



Exeter
City Council

Environment and Waste

Food Law and Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan

2024 – 2025

Drawn up in accordance with the

- Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement
- National Local Authority Enforcement Code
- Regulators' Code

Issued by: Simon Lane, Head of Environment and Waste

Issue date: September 2024

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Service aims and objectives	3
3	Background	6
4	Performance	7
5	Food Safety	8
6	Health and Safety	16
7	Sampling Programme	22
8	Environmental Health Training Service	24
9	Resources.....	25
10	Quality Assessment.....	28
11	Review	28
12	Conclusion	29
13	Glossary of terms	29
14	Action Plan 2022-23	30
	Appendix A – Service Structure	31
	Appendix B – Committee Structure.....	32
	Appendix C – List of activities / sectors for proactive inspection by Local Authorities	33

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This document forms the basis of the business regulation enforcement functions for the authority and ensures that statutory provision for food law and health and safety enforcement is addressed along with locally identified needs.

1.1.2 The Council has a duty to act as an enforcing authority for food safety and health and safety in premises for which it is responsible. The plan outlines how the Council will undertake that function.

1.1.3 The service plan will help to ensure that the actions of the Council are fair, consistent, open and effective.

1.1.4 The Council recognises the important role it plays promoting and securing the safety and health of those who live, work and visit the city of Exeter. The key aim of this plan is to demonstrate how the Council will fulfil its statutory obligations in accordance with national guidance set out by the respective regulatory agencies. It includes:

- the Council's aim and objectives;
- information around enforcement services provided by the Council;
- details of the Council's performance management systems;
- information on the performance of the Council

1.2 Access to services

1.2.1 The Environment and Waste Service is based in the Civic Centre, Paris Street. Service users may contact officers on site or by leaving a message in the following ways:

- online via the Council website;
- in person by appointment at the Customer Service Centre in Paris Street;
- by telephone, 01392 265147 between 09:00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday;
- whilst there is no formal out of hours service, staff can be contacted in the event of an emergency through the Council's Control Room on 01392 267888 by means of a telephone service;
- by email at environmental.health@exeter.gov.uk

2 Service aims and objectives

2.1 Aims and objectives

2.1.1 The Council's Corporate Plan sets out priorities that aim to meet the needs of our citizens and customers. The priorities are:

- Net Zero Carbon City
- Healthy and Active City
- Great Homes and Neighbourhoods
- Thriving Local Economy
- Leading a well-run council

The corporate plan is available by visiting www.exeter.gov.uk/corporateplan.

2.1.2 In respect of food safety and health and safety the objectives of the Council will:

- undertake appropriate and meaningful regulatory interventions at business and residential premises for which the Council is the enforcing authority and institute informal or formal action in accordance with the Enforcement Policy, Local Government Regulation and national government guidance produced by the Food Standards Agency, Health and Safety Executive and current good practice. Businesses will be targeted, focusing resources on those presenting a high risk to health, the environment or public safety with a view to securing an improvement in legislative compliance;
- investigate complaints about food businesses and premises for which the Council is the enforcing authority for health and safety; at the conclusion of investigations, institute informal or legal action as appropriate;
- provide appropriate training and education to local businesses to assist them to meet legislative requirements;
- investigate cases of food-borne and some other infectious diseases and advise upon appropriate precautionary and control measures;
- issue registrations for skin-piercing premises and individuals, monitoring compliance with relevant conditions;
- sample and arrange for microbiological testing of high-risk food products and premises;
- develop Primary Authority partnerships, where relevant, with local businesses;
- provide advice and assistance to businesses to help them comply with legislation and to maintain high standards and
- work in partnership with related organisations to promote the wellbeing of persons living, working or visiting the city.

2.2 Links to corporate purposes and other local and national strategies and plans

2.2.1 The Environment and Waste Service aims to uphold the core values of how the council works, making sure that they underpin our attitudes and behaviours. Accordingly, we will:

- Meet customers' needs with high-quality services.
- Be flexible and have a can-do approach.
- Show trust and respect.
- Tell people what is going on, listen and respond to their views.
- Be proud to work for the city and the council.

2.2.2 The following represent key aims for the service. The service:

- embraces the principles of excellence in public services and better regulation and will look to make the most effective use of available resources to achieve maximum gain;

- implements the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice (England) - actively promoting and evaluating the use of effective food safety interventions to facilitate compliance with food law;
- recognises the importance of food and its influence on the wider determinants of health; seeking to work in partnership and play an active role to reduce the inequalities in health in the local population;
- recognises the importance of the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme which gives each premises a numerical rating based on their food safety management system, structure and confidence in management - this scheme is an important tool in maintaining high compliance of businesses with food hygiene law;
- continues to develop new ways to establish and maintain an effective health and safety culture in the city so that all employers take their responsibilities seriously, the workforce is fully involved, risks are properly managed and employees are protected;
- actively seeks to work with other areas of the Council, businesses and individuals to ensure that economic development within the city is maintained;
- targets work to manage the risk in high-risk, poor-performing and rogue trader businesses. It will be proportionate, consistent and transparent and have suitable monitoring and review systems and
- is mindful of the burdens on local businesses particularly where, for example, the economy is seasonal and subject to fluctuation. The Council will work in partnership with national regulators, local partners and with local businesses offering information, advice and assistance.

2.3 Links to Health and Wellbeing Priorities and Other Plans

2.3.1 The Devon Health and Wellbeing Board has 4 strategic priorities:

- Create opportunities for all-inclusive economic growth, education and social mobility.
- Healthy, safe, strong and sustainable communities creating conditions for good health and wellbeing where we live, work and learn.
- Focus on mental health building good emotional health and wellbeing, happiness and resilience.
- Maintain good health for all supporting people to stay as healthy as possible for as long as possible.

2.3.2 Whilst there are no specific regulatory targets set out in the above, enforcement will contribute to raising business standards, improving health outcomes and reducing health inequalities through the delivery of relevant services, in partnership with other agencies.

2.3.3 In addition to this service plan, the service is also responsible for or contributes to the following strategies, policies and plans:

- The Council Enforcement Policy
- The Environmental Strategy

- The Carbon Management Plan
- The Air Quality Strategy
- The Air Quality Action Plan
- The Licensing Act 2003 Statement of Licensing Policy
- Exeter City Council Corporate Plan
- The Exeter Community Safety Partnership Strategy
- Gambling Act 2005 Policy
- Street Trading Policy

3 Background

3.1 Profile of Exeter City Council

- 3.1.1 The geographical enforcement area is relatively confined in local authority terms covering an area of 4,774 hectares and supporting an estimated residential population of 134,500 persons with 72.8% of working age.
- 3.1.2 There are a total of 5,147 businesses registered for business rates.
- 3.1.3 Approximately 35,000 people commute to Exeter on a daily basis, with an average footfall in the city centre of 1,364,000 people per month.
- 3.1.4 Exeter comprises of a mix of residential and commercial properties as well as industrial and trading estates. With Exeter being the regional administrative, cultural and educational centre, the city has a significant impact on the adjacent areas of East and Mid Devon and Teignbridge.
- 3.1.5 Although set in a predominantly urban area the city offers only a limited range of industry with the main activities being catering, retail sales, office activities, warehousing and distribution. A pie manufacturer supplying products on a national scale opened for business in March 2024. There is an increasing variety of ethnic food outlets and fast-food takeaway outlets and the food pattern is dynamic.
- 3.1.6 The city's status as a medical, university, and educational centre means that there are several large institutional catering premises located within the boundary.
- 3.1.7 There are two approved establishment in the city – the pie manufacturer mentioned above and a wholesaler re-wrapping meat and dairy products.
- 3.1.8 Exeter was once a thriving port but the River Exe and ship canal are now used for leisure, rather than trade – the city is no longer a port health authority. Exeter airport is situated within East Devon District Council.

3.2 Organisational Structure

- 3.2.1 Environment and Waste is within the Portfolio of Services overseen by the Strategic Director Communities. The Head of Environment and Waste is responsible for delivering this Service Plan. The Environment and Waste Service provides:
- the Food Safety Enforcement function;
 - the investigations of notifiable / infectious disease;
 - the Health and Safety Enforcement function;
 - the Private Water Supply Enforcement function;
 - the Health Act Enforcement function;

- Sunbed Regulations Enforcement function;
- Licensing duties in relation to Licensing Act 2003, Gambling Act 2005, taxis and miscellaneous legislation;
- Regulation of premises under the Environmental Permitting Regulations;
- Monitoring of the city's air quality;
- Monitoring and guidance with respect to contaminated land;
- Investigation of complaints relating to business nuisance;
- Co-ordination of the council's anti-social behaviour function;
- Co-ordination of the multi-agency Community Safety Partnership
- Regulation of Private Sector Housing which includes Mobile Home Parks
- Housing Grants and Loans
- Fuel Poverty Strategy

3.2.2 The Head of Environment and Waste has various delegations to act on behalf of the Council, with delegated deputies appointed under the Council's constitution. All non-delegated matters are reported to the appropriate committee.

3.2.3 The officer structure in respect of the service is detailed in Appendix A and the Council's committee structure is detailed in Appendix B.

