

# Salford Environment Directorates' Food Sampling Policy

## Food Sampling Policy Contents

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### 1. Aims of Sampling

- To provide analytical results to improve standards of food safety and food standards in relation to the sale and manufacture of food within the Council's boundaries.
- To act as an educative tool to help inform businesses and the public regarding food safety issues.
- To provide supporting evidence to food businesses HACCP and hazard analysis systems, particularly with regard to implementing [Safer Food Better Business](#) (SFBB) and approved premises under [EU Regulation 853/2004](#).
- To address both local and national food safety concerns.
- To act as supporting evidence in the enforcement of food safety where appropriate.

### 2. Objectives

A number of food samples will be taken each month. The type of food sampled each month where necessary, having previously been agreed to and discussed with the Food Examiner: HPA Food Water and Environmental Microbiology Services Laboratory, Royal Preston Hospital and the Public Analyst: Staffordshire and Leicester and in the case of Food Standards with the AGMA Food Standards Panel in conjunction with the Public Analyst =. Samples will be taken and on receipt of the results, action will follow the methodology detailed in the appropriate Work Instructions. This sampling policy will be adequately resourced as detailed in the [Food Service Plan](#) and relevant Directorate Business Plan.

### 3. Criteria for Sampling

The laboratories detailed above will examine samples. The Division being satisfied that this will be undertaken by competent personnel and in accordance with The Food Safety (Sampling and Qualifications) Regulations 1990. Under certain circumstances samples taken to ascertain compliance with labelling requirements only, may be examined 'in house'. Officers who undertake formal sampling will be qualified and trained as detailed in Food Law Practice Guidance. Any officers who do not possess relevant qualifications will only sample on an informal basis. The Division has

procedures for dealing with food complaints. In deciding whether to submit an article for microbiological examination or analysis the officer should have regard to the probable benefits, the likelihood of further evidence being produced and the Enforcement Policy. If in doubt the officer should discuss the matter with the appropriate senior officer. Any samples submitted must be in accordance with this sampling protocol.

The procedures for the taking and submission of food samples are detailed for officers of the Division in the Public Protection Food Sampling Work Instruction QP08-10.

#### **4. Food Safety Samples**

Approximately 240 food safety samples are taken from a wide range of the 2000 food premises within the City including our approved premises, high risk caterers and retailers. Food Safety samples will be taken according to a risk based approach, as follows:

**Routine sampling:** Carried out as required, for example:

- Before, during or after routine inspections for the purposes of process monitoring, to assess the safety of particular foods etc.;
- Following a complaint;
- As part of a special investigation, e.g. a suspected food poisoning outbreak;

**Surveillance Sampling:** As part of a structured programme devised by the Greater Manchester Food Liaison Group (GMFLG), in conjunction with all North West local Authorities and agreed with the Health Protection Agency's Royal Preston Hospital Laboratory (RPHL). Detailed protocols are developed to ensure consistency of sampling and results. In determining foods to be sampled, the following are considered:

- Surveys national and regional – i.e. Local Government Regulation (LGR), EC Co-ordinated or Food Standards Agency (FSA) surveys.
- Local and national food safety concerns and priorities including focusing on listeria, E.coli and campylobacter.
- Verification of HACCP or hazard analysis for locally produced products, for example fish products from approved premises, in compliance with EC Regulation No 2073/2005 on Microbiological Criteria for Foodstuffs.
- Premises for which the authority is home/originating authority.
- The sampling programmes and the survey reports (once available) are to be found on the internet at:-  
<http://www.salford.gov.uk/business/envhealth/foodsafety/foodsampling.htm>.
- Results of samples are interpreted using [HPA Guidelines for assessing the Microbiological Quality of ready to eat foods](#) placed on the market.

- **Food Standards Samples.**

The authority will aim to submit at least 1 food sample per 1000 head of population for compositional analysis and/or labelling examination each year. The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) Food Standards Group's food sampling programme will form the basis of this activity and officers will contribute to ensure that it meets local requirements. In addition officers will be encouraged to sample products and ingredients of products on their own initiative. The sampling programme will operate within the following criteria:

- Each Authority will concentrate on its Home Authority companies where possible, and will include the sampling of raw ingredients where relevant.
- Authorities will concentrate on locally produced foodstuffs as well as Home Authority companies.
- In general, up to eight categories (including food supplements and food claims,) will be targeted during each quarter. Food contact materials will be targeted periodically.
- Areas identified as presenting a continuing problem e.g. meat products will be regularly sampled.
- To avoid the submission of the wrong type of product, the Group will agree specific criteria and guidance for use by sampling officers, and this information will be noted on the sampling programme.
- The Group will be sensitive to trends and areas of public concern, and the Public Analyst will provide guidance and expertise.
- An overview of the results of the previous quarters sampling programme will be reported at the subsequent Group meeting.
- The Group will report on the results of the sampling programme and details of action taken to the Greater Manchester Public Protection Managers Group and the Chief Trading Standards Officer's sub group on an annual basis.
- The Group will endeavour to avoid duplication of samples.

The authority will participate in FSA/LGR sampling initiatives as appropriate. Numbers of submitted samples may vary due to the necessary re-sampling for previous acceptable or unsatisfactory results. In addition to programmed samples individual food samples may be submitted in order for the Division to investigate a food complaint or to assist in the verification of procedures applied by local food producers. All samples taken as part of the monthly co-ordinated sampling programme will generally be taken initially as an informal sample, except in circumstances where the sampling protocol demands a formal sample – this may arise for national LGR or FSA surveys.