

**Regeneration and Local Services**

**Environment Health and Consumer Protection**

# Food Safety Service Plan 2019-20

*Altogether better*



Drawn up in accordance with the Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Law Controls by Local Authorities (as amended)

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Durham County Council is required to prepare an annual food and feed service plan in line with the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) Framework Agreement on Food Law Enforcement.
- 1.2 This Service Plan sets out how Durham County Council intends to provide Food Safety and Food Standards services that ensures food produced, sold, stored, distributed or consumed in County Durham is safe to eat, is what it says it is, and that businesses comply with food law.
- 1.3 The Food Safety & Wellbeing Team delivers the Council's food service. The team is part of the Environment, Health and Consumer Protection (EHCP) Service, which is in turn part the Regeneration and Local Services Directorate (REAL).

## **2. Service Aims and Objectives**

### **Aim**

- 2.1 The aim of the Food Safety and Wellbeing team *is to ensure that food produced, sold, stored, distributed or consumed in County Durham is safe to eat, is what it says it is, and that businesses comply with food law.*
- 2.2 The team will implement the following objectives and actions to achieve the aim:

### **Objectives**

**FS1 To improve food safety and levels of compliance with food law and contribute to a reduction in in food borne illness through the delivery of a programme of proactive inspections and interventions in food businesses within Durham County Council.**

### **Actions**

- a. Implement an annual risk-based intervention plan for food hygiene
- b. Implement an annual risk-based intervention plan for food standards
- c. Implement an annual sampling plan in relation to microbiological and compositional food safety, including labelling, allergens and health claims.

**FS2 To improve food safety and levels of compliance with food law and contribute to a reduction in in food borne illness through the delivery of reactive interventions relating to food safety and food standards.**

Actions

- a. Investigate all complaints and service requests relating to food safety and standards in accordance with Durham County Council's Food and Food Premises Complaints Procedure
- b. Investigate outbreaks of food borne illness
- c. Investigate cases of food borne illness in accordance with guidance issued by Public Health England (PHE)
- d. Respond appropriately to food alerts issued by the Food Standards Agency
- e. Work with partner agencies where intelligence is received relating to food fraud or organised crime and notify FSA where appropriate

**FS3 To support and educate businesses to help them to improve food safety standards**

Actions

- a. Deliver the nationally accredited training course in food hygiene – '(CIEH) Level 2 Award in Food Safety for Catering'
- b. Participate in national campaigns co-ordinated by the FSA
- c. Provide targeted advice to food business operators through the Safety Advisory Group
- d. Work with the Better Business for All (BBfA) team to review information provided through the council's web pages
- e. Work with the BBfA team to provide tailored advice and support to food business

**FS4 To raise awareness of local and national food safety issues, including hygiene standards in food businesses across County Durham, enabling consumers to choose where they buy, or eat, their food**

Actions

- a. Publish the inspection ratings as part of the FHRs Scheme
- b. Issue press releases in response to food alerts issued by the Food Standards Agency where necessary
- c. Participate in national campaigns co-ordinated by the FSA

## **FS5 To provide a consistent approach to better food regulation**

### Actions

- a. Keep accurate records of all food safety enforcement activities and produce timely statutory returns as required by the FSA
- b. Review Durham County Council's compliance with the standards laid out in the FSA 'Framework Agreement'
- c. Ensure all food officers receive training to maintain their competence
- d. Continue to attend local authority liaison groups, including their sub-groups and consistency exercises
- e. Use proportionate enforcement methods in accordance with the authority's [Enforcement Policy](#).

### **3. Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans**

3.1 This service plan links to the Authority's [Council Plan](#). The plan provides a framework, for organising our improvement actions into the following priority themes:

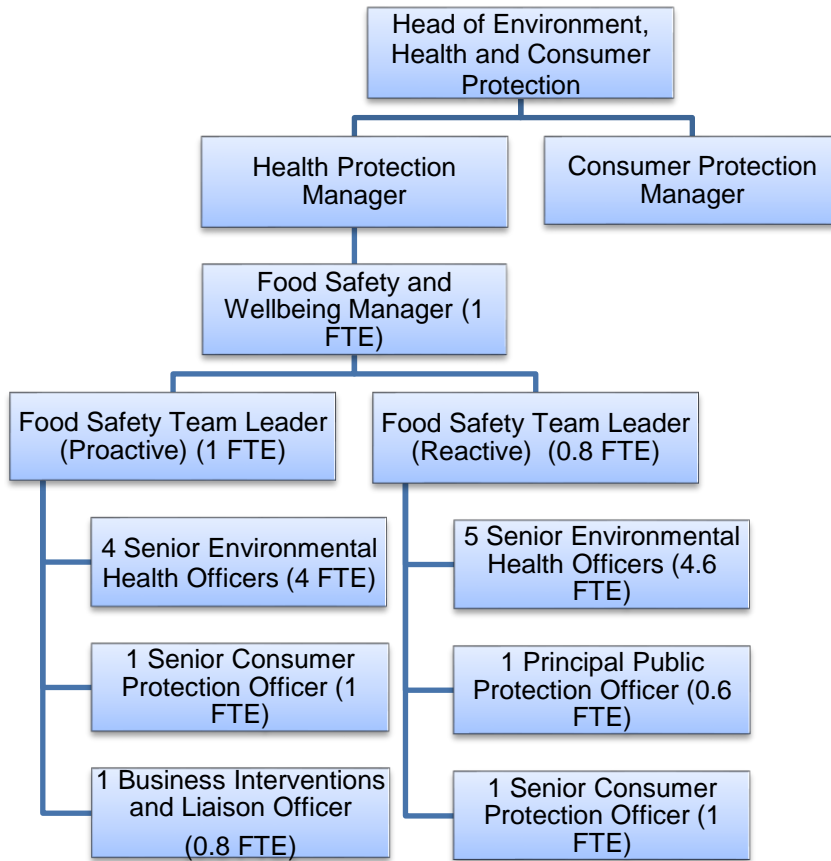
- Altogether wealthier - focusing on creating a vibrant economy and putting regeneration and economic development at the heart of all our plans
- Altogether healthier - improving health and wellbeing
- Altogether safer - creating a safer and more cohesive county
- Altogether better for children and young people - enabling children and young people to develop and achieve their aspirations, and to maximise their potential in line with Every Child Matters
- Altogether greener - ensuring an attractive and 'liveable' local environment, and contributing to tackling global environmental challenges
- Altogether better council - ensuring corporate improvements are achieved against the five priority themes

### **4. Profile of the Local Authority**

4.1. Durham is a county of economic, cultural and environmental contrasts. Stretching from the remote rural North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the west to the more densely populated east Durham heritage coastline, the county has a varied geography and rich economic history. County Durham is a place of distinctive character with a strong sense of its own identity. Further information on profiles of County Durham, can be viewed on the [County Durham Partnership website](#).

## 5. Organisational Structure

5.1. The Environment, Health & Consumer Protection Service operates within Regeneration and Local Services and comprises two 'themed teams', each responsible for specific areas of work. The food safety team sits within the Health Protection grouping, which has the following organisational management structure:



## **6. Scope of the Food Safety Service**

6.1. Durham County Council is designated as a food authority under the Food Safety Act 1990. The Food Safety and Wellbeing Team is responsible for the delivery of Food Safety and Food Standards regulation as well as the council's responsibilities for infectious disease, port health and some areas of health promotion. The team is responsible for the work activities involving:

- Carrying out risk-based interventions at food business for food hygiene and food standards in accordance with the National Food Law Code of Practice.
- Approval and inspection of food businesses handling food of animal origin covered by Regulation (EC) No 853/2004.
- Microbiological food and environmental sampling.
- Food sampling for compositional and labelling conformity.
- Complaint investigations concerning food, hygiene of food businesses, labelling and composition of food (including allergens).
- Investigation and control of outbreaks and sporadic cases of food poisoning, food-borne disease and other relevant infections.
- Responding to food safety incidents and food alerts reported by the FSA.
- Working with partner agencies where intelligence is received relating to food fraud or organised crime.
- Imported food control as an inland authority for food imported from outside the EU through sampling, inspection and enforcement
- Issuing Food Export Certificates to businesses exporting foods to third countries
- Examination and responding to planning, licensing applications and safety advisory group consultations in relation to food premises and related food safety activities
- Maintaining a register of food business establishments
- Promotion and operation of the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme
- Inspection of ships and issuing Ship Sanitation Exemption Certificates at the Port of Seaham.
- Provision of food hygiene training and advice to support our local existing food businesses, new and proposed food businesses and consumers on food safety matters
- Business support activities based around food safety, food hygiene and food standards the Better Business for All scheme.

