



Development and Public Protection

Service Plan for the Health & Safety and Food Control Services 2016/2017



Gateshead Council

Service Plan for the Health & Safety and Food Control Services 2016/2017

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Foreword

The work of the Environmental Health Team is governed by various Acts of Parliament, Official Government Guidance and reports. The main legislation covering the teams work is the Food Safety Act 1990 and the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The team is also monitored and reports to the Food Standards Agency and the Health and Safety Executive. The following are some of the most recent reports that directly impact on the work of the team.

The Code

The National Local Authority Enforcement Code (The Code) relates to the health and safety service and was published in 2013 by the HSE. It has been developed in response to a recommendation by Professor Löfstedt, for the HSE to be given a stronger role in directing local enforcement of health and safety. It is also an outcome of the Red Tape Challenge on Health and Safety. It is designed to ensure that local authority (LA) health and safety regulators take a more consistent and proportionate approach to enforcement. Whilst the primary responsibility for managing health and safety risks lies with the business who creates the risk, LA health & safety regulators have an important role in ensuring the effective and proportionate management of risks, supporting business, protecting their communities and contributing to a wider public health agenda.

The Code requires that LAs use the full range of regulatory interventions available to influence behaviours and the management of risk with proactive inspection utilised only for premises with higher risks or where intelligence suggests that risks are not being effectively managed. The Code provides direction to LAs on meeting these requirements, and reporting on compliance. The Code is mandatory for LAs to follow and provides suggestions for activities and sectors that are suitable for proactive inspection.

Lord Young Common Sense, Common Safety Report 2010

This report includes issues which have implications for local authorities and particularly the regulatory functions of health and safety and food safety. It recommends reducing bureaucracy associated with unnecessary health and safety and insurance requirements and tackles the compensation culture. It advocated the introduction of a register for competent health and safety consultants and hopes to reverse the risk averse approach that is seen to hamper children's development. The report reinforces the move towards risk based inspection, recommending the removal of many burdens on low risk premises, the voluntary sector and the self employed along with improved, accessible and tailored advice and guidance. It supports the ethos of earned recognition, advocating Primary Authority and recommending an enhanced HSE role for large multi-site retailers. It recommends the combination of health and safety and food inspectors in local authorities and supports the opening up of the inspection regime to accredited certified bodies.

Elliot Review

Following the horse meat scandal early in 2013, the Government tasked Professor Elliott to review the various information, reviews and some of the evidence relating to the scandal. The report was published in September 2014 and impacts on how the service operates in the future. The report raises a number of recommendations that the Government are looking at implementing. The report recommends that consumers are put first and there is a zero tolerance approach to food fraud. Intelligence about food fraud should be more widely shared. The report makes recommendations about the laboratory services and the value of sampling regimes. Independent auditing of the food industry is seen as valuable and should be encouraged, providing the audit has measures to identify and eliminate food fraud. The Government must support a co-ordinated approach to food law enforcement and look to

creating a new food law crime unit. The Government must also have in place procedures for dealing with a serious food safety or food crime incident.

Smoke Free Cars

In October 2015 new legislation on cigarette smoke came into force in England. The law requires all cars carrying people under the age of 18 to be smoke free. The team have a joint enforcement responsibility with the Police. The aim of the legislation is to reduce the exposure of young children to second hand cigarette smoke. The main method of enforcement for the team will be the use of fixed penalty notices served on the driver for allowing somebody to smoke in a car with an under 18 present.

Carrier Bags

Another piece of new legislation was the introduction of the charge for carrier bags in large retail organisations. The Climate Change Act 2008 allowed for the Single Use Carrier Bags Charges (England) Order 2015, which makes it mandatory for businesses employing more than 250 people to make a charge of 5p for any plastic carrier bags issued to customers. It is expected that the money will be donated to worthy causes.

Audits

The food service has been subject to two audits during the year. The first audit was carried out by the Food and Veterinary Office as part of a Europe wide audit of the official controls on soft fruit and vegetables. The audit in Gateshead looked at the production of bean sprouts. As this was part of a wider audit across Britain an report about Gateshead was not produced. However, the auditors did raise a few points about the official controls used at the premise, but overall were pleased with the work officers had carried out.

The second audit was an inter authority audit into the implementation of the Food Hygiene Rating System. The auditors found that there were elements of good practice, particularly the use of a business advice sheet, given to the food business operator after each intervention. However, the Council needs to prioritise the progress towards getting the E rated businesses on the National Database.

Introduction

Last year the Environmental Health Team of the Council responded to over 900 accidents, food poisonings and service requests. We also undertake over 1300 interventions in a wide range of premises in order to build stronger, healthier, prosperous and sustainable businesses.

Nationally there are over a million cases of food poisoning each year, 20,000 hospitalisations and 500 deaths. This costs the economy £1.5 billion each year. 28.2 million working days were lost in 2013/14 due to work related illness or injury, 133 workers were killed at work. Workplace ill health and injury cost society £14.2 billion in 2013/14.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) as part of its national food safety framework agreement requires all Local Authorities to prepare a service plan which sets out how the official controls will be delivered.

The Health and Safety Code (The Code) requires Local Authorities to be transparent in their enforcement role. In order to achieve this we need to publish our intervention plan and report on our performance against that plan.

