



FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT

2007–2008 OUTTURN

AND

ENFORCEMENT PLAN 2008-2009

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PART 1 - INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAN

The Council is responsible for food hygiene and standards under The Food Safety Act 1990, The European Communities Act 1972 and the associated Regulations. We advise on and enforce food safety in more than **900** food premises including restaurants, cafés, takeaways, public houses, shops and hotels. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) Framework Agreement shapes the work of all local authorities in relation to food safety and standards and the FSA audit local authorities on their food law enforcement activities.

Bracknell Forest Council's Food Law Enforcement Plan contains details of:

- the work we have completed in the previous year
- what we plan to do this year and
- how we intend to do it.

Our key priorities are:

- to promote food safety
- protect consumers from unsafe food
- work with and support local food businesses
- encourage awareness of healthy food choices.

This work is carried out jointly by **The Food Team** made up of Officers from the Commercial Team (Environmental Health) in relation to **food hygiene** and the Trading Standards Team in relation to **food standards**. To maximise our resources and provide a consistent and balanced approach, officers from both teams work closely to deliver an integrated service.

Our work is varied; for example last year we:

- inspected **507** food businesses and carried out **157** other related visits
- dealt with **56** food complaints and a further **119** complaints about food premises
- issued written notifications on how businesses can comply with the law to **510** businesses.

In 2008/09 we plan to:

- inspect **537** food businesses and provide self-assessment questionnaires to **21** low-risk premises
- support at least **20** small businesses with adoption of Safer Food Better Business, a food safety management system
- extend our sampling policy to include more imported foods
- Enhance the Berkshire-wide Safe Food Award and Catering for Health Award run in partnership with Bracknell Forest Primary Care Trust to a national accessible website.

We will base this work on:

- inspecting food premises on the basis of risk
- targeted sampling of food to ensure that it is safe to eat
- investigating complaints and concerns over food safety
- providing advice, information and training
- recognising and rewarding high standards of food safety through our Award Scheme
- consulting our customers and seeking feedback on the quality of our service.

This plan is reviewed every year and we welcome your comments and suggestions on how it could be improved further. Please forward your views to environmental.health@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

PART 2 – DELIVERING THE PLAN

Our Vision

The Food Law Enforcement Plan is designed to work within the Bracknell Forest Community Plan to help deliver the Council's priorities. The Council's vision is:

“To make Bracknell Forest a place where people can thrive: living, learning and working in a clean, safe and healthy environment”

The Corporate themes adopted by Bracknell Forest Borough Council (Community Plan) that encompass our health and safety work are contained within Priority Area Three, promoting health and achievement.

Our Food Law Enforcement Plan aims to ensure a graduated approach based on risk. It reaffirms our commitment to carry out our duties in an open, fair and consistent manner that promotes economic development.

We recognise that most businesses want to comply with the law; therefore we want to support and enable businesses to meet their legal duties without unnecessary expense. However, firm action, including prosecution, will be taken where appropriate.

This Food Law Enforcement Plan sets out the actions we are taking to promote food safety for the benefit of local consumers and those who produce and sell food in our Borough.



FOOD SAMPLING

In 2008/09 our surveys will look at:

Food Standards

- Labelling and composition of doner kebabs
- Nutrition of nursery meals (age 3–5)
- Contamination of imported food – maize products.

Food Hygiene

- Speciality Meats
- Egg Mix & Environmental Samples from restaurants and takeaways
- Shelled Nuts from retail premises
- Sandwiches and other cold ready to eat foods stored at ambient temperature at point of sale
- Regenerated / Transported Meals at the point of service e.g. WRVS, hospitals and schools.

Training and Information

Education and information are an important part of our enforcement activity. We assist and support local businesses through the provision of Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering training for food handlers. We aim to provide 6 courses in the current year.

In addition we continue to utilise a system developed by the Food Standards Agency called 'Safer Food Better Business' (SFBB) to help small food business operators draw up food safety management systems specific to their own food activities. We aim to provide one training seminar aimed specifically at minority ethnic or specialist caterers, in all providing support to a further 20 businesses.

