

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL
HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE
SERVICE PLAN FOR FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT 2017/2018

It is estimated (from N.I. Department of Health statistics) that in Belfast 11200 people will suffer from food poisoning and food related illness annually, resulting in 104 hospital admissions, 5 deaths and costing the Belfast economy an estimated £19 million each year.

This service plan for food law enforcement describes the balance of techniques and approaches to be taken by Belfast City Council during 2017/2018 to ensure food safety and promote informed healthy choices. The Council will mix and balance the four common approaches to enforcement:

- Demand driven
- Education driven
- Inspection driven
- Intelligence driven

Food safety is a priority for the Council's Environmental Health Service, with staff on the Food Safety, Port Health and Business Support Units providing most aspects of the service.

1 – Service Aims and Objectives

1.1 Aims and objectives

The key aims and objectives of the food service are to:

1. Protect consumers and ensure food produced, imported through or sold in Belfast is safe to eat and meets the necessary legal standards
2. Support the local economy, including the Regeneration and investment in the City Centre by minimising the cost of food related illness and supporting individual businesses through clear advice, guidance and good regulation which are effective, risk based and proportionate.
3. Respond to all complaints or service requests within target response times and meet the needs of local people through effective delivery of quality and customer centric services.
4. Help consumers and businesses understand about safe food and healthy eating, and help to ensure that consumers have the information they need to make informed choices whilst promoting food sustainability and helping to reduce food poverty.

1.2 Links to corporate objectives and plans

The Belfast Agenda is Belfast's first community plan and sets out a new vision for the Belfast to become a City which will drive a successful economy, a magnet for investment and a great place to live for everyone,

The Food Service has an important contribution to make to the achievement of the Council's vision, particularly through its support to the Economy and creating a safe city. The service also helps the Council in its efforts to stimulate the local economy through its City Centre regeneration and investment plan.

In promoting food safety and healthy choices the Food Service also contributes to delivering the cross-government food strategy, published in January 2010, setting out a joint vision for the UK food system in 2030 and the Food Standards Agency's Strategy for 2015–2020.

The Service, by improving food safety in the City plays an important role in promoting Belfast to visitors and tourists. This has become more visible since the Food Hygiene Rating Act (NI) 2016 came into operation in October 2016 requiring all relevant food businesses to display their ratings (display was previously voluntary, with 57% of businesses displaying their rating). The introduction of this legislation required a considerable amount of preparatory work by the Service.

2. Background

2.1 Profile of the Local Authority

The Council is the largest of the 11 Councils in Northern Ireland and, by any definition, is an organization of size, importance and structure. It now serves a population of 334,000 (with a daytime population of 422,500). The area is predominantly urban in nature with the Council offices being located in the city centre. The city is the major centre for both employment and entertainment in Northern Ireland with two thirds of the population of Northern Ireland being within 50km of the city.

Within the city boundary is the Port of Belfast, Ireland's busiest port and one of the major ports within the United Kingdom. The area of the Port consists of 1,000 acres of water 2,000 acres of land and over 8,000 linear metres of quays. Around two thirds of Northern Ireland's seaborne trade, and a quarter of that for Ireland as a whole, is handled at the port which receives almost 6000 vessels each year and 23 million tonnes of cargo.

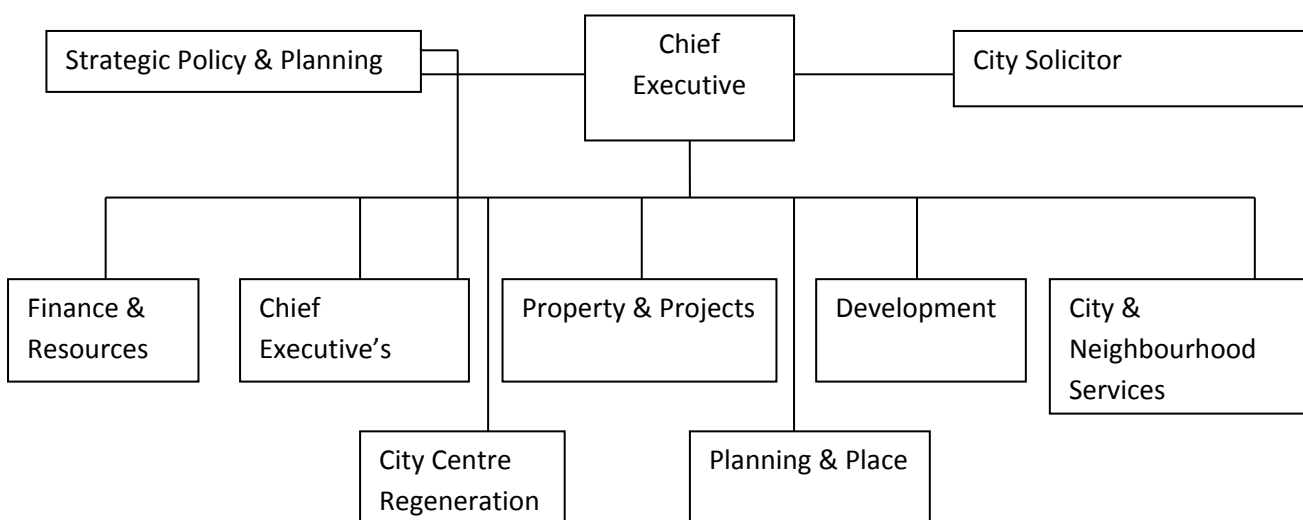
Belfast is Ireland's busiest ferry port with 1.4 million passengers and half a million freight units annually and is also the leading dry bulk port with regards to imports of grain, animal feeds, coal, fertilizers and cement. Additionally, over 95% of Northern Ireland's petroleum and oil products are handled at the Port.

