

Sampling - General

Question	Answer	Comments/Evidence	Auditors Notes
Organisation and Management¹:			
Does the Authority's service delivery plan provide information on:			The information might not be within one document. Auditors will need to look carefully through the paperwork provided, and follow up any areas where information was not available. (It is likely that the paper work provided for the other sections of the audit will hold some answers.)
➤ A statement of the Authority's food and feeding stuffs sampling policy, and arrangements for analysis/examination.	Yes/No		
➤ Details of the liaison arrangements in place.	Yes/No		
Does the Authority have any local performance indicators on sampling?	Yes/No	Audit/documentation check	Auditors should establish whether any relevant performance indicator targets are being met.
Documented Policies and Procedures:			
Are up to date copies of appropriate documentation on sampling including legislation and guidance available at all relevant locations to all relevant staff?	Yes/No	Documented procedures checklist Officer interviews	
Authorised Officers²:			
Are Agency/temporary staff used for sampling work?	Yes/No	Training checklist PVQ information	Agency staff should fulfil the same qualification criteria and be authorised by the LA under their authorisation procedure.
Are all staff, including Agency/temporary staff, appropriately authorised for sampling work?	Yes/No	Training checklist Document review	
Are officers acting in accordance with their authorisations for sampling?	Yes/No	Sampling checklist	
Are identified training needs on sampling included within the training programme?	Yes/No	Audit check Officer interviews	
Is the training programme implemented in relation to sampling?	Yes/No	Audit check Officer interviews	
Food Complaints³:			

Does the Authority's food complaint procedure cover: ➤ submitting samples for scientific examination	Yes/No	Document review	
➤ consideration of follow-up samples	Yes/No		
Home Authority Principle:			
What level of assistance is offered to other authorities regarding sampling issues, on businesses for which the authority is Home/Originating Authority?		Audit check	
How does the Authority ensure that officers liaise with Home/Originating Authorities?		Audit check	
Is there evidence that the HAP is being followed in respect of food sampling?	Yes/No	Sampling checklist	
Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease⁴:			
Does the authority's documented procedure on the investigation of food poisoning notifications cover: ➤ submitting samples for scientific examination	Yes/No	Document review	
➤ consideration of follow-up samples	Yes/No		
Enforcement⁵:			
Does the authority's enforcement policy cover sampling?	Yes/No	Document review	
Is there evidence of the authority's enforcement policy being implemented in relation to sampling?	Yes/No	Audit check	
Have any enforcement decisions on sampling been made outside the enforcement policy guidelines?	Yes/No	Audit check	

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Food Safety Incidents			
Has the Authority had any incident following on from a sampling result that could be classified as a serious localised incident or wider food safety problem?	Yes/No	Audit check	
Records:			
Are records of samples taken/results/follow-up easily retrievable?	Yes/No	Audit check	
Do they include relevant detail?	Yes/No		These details may be on the computer database and/or on premises/sampling files.
Are records available for the last 6 years?	Yes/No		
Liaison⁶:			
Does the authority have a nominated sampling liaison officer?	Yes/No	Audit check	
Does the authority have liaison arrangements in place on sampling with neighbouring authorities?	Yes/No	Audit check Detail + evidence:	Likely to be via food liaison groups and/or sampling sub-groups. The Authority's arrangements should be detailed in the Service Plan. the auditor should look for evidence of these activities at the authority
Does a representative of the authority regularly attend these meetings?	Yes/No	Document review (last 3 meeting minutes)	
Internal Monitoring⁷:			
Do documented monitoring procedures cover sampling activities?	Yes/No	Document review	
Does the procedure cover:			Quantitative monitoring may include no. of samples against programme
➤ quantitative aspects	Yes/No		Qualitative monitoring may include: Team meetings Paperwork checks Accompanied sampling visits Consistency exercises Customer questionnaires
➤ qualitative aspects	Yes/No		

Has the procedure been implemented in respect of sampling?	Yes/No	Audit check	
Where necessary have corrective actions been identified and implemented?	Yes/No	Audit check of records	There should be evidence of corrective action where non-conformity is found. Continuing identification of the same problem could indicate that corrective action had not been effective.
Third Party or Peer Review⁸:			
Has the authority participated in an IAA exercise that covers sampling?	Yes/No	Document review Officer interviews	The auditor should log the scope of the audit and the date. Where there is no evidence of an IAA the auditor should assess whether such an exercise has been undertaken in the area.
Has the authority participated in any other 3 rd party/peer review process in relation to sampling?	Yes/No	Document review	Third party audits may include BV inspections, ISO 9002.
If corrective actions have been identified, have they been programmed as part of an action plan?	Yes/No N.A	Audit check	
Is the authority adhering to the action plan?	Yes/No N.A	Audit check	
Food Safety and Standards Promotion and Advice to Business⁹:			
Has the authority undertaken any activity to promote food safety in response to sampling activities?	Yes/No	Officer interview	Examples may include press releases.