Gateshead Council is responsible for the enforcement of food safety legislation in approximately 1600 premises and health and safety law in approximately 3000 premises. Our food premises

range from food manufacturers to retailers and restaurants, whilst health and safety covers the service industries including warehouses, retail premises, hotels and leisure facilities.

This plan sets out how the Council will deliver the food safety and health and safety enforcement functions in the financial year 2016/17. The details concerning the time required for each element is in officer days. Each full time officer has 220 days available for carrying out their duties.

To ensure local transparency and accountability, to show the service's contribution to Vision 2030 and to meet the requirements of the FSA Framework Agreement this plan is approved by Members on behalf of Gateshead Council.

The plan highlights that the team does not have the necessary resources to complete all of the required works. The team will therefore prioritise work on a risk basis. Inspections will be targeted at high risk and poor performing businesses. For low risk businesses a system of alternative interventions will be used, including questionnaires, sampling visits, monitoring checks and checks by other teams during their visits. New food businesses will be asked to complete a questionnaire so that their initial visit can be prioritised.

1. Service Aims & Objectives

1.1 Aims

We aim to:

- Ensure that food produced, sold or consumed in the borough is safe to eat and that businesses comply with food law;
- Protect the safety, health and welfare of people at work in Gateshead and to safeguard others who may be exposed to risks from the way that work is carried out; and
- Improve working conditions in the Borough through a programme of workplace inspections and self assessment, and accident, incident and complaint investigation.

1.2 Objectives

To achieve these aims we have the following objectives:

- Deliver the official controls on food law as set out in the FSA Framework Agreement
- Ensure food is safe, fit to eat and free of contaminants
- Protect consumers from food fraud
- Improve compliance in food businesses using advice, guidance and when necessary enforcement
- Maintain an accurate database of food establishments
- Carry out a programme of food safety interventions at a frequency appropriate to risk
- Respond effectively to complaints relating to food and water
- Ensure that readily accessible advice and assistance is available to businesses and the public
- Carry out the annual sampling programmes for microbiological examination and compositional analysis, including participation in regional and national surveys
- Regularly survey imported food to prevent unsafe or illegal food from entering the market
- Approve establishments for handling products of animal origin as required
- Carry out surveillance of suspected and confirmed illness that has the potential to be food or water borne and implement control measures to prevent further illness
- Enforce a wide range of relevant health and safety legislation.
- Establish and maintain a planned inspection programme based on a risk-based priority planning system to select premises for inspection.
- Develop a range of campaigns and intervention programmes aimed at both specific business sectors and specific business risks to improve health and safety.
- Investigate complaints from the public about health and safety issues
- Investigate notified accidents, incidents and cases of occupational ill-health
- Advise, educate and assist businesses to comply with legal obligations and promote self-regulation using self-assessment tools.
- Administer and regulate statutory permission and registration regimes for specific work activities linked to health risks, such as
 - The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2006
 - Gateshead Byelaws for the registration of practitioners and premises carrying on the practice of Acupuncture and the business of Tattooing, Semi-Permanent Skin-Colouring, Cosmetic Piercing and Electrolysis.

- Promote issues in the Government White Paper, 'Choosing Health' by improving working conditions to reduce the causes of ill-health related to work, promote the work environment as a source of better health and support 'Smoke Free Gateshead'
- Work closely with businesses including Workplace Health and Safety Representatives and Trade Union Representatives
- Support the principles of the Primary Authority Scheme to improve regulatory consistency and reduce burdens on business.

1.3 Links to Corporate Objectives

The Council Plan 2015-2020 sets out how the Council will achieve its aims and objectives. The Environmental Health team contributes in many areas of delivery, in particular:

- **People** The Food Service has a major role to play in ensuring a healthier community. We help businesses grow and develop and improve the service they provide by offering help and advice, this in turn provides more jobs and reduces financial exclusion and child poverty. The voluntary sector also receives help and advice from the team and helps develop stronger communities. By reducing accidents and improving food standards we are helping to reduce health inequalities and adding years to life. We work closely with Adult Social Care to safeguard our elderly residents in care homes across the borough and our work with the schools meals service helps safeguard our children at school.
- **Place** the team has an active role in the Virtual Rural Economic Strategy Team, providing advice and guidance on businesses and improving the rural economy. The team inspects the mobile and permanent traders that operate in our parks and open spaces, improving the facilities available to visitors.

1.4 Vision 2030

The work of the Food Service is directly linked to 'Vision 2030', Gateshead's Sustainable Community Strategy and the heart of an ambitious long term plan developed by Gateshead Strategic Partnership following extensive consultation. The most relevant of the 'Six Big Ideas' within Vision 2030 to the team is '**Active and Healthy Gateshead**'

What we eat can make a big difference to our health and the Food Service plays a key role in diet and nutrition by checking the accuracy of food composition and labelling through the sampling programme. This helps people to make healthy choices based on accurate product information. We can also help raise Gateshead's profile - for example, by making sure that restaurants and hotels meet the legal standards and produce safe food for visitors and residents.

Good health is fundamental to well-being and long life and the annual inspection programme helps to ensure that food safety standards are met and workplaces are safe and healthy.

The web based initiative known as the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme places food hygiene information into the public domain and encourages food business operators to achieve higher hygiene ratings

2. Background

The service is a statutory function enforcing food safety and health and safety legislation across Gateshead. By using a variety of interventions and techniques we are seeing a sustained improvement in food safety levels, indicated by the increasing numbers of food businesses rated as 5 in the Food Hygiene Rating System. With over 900 accidents, food poisonings and complaints per year to respond to and over 1300 interventions we are constantly looking for ways to improve our service and be more efficient.

