

Report on the Food Law Enforcement Service

Derwentside District Council

21–23 May 2002

Foreword

Audits of local authorities' food law enforcement services are part of the Food Standards Agency's arrangements to improve consumer protection and confidence in relation to food. These arrangements recognise that the enforcement of UK food law relating to food safety, hygiene, composition, labelling, imported food and feeding stuffs is largely the responsibility of local authorities. These local authority regulatory functions are principally delivered through their Environmental Health and Trading Standards Services.

The attached audit report examines the Local Authority's Food Law Enforcement Service. The assessment includes the local arrangements in place for inspections of food businesses and foodstuffs, sampling and analysis, internal management, food safety promotion and educational activities. It should be acknowledged that there will be considerable diversity in the way and manner in which local authorities may provide their food enforcement services reflecting local needs and priorities.

Agency audits assess local authorities' conformance against the Food Law Enforcement Standard "The Standard", which was published by the Agency as part of the Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement and is available on the Agency's website at:

www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/role/framework/.

The main aim of the audit scheme is to maintain and improve consumer protection and confidence by ensuring that local authorities are providing an effective food law enforcement service. The scheme also provides the opportunity to identify and disseminate good practice and provide information to inform Agency policy on food safety.

The report contains some statistical data, for example on the number of food premises inspections carried out. The Authority's activity data for 2000 has also been reproduced at Annex A. The Agency's website contains enforcement activity data for all UK local authorities and can be found at:

www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/role/39188.

The report also contains an action plan, prepared by the Authority, to address the audit findings.

For assistance, a glossary of technical terms used within the audit report can be found at Annex B.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report records the results of the audit under the headings of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Enforcement Standard and has been made publicly available on the Agency's website at www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/audits/48066. Hard copies are available from the Food Standards Agency Library at Aviation House, 125 Kingsway, London WC2B 6NH, Tel: 020 7276 8181. These are subject to a reproduction and handling fee of £7.50 plus £1.50 postage and packing.

Reason for the Audit

- 1.2 The power to set standards, monitor and audit local authority food law enforcement services was conferred on the Food Standards Agency by the Food Standards Act 1999. The audit of the food service at Derwentside District Council was undertaken under section 12(4) of the Act as part of the Food Standards Agency's annual audit programme.
- 1.3 The Authority was included within the audit programme on the basis of its inspection levels of high risk premises, as indicated by 2000 monitoring information provided to the Agency under section 13 of the Food Standards Act 1999. Derwentside District Council was randomly selected from those authorities within the mid-range of food hygiene inspection activity. Further details of monitoring statistics can be found at www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/role/39188.

Scope of the Audit

- 1.4 The audit covered Derwentside District Council's food hygiene law enforcement service. Food standards and feeding stuffs law enforcement is the responsibility of the County Council and was therefore not included within the scope of this audit. The on-site element of the audit took place at the Authority's office at the Civic Centre, Medomsley Road, Consett on 21–23 May 2002.
- 1.5 The audit assessed the Authority's conformance against the Standard, using audit protocols FSA/AP3/1 – FSA/AP21/1. The Standard was adopted by the Food Standards Agency Board on 21 September 2000 (amended in March 2002), and forms part of the Agency's Framework Agreement with local authorities. The Framework Agreement and the audit protocols can be found on the Agency's website at: www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/enforcement/role/framework and www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/auditprotocol respectively.

Background

- 1.6 Derwentside District Council has a total population of approximately 87,000 and covers an area of 105 square miles in the western region of County Durham. The north and east of the District border the Newcastle conurbation.
- 1.7 The area is mainly rural in character, with clusters of villages surrounding the 2 main commercial centres of Consett and Stanley. Derwentside's historic industrial base of coal mining and iron and steel production has been transformed over the last 20 years. The District has attracted a diverse range of advanced technology businesses, including biotechnology, engineering, electronics, information technology and communications.
- 1.8 Food hygiene enforcement was carried out by officers of the Food/Occupational Health and Safety Team located at the Civic Centre in Consett.
- 1.9 The Council offices were open Monday to Friday between 08:30–16:45. Key officers could be contacted to deal with emergencies arising out of normal working hours via a 24hr help line.
- 1.10 In addition to food hygiene enforcement, the Food/Occupational Health and Safety Team officers were also responsible for the delivery of a range of services including occupational health and safety, water quality and health promotion.
- 1.11 The Authority's monitoring returns made to the Agency for the four quarters making up the financial year 2000/2001 indicated that the Food/Occupational Health and Safety Team was responsible for enforcing food hygiene legislation in 653 premises. These food businesses were predominantly within the catering (64%) and retail (31%) sectors. The returns indicated that the Authority carried out:

Enforcement activity	No.
Food hygiene inspections	478
Other food hygiene visits	514
Informal food samples	8
Formal food samples	55

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Authority had recently undertaken a major review of the food law enforcement service, which had led to an organisational restructure and the development of a range of improvement plans. Although the audit was carried out at a relatively early stage in this process, the Authority had commenced implementation of these plans and it was clear that they were beginning to provide an improvement in Service delivery.
- 2.2 There were, however, a number of significant problems that remained to be addressed, many of which had already been identified by the Authority. It is important that the officers are properly authorised and that the Service has a consistent approach to formal enforcement actions in accordance with the official guidance.
- 2.3 Although the Authority was prioritising inspections of high risk premises, not all inspections had been made at the correct frequency and a large backlog of lower risk premises inspections had accumulated. It is also important that adequate records of inspections and enforcement actions are maintained. All of these issues should be addressed through the planned improvements that the Authority has initiated and by more comprehensive and systematic monitoring.

2.4 The Authority's Strengths:

Organisation and Management – there was a clear-sighted management commitment to remedy the deficiencies evident from the records of past performance. A systematic analysis of the food law enforcement service had been carried out, and many of the areas for improvement raised in this report had already been identified by the Authority and were being addressed. These were clearly set out in the Service's improvement plans and work programmes. Full implementation of the structural and procedural improvements that were being put in place at the time of audit should ensure that a consistently good standard of service delivery could be achieved.

2.5 **Key Areas for Improvement:**

Officer Authorisations – the Authority’s scheme of delegated authority, the Enforcement Policy and the Authorisation Procedure were not consistent and it could not be confirmed that officers had been properly authorised to carry out their duties. This could render the Authority vulnerable to successful challenge during formal enforcement proceedings.

