

SAMPLING POLICY STATEMENT FOR TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL 2019 - 2020

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council complies with all relevant UK and EU legislation to ensure food within the district is appropriately sampled for microbiological safety. This Council views food sampling as an important aspect of their duty to protect public health and comply with our enforcement responsibilities relating to food law. Each year a food sampling policy and programme will be produced and published to 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 policy, programme and following a set documented procedure. The procedure is presently based on the Kent Food Sampling protocol which has been updated to reflect guidance from Public Health England and relevant legislation and the Food Law Code of Practice. This only covers food sampled for examination for microbiological contamination.

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council have appointed Senior Microbiologists from the Food, Water and Environmental Microbiology London (Collindale) Laboratory as Food Examiners.

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council aims to participate in all sampling programmes organised nationally through the Food Standards Agency and Public Health England. As agreed through Kent Environmental Manager's Group all programmes organised through Kent Food Technical group will be participated in.

Locally, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council will have regard to sampling from food businesses and processors, particularly those approved premises for the production or processing of products of animal origin. The Council will also sample from premises for which they act as home or originating authority and those which produce and distribute foods outside the area. Food sampling and swabbing of food premises may be included as part of food hygiene inspections to help assess hygiene standards and processes. Food sampling will also be used as an important tool, when appropriate, in the investigation of food complaints and food poisoning incidents. Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council devotes officer time and sampling budget to support local businesses and ensure that food is safe for consumers.

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