

Environmental Health and Public Protection

Food Safety and Standards Service Plan

2023/24



Nottingham
City Council






2 Service aims and objectives	04
2.1 Aims and objectives	
2.2 Links to corporate objectives and plans	
3 Background	05
3.1 Profile of the Local Authority	
3.2 Organisational Structure	
3.3 Scope of the food service	
3.4 Demands on the food service	
3.5 Enforcement policies	
4 Service Delivery	09
4.1 Food and feedingstuffs premises inspections	
4.1.1 Food premises- hygiene inspections	
4.1.2 Food Hygiene formal actions	
4.1.3 Food Hygiene Inspection changes	
4.1.4 Food premises – standards & feedingstuffs inspections	
4.2 Food and feedingstuffs complaints and requests for service	
4.3 Home authority principal	
4.4 Advice to businesses page	
4.5 Food and feedingstuffs inspection and sampling	
3.5.1 Microbiological sampling	
3.5.2 Composition and labelling	
4.6 The control and investigation of outbreaks and food related infectious diseases	
4.7 Food safety incidents	
4.8 Liaison with other organisations	
4.9 Food safety and standards promotion	
4.10 Imported Foods	
5 Resources	18
5.1 Financial allocation	
5.1.1 Food safety	
5.2 Staffing allocations Food Safety and Standards	
5.3 Staff Development	
5.4 Risk management	
6 Quality Assessment	22
6.1 Quality assessments	
7 Review	23
7.1 Review against the service plan	
7.2 Conclusion	

1. Introduction -

A recovery plan was implemented in 2022/23 to start dealing with the impacts of Covid 19 on the food safety inspection programme. This plan has been successful, and the service met and surpassed the minimum standards set by the Food Standards Agency. At the start of 2022 approximately 1900 food premises in high and lower risk sectors were overdue for an inspection which is 59% of all premises in the city. At the start of 2023 this has been reduced to 1400 overdue premises which is 45% of premises. None of the current overdue premises are in the highest risk categories. This data reflects a successful year in returning the inspection programme back to normal by the end of the 2023/24 year.

The safety of food supply and transparency about its nutritional qualities is a key contributor to public health and wellbeing of citizens. The team's work is a vital part of the food and hospitality economy.

Key headline issues for the Food Service in 2023/24;

-  Continue the restoration of the inspection programme in accordance with the FSA's guidelines.
-  Focus resources on; newly opened businesses, those previously rated as higher risk, not broadly compliant, Approved Premises and interventions following serious complaints and national/local incidents.
-  Address and monitor the identified gap in resourcing of the team to ensure it meets statutory minimum
-  Continue to support and promote the high-profile Food Hygiene Rating Scheme
-  Supporting local business to ensure advice and coaching expertise is available to help them comply
-  Ensure new allergen safety laws on prepacked for direct sale are enforced to protect vulnerable consumers from risk of harm.

Ensuring that the business sector is well informed, trained and compliant with food safety and standards requirements is essential in safeguarding the public from serious illness such as food poisoning, allergenic reactions from incorrectly described foods as well as protecting from fraudulent activity such as dangerous illicit or counterfeit alcohol. I support the Food Safety and Standards inspection service in their risk-based work to protect communities and ensure a fair-trading environment for businesses.

Paul Dales

Environmental Health Manager – Safer Business

2. Service aims and objectives

2.1 Aims and objectives

It is the policy of Nottingham City Council to ensure that food produced without risk to health, is correctly labelled and complies with relevant legislation. The service achieves this by;

- ➔ Carrying out thorough, competent inspections of food and food premises with fair and consistent enforcement
- ➔ Investigation of complaints about food and food businesses
- ➔ Undertaking a coordinated, effective programme of food and water sampling
- ➔ Thorough investigation of suspected and confirmed food poisoning cases and outbreaks
- ➔ Provision of an accessible advice, information and training service
- ➔ Instigation of targeted campaigns to better inform the public and food industry sector
- ➔ Continuously improving the quality of public service.

The Authority adheres to the Home Authority and Primary Authority principle where the Service deals with Food Safety and Standards issues centrally for national food manufacturers/food outlets in the City.

The key outcomes to be achieved in 2023/24 are;

- ➔ Continue to implement the Nottingham Recovery Plan, build upon the compliance with the FSA's Recovery Plan minimum inspection requirement and to actively tackle the backlog so as to restore the inspection programme that was severely disrupted because of the Covid 19 pandemic.
- ➔ **By 31 March 2024** – All establishments rated A, B, C, D for hygiene or A for Standards to have received on-site inspection plus prioritisation of higher risk new premises.
- ➔ Prioritisation of new (Unrated) businesses for intervention based on risk. Ongoing specific legal requirements, surveillance, enforcement, and urgent reactive work to continue throughout.
- ➔ Food Hygiene Rating Scheme to be maintained and promoted.
- ➔ New FSA delivery models ready for implementation in 2024/25.
- ➔ Prioritise sampling and reactive inspections on categories of premises subject to complaints that may pose a higher risk of non-compliance or potential food poisoning outbreaks/allergen incidents
- ➔ Inspect and provide coaching in Safer Food Better Business management systems to newly opened small and medium sized businesses to aid compliance. Promote use of the multi-language support in appropriate BME businesses that may need specific support.

