

Food Service Plan 2025-2026

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1.0 Introduction

An annual Food Safety Service Plan is required under the Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement by the Food Standards Agency. The plan outlines the strategic link to corporate and financial planning through the Service Business plan. This plan has been produced in accordance with the FSA's service planning guidance for Food Law Enforcement, the Food Law Code of Practice (England) and Practice Guidance.

The service plan relates to the 2025/2026 year.

The plan provides key stakeholders, and members of the public, the information that they require to understand the approach to food safety enforcement adopted by the Council.

Food safety enforcement is covered by the Mid Devon District Council Enforcement Policy PH/EP/09/20, however this plan may make reference to enforcement practice where applicable. The service plan will help to ensure that the actions of the Council are fair, consistent, open and effective.

The Plan provides a focus for service delivery outcomes and provides a framework for assessing performance against those outcomes.

The plan will set out our priorities and our planned approach to the following:

- Inspection programmes
- Methodology for risk rating
- Sampling programmes
- Enforcement
- Food Business Registration
- Communication and engagement
- Approved Premises
- Export certificates
- Dealing with complaints about a food business / food products
- Dealing with investigations following allergic reactions within food premises

A series of processes and procedures will sit behind this plan for internal use by officers to ensure consistency.

1.1 Aims and Objectives of the service

The primary aim of the food safety service is to ensure food safety across the district. This is delivered through interventions that aim to prevent food poisoning, food borne and water borne illness and to ensure, so far as is possible, that food and drink intended for sale for human consumption, which is produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed within the district is without risk to the health or safety of the consumer.

In delivering this service the food team aims to:

- (i) Perform the Council's statutory food safety responsibilities required by the Food Safety Act 1990 as amended, the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 and relevant regulations made thereafter, including duties related to imported food.

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- (ii) Protect public health, promote consumer confidence and enhance food safety through the provision of food which is safe and without risk to health.
- (iii) Prevent and control the spread of food borne illness.
- (iv) Ensure that enforcement work is targeted, proportionate, consistent, and transparent and supports the principles of good enforcement and the provisions of the Regulators' Code 2014 as outlined in our Enforcement Policy.

1.1.2 Our key objective is to promote and maintain high standards of food hygiene and safety across the district and will be achieved by:

- (i) Carrying out a risk-based programme of food hygiene enforcement interventions in accordance with statutory requirements, the Food Law Code of Practice (England) issued under Section 40 of the Food Safety Act 1990; regulation 24 of the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 and regulation 6 of the Official Feed and Food Controls (England) regulations 2009; and associated guidance.
- (ii) Registering and/or approving premises and maintaining a food premises register of all food establishments operating in the district.
- (iii) Informing businesses of their legal obligations under relevant legislation
- (iv) Responding to notified cases and outbreaks of food borne infectious diseases, advising on precautionary and control measures in order to minimize effects on the community.
- (v) Investigating serious and high-risk complaints concerning unfit, unsound or contaminated food, unacceptable food hygiene practices compromising food safety or allergic reactions within catering premises.
- (vi) Sampling of food produced, sold or imported across the district and/or environmental swabbing of surfaces and equipment within food establishments in accordance with our Food Sampling Policy.
- (vii) Respond to food alerts issued by the FSA in accordance with national and local guidance.
- (viii) Providing food hygiene advice, guidance, coaching and training and development opportunities to businesses, and where relevant consumers. Promoting best practice.
- (ix) Ensuring staff are adequately qualified and competent to carry out food safety work and adequate equipment and resources are in place.
- (x) Developing and improving the service to meet the needs of customers, statutory requirements and to achieve best practice.
- (xi) Tackling food fraud and organised crime by conducting investigations and working with relevant agencies to target criminals.

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- (xii) Giving consumers the right to make informed decisions about where they choose to eat and purchase food and drink with the implementation of the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
- (xiii) Promoting food safety and, where appropriate, participating in local and national campaigns.
- (xiv) Working in partnership with other agencies to help secure and promote good food hygiene and safety, including the South West Food Liaison Group.
- (xv) Supporting the Primary and Home Authority Principles.
- (xvi) Providing appropriate responses to public health incidents and emergencies.