The City has become one of the main cruise destinations in the UK attracting over 80 cruise ship visits in 2016 carrying 170,000 passengers and generating around £24 million for the local economy.

2.2 Organisational Structure

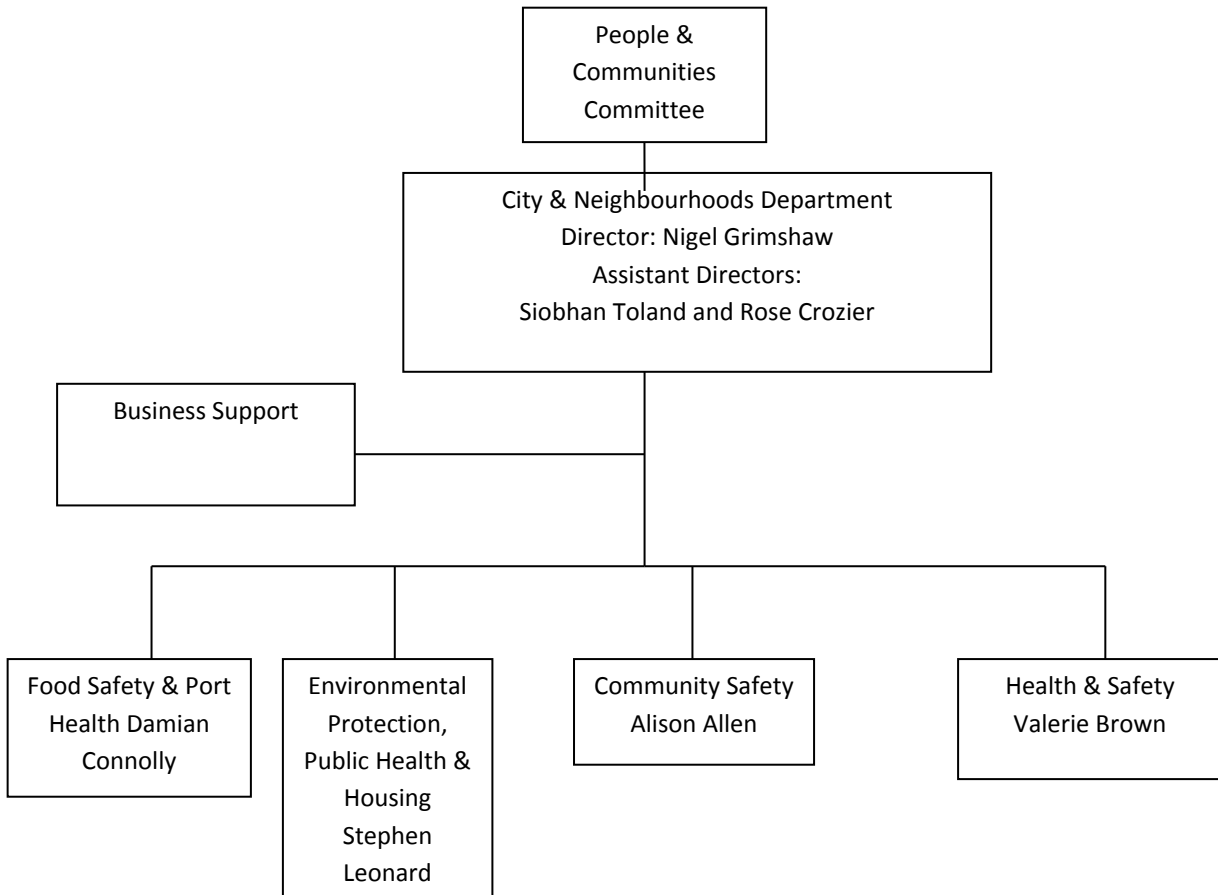
Following local government reform in April 2015 and the additional powers and responsibilities of the new Council, the organisation has and continues to undergoing substantial redesign. This has included new committee structures and restructuring of the various departments.

The new City and Neighbourhood Services Department was formed and is currently one of seven service Departments which make up the officer structure of the Council. The various Departments are shown below.



Each Department reports to and discharges the functions of one or more Council Committees. The City & Neighbourhoods Department will mainly report to the People & Communities Committee. The Department comprises of approximately 1,500 staff and brings together many of the main functions providing services directly to ratepayers across the city, including Parks, Community services, Environmental Health, Waste Management, Cleansing Services, Good Relations etc The common threads are the objectives of improving public safety and health and helping to create a more attractive and sustainable city.

The Department is currently being redesigned to better integrate and improve service delivery and that process of change will continue during this year and in the years to come. However the existing Environmental Health Service consists of four units supported by Business Support:-



The Environmental Health Manager (Food Safety and Port Health) has responsibility for the delivery of this Service Plan for Food Law Enforcement. He is assisted by two Principal Environmental Health Officers (Food Safety) and a Principal Environmental Health Officer (Port Health). A pool of suitably qualified and authorized Environmental Health Officers are employed by the Council, and are allocated to duties within 3 areas of the Service, and allocation of staff to each of those areas can be quickly adjusted, should the need arise. The Unit has established an area based service delivery system.

The Northern Ireland Public Health Laboratory based at the Royal Group of Hospitals, Belfast provides specialist services in food microbiology and pathology. The Council has recently appointed Public Analyst Scientific Services as Public Analysts (PASS) to provide specialist analysis and advice on food composition, labelling and chemical and physical contaminants of food. The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute at Newforge Lane, Belfast, is employed for the identification of pests associated with food and food premises and for the testing of fishery products for veterinary drug residues.

