

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE
ANNUAL REPORT 2008/2009



Document Management

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Environmental Health Service

Overall Ambition

The Environmental Health Service has become focused much more on protecting and improving the health of the community in recent years. The following vision and mission statement were created.

Vision

By March 2009, Rossendale will have a best value Environmental Health Service that, together with relevant partners, delivers quantifiable improvements in health and a reduction in health inequalities and achieves a high degree of customer satisfaction

Mission Statement

We will achieve the vision by providing an efficient, effective and economic service which is focussed on;

- Effectively communicating with customers and stakeholders, understanding their needs and providing high levels of satisfaction.
- Raising the levels of health of all the community and contributing to the reduction of health in-equalities.
- Providing a variety of means to access services.
- Improving health literacy so people and businesses can access information and understand its relevance to them and their health.
- Continuously raising and ensuring the quality of services and their delivery.
- Working with partners to maximise service effectiveness.
- Using the social marketing concept as a tool for effective health promotion and protection.
- Implementing a risk based enforcement policy.

The 'Golden Thread'

This identifies the links between national, regional and local priorities and strategies all the way to individual services and functions within the Environmental Health Service (EHS). The EHS is influenced by the following;

National Priorities
<p>The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is responsible for national policy on local government in England, and covers what it does, how well it works and how it is funded.</p> <p>A range of departments and agencies including Defra, Food Standards Agency, Health and Safety Executive and Environment Agency also direct national policy relating to environmental health.</p> <p>The DCLG's vision is of prosperous and cohesive communities, offering a safe, healthy and sustainable environment for all.</p>
Regional Priorities
<p>The North West public health group is based in Manchester within the Government Office (GO). Their agenda is to lead improvement in the health of people in the north west, whose health is recognised as being poor in comparison with other regions and the national average. This is true for all age groups.</p> <p>Tackling health in-equalities is a top government priority. The GO works very closely with local authorities in areas such as advice on government policy, negotiation of local area agreements, assessing financial plans, advising government on bids for beacon status and invest to save programmes and helping poorer performing authorities as identified through the CPA process</p>
Lancashire Priorities
<p>Ambition Lancashire 2005-2025, the strategic vision for the future of Lancashire, was revised in 2008. This expressed the key priority areas in terms of strategy, action and resources in order to achieve their vision and ambitions. These related to Economy, Health & Wellbeing, Education, Training and Skills, Environment and Community Safety. They will achieve their vision at district level by working through Councils and local strategic partnerships.</p> <p>The Local Area Agreement 2006-2009 included 12 stretch targets, the majority of which ended on 31 March 2009. These targets represented key Partnership priorities and also had the potential for Performance Reward Grant. The Environmental Health service are involved in targets relating to smoking cessation and carbon savings</p>
Pennine Lancashire Priorities
<p>These are being developed through a Multi Area Agreement (MAA). The key theme of the agreement is to restructure the Pennine Lancashire economy to achieve long-term sustainable growth.</p>
Rossendale Priorities
<p>Rossendale Borough Council's activity is closely linked with that of the Local Strategic Partnership. Together they agreed a vision for the Borough's future called 'Rossendale Alive'. This set out a long term strategy to improve the quality of life in Rossendale delivering 8 strategic objectives relating to community safety, health, education, housing, economy, community network and culture.</p> <p>The Council's strategic priorities are set out in the Corporate Plan 2008-2011 and</p>

reflected in the Business Directorate's Business Plan for 2008/9.

Environmental Health Strategic Framework

The following framework illustrates how services are designed and delivered to meet the needs of our customers and stakeholders.

Environmental Health Strategy 2006-08

This set out the context, customer base, service drivers, opportunities and threats, recent performance, achievements and trends, its priorities and links to stakeholder priorities and the general future aims and objectives.

The following four systems and documents will describe how our work is designed and delivered

Enforcement Policy

Together with other parts of the Council, this document and its appendices will clearly explain the basis for making decisions concerning enforcement actions

Communications Strategy

Describes how we will communicate with all our stakeholders. Includes consultation, advice and information, data protection, freedom of information, environment information, member involvement, promotions and intelligence

Staff Development Strategy

Our primary asset is staff. This describes how staff are recruited, developed, encouraged, involved and maintained to ensure good service and staff satisfaction

Quality Management System

This internal system is designed to ensure that everything we do is of consistent quality, focussed on our customers needs and continually improving

The content of our service plans is guided by long term setting strategies having been prepared along with a range of partners.