1.2 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans

1.2.1 Our Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028 defines five themes

- (i) Planning, Environment & Sustainability
- (ii) Community, People & Equalities
- (iii) Homes
- (iv) Economy & Assets
- (v) Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement

Under Community, Environment and Equalities, we make a commitment to support the health, wellbeing, and safety of our residents, by keeping the public safe through rigorous public health inspections.

2. Background

2.1 Profile of Mid Devon District Council

2.1.1 Mid Devon covers an area of 353 square miles (914 km²) in the rural, agricultural heartland of Devon, between Dartmoor, Exmoor and the Blackdown Hills. Over half the population of some 83,000 people is scattered in villages in the rural hinterland, with the balance divided between the three main towns of Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton. Although set in a predominantly rural area the towns offer a diverse range of industry and a seasonal tourist trade both within the towns and outlying rural villages.

2.1.2 As at April 2025 there are 960 food businesses registered, an increase of 6% since last year and 18 approved establishments within the District. This includes a diverse range of food businesses from large manufacturers, distributing nationally and internationally, meat and dairy processors, schools and residential care settings, to predominately small to medium sized independent catering and retailing premises.

2.1.3 New food business registrations are steadily received and the rate of closures has slowed so we are now showing growth in the number of registered businesses.

2.2 Organisational Structure

2.2.1 The Council operates under an Executive structure, with a 'Cabinet'. The Council structure and executive member contacts are available on the Internet under <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/your-council/how-the-council-works/>.

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2.2.2 The food safety team is part of the Commercial Team, led by the Team Leader (Commercial) within the Public Health and Housing Options Service. The Operations Manager for Public Health and Housing Options reports into the Head of Housing and Health at Corporate Management team level. Activities of the Commercial team are covered by the Community Policy Development Group (PDG) and ultimately Cabinet. The portfolio holder for the Community PDG is responsible for this service area.

2.2.3

The food team structure is made up of the following posts at April 2025:

Team Leader (0.4) – occupied

Lead officer (0.5) – currently filled by secondment

Specialist Officer (2.0 FTE) – 1 FTE occupied, 1 FTE vacated to secondment above

Regulatory Officer (1.0 FTE) – occupied

Specialist support (1 FTE)

2.2.4 We have been unable to recruit into the new Lead officer post despite advertising the position twice since August 2024. The post have been filled internally through a secondment, however this has created a temporary vacancy at Specialist Officer Level, which we are partially covering with external support.

2.2.5 A food safety contractor will be engaged during the 2025/2026 to cover some of the vacancy gaps whilst the new posts are being implemented. This has been secured through a direct 12 month contract, with option to extend to 36 months.

2.2.6 The Section employs the following additional support services;

- (i) Public Analyst - Public Analyst Scientific Services, i54 Business Park, Valiant Way, Wolverhampton, WV9 5GB
- (iii) Food Examiner - Public Health England, Food Water and Environmental Microbiology Laboratory Porton Down, Salisbury, SP4 0JG

For other specialist work the services of other analysts may be employed.

2.3 Scope of the Service

2.3.1 The Food Safety Team delivers a wide range of key food-related service functions, which includes:

- Food hygiene interventions of premises, based on risk assessment of business activity and level of compliance, which will dictate the frequency of visits, in accordance with Annex 1 of the Food Law Code of Practice;
- Identifying and determining premises that require approval of specific food products of animal origin. Assessing and inspecting these premises as required to ensure that they are issued with conditional and full approval as necessary;
- Implementing and promoting the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme to encourage businesses to improve and promote hygiene standards and give consumers the information they need to make informed decisions about where they choose to eat and purchase food and drink;
- The enforcement of all aspects of Food Hygiene and Safety in Food business in the District;
- Imported food control as an inland authority for food imported from outside the European Union through sampling, inspection and enforcement;

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- Maintaining a register of food premises trading in the district;
- Issuing of health certificates for the export of food products.

