



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Food Safety and Health and Safety Service Plan



2020/21

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Links to other documents

Document	Link
Environmental Services Service Plan 2018-19	http://intranetsrv.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/893/env_1718_service_plan
Corporate plan	https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/9012/corporate_plan_2015-19
Enterprising East Northants Strategy	https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/enterpriseEN

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Executive Summary

The food and health and safety functions play a vital role in ensuring the health of those that live, work and visit our district. We do this through ensuring safe food is produced, workplaces are safe and by supporting businesses. We are key to ensuring regulation is supportive of growth and can help businesses in our district thrive.

We do this through a range of different interventions from advice, coaching and more rarely using enforcement activity.

The plan explains the background to the food safety and health and safety regulatory services and identifies the scope of the service and resources that have been allocated to meet the services requirements.

The Council is committed to improving health and safety and food safety outcomes from the interventions that it undertakes. We target these interventions on those duty holders that can most influence the reduction of health and safety and food safety risks with an emphasis on stopping those who seek to take economic advantage from non compliance with legislation. At all times we will give priority to those activities giving rise to the most serious risk and where the risks are most poorly controlled.

We also seek to engage with a variety of partners in the public and private sector in order to deliver this plan.

This document is approved by CMT and Councillors and demonstrates our commitment to improving health and safety and food safety outcomes.

1.0 Overview of Key Service Aims in 20-21

- 1.1 The aim is to ensure a risk-based, proportionate and targeted approach to regulatory inspection and enforcement, whilst supporting businesses.
- 1.2. This year will continue to see a food safety focus on those poorly performing premises that are not broadly compliant.
- 1.3. The team will continue to develop its food sampling programme and its successful environmental sampling initiative to highlight problem premises and focus on improving their food safety standards through coaching and business support.
- 1.4. The team will continue to support businesses especially at start up and growth to encourage development.
- 1.5. Northamptonshire Local Authorities have agreed a set of health and safety priorities that have been based on National and Regional data when establishing this years work plan.
- 1.6. We will continue to utilise the Adenosine Tri-Phosphate (a measure for residual protein indicating the presence of bacteria) machines as an educational tool to improve cleaning in food businesses.
- 1.7. We will continue to promote the Eat Out Eat Well scheme.
- 1.8. The team will explore opportunities to develop primary authority agreements if the opportunity arises.
- 1.9. Progress with Local Government Reform has been delayed due to COVID-19 and the focus is now to ensure the two Unitary Authorities are safe and legal before vesting day. The objectives are as follows:
 - To ensure the establishment of safe, legal and accessible regulatory service provision within both Unitary Authorities
 - Ensure officers have the appropriate delegated authorities
 - Harmonise strategies, policies and procedures – where this is impractical or unfair (e.g. taxi licensing) a transitioning period will be determined and agreed
 - Ensure seamless transitions for investigations, prosecutions and case management
 - Establish legal, efficient and effective governance structures

1.10. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on delivery of the service at the time of writing. The extent to which the above aims will be achieved will be influenced by how things progress as we move towards the 'new normal'.

