

Rossendale Borough Council

Street Scene and Liveability

Environmental Health Service

Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2005/06

FSA Ref. 204

Produced by:

**Hayley Robinson-Mitchell
Senior Environmental Health Officer
Town Hall
Lord Street
Rawtenstall
Rossendale
BB4 7LZ**

August 2005

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN 2005-2006**

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1 **Service aims and objectives**

1.1 Aims

- To protect and promote the health of persons, both within and outside Borough, by controlling the risks associated with the consumption of food and drink, and the investigation and control of designated communicable diseases.

1.1.1 OBJECTIVES

- To undertake an annual programme of food hygiene inspections and enforcement in accordance with all relevant statutory requirements, codes of practice and guidance.
- To support the annual inspection programme with an annual microbiological food sampling programme.
- To investigate complaints, requests for service and notifications of food poisoning within service standards and to take appropriate action in accordance with all relevant codes of practice and guidance.
- To respond to food hazard warnings and incidents in accordance with all the relevant code of practice and guidance.
- To provide advice, information and training to consumers, employees and operators of food businesses.
- To promote food safety and participate in, and contribute to, local and national campaigns
- To provide efficient, effective and high quality services.
- To provide services which are accessible, open and equitable to all.
- To respond promptly and courteously, in accordance with good customer care practice, to all recipients of our services.

1.2

Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans

1.2.1 *Rossendale Alive*

The Local Strategic Partnership has published its Community Strategy for 2005-2020. This has identified 8 delivery themes and targets to which the Food Service can contribute. The Actions to implement the Strategy's objectives will be revised annually and incorporated into work plans for the various themes. The Food Service can contribute to these work plans. In addition, the Food Service will contribute to the three cross-cutting commitments (focus on community cohesion, utilise ICT in service delivery and ensure a sustainable environment) and thereby improve the success of the food sector and help consumers to help themselves.

1.2.2 *Rossendale Corporate Plan*

The Council has adopted a Corporate Plan to include its contributions to the Community Strategy. The Food Service contributes to the Plan in the following ways:-

Developing a dynamic local economy

1. The activities of the food safety team help businesses to reduce risks and consequently reduce potential losses.
2. Helping to improve the food safety performance of business assists in their growth and the development of new employment opportunities. The food safety team promotes self regulation by all businesses as part of a balanced enforcement and educational approach. Officers offer advice, guidance and support on the development and implementation of food safety systems of control which, in turn, assists in the development of new business and employment opportunities.

Investing in our people

1. The food safety team ensures that employers fulfil their legal duties, as well as promoting best practice, in relation to the training of employees to ensure they are competent to carry out their work. This improves the employment skills of those employees.
2. The team enforces food safety legislation and acts as consultees to the Licensing Service for cultural and leisure activities throughout the district. The activities of the team, including giving advice, assist such activities to take place.

Communication

The Food Service will link with the proposed Contact Centre and thereby improve its accessibility to all its customers. The aim is to enable more services to be accessed

at the first point of contact and also e-enable information so that businesses can help themselves where appropriate.

1.2.3 CPA 2005

One objective of the Service is the delivery of a service that is efficient, effective and of high quality. This will contribute to the service being viewed by the CPA process as being consistently above minimum requirements and performing well.

2 **Background**

2.1 Profile of the Local Authority

The Borough of Rossendale comprises a mixed urban/rural setting covering 13,800 hectares situated in East Lancashire and to the North East of the Greater Manchester conurbation. It has a population of just over 64,000 the majority of whom live in the towns of Bacup, Haslingden, Rawtenstall and Whitworth set in Rossendale between the surrounding hills. The ethnic minority population comprises about 3%, primarily of South Asian origin, and mainly living in Haslingden and Rawtenstall.

2.2 Organisational Structure

The Food Safety function is performed by staff in the Environmental Health Department which forms part of Street Scene and Liveability. The organisational structure within Street Scene and Liveability is currently being reviewed.