2.3.2 The Food Safety Team is also responsible for a range of non-food related work, including;

- Health and Safety at Work enforcement and advice;
- Promoting and enforcing smoke-free legislation in workplaces and enclosed public places;
- Responding to and investigate, as necessary, RIDDOR reported accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences;
- Responding to and investigating work related safety complaints;
- Supporting local health improvement programmes;
- Commenting on planning and Licensing applications;
- Registration of premises / persons under Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1982.

2.4 Demands on the Food Safety Service

2.4.1 Mid Devon District Council has 905 registered food premises. Under the FSA Code of Practice all food premises are categorised with an inspection rating score that determines the frequency of interventions from 6 months to 3 years. On 1st April 2025, the premises profile according to the inspection risk-rating scores is as follows:

Category	Premises Category	Frequency of Intervention	Number of Premises	Number variance since 2024
A	High	6 months	1	75% ↓
B	High	12 months	36	36% ↓
C	High	18 months	114	5% ↑
D	Medium	24 months	311	12%↑
E	Low	36 months	447	7% ↑
Unrated	Prioritised	Awaiting inspection	40	
Outside programme			11	
TOTAL			960	6%↑

2.4.2 There has been an overall decrease in the number of higher risk premises in the district. Whilst the inherent risk has not changed, this represents higher levels of compliance observed within the premises that were sitting within the higher risk groups at April 2024. Which will be having a positive impact on our objective of ensuring food safety.

2.4.3 There has been a significant reduction in the number of A rated premises since last year. This represents businesses improving their compliance through ongoing liaison with officers of the department.

2.4.4 1.6% (16) of all rated food businesses in Mid Devon are less than broadly compliant. Officers work with all non-compliant businesses to improve standards, and a measure

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of our performance is movement from non-compliant to broadly compliant between interventions. This performance measure was established during the 2024/2025 year.

2.4.5 Table shows the movement of rating for non-compliant businesses at subsequent interventions during the 24/25 year

Movement of FHRS	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
FHRS improved	89	90	100	100
No change in FHRS	11	10	0	0
FHRS decreased	0	0	0	0

2.4.6 The food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) provides the public with a view of compliance for all food businesses that are in scope of the scheme and that sell to the final consumer. The service aims to drive up food safety standards with businesses encouraged to improve and promote hygiene standards through the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Currently 96.5% of food businesses that have been subject to an intervention and rated, hold a food hygiene rating of 3,4 or 5.

2.4.7 747 businesses are currently in scope and have been scored under the scheme as follows:

Rating	5	4	3	2	1	0
Descriptor	Very good	Good	Generally satisfactory	Improvement necessary	Major improvement necessary	Urgent improvement necessary
Number *	652	46	33	6	10	0
%	87.2%	6.2%	4.5%	0.8%	1.3%	0%

*taken from FHRS public facing website 20/04/2025

2.4.8 The premises profile highlights manufacturing, catering and retail as being the dominant sectors. Catering premises are typically small to medium and independently owned establishments made up of accommodation services, care settings, restaurants, cafes, takeaways and pubs. We also have many sole traders where individuals cater from farms and domestic premises. Primary production in the area is predominantly in the dairy and meat industry. Food and drink manufacture continues to be a significant sector in Mid Devon with a number of established manufacturers, including tofu, breweries, ice-cream makers and confectioners.

