 46 complaints regarding the hygiene of premises. We receive very few complaints about food contamination.

All service requests are managed in accordance with the Local Performance Indicator. Where the complaint relates to premises which are outside of the district we will work with the relevant authority to investigate the complaint. Where appropriate we will pass the matter to another authority and inform the customer why the complaint has been referred on, along with contact information for the other local authority.

Requests for service regarding food standards will be dealt with in accordance with the agreement between Kent County Council Trading Standards and the local authority. Where appropriate, complainants will be re-directed to the County Council. Trading Standards will not accept complaints made by Environmental Health on behalf of a member of the public who has initially contacted the wrong authority.

The majority of service requests received are 'For Information and Advice'. They account for around half of all service requests received.

All service requests are allocated as soon as possible after receipt and prioritised for appropriate action.

The Environmental Health have a performance indicator for service requests as follows:

- Average time taken (days) to provide a meaningful response to service requests. Target is less than 5 days (average).

3.4. Primary Authority Principle

We acknowledge the Primary Authority Principle and will act in accordance with LGR guidance.

The Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008, regulated by Regulatory Delivery (RD), 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. We will comply with the legislation and guidance issued by RD. We will take direction from inspection plans produced by Primary Authorities for multi-outlet businesses and we will notify relevant PAs where formal enforcement action is proposed.

3.5. Advice to Businesses

We are proactive in providing advice to businesses to help them comply with the law and we encourage the use of best practice. This approach aims to help standards of food hygiene to improve and for positive relationships to be built with food business operators. We achieve this through:

- advice given during inspections and other visits
- the provision of advisory leaflets
- responding to enquiries
- advice regarding the implementation of the Safer Food Better Business(SFBB) pack
- availability of food safety information on the Council's website
- advising proposed businesses at the planning stage

Advice and support for businesses is also provided via our link with “Team Around Your Business” which is a single point of contact for businesses.

A new ‘Gain or Retain a 5 scheme’ has been agreed with the intention to implement the scheme from April 2024. This would be a new chargeable scheme for the delivery of comprehensive advice to food business operators (fbo). The proposal is to offer a set amount of advice and information within one chargeable fee that provides a fbo with the best chance of obtaining a 5 rating at the time of inspection. It is anticipated that the scheme will generate a small income for Environmental Health. Some elements of the scheme still need to be resolved before implementation eg the content of the service-level agreement.

3.6. Food Inspection and Sampling

The microbiological and physical examination and analysis of food is undertaken on the basis of:

- businesses identified for sampling as part of a nationwide, regional or local schemes
- businesses subject to consumer complaints or outbreak investigations
- during a programmed inspection where the officer deems a sample is necessary.

We support all relevant nationally co-ordinated food sampling programmes organised by the FSA and the UK Health Security Agency UKHSA (formally known as PHE) Laboratory Services as well as any relevant cross regional surveys co-ordinated by the Food and Water Laboratory. Samples requiring microbiological examination are collected by a courier service and taken to the Colindale laboratory in London.

Since 1st April to end November 2023, 53 samples were taken for microbiological analysis. We have supported a local/cross regional studies on Ready to eat salads from catering and retail premises, Cooked meats and Swabbing in catering premises.

There is a separate food sampling plan for businesses within the district that are Approved Premises. The Food Standards Agency requires that microbiological testing of locally produced food from 'Approved' premises is undertaken annually.

3.7. Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Diseases (Food Poisoning)

Investigation of outbreaks will be in accordance with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Communicable Disease Outbreak Management Plan. The number of notifications received almost always relates to single cases rather than outbreaks. Single cases are investigated in accordance with the Single Case Plan made under a Framework Agreement for the control of communicable disease between UKHSA and Kent and Medway Environmental Health teams.

All infectious disease notifications are followed up by a standard letter, advisory leaflet and questionnaire (where appropriate) to identify possible sources of infection and recommend practices to prevent its spread.

3.8. Food Safety Incidents

The Council complies with the Food Safety Act Code of Practice in relation to handling food alerts. Food alerts are issued by the FSA to communicate information on national food issues, the majority being for information only. Food alerts for action require officers to undertake a wide variety of courses of action dependant on the issue.

3.9. Liaison with Other Organisations

The Food and Safety 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 countywide or national professional networks.

- Kent Food Technical Group
- Kent Food Sampling Sub Group
- Liaison meetings with the CCDC/ UKHSA
- Kent Infection Control Committee (KICC)
- Kent Environmental Health Managers Group

The importance of partnerships and joint working extends also to contacts within the Council, which includes Building Control, Development Control, Licensing, Legal Services, Economic Development, Community Safety Unit, CCTV and the Environmental Protection Team within Environment Health. The team also works in partnership with a number of external organisations including; Food Standards Agency, UKHSA, DEFRA, Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue, HSE, Border Force and DWP

3.10. Food Safety Promotion

We participate in the Food Standards Agency National Food Hygiene Ratings Scheme. The scheme is designed to provide information about business hygiene standards to members of the public but it is also a useful tool to drive up performance standards of food businesses.

