

Food Safety Service Delivery Plan 2017/18

INTRODUCTION

This Service Delivery Plan sets out the aims, objectives and main work programmes which the food safety Team will pursue for the current financial year.

The overall objective of the Environmental Health Team is to protect and promote the health, safety and living conditions of residents and those working within East Lindsey.

Our continuing success is due largely to the skill and commitment of the team members - our greatest asset.

The structure of the team, the areas for development and performance measures are set out in Team Service Plan.

1.0 SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Aim and Objectives

To discharge the statutory functions and responsibilities of existing and proposed environmental health legislation by providing sufficient enforcement activity, advice and education in the field of food safety, in an attempt to contribute towards the provision of a safer healthier place to live and work.

The overall aim is to provide high quality, cost effective services.

This plan will identify the priorities within each of this area.

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2.0 General

2.1 Service Availability

The food safety officers are based mainly at Manby, but the Skegness area office is also manned daily. Out of office hours visits to premises and sites are made routinely, where the main operations occur outside normal working hours. The environmental health manager is also available for emergency planning issues and other environmental health demands out of hours.

3.0 Food safety

East Lindsey District Council is committed to ensuring that food and drink intended for human consumption which is produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed within the district is without risk to the health or safety of the consumer and satisfies their consumer rights. To achieve this we will carry out a planned programme of food premises inspections on a prioritised risk assessment basis; respond in a timely manner to food complaints; investigate cases and outbreaks of infectious disease; routinely sample food stuffs and promote food safety by education and any other means.

3.1 Demands on the Food Service

Premises Profile - Food business are scored after each inspection in line with guidance given in the Food Safety Act Code of Practice 9. These scores categorise the businesses into risk bands. Band "A" being the highest risk.

Risk Categories, showing numbers of premises in each band as at April 1st 2017.

A	7
B	80
C	379
D	984
E	706
Unrated	57
Total:	2213

3.2 Food Premises Inspections

We have in place a proactive inspection programme for food premises. We aim to achieve 100% of high risk premises (A or B rated) and no less than 80% of the lower risk premises that are planned to be inspected. Due to the seasonal nature of many premises, for a significant number of food businesses we cannot achieve 100% of all inspections. Most seasonal premises require an 18 month intervention frequency. This can be difficult to achieve when they are only open for less than half of the year. Because of the short operating time we have accepted that a two year inspection target for these premises is deemed to comply with the Code of Practice, but we strive to visit these premises annually.

A documented procedure for the inspection of food premises is in place.

Only officers qualified and experienced in accordance with the Food Safety Act 1990 Code of Practice shall be authorised to carry out food safety inspections. A documented policy for the appointment and authorisation of officers is in place.

Premises Profile

Manufacturers/Packers	58
Distributors	48
Retailers	703
Restaurants/Caterers	1404
Total	2213

Projected visits generated in accordance with FSA Codes of Practice hazard ratings indicate the following inspections.

<u>Risk Category</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Annual Visits</u>
A	6 months	7	14

B	12 months	80	80
C	18 months	379	284
D	2 years	984	362
E	3 years	706	22
Unrated		57	57
New premises		300	300
		Total	1106
		Monthly average	92

Revisits to check on required works are scheduled in accordance with the document "Procedures Manual - Programmed Food Hygiene Inspections". On the basis of previous experience the number of revisits projected for the year 2017/2018 is 250. In addition 50 annual survey or sampling visits are projected during the year.

3.21 Alternative Enforcement Strategy for low risk premises

To allow us to focus our resources more effectively upon the higher risk premises we have developed an alternative enforcement strategy for low risk premises. For food premises rated as category E we now send a questionnaire to the proprietor to assess if a visit is necessary. Returned questionnaires are assessed and if no changes have taken place and the premises are still low risk, they are scanned and stored against the premises and the next intervention date is moved back two years.

3.22 Primary Authority Principle

All Local Authorities are encouraged to adopt the Primary Authority Principle and act within the appropriate Guidelines.

All officers are now following the Primary Authority Principle, which requires them to check the national data base prior to all inspections.

