

# Trafford Council

## Sampling Policy



### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Trafford Council recognises the important contribution food sampling makes to the protection of Public Health and the Food Law Enforcement functions of the Authority. The Council will provide the necessary resources to carry out its food sampling programme.
- 1.2 Trafford Council will make provision to co-operate, and where possible participate in and contribute to national and regional food sampling surveys. However, some surveys may involve foods or food premises which are either in short supply or not available in Trafford, in which case a reduced number of samples or no samples will be submitted to the laboratories.

### 2 Resources

- 2.2 Suitably qualified, trained and authorised Environmental Health Officers from the Public Protection Service will be responsible for undertaking the food sampling functions of the Council.
- 2.3 Funding for the examination of routine food samples except in an outbreak situation is borne by the Public Health England based on a 'credit allocation system' which is calculated on the size of each Authority. There is however flexibility to share out unused/ surplus credits, by agreement, between Authorities based on demand.
- 2.4 Should the Council use up all allocated credits and no unused credits be available, payment for the examination of any additional samples will be made from the Council's own sampling budget.
- 2.5 Examination of samples, associated with outbreaks, remain free of charge.
- 2.6 Fees for analysis by the Public Analyst of food standards samples are borne by Trafford Council from the sampling budget.
- 2.7 Trafford Council will also, where available, seek funding for food sampling from the Food Standards Agency though joint bids by the Greater Manchester Food Liaison Group and the Trading Standards North West Food & Agriculture Group.

### 3 Arrangements for Analysis and Examination of Samples

- 3.1 The Council engages the services of the Public Health England, Food Water and Microbiology Laboratory, Preston, to undertake all microbiological examinations of food and water.

- 3.2 The Council's appointed Public Analyst at Lancashire County Council Scientific Services, is used for any food or water which requires analysis.
- 3.3 The number of samples taken in any one year may vary significantly, depending on any local food incidents or national priorities occurring during the year e.g. in 2012 the Authority increased levels of sampling at food premises trading around Manchester United Football Club ahead of the Olympic Games.
- 3.4 The Authority is however fully committed to participating in all regional and national sampling programmes.

#### **4 Basis of the Food Sampling Programme**

4.1 Trafford Council will undertake an annual sampling programme which will be developed giving consideration to: -

- protecting the consumer through the enforcement of food legislation;
- protecting the legitimate trader, who seeks to comply with the law and provide safe and good quality food, from unfair competition;
- identifying foods that pose a hazard to the consumer because they contain significant levels of pathogenic bacteria or substances in excess of permitted levels;
- assessing the microbiological quality of food manufactured, distributed or retailed in the area;
- assessing the composition of food manufactured, distributed or retailed in the area and the adequacy of its labelling;
- identifying any contraventions of food safety or food standards legislation, e.g. Food Safety Act 1990 Section 8 (food which is unfit or food which is so contaminated) or Section 14 (food not of the nature, substance or quality);
- helping to determine whether advice or enforcement action would be appropriate where it is suspected that poor practices and procedures exist;
- offering advice and guidance, if appropriate, on food hygiene and food standards matters;
- the need for the authority to fulfil its statutory sampling obligations.

4.2 When deciding which foods are to form part of the sampling programme consideration will be given to local, regional and national intelligence regarding known problem areas, current consumer concerns, whether food is imported, novel processes or technology, and advice from Public Analyst and Food Examiner.

#### **5 Other Food Sampling**

- 5.1 As well as an annual sampling programme there are a number of situations where officers will also take food samples for analysis and/or examination. These include food samples received as a food complaint from members of the public, complaints of alleged food poisoning from members of the public, process monitoring during inspection of food manufacturing premises, and during routine food hygiene and standards inspections.
- 5.2 Samples of food and environmental samples may also be taken during food poisoning and other infectious disease outbreak investigations.
- 5.3 Samples of food may also be taken from consignments of imported food from third countries arriving at the border inspection points and at premises which are the “first destination” in the UK for imported food.