

# Service Delivery Plan 2018/19



Health, Safety and Wellbeing in Slough

The Food and Safety Team, sit's within Regulatory Services, which is an outward facing service group made up of:

- **Food & Safety**
- **Primary Authority**
- **Trading Standards**
- **Licensing**
- **Community Safety**
- **CCTV & Careline**
- **Registration Services**
- **Cemetery and Crematory**
- **Prevent**

Our aim is to deliver a wide range of effective and responsive public protection services for our residents, businesses and visitors.

## **Health & Safety Service**

Slough Borough Council is responsible for health and safety regulation under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and associated regulations. We provide advice and enforce health & safety within approximately 1,600 commercial premises in the borough, including warehouses, residential care homes, leisure centres, shops, pubs and restaurants. Health and safety enforcement is divided between the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) & LA depending on the main activity in the workplace. We play a major role in protecting the health, safety and welfare of employees and members of the public in Slough.

Our approach to health and safety regulation is largely reactive and follows formal guidance issued by the HSE, namely the National Local Authority Enforcement Code, introduced in 2013. The aim of this code is to ensure a consistent and sensible approach to health and safety regulation. Since its introduction the direction of health and safety enforcement nationally has changed considerably. The Code targets resources on risks and aims to reduce the regulatory burden on compliant businesses. This is the stance Slough has been taking for several years. As a result our intervention strategy is targeted at local and national priorities, where evidence suggests risks are not being controlled. Proactive inspections are reserved only for premises that do not manage their own risks or premises on the HSE's list of high risk sectors. This means few proactive inspections are undertaken, which releases capacity for more effective outcome-focused interventions and thorough reactive work. Where we do undertake H&S interventions they are project based, and focus on sectors which are high risk, where we have little information about levels of compliance or where local intelligence suggests an intervention may be necessary.

Greater emphasis is placed on dealing with complaints, accidents and incidents, targeting those businesses which are poor performers and failing to meet their duties under health and safety legislation.

In line with our enforcement policy we provide a graduated enforcement approach based on risk to public health. We show our commitment to carrying out our work in an open, transparent and fair manner, protecting employees and the wider public from risk whilst supporting business and economic growth. We recognise that most businesses want to comply with the law, therefore we will support those businesses in meeting their legal duties and be safe.

We have adopted a 'sensible risk management approach' in line with the Enforcement Code. This also links to the council's Primary Authority Scheme, where our work on improving safety standards extends to the national scale. Further information on Primary Authority is provided below.



The Health & Safety Service is delivered via the Food & Safety Team. A relatively small amount of officer time is dedicated to health and safety work, due to the direction of the Enforcement Code. However, allocation of officer time is fluid and reactive to service need, so officers will spend a significant amount of time investigating serious workplace accidents when necessary. However, this does have a knock on effect on other work which may have to be re-prioritised.

We also support and work with businesses by providing advice when issues are noted during other interventions, such as food visits. This helps businesses to comply with requirements and good practice.

We work in partnership with the Licensing Team, police, immigration enforcement and other partners to help promote awareness of child sexual exploitation and safeguard workers and others who may be exploited.

The purpose of this plan is to let you know how we are going to achieve the various measures that we will be taking in conjunction with our partners and other agencies, to enhance public health, safety and wellbeing.

We will do this by:

- signposting businesses and residents to information and free advice
- visiting businesses on the basis of risk, so reducing the burden on compliant businesses whilst targeting those that seek to gain an advantage from non-compliance
- investigating complaints and listening and responding to concerns
- investigating accidents, giving priority to those involving major injury or death in the workplace
- developing safety and health promotion initiatives
- consulting our customers on the quality of our service
- working in partnership with others to improve our outcomes for Slough. For example - The Health & Safety Executive, Thames Valley H&S Group, UK Border Agency, Thames Valley Police, the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and other council teams.

We are committed to helping change the health and safety culture in Britain and retain common sense in the approach we take to ensuring the protection of employees and the public.

### ***Helping Great Britain Work Well***

This plan is reviewed annually and we welcome your views, comments and suggestions on how it can be improved.

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To find out more about our service and initiatives visit our website at:  
<http://www.slough.gov.uk/business/health-and-safety/>



## Our vision

The focus of work within the Health & Safety Service is to ensure that the council is able to fulfil its statutory obligations under the relevant legislation and that this is geared towards Slough's specific community and business needs, based on local intelligence and our work with partners.