3.2.4 In consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the Head of Environment and Waste is authorised to deal with the provisions and enforce compliance with legislative areas delegated to the post. This includes the initiation, defence and settlement of legal proceeding, issuing of formal cautions and fixed penalty fines, service of Notices and Orders, the issue, refusal and revocation of licences, certificates and registrations, carrying out works in default and payment and recovery of costs.

3.2.5 The Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services has delegated authority for the initiation, defence, settlement and conduct of any legal proceedings that may affect the interests of the Council or the inhabitants of the City.

3.2.6 Specialist analytical and microbiological services are provided by external agencies such as the UK Health Security Agency, South West Water and Public Analyst Scientific Services.

4 Performance

4.1 Food Safety performance

4.1.1 During 2023/24, the service:

- Registered 179 new food businesses,
- Conducted 399 food hygiene inspections,
- Received 174 service requests relating to food businesses, of which 101 were complaints about food and 73 concerned the hygiene of premises,
- 4 requests for food hygiene rating scheme revisits were received and the premises were subsequently revisited,
- 99% of food premises in the food hygiene rating scheme were broadly compliant with food hygiene law,
- 96 food poisoning cases and other infectious disease were investigated,

- 126 food samples were taken, 5 of which were unsatisfactory, 7 borderline,
- 77 people attended face-to-face Level 2 food hygiene training.

4.2 Health and Safety performance

4.2.1 During 2023/24:

- 102 proactive health and safety inspections were undertaken,
- 65 other visits/face to face contacts (e.g. health and safety training, Safety Advisory Group attendees etc.) were made,
- 51 non-inspection interventions (e.g. complaints, incident investigation, pool sampling visits) were made,
- 29 health and safety service requests / complaints were dealt with,
- 117 accident reports were received and looked into

5 Food Safety

5.1 Scope of the Food Safety Service

5.1.1 The Food Safety Service:

- undertakes programmed food hygiene interventions and revisits;
- registers all food businesses in the city (or approves those businesses supplying products of animal origin to persons other than the final consumer);
- monitors the database;
- undertakes food sampling;
- investigates food complaints;
- assists UK Health Security Agency in investigation of food poisoning and infectious disease outbreak control;
- responds to Food Standards Agency Food Alerts, product withdrawals and recalls;
- provides export health certificates;
- inspects food;
- runs advisory and training services for businesses and
- promotes food safety.

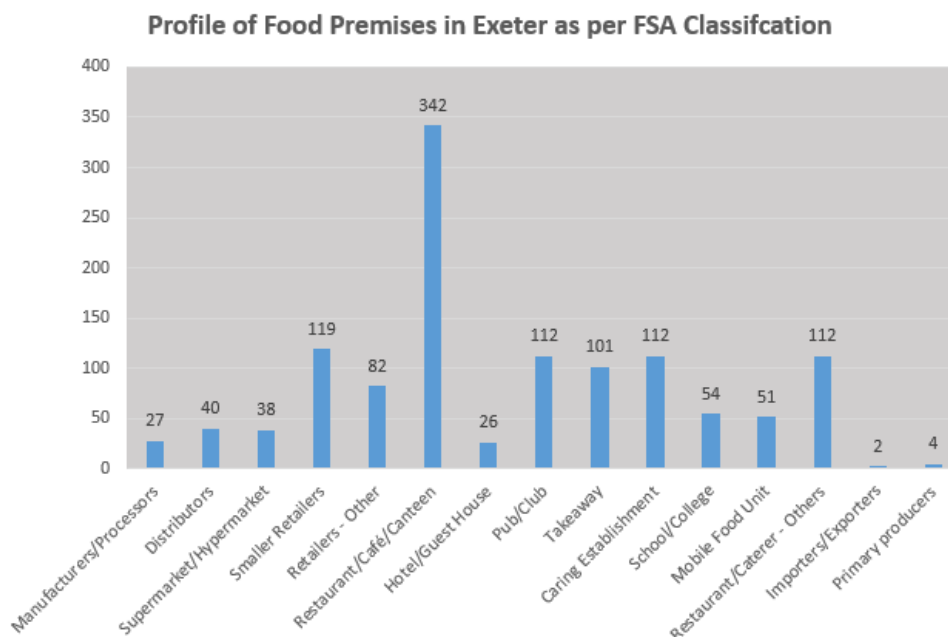
5.1.2 The Council believes in fair regulation and the team uses a variety of means to ensure that individuals and organisations meet their responsibilities including education, negotiation, advice, guidance, warning letters, formal notices and prosecution. Overall, the service seeks to work in collaboration with businesses while avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy in the way it works.

5.1.3 The Council supports the Food Standards Agency's *Food You Can Trust* strategy and its 3 guiding principles:

1. Food is safe.
2. Food is what it says it is.
3. Food is healthier and more sustainable.

5.2 Food Business Profile

5.2.1 The current profile of food premises in the city as per Food Standards Agency classification is illustrated below:



5.2.2 Following an inspection/audit, food premises are scored and categorised A to E in respect of the risk to food safety in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (England). The categories dictate the interval between inspections. For example, category A premises should be inspected at least once every 6 months, category D premises every 2 years.

5.2.3 The current profile of food premises in terms of risk category are shown below:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total
01 April 2024	1	41	136	600	423	55	1256

5.2.4 There are a small number of food premises in the city where business owners do not speak English as their first language. This can impact on the ability to successfully inspect premises and to effectively promote food safety. The Food Standards Agency provides food hygiene information in a number of languages to which food business operators will be signposted whenever appropriate. The Council also aims to provide food hygiene training in other languages if sufficient demand arises.

5.2.5 Some food business operators employ a number of migrant workers. Where appropriate, inspecting officers will look for evidence of modern slavery or inadequate accommodation/working conditions and share this intelligence with the appropriate agencies (Police, Border Force etc.).

5.3 Interventions

5.3.1 The Council will:

- carry out a range of official and other food controls as set out in the Food Law Code of Practice (England) and its associated Practice Guidance;
- inspect/audit and approve relevant premises in accordance with the relevant legislation, Code of Practice and centrally issued guidance;

- liaise with the Primary Authority of any company whose premises have been inspected and offences identified which are, or appear to be, associated with the company's centrally defined policies and procedures;
- assess the compliance of premises and systems to the legally prescribed standards having due regard to any relevant Industry Guides to Good Hygiene Practice and other relevant centrally issued guidance;
- take appropriate action on any non-compliance found, in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Policy and
- maintain documented intervention procedures and record legible data and information following interventions in a retrievable way.

5.3.2 Whilst the primary responsibility for identifying food hazards and controlling risks rests with food business operators, food hygiene interventions will be undertaken to:

- establish whether food is being produced hygienically;
- establish whether food is, or will be, having regard to further processing, safe to eat;
- identify foreseeable incidences of food poisoning or injury as a consequence of consumption of food;
- to issue the relevant rating as laid out in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Brand Standard, where the premises is part of the scheme.

5.3.3 With the foregoing in mind, the main objectives of the interventions programme will be to:

- determine the scope of the business activity and the relevant food safety legislation;
- thoroughly and systematically gather and record information;
- identify potential hazards and risks to public health;
- assess the effectiveness of process controls and HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) based systems;
- identify specific contraventions of food safety legislation;
- consider appropriate enforcement action (proportionate to risk), to secure compliance with food safety legal requirements;
- produce advice and information and recommend good practice where appropriate;
- promote continued improvements in food hygiene standards to meet national / local performance indicators and the relevant Food Standards Agency strategy and
- issue the relevant rating as laid out in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Brand Standard, where the premises is part of the scheme.

5.3.4 Coronavirus restrictions from April 2020 onwards prevented the completion of a large number of planned food interventions. Introduced in July 2021, The Food Standard Agency's Recovery Plan set out how local authorities should resume food interventions post-Covid, the emphasis being on the inspection of higher-risk (category A-C) premises, with visits to lower-risk premises carried out where resources allowed.

5.3.5 The Recovery Plan ended in March 2023, the Council successfully meeting its targets. The Food Standards Agency is still keen to ensure that higher-risk premises (category A-C) are inspected as a priority and that new food registrations (category U) are triaged and inspected based on risk (a newly registered butchers' shop being inspected before a sweet shop, for example).

5.3.6 Since the end of the recovery Plan, the expectation of the Food Standards Agency is that local authorities realign their inspection work with the requirements of the Food

Law Code of Practice – for most local authorities (Exeter included) this mean bringing lower risk (category D&E) food businesses back into an appropriate programme of controls.