2.2 Links to corporate objectives and plans

The Authority has a comprehensive corporate planning and review process. The Food Safety and Standards Service Plan is one of many service plans, which support the objectives of the Communities Directorate within the Resident Services Department.

The Food Safety and Standards Service operates to meet, and support the following Priorities of the Council:

- ➔ Clean and Connected











 Healthy and Inclusive

 Safer

3. Background

3.1 Profile of the Local Authority (Nottingham Insight Statistics)

Nottingham City Council is a Unitary Authority in the East Midlands and is one of England's eight Core Cities. It sits in the centre of the Greater Nottingham conurbation that includes the Districts of Gedling, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe in Nottinghamshire, and Erewash in Derbyshire. In summary:

-  City of Nottingham population – 329,000
-  Greater Nottingham population – 733,000 and 805,000 in the travel-to-work area. The travel to work area is the Nottingham metro area which is 1.5million (including from Derby and Leicester)
-  The retail catchment area is 2million.
-  Nottinghamshire including city attracts 37m visitors a year. The city figure is 12m visitors per year.
-  Home to two Universities with over 60,000 students
-  30% of the City's population are aged 18-29
-  One fifth of Nottingham people were born outside of the UK and 35% of the City's population are from BAME groups.
-  The City has a multi-ethnic population and contains areas of significant deprivation
-  Ranked 8th most deprived in UK
-  Nottingham City is the predominant centre for commercial activity (with the associated risks) that is used by residents from the whole conurbation; however the City has a Council Tax income of a relatively small population (and lower bandings) but has to regulate the demands placed upon it from a much larger population arising from the outer Borough residents.

3.2 Organisational Structure

The Safer Business Food and Health and Safety Team are part of the Community Protection Directorate. A key part of the involvement in the wider Directorate is providing greater access to skills and support to the team enabling closer cooperation between the various enforcement teams and the Police as well as ensuring the service can respond quickly to routine demand and critical incidents.



FTE officers for Food Safety 7.7 (5.4 occupied for year 2022/23).

FTE officers for Food Standards 1.8 (1.5 occupied for year 2022/23).

* April 2023 – 3 EHO vacancies have been appointed to with all in place by August. (1 deleted post in 2021 has been reinstated from 1 October 2023)

3.3 Scope of the Food Service

In 2010, the Food Standards work was migrated to Environmental Health Officers from the Trading Standards team and by doing so has consolidated all food compliance work within one team. This has delivered more efficient use of resources and importantly a single point of contact to help reduce compliance burdens on businesses in accordance with Better Regulation initiatives.

This combined service provides;

- ➔ Food safety, food standards, health & safety inspections, private drinking water compliance and testing
- ➔ Food complaint and hygiene complaint investigation
- ➔ Inspection of foodstuffs including imported food and issuing Export Certificates
- ➔ Food labelling, composition (colours/additives/allergens/meat speciation), Novel foods investigation, misleading health claims etc.
- ➔ Microbiological and compositional sampling of food and water
- ➔ Investigation of food poisoning and gastro intestinal notifications including outbreaks
- ➔ Food Safety and Standards advice service incorporating 'Safer Food Better Business'
- ➔ Response to national 'Food Alerts' and 'Allergen Alerts'
- ➔ Promotional health development activities with businesses and the community

3.4 Demands on the Food Service

Profile of food premises – April 2023

At the start of April 2023 there were 3189 food premises mainly in the retail and catering sector. An intrinsic part of Nottingham's desire to be a top European tourist destination is its leisure, retail and catering sectors. The NG1 area of Nottingham has 805 food businesses registered with a wide variety of traditional and minority ethnic cuisines.

There are several thousand hotel bed spaces within a mile of the City Centre and the City has numerous high quality conference facilities. There are major establishments that pose a significant business continuity risk should a serious food incident occur such as the hospitals, prison, universities, schools and major manufacturers who distribute products nationally and internationally.

Nottingham's multi-ethnic population is reflected in the diverse ethnicity of food business operators with a significant number whose first language is not English.

