

## CABINET MEETING – 9 OCTOBER 2013

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET PART 1

**Title of Report:**

FEED AND FOOD CONTROLS SERVICE PLAN 2013/14

**Author(s):**

Deputy Chief Executive

**Purpose of Report:**

To advise Cabinet of the Feed and Food Controls Service Plan of Public Protection and Regulatory Services for 2013/14

**Description of Decision:**

Cabinet is recommended to approve the Feed and Food Controls Service Plan for 2013/14.

**Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework \*Yes/No**

**If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework**

**Suggested reason(s) for Decision:**

The Food Standards Agency which monitors and audits the activities of local authorities in respect of feed and food law enforcement requires Feed and Food Controls Service Plans to be approved by authorities in a manner which ensures local transparency and accountability. The plan forms part of the Council's policy and budgetary framework as defined in the Constitution.

**Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:**

There are no practical alternative options as failure to produce a Feed and Food Controls Service Plan would conflict with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency.

**Impacts analysed;**

Equality

Privacy

Sustainability

Crime and Disorder

Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in The Constitution?

Yes

Is it included in the 28 Day Notice of Decisions?

Yes

Scrutiny Committee



## **CABINET**

### **FEED AND FOOD CONTROLS SERVICE PLAN 2013/14**

#### **REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

##### **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Cabinet of the Feed and Food Controls Service Plan to be used by the Public Protection and Regulatory Services section of the Street Scene service.

##### **2. Description of Decision**

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the Feed and Food Controls Service Plan for 2013/14.

##### **3. Introduction/Background**

- 3.1 The Food Standards Agency (“the Agency”) is an independent government department responsible for food safety and hygiene across the United Kingdom. It works with businesses to help them produce safe food, and with local authorities to enforce food safety regulations.
- 3.2 The Agency pursues a programme of auditing local authorities with the aims of helping to protect public health by promoting effective local enforcement of animal feed and food law and maintaining and improving consumer confidence.
- 3.3 The Agency considers that service plans for feed and food controls are an important part of the process to ensure that national priorities and standards are addressed and delivered locally. Service plans are intended to help local authorities to follow the principles of good regulation and focus on key delivery issues and outcomes.
- 3.4 To assist in the service planning process the Agency has developed a Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities in consultation with the Local Government Association. This document recommends a format for feed and food controls service plans and gives detailed guidance on the content of such plans.
- 3.5 The Council has followed this format in preparing the Feed and Food Controls Service Plan 2013/14 which is Appendix 1 to this report.

##### **4. Current Position**

- 4.1 The Feed and Food Controls Service Plan for 2013/14 has been developed by the Council in order to comply with the recommendations of the Food Standards Agency’s Framework Agreement. It would be necessary to produce this plan in the event of an audit by the Agency.

##### **5. Reason for Decision**

- 5.1 The reason for the decision is to facilitate the compliance of the Council with the

requirements of the Food Standards Agency.

## **6. Alternative Options**

- 6.1 The option of not producing a Feed and Food Controls Service Plan would place the Council at risk of receiving criticism in the event of an audit by the Food Standards Agency. It would also weaken the reputation of the Council and our ability to influence businesses with regard to matters of food safety. It has been discounted on these grounds.

## **7. Impact Analysis**

- 7.1 **Equalities** There are no equalities implications as a result of this decision. Equalities are embedded within the national framework with which the Feed and Food Controls Service Plan complies.

## **8. Glossary**

- 8.1 None.

## **9. List of Appendices**

- 9.1 Appendix 1 - Feed and Food Controls Service Plan of Public Protection and Regulatory Services for 2013/14

## **10. Background Papers**

- 10.1 Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities

# APPENDIX 1

# FEED AND FOOD CONTROLS SERVICE PLAN 2013/14

## 1. Service Aims and Objectives

### 1.1 Aims and objectives

The aims of Public Protection and Regulatory Services (“the Service”) are to protect the health and wellbeing of all persons within the City in relation to food safety matters and, in relation to animal feed, to protect the health and welfare of livestock and prevent the outbreak of animal disease.

