



**Regulatory Services and Health**

**Food Law Enforcement Plan**

**1 April 2021 – 31 March 2023**

## **CONTENTS**

		<b>Page</b>
	<b>Introduction</b>	3
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Aims and Objectives</b>	4
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>	6
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Service Delivery</b>	10
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Review of 2020-2021</b>	21
<b>5.0</b>	<b>2021-2023 Work Programme</b>	29
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Resources to Support 2021-2023 Service Delivery</b>	34
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Consultation</b>	35

## Introduction

This Food & Feed Hygiene Plan deals with food and animal feed enforcement functions carried out by the Cheshire East Borough Council Regulatory Services and Health team. This Plan is implemented by the Commercial Services, Trading Standards and Animal Health and Welfare teams within the Regulatory Services and Health Service area.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) was established by statute in 1999 and is charged with overseeing local authority food enforcement activities. The Agency monitors the standards of food law enforcement by food authorities. The aim of the FSA is to ensure that food law enforcement is undertaken in a cost effective, comprehensive, and collaborative manner. Consequently, the aim of this Food Law Enforcement Plan is to set out the objectives to achieve these FSA aims by the provision of an efficient service which targets risks through a series of intervention techniques including inspection, alternative enforcement techniques, sampling, targeted project work and general advice & guidance.

The plan must cover all areas of food law that the competent authority has a duty to enforce and set out how the authority intends to deliver Official Controls within its area taking into account any advice issued by the Food Standards Agency.

This Plan reflects the commitment of the authority to the achievement of high standards of food and feed law enforcement to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the consumer.

Ordinarily, this Plan is drawn up on a yearly basis, however, as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic and the Food Standards Agency's 'Recovery Plan' to address a national backlog of inspections as a result of this, the Plan has been devised over a 2-year time period to align with the FSA Plan. A new delivery model is expected from 2023/2024 at which point a new Plan can be developed to address those requirements. This Plan will be reviewed at the end of 2021/2022 to check on its status and progress.

## 1.0 Aims and Objectives

The Regulatory Services and Health Team is responsible for the delivery of a wide range of services including statutory activities on food law enforcement. The team works to deliver the outcomes of the 2021-2025 Cheshire East Corporate Plan with particular focus on Priority 3: A thriving and sustainable place.

### Our Priorities

<b>Priority 1: An open and enabling organisation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making</li><li>✓ Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation</li><li>✓ Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation</li><li>✓ Look at opportunities to bring more income into the borough</li><li>✓ Support and develop our workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient and empowered</li><li>✓ Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents</li></ul>
<b>Priority 2: A Council which empowers and cares about people</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient</li><li>✓ Reduce health inequalities across the borough</li><li>✓ Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation</li><li>✓ Be the best Corporate Parents to our children in care</li><li>✓ Support all children to have the best start in life</li><li>✓ Increase opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs</li><li>✓ Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential</li><li>✓ • Reduce the reliance on long term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia services</li></ul>
<b>Priority 3: A thriving and sustainable place</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ A great place for people to live, work and visit</li><li>✓ Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods</li><li>✓ Reduce impact on the environment</li><li>✓ A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel</li><li>✓ Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all</li><li>✓ Be a carbon neutral council by 2025</li></ul>

Regulatory Services & Health is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the population of Cheshire East. Our primary objective relating to food and feed hygiene/standards is to ensure that *food, drink and feedstuff which is produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed within the Borough is without risk to the health, safety or economic well-being of the consumer.*

It is recognised that there are several approaches that can be combined to assist in the achievement of our primary objective and alongside these is the need to integrate

effective, consistent enforcement and demonstrate value for money. Our general aims are:

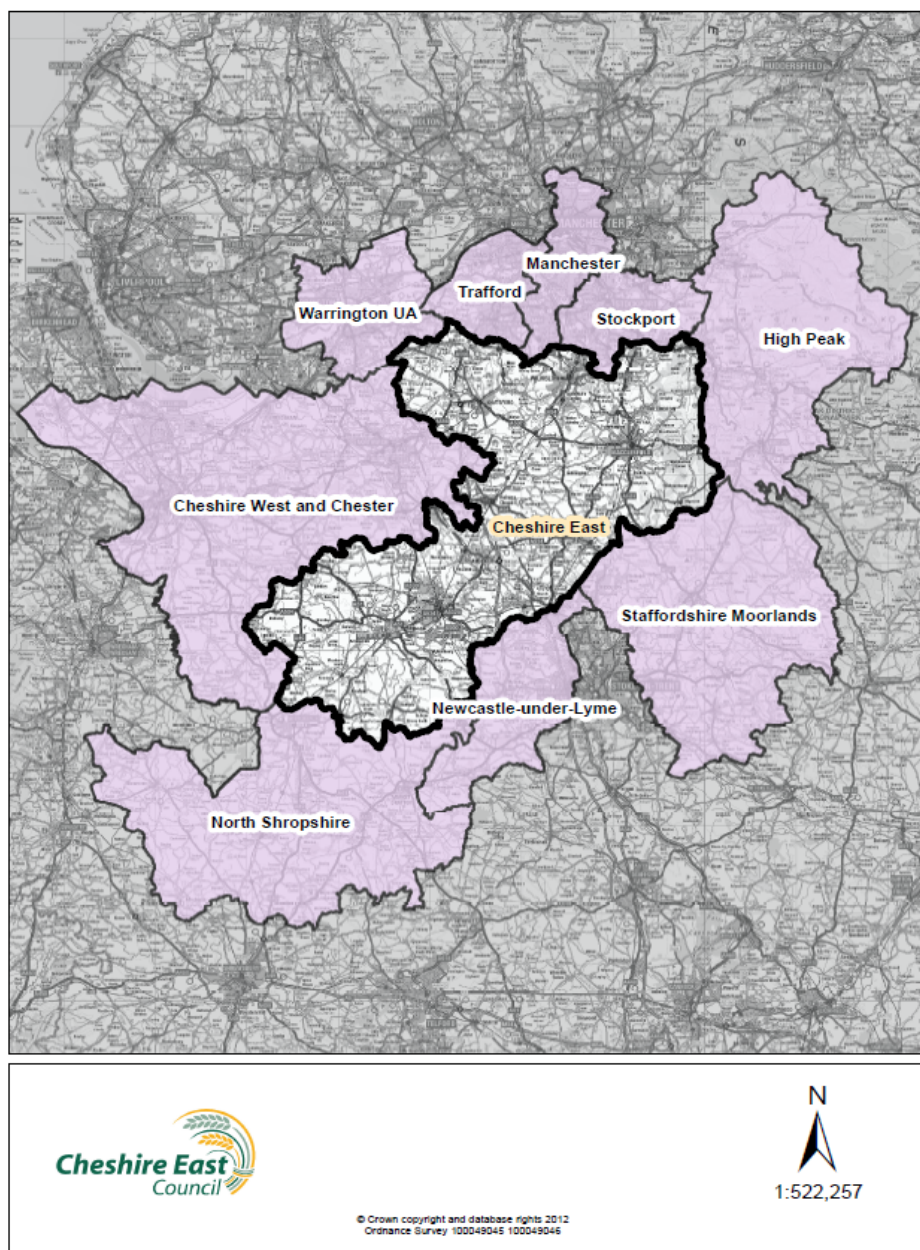
- To carry out interventions at premises at the frequency determined by the rating system detailed in the Food Standards Agency Code of Practice (revised March 2021).
- To offer advice to existing and prospective food and feed business operators and assist in compliance as far as resources allow. This may be as part of day-to-day operations or as part of formal Primary Authority arrangements.
- To investigate all complaints and allegations of fraud relating to food and/or feed businesses in the Borough and in conjunction with the FSA Food Crime Unit as laid down in the relevant Memorandum of Understanding.
- To investigate cases of food-related diseases to try to determine the source, to educate victims of food related diseases and to educate food handlers involved in premises related outbreaks.
- To enforce food and feed legislation in a fair and consistent manner and in accordance with national guidelines and our own Enforcement Policy.
- To identify and implement opportunities for education and awareness raising in food and feed related matters to both consumers and business.

