



Food, Health and Safety Work Plan 2024/2025

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Council is required to produce and approve a work plan that is in line with both the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement, and the Statement of Commitment agreed nationally between Local Authority Representatives and the Health and Safety Executive (appendix A). It covers all work undertaken within the Housing and Environmental Enforcement work area relating to Food and Health and Safety.
- 1.2. The purpose of the work plan is to set out how the Council delivers its official controls and fulfils its duties under food, health and safety, public health and drinking water legislation.
- 1.3. The Service has now returned to a normal operating model following the Covid-19 Pandemic and is now working back in line with the Food Standards Agency Routine Planned Inspection Programme, which commenced in April 2022 and is ongoing. Specifically, local authorities should be planning to:
 - Carry out due interventions for establishments that are back in the routine programme of interventions in accordance with the frequencies set out in the Food Law Code of Practice (the Code). This is in line with the expectation in the Recovery Plan that establishments should revert to Code frequencies once subject to an intervention as part of the Plan.
 - Continue to exercise a risk-based approach to the requirements set out in the Code based on available resource. Please note, services should be resourced to ensure they can meet the requirements of the Code.
- 1.4. The Food and Health & Safety Team will continue to provide the Council's response to any future coronavirus pandemic, should it return. Providing advice, education and ultimately, enforcement, to both businesses and residents. The reduction of 1 FTE temporary resources at the end of June 2023, coupled with the loss of 1 FTE permanent position for approximately 2 months have impacted on the ability of this service to deliver against the expectations and obligations of the 2023-24 plan.
- 1.5. The reduction in temporary resources in the 2023/24 financial year have impacted service delivery. The service has not been able to implement a targeted programme of proactive health & safety interventions, identified as a priority based on those previously undertaken in the 2022/23 financial year. Furthermore, the service has been unable to implement a full food sampling programme. The above are still seen as a priority of the service to ensure that West Lindsey is a great place to be where people, businesses and communities can thrive and reach their potential.

2. Service Aims and Objectives

- 2.1. The Food and Health & Safety work areas play a key role in ensuring that the district is safe and healthy.

The work of the service:

- Protects and improves the health, wellbeing and safety of all persons who live in, work in, or visit the district
- Enables economic development and prosperity
- Protects and improves the local environment
- Ensures that a proportionate and risk-based approach to enforcement is delivered

3. Links to the Corporate Plan and Other Functions

- 3.1. The Councils Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027 has the following vision: “West Lindsey is a great place to be where people, businesses and communities can thrive and reach their potential.”

In order to deliver the Councils vision, it will focus on three key areas: Our Council, Our People and Our Place.

- 3.2. This work plan supports this vision and specifically contributes to a number of key strategic aims such as:

- To create a safer, cleaner, and greener district in which to live, work and socialise.
- To reduce health inequalities, promote healthy lifestyle and improve wellbeing across the district.
- To create strong, resilient communities and promote positive life choices for disadvantaged residents.

- 3.3. The Councils Corporate Enforcement Policy was reviewed and updated in 2022 and provides the framework under which these functions operate.

- 3.4. The work across the wider Housing and Environmental Enforcement service area seeks to broaden the scope of the food and health and safety work areas. This particularly relates to food premises that may present wider issues relating to housing or environmental health.

- 3.5. The work areas also contribute and influence work relating to development management and policy, growth, licensing, and community safety.

4. Authority Profile

- 4.1. The West Lindsey District is one of the largest and most rural in England. It covers 1,156km² (446 square miles), with the administrative center in Gainsborough on the River Trent to the west, and the market towns of Caistor and Market Rasen to the east.

- 4.2. The 2021 Census revealed that the population of West Lindsey is at its highest ever recorded level having grown from 89,300 in 2011 to 95,200 in 2021. This is an increase of 6.7%, which is a higher increase than the

national average. The districts population is ageing and continues to age at a faster rate than the population nationally.

- 4.3. Across the district there are wide variations in the levels of deprivation. Some areas experience the highest levels of deprivation in the country, while others are amongst the most affluent.

