

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

**FOOD SAFETY AND
FEEDSTUFFS
LAW ENFORCEMENT
SERVICE PLAN**

2007/2008

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1. SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Service Aims

It is the aim of the Food Safety Service to ensure that Aberdeenshire Council's statutory obligations, in accordance with Food Safety law, with guidance set out in the Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland) and approved Industry Guides to Good Hygiene Practice, are carried out in an efficient, proactive, comprehensive, consistent, fair and accountable manner in order that food offered to the public is safe for consumption.

The aim of the Feedstuffs unit is to monitor the quality of animal feedstuffs sold and used in Aberdeenshire and to provide advice and guidance to the manufacturing, distribution and farming sectors on matters arising from the Council's statutory obligations under Feedstuffs legislation.

Service Objectives

It is the objective of the Food Safety Service to protect the health and safety of all consumers living in, working in and visiting Aberdeenshire who may be affected in respect of food safety and food standards by ensuring that food businesses comply with the law.

To promote Food Safety education and training for those working in the food industry and all individual consumers.

To publicise the work of the Food Safety Service and maintain efficient and effective work systems.

The objective of the Feedstuffs unit is to ensure that animal feedstuffs sold from and consumed in Aberdeenshire will not adversely affect the human food chain or harm the animals to which they are fed.

1.2 Strategic Planning

Food safety has been identified as one of Environmental Health's key processes and, as such, is one of the integral Plans which form the basis of the Environmental Health Service.

Although not specifically included in Aberdeenshire Council's Strategic Plan, this Plan is consistent with its aims and objectives and is clearly identified in the Planning and Environmental Services' Service Plan.

The Area Committees monitor performance management information in which the statutory performance indicators for Food Safety are included. These performance figures are closely scrutinised by elected members as the food industry, specifically fishing and agriculture, is a mainstay of Aberdeenshire's economy.

The Food Safety Service function is a specific area of Planning & Environmental Services' duties and is clearly identified in the budget planning process and the priority given to the function by Aberdeenshire Council is reflected in the allocation when viewed against other Environmental Health functions.

The Unit's feedstuffs' responsibilities are addressed on an Aberdeenshire basis although trading standards planned inspection targets and achievements reported to Area Committees include feedstuffs data.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Local Profile

Aberdeenshire is predominantly a rural area with a population of 233,000 spread over an area of 6300 square kilometres with a landscape varying from the mountainous heights of the Cairngorms to rich agricultural land and over 200 kilometres of rugged coastline.

The area is Scotland's foremost fishing area accounting for 40% of total fish landings by tonnage and provides 30% of the country's fishery-related employment.

Peterhead (18,200 pop) is the largest white fish landing port in Europe with around 130,000 tonnes landed annually.

Other major towns include Fraserburgh (12,400 pop), Inverurie (11,200 pop), Stonehaven (10,500 pop), Westhill (10,000 pop), Ellon (9,700 pop), Portlethen (6,500 pop) and Banchory (6,300 pop). Aberdeenshire accounts for 9% of Scotland's total agricultural area, 16% of farm holdings and 15% of the agricultural workforce. In addition, 50% of the country's cattle, sheep and pigs are reared in the area.

The historical importance of agriculture and fishing to the area's economy is reflected in the predominance of food processes within Aberdeenshire. The development of a healthy tourism and offshore industry has increased the food premises database and the range of food issues which require to be addressed.

2.2 Organisational Structure

The present structure of the Environmental Health Section has existed since October 1998. The Section is part of Planning and Environmental Services which also includes Planning, Building Control, Animal Health & Welfare, Waste Management, Consumer Protection and Support Services.

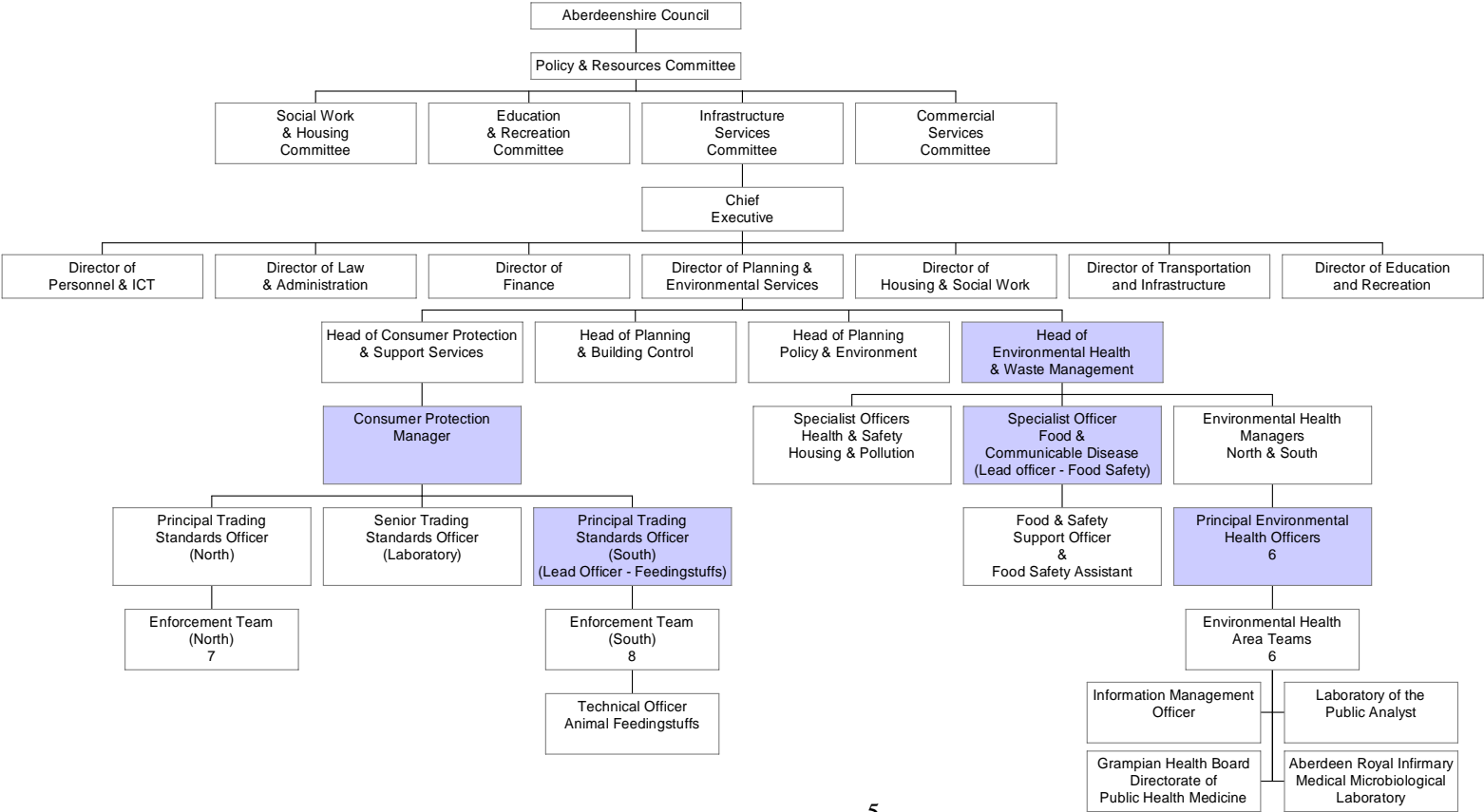
The Head of Environmental Health & Waste Management has overall responsibility for the provision and management of the food service delivery. The Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food) is the designated lead officer responsible for food safety and each Area Team is headed by a Principal Environmental Health Officer with line management responsibility over their respective enforcement officers and direct monitoring responsibility for the delivery of food enforcement activities.

