

Housing and Public Protection Department

FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN 2008/2009



1. SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 AIMS

1. To protect public health from risks which may arise in connection with the consumption of food, and otherwise to protect the interests of consumers in relation to food.
2. To support the headline priorities set out by the FSA for regulation:-
 - To provide support and take targeted, proportionate risk based enforcement action, including inspections, to protect food safety and prevent food borne disease.
 - To tackle rogue business and take appropriate measures to safeguard the food supply from adulteration, contamination, fraud and misdescription.
 - To provide appropriate targeted, specific, transparent and robust advice, support and incentives to businesses to maximise compliance with EU based food hygiene regulations and general food law.
 - To provide advice and support to consumers to protect public health and promote healthier lifestyles and consumer choice
 - To provide transparent, robust and consistent approaches to investigating and resolving consumer complaints about food and food business.
3. To maintain fair and equitable trading, to inform consumers and businesses, and encourage honest business.
4. To improve continuously the quality of services through the effective use and enhancement of staff skills and knowledge.

OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure the health and well-being of the public by promoting and enforcing safe standards of hygiene and food safety in the preparation, manufacture, storage, distribution, handling and sale of food in all relevant food premises in Wrexham County Borough in accordance with the requirements of all relevant food safety legislation.
2. To provide an effective planned inspection and enforcement programme for food premises, livestock and arable holdings and animal feeding stuff premises.
3. To assist, advise and educate all parties in matters relating to food safety and standards, communicable disease control, animal feeding stuffs, fair trading and weights and measures and consumer safety with a view to supporting the provision of quality businesses.

4. To monitor the safety of food on sale to the public, wholesomeness of private drinking water supplies, composition and accuracy of labelling of food and feedings stuffs, by means of a structured sampling programme.
5. To provide and maintain a fail safe and informed trading environment for the residents of Wrexham County Borough and for visitors
6. To ensure that human food and animal feeding stuffs do not pose health risks and that labelling and compositional standards are complied with.
7. To undertake a planned programme of testing, inspection and verification of weighing and measuring equipment and surveillance of metrological control systems at relevant premises according to risk.
8. To investigate consumer and trader complaints relating to: food, food premises and animal feeding stuffs, weights and measures, fair trading and consumer safety.
9. To investigate cases of communicable disease notified to the Authority.
10. To protect consumers from fraud and trading malpractice.
11. To liase with other Local Authorities, parties and stakeholders.
12. To promote food and feeding stuff standards.
13. To respond promptly and effectively to food alerts and any threats to the safety of food sold in Wrexham County Borough.
14. To deliver the service we provide in accordance with quality management systems.

1.2 LINKS TO CORPORATE OBJECTIVES, SHARED PRIORITIES AND PLANS

Wrexham's Community Strategy Partnership, in which the Council takes a leading role, in leading the community vision process, setting out the vision priorities and goals to improve the Wrexham area. The six key strategic priorities identified in the community vision are:

- A place that values learning
- A safe place
- A healthy caring place
- A place where children and young people are valued
- An economically prosperous place
- A place that cares for the environment

In addition the Council have set out their 7 corporate priorities for the people of Wrexham County Borough. These are:

- Delivery of Streetscene – Pride in your streets
- The number of older people receiving support and the quality and range of services they receive
- Improve educational attainment/skills and reduce exclusions

- Promote sustainable development and use of land in the County Borough through a robust Local Development Plan (LDP)
- Reduce anti-social behaviour
- Implement the Regional Transport Plan to secure sustainable investment for the transport infrastructure
- Increase recycling and reduce landfill

The Food Service contributes directly to these priorities by:

- Regulating and enabling economic vitality
- Supporting local businesses
- Assisting new businesses
- Making people safer
- Promoting informed consumers
- Providing education and training
- Directly affecting the health of people

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 PROFILE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

WREXHAM COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

- 2.1.1 A total of 47 wards, covering 50,500 hectares of North East Wales 94% of the geographic area is classified as rural by the Welsh Assembly Government. The population in 131,000 (2006 ONS estimates) 52% of which live in the urban areas of Wrexham town and the urban villages.
- 2.1.2 The number of dwellings on the valuation list in March 2005 was 55,437.
- 2.1.3 Wrexham is the third largest retail centre in Wales behind Cardiff and Swansea. In recent years the town centre has enjoyed extensive development which had added 250,000 square feet to its shopping area.

