

A man with a beard and a woman are sitting at a wooden table in a restaurant, smiling and eating. The man is wearing a light blue t-shirt and the woman is wearing a beige polo shirt. They are both holding cutlery and eating from white bowls. On the table, there is a glass of beer, a small bowl of sauce, and a plate of food. The background shows a brick wall and a window.

City of Wolverhampton Council

Food Service Plan 2023



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Introduction

Welcome to the 22nd Statutory Food Service Plan for the City of Wolverhampton.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) Framework Agreement, which was developed in close partnership with the Local Government Association (LGA), requires the annual production of the Statutory Food Service Plan. The agreement applies to local enforcement of all food laws, and incorporates the latest guidance and standards on food law enforcement.

The plan has been reviewed in accordance with the FSA's Service Planning Guidance for Food Law Enforcement and the guidance contained in the Food Law Code of Practice (England) and Guidance. The FSA also requires the service plan be submitted for member approval to ensure local transparency and accountability. All formal actions arising from interventions taken under the provisions of the plan will be compliant with the Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO) Regulators' Code and the Black Country Regulators Operating Framework.



The plan is not a stand-alone document; it is an integral part of the council's service delivery programme supporting the delivery of the councils 'Our City, Our Plan', to improve outcomes for local people. It stands alongside other service specific plans such as the Health and Safety Plan and sits within the overall performance management arrangements for the Regulation group of services. All the service plans are aligned to the council's corporate performance and financial planning frameworks.

The service is committed to working towards the inspection and intervention regime prescribed by the Food Standards Agency.

The Food Standards Agency produced a Recovery Plan for Local Authorities during the pandemic, identifying the areas of work that were to be prioritised for response and action.

The Recovery Plan came to an end in March 2023, with the Food Standards Agency placing the expectation on Local Authorities to work towards realigning food establishment interventions with the prescribed frequencies as laid down within the Food Law Code of Practice. The prioritisation of these interventions will be based on risk and intelligence.

In 2018, we launched our consultancy service Trade with Confidence. The service allows us to provide bespoke support to businesses to help them achieve a better star rating or with any other issues or advice that they require. We hope to further develop this area of work.

Should you have any comments or views with respect to this plan please forward these to the Service Manager at **emma.caddick@wolverhampton.gov.uk**



Service wheel: existing services and priority areas



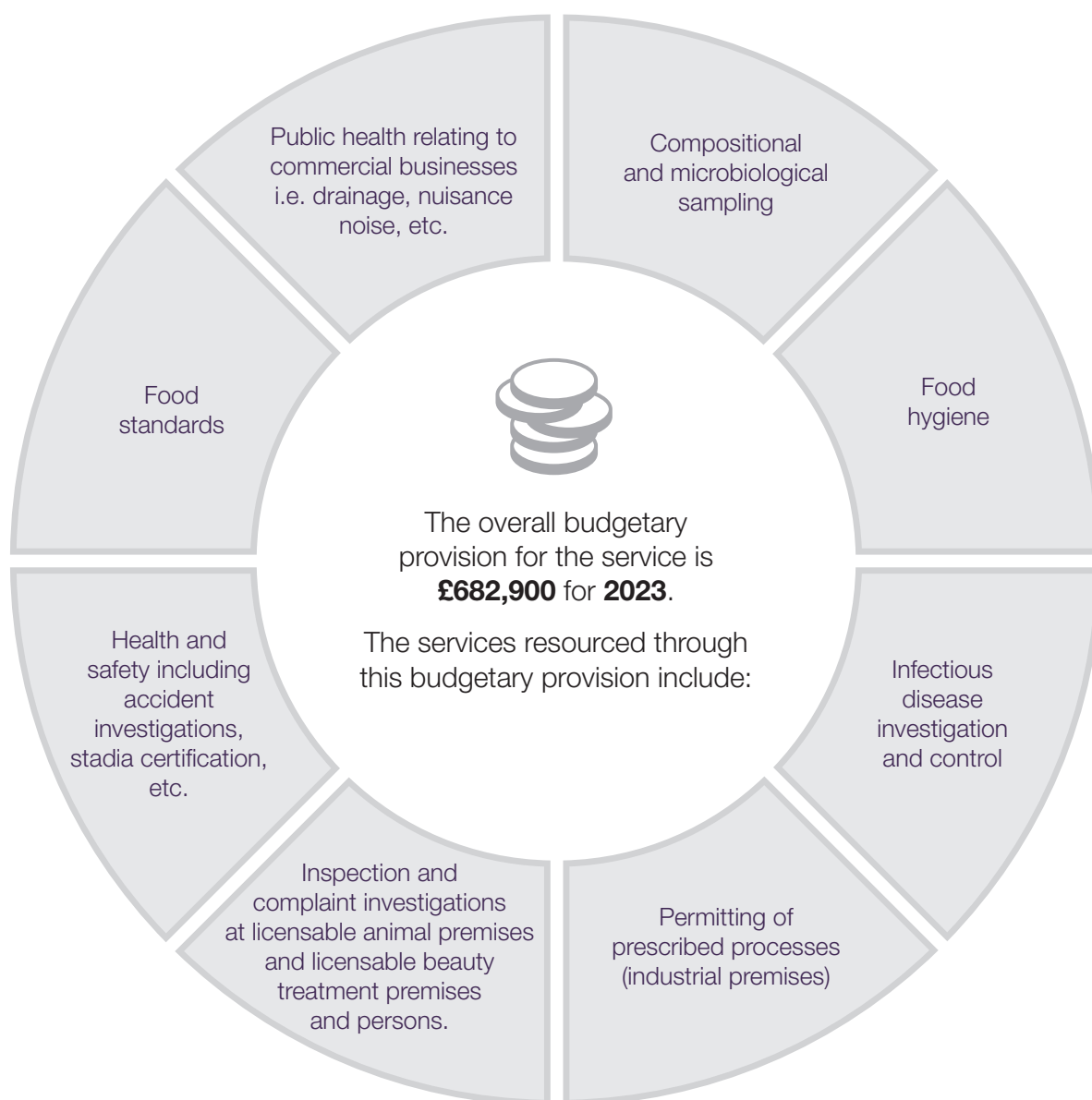
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Summary