We will again be involved in both Food Safety Week and Food Awareness Week, the latter in conjunction with the Bracknell Forest Primary Care Trust. We hope to repeat our successful involvement with a number of schools and support this work with the timely production of a Food Safety Newsletter.

We aim to continue to provide advice and information through our website at:
<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/environment.htm>

Safe Food Award and Catering for Health Schemes

The Safe Food Award Scheme continues to be received with appreciation by businesses. Food businesses are currently assessed for Pass, Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. The scheme incorporates the Catering for Health Award in partnership with the Bracknell Forest PCT. This ensures that the importance of healthy eating is encouraged and recognised. Details of the Award winners are published on the Council website. In 2007/08 a total of **147** businesses received Safe Food Awards.

A further 6 businesses achieved Catering for Health Awards. This brings the total number of Bracknell caterers maintaining a high standard of food hygiene and offering a healthy menu choice to **19** out of 279.

The scheme is set to develop further in 2008/09 with Bracknell Forest making its food hygiene ratings available to consumers on a nationwide database. This tool allows customers to choose where to eat based on the hygiene ratings of premises.

Departures from the Plan

Departures from the Food Law Enforcement Plan, reported through Departmental Management Team, will be exceptional, capable of justification and be fully considered by the Head of Environmental Health and the Head of Trading Standards and Licensing, before varying action is taken. Reasons for any departure will be fully documented.

Areas for Development

We are always striving to move the service forward. In order to achieve this, we set targets and identify areas for development during the coming year. **Appendix A** details the work achieved in 2007-08 and **Appendix B** details the targets from our **Action Plan for 2008-09** along with proposed timescales.

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

Staff Resources

There are now **3.7** full time equivalent qualified officers within Trading Standards and Licensing and **3** full time equivalent officers within Environmental Health who can perform food law enforcement. In total **9** officers are involved in issues relating to food safety enforcement as part of their day-to-day duties.

Consisting of:

- **1 x Team Manager**
- **1 x Principal Trading Standards Officer**
- **1 x Senior Environmental Health Officer**
- **2 x Environmental Health Officers**
- **1.5 Trading Standards Officers**
- **1 x Food Safety Enforcement Officer**
- **1 x Trading Standards Enforcement Officer**

The **5** officers in the Commercial Team spend **60%** of their time on Food Hygiene related matters. Within the Trading Standards Team 3 officers have been allocated to undertake this work accounting for 40% of their time.

Customer Feedback and Quality Monitoring

Procedures are in place to scrutinise all the work that is undertaken by the Food Team. Our quality monitoring includes detailed practice notes, checks on data entry and officer consistency. It is our aim to achieve the highest standard of service with the resources available and as from 2008 we will be adopting criteria set by the government, national key performance indicator 182, (KPI 182), to measure business satisfaction with the service provided.

Benchmarking

We are members of the Berkshire Environmental Health Benchmarking Club and the Trading Standards South East (TSSE) Benchmarking Group. These seek to identify and develop good practice procedures to help enhance the quality and consistency of service provision. Where opportunities arise within these groups for benchmarking activities during the year, we will aim to contribute.

Staff Development

We aim to make full use of the skills that exist in the Food Team and to develop those skills through updates, shadowed working and internal and external training. A record of continuous development is maintained for all Officers.

PART 3 – FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like further information about the service that the Food Team provides, or would like to speak to an officer for advice on a food matter, please contact us:

Environmental Health or Trading Standards Service at
Environment, Culture & Communities Department
Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Time Square
Market Street
Bracknell
RG12 1JD

Tel: 01344 352000

Fax: 01344 351411

Email: environmental.health@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Or look on our website at www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/environment.htm

Other useful websites:

Food Standards Agency (FSA)

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.uk/>

Safer Food, Better Business

<http://cleanup.food.gov.uk/index.html>

Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/>

Foodlink

<http://www.foodlink.org.uk/>

European Food Safety Authority

<http://www.efsa.eu.int/>

Availability of Officers

Officers can be contacted through our Customer Service Centre which is open at the following times:

8.30 am—5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Address for correspondence:

Director of Environment, Culture & Communities
Environment & Leisure Department
Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Time Square
Market Street
Bracknell
RG12 1JD

Tel: 01344 352000

Fax: 01344 352555

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Web: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk

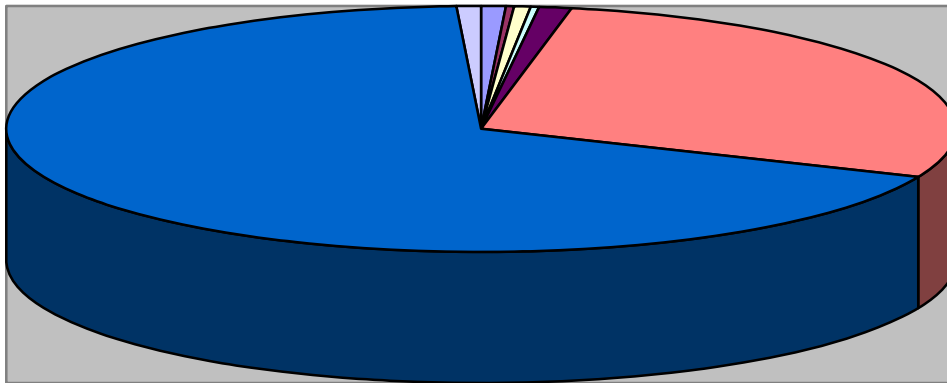
FOOD ENFORCEMENT OUTTURN 2007/08

HOW DID WE PERFORM?

Our Food Law Enforcement Plan is reviewed on an annual basis. This process provides the opportunity to record achievements and identify the key areas for improvement over the forthcoming year.

Inspections

The chart shows the proportion and type of food businesses that were inspected by the Food Team during 2007/08.

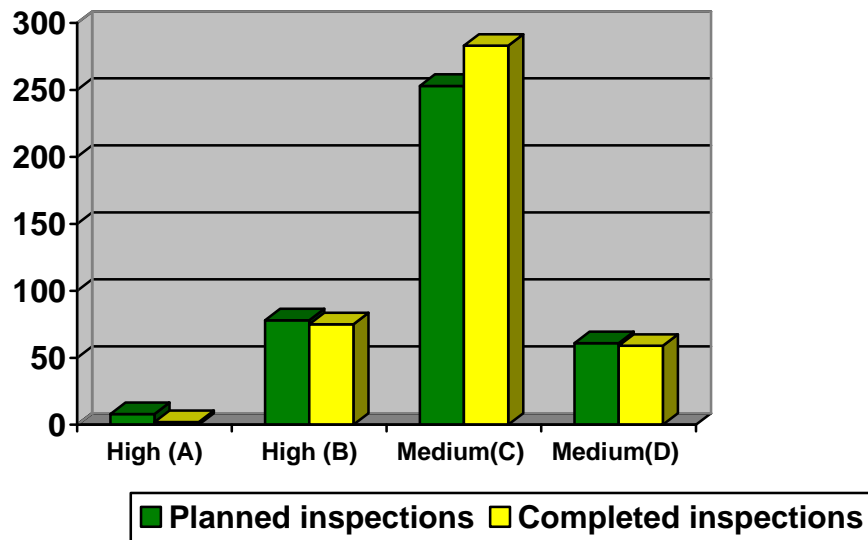


Primary producers	Slaughter Houses	Manufacturer	Importer
Distributor	Retailers	Restaurants	Materials

All local authorities have a legal duty to inspect food businesses with a frequency based upon risk, so that our resources are directed to best effect. In **2007/08** the Food Teams completed a combined total of **664** inspections. The individual breakdown for Food Hygiene and Food Standards Inspections is illustrated in the tables on the next page.