The latest projects underway will see:

- Development of the 60 acre Western Gateway site adjacent to Wrexham Technology Park.
 - Redevelopment of the Eagles Meadow site to provide a 400,000 sq.ft development comprising a mix of retail, leisure and residential uses.
- 2.1.4 The industrial character of the area has changed significantly as the older heavy industries such as steel, coal and brick-making declined and new sectors took their place. Manufacturing still plays a key role with 25.3% of workers employed in this sector.
- 2.1.5 Household names such as Kellogg's and Cadbury's along with other large food manufacturers have facilities within the County.

2.2 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

2.2.1 Appendix 1 outlines the political management structure for Wrexham County Borough Council.

2.2.2 Appendix 2 outlines the Departmental Management structure.

2.3 SCOPE OF THE FOOD SERVICE

2.3.1 Scope of Service Delivery

- Inspection of premises where food is produced or sold to check compliance with Food and Agricultural legislation.
- To receive and process applications for approval/registration of premises e.g major manufacturers and registered animal feedstuff premises.
- Respond to and investigate all complaints relating to food sold, food premises, food poisoning notifications.
- To carry out inspections and to receive or seize unsound and unwholesome food and animal feeding stuffs.
- Undertake food hygiene training and promotional activities to the public and traders.
- Examine and respond to all planning consultations in relation to food premises.
- Provision of advice and guidance to caterers, food handlers etc.
- Carry out a sampling programme of food and feedstuffs for bacteriological and compositional analysis.
- Action notifications of food alerts from the National Assembly for Wales.
- To act as home/originating authority where necessary.

2.4 DEMANDS ON THE FOOD SERVICE

2.4.1 PREMISES PROFILE

Producers	6
Slaughterhouses	3
Manufacturers/Processors	44
Packers	4
Importers/Exporters	0
Distributors (including wholesalers and transporters)	19
Retailers	381
Restaurant and other caterers	825
Materials and Articles Manufactures and Suppliers	1
Manufacturers selling mainly by retail	3
Total	1292

Product Specific Approved Premises	20
Registered Feeding Stuffs	92
General Regulation Premises Supplying Food beyond Local Area	4

2.4.2 Service Delivery Points

Food Safety, Public Protection Department, High Street, Ruabon, Wrexham, LL14 6NH

In addition the Department operates an out of hours emergency facility for dealing with emergency incidents out of normal working hours. Additionally pre-planned inspections of premises are performed outside normal working hours.

3. **ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

The Public Protection Department has a documented enforcement policy and has signed up to the nationally agreed Enforcement Concordat.

In coming to any enforcement decisions, consideration will be given to the following factors:-

- a) The seriousness of the offence
- b) The past history of the business
- c) Confidence in management
- d) The consequences of non compliance
- e) The likely effectiveness of various enforcement options
- f) The attitude of the operator/proprietor

The above list is not exhaustive and other factors may be taken into account in the circumstances of a particular case. Before deciding if a prosecution should be taken, consideration will be given to issuing a formal caution in accordance with Home Office Circular 18/1994 if this course of action would be more appropriate or effective.

The choices for action are:-

- a) To take no action
- b) To take informal action
- c) To use statutory notices
- d) To use a formal caution
- e) To prosecute

The full version of the Enforcement Policy can be obtained by contacting the Chief Public Protection Officer at Housing and Public Protection Department, Crown Buildings, Chester Street, Wrexham, LL13 8BG.

If any person is dissatisfied with any aspect of the Service they should contact the following:-

The Public Protection Service Manager
Housing and Public Protection Department
High Street
Ruabon
Wrexham, LL13 8BG
Tel: 01978 813700

4. **SERVICE DELIVERY**

4.1.1 **Food and Feeding Stuff Premises Inspections**

Premises liable for food and feeding stuffs inspections are risk assessed and the risk assessment category, dictates the frequency and level of inspection they receive.

