



Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

# Department Environmental Health

**SERVICE  
PLAN  
2020 / 21**

**At the Heart of Our  
Community**

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## **1.0 OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SERVICE**

### **1.1. Purpose and Scope of the Service**

The Environmental Health Department is fundamentally about improving the health & wellbeing of local communities. Our work as outlined in this document makes important contributions towards all of the Council's key themes and objectives, but in particular, through aiming to keep our environment safe and where possible, promoting healthier choices.

The purpose of the Environmental Health Department continues to be the control of factors in the environment which can affect public health and safety within the realms of the Council's statutory obligations. This is mainly achieved by enforcing environmental health legislation in a reactive and proactive manner. The Department also plays a supportive, informative and advisory role in all aspects of Environmental Health including health and wellbeing.

### **1.2 Responsibilities**

Regulatory and advisory work in relation to the following core function areas

1. Food Control
2. Consumer Protection
3. Public Health and Housing
4. Environmental Protection
5. Licensing
6. Dog Control and Animal Welfare
7. Health and Safety
8. Health and Wellbeing programmes

***The section is specifically responsible for the following functions:***

### 1.3 Customers & Stakeholders

Customers & Stakeholders
• Public Health Agency
• Food Standards Agency
• Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland
• Northern Ireland Housing Executive
• Police Service of Northern Ireland
• Communities
• Residents
• Visitors to the District
• Businesses
• Department for communities
• Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
• Office of Product Safety and Standards

### 1.4 Performance Overview in 2019/20

The following table provides a progress summary and the impact made by last years' Service Plan (2019-2020). It also details key successes, a summary of the end of year progress, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference.

1. *Delivering for Our People -High performing services focused on customers and value for money*
2. *Health and wellbeing of our community working together across agencies to focus on early intervention and prevention to reduce health inequalities*
3. *Economic Growth by providing support for Micro and SMEs*
4. *Vibrant and Safe Communities working towards having fewer people living in poverty and fewer areas of disadvantage in the community*

2019/20 Performance Overview	End of Year Progress Status: Completed/Commenced/Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60% of all planning applications responded to within 21 working days</li> </ul>	52% of planning applications responded to within the 21 working days. 331 planning applications responded to. 2 public enquiries attended. Outstanding 2019 responses negatively affected 2020 response figures.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readiness to support MUDC businesses when Brexit decisions taken.</li> </ul>	Responded to all 100% of all business queries received in 2019/2020 regarding EU Exit.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of Operational targets met in line with funding</li> </ul>	<p>Tobacco Control, Energy Efficiency and “Make a Change” targets were met in line with PHA Work Plan. All targets within Home Accident prevention were met except for a very small percentage of the over 65 visits not taking place due to COVID-19 during March. Some of the visits to families with children under 5 were also not carried out which had an effect on associated equipment delivery during COVID-19.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and meet with key stakeholders in local air quality on 2 occasions</li> </ul>	<p>Key stakeholders were met with on 1 occasion with regard to updating and amending Council Action Plan. Updated action plan has also been forwarded to Council Climate Change Group. March 2020 meeting postponed due to the Covid-19 situation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess and process 100% of compliant caravan parks within MUDC</li> </ul>	<p>Annual inspections completed for 2 of the 3 licenced sites. The visit to the remaining site scheduled for Q4 prior to the new spring / summer 2020 season commencing was not completed due to inspections ceasing with the Covid 19 situation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>85% of Food Standards (FS) Category A inspections to be carried out</li> </ul>	<p>100% of Food Standards Category A inspections carried out.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond to 100% of House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) consultations within agreed timescale</li> </ul>	<p>No consultations received during this period</p>