6.1 The authority has arrangements in place with the following organisations to assist with service delivery relating to food sampling and the control of infectious disease, including:

- A service level agreement with the Public Health England (PHE) Food, Water and Environmental Microbiology Laboratory (Official Control Laboratory) in York for the microbiological examination of food, water, dairy and environmental investigations.
- Access to the services of a "public and agricultural analyst" by means of a regional procurement arrangement in accordance with section 27 of the Food Safety Act 1990.
- The appointment of a 'Proper Officer' at Public Health England in relation to infectious disease control.



**7. Demands on the Service**

7.1 As of 01/04/2019 there are 4421 food businesses subject to regulatory controls situated in County Durham. The premises profile below highlights catering and retail as the dominant sectors, with businesses predominantly being small to medium-sized establishments:

<b>Food Business Profile by Premises Category @ 1 April 2019</b>	
<b>Type of Premises (by FSA category)</b>	<b>Number</b>
Primary Producers	12
Manufacturers and Packers	121
Importers/Exporters	3
Distributors/Transporters	49
Retailers ( <i>including Supermarket/Hypermarket, Smaller Retailers.</i> )	982
Caterers: ( <i>including Restaurants &amp; Cafés, Hotels &amp; Guesthouses, Takeaways, Pubs &amp; Clubs, Businesses providing care, Schools &amp; Colleges, Mobile food businesses &amp; other caterers</i> )	3254
<b>Total</b>	<b>4421</b>

<b>Food Hygiene Premises Profile by Risk Rating @ 1 April 2019</b>	
<b>Premises Rating Category</b>	<b>Number</b>
A	6
B	208
C	906
D	1468
E	1444
Premises - Unrated	186
Outside of the FSA scheme	293
<b>Total</b>	<b>4421</b>

<b>Food Standards Premises Profile by Risk Rating @ 1 April 2019</b>	
<b>Premises Rating Category</b>	<b>Number</b>
A	5
B	441
C (Including Premises – Unrated)	3275
Premises - Unrated	453
Outside of the FSA scheme	295
<b>Total</b>	<b>4469</b>

7.2. Under Regulation (EC) 853/2004, relating to the production, handling and storage of Products of Animal Origin there are currently 39 approved establishments operating in County Durham. The range of premises consist of:

<b>Approved Establishments @ 1 April 2019</b>	
<b>Establishment Type</b>	<b>Number</b>
Meat products	5
Dairy products	9
Meat preparations	5
Meat products and meat preparations	1
Rewrapping establishment	1
Fish product processing	1
Cold stores	13
Egg packing centres	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>

- 7.3 Food premises interventions are generally undertaken during daytime office working hours. However, an increasing number of food businesses, such as takeaways, focus their trade at the evening economy and the timing of our interventions has changed. The team works flexibly to accommodate this change.
- 7.4 The number of registered food premises fluctuates because of new businesses opening for trade, existing businesses which cease trading, and businesses where there is a change in ownership, management and/or food activities at the premises. All new food businesses need to be inspected to assess compliance with food laws and issue a food hygiene rating. This directly affects other areas of programmed work carried out by the team. During 2018-2019 there were 472 food hygiene inspections required in respect of newly registered food businesses.
- 7.3 Increased public awareness has led to a rise in Freedom of Information and Environmental Information requests, Data Protection enquiries. In addition, food safety consultations, for example from the council's Safety Advisory Group continue to place demands on the work of the food safety service.
- 7.4 The implementation of the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) in County Durham, has impacted resources. The FHRS incorporates safeguards to ensure fairness to businesses. This includes an appeals procedure, a 'right to reply for publication (together with the food hygiene rating) and a mechanism for requesting a re-inspection or revisit for a new rating. These additional inspections are carried out within three months from the submission of a valid request. Whilst a fee has been introduced to cover the costs of re-inspections, the time taken impacts other programmed work. The proposed introduction of 'mandatory display' of FHRS ratings will place further demands on the team.
- 7.5 Durham County Council is the 'Port Health Authority' for the Port of Seaham. Whilst no food is imported through the port, a small number of service requests are received each year to provide Ship Sanitation (Exemption) Certificates for vessels arriving at the port. These requests involve the inspection of facilities on board ships visiting the port.
- 7.6 Better intelligence received by the team in relation to local, regional and national food crime has increased the number of requests to work with partner regulators.

7.7 The Food Safety Team can be accessed in the following ways:

<b>Food Safety &amp; Wellbeing Team Contact Details</b>	
<b>Office Address</b>	Annand House, John Street North, Meadowfield, Durham, DH7 8RS
<b>Postal Address</b>	<b>Environment, Health and Consumer Protection</b> , Annand House, John Street North, Durham, PO Box 617, Durham, DH1 9HZ
<b>Hours of Opening</b>	Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm
<b>Telephone Number</b>	03000 261016 (EHCP offices) 03000 260000 (General enquiries)
<b>Email</b>	ehcp@durham.gov.uk ns_foodsafety@durham.gov.uk
<b>Social Media</b>	Twitter @durhamcouncil Facebook.com/durhamcouncil
<b>Council's Website</b>	www.durham.gov.uk

7.9 Our service works almost exclusively with, through and for people. As an authority we are acting to ensure all aspects of service delivery address equality and diversity issues. We are committed to ensuring that staff and people using council services or facilities receive fair and appropriate treatment. We will provide support in the most appropriate way to help people use our services.

7.10 Whilst there are relatively few traders in County Durham whose first language is not English, the council can provide access to a range of communication services to customers upon request including:

- translation and interpreting services where your first language is not English
- sign language interpreters and other support for those who are deaf or have impaired hearing
- documents in alternative formats, for example Braille, large print, audio and disc and other options designed to meet specific individual needs

## **8. Regulation Policy**

8.1 The Service will proportionately enforce relevant legislation when carrying out their duties, in accordance with the principles of 'Better Regulation' set out in the [Regulators' Code](#). These principles and our approach to enforcement of food safety are embedded within the [Environment, Health and Consumer Protection \(EHCP\) Enforcement Policy](#). A full copy of the policy is available via the council's website; or as a paper copy, upon request.

8.2 All enforcement action will be taken having regard to the [Environment, Health and Consumer Protection \(EHCP\) Enforcement Policy](#). Wherever possible, enforcement activities will be co-ordinated with other enforcement agencies and local authorities.

## **Service Delivery Objective FS1 - Proactive Interventions at Food Establishments**

To meet the service objective **FS1** (see page 4) the team will carry out the following pro-active interventions at food establishments:

- a. Implement an annual risk-based intervention plan for food hygiene
- b. Implement an annual risk-based intervention plan for food standards
- c. Implement an annual sampling plan in relation to microbiological and compositional food safety, including labelling, allergens and health

### **9. Proactive Food Hygiene and Food Standards Interventions at Food Establishments (FS1a and FS1b)**

9.1 Interventions are defined as activities that are designed to monitor, support and increase food law compliance within a food establishment and they include but are not restricted to the following “official controls”:

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

9.2 The Authority follows the FSA Food Law Code of Practice to determine how food establishments are included in the its intervention plan and the frequency of the intervention.