Records – There was considerable variation in the level of record keeping between officers and there were gaps in the records of inspections and enforcement actions across most areas of Service activity. Comprehensive and retrievable records are important to inform officers of the history of compliance of food businesses, to enable appropriate enforcement decisions to be made in a staged approach and to permit effective internal monitoring to be carried out.

Inspection Frequencies – Although high risk businesses were being inspected as a priority, the Authority had not carried out inspections of food premises at the required minimum frequencies according to risk and had accumulated a significant back-log of overdue inspections. The minimum inspection frequencies, as set out in official guidance, aim to ensure that enforcement authorities regularly monitor the standards in food businesses, enabling timely intervention.

Enforcement Actions – The Authority’s Enforcement Policy was not consistent with its scheme of delegated authority and operational procedures for formal enforcement actions. It could not be confirmed that the Authority was taking a consistent and graduated approach to enforcement in accordance with its Enforcement Policy and official guidance.

Internal Monitoring – Although some monitoring of quantitative performance against internal targets had been carried out, the Authority had yet to implement a comprehensive and systematic qualitative monitoring process to ensure that it was acting in accordance with official guidance and its own policies and procedures across all areas of Service activity.

3. Audit Findings

3.1 Organisation and Management

- 3.1.1 The Council was piloting its new political arrangements. Food safety fell under the terms of reference of the Cabinet Member with the Municipal Services portfolio.
- 3.1.2 The Council had 3 Directorates; delivery of the food hygiene service was the responsibility of the Food/Occupational Health and Safety Team, within the Environmental Health and Private Sector Housing Division of the Public Services Directorate.
- 3.1.3 The corporate planning framework included the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP). The Food Service Plan 2001/2002, and the draft Plan for 2002/2003, both provided a link to the Authority's new key corporate aims and objectives that were set out in the BVPP 2002.
- 3.1.4 The performance indicators used for food safety were the percentage of food premises inspections that should have been carried out, that were carried out for:
- (a) high risk premises, and
 - (b) other premises.
- 3.1.5 The Authority had also established local performance indicators that set target response times for a range of Service activities.
- 3.1.6 Problems with the food service database had caused difficulties in deriving reliable performance figures relating to the inspection targets for 2000. The Authority could confirm that 62% of all inspections due in 2000/2001 had been achieved, although this was believed to be an under-estimation. However, the Authority was able to provide more reliable figures for 2001/2002, which indicated that 97.4% of the inspections due at high risk premises and 11% of those due at other premises were carried out.
- 3.1.7 The Authority had drawn up a comprehensive Food Service Plan for 2001/2002, which was broadly in line with the Service Planning Guidance in the Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement. The Plan had been reported to the Council's Budget Panel in October 2001 before receiving Member approval at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2001.

- 3.1.8 The Authority's draft Food Service Plan 2002/2003 indicated that the total staff resource available for food enforcement during 2001/2002, including administrative support, was 3.6 full time equivalents (FTE). This represented an increase of 0.6 FTE following a departmental restructure in May 2001, although an Environmental Health Officer post (0.5 FTE) had remained vacant for several months. In addition, a temporary contractor had been engaged to undertake low risk inspections. Staffing levels for 2002/2003 were estimated at 3.5 FTE.
- 3.1.9 The FTE staff resources needed to deliver the food safety programme were not detailed in the Food Service Plan, but numerical figures for the number of Service requests received in the preceding year were included in those sections relating to reactive areas of work. The Service Plan stated that an appended Work Programme, which had been devised to deliver the Service's key objectives, was based on the availability of resources.
- 3.1.10 The Foot and Mouth outbreak had placed additional burdens on the Service since March 2001. In particular, the Team had been involved in extensive water sampling to monitor the safety of drinking water in the vicinity of animal burial sites.
- 3.1.11 The Food Safety Service financial costs were contained within the total costs for the Environmental Health and Private Sector Housing Division. The level of expenditure for the Food Safety Service could not be disaggregated from the overall expenditure under the Authority's current accounting system, although there were proposals to review this practice. Figures for the Team's salary costs were available and these showed a rise from £85,948 in 2000/2001 to £104,809 in 2001/2002. The projected salary cost for 2002/2003 was £100,742.
- 3.1.12 The auditors were advised that a review of performance against the previous year's Plan and a new Service Plan for 2002/2003 had been drafted. These were both due to be finalised and submitted for Member approval in July 2002 following this audit.

Recommendations

3.1.13 The Authority should:

- (i) Ensure that the Food Service Plan 2003/2004 complies fully with the guidance in the Framework Agreement on Food Law Enforcement and that it addresses any variance identified in meeting the previous year's Plan.
[The Standard – 3.1 and 3.3]
- (ii) Finalise the draft review of performance against the Service Plan 2001/2002 and submit it for Member approval.
[The Standard – 3.2]

3.2 Review and Updating of Documented Policies and Procedures

- 3.2.1 The Authority had recently developed revised or new documented policies and procedures for all of the areas of Service activity required by the Standard. In most cases, the new procedures had been implemented from the month preceding the audit and the Authority's performance against its revised practices could not therefore be assessed at this early stage.
- 3.2.2 Although still under development, a procedure had begun to be implemented for controlling the internal policy and procedure documents and reference texts. The standard format for the Authority's procedures showed that the documents had been properly approved and included an issue date with a summary of any amendments. The master copies of all internal documents were held as read-only versions on the Authority's computer system. The control system was also in electronic format and included a programme to alert the designated officer when each document was due for routine review.
- 3.2.3 Where available, electronic versions of reference texts were also held on the system together with details of where to locate any additional hard-copy texts.
- 3.2.4 Officers had access to up to date versions of all relevant reference materials. A hard copy food law encyclopaedia remained available although the Authority's subscription to updates had recently been cancelled.

3.3 Authorised Officers

- 3.3.1 The Authority's scheme of delegated powers, its Authorisation Procedure and the Enforcement Policy were inconsistent and did not provide a coherent scheme for delegating authority to enforcement officers. The current revision to the scheme of delegation appeared to omit key areas of sub-delegation and contained references to superseded legislation. In particular, it could not be confirmed that the power to authorise formal enforcement actions, to issue butchers' licences and premises approvals had been properly delegated.
- 3.3.2 The Authority's Enforcement Policy was based on a generic document devised by the Durham Districts Food Liaison Group and, as such, contained authorisation and procedural details that were not in accordance with the local arrangements. In practice, however, officers were carrying out duties in line with their levels of qualification, training and experience, and in accordance with the requirements of Food Safety Act Code of Practice No. 19: Qualifications and Experience of Authorised Officers.
- 3.3.3 The Authority had appointed an officer with appropriate specialist knowledge to have lead responsibility for food hygiene legislation.
- 3.3.4 A documented training programme had been produced for 2001/2002 based on annual officer appraisals carried out under the Investors in People scheme. This document balanced the requests for training from individual officers and the needs of the Team. A training programme for 2002/2003 was due to be finalised by July 2002 following the current round of officer appraisals. The food safety training budget was contained within the Divisional training budget of £2,050 for 2002/2003.
- 3.3.5 Consideration was being given to the inclusion of an officer competency assessment to link the appraisal process with the authorisation procedure. This would then provide a means of ensuring and verifying that levels of authorisation were conferred in accordance with officers' individual levels of qualification, training and experience.
- 3.3.6 Training records were being maintained and these included copies of the qualification certificates of each officer, although some of the records did not provide a clear indication of the content and duration of the training received. This was of particular significance where the training had led to an enhanced level of authorisation.

