

**FOOD SERVICE PLAN
2006/07
ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE
SALFORD CITY COUNCIL**

FORWARD

The provision of a vigorous Food Safety Service has quite rightly received consistent support from Elected Members of the Council in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the public in the City of Salford.

This Food Service Plan continues to provide a clear strategy and ensures that resources are targeted towards front line services. The plan provides the basis for a robust regime to monitor the performance of service in the long term as well as short term.

The Plan sets out the performance that must be achieved by the Environment Directorate, that is committed to maintaining the highest standards to deliver high quality health protection. The work of the service is to successfully balance service delivery between education, encouragement and enforcement. I fully endorse the policy of the Government and the Cabinet Office that considers assisting compliance with Food Safety Standards as every bit as important as detecting non-compliance. The Council works in partnership with the food industry and service providers in this crucial area of public health protection as in the past this approach has been a success. However we are committed to use all our available powers to secure the standards of Food Safety expected by our communities.

It is also pleasing that stakeholders value the Council's food service so highly and I am keen that both Members and Officers continue to respond by providing a service that delivers best value. Food Safety is a key service priority in Salford. The City Council will work to deliver the high standard expected by our Community.

**Cllr Maureen Lea
Lead Member for Environment Directorate**

INTRODUCTION

Food Safety has consistently been a topic of vital importance for the City Council. The right of access to a sufficient, safe and wholesome food supply is essential to all our residents.

The residents of the city expect no less from the Council. In a recent needs analysis survey undertaken by the Environment Directorate, regular inspections of businesses to maintain food safety standards were considered by residents to be a very important service that the Environmental Health Services provide.

Against this background, the Council has responded to the recent changes to national legislation and food standards by ensuring that sufficient staff resources of the right type and quality are provided. This has ensured that not only is the Statutory Duty of the Council met, but that the objectives of a safe food supply for the population we serve are, as far as is practical for the Council, achieved.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Framework Agreement is welcomed by the Council as means to promote and maintain public confidence in a safe food supply.

Bruce Jassi
Strategic Director - Environment

1. Service Aims and Objectives

1.1 Aims and Objectives

To ensure that all food and drink intended for sale for human consumption that is produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed in Salford, is safe, hygienic and compliant with applicable food hygiene and standards legislation and that all food premises and food handlers comply with the Food Hygiene Regulations. This will be achieved through a mixture of education, programmed inspections, investigation of complaints and sampling initiatives.

1.2 Link to Corporate Objectives and Plan

This document is an expansion of the general objectives regarding food, contained in the Environment Directorate's Service Plan, which enables the Directorate to deliver the Council's Pledges.

2 Background

2.1 Profile of Salford

The area covers 4,731 square kilometres and has a population of 216,000 persons. The area has a mixed topography of rural and densely populated areas.

2.2 Organisational Structure

The food hygiene service is provided by the Environmental Health team operating within Regulatory Services, part of the Environment Directorate. The Team Leader is a Principal Environmental Health Officer, who is directly responsible to the Regulatory Services Manager.

Responsibility for food standards and feeding stuffs is dealt with by officers of the Trading Standards Service, which is also part of Regulatory Services.

The team of specialist food officers are based at Turnpike House, 631 Eccles New Road, Salford. The office is open from 8.30am - 4.30pm Monday to Friday. The division also operates a stand-by service for major incidents including infectious disease control and food hazard alerts outside office hours.

The officers are assisted in their tasks by the Health Protection Agency Laboratory at Preston which provides the Food Examiner Service and by Eurofins Laboratories Limited, which provide Public Analyst, Agricultural Analyst and Scientific Adviser services.

2.3 Scope of the Food Service

The Environmental Health Team is responsible for the enforcement of the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006 and the food hygiene legislation made there under. Officers of the Food Team also carry out health and safety inspections in a range of food premises. This is delivered alongside food service inspections. The Trading Standards Service is responsible for food standards and feedingstuffs enforcement under the Food Safety Act 1990 and Regulation (EC) No 882/2004. Regulatory Services has Pest Control Officers who can contract to food businesses to assist businesses to maintain pest free premises. Officers from the Commercial Services Team also investigate notifications of infectious disease including food poisoning, in association with the Greater Manchester Health Protection Unit and Consultant in Communicable Disease Control.