2.1 Profile of the Local Authority

Gateshead Council is one of five historical Tyne and Wear borough councils. It has the largest area of 55 square miles and the 22 wards cover a mix of urban and rural environment with a population of approximately 200 000. The borough stretches for 13 miles along the south bank of the River Tyne.

Gateshead is an area with exciting new developments including progress toward a modern, vibrant town centre with the Trinity Square Development and further development of the Gateshead Quays, which already includes the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art and the Sage Gateshead.

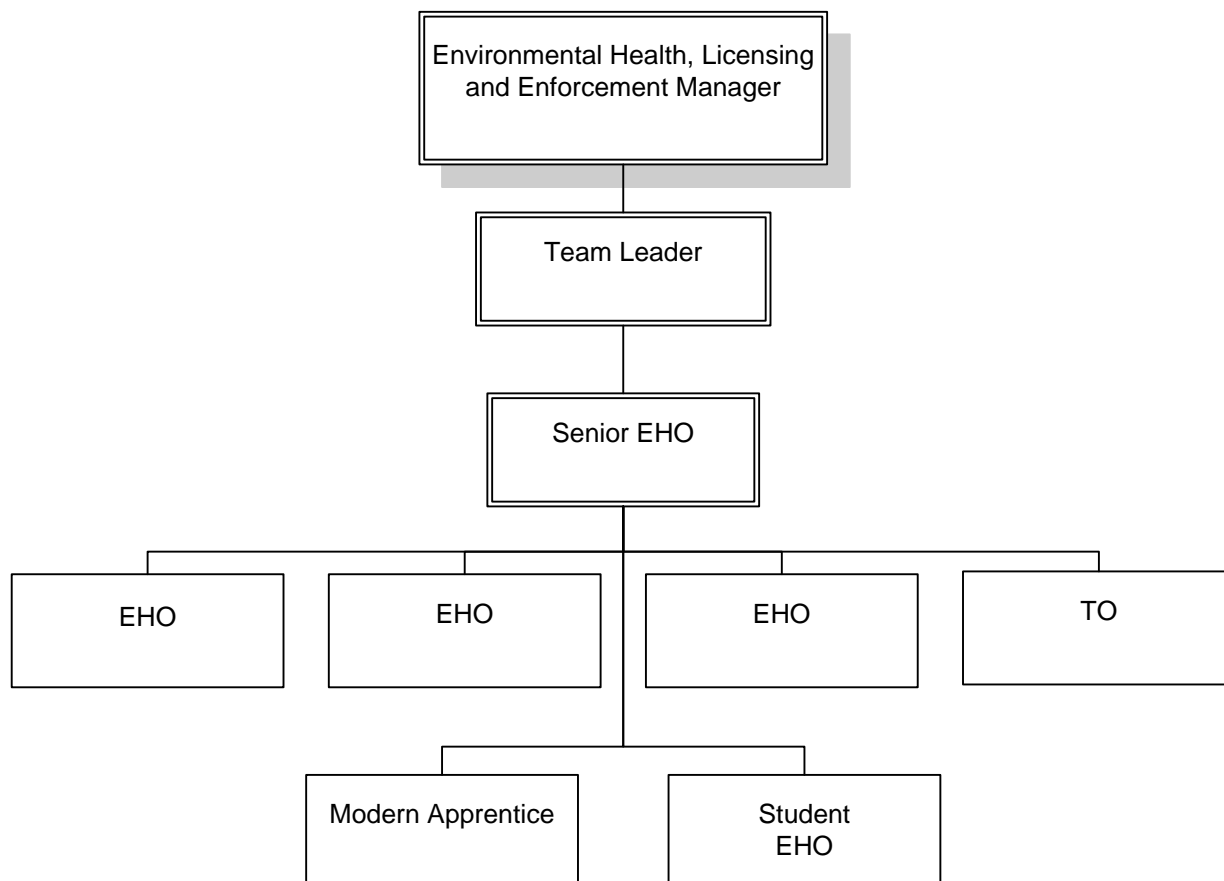
Gateshead also includes:

- The Metrocentre, one of Europe's largest indoor shopping and leisure complexes
- The Team Valley Trading Estate, home to over 650 companies and includes the Retail World shopping area
- Gateshead International Stadium
- Gateshead College

The Team is based at the Civic Centre in Gateshead with office hours being from 0830 to 1700 hours. Members of the Team voluntarily provide an unofficial out-of-hours service to carry out interventions and investigations that cannot be achieved during office hours.

The Council operates a 24 hour emergency response through Care Call, and Development & Public Protection have arrangements in place for Care Call to be able to contact a relevant officer in case of emergency outside normal office hours.

2.2 Organisational Structure



There are no planned structural changes to the team in 2016/17, however an EHO is due to begin maternity leave in May. This will impact on the service and is likely to be reflected in a reduction in the routine work carried out. It is planned that the graduate EHO currently working on the team will be maintained to cover the period of maternity leave, but will be unable to inspect higher risk businesses. The Team sends regular reports to the Transport & Environment/Employment & Skills Portfolio and Adult Social Care & Healthier Communities Portfolio.