## 2.0 Background

### 2.1 Profile

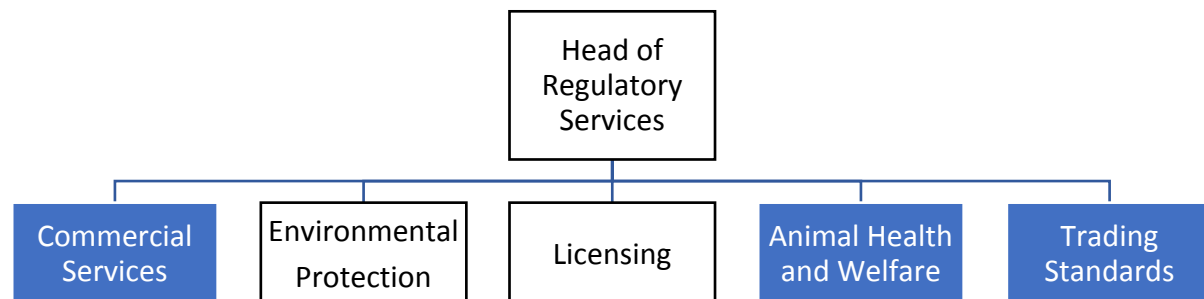
Our borough is home to 380,800 residents and more than 175,000 households. It contains the major towns of Crewe, Macclesfield, Congleton and Wilmslow (with populations above 20,000). There are also a number of other significant centres of population (over 10,000) in Sandbach, Poynton, Nantwich, Middlewich, Knutsford and Alsager. It is bounded by Greater Manchester to the north, Derbyshire to the east, Staffordshire and Shropshire to the south and Cheshire West and Chester to the west.

#### Cheshire East and surrounding areas



## 2.2 Organisational Structure

Food Hygiene, Food Standards and Feed Hygiene enforcement is carried out by teams within Regulatory Services and Health (RSH). The RSH structure is provided below with the relevant teams who carry out food and feed functions shaded in blue.



Oversight and scrutiny of the Regulatory Services and Health team is the responsibility of the Environment and Communities Committee as part of the Council's constitutional arrangements.

## 2.3 Scope

Food and feed functions are carried out by three distinct teams within Regulatory Services and Health and alongside other non-food related functions.

Food and animal feed activities include:

- Intervention Activity (including inspection, audit and sampling)
- Approved Premises
- Investigation of food & feed complaints (including food fraud)
- Investigation of food poisoning complaints
- Food & Feed incidents and alerts
- Issue of export health certificates
- Imported food controls
- Implementation of the Food Hygiene Rating System
- Provision of the Cheshire East Services for Schools (ChESS)
- Registration of Food Business Establishments
- Business Advice/Consultation
- Statutory LAEMS return
- Primary Production and Inland Feed
- Primary Authority Relationships
- Promotion, Projects and Surveys
- Enforcement Sanctions and Penalties

Food and feed activities are carried out by 'competent' officers as defined in Chapter 3 of the Food Standards Agency Code of Practice. A local scheme of delegation exists within the service which identifies individual officer responsibility to carry out enforcement activities or premises interventions dependent upon qualification and/or experience.



Enforcement Officers may be contracted from other organisations or agencies to undertake Food Hygiene and Food Standards activities, provided that adequate evidence is provided to demonstrate that the officer is competent at the required standard.

## **2.4 Demands**

### **Premises Profile**

The premises profile as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 comprised of 3528 premises registered for food standards and 3694 registered food businesses for food hygiene. This includes unrated businesses and businesses outside the inspection regime.

Food safety and quality is one of our priorities. We work with food businesses to make sure that under food regulations, food businesses are responsible for ensuring that their food is safe, that its quality is what consumers would expect, and that it is not labelled in a false or misleading way.

Trading Standards enforce the statutory legislation relating to food labelling, advertising, claims, nutritional quality and composition (collectively known as food standards).

The Commercial Services Team enforce the statutory legislation relating to food safety including food preparation, storage and handling methods as well as the structure of food premises and equipment used by a business.

### **Food Standards Premises Profiles 1st April 2021**

The Food Law Code of Practice as produced by the Food Standards Agency sets out the relevant intervention risk rating scheme for food premises and provides minimum frequencies for interventions at all food establishments.

For food standards this scheme is based on risk to consumers and/or other businesses, extent to which the activities of the business affect any hazard, ease and level of compliance and confidence in management/control systems.

Risk Category	Food Standards
A - High	11
B - Medium	745
C - Low	1498
U - Unrated	335
O - Other	939
Total	<b>3528</b>

Several food premises will also be feed hygiene premises, so will be counted in both the food standards and feed hygiene totals.

### **Food Hygiene Premises Profile 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021**



For food hygiene the same scheme is based on the type of food and method of handling, methods of processing, the level of consumers at risk, establishments involved in the production or service of food intended specifically for consumption by consumers which are likely to include a vulnerable risk group, level of compliance and confidence in management/control procedures.

As with Food Standards, premises rated 'A' for food hygiene, for example, are higher risk than those rated B to E. This could be because of the type of products handled / method of handling being more high risk, or because standards at the premises were poor at the last inspection – or any combination of the above.

Those categorised 'U' in the table below are unrated and therefore registered but awaiting inspection, those categorised as 'O' are outside the inspection programme, because they are so low risk – an example of this could be a department store that sells ambient food 'gifts', or a chemist that sells ambient / long life food products only.

Elements of this risk scheme for food hygiene i.e. the levels of compliance for food hygiene practices and procedures, the structure and cleanliness, and the confidence in management / control procedures also gives a corresponding 'Food Hygiene Rating' for food business that supply direct to the final consumer. This is a national Food Standards Agency (FSA) scheme, where ratings of businesses are published on the FSA website, and businesses are given rating stickers for display, however the display of a rating is not mandatory in England.

Risk Category	Food Hygiene
A	9
B	124
C	480
D	1277
E	1067
U	509
O	228
Total	<b>3694</b>

## Approved Premises

'Approved' Premises are those that deal with products of animal origin (POAO). Due to inherent risks of POAO and the need for robust processes to minimise that risk these food businesses are subject to greater more detailed controls.

There are 42 food premises that are approved in accordance with retained EC Regulation 853/2004 on the hygiene of food. These include 23 dairy producers or processors, 11 meat product premises, 5 egg or egg products plants, 2 cold store/warehouses and 1 collagen processor. Cheshire East has a high proportion of premises that carry out cheese recovery operations.

