



Meeting Location:

The Atrium - Perceval House

Date and Time:

Tuesday, 17 September 2024 at 7.00 pm

Contact for Enquiries:

Email: democraticservices@ealing.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 8825 6302

Chief Executive:

Tony Clements

Notice of Meeting:

General Purposes Committee

Committee Membership: Councillors

T Mahmood (Chair), K Bains (Vice-Chair), Y Gordon, I Kingston, B Rai, A Young, H Kaur Dheer, T Mahmood (Chair), G Quansah and G Shaw

AGENDA

1 Apologies for absence

2 Urgent Matters

3 Matters to be Considered in Private

4 Declarations of Interest

5 Minutes (Pages 3 - 8)

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting, held on
1 February 2024 as a correct record.

6 Food Safety (Pages 9 - 84)

7 Next meeting Date

The next meeting will be held on 23 October 2024

Published: 9 September 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee

Date: Thursday, 1 February 2024

Venue: Committee Room 5 - Perceval House

Attendees (in person): Councillors

M Ahmed (Chair)

M Rice, Y Gordon, I Kingston, K Nagpal and A Young

Apologies:

K Bains (Vice-Chair)

Attendees (virtual): Councillors

1 Apologies for absence

Cllr. K Bains

2 Urgent Matters

There were none.

3 Matters to be Considered in Private

There were none.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

5 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 December 2022, were discussed.

RESOLVED: That

The minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 6 December 2022 be agreed and signed as a true and correct record.

6 Food and Workplace Safety Service Plans

Joe Blanchard, Head of environmental health and trading standards introduced himself and colleague Izabela Gregory, Regulator Operations Manager. He proposed an approval for the food service plan for the financial year 2023 - 2024 and health and safety service plan for 2023 – 2024. These were found in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 and a performance report for the previous financial years' service plans in Appendix 3. Joe Blanchard commented on the performance report for previous activities. In June 2024 Joe Blanchard and colleagues would bring forward the new service plan for the upcoming financial year and report on activities for the current financial year.

Cllr. M Ahmed, Chair, commented that the report was due to be presented in June of 2023 and that the report should be approved as most of the work has already been undertaken.

In response to questions from the Committee, Joe Blanchard confirmed that reports were going as planned. That in the food service plan they expected to have a 200 expected shortfall in this financial year and were hoping to have a 0 shortfall in inspections by the end of the year and that this had been accomplished by successful internal growth in resources.

In response to questions from the Committee, Joe Blanchard confirmed that staffing was a challenge because the market didn't have the capacity to deliver what they needed. Joe Blanchard commented that they were using agency staff and that there was a reorganisation of the teams. He noted that his colleague Izabela Gregory was appointed as Food Safety and Licensing Manager and that they hope to recruit new permanent staff.

In response to questions from the Committee, Joe Blanchard commented that Ealing had a unique demographic and food sectors. He also commented that Brexit had caused issues and challenges for food export/import businesses. Joe Blanchard noted that the issuing Food Health Export Certificates had become more important and the requirements upon businesses to have export health certificates had increased.

Izabella Gregory, Regulator operations manager, confirmed that to the Council was not permitted to deal with certain workplaces which were under the enforcement jurisdiction of the Health and Safety Executive.

Joe Blanchard commented that all companies were required to report accidents, injuries and dangerous occurrences and that failure to report would be investigated.

In response to questions from the Committee, Joe Blanchard commented that there were a variety of large food companies and online food ordering platforms operating within the borough which created regulatory and resourcing burdens on his teams.

Joe Blanchard noted that he and colleagues would support entry level staff. During Covid they employed and upskilled graduates.

Izabela Gregory commented that FSA was looking at ways of amending the food law code of practice.

In response to questions from the Committee Izabela Gregory confirmed that they were successful in obtaining funding from the UK Prosperity Fund to provide food advisors and that there would be free workshops for any food businesses to come to.

RESOLVED: That

The contents of the report and the supporting documentation were agreed, and the Food Service Plan 2023-24 and Health and Safety Service Plan 2023-24 were approved.

7 Polling Place Change Proposals and the Elections Act 2022

Helen Haris, Director of Legal and Democratic Services commented that herself and colleagues were reviewing 137 polling stations to check that they were still available and that they met the health and safety requirements. They concluded that they were not all available.

Helen Haris shared the examples of the new requirements for staff. She commented that Photo ID would now be required to be shown by electors and that there were privacy screens being provided at the polling station if needed.

Helen Haris also commented that the new procedures would take a lot longer, that everyone needs to keep the length of queues and weather in consideration and that she and colleagues were reviewing the size of the polling stations.

One polling station was temporarily moved to a different fixed venue. However, as Copley Close community centre was rebuilt, Helen Haris proposed the station to return to the previous permanent venue.

Where fixed polling places were being refurbished or not available, proposals for changes were made.

The provision in legislation for temporary polling stations was meant for emergency use.

Not all temporary polling stations were put forward for changes.

There would be a full review starting from after the parliamentary elections and temporary changes agreed at this committee would be in place until the end of Jan 2025.

Helen Haris asked the committee to advise her, and colleagues to identify new fixed suitable alternatives for polling stations in the future.

In response to questions from the Committee, Helen Haris confirmed that she

and colleagues were not ruling anything out for temp polling places and that it would be appropriate to keep an open mind.

Cllr. M Ahmed, Chair commented that the polling stations that were at the end of each district were quite distant. St Nicholas church has been less popular as residents have visited the area a lot less and that the industrial area had become a one-way street, which caused traffic congestion. The Perivale industrial area has become practically, a one-way street due to Federal Road School Streets scheme restrictions.

Cllr. M Rice commented that the *Fox and Goose* was very good venue as it was suitable and close to new student housing.

Ross Jackson, Head of Elections, confirmed that although this venue served alcoholic drinks, the station would be situated away from the bar.

The following proposals were made by the committee:

Cllr. M Ahmed, proposed to keep the Perivale polling station, due to positive personal experiences in previous elections.

This was agreed by the committee.

A member of the committee proposed to make all three locations permanent.

This was agreed by the committee.

Cllr. M Ahmed proposed that polling stations that were not available were to be put forward for recommendations.

This was agreed by the committee.

Cllr. M Ahmed proposed that the Copley Close community centre was to become a permanent location.

This was agreed by the committee.

Ross Jackson commented that in person voters must show photo ID and that all electors had been made aware of this, with further communications to follow. There was a comms plans in place and officers would visit residential homes, hostels and younger people housing.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ross Jackson confirmed that some student identity cards, the type that bear the PASS (Proof of Age Standards Scheme) hologram) would be allowed and that the ID doesn't have to be in date, only the picture needs to be the accurate.

Ross Jackson commented that postal voting rules have changed, he confirmed that if someone hands in postal pack, they would have to complete an A3 sized form.

Ross Jackson noted that temporary polling stations would be challenging.

The staff would not accept the Postal pack unless the form has been complete and signed. Electors would not be able to post postal packs through council postal letter box or hand to council reception staff.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ross Jackson confirmed that there was a 22:00hrs deadline for postal packs to be handed in.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ross Jackson confirmed that completed postal vote packs must be handed to the Greenford offices or handed to postal stations where they would be asked to fill out a form.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ross Jackson confirmed that there would be signage that would direct people on where to post their vote.

Councillors should not handle postal packs unless it's their own or close family member.

Postal vote Applications must include a national insurance number and you can now apply online.

EU citizens who were citizens prior to 1 January 2021 would still be allowed to register and citizens post 2021 can register if they apply for a settlement scheme.

Everything above would be implemented and come into effect after the general election.

RESOLVED: That

1. The contents of the report and the supporting documentation were noted.
2. The requirements of the Elections Act 2022 were noted.
3. The changes of polling places, as set out in Appendix A of the report, save that the changes to JQ (Perivale) were not agreed and that all the other changes were permanent changes, and
4. In the event that, for whatever reason, it was not possible to provide any of the remaining polling stations, to authorise the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, following consultation with the chair of General Purposes Committee and the party whips, to make alternative arrangements, including moving one or more of the temporary polling stations to the site of an existing fixed polling station in the same or an immediately neighbouring polling district.

8 Next meeting Date

The next scheduled meeting is to be held on 13 March 2024.

Meeting commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting finished: 8.16 pm

Signed:

Dated: Wednesday, 13 March 2024

M Ahmed (Chair)



Report for:
ACTION

Item Number:

Decision maker: General Purposes Committee

Date: 17 September 2024

Subject: Food and Workplace Safety Service Plans 2024-2025

Report of: **Councillor Kamaljit Kaur Nagpal, Decent Living Incomes**

Report author: Izabela Gregory, Food, Safety & Licensing Manager

Responsible Director: Nicky Fiedler, Strategic Director, Housing & Environment

SUMMARY

The report provides an update to the General Purposes Committee on the Food and Workplace Safety team's activities and progress against what was outlined in 2023-2024 Food Service Plan and 2023-2024 Health and Safety Service Plan.

The report seeks endorsement of the approach set out in the new Food and Health and Safety Service Plans for 2024-2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Purposes Committee is invited to scrutinise this report, the appended service plans (appendix 1 and appendix 2) and service performance report (appendix 3) and to:

- i. Note the extent of implementation of the Food Service Plan in 2023-2024 (summarised in paragraphs 5 -10 and within Appendix 3) and expected delivery in 2024-2025 (as set out in paragraphs 21- 25).
- ii. Note the extent of implementation of the Health and Safety Service Plan in 2023-2024 (summarised in paragraphs 33-35 and within Appendix 3) and expected delivery in 2024-2025 (as set out in paragraphs 36-38).
- iii. Approve the Food Safety (Appendix 1) and the Health and Safety (Appendix 2) Service Plans for 2024-2025

Wards Affected: All

Strategic Objectives	Summary of how this report aligns to the Ealing Council Plan 2022 - 2026 and Ealing's strategic objectives.
Creating Good Jobs	Ensuring that all workplaces for all employees conform to the minimum legal standards of health, safety and welfare for their employees and others. Discouraging risky business behaviour and taking robust action against dangerous or disreputable businesses.
Tacking the Climate Crisis	Minimising food waste, encouraging sustainability and maintaining environmental standards
Fighting Inequality	Ensuring a level playing field that enable businesses to compete fairly without being undercut by businesses that ignore legal requirements. Encouraging increasing levels of compliance among businesses so that everyone has access to safe food and workplaces Ensuring that all food for all consumers in the borough is safe to eat and contains what it says it contains.

Financial impact

1. No financial implications arise from this decision and implementation of the Service Plans as proposed.
2. However, the Food Service Plans recognise a number of risks and threats to statutory service delivery from unforeseeable service demands or food or safety incidents which would require more resources and put at risk delivery of this programmes set out in the plan.
3. In addition, based on the time limited aspect of the recent funding uplift, in the context of the challenges outlined in this area, and in particular in relation to retention, recruitment and the organisational curbs on the ability of the service to engage the necessary contractors and agency staff the resourcing position of the service is precarious.

Legal Implications

4. Ealing Council is designated as a Food Authority under the Food Safety Act 1990. As such the council must exercise its duty to “enforce and execute within their area the provisions of this Act” (Section 6) and must comply with any codes of practice issued by the Food Standards Agency with regards to the exercise of that duty (Section 40).
5. The Council is also responsible to investigate and prosecute offenders under the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013. The FSA provides a scheme of aims and provides materials for LAs to ensure that the nationwide approach is uniform and proportionate.
6. Under s.34 FSA certain offences may only be prosecuted within three years of the commission of the offence or within one year after its discovery by the Council, whichever is sooner. It is therefore essential for the council to have sufficient capacity to properly consider potential offences in a timely way, especially in the view of current enforcement backlog.
7. Where the Food Standards Agency or Secretary of State is satisfied, the council has failed to discharge any duty which affects the general interests of consumers of food, they may order a substitute authority to discharge the council's duties (Section 42).
8. The Council must make adequate arrangements for the enforcement of the health and safety provisions under its jurisdiction (Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Section 18). The Health and Safety Executive, via their Local Authority Circular 67/2 "Setting priorities and targeting interventions", state that elected members should confirm commitment to the health and safety enforcement principles detailed in the Service Plan.

