

Port Health & Public Protection Enforcement Activity Period 1 (April - July) 2020-21

Food Safety	2019-2020 Annual Total	Period 1 2020-21
Programmed inspections	<u>Food Hygiene:</u> 929 <u>Food Standards:</u> 337	<u>Food Hygiene:</u> 3 <u>Food Standards:</u> 4
Hygiene Emergency Closures	1	0
Voluntary closures	1	0
Complaints & service requests received	750	166
Notices served	3	0
Prosecutions	0	0

Health & Safety	2019-20 Annual Total	Period 1 2020-21
Programmed Cooling Tower inspections	63	0
Other H&S Inspections	0	0
H&S Project visits	0	0
Accident and dangerous occurrences notifications	110	14
Complaints & service requests received	519	216
Notices	5	0
Prosecutions	0	0

Period 1 – Commercial Team Highlights (Food Safety and Health & Safety)

During Period One, the team has undertaken a phased approach to the delivery of its work which has fundamentally changed during the pandemic with environmental health at the forefront of much of the new regulations for the control of the COVID-19 virus. Throughout Period One, the team has continued to support City businesses to recover by providing advice on a wide range of Food Safety, Health & Safety, Pest Control and general trading matters, linking up with our colleagues in Trading Standards, Licensing and Pollution Control.

Food Safety

- Between 1-17 April, all planned food hygiene and food standards inspections were stopped on the direction of the FSA and priority given to COVID-19 and other urgent reactive work.
- However, the team was asked to undertake remote surveillance interventions with higher-risk establishments where an inspection was due/overdue if they were:
 - food hygiene Category A and B (prescribed inspection frequency of 6 and 12 months respectively);
 - food standards Category A (prescribed inspection frequency of 12 months);
 - establishments still trading where revisits were due;
 - new businesses where their registration information raised concerns about a potential public health risk;
 - businesses notifying a significant change in activities – e.g. starting take away service and only to visit if it was felt there was a serious risk to public health & safety.

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- Between 18 April-17 July, most planned food hygiene and food standards interventions were further deferred by the FSA except if as above, though some re-rating visits, and a small number of Food Hygiene inspections, were carried out as required.
- Priority was then given to recovery and re-opening work, particularly COVID-Secure work immediately prior to pubs, bars and restaurants re-opening on 4 July.
- Officers made contact with all City hotels to verify their status following lockdown as, initially, hotels were required to close (with exceptions). When allowed to re-open, officers contacted them to check on their arrangements for clients and staff, including eating and social distancing measures.
- Primary Authority advice was given to a number of our partners, particularly in latter part of the period when many were focussing on re-opening.
- A team member has been providing Food Safety advice at Billingsgate Market on a twice weekly basis and continues to do so.
- The team provided panel members on a number of national and regional food safety webinars for professionals and other interested parties.
- Most recently, the team contributed to the development of Standard Operational Protocols (SOPs) to manage outbreaks and incidents in specific scenarios and locations, in conjunction with the City & Hackney Local Test, Track and Trace Team.

Health & Safety and Pest Control

- As a priority during lockdown, all premises with cooling tower(s) in the City were engaged remotely to check how the risk of *Legionella spp* bacteria was being managed when some premises were effectively being mothballed.
- Primary Authority advice was given to a number of our partners, particularly during the latter part of the period when many were focussing on re-opening.
- Officers contributed to the formulation of national guidance and advice on the control of *Legionella spp* bacteria.
- The team provided panel members on a number of national and regional health & safety webinars for professionals and other interested parties.
- With a chairing role on existing regional groups, the team has led and contributed to the co-ordination of the London enforcement response to COVID-19 where health & safety legislation has been the vehicle for such work.
- Officers continued to investigate serious accidents and incidents that occurred within the City of London, including health & safety matters relating to the stabbing incident at Fishmongers' Hall in late November 2019; a scalding incident to a child at the YHA immediately prior to lockdown; and the death of a member of the public at Exchange House in August 2019.
- Officers provided pest control advice to Open Spaces' City Gardens Team including emergency treatment in a number of City public locations in order to reduce rat populations that had increased during lockdown.