## **2.0 IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2020/21**

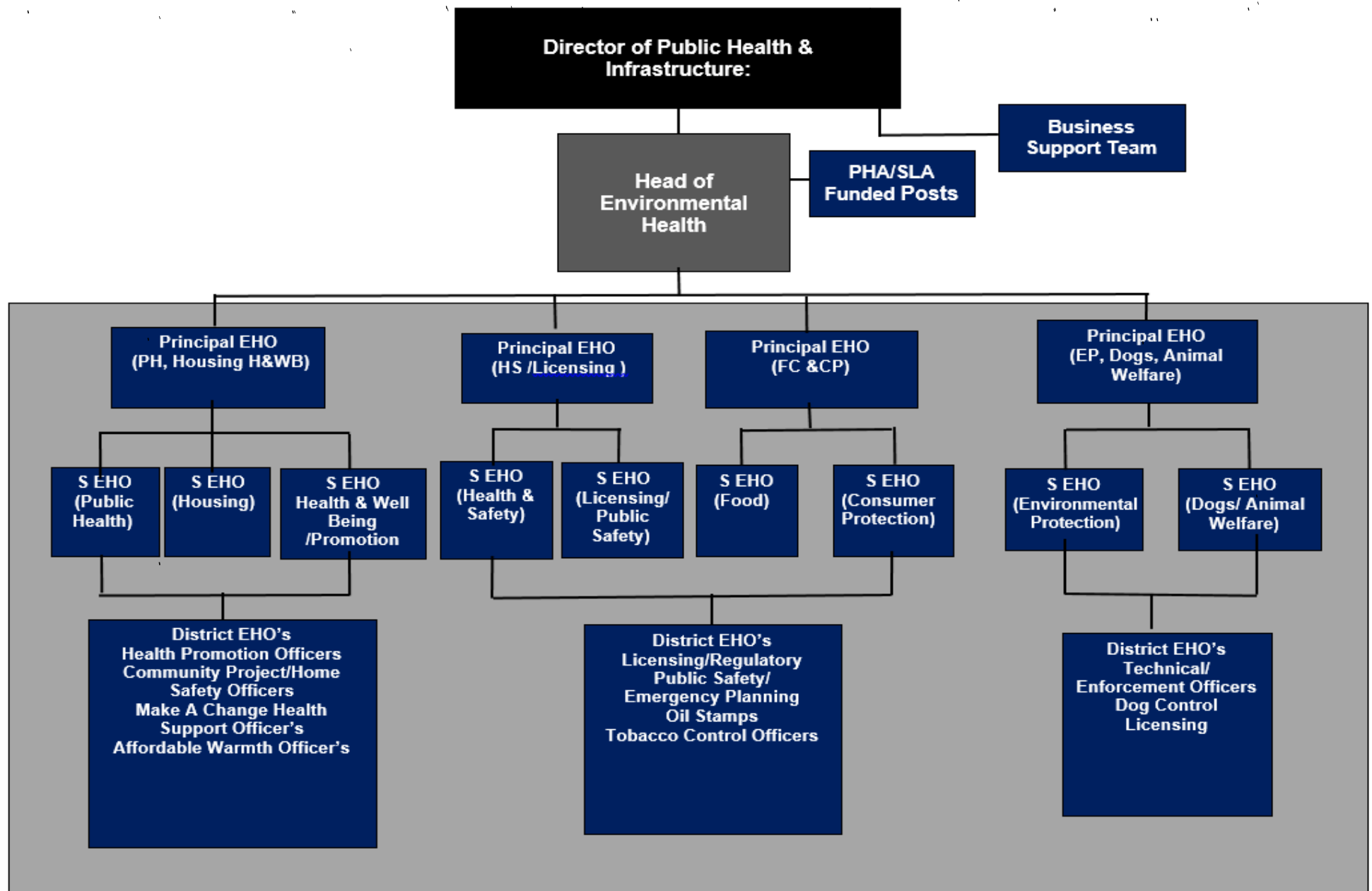
The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Service has access to throughout 2020-21 to deliver its actions, activities and core business.

