

Environment and Leisure Department



Food Law Enforcement Plan (2004 / 2005 update)



Awarded for excellence

BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE DEPARTMENT
FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT PLAN 2004/2005

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1. Food Service Aims and Objectives

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The relevant aims of the Environment and Leisure Department are:

- To contribute to health promotion within the community
- To encourage and promote high standards in retail premises
- Promoting an equitable and mixed trading environment
- Working with the community to promote healthy and sustainable lifestyles
- To promote quality of life throughout all sectors of the community
- To maintain and improve the visual and living environment
- To aid movement of people and goods in the Borough
- Making service more accessible to the public through an integrated Customer Service Centre

Food law enforcement is a function of the Environmental Health and Trading Standards sections.

To be effective, officers are required to allocate a risk rating to all food premises in accordance with the Food Safety Act 1990 and statutory codes of practice to ensure that all relevant premises are inspected according to risk to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency's 5-year inspection programme.

To assist in the process of achieving this, a number of operational objectives have been set.

For Trading Standards these are:

- To seek to ensure that all food and drink produced, imported or sold within the Borough is of appropriate quality and composition, and in conformance with its description.
- To plan and carry out a programme of food sampling, to determine by analysis, whether or not food and drink produced, imported or sold within the Borough is of appropriate quality and composition, and in accordance with its description. Priority will be given to locally controlled or produced foods.
- To promote awareness of food safety issues, especially in relation to information contained on food labels.

For Environmental Health these are:

- To seek to ensure that all food and drink produced, imported or sold within the Borough is fit for human consumption and free from contamination.
- To undertake a bacteriological sampling programme with special emphasis on foodstuffs or ingredients produced or distributed from within the Borough.
- To enhance public and trade awareness through education and publicity of the need to maintain high standards of food hygiene/control.

Progress against all these objectives is measured monthly and reported in detail to the Executive quarterly. Resources are allocated where appropriate to ensure that targets

are achieved. The Borough Council is committed to the concepts and process of Best Value. The Council has a robust Performance Review system in place. Service delivery is constantly reviewed to ensure that new initiatives and proposals can be put forward to further improve the service for customers and to highlight efficiencies where these can be made.

1.2 Links to Corporate objectives and plans

The annual Environment and Leisure Department Service Plan together with the Environment and Leisure Department Food Law Plan complement the Bracknell Forest Community Plan to deliver certain priorities.

1.2.2 The Community Plan Corporate medium-term objectives that encompass food safety are:

**"To improve the well-being of the Bracknell Community" and
"To develop the local economy".**

1.2.3 Cross Linkage to other Plans developed by the Authority

The work carried out by the food safety enforcement service contributes to achieving the Council's wider objectives alongside other strategic approaches and services. Some key areas where this is relevant are:

1.2.3.1 *Enforcement Concordat*

The Council has adopted the provisions of the Enforcement Concordat (Appendix 7) and has approved an Enforcement Policy developed in consultation with local businesses.

The Department Enforcement Policy is referred to in more detail in section 2.5 of the Plan.

1.2.3.2 *Local Plan*

We recognise the importance of commercial businesses to the local economy and work closely with Planning Officers to encourage businesses to 'design out' potential problems in food premises before they arise. This includes, for example, ensuring that new food businesses do not generate noise and odours that would cause detriment to the local amenity.

1.2.3.3 *Licensing*

We are the licensing authority for a variety of food establishments including butchers' shops, nightclubs, public entertainment venues, outdoor events and all premises that sell alcohol. Officers ensure that any food safety problems that come to light during licensing inspections are dealt with without delay.

1.2.3.4 *Health Improvement*

The service has been working closely with Bracknell Primary Care Trust to develop a Healthy Eating Award that can be issued to local catering businesses who can demonstrate that they provide an alternative range of healthy foods in addition to their standard menu.

1.2.3.5 *Economic Development*

The policies set out in the Local Plan seek to achieve a balance between community health and development.

We aim to take a balanced approach to food safety enforcement that safeguards public health, but does not act as a disincentive to business.

1.2.3.6 *Managing Diversity*

The Council is committed to dealing positively with issues of diversity. How we relate this in the context of food and the food industry is outlined later in the document.