## Feed Hygiene Premises Profile 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021

There are 1963 feed premises within the Borough.

Premises type	Number of premises
Approved premises	8
Registered premises	1097
Premises not yet registered	858

### 2.5 Service Delivery Points

The Regulatory Services and Health Team is located in offices within Macclesfield and Crewe. Both the Macclesfield and Crewe offices operates between 8.30 to 17.00 Monday to Friday with face-to-face contact by appointment only. Calls are managed by the Customer Contact Centre which operates between 08.30 and 17.00 Monday to Friday.

The service also receives contact through electronic routes including team specific mailboxes and via the Citizens Advice Contact Service (CACS).

### 2.6 Enforcement Policy

The Council operates in accordance with its published Enforcement Policy which is available in hard copy on request or by visiting the Cheshire East Council web site. In addition to the overarching corporate Enforcement Policy the Council has service specific policies including one for Regulatory Services and Health.

<http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/business/enforcement/enforcement-policy.aspx>

## 3.0 Service Delivery

### 3.1 Interventions

#### 3.1.1 Interventions at Food Hygiene Establishments

##### Risk Categories

The Food Law Code of Practice (England) March 2021 identifies the risk category that food premises should be allocated following an intervention which in turn dictates the frequency of intervention requirements.

##### Food Hygiene

Risk Category	Inspection Frequency
A	6 Months
B	1 Year
C	18 Months
D	2 Year
E	Alternative Enforcement Strategy or Intervention every 3 Year

##### Environmental Health & Cheshire East Services for Schools (ChESS)

Cheshire East Council operates an enhanced food hygiene service for its local schools to incorporate additional advice, sampling and audit work alongside the statutory inspection.

Each year schools can opt to sign up to a range of food related services which are delivered as part of their 'paid for' contract. As this is an annual inspection arrangement this does not operate in line with the risk rating scheme (the majority of schools would normally expect a routine inspection every 18-24 months) and does not contribute to the general inspection burden.

##### Food Hygiene Intervention Revisits

Following an inspection, a revisit will only be carried out if the officer has identified significant contraventions. This decision is made having regard to risk scores for hygiene, structure, confidence in management or control systems and in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice.

##### National Food Hygiene Ratings Re-Score Visits

Cheshire East Council operates the Food Standards Agency National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHSRS).

A business will be issued with a FHSRS following an appropriate intervention carried out at the premises. The FHSRS scheme allows for a Food Business Operator to

appeal their score or request a rescore visit; rescore requests are only accepted where the FBO has demonstrated compliance with outstanding matters.

Rescore visit applications must be accompanied by the appropriate fee.

## **EU and Third Country Imports**

Cheshire East does not have any direct importers of high-risk foods. Premises that receive imported food directly or indirectly will be inspected in accordance with their normal risk rating. During the course of a visit to a food premises the inspecting officer will carry out such work as is necessary to ensure that any imported food has been subject to the relevant checks and procedures necessary to ensure the safety of the food.

Any food that is of concern will be subject to actions in accordance with the Cheshire East Enforcement Policy and further guidance will be obtained from the Food Standards Agency as appropriate.

### **3.1.2 Interventions at Food Standards Establishments**

The inspection frequency of premises for Food Standards is also based upon the Food Standards Intervention Frequency within the FSA Code of Practice and any appropriate intervention type.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Minimum Intervention Rating</b>
A	12 months
B	24 months
C	60 months
	By Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES) or intervention
U	Unrated

## **Food Standards Intervention Revisits**

Following an inspection, a revisit will only be carried out if the officer has identified significant contraventions. This decision is made having regard to compliance, confidence in management and control systems scores as defined in the Food Law Code of Practice.

### 3.1.3 Interventions at Feed Hygiene Establishments

#### Inspection of Feed Establishments

In line with National Priorities for Feed Law Enforcement, officers from the Animal Health Team and Trading Standards Team will undertake the following inspections.

Approval/Registration Activity Code	Premises Type
A2/A5/A7/R2/R3/R4/R6**	Premises manufacturing or placing on the market additives, premixes etc. Premises manufacturing or placing on the market additives (not subject to approval) Manufacturers of compound feed (unless subject to approval)
R4	Mobile mixer
R6 **	Pet food manufacturers
R7 **	Supplier of Surplus Food for Feed
R8*	Transporter
	Importer
R9 **	Storage premises for feed/feed products
R10*	Mixing feeds on farm, with additives and pre-mixtures
R11*	Mixing feed on farm, with compound feeding stuffs which contain additives
R12 **	Food businesses selling co-products of the food industry destined as feed materials
R13*	Livestock farms (including fish farms) which do not mix feeds or mix feeds without additives
R14*	Arable Farms

\* The Animal Health and Welfare Team carries out farm inspections. These inspections will focus on primary production/feed hygiene and animal health and welfare.

The farm inspection team also carries out the R10 and R11 (on-farm mixer) inspections and transporter/store inspections on farm. Any issues identified are discussed and re-visits conducted by the Team Leader or Trading Standards Officers.

\*\* These inspections will be undertaken by an officer from the Trading Standards Team or the Animal Health and Welfare Team Leader.

Whilst conducting routine Animal Health inspections/complaint work, officers from the Animal Health & Welfare Team also ensure that premises not already registered for feed hygiene are brought into compliance and registered as appropriate. They also ensure that premises are registered under the correct activity code.

## **Food Hygiene at Primary Producers**

The Food Hygiene Regulations applicable to Primary Production came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006. Previously, only certain types of farms that produced foods of animal origin were covered by specific food hygiene legislation. Now, the general principles of food hygiene legislation extend to all businesses engaged in primary production of food, although there are minor exclusions.

As the Animal Health and Welfare Team carry out farm inspections for animal health and welfare and feed hygiene the responsibility for initial basic food hygiene inspections on livestock farms falls to them; this excludes dairy or egg producing establishments which have their own Inspectorates.

The basic food hygiene requirements relating to livestock primary producers are commensurate with those for feed hygiene and any matters requiring enforcement action will be followed up by Officers from the Animal Health and Welfare Team or Trading Standards Team.

## **Service Level Agreement with Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council**

The Animal Health and Welfare Team deliver farm and feed inspection activities for Stockport MBC. In addition to the completion of a programmed inspection list provided by Stockport MBC the team also provide adhoc advice and support.

This is a chargeable service.

### **3.1.4 COVID-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan from 1 July 2021**

An impact of the coronavirus pandemic has been a significant pressure on the resources within those services that deliver official food controls nationally.

During 2020-2021 and as resources were diverted to meet Covid priorities, the Food Standards Agency allowed deviation from the normal inspection frequencies set out in sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 above. In addition, the FSA provided guidance to local authorities on where to target any residual resources to ensure that situations of higher risk continued to be addressed.

The outcome of this approach is that Local Authorities were left with a backlog of inspections to complete either as a result of national lockdown restrictions where premises were closed for extended periods of time or because of the redirection of resources to the Covid effort. This backlog included premises due an intervention in 2020-2021 and those scheduled within the first half of 2021-2022.

Now that the UK is returning to a more normal way of life, and resources can move back towards the delivery of food law regulatory controls, the Food Standards Agency has developed a recovery plan to enable a 'restart' to the delivery system in a measured and risk-based way. This allows resources to continue to be targeted where they are of greatest value and provides structure within which local authorities can move forward.