### **2.1 Budget 2020/21 - Draft Budget ( June 2020 )**

<b>Service Budget Headings</b>	<b>£</b>
Affordable Warmth Programme Total	tbc
Consumer Protection Total	475
Dog Control including Enforcement Total	175685
Environmental Health : General /Support Total	1,345,050
Food Safety Total	(76,095)
Health and Safety at Work Total	100
Health and Wellbeing	35,650
Health Inequalities Total	54,018
Home Accident Prevention Total	44,587
Home Energy Total	(4,433)
Other Licensing Total	(10,460)
Neighbourhood Total	6,000
Oil Stamps Total	Tbc
Pollution Control/Clean Air Total	(50,092)
Public Health Total	(3,230)
Gross Budget	2,109,606
Income	(592,351)
Net Budget for 2020-21	1,517,255

### **2.2 Staffing Complement – 2020/21**

**See Departmental Structure below**



<b>Staffing</b>	<b>No. of Staff</b>
Head of Service	1
Managers	4 Principals 9 Seniors
Officers	25
Health & Wellbeing Team	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>

### **2.3 Service Work Plan - 2020/21**

This plan confirms the core activities and actions, for EH for 2020-21. This is a high-level capture of the Service activities as well as some improvement undertakings which the service will focus on throughout 2020-21. The Plan links to the Council's new 2020-2024 Corporate Plan priorities, Annual Corporate Improvement Plan Objectives, Corporate Indicators and Mid Ulster Sustainable Community Plan themes & outcomes:

The social and economic disruption of COVID-19 has had and will continue to have a significant impact on our District, our citizens, the services we provide and the way we provide them. As lockdown restrictions ease, social distancing measures are enacted in the workplace and service provision gradually recovers, transitions and adapts to the 'next normal', the Council must consider the impact of COVID-19 on the plans which are currently being developed at all levels of the Service Planning and Performance Management Framework. The service has therefore included some of its recovery activities in this plan. How well we plan ahead now will determine how well we adapt to the challenges and opportunities within the post COVID-19 environment.



<b>Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):</b>	<b>e.g. Write service objective here</b>			
<b>Link to Community Plan Theme:</b>	<b>Align to Corporate Plan Theme</b>			
CMP 1.3 Economic Growth - Our Towns & Villages are vibrant & competitive	Leadership: 1.3 We will work collectively to meet the identified needs and priorities of our citizens & connect the people of Mid Ulster			
<b>What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):</b>	<b>By When (Date?)</b>	<b>Lead Officers(s)</b>	<b>What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)</b>	<b>How Will we Know? (Measures)</b>
Work with other internal and external partners to provide support and guidance to business. Provide advice and guidance on food hygiene and safety matters to Food businesses when COVID-19 rules are less restrictive and food premises are preparing to re-open and changing their business models.	31/03/21	MM	Support for business in changing COVID-19 situation. Ensure that businesses have ready access to Food Hygiene & Food Standards advice and guidance. 90% of all queries responded to within 5 days.	Businesses will have access to the necessary Food Hygiene & Food Standards advice and guidance whilst preparing to change their business models and/or re-open after a period of closure helping to ensure food safety
Work with other internal and external partners to provide support and guidance to business. Provide advice and guidance on Health and Safety matters to relevant businesses when COVID-19 rules are less restrictive and premises are preparing to re-open	31/03/21	MP	Businesses who are intending to or who have resumed their work activities are supported to ensure that they take all reasonable steps to protect their employees and others who may be affected by the risks associated with Covid-19 in the workplace.	All requests from business operators for advice, guidance and advisory visits will be responded to within 5 days
Ensure Environmental Protection support and guidance provided to Pollution Prevention Control (PPC) premises in line with regulations and fee structure	31/03/21	CB	Provide support for business in changing COVID-19 situation through a revised service delivery model to ensure continuity of service provision to the 47 registered Pollution Prevention Control premises.	Businesses will have access to the necessary Environmental Protection support in line with Pollution Prevention Control regulations.  90% of all related Environmental Protection complaints to be responded to within 3 days.