2. BACKGROUND

Profile of the Local Authority

2.1 The Borough of Bracknell Forest is in a prime location, at the very centre of the Thames Valley, some 25 miles from London. This location of the Borough and the development of Bracknell New Town have meant that the Borough has traditionally enjoyed high employment growth and low levels of unemployment.

This area is known as 'Britain's Silicon Valley'. The area is home to the UK head offices of major IT companies and many household names such as Waitrose, BMW, Fujitsu, Dell and Hewlett-Packard.

The Borough comprises Crowthorne and Sandhurst town in the south, the semi-rural communities of Binfield, Warfield and Winkfield in the north and the former new town of Bracknell in the centre of the Borough, which contains the majority of the Borough's commercial and industrial areas.

The Borough Council became a Unitary Authority on 1 April 1998. The Authority now consists of 4 Directorates and employs in excess of 3,200 staff.

2.2 Organisation Structure

2.2.1 The Council works to the Executive model with the Environment and Leisure Department having two Executive Members. Within the Environment and Leisure Department, different functions report to specialist committees such as the Licensing and Safety Committee.

2.2.2 Trading Standards and Environmental Health functions form part of the Sustainability Division of the Environment and Leisure Department. The Trading Standards and Environmental Health sections are part of high profile front-line services of the Borough Council. Food safety functions are fulfilled by teams within both sections. Both teams have a manager who reports to a head of service who in turn reports to the Assistant Director of Sustainability. In total 7 officers are involved in issues relating to food safety enforcement as part of their day-to-day duties.

2.2.3 A function of both sections is the promotion and maintenance of a safe, fair and equitable trading environment to benefit local residents, businesses and visitors to the area.

2.2.4 Whilst much of the work is mandatory and may result in enforcement action, the Council is committed to achieving its objectives in the most effective and efficient manner possible. This includes developing partnerships, both within the community

and the business sector. 'Self-help' is encouraged wherever possible to generate a sense of community involvement and to find the most appropriate solution to the particular issue. There is a commitment to customer care and both services remain focused on the provision of services that reflect the expectations of its service users.

2.3 Scope of the food service

This Food Law Enforcement Plan establishes the principles for ensuring local compliance with both food standards and food hygiene under the Food Safety Act provisions.

The plan embraces the following functions, all of which are the responsibility of the Department.

Food Safety	Health and Safety at Work
Infectious Diseases	Health Promotion
Food Standards	Trade Descriptions and Fair Trading
Product Safety	Consumer Credit
Animal Health & Welfare	Licensing
Metrology	Taxi and Private Hire Licensing

Officers will carry out inspections of businesses located within Bracknell Forest in accordance with appropriate risk assessment procedures. They will provide advice and assistance to businesses on compliance with existing or new legislative requirements by means of a range of options including visits, advice sheets, talks, presentations, training courses and the Borough Council's website. The officers also seek to ensure consumers are informed members of the community in order to help maintain standards. This is achieved by providing relevant information by means of advice sheets, talks, and presentations to specific groups or highlighting possible areas of concern and taking the message to various public locations within the Borough.

Establishing effective partnerships with others in government offices, voluntary organisations and business are seen as vital to deliver the service in an effective and comprehensive manner. The officers seek to develop existing arrangements and establish new ones where service provision within existing resources can be improved.

2.4 Demands on the food service

The Borough of Bracknell Forest has a statutory responsibility to keep a register of food business premises located in the Borough. The number of food businesses in the Borough changes from year to year. Appendix 1 summarises the following:

- The total number of food premises in the Borough by type (Table 1).
- A Food Standards risk assessment breakdown (Table 2).
- A Food Safety risk assessment breakdown (Table 3).

Procedures have been written to cover all aspects of service in line with the requirements detailed by the Food Standards Agency's Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement.

All information relating to the inspection of premises is contained upon a common database system, which is accessible by all officers.

