

Housing and Public Protection Department

FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2011/2012



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.

1.2 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 liaise 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.

1.3 LINKS TO CORPORATE OBJECTIVES, SHARED PRIORITIES AND PLANS

Local Authorities have a duty to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of their local communities and contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom. Each Council is required to develop a community strategy in partnership with other public sector organisations such as police, health, business community and voluntary groups, which sets out long term targets and actions to improve their local area. There were six key strategic priorities identified in Wrexham's Community Strategy, namely:

- 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

The Council has set a number of priorities and improvement priority areas where it wishes to achieve significant change for the public. These include:

- Better education and skills for employment

- Affordable housing
- Carbon emissions and energy use reduction

There are also a range of areas where the Council wishes to make major changes or improvements, including:

- Healthy eating and people being more active
- Anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and perceptions of crime
- Assisting older people to live independently
- Waste minimisation and recycling
- Access to services and listening to and engaging the public in influencing services
- Organisational development projects / service improvement projects

The Food Service can help to contribute directly to these priorities by:

- Regulating and enabling economic vitality
- Supporting local businesses
- Making people safer
- Providing education and training
- Encouraging food businesses to promote healthy options
- 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 is 133,200 (2009 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 April 2011 was 58,995
- 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.
- 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 22.5% 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 A](#) outlines the Strategic Director/Chief Officer structure for Wrexham County Borough Council.

2.2.2 [Appendix B](#) 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	7
Slaughterhouses	3
Manufacturers/Processors	66
Supermarket	11
Distributors (including wholesalers and transporters)	20
Retailers	292
Restaurant and other caterers	920
Materials and Articles in contact with food	1
Total	1320

Product Specific Approved Premises	21
Registered Feeding Stuffs	87
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 Service has recently reviewed its enforcement policy in line with the requirements of the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008

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 simple caution in accordance with Home Office Circular 016/2008 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 Service Manager of the Public Protection Department at:

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 for the year 2011/12

Food Standards

Risk Group	No of Premises	Due Inspections	Inspections Planned
A - High	47	47	47
B - Medium	315	141	141
Unrated	9	9	9
Total	371	197	197

Agricultural Standards*

Risk Group	Inspection level	Number of premises	Due Inspections	Inspections Planned
Arable/General Cropping	2%	7	0	0
Livestock Non Assured	25%	}561	79	79
Livestock Assured	2%	}	9	9
Total		568	88	88

Food Hygiene

Risk Group	Premises	Inspections Planned
A	3	6
B	63	63
C	480	267
D	200	135
E	354	192
Total	1100	663

4.2 Alternative enforcement Activity

Alternative enforcement activities will be undertaken on low risk premises (Risk Group E) where appropriate, using a combination of self assessment questionnaires and targeted advice/information at specific trade sectors.

4.3 Food and Feeding Stuffs 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 remained static overall during 2010/11

Complaints	2009/10	2010/11
Food Standards	18	31
Food Safety	67	51

These relate to complaints regarding food that members of the public have purchased which they have considered to be unfit, contaminated, or out of condition.

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.

4.4.1 Primary Authority Scheme

As part of the Government's 'Better Regulation' initiative, the Primary Authority Scheme commenced on 6 April 2009. This scheme compliments the Home Authority Principle and allows business to form a statutory partnership with a single local authority which will provide robust and reliable advice that other Councils must take into account when carrying out inspections or dealing with non compliance. The scheme build on the foundation created by voluntary home and lead authority initiatives but entails a fundamental shift in the nature of the relationship between the regulated and regulator.

During the forthcoming year we will be exploring the possibility (along with the Local Better Regulation Office) of publicising the benefits of the scheme to local businesses that trade regionally and nationally.

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 Public Protection Department produces a newsletter aimed at all businesses, including 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. An information pack for new businesses has been developed giving basic advice and useful contact details for business operators.

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 and Local Government Regulation Co-ordinated surveys. During the last year, as well as sampling our local manufacturers, a survey was undertaken of school meals. A total of 44 school meals were submitted for analysis, and all were found to be satisfactory. In 2011/12, it is envisaged that, in addition to investigating our local manufacturers, the authority will take part in a sampling programme investigating the safety of pate, and the bacteria found on shopping trolleys.