Number of Food Premises to enforce Food Hygiene & Safety in 2023/24

Risk Category	A	B	C	D	E	Unrated	Total
Number of Premises As of 1/4/23	1	50	305	1345	1241	247	3189
(data for 1/4/2022)	(1)	(39)	(363)	(1429)	(1174)	(227)	(3233)

Number of Food Premises to enforce Food Standards in 2023/24

Risk Category	A	B	C	Unrated	Total
Number of Premises	12	454	2188	468	3122
	(14)	(497)	(2181)	(541)	(3233) (including 6 not of inspectable risk)

Other information about the service:

- ➔ Since the inception of the FSA's Safer Food Better Business (SFBB) management system the team has carried out basic coaching advice to caterers and retailers that are small businesses in the development and use of safety management systems. Providing such support to small businesses is essential to building the skills and qualifications of the workforce as well as contributing to stage 1 of the compliance model (see 3.5).
- ➔ Authorises, inspects and monitors **11 EC Approved manufacturers** which are able to export throughout the EC and international market.
- ➔ Provides export hygiene health certification.
- ➔ Operates a basic advisory service for small businesses.

Access to the Service

The main offices are located close to the City Centre.

Communities Directorate Safer Business - Food and Health & Safety Team

Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham. NG2 3NG (Council HQ and postal address)
Team is based operationally at Byron House Maid Marian Way

3.5 Enforcement policies

The Enforcement Policy has been approved by the Council, and was reviewed and

3.5 Enforcement policies

The Enforcement Policy has been approved by the Council in June 2016 and is being refreshed in June 2023. The Policy reflects the intention of the Food Service to adhere to the requirements of criminal investigation laws such as, Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE), Human Rights Act 1998 and Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). The Food Service follows the requirements of the changes brought in by the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008. The Enforcement Policy incorporated changes to reflect the statutory Regulators' Code of 2014.

The enforcement policy helps to promote efficient and effective approaches to regulatory inspection and enforcement, which improve regulatory outcomes without imposing unnecessary burdens.

City Council Food Businesses

Where the Council is itself the proprietor of a food business, then the general principles of the Enforcement Policy will apply and be adhered to. To facilitate compliance in such premises, a link environmental health officer is assigned for each Department to enable periodic development and review of their food safety policies. Any breaches of Regulation noted on inspections will be brought to the attention of the relevant catering manager for rectification and dependent upon the seriousness or in cases of continuing non-compliance, senior departmental managers and ultimately the Chief Executive will be notified in order to ensure compliance.

4. Service Delivery

4.1 Food and Feedingstuffs Premises Inspections (Official Controls)

4.1.1 Food premises- hygiene inspections/interventions programme

The Authority follows the priority rating system in the Food Law Code of Practice and aims to inspect 100% of premises due to be inspected in accordance with their risk rating in the following categories; A, B, C, D, E, 'not broadly compliant', manufacturers and newly opened businesses that are unrated.

Official controls are defined at Community level in Article 2(1) of EC Regulation 882/2004 and involves monitoring the knowledge and management ability of the food business operator, assessing practices and procedures and also conducting a physical inspection of the structure of the premises. Monitoring could include surveillance, verification, audit, inspection, and sampling and analysis.

Britain's exit from the EU has resulted in broad adoption of EC food laws into UK law which has provided a degree of continuity but with some practical changes to export health certification.

Inspection Performance Results – Food Hygiene

Risk Category	% of Food Hygiene Inspections due that were carried out						
	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21*	21/22*	22/23*
A	100	100	100	100	40	100	100
B	100	100	100	99	21	63	100
C	99	99	100	97	14	26	100
D	99	97	100	94	20	22	51
E	14	18	80	84	26	11	7

*LAEMS report not run and submitted – data from manual run database reports.

Inspections that are due - profile for the year 2023/24

Risk Category	A	B	C	D	E	Unrated	Total
Inspections due	2	50	125	830	906	247* plus ~500** in-year new registrations	2160*

* Number of new premises not yet inspected as of 1/4/23

** Approximately 500 new businesses will open/close within the next year and be added to the inspections needed figure.

Premises rated Category A & B by officers are considered the highest risk due to the nature of the food business and possibly because of poor operating standards. The minimum inspection frequency for the different categories of premises is given below. Premises may be inspected more frequently than this if required. The specialist 'Flare' database is used to log and track inspections and other activities. This database is also used to extract data to upload to the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme website and the LAEMS annual data or replacement data return to the FSA.

Hygiene Risk Category	Minimum Frequency of Inspection
A	6 months
B	12 months

C	18 months
D	2 years
E	3 years
Unrated; new registered food premises	High risk premises should be inspected within 28 days of opening to risk rate it in category above and issue a zero to five food hygiene rating score if applicable.

Officers also carry out follow up revisits/video calls to assess improvement in conditions in approximately 10-20% of premises inspected. Procedural guidance within the team provides a structured risk-based guide to promote consistency for revisits.