Documentation:

- 1 Service Plan
- 2 Training programme, authorisation procedure
- 3 Complaints procedure
- 4 I.D procedure(s)
- 5 Enforcement policy
- 6 Copies of any liaison group or sampling group minutes
- 7 Internal monitoring procedures, copies of any internal reports following consistency or monitoring exercises.
- 8 Audit report summaries and action plans
- 9 Any relevant examples, evidence and good practice

Food Sampling

- 12.1 The Authority shall ensure that food is inspected in accordance with relevant legislation, Food Safety Codes of Practice and centrally issued guidance to ensure that food and feeding stuffs meet legally prescribed standards.
- 12.2 The Authority shall take appropriate action on any non-compliance found in accordance with the Authority's enforcement policy.
- 12.3 The Authority shall set up, maintain and implement a documented sampling policy and programme that shall accord with any centrally issued or relevant guidance, and relevant Food Safety Act Code of Practice and shall include reference to its approach to any relevant national sampling programme centrally co-ordinated by the Food Standards Agency.

NOTE: The Authority should consider the nature of its food establishments and also have regard to any relevant sampling programme centrally co-ordinated by LACOTS and the PHLS and in Scotland, the Scottish Food Co-ordinating Committee and in Wales the Welsh Food Microbiological Forum.

- 12.4 The Authority shall set up, maintain and implement documented procedures for the procurement or purchase of samples, continuity of evidence and the prevention of deterioration or damage to samples whilst under their control in accordance with the relevant Food Safety Act Code of Practice and centrally issued guidance.
- 12.5 The Authority shall carry out sampling in accordance with its documented sampling policy, procedures and programme and shall take appropriate action in accordance with the Authority's enforcement policy where sample results are not considered to be satisfactory.
- 12.6 The Authority shall take appropriate action in accordance with its enforcement policy where sample results are not considered to be satisfactory.
- 12.7 The Authority shall, where appropriate, ensure a Public Analyst, and/or Agricultural Analyst is appointed to carry out examinations and analyses of food samples. In making these appointments, all relevant legal requirements and Food Safety Act Codes of Practice shall be satisfied. All samples for examination should be submitted to a Food Examiner at a laboratory accredited for the purpose of examination.

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Sampling Policy: Does the Authority have a documented sampling policy? [CP 7.4]	Yes/No	Document Review	Auditors will need to take into account the range of activity of the LA when assessing the completeness of the sampling policy, procedures and programme. The PVQ information on the LA profile will aid in this.
Was the policy prepared in conjunction with the PA/PHLS	Yes/No	Audit check	
Was any other organisation (inc. trade organisations or the public) consulted on the development of the policy?	Yes/No	Audit check	
Were Members involved in the development of the sampling policy?	Yes/No	Audit check	

Does the sampling policy take account of:		Document review	
➤ A risk based approach	Yes/No		
➤ HA premises	Yes/No		
➤ OA premises	Yes/No		
➤ Process monitoring	Yes/No		
➤ Complaints	Yes/No		
➤ Surveys - national, regional and EU	Yes/No		Check if policy refers to links with regional groups. If no participation, explore reasons why.
➤ Investigation of food contamination and food poisoning incidents	Yes/No		
➤ Imported food responsibilities	Yes/No		
➤ Avoidance of duplication with port health/HA sampling	Yes/No		
➤ Special investigations	Yes/No		
Has the policy been made available to local businesses and the public?	Yes/No	Audit check	
Has the policy been reviewed?	Yes/No		
If a review has been conducted, when and how did this take place?			

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Sampling Programme: Does the Authority have a documented sampling programme? [CP 7.5]	Yes/No	Document Review	Programme should take into account the number, type and risk ratings of the premises in the area, and the authority's Home Authority responsibilities. [CP 7.5]
Was the programme prepared in consultation with food examiner / public analyst? [CP 7.6]	Yes/No	Audit Check	
Was any other consultation carried out, e.g. with trade groups?	Yes/No		
Is the programme in accordance with the sampling policy?	Yes/No	Document Review	
Does the programme include:			
➤ Products manufactured locally	Yes/No		
➤ Environmental sampling (apart from national/EU surveys)	Yes/No /N.A.		If no environmental sampling, explore reasons why.
➤ Importers	Yes/No		
➤ M&A in Contact With Food	Yes/No /N.A.		
Does the programme take into account HA arrangements?	Yes/No		
Does the sampling programme link with the inspection programme?	Yes/No		Programme could where applicable include planned sampling of local manufacturers due for inspection.
Is the Authority implementing the programme?	Yes/No	Audit Check of sampling results to verify compliance with the plan.	Auditors should note that Article 14 returns will also give an idea of activity prior to the audit. If the Authority has not met its programme. The Auditor should examine any review that may have been done with the PA/Food Ex to determine the reasons.

