

Meeting of:	Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, 27 September 2023
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	All Scrutiny Committees
Report Title:	Overview and Update on Shared Regulatory Services
Purpose of Report:	This report provides an update on the work undertaken by the Shared Regulatory Service (SRS)
Report Owner:	Director of Environment and Housing Services
Responsible Officer:	Head of Shared Regulatory Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	<p>No Elected Members have been consulted. The following officers have been consulted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Director, Cardiff Council • Chief Officer Legal, Regulatory and Human Resources, Bridgend County Borough Council
Policy Framework:	This is a matter delegated to the Joint Committee
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report apprises the Committee of the work of the service and progress toward completing the actions contained in the SRS Business Plans. 	

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to:

1. Consider, note, and agree the contents of this report
2. Approve the 2023-24 Communicable Disease Plan and the 2023-24 Port Health Plan
3. Authorise the Head of Shared Regulatory Services to make administrative amendments to the Communicable Disease and Port Health Plans, should the need arise.

Reason for Recommendation

1. The report appraises the Committee of the work of the service and the progress toward completing the actions contained in the SRS Business Plans.
2. To ensure that the Shared Regulatory Service has robust arrangements in place to deliver its obligations in respect of Communicable Disease and Port Health
3. To enable minor changes to be made, should the need arise, during the lifetime of the Communicable Disease and Port Health Plans, without the need for them to be brought back to the Joint Committee.

1. Background

1.1 SRS Business Plans are developed in consultation with stakeholders; they inform and direct the work of the service and contribute toward the corporate priorities of each partner Council. The service has five key aims, namely:

- Improving Health and Wellbeing
- Safeguarding the Vulnerable
- Protecting the Local Environment
- Supporting the Local Economy
- Maximising the Use of Resources

This report contains information outlining how the service is working to achieve better outcomes for residents and businesses within the region through a series of different actions and work programmes. The report provides an overview of activities undertaken in the period April to June 2023.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

Human Resources

- 2.1 The sickness absence level at the end of Quarter 1 2023-24 was 1.57 days per FTE person overall.

	Short Term Days Lost per FTE	Long Term Days Lost per FTE	Total Days lost Per FTE
Q1 2023-24	0.19	1.38	1.57
<i>Q1 2022-23</i>	<i>0.52</i>	<i>2.86</i>	<i>3.38</i>
<i>Q1 2021-22</i>	<i>0.32</i>	<i>0.44</i>	<i>0.76</i>
<i>Q1 2020-21</i>	<i>0.37</i>	<i>1.34</i>	<i>1.71</i>

When compared with the same time frame in 2022/23, Q1 saw a reduction of more than 50% in the FTE absence figure for SRS, and it is pleasing to see that this reduction is reflected in both the short term and long term absence elements of the overall figure. The Q1 absence rate compares favourably when viewed in a wider context through comparison with the average sickness rates across the partner Councils.

- 2.2 Recruitment and retention continue to be challenging, and in line with other regulatory services across Wales, SRS has again experienced difficulty in recruiting into a range of key posts across the Environmental Health and Trading Standards functions. The problem has been exacerbated nationally by the limited pool of suitably qualified staff, and an ageing workforce, and in this context, it has become all the more important for SRS to adopt a 'growing our own' approach. One example of this has been the fast tracking of two members of staff by supporting them to undertake the Higher Certificate qualification in Food Premises Inspection, and both have now successfully completed the first of two years of study.
- 2.3 A focus group of staff met recently to consider the practical steps that can be taken to improve our ability to both recruit staff and crucially retain them. A number of themes have emerged, some of these would be cost neutral, relatively quick wins and work is already underway to consult staff on one of these proposals for change. Other strands are likely to be for the longer term, and all will be reflected in an SRS Workforce Plan that is fit for the future.
- 2.4 Good links continue to be built with Cardiff Metropolitan University as SRS gains a reputation as a 'go-to' employer for graduates of the Environmental Health degree course. In a similar vein, the Service was applauded recently by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) for its support of their Directory of Student Training Opportunities (DSTO). The DSTO is in effect, a compendium of one-off training visits

where the student /graduate can accompany an Environmental Health professional to gain the necessary breadth of experience to satisfy their professional practice portfolio. Recognising the commitment of the Service in this regard, the President of the CIEH has highlighted the fact that SRS is the only employer to offer a ‘clean sweep’ of opportunities, offering visits in every intervention field. On behalf of the CIEH, the President extended her thanks to the teams for their support and thanked ‘*SRS and its constituent authorities for being so willing to work with us to address the issue of graduate practical training, and through the current recruitment crisis, which affects us all*’.

- 2.5 In another example of close working with the CIEH, the SRS Operational Manager Commercial Services has participated in an online session aimed at guiding graduates to job interview success. Following a ‘coffee and chat’ style format, the session proved to be extremely popular and provided those new to the Environmental Health profession with advice, hints and tips for interview preparation and for interview performance itself.
- 2.6 The Service continues to encourage SRS officers to engage in further study leading to recognised, higher level qualifications. Support has recently been agreed, on a match funded basis, for three members of staff to begin the MSc in Environmental Health in the 2023-24 academic year. This is another example of how the Service supports staff development while at the same time builds resilience through the ‘growing our own’ approach. We look forward to this approach reaping rewards as and when the much-needed Regulatory apprenticeship for Wales is finalised and ‘goes live’.

Financial Position Quarter 1

- 2.7 The financial monitoring report for the period 1st April to 30th June 2023 is attached at **Appendix 1**. It has been prepared from the consolidated figures gathered from each Authority for this period. The Service is forecasting an outturn position of a £170k overspend against the 2023/24 gross revenue budget. This is largely as a result of the proposed pay award currently under consideration which exceeds the 5% that had been assumed as part of the budget setting process.

Performance Monitoring

- 2.8 Joint Committee members are provided with data on activity levels to help reassure local members at each council that the Shared Service continues to tackle issues across the region. Performance data for Quarter 1 of 2023-24 is set out at **Appendix 2** and is reported to each Council in line with the legacy performance management regimes and existing service plans.
- 2.9 The Service updates below provide more detail and context for the Joint Committee on some of its key areas of work and developing agendas.

Service updates

- 2.10** At the June meeting of the Joint Committee, Members received the Health and Safety Enforcement Plan, the first of the 2023-24 statutory plans for which the Service is responsible. Two further statutory plans are now presented below for approval.

Communicable Disease Plan 2023-24

- 2.11** SRS publishes several operational plans to advise stakeholders of the work to be carried out in certain environments. The document attached at **Appendix 3** is the Communicable Disease Plan 2023-24, which sets out how the SRS will fulfil its role of protecting public health through the investigation of cases and outbreaks of communicable disease and the application of control, preventative and enforcement measures.
- 2.12** It is important to note that the SRS commitments in relation to COVID 19 do not form any significant part of the Communicable Disease Plan. Traditionally local authorities have not had a defined role in dealing with respiratory illnesses, this having been firmly in the province of Public Health Wales.

Port Health Plan 2023-24

- 2.13** The document attached at **Appendix 4** is the Port Health Plan for 2023-24, another of the SRS operational plans for the year. It sets out how the Shared Service will fulfil its role of protecting public health by carrying out a range of health controls.
- 2.14** The plan explains how the Port Health Team will fulfill its purpose of preventing and controlling infectious disease coming into Cardiff, Barry and the surrounding areas via the ports and airport to protect the health of the public. The Plan also details the delivery mechanisms for the statutory obligations in relation to food safety, imported food control, ship sanitation, disinsection, waste control and animal health.

Private Sector Housing

- 2.15** For a number of reasons linked to mortgage rate rises, the cost of living crisis and legislative changes, there are unprecedented demands being placed upon the private rented sector across the SRS region. This has translated into tremendous pressure and case workloads for the SRS teams who regulate the sector and manage complaints from the public and Members regarding housing conditions.
- 2.16** Examples of investigations which have led to formal action in Cardiff include a prosecution of a company and its sole director for failure to licence or maintain 2 houses in multiple occupation in the Roath area of the City, which produced a

significant outcome. The owner and his company were fined a total of £68,00 for failing to obtain HMO licences or carry out works of repair. With costs and victim surcharge the total financial penalty was in excess of £72,000.

- 2.17** The Housing Enforcement Team also gained a conviction for obstruction where an owner of a filthy and verminous premises prevented access for Council officers and contractors who were there to clear up. There are several important cases in the court schedule for a variety of offences, most notably where an owner has wilfully contravened 11 Emergency Prohibition Orders served on a large building in Roath. This is a case where the Cardiff team are being supported by South Wales Fire and Rescue in order to gain a conviction and secure the safety of in excess of 25 residents living in seriously unsafe conditions.
- 2.18** In the Vale we have responded to 80 PSH complaints in Q1 and 71 in Q2 to date, and in Bridgend the figures have been 137 in Q1 and 129 in Q2 to date. Officers are still seeing an increase in the numbers of complaints concerning damp and mould and staff have attended refresher training to ensure that they take into account all relevant factors including the impact of the cost of living on the tenants to be able to afford the heating within the property. Officers have responded with a combination of formal and informal action, with 21 enforcement notices being served in the Vale and 45 in Bridgend.

Empty Homes Work

- 2.19** In both Cardiff and Bridgend, SRS have a group of Officers within their Housing Enforcement teams focusing on tackling private sector empty homes, supported by additional resources provided via income generated through the Council tax premium.
- 2.20** This work includes writing to all known owners of empty properties listed on Council tax, to offer advice and assistance on how to bring the property back into use. This includes gathering property specific information and identifying areas for bespoke advice. The team assist through site meetings, advice regarding property standards and rental requirements, referrals and signposting to other departments and avenues of financial assistance.
- 2.21** The management of empty homes requires a whole authority approach and a key role that SRS undertake is to pull together the various stakeholders across the Authorities to ensure that a co-ordinated strategy is brought to bear to bring empty properties back into beneficial use. This has proved extremely successful and in Bridgend and Cardiff an Action Plan, submitted to and agreed by Welsh Government, identified our most problematic empty properties and prioritised associated actions. Targeted enforcement of these problem properties is yielding positive results, with several properties now occupied, cases progressing with service of enforcement notices, and works in default being completed with the aim of enforcing sale of the property if the debt is not paid.

- 2.22** Within Cardiff, two properties previously subject to a Compulsory Purchase Order are now both fully renovated by the new owners and returned to occupation. In Bridgend we have prepared 2 business cases to make use of the Welsh Government Enforcement fund in relation to substantial works to be carried out in default at an empty property, and the Compulsory purchase of another long-term problematic property.
- 2.23** Moving forward, The Vale of Glamorgan Council has recently provided additional dedicated resource to their empty property work and SRS are currently recruiting a full time Neighbourhood Services Officer who will work with existing staff in the Vale using the successful template that already exists in Cardiff and Bridgend.

Supporting the Local Economy - Primary Authority update

- 2.24** Members will be familiar with the Primary Authority principle that allows a business to enter into a statutory partnership with a local authority of its choice (its Primary Authority), and it is through these partnerships that assured advice can be provided. Primary Authorities are able to charge partner businesses for the work undertaken in the course of such partnerships, and this is permissible on a cost recovery basis.
- 2.25** Primary Authority partnerships can be hugely beneficial for businesses, not least the fact that they are able to take and act upon advice from one local authority rather than facing the resource intensive alternative of having to deal with a multitude of local authorities and, potentially, inconsistent or conflicting advice. In addition, where a Primary Authority has given assured advice to a Primary Authority business partner on a particular area of law or a particular scenario, then provided the assured advice is followed by the business concerned, the Primary Authority is able to challenge any intended enforcement action by other local authorities.
- 2.26** At the start of 2023-24 Q1, the number of Primary Authority partnerships administered by the Shared Service stood at 34, and this includes a mix of direct partnerships with national, regional and local businesses, as well as a number of co-ordinated partnerships with trade organisations (through which the benefits are felt by all members). The full list of the Primary Authority partners working with SRS is included as **Appendix 5** to this report.
- 2.27** Since February 2023, an established partnership with a major retailer has expanded whereby SRS is now responsible for administering all food hygiene referrals from authorities across England as well as Wales. Other areas of recent Primary Authority work have included the review of HACCP systems, assured advice on Pest Control, underage sales training and the development of guidance on advertising alcohol alternatives.

- 2.28** The SRS Industry Team has been fielding several enquiries from other businesses keen to explore potential Primary Authority partnerships, and some early discussions are taking place. Joint Committee will be updated in due course on developments in this regard.

Supporting the Local Economy - Training Update

- 2.29** A key component of the SRS approach to income generation is through the training courses delivered through our approved training centre. Particularly popular are those on food safety, health and safety, allergens, HACCP and infection control which are all taught by Environmental Health Officers and Trading Standards Officers.
- 2.30** In addition to the above externally marketed training courses, SRS Officers have been working with departments in the partner Councils to assist in the delivery of training to staff. Examples in this context include the preparation of training materials for one service area to support the training being delivered to schools, which will be equivalent to the Level 1 and Level 2 Food Safety courses. SRS has also been working with Social Care and Community Learning colleagues to provide food safety training to their staff.

Protecting the Environment - Air Quality and Soundscapes

- 2.31** In March 2023, Welsh Government laid before the Senedd the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill. The Bill is a key step in bringing forward measures that will contribute to improvements in the quality of the air environment in Wales and reduce the impacts of air pollution on human health, biodiversity, the natural environment and our economy. Amongst other things, the Bill looks set to amend the Local Air Quality Management regime.
- 2.32** The vision for the Air Quality and Soundscapes Bill is that it will provide a framework for setting national air quality targets and amend existing legislation relating to:
- the national air quality strategy,
 - local air quality management,
 - smoke control,
 - trunk road charging schemes; and
 - vehicle idling

It will also

- place a duty on Welsh Ministers to promote awareness of air pollution;
- place a duty on Welsh Ministers to publish a national soundscape strategy, and
- give the Welsh Ministers a power to amend existing legislation relating to noise.

- 2.33** In terms of the impacts on local air quality management, the Bill will change the system that local authorities use to monitor air pollution and take action to reduce it. Currently, councils can declare air quality management areas where there are pollution hotspots, and then work towards achieving compliance in the shortest possible time. The Bill proposes that there will be a need for local authorities to require a more holistic annual review of local air quality and will require local authorities to commit to a compliance date with Welsh Government.
- 2.34** It is also likely that as part of the any new air quality targets local authorities will have to monitor and assess against new PM_{2.5} air quality objectives.
- 2.35** SRS Officers have attended working groups, including the Cross Party Group on Clean Air and also specific workshops with Welsh Government officials on developing the new national air quality targets. As work progresses on the various strands of work included in the Bill, updates on progress will be provided to the Joint Committee, together with an indication of any potential resource implications arising from the Bill.

Protecting the Environment - Animal Health and Welfare

- 2.36** SRS has been recognised in the 2023 RSPCA PawPrints awards in three categories. The hard work of our Animal Wardens and Animal Health and Welfare Officers throughout the year has resulted in the following being awarded:
- **Animal-related Licensing: Gold Award**
 - **Stray Dog provision: Gold Award**
 - **Kennelling: Gold Award**

It is pleasing to see that not only did the Service maintain its 2022 Gold standard in the first two of these categories, but for the first time it has also achieved the Gold standard for Kennelling. This means that in 2023, SRS is the *only service in the UK* to achieve the Gold standard in all three categories.

- 2.37** The aim of the RSPCA in giving these annual awards is to shine a light on organisations that have ‘gone the extra mile’ for animals, and entries are judged by an external panel of animal welfare experts.

Protecting the Vulnerable – Concerns around vaping

- 2.38** When the first electronic cigarettes came onto the market more than 15 years ago, they had the appearance of a ‘real’ cigarette, usually with an illuminated tip and vapour reminiscent of cigarette smoke. Over the years, these devices have proved helpful for those trying to give up smoking and their use has been encouraged as an effective smoking cessation aid for adults.

2.39 More recently there has been a marked change in the appearance and presentation of electronic cigarettes (or to use their official designation, electronic nicotine delivery systems or ENDS). The product line has quickly evolved into the devices we now know as vapes, which look nothing like cigarettes, and which are marketed under various brand names in attractive packaging and in a range of appealing flavours. **Figure 1** below provides an indication of the choice available to customers even in a corner shop setting.



Figure 1 – Typical appearance of vapes on display at a corner shop

2.40 With the rapid expansion in the market for vapes come concerns that they are being used not just by smokers, but by non-smokers and by youngsters, leading to calls for stronger regulation of the market. During 2022-23 in the SRS region, of the 41 attempts by young volunteers to purchase nicotine containing vapes, 10 resulted in a sale (24%). Investigations into the circumstances of these sales have taken place with appropriate action taken, including in some cases recommendations for prosecution of the businesses concerned. Underage sales exercises merely give an insight into one means of young people accessing vapes however, and other means such as adults, family and friends providing them, need to be factored in. The impact of youth vaping is being felt in our communities and in our schools where behavioural issues linked to the use of vapes is a growing problem.

2.41 Exacerbating the problem, the last few years has seen a huge influx of illegal vapes into UK supply chains. These are products that have not been registered with the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), do not comply with

the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 in respect of their tank liquid capacity exceeding the 2ml permitted (equivalent to approximately 600 puffs), and the nicotine strength of the liquid exceeding 20mg / ml. As a snapshot of the scale of the illegal vapes problem, during 2022-23 in the SRS region alone, 37 seizures of illegal vapes took place with a combined retail value of £51k.

- 2.42** Many of the issues presented by the supply of illegal tobacco in our communities are now being seen in respect of illegal vapes, often with common supply chains being used and similar methods of concealment being identified in and around retail premises. Arguably there is a far bigger audience for illegal vapes than there is for illegal tobacco however, adding to the fear that the availability of cheap product will further encourage non-smokers, and in particular the young, to begin vaping.
- 2.43** There are also environmental concerns connected with vapes, and in particular disposable, single use vapes. Material Focus research in 2022 established that 1.3 million single use vapes are thrown away in the UK *each week*, while across all vapes, the equivalent of 23 tonnes of lithium is thrown away each year, equivalent to 3,000 batteries for electric vehicles. As well as the direct environmental impact of the incorrect disposal of vapes (they should be disposed of in accordance with the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment requirements), their content means that after seizure by Regulatory Services, the disposal of illegal vapes is not straightforward and is proving to be very costly.
- 2.44** In other parts of the UK, analysis of illegal vapes has identified the presence of harmful heavy metals such as lead, nickel and chromium.
- 2.45** It is clear that this is a complex, multi-faceted problem, and one that SRS is committed to resolve alongside relevant partners. In this context, SRS represents Directors of Public Protection Wales on a *Vaping in Children and Young People Incident Response Group*. Administered by Public Health Wales, other representation on the Group includes Welsh Government, the education sector (schools and further education), as well as ASH Wales. The Group is currently considering a raft of evidence before making policy recommendations to Welsh Government on such things as limiting youth access and supporting those youngsters already addicted to nicotine to quit the vaping habit. In addition, guidance for schools to assist them in understanding and addressing the problems linked to pupils' use of vapes has been prepared to coincide with the start of the new school term.
- 2.46** In England, an additional £3 million is being made available to Trading Standards Services over two years to assist in tackling the problem through additional enforcement. Recently, Trading Standards Wales has prepared a business case seeking one-off funding to enable local authorities in Wales to conduct additional market surveillance and enforcement work, as well as the analysis of vape products for contaminants, and to assist with the cost of the storage and disposal of seized vapes.

- 2.47** An update will be provided on this area of work when the outcome of the funding request to Welsh Government is known, and an Officer presentation on SRS activity in regard to vapes enforcement is being arranged for the December Joint Committee meeting.

Protecting the Vulnerable – Prosecution of Illegal Money Lender

- 2.48** This time last year, Joint Committee was advised that as the cost of living crisis took hold, the Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit (WIMLU) has seen an uptick in loan shark cases being reported. One of the cases investigated by the Unit has resulted in a recently concluded prosecution which saw the loan shark sentenced to a total of two years imprisonment, suspended for two years, for money laundering as well as for illegal lending.
- 2.49** There has been a good deal of interest in this case, which involved a loan shark who charged £40 interest on every £100 they lent, and who had multiple victims, some of whom received threats from the lender to ensure repayments were made on time. While these features of the case are quite standard in illegal money lending investigations, the unusual feature was the fact that the loan shark was an 83-year-old woman. The illegal money lending tactics of this individual shatter the stereotypical image of a loan shark as a male of imposing stature and carrying a base ball bat. Despite her age, she managed to cause real distress in her illegal lending, and in one particularly irresponsible arrangement, the low-income couple she was lending to ended up having to pay her £120 *more than their total monthly income* just to service their debt to her, leaving them penniless every month and trapped in a cycle of debt.
- 2.50** This case and the other cases investigated by the WIMLU yet to be concluded in court, all serve to highlight the need for early intervention in cases of illegal lending. When victims feel uneasy about coming forward, it becomes all the more important for their family and friends, or the organisations with whom they come into contact, to pick up on the warning signs and report their concerns via one of the following routes:

Phone: 0300 123 3311

Email: stoploansharkswales@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Website: stoploansharkswales.co.uk

Making the Best Use of Resources – audit results

- 2.51** Members will recall the recommendations made by Audit Wales in its report – Delivering with Less. One of those recommendations was that the Council(s) should introduce greater challenge of the level and quality of environmental health services provided by third parties, including the SRS under the Joint Working Agreement. One

way that the SRS seeks to demonstrate service improvement and service quality is through audit and assessment. In the year to date, SRS has received two audit reports.

- 2.52** The first of these reports related to an audit by the Regional Internal Audit Service of **SRS Governance and Financial Controls 2022-23**. The purpose of the audit was to provide the necessary assurance to the SRS Joint Committee that financial controls and governance are operating effectively and in compliance with the Council's policies and procedures including Financial Procedure Rules and Contract Procedure rules. Audit testing was undertaken in respect of the 2022-23 financial year.
- 2.53** For this audit, the Service was awarded an audit category code of *Reasonable Assurance*, meaning that there is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place in the Service. Supporting this, a number of low priority recommendations were made with respect to reviewing suppliers, reclaiming VAT on all purchases and cross-checking officer authorisation levels for purchasing. In addition, a single medium priority recommendation was made to ensure that in cases where it is not possible, for good reason, to comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, a waiver request form is completed.
- 2.54** The second of the audit reports relates to the **Wales Illegal Money Lending Grant 2022-23**. Again undertaken by the Regional Internal Audit Service, this audit resulted in an audit category code of *Substantial Assurance*, meaning that a sound system of governance, risk management and control exists, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied. Just one low priority recommendation was made as a result of this audit, and that related to the disposal of assets.

Making the best use of resources – additional demands on the Service

- 2.55** In the coming months, a number of new areas of regulation are due to fall to Regulatory Services in Wales, and Members will be familiar with the new Special Procedures framework that will apply from mid-2024 in respect of tattooing, semi-permanent skin colouring, cosmetic piercing, acupuncture and electrolysis.
- 2.56** The Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill mentioned at 2.31 above is another example of new law facing the Service, as is the Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act. The latter was implemented in June 2023, and creates an offence to supply or offer to supply commonly littered single-use plastic products to a consumer in Wales. Phase 1 (straws, plates, cutlery and stirrers) is expected to come into force in October 2023, with Phase 2 following sometime in 2024 (polystyrene lids, food containers and single use carrier bags).
- 2.57** Unfortunately, none of this new legislation is accompanied by any new funding for local authorities, nevertheless there is an expectation that it will be enforced (and in the case of Special Procedures the new Licensing scheme implemented) by Regulatory Services.

Enforcement Activity

- 2.58** Details of recent cases investigated by the SRS that have resulted in prosecution are set out in **Appendix 6** to this report.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires the SRS to underpin decision making by contributing to the seven well-being goals of the Act, following the five ways of working, and consequently undertaking actions that will have a positive impact on people living in the future as well as those living today. Consequently, SRS seeks to work in the following ways:

- Looking to the long term
- Taking an integrated approach;
- Involving a diversity of the population in the decisions affecting them;
- Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions
- Acting to prevent problems from occurring or getting worse.

- 3.2** The fundamental purpose of the SRS (here defined as Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing) is to protect residents, consumers, businesses and communities. The broad range of responsibilities can make it difficult to demonstrate succinctly their impact and value in terms of the wellbeing; the SRS Business Plans provide members with greater detail and articulate how those statutory responsibilities, and subsequent activities, contribute toward wellbeing across the region. This update report reflects some of the activities undertaken in recent months to promote the sustainable development principle.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** One of the key strategic themes for the Shared Regulatory Service is *Protecting the Local Environment*.
- 4.2** The SRS Business Plan articulates the work carried out under this theme to deliver on the corporate priorities for the participant Councils, including their ambitions to minimise climate change and impacts on the natural environment.
- 4.3** In this context, the Joint Committee is regularly updated on the contribution of SRS to this agenda, for example through its work in the areas of animal health and welfare, air quality, contaminated land, energy efficiency in the private rented sector and investigating greenwashing claims or environmental fraud.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** The Participants' contribution towards the Shared Regulatory Service is recharged on a quarterly basis, based upon the approved budgets for 2023/24. Accounting for the full year is reported to the Committee at the Annual General Meeting.