- 5.3.7 All 90 category A-C premises due an inspection between April 2023 to March 2024 received a visit; in addition, 160 category U premises were visited and rated.
- 5.3.8 The focus on inspecting higher-risk food premises (both new and existing) together with an ever-increasing number of service requests dealt with by the Business Regulation team (553 in 2023/24, compared to 408 in 2022/23 and 337 in 2021/22) means that, in common with many local authorities, the council carries a number of lower-risk food businesses (category D&E) which are overdue an inspection.
- 5.3.9 To this end, contract environmental health officers will be engaged to inspect a number of the outstanding D-category food businesses, with a view to bringing the inspection programme back in line with the Food Law Code of Practice by April 2025.
- 5.3.10 The very lowest-risk (category E) food businesses which are overdue an inspection will, in line with the Food Law Code of Practice, be dealt with using an alternative enforcement strategy. These businesses (which include the likes of greengrocers, sweet shops, chemists, off-licences etc.) will receive a food hygiene questionnaire, to be returned in lieu of a visit. This work can be undertaken by the council's Environmental Health Apprentices, allowing the Business Regulation team's EHOs to concentrate on inspecting higher-risk and unrated food businesses.
- 5.3.11 Where a category E business fails to complete a questionnaire, or where the information supplied on the questionnaire suggests a greater food safety risk than would be otherwise expected for this type of business, an inspection will be carried out.
- 5.3.12 After consultation, the Food Standards Agency's proposal for a new risk-based approach towards intervention frequencies that could see inspection frequencies ranging from every 2 months to every 5 years has gone back to the drawing board. The FSA's current focus is concerned with local authority capacity and capability – there are not enough qualified EHOs. Nationwide, 50% of local authorities report challenges around recruiting suitably qualified staff, many increasingly relying on contractors to carry out inspections.
- 5.3.13 For Exeter's Business Regulation Team, in order to achieve the inspection programme not less than 3 (FTE) qualified food inspectors will be required. This figure takes no account of the burden of any extra targeted inspection activity, sampling or investigations arising from complaints or Food Alerts, product withdrawals and recalls for example.
- 5.3.14 All officers undertaking inspections, investigating complaints, giving advice and taking samples shall meet the qualifications and experience requirements in the Food Law Code of Practice (England)
- 5.3.15 It is not envisaged that arrangements will need to be made to ensure the Council has access to specialist expertise for the inspection of any specialised processes located in the city.

5.4 Food Complaints

- 5.4.1 Food complaints received and investigated by the service fall into one of the following broad categories:
- food contamination;

- complaints about food businesses (poor hygiene, pests, lack of food handler training etc.) and
- food alerts, product withdrawals and recalls.

5.4.2 There is an established procedure for dealing with food complaints that sets out the action to be taken regarding investigation. The procedure, together with a food complaints investigation form, is available on RIAMS (The Council's online information management system).

5.4.3 The number of food complaints/service requests received annually has been at a constant level over the last few years.

5.4.4 It is estimated that 0.2 FTE qualified inspectors will be required to deal with food complaints.

5.5 Primary Authority Partnerships

5.5.1 The Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 established a statutory scheme for businesses trading across local authority boundaries. The scheme known as the Primary Authority Scheme enables businesses and local authorities to enter into formal partnerships. The advice provided by the local authority has to be taken into account by other councils before enforcement action can be taken against the business concerned.

5.5.2 Primary Authority partnership agreements have been established with:

1. West Country Family Butchers Ltd.
2. South West Norse Ltd.
3. Andrew Brownsword Hotels
4. HK4 Group Ltd.
5. KM Innovations Ltd.
6. Fresha Ltd
7. Sacred Grounds (Exeter) Ltd.

5.6 Advice to Business

5.6.1 A full suite of food courses is promoted to enable local businesses to fulfil their training requirements. Taught courses and e-learning are both available. See Section 8 for more information.

5.6.2 Inspectors provide advice during routine interventions and respond to queries from the public and food businesses.

5.6.3 Advice on topics of general and current food safety interest is placed on the Council web site and social media accounts as necessary; recently this has included practical guidance for people running food businesses from home. Approximately a third of new food business registrations received over the past year are at private addresses.

5.6.4 The Council will use local business and other forums as a means to disseminate relevant food safety information to help assess their needs and obstacles to compliance.

5.6.5 The service will actively seek participation in or look to co-ordinate appropriate forums to promote food safety and disseminate information.

5.6.6 It is estimated that 0.1 FTE qualified food inspectors will be necessary to provide information and advice to food businesses.

5.7 Food Inspection / Sampling

5.7.1 The Council will ensure that food is inspected in accordance with relevant legislation, The Food Law Code of Practice (England) and the Practice Guidance (England) and centrally issued guidance and ensure that food meets prescribed standards.

5.7.2 UK Health Security Agency's Coordinated National Sampling projects are determined following consultation on various options with stakeholders. Local sampling studies are also organised via the Devon Food Subgroup.

5.7.3 The Council's sampling priorities are detailed in Section 7.

5.7.4 Routine sampling will be undertaken by the Environmental Health Officers supported by the Environmental Technical Officer. Activity reports will be submitted on a periodic basis. A procedure has been set up and implemented in respect of taking samples and the arrangements made for Analysis and Examination. A service level agreement is agreed annually between the Council UKHSA's Food, Water and Environmental Laboratory Service.

5.8 Control and Investigation of Food Poisoning Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease

5.8.1 The service's objective in respect of the control of food related disease is to:

- contain the spread of any outbreak;
- identify the focus of infection;
- identify the causative organism/chemical;
- trace carriers and cases;
- trace the source of infection;
- determine the causal factors;
- recommend practices to prevent recurrence of disease and
- determine whether criminal offences have been committed.

5.8.2 Investigations into outbreaks of foodborne illness are carried out in consultation with and under the direction of UK Health Security Agency.

5.8.3 A Single Case Management Plan has been drawn up between UK Health Security Agency's SW Health Protection Team and Local Authorities. The plan outlines who will take the lead for investigating single cases of various notifiable diseases and the appropriate method in each case (letter, phone call, visit etc.). Case questionnaires have also been standardised across the district and are available on the Environmental Health Computer System.

5.8.4 The Principal Environmental Health Officer (Business Regulation) fulfils the role as lead officer in respect of infectious disease control and it is anticipated that adequate resources exist within the full complement of the Environment and Waste Service to deal with this service demand.

5.8.5 It is estimated that 0.1 FTE qualified food inspectors will be required to investigate outbreaks and food related infectious diseases.

5.9 Food Safety Incidents

- 5.9.1 The Council has and will maintain a computer system capable of receiving food alerts, product withdrawals and recalls and will implement the documented procedure for responding to food alerts and food safety incidents received from the FSA, in accordance with the relevant Food Law Code of Practice (England). The current informal out of hours contact arrangements will be used.
- 5.9.2 Documented responses to the outcome of appropriate food alerts will be in accordance with the adopted procedure.
- 5.9.3 In the event of any serious localised incident or a wider food safety problem, the Principal Environmental Health Officer (Business Regulation) will notify the FSA.
- 5.9.4 It is considered that adequate resources exist within the service to deal with this demand.
- 5.9.5 It is anticipated that 0.1 FTE will be required to deal with food hazard alerts.

5.10 Liaison with Other Organisations

- 5.10.1 The Council is committed to ensuring the enforcement approach it takes is consistent with other authorities. Regular dialogue on food enforcement matters and food related issues takes place with:
- Primary Authority business partners
 - Trading Standards
 - Southwest Food Liaison Group
 - Health Protection Advisory Group
 - Exeter and Heart of Devon Hoteliers & other appropriate business forums
 - Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH)
 - University of Exeter
 - Exeter College – regular food hygiene/health and safety talks to Hospitality and Catering Students
 - Other services within the Council (e.g. Planning & Building Control)
- 5.10.2 In delivering the food service, the Council recognises the increasing importance of partnership working. Examples of this include:
- consultation with businesses and community leaders;
 - participation in third party audits, joint sampling initiatives etc.;
 - identify funding opportunities;
 - development of food hygiene training;
 - providing focused training sessions on nutrition and
 - other food related subjects.
- 5.10.3 Numerous promotional activities also occur during the course of a typical year usually in response to need/requests from the different communities in Exeter, for example:
- presentations to schools, interested groups, professional bodies etc.
 - circulation of advisory leaflets or guidance notes in response to topical issues or changes in legislation.

5.11 Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and Food Safety Promotion

- 5.11.1 The service utilises many methods to promote food safety and increasingly is led by the developing body of research. Since April 2011, the service has operated the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme which has helped drive improvements in food law compliance. As at April 2024, 1050 businesses fall within the scope of the scheme, with all ratings published on the national web portal at www.food.gov.uk/ratings and businesses encouraged to display stickers.
- 5.11.2 The service will continue to promote usage of the scheme by consumers by harnessing the power and influence of the local media, health promotion initiatives and public events. The service will also continue to encourage at the time of visits voluntary display of rating stickers at premises that fall within the scope of the scheme.
- 5.11.3 In April 2024, 99% of rated food businesses in Exeter are classed as ‘broadly compliant’, i.e. rated 3 or above:

FHRS Rating	Sep - 23	Oct - 23	Nov - 23	Dec - 23	Jan - 24	Feb - 24	Mar - 24	Apr - 24	May - 24
5 - Very good	952	916	900	894	885	879	882	882	883
4 - Good	121	126	126	127	130	130	127	129	127
3 - Generally satisfactory	29	28	31	32	32	31	31	29	30
2 - Improvement required	4	4	3	3	3	4	6	6	6
1 - Major improvement required	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4
0 - Urgent improvement required	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total rated establishments	1110	1078	1064	1061	1054	1048	1050	1050	1050
Establishments with rating of 3 or better	1102	1070	1057	1053	1047	1040	1040	1040	1040
Awaiting inspection	50	49	54	50	49	50	56	59	60
Exempt	52	48	46	46	46	46	46	46	47
Sensitive	27	24	23	23	22	22	22	35	33
Excluded	27	27	28	31	32	27	27	27	32
Total establishments	1266	1226	1215	1211	1203	1193	1201	1217	1222

A small number of establishments are not included in the food hygiene rating scheme. Businesses not supplying food to the final consumer or those that are extremely low-risk and not generally recognised as food businesses are classed as *excluded* and *exempt* respectively. Businesses with sensitivities around publishing addresses (childminders, military establishments etc.) are classed as *sensitive*.