2.3 Specialist Services

The Environmental Health Team works closely with the following specialist services:

- Public Analysts - Alan Richards, Public Analyst Scientific Services Ltd and Nigel Payne
- Infectious Disease Control – Public Health England (Proper Officer: Dr Roberta Marshall)
- Microbiology laboratory – Public Health England (North East Region Environmental Laboratories)

2.4 Premises Profile

2.4.1 Health and Safety Premises

The Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) Regulations allocates enforcement responsibilities between Local Authorities and the HSE. Premises profiles fluctuate throughout the year due to businesses opening / closing and changes in use. The service database is updated with any changes as they become evident.

Local authority enforced business classifications	2015/16	2016/17	Change
Retail Shops	1046	1020	-26
Wholesale shops, warehouses and fuel storage	301	301	0
Offices	614	609	-5
Catering, restaurants and bars	546	560	+14
Hotels, campsites and other short stay accommodation	34	34	0
Residential care homes	68	70	+2
Leisure and cultural services	115	119	+4
Consumer services and membership organisations	429	426	-3
Other premises	19	20	+1
Total	3172	3159	-13

2.4.2 Food Premises

Particular local requirements include:

- 4 companies currently have approval for handling products of animal origin.
- Major retail, wholesaling, and warehousing complexes, including the Metrocentre and the Team Valley Trading Estate.
- Several large food producers including Kavli, Northumbrian Fine Foods, Paradise Foods, Dalziels and Beckleberries.
- The Queen Elizabeth Hospital cook-chill production unit.
- Third country importers, including Traidcraft (specialising in fairly traded goods).
- Specific needs of various ethnic groups.

Type of Premises	2015/16	2016/17	Change
Primary Producer	1	1	0
Manufacturers and Packers	58	55	-3
Importers/Exporters	3	3	0
Distributors and transporters	58	59	+1
Supermarket/Hypermarket	35	36	+1
Smaller retailers	314	309	-5
Retailers - Other	25	43	+18
Restaurants/café/canteen	237	252	+15
Hotel/Guest house	30	29	-1
Pub/Club	209	205	-4
Takeaway	236	228	-8
Caring establishment	102	104	+2
School/College	89	91	+2
Mobile food unit	64	75	+11
Restaurant and caterers - other	150	142	-8
Other		10	+10
TOTAL	1611	1642	+31

2.5 Client Profile

The client profile for the service is wide-ranging and varied, being based around all Local Authority enforced businesses and all food businesses.

Our clients include those who make a request for service (complaints or advice) about these, or proposed businesses. This will include owners, employees, managers, trade union/employee representatives, customers, residents and visitors. We appreciate the various and diverse needs of these people will affect how we work with them – issues such as language, experience, education, disability, age, time available can all make a difference.

Our database allows us to identify information about businesses that enables specifically targeted work. For example, we can group them by businesses classification/type, geographical area and business name.

We also respond to specific health and safety queries. For example, providing health and safety information and advice to students and other local authorities and investigate smoking complaints in ALL businesses and vehicles.

Our customers include Government departments, regulatory bodies such as Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Fire Authority, Police Authority, other teams within Gateshead Council, other local authorities and agencies such as Public Health England (PHE), Local Government Regulation (LGA) and Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH). Some of these are also our partners.

We also assist the Director of Public Health in achieving some of her targets with respect to infectious disease, smoking and workplace health.

3. Service Delivery

3.1 Proactive Work

The intervention programme is continually monitored and reviewed by Lead Officers in the Team with the following factors being assessed:

- Most appropriate intervention for risks associated with a business
- Qualifications, experience and competency of the officer carrying out an intervention
- Additional intelligence that may be gathered during the year (food fraud, illegally imported food, accidents)
- Use of unscheduled interventions for increased risks or newly identified hazards
- New businesses added to the programme.

3.1.1 Health and Safety

HELA LAC 67/2 (rev 4.1) provides guidance for priority planning of inspections through a risk rating system. Officers score premises based on four risk elements and assign a rating value to each of these elements:

- Confidence in management
- Health performance
- Safety performance
- Welfare standards

The system then categorizes the risk the premises pose as high (A), medium (B1/B2) or low (C), and identifies an intervention frequency for A and B1.

LAC67/2 does not give an intervention frequency for B2 and C - although ignoring these is not an option, we do not routinely visit these premises unless we are visiting for other reasons i.e. a food safety intervention.

We have therefore decided an intervention frequency not less than 3 yearly for B2 and 5 yearly for C. This takes into account the number of premises in these categories, the resources available for delivering the service plan and local/ historical knowledge of the premises database.

All intervention visits contain an element of smokefree enforcement and officers will check for compliance with the legislation.

The types of interventions for all premises are directed by the Code. Broadly these fall into two groups, proactive and reactive. The two groups include a number of different options and include:

Proactive interventions:

- Partnership
- Motivating senior managers
- Supply chain
- Design and supply
- Sector and industry wide initiatives
- Working with those at risk
- Education and awareness
- Inspection
- Intermediaries
- Best practice
- Recognising good performance

Reactive interventions:

- Incident and ill-health investigation
- Dealing with issues of concern that are raised and complaints

A traditional inspection is reserved for only a very small number of premises, so the majority of interventions will come from the other options.

Low risk businesses are unlikely to be visited, but will receive a self assessment questionnaire and written advice on how to improve their health and safety performance. These businesses will then be able to request an advisory visit if they so wish.