Our objectives are:

- To secure compliance with food safety law having regard to official codes of practice; particularly concerning the frequency of food safety interventions;
- To seek to secure the protection of consumers from the potential dangers of suspect or contaminated food; particularly those which may result in foodborne infections;
- To ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that food is fit for human consumption and free from extraneous matter;
- To increase the knowledge of food handlers, food managers and the general public about the principles and practice of food hygiene and food safety management;
- To increase the knowledge of food business operators of food safety management; thereby assisting the raising of standards and enabling improved food hygiene rating scores under the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme;
- To assist in the control and prevention of the spread of foodborne diseases;
- To carry out food safety interventions (activities that are designed to monitor, support and increase food law compliance within a food establishment) in accordance with minimum frequencies and to standards determined by the Food Standards Agency (“the FSA”);
- To respond to and investigate Food Standards Agency ‘Food Alerts and Allergy Alerts for Action’ in accordance with published guidance where these impact upon food originating or traded within the City;
- To investigate all notified cases of foodborne disease and take effective action to control the spread of infection;
- To undertake the inspection of ships visiting the Port of Sunderland in accordance with current guidance;
- To carry out inspections at premises presenting the highest potential risk for contamination of the feed chain;
- To conduct on farm visits in order to examine primary production and animal feeding;

- To investigate complaints about feed and, where necessary, take samples;
- To give guidance to people supplying material into the feed chain and also to new livestock keepers.

## 1.2 Links to corporate objectives and plans

The Sunderland City Council Corporate Plan sets out the vision for the Council and outlines the strategic direction of the Council over a 3 year period. The Corporate Plan can be found on the Council's website and highlights three strategic priorities:

**People** – raising aspirations, creating confidence and promoting opportunity.

**Place** – leading the investment in an attractive and inclusive city and its communities.

**Economy** – creating the conditions in which businesses can establish and thrive.

The People priority encompasses the protection and improvement of the health and wellbeing of the people of Sunderland. The delivery of the Feed and Food Controls Service Plan 2013/14 will contribute positively to the achievement of the People priority by ensuring the protection of public health through inspection and education activity and the improvement of wellbeing through initiatives to promote healthier eating.

The Place priority is addressed in that the livestock of our local farms will be protected from contaminants in their feed that could harm their health and welfare.

The Economy priority is addressed by enforcement action and advice given to businesses. Proportionate enforcement provides a fair and equitable trading environment in which businesses can develop and be protected from those who fail to comply with the law. Initiatives to develop best practice in small to medium enterprises will assist them in promoting their businesses.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 Profile of the Local Authority

Sunderland City Council serves an area of 137 square kilometres and has a population of around 281,000 people resident in some 121,000 households. The City principally comprises urban areas, the City Centre and Washington, as well as the former coalfields communities of Easington Lane, Hetton-le-Hole and Houghton-le-Spring. A small number of farms surround the urban population centres.

### 2.2 Organisational Structure

The Council is composed of 75 councillors within 25 wards. Governance is through the Leader and Cabinet model with an annual budget expected to be in the region of £264.8 million for the financial year 2013/4.

The Council delivers services through the Office of the Chief Executive, the People Services Directorate and the Commercial and Corporate Services Directorate. This Feed and Food Controls Service Plan is delivered by staff from Public Protection and Regulatory Services within Street Scene, which is part of the Office of the Chief

Executive within the responsibility of the Deputy Chief Executive. The service operates within the remit of the City Services Portfolio and works closely with the Portfolio Holder.

The Head of Street Scene reports to the Deputy Chief Executive on a number of matters including feed and food control. Public Protection and Regulatory Services deliver the Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing functions on behalf of the Council. These services are led by the Assistant Head of Street Scene (Public Protection and Regulatory Services) who has overall responsibility for delivery of the Feed and Food Controls Service Plan.

The Environmental Health Manager has specialist responsibility for food hygiene and standards matters and health promotion. The Principal Trading Standards Officer has specialist responsibility for feedingstuffs.

The Council uses the services of Public Health (England) Laboratories, a Public Analyst and an Agricultural Analyst as necessary. The Public Analyst and Agricultural Analyst appointed by the authority is Public Analyst Scientific Services Limited.

### **2.3 Scope of the Feed and Food Service**

The activities relating to feed and food in the City are undertaken by the Trading Standards and Environmental Health teams respectively.