The Head of Consumer Protection and Support Services has responsibility for feedstuffs enforcement with the lead officer role currently undertaken by the Principal Trading Standards Officer (South). A Technical Officer (Feedstuffs) is permanently engaged in feedstuffs enforcement and administration and Trading Standards Officers carry out occasional sampling and inspection duties.

Planning & Environmental Services

Organisational Structure

* Shaded boxes indicate management responsibility for food and feed service delivery and lead officer designation



2.3 Scope of the Service - Food

The Food Service is one aspect of the functions of the Environmental Health Section which also encompasses Health & Safety, Pollution Control, Housing, Licensing and Public Health.

The food law enforcement staff complement totals 19 Environmental Health Officers of various designations, plus 3 Student Environmental Health Officers and 8 Authorised Officers.

Due to the geographical nature of Aberdeenshire and the need to provide decentralised service delivery, the majority of officers have a range of duties and are not employed full time on food safety related work. However, 6 Authorised Officers specifically carry out food service activities. This total includes 2 Fish Hygiene Officers based at Peterhead Fish Market.

A full time Food and Safety Support Officer is employed with responsibility to provide and deliver food hygiene training courses to external businesses, voluntary groups and individuals. The officer is also responsible for involvement in health education and health promotion issues.

A Food Safety Assistant is employed on a short term contract to assist the Food & Safety Support Officer in respect of supporting food businesses under the national CookSafe project.

Feedstuffs

Feedstuffs is a small but significant function within the range of trading standards duties undertaken by Consumer Protection staff. They also deal with trading law enforcement; legal metrology; petrol, explosives and poisons licensing and the provision of consumer advice and assistance.

Consumer Protection has four operational Trading Standards Officers and one Technical Officer (Feedstuffs) in post. Trading Standards Officers have a wide range of enforcement roles other than those relating to feedstuffs but the Technical Officer (Feedstuffs) is dedicated to the feedstuffs role.

The Food Service

- ✧ Inspects premises where food is manufactured, processed, prepared or sold to ensure that it is handled and produced hygienically and that the premises operate in a hygienic manner.
- ✧ Inspects premises where food is manufactured, processed, prepared or sold to ensure that it meets the legal requirements covering quality, composition, labelling, presentation and advertising.
- ✧ Investigates food complaints in respect of contamination, composition, labelling and unhygienic practices.

- ✧ Obtains samples of food for examination and analysis to ensure it is free from contamination and that the composition and labelling is accurate. The examination and analysis is carried out by the Laboratory of the Public Analyst, Aberdeen.
- ✧ Investigates the occurrence of food poisoning and food borne disease in conjunction with NHS Grampian.
- ✧ Provides food hygiene training at Elementary, Intermediate and Refresher levels plus training in the development and maintenance of food safety management systems for businesses, voluntary groups and individual consumers.
- ✧ Promotes, advises, educates and provides guidance on food matters to the businesses, residents and visitors to Aberdeenshire.

The Feedstuffs Unit

- ✧ Inspects premises in which feedstuffs are manufactured and stored for sale to establish that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with the compositional and labelling requirements of feedstuffs legislation and to ensure compliance with feed hygiene requirements.
- ✧ Inspects livestock and arable farms to ensure safe production of feed and good animal feeding practices.
- ✧ Investigates complaints about feedstuffs.
- ✧ Takes samples of feedstuffs for examination and analysis to ensure freedom from contaminants and compliance with compositional and labelling requirements.
- ✧ Provides advice and information to businesses that manufacture, store, distribute and supply feedstuffs on the requirements of the legislation.

2.4 Demands on the Food Service

There are 2372 registered food premises in Aberdeenshire covering all category types, eg, processing, manufacture, retail and catering. Within this number, 83 (3.5%) premises have Approved status under Products of Animal Origin legislation in respect of fishery, meat products and dairy products, and 68 (3%) premises registered as production holdings under dairy products legislation.

Approximately 4% of food premises are involved in manufacture and include such specialist processes as canning, smoking, cheese and butter production, confectionery, biscuits, bottled water, ice cream, soft drinks, sandwich fillings, honey, preserves and baby teething biscuits.

There is also a significant export of foods to the rest of the UK, Europe and the world from these premises, particularly in relation to fish, shellfish and fishery products.

Ethnic Minority Food Premises

There are approximately 85 food premises in Aberdeenshire that speak English as a second language and can be broken down into the following language categories:

Cantonese/Mandarin, Bengali, Urdu, Turkish, Indonesian, French, Arabic, Czechoslovakian, Russian and Polish.