Factors that may effect changes upon delivery of this plan include:

- The current merger of the Environment and Leisure Departments to form the Environment and Leisure Department.
- The Department is continuing to pursue a policy of flexible working to include, hot-desking, remote working and flexible hours, which is gradually being extended to all officers within the Department.
- New and changing legislation resulting in additional responsibilities. This includes new statutes relating to imported food control and new European directives that will result in changes to general food hygiene regulations and product specific legislation. The Food Standards Agency is also to produce a new code of practice for enforcement of the Food Safety Act 1990.
- Major incidents such as another Foot and Mouth Outbreak.
- Increased consumer awareness, interest and concern in respect of issues relating to matters of food safety such as food allergies, genetic modification, animal feeding stuffs, and weight control.
- Developments in the areas of e-commerce and e-government.

2.5 Enforcement policy

The Departmental Enforcement Policy has been developed to demonstrate that the officer's approach is to use enforcement powers sympathetically and relative to the seriousness of the situation. All staff are required to take a fair but firm view to enforcement and this is reflected in the Enforcement Policy. The Policy was produced in line with the Enforcement Concordat (Appendix 7) and with reference to other appropriate guidance. The Enforcement Policy is made freely available to businesses in the Borough.

Officers are required to give full regard to the Code for Crown Prosecutors and Food Safety Act Code of Practice 2, before making a recommendation to instigate legal action.

3. **Service Delivery**

3.1 Inspection for Food Standards and Safety

Food Safety visits are carried out according to the risk based plan as shown in Tables 1 and 2 of Appendix 3. Wherever possible the officers also carry out programmed inspections for other work either Trading Standards or Health and Safety. The purpose of such inspections is to ensure that food supplied is of the nature, substance, quality demanded, and complies with any description. Other activities carried out during inspections include the investigation of complaints, purchasing of samples for analysis or testing, or referrals from other authorities.

In addition to scheduled risk based inspections, officers carry out revisits to check on compliance with legal requirements, visits to new businesses and visits to investigate food complaints. The total number of all food related inspections (scheduled risk based inspections plus other, non routine visits) is detailed in Appendix 5, Table 1.

A number of items of equipment that are suitable for screen-testing purposes have been acquired for use by officers conducting food standards work. These can be utilised on business premises or within the department's laboratory. This equipment is seen as a vital tool in providing value for money, in the checking of compositional and descriptive requirements.

The Borough Council target for achieving the minimum inspection frequency targets for food hygiene inspections is 100% completion. This target has been achieved for the past 5 years.

The Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) (Butchers' Shops) Amendment Regulations 2000 require retail businesses, which sell or handle raw and cooked meats in the same part of the premises to have a butchers' shop licence. Businesses that require a licence must make an application and pay a licensing fee of £100. Officers inspect businesses that apply for licences and will only issue a licence if the business satisfactorily complies with the food safety requirements as specified in the regulations. A licence must be renewed on an annual basis but a renewal can be refused or a licence can be revoked at any time should an officer consider that there have been serious breaches of the regulations. The current number of butchers who are licensed by the Council is shown in Table 1 of Appendix 5.

3.2 Inspections of feeding stuffs premises

Funding from DEFRA has been obtained which has enabled the employment of a Bio-Security Officer through a partnership arrangement with Wokingham and Windsor & Maidenhead Councils. This officer has conducted inspections of farms within Bracknell to ascertain the current position. [This information will be used to form an inspection and sampling programme for feeding stuffs.]

3.3 Farm visit medicine record checks

The Bio-Security Officer will advise farmers on compliance with legislation whilst conducting farm visits. Visits will be undertaken with DEFRA vets where appropriate and where enforcement action is necessary this will be referred to one of the enforcement staff.

3.4 Food and Feeding Stuffs Complaints

Complaints concerning food are allocated to Officers according to the nature of the complaint. Generally, food hygiene and any matters that impact on public health will be dealt with by Environmental Health, whereas other matters that do not immediately have this impact are referred through to Trading Standards. Where urgent action must be taken, food qualified officers from either Team, as available, are called upon. Where appropriate, samples are taken for analysis. Audits are to be carried out, sometimes in conjunction with neighbouring authorities, where intelligence from complaints or other sources indicate that problems may exist.

In relation to food complaints and food hygiene complaints, the target for an initial response is one day.

3.5 Home Authority Principle

This is a national scheme whereby businesses' head offices located within a local authority agree to work with the local authority in two main ways. The first is that issues are referred to Bracknell Forest officers from other authorities for appropriate action. This reduces the burden on business by establishing one national point of contact. The second is part of the business partnership advice initiative. Advice on compliance issues should enable a proactive approach to adherence of legislation. This reduces costly problems afterwards.

