

Appendix A

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Public Health and Protection

**Annual Review of the Food Safety Service Delivery
Plan 2017/18**

Background

In accordance with the Service Plan a review has been carried out to identify any variances from the preceding year.

Our Improvement plan for 2017/18 as published in the food safety service plan was as follows:

1. Undertake continual review and revision of all existing food policies and amend as necessary to reflect current good practice and working methods, especially with reference to new direction from the Food Standards Agency as part of the delivery of Regulating Our Future over the next 3 years.
2. Continue to develop the use of social media in delivering food safety messages.
3. Start to deliver Eat Out Eat Well initially in Council operated and/or owned facilities within the borough.
4. Update the food safety content of the Council's website
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of the food business seminar targeted at poorly performing food businesses.
6. Review the delivery of the level 2 and 3 training courses to ensure the course meets the requirements of the Royal Society of Public Health following our change of accredited providers.
7. Review the training options currently provided to food businesses and explore the possibilities of alternative models.

Summary

There were no significant variances from the plan.

The service has prioritised the highest risk food businesses and has completed all category A and B inspections. All of the category A premises have been re-rated as a result of successful intervention to reduce to risk to consumers. However, whilst a number of low risk businesses such as newsagents, have been inspected, we have not completed all of them within the year.

It has been a busy year within Environmental Health with demands on the food officers from other work streams rather than being a particularly challenging year directly with food cases. It has impacted upon the team having one food competent officer on maternity leave for the year. However, although we found a suitable contractor to assist us in completing food inspections, we were unable to appoint them due to the new rules relating to IR35.

Improvement Plan 2017/18

1. The service has purchased RIAMS, a Regulatory Information and Management System to aid with the development of policies and procedures. We have continued to attend Herts & Beds Food Group and have attended an FSA event to keep up to date with changes to food regulation through Regulating Our Future (RoF).

2. We have used our twitter account throughout the year to share messages regarding our service including food hygiene.
3. The delivery of Eat Out Eat Well was delayed due to greater involvement from the County Council Public Health team with whom we are working in partnership to hopefully enable a greater uptake of the scheme across the County in the future.
4. We have reviewed the content of the food related pages of the Council's website, some are now being updated prior to a whole website update.
5. Evaluation of the food business seminar identified that the businesses that attended have (with the exception of one business) improved their food hygiene rating achieving '3' Satisfactory or above. This project was nominated for a Municipal Journal award. The apparent success of this seminar has prompted the decision to schedule a further two seminars this year 2018/19.
6. The food hygiene training courses have been reviewed and updated throughout the year to ensure we continue to meet the requirements of the accredited body (Royal Society for Public Health) but also to reflect feedback from our trainers and customers.
7. A review was carried out and we have added a level 2 nutrition qualification to meet the needs of Eat Out Eat Well.

Officer Training

During 2017/2018 all food authorised officers involved in food safety enforcement undertook the mandatory 10 hours of food related Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as required by the Food Law Code of Practice (England).

We have continued to delivery regular cascade training sessions and maintained regular meetings of the food officers to share learning and good practice.

Training courses attended by officers over the last year include:

- FHRS FSA National Consistency Exercise
- Legal Update training – food enforcement notices
- HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) (Funded by The European Commission)
- Sous Vide Training
- Inter authority consistency exercise
- Herts & Beds Food Training Workshop

Food Business Training

The service has continued to provide low cost food training to local residents and businesses. This is provided by food officers as part of their working day. Following a review in 2016/17 at the costs associated with providing this training we only deliver a course where we have sufficient attendees booked on. Pass rates for these

courses remain extremely high though we have noted a 1% reduction which we will continue to monitor.

Type of Food Training	Numbers of Food Handlers Trained 2014/15	Numbers of Food Handlers Trained 2015/16	Numbers of Food Handlers Trained in 2016/17	Numbers of Food Handlers Trained in 2017/18
Level 2 Food Safety	84	141	53	54
Level 3 Food Safety	21	29	17	23

Primary Authority Partnership

We recognise and acknowledge that Primary Authority partnerships provide learning and development for our team as well as benefits to the company. Primary Authority partnerships have been broadened in the last year and they will play an important role in the Food Standards Agency’s Regulating Our Future plans for re-designing the regulatory controls for food.

The Primary Authority agreement with Ocado continues to be successful. One day per month is fully funded by Ocado which enables a food officer to provide advice on changes in legislation, guidance and food alerts. Welwyn Hatfield also provides the first point of contact for other local authorities across the country if they have concerns with food supplied to Ocado customers.

Ocado has continued to grow and expand its food operation within England. Since the Primary Authority partnership was originally agreed with just one distribution warehouse operational in Hatfield, the company now has four food warehouses, which all operate with varying technology. We have noted an increase in the amount of work this partnership has generated and this will remain under review. The Head of Food Technology post holder at Ocado has recently changed and we look forward to both reviewing and moving the partnership forward in 2018/19 with our new contact.

A second primary authority partnership with Retail Concessions was established last year. This is a co-ordinated partnership. Retail Concessions act as agents at hundreds of sites across the UK providing high quality food concessions. Work to develop their existing food safety management systems has slowly progressed over the year. In addition we will support them as the first point of contact for local authorities across the country if they have food safety concerns about a food concession operating on one of the sites contracted by Retail Concessions.

