



**Regulatory Services  
Environmental Health  
and  
Trading Standards**

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**FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT  
SERVICE PLAN  
2023/2024**

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## **Foreword**

The Food Law Enforcement Plan provides a clear strategy, which ensures that the Environmental Health and Trading Standards services maintain a risk-based approach to their regulatory role relating to food and animal feed.

The Plan provides members of the public, local businesses and other key stakeholders with the inspection proposals for the forthcoming year, information regarding special projects, sampling programmes and training plans. It also reviews the achievements and provides an indication of the performance of these services over the previous year.

Within the work proposals for this year there remains a commitment to supporting local businesses in developing their food and feed management controls, as well as tackling wider public health issues such as obesity.

In endorsing this Food Law Enforcement Plan, St Helens Borough Council recognises that maintaining the safety and quality of both food and animal feed is fundamental to protecting the health and well-being of the local and wider community. The Council is fully committed to supporting its officers delivering the inspections, visits and key initiatives contained within the Plan.

**Councillor Kate Groucutt – Portfolio: Economy Business and Skills**

**October 2023**

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## INTRODUCTION

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As part of the Food Standards Agency's Framework Agreement, Local Authorities are required to have in place Food Service Plans, which are audited by them. This Service Plan sets out how the nationally recognised priorities are addressed and delivered locally and how these will be achieved. It details the achievements of the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Services in delivering a food service in 2022/23 and plans for 2023/24.

During 2022/23 the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Services were required to follow the "Roadmap to Recovery" published by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in July 2021. During the Covid 19 pandemic, food services around the country were met with many challenges that led to a suspension of usual work activities; hence the need for the published guidance which aimed to ensure that during the period of recovery from the pandemic (July 2021 – March 2023), Local Authority resources were targeted where they added greatest value in providing safeguards for public health and consumer protection in relation to food.

The Recovery Plan provided a framework for re-starting the food hygiene delivery system in line with the Food Law Code of Practice. This was implemented alongside the delivery of:

- official controls, where the nature and frequency are prescribed in specific legislation and official controls recommended by FSA guidance that support trade and enable export
- reactive work, including enforcement in the case of non-compliance, managing food incidents and food hazards, and investigating and managing complaints
- sampling in accordance with any local authority sampling programme or as required in the context of assessing food business compliance, and any follow up necessary in relation to FSA Surveillance Sampling Programme
- ongoing proactive surveillance to obtain an accurate picture of the local business landscape and to identify open/closed/recently re- opened/new businesses; as well as businesses where there has been a change of operation or food business operator

Support provided during visits is vital to businesses that face competing pressures in the current financial climate. Officers ensure that food businesses are aware of their legal obligations to provide food that is wholesome and safe.

Adhering to the Recovery Plan safeguarded the credibility of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS), all registered food premises within the borough are rated in accordance with the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Members of the public can see the rating awarded to any business following an inspection. [Search for ratings | Food Standards Agency](#)

In 2016, St Helens Borough Council signed the Declaration on Healthy Weight, (an update of this declaration is planned for September 2023) and in partnership with Public Health the Council continues to contribute to the public health agenda with the aim of protecting the residents of St Helens from unhealthy weight. The Environmental Health and Trading Standards Services are well positioned to engage and influence food businesses in relation to nutrition and healthier lifestyles.





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## OFFICIAL FOOD AND FEED CONTROLS

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The Council's Vision:

*“Working together for a better borough, with people at the heart of everything we do by improving people’s lives together and creating distinct, attractive, healthy, safe, inclusive, and accessible places in which to live, work, visit and invest”.*

St Helens Borough Strategy 2021-2030 can be found on the council website at: [https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/media/1687/St-Helens-Borough-Strategy-2021-2030/pdf/Our Borough Strategy 2021-2030.pdf?m=](https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/media/1687/St-Helens-Borough-Strategy-2021-2030/pdf/Our_Borough_Strategy_2021-2030.pdf?m=)

### **Food Service Aim and Objectives**

#### **Aim**

The Food Service will “offer services that aim to contribute to the wider protection of the environment and strive to achieve fair and safe trading for the residents of and visitors to St Helens.”

#### **Objectives**

- i. To prevent illness resulting from food and waterborne diseases.
- ii. To assist consumers in achieving a healthy diet by avoidance of; contaminated, adulterated or poor-quality food.
- iii. To ensure consumers have access to accurate, understandable information to make informed choices.
- iv. To assist businesses, in particular caterers to provide healthy catering options to help their customers to make healthier choices to assist in part to reduce obesity and heart disease within St Helens.
- v. To protect business from economic disadvantage caused by competitors not complying with Food Safety and Food Standards legislation.
- vi. To help business find the most effective way of complying with Food Safety and Food Standards legislation and to facilitate access to appropriate training.
- vii. To work with other local authorities and agencies with common objectives to provide effective and “joined up” enforcement.
- viii. To work within pre-set budgets and maximise all opportunities for income generation.

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

The Council approves the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan annually, however, during the period 2020 -2023 the FSA regularly reviewed the expectations of Regulatory Authorities in delivering official food controls in the context of the response to the Covid 19 pandemic. Coming out of the pandemic the FSA published a two phased "Roadmap to Recovery" Plan (1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023), which the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Services were obliged to follow. For food safety this enabled inspection plans to be reinstated and maintained the integrity of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Progress against the "Roadmap to Recovery" Plan was monitored quarterly by the FSA.

The Food Service Plan will be reviewed annually taking into account corporate objectives, demands on the Environmental Health and Trading Standard services and any changes to the way in which they are provided to ensure the provision of the most cost-effective delivery of a food enforcement service. The work of the Food Safety Service is identified in the Council's Performance Plan, with quarterly reporting from 2023/24 on the percentage of high-risk food inspections carried out.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Profile of the Local Authority**

St Helens covers an area of 136 km<sup>2</sup> and is home to over 180,000 people with 4,800 businesses based in the borough. It is a place with a strong identity and cultural history, rooted in its world-famous industrial heritage. It is a place of great potential with many strengths and opportunities. St Helens' strategic position at the heart the Northwest provides excellent connections to and from the borough. Its semi-rural nature, with over 65% of the area, green belt, makes for a very attractive place to live, with strong growth in new housing, business premises and transport facilities.

### **Population**

St Helens has a population of 183,248 (2021) with an aging population structure similar to England, but with a higher proportion of people aged 65 years and over and proportionally fewer people of working age (16-64 years). An aging population can lead to an increase in demand and pressure upon the health and social care services.

### **Economic Activity**

St Helens full time employment rate is 35.7% compared with 34.3% across England. The self-employed rate is 6.5% compared to the average rate of 9.5% across England.

### **Health Inequalities**

The Environmental Health and Trading Standards Services work towards delivering the Council's priorities and vision for the Borough. What we eat can make a big difference to our health and significantly influences health inequalities that exist within St Helens. Diet, especially excess saturated fat, salt and sugar, is thought to play a role in about one third of all deaths from cancer and heart disease. Almost 70,000 premature deaths could potentially be prevented each year if UK diets matched nutritional guidelines. Officers have an influence

on food provision within businesses and the community and are in a unique position to enforce, promote, advise, educate and inform.

## **Health and Wellbeing**

Improving the health of local people remains a priority with a number of specific challenges. Life expectancy in St Helens continues to improve with life expectancy for males at 77.5 years and for females 81 years this is better than some of the neighbouring authorities but remains lower than the national average of males 79.4 years and females 83.1 years.

[2200171 Public Health Annual Report 2021 22.pdf \(sthelens.gov.uk\)](#)

## **St Helens Healthy Weight Strategy**

Tackling obesity is one of the greatest long-term health challenges currently faced in England. Around two-thirds (63%) of adults are above a healthy weight, and of these, half are living with obesity. In England 1 in 3 children leaving primary school are overweight or living with obesity with 1 in 5 living with obesity.

Obesity is associated with reduced life expectancy and a range of health conditions including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, liver and respiratory disease and cancer. Obesity can also have an impact on mental health. [Obesity Profile - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](#)

The national target is to halve childhood obesity by 2030. The healthy weight of children has been recognised as a challenge in St Helens and has been identified as a key priority in the St Helens Healthy Weight Strategy.

## **Enforcement Policy**

St Helens Council's Enforcement Policy provides guidance to officers, businesses and the general public on the range of options that are available to achieve compliance with legislation enforced by St. Helens Regulatory Services.

<https://new.sthelens.gov.uk/media/8763/enforcement-policy.pdf>

## **Organisational Structure**

Organisational structure charts for the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Services are attached at Appendix 2. Detailed Service Plans for Food Safety, Food Standards, Feed Hygiene and Primary Production follow.

## 1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

The Food Safety Service Plan sets out how St Helens Borough Council, through its Environmental Health Service, will fulfil its responsibilities under the legislation relating to food safety, particularly in respect to the inspection of food premises. The structure of the Service Plan follows the service planning guidance contained within “The Framework Agreement on official feed and food controls by Local Authorities” published by the Food Standards Agency.

### 1.1 **Scope of the Food Service**

In accordance with the standards set out in the FSA Code of Practice and the FSA Framework Agreement, the Food Safety Service is responsible for:

- Registering food premises and the enforcement of food safety legislation in all food premises within the borough using a range of interventions such as inspections and audits.
- The investigation of food complaints, including contamination by micro-organisms, chemical contamination and contamination by mould or foreign matter of food products made or purchased in the borough, followed where necessary by the appropriate enforcement action.
- The investigation of notifications of food-borne and water borne diseases, outbreaks of gastro-enteritis, including food poisoning outbreaks, in collaboration with United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA).
- Health promotion activities focusing on food and nutrition within the community and food businesses.

The Food Safety Service also:

- Samples food produced or sold in the borough.
- Provides food hygiene training/mentoring/guidance to businesses.
- Approves food premises that handle/process/manufacture foods containing products of animal origin.

The Food Safety Service is responsible for the enforcement of the Health and Safety at Work Act, Smoke Free legislation and has responsibility for animal welfare and pest control. The frequency of health and safety inspections is dictated by separate guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive.

## **1.2 Demands on the Food Service**

Food service work profiles with respect to the number and type of food premises in the borough requiring interventions in 2023/24 are shown in Appendix 3.

