

FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2021-22
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
SURREY HEATH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Section 1 – Service Aims and Objectives

1.0 Aims and Objectives

1.1 The aim of the food safety service is to help ensure that food and drink intended for human consumption, which is produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed within the Borough is without risk to the health or safety of the consumer. This will be met through the following objectives: appropriate and proportionate enforcement of food safety legislation, carrying out inspection of food and food premises, sampling and analysis of foodstuffs, the investigation of complaints regarding food and food premises, including cases of food poisoning, and the provision of advice to businesses and the public on legislative requirements and good food hygiene practice.

2.0 Links to Corporate objectives and plans

2.1 The Food Safety Service Plan sets out how the Council will deliver the service in accordance with the national priorities and standards required by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The food safety service contributes to the Corporate priorities set out in the Council's Annual Plan 2021/22 and the Health and Quality of Life, Economy and Efficiency themes contained in the draft Five Year Strategy. The plan provides information about the service, the means by which it is provided and the means for monitoring and reviewing the service against set standards, including a review of performance in 2020/21.

2.2 The Council has the following Corporate Success Measure in the Annual Plan relevant to food safety:

- The percentage of food premises achieving a Food Hygiene Rating 3 or above (i.e. Satisfactory, Good or Very Good)

3.0 Portfolio Holder Performance Meetings

3.1 The Environmental Health and Licensing Manager (EHLM) and the Environment and Health Portfolio Holder have the opportunity to discuss progress with implementing the service plan at monthly meetings.

4.0 Licensing Committee

4.1 The EHLM reports annually to the Licensing Committee on the food safety activities that have taken place over the last year and on the plans for the forthcoming year.

5.0 Annual Appraisals and Monthly one-to-one meetings

5.1 Targets from the Annual Plan are included as objectives in individual officer annual appraisals and monitored throughout the year in one-to-one meetings.

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6.0 Equality Scheme

- 6.1** The Council's Equality Strategy 2021-23 aims to ensure that equality is integrated into service delivery and the Strategy has been taken into account in the drafting of this plan.

Section 2 – Background

7.0 Profile of the Borough

- 7.1** Surrey Heath covers 95.05 square kilometres in North West Surrey and has a population of 88,874 (Office of National Statistics 2018).

8.0 Organisational Structure

- 8.1** The food safety service is delivered by the Food and Safety Team within Environmental Health which is part of Environment and Community Services. The team is led by the Senior Environmental Health Officer (Food and Safety) who holds the required specialist responsibility for food safety. The Team leader reports to the EHLM. Specialist services for food examination are provided by Public Health England (PHE) and Hampshire Scientific Services.

9.0 Scope of Food Service

- 9.1** To fulfil statutory obligations on the Council in relation to food safety through:

- The inspection of food premises.
- The operation of the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme
- The investigation of complaints relating to food items, premises or food related illness, and food alerts.
- The sampling of foodstuffs and application of imported food controls.
- Enforcement of food safety legislation.
- The promotion of high standards of food safety through advisory activities
- The gathering and processing of information including the completion of official returns.

- 9.2** The Surrey and Buckinghamshire Trading Standard Service is responsible for Food Standards enforcement and Food Hygiene for primary production e.g. farms. They also lead in enforcing the food information regulations (2014 and 2019) in relation to allergens, although the Council has an advisory role. Formal liaison takes place at the quarterly meetings of the Surrey Food Liaison Group, or on an ad hoc basis as required.

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10.0 Demands on the Food service

- 10.1** The food safety service is part of the wider Environmental Health and Licensing Team, which also deliver infection control (including Covid-19), health and safety at work and public events, environmental control and a range of licensing activities. The food safety team are located at Surrey Heath House, Knoll Road, Camberley, GU15 3HD and can be accessed via the Council's Contact Centre during normal office hours and individual officers can be contacted by direct dial or email. The public can also e-mail general food related service enquiries to environmental.health@surreyheath.gov.uk and aspects of the service can be accessed via the Council's website.
- 10.2** Most food safety activities are conducted during office hours, however officers regularly carry out routine inspections and sampling in the evening. The service can be accessed in an emergency out of hours via the Council's out of hours service e.g. in case of a food poisoning outbreak.
- 10.3** In Surrey Heath, as of the 1st October 2021, there are 706 food businesses subject to inspection. The food hygiene category profile of the premises in the Borough is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1 - Food Hygiene Category of Premises in the Borough

Food Hygiene Category	Total
Primary producer	1
Distributors/Wholesalers	20
Importers/Exporters	2
Manufacturers/Packers	18
Restaurants/Café/Canteen	185
Take Away	65
Other caterers	164
Caring establishment	80
School	40
Retailers	111
Mobile Food Unit	20
Total	706

- 10.4** There are specific hygiene rules and prior approval requirements for businesses that conduct certain processes involving foods of animal origin. There are currently no such approved premises operating in the Borough.
- 10.5** The service responds to requests for advice and guidance from persons who are interested in starting new food businesses, including new food business operators taking over existing food businesses.

