

Appendix Two – Benchmarking

BENCHMARKING ACTIVITIES FOR LONDON BOROUGH TOWER HAMLETS FOOD SAFETY:

There are several benchmarking activities, both internal and external, that the food team employ to ensure the team meet expectations and work effectively. Below, is a broad synopsis of the benchmarking mechanisms.

Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS):

LAEMS is a web-based system used to report local authority food law enforcement activities to the Food Standards Agency (FSA). Local authorities upload end of financial year data to the FSA that has been generated from local systems (such as APP / Civica) where data is recorded on food law enforcement activities.

This annual data for all Local Authorities is then published by the FSA. It aids in creating service plans and benchmarking services across the country.

North East London Food Liaison Group (NELFLG):

Every quarter managers from each North East London authority meet to discuss Environmental Health matters, cross borough issues, and benchmark each service against each other. As part of this “best practice sharing” the group submit figures for their current quarter regarding broadly compliant status (see table below).

The term “broadly compliant” relates to the way a food business complies with food hygiene legislation. Previously a National Performance Indicator (NI184), it was intended for the monitoring of Local Authorities. We, as a Council, still use broadly compliant status as a general internal indicator of performance. A Food Safety Officer currently risk assesses every food business that they inspect having regard to a food hygiene scoring system located in the Food Law Code of Practice.

A food business will be classed as broadly compliant, if they score in the manner described below in the categories listed.

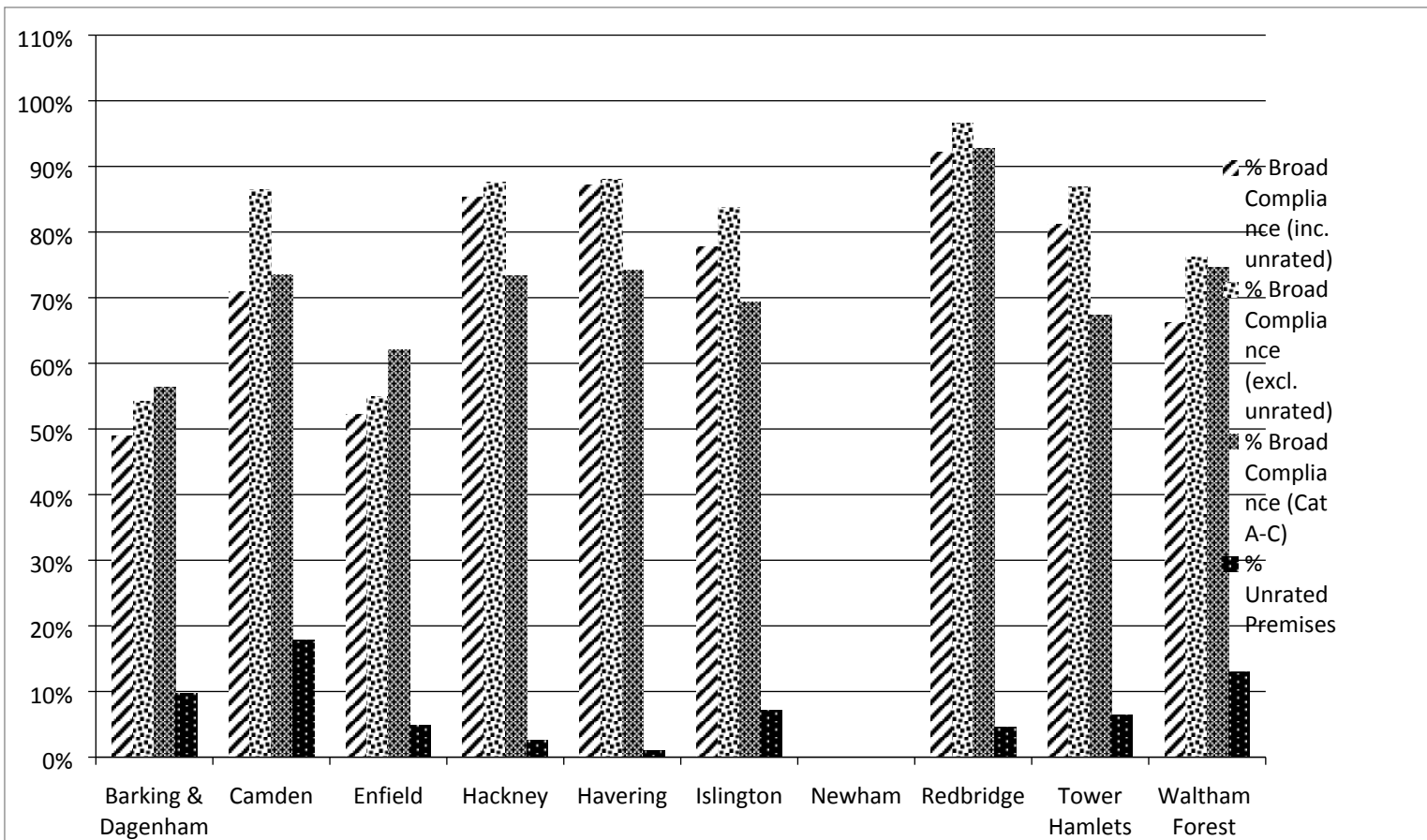
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|---------------------------------|--------------|
| a) Hygiene compliance record | = 10 or less |
| b) Structural compliance record | = 10 or less |
| c) Confidence in management | = 10 or less |

Therefore in order to be classed as broadly compliant the business should score 10 or less in each category a) to c), and have a total of 30 or less for the sum of the categories. In lay-terms, one would class a broadly compliant business as generally satisfactory – not perfect, but largely satisfactory and not presenting any risk.