2.3 Scope of the Food Service

The Environmental Health Department is responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Food Safety Act 1990, the European Communities Act 1972 and regulations made under those Acts and aims to provide a comprehensive service to consumers and food businesses by:

- Registration of relevant businesses
- Proactive food safety inspections including premises subject to special approvals under product specific legislation.
- Licensing of butchers.
- Investigation of communicable diseases, including outbreaks.
- Investigation of food complaints.
- Implementation of Food Standards Agency (FSA) Food Hazard Warning Scheme.

- Investigation of hygiene complaints.
- Routine food sampling, including participation in national and regional surveys.
- Examination of food, including the seizure, detention and voluntary surrender of food.
- Liaison with other local authorities regarding food manufactured within Rossendale
- Liaison with other Lancashire local authorities including Trading Standards.
- Advice to business.
- Food Hygiene training to businesses and the voluntary sector
- Promotion of food safety issues eg Food Safety Week.

Joint inspections for food safety and Health & Safety purposes are also undertaken where health and safety is not of a high risk nature.

2.4 Demands on the Food Service

2.4.1 PREMISES PROFILE (AS AT 1ST APRIL 2005)

• Categories A-C High Risk	355 (55%)
• Categories D-E Low Risk	287 (45%)
• Total Number of Food Premises (including non-rated)	650
• Producers	1
• Slaughterhouses	0
• Manufacturers/Processors	15
• Packers	4
• Importers/exporters	0
• Distributors/transporters	1
• Retailers	260
• Restaurants and caterers	352
• Manufacturers/articles/suppliers	0
• Manufacturers selling retail	9
• Approved meat product premises	5
• Approved fish premises	0
• Approved dairy premises	3
• Total approved premises	8

- Licensed premises (butchers) 12
- Premises where home authority partnership applies 0

2.4.2 LOCAL REQUIREMENTS

There is a broad mix of food businesses in the Borough including restaurants, cafes, takeaways and retailers, which can be predominately categorised as small businesses.

There are also a number of large and small scale manufacturing premises eg meat products, dairies and bakeries which are not particularly complex processes but which require a significant amount of time to physically inspect the whole premises. These higher risk premises are inspected by Senior Environmental Health Officers.

2.4.3 SERVICE DELIVERY POINTS

The service is currently based at the Town Hall, Lord Street, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, but is due to move to Bacup by the end of 2005.

General enquiries 01706 217777
 Fax 01706 244590

Web site www.rossendale.gov.uk

There are a number of other council offices/premises throughout the district known as Neighbourhood Offices. However, most service requests are made directly by telephone. The Council is actively working towards the development of a Contact Centre, thereby improving access to all service users.

Normal office hours are between 8.45am to 5.00pm. Food officers do undertake evening and weekend inspections of premises and occasional events on an ad hoc basis.

2.5 Enforcement Policy

The Environmental Health Department has a written policy on enforcement having regard to the principles and content of the Enforcement Concordat which Rossendale B.C. formally signed in April 2001 and which had member approval.

The food section operates an enforcement mix based on the following principles :

- Demand driven eg requests for advise, complaints
- Inspection driven eg programmed inspections, food and water sampling

- Education driven eg publicity and awareness campaigns
- Intelligence driven eg sampling, notifications and investigations of food borne illness.

3 **Service Delivery**

3.1 Food Premises Inspections

The council maintains a computer database of all food premises using Flare software which was installed in April 2000. The inspections are carried out in accordance with a risk rated inspection programme.

All inspections are carried out by suitably qualified officers who are authorised and satisfy the requirements of the FSA 1990 Code of Practice and in-house procedures.

In addition to these inspections the service undertakes licensing and inspection of Butcher's Shops, following the FSA 1990 Code Of Practice and in-house procedures.

Performance Indicators 04-05

Inspections against food programme – A rated premises	- 100%
B rated premises	- 100%
C rated premises	- 98.64%
D rated premises	- 100%
E rated premises	- 100%
F rated premises	- 100%

Overall 99.33 %

Total Food Inspections completed in 2004/5 - 414

3.1.1 SPECIALISED PROCESSES

The approval and inspection, both primary and secondary, of premises subject to product specific legislation is restricted to those senior environmental health officers who have undertaken training relevant to those premises.

3.1.2 ALTERNATIVE INSPECTION STRATEGY

The council has adopted an Alternative Enforcement Strategy option for low risk premises meaning that these premises need not be subject to a primary inspection.