- 5.11.4 Food businesses rated four or below can request a revisit to rescore, for which a fee of £160 is payable. Once the completed application and fee is received, officers will carry out an unannounced inspection within three months.
- 5.11.5 Online food delivery services such as Deliveroo and Just Eat will not host businesses with poor food hygiene ratings; this (and the perpetual interest shown by local media in zero- and one-rated premises) is an important factor that businesses need to consider when it comes to maintaining good standards of food hygiene.

5.12 Internal Monitoring

Internal monitoring procedures to verify conformance with this Service Plan are well established and will be exercised. These include senior officer auditing, peer review and consistency exercises. Team meetings take place weekly in person.

5.13 Audit

- 5.13.1 The Council will participate in third party and peer review processes against this Service Plan and associated procedures. Maintaining consistency in food hygiene enforcement across the South West is a key role of the South West Food Liaison Group.

5.13.2 The Food Standards Agency has an annual programme of local authority food service audits. Exeter's policies and procedures for dealing with approved premises were subject to FSA audit in 2020; no significant issues were reported.

5.14 Other Services

5.14.1 The Service has responsibility for undertaking a parallel role in respect of other Environmental Health related legislation in commercial premises.

5.14.2 General (non-food related) complaint work will initially be undertaken by the service in accordance with the relevant procedure. Pest control treatment may be undertaken by officers from the section in liaison with the Environmental Health Officer, but only when it will not comprise future enforcement action.

5.14.3 The Business Regulation Team is responsible for enforcing environmental protection legislation when it relates to commercial activities. In 2023/24, the team received a total of 553 service requests; 60% of these (335) related to environmental protection matters, with 196 complaints about noise from commercial premises making up by far the greatest proportion of this figure.

5.15 Enforcement Policy

5.15.1 The Council's Enforcement Policy includes the principles contained in the Regulators' Code which the Council is committed to incorporating into its regulatory functions.

5.15.2 The Enforcement Policy will be subject to periodic review at which time amendments will be made to specifically reflect the requirements of the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement and other relevant and appropriate guidance.

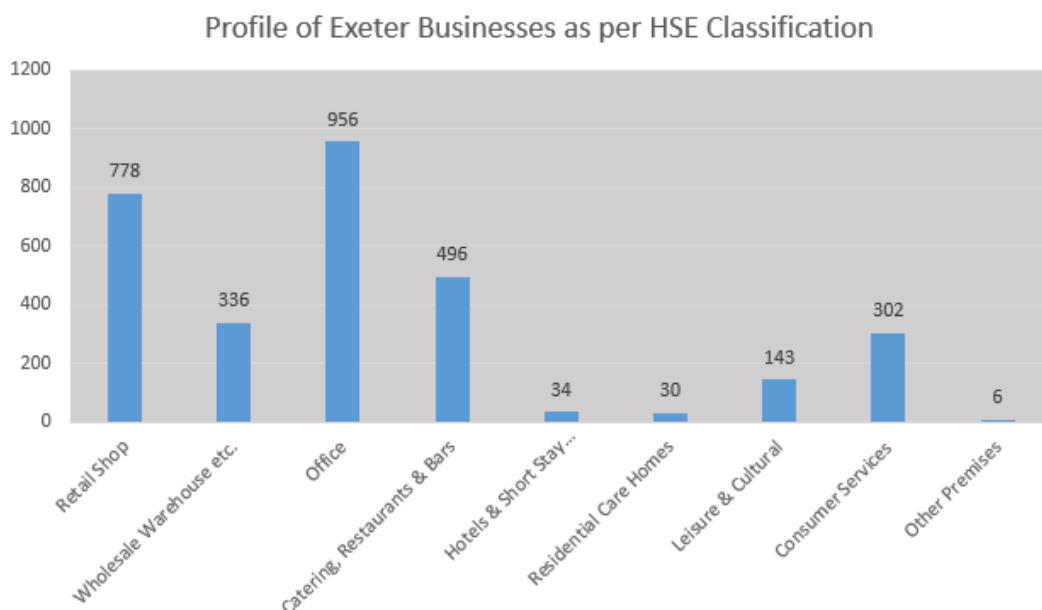
5.15.3 The key elements of the Enforcement Policy are detailed below:

- a belief that enforcement must be firm but fair;
- the need for proportionality in the application of the law;
- showing transparency about how the service operates;
- a need for targeting of enforcement action;
- a need to deliver consistency of approach and
- the need to balance enforcement and education in the way the service works.

6 Health and Safety

6.1 Health and Safety Business Profile

6.1.1 Exeter is predominantly an urban area with many small businesses. Health and safety enforcement is split between the Health and Safety Executive (who enforce the legislation in higher-risk businesses such as manufacturing and construction) and the Council who enforce health and safety in mostly small and lower risk businesses that are predominantly in the service sector. There is no requirement for non-food businesses to register with Environmental Health but as estimate, the Council is responsible for health and safety enforcement in around 3000 premises.



6.2 Health and Safety Intervention Programme

- 6.2.1 Health and Safety law clearly sets out that the primary responsibility for managing risk to workers and the public who might be affected by work activity lies with the business or organisation that creates the risk in the first place.
- 6.2.2 The role of the Council is to support, encourage, advise and where necessary hold to account businesses to ensure that they effectively manage the occupational health and safety risks they create. The service uses the guidance given in HELA Circular (67/2 Revision 13) to set its priorities and target its interventions.
- 6.2.3 As a result of current national and local drivers for change we aim to focus health and safety enforcement resources into areas where they are likely to have the greatest impact. In the coming year, we will continue to concentrate on specific topic areas during proactive interventions and reactive investigations, rather than complete all-encompassing inspections. The areas focussed on have been identified nationally and locally as contributing to the highest rate of accidents/incidents and ill health at work, across all health and safety enforcing authorities.
- 6.2.4 HSE's 2022 strategy *Protecting People and Places* sets out a number of strategic objectives, including reducing work related ill health with a specific focus on mental health and stress.
- 6.2.5 The Statement of Commitment between Local Authority and HSE Regulatory Services (March 2019) sets out a shared vision for co-regulatory partnership of this strategy.

6.3 Scope of Health and Safety Service

- 6.3.1 With regard to health and safety, the Council will be directed by the Health and Safety Executive's National Local Authority Enforcement Code issued under Section 18 (4)(b) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The key elements of the code are:
- Ensuring that the authority takes a risk-based approach to regulation;
 - Ensuring that the authority applies proportionate decision making in accordance with the LA's Enforcement Policy Statement and Enforcement Management Model;

- A requirement for the authority to legally appoint suitably qualified staff to carry out the necessary regulatory duties;
- A requirement to produce an annual service plan;

6.3.2 The objective of the health and safety service in contributing to this aim is to ensure that risks to person's health, safety and welfare from work activities are properly controlled through advice and proportionate enforcement.

6.3.3 The service comprises a range of key functions, namely:

- to carry out interventions in line with HELA Circular 67/2 (rev.13), the National Local Authority Enforcement Code and the Devon and Cornwall Health & Safety Subgroup's annual workplan;
- to take the most appropriate action upon inspection of relevant workplaces including the use of advice, informal correspondence, improvement and prohibition notices and the institution of legal proceedings.
- to educate proprietors of relevant workplaces in health, safety and welfare matters and their legal responsibilities in relation to their occupation by the distribution of leaflets and the provision of advice and information;
- to investigate specific accident notifications;
- to advise on the design of relevant workplace premises prior to and during alterations and construction;
- to liaise and work in partnership with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), UK Health Security Agency and the Fire Authority regarding the enforcement of the legislation;
- to comply with the HSE'S National Local Authority Enforcement Code in respect of inspection programmes;
- seek to promote a simplified risk assessment procedure for low hazard workplaces such as offices and shops through the use of the Devon Local Authority devised toolkit Safer Workplaces, Better Business and
- to focus on emerging issues such as modern slavery and migrant workers, through liaison with the police and immigration authorities.

6.3.4 Proactive aspects of the health and safety service are often delivered jointly with other proactive services such as food hygiene inspections. For example, a current national enforcement intervention focusses on commercial gas safety – a matter discussed (where relevant) during food hygiene interventions. The reactive aspects of the service, for example accident investigations, are responded to along with other complaints and requests for service.