We care deeply about the work we do for our town and its residents, visitors and businesses; all the people we are **accountable** to. We are **ambitious** in our plans for the borough, **innovative** in our thinking and actions; all the time listening and **responsive** to those who need us, **empowering** and supporting everyone to reach their goals.

We are one team. We are Slough Borough Council

The council's Five Year Plan and the Joint Wellbeing Strategy set out a vision for Slough, for the people, the place, the prosperity and the town, and the things that need to be done to make this a reality. Businesses and other partners within Slough are already working together to improve life in the borough.

One of our key aims is to protect and enhance public health and wellbeing whilst supporting local businesses. The action plan at the rear of this service delivery plan shows how we are going to achieve this. It demonstrates how we directly link with the Five Year Plan to achieve the council's wider outcomes. The action plan should be read in conjunction with our Enforcement Policy.

The Enforcement Policy reaffirms our commitment to carry out our duties in an open, fair and consistent manner with a graduated approach to enforcement, based on risk. Assessment of risk and the likelihood of reoccurrence are major factors in our enforcement decisions. We recognise that most people want to comply with the law; therefore, we want to support and enable them to meet their legal obligations without unnecessary expense. Firm action, however will be taken, including prosecution, where appropriate.

The service plan sets out the actions we are taking to enhance and improve health, safety and wellbeing in Slough.

## **SBC Values**

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We are one team.  
We are Slough Borough Council

## **Our plan for 2018/19 and looking ahead**

The Health & Safety action plan for 2018/19, which outlines our planned work for the year is detailed in appendix A. As with previous years, we plan to undertake our statutory obligations by investigating accidents, complaints, and undertaking proactive interventions based on risk. This year, we also aim to undertake several projects based on the HSE list of sectors and activities suitable for an intervention, which forms part of the Enforcement Code.

We are planning focused projects in:

- retail/wholesale premises with regards to falls from height, workplace transport, lifting equipment, manual handling, and safe loading of vehicles.
- Violence and work
- Gas safety in catering premises\*
- Gas safety in hospitality industry\*
- Lung cancer in bakeries\*
- Musculoskeletal disorders in care homes
- Preventing access to large commercial waste bins\*

Such projects will also allow us to update our knowledge/database of premises in Slough.

Some of the priorities above marked with an \* will be looked at during whilst undertaking food hygiene visits. This is to reduce the burden on businesses by undertaking separate visits, whilst linking in with the HSE's priorities.

It's important to note that this year we aim to undertake more proactive interventions than we have in previous years. This is due to a change in the HSE's list of sectors and activities suitable for an intervention, more of which are applicable to premises in Slough.

Our health and safety plan is ambitious and aspirational. Its important to note the comments made in the resourcing section below, in particular, the level of resource needed to meet the plans objections and that available are not equal. Ultimately we do not have the resources available to complete all aspirations within the plan. This is also mirrored in the Food Safety and Standards Service Plan. It is likely that some of the planned work will be re-prioritised throughout the year, particularly if unforeseen demands on the service arise such as serious workplace accident investigations.

Our service plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and provides the opportunity to record our achievements and identify those key issues that still need to be addressed.

## How did we perform during 2017/18?

The Health and Safety Service can be divided into key activities and projects, listed below.

- Primary Authority Scheme and our Commercial Offer
- Accident investigations.
- Complaints about Health & Safety in Slough
- Health and safety interventions and projects
- Enforcement Actions
- Striving for Excellent and resourcing

### Primary Authority Scheme and our Commercial Offer



Primary Authority (PA) Partnerships comprises a legally binding contract between the Authority and a business to provide ongoing specialist advice on specific areas of regulation applicable to that business, such as fair trading, product labelling, product safety, food safety and health & safety.

Our Officers are able to provide companies which trade across council boundaries robust and reliable advice, through the creation of these legally recognised partnerships. The scheme also provides a safety net to ensure that local authorities are consistent in the way they regulate businesses.

Since Slough Borough Council introduced Primary Authority partnerships in April 2011 we have already secured more than 40 successful PA partnership agreements. These services are uniquely provided by in house by specialist officers.