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11.0 Enforcement Policy

11.1 All formal and informal enforcement actions taken against food businesses are in accordance with the Corporate Enforcement Policy.

Section 3 – Service Delivery

The service is delivered in accordance with the FSA Food Law Code of Practice 2021 (FLCOP), which gives instructions to local authorities on enforcing food law and the Covid-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan (2021), which gives guidance on the delivery of official food controls in the period 1 July 2021 to 2023/24. The aim of the Recovery Plan is to ensure that during the period of recovery from the disruption to the delivery of the food safety service from the impact of Covid-19 that local authority resources are targeted where they add greatest value in providing safeguards for public health and consumer protection in relation to food.

12.0 Food Premises Interventions

12.1 The food premises inspection programme is based on the priority risk rating and inspection frequencies set out in the FLCOP ensuring highest risk premises are inspected more frequently than lower risk premises. The inspection frequency profile of Surrey Heath food businesses as at 1st October 2021 is at Table 2 below:

Table 2 – Risk Profile of Food Businesses as at 1st October 2021

Risk Category	Frequency of Inspection	Total
A	Every 6 months	0
B	Once a year	18
C	Every 18 months	129
D	Every 2 years	269
E	Alternative enforcement every 3 years – visit or self-assessment questionnaire	276

12.2 Most low risk E rated businesses for example newsagents, chemists, childminders, home bakers are sent a self-assessment questionnaire when they are due for an intervention. The returned questionnaires are reviewed, then risk assessed by officers and followed up by an intervention if necessary.

12.3 The food inspections due in 2021/22 are listed in Table 3 below.

Table 3- Food Inspections Due in 2021/2022

Risk Category	Number of Inspections due
A	0
B	9
C	50
D	127
E	61
Total	247

12.5 Revisits are also conducted to non-compliant premises and new businesses that register during the year will require inspection. The Council will aim to carry out 100% of all inspections due within 28 days of the due date and to inspect all newly registered food businesses within 28 days of registering.

12.6 Food Hygiene Ratings are issued to those within the scope of the national Food Hygiene Rating scheme in accordance with the FSA 'Brand Standard' for the scheme. Re-rating inspections are carried out where businesses with a 0-4 rating apply for a re-inspection having carried out the required improvements. There is a £155.00 cost recovery charge to the business for a re-rating application. Whilst it is currently still not mandatory for businesses to display their rating window stickers, the service will follow up any reports of inaccurate ratings being displayed or advertised and where necessary refer the case to Trading Standards colleagues for enforcement action.

12.7 In 2020/21 the team completed 212 food safety interventions made up of programmed food hygiene inspections/audits/revisits, sampling and advisory visits. 136 new food business registrations were received and 104 warning notices and letters were issued to businesses and 1 Hygiene Improvement Notice was served. 7 applications for a food hygiene re-rating re-inspection were received from businesses and in all but 1 case, the business achieved an improved food hygiene rating.

13.0 Food Complaints

13.1 The service will investigate all complaints about food or a food premises.

13.2 In 2020/21, 57 complaints were received from the public. Of these 36 related to food and 21 related to hygiene in premises.

14.0 Primary Authority Partnership Scheme

14.1 The Council participates in the national Primary Authority Partnership Scheme (PAPS). PAPS entitles businesses or organisations which operate across authority boundaries to ask for a Partnership with a LA. The businesses will work closely with their partner LA to ensure they

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are complying with food safety legislation and the LA can charge the business for their time on a cost recovery basis. The aim of PAPS is to lead to greater compliance by the business and also greater consistency and co-ordination of regulatory enforcement by LAs.

- 14.2** All officers have access to the Primary Authority Register and check the database for PAPS and any Inspection Plans that must be followed prior to carrying out an inspection or investigation.
- 14.3** The Council is Primary Authority for food hygiene matters for Krispy Kreme, Exclusive Hotels (who own Pennyhill Park Hotel), Manning Impex (a food importer), Kerry Foods, (a large multi-national food manufacturer), Huel (nutritional shakes manufacturer) and the Health Food Manufacturers Association (HFMA). Activity includes meetings with representatives and providing advice and assistance to other LAs who have queries following inspections and when investigating food complaints.
- 14.4** Approximately 15 days per year is currently spent on this activity and it is anticipated that there will be similar demand in 2021/22.

15.0 Advice to Business

- 15.1** The service provides free advice to potential and existing food business operators via advisory visits or information on the website and telephone/email advice. In 2020/21 the service responded to 64 food enquiries. This included food safety service requests resulting from the UK leaving the EU in terms of food import/export provisions.
- 15.2** Advice is also made available to businesses via the Council's Economic Development team, Collectively Camberley and the service has links to the licensed trade via the Council's Licensing officers and local Pub Watch schemes.