5. Scope of the Service

- 5.1. The Food and Health & Safety functions sit within the wider Housing and Environmental Enforcement work area. The main functions of the work area are as follows:

- Inspection of registered food premises
- Investigation of food poisoning and infectious disease notifications
- Investigation of food related complaints
- Responding to national and local food alerts
- Inspection of businesses in relation to health and safety compliance
- Investigation of statutory reportable incidents
- Provision of advice and guidance in relation to the matters above
- Maintenance of a register of cooling towers and food premises

- 5.2. Some functions within the food safety work area come with an associated fee. These fees are reviewed annually and detailed on the Councils website.

6. Service Delivery

- 6.1. There are a number of elements within the service delivery aspect of this plan:

6.1.1. Staff Development / Internal Monitoring

We are committed to ensuring that we have a high standard of competency for Authorised Officers working within the Food / Health and Safety Team. We will ensure that resources are available to allow Authorised Officers to meet their obligations of Continued Professional Development. Training needs will be reviewed as part of the appraisal process to identify any competency deficiencies and further staff development.

Internal monitoring of food interventions / complaints / service requests will be conducted by the Food Team Manager / Lead Food Officer. Verification of the above will be undertaken at regular 1-2-1 meetings with Authorised Officers. Review of Competency Assessments, required under the Food Law Code of Practice / Practice Guidance will form part of the appraisal process. Subject to the findings of the internal monitoring at 1-2-1 meetings accompanied food hygiene inspections will be undertaken as a minimum, yearly.

6.1.2. Food Complaints

We will investigate all complaints about food / complaints about food premises received, where we have the authority and jurisdiction to do so. Food complaints will be investigated by Authorised Officers, demonstrably competent to do so, in accordance with the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice: Statement of Competence for Authorised Officers. Officers will use their Professional Judgment, coupled with available guidance, to determine the nature and scope of the investigation. Advice may also be obtained from colleagues. All complaints may trigger a food hygiene inspection, at the professional discretion of the Authorised Officer.

6.1.3. Home Authority Principle & Primary Authority Scheme

The Council supports the Primary Authority Scheme and Home Authority Principle. However, the Food Service does not have any formal Home Authority arrangements with individual businesses. Currently there are no food related Primary Authority relationships in place.

6.1.4. Advice to Businesses

The Council provides advice and education to food businesses, to support them in complying with their legal requirements, whilst also helping them to adopt good practices. The Council supports businesses by providing information on the Council webpage. Advice is readily available by contacting Officers directly. The Council also operates one to one advice visits for the benefit of food businesses, although this is a paid service.

6.1.5. Control of Infectious Disease

The service will investigate all outbreaks of food or water borne disease. All suspected cases will be followed up and confirmed cases will be contacted by telephone or by questionnaire to try and ascertain if there are any common factors.

6.1.6. Food Safety Incidents

Food safety alerts notify the public and food authorities of incidents concerning food which does not meet food safety or composition standards. Alerts are received via the FSA alert system into the Commercial Team shared e-mail inbox which is monitored during office hours. Any alert marked "for action" is referred to the Team Leader to determine the most appropriate course of action.

6.1.7. Sampling

West Lindsey District Council shall comply with all relevant UK and assimilated EC legislation to ensure food within the district is appropriately sampled for microbiological safety. 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.

West Lindsey District Council has access to Senior Microbiologists from the Food, Water and Environmental Microbiology Laboratory (York) Laboratory as Food Examiners.

West Lindsey District Council aims to participate in all sampling programmes organised nationally through the Food Standards Agency and UK Health Security Agency. As agreed through Lincolnshire Environmental Health Manager's Group all programmes organised through Lincolnshire Food Sampling Group will be participated in.

Locally, West Lindsey District Council will have regard to sampling from food businesses and manufacturers, particularly those premises producing high risk foods of animal origin. The Council will also sample businesses 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.

6.1.8. Food Sampling Policy

This policy will set out West Lindsey District Council's general approach to food sampling and its approach in specific situations such as process monitoring, Home Authority Principles, inspections, complaints, special investigations, and national, regional, and locally co-ordinated programmes.