4.1.2 Food Hygiene formal actions in 2022/23

It is the policy of the Authority to serve Hygiene Improvement Notices if significant work required on previous inspection reports has not been completed or if there are serious concerns about food safety during a current visit. These formal legal notices permit officers to specify to a food business operator what improvements are needed within a reasonable timescale.

A Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice can also be served if an officer discovers conditions that pose an imminent risk to health although officers can accept that a business closes voluntarily in such circumstances and similar restrictions are placed on the business before re-opening is permitted. The most likely reasons for the service of such a notice is the discovery of pest infestations (rats, mice, cockroaches), filthy premises or very poor controls over food hazards. Other reasons could include a production process that does not follow recognised guidelines and is dangerous leading to food that is unsafe to eat e.g. a vacuum packing process that could lead to botulinum growing resulting in illness with a very high mortality rate. These notices are often followed by consideration of whether to prosecute/caution for the conditions found.

Formal Actions	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Number of food businesses served with Hygiene Improvement Notices	8	3	4	4
Number of Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices	1	0	0	0

Number of premises where emergency voluntary closure accepted	5	2	0	0
Prosecutions	0	1	1	1
Number of premises where food voluntarily surrendered or seized	25	9	2	3
Formal (Simple) Cautions	2	1	0	0
Premises subject to written warnings	875	216	507	771

4.1.3 Food Hygiene Inspection issues for 2023/24

The national **Food Hygiene Rating Scheme** devised by the Food Standards Agency was adopted by Nottingham in March 2012 and will continue to be promoted in 2023/24. In addition to website information, food businesses are issued with window stickers with Nottingham City Council logo branding that they will be encouraged to display. The website can be viewed at; www.food.gov.uk/ratings

	May 2016	June 2019	Dec 2020	June 2021	May 2022	May 2023
5 Rated	1865	1966	2020	2109	2327	2297
4 Rated	384	239	224	231	225	205
3 Rated	146	127	87	87	83	57
2 Rated	40	26	19	18	9	15
1 Rated	71	71	43	39	23	32
0 Rated	2	4	6	6	9	1

- ➔ In 2023/24 it is proposed to continue to emphasise the focus on food premises that fail to improve and place citizens at potential risk. The impact of the pandemic on food businesses meant many were closed for long periods because of Covid Regulations. This has built up a considerable backlog of inspections that could not be carried out and still show as overdue within the database although good progress has been made to reduce the backlog with the assistance of contract EHOs. Premises identified by their low food hygiene rating score or higher risk rating will be targeted with proportionate legal action up to and including prosecution.
- ➔ UK Food Surveillance System (UKFSS) – Nottingham joined this system from Feb 2015. This is a national database that centrally holds a record of all food standards and feed samples taken as part of official controls by local authorities and Port Health Authorities. This has enabled more effective communications with the public analyst laboratories that the Food Service uses, as well as having more information available to the team to enable more informed risk-based sampling initiatives. The database has permitted more real time/live

data of ongoing sampling so that liaison with the Food Standards Agency and other food authorities is improved to target resources more effectively.

- ➔ Food Information Regulations came in to force during 2014 and 2015. These EU regulations change and tighten rules on labelling of; country of origin, nutritional information, date marking, minimum font sizes, types of oil used, high caffeine drinks, added water in meat and fish products and allergen information extended to non- prepacked foods and catering situations. The Food Service continues to support businesses applying the new regulations particularly with regard to allergen information; this can be particularly challenging for small local businesses such as restaurants/takeaways to meet the requirements. Additional changes to the Food Information Regulations (so called Natasha's Law) came in to force in October 2021 to require more information on products prepacked for direct sale. The legislation has been enacted as a result of some high profile fatalities of customers who suffered severe anaphylactic shock after eating foods that contained allergens that were not fully detailed on the packaging. Natasha's Law is named after Natasha Ednan-Laperouse who, at the age of 15, died due to a severe allergic reaction. Natasha had a sesame allergy and was not made aware that sesame seeds had been baked into the bread of a sandwich she had purchased. This new legislation is an additional responsibility for the Food Team in dealing with requests for advice, complaints and explaining/enforcing compliance while on inspections.
- ➔ The revised Food Law Code of Practice introduced changes to the qualifications and competency requirements for officers carrying out Official Controls. An enhanced and prescribed structure to demonstrating competence is set out in the Code that requires compliance from April 2021. The Service has updated procedures and documentation to ensure competency can be measured and continuing professional development time for authorised officers is 20 hours per year. Officers use available training from the FSA, UKHSA and local seminars organised for the East Midlands local government area.
- ➔ Three vacant EHO posts have been recruited to with start dates of April, June and August 2023. The officers are newly qualified and will require a period of up to two years to be fully competent in all areas of food safety and food standards as well as imported food knowledge and emergency prohibition procedures. While this recruitment is welcome, the newly qualified officer input will be restricted to lower risk premises inspections and the more experienced team members will focus on the highest risk and also provide the training to the new recruits.