Recommendations

3.3.7 The Authority should:

- (i) Ensure that the scheme of delegated authority and the Authorisation Procedure provide a coherent, clear and consistent basis for conferring officer authorisations, in line with officers' individual levels of qualification, training, experience and competency, and in accordance with Food Safety Act Code of Practice No. 19: Qualifications and Experience of Authorised Officers. [The Standard – 5.1]

- (ii) Ensure that officer training records include details of the content and duration of all relevant training. [The Standard – 5.5]

3.4 Facilities and Equipment

- 3.4.1 The Authority had made available the necessary facilities and equipment to permit all activities associated with the Service to be carried out.
- 3.4.2 A documented calibration procedure had recently been implemented and appropriate records of calibration checks were being maintained. The procedure needed some further development to reflect the record keeping arrangements carried out in practice, and to include calibration checks relating to formal enforcement activities in accordance with Food Safety Act Code of Practice No. 10: Enforcement of the Temperature Control Requirements of the Food Hygiene Regulations.
- 3.4.3 The Authority has introduced new computer software in December 2000 to replace a non year-2000 compliant system that had been in use from 1996 and which had deleted most of the historic data. The Authority anticipated that by July 2002, the computer system would be able to generate reliable information on current Service activity and the monitoring statistics required by the Agency.
- 3.4.4 A number of anomalies in data entries on the database were identified during the audit. There were also some inconsistencies between the dates of actions recorded on the database and those shown on the paper files.
- 3.4.5 Appropriate database back-up systems were in place and adequate security arrangements were being operated to minimise the risk of corruption or loss of information.

Recommendations

- 3.4.6 The Authority should:
- (i) Further develop the documented calibration procedure so that it covers the record keeping arrangements and includes calibration checks relating to formal actions.
[The Standard – 6.2 and 6.3]
 - (ii) Ensure that the database system is operated to provide the required information to the Food Standards Agency.
[The Standard – 6.4]

3.5 Food Premises Inspections

3.5.1 The Authority's Food Service Plan 2001/2002 confirmed that there were 644 food premises on its database at that time, with the following risk rating profile:

Risk Category	No.	%*
A	13	2
B	87	14
C	279	43
D	76	12
E	128	20
F	61	9
Unrated/outside inspection programme	0	
TOTAL	644	

*Figures rounded to nearest %

3.5.2 There were only 2 inspections of high risk premises overdue at the time of the audit, but a significant backlog of 85 lower risk premises remained overdue for inspection from previous years. The premises that had not been inspected at the required minimum frequency included a number of residential/nursing homes. The Authority had targeted its resources at high risk businesses and proposed during the current year to also focus on any premises that prepared open food.

3.5.3 The Authority did not have complete records of premises inspection histories and risk ratings (see Section 16: 'Records and Inspection Reports'); in most cases the available records were limited to the most recent inspection only. This precluded any assessment of the proportion of premises that had received late inspections, although there was evidence that 2 of the Authority's 9 Approved Premises had not been inspected at the required minimum frequency according to risk.

3.5.4 The Authority had recently implemented revised documented procedures that covered all types of inspection and which included inspection record forms and related letter proformas. These needed some further development to adequately cover all relevant areas, particularly butchers shops licensing; inspections of Approved Premises and formal follow up actions. The Authority's procedures for carrying out the range of formal actions available following inspections were incorporated in the Enforcement Policy. This guidance was generic in approach and lacked sufficient detail of the local arrangements.

- 3.5.5 The inspection records for 12 general premises, 9 Approved Premises and 10 butchers' shops were examined. All inspections had been carried out by officers with the appropriate levels of qualification, training and experience. A detailed inspection record form had been used during recent general premises inspections which, when fully completed, provided evidence that detailed assessments of compliance with the legally prescribed standards had been undertaken.
- 3.5.6 Officers were consistent in ensuring that hand-written copies of the Authority's standard report were left with proprietors following each inspection. However, there was an inconsistent approach to filling out these reports and the amount of information recorded varied considerably. Similarly, some officers sent follow-up letters as a matter of routine where significant problems were identified during the inspection. The inspection procedures did not provide any guidance in this area.
- 3.5.7 The deficiencies in both the Authority's historical records of inspections and the content of some reports inhibited the auditors' ability to fully assess the accuracy of premises risk ratings and whether appropriate follow-up action had been taken following all inspections. From the information available it appeared that the risk rating of a number of premises was not in accordance with Food Safety Act Code of Practice No. 9: Food Hygiene Inspections. This was particularly evident in respect of some butchers' premises where the risk rating on consecutive inspections fluctuated, for example, from 'E' risk to 'B' within 2 months, with no indication on either the file or inspection reports of any significant changes in the operations or safety standards.
- 3.5.8 From reports run from the database during the audit it was apparent that numerous premises had been identified as 'caterers' but were allocated risk ratings that were not consistent with a business preparing open food.
- 3.5.9 The Authority's inspection procedures required revisits following inspections only where the proprietor requested this. The auditors were advised that this was a drafting error and that officers were required to revisit whenever significant breaches were identified. Nevertheless, inconsistencies in approach were reflected in the inspection records.