2.4.9 In relation to the production, handling and storage of Products of Animal Origin there are currently 17 approved establishments operating under Regulation (EC) 853/2004 in Mid Devon, summarised below:

Approved Premises Type	Number of Premises
Dairy Products	5
Meat Products	1
Meat Preparations	1
Cold Store	4
Fish Products	0
Egg products	1
Egg Packing Centres	5
Total	17

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- 2.4.9.1 Officers approved 2 new establishments during 2024/2025, with 1 establishment stopping approved activities.
- 2.4.9.2 Officers who conduct official controls in these establishments require significant specialist knowledge and competencies in the relevant area.
- 2.4.10 New food business registrations are steady, with 134 made in 2024/2025. Approximately 2.5 a week.
- 2.4.11 The food team issue food export certificates to businesses who commercially export food. 33 were issued between April 2024 and March 2025. These businesses include confectioners and chocolatiers and jams and preserves manufacturers.
- 2.4.12 Imported food controls are important to ensure that consumers and businesses are protected from contaminated products. The authority has responsibility for imported food control as an inland authority and imported food control forms part of the overall food safety intervention process. Officers will routinely look for foods imported during visits to premises and carry out imported food examination to check traceability and compliance with standards as necessary.
- 2.4.13 The Food Safety officers are district based and operate under a hybrid working scheme, based either from home or from Mid District Council offices located at Phoenix House in Tiverton.
- 2.4.14 Food Safety officers are available Monday to Friday working hours, and public access at Phoenix House is available Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9am till 1pm (the offices are closed to public access on Wednesday). Central telephone lines are available Monday to Friday 9am till 5pm. An emergency out-of-hours service is available at all other times.

2.5 Regulation Policy

- 2.5.1 The Public Health Services Enforcement Policy details our approach to the use of enforcement powers to ensure compliance with Regulators' Code and the principles of good enforcement. It also gives clarity as to how the unit will achieve compliance by setting out options and the criteria used to determine the most appropriate, effective and efficient response to breaches of legislation.
- 2.5.2 The Food Law Code of practice defines the interventions and the range of official controls which may be used to ensure that food is safe to eat and that all food premises in the district comply with food safety legislation. This can range from informal action through to the service of formal notices or the issue of simple cautions or prosecutions.
- 2.5.3 All enforcement action will be taken having regard to this Enforcement Policy based on the provisions of the Regulators' Code 2014 (Department of Business Innovation and Skills), the Code of Practice Powers of Entry 2014 (Home Office) and the provisions outlined in the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 and the Regulatory and Enforcement Sanctions Act 2008. This policy was adopted by Full Council on 6th January 2021.

3.0 Service Delivery

3.1 Premises Interventions

3.1.1 Mid Devon District Council considers programmed interventions of food premises to be essential to ensure consumers are protected in terms of food safety by:-

- establishing whether food is being handled, produced and kept hygienically;
- determining whether food is safe to eat;
- Identifying foreseeable incidents of food poisoning or illness resulting from the consumption of food.

3.1.2 It is the policy of this authority to carry out a programme of planned interventions of food premises in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice using a wide range of interventions to monitor, support and increase business compliance. Such measures are key to ensuring food business operators comply with food law which at the same time embraces the Government's regulatory reform agenda. A risk-based approach will be taken such that resources will be focused on those businesses posing a greater risk whilst adopting a lighter approach to businesses that do comply.

3.1.3 In accordance with this and our own internal Food Hygiene Intervention Procedure, we aim to apply the following risk based approach:

- Assess 100% of category A and B premises which are due a programmed intervention with a full inspection, partial inspection or audit
- Assess 100% of category C less than broadly compliant premises which are due a programmed intervention with a full inspection, partial inspection or audit
- Broadly compliant category C rated premises will be subject to an intervention that is an inspection, partial inspection or audit, alternated with another type of official Control; sampling, monitoring, surveillance or verification.
- Assess 100% of category D premises that are less than broadly compliant which are due a programmed intervention with an inspection, partial inspection or audit.
- Broadly compliant category D rated premises will be subject to an intervention that is an official control, alternated with an intervention that is not an official control.
- Where a D rated premises is assessed and scores 30 or 40 for type of food and method of handling, an inspection, partial inspection or audit will be carried out.
- Inspect premises which are overdue a food hygiene intervention targeting those considered a higher risk to food safety or in circumstances where it is considered necessary to review a premises rating;
- Apply an alternative enforcement strategy to food premises rated category E such as the use of self-assessment questionnaires, mailshots, information gathering exercises, seminars or other targeted campaign;

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- In any case, where the premises in question is subject to approval under Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 the intervention will be an inspection, partial inspection or audit.
- Interventions for higher risk businesses or those that are likely to be high risk always take priority over interventions for lower risk businesses, unless information or intelligence suggests that there is a need for earlier intervention.