The Statutory Food Service Plan sets out how the City of Wolverhampton Council will work over the coming year to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety and quality of food prepared and sold in Wolverhampton is of the highest standard.

The plan meets the requirements laid down by the Food Standards Agency and is designed to ensure that local people and residents can clearly see what the service does, how our services are delivered and the resources we have to do this.

Services Resourced



Monitoring

The monitoring of performance against the service plan is detailed in the plan and involves the head of service, service managers and employee groups. In addition, there is external review of performance through the statutory return to the Food Standards Agency.

SERVICE STATEMENT

OUR SERVICE

Environmental Health engages with businesses, customers and other consumers accessing our services to provide relevant information, advice and support whilst explaining and encouraging compliance with relevant regulatory requirements. Through a programme of interventions and investigations we enforce the law in food and commercial businesses. This service is also responsible for health and safety, infectious disease control, and permitting prescribed industrial processes. The service receives approximately 1200-1500 requests each year. In addition to dealing with requests and complaints we carry out programmed regulation of shops and businesses in Wolverhampton.

OUR GROUP OF SERVICES

The Commercial Regulation is responsible for delivering some of the council's statutory duties. It combines Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Licensing and Private Sector Housing into a single regulatory service. Our services are responsible for ensuring that individuals and businesses are treated fairly and that their health and environment are protected.

OUR COUNCIL

In discharging these duties we strive to contribute to the corporate customer service standards, the council's core values and community priorities. Our service contributes to the council's core values in many ways.

Our service plans set the highest standards for us to work to. In our dealings with the public and trade we act in accordance with the principles of the Black Country Regulators Operating Framework ensuring equality and fairness to all combined with honesty, transparency and accountability.

The objectives of these services are protecting people and the environment and, through engaging stakeholders and colleagues in other agencies, we build partnerships. By protecting the social, economic and environmental conditions within the city and by minimising nuisance to neighbourhoods and protecting the health of people at work and play our service contributes to the council's strategic priorities of developing healthy, inclusive communities and support thriving economy in all parts of the city, which we can all be proud of.

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Service aims and objectives

Aims

Through the effective and efficient use of the resources allocated, to help food businesses provide safe food and ensure that the quality of food prepared and sold in Wolverhampton is of the highest standard.

Objectives

In achieving the aims we will:

- Register, approve and licence, as appropriate, relevant food premises.
- Maintain appropriate food premises intervention programmes which comply with all requirements set out in legislation.
- Respond to and investigate food safety and standards complaints, requests for information made by both business persons and private individuals and complaints of a public health nature, relating to food premises.
- Make appropriate responses to national food alerts and incidents identified by the FSA.
- Support the BEIS Primary and Home Authority Principle.
- Work with and support new and existing businesses to create a thriving economy within the City.
- Support the workings of the Central England Environmental Health Partnership, West Midlands Food Liaison Group, and the Central England Trading Standards Authorities Food Group.
- Maintain appropriate food sampling regimes which comply with relevant statutory provisions and national guidance.
- Investigate reported cases and outbreaks of infectious disease and support the work of Public Health England in this respect.
- Have regard to enforcement which is helpful, consistent and proportionate and does not impose unnecessary burden, as set out in the Black Country Regulators Operating Framework.
- Ensure all actions and decisions taken by employees and councillors are undertaken in an open and transparent fashion with due regard to the council's policies on equality.
- Ensure that all investigations leading to legal proceedings are completed in accordance with the principles of natural justice and fairness.
- Ensure appropriate monitoring, reporting and response to the actual implementation and delivery of the agreed service plan.

Links to corporate issues

In order to achieve continuous service improvement and strive for performance capable of achieving a sustainable future which reflects the political priorities and values of partners within Wolverhampton, it is important that the statutory service plan links itself visibly to the overall corporate objectives.

Environmental Health produces two service delivery plans detailing the work of the service. They cover the work of the Food Hygiene and Standards Service and the Health and Safety Service.