9. All recommendations take account of the Food Law Code of Practice, issued by the Food Standards Agency in June 2023.
10. Part 3 of the Council's constitution assigns responsibility to exercise any council side functions not falling within the remit of any other committee to its General Purposes Committee.

Justin Morley, Head of Legal Services (Litigation) 2 September 2024.

Name: Justin Morley

Position: Head of Legal Services (Litigation)

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

Food Safety Service Plan 2023-2024:

[Appendix 1 Food Service Plan 2023-2024.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

Health and Safety Service Plan 2023-2024:

[Appendix 2 Health and Safety Service Plan 2023 - 2024.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

1. DETAILED ANALYSIS

Proposals and analysis of options

11. The core function of Food & Workplace Safety Team is to ensure the Council meets its statutory obligations in respect of food, feed and health and safety law, which are essentially to:
 - Make adequate arrangements for the enforcement and execution of food and feed provisions under its jurisdiction (Food Safety Act 1990, Section 6). The implementation of these arrangements is overseen by the Food Standards Agency (FSA).
 - Make adequate arrangements for the enforcement of the health and safety provisions under its jurisdiction (Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Section 18). This is overseen by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
12. The FSA, via their Framework Agreement on Official Feed & Food Controls by Local Authorities, and the HSE, via their Local Authority Circular 67/2 "Setting priorities and targeting interventions", provide direction to the Council on what constitutes adequate arrangements.
13. The Service plans appended to the report (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2) outline how the Council plans to fulfil these obligations.

Key Implications: Food Service delivery 2023-2024 and 2024-2025

Food establishments in the London Borough of Ealing

14. Ealing is a home to one of the highest numbers of food establishments of all London Boroughs with close to 3,500 registered food premises. The characteristics of Ealing's food industry make it a uniquely complex and

challenging prospect to regulate when it comes to safeguarding the integrity of the UK's food chain. While the routine inspection programme of all 3,500 premises forms the bases of the work of the Food Safety team, there are various additional statutory duties the team is obliged to fulfil and each year the service responds to over 1,000 complaints and requests for advice and undertakes complex food outbreak investigations. Among many other functions, the team carries out sampling and deals with unsafe product recalls and imported food controls.

Overview of Food service delivery in 2023-2024

15. The Food Safety Team has made significant progress in reducing the backlog of food interventions, which was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The backlog, which stood at over 2,500 overdue inspections shortly after the pandemic, has been significantly reduced to 263 overdue interventions as of April 2024.
16. The service estimated that number of inspections due in 2023-2024, stood at approximately 2,322. This figure included 737 very low-risk inspections (Category E rated premises). In alignment with the ongoing post-COVID recovery plan and due to resource constraints, the service set a target of 1,585 interventions, focusing on higher-risk premises. This approach was validated by the FSA, which issued a directive to all councils to continue reducing the nationwide backlog of inspections.
17. By 31st March 2024, the service successfully delivered and completed all high-risk food hygiene interventions as identified in the 2023-2024 Service Plan. The Food Safety team delivered a total of 1813 inspections, which included additional 287 of the most overdue very low-risk premises.
18. As a result, the overall backlog of low-risk interventions, was therefore reduced to 263 Category E inspections. The backlog of unrated premises (those about to start trading or yet to be inspected) stood at 160.
19. In 2023-2024, the service has completed 87% of its overall inspection regime, which remains the highest level in the last decade, as presented in Figures 1 and 2 below.
20. Overview of all service delivery for 2023-2024 is provided in Appendix 3.

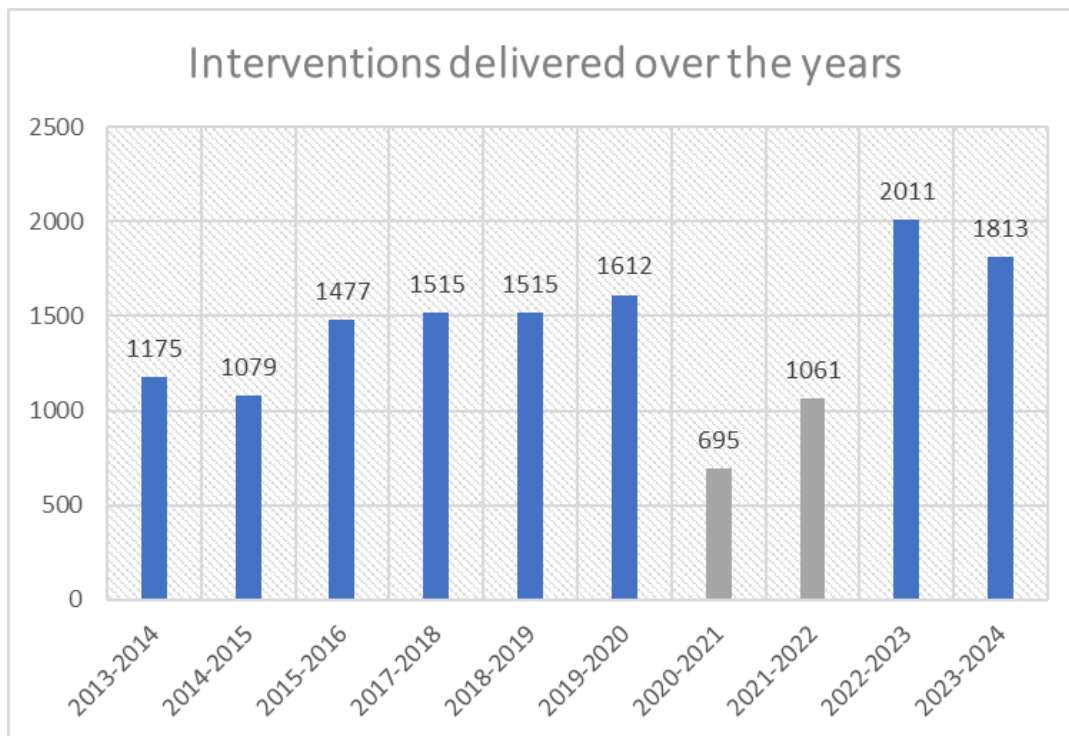


Figure 1: Number of food interventions completed over the past decade.

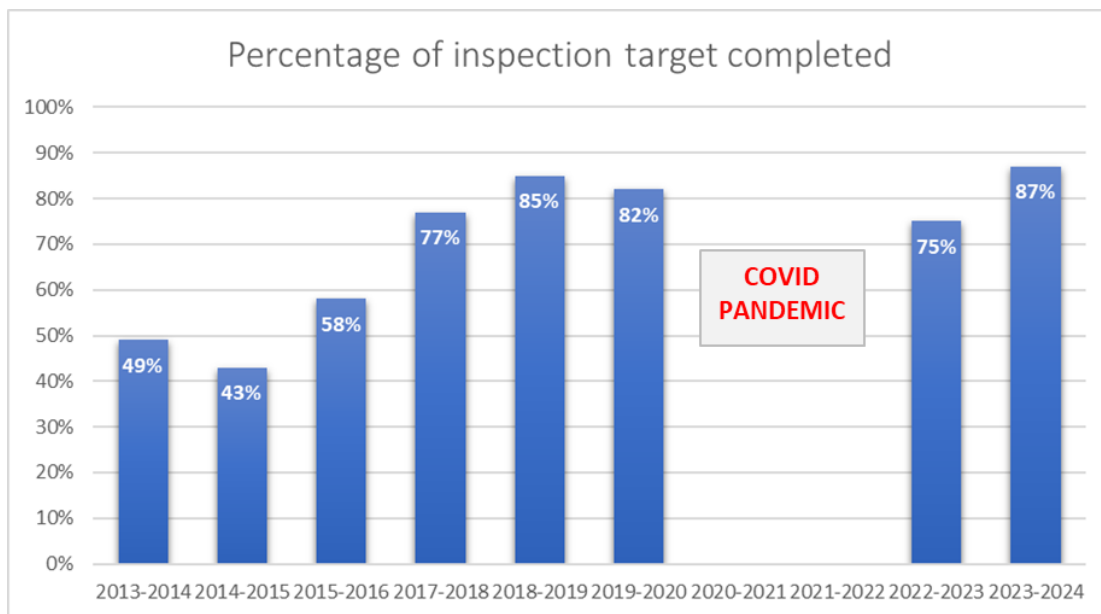


Figure 2: Percentage of completed food interventions over the past decade.

Food Service delivery demand 2024-2025

21. Local authorities across the UK are still facing backlogs from the pandemic, and, as in the case of Ealing, they are facing resourcing challenges.
22. Analysis of interventions required to be delivered in 2024-2025, found that estimated **2,758 premises** were due for an inspection.
23. This is the highest number of inspections required to be delivered and is well above what the Food Safety team delivered in any previous year (see Figure 1). Such a high number of premises inspections presents a significant challenge, even with increased resources.

Table 1: Estimated interventions required in 2023-2024.

Estimated interventions due per month 2024/2025											
No of traders	Food Hygiene Category										
When due	E Comp	D NC	D Comp	C NC	C Comp	B NC	B Comp	A NC	A Comp	Unrated	Sum all
Past FY	263	1	2	0	1	0	0			160	427
2024 M04	27		11	3	38	2	6	6		58	151
2024 M05	18	4	19	10	43	12	11	7	1	58	183
2024 M06	11	2	24	9	20	4	13	2	1	58	144
2024 M07	14		17	12	77	9	14	12		58	213
2024 M08	15		19	11	57	11	12	11	1	58	195
2024 M09	10	2	25	10	57	15	3	8	1	58	189
2024 M10	17		21	4	28	7	5	10		58	150
2024 M11	14	7	34	3	30	11	15	11	1	58	184
2024 M12	8	4	44	1	33	4	14	6	1	58	173
2025 M01	8	10	117	8	25	19	19	16		58	280
2025 M02	9	4	108	4	22	9	10	15		58	239
2025 M03	12	2	101	2	16	9	17	12	1	58	230
Total	426	36	542	77	447	112	139	116	7	856	2758
Re-ratings											65

N.B. Category A premises represent the highest risk, while Es represent the lowest risk

24. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the average annual number of new food business registrations was approximately 590. Since that time, the food safety

team has observed a substantial increase in the number of new businesses. In the 2023-2024 year, the team received a total of 1,002 new food premises registrations. Each of those premises require an inspection regardless of whether it is entirely new or whether it is an existing premises that has been taken over by a new food business operator.

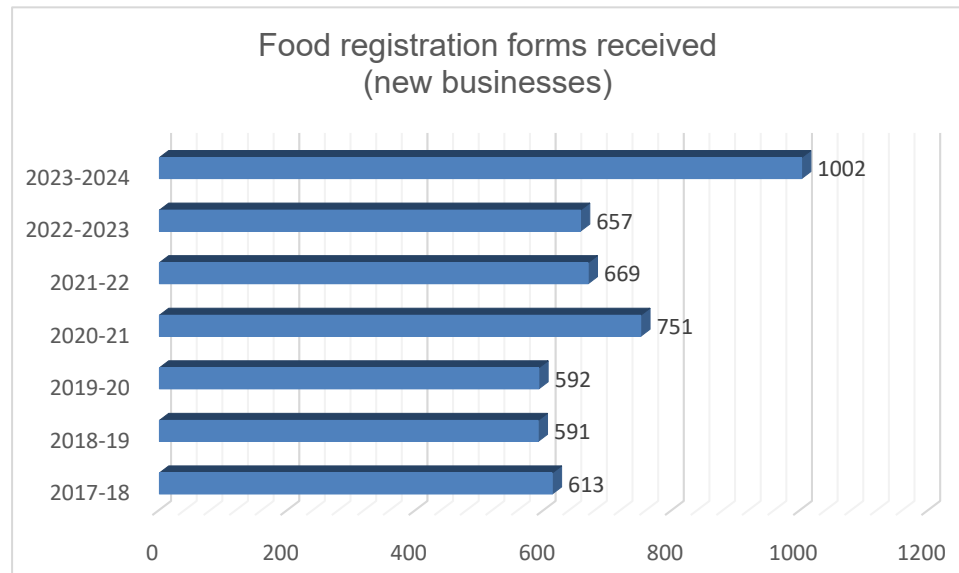


Figure 3: Number of new food premises registration over the years.

