

## 3.4.04 Food Safety

### Introduction: why is this important?

Poor food safety places a significant burden on the UK economy, in addition to personal suffering in terms of morbidity, mortality and economic loss. Poor food safety practices greatly increases the risk of contaminating food and presents a risk of food poisoning. The exact agents vary, but where food safety does not adhere to guidelines the risk is real and present. In addition, commercial operations not adhering to safe practices are placing customers at risk.

Food safety in the home is as equally as important as food safety in a commercial setting. Food borne diseases originate from a variety of foods and can be caused by many pathogenic organisms (for example bacteria or viruses). Food poisoning continues to be a problem in the UK:

- There are more than 500,000 cases of food poisoning a year from known pathogens. This figure would more than double if it included food poisoning cases from unknown pathogens
- Campylobacter was the most common foodborne pathogen, with about 280,000 cases every year
- The next most common pathogen was Clostridium perfringens with 80,000 cases, and norovirus was third with an estimated 74,000 cases
- Salmonella is the pathogen that causes the most hospital admissions – about 2,500 each year
- Poultry meat was the food linked to the most cases of food poisoning, with an estimated 244,000 cases every year
- After poultry, produce including vegetables, fruit, nuts and seeds caused the second highest number of cases of illness (an estimated 48,000 cases), while beef and lamb were third (an estimated 43,000 cases)

Because of this there is a need to protect public health from risks which may arise in connection with the consumption of food (including risks caused by the way in which it is produced or supplied) and otherwise to protect the interests of consumers in relation to food.

### What do the facts and figures tell us?

As of the 1st April 2015 almost 90% of food businesses rated under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) were generally satisfactory, with 10 % of business requiring some improvements.

**Distribution of rated premises under the FHRS**

FHRS score	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
5 (most satisfactory)	58.8%	60.5	60.4
4	18%	17.1	19.2
3	9.1%	9.1	9.9
2	3.5%	3.9	3.9
1	9.3%	8.3	6.3
0	1.3%	1.0	0.2
3 or better	85.9%	86.8	89.6

Vulnerable groups, in particular (the elderly, young and immunocompromised) are particularly at risk. These are the groups also most likely to experience poverty.

Notifications of communicable diseases in Bradford have fallen over the last three years, but Campylobacter, Salmonella, Cryptosporidium and Giardia continue to be a problem. The need to engage with Food Standards Agency (FSA) campaigns on educating the public on how to reduce the incidence of such cases is important in reducing the cases further. The following notifications have been dealt with by Environmental Health in 2014-15:

## Environmental Health notifications in Bradford, 2014/15

Disease		2014-15
Hepatitis A		1
Hepatitis E		4
Cholera		0
Dysentery	Entamoeba histolytica	0
	Shigella Boydii	1
	Shigella Dysenteriae	0
	Shigella flexneri	21
	Shigella sonnei	11
	Not Typed	3
Food Poisoning	Bloody diarrhoea	0
	B.cereus	0
	C.botulinum	0
	Campylobacter	406
	E.coli 0157	11
	E.coli –other than 0157	1
	Listeria	1
	Salmonella	78
	Suspected Food Poisoning	70
	Yersinia	0
	Not Typed	0
Gastro Enteritis	Cryptosporidium	55
	Giardia	58
Respiratory Disease	Legionella	1
	Tuberculosis	2
	Part 2a order	0
Paratyphoid Fever	Salmonella	5
Typhoid Fever	Salmonella	8
Total		737

### What strategies, policies and best practice have been developed locally and nationally?

Department of Environment and Sport: Food Safety Service plan 2015/16: details the Departments planned work activities and arrangements for fulfilling statutory duties. The aims of which are:

- 1) To ensure that all food produced and sold in Bradford District is safe to eat
- 2) To increase the awareness of food safety amongst the residents of Bradford District
- 3) To support the role of Public Health England in relation to communicable disease control with Bradford District
- 4) To assist in the delivery of the relevant outcomes within the Public Health Outcomes Framework