Food Sampling

Food sampling is undertaken formally in response to food poisoning outbreaks but also as a routine intervention within the delivery of our food safety service.

During the last year we participated in both national and local sampling programmes and took a number of samples in relation to complaints about food businesses.

During 2017/18 we nearly doubled the quantity of microbiological samples taken from food businesses, taking 110 samples. We continue to use sampling as an alternative intervention to inform our intelligence about food businesses. All microbiological samples are tested using our annual allocation of credits at the public health laboratory.

Inspection completed 2017/18

In 2017-2018, 314 food businesses have been risk rated following routine food hygiene inspection, this is a decrease in the number of inspections from the previous year (377). This is not unexpected given the loss of a food competent officer for the year (through maternity leave), it is unfortunate that we were unable to recruit a contractor and we are now advertising for more casual food competent officers to address this in the future. Given the pressures on staff resources we have prioritised the inspection of high risk food businesses (categories A and B premises), all of these have been inspected within the required timescales.

Of the category C inspections, which are lower risk, we currently have approximately 25 outstanding from 2017/18. These are scheduled to be completed before the end of the June.

There remains a small percentage of our food businesses who struggle to meet satisfactory standards of compliance or choose not to comply; this has resulted in formal enforcement action. This year improvement notices served has reduced significantly down to 7 notices, 1 emergency prohibition notice and 1 simple caution has been issued. Taking enforcement action is resource intensive but proportionate to the risk presented to public health.

Other Food Interventions

In 2017-2018 the authority received 101 requests for new business registration. The majority of new registrations are low risk in terms of food safety. Those businesses that are identified as high risk due to the food handled or cooking methods are prioritised for inspection. New businesses place a considerably additional draw upon our resources; best practice in addressing this demand for service will be discussed

through Herts & Beds Food Group to ensure a consistent approach is maintained with our neighbouring authorities.

In addition to the new businesses officers responded to 104 complaints about food businesses (40 during 2016/17). This is a significant increase but does include complaints relating to our Primary Authority partnerships.

Written warnings and enforcement notices served

Type of enforcement action	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Letters/written warning	122	182	166	156
Hygiene improvement notice	16	56	41	7
Hygiene Prohibition notice	0	0	0	1

Food Hygiene Simple Caution

On 19th January 2018 Grill Kebabish Ltd trading as Kebabish at 40 The Common, Hatfield, admitted to 10 food hygiene offences for which they consented to receiving a caution for.

A simple caution is an alternative to prosecution and may only be used where there is no previous prosecution history. The caution remains relevant for 5 years and may be referred to during any subsequent court proceedings where the company is found guilty of any related offence.

The offences related to conditions found during a routine food hygiene inspection in February 2017 that also resulted in the business agreeing to voluntary closure for 4 days. The offences included having no food safety management system, failure to comply with an improvement notice, poor temperature control, inadequate standards of cleaning, poor structural conditions including floors, walls and ceilings, poor standards of personal hygiene of food handlers and inadequate space/poor layout to enable hygienic conditions.

During the investigation of this case the business was sold and has subsequently ceased trading.

Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease

During 2017/18 we were notified of 54 residents suffering from food related infectious disease. These notifications were mostly consumers reporting directly to us rather than positive confirmations from Public Health England.

Unconfirmed cases are very difficult to investigate but each case is risk assessed and we have increasingly undertaken sampling to address consumer concerns.

Where confirmed food poisoning can be related to a specific food business investigations are undertaken to identify improvements required in the structure

and/or practices employed to prevent a re-occurrence. We have not been involved in any food poisoning outbreaks this year.

FSA Board Member Visit

In November we were visited by Stuart Reid a new board member of the Food Standards Agency. Stuart has local connections being the Principal of The Royal Veterinary College. During his visit Stuart accompanied an Environmental Health Officer in undertaking a routine food hygiene inspection and we had discussions around the role of Environmental Health in food safety, along with the opportunity to share some of our successful interventions.

Conclusion

It has been a stable year for food interventions with less formal interventions but still applying these as and when necessary to ensure public safety.

Inspection numbers were less than the previous year but this is directly related to the absence of a food competent officer for the duration of the year alongside our inability to obtain a food contractor. Inspections undertaken have been focussed on risk and time has been spent with the highest risk businesses bringing all Category A businesses to a lower risk category within the year.

The food businesses that attended the seminar delivered in March 2017 were monitored and achieved significant improvement in their food hygiene ratings through the year. All but one of the businesses that attended, that are still trading, has now achieved a rating of '3' Satisfactory or above which was our overarching aim.

We are acutely aware of the outstanding food inspections and are prioritising their completion in the first three months of this year. Whilst it is always important to us to complete the inspections due we maintain our position of basing all intervention by risk throughout the year in accordance with the Food law Code of Practice in order to make sure our work is focussed on protecting the public.

In the forthcoming year we await the changes that will be implemented in line with Brexit and RoF and adapting to enable delivery of new systems of work.