25. The increase in the number of premises requiring intervention is therefore caused by a combination of an increase in turnover and the number of new businesses, alongside the Covid-19 backlog and general compliance challenges

Consequences of inaction or inadequate action

26. If the Council fails to discharge its statutory duties in respect of the Food Safety Act 1990 there are a number of potential consequences.

27. In terms of government response this will be led by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The FSA can:

- undertake a performance management programme including audits, and development of action plans – this will include publication of detailed reports and findings;
- instruct someone else to take over Ealing’s food functions as a “substitute authority” – which can include the FSA themselves, another Council or anyone they authorise;
- empower the substitute authority to recover all their expenses either directly from funds or by borrowing on behalf of the Council;
and
- initiate a local public inquiry

28. The reputational, political and social risks are widespread. Ealing's businesses have often been cited as having some of the worst levels of hygiene in the UK, however the Council has been able to demonstrate a robust level of intervention and enforcement action undertaken to protect consumers.
29. Continuing service decline may result in less enforcement action and further deterioration, and the Council is unlikely to be able to counter negative perceptions among our businesses and residents.
30. Most crucially a lack of adequate food control presents a risk to the health of consumers. Due to Ealing's food sector this isn't just a risk to our residents but also represents a risk to the integrity of national food chains and consumers across the country.

Anticipated delivery 2024-2025

31. As a result of previous backlogs, increased business turnover, and other factors such as ongoing non-compliance issues and recruitment difficulties, the service will face significant challenges in delivering the inspection program.
32. The food safety team, without additional resourcing has 7 full time equivalent (FTE) authorised officers, excluding Team Leaders. Without any additional support, it is anticipated that the Authority at its current capacity of FTE could deliver at most approx. 1,176 per annum. This would mean, at the end of the 2024/2025 this authority would have a deficit of inspections of 1,647.
33. The service is undergoing reorganisation and temporary resources were made available, allowing the team to recruit additional contractors. As a result, the service aspires to deliver **2,593 interventions**.
34. In line with the allowances within the Food Law Code of Practice (which provides guidance on delivering food hygiene interventions), the shortfall of 165+ interventions, is anticipated to be carried over to the 2024-2025.
35. The anticipated delivery is subject to ongoing resource increase and the absence of service threats outlined in the Food Safety service plan (Appendix 1).

Future planning – food safety

36. Due to increasing work demands, the review of resourcing of the Food and Workplace Safety team was commissioned in late 2022 to ensure resources align with the service demands. As a direct measure, temporary uplift of £250,000 was made available for 2023- 2024 and 2024-2025. This uplift has enabled the team to retain officers who had been taken on as graduate officers, created prior to the pandemic, funded by the central government between 2020-2022.
37. However, even with the temporary uplift in resources, there is an on-going risk that without close attention and management intervention, the service may not be able to fulfil its statutory duties in all its 3,500 premises.
38. The service continues to explore other funding options and was successful in securing £50,000 for 2024-2025 to fund an in-house food advisor (through UK

Shared Prosperity Fund). This will enable the service to safeguard compliance rate but will not address the current and future demand issue.

39. Work is on-going with colleagues across finance and senior management to agree a long-term funding position for the Food & Workplace safety teams to enable the service to deliver all of its statutory functions, and more importantly protect the public from ill health.

Key implications: Health and Safety

Background information

40. The London Borough of Ealing is home to an estimated 13,000 businesses and of those 90% are micro-businesses (have up to nine employees). Most of these businesses consist of small, entrepreneurial start-ups and will usually have less than 5 employees.
41. The responsibility for enforcement of health and safety law is shared mainly between local authorities and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The HSE are responsible for industries and activities that are generally higher risk than those under local authority jurisdiction. HSE enforced activities include construction, manufacturing, healthcare and government functions. Local authorities enforce health and safety law in offices, shops, warehouses, hospitality, leisure, and retail premises.
42. The Workplace Safety Team's functions in the exercise of the Council's duties to enforce health and safety law include:
- Accident investigation.
 - Investigation of complaints about workplaces or matters of evidence concern.
 - Proactive inspections of high-risk sectors.
 - Consultation with other teams and agencies on relevant matters.

Workplace Safety service delivery 2023 – 2024

43. The Workplace Safety Team consists of a Team Leader (whose remit includes also Food Safety work) and three dedicated workplace safety officers [a Senior Regulatory Services Officer (vacant) and two Regulatory Services Officers (RSOs)].
44. Throughout 2023-2024, both RSO posts were occupied and the vacant Senior RSO post was partially filled by a contractor.
45. As a result, the team delivered required reactive work and two proactive campaigns as detailed in Appendix 3.

Overview of anticipated Workplace Safety service delivery 2024-2025

- 46. Due to resourcing issues and the inability to recruit to the senior officer post (predominantly because of a lack of competitive pay and a shortage of H&S officers), delivery for 2024-2025 will focus on reactive work, with targeted plans for proactive service delivery in problematic areas. This approach is reflected in the Health and Safety Service Plan (Appendix 2).
- 47. The proactive work streams take into account the recent government request to visit all funeral directors in the Borough, following the distressing events in Hull and the East Riding.
- 48. Any additional work of this nature is likely to impact delivery of the service plan.

Future planning – Workplace Safety

- 49. The Workplace Safety team, which works closely alongside the Food Safety counterpart is subject to the same review of resourcing.
- 50. Given the current challenges in relation to pay, recruitment and retention challenges, it is very likely that the service will remain predominantly reactive, with limited capacity to undertake any more proactive interventions.
- 51. Nevertheless, as it has been shown in 2023-2024, with adequate resourcing both, the Workplace Safety and Food Safety teams can achieve great outcomes and ensure Ealing provides a thriving and safe economy for all.

Options considered

- 52. Doing nothing is not an option as the Council is statutorily obliged to adopt service plans as outlined in Paragraph 1.

Equality implications

- 53. An Equality Analysis Assessment (EAA) is not required for adoption of the Service Plans.

Risk management implications

- 54. Without ongoing additional resourcing, the Food Service will continue to face significant challenges in meeting its statutory duties. The current resourcing places also the services at risk of being unable to provide an effective response to a significant incident such as a workplace fatality or food outbreaks and incidents.

IT implications (required for any changes to IT systems)

- 55. None

Local economy and social value implications

56. The work undertaken as part of these plans contribute directly to the local economy and social value implications by ensuring there is a safe food manufacturing, retailing and distribution environment within the borough. In addition to this, Food and Workplace Safety Officers use their close association with, and knowledge of local businesses in particular, in collecting intelligence relating to food fraud and criminal practices, licensing breaches, anti-social behaviour and nuisance, and other issues of interest to the local authority. The team works closely with other Council departments and external partners including the Police, London Fire Brigade, Home Office, and HMRC

Climate and sustainability Implications

57. None

Property and assets implications

58. None

Staffing and workforce implications

59. None

Consultation

60. No consultations were undertaken.

LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – “Food Service Plan 2024 – 2025”
- Appendix 2 – “Health and Safety Service Plan 2024 – 2025”
- Appendix 3 – “Food & Workplace Safety Performance Review Report 2023-24”

Food Safety

Service Plan 2024

-2025

Housing and Environment

31/05/2024

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Section 1 – The Service

1.1 Summary

Ealing Councils Food Service Plan describes how the Councils statutory duties as a Food Authority under the *Food Safety Act 1990*, and allied Regulations, will be discharged. The service plan will:

- Review service delivery and performance of 2023 – 2024.
- Plan service delivery and performance for 2024 – 2025.
- Set objectives and delivery targets to be achieved in 2024 – 2025.
- Outline how the team will deliver, monitor, and evaluate progress against the plan.

Section 1: Provides the background to Ealing and the underpinning principles to the food service including the applicable legislative frameworks as well as an overview of the food industry in Ealing.

Section 2: Describes service delivery 2024 – 2025 with reference to both the proactive Official Food Control Programme as well as reactive service demand and enforcement.

Section 3: Sets out the approach proposed to deliver the service and forecasts service demand as well as risks and threats.

Section 4: Gives a brief description of the Councils internal administrative arrangements that are related to the Plan.

1.2 Aims, Scope, and Legislative Framework

Ealing Council is a designated Food Authority under the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 and the Food Safety Act 1990 and therefore has statutory duties to fulfil in accordance with directions from the FSA. The FSA issue guidance including the Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities, Food Law Code of Practice (England) (FLCOP) and Food Law Practice Guidance (England).

In fulfilment of these duties the Team's aims & objectives are as follows:

1. Deliver a food service as required by the FLCOP.
2. To respond quickly and proportionately to food incidents and customer complaints.
3. To improve the compliance rates of food business across the borough
4. To work in partnership with food businesses and other agencies to ensure that food produced, distributed, and marketed in the borough is safe to eat, accurately labelled and presented so that consumers can make informed choices and are not misled.

This service plan outlines how these aims and objectives will be met up to 31 March 2024.

1.3 Profile of the London Borough of Ealing and Food Service Demand

Details of the population, size and nature of the Borough can be found at [Your borough | Ealing Council](#).

The London Borough of Ealing is the third largest borough in London and is home to an estimated 13,000 registered businesses in Ealing, and of those, 90% are micro-businesses (have up to nine employees).

Most of these businesses consist of small, entrepreneurial start-ups, and will usually have less than 5 employees. In the Northeast of the borough is the Park Royal Industrial Estate, shared with the London boroughs of Brent and Hammersmith & Fulham. This is the largest industrial estate in Europe, covering about 263 hectares (650 acres). In total, Park Royal hosts nearly 2,000 businesses and around 40,000 employees. Reflecting the local population, 40% of businesses are owned by people of ethnic minority background.

The characteristics of Ealing's food industry make it a uniquely complex and challenging prospect to regulate when it comes to safeguarding the integrity of the UK's food chain. Ealing is home to well over 3,000 food establishments and the fourth highest number of food establishments in London. Compared to the average London Borough, Ealing has 33% more manufacturing businesses, 50% more transport and storage businesses and 60% more wholesale businesses. (Inter-Departmental Business Register - Office for National Statistics, March 2018).

Ealing has a higher-than-average number of Approved establishments (68) which is one of the highest numbers in the UK. There are also currently 176 food manufacturers based in the Borough who do not require approval. Ealing is a desirable location for these larger businesses due to the proximity to Central London and major connection hubs for the international trade such as Heathrow Airport. The enforcement burden on local authority food enforcement services posed by Approved

establishments and food manufacturer is far higher than conventional retailers, takeaways, cafés and restaurants and Ealing has a disproportionately high number of Approved establishments. In addition to approved establishments, there are 176 food manufacturers based in the Borough who do not require approval.

There are 86 importer and exporters of food based in the borough as well as 4 External Temporary Storage Facilities (ETSFs) involved in the importation of food from outside the European Union. As an authority LBE regulates these ETSFs for inland food controls and support local business by issuing 100s of export health certificates every year. In 2023/2024 the service issued 134 Health Certificates to local businesses in an effort to support the economic growth of the Borough.

Historically Ealing has always had a relatively high number of non-compliant food premises compared to some other London Boroughs. Non-compliant food establishments place a significantly larger burden on local authority food enforcement services than compliant food establishments. Not only is the likelihood of remedial action managed by the team higher, but the amount of intervention required for revisits and monitoring and potentially legal action is high. In recent years Ealing has undertaken some of the highest levels of enforcement in the UK.

In summary the demands on the service are varied both in terms of the complexity of official controls required and the speed at which interventions need to be undertaken.

