

# Food Sampling Policy

Gravesham Borough Council

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This document provides the outline for our food sampling to provide consistent enforcement.

## Document Control

- Responsible Department: Environmental Health
- Responsible Manager: Regulatory Services Manager
- Revision Timeframe: Annually
- Version: April 2020

Gravesham Borough Council will comply with all relevant UK and EU legislation to ensure food within the district is sampled. Gravesham Borough Council views food sampling as an important aspect of its duty to protect Public Health and comply with its enforcement responsibilities relating to food law.

Each year a food sampling programme will be produced and published and will be available to local businesses and consumers. This will outline our general sampling strategy and approach relating to specific local situations. Sampling within the district will be carried out in accordance with this programme and will follow a set of documented procedures.

The Council has appointed the Lead Public Health Microbiologist for Public Health England based at Food, Water & Environmental Microbiology Laboratory at Colindale (or one of his appointed Food Examiners) as Food Examiner and Kent Scientific Services as Public Analyst.

The Council aims to participate in all UK Co-ordinated Food Control Programmes organised nationally through the Food Standards Agency and the UK Health Security Agency which are relevant to the needs of the local food businesses. The Authority will also participate in programmes organised by the CIEH Kent Food Technical Group and the Food Sampling Sub-Group, as agreed by the Kent Environmental Health Managers Group.

Locally, the Council will target sampling at food businesses, which score poorly on the national food hygiene-rating scheme. Food sampling and swabbing of food premises will be an integral part of food hygiene inspections to help assess hygiene

standards and processes. Food sampling is an important tool when investigating food complaints and food poisoning incidents and will be used as necessary to assist these investigations.

Each year the UK Health Security Agency allocates central government funding, for microbiological food and water samples to the Council. Where allocation permits Gravesham Borough Council will ensure that a minimum sample rate of one (1) sample per 1000 head of population is taken.

Within the Authority, Gravesham Borough Council is committed to carrying out a targeted sampling programme in respect of local food manufacturers of high-risk items; this includes dairy and meat products establishments. Imported foods will also be included within our sampling programme both proactively and as required on complaint/investigation.

Officers carrying out food sampling will ensure that they co-ordinate activities with colleagues in other Food Authorities and working in related professions such as Trading Standards, Environment Agency, etc. to prevent duplication of work and share relevant results and findings.