2.3 Scope of the Food Service

Belfast City Council carries out all functions relating to food safety and food standards matters, including the following:

- Inspection of food premises including manufacturing, catering and retail premises in accordance with a range of legislation and guidance, and taking into consideration the Council's Regulation and Enforcement Policy
- Registration of food premises
- Implementation of the national Food hygiene Rating Scheme including publication of food hygiene inspection results on the national website.
- Dealing with potential food hazards including Food Alerts
- Approval of premises for the production and supply of products of animal origin
- Inspection of foodstuffs and the formulation and implementation of sampling programmes for analysis in relation to composition and labelling and/or microbiological examination.
- Investigation of complaints relating to food and hygiene of food premises and Investigation of cases of suspected food poisoning
- Providing advice and information on food safety matters
- The provision of specialized food safety education programmes, and signposting to other commercially available training services
- Food safety and nutrition promotional activities, including participation in National Food Safety Week, the Healthier Chinese Project and the development and promotion of actions to improve nutrition & health and reduce food poverty.
 - Provision of practical food safety and port health training to environmental health students.
 - Investigation of incidents of statutorily notifiable food and water related illnesses on behalf of the Director of Public Health of the Public Health Agency.
 - Inspection of third country (non EU) imported food of non animal origin.
 - In partnership with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development the operation of the Port of Belfast Border Inspection Post and the inspection of Products of Animal Origin.
 - Inspection of vessels (ships – including passenger ferries) arriving at the Port to ensure compliance with International and United Kingdom health and hygiene requirements including food safety and control of infectious diseases and to issue Ship Sanitation Certificates as required.
 - Enforcement of legislation relating to import and control of Organic produce
 - Enforcement of legislation to control Illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing
 - The issuing of export certificates required for the export of consignments of food from NI to third countries

The service is currently provided by members of staff employed by Belfast City Council. All staff involved in the inspection of food and food premises meet the qualification and experience requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice. Staff competence levels and authorisations are currently being reviewed as a result of changes to the Food Law Code of Practice.

2.4 Demands on the Food Service

2.4.1. Food Safety Service

Belfast City Council has 3796 food businesses within the City.
A profile of premises classified in accordance with the FSA monitoring returns are given below.

TYPE OF ESTABLISHMENT	NO. OF PREMISES
Primary Producers	4
Slaughterhouses	0
Manufacturers & Packers	198
Importers/Exporters	35(includes Import Agents)
Distributors/Transporters	59
Retailers	765
Restaurant/Caterers	2733
Unrated premises awaiting first inspection as of 1st April 2016	25

NB. 610 premises are considered to be of so low risk they are currently outside the intervention programme. These are mainly childminders that care for children in their own home.

8 manufacturing premises, 1 primary producers and 6 cold stores in the city are approved under EC Reg 853/2004.

The majority of food premises in the city are caterers or retailers reflecting the fact that Belfast is a major regional centre for shopping, entertainment, business and tourism. However within the City there are a number of major manufacturers including two major bakeries, two flour mills, 6 Cold Stores 3 meat preparations and other meat products premises, an animal fat rendering plant, 4 approved fish processors which manufacture and process food for distribution throughout Northern Ireland and Great Britain and export to the Republic of Ireland.

External Temporary Storage Facilities

An ETSF (formerly known as Enhanced Remote Transit Shed – ERTS) is a warehouse designated by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), where goods are temporarily stored pending clearance by HMRC, and prior to release into free circulation. ETSFs are examined quarterly to ascertain if foods are stored.

As shown above there are a large number of distribution centres located in the city many of which distribute across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Seven of these premises specialize in ethnic foods of non EU origin and are monitored to ensure imported food controls are being adhered to.

It is estimated that over 5% of Belfast's food businesses, across a range of business types, are owned by people whose first language is not English. These food business operators have traditionally been Asian, however in recent times there has been an influx of Eastern Europeans and Africans. Whilst this adds significantly to diversity and customer choice, it requires particular effort from the service to ensure equal access to advice and information, including the facility for the translation of documents and provision of interpreters for on-site visits and meetings.

The Council's food safety services are delivered from the Cecil Ward Building, 4-10 Linenhall Street, Belfast, between the hours of 0830 and 1700, Monday to Thursday, and between 0830 and 1630 on Fridays. The Port Health services are delivered from the Port Health Unit at Corry Place, Belfast Harbour Estate, during the same hours.

Out of hours work is undertaken as necessary, such as for businesses open at night and weekends and ship inspections in the Port.

There has been a continued increase in the number of large outdoor events which have significant catering facilities associated with them, such as farmers and continental markets, festivals and concerts. These events require evening, weekend and Bank Holiday visits to monitor food hygiene standards. We will continue to strengthen relationships with promoters and organizers this year in order to ensure that adequate attention is given to planning for food safety. Significant events this year include the Spring & Christmas Continental Markets, The Maritime Festival, Orangefest, St. Patrick's Day, Tennents Vital and Belsonic music festivals.

An Environmental Health Officer is on standby outside normal office hours, to deal with infectious disease incidents at the discretion of the Public Health Agency (PHA), and a Port Health Officer is on standby out of office hours to deal with issues arising in the Port. This service extends 24 hours per day for 365 days per year.

2.4.2. Port Health Service

The Port Health Unit is located in purpose built office and inspection facilities within the harbour estate. These facilities were approved in January 2010 by the Food Standards Agency on behalf of the European Union as a Designated Point of Entry into the EU for the carrying out of official controls on high-risk products of non-animal origin imported from outside the EU. The facility is also approved as a Border Inspection Post for the examination, sampling and clearance of third country imports of products of animal origin and is operated by the Council in conjunction with DAERA (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs – formerly DARD). It is also approved as a First Point of Introduction for certain food contact materials.

