

Summary of Service Delivery for Maidstone Environmental Health April 2015 – March 2016

1. Staffing

During the year we have seen the appointment of a new EHO to the Food and Safety Team from Tunbridge Wells B C and a Food & Safety Officer qualify and gain registration to undertake food hygiene inspections following a two year training and professional competency programme. This has strengthened the overall resilience of the team and helped to deliver the service outcomes below.

2. Food Safety

2.1. Programmed Work

The work of the team involves a range of measures to protect public health including; advice & guidance, audits & inspections, verification and surveillance visits, sampling visits, and information and intelligence gathering. This work is generally programmed through out the year and determined by the risk rating of the businesses based on officers' last visit to the premises. Table 1 provides an overview of the work carried out within Maidstone and compares the work to 2014/15.

	14/15	15/16
Total Number of Food Premises within Maidstone	1,248	1,248
Number of Food Interventions Achieved	699	933
Number of Food Interventions Due	778	938
Inspections achieved as percentage	90%	99%

Table 1: Programmed Food Interventions

2.2. Reactive Work

Complaints about the hygiene standards at a food premises or concerns about the food purchased by consumers in Maidstone are proportionately small to the number of food businesses and food consumed, but it is an important means of food intelligence for the team. All complaints are assessed and allocated to officers by the Team Leader. We discourage anonymous requests from the public to enable us to investigate and respond back to complainants following the investigation of allegations.

	14/15	15/16
Food Complaints (complaints of foreign bodies, mould etc)	67	65
Food Hygiene Complaints (associated	35	29

with a food business)		
Total Number	102	94

Table 2: Food Complaints and Service Requests

3. Health & Safety

3.1. Health and safety enforcement is divided between the HSE and local authorities. We have responsibility for health and safety within the service, and leisure industries, in general. Each year the HSE produce guidance on the inspection programmes for local authorities based on intelligence and analysis of data from accidents and incidents. During 2015-16 no Kent wide proactive health and safety projects were undertaken.

3.2. Maidstone received a number of accident notifications through the HSE RIDDOR website, the official method for businesses to notify authorities of accident, incidents and dangerous occurrences. Some accidents may be reported by businesses which do not necessarily require reporting (for example they may involve a member of the public or no work activity is associated with the accident), these incidents are considered to be non reportable and are recorded but may not warrant investigation.

	14/15	15/16
Accident Reports Received	120	138
Non Reportable Accidents	41	46
H&S Advice Requests	15	6
Complaints of H&S	16	9
LOLER notifications	3	6
Asbestos Advice	0	1
Total Number	195	206

Table 3: Reactive health and safety work in Maidstone

4. Tattoo Hygiene Rating Scheme

In December 2015 as part of a Kent wide initiative to encourage high standards in the tattooing industry within the county, Mid Kent Environmental Health launched a Tattoo Rating Scheme. Similar to the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme it is based on Welsh Chartered Institution of Environmental Health criteria, which need to be achieved before the award can be issued. A Maidstone tattoo business, Stainless Steve achieved the first Level 4 award within the shared service and remains one of the few across Kent to achieve this high standard.

5. Infectious Disease Control

The officers in the Food & Safety team work closely with Public Health England to follow up cases of notifiable disease, such as Campylobacter, E.coli or Legionella reported through the medical notification from a GP.

Cases are investigated to control the spread of infection or prevent further cases of food poisoning.

6. Environmental Protection

In contrast to the work of the Environmental Enforcement team the work of the Environmental Protection team focuses on identifying means of preventing future problems occurring or carrying out specialist inspection regime work under the pollution prevention and control scheme and the private water supply legislation.

6.1. Private Water Supplies

There are six private water supplies in the Maidstone area. These are a mix of private residences, commercial sites and combined commercial and residential systems. The scheme we operate under is strictly controlled by the Drinking Water Inspectorate. We are required to carry out a risk assessment every five years on each supply to ensure the system and water quality is satisfactory. We also carry out a number of water samples each year for each supply.

6.2. Pollution Prevention Control

This is a DEFRA lead management scheme for the control of various potentially polluting industrial/commercial processes. We issue permits with conditions to ensure the businesses achieve the required environmental standards. We inspect these processes under a risk based scheme which produces an annual inspection programme.

Maidstone have 42 premises with permits under this scheme, which range from complex processes associated with Vinters Park Crematorium to more straight forward controls at petrol stations and dry cleaners. During 2015/16 31 inspections were undertaken by officers.

Across the shared service, the PPC scheme was contracted out at Swale and Tunbridge Wells. But during 2015/16 through a range of training programmes and using the expertise and knowledge from Maidstone's officers, the whole scheme will be brought in house from 1 April 2016.

6.3. Air Quality

Maidstone have a duty to monitor the air quality within the district for pollutants which are potentially harmful to public health, this includes nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter. We fulfil this duty through our continuous monitoring stations at Detling and Fairmeadow in the town centre (currently being relocated due to

town centre road works) and using 54 NOx tubes throughout the district. The 2015 Updating & Screening Assessment Report was submitted to and approved by Defra it is published at www.kentair.org.uk this report contains the verified monitoring data collected during the year.

We continue to work to the Air Quality Action Plan 2010 submitted and approved by DEFRA, but we are in the process of reviewing and updating this.

6.4. Contaminated Land

In March 2016 the reviewed Contaminated Land Strategy was approved by Communities, Housing and Environment Committee. This was necessary to reflect changes in DEFRA guidance, and the economic climate of central and local government. The strategy still reflects the statutory duties placed on the authority and its commitment to improving the level of information it holds on possible sites and the mitigation of contaminated land through development control processes. This was approved at the March 2016.

6.5. Planning Consultations

A large part of the work of the team relates to providing the Development Management teams providing consultation responses on air quality, noise, potentially contaminated land and lighting. This work is important to resolve current and future environmental issues through design or mitigation controls.

	2014/15	2015/16
Planning Consultations	469	656
Planning Appeals	21	34
Contaminated Land Enquiries	69	48
Private Water Enquiries	3	5

Table 4: Consultation and reactive work undertaken by Environmental Protection in Maidstone.