9.3 Risk based food safety and food standards interventions (including inspections) will be carried out in compliance with The Food Safety Act 1990, Food Hygiene (England) regulations 2006 and the Food Law Code of Practice and Practice Guidance 2017 and according to the following principles:

- a. We aim to inspect 100% of Category A, B and C premises which are due a programmed food hygiene inspection during the year
- b. We aim to inspect 70% of Category D and 50% of Category E premises due a programmed food hygiene inspection during the year with priority given to those food businesses considered as a higher food safety risk.
- c. We aim to inspect 100% of Category A and B premises which are due a food standards inspection
- d. Higher risk interventions will take precedence over lower risk interventions
- e. Priority is given to the higher risk food hygiene inspection programme. All A, B, C and high risk (FHRS score 0-2) D businesses will receive an appropriate official control.
- f. Low risk D rated premises may alternate between an official controls and other interventions
- g. Inspect premises which are overdue a food hygiene inspection from previous years, targeting those considered a higher risk to food safety
- h. Inspect establishments for compliance with food standards and food hygiene at the same visit. These inspections will be determined within the intervention frequency of the food hygiene programmed intervention

- i. Other Food interventions due within year will where practical be carried out alongside food hygiene interventions
- j. We will target food premises currently rated Category E within the food hygiene programme using partial inspections or an alternative enforcement strategy (AES) to address both food standards and food hygiene requirements. Where applicable this will be achieved by sending out AES questionnaires.
- k. Interventions will be carried out at Category E premises, where we receive a complaint, a notification of change of activity or ownership, or any other “intelligence” that justifies a visit.
- l. Newly registered businesses will be logged as ‘unrated’ until inspected and risk score is determined. These will be inspected in addition to the proactive intervention program. Durham County Council has a high turnover of businesses resulting in high number of new food business registrations. Newly registered business will be prioritised according to risk. In 2018-2019 we carried out 472 inspections of new businesses. Due to the large number, it may not be possible to complete these within the required 28 days of the business registering with us.
- m. We will revisit business to assess compliance following the service of a formal notice, after the grant of an approval or where previously identified contraventions may lead to risks to food safety. We anticipate that we will revisit around 10% of premises inspected.
- n. The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) allows businesses to request a revisit to allow their rating to be re-assessed once they have addressed non-compliances. There were 46 revisit inspections carried out during 2018-2019. It is estimated that around an additional 50 FHRS revisit to rescore inspections will be carried during the financial year.

### **Imported Food Controls**

- 9.5. Although there are currently no border inspection posts or enhanced remote sheds within the county boundaries, the authority has responsibility for imported food control as an inland authority and imported food control forms part of the overall food safety intervention process.
- 9.6. Officers routinely look for foods imported during intervention visits to premises and carry out imported food control sampling and examination to check traceability and compliance with compositional, microbiological and labelling compliance standards.
- 9.7. Arrangements are in place to ensure effective liaison and communications with key bodies and businesses involved in imported food activities

9.8. Food hygiene interventions are undertaken to ensure that food businesses are operating in compliance with the requirements of food hygiene legislation. The intent is to assess measures and conditions necessary to control hazards and to ensure fitness for human consumption of a foodstuff, considering its intended use

9.9. The intervention plan for Food Hygiene is detailed in the table below:

<b>Objective FS1a - Food Hygiene Intervention Plan 2019-2020</b>			
<b>Premises Rating Category</b>	<b>Minimum Intervention Frequency</b>	<b>Number of premises due an intervention</b>	<b>Intervention Target</b>
A	6 months	6	100%
B	12 months	208	100%
C	18 months	593	100%
D	24 months	839	75%
E*	36 months	699	50% (including AES*)
Unrated	-	186	-

9.10. Food standards interventions are delivered to ensure that food meets the requirements of food standards law, including correct presentation, composition, labelling and advertising, so as not to mislead the consumer.

9.11. The intervention plan for Food Standards is detailed in the table below:

<b>Objective FS1b - Food Standards Intervention 2020</b>			
<b>Premises Rating Category</b>	<b>Minimum Intervention Frequency</b>	<b>Number of premises due an intervention</b>	<b>Intervention Target</b>
A	6 months	6	100%
B	12 months	259	100%
C	18 months	706	AES
Unrated	-	514	-

## 10. Food Sampling

10.1. All food sampling is undertaken in accordance with the Food Safety Code of Practice, the authority's sampling policy, and in-house documented sampling procedures. Where samples fail to meet the required standards, an investigation will follow to identify the cause of the failure, and appropriate action will be taken to ensure the safety and quality of food products.

10.2. Sampling is achieved by examination and analysis of foods to ensure they meet safety standards for microbiological safety, labelling, chemical and compositional quality, and may be taken:

- as part of a planned survey
- where a complaint has been received requiring further investigation
- for enforcement purposes where there are concerns about food safety practices or procedures found during an intervention or from intelligence received
- as part of a national, cross regional or locally co-ordinated sampling project
- where there is an alleged or confirmed report of food poisoning forming an essential part of a full investigation of the cause and means of control
- as part of an FSA funded imported food control or other co-ordinated sampling programme
- as directed by the Food Standards Agency following notification of food safety incidents and food alerts for action

10.3. Annual sampling programmes are drawn up and implemented to reflect the number, nature and risk ratings of the food businesses in the area, taking account of our Originating Authority obligations, and any national or regionally organised sampling initiatives agreed with Public Health England, the FSA and the appointed Public Analyst and Food Examiner.

10.4. Durham County Council has a service level agreement with its appointed food examiner for the **microbiological examination** of food, water and environmental samples. The appointed food examiner for Durham County Council is:

Public Health England (PHE)  
Food Water & Environmental Microbiology Laboratory  
Block 10,  
The National Agri-Food Innovation Campus  
Sand Hutton  
York  
YO41 1LZ

10.5. The team service will be participating in a series of national, cross regional and local microbiological studies during 2019-2020. These are agreed with the Public Health England York Laboratory and are outlined in the table below:

<b>Objective FS1c – Microbiological Sampling Plan 2019-2020</b>			
<b>Study Reference</b>		<b>Sampling Project</b>	<b>Study Period</b>
National Studies	Study 67	Vacuum packed/ Modified Atmosphere RTE Food and Swabs	April 2019 to March 2020
	Study 68	Raw Milk Cheeses (UK & Non-UK)	April 2019 to March 2020
	Study 69	EU Exit Study	TBC
Cross Regional Studies	XR37	Premises with single multi-purpose sink & no dishwasher	April to Sept 2019
	XR38	Premises Hygiene: Single use cloths vs reusable cloths	April 2019 to March 2020
	XR39	Soil bearing vegetables	May to Oct 2019
	XR40	Sandwiches at the end of shelf-life	Jul to Oct 2019
Local Studies	TBC		
	TBC		

10.6. We also plan to contribute to a series of North East Regional Compositional Food Sampling Projects during 2019-2020. These are detailed in the table below:

<b>Objective FS1c – Compositional Food Sampling Plan 2019-2020</b>			
<b>Study Reference</b>		<b>Sampling Project</b>	<b>Study Period</b>
Cross Regional Studies	C1	Allergens in takeaways	Apr to May 2019
	C2	Allergens in food from National branches of coffee shops/retail grab'n'go outlets	May 2019
	C3	Allergens in food from bespoke cake makers/general market stalls	June 2019
	C4	Allergens in food from events and caterers	June to July 2019
Local Studies	TBC		

10.7. Durham County Council has appointed Public and Agricultural Analysts to undertake compositional analysis food. The analyst is:

Public Analyst Scientific Services Ltd  
 Valiant Way  
 Wolverhampton  
 WV9 5GB



## **Service Delivery Objective FS2 - Reactive Interventions at Food Establishments**

To meet the service objective **FS2** (see paragraph page 4) the team will carry out the following re-active interventions at food establishments:

- a. Investigate all complaints and service requests relating to food safety and standards in accordance with Durham County Council's Food and Food Premises Complaints Procedure
- b. Investigate outbreaks of food borne illness
- c. Investigate cases of food borne illness in accordance with guidance issued by Public Health England (PHE)
- d. Respond appropriately to food alerts issued by the Food Standards Agency
- e. Work with partner agencies where intelligence is received relating to food fraud or organised crime and notify FSA where appropriate

### **11. Food Safety Complaints**

11.1. Complaints and service requests received by the team fall into one of the following categories:

- Complaints about food such as undercooking, mould or contamination with foreign matter. These include complaints about food made in County Durham and complaints about food sold in County Durham but made elsewhere in the country or abroad.
- Complaints about food business premises within County Durham. These include complaints relating to poor cleanliness, staff hygiene, pests lack of facilities such as hot and cold-water supply, and management issues such as temperature control.
- Food Standards Complaints about food labelling including misleading claims, product descriptions and use by dates.
- Complaints about chemical contamination.
- Requests for advice and guidance.