The Environmental Health team undertake a programme of food hygiene and food standards interventions as well as responding to requests for service and infectious disease notifications. Sampling of foodstuffs, both microbiological and compositional, is also undertaken. The team has for many years enforced health and safety at work legislation in most food premises in line with recommendations in the Lord Young report: "Common Sense, Common Safety". However now, as a consequence of the Lofstedt Report, the team undertakes primarily hazard spotting during planned interventions. Serious contraventions may, however, result in a full inspection and enforcement action based on risk. Officers also respond to Port Health requests and food hygiene inspections are undertaken in connection with Ship Sanitation Certificates required under international health regulations.

The Environmental Health team provide Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Level 2 and Level 3 Food Safety in Catering training courses. Officers organise campaigns and develop award schemes in order to promote the public health agenda, including healthy eating, to local businesses. The Heart of Sunderland Award and the Healthy Home Award schemes are promoted and managed by the team, with inspections being undertaken at relevant premises. The Healthy Home Award, presented to the City's nursing and residential homes, supports the Council's People service's Care Quality Standards. Homes achieving the award achieve a higher grading.

The City has a small agricultural sector, principally arable with a few livestock holdings. The Trading Standards team carries out the enforcement of primary production and feedingstuffs legislation and provides advice to farmers and retailers.

### **2.4 Demands on the Feed and Food Service**



## 2.4.1 Food establishments profile

There are 2161 food premises currently operating in the City, including one registered primary producer.

Types of Food Premises in the City	No.	Food Hygiene High Risk (A)	Food Hygiene Medium Risk (B)	Food Hygiene Medium Risk (C)	Food Hygiene Medium Risk (D)	Food Hygiene Low Risk (E)	Not rated
Primary producers/ manufacturer s/processors	93	0	3	44	11	30	20
Packers/ importers/ exporters/ distributors etc.	38	1	2	5	6	24	0
Retailers	535	0	12	197	152	154	20
Restaurants/ other caterers	1462	1	150	825	190	215	81
Contact materials and articles	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total food premises</b>	<b>2161</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>1071</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>121</b>
Outside the programme	18						

Most of Sunderland's food premises are classified in the restaurant/catering outlet group (1462) whilst there are 535 food retailers. These categories feature a large number of changes of food business operators. This creates additional demands for the Service in educating new operators.

The unrated premises are those which have recently opened or changed proprietor since the last inspection. These premises are, where notification takes place, visited initially and are assessed according to risk for further inspection and rating within 6 to 24 months in order for the Service to make an informed judgement of on-going standards.

The Stadium of Light can accommodate over 48,000 seated spectators, with significant catering provided from the outlets within the stadium. This summer, three major music events requiring the attention of Environmental Health Officers occurred at the stadium.

There are a significant number of outdoor events held regularly each year (e.g. the International Air Show) which are attended by up to 1.5 million visitors. Various

mobile caterers and food businesses from around the region visit the City to cater at the events.

Port health inspections which require inspections of food hygiene and standards on board vessels coming into the port are undertaken. The provision of fifteen Ship Sanitation Certificates was requested from the Service last year in addition to eight visits to take water samples being undertaken.

#### **2.4.2 Feed establishments profile**

There are currently 29 premises registered as Feed Business Operators.

<b>Types of Feed Premises</b>	<b>Number</b>
Arable farms	10
Livestock farms	9
Manufacturers and packers	1
Food businesses selling co-products/surplus food	6
Distributors / transporters	1
Stores	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>

The arable farms principally produce cereal for food production or for incorporation in animal feed. Inspections of these premises are on a low risk basis. Several of the farms are members of farm assurance schemes.

The livestock farmers generally grow arable crops for feeding to their own livestock along with silage. The use of supplementary feed is generally restricted to sheep and pigs. Visits to these premises are generally scheduled when the animals are housed and are undertaken in conjunction with animal health and welfare visits.

The single manufacturer and packer makes pet foods and has been assisted with advice on legal requirements. The premises may be visited for sampling purposes.

An increasing number of businesses are being found to send waste food into the feed chain. Following potential issues previously identified on inspection all premises registering to supply waste food into the feed chain will be inspected.

The registered transporter removes waste food from shops for use in the manufacture of feed.

Increased vigilance continues to be undertaken with regard to the inland enforcement of imported feed legislation in an effort to prevent the spread of disease in food animals.