Food Law Enforcement Service Plan

Includes food hygiene and safety, food sampling, infectious diseases, private and public water supplies and food award scheme.



Healthy Workplace Strategy

Includes health and safety, occupational health, healthy workplace scheme, smoking at work, investigation of accidents



Environmental Strategy

Includes climate change, waste and natural resource, street scene, sustainable energy use, transport, air and noise pollution, water, land, countryside and wildlife.



Home and Health Strategy

Includes housing standards, energy efficiency, home safety, indoor air pollution, smoking at home.



Annual service plans are derived from these strategies. These service plans are detailed in relation to the following four settings:-

- Food and drink
- Healthy workplace
- Environmental protection
- Home and Health

Annual service plans are designed to deliver outcomes that implement the four setting strategies whilst observing the requirements of the four guidance strategies.

The year 2008/2009 is the third year needed to establish a comprehensive and competent service having re-defined its activities and established a sound information base upon which the key environmental health service strategy can be built for the service in the future. Major changes are being experienced in relation to regulation and partnership working that will fundamentally affect service design and delivery in the future. The structure of the Council's departments also changed during 2008. A new Environmental Health Strategy will be produced once enforcement priorities have been revised nationally.

This report summarises some of the key achievements during the year and outlines some of our plans for the future to enable us to deliver the vision described above. The structure of this report is set out in relation to the strategic framework identified above.

- A. Achievements in relation to the four settings and what our plans are for the current year.
- B. The progress we have made in relation to the four supporting systems.

Food & Drink Setting

There are around 700 food premises in Rossendale for which EHS has enforcement responsibility. Enforcement activity includes;

- A programme of risk-rated inspections of food premises
- Investigation of requests for service in relation to food, food premises, practices and personnel.
- Administration of a food hazard warning system
- Food hygiene education courses
- Food related promotions
- Provision of advice and information to consumers and businesses
- Food award scheme
- Food, milk and water sampling
- Investigation of notification of cases and outbreaks of infectious diseases
- Registration of food businesses
- Sampling of private water supplies

- Monitoring and reporting on quality and sufficiency of public water supplies.

During 2008/9, we:

- Worked with partners in the Rossendale Food Forum
- Launched the Recipe4Health Award Scheme working with Lancashire County Council Trading Standards Service
- Implemented an initiative to help reduce salt usage in fish and chip takeaways
- Issued advice leaflets on precautions to take to prevent Listeria infection associated with sliced cooked meats
- Participated in Food Safety Week with a presentation to Haslingden Community Link mothers and toddlers group
- Identified a loophole in a large supermarket chain's food safety procedures which was promptly remedied
- Reviewed all food premises to identify their degree of non-compliance with legislation and prepared and implemented a plan to concentrate on those premises to raise their standards
- Successfully bid jointly with other Lancashire Authorities for Food Standards Agency funding to provide additional training and support in the businesses with the worst compliance rate
- Published the 4th edition of the Food Service Newsletter
- Published new vacuum packing guidance for businesses
- Undertook an investigation into suspected illegal slaughter activity having been alerted by United Utilities. The original source of the suspected activity was not identified.
- Rossendale Food Forum was nominated for a NHS Excellence in Practice Award and received the runner up award.
- Investigated suspected food poisoning outbreak in an Aged Persons Home - subsequently found to be a virus infection
- During the year devoted considerable time and effort preparing for the new Private Water Supply Regulations. We are still waiting.

Service Plan Items	2007/8	2008/9
Proactive Services carried out:		
▪ Food Hygiene Inspection	310	366
▪ Food Samples Obtained	149	167
▪ Private Water Samples Taken	11	14
Reactive Services carried out:		
▪ Investigated request for service about food	116	84
▪ Investigated infectious diseases	75	78

During 2009/10 we will:

- Undertake a promotion concerning food hygiene for the over 60s and listeriosis
- Implement the Private Water Supply legislation
- Review the Food Hygiene service in the light of the new Food Standards Agency Framework agreement.

- Review and revise the food enforcement processes and procedures.

Healthy Workplace Setting

There are around 1,200 workplaces in Rossendale for which we have health and safety enforcement responsibility. Enforcement activity includes;

- Inspection of premises where Rossendale BC is the enforcing authority such as offices, shops and warehouses.
- Inspection and licensing of animal welfare premises
- Investigation of request for service in relation to working conditions and animal welfare
- Investigation of reports from competent persons about lifting equipment, pressure vessels etc
- Health and safety education courses
- Health and safety promotions
- Provision of advice and information to employers and employees.
- Smokefree Rossendale
- Investigation of notifications of injuries and dangerous occurrences.