The food premises database can be categorised as follows:

Producers	164
Manufacturers / Processors	33
Packers	5
Importers / Exporters	2
Food Storage	22
Slaughterhouses	5
Distributors / Transporters	61
Retailers	555
Caterers	1513
Manufacture mainly selling by retail	12
Total:	2372

Feedstuffs

There are currently 848 registered feed premises. These include 7 premises where compound feeding stuffs are manufactured for supply and distributed throughout the UK. The remainder are mostly farms carrying out on-farm mixing, agricultural merchants supplying feed, stores or hauliers of feed, and food businesses selling co-products for animal feed.

The Feed (Hygiene and Enforcement)(Scotland) Regulations 2005 came into force on 1 January 2006 but provided a transitional period until 1 January 2008 for new businesses to comply with the requirements. Thus from this date up to an estimated 6,000 additional agricultural holdings will become liable for inspection.

Service Delivery Points

The food service is delivered from 11 offices located throughout Aberdeenshire at Banff, Fraserburgh, Peterhead, Turriff, Ellon, Inverurie, Stonehaven, Aboyne, Alford, Banchory and Huntly.

The service delivery points are open from 8.45am until 5.00pm Monday to Friday with only the Ellon, Alford and Huntly offices closing for lunch.

A flexi-time work system is operated within the Environmental Health Section allowing Authorised Officers to provide a food safety service between 7.30 am and 6.30 pm and outwith these hours should the situation demand.

Feedstuffs

Consumer Protection has two offices, in Fraserburgh and Inverurie, from which service is delivered although currently service relating to feedstuffs is provided entirely from the Inverurie office. Advice and information is available on feedstuffs matters between 8.45 am and 5.00 pm each week-day and at other times by arrangement.

External Factors

A number of 1 day events such as agricultural shows, food festivals, concerts and highland shows are held throughout Aberdeenshire on an annual basis, particularly during the summer months. These events have a minor impact on the Food Safety Service in that a large number of external food retailers and caterers provide for a large number of visitors.

2.5 Enforcement Policy

The Food Law Enforcement Policy was produced in March 2001. The policy details the choice of actions that may be taken by officers where contraventions of food law are noted in the course of proactive programmed inspections and complaint investigations with emphasis on advice and education before formal action by working with businesses to encourage compliance.

Arrangements for auditing the quality and consistency of enforcement procedures are contained in the Food Safety Internal Management Monitoring Policy and Procedure.

The enforcement policy was formally approved by Aberdeenshire Council's Infrastructure Services Committee on 10 May 2001.

The enforcement policy is available on the Aberdeenshire Council website, on Arcadia and on request at all Environmental Health service delivery points.

New EC Hygiene Regulations came into force on 1 January 2006 together with a revision of the Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland) published in September 2006.

This necessitated the revision and update of the Food Law Enforcement Policy 2007 which was produced in April 2007 and placed before Aberdeenshire Council's Infrastructure Services Committee for formal approval on 31 May 2007.

Feedstuffs

The Consumer Protection Enforcement Policy applies to all the Section's enforcement roles including that relating to feedstuffs. It was approved by the Council's Infrastructure Services Committee in August 2001 and details the action to be taken by enforcement staff when they encounter breaches of legislation. The Enforcement Policy is available on the Council's website and on request from either of the Consumer Protection offices.

3. SERVICE DELIVERY

3.1 Food and Feedstuffs Inspection Programme

Food hygiene and standards inspections are carried out in accordance with the Food Hygiene Inspection Policy and Procedure and the Food Standards Inspection Policy and Procedure. Both policies were implemented on 2 April 2001 and reviewed annually.

Feedstuffs inspections are carried out in accordance with the Consumer Protection Inspection Procedure issued in 2001 and the Feed Law Enforcement Code of Practice.

A food safety inspection programme is set at the beginning of each financial year covering food hygiene, food standards and approved establishments and is generated by the risk rating system outlined in the Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland).

The Feedstuffs inspection programme is also generated at the beginning of the financial year. The businesses to be visited have been risk assessed on the basis of the 1994 LACORS risk assessment guidance and subsequent LACORS advice.

All premises details are held on the electronic database which can generate reports on inspections due and achieved on a daily, weekly, monthly or annual basis, list premises by risk category and maintain approval and registration details of each premises.

During the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008 1123 premises are targeted to receive programmed food hygiene inspections and 791 premises are targeted to receive programmed food standards inspections. Wherever possible, these programmed inspections will be carried out as a joint inspection of the same premises.

Secondary inspections, or revisits, will be carried out when an officer gives an inspected premises a score of 15 or more in either of the compliance elements of the food hygiene inspection rating scheme contained in the Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland).

This score will act as a trigger value for a secondary inspection to be scheduled.

Secondary inspections scheduled due to the trigger value criteria having been met shall be given a higher priority than low risk programmed inspections.

Additional food inspections may require to be carried out on a reactive basis in respect of complaints received, communicable disease notifications, training, advice and sampling.

A procedure has been developed and implemented in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland) whereby premises found to be of negligible risk may be removed from the food hygiene and/or food standards programmes. These premises will be subject to an alternative enforcement strategy, once every 3 years, in the form of a postal request for businesses to self certify their compliance.

This procedure will ensure that inspection and enforcement is targeted towards those premises of highest risk.

Premises approved under Products of Animal Origin legislation are removed from the general inspection programme, in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland), and are subject to an annual primary inspection plus additional secondary inspections dependant on activities conducted at the premises.

The Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland) also requires that pro-forma inspection checklists are completed during both primary and secondary inspections of all premises and are retained in the premises files for audit purposes.

Inspection of premises in which English is spoken as a second language can require an extended period of inspection time due to the language barrier.

The inspection programme must also provide for food businesses to be inspected, on occasion, at night, at weekends, or in the early hours of the morning if they are open for business, even if such businesses are also open during normal hours of work.

These additional requirements significantly increase both the number of inspections required on an annual basis and the time taken to carry them out.

These factors, together with the continuing increase in workload throughout Environmental Health functions and existing staff resources, place a significant burden on food enforcement officers to complete all required inspection targets.

Emphasis will, therefore, be placed on food premises where the level of risk is perceived to be highest and priority given to high risk premises requiring six monthly and annual inspections and medium risk catering premises requiring inspection every 18 months. Non-catering medium risk premises and low risk premises will not be included in the food hygiene inspection programme, however, premises that have never been subject to a primary, programmed inspection and have not been scored and allocated a risk rating category will be targeted.