Sampling makes an important contribution to the protection of public health and the food law enforcement function of the Local Authority. It is a useful tool for:

- Investigating complaints
- Investigating food poisoning or food contamination incidents
- Assisting in measuring compliance with food safety legislation when undertaking food hygiene inspections.

These matters are demand driven and samples will be taken as required.

Local Authorities have a duty to ensure food meets legally prescribed standards and routine sampling will monitor compliance.

West Lindsey District Council will ensure appropriate action on non-compliance with food safety legislation is taken in accordance with relevant Food Safety Legislation, Food Standards Agency Codes of Practice, and the Enforcement Policy.

A procedural document details the method for taking samples, continuity of evidence and preventing deterioration or damage to samples whilst under the Authority's control.

Samples for examination are sent by courier to UK Health Security Agency, Food Water and Environmental Microbiology Laboratory (York). Other accredited laboratories may be used for specialist projects.

West Lindsey District Council's sampling programme will reflect the manufacturing, retail, and catering premises within the district to ensure locally produced foods meet legal requirements and to assist those businesses in monitoring compliance. This will also reflect our Home Authority and any future Primary Authority responsibilities.

West Lindsey District Council will participate in UK Health Security Agency and local co-ordinated sampling programmes with other Local Authorities.

Figures relating to food sampling undertaken by the Authority will be returned to the Food Standards Agency via the Food Surveillance System and LAEMS returns.

West Lindsey District Council will follow documented procedures to ensure consistency following results of sampling and consider the Enforcement Policy before deciding what action to take.

During routine sampling if unsatisfactory results are found the manufacturer or if relevant the local retailer/caterer will be notified of the results to discuss the proposed course of action.

If formal samples are taken in accordance with the FSA Code of Practice the local business will be notified and action taken in accordance with the Code of Practice, the Council documented Food Sampling Procedure and the Enforcement Policy in consultation with the Senior Environmental Health Officer/Environmental Health Manager as appropriate.

The sampling programme will be reviewed and updated annually and as required to reflect local and national priorities.

7. Profile

7.1. The current profile of food premises and timescales for inspections are as follows:

Category	Primary Producers	Manufacturers & Packers	Importers / Exporters	Distributors / Transporters	Retailers	Restaurants & Caterers	Totals
A (6 months)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
B (12 months)	0	4	0	0	2	18	24
C (18 months)	0	17	0	1	5	98	121
D (24 months)	0	3	0	2	39	262	306
E (36 months)	7	10	0	29	104	328	478
Unrated	1	0	0	2	7	38	48
Total	8	34	0	34	157	745	978

7.2. The total number of food premises is 978 and there are currently 9 approved premises which may require 2 inspections per year.

7.3. The food hygiene rating system (FHRS) extends to businesses supplying food directly to consumers. The overall aim of the scheme is to reduce the incidence of food borne illness and the associated costs of this to the economy. The system helps to inform members of the public in regard to places they wish to eat or purchase food from. This in turn helps to raise food hygiene standards. The rating of premises across the district as of March 2024 is shown below;

FHRS Rating	Description	Number	%
5	Very Good	566	84.1%
4	Good	61	9.1%
3	Generally Satisfactory	35	5.2%
2	Improvement Necessary	0	0%
1	Major Improvement Necessary	11	1.6%
0	Urgent Improvement Necessary	0	0%

** Please note. These figures come from the Food Standards Agency website and includes premises that may have been rated but that may no longer require rating

8. Service Demand

8.1. The table below shows the demand placed on the service over the last 4 years

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Total Routine Planned Food Hygiene Inspections (A to D, & Unrated)	291	198*	447	228
Completed Food Hygiene Inspections	18 n/a	172 (87%)	418 (F3 + F5)	229 (F3 + F5)
Food Inspection Visits (inc abortive)	39 (M38)	210	542 (M38)	355 (M38)
Food Inspection Revisits (additional)	4 (M24)	26	131 (M24)	50 (M24)
Request for Revisit (FHRS)	0	2	17 (MFV)	3 (MFV)
Health & Safety Intervention Visits			32	5
Health & Safety Targeted Interventions			20	0
Food / H&S Complaints and Service Requests (note 2020/21 figure includes covid related complaints and service requests)	875	395	247 (SRR com)	247 (SRR com)
Service Requests Requiring a Premises Visit (additional)	5	28	39 (M29)	51 (M29)
Accident Investigations	12	2	1	0
RIDDOR Reports	50	64	50	51
Infectious Disease Reports	23	50	47	29
Sampling Undertaken	4	0	24	1

*the figure of 198 total routine planned food hygiene inspection in 21/22 reflects the number of inspections required within the FSA recovery plan. In a normal inspecting year, the programme would have required 554 inspections.