Cost recovery is an essential element of the contracts and is applied to Primary Authority partnerships with an hourly charge for any work undertaken; in 2017/18 our income was £93,964 (jointly with the trading standards team). This cost recovery enables the Council to support businesses in Slough and increase the availability of specialist officers who are funded from PA at no extra cost to the Council. Last year the food & safety team had over 529 hours of advice interactions with our PA companies; a high proportion of this was advice and support requests from our partners.

As a Primary Authority we have had communication with many other Council's to ensure that inspection and enforcement action reflects the advice we have already given, and is proportionate. We continue to work with the businesses to produce national inspection plans, and give guidelines to other councils to avoid unnecessary checks and tests.

The number of businesses joining and leaving Primary Authority Partnerships with the Council remains changeable; however the demand on PA has remained relatively constant over the past year. As a service we currently maintain in excess of 40 partnerships.

In 2017 there were changes to the Primary Authority Scheme with the introduction of PA3. This demanded additional resources to update partnerships and review advice issued.

More information on Primary Authority Partnerships can be found on the website <https://primary-authority.beis.gov.uk/about>. Businesses that would like to join the scheme can email [primary.authority@slough.gov.uk](mailto:primary.authority@slough.gov.uk)

## **Our Commercial offer**

In line with last year's service plan we have been looking at ways of supporting businesses at no cost to Council. We introduced a new range of Business Support packages which have been advertised and made available to local food businesses. Businesses are offered bespoke advice packages either on start-up or before a planned intervention. These are charges at cost price and enable businesses to get additional advice on what they specifically need to do to improve their compliance with legal requirements. Last year we supported xx local businesses which made an income of £4,957. This was largely based on food safety work.



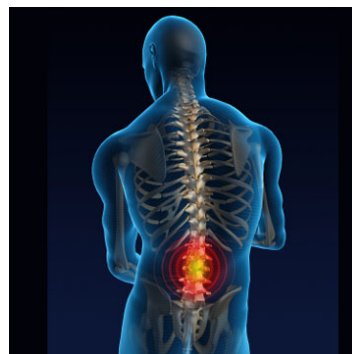
## Accident investigations

The team received 61\* accident notifications, a 25 per cent decrease from the previous year. In all but 3 notifications, employees needed to stay off normal work duties for more than 7 days or in the case of members of the public, needing to go to hospital. This is a significant reduction in accident notifications from last year and there is no specific reason to explain this decrease. It is likely that many accidents are not reported at all by employers, which results in under reporting and a reduction in notifications. It also allows dangerous practices and unsafe working conditions to continue. The majority of notifications are from large multi site employers who are known to have systems in place to promote the health and safety of employees. There have been almost no notifications from medium and small businesses.

On receipt of each notification we make a decision as to whether the accident warrants an investigation based on current HSE accident investigation guidance. The nature of the accidents reported last year varied considerably. Injuries from slips, trips and falls continue to account for the highest proportion of accidents notified (50%). This is in line with national statistics. There was 1 amputation of part of a finger and 12 fractures. The notifications also included:

- being struck by moving vehicles within a warehouse
- contact with moving machinery within workplaces
- cuts to hands
- trapped fingers
- back injuries due to poor manual handling
- injuries sustained at places of public entertainment
- injuries to members of the public at leisure premises
- physical assaults on employees in the workplace
- injuries to catering staff using faulty commercial catering equipment.

\*Source RIDDOR website



## **Complaints about Health and Safety in Slough**

Employees and members of the public made 34 complaints and enquiries about health and safety last year. This is a reduction of approximately 30% on the number of complaints and enquiries received last year and this is a repeat of the reduction in numbers from the previous year. It is unclear why this number has reduced and we are exploring other ways in which people can contact us easily.<sup>i</sup> The types of queries received are wide ranging, including complaints about unsafe workplaces, asbestos and legionella exposure risks, fire safety concerns, release of ammonia gas, storage of propane gas cylinders, poor welfare conditions, danger to staff in catering establishments, unsafe holistic health procedures placing public at risk of injury (including blood letting), unsafe beauty treatments and concerns about the safety of lifting equipment.