There are two phases to the recovery plan. During both phases Local Authorities will continue to deliver the following activities as standard.

- Official controls where the nature and frequency are prescribed in specific legislation (e.g. approved premises).
- Reactive work including investigation and management of complaints and managing food incidents / hazards.
- Enforcement action in cases of non-compliance.
- Ongoing proactive surveillance to obtain an accurate picture of the local business landscape to identify open/closed/recently re-opened/new businesses; businesses where there has been a change of operation, activities or Food Business Operator (FBO). The service will do this through newly registered food businesses as notified and through unrated inspections and Alternative Enforcement Strategy questionnaires (AES), updating service records accordingly.
- For 'new businesses', consideration of registration information and intelligence with appropriate onsite interventions carried out where there are concerns around public health/consumer protection

Cheshire East Council is committed to the delivery of these requirements as a minimum.



### **3.1.4.1 Phase 1 – 1<sup>st</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

The first phase of the recovery plan allows for prioritisation of new businesses based on risk and following that the development of an intervention programme to operate from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021.

The Service has successfully achieved FSA funding for the prioritisation of new businesses based on risk. This equates to the assessment of 370 unrated businesses and will enable a thorough and detailed assessment of new businesses within the Borough, that are awaiting a food hygiene inspection. This will then support appropriate prioritisation from October 2021 onwards in line with the recovery plan.

### **3.1.4.2 Phase 2 – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

Phase 2 of the roadmap provides key milestones for inspection of higher risk businesses as follows:

- By 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 – all establishments rated Category A for food hygiene to have received an onsite intervention
- By 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 – all establishments rated Category B for food hygiene and A for food Standards to have received an onsite intervention
- By 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 – all establishments rated Category C (and less than broadly compliant) for food hygiene to have received an onsite intervention
- By 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 – all establishments rated Category D (and less than broadly compliant) for food hygiene to have received an onsite intervention
- By 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 – all establishments rated Category C (and broadly compliant) for food hygiene to have received an onsite intervention

An overview of the complete programme including high and low risk premises requirements is contained as Appendix A.

By the end of Phase 2 a new food standards delivery model and a revised food hygiene rating scheme will be in place for 2023/2024 and will replace that outlined in sections 3.1.1 & 3.1.2 above.

The Recovery Plan prescribes that Local authorities should, where they can, move at a faster pace in realigning with the original intervention frequencies, and other provisions set out in the Food Law Codes of Practice.

### **The Cheshire East Approach**

- **Food Hygiene**

For food hygiene premises, there is likely to be intervention activity across the whole spectrum of premises rated A through to E throughout this timeframe. This is due to the range of qualifications within the team (some officers can only carry out interventions in lower risk premises) and a contractual agreement in place with external inspectors to inspect D rated premises and reduce the inspection burden within the largest premises band. At the start of 2021/22 this agreement was for 450 D rated premises to be completed.

This range of activity will gradually allow the team to realign with the inspection frequencies in preparation for the new delivery model in 2023/2024. However, officers will prioritise higher risk premises and activities wherever possible.

- **Food Standards**

For food standards premises, notwithstanding the identified priority work for category A premises, category B premises will continue to be allocated to qualified officers for completion of on-site inspections where resources allow. This will help prepare for the implementation of the planned new delivery model in 2023/2024 and ensure that any impact of the new requirements on allergen labelling are identified.

The FSA recovery plan identifies that interventions in Category C premises are not required unless intelligence suggests that risks have increased. This will include an assessment of the potential impact of the new requirements on allergen labelling.

Any sampling work for food standards will be addressed during routine inspections or in response to complaints as necessary. The Trading Standards North West Executive as yet have not made any plans for sampling projects during 2021-2022 although this will be under constant review.

## **3.2 Food and Feed Complaints**

### **3.2.1 Food Hygiene Complaints**

Cheshire East Council aims to ensure that all complaints regarding unfit food, out of condition food or the condition of food premises are investigated promptly in accordance with our internal procedures. Action will be taken to remove any food or feedstuff from the retail chain which does not meet current legislative requirements.

### **3.2.2 Food Standards Complaints**

The Trading Standards Teams receive enquiries and complaints relating to food labelling, claims and descriptions, composition of food, adulteration of food, chemical contamination of food and the nature of food. All complaints will be assessed, and action will be taken where appropriate and in proportion to the potential risk posed by the issue.

Complaint samples will be taken and submitted to the Public Analyst for analysis where necessary.

### **3.2.3 Feed Hygiene Complaints**

The Animal Health & Welfare and Trading Standards Teams receive complaints and enquiries relating to unwholesome/contaminated feed, feedstuff composition and labelling, transport and storage and pet food. All complaints are assessed, and action taken as appropriate and in proportion to the potential risk posed.

Complaint samples may be taken and submitted to the Public Analyst for analysis where appropriate.

### **3.3 Advice to Business**

#### **3.3.1 General Advice**

Cheshire East Council will, upon request from food businesses within the Borough, provide basic advice, support, and guidance to encourage compliance and promote a fair trading environment.

Business advice may include:

- On the spot advice or guidance during visits
- Response to service requests
- Website information
- Press releases
- Media information

Businesses may also request one to one support and guidance, to either improve their existing business or to understand what is legally required to start up and operate a food business. The Authority will also provide help and advice to business partnerships, forums, or trade associations on request and in line with resource availability.

The service may also undertake chargeable consultation work with a business as part of the development of any subsequent Primary Authority relationship.

#### **3.3.2 Primary Authority Scheme**

The Primary Authority scheme came into effect on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2009 and is designed to ensure consistency and improved coordination of local inspection and enforcement activities. Currently there are 9 businesses within Cheshire East who have a Primary Authority agreement for food standards and 4 businesses that have a Primary Authority Agreement for food hygiene.

More information on Primary Authority and to see a list of all agreements held by Cheshire East Council can be viewed on the Primary Authority website.

[Local regulation: Primary Authority - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

### **3.4 Feed & Food Sampling**

The Public Health England, Food, Water and Environment Microbiology Laboratory will be used for microbiology samples. Eurofins will be used as appropriate and in accordance with Section 39 of the Food Safety Act 1990, as the public analyst for the provision of competent and accredited laboratory services for Cheshire East Council.

Samples taken in response to a complaint will be assessed on an individual basis and action taken as appropriate.

Food and feed samples taken and submitted for composition analysis will be targeted in relation to national and regional surveys or in response to complaints as appropriate.

Food samples submitted for bacterial analysis may be taken for the following purposes.

- Participation in national sampling schemes.
- Cheshire and Merseyside Food Group sampling projects.
- In response to a complaint.
- To verify HACCP Procedures.

### **3.5 Control & Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Diseases**

Where appropriate the Commercial Services Team will investigate notified cases of food poisoning to establish, where possible, the cause of the illness and to ensure that appropriate action is taken to ensure that a recurrence is avoided. Such investigations could potentially include:

- Interviewing of persons.
- Taking food samples.
- Taking environmental samples.
- Provision of kits for faecal specimens.
- Collection and examination of case histories.

Any identified links to a food premises will be investigated as appropriate.