No Formal Primary Authority Agreements exist between the Council and the local businesses. However this authority does acts informally as originating authority for several food businesses

These partnership arrangements have been beneficial to the businesses and have assisted the District Council to improve consistency of operations and practices throughout their business which contribute to food safety locally, and nationally.

3.3 Food Complaints about Premises and Foodstuff

We endeavour to ensure that all relevant food complaints are appropriately investigated and dealt with having regard to the Food Safety Act 1990 and the various Codes of Practice, together with guidance issued by the Food Standards Agency .

Typically we receive approximately 800 food related service requests each year. Officers are required to operate in accordance with the Departments Food Complaint procedure which includes a response time of 5 working days for most complaints.

Depending on the complexity of the food complaint, the investigation process will vary considerably.

Referrals to us of foodstuff complaints can be very complex and often involve detailed inspection and investigation of a food manufacturing plant, taking up to two days to complete the technical and administrative process.

Other foodstuff complaints received and investigated by this office as the investigating authority will often not require a site visit but nevertheless such investigations are often lengthy and time consuming.

Food Hazard Warnings received from the Food Standards Agency are considered to fall within this service request category. They are defined in the Food Safety Act Code of Practice, which sets out the actions local authorities are expected to take. We will always endeavour to respond with due haste and in line with the Code of Practice. These may require a rapid response which may involve many or all of the food safety team. The response will take priority over routine work.

The procedure for dealing with such incidents is set out in the procedure manual. Hazard warnings received in the previous year were:

Allergy alerts	55
Action alerts	3
Product Recall Information Notices	73
Total	131

3.4 Maintaining a food premises register

We have a legal duty to maintain a register of all relevant commercial food businesses. Likewise, all food business operators have a duty to register with their Local Authority. The Environmental Health data base is used to hold the food premise registration details as these are also used to generate the necessary inspections.

We typically receive 300 new food premise registrations per year, all of these are entered onto the data base and allocated to an officer to visit. We cannot refuse registrations, but feel that it is important to visit, even if it is simply an owner change, because there are often issues around compliance that need to be addressed.

3.5 Approval of food manufacturers

Regulations made under EU Directives require that premises dealing with high risk food stuffs such as:

- Meat and Meat Products
- Fish and Fish Products
- Dairy Products
- Egg Products

that are sold to other than the final consumer must be approved by the Food Authority.

The approval process is complex and involves close involvement with the business prior to opening, if it is a new business, a very detailed audit must take place before the final approval number can be issued and food can be released for human consumption.

A unique premises approval number is issued to each premises which enables food to be distributed throughout the EU without further restriction.

Major refurbishment and extensions to production facilities which are already approved must go through a similar process before launching product from the altered premises.

Food businesses whose activities alter to bring them within the scope of approval, go through the same process. The detailed procedure is in the 'Food safety procedure manual'.

The high risk nature of these businesses will generally result in a more frequent inspection period. We will continue to ensure close links with our approved premises, this allows us to be able to answer queries from other Local Authorities, should they arise.

3.6 Food Poisoning and Infectious Disease Control

We will respond with appropriate haste to all notifications of food poisoning and infectious diseases, especially if we suspect that there may be an outbreak or if the notification concerns E.coli 0157 or any other potential fatal infectious disease.

Each year we receive approximately 250 infectious disease notifications. A protocol to guide the investigation of notifications of food poisoning and infectious disease has been developed in association with the Public Health England.

Liaison takes place with: GP's, Public Health England, Other LA's, Food Businesses and the Food Standards Agency depending upon the circumstances of each case.

It is difficult to pre-plan the availability of staffing resources for this activity as individual notifications and outbreaks cannot be predicted and are often sporadic.

When incidents occur it may be necessary for several members of the team to become involved. The investigation must take priority and other work is rescheduled. This can create problems in other areas of work activity

Infectious Diseases do not respect Council boundaries, therefore in addition to the common Lincolnshire protocol, close co-operation exists between other Local Authorities and external agencies. To ensure the co-operation exists, Countywide exercises take place.

