



Case study

Westminster City Council Chinatown hygiene Initiative Project (CHIP)

Last updated 10 March 2006

Summary

Context: Food hygiene problems were being found in Chinatown, where enforcement action and other approaches were not improving compliance, leading the council to launch a dedicated initiative.

Response: The establishment of the Chinatown Hygiene Initiative Project, using key stakeholders to build closer working relationships with the Chinese community with the view of improving hygiene standards.

EHP Action: Establishment of the scheme and participation in putting across good hygiene practice.

Outcomes: Businesses contacted are now participating in the project and a 98% pass rate for food handlers who have completed a basic Good Hygiene Certificate.

Key words: Food hygiene, Chinatown Hygiene Initiative Project, improving hygiene standards, category A and B, Foundation in Food Hygiene Certificate.

Background

The Chinatown Hygiene Initiative Project (CHIP) is aimed at improving hygiene standards and awareness among food businesses in Chinatown.

Aims

Chinatown has been identified because the environmental health food team was finding significant hygiene problems, where enforcement action and other approaches were not improving compliance or standards.

Thirty-three businesses identified as part of the Chinatown Hygiene Initiative Project were chosen on the following basis:

- Businesses rated as category A or B for more than two years
- Chinese businesses, which are located in Chinatown and represent a “hard to hear” group



- Businesses that have a high number of complaints, prosecutions, closures and notices

Resources

Resources were officers' time for inspections and revisits. The Asian and Oriental School of Catering uses European Social Fund and Learning Skills Council sponsorship funding for the training and one-to-one coaching of managers and head chefs.

Activities

Westminster food team is working in partnership with The Asian and Oriental School of Catering to help achieve improved hygiene standards in Chinatown and to promote Safer Food, Better Business.

The school obtained a grant from the European Social Fund and Learning Skills Council sponsorship to assist in funding this initiative

The London Chinatown Chinese Association was consulted and they gave their support for the project.

The food team consulted with the businesses of Chinatown by meeting within their community centre to inform them of the initiative. At the meeting they were introduced to the Asian and Oriental School of Catering and concerns about standards and hygiene were highlighted. They were informed of the implications of the Freedom of Information Act and the publication of inspection reports.

One of the main problems identified in communicating with Chinatown businesses is language. To overcome problems the food team has been working with Mandarin and Cantonese speakers to interpret our meetings, training sessions and correspondence.

Officers and the staff from the Asian and Oriental School of Catering visited each of the premises selected to introduce the initiative and to get them on board.

The initiative has been publicised through Sing Tao Daily (Chinese newspaper) informing the community of the partnership between Westminster, Asian and Oriental School of Catering and The London Chinatown Chinese Association.

Evaluation and outcomes

- 33 of businesses contacted are now participating in the project
- Free training given to businesses, which is tailored for their business needs



- There has been a 98 percent pass rate for the Foundation in Food Hygiene Course, where food handlers, proprietors and managers have attended the course and taken the exam
- The food team has had full support and co-operation with London Chinatown Chinese Association Leaders
- The Chinese community within Chinatown has supported the new approach of improving standards, inspecting and educating

Implications

Businesses outside Westminster City Council have contacted us requesting that they would like to take part in the initiative or, if their home authority had this initiative, they would be very interested.

Conclusions:

Safia Khokhar, food team leader, said: "Improvements in some Chinatown restaurants have been identified, however we are continuing to work closely with all restaurants to ensure full compliance.

"Where improvements have not occurred, we are taking enforcement action."

Further information:

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