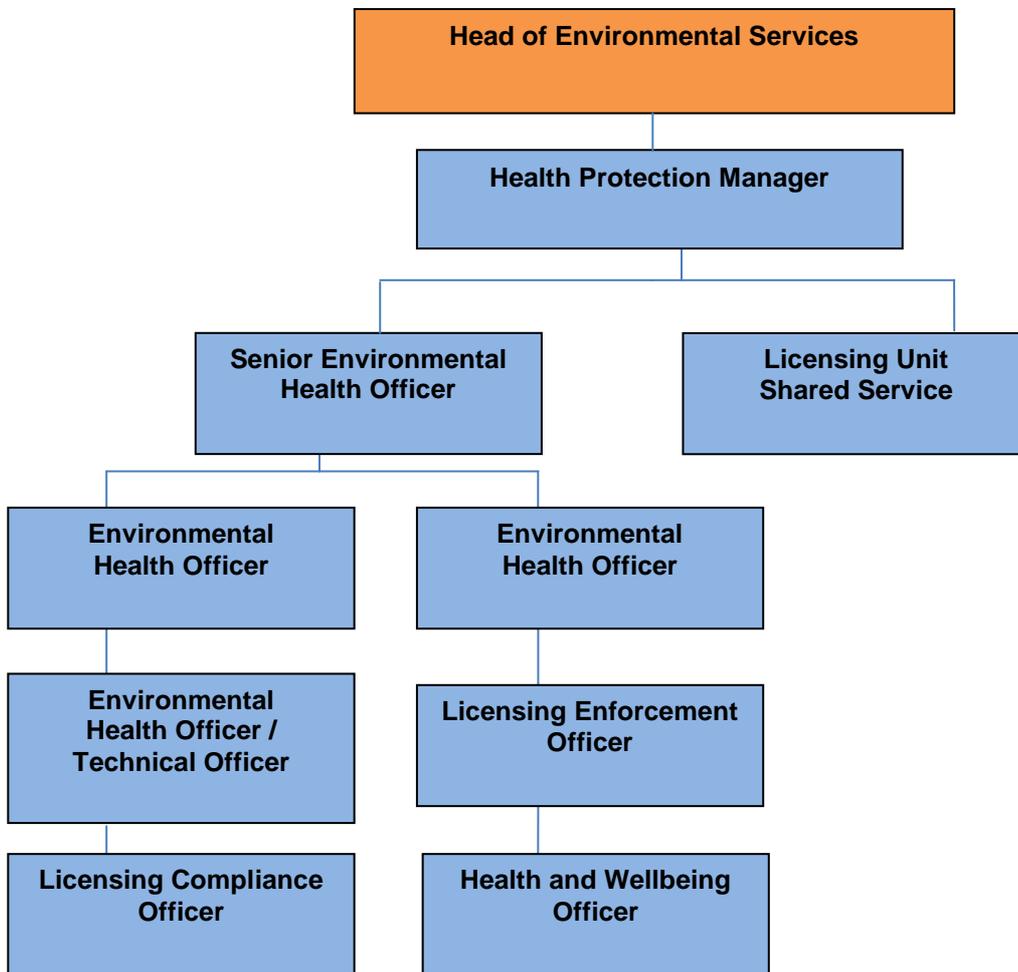
2.0 Background

2.1. East Northamptonshire is a large rural district in the East Midlands made up of six towns and 55 villages with a population of 94,527(estimated).



2.2. It is served by major road networks such as the A14, A45, A43, A47, A605 and the A6 which continues to impact on the district by increasing the number of food businesses, in particular manufacturers. We have also seen an increase in smaller businesses and existing businesses diversifying.

2.3. The Health Protection Team is structured as follows:



2.4. **Food** - The service inspects and audits food premises, takes food samples, provides advice and training, undertakes food poisoning investigations and provides education to food businesses and the public. Complaints about food and food businesses are investigated as are individual cases and outbreaks of food poisoning.

Health and Safety - The service undertakes a range of interventions with local businesses, investigates accidents, investigates complaints and provides advice and education to businesses and employees. The HSE have reduced the amount of proactive premises inspections that local authorities can undertake. Proactive inspections can now only be undertaken on key priority premises or sectors. We will visit premises where we receive intelligence that there are matters of concern or where we receive accident reports.

2.5. The officers involved in the food safety and health and safety functions, also deliver infectious disease control, licensing, health promotion and advise on planning applications.

2.6. The Health Protection Team have played a major role in the COVID-19 response. The Food Standards Agency directed food teams to cease the routine inspection programme during lockdown however latest guidance is that these can resume subject to priority and risk assessment. The team has worked with partners and most notably the police to undertake the following:

2.7.

- Keeping up to date with latest government guidance and advice
- Supporting businesses to ensure they are 'Covid Secure'
- Ensure compliance with business restrictions
- Dealing with Covid related complaints and queries
- Assisting Public Health England and Northamptonshire County Council Health Protection Team with the Covid Outbreak response
- Assisting Economic Development and Town Councils with events and promotional work for reopening of the high streets
- Implementation of the new pavement licensing regime

3.0 Links to other Strategies, Plans and Programmes

3.1. This service plan should be read in conjunction with the service plan for Environmental Services as this document is integral to service delivery.