## **1.3 Future Challenges**

The way in which food is produced, prepared and delivered to the end consumer has changed dramatically over the years with the development of online ordering platforms and social media. “Dark kitchens” or “ghost kitchens”, are those businesses that have no high street presence, they trade solely via the internet and may share kitchens or operate from premises that would not immediately be identifiable as food establishments, making it very difficult to locate them. The Food Service needs to adapt to meet these challenges. The Food Hygiene Delivery Model has been revised for food standards (Trading Standards) and is to be revised for food safety (Environmental Health) these changes will impact on the way we operate.

As an inland authority that has large scale warehousing facilities and with the development of Parkside it is anticipated that more import/export food regulatory work will be required. The proposed changes in border controls as detailed in the Border Target Operating Model and Defra published risk categories for EU commodities could potentially lead to more resources needing to be directed towards imported food controls, as commodities that have been mistakenly or otherwise miscoded may be permitted to travel inland without the correct documentation or checks having been carried out at the Border Control Point. We may be requested to assist Border Control and HMRC.

All officers in Environmental Health have received training in import and export controls and 4 officers including the Lead Officer have successfully renewed their registrations as Food Competent Certifying Officer (FCCO), that is they have the competencies to operate official controls under the Food Act working on behalf of the Animal and Plant Health Agency to issue Export Health Certificates for fishery products. Officers will liaise with the National Food Crime Unit as necessary.

## **1.4 Food businesses and the local economy**

Food production, its transport and sale at retail and catering establishments are significant parts of the economy both nationally and locally. Nationally the food and drink supply chain accounts for 7% of GDP and employs 3.7 million people in everything from food retailing to restaurants and canteens, to farming and fishing. The service sector, including hotels, distribution and catering remains the largest industry within St Helens. The total number of food businesses registered at the beginning of the 2023/24 business year is 1554 the number for 2022/23 was 1489.

Our work helps the changing local food economy to remain vibrant and enables the Council to provide practical support to businesses, which is particularly important in difficult economic times. The work of the Environmental Health food service helps maintain public confidence in the standards of our local food industry.

We work to help businesses comply with food legislation, which helps ensure fair competition and allows well-run food businesses to flourish and contribute to the local economy. We offer specific support for new companies, which can prove vital to the longer-term survival of a business.

Service delivery is coordinated from the office base at Atlas House, and officers can be contacted throughout the working week via phone, email or Microsoft Teams. Food hygiene inspections often necessitate later evening visits, due to the nature of trading. Other out-of-hours services are available as circumstances dictate, with flexible working hours accommodating this need.

## **2.0 SERVICE DELIVERY**

The revised Food Law Code of Practice (England) issued by the FSA came into force on the 7 April 2015 and was re-issued in June 2023. This Code sets out the requirements that the Council (as the Competent Authority) must adhere to in the execution and enforcement of the relevant legislation.

Competent Authorities have statutory duties to enforce legislation relating to food, including the primary production of food and imported food. The purpose of enforcement is to ensure compliance with legislation relating to food in each Competent Authority's area. Every Competent Authority must therefore discharge its duty as effectively as possible using means that are appropriate to the circumstances. The FSA are consulting on developing a modernised food hygiene delivery model where it is proposed that the following will be introduced:

- a revised food hygiene intervention rating scheme
- an updated risk based approach to timescales for the initial official controls of new food businesses,
- increased flexibilities in the methods and techniques used to deliver official controls.
- extending the activities that officers who do not hold a suitable qualification can do.

### Consultation on developing a modernised food hygiene delivery model - England | Food Standards Agency

Following consultation, pilots and subject to ministerial approval it is anticipated that a modernised model will come into effect in April 2025

## **2.1 Food Premise Interventions**

The Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities sets out the Food Standards Agency's expectations of the Council in the delivery of official controls on food law. The Food Safety Service shall carry out interventions/inspections as required by the Food Law Code of Practice at all food hygiene businesses, at a frequency which is not less than that determined by the intervention rating scheme and within 28 days of the due intervention date.

For food safety interventions, establishments are rated A – E dependent on the level of risk. For high-risk establishments A, B and non-compliant C (that is those establishments that have been awarded a score of more than 10 in any of the categories, food hygiene, structural condition or confidence in management) will receive food hygiene inspections or audits. Once broad compliance has been achieved the planned interventions may alternate between an inspection/audit or another type of official control as appropriate. For D rated establishments interventions may alternate between official and non-official interventions except for those

establishments that handle, prepare, cook open high-risk food or provide typically more than 20 meals a day. The official control for these establishments must be an inspection, or audit. Competent authorities can alternate between these types of official food controls and other types of interventions. E rated establishments will be assessed by an Alternative Enforcement Strategy that involves completion of a questionnaire, this will only be the case where the last intervention was a visit. The choice of intervention undertaken will be determined by the inspecting officer on a case-by-case basis, under the supervision of the Principal EHO. The suite of interventions that may be used are:

Official Controls	Non-Official Controls
• Inspections	Coaching
• Advice	Education
• Audits	Information & Intelligence Gathering
• Sampling	
• Monitoring Visits	
• Verification Visits	
• Surveillance Visits	

For each risk rating the inspection/intervention frequencies are shown below:

### Food hygiene

Risk category	Minimum intervention frequency
A	At least every 6 months.
B	At least every 12 months.
C	At least every 18 months.
D	At least every 24 months.
E	A programme of alternative enforcement strategies or interventions every three years.

Of the total 1554 registered premises, 1089 have been “tagged” on the data base as requiring an inspection or alternative intervention in 2023/24

- A rated establishments x 2
- B rated establishments x 125

**Total high risk x 127**



- C rated establishments x 183
- D rated establishments x 424 (includes 233 carried over from 2022/23)

**Total lower risk x 607**

- E rated establishments x 303

Unrated premises x 52 (newly registered businesses)

**Notes:**

1. Due to limited staff resource 233 overdue inspections of D rated establishments have been carried through from 2022/23, these inspections will be prioritised by date of last inspection.
2. E rated establishments will be assessed by questionnaire where last intervention was a visit.
3. The number of unrated establishments requiring an inspection will fluctuate throughout the year as applications are received.

Approved Premises registered under EC Regulation 853/2004 (as retained) x 6. (These are food premises which handle/produce products of animal origin and are subject to additional product specific hygiene controls, they are required to use a health mark. They do not receive a Food Hygiene Rating Score)

With the staff resource available, the service is committed to returning to the pre-pandemic targets of completing as a minimum 96% of food safety inspections of A and B rated establishments. The service will also aim to complete inspections of all non-broadly compliant establishments and will endeavour to complete at least 80% of C and D rated establishment inspections. In the worst-case scenario this shortfall equates to 85 x D rated and 37x C rated establishments not receiving an inspection or intervention in accordance with statutory guidance.

Following an inspection and the calculation of an intervention rating a Food Hygiene Rating Score (FHRS) is awarded. These scores, which range from 0 (urgent improvement needed) to 5 (very good) may be displayed at the food premises. A score of 3 (generally satisfactory) is the legal standard. All scores are uploaded on a monthly basis onto the Food Standards Agency's website and are publicly available. <http://ratings.food.gov.uk/>

There are a number of safeguards available to businesses ranging from appealing a food hygiene rating score, requesting a revisit for a re-rating assessment to placing comments on the FSA website with the agreement of the authority.

As public awareness of FHRS continues to grow there has been an increase in the number of food businesses requesting revisits for re-rates. This is especially the case now that platforms such as Just Eat are beginning to set minimum food safety standards before a business is permitted to join. Just Eat insists that a businesses' FHRS is published on the FSA website, and it has to have at least a score of 3. For each re-visit application submitted a charge of £172 is made.

We have witnessed a fall in the standards in some food businesses, there are a number of reasons for this, amongst them fewer people working in businesses/ problems with recruitment and a lack of investment as businesses struggle financially due to the rising costs of utilities and food. Officers are finding that inspections are taking longer to do with more advice/support being given to operators, and more frequent revisits. See Appendix 3 for Food Safety Work profile 2023/24.

## **2.2 Complaints**

Food Safety and Hygiene complaints and referrals received by the Food Safety Service will be responded to within 2 working days of receipt. Where sufficient information is obtained from a complainant a full investigation will be undertaken. All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with Food Safety Service Practice and Procedure notes, which in turn requires that the complaints should be dealt with having regard to the Food Law Code of Practice and other relevant guidance.

Whilst it is difficult to estimate the number of complaints that will be received, we do know that 148 food complaints were received during 2022/23. Past trends indicate that this is a greatly reduced number, to the pre-pandemic levels of 300 plus and is lower than the number of 193 received in 2021/22. Complaints relating to the service will be monitored and investigated thoroughly. Complaints of discrimination will be investigated, and lessons learned to ensure that an all-inclusive service is provided.

## **2.3 Primary Authority Partnerships**

Primary Authority is a means for businesses to receive assured and tailored advice on meeting environmental health, trading standards or fire safety regulations through a single point of contact. This ensures start-ups get it right at the outset and enables all businesses to invest with confidence in products, practices and procedures, knowing that the resources they devote to compliance are well spent.

Primary Authority is based on legal partnerships between businesses and individual local authorities. Businesses can set up their own partnership or belong to a trade association (or other type of group) with an existing partnership.

Primary authorities provide advice to businesses that other local regulators must respect on compliance with the regulations. They can also produce an inspection plan for a business or the members of a trade association (or other type of group), to improve the effectiveness of visits by local regulators and underpin better sharing of information thereby ensuring a consistent approach to enforcement for those multi-sited businesses. We have Primary Authority Partnerships with:

- Princes Foods (food safety and food standards)
- 2U Foods (food safety and food standards)
- Aimia Foods (food safety and food standards)
- Nichols plc (food safety and food standards)

## **2.4 Advice to Business**

The Food Safety Service provides advice and support to businesses. In undertaking such a role, legitimate businesses are kept informed of changes in regulation and are encouraged to meet the highest standards of trading to the benefit of themselves, and consumers. Provision of advice and support will be provided in line with the Food Standards Agency Code of Practice and a clear distinction will be made between statutory requirements and good practice in such communications.

