



Spring / Summer 2008

## Inside This Issue

- Avian Flu & Food Safety
  - Legal Cases
  - Scores on the doors update
  - Sampling
  - Food Fraud
  - Meet the FaS Team
- Advice Leaflets:**
- SFBB Update
  - Rats and your business
  - Salad Safety

## Safer Food Better Business seminar - a success

*Since January 2007 we have run 10 seminars introducing 'Safer Food Better Business' (SFBB) to 217 of our local businesses. Of those attending, 181 businesses went on to receive a one-to-one coaching session to help them complete the pack.* This was part of a wider project across Surrey that has helped more than 1,000 businesses comply with the legal requirement to have a documented food safety management system.

Speaking of the pack, one seminar attendee said, "Such an encouragement – all the hard work has been done – just need to put it into practice." Another said, "It's an extremely useful tool for staff training and will make things easier to manage."

Food and Safety Manager, Alex Lisle, attended most of the seminars and said, "I was impressed at the level of food hygiene appreciation shown by most businesses, reflecting well on the officers' efforts over the years. But this new requirement is a challenge and we've done our best to ensure as many of our caterers and retailers had the benefit of this one-off coaching package. I'm pleased it has been received so well."



Attendees working through a practical exercise at one of the seminars

Officers visiting businesses after the coaching have generally been encouraged by results but a few businesses are still dragging their feet. "If certain businesses fail to respond to the help given they leave us with no option but to enforce the law in order to safeguard the public" said Alex.

The SFBB pack was developed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) specifically for small businesses, they also funded the seminars through a special grant scheme that Reigate and Banstead Borough Council led a partnership of 10 Surrey district authorities to successfully bid for a grant. Further details on SFBB support can be found in the enclosed update.



## Is this your food business?

When was the last time you cleaned your air vents? This was a vent allowing air in to the kitchen; as you can see from the photograph it is also allowing contamination from outside, which includes bird feathers. The vent unit was above an open food preparation area.

*All extractor units must be kept clean and should be included on your cleaning schedule.*

# Facts about Avian Flu and Food Safety

On-going outbreaks of avian influenza in poultry have raised concerns about multiple sources of infection and the risk to humans. When an outbreak of avian flu occurs in wild birds or a poultry flock, DEFRA are required to put in place controls that aim to prevent the spread of the disease. These controls will also mean it is unlikely that infected poultry or eggs will enter the food chain. The Food Standards Agency has taken account of this low risk of infected products entering the food chain as it developed its advice for consumers. Which is applicable whether or not avian influenza is present in the UK. Their long standing advice is that you should always wash your hands after handling raw poultry meat and eggs to avoid contamination from any bugs and cook food thoroughly as this will kill bacteria and viruses. Poultry and eggs should always be cooked properly to avoid food poisoning.



FOOD  
STANDARDS  
AGENCY

## Legal Action

### Hygiene breach costs Hoddlesden hotel £33k

The owners of a country house hotel and restaurant have been hit with a £33,000 penalty for breach of food hygiene regulations. Blackburn magistrates imposed the fines and costs on the WEC Group Limited, which owns the Old Rosins, in Hoddlesden. The court heard a catalogue of dirty and unhygienic conditions discovered when Environmental Health Officers visited in October. WEC entered guilty pleas to nine offences and was fined £3,500 on each. It was also ordered to pay £2,288 costs.

**Are you checking  
that your staff  
have carried out  
their jobs  
properly?**

*“They spent a lot of money refurbishing the premises and brought in senior staff who they thought could do the job,” said Mr Blacklidge, defence solicitor “It now appears that those people could do the job, they just didn’t bother.”*

### Shop owner jailed over dead rat



A shopkeeper has been jailed and his wife given a suspended sentence after health inspectors found a dead rat and gnawed food in their shop. Mr Searle and his wife of Ashfield Stores and Post Office, Llanymynech, were sentenced in March 2008 having admitted placing the health of their customers and staff at risk. The couple admitted failing to keep food premises in good repair and condition, failing to ensure adequate pest control procedures were in place and failing to provide adequate facilities for good food hygiene practices - the second time they had been in court for food hygiene offences.