Employment

- 5.2** There are no immediate employment implications associated with this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3** There are no immediate employment implications associated with this report

6. Background Papers

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Quarter 1 2023-24 Financial report
- Appendix 2 Quarter 1 2023-24 Performance data
- Appendix 3 Communicable Disease Plan 2023-24
- Appendix 4 Port Health Plan 2023-24
- Appendix 5 SRS Primary Authority partners
- Appendix 6 Details of recently concluded SRS prosecutions

Meeting of:	Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, 27 September 2023
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Homes and Safe Communities
Report Title:	Q1 2023/24 Shared Regulatory Services Revenue Monitoring Report
Purpose of Report:	To Provide the Partner Authorities with the Financial Performance of Shared Regulatory Services
Report Owner:	Matt Bowmer - Head of Service/s151 Officer
Responsible Officer:	Miles Punter – Director of Environment & Housing Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Head of Service for Shared Regulatory Services
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Shared Regulatory Services

Executive Summary:

- The £8.645m 2023/24 Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) Budget was agreed by Committee on the 9th February 2023. The net budget increase of £314k included an assumed 5% pay award of plus an adjustment in respect of the previous year’s pay shortfall, less agreed savings.
- The 2023/24 pay award is yet to be agreed, with indicators that the eventual award may exceed the available budget, therefore increasing pressure on an already challenging position.
- As at Q1, the SRS is forecasting overall overspend of £170k. This position includes an historical Cardiff Authority Specific budget shortfall of £200k relating to Taxi Licensing. The forecast outturn position is illustrated on the following table;

	Gross Budget	Forecast Outturn	Outturn Variance
Authority	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Bridgend	1,914	1,917	(3)
Cardiff	5,009	5,157	(148)
Vale	1,722	1,741	(19)
Total Gross Expenditure	8,645	8,815	(170)

- Use of the SRS reserve may be required to resolve part of the forecast overspend position.

Recommendations

1. That the position with regard to the 2023/24 forecast outturn position is noted.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. That the members are aware of the position with regard to the 2023/24 forecast outturn position pertinent to the Board and relevant Scrutiny Committee.

1. Background

- 1.1 The 2023/24 Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) Gross Revenue Budget was approved on the 9th February 2023.
- 1.2 Two members of staff remain on secondments out of the Service. The associated cost of these secondments is being recovered from Welsh Government and Monmouthshire County Council. This has enabled staff to act up into more senior roles.
- 1.3 A small group of officers from across the Service continue to be seconded to support the regional Health Protection Officers (HPO) team supporting the Cardiff and Vale Health Board.
- 1.4 The revenue position for 2023/24 continues to be challenging for the SRS both operationally and financially due to the ongoing implications of the Cost-of-Living Crisis where prices are continuing to rise in excess of available funds, support provided to the Homes for Ukrainian Refugee's Initiative and the continued impact of the Covid-19 pandemic through its support to residential care homes. The SRS has continued to see additional pressure across the Service. The pandemic also continues to have a visible bearing on the income generation ability of the Service.
- 1.5 The impact of cost pressures relating to cost-of-living price rises has intensified pressure on existing budgets.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 The Gross Revenue Budget and forecast outturn position for 2023/24 are shown in the tables below, with the position in respect of each of the partners detailed to include both Authority Specific and Core expenditure positions. As at Q1, the Service is forecasting a £170k overspend against a gross revenue budget of £8.645m, as illustrated in the following table:

Authority	Gross	Forecast	Outturn
	Budget	Outturn	Variance
	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Bridgend	1,914	1,917	(3)
Cardiff	5,009	5,157	(148)
Vale	1,722	1,741	(19)
Total Gross Expenditure	8,645	8,815	(170)

- 2.2 Multiple recruitment drives have been undertaken, however the Service continues to experience significant issues in attracting appropriate candidates to particular disciplines within the Service, which may also be due to a national scarcity of resource being available. This position is then amplified further due to the cost-of-living price rises and the overall position of the economy.
- 2.3 The Service continues to work with local universities in the practical support of students who are enrolled on degree courses relevant to areas in the SRS such as supporting the Homes for Ukraine initiative within the Housing Team. Some of the students have now secured permanent posts within the Service as vacancies have arisen.
- 2.5 A full breakdown of the forecast outturn position is shown in **Appendix 1**.

Authority Specific Services

- 2.6 The approved gross budget of £2.567m in respect of Authority Specific (AS) Services has a forecast overspend of £162k, as detailed in the following table:

	Gross Budget	Forecast Outturn	Outturn Variance
Authority	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Bridgend	461	463	(2)
Cardiff	1,562	1,705	(143)
Vale	544	561	(17)
Total AS Services	2,567	2,729	(162)

- 2.7 The £2k forecast overspend at Bridgend, relates directly to a £21k underspend within The Bridgend Licensing Team which has been partially offset by the forecast £19k underspend within Kennelling and Vets which is very much consistent to activity levels experienced in previous years.
- 2.8 The £143k overspend at Cardiff relates to a forecast £143k overspend within the Taxi Licensing Section and is consistent with performance in previous years.
- 2.9 Overall the Vale is forecasted an aggregate £17k overspend.
- 2.10 Taxi Licensing has a forecast overspend of £25k which is due to increased staffing costs to enable staff to successfully navigate an increased workload.
- 2.11 Burials is forecasting a £5k overspend which is due to anticipated demand during the current economic climate.
- 2.12 The forecast overspends within the Licensing and Burials at the Vale are then partially offset by an anticipated £13k underspend within Kennelling and Vets.

Core Services

- 2.13 The approved gross Core Services Budget for 2023/24 is £6.078m, which at Q1 is forecasting an overall overspend of £8k. The Core Service's budget is allocated in line with the population split across the participating authorities, as illustrated in the following table:

		Gross	Forecast	Outturn
		Budget	Outturn	Variance
Authority	%	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Bridgend	23.90%	1,453	1,454	(1)
Cardiff	56.72%	3,447	3,452	(5)
Vale	19.38%	1,178	1,180	(2)
Total Core		6,078	6,086	(8)

- 2.14 The £3k overspend within Animal Services is the result of increased costs relating to an illegal dog breeding seizure undertaken on welfare grounds. The case has now been concluded in favour of the SRS therefore kennelling costs will soon be ceasing.
- 2.15 Environmental Services are currently forecasting a balanced position.
- 2.16 Food Services are currently forecasting a £31k underspend which is linked to support provided to the HPO scheme which is the follow-on scheme from TTP.
- 2.17 Housing Services is currently forecasting a marginal overspend of £6k. However, it is hoped that this will be brought back into balance by year end.
- 2.18 Health & Safety and Communicable Disease Services is currently forecasting a £8k overspend which is made up of smaller variance across this element of the service.
- 2.19 Pollution Services is forecasting an overall underspend of £10k, which is the result of the potential impact of the pay award.
- 2.20 The £12k Trading Standards underspend relates to an anticipated underspend within Supplies & Services.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1 The revenue budget has been set in order to support services in the delivery of the SRS Well-being objectives. It is therefore important for expenditure to be monitored to ensure that these objectives are being delivered.
- 3.2 The revenue budget has been set and is monitored to reflect the 5 ways of working.
- 3.3 **Looking to the long term** – The setting of the revenue budget requires planning for the future and takes a strategic approach to ensure services are sustainable and that future need and demand for services are understood.
- 3.4 **Taking an integrated approach** – The revenue budgets include services which work closely with other organisations to deliver services such as Cardiff & Vale e.g. Health Boards via Health Protection Support Officers (HPO's).
- 3.5 **Involving partners in decisions** – As part of the revenue budget setting process there is open engagement between the SRS partners.
- 3.6 **Working in a collaborative way** – The SRS was created as a collaborative service in 2015, with the split of funding split in line with the population data which is updated on an annual basis.
- 3.7 **Understanding the root cause of issues and preventing them** – Monitoring the

revenue budget is a proactive way of understanding the financial position of services in order to tackle issues at source and as soon as they become apparent.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1 The SRS Annual Business Plan details illustrates how the Service is working towards reducing the carbon footprint of the service with consideration also given to nature implications, such as investigating noise and air emissions through environmental monitoring, including regulating emissions from industrial processes.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1 As detailed in the body of the report.

Employment

- 5.2 There are no employment implications

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3 There are no legal implications.

6. Background Papers

None

	Bridgend 2023/24			Cardiff 2023/24			Vale 2023/24			Total Gross Expenditure 2023/24		
	Budget £000's	Outturn £000's	Variance £000's	Budget £000's	Outturn £000's	Variance £000's	Budget £000's	Outturn £000's	Variance £000's	Budget £000's	Outturn £000's	Variance £000's
<u>Authority Specific</u>												
Bridgend Licensing	373	394	(21)							373	394	(21)
Bridgend Empty Homes	41	41	0							41	41	0
Kennelling & Vets Fees (Bridgend)	47	28	19							47	28	19
Cardiff Licencing				757	900	(143)				757	900	(143)
HMO Cathays				217	217	0				217	217	0
HMO Plasnewydd				296	296	0				296	296	0
Student Liaison				70	70	0				70	70	0
Night Time Noise				67	67	0				67	67	0
Cardiff Port Health				155	155	0				155	155	0
Vale Licensing							409	434	(25)	409	434	(25)
Burials (Vale)							1	6	(5)	1	6	(5)
Pest Control Service (Vale)							114	114	0	114	114	0
Vets & Kennelling Fees (Vale)							20	7	13	20	7	13
Authority Specific Sub total	461	463	(2)	1,562	1,705	(143)	544	561	(17)	2,567	2,729	(162)
<u>Core Services</u>												
Animal Services	102	101	1	238	242	(4)	82	82	0	422	425	(3)
Environmental	57	57	0	136	136	0	47	47	0	240	240	0
Food Services	373	365	8	884	867	17	302	296	6	1,559	1,528	31
Housing Services	149	151	(2)	355	358	(3)	121	122	(1)	625	631	(6)
Health & Safety & Communicable Disease	159	161	(2)	378	382	(4)	129	131	(2)	666	674	(8)
Pollution Services	223	226	(3)	530	535	(5)	181	183	(2)	934	944	(10)
Trading Standards	390	393	(3)	926	932	(6)	316	319	(3)	1,632	1,644	(12)
Core Sub total	1,453	1,454	(1)	3,447	3,452	(5)	1,178	1,180	(2)	6,078	6,086	(8)
Gross Expenditure Budget	1,914	1,917	(3)	5,009	5,157	(148)	1,722	1,741	(19)	8,645	8,815	(170)

Shared Regulatory Services

Quarterly Performance Report 2023/24

Quarter 1



Shared
Regulatory
Services

Gwasanaethau
Rheoliadol
a Rennir



High Risk Food Hygiene Inspections

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/FH/001	Qtr 1	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat A & B) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	13	32	40.63%	Amber	In line with our priorities agreed with the Food Standards Agency, all high risk businesses rated A and B due an inspection by the end of Qtr 1 were completed, with the exception of one inspection which was carried out in July and is no longer outstanding.	100%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/FH/001	Qtr 1	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat A & B) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	31	167	18.56%	Green	In line with our priorities agreed with the Food Standards Agency, all high risk businesses rated A and B due an inspection by the end of Qtr 1 were completed at premises that were operating and available for inspection.	100%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/FH/001	Qtr 1	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat A & B) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	29	60	48.33%	Amber	In line with our priorities agreed with the Food Standards Agency, all high risk businesses rated A and B due an inspection by the end of Qtr 1 were completed with the exception of 2 inspections, one of which was completed in July while the other remains outstanding.	100%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/FH/001	Qtr 1	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat A & B) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	73	259	28.19%	Amber	In line with our priorities agreed with the Food Standards Agency, all high risk businesses rated A and B due an inspection by the end of Qtr 1 were completed with the exception of 3 inspections, 2 of which were completed in July while one remains outstanding.	100%

High Risk Food Hygiene Inspections

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/FH/002	Qtr 1	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat C) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	108	432	25.00%	Red	While high risk business inspections remained a priority Category C inspections remain an issue with a significant number outstanding. This is largely due to the volume of inspections required and the service focusing resources on those businesses that pose the greatest risk. Notwithstanding this, all non broadly compliant C rated inspections have been completed (those that have a food hygiene rating of 0-2) at businesses that were operating and available for inspection.	90%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/FH/002	Qtr 1	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat C) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	309	946	32.66%	Red	While high risk business inspections remained a priority Category C inspections remain an issue with a significant number outstanding. This is largely due to the volume of inspections required and the service focusing resources on those businesses that pose the greatest risk. Notwithstanding this, all non broadly compliant C rated inspections have been completed (those that have a food hygiene rating of 0-2) at businesses that were operating and available for inspection.	90%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/FH/002	Qtr 1	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat C) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	99	377	26.26%	Red	While high risk business inspections remained a priority Category C inspections remain an issue with a significant number outstanding. This is largely due to the volume of inspections required and the service focusing resources on those businesses that pose the greatest risk. Notwithstanding this, all non broadly compliant C rated inspections have been completed (those that have a food hygiene rating of 0-2) at businesses that were operating and available for inspection.	90%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/FH/002	Qtr 1	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat C) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	516	1755	29.40%	Red	While high risk business inspections remained a priority Category C inspections remain an issue with a significant number outstanding. This is largely due to the volume of inspections required and the service focusing resources on those businesses that pose the greatest risk. Notwithstanding this, all non broadly compliant C rated inspections have been completed (those that have a food hygiene rating of 0-2) at businesses that were operating and available for inspection.	90%

New Businesses—Food Hygiene

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/FH/003	Qtr 1	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment during the year for food hygiene.	29	157	18.47%	Red	While high risk business inspections remained a priority new business inspections remain an issue with a significant number outstanding. This is largely due to the volume of inspections required and the service focussing on those businesses that pose the greatest risk which has affected performance in this area.	90%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/FH/003	Qtr 1	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment during the year for food hygiene.	99	484	20.45%	Red	While high risk business inspections remained a priority new business inspections remain an issue with a significant number outstanding. This is largely due to the volume of inspections required and the service focussing on those businesses that pose the greatest risk which has affected performance in this area.	90%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/FH/003	Qtr 1	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment during the year for food hygiene.	43	145	29.66%	Red	While high risk business inspections remained a priority new business inspections remain an issue with a significant number outstanding. This is largely due to the volume of inspections required and the service focussing on those businesses that pose the greatest risk which has affected performance in this area.	90%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/FH/003	Qtr 1	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment during the year for food hygiene.	171	786	21.76%	Red	While high risk business inspections remained a priority new business inspections remain an issue with a significant number outstanding. This is largely due to the volume of inspections required and the service focussing on those businesses that pose the greatest risk which has affected performance in this area.	90%

Broadly Compliant Food Premises

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	PAM/23	Qtr 1	Percentage of food establishments which are 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene standards.	1247	1273	97.96%	Green	Target exceeded.	94%
2023-24	Cardiff	PAM/23	Qtr 1	Percentage of food establishments which are 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene standards.	3048	3194	95.43%	Green	Target exceeded.	94%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	PAM/23	Qtr 1	Percentage of food establishments which are 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene standards.	1219	1261	96.67%	Green	Target exceeded.	94%
2023-24	SRS	PAM/23	Qtr 1	Percentage of food establishments which are 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene standards.	5514	5728	96.26%	Green	Target exceeded.	94%

High Risk Trading Standards Inspections

Year	Team	Authority	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	TS combined	Bridgend	Qtr 1	The percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected, for trading standards.	1	12	8.33%	Green	There were no high risk inspections programmed for Qtr 1 at open and operational businesses.	100%
2023-24	TS Combined	Cardiff	Qtr 1	The percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected, for trading standards.	3	16	18.75%	Amber	One inspection remained outstanding at the end of Qtr 1 in relation to a food standards inspection, however this was completed in July and is no long outstanding.	100%
2023-24	TS Combined	Vale of Glam	Qtr 1	The percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected, for trading standards.	1	8	12.50%	Green	All programmed high risk inspections have been carried out at open and operational businesses.	100%
2023-24	TS Combined	SRS	Qtr 1	The percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected, for trading standards.	5	36	13.89%	Amber	One inspection remained outstanding at the end of Qtr 1 in relation to a food standards inspection in Cardiff, however this was completed in July and is no long outstanding.	100%

New business—Trading Standards

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/TS/003	Qtr 1	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment visit or returned a self-assessment questionnaire during the year, for food standards and animal feed.	23	226	10.18%	Red	New business inspections remain an issue for the service with a significant number outstanding. This is largely due to the volume of inspections required and the service focussing on those businesses that pose the greatest risk which has affected performance in this area.	80%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/TS/003	Qtr 1	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment visit or returned a self-assessment questionnaire during the year, for food standards and animal feed.	92	901	10.21%	Red	New business inspections remain an issue for the service with a significant number outstanding. This is largely due to the volume of inspections required and the service focussing on those businesses that pose the greatest risk which has affected performance in this area.	80%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/TS/003	Qtr 1	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment visit or returned a self-assessment questionnaire during the year, for food standards and animal feed.	41	325	12.62%	Red	New business inspections remain an issue for the service with a significant number outstanding. This is largely due to the volume of inspections required and the service focussing on those businesses that pose the greatest risk which has affected performance in this area.	80%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/TS/003	Qtr 1	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment visit or returned a self-assessment questionnaire during the year, for food standards and animal feed.	156	1452	10.74%	Red	New business inspections remain an issue for the service with a significant number outstanding. This is largely due to the volume of inspections required and the service focussing on those businesses that pose the greatest risk which has affected performance in this area.	80%

Noise and Air Pollution

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. re- sponded to within tar- get	No. re- ceived	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/LC/008	Qtr 1	Percentage of domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days.	145	172	84.30%	Amber	The shortfall against target represents 10 complaints that failed to reach target. This is largely due to current demands on the service.	90%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/LC/008	Qtr 1	Percentage of domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days.	493	535	92.15%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/008	Qtr 1	Percentage of domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days.	145	151	96.03%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/LC/008	Qtr 1	Percentage of domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days.	783	858	91.26%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%

Noise and Air Pollution

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. re- sponded to within tar- get	No. re- ceived	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/LC/009	Qtr 1	Percentage of commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day.	45	59	76.27%	Green	Target exceeded.	75%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/LC/009	Qtr 1	Percentage of commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day.	114	197	57.87%	Red	The shortfall against target represents 34 complaints that failed to reach target. This is largely due to current demands on the service and the lack of resource available, further exacerbated by delays in the logging of complaints.	75%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/009	Qtr 1	Percentage of commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day.	62	90	68.89%	Amber	The shortfall against target represents 6 complaints that failed to reach target. This is largely due to current demands on the service and the lack of resource available, further exacerbated by delays in the logging of complaints.	75%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/LC/009	Qtr 1	Percentage of commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day.	221	346	63.87%	Red	The shortfall against target represents 39 complaints that failed to reach target and this is largely due to current demands on the service and the limited resource available. Options are now being explored to streamline the complaint logging process.	75%

Noise and Air Pollution

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. re- sponded to within tar- get	No. re- ceived	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/LC/010	Qtr 1	Percentage of alarm complaints responded to within one day.	3	4	75.00%	Red	The shortfall against target represents only 1 complaint that failed to reach target. This is largely due to the volume of general workload.	90%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/LC/010	Qtr 1	Percentage of alarm complaints responded to within one day.	28	28	100.00%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/010	Qtr 1	Percentage of alarm complaints responded to within one day.	1	2	50.00%	Red	The shortfall against target represents only 1 complaint that failed to reach target. This occurred due to delays in the complaint reaching the team within required timescales.	90%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/LC/010	Qtr 1	Percentage of alarm complaints responded to within one day.	32	34	94.12%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%

Licensing

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No deter- mined	No. received	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/LC/004	Qtr 1	Percentage of licensed premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	24	24	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/LC/004	Qtr 1	Percentage of licensed premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	159	159	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/004	Qtr 1	Percentage of licensed premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	29	29	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/LC/004	Qtr 1	Percentage of licensed premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	212	212	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%

Licensing

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No deter- mined	No. received	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/LC/005	Qtr 1	Percentage of licensed personal applications received and determined within 2 months.	33	33	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/LC/005	Qtr 1	Percentage of licensed personal applications received and determined within 2 months.	77	77	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/005	Qtr 1	Percentage of licensed personal applications received and determined within 2 months.	25	25	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/LC/005	Qtr 1	Percentage of licensed personal applications received and determined within 2 months.	135	135	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%

Licensing

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No deter- mined	No. received	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/LC/006	Qtr 1	Percentage of Gambling Premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	0	0	0.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/LC/006	Qtr 1	Percentage of Gambling Premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	1	1	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/006	Qtr 1	Percentage of Gambling Premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	1	1	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/LC/006	Qtr 1	Percentage of Gambling Premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	2	2	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%

Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. improved to an E or above EPC	No of properties where engagement has taken place with landlord	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/MEES/001	Qtr 1	Percentage of private rented sector properties where energy efficiency has been improved through direct action from SRS.	14	79	17.72%	Green	Work began late in Qtr 1 sending out letters to landlords with properties holding an EPC with and F and G rating and the results presented represent the initial response received by the end of Qtr 1, with new certificates being rated between C and E. The estimated reduction in carbon dioxide (CO2) produced from these properties as a result of improvements is 50.6 tonnes together with a reduction of 44652 kWh in energy needed for heating. Unfortunately due to recent energy price increases it has not been possible to reliably estimate the reduction in energy cost. There remains a significant amount of work validating our records on unrated properties in order to engage further with landlords of these properties.	Baseline being set
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/MEES/001	Qtr 1	Percentage of private rented sector properties where energy efficiency has been improved through direct action from SRS.	12	69	17.39%	Green	Work began late in Qtr 1 sending out letters to landlords with properties holding an EPC with and F and G rating and the results presented represent the initial response received by the end of Qtr 1, with new certificates being rated between C and E. The estimated reduction in carbon dioxide (CO2) produced from these properties as a result of improvements is 36.4 tonnes together with a reduction of 18128 kWh in energy needed for heating. Unfortunately due to recent energy price increases it has not been possible to reliably estimate the reduction in energy cost. There remains a significant amount of work validating our records on unrated properties in order to engage further with landlords of these properties.	Baseline being set
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/MEES/001	Qtr 1	Percentage of private rented sector properties where energy efficiency has been improved through direct action from SRS.	7	93	7.53%	Green	Work began late in Qtr 1 sending out letters to landlords with properties holding an EPC with and F and G rating and the results presented represent the initial response received by the end of Qtr 1, with new certificates being rated between C and E. The estimated reduction in carbon dioxide (CO2) produced from these properties as a result of improvements is 16.9 tonnes together with a reduction of 28770 kWh in energy needed for heating. Unfortunately due to recent energy price increases it has not been possible to reliably estimate the reduction in energy cost. There remains a significant amount of work validating our records on unrated properties in order to engage further with landlords of these properties.	Baseline being set
2023-24	SRS	SRS/MEES/001	Qtr 1	Percentage of private rented sector properties where energy efficiency has been improved through direct action from SRS.	33	241	13.69%	Green	Work began late in Qtr 1 sending out letters to landlords with properties holding an EPC with and F and G rating and the results presented represent the initial response received by the end of Qtr 1, with new certificates being rated between C and E. The estimated reduction in carbon dioxide (CO2) produced from these properties as a result of improvements is 103.9 tonnes together with a reduction of 91550 kWh in energy needed for heating. Unfortunately due to recent energy price increases it has not been possible to reliably estimate the reduction in energy cost. There remains a significant amount of work validating our records on unrated properties in order to engage further with landlords of these properties.	Baseline being set

Prosecutions

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. of prosecutions cases in court	No. concluded successfully	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/PRO/001	Qtr 1	Percentage of SRS investigations resulting in prosecution that were successfully concluded.	1	1	100.00%	Green	Only one case was concluded in relation to Bridgend and this related to an investigation following a consumer complaint about the purchase of a vehicle. The customer paid for an extended warranty but the seller never registered it despite taking the money.	Baseline being set
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/PRO/001	Qtr 1	Percentage of SRS investigations resulting in prosecution that were successfully concluded.	7	7	100.00%	Green	The seven Cardiff cases that were concluded during Qtr 1 related to food hygiene, housing, food standards, health and safety at work and trading standards issues. One of these cases concerning health and safety offences at an indoor trampoline park was highlighted in the media, and resulted in a £10,000 fine and £10,000 costs and the director sentenced to 10 months imprisonment suspended for 18 months.	Baseline being set
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/PRO/001	Qtr 1	Percentage of SRS investigations resulting in prosecution that were successfully concluded.	0	0	0.00%	Green	No Vale of Glamorgan prosecutions concluded during Qtr 1.	Baseline being set
2023-24	SRS	SRS/PRO/001	Qtr 1	Percentage of SRS investigations resulting in prosecution that were successfully concluded.	8	8	100.00%	Green	The 8 cases that were concluded during Qtr 1 related to food hygiene, housing, food standards, health and safety at work and trading standards issues. One of these cases concerning health and safety offences at an indoor trampoline park was highlighted in the media, and resulted in a £10,000 fine and £10,000 costs and the director sentenced to 10 months imprisonment suspended for 18 months.	Baseline being set

Shared Regulatory Services

Communicable Disease and Health Service Plan

2023-24



Communicable
Disease



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Introduction

Local Authorities have a responsibility to provide comprehensive health protection service to businesses, residents and visitors of Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. This is largely achieved through the investigation of cases and outbreaks of communicable disease and the application of control, preventative and enforcement measures together with a number of other proactive activities. This Service Plan is produced to inform the business community and wider audience of the arrangements Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan has in place to discharge this duty.