## **2.5 Accessibility of Service**

The Food Safety Service uses translation and interpretation services to enable equality of opportunity for people who speak different languages. This includes when businesses and individuals are supported throughout inspections, training initiatives, and any other contact that may be necessary. Service information on the Council's Website can be translated into different community languages, and Food Standard Agency information is available in different languages at [fsa.gov.uk](http://fsa.gov.uk)

## **2.6 Sampling**

Food samples and environmental swabs are taken from food businesses for microbiological examination. By taking samples we are seeking to confirm that the standards of food safety management systems within businesses are effective. The aim being to detect contaminated food or poor hygiene practices and to correct any problems regarding the manufacture, handling or storage of food, before any illness is caused.

Subject to staffing resources the Service will continue to undertake sampling during inspections of premises where there is a concern regarding the standard of cleaning/cross contamination risk or during investigations into food complaints/food poisonings, this being identified as an official control.

Results of samples will be notified to the proprietor of the business. Where results are unsatisfactory an officer will visit to provide advice and discuss the corrective actions to be taken. Any actions taken as a result of sampling will be in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Policy.

## **2.7 Pest Control**

Pest control officers work closely with officers advising where necessary on pest control/proofing issues in food businesses where evidence of pest activity has been found. The Pest Control Service is also able to offer a commercial pest control service to all food and non-food businesses in the Borough.

## **2.8 Infectious Disease Control**

Notifications of food or water borne diseases are received from UKHSA Merseyside and Cheshire on a weekly basis and will be investigated within 5 working days of receipt; they will be dealt with in accordance with the Food Safety Service's Practices and Procedures.

On interviewing the infected person and completing the questionnaire further investigations may be required. These may include the sampling of individuals and close contacts, sampling any food that may still be available and inspecting food businesses that may have been identified during the investigation, in order to ensure that appropriate food safety control measures are in place.

Investigations of infectious disease outbreaks are coordinated by UKHSA and the Food Safety Service works in partnership with the Agency and the Public Health Team and other stakeholders and attend Outbreak Control Meetings.

## **2.9 Food Safety Incidents**

Food Hazard Alerts received by e-mail from the FSA, are passed immediately to the Principal Environmental Health Officer, and in their absence, to the Head of Regulatory Services, who will then decide what action should be taken depending on the category of the Food Hazard Alert, and the information given in the warning. Action will be taken having regard to the Code of Practice. The number of warnings received, and the number requiring significant action varies each year, it is therefore difficult to predict the demand on the service.

The Food Safety Service will also work as required with the National Food Crime Unit following receipt of any local/national intelligence related to food crime

## **2.10 Liaison with Other Organisations**

The Food Safety Service adheres to the Home Authority and Primary Authority principles, it has links with the other competent authorities in the Merseyside and Cheshire area, the Food Standards Agency and UKHSA, through the Environmental Health Cheshire and Merseyside (EHCM) Food Safety Subgroup, and through this to neighbouring subgroups of Lancashire, Cumbria and Greater Manchester. The subgroup meets every 6 weeks.

## **2.11 Promotion**

### Training

The Environmental Health team are a registered centre enabling them to deliver the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Officers Level 2 Food Hygiene Training (6 hours) they can also deliver in house introduction and refresher food safety courses to the business sector, community groups and council employees. The service is currently unable to offer these training courses due to limited staff resources. However, staff do signpost to Food Standards Agency online training which is free of charge and other online training offered by other CIEH approved companies.

### Food Safety Coaching

For non-compliant caterers and proprietors of small non-compliant convenience stores, officers spend time with these businesses providing advice, guidance and support aimed at bringing about long-term improvements. Businesses that do not improve following these interventions may be subject to the stepped enforcement approach as detailed in the Enforcement Policy. This could include the sending of letters and the use of Hygiene Improvement Notices.

## **2.12 Community and Business Health Promotion**

In 2015 the Council's Public Health Division funded the post "Community and Business Health Promotion" initially this was for two years, however because of the success of this initiative the post is now permanent. The key role of this post is to deliver initiatives linked to and supporting the St Helens Healthy Weight Strategy. Being overweight or obese can have a serious impact on health. Nationally one in four children in Reception class aged 4-5 are

overweight or obese, rising to over one in three by year 6. Nearly 25% of children in St Helens Borough are classified as obese in Year 6, which is worse than the average for England ([inal-st-helens-peoples-plan-21-26\\_1.pdf \(sthelens.gov.uk\)](#)). In 2019 the Chief Medical Officer published a report on Childhood Obesity: [Time to Solve Childhood Obesity \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

The Food Standards Agency in their strategy for 2022 – 2027 commits to working closely with the Department for Education, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, and Local Authorities to assess and improve the level of compliance with School Food Standards. These standards are mandatory for state-funded schools in England and set minimum nutrition standards for school food. [Food you can trust - FSA strategy 2022-2027 | Food Standards Agency](#)

The national target is to halve childhood obesity by 2030, this is the long-term ambition for St Helens and is the objective of the St Helens Council Healthy Weight Strategy

During 2023/24 work will continue in partnership with Public Health to deliver healthy weight messages to local communities and businesses via food banks/pantries, community and volunteer groups and other stakeholders such as social landlords. This Service Plan positively contributes to addressing obesity as an issue and compliments the Healthy Living Agenda.

Work will also focus on the business community assisting businesses, in particular caterers to provide healthier catering options to help their customers make healthier choices thereby assisting in part in reducing obesity and heart disease. For example, the “Chip Fryer Award” is to be relaunched - this recognises those businesses who operate frying methods that result in a “healthier” chip, that is a reduction in the fat content. Businesses awarded the “Chip Fryer Award” in 2019 will be revisited and the status of their award will be reviewed, and new businesses will be encouraged to sign up for the award.

### **2.13 Food Information for Consumers – Allergens**

All food businesses who sell open food have to declare any of 14 identified allergenic ingredients which are used in non-pre-packed or loose foods that are sold or provided. The Food Safety Service ensures that this issue is discussed during inspections and an inspector’s assessment of how well allergens are being managed within a business contributes to the scoring awarded in respect to the FHSR confidence in management criteria.

Since October 2021, all food which is prepacked for direct sale, for example sandwiches which are made on the premises, packed and then put in a chilled display cabinet must also have all the allergens displayed on the packet, advice and guidance will continue to be offered to businesses.

### **2.14 Mobile Caterers**

The Food Safety Service is responsible for enforcing the Street Trading Consent Scheme. Each mobile unit is subject to annual inspections for the purpose of renewing the trading consent, this includes a food safety inspection, food hygiene ratings are awarded following each inspection.

### **2.15 Smoke Free**

The Food Safety Service is responsible for enforcing smoke-free legislation in businesses. During inspections of premises if an officer discovers evidence of smoking within a workplace the necessary advice and action is taken in accordance with the Enforcement Policy.

## 2.16 Waste Control

During visits/inspections of food premises officers confirm if a waste removal contract is in place for all generated waste. If this is not the case the proprietor is required to obtain a contract.

## 3. **RESOURCES**

### 3.1 Staffing Allocation

For 2023/24 the Food Safety Service has a total of 4 Senior EHOs and a Principal EHO (lead food officer) available for the delivery of the Food Service Plan. All officers are suitably qualified and authorised to undertake assessments of compliance with food law and take enforcement action as appropriate.

The Food Safety Service Plan has been produced taking account of the available 3.2 x FTE front line posts. The borough is divided into districts by wards, and each officer is designated a district for which they take responsibility ensuring so far as is possible a fair distribution of due inspections by intervention risk rating.

### 3.2 Financial Allocation Food Safety

Provision and delivery of Food Safety Service - Expenditure.

	FTE	Total Cost
Principal Environmental Health Officer	0.7	£42,439
Senior Environmental Health Officer	0.8	£41,564
Senior Environmental Health Officer	0.8	£41,564
Senior Environmental Health Officer	0.8	£41,564
Senior Environmental Health Officer	0.8	£41,564

<b>Direct Employee Costs</b>	<b>£208,695</b>
<b>Total Environmental Health Employee Budget</b>	<b>£828,500</b>
<b>Food Safety as % of total</b>	<b>25.19%</b>

Direct Employee Costs (as above)	£828,500	25.19%	£208,695
Premises	£70	25.19%	£18
Transport	£8,068	25.19%	£2,032
Supplies	£85,128	25.19%	£21,443
Third Party	£300	25.19%	£76
Central Admin	£462,411	25.19%	£116,479
Capital Finance	£600	25.19%	£151
Less Income Budget			-£3,038

<b>TOTAL FOOD SAFETY COST</b>	<b>£345,856</b>
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- The Community and Business Health Promotion Officer is 1 FTE post and is fully funded by Public Health.
- A 5<sup>th</sup> Senior EHO is seconded through 2023/24 to lead on the data base transition programme.

### 3.3 Staff development plan

All officers take part in regular 1:1 meetings with the Principal Environmental Health Officer and twice a year person centred reviews take place which focus on employee wellbeing, development, recognition and contribution to the service. Lead food officers and authorised food officers must obtain a minimum of 20 hours CPD per year split into:

- A minimum of 10 CPD hours on core food matters directly related to the delivery of official controls:
- 10 hours on other professional matters. This could include training needs identified by the Principal Environmental Health Officer during 1:1 meetings
- New officers to the team will complete the competency matrix as set out in the Food Law Code of Practice. This ensures that officers are correctly authorised to undertake their duties, which is dependent on their qualifications and demonstrable experience. Officers are mentored/shadowed by experienced officers who report back to the Food Lead Officer.

The training programme is attached in Appendix 5.

#### **4.0 INDICATORS AND QUALITY ASSESSMENT**

The Food Safety Service will monitor its performance against the Food Law Service Plan at regular intervals. The Head of Regulation and Principal Environmental Health Officer monitor performance on a monthly and quarterly basis. The % of broadly compliant businesses is a service KPI. The Principal Environmental Health Officer monitors performance regularly and the numbers of inspections due by category are discussed with all officers during team meetings. FSA “temperature check” surveys are completed as required. The Food Service Enforcement Plan will be submitted for approval to full Council.

##### **4.1 Performance Indicators**

- Infectious disease investigation response times.
- Service request response times (food safety complaints).
- Number of High-Risk Inspections undertaken
- Number of businesses broadly compliant

##### **4.2 Quality Assessment**

The inspections due are identified by priority rating and are discussed during each team meeting, any inspections that are “overdue” are identified. The Principal Environmental Health Officer will also examine in detail all approved premise files after inspection and all notices and prosecutions are examined before action is taken.