In relation to food safety matters Bracknell Forest is the Home Authority for Waitrose Ltd, a major supermarket retailer. Both teams have a designated officer to liaise with the

company on these issues, which is facilitated through monthly meetings and other regular communications.

Table 1 in Appendix 5 shows the number of Home Authority enquiries received by the department during the year.

3.6 Advice to business

The department expects to receive a number of requests for trader advice both from companies signed up to the Home Authority Principle and those unaware of it. In each case officers use this information to maintain the accuracy of the database, to further advise the business on other matters and add them to the inspection programme where appropriate. Consumer complaints are also used as a trigger for visits and inspections.

A business pack has been produced and is given out on inspections to traders explaining various pieces of legislation. It has been noticed that a problem often found is the lack of a business name's notice at premises. To address this minor issue, a form is included with the other leaflets that once returned ensures our database is correct and a business name's sign is automatically generated.

The Department has developed a range of other Trader Advice Leaflets to aid business to meet legal requirements. These are available by request through the Department's Customer Service Centre or from officers at the time of visits. In addition a range of these leaflets is accessible through the Trading Standards website at www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/bracknell-forest. Businesses are also able to e-mail enquiries and requests for assistance to the Department.

Table 1 in Appendix 5 shows the number of requests received and the percentage response times that were made within one day.

3.7 Managing diversity

The Department is aware of the need to recognise the diverse nature of the food industry. In response we have available a range of leaflets and guidance which explains what the law says in clear and simple language. We also have access to leaflets and posters in several foreign languages, which reflect diverse nature of food businesses in the Borough. The Department has developed contacts with trainers in foreign languages, which are made available to businesses during visits, and on the Council's website.

3.8 Food and Feeding Stuffs inspection and sampling

Money is allocated for sampling of goods for food standards and food hygiene purposes. Samples are purchased according to the food standards sampling plan and the food hygiene sampling policy (Appendix 6). The food standards sampling plan is divided into the four quarters. The second and fourth quarters are for local sampling projects and the remaining determined through the partnership arrangement with the Thames Valley Food Focus Group.

Local sampling projects concentrate upon products manufactured, produced or exclusively marketed within Bracknell Forest. Priority will also be given to products that have undergone some significant change within the Borough in the form of processing, re-packaging or re-labelling.

The animal feeding stuffs plan will concentrate upon local mixing on farm of products as currently there is no producer of feeding stuffs within Bracknell Forest.

Informal samples are taken except where follow-up samples cannot be easily repeated or if they are taken as part of complaint, previous failure, or as a result of a screen testing failure. Formal samples are taken in accordance with Code of Practice 7, Food Safety Act.

The authority has appointed the following Public Analysts for the purposes of testing products under the Food Safety Act and Agriculture Act:

Mr R A and Mrs C R Stevens
Worcestershire County Council Scientific Services
County Buildings
St Mary's Street
Worcester
WR1 1TN

Eurofin Scientific
445 New Cross Road
London
SE14 6JA

Mr P Berryman
Hampshire Scientific Services
Hyde Park Road
Southsea

3.9 Control and investigation of outbreaks and food-related infectious disease

The Council subscribes to the joint Infectious Disease Incident Plan for Berkshire, which is produced jointly with the local Health Authority and was revised in December 2003. Outbreak investigations are carried out in close liaison with the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC) at the Health Protection Agency (HPA).

The method of investigation of all possible food poisoning incidents is detailed in a departmental Practice Note that is reviewed every year and also where new practices are developed. The Table in Annex 4 details the number of infectious disease notifications received for the past 4 years.

The target time for response is one day and this has been achieved for all cases to date. Resources are allocated to notifications as appropriate with numbers of officers being involved where the outbreak may involve multiple cases. Commonly, recent multiple case outbreaks have confirmed as being caused by Norovirus which is also known as Norwalk-like virus (NLV) or small round structured virus (SRSV).