We also benchmark how many unrated premises are currently recorded as these are a perceived risk and impact detrimentally against our Broad Compliance figures.

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LA	Premises	Total No. of Unrated	Total No. of Broadly Compliant Premises	No. of Category A	No. Broadly Compliant category A	No. of category B	No. Broadly Compliant category B	No. of Category C	No. Broadly Compliant category C
Barking & Dagenham	1335	130	653	1	1	52	16	554	325
Camden	3761	672	2669	63	1	240	76	1079	938
Enfield	2628	128	1373	19	2	179	53	501	379
Hackney	2778	72	2371	12	0	202	82	713	598
Havering	1860	20	1621	6	1	116	69	452	356
Islington	2345	167	1825	19	2	193	78	830	642
Newham	Data not provided								
Redbridge	1877	85	1730	8	4	70	49	768	731
Tower Hamlets	2973	193	2414	35	0	208	51	739	610
Waltham Forest	1971	256	1306	10	1	98	31	451	385



The Consumer’s Association - Which? Magazine:

Which? produce a ranking of the 386 food safety authorities nationally every year based on our LAEMS return.

Which? Magazine has over the past few years has collated the result of the LAEMs data and assessed the data and it ranked local authority areas based on three indicators using the following criteria:

- how many food establishments were rated for risk,
- how many of the medium and high-risk premises met hygiene requirements, and
- how many planned interventions (such as inspections or follow up actions) were actually carried out.

They stated that, budget cuts at local authorities, complicated international food supply chains and an increase in food crime can make it more difficult to enforce good food hygiene. Leaving the EU is likely to mean that the UK will have to conduct more of its own safety checks on imported food, which will require more resources and a new approach to food standards checking. The Food Standards Agency is currently reviewing food enforcement strategies.

Tower Hamlets were 350th out of 386. This number may at first glance appear underwhelming, but in terms of benchmarking a city borough, let alone a London borough, it is quite reasonable. The formula used by Which? is not weighted to account for how many premises or officers you have; where you are in the country; different demographical issues you face; how much enforcement takes place. As such, a smaller, rural authority with similar inspection percentages but more staff and less enforcement will rank better.

When you take London as a microcosm of 33 authorities Tower Hamlets performed reasonably well (see below). In a Borough that has high levels of poverty, and issues surrounding education and language barriers we still managed to come 19th in London out of 33.

Below us in the overall rankings were all of our neighbours. Enfield improved from the bottom of the table, through investment into their food team and there were five other London councils in the bottom 10 overall (Hackney, Camden, Lewisham, Ealing, and Newham). This further shows the difficulty of being a food authority in London. Our closest NE London equivalent in the rankings was Islington at 349th, one position above us.

WHICH? ranking of the 33 London Boroughs:

Borough	2015 Which? Ranking	2016 Which? Ranking	Change in ranking (-ve = worse	2016 Standing in London
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	(/398)	(/386)	rank)	
Bexley	377	36	341	1
Kensington	166	80	86	2
Hammersmith	308	241	67	3
Hillingdon	191	258	-67	4
City of London	235	268	-33	5
Barking	313	274	39	6
Kingston	314	291	23	7
Wandsworth	217	304	-87	8
Barnet	230	323	-93	9
Merton	322	326	-4	10
Haringey	383	327	56	11
Redbridge	110	328	-218	12
Greenwich	298	331	-33	13
Hounslow	382	332	50	14
Lambeth	319	341	-22	15
Brent	389	344	45	16
Westminster	316	346	-30	17
Islington	350	349	1	18
Tower Hamlets	310	350	-40	19
Sutton	343	356	-13	20
Southwark	387	357	30	21
Waltham Forest	344	361	-17	22
Havering	379	364	15	23
Richmond	354	367	-13	24
Bromley	326	369	-43	25
Enfield	398	370	28	26
Harrow	394	372	22	27
Croydon	336	373	-37	28
Hackney	381	374	7	29
Camden	390	381	9	30
Lewisham	396	382	14	31
Ealing	395	383	12	32
Newham	370	384	-14	33

Lifestyle (LoveMyVouchers.co.uk)

The Lifestyle blog , a consumers interest website on LoveMyVouchers.co.uk also carried out a study in February this year, based upon the interventions data of December 16 2016, supplied to the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and operated by the Food Standards Agency.

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They assessed the data from Restaurants and Cafes and for Takeaways to check hygiene ratings in the Food Authorities in the UK. By region we were assessed to be the 5th highest in London for the percentage of well performing restaurants and cafes