6.3.5 Health and safety interventions are delivered by suitably trained and experienced officers, in accordance with a competency and development scheme. This scheme has been designed to meet the requirements of Health and Safety Executive and Local Authority Enforcement Liaison Committee (HELA) Section 18 guidance.

6.3.6 External consultants may be used to undertake other intervention strategies of low-risk premises. The decision to employ contractors is taken by the Head of Environment and Waste and will be subject to the following criteria:

- there is a direct need to ensure statutory performance targets are met;
- external contractors must meet the requirements of HELA Section 18 guidance;
- the cost of the work can be met within existing budgets and
- previous knowledge of the competency and quality of the consultants.

- 6.3.7 There has been a reduction in proactive inspections, reflecting national priorities regarding better regulation. Equally, 2020 onwards saw a significant increase in Covid-related visits to premises, with officers carrying out a large number of spot-checks to ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments were in place and safe working methods demonstrated.
- 6.3.8 The health and safety service operates from the Civic Centre between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday. Evening and weekend inspections are carried out as determined by the risk-based inspection programme and the premises opening hours.
- 6.3.9 Emergency health and safety issues are currently directed initially to a 24-hour central control team and then onto senior officers as required. In addition the Council's continually revised website is used to provide information about health and safety services for consumers and businesses and also provides a direct email address for service requests.

6.4 Complaints / Requests for advice / Advice to Business

- 6.4.1 Additional interventions will arise during the year by virtue of complaints, new business start-ups, change of use, major alterations/refurbishments and request for inspection. A revisit will always be carried out where statutory notices have been served, in all other cases the officer will make a professional judgement as to the requirement for a revisit.
- 6.4.2 From 1 July 2007, all enclosed workplaces became smoke free, as a result of the Health Act 2006 and subsequent regulations. All Environmental Health Officers, Technical Officers, Licensing Officers and Environmental Protection Officers are also authorised to enforce the smoke-free provisions. Smoke free compliance for businesses will be incorporated into the proactive inspection work undertaken by the service, in addition to responding to complaints.
- 6.4.3 The approach is therefore about focussing health and safety enforcement resources into areas where they are likely to have the greatest impact rather than completing all-encompassing inspections. This will fall in line with the principles advocated the Health and Safety Executive.
- 6.4.4 The above does not preclude the importance of providing wider guidance on health and safety compliance to new businesses and following specific service requests. Proactive health and safety education work will be suitably balanced against targeted enforcement activity.
- 6.4.5 The authority has a duty to investigate complaints about health and safety conditions/issues and about its health and safety service provision. A number of complaints/service requests about health and safety are received annually, all of which will be dealt with as appropriate or passed to other agencies.
- 6.4.6 No complaints have been received regarding the service provision of the Authority.
- 6.4.7 The service recognises the importance of providing advice to businesses as part of effective health and safety enforcement. As well as the provision of specific advice during interventions and with post intervention correspondence, a wide range of general health, safety and welfare advice is distributed to businesses.

6.5 Statutory Notifications

- 6.5.1 Prescribed accidents, dangerous occurrences and occupational diseases are reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences

Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013. Accidents would include fatalities and accidents involving visits to hospital or currently more than 7 days off work. Certain accidents involving employees, the self-employed and members of the public are also reportable.

6.5.2 117 RIDDOR reports were received by the service in 2023/24.

6.5.3 The Council has a duty to investigate accidents to determine whether offences have been committed and to prevent a recurrence. The authority also receives notifications of certain unsafe equipment and must respond and investigate such notifications. Decisions as to which accidents require a full investigation are made by the Principal Environmental Health Officer, based on HSE's *Incident Selection Criteria Guidance*.

6.5.4 As a 'responsible authority' for the purposes of the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005 the section has a duty to respond to premises licence applications etc. A number of applications will require scrutiny, some of which may require amendments by negotiation.

6.5.5 Liaison with other organisations is essential in order to achieve consistency and effectiveness of the health and safety service. The service is represented on the Devon Health and Safety (Enforcement) Subgroup, which meets bi-monthly. This group includes a representative from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and maintains links with other local authority health and safety enforcement officers.

6.6 National Priorities

6.6.1 HSE's LAC 67/2 (rev.13) - *Setting Local Authority Priorities and Targeting Interventions* includes a number of national priorities, including:

- Raising awareness of the work-related stress and mental health campaign 'Working Minds' with businesses.
- Ensuring that pubs, restaurants and cafés check that outdoor electrical equipment such as lights and heaters are specifically designed for outdoor use, installed by a competent person and checked regularly for damage or water ingress.
- Legionella from spa pools and hot tubs in the holiday sector.
- Cooling towers in built-up areas
- Improving the information provision and supervision of users at trampoline parks.
- Gas safety in commercial catering premises.
- Planned preventative maintenance of work equipment.
- Provision of licensable adventure activities without an AALA (Adventure Activities Licensing) licence.
- Duty to manage asbestos – which will continue to be discussed (where appropriate) during food hygiene interventions.
- Raising awareness of the need to prevent injury to members of the public from accessing large commercial waste and recycling bins – work which can be carried out as part of our on-going initiative to ensure that commercial waste is being correctly presented.

- Inflatable amusement devices – ensuring adequate ground anchorage, measurement of wind conditions, documentation from a competent inspection body to show compliance with BS EN 14960 and annual inspection by a competent person.

6.6.2 LAC 67/2 (rev.13) also sets out a list of activities/sectors which are suitable for proactive inspection. The current list can be found at Appendix C.

6.7 Monitoring

6.7.1 An annual return is made to the HSE's Local Authority Unit at the end of each financial year. This LAE1 return reports upon the number of proactive inspections, face-to-face contacts, non-inspection interventions and reactive visits carried out over the past year. Highlights of the 2023/24 return can be found at 4.2.1

6.8 Enforcement

6.8.1 Enforcement (or the fear of enforcement) is an important motivator for rogue employers. Evidence confirms that enforcement is an effective means of securing compliance and promoting self-compliance.

6.8.2 We will work in partnership with the HSE, other enforcement agencies, regulators and stakeholders to secure proportionate compliance with the law and to ensure that those who have duties under it may be held to account for failures to safeguard health and safety and welfare.

6.8.3 The scope of these activities will continue to be evidence-based and are clearly set out in the Council's Enforcement Policy.

6.9 Staff Resources

The national local authority enforcement code requires the Council to have sufficient capacity to undertake our statutory duties. Exeter City Council.

6.9.1 All Environmental Health Officers will undertake some health and safety duties along with their other functions that include food safety, training, health initiatives, some licensing duties and infectious disease control.

6.9.2 The staff resources allocated to the functions is currently deemed adequate to fulfil the Council's duties. Officers will vary their approach to the health and safety intervention programme to enable them to meet Performance Indicators by targeting resources on high-risk premises and national priorities.

6.10 Staff Skills

6.10.1 Only trained and competent staff will be able to undertake full health and safety duties. The authorisation, and hence action they can take, for each officer will reflect their individual skills. As part of the annual Growth and Development Review all staff who undertake health and safety duties are subject to an assessment of competency. Any training and development needs identified at the Growth and Development Review process are added to the service wide training plan that provides for the priority resourcing of both qualification-based training and continuing professional development.

6.11 Consultation with Stakeholders

- 6.11.1 The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 places general duties on all employers to protect the health and safety of their employees and those affected by their work activities. Its goal-setting approach makes clear that those who create risks are best able to manage them. We will make clear that effective health and safety management is a collective responsibility in which individuals too must play their part.
- 6.11.2 Experience shows that many organisations do not contact us. Some may be fearful of contact, which deters them from seeking advice. We will make a special effort to explore new ways to establish and maintain an effective health and safety culture, so that all employers take their responsibilities seriously, the workforce is fully involved and risks are properly managed.
- 6.11.3 We will aim to demonstrate the moral, business and economic case for health and safety. Appropriate health and safety management is an integral part of effective business management and, we will promote it as an enabler and not a hindrance.
- 6.11.4 We will explore ways to promote greater access to authoritative health and safety advice and guidance and we will continue to offer advice in the course of our other enforcement activities where appropriate. We will listen to business's health and safety concerns and assist (by the provision of appropriate guidance, advice, training etc.) as much as is practicable.

7 Sampling Programme

7.1 Purpose of Sampling

- 7.1.1 The food and water quality sampling programme is devised to ensure effective use of resources and fulfil the requirements of the Food Sampling Policy, Private Water Supply Regulations and water quality standards in respect to swimming pools.

7.2 Requirement to Sample

- 7.2.1 The sampling programme operates on a total sampling allocation of 10 samples per 10,000 population. This will require approximately 130 samples per year to be taken. The authority is required to provide a statistical return to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Drinking Water Inspectorate on its annual sampling activity. All local authorities have an arrangement with the UK Health Security Agency Laboratory, which provides a credit allocation to facilitate this work.
- 7.2.2 The authority has a duty under the Private Water Supply Regulations to conduct periodic sampling of Private Water supplies within the City. All local authorities within Devon have an arrangement with South West Water, which provides a pay as you sample contract to facilitate this work.
- 7.2.3 The authority also conducts routine swimming pool sampling of all public and private swimming baths within the city. All local authorities have an arrangement with the UK Health Security Agency Laboratory, which provides a credit allocation to facilitate this work.