2.4 Demands on the Food Service

There are presently approximately 1,856 food premises operating in Salford, including twelve approved premises including an industrial dairy, meat and fish processing establishments, and over a thousand catering premises. The majority of premises are small to medium size companies with limited internal technical support.

A number of business owners in the city do not have English as their first language. These are mainly proprietors of ethnic catering establishments, particularly Chinese and Asian.

2.5 Enforcement Policy

The City Council has signed up to the Cabinet Office Enforcement Concordat. This is incorporated within the Food Safety Enforcement Policy and Procedure and ISO 9001:2000 accredited quality system. The enforcement and prosecution policy is available on the Council's website http://www.salford.gov.uk/enforcement_prosecution_policy.doc

3. Service Delivery

3.1 Food Premises Inspection

Salford City Council considers programmed inspections of food premises to be an essential element in protecting the food available to consumers in their area. In accordance with the Statutory Codes of Practice, all food premises are risk assessed, both for food hygiene and food standards. Risk assessments are entered in the Directorate's database, which generates a 'next visit date'. The date of the next visit is set at the inspection interval determined by the risk assessment of the premises, in accordance with the Food Standards Agency Code of Practice.

The approximate make-up of food premises in the area is as follows:

- 29 Manufacturers/processors
- 12 Manufacturers mainly selling by retail
- 3 Packers
- 1 Importers
- 29 Distributors
- 532 Retailers
- 1233 Restaurant and other Caterers

The number of premises in the higher food safety inspection categories (A and B) requiring more frequent inspection is approximately 342. For 2006-7 we are required to inspect 1374 premises consisting of 977 high risk premises (bands A to C), 247 lower risk premises (bands D to E) and an additional 150 premises outside of the food programme (following change of ownership, usage or following complaints). In addition there are approximately 250 re-visits necessary following the initial inspections.

In recent years we have continued to reduce the number of overdue inspection and from last year we have carried over 68 overdue low risk inspections from the previous year. These will be included in all visits due lists provided to each officer by the Food Safety Team Leader from 2006-7. These are to be inspected according to priority category alongside the main program of inspections. Officers also carry out some Health & Safety inspections at Food Premises in accordance with separate risk rating frequency.

The number of food premises to be visited by the Trading Standards service for food standards during the year is 395. As with 2005-6 the Trading Standards service is unable to visit all of the 948 premises which are due for inspection during the course of the year due to recruitment difficulties. Resources are being allocated to areas of greatest risk with the Service balancing both national and local priorities e.g. Crime and Disorder issues / underage sales of alcohol. Most of these visits will be carried as comprehensive trading standards inspections.

From January 2006 new food safety legislation came in to force including a requirement for all food businesses to have a documented food safety management system in place. As all local businesses are likely to be affected, all inspected premises will be given additional advice and support in order to assist them in understanding and complying with the requirements. Currently there is considered to be adequate expertise within the Food Team to deal with all foreseeable food activities.

In addition to the statutory Code of Practice, the Regulatory Service's Quality System incorporates procedures regarding food hygiene and food standards inspections. This covers officer competency and ensures consistency in actions taken by the Service.

When premises are inspected the Food Standards Agency (FSA) have required food officers to place a greater emphasis on identifying and sampling non EC imported foods and additives following complaints and intelligence of illegal additives and contaminants in such products. Recording of businesses directly importing on to the database will be carried out during the year.

3.2 Food Complaints

The investigation and resolution of consumers' complaints regarding food is an important element of food law enforcement. These are dealt with as a priority with a maximum response target of 3 working days. In addition to the statutory Code of Practice, the Division's Quality System has procedures for dealing with food complaints and for responding to complaints about food premises or practices.

All service requests are logged in the FLARE computer system including details of the action taken and the closing of completed complaints.

3.3 Home Authority Principle

Salford City Council fully endorses Local Authority Co-ordinating Body for Regulatory Services (LACORS) Home Authority principle including within Salford for Sodexo, North Country Foods and Makro. Officers operate the principle when dealing with food complaint investigations and when there are contentious food hygiene problems at multiple retailers. The principle is also routinely used regarding food standards and labelling issues. Advising local businesses that also trade outside the Salford area, as their Home Authority, results in more frequent food standards visits than would otherwise be the case.