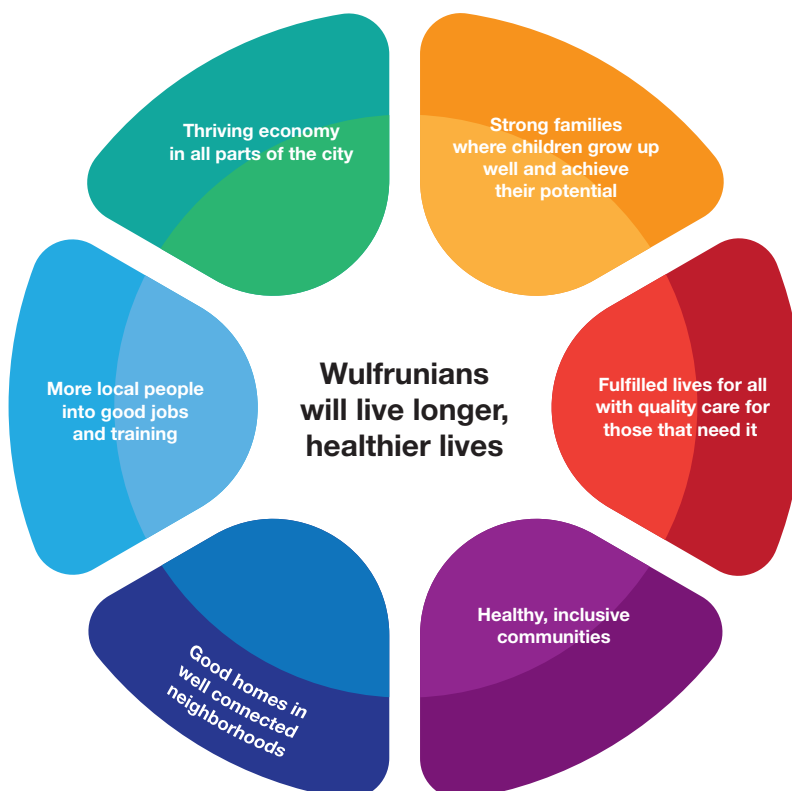
Approval and review process

The service plan is subject to approval and scrutiny by the Director for Resident Services and the Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change.

Progress with delivery of the plan is monitored on a regular basis by the Commercial Regulation Management team.

OUR CITY: OUR PLAN

Working together to be a city of opportunity, a city for everyone and deliver our contribution to Vision 2030



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Key achievements for 2022/2023

- Exceeded the Food Standards Agency's 'Recovery Plan' for 2022/2023
- **666** Food hygiene official control interventions undertaken
- **616** Food standards official control interventions undertaken
- **1350** service requests/complaints responded to
- **73** Food samples/environmental swabs obtained and examined
- **312** new food premises registered
- Involved in **5** Food Standards Agency recognised Food Incidents, requiring local intervention at relevant Manufacturing premises
- Established a new Primary Authority Partnership with Catering Management Consultants Limited, and approved 2 new food premises
- Issued 3 Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices and 3 voluntary closures of food businesses/activities to protect public health
- Completed an imported food project with a selection of Wolverhampton businesses
- Focussed City Centre visits in preparation for the Commonwealth Games activity within the City
- One of 18 Local Authorities involved in a National School Food Standards Pilot assessing school menus during inspections of school kitchens



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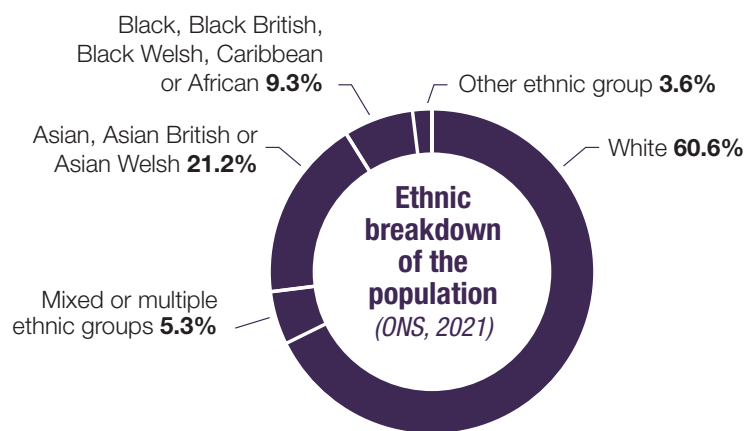
Background information

Authority profile

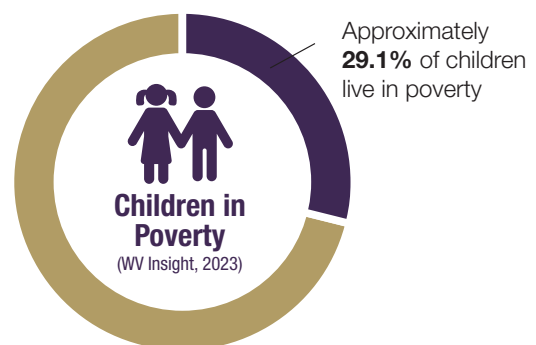
The City of
Wolverhampton has
a population of

264,036

(WV Insight, 2023)



Wolverhampton is ranked as the 24th most deprived local authority area in the country.





The means by which the service is delivered

The political structure of the council is made up of a Leader, Cabinet, Cabinet Panels, Scrutiny Panels and committees. The Cabinet is part of the executive decision making process and is made up of ten councillors and is chaired by the leader of the council. Each cabinet member has a specific area of responsibility, a portfolio. Decisions about the day to day running of council services are taken by Cabinet within the framework of the

council's constitution, budget and plans approved by the council.