3.1.4 The intervention programme for 2025/2026 includes 575 programmed (including overdue and missed premises), as detailed below:

Food Interventions Due 2025 – 2026	
Premises Category	Number of premises
A	1
B	36
C	82
D	211
E	214
Total Programmed Interventions	544
Unrated	31
Total Inspection Programme	575

3.1.5 Additional areas of non-programmed interventions include:

- Non-compliant premises will receive a revisit or further intervention with an objective of assessing improvements in levels of compliance, and facilitating required improvements through a graduated and proportionate level of enforcement action. All 0, 1 and 2 rated premises would receive at least one follow up revisit. It is anticipated that around 30 revisit interventions will be carried out in addition to the programmed interventions and alternative enforcement interventions.
- The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme also encourages businesses given a 0-4 rating to request a revisit for re-rating purposes once non-compliances have been addressed. In March 2022, the Council introduced a charge for a revisit to re-rate, this has resulted in a slight drop in requests for this service. We delivered 7 re-visits to re-score premises during 2024/2025.

3.2 Food Complaints

3.2.1 Food safety-related service requests requiring a response within 5 working days are received by the food team about the condition of food, food premises, practices or food handlers. A risk-based approach will be taken such that investigations will be carried out on those complaints posing the greater risk to ensure that resources are used effectively. The Service will investigate all such complaints in accordance with our service standards and documented food complaints procedure. There were 47 food complaints received last year.

3.2.2 All consumer complaints are taken as potential indicators of management problems within a food business and prompt a level of investigation. This includes general

complaints relating to cleanliness or waste disposal, as well as allegations of food poisoning. If the business in question is due or shortly will be due a routine intervention, the complaint will trigger this and a visit will be made. The complaint will be investigated as part of the inspection process. If the business has only recently been assessed and is not due a routine intervention, officers' judgement is utilised to determine the most appropriate action to investigate the complaint.

3.3 Home Authority Principle and Primary Authority Scheme

3.3.1 Although this Service has no formal agreements currently in place to act as a Primary Authority for any food business, the Authority does support the Primary Authority Scheme advocated by the Better Regulatory Delivery Office and takes full regard of the relevant principles and guidance when dealing with any food business which is part of a Primary Authority arrangement. The Authority is committed to support local businesses and would welcome discussions from Mid Devon based manufacturers looking to enter into a Primary Authority agreement.

3.3.1 Mid Devon is the Originating Authority for a number of food manufacturers and will provide advice to relevant businesses on legal compliance. In addition we will have regard to any information or advice received from home and/or originating authorities elsewhere, and we will liaise with the home and/or originating authority of any business where identified non-compliance appears to be associated with the business's centrally defined policies and procedures. In accordance with the Home Authority Principle, this authority will respond to all reasonable requests for appropriate information and or assistance from other local authorities about locally produced foods that are the subject of a complaint outside of this district.

3.3.2 It is anticipated that 10 requests for advice from other authorities concerning Mid Devon food producers will be received during the course of a year.

3.4 Advice to Business

3.4.1 This Authority is committed to assisting all Mid Devon based food premises meet their legal obligations and achieve best practice, by offering free advice and assistance, irrespective of their size or scale of operations, through a range of activities and interventions, including;

- Advice during the course of an intervention
- Responding to enquiries from food business operators for advice and information using email and telephone communication
- Proactively commenting on, and providing advice on food safety via planning applications
- Providing food safety advice to food business operators and groups represented on Safety Advisory Group's
- Reference and referral to free Food Standards Agency advice leaflets and guidance such as allergens, Safer Food Better Business
- Maintenance and development of food safety information on the Council's website with signposted links to relevant information providers
- Participation in Food Standards Agency food safety awareness campaigns
- Signposting businesses via letter and questionnaire as part of an alternative intervention

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- 3.4.1 The Freedom of Information Act (FOI) gives individuals the right to access recorded information and it is anticipated this will generate 5 requests for food-related information for the year.