During 2008/9 we:

- Continued to promote the Healthy Workplace Scheme with initiatives operating at 4 local employers
- Continued to work on the investigation of the fatality that occurred in 07/08, preparing for and attending the Coroner's inquest and giving further consideration to legal action.
- Investigated an injury that occurred at a local office
- Continued to develop a network of agencies involved in implementing healthy workplace initiatives
- Reviewed all quality procedures and HSE guidance and requirements
- Developed and implemented a project aimed at minimising violence at work, especially on retail premises, working with the Police.
- Developed and implemented two Passport to Work training courses working with Connexions and Burnley College.
- Held a Healthy Workplace promotion at Carr's Industrial Estate working with East Lancs PCT.
- Implemented targeted action that raised awareness of hazards associated with slips, trips and falls and falls from height as part of a regional initiative working with the HSE.
- Produced the Health & Safety Enforcement Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet in December 2008.
- Developed a process for updating property records in association with Capita.
- Developed joint action plan with other Pennine Lancashire Authorities to encourage an environment free from tobacco smoke.

Service Plan Items	2007/8	2008/9
Proactive Services carried out:		
▪ Inspection of H&S Premises/Activities	145	135
▪ H&S Premises Subjected to Alternative Enforcement	214	197

Reactive services carried out:

- | | | |
|--|----|-----|
| ▪ Investigation of service requests re health & safety | 30 | 285 |
| ▪ Investigation of accidents | 7 | 3 |

During 2009/10 we will:

- Undertake a promotion in relation to safety of aerial installers who will be more active as a consequence of the digital roll out
- Carry out a joint promotion on precautions against violence in vulnerable premises in the retail sector
- Continue to promote the Passport to Work scheme working with Lancashire's Young People's Service
- Improve the way we gather information about properties for which we have an enforcement responsibility
- Improve the way we ensure staff competence in enforcement
- Implement new service and priority planning guidance
- Investigate the potential for mobile working initiatives.

Environmental Setting

This function covers a range of environmental issues that affect people's health. Included in this function are the control of 25 permitted processes, air quality management, the maintenance of land drainage and investigation and the remedy of causes of statutory nuisance. Environmental issues can affect all residents and businesses and also visitors to Rossendale.

Risk based activity include:

- Inspections of permitted installations
- Investigation of request for service in relation to environmental nuisance e.g. noise, smoke, dust, odour, land contamination and land drainage
- Pollution related promotions
- Provision of advice and information to businesses
- Air quality monitoring
- Noise monitoring in relation to commercial, residential and industrial sources.
- Enforcement in relation to privately owned sewers and drains.

During 2008/9 we:

- Issued press release as part of Noise Action Week in relation to nuisance caused by barking dogs
- Restarted the Out of Hours noise monitoring service working with other Pennine Lancashire Authorities
- Successfully recruited a specialist officer to deal primarily with drainage requests for service re private sewers and drains
- Awarded the contract for the investigation of a potentially contaminated land site in Whitworth using a private sector contractor and Defra funding.

- Produced guidance note on extraction systems for planning applicants
- Implemented a warrant to disconnect a house alarm in default of the owner in order to prevent an ongoing noise nuisance.
- Issued a press release about 'what to burn in a smoke control area'
- Devoted considerable time and effort on collecting evidence that a suspected private sewer was in fact a public sewer. This was accepted by UU thereby saving residents considerable expenditure in effecting repairs.
- Successfully objected to the award of a 3 a.m. pub licence for 7 days a week, the applicant withdrawing the application after the Licensing Committee hearing.
- Developed a "Green Team" of Departmental representatives to start the implementation of the Acorn Environmental Management System.
- Worked with Lancashire Climate Change Group to develop a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for Lancashire and for Rossendale.
- Undertook a survey of the highest rated areas of potentially contaminated land to update our records and determine their current use and thereby confirm their risk status.
- Undertook emergency repairs to a private sewer to prevent contamination of the River Irwell
- Published data for air quality monitoring activity on the Council's website for public information.
- Developed an Environmental Strategy which was approved by Cabinet on 18th February 2009.
- Developed an Air Quality Strategy which was approved by Cabinet on 18th March 2009.
- Developed and published a Biodiversity Action Plan and Geodiversity Action Plan, both of which were approved by Cabinet on 18th March 2009.
- Hosted a business Energy Efficiency Seminar at St Mary's Chambers.
- Successfully prosecuted a landowner for failure to comply with an enforcement notice under the Public Health Act 1936 for failure to act to prevent flooding
- Undertook considerable and protracted negotiations on behalf of householders who are affected by flooding from a severed culvert
- Worked with others to prepare a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Produced a leaflet to inform businesses of flooding risks and the need for business continuity arrangements.
- Developed new software to enable all land drainage assets to be modelled and viewed electronically.
- Successfully applied for and received confirmation that Swinnel Brook and its tributaries would be "enmained" which means that the Environment Agency, with its significantly greater resources, would be responsible for flood protection and maintenance.
- Started work in response to the Pitt Review of flooding events elsewhere in 2007.
- Publicised offer of grants by Defra for property-level flood protection schemes. 9 applications were received and assessed. 2 expressions of interest were submitted to Defra.