All officers are accompanied by the Principal Environmental Health Officer as required particularly during visits that may result in further enforcement action, to ensure that inspections and any enforcement actions are carried out in accordance with the legislation, the appropriate Code of Practice, and Practice and Procedure notes, any discrepancies are discussed with the inspecting officer. The Principal Environmental Health Officer reviews all ratings that have been awarded following a request for a revisit for a re-rate and signs off the revised rating if satisfied with the decision reached by the officer.

All food sampling results are examined as they are received from the laboratory. All thermometers and probes are calibrated monthly and are also calibrated by an external supplier annually.



The Service is required to report on its activities twice a year to the FSA who monitor closely its progress against the inspection plan.

Complaints from service users of discrimination will be fully investigated and the appropriate actions taken to eliminate discrimination.

### Peer Review

The nine local authorities who form the Merseyside and Cheshire Food Safety Subgroup meet regularly to discuss food safety/standard issues of common interest and exchange examples of good practice. This leads to a consistency in approach to regulation and enforcement across the region. Representatives from other agencies such as the Food Standards Agency and UKHSA also attend these meetings.

### **4.3 Monitoring of Local Authorities and FSA Audit Scheme**

The Food Standards Authority has a duty to monitor the performance of enforcement authorities and collects key data on how each local authority is delivering its service twice a year. It has the powers to request information relating to enforcement action and to make reports to any enforcement authority on their performance in enforcing the relevant legislation.

The Agency is also required to audit enforcement authorities to help ensure that local authorities are providing an effective service to protect public health. Information on local authority enforcement performance is made public being published on the FSA website. FSA follow up action depends on the level and type of non-conformance identified and the action plan produced by the local authority. Where it is identified that a local authority is failing to implement part or all of their action plan, subsequent Agency action will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **5.0 REVIEW OF ACTIVITY IN FOOD SAFETY 2022/2023**

In April 2022 work started on the programmed transition of the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Service's management information system from Civica APP to Civica Cx. This work is expected to be completed by mid-November 2023, a Senior EHO was seconded from the Service to lead on this programme, and once it is in place it will provide improvements to case management and work allocation. Two Senior EHOs left the Service in June and July, being replaced in September and November 2022.

Work through the year was directed by the FSA Roadmap to Recovery and the required targets for overdue inspections were met, other than for the inspections of compliant C rated establishments, which fell short by 42 out of a total of the 240 inspections that had been due. The remaining 42 were completed by the end of June 2023 and less than broadly compliant D rated establishments that fell short by 4, were completed by the end of May 2023.

### **5.1 Registration Applications**

During the height of the pandemic the Service joined the FSA Registering a Food Business Service Food business registration - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)) there was a noticeable increase in the number of registrations received from individuals who wanted to start up home catering. Whilst this trend slowed a little during 2022/23, we still received 179 new business applications from a variety of businesses. All new food businesses require an inspection so that an FHRS can be awarded (unless they are exempt). New applications are prioritised by the food safety

risks posed by the nature of the proposed undertaking and the vulnerabilities of customers/consumers, for example a new care home application would take priority over a convenience store selling packaged food.

## 5.2 Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)

The purpose of the FHRS is to allow consumers to make informed choices about the places where they eat out or shop for food and, through these choices, encourage businesses to improve their hygiene standards. The overarching aim is to reduce the incidence of food-borne illness and the associated costs to the economy.

Food Hygiene Rating Scores are awarded following an inspection of the premises, in accordance with the Food Standards Agency’s Brand Standard. Premises are scored on the suitability of the structure of the premises, the food hygiene practices that are observed within the premises at the time of the inspection and confidence in the management of the food businesses.

Scores from 0 to 5 are then awarded to each to each premise. A zero score indicates failure to comply with the legislative requirements and a score of 5 demonstrates very good compliance. A score of 3 is deemed to be the accepted legal standard.

Any business which scores below 3 is subject to further interventions from the food service which can range from one-to-one coaching in the implementation of the Safer Food, Better Business food safety management package, to the service of Hygiene Improvement Notices or, in the most serious cases, prosecution for failing to comply with the food safety regulations. All scores are uploaded on a monthly basis and are available to be viewed on the Food Standard Agency’s website at [www.food.gov.uk/ratings](http://www.food.gov.uk/ratings)

In November 2022, Senior EHOs and the Principal EHO took part in the national Food Standards Agency web-based consistency exercise. The aim being to promote the consistent application of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Brand Standard.

## 5.3 Food Premises Interventions

During 2022/23, 514 inspections were carried out, this brought those establishments that were overdue an inspection back into the FSA delivery of interventions framework as detailed in the Food Law Code of Practice.

RISK RATING	NUMBER OF INSPECTIONS 2022/23	NUMBER OF OVERDUE INSPECTIONS 31 MARCH 2023
A	3	0
B	124	0
C	198	42 (completed end June 2023)
C less than broadly compliant	26	0

D less than broadly compliant	5	4 (completed end May 2023)
D (not a target in the recovery plan to be incorporated into ongoing inspection programme for 2023/24)	112	233 (to be incorporated into ongoing inspection programme for 2023/24)
E	46	(Alternative interventions can be used such as questionnaires)
<b>TOTAL inspections</b>	<b>514</b>	

#### 5.4 Formal Actions

During the year there were 3 Voluntary Closure of establishments, one for a rat infestation and 2 where establishments were found to be trading with no hot water supply. 3 Hygiene Improvement Notices were served requiring the provision of a documented food safety management system at one establishment, structural issues at another and failure to maintain the correct temperature control of hot food at another.

124 formal letters were sent to Food Business Operators, identifying contraventions of food safety regulation that required attention and also matters where it was recommended that improvements could be made.

#### 5.5 Complaints

148 food related complaints were received. These ranged from the poor hygiene standards within food establishment/poor food hygiene practices/ foreign bodies found in food and pest infestations.

#### 5.6 Staffing

The five Senior EHO's within the team provide a dedicated service aimed at the protection of the public health, the improvement of food safety and they also consider the health and safety standards within food businesses dealing with matters of evident concern during food safety inspections.

The Community and Business Health Promotions Officer is responsible for developing programs of work in conjunction with Public Health which contribute to the St Helens Healthy Weight Strategy 2020/2025, throughout 2022/23 this officer was committed to working with community food providers.

#### 5.7 Staff Development 2022/23

All food safety staff received the minimum of 20 hours Continuous Professional Development, with a minimum of 10 hours being focused on food safety related topics as required by the FSA Food Law Code of Practice

Staff training was undertaken in the following areas:

- FHRIS National Consistency Exercise (FSA web based)
- Food Competent Certification Officer Authorisation (Animal Health Paraprofessional)
- Imported Foods (FSA)
- Campylobacter (UKHSA)
- Practical Sampling Training for Food and Environmental Sampling (UKHSA)
- Legionnaires Disease Water Systems Workshop (UKHSA)
- High Risk Foods (UKHSA)
- Allergen Consistency Exercise (EHCM)

Webinars attended:

- Value of Intelligence in food and feed controls (FSA)
- Enterprise Level Regulation (FSA)
- Online Assurance Workstream (FSA)
- Annual Public Health Conference
- Annual Food Conference (CIEH)
- Achieving Business Compliance (FSA)
- Food Hygiene Delivery Model (FSA)

### **5.8 Primary Authority Partnership**

The Service is a partner with Princes Foods Ltd who are world leaders in the supply of canned foods. Within this partnership, the service is responsible for dealing with all food complaints received from other enforcement authorities involving Princes branded or own branded products produced by Princes.

Partnerships provide a means through which Environmental Health can be seen to support local and national businesses and gives front line officers an opportunity to enhance their skills working within a commercial environment. It is considered an achievement that the Service has been chosen over several other authorities as the companies' preferred partner and recognition of the professionalism and quality of the Council's front line environmental health and trading standards staff.

### **5.9 Food Sampling**

Due to staffing challenges throughout part of the year and the need to prioritise the response to health and safety regulatory investigations, following the occurrence of two major injury accidents, it was not possible to undertake a proactive sampling programme.

### **5.10 Allergens**

New legislation came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021, “Natasha’s Law” this now means that any food business selling food that is pre-packed for direct sale (PPDS) such as sandwiches, salads and cakes, must provide full ingredients labelling on the packaging.

#### Introduction to allergen labelling changes (PPDS) | Food Standards Agency

The Food Service together with Trading Standards have produced guidance for local businesses that is published on the Council’s website - Allergens - St Helens Borough Council

The management of allergens within the catering environment and serving of meals and the risks of cross contamination are discussed during food hygiene inspections.

### **5.11 Infectious Disease Control**

48 infectious diseases were investigated and appropriate action in conjunction with UKHSA was taken in all cases. Notifications of infectious diseases of particular concern such as e coli 0157 and listeria are received by telephone call from UKHSA and an immediate response is provided. One such case was that of a pre-school child who was a confirmed e-coli case and who had attended a children’s day nursery without receiving a negative test result, although they were not exhibiting any symptoms. An outbreak control meeting was called and following a risk assessment it was agreed that all close contacts of the child in the nursery should be offered the opportunity of submitting faecal samples for testing. A Senior Environmental Health Officer organised this to be done and a visit was made to the setting to advise on deep cleaning and personal hygiene issues. A letter was also provided by UKHSA to be handed out to parents. All samples taken later returned negative results.

### **5.12 Food Standard Agency Food Alerts & Food Incidents**

Food alerts were received throughout the year. Whilst colleagues in Trading Standards took the lead in these, the Service did assist as and when requested.

### **5.13 Exports and Imports**

Following Brexit, the United Kingdom is now a third country and is no longer regulated by the standardised EU export/import controls. More work has resulted from these changes. In St Helens two more businesses have had to be approved in order that they may continue to export products of animal origin into Europe, as they are identified as logistic hubs.

Officers in the team have now revalidated their authorisations as Food Competent Certifying Officers which enables them to certify official APHA European Health Certificates for fish and fishery composite products containing egg. Officers also provide local authority Health

Certificates for products of animal origin and high-risk products of non-animal origin which are produced within the borough. 32 Health Certificates were issued during 2022/23

#### **5.14 Business and Community Health Promotion**

The Business and Community Health Promotion Officer within the Food Service is funded by Public Health. Part of this officer's role is to engage with businesses encouraging them to improve the nutritional quality of their food. Unfortunately, because of the rise in the cost of living much of this work had to be put on hold as food poverty became an urgent concern with the focus turning to community food providers such as food banks.