Provide support on request to the MUDC climate change working group. Monitor current levels of air quality within the District, through maintenance of air quality monitoring network. Replace No2 tubes monthly. Additional 3 monitoring tubes in Magherafelt to monitoring background NO2 levels. Assess Pollutant levels against recognised standards in line with air quality objectives	31/03/21	CB	This will ensure that MUDC adequately monitors the District for air quality issues and takes suitable steps where exceedances of air quality objectives are noted. Investigation of air quality nuisance complaints, with appropriate action to resolve the problem	Submission of annual monitoring report.  85% of complaints responded to within 3 days
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What <b>Service Development/Improvement</b> will we undertake in <b>2020/21? (actions):</b>	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
Health & Wellbeing key messages to be delivered taking into account the COVID -19 situation. Exploration of extended customer journeys through enhanced integration of services with leisure and parks teams to maximise benefit for customers.	31/03/21	AC	Maximising every existing contact within the 300 existing clients of the Health & Wellbeing programmes of energy efficiency, home accident prevention and "Make a change" within the Funded target audience to help support clients with key messages in the ongoing Covid -19 situation	300 clients on the existing programme re-engaged with to provide support on key messaging and to provide onward signposting as appropriate through integration with the parks and leisure services.
With respect to EU Exit, assist and advise businesses regarding changes in regulatory checks and controls which fall under EH remit.	31/03/21	MM	Support for business in advance of pending EU Exit. Ensure that businesses have access to relevant advice and assistance. 90% of all complaints responded to within 5 days.	Businesses that require advice or assistance will have access to the necessary advice and assistance to help ensure continued safe production of compliant product.

<b>Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):</b>	<b>e.g. write service objective here</b>			
<b>Link to Community Plan Theme:</b>	<b>Align to Corporate Plan Theme</b>			
CMP 4.1 Health & Wellbeing - We are better enabled to live longer healthier & more active lives	Leadership: 1.3 We will work collectively to meet the identified needs and priorities of our citizens & connect the people of Mid Ulster			
<b>What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):</b>	<b>By When (Date?)</b>	<b>Lead Officers(s)</b>	<b>What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)</b>	<b>How Will we Know? (Measures)</b>
Respond to Public Health (PH) complaints as per Public Health & Housing unit plan targets	31/03/21	AC	Respond continuously to Public Health complaints as per Public Health & Housing unit plan	Complaint resolution as per operational targets and mechanisms (85% responded to within 5 working days).

<b>What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):</b>	<b>By When (Date?)</b>	<b>Lead Officers(s)</b>	<b>What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)</b>	<b>How Will we Know? (Measures)</b>
Review and develop new methods of service delivery to minimise H&S risks from COVID-19 across EH	31/1/8/20	HoS/Principals	Improved efficiency when resolving complaints while maximising staff safety	Revised protocols across all core function areas.
Development of new delivery models for how Health & Wellbeing key messages can continue be delivered to the target audience already within the Environmental Health database during the various stages of COVID-19. Work with internal partners to update and maximise referral pathways	31/03/21	AC	Establishment of new pathways to receive referrals allowing wider communications opportunities for delivery of key messages	Provision of key messages and information to those within the Health & Wellbeing database and those accessible through further connections with leisure and parks sections

What <b>Service Development/Improvement</b> will we undertake in <b>2020/21?</b> (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
<b>Further development of remote and rotational working arrangements for Environmental Health staff with adequate technology in place to facilitate fully operational office environment to ensure business continuity in any current or future situation. Use of Teams for meetings to continue and Environmental Health staff to be provided with suitable computer hardware such as laptops. Continued usage and support for web based platforms.</b>	<b>30/9/20</b>	<b>FMCC/Principal EHOs</b>	<b>Increased efficiency for resolution of complaints as readily available data irrespective of base location. Reduced carbon footprint in line with climate change measures</b>	<b>Minimal disruption to core function targets during any disruption. Increased staff safety. Reduced mileage for attendance at meetings</b>

