

## SAMPLING IN FOOD PREMISES

The City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council's Environmental Health Service undertakes sampling of food in premises throughout the district. At the start of each financial year a sampling programme is drawn up giving details of the type of samples to be taken that year. A food sample may be a finished product eg a meat pie, a whole meal or purely a food ingredient.

- **Why is Sampling Carried Out?**

This authority obtains food samples for a variety of reasons, here are some examples

- via members of the public as part of a complaint
- taken as evidence by officers during inspections in cases where formal action is being considered
- samples to be submitted for expert opinion (often when food has been detained or seized)
- for surveillance purposes to monitor the bacteriological standard of food prepared/sold in the district
- formally submitted samples to the analyst or food examiner in instances where it is believed a problem exists.

- **Who is Authorised to Take Samples?**

Only officers with appropriate qualifications are allowed to carry out formal sampling unless under supervision of a qualified officer. All samples are submitted to approved laboratories relevant to the type of sample and analysis required.

- **Types of Sampling**

- Formal samples may be taken either at the time of a routine inspection of a food premises or at a later date if officers feel that there is a need to justify the quality and safety of food produced/sold from premises. These may be taken as a customer or after identification of the officer. It is likely that, having due regard to the Departmental enforcement policy, legal action may result following **unsatisfactory** sample results.

Following unsatisfactory results the primary concern is to ensure that immediate action is taken by the business to prevent the continuing risk to health. Should this fail to happen unsatisfactory results may lead to food poisoning. All formal samples are taken in accordance with The Food Safety (Sampling and Qualifications) Regulations 1990

- Informal samples are used for surveillance purposes to monitor the quality and safety of food produced/sold in the district. These may take the form of special projects organised locally or nationally, in line with any political or current food hygiene concerns. Any unsatisfactory sample results will be followed up with an investigation into the possible cause and a 'formal' re-sample taken where the officer deems necessary.

- **Approved Product Premises**

This Authority is required to take samples from all premises approved under product specific purposes and visits will be made to these premises specifically for this purpose. This authority currently has **16** such approved premises in the district.

- **Involvement with Other Local Authorities**

This authority acts as home authority for **3** businesses. Where other Local Authorities have identified problems with foods relating to these businesses, we will work with both the authority and the business to ensure any necessary samples are taken, and the results of any samples are acted upon in a satisfactory manner. Similarly other Local Authorities may contact us regarding samples that have been taken of food produced in the Wakefield District but sold in other areas. Where the situation requires liaison with the Food Standards Agency, this will be done in accordance with the Department's policy on food hazard warnings to ensure a proper product recall is initiated.

- **Liaison with Food Businesses**

Where any formal samples have been taken this department will notify the proprietor of the business as soon as possible. Results of samples taken will be released to the proprietor, unless this release would hinder other formal investigations.

All samples taken by this department will be properly paid for unless the samples are taken as evidence of an offence.

- **Reviewing the Sampling Programme**

The sampling programme and policy are reviewed on an annual basis as part of the Food Service Plan review. Such a review will have consideration for the types of premises within the District, the demands on the service, the service level agreements with the food examining bodies and also budget and staffing resources.

Whilst the programme will set out a plan of sampling to be carried out throughout the year deviations may occur in cases of emergencies. Should this occur this will be recorded at the annual review of the Food Service Plan.

- **Reporting Back**

All sampling activities are reported to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) on a quarterly basis as part of their local authority monitoring process. Sampling activities for the year are also reported to the West Yorkshire Principal Food Officers Group on an annual basis in order to help to target sampling programmes for future years.

- **Contact Details**

Should you wish to contact us to discuss any aspect of our sampling activities please use the number below  
01924 305968 or

e-mail [food@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:food@wakefield.gov.uk)