- 8.2. There is a level of uncaptured demand that relates to general advice and queries that arise as part of the day-to-day work relating to food and health and safety. The offering of advice provides additional value to businesses in the district and help to ensure that strong relationships are in place.
- 8.3. Further uncaptured demand relates to technical advice provided to the wider Council, as the technical lead to the Council for both food and health & safety.
- 8.4. Additional uncaptured demand is generated from attendance, by the service, at site specific events throughout the year. For example. Five Officer attendance at the two-day Lincolnshire Show to ensure public safety at the event.
- 8.5. There is a specific charging schedule in place for various aspects of food safety work such as food hygiene re-inspections, under the food hygiene rating scheme, and advice and guidance provided to new businesses.

9. Planned Inspection Programme

9.1. An inspection programme is established and maintained for all food premises within the district. Inspections are undertaken in accordance with the Food Safety Act 1990, Code of Practice. The frequency of inspection is determined by the risk that is presented. The Council has no formal Home/Lead/Primary Authority Agreement with any business operating in the district.

In 2024/25 the service aims to:

- Provide advice and support to businesses and residents.
- Maintain an effective food inspection program, comprising both routine planned & unplanned inspections seeking to achieve a total of 100%, in line with the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice.
- To investigate and instigate an action plan should this figure fall below 90%.
- Ensure that any high-risk complaints are addressed.
- Maintain a level of 97% of premises rating 3* or above.
- Maintain and improve service delivery of health & safety provision within the district to capitalise on advances made in the 2022/23 financial year.
- Maintain and improve service delivery at site specific events within the district.
- Respond to and implement the proposed changes to the Food Law Code of Practice (and Practice Guidance), and their effect on food service delivery.

9.2. The Food Law Code of Practice (March 2021) provides opportunity for a range of interventions in relation to food premises. The approach that the Council takes regarding these interventions is linked to its corporate enforcement policy, which officers have regard for when making any decision. The planned programme of intervention is shown in the table below.

Category	Inspection Frequency	No of Premises
A	6 months	1
B	12 months	24
C	18 months	89
D	24 months	214
E	36 months	74
UNRATED		48

9.3. The above table represents a normal routine inspection programme for the Year 2024/25 of 450. Of these, 376 require a physical food hygiene inspection, and 74 category E are inspected via an Alternative Enforcement Strategy.

- 9.4. Food hygiene inspections undertaken which do not form part of the routine inspection programme are estimated to add a further 20 to 30% to these figures. Non-routine inspections include: -
- Paid for food hygiene inspections undertaken as part of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
 - Food hygiene inspections undertaken as part of a complaint investigation.
 - New food businesses opening after 1st April 2024.
 - Changes to the risk rating, resulting in more frequent inspection.
- 9.5. The true food inspection programme, comprising of both the routine planned, and unplanned inspection program, is estimated at between 451 and 489 food hygiene inspections required in the current financial year.
- 9.6. Food sampling is an important aspect of food safety enforcement, providing information about the microbiological safety of food available within the district. Sampling will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant guidance and may be taken during a routine inspection, in response to a complaint or as part of a national sampling programme.
- 9.7. The Council ensures that a risk-based approach to inspections occurs in regard to its health and safety obligations. Reference is made to targeting advice produced by the Health and Safety Executive contained within Local Authority Guidance LAC 67/2 version 12, ensuring we are aligned with wider national priorities, and other relevant guidance. Programmed work focuses on reports that are received from members of the public or reports that are received via the Health and Safety Executive.
- 9.8. The Council is required to undertake accident investigations relating to fatalities and life changing injuries as a result of poor health and safety practice. We also investigate cases of occupational ill health and dangerous occurrences as defined by the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013.
- 9.9. The Council works in partnership with the UK Health Security Agency to identify, control and prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