Food Hygiene Inspection Programme 2007 / 2008

Premises Risk Category	Premises Requiring Inspection	Targets
A (High Risk)	76	On or before the inspection date (+28 day window)
B (High Risk)	350	On or before the inspection date (+28 day window)
C (Medium Risk)	587	Catering premises within 28 day window of inspection date. Non catering premises when workload dictates
Unrated Premises	110	On or before the inspection date (+28 day window)
Approved Premises	119	On or before the inspection date (+28 day window)

Approval and Inspection of Food Establishments

There are currently 155 food establishments operating in Aberdeenshire which are approved under Product of Animal Origin legislation.

Approved Food Establishments

Meat Products Establishments	3
Minced Meat and Meat Preparations Establishments	0
Fishery Products and Live Shellfish Establishments	71
Dairy Establishments	9
Dairy Production Holdings	71
Egg Products Establishments	1
Total:	155

Food Standards Inspection Programme 2006 / 2007

Premises Risk Category	Premises Requiring Inspection	Target
A (High Risk)	18	On or before the inspection date (+28 day window)
B (Medium Risk)	99	On or before the inspection date or as a joint inspection
Unrated Premises	196	On or before the inspection date or as a joint inspection
C (Low Risk)	478	When workload dictates or as a joint inspection and/or alternative enforcement strategy

Staff Resource -v- Inspection Programme Requirement

In order to estimate the staff resource required to adequately address the inspection programme, an assessment must be made to equate the number of inspections required with the food enforcement officer compliment.

In line with previous national enforcement reports and with regard to recent additional requirements for inspection procedures, new legislation, reporting standards and retention of compliance history details and documentation, it is estimated that one qualified food law enforcement officer (FTE) could undertake and fully complete approximately 50 high risk (A & B category) and Approved premises inspections per annum.

In respect of medium risk (C category) and unrated premises it is estimated that one qualified food law enforcement officer could undertake and fully complete approximately 60 inspections per annum.

These estimates only apply to primary, programmed food hygiene inspections and do not include re-visits, secondary inspections, food standards inspections, food

sampling, food complaints, communicable disease investigations and miscellaneous food premises complaints.

The most recently completed time allocation figures indicate that an equivalent 10.18 full time qualified staff are involved in food law enforcement duties.

This would equate to the completion of 509 high risk and approved premises and 610 medium risk and unrated premises.

With the current staff resources undertaking the present year's inspection programme, a high risk premises performance figure of 93% and medium/unrated risk premises performance figure of 90% is estimated to be attained during 2007/2008.

Additional External Factors Affecting Inspection Performance

Egg Packing Centres

There are 30 registered egg producers and packers located within Aberdeenshire. The responsibility for enforcement of the egg packing activities has been transferred from the Scottish Executive Egg and Poultry Unit to Local Authority Environmental Health Services. Due to the packing activity involved these businesses require to be approved in accordance with EC Hygiene Regulation 853/2004 and have a transitional period until 31 December 2009 to attain this approval.

A programme of approval has been developed over this transitional period and intervention with the targeted businesses may place a burden on the inspection programme.

Primary Producer Enforcement

EC Regulation 852/2004 Annex 1 deals with the enforcement of primary producers such as livestock, crop and horticulture farm premises. Enforcement of these businesses is shared between SEERAD Agricultural Inspections and Local Authority Environmental Health and Consumer Protection enforcement officers. The enforcement regime for primary producers is driven by the Food Standards Agency Scotland who are responsible for developing a premises database and issuing the required inspection programme.

No details of programmed inspections during 2007/2008 are available at this time, however, these inspections will encroach on the proposed workload throughout the year.

Official Controls of Wild Pectinidae (Scallops)

The official sampling controls for harvested wild scallops have been transferred from offshore to the first point of arrival at the processor and is now the responsibility of Local Authority Environmental Health services. Ten approved establishments who process and/or dispatch consignments of scallops within Aberdeenshire have been identified as falling under the official control regime for which a sampling programme will require to be developed and implemented.

The frequency of the official control sampling is determined by assessing the current compliance of each establishment in respect of food safety management control documentation, training standards of operatives and in-house testing checks of product. Sampling frequencies can range from every 1-2 weeks to twice a year dependant on establishment compliance and this work will again encroach on the current workload.

Changes in Local Authority Enforcement (CLAE)

Following the publication of the Hampton Report on the subject of reducing administrative burdens and effective inspection and enforcement the Food Standards Agency has set up a CLAE Policy Board to look at fundamental changes to the whole approach to Food Law Enforcement by Local Authorities. Four separate projects have been agreed within the review:

- ✧ Food law enforcement policy
- ✧ Food law performance monitoring system
- ✧ Local authority audit arrangements
- ✧ The Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement.

The CLAE review is programmed to be completed by the end of 2007 and due for implementation on 1 April 2008 and, although no specific details or associated consultations have been released, any proposed changes in food law enforcement activities is bound to affect the targeted 07/08 workload.

Cross Boundary Inspections

Inspections are undertaken on a recognised geographical basis by enforcement staff based at service delivery points within each Area. Staff are fully experienced and knowledgeable in respect of specialist production/manufacturing premises within their prescribed areas and fully acquainted with retail and catering premises operations.

On occasion, officers may cross service delivery points and Area boundaries to assist in meeting inspection targets in certain circumstances such as high target levels, absence and holiday cover.

Out of Hours Inspections

The food safety section operates a flexible working system between 7.30 am and 6.30 pm and the majority of inspections are carried out between these hours.

Due to present staffing resources and current workloads, no formal out of hours inspection programme exists. However, officers are expected to use their initiative and assess, on an individual premises basis, when a food business should be subject to an inspection outwith normal working hours.

Food businesses open at night, at weekends or in the early hours of the morning should, on occasion, be inspected at these times in order to assess food hygiene procedures and practices when businesses are operating at full capacity.

