



Introduction

We all recognize that our well-being depends on our Social and Physical environment, as well as our lifestyle. Put more simply, our personal health depends on the food we eat, the air we breath, the safety of our work places and the quality of the homes and communities we live in.

The Environmental Services Department aims to improve the quality of life we lead, both now and in the future. We are here to assist in reducing health inequalities and aim to make a difference to the health and well being of residents and visitors to the District by:-

- **improving food safety & nutrition**
- **improving housing conditions**
- **improving the environment**
- **improving workplace health & safety**

These aims are achieved through a regime of licensing, regulation and enforcement, impacting on both commercial enterprises and the public although the Council balances this approach with the provision of a range of education, advice and promotion services. This Charter is intended to set out the aims and objectives for the Environmental Health service and, in particular, to ensure that a high standard of service is provided to all.



Why Do We Need Environmental Health Services?

The purpose of our service is to “Protect and Improve Public Health and the Environment”. The activities of the Environmental Services Department are based on a number of core functions. It is through the inspection of premises, investigation of complaints, enforcement of legislation, education and the provision of key services such as waste collection and recycling that we maintain and improve the environment and the health of residents within the district.

Practically, we aim to safeguard the health of residents of East Cambridgeshire by:

- inspecting food premises and workplaces by carrying out 1500 such inspections each year.
- controlling noise and other pollution, dumping of rubbish and monitoring the quality of water supplies. We respond to more than 2000 complaints each year.
- investigating and controlling outbreaks of food poisoning and other infectious diseases with a particular aim of preventing their spread.
- providing a subsidised pest control service. Offering advice to householders and businesses, carrying out enforcement action if necessary and working with Anglian Water to keep the underlying rodent population under control.





- providing a service for the capture and detention of stray dogs. Working with Parish Councils and the public to reduce dog fouling by promoting responsible dog ownership and by the provision and emptying of dog waste bins
- providing advice and financial assistance by means of grants to remedy unfitnes in housing and for the adaptation of dwellings for the disabled.
- providing advice and financial assistance for carrying out small scale repairs or for increasing thermal insulation to those home owners who are in receipt of benefits
- providing advice on applications for the following licenses and registrations and ensuring that the necessary licenses are issued within the statutory timescale
 - Butchers licenses
 - Public Entertainments
 - Game dealers
 - Animal Boarding and Breeding Establishments
 - Pet shops
 - Riding establishments
 - Dangerous Wild Animals
 - Tattooing, Electrolysis etc
 - Authorisations required by the Environmental Protection Act 1990
 - Liquor licences

- investigating complaints and providing advice on contaminated land and identifying contaminated land within the district.
- providing weekly refuse, and fortnightly kerbside recycling, collections and by providing other facilities to encourage recycling and waste minimisation.

What We Offer

We aim to provide a responsive and effective Environmental Health service to those who want our advice or our help. It is the work we carry out on a day-to-day basis that improves and protects the health



of residents and people passing through the district. Our discretionary activities are designed to complement the statutory process of enforcement, regulation and licensing. In particular, advice services and promotional activities are designed to reduce the burden of enforcement for businesses and the public by reducing the need for recourse to formal legal action in securing public health.

For Our Customers:

- we will respond immediately to problems which we consider may involve a significant risk to health.
- we will respond to complaints of infestations by pests, unfit food, or food hygiene deficiencies in premises within 3 working days.
- if you make a complaint about any other matter we will contact you within 5 working days.
- we will make routine food safety and health and safety inspections of restaurants, shops and workplaces. High-risk premises will be visited at least once a year.

- we will take routine samples of private water supplies and advise on any necessary treatment to ensure water is safe to drink.
- we will advise on eligibility for assistance for the repair, improvement or adaptation of your home, including information on increasing energy efficiency.
- we will provide a number of Basic Food Hygiene and Health and Safety training courses in response to demand from businesses.
- we will respond to complaints of missed refuse and recycling collections within 24 hours.
- we will offer advice and information on all aspects of Environmental Health.
- we will keep you informed of the progress of your complaint.
- we will keep your details confidential.
- we will take legal action in accordance with our enforcement policy.



Over the full range of activities covered by Environmental Services some may only account for a small proportion of the Department's total commitment. However, the majority have a statutory basis and are based on the need for policing of legal requirements. To meet these demands requires a reactive and responsive service – necessitating out of hours, evening and weekend working. At the same time the statutory responsibility for routine inspection and enforcement necessitates clear policies and procedures, which enables the council to demonstrate transparency and consistency of approach.

Copies of these policy documents are available on request and can be seen on the Council's website www.eastcambs.gov.uk

How To Help Us To Help You

If you have a problem to report, the following information would be helpful:

- your name and address (dealing with anonymous enquiries and complaints is difficult when we come to assess whether the problem has been resolved).
- the name and address of the person or premises to which your enquiry relates.
- the nature of your enquiry.
- if you are being troubled by an intermittent or on-going problem such as a barking dog, smoke nuisance etc - information on the time of day and duration of the nuisance.
- if your complaint is about food - information regarding where and when you purchased the product is essential.

The Council will try to resolve reported problems by advice and education. However if the problem continues and is considered to require statutory action then the necessary steps will be taken to ensure that the matter is satisfactorily resolved. This may take time and may require you, in some instances, to keep a log or diary of the problem. This information is very important; it is used to assist the Council if legal action in the courts is necessary. The Environmental Services Department has developed an Enforcement Policy, which explains why, when and how we will proceed with the process of enforcement of legislation. A copy of this policy can be obtained from the reception desk at the council offices and is available on the Council's website.



Some problems we cannot help with

- noise in the street from moving traffic and rowdy behaviour. Please contact the Police (01223 – 358966)
- complaints about main watercourses and rivers. Please contact the Environment Agency (0845 9333111)
- enquiries about food labelling, dating, coding, quality, quantity or chemical contamination. Please contact Trading Standards (0845 3030666)
- problems relating to industrial, construction or manufacturing processes. These are dealt with by the Health and Safety Executive (01582 444200)
- complaints about dangerous dogs. Please contact the Police (01223 358966)



How To Get Help And Advice

If you wish to obtain advice you can do so in one of the following ways:

Write to: Environmental Services
East Cambridgeshire District Council
The Grange, Nutholt Lane
Ely, Cambs
CB7 4PL

Or phone: (01353) 616343 or 616286

Or e-mail: health@eastcambs.gov.uk

Normal Council office hours are 8.45 am - 5.00 pm (4.30 pm on Friday).

Further information about our service is available from our web site at:

<http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk>

If Things Go Wrong

If you are not happy with the service you have received, please let us know without delay so that we can try and put things right. Speak to the person who is dealing with your query, or write to:

Stephen Clements
Executive Director Environmental Services
East Cambridgeshire District Council
The Grange, Nutholt Lane
Ely, Cambs
CB7 4PL

Your complaint will be acknowledged in 2 days and investigated with a reply in writing within 10 working days or such other extended period as may reasonably be required depending on the complexity of the case. A leaflet describing our complaints procedure is available from the Council Reception.