It is crucial therefore that the authority sustains an appropriate number of suitably experienced and qualified authorised officers to carry out rapid

controls to ensure that incidents can be dealt with swiftly as well as execute the ongoing proactive programmed of official controls as required by the FLCOP.

1.4 Organisational Structure and Resources

Authorised officers within the team as of 1 April 2024:

- Team Leader (1.0 FTE) permanent (Food Lead Officer)
- Team Leader (1.0 FTE) permanent (Food & Public Health)
- Team Leader (0.5) permanent (Health Safety Lead)
- Senior Environmental Health Officer (1.0 FTE) permanent
- Regulatory Services Officer (1.0 FTE) permanent
- Regulatory Services Officer (1.0 FTE) permanent
- Regulatory Services Officer (1.0 FTE) permanent
- Regulatory Services Officer (1.0 FTE) permanent
- Regulatory Services Officer (1.0 FTE) permanent
- Regulatory Services Officer (1.0 FTE) permanent (vacant)
- Regulatory Services Officer (1.0 FTE) permanent (currently occupied by a Food Safety Advisor)

(Total of 7 FTE authorised officers, 1 vacancy and 2.5 FTE team leaders)

In addition, the following officers carry out administrative function's ancillary to the authorised officers including.

- Food Safety Advisor (1 FTE) (externally funded)
- Food and Systems Quality Assurance Officer (1.0 FTE) permanent
- Food Safety Processing Officer (1.0 FTE) permanent
- Food Processing Apprentice (1.0 FTE) permanent

The complement of authorised officers is also supplemented by temporary contractors who are authorised and utilised to carry out programmed proactive interventions only, on an as and when basis, to assist in completion of the inspection programme.

Section 2 – Service Delivery 2023 – 2024

2.1 Overview of 2023 – 2024 Service Delivery

Ealing Councils Food Safety Service Plan 2023 – 2024 recognised that this authority had removed the vast majority of the backlog of overdue high-risk inspections (Cat A – D) post the Covid 19 Pandemic. The service priority was to complete all high-risk interventions: Category A – D and newly registered, unrated establishments by 31st March 2024.

In the 2023/2024 Service Plan, it was estimated that the following rated interventions were to be prioritised for service delivery:

Table 1: Estimated Service Delivery of 2023/2024

Risk Category	No of Inspections Due
Cat A (Compliant)	6
Cat A (Non-Compliant)	54
Cat B (Compliant)	182
Cat B (Non-Compliant)	102
Cat C (Compliant)	205
Cat C (Non-Compliant)	61
Cat D (Compliant)	289
Cat D (Non-Compliant)	13

Cat E (Compliant)*	737
Food Standards As & FH Es	15
Backlog of Ds from previous FY	52
Predicted New Businesses	630
Cat A repeated	40
Total (All Cat)	2322
High Priority Target (*Excluding Cat E)	1,585

Category Es would only be inspected when complaints or service requests were received against a premises which was overdue for inspection as per the Council's Food Safety Complaints Policy or if it was due for a Food Standards Cat A intervention.

Interventions Delivered vs Previous Years

The service has delivered a high number of interventions in 2023-2024, as can be seen in the following figure:

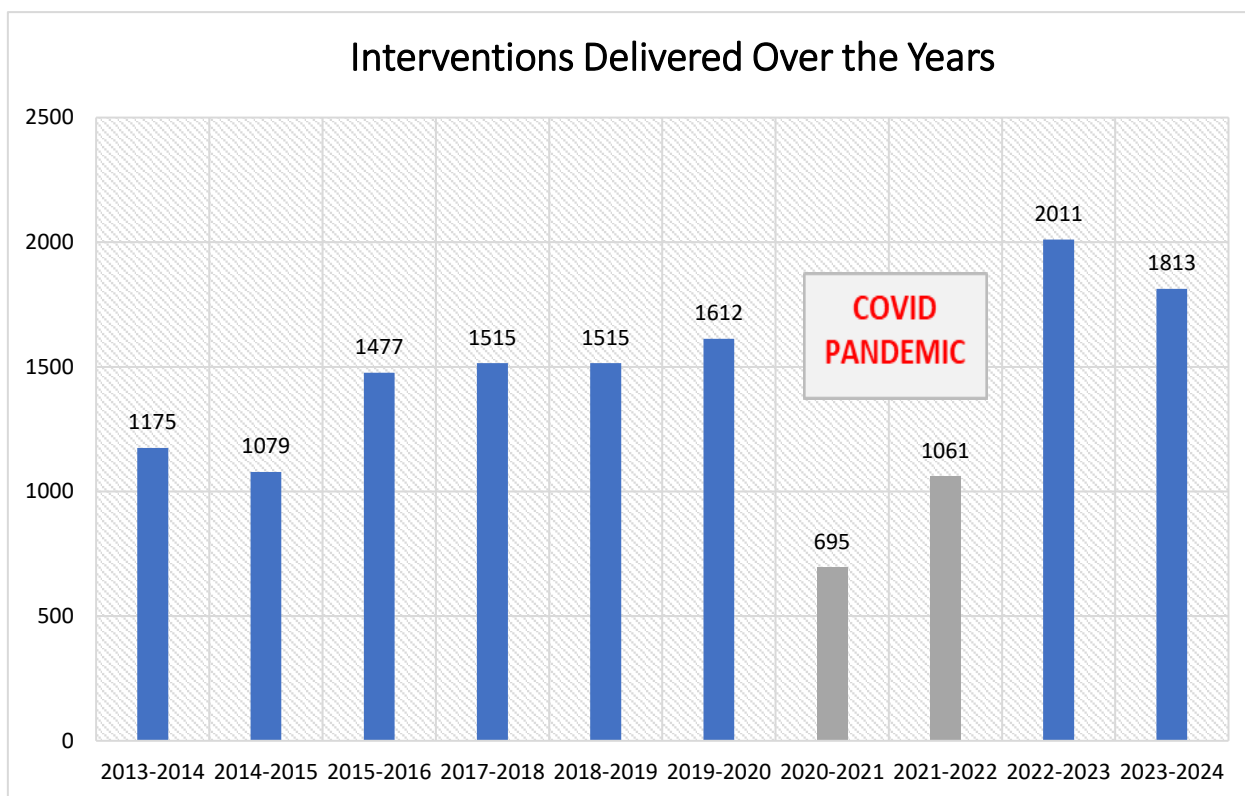


Figure 1: Interventions Delivered 2013 to 2024

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the service was challenged with a considerable backlog of inspections. In response, it has delivered the highest number of interventions completed on records over the past two years.

2.2 Delivery against Food Safety Service Plan 2023 – 2024

By 31st March 2024, this authority successfully delivered and completed all high-risk food hygiene interventions as identified in the 2023-2024 Service Plan. The following rated interventions were completed:

Table 2: Number of Interventions Delivered 2023/2024	
Inspection Cat	No of Inspections Completed
A (Compliant)	13
A (non-compliant)	99
B (Compliant)	176
B (non-compliant)	89
C (Compliant)	171
C (non-compliant)	58
D (Compliant)	240
D (non-compliant)	10
E (Compliant)	287
Unrated	670
Grand Total	1813
Total Minus Cat Es	1526

On 31st March 2024, only the following rated interventions were overdue:

Table 3: Number of Interventions Completed vs Overdue		
Category	Number Done	Number Overdue
A Comp	13	0
A NC	99	0
B Comp	176	0
B NC	89	0

C Comp	171	*1
C NC	58	0
D Comp	240	*2
D NC	10	*1
*E Comp	287	263
E NC	0	0
Unrated	670	(56 new awaiting inspection)
Grand Total	1813	

*Of the four rated interventions which were outstanding, officers had attempted but were unable to gain access to the Category C and D establishments for various reasons. These inspections were prioritised and subsequently completed in April 2024.

Reduction in Backlog

A notable success of the year was the reduction in newly registered businesses who were awaiting interventions. Unrated establishments fell from 244 in 2023 to 54 by the end of 2024.

Category E establishments were not included in the Service Plan but due to the successful delivery of the higher risk inspections, the most overdue Category E inspections were also completed in the final three months of the year. This authority successfully reduced the number of overdue Cat Es which were due in 2023 from 737 to 263 by 31st March 2024.

Record number of High Risk (Cat A – B) Interventions Completed

In 2023-2024, a record number of Category A and B interventions was delivered at 377. This is significantly more than inspected the previous year where the service delivered 302 Category A & B interventions. This is seen to be the result of increased level of enforcement action taken against non-compliant food businesses.

Food Premises Risk Profile

There has been marginal increase in the overall number of establishments based in the Borough. It is worth noting that the risk profile of businesses has changed significantly over the past two years.

While the service completed more high-risk category interventions last year, the profile of Cat A and B premises has reduced which shows that previously non complaint businesses have improved.

Table 4: Food Premises Risk Profile			
Risk Category	Total April 2021	Total April 2023	Total April 2024
Cat A	35	52	52
Cat B	173	289	253
Cat C	754	672	781
Cat D	965	955	1031
Cat E	941	1278	1200
Unrated	565	101	76
Total	3,433	3,341	3,392

Ealing Food Business Compliance Rate

The overall compliance rate for food businesses in Ealing currently stands at 88%. This has dropped marginally from April 2023 where it was 89%. The compliance inclusive of unrated establishments is 78.5%.

Food Standards Interventions

The Food Law Code of Practice requires Local Authorities to undertake food standards interventions at food establishments. Food standards inspections determine if the legal standards regarding the quality, composition, labelling, presentation, and advertising of food are being adhered to. Additionally, the inspections also cover materials or items that come into contact with food. Due to the high number of food manufacturers and importers located in the borough, Ealing has a relatively high number of Category A establishments for Food Standards compared to other London Boroughs.

Table 5: Food Standards Premises Risk Profile	
Risk Category	Total April 2024
Cat A	120
Cat B	1580
Cat C	1616
Unrated	65
Total	3,381

The following food standards interventions were completed this year:

Table 6: Food Standards Interventions Delivered 2023/2024		
Cat	FY 2023-2024	2023-2023
A	156	145
B	899	1133
C	703	675
Grand Total	1758	1953

Food Standards (FS) Category As are a high priority for this service and therefore often require a lot of resources. A typical FS Category A, for example would be a food manufacturer or importer, particularly those who create their own labels for their products. This can often be complex intervention as officers have to determine if the food products labels and descriptions are compliant with UK law.

It is noteworthy that despite delivering less interventions overall last year than 2022/2023, this authority delivered the highest number of FS Cat As on the council's records.

New Food Establishments & Administrative Burden

In the 2023-2024 financial year, the service received 789 newly registered businesses.

Throughout the financial year, this authority continuously looked to update councils' food business registration database. The council verified accuracy of information held (contact details, addresses, food business operator details) by cross referencing other databases available (i.e. business rates)

and carrying out visits and checks. As a result, 1,380 food establishments were successfully closed on the database. This was a resource intensive process, but it was a critical factor to efficient service delivery.

The number of new food businesses recorded by the service are particularly high number compared to other local authorities. It presents a significant challenge in service delivery as there is a high turnover of new businesses that all require an inspection.

As per FSA priorities, this authority was continuously monitoring the trading status of businesses trading in the borough and as shown above, carried out a large-scale data cleansing operation over the past two years.

FHRS Requested Revisits

In 2023/2024 this authority received 76 requests and completed 67 interventions following eligible requests for FHRS rerating visits. This figure is comparable to 2022/2023 in which 62 FHRS rerating inspections were completed.

These inspections are statutory visits local authorities have to carry out in addition to those scheduled and planned for at the beginning of the year.

Appeals Against FHRS

In 2023/2024 Ealing Food Safety team received a total of 13 appeals against food hygiene ratings). Of the 13 appeals received, only one appeal was deemed to have been successful. Upon review by the Food Lead Officer, the individual scores had been changed, although the overall food hygiene rating provided remained the same.

This is a slight increase compared to 10 received in 2022/2023. All appeals received by the service are processed in full compliance with the FHRS Brand Standard.