- Undertook protracted negotiations to remedy an inadequately sized culvert to avoid risks of flash flooding.

Service Plan items:	2007/8	2008/9
▪ Number of inspections of Permitted Processes	24	22
▪ Investigated requests for service about noise	248	290
▪ Investigated request for service about other nuisance	192	131
▪ Responded to planning applications	112	114
▪ Responded to licensing applications	18	14
▪ Respond to planning conditions re contaminated land	30	17
▪ Land drainage sites - enforcement and advice	81	64

During 2009/10 we will:

- Produce an air quality and screening assessment
- Manage the delivery of the project to investigate a potentially contaminated land site in Whitworth
- Review services in relation to noise, nuisance, drainage and air quality.
- Improve the working arrangements with Planning and Licensing services.
- Update procedures and policy in relation to Contaminated Land.

Home and Health Setting

The private housing sector in Rossendale, both rented and owner-occupied, comprises about 80% of the entire housing stock or about 20,000 dwellings. The need for intervention to improve private sector housing is rapidly growing

Activity includes:

- Inspection of residential premises following requests in relation to housing defects, the housing bond scheme and for immigration purposes
- Making arrangements for services in relation to public burials
- Investigation of requests for service in relation to filthy and verminous premises and vacant premises
- Monitoring health related data and information concerning the residential population
- Enforcement of legislation in relation to park homes
- Respond to request for service in relation to blocked and defective private drains and sewers

During 2008/9 we:

- Worked with Strategic Housing to develop a Rossendale domestic energy efficiency project using external funding
- Issued press release on new grant available to owner occupiers over 60 and on benefits for cost of work to upgrade electrical systems

- Obtained a warrant to enter vacant premises to disconnect the mains water supply as it was leaking and wasting water.
- Promotion undertaken to prevent fat and grease being discharged to sewers
- Obtained a warrant to enter property and disconnect an internal domestic alarm in default of the owner thereby remedying a noise nuisance.
- Considerably expanded services being delivered in relation to private sector housing and serving formal enforcement notices under Sections 11 and 12 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Issued a press release to remind householders of the effect of the smoke control legislation and its implications for domestic properties.
- Agreed to charge landlords for the service on formal notices where they have disregarded informal approaches for improvement in privately rented housing.
- Undertook a significant promotion to raise awareness amongst tenants and landlords of the requirement for gas safety certificates in privately rented housing.
- Arranged for the funeral of a resident with no next of kin.

Reactive Services carried out:	2007/8	2008/9
▪ Investigated service request re housing conditions	30	187
▪ Investigated requests for services about drainage	158	188

During 2009/10 we will:

- Raise awareness of domestic noise issues during Noise Action Week
- Review housing standards services
- Investigate the issue of the revised Radon map and investigate the implications for householders.
- Participate in the Landlords' Forum
- Accommodate student EHOs from other Authorities to provide some of their practical training.

Supporting Activities

Enforcement Policy

All council regulatory services need to comply with the principles of the Regulator's Compliance Code which was published in 2007. In addition, the Crown Prosecution Service's code of practice applies to enforcement action, as does the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. The decision was therefore taken to produce one comprehensive enforcement policy to cover all enforcement activity. This would be supported by appendices to explain the policy in relation to the enforcement of individual pieces of legislation. In this way, people and organisations could easily see how decisions are made

During 2008/9 we:

- led the production of the Corporate Enforcement Policy and Strategy covering all Rossendale Borough Council's regulatory services.

- Arranged for the Council to implement a Self Assessment and Peer Review process with LACORS which covers all regulatory services.

During 2009/10 we will;

- Co-ordinate the development of service specific appendices to the Enforcement Policy
- Co-ordinate the implementation of the Enforcement Strategy implementation plan
- Develop and implement training for managers on the Freedom of Information Act and Environment Information Regulations.
- Undertake the Self Assessment and Peer Review process.

