

PEMBROKESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT

SERVICE PLAN

2022-23

We the undersigned endorse this Plan on behalf of Pembrokeshire County Council



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Date 31 August 2022

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CONTENTS

1	SERVICE AIMS, OBJECTIVES, LINKAGES AND NATIONAL CONTEXT AND DIRECTION.....	4
1.1	Aims and Objectives.....	4
1.2	Specific Aims of the Food Safety and Standards Service.....	4
1.3	Links with the Well Being Plan for Pembrokeshire and the Pembrokeshire County Council Corporate Plan 2019-20.....	5
2	BACKGROUND.....	6
2.1	Profile of Pembrokeshire.....	6
2.2	Organisational Structure.....	7
2.3	The Scope of the Food Law Enforcement Service.....	9
2.4	Demands on the Service.....	9
2.5	Exit from the EU.....	11
2.6	Food Standards Agency “Achieving Business Compliance” Review and LA Recovery Plan.....	12
2.7	Enforcement.....	14
2.8	Performance of Service.....	15
	2.8.1 Food hygiene compliance – national strategic performance indicator - ‘broadly compliant premises’.....	16
	2.8.2 Food hygiene compliance – Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS).....	18
3	SERVICE DELIVERY.....	19
3.1	Registration of Food Premises.....	19
3.2	Inspections.....	20
	3.2.1 Food premises by food hygiene risk category.....	20
	3.2.2 Food premises by food standards risk category.....	23
	3.2.3 Achievement against combined inspection programme for food hygiene and food standards for 2017-18 (check previous year).....	23
	3.2.4 Combined inspection programme for food hygiene and food standards for 2022-23.....	24
	3.2.5 Unplanned and reactive inspections.....	25
	3.2.6 Timing of Inspection Reports.....	26
	3.2.7 Enforcement revisits.....	26
3.3	Service requests.....	28
	3.3.1 Premises complaints.....	29
	3.3.2 Food complaints.....	30
	3.3.3 Approval of food premises covered by EC Regulation 853/2004 laying down specific rules for the hygiene of food of animal origin.....	33
	3.3.4 Enquiries and requests for advice.....	34
	3.3.5 Referrals from other local authorities.....	36
3.4	Home Authority Principle and Primary Authority Partnerships.....	36
3.5	Training of Food Handlers.....	37
3.6	Food Inspection and Sampling.....	37
	3.6.1 Food samples for microbiological surveillance.....	37
	3.6.2 Food standards sampling.....	38
	3.6.3 Shellfish sampling.....	39
3.7	Investigation and Control of Outbreaks, Food Related Infectious Disease and Zoonoses.....	39
	3.7.1 Investigation and control of outbreaks and food related infectious disease.....	39
	3.7.2 Investigation and control of zoonoses.....	42
3.8	Food Alerts.....	42
3.9	Liaison with Other Organisations.....	42
	3.9.1 Expert panels, task groups and other professional groups/committees.....	42
	3.9.2 Public Health Wales and Health and Safety Executive.....	43
	3.9.3 Other external agencies.....	43
	3.9.4 Professional bodies.....	44
	3.9.5 Internal liaison.....	44
3.10	Food Safety and Standards Promotion.....	44
4	RESOURCES.....	44
4.1	Financial Allocation and ‘Efficiency Savings’.....	44
4.2	Staffing Allocation.....	47
4.3	Staff Development Plan.....	48
5	QUALITY ASSURANCE.....	49
5.1	Quality Assessment.....	49
5.2	Development and Review of Documented Policies and Procedures.....	50
6	REVIEW.....	50

6.1	Review against the Service Plan	50
6.2	Identification of any Variation from the Service Plan	50
6.3	Areas for Improvement	50
6.4	Food Standards Agency Wales (FSAW) Audits	50
6.4.1	Full Food Law Enforcement Audits	50
6.4.2	Official Controls in Approved Establishments	50
6.4.3	'LA response to the recommendations following the Public Enquiry into the 2005 Outbreak of E.coli O157 in SE Wales' and 'LA arrangements for new businesses'	51

1 SERVICE AIMS, OBJECTIVES, LINKAGES AND NATIONAL CONTEXT AND DIRECTION

1.1 Aims and Objectives

Food safety and standards enforcement is provided by the Public Protection Division of Pembrokeshire County Council.

This is the first Food Law Enforcement Service Plan to have been prepared since the Covid pandemic started in early 2020. Many routine services and proactive work such as food law inspections were suspended across the Country in line with Food Standards Agency guidance, as the Country entered the various lockdowns that occurred during the pandemic.

The effect of suspending routine work was to enable Environmental Health staff involved with the undertaking of Food Law enforcement to be involved with their wider Public Health role in assisting the Council to mitigate risks of transmission of Covid-19 across our Communities through the provision of advice and enforcement of the controls to prevent transmission, to deal with clusters and significant cases of covid infection, and to be deployed into Infection Prevention and Control activities, in line with the Pembrokeshire County Council Business Continuity Plan.

Further information on the achievements made against these objectives is set out later in this Plan.

1.2 Specific Aims of the Food Safety and Standards Service

The specific aims of the **Food Safety and Standards Team** are:

- To ensure that food produced, sold or supplied within Pembrokeshire is safe and wholesome; produced under hygienic conditions; of an acceptable quality and composition; and suitably labelled and advertised, so as to protect the health of the public and the rights/expectations of consumers.
- To investigate cases and outbreaks of food poisoning and other food related infectious disease linked to food business operations, to identify the source of infection, where possible; to prevent further spread; and, to raise awareness in general of routes of transmission and methods of prevention, with the aim of reducing the incidence of related illness within the local community. From the start of 2017-18, responsibility for following up initial notifications or allegations of infectious disease (including possible food poisoning), and for leading on infectious disease control in general, were transferred to the Section's Health and Safety Team.

These aims are pursued in accordance with relevant food law, the Food Standards Agency's "Framework Agreement on Official Controls for Food and Feed Controls by Local authorities", and Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) by:

- Developing an annual Food Law Service Plan,
- Discharging the statutory functions of the Council with respect to the registration of food premises, and the approval of certain food premises under product specific legislation (predominantly milk products, meat products and fishery products establishments).
- Carrying out a range of programmed activities including the inspection of premises and sampling of food products, taking follow-up action as necessary, in accordance with published enforcement policies, to ensure that identified breaches of legislation are rectified.
- Administering the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme for food businesses.
- Investigating complaints concerning food safety and food standards.
- Following up sporadic cases and outbreaks food poisoning, where there are potential links to food businesses
- Taking appropriate action in response to zoonoses notifications.
- Taking enforcement action that is proportionate, transparent, consistent and targeted, in line with the Food Safety Act Code of Practice and Practice Guidance, Food Standards Agency advice and guidance, and relevant internal enforcement policies.

- Providing information and advice on matters relevant to food safety and standards. In particular, the Team will endeavour to increase the knowledge and understanding of business operators and promote good practice.
- Committing resources to promotional and educational campaigns, having regard to the Food Standards Agency's strategic aims and local needs.
- Liaising with relevant bodies over issues of enforcement and consistency.
- Ensuring that our staff are appropriately qualified, possess suitable technical and professional skills, and are competent to perform the duties expected.
- Monitoring the implementation of our procedures to ensure that service standards are maintained and where appropriate improved.

1.3 Links with the Well Being Plan for Pembrokeshire and the Pembrokeshire County Council Corporate Plan (2020-21)

The Service links to a number of priorities set out in the Well Being Plan for Pembrokeshire that frames public, private and voluntary sector activity in Pembrokeshire over the period 2018-2030. The Plan is overseen by a multi-agency partnership (Public Service Board) that seeks to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Pembrokeshire, and is aligned with the seven national wellbeing goals set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015.

The Pembrokeshire County Council Corporate Plan is an annual, forward looking plan which identifies our Wellbeing Objectives, listing the actions the Council will be taking during the year to which it relates and setting out the performance measures and standards used to measure our progress. The Corporate Plan is our principal plan. It is published at the beginning of each financial year once it has been approved by Council, and the vision which underpins it is "*Working together, improving lives*".

In particular, these are:

- **A PROSPEROUS WALES (WBP GOAL)**
- **SUPPORT THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT FOR BUSINESSES TO GROW AND TO ASSIST SECURE AND SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT (CORPORATE WELL BEING OBJECTIVE)**

We are committed to ensuring that 'successful businesses grow, prosper and employ', with a particular emphasis on two headline actions:

- Promoting and supporting start-up, small and medium sized enterprises.
- Providing support to the food, tourism and agricultural sectors.

We will look to achieve this through a range of measures including:

- ensuring the provision of safe food from clean, hygienic premises, thereby creating confidence in local food businesses and promoting tourism;
- proactively providing advice on legal compliance and good practice to help maintain and develop food businesses, and
- targeting enforcement at the poorest performing food businesses that are seen to 'cut corners', to ensure that well run businesses are not placed at a competitive disadvantage.

- **A HEALTHIER WALES (WBP GOAL)**

We are committed to ensuring that 'People in Pembrokeshire are Healthier', with a particular emphasis on the priority of 'Helping and supporting people to take responsibility to improve their health and well-being throughout their lives' and on the 'headline action' of 'Reducing levels of obesity by promoting healthy and active living across all ages'.

The Food Safety and Standards Team contributes to the above objectives by ensuring that food businesses make available required information on food products. This ensures that consumers understand how to prepare and store foods safely, enables them to make informed choices about which food products to

purchase in order to maintain a healthy balanced diet, and to avoid ingredients for which they have particular intolerance or sensitivity.

1.4 The Medium Term Financial Plan (2021-2022 – 2024-25)

The Service is also committed to this cross cutting plan which is a live document and underpins all the objectives in the Corporate Plan. Changes are being implemented in order to improve efficiency and service delivery whilst meeting future financial challenges. In particular, we will:

- seek to maximise income where other service priorities such as the recovery from Covid-19 allow, whilst also driving up levels of compliance through:
 - the continuation of the Primary Authority program where capacity permits,
 - the take-up of all grant monies available from the Food Standards Agency
 - the continued promotion of the Team's paid advisory service where capacity permits
 - continued promotion of paid revisits for rescore
- implement identified financial reductions and continue to make efficiency savings by :
 - maximising the use of the Pembrokeshire County Council website and electronic communication,
 - continuing to reduce mileage as much as possible through use of agile/hybrid working, clustering of inspections by area, and triaging low risk complaints which are dealt with by phone or at next inspection.
 - use of electronic inspection forms and "verification" checks to replace inspections where a full inspection is not deemed necessary, where possible under the FSA Recovery Plan.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Profile of Pembrokeshire

Pembrokeshire County Council was established as a Unitary Authority in April 1996, bringing together the services provided by the previous county and district councils. It is the main employer in the County with approximately 6,000 staff (December 2016 payroll).

Pembrokeshire itself is a predominately rural county with a population of 124,000.

It is geographically the fifth largest county in Wales - covering an area of 1600 square kilometres.

Pembrokeshire, in common with many rural areas, relies on small and micro businesses to drive the economy. 85% of businesses employ less than 10 people, with (in 2011) an average of 3.3 employees. 12% of the workforce are self-employed.

Unemployment (claimant count) in Pembrokeshire stood at 3.1% in May 2022, and although levels are still low they are now at, or slightly above, those of many other Welsh local authorities.

The agricultural, food and tourism sectors are significant employers in the County and have concentrated local supply chains.

Tourism has been a major source of income for Pembrokeshire for the last 160 years. This industry results in a population increase to some 230,000 people in the summer, and accounts for a significant preponderance of catering premises within the County. As at 1st April 2022 there were 2835 registered food premises in the County as recorded on the Authority's database, and of these approximately 1843 (65%) are catering businesses. This compares to 2350 premises on our register on 1 April 2019. The number has increased significantly during the Covid-19 period, with a number of people setting up businesses whilst furloughed from their normal jobs. Some of these new businesses will have only traded for a short period whilst people's normal jobs were not available. However all must be followed up to see what their longer term position is. This increased number of registered premises will significantly add to the workload of the Food Team.

The main towns include the county town of Haverfordwest, Tenby, Milford Haven, Pembroke, Fishguard and St David's. The main tourist centres tend to be within the south of the County, and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park elsewhere. Tenby and Saundersfoot offer the greatest concentration of tourist accommodation. Milford Haven remains focused on the shipping industry, and includes fish landings in the port. The ports of Fishguard and Pembroke Dock also attract traffic en-route to Ireland and have employment based upon these ports.

2.2 Organisational Structure

Within the Authority, responsibility for food law enforcement lies with Public Protection Division, which is part of the Community Services Directorate.

The Division undertakes a wide range of environmental health and trading standards functions, and is divided into two sections.

Following organisational change in 2017, the Food Safety and Standards Team now forms part of the Health and Consumer Protection Section, and is managed by the Public Protection Manager (Health and Consumer Protection).

The Public Protection Department is also currently undergoing a service review to ascertain the resources needed to provide the service in the post-Covid-19 era. Due to the internal promotion of the previous Head of Public Protection, the Department has currently been placed under a combined Head of Public Protection and Housing Services, who is leading the review, with the two Public Protection Managers.

The food safety and hygiene functions (traditionally enforced by Environmental Health Officers) and food standards enforcement functions (traditionally enforced by Trading Standards Officers) have been integrated within the Authority, providing a more cohesive food law enforcement service. While a limited number of health and safety at work matters may be considered/advised upon during food premises inspections, health and safety regulation is generally carried out by the specialised Health and Safety Regulatory Team. The degree of integration of these service areas is kept under review to take full advantage of the synergies that exist and to ensure that the services are provided as efficiently and effectively as possible. As a result, infectious disease investigations are carried out by the Health and Safety Team as of 1st April 2017, with involvement by the Food Team at an early stage where food premises may be implicated.

However, the Public Protection Manager (Health and Consumer Protection) holds lead responsibility for communicable disease control, which spans the work of three of the Section's teams.

The Lead Environmental Health Officer (Food Safety) within the Food Safety and Standards Team holds lead responsibility for food safety and hygiene matters and for managing one of two area teams. When fully staffed, the Lead EHO (Food Safety) is supported by a Senior Environmental Health Officer, who assists in the role of monitoring service quality, consistency and effectiveness for the Team's 6 other operational staff (4 part-time).

The Lead Environmental Health Officer (Food Standards) within the Food Safety and Standards Team holds lead responsibility for food standards enforcement and when fully staffed manages the second area team of 5 officers (3 part-time). The Lead Trading Standards Officer (Food Standards) is similarly supported by a Senior Environmental Health Officer.

During the Covid-19 period, the Team suffered a number of retirements, one officer on maternity leave, and secondments, including the Lead Trading Standards Officer (Food Standards), and secondments to the Private Sector Housing Team and the Test Trace Protect Service created within Pembrokeshire to undertake contact tracing of persons with Covid-19 and their contacts, and also to investigate incidents and clusters of the infection in high risk settings such as care homes, and other high risk locations such as schools and workplaces. Replacements have been sought where possible, but the Team currently still carries vacancies. It is anticipated that further recruitment will take place during the year, to bolster the capacity in the Food team, to implement the FSA LA Recovery Plan.

The Lead Environmental Health Officer (Port Health), responsible for the day-to-day management of the Port Health Team, maintains a close working relationship with the Lead EHO (Food Safety) and Lead

Environmental Health Officer (Food Standards) within the Food Safety and Standards Team, in relation to food safety and standards activities, thereby ensuring consistency across the County. The Port Health Team is also responsible for all shellfish sampling activities, which are detailed in the Port Health Service Plan.

The two Senior Environmental Health Officers also have specialist responsibilities for 'approved' meat and meat products establishments and milk and milk products establishments, both of which are particularly technical in nature and covered by specific requirements and guidance. The Lead Environmental Health Officer (Port Health) has specialist responsibility for the local shellfish industry, including the sampling programmes, and for the inspection, approval and enforcement in respect of approved fishery establishments and vessels.

A significant number of officers work on a part-time basis.

Administrative support is provided to the Section by one full-time and one part-time Technical Support Assistants, with further input from the Division's System's Collator, who is responsible for the production of statistical information required for statutory returns, and performance reports needed to facilitate the management of the Service. These members of staff are based in the Division's Business Unit.

Responsibility for animal feedingstuffs enforcement was transferred to the Division's Animal Health Team in 2006. This transfer was agreed following the introduction of EC Regulation 183/2005, laying down requirements for feed hygiene, on the 1st January 2006. This legislation meant that animal feedingstuffs provisions would apply to a much wider range of premises than was previously the case, requiring a more comprehensive programme of inspections. Having regard to the recommendations of the Hampton Report and intentions of the Local Better Regulation Office (now the Office for Product Safety and Standards), it was considered appropriate to integrate these animal feedingstuffs visits with those made for animal health purposes, thereby avoiding an excessive number of different visits to farms. This work is covered by a separate service plan, which also covers the enforcement of food hygiene on farms that are primarily involved in primary production, which is again undertaken by the Division's Animal Health Team. As of March 2017 the Animal Health Team is also part of the Health and Consumer Protection Section - see organisation chart (**Appendix 1**), and is managed by the Public Protection Manager (Health and Consumer Protection).

In April 2019 the Food Safety and Standards Team relocated from Cherry Grove in Haverfordwest and are now based at:

Thornton Industrial Estate
Thornton
Milford Haven
Pembrokeshire

Telephone no. (01437) 775631
E-mail foodsafety@pembrokeshire.gov.uk

Since 2008-09, the Service has operated a flexible working scheme between the hours of 7.00 a.m. and 10.00 p.m., Monday to Friday, this being more compatible with the operating hours of certain food businesses. Guaranteed cover is available between the hours of 09:00 and 17:00 Monday to Friday.

Officers occasionally work outside these hours where required, in particular to allow for the inspection of businesses/events that operate/take place over the weekend. All officers have laptops and may work at various locations across the County as well as their office base.

Since 1st April 2013 the food safety and communicable disease functions have been covered by a guaranteed 'emergency' response service outside normal office hours. This service is manned by officers qualified in food law enforcement based within the Port Health Team who are also based at Thornton Industrial Estate, having relocated from Milford Haven Town Hall.

Telephone no. (01437) 776390
E-mail porthealth@pembrokeshire.gov.uk

The Port Health Team operates a shift system with standby arrangements in place for emergencies - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week throughout the year.