#### **2.4.3 Service delivery points**

The officers who undertake feed and food controls work are based at Jack Crawford House, Sunderland. The Council's Customer Service Centre in Fawcett Street, Sunderland is open to the public in normal working hours throughout the week, 8.30am to 5.15pm (4.45pm Friday), although officers from the Environmental Health

team may be contacted by businesses directly. There is an evening and weekend service arrangement for contacting managers for out-of-hours emergencies. Visits are conducted at events and as necessary outside normal working hours.

The Council website [www.sunderland.gov.uk](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk) encourages the public to communicate with the Service by email and makes information constantly available. Letters from the Service to customers / companies encourage the use of email. Initial contact for services to the public is through the Council's Customer Services Network.

The Council displays current food hygiene ratings on the [www.sunderlandcitycouncil.com](http://www.sunderlandcitycouncil.com) website. This website may also be accessed from the [sunderland.gov.uk](http://sunderland.gov.uk) website (Food Hygiene). The Council also regularly updates data on the Food Standards Agency national scheme. Ratings can be found at <http://ratings.food.gov.uk>

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme involves the publication of a food safety rating for catering premises in the City based on standards of structure and hygiene ratings and confidence in management scores assessed during programmed inspections. Following inspections, business owners are advised in writing that the information may be released on the website in the future and in response to third party requests as required by Freedom of Information legislation. Food business operators have the right to appeal against a rating which may result in a revisit for re-inspection after three months.

#### **2.4.4 External factors impacting on the Service**

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 impacts on the workload of the Service due to the administration of requests and time spent recovering the information. Press and other enquirers often request specific information with a view to making comparisons of businesses in various local authority areas. In the past year, the Service responded to eleven requests for information regarding food premises.

The Service's responsibilities under the Licensing Act 2003 also impact on workload. Officers consider applications for new and varied licences for food premises in pursuance of duties as responsible authorities.

There is a possibility that any large outbreak of food poisoning or illness, or a serious accident at food premises, would impact significantly on the routine activities of the Service.

There are no other likely major impacts upon the Service expected, e.g. significant food imports, seasonal variations or an increase in the number of food manufacturing businesses. However, where food alerts necessitate a significant response, this will impact upon the Service.

Food alerts are notified to local authorities by the Food Standards Agency. During 2012/13 the Service received 62 alerts of food problems occurring elsewhere in the country and twelve updates. Many of these alerts were product recalls where the response required from the Service was limited.

The Food Standards Agency also notifies local authorities of allergy alerts, e.g. instances of food labelling errors or contamination of specific ingredients. There

were 67 such alerts received in 2012/13. Whilst not critical to general public health, such incidents can have serious effects on persons who are allergic to specific ingredients.

Last year the Food Standards Agency was heavily involved in responding to incidents of meat products being contaminated with horse meat. The Service investigated all twelve relevant premises in the City in order to ensure that all reasonable steps were being adopted to ensure the traceability of raw products. It is expected that, in future, samples of meat will be required to ensure that correct descriptions are being used.

## **2.5 Regulation Policy**

Public Protection and Regulatory Services has a documented Enforcement Policy covering the Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing functions of the Council. The Service works within the principles of the Regulators' Compliance Code.

## **3. Service Delivery**

### **3.1 Interventions at Food and Feedingstuffs establishments**

Food premises in the City have been found to demonstrate relatively static level of compliance over the last five years with between 83 and 85% of all premises achieving a three star rating or above. Within this figure there has been a year on year improvement in the numbers of premises achieving five stars thus demonstrating that the good premises are getting better

In April 2012 the Food Standards Agency reviewed their Food Law Code of Practice (England) and now local authorities are encouraged to spend more time at targeted businesses rather than spreading resources over the whole range of premises. So, in accordance with the reviewed guidance, the Service plans this year to place a greater emphasis on targeting lower-rated businesses. It is envisaged that those premises which are found to have poor structures or hygiene standards or where there is low confidence in management will be monitored in order to drive improvements.

To this end the Service will follow the FSA Food Hygiene and Food Standards Intervention Rating Schemes, as prescribed in the revised Food Law Code of Practice (England), in order to determine the frequency and type of intervention appropriate to the risk posed by the premises.

The Service will use the wide range of interventions described by the FSA guidance in order to monitor and increase business compliance in the most efficient and proportionate way.