Samples Planned	20011/2012
Food Standards	100
Agricultural Standards	20
Food Safety	172

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

Public Analysts: Eurofins Laboratories Ltd, Woodthorne, Wergs Road, Wolverhampton WV6 8TQ and;

HPA Laboratory, Royal Preston Hospital, Sharoe Green Lane North, Preston.

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 2008 - 2010 were as follows, showing a slight dip in notifications, especially Salmonella. Whether this is just a temporary dip or part of a trend remains to be seen.

Disease	2008	2009	2010
Campylobacter	78	132	122
Salmonella	27	27	9
E coli O157	8	5	5
Cryptosporidium	18	12	16
Giardiasis	2	2	1
Other Food Poisoning	3	4	1

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

4.8 Food Safety Alerts

The Food Standards Agency Incidents Branch deals with the environmental contamination incidents with the potential to affect the food chain. Formed in 2007 the Agency's incident branch provides advice and support to local authorities on incidents. It produces 'Product Withdrawal Information Notices' or 'Product Recall Information Notices' to let Local Authorities and consumers know about problems associated with food. In some cases a 'Food Alert For Action' is issued. This provides local authorities with details of specific action to be taken on behalf of consumers.

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

Details of the latest product withdrawals and recalls can be found on the web site of the Food Standards Agency.

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 2010-11 the following courses were delivered by the Food Safety Section

	No. of courses	Total No. of Candidates
Basic Food Hygiene	7	89
Intermediate Food Hygiene	2	31

In addition, local High Schools have been offered the chance for food technology pupils to sit the Level 1 exam in Food hygiene. During the year 2010/11, 11 pupils passed the Level 1 paper. This number has decreased from previous years as the department has introduced charging to recoup some of its costs.

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. **As all Welsh Local Authorities agreed, in 2010, to implement the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, it was decided, across Wales, not to continue with the Hygiene Award Scheme.**

6.3 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 web site service introduced in November 2006 allowed 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 led to an overall score, which was used to calculate the star rating in the scheme which was known generally as "Scores on the Doors".

During the last two years, the Food Standards Agency has worked towards developing a national scheme which it launched, in Wales, in the Autumn of 2010. All 22 Welsh Authorities agreed to implement this national scheme, allowing customers to examine the food hygiene ratings of premises on line. It also provides for the display of certificates and stickers at the premises, indicating the rating of the premises from 0 to 5, although currently, this display is not mandatory.

6.4 Nutrition Strategy for Wales

6.4.1 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.

6.5 Proactive initiatives planned for this year include:

Food Hygiene

- Following the Pennington Report of 2009, there has been a change in emphasis in terms of enforcement action taken by officers within the Department, with an increase in formal notices being served and prosecutions initiated. Poorer performing premises have been identified, and it is proposed to concentrate resources on those premises in an attempt to bring about improvements, or take action against those unwilling to comply.
- It is envisaged that food safety information will be available at the Wrexham Council stand at the National Eisteddfod.
- The national food hygiene rating scheme will be rolled out, and any concerns brought to the attention of the Food Standards Agency.
- Level 2 and Level 3 food hygiene courses will be advertised to food businesses throughout the borough and on the Wrexham Council web site.
- The possibility of closer collaborative working with Flintshire County Council will be explored.

Food standards:

On a North Wales basis

- Sampling survey for fish labelling at takeaway establishments as a follow on from the survey carried at retail premises last year
- Sampling for copper in lambs liver (& another contaminant yet to be decided)
- Participating in FSA Imported food survey looking at (subject to successful funding bid)
 - a) Migration of formaldehyde in melamine ware
 - b) Fish speciation – linked with above sampling survey for fish labelling

- c) Meat, fish and dairy products for non-dioxin like PCBs
- Training course to assist in officers gaining CPD hours required

Wrexham only basis

- Licensed premises sampling for brand substitution and “watering”
- Use of GMO cooking oil in takeaways
- Survey into Nursery School Nutrition

Feed Standards

- Participating in FSA imported feed survey looking at dioxins, DL-PCBs and NDL-PCBs in imported oils at the 3 animal feed mills within the borough (subject to successful funding bid)
- Target feed businesses based on the National Enforcement Priorities for Feed Authorities eg; businesses involved in the processing of surplus food into animal feed chain and traceability systems in operation in feed businesses.

6.6 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.