11.2. Details of all complaints are recorded for intelligence purposes are recorded, however the decision to investigate or not is based upon risk in accordance with the Council's Food and Food Premises Complaints Procedure.

11.3. Trend data indicates that the team will deal with over 700 complaints about food, food premises and food standards. The number is expected to increase due to a larger number of food businesses within County Durham and greater public awareness.

### **12. Primary Authority and Home Authority Principle**

12.1. Although the Council currently have no formal agreements currently in place to act as a Primary Authority for any food business, the authority supports the Primary Authority Scheme and has regard to the relevant principles and guidance when dealing with any food business establishment in a Primary Authority partnership.

- 12.2. The food safety team recognises the role which primary authorities play, in enabling a consistent approach to enforcement of food safety. Training on the role of a primary authority and specific arrangements for inspection and enforcement has been provided to officers to reflect the approach regulators are required to follow
- 12.3. The Council is the originating authority for food producers, food manufacturers and many other food businesses which supply food outside of County Durham. In our capacity as an 'originating authority', we will provide advice to relevant businesses on legal compliance. In addition, we will have regard to any information or advice received from home and/or originating authorities elsewhere. We will liaise with the home and/or originating authority of any business where identified non-compliance appears to be associated with the business's policies and procedures.
- 12.4. We will respond to all reasonable requests for appropriate information and or assistance from other authorities about locally produced foods sold outside of County Durham and are the subject of a complaint.

### **13. Control and Investigation of Food-Related Outbreaks and Notifications of Infectious Disease**

#### **Outbreaks of Food Borne Illness**

- 13.1. Whilst most notifications are sporadic, occasionally outbreaks of food borne illness occur. In the event of an outbreak, officers from the team act in accordance with the Public Health England "Policy for the Investigation and Control of Community Outbreaks of Infectious Disease in the North East" (January 2014). The Policy describes the actions to be taken in the event of a suspected outbreak of infection occurring in the North East region. This includes community outbreaks of food poisoning. The Policy has been developed and endorsed by Public Health England (PHE), the North East Centre Health Protection Team and constituent local authorities.
- 13.2. Members of the food safety team are core members on Outbreak Control Teams (OCTs) and have defined responsibilities, including contacting and interviewing affected individuals, taking samples, carrying out investigations at implicated food premises, and attending OCT meetings. Depending on the scale and type of outbreak these responsibilities require significant resources from the team that impact on the team's ability to carry out planned interventions.

#### **Individual Cases of Food Borne Illness**

- 13.3. The team works closely with the North East Health Protection Team from Public health England to investigate all reported cases of food related infectious diseases are investigated in accordance with documented procedures (PHE).
- 13.4. The method of response and investigation varies according to risk and will be based upon the nature of the illness and causative organism. The response may be by visit, telephone or postal questionnaire.

13.5. There were 824 notifications of cases of infectious disease during [2019/ 2020] and data relating to the type and number of notifications received during the year is detailed below:

<b>Objective FS2c – Investigation of Food Borne Illness</b>			
<b>Type of Organism</b>	<b>2016/ 2017</b>	<b>2017/ 2018</b>	<b>2018/ 2019</b>
Campylobacter		690	542
Cryptosporidium		77	84
Salmonella Species		107	61
Giardia Lamblia		28	26
Suspected Infection		21	74
E Coli 0157		9	16
Shigella Sonnei		4	4
Shigella Flexneri		3	0
Hepatitis E		3	7
Yersinia Spp.		1	2
Listeria Monocytogenese		1	4
Entamoeba Hystolitica		1	0
Legionella		4	3
Total		947	824

#### **14. Food Incidents and Food Alerts**

14.1. The authority has arrangements in place to respond to food alerts for action and food safety incidents communicated by the FSA. Each member of the Food Safety team subscribes to the FSA ‘Smarter Communications’ system and as a result receives Food Alerts directly via email. The FSA issues three types of food alert:

- Food alerts for action
- Product Recall Information Notices (PRINs)
- Allergy alerts that provide information directly to the consumer

14.2. In the case of food alerts requiring action, the team will ensure that all actions specified are taken in line with the advice given by the FSA. Officers in the team will also follow its own documented procedures, outlining operational arrangements for dealing with such incidents in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice.

14.3. Response to the alerts may involve contacting or visiting premises where an implicated food product is likely to be on sale. Whilst it is difficult to predict the number of such incidents that received in any given year, these investigations can potentially have a significant impact on the planned intervention programme. In previous years there have been the following number of alerts:

<b>Objective FS2d – Food Alerts</b>			
			<b>2018/ 2019</b>
Total			175

14.4. Where the Authority becomes aware of a serious localised incident, or a wider food safety problem relating to a food business, staff will notify the FSA in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice.

## **15. Food Fraud and Organised Crime**

15.1 Food fraud is committed when food is placed on the market, with the purpose of deliberately misleading the consumer for financial gain. Examples of food fraud include:

- deliberate substitution of a food product or ingredient with another substance of inferior nature such as the replacing almond with peanut
- knowingly selling goods which are past their 'use by' dates
- unlawful processing where the slaughter or processing of meat and associated products is carried out in unapproved premises or using unauthorised techniques
- misrepresentation where the marketing or labelling of a product inaccurately portrays its quality, origin or safety and
- document fraud where the use of false or misappropriated documents are used to sell or market a fraudulent or substandard product.

15.2 The food safety team aims to prevent fraudulent or deceptive practices, adulteration of food and any other practice, which may mislead or give rise to serious health risks or injury to the consumer.

15.3 We will investigate all allegations and official notifications of food fraud from the National FSA Food Crime Unit and other sources. We will report any intelligence gathered during routine interventions with businesses or from members of the public to the police or the appropriate government agency or enforcement body.

15.4 We will work with the police and other enforcement agencies where intelligence indicates activities at food business are associated with organised crime.

**Service Delivery Objective FS3 - Provision of Advice and Support to Food Businesses**

To support and educate businesses to help them to improve food safety standards the team will implement the following actions:

Actions

- a. Deliver the nationally accredited training course in food hygiene – ‘(CIEH) Level 2 Award in Food Safety for Catering’
- b. Participate in national campaigns co-ordinated by the FSA
- c. Provide targeted advice to food business operators through the Safety Advisory Group
- d. Work with the Better Business for All (BBfA) team to review information provided through the council’s web pages
- e. Work with the BBfA team to provide tailored advice and support to food business

**16. Food Safety Training Courses**

16.1. The Food Safety Team is registered to deliver the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate course in Catering. Subject to demand and available resource we plan to deliver a minimum of one training course during the year.

16.2. Additionally, the team may provide other educational and promotional activities subject to resources being available, for example by delivering talks, workshops and presentations to food businesses, in schools and other community organisations covering existing and emerging food safety topics.