From the start of 2017-18, responsibility for following up initial notifications or allegations of infectious disease (including possible food poisoning), and for leading on infectious disease control in general, were transferred to the Section's Health and Safety Team, with incidents being investigated, in consultation with one of the Council's appointed **Proper Officers** based with the Mid and West Wales Health Protection Team (part of Public Health Wales), Matrix House, Northern Boulevard, Swansea Enterprise Park Swansea SA6 8DP. Cover is provided by Proper Officers operating from other locations. The role of all Proper Officers was extended to include medical officer responsibilities for port health during 2009-10, following a national review of and improvements to medical officer arrangements by the then National Public Health Service (now Public Health Wales). Food-related infectious disease incidents, linked to food business operations, are investigated by the Food Safety and Standards Team

Advice on food microbiology and sampling is provided by the **Food Examiner**, employed by **Public Health Wales** at the **Food, Water and Environmental Laboratory** based at **West Wales General Hospital, Carmarthen**. This laboratory examines the majority of food samples collected for surveillance and enforcement purposes. A service level agreement exists that sets out the cost of services provided.

The majority of routine clinical samples, collected as part of the investigation of food poisoning/other related infectious disease, are submitted to the laboratory at **Withybush General Hospital**, Haverfordwest.

During 2011-12, following a tender exercise led by Pembrokeshire County Council's Procurement Division on behalf of the Welsh Purchasing Consortium, Pembrokeshire County Council appointed **Public Analyst Scientific Services Limited (PASS)**, Woodthorne, Valiant Way, and Wolverhampton as its preferred **Public Analyst**, in place of its former provider. Food standards samples have subsequently been analysed by this provider. The contract was re-awarded in July 2016.

2.3 The Scope of the Food Law Enforcement Service

The following functions are undertaken:

- Food premises registration
- Approval of premises covered by product specific legislation
- Programmed food hygiene and standards inspections (and follow-up compliance checks)
- Administration of the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme for food businesses
- Food sampling (for microbiological quality/safety and food standards)
- Shellfish sampling (by the Port Health Team)
- Investigation of complaints concerning the hygiene of food premises, unfit or contaminated food and concerning the quality, composition, labelling or advertising of food
- Investigation of incidents and outbreaks food poisoning and other food related infectious diseases
- Investigation of zoonoses
- Food alerts
- Advisory visits
- Provision of information on, and promotion of, food hygiene and standards
- Advice in respect of planning applications
- Voluntary surrender of foods
- Statistical reporting

2.4 Demands on the Service

The majority of food premises are required to register with the Council, and details of all known food premises are held on an electronic database (Tascomi), which assists with planning the service. 2835 food premises were recorded as registered on this database on 1st April 2022 and, as the following chart illustrates, the majority of these food premises are catering establishments, including the local hospital, schools, residential and nursing homes, hotels and guesthouses, restaurants and takeaways, and pubs and clubs. This reflects an increase of 485 premises from the most recent (pre Covid) Service plan, where there were 2350 registered premises.

Impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Delivery of Food Service

When the Covid-19 Pandemic emerged in March 2020, there was an immediate impact on the ability of the Food Team to continue to delivery its routine inspection programme. On a national level routine inspection work was suspended due to risks to staff and the public arising from the face to face interactions which occur during inspections. Shortly afterwards, rules were introduced which closed the majority of food premises.

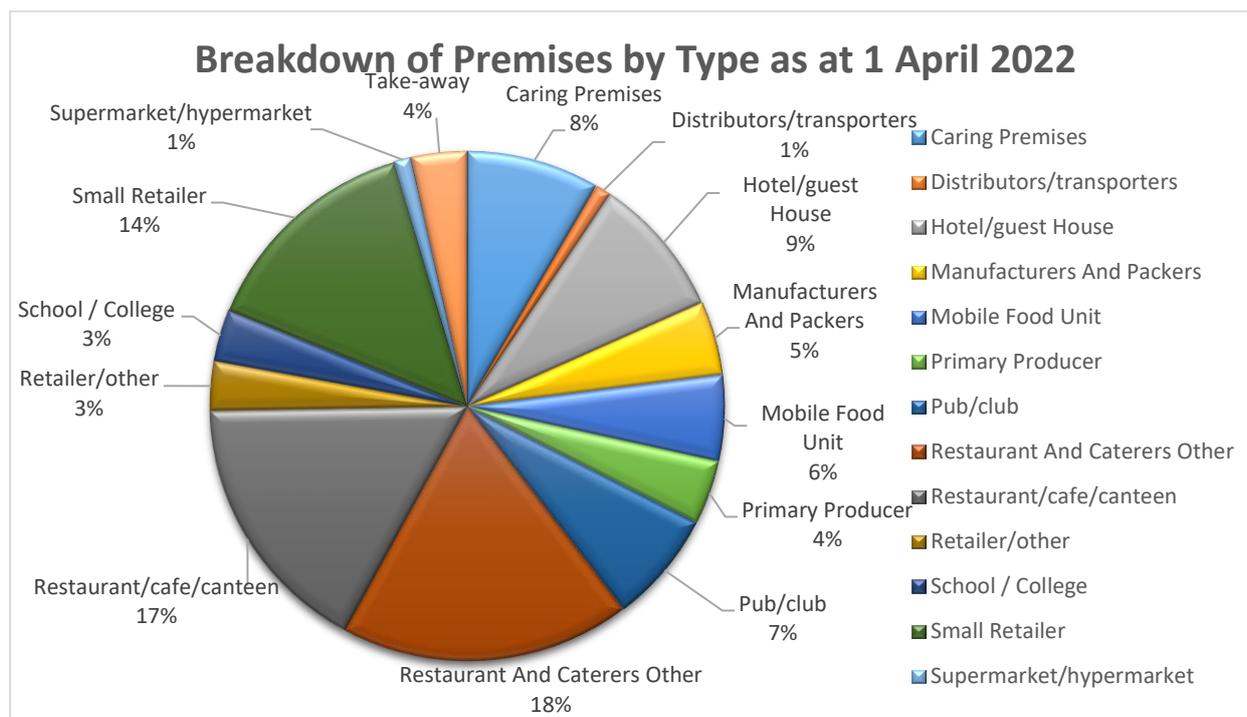
Periodic advice was provided by the Food Standards Agency, to local authorities on priority work which needed to be undertaken such as providing a response to serious food incidents, serious food complaints, dealing with applications from businesses who needed to be approved before trading could commence.

Also during the early period of the pandemic, officers from the Food Team were involved in the enforcement and provision of advice to local businesses relating to compliance with the raft of new Covid-19-specific legislation that was introduced, both in terms of the types of premises who could trade, and also for those premises the additional requirements that they needed to adhere to, to minimise risk.

Another key part of the Department’s resources was dedicated to working with care homes across Pembrokeshire to ensure that they had adequate arrangements in place to manage clusters or outbreaks of Covid-19 in their settings, also to ensure that care home managers were aware of all requirements on them and the availability of key infection control guidance and advise on the provision and use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), to control spread of Covid-19.

From June 2020 there was a Contact Tracing Service called Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) created across Wales and within Pembrokeshire. Officers from the Food Team were seconded partly and in some cases fully to work on this key aspect of the management of Covid-19.

A full summary of the staffing changes and the impact of secondments and sickness is provided in Section



All bar a handful of premises fall to the local Authority for both food hygiene and food standards enforcement.

In addition to these permanent premises, the Food Safety and Standards Team will monitor food operations at various temporary events such as markets, shows and festivals where food businesses from outside the County trade alongside local businesses.

169 food premises within the County (6%) are recorded as being seasonal, generally operating from April through to the end of September. This puts increased pressure on the service over this period and can impede completing the planned inspection programme for some seasonal premises, if other competing pressures arise.

In addition, numerous businesses operate during the evening only. Tascomi does not record the number of such businesses at present.

129 (5%) of food businesses are classed as manufacturers. In addition to the approved manufacturing premises referred to below, these include: bakeries, jam/preserve manufacturers, confectionery manufacturers, non-approved ice cream manufacturers, sandwich producers, vegetable preparation, a spring/mineral water bottling plant, chocolate manufacturers, an insect biscuit manufacturer, a distillery and a number of breweries.

As of 1st April 2022, 35 food premises are approved under product specific regulations: 6 dairy product establishments, 3 meat product establishments, 11 fish/shellfish establishments, 4 cold stores and 11 approved egg producers.

The milk product establishments include 3 cheese producers (one of which also supplies raw cows drinking milk), 1 ice-cream manufacturer, 1 milk pasteurisation and bottling plant and 1 premises engaged in cutting and packaging of cheese.

The meat product establishments include 1 sandwich manufacturer selling some products which fall into the category requiring approval, 1 biltong manufacturer and 1 beef jerky manufacturer selling to wholesale outlets and retailers.

Officers inspecting and approving approved premises require additional knowledge and expertise. Specialist training has been provided to officers in the Food Safety and Standards Team who have been selected to lead in these areas and this has been progressively rolled out to other staff. In addition, inspections of approved premises are generally undertaken in pairs, using these visits as an opportunity to share and develop knowledge of the production processes involved, building resilience and promoting consistency across the Team.

There are 5 seasonal slaughterers, of geese and turkeys, exempt from approval requirements.

231 (10%) of premises are “caring premises” – such as residential care/nursing homes, childminders and nurseries. These premises are also registered with and inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales, with liaison taking place as appropriate.

The County has a relatively small number of ethnic businesses that require information/advice in languages other than Welsh and/or English. A range of guidance leaflets, business packs and DVDs are made available to these businesses in the appropriate languages, where available, to assist their understanding and promote compliance. The Authority also has access to translation and interpreter services that are utilised when necessary.

Significant work has previously been required to support the classification and monitoring of shellfish production areas, to enable the commercial harvesting of these shellfish for human consumption. However, over the last four years no licences for the commercial harvesting of shellfish in the Cleddau Estuary (the location of all classified sites) have been issued by Welsh Government, as a result of environmental concerns, and monitoring has been suspended.

Responsibility for this work lies with the Port Health Team and further details can be found in the Port Health Service Plan.

2.5 Exit from the EU

Over the past few years, national preparations have taken place in readiness for the UK’s exit from the EU, with EU food regulations brought into UK law, to ensure all regulatory functions can be discharged.

The implications locally will depend on the outcome of negotiations and discussions on the need for border controls between Eire and mainland UK, relating to whether food will be able to move freely across the border, or whether additional checks will be necessary at the point of entry into mainland UK. This may create significant new demands on the service at the County's two ports of entry from Eire, i.e. Port of Pembroke and Fishguard. These decisions are being made on a national level, and it has been determined that foods will have to be checked at borders or at their first point of destination within the UK.

Discussions are ongoing with regard to establishing Border Control Post facilities to serve these two ports which are needed to monitor the import of foods to the UK from the EU (Ireland).

It is anticipated that significant additional staffing will need to be sourced to operate Border Control Posts within Pembrokeshire, as well as the siting of suitable facilities, which again is currently being determined.

Further to an announcement by the UK Government in April 2022, the implementation of controls at the borders with Ireland have been delayed until late 2023.

2.6 Food Standards Agency “Achieving Business Compliance (ABC)” Programme and LA Covid-19 Recovery Plan

2.6 (i) Achieving Business Compliance

ABC is the refreshed second phase of the work started by the Regulating our Future (ROF) programme and seeks to deliver a vision for a future regulatory system, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, that is fit for purpose and capable of managing future risks.

In March 2020, the Board agreed a forward work plan for the ABC programme, which contained three streams of activity. Work has evolved since then, and more detail is available regarding the direction of travel.

The ABC programme was established in January 2020 following a review of the ROF programme. ROF had a strong focus on reforming local authority activity and has laid robust foundations on which to build the ABC programme, which will continue with this reform, but also drive further changes in response to the changing food landscape.

Ongoing activity continues to span the two programmes and demonstrates the natural progression being made on the pathway to reform particularly in the following areas of work:

• Register a Food Business

This service is an online process for all food businesses to be able to register their businesses into a single system online, and has been rolled out to 208 of 343 local authorities (60%), including Pembrokeshire who were an early adopter of the scheme in Wales.

ABC will look to develop activity linked to the wider business benefits of registration.

• Competency Framework

A new competency framework has been developed to provide a single and consistent approach to defining competency by activity across all food and feed controls. This will help ensure the right resource is allocated to work.

• Food Standards Model

Local authority pilots of a new intelligence-led model for organising official food standards controls began in January 2021, with seven authorities implementing the approach and a further five acting as controls. So far there has been a positive response to the flexibility provided by the new risk assessment model – this work currently sits in ABC but will move to business as usual (BAU) activity after pilot evaluation is complete.

The FSA has now outlined its vision for ABC, the planned direction of travel and ambition for delivery. The key drivers for the former ROF programme were that the Agency felt it was necessary to;

- move away from a “one-size fits all” approach to regulating food businesses;
- that the regulatory system lacked agility and was not keeping pace with technological changes in the food industry in particular due to the increased levels of online sales of food;
- that there was continued pressure on local authority resources, which has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic;
- a need to implement a financially sustainable model of regulation.

To do this effectively ABC is to look at the role of regulators across the whole food system (including local authority enforcement) and consider the range of levers and interventions available, in addition to what services we could introduce, to ensure that no matter where food is sourced, consumers can be assured of its safety and authenticity. Considerations which are being looked at include possible segmentation of the retail sector, consideration of regulation of online aggregators of food (e.g. Just Eat, Deliveroo and Uber Eats etc.), and modification of the Hygiene Delivery Model of Interventions and controls, as it sees it to be most efficient to oversee the modern methods of supply of food.

The regulatory framework for local authority delivery of official controls may change significantly under the ABC Programme. The Authority will continue to monitor what this may mean for the delivery of Local Delivery of Official Food Controls.

2.6(ii) Covid-19 – The FSA Local Authority Recovery Plan

As mentioned in 2.4 above, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the delivery of food controls locally and nationally since the pandemic started in early 2020, with differing impacts at different points during the period.

Consequently during the recovery of the food law enforcement services, from July 2021, whilst priority has been given to the most significant and highest risk reactive work that has occurred during the pandemic, for the reasons mentioned above and the temporary suspension of routine food inspections, there was a significant reduction in the number of inspections undertaken during the pandemic, which has resulted in a significant backlog of inspections arising. This relates to both inspections that would have been due to have taken place during the pandemic, and also the number of new food businesses that registered and started operating during this period.

In order to ensure that local authorities focus on consistent priorities and to phase in the recovery of routine official food controls based on risk, the Food Standards Agency has issued a Recovery Plan for local authorities to follow. This plan covers the period up to 31st March 2023, when the Agency anticipates that local authorities will have been able to recover the shortfall in inspections which has occurred since early 2020.

Pembrokeshire, as with all other local authorities has determined the inspection demands for the coming year, based on the priorities, the different milestones itemised within the Recovery Plan.

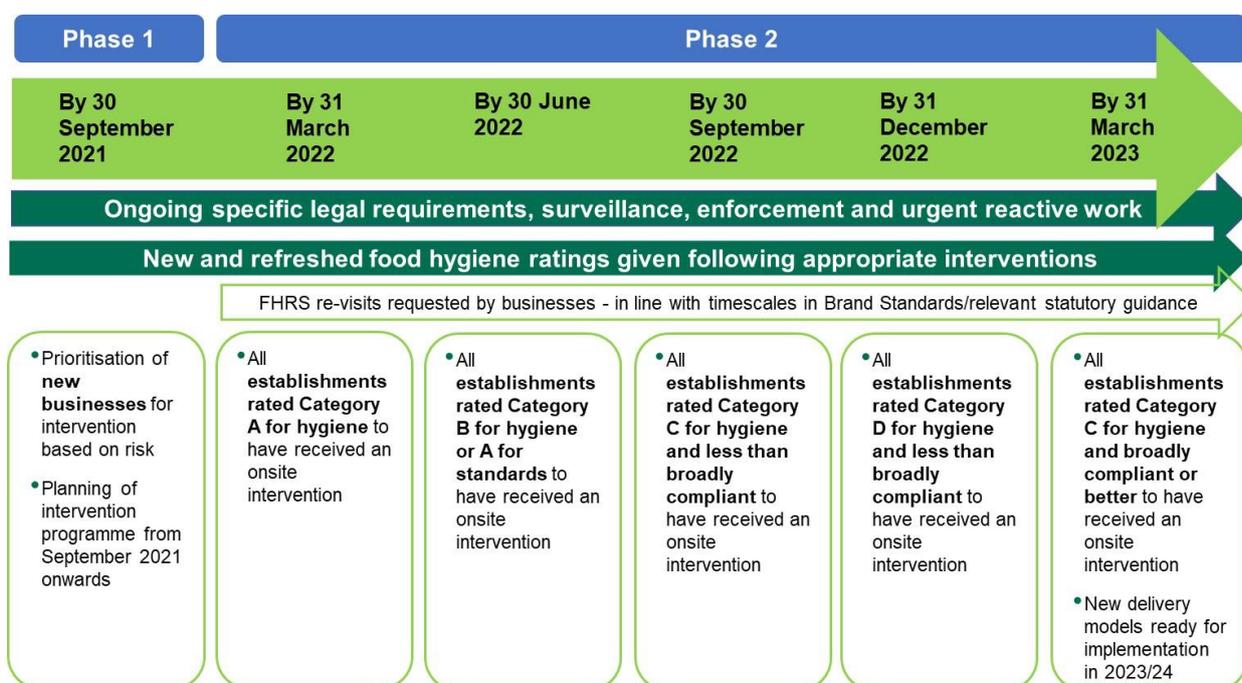
An outline of the Recovery Plan is indicated below.

The FSA Recovery Plan to 31 March 2023

In order to enable local authorities across the country to focus on the same priorities, the Food Standards Agency has introduced a Recovery Plan, with different milestones for authorities to focus their resources on the correct priorities, with greater emphasis/priority placed on the highest risk premises and the highest priority unrated premises, including those that registered during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The table below provides information on the different timescales expected and the order of priorities.

Details of Pembrokeshire’s figures for implementing the Recovery Plan are included in Section 3.2.4 below.



Outlook for the remainder of the FSA LA Recovery Plan to 31 March 2023.

Whilst the Team has been able to meet the numerical inspection target to the end of March 2022, the ongoing absences, secondments, retirements, maternity leave etc. is meaning that there is a projected shortfall in capacity for the Team for the coming year.

Calculations undertaken at the start of April indicated that at that stage due to the extent of work that the Recovery Plan requires within a very tight timescale of 31 March 2023, there is a projected shortfall in inspection capacity in the Food Team of 346 inspections, once all high risk overdue and newly registering premises through the year are considered. This is without including a further 386 new business registrations from pre 1 April 2022, which have been risk assessed as low risk. Where resources allow, further work will be undertaken on this portion of unrated businesses, to see whether they are trading.

A more detailed breakdown of the inspection requirement for 2022-23 under the FSA LA Recovery Plan is outlined in Para 3.2.4 below.

Discussions with other Welsh local authorities would indicate that others are feeling similarly pressurised, and to greater or lesser extent are experiencing similar impacts on their ability to recover that have been mentioned above, e.g. retirements, secondments, inability to fill vacancies, greater than normal levels of sickness, inspections taking longer in the recovery period due to lower compliance, as well as low staff morale.