3.7 Monitoring all private water supplies

Background

There are parts of East Lindsey that do not receive a mains water supply. Around 250 properties rely on a 'private' supply, usually via a well or bore hole.

For many years, the environmental health team has monitored the water quality from these private supplies. Local Authorities have a statutory duty to carry out a 'risk based' approach to assessing water supplies

Categories of supply

The types of private water supply are subdivided into three categories:

1. **Large supplies and supplies to commercial premises.** The definition of a 'large' supply is one that produces more than 10 cubic metres per day. These are subject to more onerous and frequent checks (at least annually) depending upon the volume of water extracted, and analysed for up to 53 parameters.
2. **Other private supplies.** These supply less than 10 cubic metres of water per day to more than one residential dwelling and are subject to a reduced level of testing based on risk assessment and needing testing of at least every 5 years.
3. **Supplies to single domestic dwellings.** There is no duty placed upon Local Authorities to routinely monitor the supplies to individual domestic premises unless requested to do so by the owner or occupier. Upon such a request, a similar arrangement to 2 above will apply.

The Legislation also introduced the concept of a private distribution network. Whenever a mains water supply undergoes further distribution, by someone other than by Anglian Water, then it must now be classed as a private supply. This will have major implications for ELDC as it could include premises such as caravan sites, chalet parks, shopping centres, RAF camps and certain farms. These will all need to be assessed and sampled in accordance with the legislation.

There are currently in East Lindsey:

- 9 Large supplies or supplies to commercial premises
- 61 'Other' private supplies
- 179 single domestic supplies.
- Up to 600 private distribution networks.

We are currently in the process of surveying the district to improve our records of which premises are on a private supply.

Where appropriate officer time spent carrying out risk assessments, investigations, sampling etc is re charged at the average cost centre rate. The laboratory costs would be recharged plus an administration fee.

3.8 Food and water Sampling

We aim to carry out sampling of foods and water to satisfy the requirements of Codes of Practice and Statutes and to monitor standards in the District.

A Food Sampling Programme is developed each year by a subgroup of the Lincolnshire Food Liaison Group. The plan incorporates other programmes agreed

regionally or nationally by Public Health England and the Food Standards Agency. Other foods are included which are identified locally as worthy of inclusion

We are committed to following the agreed sampling programme. Food sampling is also carried out in the following circumstances:

- Food and/or water sampling at approved food premises.
- Inspection samples – when judged necessary by the Inspecting Officer.
- Food poisoning investigations – samples of food or water may be taken as part of any investigation.
- Complaint samples – taken as part of a complaint investigation.
- Special investigations – for example, at the request of the Food Standards Agency.

Samples are submitted for microbiological examination and / or chemical analysis. Microbiological examinations are undertaken by the Public Health England at their laboratory in York; chemical analysis and similar work is undertaken by the Public Analyst

We also have in place regular monitoring of water samples taken from privately run swimming pools and spa pools to ensure that they are safe for public use. We will also continue to work closely with our colleagues in the Leisure team to facilitate the collection of monitoring samples from our own swimming pools.

3.9 Food Safety Promotion

We recognise the importance of Food Safety Promotion and aim to participate in several activities this year to promote food safety. These include attendance at Caterex in Skegness, and involvement with National food safety week and the Christmas food poisoning campaign. In addition we are keen to hold more formal food hygiene training events. It is envisaged that this year we will organise and run at least two events for business to promote key issues. We also will be running qualification training in food safety at level 2 and above if there is the demand.

East Lindsey is committed to supporting the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. All of our food businesses have now been rated and this can be viewed on the Food Standards Agency website.

In addition to the advice given during routine inspections approximately 200 requests for advice at proposed new businesses or businesses proposing significant alterations and requiring a site meeting will be dealt with during the year.

4.0 Charging for services

Due to continued pressure on finances it was agreed that charging certain food safety services would be introduced this year. The first area to which charging was to be applied was for advice to new businesses. This was to be implemented from May 2017. Subject to the success of this, it is envisaged that charging for food hygiene rating re scoring would be brought in later in the year.