2.5 Enforcement Policy

The Council has prepared a Regulation and Enforcement Policy which was formally adopted by the Council in December 2011. The purpose of this policy is to secure an efficient and effective approach to all regulatory and enforcement activities carried out by Belfast City Council. The policy is consistent with the principles set out in the Government's Better Regulation agenda and with the principles of the Enforcement concordat and it is also intended to improve compliance with legislation while minimizing the burden on businesses, individuals, organizations and the Council. The policy sets out the principles which will enable the Service to ensure consistent and open enforcement and is considered when determining appropriate enforcement action. Management controls are in place to ensure that all decisions on enforcement are consistent with this policy.

In preparing the Policy, the Council has considered the Regulator's Compliance Code and the "Statement of Intent" between the Local Better Regulation office, the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment, and District Councils.

The Regulation and Enforcement Policy is available on the Council's website and can be accessed at www.belfastcity.gov.uk. Businesses are advised of the existence of the policy together with how it can be obtained on all standard letters and reports left following the inspection of premises.

This general policy is supported by unit specific guidance and procedures.

The Council maintains its own Legal Services to provide support to service Departments.

3. Service Delivery

3.1 Food Premises Interventions

The Council plans and delivers a risk based Food Premises Intervention Programme based on the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice. The frequency and type of intervention planned aims to concentrate resources on the worst offenders and higher risk businesses whilst at the same time reducing the burden on the better businesses.

The Council recognizes the importance of a robust intervention programme and will thoroughly inspect all businesses that are higher risk or have poorer compliance levels.

As in the previous year the Council will use a “light touch” Alternative Enforcement Strategy for the very low risk premises. This strategy will negate the need for intervention in many of these premises.

There are a total of 1803 premises due a food hygiene intervention and 518 premises due a food standards intervention in 2017-2018 with an additional number of category E (Hygiene) premises to be inspected because of the introduction of the mandatory FHRS scheme.

Food Hygiene Intervention strategy

Inspections

It is planned to carry out 1803 full hygiene inspections.

The profile of the planned food hygiene intervention programme for 2017/2018 by risk rating is shown below:-

Risk category	Inspection planned
A	4
B	103
C	668
D	703
E	300
E to be inspected for FHRS scheme	90
Unrated	25
Estimated New Premises or Changes of Ownership	400

Alternative Enforcement Strategy

Normally those food businesses which present the lowest risk to public health and have an intervention rating of Category E for hygiene and do not fall into other inspection criteria, will be subject to an alternative approach to inspection. The strategy consists of a Food Safety Self-Assessment Questionnaire posted to the business to monitor compliance and confirm that there has been no significant change to the business or change in ownership. Premises that do not provide the necessary information or indicate a significant change will be subject to an inspection.

This year AES self-assessments will be reviewed and issued on a case by case basis to ensure that all relevant premises have received an appropriate official control in line with the Food Law Code of Practice and that all relevant premises have received an inspection for risk rating purposes under the Food Hygiene Rating Act and Regulations made thereunder.

Food Standards Intervention Strategy

Food standards interventions aim to ensure that food sold throughout the city complies with relevant compositional and labelling requirements, is properly described and of sound quality. In general food standards inspections are carried out during the same visit to premises to conduct a food hygiene inspection where they fall due within the same timeframe. However for higher risk premises such as Category A, Approved Premises, Manufacturers and Distributors and some other Category B premises, the standards inspections shall be carried out separately in order to facilitate focused attention on food standards.

It is planned to carry out 518 food standards inspections.

The profile of the planned food standards intervention programme for 2016/2017 by risk-rating is shown below:-

Risk category	Inspection planned
A	14
B	113
C	366
Unrated	25
Estimated new / changes of ownership premises	400

It is forecast that based on the Food Hygiene and Food Standards intervention programmes above the Council will be able to complete 100% of the planned programme.

Allergens

Compliance with allergens information requirements shall be assessed during every programmed hygiene and standards intervention (with exception of AES) and appropriate action taken including provision of advice, toolkits, and appropriate enforcement action.

Revisits

In line with the statutory Food Law Code of Practice all Food businesses that fail to comply with significant statutory requirements shall be subject to appropriate enforcement action and revisit to verify compliance. As a minimum they will receive a written warning.

However officers will aim to utilize the wide range of enforcement options available to ensure compliance is achieved in a timely fashion. We shall maximize the use of all enforcement options including (where appropriate) the service of Improvement Notices and Remedial Action Notices which continue to apply to all food businesses, as appropriate and in accordance with the Council's Regulatory and Enforcement Policy.

For food hygiene a compliance score of 15 (or higher) and/or a confidence in management score of 20 (or higher) is considered significant.

For food standards a compliance score of 40 and/or a confidence in management score of 30 is considered significant.

For lower scores it is anticipated that written warnings/advise shall be issued were it is appropriate to do so and that more formal enforcement options will be considered for persistent non compliance

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Revisits for rerating

Under the requirements of the Food Hygiene Rating Act (NI) 2016 additional revisits will be carried out on request to rerate a premises, subject to criteria being met.