All other businesses will receive a face to face intervention from one of the above categories. The Code provides for a number of industry wide initiatives to promote safety in high risk areas.

HSE Category	Rating score	Intervention frequency (set by LAC 67/2 rev 3; or Gateshead)	Total on database	Due in 2016/17	Time Required (Days)
A	5 or 6 on any risk	Inspect not less than once per year	0	0	0
B1	4 on any risk	Premises for intervention. Premises without an intervention within 18 months to be reviewed	1	1	1
B2	3 on any risk	Premises for intervention. Gateshead standard is an intervention not less than every 3 years	223	156	21
C	No score greater than 2	Assess premises, but suitable for non-inspection intervention methods\ techniques. Gateshead standard is an intervention not less than every 5 years	2706	937	63
Unrated	Unknown	Gateshead standard is an intervention according to the perceived priority	229	230	31
Total			3159	1324	116

3.1.2 Food Safety

The Food Service uses the FSA's intervention rating scheme to determine the frequency that food premises should receive an intervention. This ensures that all premises are visited at an appropriate minimum interval determined by their risk rating.

Interventions are defined as activities that are designed to monitor, support and increase food law compliance within a food establishment. They include, but are not restricted to:

- Inspections (full and/or partial) and audits
- Monitoring
- Verification and surveillance
- Sampling where the analysis/examination is carried out by an Official Laboratory.

The tables below show how many premises the Service has in each risk category on 1 April 2016, together with the projected number of interventions required during the financial year:

FSA Risk Category	Minimum intervention frequency	No. on database	Projected interventions due 2016/17	Bought forward from 2015/16	Time Required (Days)
A	6 months	4	8	0	16
B	12 months	31	24	7	31
C	18 months	347	130	184	157
D	24 months	593	177	120	40
E	36 months	524	130	43	23
UNRATED		151	151	0	61
Total		1642	606	354	328

Unrated businesses are those that have not yet been inspected and therefore do not have a rating. New businesses are continually added to the programme throughout the year. 111 were added during 2016/17 with 33 of them receiving an inspection, taking approximately 16 days of EHO time. A total of 85 new businesses were inspected during the year.

3.1.3 Food Standards

The table below shows the number of premises that the Council has on its database and the number of interventions required during the year.

FSA Risk Category	Minimum intervention frequency	No. on database	Projected interventions due 2016/17	Bought forward from 2015/16	Time Required (Days)
A	12 months	21	7	12	19
B	24 months	699	139	465	245
C	5 years	782	265	32	40
UNRATED		143	143	0	58
Total		1645	554	509	362

3.1.4 Feed Safety

As part of our ongoing commitment to reducing burdens on business, we have agreed with Trading Standards to undertake feed safety interventions at the same time we undertake food

safety interventions. This should have limited impact on the work of the team, but will remove the need for a second officer to visit the premises to undertake a separate feed visit. The time for these has been factored in to food hygiene interventions.

3.2 Service Requests

3.2.1 Health and Safety

The Council investigates requests for service from a wide customer base about health and safety issues in the workplace. We endeavour to provide comprehensive information and advice on health and safety when requested.

We have an internal policy, based on HSE guidance to determine whether requests for service will / may / will not be responded to. Our target is to respond to 100% of those requests for service that meet our selection criteria within two working days.

In 2015/16 we received the following number of requests for service:

Complaint Type	Number of Requests	Time Allocated 2015/16 (days)
Health and Safety	57	15
Accidents (none RIDDOR)	1	1
Licensing	45	6
Public Health	26	11
Smoking	10	1
Total	139	34

3.2.2 Food Safety

The Food Service receives complaints about food and food businesses. These are investigated in accordance with the selection criteria. Numbers of complaints received in 2015/16 are shown in the table below:

Nature of request	Number of Requests	Time Allocated 2016/17 (days)
Premises	54	22
Standards	83	34
Hygiene	48	19
Totals	185	75

3.3 Home Authority Principle and Primary Authority Principle

Gateshead Council fully supports the Home Authority Principle and the Primary Authority Partnership Scheme.

The Food Service is Home Authority for a number of producers and as such provides advice and investigates incidents on behalf of other Local Authorities. The Service does not have any Primary Authority arrangements in place, but is currently looking to enter into a partnership agreement with a local business.

Gateshead must abide by the relevant principles and guidance when it deals with any business that has a Primary Authority agreement. The Better Regulation Delivery Office website is

regularly monitored to identify new primary authority partnerships and the premises database updated with relevant information.

3.4 Advice to business

The Food Service not only provides advice on compliance and business improvement during each visit, but also responds to requests for advice from local businesses and members of the public. The total numbers of requests received in 2015/16 is 104, due to the new charging regime we anticipate that this will only require a total of 14 days to provide the advice.

The advice provided varies from forwarding website links or information packs to visiting a business to provide detailed advice on compliance and controlling hazards.

3.5 Food sampling

Food sampling is carried out in accordance with our procedures. The food and businesses sampled are determined by our intervention and sampling programmes and additional information received such as allegations of food poisoning, complaints, newly identified businesses, processes or hazards.

Annual sampling programmes are developed following consultation with the North East Food Sampling Group, the Public Analysts and Public Health England. The programmes support national food surveys (identified by FSA and Local Government Regulation) as well as regional and local priorities.

The time required includes the time taken for resamples and investigations of failed samples.