3.2. This plan supports the corporate plan in the following areas:

Clean - through the correct disposal of food waste, and the control of odour from food businesses.

Healthy - diet and nutrition is central to any strategy to prevent deaths from heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Reducing incidences of food poisoning has a positive impact on the community's health.

Prosperous - by providing low cost training, business start up packs, business coaching, leaflets and advice, the service assists the economy in complying with legislation and encourages the provision of healthier choices through the Eat Out Eat Well scheme

By making sure that businesses are compliant with regulation in a way that is consistent and avoids unnecessary burdens, we contribute significantly to the conditions for sustainable economic growth.

Safe – through the inspection, initiatives and investigation of complaints and accidents to ensure the safety of workers and those affected by work activities.

Good value for money – providing an efficient and effective service and low cost training opportunities.

High quality service delivery – by providing a quality service to both businesses and consumers to ensure the provision of safe food and a safe working environment within the community.

Effective partnership working – working with other local authorities, Northamptonshire County Council, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP), Knowledge Hub, Chamber of Commerce, Health and Safety Executive, Food Standards Agency, local businesses, and consumers.

3.3. This plan complements the following corporate strategies:

- Corporate Plan
- Performance Management Framework
- Licensing Policy Statement
- Enterprising East Northants Strategy and Business Charter

3.4. This plan complements the following Regional and National Strategies:

- Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Public Health Outcomes
- Northamptonshire COVID-19 Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan
- Future Northants Prospectus – The Next Chapter May 2020

It also supports the priorities identified by the local forums for health and wellbeing.

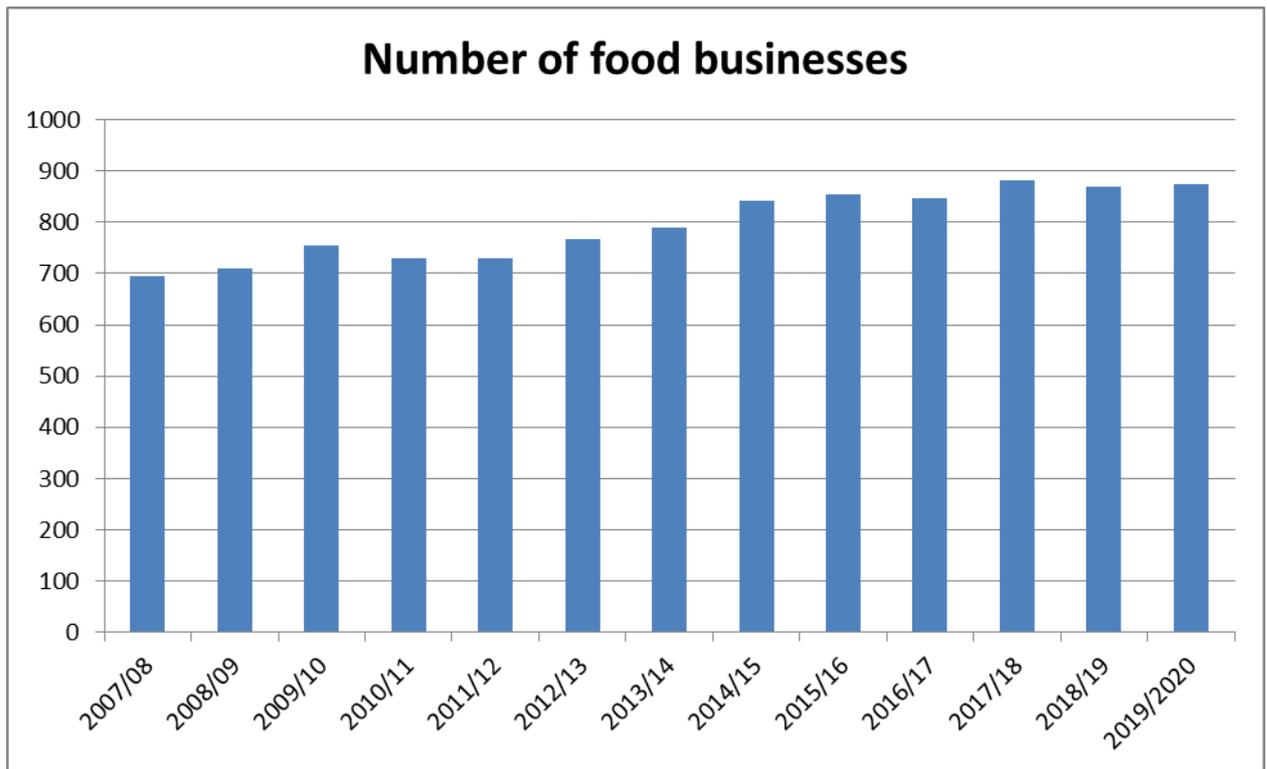
4.0 Service Specific Information - Food Safety