- 3.5.10 It could not be confirmed that appropriate follow-up action had been taken in all cases where significant contraventions had been identified during inspections. In particular, the records of 2 consecutive inspections of an Approved Premises noted that the business did not have 'own checks' systems in place. Two further Approved Premises had an additional weighting for 'significant risk' included in their risk rating scores. In the latter cases, there was no information in the records or on the inspection reports to show why there was a significant risk and, although 'own checks' is an essential precondition for approval, there was no evidence that action had been taken to remedy any of these concerns.
- 3.5.11 Details of the Approved Premises held by the Agency were consistent with those maintained by the Authority.
- 3.5.12 The records relating to butchers' shops licensing were confused and insufficient to confirm that this had been carried out in full accordance with the Regulations and official guidance. In some cases it appeared that the assessments were carried out after the licence had been issued.
- 3.5.13 Although a standardised form for butchers shop licensing assessments had been used in the first year of licensing, the Authority's general premises inspection record form had been used for subsequent licence renewals. Consequently, relevant details of current operations, key business details and levels of compliance were not recorded. These omissions included details of HACCP systems and business training levels, particularly in respect of the higher level required of supervisors, all of which are essential preconditions for licensing.
- 3.5.14 The Authority advised that a butcher's shop licence had been temporarily refused. Records relating to this were confused and the history of actions could not be ascertained from the file record alone. Copies of significant reports and letters were missing from the file or undated.

Recommendations

3.5.16 The Authority should:

- (i) Ensure that inspections are carried out at a minimum frequency based on risk and in accordance with the requirements of Food Safety Act Code of Practice No. 9: Food Hygiene Inspections. [The Standard – 7.1]
- (ii) Ensure that general premises, Approved Premises and butchers' shops are inspected, approved and licensed in accordance with the relevant legislation, Food Safety Act Codes of Practice and centrally issued guidance. [The Standard – 7.2]
- (iii) Ensure that assessments of compliance at Approved Premises and butchers' premises are to legally prescribed standards and have regard to centrally issued guidance. Ensure that appropriate follow-up action is taken on any items of non-compliance identified. [The Standard – 7.3]
- (iv) Review the documented procedures for inspections and ensure that sufficient guidance is provided for the range of inspections undertaken and follow up actions. [The Standard – 7.4]

3.6 Food and Food Premises Complaints

- 3.6.1 The Authority had recently implemented a revised documented policy and procedure for dealing with food complaints. This document was very detailed and provided comprehensive guidance.
- 3.6.2 The records of 10 food and food premises complaints were examined. Two investigation records were not available and the level of detail retained for the remainder varied and appeared incomplete in a number of cases. It was therefore not possible to fully assess whether all investigations had been carried out in accordance with the relevant Food Safety Act Codes of Practice and centrally issued guidance. In particular, it could not be confirmed that all relevant parties were notified of the complaint and the outcome. More significantly, 3 complaints appeared to have been investigated without reference to the Enforcing Authority where the potential offences had occurred.

Recommendation

- 3.6.3 The Authority should:

Ensure that food and food premises complaints are investigated in accordance with the relevant Food Safety Act Codes of Practice and centrally issued guidance. [The Standard – 8.2]

3.7 Home Authority Principle

- 3.7.1 The Authority's policy and its endorsement of the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) Home Authority Principle was set out in the Service Plan. Detailed procedural guidance on Home and Originating Authority liaison was set out in the Authority's Complaints Procedure and in its Enforcement Policy.
- 3.7.2 At the time of audit, the Authority did not have any formal Home Authority arrangements with local businesses. There was, however, clear evidence that the Authority was responding to enquiries from other enforcing authorities regarding the food manufacturers in the District.
- 3.7.3 The Authority's approach to instigating Home Authority contact was inconsistent. In several cases where it appeared appropriate to notify other enforcing authorities, particularly during food complaint investigations, there was no evidence that this had occurred.

Recommendation

- 3.7.4 The Authority should:

Ensure that it liaises with the Home and/or Originating Authority of a business where offences have been identified which appear to be associated with the company's centrally defined policies and procedures. [The Standard – 9.4]

3.8 Advice to Business

3.8.1 In addition to the advice given during inspections and in response to specific enquiries, the Authority was carrying out a number of proactive initiatives aimed at assisting businesses to comply with food legislation. These included a number joint of initiatives with the Durham Districts Food Liaison Group:

- A 'Mobile Vendors Passport Scheme'. The Liaison Group was due to implement a regional scheme based on an arrangement piloted by Tyne and Wear Authorities. The aim was to ensure that all of the enforcement authorities within the region would have access to the complete inspection histories of the mobile vendors operating across the area. A 'passport' document had been developed that contained relevant legal guidance and sections for completion by enforcement authorities following each inspection.
- An Enforcement Policy had been jointly agreed between the Liaison Group authorities with the aim of providing a consistent approach to enforcement throughout the region. A summary document had also been produced and made available to food businesses and the public.
- Development of guidance leaflets providing information on the main types of food poisoning organisms and infectious disease control.
- Liaison with a local college over the provision of food hygiene training for businesses.
- Guidance on butchers' licensing had been provided at no cost to all relevant businesses, and 'new business' information packs were issued as appropriate.
- The Authority was implementing a corporate project to identify local language needs. The Council website was also under development and it was intended that all significant food safety related documents would be made available from this source together with a feedback mechanism.

3.9 Food Premises Database

- 3.9.1 The Authority had developed a new database of the food premises in its District from April 2001, based on the surviving records from the previous system and a business survey. A check of 14 premises selected at random from a local business directory showed that all but 2 were on the database and included in the routine inspection programme.
- 3.9.2 A documented procedure for maintaining the accuracy of the database had been developed, but this was largely confined to new business registrations. However, a number of measures were being planned, including the sharing of premises address details with the County Council and cross-referencing with other databases within the Council.
- 3.9.3 The Authority was still in the process of introducing its new software system and had yet to finalise and document the arrangements and procedures for controlling data input and to fully utilise the capabilities of the new system.

Recommendation

- 3.9.4 The Authority should:

Develop and implement a documented procedure to ensure that the food premises database is kept accurate and up to date, and that adequate security measures are in place to prevent access and amendment by unauthorised persons. [The Standard – 11.2]

3.10 Food Inspection and Sampling

- 3.10.1 The Authority had a food sampling policy and was implementing its current food sampling programme. The programme targeted producers and manufacturers based within the District, in addition to the other areas of regional and national surveillance sampling set out in the Authority's policy.
- 3.10.2 The Authority had recently implemented a comprehensive food sampling procedure.
- 3.10.3 Only 1 unsatisfactory sampling result had been obtained in the 12 months preceding the audit. This had been properly followed up and all related actions were recorded in detail.
- 3.10.4 The draft Service Plan 2002/2003 stated that sampling activity had been redirected during 2001/2002 to monitor drinking water safety around the burial site in the Authority's area which had been used for the disposal of carcasses during the Foot and Mouth outbreak.
- 3.10.5 All of the laboratories used by the Authority were properly accredited.