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Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) – profile of food businesses in the City

		Hygiene Rating						Total no. of food businesses in the City included in the FHRS
		5	4	3	2	1	0	
Number (%) of food businesses	29 July 2016	1163 (66%)	306 (17%)	132 (8%)	60 (3%)	49 (3%)	13 (1%)	1765 (incl. 42 awaiting inspection)
	30 November 2016	1204 (69%)	306 (17%)	117 (7%)	64 (4%)	43 (2%)	6 ($<1\%$)	1740 (incl. 46 awaiting inspection)
	31 March 2017	1244 (70%)	277 (16%)	101 (6%)	73 (4%)	36 (2%)	7 ($<1\%$)	1774 (incl. 36 awaiting inspection)
	31 July 2017	1256 (71%)	270 (15%)	102 (6%)	68 (4%)	33 (2%)	6 ($<1\%$)	1768 (incl. 33 awaiting inspection)
	30 November 2017	1258 (71%)	272 (15%)	101 (6%)	55 (3%)	31 (2%)	6 ($<1\%$)	1767 (incl. 44 awaiting inspection)
	29 March 2018	1284 (73%)	250 (14%)	93 (5%)	56 (3%)	25 (1%)	5 ($<1\%$)	1757 (incl. 44 awaiting inspection)
	31 July 2018	1286 (72%)	270 (15%)	89 (5%)	49 (3%)	24 (1%)	5 ($<1\%$)	1777 (incl. 54 awaiting inspection)
	30 November 2018	1274 (73%)	261 (15%)	86 (5%)	38 (2%)	26 (1%)	4 ($<1\%$)	1752 (incl. 63 awaiting inspection)
	29 March 2019	1290 (75%)	245 (14%)	76 (4%)	42 (2%)	29 (2%)	2 ($<1\%$)	1730 (incl. 42 awaiting inspection)
	31 July 2019	1310 (75%)	236 (14%)	73 (4%)	48 (3%)	24 (1%)	2 ($<1\%$)	1747 (incl. 54 awaiting inspection)
	29 November 2019	1335 (77%)	232 (13%)	73 (4%)	49 (3%)	20 (1%)	2 ($<1\%$)	1743 (incl. 32 awaiting inspection)
	31 March 2020	1372 (78%)	207 (12%)	71 (4%)	53 (3%)	24 (1%)	2 ($<1\%$)	1751 (incl. 22 awaiting inspection)
	31 July 2020	1352 (78%)	214 (12%)	73 (4%)	48 (3%)	27 (2%)	3 ($<1\%$)	1743* (incl. 26 awaiting inspection)

***N.B.** In addition to the 1,743 businesses included in these statistics, there are currently a further 53 food businesses in the City of London which are exempt from the FHRS. They are inspected by Environmental Health Officers but are not given a food hygiene rating. These are businesses that are low-risk to public health, for example, shops selling pre-wrapped goods that do not require refrigeration.

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'0' rated food businesses in the City

These businesses were rated '0' on 31 July 2020 (the last working day of the period); food businesses will have taken some action to improve and some have been since been re-inspected - further information is given in the 'Details' column.

Premises	Details
City Izakaya Retail Unit 46 Moorgate	The Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Order remains in force and this premises has remained closed during lockdown; we have noted some (building) activity within the premises but have not been provided with any confirmation when this premises might re-open.
Krua by Nathong 56 Carter Lane	This premises closed following lockdown and remains closed. Prior to lockdown, improvements in the premises had been made and sustained.
The Folly 41 Gracechurch Street	This business voluntarily closed prior to lockdown following problems found at the inspection. It has since reopened and is much improved.

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Trading Standards	2019-20 Annual Total	Period 1 2020-21
Inspections and visits	112	5
Complaints & service requests received	2,176	833
Acting as a responsible authority for Licensing Applications	96	9
Prosecutions	2	0