Other strategies include:

- Food Standards Agency Strategic Plan 2015-20
- Food Law Code of Practice
- West Yorkshire Gastro-Intestinal Disease Management Protocol (January 2014): this details the agreed response and timescales for investigation of communicable diseases

### What challenges have been identified in a local context?

Bradford has a wide variety of food businesses, but decreasing resources to fulfil the statutory requirements. The Food Safety Intervention Programme undertaken by the Local Authority operates in accordance with the FSA's statutory Local Authority Framework Agreement and Food Safety Code of Practice (CoP). The CoP sets out a range of interventions that Local Authorities may adopt in addition to food safety inspections. These are official controls that include inspections, audits, sampling, monitoring and verification; non-official controls include advice, coaching, education and training and questionnaires.

Priority is given to the inspection of high risk and approved premises over low risk businesses. This means priority is given to the inspection of highest risk premises, (categories A-C). All registered food businesses receive an intervention in the form of Feeders Digest, our annual newsletter. Low risk businesses (D-E) that fall within the scope of the FHSR website will however receive an inspection when resources facilitate this.

A Food intervention programme was developed by the West Yorkshire Food Officers Group and ratified by the West Yorkshire Chief Officers Group. This aimed to provide the best use of resources and seek a consistent approach across West Yorkshire.

**Categories of Food Businesses**

<b>FSA Category</b>	<b>Number in 2014-15</b>
Primary producers	6 (488 farms )
Manufacturers and packers	116
Importers/Exporters	8
Distributors / transporters	85
Supermarket/ hypermarket	110
Small retailer	815
Retailer – other	157
Restaurant/café/canteen	646
Hotel/guest House	62
Pub/club	493
Take-away	680
Caring premises	236 ( 502 childminders)
School /college	222
Mobile Food Unit	125
Restaurants / caterers – other	239
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,000 (4,990)</b>

Bradford does have a number of importers, meat product premises and on farm dairies that can create significant problems/ challenges. Illegal meat cutting plants have been identified, and these premises will obviously increase risks to health.

### What do our stakeholders tell us?

In order to ensure food safety, national guidance and legislation details how food businesses (including charities) should operate. The Local Authority is statutorily bound to inspect food businesses. Local officers inspect food businesses against these standards and areas of concern are addressed, including via formal enforcement if necessary. Such actions and decisions are based on the FSA's guidance and the local Enforcement Policy. Cases of food poisoning are often investigated, and advice and guidance is provided to domestic premises.

In its Strategic Plan 2015-20, the FSA outlines its objectives in protecting public health. This includes regulation for food producers, commercial food premises and home food users.

Responses from customer satisfaction surveys of these statutory inspections provide positive feedback on the value of inspections to food businesses as a means of giving advice and education. In excess of 90% state that they are fairly or highly satisfied with inspection services.

### Recommendations: What do we need to do? How do we ensure this remains a priority?

- To deliver an annual programme of food hygiene interventions, this includes inspections, audits, and alternative intervention strategies
- Promote best practice in food production and sale in Bradford through the FHRS
- Provide support and advice to local businesses, so they can comply with legal requirements and best practice
- Publicise food safety issues, by working with partners, through a number of activities as part of local and national campaigns
- Act as Primary Authority for our partner businesses and deal with enquiries referred on by other authorities and agencies
- Investigate food poisoning notifications and outbreaks in association with the Consultant for Communicable Disease Control (CCDC), based within Public Health England
- Investigate complaints about food and food premises
- Implement an annual sampling programme to include participation in national and regional sampling surveys
- Approve and register special high risk food premises as required by law
- Enforce food legislation and take proportionate action to secure compliance
- Take prompt and effective action in response to food alerts and other threats to food safety in Bradford District
- Provide training and development opportunities for staff to ensure they are competent, professional and fair