3.5 Food Sampling

- 3.5.1 Sampling makes an important contribution to the protection of public health and the food law enforcement function of the Local Authority.
- 3.5.2 In addition to routine sampling programmes, food and environmental sampling is considered a valuable tool to support interventions and assessment of food safety procedures and practices. Sampling is routinely carried out as part of wider food safety inspection or audit to validate or verify a part of a process or a HACCP plan.
- 3.5.3 Food sampling is carried out in accordance with Food Sampling Policy that sets out our general approach to sampling and the approach to more specific situations. This policy has been drawn up in consultation with the Food, Water & Environmental Lab (FWEM) at Porton Down and the Public Analyst which undertakes food examination for Mid Devon District Council.
- 3.5.4 A food and environmental sampling programme has been set to reflect local and national priorities and is coordinated with the Devon and Cornwall Food Liaison group. The current sampling programme also provides for routine sampling from producers, retailers and approved establishments across the district.
- 3.5.5 2025/2026 sampling priorities in line with regional studies are:
- Root vegetables with an emphasis on STEC and Yersinia
 - Dried fruit nuts and seeds – general microbiological criteria
- 3.5.6 Last year 86 samples were taken, this included food, environmental swabs from food premises as well as tattoo and piercing premises. The number of samples taken was lower than anticipated, due to ongoing officer capacity. It is anticipated that around 120 samples will be collected during 2025/ 2026, predominantly from our approved premises and as part of work to improve levels of compliance. .
- 3.5.7 There has been a rolling annual agreement in place between Mid Devon District and the Food, Water and Environmental Lab (FWEM) at Porton Down since March 2020 for provision of food, water and environmental microbiology services.

3.6 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease

- 3.6.1 Officers in the team investigate notifications of infectious disease including food poisoning and community outbreaks. During 2024/25, 55 notifications of infectious disease were received and dealt with by the service. These included, 29 Campylobacter, 12 Salmonella, 12 Cryptosporidium and 2 Shigella.
- 3.6.2 Outbreak control plans are in place between UKHSA and Public Health for the control of communicable disease. Outbreaks are dealt with as a high priority and will be assigned an officer who will focus on the investigation and work with partners to ensure a fast response to identify the source of the outbreak and deal with the causes.

3.7 Food Safety Incidents

- 3.7.1 This authority has a procedure which explains how to respond to Food Alerts for Action, Product Withdrawal Information Notices and Product Recall Information Notices notified by the FSA, including those received outside office hours.
- 3.7.2 The purpose of the response is to inform businesses and the general public of any potential contamination or risk to food and to advise them of any course of action. The procedure includes receipt of alerts, notices, appropriate actions, closure and record keeping. Alerts and Notices are received by email to the services generic email: health@middevon.gov.uk and direct to the Commercial Team Leader.

3.8 Liaison with Other Organisations

- 3.8.1 Local and National partnership working is pivotal to continuing the drive to improving and delivering better public health outcomes for the residents, businesses and communities of Mid Devon. The scope of work and partnerships outlined below shows the positive impact made by the food team.
- 3.8.2 Food liaison arrangements are in place with neighbouring south west local authorities, Trading Standards, Food Standards Agency, through regular attendance at the Devon and Cornwall Food Liaison Group. The group acts as a discussion forum and shares intelligence, information and best practice to ensure consistent enforcement.
- 3.8.3 Working in collaboration with UKHSA South West Centre, we are actively involved in surveillance, reporting and control of communicable diseases across the south west by participation in regular UKHSA Group meetings and working groups.