7.3 Sampling Methodology

- 7.3.1 Primary Authority Partnership role: There is a limited role for the Council to play in this respect as we are without any large national companies producing high-risk products with whom we have a primary authority partnership agreement. There are, however, a

few small producers whose products are distributed locally and sampling will provide a means of surveillance of their goods and services. By carrying out sampling over a period of time, we were able to help one of our smaller primary authority partners to determine a suitable shelf life for a newly developed range of food products prior to them going into production.

- 7.3.2 South West Food Liaison Group: The group liaises with UKHSA to help inform the contents of a number national/regional sampling plans each year. Members choose from a list of potential sampling initiatives based on their understanding of those foods/practices likely to be of highest risk/greatest concern. In 2023, unsatisfactory samples of bagged salads taken from Exeter retailers helped the manufacturers of these products (none of whom were in Exeter) to identify and rectify hygiene issues at their place of production.
- 7.3.3 Vulnerable Foodstuffs: High-risk foodstuffs, which give cause for concern or suspicion, may need to be sampled on an ad hoc basis. This will include sampling as a means of verifying controls at a critical step in a food operation and monitoring of imported food for example.
- 7.3.4 Complaints: Food samples may be taken when investigating consumer complaints, either to confirm suspected contamination or in undertaking enquiries resulting from complaints.
- 7.3.5 Statutory Samples: We have a statutory obligation to monitor water distributed by SWWS Ltd and to a limited extent premises with private water supplies.
- 7.3.6 Survey Work: The number of samples taken as a result of Food Alerts, locally/nationally agreed surveys and food poisoning investigations is subject to annual variation, but provision will be made for these items.
- 7.3.7 Environmental Swabs: The swabbing of key food contact and hand contact surfaces is seen as an effective means of contributing to the assessment of hygiene standards during routine food hygiene inspections. Officers will use a combination of swabs sent to the UK Health Security Agency laboratory and ones analysed at the time of visit using an ATP meter (a hand-held device which can produce a numerical representation of the cleanliness of a swabbed surface)

7.4 Budget Provision

- 7.4.1 In addition to the credit allocation provided by the UK Health Security Agency laboratory, sums of £260 (analyst’s fees) and £300 (samples) are included within the budget. These sums are intended to cover all sampling and a proportion of this will be reserved for Health and Safety sampling (e.g. asbestos, COSHH etc.).

7.5 Resources

- 7.5.1 There is adequate provision within the present budget to undertake the proposed sampling programme. Allowing for some flexibility between the two budget entries ensures that problems in financing the purchase and analysis of samples for the Food and Health and Safety enforcement functions of the section will be minimised. The programme assumes the current staffing level as outlined in section 5 of this report will be maintained throughout the year.

Year	2024										2025		
Months of sampling	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	
UK Health Security Agency Studies													

Study 80 – unpasteurised and pasteurised milk cheese													
Study 81 – Hygiene in tattoo/piercing premises													
Exeter Specific Sampling Programme													
Swimming Pool Sampling													
Private Water Supply Sampling													

8 Environmental Health Training Service

8.1 Scope of the Training Service

8.1.1 The service has established a robust cost-effective training service for Exeter and the surrounding area.

8.2 Main Provisions of the Training Service

8.2.1 Food handlers must receive adequate supervision, instruction and /or training in food hygiene for the work they do. The owner of the food business is responsible for ensuring that this happens. There is an equivalent legal position under Health and Safety legislation and businesses have a legal duty to assess the risks within their operation and the take precautions to minimise that risk.

8.2.2 The Environmental Health training services provision has been at the forefront of training since the establishment of the first formal courses. Over the years, the Environmental Health Training Portfolio has established itself as a primary provider of Environmental Health training courses in Exeter and the surrounding area. The authority aims to provide this service on a cost neutral or profit-making basis.

8.2.3 The training and education activities are principally directed to workplace and consumer health protection, although increasingly educational establishments and the voluntary sector are using the service. The service embraces the principles of excellence in public services and Better Regulation and looks to make the most effective use of available resources to achieve maximum gain.

8.2.4 Exeter City Council is a registered Royal Society of Public Health training centre, offering face-to-face taught RSPH Level 2 food hygiene courses. Courses are run at The Matford Centre approximately six times per year; additional off-site training can be provided where organisations are able provide appropriate facilities and a sufficient number of delegates.

8.3 Access to Training

8.3.1 The service looks to actively encourage delegates who require additional support in terms of, language difficulties, poor literacy or numeracy skills, physical or mental challenges, dyslexia or other literacy problems.

8.3.2 Where additional support is required, this can be provided through the provision of language specific course materials, extension of guided learning hours, oral examinations, extended examination period, alterations to the method of instruction or

provision of specific courses. The service also provides training in other languages to meet the diverse needs of the business community.

8.3.3 E-learning courses, which allow candidates to study at their own pace, are offered as an alternative to those unable to attend taught courses. Our e-learning Level 3 course is popular as an equivalent taught course would require 3 or 4 days in a classroom environment.

8.4 Financial Implications

8.4.1 The costs of providing training in other languages significantly increases the costs as the service needs to employ the services of a translator or course tutor who can deliver the course in the desired language to ensure that the courses are equally successful.

8.4.2 Six face-to-face level 2 food hygiene courses took place in 2023/24; a total of 77 delegates attended. Gross takings for face-to-face courses was £4775; profit (once the costs of room hire, exam papers and course books were removed) was £3399.

8.4.3 Twenty-three e-learning level 2 and nine e-learning level 3 courses were sold; gross takings for e-learning courses was £1585.

9 Resources

9.1 Financial Matters

9.1.1 Detailed figures to determine the overall specific level of expenditure involved in providing individual elements of the service are not available as there are fluctuations in priority and need across the wide range of legislative areas. Likewise with changes in the intervention pattern it is difficult to accurately determine the trend of growth, of the various functions of the service. The food safety function can occupy the significant portion of time of the Section, at the expense of the other services.

9.1.2 The training element is also covers subjects across the enforcement disciplines, although it has its own budget and cost centre and aims to be cost neutral. External tutors are used to increase efficiency in delivering this service.

9.1.3 The budgets for sampling and analysis of samples are currently £560 for the year.

9.2 Budget Allocation Figures for 2024/25 – Food Safety Function

	Salary (+)	Equipment	Travel
<u>Commercial F020</u>	338,040	9,770	810
Proportion allocated to Food Safety Function (40%)			
Analysis (max)	135,216	3,908	324
Purchase of Samples		260	
		300	
Environmental Protection Sampling Technician	2,371		

NB: Based on 40% allocation to Food Safety. Analyst fees up to a maximum £260 (may also be used for water/health and safety samples) if required.

9.3 Budget Allocation Figures for 2024/25 – Health and Safety Function

	Salary (+)	Equipment	Travel
<u>Commercial F020</u>	338,040	9,770	810
Proportion allocated to Health & Safety Function (40%)	135,216	3,908	324

NB: Based on 40% allocation to Health and Safety. Analyst fees up to a maximum £260 (may also be used for water/health and safety samples) if required.

9.4 17.1.6 Budget Allocation Figures for 2024/25 – Training Provision

	Salary (+)	Equipment	Travel
<u>Health Education F018</u>	440	16,140	-
Proportion allocated to Health & Safety function (20%)	220	3,228	-
Proportion allocated to Food Safety function (80%)	220	12,912	-

9.5 Staffing Allocation

9.5.1 The Environment and Waste Service is managed by the Head of Environment and Waste.

Title	Qualification	Role
Head of Environment and Waste	BSc / Msc Environmental Health	Head of Service

There are currently 3 FTE staff directly working on food, enforcement and related matters and 2 FTE staff directly working on health and safety related matters with a significant and increasing support role by an Environmental Technical Officer and Project and Support staff. An Apprentice EHO post was created in 2023, studying for a BSc in Environmental Health at University Centre Weston, whilst gaining valuable work experience in the Business Regulation Team.

Title	Qualification	Role
Environmental Health and Community Safety Manager	BSc / Msc Environmental Health	Manager
PEHO	BSc Environmental Health	Lead Professional Officer
EHO	BSc Environmental Health	Food Safety / Health and Safety and Nuisance District Officer
EHO	BSc Environmental Health	Food Safety / Health and Safety and Nuisance District Officer

Title	Qualification	Role
EHO	BSc Environmental Health	Food Safety / Health and Safety and Nuisance District Officer
Apprentice EHO	Working towards BSc Environmental Health	Practical experience in the Business Regulation Team whilst studying for BSc.
Environmental Health Technician	Educated to degree level	Sampling and Monitoring

9.5.2 There are currently 3 FTE staff providing a project and support service for The Environmental Health and Community Safety service.

Title	Qualification	Role
Principal Projects and Support Officer	Educated to A level standard	Service Support
Projects and Support Officer	Educated to A level standard	Service Support
Projects and Support Officer	Educated to A level standard	Service Support

9.5.3 It is currently the approach of the Council to engage the services of outside contractors to assist in programmed food hygiene interventions where necessary. This will be subject to any agency contractors meeting the requirements specified in the Code of Practice (England) and the relevant Councils procedure and the cost of the work being met within existing budgets.