2.7 Enforcement

Resources are targeted towards the most significant hazards and higher risk premises.

This is generally achieved by employing national inspection rating systems that ensure more frequent inspections to food premises where the hazards are greatest, standards of compliance poor and the confidence in management low. In addition, complaints are triaged and prioritised for intervention having regard to risk.

In 2010-11 flexibilities introduced through the revision of the national Food Law Code of Practice, provided scope for the Authority to introduce 'verification' visits in place of full inspections for 'broadly compliant' premises in food hygiene risk category C, and for those in food hygiene risk category D. In 2017, this was extended to "broadly compliant" premises in food standards risk category B and for those in food standards risk category C. This approach helps ensure that the Authority's resources are focussed on securing

improvements across the poorest performing businesses, while helping to reduce the inspection burden on those that are more compliant.

With finite resources available, there has to be a reasoned choice in the best mix of different enforcement techniques, having regard to what will have the greatest impact on strategic priorities and what provides best value for money.

It is also recognised that different organisations are motivated in different ways and so respond to different blends of intervention (i.e. those methods and techniques, including inspection, education and awareness-raising, which are used to influence behavioural change in managing food hygiene and standards, so as to improve levels of compliance). In this respect, the Authority will be guided by available research and guidance.

The Authority has signed and endorsed the principles of the Enforcement Concordat, and has adopted an Enforcement Policy for Food Safety and Standards Enforcement. The policy is founded on the principles of: standards, openness (and transparency), helpfulness, proportionality (and the targeting of resources and enforcement actions), and consistency.

Decisions to institute legal proceedings and to administer 'simple cautions' have been delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services. These decisions are guided by recommendations put forward by investigating officers, the Public Protection Manager (Health and Consumer Protection) and the Head of Environmental Services and Public Protection.

The following table provides a breakdown of enforcement action taken by the Food Safety and Standards Team during 2021–22:

Enforcement	Number of premises	2021-22
Advice only	45	25.7%
Letter/warning	121	69.1%
Hygiene Improvement Notice	11	6.3%
Food standards Improvement Notice	0	0.0%
Remedial Action Notice	1	0.6%
Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice	0	0.0%
Voluntary Closure	2	1.1%
Voluntary Surrender	6	3.4%
Seizure/Detention of food	0	0.0%
Simple Caution	0	0.0%
Prosecution	0	0.0%
Total	175	

The option of serving Remedial Action Notices and Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices is only available for food hygiene enforcement. However, statutory Improvement Notices are available for hygiene and standards enforcement.

There were no businesses prosecuted or that received a Simple Caution for contraventions of food law.

The number of actions undertaken are significantly lower than in the years preceding the Covid-19 pandemic, which reflects the reduction in the number of inspections undertaken in the year 2021-22.

2.8 Performance of Service

A range of national and local performance indicators have been developed against which service performance is assessed. These emanate from the Performance Measurement Framework for Welsh

Local authorities, containing the statutory Public Accountability Measures and from the Welsh Local Government Association which provides “core set” indicators.

Indicator	2019-20		2020-2021		2021-2022	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
%age of food premises ‘broadly compliant’ with food hygiene requirements	97.5%	97%	None set	97%	None set	97%

2.8.1 Food hygiene compliance – national strategic performance indicator - ‘broadly compliant premises’

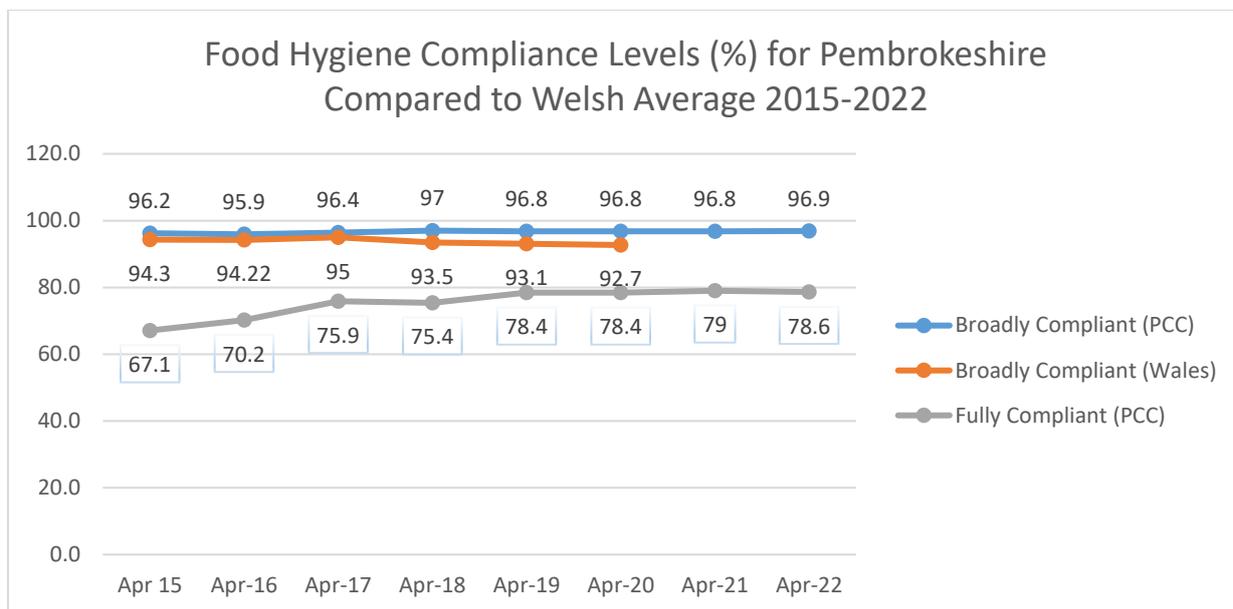
In 2008-09, the Food Standards Agency established the concept of ‘broadly compliant’ food premises, based on the food hygiene risk-rating scheme established by the national Food Safety Act Code of Practice. Subsequently, in 2010-11, the percentage of ‘broadly compliant’ premises within each local authority area was adopted as the single national strategic performance indicator for food law enforcement, in place of the percentage of high risk inspections achieved.

This represented a move from measuring enforcement outputs, to more meaningful outcomes.

To be deemed ‘broadly compliant’ premises have to score no greater than 10 in each of three elements of the risk rating scheme, namely: ‘compliance – structure’, ‘compliance – hygiene procedures’, and ‘confidence in management’. In practice, premises that are ‘broadly compliant’ may present evidence of some non-compliance with statutory obligations and industry codes of practice, but with standards generally being maintained or improved. The compliance history will need to be at least satisfactory, and the business will need to have access to and make use of technical advice in-house, from trade associations and/or Industry Guides to Good Practice. The business should be able to demonstrate an understanding of significant hazards and control measures in place, and be making satisfactory progress towards a documented food safety management system/procedures, commensurate with the type of business.

In addition, the concept of ‘fully compliant’ premises was put forward, again based on the same scoring system. To be deemed ‘fully compliant’ premises has to score no greater than 5 in each of the three same elements of the risk rating scheme. Premises that are ‘fully compliant’ should demonstrate a high standard of compliance with statutory obligations and industry codes of practice, with only minor contraventions of food hygiene regulations, and minor non-compliance with statutory obligations and industry codes of recommended practice. The compliance history will need to be at least reasonable, and the business will need to have access to and make use of technical advice in-house, from trade associations and/or Industry Guides to Good Practice. The business should have satisfactory documented procedures and systems and be able to demonstrate effective control of hazards. They will need to have a satisfactory documented food safety management system, and be found generally compliant with this system.

The following chart shows the changes in the food hygiene compliance levels over the past 10 years.



The chart shows a gradual but progressive improvement in the percentage of 'broadly compliant' premises, with 97% of premises classed as 'broadly compliant' at the beginning of April 2019. The Broad Compliance has remained fairly static since and in April 2022 the level is 96.9%. The percentage of 'broadly compliant' premises across Wales as a whole has shown a similar upward trend over this period, but compliance levels in the County have remained above the Welsh average. No data was available for Wales for the start of 2020 or 2021 at the time the Plan was prepared.

The percentage of food premises in Pembrokeshire classed as 'fully compliant' has continued to increase since 2015, with the level remaining static over the last 4 years. This data is not available for the rest of Wales.

It is to be expected that these indicators will not show a change, due to the low level of inspection activity during the Covid-19 period. However it will be important to continue to monitor these indicators through the Covid-19 recovery period. It is anticipated that the previous trends may not be continued as result of likely lower levels of compliance in businesses, due to their experiences through the pandemic and the fact that food inspections were not possible during the pandemic. It is considered that a reduction in the levels of Broad and full Compliance is to be expected. However this is based on colloquial evidence from inspections that have been carried out since the restrictions were lifted, rather than a full review of early inspection data.

A number of factors have contributed to improvements in Broad Compliance and Full Compliance levels over the last few years, including:

- the effective targeting of the Authority's food law enforcement resources and its overall approach to enforcement (enforcement mix);
- the targeting of enforcement efforts towards premises that are not 'broadly compliant' (in particular all premises that are not 'broadly compliant' at inspection will receive a follow-up revisit);
- the additional support, in particular Food Safety Management System coaching visits, offered to non-compliant premises with low confidence in management (supported by additional Food Standards Agency funding);
- the further compliance incentive created by the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, launched at the end of 2010. All businesses which are not broadly compliant are encouraged to apply for a paid revisit for rescoreing); and,
- the enhanced requirement to *display* a food hygiene rating, which became law in Wales during 2013.

The Authority is committed to pursuing these same strategies, with the aim of continuing to improve compliance levels over the year ahead.

2.8.2 Food hygiene compliance – Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)

Since 1st October 2010, food premises in the County (with the exemption of certain very low risk premises) have been awarded an overall score for food hygiene in accordance with the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme - formerly referred to as the ‘Scores on the Doors’ scheme.

Following the transition to a statutory rating scheme in 28th November 2013, the display of ratings for businesses inspected since this date has been mandatory. This legislation also extended the rating scheme to food manufacturers with effect from 28th November 2014.

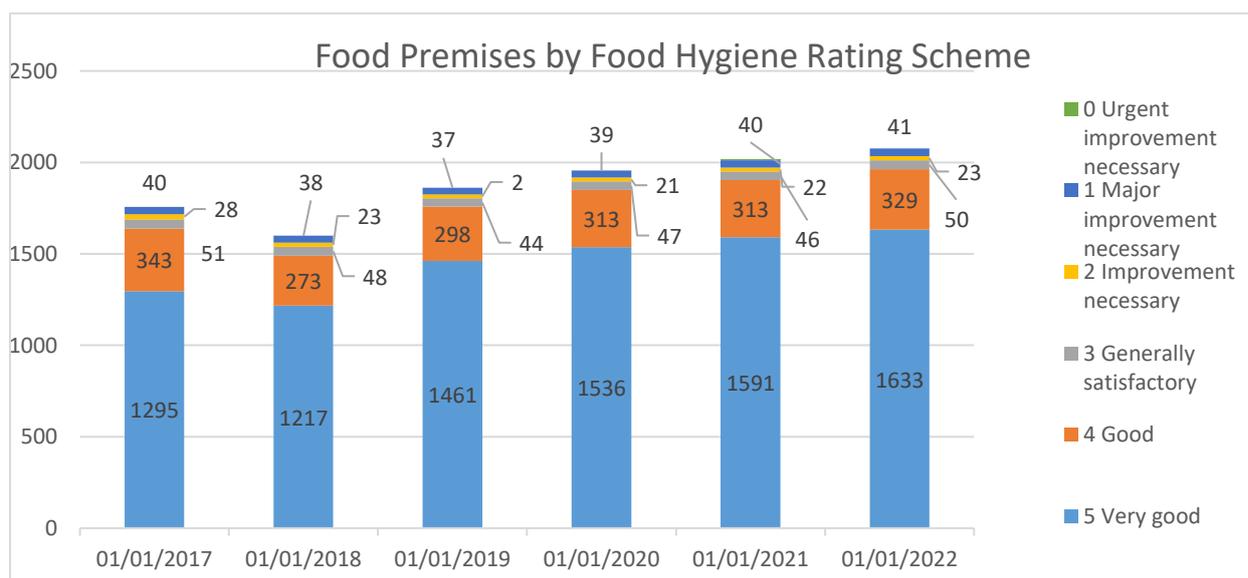
As with the ‘broadly compliant’ indicator, the FHRS score is based on the food hygiene risk-rating scheme established by the national Food Safety Act Code of Practice, being determined by the individual scores awarded for ‘compliance – structure’, ‘compliance – hygiene procedures’, and ‘confidence in management’.

Based on this assessment, premises fall into one of six bands:

FHRS score	Descriptor
5	Very good
4	Good
3	Generally satisfactory
2	Improvement necessary
1	Major improvement necessary
0	Urgent improvement necessary

Premises scoring 3 (or above) are classed as ‘broadly compliant’ (see 2.6.1).

The following chart shows the number of food premises rated in accordance with the FHRS as at the 1st April, for the years 2017 to 2022, in each score band.



By 1st April 2022, a total of 2076 of the County’s food premises were rated under the FHRS, this number has steadily increased from 1757 in 2017, to reflect the increase in registered food businesses in the County. It is also anticipated that the breakdown of food hygiene ratings may change as a result of inspections during the recovery period. As indicated previously lower compliance will lead to lower food hygiene ratings.

2022 (96.9%) of these premises attracted a score of 3 or above (similar to pre-Covid-19 levels), with 1633 (78.6%) being classed as Very Good, 329 (15.8%) as Good, and 50 (2.4%) as Generally Satisfactory.

As of the 1st April 2022, the proportion of premises attracting a score of 1, 'Major Improvement Necessary', has remained fairly static due to the decreased number of inspections that took place in 2020-21 and 2021-2022.

No premises held a score of 0 (Urgent Improvement Needed) as at 1st April 2022. A score of 0 triggers a management review, with a view to possible legal proceedings. In addition a management review will take place where premises fail to achieve a rating of 3 or better over a number of inspections, or where good ratings have only been achieved on requested inspections to re-rate premises, which may indicate that a business is responding to requirements after an inspection, but is not taking action in between to maintain high standards. The reasons for such a review are to investigate the reasons for the repeated poor ratings and where an escalation of enforcement action is needed to draw the businesses' attention to the fact that repeated poor standards is not acceptable.

In practice the Authority carries out follow up 'enforcement revisits' to any premises that attract a score of 2 or below, with a view to ensuring an appropriate improvement in compliance.

To provide some assurance to food businesses the scheme is supported by an appeals procedure, and businesses are afforded the right to request a 'revisit for rescoring' and also to a 'right to reply'.

15 revisits for rescoring were carried out during 2021-22, compared to 1 in 2020-21, which again were lower due to the reduced inspection activity in those years. In previous years, the numbers of such inspections were generally around 60-70 per year. It is anticipated that the number of requests will return to pre-Covid-19 levels, or even increase, if overall levels of compliance are found to be reduced, due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the lack of inspections that could take place during that period.

An estimate of 65 'revisits for rescoring' likely to be received has been made for 2022-23 a prediction based on trends seen in the last 5 years of data.

There is a fee of £180 for requested revisits for rescoring.

3 SERVICE DELIVERY

3.1 Registration of Food Premises

The Authority is responsible for the statutory registration of food premises under EC Regulation 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs. These Regulations, which came into force on 1st January 2006, extended the registration requirement to include all primary producers. This brought primary producers into the local authority food hygiene inspection programme.

Responsibility for enforcement at the primary production level is split between the Food Safety and Standards and Animal Health and Welfare Team, with the Animal Health and Welfare Team responsible for all livestock farms and those producing crops for animal feed.

While the Food Safety and Standards Team aims to inspect *new food premises* and those subject to a *change in ownership* within 28 days of the commencement of operations, resources are prioritised towards those that are high risk for food hygiene and/or standards.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, it was recognised that local authorities could not achieve this in all cases, due to a number of reasons such as premises not being allowed to open, and at different times, inspections being suspended. It was therefore expected that where new registrations were received, Local authorities should prioritise inspections of applications for approval under 853/2004, i.e. premises who deal in products of animal origin and supply other businesses, and also prioritise (at times when inspections were not suspended and premises were open) newly registering businesses which would be likely to be high risk, or where information suggested that the premises may pose a risk. For that reason, in this year's plan, data is not provided on the number of premises inspected within the normal 28 days.

However 251 new registrations were received in 2021-22, and after risk assessing, 107 were inspected during the year. A list of 96 high risk unrated premises was carried forward into the year 2022-23 as a priority for inspection alongside the other priorities stated in the FSA's LA Recovery Plan. This compares to 276 new registrations received on 2020-21 and 254 in 2019-20.

In total as of 1 April 2022, there were 482 unrated registered premises on the database.

Following initial inspection, food premises are added to the planned inspection programme. Inspections arising from this work are covered under 3.2.5 below.

3.2 Inspections

Inspections are the principal way of securing appropriate standards in food premises and represent what many stakeholders expect to happen. Furthermore, research has shown that small to medium sized businesses in particular favour direct contact in their premises, and specific advice and information that they do not have to interpret.

The Authority strives to ensure that all food premises are inspected with a frequency that has regard to the risk associated with those premises. Food premises inspections in 2022-23 will be assessed and prioritised in line with the timescales identified in the FSA LA Recovery Plan.

Where it is possible and appropriate to do so, food hygiene and standards inspections are carried out simultaneously, by the same officer, thereby reducing the number of visits necessary to each business.

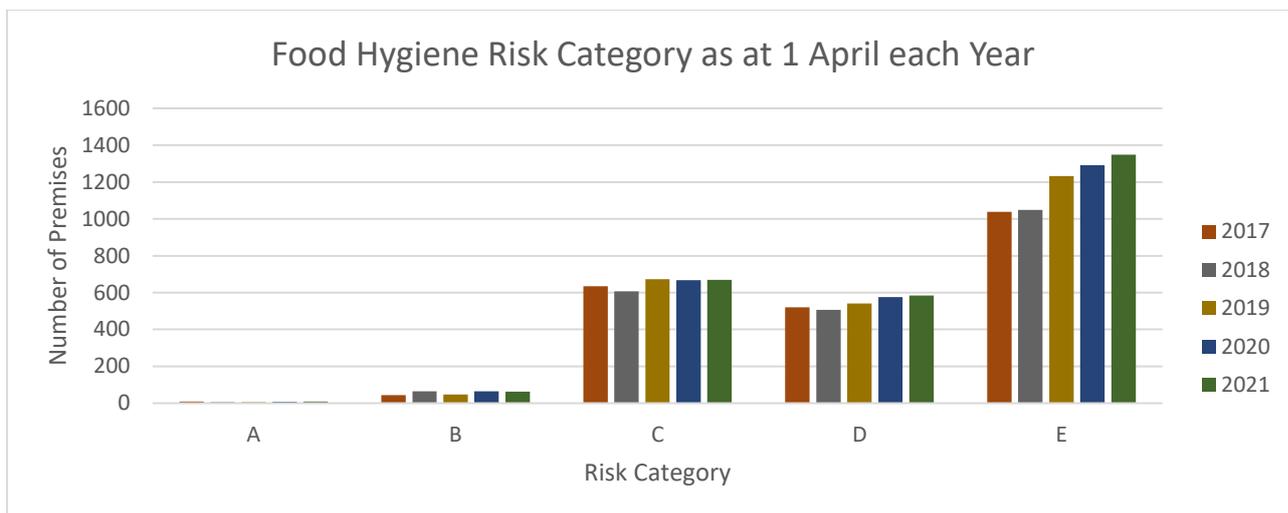
3.2.1 Food premises by food hygiene risk category

Food premises are classified in accordance with the rating scheme set out in the Food Safety Act Code of Practice. The scheme is used to determine the minimum frequency of inspection and is in turn the basis of the Authority's food hygiene inspection programme.