National statistics produced by HPA demonstrate that the incidence of Norovirus is far greater than other enteric illness such as campylobacter and salmonella. The disease spreads readily among groups of people and symptoms include diarrhoea and projectile vomiting lasting between 24 and 48 hours. It is estimated that there are between 600,000 and 1,000,000 cases per year in the UK and they are concentrated during the winter months. Given that food can act as a vehicle in the transmission of the disease and symptoms are similar to those of food poisoning, it is important that all such outbreaks are thoroughly investigated. In the recent outbreaks that have occurred within the Borough, investigations suggested that food hygiene practices were not implicated (during the investigation.).

The Food Standards Agency has a target to reduce incidents of food poisoning in the UK by 20% by 2006. The Department can contribute locally to meeting this target by the use of effective food hygiene enforcement, thorough investigation of food poisoning incidents and in the promotion of food hygiene issues to the public.

3.10 Food safety incidents

Food hazard warnings are issued to local authorities by the Food Standards Agency are acted upon as required by the Food Safety Act 1990, Code of Practice No 16. There are four categories of notification (A to D), which require different levels of action. The action required ranges from category A notifications which must be dealt with immediately to category D notifications that are for information only. Such warnings are stored electronically and all officers involved in food safety are kept up-to-date of developments using e-mails to ensure that all are aware of the situation and that appropriate action is initiated. Appendix 5 shows the number of food hazard warnings that the Council has responded to during the last two years.

3.11 Liaison with other organisations

Ensuring consistency of enforcement is seen as vital and the Council has in place the following arrangements to liaise with other organisations.

- Thames Valley Managers Group in relation to Food via LACORS and its panels
- Thames Valley Trading Standards Authorities Food Focus Group
- Berkshire Food Safety Liaison Group
- Berkshire Communicable Disease Liaison Group
- Professional bodies such as Trading Standards Institute, and Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
- Arrangements have also been made with other enforcement agencies such as FSA, Wine Standards Board, Egg Marketing Inspectorate, etc.

3.12 Food hygiene and standards promotion

A newsletter is sent annually to all food businesses in the Borough, which advises on new food safety legislation, current trends, new initiatives and also on the availability of food hygiene and health and safety courses. Currently 6 food hygiene courses are scheduled each year with others run on demand.

The Council supports Food Safety Week. In recent years the Council's contribution has involved visits to a number of schools and also displays on thorough hand washing and tips for good food hygiene at various locations around the Borough. A competition is usually run in association with the campaign with prizes given by local businesses.

A comprehensive list of food-related leaflets has been developed and these are made available at the Borough Council receptions, the Town/Parish Council offices and at all outside events. Feedback is encouraged from all that receive them.

At Christmas a campaign is usually organised to promote hygienic practices and raise awareness of safety issues in the home. Again, competitions with prizes donated by local businesses usually form part of this initiative.

Local caterers are eligible to apply for a Food Hygiene Award and a Health Eating Award should they meet certain specific criteria. The latter is administered jointly with Bracknell Primary Care Trust. The awards are issued as a result of routine food hygiene inspections. This gives added value to the process and has been very well received by local businesses. Details of award holders are posted on the Council's website.

Appendix 5 also shows the number of food awards issued to local food businesses during the last two years.

4. Resources

4.1 Financial allocation

To aid budgeting, a new corporate financial management system was introduced in April 2003. Cost centres can now be accessed electronically and reports produced readily by managers. Managers receive monthly budget reports from Corporate Finance and subsequent monthly review meetings are held within the Department. For 2004/2005, £273.890 has been allocated to food safety.

4.2 Staffing allocation

There are now 5 appropriately qualified officers within Trading Standards and 6 within Environmental Health who can perform food law enforcement.

4.3 Staff development plan

The Council has in place a formal appraisal scheme involving a full staff appraisal every 12 months with an interim review as often as necessary. The area of staff development is vital to that scheme and staff contribute to the identification of a personal development and action plan.

Corporate Training opportunities are circulated to all staff and are freely accessible on the Council Intranet site.

Details of other organisations offering training and development are circulated to all staff and posted on notice boards.

Arrangements have been made with other authorities within the Thames Valley to have regular training updates on new legislative provisions or good practice. Membership of the Southern Branch of the Trading Standards Institute is encouraged. They also facilitate training courses for staff to maintain competencies.