Whilst Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) was able to return to a 'business as usual' service delivery model throughout 2022/23, we remain vigilant to challenges and opportunities that may require the service to adjust to accommodate new ways of working. Our commitment to support Local Health Board partners manage on-going risks associated with COVID-19 continues, but with wider focus now moving to the introduction of the new all-Wales special procedures licensing regime in 2024 and what that will mean for service delivery across the region. This licensing regime will replace the existing 'one-off' registration scheme for tattooing, cosmetic skin piercing, acupuncture, and electrolysis procedures, replacing it with a system of renewable personal licences and premises approvals. Whilst SRS welcomes this more robust regulatory framework for skin piercing treatments, and its potential expansion to the largely unregulated aesthetics sector, concern remains about Local Authority resource and capacity to deliver this critical piece of work without additional funding being made available by Welsh Government.

This service plan therefore outlines our current arrangements and proposed interventions and actions to be delivered during the year. Whilst these may be subject to change, we remain committed to protecting and improving the health of people across the region.

Christina Hill
Operational Manager Commercial Services

1. Service Aims and Objectives

1.1 Primary aims

The Communicable Disease Service is committed to protecting individuals from harm, preventing communicable disease and promoting health improvement and to demonstrate this; the service has adopted the following aims and objectives.

The overall aim of the service is:-

The protection and improvement of the health of the people of Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan

To achieve this, the service has adopted the following key delivery priorities:-

- The timely investigation, surveillance, control, and prevention of sporadic and outbreak cases of communicable disease, including the development and implementation of related public health intervention strategies.
- The enforcement of Health Protection legislation to minimise the spread of communicable disease and contamination from radiation and chemicals that threaten health.
- The provision of infection control and nutritional training.
- Leading and supporting the work of council services and external organisations including local communities and industry to protect and minimise the impact of public health risks to the population of Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.
- In line with Cardiff's Healthy City status undertake targeted health promotion and intervention activities by acting upon the social, economic, environmental and biological determinants of health and wellbeing.

1.2 Links to Corporate Objectives and local plans

As a regional organisation providing regulatory services across three local authority areas, we place the **corporate priorities** and outcomes of the three councils at the heart of all that we do (Appendix A). In developing our own strategic priorities and outcomes for Shared Regulatory Services, we have considered the priorities of all the three authorities, together with the needs and aspirations of our partners and customers so they translate into priorities that meet local needs.



SRS priorities particularly relevant to the delivery of the communicable disease service are:

Improving health and wellbeing Amongst other factors impacting health, the service works with others to protect public health by controlling and preventing sporadic cases and outbreaks of communicable disease contributing to the reduction in ill health in people.

Supporting the local economy The provision of timely advice and engagement on health and infection control issues to businesses, stakeholders, and other local authorities and bodies can benefit the economic viability of businesses. The equitable enforcement of regulations helps to maintain a level playing field, allowing businesses to compete on equal terms.

Safeguarding the vulnerable Much of the reactive surveillance work forms the foundation for proactive evidence based interventions focused on vulnerable and 'at risk' sectors of our community. This work routinely involves working in partnership with the business community, Public Health Wales, Care Inspectorate Wales, Local Health Board, voluntary organisations and supporting other Council services such as schools and care sector commissioning teams.

Nationally the service also contributes to the **National Enforcement Priorities for Wales** for local regulatory delivery which highlight the positive contribution that regulatory services, together with local and national partners, can make in delivering better outcomes:-

- Protecting individuals from harm and promoting health improvement
- Ensuring the safety and quality of the food chain to minimise risk to human and animal health
- Promoting a fair and just environment for citizens and business
- Improving the local environment to positively influence quality of life and promote sustainability.

As a public body, SRS is required to implement the key principles of the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** which seeks to ensure the needs of the present are met in a sustainable way by using the following ways of working:

- looking to the long term so not compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs;
- taking an integrated approach;
- involving a diversity of the population in the decisions affecting them;
- working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions; and
- acting to prevent problems from occurring or getting worse.

Welsh Government expects public bodies in Wales to follow these five ways of working when preventing and managing communicable disease outbreaks.

The Local Public Health (interim) Plan 2021-2024, published as part of the Local Public Health Strategic Framework, provides details of how local Public Health teams work in partnership to improve and protect the health and well-being of the local population. The Plan sets out several priority work areas and actions necessary to achieve improvement. A number of themes detailed in the public health work programme dovetail with work being undertaken by the Communicable Disease, Health and Safety service as part of its proactive and reactive work

(e.g. delivering the Healthy Option Award scheme; providing appropriate infection control advice when interviewing confirmed cases of communicable disease; enforcement of current smoke-free legislation across the region).

“Move more, Eat Well Plan” (launched in 2020) is a regional response by Cardiff & Vale Local Health Board, Cardiff Council and Vale of Glamorgan Council which identifies 10 priority areas to improve health conditions across the region, including all Public Services Board organisations staff restaurants/canteens signing up to healthy food standards. [Move More Eat Well](#)

The Healthy Option Award also supports one of the national key priorities in the Welsh Government’s strategy to prevent and reduce obesity levels in Wales, “Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales”, which aims to improve life opportunities for future generations by delivering a whole system approach with a range of partners.



National Priority Area 1

Shape the food and drink environment towards sustainable and healthier options.

Aim - Ensure that our food environment is more targeted to healthier options to make the healthy choice, the easy choice. We will ensure that foods High in Fat, Sugar, and Salt (HFSS) are not advertised to children and young people. We will promote healthier options on our public transport and within local communities to enable healthy eating to become the norm.

2. Overview of the Service

2.1 Area profile

Shared Regulatory Services covers the Council areas of Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan and serves over 600,000 residents. Extending from St Mellons in the East of Cardiff to Maesteg in the west, the area encompasses Cardiff, the capital City of Wales with its array of cultural, financial and commercial organisations and the rural areas of Bridgend and the Vale of Glamorgan with their vibrant tourist and agricultural economies.



Bridgend is situated on the south coast straddling the M4 corridor. It comprises an area of 28,500 hectares and a population of just over 140,000 residents. To the north of the M4, the area consists of mainly ex-coal mining valley communities with Maesteg as the main centre of population. To the south of the M4, the ex-market town of Bridgend is the largest town, the hub of the economy and its employment base. To the south west on the coast lies Porthcawl, a traditional seaside resort, a traditional seaside resort with a high proportion of elderly residents, which is subject to a major influx of tourists during the summer period.



Cardiff is the capital city of Wales and is continuing to grow faster than any other capital city in Europe. In population terms, it is the largest city in Wales with a population of 370,000. Population alone however, does not fully represent Cardiff's significance as a regional trading and business centre as the population swells by approximately 70,000 daily with commuters and visitors. Cardiff is the seat of government and the commercial, financial and administrative centre of Wales. Cardiff boasts one of the most vibrant city centres in the UK and on a typical weekend, Cardiff's night time economy can attract over 40,000 people and sometimes more than 100,000 when the City's Millennium Stadium hosts international events.



The Vale of Glamorgan is bounded to the north by the M4 motorway and to the south by the Severn Estuary. It covers 33,097 hectares with 53 kilometres of coastline, and a population of over 130,000 residents. The area is predominantly rural in character, but contains several urban areas of note such as Barry, Penarth, Dinas Powys and the historic towns of Cowbridge and Llantwit Major. Barry is the largest town, a key employment area and popular seaside resort. The rural parts of the Vale provide a strong agricultural base together with a quality environment, which is a key part of the area's attraction. The area includes Barry Docks area and Cardiff International Airport.

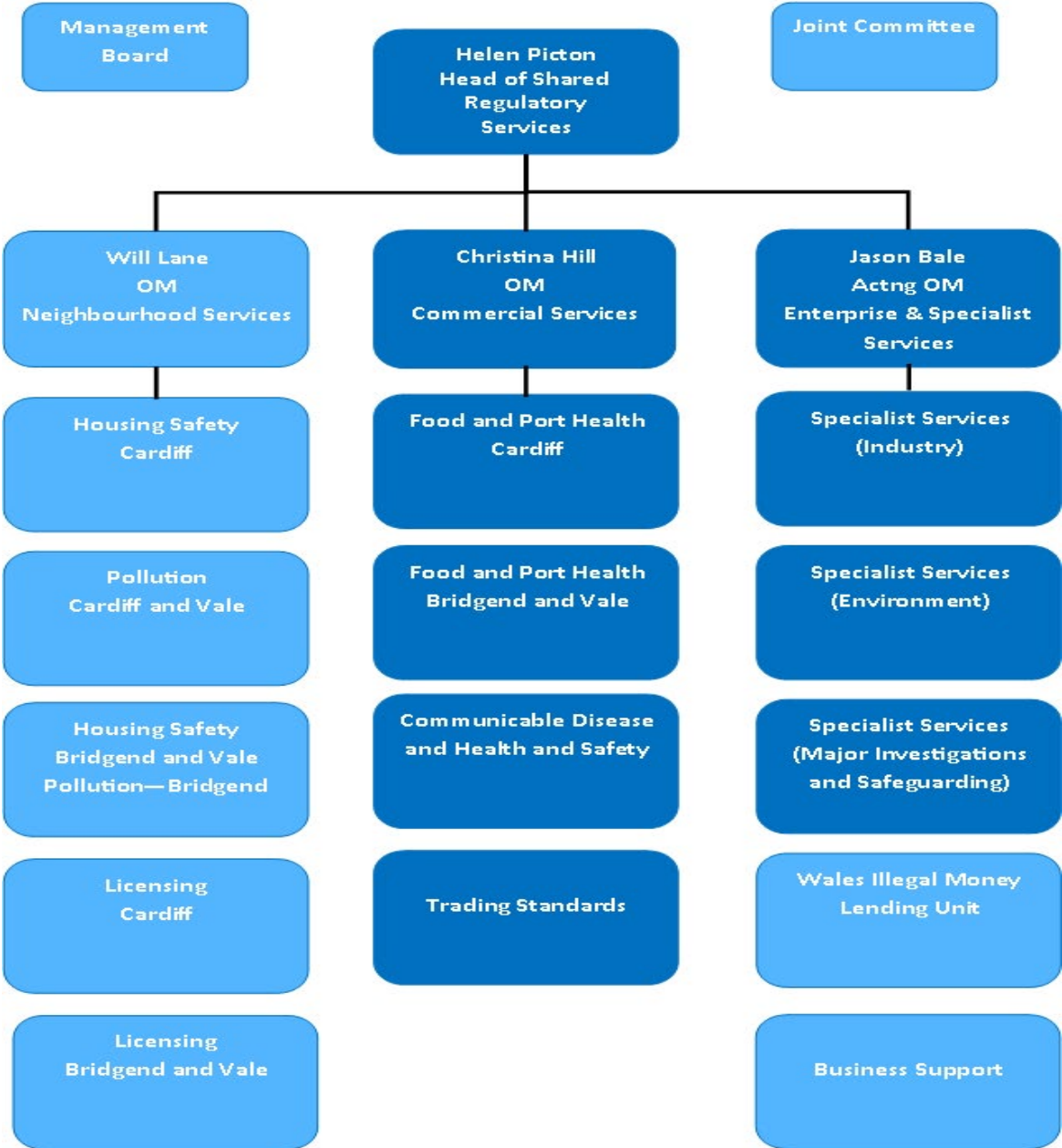


2.2 Organisational Structure

Communicable Disease Services are provided by the Commercial Services Team within Shared Regulatory Services. The Teams consists largely of Environmental Health Officers providing services across the three local authority areas. The Vale of Glamorgan Council acts as the host authority for the Service with functions associated with this Plan delegated to the Shared Service Joint Committee.

Operational functions within the Service are illustrated in the following table with those that have responsibility for public health issues highlighted in darker blue.

Shared Regulatory Services Organisational Chart



2.3 Scope of the Communicable Disease Service

A comprehensive health protection and improvement service is delivered by combining surveillance, public health intervention, epidemiological studies, enforcement, advice, training and promotion. Much of the reactive surveillance work forms the foundation for proactive evidence based interventions focused on vulnerable and 'at risk' sectors of our community; in particular young people and the elderly. Examples of proactive interventions undertaken by the service will be detailed later on in this report. Outbreak and cluster investigations also form a significant part of our reactive role.

Shared Regulatory Services, and its Officers, continues to lead nationally on aspects of communicable disease and health protection, most notably since 2018, when the substantive Team Manager was seconded to Welsh Government to lead on the development of the Special Procedures Licensing regime in accordance with the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017. As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Team Manager was re-assigned into the role of Senior Environmental Health advisor for COVID-19 in the Health Protection Policy & Legislation Branch of Welsh Government from March 2020 to March 2022. Throughout the remainder of 2022, and continuing into 2023, the Team Manager has resumed a primary focus on delivering the new special procedures licensing regime across Wales by Spring 2024.

The acting Team Manager was further able to actively contribute to the development of the all-Wales licensing regime via attendance at the fortnightly Welsh Government special procedures task and finish group.

Officers from the service have also played an integral role in the development and delivery of the Level 2 Award in Infection Prevention and Control for Special Procedures across the region, which will be a prerequisite for practitioners wishing to apply for a personal licensing in the future.

Key services delivered are:

- The investigation of confirmed sporadic and outbreak cases of communicable disease and all actions required as a result of those investigations.
- **During 2022/2023 this has continued to include the investigation and management of COVID-19 incidents in the health and social care sector.**
- Responding to complaints of suspected food poisoning and infectious disease risks.
- Enforcement of Health Protection legislation including the service of 'Requests for Co-operation', the application for Part 2A Orders and exclusion of infected cases or close contacts from place of work, education or leisure activities.
- Lead on local and national communicable disease initiatives, which involve proactive business engagement and partnership working commonly Public Health Wales, Business Wales, Welsh Government and other Council services such as education and corporate health and safety.
- Undertake health promotion and public health interventions (*e.g. Healthy Option Awards; Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Schemes; preparing educational videos*).
- Management and delivery of infection control and nutritional training.
- Assess client consultation and infection control arrangements in businesses registering to undertake skin piercing activities (*tattooing; cosmetic piercing; acupuncture; electrolysis; semi-permanent make-up*).

Service delivery points

Whilst all 3 Local Authority areas include regional hubs which operate office hours from Monday to Friday, the Communicable Disease Service is primarily delivered by Officers following a hybrid working model. Lead Officers remain contactable outside of office hours via the out-of-hours mechanism for the investigation and control of communicable diseases of public health significance; such as E. Coli O157, Typhoid and Legionnaires' disease. Officers will also conduct investigations and case interviews outside of normal office hours for significant pathogens so that the spread of communicable disease in the wider community is controlled as quickly as possible.

The Shared Regulatory Services website provides information on the services provided.

[SRS.wales](http://www.srs.wales)

Tel: 0300 1236696



[@SRS_Wales](https://twitter.com/SRS_Wales)

<http://www.srs.wales>

Bridgend

Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB

Normal offices hours:

Monday to Thursday: 8.30am to 5.00pm

Friday: 8.30 am to 4.30pm

Cardiff

Level 1
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Normal office hours:

Monday to Thursday: 8.30am to 5.00 pm

Friday: 8.30 am to 4.30pm

Vale of Glamorgan

Civic Offices
Holton Road
Barry
CF63 4RU

Normal offices hours:

Monday to Thursday: 8.30am to 5.00pm

Friday: 8.30am to 4.30pm

2.4 Resources

Financial allocation

The expenditure directly involved in providing the Communicable Disease Service for 2023/2024 is included in the Service budget and is considered adequate to ensure the effective delivery of the service **under normal circumstances**.

Staffing allocation

The table below indicates the actual number of staff working on Communicable Disease Control and related matters (in terms of full time equivalents FTE).

Position	Function	FTE
Head of Shared Regulatory Services	Management of Shared Regulatory Service.	0.05
Operational Manager Regulatory Commercial Services x 1	Management of Commercial Services	0.10
Team Manager Communicable Disease, Health and Safety (also a nominated Lead Officer) x 1	Management and delivery of the Communicable Disease Service.	0.50
Lead Officers for Communicable Disease x 2 1 FT CSO has 50/50 split for H&S:CD work 1 FT CSO has a 20/80 split for H&S:CD work	All aspects of communicable disease investigation, enforcement, control and prevention.	1.3
Commercial Services Officer (Communicable Disease, Health & Safety) x 4 1 CSO works 4 days a week with an equal split in H&S:CD work The other 3 CSOs are currently fully focused on health and safety enforcement work but are trained to assist with CD work on an agile basis as demand dictates.	Assist with all aspects of communicable disease investigation, enforcement, control and prevention <i>(additional resource can be diverted to CD function as service demand dictates)</i>	0.4
Commercial Services Technical Officer (Communicable Disease, Health & Safety) x 2 2 FT CSTOs have 50/50 split for H&S:CD work	All aspects of communicable disease investigation and enforcement as dictated by training and experience	1.0

Two part-time CSOs based in the Specialist Services (Industry) team also lead on delivery of the Level 2 Award in Infection Prevention and Control for Special Procedures in readiness for the introduction of the all-Wales licensing regime in 2024.

During 2022, the Communicable Disease, Health and Safety team was not fully staffed until August 2022. Support with the follow up of confirmed cases of communicable disease was also provided by a temporary member of staff until the end of December 2022.

The table below indicates the number of staff tasked with oversight and management of COVID-19 related incidents in the health and social care sectors (in terms of full time equivalents FTE)

since 1st April 2022. A FTE Environmental Health student post remains vacant. This function is subject to separate funding arrangements from Welsh Government.

Position	Function	FTE
1 Senior Commercial Services Officer	Oversight of escalations via the Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) process and management of Clinical Lead and HPOs	0.5
1 Commercial Services Officer	Dealing with incidents of COVID-19 in the health and social care sector as a Clinical Lead	1.0
4 Health Protection Officers	Investigation of incidents of COVID-19 in the health and social care sector; providing IPC advice to settings.	4.0

2.5 Staff Development and Competency

Shared Regulatory Service’s approach to managing the competency of its employees is through the Workforce Development Plan which provides a structure for developing staff to ensure the right mix of experience, knowledge and skills, and to ensure we get the right number of the right people in the right place at the right time.

The Workforce Development Plan provides a framework to blend:-

- Organisational culture
- Leadership and management
- Core skills
- Recruitment, retention and progression
- Communication and employee engagement
- Employee performance management

To improve business resilience, and bolster the competency of staff in the Communicable Disease, Health and Safety Team, a number of additional Officers were up-skilled during 2019 so that they are now competent using the Tarian database and confident interviewing confirmed cases of illness. All new staff members into the Communicable Disease, Health and Safety Team are now routinely trained in the use of Tarian when they join SRS. This in-house training has, and continues to be, enhanced by Lead Officer and Support Lead Officer training courses as they become available from Public Health Wales.

Workforce development is enhanced through annual performance reviews where the Team Manager identifies personal objectives for each member of the team and assesses training needs for the year ahead. This management tool is further supported by monthly team meetings and regular team contact (*face-to-face discussions; Email communications; on-line TEAMS meetings and telephone calls*).

Professional Development (CPD) is actively encouraged and Officers continue to be offered the opportunity to attend a wide range of training courses and webinars, seminars, meetings and briefings to help maintain competency and improve technical, legal and administrative knowledge. Authorised officers are expected to achieve at least 20 hours of CPD each year, or

at least 30 hours of CPD if a Chartered Member of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health.

Officers within the Communicable Disease, Health & Safety Team additionally have access to the technical support and expertise of the local CCDC (Consultant in Communicable Disease Control) and Health Protection Team (AWARe) in Public Health Wales, particularly when dealing with outbreaks and clusters of communicable disease, and complex conditions that have a significant impact on the wider community (e.g. such as TB).

Lead Officers regularly attend regional communicable disease task group meetings and the all-Wales Expert Panel for Communicable Disease meetings.

The Service ensures that competency is secured by appointing appropriately qualified and experienced personnel to carry out the communicable disease function. There are specific job descriptions and person specifications for all employees of Shared Regulatory Services and all appointments are made in accordance with the procedures for recruitment and selection.

2.6 Challenges for the year ahead

Delivering the SRS in the future - The creation of SRS reflected the Welsh Government collaboration agenda, with one of the main drivers being to realise significant cost savings. These, and subsequent savings have been made by SRS over the years and we continue to deliver the SRS with a reducing resource. Over time SRS has taken on additional responsibilities under new legislation and areas of regulation and any further reductions will require the need to further examine and introduce new ways of prioritising our services which may result in a reduction in service provision, or the charging for some services and difficult decisions about the level of service provision.

Refugees and re-settlers – Whilst recent international humanitarian emergencies have enabled SRS to welcome, and support, refugees and re-settlers into the region, it has necessitated the introduction of measures to ensure that diseases endemic in other countries are not introduced in the UK. This is particularly poignant for the importation of pets by refugees from countries where Rabies, tick and tapeworm infections, and conditions such as *Brucella canis* are prevalent.

Many re-settlers and refugees are also re-locating from conditions with limited sanitation; poor access to clean food and water; and over-crowded conditions. This could result in an increase of reported cases of Giardiasis; Tuberculosis and Shigella across the region that will require the service to formally exclude cases from school or work until medical clearance has been achieved; support the funding of cases to remain off work if they are required to undergo prolonged and complex medical treatment; and potentially ensure risks to public health are mitigated through the 'request to co-operate' and Part 2A Order mechanisms.

Delivery of new legislative controls - It is now predicted that implementation of the all-Wales licensing regime for special procedures (*tattooing, cosmetic piercing, acupuncture and*

electrolysis) in accordance with the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 will be **delayed until mid-2024**. This licensing regime will replace the existing registration scheme with a more robust regulatory system that will require a personal licence and premises approval to be renewed at 3 yearly intervals (or 7 days for temporary events), and the completion of a level 2 infection control training course before a licence can be issued.

At the time of writing this service plan Welsh Government is still in the process of collating and analysing the feedback from its first consultation to inform the finalised personal licence and premises approval conditions, and will not commence the second consultation, which will consider the supporting Regulations, until late Autumn 2023.

The full impact of this new regulatory regime on resources has yet to be determined, and whilst the costs associated with administering the scheme will be recoverable through agreed, all-Wales Licensing fees, no additional funding will be made available for Local Authorities to fully deliver this piece of work alongside existing statutory functions. Since SRS has the largest number of registered skin piercing practitioners and premises throughout all of the Welsh Authorities, it will likely experience the greatest impact from this new legislative regime.

Cardiff's city status - Cardiff is the capital city of Wales, and the largest Local Authority in the country; its population of 370,000 swelling by approximately 70,000 each day from commuters, students and visitors. The popularity of the city as a leisure, entertainment and sporting event destination continues to grow and it's anticipated that visitor numbers will continue to increase throughout 2023/24. This status presents a range of public health risks whose control and prevention is the responsibility of the Communicable Disease Service in partnership with Public Health Wales. The risks vary in terms of complexity, significance and resource allocation.

Cost of living crisis – The cost of living crisis currently being experienced across the UK will inevitably impact the health of our nation and exacerbate inequalities in health. As household finances become squeezed, the opportunity to maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle will become more challenging for a larger number of households across the SRS region, potentially impacting life opportunities for future generations.

Financial pressures on the commercial sector could also create an increase in illicit activities (*e.g. food fraud; supply and sale of illegal tobacco; substitution of ingredients that are cheaper*) that could negatively impact the health and safety of our communities. This could cause a significant increase in the number of confirmed cases of illness; complaints and accidents being reported to SRS in the short to mid-term.

2.7 Action Plan 2023/2024

The following action plan is evidence based and has been developed for 2022/2023 and outlines how through reactive and proactive work the Service will:

1. Improve health and well being
2. Safeguard the vulnerable
3. Support the local economy and
4. Maximise the use of resources

The Communicable Disease and Health Protection Service also contributes to the Section 18 Health and Safety Enforcement Plan, and the Food Law Enforcement Plan, and details of this contribution are contained within those respective documents.