3.2 Food Complaints

The Council will commence the investigation of all food complaints received from members of the public or food businesses within two working days of receipt. In the case of urgent investigations, we endeavour to make contact within the same working day. Officers will investigate complaints in accordance with the requirements of the Northern Ireland Food Liaison Group's Food Complaints Investigation Procedure, and where necessary the Council will liaise with Originating, Home Authorities and Primary Authorities during the course of its investigation. In determining the appropriate course of action, the Council will take into consideration any reports received from the Home, Originating or Primary Authorities and the Food business identified as the cause of the complaint and will have regard to the Council's Regulatory and Enforcement Policy. For 2017/2018 the Council estimates that it will receive approximately 630 complaints relating to food or the hygiene of food premises.

3.3 Home Authority Principle

The Council supports the Home Authority Principle and, where appropriate, will liaise with the Home Authority of a business trading in the city, on enforcement and other issues which affect the policies of the enterprise. We will take cognisance of any relevant advice given by the Home or Primary Authority, including any published intervention plan.

While the Council has not entered into a formal written home authority partnership with any business, it has established a close liaison with the majority of businesses for whom it could be either Home or Originating Authority to give preventative guidance or advice. Advice is provided during programmed inspections and other visits. On request the Council will investigate all matters referred to it by other local authorities and where appropriate will provide a written response to requests for information. The Council will review its informal arrangements during this year. For 2017/2018 the Council estimates that it will receive over 100 requests for information from other Local Authorities.

Where appropriate the Food Safety and Port Health Unit will have cognisance of the contents of the "Statement of Intent" agreed between District Councils, DETI and the Better Regulation Delivery Office (Formally LBRO) for the purposes of providing better regulation of businesses.

The Council will liaise closely with the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (D.A.E.R.A.) for Northern Ireland which has responsibility for the enforcement of Food Hygiene Legislation in E.C. approved fresh meat and liquid milk plants in Northern Ireland.

3.4 Advice to Business

The Council is committed to the improvement of standards in food businesses and advice to businesses is an important dimension of that strategy. Advice is given through site-visits, provision of compliance tools such as the Butchers HACCP Pack and the Safe Catering (HACCP) Pack, the Council's web-site, dealing with enquiries and requests for advice, through correspondence, meetings with trade groups, distribution of printed materials, and educational and training programmes. The service will continue to support all businesses with the implementation and maintenance of Food Safety Management Systems based on HACCP principles, in conjunction with a graduated approach to enforcement.

From December 2014 there were significant changes to the information that food businesses must give to their customers. All food businesses (e.g. restaurants, takeaways, bakeries and delicatessens) must declare any of 14 identified allergenic ingredients which are used in non-prepacked or loose foods that are sold or provided.

From December 2016 certain food products have to be labelled with full nutritional information. We plan to assist businesses to implement this change by carrying out advisory visits, sending out guidance documents and providing information on the website.

In order to promote a positive image and promote the reputation of the Council the unit plans to publish at least one article in City matters.

The Food Safety unit also holds regular compliance improvement workshops targeted at new businesses and at poorly performing businesses. The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme has increased the interest in these workshops and compulsory display of ratings will provide a powerful incentive for self regulation.

The Food Safety Unit invites plans and specifications for all new and refurbished food businesses for review and comment. This proactive approach is taken to help businesses secure compliance before they open thus saving the business and the Council resources by avoiding the need to carry out remedial works. Planning application and building control application lists are scrutinized to identify and target relevant developments. It is estimated that 150 plans will be received for review and comment.

Our system of recording service requests, response times and actions help plan, improve and monitor this part of the service. It is estimated that in addition to complaints relating to Food or Premises a further 1000 requests for service will be received this year. There has been a significant increase in such requests over the last few years, particularly for information on new businesses.

The Port Health Service is an active member of the local shipping community having extensive business contacts with the Marine Coastguard Agency, Belfast Harbour Commissioners, N.I. importers, customs clearance agents, hauliers, shipping companies, ferry operators and stevedores. Advice is given on Port Health related matters, including food safety, to the shipping community on a regular basis and when requested help and advice is given to local importers and members of the general public on the importation of third country foodstuffs including products of animal origin. It is estimated that approximately 150 service requests will be received and responded to by Port Health.

3.5 Food Inspection and Sampling

3.5.1 Food Safety Service

The Food Safety Unit has prepared a Food Sampling Policy outlining its general approach to chemical and microbiological sampling as well its approach in specific situations This approach recognises the important role of sampling in protecting public health and product quality, detecting fraudulent activities and unhygienic practices and to ensure that food standards are maintained.

Food sampling programmes are produced annually for both chemical and microbiological samples, after consultation with the Public Analyst and the Food Examiner. The programmes are produced in accordance with documented procedures, are risk based and prioritised to focus on foods that are manufactured in the city where there are Home/Originating Authority responsibilities. The programmes also consider the type and risk category of food businesses, and imported food. The programme has regard to national, regional and local co-ordinated sampling surveys.

Several areas of intelligence are used to identify priority premises, food products or specific analyses in addition to those collated from the food safety database. Such intelligence may include: Incident reports sent to FSA, Food Alerts, FSA Annual Incident report, RASFFs, Food standards complaints; UK Food Surveillance System annual reports, FSA Imported Food Annual Reports & Food Fraud Database bulletins.

Currently per annum approximately 400 samples are procured for chemical analysis and 1050 samples for microbiological examination.

3.5.2. Port Health Service

The Unit receives a shipping list from the Port Authorities on a daily basis and from this list it is able to identify vessels and their cargoes. Cargo manifests are scrutinized and all third country imported foodstuffs are identified.

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Documentary, identity and physical checks, including sampling, are carried out on all third country products of animal origin in accordance with the EC veterinary checks regime.