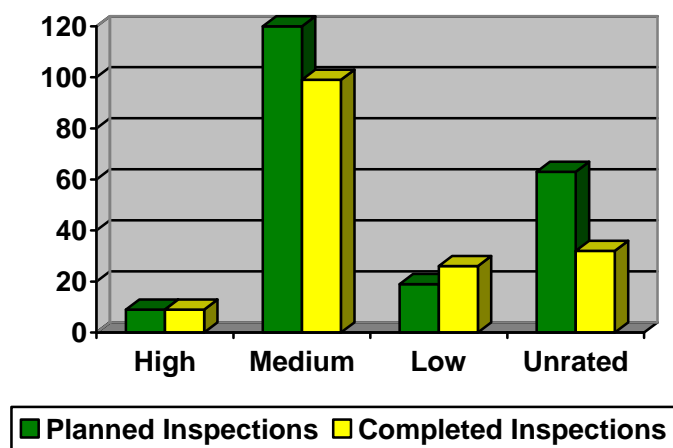
This year we aim to carry out **399** food hygiene and **138** food standards inspections. We adopted an alternative enforcement strategy for low-risk food hygiene inspections in **2007/08** and sent out 153 self-assessment questionnaires. For **2008/09** 42 premises have been identified as suitable for this strategy for both food hygiene and food standards.

Environmental Health Food Hygiene Inspections for 2007/08



The 4 premises rated as 'A' were scheduled at the start of the year to receive 2 inspections at 6-monthly intervals, making 8 inspections of A premises in total. However 2 were found to have improved at the first visit and hence did not require the second programmed inspection and a further 2 had ceased trading. Similarly 6 premises in Category B were found to have ceased trading on re-inspection and 3 new premises were allocated to this category. In Category C there were 48 inspections of new premises and 18 were found to have ceased trading. Category D had also 3 premises which ceased trading and one new premises which explains the differences between planned and completed inspections.

Trading Standards Food Standards Inspections for 2007/08



High, medium and low premises are defined as those visited once in 12, 24 and 60 months respectively. Unrated are those which have yet to be visited and rated. **All Trading Standards work was disrupted for some three months over the summer during the two foot and mouth outbreaks that occurred as staff were called upon to undertake animal health duties during this time.** Additionally the Trading Standards team had a vacancy which was not filled for over 10 months.

Sampling

We routinely sample food produced and offered for sale in the Borough to check quality and safety. In **2007/08** we sent **209** samples for analysis, of which **25** were found to be unsatisfactory and resulted in follow-up action.

Our sampling programme focuses on foods produced and sold within the Borough. We also participate in regional and national sampling initiatives, and undertake special investigations of local interest. Last year our surveys looked at a range of issues including:

Sampling 2007/08 for Food Standards

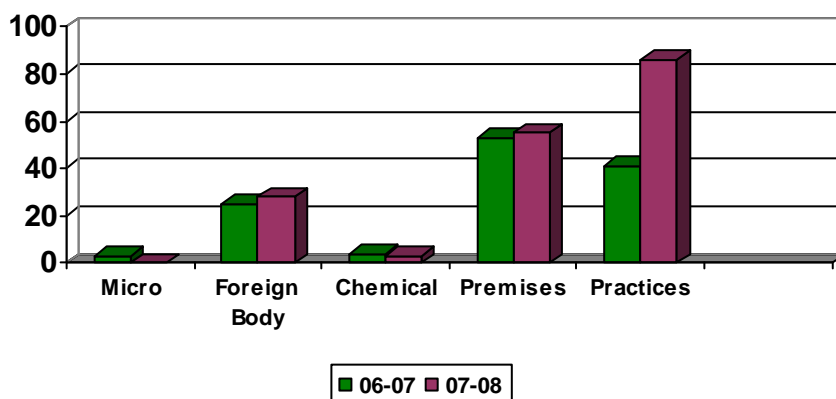
- The nutritional content of children's meals at tourist-related establishments
- A survey of contaminants in imported foods
- A survey of the accuracy of 'traffic light' labelling on pre-packed foods
- A survey of hidden salt/sodium levels in apparently healthy foods
- A survey on pesticide residue on fruit and vegetables
- Excess packaging of food.

Sampling 2007/08 for Food Hygiene

- Shopping basket style survey focused on detecting Listeria in a selection of foods frequently consumed by elderly consumers
- Fresh herbs
- Kebab shop and vehicles, looking at salads and sauces
- Edible seeds
- Condiments available for customer use in restaurant and takeaways
- Sliced meats
- Salad bars
- Hot buffet food
- Soft ice cream.

Complaint Investigations

We continue to receive consumer complaints about dirty food premises; poor food hygiene practices and contaminated food products. In **2007/08** we dealt with 175 such complaints. We investigate all such complaints and provide advice or take enforcement action as appropriate. The table below shows the number of different complaints dealt with by The Food Team in **2007/2008**. The figures indicate an increase which is partly attributable to increased customer awareness.