Communicable Disease Action Plan 2023/2024	
Relevant Strategic Priorities	Objective
	Investigate and control sporadic and outbreak notifications of communicable disease and undertake public health interventions to prevent increased incidence of illness and minimise onward transmission
	<p>Q1 Commence work on the Communicable Disease service plan for 2023/2024.</p> <p>Undertake timely investigations of sporadic cases of communicable disease; outbreaks and suspected food poisonings, and apply appropriate control and preventative measures.</p> <p>Continue to support businesses and legacy authorities across SRS with infection control training and advice during outbreaks.</p> <p>Actively support the regional Test, Track and Protect regional response in conjunction with the Local Health Board, as required.</p> <p>Prepare the service for the introduction of the special procedures licensing scheme outlined in Part 4 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017.</p> <p>Deliver the RSPH Level 2 Award in Infection Prevention and Control for Special Procedures.</p> <p>Visits to sunbed salons across SRS to gauge, and improve, compliance with The Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010 and The Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010 (Wales) Regulations 2011.</p> <p>Engage with the student liaison officer and partners in the higher education sector to support existing strategies and initiate opportunities to supports students improve their food behaviours.</p>
	<p>Q2 Complete the Communicable Disease service plan for 2023/2024.</p> <p>Undertake timely investigations of sporadic cases of communicable disease; outbreaks and suspected food poisonings, and apply appropriate control and preventative measures.</p> <p>Continue to support businesses and legacy authorities across SRS with infection control training and advice during outbreaks.</p>

	<p>Actively support the regional Test, Track and Protect regional response in conjunction with the Local Health Board, as required.</p> <p>Prepare the service for the introduction of the special procedures licensing scheme outlined in Part 4 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017.</p> <p>Deliver the RSPH Level 2 Award in Infection Prevention and Control for Special Procedures.</p> <p>Visits to sunbed salons across SRS to gauge, and improve, compliance with The Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010 and The Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010 (Wales) Regulations 2011.</p> <p>Engage with the student liaison officer and partners in the higher education sector to support existing strategies and initiate opportunities to supports students improve their food behaviours.</p> <p>Develop and cascade educational materials about infection prevention and control measures in barber shops, particularly with regard to the control of ringworm.</p>
Q3	<p>Undertake timely investigations of sporadic cases of communicable disease; outbreaks and suspected food poisonings, and apply appropriate control and preventative measures.</p> <p>Continue to support businesses and legacy authorities across SRS with infection control training and advice during outbreaks.</p> <p>Actively support the regional Test, Track and Protect regional response in conjunction with the Local Health Board, as required.</p> <p>Prepare the service for the introduction of the special procedures licensing scheme outlined in Part 4 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017.</p> <p>Deliver the RSPH Level 2 Award in Infection Prevention and Control for Special Procedures.</p> <p>Engage with the student liaison officer and partners in the higher education sector to support existing strategies and initiate opportunities to supports students improve their food behaviours.</p>
Q4	<p>Undertake timely investigations of sporadic cases of communicable disease; outbreaks and suspected food poisonings, and apply appropriate control and preventative measures.</p> <p>Continue to support businesses and legacy authorities across SRS with infection control training and advice during outbreaks.</p> <p>Actively support the regional Test, Track and Protect regional response in conjunction with the Local Health Board, as required.</p> <p>Prepare the service for the introduction of the special procedures licensing scheme outlined in Part 4 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017.</p> <p>Deliver the RSPH Level 2 Award in Infection Prevention and Control for Special Procedures.</p> <p>Engage with the student liaison officer and partners in the higher education sector to support existing strategies and initiate opportunities to supports students improve their food behaviours.</p>

3. Service Delivery and Performance 2022/23

3.1 Introduction

The Communicable Disease Service is supported by an active surveillance system managed through the national database, Tarian, which is utilised by all Welsh Local Authorities and Public Health Wales. All information pertaining to communicable disease incidents (*e.g. Norovirus issues in a school or residential care setting*); sporadic cases of notifiable illness and outbreaks are logged on Tarian. Since its introduction Tarian has facilitated more effective communication between stakeholders; supports effective case management; enables early detection of outbreaks and enabled the Authority to more readily identify trends in infectious disease cases.

In 2022, **54,461 cases** of communicable disease were notified to SRS. Lab confirmed cases accounted for 99.5% of these (54,205 cases), whilst unconfirmed (suspected) food poisoning accounted for only 0.5% (256 cases). This is almost a 50% decrease when compared to 2021, yet 2022 case numbers are still significantly higher than all other years prior to 2021.

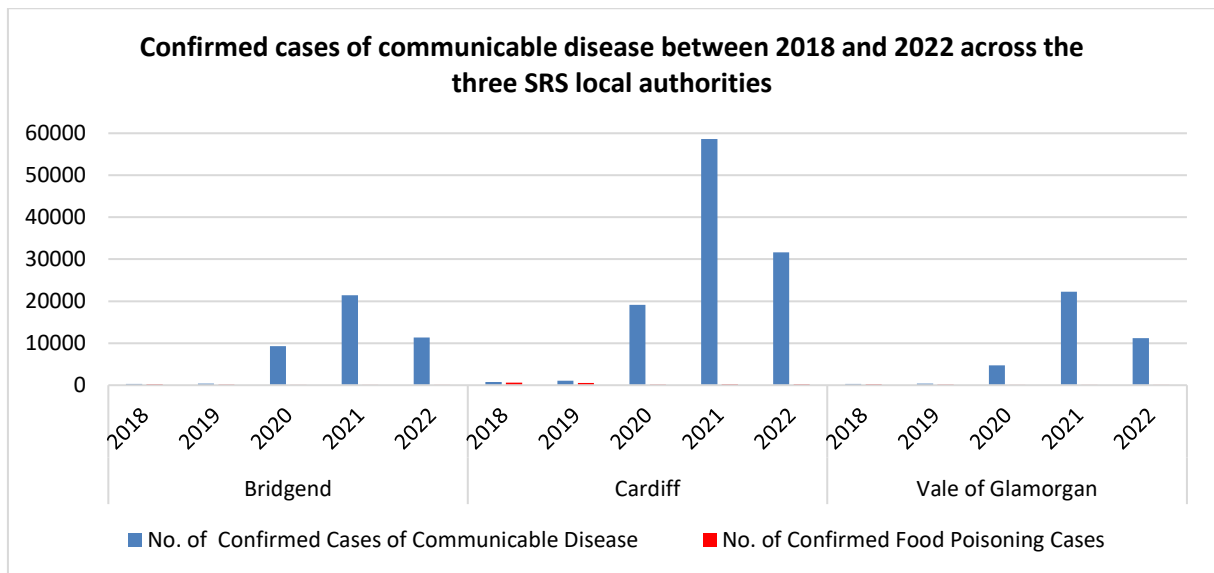
In 2021 there were 102,562 cases, of which 102,272 (99.7%) were laboratory confirmed. In 2020 there were 33,297 cases, of which 33,108 (99%) were laboratory confirmed. In 2019, there were 2149 cases, of which 1786 (83%) were laboratory confirmed. The dramatic increase in cases that can be seen in 2020 and 2021 is a result of positive cases of COVID-19 that were reported to SRS during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The table below shows the number of cases of confirmed and unconfirmed communicable diseases per local authority within SRS.

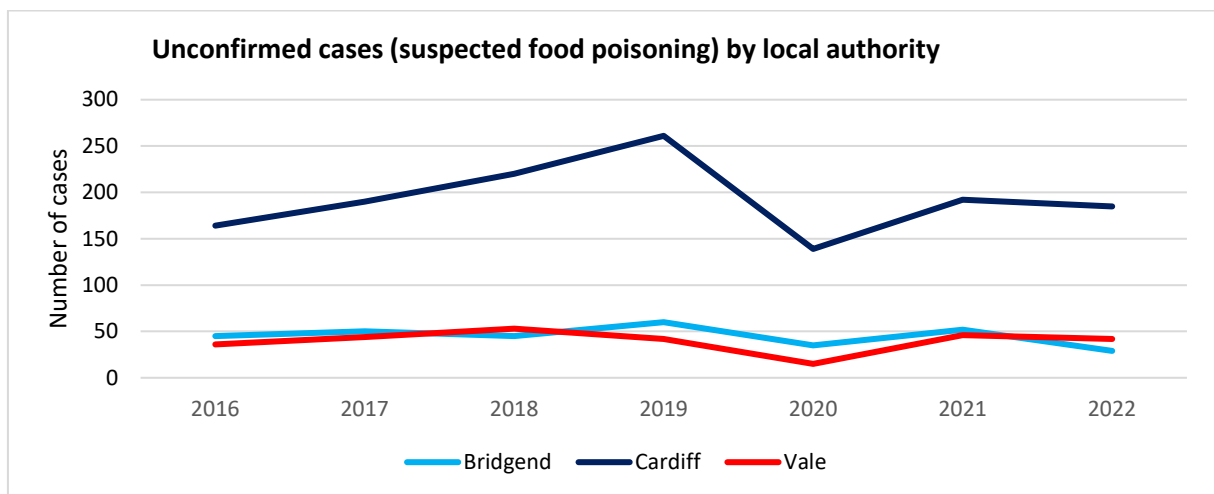
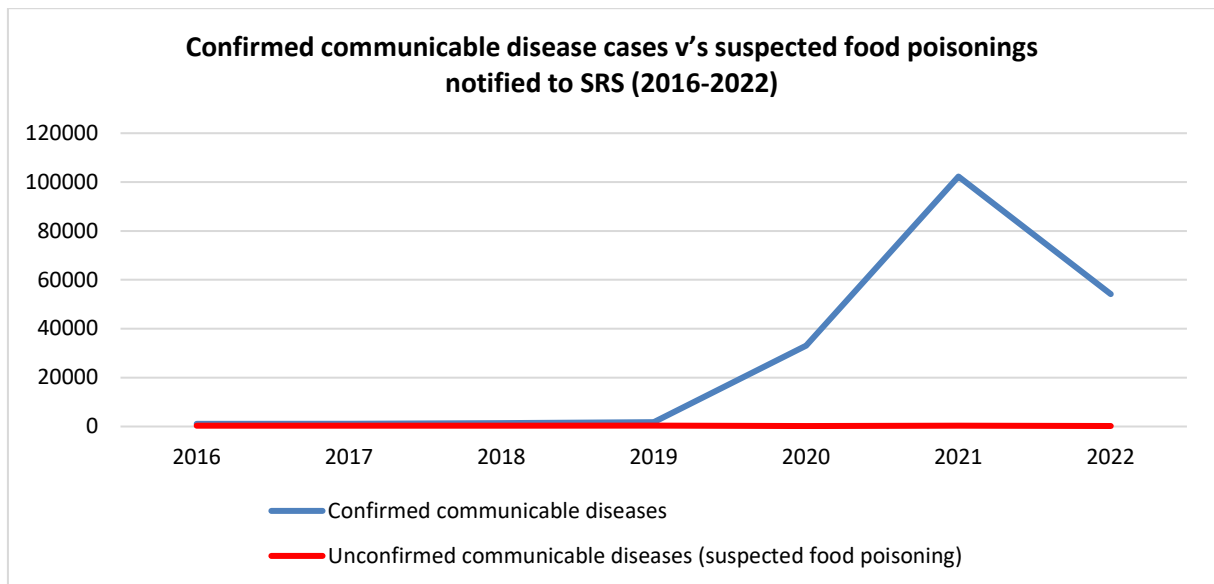
	Confirmed (CFP¹)	Unconfirmed	Total
Bridgend	11324 (91)	29	11353
Cardiff	31647 (216)	185	31832
Vale of Glamorgan	11234 (76)	42	11276
Total	54205 (383)	256	54461

(CFP¹) = Confirmed food poisoning as applied in the 'Disease' tab in Tarian

The graph below illustrates the incidence of notified cases of communicable disease across Bridgend, Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan between 2018 and 2022. The introduction of PCR testing in the microbiology laboratories since June 2018 has resulted in an upward trend in cases, however, the substantial increase in case number between 2020 and 2022 is due to the large number of COVID-19 cases reported across the region.



Confirmed food poisoning cases = as applied in the 'Disease' tab in Tarian.



A significant decrease in the number of **confirmed cases of communicable disease** was observed in 2022, when compared to 2021, which reflected an overall decrease in COVID-19 cases being reported across the year. Case numbers for 2022 still, however, exceeded those of 2020 which can be explained by the emergence of the COVID-19 Omicron variant of concern (VOC) during the first quarter of 2022. Whilst the continued rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme throughout 2021 resulted in fewer deaths and hospitalisations, a relaxation of restrictions; increase in national and international travel; and increased transmissibility of the emerging VOC contributed to the rapid spread of the virus across communities and in households.

The decrease in confirmed cases of communicable disease in 2022 may also be due to challenges accessing appointments with local GP surgeries and being able to easily submit faecal sample pots for microbiological analysis.

Reports of **unconfirmed cases of communicable disease** (suspected food poisoning) saw a slight decrease when compared to 2021. The nature of these cases usually involves a complainant visiting a commercial food business and subsequently alleging illness after the consumption of food without submission of a faecal sample pot. This decline may be due to the cost of living crisis and a fall in real disposable income that has been experienced by UK residents since the end of 2021, with a greater number of people cutting back on eating out and other non-essential spending.

The slight decrease in suspected food poisoning cases could also be affected by the closure of smaller, independent food businesses during the current economic crisis, and resumption of more regular food safety inspections across the region as the service continues to deliver its recovery plan.

3.2 Performance activities

The investigation of confirmed sporadic and outbreak cases of communicable disease require a reactive service and our performance indicator therefore reflects this by measuring response times to notifications.

Sporadic cases

The Notification Guidance ('expert rules') made under the Health Protection (Notification) (Wales) Regulations 2010 dictates the response times required to be taken by Local Authorities investigating cases of communicable disease. All cases of confirmed communicable disease notified to SRS are responded to and every effort is made to undertake a full investigation by carrying out case interviews. The target response time for contacting the case is dependent on the public health significance of the pathogen concerned; as detailed in the table below.

L.A. target response times for common communicable disease pathogens

Pathogen	Response time
Campylobacter	Within 48 hours (unless part of a cluster or outbreak)
Cryptosporidium	Within 24 hours (same day if an outbreak)

Giardia	Within 24 hours (same day if part of an outbreak)
Salmonella spp.	Within 24 hours (same day if part of an outbreak, or case is a food handler/works in a closed community such as a care home) Salmonella typhoid or paratyphoid – Within 4 hours
E. coli O157	Within 4 hours
Hepatitis A	Within 4 hours
Hepatitis E	Within 48 hours
Shigella	Shigella sonnei – Within 24 hours; other Shigella sp. - Within 4 hours
Legionella spp.	Within 4 hours

Response times cited above were determined in October 2018; LA response times are currently under review

A review of the response rates of Campylobacter cases (% of notified cases that were interviewed) across the 3 local authorities were reviewed and compared to the previous 4 years.

Campylobacter response rates 2022 (2021 figures shown in red as a comparison)

	Bridgend	Cardiff	Vale	SRS Total
Cases interviewed	181 (165)	346 (344)	145 (137)	672 (646)
Total cases	242 (258)	455 (526)	191 (196)	888 (980)
Response rate	75% (64%)	76% (65%)	76% (70%)	76% (66%)

A comparison of response rates from 2016 to 2022

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Bridgend	75%	64%	84%	86%	92%	96%	97%
Cardiff	76%	65%	76%	86%	91%	93%	94%
Vale	76%	70%	77%	88%	92%	97%	96%
SRS	76%	66%	78%	87%	91%	95%	96%

The response rates for confirmed cases of Campylobacter slightly increased during 2022 and returned to the levels seen in 2020. During the first quarter of 2022 Officers remained focused on COVID-19 work and continued to rely on sending cases postal questionnaires and advice sheets instead of conducting telephone interviews. After April 2022, when the team was able to return to a 'business as usual' service delivery model, a greater emphasis was placed on interviewing cases by phone. The communicable disease service was also able to fill all vacant posts during 2022 and benefit from the assistance of additional temporary member of staff who was primarily responsible for following up Campylobacter cases.

As a methodology for data capture, postal questionnaires return a lower response rate to telephone surveys which has contributed to the lower response rate seen since 2020 (*BMC Medical Research Methodology, August 2012 – telephone survey response rate 30.2%; personalised postal questionnaire response rate 10.5%*).

Confirmed Cases of Communicable Disease

The following table details the incidence of confirmed cases of communicable disease across SRS between 2018 and 2022

	BRIDGEND					CARDIFF					VALE				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Campylobacter	198	187	183	258	242	491	576	413	526	455	174	191	163	196	191
Salmonella	22	13	13	10	14	56	54	14	64	54	11	17	6	7	10
Cryptosporidium	11	17	7	6	6	35	52	37	20	29	17	9	15	10	17
Giardia	23	28	11	13	13	41	69	35	50	62	12	36	11	19	28
E. coli O157	0	2	3	3	7	0	4	1	3	3	0	0	1	4	2
E. coli non O157*	16	24	10	20	19	27	46	21	28	31	6	18	10	8	9
Hepatitis E	2	5	1	0	7	5	3	1	2	0	2	2	1	1	1
Hepatitis A	3	0	0	1	1	2	1	4	1	2	1	7	1	0	1
Listeria	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Legionella	2	3	3	4	3	3	8	2	4	4	8	5	3	2	3
Shigella	2	1	0	3	5	12	15	3	3	22	7	4	3	0	4
COVID-19 **			9021	21066	10958			18530	57822	30865			4461	21967	10911
Other	43	98	29	42	48	118	201	58	81	119	39	88	30	32	57
Total	322	379	9282	21426	11324	790	1030	19121	58605	31647	277	377	4705	22246	11234

*June/July 2018 onwards (due to changes in laboratory testing methods this is now being reported to SRS)

** May 2020 onwards COVID-19 cases were reported to SRS

NB. 'Other' includes Entamoeba histolytica/dispar, Borrelia burgdorferi (Lyme disease), Leptospira, Vibrio cholera, Taenia, Cyclospora, Clostridium perfringens, Mycobacterium chelonae and Norovirus. In 2021, diseases in 'Other' include Norovirus, Borrelia burgdorferi Clostridium perfringens and Brucella.

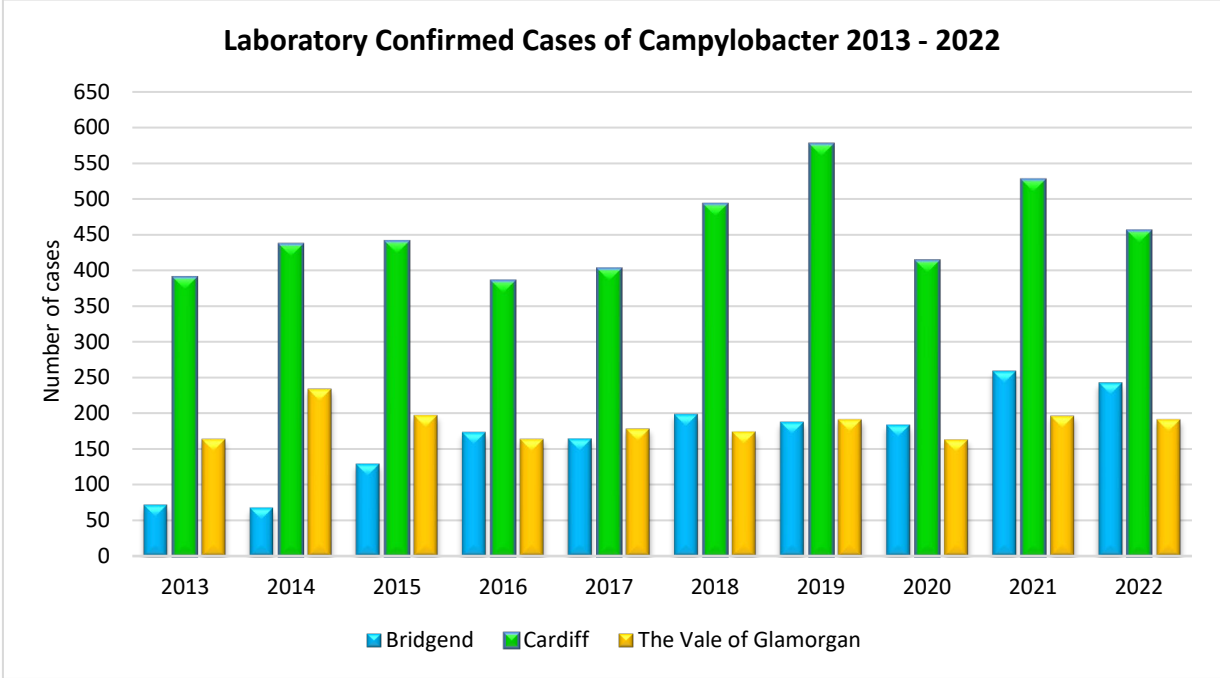
Campylobacter Infection

The incidence of Campylobacter infection throughout SRS far exceeds other notifiable diseases (with the exception of COVID-19), as illustrated in the previous table, which reflects the national trend observed across the UK. The reason for such high numbers of cases is the wide range of risk factors associated with Campylobacter, including: foreign travel; consumption of undercooked poultry and poultry offal (*i.e. 'pink' chicken livers*); consumption of unpasteurised dairy products; consumption of contaminated drinking or leisure water; contact with animals/birds and their faeces; domestic sewerage problems and close contact with an infected person (*i.e. changing nappies of an infected child*) and subsequent poor hand hygiene.

More recently identified risk factors associated with cases of Campylobacter have included: cross-contamination associated with the growing popularity of feeding pets a raw meat diet; the accidental consumption of raw/part-cooked chicken products and the practice of washing raw chicken packaging for recycling (*where the bacteria becomes splashed onto adjacent surfaces and subsequently transferred onto hands, ready-to-eat foods or other equipment*).

Campylobacter remains an important public health risk. The pathogen has multiple risk factors in addition to having a low infective dose, meaning that a person only needs to be exposed to a small amount of the bacteria to become ill. It is therefore critical that the communicable disease service retains the requisite level of resource to be able to effectively investigate all confirmed cases in a timely manner.

Reported cases of Campylobacter from 2013 to 2022 are detailed in the following graph.



As a whole, in 2022 SRS received **888 confirmed cases of Campylobacter in 2022** compared with 980 in 2021; 759 in 2020; 954 in 2019; 863 in 2018; 741 in 2017 and 722 in 2016. The slight decline in numbers to that seen in 2021 is observed across the 3 legacy Local Authorities. The reasons for this slight decrease is unclear, but is likely to be a consequence of challenges accessing GP appointments in order to submit faecal samples for analysis.

This general, year-on-year, increase is not unique to the UK. Some studies have linked weather and climate factors (particularly increases in temperature and precipitation) to an increased prevalence of Campylobacter cases. Other suggested casual factors have included levels of infection in poultry; changing populations; changing exposure patterns and microbial features such as antimicrobial resistance (K. Khun *et al.*, 2020).

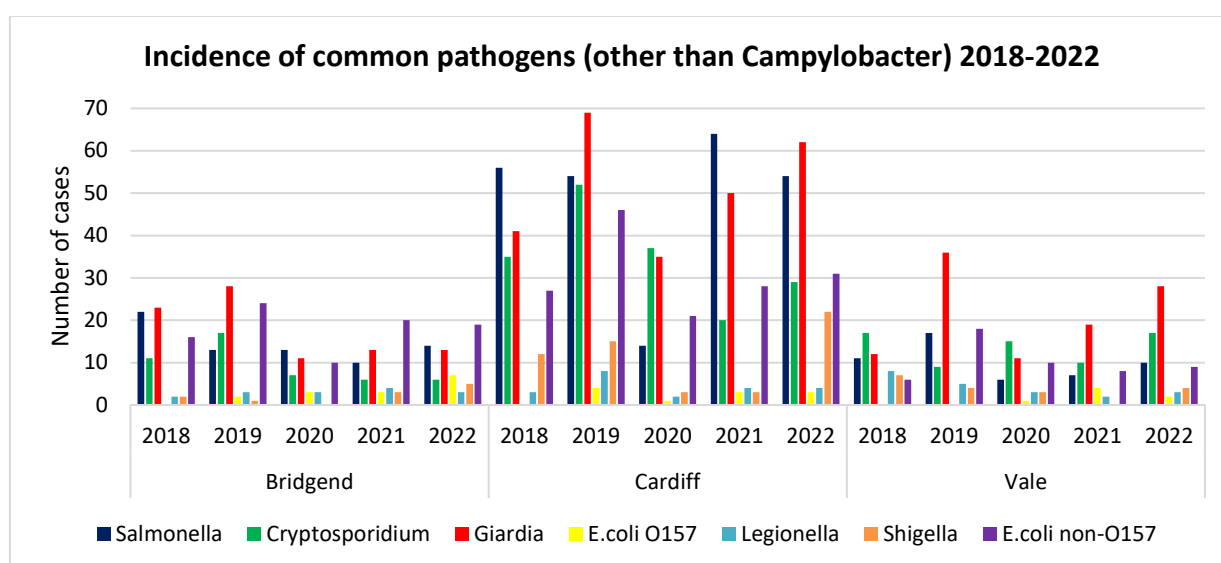
Pathogens of Public Health Significance Investigated by SRS

Pathogens of public health significance (other than Campylobacter) commonly require more detailed investigation; either because the pathogen can be more readily spread throughout households and the wider community, or because of the seriousness of the infection. The need to complete enhanced interview questionnaires to identify close contacts of a case; determine potential sources of infection and potentially instigate wider public health interventions is particularly true for pathogens such as: Shigella; Hepatitis A; E.coli O157; Legionella; Giardia and Listeria.

e.g. Vaccination of close contacts of Hepatitis A cases; Ensuring confirmed cases of Giardiasis receive appropriate antibiotic treatment from their GP; Ensuring confirmed cases working with food or vulnerable people only return to work after satisfying the relevant microbiological clearance requirements; Liaison with other relevant stakeholders to identify contaminated foodstuff on the market.

Contrary to general public perception, most communicable diseases are not necessarily caused from consuming contaminated food; despite the case having traditional ‘food poisoning’ symptoms. Risk factors are often associated with the consumption of (or exposure to) contaminated water; direct contact with animals and/or their faeces; close contact with an infected person (including sexual contact).

The graph below illustrates the incidence of common pathogens (other than Campylobacter) that have caused illness across SRS between 2018 and 2022.



An increase in Shigella cases was observed across all 3 local authority areas in 2022, but particularly in Cardiff where 22 confirmed cases were reported across the year; higher than levels seen pre-pandemic. Whilst the source of infection could not be identified for some of these cases, a significant number of cases reported having gay relationships, whilst the majority of cases were associated with foreign travel (*Pakistan; Cape Verde; Uzbekistan; Turkey; Egypt; Dominican Republic; Jordan*). All cases reporting travel to Cape Verde were linked to a Shigella outbreak associated with the same hotel.

A significant increase in confirmed cases of Giardia were observed in both Cardiff and the Vale local authority areas during 2022. Whilst none of the cases were linked to a particular cluster or outbreak, cases did report a number of similar risk factors, including: foreign travel; exposure to animal faeces; animal handling activities in a farm setting; visiting parks; swimming and water activities in the sea; camping; and person-to-person spread in the household.