5. Quality assessment

Environmental Health attained a Charter Mark in 1995 and again in 1999. Trading Standards gained their Award in 2000. This reflects the Department's approach to customer service quality and delivery.

Officers work in partnership with other Berkshire Councils on Benchmarking exercises. Bracknell's performance has reflected well against the other Berkshire local authorities over the years

A formalised ongoing quality assessment procedure to ensure accuracy and consistency of officers' work has been introduced in the Environmental Health Section.

A number of customer consultation surveys are undertaken throughout the year in order to monitor customer satisfaction. The feedback is reported in the quarterly operations report and services are amended as appropriate.

6. Review

6.1 Review against the Service Plan

Performance standards have been set and the resources needed to achieve those standards have been assessed using available historical data from the Sections and also data made available from other local authorities. Performance standards and resources are kept under review.

With the concept of 'flexible working' now fully incorporated into the working culture, performance management has become a crucial tool in the monitoring of officers' workload, outputs and service quality. A formal system is in place where officers meet with their line managers every two weeks, when topics such as workload, complaints against service, training needs, problematic issues, etc are discussed. Notes are taken at these meetings and learning identified. The use of technology has been developed to the full to provide officers with the right tools to allow them to undertake their tasks, whilst also providing management with quick and comprehensive data around officer performance and evolving workloads.

6.2 Identification of any variation from the Service Plan

Monitoring procedures are in place to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the services as a whole. Performance statistics are presented in the quarterly operations reports with comments where performance exceeds or fails to meet targets. This information is then fed back into the development of other service plans.

6.3 Areas of improvement

The service needs to improve in the following areas:

- (a) Implement measures outlined in the report of the recent audit carried out by Deloitte and Touché. Improve record keeping for the retrieval of information on service requests, complaints and food standards inspections.
- (b) Identify additional training needs and budget requirements to ensure that enforcement staffs remain competent to enforce food safety legislation.
- (c) Work within the Thames Valley Trading Standards Authorities to develop a benchmarking model for food standards.
- (d) As part of the Benchmarking arrangements, third party reviews and audits will take place.

APPENDIX 1

The Borough of Bracknell Forest has 816 registered food business premises detailed below:

TYPE OF PREMISES	NUMBER OF PREMISES
Producers	12
Slaughterhouse	0
Manufacturers	2
Packers	0
Importers	3
Distributors	15
Retailers	223
Restaurants	536
Materials and Articles	9
Manufacturers selling by retail	0
TOTAL	816

Table 1: Types of Food Businesses

Table 1 shows the classification of the type of food businesses in the Borough. The classification is a national one and the table shows that restaurants represent the highest type of premises in the Borough. The classification is broad and includes take-aways, office restaurants and school kitchens.

In relation to Food Standards, the food safety risk assessment breaks down as follows:

Risk	Frequency of Inspection	2003/4	2004/5
High	12 months	40	12
Medium	2 years	614	421
Low	5 years	133	251
Non-inspectable	-	82	150
Unrated		4	0
Total		873	834

Table 2: Food Standards Risk Rating System

Premises have been risked according to the Food Safety Act Code of Practice 7 as well as taking into account the new code of practice. During the year 2003/4 it is anticipated that a consolidation of codes will occur and LACORS will introduce a new risk-rating scheme that may cover food activities. The new scheme will be proscriptive in setting a national risk rating to premises based upon use. The local variable enables a particular trader to have a higher risk if necessary.

Non-inspectable premises are those that have minimal food standards risk if at all but are classified as food premises.

In relation to food hygiene, the food safety risk assessment breaks down as follows:

Category	Frequency of Inspection	Number of Premises
Category A	6 months	9
Category B	12 months	106
Category C	18 months	281
Category D	2 years	100
Category E	3 years	127
Category F	5 years	140
Unrated		0
TOTAL		816

Table 3: Food Safety Risk Rating System

Table 3 shows the total number of premises broken down according to risk. Category A premises are the highest risk and are inspected every 6 months and Category F premises are the lowest risk and are inspected every five years.

Unrated premises includes new premises outside the programme waiting risk assessment and premises not selling food, but selling materials and articles which come into contact with food which are inspected for food standards purposes.