3.11 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease

- 3.11.1 The Service had participated in the development of County Durham Health Authority's food poisoning Outbreak Plan and Guidelines on the Exclusion from Work of Persons Affected by Gastro-intestinal Disease. In addition, the Authority had recently implemented its own comprehensive documented procedures for investigating food poisoning outbreaks and isolated notifications.
- 3.11.2 The procedures provided for a reciprocal arrangement with other authorities in the regional liaison group to provide officers and support to assist in major outbreaks.
- 3.11.3 The investigation records of 3 food related outbreaks of infectious disease were examined. The investigation of 1 outbreak had been recorded in detail and it was clear that a thorough investigation had been undertaken. The records of another outbreak could not be provided and there was insufficient detail in the third case for the investigation to be fully assessed.
- 3.11.4 Six cases of individual notifications of food poisoning were examined. These were well documented and it was evident that appropriate investigations were carried out in each case. The Authority had worked closely with the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control and there was evidence of effective county-wide initiatives aimed at improving the rate of notification and investigation of such incidents.

Recommendation

- 3.11.5 The Authority should:

Ensure that complete records relating to the control and investigation of outbreaks of food related infectious disease are kept and retained for at least 6 years. [The Standard – 13.3]

3.12 Food Safety Incidents

- 3.12.1 The Authority had a computer system capable of receiving food hazard warnings (FHWs) and had recently implemented a documented procedure for responding to FHWs and for notifying the Agency of any serious local incidents.
- 3.12.2 Records of the Authority's response to 12 FHWs were examined. In the majority of cases it was clear that appropriate action had been undertaken and these were particularly well documented since January 2002. Prior to that date, there were 2 category 'B' FHWs requiring action that were not on file and for which there was no evidence of the Authority's response.
- 3.12.3 The Authority's draft Service Plan 2002/2003 stated that more than 200 premises had been provided with written guidance in response to 3 FHWs received during 2001/2002.

Recommendation

- 3.12.4 The Authority should:

Ensure that all actions in response to food hazard warnings and the outcomes are documented. [The Standard – 14.3]

3.13 Enforcement

3.13.1 The Authority had adopted the Local Authority Enforcement Concordat in 1999/2000. This is a Cabinet Office and Local Government Association scheme that sets out the principles of good enforcement practice, based on the following criteria:

- Standards of service and performance
- Openness and clarity
- Helpfulness
- Effective complaints procedures
- Proportionality of enforcement actions
- Consistency.

3.13.2 The Authority had adopted and approved an Enforcement Policy developed by the regional food liaison group. However, as a generic document, this did not reflect the local policies and procedures specific to Derwentside, particularly in respect of prosecutions. A summary leaflet had also been produced and made available to local food businesses and the public. The auditors were advised that the Enforcement Policy was due to be reviewed and revised.

3.13.3 The Service completed the following formal enforcement actions in the 2 years preceding the audit:

- 8 improvement notices served on 4 premises
- 3 voluntary surrenders of food

3.13.4 There appeared to be an inconsistent approach to taking formal enforcement actions when instances of non-compliance with legal requirements were identified. It could not be confirmed that the Authority had adopted a graduated approach to enforcement as set out in its enforcement policy and the relevant official guidance. For example, the inspection records for 2 general premises and an Approved Premises showed that the Authority had identified deficiencies to the 'own checks' controls and considered the businesses to be 'high risk' on successive inspections. However, no action appeared to have been taken other than to repeat these deficiencies in consecutive inspection reports.

3.13.5 The records relating to all 8 improvement notices were examined. In all cases, the notices had been preceded by 'minded to' notices when necessary and were served by an officer with the appropriate authorisation who had witnessed the contraventions. Where 'minded to' notices had been issued, there had been timely progress to the service of improvement notices.

- 3.13.6 Overall, the wording of the contraventions and the works required was clear, reasonable time limits were given and prompt checks on compliance had been carried out. Appropriate and accurate legal references were provided in all cases. There were however a number of problems with the notices which included a failure to provide the full name of the proprietor, service on a company secretary rather than the body corporate and 1 notice not served appropriately on joint owners.
- 3.13.7 In some instances it was not clear that the works required were properly justified in the notice and there was some doubt that enforcement action could have been taken in the event of non-compliance. The time limit for compliance had been extended in respect of 1 premises, but this was not confirmed with the proprietor in writing. Similarly, no written confirmation was provided when the works required by other notices had been satisfactorily completed.
- 3.13.8 In general, the 3 voluntary surrenders of food had been carried out in accordance with the relevant Food Safety Act Code of Practice requirements. Although there was no evidence to indicate otherwise, there were no records to confirm that the food had been properly disposed of.

Recommendations

- 3.13.9 The Authority should:
- (i) Ensure that the Enforcement Policy and any summary version made available to the public and food businesses reflect local policies and procedures.
[The Standard – 15.1]
 - (ii) Ensure that its approach to enforcement and all formal enforcement actions are undertaken in line with the Enforcement Policy and relevant official guidance.
[The Standard – 15.2]

3.14 Records and Inspection Reports

- 3.14.1 The Authority had moved to a 'paperless office' approach to record keeping during 1996/1997 when all food business and enforcement activity records were gradually transferred onto the Team's database. However, it became apparent that the software was not year 2000 compliant when a significant proportion of these records, across all areas of Service activity, were erased from the system. Consequently, the historic records of enforcement activity were incomplete.
- 3.14.2 A new software system had been operated since May 2001, with a renewed premises database built from surviving records supplemented by a District wide survey of premises. Business details were being recorded by officers during the course of programmed inspections and inputted onto the database.
- 3.14.3 The records of enforcement activity available at the time of audit consisted of premises and activity files maintained post 2000, together with some surviving records.
- 3.14.4 In addition to the problems with the database records outlined above, there were gaps in the records of inspections and enforcement across most areas of Service activity. There was considerable variation and inconsistency in the level of record keeping between officers; reference has been made to these under the relevant sections of this report.
- 3.14.5 The standard inspection report form issued following inspections did not contain all of the details required to be notified to proprietors by Food Safety Act Code of Practice No. 9: Food Hygiene Inspections. There was also an inconsistent approach between officers in respect of the amount of detail provided, and in general, these reports were of limited benefit to the food business. Follow-up letters also varied in content and clarity, several of which omitted time scales for the works required and quoted incomplete legal references.
- 3.14.6 The inspection records of Approved Premises showed an inconsistency in approach by different officers. Most files contained considerable details about the food operations, including synopses of the premises and activities, and detailed notes of the Authority's involvement. By comparison, other files were deficient in key details, such as the formal notifications of approval sent to the businesses, current information on the food operations carried out and the inspection findings. However, the Authority had addressed the issues of consistency and record keeping through the recent introduction of detailed assessment forms.