We are promoting businesses that have achieved a 5 hygiene rating at a recent inspection via social media-‘Five Star Friday’.

We will look to develop our food safety education role and seek to identify new opportunities to deliver information on food safety and food allergen awareness.

Natasha’s Law came into effect on 1st October 2021. This requires food businesses to include full ingredients labelling (with the 14 major allergens emphasised in the list) on pre-packed for direct sale foods on the same premises from which they are sold. For example, a packaged sandwich or salad made by staff earlier in the day and placed on a shelf for purchase.

Kent Trading Standards are authorised to undertake enforcement of these legal requirements so we will proactively report matters to them and support their investigations in order to drive up compliance.

Allergen awareness interventions are included within our routine food safety inspections.

Wherever practicable we will participate in national campaigns to improve food safety standards and awareness of good practice. Where we decide to take part in campaigns we will ensure that they are focused to make best value usage of our resources.

4. Resources

4.1. Financial Allocation

The Environmental Health Function operates within an annual budget of approximately £780,000 per annum. Of this total, approximately £347,000 is allocated to the Food & Safety Team. Food safety accounts for approximately 77% of the work undertaken by the Food & Safety Team (£267,000).

The majority of the budget is allocated to staffing costs (salary plus on costs including training, professional membership etc.). The remainder is used to fund equipment, sampling and other necessary support services.

The Food & Safety Team budget covers all of the functions of the team and resources are allocated according to the needs of the service. The Food and Safety Team Leader is responsible for the day to day management of the budget. Financial allocations are currently considered sufficient to meet the equipment and training needs of the team.

If and when necessary, the Environmental Health Manager has the flexibility to supplement the Food & Safety resources from elsewhere within the Environmental Health Team budget.

4.2. Staffing Allocation

The Environmental Health Team currently allocate 3.21 FTE to discharging the food safety functions. This FTE is allocated by role as follows:

Role	FTE
Environmental Health Manager	0.20
Food & Safety Team Leader	0.41
Environmental Health Officer- 1	0.42

Role	FTE
Environmental Health Officer- 2	0.43
Environmental Health Officer- 3	0.51
Food & Safety Officer- 1	0.43 Vacant
Food & Safety Officer -2	0.51
Technical Administrator-1	0.20
Technical Administrator-2	0.10
TOTAL	3.21

If necessary (i.e. in the event of an outbreak or major incident) additional resources are available from within the Environmental Protection Team (5.6 FTE) and/ or neighbouring authorities within Kent as part of an informal support network.

An external contractor has been employed to carry out a certain number of food safety inspections while we have a vacant post.

4.2.1. Allocation of staff resources by task

By Task	FTE
Food hygiene inspection	1.86
Food complaints	0.05
Primary & Home authority principle	0.025
Advice to business	0.4
Food Sampling	0.2
FP and ID investigations	0.05
Food Safety incidents	0.05
Liaison with other authorities	0.05
Food Safety Promotion	0.025
Training and Education delivery	0.05
Administration	0.2
Monitoring and review of service	0.1
National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme	0.1
CPD and team consistency training	0.05
Total	3.21

4.2.2. Use of Specialist Contractors

We do not routinely use contractors and do not have an allocated budget for their employment.

However, if and when necessary we may employ suitably qualified and experienced specialist contractors on an ad hoc basis to assist with the delivery of food safety inspections. Contractors are required to demonstrate compliance with the competency framework in advance of their employment.

4.2.3. Operational Efficiency and Accuracy

We recognise the importance of ensuring that our service offers best value to the residents of Sevenoaks and work hard to ensure that the food safety service operates as efficiently as possible.

We have invested in technology and systems to assist us with the delivery of food safety, re-configured processes and procedures to ensure that they utilise the available resources effectively and minimised waste.

4.2.4. Electronic Inspections

Our officers continue to undertake electronic food hygiene inspections, utilising iPads and custom built iAuditor (specialist auditing software) forms.

These electronic inspections ensure that officer notes, comments, recommendations and legal requirements are communicated clearly to Food Business Operators in Portable Document Format (PDF). Photographs and other evidence can be attached to the inspection ensuring that officer reasoning is made more transparent and easily explainable to those not present at time of inspection. As a result, we are receiving fewer appeals against Food Hygiene Ratings.

We have, and continue to develop inspection templates (eg specific templates for assessing home bakers, childminders and pharmacies) and other food safety documents

improving the accuracy, transparency and efficiency of our service. These include standard letters, Voluntary closure documents, Voluntary surrender of food and Certificate of examination of unsaleable food.