Bracknell Forest Borough Council Home Authority Work

We continue to devote resources to working with Bracknell-based food businesses, dealing with **49** referrals from around the country involving local businesses and handling **24** formal requests for advice on food matters. The majority of our Home Authority work is in connection with food importers and Waitrose Ltd, whose head offices are based in this borough.

Food Safety Incidents

Food Alerts, such as warnings for removal of particular products from sale or use, are issued by the FSA. The Food Team respond to the Alerts taking whatever action is needed. In 2007/08 we responded to 41 Alerts, 3 of which were for 'action' the remainder for 'information'. Alerts that we responded to included: salmonella detected in seed products and carbon monoxide detected in tuna fillets,

Food Poisoning

Infectious Disease Notifications

An important part of our work is the investigation of infectious diseases, including food poisoning, to locate potential sources and prevent the spread of infection. In **2007/08** we dealt with 230 notifications of infectious diseases. The gastrointestinal infection *Campylobacter* accounted for 70% of the notifications. This is an increase of almost 50% which is reflective of notifications nationwide, according to the figures collated by the Health Protection Agency.

Training and Information

Education and information are important part of our enforcement activity. We have assisted and supported local businesses through the provision of Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering training for food handlers. We provided 6 courses in 2007/08.

In addition we have utilised a system developed by the Food Standards Agency called 'Safer Food Better Business' (SFBB) to help small food business operators draw up food safety management systems specific to their own food activities. In 2007/08 we continued to offer businesses on-site coaching.

June, as always, was a busy time with our involvement in both Food Safety Week and Food Awareness Week, the latter in conjunction with the Bracknell Forest Primary Care Trust. In **June 2007** we gave an interactive presentation to a number of schools.

Other significant achievements include the **ongoing** publication and free distribution of a newsletter to local businesses, and the continued provision of advice and information through our website at: <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/environment.htm>

Berkshire Safe Food Award and Catering for Health

During 2007/08 we continued to work in partnership with the Bracknell Forest PCT in awarding a further 6 Catering for Health Awards. This brings the total number of Bracknell caterers maintaining a high standard of food hygiene and offering a healthy menu choice to 19 food businesses.

Development of a Berkshire-wide Safe Food Award continues to be received with appreciation by businesses. Details of the Award winners are published on the Council website. In 2007/08 a total of 147 businesses received Safe Food Awards.

Enforcement Action

We have adopted a broad and comprehensive set of measures to protect consumers and promote food safety, and actively work with local business to achieve a balanced approach.

Any enforcement action taken by the Food Team is graduated, proportionate and in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Policy. A full copy of the policy can be found on our website: <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/environment/env-environmental.htm>.

In 2007/08 the Food Team issued 506 written notifications of non-compliance with legal requirements. 1 Formal Improvement Notice was served, in line with staged enforcement approach outline in the Enforcement Policy.

Staff Development

A record of continuous development is maintained for all Officers. The following courses were attended during 2007/08:

- Food legislation update training
- Food standards inspection techniques
- Handling food allergens
- RIPH Intermediate (Level 3) Food Hygiene Certificate
- Smokefree Legislation Training
- Fit 3 Project Management Workshop
- Local Area Agreements
- Food Law Enforcement
- Health and Safety Enforcement Management Model.

Internal training attended included: acting as official consultees for licensing applications; fraud in food manufacturing processes; topical sources of contamination in food and the changes to food legislation