Recommendations

3.14.7 The Authority should:

- (i) Ensure that up to date and retrievable records are maintained of inspections, visits, enforcement actions and the determination of compliance with legal requirements made by officers, including Approved Premises and licensed butchers' shops. [The Standard – 16.1]
- (ii) Ensure that all records are kept for at least 6 years. [The Standard – 16.2]

3.15 Complaints about the Service

- 3.15.1 The Service had recently implemented a documented procedure setting out the arrangements for complaints made about food enforcement. This was linked to the corporate complaints procedure, which was summarised and made available to the public in a leaflet available at the Council Offices reception point. The Service Plan stated that any complaints received would be considered as part of the annual review of performance.

- 3.15.2 The auditors were advised that no complaints had been made against the Food Service during the 2 years preceding the audit.

3.16 Liaison with Other Organisations

3.16.1 Liaison arrangements, aimed at facilitating consistent enforcement, were in place with neighbouring authorities and other appropriate bodies. These included:

- Durham Districts Food Liaison Group
- County Durham Liaison Group (this forum was formed from the above district authorities together with representatives from local trading standards enforcement authorities).
- Chartered Institute of Environmental Health General Food and Health Committee
- Public Health Laboratory Service Liaison Group
- Durham Chief Environmental Health Officer Group

3.16.2 The Authority also maintained a close working relationship with the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control and liaised with other regional authorities through various specialist working groups set up under the remit of the Durham Districts Food Liaison Group.

3.16.3 The minutes to the main group meetings were retained and confirmed the Authority's regular attendance.

3.17 Internal Monitoring

- 3.17.1 The Authority did not have documented procedures setting out the Service's qualitative and quantitative internal monitoring arrangements, although the new Food Premises Inspection Procedure included some measures in respect of that specific activity. These related to accompanied inspections with each officer on a twice-yearly basis. However, the Service Plan 2001/2002 identified this as an area requiring development.
- 3.17.2 Some ad hoc measures to monitor qualitative performance were being undertaken in practice, which largely comprised peer checking of formal notices and some management checks on correspondence.
- 3.17.3 A new Corporate Performance Management System had been implemented from April 2002. This required quarterly management checks on quantitative performance against internal targets and the submission of 6 monthly reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These encompassed overdue inspections, infectious disease investigations, food sampling, responses to food hazard warnings and requests for advice.
- 3.17.4 The Service had also commenced a programme of customer satisfaction surveys. Questionnaires were being sent out following each inspection with the intention of collating the results and presenting regular reports to the Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation

- 3.17.5 The Authority should:

Extend and implement documented internal monitoring procedures to verify its conformance with the Standard, relevant legislation, centrally issued guidance and the Authority's own policies and procedures. [The Standard – 19.1 & 19.2]

3.18 Third Party or Peer Review

- 3.18.1 No inter-authority audit programmes had been carried out in the region, although the auditors were advised that this is currently under active consideration together with various benchmarking exercises.

3.19 Food Safety Promotion

- 3.19.1 The Authority was able to demonstrate a number of projects aimed at promoting food safety. The Service Plan 2001/2002 confirmed the Authority's aspiration to undertake more initiatives in this area but stated that the current staff resource allocation was a limiting factor.
- 3.19.2 The draft Service Plan 2002/2003 reiterated the Service's intentions and the auditors were advised of events that were being jointly planned with the regional food liaison group in support of the Agency's Food Hygiene Campaign. A Safe Barbecue Campaign was being prepared in association with a local radio station to coincide with the national Food Link events during Food Safety Week.
- 3.19.3 Food safety promotional activities carried out during 2001/2002 included the following:
- Talking Turkey Campaign – this project, undertaken in liaison with other regional enforcement authorities and a local radio station over the Christmas period, was aimed at disseminating information on safe cooking and reducing the levels of food poisoning associated with poultry consumption.
 - General Practitioner Training Event – working in partnership with the local Health Authority and other enforcement authorities, this event was aimed at improving the early notification of food poisoning within the region by general practitioners.

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Food Standards Agency

Local Authority Enforcement Division

<p>3.</p> <p>(i) Revise current scheme of delegation.</p> <p>(ii) Review authorisation procedure ensuring that it is consistent with the revised scheme of delegation.</p> <p>(iii) Develop a mechanism for assessing officer competence and incorporate within the current appraisal scheme.</p>	<p>Completed Sep-02</p> <p>Jan-03</p> <p>Sep-02</p>	<p>Recommendation 3.3.7</p> <p>(i) Ensure that the scheme of delegated authority and the Authorisation Procedure provide a coherent, clear and consistent basis for conferring officer authorisations, in line with officers' individual levels of qualification, training, experience and competency, and in accordance with Food Safety Act Code of Practice No. 19: Qualifications and Experience of Authorised Officers. [The Standard – 5.1]</p>	<p>Revised scheme of delegation is to reflect imminent changes to corporate management team and to remove references to superseded legislation.</p>
<p>4.</p> <p>Revise training request and training evaluation documents to include details of content and duration of training received.</p>	<p>Completed Aug-02</p>	<p>Recommendation 3.3.7</p> <p>(ii) Ensure that officer training records include details of the content and duration of all relevant training. [The Standard – 5.5]</p>	
<p>5.</p> <p>Revise equipment maintenance and calibration procedures.</p> <p>Thermometer calibrated by external calibration service used specifically for reference and enforcement purposes.</p> <p>Provide staff training on revised procedures.</p>	<p>Oct-02</p>	<p>Recommendation 3.4.6</p> <p>(i) Further develop the documented calibration procedure so that it covers the record keeping arrangements and includes calibration checks to formal actions. [The Standard – 6.2 and 6.3]</p>	