The percentage of premises in each Risk Category as at 1st April 2022 and the minimum inspection frequencies are as indicated:

Risk Category	No. of premises (as of 1 st April 2022)	Percentage (%age of premises as at 1 st April 2022)	Frequency of Inspection
A	2	0.01%	Every 6 months
B	51	1.5%	Every year
C	643	22.2%	Every 18 months
D	570	17.8%	Every 2 years
E	1087	40.7%	Not required*
Awaiting inspection	482	16%	
All premises	2835	100.0%	

See the FSA Recovery Plan in 2.6(ii) above for the different milestones in the FSA Recovery Plan for 2022-23, and section 3.2.4 below where numerical values are added to the different categories of work.



There has been a steady and very significant reduction in the number of premises in the higher risk categories (i.e. Risk Categories A-C) over the last 6 years, with a corresponding increase in the number of premises in the lower risk categories (i.e. Risk Categories D and E). The number of Category A premises has fluctuated between 3 and 9 since 2014, with 6 being the average number of premises since then. As of 1 April 2022 there are 2 premises in Risk Category A.

It is difficult to say whether this trend will continue after the Covid-19 delays in Food enforcement activities. Initial colloquial evidence from officers would suggest that due to the length of time since premises were last inspected, there has been a corresponding decrease in compliance, which would lead to more premises being assessed into a higher Risk Category. This would in turn lead to an increase in the number of inspections required. This issue will be assessed during the year.

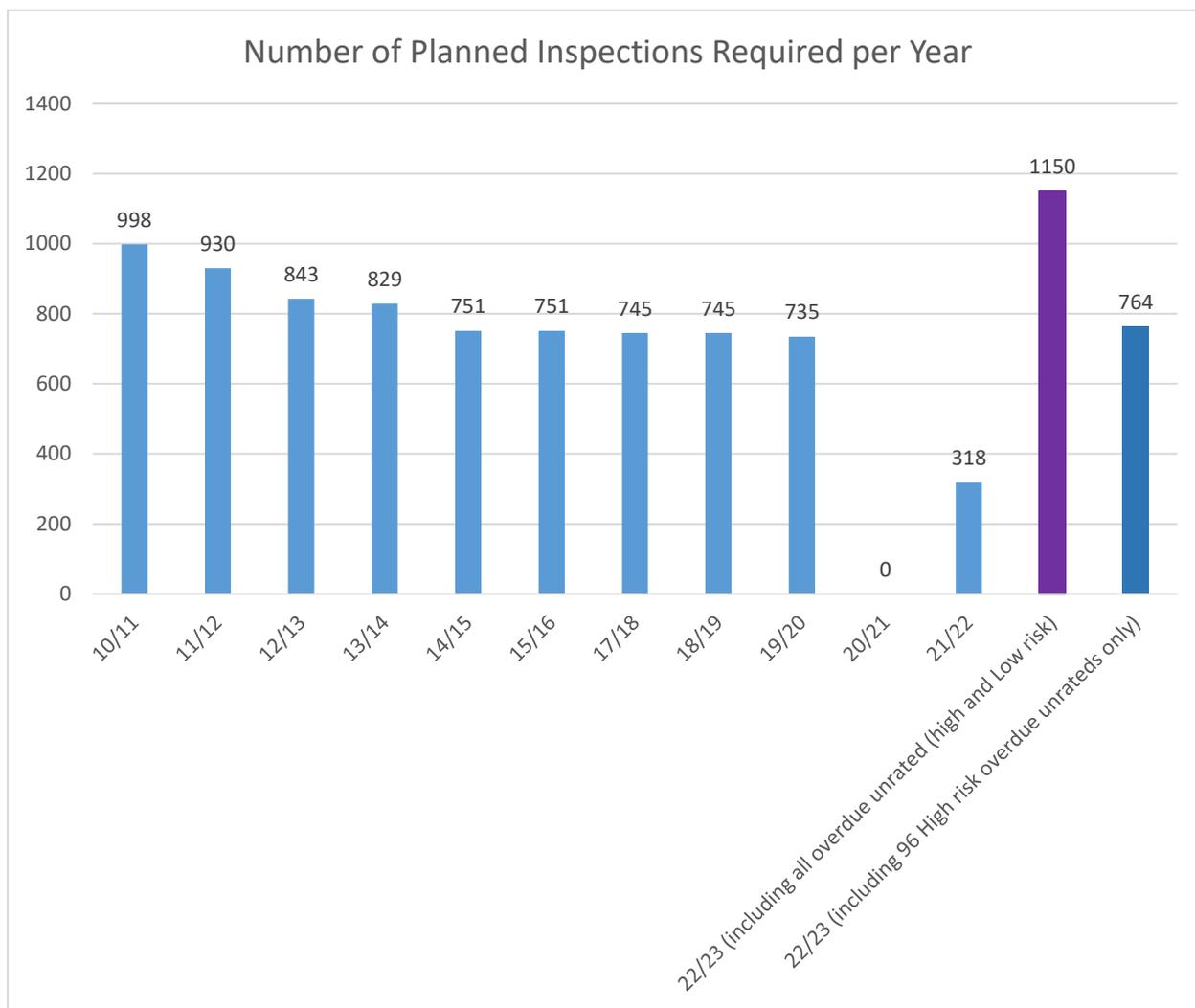
The number of premises and criteria for risk rating premises have remained largely constant throughout this period, and the trend shows an improvement in food safety compliance throughout the County, despite the challenges presented by a difficult economic climate.

A number of factors will have contributed to these improvements, including:

- the effective targeting of the Authority’s food law enforcement resources and its overall approach to enforcement (enforcement mix);
- the additional support, in particular Food Safety Management System coaching visits, offered to premises, that were not broadly compliant, and with low confidence in management (supported by additional Food Standards Agency funding); and,
- the compliance incentive created by the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, launched at the end of 2010. In February 2018 the Food Standards Agency published its 3 year review of the implementation and operation of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme which provided evidence as to the Scheme’s high success in achieving improved and sustained food safety compliance by food businesses, as well as providing greater transparency for consumers in Wales.

The Authority is committed to continue to pursue these same strategies, with the aim of securing further improvements over the year ahead.

The chart below shows the number of inspections due each year since 2010-11



As can be seen from the table, due to Covid-19 proactive inspections were largely suspended in 2020-21, due to premises not being allowed to trade, and routine work, except to high risk reactive premises and applications for approval, therefore no number has been allocated for this year. The figure for 2021-22 reflects the start of the recovery plan during the year, with the Plan concentrating inspections to approved premises applications, Category A for Hygiene and high risk Unrated premises, as well as high risk reactive work.

The figure for 2022-23 however includes the numbers of inspections to meet all of the different milestones in the Recovery Plan during 2022-23. It can be seen that there are two columns for 2022-23, one of which includes inspection of all 482 unrated premises outstanding from 2021-22, and the other (in purple) which shows a modified number of inspections required if the low risk overdue unrated premises are not included. See para 3.2.4 below for a more detailed breakdown of the work due, to fully meet the FSA LA Recovery Plan.

When including all overdue unrated inspections, the number of inspections expected for this year is much higher than any other year in the last 11 years, and any year prior to that. Consequently due to this significantly increased requirement, the fact that the Food Team establishment is not staffed sufficiently to meet such a high target, and the fact that there are issues relating to staff capacity, as further detailed in Para 4.2 below, there is not sufficient capacity to meet all expected work in the Plan, by the end of March 2023.

These two columns have been produced because the FSA has indicated (though not confirmed) that local authorities may be able to leave the lower risk unrated premises out of the Recovery Plan for 2022-23.

The number of inspections required per year in the above table relates only to the programmed inspections required and does not include additional inspections that may be needed in response to complaints (reactive), unplanned inspections such as new registrations that will occur during the year, and Requests for Re-rating under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme that will be received, to ensure consistency in the required numbers of inspections through the years.

3.2.2 Food premises by food standards risk category

As for food hygiene, the Authority has adopted the risk-rating scheme set out in the Food Safety Act Code of Practice. The scheme is used to determine the minimum frequency of inspection and is in turn the basis of the Authority's food standards inspection programme. However this year the FSA LA Recovery Plan will dictate the priority to be given to Food Standards Inspections. Only Category A Food Standards inspections are required to receive a proactive inspection in 2022-23. The percentage of premises in each Risk Category as at 1st April 2022 are as indicated:

Risk Category	Percentage (as at 1st April 2022)	Frequency of Inspection
A	16	Every year
B	392	Every 2 years
C	1945	Not mandatory
Awaiting inspection	482	
All premises	2835	

3.2.3 Achievement against inspection programme based on expectations in the FSA Recovery Plan for food hygiene and food standards for 2021-22

Under the FSA Recovery Plan expectations for 2021-22 which primarily included the need to inspect high priority unrated premises and Category A Food Hygiene premises.

Inspections were undertaken to the 5 identified Category A premises, 18 premises were inspected following requests for rescoring under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, and 8 reactive inspections were undertaken.

In addition 107 initial inspections of unrated premises were undertaken, plus a further 5 programmed food hygiene inspections.

Shortfalls in the proposed numbers of inspections for 2022-23 can be accounted for through a number of means, including the ongoing secondments to the TTP service, significant staff illnesses/absence due to Covid-19, and other reasons including family bereavements, the vacancies arising during the year. Whilst a new Environmental Health Officer and an Area Food Safety Officer were appointed, their induction and competency assessments affected the number of inspections that could be achieved.

In addition on inspections, officers have reported that inspections are taking longer for a number of reasons, including the fact that as routine inspections have not been possible in the Covid-19 period, which has resulted in reduced compliance. This has led to increased time required for inspections, report writing and enforcement revisits, which all reduce the inspection capacity.

In addition the FSA Recovery Plan was released before the Delta and Omicron variants of Covid-19 arose, and was not subsequently amended, so no account was made of the impact that those subsequent peaks would have had on officers' abilities to carry on with routine work, and the need for the ongoing redeployment of officers away from the Food team.

The routine work of issuing Alternative Enforcement Strategy Questionnaires to the very lowest risk (from BOTH Hygiene AND Standards point of view) did not take place in 2020-21 or 2021-22.

3.2.4 Inspection programme for food hygiene and food standards for 2022-23, to implement the FSA LA Recovery Plan, including the milestones for different categories of premises plus an assessment of the capacity to meet the demand

The table and data below quantify the number of inspections that are required in the year 2022-23 and are broken down by the Inspection reason and by the different milestones as required by the FSA Recovery Plan.

By 30 June 2022		By 30 September 2022	By 31 December 2022	By 31 March 2023	Total Inspections to Rated Premises due
Category B Food Hygiene Inspections	Category B Food Hygiene Inspections	Non Broadly Compliant Category C Food hygiene Inspections	Non Broadly Compliant Category D Food Hygiene Inspections	Broadly Compliant Category C Food Hygiene Inspections	
51	16	25	2	574	668

In addition there are 96 overdue High risk Unrated premises, meaning that there will be **764** Planned inspections due in the year.

This figure will be added to the calculated Unplanned Inspections identified below to calculate the full inspection Requirement for 2022-23.

It is also important to record the fact that there are 386 unrated premises which have been assessed as low risk. As per FSA advice these premises do not need to be included in the Inspection requirement for 2022-23, but they must be accounted for. The new FSA Delivery Model MAY enable such businesses to be dealt with in a way other than inspection.

Summary of Inspection Requirement for 2022-23 against Team Capacity

Inspection demand for 2022-23:

Inspections required (386 low risk unplanned excluded)	
Planned Inspections, 668 from Recovery Plan Plus High risk Unrated (96) from pre 2022-23, PLUS	764
Unplanned inspections, Requests for rescore, reactive insps, new registrations received	327
Inspections required in 2022-23	1091

Food Team Capacity:

Capacity for 2022-23:	
From calculations of capacity based on number of officers available, PLUS	535
From the two contractor companies M&T (120), and A2Z (90)	210
Capacity (including contractors)	745

Shortfall for the year

Shortfall in inspections 2022-23:	
The inspection demand for the year MINUS	1091
Current Capacity available (staff and contractors)	745
Shortfall	346

Loss of Capacity as a result of Vacancies/Secondments/Maternity

As a result of vacant posts for the year, ie

Vacant Posts:	
1 x maternity*	97.2
1 x secondment of 0.9 fte to regional TTP service to 31/03/2023*	87.45
1 x secondment of 0.8 fte to TTP to 18/07/2022*	51.84
1 x FTE Vacancy due to temporary promotion*	97.2
1 x FTE Officer seconded to Private sector Housing*	97.2
Total loss in capacity due to Vacant posts	431

* N.b. capacity of FTE officer reduced by 35%, for 2022-23 due to anticipated additional length of time to be taken due to lower compliance, resulting in more enforcement revisits and more formal action. Also due to staff vacancies, each officer will need to spend more time on duty, which affects inspection capacity. In addition new food standards law of Pre-packed for direct sale foods will increase the length of inspections. A significant portion of this reduction is anticipated to be temporary as a result of the recovery from COVID.

Action Proposed, to Tackle Shortfall in Capacity for 2022-23

In order to increase capacity in the Team, it is anticipated to advertise in August 2022, for a further 1 permanent full time officer (to offset a retirement which arose during Quarter 1 of 2022-23) and 2, temporary full time officers, on a 12 month temporary contract.

In the longer term, the current ongoing Public Protection Review will ascertain the future ongoing capacity necessary for the Food team, to meet future service demands.

The individual capacities of officers in the Food Team will be kept under review to account for specific impacts on their abilities to achieve inspections.

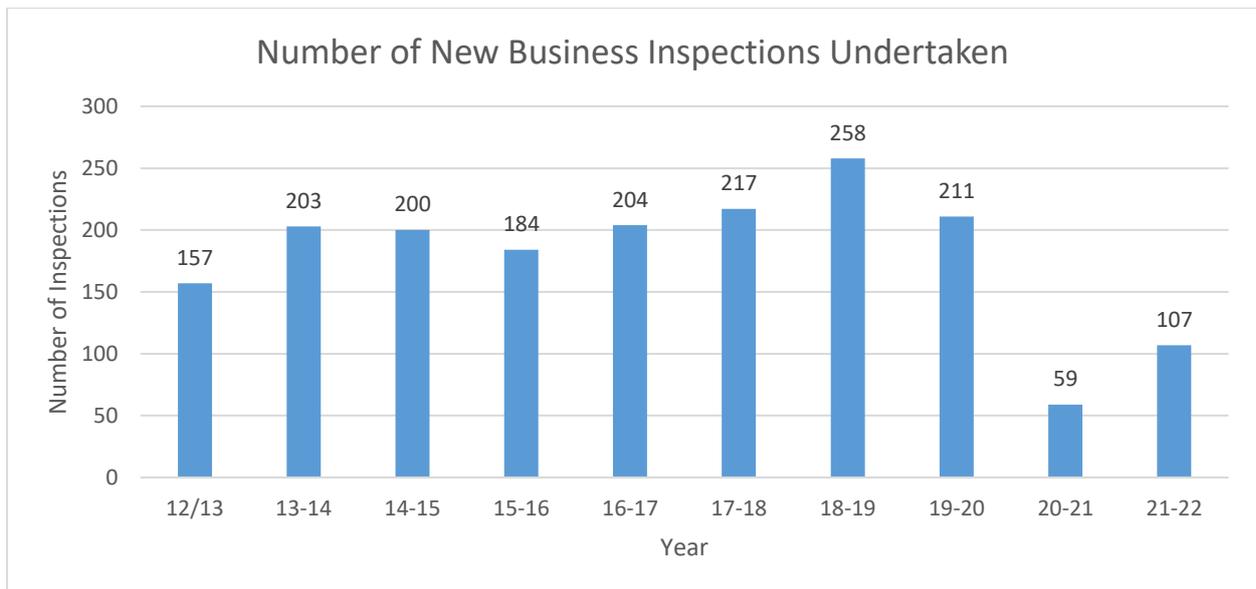
3.2.5 Unplanned and reactive inspections

In addition to carrying out routine programmed inspections, **unplanned** inspections are carried out where:

- new premises come to the attention of the Authority;
- there is a change of ownership of existing premises; and
- some outdoor temporary events, etc. take place with on-site catering.

The registration and inspection of new premises is covered in more detail under 3.1 above.

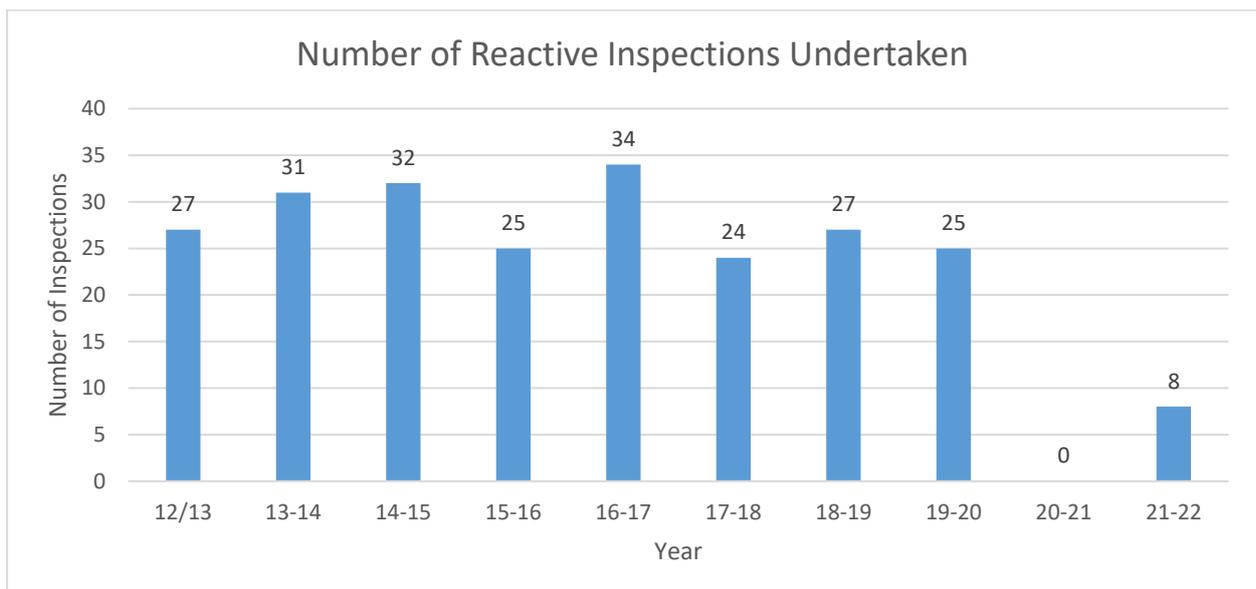
The following **unplanned inspections** were made over the last 10 years:



A planned estimate of 230 new business inspections has been made for 2022-23. This will be in addition to 482 unrated premises that have been carried forward from 2020-21 and 2021-22. The backlog of unrated premises has been risk assessed and 96 of these have been identified as high priority. The primary attention for new businesses will be to inspect the highest priority premises first.