Food being used close to its use by date and the repackaging of donated food caused issues relating to food safety and allergen safety as labelling information could be lost. Work had to be done with respect to ensuring that volunteers had an understanding of food safety. The Business and Health Promotions Officer's role was to help guide these volunteer groups and provide the relevant information with respect to food safety alongside meal and recipe planning.

Setting up a food bank, food aid charity or provider | Food Standards Agency

#### **6.0 VARIATIONS FROM RECOVERY PLAN 2022/23**

There was no variation from the FSA Recovery Plan and all temperature check survey returns were made.

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### **FOOD STANDARDS SERVICE PLAN 2023/24**

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#### **7.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Food Standards Service Plan sets out how St Helens Council through its Trading Standards Service will fulfil its responsibilities under the legislation relating to food standards, particularly the labelling and composition of food. The structure of the service plan follows the service planning guidance contained within the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement. Other Activities performed by the authority in respect of consumer protection legislation are detailed in the Departmental, Divisional and Action Plans detailed in Appendix 1.

#### **7.1 Scope of the Food Standards Service**

The enforcement of food standards legislation, which includes regulation of compositional standards relating to food, food labelling and nutritional and health claims made in connection with food, with all food businesses based or trading within the borough.

- To conduct a programme of risk based, intelligence led inspections and interventions at food businesses.
- To undertake sampling of food based on the National Co-ordinated Food Sampling Programme Priorities published by the FSA, local priorities and food incidents.
- To react to food standards incidents, complaints, referrals and requests for advice relating to food standards.
- To take appropriate enforcement action, when necessary, in accordance with the authority's enforcement policy.

The Trading Standards Section is also responsible for the enforcement of a wide range of consumer protection legislation, including Fair Trading, Product Safety and Weights and Measures. Wherever possible, this is combined with food work.

## 7.2 Demands on the Food Standards Service

Detailed below is a summary of the premises with a Food Standards risk rating within the authority area:

<b>FSA Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>A Rated</b>	<b>B Rated</b>	<b>C Rated</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
A	Primary Production	0	0	60	<b>60</b>
B	Slaughterhouses	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
C & D	Manufacturers & Packers	2	11	1	<b>14</b>
E	Importers / Exporters	0	2	0	<b>2</b>
F	Distributors	0	3	19	<b>22</b>
G	Retailers	0	98	348	<b>446</b>
H	Restaurants & Caterers	0	75	924	<b>999</b>
I	Materials and Articles Manufacturers & Suppliers	0	2	1	<b>3</b>
J	Manufacturers mainly selling by retail	0	0	0	<b>0</b>

<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>1353</b>	<b>1546</b>
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In general, the food businesses based in the area pose a low to medium risk and 97% of premises are rated as “broadly compliant” under the Food Law Enforcement Code of Practice (Guidance). High Risk premises are food manufacturers and packers, producing meat products, soft drinks, beverages, breakfast foods, hospital meals, and pickles. The majority of the food manufacturers and packers in the area are members of accreditation schemes such as BRC (British Retail Consortium).

## 8.0 **SERVICE DELIVERY**

### 8.1 **Service Delivery Points**

The Food Standards Service is delivered by the Trading Standards Section, based at Town Hall, Victoria Square, Library Street, St Helens, WA10 1HP. Office hours are 8.45 am to 5.15 pm Monday to Friday.

Out of hours service is available should it be required.

Contact can be made by telephone to 01744 676789 or by e mail to: [tradingstandards@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:tradingstandards@sthelens.gov.uk).

### 8.2 **Identification of Premises with a Food Standards Risk**

The Food Standards Service shares a premises database with the Environmental Health Food Safety Service, hence all food premises registered with the authority under the Food Safety requirements are known to the Food Standards Service. Regular checks are made on the database to ensure that all food premises have been risk rated and thus brought into the inspection programme. Food premises also become known through requests for advice from the business, complaints and enquiries about the business, as well as officers’ knowledge of the local area, which will lead to them being recorded on the premises database.

### 8.3 **Inspections (Interventions) at Premises with a Food Standards Risk**

All food premises which are “A rated” will be inspected annually as required by the Food Law Enforcement Code of Practice.

The remainder of Food Standards work is intelligence led and delivered through a range of targeted projects, which include targeted inspections and interventions. In addition to reacting to complaints relating to specific businesses, business sectors will be targeted where there is a perceived national or local issue, such as the traceability of meat, substitution of meat species, the re dating of foods, failure to provide accurate allergen information, the sale of illicit alcoholic drinks, particularly wine and vodka and the use of false nutritional and health claims. The intention is to address any issues identified and to gather information which will influence future work.

In October 2022, the FSA opened consultation on a new Food Standards Delivery Model, scheduled to be in place during 2023/24. We await a new Food Law Code of Practice which will incorporate the new Food Standards Delivery Model, which includes a radically different approach to risk scoring and inspection frequency. The new scheme will be based on actual



risk posed by a business, rather than a generic risk based on business type and will lead to significant changes in Food Standards inspection frequencies. It is anticipated, that as we have few premises which pose any significant risk with regards to Food Standards issues, that once we have assessed our businesses against the new scheme, that there will be far fewer inspections expected. Details of the proposed changes can be found at: <https://www.food.gov.uk/our-work/review-of-the-food-law-code-of-practice-for-the-food-standards-delivery-model-england-full-consultation-pack>

#### **8.4 Food Standards Complaints**

Food Standards complaints are received by the service by telephone, letter, email or referrals via the Citizens Advice Consumer Service. All complaints are responded to within 1 working day.

Where the complaint relates to the contamination, adulteration, composition and labelling of food the complaint will be fully investigated, with a view to tackling the root cause of the problem, to avoid it happening again. Where appropriate, enforcement action will be taken, having regard to the Enforcement Policy and Statutory Codes of Practice.

#### **8.5 Home Authority and Primary Authority Scheme**

The service operates in accordance with the Home Authority Principle, acting as a point of contact for businesses based in St Helens that trade within and outside the area.

The service is working to develop Primary Authority relationships with appropriate food businesses. Primary Authority relationships including Food Standards exist with:

Aimia Foods Ltd

2 U Foods Ltd

Princes Ltd

Nichols Foods plc.

#### **8.6 Advice to Business**

The Food Standards Service will make all reasonable attempts to provide advice and education to businesses in a practical and cost-effective manner. The intention is to equip the business with information that will allow the business to meet legal and best practice requirements. Advice may be provided through a number of means including:

- At the request of the business
- During routine inspections / visits and follow up visits
- Following investigation of a complaint
- Provision of information sheets / advice letters in hard copy of via relevant websites
- Telephone conversations with businesses

- Provision of seminars, displays and talks to businesses.

## **8.7 Food Sampling**

Food sampling is planned based upon intelligence received and will take account of the National Co-ordinated Food Sampling Programme Priorities published by the FSA. The service will participate in Trading Standards North West (TSNW) sampling initiatives where appropriate.

In previous years the service has taken advantage of funding made available through TSNW participation in the FSA coordinated sampling programme. This funding is no longer available so the coordinated sampling programme will not take place in 2023/24.

The service has given careful consideration to project work for the year ahead, and due to current staffing resources and prioritisation process, no food standards proactive projects are included within the planned work for this year. However, the service is currently working on a reactive basis and work is intelligence led, targeting issues identified as posing the most significant detriment to residents and businesses in St Helens. Should intelligence identify a food standards risk, a project will be planned and undertaken where appropriate.

The authority has contracted Lancashire Scientific Service as Public Analyst for the service.

Results of any official samples undertaken will be notified to the proprietor of the business. Where any sample results are unsatisfactory an officer will visit to give advice and discuss corrective actions to be taken, and it is likely that further sampling will be carried out. In instances where the adverse result relates to food manufactured outside the authority area, officers will liaise with the relevant Primary or Home Authority.

Any enforcement actions taken as a result of sampling will be in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Policy.

## **8.8 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks of Food Related Infectious Diseases**

Should a food safety incident be linked with food standards issue the Food Standards officers will liaise with the Food Safety Team to investigate the issue.

## **8.9 Food Standards Incidents**

All Food Standards alerts are received from the Food Standards Agency via e mail alert. The majority of alerts are for information only, whilst a small number will require an immediate response.

Food Standards alerts and warnings are responded to by an appropriate officer, usually the Lead Food Standards Officer, who will determine the action to be taken, which will be as directed by the warning notification received and in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice.

Should there be a need for the Trading Standards Service to issue a Food Hazard Warning in respect of food standards matters, this would be undertaken in line with the relevant requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice and our Food Standards Practice and Procedures.

The authority has an emergency response system in place for any incidents that occur outside of normal office hours.

### **8.10 Liaison with Other Organisations**

The service ensures that the food standards service delivered is consistent with that of its neighbouring authorities through participation in the Trading Standards North West (TSNW) Food Standards Group, which also includes partner organisations involved in similar work, such as MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency), FSA Food Crime Unit and Port Health. The service has a close working relationship with colleagues in Environmental Health responsible for Food Safety Enforcement.

### **8.11 Food Standards Promotional Work**

The service is committed to raising public awareness of food standards issues and will provide information through a variety of means whenever possible, including media articles, websites and events.

## **9. RESOURCES**

### **9.1 Financial Allocation**

The officers engaged in Food Standards delivery also undertake other duties and the costs of the service are contained within the total approved budget for the Trading Standards Service.

Inspection, intervention work and sampling must be funded through the Trading Standards Service budget. At present approximately £3000 is available for analysis of Food Standards samples.

The cost of providing a Food Standards Service, as presently staffed is as follows:

Employment Costs:	£3031
Supplies Service and Transport:	£130
Recharges and Premises:	£1418
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>£4579</b>

Equating to <1% of the overall Trading Standards Budget.

The cost of providing a Food Standards Service, if fully staffed is as follows:

Employment Costs:	£8227
Supplies Service and Transport:	£389
Recharges and Premises:	£4254
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>£12870</b>

Equating to 2.1% of the overall Trading Standards Budget.

## **9.2 Staffing Allocation**

A list of officers currently authorised to undertake Food Standards enforcement work is maintained, together with a record of training and continuing professional development hours awarded. At present the service has only one authorised food standards officer in post, that officer also being authorised as Lead Food Standards Officer. Other officers holding a relevant qualification are in post but require update activities in order to bring them into competence as required by the Code of Practice. It is estimated that 0.15 FTE time is allocated to Food Standards service delivery.