4.1.4 Food premises – standards inspections

The programme for food standards inspections is based on the objective of inspecting, as a minimum, high risk (A rated) premises at least once a year, medium risk (B rated) premises at least once every two years, and low risk (C rated) premises at least once every five years. Risk assessments are carried out using a method that complies with the Food Safety Code of Practice.

Inspection Performance Results – Food Standards

Risk Category	% of Food Standards Inspections due that were carried out					
	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21*	21/22*	22/23
A	66	100	92	15	25	100
B	59	73	83	14	23	21
C	45	33	82	25	20	8

*From manual database reports as LAEMS return not run.

Inspection Profile for 2023/24

Risk Category	A	B	C	Total
Inspections due	12	314	727 Programme led by Hygiene risk rating.	~ 1053 Plus 468 are unrated

4.2 Food complaints and request for service

It is the policy of the Authority to investigate complaints concerning food produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed, or intended for human consumption so as to ensure it does not jeopardise the safety of the public. Investigation of complaints about labelling, compositional or quality standards will also be undertaken. All complaints and service requests are recorded using the Civica Flare database, which is used to track the progress of investigations and provide management reports.




Complaints about food matters are dealt with in accordance with departmental procedures that reflect FSA guidelines. The procedures aim to ensure consistency of approach and continuity of evidence.

Number of Complaints/Service Requests received and responded to about Food and Food premises	19/20	20/21*	21/22*	22/23*
Complaints about Food – Submitted items	95	121	120	110
Complaints about Hygiene	466	260	249	303
All Service requests received by Food Safety & Standards Team	1349	1217	1026	1052

*From manual database reports as LEAMS return not used for annual data.

4.3 Home authority/Primary Authority

The Home Authority is the local authority where businesses that manufacture or process food items are based. Where the head office of any such company is not the same location as the manufacturing premises, the authority responsible for the location of the manufacturing unit is known as the Originating Authority. The City Council;

-  Endorses the principles of the Primary Authority and Home Authority Principle
-  Will act as an Originating/Home Authority for local businesses according to service limitations and demand
-  If enforcement action will impact on a business's national policy, the Primary/Home or Originating Authority will be consulted

The Service will adhere to the requirements set by the Better Regulation Delivery Office (part of Regulatory Delivery) in the establishment of the statutory Primary Authority requirement and will carefully consider any requests received from local businesses to act in such a capacity. There are Primary Authority arrangements in place for a number of national companies that operate in Nottingham and the Food Service must adhere to any inspection plans that have been agreed for these businesses.

4.4 Advice to businesses






The Authority recognises the importance of supporting the local economy by providing help and advice to businesses and the public. Food safety and food standards advice and web based links are routinely provided as part of inspections and are supplemented by national and local publicity campaigns. The service has an active Twitter account.

The website provides valuable information both for businesses and the public. It can be accessed at <https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/information-for-business/business-information-and-support/food-hygiene-and-safety/>

4.5 Food inspection and sampling

4.5.1 Microbiological sampling

Sampling of food for microbiological purposes is carried for 5 main reasons;

-  To comply with the statutory duty under EC Reg 882/2004 as part of Official Controls,
-  To assist investigation of suspect cases of food poisoning
-  To investigate complaints about food,
-  To assist in national and local studies of particular foodstuffs,
-  To provide a supplementary means to measure the effectiveness of hygiene controls at food businesses.

Food samples are analysed by the UK Health Security Agency laboratories (bacteriological food and water), the appointed Public Analyst (food standards), the Environment Agency (chemicals in water), and by acknowledged experts in their field (foreign objects, e.g. insects). Laboratories used for analysis in connection with food safety and water quality are accredited to national standards.

Year	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Number of microbiological samples	172	100	95	90	48	68	13	21	19
--	-----	-----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

There has been a drop in sampling nationally and Nottingham's statistics reflect the trend. This is because of competing priorities with carrying out inspections and also the cancelling of funding from the FSA for sampling projects particularly relating to food standards. The sampling that is carried out is risk based and focusses on the highest risk or emerging issues of suspected risk.

4.5.2 Composition and labelling

The Food Service has a documented protocol for the taking of food samples. The majority of samples are taken as part of the food inspection activities at catering, retail and non-retail levels. Sampling for composition and labelling purposes includes non-prepacked food, food from manufacturers and importers in the city and from wholesalers. There has been a reduction in the number of samples due to more focussed sampling plans nationally in order to minimise duplication.