7.1 Financial Allocation

	20010/2011
Food Safety	£284,129
Food and Agricultural Standards	£76,398

7.2 Staffing Allocation (full-time equivalents)

Food Hygiene 6
Food and Agricultural Standards 1.4

7.3 Staff Development Plan

The Authority has implemented an appraisal procedure. This involves two review meetings annually whereby past, present and future performance is reviewed and assessed, and areas for improvement identified. 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.

During the year 2010/11, the Department completed 100% of its high risk food hygiene and food standards inspections.

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 can be 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.

The Public Protection Service has received the Customer Service Excellence Award following an audit in 2009. This rewards the commitment of the Department in serving its customers.

8.4 Review of some of the investigations that took place in the year 2010/211

Food Hygiene

E.coli outbreak.

The E.coli outbreak in Llay in the summer of 2009 has had a major impact on the workings of the Food Safety Team over the last 18 months. All members of the team were heavily involved in the initial investigation, resulting in a reduction in the number of programmed routine inspections being carried out. This shortfall was met by employing a contractor between February and March 2010. The Authority employed the services of a barrister when compiling a case for prosecution of the food business operator involved in the outbreak, and, after a complex legal investigation, the operator was sentenced to an eight month custodial sentence, and prohibited from managing a food business in the future.

Investigation into the operation of a wholesale meat Company.

In April 2010, it was brought to the attention of the Department that a wholesale meat Company based in Wrexham (but previously unknown to the Department) were selling meat to retailers in the area with inadequate labelling and traceability. An investigation into the Company revealed it to be

buying in and storing meat, some of it of dubious quality and some of it with lack of authentic traceability. During the past year, having worked closely with the Food Standards Agency and several other Local Authorities around the country, several tonnes of meat have been seized and destroyed, and the investigation is still ongoing. One officer in the Food Safety Team has led the investigation, resulting in the Authority employing a contractor between September and December 2010 to help make up the shortfall in inspections which had occurred.

This case, following on closely after the Llay outbreak, and the subsequent need to employ a contractor to carry out routine inspections, resulted in additional costs to the service of approximately £22000. The Food Standards Agency has a 'fighting fund', offering financial assistance to those Authorities, which through their involvement in complex investigations, suffer financially. A successful application was made to The Agency, helping to recoup the costs of employing a contractor for these periods.

Investigation into odours emanating from a fish stall on the Butchers' Market.

Following complaints in March 2011 from members of the public and other stall holders, relating to offensive odours emanating from a fish stall on the butchers' market, officers of the Food Safety Team carried out an inspection of the premises. This revealed fish in a walk-in chiller, in a freezer and on display for sale in poor condition, some of it decomposing.

All the fish on the stall was either detained for further investigation or seized, and two applications were subsequently made to the Magistrates Court for condemnation certificates. These applications were duly made by the Magistrates and the fish sent for destruction.

The food business operator in charge of the stall has not been seen in the market since the day of inspection.

Food Standards

- Publication of menu descriptions survey carried out in North Wales highlighted that 14% of descriptions examined were found to be incorrect or unverifiable. The survey obtained coverage from both local and national newspapers and a national TV breakfast programme with the Welsh consumer programme X ray interested in following an officer if the survey is to be carried out again in the future. Following the survey bilingual guidance leaflets were developed to assist catering establishments and suppliers in product descriptions.
- Fish Labelling survey (wild or farmed and species) carried out in North Wales highlighted that 15% of samples taken were incorrect due to being misdescribed
- Participated in Food Standards Agency Imported Food Sampling programme looking at food contact materials, rice, nuts, herbs, spices and soy sauce for contaminants, GMO and mycotoxins. Total of 83 samples taken across North Wales (17 in Wrexham) results submitted to FSA to collate on national basis
- Participated in WHO's Care Home Survey looking at nutrition provided to people within this sector. Results currently being collated by Welsh panel.
- Sampling carried out prior to Christmas at licensed premises within the borough for brand substitution and "watering". 10 premises visited, 29 samples tested and one sample found to be incorrect. A written warning was issued to the premises.
- Bilingual advice leaflets are now available online on the trading standards website that can be tailor made by users for their specific need

Feed Standards

- Due to staff changes the delivery of Feed Standards was reviewed and following a FSA Audit looking at imported feed an action plan has been developed to target specific areas.