To ensure that a coordinated approach is provided in the case of any outbreak, the Cheshire and Merseyside Communicable Disease Operational Procedures have been agreed with Public Health England. This formalises the investigation under the leadership of the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control to provide liaison between Environmental Health Professionals, Public Health England and other cooperating bodies.

### **3.6 Food & Feed Safety Incidents**

#### **3.6.1 Food Alerts**

The FSA issues Product Recall Information to let local authorities and consumers know about problems associated with a specific foodstuff.

A “Product Recall Information Notice” is issued where a solution to the problem has been put in place for example the product has been, or is being, withdrawn from sale or recalled from consumers.

A “Food Alert for Action” is issued where intervention by enforcement authorities is required. These notices and alerts are often issued in conjunction with a product withdrawal or recall by a manufacturer, retailer or distributor and provide local authorities with details of specific action that is required to be taken on behalf of consumers.

An ‘Allergy Alert’ is issued by the Food Standards Agency to quickly communicate allergen risks directly to the consumer. Competent Authorities receive copies of these Allergy Alerts for information purposes only.

In accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice, Cheshire East has a documented procedure for dealing with food incidents and hazards which includes details of arrangements in place to deal with such situations. Any subsequent action will then be based upon the risk associated with the level of notification.

### **3.7 Liaison with Stakeholders and Other Organisations**

Food and feed law enforcement liaison is undertaken with a range of internal and external agencies, neighbouring authorities, and national and regional organisations to share information and intelligence and present a consistent approach to advice and enforcement. These include:

- Food Liaison Groups – Cheshire and Merseyside Food Technical Group, Trading Standards North West (TSNW) Food Standards Focus Group.
- Public Analyst – For analysis and opinion in respect of samples and standards.
- Public Health England, Food, Water and Environment Microbiology Laboratory - Microbiology Samples.
- Public Health England – Food related and infectious disease control.
- Community Infection Prevention and Control – Community Infections.
- FSA – Service standards and policy development.
- State Veterinary Service – TB notifications.
- APHA and DEFRA - animal by-product issues, TB which has been identified in relation to the feeding of raw pet food, and other issues.
- Internal Departments – Development Control, Building Control, Licensing; and
- External Bodies – Cheshire Police, Cheshire Fire and Rescue.

### **3.8 Promotional Work and other non-official interventions**

#### **3.8.1 Food Hygiene**

The Cheshire and Merseyside Food Technical Group consists of Cheshire and Merseyside Food Safety Officers and representatives from Public Health England (PHE) and other relevant organisations. This group formulates the work plan for specific projects and sampling at the start of each financial year.

Officer time is committed to coordinated and individual projects developed by the Technical Group having regard to available resources and applicability to the needs

of the local area. Local sampling initiatives are undertaken when these specific products or premises can be incorporated into our sampling programme.

The team will also respond positively to requests from professional business and similar organisations for educational talks and presentations.

### **3.8.2 Food Standards**

Trading Standards North West (TSNW) is a regional group of Trading Standards services in the north-west of England designed to assist in the coordination of Trading Standards activities in the region as well as sharing knowledge and best practice. TSNW is grouped along functional lines, including a Food Standards Focus Group which meets quarterly; governance is held by the TSNW Executive.

### **3.8.3 Feed Standards**

The North West Agriculture Panel also sits under the governance of the TSNW Executive meeting on a quarterly basis. The Panel shares knowledge and best practice to ensure consistency of approach across the region. Regional priorities are set in conjunction with the FSA, and an annual inspection programme developed for each of the authorities within the region. Progress in relation to the programme, and any issues arising, are discussed as part of the regional Panel meetings.

## **4.0 Review of 2020-2021**

The Regulatory Services and Health Team (RSH) undertake full quarterly performance monitoring against the RSH Team Plan; this plan includes specific objectives and targets relating to food hygiene, food standards and feed hygiene work.

Performance is shared with the Head of Regulatory Services and exception reports are provided to the Director of Environment and Neighborhoods.

During 2021 Cheshire East Council moved from the Cabinet governance system to a Committee system and matters covered by this plan are now overseen by the Environment and Communities Committee.

### **4.1 Review of 2020 - 2021 Intervention Plans**

#### **Impact of Coronavirus Pandemic**

During the year the coronavirus pandemic had a significant impact on the delivery of the 2020-2021 Cheshire East Food Law Enforcement Plan.

Extra duties and responsibilities placed upon the service, included matters of Covid compliance, provision of advice and the investigation of positive cases within the workplace (Environmental Health) and business closures/restrictions (Trading Standards). This diverted resources away from wide ranging 'business as usual' activities. Using the FSA guidance produced throughout the year, priorities focused on higher risk premises interventions, the impacts and risks of business diversification and response to complaints.

Throughout the year the service was led by ongoing and updated advice and guidance provided by the FSA and national government on where the service should focus its efforts. Within this framework Regulatory Services delivered in full the high priority food hygiene and standards controls and activities specified in the FSA's guidance and advice to local authorities for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This included undertaking proactive surveillance to obtain an accurate picture of the local business landscape and using this information to determine appropriate interventions for establishments where the local authority has concerns around public health/consumer protection or to provide direct support to businesses wishing to diversify as a result of restrictions on normal operations.

As part of its response to the coronavirus pandemic the FSA advised local authorities that they could use remote assessments as a tool when working with food businesses. Remote inspections were not intended to replace on-site work, but rather used to help provide focus to a subsequent visit, to understand whether an on-site visit could be delayed, and to reduce time required on site whilst the pandemic was ongoing.

Most of the remote work was carried out by phone or email, however, this work was not without its limitations:



- Remote assessment was not seen as appropriate for some premises, such as those with higher risk activities, unfamiliar premises, those with a history of non-compliance, as a response to a complaint and those complex or very small businesses.
- It took a greater amount of administrative time for the business to locate and share specific required documentation, especially if there are IT equipment or knowledge limitations.
- There was extra time involved for local authority officers follow up/review documentation.
- In some cases, there was skepticism about the accuracy of information provided by the business due to lack of trust or unclear communication.
- Concern that public health risks could be concealed or missed.
- Loss of benefits from the usual informal interaction between an officer and the business.
- Inability to use instincts or to judge the live picture of business operations.
- A remote interaction places heavy emphasis on the business operator rather than the business premises itself.

### **Additional in-year challenges**

The Commercial Services team continued to carry staff vacancies during 2020-2021 which created further impact on the inspection programme for the year.

Within Trading Standards priority had to be diverted from food related activities to other areas of Standards notably a high-profile product safety case.

EU Exit also had an impact as extra knowledge, training and updates were required for qualified officers and this diverted resources that impacted on service delivery. Business requests for informal or formal advice and guidance on EU exit legislation also impacted officers' available time.

#### **4.1.1 Food Hygiene Interventions 2020-2021**

<b>Premises Rating</b>	<b>Inspections Due 2020 - 2021</b>	<b>Overdue 31 March 2021</b>	<b>% of target completed</b>
A	6	3	50
B	130*	87	33
C	322*	195	39
D	670*	349	48
E	354*	184	48
U	153	509	N/A

\* Due 2020-21 includes those due that year plus and overdue requirements from previous years.