Interventions are defined as activities that are designed to monitor, support and increase food law compliance within a food establishment and they include but are not restricted to the following "official controls":

- Inspections and audits (full/partial inspection and audits);
- Monitoring;

- Surveillance;
- Verification; and
- Sampling and analyses where examination is carried out by an Official Laboratory.

When undertaking official controls, officers will take account of any identified risks, the food business operator's past record and current knowledge, an examination of practices and procedures in place, a physical inspection of the premises, the reliability of an operator's own checks, and any information that may indicate non-compliance.

Other interventions that do not constitute official controls can be undertaken in some premises in addition to the official control or at an interval between official controls. These include:

- Education;
- Advice and coaching;
- Information and intelligence gathering; and
- Sampling where examination is not carried out by an Official Laboratory.

Premises will continue to be risk rated depending on the previous level of food safety and structural compliance together with confidence in management. Factors also taken into account are the types of food prepared and the type and number of consumers potentially at risk.

The minimum intervention frequencies for the different rating categories for premises subject to food hygiene and food standards interventions are shown below:

#### **FSA Food Hygiene Risk Category and Intervention Frequency**

<b>PREMISES RATING CATEGORY</b>	<b>MINIMUM INTERVENTION FREQUENCY</b>
<b>A</b>	At least every six months
<b>B</b>	At least every 12 months
<b>C</b>	At least every 18 months
<b>D</b>	At least every 24 months
<b>E</b>	A programme of alternative enforcement strategies or interventions every three years

Those food premises which fall into Category A are considered to be those with the highest risk, whether as a result of the nature of the main activities undertaken on the premises or because of the relatively poor operating conditions which have prevailed previously.

## FSA Food Standards Risk Category and Intervention Frequency

<b>PREMISES RATING CATEGORY</b>	<b>MINIMUM INTERVENTION FREQUENCY</b>
A	At least every 12 months
B	At least every 24 months
C	A programme of alternative enforcement strategies or interventions every five years

Where premises are rated for both food hygiene and food standards the food hygiene risk rating will take precedence with food standards being considered at the next appropriate intervention.

The predicted numbers of interventions are as follows:

- All Category A and B premises will receive an inspection (169 visits);
- All unrated premises (new businesses) will receive an inspection (110 visits);
- Category C premises which are not “Generally Satisfactory” and those which supply food to vulnerable groups such as the young or elderly will receive an inspection (107 visits);
- Category C premises which were previously found to be “Generally Satisfactory” will receive monitoring visits to determine whether standards have been maintained. Where this is not the case a full inspection will be carried out (611 visits); and
- Category D and E premises will be targeted by other enforcement measures as detailed in the revised FSA Code of Practice. This may include the sending of self assessment questionnaires with the results informing rating decisions (394 interventions).

The total estimated number of interventions is therefore 1391 in addition to those pertaining to any new businesses established within the year. Alternative strategies for lower risk premises will result in fewer such premises being visited than in previous years but, potentially, more visits being made to less well performing premises in order to promote and confirm improved standards.

In line with our commitment to carry out revisits to check on compliance, where necessary, it is estimated that the above-mentioned planned inspections will generate a further 350 revisits.

The Service aims generally to undertake the relevant intervention at the premises within one month of the due date for inspection; the only exceptions being those businesses that operate seasonally and those which may be subject to alternative enforcement strategies.

Secondary inspections (including revisits and requests for revisits by operators of food businesses) will be undertaken as necessary on a risk assessed basis in order to ensure that significant material defects are rectified. Those premises which are not broadly compliant will be visited with a view to enforcing compliance standards.

Individual businesses may be visited more frequently or the planned date for intervention may be brought forward if a problem is identified such as:

- A complaint about the food premises or notification of an issue received from another authority which requires further investigation;
- An unsatisfactory sampling result is received;
- The business is implicated in a food poisoning outbreak;
- There is a change in business operations resulting in a higher risk;
- A request for a re-rating revisit under the FSA Food Hygiene Rating Scheme is received; or
- A notification is received from the FSA regarding a food safety incident or food alert.

All requests for revisits by businesses wishing to amend their risk ratings as part of the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme will be carried in accordance with FSA procedures. Whilst the published rating of the business may be changed as a result of this revisit, the Service will need to examine sufficient elements of the business and have sufficient evidence from this intervention if any change to the intervention frequency for the business is to be considered. Otherwise the business will retain its original risk rating score for frequency of intervention

The City, being principally urban in nature, has only a small number of feedingstuffs premises registered. None of the premises registered are considered to be high risk. The premises will be visited on a risk assessed basis. Last year there were twelve inspections and one revisit undertaken at feed establishments.