4.1 The team currently act as a Home Authority for Farrington Oils, Whitworths Limited and Tilley's Sweets Limited. We have recently joined a SEMLEP Growth Hub Primary Authority Pilot which is one of seven pilots across the country. The aim of these pilots is to enhance regulatory support to local businesses.

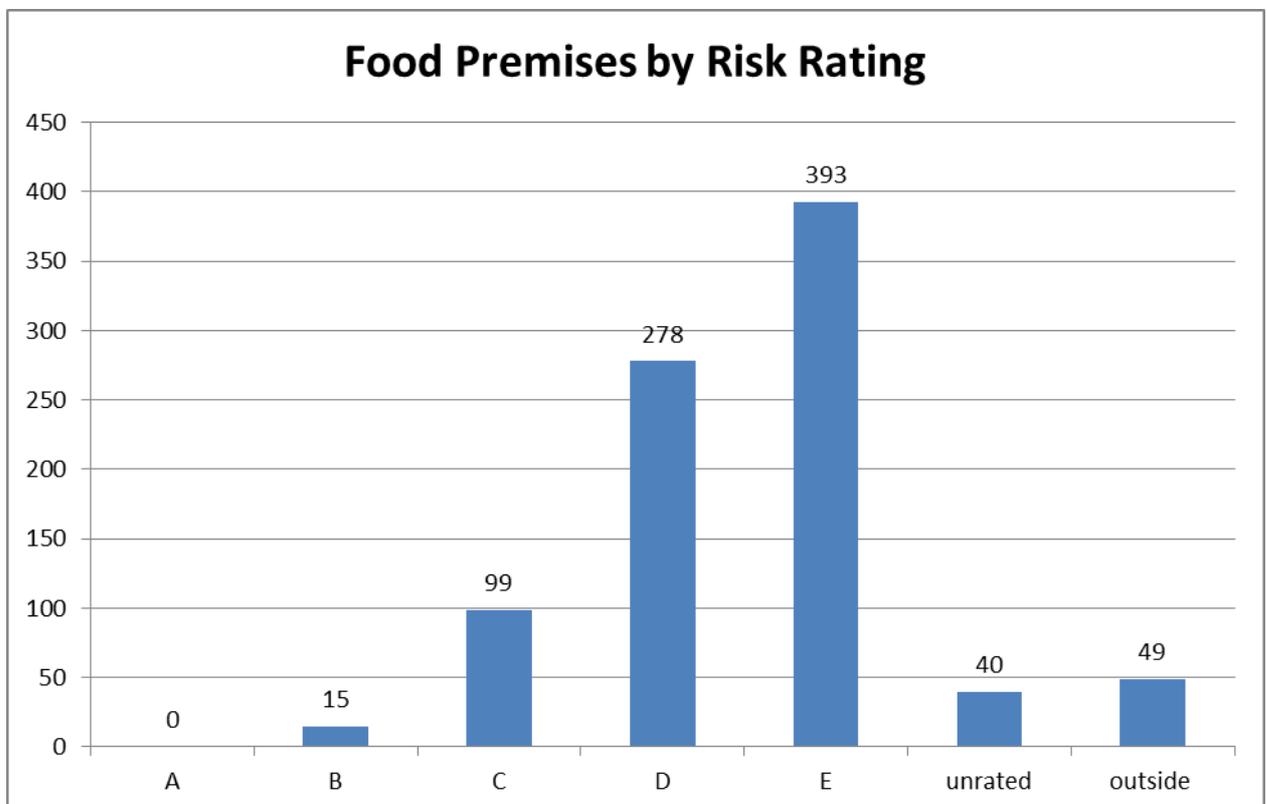
4.2 The current statistics for food businesses in East Northamptonshire are as follows:

The total number of premises for food inspection is 874 which is an increase of 5 from the previous year. 93% of food businesses are broadly compliant with food hygiene law. In addition, there are a number of micro breweries and one Approved Premises (Redlands Farm).

The following chart shows the growth of food business within East Northamptonshire over recent years.

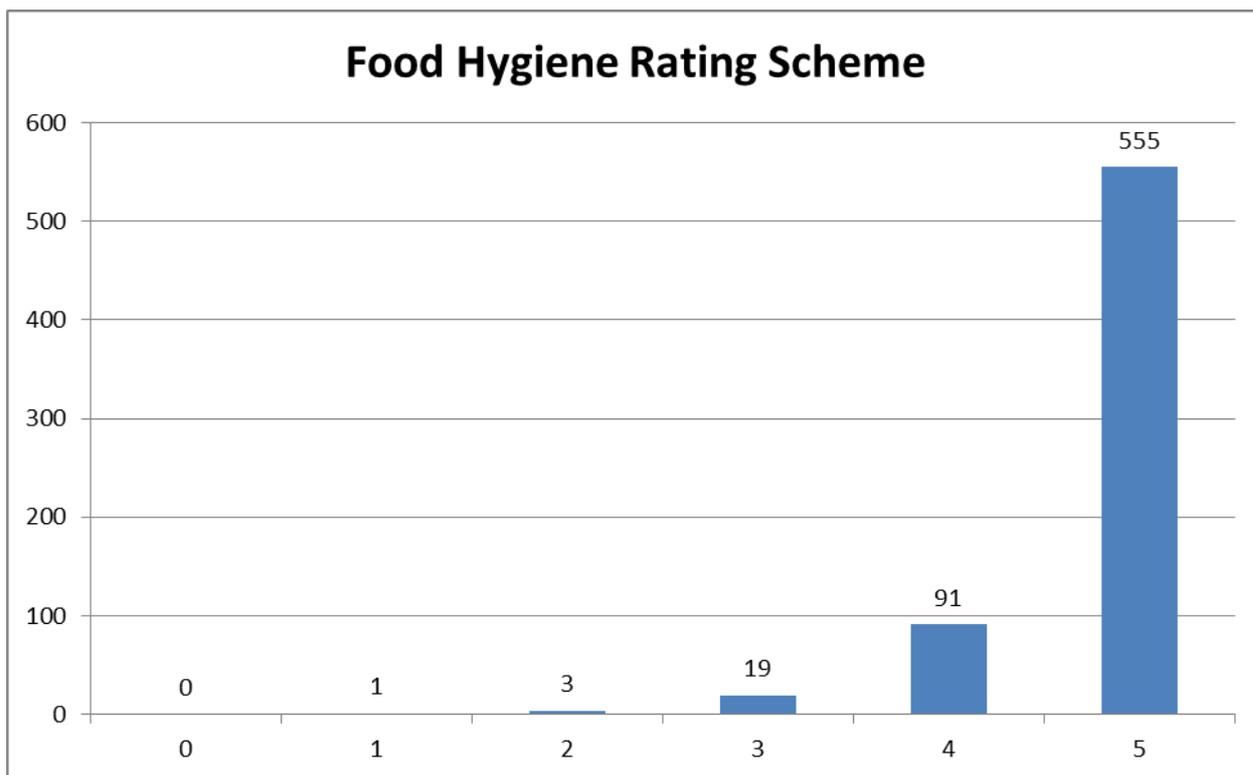


The following chart details the risk ratings for the premises within our district, A being the highest risk and E being the lowest.