As we entered 2020-21 Local Authorities were already under the direction of the Food Standards Agency to stop programmed inspections; a decision taken to reduce transmission of Covid-19 and keep the workforce as safe as possible. Additionally, a large proportion of food businesses were closed as required by Coronavirus

Regulations. Visits to food premises were only to take place where there was a serious risk to public health identified.

Routine food hygiene inspections recommenced in August 2020, however, many businesses remained closed, a significant proportion of officer time was diverted to the Covid effort, and the year continued to be disrupted by further lockdowns. Premises requiring an inspection but having identified vulnerable groups (e.g., the care sector) were deferred further however, they did receive remote interventions by telephone call to ensure that there were no identifiable risk factors to indicate that a visit was necessary and to enable the team to provide some guidance and support.

Overall, 43% of A-D rated premises and 38% of E rated premises, due a routine inspection in the year 2020-21 received a food hygiene inspection. Of the premises due an inspection prior to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 (those that were already overdue), 62% of A-D rated premises and 84% of E rated premises received an inspection.

In addition to the intervention work detailed above the service also completed:

- 21 premises revisits, this is a decrease from the previous year when 120 revisits were undertaken.
- 18 FHRS rescore visits.
- 98 ChESS audits were scheduled in year but were suspended due to the pandemic and the resultant pressures on local schools. The service did however maintain contact with school colleagues and provided advice and guidance as required. Outstanding inspections were carried forward to the first quarter of 2021-2022.
- During 2020-21, we received 536 new Food Registrations - an increase from 397 in the previous year. This is in line with a national increase in new registrations received during the Coronavirus pandemic.

## Staffing

In year the service experienced a reduction in staffing resources, this was due to actual vacancies and the result of diverting officer resource to Covid related work. Recruitment work to employ permanent staff was unsuccessful due to a shortage of applicants and suitably qualified staff.

As a consequence, the service employed external contractors to assist with inspections of D and E rated premises once routine inspections resumed.

Moving forward it is hoped to recruit both permanent staff members to the service (2.0 FTE) and to use the flexibility of external contractors to address lower risk premises work where the intervention burden is highest.

#### 4.1.2 Food Standards Interventions – 2020-2021

Premises Category	Inspections Due 2020-2021	Overdue 31 March 2021	% of target completed
A High	5 x 100% = 5	0	100%
B Medium	726 x 50% = 363	339	7%
C Low	1445 x 20% = 289	283	3%
U Unrated	104 x 75% = 78	0	133% (104)

\* Number of unrated increased through the year due to new registered premises

#### Staffing

The service was unable to recruit a temporary full time food standards qualified officer (to cover maternity leave) during this period due to a lack of applications and competent available officers. This is reflected in the national reduction of Trading Standards workforce (CTSI workforce survey) and an acknowledged priority to ensure adequate succession planning.

The service is implementing alternative plans to boost staffing capacity and has recruited two regulatory compliance officer apprentices (Trading Standards) who are working through the qualification framework with the potential that they will be fully food standards competent within 2 to 3 years.

The service also has one officer completing the CTSI Food Standards module with the submission of the portfolio the only outstanding requirement.

All Food Standards Officers undertook an Internal QMS Auditor course during 2020-2021.

#### 4.1.3 Feed Premises Inspections 2020-2021

Approval/Registration Activity Code	Premise Type	Inspections Due 2020-2021	Overdue 31 March 2021	% of Target
A1-A8	Premises manufacturing or placing on the market additives, premixes, etc.	5	3	40
R1	Premises manufacturing or placing on the market additives (not subject to approval)	Included in A1 – A8	Included in A1 – A8	
R4	Mobile Mixer	1	0	100
	Importer	1	0	100

R5	Premises involved in placing compound feed on the market	Included in A1 – A8	Included in A1 – A8	
R6	Pet Food Manufacturers	3	1	67
R7	Premises manufacturing or placing feed materials on the market	10	8	20
R8	Transporters of feed/feed products	1	0	100
R9	Storage premises for feed/feed products	3	0	134 (4)
R10	Mixing feeds on farm, with additives and pre-mixtures	4	0	150 (6)
R11	Mixing feed on farm, with compound feeding stuffs which contain additives	Included in R10 Figures	Included in R10 Figures	
R12	Food businesses selling co-products of the food industry destined as feed materials	6	3	50
R13	Livestock farms (including fish farms) which do not mix feeds or mix feeds without additives	28	6	79
R14	Arable farms growing/selling crops for feed	0	0	N/A
AES	Arable farms growing/selling crops for feed	0	0	N/A

70% of all feed premises inspections scheduled for the year were completed with the shortfall attributed to the impact of Covid-19.

All requirements of the Service Level Agreement with Stockport MBC were achieved and a new programme will be developed for 2021-22 in line with resources and any extant Covid-19 requirements.

#### **4.1.4 Food and Feed Complaints**

During 2020-2021 the service responded to and investigated.

- 151 Food Hygiene (Premises) Complaints and 90 Food complaints (estimated hourly resource of 482 Hours)
- 64 Food Standards complaints
- 60 intelligence and information reports submitted

- 19 pet food complaints
- 8 animal feed complaints

#### **4.1.5 Feed and Food Sampling**

Sampling work included.

0	Food Samples
47	Private Water Supply Samples
8	Water Samples at Pools
6	Legionella Samples to support businesses reopening after extended closure due to the pandemic
1	Food Standards Sample

In all cases, sample results were followed up with appropriate action.

No feed sampling was due to be carried out during the year and we received no complaints requiring samples to be taken.

#### **4.1.6 Control & Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Diseases**

During 2020-21 we received 60 allegations of unconfirmed food poisoning, around half of those reported in the previous year, plus 6 further allegations of food poisoning where an infectious disease had been confirmed.

There were 100 Infectious Disease notifications from Public Health England – a significant reduction from 216 in the previous year (highest category of ID types are 32 *Cryptosporidium*, 31 *Giardia*, 25 *Salmonella*).

The reduction in food poisoning allegations and Infectious Disease notifications are likely to be due to the restrictions in place as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

#### **4.1.7 Food and Feed Safety Incidents**

The service was not required to take any direct action in relation to food and feed safety incidents during 2020-2021.

#### **4.1.8 Liaison with Stakeholders and Other Organisations**

The service continued to work with partners and stakeholders with respect to the delivery of food and feed related work.

## **4.2 Areas of Improvement**

### **4.2.1 Staff Resources**

During 2020-2021, all of the teams responsible for food and feed delivery experienced a reduction in staffing resources due to vacancies and the need to divert staff to other areas of work. This impacted on outturn performance during the year.

The Coronavirus pandemic impacted upon recruitment and not all positions were filled leaving several vacancies that have been carried over to 2021-2022. Priority has been given to recruitment work to address this shortfall as soon as possible in the 2020-2021 financial year.

There remains however a natural turnover of staff in any organisation over a period of time; we will therefore have to address this as swiftly as possible should it arise.

### **4.2.2 Support System and Data Recording**

A migration of food standards premises information over to the Food Standards Agency Rating system in previous years has impacted upon the perceived accuracy of risk rating scores. In response to this, work commenced to ensure that risk rating scores were as up to date as possible and to support our work programme. This will continue into 2021/22.

The service has recently procured a new systems database to replace the existing APP software. Implementation and integration commenced in 2020-2021 and will continue into 2021-2022. This work will include data cleansing and data migration through which we expect to improve our current records.

