

Food Safety Service Plan 2013-2014

Appendix 2

Review of 2010-2013 (3 years) Food Safety Service Plan

Contents

Introduction	2
Review of performance	2
Activities	2
Broadly Compliant	3
Food Poisoning and other associated infectious diseases	4
Liaison with other organisations	6
Staff Development	6
Quality assessment	6
National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (NFHRS)	7
Community Health Promotion	9
Advice to businesses	9
Annual Food Safety Week	9
Annual Fairtrade fortnight	10
Dangerous Catering Equipment	10
Cool It Project	11
Shake the Salt Habit	12
How to score a 5 - NFHRS	13
Presentation to Eastbourne Residential Care Homes Association	13
Variations in service plan	14
Areas of Improvement for 2013-2014	15

Introduction

The **Food Standards Agency (FSA)** Framework Agreement requires every Local Authority to review its previous year's performance against its service plan. The review must identify where the Authority was at variance from the service plan and, where appropriate, the reasons for that variance.

This review details the performance of the food service for the financial years 2010-2011, 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 and outlines any significant issues that impacted on the delivery of the service.

Review of performance

Activities

Table 1 details the activities undertaken which are subsequently reported to the FSA annually and form part of their monitoring of this statutory function.

The figures show an increase in the total number of registered food premises and their subsequent inspections, year on year. On average, around 150 food businesses open and close annually which places a demand on the team resources.

Sampling visits increased as they are commonly used as an effective tool to demonstrate poor cleaning and disinfection methods, ultimately educating businesses and improving standards. In addition the Public Health Laboratory Service (PHLS) increased the quota for samples in their planning and preparation for the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.

Service requests have increased also, partly because of the way the teams' work is recorded and allocated using the paperless document management system, W2.

The team received a total of 28 food complaints between 2010 and 2013. A very small number of the food complaints were directly attributable to food produced in premises in Eastbourne. All complaints were investigated promptly and efficiently, and within the stipulated response times. None of the food complaints resulted in formal action and in all cases concerning complaints about food

premises in Eastbourne, where these were substantiated, corrective action was initiated.

Between 2010 and 2013 the team received 30 **Food Alerts for Action (FAFA)** from the FSA, advising of problems with various foods. Service are required to respond to these FAFA's without undue delay.

Table 1

Number of specific interventions carried out between 2010-2013:

Activity	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Inspections and Audits	572	612	546
Verification and surveillance	0	0	0
Sampling visits	18	36	47
Advice and education	19	187	9
Information/intelligence gathering	0	128	0
Service of Improvement Notices	0	3	9
Service requests - complaints investigated about food and hygiene of premises	190	431	394
Service requests – food complaints	14	11	3
Total premises as of 31 st March	961	1030	1090

(Correct on 11th February 2013)

Broadly Compliant

'Broadly compliant' is a measure based on the risk rating scheme applied by our service regarding how well food safety is managed in a business to meet hygiene requirements. Businesses must score below a certain level to be 'broadly compliant', as defined by the FSA. The term 'broadly compliant' was initially used as an outcome measure for local authority monitoring returns to the FSA and was subsequently adopted by the **Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)** as a National Performance Indicator (NPI 184- Number of food businesses in an area which are broadly compliant) for Comprehensive Area Assessment purposes. Table 2 details the number of broadly compliant premises in Eastbourne.

Table 2

Number of premises broadly compliant:

2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
862	878	Not available until March

At their next inspection, if food safety standards have been maintained since their last visit, these 'broadly compliant' businesses may receive an intervention rather than a full inspection.

This makes good use of our resources as it potentially saves time, and businesses that have consistently achieved good levels of compliance are rewarded. We can then focus our attention to those businesses failing to meet food safety standards.

Food Poisoning and other associated infectious diseases

Doctors are required by law to report some, either confirmed or suspected, infectious diseases to the **Health Protection Agency (HPA)**. In turn, the HPA inform the local authority who investigate the case. The depth of the investigation is dictated by the type of organism and number of individuals affected. To determine this, it may be necessary to ask for a faecal specimen so that the exact type of bacteria can be identified.

The primary aim of the investigation is to identify the source of infection. Our service will attempt to contact the infected person to take a history of food and drink consumed, places visited before the illness began, and to provide advice on preventing further spread of the infection. This may involve exclusion from the workplace if, for example, the infected person is in a 'high risk' occupation e.g. a food handler or a health care worker who has direct contact with highly susceptible patients or persons to whom an intestinal infection would have particularly serious consequences.

The investigating officer may need to investigate the source, in order to identify others who may be suffering, or to prevent others becoming infected.