The Commercial Regulation Service, which sits within the City Housing and Environment group of services, falls under the remit of the Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change.

Scope of the Food Service

The City of Wolverhampton Council's Food Service undertakes:

- Programmed interventions, which include full or part inspections, microbiological and compositional sampling of food, education and advisory visits to food businesses with respect to food hygiene and food standards.
- Operation of the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)
- Development and maintenance of an 'alternative enforcement strategy' for food businesses for both food hygiene and food standards
- Responses to food complaints
- Response to nuisance complaints and related issues in connection with food business
- Response to food alerts, warnings and other food incidents
- Response to, and determination of, licence applications in relation to food businesses
- Investigation of allegations of food fraud
- Promotion of food related health matters
- Commitment to continually support businesses implementing new

legislative requirements, including recent changes to allergen laws (Natasha's Law)

- Commitment of resources to the Home Authority Principle and Primary Authority Partnership,
- Commitment to the BEIS Better Business for All initiative
- Response to cases and outbreaks of actual and suspected food related infectious disease.
- Provision of advice and assistance to other local authorities and enforcement bodies
- Enforcement of the Health Act 2006, Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005
- Consultee role to planning applications.

The service is also responsible for discharging the authority's functions in relation to health and safety at work, infectious disease control, licensing issues and nuisance arising from waste, drainage and noise from food and licenced commercial premises.

Feeding stuffs enforcement is delivered in partnership with Staffordshire County Council who are responsible for undertaking enforcement compliance in this area.

Development of the Food Hygiene Service

In 2023, the Food Service will focus on realigning the food establishment intervention frequencies to the prescribed timescales detailed within the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic commenced in 2020, the Food Standards Agency recognised the impact on Local Authority Environmental Health teams and issued a regularly updated Recovery Plan to ensure that high risk activities were prioritised. Whilst Wolverhampton over-achieved on these priorities, returning all food premises to the inspection programme will require significant focus and resource allocation. In 2023 establishments will be prioritised for intervention based on risk and intelligence. Enforcement action will be taken where standards are found to be poor.

Food establishments will continue to be risk rated after each official control intervention. The establishment may apply for a paid for re-inspection should they wish to amend this rating.

Officers will continue to signpost businesses to any resources and guidance required to ensure they comply with the law, however more detailed help and support will only be available on a cost recovery basis through the 'Trade with Confidence' consultancy service.

In 2023, an ongoing priority for the

service will be the further development of the consultancy service, widening the services remit and ensuring the products on offer meet the needs of the businesses within the city.

Alongside the consultancy service, we will aim to further develop our primary authority partnerships with Marstons, Little Dessert Shop and CMC Consultancy, but also aim to identify further opportunities to create new partnerships with business.

Primary authority is a means for businesses to receive assured and tailored advice on (amongst other areas) meeting environmental health and trading standards regulations through a single point of contact. The service will continue to participate in a joint pilot project with the Food Standards Agency, and Department for Education relating to School Food Standards in schools.

The FSA are currently in process of developing a new Food Standards delivery model which will result in a change in food standards activity, moving more towards prioritisation based on local, rather than national, risks and intelligence. Further detail on the implications of this and update to software systems is awaited and potentially will see changes in the latter part of the year. The service will look to implement this as far as practicable within the timescales provided.

Profile of the Food Service (As of March 2023)

Enforcement of regulations on food standards, safety and hygiene is primarily the responsibility of local authorities, however the Food Standards Agency (FSA) have responsibility for food hygiene enforcement in slaughterhouses, cutting premises, farmed and wild game facilities and co-located minced meat and meat products premises. Local authorities retain responsibility for food standards enforcement within these premises.

The food premises profile for Wolverhampton is set out in the table alongside.

The food premises database of Wolverhampton is currently stored within an IT platform called IDOX.

Premises Type	Total Number of Premises
Caring	197
Distributors & transporters	32
Hotel/guest house	16
Importers & exporters	2
Manufacturers and packers	47
Mobile food unit	81
Pub/club	180
Restaurants, cafes and caterers	682
Retailers	556
Schools/colleges	99
Supermarket/hypermarket	46
Take-away	293
Totals	2231



Profile of Food Service – feeding stuffs

The authority has entered into a partnership with Staffordshire County Council, who have now assumed responsibility for undertaking enforcement compliance within this area.

45 premises undertake the activity of production, storage or handling of feed stuff(s) for animals.

Regulatory and compliance policy

This is the overarching compliance policy document detailing the operating framework for the service. It has regard to human rights issues and incorporates the principles contained within the Government's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy BRDO (Better Regulation Delivery Office) 'Regulators Code'. The document was reviewed and approved by Cabinet in October 2021.

The Black Country Regulators Operating Framework, comprising Regulator and Business Charter, Enforcement Policy and Service Standards has now been adopted by all four Black Country authorities. The document was reviewed and approved by cabinet in August 2021.