Samples taken	2014/2015	2015/16	Time Allocated 2016/17 (days)
Microbiological examination	454	500	338
Analysis (composition/labelling)	203	219	148
Total	657	762	515

In 2016/17 we will contribute to the PHE Cross Regional Studies on unpasteurised fruit and vegetable smoothies, hygiene during the production and handling of Ice, re-usable bottles for antibacterial sprays/sanitiser and cooked crustaceans and other cooked shellfish.

The FSA studies have been agreed, following a change to the way that the sampling is funded there are significant consequences for the compositional sampling programme, with the number of samples allocated to Gateshead being vastly reduced.

3.6 Control and investigation of outbreaks and food related infectious disease

The Food Service aims to safeguard the public through surveillance and investigation of food and water related infectious disease. The Service works closely with Public Health England and follows agreed disease specific procedures and when relevant, Outbreak Control Plans.

Numbers of incidents notified to the Service in previous years are shown in the table below:

Food related infectious disease	2014/15	2015/16	Time Allocated 2015/16 (days)
Investigated	103	153	62
Monitored	203	242	16
Outbreaks	11	4	20
Totals	317	355	98

During the year there have been improvements in the use of DNA analysis of food poisoning organisms. This has meant it is easier to link food poisoning organisms between people and the food they have eaten. It may also mean that there may be more outbreaks identified, these may not necessarily be local links as results are entered on a national database and may show links across the country.

One of the outbreaks reported has resulted in a formal investigation taking place, hence the increase in time allocation from previous years.

3.7 Food safety incidents

The Service regularly receives reports of food incidents from the FSA via e-mail and text. Action depends on the nature of the incident and will be dealt with in accordance with the FSA Code of Practice. The majority are for information only but Food Incident warnings and Food Alerts for Action may require immediate action to remove the food hazard from the food chain. These Alerts/Incidents can potentially have an impact on programmed interventions.

There are a large number of product recalls received during the year, which officers need to be aware of. During the year 6 alerts for action were received.

3.8 Statutory Notifications

A significant part of the health and safety workload is taken up with accident investigation. Certain injuries, dangerous occurrences and occupational diseases are reportable by businesses to the enforcing authority using RIDDOR. Incidents are selected for investigation in accordance with HSE Guidance, local and national priorities.

In 2015/16 we received 179 accident notifications and we investigated 38 of these. This was an increase on the previous year. That took a total of 38 officer days to carry out and a further 2 days to administer all notifications.

We will respond to notifications of defective lifting equipment within two working days or more promptly where appropriate, to ensure the risk of injury is minimised or eliminated.

The Council must be notified by licensed asbestos contractors about any asbestos stripping operation taking place in Council enforced premises. We will respond to all notifications in an appropriate timescale and liaise with the contractor to ensure that all work takes place according to legislative guidelines to minimise risk.

3.9 Registrations

Byelaws require the registration of people and premises carrying out acupuncture, tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring, cosmetic piercing and electrolysis.

The Council is required to maintain a register under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 and charges are made for registration of persons and premises used for each activity. In 2015/16 we processed 28 applications for skin piercing, taking a total of 28 officer days. The team have commenced 2 campaigns targeting tattooists, with the aim of reducing the number of illegal tattooists. Firstly the Tyne and Wear Region has implemented a Tattoo Hygiene Rating Scheme. The aim is to encourage customers who wish to get a tattoo, to only go to premises with a good rating. The second campaign is called Ink Smart and is aimed at encouraging members of the public to tell us about illegal tattooists.

We also maintain a public register of installations under the Notification of Cooling Towers and Evaporative Condensers Regulations 1992. This can be used as a source of information in the investigation of a suspected legionella outbreak or for planning initiatives to control Legionella.

3.10 Licensing Applications

The service is a statutory consultee under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005. The number of applications received is given in the table showing the number of health and safety service requests received.

3.11 Business training and information

We will raise awareness with relevant businesses of legislative changes as they occur.

We encourage training courses for both inspectors and for businesses (over and above the statutory minimum) including those approved by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, FSA and the HSE.

3.12 Liaison and Partnerships

The health and safety service has close and regular contact with the HSE via the North East Occupational Health and Safety Group. This results in shared priorities, and action plans with delivery through partnership working across the region. The HSE LA Partnership Officer attends and provides access to specialist services and shared resources. The group exists to promote uniformity, consistency and a sharing of knowledge. It fully supports the development of the partnership between HSE and Local Authorities working together and represents the Tyne and Wear, Durham and Northumberland authorities. Opportunities for joint working on both a national and regional level are explored and developed. There is a sub group which looks at skin piercing activities and promotes consistency in enforcement across the region.

Wider liaison with other environmental health professionals is supported via links with the CIEH (initially through the North East Regional Management Board) and the Knowledge Hub website.

The Food Service works very closely with neighbouring councils through the North East Food Liaison Group. Representatives meet quarterly to promote uniformity and consistency on issues such as enforcement, competency and training. It provides a forum for the sharing of knowledge and experiences to improve good practice and consistency. There are 2 sub-groups, one for microbiological sampling and one for food standards. The microbiological group has been

chaired by the Services Team Leader for 3 years. An EHO from Gateshead represents the wider region on the National Food Standards Focus Group.

The Service has close links with the Public Health England (PHE), Food, Water and Environment (FWE) Laboratory, now based in York. The PHE laboratory provides expert advice on microbiological issues associated with food poisoning, sampling and complaint investigation. Meetings are held regularly between the north east local authorities and key laboratory personnel to discuss practices, training and current issues.