<b>Performance Measures:</b> <i>Should include any measures as outlined in work above and relevant measures from Community, Corporate, Performance Improvement Plan, Statutory, Corporate Health Indicators etc.</i>	Is the Measure, Statutory, Corporate, Existing, or New?	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 Target/Standard
The Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 makes provision for the licensing of dogs. Article 52 of the Order requires Councils to provide information relating to the operating of the Order as required by DAERA.	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Returns made</b>	<b>Returns made</b>	<b>Returns made</b>	<b>Statistical return to be made</b>
Food standards Agency: Data comprises of statutory return consisting of numbers of food hygiene and food standards inspections undertaken across the range of risk categories; number and type of food premises in the DC; number and type of samples taken - for microbiological purposes and for composition and labelling purposes; all enforcement actions; number of staff (FTE); promotional food safety and standards work undertaken.	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Returns made</b>	<b>Returns made</b>	<b>Returns made</b>	<b>Statistical Return to be made</b>
PHA targets for Home accident prevention, Energy efficiency and Make a change programmes for Health and wellbeing improvement across the targeted sections of the MUDC population.	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Targets met</b>	<b>Targets met</b>	<b>Some slippage due to COVID-19</b>	<b>Revised measures due to COVID-19</b>

## **3.0 OUR STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

In carrying out our responsibilities, the Service is cognisant of the statutory duties placed upon the council in the delivery of its services. Whilst the Service operates, under various obligations it is however mindful of the changing context in which it operates and endeavours to mainstream the equality and rural needs duties in the design and delivery of our functions.

### **3.1 EQUALITY DUTY**

The council and by consequence our Service is committed to contributing towards its part in working towards fulfilling obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to ensure adequate time, staff and resources to fulfil our duties.

The Service will also work towards adherence to the council's Equality Scheme ensuring equality duties, together with promoting positive attitudes towards persons with a disability and the participation of people with a disability in public life when carrying out our functions.

### **3.2 RURAL NEEDS DUTY**

The Service will be mindful of the rural needs of its customers when carrying out its functions and subsequent responsibilities, particularly in developing any new policies, plans or strategies throughout the year. In line with the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 we will give due regard to rurality in terms of needs in carrying out the activities within our Service.

### **3.3 RISK MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE**

The purpose of risk management is to manage the barriers which prevents the Council from achieving its objectives. This section of the service plan includes space for the Service to input their key risks (in summary form), which have been identified during the business planning process. The Council uses risk management to maximize opportunities and minimize risks. This improves its ability to deliver priorities and improve outcomes. This is why the Council deems it important to link business planning and risk management. Risk Management aims to:

- Help the Council achieve its overall aims and objectives
- Manage the significant risks the Council faces to an acceptable level
- Assist with the decision making process
- Implement the most effective measures to avoid, reduce and control those risks
- Balance risk with opportunity
- Manage risk and internal controls in the most effective way.

This table illustrates the risks identified to deliver the Services business in 2020/21.

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
1.	Food Control and Brexit	6	Keep up to date with FSA/ DAERA and related guidance at local, regional and national level. Provision of adequate levels of EHOs (Food control) for support to relevant businesses.
2.	GDPR	6	Reminders at staff meetings
3.	Road Closures	4	Information widely available
4.	No Co-ordinated on-call food arrangement	6	Relying on food officers answering phones out of hours
5.	Fraud, bribery and theft	6	MUDC policies in place
6.	Health and safety especially in line with risks of infection especially COVID-19	12	Risk assessment to be reviewed for all staff and working practices to be reconsidered for COVID-19. Reviewed methods of delivery. Use of white board within offices for lone working.
7.	Transfer of HMO function to Councils	2	Service Level Agreement with Belfast City Council
8.	Complaints arising through the accelerated introduction of pavement cafes	6	Guidance and application requirements in place.