All businesses that register as food businesses will be subject to inspection. With the increase in co-products (i.e. products produced together with another product) entering the food chain a project will be undertaken to identify premises not currently registered that may be supplying products to be used in the manufacture of feed.

The Service has good working relations with neighbouring authorities and the Public Analyst should any specialised process be identified.

### **3.2 Feed and Food Complaints**

The Service is committed to responding to all complaints about feed or food. The extent of the investigation will depend on the merits of the complaint. This can range from re-assuring the complainant to a more formal process, including reference to home or originating authorities in accordance with the guidance and the relevant Code of Practice. Officers also liaise with any relevant primary authority in pursuance of the relevant scheme administered by the Better Regulation Delivery Office.

In 2012/13, 624 requests for service requiring a response from officers were made (this being a near 100% increase upon the previous year), including ten complaints

relating to food standards or labelling, and 104 requests relating to unfit or contaminated food.

Due to the relatively few number of feedingstuffs establishments, it is not anticipated that there will a significant number of complaints received by the Service. Any complaints will be investigated in line with Service procedures. The Service received no complaints last year which related to feedingstuffs. Pet foods are anticipated as being the most likely subject of complaints.

### **3.3 Home Authority Principle and Primary Authority Scheme**

The Service undertakes to comply with all the relevant legal requirements of the Primary Authority Scheme and liaises with other relevant local authorities within the context of the Home Authority Principle

### **3.4 Advice to Business**

The Service seeks to assist local businesses in order to encourage the success of our local economy. Last year 190 specific requests for advice were received by the Environmental Health team (an increase of over 100% compared to the previous year). Additionally, advice is given by officers informally at every visit to food premises, as appropriate.

The Service is committed to promoting the Food Standards Agency's project: "Safer Food, Better Business" which is intended to support food businesses in complying with the food safety management principles. There will continue to be great efforts to educate businesses in complying with their requirement to implement a suitable food safety management system, which some smaller food businesses seem to find difficult

In correspondence to food businesses, a standard invitation is given to them to seek advice from the Service.

Close links are maintained with many business organisations in the City and informal agreements reached to cooperate more fully with businesses through these contacts.

Feed businesses are provided with business advice on inspection and new livestock keepers are provided with guidance when registering their premises.

### **3.5 Feed and Food Sampling**

The Service is committed to sampling foods in order to determine compliance with compositional and bacteriological standards. Sampling of imported and locally produced foods is undertaken proactively and the Service participates in national and regional surveys arranged by the regional food authorities group and Public Health (England) Laboratory Service.

As a consequence of demand, i.e. complaints, food alerts, food poisoning outbreaks, etc., further samples will be taken. Last year 304 samples were taken.



An estimated 300 samples will be taken for bacteriological examination / compositional analysis in the year 2013/14, including 30 water samples. As a consequence of new legislation, private water supplies and distribution systems may require some sampling and work to identify such systems is on going. Some of the analysis costs for this work will be met by the FSA and operators.

The Health Protection Agency Laboratory transports samples from the region as necessary by courier to Leeds. The Service liaises with the management of the laboratory and neighbouring authorities in order to facilitate an effective and coordinated sampling programme with flexibility for local needs.

Participation with neighbouring authorities in sampling and other food related matters ensures that the Service works in a co-ordinated and compatible way.

Sampling of feed will take place where a complaint justifies a sample be taken, though there is no expectation of any complaints. Samples may be taken to assist in projects instituted by the Food Standards Agency or the North East Trading Standards Association or to maintain competence levels.

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

The Service has agreed with Public Health (England) a policy for considering the investigation of confirmed food poisoning cases. The unwell people involved in most cases, other than in the case of suspected viral infections or Campylobacter infection, are usually visited by officers in order to trace the source of the infection and prevent further spread. People involved in Campylobacter cases are contacted by letter.

The local Consultant for Communicable Disease Control, employed by Public Health (England), will provide the Service with advice regarding specific problems relating to infectious disease.

Advice on food poisoning is available on the Council's website.