Communications

Communications with stakeholders is vital to ensure that the service identifies and meets the needs of its customers and works closely with others to share service delivery by enhancing each other's contributions. This activity includes the following;

- Consulting customers to discover their perception of service delivery and also how services could be improved.
- Engaging with partners in other agencies and organisations that are also involved in services relating to the scope of the EHS, including amongst others those involved in the local strategic partnership and the local area agreement
- Developing means for the provision of advice and information to individuals and organisations both proactively and reactively
- Promoting the activities of the EHS as a career and to encourage undertaking of the contribution that the EHS can make
- Collection and analysis of information about the community, and its constituent parts to enable services to be better designed and targeted in future
- Raising the profile of the EHS in order that residents and businesses become aware of our services and utilise them as needed.

During 2008/9 we;

- Implemented a business satisfaction survey process in order to collect, monitor and learn from feedback about performance
- Developed a proposal for a corporate newsletter to improve communication with businesses
- Led the implementation of the LifeCheck initiative with funding from the Department of Health and working with other agencies and Children's Centres.

During 2009/10 we will;

- Develop improved service information to improve access to services
- Implement a communication plan to improve knowledge of action that will be taken in relation to emergencies.

Staff Development

The primary assets of the service are its staff. The quality of service design and delivery is dependent on the competence and capacity of the staff of

the service and their ability to keep up to date with current priorities and initiatives

During 2008/9 staff within the Environmental Health Service:

- Attended seminars on energy efficiency and climate change, obesity action, Food Standards Agency update, Regional HSE update, Health Protection Agency stakeholders meeting, NI 188 workshop on climate change adaptation, health & safety management, Air Quality, Primary Authority scheme and health inequalities.
- Achieved qualifications in RIPH Certificate in Nutrition and Health, HHSRS Housing Inspection.
- Attended training courses on managing performance, social marketing, legionella, fire guidance, JADU (website authorship), advanced HACCP training for enforcement officers, investigation and legal preparation course, HPA carbon monoxide awareness, customers matter, business improvement techniques, disability awareness, intermediate MS Outlook, facilitating focus groups, report writing, and Update and Screening Assessment (air quality).
- Participated in working groups on the subject of Getting to Know You, Team Rossendale, retail violence project, aerial erecting, flexible warrant project, empty property task group, Pennine out of hours noise service.
- All staff participated in the job evaluation exercise.
- Undertook a review of service staffing in order to determine whether resources, capacity and competences can meet service needs. A further slight restructuring was justified and temporary posts created using temporary funds.

During 2009/10 we will;

- Develop and implement improved working relationships with other Council departments and raise awareness of services available.
- Complete the production of a staff competency system
- Revise the structure of the service to improve flexibility

Quality Management System

The services we provide need to be designed and delivered in such a way that they meet the needs of the customer and the requirements of the internal management system. The level of quality is compared with external organisations and requirements and is constantly improved while maintaining value for money and achieving our health objectives.

During 2008/9 we:

- Reduced computer software licences to release funds to pay for software development consultancy to improve the effectiveness and efficiency in the use of the software.
- Implemented contractual arrangements for services relating to assisted funerals and the regulation of permitted processes.

During 2009/10 we will;

- Revise the quality management system in line with ISO 9004:2009.

Performance Indicators

The Environmental Health Service is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the following indicators. In addition, the Environmental Health Manager is responsible, as a member of the corporate management team, for monitoring the performance of a range of other indicators relating to health and wellbeing and the environment. Those shown below are those for which the Environmental Health Service is responsible for delivering activity or for co-ordinating activity on behalf of the Council.

National Indicators

BVPI	Description	2008/9 target	2008/09 outturn	2009/10 target	2010/11 target
182	Business satisfaction	n/a	84%	90%	90%
184	Food business compliance	n/a	85.3%	96%	97%
185	CO2 reduction from Council activities	n/a	Baseline set	Not set yet	Not set yet
186	Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions	New	2007- 8.2 tonnes	Not set yet	Not set yet
188	Adaptation to climate change	n/a	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
189	Flood management	n/a	100%	100%	100%
194	Air quality - reduction in NOx and PM10	n/a	Baseline set	Not set yet	Not set yet

Local Indicators

BVPI	Description	2008/9 target	2008/09 outturn	2009/10 target	2010/11 target
216b	Information about Contaminated Land	3	3	1	1
217	Pollution Control Improvements	90%	92.3%	90%	90%

Other formats available on request.

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