**17. National Food Campaigns**

17.1 The team will continue to support national food safety initiatives such as the FSA ‘Let’s Talk Turkey’ campaign using press releases and the council’s social media channels, and by raising awareness of National Food Safety Week.

**18. Provision of Advice through the Safety Advisory Group (SAG)**

18.1 The team provides advice to event organisers as part of its role in the SAG. In previous years the team has responded to following number of consultations/ requests for information:

Objective FS3c – SAG Consultations			
			2018/ 2019
Total			200

18.2 One Each SAG consultation may involve provision of advice to event organisers relating to more than one business. In addition, officers from the team also provide advice during risk-based interventions during major events, such the Bishop Auckland and Seaham Food Festivals.

**19. Review of Durham County Council Web Pages to Support Businesses**

19.1 Members of the team will continue to work to review the Council's website content for food businesses to ensure that information on the Council's website is current and accurate. Our aim is to ensure businesses are sign posted to the food safety information and services that are relevant to their business.

**20. Provision of Tailored Advice to Businesses through Better Business for All (BBfA)**

20.1. The team will signpost businesses to sources of free information such as:

- Referring to free posters and advice leaflets
- Signposting to web-based information on the council's website and external sites such as the Food Standards Agency (FSA), DEFRA and the CIEH.
- Referring businesses to electronic copies of the FSA Safer Food Better Business (SFBB) pack

20.2. We will charge for advice that is specific to businesses, requires research, or where a visit is requested. Examples of chargeable services include:

- 'Gain and Retain' helps new and existing business gain a high FHS rating and provides support to help businesses retain it.
- Detailed advice on food labelling.
- Provision of 'hard copy' SFBB packs.

**Service Delivery Objective FS4 - Raising public awareness of local and national food safety issues, including hygiene standards in food businesses across County Durham**

To raise public awareness of food safety issues and to help them to members of the public make informed choices the team will implement the following actions:

Actions

- a. Publish the inspection ratings as part of the FHRs Scheme
- b. Issue press releases in response to food alerts issued by the Food Standards Agency where necessary
- c. Participate in national campaigns co-ordinated by the FSA

**21. National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRs)**

21.1 Durham County Council supports and provides data to the national [Food Hygiene Rating Scheme](#) to provide a single point of access to consumers for food hygiene information in a consistent manner across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

21.2 The data we provide includes scores that are based on standards we find on the date of our inspection and a rating for the business. This rating helps inform the customer about the standards of hygiene at a business.

21.3 To ensure data is accurate the council aims to upload and refresh its data every 14 to 21 days. Ratings for businesses within County Durham can be searched for [County Durham data](#). Trend data on the distribution of data can be seen in the table below:

Objective FS3c – Food Business Hygiene Ratings			
Rating	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019
5	2394	2465	2404
4	913	888	872
3	316	320	392
% rated 3 or above		95.4%	95.9%

**22. Raising Public Awareness of National Food Alerts**

22.1 Where necessary we will help to raise local awareness of National Food Alerts (refer to section 14) by issuing press releases to local media outlets and by using local media channels.

**23. Participation in Local and National Public Awareness Campaigns**

23.1 The team will continue raise public awareness of food safety issues by supporting national food safety initiatives such as the FSA ‘Let’s Talk Turkey’ and ‘Easy to Ask’ campaigns using press releases and the council’s social media channels, and by raising awareness of National Food Safety Week.

## **Service Delivery Objective FS5 - Providing a consistent approach to better food regulation**

To ensure the team provides a consistent and high-quality approach to food regulation the team will implement the following actions:

### Actions

- a. Keep accurate records of all food safety enforcement activities and produce timely statutory returns as required by the FSA
- b. Review Durham County Council's compliance with the standards laid out in the FSA 'Framework Agreement'
- c. Ensure all food officers receive training to maintain their competence
- d. Continue to attend local authority liaison groups, including their sub-groups and consistency exercises
- e. Use proportionate enforcement methods in accordance with the authority's [Enforcement Policy](#).

## **24. Data Accuracy and Submission of Statutory Returns - Quality Assessment and Internal Monitoring**

- 24.1. In accordance with the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement, Food Law Code of Practice (England) and Practice Guidance the service implements a documented internal management and monitoring system to monitor performance and quality of work. The procedure applies to all food hygiene and food standards interventions, post inspection administration, statutory notices, sampling and to all food-related service requests.
- 24.2. Monitoring activities include:
  - on-going staff appraisals,
  - regular team meetings,
  - accompanied interventions,
  - monitoring of a selection of food premises intervention documentation
  - statistical performance monitoring i.e. inspection and complaint numbers and database entry checks to determine accuracy.
  - Shadow inspections carried out for newly qualified officers and officers returning to food safety work from a period of absence
- 24.3. The outcomes of monitoring checks are reported to staff ensuring corrective action is taken and monitoring outcomes are documented.
- 24.4. External appointments, for example laboratories are independently assessed by outside agencies. Public Analytical Services and Public Health England laboratory providers are accredited for the testing and analysis of a wide range of products by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS).



24.5. We aim to submit our Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS) return by 31<sup>st</sup> May each year. The return provides annual data on our food law enforcement activities to the FSA. For this to be successful we check the accuracy of our stored data and carry out verification of data when we upload and submit it to the FSA.

## **25. Performance Management**

25.1. The measures in place to monitor the data accuracy and quality also include reviews on levels of staff performance. These include production of quarterly management reports covering inspection targets and enforcement action, and inter-authority auditing

25.2. The following reports of team performance are submitted to our corporate performance team quarterly, and include the following performance indicators:

- % progress against the annual planned food hygiene inspection programme
- Number. of food businesses per FTE officer in the Food Safety Team
- % of food establishments rated as 3 or above in Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)

## **26. Review Durham County Council's compliance with the standards laid out in the FSA 'Framework Agreement'**

26.1 We aim to review our procedures following changes to guidance issued by the FSA or to council policy.

26.2 Where there are no changes to council policy or FSA guidance we will review a minimum of one procedure per year.

## **27. Officer Training and Competence - Staff Development Plan**

27.1. The council recognises the link between performance and staff development. It commits to develop staff competency in line with its OPEN values. All staff therefore participate in an annual Performance and Development Review (PDR) during which staff can identify learning and development needs. This helps to ensure we deliver high-quality services and comply with the statutory competency requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice.

27.2. Team members can access their own portal on the Durham Learning & Development site. The site holds PDR records, including training needs as well as holding records of training received, e-courses, and supervision records. The site is a means of providing management information as well as identifying essential and desirable training through the PDR.

27.3. We aim to provide staff with a range of opportunities that ensure that staff receive a minimum the 20 hours technical and professional training necessary to satisfy the FSA Food Safety Code of Practice requirements to maintain competency. We will prioritise the 10 hours training in essential core competencies that update and enhance the skills necessary to delivery an integrated food service.

27.4. Officers are assessed against this requirement during their annual Performance and Development Review (PDR). To assist staff, we will identify in-house training, and external training delivered in partnership with regional partner agencies and external training providers. In addition, all enforcement officers have access to up to date reference material, through:

- The FSA communications database (RIAMS)
- Online courses delivered through the FSA and ABC websites
- Peer to peer discussion on Knowledge Hub
- Dedicated shared team folders and access to the internet

27.5. The training programme agreed for the current year is outlined in the table below, although further opportunities may arise:

<b>Objective FS5c – Food Safety Team Training and Development 20xx /20xx</b>			
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Information</b>
Imported Food	FSA	1 day	Training on imported food controls
Imported Food (E-Learning)	FSA	1 day	Training on imported food controls
Lessons Learned from Outbreaks	PHE	1 day	Training to improve working practices using lessons learned from recent outbreak investigations
Food Standards Update	Public Analyst Scientific Services (PASS)	1 day	Covering new and emerging issues and new legislation and guidance
Advance Professional Certificate in Investigative Practice	Bond Solon	8 Days (4 in 2019/ 2020)	Training designed to assist officers with criminal investigation interviewing and case file preparation.
FHRS Consistency	FSA/ NE Liaison Group	0.5 day	To be determined

## **28. Liaison with Other Organisations**

28.1. The Authority participates in and supports the work of regional local authority liaison groups and external organisations to achieve a consistent approach to its food safety enforcement activities. The aim of liaison is to discuss emerging issues, exchange information, promote consistency, work together on joint projects and organise training.