Out of hours inspections may also be undertaken:

- ✧ When a food business is not open during normal daytime working hours, eg, hot food takeaways.
- ✧ When a food business is open only at weekends e.g. markets, night clubs
- ✧ When a food business operates only in the evening and at weekends, eg, outside caterer.
- ✧ When high risk processes are operating e.g. bakeries during night shift.
- ✧ When a food business is of a seasonal nature.
- ✧ When a day time inspection has raised food safety concerns.

Feedstuffs

285 premises are due to receive programmed feedingstuffs inspections during the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008. The bulk of these are to farms to ensure compliance with feed hygiene requirements but 9 visits are scheduled to feed manufacturers where both feed hygiene and feed compositional standards will be assessed. In addition hauliers will be targeted to ensure they comply with feed hygiene requirements applicable to them from 1 January 2008. In total, 7 High risk premises will be visited, 134 Medium risk and 144 Low risk.

32 routine feedingstuffs samples are programmed for this year and further samples will be obtained as part of a Food Standards Agency project on dioxins and mycotoxins. In addition any maize gluten feed or brewers grain originating from the USA will be sampled for the presence of the non-authorized genetically modified organism Bt 10.

Samples will be targeted at products recommended as priorities in the Food Standards Agency Guidance on Enforcement Priorities for Feed Authorities in Great Britain. This takes account of animal feed incidents of the previous year as well as new and emerging Community legislation.

3.2 Food and Feedstuffs Complaints

The Service will consider and, where appropriate, fully investigate every food complaint in accordance with procedures and the Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland). Where sufficient evidence is available to warrant action being taken, this will be done in accordance with the Food Safety Enforcement Policy.

A Food Complaint Policy and Procedure is available to harmonise the investigatory process. It was implemented on 1 August 2001 and is reviewed annually.

Where food involved in a complaint originates outside Aberdeenshire, liaison with the appropriate home/originating or enforcement authority is undertaken in accordance with the policy and procedure.

Food complaints are accepted at all service delivery points whether the responsibility of another area or local authority. Arrangements are in place to allow the transfer of information and investigatory responsibilities when necessary.

All subjects of complaint, if sent to the Public Analyst for examination or analysis, are recorded on the national electronic Food Surveillance System, in accordance with laid down procedures.

Complaints about feedstuffs are received from purchasers in Aberdeenshire and from enforcement authorities elsewhere. These are raised with the suppliers or manufacturers and investigations are carried out to determine the cause. Apparent breaches of legislation are dealt with in accordance with the Consumer Protection enforcement policy.

3.3 Home Authority Principle

Aberdeenshire Council actively supports the Home Authority Principle and a number of local businesses have been identified as ones which produce goods or provide services to customers outwith Aberdeenshire borders and could benefit from the Home Authority Principle in respect of food safety, food standards and trading standards.

Selected businesses are contacted and invited to participate in the partnership.

The businesses who have entered into the agreement manufacture a variety of products such as fish, meat, dairy products, soft drinks and bottled water, confectionery, preserves, honey and bakery products which are sold both within the United Kingdom and throughout the world and are marketed under own name and various national brands. The Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food), the Principal Environmental Health Officer with responsibility for the area in which a business operates and a designated Trading Standards Officer have been nominated as the contact officers in respect of any Home Authority Principle referral.

Details of the businesses registered under the Home Authority Principle have been placed on the Home Authority Principle website operated by the Local Authorities Co-ordinating Body for Regulatory Services (LACORS).

There are currently 29 businesses listed on the website for whom Aberdeenshire Council acts as Home Authority and additional businesses are added as necessary.

3.4 Advice to Businesses

The Environmental Health Service encourages the provision of advice, guidance and education to all food businesses within Aberdeenshire and actively seeks to progress this issue in the following manner:

- ✧ Provision of advice and guidance when carrying out programmed inspections and during post inspection discussion.
- ✧ Encouragement to food businesses to seek further advice, assistance and guidance on food related issues through pro-active contact with individual officers at all service delivery points.

- ✧ Issuing of published guidance to food businesses on specific food safety issues and offering further guidance in person, if required.
- ✧ Encouragement to food businesses in attending relevant food safety training courses and provision of details of available courses externally and in-house.
- ✧ Offering private meetings to food business proprietors to provide education and advice outwith the “inspection environment”.
- ✧ The maintenance of stocks and availability of information leaflets, free of charge, as far as is reasonably practicable.
- ✧ The organisation of seminars to assist food businesses in compliance with food hygiene, safety and standards issues (eg, food safety management systems, quantitative ingredient declarations (QUID), etc).
- ✧ Encouragement to authorised food officers to participate in the provision of food hygiene training courses and presentations to food businesses, trade associations, education establishments, charity and community organisations with a view to promoting the work and increasing the profile of the food safety service.

It is estimated that advice and assistance will be given to food businesses during the majority of the annual programmed inspections either verbally or contained in the written inspection report.

It is felt that existing resources are adequate to continue the provision of this facility.

The Environmental Health Section is approved as an Intermediate and Elementary Food Hygiene level training centre by the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland.

The Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food) and the Food and Safety Support Officer present the Intermediate level course, however, dependant on the location of demand local enforcement officers assist as additional presenters, where necessary.

The Elementary level course is presented by the Food and Safety Support Officer and the Food Safety Assistant.

Due to the number of Aberdeenshire Council employees actively involved in the handling of food and the amount of high risk food being prepared and served on a daily basis throughout Aberdeenshire (eg, school kitchens, care homes, lunch clubs, meals on wheels etc) the Intermediate level course is offered to all Aberdeenshire Council employees involved in food handling at a supervisory or management level. This offer may extend to introductory and refresher training if identified as required.

The Environmental Health Section also seeks to form working partnerships with local enterprise companies, further education colleges, private training companies, trade associations and any other bodies in order to facilitate discussion and to provide advice, assistance, guidance and training concerning all food safety issues.

Similarly for Feed Businesses, advice is provided as follows:

- Providing advice and education during programmed inspection visits
- In response to specific enquiries from businesses
- The provision of trader guidance leaflets free of charge
- Having an information stall at agricultural shows in the area

3.5 Food and Feedstuffs Sampling

Food sampling is carried out to a set annual programme for microbiological, compositional and labelling parameters agreed between the Laboratory of the Public Analyst, Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council and the Moray Council.