Year	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Number of composition/labelling/allergen samples	100	14	17	10	6	25	14	5	23

4.6 The control and investigation of outbreaks and food related infectious disease

Suspected or confirmed cases of food poisoning are reported by GPs to UKHSA who then formally notify the Food Service. Many reports that arrive with the team for investigation relate to sporadic, isolated incidents of food poisoning. On occasions, reports are received of suspected or actual outbreaks of food poisoning. Isolated cases are not routinely contacted however certain unusual cases highlighted by UKHSA will have a more formal investigation and intervention information provided to assist the patient and prevent further spread of the illness to family contacts or consideration of any occupationally linked risks.

The Authority has appointed the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC), based with UKHSA, as the Proper Officer under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984. The CCDC service works in partnership with the Food Safety Service to administer notifications, investigations, collation of statistics and formal exclusion of infected food handlers.

The service has a documented outbreak procedure that is used to investigate outbreaks originating from bacteriological or viral sources. The documented Food Poisoning Outbreak Control Plan, has been drawn up in conjunction with the CCDC.

Case Study

In June 2014, the Food and Health & Safety Team received notification of a suspected food poisoning outbreak. Seven patients had presented to Accident and Emergency at Queens Medical Centre the previous evening. Symptoms included diarrhoea, vomiting and fever, the severity of which had resulted in 6 cases being admitted for treatment. An inspection of the food premises implicated took place straight away and a Hygiene Emergency

Prohibition Notice was subsequently served by officers prohibiting the use of the premises immediately. In total the food poisoning outbreak affected 142 people which occurred after eating food prepared on and sold from the premises; the food poisoning organism responsible was Enteroinvasive E coli (EIEC).

The only known reservoir of this strain of E coli is the human gut. The infective E. coli bacteria contained in faecal matter got in to the food through poor handwashing by food handlers after using the toilet. Victims of the outbreak included a 14 year old girl who was admitted to paediatric intensive care with multiple organ failure (including kidney failure) and a 16 year old boy severely ill with a low blood platelet count. Due to the nature of their symptoms The case hearing was at Nottingham Crown Court on 23 Sep 2015. Both defendants received 4 months imprisonment suspended for 12 months, ordered to carry out 250 hours community service each, costs awarded of £25,756, Compensation Order of £200 to each of the 142 victims. (£28,400).

4.7 Food safety incidents and Allergy alerts

National 'Food Alerts' are notified to Local Authorities from time to time and the Authority receives these by way of email, mobile phone text message or by out of office hours emergency contact numbers provided to the FSA Incidents Branch. The Authority has a documented procedure for receiving, and when necessary, reacting to such alerts. Some Food Alerts require an immediate response where there is an imminent risk to health.

The FSA (and LAs) lost access to parts of the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), which it used to exchange information about food safety risks and responses across the EU. It also lost access to the Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES), which provides information on imports, and the Alert and Cooperation Network, which allows for exchanges of intelligence and requests for assistance on food fraud issues between EU member states. As a result, it said the FSA has put in place alternative mechanisms for identifying and escalating risks, and for exchanging information.

Allergy Alerts - sometimes foods have to be withdrawn or recalled if there is a risk to consumers because the allergy labelling is missing or incorrect or if there is any other food allergy risk. Vulnerable persons may suffer anaphylactic shock and possible death if they consume certain allergens.

4.8 Liaison with other organisations

The Food Service actively participates and contributes to liaison arrangements both formal and informal to share intelligence as well as best practice.

The formal groups attended are;

-  Trading Standards East Midlands – Food & Agriculture (TSEM)
-  Nottinghamshire Food Liaison Group
-  Nottinghamshire Food Sampling Group
-  East Midlands Unitary Cities Group
-  Nottinghamshire Regulatory Managers Group
-  D2N2 Better Regulation Group

4.9 Food Safety and Standards Promotion

The Food Service teams maintain a comprehensive range of advisory website information in respect of food matters.

Press releases in conjunction with the Authority's communications team are also an integral part of the work of the Service and used pro-actively along with use of Twitter to promote food safety and food standards matters.

As an Authority that trains Environmental Health and Trading Standards Officers we also welcome students from allied professions such as Public Health, GP and Nursing trainees.

4.10 Imported Foods

The Food Service is proactively involved in Imported Food work seeking illegally imported products during routine inspections. Officers have been trained on imported foods and illegal meat/food fraud matters and the provenance of food items on business premises is routinely scrutinised to ensure it is legally compliant and safe to eat.

Imported Food procedures have been implemented to identify those premises involved in the importation and wider distribution of foods in the City area in order to ensure that appropriate precautions have been followed so as to comply with the relevant legislation.