This strategy was introduced in 2004 for all premises categorised E and F and due for inspection. The strategy is based on the completion of questionnaires by proprietors and a subsequent assessment by Officers. 10% of those businesses

returning questionnaires will be subject to a validation inspection in addition to all businesses not responding to the strategy. The Strategy complies with the FSA 1990 Code of Practice and is covered by in house procedures.

3.2 Food Complaints

The Food Service has a target to respond to all food complaints within 3 working days in accordance with in-house procedures written with reference to the Food Safety Act 1990. This target includes complaints or requests for service related to food, food premises, practices and personnel.

Food Complaints estimated for 2005-2006 = 55

3.3 Home Authority Principle

The Food Service currently has no Home Authority agreement with any food business in place but is actively considering the promotion of the concept within Rossendale.

3.4 Advice to Business

Rossendale B.C. has a policy of offering advice to members of the public and any business which has trading premises within its area, on any food or food borne disease related issue. Advice is offered both prior to starting up in business and to existing businesses. This area of activity is currently being expanded to help businesses comply with forthcoming changes in legislation and a joint bid with other Lancashire Authorities has been submitted to apply for extra funding for implementation.

3.5 Food Sampling

Rossendale Borough Council participates in all regional and local food sampling surveys. These are organised by the Health Protection Agency (HPA) and the Local Authorities Organisation for Regulatory Services (LACORS) together with the Lancashire Food Officer Group (FOG). Our policy is to sample food and drink as supplied, produced and sold in accordance with the FSA 1990 Code of Practice and in-house sampling procedure in order to assess food safety and quality. All microbiological samples are submitted to the HPA accredited laboratory in Preston. Samples for chemical analysis are submitted to the Public Analyst in Preston.

The Sampling Policy contains an outline of the sampling activity. The sampling programme will target specific foods and sectors of food activity including Approved Premises.

It is anticipated in 2005-2006 the food service will be required to obtain approximately 180 samples.

3.6 Investigation Of Outbreaks And Food Related Infectious Diseases

The Authority's policy is to investigate all food poisoning/infectious disease notifications for which it has responsibility in accordance with the written in-house procedure. There is regular contact with the Consultant for Communicable Disease Control and liaison is established with the laboratories and personnel of the Health Protection Agency.

3.7 Food Incidents

Food incidents and information received concerning food which is potentially hazardous, is administered and appropriate action taken, in accordance with the severity of the incident and distribution system as described in the FSA 1990 Code of Practice and in-house documents. Records are kept of decisions made and action taken or planned.

3.8 Liaison with other organisations

3.8.1 The Authority is a member of the Lancashire Food Officers Group. This group meets regularly with the purpose of ensuring consistency of action within the County. It is a sub-group of the Lancashire Chief Officers Group, which approves the FOG Annual Action Plan and monitors the delivery of those actions.

3.8.2 Although Rossendale has no individual representation on other professional bodies or working groups or LACORS, it obtains and provides information through other members of FOG and thereby contributes towards their work.

3.8.3 The Authority is currently consulting with businesses in order to determine the most efficient and effective means for liaison with businesses and the voluntary sector. The concept of helping businesses to help themselves in relation to all Environmental Health functions, within the context of the Enforcement Policy, is supported by the service.

3.8.4 The Authority also liaises regularly with other authorities and the Health Protection Agency and has adopted the generic protocols e.g. for infectious disease outbreak investigation and control.

3.9 Food Safety Promotion

The department has recently employed a Health Promotion Officer for 10 hours per week on a two year contract. The Department launched its Confidence in Catering Award in June 2005 to coincide with Food Safety week. This award

scheme promotes and encourages high standards of food safety. Businesses who achieve the award will gain public recognition via internet, local press, window sticker and certificate. The award will also give customers the means to make an informed choice when deciding where to eat.

In addition the department will issue ad hoc press releases, embark on providing Foundation Level Food Hygiene training and participate in Food Safety Week and a programme of other food safety promotions.

4. Resources

4.1 Financial allocation

The level of expenditure is identified alongside other Environmental Health expenditure. Work is currently underway to produce an identifiable budget, linked to time recording systems, to set up a baseline for financial resource allocation for the Food Safety function. This will be in place prior to the 2006/7 budget fixing round.