3.4 Advice to Business

In an area where small to medium size businesses predominate, officers from the food safety service recognise the important role they have to support businesses in understanding and complying with the law and all officers advise businesses regarding food hygiene and food standards legislation. Specifically requested advice is responded to promptly at no charge to the business.

The Environmental Health Food Hygiene service is currently working with the Greater Manchester Food Liaison Group (GMFLG) and the Northwest Food Alliance to secure additional funding from the Food Standards Agency to assist catering businesses achieve HACCP food safety management system. This "Safer Food Better Business (SFBB)" project is planned to be carried out without affecting the normal work of the team. The majority of training if successful will be carried out by the Alliance and its consultants and by officers working overtime. The service also offers free business workshops relating to general food and health and safety requirements.

3.5 Food Inspection and Sampling

Food Officers inspect and undertake programmes of food sampling. The Council has a sampling policy and procedure which is based on intelligence gained from experience and concentrates on high risk products to ensure the delivery of safe food to the public.

The total number of microbiological food samples sent to the Health Protection Agency's laboratory at Preston via Manchester Royal Infirmary (MRI) is 220 per annum.

The total number of samples, including complaint samples, submitted to the Public Analyst (Eurofins) is approximately 350 per annum.

The Environmental Health Food Hygiene service's measuring equipment is regularly calibrated in order to ensure their accuracy as measurements obtained may be used to support legal proceedings.

3.6 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease

Salford City Council's Food Safety Policy and Quality procedure outlines the service's partnership with GMHPU for the investigation of food poisoning. The investigation procedure also outlines the criteria leading to a declaration of an outbreak.

The Division's Major Outbreak Plan has been revised (2005) and was followed by a joint Greater Manchester Health Protection Unit (GMHPU), Salford Primary Care Trust (PCT) and LA training event in January 2006. A copy of this plan is electronically stored with specific guidance for the individual diseases.

The GMHPU Team operates an out-of-hours stand-by system for infectious disease.

3.7 Food Safety Incidents

Food Safety Alerts are received at the Turnpike Office and appropriate action is decided on and taken in accordance with the FSA's Food Law Code of Practice (England) and the service's Quality System Procedures. The Food Hygiene Team Leader carries a mobile phone, which gives an alert in the event of all serious food hazard incidents. The service also operates an out-of-hours stand-by system for the receipt of and initial action for food alerts.

It is estimated there will be approximately 80 alerts this year. The majority of these are likely to be for information, with a limited number requiring local action. Each alert however requires scrutiny and decisions on action to be taken, equating to approximately 50 officer hours per annum. Where action is deemed necessary, the extent of this action will vary and it is estimated that there will be 6 such incidents each year.

3.8 Liaison with Other Organisations

The service liaises directly with neighbouring Local Authorities' Food Officers directed by the Greater Manchester Public Protection Managers' Group representing the 10 GM Authorities. Regular meetings of the Greater Manchester Food Liaison Group are used as a forum to achieve consistency of approach in enforcement activities. Also, Trading Standards Officers attend the GM Food Standards Group.

The service is also represented at regular meetings of the GMHPU, PCT and with United Utilities and is involved in liaison and meetings with the Care Commission, regarding standards in wide variety of care situations.

Officers liaise with Salford University and other local trainers regarding the provision of food hygiene training.

3.9 Food Safety and Standards Promotion

The Food Hygiene service participates in the National Food Safety Week, each year targeting different sectors. Activities can include lectures, demonstrations and competitions. The target sectors for 2006 is the adult population especially the elderly and the Council's own staff.

The Food Hygiene service arranges displays and provision of information at a number of public and trade food exhibitions in the city, e.g., Directorate Open Day and Food & Drinks Festival. The level of response at the manned exhibitions evaluates the effectiveness of these demonstrations.

The team also organises a local Curry Chef competition promoting high food hygiene standards and nutrition contributing to improved public health and raising the profile of local businesses. The team also publishes details of our Food Hygiene Award including publishing details of our Gold Award premises on the Council's website.