The purpose of the sampling is to ensure that food manufactured, distributed, prepared and retailed within Aberdeenshire is fit for human consumption and complies with the relevant food safety and food standards legislation and/or guidelines for the type of food.

The type of food sampled varies and is primarily targeted at food produced locally for local consumption or for distribution outwith Aberdeenshire. Whenever possible, sampling will be carried out in accordance with local, regional and national surveys, projects and/or investigations initiated by local intelligence or by regional and national bodies such as the North of Scotland Food Liaison Group (NSFLG), the Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee (SFELC), the Local Authorities Co-ordinators for Regulatory Services (LACORS), the Health Protection Agency (HPA), the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the European Union (EU).

The food service will take part in the following planned local, regional and national surveys during 2007/2008:

- ✧ Salt levels in pre packed products (FSCWG)
- ✧ Microbiological quality of fresh herbs (LACORS/HPA)
- ✧ Ready to eat fruit and vegetables for pesticide residue (FSCWG)
- ✧ Nutritional parameters of children's meals at tourist attractions and leisure centres (FSCWG)
- ✧ Microbiological quality of pate made by small scale producers and caterers (SFELC)
- ✧ Verotoxigenic E coli in minced meat (SFELC)
- ✧ Study of ceramic articles in contact with food (NSFLG)
- ✧ Microbiological quality of rotisserie chickens in retail premises (NSFLG)
- ✧ Swabbing study of contact surfaces in caterers and producers (NSFLG)

The following local targeted surveillance exercises to be carried out by Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council and The Moray Council have been agreed.

- ✧ Pesticides in Soft Fruit
- ✧ 3 MCRD in Soya Sauce from retail and catering premises
- ✧ Arsenic and Mercury in Imported Foods from Third Countries
- ✧ Sudan 1 in spices
- ✧ Gluten, peanut protein and SO₂ in selected foods.

In addition, the general monitoring sampling programme will consist of the following elements:

- ✧ Periodic testing of specific foods (eg, fish products, ice-cream, meat products, dairy products, ready to eat meals, sandwiches, soft drinks, bottled waters, alcohol, bakery products etc).
- ✧ Routine sampling of water supplies used as an ingredient of food or in the production of ice, in particular private water supplies serving food businesses.
- ✧ Routine hygiene surface swabbing of food preparation surfaces and equipment in high risk food premises.

Food samples may also be taken:

- ✧ As part of food borne disease investigations.
- ✧ As part of food complaint investigations.

For the purposes of examination and analysis, two laboratories have been appointed in accordance with the Food Safety Act 1990 and the Food Hygiene (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

- ✧ The Aberdeen City Council Public Analyst for compositional and labelling analysis and microbiological examination (including contamination by foreign bodies).
- ✧ Aberdeen Royal Infirmary Medical Microbiological Laboratory for microbiological examination as part of food borne disease investigations.

Aberdeenshire Council actively supports the national Food Surveillance System (FSSUK) which electronically records and downloads all food sampling. Sample results are placed on a secure website where national trends can be easily identified.

The Information Officer has been designated as the Systems Administrator.

Feedstuffs sampling is planned for the year with the purpose of detecting deficiencies in labelling and compositional requirements and monitoring the presence of contaminants.

Samples are taken to establish:

- ✧ the presence of the main nutrients at the prescribed and/or stated levels;
- ✧ that additive levels do not exceed those prescribed
- ✧ that physical, biological and chemical contaminants are not present at significant levels
- ✧ the validity of complaints made to the service

Samples are submitted to the Agricultural Analyst employed by Aberdeen City Council and to the Central Laboratory in York for dioxin and PCB monitoring.

3.6 Notifications, Control and Investigation of Outbreaks of Foodborne Disease

The control and investigation of food poisoning, foodborne and food related infectious disease is carried out in conjunction and liaison with the NHS Grampian Health Protection Team. The Health Protection Team is headed by the Consultant in Public Health Medicine. Control and investigation procedures are carried out in accordance with the requirements of the NHS Grampian, Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council and the Moray Council, Outbreak Control Plan which was reviewed in February 2007.

Control measures are implemented under the local Enteric Exclusion Policy developed in accordance with nationally agreed guidelines.

Confirmed cases of food related disease (eg, Salmonella, E.coli 0157, Campylobacter, Cryptosporidium, viral disease) are notified by the Health Protection Team to the Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food) by way of a password protected electronic mail system.

Notifications are immediately forwarded to the relevant Principal Environmental Health Officer who responds in accordance with Aberdeenshire Council's local service standard.

Investigation procedures may include:

- ✧ Interview with cases and contacts.
- ✧ Procurement of water samples (in particular with private supplies).
- ✧ Procurement of environmental samples.
- ✧ Arrangement for the procurement of faecal samples.
- ✧ Inspection of suspected premises.
- ✧ Sampling of suspected food.
- ✧ Advice and guidance on personal hygiene given to cases and/or contacts.

The local service standard has been developed in liaison with the NHS Grampian Health Protection Team and all information obtained during investigations is passed to the Consultant in Public Health Medicine.

A regional Health Protection Group, consisting of representatives from NHS Grampian Health Protection Team, Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council, the Moray Council and other relevant agencies, meets on a monthly basis to report and discuss current infection figures, investigatory and control findings and national issues pertaining to food related infectious disease.

An out of hours service for the notification, investigation and control of food related disease is also in place and ensures a 24 hour facility for discussion and action, if deemed necessary.

No one can predict an outbreak incident. However, previous experience indicates that food poisoning episodes may, on occasion, place an extraordinary demand on the food service. It is anticipated that such incidents can be dealt with utilising existing resources.

3.7 Food Safety Incidents / Food Hazard Warnings

Food Safety Incidents and Food Hazard Warnings are dealt with under the Food Hazard Warning Policy and Procedure developed in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland).

The Lotus Notes electronic mail system is maintained for the purpose of receiving food alert communications. Arrangements are in place to enable the Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food), Principal Environmental Health Officers, nominated area Food Focus Group representatives and designated Authorised Officers to receive notifications directly from the Food Standards Agency (Scotland).

This arrangement allows all Environmental Health service delivery points to receive Food Alerts simultaneously, thereby ensuring that any immediate action required may be carried out promptly. It is the responsibility of the Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food) to determine appropriate local action to be taken in response to a Food Alert over and above any specific action detailed in the alert by the Food Standards Agency (Scotland).