Eastbourne is no different in terms of comparison with national figures relating to infectious diseases, as Campylobacter is the commonest reported bacterial disease in England and Wales.¹

Over the last three years the team dealt with 417 notifications of Campylobacter, see table 3. Illness is characterised by severe diarrhoea and abdominal pain. Undercooked meat (especially poultry) is often associated with illness, as is unpasteurised milk and untreated water. The majority of infections, however, remain unexplained by recognised risk factors for disease and hence are investigated by questionnaire. The number of food poisoning cases has shown no significant change over the last three years; however the population within the borough has increased marginally.

Table 3

Infectious diseases notifications:

2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
203 (141 Campylocabter)	190 (148 Campylocabter)	183 (128 Campylocabter)

(Correct on 11th February 2013)

All individual cases were followed up and analysis of the investigation findings show that the majority of food-borne illnesses reported by residents of the borough were contracted abroad, outside Eastbourne or in a domestic setting, and none of the cases investigated identified local food premises as being the likely source.

Our Service dealt with 82 outbreaks of viral gastroenteritis over the last three years all thought to be Norovirus, also known as winter vomiting disease, **small round structured virus (SRSV)** or the Norwalk-like virus. Norovirus lives in the gut and is passed from person to person by poor hygiene after using the bathroom - not washing hands properly after using the toilet and then touching toilet handles, seats, door handles and so on. It can also be spread when someone vomits and small aerosols containing the virus enter the air. Although the infection is unpleasant, it is rarely dangerous.

¹ Information obtained from The Health Protection Agency website [accessed 13.02.13]
<http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/Campylobacter/>

Liaison with other organisations

Interaction, some regular, some more ad hoc, has taken place with key organisations including the Sussex Food Liaison Group, Sussex Food Study Group, NHS Sussex and East Sussex County Council, Health Protection Agency, Health Protection Unit (Horsham), East Sussex Trading Standards, Food Standards Agency, South East Water, CIEH South East Group, The Sussex Region Chief Officers Group, DEFRA, CIVICA and the APP User Group.

The Sussex Food Liaison Group aims to collaborate on food safety issues; to produce common policies and procedures and to promote consistency between both service and authorities. The Liaison Group has successfully secured funding for certain initiatives and has produced policy and procedure documents with regard to food hygiene and safety matters. Low-cost training courses for enforcement service and businesses have also been organised across the county, in conjunction with the Sussex Food Study Group.

There is regular liaison and consultation with services from other departments within the Council on issues relating to planning and building control applications, business rates, fraud team, licensing, tourism, cleansing, economic development and where appropriate with the borough Solicitor.

Joint working with service from East Sussex County Council Trading Standards is carried out as required and in response to specific incidents. Imported Food and food labelling have been key areas for recent co-operation.

Staff Development

All staff received regular training and briefings in accordance with the Service Plan, statutory CPD requirements and individual personal development plans. Staff also attended a number of external training courses on a wide range of food-related matters.

Quality assessment

Management monitoring systems and quality control checks were partially operational throughout the year to secure consistency of enforcement and compliance with policies and procedures. The

Senior Environmental Health Officer and Health & Environment Team Manager accompanied staff members on a number of food hygiene inspections and a percentage of inspection documentation was also monitored.

Not all of the performance indicators set out in the previous plan were collated and reported upon because the practicalities of office moves, system moves and structure moves made these indicators difficult to introduce. However, Broadly Compliant premises and the number of specific statutory interventions carried out between 2010-2013 (Table 1) were measured. With the full introduction of Covalent across the Council it is anticipated that it will become easier to measure performance for 2013-2014.

National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (NFHRS)

The Food Safety Team announced the introduction of the **National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (NFHRS)** across the borough from April 2011.

Eleven local authorities in East and West Sussex made a successful bid for funding from the **Food Standards Agency (FSA)** to introduce the scheme. (Brighton & Hove and Crawley were already operating similar schemes). The funding amounted to over £65,000 and covered the cost of setting up the scheme in the County.

This national scheme, developed by the FSA in partnership with local authorities, provides information on food hygiene standards to help people to choose where to eat out or shop for food. Around one million people suffer from food poisoning every year, and the aim in introducing the scheme is to reduce this.

Food outlets, such as restaurants, takeaways and pubs, are inspected by food safety staff members from EBC, to check that their hygiene standards meet legal requirements. The hygiene standards found at these inspections are rated on a scale ranging from zero at the bottom (which means 'urgent improvement necessary') to a top rating of five ('very good').



These ratings are for anyone to view on the FSA website at www.food.gov.uk/ratings and the food business are given a sticker and certificate and encouraged to display these at the entrance to their premises. This means that their customers can easily see them and decide if they want to go in. When customers expect to see a rating, there is a real incentive for food businesses to seek to make improvements to their hygiene standards.

On 19th April 2012 the Food and Health & Safety Team organised a celebratory event called 'High 5' at the Town Hall to mark the start of local publicity for the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in Eastbourne.