The Service has formally appointed Public Analysts and has established close working links associated with sampling, chemical analysis and labelling. The North East Food Sampling Groups meet quarterly to discuss compositional and microbiological issues, and to arrange coordinated regional sampling targeting wider and emerging food safety issues.

The Service works in partnership with the NE Health Protection Unit of PHE concerning notification of infectious diseases, reporting and investigation of food or water borne illness and infection control.

There is regular contact with the FSA and this includes reporting food safety and fraud issues for the national database to assist in investigations by other organisations and the annual Local Authority Enforcement Management Scheme (LAEMS) return of data. Over the coming months the new Food Crime Unit will also become an important point of contact and we will be sharing information and intelligence with it.

Wider liaison with other environmental health professionals is supported via links with the CIEH and the Knowledge Hub website. The service also works closely with other services and groups within the council.

During the year the service received 2 audits of its activities.

The first was an audit of enforcement of the legislation pertaining to sprouting seeds by the European Food and Veterinary Office. The audit was aimed at the UK as a whole so did not generate a report specific to Gateshead. It did however; highlight several areas of improvement, which have all been implemented.

The second audit was an inter authority audit of the implementation of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. The report highlighted several areas of improvement and a plan has been submitted to the audit team and approved.

4. Resources

4.1 Finance

4.1.1 Expenditure

An overall expenditure budget for 2016/17 has been set that covers:

- Salaries, national insurance and superannuation
- Vehicles
- Sampling
- Analytical fees
- Incineration and waste disposal
- Control of infectious diseases
- Consumable materials and technical equipment

A 'credit' system is operated by the FWE laboratory for microbiological samples taken for the protection of public health. Each Authority is allocated an annual number of credits to 'spend' on the various tests. There is no charge to the authorities for samples taken within the credit allocation.

The Service has and will continue to take advantage of free and highly subsidised training provided by the FSA and PHE.

4.1.2 Income

Charges apply for the registration of skin piercing premises and practitioners. These are one-off charges that provide a small amount of income to the team.

A charging system will be introduced to allow for recouping the costs of none statutory functions. In 2015/16 the team provided 6 export certificates for a local business, under the new system this would have produced £450 income. Charges will be based on £75 per hour.

The cost of registration for skin piercing activities has also been increased to better reflect the costs to the service of undertaking the registration process.

4.2 Resources

The following tables show how much time in days officers have allocated to the various parts of the service. These are projected figures based on the estimated times allocated during 2015/16 as shown in the previous tables. In calculating the resources required the management figures are excluded as they are not included in the time calculations shown above.

4.2.1 Management

Officer	H & S	Smokefree	Food	ID
Environmental Health, Licensing and Enforcement Manager	22	4	44	7
Team Leader	56	9	127	9
Senior EHO	10	2	120	6

4.2.2 Operational

Post	Officer	H & S	Smokefree	Food	ID
1	Team Leader	10	2	5	2
2	Senior EHO	12	9	56	5
3	EHO	22	0	176	22
4	EHO	22	0	176	22

5	EHO	22	0	176	22
7	Modern Apprentice	66	2	132	20
8	TO	0	0	198	22
9	Student EHO	44	2	154	20
	Total	198	15	1073	135

4.2.3 Competence

Each officer has a level of competence and specialism that directs what type of work they are able to undertake. The Senior EHO undertakes assessment of each officer on a regular basis. Regular A&D's identify any training issues and how best to provide the training. The team also undertakes a number of exercises to test competence and help improve knowledge and confidence. The team took part in the national consistency exercise run by the FSA earlier in the year.

4.2.4 Overall Resource Required

Activity	Visits / investigations	Total Time
Health and safety inspections	1	1
Health and safety face to face interventions	386	52
Health and safety none face to face interventions	937	63
Accident investigations	38	40
Health and safety service requests (Includes licensing Applications)	129	32
Skin piercing applications	20	20
Smokefree complaints	10	1
Food safety inspections	823	268
Food standards inspections	920	304
New Businesses	294	119
Food premises approvals	4	12
Food sampling interventions	657	486
Infectious disease investigations	317	80
Food service requests	185	75
Food Safety Notices	156	26
Food Advice	104	14
Meetings		79
Training		80
ICT Maintenance		20
Total	4981	1772

	H&S	Smokefree	Food	ID	Other	Total
Time Available	198	15	1073	135	0	1421
Time Required	209	1	1292	80	179	1761
Balance	-11	14	-219	55	-179	-340

4.3 Staff Training and Development

Food training is provided free of charge by the FSA and is available both regionally and nationally. Officers are required to maintain 10 hours CPD in food related training in order to maintain their basic food competence. The FSA are consulting on a proposal to require all officers involved in food enforcement to maintain 20 hours CPD. The impact of this will be evaluated and comments made to the FSA.

Further training is provided through the North East Public Protection Partnership

Environmental Health Officers must maintain a minimum of 20 hours CPD to maintain competence and 30 hours if chartered Environmental Health Professionals. Environmental Health Officers are also career graded and must take on extra responsibility to progress within the career grade.

5. Quality Assessment

The Team is fully committed to the principles of continuous improvement and will strive to maintain high standards of performance.

Officer workload, enforcement decisions and data recording will be monitored by the Senior EHO to ensure consistency and accuracy. Health and Safety enforcement decisions are confirmed by using the Enforcement Management Model.