4.2 Staffing allocation

The number of staff currently contributing to the delivery of the Food Services Plan is as follows:-

Senior EHO	1 f.t.e (currently on maternity leave)
Senior EHO	0.8 f.t.e
Senior EHO	0.5 f.t.e (1 year temporary post)
Senior Technical Officer	0.67 f.t.e
Health Promotion Officer	0.27 f.t.e (2 year temporary post)
Administration Officer	0.67 f.t.e

The future permanent establishment and staffing deployment is currently under review.

4.3 Staff Development Plan

It is the policy of Rossendale B.C to comply fully with the requirements of the FSA 1990 Code of Practice in relation to staff training and the qualifications of authorised officers.

The Corporate staff performance appraisal scheme offers the opportunity to:

- Review achievements and obstacles to achievements for the past year.
- Agree mutual key tasks and objectives for the next 6 to 12 months.
- Identify training and development needs for both career development and the year's objectives.

- Ensure sufficient training is provided to maintain and update staff skills and experience.

There are 3 themes to the staff training and development programme namely:

- The attainment and maintenance of core competencies in accordance with the statutory requirements.
- Training on new or changes to internal practices and procedures.
- Training on supplementary skills as identified by service needs and personal requirements.

The planned staff training programme includes:-

Subject

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------|
| • Imported Food Controls | External |
| • Formal Sampling | In house |
| • Animal Byproducts | External |
| • Meat Products | In house |
| • Food Poisoning Outbreaks | In house |
| • New Codes of Practice | In house |

Monthly team meetings are planned each year when officers who have attended seminars etc will cascade the training down to all team members as a standard agenda item.

Ad hoc training will also be identified during the year. Staff involved in food law enforcement will need not less than 10 hours each updating in technical information during the year.

5. Quality Assessment

- 5.1 The Environmental Health service's Quality Management System, designed to meet the ISO 9000:2000 standard, is used to provide a framework for the management of the Food Service in order to meet the requirements of the Framework Agreement and Code of Practice. Rossendale B.C. is committed to adopting systems to assess the quality and performance of the Food Safety Team.
- 5.2 A monitoring system, including checks of inspection records etc, accompanied inspections, and questionnaires to business is in place to assess compliance with statutory requirements, guidance, internal procedures, good enforcement and customer care practice. Quarterly performance reports are also produced to compare performance against service plan targets and performance indicators.
- 5.3 Rossendale B.C. has a performance management process whereby key performance indicators are monitored. The Best Value Performance Indicator BV166, applicable to the whole Environmental Health Service, is subject to

scrutiny and includes the provision of a written enforcement policy, planned risk based enforcement activity, customer consultation and satisfaction levels.

6 Review

6.1 Review against the service

The Food and Safety team reviews and reports performance on a monthly and quarterly basis and reports its achievements to the Head of Street Scene and Liveability, who will monitor and assess key service performance indicators. The Key Performance Indicators relating to the Food and Communicable Disease service are as follows:-

	Target
• Response times to service requests	90%
• Food proactive inspections	
A-C premises	95%
D premises	98%
• Service satisfaction levels(proactive relating to food)	95%

NB Response times to food service requests have been set as follows:-

Activity	Working Days
Food poisoning notifications	1
Food complaints	3
Food hygiene complaints	3
Food hazard warning	1
Requests for advice	3

6.2 Variations from the Service Plan

Any significant variations from the approved service plan are forwarded for consideration by the Head of Service, Street Scene and Liveability, prior to implementation.

6.3 Service Improvements

Improvement and development of services is detailed in the current service's Action Plan and reported and considered through the performance management system.

The food service has achieved a number of successes during the past year relating to service improvement and meeting the challenges posed, compliance with the Food Standards Agency Model Standard (Framework Agreement), removal of a backlog of food inspections, including all food premises due for inspection in 05-06 in the risk based inspection programme and preparing for the introduction of the new Food Hygiene Award whilst maintaining high standards of service delivery.

The primary focus of 2005/6 will be the updating and reviewing of all in-house quality documents and the redesign of services in order to implement the new food safety legislation coming into force in January 2006.