<p>6. Complete commercial premises electronic database. Information concerning commercial premises details, current service activity and future actions have been entered onto electronic database.</p> <p>Standard reports have been developed to generate the monitoring statistics required by the Food Standards Agency. Maintenance of the database is ongoing, using information from local surveys, business directories and other databases.</p>	<p>Completed Jul-02</p>	<p>Recommendation 3.4.6 (ii) Ensure that the database system is operated to provide the required information to the Food Standards Agency. [The Standard – 6.4]</p>	
<p>7. (i) Ensure that all outstanding high risk (A-C) inspections are complete. Inspection programme generated on a quarterly basis to assist monitoring of performance.</p> <p>(ii) Inspect all category D, E and F premises due for inspection (inc. outstanding) within current inspection programme (Apr 02 - Mar 03). Consultants engaged to undertake inspection of category D, E and F premises</p> <p>(iii) Monitor on going performance against inspection target on a monthly basis.</p>	<p>Completed Jun-02</p> <p>Mar-03</p> <p>Sep-02</p>	<p>Recommendation 3.5.16 (i) Ensure that inspections are carried out at a minimum frequency based on risk and in accordance with the requirements of Food Safety Act Code of Practice No. 9: Food Hygiene Inspections. [The Standard – 7.1]</p>	<p>Team Leader is monitoring officer for monthly performance monitoring.</p>

<p>11. Develop standard documentation to be used for the investigation of food complaints.</p> <p>The internal monitoring system (see 3.17.5) will examine recording of information and actions.</p>	<p>Mar-03</p>	<p>Recommendation 3.6.3 Ensure that food and food premises complaints are investigated in accordance with the relevant Food Safety Act Codes of Practice and centrally issued guidance. [The Standard – 8.2]</p>	
<p>12. (i) Link generation of questionnaire to Home / Originating Authorities with standard Food complaints form.</p> <p>(ii) Revise standard food complaints investigation form to include details of contact with Home / originating Authority. The internal monitoring system (see 3.17.5) will examine recording of information and actions.</p>	<p>Completed Aug-02</p> <p>Sep-02</p>	<p>Recommendation 3.7.4 Ensure that it liaises with the Home and/or Originating Authority of a business where offences have been identified which appear to be associated with the company's centrally defined policies and procedures. [The Standard – 9.4]</p>	
<p>13. Document the security arrangements and procedures for controlling data input onto the electronic database system [These arrangements and procedures are detailed in the improvements planned for recommendation 3.4.6(ii)].</p>	<p>Mar-03</p>	<p>Recommendation 3.9.4 Develop and implement a documented procedure to ensure that the food premises database is kept accurate and up to date, and that adequate security measures are in place to prevent access and amendment by unauthorised persons. [The Standard – 11.2]</p>	

<p>17. Provide further training to Officers on the revised Enforcement Policy and procedures. The internal monitoring system (see 3.17.5) will incorporate action checklists and monitoring of enforcement action in line with Enforcement Policy.</p>	<p>Mar-03</p>	<p>Recommendation 3.13.9 (ii) Ensure that its approach to enforcement and all formal enforcement actions are undertaken in line with the Enforcement Policy and relevant official guidance. [The Standard – 15.2]</p>	
<p>18. Provide officers with documented procedures concerning the recording and input of data onto commercial premises files and electronic database. Develop and maintain commercial premises (paper) files. Carry out monthly checks of officer workloads to ensure update of computer records. Specific responsibility allocated for monitoring of compliance with procedures as part of comprehensive internal monitoring system (see 3.17.5)</p>	<p>Feb-03</p>	<p>Recommendation 3.14.7 (i) Ensure that up to date and retrievable records are maintained of inspections, visits, enforcement actions and the determination of compliance with legal requirements made by officers, including Approved Premises and licensed butchers' shops. [The Standard – 16.1]</p>	
<p>19. All records to be kept for at least 6 years</p>	<p>Completed Apr -02</p>	<p>Recommendation 3.14.7 (ii) Ensure that all records are kept for at least 6 years. [The Standard – 16.2]</p>	<p>All records to be kept for at least 6 years with effect from 19/4/02 when amendment to the Framework Agreement was received.</p>

<p>20. Extend and implement a documented, comprehensive and systematic internal monitoring process. Incorporate existing performance monitoring tools.</p> <p>Specific responsibilities allocated for implementing internal monitoring arrangements.</p>	<p>Mar-03</p>	<p>Recommendation 3.17.5 Extend and implement documented internal monitoring procedures to verify its conformance with the Standard, relevant legislation, centrally issued guidance and the Authority's own policies and procedures. [The Standard – 19.1 & 19.2]</p>	
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ANNEX A

DERWENTSIDE DISTRICT COUNCIL ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY OFFICIAL RETURN 2000

The UK enforcement data is reported to the European Commission on a calendar year basis. Therefore the information in this Annex, and on the Agency website at www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/role/39188, will not match the data in the main body of the report which is based on the local authority reporting year (1 April-31 March).

DERWENTSIDE DISTRICT COUNCIL– OCD NO 094

	Primary Producers	Manufacturers and Packers	Importers and Exporters	Distributors and Transporters	Retailers	Restaurant and other Caterers	Total
Number of establishments	8	15	0	3	324	347	697
Number of establishments inspected	6	12	0	1	238	308	565
Number of inspections	6	12	0	1	290	362	671
Number of establishments committing infringements*	0	0	0	0	107	173	280
Hygiene general (handling procedures, equipment and condition of premises)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hygiene of personnel (in conformity with article 8 of the Control Directive)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Composition (including raw materials and additives)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contamination (other than microbiological)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Labelling and presentation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

* Only the ones which have led to formal action by the competent authorities

LABORATORY RESULTS

Product	Samples with infringements*					Total number of samples
	Number of samples#	Microbiological contamination	Other contaminants	Composition	Labelling and presentation	
Dairy products	0	0	0	0	0	26
Eggs and egg products	0	0	0	0	0	0
Meat and meat products, game and poultry	0	0	0	0	0	7
Fish, crustacea and molluscs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fats and oils	0	0	0	0	0	0
Soups, broths and sauces	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cereals and bakery products	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fruit and vegetables	0	0	0	0	0	8
Herbs and spices	0	0	0	0	0	0
Non-alcoholic drinks	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wine	0	0	0	0	0	0
Alcoholic drinks (other than wine)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ices and desserts	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cocoa and cocoa preparations, coffee and tea	0	0	0	0	0	0
Confectionery	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nuts, nut products and snacks	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prepared dishes	0	0	0	0	0	0
Foodstuffs intended for special nutritional uses	0	0	0	0	0	0
Additives	0	0	0	0	0	0
Materials and articles intended to come into contact with foodstuffs	0	0	0	0	0	7
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0

* Only the ones which have led to formal action by the competent authorities

A few samples had more than one type of infringement on which formal action was taken