9.6 Self-Development Plan

The service will ensure that staff are appropriately qualified and receive regular training to maintain and improve their level of competency. All officers will have access to training that allows them to fulfil the twenty hours continuing professional development (CPD) requirement set out in the Food Law Code of Practice. Ten of these hours will be food-related, the other ten may relate to professional matters such as evidence gathering, legal proceedings etc. Membership of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health also requires evidence of this number of hours of CPD per year (30 hours for chartered members).

9.6.1 The training structure comprises:

- the employment of enforcement officers capable of food law, health and safety, licensing, environmental permitting and other enforcement that they are required to undertake;
- evidence of formal qualification (sight of original qualification certificates prior to commencement of employment);
- in-house competency-based training;
- successful completion of competence-based needs assessments and
- identification of training needs during annual performance appraisal to meet current targets to assist and improve upon performance against current job requirements.

9.6.2 The following additional steps are taken to ensure staff development:

- internal training sessions will be held (anticipated 4 hours CPD in food related topics and 4 hours CPD in health and safety related topics per year);

- briefing notes on topics of current interest will continue to be regularly circulated to bring details of new legislation and technological change in the field of all enforcement areas to the attention of officers and
- programmes of instruction will be devised to accommodate the needs of new and existing staff and ensure the required level of competency.

10 Quality Assessment

- 10.1.1 The Environmental Health and Community Safety Manager and Principal Environmental Health Officer monitor the quality and consistency of work through the checking of inspection correspondence, statutory notices and audits of various aspects of work conducted on a periodic basis.
- 10.1.2 Any formal complaints made against the service are investigated and monitored in accordance with Council's Complaint Policy.
- 10.1.3 External verification of quality is actively pursued with a commitment to promote consistency of enforcement through auditing and benchmarking with the Devon Health and Safety and Food Safety groups as well the Health Protection Advisory Group organised by UK Health Security Agency.
- 10.1.4 Internal monitoring procedures have been set up to verify the service operates in conformance with relevant legislation, the Food Law Codes of Practice (England), Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and our procedures.
- 10.1.5 The Council will continue to monitor and report on Customer Satisfaction with interventions and enforcement conducted by the service.
- 10.1.6 The Principal Environmental Health Officer undertakes annual quality monitoring audit with each inspecting officer to ensure consistency of enforcement. These audits are recorded and any outcomes agreed between the Principal Environmental Health Officer and inspecting officer.
- 10.1.7 Consistency matters are discussed regularly at weekly team meetings; additionally, the Principal Environmental Health Officer undertakes case review meetings with a district officer every week.

11 Review

- 11.1.1 Quarterly Performance Indicators on progress in implementing this Service Plan will be made by the Head of Environment and Waste to the Strategic Director.
- 11.1.2 An annual review against the Service Plan will be made by the Executive Committee.
- 11.1.3 The annual review report will contain information on performance against the Service Plan and Performance Indicators. It will highlight any variances from the plan, reasons for these, and the likely impact that these may have.
- 11.1.4 The Executive will support and Council will approve the Service Action Plan for the year. Improvements to the service identified as a result of the review, quality assessment, or benchmarking work will be incorporated in the Plan.
- 11.1.5 Information on our targets and progress towards meeting these will be published and publicised as part of the Council's Performance Plan.

11.2 Targets

11.2.1 Service Performance Indicators for 2024/2025:

- Percentage of food premises broadly compliant with food hygiene law (annual figure provided to FSA and APSE as part of annual return)
- Number of food safety Interventions (six-monthly figure provided to FSA and to APSE as part of annual return)
- Number of health and safety Interventions (annual figure provided to HSE and APSE as part of annual return)
- Percentage of samples taken found to be satisfactory
- Number of delegates engaging with health education initiatives (can be provided quarterly or on an annual basis)
- Percentage staff absence (annual figure provided to APSE as part of annual return)
- Net cost of food hygiene service per head of the population (annual figure provided to APSE as part of annual return)
- Net cost of Health and Safety service per head of the population (annual figure provided to APSE as part of annual return)

11.3 Review of performance

11.3.1 Performance will be monitored by the Head of Environment and Waste and where there are significant issues, reports will be made to the Strategic Director.

12 Conclusion

12.1.1 This service plan demonstrates that the Council has organised its food safety and health and safety and other associated functions in such a manner that it is capable of achieving a comprehensive service capable of meeting the corporate aims of the authority, and the expectations of the Food Standards Agency, Health and Safety Executive, Drinking Water Inspectorate and other related legislation that the section has responsibility for enforcing.

13 Glossary of terms

GLOSSARY	
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CIEH	Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EHO	Environmental Health Officer
EHORB	Environmental Health Officers Registration Board
EHT	Environmental Health Technician
FSA	Food Standards Agency
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
HECA	Home Energy Conservation Act
HoS	Head of Service
LGR	Local Government Regulation
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
PEHO	Principal Environmental Health Officer
PHE	UK Health Security Agency (formally Public Health England)
PCT	Primary Care Trust
RIAMS	Regulatory Information and Management Systems
RSPH	Royal Society of Public Health

14 Action Plan 2024-25

14.1.1 Maintain high standards in food safety by:

- Following the FSA's post Recovery Plan guidance by applying a risk-based and intelligence led approach to the prioritisation of food interventions. Interventions for higher risk businesses or those that are likely to be high-risk will always take priority over interventions for lower risk businesses.
- Continuing to maintain high level (>97%) of broadly complaint food businesses in the city.
- Enhanced coaching/sampling/training for non-complaint businesses, with caution/prosecution as final action for those who continually flout the law.
- Continuing with an intelligence-led food sampling programme
- Building our customer base for taught Level 2 food hygiene courses whilst promoting e-learning to those who prefer to learn that way.
- Recognising food business trends such as the growth of home/mobile catering and internet sales and offering hygiene guidance and advice in an appropriately accessible format.

14.1.2 Promote safer workplaces by

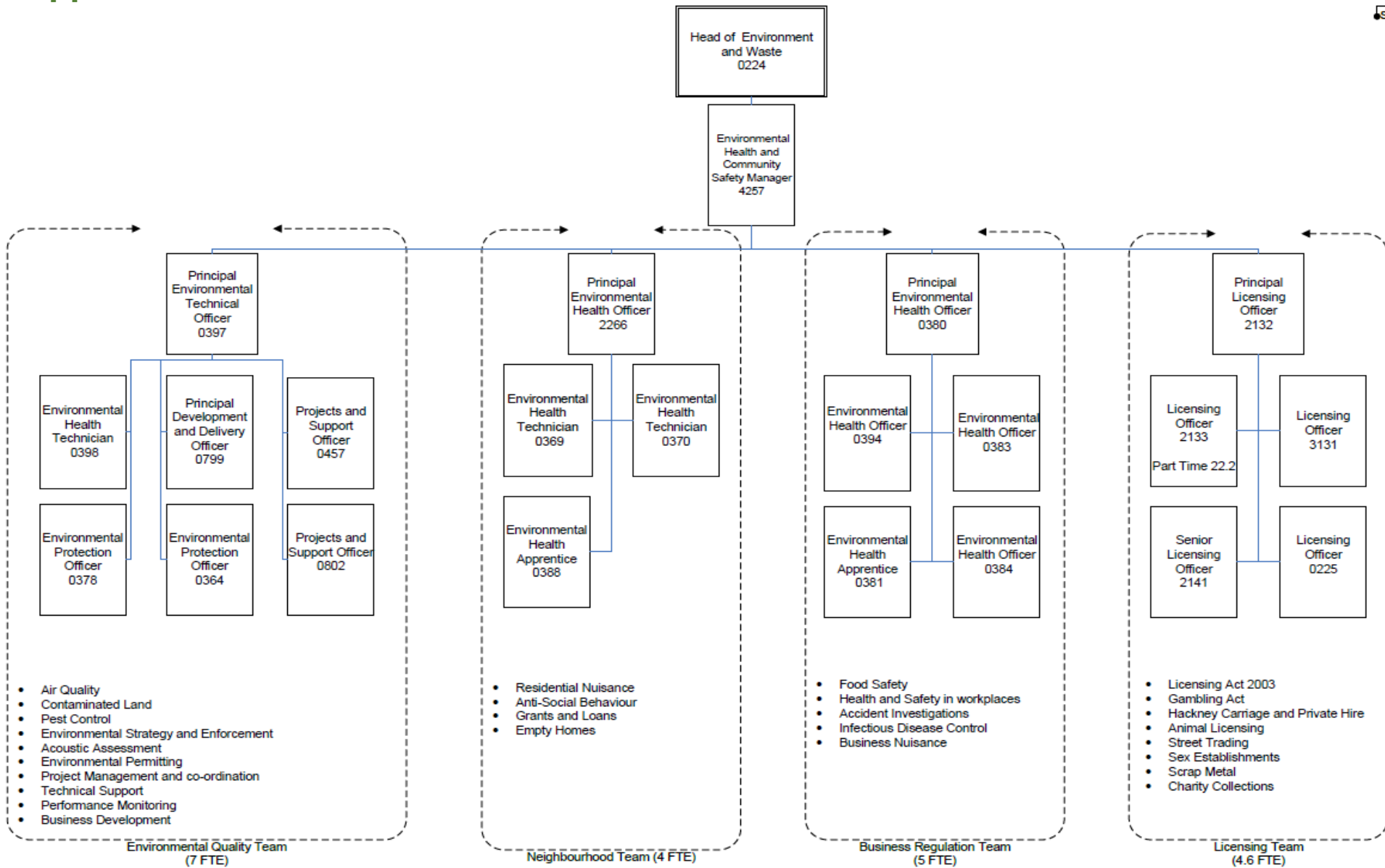
- Focussing on the duty to manage asbestos, commercial gas safety and outdoor electrical safety during routine food hygiene inspections whenever appropriate.
- Continuing to conduct water quality sampling of swimming pools and private water supplies.