Reactive inspections are also made in response to service requests (e.g. a complaint or food poisoning incident), where a full inspection is deemed necessary following investigation.

The following **reactive inspections** were carried out over the last 10 years:



An estimate of 32 reactive inspections has been made for 2019-20, based on projections from the above data, and a potential increase due to issues arising during the Covid-19 period.

3.2.6 Timing of inspection reports

The Authority generally aims to issue inspection reports within 15 working days of inspection and to achieve this standard in 85% of all cases.

Since October 2010 the Food Safety and Standards Team have worked to a target of 10 working days in accordance with the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

The following table shows the level of performance achieved by the Team against the '15 day service standard' during 2021-22 compared to the previous 4 years, and against the 10 day target.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Number of inspection reports issued	1023	1056	1056	79	322
Percentage issued within 15 working day corporate service standard	94.2%	95%	89%	5%	62%
Percentage issued within 10 working day target established by FHRS	83.2%	81.0%	85%	3%	49%

This Report shows the dramatic reduction in inspection work undertaken during the 2 years of the Covid-19 pandemic, for the reasons explained elsewhere, and the dramatic reduction in achievement against the indicators. This change will be directly as a result of the pandemic, and achievement will be expected to improve during the Recovery period.

3.2.7 Enforcement Revisits

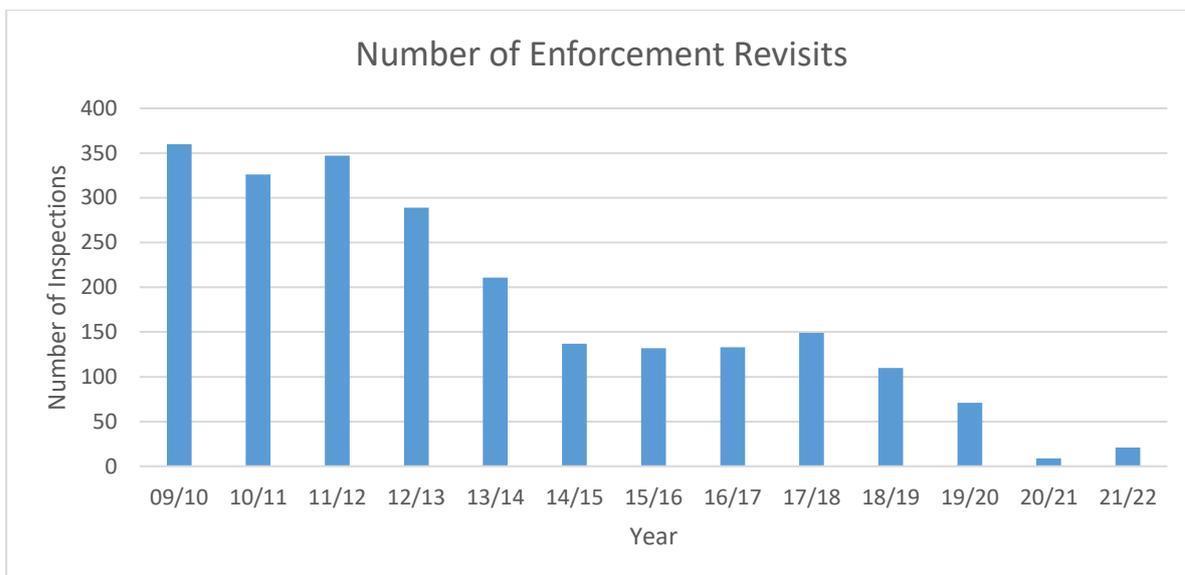
(These revisits are considered separately from requests for 'revisits for rescoring' under the FHRS that are covered at 2.6.2 above).

As a general rule 'enforcement revisits' will only be carried out to premises that are **not** 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene requirements (see 2.6.1 above), or where compliance and/or confidence are low for food standards (scoring the lowest available score for Current Compliance (40) and /or Confidence in Management (30) for food standards). This will help to ensure that the Council's resources and efforts to secure improvements in food premises are targeted at the 'worst offenders'.

Where contraventions of legislation are identified, timescales for compliance will be specified. Where continued non-compliance is evident further enforcement action will be taken. Where a revisit is not deemed necessary, businesses **may** be asked to confirm compliance in writing, or compliance will be checked at the next routine visit.

During 2021-22, 21 enforcement revisits were made.

The following chart compares the number of enforcement revisits carried out over each of the last 13 years:



There has been a decline in the number of enforcement revisits required over the last 6 years. This is consistent with a reduction in the number of inspections carried out; and, in earlier years, the improved level of food hygiene compliance as illustrated by the changing food hygiene risk profile, increase in ‘broadly compliant’ food premises and improved food hygiene ratings. As the number of inspections increase in the recovery period, and with anticipated reductions in compliance with food law, it can be expected that the number of enforcement revisits required in 2022-23 will increase.

3.3 Service requests

The Authority receives service requests from various sources, including members of the public, businesses, referrals from other local authorities, and occasionally from the Food Standards Agency.

Service requests include:

- complaints from members of the public about the standard of hygiene in food premises
- complaints about foods that are: unfit; contaminated with extraneous matter; not of the nature, substance or quality expected; mislabelled; and, misdescribed
- applications for the approval of food premises
- requests for information and advice on food hygiene and standards matters from businesses
- requests from other local authorities about locally produced foods that have been sold outside the County and are the subject of a complaint
- requests for information or intervention received from the Food Standards Agency

Requests for ‘revisits for rescore’ and appeals against ratings under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme are not included in these figures, being covered earlier in this Plan (See 2.6.2). Similarly, zoonoses and food poisoning and infectious disease notifications are excluded from this heading, but are covered later in this Plan (See 3.7).

The Authority aims to provide a response to all service requests within 10 working days and to achieve this in 95% of all cases.

A response may consist of a telephone call, e-mail, letter or visit depending on the circumstances in each case.

However, service requests received by the Food Safety and Standards Team are further categorised as being urgent or non-urgent, with any urgent service requests receiving an ‘initial response’ within 1 working day.

The following table shows the level of performance achieved against service standards in the past 6 years:

	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22
Number of urgent service requests	51	45	25	19	5	26
Percentage provided with an 'initial response' within 1 working day	96.1%	95.6%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	92.3%
Number of non-urgent service requests	860	862	1050	1101	1798	925
Percentage provided with an 'initial response' within target date	98.4%	92.5%	96.6%	96.6%	86.4%	95.6%

The level of performance against both of these indicators has remained consistently high, it can also be seen that in 2020-21, the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of service requests was significantly higher than other years. This number includes 1038 Covid-19 related service requests dealt with by the Food Team. The number of service requests dealt with by the Food Team had reduced to closer to the normal number in 2021-22 due to the fact that the Authority's Covid Enforcement Officers were in place and were responsible for receiving Covid-19 related service requests in that year.

Having made an 'initial response' officers are generally expected to 'take action' in response to urgent service requests on the same working day and to non-urgent requests within 10 working days (this was relaxed from 5 working days from 2014-15 to allow officers more flexibility to better co-ordinate any necessary visits with the aim of further reducing mileage expenditure).

3.3.1 Premises complaints

The Authority will fully investigate complaints relating to the hygienic condition of food premises where:

- the conditions described may present a significant risk to public health, and/or
- the conditions described are of persistent and/or widespread concern to the public, and/or
- the business has a poor history of compliance

Complaints will be prioritised for investigation as follows:

Priority (Risk)	Target for investigation
High	Same day
Medium	10 working days
Low	Report to business and consider at next routine visit

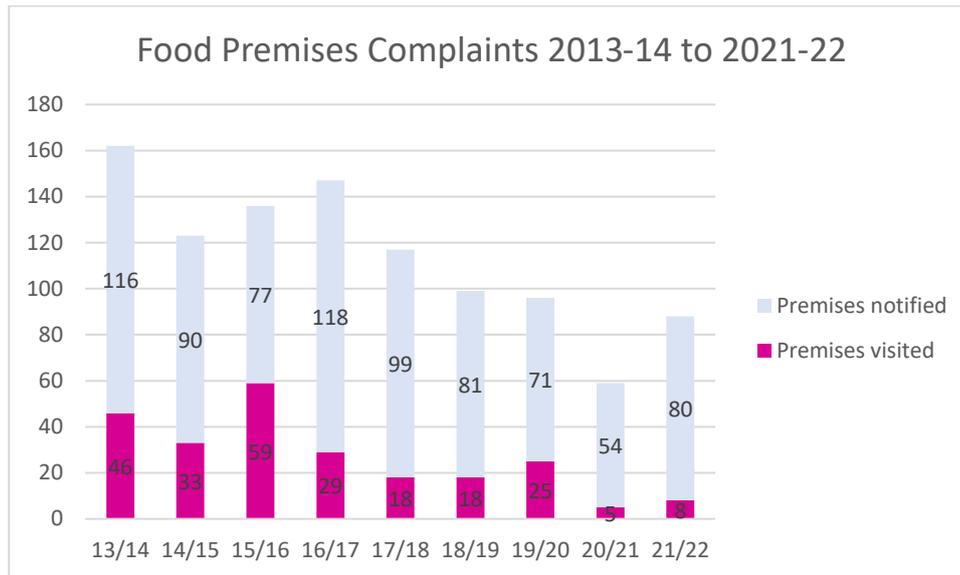
The target for investigating 'medium' risk complaints was relaxed at the start of 2014-15, from the previous 5 working days, to 10 working days to allow officers more flexibility to better co-ordinate any necessary visits with the aim of further reducing mileage expenditure).

Where the complaint does not warrant a *full* investigation, the Council will, where appropriate, report the matter to the business, identifying any relevant legal requirements and good practice that might apply, and will make a record the complaint for consideration at the next routine visit. In doing so, the business will be invited to make a written response, as a record of any internal investigation and action.

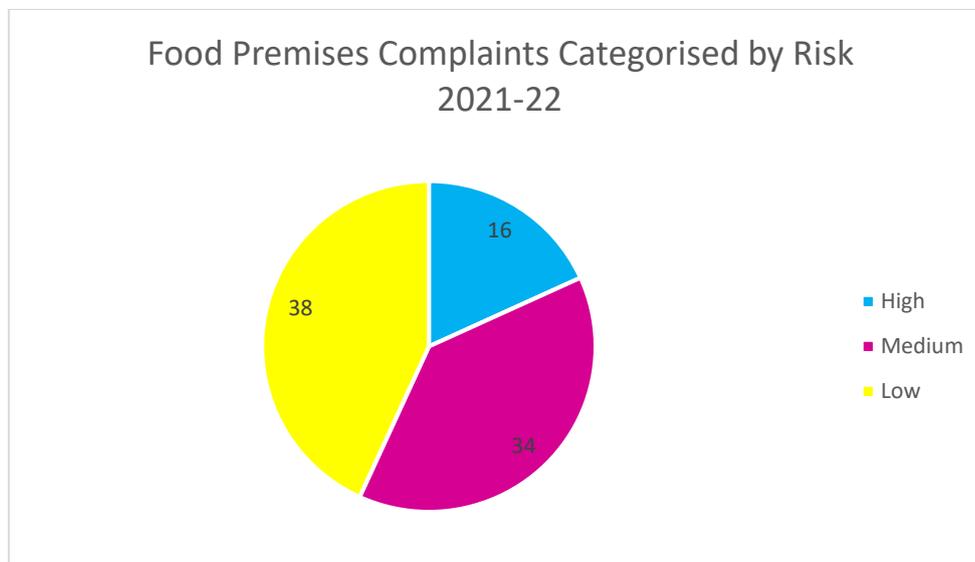
Complaints suspected of being vexatious and/or persistent, will be handled in accordance with the Council's 'Unreasonably Persistent Communications and Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Procedure'.

88 complaints about food business premises were received during 2021-22, with 16 of these complaints requiring a visit to the premises concerned.

The following chart shows the number of premises complaints received during 2021-22 compared to each of the previous 8 years and the relative proportion of complaints that were investigated by visiting the premises concerned.



The following chart shows the number of premises complaints received by risk categorisation:



3.3.2 Food complaints

The Authority will investigate complaints concerning the safety and wholesomeness of food; food contaminated with foreign matter or chemicals; food quality; and, food labelling and composition.

Food complaint investigations can be extremely time consuming and, particularly during the summer months, could divert resources in the team to prejudice the performance of other tasks.

As a result complaints about food will only be subject to a 'full' investigation where:

- there may be a significant risk to public health, and/or
- there is persistent concern to the public, and/or
- the business has a poor history of compliance, and/or
- a legal contravention has been identified which is likely to continue or recur, and/or
- the type of contravention is widespread and/or
- the contravention might be due to a deliberate act

Complaints will be prioritised for investigation as follows:

Priority (Risk)	Target for investigation
High	Same day
Medium	10 working days
Low	Report to business and consider at next routine visit

The target for investigating 'medium' risk complaints was relaxed at the start of 2014-15, from the previous 5 working days, to 10 working days to allow officers more flexibility to better co-ordinate any necessary visits with the aim of further reducing mileage expenditure).

Where the complaint does not warrant a *full* investigation, the Council will as appropriate report the matter to the business, identifying any relevant legal requirements and good practice that might apply, and will make a record of the complaint for consideration at the next routine visit, where appropriate. In doing so, the business will be invited to make a written response, as a record of any internal investigation and action. In this case the complainant will be invited to return any item purchased to the manufacturer/retailer as appropriate, for possible replacement.

This triage system will be reviewed as part of the team's routine monitoring.

Complaints suspected of being vexatious or persistent, will be handled in accordance with the Council's 'Unreasonably Persistent Communications and Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Procedure'.

Where the food originates from outside the County, the complaint will be reported to, or investigated in liaison with, the relevant Home Authority and/or Originating Authority and/or Primary Authority as appropriate.

Where an investigation is conducted, this will be pursued informally where:

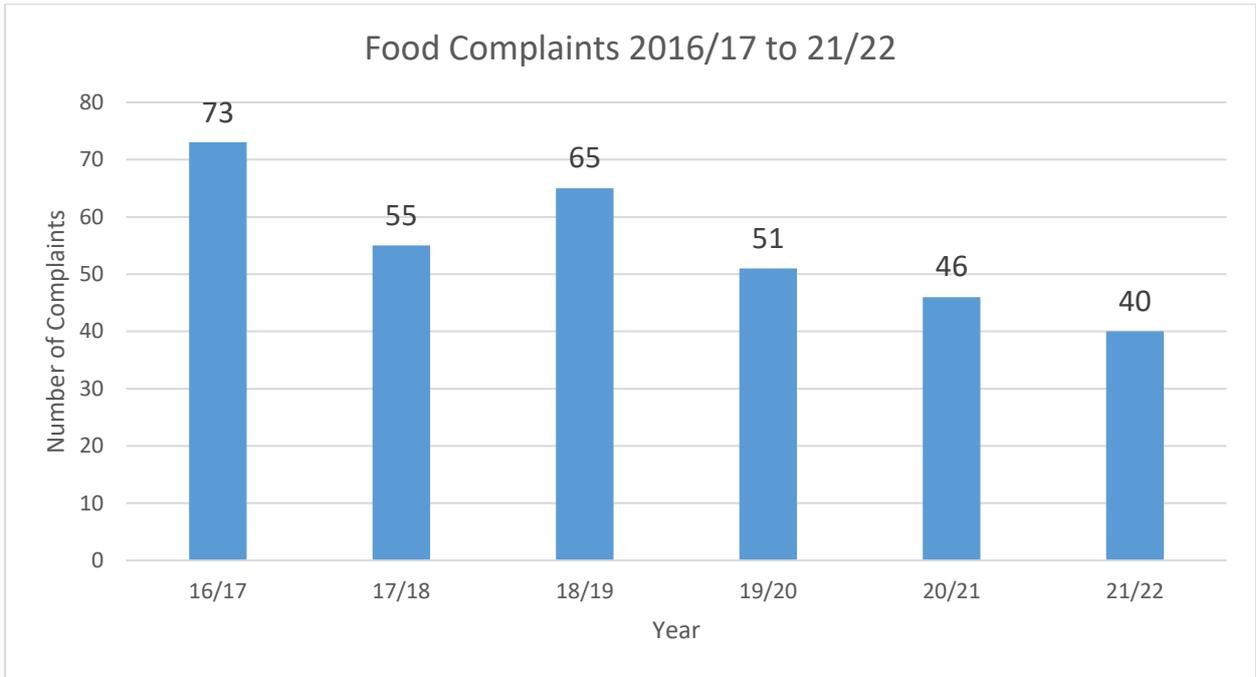
- the offence is not serious (e.g. there is no risk to the health of consumers)
- a key witness refuses to make a statement
- and/or a key witness confirms in writing that they would not be prepared to attend court.