Food Standards work is undertaken by the following officers:

1 x	Principal Trading Standards Officer:	5% of time
1 x	Senior Trading Standards Officer:	10% of time

## **9.3 Staff Development Plan**

All training needed to deliver the Food Standards Service Plan is managed in accordance with corporate training procedures and with consideration to the requirements for continuing professional development identified in the Food Law Enforcement Code of Practice. The Trading Standards team have recently appointed a new post of Assistant Training Standards Officer, this is a career graded post, and this officer will now undertake a 3 ½ year level 6 trading standards apprenticeship at the conclusion of which they will be competent to undertake food standards work. The service will utilise training provided by TSNW and the FSA.

## **10.0 QUALITY ASSESSMENT**

### **10.1 Quality Assessment and Internal Monitoring**

The Service monitors its performance of the Food Standards Service Plan at regular intervals. The Chief Trading Standards Officer monitors performance on a monthly and quarterly basis. In addition, each year performance is compared as part of the service planning process. The service works in accordance with the FSA Code of Practice and Practice Guidance.

All officers are monitored on a monthly basis to ensure that targets are being met with regard to response times and inspections due. The Lead Food Standards Officer monitors work recording and follow up actions taken on a regular basis and may on occasion accompany Food Standards officers during visits, to ensure that inspections and enforcement actions are carried out in accordance with legislation and the Food Law Enforcement Code of Practice.

## **11.0 REVIEW OF ACTIVITY IN FOOD STANDARDS 2022/23**

### **11.1 Programmed Premises Interventions**

As highlighted in the Food Hygiene section of this plan, the FSA published a “Recovery Plan” to assist local authorities in planning their food following the dramatic interruption to programmed work during the Covid 19 pandemic, during which very little food standards work was undertaken, as access to premises was limited and officers were engaged in Covid

enforcement duties, and in the case of the food standards officers undertaking increased demands for work in relation to product safety connected with PPE (face masks) and hand sanitisers.

The milestone set on the FSA Recovery Plan was for all premises rated as “A” for food standards, the highest risk premises to have received an intervention by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022. This target was achieved.

Although not performing programmed inspection visits to the remainder of the food businesses, the service continued to engage with and challenge Low and Medium Risk businesses (B and C rated), by reacting to intelligence received and complaints.

## **11.2 Formal Action**

The Food Standards Team has completed a lot of work in relation to infringements identified through intelligence received. Much of this work has been the provision of business advice in order to resolve problems and prevent future infringements. The majority of non-compliant businesses were brought into compliance by the end of the year through this process. Other issues have been resolved through liaison with the Primary or Home Authority for the business concerned.

## **11.3 Food Complaints**

During 2022/23 consumer complaints related to the sale of out-of-date food, inaccurate allergen labelling and the sale of imported soft drinks not legal for UK sale. The Food Standards Team also dealt with one major and complex case that is worthy of note, involving a very large amount of imported vodka. This case involved extensive investigations and the involvement of HMRC, FSA National Crime Unit and neighbouring local authority units. It was eventually determined that the high value product could not be legally placed on the market and must be destroyed by the importer.

The team also responded to an increased number of requests for advice received from new food businesses on the composition, labelling and advertising of their products.

It is believed that the low level of consumer complaints received may be due to the use nationally of the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline, as the contact point for Trading Standards enquiries, as consumers may not realise that food complaints can be made through this route. The Service will look to strengthen its communications in regard to this.

## **11.4 Food Sampling**

The FSA did not provide any funding for food standards sampling during 2022/23 and hence no surveillance sampling was undertaken. Official Samples were taken in relation to a food incident which occurred relating to imported vodka.

## **11.5 Primary and Home Authority**

The Primary Authority relationship with Princes Ltd and Nichols plc continued to develop, with the business seeking advice and support on a wide range of issues, some of which are complex and technical. Of particular note this year has been requests for advice in relation to

the labelling changes required connected with shortages of food ingredients connected with the challenging global situation.

During the year the Service worked with the international food manufacturers we are Primary Authority for, to investigate any food incidents, all of which have been fully investigated with involvement as appropriate with the FSA. Primary Authority work is charged for at cost recovery.

### **11.6 Officer Development**

All Food Standards enforcement officers attended a minimum of 10 hours CPD (Continuing Professional Development) training, as is required by the Food Law Enforcement Code of Practice. Officers attended a number of training events, most of which were provided through the TSNW Food Standards Group and the FSA.

In addition, officers have undertaken extensive research in order to provide comprehensive business advice on a number of issues, which has contributed to the officers' knowledge base.

All officers have completed a competency matrix which will form the basis of their individual appraisals, and which will ensure that officers are correctly authorised to undertake their duties which is dependent on their training and years of experience.

### **11.7 Variation from the Service Plan**

There was no variation from the Service Plan.

### **11.8 Areas of Improvement**

The Lead Food Standards Officer is assisting with the implementation of the new Civica CX database, including ensuring that the system is capable of recording and monitoring the soon to be implemented new Food Standards Delivery Model.

To build capacity through recruitment into the vacant Senior Trading Standards Officer post, potentially with an apprenticeship.

To continue to review officers' qualifications, skills and competencies against the Food Law Enforcement Code of Practice requirements and review authorisations as required.

To introduce the new Food Standards Risk Rating Scheme in line with the revised Food Law Enforcement Code of Practice.

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## **FEED SERVICE PLAN 2023/2024**

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### **12.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Feed Service Plan sets out how St Helens Council through its Trading Standards Service will fulfil its responsibilities under the legislation relating to animal feed, fertilisers and the primary production of food. The structure of the plan follows the service planning guidance contained within the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement. Other activities performed by the authority in respect of consumer protection legislation are detailed in the Regulatory Services (Trading Standards) Service Plan.

### **13.0 FEED SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **13.1 Aims and Objectives**

- To ensure all animal feed, including pet foods are safe for consumption and are properly
- labelled;
- To ensure that animal feeds are produced, transported, stored and used hygienically;
- To continue to register and / or approve all feed business establishments;
- To ensure that food and feed produced at Primary Production is safe for consumption.

#### **13.2 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans**

The Council approves the Feed Service Plan. The Cabinet Member holding the Portfolio for Safer, Stronger Communities monitors progress against service objectives during the year.

The work of the Feed Service is reflected in the Council's Performance Plan.

The Feed Service Plan is reviewed annually, taking into account corporate objectives, demands on the service and any changes in the way in which the service is provided, to ensure the provision of the most cost-effective service. The links to the St Helens Plan objectives are set out in Section 1.3.

### **14.0 BACKGROUND**

#### **14.1 Profile of the Local Authority**

A profile of the authority is provided on page 12.

Whilst St Helens is a mainly urban area, there are small rural communities around the outskirts, where farming remains as a full-time occupation, in addition to a number of small holdings, and hobby farms.

## 14.2 Organisational Structure

The Feed Service is provided by the Trading Standards Service, the organisational structure which is shown in Appendix 2.

## 14.3 Scope of the Feed Service

To conduct a programme of inspections of feed businesses and primary production businesses at the frequency required under the Feed Law Code of Practice published by the Food Standards Agency.

To undertake sampling of animal feed based on the National Feed Priorities published by the FSA, local priorities and feed incidents.

To react to feed safety incidents, complaints, referrals and requests for advice relating to animal feed and the primary production of food.

To take appropriate enforcement action, when necessary, in accordance with the authorities' enforcement policy.

### 14.4(a) Demands on the Feed Service

Detailed below is a summary of the premises registered as Feed Business Operators with the authority:

<b>FSA Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Number of premises</b>
R5	Placing on the market of compound feeds	4
R6	Manufacture of Pet Foods	6
R7	Manufacture and / or placing on the market of feed materials	18

<b>FSA Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Number of premises</b>
R8	Transporting of feed and feed products	1



R9	Storage of feed and feed products	1
R10/11	Mixing feed on farm with additives and premixtures/ with compound feeding stuffs that contain additives	10
R12	Food businesses selling co products of the food industry which are destined as feed materials	1
R13	Livestock Farm	20
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>106</b>

In general, the feed businesses based in the area pose a low to medium risk and all premises are rated as either “broadly compliant” under the NTSB risk rating scheme. Less than 30% of the registered feed businesses are members of recognised feed assurance schemes.

The highest risk premises are the on-farm mixers (R10/11) who generally only mix their own grain with compound feeds supplied by reputable suppliers, the food businesses disposing of waste food and co products (R7 and R12) into the feed supply chain, with varying control measures in place, and the manufacturers of pet food and treats (R6) which are mainly small startup businesses lacking in experience.

#### 14.4(b) **Service Delivery Points**

The Feed Service is delivered by the Trading Standards Section, based at Town Hall, Victoria Square, Library Street, St Helens, WA10 1HP, office hours being 8.45am to 5.15pm Monday to Friday.

Out of hours service is available should it be required.

Contact can be made by telephone to 01744 676789 or by email to [tradingstandards@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:tradingstandards@sthelens.gov.uk).

#### 14.5 **Regulation Policy**

The Feed Service adheres to the Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy which is available via the website [www.sthelens.gov.uk](http://www.sthelens.gov.uk).

### 15.0 **SERVICE DELIVERY**

#### 15.1(a) **Feed Premises Registration**

The Feed Service has proactively sought registration of feed business establishments under the feed hygiene requirements and continues to do so, when affected businesses are identified. Third party assurance information is incorporated into the Feed Hygiene Register maintained by the service.

### **15.1(b) Inspections (Interventions) at Feed Business Establishments and Primary Production Premises**

Feed and primary production inspection frequency is conducted according to the NTSB risk scheme. Inspections are conducted in accordance with the Feed Law Enforcement Code of Practice. The table below details the inspection programme for the premises currently on the Feed Hygiene Register.