4.3 The food hygiene rating scheme gives each premises a numerical rating based on their food safety management systems, structure and confidence in management. The ratings range from 0 to 5, where 0 means 'urgent improvement is required' and 5 means 'standards are very good'. The ratings are publicly available at www.food.gov.uk/ratings.

The following chart shows the ratings for our premises that are included within the scheme.



4.4 The service is delivered both in and out of normal office hours to ensure premises are inspected whilst they are operational. There is also a 24 hour call out system for emergencies at the weekends. It is the policy for food inspections, unless in exceptional circumstances, to be carried out unannounced to allow the actual business operations to be observed.

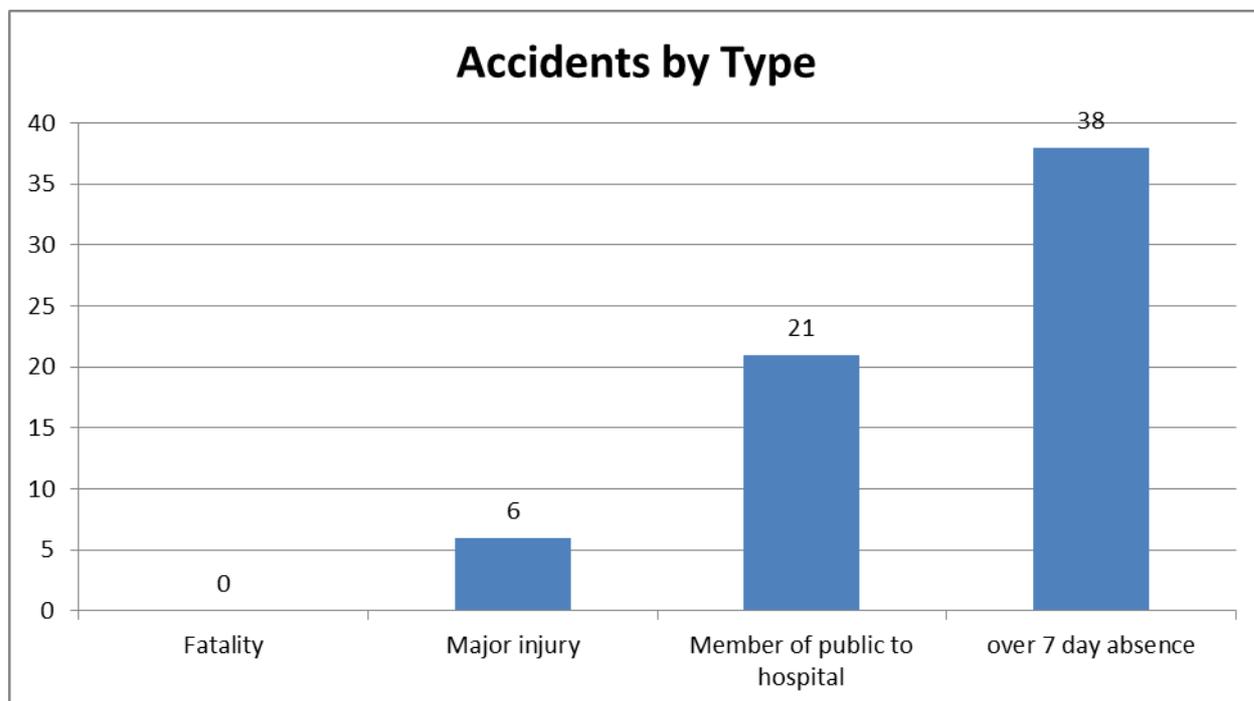
4.5. Environmental Services has a general enforcement policy. All enforcement action will be taken in line with this policy. In addition to this, there are comprehensive procedures available to ensure consistency of service.

5.0 Service Specific Information - Health and Safety

5.1 The total number of businesses where health and safety is enforced by East Northamptonshire Council is around 1,100. This is not an accurate figure as the statutory requirement to register with your local authority has been removed.