EU legislation requires that specified import conditions will apply to certain imported consignments of third country products of non-animal origin. These products all require a documentary check and a proportion will be subject to identity and physical checks (including sampling) at a level laid down in the legislation. Products not subject to the specific legislation will be risk assessed and appropriate checks, including sampling, carried out to ensure compliance with relevant imported food legislation. When possible the Unit carries out imported food sampling programmes devised by the Food Standards Agency or the E.U.

In the period 2017/2018 this is likely to result in the following number of samples:-

- Microbiological 45
- Chemical 35

(Figures included above)

The International Health Regulations (2005) require that all ships must be inspected at an authorised port such as Belfast and where necessary a Ship Sanitation Certificate issued for the prevention and control of public health risks. Certificates are valid for a period of 6 months. It is anticipated that 84 Ship Sanitation inspections (including large cruise ships) will be carried out during the year. In addition to ship sanitation inspections, ships are routinely boarded to ensure that conditions are satisfactory and there is no infectious disease on board. During these inspections advice is given on food hygiene and other matters.

Food hygiene and food standards inspections of Passenger Ferries registered with and operating out of Belfast are undertaken. Some of these ferries are large food businesses producing up to 7500 meals per day. We will inspect 6 - 10 ferries in 2017-18.

Cruise ships arriving in the Port are inspected to ensure that no disease is being introduced and that hygiene conditions on board are of an acceptable standard. It is estimated that 40 cruise ship inspections will be carried out.

The unit also regularly inspect External Temporary Storage Facilities (formerly known as ERTS), fishing vessels operating out of Belfast and other vessels in dry dock for repair.

Food Hygiene and Standards inspections are also carried out at George Best City Airport as well as ensuring the safety of water delivered to aircraft.

3.6 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related and other Infectious Disease

The Council will attempt to investigate all notifications of infectious disease received from the Public Health Agency (PHA), within one working day of receipt. Specifically trained and competent environmental health officers within the Food Safety and Port Health Unit are authorized by the PHA for the investigation of notifications.

Investigation of outbreaks of food related infectious disease is conducted in liaison with the Consultant in Public Health Medicine of the PHA, and in accordance with the existing Outbreak Control Plans and protocols.

The Council estimates that it will receive 100 notifications of food related infectious disease during the year, with an additional 200 alleged food poisoning complaints from the public.

The Port Health Division will respond immediately it is notified of any complaint or incident of food poisoning or food related infectious disease occurring on board a ship or premises within the Port of Belfast or relating to a passenger using Belfast City Airport.

3.7 Food Safety Incidents

The FSA receives and issues information about foods within the supply chain which have been found to be unsafe or do not meet legal requirements. These include Product Withdrawal

Information Notices, Product Recall Information Notices and Allergy Alerts. A “Food Alert For Action” is issued where Local Authorities are required to take specific action to protect consumers.

Food Alerts received from the Food Standards Agency (NI) will be actioned in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice and the Food Safety and Port Health Unit's Procedure for Food Alerts. Notification of food alerts will be received by facsimile and electronically via email, passed to the Environmental Health Manager (Food Safety and Port Health) or a Principal Environmental Officer (Food Safety and Port Health) deputizing in his absence, for appropriate action. Where action is taken in response to alert, details will be recorded on relevant premises files.

The Council estimates that it will receive 180 food alerts/ product recalls or withdrawals during the year. Around 70 of these will require investigation and further action to protect public safety.

Rapid Alert System for Feed and Food (RASFF).

Rapid alerts are reviewed weekly to identify potential risks with imported foods. All rapid alerts are read as soon as possible and any alerts relevant to the work of the Unit are brought to the attention of staff for action as deemed necessary.

If a consignment/product is to be rejected or destroyed due to a direct or indirect risk to human health, an incident report and rapid alert notification must be completed and forwarded to the FSA Food Incident Branch after consultation with FSA Northern Ireland for onward notification to the European Commission. It is likely that 2-5 notifications will be generated in 2017 – 2018.

3.8 Liaisons with Other Organisations

The Food Safety and Port Health Unit has extensive liaison in place with a wide range of other organisations:-

- FSANI through enforcement stakeholder meetings, the NIFMG, and numerous other formal and informal meetings.
- The Public Health Agency (MOU exists) in relation to the investigation of sporadic cases and outbreaks of food related infectious disease.
- Northern Ireland Food Managers Group reporting to Northern Ireland Chief Environmental Health Officers Group.
- C.I.E.H. Port Health Special Interest Group.
- Association of Port Health Authorities. The Principal Environmental Health Officer (Port Health) is a member of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- The Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs in relation to the operation of the Border Inspection Post.
- Merchant Navy Welfare Board (NI)
- HM Customs and Excise nationally and locally in relation to imported food controls.
- Planning Service to review related applications.
- Department for Infrastructure Water Quality Liaison Group.
- Safe Food through projects and working groups on the Island of Ireland
- The Northern Ireland Area Medical Advisory Committee - Infectious Disease Sub Group.
- Belfast Resilience-Harbour Working Group
- Marine Coastguard Agency
- Belfast Harbour Commissioners
- The Chinese Welfare Association and the Chinese chamber of commerce
- Belfast Food Network
- The Education Authority for NI School Meals Service

Close liaison is maintained with the Council's Building Control Service, Pest Control and Waste Management Service, as well as with the other units across the Environmental Health Service.

3.9 Promotion of Food Safety and Healthy Eating/ Nutrition

The Council carries out educational and promotional activities as an integral part of it's food

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safety duties. In addition to this, specialized promotional activities are carried by the Food Safety & Port Health Unit. Many of these initiatives are designed to promote healthy choices.