The number of reported cases of food poisoning depends on persons suffering attending their doctor or hospital, where, if samples are taken, and found to be positive, the medical practitioner has a legal duty to inform the Council. The Service liaises closely with relevant laboratories and the Health Protection Agency in order to effectively investigate all positive cases.

The Service maintains close links with Public Health (England) in order to respond to incidents of ill health. Regular meetings to discuss various matters relating to food poisoning cases and sampling programmes take place. The Public Analyst and Health Protection Agency will be contacted in order to assist with expertise where any additional problems arise. Similar networks exist within the region, nationally and with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and the Food Hygiene Forum.

Relevant policies published by Public Health (England) include:

- Policy for the investigation and control of a Cryptosporidiosis outbreak in the community associated with mains water supply;

- An agreed approach to Campylobacter investigations in the North East;
- Standard Salmonella questionnaires;
- Standard Verocytotoxin-producing Escherichia coli (VTEC) questionnaire; and
- Standard NE HPT Cryptosporidium surveillance questionnaire.

### Statistics of cases notified over recent years

Year to 31 March	Campylobacter	Salmonella	Cryptosporidia	Food poisoning & suspected FP	Shigella	Esch. Coli	Other miscellaneous organisms	Totals
2009	306	58	26	24	5	2	2	423
2010	357	52	38	12	4	4	4	471
2011	440	28	27	11	3	2	0	511
2012	286	38	17	6	2	12	2	363
2013	329	40	48	19	2	3	3	444

Year to 31 March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Totals
2009	19	35	50	48	48	41	50	36	22	20	28	26	423
2010	28	38	66	44	40	56	56	41	24	21	24	33	471
2011	37	28	57	90	58	47	57	46	23	21	23	24	511
2012	26	43	30	39	47	32	33	27	24	24	26	12	363
2013	27	36	56	38	36	65	54	29	20	24	29	30	444

### 3.7 Feed/Food Safety Incidents

The Service is committed to responding appropriately to all Feed and Food Alerts issued by the Food Standards Agency in accordance with the relevant code of practice. The level of response is determined by the category of response required and the individual circumstances of the incident.

### 3.8 Liaison with other organisations

Both teams seek to cooperate in joint working with other local authorities in the North East. In relation to animal feed, information sharing and joint working is coordinated by the North East Trading Standards Association (NETSA) and via the Local Government Association Knowledge Hub. In respect of food matters, Environmental Health Officers liaise with colleagues via the North East Food Liaison Group and the North East sampling and Public Protection Groups.

Officers of the Service meet with our six neighbouring authorities, i.e. those in Tyne and Wear and Durham and Northumberland, in the North East Food Liaison Group. This group facilitates close cooperation between the representatives. Officers are

also involved with sampling sub-groups and South of Tyne meetings involving Public Health (England), Local Authorities and the Primary Care Trust. These meetings involve representatives from the relevant bacteriological laboratories and communicable disease specialists.

Officers liaise frequently with Council colleagues in connection with food matters, including catering and school meals, and with regard to building control and planning applications.

### **3.9 Feed and Food Safety and Standards promotional work**

Officers give advice and information in the course of inspections and other visits. The Environmental Health team also offer training for the CIEH Level 2 and 3 awards in Food Safety in Catering.

The Heart of Sunderland award replaced the Heartbeat award in 2012. The award recognises and rewards businesses that offer healthy food options, promotes healthy eating and makes it easier for customers to make an informed choice.

There are three award categories:

- Bronze - awarded to premises which make food healthier by reducing fat, salt and sugar content, but may have a limited menu;
- Silver - awarded to premises which are committed to improving the nutritional quality of the food and helping customers make informed choices; and
- Gold - awarded to premises which can demonstrate a healthy eating policy with nutritionally trained staff.

In addition, all award premises must demonstrate a hygiene rating of three or above and a no smoking policy must be in place with support given to staff wishing to quit.

A total of 136 premises achieved the award:

- 55 Gold;
- 73 Silver; and
- 8 Bronze.

The Healthy Home award scheme was first provided by the Service in 1997, and has developed and expanded. A total of thirty Healthy Home awards were presented in 2012/13.

Homes must have a food hygiene rating of three stars or above, have a balanced menu and have good documented health and safety procedures.

During 2012/13:

- Eighteen courses in Level 2 Food Safety in Catering were attended by 190 delegates; and
- Three courses in Level 3 Food Safety in Catering were attended by 21 candidates.