16.0 Food Inspection and Sampling

- 16.1** The service takes part in routine food sampling and environmental swabbing of food premises based on local intelligence and as part of county and national sampling programmes. Sampling and swabbing also takes place during food complaint and outbreak investigations. Samples for examination are submitted to the Public Health England (PHE) laboratory in Porton Down which holds the necessary UKAS accreditation for microbiological examination of food samples. The service has a sampling credit allocation and a courier service for delivering samples to the laboratory is included.
- 16.2** During 2020/21 due to Covid-19 sampling and environmental swabbing programmes were suspended. In 2021/22 sampling programmes have been reinstated and the service will participate in these programmes. The service has sampling credit allocation of £3386 for the year.

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16.4 Public Analyst food examination services are provided by Hampshire Scientific Services located at Portsmouth. A courier service will continue to be employed to take these samples to the laboratory as and when required.

17.0 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Diseases

17.1 The service works in partnership with PHE to investigate cases of food poisoning and related illnesses. Our aim is to try to locate the source and ensure infection is contained.

17.2 On receipt of a notification of a food poisoning case, a risk-based approach is adopted when carrying out investigations to decide whether further information is required. Officers aim to identify cases involving high-risk groups or occupations such as pre-school children or food handlers. Relevant statutory powers are used, where necessary, to exclude those infected from attending pre-school settings or work, to prevent the spread of the disease within the community. In 2020/21 the Council was notified of 75 cases of food related infectious disease.

17.3 Officers attend the Surrey Health Protection Group which meets three times a year and includes representatives from the other Surrey LAs, PHE and water utilities, to share best practice and discuss cases of interest and regional investigations.

18.0 Food Safety Incidents

18.1 The service has a Food Safety Incident procedure in respect of the appropriate response to product recall/withdrawal notices and food alerts from the FSA.

18.2 The FSA regularly issue electronic Food Alerts to LAs specifying required actions regarding food safety concerns regarding a particular food product. Actions required range from circulating to officers for information to visiting premises and removing products from sale.

18.3 In 2020/21 there were 124 reported incidents by the FSA.

19.0 Liaison with Other Organisations

19.1 The service has various liaison arrangements in place to help ensure consistency of enforcement to share best practice and coordinate activity in Surrey, including representation on the following groups: The Surrey Food Liaison Group (SFLG), the Surrey Environmental Health Managers Group (SEHMG) and the Surrey Health Protection Group

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19.2 The SFLG meets quarterly and in addition to representation from the 11 Surrey LAs there is representation from Trading Standards, the PHE sampling laboratory, the FSA and SEHMG.

Other liaison arrangements include:

- Liaison with other Council Services including Licensing, Economic Development Private Sector Housing (regarding housing above food premises), Planning and Building Control
- Contact with the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control and Director of Public Health
- Liaison and joint visits with the Fire Safety Officer from Surrey Fire and Rescue
- Liaison as necessary with the Approvals team at FSA and the egg marketing and plant and seed inspectorate (Animal and Plant Health Agency)
- Liaison and referrals from the UK Border Agency on immigration
- Access to national online reference and professional networking resources e.g. Knowledge Hub, EHCNet
- Notification from water utility companies when a commercial water supply is to be disconnected at a business within the Borough.

20.0 Food Safety Promotion

20.1 Non-statutory food safety promotion is limited, but food safety advice for the public and businesses is available on the website together with relevant information on the FSA national food safety campaigns.

20.2 Food businesses with a 5 rating are given the opportunity to publicise their rating via the Council's social media channels.

Section 4 – Resources

21.0 Financial Allocation 2021/22

21.1 The allocated budget for the food safety and health and safety services, including salaries, support services, equipment, etc. is £295,448.

21.2 Staffing Allocation

21.3 Currently there are 5 officers authorised and competent in food safety. The time allocated to food safety equates to a total of 2.20 FTE officer time and there is an additional 0.2 FTE administrative support. The Council's Contact Centre receives initial telephone calls, emails and other correspondence for the service.

21.4 All officers are authorised to undertake all aspects of the food safety service.

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21.5 The EHLM in conjunction with the Senior EHO is responsible for assessing competency and recommending levels of authorisation to the service Director in line with the Authorisation Policy.

22.0 Staff Development Plan

22.1 The Council's staff appraisal scheme highlights the specific development and training needs of each officer and the EHLM monitors to ensure that these needs are identified and met by the scheme.

22.2 The training and development of staff is achieved through attending courses, on-line training, information updates in team meetings and staff mentoring. The Senior EHO maintains a training log for all officers and ensures that they achieve the 10 hours a year Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in food safety required by the FSA to maintain food officer competency.