When a specific category or categories of food premises requires to be contacted and made aware of a particular food hazard warning by means of written notification then this procedure is carried out centrally under the responsibility of the Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food) and the Information Officer.

Out of hours contact arrangements with regard to Food Alerts are in place and full details have been intimated to the Food Standards Agency (Scotland) in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland).

Current arrangements have been in place since the inception of the Food Standards Agency (Scotland) in April 2000.

All notifications are fully investigated and reported on, when necessary, and have not placed any specific demand on existing staff resources.

In March 2007 the Food Standards Agency launched a separate Allergy Alert category of food alert in response to the number of product withdrawals and recalls associated with food allergies.

Each allergy alert received by the Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food) is forwarded, on receipt, to all food enforcement officers for information.

3.8 Liaison with Other Organisations

In order to ensure consistency of enforcement action with neighbouring local authorities within the north of Scotland area, and with other local authorities throughout Scotland, a delegated representative from the Environmental Health Section attends regular meetings of the following:

- ✧ North of Scotland Food Liaison Group (meets quarterly)
- ✧ Scottish Fish Hygiene Working Group (meets quarterly)

- ✧ Health Protection Group (meets monthly)
(chaired by Consultant in Public Health Medicine)
- ✧ Food Sampling Working Group (meets annually)
(chaired by the Public Analyst)
- ✧ Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee (SFELC)
- ✧ Scottish Food Standards Sub-Committee
- ✧ Primary Producer Enforcement Working Group (chaired by FSAS)
- ✧ Food Surveillance System Users Group
(chaired by SCIEH)
- ✧ Scottish Animal Feedstuffs Group
- ✧ Feedstuffs Sub-Committee
- ✧ North of Scotland Quality Liaison Group

When appropriate, attendance will also be sought at meetings held by other Agencies such as:

- ✧ Food Standards Agency (Scotland) (FSA)
- ✧ Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD)
- ✧ Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health (SCIEH)
- ✧ Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
- ✧ Fertilisers and Feeding Focus Group (LACORS)

Due attention is also paid to guidance issued by the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS), the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), SCIEH, SFELC, COSLA, and the Local Authorities Co-ordinators for Regulatory Services (LACORS) on enforcement issues as well as Government Guidelines and Codes of Practice.

Regular liaison with other Aberdeenshire Council services (eg, Training & Development, Education & Recreation, Housing & Social Work, Law & Administration) is currently in place to discuss, review and progress specific food safety issues such as food hygiene training requirements, food safety policies and licensing procedures.

Attendance at and representation on liaison, working and advisory groups is the responsibility of the Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food) and is a major task contained in the job description. On occasion, however, dependent on current workload, designated food enforcement officers are invited to attend such meetings as a substitute for or accompanied by the Specialist Officer (Food). Attendance at food safety, hygiene and standards related meetings is accorded to individual officers as part of continuous professional development arrangements.

These arrangements are accommodated within the food service resource allocation.

3.9 Food and Feedstuffs Safety and Standards Promotion

This Authority actively encourages participation in food safety promotional work by individual officers on a local level or by the Environmental Health Section at a local, regional and national level. The development of and participation in food safety promotions/campaigns is a dedicated duty contained in the job description of the Food and Safety Support Officer who is directly line managed by the Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food).

It is anticipated that the Authority's involvement in food safety promotional work will be progressed over the current year at the following levels:

National

- ✧ Participation in and support of the national food hygiene campaign initiated and co-ordinated by the Food Standards Agency.
- ✧ Participation in the annual national Food Safety Week.
- ✧ Participation in the Healthy Living Award Scheme – a national award scheme for the food service sector that rewards achievements for making it easier for consumers to eat healthily.
- ✧ Participation in and support of the Eat Safe Award Scheme launched in Scotland on 20 January 2005. The scheme provides an incentive to caterers to strive for food hygiene and food safety management standards beyond those required by law. It also assists consumers make informed choices about where to eat out by providing a recognisable “sign” of excellence in standards of food hygiene. Aberdeenshire Council have, at present, 13 recipients of the Eat Safe Award.

Celebrations Restaurant and Coffee Parlour, Turriff (2nd award in Scotland)
Macphie of Glenbervie Staff Restaurant, Glenbervie (3rd award in Scotland)
Mitchells Restaurant, Inverurie
Inverurie Garden Centre Restaurant, Inverurie
Happy Plant Garden Centre & Coffee Shop, Mintlaw
Zanres, Mintlaw
Balmedie Fish and Chip Bar
ESS, St Fergus
Hilton Hotel, Ballater
Saddlers Restaurant, Turriff
Symposium Coffee House, Faith Acres, Inverurie
Symposium Coffee House, Peterhead
Banff and Buchan College Refectory, Fraserburgh

Local

- ✧ Food enforcement officers are encouraged to participate in food safety presentations on receipt of invitations/requests from local community organisations, educational establishments, etc, in order to promote the work of the Service and to highlight food safety issues causing consumer concern at a national level.

- ✧ Guidance leaflets are developed and issued to target specific and seasonal food issues:

On publication, the leaflets are featured in a press release and are available in downloadable format on the Council website and Arcadia. Hard copies are circulated to all Environmental Health Service delivery points and to relevant catering and retail premises.

- ✧ A programme is prepared to ensure an Environmental Health Food Safety Service presence at food related events and shows throughout Aberdeenshire on an annual basis.

It is estimated that the majority of this work will be undertaken by the Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food) and the Food and Safety Support Officer, as per their job descriptions. However, additional food enforcement staff may be required to undertake out of hours presentations, as required, dependent upon workload.

4. RESOURCES

4.1 Financial Allocation

The current budget (2007/2008) for food safety law enforcement is £790,000. For feedstuffs enforcement a total of £62,000 is budgeted for 2007/08.