The very small number of feed establishments registered within the City does not make promotional work on any scale viable. Imparting information on the importance of feed control is restricted to business advice given on inspection.

Basic food hygiene information for consumers is available on the Council's website. Similarly, advice is also available on food poisoning organisms and what to do in the event of suspicion of illness caused by the consumption of contaminated food.

#### **4. Resources**

##### **4.1 Financial Allocation**

For 2013-14 the budget for food control is £365,612 of which £195,911 is delegated (i.e. controlled by the Service manager). The sampling budget is £7, 000.

Health promotion has a general budget of £70,691 (of which £28,426 is delegated) including anticipated income of £24,275; partly from food hygiene training

The feedingstuffs element of the Trading Standards budget relating to inspection, training and business advice is approximately £2,500, equating to approximately 111 officer hours per annum.

##### **4.2 Staffing Allocation**

Environmental Health personnel specialising in food comprise:

- 1 Principal Environmental Health Officer / Team Leader ( 0.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE))
- 3 Senior Environmental Health Officers (2.5 FTE)
- 1 Technical Officer (1 FTE – working towards Higher Certificate)
- 2 Senior Environmental Health Officers (Part time on food and working on acquiring advanced competency for complex processes) (1FTE)
- 1 Health Promotion Specialist Environmental Health Officer (Part time on food matters) (0.3 FTE)
- 1 Health Promotion Assistant (Part time on food matters) (0.5 FTE)

All food specialist Environmental Health Officers have over two years' experience in food matters and are fully competent in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice.

Additionally, Environmental Health Officers working on other specialist areas of law will be building competencies in food safety in order to provide support and assist in periods of high demand.

**Total of Environmental Health Officers allocated to Food work: 4.3 FTE**

**Total of other officers: 1.5 FTE**

Trading Standards personnel specialising in feed law comprise:

- 3 Trading Standards Officers (Part time on feed matters) (0.3 FTE)

### **4.3 Staff Development Plan**

Staff appraisals are undertaken regularly and the findings are included in staff development and training plans. A competency matrix has been developed in line with the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice and training needs have been assessed. An action plan in order to ensure that personnel are fully competent commensurate with the activities assigned will be delivered during the current year. Individuals will receive specific training where appropriate and all food specialist Environmental Health Officers will complete the required ten hours of food specific Continuing Professional Development.

The Service cooperates regionally through the Food Liaison Group and with the Food Standards Agency in order to source low cost training.

Training days and training sessions on subjects are programmed as necessary.

Any inexperienced officers assigned to food work are supervised and receive training commensurate with the Code of Practice.

Officers enforcing feed work undertake training provided by the FSA and will utilise online training provided by the Trading Standards Institute.

## **5. Quality Assessment**

A documented internal monitoring procedure in accordance with Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004 (Official Feed and Food Controls), the Food Law Code of Practice and centrally issued guidance will be developed this year.

Monitored inspections will be recorded on a database during this year in addition to random file checks, case load meetings and specific premises interventions. Consistency checks will be adopted and a peer review training course will be undertaken.

Visits to feed establishments are recorded and feedback on the inspection provided to the business operator. Annual returns on activities are provided to the FSA.

## **6. Review**

### **6.1 Review against Service Plan**

The Service Plan is approved by Cabinet annually and a review against the plan is undertaken mid-year with consideration of achievements against targets. In the periods either side of the mid-year review, managers monitor progress with case loads and regular meetings

The Service achieved high rates of inspections of food premises in 2012/13 with 1348 different food premises being visited and 1373 inspections undertaken. A total of 1748 visits were made including inspections, revisits and sampling. Sixteen inspections were outstanding at the year end. These were completed early in April 2013.

## **6.2 Identification of any variance from the Service Plan**

Any variance from the Service Plan will be reported at the Service's senior management team meetings. Any proposed changes and redeployment of resources will be entered into the meeting minutes.

## **6.3 Areas of Improvement**

A review of the Environmental Health team with regard to the food safety function has been undertaken in order to address the requirements of the amended Food Law Code of Practice and an action plan has been developed in response.

A review of future interventions in light of the additional freedoms offered by the Food Law Code of Practice has been undertaken in order to ensure the resources of the Service are utilised in the most effective way.