

SCORES ON THE DOORS

Premises with Low Risk Alternative Enforcement Strategies (AES)

Local Authorities are required to carry out routine inspections of food businesses to assess if they comply with current legislation. In most cases, authorised officers will actually visit the premises to assess compliance with the regulations and these visits involve a physical inspection of the premises, discussions with members of staff, observations of food handling activities, taking measurements and examining procedures and records. Visits can take several hours and will involve discussions between members of staff and the authorised officer.

Local authorities are expected to prioritise their inspections to focus on those businesses that present the greatest public health risk and they are expected to identify other ways of checking those premises that present little or no risk to the public. These arrangements are referred to as Alternative Enforcement Strategies (AES).

The Council has identified a number of premises that fall into this category because the nature of the food operation presents little or no risk to the people who use the business and therefore it does not warrant an inspection in the “traditional” way. Some businesses will be in the AES category because they have achieved and maintained consistently high standards coupled with the fact that they operate over a small area or serve very few customers on a day-to-day basis.

From time to time some of these businesses will receive a questionnaire which asks them to provide information about the nature and size of their business in order that the Council can maintain accurate records. If this information indicates that there has been a significant change to the operation, the information is not adequate or the business is under new ownership, an officer will carry out an inspection of the premises. Also, some low-risk businesses will be selected for inspection.

All premises receive a copy of the Council’s food business newsletter whether or not they are included in the AES arrangements and they are invited to contact any of our authorised officers for advice and information about how to comply with their statutory duties.