The following elements, in varying depth depending on the identified risks of the business, will be undertaken during feed and primary production inspections:

- Registration / checks on the registration categories of feed businesses including food businesses supplying into the animal feed chain;
- Examination of the processes to ensure that feed / food (at primary production) is compositionally and nutritionally correct, not adulterated or contaminated and is properly labelled;
- Determining the efficiency and effectiveness of HACCP systems used in the manufacture and use of feed and the primary production of food and feed.
- Examination of the traceability systems for feed, feed ingredients and food at primary production;
- Sampling for analysis of feed, feed ingredients and food at primary production.
- Provision of advice on legal requirements

The following inspection visits are planned for 2023/24:

1 x R5	Placing on the market of compound feeds
3 x R6	Manufacturer of pet foods
3 x R7	Food business disposing of surplus food
1 x R10/11	On farm mixer of feed (with & without feed additives)
1 x R13	Livestock Farm
1 x R14	Arable Farm

All of the planned inspections will be funded by FSA/ NTSB via a regional funding bid. The level of inspection detailed above, and the associated work can be met with the resources available.

The Feed Officer is qualified and maintains competency as per the requirements of the Feed Law Enforcement Code of Practice for Authorised Officer and Lead Feed Officer activities.

### **15.2 Feed Complaints**

Feed and primary production complaints are received by the service by telephone, letter, email or referrals via Citizens Advice Consumer Service. All complaints are responded to within 1 working day.

Where the complaint relates to the contamination, adulteration, composition and labelling of feed or food produced at the primary production level the complaint will be fully investigated, with a view to tackling the root cause of the problem, to avoid it happening again. Where appropriate, enforcement action will be taken, having regard to the Enforcement Policy and Statutory Codes of Practice.

### **15.3 Home Authority and Primary Authority Scheme**

The service operates in accordance with the Home Authority Principle, acting as a point of contact for businesses based in St Helens that trade within and outside the area. We are Primary Authority for Aimia Foods Ltd who are a food manufacturing and packing business, businesses that disposes of waste for use as animal feed. The service is working to develop Primary Authority relationships with appropriate food and feed businesses.

### **15.4 Advice to Business**

The feed service will make all reasonable attempts to provide advice and education to businesses in a practical and cost-effective manner. The intention is to equip the business with information that will allow the business to meet legal and best practice requirements. Advice may be provided through a number of means including:

- During routine inspections / visits and follow up visits
- Following investigation of a complaint
- Provision of information sheets / advice letters in hard copy or via relevant websites
- Telephone conversations with businesses
- Provision of seminars, displays and talks to businesses

### **15.5 Feed Sampling**

Feed sampling is planned based upon intelligence received and will take account of the National Enforcement Priorities set by the FSA. The service will participate in Trading Standards North West (TSNW) sampling initiatives where appropriate.

The authority has contracted Lancashire Scientific Services as agriculture analyst for the service.

At present no reason for sampling has been identified for 2022/23, however, samples will be programmed should intelligence be received, or initiatives be developed by TSNW or the FSA.

## **15.6 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks of Food Related Infectious Disease**

Should a food safety incident linked with a primary production premise, or a feed business arise, the feed officers will liaise with the food safety team to investigate the issue, as described within the Food Service Plan

## **15.7 Feed Safety Incidents**

All feed alerts are received from the Food Standards Agency via e mail alert. The majority of alerts are issued for information only, whilst a small number will require an immediate response.

Feed hazard warnings are responded to by an appropriate officer, usually the lead feed officer, who will determine the action to be taken which will be as directed by the warning notification received and in accordance with the Feed Law Code of Practice.

The authority has an emergency response system in place for any incidents that occur out of normal office hours.

## **15.8 Liaison with Other Organisations**

The service ensures that the feed service delivered is consistent with that of its neighbouring authorities through participation in the Trading Standards North West (TSNW) Agriculture Group, which also includes partner organisations involved in similar work, such as APHA (Animal and Plant Health Agency) and VMD (Veterinary Medicines Directorate). The group is represented on the National Agriculture Panel (NAP). We work directly with APHA when required. The service liaises with colleagues in Environmental Health responsible for Animal Health enforcement.

## **15.9 Feed Safety Promotional Work**

The service is committed to raising public and business awareness of feed safety issues and will provide information through a variety of means whenever possible, including media articles, websites and events.

## **16.0 RESOURCES**

### **16.1 Financial Allocation**

The officer engaged in feed service delivery also undertakes other duties and the costs of the service are contained within the total approved budget for the Trading Standards Service. In addition, the service applies for funding from NTSB for feed delivery work, via a regional TSNW bid. The funding available for 2023/24 is £3210 in relation to inspection visits. As there was no external funding available, no regional bid was made in relation to sampling, hence any sampling will need to be funded through the services budget.

### **16.2 Staffing Allocation**

A list of officers currently authorised to undertake feed and primary production enforcement work is maintained, together with a record of training and continuing professional development hours awarded. Currently this is 1 authorised feed officers, who is also qualified and authorised

as Lead Feed Officer. It is estimated that less than 0.1 FTE officer time is allocated to feed service delivery.

### **16.3 Staff Development Plan**

All training needed to deliver the Feed Service Plan is managed in accordance with corporate training procedures and with consideration to the requirements for continuing professional development identified in the Feed Law Enforcement Code of Practice.

The service will utilise free and low-cost training provided by TSNW when possible.

## **17.0 QUALITY ASSESSMENT**

### **17.1 Quality assessment and internal monitoring**

The Service monitors its performance of the Feed Service Plan at regular intervals. The Chief Trading Standards Officer monitors performance on a monthly and quarterly basis. In addition, each year performance is compared as part of the service planning process.

The Service has documented practices and procedures in relation to feed service delivery, which are subject to regular review and performance is audited against these.

All officers are monitored on a monthly basis to ensure that targets are being met with regard to response times and inspections due. The Chief Trading Standards Officer monitors work recording and follow up actions taken and may accompany the Feed Officer during visits to ensure that inspections and enforcement actions are carried out in accordance with legislation and the Feed Law Enforcement Code of Practice.

## **18.0 REVIEW**

### **18.1 Review against the Service Plan 2022/23**

#### **18.1(a) Programmed Premises Interventions**

During 2022/23 the service completed the following inspection visits, all funded through the NTSB / FSA regional funding awarded:

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| 1x R5  | It was established that an online retailer of chicken feed and equipment established during 2020 has ceased trading.   |
| 3 x R6 | Pet food manufacturers, it was established that one business had ceased trading, whilst two were not active in the manufacture of pet treats. All were businesses which started trading in 2019/20.  |
| 1 x R7 | A supermarket disposing of unsold bread for animal feed for further processing by specialist food recycling businesses. The inspection indicated that only minimal amounts of waste are disposed of in this way, as the products are first offered to local food banks and pantry's. |

- 2 x R8            One haulier had ceased trading, the other was not active in feed transportation at the time of contact but will be in future. That haulier is TASC registered so is low risk.
  
- 1 x R9            A warehouse facility had registered to store liquid animal feed for a specific customer. The customer had ceased importing the feed, so there was no longer any storage in use.
  
- 1 x R10/11      On farm mixer of feed with feed additives. Enquiries were made and it was established that the farm is no longer a working farm.
  
- 2 x R13           Livestock farms: a visit was made to a sheep farm not previously inspected. Standards were very good. A farm which had raised beef cattle was found to no longer be keeping any stock and is now recorded as an arable farm.
  
- 2 x R14           Arable farms: it was established that both businesses had left their fields fallow.

No major issues were identified through the inspections, but advice was provided to assist improvement, particularly with regard to record keeping. The main issue found is that businesses are not registered in the correct category for their current activity, and do not update the authority when their business changes significantly.

The Feed team have now had contact with all registered feed businesses in the area and have inspected over 40% of those businesses over the last 5 years and continue to utilise questionnaires in order to maintain current records of the feed business in the area. The majority of businesses not inspected are supermarkets disposing of bakery waste for feed use, and small-scale hobby farmers, neither of which pose any significant risk.

#### 18.1(b) Formal Action

No Formal Action was required as no significant infringements were identified. Advice was provided to a number of Feed Business / Primary production Establishments to assist improvement.

#### 18.1(c) Feed Complaints

During 2022/23 the level of feed related enquiries decreased with only 6 contacts received, 4 of which related to the manufacture or sale of pet treats, which had been the main category for feed work over the previous 2 years. It is believed that this is the effect of people returning to work following the Covid 19 pandemic and these small-scale businesses not being profitable in the long term. One enquiry was a person planning to start a Raw Pet Food business, including manufacture, which is a high-risk activity requiring APHA approval due to the use of Animal By Products. This business will require advice and monitoring should it commence trading.

#### 18.1(d) Feed Sampling

A review was made of the National Sampling Priorities which did not indicate the need for any sampling No issues arose during the year which required samples to be taken.

#### 18.1(e) Officer Development

The lead feed enforcement officers achieved in excess of 10 hours CPD (Continuing Professional Development) training, as is required by the Feed Law Enforcement Code of Practice. The Lead Feed Officer attended several online training events, including Feed Labelling. In addition, the Lead Feed Officer attends the TSNW Agriculture Group and undertakes individual research relating to legislation and best practice.

## **18.2 Variation from the Service Plan**

There was no variation from the planned work during 2022/23, other than that slightly more funded inspections were completed than planned.

## **18.3 Areas of Improvement**

To continue to review the risk rating of feed premises on our database in line with the NTSB risk Rating Scheme.

To improve the standard of inspection recording, utilising the FSA standard forms and guidance on completion provided.

To review our Practices and Procedures to ensure compliance with the revised Code of Practice on Feed Law Enforcement.

## **APPENDIX 1**

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### **SERVICE PLAN PROGRAMME 2023/24**

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Departmental and Divisional Service Action Plans can be viewed on the council's web based PMF (Performance Management System).

Paper copies of the plans are available on request.