Mr Searle was jailed for 12 weeks and his wife was given a 12-week term, suspended for two years, and made subject to a 12-month supervision order. The couple were fined £12,000 in 2006 after admitting 26 food safety offences.

### Tesco faces huge fine of £133,400 for out of date food

A Tesco Store in Coventry, was fined £133,400 plus £8796.88 costs at Coventry Magistrates court on 5th June 2008, having pleaded guilty on the 14th May 2008 to 43 offences under the Food Labelling Regulations 1996, with 94 others taken into consideration.

Officers from Coventry Trading Standards undertook five inspections of the store (between 9th August and 20th November 2007), four of which were in response to customer complaints alleging that food was on sale past its ‘use by’ date. In total 142 items of food were found available for sale past their ‘use by date’.

## Scores on the doors update

The Food Standards Agency is seeking views on proposals for establishing a UK wide 'scores on the doors' scheme. The Agency's Board will consider the outcome of a consultation in the autumn with a view to a UK-wide scheme being launched in early 2009. The introduction of a UK-wide scheme will avoid further proliferation of different arrangements in different areas, and will help to ensure clarity for consumers and consistency for businesses. Consumer, industry and local authority stakeholders have expressed support for a UK-wide scheme for these reasons.

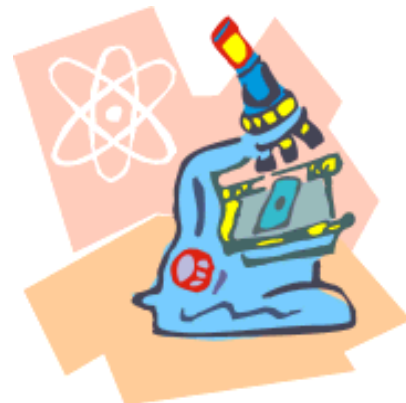
## Use of bleach

Here at the Town Hall the Environmental Health Officers have been debating the use of bleach in commercial kitchens. This debate was brought on by a consultant telling food business not to soak dishcloths in bleach. The officers have been finding that the cloths are now being soaked in washing powder and other chemicals that don't kill bacteria. Our advice is to use bleach to clean and disinfect cloths but they must be thoroughly rinsed to remove the bleach before use.

*Bleach must not be used on work surfaces or food equipment. A food safe sanitiser will need to be used instead.*

## Sampling

As some of you know the Food Safety Team take food samples for microbiological examination. From April 2007 and March 2008 we took part in several national studies which included Listeria in ready to eat foods, fresh herbs, kebab shops (salad and sauces), fresh sauces made on the premises, fresh cream, smoothies, and shelled nuts. Out of 92 samples taken for the studies 89 were found to be satisfactory and three (cream cake, chilli sauce and vinaigrette) were found to be acceptable but borderline due to high enterobacteriaceae. Enterobacteriaceae are useful indicators of hygiene and of post processing contamination of processed foods (i.e. from dirty machinery).



## Food Fraud Warning

The Food Standards Agency and police are warning food companies to be on the alert to a fraud that may have affected a number of food businesses across the country.

The fraudsters are alleged to have targeted small legitimate wholesale food businesses that supply meat, seafood and fruit and vegetables. The alleged offenders work by acquiring authentic letter heads of the legitimate company and changing the telephone, email and fax details. They then contact a genuine wholesaler/importer and place a food order with them. This business, after completing credit checks, agrees to supply the food; however, before the delivery is made, the driver is contacted and the location switched – usually to the roadside or a car park. The fraudsters then make off with the goods and attempt to sell them on elsewhere.

The police have arrested seven men from Dewsbury, Bradford, Wakefield and Brighton, on suspicion of conspiracy to defraud and money laundering. They have all been released on police bail pending further enquiries.

If you are offered cheap food it may not be safe. If you see anything that makes you concerned you should contact the Food & Safety Team on 01737 276417.