## **Health and safety interventions & projects**

In accordance with the HSE National Code, we target our resources on outcome focused interventions and reactive work, rather than proactive inspections. Proactive inspections are a good tool used in the right circumstances; however, they are the most resource intensive for both the council and the business, and therefore not always appropriate for low risk businesses.

As a result we undertook 35 health and safety visits to premises in Slough, of which 6 were reactive following complaints or accident notification. We also undertook 2 revisits to ensure standards had improved. This is roughly the same as last year. Of these visits, only 4 were proactive inspections, the remaining were project based, specifically focusing on gas safety and cooling towers.

## **Gas Safety in Catering**

Business operators have a legal obligation to ensure that gas appliances that are used in connection with food business are maintained in a safe condition. Historically, in Slough there have been areas of non compliance within food businesses.

The food and safety team has an ongoing commitment to assess standards of compliance with legal requirements and assess levels of awareness of local business operators with respect to the dangers of gas appliances used in catering. This involves undertaking visits in relation to gas safety at the time of routine food hygiene inspections and determining current standards of compliance.

Written advice is provided on matters that require attention and timescales are agreed for meeting legal requirements. Where necessary follow up work is

undertaken to ensure the improvement of standards where premises are found to be non compliant. In total 15 gas safety checks were undertaken.

## Cooling tower registration

Registration of wet cooling towers and evaporative condensers, with the local authority, is a legal requirement.

We have registered 19 premises with a total of 114 cooling towers or evaporative condensers. Historically there has been a reduction in the number of premises having cooling towers. However, this year the number of registered cooling towers or evaporative condensers has increased from 31 to 114, mostly as a result of one business registering 80 evaporative condensers at their premises. This shift is due to the nature of some new businesses setting up on the trading estate and needing air treatment plants in order to carry out their operations.



An important part of the monitoring of cooling towers safety is the assessment of controls to prevent multiplication and possible infection with Legionella together with scrutiny of the businesses' own sampling procedures and results. In the past year we have not carried out any on-site inspections of systems due to other service demands but this remains important and detailed in our action plan. We will also take this opportunity to confirm that the registration details we have for cooling towers in the Slough are correct and up to date.

## Private water supplies

We have two private water supplies located in Slough that we monitor for compliance with the relevant legislation. The results of the monitoring are submitted to the DWI on an annual basis in January for the preceding year. The return for 2017 was completed and submitted on time. In addition, the local authority is required to carry out a risk assessment of each private water supply at least every 5 years. As such a review of the current risk assessments for both of the private water supplies in the Borough were undertaken. This involved discussions with the operators of the supplies, site visits and liaising with Thames Water and the Environment Agency to check on any local hazard information.

## Working with partners

We recognise that working with partners can increase our capacity to deliver health and safety solutions for businesses in Slough. During 2017/18 we worked to develop the following important partnerships:

- **SAG (Safety Advisory Group)**

We are members of the Slough Borough Council SAG. SAG's role is to advise the council on the suitability of applications to hold events, safely, in the borough's parks, open spaces and premises and on the borough's roads. Our role is to consider health and safety issues in planning, organising, setting up and holding events and to recommend approval or rejection of applications. We also advise SAG and applicants on the law and technical standards in relation to health and safety at events. Last year we gave advice on Vaisakhi, a football tournament, a diversity day, the launch of Kennedy Park, home slough/Streets alive, Langley Carnival, the Chippenham Green Fair, Slough Festival, the national Playday, The Canal festival, the annual bonfire, the Christmas lights turn on and a large Peace campaign. Advice given also relates to food safety.

- **Thames Valley Health and Safety Group**

We continue as advisors and partners in the continually growing Thames Valley Health and Safety Group. The Mayor of Slough is the group's Honorary President. The group was originally set up jointly by Slough Borough Council and the business health and safety community. The group is part of Safety Groups UK, is affiliated to ROSPA and provides a forum and a focus for safety professionals in the Thames Valley. Many major businesses in Slough are active members of the group as are those that are in the smaller and medium categories. The group meets monthly at different company venues in the Thames Valley region. We aim to attend meeting on a regular basis, however due to resource implications last year, in particular the manager, who usually attends being on maternity leave, this was not achieved.

## **Enforcement action**

We have a comprehensive set of measures to protect residents of Slough, people who work here as well as visitors and to promote sensible risk management. We actively work with businesses and other stakeholders to achieve our shared goals.