	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004
Food complaints	115	102	118	56
Food hygiene	120	112	116	118

Table 1: Food Complaints and Food Hygiene Complaints

Table 1 shows the breakdown of the food complaints and complaints of poor hygiene in the Boroughs food premises. In relation to the number of food premises in the Boroughs food premises is low. The purpose of the Environment and Leisure's food inspection programme each year is to be proactive and inspect premises at the minimum frequency to prevent serious food complaints and failures in food hygiene.

APPENDIX 3

The inspection programmes for food safety are shown in Tables 1 and 2 as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	TOTAL
Targeted 2003/2004	20	79	215	62	33	56	465
Targeted 2004/2005	18	106	176	47	39	22	408

Table 1: Food Hygiene Inspection Programme 2004/5

Table 1 shows the completed programme for 2003/2004. For the coming year the number of premises that require a food hygiene inspection according to the risk rating system is 408 out of a total of 816. As can be seen from the table, some of the Boroughs lowest risk rated premises that have not been inspected for 5 years will be included this year.

	High	Medium	Low	TOTAL
Targeted 2003/2004	40	307	27	374
Targeted 2004/2005	12	210	88	310

Table 2: Food Standards Inspection Programme 2004/5

Table 2 above shows the targeted programme for last year and this year, in relation to premises requiring food standards inspections. The risks are determined by applying the risk-rating scheme during comprehensive visits and can, therefore, change depending on contraventions identified. Inspections achieved in 2003/2004 fell short of those targeted, as a result of staff losses during that period.

2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004
374	368	333	200

Table 1: Food Related Infectious Disease Notifications

From the table the notifications of infectious disease to the Environment and Leisure Department have remained stable for the previous 3 years but last year there was a drop in notifications. This compares with the rest of Berkshire where the notifications reported to the five other Berkshire local authorities range between 200-480.

Food poisoning statistics in England and Wales demonstrate that reported cases of food poisoning peaked at 93932 cases in 1998 and declined slightly to 85,468 cases in 2001, which is the most recent year for which figures are available. The numbers reported case within Bracknell Forest Borough has reflected this trend.

APPENDIX 5

Service	2002/2003	2003/2004
Home Authority Enquiries	126	70
Food Hazard Warnings	31	75
Inspections – TS	421	264
Inspections – EH	696	734
Food Complaint Response – one day	82%	91%
Food Hygiene Awards	15	41
Butchers Shops	13	12
Game Dealers	13	12

Table 1: Other Related Food Safety Activity

SAMPLING PLANS FOR FOOD SAFETY

Food Hygiene Sampling Policy

A comprehensive departmental sampling policy (attached) details the work to be undertaken on food sampling. A budget of £4565.70 is provided each year by the PHLS at Reading. The sampling programme is based on guidance from LACORS and the Berkshire Food Liaison Group and in response to complaints/food poisoning outbreaks.

Food Standards Plan

The food safety-sampling programme for 2004/2005 will total around xxx samples dependant on the complexity and costs associated with testing the product. £9,500 is allocated for sampling according to the plan as well as other samples that arise throughout the year. These other samples arise through consumer/trader complaints as well as officer initiated whilst on inspection.

Regional Sampling surveys			
Topic	Timescale	Why and what	Report
Ready to roast joints of meat	Q2 – Q3	Investigate the addition of water and other ingredients, and hence assess the accuracy of the labelling	December
'Suitable for Vegetarians' claims on food	Q3	Investigate whether product contains or has been manufactured using animal fats or meat	February
Allergen issues in catering establishments	Q1 – Q2	Sampling of food being offered as suitable for allergen sufferers	November
Promotion and advertising of food aimed at children	Q1	Compositional analysis of these products alongside healthier alternatives	September

Education/information			
Topic	Timescale	Why and what	Report
Promotion of healthy eating options for children	Q3 – Q4	Following project looking at foods aimed at children, promotional material to be developed showing healthier and more cost effective alternatives	March
Allergen and vegetarian claims	Q4	Awareness raising for 'allergen free' and 'vegetarian claims'	March

FOOD HYGIENE SAMPLING POLICY

Background

Food sampling by officers in the Environmental Health Section is regarded as a very important element of the service approach to ensuring that food is safe for its intended end user. To this end on an annual basis a food sampling programme is developed and is reviewed every quarter to take into account changing national trends, recent issues - local, national and international – and any national sampling programmes.