4.2.5. Enterprise for Uniform

Introducing Enterprise for Uniform helps us keep track of, prioritise, record and monitor food hygiene inspections. This system has enabled us to undertake a full review of our existing food premises and make sure that databases we hold are accurately updated and cleansed of duplicate entries, unnecessary records and historic input errors.

4.2.6. Process Re-design

We have ensured that whenever possible, administration tasks have been moved from qualified food hygiene inspectors to our technical administrators generating additional capacity. We are working to increase the knowledge and experience of these officers so that, with the support of qualified food safety officers, they are able to respond to basic enquires and requests improving the speed of our responses to customers.

We have worked with our colleagues in Customer Solutions to ensure that the 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQ) (accessed during a customer's initial contact with the Council) are accurate and informative. This has helped to ensure that customers are where necessary signposted to other organisations (such as UKHSA or Kent County Council Trading Standards) and resolve some common enquiries at point of 1st contact without the need for officer involvement.

4.2.7. Website Updates

We continue to utilise our website as a source of information for residents and businesses. We work with our Communications Team to ensure that the content we produce is accurate and user friendly and that it assists our customers and their needs.

We have developed with IT colleagues a more efficient process for Food Hygiene Rating rescore inspection applications. We now have an on-line revisit form which ensures that the food business operator has to provide information at the time of payment regarding improvements that have been made since the programmed inspection rather than this being a separate process.

We do not recreate resources available elsewhere and link to authoritative sources whenever possible such as the FSA website.

4.3. Staff Development

The Council places significant importance on the development and training of staff to ensure that quality services are delivered to our customers.

The Food Standards Agency requires that all persons undertaking any food hygiene and/or food standards functions must undertake a minimum of 10 hours work specific CPD each year. The CIEH requires a minimum of 20 hours work specific CPD each year.

All Officers are required to prove competence via the Competency Framework introduced by the Food Standards Agency. Training will be undertaken through in-house training, formal courses and vocational visits as appropriate. The team undertakes regular training as part of team meetings to ensure that knowledge and interpretation of legislation and guidance is maintained. The team also completes consistency exercises to ensure that food hygiene ratings awarded to businesses are consistent across the team.

Training needs are considered as part of the appraisal process and 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.

Officers may have access to an online training platform which provides training modules and webinars. The service provider was for a number of years the sole contracted

provider of FSA training to local authorities as well as acting in a consultancy capacity to the FSA on the development of Guidance.

5. Quality Assessment

The work of the Food & Safety Team is subject to scrutiny by Members, internal auditors and the Food Standards Agency

All officers delivering food law interventions are required to meet a rigid qualification criterion and demonstrate knowledge and competency across a number of skill sets. The competency framework drives personal and team training and development. It is also used to highlight gaps in the team's knowledge and skills.

All officers participate in annual national consistency exercises developed by the Food Standards Agency to review various scenarios and then to determine the hygiene rating awarded. The team also participates in Kent wide and in-house scenario set exercises.

The following monitoring arrangements are in place to assist in quality assessment:

- inspection audits including associated paperwork
- performance and development reviews
- customer satisfaction questionnaires
- performance monitoring of target response time
- 1:1 meetings with team members
- Team and department meetings
- use of Enterprise in the IDOX Uniform database to improve monitoring of the inspection programme and service requests

In our work programme, we will continue to review and improve our documented food procedures required within the Food Standards Agency's Framework Agreement.

6. Review against the Service Plan

We will carry out a review of our Food Safety service each year. This will be based on performance and resources available over the previous 12 months, feedback from local businesses and the community, observations from Members and the Food and Safety team and advice and guidance issued by the Food Standards Agency.

The FSA are in the process of developing a new performance monitoring system and have removed the use of the Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS). It is likely that new benchmarking categories will be set and we may need to adapt our key performance indicators to reflect these changes once the detail is known.

7. Areas of Improvement

Every effort is being made to maintain a high quality service to the public and to meet and exceed performance targets. We aim to:

- improve the accuracy of the Uniform database
- reduce the number of non-compliant premises
- respond to requests for advice within max 5 working days
- triage all new food business registrations received so that they can be prioritised for inspection as soon as practicable
- be more alert to issues around mislabelling (Trading Standards)
- and food fraud
- continue to raise awareness and provide advice in relation to food allergies and intolerances within the catering industry
- to give renewed emphasis in promoting the healthy eating message
- encourage customers to provide feedback on the service they have received via an emailed customer feedback survey.

8. Contact Officer

Glenys Shorrick

Food & Safety Team Leader

Sevenoaks District Council

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Kent

TN13 1HG

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