Additional Visits to Food Premises

In 2023/2024 the Food & Workplace Safety Team in addition to 1,813 rated inspections, carried out 1,052 further visits to food premises. These visits are summarised below:

- Revisits to follow up on issues highlighted on previous inspections - 287
- Verification and surveillance - 392
- Food Sampling visits - 6
- Advice and Education - 51
- Information/intelligence gathering - 316

New Food Advisory Service

This year, the service secured funding from UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to work with local businesses who are included in the Food Hygiene

Rating Scheme to improve their compliance and their FHRs scores (to fund 1 Food Safety Advisor post). Since the 1st of August 2023 Food Advisors have contacted **346** premises. This includes reaching out to new registrations, previously non-compliant businesses, and carrying out revisits. So far, the advisors have conducted **147** onsite revisits or advisory visits. **92** of approached by the advisors' businesses have subsequently had a re-inspection or a re-rating and **79%** are now compliant. There has been overwhelming positive feedback from the businesses which have interacted with this new service.

2.3 Service Requests

The authority receives a high number of service requests from members of the public and from both internal and external partners/agencies. Due to the number of manufacturers and importers based in the borough, it is believed that this authority receives a higher number of complaints and request for service than many other of our neighbouring boroughs.

Service requests range from complaints about food quality, food safety, alleged food poisoning, food fraud, complaints regarding hygiene at food premises, requests for food advice.

Figure 7: Food Service Requests 2021 - 2024	
Food Service Requests received	

2021/2022 Total	1167
2022/2023 Total:	1016
2023/2024 Total:	1031

Service requests vary but complaints usually relate to potentially unsafe food complaints or labelling issues. Due to the high number of manufacturers and imports based in the borough, the service receives a high volume of requests for advice on food safety and food standards related issues.

Complaints are investigated dependent on criteria such as the history of compliance at the premises, the credibility of the complaint and specific matters alleged. Priority is given to complaints where there is evidence of a serious risk to health or a suggestion of fraudulent practices.

The authority cannot respond to all complaints; however, a desktop review is carried out and any decision of further investigation is based on professional judgment by the team leader or on occasion the duty officer.

2.4 Food Poisoning Outbreak Investigations

The authority participates as required in the investigation and control of any outbreak of food related illnesses. The service co-operation with the Public Health England Northwest London Health Protection Team and the Food Standards Agency.

Due to the number of manufacturers, distributors, and event caterers in the Borough there is potential for outbreaks to affect large number of consumers, and which could be distributed over a large geographic area. The investigation and control of outbreaks may be at the expense of routine food control activities. It is therefore essential that the team maintains sufficient resilience to deal with such events.

Although many alleged food poisoning incidents were reported to this authority, there were no significant food poisoning outbreak investigations in 2023/2024.

2.5 Food Sampling

The authority has access to two official food control laboratories one for microbiological examination of food (Public Health England Food Water and Environmental Microbiology Laboratory, Colindale) and one for chemical sampling/ food analysis (Public Analyst Scientific Services, Acton).

In 2023-2024, the Food & Workplace Safety Team carried out the highest number of food samples in recent years. The London Borough of Ealing accounted for 40% of all samples sent to the UKHSA laboratory from the Northwest Sector Group which consists of 9 London Local Authorities.

Table 8: Food Samples Taken 2022/2023 vs 2023/2024		
Food Sampling Undertaken	No of Samples Taken 2022-2023	No of Samples Taken 2023-2024

Microbiological	66	224
Chemical Sampling (Composition/Labelling/Additives)	0	33
Total	66	254

There was a 379% rise in the number of food samples taken compared to the previous year. The high number of samples taken were largely in response to emerging compliance issues found with food manufacturers and importers of foods. In particular, this authority remains vigilant in its response to investigation where there have been detections of very harmful pathogens such as *Listeria monocytogenes* in ready to eat foods. Although it is often resourcing intensive process, in order to safeguard public health, it is essential that this authority continues to carry out robust investigations utilising the UKHSA and Public Analysts services.

2.6 Enforcement

The Food & Workplace Safety Team takes formal enforcement action in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Policy. The Ealing Food Safety Team undertook a very high level of enforcement to secure compliance and safeguard its residents in 2022/20223 and this has been sustained over 2023/2024 which makes Ealing one of the most proactive authorities in the UK in terms of food enforcement.

The following enforcement measures were taken against businesses in 2023/2024:

Table 9: Enforcement 2022/2023 vs 2023/2024		
Type of Food Enforcement	2022-2023	2023-2024
Written Warnings	1459	1,544
Hygiene Improvement Notices	55	50
Voluntary Closures	1	5
Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices	36	28
Improvement Notices	3	6
Remedial Action Notices	12	14
Voluntary Surrenders	13	20
Imported Food Destruction Notices	6	15
Seizure & Detention Notice	0	0
Simple Caution	1	1
Prosecutions Concluded	9	8
Suspension of EU Approval	1	0

50 Hygiene Improvement Notices were served last year. HINs are served on food businesses where there is a significant or persistent contravention which requires a formal legal notice to be served with a specified date for compliance.

A particular highlight of the past two years is the number of Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices (HEPNs) served. In 2023/2024 the team served 28 HEPNs and 5 voluntary closure agreements. Food businesses closures are only carried out where there is an imminent risk to public health which typically is caused by an infestation of rats, mice or cockroaches.

There has also been a notable increase in the number of Remedial Action Notices (RANs) served. RANs are served on approved manufacturers where there are clear food hygiene contraventions and immediate remedial action must be taken in order to secure compliance and protect public health.

As there has been a very high output of enforcement actions within the team over the past two years this resulted in an increase in food safety prosecutions. A total of 8 food safety prosecutions concluded last year. These cases were taken in line with a graduated approach to enforcement and in accordance with the council's enforcement policy. A summary of the concluded prosecutions is listed on the table below:

Figure 10 – Ealing Council Food Safety Prosecutions Concluded 2023-2024

Offence Date	Premises Name	Premises address	Defendant (s)	Company Sentence	Director/Manager Sentence	Costs	Date concluded
22-Jul-22	Al Noor Foods	Unit 8, 142 Johnsons Street, Southall, UB2 5FD	Al Noor LTD	Al Noor LTD = £10,000	Mr Ahmed = £1666	Full costs awarded = £4848	05/12/2023
26-Jan-23	Amasi Lounge	12 Wadsworth Road, Perivale, UB6 7JD	Amasi Lounge LTD, Mr Ahmad Abbud Farhan	Amasi Lounge LTD = £1,600	Mr Ahamd Abbud Farhan = £900	Full costs awarded (split with smokefree) = £600	07/11/2023
07-Jun-22	Daleys	7 Church Road, Acton, London, W3 8PU	Daleys Café Limited Mr Abdiaziz Yusuf (Director) Mr Abdirisaq Ali (Manager)	Daleys Cafe Limited = £10,000	Mr Abdiaziz Yusuf = £1,495	Full Costs Awarded = £4,599.94	27/10/2023

23-Aug-23	Delhicious	Unit 3 Bridge Business Centre, Bridge Road, Southall. UB2 4AY	Delhicious Foods Ltd, Mr Kanwal Nain Sabherwal	Limited Company = £20,000	Mr Subherwal = £4,132	Full Costs Awarded = £3,978.30	26/09/2023
21-Feb-22	Kebabish	158 The Broadway, Southall, UB1 1NN	Kebabish Original Southall LTD	Kebabish Original Southall LTD = £8,190	Mr Bismillah Ullah = £2,650	Full Costs Awarded = £2,374.93	04/07/2023
26-Nov-21	Maeme's	10 High Street Southall, UB1 3DA	Maeme's Southall Limited	Maeme Southall LTD: £10,000	Mr Javed: £6,500	Mr Javed: £1,059 Maeme Southall LTD: £1,059	20/06/2023
06-Oct-22	Sira Cash & Carry	43 South Road, Southall, UB1 1SW	Streamquote LTD, Ms Chagger	Streamcote: £26400	Ms Chagger: £984	Full costs: £1610	29.11.2023

01-Feb-23	Perfect Piri Piri	2 Broadway, West Ealing, W13 0SR	LHR UK Enterprises Ltd, Mr Syed Biabani	LHR UK Enterprises UK Ltd £18,000	Mr Biabani £1,920	Full Costs: 3630.58	12.03.2024
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2.7 Working with Other Teams, Services or Organisations

Due to the nature of the service working in partnership with others is an essential area of work for the team. The authority works in partnership with other internal and external departments and agencies to utilise their own expertise in order to ensure a high standard of service delivery. These partners include but are not limited to: Public Health England, Food Standards Agency, Food Import authorities, Northwest Sector Groups Internal – Early Years (Ofsted), Environmental Services, Licensing, Trading Standards and Police.

The authority also has a Primary Authority Partnerships under the Enterprise Act 2011 with Danone Ltd who are a large multinational food corporation. In this direct partnership, this authority issues advice specific to the needs of Danone Ltd. Due to a change in the limited company this agreement will be revoked, and a new Primary Authority agreement is expected to be agreed in the near future.

Section 3 – Service Delivery 2024 – 2025

3.1 Official Food Control Programme 2024 – 2025

The authority acknowledges that while the service has addressed the backlog of high-risk food premises interventions (Category A-D and unrated), there is still a backlog of low-risk Cat E inspections. Given the current resources and the challenges ahead, the service will continue to prioritise interventions based on risk and, when appropriate, conduct interventions at low-risk food establishments.

The main focus remains completing all high-risk Category inspections (Cat A-D for Food Hygiene and Cat A for Food Standards) by March 31, 2024. The service will also ensure that other priority areas such as service requests, enforcement actions, and food sampling are carried out in accordance with local council policies and the Food Law Code of Practice.

3.2 Estimated demand as of 1st April 2024

As of 1 April 2024, the food business establishments registered with the Council were in the following food risk categories:

Table 11: Premises Risk Profile 2024	
Risk Category	No. of Food Establishments
Cat A	52
Cat B	253
Cat C	781
Cat D	1031
Cat E	1200
Unrated	76
Outside the Programme	15
Total	3,408

The following table show the total number of inspections that are predicted to be due from 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025:

Table 12: Estimated interventions due per month 2024/2025											
No of traders	Food Hygiene Category										
When due	E Comp	D NC	D Comp	C NC	C Comp	B NC	B Comp	A NC	A Comp	Unrated	Sum all
Past FY	263	1	2	0	1	0	0			160	427
2024 M04	27		11	3	38	2	6	6		58	151
2024 M05	18	4	19	10	43	12	11	7	1	58	183
2024 M06	11	2	24	9	20	4	13	2	1	58	144
2024 M07	14		17	12	77	9	14	12		58	213
2024 M08	15		19	11	57	11	12	11	1	58	195
2024 M09	10	2	25	10	57	15	3	8	1	58	189
2024 M10	17		21	4	28	7	5	10		58	150
2024 M11	14	7	34	3	30	11	15	11	1	58	184
2024 M12	8	4	44	1	33	4	14	6	1	58	173
2025 M01	8	10	117	8	25	19	19	16		58	280
2025 M02	9	4	108	4	22	9	10	15		58	239
2025 M03	12	2	101	2	16	9	17	12	1	58	230
Total	426	36	542	77	447	112	139	116	7	856	2758
Re-ratings											65

It is estimated that the service will receive approximately a repeat of the same number of FHRS rating requests and new business registrations as previous year (which is 31 approx. 58 per month totalling 856 in total).

The total forecasted figure of **2,758** interventions far exceeds any previous year's intervention targets and exceeds the resources available to this authority. This high figure is largely due to how previous years interventions were completed during the Covid 19 Service Recovery Plan, where a high number of interventions were delivered between January and March 2022. As a result, as can be seen in **Table 12**, the inspections due rise sharply from 173 in December 2024 to 280 in January 2025, 239 February 2025 and 230 in March 2025.

This authority will therefore look to spread these interventions amongst other months to avoid similar peaks in future years. Interventions from January and February 2025 will be brought forward to September and October 2024. The service will also not aim to complete the inspections due in March until April 2025 in an attempt to spread the burden on future years. This approach is in line with the Food Delivery Code of Practice. Should intelligence or concerns be raised for any of these premises due in March, they will be prioritised for inspection accordingly.