### **4.2.3 Low Risk Inspection Interventions**

The Coronavirus pandemic, and the subsequent diversion of resources to Covid activities meant that only higher risk food activities were able to be undertaken during 2020-21, this has resulted in a backlog of inspections across the bands, but particularly those rated D and E, i.e., the lower rated premises, going into 2021-2022. This backlog will be factored into the two-year inspection allocation plan where appropriate, and in line with the FSA Roadmap. External Contractors have been allocated a total of 450 D rated inspections during 2021-2022 allowing the team to focus on higher risk A to C rated premises initially during this first year.

### **4.2.4 Primary Authority Work**

Due to other priorities and a reduction in staffing resources, the service has maintained a low-level reactive approach to its Primary Authority relationships. Although we have adequately serviced our various contracts there is a desire to take a more proactive approach to the Primary Authority Scheme as a whole with a view to improving existing relationships and developing new schemes with businesses within the Cheshire East area.

## 5.0 2021-2023 Work Programme

At the start of each inspection year the routine inspection programme, based upon the Food Law Code of Practice, is automatically generated from the existing service database (Civica APP).

Tables in sections 5.1 and 5.2 below provide a benchmark of risk level within our food businesses and the normal expected intervention work that would be required to achieve the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice.

However, the Service shall be following the FSA Recovery Plan as detailed in 3.1.4 to formulate an inspection plan up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. Reference to the former inspection requirement (on an annual basis) is referenced here to assist in prioritisation of visits, and for where resources allow for intervention activity greater than that required by the Recovery Plan.

A review of the inspection requirements will be carried out again for prioritisation from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to ensure that the programme is on track and that the highest risk premises continue to be inspected above those of lower risk.

### 5.1 Food Hygiene Inspection Requirement 2021 – 2022 (Food Law Code of Practice)

Rating	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	2021 – 2022 Total	Awaiting inspection 31/3/21
A*	0	6	0*	6*	12	3
B	1	10	11	13	35	87
C	91	84	0**	27**	202	195
D	133	128	173	175	609	349
E	28	49	63	159	299	184
U						509
<b>Total</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>1157</b>	<b>1327</b>
Overall Total					2484	

\* As category “A” premises are required to be inspected once every 6 months it is estimated from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter that these premises will be mirrored in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. If following the initial inspection, a category “A” premises has improved it may be then classified as a category “B” premises and therefore not be inspected until 12 months later.

\*\* There are no Category C inspections due in quarter 3, and a very small number in quarter 4, this reflects the requirement to not carry out routine food hygiene inspections due to the Coronavirus pandemic during March – August 2020. E.g., an inspection carried out in April 2020 that was category C would be due again in October 2021 – but programmed visits were not taking place during this time, under the direction of the FSA, so therefore no premises of that category can be due during that following time period.



Category U premises are Food business operators who have registered with the authority but have not yet had their risk rating determined. These premises are subject to a desk top risk assessment and from this review, premises which are evaluated as being very low risk are subject to a self-assessment questionnaire. Any identifiable higher risk premises from the desk top exercise are included in the current year intervention programme.

### 5.1.2 Revisits

Revisits will be carried out in accordance with details provided in section 3.1.1.

## 5.2 Food Standards Intervention Requirement 2021-2022 (Food Law Code of Practice)

Category	Minimum Intervention Rating	Intervention Type	Number of Premises	Target 2021 - 2022
A	12 months	Inspection, partial inspection or Audit	11	(100% of premises) = 11
B	24 months	Inspection, partial inspection or audit until deemed to be broadly compliant.	745	(50 % of premises) = 372
C	60 months By Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES) or intervention	Alternative enforcement strategy. Intelligence led approach to non-planned interventions	1498	premises assessed by questionnaire / inspection (20% of premises) = 300
U	Unrated		335	75% = 251

To achieve the programme, the service will use the full range of interventions available including:

- Partial inspections and audits for category B premises.
- The use of Regulatory Compliance Apprentices to undertake tasks within the food team which support the work of the authorised officers for alternative interventions e.g. information gathering.
- The use of the Regulatory Compliance Apprentices to support alternative enforcement activities (questionnaires) for C category and unrated premises where appropriate and based on risk.
- The introduction of a 'checklist' to be undertaken at relevant food standards premises as an alternative to physical inspection (low risk).

- The identification of premises requiring multiple function inspections for a single check with referrals to qualified officers for high-risk issues if identified, thus reducing duplicate inspections and officer time requirements.

For Category A premises, where quality assurance systems are to be assessed, only officers who possess either a quality assurance qualification or equivalent professional experience and competency to enable them to assess quality assurance systems will carry out this intervention.

The service has also introduced a quarterly allocation intervention target for each officer which will be part of the RSH Team performance report.

All newly registered premises will be allocated for initial inspection to be conducted no later than 28 days of registration.

### 5.2.1 Revisits

Revisits will be carried out in accordance with details provided in section 3.1.2.

## 5.3 FSA Recovery Plan Inspection Requirements – Phase 2 up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

Achievement Date	Minimum Requirement Food Hygiene	No. of Premises	Minimum Requirement Food Standards	No. of Premises
31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	Category A	9		
30 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	Category B	124	Category A	11
30 <sup>th</sup> September 2022	Category C (and less than broadly compliant)	22		
31 <sup>st</sup> December 2022	Category D (and less than broadly compliant)	4		
31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023	Category C (and broadly compliant)	458		

Appendix A contains an overview of the whole recovery plan requirements including those activities that should continue in parallel with any specific inspection requirements detailed above and those circumstances where Cheshire East has a planned alternative approach.

## 5.4 Targeted Inspections of Feed Establishments 2021 - 2022

In line with National Priorities for Feed Law Enforcement, officers from the Animal Health and Welfare and Trading Standards Team will undertake programmed inspections.

Approval/Registration Activity Code	Premises Type	No of premises to be inspected
A1-A8, R1-R4**	Premises manufacturing or placing on the market additives, premixes etc. Premises manufacturing or placing on the market additives (not subject to approval) Manufacturers of compound feed (unless subject to approval)	5
A1-8, R1-3, R5	Distributor	1
R4	Mobile mixer	1
R6 **	Pet food manufacturers	3
R7 **	Supplier of Feed Materials/Surplus Food	10
R8*	Transporter	1
	Importer	1
R9 **	Storage premises for feed/feed products	3
R10*	Mixing feeds on farm, with additives and pre-mixtures	4
R11*	Mixing feed on farm, with compound feeding stuffs which contain additives	
R12 **	Food businesses selling co-products of the food industry destined as feed materials	6
R13*	Livestock farms (including fish farms) which do not mix feeds or mix feeds without additives	28
R14*	Arable Farms	0

The Team is also intending to undertake a piece of work in the period 2021-2022 to record farm assurance information for all premises and those premises which sit outside of the various assurance schemes and to use this to update the premises database.

## **5.5 Sampling**

The Cheshire & Merseyside Sampling Sub-Group are yet to determine a food hygiene sampling programme, due to the continued resources required for Covid related work. However, there are a limited number of National Sampling initiatives in place which the service will support where resources allow and where it is felt that the work will benefit the Council and our local businesses.