Bridgend saw an increase in confirmed STEC E.coli O157 cases compared to previous years. No link between cases could be identified with a number of risk factors being reported (*travel to Turkey and Egypt; domestic pets; working at an animal petting farm; visiting the beach/going into the sea*).

A total of 2 Listeria cases were reported to SRS in 2022, which is comparable to previous years. One of these cases was linked to a national outbreak of Listeria associated with contaminated ready-to-eat meat from a supplier in England. Although the case did not directly consume the product that had been subject to the product recall, the investigation determined that cross-contamination from the contaminated product to a ready-to-eat product sold to the case had occurred in the food business within SRS.

A significant increase in the number of confirmed Hepatitis E (HEV) cases were reported in Bridgend throughout 2022. The only commonality between all 7 cases was the consumption of pork products prior to a confirmed diagnosis (*e.g. pork sausages, pate and pork pies*); however, no link between cases could be identified. HEV infection usually produces a mild disease which can range from no symptoms to liver failure. In rare cases, it can prove fatal in vulnerable people, particularly pregnant women. In developed countries the virus may spread from animals to humans through the consumption of undercooked, or raw, pig and game meat; processed pork and shellfish.

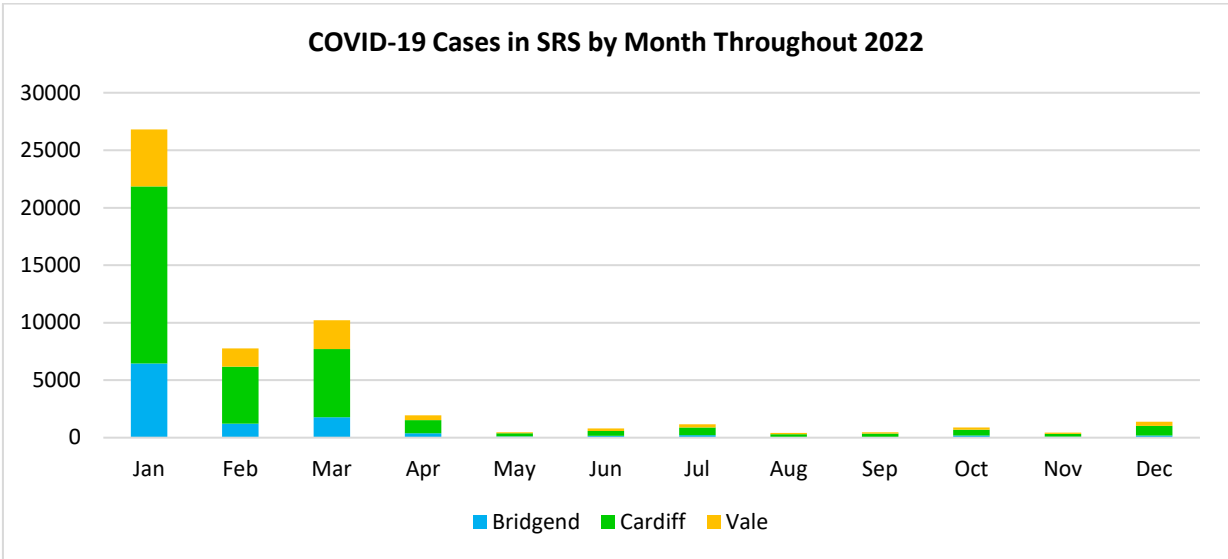
COVID-19 Virus (SARS-CoV-2)

Throughout 2022 Shared Regulatory Services continued to support Local Health Board partners deliver the regional COVID-19 Test, Trace Protect (TTP) response, albeit in a more focused way than in 2020 and 2021 with greater emphasis being placed on cases linked to health and social care settings and related activities (*e.g. domiciliary care provision*).

The start of 2022 witnessed a rapid surge in COVID-19 cases due to the emergence of the more virulent Omicron variant, as illustrated in the chart below. As cases abated towards the end of January, the required self-isolation period for positive cases was reduced from 7 to 5 days, and social distancing requirements were removed. At the end of March 2022 the majority of COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, including the legal requirement to wear face coverings and self-isolate, except for health and social care settings. Control measures in this sector were relaxed at the end of May 2022. The dramatic decline in reported case numbers post March 2022 was also a consequence of a significant change to Welsh Government policy on COVID-19 testing. From 28th March 2022 PCR home test kits were no longer available to the general public, and in-person PCR testing for this cohort was stopped from 30th March 2022. From April 2022 onwards, all members of the public with COVID symptoms were asked to perform a lateral flow test, only available on-line, which relied on each individual up-loading results to the NHS database. As anticipated, the move to self-reporting resulted in a dramatic decrease in positive results being uploaded to the system.

From April 2022 onwards PCR testing was only available for the clinically vulnerable, special schools and people working in the health and social care sector. This significant policy shift enabled SRS to review its service model for COVID-19, enabling the implementation of its recovery plan. The Communicable Disease, Health and Safety Team were subsequently able to resume its substantive work in earnest, with management oversight of COVID-19 incidents across the health and social care sector being transferred to a dedicated Health Protection Partnership Team working in tandem with Local Health Board partners.

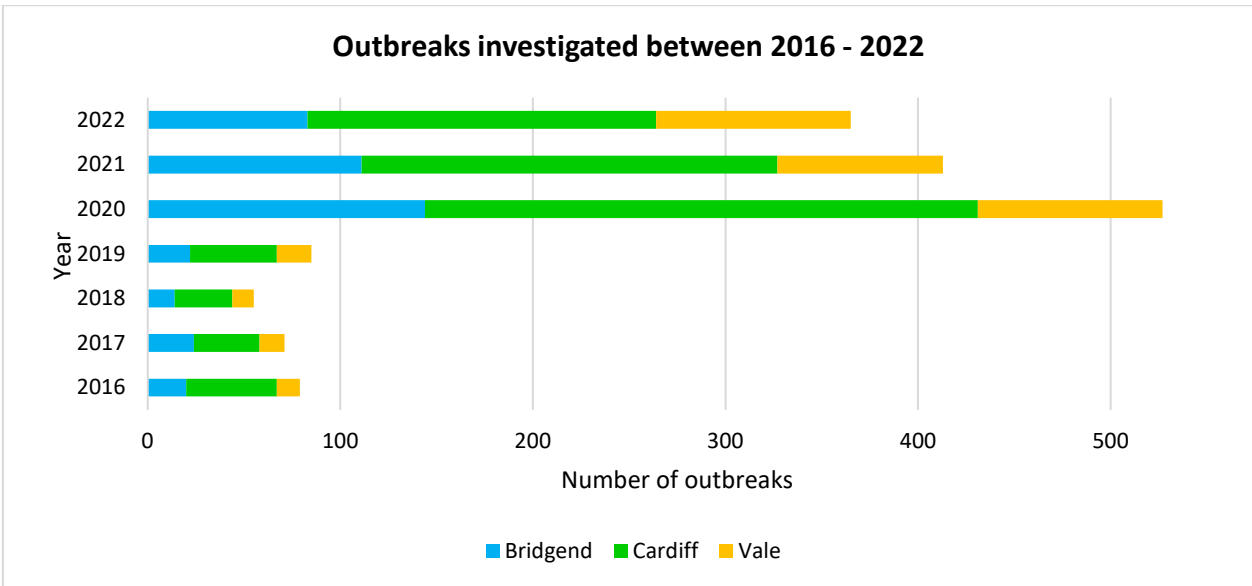
The following graph illustrates the numbers of COVID-19 cases across the SRS region throughout 2022. As expected, after the regulations were lifted and free testing was no longer available, case numbers drop dramatically from April onwards.



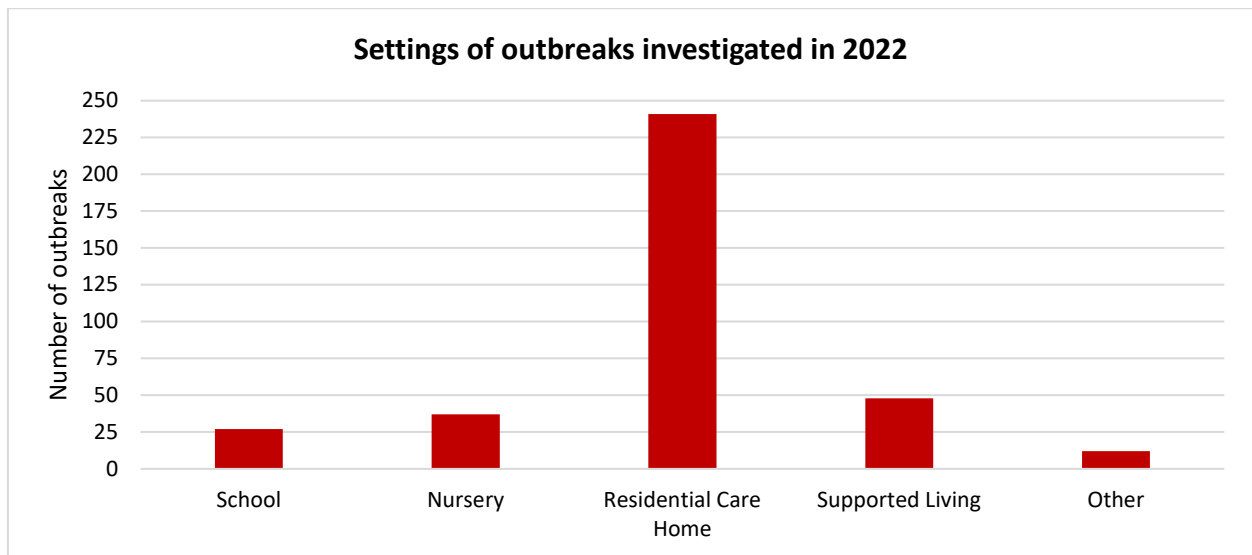
Outbreaks in 2022

365 outbreaks were investigated by SRS in 2022, compared with 413 in 2021; 527 in 2020 and 85 in 2019. Unsurprisingly the main reason for the decline in number compared to 2020/2021 was the significant reduction in COVID-19 outbreaks across the region.

Half of the reported outbreaks were in Cardiff (181, 50%), just under a quarter were in Bridgend (83, 23%) and just over a quarter were in the Vale of Glamorgan (101, 27%). The graph below compares the number and distribution of outbreaks across the SRS region between 2016 and 2022.



The type of setting where outbreaks were experienced is illustrated in the next graph.



“Other” includes domiciliary care agencies, a prison, day care centres and a residential college

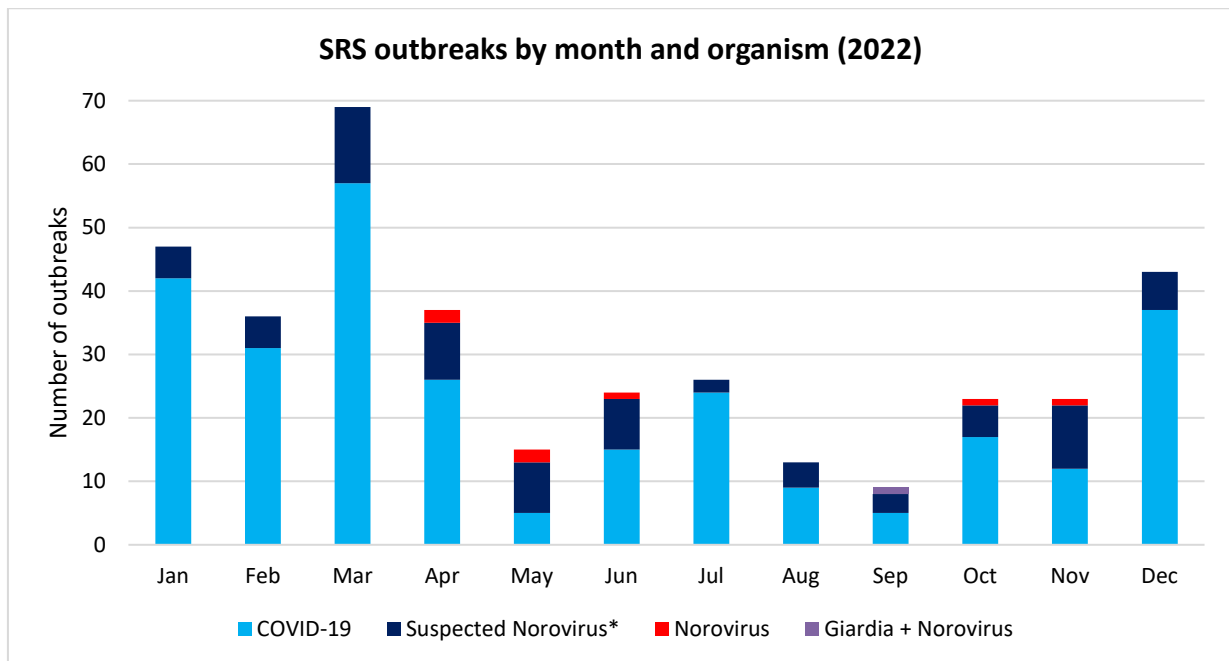
The largest number of outbreaks were linked to residential care homes (241, 66%), followed by supported living accommodation (48, 13%) and nurseries/early years settings (37, 10%).

COVID-19 accounted for 60% (280) of all outbreaks. Suspected Norovirus accounted for 36% (77) and confirmed Norovirus, 7% (7). One outbreak was caused by two pathogens – Giardia and Norovirus - and was linked to a hotel being used to house refugees and asylum seekers.

The graph below compares the monthly outbreaks investigated by SRS throughout 2022.

As anticipated, most outbreaks were reported during the winter months when a greater number of people would be mixing indoors with poorer levels of ventilation. The spike of cases seen in March could be attributed to the relaxations in requirements to socially distance and wear face masks, in conjunction with a growing confidence to travel and socialise as the UK finally emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic.

An increase in reported incidents around October would correlate with students’ returning to school, college and university.



*These outbreaks were suspected to be Norovirus based the characteristics of the illness and its spread; however, either no stool samples were submitted for testing or stool samples came back negative.

Between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023, Lead Officers for Communicable Disease attended a total of **42** cluster/incident/outbreak meetings for a range of significant pathogens.

- Salmonella linked to cluster at community Eid BBQ during July 2021 5
- Tuberculosis cases linked to a workplace and educational setting 4
- Cryptosporidium cases linked to open farm in neighbouring LA 1
- M-Pox 19
- Meningococcal illness associated with educational setting 2
- Influenza outbreak in prison setting 5
- Norovirus outbreak linked to raw oyster consumption 5
- *Brucella canis* cases linked to a dog breeder in neighbouring LA 1

3.3 Achievements & Public Health Interventions

Managing the Risk of Legionella in Water Systems – Improving health and wellbeing; safeguarding the vulnerable; maximise the use of resources



During 2022/23 Shared Regulatory Services committed to complete the desk top review of Legionella assessments; written schemes of control and monitoring records for all private residential care homes across Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan to ensure that control measures remained robust. A total of **5 desk top assessment were undertaken to complete the intervention that commenced during 2021/22** - 1 in Bridgend, 3 in Cardiff and 1 in the Vale of Glamorgan. Neither site visits nor escalated enforcement action needed to be taken following these desk top reviews since appropriate action was instigated by the Responsible Individuals

concerned.

Management of Legionella and Infectious Diseases Associated with the Use of Commercial Hot Tubs and Spa Pools – Improving health and wellbeing & safeguarding the vulnerable

See full report in Appendix 2 of the 2023/24 Health and Safety Service Plan.

Monitoring Compliance with Smoke-Free Requirements under The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 and The Smoke-Free Premises and Vehicles (Wales) Regulations 2020 - Improving health and wellbeing; safeguarding the vulnerable



Tobacco smoking with a water pipe, or shisha pipe, continues to be popular within the Cardiff area, particularly among young adults. There is a growing body of evidence that shisha smoking poses a serious potential health hazard to both smokers, and non-smokers exposed to second-hand smoke, and is not a 'safe' alternative to cigarette smoking. Evidence suggests that shisha smoking detrimentally affects cardiovascular health, in particular heart rate and blood pressure.

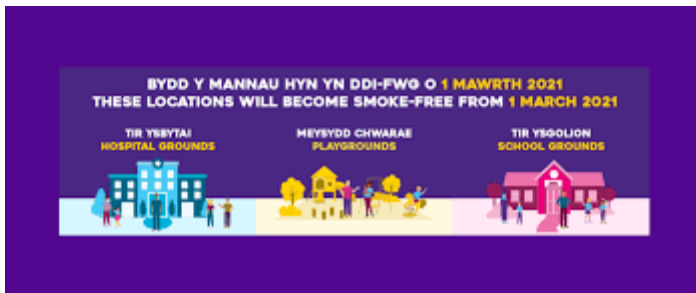
The risk of cross-infection from pathogens such as Herpes, Tuberculosis and Hepatitis significantly increases through the sharing of shisha pipes in a social context; a risk often not considered by shisha users.

Since the advent of the smoking ban, Cardiff has seen an increasing number of shisha lounges operating in the student areas of the City. Historically compliance with smoke-free legislative requirements has been poor, as highlighted in the 2020/21 Communicable Disease and Health Service Plan, and after the removal of COVID-19 restrictions in 2022 the Service was starting to receive intelligence about non-compliant behaviours across the sector again.

In early summer 2022 all known shisha operators were sent a mailshot letter which confirmed changes to the smoke-free legislation across Wales and the enforcement expectations of Shared

Regulatory Services. The correspondence also included a copy of the up-dated SRS guidance on shisha to reiterate when premises had to be smoke-free. Unannounced monitoring visits were subsequently undertaken during Quarter 4 of the 2022/23 business year which identified **5 shisha lounges operating in a non-compliant way**. All duty holders have been invited to make written representations under caution about these alleged offences and investigations remain on-going.

Supporting Key Partners Achieve Compliance with Smoke-Free Requirements - Improving health and wellbeing; safeguarding the vulnerable; stakeholder engagement



From 1st March 2021 the legislative framework governing smoke-free requirements in Wales has been contained within the **Public Health (Wales) Act 2017, Part 3, Chapter 1** and **The Smoke-Free Premises and Vehicles (Wales) Regulations 2020**. Whilst the 2007 Regulations had a significant

impact on the number of smokers and people exposed to second-hand smoke, the updated legal framework aims to reduce smoking rates even further and denormalise the practice to reduce the number of young people taking up smoking. Consequently the current legislation governing smoke-free requirements across Wales now includes hospital grounds, playgrounds and school grounds.



In the summer of 2022, Shared Regulatory Services supported Cardiff Council's Educational Department complete its 'Whole School Smoke-Free Premises Policy' which aims to provide a smoke, and vape, free environment across the whole school community. Advice was provided about age-restricted products and an appropriate referral pathway when concerns were

identified on school grounds; guidance was provided on the enforcement of smoke-free legislation and a clear escalation process was identified to support Head Teachers discharge their responsibilities.

Shared Regulatory Services was also asked to support Local Health Board (LHB) partners review their smoke-free arrangements during 2022 and identify opportunities for enforcement initiatives in hospital grounds across their estates. The Cardiff and Vale Local Health Board, and Cwm Taf Morgannwg Local Health Board for the Bridgend area, have had a Smoke Free Environment Policy in place since 2015 which has required all health board sites to be smoke free. This policy has now been updated to reflect the requirements of Chapter 1, Part 3 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 and the Smoke-free Premises and Vehicles (Wales) Regulations 2020.

Following receipt of several complaints concerning people smoking immediately outside hospital entrance doors, areas previously not within scope of the smoke-free legislation, initial dialogue with LHB partners surrounded how sites had adapted their management arrangements to

include all open, external areas to hospital grounds that were now captured by the revised legislation. Discussions surrounded where site-specific challenges were being experienced; what operational measures were in place to monitor compliance across all sites; and what internal mechanisms were available to address employee non-compliances. To gain a wider understanding of the situation, SRS undertook an audit of management arrangements in place at one of the major hospital sites across the region which enabled the Service to make recommendations to the LHB strategic operational smoke-free policy to promote a more robust level of compliance.

Business Engagement: Infection Control Advice to Duty Holders - Improving health and wellbeing; safeguarding the vulnerable; stakeholder engagement



Shared Regulatory Services included infection prevention and control (IPC) as part of the indoor soft play and inflatable amusement device project carried out in the 2022/23 business year.

See full report in Appendix 4 of the 2023/24 Health and Safety Service Plan.

Business Engagement: Safe Operation of Commercial UV Tanning Equipment - Improving health and wellbeing; safeguarding the vulnerable; maximising the use of resources



The legislation governing the use of sunbeds in Wales is contained in **The Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010 and The Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010 (Wales) Regulations 2011.**

The key requirements of the legislation are:

- For premises offering sunbeds to be supervised at all times by a competent ‘supervisor’.
- Prohibit the use of sunbeds by under 18s (including the offer of use).
- To provide prescribed health information to users, including the provision of assistance when assessing skin type and determining suitability to use UV tanning equipment.
- To prohibit the display of materials relating to health effects of sunbed use, other than the prescribed health information.
- Mandate the provision and use of protective eyewear to users.

During 2022 Shared Regulatory Services was made aware of the findings of an undercover investigation carried out by the BBC Wales consumer programme, X-Ray, which had identified tanning salons in Newport and Cardiff letting in 2 minors (17 years old) without any identification checks to verify their age. As a precursor to undertaking compliance monitoring visits, all known tanning salon operators were sent a mailshot letter which reiterated the requirements of

legislative controls for UV tanning equipment in Wales, and the enforcement expectations of Shared Regulatory Services. The correspondence also included a copy of newly produced SRS guidance for the safe operation of sunbed facilities, including infection prevention and control advice surrounding appropriate cleaning and disinfection arrangements.

Compliance visits to all sunbed operators has been prioritised as an intervention for the 2023/24 business year.

Business Engagement – Nutritional Training; Healthy Options Award; Gold Snack Healthy Snack Award & Stakeholder Engagement



Healthy Options Award

The Healthy Option Award (HOA) continues to be offered across the 3 authority areas and is administered by the Communicable Disease, Health and Safety Team.

The HOA aims to encourage food businesses to provide healthier catering practices; increasing the amount of fruit, vegetables and starchy carbohydrates on the menu; decreasing saturated fat, sugar and salt content in the food offered. The scheme also recognises the provision of healthy options for children; rewards staff training; and the promotion and marketing of healthier options.

During 2022/23, 17 new awards were issued across the SRS region:

	BRIDGEND	CARDIFF	VALE
GOLD AWARD	3	10	2
SILVER AWARD	1	1	0
BRONZE AWARD	0	0	0






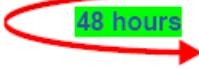




Nutritional training supports the uptake and sustainment of the Healthy Option Award in food businesses across the 3 authority areas, and consequently SRS continues to provide level 1 community food and nutritional skill training courses on request. The aim of the training is to increase knowledge and skills in food and nutrition, particularly about the components of a balanced diet and how good nutrition can influence a person’s health status.

SRS is a member of, and continues to support, the Cardiff, Vale and Bridgend Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Schemes (CHaSPS) and Gold Standards Health Snack Award advisory group. During 2022/23, the Service received 2 school enquiries about the snack award.

The Communicable Disease Service also provides infection control advice and support to its partners wherever necessary (*e.g. hand hygiene messaging, guidance on the suitability and use of cleaning products*); feedback on the development of strategic documents and reinforces the infection control message via attendance at organised events. The team supported key partners at several meetings throughout the 2022/23 business year, and was able to contribute to a review of the ‘Little Cooks’ guidance for the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-school Scheme.

Business Engagement – Childcare Networking Event

During October 2022 the Communicable Disease Service was proud to support the childcare networking event organised by the Children & Young Peoples’ Partnership. The Vale of Glamorgan Council aimed to raise awareness amongst professionals of the wide variety of services available for children, young people and their families in the Local Authority area. SRS attended the event to promote the importance of good hand hygiene and effective infection prevention and control, which included the production of in-house resource materials as illustrated below.

 Shared Regulatory Services Gwasanaethau Rheoliadol a Rennir		 BRIDGEND County Borough Council	 CARDIFF CAERDYDD	 VALE of GLAMORGAN BRO MORGANNWG
<h3 style="color: red;">Is your setting prepared for an outbreak of vomiting and/or diarrhoea?</h3>				
<h4 style="color: red;">Disinfection and Product Dilution</h4>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To be effective at killing norovirus, the concentration of products should be 1000 parts per million (PPM) or 0.1% available chlorine. ▪ Dilution rates and surface contact time will vary by product. Always follow the manufacturer instructions. ▪ Product should be made up fresh daily for maximum effectiveness. Consider using a different viricidal product than you use everyday. ▪ The use of disposable cloths and mop heads are best practice when cleaning. If mop heads are not single use, they should be changed regularly. Always ensure cleaning equipment such as mop and bucket are cleaned with a chlorine based product after each use. ▪ Spray bottles for made up cleaning solution should also be cleaned and disinfected regularly. ▪ A steam cleaner is the most effective way to clean surfaces such as carpets or surfaces where a bleach hypochlorite solution is not suitable to be used. If illness occurs on carpets or soft furnishings that cannot be hot washed to at least 60° C for 10 minutes then a steam cleaner will need to be used. ▪ Keep products out of sunlight and store all chemicals safely and securely. 				
Products should be  1000 PPM	Keep children and staff away from setting until they have been symptom free 	Wash hands frequently and thoroughly 		
<h4 style="color: red;">Decontamination</h4>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Always wear appropriate PPE (i.e. disposable gloves, apron and face protection). ▪ Remove vomit/faeces using a spill kit. Follow instructions contained within the spill kit using granules to soak up excess liquid. ▪ Transfer into the disposable bag using the scoop/scrapper provided. ▪ Clean the contaminated area within a 2 metre radius with detergent and hot water using a disposable cloth. ▪ Disinfect the contaminated area with freshly made 1000 PPM hypochlorite solution. Ensure sufficient contact time as per manufacturer instructions. ▪ Dispose of all PPE into the disposable bag provided, seal contents and remove to the external waste receptacle. ▪ Wash hands thoroughly with liquid soap, warm water and dry with paper towels. 				
 SRS.WALES	 0300 123 6696	 @SRS_WALES		

Oversight of Exhumations in SRS.