In addition, investigations will be curtailed where:

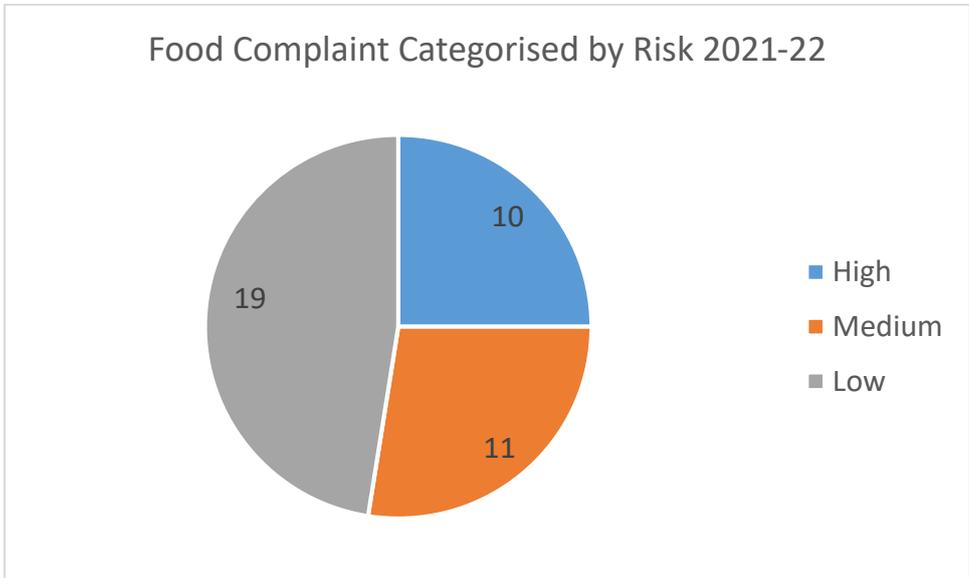
- the initial investigation indicates that there is no worthwhile purpose in pursuing further action (e.g. where a report from the public analyst or food examiner confirms that no offence has been committed)
- a reasonable prospect of securing a conviction cannot be substantiated (e.g. where there is the likelihood of a due diligence defence).

40 food complaints were received during 2021-22.

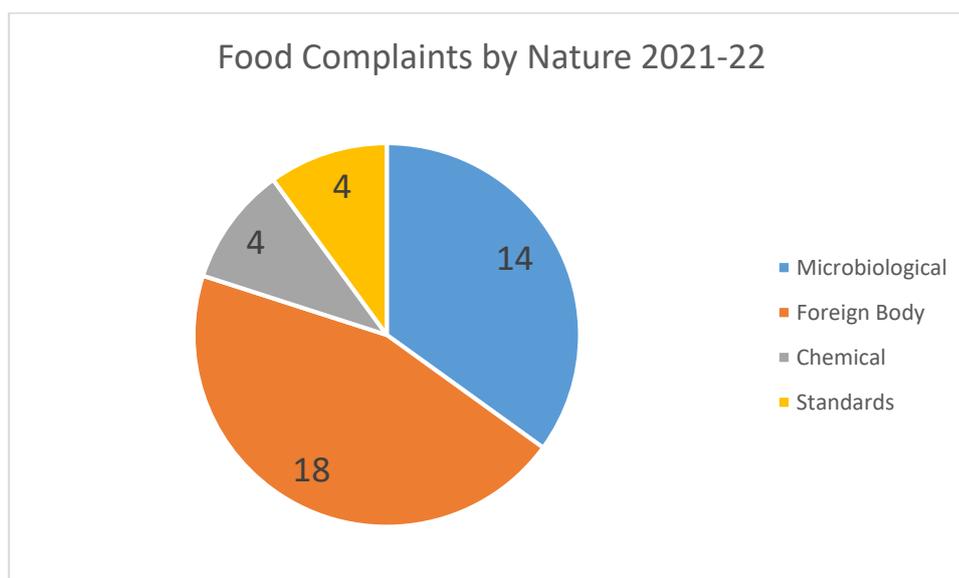
The following chart shows the number of food complaints reported during 2021-22 compared to each of the previous 5 years:



The following chart shows the number of complaints received by risk category:



The following chart illustrates the nature of food complaints received during 2021-22:



The number of complaints due to microbiological, chemical and foreign body contamination appears to be on a general downward trend based on the last 4 years, though it remains to be seen to what extent the Covid-19 pandemic has had an effect on these numbers.

Food complaints by nature	17/18	%age	18/19	%age	19/20	%age	20/21	%age	21/22	%age
Microbiological	24	44%	16	29%	16	29%	18	33%	14	25%
Foreign Body	12	22%	18	33%	17	31%	13	24%	18	33%
Chemical	7	13%	16	29%	5	9%	6	11%	4	7%
Standards	12	22%	15	27%	13	24%	9	16%	4	7%
	55		65		51		46		40	

As numbers of such complaints are generally quite low, it is unclear whether there is a continuing trend. The low level of reported complaints may be an indication of the generally higher levels of compliance in food businesses.

3.3.3 Approval of food premises covered by EC Regulation 853/2004 laying down specific rules for the hygiene of food of animal origin

The Authority is responsible for the statutory approval of food premises covered by EC Regulation 853/2004, laying down specific rules for the hygiene of food of animal origin (mostly premises involved in the manufacture and/or wholesale of meat and meat products, milk and milk products and fish and fish products).

The approval requirements and assessment process are relatively onerous and can involve a series of advisory visits and/or inspections prior to approval being granted.

Pembrokeshire has a large number of approved premises compared to many other local authority areas.

3 new requests for approval were received during 2021-22, 1 from an oyster depuration premises, 1 from a salmon cold smoking business, and 1 from a business processing crabs and lobsters, also despatching live scallops, mussels and oysters.

3.3.4 Enquiries and requests for advice

The Authority recognises the importance of providing reliable, tailored advice to businesses. In particular it:

- helps to build and maintain a positive working relationship between enforcement officers and businesses;
- proactively assists timely compliance (and in the case of food businesses, helps the business to secure a good Food Hygiene Rating);
- supports the adoption of best practice;
- helps avoid unnecessary expenditure by businesses;
- reduces the likelihood of costly food recalls;
- reduces the likelihood of subsequent enforcement and potential fines;
- helps businesses develop and maintain a good reputation;
- helps protect our communities; and
- contributes to the wider public health agenda.

The Food Safety and Standards Team have traditionally provided advice and support to new and existing food businesses, supporting their efforts to comply with legal requirements and ultimately their economic success.

However, in common with local authorities across the UK, the Authority continues to face reductions in Government funding and as a consequence it is faced with difficult budget decisions.

While the vast majority of functions performed by our Food Safety and Standards Team are statutory requirements and are delivered in accordance with statutory guidance, the provision of advisory visits, and related consultancy-type activities, exceed what the Authority is required to do, and the provision of these 'free' services was considered unsustainable in the context of wider corporate priorities.

However, in order to continue to make this support available to businesses, a 'fee-based' advisory service for food safety and standards was introduced with effect from the 1st April 2016, offering a wide range of advice, including:

- Advice on premises layout, structure, facilities, equipment.
- Advice on food safety practices and procedures (e.g. on temperature control requirements, and on how the business could meet guidelines to control the risk of E.coli cross-contamination, where appropriate).
- Advice/support in developing a food safety management/HACCP systems and maintaining records that are proportionate to business.
- Advice on the requirements relating to the training, instruction and supervision of food handlers.
- Advice on the criteria considered under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, and the general requirements to be met in order to attain a high rating - helping new businesses get off to a flying start.
- Advice on/assistance with food sampling and the significance of any results.
- Advice on complying with food allergen labelling/information requirements.
- Advice on complying with other food labelling/ description/ advertising requirements.
- Advice on food compositional requirements.
- Approval of food labels/menus/websites/other advertisements prepared by the business.
- Food premises audits ('health checks').

Further details of this service, including fees and charges, and full terms and conditions, are available on the Council's website at www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/foodlawadvice.

The following advice/support continues to be provided for free:

- Provision of basic, verbal information and/or advice in response to occasional telephone requests.
- Issuing relevant guidance leaflets/booklets.
- Issuing letters/e-mails to relevant business sectors, highlighting new/changes in legislation and guidance, and in support of particular awareness raising campaigns.

- The provision of information via the advice section of the Council's web-site.
- The provision of information and/or advice incidental to inspections and other regulatory visits.

In moving away from a free advisory service, added emphasis is being given to enhancing the above information, where possible, in order to maximise access to key information and support timely compliance.

During 2021-22 the Food Safety and Standards Team provided fee based advice to 1 Pembrokeshire businesses, compared to 0 in 2020-21 and 44 in 2019–20. Following a corporate review of fees and charges during 2017-18, fees were increased to ensure full cost recovery for the service provided.

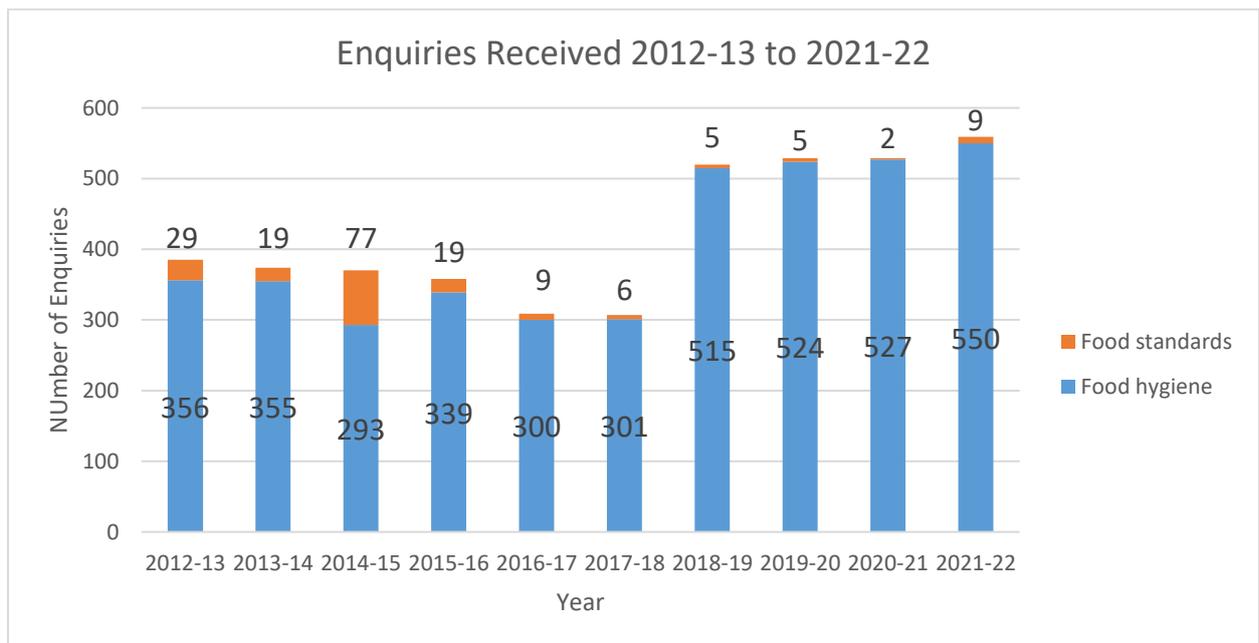
The reduction in the number of requested paid advice visits has all but ceased during the Covid-19 pandemic period and during the period of LA Recovery the Food Team will prioritise undertaking overdue and high risk work, to meet the requirements of the Recovery Plan. It is therefore envisaged that there will be no paid advisory visits undertaken in 2022-23.

More specific information on the provision of 'assured advice' to businesses covered by a Primary Authority arrangement is provided under Section 3.4 below, and consideration will be given to any opportunities for extending such arrangements further, having regard to any wider priorities and constraints.

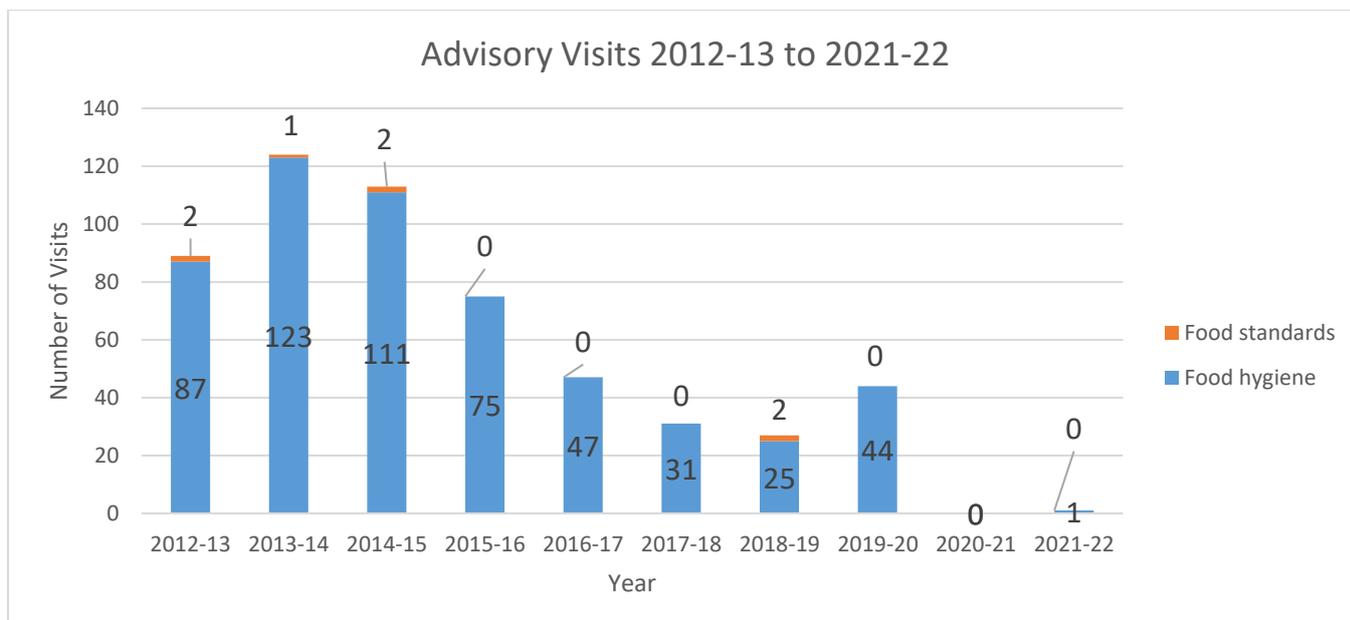
In all cases, where more detailed advice or support is required than can be provided by the Authority, businesses will be directed to relevant trade associations, consultants, or experts, as appropriate.

During 2021-22, 550 enquiries were received.

The following charts show the number of general food enquiries which were received during 2021-22 compared to each of the previous 9 years.



The following charts show the number of advisory visits requested during 2021-22 compared to each of the previous 9 years.



New arrangements were introduced in April 2016 to charge for advisory visits to new and existing food businesses. It is hoped that the undertaking of advisory visits can be a helpful factor in assisting businesses achieve good ratings. However as the undertaking of advisory visits is not a statutory duty, it has identified as being an activity that can only be provided where the visit is funded by the food business.

The number of advisory visits has declined steadily, and although it might be expected that the introduction of charges contributed to this decline it is difficult to say how much of the decline was a continuation of this trend and how much due to the charges. Other contributing factors could include better awareness of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme requirements, particularly due to information and materials available online, resulting in increased confidence and knowledge amongst food business operators. In the last two years the Covid-19 pandemic has had a major effect.

3.3.5 Referrals from other local authorities

In accordance with the Home Authority Principle (see 3.4), the Authority will respond to requests for appropriate information from other local authorities about locally produced foods that have been sold outside the County and are the subject of a complaint.

No such referral was received during 2021-22.

3.4 Home Authority Principle and Primary Authority Partnerships

Since 2014-15, the Authority acted as the nominated Primary Authority for food safety and standards matters for CKs Supermarkets Ltd. The Company operates 25 stores throughout South and West Wales regulated by 5 enforcing authorities. Six of these stores are situated in Pembrokeshire.

The arrangement was the first statutory partnership to be formed between the Authority and business under the provisions of the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008, as amended.

In March 2017 a second partnership was set up with the Seren Collection Ltd who operate a hotel, a restaurant and a takeaway kiosk in Pembrokeshire and restaurant in Swansea, and in April 2019 a third partnership was established with Hwyl Dda University y Health Board.

As Primary Authority for the businesses, the Authority has accepted responsibility for providing 'assured advice' for application across the company's entire operation, which in turn other Enforcing Authorities are required to have regard to when inspecting any of their premises and when considering any possible enforcement action.

The full cost for any work undertaken by the Authority, under the terms of the partnership, are met by the businesses, so no additional financial burden is placed on the Authority and ultimately the public purse.

In line with changes planned following the introduction of the Enterprise Act 2016, the existing Primary Authority Partnership Scheme was replaced with effect from 1st October 2017. The above existing partnerships moved across to the new Scheme, and they are now entitled to advice for all the Public Protection regulatory functions within Pembrokeshire County Council's remit.

Further opportunities to establish Primary Authority partnerships will continue to be considered, recognising the mutual benefits to businesses, the Authority and ultimately in protecting consumers. However, although the service is provided on a cost recovery basis, capacity to provide further partnerships is now low in view of the need to meet other service demands.

Under the new Scheme, businesses which trade in both England and Wales, such as Pembrokeshire manufacturers supplying products outside Wales would need to have partnerships in both nations in order to ensure Primary Authority coverage across devolved policy areas,

The Department will need to balance its commitment to the three Primary Authority Partners during the implementation of the FSA LA Recovery Plan, also due to the need to allocate the scarce staff resources to meeting the expectations of the Plan.

3.5 Training of Food Handlers

While the Authority recognises that an adequate understanding and appreciation of food safety principles is vital to the effective management of food safety within food businesses, the provision of training is not a statutory function that the Authority has a duty to provide.

Due to other priorities, in particular the need to meet statutory inspection programmes, the Authority has chosen to promote opportunities for training offered by external providers wherever possible, and the Authority maintains a list of training providers and courses available locally, to facilitate access to training by businesses.

3.6 Food Inspection and Sampling

The Authority normally operates three separate food sampling programmes:

- food sampling for microbiological surveillance e.g. to satisfy local/national sampling priorities and to ensure HACCP systems are operating effectively
- food standards sampling
- shellfish sampling

In addition, further food samples may be taken following a complaint or for enforcement purposes.

Shellfish sampling is carried out by the Port Health Team, and these arrangements and activity levels are detailed in the Port Health Service Plan.

3.6.1 Food samples for microbiological surveillance

3.6.1.1 Sampling Plans for 2021 -22

The microbiological examination of food is carried out by the Food Examiner at the Public Health Wales Laboratory, Glangwili Hospital, and Carmarthen. During 2022-23 a credit allocation equivalent to £2318 was made available through this laboratory to cover food examination costs. Food sampling costs in excess of this allocation must be met by the Authority. A budget of £440 was also made available by the Authority to cover the purchase of samples, and for the examination/analysis of complaints relating to the hygiene of foods by the Public Analyst. In general, complaint items are only sent for analysis/examination where formal action might be contemplated.

3.6.1.2 Planned sampling programmes 2021-22

During 2021-22, the Authority did not operate a Proactive Sampling Plan as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the diversion of resources towards the Authority's response to Covid-19. Activities were restricted to responding to complaints, or otherwise using intelligence and information gathered on inspections to determine the need for any microbiological samples.