Any enforcement action by us will be graduated, proportionate and in accordance with the council's enforcement policy.

The team take relatively low enforcement actions, which is reflective to the small amount of health and safety work undertaken by the team, in comparison to food safety work. As a result in 2017/18 we served **3 Improvement Notices** and **1 prohibition**

**notice.** We have 6 warranted health and safety officers who are able to take enforcement action.

Finding these dangerous situations reinforces the necessity for safeguards to be in place to prevent dangerous occurrences and reduce risk of injury. They also reinforce the importance of verification checks by both employers and enforcing authorities. By maintaining a competent trained inspectorate Slough Borough Council fulfils its obligations under the Health and Safety at Work, etc., Act 1974

### **Prosecutions**

The complex investigation into a serious workplace transport accident, which occurred in January 2015 was heard in Reading Crown Court in December 2017. A young employee was crushed by a reversing vehicle, sustaining serious and long term injuries, and the investigation accounted for a significant amount of officer time and resource. The company was issued with a fine and costs totalling £25,000



The time and resource taken to investigate serious cases often outweighs the fines and penalties awarded, however such enforcement action is necessary to morally seek justice against those who put others at risk, and ensures duty holders and managers who fail to meet their responsibilities are held accountable for their actions. It also acts as a strong deterrent to other businesses, demonstrating that Slough Borough Council will not tolerate poor performing businesses who take an unfair advantage and put peoples lives at risk.

### **Striving for Excellence and Resourcing**



Providing excellent customer services is one of our key priorities. In order to achieve this we will always:

- be polite, friendly and offer a helpful service
- take the time to listen and explain things
- provide accurate information and advice, in a clear and straightforward way

- deal with enquiries immediately, but if this is not possible, tell you who we have passed your enquiry to and their contact details
- keep you informed of progress and the outcome of our investigations
- treat you fairly and with respect

## Customer Pledge

We aim to provide every customer with a quality service and will seek feedback from you to help further improve the quality of the services we provide. A manager will contact you personally if you are unhappy with the service received.

In addition, we have the following standards against which we will monitor the responsiveness of our service, namely:

Service standard	Target / response times
Respond to customer complaints and enquiries	Within 5 working days
Provide a full response	Within 10 working days

## Customer Feedback and Quality Assurance

We use feedback questionnaires following each intervention .xxxxx

No complaints regarding the service has been received, either formally or informally. The team is committed to working with local businesses and the local community ensure high levels of satisfaction. We aim to enhance the quality of life of residents within the borough. All feedback received is used to inform and improve our service.

We undertake monthly quality assurance (QA) on the whole range of our service delivery. Our QA procedures assess the work of our officers to ensure that it meets the high standard expected by the service.

We regularly attend the Berkshire and Oxfordshire Food and Health & Safety Liaison Group with the aim of sharing good practice.

## Variation from service plan

Departures from this service plan will be exceptional, capable of justification and be fully considered by the Head of Consumer Protection and Business Compliance, Ginny de Haan, before varying action is taken. Reasons for any departure will be fully documented

## Resourcing

The food and safety team comprise of 6 FTE (full time equivalent). This includes the Food and Safety Manager and a Business Support Officer. However of this, only 1 FTE is allocated to health and safety work. This is because the team focus most of their time on food safety work as this has greater statutory demand and obligations. The cost of the service during 2017/18 to meet statutory obligations and aspirations in the action will be approximately **£40,000**.

To complete all of the obligations within this plan is ambitious. Ultimately priority will be based on risk, and work will be re-prioritised as needs change. It is likely that projects and other non statutory work will not be undertaken, or projects will be downsized and exclude advisory visits. We also aim to make efficiencies and create income to offset this shortfall.

Quarterly monitoring of team performance will be undertaken, and any significant shortfalls or non compliance will be raised with Head of Service and members, along with the associated risks. Where necessary a request for additional resources will be submitted.

## Staff development

On going personal development of the work force is paramount to ensure a comprehensive service is provided to the customer, whilst ensuring continuous improvement and providing value for money.

The HSE requires that the council maintains the competency of its officers and that we have officers with sufficient skills to maintain the breadth of competency needed for Slough specifically.

The Health & Safety action plan for 2017/18, which outlines our planned work for the year is detailed in appendix A.