*If you are offered cheap food it may not be safe. If you see anything that makes you concerned you should contact the Food & Safety Team on 01737 6417.*

## Food Safety Team

Contact Details:

### General Enquiries

Nicky Woolley  
01737 276417

### Food Safety Team Manager

Alex Lisle  
01737 276412

### EHO - Specialist Premises and Pest Control

Pamela Howard  
01737 276419

### EHO - North Area

Russell Jenner  
01737 276415

### EHO - Central Area

Kirk Holmes  
01737 276365

### EHO - South Area

Lisa Wareham  
01737 276416

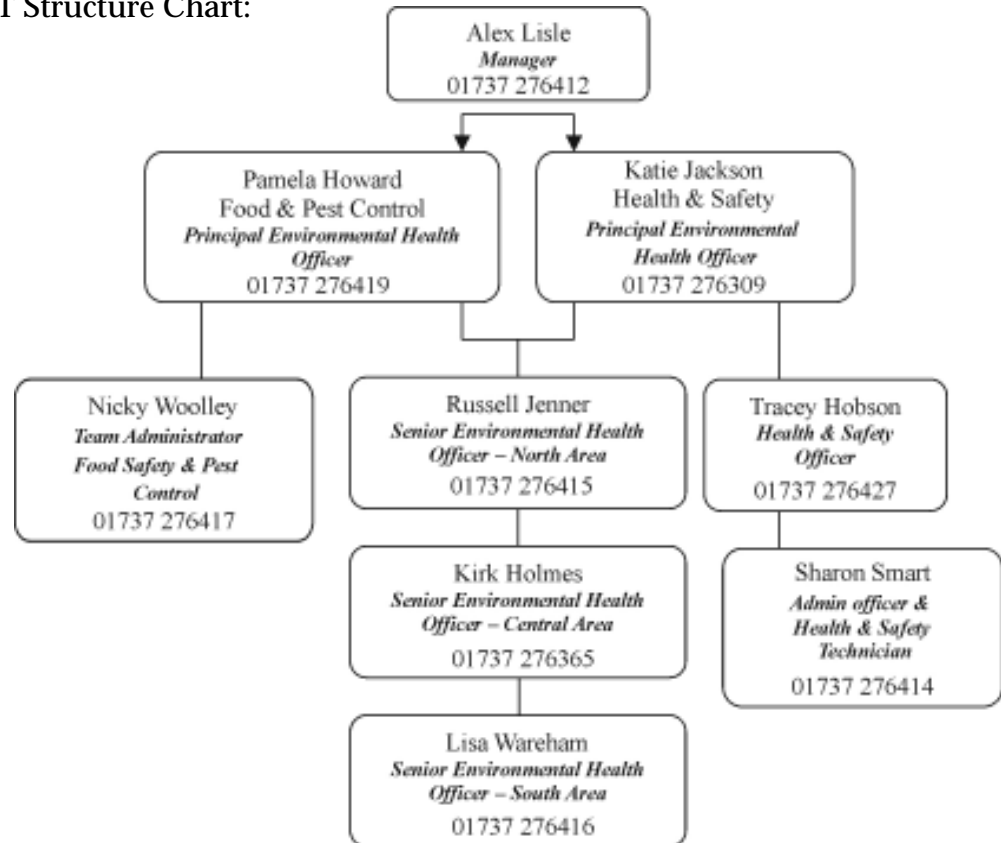
### Email:

food.safety@reigate-banstead.gov.uk

## The FaS Team is here !

The Food Safety and Health & Safety Teams have merged and will now be called the Food and Safety Team (FaST).

FaST Structure Chart:



## What does this mean for you?

Russell, Kirk, Lisa and Pam will still be doing food safety inspections but they will also be carrying out Health and Safety inspections, complaint and accident investigations around the Borough. Katie will be doing the occasional food hygiene inspections.

## What have the Food Team learnt about Health and Safety?

We have been involved in the Shattered Lives campaign finding some very slippery floors in kitchens. It is very common for businesses to rely on signs if a floor gets wet. They think a sign covers them for health and safety, this is not the case as having a wet floor can be avoided by drying the floor as much as possible with a dry mop or paper towels.

*In June 2008 a Manchester restaurant owner was successfully prosecuted by Trafford Council after a horrific accident in which a chef's foot was severely burned by hot oil. The chef was standing on greasy kitchen equipment to clean a canopy, when he slipped and plunged his foot into hot cooking oil. Restaurant owner, Tampopo Ltd, admitted four Health and Safety at Work offences, at Trafford magistrates' court. They were fined £11,500 and ordered to pay £3,084 in costs.*