Between 01/04/2022 and 31/03/2023, Officers from the Communicable Disease, Health and Safety Team were required to attend **5 exhumations** across the SRS region (Cardiff 2; Vale 3). In accordance with the provisions of the Burial Act 1857, Environmental Health was notified of the exhumation, via a Ministry of Justice licence, to take any necessary actions in the interests of public health and decency. This required Officer attendance at the time of the exhumation.

Skin Piercing Registrations – Improving health and wellbeing

Officers from the Communicable Disease, Health and Safety Team routinely carry out skin piercing registration visits, for both premises and practitioners, in accordance with the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 and bye-laws made thereunder. The legislation requires all duty holder carrying on the business of tattooing; semi-permanent skin colouring; cosmetic body piercing; acupuncture and electrolysis to be registered with their respective Local Authority and to operate in compliance with bye-laws specifically sanctioned by that Local Authority.

These visits focus on procedural infection control provisions; assess client consultation arrangements to ensure that the risk of contraindications is minimised; and ensure that the structure of all treatment areas will facilitate effective cleaning and disinfection.



Between 01/04/2022 and 31/03/2023 Officers carried out **118 skin piercing registration visits** across SRS: Bridgend (28); Cardiff (63); Vale of Glamorgan (27).

Preparation for the Introduction of the Special Procedures Licensing Regime – Improving health and wellbeing; safeguarding the vulnerable



Throughout the 2022/23 business year, Shared Regulatory Services has continued to support Welsh Government with its preparatory work for the introduction of the new special procedures regulatory framework specified in **Part 4 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017**.



SRS continues to be represented at the Welsh Government Special Procedures Task and Finish group which has been actively contributing to the development of conditions for the proposed personal licences and premises approvals. **From 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, SRS was represented at 15 Task and Finish Group meetings.**

A presentation made to Joint Committee in March 2023, which provided an update about Welsh Government's on-going work streams for special procedures and highlighted potential opportunities and business risks for the Service associated with the introduction of the new legislative regime, enabled SRS and the 3 legacy Authorities to submit a **consultation response** to Welsh Government to inform the final Regulations and personal licence/premises approval conditions. SRS further supported Welsh Government's initial consultation process by holding a **consultation workshop with industry practitioners** across the region during March 2023.

Whilst SRS became an approved centre for delivering the **RSPH Level 2 Award in Infection Prevention and Control for Special Procedures Practitioners** during 2019/20, course materials were not released by Welsh Government until the summer of 2022. Following a review of the course training materials and delegate notes, SRS was able to successfully deliver the first course in Wales during December 2022 with a further 2 face-to-face courses being held between January and March 2023.

Requests to Co-operate under Health Protection Legislation – Improving health and wellbeing; safeguarding the vulnerable

In accordance with Regulation 8 of the Health Protection (Local Authority Powers) (Wales) Regulations 2010, Local Authorities have the power to request individuals or groups to co-operate with the Authority for health protection purposes. The 'request to co-operate' is to prevent / protect against / control / provide a public health response to an incidence or spread of infection, or contamination which presents / could present significant harm to health. From an operational perspective this power would be used to exclude an infected person from returning to work with food or vulnerable persons (*i.e. under 5's; over 65's; immunocompromised persons*); to prevent the continuation of an activity that could result in the infection of other people; or to restrict the activities of an infected person so that the risk of spread to the wider community is controlled.

Between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023, the Communicable Disease, Health and Safety Team issued **19 'requests to co-operate'**: 2 to require the isolation of a **case and contact of M-Pox**; 3 were issued on people carrying on the business of **tattooing** without the requisite registration; and 14 were issued on **confirmed cases of communicable disease** to require their exclusion from work until symptom-free for the requisite time period, or until medical clearance had been obtained.

Investigation of Multiple Cases of Illness Associated with Raw Oyster Consumption – Improving health and wellbeing; safeguarding the vulnerable; stakeholder engagement



During January 2023 Officers received reports of illness from 2 separate groups of people who had eaten at the same Cardiff restaurant on consecutive days.

Party #1 - 5 of the 6 people reported sickness, diarrhoea, fever and lethargy within 48 hours of eating raw oysters as a starter.

Party#2 - 2 of the 3 people reported sickness and diarrhoea symptoms within 48 hours of eating raw oysters.

Comprehensive enquiries were made to confirm what foods were consumed by all members of both parties, and identify wider potential risk factors, in addition to arranging the submission of faecal specimens to the microbiology lab for all persons presenting with diarrhoea symptoms. Of the 6 cases that could provide a faecal specimen, 5 tested positive for Norovirus; a gastro-intestinal illness commonly associated with raw and undercooked shellfish during winter months where it can persist for longer in colder marine waters.

A traceability exercise undertaken by the Food Safety Team was able to identify the wholesaler, and purification centre, for the oysters concerned and confirm delivery dates, quantities received and other businesses supplied with the same batch of product. This enabled the Service to contact other businesses within SRS, as well as colleagues in neighbouring Authorities across the region, to identify any other possible cases of illness associated with the same batch of oysters. This exercise identified a further 4 cases of sickness and diarrhoea after consuming raw oysters from a restaurant in the Vale area, and another 4 cases of sickness and diarrhoea linked to raw oysters in the Newport area. Engagement with the purification centre in England identified another known case of illness linked to the same batch of oysters, and discussions with the local authority responsible for approving the purification centre highlighted a cluster of 12 cases of sickness and diarrhoea linked to consumption of raw oysters from the same batch of product at a restaurant in Nottingham.

A number of multi-agency incident meetings ensued which were chaired by a Consultant for Communicable Disease Control (CCDC) from Public Health Wales (PHW) and attended by representatives of: Environmental Health Practitioners in England and Wales; PHW; UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA); Food Standards Agency (FSA) in England and Wales; Local Health Board Microbiological Laboratory Services and the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre.

A number of outcomes occurred as a result of the initial investigations undertaken by SRS staff, which included:

- The batch of oysters implicated in the cases of illness were depurated between 11-12°C. The purification centre agreed to increase depuration temperatures to 15-16°C during peak Norovirus season to reduce the risk of illness when consuming raw oysters.
- The batch of oysters implicated in the cases of illness were not subject to any microbiological sampling. The purification centre agreed to undertake enhanced microbiological testing of oysters in the short-term in light of recent events.
- Epidemiologists in PHW conducted a case-control study of the cases linked to Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan to determine if the consumption of raw oysters and illness was statistically significant. Of the 150 questionnaires sent out to customers who ate at the restaurants concerned on the same days as the cases, a total of 88 questionnaires were returned and analysed. Oysters were found to be statistically significant out of all foods consumed.
- PHW liaised with the Communications Team in the FSA to arrange communications ahead of Valentine's Day concerning the risks of consuming raw oysters.

3.4 Customer Evaluation Forms

Once officers have interviewed a confirmed case of communicable disease, the customer is routinely sent an evaluation questionnaire, alongside an advice sheet about what has made them ill, in order to gauge their opinion of the service provided and identify likely changes in behaviour after discussing their illness with an officer. During 2022 the service also encouraged feedback by creating an electronic version of the evaluation form with a link that could be sent out to everyone who provided an Email address.

Feedback from all cases:

The response rate for completed evaluation forms remained extremely low in 2022 at 4%. Whilst this was a nominal increase to the response rate seen in 2021 (2%), it was still much lower than the numbers observed in 2020 (11%); 2019 (13%) and 2018 (20%).

A total of **44 completed evaluation forms** were received; some respondents only elected to answer questions on part of the form.

- 44/44 (100%) cases reported being 'satisfied' with the service, of which 43/44 (98%) reported being 'very satisfied'.
- 42/42 (100%) cases reported that the advice given by officers was useful and 42/44 (95%) reported that the advice was easy to understand.
- 16/40 (40%) cases reported changing their food preparation practices or choices as a result of the interview.
- 43/43 (100%) cases reported that the officers performance was good, of which, 42/43 (98%) reported that the officers performance was very good.
- 32/40 (80%) of cases said that they were better able to prevent future infections
- 41/42 (98%) said that the officer could not have done any more to improve the quality of the interview.

References

Kuhn, K. et al. (2020) 'Campylobacter infections expected to increase due to climate change in Northern Europe', *Sci Rep* 10, 13874. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-70593-y>

Appendix A - Corporate priorities of partner local authorities

Bridgend County Borough Council

Priorities

Outcomes/Aims

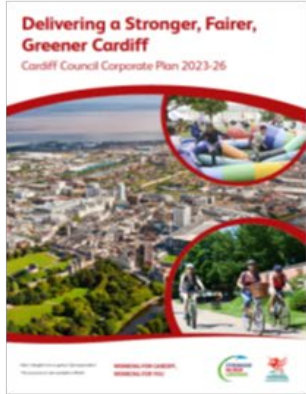


- A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable
 - A County Borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns
 - A County Borough with thriving valleys communities
 - A County Borough where we help people meet their potential
 - A County Borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community
 - A County Borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community
 - A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives.
- Protect our most vulnerable
 - Fair work, skilled , jobs and thriving towns
 - Creating thriving valleys communities
 - Helping people meet their potential
 - Responding to the climate and nature emergency
 - Making people feel valued, heard and part of their community
 - Supporting people to be healthy and happy.

City of Cardiff Council

Priorities

Outcomes/Aims



- Cardiff is a great place to grow up
 - Cardiff is a great place to grow older
 - Supporting people out of poverty
 - Safe, confident and empowered communities
 - A Capital City that works for Wales
 - One Planet Cardiff
 - Modernising and integrating our public services
- Cardiff is a great place to grow up
 - Cardiff is a great place to grow older
 - Supporting people out of poverty
 - Safe, confident and empowered communities
 - A Capital City that works for Wales
 - One Planet Cardiff
 - Modernising and integrating our public services

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Priorities

Outcomes/Aims



- To work with and for our communities
 - To support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth
 - To support people at home and in their community
 - To respect, enhance and enjoy our environment
- A Vale that is:
- Inclusive and Safe
 - Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous
 - Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant
 - Active and Healthy

DRAFT PORT HEALTH PLAN 2023/2024

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Appendix A – Corporate priorities and key outcomes of partner local authorities

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1. Introduction

The Seaports of Cardiff and Barry, and Cardiff International Airport, provide entry points into the UK and require Shared Regulatory Services to carry out a range of health controls. These controls are provided by Port Health Officers from Shared Regulatory Services who enforce regulations on behalf of central government.

The responsibilities of these officers include monitoring the safety of imported food and feed at the point of import, undertaking ship inspections, enforcing food safety and hygiene standards and general public health law. The control of infectious disease is managed jointly by the Port Health Officers and Lead Officers in Communicable Disease.

This Operational Plan has been produced to inform interested parties of the arrangements Shared Regulatory Services have in place to regulate Port Health. It explains how the Port Health Team will fulfill its purpose of preventing and controlling infectious disease coming into Cardiff, Barry and the surrounding areas via the ports and airport to protect the health of the public. The Plan also details how the statutory obligations in relation to food safety, imported food control, ship sanitation, waste control, welfare of crew and animal health will be delivered.

The Covid-19 pandemic continues more than three years on from when it started, but the declaration by the World Health Organisation on 5 May 2023 that it no longer fits the definition of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) means a return to normal port health duties for the Service. Despite this, new challenges continue to arise such as the introduction of special measures in September 2022 by Welsh Government to address the risk from African Swine Fever.

The UK Government has also been phasing in new border controls for imports since the UK's exit from the European Union. Many controls remain to be introduced after having been postponed. A draft Target Operating Model for all imported goods will be rolled out from the end of 2023 and the Service will need to remain vigilant about the types of cargo entering the ports to establish what controls will need to be implemented moving forward. Participation in national and local working groups with partner agencies is therefore essential for the Service to remain informed and adopt best practice.

Christina Hill

Operational Manager Commercial Services

2. Background

2.1 Profile of Cardiff Port

The district of Cardiff Port Health Authority extends from Sully Island to the River Rhymney, from low water mark to a point three miles seaward, including all docks, harbours, and vessels within these limits.

Cardiff Port Health Authority was originally established by a Provisional Order in 1882, becoming permanently constituted by the Cardiff Port Order (1894) and consolidated by the Cardiff Port Order (1938) and the Port Health Authorities (Wales) Order (1974).

The history of Cardiff docks began in 1794 with the completion of the Glamorganshire Canal which linked Merthyr to the small town of Cardiff. A small basin was built which linked the canal to the Bristol Channel and this provided a means for exporting the rich coal and iron reserves present in the South Wales Valleys.

The export of coal and iron grew rapidly during the early 19th century and led to the construction of West Bute Dock (1839), East Bute Dock (1859), Roath Dock (1887) and the Queen Alexandra Docks (1907). By 1913, Cardiff had become the biggest coal exporting dock in the world.

A fall in the demand for Welsh coal, the Great Depression in the 1930s and the outbreak of World War II contributed to the gradual decline of the port. Today, however, the port of Cardiff remains active and is a mixed cargo port.

Last year the port received 157 ships from all over the world: mainly handling cat litter, steel, forestry products, and dry and liquid bulks. There is no longer any routine container activity associated with this port.

2.2 Profile of Barry Port

The Port of Barry is nine miles west of Cardiff. In the second half of the 19th century the Port of Cardiff, the main coal exporting port in Wales became too small to handle all exports other than those of the owners. In 1883 a group of mine owners, sought permission to build a dock at Barry, serviced by a new railway. Work began on the new dock at Barry on 14 November 1884, along with the construction of the new railway link. Everything was completed in double quick time and the dock opened for trade in 1889.

In due course, further docks were added and while exports in the first year were just one million tons, by 1903 they had multiplied to over nine million. By 1913, the year before the outbreak of World War One, Barry had surpassed both Cardiff and Penarth to become the largest coal exporting port in the country.

The collapse of the Welsh coal trade after the war left Barry Port struggling for survival. In 1959 bananas were imported from the West Indies but moved out in the 1980s.

The docks, whose road links were dramatically improved with the opening of the Docks Link Road in 1981, now have direct road access with the M4 motorway. The docks can handle vessels up to 23,000 tones and the first-class tidal position close to the deep-water channel of the Severn Estuary, allows for scheduled sailings

Last year the port received 31 ships from all over the world. The reduction in shipping movements may be attributed to the dock closure for a period of time to facilitate essential repairs. Most vessel movements are associated with handling liquid bulks for the local chemical industry Dow Corning.

2.3 Profile of Cardiff Airport

Cardiff International Airport is a relatively small international airport located on the outskirts of the village of Rhoose, in the Vale of Glamorgan, approximately 12 miles (19km) south-west of the Welsh capital, Cardiff. The airport is a major facility for the area serving all business and tourist traffic for south and mid Wales. The nearest comparable international airport is at Bristol. The airport is multi-purpose and versatile, being served by scheduled, low-fare and charter carriers and also supporting corporate and general aviation as well as having maintenance facilities.

Cardiff is the only airport in Wales offering international scheduled flights. The maintenance hangar is one of the largest in the world (at 250m x 175m / 820ft x 574ft) and provides heavy airframe and engineering maintenance for the British Airways fleet and third-party carriers.

In early 2019, after investing in additional facilities to safely support aircraft during an emergency landing, the airport gained divert status .

None of the ports described above have Border Control Post (BCP) status and therefore products of animal origin (POAO) and higher risk products not of animal origin (PNOAO) are not permitted to enter via these ports.

2.4 Aims and Objectives

The Port Health Team as part of the Communicable Disease and Food Safety Service is committed to preventing and controlling the import of infectious and animal disease into the UK, ensuring ships and aircraft comply with international agreed public health standards and maintaining the safety and quality of the food chain.

The overall aim of the Service is:-

Protect the citizens of Cardiff, Penarth, Barry and the surrounding areas from the import of infectious disease and ensure the health and wellbeing of crew and passengers aboard ships and aircraft entering the Ports of Cardiff, Barry, Penarth Marina and Cardiff Airport

To support this, the Port Health Service has adopted the following 5 delivery priorities:-

- Check and identify the food and feed imported through the ports to ensure it is permitted to enter at the point of entry and that it meets legal requirements.
- Control and investigate cases of notifiable communicable disease including food poisoning and other infectious disease on-board ships and aircraft.
- Investigate and respond to incidents of international public health concern to safeguard public health.
- Protect the public health and wellbeing of crew present on ships.
- Prevent the spread of animal health diseases from vessels entering the ports.

2.5 Links to the Corporate Plan

As a regional organisation providing regulatory services across three local authority areas, we place the corporate priorities and outcomes of the three councils at the heart of all that we do. (Appendix A). In developing our own strategic priorities for Shared Regulatory Services, we have considered the priorities of all the three authorities, together with the needs and aspirations of our partners and customers so they translate into priorities that meet local needs.



The SRS priority particularly relevant to the delivery of the port health function is 'Improving health and wellbeing':-



The Port Health Officers implement suitable controls to minimise the risk of importation of diseases that may pose a significant risk to public health. This is achieved by monitoring the quality of imported food and animal feed, vector monitoring and control and acting on notifications of infectious disease in passengers or crew. It is also ensured that ships and aircraft comply with internationally agreed public health sanitation standards.

Nationally, the service also contributes to the Welsh National Enforcement Priorities for Wales for local regulatory delivery which highlight the positive contribution that regulatory services, together with local and national partners, can make in delivering better outcomes:-

- Protecting individuals from harm and promoting health improvement
- Ensuring the safety and quality of the food chain to minimise risk to human and animal health
- Promoting a fair and just environment for citizens and business
- Improving the local environment to positively influence quality of life and promote sustainability.

2.6 Enforcement Policy

Fair and effective enforcement is essential to protect the economic, environmental, and social interests of the public and business. Decisions about enforcement action and in particular the decision to prosecute, has serious implications for all involved and for this reason, the Shared Regulatory Service has adopted a Compliance and Enforcement Policy.

The Compliance and Enforcement Policy sets out the standards that will be applied by the Service when dealing with issues of non-compliance, and what residents, consumers and businesses can expect. Such a policy helps to promote efficient and effective approaches to regulatory inspection and enforcement and balances the need for improvement in regulatory outcomes with minimising unnecessary burdens on business.

Traditionally based upon the principles of the Enforcement Concordat and the Regulators Compliance Code, local authority Enforcement Policies must now reflect the Regulators Code of 2014 and the regulatory principles required under the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006

The Regulators Code is based upon six broad principles:

- Regulators should carry out their activities in a way that supports those they regulate to comply and grow.
- Regulators should provide straightforward ways to engage with those they regulate and hear their views.
- Regulators should base their regulatory activities on risk.

- Regulators should share information about compliance and risk.
- Regulators should ensure clear information, guidance and advice is available to help those they regulate meet their responsibilities to comply.
- Regulators should ensure that their approach to their regulatory activities is transparent.

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Service Delivery

3.1 Responsibilities

The key responsibilities of Shared Regulatory Service's Port Health Team are to prevent the import of infectious disease via the ports and to protect the health and wellbeing of the crew and citizens of the surrounding areas by carrying out statutory obligations in relation to food safety, imported food control, ship sanitation, aircraft disinsection and animal health. This encompasses the following activities: -

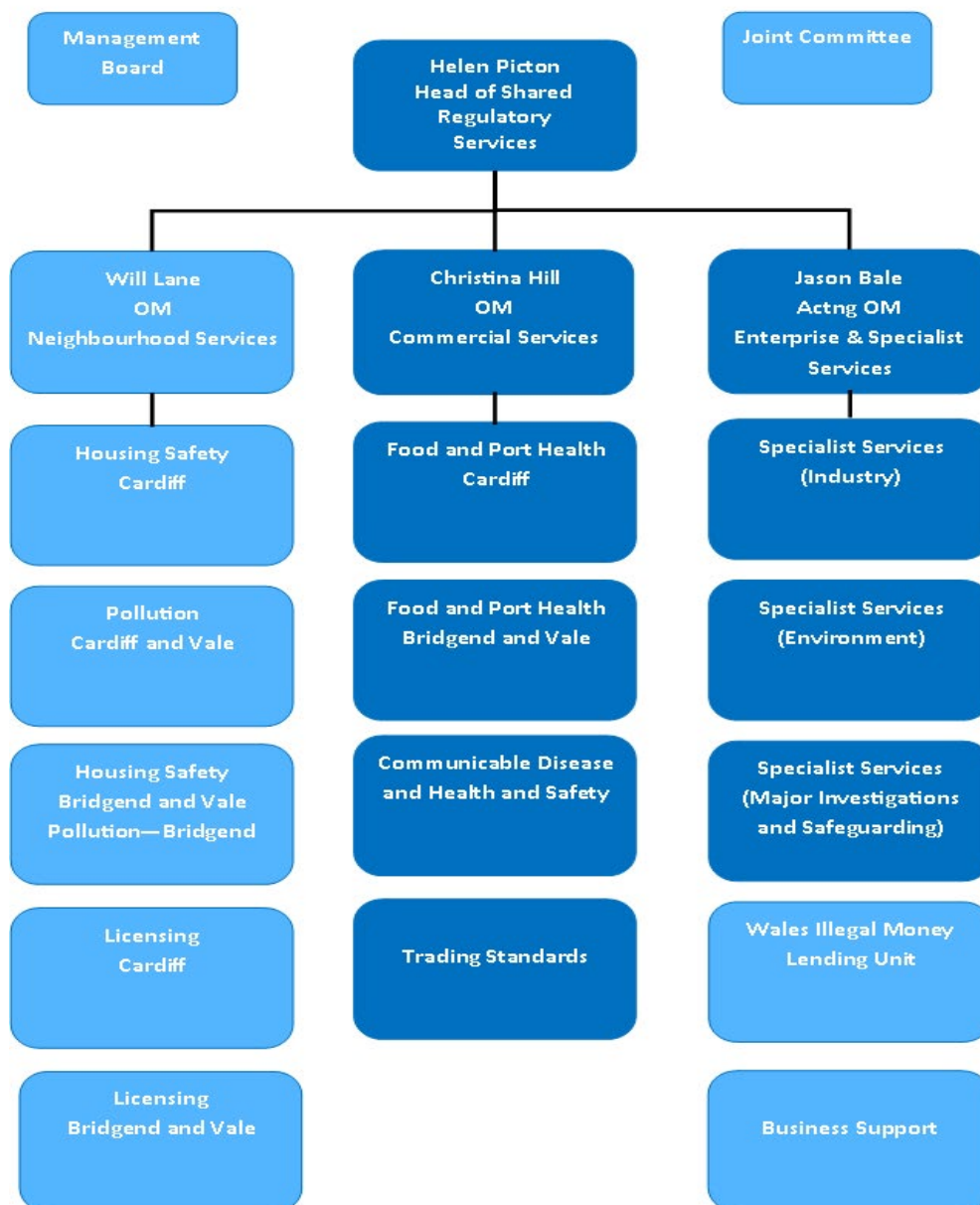
- Close monitoring of ship (vessel) and aircraft movements within the port authorities for the purposes of preventing the spread of infectious human and animal disease, ship and aircraft inspection and imported food controls.
- Responding to reports of food poisoning and infectious disease and implementing required control measures to safeguard public health.
- Checking ship manifests and aircraft cargo to identify imports of food originating from within and outside the EU.
- Identifying food and feedstuffs which are not permitted to enter through the ports and arranging for their destruction, re-export, re-direction as necessary.
- Undertaking documentary, identity, and physical checks of imported food as necessary to ensure fitness and compliance with EU and UK legislation.
- Sampling foodstuffs for chemical and microbiological examination.
- Protecting animal health by ensuring vessels and aircraft correctly dispose of International Catering Waste.
- Inspecting the Port Health Authority areas and boarding ships and aircraft to check on sanitary conditions and act in accordance with the International Health Regulations and domestic legislation.
- Issuing Sanitation control or exemption certificates following a thorough inspection of a ship and extending a ship sanitation certificate if appropriate.
- Checking the water quality on board vessels and aircraft to ensure there are no risks to health.
- Undertaking food hygiene inspections of the galley and implementing any required measures to safeguard food safety.
- Checking the water quality standards of quayside and airport water supplies used by ships and aircraft.
- Act as Category 1 responders under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
- Liaising with other port health authorities, Food Standards Agency; Maritime & Coastguard Agency; Border Agency; cargo and baggage handling agents, cleaning

services, airline operators, Welsh Government; port operator, airfield operations manager and shipping agents to ensure the efficiency of the service.

3.2 Organisational structure

Responsibility for delivering port health falls within the Food and Port Health Teams of Commercial Services Team within Shared Regulatory Services.

Shared Regulatory Services Organisational Chart



3.3 Interventions

3.3.1 Shipping Ports of Cardiff and Barry and Penarth Marina

Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Infectious Disease

Masters have a statutory duty under the Public Health Ships Regulations to notify the authority when illness and mortality occur on board their vessel using a Maritime Declaration of Health. In such instances, health clearance is required, “Free Pratique”, for the crew to disembark.