In total, the service will aim to deliver **2,593** interventions by 31st March 2025. The delivery of these interventions will rely on external contractors to carry out set monthly targets for interventions. The service is therefore heavily dependent on the availability of suitably competent and qualified food safety officers to complete this work as well as full availability of full time officers.

3.3 Forecast of Service Demands 2024 - 2025

It is expected that the service demand will exceed that of previous years. The following matters are predicted to be of particular concern with regards to service demand:

- **Service Reorganisation:** It has been announced that there will be a reorganisation which will impact upon the Food & Workplace Safety Team. There is a potential threat to the service if adequate resourcing is not made available to meet the increasing service demands.
- **New Food Standards Delivery Model:** The FSA are introducing a new delivery model for food standards interventions. It is expected that Ealing will look to introduce the new delivery model at the end of 2024. Preparation for the new system will require all officers to be retrained on the new model, all inspection paperwork to be changed appropriately and for the new model to be adopted by the current MIS provider. This could therefore be a very resource intensive process which can affect service delivery.
- **New Businesses:** The authority continues to receive a high number of new food business registrations compared to previous years. It is anticipated that this will continue as new rental commercial kitchens for small manufacturers and dark kitchens are currently being built. There is also a high number of home caterers being registered with the authority which presents a unique challenge as their operating hours are often outside that of Ealing core hours and the owners can be difficult to get in contact with.

- **Premises turnover:** There has been a spike in the number of businesses which are opening and closing in a short period of time. This is largely attributed to the cost of living and energy crisis and changing customer behaviours in how we purchase foods. This presents a regulatory challenge as the service is unable to build lasting working relationships with businesses.
- **Cost of Living/Energy Crisis:** As the cost of operating a business has risen significantly over recent months, there is an increased pressure on food businesses to survive in today's economic climate. There is a higher potential for food businesses to cut back on resources which would have been invested in food safety management or to look to potential food fraud. There is therefore an extra regulatory burden on the service to take appropriate action in response.
- **Food Fraud:** The FSA have recently stated there is an increased likelihood that businesses will look to food fraud because of increased financial pressure. The service will remain vigilant in response to any incidents or intelligence received.
- **Compliance Rates & Enforcement Action:** There has been a notable decline in some of the standards noted at food manufacturers across the borough over the past two years. Any enforcement actions taken on manufacturers is often more complex and resource intensive so there is a risk to available staffing resources. The service will always look to take proportionate enforcement action in response to non-compliance, but it is worth noting the potential drain this has on officer time and resources in particular undertaken food safety prosecutions. Although enforcement action to safeguard the public

will always be the highest priority for this service, the team will constantly monitor this issue to ensure there is a balance of resources between carrying out our statutory inspections and enforcement action.

- **Action Days:** The service has scheduled Action Days in which the wards with the lowest compliance rate will be targeted by our officers. The team will carry out short compliance visits to non-compliant food businesses in order to educate and advise business ahead of their next scheduled routine inspection with the aim to guide business so that they are complaint.
- **Product Recalls:** Due to the number of food manufacturers and food re home authority within the borough; it is predicted that this authority will deal with a high number of product recall notifications relative to other LAs. These can be very complex and time-consuming investigations for officers to deal with.
- **Export Health Certificates/Brexit Related Work:** There was a significant demand on the service to advise businesses on the specifics of how the UKs departure from the EU would affect the food industry over the past few years. The service processed 134 requests for Export Health Certificates in order to support local businesses. It is anticipated that this service will be maintain for the year ahead.
- **New Management Information System:** There is a strong possibility that the service will be moving over to a new MIS within the coming months. This will involve a high degree of effort and work in planning and delivery to ensure a smooth transition as possible.

3.4 Overview of anticipated service delivery 2024-2025 and resourcing

In 2024/2025, if the service delivers the programme of inspections and service provision as required by the conventional FLCOP, it is estimated that the authority will need to undertake approximately 2823 inspections. It is estimated that the Authority would therefore require at least 15.0 FTE authorised, fully competent and experienced officers (excluding TLs) to deliver the service and meet minimum requirements of the FLCOP in full.

Currently across the UK, there is a significant shortfall of experienced and fully competent food safety officers. It is estimated as far as 1 in 7 food safety positions are vacant in England alone.

In recent years, where recruitment has been successful newly recruited officers are often inexperienced, and their competency is in development which reduces their effectiveness as authorised officers compared to more experienced and competent officers. The Authority is currently unable to recruit experienced officers because the salary rates are some of the least competitive in the UK.

The recruitment of less experienced officers also reduces the effectiveness of senior officers and team leaders as authorised officers due to the additional time developing and supervising those less experienced officers.

In the event that the minimum statutory service cannot be delivered, for example due to the realisation of potential threats or inability to recruit suitably qualified officers, then the cost of using contractors to backfill work is likely to result in a budgetary overspend.

At full complement the Authority has 7.0 FTE authorised officers excluding Team Leaders. Without any additional support it is anticipated that the Authority at its current capacity of FTE could deliver at most approx. 1,176 per annum. This would mean, at the end of the 2024/2025 this authority would have a deficit of inspections of 1,647.

Due to challenges around recruitment and non-compliance of establishments within the borough, this means that the continued use of contractors to complete programmed inspections is required to fill the shortfall to deliver the service plan.

Following additional resourcing made available to the service, the team has recruited additional 3 contractors in Q1 of 2024. As the inspection burden increases, there are plans to appoint more temporary contractors. However, recruitment of competent officers remains challenging. Providing competent officers are recruited and the resources are made available as needed, the service anticipates a delivery of **2,593** interventions by 31st March 2025. The shortfall of 165 interventions will be carried over to 2024-2025.

3.5 Potential Challenges, Risks and Threats 2024 – 2025

The following section details risks and threats facing service delivery. Because resourcing is conformed to fulfil only the minimum statutory obligations the following matters have the potential to require resource to be expended at the expense of fulfilment of minimum statutory standards.

Some threats arise because there is an inherent risk in providing only the minimum statutory service as this can lead to a decline in overall

compliance across the borough and an inability of the service to provide discretionary services.

Other threats arise because the authorised officers are part of the Food and Workplace Safety Team. This team has a variety of responsibilities and functions beyond food and therefore may be called upon to carry out other functions at the expense of fulfilment of minimum statutory standards in relation to food. For example, the Food and Workplace Safety Team has delivered all the Ealing Council's covid enforcement functions, a function which was prioritised above all others.

It must also be acknowledged that the following are the known, foreseeable, or potential threats. There will no doubt be matters that risk service provision which are unforeseen.

Availability of suitable short-term contractors

As detailed in points **3.2** of this plan, the service will be heavily reliant on the availability of suitably competent and qualified contractors to support the delivery of our intervention targets. It is not possible to foresee which officers are available throughout the year and in addition due to the nature of the contracts, these employees can leave without a notice period. The average onboarding time for a new contractor can vary from 4 to 6 weeks which means the service is therefore potentially vulnerable.

Significant incidents such as workplace fatalities or widespread food poisoning

There are a variety of incidents that may occur that would require both a significant immediate response and present an ongoing significant resource burden on investigation and follow up work.

The most severe examples would be a workplace fatality or multiple fatalities or a food poisoning outbreak or incident that resulted in fatality. Such incidents would require deployment of our most experienced and competent officers as well as a redeployment of most officers to assist in the initial response.

Other examples would include complex investigations

The follow up work on these incidents can last many months and most cases years.

Section 4 – Internal Administration

4.1 Information and Data Management

All service requests are received and logged by the administrator for the Food and Workplace Safety team on council's internal database - Idox Uniform. Idox Uniform stores all information about the work the team undertakes and allows officers to retrieve the information and record all actions.

4.2 Quality assessment, oversight, and internal monitoring

An on-going program of internal quality assurance monitoring will continue to be implemented in 2024-2025 including desktop case reviews, on site verification of inspection quality and post-inspection "reality checks" at food establishments. The team have a dedicated Food & Systems Quality Assurance Officer to ensure all systems, reports and data collected are compliant with all legal requirements and in accordance with best practice,

the FLCOP and the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Brand Standard as applicable.

Systems are also in place to ensure the quality of officers' work is in line with national standards and this team complete regular FSA consistency exercises.

Officers are subject to proportionate monitoring checks for accuracy and consistency of their work. All officers have recorded "one to one's" with their team leader at least every three months. During the one to one the officer's performance is monitored, work is reviewed, and critical feedback provided. In addition, certain day-to-day processes such as enforcement actions require a team leader's oversight.

Officers also need to continuously ensure they are competent in their role as regulatory officers and must ensure they undertake a minimum of 10 hours food-related continuing professional development training per year. The authority provides internal training for all staff and funding and access to other courses.

The Council's formal appraisal timetable is followed. Yearly Objective Setting is carried out by the team leader with each officer between April and June.

4.3 Review, variation, and improvement

Overall progress against the service plan will be reviewed in November 2024 and this will be in conjunction with officers' Mid-Year Appraisals.

The review will also identify where there was deviation from the service plan and, where appropriate, the reasons for that variance. The review will include plans for any relevant improvement or service development identified as necessary by the review or the quality assessment.

Health and Safety Service Plan 2024 -2025

Housing and Environment

31/05/2024

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

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Section 1 – The Service

1.1 Aims and Scope of the Service

The purposes of this service plan is to:

- Review service delivery and performance of 2023 – 2024.
- Plan service delivery and performance for 2024 – 2025.
- Set objectives and delivery targets to be achieved in 2024 – 2025.
- Establish service delivery targets for 2024 – 2025.
- Outline how the team will deliver, monitor, and evaluate progress against the plan.

The Workplace Safety Team's aims and objectives for 2024 – 2025 are:

- Prevent accidents, injuries, work-related deaths, and work-related illnesses in workplaces.
- Deliver national and local inspection campaigns to prevent harm to employees, and those affected by work activities.
- Sustain the timely completion of investigations relating to workplace accidents and fatalities, to help victims and bereaved families understand what happened (and why), to tackle ongoing risks and to take enforcement action where appropriate.
- Investigate complaints and notifiable work-related accidents/incidents, infectious diseases, dangerous occurrences and near misses (RIDDORs).
- Work collaboratively with the Council's Licensing Team on relevant licensing applications (i.e., special treatments and entertainment/premises licenses).
- Exercise the Council's functions arising out of Sportsgrounds Safety legislation.
- Maintain delivery of Health Protection services.

Under the *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974* the Local Authority and other relevant organisations have a duty to make adequate arrangements for the enforcement of health and safety legislation.

The enforcement of the health and safety law lies mainly between Local Authorities and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The *Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) Regulations 1998* set out the allocation of premises which fall to each organisation. The Workplace Safety Team are responsible for regulating health, safety, and welfare for those at work and for those affected by risks from work activities, including the public, at the following premises:

- Offices
- Hotels
- Shops
- Warehouses
- Consumer services
- Cafes/restaurants
- Leisure/cultural/recreational activities

1.2 Profile of the London Borough of Ealing and Demands on the Service

Details of the population, size, and nature of the Borough can be found at [Your borough | Ealing Council](#).

The London Borough of Ealing is the third largest borough in London and is home to an estimated 13,000 registered businesses, and of those, 90% are micro-businesses (have up to nine employees).

Most of these businesses consist of small, entrepreneurial start-ups, and will usually have less than 5 employees. In the Northeast of the borough is the Park Royal Industrial Estate, shared with the London boroughs of Brent and Hammersmith & Fulham. This is the largest industrial estate in Europe, covering about 263 hectares (650 acres). In total, Park Royal hosts nearly 2,000 businesses and around 40,000 employees. Reflecting the local population, 40% of businesses are owned by people of ethnic minority background.

Since the 6th of April 2009, employers are no longer required to register with the relevant enforcing authority. In part, this means the Workplace Safety Team are not notified of new workplaces as and when they become constructed/occupied.