4. Resources

4.1 Financial Allocation

Food Hygiene

Staffing - £321,734

Travel - £9,000

Sampling - £4,900

Supplies & Services - £14,000

Trading Standards (including Food Standards)*

Staffing - £388,632

Travel - £11,000

Transport - £2,790

Sampling - £14,000

Supplies & Services - £21,640

**The above figures reflects the total costs associated with the provision of all Trading Standards services of which Food Standards is an element.*

4.2 Staffing Allocation

Presently there is an establishment for the equivalent of six full time Environmental Health Officers and one Senior Scientific Officer holding the Higher Certificate in Food Premises Inspection. Clerical back-up is provided by a pool of Admin Support officers, equivalent to 2 clerical officers overall. Within the Food Standards team there are recruitment difficulties, with few applications being received, reflecting a national shortage. The increasing demands on the service and recent and impending changes in legislation and the new Code of Practice, will stretch the staff resources as detailed in the Directorate's Business plan.

4.3 Staff Development

Salford City Council is IIP accredited and as part of the Regulatory Services quality system line managers are responsible for the appraisal of officers and determining their training needs and competency in accordance with the FSA's Food Law Code of Practice (England). The Council also operates an employee appraisal scheme. In addition the professional institutes (CIEH & TSI) require and run Continual Professional Development (CPD) schemes.

The Food Safety Policy and Quality Procedure details the Council's commitment to enabling all Food Enforcement Officers to obtain at least 10 hours of certified continuing professional development, required by the FSA Code of Practice.

4.4 Information Technology

Development and refinement of a database for all food activity is seen as essential for a consistent and organised delivery of food safety enforcement in the authority. Flare generated returns to the FSA have been achieved with the assistance of the Directorate's IT manager. The IT system is also used for tracking due food visits, service requests, infectious disease notifications and food samples.

5. Quality Assessment

A number of quality monitoring aspects e.g., response times are built into the Division's ISO 9001:2000 accredited quality system. These procedures are available electronically on the Council's intranet, The Food Team have a number of procedures to ensure quality and consistency of food enforcement. A program of visits is now drawn up to ensure the procedure requirement is met. The Environment Directorate is presently accredited with the Investors in People award, Regulatory Services has received the Government's Charter Mark Award for Excellence in Public Service and was subject to a Best Value Review in 2005.

6. Review

6.1 Review Against the Service Plan

Prior to the drafting of the Service Plan in March each year, a review will take place of the previous year's performance against the Service Plan and the FSA targets. This has been carried out for last year's plan as detailed in (6.4).

6.2 Identification of any Variation from the Business Plan

This will be identified and reasons given in each year's Business Plan. Any necessary action will be included in the following years Service Plan. In Salford we operate a rigorous Business Planning and Performance Management system based on FLARE that enables management to monitor performance on a monthly basis and take the appropriate remedial action.

6.3 Areas of Improvement

Where there are any relevant improvement plans or service developments identified, these will be set out in each of the Service's Business Plans.

6.4 Review of Plan for 2005/6 and Areas for Improvement: -

- FSA increased emphasis on dealing with directly imported food has already led to team discovering a number of food brokers. This work has been identified as requiring additional resource for 2006-7, which has been achieved by changes to resource allocation through the Business Planning process
- To assist businesses to comply with the revised Food Safety regulations additional guidance and an increased demand for support will be required from the service.
- Additional input is envisaged from the service to assist the Primary Care Trust with its Public Health Initiatives, especially the development of a five a day Award for workplace kitchens.
- The Food Hygiene Service carried out an additional 100 food inspections from the plan due to new premises registering with the service and premises changing hands during the year 2005-6. This has been reported to the FSA in the annual return.

- From January 2007 it will be a legal requirement that all farms, including arable only, are registered with the Council. The food standards service plan to visit all farms in the City and obtain details of all activities carried out by them and to update ownership details.
- Since 1996 we have reduced the number of high risk premises (Band A) by 78% as detailed on the Council's website.
- We have increased the number of Gold Food Hygiene Award premises to over 35 including a number of Citywide's school kitchens following the Service working with Citywide to improve their documented food safety management system.

Date :- 10th May 2006

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