4.1.2 Premises Profile – Number of Inspections programmed

Food Standards

Risk Group	No of Premises	Due Inspections	Inspections Planned
A - High	42	42	42
B - Medium	490	307	307
Unrated	18	18	18(Questionnaire)
Total	550	367	367

Agricultural Standards*

Risk Group	Inspection level	Number of premises	Due Inspections	Inspections Planned
Arable/General Cropping	2%	7	1	1
Livestock Non Assured	25%	746	186	186
Livestock Assured	2%	110	2	2
Total		863	189	189

Food Hygiene

Risk Group	Total Premises	Inspections Planned
A	6	12
B	124	124
C	458	269
D	165	97
E	310	53
Total	1063	555

4.2 Alternative enforcement Activity

Alternative enforcement activities will be undertaken on low risk premises, using a combination of self assessment questionnaires and targeted advice/information at specific trade sectors. The Service will be participating in the Wales Retail Cross Compliance project in 2008/2009. This involves multi-disciplinary inspections of target premises, involving officers across the Public Protection Service. The aim is to reduce unnecessary inspections and save on resources.

4.3 Food and Feeding Stuff complaints

The authority's policy is that it aims to respond to complaints about food and feeding stuffs within set guidelines and procedures including regard to specific investigatory processes.

The level of complaint remains relatively stable

Complaints	2006/2007	2007/2008
Food Standards	35	47
Food Safety	128	124

4.4 Home Authority Principle

The authority has formally adopted the Home Authority Principle and has obtained member approval. The authority acts as Home Authority for 23 food manufacturing premises and as originating authority for 9 food manufacturing premises. Of these, at least 24 supply food throughout the United Kingdom and a number also export food to the EC and beyond. The authority has absorbed home authority work in the areas of food standards and food safety as part of its routine pre-programmed inspections. Larger food enterprises have nominated contact officers for food standards and food safety purposes in order that advice can be readily given in a uniform and consistent manner.

4.5 Advice to business

The authority publicises the availability of staff, advice leaflets and resources to ensure a uniform and consistent approach to advice is given across the authority's area. The Department continues to produce a newsletter aimed at operators of most of the food businesses throughout the County Borough. This aims to keep businesses up to date with changes in legislation and training opportunities, as well as current hot topics.

4.6 Food and Feeding Stuffs Inspection Sampling

Food sampling plans are drawn up annually in response to perceived local needs and problems. Sampling leans towards local producers and manufacturers and emerging issues and also take account of any national sampling programmes e.g. Society of Directors of Public Protection Wales Food and Agricultural Standards Panel, LACORS Co-ordinated surveys, and the Welsh Shopping Basket.

Samples Planned	2008/2009
Food Standards	119
Agricultural Standards	32
Food Safety	200

The authority has appointed the following for the purposes of foods and feeding stuffs analysis.

Public Analysts: Eurofins Laboratories Ltd, 47-69 Woodside Business Park, Shore Road, Birkenhead, Wirral, CH41 1EP

Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Trust, Liverpool Road, Chester. (Food Safety)

4.7 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Diseases

All cases of Food Poisoning or Suspected Food Poisoning are investigated; contact is made either by personal visit or by telephone.

The Authority has formally adopted a Plan for Handling Outbreaks of Food Poisoning together with partner organisations.

Notifications 2005 - 2007 were as follows:

Disease	2005	2006	2007
Campylobacter	177	148	146
Salmonella	24	34	21
E Coli O157	2	1	5
Cryptosporidium	21	25	13
Giardiasis	1	1	3
Other Food Poisoning	3	1	7

Two officers have taken part in an all Wales training programme in Communicable Disease Control.

4.8 Food Safety Alerts

Food safety alerts are received electronically directly by relevant officers. Action is taken in accordance with the hazard warning category and additional advice given in the warning. During the period 2007/2008 53 notifications were received and acted upon.

5. **LIAISON WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

The authority has in place arrangements to ensure that enforcement action is consistent with those of neighbouring local authorities, and is represented on the Society of Directors North Wales Technical Panels, dealing with Food Safety and Communicable Disease, Food and Agricultural Standards issues.

The authority is an active member of the Food and Agricultural Standards Panel. This panel ensures that the activities undertaken are consistent and compliant with current LACORS guidelines.

6. **FOOD SAFETY PROMOTION**

6.1 Food Hygiene Courses

During 2007-08 the following courses were delivered by the Food Safety Section

	No. of courses	Total No. of Candidates
Basic Food Hygiene	8	109
Intermediate Food Hygiene	2	24
Advanced Food Hygiene	1	6

In addition, 10 High Schools have been registered with the relevant awarding body to deliver Basic Food Hygiene courses. Officers of the Food Safety section provide input onto these courses, the initiative being supported by the Wrexham Local Health Board. During the year 2007-08, 22 pupils sat the Basic Course, and 49 the new Level 1 course.