Period 1 – Trading Standards Team Highlights

- With the onset of COVID-19 and subsequent lockdown in March, new legislation was introduced by Government to close businesses which were opening illegally. Local Authorities were given responsibility for enforcing this legislation and the necessary authorisations were provided to Trading Standards Officers and Environmental Health Officers. The impact of lockdown meant that commuters no longer came into the City and most business premises closed down due to there being no customers. Trading Standards kept in close contact with CoL Police to deal with any intelligence that businesses may be opening illegally. A relatively small number of businesses were advised about the closure regulations and there were no breaches requiring prohibition notices to be issued or prosecutions to be commenced. The situation in the City was very different from the rest of London: colleagues in many other Boroughs had a very different experience with businesses seeking to remain open illegally.
- One of the early issues highlighted by COVID-19 across the UK was price gouging and the marketing of PPE that was unsafe. This formed part of a COVID-19 campaign that was run by London Trading Standards. More details are available at: <http://www.londontradingstandards.org.uk/campaigns/london-trading-standards-week-2020/>
- Another consequence of COVID-19 has been the chaos caused to consumers who had bookings for holidays, concerts and other special events. The holiday sector, in particular, has failed to comply with legislation regarding refunds in the event of cancellations and the City of London has been feeding examples to the Competition and Markets Authority who requested intelligence on these matters.
- Complaint levels into Trading Standards have risen by 15% compared with the same time last year. This is probably due to a variety of factors with the key ones being, firstly, consumers working at home having more time to actually make a complaint and, secondly, there being more detriment caused through COVID-19 affecting consumer transactions.
- Operation Broadway has continued to meet virtually through lockdown. There appears to be even more investment fraud taking place and there is a pandemic of what are called 'lead generators' that pass on consumer details to fraudulent companies. Trading Standards continue to deal with victims and give advice to try to recover losses. In probably the best case we have dealt with, Trading Standards advice led directly to one victim recovering £100,000 from his bank. He was very grateful for the help.

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Pollution	2019-20 Annual Total	Period 1 2020-2021			
		Total	% Noise complaints resolved	Notices served	Prosecutions
Complaint investigations, noise	624	250	92.9%	0	0
Complaint investigations, other	82	44	N/A	N/A	0
Licensing, Planning and Construction Works applications assessed	1,077	104	N/A	N/A	N/A
No. of variations (to construction working hours) notices issued	1,358	245	N/A	4 COPA S61*	N/A

*COPA: Control of Pollution Act 1974. S61: Prior consent for work on construction sites.

Period 1 – Pollution Team Highlights

- A further bid to the TFL Lane Rental Board for a Streetworks and Liaison Officer for two years has been approved and will commence in September 2020. This bid will further enhance the controls on TfL street works including reducing environmental impact; better communications to the City of London Corporation and residents; and expanding the scheme to other London local authorities.
- The City's infrastructure projects are progressing well with the team working hard to ensure the environmental impacts of Crossrail, Thames Tideway Tunnel and Bank Station Capacity Upgrade are being continuously monitored and managed by the numerous contractors. All sites are working again following the initial closure of the sites in response to COVID-19.
- The Construction Monitoring Levy, outlined in the Code of Construction Practice, has seen payments made and enhanced monitoring is now in place for these sites.
- 'Contact us' & 'construction hours variation' forms have now gone live using Firmstep technology. Work continues to optimise the new systems.

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Period 1 – Air Quality Team Highlights

During Period One, the Team has:

- Organised and delivered a national best practice webinar on dealing with the local air quality impact of generators.
- Delivered an online best practice webinar for city businesses as part of the CityAir business engagement programme.
- Continued to measure air pollution in the City during the COVID-19 lockdown.
- Developed air quality action plans for all City nurseries.
- Responded to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee inquiry into air pollution.
- Commenced a Clean Air Villages project in the area covering Monument to Houndsditch with Cross River Partnership.
- Submitted the statutory annual air quality status report to the GLA and government.
- Commenced a London wide advertising campaign for dealing with unnecessary engine idling.

Period 1 - Unlicensed Street Trading update

As Members are aware, Section 101 agreements to enable City officers to tackle illegal street traders on the City's Bridges and environs are in place with the London Boroughs of Tower Hamlet and Southwark and officers have been actively engaged in enforcement.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in no illegal trading on or near City Bridges from April to July. Officers continued to process prosecution cases, although the progress through the Magistrates Courts has been subject to delay.

A new partnership has been formed with the National Food Crime Unit which is assisting the City of London with collating intelligence on illegal street traders across London. The intelligence shared is being analysed with a view to a more co-ordinated and robust approach targeting the controlling minds.