Pictured: (L-R) Caroline Wallis, Tracey Walter, Cllr Carolyn Heaps, John Demetriou and Fleur Willard.

All 184 local food businesses that received a 5 rating (very good hygiene standards) at their most recent food inspection were invited. Those in attendance received a special presentation from the Mayor Carolyn Heaps and a printed photograph taken with the Mayor to display in their food business. Photographs of the event were also published on the Council's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/EastbourneC

Guests were treated to refreshments donated, prepared and served by Sussex Downs level 2 Hospitality Students which contributed to the day's success.

Attendees could also get expert advice and information from ESCC Trading Standards, Economic Development, Environmental Health, Fairtrade Eastbourne, Activating Eastbourne and Tourism Development.

The event was a major success and received positive feedback from businesses. The event was well publicised in the local papers, including a two-page spread in The Herald. Find out more at www.eastbourne.gov.uk/high5

At present 28.7% (314) of the eligible food businesses in Eastbourne have been awarded a score of 5, and some of these businesses have had a subsequent inspection since their initial score of 5 and have rescored 5, which is a great achievement.

Community Health Promotion

Advice to businesses

The team have continued to give free advice and assistance to businesses and consumers throughout the last three years on food safety and hygiene matters. Often this was facilitated during the inspection process, but also through the development of the team's food safety website, newsletters, phone calls and the production and distribution of advisory leaflets and pamphlets.

The introduction of specific FSA guidance and the requirement for documented systems has had a significant impact on food business operators as they now have to comply with the guidance and they need to have a fully documented food safety management system in place. To meet the needs of the food business sector the service has continued to provide considerable guidance and advice on both issues. This has increased the time spent at each business which has had an impact on meeting other service demands.

Consultative advice and guidance were provided to various consumers, voluntary groups, businesses and outdoor events throughout the borough. Specific help and support on specific FSA guidance including cross contamination, cleaning and disinfection was provided to targeted businesses.

Annual Food Safety Week

Over the last 3 years, much of the team's efforts were focussed on inspections, however health promotion was highlighted during June 2010, 2011 and 2012 when we took part in the annual FSAs food safety week campaign.

The focus changes each year and is a great way of communicating simple yet effective messages to consumers about food safety in the home, thus reducing ill health from the often devastating effects of food poisoning.

Year	Food Safety Week Topic
2010	Campylobacter
2011	Good hygiene in the home
2012	Food safety on a budget

You can read about the teams activities associated with Food Safety Week at www.eastbourne.gov.uk/foodsafetyweek

Annual Fairtrade fortnight

Fairtrade Fortnight, a series of events to raise awareness of ways to encourage fair working conditions and fair prices for goods produced by workers in developing countries, and runs for 2 weeks from February to March annually.



The FAIRTRADE MARK is an independent consumer label which appears on thousands of products from coffee to fresh fruit, as a guarantee of a better deal for people and planet.

Many farmers and workers in developing countries struggle to provide for their families. Poor market access and unfair trade rules often mean that the price they get for their crop does not cover the cost of production. They face the global challenges of food price rises and climate change too.

The team support 'Fairtrade Eastbourne annually' by promoting a display in the Customer Contact Centre for the duration of the fortnight.

The teams' web pages are updated and contain more information about shopping Fairtrade in Eastbourne. To find out more about Fairtrade and the work of 'Fairtrade Eastbourne', visit www.eastbourne.gov.uk/fairtrade

Dangerous Catering Equipment

The team held three training sessions with large local seafront hotels and catering outlets in 2010-2011. Utilising the kitchen of the Langham Hotel to demonstrate the potential hazards, the delegates

were informed about the legal requirements surrounding dangerous kitchen equipment and how to reduce associated accidents.

The event provided an opportunity to train Head Chefs and Managers from the large catering outlets from the Hydro to the Harvester in the harbour. Altogether 22 catering outlets were represented. Further information can be found at

www.eastbourne.gov.uk/cateringequipment



John Demetriou with some of the chefs and managers from the hotels.

Cool It Project

Funding was obtained following a successful bid from the NHS Sussex Food & Physical Activity Group to target food premises with display chillers or fridges in the Devonshire Ward.

The funding provided for thermometers to be given to eligible food businesses (grocery/convenience stores, newsagents, cafes, snack bars and delis) to encourage them to keep food at appropriate temperatures to help them comply with food safety law, e.g. cold foods must be kept at 8 degrees or below. The temperature of a food may "result in a risk to health" where temperature control is critical to the safety of food. Upon visiting, the businesses were also provided with a handy pictorial leaflet containing best practice advice.

As part of the Cool It Project, some of the children at Bourne Primary School, Eastbourne held a special assembly to mark Science Week in March 2011. Food Safety Service talked to Years 5 and 6 about how harmful bacteria grow on food and how to prevent bugs spreading causing sickness.