6.2 Welsh Food Hygiene Award Scheme

This award scheme was launched on 1 March 2002, with certificates being awarded to operators of food premises which have attained high standards of cleanliness and food hygiene practices. Over 200 certificates have now been issued.

6.3 Food Safety Newsletter

The Food Safety section, in conjunction with the Food Standards section of the Trading Standards Division publishes a quarterly newsletter called “Food For Thought”, aimed at operators of all food businesses throughout the County. This enables officers to keep businesses up to date with changes in legislation and training opportunities, as well as current “hot topics”.

6.4 Safer Food Better Business Seminars

The Food Safety Team decided to run some training seminars, inviting local businesses to attend sessions aimed at educating them with regard to legal requirements concerning Food Safety Management. Three such sessions were held during the year attracting a total of 65 people from 30 different premises. It is intended to run further similar seminars during the forthcoming year.

6.5 Website Information (www.wrexham.gov.uk and follow the links to Food Safety)

The information available on Food Safety and Standards matters includes advice on operating a new business and a number of frequently asked questions.

It is possible to report a food issue, book a food hygiene course and register a food premises ‘on-line’.

A new web site service introduced in November 2006 allows members of the public to see the results of recent food hygiene inspections carried out in the borough in the form of a hygiene star rating. At the time of inspection, businesses are assessed against a range of parameters, including their compliance with food hygiene legislation, and the officer’s assessment of their confidence in the management of the business.

This assessment leads to an overall score, which will be used to calculate the star rating in the scheme which is known generally as “Scores on the Doors”.

It is hoped that this scheme will help drive up standards as well as giving the public the opportunity to make informed choices about where they choose to eat or buy food, based on food safety.

6.6 Nutrition Strategy for Wales

6.6.1 This Authority is committed to supporting the Nutrition Strategy for Wales, the Housing and Public Protection Department will carry out and support various activities to this end.

6.6.2 An authority wide review of school meal provision has been undertaken by the Nutritional and Dental Health Strategic Planning Group. A recommendation is the Food Standards Officers will be involved in inspecting and sampling school meals in Wrexham schools and advising on procurement initiatives. A similar approach is being explored as part of the review of the community meal provision in the authority.

6.6.3 Proactive initiatives planned for this year include:

- Reduction of salt consumption in takeaway meals
- Nutritional/Food Labelling campaigns aimed at schools and community groups

The Food Safety Team are introducing a new award aimed at those caterers who provide healthier food choices on their menu. This new scheme is being introduced throughout Wales, and those premises wishing to be considered for this 'Healthy Options Award' have to comply with some strict requirements with regard to hygiene and the type of food offered for sale.

6.7 Other Activities

Talks will be provided to local organisations upon request. Press releases will be issued on relevant seasonal food safety topics.

7. **RESOURCES**

A breakdown of resources allocated to the component parts of the service, as detailed above, has not been carried out. It is intended to introduce a time management recording system within the Public Protection Service to allow for this to be carried out in future years

7.1 Financial Allocation

	2007/2008
Food Safety	£289,277
Food and Agricultural Standards	£79,001

7.2 Staffing Allocation (full-time equivalents)

Food Hygiene 5.4
Food and Agricultural Standards 1.6

7.3 Staff Development Plan

The authority has introduced a Personal Review and Development programmes. This involves two review meetings annually whereby past, present and future performance is reviewed and assessed. The authority has attained the externally assessed Investors In People standard.

8. **REVIEW**

8.1 Review against the Service Plan

Departmental Activity plans which include aspects of the food service plan are reviewed on a regular basis by the senior managers of the Department. This includes regular monitoring of the plan.

8.2 Identification of any variance from the service plan

By monitoring the service delivery on a regular basis it is possible to identify shortfalls or variation in the level of services being applied, these can be actioned almost immediately, which may necessitate an audit to assess the extent and reason for such variations. Alternatively, if necessary, dependent upon the complexity and extent of the variance, a management review being called in addition to the regular monitoring programme.

8.3 Areas of improvement

The Management review will recommend and document any areas of improvement for the service, these can either be actioned immediately if necessary, or can be built into future annual service plans.

8.4 Peer Review and Self Assessment

The Trading Standards Service underwent Self Assessment/Peer Review of the whole service in 2007/08. An Improvement Plan has been put in place which will impact and improve on the delivery of Food and Agricultural Standards.