1.3 Workplace Safety Team Structure

Officers within the team as of the 1st of April 2024:

- Team Leader (0.5 FTE) permanent (shared with Food)
- Senior Regulatory Services Officer (1.0 FTE) **(Vacant Since 2022)**
- Regulatory Services Officer (1.0 FTE)
- Regulatory Services Officer (1.0 FTE)

Section 2 – Service Delivery

2.1 Service Data

Below is the past delivery/campaign data for the 2022 - 2023 & 2023 - 2024 financial years and what the predicted data will be for this coming 2024 - 2025 financial year.

	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025 (Predicted)
Reactive			
Service Requests Received	266	293	275
Visits to Investigate Health & Safety Complaints	59	58	60
RIDDOR Notifications	107	131	110
RIDDOR Investigations	6	13	8
Infectious Diseases Notifications	405	495	450
Overseeing of Exhumations	1	0	0
Proactive			
Proactive Inspections Carried Out	45	20	40
Enforcement			
Immediate Prohibition Notices	41	10	15
Improvement Notices	14	6	20
Simple Cautions	0	0	0
Successful Prosecutions	0*	1	2*

**See Section 2.4 (Page 13) for more details about prosecution cases.*

Project	Aim & Targets	Outcomes
Campaign 1: Gas Safety (National)	To ensure compliance with gas safety in commercial catering premises 10x inspections and relevant further action	10 Inspections Completed 1 Revisit Completed 1 Prohibition Notice
Campaign 2: Guarding of Work Equipment Campaign (Local)	To ensure compliance with electrical safety legislation in commercial premises 10x inspections and relevant further action	10 inspections Completed 4 Revisits Completed 2 Prohibition Notices Served

2.2 Reactive Work and Targets

The team is responsible for investigating complaints relating to poor health and safety practices and workplace accidents (RIDDORs). The work can vary from dealing with minor issues, drainage complaints, and reports of pests in the premises, to serious health and safety concerns and investigations of workplace fatalities. In addition, the team reviews several licensing and planning permission consultations and provides assistance to UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA).

Service Requests:

The service requests received by the Workplace Safety Team include complaints and requests for service from other departments. The service will aim for those who made the request or complaint to receive a first response within 5 working days. The team adopts HSE's risk-based approach when determining which complaints require further investigation: Risk Based Approach - Risk Model (Initial Decision Matrix) (hse.gov.uk).

This ensures the best use of regulatory resources, and whilst many queries may be dealt with remotely and may not require a visit, all complaints are recorded, processed, and responded to.

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulation Notifications:

RIDDOR notifications are assessed using the HSE's incident selection criteria ([Incident Selection Criteria Guidance - HSE and LAs Working together - HSE](#)) which means that not all accidents are investigated. This provides a common proportionate, transparent, and targeted procedure for the selection and investigation of accidents and incidents.

Health Protection Matters:

The Workplace Safety Team receives formal notifications of confirmed and suspected notifiable infectious disease cases/outbreaks by UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). Many of these notifications would not be investigated as they relate to single cases, where there is no clinical evidence that the infection was foodborne, cases are asymptomatic, and the condition is self-limiting.

There are a small number of infectious diseases that would be investigated by the Workplace Safety Team, such as Legionnaire's Disease, but any infectious disease transmitted through food, or the workplace, may also be investigated at the request of (UKHSA). The team plays a vital role in arranging multiple faecal samples, ensuring exclusions from work/schools, providing advisory information, and providing assistance in court proceedings.

The Workplace Safety Team also provides an essential function overseeing exhumations and assisting the Health Protection Team in obtaining Part 2A orders (powers to manage

Page 8

a person or item that may cause significant harm to human health from infection or contamination).

Matters of Evident Concern:

In addition to the above reactive work, the Food Safety team hazard-spots health and safety issues during food hygiene inspections. The Workplace Safety Team provides advice and support on these areas when the need arises and take the lead on complex cases referred by the Food Team, other council departments, and other regulators. Within the 2023 – 2024 financial year, 17 matters of evident concern were investigated from food team referrals.

2.3 Proactive Work and Targets

Local Authority (LA) Circular (LAC 67/2 (Revision 13) is guidance issued under Section 18 of the *Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974*. This LAC provides guidance and tools to help the Workplace Safety Team with priority planning and targeting proactive interventions to meet the requirements of the National Local Authority Enforcement Code. LAC 67/2 (Revision 13) states that proactive inspections should only be used for:

- Specific projects/programmes of inspections identified by HSE for Local Authority attention, these may be communicated via guidance, or may be directly communicated to LAs for urgent attention because of new intelligence arising from an incident/investigation.
- High risk premises/activities within the specific LA enforced sectors published by HSE.

- Locally identified potential poor performers. This is where specific local intelligence indicates that risks are not being effectively managed.

The Workplace Safety Team aims to carry out the following proactive inspection campaigns for 2024 – 2025:

Project	Aim & Targets	Anticipated Outcomes
Campaign 1*: Funeral Directors (National)	To ensure appropriate controls are in place for the professional and dignified management of the deceased within Funeral Directors.	Visits to all Funeral Directors within Ealing (Estimated at 21) and providing feedback to relevant Government Body.
Campaign 2: Swimming Pool Safety (Local)	To ensure appropriate controls are in place for the management and treatment of Swimming Pool water.	5 x Inspections and relevant further action
Campaign 3: Crowd Safety (Local)	Crowd management and the prevention of Injuries/Fatalities to members of the public.	5 x Inspections of larger events and relevant further action
Campaign 4: Warehouse Safety (Local)	To ensure appropriate controls are in place for workplace transport and racking.	10 x Inspections and relevant further action

The campaigns above have been chosen based on national priorities and local intelligence.

* Campaign 1: The Ministry of Justice has requested that all Local Authorities conduct an inspection of the Funeral Directors within their areas due to a distressing incident that occurred at a Legacy Independent Funeral Directors in Hull at the start of 2024. There is currently no statutory inspection regime in relation to the services provided by funeral directors, and quality standards in the provision of funeral director services are not prescribed by law. This project will therefore consume considerable time in planning, understanding enforcement options, and training officers to be competent and confident to conduct the inspections. Additionally, we are currently only aware of 21 funeral directors as they are not required to be registered, so the inspection target is currently approximate and may increase.

2.4 Enforcement

The Workplace Safety Team works with duty holders to help them understand the risks they create and how to manage them. However, in certain circumstances, it may be necessary to take enforcement action.

All enforcement decisions are ultimately in line with Ealing Council's Enforcement Policy and the HSE Enforcement Management Model (EMM). The EMM is a tool that provides a framework to Health and Safety Officers to ensure enforcement decision-making is consistent and proportionate. In short, it assesses how far the duty-holder (i.e., an employer) is from the benchmark standard (i.e., legal requirement) and provides an initial enforcement expectation.

There are a range of enforcement options available to health & safety officers:

- Information and advice face-to-face or in writing
- Improvement / Prohibition Notices

- Issuing Simple Cautions
- Prosecution

The table in the Service Delivery Section **2.1** (Page 6) of this Service Plan outlines the enforcement action taken in 2023 – 2024.

Prosecutions

Ealing Council are currently undertaking some ongoing Prosecution Investigations. It is important to note that Health & Safety Prosecution investigations and cases can take years to complete, so are hard to sufficiently quantity into one financial years' Service Plan. Some of the Prosecution cases the Workplace Safety team are currently investigating are a Carbon Monoxide poisoning incident in a premises used for assisted living, and a retail butcher where a member of staff severed a thumb on a piece of machinery.

2.5 Working with Other Teams, Services or Organisations

The Workplace Safety Team continues to work with other departments (licensing, planning, pollution, tenancy management ETC) and responds to/refers concerns to other enforcing bodies such as HSE, London Fire Brigade, and other Local Authorities. The Workplace Safety Team also continues to provide assistance to the Licensing Team due to some of the complexity of issues and businesses they deal with, also officer competence.

The team continues partnership working with UKHSA and provides assistance in outbreak management and infectious diseases management.

The Team Leader also chairs the inter-authority group meetings and Health and Safety focus groups.

2.6 Promotional Work and Other Non-Statutory Actions

Campaign 1 (Funeral Directors), which is detailed on page 11, is a non-statutory function.

Additionally, as part of all campaigns and any Health & Safety Complaints and Accident Investigations undertaken by the team, proactive stress awareness information will also be shared by officers to businesses. During each inspection, officers will be raising awareness of stress within the workplace and directing businesses to the Working Minds campaign on the HSE website. Further information on this campaign can be found here: [Working Minds - Work Right to keep Britain safe](#). These will be the only non-statutory functions carried out this year.

Due to resourcing challenges, no non-statutory work was carried out in the previous financial year.

Section 3 – Internal Organisation and Planning

3.1 Staffing Allocation and Development

The Workplace Safety Team consists of a Team Leader (whose remit also includes Food Safety work) and three dedicated workplace safety officers (a Senior Regulatory Services Officer, and two Regulatory Services Officers).

During 2023 – 2024:

- The Senior RSO post was still vacant. This has been the same since 2022.
- Out of the two RSO posts, one was filled throughout the whole of 2023 – 2024, and one was filled for only 5 months of the year due to maternity leave.

The Senior post remains vacant, and we are unable to recruit experienced officers because the salary rates within Ealing are some of the least competitive in London. This post has been being filled on an Ad-hoc basis by an experienced Health & Safety Contractor.

It is anticipated that following the analysis in previous sections, that the plan can be delivered over 2024 – 2025 within the current complement of officers, but only if:

- No services beyond the absolute minimum statutory service are delivered.
- Where posts are vacant, contractors are used to complete programmed inspections or other functions (such as food enforcement) to fill the shortfall.
- No significant service disruption is experienced (see “**3.2** Potential Challenges, Risks and Threats 2024 – 2025”).

Currently the Workplace Safety Team have 2 Fulltime Officers and a 0.5 Fulltime Team Leader, with ongoing difficulties filling the Senior post. A risk prioritisation process will continue to be applied to all work.

The Food and Workplace Safety Team is also entering a restructuring process during the 2024 – 2025 financial year, which will create a level of uncertainty within the team and potentially effecting staff allocation levels. In the event that the minimum statutory service cannot be delivered, for example due to the realisation of potential threats or inability to recruit suitably qualified officers, then the cost of using contractors to backfill work is likely to result in a budgetary overspend.

In the absence of any resource uplifts to the team, the statutory minimum approach is the most effective option of ensuring the Council's statutory duties are discharged, while acknowledging that the absence of discretionary service is far from desirable.

3.2 Potential Challenges, Risks and Threats 2024 – 2025

The following section details risks and threats facing service delivery. Because resourcing is conformed to fulfil only the minimum statutory obligations, the following matters have the potential to require resources to be expended at the expense of fulfilment of minimum statutory standards.

Some threats arise because there is an inherent risk in providing only the minimum statutory service, as this can lead to a decline in overall compliance across the borough, and an inability of the service to provide discretionary services.

Other threats arise because the workplace officers are part of the Food and Workplace Safety Team. This team has a variety of responsibilities and functions beyond workplace safety and therefore may be called upon to carry out other functions at the expense of fulfilment of minimum statutory standards in relation to food and workplace safety.

It must also be acknowledged that the following are the known, foreseeable, or potential threats. There will no doubt be concerning matters that risk service provision which are unforeseen.

Significant Incidents such as Workplace Fatalities or Widespread Food Poisoning

There are a variety of incidents that may occur that would require both a significant immediate response and present an ongoing significant resource burden on investigation and follow up work.

The most severe examples would be a workplace fatality/multiple fatalities, or a food poisoning outbreak or incident that resulted in fatality. Such incidents would require deployment of our most experienced and competent officers, as well as a redeployment of multiple officers to assist in the initial response. The follow up work on these incidents can last many months and most cases years.

Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment has always been challenging for the team at Ealing. Despite offering extensive practical experience and professional development opportunities, Ealing's unique nature, including some of the lowest remuneration in the sector, makes it hard to attract candidates, especially experienced officers. Conventionally, the team has dealt with long periods of vacancies by back filling work using contractors to carry out inspections. However, it is also difficult to find contractors suitable to assign because Ealing's contractor rates are also one of the sector's lowest.