3.6.1.3 Sampling results (and follow-up action) 2021-22

Bacteriological samples are interpreted in accordance with EC Regulation 2073/2005 on the Microbiological Criteria for Foodstuffs, or the National Public Health Laboratory Service guidelines as appropriate.

Unsatisfactory/unacceptable samples will be followed up by visiting the premises concerned, investigating the possible reasons for failure, and repeated sampling.

In 2021-22, 1 sample taken as a result of a complaint of possible scrombotoxin (irritation) symptoms experienced by a consumer of fish purchased at a restaurant was sampled for Histamine, which causes scrombotoxin infection. Though not purely a microbiological test, the result showed elevated levels of Histamine. The matter was followed up with the business and advice was provided on traceability, stock rotation and temperature control of fish, which reduces the risk of histamine development in fish. The restaurant subsequently stopped having the particular suspect food (mackerel) on their menu.

3.6.1.4 Planned sampling programmes 2022-23

An allocation equivalent to a budget of £4289 has been made available by PHW in support of the Authority's sampling programmes. A further budget of £440 has been made available by the Authority to cover the purchase of samples, and for the examination/analysis of complaints relating to the hygiene of foods by the Public Analyst.

For this financial year, whilst the FSA's LA Recovery Plan is being implemented, resources are being concentrated on undertaking inspections. No set Microbiological Sampling Plan has been developed for 2022-23, however the Authority will undertake microbiological sampling where inspections, service requests, outbreaks of food poisoning or other incident, follow up as necessary to any samples necessary in relation to the FSA Surveillance Sampling Programme, or other intelligence/information is obtained which would suggest that sampling is necessary to determine whether foods placed on the market are compliant with legal microbiological standards, and are safe to consume.

3.6.2 Food standards sampling

In 2020-21 a budget allocation of £ 9530 was made available by the Authority to cover food analysis costs, to be used for routine food standards sampling.

During 2021-22, the Authority did not establish a food standards sampling programme as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the diversion of resources towards the Authority's response to Covid-19. Activities were restricted to responding to complaints, or otherwise using intelligence and information gathered on inspections to determine the need for any microbiological samples.

In 2021-22 whilst two samples were taken for Food Standards matters, both were found to be satisfactory.

In 2022-23 in relation to Food Standards sampling, whilst the FSA's LA Recovery Plan is being implemented, resources are being concentrated on undertaking inspections. No set Food Standards Sampling Plan has been developed for 2022-23, however the Authority will undertake food standards sampling where inspections, service requests, any Incidents, follow up as necessary to any samples necessary in relation to the FSA Surveillance Sampling Programme or other intelligence/information is

obtained which would suggest that sampling is necessary to determine whether foods placed on the market are compliant with legal food standards.

A budget of £9530 has been made available by the Authority for food standards to cover analysis costs.

3.6.3 Shellfish sampling

Significant work has previously been required to support the classification and monitoring of shellfish production areas, to enable the commercial harvesting of these shellfish for human consumption, including in 2021-22, where sampling to classify new shellfish beds has been taking place.

Where work has been undertaken this is detailed in the separate Port Health Plan.

3.7 Investigation and Control of Outbreaks, Food Related Infectious Disease and Zoonoses

3.7.1 Investigation and control of outbreaks and food related infectious disease

Since 1st April 2017, notifications of food poisoning and food related infectious disease have been received by the Health and Safety Team instead of the Food Safety and Standards Team.

This transfer of responsibility was made in part to respond to mounting pressures on the Food Team, relative to Health and Safety, and partly to establish better alignment of areas of infectious disease control.

Food Officers will continue to investigate food premises implicated in suspected food borne incidents, as is currently the case, but not incidents which are evidently spread person to person or of other environmental origin.

In practice notifications come from GPs and medical laboratories, via an appointed proper officer situated within the Mid and West Wales Health Protection Team (part of Public Health Wales). These notifications are made in accordance with the Health Protection (Notification) (Wales) Regulations 2010.

The Authority has appointed a Lead Officer for Communicable Disease Control, and works closely with appointed proper officers (Consultants in Communicable Disease Control or Consultants in Health Protection) employed by Public Health Wales.

In practice, notifications are received electronically via a shared database system (Tarian), utilised by local authorities, Public Health Wales laboratories and local Health Protection Teams.

Reported cases of 'gastro-intestinal infections' are generally investigated by the Health and Safety Team with a view to determining the source of infection where possible; so that advice can be provided and/or action taken to prevent further spread; and, to identify any steps that can or should be taken to prevent future occurrences.

The protocols for investigating sporadic cases are covered by internal procedures, and outbreaks are investigated in accordance with the All Wales Outbreak Plan, which provides the agreed framework for consistent, multi-agency investigations.

Response targets for both sporadic cases and outbreaks reflect those established in the 'Public Health Wales – Notification Guidance Reporting from Microbiology Laboratories on Organisms - July 2011'.

Investigations typically involve case interviews and the provision of advice, but depending on the cause and source of infection, and risks involved, may require a variety of follow-up actions including:

- Ensuring the exclusion of persons infected from high risk settings (typically schools, nurseries, food premises, and health care settings).
- Screening samples from other persons exposed.
- Follow-up samples from confirmed cases to provide microbiological clearance.
- Visits to at risk settings such as schools, nurseries and other childcare settings, and to residential care and nursing homes, to provide advice on infection control.

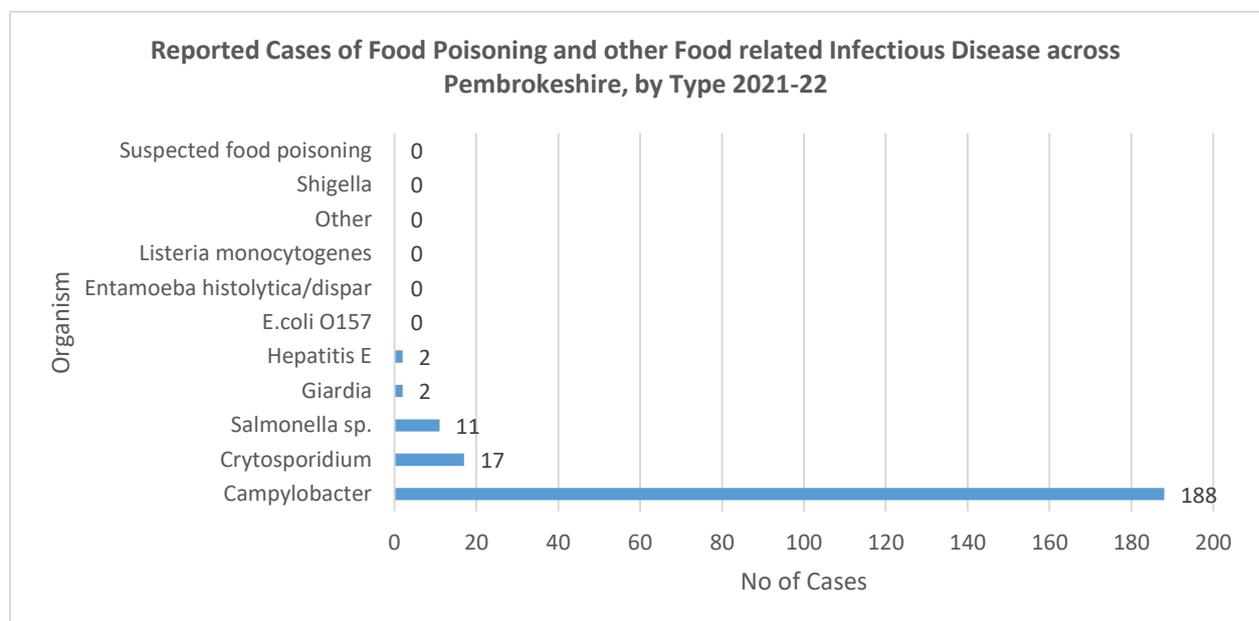
- Visits to food business premises, where food purchased by, or provided to, consumers might be implicated.
- Obtaining food and/or environmental samples.
- Liaising with other local authorities and central competent authorities, e.g. the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre and the Food Standards Agency, where infections may have been acquired out of the County, overseas or from food produced outside of the UK.

The two teams work closely on such cases, being based in the same office. Where food businesses or commercial food supplies are implicated or involved, authorised food officers will take action as necessary, and these actions are recorded on Tascomi.

During 2021-22, 220 confirmed/suspected cases were notified for investigation.

In practice, notified cases are known to represent a relatively small proportion of the true cases of gastro-intestinal infection in the community, and have been estimated to be in the region of 10% of all cases. The reasons for the low level of reporting are numerous but include: cases not visiting their GPs (especially where symptoms are relatively mild and/or short lived); under reporting of suspected cases by GPs; and variation in faecal testing by GPs. The majority of cases of gastro-intestinal infection are, in any case, likely to be attributed to viral gastroenteritis, which causes relatively short-lived symptoms, is seldom tested for (other than to confirm it as a cause, where suspected in an outbreak) and furthermore is not notifiable unless suspected as being food borne. The true burden of gastro-intestinal infection on our communities is therefore much greater.

The following chart shows the breakdown of ‘notified’ cases of gastro-intestinal infection by type for the County during 2021-22:



In line with the national picture for England and Wales, the majority of ‘notified’ cases of gastrointestinal infection are caused by Campylobacter infection –i.e. 85% of all reported cases for Pembrokeshire during 2021-22.

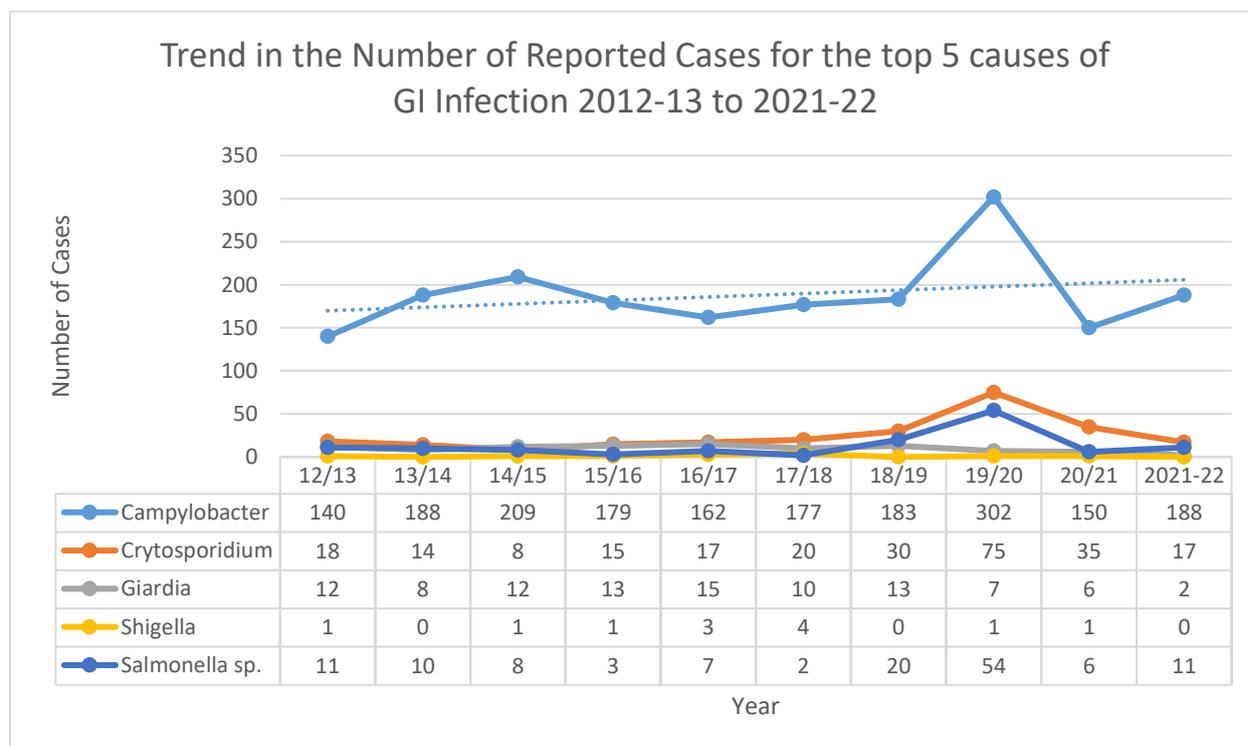
Although Campylobacter is the commonest bacterial cause of infectious intestinal disease in England and Wales, its epidemiology remains poorly understood.

Undercooked meat (especially poultry) is often associated with illness, as is unpasteurised milk and untreated water. While most cases of *Campylobacter* infection are thought to be sporadic, and the routes of transmission remain unclear, a number of significant outbreaks have been identified across Wales over recent years, with the possibility of other outbreaks going undetected.

There were no outbreaks of food poisoning in 2021-22 which required the involvement of the Health and Safety/Communicable Disease Team.

Outbreaks involving food premises can be very time consuming, and may require input from some/all Team members over a number weeks, in carrying out the investigation and collating information. Senior management input at outbreak control meetings may also be required.

The following chart shows the trend in the number of reported cases each year over the 10 year period from 2012-13 to 2021-22, for the top 5 laboratory confirmed causes of gastro-intestinal infections in the County.



Having regard to the increase in Campylobacter across England and Wales, and the possibility of outbreaks going undetected, the national Communicable Disease Expert Panel undertook a project to develop a good practice standard for the investigation of Campylobacter, to promote a common approach to investigations and surveillance. This area of work, coupled with improved data capture and analysis through enhancements to the Tarian system, may result in the identification of further clusters/outbreaks and enable the role of animal products, other foods, water and non-foodborne exposures to be investigated further.

The Public Enquiry into the 2005 outbreak of E.coli O157 affecting schools across South East Wales was concluded in March 2008, with the final report ('Pennington Report') produced in March 2009. The Authority considered and adopted where appropriate recommendations made, having regard to any advice issued by the Welsh Assembly Government, FSAW, and the Welsh Food Safety and Communicable Disease Technical Panels that operate under the direction of the Directors of Public Protection Wales and Welsh Heads of Environmental Health. The template of the WLGA Responsibilities and Actions document was used to report actions and progress in reports to the Authority's Corporate Management Team. The Authority's response to the recommendations of the Pennington Report was audited by the Food Standards Agency Wales during 2013-14 (See 6.4.3 below).

3.7.2 Investigation and control of zoonoses

The Authority investigates notifications of a range of zoonotic diseases, in particular the loss of Officially Tuberculosis Free (OTF) status in cattle. Action is taken in accordance with the Council's procedures based upon an All-Wales model document that provides for consistent responses and investigations.

During 2021-22, there were 52 notifications of restrictions on dairy herds as a result of loss of Officially Tuberculosis Free status were received, compared to 0 the previous year and 263 the year prior to that.

The low numbers reported during the Covid-19 pandemic period indicate a reduction in on-farm testing undertaken by Defra during that time.

The Authority is routinely notified of the loss of OTF status and is in turn takes steps to ensure that milk from reactor cattle does not enter the human food chain and that milk from the rest of the herd is subject to pasteurisation.

The Authority is also advised of the loss of OTF status in non-dairy cattle, though no action is required by the Team in respect of these notifications.

During 2017-18 to mitigate the impact of other increases in demand on the Food Team responsibility for initial contact of farmers in response to loss of Officially TB Free status of dairy herds was transferred to the Division's Business Unit.

3.8 Food Alerts

The Authority receives 'food alerts', 'food alert updates' and 'information notifications' from the Food Standards Agency on a routine basis.

Action will be taken as appropriate in response to all food alerts and food alert updates. In doing so the Authority will have due regard to the Food Standards Agency Code of Practice and Practice Guidance, along with internal procedures.

Depending on the nature of the problem, responses will often include contacting relevant retailers and caterers within the County to ensure that they are aware of the problem and suggested action, such as the need to withdraw affected products from sale. Advice may also be given to local consumers and press releases will be considered in certain cases, depending on the extent of publicity initiated by the manufacturer or by the Food Standards Agency and the likelihood of product being available for use or sale within Pembrokeshire.

Records of action taken will be maintained.

79 food alerts, for action where appropriate, were received during 2021-22.

Food alerts for information which relate to incorrect allergen labelling are sent separately. There were 88 Allergy Alerts issued in 2021-22.

Whilst it is difficult to predict the number of food alerts that might be received in any given year, there has been a significant decline in the percentage of food alerts requiring action, and the majority require no intervention by Pembrokeshire County Council. However, where action is required, this can be time consuming.

3.9 Liaison with Other Organisations

The Authority aims to work jointly and consistently with other local authorities by participating in national and regional groups set up for that purpose.

3.9.1 Expert panels, task groups and other professional groups/committees

A number of specialist Expert Panels have been established in Wales. Of particular relevance to the food safety function is the Food Safety Expert Panel, which is attended by the Lead EHO (Food Safety). The Food Standards Agency (Wales) is also represented at these meetings. Discussions on enforcement issues and service developments take place at Panel meetings to ensure consistency of approach. Beneath this Technical Panel are three regional Task Groups for food safety that act as working groups to develop policies, procedures or prepare recommendations based upon investigative work, for consideration by the Expert Panel. The Task Group for food safety is also attended by the Lead EHO (Food Safety).

The Food Standards Agency in Wales have also developed a Wales Wide Steering Group on the implementation of Food Hygiene Ratings legislation in Wales, which has been set up to help monitor and review how the legislation is being implemented, and to help the Agency make recommendations for improvements and future developments to the Rating Scheme. The Lead EHO (Food Safety) is a member of this Steering Group.

The Communicable Disease Expert Panel and Task Groups operate under the same arrangement. These are both attended by the Public Protection Manager (Health and Consumer Protection), with communicable disease control being relevant to many areas within the remit of the Health and Consumer Protection Section.

The Lead EHO (Food Safety) also attends the Welsh Food Microbiological Forum, established to co-ordinate microbiological food sampling activities across Wales.

Food and agricultural standards co-ordination and advice is provided in Wales by the Food Standards and Agriculture Group for Wales. The Lead TSO (Food Standards) attends meetings of the WHOTS Food Standards and Labelling Group for Wales

The Lead EHO (Port Health) attends the local Shellfish Liaison Committee, established to co-ordinate shellfish sampling, classification and enforcement issues (in addition to the Port Health Expert Panel which considers food hygiene and infectious disease on-board vessels, imported food controls, etc.).

3.9.2 Public Health Wales and Health and Safety Executive

Contact takes place, as and when required, with representatives of Public Health Wales with respect to the prevention of communicable disease, in particular with the Council's appointed 'proper officers' (Consultants in Communicable Disease Control and Consultants in Health Protection), other colleagues at the local Health Protection Team and microbiology staff at the Public Health Wales Laboratory, Glangwili Hospital, Carmarthen. The Health and Safety Team leads on the investigation of zoonotic illness associated with other work-related activities/workplaces, e.g. regarding the spread of zoonoses on farms etc., and other non-food related infectious diseases e.g. Legionnaires' Disease, in liaison with inspectors from Health and Safety Executive, as appropriate.