22.3 EHOs are encouraged to be Members of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), in order to further demonstrate competence and professional accreditation. It is a membership requirement that officers achieve a total of 20 hours Environmental Health related CPD (30 hours for Chartered Members) and where possible development opportunities will be provided to facilitate this.

22.4 Corporate training is also provided for general subjects such as IT, Safeguarding, health and safety, and customer service skills.

22.5 The Council subscribes to the Regulatory Information and Management System (RIAMS). This provides online access to relevant reference material which is automatically updated and version controlled so that officers have access to the most up to date information and legal references.

Section 5 – Quality Assessment

23.0 Quality Assessment

23.1 The Food Safety Quality Monitoring Policy details the following mechanisms which are in place to ensure that a quality service is delivered in accordance with FSA and Council requirements:

- Adherence to Authorisation Policy
- Regular one to one and team discussion on performance against the inspection programme and current case load.
- Appraisal system to discuss competency and performance
- Accompanied monitoring inspections with each food officer by SEHO
- Statistical performance monitoring e.g. inspection programme; complaint numbers
- Quarterly reporting on Corporate Success Measures

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- Completion of annual FSA Statutory Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS) return.
- Peer review benchmarking activities and sharing good practice via the Surrey Food Liaison Group and Surrey EH Manager's Group
- Participation in FSA national consistency exercises
- Internal and external audits (e.g. Internal Audit and FSA)
- Customer Complaints Procedure
- Customer satisfaction surveys

23.2 The outcome of monitoring activities is fed back to staff to ensure that any identified development needs are addressed.

Section 6 – Review

24.0 Review of Performance 2020/21 and Impact of Covid-19

24.1 In addition to the ongoing performance monitoring of the service, performance is reviewed on an annual basis by the service Director and the Licensing Committee.

24.2 In 2020/21 in light of the competing demands on LAs from enforcement of Covid-19 business controls and containment and outbreak control work, the FSA issued instructions to LAs on their priority food safety work. This focused interventions on those premises and incidents that present the greatest food safety risk and the food service work programme was aligned to these revised priorities.

24.3 The Team were able to deliver the FSA priority work identified for 2020/21, and despite the challenges presented by Covid-19, in terms of premises closure during lockdown, diverted resources and ensuring officer safety, were able to carry out 212 food premises visits. In some instances remote interventions (i.e. telephone contact, electronic review of documentation/video/ photographs) took place prior to physical onsite visits to enable them to be targeted and reduced in length.

24.4 As at 31st March 2021 96.6% of food businesses received a food hygiene rating of 3 (Satisfactory), 4 (Good) or 5 (Very Good) against the Corporate Annual Plan target of achieving 95% of business with a rating of 3 or better.

24.5 The Council continued to offer food safety advice to businesses including advice on safely reopening/operating food businesses after lockdown with regard to food safety issues such as effective cleaning, personal hygiene, water supply safety and pest control, in addition to Covid-19 controls.

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24.6 The food sampling programme was suspended in light of the need for work prioritisation, access to food businesses and capacity at the PHE laboratory.

24.7 Work continued on implementing the IDOX Uniform system to effectively manage the delivery of the food safety service, including the necessary IDOX consultancy time and officer training.

Section 7 - Service Priorities 2021/2022

25.0 In 2021/22 the food safety service is being delivered in accordance with the priorities identified in the new FSA Recovery Plan (2021) which sets out guidance and advice that all LAs must have regard to when delivering official food controls in the period 1 July 2021 to 2023/24.

The Recovery plan is intended to ensure that during the period of recovery from the impact of Covid-19, that resources are targeted where they add the greatest value in providing safeguards for public health and consumer protection and safeguard the credibility of the FHRS. It provides a framework for realigning the delivery of food safety services with the FLCOP in relation to the following priority areas;

- new food establishments and
- high risk and/or non-compliant businesses while providing flexibility for lower risk establishments
- delivery of official controls where prescribed in specific legislation
- official controls recommended by FSA guidance supporting trade and enabling export,
- reactive work including enforcement in case of non-compliance, managing food incidents/hazards and investigating managing complaints,
- sampling;
- ongoing proactive surveillance.

25.1 The Food and Safety Team work programme for 2021/22 sets a target to have carried out all outstanding inspections from 2020/21 and at least 85% of inspections due in 2021/22 by the end of March 2022. It is the intention to have the inspection programme fully aligned again with the FLCOP by the end of March 2023 in accordance with the FSA instruction to LAs. The use of the services of a contractor to assist with the 2021/22 inspection programme is planned.

25.2 The service will continue to work with businesses to meet the corporate indicator target of 95% of food premises achieving a Food Hygiene Rating 3 or above (i.e. Satisfactory, Good or Very Good).