5. Resources

5.1 Financial Resources

5.1.1 Food Service (Summary)

	2023/24
Salaries (inc. management)	£584,000
Other expenses including, travel, supplies & services, food sampling, stationary, insurance, recharges.	£ 17,000
Income – FHRS rescore fees, export certificate fees	~£5000

5.2 Staffing allocations

5.2. Food Service

Environmental Health Officers and Food Safety and Standards Officers hold the certificate of registration with EHRB or are following a period of structured training and monitoring, which is a statutory requirement to undertake official food control work. Two EHOs have been working through the authorisation levels to be able to inspect the full range of premises while three newly qualified officers joining the team in spring/summer 2023 will be trained and supervised to work through the required authorisation levels.

The EHO post that was deleted has been reinstated with an anticipated recruitment time of October 2023. This will provide additional capacity of approximately 200 food safety and standards inspections per year once they are fully authorised and competent.

5.2.1 Team Minimum Capacity to carry out all Official Controls (Hygiene & Standards) 2023/24.

Current team capacity	Other work factor adjustments	Target No. Inspections Tagged Cat A-E premises and unrated	Revisits Re-score Inspections Sample other visit etc. at ~ 25% of Insp target.	No. of Service Requests Average capacity
PEHO (1.0)	(50% capacity allowance for PEHO duties)	100	37	~ 132
PEHO (1.0)	(50% capacity allowance for PEHO duties)	100	37	~ 132
PEHO (0.8)	(50% capacity allowance for PEHO duties)	80	30	~ 132
EHO (1.0)		200	75	~ 132
FSO (0.75)	DWI work plus sampling/UKFSS lead/meetings -20 days	110	50	~ 132
EHO (1.0)		200	75	~ 132
EHO (1.0)	Post filled with NQ EHO April 2023	200	75	~ 132
FSO (1.0)	Post filled with NQ EHO June 2023	200	75	~ 132
EHO (1.0)	Post filled with NQ EHO Aug 2023	200	75	~ 132
EHO (1.0) *	* Deleted post reinstated from October 2023	*200	*75	~ 132

EHO (0.6)		120	45	~132
9.15 FTE		1710	649	1344
*Vacant for first 6 months				

* 30/08/2023 update note: this reinstated growth item EHO post that is presently vacant may be subject to budget savings and deleted. The negative impact on resources will be as indicated in the above table i.e., approx. 200 inspection capacity reduction.

5.2.2 Inspection Plan Summary

The table below indicates that the deleted post and 2 current vacancies have reduced the capacity of the team below that which is required for statutory minimum inspection programme.

Inspection Demand 2023/24		Team Capacity (all posts filled) Inspections		Team Capacity with 0.5 vacancies
A-D	830	Food Team 9.15 FTE	1710	1610
E	(906)			
Unrated plus new registrations	247 500			
TOTAL	2660	*Agency EHOs/FSOs	500	500
TOTAL			2210	2110

*Estimated additional resource needed to meet demand.

Summary of Demand versus Capacity Resources

The normal demand for inspections in 2023/24 is **2660** including the Category E premises.

The team inspections capacity if all posts are filled has increased to 1710 with three new recruits (though all are newly qualified EHOs and cannot inspect all risk categories yet and will begin on lowest risk category, E rated). The additional EHO through a growth item will only be appointable from October if recruitment is successful; therefore team inspection capacity is reduced to **1610** inspections.

However there will be approximately 500 inspections carried out by the EHO contractors which boosts this year's inspection capacity to **2110** inspections.

Therefore there is a predicted gap of **approximately 550** inspections this year which will mean a reduction in the target of category E inspections so as to focus on higher risk premises. It is anticipated that should staffing numbers remain in place then the recovery in category E to 100% should be achieved in the 2024/25 year.

Resources will continue to be aligned and focussed as per the FSA Recovery Plan principles on Category A-D Hygiene, Category A Standards, newly registered high-risk premises and premises that are not broadly compliant.

5.3 Staff Development

The Authority fully supports the implementation of training, and development plans for staff. An annual appraisal review process takes place where each member of staff meets with their line manager and their development and training needs are identified in light of the Council strategic aims and personal job descriptions. Monthly one to one meetings with each officer are also carried out to monitor performance, consistency, ongoing training needs as well as personal concerns. Whole team meetings take place every eight weeks to discuss new and ongoing issues as well as providing a forum for discussion and consistency. A specialist Food Practitioners meeting occurs every eight weeks and this drills down further in to the detail of food safety.

Monthly training records are maintained to track Continuing Professional development including the FSA requirement for at least 20 hours food update training per year. All officers are subscribed to an on-line training provider that also includes regular live webinars to ensure they are up to date with current issues.

The Authority is positive about developing professional knowledge and works in liaison with other local authorities to arrange low cost training as well providing bespoke training specifically for the team. The Authority has subscribed to the Local Government East Midlands '5 plus 1 pack' training scheme, which will provide low cost training throughout the year.