28.2. The service has liaison arrangements with the following organisations to relevant information when necessary:

- Food Standards Agency - regarding performance monitoring, provision of training and update events, and regional and national issues relating to food fraud and food safety incidents.
- Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy - Office for Product Safety and Standards which provides training, information and guidance on regulatory policy and Primary Authority support
- Professional industry bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health regarding training and the North East Trading Standards Association regarding food standards and feed.

28.3. We also liaise with internal Council service providers on issues such as:

- Applications for Planning Approval
- Safety Advisory Group Consultations (SAG) on food safety matters
- Licensing Service on licensing temporary event notices and street trader issues
- Business rates

28.4. We exchange and share information and best practice with regional partner local authorities. This aims to maximise resource and to improve our own understanding and knowledge in the areas of food safety and standards, promote consistency, provide joint projects and develop services. This is achieved through regular attendance at the following forums and groups:

<b>Objective FS5d – Food Safety Team Liaison Group Meetings</b>		
<b>Group</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
North East Food Liaison Group	Sub-regional meeting of the 7 North East LAs and a representative from the FSA is held to consider enforcement and consistency, officer training and development. It has the added value of sharing of experience and knowledge to improve best practice. We support decisions taken at the group and actively engage in the programme of activities.	Quarterly
North East Microbiological Sampling Sub-Group	Regional meeting held between local authorities from the Tees Valley and North East regions and the PHE Food Examiner to discuss and agree co-ordinated sampling programmes, protocols, practices, training as well as current and emerging food safety issues.	Quarterly
North East Compositional Sampling Sub-Group	Regional meeting held between local authorities from the Tees Valley and North East regions and the appointed Public Analyst to discuss, agree and plan sampling programmes, officer training and to discuss food standards, labelling and compositional matters.	Quarterly

<b>Objective FS5d – Food Safety Team Liaison Group Meetings</b>		
<b>Group</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
County Durham and Darlington Area Health Protection Group	Sub-regional meeting PHE, County Durham and Darlington authorities and Northumbrian Water to discuss strategic and operational health protection issues, local priorities, national policy and guidance and to identify training and development needs.	Quarterly
Northern Ports Liaison Network	Network meeting between local authorities, the APHA in which local authorities with port health functions work together to support each other by sharing knowledge, good practice and promoting consistency and competency in the delivery of port health services.	Twice a year

## 29. Proportionate Enforcement

29.1 The team will use a range of enforcement methods having regard to the [Environment, Health and Consumer Protection \(EHCP\) Enforcement Policy](#). Wherever possible, enforcement activities will be co-ordinated with other enforcement agencies and local authorities.

## 30. Resources

### Financial Allocation

30.1. The following figures are from the current Health Protection Service Budget, and have been extrapolated, based on the FTE split between the teams, and relevant functions, to provide the costs of delivering the food safety service.

<b>Cost Centre</b>	<b>Budget Amount (2019/ 2020)</b>
Salaries (net) authorised officers (permanent staff)	£525,605
Salaries (net)-support staff	£30,267
Equipment, materials & general expenses	£6,850
Travel	£17,000
Sampling (excluding FSA direct grant awards)	£12,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£591,722</b>

## Staffing Allocation

30.2. To deliver the Service, the following staff resource is available:

Post	Qualification	FTE (Food Service) (2019/ 2020)
Food Safety Manager	Environmental Health Registration Board (EHRB)	1.0
Food Safety Team Leader	EHRB	1.8
Senior Environmental Health Officer	EHRB	9.0
Principal Public Protection Officer	EHRB - Higher Certificate Food Premises Inspection (endorsed for food standards)	0.8
Senior Consumer Protection Officer	EHRB - Higher Certificate (Food Premises Inspection)	2.0

Post	FTE (Food Service) (2019/ 2020)
Business Interventions and Liaison Officer (Regulatory Support)	0.8
Business Support (administration and system development)	1.0

30.3. Regulatory support is provided by an Interventions and Liaison Officer, whose duties include:

- Monitoring planning applications to identify food businesses where the food safety team have a regulatory role. Liaison with applicants to provide advice registration and signposting to further sources of food safety guidance and information.
- Assistance in the delivery of the 'alternative enforcement strategy' currently in place for low risk food businesses
- Filtering of Safety Advisory Group events, which require comments on food safety matters and sign-posting of advisory information to event organisers.
- Providing an additional point of contact to accept reported notifications of cases of food poisoning and food-related infectious disease
- Informal sampling

30.4. Provision of administrative support to the Food Safety Service is provided by Technical Support Officers and a Service Development Officer. The provision of these additional resources will continue to influence the improvement and efficiency of the food safety team by:

- Ensuring the efficient and effective management of data systems to maintain the integrity of all electronic records
- Delivering training on data systems to users and managers and supporting them service delivery
- Developing, implementing and maintaining the service's electronic databases, software applications and web-based services

### 31. Review of Performance against the Service Plan

31.1. The food safety service plan review covers progress against the objectives and actions in Section 2 of this plan. These actions will also form part of future Health Protection Plans.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS1</b> - To improve food safety and levels of compliance with food law and contribute to a reduction in in food borne illness through the delivery of a programme of proactive inspections and interventions in food businesses within Durham County Council.				
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS1a</b> - Implement an annual risk-based intervention plan for food hygiene				
<b>Progress</b>	The team carried out the following interventions as part of the annual plan:				
	<b>Food Hygiene: Interventions by risk and due interventions</b>				
	<b>Premises Food Hygiene Rating Category</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>		<b>2018-2019</b>	
		Interventions Achieved (% of due)	Interventions Outstanding	Interventions Achieved (% of due)	Interventions Outstanding
	A	40 (100%)	0	41	0
	B	409 (100%)	0	415	1
	C	768 (99%)	7	878	2
	D	645 (61%)	413	744	295
	E	180 (22%)	645	454	411
	Unrated premises	509 (82%)	92	472	97
<i>Premises Outside of the intervention programme</i>	24	0	2	0	
<b>Total number of interventions</b>	<b>2575</b>	<b>1150</b>	<b>3006</b>	<b>806</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The service carried forward 1150 inspections from 2017-2018, including 413 category D, 645 Category E rated premises as well as 92 unrated premises. This increased the overall intervention target for 2018-2019. Because of this the team implemented several measures to reduce the backlog of low risk interventions. By the end of the 2018-2019 financial year the team had reduced the backlog from 1150 to 806.</li> <li>2. Whilst the FTE within the food service has not changed, a part time member of the team was seconded to another unit for a period of three months during the financial year. Going forward this part time post has been replaced with a full-time position increasing FTE capacity by 0.4.</li> <li>3. The level of reactive work dealt with by the team has remained high, specifically complaints relating to food/ food premises received, cases of infectious disease, requests for advice (842), and 46 visits to rescore under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.</li> <li>4. These factors together with those outlined in the General Comments section have had a significant impact on our ability to achieve 100% of the food hygiene and food standards programmed interventions planned. Going forward we are continuing to implement our action plan to reduce the number of outstanding inspections over a three-year period.</li> </ol>					