10. Resources

- 10.1. There are currently 5 officers authorised to undertake food and/or health & safety related work within the Council. Four directly employed by the Council and 1 temporary contractor. This relates to 3.2 FTE posts to deliver the food and health & safety service plan. A reduction of 1 FTE on the previous year. This translates to:
- 1 FTE Senior Environmental Health Practitioner
 - 2 FTE Food and Health & Safety operational inspecting officers
 - 0.2 FTE temporary food and health & safety inspection contractors

A further 0.3 FTE, towards delivery of the food and health & safety function, is provided by administrative support.

- 10.2. There is sufficient support officer resource in place to assist with the administrative functions relating to food and health and safety. These resources are shared across the broader work areas.
- 10.3. All relevant officers are delegated and authorised to carry out their functions. The level of authorisation is determined by their specific role, responsibility and competency level. Specific competency assessments for individual officers are in place relating to the work areas.
- 10.4. Financial Allocation - Food Safety Budget 2024- 2025

Code	24/25 Base Budget	25/26 Base Budget	26/27 Base Budget	27/28 Base Budget	28/29 Base Budget	29/30 Base Budget
Employees	255,300	262,600	271,200	277,500	284,600	293,500
Supplies & Services	12,000	12,100	10,000	10,500	11,100	11,100
Support Services	67,600	68,100	70,300	70,900	72,000	72,00
Transport	200	200	200	200	200	200
Income and Fees	(7,300)	(7,400)	(7,400)	(7,400)	(7,400)	(7,400)
Grand Total	327,800	335,600	344,300	351,700	360,500	369,400

11. Liaison with Other Organisations

- 11.1. Alongside working within the Council, officers liaise with a number of other local authorities, agencies, and organisations to ensure that consistency is maintained, develop best practice and to share learning. The groups engaged with as are as follows:
- Lincolnshire Environmental Health Managers Group
 - Lincolnshire Food and Health and Safety Group
 - Food Standards Agency (East Midlands, Yorkshire, and Humber Region)
 - Health and Safety Executive
 - UK Health Security Agency
 - Lincolnshire County Council
 - Lincolnshire Police
 - Drinking Water Inspectorate
 - Anglian Water

12. Review

- 12.1. The Food and health and Safety Work Plan will be reviewed on a yearly basis

HSE

Statement of commitment between: Local Authority and HSE Regulatory Services

This joint statement of commitment (SoC), agreed by local authority (LA) representative bodies and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in March 2019, sets out our shared vision for an ongoing LA/HSE co-regulatory partnership. Ensuring LAs and HSE work together as effective, modern and professional regulators - delivering the positive benefits of efficient, world leading workplace health and safety, to achieve:

- Sustainable arrangements for the enforcement of work related health and safety.
- Established joint working arrangements resulting in effective engagement, consultation and communication.
- Consistency of high quality regulation across HSE and LA enforced businesses.

This shared SoC is aimed at Councillors, LA Chief Executives and their Heads of Regulatory Services. It outlines how LA senior managers and HSE will work together, to achieve sustainable future delivery of effective workplace health and safety enforcement in Great Britain (GB).

Current position

LAs are a key part of the health and safety system in GB. They have a statutory duty under Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to 'make adequate provision' for health and safety enforcement in their area, as set out in the 'National LA Enforcement Code' (the Code) (www.hse.gov.uk/lau/la-enforcement-code.htm).

LAs enforce workplace health and safety in two thirds of all business premises, around half of the total GB workforce. LAs predominantly cover the retail, consumer services, entertainment and warehousing/supply chain sectors.

Currently failures in the management of health and safety in LA enforced business sectors result in around 10 deaths, 5000 major injuries and over 100,000 new cases of ill health a year. Many of those harmed are members of the public/children, or vulnerable workers not provided with reasonable workplace protection.