Details of the non-fixed costs incurred during 2006/2007 were as follows:

Food Safety Expenditure:

* Staffing Costs (coded to food safety)	£ 222,948.98
Equipment	£ 2,423.99
Purchase of Samples	£ 576.11
Travel & Subsistence	£ 21,248.87
Public Analyst	£ 313,360.00
** Staff Allocation (not coded to food safety)	£ 461,868.80
Other Costs (incl central admin costs)	£ <u>173,758.54</u>
TOTAL	£1,196,185.29

* officers dedicated to food law enforcement duties

** officers undertaking general Environmental Health duties including food law enforcement

Food Safety - Income:

Health Certificates	£ 29,711.51
Street Traders Certificates of Compliance	£ 3,118.50
Food Hygiene Courses	£ 14,220.00
Fish Hygiene Charges	£ 37,921.44
Border Inspection Post	£ 0.00
Port Health	£ 3,793.68
Other Income	£ <u>4,746.95</u>
TOTAL	£ 93,512.08

Feedstuffs - Expenditure:

Staffing Costs	£	48,601
Equipment	£	1,946
Purchase of Samples	£	82
Travel & Subsistence	£	5,474
Analyses	£	4,000
Overheads	£	6,528
Other Costs	£	00
Training	£	2,213
TOTAL	£	68,844

Feedstuffs – Income: £0

The Public Analyst fee is an agreed fixed price for the year and includes water sampling analysis costs taken outside the food safety service.

No specific financial provision is made in respect of legal action necessary as part of the food enforcement function. However, appropriate funding can be made available in extraordinary circumstances from Council revenue balances.

4.2 Staff Allocation

The staff complement in terms of food safety enforcement is as follows:

Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food & Communicable Disease)	-	1
Principal Environmental Health Officers	-	6
Senior / Environmental Health Officers	-	13
Senior / Authorised Officers	-	8
Food and Safety Support Officer	-	1
Food Safety Assistant	-	1
Student Environmental Health Officers	-	3

The Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food) is designated as the lead officer on food safety, hygiene and standard matters as required under the Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland) and the Food Standards Agency has been duly notified.

In terms of Environmental Health Officer provision, there are no dedicated food safety enforcement officers and all carry out duties as part of a generic work remit from the Area Offices. Principal Officers have line management responsibility in respect of their relevant Area team.

The Food and Safety Support Officer and the Food Safety Assistant do not carry out enforcement duties but undertake food safety related duties such as training assessment and provision and the promotion of food safety issues. These posts are line managed by the Specialist Officer (Food).

All Officers have the necessary qualifications, training and competence required to carry out their designated roles and are authorised in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland).

The equivalent of 10.18 full time staff are involved in food law enforcement.

Administration support and office resources are shared with other functions of the Environmental Health Service.

The Technical Officer (Feedstuffs) carries out the majority of the inspection and sampling work with some assistance from other staff when necessary for health and safety or evidential reasons. Trading Standards Officers also provide some back up in this area as well as guidance for the Technical Officer.

The equivalent of 1.5 staff are involved in feedstuffs enforcement and administration.

4.3 Staff Development Plan

Formal development schemes for Environmental Health Officers and Authorised Officers have been produced, approved and adopted.

The schemes allow officers to progress above the current salary bar by meeting CPD criteria, demonstrating competency, expertise, innovation and initiative.

Seven Environmental Health Officers have progressed to become Senior Environmental Health Officers and one Authorised Officer has progressed to become a Senior Authorised Officer.

An Employee Development Review Scheme is carried out annually with training needs and requirements identified for individual officers and addressed by the development and production of an ongoing training programme managed, maintained and recorded in accordance with the Continuous Professional Development criteria required by the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland.

There is an ongoing commitment to training through proactive and reactive attendance at courses, seminars and conferences.

The Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food) has responsibility to provide in-house training sessions and will continue to set up working groups in order to discuss and progress local and national food safety issues such as Product of Animal Origin Premises Approval, Code of Practice Review and Interpretation, Policy and Procedure Review and Inspection Harmonisation. Cascade training sessions will also be arranged and provided when necessary in relation to identified food issues such as the new EC Hygiene Legislation, Food Sampling, Food Standards, Communicable Disease and Imported Food.

Food safety training and development records for all food enforcement officers are retained and maintained by the Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food) in consultation with the Environmental Health Manager (South) who has responsibility for all training issues within the Environmental Health Section.

The development requirements of the Technical Officer (Feedstuffs) are covered by the Council's Employee Review and Development scheme. Update training is provided as and when required.

5. QUALITY ASSESSMENT

5.1 Performance Management Assessment and Monitoring

An Internal Management Monitoring Policy and Procedure was implemented in December 2003 and forms the basis of verifying the consistency and quality of food premises inspections, responses to food complaints, enquiries and other service requests.

Quality management is the responsibility of the Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food) and the Principal Environmental Health Officers and addresses the following criteria:

- ✧ Food premises database – maintenance and accuracy
- ✧ Compliance with inspection programmes and agreed targets
- ✧ Compliance with local policies and procedures
- ✧ Consistency and quality of inspections
- ✧ Consistency and quality of post inspection paperwork
- ✧ Consistency and quality of electronic food premises database input
- ✧ Qualifications and experience of officers
- ✧ Training and continuous professional development

Monitoring arrangements include accompanying officers during inspections by the relevant Principal Environmental Health Officer or the Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food) with an agreed target of a minimum of one inspection per officer per year.

Inspections to be monitored will be in respect of premises rated in A and B risk categories and should include premises with Product of Animal Origin approval.

Joint inspections are not used as a personal appraisal of individual officers.

Monitoring records are recorded in the personal file of each officer for audit purposes.

The Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food) and the Information Officer carry out area audits of food premises files and the food premises database at selected service delivery points on an annual basis to verify compliance with local policies and procedures and in accordance with The Standard contained in the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement document.

These audits assess the appropriateness of action taken and ensure that a history of events is clearly documented in respect of each premises.

6. REVIEW

6.1 Review Against the Service Plan

Service Plan reviews and improvement plans are produced on an annual basis when the relevant performance figures have been calculated. The reviews are available as separate documents in order that they may be published on the Aberdeenshire Council website for ease of access.

6.2 Service Plan Variance

Any variance from the service plan and the reason for the variance will be identified and recorded.

Additional work carried out in other enforcement areas which has achieved the service objectives through other means will also be recorded.

6.3 Service Improvement

In response to the Service Plan reviews improvements will be identified and adopted in order to raise the performance standards and quality. Improvement plans will be available within the annual Service Plan review documents.