3.9 Food Safety Promotional Work

- 3.9.1 Limited resources have impacted on our ability to deliver promotional work. The Regulatory Officer post is now occupied and going forward will take a lead role in promotional work and utilise Food Safety campaigns to share information with our lower risk premises.
- 3.9.2 Officers have delivered a targeted educational intervention, providing a webinar covering key learning points to our Childminders.
- 3.9.3 Officers are shaping a training package to support our Chinese businesses comply with allergen information and management requirements, as it has been identified that this is an area where further support is needed.

4.0 Resources

4.1 Financial Allocation

	Set Budget for the year	Income target		Actual spend	Actual income	
	Includes staff costs, training, management, equipment, ICT and sampling specifically related to food safety	Export Certificates	Re-score visits	Includes staff costs, training, management, equipment, ICT and sampling specifically related to food safety	Export Certificates	Re-score visits
2023/24	£281,590	£500	£0	£212,162.40	£1854.19	£278.34
2024/25	£241,560	£1000	£500	204,430.51	£238	£745.85
2025/26	£262,570	£1500	£500			

4.2 Staff Allocation

4.2.1 The allocated resources within the Commercial Team which are committed to food safety enforcement equates to 2.8 FTE Officers who hold either registration with CIEH as an Environmental Health Practitioner or the Higher Certificate in Food premises Inspection. The new 1 FTE Regulatory Officer does not have food safety enforcement responsibilities but will implement Food Hygiene requirements through alternative interventions, and is authorised to deal with enforcement of other legislation, such as Licensing and Environmental Protection

4.2.2 1 FTE support roles have been in place since October 2023.

4.2.3 The System Administrator is responsible for the FHRS upload and supports with the provision of management information essential for delivering and also assessing the effectiveness of the service. The System Administrator works alongside the Team Leaders to deliver data quality checks to ensure that the database is up to date, accurate and compliant with data standards.

4.3 Resource assessment against demands

4.3.1 Number of new premises remain high, with an average of 2.5 new food registrations a week, so this demand is factored into the resources required to deliver the food service.

4.3.2 The structure detailed in section 2.2.3 would provide adequate resource to ensure compliance with the Food Law Code of Practice.

4.3.3	Team Leader	Focus on higher risk and approved establishments
	Lead Officer	Focus on higher risk and approved establishments
	Specialist Officers	Focus on premises rated C and D
	Regulatory Officer	Premises rated E, D rated with a score of 10 for type of food and other educational campaigns

4.3.4 The ability of the service to deliver against this plan has been determined with consideration to the input from the System Administration.

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4.3.5 The continued use of a contracted Food officer will be required until the full structure detailed in section 2.2.3 is in place.

4.3.6 Whilst working towards the full structure and compliance with the Food Law Code of Practice, the focus will remain on the higher risk premises and processes, and new registrations, there will be insufficient capacity to complete interventions with lower risk D and E rated premises.

4.4 Staff Development Plan

4.4.1 This authority has a clear commitment to maintain and develop staff competencies to ensure we continue to deliver a high quality service to our community.

4.4.2 Specialist Officers are assisted in achieving 20 hours continuing professional development training. Chartered practitioners have a requirement for 30 hours CPD.

4.4.3 All training needs are identified through the appraisal process and incorporated into a service training plan, all CPD training is recorded and certificated. Ad hoc training needs will also be considered and fulfilled outside of those on the training plan, as the need arises.

4.4.4 The service utilise the Food Standards Agency Competency Framework to support with the assessment of officer competencies and identify gaps in knowledge and skill that then feed into future training plans.

4.5 Information Technology

4.5.1 A Uniform database is maintained to keep the register of food businesses, facilitate risk rating and upload of Food Hygiene Rating data to the national database. Details of interventions and other contacts between businesses and the service are managed on the platform.