5.2 Accidents are investigated following incident investigation criteria that are applied nationally. In general terms serious accidents would be investigated but more minor accidents are recorded and used as local intelligence on the safety performance of individual companies/duty holders. They also help to plan interventions for the most common types of accident.

The following chart shows the reported accidents by type for the last year.



5.3 Environmental Services has a general enforcement policy. All enforcement action will be taken in line with this policy. In addition, there are procedures available to ensure consistency of service.

5.4 The service is delivered both in and out of normal office hours to ensure premises are inspected whilst operational. There is also a 24 hour call out system at weekends for emergencies.

6.0 Service Delivery – Food Safety

6.1 For premises in the risk groups A-D there are a number of interventions set out in the food law code of practice that can be used. These range from advice and intelligence gathering to inspections and audits. All of these interventions must take place at an appropriate frequency depending on the risk rating awarded at the previous inspection.

6.2 For the lower risk E premise postal questionnaires may be sent out as an alternative to carrying out interventions.

6.3 A rated premises are inspected every 6 months and the lower risk E premises will receive a visit or a questionnaire every three years.

The following table shows the interventions that are due in 2019-20 compared to previous years.

Risk Rating	Number of interventions due				
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
A	2	0	0	0	0
B	12	9	8	10	13
C	82	63	78	73	54
D	95	124	117	128	151
E	30	66	125	89	120
Unrated	10	0	0	0	48
Total	231	262	328	300	386

- 6.4. Although the team aim to ensure 95% of the due A-C interventions are completed by the end of the year this is likely to be a significant challenge this year due to the pausing of the inspection programme due to Covid-19. There may also be a reduction in standards which may result in the need for more support and education and as a last resort enforcement. It is likely that there will be a backlog of overdue inspections at the end of the year. Visits will be prioritised according to risk which will need to be weighed against required Covid response. All premises have received a Covid specific newsletter to ensure they understand how to comply with the Covid Secure guidance.
- 6.5. Any new business advice has been provided virtually during the pandemic, either by phone or email and advisory visits will resume as soon as is practicable and on a risk assessed basis. The team strongly believes that this support improves hygiene standards resulting in our businesses having better food hygiene ratings. It is also an opportunity to signpost businesses to any grants and support they can receive. A member of the team attends a Business Focus Group. The group coordinate activities for supporting businesses across East Northamptonshire.
- 6.6. All food complaints are investigated. The authority received 68 complaints and 46 service requests last year with respect to foodstuffs and food premises.
- 6.7. The team also provide Level 2 food hygiene and nutrition courses according to demand.
- 6.8. The authority takes part in Public Health England and Northamptonshire Food Liaison Groups sampling programmes. Sampling will also be targeted at businesses where there are hygiene concerns. All food samples are analysed by the Public Health Laboratory Service based in Collingdale. The Public Analyst, (Eurofins Scientific Laboratories) in London is used occasionally.
- 6.9. Between Public Health England (PHE) and the Authority, there are formal arrangements in place to identify and investigate cases of food poisoning. All laboratory identified cases of food poisoning are sent directly to the authority for investigation. All incidents of food poisoning or alleged food poisoning are investigated with a view to tracing the

source and preventing spread and reoccurrence. Last year there were 139 infectious disease notifications.

- 6.10 The authority acts on all food alerts received in accordance with the food alert procedure and the FSA's Code of Practice.
- 6.11 The authority has local partnerships with the following organisations:
- The Northamptonshire Food Liaison Group
 - Northamptonshire Food Surveillance Group
 - Northamptonshire Trading Standards
 - Public Health England
 - Food Standards Agency (FSA)
 - CQC
 - OFSTED.
- 6.12 The team continues to promote the Eat Out Eat Well Healthy Eating Scheme. We currently have 31 businesses with awards consisting of 8 bronze, 11 silver and 12 gold.
- 6.13 All relevant planning applications are considered by the team with respect to food safety. Advice is given on premises layout. Copies of Licensing Act consultations are forwarded to the team.