Retention of existing officers is challenging for similar reasons since officers in the team quickly build a level of experience that enables them to easily command higher salaries at other authorities that Ealing will not match.

Perceval House Renovations

The Council had planned to decant Perceval House in 2023 and move to a new location. However, this has since been cancelled and changed to renovating the existing building. The renovation process will disrupt the team and give rise to resource pressures to prepare equipment for any temporary move during renovation. The Team has specialist needs when it comes to accommodation, i.e., the requirements are more than simply having a desk and Wi-Fi connection, as significant evidence and specialist equipment storage is needed and access to public meeting rooms to carry out Interviews Under Caution under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. The Team also needs to have the ability to bank money.

Due to these specialist needs, the team does not easily fit within accommodation procurement proposals and there is a risk that for this reason the team will be located somewhere that is not fit for purpose, even temporarily, with a consequential pressure on resources.

Smokefree Enforcement

Businesses that offer tobacco smoking, particularly shisha lounges, are disproportionately non-compliant and as a sector, are over-represented as sources of crime, disorder, ASB, and violent crime. Most of these premises are non-compliant with smokefree legislation which the team has enforcement responsibility to implement. While multiple prosecutions have been undertaken in the past, the maximum fines are £2,500, so provide little deterrent to non-compliance or meaningful penalties to those who are convicted. Few regulatory complaints are received about these businesses and most service requests are made by other agencies, such as safer communities and the police referring businesses to the team.

The table below details the Smokefree Enforcement action taken by the Workplace Safety Team in the previous Financial Year.

2023 – 2024 Financial Year	
Total Smoke Free Complaints Received	13
Total Smoke Free Inspections Carried Out	37
Total Smoke Free Warning Letters Sent	10
Total Smoke Free Prosecutions Successful	7
Total Smoke Free Prosecutions Ongoing/Not Heard Yet	5
Total Fines Received	£21,465.00
Total Costs Received	£9,098.56

Ealing is becoming a popular destination for these businesses to locate themselves. These businesses often open in light industrial settings where rents are cheap and large premises can be quickly opened and operated, allowing maximisation of profits through economies of scale.

Ealing Council had a Smokefree case conclude in May 2024, however it is a good example on the work these types of cases involve.

In May 2022, Workplace Safety officers visited Bamboo Lounge and advised against shisha smoking. Despite this, during visits in August 2022, February 2023, and July 2023, the business was found in violation again. Bamboo Nights UK LTD and its sole director, pleaded guilty to three offenses and were fined £27,836.99. A manager was also found guilty of failing to prevent shisha smoking on three occasions and was fined £10,950. Previously, in 2019, Bamboo Lounge and the same manager were fined £12,607.60 for similar violations, showing prosecution does not seem to be a deterrent.

Ealing Council will continue proactive inspections of shisha lounges to ensure compliance with regulations and will take strict enforcement action against violators.

3.3 Information and Data Management

All service requests are received and logged by the Quality Assurance Officer's in the Food and Workplace Safety Team on council's internal database - Idox Uniform. Idox Uniform stores all information about the work the team undertakes and allows officers to retrieve the information and record all actions.

The RIDDOR Notifications as well as Infectious Diseases information is accessed and/or retrieved by the business support team, who have access to secure databases. Once the information is received, the business support team records it on Idox Uniform.

In the future there are plans to change the data management system from Idox Uniform to a more up-to-date system. This will have an impact on the team and this procurement process is likely to conclude at the end of this financial year.

3.4 Quality Assessment, Oversight, and Internal Monitoring

Officers are subject to proportionate monitoring checks for accuracy and consistency of their work. All officers have recorded "one to one's" with their team leader at least every 6 weeks. During the one to one the officer's performance is monitored, work is reviewed, and critical feedback provided. In addition, certain day-to-day processes such as enforcement actions require team leader oversight.

Checks are carried out by peers and Food and Workplace Safety Team Quality Assurance Officer.

The Council's formal appraisal timetable is followed. Yearly Objective Setting is carried out by the team leader with each officer between April and June.

3.5 Review, Variation, and Improvement

Overall progress against the service plan will be reviewed in November 2024 and forms part of the 2024 – 2025 Service Plan. This will also be in conjunction with officers' Mid-Year Appraisals.

The review will also identify where there was deviation from the service plan and, where appropriate, the reasons for that variance. The review will include plans for any relevant improvement or service development identified as necessary by the review or the quality assessment.

Food & Workplace Safety Performance Review Report 2023-24

1. Food Safety Service delivery review

	2022-2023	2023-2024
Reactive		
Service requests received	1016	1031
Proactive		
Inspections carried out	2016	1813
Enforcement		
Total enforcement actions	103	92
Hygiene Improvement Notices	55	50
Hygiene Emergency Prohibition	36	28
Withdrawal of Approval	1	0
Voluntary Closure	1	5
Simple cautions	1	1
Successful prosecutions	9	8
Export Health Certificates		
Heath Certificates Issued	133	135
Sampling and Analysis		
Food samples	66	224
Public Analyst	0	33

2. Food Advisory Service

In 2023, the service secured funding from UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to work with local businesses who are included in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) to improve their compliance and their FHRS scores (to fund 1 Food Safety Advisor post). Since 1st of August 2023 Food Advisors have contacted **346** premises and conducted **147** onsite revisits or advisory visits. **92** of approached by the advisors' businesses have subsequently had a re-inspection or a re-rating and **79%** are now compliant.

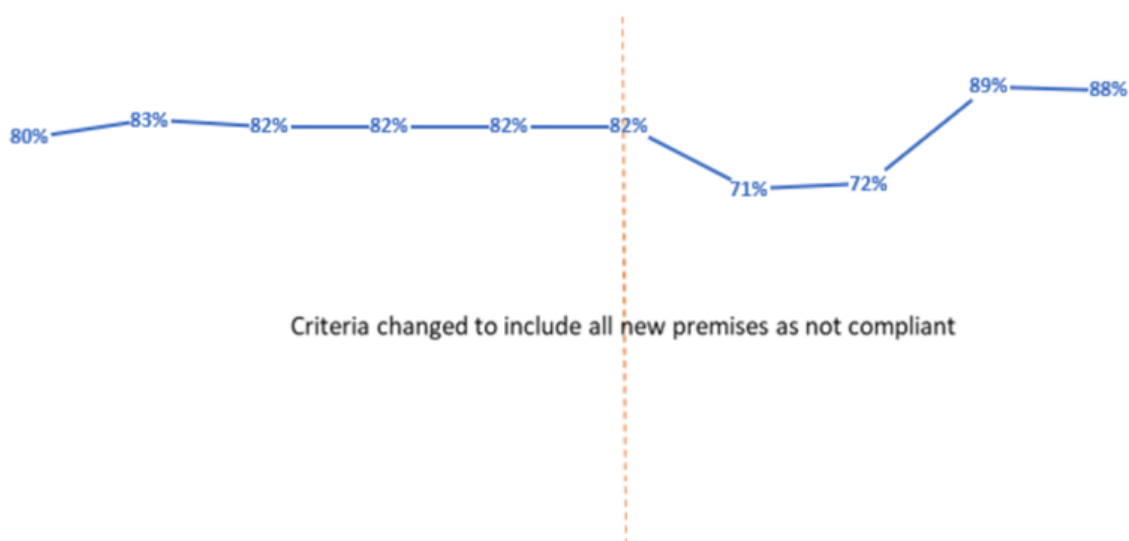
FHRS Awarded after advice	Frequency
5*	28
4*	28
3*	17
2*	5
1*	7
0*	7
Total	92

Compliant	73 (79%)
Non-Compliant	19 (21%)

3. Food Hygiene Compliance rates across borough.

Ward	% compliant	Numbers of food businesses	
		Broadly Compliant	Noncompliant
Central Greenford	94.9%	166	9
Dormers Wells	83.3%	45	9
Ealing Broadway	93.2%	221	16
Ealing Common	88.4%	76	10
East Acton	92.9%	92	7
Greenford Broadway	92.1%	116	10
Hanger Hill	87.7%	114	16
Hanwell Broadway	92.7%	152	12
Lady Margaret	87.7%	64	9
North Acton	85.3%	377	65
North Greenford	95.6%	86	4
North Hanwell	93.8%	75	5
Northfield	89.6%	103	12
Northolt Mandeville	98.8%	83	1
Northolt West End	92.8%	64	5
Norwood Green	79.8%	95	24
Perivale	89.3%	109	13
Pitshanger	92.9%	92	7
South Acton	85.7%	191	32
Southall Broadway	83.6%	148	29
Southall Green	71.6%	146	58
Southall West	84.2%	32	6
Southfield	94.4%	102	6
Walpole	90.2%	174	19
Grand Total	88.4%	2923	384

PERCENTAGE OF ALL PREMISES THAT ARE BROADLY COMPLIANT



2014-15 2015-16 2016-17 2017-18 2018-19 2019-20 2020-21 2021-22 2022-23 2023-24

4. Workplace Safety Service delivery review

	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025 (Predicted)
Reactive			
Service Requests Received	266	293	275
Visits to Investigate Health & Safety Complaints	59	58	60
RIDDOR Notifications	107	131	110
RIDDOR Investigations	6	13	8
Infectious Diseases Notifications	405	495	450
Overseeing of Exhumations	1	0	0
Proactive			
Proactive Inspections Carried Out	45	20	40
Enforcement			
Immediate Prohibition Notices	41	10	15
Improvement Notices	14	6	20
Simple Cautions	0	0	0
Successful Prosecutions	0	1	2

Projects 2022 – 2023

Project	Aim & Targets	Outcomes
Campaign 1: Gas Safety (National)	To ensure compliance with gas safety in commercial catering premises 10x inspections and relevant further action	10 Inspections Completed 1 Revisit Completed 1 Prohibition Notice served
Campaign 2: Guarding of Work Equipment Campaign (Local)	To ensure compliance with electrical safety legislation in commercial premises 10x inspections and relevant further action	10 inspections Completed 4 Revisits Completed 2 Prohibition Notices Served

Food & Workplace Safety Performance Review Report 2023-24

Projects 2023 – 2024

Project	Aim & Targets	Anticipated Outcomes
Campaign 1*: Funeral Directors (National)	To ensure appropriate controls are in place for the professional and dignified management of the deceased within Funeral Directors.	Visits to all Funeral Directors within Ealing (Estimated at 21) and providing feedback to relevant Government Body. Status: Scheduled for Sept & Oct 2024
Campaign 2: Swimming Pool Safety (Local)	To ensure appropriate controls are in place for the management and treatment of Swimming Pool water.	5 x Inspections and relevant further action Status: Scheduled for Jan -March 2024
Campaign 3: Crowd Safety (Local)	Crowd management and the prevention of Injuries/Fatalities to members of the public.	5 x Inspections of larger events and relevant further action Status = Completed
Campaign 4: Warehouse Safety (Local)	To ensure appropriate controls are in place for workplace transport and racking.	10 x Inspections and relevant further action Status: Ongoing

* Campaign 1: The Ministry of Justice has requested that all Local Authorities conduct an inspection of the Funeral Directors within their areas due to a distressing incident that occurred at a Legacy Independent Funeral Directors in Hull at the start of 2024. There is currently no statutory inspection regime in relation to the services provided by funeral directors, and quality standards in the provision of funeral director services are not prescribed by law. This project will therefore consume considerable time in planning, understanding enforcement options, and training officers to be competent and confident to conduct the inspections. Additionally, we are currently only aware of 21 funeral directors as they are not required to be registered, so the inspection target is currently approximate and may increase.

5. Smokefree Enforcement

	2022/2023	2023/2024
Total Smoke Free Complaints Received		13
Total Smoke Free Inspections Carried Out	34	37
Total Smoke Free Warning Letters Sent	6	10
Total Smoke Free Successful Prosecutions	12	7