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<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS1</b> - To improve food safety and levels of compliance with food law and contribute to a reduction in in food borne illness through the delivery of a programme of proactive inspections and interventions in food businesses within Durham County Council.																									
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS1c</b> - Implement an annual sampling plan in relation to microbiological and compositional food safety, including labelling, allergens and health claims.																									
<b>Progress</b>	<p>We implemented our microbiological and compositional sampling programmes focussing on national, regional and local studies as well as taking reactive samples following complaints. The studies included checking ovens for salmonella, testing levels of acrylamide in baked products, cooked meats from butchers' shops and testing foods for allergens.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Microbiological Samples</th> <th>2017-2018</th> <th>2018-2019</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Total number of samples taken</td> <td>560</td> <td>355</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total number of unsatisfactory samples</td> <td>97</td> <td>70</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total number of sampling interventions (visits)</td> <td>106</td> <td>137</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Compositional Samples</th> <th>2017-2018</th> <th>2018-2019</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Total number of samples taken</td> <td>64</td> <td>63</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total number of unsatisfactory samples</td> <td>18</td> <td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total number of sampling interventions (visits)</td> <td>11</td> <td>13</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>All unsatisfactory sample results were followed up by carrying out a variety of interventions depending on risk i.e. inspection of premises/ process, giving advice and guidance and/or enforcement action.</p>		Microbiological Samples	2017-2018	2018-2019	Total number of samples taken	560	355	Total number of unsatisfactory samples	97	70	Total number of sampling interventions (visits)	106	137	Compositional Samples	2017-2018	2018-2019	Total number of samples taken	64	63	Total number of unsatisfactory samples	18	17	Total number of sampling interventions (visits)	11	13
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<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS2</b> - To improve food safety and levels of compliance with food law and contribute to a reduction in in food borne illness through the delivery of reactive interventions relating to food safety and food standards.																							
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS2a</b> - Investigate all complaints and service requests relating to food safety and standards in accordance with Durham County Council's Food and Food Premises Complaints Procedure																							
<b>Progress</b>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><b>Service Request Type</b></th> <th><b>2017-2018</b></th> <th><b>2018-2019</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Hygiene of Food Premises complaints</td> <td>357</td> <td>427</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Food complaints (food hygiene)</td> <td>271</td> <td>186</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Food complaints (food standards)</td> <td>76</td> <td>66</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Food safety-related services requests, these include                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enquiries about registration or /approval</li> <li>• Enquiries about FHRS and training</li> <li>• Requests by new businesses for advice</li> <li>• Requests by existing food businesses for technical advice</li> </ul> </td> <td>658</td> <td>729</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Safety Advisory Group (SAG) and planning (food safety) consultations</td> <td>293</td> <td>230</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total number of food safety service requests</b></td> <td><b>1664</b></td> <td><b>1638</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			<b>Service Request Type</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	Hygiene of Food Premises complaints	357	427	Food complaints (food hygiene)	271	186	Food complaints (food standards)	76	66	Food safety-related services requests, these include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enquiries about registration or /approval</li> <li>• Enquiries about FHRS and training</li> <li>• Requests by new businesses for advice</li> <li>• Requests by existing food businesses for technical advice</li> </ul>	658	729	Safety Advisory Group (SAG) and planning (food safety) consultations	293	230	<b>Total number of food safety service requests</b>	<b>1664</b>	<b>1638</b>
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<p>The level of reactive work dealt with by the team has remained high, particularly complaints relating food premises which may be due to increased public awareness.</p> <p>The team also dealt with a significant number of requests for advice (729). These include new business advice, consultation on licensing and planning applications, and advice to the Safety Advisory Group in relation to events (200 requests).</p>																								

<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS2</b> - To improve food safety and levels of compliance with food law and contribute to a reduction in in food borne illness through the delivery of reactive interventions relating to food safety and food standards.		
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS2b</b> - Investigate outbreaks of food borne illness		
<b>Progress</b>	<p>The team investigated all outbreaks of food borne illness during the year, including the continuation of a major investigation of a salmonella outbreak that was ongoing from the previous financial year.</p> <p>All investigations were carried out in accordance with procedures agreed with Public Health England. These investigations are resource intensive and impact on other areas of work.</p>		

<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS2</b> - To improve food safety and levels of compliance with food law and contribute to a reduction in in food borne illness through the delivery of reactive interventions relating to food safety and food standards.			
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS2c</b> - Investigate cases of food borne illness in accordance with guidance issued by Public Health England (PHE)			
<b>Progress</b>	The team received 824 notifications of infectious disease including 282 that required investigation in accordance with PHE procedures. The breakdown of the notifications is detailed below:			
		<b>Type of Organism</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>
		Campylobacter	690	542
		Cryptosporidium	77	84
		Suspected Infection	21	74
		Salmonella Species	107	61
		Giardia Lamblia	28	26
		E Coli 0157	9	16
		Hepatitis E	3	7
		Shigella Sonnei	4	4
		Listeria Monocytogenes	1	4
		Legionella	4	3
		Yersinia Spp.	1	2
		<b>Total</b>	<b>943</b>	<b>824</b>

<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS2</b> - To improve food safety and levels of compliance with food law and contribute to a reduction in in food borne illness through the delivery of reactive interventions relating to food safety and food standards.		
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS2d</b> - Respond appropriately to food alerts issued by the Food Standards Agency		
<b>Progress</b>	During this period the FSA issued 67 Product Recall Information Notices (PRINs) and 108 Allergy alerts that provided information directly to the consumer. Whilst no 'Food alerts for action' were issued that required a response by the team, the content of all alerts is reviewed and actioned where necessary.		

<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS2</b> - To improve food safety and levels of compliance with food law and contribute to a reduction in in food borne illness through the delivery of reactive interventions relating to food safety and food standards.
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS2e</b> - Work with partner agencies where intelligence is received relating to food fraud or organised crime and notify FSA where appropriate
<b>Progress</b>	<p>The food safety service has been involved in targeted intelligence-based initiatives with other agencies, including the council's licensing and trading standards teams. In addition, joint enforcement visits have been carried out with the police, immigration officers and HMRC to food business premises, during which the team investigates food safety issues associated with criminal activity.</p> <p>We continue to respond to all data protection requests relating to food businesses from partner agencies, to assist with the investigation of crime.</p>