5.0 Quality Assessment

5.1 Quality Assessment and Internal Monitoring

5.1.1 The following monitoring arrangements are in place to assist in the quality assessment of the work carried out by the food team:

- Local scoring consistency discussions are carried out routinely at team meetings
- National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme national consistency exercises are carried out and reviewed
- Quality management procedures are delivered through monitoring arrangements including through team meetings, reviews of inspection paperwork, monthly case review meetings (new April 2024), one-to-ones, staff appraisals and development plan reviews, as well as accompanied interventions
- Uniform database and National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme data analysis and cleansing exercises are carried out regularly by System Administrator and Team Leader
- Statistical performance monitoring including inspection and complaint monitoring
- Returns of Mid Devon District Council food law enforcement activities are submitted to the Food Standards Agency as requested

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- We continue to review our systems and procedures in accordance with the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice and to ensure compliance with the enforcement framework requirements

6.0 Review

6.1 Review against service plan

- 6.1.1 During 2024/2025 63% of due interventions with established businesses were carried out in accordance with Food Law Code of Practice timescales.

6.2 Review against internal performance indicators

- 6.2.1 % of interventions due at each risk category carried out

	Qrt 1	Qrt 2	Qrt 3	Qrt 4
Band A	100%	100%	50%	100%
Band B	100%	100%	77%	94%
Band C	100%	100%	53%	88%
Band D	74%	50%	16%	34%
Band E	2%	1%	0%	23%

- 6.2.1.1 The service have been unable to deliver 100% of interventions at each risk rating. Wherever possible, higher risk premises have been prioritised. The drop in quarter 3 was a result of a combination of factors, including the secondment of a food officer to cover essential licensing service delivery, the retirement of a part time food officer, and a gap in support whilst moving from an agency food officer to a direct contract through a procurement process.

- 6.2.1.2 The number of interventions carried out in the lowest risk group has increased with the start of the Regulatory Officer, and this will continue to increase. There is a significant list of those overdue that will be worked through over the coming year.

- 6.2.2 Improvement in Food Hygiene Rating Scheme score (FHRS) for premises rated 0, 1 or 2, at subsequent food hygiene interventions.

2024-2025	Qrt 1	Qrt 2	Qrt 3	Qrt 4
Percentage %				
Improved	89	90	100	100
No change	11	10	0	0
Decrease	0	0	0	0

The movement in hygiene rating represents improved compliance levels with food safety requirements, indicating a direct positive impact on food safety standards following officer interventions.

- 6.2.3 In addition to the measures defined above, the % of new businesses inspected within 28 days of registration/opening is being monitored. This was an average of 43% over the year. This is due to officer capacity issues, as well as a theme of difficulty contacting some newly registered businesses.

Annex A

- 6.2.4 From an operational perspective the Commercial Team Leader will review the key performance measures and service improvements contained in this plan on a quarterly basis.

6.2 Service Audit

- 6.2.1 An internal audit was carried out during the 24/25 financial year covering Food Safety. The draft report has been made available and gives reasonable assurance about the delivery of statutory food safety functions.
- 6.2.2 The authority has been identified for participation is an FSA audit for the financial year 2025/2026, covering official controls at Primary Production.

6.3 Deviation from service plan

- 6.4.1 Recruitment into the Lead officer role was not successful, we are therefore not operating within the structure as detailed in section 2.2 and internal movement of staff to cover other areas of vacancy have had further impact on the service delivery.
- 6.4.2 There was a period of 6 months between August 2024 and March 2025 where we were not utilising the services of an external food safety contractor, this was mainly due to procurement processes taking place.
- 6.4.3 The deviations above have resulted in us not meeting the inspection targets at the higher risk bands as detailed within the service plan.

6.5 Areas of Focus

- 6.5.1 There are a number of areas where we are working to improve the service, with the key aim of building resilience and capability to ensure compliance with the Food Law Code of Practice. We are continually seeking to improve service delivery and look to smarter ways of working to ensure that we are utilising the resources available to us to achieve our overall objective of ensuring Food Safety within the District.
- 6.5.2 As we have been unsuccessful to recruit into the planned new Lead post, a further review of the team structure and vacancies will be carried out during 2025/2026. The aim will be to ensure that we design a role that has the best chance of recruitment success and ensure the service has adequate capacity and resource to deliver against the service plan.