3.9.3 Other external agencies

Liaison is maintained with other agencies and bodies in a variety of ways. Lists of contacts are maintained for each specialist area of work, and regular enquiries and contacts occur with relevant agencies. Of particular relevance to the food safety and standards functions are contacts with the Food Standards Agency Wales, the Welsh Food Fraud Unit and the Animal and Plant Health Agency. These organisations have a role to play in the enforcement of food legislation and the control of zoonoses, and are consulted at both a local and regional level. Liaison also occurs with the Centre for the Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science in respect of the classification of shellfish beds and sampling regimes. Liaison also takes place with the Care Inspectorate for Wales, in relation to food safety and standards issues and the management of outbreaks in care homes etc.

3.9.4 Professional bodies

Professional officers are represented in Wales by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and Trading Standards Institute, as appropriate. The CIEH Welsh Council provides a further link in the development of effective liaison with local authorities and also provides a level of training for staff.

3.9.5 Internal liaison

Liaison takes place with the Council's Catering Division regarding food safety and standards compliance in Council run schools and care homes, and with the Professional Officer for Governor Services with respect to infectious disease control in schools and incident management. Communication also takes place with respect to planning, building control and licensing applications which may warrant input from the Team; to ensure that land charge registers are maintained; and, that problems with or pollution and waste issues pests in food premises, identified by pest control officers, are drawn to the attention of the Team.

3.10 Food Safety and Standards Promotion

In 2021-22 the Food Safety and Standards Team supported the following activities with the aim of promoting knowledge and understanding of food hygiene and standards within Pembrokeshire:

- **Crucial Crew** - This project aims to teach Year 6 school children about food safety in the home by giving and reinforcing a number of food safety messages relating to the importance of handwashing and the 4 Cs via an audio visual presentation, accompanied by an interactive question and answer session. This takes place within the context of "Crucial Crew", an event attended over 9 days by Pembrokeshire Schools, during which they also learn about other safety issues from the emergency services and other bodies. The team was supported during 2021-22 by the Food Standards Agency and their appointed contractor.

These areas of promotional work will continue to be supported during 2022-23.

4 RESOURCES

4.1 Financial Allocation and 'Efficiency Savings'

Expenditure on food law enforcement is identified within the CIPFA best value accounting framework.

The movement in the budget over the last seven years is shown below, divided between food safety, food standards and communicable disease control:

FOOD SAFETY	2014-15 (£,000)	2015-16 (£,000)	2016-17 (£,000)	2017-18 (£,000)	2018-19 (£,000)	2019-20 (£,000)	2020-21 (£,000)	2022-23 (£,000)
Total budget	481	502	472	462	465	462	527	556
Increase/decrease (£,000) on previous year	-36	+21	-30	-10	3	-3	+65	+29
%age increase/decrease on previous year	-7.0%	-4.4%	-6.0%	-2.1%	+0.6%	-0.6%	+14.1%	+5.5%
Real terms increase/ decrease year on year (adding 3% for inflation)	-10%	+1.4%	-9.0%	-5.1%	-2.4%	-3.6%	+11.1%	+2.5%

FOOD STANDARDS	2014-15 (£,000)	2015-16 (£,000)	2016-17 (£,000)	2017-18 (£,000)	2018-19 (£,000)	2019-20 (£,000)	2020-21 (£,000)	2022-23 (£,000)
Total budget	129	129	135	204	210	197	216	227
Increase/decrease (£,000) on previous year	-25	+0	+6	+69	+6	-13	+19	+11
%age increase/decrease on previous year	-16.2%	0%	+4.7%	+51.1%	+2.9%	-6.2%	+9.6%	+5.1%
Real terms increase/decrease year on year (adding 3% for inflation)	-19.2%	-3.0%	+1.7%	+48.1%	-0.1%	-9.2%	+6.6%	+2.1%

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL	2014-15 (£,000)	2015-16 (£,000)	2016-17 (£,000)	2017-18 (£,000)	2018-19 (£,000)	2019-20 (£,000)	2020-21 (£,000)	2022-23 (£,000)
Total budget	35	36	37	56	64	56	57	58
Increase/decrease (£,000) on previous year	-20	+1	+1	+19	+8	-8	+1	+1
%age increase/decrease on previous year	-36.4%	+2.9%	+2.8%	+51.4%	+14.3%	-12.5%	+1.8%	+1.8%
Real terms increase/decrease year on year (adding 3% for inflation)	-39.4%	-0.1%	-0.2%	-48.4%	+11.3	-15.5%	-1.2%	-1.2%

The marked increase in 2017-18 was as a result of reassigning the whole of the Food Team resources and therefore salary budget to food safety and standards enforcement (and away from communicable disease control), with a significant component of the Health and Safety Team budget reflected for the first time against Communicable Disease Control. Further changes have arisen from a review of the percentage breakdown of officer time resulting in some realignment of staffing costs to more accurately reflect service/work activities.

The following table shows how the proportion of expenditure on central support costs has risen relative to the total budget for these food-related services has increased over this 6 year period, rising from 22.8% of the total service costs in 2016-17 to 24.2% as at 1st April 2022.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2022-23
Total budget for food-related services	£643,830	£722,000	£738,310	£800,000	£818,360	£840,340
Central support and internal recharges (uncontrolled)	£147,020	£147,390	£158,970	£111,500	£209,220	£203,930
%age of total budget made up from central support and internal recharges (uncontrolled)	22.8%	20.4%	21.5%	13.9%	25.5%	24.2%

The budget provision includes various allocations for non-fixed costs, with some of the more pertinent indicated below:

Cost	Includes	2022-23
Staffing	All salary related costs	£632,560
Travel	Mileage, pool cars, hire cars and diesel	£8,480
Subsistence	Other travel related expenditure	£250
Furniture and equipment	Purchase of furniture and equipment, equipment maintenance costs (incl. calibration), mobile phones	£2,750
IT	Purchase of equipment and internal IT recharges	£31,200
Legal services	Internal recharge for Legal Services	£10,190
Food sampling (excl. drinking waters)	Cost of purchasing food samples, and the budget for having samples 'analysed' by the Public Analyst and/or subject to 'examination' by a food examiner (when not covered as part of the Authority's laboratory allocation)	£9,970

As with all other local authorities across Wales (and the UK as a whole) the Authority has had to contend with significant cuts in its Revenue Support Grant (RSG) in recent years, as a result of Government austerity measures, and has increasingly had to identify ways of delivering 'efficiency savings'. Food law enforcement services have not been protected from these cuts. In practice, the required efficiency savings have been managed through a range of measures designed to reduce expenditure and to maximise income generation, where possible.

To date **expenditure** across the Service has been reduced by:

- The reduction Public Protection Manager positions (reduced from 4 to 2).
- Changes in the arrangements for providing a guaranteed out of hours service for Public Protection, with a significant reduction in expenditure.
- Cutting out the 'contingency budget' for the employment of food hygiene contractors.
- Cutting out the overtime budget for food premises inspections.
- Permitting officers to 'buy more leave' where this can be accommodated.
- Pursuing more cost effective database solutions (for Public Protection as a whole). Subsequent to a **new software provider (Tascomi)** being engaged.
- Reducing expenditure on equipment maintenance, by identifying more competitive solutions for equipment calibration and by officers washing their own protective clothing.
- Adhering to officer 'guidelines to reduce stationery, printing and postage costs'. In particular through greater use of electronic communications. During 2015-16, an **electronic communication strategy** was prepared for use across the Section, having regard to the Council's Channel Access Strategy and results of a business survey, to increase the emphasis given to providing information and advice electronically, utilising the Council's website and e-mail in particular. This work is ongoing.
- Adhering to officer 'guidelines to reduce mileage expenditure.
- Use of in-house electronic inspection proformas to capture information on businesses electronically. While this has required a significant investment of time, to develop the proformas; for officers to become practised and proficient in their use; and, to generate comprehensive electronic records on each business, this investment should result in longer term efficiencies as the information gathered provides a starting point for subsequent inspections.

In addition, **income** has been secured through:

- Promoting and carrying out revisits for rescoring under the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
- Entering into Primary Authority arrangements, as outlined under 3.4 above.
- Applying for a range of grants to support food law enforcement activities.

The Authority as a whole will continue to face further reductions in its RSG for the years ahead. However, there are no proposals to reduce the budget for food law enforcement during 2022-23, while the service remains committed to reducing expenditure where it is possible to do so.

Also, while continuing to pursue the cost reduction strategies covered above, the Service will continue to recover any costs associated with:

- advisory visits and related consultancy-type activities.
- food export certificates.
- Primary Authority partnership arrangements.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

The following staff were employed on food law enforcement during 2021-22

Food Law Enforcement – Officers		
Officer grade	Minimum qualifications	Maximum Full time equivalent officers (FTEs), with some fluctuations through the year
PP Manager and Consumer Protection)	BSc(Hons)/MSc Degree in Environmental Health Or Diploma in Trading Standards, or antecedents	0.05
Environmental Health Officers (includes Port Health officer time)	BSc(Hons)/MSc Degree in Environmental Health	6.9
Trading Standards Officers	Diploma in Trading Standards, or antecedents	1
Food Safety/Standards Officers (includes Port Health Officer time)	Higher Certificate in Food Premises Inspection plus Certificate of Competence in Food and Agricultural Standards or equivalent)	1.6
Total		9.55

Food Law Enforcement – Support Staff		
Title	Minimum qualifications	Full time equivalent officers (FTEs)
Performance Collator	Not stipulated	0.6
Technical Clerks	Not stipulated	1
Total		1.6

Summary of impact of Covid-19 on Food team Staffing

2 officers were fully seconded to the Test trace Protect Contact Tracing Service (TTP) from June 2020, and these secondments will continue until at least 30 June 2022, when a more regional approach to

management of vulnerable cases and contacts will be initiated. A further officer and the Lead Officer for Food Safety were partly seconded whilst also still providing oversight of the Food service. This partial secondment continued up to the end of March 2022.

In addition to secondments out of the Food Team to work on the Covid-19 Response, an experienced Area Food Safety Officer left the team in May 2021 and the Lead Trading Standards Officer (Food Standards) left the Authority in September 2021. Another officer went on Maternity Leave in 2021.

Whilst an officer from the team was able to step up into the Lead Officer (Food Standards) role, this created an additional vacancy in the team. Fortunately it was possible to recruit an Environmental Health Officer and Area Food Safety Officer to the Team in the autumn of 2021. However one of the newly appointed officers was seconded to another team in Public Protection on 1 April 2022, due to staff shortages.

In addition, a further Environmental Health Officer is due to retire from the team in June 2022.

Also in line with other areas, the Food team was significantly affected by family bereavements, personal illness and serious family illnesses in 2021 and 2022, which resulted in a number of long term absences from the Team.

These issues have had a limiting effect on the pace at which the Food Standards Agency LA Recovery Plan has been implemented, and will be able to be implemented in 2022-23.

4.3 Staff Development Plan

Annual training priorities are agreed for every member of staff, as part of the annual performance review process. Records of these performance reviews and training identified are maintained.

The Authority takes advantage of opportunities for low cost training offered by the Food Standards Agency and CIEH (Cymru) where it is available, although there was a marked decline in courses offered in recent years. Many courses only allow one or two delegates to attend, although there are some self-guided training courses available on the FSA website. In addition, training may be provided in-house, using the resources available through the Authority's Training and Development Section, or by contracting external trainers in appropriate cases. Where additional training is required staff will be sent on courses/seminars run externally. Team meetings are also used as an opportunity to provide training.

During 2021-22, officers within the Food Safety and Standards Team benefited from a range of formal training opportunities. These courses included:

- The FSA Funded one newly appointed officer to attend the University of Birmingham Food Standards Endorsement of the Higher Certificate in Food Control
- Privately purchased ABC online training and webinars, accessible in real time or subsequently which allowed officers to manage time spent training more efficiently and flexibly. In house FSA National Consistency Exercise
- Imported Food training for officers of the Food team, both in relation to controls at ports and at inland premises,
- FSA Hypersensitivity training,

Further opportunities for knowledge sharing are pursued in relation to approved premises inspections by undertaking joint visits.

While prioritising training to meet key business/service needs the Authority will seek to ensure that each officer receives the minimum level of technical and professional training, necessary to satisfy the Food Safety Act Code of Practice, and Continual Professional Development requirements required to maintain professional status.

A training budget of approximately £5746 is available to the Section as a whole for 2022-23. As from 2019 the CPD required by the Code of Practice doubled from 10 to 20 hours, placing increased demands on the service in this area through increased Continual Professional Development requirements and the need to

update existing policies and procedures surrounding authorisations and competencies. The Department also takes advantage of regular Food Standards Agency funding which is provided for officers to attend training courses and events, in addition to subscribing to an online professional Food Law Training service, to assist and ensure that officers undertake the necessary training to meet the Code of Practice Training obligations.

5 QUALITY ASSURANCE

5.1 Quality Assessment

The Food Law Enforcement Standard requires food authorities to maintain documented monitoring procedures.

A documented management system has been introduced to monitor adherence to the planned inspection programmes and the quality and nature of work carried out, to ensure as far as practicable that work is undertaken competently and to a uniform standard.

The procedure includes measures to monitor:

- adherence to the planned inspection programmes
- that priority is given to inspecting the higher risk premises
- compliance with Food Standards Agency Code of Practice, Practice Guidance and central government guidance
- that officers have due regard to published UK or EU Industry Guides to Good Hygiene Practice, where applicable
- compliance with internal procedures and policies
- that inspection ratings, and Food Hygiene Ratings awarded, are appropriate
- that the interpretation of legislation, and action taken by officers following inspections/investigations, are consistent within the authority and with central government and/or other relevant guidance.

The procedure is composed of three elements:

- Performance updates on each officer, at approximately monthly intervals.
- Monitoring of file and computer records: a minimum of 5% of inspection records and service requests will be monitored for each officer, either on an annual, six monthly or 3 monthly interval depending on performance, with the more frequent monitoring taking place where there are knowledge or practice issues identified, together with provision of additional training if needed.
- Accompanied inspections. A senior officer and inspecting officer will visit the premises at the same time, one to undertake the inspection, the other to monitor the officer's approach, judgements, thoroughness, etc. A minimum of one visit will be made with each officer during the year.

These procedures were reviewed during the course of 2017-18, to make them more streamlined and targeted (risk-based).

In addition to the monitoring systems describe above, the following arrangements are in place to promote quality and consistency:

- A document control system has been established to ensure that officers have access to current policies, procedures, legislation and official guidance, including an on-line menu of procedures.
- Team meetings are held during which issues of interpretation and enforcement are considered.
- Lead officers have been appointed to promote consistency in the interpretation of product specific regulations, and applications for approvals are reviewed by lead officers prior to signing by the SEHO or Food, Safety and Port Health Manager.
- Standard letters and phrases are used to encourage consistency and to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency Code of Practice and Practice Guidance.
- Improvement Notices are subject to peer review before service.
- All files presented for formal action are reviewed by the Food, Safety and Port Health Manager. Recommendations for formal action (simple caution or prosecution) are further considered by the Head of Service and finally approved by the Head of Legal Services.

5.2 Development and Review of Documented Policies and Procedures

Where necessary and where resources allow, documented policies and procedures will be reviewed and updated during 2022- 23. The majority of these documents are required to comply with the Framework Agreement on Food Law Enforcement, but more fundamentally provide guidance to officers and a basis for the effective management of the service.

6 REVIEW

6.1 Review against the Service Plan

Performance against this Service Plan will be reviewed at the end of 2022-23 and will be reported as part of the Service Plan for 2023-24.

The feedback given will include information on levels of compliance with all aspects of the Plan, including specified performance targets and standards, and other stated outcomes.

6.2 Identification of any Variation from the Service Plan

The review against this Service Plan will identify any areas where the Authority was at variance from the Plan and, where appropriate, the reasons for that variance.

If additional work is carried out in other areas of food law enforcement, which is considered to have achieved the same objective, this will be identified clearly.

6.3 Areas for Improvement

The review against this Service Plan will set out any relevant improvements or service developments identified, either as a result of reviewing the Plan or as a result of performance and quality assessments.

6.4 Food Standards Agency Wales (FSAW) Audits

6.4.1 Full Food Law Enforcement Audits

An audit of the whole of the Food Law Service was last carried out by FSAW in July 2016, the first full audit since 2004. The final report and agreed action plan was received in April 2018 and the action plan will be implemented and reviewed during 2018 in advance of a follow-up visit. The Report can be accessed at the following link: https://signin.riams.org/files/display_inline/46895/Final-report-Pembrokeshire-with-action-plan-12042018.pdf

6.4.2 Official Controls in Approved Establishments

In November 2009 the Authority was subject to a focused audit of its Official Controls in Approved Establishments by the Agency. The final report was released in January 2010 and a 4 point action plan provided for the Authority as follows:

- ensure that all documented policies and procedures for each of the enforcement activities covered by The Standard are reviewed in accordance with the Authority's own procedure.
- ensure the training of all authorised officers and appropriate support staff in the technical and administrative aspects of the work in which they will be involved and to have completed the requisite 10 hours of food related training as required by the Food Law Code of Practice (Wales)

- carry out food law enforcement in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) and ensure that reasons for any departure from the criteria set out in the enforcement policy are documented
- undertake its internal monitoring programme in accordance with its own documented procedure and retain records of internal monitoring for at least 2 years

While significant progress has been made in these areas since that time, this continues to require ongoing management commitment.

6.4.3 'LA response to the recommendations following the Public Enquiry into the 2005 Outbreak of E.coli O157 in SE Wales' and 'LA arrangements for new businesses'.

In January 2014, the Authority was one of six Welsh local authorities selected by the Food Standards Agency Wales to be visited, to undertake a 'reality check' on two areas subject to a desktop assessment across all Welsh authorities. These areas were:

- the LA response to the recommendations following the Public Enquiry into the 2005 Outbreak of E.coli O157 in SE Wales; and
- the LA's arrangements for dealing with new businesses.

The final report was received in February 2015, and an action plan prepared to respond to two issues, namely:

- To establish a system of 'red-flagging' issues, concerns or potential problems at the end of each inspection to alert future inspecting officers.
- The approach to the recording of new businesses to be revised to include the date trading is expected to commence/actually commenced, to facilitate monitoring against the target that 'high risk' premises be inspected within 28 days of commencing trading.
- Food premises inspection forms to be completed sufficiently in all cases to verify that a thorough assessment of compliance with requirements in relation to HACCP has been undertaken and to verify that requirements relating to food labelling and/or compositional requirements had been fully considered.

These points have been addressed, but will again require ongoing monitoring and reinforcement in certain cases.