**FOOD ENFORCEMENT PLAN
2008/2009**

APPENDIX B

Protecting and Informing Consumers		
Task	Outcome	By when
<i>To seek to ensure all local food businesses are operating as safely as practicable and are seeking to comply with relevant legislation.</i>	Inspect food businesses in accordance with FSA and LACORS (Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services) risk assessments. 100% of premises due for food hygiene and food standards inspections. (559) 80% Business Satisfaction on inspection (National Key Performance Indicator 2)	March 2009
<i>Continue to implement the Safe Food Award and to enhance scheme by launching Scores on the Doors.</i>	Provide encouragement, direction and support to local businesses in achieving higher levels of compliance and standards to enhance the wellbeing of Bracknell Forest residents and visitors. Publicise the achievements of businesses and identify those premises requiring improvement by accessing the Council website. Hold 1 award ceremony.	March 2009
<i>To develop and implement a Food Safety Plan detailing inspection and sampling</i>	Provide encouragement, direction and support to local businesses in achieving higher levels of compliance and standards to enhance the wellbeing of Bracknell Forest residents and visitors. Plan to be achieved within existing resources.	March 2009
<i>In partnership with Consumer Direct South East provide a consumer advice and information service providing advice to residents</i>	95% initial response with 2 working days 90% completed within 30 days 100% informed on progress every 30 days 83% customer satisfaction (NKPI) 95% Business Satisfaction	Ongoing
<i>Respond and investigate Infectious Disease Notifications</i>	To ensure infectious disease notifications are investigated and to take prompt action to prevent food poisonings and infections spreading.	Ongoing

Protecting and informing Customers		
Task	Outcome	By when
<i>Implement a food and water sampling programme which is in accord with national and local requirements, linked to the inspection programme and is complementary to the TS sampling programme</i>	Identification of potential risk areas and to assess the effectiveness of food safety management systems. A joined-up approach to sampling to maximise impact within the budget available.	Ongoing
<i>Develop an Imported food policy with TS</i>	Ensure imported food entering the Borough is safe and correctly labelled. 100 premises included in checks throughout the year.	March 2009
<i>Publish specialist food safety newsletters</i>	2 Food Newsletters in association with TS and Licensing	March 2009

Support for Local Businesses		
Task	Outcome	By when
<i>Develop integrated approach between EH, TS and Licensing to maximise resources and reduce the regulatory burden on compliant businesses</i>	Agree and define approach to integration using 'Retail Enforcement Pilot' Set up documentation and training Number of shared interventions achieved 100	March 2009
<i>Provide training and coaching to Food Businesses to provide a documented food safety management plan</i>	Support 20 small businesses with SFBB. Overall increased compliance with HACCP in SME food businesses. Increase the number of food businesses eligible for the Safe Food award.	March 2009
<i>Develop specialist project aimed at consistently poor catering premises to raise levels of compliance</i>	10% increase in confidence in management (40 businesses)	March 2009
<i>To provide support to local businesses in line with the LACORS Home Authority Principle</i>	Respond to requests for advice within 2 working days and provide full advice within 14 days Respond to referrals within 2 working days. Refer to company within 21 days. Closed within 3 months.	Ongoing
<i>Provide competitively priced accredited training courses in food hygiene</i>	6 x level 2 CIEH training courses plus 1 specialist language or sector specific courses	March 2009

Local Partnerships		
Task	Outcome	By when
<i>To support and participate in the working of the TSSE region of authorities and the Berkshire Food Liaison Group</i>	Work effectively together upon agreed regional and national projects to provide a consistent and improved service	March 2009
<i>To further develop the Buy With Confidence trader approval scheme within Bracknell Forest</i>	To form partnerships with a variety of businesses including food, in order to deliver higher standards and improved customer satisfaction. 50 businesses signed up by 31/03/2009	March 2009
<i>In partnership with the Berkshire East PCT promote the Healthy Eating criteria for caterers</i>	Support and encourage caterers to provide healthy menu choices. Continue to encourage new premises to gain Healthy Eating Awards of which 2 in area of health inequality.	March 2009

Performance Management		
Task	Outcome	By when
<i>To respond within agreed timetables for national performance data for FSA and BERR (Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform)</i>	Full reports submitted within time-frames	As requested
<i>To maintain a BFBC integrated Food Service between Food Hygiene and Food Standards</i>	To implement contents of agreed work plan, ensure consistency of approach and maximise resources	Ongoing
<i>Complete Quarterly Quality Performance Assessments</i>	To ensure the quality and consistency of the Food Team's work	Quarterly
<i>Maintain and assess competency of food safety and food standards officers in line with Food Standards Agency criteria</i>	Provide or source relevant training as required Complete Quality Monitoring in line with the existing procedures	Ongoing