



SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2024/25

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Sheffield's Food Plan 2024/25

Food quality, safety and choice are fundamental to everybody and the maintenance of standards from production and handling of crops or animal feed on a farm through manufacture to sale in a shop or café is the responsibility of Sheffield City Council through its Food Teams.

This plan is drawn up in compliance with Food Standards Agency guidance. Additional information about the Food Service can be found on the Sheffield City Council web site and areas covered are indicated throughout this document.

1.2 Aim

The aim of the service is to protect the health of the public by ensuring food and feedstuff control is maintained in the City, to raise standards of food hygiene and food standards and to provide information to businesses and the public to help with healthy choices and improved diet.

1.3 NATIONAL CONTEXT

The delivery of the food plan, although a local issue, has a national and even international context in that food moves around the country and is imported from all around the world and controls must be in place to ensure that safety is achieved for all citizens of the United Kingdom.

1.4 Strategic Context

The Food Plan links directly to key issues for the City, particularly issues concerning health, education, and skills, and supporting economic growth. This Food Plan supports the Sheffield City Council Plan 2024-28 and our values in the following way:

- * Integrating service delivery to improve wellbeing by disseminating information on food inspection, hygiene, safety & standards promotion etc. (*Cross cutting theme*)
- * Contributing to sustained economic growth by both creating and increasing demand for healthier foods and ensuring a standard that encourages businesses to trade. (*Healthy lives and wellbeing for all*)

- * Improving business profitability through improving hygiene standards and increasing customer satisfaction. (*Making Sheffield the best place to do business and create good jobs*)
- * Promoting healthier communities by breaking down cycles of poor eating behaviour (*Healthy lives and wellbeing for all*)
- * Increasing the opportunity for all to have a healthier lifestyle (*Tackling inequalities and supporting people through the cost-of-living crisis*)

Ensuring that standards are maintained in all food businesses gives encouragement to growth of existing business, and the advice element is crucial in helping new or current businesses flourish in Sheffield, supporting the priority of economic growth.

To attract food businesses, Sheffield City needs a trained and skilled workforce,

There are significant health related elements contained in the Food Plan since food is fundamental to all. Wholesome food is necessary for survival and healthy diet choices can have a significant impact on overall health, including obesity levels and associated illnesses. The Food Plan enforcement aspect addresses the issues around the wholesomeness of food, and the promotional arm looks at informing people in order that they can make the right choices.

2.0 LOCAL OVERVIEW

2.1 Sheffield Context

Sheffield has a population of approximately 590,000 within an area of 36,795 hectares. It has an international reputation for metallurgy and steelmaking. It was this industry that established it as one of England's main industrial cities during the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. However, due to increasing competition from imports, it has seen a decline in heavy engineering industries since the 1960s.

The largest employers are now all public sector: the two universities, NHS, and national and local government employees.

There are a range of food establishments throughout the city within its thriving economy.

The service relating to food and feedstuffs for Sheffield City Council is part of the Environmental Regulation Service, within the Street Scene and Regulation Directorate.

There are a range of enforcement services within Regulation & Enforcement, including Health and Safety in businesses, Trading Standards, Environmental Services, Environmental Protection, and Licensing. The management team meet regularly to consider effective, appropriate, and joined up working practices and information sharing.

This document is the 2024/25 Food Plan for Sheffield City Council with regard to its ongoing obligations for the statutory delivery of Food Hygiene and Food Standards protections. The Food Standards Agency (FSA/ the Agency) and Defra are the Central

Government agencies with overarching responsibility for the national delivery of Food Hygiene and Food Standards.

The Food Standards Agency recognised the work undertaken by local authority food officers (who are trained on infectious disease control) during the Pandemic and the difficulties in completing inspection/intervention programmes with staff seconded into covid response work and periods of business closures. Large backlogs appeared in due inspections across the country. They therefore produced national recovery plans for both Food Standards and Hygiene teams, guiding us to concentrate on the highest risk aspects of our work and acknowledging that some work would be delayed. However, from 1/4/24 these concessions were removed, and we were required to undertake all work outlined in the national Food Law Code of Practice (FLCoP) which dictates inspection frequency and priorities.

The plan outlines how we intend to:

- Continue to address overdue interventions and unrated premises.
- Maintain the delivery of official controls in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (FLCoP) requirements.
- Provide suitable and sufficient competent authorised officers to sustain delivery of the food law enforcement service in accordance with the FLCoP.
- Undertake ongoing internal monitoring to verify the effective delivery of the food law enforcement service in accordance with the FLCoP and the Authority's documented procedures.

We completed all high-risk food standards inspections due at 1st April 2023.

We met all but the final milestones for Food Hygiene by end 2023/24, carrying a deficit of 207 establishments rated C and broadly compliant. These are generally good businesses, presenting a medium to low risk generally conducted by our contractors, who were unable to meet their targets during the year, due to a slow post pandemic return to the Profession. We have now procured a new contract for medium to lower risk interventions which is intended to address the risks we face by carrying backlogs, and we have allocated the outstanding work to them. This, together with the 2.8 FTE additional resource means the backlogs will be eliminated for Hygiene by year end.

We acknowledge the need to concentrate on unrated businesses going forward and are prioritising them in our work programme for Hygiene. They are triaged on receipt and provided with information in preparation for their inspections.

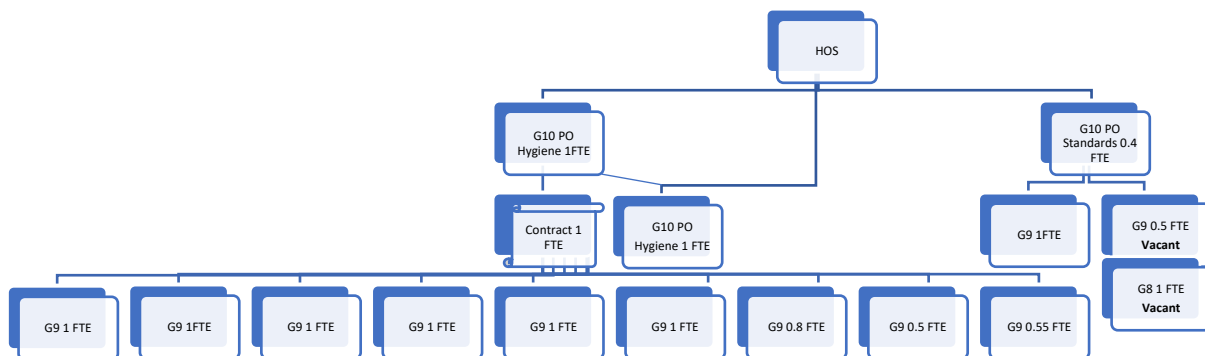
Risks in the backlog businesses are likely to have increased over time, given the delay in official controls. Our capacity to undertake both the backlog of inspections and the new yearly intervention programmes with the current resources remains heavily dependent on the ability of the contractor to fulfil their commitments.

In 2023 we recruited into the Hygiene Team, 3 additional Environmental Health Officers. We are recruiting two food standards officers in 2024-25 to replace vacancies and up to 3 trainee posts (albeit these will train across all the service)

There is a local and national shortage of qualified, competent officers to undertake food interventions. Many private contractors failed to return to the profession post pandemic. We therefore need to take a robust risk-based approach to the work we undertake, targeting the highest risk and utilising any flexibilities available to us.

There is some overlap in the responsibilities of the teams, particularly in respect to allergens, which remain the greatest risk to the health of our residents statistically. There is an agreed Memorandum of Understanding between the teams for the hygiene team (including Contractors) to include agreed questions relating to allergens, in all interventions, to give advice if appropriate. An allergen assessment is carried out at each hygiene inspection to allow each establishment to be rated for allergen compliance. The in-house team of EHO's are now revisiting all establishments that are rated as non-compliant for allergen controls in order to improve standards and protect public health. There is a legacy caused by previous budget cuts that trainee posts have been removed from our structure, in common with many authorities. Our professions are now facing a skill shortage. This has been recognised nationally, and appropriate courses are now included in the apprenticeship scheme. We have asked the FSA to support the inclusion of Food Safety Officer training in this scheme and have received a positive response. We have already funded an internal officer to retrain as a food officer, and subject to funding, will be offering this training pathway again, together with Apprentices in both Standards and Hygiene. We are assisting in the practical training of EHO apprentices employed in SCC outside of Environmental Regulation.

Figure 1. Food Standards and Hygiene posts (NB- this shows only food related posts not the wider TS or Environmental Regulations Structure)



Nb – Some reporting lines and roles are matrix based to provide cover and business continuity whilst delivering front line service eg allergen work.

3.0 FSA: Changes in Food Delivery 2023-24

A new Food Law Code of Practice was published in June 2023. The code introduced a new food standards delivery model. Implementation of the new model for Civica APP users is scheduled from July 2024 onwards. Until implementation, the service will continue to follow inspection frequencies determined by the previous Code. We have been asked to sign up for training on this and SCC officers will be attending in October.

The FSA have only just started the process for changing the Food Hygiene aspect of the code of practice, and the delivery model for 2024-25 remains the same. We are required to fulfil our entire programme each year, with flexibilities only in respect of the very lowest risk interventions. It is anticipated that the new delivery model for Hygiene will be implemented from 2025, and the plan for that year will reflect this. We expect that our triage and risk-based programme will align with the new model.

We propose to use all flexibilities currently available to us and increase our numbers of contracted interventions to medium/lower risk establishments and aim to remove the backlogs caused during the Pandemic by the end of 2024/2025. We will continue to actively triage all new businesses on receipt, and provide suitable advice and information, to assist our businesses in complying with Standards and Hygiene law.

4.0 FOOD STANDARDS

4.1 Inspections

Figure 3

Food Inspections Achieved 1.4.23 to 31.3.24						
High (26 due at 1.4.23)	Upper Medium	Low Medium	Low	Unrated	Outside the programme	Total
26	11	124	15	11	0	187

In addition, there were 1118 food standards interventions on allergens carried out during hygiene visits although under the FSA scheme for standards these are listed as verification and surveillance visits rather than full inspections. The service was affected by retirements in the period. The team was reduced to 1 FTE equivalent TS food officer in March 2024 (not including the allergen work being undertaken by the Hygiene team) due to sickness absence on a temporary basis.

As the full programme of inspections has not been met for several years, all food business establishments that have not been visited following a complaint are overdue for inspection (albeit allergen interventions are taking place). Therefore, the current food standards landscape and compliance levels for other standards issues are unknown other than where for example we receive notifications or food alerts or complaints (which can be a valuable source of information). This may be significant in the context of Brexit, where there may be more food businesses classed as importers. This alters the responsibilities on food business operators for ensuring food products are compliant with all aspects of food law.

Until service migration to the new food standards delivery model, inspections due in 2024-25 are as follows:

Food Inspections Due 1.4.24 to 31.3.25						
High	Upper Medium	Low Medium	Low	Unrated	Outside the programme	New Registrations Desk top risked as High
35	197	3552	1290	23	0	No data

In 24/25 there are 2,834 hygiene inspections to be carried out where the necessary allergen checks will be carried out and followed up if non complaint.

All Full FSA food standards inspection targets have not been achievable for a number of years due to decreasing staffing levels. Resources are prioritised towards high-risk premises. Where other categories of premises are inspected, this is generally due to complaints or referrals being received from within or outside the service.

The Food Standards Agency require Local Authorities to outline the staff resource required to meet the full inspection programme. In Sheffield, it is estimated a further 7 posts would be required to fulfil the full food standards inspection programme were we to deliver everything in the programme – although this does not account for the time the hygiene team spend on allergen interventions. This is based on an assumption of each officer conducting an average 15 visits per week for 48 weeks/year. In our experience this difference between the standards inspection staff resource needs and actual staffing is not unusual in regulatory teams focussing on the highest risk standards work and all hygiene interventions.

4.2 Unrated premises

In 2023/24, new food businesses were subject to 'desktop' risk rating for food standards to allocate an initial risk. In this way, we were able to identify new businesses likely to be 'high risk', and to prioritise these for initial inspection. This method deviates from the Food Law Code of Practice, which state that all new premises must be visited within 28 days of registration, but it enabled the service to triage premises and target limited officer resources at those food business most likely to be high risk.

In 2024/25 we will continue with this strategy of initial risk rating. We will interrogate new business registrations for the purposes of surveillance and monitoring.

4.3 Allergens

A major concern for the authority is the risk to public health of a death or serious injury from an undeclared allergen present in food supplied in the city.

At each food hygiene inspection, an allergen assessment is carried out and appropriate advice given. Each hygiene inspection includes an assessment of the premises for allergen compliance. The in-house team of EHO's revisit all establishments that are rated as non-compliant for allergen controls in order to improve standards and protect public health.

In 2023-24, 41 food complaints and referrals were made to the food standards service about allergens and many more problems were identified on environmental health visits. Food Standards Officers carried out 30 priority visits to non-compliant food businesses and revisits were carried out by the hygiene team also. The authority has prioritised this area of work since changes to the law in 2014, for example, by sending information to all food businesses in the city in 2014. This has continued in recent years following changes to labelling requirements for Pre-Packed for Direct Sale food (known as Natasha's Law). These legislative changes have arisen from allergen related deaths nationwide. The food enforcement teams have worked closely over the years to inform businesses of their obligations, and this continued in 2023/24 with joint work on implementing Natasha's Law.

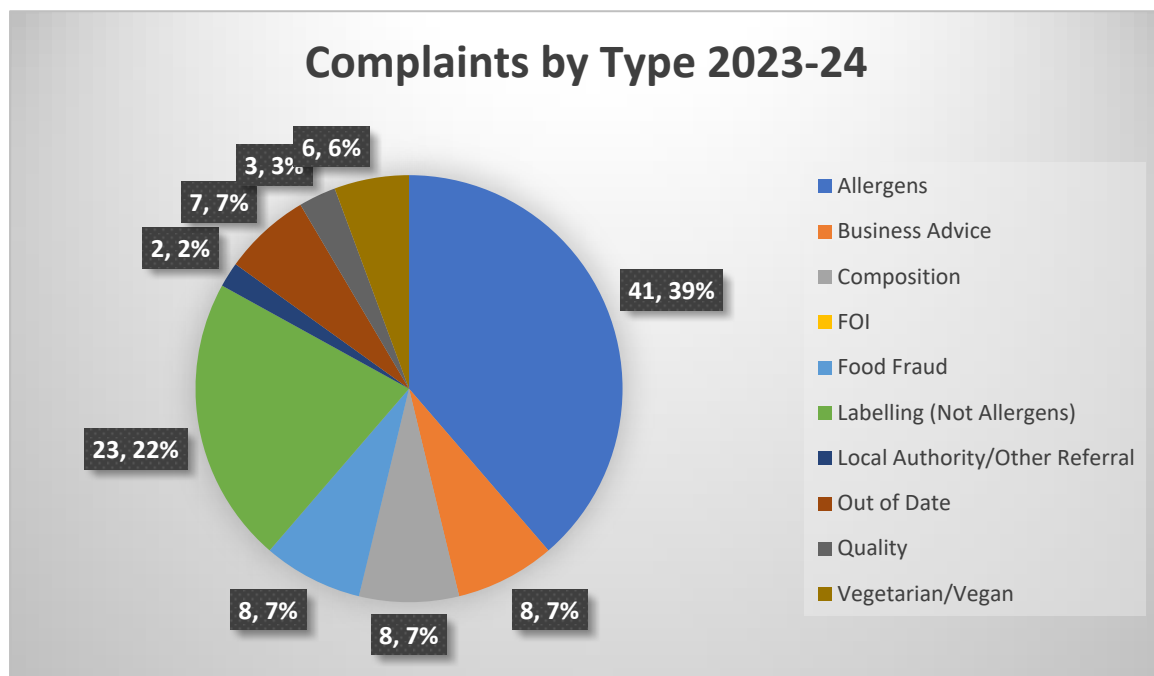
To provide the best protections for Sheffield consumers, the trading standards and environmental health teams have worked together to produce a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to agree enforcement responsibilities and procedures for allergen work.

In the MOU, we have reviewed and refined the system for referrals between the teams to try to prevent enforcement gaps where there is joint responsibility.

Of all visits undertaken there remain 270 food businesses which have had a visit and had advice on how to be compliant on allergens due to some gaps in controls but where we have yet to formally revisit to ensure all remedial action has been taken. Whilst it is not usual for all minor contraventions to have not received a revisit after advice was given at the time on a general inspection, due to the higher risk associated with allergens to consumers we are revisiting these either as part of the next programmed inspection or as a specific intervention project in 24/25.

4.4 Food Standards Complaints, Incidents and Alerts

We received 105 food standards complaints and requests for service in the year. These are categorised as follows:



Complaints are risk assessed and either investigated or recorded for intelligence purposes. All service requests are responded to, including FSA notifications of non-compliant food within the local authority area. We work with partners where appropriate, to deliver joined up enforcement. Partners can be internal to SCC, e.g. Environmental Health Officers, or external, e.g. National Food Crime Unit. Any intelligence arising from complaints and service requests, may be used to inform future enforcement projects. In 2024/25 we will continue to respond to complaints and service requests to meet FSA expectations.

4.5 Samples

Sampling forms part of our responsibility towards ongoing market surveillance. Food standards officers took 10 food samples in 2023-24 to check labelling and composition issues. Of these, 3 were reported as 'satisfactory', 6 were reported as 'unsatisfactory' and 1 was reported as 'other'. 1 food fraud prosecution case file is pending.

The whole service participated in an imported food training day which involved visits to local retailers and the procurement of an additional 21 food samples. 15 were found to be unsatisfactory and resulted in 1 product recall, 2 written warnings, 2 referrals to Primary/Home Authorities and 1 re-sample.

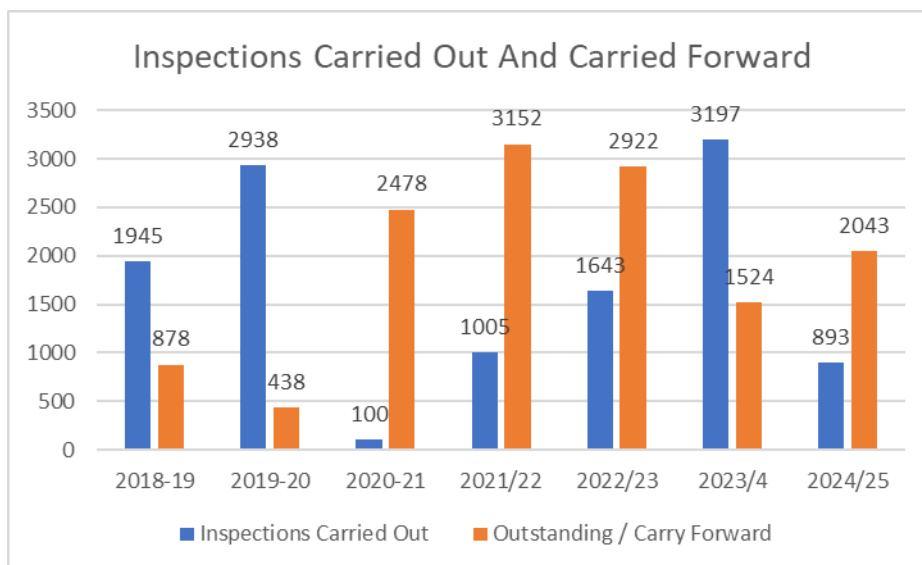
In 2024/25 we will continue to ensure food sampling is planned, effective and consistent and unsatisfactory samples are dealt with in accordance with the service's enforcement policy.

5.0 FOOD HYGIENE

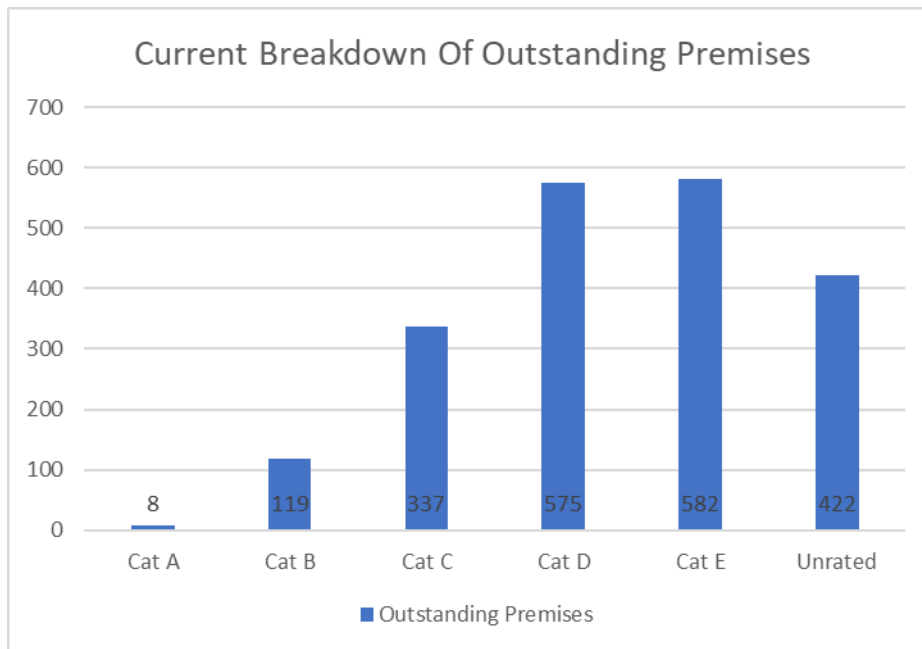
5.1 Statutory Work Performance

Sheffield City Council has a legal duty to ensure that food safety legislation is enforced throughout the City. This is generally achieved by a schedule of programmed inspections in line with FSA guidance and dealing with any reactive work such as complaints and other intelligence that may be received regarding food safety issues in the City.

Each year we are required to inspect all the existing businesses that are due an inspection that year and all new establishments that register or start up. Prior to the pandemic we inspected most of the establishments that were due and had small numbers to carry forward. The Covid pandemic disrupted food related work disproportionately and so we currently have a correspondingly high backlog of overdue inspections.



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When a food business establishment is inspected it is given a risk rating that determines its frequency of inspection:

Category A premises are the highest risk and have to be inspected every 6 months.

Category B premises are required to be inspected yearly

Category C premises have an inspection frequency of 18 months

Category D premises have an inspection frequency of 2 years and

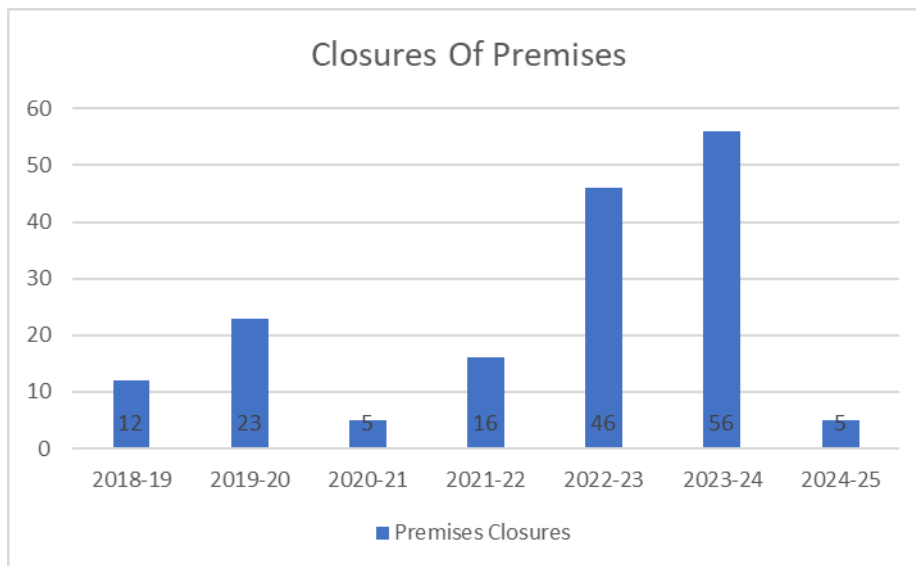
Category E are the lowest risk are required to be inspected every 3 years.

We target our resources on the highest risk establishments to reduce the risk to health. However, we do have backlogs of lower risk inspections. A low risk for hygiene doesn't correlate to a low allergen risk, so it is important that all outstanding businesses are visited.

5.2 Enforcement Action

Hygiene standards in premises declined during the pandemic and recovery period. The cost-of-living crisis further exacerbated this situation. Most of our inspections focus on providing coaching and advice to businesses. However, when businesses pose an imminent risk to health, we are forced to take emergency action and close the premises.

The businesses receive advice and support to enable them to reopen as soon as possible. Post pandemic, we have had deal with a record number of closures each year but the situation has improved in this current year.



5.3 Unrated Businesses

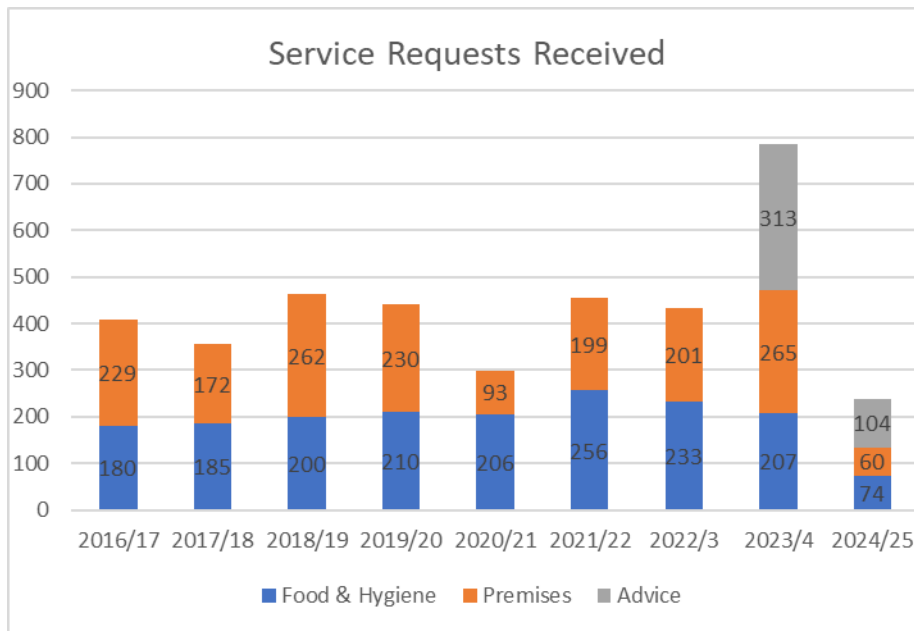
All food businesses must be either registered or approved by the local authority. We receive over 700 new registrations per year which is often a mixture of new food business establishments and changes of ownership in established businesses. These premises remain unrated until they receive an inspection. We are required to inspect the premises within 28 days. Some businesses trade without registering and so these are picked up by food team and through other local intelligence.

Until an establishment is inspected, its risk is uncertain, and it does not have a food hygiene rating awarded to it. This can cause problems for some businesses if online marketplaces such as Just Eat, Uber Eats or Deliveroo insist on a food hygiene rating before allowing them to trade on their platforms.

The 2024/25 plan aims to eliminate backlogs in order to reduce the time taken to visit unrated businesses. To mitigate the risk in carrying unrated businesses, all applicants are contacted on receipt with information and advice to prepare for their inspection. There is a triage system to distinguish high risk applications, which are allocated as a priority to the in-house team. Contractors are allocated low risk businesses and are instructed to prioritise this work.

5.4 Requests for Service and Complaints

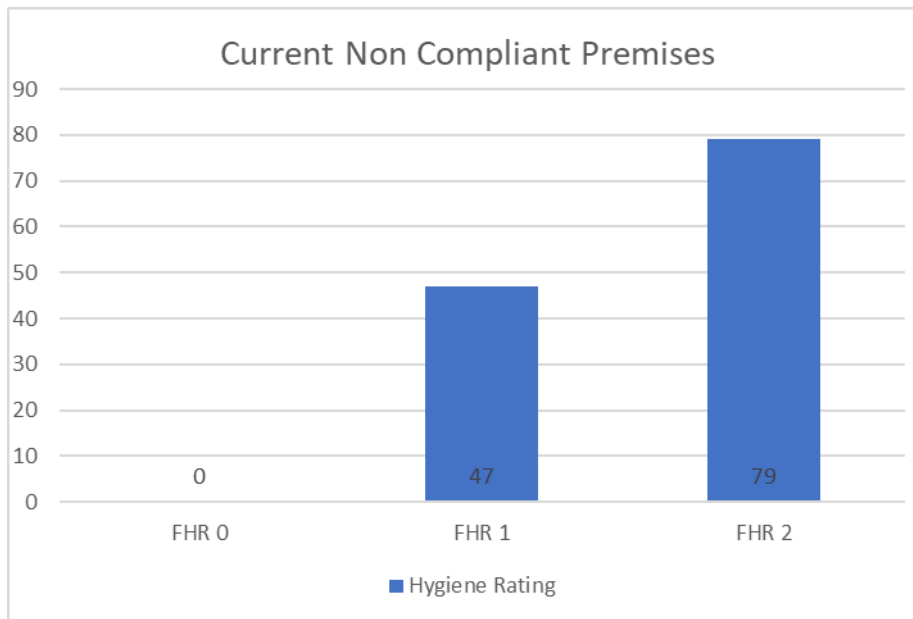
The service receives complaints regarding potentially unsafe food and regarding hygiene of premises. In a typical year we receive approximately 400 to 500 complaints. Although they are triaged according to risk, this presents a significant demand on the service, especially considering that these complaints can lead to offences being investigated and enforcement action taken in relation to any offences identified.



5.5 Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme run by the Food Standards Agency, now provides guidance to the public on the hygiene standards found in Sheffield’s food premises. Almost every local authority in the UK now uses this scheme. The result of the last inspection is converted into a food hygiene rating. A premises can be ranked between 0 and 5 with the higher the number indicating a better food hygiene rating. All food businesses receive a window sticker indicating their score, but there is currently no legal requirement for this to be displayed on the premises. The scores consider the structure of the premises, the hygiene standards, and the quality of the management of the business. Premises rankings across the country can be viewed by the public to judge the hygiene standards before visiting.

Most food business establishments receive a food hygiene rating of 0-5 upon inspection. The highest rating is 5 and the lowest is 0. Premises that are awarded a rating of 0-2 are deemed as non-broadly compliant and we revisit all of these to improve standards and reduce the risk that they pose. Although many of these now have improved their hygiene rating will not change until the next routine inspection or if they request a paid re-rating inspection. We monitor the businesses until they are broadly compliant.



At the beginning of August 2024 there were 126 establishments with a hygiene rating less than 3. These are deemed as non-broadly compliant, and we have a policy of revisiting all of these to improve standards and reduce the risk that they pose. We work with all non-broadly compliant establishments until they have improved standards. Currently, 59 of these establishments have improved standards and would now be deemed as broadly compliant. However, their rating will not change until the next routine inspection, or if they request a paid re-rating inspection.

The Food Hygiene Ratings Scheme can be found on <http://ratings.food.gov.uk/>

5.6 Food Hygiene Intervention Delivery 2024/25

Food safety interventions have previously been completed by a combination of in-house officers performing high risk duties and private contractors undertaking lower risk tasks with support from the Food Team. Historically this cost between 50 and 90 K per annum (1 to 2 FTE). We relied on the external contractors to complete the majority of our yearly interventions. This business model was cost effective and worked very well, enabling us to achieve a high level of compliance with requirements.

This service model of a mix of contract and inhouse staff is relatively common in some of the larger unitary authorities including Leeds, Manchester, Bradford and Wakefield and many councils had used contractors at some time over the last 10 years.

However, this once hugely effective business model faltered post Pandemic, with many Contractors being slow to return to the profession and the level of High-risk work increased, making the task of recovery difficult for the small in-house team. There is a new Food Intervention Contract in place which is intended to complete the medium to low risk part of our programme and the Contractors have now returned to previous capacity. The 2023/24 Food Service plan led to additional resource being added to the in-house team (2.8FTE) to strengthen the ability to undertake high risk interventions and react to incidents which present a risk to Public Health.

When backlogs were particularly high due to the pandemic and we had fewer fully trained officers, we trained temporary enforcement officers, to visit newly registered businesses, providing information to assist them in complying with their subsequent inspection, and signposting them to the services of Business Sheffield, as many are found to be affected by the cost-of-living crisis and at risk of cutting corners. This resource is no longer available and is not funded however we are exploring doing this again with students and other staff.

There are flexibilities in the Food Law Code of Practice (FLCoP) allowing alternative interventions for very low risk establishments and it is not cost effective to outsource these tasks. A preferable delivery model for 2024/25 would include utilising a Regulatory Officer perform low risk tasks to deal with the backlogs of very low risk interventions and we are utilising student EHOS on this when they are with us as part of their training.

Our Contractor has projected sufficient capacity for all allocated interventions in the period of the plan. They acknowledge that this is reliant on a fluid workforce. Work will be allocated on a scale from medium to low risk. It is expected that the remaining interventions will be the lowest risk.

Figure 5 2024/25 Food Programme

BAND AS OF 1/4/24	Frequency of Inspection	Total	In house	Outsourced	Notes
A	Minimum 6 monthly	12(24)	24	0	These are generally poor premises providing high risk food sales
B	Minimum 12 Monthly	151	151	0	These are mainly catering premises or takeaways where standards are not very high
C Broadly Compliant	Minimum 18 Monthly	494	0	494	These are premises of a good or reasonable standard providing high risk food
C NON Compliant	Minimum 18 Monthly	49	49	0	These are premises who are failing to comply in one or more of the Hygiene/Structure or Management areas who provide high risk food
D	Minimum 24 Monthly	828	0	828	These are reasonable or good premises serving some

Broadly Compliant					open food, but not preparing and cooking food
D NON-Compliant	Minimum 24 Monthly	11	11	0	These are generally poor premises selling only wrapped food
E	Minimum 36 Monthly	472	472	0	These are premises that sell wrapped foods or low risk foods and are unlikely to cause any problems. Identified as able to use a flexibility. Will be contacted and visited by an enforcement officer.
E Primary	Minimum 36 Monthly	178	0	178	192 premises required to have a primary intervention
UNRATE High Risk	Required to be inspected within 28 days of opening	208	208	0	Unrated are registered businesses not yet inspected. * Food Law Code of practice requires inspection within 28 days. This is not being achieved and presents a risk to Public Health. Aim to improve compliance. Currently provide information and advice on receipt
UNRATE LOW RISK	Required to be inspected within 28 days of opening	91	0	91	All applications are reviewed, and triaged. Information and advice given prior to inspection to include allergens.
Estimated new high risk	Required to be inspected within 28 days of opening	400	300	100	Failure to inspect within 28 days of opening and represents a risk to Public Health. Aim to improve compliance.

Estimated new low risk	Required to be inspected within 28 days of opening	400	200	200	
Total		3306	1415	1891	

We actively work with Business Sheffield to assist businesses to give them the best opportunity to provide safe food, be legally compliant and cause their businesses to thrive.

We have entered into discussions with other teams to survey our Authority for indications of non-compliance and providing signposting information to all teams that might interact with food businesses.

To address our aging workforce situation, and the national shortage of qualified staff, we understand that we must succession plan. We are considering a range of training and apprenticeship options to provide competent qualified officers. We have already trained one food safety officer who undertook a part time secondment to our food team.

5.7 Risks.

There are risks inherent in persisting with the current model for Food Intervention delivery with respect to variations in resource availability, although previous cost benefit analysis has shown it to be the most cost-effective means of completing the hygiene programme. The risks are both to Public Health and to the reputation of Sheffield City Council. We have taken considerable steps to mitigate the risks as detailed above and the situation is much improved on last year. SCC has a statutory obligation to complete the yearly programme of Food Interventions.

Funding for the enforcement officer ended at 30/9/2023 and capacity to undertake this work is not present in the inhouse team. It would be extremely costly to use the Intervention contract to complete this work and would prevent higher risk work being completed. We are reviewing how best to provide this additional business support and intervention work through other means.

Our Contractor has no capacity beyond the maximum they have committed to. We are offering overtime to inhouse officers, but this is unlikely to impact the deficit significantly.

6.0 Control of Food Related Infectious Diseases

The service will investigate all outbreaks of food or water borne disease in accordance with the procedures. All suspected cases will be followed up and confirmed cases will be contacted by telephone or by questionnaire to try and ascertain if there are any common factors. This work is crucial to safeguarding public health and involves dealing with infectious disease outbreaks such as E.Coli as well as other notifiable diseases by working in conjunction with the UK Health Security Agency.

In total we made 568 (1040) investigations including 163 (103) significant high-risk cases such as STEC, Listeria and Typhoid. We also investigated 56 (33) outbreaks/clusters of which 7 (3) were significant, involving sampling, interviewing cases, liaison with United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and communications with the businesses involved. All this work also resulted in a significant amount of administration of the outbreaks/clusters. UKHSA Yorkshire and Humber Standard Operating Procedures are continually reviewed and revised during the year and streamlined where possible.

Figure 6

INFECTIOUS DISEASE & FOOD POISONING, OUTBREAKS/CLUSTERS

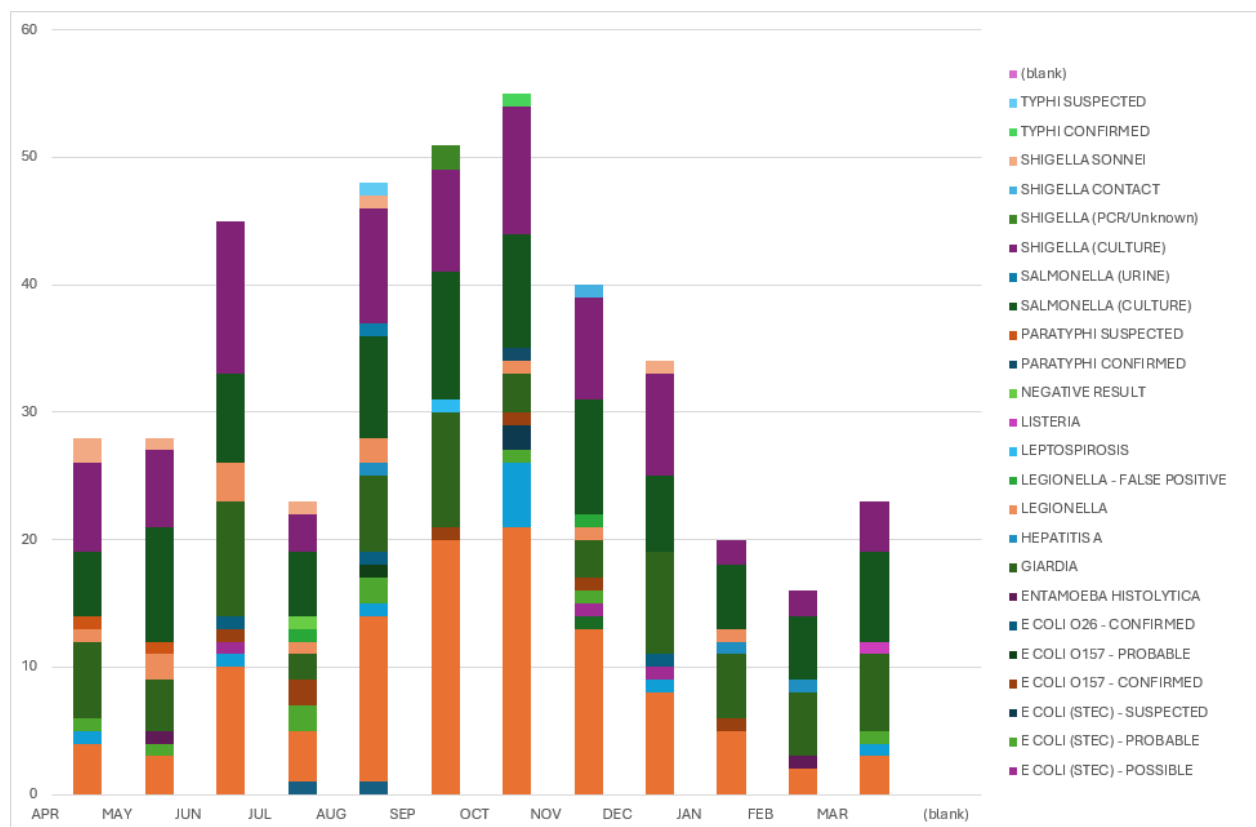
NOTIFIED	IDU	SRU	TOTAL	
NOTIFIED	397	212	609	
INVESTIGATED	397	212	609	100%

CASES/OUTBREAKS/CLUSTERS	IDU	SRU	TOTAL	
HIGH RISK/SIGNIFICANT	142	2	144	24%
LOW/MEDIM RISK	255	210	465	76%
TOTAL	397	212	609	100%

INVESTIGATION		SRU	TOTAL	
OUTBREAKS/CLUSTERS		61	61	29%
SPORADIC		152	152	71%
TOTAL		213	213	100%

INVESTIGATOR	IDU	SRU	TOTAL	
EHO	142	151	293	48%
IO	255	61	316	52%
TOTAL	395	173	568	100%

Figure 7 High Risk Investigations by month (2023-24)



7.0 Samples

We have taken a risk-based decision to not participate completely in regional sampling programmes to allow the team to concentrate on the highest risk interventions. We do however use sampling as an educational tool in assisting non-compliant businesses, during outbreaks of infectious diseases, and in response to complaints.

Figure 8 Sampling results

Column Labels		
SATISFACTORY	UNSATISFACTORY	Grand Total
164	26	190
164	26	190

190 Food and environmental swab samples were taken during the year, 5 of which were unsatisfactory.

8.0 Food Safety Incidents

The authority receives Food Alerts & Allergy Alerts from the Food Standards Agency, via an electronic e-mail system, to inform of warnings being put on the system. Appropriate action is taken in accordance with the guidance contained in the Alert. A call out system which operates 24 hours a day is the initial response to any food issue out of hours. This may involve a visit to an individual premises or setting up an incident response to contact a large number of food outlets that may have the suspect food on their shelves.

9.0 Private water supplies

SCC has approximately 150 establishments that are not connected to mains water and rely on private water supplies from wells, boreholes, streams, etc. These types of supply can present a risk of microbiological or chemical contamination if they are not properly treated.

Some of these establishments are commercial premises such as food business establishments or commercially rented properties – The City Council has a statutory duty to risk assess and monitor these supplies and, where necessary, take enforcement action to ensure they comply with drinking water standards. The hygiene team have carried out risk assessments at all the known commercial supplies (6 establishments) and have sampled the supplies to check if they comply with drinking water standards. The owners of these supplies are charged for any sampling costs and officer time.

We carried out further investigations into the remainder of the private water supplies to check on their current status.

We are not obliged to risk assess or sample the supply for single supply dwellings unless the customer specifically asks us to investigate, in which case they would be responsible for any reasonable costs incurred. We discovered that some of these supplies may not be single dwelling supplies and may be clusters of premises sharing the same supply requiring risk assessment and sampling, similar to the commercial premises.

We have incorporated this work into this year's work programme and will be carrying out investigations into the status of these suspected 'clusters'.

The Drinking Water Inspectorate is the central government body that is the regulator for water companies and local authorities.

The City Council is required to submit an annual return to the Drinking Water Inspectorate notifying them of the results of any work carried out in relation to private water supplies (and any outstanding risk assessments / sampling)

10.0 Liaison with other Organisations

The team is represented on a number of bodies as listed below:

- * Sheffield takes a leading role in the South Yorkshire Food Group, which works on consistency issues in the area. This group operates as the Local Government Regulation liaison group and has links into the national liaison groups.
- * The Yorkshire and Humber and South Yorkshire groups chaired by the Consultant in Communicable Diseases Control.
- * Yorkshire and Humber Enforcement Group
- * Food Standards Agency Enforcement Stakeholder Forum.
- * Tripartite Hygiene/Public Health/UKHSA group

The membership of these groups allows for the sharing and dissemination of good practice and joint training initiatives as well as ensuring a positive contribution to national debate and policy development.

11.0 Training and Workforce Development

Workforce development is carried out in accordance with training needs identified through Performance and Development Reviews of all staff that also include priorities for delivery. There is a routine training programme and regular updates of staff through cascade training. Courses are assessed and if found to fit into the training needs, staff will be allocated accordingly. All staff are assisted to achieve the 20 hours of Continuing Professional Development training each year as required by the relevant Codes of Practice.

12.0 Quality Assessment

The quality of inspections is checked regularly with both internal and peer authority audits of the work carried out. In addition to this, routine checks are carried out on the work of inspectors to ensure consistency of enforcement. Quarterly and monthly reports against the Food Plan are produced to enable monitoring of progress against targets.

13.0 Consultation

The plan is largely governed by the type of premises in the city and the reactive work. Consultation will take place with the Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee

14.0 Conclusion

The FSA has stopped its enhanced monitoring of SCC food work as a result of last year's investment and the reduction in the overall backlogs. We expect to remove the hygiene backlog this year. However, the food standards programme as defined by the FSA is unachievable without significant extra resources, so we take a risk-based approach based on current staffing.

Recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic caused significant backlogs in the intervention programme. This has been recognised and additional resources are now in post in the team, together with a functioning intervention Contract. This has also improved the quantity of Allergen interventions performed in businesses, as each intervention now includes advice and an assessment. Our in-house team does not have the capacity to complete the full food hygiene inspection Programme without the assistance of Contractors. This is unpredictable and reliant on availability on an ongoing basis. The ability to utilise flexibilities open to us has been reduced following the loss of regulatory officers.

The risks involved in large backlogs are understood, and mitigations are still in place to reduce the overall risk. We have reduced backlogs significantly during 2023/24 and project that this year's plan will remove Hygiene backlogs. The anticipated changes in the FSA delivery model, from 2025 onwards will affect our workload and it is unlikely to decrease. The training and succession plans we have in place are expected to provide considerable resilience going forward.

There is a considerable amount of additional work conducted by the in-house team, including high risk infectious disease investigations which have a significant public health implication.

Education and promotion are seen as vital elements in the range of tools the service uses to improve the quality and safety of food produced and consumed within the City. At the other end of the enforcement spectrum, when significant failures in a business have led to a risk to public health, the service has acted in an appropriate and timely manner, to ensure the business ceases trading until the standards have improved.

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