HSE provides national direction via the Code and its supporting documentation e.g. annually updated targeting advice (www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/67-2.htm) supports LAs to develop locally responsive sustainable delivery plans, using the most current intelligence and regulatory practice.

Effective management of health and safety brings direct benefits to the local community, by:

- Reducing work related death, injuries and ill health.
- Reducing the need for local public health and support for those recovering from injury and ill health.
- Reducing the rate of business failure due to business outages caused by incidents and harm to staff, or the loss of reputation.

This SoC was developed as part of the on-going work of the strategic group overseeing the HSE/LA co-regulatory partnership (HELA) and the supporting Practitioner's Forum. It also has the endorsement of the Local Government Association (www.local.gov.uk/), Welsh Local Government Association (www.wlga.gov.uk/) and Society of Chief Officers of Environmental Health in Scotland (www.socoehs.com/) and recognises that:

- LAs must target and prioritise regulatory resources to meet their legal duty to enforce health and safety;
- Continued delivery of effective co-regulation will require ongoing evolution in both the LA and HSE approaches to regulatory delivery, and
- The HSE and LA co-regulatory partnership plays a vital role in delivering the 'Help GB Work Well' strategy. (campaigns.hse.gov.uk/hgbww/)

This SoC does not relate to an LA's own responsibilities as a health and safety dutyholder. Information to support LAs as employers, service providers and procurers/commissioners of goods and services can be found on the HSE website (www.hse.gov.uk/services/localgovernment/index.htm).

Joint LA/HSE Commitments to Targeted Sustainable Health and Safety Enforcement

What LAs & HSE will do together as co-regulatory partners to #HelpGBworkwell

LAs & HSE will provide an effective regulatory framework by:

- Sharing information, to make sure we take decisions on the best available evidence.
- Delivering risk based, targeted frontline interventions.
- Maintaining liaison and effective two-way communication via joint representation at county liaison groups as well as the joint LA/HSE HELA and Practitioner forums.

LAs & HSE will secure effective management and control of risk by:

- Delivering a consistent approach to the enforcement of work related health and safety across GB in line with the principles of the Regulator's Code (www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulators-code).

LAs & HSE will lead and engage with others to improve workplace health and safety by:

- Promoting the benefits of proportionate health and safety in their frontline engagement.
- Working together as co-regulatory partners to influence businesses as part of a national strategy.
- Using the latest in behavioural insight to develop new ways to change business behaviour.

What LAs will do as independent co-regulators to #HelpGBworkwell

LAs will provide an effective regulatory framework by:

- Providing the competency, capacity, resource and support to fulfil their delivery plans.
- Working with other LAs to peer review activities and promote better health and safety outcomes.

LAs will secure effective management and control of risk by:

- Developing and implementing local delivery plans which clearly link to national and local priorities.
- Using national and local intelligence to effectively target poor performing sectors.
- Annually reporting their health and safety enforcement activity to HSE.

LAs will lead and engage with others to improve workplace health and safety by:

- Leading and engaging with their local business community to promote health and safety priorities and adopting the "Better Business for All" approach where relevant and sustainable.
- Sharing relevant local intelligence with HSE to inform the national perspective.
- Championing their role as health and safety regulators.

What HSE will do as the national policy lead and a co-regulator to #HelpGBworkwell

HSE will provide an effective regulatory framework by:

- Reviewing the effectiveness of GB's occupational health and safety system.
- Providing LA regulators with access to topic specific materials and technical / forensic support.
- Monitoring and reporting on LA regulatory activity to the HSE's Board and other stakeholders.

HSE will secure effective management and control of risk by:

- Setting national regulatory priorities and the overarching strategic direction.
- Sharing expertise, practice and supporting materials to promote consistent/proportionate regulation.
- Supporting LAs to develop effective intervention plans by providing targeting guidance based upon up-to-date information and intelligence via targeting guidance which accompanies the Code.

HSE will lead and engage with others to improve workplace health and safety by:

- Co-ordinating national engagement and promotion of proportionate health and safety and using feedback from LAs to inform the development of national priorities in the LA enforced sectors.
- Providing support for LA local and national regulatory liaison and industry sector working groups.
- Championing the LA role as health and safety regulator.