7.0 Service Delivery – Health and Safety

- 7.1. The following action plan details areas of focus and/or interventions that have been agreed on the County work plan for the 2020/21.

Priorities
Preparing for Unitary
Northamptonshire Workplace Health and Wellbeing toolkit
Warehousing and workplace transport
Inflatable amusement devices
Public Events
Gas safety in commercial catering operations
Indoor Cooking on Solid Fuel
Beverage Gases in the Hospitality Industry

- 7.2. The above activities are co-ordinated at a County level.
- 7.3. Accident investigations are undertaken based on an assessment of the situation using accident investigation criteria. All Health and Safety complaints are investigated. The authority received 8 complaints and requests for service last year.
- 7.4. Advice and education for businesses, schools and individuals is provided for health and safety on request. The team also produces a business newsletter bringing current health and safety matters to the attention of local businesses. The team has established links with Public Health, HSE, CQC and OFSTED to address health and safety issues.

7.5. All relevant planning applications are considered by the team with respect to Health and Safety and advice is given to future businesses at this point, with the aim of designing out health and safety problems.

8.0 Resources

8.1. The current costings of the Food and Health and Safety Service are described below:

2018/19	Food Safety £	Health and Safety £
Support Costs	100,560	49,280
Salaries	119,750	84,130
Equipment	500	150
Sampling	200*	0
Training income	-£3,900	
Officer training	£5000**	

*This figure does not include the allocation of sampling credits from the Public Health England

**This figure is for the department and is dependent on identified need and statutory requirements

8.2. There are 1.90 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) officers for the food safety function. The above calculations can be broken down into officers as detailed below:

Health Protection Manager (EHO)	0.25 FTE
Senior Environmental Health Officer	0.45 FTE
Environmental Health Officer	0.25 FTE
Environmental Health Officer	0.60 FTE
Environmental Health Officer	0.35 FTE

8.3. There are 1.3 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) officers for health and safety. The above calculations can be broken down into officers as detailed below:

Health Protection Manager (EHO)	0.25 FTE
Senior Environmental Health Officer	0.30 FTE
Environmental Health Officer	0.15 FTE
Environmental Health Officer	0.20 FTE
Environmental Health Officer	0.40 FTE

8.4. A report was presented to Personnel Sub-Committee in March seeking permission to change the vacant part time post of Health Protection Officer to a full time Health and Wellbeing Officer. The request was approved, however at the time of writing it has not been possible to recruit to the post.

8.5. Officer training needs are identified during the Personal Development Review process and a training programme is developed once this process is complete. It is Council policy to ensure that officers involved in enforcing food safety legislation receive a minimum of 10 hours continuing professional development training as required by Food

Standards Agency Code of Practice and practice guidance. This will be provided through a combination of commercial courses provided by the Food Standards Agency, Five plus 1, Northamptonshire Food Liaison Group and internal training courses. It is the policy of the Council to ensure that officers involved in enforcing health and safety are competent in accordance with section 18 of Health and Safety at Work Act.

9.0 Quality Assessment

Internal monitoring procedures are in place for food and health and safety to ensure quality and consistency. Workloads, specific cases and the current position against the inspection programme and service plan are reviewed during 1-1 meetings and team meetings.

10.0 Review

10.1 The food safety and health and safety function will continually monitor and review its performance against the food service plan and report serious deviations to the Policy and Resources Committee. The authority will annually review its performance and report against the Food Service Plan on the intranet after 1st April each year.

11.0 Outcomes and links to the corporate outcomes

11.1 The outcomes to be delivered by this strategy are:

- Compliance with the Food Standards Agency Framework agreement and Code of Practice
- Improved food safety in the district.
- Improved health and a reduction of workplace accidents in the district

12.0 Glossary

CMT – Corporate Management Team
HSE – Health and Safety Executive
FSA – Food Standards Agency
RDNA – Regulators Development Needs Assessment
LGR – Local Government Regulation
HPA – Health Protection Agency
OFSTED – Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills
CQC – Care Quality Commission
PDR – Personal Development Review
HSWA – Health and Safety at Work Act
SEMLEP – South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership