

# Food safety and food standards

Service Delivery Plan 2025/26



Food  
Standards  
Agency

[food.gov.uk/ratings](https://food.gov.uk/ratings)

FOOD HYGIENE RATING





# Introduction

The Food and Safety Team, sits within the Public Protection service, which is part of the Public Health and Public Protection Directorate. The Public Protection service provides the following functions:

- Food & Safety
- Trading Standards
- Licensing
- Primary Authority - sits across both teams.

Our aim is to deliver a wide range of effective and responsive public protection services for our residents, businesses and visitors.

## About our service:

Slough Borough Council is a designated Competent Authority for the purposes of official food controls it is responsible for the regulation of food safety, food standards and imported food legislation within the borough. This role is shared between the Food & Safety and Trading Standards & Licensing Teams. The teams are also responsible for:

- Health & Safety regulation
- Infectious disease control
- Consumer protection
- Animal health
- Primary Authority Partnerships
- Smoke Free regulation
- Licensing functions.

We provide a responsive service that aims to achieve a balance between regulation, enforcement and support. We take a minimum tolerance approach on issues of serious concern, while supporting compliant businesses.

We work closely with businesses and key stakeholders like the Food Standards Agency (FSA), UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and other partners within the council such as Public Health, Resilience and Enforcement team, Building Control & Planning.

## Resourcing

In 2024/25 we had the equivalent of 5.85 FTE working in the food and safety team. This includes the team manager and our business support officer. However, allocated to food work, is only 3.3 FTE, as some time is allocated to health and safety work, and most of the managers time is non-operational. It's important to note we have estimated that we need 4.25 FTE to deliver all the official food



safety controls required within FSA Food Law Code of Practice. **This leaves a shortfall of 0.95 FTE to deliver official food controls.** We have one FTE to deal with food standards issues.

We also have pressures of other areas of work, including health and safety regulation, infectious disease control, and non-regulatory work, such as replying to emails, keeping up to date with training and competency, attending meetings, 1:1's and adhering to the council's policy and procedures etc. It is estimated that this non-food work is approximately 3.77 FTE.

To deliver our official food controls, health and safety requirements, and everything needed for effective service delivery, we therefore need approximately 8.02 FTE, and we have 6.85 FTE. **This leaves an approx. 1.17 FTE shortfall to deliver statutory obligations and an effective service.** See appendix A for details on this



calculation. This means we prioritise work, and do the best we can with what resources we have.

Since September 2025, we have an Apprenticeship Environmental Health Practitioner in post, which means in four years time when the apprenticeship scheme is completed, we should be able to recruit another qualified officer into the team. There is a national decline in people entering the Environmental Health and Trading Standards professions and it is seriously challenging to recruit qualified authorised officers, hence we have launched an apprentice this year.

### Outputs

The main outputs relating to Food Safety Regulation are:

- Undertaking risk based interventions to food businesses
- Supporting business in Slough and protecting customers by using a range of interventions and enforcement tools to secure improvements
- Providing information on food safety standards to residents and consumers through the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS). This identifies both businesses which are operating to a satisfactory standards and also businesses which are non-compliant and may be putting Slough residents and visitors at risk

- Food safety, quality and composition sampling
- Investigation of complaints about food and food businesses
- Acting as 'Primary Authority' for large businesses and manufacturers both inside Slough and nationwide, which involves formal liaison with other local authorities, giving advice and support to the business in the Primary Authority partnership. Primary Authority is a cost recovered charged service
- Investigating food poisoning outbreaks and infectious diseases; taking action to prevent infection and spread
- Inspecting imported food, food products and the verification of imported organic food arriving into the Borough
- Supporting businesses involved in the export of foods by providing certification documentation
- Promotion of Food Safety

This plan is reviewed annually. We welcome your views, comments and suggestions on how it could be improved. Please forward your views to:

Levine Whitham  
Food and Safety Manager  
[levine.whitham@slough.gov.uk](mailto:levine.whitham@slough.gov.uk)

Ann Stewart  
Food & Safety Professional  
[ann.stewart@slough.gov.uk](mailto:ann.stewart@slough.gov.uk)

Russell Denney-Clarke  
Trading Standards and Licensing Manager  
[russell.denney-clarke@slough.gov.uk](mailto:russell.denney-clarke@slough.gov.uk)

# Our objectives

The food safety function is a statutory service, the teams operate within a legal framework supplemented by a Statutory Code of Practice which describes how to fulfil our obligations as a Competent Authority.

The Corporate Plan 2023-27 'A Fresh Start' and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy set out a vision for Slough, and the actions needed to be done to make this a reality. It reflects the significant challenges faced by the Authority while setting out the Council's Priorities for the medium term. Food Safety is a foundation stone upon which objectives such as helping residents live healthier lives and the vision for a thriving Town Centre are built. The Action Plan at the rear of this service delivery plan shows, in detail, how we are going to achieve this.

The Action Plan should be read in conjunction with our Enforcement Policy. [Enforcement policy for regulatory and enforcement services - Slough Borough Council](#). The Enforcement Policy reaffirms our commitment to carry out our duties in an open, fair and consistent manner, with a graduated approach to enforcement, based on risk. Assessment of risk and the likelihood of reoccurrence are major factors in our enforcement decisions.

Our service plan reflects the [minimum](#) service that we must deliver to meet our statutory obligations under the FSA Food Law Code of Practice.

Delivery of this plan will be dependent on having the resources needed. As always it may be necessary to reprioritise planned work throughout the year if unforeseen demands on the service, such as serious investigations, arise.

Appendix A gives an estimate of the resources needed to deliver all the objectives of the Food Service Plan. As with previous years, we do not have the resource to deal with [all objectives](#), hence our priorities will be based on risk and reprioritised as the demand and needs of the service change.



# Looking back at 2024/25

## Summary

2024/25 was a challenging year for a number of reasons, the most significant being a migration to a new Management Information Systems (MIS) which went live in February 2024. Developing and learning the new system took a significant amount of time for everyone in the team. Work on improving the system and still ongoing.

The FSA also raised concerns over a growing backlog of triaged low risk unrated businesses - meaning those that registered but haven't been inspected, i.e. cake baker from home or a retail clothes shop selling sweets. The FSA wanted us to focus on reducing this backlog, which we did. When the FSA raised concerns we had around 100 unrated businesses overdue for an intervention, and the end of 2025, we only had 12, of which the majority were seasonal businesses or ones we could not access on time.

We also have ongoing financial pressures and Government appointed Commissioners continue to support the organisation as they implement a number of Governmental directions.

We inducted and trained two new members of the team; a new business support officer who is covering our current business support officer on a secondment, and an apprentice Environmental Health Practitioner. We also supported a food safety officer through his CPD (Competency Development Portfolio) in order to become a Food Safety Practitioner and be able to undertake official food controls.

Sadly one of our senior officers was absent from work for six months due to an unforeseen health condition, which created resourcing challenges.



### Key achievements

Despite the above, the team made great achievements, specifically:

- The team delivered most obligations within the FSA Food Law Code of Practice. We completed due inspections 100% of all high to medium risk rated premises (A, B and C rated), 96% of our medium rated premises (D rated), and 99% of our low rated premises (E rated). We also completed 93% of inspections to unrated premises (newly registered).
- We also provided 313 Export Health Certificates, an increase on 219 last year. This generated cost recovery 'income' of approx. £40K, and increase on £30K last year
- We continued to work with our PA Partners and local businesses resulting in salary off set 'income' of more than £19K. This is similar to our PA income from last year. We deliver PA jointly with Trading Standards and this year generated a combined income of £24K.
- We had a successful prosecution regarding serious rodent infestation at a local restaurant. The company was issued with a £7,000 fine.
- We closed two food businesses for serious cockroach infestations, one was closed formally under emergency powers, whilst the other was closed with a voluntary agreement. Both dealt with the infestations and reopened within a few weeks. We also

voluntarily restricted the sale of certain foods in a Polish supermarket and dumpling manufacturer for a mice infestation, restrictions were in place for several months until the infestation was under control.

- We oversaw the destruction of 2,500kg of imported green beans from Kenya, which failed statutory testing at the Boarder Control Post.
- We have started a project to move from a paperwork inspection to remote inspection on a tablet device. This will remove the need to prepare long reports, which will be automatically generated. We hope this project will be completed and implemented in 2025/26.

### Primary Authority Scheme

Primary Authority (PA) Partnerships comprise a legally binding contract between the Authority and a business to provide ongoing specialist advice on specific areas of regulation applicable to that business, such as fair trading, product labelling, product safety, food safety and health & safety.

Our specialist officers provide companies trading across council boundaries robust and reliable advice, through these legally recognised partnerships. The scheme also provides a safety net to ensure that local authorities are consistent in the way they regulate businesses.



Cost recovery is an essential element of the scheme and is applied to Primary Authority partnerships with an hourly charge for any work undertaken. While the number of businesses in a Primary Authority Partnership with us is reasonably stable, we currently maintain 46 partnerships, the demand for support from our partners does vary. Generally over the past few years we have seen a downward trend in PA income, principally due to the fact we lost staff, whose key role was to provide PA advice. We therefore have refocused our abilities and priorities.

However, this year we saw an increase in demand from our PA partners resulting in salary off set 'income' of more than £19K. This is a similar to last years income. The food & safety team gave over 200 hours of advice interactions with our PA companies; most of this was in response to requests from our partners.

This cost offset Primary Authority model offers benefits for the Authority and local businesses by improving resilience, competency and staff retention within the Teams. It also improves standards in business trading in and out of the Borough. Additionally as a Primary Authority we have access to specialist panels which support officers, improve consistency and provide access to experts in the field.

More information on Primary Authority Partnerships can be found on the website [primary-authority.beis.gov.uk/about](https://primary-authority.beis.gov.uk/about). Businesses that would like to join the scheme can email [primary.authority@slough.gov.uk](mailto:primary.authority@slough.gov.uk) or [www.slough.gov.uk/primaryauthority](https://www.slough.gov.uk/primaryauthority)

### Our Chargeable Services

We provide a service to issue export health certificates to Slough based businesses exporting food products. This is discretionary but is offered as it supports local businesses to access the exported food market. This year we issued 313 export health certificates, which made an income of approx. £40K. This is an increase on 219 certificates last year. The fee charged for this service is based on salary and cost 'off-set'. The demand for this service is not reliable and may stop at any time.

The logo for Primary Authority, featuring the words "PRIMARY" and "AUTHORITY" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters, stacked vertically on a dark green rectangular background. The entire logo is enclosed within a white rounded rectangular border.

**PRIMARY  
AUTHORITY**

## Food Hygiene Premises Inspections and Interventions

Slough Borough Council is a Competent Authority and is responsible for ensuring that Official Food Controls are undertaken. We aim to undertake all interventions required by the FSA's Food

Law Code of Practice, a Statutory Code of Practice. Where there is a gap between the resources available to deliver these interventions and the demands on the service then our priority is to complete interventions to food businesses which present the highest risk.

Table 1 below shows the number of interventions due in 2024/25 and the number of full or partial inspections carried out at each category of premises.

Risk Rating	Frequency of intervention	Number of interventions due in 2024/25 as of 1 April 2024	Number of interventions not completed and now overdue
Premise Rating - A	6 months	10	0
Premise Rating - B	12 months	26	0
Premise Rating - C	18 months	106	0
Premise Rating - D	24 months	233	3
Premise Rating - E	Alternative Intervention	234	1
Premise Rating - Unrated	Awaiting initial inspection	70	0
Newley registered businesses requiring inspection	28 days from opening	171	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>850</b>	<b>16</b>
Businesses closed	253		

We triage new businesses as they register, and as a priority inspect those that present greater risk. Businesses which are lower risk, such as businesses who bake a small number of cakes from home, food brokers, or a clothes retailer

selling sweets, are classed as lower risk. We get a high number of businesses registering throughout the year, 171 this year, and many of these also close within the year. This high churn of businesses creates pressure on the team.

In the middle of the year, the FSA raised concerns over a growing backlog of triaged low risk unrated businesses - meaning those that registered but haven't been inspected. The FSA wanted us to focus on reducing this backlog, which we did. We also undertook a thorough cleanse of the database and contacted every business to determine if they were still trading and the level of risk posed. We visited 99.9% of trading businesses. We determined that 253 businesses ceased trading and removed them from our database.

The increase in number of food businesses operating from home, or

remotely, such as food imports and brokers, is not unique to Slough. It is a growing challenge to most Local Authorities, which is reflective to the change in the food safety regulatory landscape. With High Street's struggling, food businesses trade from domestic premises, or 'dark kitchens', which are remote non customer facing catering premises, often providing food for several different food take away brands. There's also a growing trend to operating a small food business from home, which became particularly popular since the Covid lockdown.

The table 2 below shows our current premises profile and interventions due for 2025/26.

Risk Rating	Number of food premises	Number of interventions due in 2025/26
Rating - A	8	16
Rating - B	18	18
Rating - C	225	156
Rating - D	433	170
Rating - E	282	44
Rating - Unrated	55 (12 overdue on 1 April 2025, plus 43 registered but not yet due on 1 April 2025)	235*
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,021</b>	<b>639</b>

\*we estimate that approx. 170 new businesses will register and require inspecting throughout the year

### Regulation and demands on the service

We undertake sensible and progressive regulation and enforcement in line with our enforcement policy.

We continued to receive a significant number of new food business registrations. At the end March 2025 we had 55 unrated premises on our database. The FSA require that all new businesses are inspected within 28 days of registration or when discovered to be open. However with such a high number of new registrations throughout the year, it is a serious challenge to inspect all within this timescale. Therefore we have developed a policy and approach to managing this based on risk, whereby we triage all new businesses as soon as we receive the registration, and inspect based on risk. High risk businesses are aimed to be inspected within 28 days, and very low businesses such as cake bakers from home, are inspected when we have sufficient resources. This meant that over time, we developed a growing list of low risk rated businesses. The number of low risk overdue businesses will slowly increase as we triage

businesses and inspect based on a risk. All new businesses were provided with advice upon registration and we aim to manage all due unrated businesses to be best of our availability with the resources available.

We routinely use broadly compliant (BC) data as a benchmarking tool. BC means that the premises is broadly compliant with food hygiene requirements **achieving a Food Hygiene Rating score of 3, which is 'generally satisfactory'**. It also includes all unrated businesses as non-compliant, even though they haven't been assessed and maybe compliant. At the start of 2024/25 our BC figure was 85%. At the start of 2025/26 it was 88%. This figure fluctuates marginally throughout the year. If you removed unrated premises from this figure and made the assessment on premises that have had an actual inspection and accurate risk rating, our BC figure for the end of 2024/25 was 94% which is more accurate and reflective. This figure is the same as last year. **This means that 94% of all our food businesses achieve a food hygiene rating of 3 or above and are 'generally satisfactory'.**

If a business is identified as 'non-broadly compliant' during an intervention, further enforcement action and revisits are undertaken to secure improvements. In the past year 7 Hygiene Improvement Notices were served on 3 Food Business Operators and we served 1 Hygiene Emergency Prohibition notices to close a business instantly, and we also closed 2 businesses voluntarily. We also served 5



Imported Food notices, 1 food seizure notice and issued 410 written warnings, a slight increase from last year.

We also gained a successful prosecution against a local restaurant with a serious rodent infestation. This resulted in a fine of £7,000 and minimal costs awarded to the council, which was disappointing. To take the case to court, including time to regulate to secure improvements estimated £7k, costs to the council. We have expressed concerns to the court that costs should be covered by the businesses creating the non compliance.

### Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

We participate in the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, the Food Hygiene Rating of businesses within the Borough are published on the national website [ratings.food.gov.uk/authority-search/slough](https://ratings.food.gov.uk/authority-search/slough). The scheme helps consumers by giving them information about the hygiene standards in food businesses. There is also evidence that the scheme encourages businesses to improve standards.

Assessments for a Food Hygiene Rating are carried out during routine food hygiene inspections when inspecting officers look at:

- How hygienically food is handled- including preparation, storage and temperature control.
- The condition of the structure of the building- including cleanliness, layout, facilities and maintenance.
- How the business manages and records what it does to make the food that it sells safe.

Officers participate in local and national consistency exercises to ensure that we are applying the risk assessment scoring in the code accurately.

### Food Safety Complaints and Enquires

The team dealt with 240 complaints and enquiries from or about food businesses in Slough during 2024/25 (this figure excludes new food business registrations, imported and exported food referrals and PA queries as they are mentioned elsewhere). This figure is a significant increase from 134 the previous year. However we have a new database as we are recording complaints and enquiries slightly differently than before. The team also gave advice to 220 new/potential food businesses, another significant increase from 161 last year.

A range of enquiries were responded to. In particular we investigated:

- **69** complaints about hygiene standards at food businesses.
- **13** complaints about food (including contamination with foreign bodies and mould)

**FOOD HYGIENE RATING**

The team follows a procedure in relation to complaints and aims to keep the customer informed of our progress and outcome. We triage the information provided and review the intelligence we already have about the business before deciding on a course of action. We prioritise complaints which indicate a serious risk to public health and/or breach of the legal requirements.

The type of complaints we've dealt with include an insect larvae in nuts, mouldy food, glass in food, metal in a chocolate bar, illegal food business trading from a domestic address, expired use by dates, undeclared allergens in food, plastic inside chicken, hair in food, insects inside flour, food with unusual smells, piece of blue gloves in food, several pest complaints, poor hygiene of staff including nose picking, several alleged food poisoning complaints, no hot water and cooking food in a yard.

### Imported Food Control

We undertake the following controls on imported food:

- Control of Products of Animal Origin (POAO) which are in Enhanced Temporary Storage Facilities (ETFS) in Slough but which have bypassed imported food controls at the point of entry into the UK.
- Supervision of High Risk Non-Products of Animal Origin (NPOAO) which are located in ETFS in Slough pending the results of sampling at the point of entry into the UK - including the

destruction of goods which fail those checks. This is part of formal onward transmission arrangements that we have with Border Control Posts around the UK.

- Dealing with other restricted foods located in ETFS in the Borough as and when we become aware of them.
- Certification of Organic Foods being imported through ETFS in the Borough.
- Inland imported food checks during routine food hygiene interventions, to ensure food has been imported correctly and does not pose a health risk.

In 2024/25 we undertook the following work specifically in relation to imported food:

- Dealt with 113 Onward Transmission notifications (significant increase from 46 in 2023/24, due to the fact we have more importers in Slough with an Onward Transmission arrangement in place)
- Detained and oversaw the destruction of 4 consignments of High Risk NPOAO which failed statutory testing (similar to last year)
- Detained and notified Border Force about four consignments of illegally imported POAO (similar number to last year).
- Deal with three consignments of illegally imported organic food (similar to last year)

### Food Poisoning and Infectious Disease Investigations

Last year, the Food and Safety Team were notified of 312 infectious diseases and food poisoning related illnesses. A slight increase on last years figure.

We follow up in line with regionally agreed protocols, co-ordinating with the South East Region of the UK Health Security Agency where necessary.

The most common food poisoning reported in Slough remains to be *Campylobacter* which made up 56% of the reported illnesses; this corresponds with national trends, as *campylobacter* is the most common type of food poisoning in the UK. *Salmonella* accounted for 12% of notifications, *Giardia* for 8%, *Cryptosporidium* 7%, Hepatitis viruses 4%, and *E.coli* VTEC 3%.

### Sampling

We took a total of 11 official samples for microbiological examination in 2024/25, all for micro examination and part of a National Study by UKHSA. This is less than 30 samples taken on last year's routine sampling.

### Food Standards Official Food Controls

Slough Borough Council is a Competent Authority and responsible for ensuring that Official Food Controls are undertaken. We aim to undertake all of the interventions required by the FSA's Food Law Code of Practice (FLCoP) (a Statutory Code of Practice). There may be deviations due to exceptional circumstances.

For 2024/25 we continued our prioritisation work for uninspected premises. This enabled our Food qualified officers to greater prioritise the 'UNRATED' uninspected premises.

As with Food and Safety, Food Standards was also migrated to the new MIS platform, with effect from 1 April 2024. This was a big undertaking, with officers juggling the task, with normal day to day duties.

This table shows the number of interventions due in 2024/25 and the number of inspections carried out, at each category of premises, along with the activity due for 2024/25. The number of lower risk visits is relatively high due to an accumulation from previous years.



Risk Rating	Frequency of intervention	Number of interventions due in 2024-25 (as per FSA recovery plan)	Total number of interventions carried out in 2024/25	Activity due for 2024/25
Premise Rating - A	12 months	3	3	100% of A rated premises
Premise Rating - B	24 months	84	42 (2 closed)	50% of B rated premises
Premise Rating - C	60 months	34	9 (0 closed)	25% of C rated premises
Premise Rating - Unrated	Awaiting initial inspection	83 (at April 2024) + 171 more businesses registered throughout the year = 254	83 FSI visits (5 x closed) + 130 Virtual Visits Total = 213 (further 41 to visit)	100% of unrated premises
<b>Total food premises</b>		<b>375</b>	<b>267</b>	

In order to meet the minimum requirements of the FSA plan in 2024/25 we are expected (as a minimum) to:

- Assess and visit in accordance with risk, all business that register with us plus any existing unrated businesses;
- Carry out interventions in line with the normal programme for inspections set out in the Food Law Code of Practice
- Of the businesses awaiting initial inspection it is planned to inspect the premises identified as high risk and carry out alternative interventions with remaining lower risk establishments.

We have continued to receive a significant number of new food business registrations. At the end March 2025,

171 new businesses had registered with us.

During the last year, 253 of the total Slough food businesses ceased trading altogether.

All new businesses were provided with advice upon registration and were called by the Food Standards team, prior to visiting; to establish whether they were still trading, but also to prioritise their first inspection, on the basis of risk.

We dealt with 53 food related enquiries ranging from out of date food, incorrectly labelled imported food, pre-packed for direct sale enquiries and allergen controls.

Preparations also began to implement the new Food Standards Delivery Model.



## Customer Pledge

We aim to provide every customer with a quality service and will seek feedback from you to help further improve the quality of the services we provide. A manager will contact you personally if you are unhappy with the service received.

In addition, we have introduced the following standards against which we will monitor the responsiveness of our service, namely:

Service Standard	Target/ Response Times
Respond to customer complaints and enquiries	Within five working days
Provide a full response	Within 10 working days

## Quality Assurance

We aim to undertake formal monthly quality assurance monitoring on the whole range of our service delivery. Our QA procedures assess the work of our officers to ensure that it meets the high standard expected by the service. Some monitoring was undertaken in 2024/25 on a risk based approach, but not at the intended levels due to demands of work and competing priorities. However, all enforcement notices are closely checked before serving. This year we aim to undertake increased QA in line with our policy.

Members of the team represent the Authority in a number of regional bodies with the aim of sharing good practice,

including a range of Primary Authority Expert Panels, The National Food Hygiene Focus Group, Berkshire and Oxfordshire Food and Health & Safety Liaison Group & Regional Sampling Group.

## Resourcing

The Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff authorised allocated to food safety & standards work is 4.3 FTE. Appendix A identifies a need for resourcing in the region of 5.25 FTE to deliver the Food Safety & Standards service. There would appear to be a shortfall of approximately 0.95 FTE, and 1.17 FTE shortfall to deliver all services of the team, including Health and Safety regulations and other non-food day to day work.

The cost of the service during 2024/25 to meet the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Food Law Code of Practice obligations will be approximately £350,000, for both Food Safety and Food Standards. A breakdown of the resources committed to Food Safety and Standards work is contained in Appendix A.



We aim to make efficiencies, work smarter and create income to offset this shortfall. We aim to change the way we undertake food hygiene interventions from paper based and typing a report, to this all being on a tablet and automatically generating a report. Whilst this will take some time and investment initially, this should increase significant efficiencies year on year.

To complete all of the obligations within this plan is ambitious. Where necessary we will prioritise on the basis of risk and work may be re-prioritised as needs change. Aspirational health and safety projects may not be undertaken. Premises deemed as low risk will be managed so their risk is reviewed regularly, and should their risk rating increase, the premises will immediately be subject to interventions. Where possible we will make use of flexibilities within the guidance and other smarter, agile and mobile working initiatives, all of which are detailed in the Action Plan attached as appendix B.

### Areas for development/Future delivery models

We are always striving to move the service forward. We have set the following areas for development during the coming year;

- Enabling food hygiene inspections to be undertaken remotely on a hand held device, and compliance reports autogenerated and sent to the business operator whilst onsite. This is a significant project, but should create

beneficial efficiencies once embedded. Work on this project started in 2024, and due to complete summer 2025

- Linking in with Public Health colleagues to support the wider health agenda for Slough
- Updating our general procedures
- Improving our customer engagement.
- Increased QA monitoring

Over the past few years the FSA have been undertaking a review of the current Hygiene Delivery Model and looking at new options to align with a rapidly changing food safety landscape and growing regulatory challenges. A new model was expected in 2024, however due to significant concerns from regulators, this was paused, and a new consultation launched April 2025. It is expected that a new Hygiene Delivery model, with significant changes to the Food Law Code of Practice will be delivered April 2026. We have recently reviewed the proposed changes, which are substantial and will required considerable changes to way we currently regulate food businesses. If implemented there will be the need for a considerable amount of costs, in terms of officer development and training, update our current Information Management System and procedures. We continue to receive communications from the FSA on requirements from them.

### Staff Development

On-going development of the work force is paramount to ensure a comprehensive service is provided to the customer, whilst maintaining continuous improvement and providing value for money. The Food Standards Agency requires that the Council maintains the competency of its officers and also that we have officers with sufficient skills to maintain the breadth of competency needed for Slough specifically. The town's close location to Heathrow airport places additional training requirements upon the team in relation to complex Imported Food legislation.

### Variation from service plan

**The action plan for 2025/26, outlines planned work for the year in Appendix B.**

Departures from this service will be exceptional, capable of justification and be brought to the attention of Head of Public Protection without delay. Reasons for any departure from the plan will be fully documented.

## Appendix A

### Resource Requirements for Food Service Delivery 2025/26

Service provision for 2025/26	Expected output	FTE required	Resource
Food hygiene interventions to all premises due	Cat A (8) 16 interventions Cat B 18 interventions Cat C 156 interventions Cat D 170 interventions Cat E 44 interventions Unrated 55 due on 31 March 2025, plus 250 businesses registering in year, of which approx. 70% will be med or high risk (based on 24.25 figures) (approx. 305 due, 70% C's, 30% E) <b>Total due</b> 2,896/12m/4.34w in m/37h = 1.5	160h 108h 780h 510h 88h 1067+183 = 1250h  <b>1.5 FTE</b>	EHO
Businesses overdue for intervention:			
Food Standards Inspections	Transitioning to the new Food Standards Delivery Model - any priority interventions will be tackled	1.0 TS	TSO
Imported food control	Difficult to estimate demand	0.1	EHO/TSO
Complaints and service requests	650	0.75	EHO/TSO
Sampling	50	0.1	EHO/TSO
Food Enforcement Action - emergency procedures, case files. Prosecutions, etc	May vary - but based on previous experience	1.0	EHO/TSO
QA and updating of procedures		0.3	Manager/TL
Day to day management of service delivery		0.5	Manager
<b>Total to deliver FLCoP requirements</b>		<b>4.25</b> excluding TS	
<b>Other service demands not in the FLCoP:</b>			
Delivery of Primary Authority scheme	Approx. 240hrs	0.12	
Administration		1.0	BSO
Export Certification	Estimated at 350	0.3	EHO
Health and Safety Regulation		0.75	
Infectious disease control		0.1	
Other non regulatory work and managing the team		1.5	
	<b>Total additional rescores required on top of FLCoP requirements</b>	<b>8.02</b> excluding TS	
We have allocated 3.3 FTE to undertake the obligations of the FSA FLCoP as detailed above for food hygiene excluding standards. This is without the pressure of other non-regulatory work, such as replying to emails, keeping up to date with training and competency, attending meetings, 1:1's and adhering to SBC policy and procedures, which together estimates an addition 3.77 FTE requirement. There is an approx. 0.95 FTE shortfall to meet our food statutory obligations alone, and <b>approx. 1.17 FTE shortfall to deliver all statutory obligations and an effective service.</b>			

## Appendix B: Food Safety and Standards Action Plan 2025/26

**Directorate:** Public Health and Public Protection

**Service manager:** Levine Whitham

**Division:** Public Protection

**Budget:** £350,000 (including Food Standards)

**Team:** Food and Safety Team, and Trading Standards & Licensing Team

**Number of staff employed to deliver or support delivery of food hygiene and standards service:**

6.85 FTE

**Number of staff employed who are allocated to official food control work:**

3.3 FTE

### Service objectives:

We have strong links to the council's Corporate Plan, as indicated against each service activity below. The work of the Food Safety & Standards teams is essential in securing safe foundations from which the council can deliver its plan. Without the basics, such as safe places to eat and protection against disease and food related illness, it would be impossible to build a safe, healthy and vibrant place to live, work or visit. The service provides a foundation stone for a fit and resilient borough.

Protecting public health via ensuring Food Safety; supporting local businesses in Slough and offsetting salaries via the Primary Authority Scheme, Exported food certification and other chargeable services.

Provide a value for money food safety service within the Food & Safety and Trading Standards Teams with excellent customer focus and well-motivated competent staff to deliver our statutory obligations and the meet the specific needs and priorities of Slough.

The timely delivery of specific work plans, evidence based initiatives and joint working with partners both within and beyond the council to improve the quality of life in Slough and protect customers whilst supporting business growth and developments within the Town Centre.

Service activity	Council priority/ statutory requirement	Targets	Key actions	Anticipated outcomes	Responsible officer	Timescale and measures
<b>Primary Authority (PA)</b>	A cleaner, healthier, more prosperous Slough, by engaging with businesses to create new employment opportunities	Monies invoiced recouped by way of Salary & cost off set target of £78,000 invoiced in conjunction with Trading Standards Team.  Consolidate and further develop existing PA partnerships.	Designated officers to work closely with PA businesses to:  Develop partnerships with PA clients.  Provide specific advice in relation to management systems & procedures and controls adopted by the company nationally.  Issue 'formal PA advice' where procedures and controls are deemed suitable and compliant.  Handle referrals from other local authorities and central government bodies on behalf of that business.  Develop and publicise Inspection Plans where requested.  Issue of advice and guidance to other Enforcement Authorities on the company's activities.  Maintain an accurate record of any advice and guidance.  Hold meetings with partner businesses on a regular timetable of mutual agreement, along with annual action plans where mutually agreeable.  Respond to requests within in line with Customer Charter and Pledge, or as agreed with the PA.	Partial offset of salaries and costs.  Improved standards, efficiencies and compliance within PA's, with less enforcement action taken by Enforcement Authorities (EA).  Reduced, efficient and effective regulation by other EA nationwide, via the provision of PA support which has a national impact.  Reduced regulatory burden on PA businesses.	Food & Safety Manager  Trading Standards & Licensing Manager  All Food Safety & Trading Standards Officers	March 2026  Monthly Reports on hours and income generation  Quarterly Reviews of progress  Yearly overview of individual company Action Plans

Service activity	Council priority/ statutory requirement	Targets	Key actions	Anticipated outcomes	Responsible officer	Timescale and measures
<b>Supporting economic development and business compliance:</b> <b>Providing support to businesses via chargeable services such as export certification and FHRS rescues.</b>	A cleaner, healthier, more prosperous Slough, by engaging with businesses to create new employment opportunities.	Monies invoiced & recouped by way of Salary & cost off set. Target of £37,000 for export certification.	<p>Provide free signposting to comprehensive self-help support and guidance to new business start-ups and existing SME's in Slough.</p> <p>To provide an export certification service to local businesses.</p> <p>Charge for Food Hygiene Rating Scheme re-score visits and SFBB packs when requested.</p> <p>Ensure recharging for enforcement activities where legislation allows including the administration of Official Food Controls on certain Imported Foods.</p> <p>Provide easy to access payment services, including telephone and online payments.</p> <p>Maintain up to date information on the council website - signposting to current guidance and resources.</p> <p>Review our offer of chargeable business support options in line with existing resourcing constraints and current corporate objectives including consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Primary Authority</li> <li>■ Tailored business advice</li> <li>■ Assessment of labelling/brochures/website</li> <li>■ Pre-start up advice</li> </ul>	<p>Improved standards, efficiencies and compliance within businesses.</p> <p>Partial offset of salaries and costs.</p> <p>Reduced the amount of regulation required by the council via business paying for support and improving standards before statutory inspections are undertaken.</p>	<p>Food &amp; Safety Manager</p> <p>Trading Standards &amp; Licensing Manager</p> <p>All Food Safety &amp; Trading Standards Officers</p>	<p>March 2026</p> <p>Quarterly review &amp; Monthly Reports on hours and income generation</p> <p>Number of Export Certificates Issued.</p> <p>Number of businesses given chargeable business support.</p> <p>Number of businesses achieving 5 FHRS.</p>

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Hygiene Interventions with food premises in Slough  Statutory Requirement	Statutory Requirement  Closing the healthy life expectancy gap in Slough by, having a town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent lives; and working with partners to target health inequalities and promote wellbeing	100% of due food interventions to A-D rated premises including approved premises in line with FSA FLCoP  Undertake a risk based approach to undertaking interventions to E rated premises.  All approvals to be issued within time limits as defines in FSA CoP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Pre-Inspection support visits</li> <li>■ Review of policy and procedures</li> <li>■ Audit of systems</li> <li>■ Support in achieving 5 FHRS</li> <li>■ Supply of SFBB material</li> <li>■ Funded projects from regional or national groups (TSSE/NTS)</li> </ul>			
			<p>Undertake Routine Food Hygiene Interventions in line with FSA FLCoP. Making full use of Alternative Enforcement Strategies (AES) where available.</p> <p>Assess compliance with allergen information to consumers and safe handling of allergens during food interventions.</p> <p>Share intel and concerns regarding allergens with trading standards, and take action to ensure compliance and consumer safety where necessary.</p> <p>Secure improvements where there are evident concerns, taking enforcement action where compliance is poor; in line with the council's Enforcement Policy.</p> <p>Recover costs for service of Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices and voluntary closures.</p>	<p>Safer food businesses in Slough and increase in % of broadly compliant premises.</p> <p>Reduced incidence of food poisoning.</p> <p>Increase in proportion of premises achieving 3, 4 &amp; 5 in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS).</p>	<p>Food &amp; Safety Manager</p> <p>Food Safety Team Leader</p> <p>All Food Safety Officers</p> <p>TS/NET/ Licensing acting as 'eyes and ears'</p>	<p>Ongoing until March 2026</p> <p>Quarterly review of number of interventions. Compared to those due.</p> <p>Number of high risk unrated businesses overdue for intervention.</p> <p>% of broadly compliant premises.</p>



Service activity	Council priority/ statutory requirement	Targets	Key actions	Anticipated outcomes	Responsible officer	Timescale and measures
		<p>Ensure all new food business registrations are risk assessed &amp; inspected in line with risk and FSA CoP.</p> <p>Improve Business Food Safety compliance in the borough.</p> <p>Undertake intervention and follow up regulation in line with the Code of Practice.</p>	<p>Publicise enforcement action taken against non-compliant premises as a deterrent to other businesses and incentivise improvements.</p> <p>Explore focused interventions and sector specific projects on high risk premises or where local intelligence suggests necessary.</p> <p>Added Value:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Joined up enforcement: Use professional curiosity when visiting premises to identify concerns and share intelligence with relevant bodies (safeguarding, CSE, modern day slavery, housing, NET team planning, licensing).</li> <li>■ Assessing compliance with Smoke Free requirements.</li> <li>■ Identify H&amp;S matters of concern and take appropriate action where necessary.</li> </ul>	<p>Consumers have greater Up to date information for consumers on hygiene standards, so they can make informed choices on where to eat and purchase food.</p> <p>Proportionate enforcement taken in non-compliant premises.</p>		<p>Impact of regulation (Revisit outcomes).</p> <p>QA monitoring completed and feedback actioned.</p>

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<b>Reactive Investigations, response to intelligence from other areas of work, Food Complaints and response to service requests</b> <b>Statutory Requirement.</b>	<b>Statutory Requirement</b> Closing the healthy life expectancy gap in Slough by, having a town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent live; and working with partners to target health inequalities and promote wellbeing.	Respond to 100% of service request within 5 days and deal with these in line with customer charter.	Review service requests and triage. Investigate service requests and where necessary using a full range of enforcement options to ensure compliance and safety. Managing customer expectations in line with Customer Charter. Where appropriate signpost customers to self help resources. Work in line with Enforcement policy, prosecution template and internal procedures. Explore joined up enforcement opportunities on a case by case basis including liaison in relation to (safeguarding, CSE, modern day slavery, housing, NET team planning, licensing).	Safer food businesses in Slough. Reduced incidence of food poisoning. Consumers feel able to eat out and purchase food safely in businesses within Slough. All complaints and service requests dealt with in line with Customer Service Charter and Pledge.	All officers	Ongoing until March 2026 Assess during 1:1 meetings and Case Reviews. QA monitoring completed and feedback actioned.

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<b>Food Hygiene Rating Scheme</b>	Closing the healthy life expectancy gap in Slough by, having a town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent live; and working with partners to target health inequalities and promote wellbeing.	<p>Continue to implement FHRS in Slough food businesses in line with FSA Brand Standard.</p> <p>Increase in premises achieving 2, 3, 4 and 5 score in the FHRS.</p> <p>Improved customer awareness of the Scheme, and better informed choices when eating out.</p>	<p>Data on National FHRS platform updated monthly.</p> <p>Appeals and rescores processed in line with the Brand Standard.</p> <p>Engage with National publicity campaigns to raise awareness of FHRS.</p> <p>Encourage businesses to seek a rescore where their compliance has improved.</p> <p>Added value:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Work to support % increase in BC businesses.</li> <li>■ Support compliance businesses and target those seeking financial gain from non-compliance.</li> <li>■ Peer pressure to improve ratings and threat of adverse publicity.</li> </ul>	<p>Up to date information available for consumers.</p> <p>Consumers have greater information on local business hygiene standards, so they can make informed choices on where to eat and purchase food.</p> <p>Businesses motivated to improve their hygiene standards.</p>	<p>Food Safety Team Leader</p> <p>All Officers to support</p>	<p>March 2026</p> <p>Monthly review</p> <p>Number of publicity actions to raise customer awareness.</p>

Service activity	Council priority/ statutory requirement	Targets	Key actions	Anticipated outcomes	Responsible officer	Timescale and measures
<b>Imported Food Controls</b> <b>Statutory Requirement</b>	<b>Statutory Requirement</b> Closing the healthy life expectancy gap in Slough by, having a town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent live; and working with partners to target health inequalities and promote wellbeing.	Intelligence and risk lead checks on 100% of imported food notifications.  Continue to support and facilitate Onward Transmission (OT) arrangements with clearing agents in Slough, regarding high risk food imported and subject to BIP testing.	Duty officer to monitor and respond to all notifications of imported food on a risk based approach, taking appropriate enforcement action where necessary.  Maintain close working arrangements with both HMRC, Hillingdon, Stanstead and Felixstowe BIP, regarding the sharing of intel, OT's and location of ETSF's.  Process imports of organic food and issue certificates.  Control of onward transmission referrals and notifications of Personal Imports.  Investigations into illegally imported Products of Animal Origin (POAO) and other restricted foods (NPOAO), both at ETSF's and inland.  Work with clearing agents and importers regarding the safe and legal import of non EU foods, including signposting to information and advice.  Annual review of internal procedures, including keeping abreast of new and emerging issues and rapid changes in import controls.  Added value:  ■ Slough community, the rest of the UK and other 3rd countries are protected against illegal and hazardous imports from third countries.	Safe and complaint food imported into the EU via Slough.  Food businesses in Slough, offering safe and complaint imported food.	Food & safety Manager  All officers to support	March 2026  Quarterly  Review  Number of imported food consignments checked and notices served.  Number of inland food investigations undertaken and notices serviced.  Number of organic COIs issued.

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<b>Sampling Statutory Requirement</b>	<b>Statutory Requirement</b> Closing the healthy life expectancy gap in Slough by, having a town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent live; and working with partners to target health inequalities and promote wellbeing.	Participating in National and Regional sampling programmes (where relevant to Slough) to investigate emerging food concerns, and to ensure food is safe.  Undertake sampling as part of a suite of interventions to improve food hygiene and food standards and focus on high risk and local needs.	Regional sampling projects to be agreed at Berkshire Food Sampling group and TSSE.  Explore funding avenues from external organisations e.g. Food Standards Agency.  Timely follow up on sampling results, including investigation into unsatisfactory results where necessary.  Explore joint sampling initiatives with Food Standards Officers where appropriate.  Undertake imported food sampling where intelligence suggests necessary.	Contribute to local and national sampling intelligence, which will support improved both hygiene and food standards levels in Slough and nationwide.  Minimum of 70 samples submitted for microbiological examination.  Safer food locally and nationwide.	Laura Charlton (Hygiene Sampling)  All officers to support	March 2026  Quarterly review  Number of samples taken.  Number of unsatisfactory results acted upon.

Service activity	Council priority/ statutory requirement	Targets	Key actions	Anticipated outcomes	Responsible officer	Timescale and measures
<b>Infectious Disease Notifications and Control, and Public Health Statutory Requirement</b>	<b>Statutory Requirement</b> Closing the healthy life expectancy gap in Slough by, having a town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent live; and working with partners to target health inequalities and promote wellbeing.	Investigation of Infectious Notifications including suspected food poisoning outbreaks in line with UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) protocols. Support Public Health Initiatives.	100% of notified infectious disease cases investigated in line with UKHSA Protocols. Appropriate action taken where food handlers, or high risk groups are involved, including exclusion from work until clear of infection. Where source can be identified, take appropriate action to prevent reoccurrence, including enforcement. Participation in Incident Management Teams where necessary and associated follow up action undertaken.	Reduced incidents of infectious disease. Increased intelligence on sources of infectious disease, locally and nation wide.	Food Safety Team Leader All Officers to support	March 2026 Quarterly reviews
<b>Food Standards Inspections and work</b>	<b>Statutory Requirement</b> Closing the healthy life expectancy gap in Slough by, having a town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent live; and working with	100% of due A category food standard inspections. Inspect or alternative enforcement of premises yet to be inspected.	Allocation of interventions based on risk priority. Make full use of Alternative Enforcement Strategies (AES) to applicable businesses in line with FSA CoP, including newsletter, SAQ's, targeted advice sessions and other relevant advice. Inspections based on risk; ■ inspection of A, yet to be inspected food businesses	Safer food businesses in Slough and increase in % of broadly compliant premises. Increased awareness among traders of their legal responsibilities in	Trading Standards & Licensing Manager/Food Standards Lead Officer Food Safety Team Leader All TS Food Officers	Ongoing until March 2026 Monthly and Quarterly review

Service activity	Council priority/ statutory requirement	Targets	Key actions	Anticipated outcomes	Responsible officer	Timescale and measures
	partners to target health inequalities and promote wellbeing.	<p>Carry out Intel led - sampling.</p> <p>Calculate amount of traders brought into compliance.</p> <p>Participation in national/regional sampling programmes as directed by TSSE or the Public Analyst. Including Internet sellers within the Borough.</p> <p>To work collaboratively with TSSE to undertake the Food Standards that have been identified as a regional national problem.</p>	<p>■ Identified poor performing businesses targeted with appropriate interventions and re-rating the risk</p> <p>To tackle Food Fraud</p> <p>Secure improvements where there are evident concerns, taking enforcement action where compliance is poor; in line with the council's business growth agenda, providing 'incubation periods' where suitable.</p> <p>Provide free regulatory advice for new businesses starting up.</p> <p>Publicise enforcement action taken against non-compliant premises as a deterrent to other businesses and incentivise improvements.</p> <p>Involvement in targeted sampling projects for compliance with a wide range of food legislation (e.g. compositional standards, compliant labelling, health nutritional information, additives, allergens, colourings, GM Oil and traceability etc.), with further follow up enforcement as required.</p> <p>Participating in National and Regional sampling programmes to investigate emerging food</p>	<p>respect of Food Standards.</p> <p>Working alongside our colleagues in Food Safety the aim will be to provide consumers with greater information on food standards and local business hygiene standards in order that they can make informed choices on where to eat and purchase food.</p> <p>Working in partnership on local, regional and national basis.</p>	FS/NET/ Licensing acting as 'eyes and ears' Support material from the FSA	

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		<p>Ensure all new food business registrations are risk assessed &amp; inspected in line with risk and FSA CoP.</p> <p>Offer business support options as detailed above.</p> <p>Align interventions to new Food Standards Agency delivery module.</p>	<p>concerns, and to ensure food is safe.</p> <p>Offer chargeable business support options as detailed above.</p> <p>Enhance advice and signposting for businesses on SBC website.</p> <p>Focused interventions and sector specific projects on high risk premises or where local intelligence suggests necessary.</p> <p>Transition to the new Food Standards Delivery Model.</p> <p>Added Value:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Assessing compliance with all consumer protection legislation.</li> <li>■ Identify matters which may be relevant to other services.</li> </ul>	<p>Better understanding of compliance levels in take away sector in relation to food standards.</p>		
<b>Safeguarding and intelligence sharing</b>	Closing the healthy life expectancy gap in Slough by, having a town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent live; working with	All officers to use their professional curiosity when making face to face contact with service users, and refer concerns in a timely manner, 100% of the time.	<p>Use the 'Concern Card', and assess effectiveness of this avenue to rapid reporting.</p> <p>All staff to undertaken SBC online training for safeguarding adults and children on a annual basis.</p> <p>Safeguarding to be on the agenda and discussed at team meetings, 121's, and appraisals.</p>	<p>Improve the safety of children and vulnerable people in Slough.</p> <p>Improved life's of people in Slough.</p>	<p>Food &amp; Safety Manager</p> <p>All officers to support</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Monthly review in team meetings.</p>



Service activity	Council priority/ statutory requirement	Targets	Key actions	Anticipated outcomes	Responsible officer	Timescale and measures
<b>Looking Ahead and Service Development</b>	partners to target health inequalities and promote wellbeing; and improving community safety, tackling anti-social behaviour, providing a safer town to grow-up	<p>Ensure all staff are trained in safeguarding and following the SBC safeguarding principles.</p> <p>Continue to share intel and concerns with other partners such as TVH, HMRC, Immigration and RBFRS.</p>	<p>All officers to be vigilant and aware of safeguarding issues when making any face to face service user contact, and follow the corporate safeguarding principles if any concerns are raised.</p> <p>Holistic approach to all operations which involve potential victims with safeguarding issues.</p>			
		<p>Horizon scanning; providing a forward thinking service and fulfilling statutory obligations.</p> <p>Improving information sharing across the organisation.</p> <p>Exploring new ways of working.</p>	<p>Keep abreast of developments from the Food Standards Agency on the future of the Standards &amp; Hygiene Delivery Models of Official Food Controls and align our service provision accordingly.</p> <p>Enabling FHI's to be undertaken remotely on a HDD, automating interventions on our MIS and any compliance report autogenerated and sent to the FBO.</p>	<p>Trained and competent staff on delivery of new FHDM and new TODM. Probably significantly more imported food work required as a result of TODM changes and checked required to some foods coming in from EU.</p>	<p>Food &amp; Safety Manager, Trading Standards &amp; Licensing Manger, Food team Leader and Principal TSO.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Number of projects undertaken/ key outcome report.</p> <p>Number of procedures reviewed.</p>

Service activity	Council priority/ statutory requirement	Targets	Key actions	Anticipated outcomes	Responsible officer	Timescale and measures
		<p>Joined up enforcement initiatives.</p> <p>Updating or processes and procedures, increasing QA undertaken.</p>	<p>Building links with other teams within the Council to ensure that changes in business ownership and nature and identified and acted upon in a timely fashion.</p> <p>Assess feasibility of undertaking joint food hygiene and standards visits to make efficiencies and reduce burden on business.</p> <p>Consider development of joint hygiene/standards initiative.</p> <p>Explore options for collaborated working with Public Health, including supporting the PH officer, Health Places to encourage food businesses to give healthy food options.</p> <p>Review of processes and procedures to align with current standards &amp; reflect smarter ways of working.</p>	<p>Arrangements for information sharing established.</p> <p>Feasibility study/project plan developed for rolling out joint food hygiene/standards inspections.</p> <p>Development of a network to discuss common enforcement challenges/themes.</p> <p>Draw up timetable for review of procedures and implement.</p>		



## **Food safety and food standards - service delivery plan 2025/26**