14.1.3 Co-ordinate multi-agency visits where migrant worker/modern slavery issues are suspected or identified.

14.1.4 Review and refresh the means of business engagement and training using innovative means to help business grow and thrive.

14.1.5 To investigate further Primary Authority Partnership opportunities for the service.

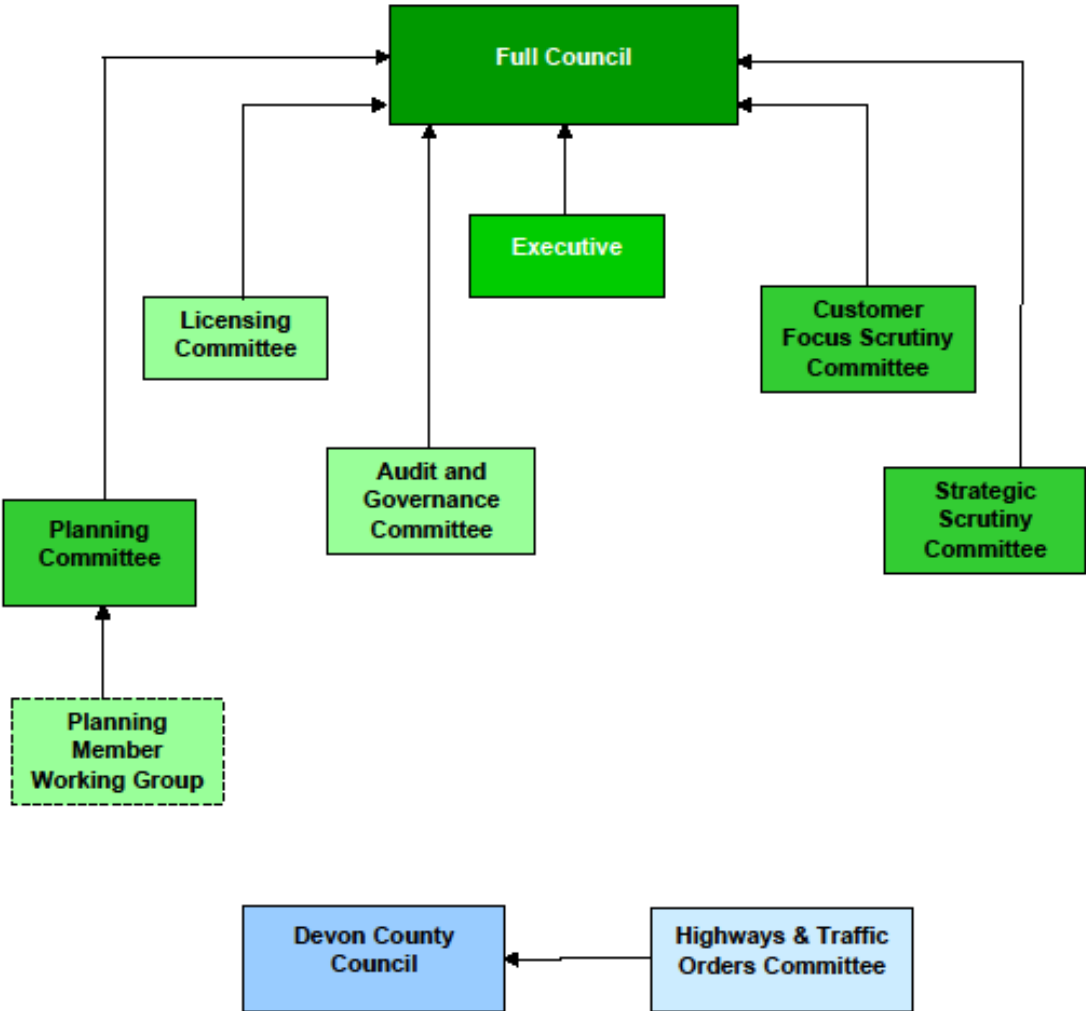
Appendix A – Service Structure



Appendix B – Committee Structure



The Council's Committee Structure



Appendix C – List of activities / sectors for proactive health and safety inspection by Local Authorities

Topic	Hazards	Potential Poor Performers within an Industry Sector	High Risk Activities
Health	Lead poisoning	Indoor firing ranges/gun clubs	Ineffective air extraction, poorly managed cleaning procedures, inadequate handwashing facilities.
Health	E.coli/ Cryptosporidium infection esp. in children	Open Farms/Animal Visitor Attractions ¹	Lack of suitable micro-organism control measures
Health	Occupational deafness	Industrial retail/wholesale premises ³	Exposure to excessive noise (eg steel stockholders).
Health	Industrial diseases / occupational lung disease (silicosis)	Industrial retail/wholesale premises ³	Exposure to respirable crystalline silica (Retail outlets cutting/shaping their own stone or high silica content 'manufactured stone' e.g. gravestones or kitchen resin/stone worktops)
Health	Industrial diseases / occupational lung disease (cancer)	Industrial retail/wholesale premises ³	Exposure to all welding fume regardless of type or duration may cause cancer. (e.g. Hot cutting work in steel stockholders) Exposure to be controlled with LEV and or appropriate RPE. ⁴
Health	Occupational lung disease (asthma)	In-store bakeries ⁵ and retail craft bakeries where loose flour is used and inhalation exposure to flour dust is likely to frequently occur i.e. not baking premade products.	Tasks where inhalation exposure to flour dust and/or associated enzymes may occur e.g. tipping ingredients into mixers, bag disposal, weighing and dispensing, mixing, dusting with flour by hand or using a sieve, using flour on dough brakes and roll machines, maintenance activities or workplace cleaning.
Health	Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs)	Residential care homes	Lack of effective management of MSD risks arising from moving and handling of persons
Health	Manual Handling	High volume Warehousing/Distribution ²	Lack of effective management of manual handling risks
Health	Carbon monoxide poisoning	Commercial catering premises using solid fuel cooking equipment	Lack of suitable ventilation and/or unsafe appliances
Safety	Explosion caused by leaking LPG	Communal/amenity buildings on caravan/camping parks with buried metal LPG pipework	Caravan/camping parks with poor infrastructure risk control/management of maintenance
Safety	Explosion caused by leaking LPG	Catering establishments.	Unsafe gas appliance installation/maintenance and unsafe use and storage of LPG cylinders and cartridges.
Safety	Violence at work	Premises with vulnerable working conditions (lone/night working/cash handling e.g. betting shops/off-licences/hospitality ⁶) and where intelligence indicates that risks are not being effectively managed	Lack of suitable security measures/procedures. Operating where police/licensing authorities advise there are local factors increasing the risk of violence at work e.g. located in a high crime area, or similar local establishments have been

			recently targeted as part of a criminal campaign
Safety	Fires and explosions caused by the initiation of explosives, including fireworks	Professional Firework Display Operators ⁷	Poorly managed fusing of fireworks
Safety	Fatalities/injuries resulting from being struck by vehicles	High volume Warehousing/Distribution ²	Poorly managed workplace transport
Safety	Fatalities/injuries resulting from falls from height/ amputation and crushing injuries	Industrial retail/wholesale premises ³	Poorly managed workplace transport/ work at height/cutting machinery /lifting equipment
Safety	Falls from height	High volume Warehousing/Distribution ²	Work at height
Safety	Crowd management & injuries/fatalities to the public	Large scale public gatherings e.g. cultural events, sports, festivals & live music	Lack of suitable planning, management and monitoring of the risks arising from crowd movement and behaviour as they arrive, leave and move around a venue

1 Animal visitor attractions may include situations where it is the animal that visits e.g. animal demonstrations at a nursery.

2 Typically larger warehousing/distribution centres with frequent transport movements/work at height activity.

3 Includes businesses such as: steel stockholders; builder's and timber merchants.

4 Specific guidance available re welding fume on HSE's website at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/welding/protect-your-workers/index.htm> 5 For supermarket and other chain bakeries etc check to see if there is a Primary Authority inspection plan with more specific guidance.

6 Pubs, clubs, nightclubs and similar elements of the night-time economy.

7 Specific guidance on the application of the Explosives Regulations 2014 to the activities of professional firework display operators is available on the HSE website - www.hse.gov.uk/explosives/er2014-professional-firework-display.pdf