In addition, the team arrange in house cascade training to update on practitioner-based subjects as well as on-site coaching to those officers developing their skills and knowledge base.

5.4 Risk Management

It is recognised that key resources are necessary to maintaining an effective Food Service that meets the statutory requirements set by the Food Standards Agency and the European Commission. Business continuity plans have been drawn up to mitigate the impact of a major loss of business resource to ensure that services can be maintained.

A number of other key risk issues presently exist;



Staff vacancies

The staff vacancies in recent years and the pandemic has impacted substantially on the team's ability to fulfil all its inspection duties; the focus has been on the highest risk premises A-D however in previous years this has resulted in many overdue inspections in category E food premises. Four EHOs left during the last 3 years.

Due to staff shortages and the backlog built up because of Covid there is a substantial number of due and overdue inspections across all risk categories and statutory duties will not be met this year. **Overdue premises will be included in the 2023/24 and 2024/25 inspection programme with the intention to meet the FSA's recovery plan to bring inspections back in to line over this period.**



Britain Exiting EU

January 2021 Britain exited from the EU and with this has brought some potential risks for food security and supply. All current adopted EU laws will be transferred wholly in to UK law however import and export trading conditions may mean there are some delays at ports; such ports may feel pressured in to an increase in 'deferred inspections' meaning that inland authorities are required to assess shipments of foods destined for Nottingham wholesalers/manufacturers. There has been a small increase in demand

for Export Certification. It is anticipated that there will continue to be uncertainty about food law and food supply chain issues on an ongoing basis. It is still difficult to quantify the pressures to the team to regulate in the new environment with a concern that there will be an increased prevalence of food fraud.



Increase in Food Premises registrations

The number of food premises registering in Nottingham is constantly high and has a significant 'churn rate'. Increases may be contributed by positive activity by the Growth Hub for artisan food outlets and self-employment in the food sector as well as increased economic activity in the entertainment and leisure sector, which is replacing some retail shops on the high street. There is also an increase in the 'churn rate' of businesses which adds an additional burden to the inspection programme. The national delivery platforms such as Just Eat require that businesses are registered and have a food hygiene rating. The businesses cannot start trading on these platforms without the EHO inspecting and issuing the FHS rating score. This initiates additional demand and pressure to prioritise these businesses that detracts from routine inspections of other businesses. A trend has also been noted that some businesses receiving a poor hygiene rating will re-register under a moderately adjusted company name to enable a new inspection to be generated and so enable a 'rescore' via this 'shortcut' method.



Inspecting New Food Premises within 28 Days

The Food Service has seen year-on-year consistent high number of new registrations for food premises including during the Covid period; this has risen to around 500 in the past year. There is a minimum time period specified by the Agency by which the new high risk food premises should be inspected; it is considered reasonable to have carried out the initial visit to high risk premises within 28 days. Improvements have been made in targeting new businesses to achieve the target period and the service will continue to focus on this as one of the key priorities. This risk is being mitigated by a triage approach to pick out the premises that are most likely to handle high risk foods or serve vulnerable groups and ensure they are prioritised.

6. Quality Assessment

6.1 Quality assessments

The team operate a procedure manual that compliment FSA Food Law Codes of Practice and Guidance. Quality and consistency are regulated by;



- A staged and mentoring approach to the authorisation of staff
- Routine monitoring of reports, correspondence and notices
- Accompanied inspections
- Consistency training in house and with other authorities
- Inter authority liaison/audits
- Attendance at Food Liaison and Trading Standards East Midlands groups
- Benchmarking meetings and reports with East Midlands Unitary Cities
- Meetings with legal services to give advice and feedback on enforcement consistency
- Monthly one to one meetings
- Subscriptions to on-line/Teams training including live webinars linking with other local authorities
- Team meetings, specialist practitioners' meetings and briefings
- Use of standard phrases in report compilation
- Feedback from customers and clients both formal and informal
- Complaints against the service are investigated in accordance with corporate guidelines

7. Review

7.1 Review against the service plan

Performance under the Service Plan is reviewed monthly and annually and reported to the Departmental Senior Leadership Team.

The review includes performance against targets, variances from the plan together with reasons and any other service activity or issue that has impacted on Food Service outcomes.

7.2 Conclusion

The recruitment plans used in last year have been successful as well as the use of a tendered service for category D inspections. This returned the inspection programme back to improved compliance in 2022/23 and with the newly recruited officers this improvement should be built upon in 2023/24.

In the event of a major incident/investigation, such as a food poisoning outbreak, the current minimum resources would need to be reviewed dynamically to ensure that all Official Controls could be completed within the timescales.

Paul Dales.

Environmental Health Manager – Safer Business.

30 August 2023.