Port Health Officers will respond urgently to any notification of illness and will consult a Port Medical Officer as necessary to ensure health controls are implemented to protect public health.

Vessel Boarding

Officers board vessels arriving within its district to undertake boarding checks and inspections under the Public Health (Ships) Regulations prioritising those that have arrived from outside the European Union. A boarding check will involve recording the ships particulars, ensuring adequate provisions for the welfare of the crew, checking public and animal health related documentation and reviewing the potable water management system. Vessels arriving from foreign ports will also need to show a valid sanitation certificate.

Following the reduction in health risks posed by the Covid-19 pandemic boarding visits of vessels were reintroduced from the 1st June 2022 to issue sanitation certificates, address sampling requests and investigate any concerns of public health. However, there was a delay in the recommencement of routine boarding checks until 1st January 2023 due to lack of resources.

Sanitation Inspection

The authority has a legal requirement to carry out a sanitation inspection and issue a certificate upon request by a Master. Cardiff and Barry Port Health Authorities are listed by the World Health Organisation as ports authorised for issuing sanitation control certificates, sanitation exemption certificates and extending sanitation certificates.

A sanitation control certificate will be issued when the inspection reveals dangers to public or a risk of infection. The controls required to remove the risk to health will be clearly written on the certificate and the Master will be requested to undertake the work as quickly as possible. The progress of work will be monitored and the next port of call will be notified if the vessel leaves before the work can be completed.

The Master will be charged for the issue of a certificate based on the Association of Port Health Authorities Ships Inspection Charges. The Association of Port Health Authorities reviewed the tariff for ship sanitation charges and have set the following national scale for 2023/24:

Ship Sanitation Inspection Charges 2023/24*

(with effect from 1 April 2023)

Gross Tonnage of Vessel	Old Rate (2022/23)	New Rate (2023/24)*
	£	£
Up to 1000	110	125
1001 – 3000	150	170
3001 – 10000	220	250
10001 – 20000	285	325
20001 – 30000	365	415
Over 30000	425	480
Vessels with 50–1000 Persons	425	480
Vessels with over 1000 Persons	725	820
Extensions	80	95

* Extra charges, based on actual costs, may be added for expenses incurred. These include launch hire; out-of-hours duty; travel and extended or re-inspections of ships due to 'Control Measures' etc.

The sanitation inspection involves a comprehensive inspection and covers the following matters:

- Ships Particulars
- Cargo information
- Potable Water Systems
- Food Safety
- Swimming & Spa Pools
- Waste Disposal & International Catering Waste
- Accommodation and Crew Welfare
- Pollution Control
- Animal Health
- Vermin and Pest Control
- Infectious Disease Controls

Ship Food Hygiene Inspections

The Food Safety (Ships & Aircraft) (Wales) Order 2003 amended the definition of food premises to include ships and therefore require ship galleys to comply with food hygiene and temperature control legislation.

A full hygiene inspection of the galley and related food areas will be undertaken as part of a Sanitation Inspection. A full inspection will also be carried out when a boarding visit reveals concerns about food hygiene on board.

The ports of Cardiff and Barry primarily receive merchant vessels and occasionally passenger vessels. Shared Regulatory Services is unable to develop an annual ship hygiene inspection programme as it is not possible to determine when a ship will next return to the port.

Food hygiene inspections will be undertaken in-accordance with the relevant FSA and APHA guidance.

Fishing boats and land-based premises within the port health district will form part of the Shared Regulatory Services Food Hygiene Intervention Programme.

Complaints

The port health service occasionally receives complaints, for example, a crew member may be concerned about water quality on board a ship. Port Health Officers will respond quickly to complaints to protect public health and will ensure the complainant is kept regularly updated about the progress of their complaint and final outcome.

Advice to Businesses

Shared Regulatory Services will provide advice and information for masters, agents, port operators, food importers, shipping companies, merchant navy welfare members and other stakeholders.

Shared Regulatory Services will proactively disseminate information to shipping agents and the port operator, marina management and other relevant parties when health protection controls need to be implemented to prevent the entry of infectious disease or in response to public health emergencies of international concern.

Food and Feedstuff Inspection

There have been no container ships arriving at the Port of Barry for a considerable length of time and none other than empty containers arriving at the port of Cardiff since September 2017. This means that the future importation of food through these ports is unlikely. Products of Animal Origin and Higher Risk Foods not of Animal Origin are not permitted to enter through either port or Port Health Officers will take action to detain any such products. In the case of Products of Animal Origin, the Border Force Agency will be notified. Food not falling into either of these categories will be monitored, inspected, and sampled on a risk basis. Any action taken will have due regard to guidance issued by the Food Standards Agency and European Commission.

A recent project directed by the Food Standards Agency identified that there was no feedstuff currently being imported into the ports. With no prior notification of the importation of feed not of animal origin required, continued liaison will be maintained with the port operators and detailed monitoring of manifests from arriving vessels to identify any changes in the situation.

Food Incidents and Hazards

Shared Regulatory Services will respond to any warnings regarding imported food which is unfit for human consumption and requires action to ensure it is removed from the food chain.

Water Quality

Every port must be provided with a supply of potable water, and this should be potable and comply with International Standards for drinking water. Suitable controls should be in place to prevent contamination and ensure adequate disinfection of tanks, distribution systems and hoses.

Vessels must have a water management plan in place not only to ensure that a suitable supply of potable water is always available, but also to identify and manage the risks of Legionella bacteria by removing or reduce possible sources of contamination through risk assessment, routine maintenance and regular cleaning, to reduce the chance of infection.

Sampling will be done on board vessels only by request or if the Port Health Officer has concerns about the suitability of the supply, or as part of a ship sanitation inspection. Requested samples will be charged as detailed below and an invoice raised for the shipping agent:

Port Health - Freshwater Analysis

Type of sample	Analysis	Number of Sampling points	Sample Cost 2023-24	Labour Cost (per visit)* 2023-24
Drinking Water	Aerobic Colony Counts, E.coli & Coliforms	2	£27.00	£75.00
Legionella	Legionella sp	2	£65.00	£75.00
Chemical analysis	Various physio/chemical parameters	1	£158.00	£75.00

**Labour cost not applied if ship already being visited.*

Extra charges may be added for exceptional costs such as launch hire

A sampling plan has been devised to check the quality of water at shoreside as detailed in Appendix B. If water quality fails to meet legal requirements suitable remedial action will be taken if required.

Insects capable of transmitting disease

Increased global travel and trade means there is a greater chance of disease vectors entering the country through accidental importation. Climate change may also mean there is a greater risk that imported tropical species could colonise and establish local populations.

This year, Shared Regulatory Services has reinstated its commitment to participate in a national survey co-ordinated by United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKSHA) to establish the distribution and type of mosquito found in and around the ports and to prevent any potential mosquito vectors of disease from entering and establishing populations within the UK.

3.3.2 Cardiff Airport

Cardiff Airport has seen a gradual return of flights and passengers as it recovers from the Covid-19 pandemic. The introduction of different airlines to the Airport brings with it different flight paths for which awareness of the prevalence of certain diseases in the country of origin is required to manage risk if illness is identified in passengers or crew. Such information is provided by the participation of Public Health Wales at regular meetings.

Prior to the Covid pandemic Qatar Airlines operated regular flights to and from Qatar which included cargo that required additional monitoring to be instigated. It is envisaged that these flights will be reinstated in 2024. Until this time most of the flights will be to and from European countries.

Investigation of incidents of infectious disease

The Commander of an aircraft has a statutory duty to inform the airport if there is someone on board who may have, or may have been exposed, to an infection. In addition, the Commander has the power to request a medical officer examine a person if there is good reason for believing that a passenger is suffering from an infectious disease or has been exposed to an infectious disease and the flight did not start within an expected area that is exempt from the controls of the Aircraft Regulations.

In such an instance the Port Health Officer will liaise with their colleagues in the Communicable Disease Team and the Port Medical Officer, Public Health Wales, to ensure appropriate action is taken in relation to the treatment of the patient/s, minimising the risk of the spread of infection and investigating the likely cause in accordance with Port Health Procedure for Cardiff International Airport. This may include:

- The collection of names, addresses and seat numbers of all passengers on board the aircraft
- Assist in arrangements to transfer of patient to clinical room and/or transfer to hospital
- Provision of faecal sample pots,
- Sampling food and water from aircraft
- Ensuring appropriate disposal or decontamination of soiled articles and sanitisation of aircraft

If the Port Medical Officer deems that there is a threat to public health; the Port Health Officer will liaise with the Duty Manager of the Airport and the airline about detaining all other passengers and possibly the aircraft.

Insects capable of transmitting disease

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has introduced regulatory requirements for disinsection of aircraft travelling from designated countries in which there is a risk of disease being spread by insects, e.g. Malaria, yellow fever, zika virus and dengue fever.

A Port Health Officer may require the Commander to assist in such steps as in the opinion of the Port Medical Officer are reasonably necessary for preventing the spread of infection, for disinsection and the destruction of vermin, and for the removal of conditions on the aircraft likely to convey infection, including conditions the existence of which might facilitate the harbouring of insects or vermin.

As for the seaports, Shared Regulatory Services has reinstated a commitment to participate in a national survey co-ordinated by United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKSHA) to establish the distribution and type of mosquito found in and around the airport and to prevent any potential mosquito vectors of disease from entering and establishing populations within the UK.

In-flight Death

Deaths that occur during a flight must be reported to Port Health unless the death was accidental, or the voyage commenced within the Expected Area and the aircraft did not touch down outside it.

If the death seems likely to be due to a communicable disease, then liaison with the Port Medical Officer will be made to investigate the cause and ensure appropriate controls are put in place to prevent the spread of infection.

Food Safety on Aircraft

Aircraft are treated as food businesses for the purposes of food hygiene regulations and officers have a power of entry to carry out interventions. Port Health Officers may inspect aircraft and will act in accordance with the Shared Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy if standards of food hygiene are not satisfactory.

Food and Feed Imports

Cardiff Airport is not a Border Control Post (BCP) so cannot receive products of animal origin or higher risk products not of animal origin from third countries. Products of animal origin arriving at the airport cannot be redirected to an approved BCP, they will be treated as an illegal import and refused entry into Europe. Currently there are no cargo flights entering Cardiff Airport that could facilitate such imports.

Potable Water

Every port must be provided with a supply of potable water, and this should comply with International Standards. Suitable controls should be in place to prevent contamination and ensure adequate disinfection of tanks, distribution systems and hoses.

3.4 Liaison with other organisations

Shared Regulatory Services will co-operate with its partners, organisations, working groups and associations to ensure the provision of an effective port health service. This will include:

The Food Standards Agency (FSA)
Welsh Government (WG)
Test Trace and Protect
Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
Public Health Wales (PHW)
UK Health Security Agency (UKSHA)
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
Association of Port Health Officers (APHA)
Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)
Border Force (Customs/Revenue and Immigration Services)
Port Health Authorities
Water Utility Companies
Port Operator
Shipping Agents
Merchant Navy Welfare Board

A representative of the Port Health function will attend the Directors of Public Protection Port Health Expert Panel. This panel consists of representatives from other local authorities, Welsh Government and Public Health Wales and provides a forum for promoting consistency of approach and discussing matters of a technical nature.

Port Health Officers also attend meetings of Merchant Navy Welfare Board and the Cruise Restart Group organised by the Association of Port Health Authorities

4. Resources

The Port Health Team forms part of Commercial Services for which overall responsibility lies with the Operational Manager Commercial Services. An organisation chart can be found within Section 3 of this Plan.

It consists of a small team of officers taken from both Food Safety and Port Health Teams. Each officer is qualified to carry out the port health functions and educated to Degree or Diploma standard in environmental health and possesses the relevant competency as required by the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice.

Officers are provided with on-going learning and development to ensure they are equipped with sufficient knowledge and skills to perform their duties which will include: -

- Port Health Induction Training
- Port Operator Induction Training
- Training needs identified through employee appraisal and team meetings.
- Professional and technical training to satisfy CPD requirements.

The competency of the Port Health Officers is continually assessed in accordance with the Internal Monitoring Procedure.

External Factors Impacting on the Service

Covid-19 Recovery – the impact of the Covid -19 pandemic has meant that many services within Shared Regulatory Services were suspended over a long period of time with the redirection of resources to address the pandemic. With the lifting of restrictions there is now a subsequent backlog of work required to be completed to meet statutory duties. This has required prioritisation of work according to risk and for Food Safety and Port Health particular attention to ensure compliance with the Food Standards Agency Recovery Plan. Consequently, this has had adverse impact on the proactive work of Port Health such as routine boarding and sampling.

Staff Retention and Recruitment-the Service has been adversely affected by the loss of staff to alternative employment opportunities closer to their homes, placing additional needs for training of new members of staff. The need to address the issues of staff retention and recruitment remains a priority for the Service moving forward.

Food Imports- The government has produced a draft Target Operating Model, a long-term border plan aiming to balance the need for a secure border with the needs of business for a simple border system which is hoped to be introduced in October 2023. Central to the plan is the UK Single Trade Window, providing a single digital point for both importers and exporters to provide the necessary data to trade, apply for licences and achieve authorisation for trusted

trader schemes. Goods will be categorised by a new approach focusing on the inherent risk that the commodity poses alongside any risk posed by the country of origin. Whilst Industry will benefit from less checks on medium to low-risk goods, there is concern that this may result in a greater need for enforcement.

Service delivery points

Port Health related services are delivered from 2 service delivery points and while the service primarily operates office hours from Mondays to Fridays, weekend and out of business hours duties are carried out as the need arises. Shared Regulatory Services also operates an out of hours duty officer scheme for emergency situations on 02920 871650.

Contact Information		
Locations	Service Area	Office Hours
<p>Cardiff Seaport <u>Contact:</u> Alexa Pieris, Team Manager Food Safety & Port Health <u>Address:</u> Shared Regulatory Services, Room 108, County Hall, Cardiff CF10 4UW <u>Tel:</u> 07970739588 <u>Out of hours:</u> 029 2087 1650 <u>Email:</u> porthealth-srswales@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk</p>	<p>Food and Feed Imports Food Hygiene Inspections & Ratings Food incidents and Hazards Potable Water Issues Vermin and Pest Control Waste Disposal Pollution Control Swimming Pools and Spas Sanitation Certificates Water Ballast</p>	<p>Mon - Thurs 08:30 - 17:00 Friday 08:30 - 16:30</p>
<p>Barry Docks/ Cardiff Airport <u>Contact:</u> Jane Peatey, Team Manager Food Safety & Port Health <u>Address:</u> Shared Regulatory Services, Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry CF63 4RU <u>Tel:</u> 03001236696/07590006445 <u>Out of hours:</u> 029 2087 1650 <u>Email:</u> porthealth-srswales@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk</p>		
<p>Cardiff Seaport/Barry Docks/Cardiff Airport <u>Contact:</u> Sarah Swaysland, Team Manager Communicable Disease and Health and Safety <u>Address:</u> Shared Regulatory Services, Room 108, County Hall, Cardiff CF10 4UW <u>Tel:</u> 02920 873819 / 02920 873832/07970738999 <u>Out of hours:</u> 029 2087 1650 <u>Email:</u> porthealth-srswales@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk</p>	<p>Death Infectious Disease</p>	

The Shared Regulatory Services website provides information on the services provided and the website address is www.srs.wales

5. Assessment and review

5.1 Assessment and Review mechanisms

Shared Regulatory Services recognises the need to measure the effectiveness of its services and strongly supports the ethos of continuous improvement. The Service therefore participates and undertakes several activities to ensure that work is of a high standard and opportunities to identify and implement improvements are taken.

Documented procedures

To ensure the quality and consistency of our activities, processes and procedures identify responsibility for the work carried out and ensure that all changes identified through audit are completed in accordance with improvement procedures.

Food Standards Agency

The Food Standards Agency has powers to audit the Port Health Service in relation to food hygiene inspections and imported food. Port Health imported food data is supplied to this agency every year as part the Local Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS).

Complaints

The port health service is also covered by the Vale of Glamorgan Council's corporate process. Last year no adverse comments were received in relation to the port health service provided by the legacy authorities of the City of Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Councils.

Performance Measurement

A range of performance measures have been in place to monitor port health activity across the port health functions of Shared Regulatory Services. These can be found in Section 5.3.

Assessment and audits

The monitoring of the quality of our policies and procedures is assessed in several ways, namely: -

- Audits undertaken by the Food Standards Agency
- Feedback from shipping agents and port operator and airline operators and airport manager.
- Corporate complaints and compliments about the service

Review

To ensure continuous improvement, it is essential that performance is regularly monitored. Shared Regulatory Services has developed an effective performance management infrastructure for delivering, monitoring, and reviewing which is achieved through the following mechanisms: -

- The Port Health Plan and associated statistical information is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the service remains effective. Where variation is identified, reasons are investigated, and improvements put in place.
- The Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee are provided details of this Service Plan which sets out the work programme for the service and reviews performance against the programme on an annual basis.

- Performance of individuals is further strengthened through the Personal Performance and Development Scheme recently rebranded to #it's about me.

5.2 Summary of Achievements from the previous year

- The core capacities of Cardiff International Airport to meet the requirements of the International Health Regulations 2005 as a “designated point of entry” were reviewed and actions taken to meet and improve them.
- The concessions at Cardiff Airport selling high risk foods were inspected and all received good food hygiene ratings.
- The mosquito survey was restarted at Cardiff Airport in September 2022 from which no vectors of concern were identified.
- A practical exercise was undertaken at Cardiff Airport on 18th January 2023 with representatives of relevant organisations to test the process and identify any additional considerations, facilities or equipment required in the situation of a passenger suspected of having a serious communicable disease.
- An audit of the cleaning procedures at the airport terminal was completed on 2nd March 2023 from which recommendations were made and implemented.
- Vessel movement at the ports of Cardiff and Barry were slow to recover but during this year the Service restarted physical visits to complete Ship Sanitation inspections and water testing which had been halted during the pandemic. Since January the proactive inspection of vessels has also recommenced.
- Regular meetings were held by the Port Health Team to facilitate updates by the Lead Officer. The updates included changes to legislation, working practices and developments taking place at Port Health Expert Panel and Association of Port Health (APHA) meetings
- Biannual meetings were held with appropriate representatives from Cardiff International Airport to ensure new procedures were agreed and effective lines of communication maintained.
- The voluntary surrender of several quantities of pork imported as personal items into Cardiff Airport by passengers to comply with the special measures introduced to minimise the risk of the introduction of African Swine Fever.
- A proactive inspection of a ship arriving from a country outside the EU identified an infestation of cockroaches in the galley for which appropriate advice and action was taken to ensure eradication.

5.3 Performance during previous year

Whilst inspections for the purpose of issuing sanitation certificates were continued through the year, routine boarding of vessels was delayed until January 2023. The delay in reinstatement of such visits following the end of Covid-19 restrictions was because of resources being redirected to address the backlog of food hygiene inspections required to be completed in accordance with the Food Standards Agency's Recovery Plan.

Shipping Ports of Cardiff and Barry and Penarth Marina

Monitoring of Ships and Manifest checks

The provision of an effective port health service is dependent on closely monitoring the arrival and departure of ships within the port health district. The type of vessel, cargo and previous port visited, helps port health officers decide which vessels to board based on risk assessment. In 2022/23 there were 157 arrivals in the Port of Cardiff and 31 arrivals in the Port of Barry.

The manifest identifies the cargo being carried which may include imported food and animal feed from countries outside the European Union. It is a requirement that the Port Health Team checks this document prior to a ship's arrival in port. The CIEH Wales Best Practice Standards require manifests to be checked within one working day if best practice is to be achieved and the team endeavour to meet this requirement where possible. During 2022/2023 no consignments of imported food were identified.

Boarding of vessels

The tables below illustrate the vessel movements through the ports of Barry and Cardiff over recent years and the estimated vessel movements for the coming year of 2023/24. It should be noted that the vessel movements in Barry were lower due to essential maintenance works having been completed in this year.

CARDIFF VESSEL MOVEMENTS AND BOARDING VISITS

	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		Estimated Numbers	
	Arriving	Boarded	Arriving	Boarded	Arriving	Boarded	Arriving	To be boarded
Arriving from UK	144	0	128	2	90	0	120	0
Arriving from EU Countries	82	0	77	0	51	6	70	0
Arriving from Third Countries*	9	0	20	0	16	2	15	10
TOTALS	235	2	225	0	157	8	205	10

*Target for boarding visits for vessels arriving from Third Countries is 75%

BARRY VESSEL MOVEMENTS AND BOARDING VISITS

	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		Estimated Numbers	
	Arriving	Boarded	Arriving	Boarded	Arriving	Boarded	Arriving	To be Boarded
Arriving from UK	12	0	25	0	7	0	15	0
Arriving from EU Countries	42	0	30	0	24	0	32	0
Arriving from Third Countries*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	54	0	55	0	31	0	47	0

*Target for boarding visits for vessels arriving from Third Countries is 75%

Currently the ships boarded are selected on a risk-based approach taking into account the priorities below and e.g. previous history, last destination and if first time in port.

Priority	Status of Vessel
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vessel has arrived from 3rd Country not within the EU (if not boarded in last 6 months) Food Safety Concerns Vessel requires chargeable water testing or ship sanitation certificate Complaint received alleging significant health risk
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All other vessels Complaint received that does not involve a significant health risk

Sanitation Exemption Certificates

It is a requirement under the Public Health (Ships) Regulations 1979 (as amended) and the International Health Regulations, that any ship arriving from a foreign port must have a valid Sanitation Exemption Certificate which is issued by an authorised Port Health Authority for a period of 6 months. When a request is made, the authority is required to carry out a full inspection and issue a Sanitation Exemption Certificate. Where the inspection reveals dangers to public health a

Sanitation Control Certificate will be issued. An officer may also decide to carry out a Sanitation Inspection if a valid certificate cannot be produced or dangers to public health exist on board.

From the table below it can be seen that during 2022/2023, 4 sanitation exemption certificates were issued. The issuing of ship sanitation exemption lite certificate has now ceased since the lifting of covid restrictions.

CARDIFF SANITATION CERIFICATES

	2019/20	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Sanitation exemption certificates issued	13	0	2	4
Sanitation control certificates issued	0	0	0	0
Ship sanitation exemption lite certificates issued	N/A	0	9	N/A
TOTALS	13	0	11	4

BARRY SANITATION CERIFICATES

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/2022	2022/2023
Sanitation exemption certificates issued	0	0	0	0
Sanitation control certificates issued	0	0	0	0
Ship sanitation exemption lite certificates issued	N/A	0	0	0
TOTALS	0	0	5	0

Ships and Shore-side Water Quality Checks

Water on board ships must be wholesome and comply with international standards. Port Health Officers will routinely check the microbiological water quality on board vessels and submit samples to the laboratory. The officer will require the Master to carry out remedial measures if the quality of the water is found to be unsatisfactory.

In the last year 7 vessels were sampled from all of which were in Cardiff. During these visits samples were taken for checking the suitability of the potable water supply and/or the presence of legionella. All the potable water samples and legionella samples taken were satisfactory.

It is a requirement of the International Health Regulations 2005 that every port is provided with supply of pure drinking water. The sampling programme detailed below was unfortunately not fulfilled due to the redirection of resources to address the Food service Recovery Plan.

Sample location	Number of samples taken		Unsatisfactory Results	
	Bacteriological	Chemical	Bacteriological	Chemical
Cardiff Bay Yacht Club	0	0	N/A	N/A
Cardiff Marina	0	0	N/A	N/A
Cardiff Dock	0	0	N/A	N/A
Penarth Quay	0	0	N/A	N/A
Barry Docks	0	0	N/A	N/A
Penarth Pier	0	0	0	N/A

Cardiff International Airport

Insects capable of transmitting disease

Between April and November, the Service participate in the surveillance organised by United Kingdom Health Security Agency (previously known as Public Health England) to monitor for the presence of the Aedes mosquito that causes the transmission of Zika Virus. This involves the placement of 4 traps at Cardiff Airport. The placement of traps had a delayed start due to resource issues but recommenced in September 2022. No mosquitos of concern were identified during the survey.

Food Safety on Aircraft

No inspections of food safety on aircraft were completed during 2022/23.

Food and Feed Imports

No commercial food or feed imports were made into Cardiff Airport during 2022/23.

On September 1st, 2022, Welsh Government introduced Special Measures under the Trade in Animals and Related Products (Wales) Regulations 2011 to minimise the risk of African Swine Fever that was prevalent in Eastern European countries being introduced through the ports. It was made illegal to bring most pork and wild boar products from the EU into Wales unless it was commercially packaged, or health/ID marked. Whilst Cardiff Airport is not authorised to receive commercial imports of meat, the legislation became relevant when flights from Eastern Europe were commenced in the Winter months and passengers were noted to be carrying such products in their personal luggage. Joint working with Border Force ensured the successful voluntary surrender of several quantities of pork.

Potable Water

Water samples were taken from several locations within Cardiff Airport Terminal and tested against microbiological and chemical criteria all of which were all found to be satisfactory.

At Cardiff Airport the planes are refilled via bowsers with water for personal hygiene purposes only and bottled water is given for passenger consumption. However, there is still a requirement for the bower water to be of potable quality when used for personal hygiene to not cause a risk to health. Water samples were taken from the water bowsers used to refill the planes for this purpose. One failed to meet recommended microbiological criteria. Review of the water management procedure and remedial works undertaken to the bower failed to rectify the issue and it was therefore taken out of use.