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Service delivery

What businesses should expect when a member of staff undertakes an inspection

Staff undertaking food safety work will:

- ✓ Identify themselves by name and title, showing proof of ID if required and give contact details when necessary

- ✓ Be helpful and courteous

- ✓ Carry out their duties in a fair, equitable and consistent manner in accordance with the council's enforcement and equal opportunities policies.

- ✓ Help food businesses in providing safe food for their customers. Discuss and assist in the compliance with legislation, applying a risk based and appropriate approach.

- ✓ Tailor the intervention to the business's needs, minimising the cost of compliance by ensuring any action required is proportionate to the risk.

- ✓ Encourage businesses to seek advice, information and encourage two way communication.

- ✓ Provide information about the council's complaints procedures and any official appeals procedures as appropriate.

- ✓ Issue a report, where non-compliance with the relevant legislation is found.

- ✓ Advise on future changes in relevant legislation and requirement/obligations on food business.

Intervention Programmes

In accordance with the FSA Food Law Code of Practice food premises in Wolverhampton are subject to an intervention in order to establish that food related activities carried out within the premises comply with food law.

The use of interventions was incorporated in UK law through the requirements made under Retained Regulation 882/2004 Article 10 and further through the FSA Food Law Code of Practice. Interventions are defined as activities that are designed to monitor, support and increase food law compliance within a food establishment. They include but are not restricted to “official controls” and are carried out using a risk based approach, which is set out within the FSA Food Law Code of Practice.

There are currently two separate inspection programmes relating to food hygiene and food standards, however for the majority of businesses in Wolverhampton, food standards interventions are normally undertaken at the same time as food hygiene interventions. This is because, for most businesses, the issues of labelling, composition and quality are interlinked with those of the food hygiene and safety and are therefore dealt with during one intervention. However, for larger manufacturing businesses and

cutting plants etc (where the council does not enforce hygiene legislation) separate food standards interventions are arranged.

The adoption of this approach has meant that although all businesses are rated for food standards risk under FSA Food Law Code of Practice, the intervention programme is generally driven by the frequency of food hygiene intervention. The inevitable consequence is that some food standards interventions will be undertaken slightly early and some slightly late. In order to minimise the effect of this on statistical returns a general rule is followed whereby if a food standards intervention will be overdue at 31 March if not carried out at the same time as a food hygiene intervention, it should be done early rather than late.

Serious or significant food standards breaches will be followed up by appropriate intervention and when necessary formal action e.g. prosecution, simple caution etc.

Both programmes adhere to the premises rating schemes contained within the statutory Food Law Codes of Practice produced by the FSA. Using the number of premises in each risk band and the associated inspection frequency, it is possible to estimate the number of inspections due in any given period. The number of revisits is a

function of the levels of compliance identified during an initial visit and any enforcement policy decisions.

The intervention programme is central to food law compliance, and local authorities must ensure that such a programme is appropriately resourced. The purpose of food hygiene inspections is to find out if food being handled and produced hygienically is safe to eat, and to identify factors which have the potential to cause food poisoning or injury. Failure to adequately resource the food programme would result in some premises not receiving an inspection and operating in a manner which could cause harm to public health.

It is estimated that an additional 2 senior/district officers and a compliance officer would be required to achieve full compliance with the Food Standards Agency's requirements on a sustainable basis.



Food hygiene intervention programme for 2023

The table below outlines the visits that are due in order to realign with the FSA Food Law Code of Practice.

Category A premises are the highest risk premises. Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES) premises are the lowest risk premises and are subject to less frequent interventions.

Risk Rating	Number of premises due (by end of 2023/2024)	Comments
A	6	
B	51	
C	132	
D	709	
AES (E)	626	
Unrated	99	(rough estimate of 200-300 new establishments anticipated to open during the course of the 2023/2024) This number will increase throughout the year as new establishments commence activities
Total	1623	

A consequence of the Covid Pandemic is the fact that there is a backlog of due food establishment interventions for unrated premises and the lower risk-rated premises (D and AES (E)). Based on current resource levels it should be noted that achieving interventions at all premises that are due during the year will not be realised. Visits that are due will be prioritised based on risk and intelligence received. Those premises that do not receive an intervention this year will be subject to the required intervention in the following years.

Food Standards Intervention Programme 2023

The table below outlines the visits that are due in order to realign with the FSA Food Law Code of Practice.

Category A premises are the highest risk premises. Category C premises are the lowest risk, and can be subject to an alternative intervention at least once

every 5 years in accordance with the FSA Food Law Code of Practice.

The information in relation to both the Food Standards and the Food Hygiene intervention programme forms part of the data submitted to the FSA on an annual basis.

Risk Rating	Number of premises due (by end of 2023/2024)	Comments
A	18	
B	470	
AES (C)	310	
Unrated	98	(rough estimate of 200-300 new establishments anticipated to open during the course of the 2023/2024) This number will increase throughout the year as new establishments commence activities
Total	896	

A consequence of the Covid Pandemic is the fact that there is a backlog of due food establishment interventions for unrated premises and the lower risk-rated premises (B and AES (C)). Based on current resource levels it should be noted that achieving interventions at all premises that are due during the year will not be realised. Visits that are due will be prioritised based on risk and intelligence received. Those premises that do not receive an intervention this year will be subject to the required intervention in the following years.

Feeding stuffs

Wolverhampton has 45 premises where feed is produced, stored or handled. Priority inspection has been contracted to Staffordshire Trading Standards, whom target higher risk premises and those generating complaints, on average premises receive a 3 year inspection.

Priority areas for intervention and targeted activities

Identified enforcement priorities for further development for 2023 are set out below:

- To prioritise new businesses and due establishments for intervention based on risk and intelligence.
- To carry out full food hygiene and food standards interventions of approved premises and other manufacturers that fall due within the year.
- To develop primary authority partnerships with businesses in the area.
- Develop the consultancy service Trade with Confidence - reviewing products and areas of work where consultancy services can be offered.
- To provide suitable, relevant and informative guidance to businesses to assist their compliance with food labelling legislation, including allergen legislation.
- To ensure a satisfactory level of compliance with food standards issues in manufacturers and processors.
- To implement new legislation, codes of practice and service policy and procedures as required by law and when requiring update.
- To continue pilot work with the Food Standards Agency on School Food standards.

Food complaints

The service endeavours to adopt a consistent approach to the receipt and investigation of food complaints, with the receipt of over 625 specific food related complaints for the past year. In general, all food complaints made to the service will give rise to a detailed consideration of the exact circumstances of each case in order to determine whether it would be an appropriate use of resources to pursue the matter. A range of options is available:

- Advise complainant to pursue directly with retailer or manufacturer.
- Accept complaint and refer to either 'home', 'originating' authority and/or primary authorities for information and/or investigation.
- Accept and investigate complaint in liaison with 'home' 'originating and/or 'primary' authorities with a view to further action.

All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the Food Complaints Policy and Procedure.

All complainants are advised at the earliest opportunity of the course of action the council intends to take. The vast majority of complaints fall into the second of the above categories. The service will accept and investigate

complaints if one or more of the following circumstances are apparent:

- There is 'prima facie' evidence of an offence under the Food Safety Act 1990 or its subordinate regulations and the nature of the offence gives rise to public health or safety concerns.
- The complaint represents a repeat of previous offences by the company/trader concerned and the circumstances of the case indicate the case would withstand legal scrutiny.

In addition to food complaints received each year, additional complaints relating to conditions in or around food premises are also received. These complaints range from allegations of poor hygiene to major defects with drainage systems or rodent infestations etc. The vast majority of these complaints are investigated by a visit from an officer.

The maximum response time for complaints is 10 working days; however, these are driven by levels of associated risk and prioritised as such.

Home Authority and Primary Authority principle

Businesses operating in the United Kingdom (UK) need to comply with a wide range of legislation. Local authorities, which are responsible for enforcing most legislation, help businesses to comply by providing advice, guidance and information. Businesses usually build up a relationship with, and receive advice and information from, one local authority that is usually based where the business is.

For trading standards and food safety matters, the local government has developed a scheme where that authority, known as the home authority, is the local authority at the location of the business' decision-making base. The Home Authority Principle is a scheme to help businesses by providing contact points for advice and guidance in order to maintain high standards of business services, encourage fair trade and develop a consistent approach to enforcement.

As part of the government's Better Regulation agenda, the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 has paved the way for an extension of the Home Authority scheme. The new scheme is known as primary authority. Effectively, primary authority gives statutory backing to the home authority scheme and provides a series of additional benefits. It is currently

administered by the Office for Product Safety and Standards.

The council is committed to supporting the Home and Primary Authority scheme in respect of both proactive and reactive food safety issues. The service has an established primary authority partnership with Marston's PLC focusing primarily on food hygiene and food standards work.

In maintaining our home authority partnerships, officers from the service will:

- respond to enquiries from other local authorities about, or concerning, the business or its operations or procedures
- act on behalf of other local authorities as the primary regulatory link to the business
- provide advice to the companies on the interpretation of legislation
- provide assistance to enforcing authorities in the conduct of investigations and encourage the businesses to offer reasonable assistance.

The authority will have regard to the Primary Authority Partnership Scheme and associated official guidance when considering formal legal action.

Advice to businesses

In order to compliment and enhance its enforcement functions, the service provides advice and information to businesses with the aim of assisting them to comply with their statutory obligations. Businesses will be signposted to information and nationally approved guidance, which will help them comply with legislation.

Apart from the 'feedstuff' related premises, advice to business with implications in relation to feeding stuffs is minimal, because retailers are selling sealed containers of long shelf life products.



Sampling

The services carries out food sampling on both a reactive and proactive basis.

Reactive sampling, for either microbiological examination or compositional analysis takes the following forms:

- Sampling of foods subject to complaint
- Unplanned sampling carried out during an inspection
- Un-programmed sampling associated with a food poisoning investigation
- Programmed sampling as determined by national and regional surveys

Two sampling programmes are operated, one for microbiological examination and one for compositional analysis. These concentrate on businesses that will positively benefit from the taking of samples and the results and advice officers can offer to the business operator.

Microbiological sampling programme

The microbiological sampling programme focuses on assisting food businesses to provide safe food to their customers.

Each sample is subject to 6 standard determinations:

- Aerobic Colony Count (ACC)
- Enterobacteriaceae
- E.coli
- Salmonella
- Staphylococcus aureus
- Listeria

Each sample result is interpreted in accordance with the most recently published guidelines from the Health Protection Agency (HPA).

The microbiological sampling programme incorporates both national surveys and those organised at a local level through the West Midlands Food Liaison Group.

Compositional sampling programme

The compositional sampling programme consists of samples being subject to

- Presence/absence of certain constituents
- Whether food has been subject to certain processes
- Compliance with labelling requirements
- Composition of food, e.g. alcohol substitution, % lean meat, over-use of food colourings

The compositional programme incorporates both national and local surveys. The service will participate in such surveys subject to available resources.

Sampling and surveys are based on the Home Authority Principle and target manufacturing businesses, new and existing. Premises having unsatisfactory results will be subject to follow-up formal sampling.

Water Sampling

There is only one commercial private water supply in Wolverhampton. In order to ensure compliance with the relevant regulations the service ensures that samples of water from all private water supplies are taken and results analysed.

Feeding stuffs sampling

The authority has entered into a partnership with Staffordshire County Council, who have now assumed responsibility for undertaking enforcement compliance within this area.



Infectious disease control

In conjunction with UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), City of Wolverhampton Council investigates cases of actual or suspected food poisoning and food borne infectious disease. The response is determined by:

- The nature of the (suspected) illness
- The number of cases
- The nature of the employment of affected individuals
- The previous record of implicated food businesses

92 individual cases were notified to the service during the year.

In all cases implicating known food hazards the standards contained in the document 'Food Handlers - Fitness to Work' are observed.

Under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 and associated regulations, duly authorised officers are provided with wider, more flexible powers to deal with food related incidents or emergencies where infection or contamination presents, or could present a risk to human health. It also places a duty on GP's to notify the proper officer of the council of food poisoning cases.

Food Safety Incidents and Alerts

All food alert warnings and food incidents are reviewed, and appropriate response given where there is a local impact requiring attention.

Notification of these to the authority is through the Food Standards Agency.

Liaison arrangements

The City of Wolverhampton Council is committed to open, transparent and proportionate enforcement which is consistent with government advice, guidance and national and regional interpretation of legislative requirements.

In addressing this the importance of collaboration and consultation locally and nationally is recognised. Regionally there are liaison groups at chief officer (head of service) level in respect of Environmental Health and Trading Standards services.

The service will also respond to consultation exercises from the government, the Local Government Association and relevant professional bodies.

Officers from the service also meet and liaise with the following organisations:

- The West Midlands Food Liaison Group
- Central England Trading Standards Authorities Group (CEnTSA) - Quality Standards Sub Group
- Public Health

With respect to liaison arrangements with trade representatives the service can organise periodic food focus groups or forums and attend and support local trade groups when required.

7

Resources

Financial allocation

As with all areas of service the allocation of resources is undertaken in accordance with the agreed Medium - term Financial Strategy for the council.

Food enforcement work benefits from the overall senior management resource provided through the Resident Services team.

This area of activity also benefits from central support services recharged through internal service level agreements.

The overall budgetary provision for the service is £682,900. A wide range of other non-food related services are delivered within this budgetary provision.

The services resourced through this budgetary provision are not confined to food related matters and include:

- Food hygiene
- Infectious disease investigation and control
- Food standards
- Sampling
- Health and safety
- Licensing of premises for animal welfare
- Public health (relating to commercial businesses, i.e. nuisance, noise, damage, etc)
- Central support services
- Permitting of Prescribed Processes (Industrial Premises)
- City centre compliance and regulation
- Student training

As feeding stuffs enforcement activity is carried out as part of comprehensive Trading Standards duties it is not possible to accurately cost, but it will amount to less than 0.5% of the total budget.