1.3 Consideration to the following should be given when developing the sampling programme:

- Investigation of food contamination and food poisoning incidents
- Complaints
- Home/Originating authority responsibilities
- Food sampling defined by statute
- The use of sampling as part of food inspections
- Participation in EU co-ordinated control programmes
- Participation in the LACORS/HPA/FSA voluntary co-ordinated sampling programme
- Sampling related to local events/initiatives

Aims of Sampling

The primary aims of sampling include:

- To protect the consumer through the enforcement of food legislation
- To provide analytical results to improve standards of food safety in relation to the sale and manufacture of food within the Borough.
- To act as an educational tool in order to assist food businesses and the general public regarding food safety issues
- To provide supporting evidence to food businesses HACCP and Hazard Analysis procedures
- To address both local and national food concerns.
- To act as evidence in the enforcement of food safety.

Objectives and Sampling Criteria

On a quarterly basis an agreed number of food samples will be taken.

The type of foods sampled each will vary but will take into account the following principles:

- a) Complaints and enquiries
- b) Locally produced
- c) Locally controlled
- d) Co-ordinated sampling plans
- f) Other local or national issues

Draft sampling programmes will be drawn up every March based on the above criteria, the Reading HPA Sampling Liaison group, information from LACORS, FSA, etc. In addition to the sampling programme, food officers as a matter of course should consider sampling at food premises during inspections to be used as a tool/verification procedure of the premise procedures and practices.

All samples taken as part of co-ordinated sampling programmes will normally be taken as informal samples. However, formal samples may be taken after a failed result of an informal sample.

All samples that may result in formal action will be obtained where possible in accordance with the procedures set out in the Food Standards Agency Code of Practice No 7.

Draft sampling programmes are developed for each year – Appendix 6A.

Examiners

Other laboratories used include:

- Reading HPA – for informal samples
- WEMS, Southampton - for formal samples
- Thames Water, Reading – private water supplies

Qualifications of Sampling Officers

All officers who undertake formal sampling will be qualified and trained as detailed in paragraphs 18, 19 and 34 of Food Standards Agency Code of Practice 19. Officers who do not possess relevant qualifications will only sample on an informal basis.

Results and Follow-Up Action

All results should be reviewed by the Commercial Team Leader. Each report will be passed to the sampling officer. Should a food sample fail, the vendor/producer should be informed and action taken as appropriate, having regard to the actions shown below:

- a) **Satisfactory Results** – within 7 working days following receipt of a satisfactory result, the sample officer will notify the proprietors of the food business of the results in writing.
- b) **Acceptable Results** – if the results fall within this category, it indicates that the food was at the level of a borderline quality (particularly microbiological). Within 7 working days the outcome will normally be to send a letter to the proprietor of the food business, advising of the results and means of prevent further samples from reaching the unsatisfactory level.
- c) **Unsatisfactory Results** – if the results fall into this category, it indicates that the food sample has exceeded the acceptable standards. Such samples will be raised as a complaint and appropriate actions taken – follow-up letters/visits/further sampling/enforcement action.
- d) **Unacceptable/Potentially Hazardous Result** – if the results fall into this category then it indicates that urgent attention is needed to locate the source of the problem. Such samples will be raised as a complaint and appropriate actions taken – follow-up letters/visits/further sampling/enforcement action. In addition as necessary informing the FSA incident branch should be considered.

If unsatisfactory results are determined from foods outside the Borough, then the Originating LA/Home Authority should be informed of the outcome. If the investigation indicates that the problem may not be an isolated incident, then LACORS and the Food Standards Agency should be informed at the earliest opportunity as detailed in FSA Code of Practice 16.

Food Safety Sampling Plan 2004/2005

Regional Sampling surveys			
Topic	Timescale	Why and what	Report
LACORS Butter from production, retail and catering premises.	Q2	Looking for Listeria in butter.	July
LACORS Raw meat survey	Q3	Looking for pathogens in raw meat.	October

Local Sampling surveys			
Topic	Timescale	Why and what	Report
Food from hotels and restaurants.	Q2	Shopping Basket items.	July