

## **Shepway District Council**

### **Food Sampling Policy**

Food sampling is an important official control used in Shepway to monitor and verify the safety and quality of food sold and produced in our district.

This policy sets out our commitment and general strategy towards food sampling in the district

Our food sampling policy will be published on our website to be available to local businesses and consumers.

#### **General Principles**

We will comply with Food Standards Agency Codes of Practice and guidance with respect to food sampling.

Our sampling will be carried out with regard to the Kent Food Sampling Protocol for microbiological sampling.

We have appointed the Public Health England (PHE) Food, Water and Environmental Microbiology Laboratory, Colindale, London as Food Examiners and Kent Scientific Services as Public Analyst.

Central government funding for examination of microbiological food and water samples is allocated by Public Health England (PHE) directly to the Council. This allocation does not cover the cost of sample collection, purchase or any chemical or physical analysis.

We use the UK Food Sampling Surveillance System (UKFSS) for recording our microbiological food sampling activity. This enables swift transfer of information to the laboratory. Data is shared with the Food Standards Agency and other Local authorities and this enables it to be used by all to monitor trends and identify potential sampling priorities

We may take food samples/ environmental swabs for the following reasons:

- As part of an investigation into a complaint or incident
- As part of regional / national or European surveillance programmes
- Local surveillance based on local priorities or intelligence
- For verification as part of an inspection

All results and explanations regarding sampling will be given to food businesses or manufacturers as soon as possible. Unsatisfactory results will be followed up as necessary with advice, further samples or formal action as appropriate in line with our enforcement policy. If food is manufactured outside the Shepway district, the producer and relevant Local Authority will be contacted where necessary in line with home and primary authority principles. The Food Standards Agency will be consulted and notified where appropriate.

### **Sampling Priorities**

**Our general priorities for proactive food sampling in the District are as follows:**

- Food manufacturers/processors in the district that are approved under EC 853/2004
- Food Manufacturers/ processors (particularly of high risk foods) who distribute products to other food businesses outside the district .
- Imported foods whose first destination on entering the EU is within Shepway.
- Surveillance sampling surveys organised by PHE and the EU Co-ordinated surveys
- Surveillance sampling surveys organised by Kent Food Technical Group
- Local surveillance, based on local intelligence (for example high risk foods from premises linked to allegations of food borne illness).

This policy will be reviewed from time to time as necessary.