The effectiveness of educational programmes and projects will be assessed using delegate evaluation forms, contact by managers and, where possible, by feedback from officers carrying out premises inspections. All promotional programmes are evaluated using a number of measures such as customer surveys, checking awareness of key messages, measuring participation or readership and officer debriefing.

Educational and promotional activities planned for 2016/17 include the following:

Promotional Activity	Estimated Resources
Food Safety Week (including preparation & delivery)	20 hours
Specialised educational programmes on food safety for voluntary groups, charities, schools etc.	40 hours
Maintain and promote and manage the Food Hygiene Rating scheme	500 hours
To continue to encourage sandwich bars to provide healthier options and to display calorie content.	300 hours
To work with Belfast Food Network to reduce food waste by diverting to foodbanks or charities	150 hours
To identify and work with 20 prominent food businesses to display calories on menus	100 hours
To revisit Healthier Chinese Project (particularly in socially deprived areas) and work with those still offering healthier alternatives to assist with the display of calories on menu boards	200 hours
To provide salt shakers (with fewer holes) to an additional 25 hot food businesses in socially deprived areas to reduce salt intake of customers	25 hours
To hold workshops for businesses to improve compliance	200 hours
To provide seminars for businesses on the new mandatory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme	500 hours
To provide an Imported Food/Port Health training day for year 3 Environmental Health students.	50 hours
To participate in relevant service wide business forums	50 hours
To publish at least one article in City Matters	25 hours
To develop relevant advice / information for businesses to assist them to comply with enforcement / legislative requirements	100 hours

4.0 Resources

4.1 Financial allocation

Details of the budget for the delivery of the Council's food service in 2017-2018 are within the City and Neighbourhood Service's revenue estimates and were approved by Council in March 2017.

4.2 Staffing allocation

4.2.1 Food Safety and Port Health Unit

The full staffing complement on the Food Safety & Port Health Unit has the equivalent of 22.6 full-time staff engaged in food safety work. All officers hold specific qualifications and are assessed for competencies as required by the Code of Practice and are authorised for duties in accordance with the Council's documented procedure. (See table below). It should be noted that out of the staff complement one Principal Environmental Health Officer and 3 Senior Environmental Health Officers are based in the Council's Port Health Facility.

Position	Name	Hours (Full or Part Time)	Authorisation	FTE
Environmental Health Manager	Damian Connolly	FT	Full including Approvals	0.2
Principal EHO Food Safety	Vacant	FT		0.8
Principal EHO Food Safety	Tom Crossan	FT	Full	0.8
Principal EHO (Port Health)	Andrew McClenaghan	FT	Full including Approvals	0.7
Senior EHO	Bridin Mulvenna-Crinion	FT	Full including Approvals	1.0
Senior EHO	Catherine Treche	FT	Full	1.0
Senior EHO	Clare Dolan	PT	Full including Approvals – Coldstores only	0.8
Senior EHO	Christina McErlean	FT	Full including Approvals	1.0
Senior EHO	Elizabeth Gilchrist	FT	Full	1.0
Senior EHO	Helen Morrissey	FT	Full	1.0
Senior EHO	Hilary Byrne	PT	Full including Approvals – Coldstores only	0.5
Senior EHO	Kara McMillan	FT	Full including Approvals	1.0
Senior EHO	Stacey Thompson	FT	Full with Approvals	1.0
Senior EHO	Roisin Kerr	FT	In progress	1.0
Port Health SEHO	Timothy McKillen	FT	Full inc Port Health	0.7
Port Health SEHO	Niall Convery	FT	Full inc Port Health	0.7
Port Health SEHO	Karen Williams	FT	Full inc Port Health	0.7
EHO	Tony McKinless	FT	Full including Approvals	1.0

EHO	Riona Flynn	FT	Full	1.0
EHO	Helen Sloan	FT	In progress	1.0
EHO	Paula McAtamney	FT	Full including Approvals	1.0
EHO	Kellie Harris	PT	In progress	0.5
EHO	Gareth Houston	FT	Full with approvals	1.0
Technical Officer	Emma Duffy	FT	Part Authorised – exceptions service of HEPN & RANs	1.0
Technical Officer	Tanya Cooke	FT	Part Authorised – exceptions service of HEPN & RANs	1.0
Technical Officer	Lauren White	FT	Part Authorised – exceptions service of HEPN & RANs	1.0
Technical Officer	Julie Mulrine	FT	Part Authorised – exceptions service of HEPN & RANs	1.0
			TOTAL	22.6

Current short term vacancies that cannot be covered by temporary contracts are on occasion covered by agency staff.

Full Authorisation: authorised by Belfast City Council to enforce the provisions of The Food Safety Order (Northern Ireland) 1991 and any Orders or Regulations made thereunder or relating to the foregoing or having effect by virtue of the European Communities Act 1972.

4.2.1a Estimate of Resource (Time) Requirements –

Activity	No Tasks	Time/task	Total Hours
Cat A inspections Hygiene	4	5.5	22
Cat B inspections Hygiene	103	5	515
Cat C inspections Hygiene	668	4	2672
Cat D inspections Hygiene	703	2.5	1757
Cat E inspections Hygiene	300	1.5	450
Cat E inspections for FHRS	90	1.5	135
Unrated and unplanned events (Hygiene)	400	5	2000
Cat A inspections Standards	14	3	447
Cat B inspections Standards	113	1.5	170
Cat C inspections Standards	366	1	366
Unrated and unplanned events (Standards)	400	1.5	600
Revisits	400	1.25	500
Advisory and other visits		1	
Micro sampling	1100	1.2	1320
Chemical sampling	435	2	870
Food Complaints	600	7	4200
ID investigations	100	2.5	250
Food Alerts For action	60	50	3000
Prosecutions	10	20	200
Planning reviews	260	3.5	910
Other Service Requests	800	7	5600
Staff Development	24	30	720