Outstanding Issues from 2022/2023

Whilst the Port Health Service has made significant progress to reinstate proactive areas of work there are still outstanding matters due to resources being diverted to priorities of a greater risk within the organisation. The outstanding issues to be completed in the coming years are therefore as follows:

Ensure the requirements of the Internal Monitoring Procedure are met to ensure consistency and quality of interventions performed by individuals within the team.

Ensure the completion of the sampling programme for the potable water supply at shore side.

Ensure the boarding of 75% vessels arriving from third countries.

5.4 Performance Targets for 2023/24

Measure	Target
Check all container vessel manifests if applicable	100% within 1 working days
Target vessels that are likely to pose the biggest public health risk with a boarding inspection.	Undertake 75% boarding inspections of vessels arriving from outside the EU.
Ensure suitable potable water supply at shore side.	Meet requirements of sampling programme
Investigation of complaints	Investigation of complaints with significant health risk within 1 working day and any other within a minimum of 5 days
Investigation of notifications of infectious disease	Ensure adequate response 24 hours/day 352 days/year

6. Action Plan

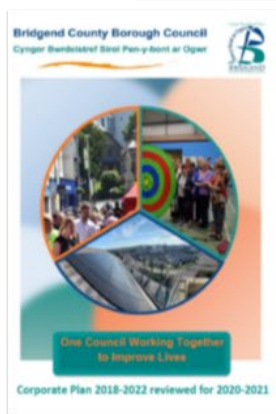
Objectives	Milestones	
Adopt the Port Health Plan 2023/24	Q2	Prepare the Port Health Plan 2023/24 and circulate to Joint Committee Members
Improve stakeholder awareness of port health requirements.	Q1-4	<p>Hold biannual meeting at airport with appropriate stakeholders</p> <p>Collate articles of interest, prepare, and disseminate information leaflet to stakeholders.</p> <p>Review SRS website</p>
Continue to meet performance targets when resource permits	Q1-4	Implement measures detailed in 5.4 to meet required targets.
Ensure the Port Health function is undertaken appropriately by ensuring authorised, trained, and competent officers.	Q3	Undertake validation assessment of port officers in accordance with internal monitoring procedure
	Q4	Carry out a review to ensure the plan has been successfully implemented.

Appendix A – Corporate priorities and outcomes of partner local authorities

Bridgend County Borough Council

Priorities

Aims



- Supporting a successful sustainable economy
- Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient
- Smarter use of resources

- Improve learner outcomes
- Support growth and prosperity
- Develop and enhance community support and services
- Build resilient communities
- Support better health and well-being
- Transform the Council's estate
- Support areas of corporate change
- Support environmental sustainability

City of Cardiff Council

Priorities

Outcomes

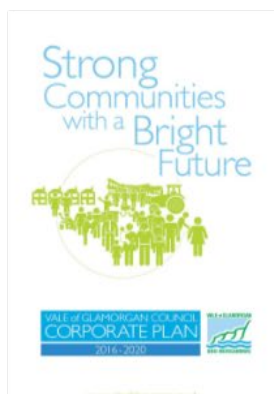


- Working for Cardiff
- Working for Wales
- Working for the future
- Working for public services

- Cardiff is a great place to grow up
- Cardiff is a great place to grow older
- Supporting people out of poverty
- Safe, confident and empowered communities
- A Capital City that works for Wales
- Cardiff grows in a resilient way
- Modernising and integrating our public services

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Priorities



- To work with and for our communities
- To support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth
- To support people at home and in their community
- To respect, enhance and enjoy our environment

Appendix B

Sampling Plan

Oct-Mar	QA F Shed – Bollard 30	High	Micro
	QA I Shed – Bollard 93	High	Micro
	RD H Shed – Bollard 88	Medium	Micro
	RD Coal Berth – Bollard 82	Low	Micro
	RB Britannia Quay	Low	Micro
	Cardiff Yacht Club		Micro
	Penarth Marina		Micro
	Barry Docks Shed B	Medium	Micro
	Barry Docks Scott Packaging	Low	Micro
	Barry Docks Vopak	Medium	Micro



Shared
Regulatory
Services
Gwasanaethau
Rheoliadol
a Rennir

Appendix 5

Primary Authority Partnerships / Partneriaethau Prif Awdurdod

September / Medi 2023





		Business name	Partnership created	Area of regulation
1.		<u>Association of Convenience Stores</u> (Co-ordinated Partnership) Working with Surrey & Buckinghamshire Trading Standards	November 2015 (DEVOLVED)	Underage sales, food standards, fireworks
2.		<u>Nathaniel Cars</u> Bridgend	March 2016	Fair Trading, consumer protection / civil
3.		<u>Braceys Limited (T/A Dunraven Windows)</u> Bridgend	March 2016	Fair Trading, Complaints
4.		<u>Venture Life Healthcare Limited</u> Bridgend	May 2016	Food Labelling
5.		<u>Heatforce Limited</u> Cardiff	May 2016	Fair Trading, Complaints

6.		Royal Voluntary Service Nationwide	August 2016	Food Safety, Food Standards
7.		Just Perfect Catering Bridgend	October 2016	Food Safety, Food Standards
8.		Sloane Home Limited Vale of Glamorgan	December 2016	Food Labelling, Fair Trading, Food Standards
9.		Falcon Installations Ltd. Bridgend	January 2017	Fair Trading
10.		Filco Supermarkets Ltd. Vale of Glamorgan	February 2017	Food Safety, Food Standards, Food Hygiene Training
11.		Essilor Nationwide	April 2017	Fair Trading – advertising and promotional materials.

12.		Bravura Foods Nationwide	April 2017	Food Labelling
13.		Waitrose Working with Surrey & Buckinghamshire (TS) and Bracknall Forest (EH)	October 2017 (DEVOLVED)	Food hygiene / trading standards
14.		Tesco Stores Ltd Working with Luton Borough Council (EH) and Hertfordshire County Council (TS)	October 2017 (DEVOLVED)	Food Safety, Food Standards, Animal Feed, Consumer Protection, Public Health
15.		Craft Bakers Association (Co-ordinated Partnership) Working with Horsham District Council (EH)	May 2018 (DEVOLVED)	Food Safety Management System & Associated Policies

16.		<u>Hallmark Care Homes</u> Working with Cherwell & West Northamptonshire Council (EH)	May 2018 (DEVOLVED)	Food Safety, Food Standards
17.		<u>Brutons the Bakers</u> (PJ & RP Best Limited)	June 2018	Food Safety, Food Standards, Health & Safety.
18.		<u>Vale of Glamorgan Hotel Ltd</u>	June 2018	Food Safety, Food Hygiene Training, Food Standards
19.		<u>HC-One Care Homes</u> Working with Wigan District Council (EH)	June 2018 (DEVOLVED)	Food Safety Management Systems & Associated Policies
20.		<u>Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd</u> Working with Oxfordshire Council (TS) & Cherwell Council (EH)	July 2018 (DEVOLVED)	Food Safety Management Systems & Associated Policies

21.		<p><u>Mitchells & Butlers plc</u></p> <p>Working with Luton Borough Council</p> <p>(Brands include Harvester, Toby Carvery, Sizzling Pubs, Miller & Carter, O’Neills)</p>	<p>April 2019 (DEVOLVED)</p>	<p>Food Safety, Food Standards,</p>
22.		<p><u>Lorax Ltd</u></p>	<p>August 2019</p>	<p>Fair trading / underage sales</p>
23.		<p><u>Access Training (Wales) Ltd</u> Cardiff</p>	<p>September 2019</p>	<p>Fair trading / consumer protection</p>
24.		<p><u>Cardiff & Vale University Health Board</u> Cardiff / Vale</p>	<p>October 2019</p>	<p>Food Safety, Food Hygiene Training, Health & Safety, food labelling</p>
25.		<p><u>Wild Water Group</u> Cardiff</p>	<p>October 2019</p>	<p>Food safety, health & safety</p>

26.		The Bannatyne Group Working with Surrey & Buckinghamshire	January 2020 (DEVOLVED)	Health & Safety, food safety, public health
27.		Wine & Spirit Trade Association Working with Salford City Council	June 2020 (DEVOLVED)	Food standards, labelling
28.		One Stop Stores Ltd Working with Luton Borough Council (EH) and Hertfordshire County Council (TS)	July 2021 (DEVOLVED)	Food hygiene, food labelling, allergens
29.		Health Food Manufacturers' Association Working with Surrey & Buckinghamshire	October 2021 (DEVOLVED)	Food standards, trading standards
30.		John Lewis plc Working with Surrey & Buckinghamshire	March 2022 (DEVOLVED)	Trading standards

31.		<u>Cadwaladers (Cardiff) Limited</u> Cardiff	July 2022	Food Safety, Food Standards
32.		<u>In the Welsh Wind</u> Ceredigion	October 2022	Food Standards
33.		<u>Studex Manufacturing of the UK Ltd</u> Working with Peterborough Council	February 2023 (DEVOLVED)	Trading Standards, Health & Safety
34.		<u>Wallace Main Ltd</u> (Successor company to the Vydex Corporation, with whom we've partnered with since April 2017)	May 2023 (April 2017)	Trading Standards, Food labelling (including animal feed)

Appendix 6 - Summary of cases concluding between April and the end of August 2023

The following prosecution cases arising from investigations conducted across the Shared Service, have been concluded recently.

Case	Court date	Offence(s)	Outcome
1	13.4.23	<p>A wholesale company and its sole Director each pleaded guilty to five food hygiene offences following an SRS inspection of the premises. Officers found rodent droppings behind pallets of food products and holes to the structure of the building which would allow pest access to the food store. As a result of these issues a Remedial Action Notice was served.</p> <p>Further visits over a period of months found further evidence of a pest infestation. Then in June 2022, one of the company's vehicles was subject to a multi-agency routine stop and check in Somerset, while enroute to delivering to various food businesses across the South West of England. Inspection of the vehicle discovered that products of animal origin were being supplied to other businesses more than 30 miles/50km from the Cardiff County boundary without the necessary approval from the authorising authority.</p> <p>In mitigation the defence argued that there had been co-operation with the Council, standards had improved in the premises, a new shutter door had been fitted and the level of cleanliness had significantly improved. With regards to the cutting plant, the defence accepted that there had been a clear error of judgement. They had tried to apply for a licence which was refused and so they had withdrawn from</p>	<p>In sentencing, the District Judge told the Director that the offences were serious, that he ran a big business which supplied a lot of people and so food safety laws should be paramount in his mind.</p> <p>The company was fined a total fine of £7,335 and order to pay costs of £1,327 together with a surcharge £190.</p> <p>The Director was fined a total of £1,000 and ordered to pay costs of £1,327 together with a surcharge £190</p>

		the whole thing.	
2	21.4.23	<p>This case concerned a number of serious failings in a House in Multiple Occupation. The HMO licence holder, the property management company and its Director were each charged with a number of offences, and all three pleaded guilty.</p> <p>When the property was visited, SRS Officers found that the conditions of the licence had not been complied with as required by the Housing Act 2004 and there were also failures to comply with the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Wales) Regulations 2006. These related to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to install the appropriate fire alarm system, • Failure to provide complete and functional fire doors • Failure to adequately fire protect the gas and electricity meters. • Missing smoke detectors, • Failure to maintain fire extinguishers, • Failure to maintain fire doors, • Inaccessible fire blanket, • Defective gutters to the annex side extension • Defective kitchen work surface 	<p>The licence holder was fined a total of £1,830 and ordered to pay costs of £1,000 together with a surcharge of £183.</p> <p>The property management company and its Director were both fined a total of £1,080 and ordered to both pay costs of £1,250 as well as surcharges of £108.</p>

3.	3.5.23	<p>In August 2021, SRS Officers visited the premises of a wholesale fruit supplier, and found evidence of rodents where foods were stored, including a pallet of rice contaminated with rodent urine and faeces. In addition, there were gaps to the exterior of the premises allowing access into the premises by pests, the premises were not maintained in a clean condition, there was no water supply to the premises for cleaning or for the maintenance of personal hygiene, and the business was not following their own food safety management procedures.</p> <p>During a further visit in September 2021, it was established that there had been a change in the legal ownership and management of the business. On this occasion, the following issues were identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to advise the authority of a change of business ownership at an approved premises • Failure to obtain approval for the supply of products of animal origin • Areas of the premises were in a dirty condition • Crabs were out of temperature control <p>A Remedial Action Notice was served but on further visit in the September 2021 the following issues were found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of the Premises were in a dirty condition • Food equipment was in a dirty condition 	<p>The business owner entered a total of 16 guilty pleas on behalf of her two companies (4 each) and herself (8 offences)</p> <p>The Director was fined £250 per offence for each of her 8 offences to give a total of £2,000. She was ordered to pay costs and a surcharge of £800.</p> <p>The companies were each fined £250 per offence giving a total fine of £1,000</p>
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4.	3.5.23	<p>In March 2022, SRS received a notification from Portsmouth City Council that the defendant had supplied foodstuffs which bore no labelling in English, and which upon translation were found to be konjac jelly mini cups. The issues here were two-fold, firstly konjac in jelly cups was prohibited decades ago as it can cause a choking hazard for children. In addition, the lack of food information in English meant that consumers would be unaware of the presence of any allergens.</p> <p>On visiting the local wholesaler, SRS officers identified the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The defendant had failed to put in place, implement and maintain a permanent procedure or procedures based on the HACCP principles • He placed on the market food, namely durian cake and chongqing huogo hot pot, with no clear reference to the name of the substance or product • He placed on the market food, namely jelly mini-cup confectionary containing konjac <p>Prior to the conclusion of this case, the limited company was dissolved, meaning that proceedings could only be</p>	<p>The Director was fined £125 for each of 4 offences, giving a total fine of £500. He was ordered to pay costs of £400, and also a surcharge of £200. Payable at the rate of £10 per week.</p>

		brought against the Director. He pleaded guilty to four offences.	
5.	11.5.23	This case involved a taxi driver who transported passengers inside the Cardiff District without using the fitted taximeter. He also charged and obtained more than the legal Tariff Fare for journeys inside the Cardiff District.	The defendant was fined £264 and ordered to pay costs of £300 together with a victim surcharge of £106
6.	11.5.23	This case involved a taxi driver using a private hire vehicle to pick up passengers in a controlled district without first having them pre-book the journey (i.e. acting as a Hackney Carriage). The driver's insurance for the vehicle had an exclusion clause in the policy stating that there was no cover for use as a Hackney Carriage. This meant that the vehicle was uninsured for the journey.	The defendant was fined £333 and ordered to pay costs of £300 together with a victim surcharge of £133. He was also given 8 penalty points on his driver's licence
7.	11.5.23	This case involved a taxi driver using a private hire vehicle to pick up passengers in a controlled district without first having them pre-book the journey (i.e. acting as a Hackney Carriage). The driver's insurance for the vehicle did not include cover for Public Hire transportation only Private Hire transportation. This meant that the vehicle was uninsured for the journey. does not have cover for Public Hire transportation only Private Hire transportation.	The defendant was fined £500 and ordered to pay costs of £300, together with a victim surcharge of £140 He was also given 6 penalty points on his driver's licence

8.	18.5.23	<p>The defendant had previously entered guilty pleas under the Fraud Act 2006 and the and the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations. The investigation followed a consumer complaint about the purchase of a vehicle, and established that the defendant had told the consumer that he would register an extended warranty with WarrantyWise. However, after the defendant took £364 for the extended warranty from the purchaser, it was never registered, resulting in financial detriment.</p>	<p>The defendant was given a 12 month community order consisting of 20 hours of rehabilitation to address his offending and 132 hours of unpaid work. He was also ordered to pay £1,500 costs and a £96.00 court surcharge.</p>
9.	8.6.23	<p>The defendant in this case is the food business operator of a sandwich bar. A visit by an officer from the Shared Regulatory Services in September 2022 found that the business had not displayed a food hygiene rating sticker of 1 which had been awarded to it following a hygiene inspection in July 2022. The defendant advised officers that he had been away on holiday and had not seen the letter and sticker. The Officer supplied another letter and sticker but a subsequent visit the following day found that the sticker was still not displayed, and the defendant refused to place the sticker in the window. Further visits in October 2022 and November 2022 highlighted further failures to display the rating.</p>	<p>The defendant was fined £440 for each of the three offences making a total fine of £1320. He was ordered to pay costs of £410 and also a court surcharge of £528.</p>
10.	9.6.23	<p>In May 2021 an Officer posing as a member of the public was sold two packs of Amber Leaf tobacco for £5 each. In June 2021 officers conducted an inspection and search of the premises, along with HMRC, and identified an area behind cladding in the back room that was secured with an electromagnetic lock. Inside was a store of counterfeit and</p>	<p>The Director was given a 12 month community order with a 20 day rehabilitation requirement. He was also fined £100 and ordered to pay costs of £750 together with a court surcharge of £95.</p>

		<p>illicit hand rolling tobacco and cigarettes. There were 9440 cigarettes and 2.05kg of tobacco. The business owner attended the store when notified of the Officers' findings and said that he knew nothing about it.</p> <p>In sentencing, the district Judge stated that he took into account that the defendant had pleaded guilty albeit not on the first occasion, and that these were sophisticated offences as there had been structural adaptations to the premises and culpability was considered to be in the medium category of the sentencing guidelines.</p> <p>Charges were laid against the company running the business and its sole Director.to in respect of 4 offences under the Trade Marks Act 1994, 1 offence under the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 and 1 offence under The Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products Regulations 2015.</p>	
11.	19.6.22	<p>During March 2017, Shared Regulatory Services received an initial complaint prior to the opening of a new indoor trampoline park. Concerns were raised about the standard of equipment being installed at the venue and its compliance with relevant health and safety legislation. Officers provided guidance and assistance to the business but subsequent visits to monitor the implementation of improvements identified a continued failure to undertake a 'suitable and sufficient' risk assessment for the foam pit, airbag and overall supervision of the trampoline arena together with a lack of manufacturer information about some of the equipment; including the airbag. Further complaints</p>	<p>The Judge sentenced the Director to 10 months imprisonment suspended for 18 months. He will also be required to carry out 200 hours of unpaid work requirement. The company was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay costs of £10,000.</p>

		<p>were received from parents between August 2017 and August 2019 which included injuries to six children including five leg fractures and one spiral fracture.</p> <p>The recurring themes throughout the incidents where injuries took place were the lack of supervision by staff, lack of training of staff, lack of safety briefing for all users of equipment, and during this time officers had made a number of visits serving improvement notices to secure improvements to the training of court monitors and provision of supervision throughout the trampoline park. Charges were brought under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 against the company and its Director.</p> <p>In sentencing, the Judge told the Director that he had a cavalier attitude towards safety and there had been an absence of basic safety provisions. The risks were obvious, there had been inadequate protective equipment and there was no desire to listen or investigate any person's report following an incident. Basic safety standards were missing. The problems should have been anticipated and people should have been able to trust that, in a premises such as this, that all precautions had been taken. The defendant had intentionally or flagrantly disregarded the law. The local authority had provided him with advice and guidance and advised him what he was doing wrong. The same accidents continued to happen as there were the same fundamental issues.</p>	
12.	6.7.23	The defendant in this case was a licensed taxi driver who, on a Friday night in September 2022, parked up his	The Magistrates imposed a fine of £83 for the plying for hire offence, and £250 plus 8 penalty points for the no

		<p>licensed Private Hire vehicle in Cardiff City centre, close to a number of hospitality premises. When approached, he agreed to take two passengers on a journey outside of the city centre for a fare of £10, without prior booking. In acting in this way, he used the Private Hire vehicle as Hackney Carriage and plying for hire. As a consequence of this unlicensed activity and in the context of section 143 of the Road Traffic Act, the vehicle was not insured to be used in this way.</p>	<p>insurance offence. The defendant was also ordered to pay £150 Prosecution costs and £133 Victim Surcharge.</p>
13.	20.7.23	<p>The defendants in this case were a property management company and its sole Director. The prosecution demonstrated that two Cardiff properties were rented to tenants without the necessary HMO licences being in place. Both properties had previously been licensed for multiple occupation, however the most recent licences were issued in 2015 and expired in 2020.</p> <p>At the time of the HMO licences being issued in 2015, each included as a condition the requirement to complete certain works at the properties within a period of 4 months. These were in respect of fire safety, also kitchen and bathroom arrangements. Nevertheless, when the Investigating Officer visited the properties in October 2022, it was clear that these crucial improvements hadn't been complied with some seven years later, and indeed further problems were also identified. In addition, the properties remained unlicensed until the matter was finally rectified in February 2023.</p> <p>Despite every attempt by the Service to remind the</p>	<p>Guilty pleas were finally entered by each of the defendants in respect of the 11 charges.</p> <p>The Magistrates stated that they were really shocked by what was presented by the prosecution, that the tenants (all students) had been left at risk and considered that the failure to complete the works for 7 years was an aggravating factor. They also stated that they were pleased that this matter had come before the court.</p> <p>The company was fined a total of £31,995 and ordered to pay costs of £251 together with a victim surcharge of £2000.</p> <p>The company's sole Director was fined a total of £34,246, and ordered to pay costs of £251.86 together with a victim surcharge of £2000.</p>

		<p>defendants of the need to have a HMO licence in place for each of the properties, they failed to take the necessary steps to comply. All the while, the health and safety of the residents living at the properties was compromised by the failure to act.</p> <p>The company and its Director were each prosecuted for offences under section 72 of the Housing Act 2004 (two counts each for failure to licence the properties as HMOs) and under section 234 of the same legislation for the properties' failure to comply with the management regulations (nine counts each).</p>	
14.	24.8.23	<p>The defendant in this case allowed his garden to become completely overgrown and neglected to the point that it was providing harbourage for rodents. Neighbours complained of accumulations of dead wood from trees, plastic ready meal trays, plastic milk bottles, metal food cans, broken chairs, old kitchen appliances and many black and green refuse/recycling sacks.</p> <p>SRS Officers attempted to work with the defendant to resolve the problem over a protracted period of time but to no avail.</p> <p>A notice under Section 4, Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 was served June 2022 requiring him to clear his garden by the end of July 2022.</p> <p>The defendant failed to comply with this notice within the</p>	<p>The defendant was found guilty of both offences in a Magistrates Court hearing. The District Judge fined him £250 and ordered him to pay a £100 victim surcharge and £150 towards costs.</p>

		<p>timescale and advised that he was planning on reusing most of the accumulations and was trying to clear the garden himself. He later agreed for the garden to be cleared in default on a particular date in November 2002, and it was explained to him that when the work was done, he would receive an invoice from Cardiff Council to recover the cost of the clearance.</p> <p>When the crew arrived however, the defendant refused to allow them onto his property. Having tried all other means available to resolve, the Service was left with no other choice than to deal with the matter formally and the defendant was charged for failing to comply with the notice and for obstruction.</p>	
15.	24.8.23	<p>The defendant in this case, a plumber, agreed to install a new bathroom for an elderly Vale of Glamorgan couple. He took payment in full for the work and materials, but the bathroom was never installed and to this day the couple has been left £4500 out of pocket.</p> <p>The plumber had been a childhood friend of the couple's children and remembering him as being a polite boy, the couple decided to give him the work. The defendant betrayed their trust however and after the money was paid, his behaviour changed. Thus, he claimed to have ordered the from a Cardiff supplier goods when that wasn't the case and he failed to turn up to work at the property, citing any number of excuses as to why he couldn't attend, including bereavement, vehicle breakdown and needing to give priority to a vulnerable resident with boiler problems.</p>	<p>The District Judge sentenced the defendant to an 18 month Community Order to include 10 days of a Thinking Skills Program and 240 hours of unpaid work.</p> <p>The judge commented on the fact that the defendant had not made any payments towards the Civil Order and as a result of his being out of work, ordered that the Victim surcharge of £114 be paid, but made no order as to costs.</p>

		The defendant did nothing to assist the couple but left them having to pay another plumber to carry out the work.	
16.	25.8.23	<p>This case against an 83-year-old illegal money lender followed concerns brought to the attention of the Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit. The investigation showed how the defendant had previously been a licensed lender, but this had lapsed in 2003. When lending money, she charged £40% interest on every £100, and it was calculated that Officers were able to calculate that in total she had lent approximately £126,000 in loans. In some cases, the lending was particularly irresponsible resulting in one low-income couple paying her £120 <i>more than their total monthly income</i> just to service their debt to her, and this left them penniless every month.</p> <p>The illegal lending was accompanied by a pattern of threatening text messages, and the Recorder hearing the case pointed out how, as a previously licensed lender, she clearly knew that what she was doing was wrong. Her interest charges kept her victims trapped in a cycle of debt.</p> <p>The defendant appeared at Cardiff Crown Court for sentencing in respect of two offences of illegal money lending under the Consumer Credit Act 1974 and the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, and also for one offence for money laundering under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.</p> <p>In mitigation, the defendant accepted that the text messages, which she had not intended to be threatening, must have caused stress to the victims. She expressed</p>	<p>The defendant was sentenced to 2 years imprisonment for the money laundering offence and to 18 months imprisonment for each of the illegal money lending offences to run concurrently but suspended for 2 years.</p> <p>The prosecution would be making a Proceeds of Crime Application and directions were given for that timetable.</p>

		remorse for what she had done and wanted to apologise to the victims for the stress she had caused them.	
17.	31.8.23	This case involved a repeated failure to provide documentation when requested by Officers as part of their work on empty homes. The defendant was charged with one offence under the Housing Act 2004, but failed to attend to court. He was therefore found guilty in his absence.	The defendant was fined £220, ordered to pay legal costs of £200, investigation costs of £200 and a court surcharge of £88.