Product from which Informal Samples were taken during 2000	Number of Informal Samples which were Unsatisfactory				Total No. of Informal Samples
	Microbiological contamination	Other contamination	Composition	Labelling and Presentation	
Dairy products	0	0	0	0	0
Eggs and egg products	0	0	0	0	0
Meat and meat products, game and poultry	2	0	0	0	10
Fish, crustacea and molluscs	0	0	0	0	0
Fats and oils	0	0	0	0	0
Soups, broths and sauces	0	0	0	0	0
Cereals and bakery products	0	0	0	0	0
Fruit and vegetables	0	0	0	0	0
Herbs and spices	0	0	0	0	0
Non-alcoholic drinks	0	0	0	0	0
Wine	0	0	0	0	0
Alcoholic drinks (other than wine)	0	0	0	0	0
Ices and desserts	0	0	0	0	0
Cocoa and cocoa preparations, coffee and tea	0	0	0	0	0
Confectionery	0	0	0	0	0
Nuts, nut products and snacks	0	0	0	0	0
Prepared dishes	0	0	0	0	0
Foodstuffs intended for special nutritional uses	0	0	0	0	0
Additives	0	0	0	0	0
Materials and articles intended to come into contact with Foodstuffs	0	0	0	0	0
Others	0	0	0	0	0

Glossary

Agricultural Analyst	A person, holding the prescribed qualifications, who is formally appointed by a local authority to analyse feeding stuffs samples.
Approved premises	Food manufacturing premises that has been approved by the local authority, within the context of specific legislation, and issued a unique identification code relevant in national and/or international trade.
Authorised officer	A suitably qualified officer who is authorised by the local authority to act on its behalf in, for example, the enforcement of legislation.
Best Value	<p>A Government policy which seeks to improve local government performance in the delivery of services to local communities – from education and care for the elderly through to environmental health and road maintenance. Best Value aims to ensure that the cost and quality of these services are of a level acceptable to local people by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing the role of local people in deciding the priorities for local government services • improving the way authorities manage and review their business • building on the experience and expertise of staff.
Border Inspection Post	Point of entry into the UK from non-EU countries for products of animal origin.
Codes of Practice	Government Codes of Practice issued under Section 40 of the Food Safety Act 1990 as guidance to local authorities on the enforcement of food legislation.
County Council	A local authority whose geographical area corresponds to the county and whose responsibilities include food standards and feeding stuffs enforcement.
District Council	A local authority of a smaller geographic area and situated within a County Council whose responsibilities include food hygiene enforcement.
Enforcement Concordat	Government guidance setting out principles and procedures of good enforcement which local authorities may adopt. Developed in consultation with businesses, local and central government, consumer groups and other interested parties. It sets out what businesses and others being regulated can expect from enforcement officers.
Environmental Health Officer (EHO)	Officer employed by the local authority to enforce food safety legislation.
Feeding stuffs	Term used in legislation on feed mixes for farm animals and pet food.

Food Examiner	A person holding the prescribed qualifications who undertakes microbiological analysis on behalf of the local authority.
Food Hazard Warnings	This is a system operated by the Food Standards Agency to alert the public and local authorities to national or regional problems concerning the safety of food.
Food hygiene	The legal requirements covering the safety and wholesomeness of food.
Food standards	The legal requirements covering the quality, composition, labelling, presentation and advertising of food, and materials in contact with food.
Framework Agreement	<p>The Framework Agreement consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Law Enforcement Standard • Service Planning Guidance • Monitoring Scheme • Audit Scheme <p>The Standard and the Service Planning Guidance set out the Agency's expectations on the planning and delivery of food law enforcement.</p> <p>The Monitoring Scheme requires local authorities to submit quarterly returns to the Agency on their food enforcement activities i.e. numbers of inspections, samples and prosecutions.</p> <p>Under the Audit Scheme the Food Standards Agency will be conducting audits of the food law enforcement services of local authorities against the criteria set out in the Standard.</p>
Full Time Equivalent (FTE)	A figure which represents that part of an individual officer's time available to a particular role or set of duties. It reflects the fact that individuals may work part-time, or may have other responsibilities within the organisation not related to food enforcement.
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point – a food safety management system used within food businesses to identify points in the production process where it is critical for food safety that the control measure is carried out correctly, thereby eliminating or reducing the hazard to a safe level.
Home Authority	An authority where the relevant decision making base of an enterprise is located and which has taken on the responsibility of advising that business on food safety/food standards issues. Acts as the central contact point for other enforcing authorities' enquiries with regard to that company's food related policies and procedures.

Improvement notice	A notice served by an Authorised Officer of the local authority under Section 10 of the Food Safety Act 1990, requiring the proprietor of a food business to carry out suitable works to ensure that the business complies with the requirements of food hygiene or food processing legislation.
Inter Authority Auditing	A system whereby local authorities might audit each others' food law enforcement services against an agreed quality standard.
Member forum	A local authority forum at which Council Members discuss and make decisions on food law enforcement services.
Metropolitan Authority	A local authority normally associated with a large urban conurbation in which the County and District Council functions are combined.
Minded to notice	A notice served by an Authorised Officer of the local authority under the Deregulation (Improvement and Enforcement Procedures) (Food Safety Act 1990) Order 1996. This notice is served prior to an 'improvement notice' and gives food business proprietors a specified period to make either a written or oral representation to the enforcement authority about the enforcement action. A repeal to the above Order means that from 10 April 2001 'minded to notices' no longer need to be issued prior to the issue of an 'improvement notice'.
OCD returns	Returns on local food law enforcement activities required to be made to the European Union under the Official Control of Foodstuffs Directive.
Originating Authority	An authority in whose area a business produces or packages goods or services and for which the Authority acts as a central contact point for other enforcing authorities' enquiries in relation to the those products
Port Health Authority	A local authority within whose boundaries there is a point of entry into the UK for imported foods.
Public Analyst	An officer, holding the prescribed qualifications, who is formally appointed by the local authority to carry out chemical analysis of food samples.
Risk rating	A system that rates food premises according to risk and determines how frequently those premises should be inspected. For example, high risk premises should be inspected at least every 6 months.
Service Plan	A document produced by a local authority setting out their plans on providing and delivering a food service to the local community.

Trading Standards	The Department within a local authority which carries out, amongst other responsibilities, the enforcement of food standards and feeding stuffs legislation.
Trading Standards Officer (TSO)	Officer employed by the local authority who, amongst other responsibilities, may enforce food standards and feeding stuffs legislation.
Unitary Authority	A local authority in which the County and District Council functions are combined, examples being Metropolitan District/Borough Councils, and London Boroughs. A Unitary Authority's responsibilities will include food hygiene, food standards and feeding stuffs enforcement.