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Animal Health & Welfare	2019-20 Annual total	Period 1 2020-2021			
		Total	Warning letters	Notices served	Prosecutions
Heathrow Animal Reception Centre					
Throughput of animals (no. of consignments)	16,344	2,551	2	0	0
Animal Health					
Inspections carried out	437	28	0	0	0

Period 1 – Animal Health Team Highlights

- The COVID-19 lockdown left the Animal Health Team unable to carry out targeted licence inspections as everyone adapted to working remotely.
- Applications to carry out activities such as breeding or home boarding of dogs continued to be received from premises that wanted to be ready to operate when COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. Team members began processing these applications remotely, carrying out documentary checks electronically and holding virtual meetings with applicants. As lockdown measures were eased, the Animal Health Inspectors began to carry out onsite visits to verify the applications.
- Senior Animal Health Inspectors worked with Defra and NGO's to produce updated COVID-19 guidance for animal related businesses during the lockdown period, including how to operate in a safe way. They also provided support and guidance to local authority officers across England.
- The Animal Health Inspectors were part of an ACTSO-led team of four officers who provided guidance and a risk register for local authorities throughout England and Wales on the COVID-19 regulations and their impact on licensed and unlicensed animal premises and farms (ranging from home boarders of dogs to the largest zoos).
- The Senior Animal Health Inspectors, who deliver a City and Guild level 3 qualification to Animal Health Officers across England, have adapted the course content to be delivered remotely. Two cohorts of students have now attended the training remotely and their feedback has been very positive. The course delivery includes the use of interactive software to give the students a varied and encompassing learning environment in the virtual world.
- The Animal Health Inspectors have responded to a number of complaints during the lockdown period. In April, they attended a domestic premises with officers from the Metropolitan Police and Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames which resulted in 54 poultry, 4 pigs and 3 dogs being removed under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. These animals were found in very poor conditions living among the carcasses of a further 4 pigs. The investigation is ongoing
- One of the consequences of the COVID-19 lockdown is the rise in the demand for puppies. Officers have responded to a number of reports of illegally imported puppies. These puppies have been imported from the Republic of Ireland and across Eastern Europe and all have been placed in Government approved quarantine kennels while investigations continue. This has been very challenging for the Animal Health Team within the environment of a pandemic.
- As the government eased lockdown in July 2020. Officers from the Animal Health team have now started routine targeted inspections for operators of animal business for local authorities with which the City of London has contracts

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Period 1 – Heathrow Animal Reception Centre (HARC) Highlights

- After a quiet April, activity slowly increased, with June back to normal trade. The workload has been exacerbated by the revised schedules of the airlines and more late flights.
- Although zoo moves were curtailed during period one, there were some hyenas, binturong (also known as a bearcat) and civets imported.
- The biggest surprise has been the number of 'rescue' dogs and cats being imported. It seems whilst people have been furloughed, they have thought it a good idea to get a dog or cat. Demand seems to have outstripped supply.

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Port Health	2019-20 Annual total	Period 1 2020-2021			
		Total	Cautions	Notices served	Prosecutions
Products of Animal Origin Consignments – document checks	8,435	2,498	0	15	0
Products of Animal Origin Consignments – physical checks	5,968	1,656	0	6	0
Number of samples taken	892	227	N/A	208	N/A
Imported food Not of Animal Origin -document checks	22,499	8,514	0	105	0
Imported food Not of Animal Origin - physical checks	6,818	541	0	N/A	0
Number of samples taken	753	383	0	N/A	N/A
Food Safety inspections and revisits	51	2	0	0	None
Ship Sanitation Inspections and Routine Boarding of Vessels	150	4	N/A	0	N/A

Period 1 – Port Health Highlights

- The COVID-19 outbreak has impacted the Port Health Service's ability to conduct planned physical inspections of feed and food. To ensure the continuation of border controls, and to minimise spread of the infection, teams were split into strict cohorts with only one team covering the urgent inspections on a rotating weekly basis. Joint inspections with partner control bodies, such as Defra and APHA, were also suspended during the first 4 months of the outbreak.
- During the COVID-19 outbreak, Port Health has been unable to conduct Ship Sanitation Inspections or routine boarding of vessels. The World Health Organisation permitted the use of rolling extensions to existing certificates and Port Health has issued 64 of these extensions. Four Ship Sanitation inspections were completed: two where the crew voluntarily left the vessel while the check was completed (both tugs); and two cruise ships moored at Tilbury.
- Food Safety Inspections were suspended during the outbreak. The inspections which were completed were performed under specific risk assessment and were emergency cases approved by a senior manager.