Working groups and initiatives with other external partners and stakeholders including NIFMG and Sub Groups, FSA, APHA	-	-	2000
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Activity	No Tasks	Time/task	Total Hours
Management of service and staff	-	-	2,500
Staff meetings	-	-	1000
Projects e.g. web development, procedures, campaigns	-	-	1000
Mandatory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme	-	-	1000
Inspect all shipping Manifests	100%	-	750
Documentary & phys. Checks, including sampling,	250	5	1250
To inspect vessels to monitor compliance with International Health Regulations, Food Safety and Public Health Legislation	600	2.00	1200
To inspect vessels for the issue of Ship Sanitation Certificates.	84	6.00	504

4.3 Staff Development Plan

The development needs of the Food Safety and Port Health Unit are identified as part of the Council's business planning process, competency assessment and through personal development planning. Relevant local training is identified by the Northern Ireland Food Managers Group and subgroups, the Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland and the Public Health Agency. Training needs are also reviewed during the year to take into account staff changes and other issues identified. In-house briefing sessions are delivered regularly as part of monthly section meetings.

New competency requirements required by the Food Law Code of Practice are currently being assessed for all Officers and all deficiencies will be addressed in year.

Specific training planned for 2017/18 is included at the end of this document.

5.0 Quality Assessment

The following arrangements are in place to ensure the quality of services provided by the Food Safety and Port Health Unit:-

5.1 Internal Monitoring Arrangements

Procedures have been drawn up and implemented to monitor the quality of work of officers assigned to the Food Safety & Port Health Unit which cover all aspects of the Standard and help ensure procedures are fully implemented.

Current procedures include:

- Bi-monthly individual meetings with principal EHO
- Use of procedure notes
- Use of standardised inspection report forms, letters and phrases
- Review of post-inspection paperwork
- Monitoring of inspections, visits and actions by documentation checks and accompanied visits
- Post complaint investigation monitoring
- Approved premises file review and monitoring
- Verification visits of inspections carried out
- Internal auditing of adherence to procedures
- Monthly meetings of the Food Safety and Port Health Unit and daily briefings
- Seminars / exercises and training as required
- Fortnightly unit management team meetings and fortnightly mini-meetings of sub-sections (proactive, reactive, and port health teams
 - Port Health and area teams

5.2 External monitoring and verification

The Environmental Health Service re-achieved Investors in People in April 2011 and also achieved OHSAS ISO 180001 accreditation for Health and Safety Management in 2012. These accreditations were retained in 2016/17.

The Border Inspection Post is audited annually by DAERA and the food service is periodically subject to both FSA and EU audits

6.0 Review

6.1 Review against the Service Plan

Performance against the unit's business plan is reviewed in line with the Environmental Health Services Performance management framework. This includes a quarterly review by the Service Environmental Health Management Team

The service plan will also be reviewed as part of the Council's business planning process. This process requires reports to be provided to the People and Communities Committee at

6 monthly intervals, detailing performance against the standards set out in the service plan and the corporate plan. Summary performance information on the previous year's service plan will be reported with each Food Service Delivery Plan. The report shall also identify any variance together with areas of improvement.

Performance report on Food Service Delivery Plan for 2016-2017

1. Departmental Plan Targets

Performance Indicator	Target 2016/2017	Achieved 2016/2017
% Premises deemed broadly compliant	95%	98%

2. Other relevant performance Information update for 16/17

Performance Indicator	Target 2016/2017	Achieved 2016/2017	Explanation of variance and improvements for 2017/
Number of Ships inspected	600	554	staff long term illness
Number of imported food consignments examined	250	357	Examination determined by nature of foods imported.
% of manifests examined for imported food stuffs	100%	100%	Target Met
% of the food hygiene programme complete	100%	86.5%	Resource demanded by the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and Food Information Regulations
% of food complaints resolved within 8 weeks	75%	84%	Exceeded Target
% of food standards programme completed	95%	87.75%	Resource demanded by the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and Food Information Regulations

Micro Samples Taken	1050	95%	Days lost due to Bank & Public Holidays
Chemical Samples Taken	400	77%	Change to Public Analyst – fewer samples taken early in year
% of Food complaints responded to within target(48	100%	97%	Less than 3% variance
To investigate notifications of gastro intestinal illness within 24 hours and report to PHA within 24 hours.	90% returned within target 90% contacted within target	100% 100%	Exceeded Target Exceeded Target

Food Safety & Port Health Training Plan 2017 – 2018

The priority training areas are due to be finalised between NIFMG and FSA and shall be provided as low cost training. The key areas have been identified as follows:

Incident Handling
 Approvals
 Food Fraud
 Country of origin Labelling
 Export Certificate Labelling
 Food Additives, Enzymes & Flavourings

The following courses are available as online training:

Approved Establishments
 Food Hygiene Risk Rating Consistency
 Hygiene Enforcement Sanctions
 Verification of HACCP
 Food Information Regulations
 Allergens

Other priority areas have been identified as:

Food Standards Overview
 FIR Improvement Notice Drafting
 Micro Criteria emphasising control of Listeria
 Vacuum Packing and Modified Atmosphere Packing
 Sous vide & other low temperature processing
 Reducing the risk of E.coli cross contamination in small and medium businesses
 Effective import controls for inland authorities

The actual programme of training shall be provided in due course and implemented as appropriate.

Port Health Specific Training

Attendance at APHA Training

Attendance at SIG Training

Mandatory Imported Food training