<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS3</b> - To improve food safety and levels of compliance with food law and contribute to a reduction in in food borne illness through the delivery of reactive interventions relating to food safety and food standards.
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS3a</b> - Deliver the nationally accredited training course in food hygiene – '(CIEH) Level 2 Award in Food Safety for Catering'
<b>Progress</b>	Two courses were planned during the financial year but were cancelled due to lack of interest.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS3</b> - To improve food safety and levels of compliance with food law and contribute to a reduction in in food borne illness through the delivery of reactive interventions relating to food safety and food standards.
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS3b</b> - Participate in national campaigns co-ordinated by the FSA
<b>Progress</b>	The Council participated in the FSA 'Let's Talk Turkey' social media campaign. Further participation with campaigns will be agreed with the authority's communications team.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS3</b> - To improve food safety and levels of compliance with food law and contribute to a reduction in in food borne illness through the delivery of reactive interventions relating to food safety and food standards.
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS3c</b> - Provide targeted advice to food business operators through the Safety Advisory Group (SAG)
<b>Progress</b>	The team provided advice to the SAG in relation to 200 event consultations. This included the multiple businesses operating at the Bishop Auckland Food Festival.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS3</b> - To improve food safety and levels of compliance with food law and contribute to a reduction in in food borne illness through the delivery of reactive interventions relating to food safety and food standards.
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS3d</b> - Work with the Better Business for All (BBfA) team to review information provided through the council's web pages
<b>Progress</b>	Six web pages were reviewed during 2018-2019 with the purpose of making it easier for users to access information or service. The review will continue into 2019-2020.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS3</b> - To improve food safety and levels of compliance with food law and contribute to a reduction in in food borne illness through the delivery of reactive interventions relating to food safety and food standards.
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS3e</b> - Work with the BBfA team to provide tailored advice and support to food business
<b>Progress</b>	The team worked with the BBfA team to establish advice packages for businesses. These include packages for new business start-ups, and a 'Gain and Retain' scheme to support businesses to achieve a good food hygiene rating.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS4</b> - To raise awareness of local and national food safety issues, including hygiene standards in food businesses across County Durham, enabling consumers to choose where they buy, or eat, their food
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS4a</b> - Publish the inspection ratings as part of the FHRS Scheme
<b>Progress</b>	The team continues to publish data to the FHRS website. Our target is to upload and publish data every 2 to 3 weeks. During 2018-2019 we published data 23 times, averaging one every 2.25 weeks.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS4</b> - To raise awareness of local and national food safety issues, including hygiene standards in food businesses across County Durham, enabling consumers to choose where they buy, or eat, their food
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS4b</b> - Issue press releases in response to food alerts issued by the Food Standards Agency where necessary
<b>Progress</b>	No press releases were required to be issued because of Food Alerts during the financial year.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS4</b> - To raise awareness of local and national food safety issues, including hygiene standards in food businesses across County Durham, enabling consumers to choose where they buy, or eat, their food
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS4c</b> - Participate in national campaigns co-ordinated by the FSA
<b>Progress</b>	The Council participated in the FSA 'Let's Talk Turkey' social media campaign. Further participation with campaigns will be agreed with the authority's communications team.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS5</b> - To provide a consistent approach to better food regulation
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS5a</b> - Keep accurate records of all food safety enforcement activities and produce timely statutory returns as required by the FSA
<b>Progress</b>	The council submitted their annual LAEMS return ahead of the 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2019. The submission required data checks and data validation during the upload process to ensure accurate information is provided.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS5</b> - To provide a consistent approach to better food regulation
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS5b</b> - Review Durham County Council's compliance with the standards laid out in the FSA 'Framework Agreement'
<b>Progress</b>	We reviewed the service's Food Complaints policy to provide clarification on what the council can investigate and in what circumstances an investigation visit will be carried out at a food business premises.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS5</b> - To provide a consistent approach to better food regulation
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS5c</b> - Ensure all food officers receive training to maintain their competence
<b>Progress</b>	<p>Planned training for 2018/19 was met by attending external training courses, in-house training and briefings at team meetings. All officers continue to maintain training and development records that are reviewed during annual appraisals. Training was carried out in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BTEC Level 7 Advanced Professional Certificate in Investigative Practice provided to additional team members (Continues into 2019-20)</li> <li>• FHRS Consistency Exercise (FSA)</li> <li>• PHE Shelf Life (Challenge Testing) (Public Health England (PHE))</li> <li>• PHE STEC and Other pathogenic E- Coli (PHE)</li> <li>• Changes to STEC – Exclusion Algorithms (PHE)</li> <li>• Allergen Awareness Training (Darlington BC)</li> </ul>

<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS5 - To provide a consistent approach to better food regulation</b>
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS5d - Continue to attend local authority liaison groups, including their sub-groups and consistency exercises</b>
<b>Progress</b>	<p>The council provided representation at the following meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North East Food Liaison Group (4 meetings)</li> <li>• North East Microbiological Sampling Sub- Group (4 meetings)</li> <li>• North East Compositional Sampling Sub-Group (4 meetings)</li> <li>• County Durham and Darlington Area Health Protection Group (3 meetings)</li> <li>• Northern Ports Liaison Network (1 meeting)</li> </ul> <p>In addition to the above meeting a representative from the team also attended a North East regional working group on Allergens.</p>

<b>Objective</b>	<b>FS5 - To provide a consistent approach to better food regulation</b>																																
<b>Action</b>	<b>FS5e - Use proportionate enforcement methods in accordance with the authority's <a href="#">Enforcement Policy</a>.</b>																																
<b>Progress</b>	<p>The team prosecuted one business for food hygiene offences during 2018-2019. In addition, the following enforcement actions were taken:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><b>Enforcement Actions (Food Hygiene)</b></th> <th><b>2017-2018</b></th> <th><b>2018-2019</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Written Warnings</td> <td>1347</td> <td>1576</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hygiene Improvement Notices</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Voluntary Closure</td> <td>0</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prosecutions Concluded</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Seizure and Detention of Food</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total number of Enforcement Actions</b></td> <td><b>1353</b></td> <td><b>1584</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><b>Enforcement Actions (Food Standards)</b></th> <th><b>2017-2018</b></th> <th><b>2018-2019</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Written Warnings</td> <td>437</td> <td>413</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total number of Enforcement Actions</b></td> <td><b>437</b></td> <td><b>413</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			<b>Enforcement Actions (Food Hygiene)</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	Written Warnings	1347	1576	Hygiene Improvement Notices	4	4	Voluntary Closure	0	3	Prosecutions Concluded	0	1	Seizure and Detention of Food	2	0	<b>Total number of Enforcement Actions</b>	<b>1353</b>	<b>1584</b>	<b>Enforcement Actions (Food Standards)</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	Written Warnings	437	413	<b>Total number of Enforcement Actions</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>413</b>
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### 32. Review of Areas of Development for the Food Safety Service

Action	Progress
<p>To engage with regulatory partners, in effectively dealing with emerging issues around food fraud and organised crime.</p>	<p>The food safety service has been involved in targeted intelligence-based initiatives with other agencies, and DCC service teams (licensing and trading standards). In addition, joint enforcement visits have been carried out with the police, immigration officers and HMRC to food businesses, during which the team investigates food safety issues associated with criminal activity.</p> <p>We continue to respond to all data protection requests from Agencies to assist with their investigations into potential criminality involving food businesses.</p>
<p>To participate in FHRS national consistency exercises as they arise and to participate in any planned local and regional consistency initiatives</p>	<p>Action completed. The food safety service has participated in all planned national and regional consistency exercises across the year</p>
<p>To progress the work already carried out to establish a database of food businesses regularly operating on markets, and at regular events held across the county, e.g. Bishop Auckland Food Festival, Farmer's Markets, Lumiere, Miner's Gala, etc</p>	<p>This area of development was partially completed. The team continues to work with the Council's Safety Advisory Group to gather information on food businesses operating at temporary events. However further work remains on attendance of food businesses at markets.</p>
<p>To continue to promote the team's work in relation to the Public Health Agenda, including supporting the national "Sugar smart" initiative in collaboration with local partners at a local level.</p>	<p>Partially complete. The team attended a briefing from the 'Sugar Smart' co-ordinator, however due to inspection priorities this was not rolled out during visits.</p>
<p>To explore opportunities for working with the recently appointed BBfA co-ordinator, and develop a cost recovery service for relevant advice</p>	<p>Work has been carried out on the review of sign-posting information on the DCC website. Additionally, products have been developed for new businesses, and 'Gain and Retain' that helps businesses achieve and keep good hygiene ratings.</p>
<p>To develop the role of the Intervention and Liaison Officer into that of a Regulatory Support Officer</p>	<p>We continue to support the development of this role particularly in relation to informal sampling and alternative intervention</p>

### 33. Area of Development for the Service 2019/ 2020




33.1. The following areas of service development work are planned during 2018-19, subject to available resources, and is in addition to the current pro-active, re-active and advisory work being undertaken by the Food Safety Team, as identified in this service plan:

- To prepare the service for the effects of Brexit
- To prepare the service for the impacts of the FSA ‘Regulating Our Future’ review.
- To explore commercial opportunities that mitigate the effects of cuts to service funding.
- To continue the development of the role of the Intervention and Liaison Officer into that of a Regulatory Support Officer.
- To participate in FHRS national consistency exercises as they arise and to participate in any planned local and regional consistency initiatives
- To engage with regulatory partners, in effectively dealing with emerging issues around food fraud and organised crime.

**Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.**

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বাংলা (Bengali)	हिन्दी (Hindi)	Deutsch (German)
Français (French)	Türkçe (Turkish)	Melayu (Malay)

 Braille	 Audio	 Large Print
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