The children learnt how to keep food cold in their lunch box. Everyone was given a fridge thermometer to take home to remind them of the important temperatures to keep food safe. You can find more food safety information on the Council's website at www.eastbourne.gov.uk/germwatch

Shake the Salt Habit

The team successfully bid for £473.00 from the NHS Sussex Food and Physical Activity Group to promote shake the salt habit.

Take-away businesses and restaurants in Eastbourne were invited to help people to cut their salt intake by taking part in the Shake the Salt Habit campaign.

A dozen shops swapped their regular 18-hole salt shaker for a 5-hole pot and in some shops, regular salt has also been replaced with low-sodium salt. The campaign could potentially help 4,500 customers a week reduce their salt intake.

The idea behind the project was that customers can still enjoy a few shakes of salt on their food without having too much, which could lead to health problems. Using the new pots could reduce the amount of salt added by up to 50% without the customer even noticing.

Health experts warn that too much salt is bad for your heart, can raise your blood pressure and damage your body. Adults should eat no more than 6g a day – about one teaspoon.

Customers were encouraged to get involved and let the Council know what they thought of the campaign by posting their comments on the Council's Twitter and Facebook pages. Details of the campaign and a list of those shops taking part can be found at www.eastbourne.gov.uk/salt



How to score a 5 - NFHRS

The team worked in partnership with Lewes District Council to provide free training for Bengali speaking restaurants and take-aways in their areas, also explaining how NFHRS works.

On 22nd November 2011, 40 Bengali caterers from 31 businesses attended the training in Seaford, with half from Eastbourne representing the majority of Bengali speaking businesses.

An experienced Bengali food safety trainer was hired to deliver the presentation in the afternoon when most were not working and a free minibus was provided from Eastbourne to help staff attend. The teaching was lively, informative, practical and interactive with delegates commenting how much they enjoyed it and enthused to strive to get the best score; a 5. More importantly, the trainer impressed on them, "You should follow the guidelines for your own self respect and reputation and because you want to serve not only tasty food but safe food."

The event further impressed on the delegates that the team are keen to work with food businesses to raise standards with formal action only a last resort for those unwilling to co-operate. For further information visit www.eastbourne.gov.uk/health/food

Presentation to Eastbourne Residential Care Homes Association

On 29th February 2012 the team delivered a talk to the Eastbourne Residential Care Home Association (ERCHA) at the Cavendish Hotel. The ERCHA is made up of managers and proprietors of care homes in Eastbourne and the surrounding area, and around 23 people attended the talk.

The meeting provided a useful opportunity to inform local care providers of NFHRS. The ERCHA was also updated regarding the latest official guidance on how to manage outbreaks of diarrhoea and vomiting (most commonly Norovirus) in care homes. This provided an opportunity to promote the recently improved online advice for outbreaks at www.eastbourne.gov.uk/outbreak/ thus helping to improve food hygiene and infection control in a more proactive manner and making for a healthier community.

Variations in service plan

Staffing levels fluctuated as one officer resigned in August 2010 and their post was left vacant until successful recruitment in December 2010 to this post on a temporary basis for 2 years. In 2011 and 2012 one officer reduced their hours temporarily and took a leave of absence. Then in 2012 the Senior Environmental Health Officer took 6 months maternity leave, requiring the Health & Environment Team Manager to cover the absence. These matters had an impact on routine workloads. In January 2013 the temporary, 2 year post became vacant and an officer was employed on a casual part-time basis to cover the post until the contract ends in April 2013.

Through these periods, it was not possible to deliver on all of the activities in the service plan as intended, such as community health promotion and the well-being agenda. As a result of re-prioritising of work the service ensured that the higher risk and lower risk premises requiring an inspection were inspected.

The introduction of 'Future Model' will bring about significant changes in the way the Food Safety service is delivered. In order to ensure the best possible service experience, the Future Model will rely on the development of multi-skilled/trained teams and staff, including Specialist Advisors and Caseworkers. Agile Working introduced this concept with the creation of the merged Customer and Corporate Support Team, and it will be pushed much further across the organisation in the future.

Areas of Improvement for 2013-2014

Matters outstanding from the 2010-2013 plan are the development and implementation of both an effective Sampling Policy and a Food Safety Competence Policy, and the publication of sampling results on the Council's website.

Additionally, it was planned that the peer audit which was undertaken in 2010/2011 and its findings would be developed into an action plan with the other Sussex local authorities to improve and enhance the food safety function over the next three years.

Due to the introduction of NFHRS, these activities did not take priority. However, a more recent internal audit of the service has revealed that there is further work required to improve the documented systems the team refer to, to bring them into line with current guidance.