**As part of the recovery of the 1<sup>st</sup> wave of the Covid -19 pandemic, should a second or further waves occur we will switch to our emergency plans.**

Rating	Descriptor
16 - 25	Extreme Risk (immediate action required)
10 - 15	High Risk (urgent action required)
7 - 9	Moderate Risk (action required)
1 – 6	Low Risk (keep under review)

**Main EH work for the period 18th May - 19th June. (approx. 4 weeks)**

**Health and safety, public safety and licensing**

- 182 health and safety service requests have been received and actioned comprising of 89 requests for advice on restricted premises or social distancing, and 41 complaint investigations relating to restricted premises and social distancing issues .
- 48 service requests relate to normal licensing issues, which have been progressed in the usual manner
- Street trading and amusement permit licensing has continued as normal
- Investigative work and visits in relation to two fatal accidents and one major injury involving a young person is ongoing.
- Proactive mailshots have been sent out with letter and advice to:
  - Childcare settings
  - Funeral directors (2<sup>nd</sup> mailshot with updated information from Dept of Health)
  - Golf clubs
- Work on preparing to implement the pavement café licensing regime has taken place and is ongoing.
- Distributing H&S guidance to various sectors as it becomes available.

**Public health, housing and Health and well-Being**

- 138 Public Health service requests have been received and actioned
- 11 Private Tenancy service requests have been received and responded to
- Support was given by 3 members of staff to the community Hub on a weekly basis with weekly monitoring reports compiled and forwarded to DfC and Trust.
- Daily calls were made to members of Agewell to help with social isolation
- Follow up calls have been made with participants of the Make a change programme to ensure lifestyle support is sustained. Contacts have been made for Home accident work, energy efficiency and some equipment deliveries have been made.



- Work is ongoing to get a remote “slow cooking” programme up and running for those in food poverty. A short video demo of a slow cooker recipe has been made by Officers.
- Work is ongoing with maintaining the age friendly programme in order to secure funding for the next two years.
- Preparations made for the first Zoom call for Sure start for Home accident prevention work messages to be communicated.

N.B one member of staff was redeployed to Environmental services (0.5FTE)

### **Environmental protection and dog control**

- 134 Service Requests have been received and responded to in comparison to 80 in the same period for last year. 72 were noise complaints and the noise procedure was worked through in the usual manner and outdoor monitoring undertaken for any complaints that had monitoring sheets returned. 22 noise complaints related to parties/ TV etc. and 25 to domestic animals, 6 to anti-social behaviours, and 19 fly-tipping complaints. Visits were undertaken as necessary and referrals made in the usual manner to NIEA and Environmental Services where appropriate. 9 odour complaints were received and actioned
- 45 Planning applications were responded to involving a number of background noise levels being monitored and site visits were undertaken for a number of these consultations.
- Air Quality monitoring continued through this period and visits were made to change 43 diffusion tubes at 21 sites throughout the District.

NB 1.5 FTE staff members redeployed during this period to Environmental services

- 80 dog complaints were received and dealt with. Reported strays and unwanted dogs were collected during this period through a scheduled collection system. All cases of attacks on livestock and persons have been investigated.
- 629 dog licences have been issued during this period with follow up phone calls to outstanding licence owners made.

### **Food Control and Consumer Safety**

- 17 Category A & B food businesses (high risk) contacted and relevant information remotely assessed as per Food Standards Agency correspondence, contact recorded as surveillance under a specific COVID-19 Tascomi code for ease of retrieval.
- 15 businesses contacted re East/West checks for export/import/food brokering trade between Northern Ireland and GB.

- 37 butcher premises returned information on traceability, which was assessed remotely by officers.
- 63 service requests for food function, included queries re social distancing, re-opening, new premises, request for allergen information, Export Health Certificates, advice on safe catering records, FHRS queries, query re new approved establishment, query re registered premises, alleged illness, hygiene handling practices, food labelling, allergen complaint.
- 9 infectious disease notifications actioned.
- 12 online new food business applications plus 4 postal applications received and guided through registration and starting up process.
- 1 application for new approved establishment received and guided through the approval application process.
- 7 consumer protection service requests, including 1 complaint, received and actioned.
- 2 tobacco control service requests received (advice on smoking shelters/methanol cigarettes).
- Fuel stamp delivery has continued on a 1-2 deliveries per week basis.

There are currently 3 officers from the food team who have been re-deployed to assist with H&S or public health duties during this time.