The TSNW Executive is yet to agree on a food standards regional sampling programme for 2021/22 due to coronavirus priorities and a recovery plan. This will remain under constant review.

No feed sampling is scheduled under the National Sampling Priorities for the period 2021-2022. Sampling may however be carried out in the event of complaints relating to feed. However, samples will be taken as a result of complaints and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

## **5.6 Demand Led Services**

The service will continue to provide a reactive service for the following functions.

- Complaints and Service Requests
- Food Hygiene Rescore Requests
- Primary Authority
- Provision of Advice
- Food and Feed Safety Alerts

## **5.7 Promotional Work**

The service will identify and implement any relevant promotion or education activities based on either local intelligence or as part of our regional working arrangements.

Where appropriate work will be undertaken to evaluate the success of this work.

October 2021 will see the introduction of 'Natasha's Law' pre-packed food on site for direct sale. An objective has been set to promote the requirements to relevant businesses through direct electronic means and direct contact.

## 6.0 Resources to support 2021-2023 Delivery

### 6.1 Financial Allocation

Regulatory Services and Health has an overall annual staffing budget of £3,510,447. Of this £1,604,305 is allocated to Commercial Services, Trading Standards and Animal Health and Welfare. However not all officers within these teams are responsible for food and feed work. Actual FTE provision is detailed below in section 6.2.

In addition, the Commercial Services Team has a budget of £30,000 to fund food hygiene inspection work carried out by third party contractors.

The three service areas also have a supplies and services budget to support expenditure on equipment including ICT, sampling and analysis costs, printing & stationery, postage and telephone costs. These are not split into costs associated with the delivery of this plan but are for all functions delivered by the three teams.

Service areas also have specific budgets to cover mileage and general travel costs.

### 6.2 Staffing Allocation

Staffing allocations for each service area for the provision of food and feed work is estimated in the table below.

Service Area	FTE Provision (Fully Staffed)	As a % of Total FTE
Commercial Services	9.2	70%
Trading Standards	2.7	16%
Animal Health and Welfare	1.5	20%

In addition to food and feed related work these officers will also be involved with the wider Regulatory Services and Health functions working with other officers of the team as required.

### 6.3 Staff Development

Effective staff development is fundamental to ensure that service targets are met in a consistent and effective manner. To ensure that training and development needs are identified, all Cheshire East officers undertake a yearly performance and development interview, with a review of progress after six months. Each officer has a personal Performance and Development Plan.

In turn, these plans feed into an annual training plan which is developed for the whole team to cover continuing professional development requirements, maintain general competency and develop new knowledge in emerging areas of the food safety world. The FSA Codes of Practice for Food and Feed both require minimum levels of CPD to be undertaken annually by food and feed officers in order to maintain competence

and retain where appropriate CTSI Practitioner status. This plan is managed by the Head of Regulatory Services in conjunction with the relevant team leads.

This plan is submitted to and approved by the Workforce Development Team who manage the overall training budget for Cheshire East.

#### **6.4 Quality Assessment**

In order to ensure that the service provided is in accordance with the FSA requirements, standard quality assessment procedures are undertaken. In Regulatory Services & Health these procedures include the reviewing of premises files including inspection reports post inspection, investigations of Service Requests and Complaints, the signing off of enforcement notices by a Senior Officer prior to service and peer review inspection work. Officers are also assessed during accompanied visits to ensure a consistent approach is maintained.

Cheshire East Council also participates in the Cheshire and Merseyside Technical Group's inter-authority auditing and participates in consistency exercises produced by the Food Standards Agency.

## **7.0 Consultation**

This plan has been jointly produced by Commercial Services, Trading Standards and Animal Health & Welfare.

This report will be presented to the Environment and Communities Committee in November 2021.

## Appendix A : Overview of Recovery Plan

Food Hygiene	
Food Standards	
Food Hygiene/Standards	

Activity	Method	October - December 2021	January - March 2022	April - June 2022	July - September 2022	October - December 2022	January - March 2023
Granting approval under 853/2004	Distance communication to support reduced on site visit.						
Conditional and full approval visits in line with legislative requirements	On site visits.						
Proactive surveillance: Open/closed/recently reopened/new businesses Change of operation, activities or FBO	Registration/Administration processes. Onsite visit where concerns around public health/consumer protection.						
New Food Businesses	Visits prioritised in accordance with FLCOP following assessment of risk.						
Management of incidents/hazards (including food borne illness)	In accordance with FLCOP.						
Management/investigation of complaints	In accordance with FLCOP.						



Enforcement action in the case of non-compliance	In accordance with FLCOP.						
FHRS requested revisits	Within three months of request if chargeable (otherwise six months). Remote assessment as appropriate.						
Sampling	In line with LA Sampling Programme/FSA Surveillance Sampling Programme.						
Category A for Hygiene	All sites should receive an onsite intervention. Ensure all back in the system for interventions in line with FLCOP.			Return to Food Law Code of Practice Requirements (FLCOP)			
Category B for Hygiene	All sites to receive one onsite intervention. Ensure all back in the system for interventions in line with FLCOP.				Return to Food Law Code of Practice Requirements (FLCOP)		
Category A for Standards	All sites to receive one onsite intervention. Ensure all back in the system for interventions in line with FLCOP.		<b>CE Planned completion by 31 March 2022</b>		Return to Food Law Code of Practice Requirements (FLCOP)		
Category C for hygiene - less than broadly compliant (FHRS 0, 1 or 2)	All sites to receive one onsite intervention. Ensure all back in the system for					Return to Food Law Code of Practice Requirements (FLCOP)	

	interventions in line with FLCOP.						
Category D for hygiene - less than broadly compliant (FHRS 0, 1 or 2)	All sites to receive one onsite intervention. Ensure all back in the system for interventions in line with FLCOP.						Return to FLCOP Requirements
Category C for hygiene - broadly compliant or better (FHRS 3, 4 or 5)	Sites with two consecutive FHRS score of 5 can miss one intervention and be put back in the system for interventions in line with FLCOP (move due intervention date forward by 18 months). All other sites (FHRS 3 or 4) to receive one onsite intervention and be back in the system for interventions in line with FLCOP.						
Category D for hygiene - broadly compliant or better (FHRS 3, 4 or 5)	No interventions unless intelligence suggests risks have increased/standards decreased or any other reason due to risk posed.	<p>Maintain oversight and take appropriate action during the lifetime of the recovery plan</p> <p><b>CE to utilise external contractors to undertake inspections and reduce inspection burden as we move into the new inspection programme from April 2023.</b></p>					

Category E for hygiene	No interventions unless intelligence suggests risks have increased/standards decreased or any other reason due to risk posed.	Maintain oversight and take appropriate action during the lifetime of the recovery plan
Category B for Standards	No interventions unless intelligence suggests risks have increased/standards decreased or any other reason due to risk posed e.g. new allergen requirements PPDS.	<p>Maintain oversight and take appropriate action during the lifetime of the recovery plan</p> <p><b>CE to continue to allocate inspections to relevant officers in line with due dates (resource dependent) to reduce inspection burden as we move into the new inspection programme from April 2023.</b></p>
Category C for Standards	No interventions unless intelligence suggests risks have increased/standards decreased or any other reason due to risk posed e.g. new allergen requirements PPDS.	Maintain oversight and take appropriate action during the lifetime of the recovery plan