Sampling procedure: Does the Authority have a sampling procedure?	Yes/No	Document Review	
Does the sampling procedure cover?			Auditors should note that some of these issues will be detailed within specific protocols, e.g. for national surveys.
➤ Equipment required	Yes/No		
➤ Procurement of samples	Yes/No		
➤ Liaison with the proprietor	Yes/No		
➤ Formal and informal sampling	Yes/No		
➤ Sample size	Yes/No		Procedures may reference centrally issued protocols or protocols drawn up by food groups that cover sample size/method of sampling etc.
➤ Method of sampling (hot, cold, frozen, solid, liquid, bulk etc)	Yes/No		
➤ Sealing, labelling, bagging	Yes/No		
➤ Documentation	Yes/No		
➤ Storage and transport	Yes/No		
➤ Results and further action	Yes/No		
➤ Traceability/continuity of evidence	Yes/No		
➤ Link with FHW procedure	Yes/No		
➤ Contact with PA/PHLS	Yes/No		
➤ Liaison with Home and Originating Authorities	Yes/No		This may be included in the L.A.'s Home Authority procedure, and should include a reference to HA action on receipt of adverse results from enforcing authorities.

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Are specific protocols used, e.g. for particular foods or sampling exercises?	Yes/No		If yes, check how developed and if protocols are retained or shared for future sampling projects.
General: Has action followed sample results that were not considered satisfactory?	Yes/No	See sampling checklist Officer interviews.	The Auditor will need to examine any record of sampling activity. Where samples have been unsatisfactory the premises files/interviews with officers should establish whether action has been taken. The food examiners or Public Analysts report will give an indication whether the food met legal requirements or whether the results require further investigation.
Are systems in place to ensure traceability, storage and security of formal/complaint samples?	Yes/No	Audit check	
Has formal action (e.g. IN, formal caution or prosecution) followed any adverse results?	Yes/No	Audit check	Gather evidence from the previous 2 years
Are all microbiological and formal food standards food samples submitted to an Official Control laboratory?	Yes/No	See sampling checklist	
Are the laboratories used on the list of Official Laboratories?	Yes/No	Document review	Details of the Public Analyst and the Food Examiner should be within the service plan information.
Has the Public Analyst been properly appointed?	Yes/No N/A	Document review	Food Safety Act 1990 Section 27. Evidence required only for unitary/county councils.

Documentation: Sampling policy, sampling procedures, sampling programmes (current and last years) Appointment letter for PA.

Statistics: Numbers of samples taken. (Last year from OCD and this year to date against the programme), sampling budget.

Facilities and Equipment

6.1 The Authority shall make available the necessary facilities and equipment to permit all activities associated with the service to be carried out. [A suggested list is included within equipment checklist]

6.2 The Authority shall set up, maintain and implement a documented procedure to ensure that equipment is properly maintained and calibrated, and removed from service when found to be defective.

6.3 Relevant information about the equipment shall be recorded.

NOTE: This should normally include identification, calibration status and the results of any in service checks.

6.4 Any computer software package or other method of record administration used by the Authority shall be capable of providing any information reasonably requested by the Food Standards Agency. Such systems shall be operated in such a way so as to be able to provide required information to the Agency.

6.5 The Authority shall set up, maintain and implement appropriate back up systems for any electronic databases and systems or documented procedures which have been designed to minimise the risk of corruption or loss of information held on its databases.

Question	Answer	Comments/Evidence	Auditors Notes
Has the Authority identified the sampling equipment it requires?	Yes/No	Equipment checklist as a guide.	Auditors should identify if the Authority has carried out an assessment of their needs. If so a check against their assessment should be made. Equipment checklist gives guidance on what might be expected.
Is it available?	Yes/No	Audit check	
Does the Authority have a documented procedure in relation to calibration and defective equipment?	Yes/No		The Auditor should ascertain the types and quantities of equipment used by the Authority. Are all pieces of equipment adequately covered?

Question	Answer	Comments/Evidence	Auditors Notes
Does the procedure cover: - The equipment to be calibrated.	Yes/No	Checklist	
- Frequency of checks.	Yes/No		
- Method of calibration.	Yes/No		
- Tolerances	Yes/No		
- Action to be taken where results are outside tolerances.	Yes/No		
- Recording of results.	Yes/No		
- Isolation of defective equipment.	Yes/No		
Is the procedure implemented?	Yes/No	Checklist Staff interviews.	
Are records kept of the calibration and maintenance of equipment?	Yes/No		Auditors may choose to observe the calibration of a piece of equipment to verify that procedures are followed.
Database			
Is the Authority's recording system capable of providing accurately the information on sampling required by the FSA?	Yes/No		The Auditor should obtain the monitoring information gathered by the FSA (currently article 14 requirements). If this information has not been provided then the auditor should investigate the reason. The auditor should discuss with the OCD team any queries they may have on the accuracy of the returns. The Food Standards Act requires LAs to provide information to the FSA. Failure to provide the information should be attributed to either the recording system or some other reason.

Documents: Calibration procedure.