

Rossendale Borough Council

Street Scene and Liveability

Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2007/08

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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN 2007-2008

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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 and by working in partnership to tackle obesity and promote and encourage healthy eating

1.2 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 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.
- To increase input and activity in the wider food and Health Agenda by working with partners and other agencies to develop and implement projects, activities and promotions based on reducing obesity and encouraging healthy eating
- To increase contributions into local initiatives working with agencies associated with the food industry to publicise and promote a range of health related subjects such as improvement of breastfeeding facilities in food premises in Rossendale,

increase information sent to Trading Standards on the control of underage tobacco sales and to increase control of litter from takeaways in Rossendale

2 **BACKGROUND**

2.1 Profile of the Local Authority

The Borough of Rossendale comprises of a mixed urban/rural 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 66,000 the majority of whom live in the towns of Bacup, Haslingden, Rawtenstall and Whitworth. The ethnic minority population is about 3%, primarily of South Asian origin, and is mainly concentrated in Haslingden and Rawtenstall.

2.2 Organisational Structure

The Food Safety function is performed by staff in the Environmental Health Service which forms part of Street Scene and Liveability Department.

2.3 Scope of the Food Service

The Environmental Health service is responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Food Safety Act 1990 and 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
- Approval of certain food manufacturers
- 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 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 East Lancashire local authorities and Lancashire Trading Standards service.
- Advice to business.
- Food Hygiene training to businesses in the area
- Promotion of food safety for example Food Safety Week.
- Promotion of Healthy Eating and the reduction of Obesity, working in partnership with other agencies including membership of the Rossendale Food Forum as part of the Rossendale Local Strategic Partnership.
- Co-ordination of work experience placements.

Joint inspections for Food Safety and Health & Safety purposes are also undertaken.

2.4 Demands on the Food Service

2.4.1 PREMISES PROFILE (AS ON 1ST APRIL 2007)

• Categories A-C High Risk	338 (47.6%)
• Categories D-E Low Risk	344(48.4%)
• Number of unrated premises	29
• Total Number of Food Premises	710
• Producers	1
• Slaughterhouses	0
• Manufacturers/Processors	3
• Packers	4
• Importers/exporters	0
• Distributors/transporters	0
• Retailers	250
• Restaurants and caterers	414
• 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

2.4.2 LOCAL REQUIREMENTS

There is a broad mix of food businesses in the Borough including restaurants, cafes, takeaways and retailers,

There are also a number of large and small scale manufacturing premises for example meat product manufacturers, dairies and bakeries which are not particularly complex processes but do require a significant amount of time to physically inspect the whole premises.

2.4.3 SERVICE DELIVERY POINTS

The service is based at Stubbylee Hall, Stubbylee Lane, Bacup, Rossendale.

General enquiries	01706 252565
Fax	01706 870447
Email	envhealth@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Web site	www.rossendale.gov.uk

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

Rossendale Borough Council has a written policy which incorporates all enforcement activity.

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

- Demand driven e.g. requests for advice, complaints
- Inspection driven e.g. programmed inspections, food and water examination
- Education driven e.g. publicity and awareness campaigns
- Intelligence driven e.g. sampling, accident notifications

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 to work within Code of Practice Guidelines and follow in-house procedures.

Performance Indicators 06/07

Inspections against food programme – A rated premises - **100%**
B rated premises - **93%**
C rated premises - **96%**
D rated premises - **94%**
E rated premises - **97%**

Total Food Premises Inspections completed in 2006/7 - 462

3.1.1 SPECIALISED PROCESSES

The inspection of premises subject to Approval is restricted to the Principal and one Senior Environmental Health Officer 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 or highly compliant premises such as some schools, 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 issuing of Educational packs and the completion of self assessment forms by proprietors. Ten percent of these businesses will be subject to a validation inspection. The Strategy complies with the Food Safety Act 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 received in 2006-2007 = 51

3.3 Home Authority Principle

The Food Service currently has no Home Authority agreement in place and is not considering the promotion of this concept.

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 infectious disease related issue, be it starting up in business or advice to existing businesses. This area of activity is currently being expanded to help businesses comply with current legislation.

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 Co-ordinating 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 Food Law Code of Practice and in house sampling procedure in response to food complaints and suspected food poisoning cases. 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 the outline of the sampling activity. The sampling programme will target specific foods and sectors of food activity including Approved Premises.

In 2006-2007 the food service obtained 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 (HPA). Regular meetings are held with the HPA to keep up to date with current developments.

3.7 Food Incidents

The system for dealing with 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 Food Safety Act 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 (FOG). The Principal Environmental Health Officer is the Chairman of this group for the year 2007-2008. 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 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 2007/08 the service is looking to work in partnership with the Trading Standards and the Food and Health Task Force to expand the award to include other criteria such as healthy eating to increase the availability and promotion of healthy options in Rossendale.

In addition the service will issue ad hoc press releases and a bi annual newsletter to all food businesses to advise and update on all food issues and promote the work of the service. The service will participate in Food Safety Week and a programme of other food safety promotions.

3.10 Healthy Eating Promotion

The Department has increased links with the East Lancashire PCT and Food Northwest and in 2007/08 will be a member of the Rossendale Food Forum which aims to identify and implement locally targeted goals and actions to improve nutritional wellbeing and health of residents in Rossendale.

4. Resources

4.1 Financial allocation

The level of expenditure is identified alongside other Environmental Health expenditure. Work is currently underway to utilise 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 2008/9 budget fixing round.

4.2 Staffing allocation

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

Principal EHO	1.0 f.t.e
Senior EHO	1.0 f.t.e
Senior Technical Officer	0.5 f.t.e

4.3 Staff Development Plan

It is the policy of Rossendale B.C to comply fully with the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice in relation to staff training and the qualifications of authorised officers. Rossendale Borough Council has just been awarded Investors in people.

The service participates in the Council's staff performance appraisal scheme which offers an 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.

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.

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

Ad hoc training is also identified 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 Codes 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. Monthly performance reports are also produced to compare performance against service plan targets and performance indicators and these are reviewed through the Services line management at monthly 1-1 and performance management meetings..
- 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 Against the Service Plan

- 6.1 The Food and Safety team reviews and reports performance on a monthly and quarterly basis and reports its achievements to the Environmental Health Manager and the Head of Street Scene and Liveability, who 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-E 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 cases	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 Improvement and development of services is detailed in the current service 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), progressing the Food Hygiene Award, Implementing the new Food Safety legislation, introducing Safer Food Better Business to businesses through a workshop and 1-1 coaching visits, whilst maintaining high standards of service delivery.