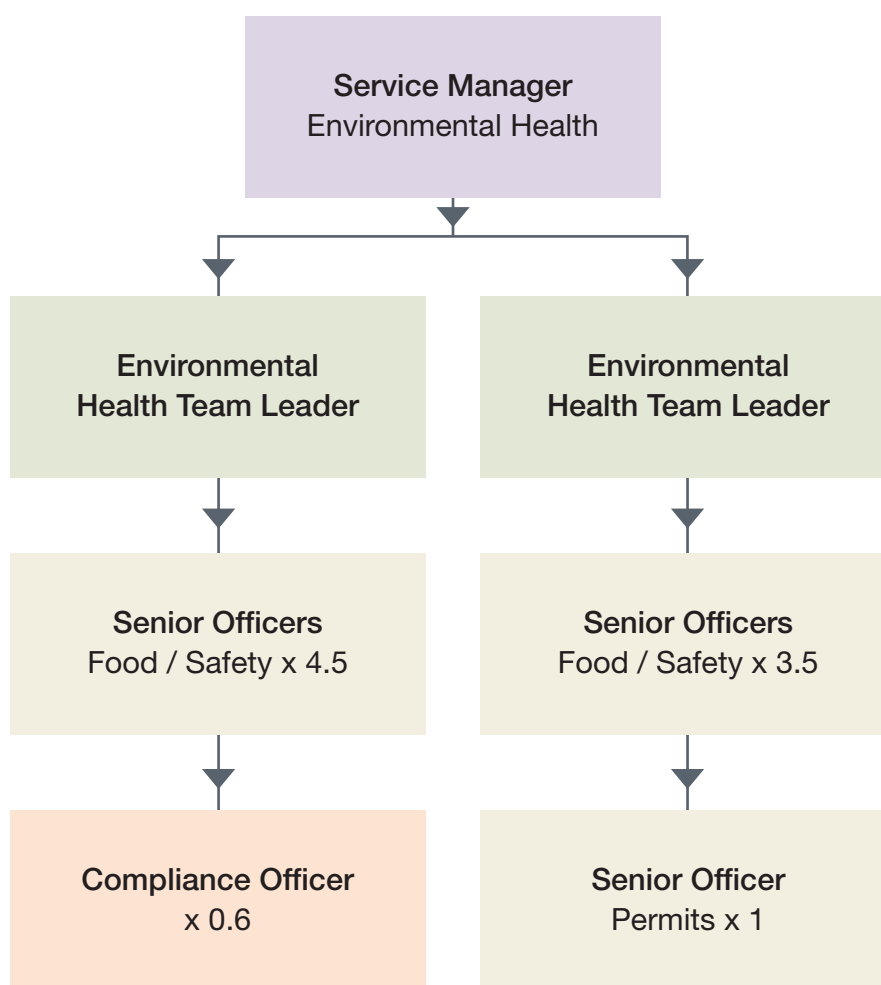
Staffing allocation

The strategic financial, human and service functions are undertaken through the Commercial Regulation management team.

A detailed analysis of the proportion of the supervisory and operational time dedicated to food safety is contained in the following table, and the structure of Environmental Health shown below.

Post	% Food Safety	FTE
Head of service (x1)	5%	0.05
Service Manager (x1)	50%	0.5
Team Leader (Food) (x1)	80%	0.8
Team Leader (Health and Safety) (x1)	75%	0.75
District/senior EHO (x7.7)	75%	5.775
Compliance Officer (x0.6)	25%	0.15
Graduate Officer (x0.5)	50%	0.25
Total full time equivalent (FTE)		8.275

The current structural chart for the Environmental Health Service is shown below:



Competency

The service operates a strict regime of supervision and assessment prior to the delegation of responsibility to officers, which is in accordance with the relevant FSA Food Law Code of Practice.

The team leader and senior officer posts, would normally be individuals with full delegated powers under the various statutes within the service's sphere of responsibility.

The Food Law Code of Practice requires that authorised officers demonstrate that they are competent to carry out their functions prior to being authorised. Officers are therefore required to complete a competency assessment with the team leader within 3 months of commencing their role. This assessment should be reviewed at least annually or when restricted activities are reassessed.

Officers with less than six months post qualification experience are subject to regular checking, monitoring and accompanied visits in accordance with the FSA Food Law Code of Practice and partake in regular intervention reflections with other officers.

All officers are subject to one formal monitoring visit per year.

Staff development

As part of the council's aim to provide services efficiently and effectively, four professional conversations will take place with officers. As part of this process officers development needs will be examined to ensure they are trained to a level of competence appropriate to their work. The Food Law Code of Practice requires all officers involved in undertaking official controls to obtain a minimum of 20 hours CPD per year. 10 of which must be on core food matters directly related to the delivery of official controls. There are different ways officers will obtain this training. These include:

- Internal and external training courses/events
- Cascade training delivered by officers who themselves have attended training
- Individual interviews
- Divisional meetings and briefings – used to disseminate information, etc.
- Attendance at ad hoc working groups
- "On the Job" training – as part of the delegation process

- Self-training – suitable journals and up to date information are provided
- Establishment of trainee/student placements
- Placement with other services or teams for training purposes and special projects

The service will ensure staff participate in any regional food standardisation exercise and in any organised in-house. There will also be opportunities for members of the division to attend one-off seminars on topical issues arising during the year. Staff attending these seminars are required to present a feedback session at the next available service meeting where it is deemed appropriate.



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Quality assessment

Various monitoring techniques are used in order to assess officer performance against set criteria, including the FSA 'Standard', and all other external standards established by various codes of practice.

For example:

- Internal audit
- Accompanied visits
- West Midlands Food Liaison Group
- Inspection monitoring
- Correspondence checking/file review
- Standardisation exercises
- FSA audit

An annual review of requirements set out in the 'Standard' shall also form part of the Service Work Programme.



9

Performance management and review

All areas of council service are subject to service planning and performance measurement and review. This is managed through service plans, corporate strategies and financial planning, etc.

Performance against performance indicators is subject to regular reviews reported to the director for City Housing and Environment. Similarly, there is on-going monitoring of the deployment of financial resources against budgetary provision, again reviewed on a monthly basis.

The monitoring of performance against service plans has been discussed earlier in this document; it involves service directors, head of service, service manager, team leaders officers and

employee groups. This is undertaken during regular Regulation Senior Management meetings, Professional Conversations and 1-2-1's with Officers.

In addition, there is external review of performance through the audit commission, External Audit and statutory returns such as those to the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

Any areas for improvement identified as requiring action will be detailed as part of the review process. These will be addressed by the Regulation Management Team as part of the review process and action taken shall range from immediate action to inclusion in the service plan for future years.

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Regulatory and Investigatory Powers Act

The service has fully implemented the requirements for the authorisation of officers and surveillance in the required circumstances.

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