Officers undertake joint visits to ensure consistency and share knowledge and best practice.

The Intervention Plan and Sampling Programme are monitored on a monthly basis and progress is reported to the Head of Service.

Business and consumer satisfaction is monitored through the use of postal surveys. The survey in 2015/16 showed that respondents strongly agreed that overall they were satisfied with the inspection service they received. Full results can be found in the Customer Satisfaction Survey End of year Report.

6. Review

Below is a review of the work completed in 2015/16. Due to changes in working practices and coding of premises that occurred during the year it is not always possible to directly link the planned work with what has been carried out. Also many of the visits included visits to previously unrated premises. Many food premises now receive a joint intervention that includes both food and health and safety.

6.1 Health and Safety

Sector, premises type or specific cross sector activity	Planned activity or resource		Achieved	Comments
	Visits / contacts	Officer days		
Health and safety inspections	2	2	6	We do not have any A rated premises
Health and safety face to face interventions	251	102	45	Mainly included as joint food hygiene interventions and includes a number of take away premises
Health and safety none face to face interventions	386	52	202	
Accident investigations	132	43	38	
Health and safety service requests (Includes licensing Applications)	139	41	125	
Skin piercing applications	20	20	28	
Smokefree complaints	18	2	10	
Total	1271	327	1009	

6.2 Food Safety

Activity	Planned	Officer Days	Achieved	Comments
Food Hygiene Interventions				
A	2	4	5	A number of new high risk establishments have been identified during the year.
B	25	25	16	Those not inspected were due in March 2016.
C	271	146	70	Premises that are broadly compliant and low risk have not been visited in preference to higher risk establishments and taking enforcement actions where low compliance
D	454	123	203	
E	127	17	67	
UNRATED	95	39	46	
Food Standards Interventions				
A	19	24	8	Standards interventions are normally undertaken at the same time as hygiene interventions. However, where a sampling intervention is undertaken, the standards intervention is not carried out until the next inspection. The Food Information Regulations 2014 have had a large impact on the work of the team and has required an increase in the time spent with businesses.
B	568	318	86	
C	46	28	14	

In the following table, planned activity is taken from the activity reported in last years' service plan. The level of activity is dependent upon the number of reports and what formal action is taken throughout the year.

Activity	Projected	Officer Days	Achieved	Comments
Sampling				
Microbiology	454		500	The sampling officer has been on long term sick leave. This has led to fewer samples being taken.
Compositional	203		219	
Infectious Disease				
Investigated	103		153	
Monitored	203		242	
Outbreaks	11		4	A major outbreak is being formally investigated.
Service Requests				
	339		280	
Enforcement				
Written warnings	215		141	These figures reflect our commitment to improving conditions within the poorest performing premises.
Hygiene Improvement Notices	16		18	
Prosecutions	2		1	
Simple caution	0		1	
Voluntary surrender	6		13	
Condemnation	0		0	

7. Service Improvements

7.1 Health & Safety

We will continue to expand the number of joint visits that are carried out to reduce burdens on business and work in a more efficient way. This is particularly true in take away premises where an intervention can only be undertaken in the evening.

We will continue the use of mailshots to lower risk businesses and provide guidance combined with self-assessment questionnaires.

We will examine the use of alternative means of contacting businesses.

7.2 Food

We will become more risk based in our approach to inspections. Lower risk businesses will receive self-assessment questionnaires, whilst compliant businesses at last inspection will receive an alternative intervention.

The highest risk premises and poor performing businesses will still receive an inspection.

We will examine the use of alternative ways of working and where colleagues are visiting premises ask them to obtain some basic information to assist us.

We will target new businesses, in order to reduce the number of outstanding inspections..

We are updating our webpages to increase the information provided to businesses and the public. We will encourage more use of online applications and reporting of problems.

7.3 Service Priorities

In 2016/17 the Development & Public Protection Service Priorities we will contribute to will be:

- Improving Health and Wellbeing
 - Ensuring safe food.
 - Ensuring compositional standards are met and that labels are accurate, including nutrition information and claims.
 - Prevent food fraud.
 - Ensuring workplaces are safe.
 - Investigating workplace accidents to prevent them recurring.
 - Work with the Adult Safeguarding Team to ensure the safety of elderly residents in care homes.
- Improving Customer Service
 - Expanding our customer satisfaction surveys to other areas of the service.
 - Review standard letters and notices to ensure they are written in plain English and can be produced quickly and efficiently.
 - Ongoing review of the procedures manual.
- Supporting Businesses
 - Providing advice to businesses.
 - Participation in the national FHRS scheme to promote business improvement.
 - Continuing to support the Metrocentre, through our joint aim of having all food businesses rated as 4 or 5.
 - Supporting the Rural Economic Strategy.
- Creating a High Quality and Sustainable Environment
 - Supporting businesses to improve their environment and going green.
- Maximising Efficiency and Value for Money
 - Examining alternative ways of working.
 - Carrying out more combined food and health and safety visits.
 - Being the eyes and ears for other teams during our visits and checking compliance with indicator items.
 - Ensuring our officers maintain and increase competence.
- A highly respected service which meets all service user needs ensuring they are well informed
 - Expand our use of customer satisfaction surveys.
 - Examine suggestions and respond to poor performance.
 - Ensure that all compliments and complaints are entered onto the corporate system.