## APPENDIX 2

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### ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE CHARTS

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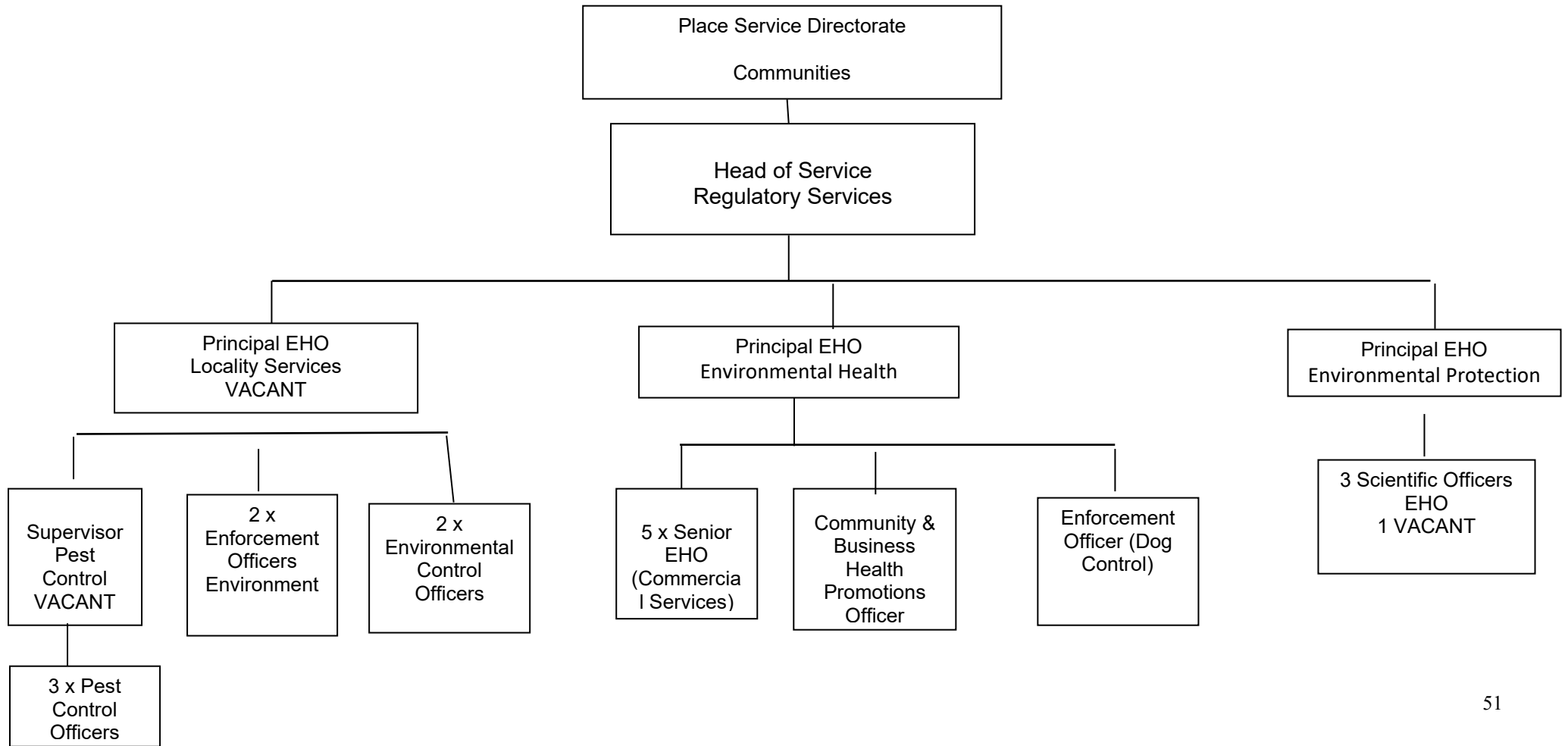
Attached on the following pages are copies of organisational structure charts for: -

- 1) Department - Management Team
- 2) Division - Regulatory Services including Environmental Health & Trading Standards

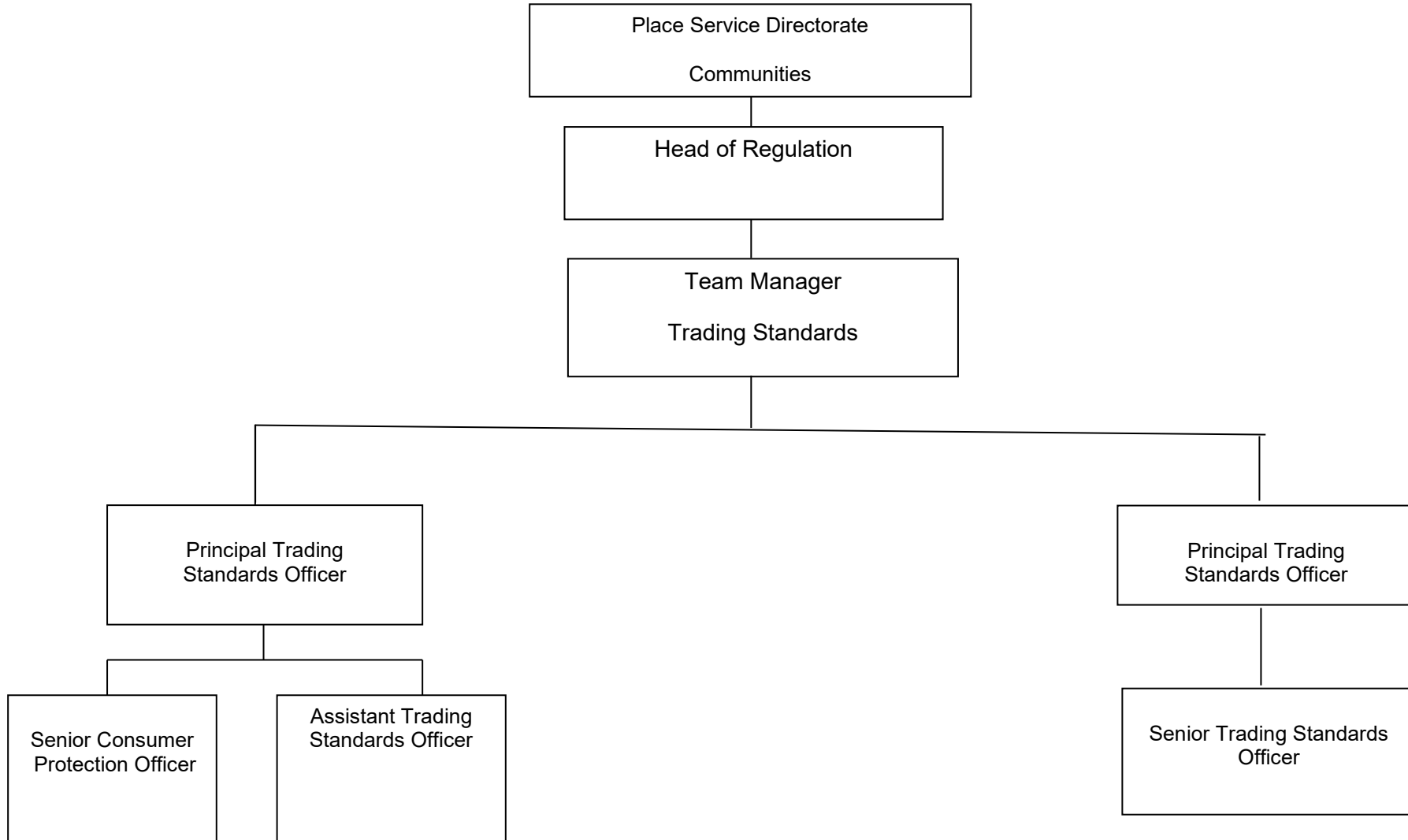
**Place Services  
Department**

[2000063\\_Structure\\_Chart\\_A3\\_-\\_PLACE\\_SERVICES\\_12.pdf \(sthelens.gov.uk\)](#)

**Place Services  
Regulatory Services**



**Regulatory Services Division  
Trading Standards**



### APPENDIX 3 Food Safety Work Profile 2023/24

FOOD SAFETY PREMISES/WORK PROFILE 20 Code	Establishments	A	B	C	D	E		Total
							Unrated	
100	Primary Producers			1		1		2
101	Manufacturers and Packers	1	2	2	4	3	1	13
102	Importers/exporters				2		1	3
103	Distributors/Transporters				7	7	2	16
105	Supermarket/Hypermarket			2	12	10		24
106	Smaller retailers	1	5	14	88	63	6	177
107	Retailer - Other			2	14	22	5	43
109	Restaurants/café/canteen		11	46	103	6	13	179
110	Hotel/Guest House			1	2		1	4
111	Pub/Club			9	51	51	3	114
112	Takeaway		4	70	49	3	14	140
113	Caring establishments		67	7	16	21	2	113
114	School/College		30	11	18	2		61
115	Mobile food unit			3	23	56	2	84
	Restaurants and caterers -other		6	15	35	58	2	116
Total due an intervention in 2023/24		2	125	183	424	303	52	1089
Inspection Frequency		6 months	12 months	18 months	24months	36months		

## APPENDIX 4 Food Safety – Estimation of Resources for 2023/24

To achieve the inspection plan as detailed on page 20, each inspector will work to individual targets. For the full team of 4 senior inspectors (1 of whom is on a 30hr a week contract), with the 5<sup>th</sup> returning from the seconded post in September 2023, the following is an estimate of the anticipated work load:

High risk inspections (A&B) x 129 (A rated establishments are inspected twice a year) **96% =127**

Low risk inspections (C&D) x 607, **80% = 424** (all non-compliant C and D rated establishments will be prioritised)

E rated establishments – subject to alternative interventions x 303 (questionnaires/desk top assessments)

Unrated establishment inspections – this figure fluctuates throughout the year as new business registrations are received. As of June 2023, 52 unrated establishments are awaiting an inspection.

Food complaints x 160

Infectious Disease Investigations x 50

Other areas of work as detailed in the Plan:

Advice to businesses

Sampling

Food Standards Agency Alerts

Liaison with other agencies

Community and Business Health Promotion

The Service is also responsible for Health and Safety enforcement/Animal Licensing/Street Trading Consent Scheme and Special Treatment Licences

## APPENDIX 5

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### FOOD SAFETY TRAINING PROGRAMME 2023/24

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All officers will receive training so as to enable them to comply with the requirements of the Code of Practice, which states that all authorised officers and the Lead officer must obtain a minimum of 20 hours CPD per year, split into:

- A minimum of 10 CPD hours on core food matters directly related to the delivery of official controls.
- 10 hours on other professional matters. This could include training needs identified during the competency assessments and appraisals.

The following areas of training will be dealt with during the coming year, some by shared low-cost training with Environmental Health Cheshire and Merseyside;

- FSA Update Sessions / Consistency Exercises
- UKHSA –sampling workshop and microbiology
- Other update courses as they become available throughout the year.

All officers are briefed during regular team meetings on any regulatory changes.

When officers attend courses on any food or related issue then the appropriate cascade training will be organised so that the team will benefit.