

London Food Co-ordinating Group's Approvals Sub Group

Minutes of Meeting on 21 February 2008 City of London offices, Walbrook Wharf, EC4

Food authority	Officer attending	Apologies
Barnet		Mark Stanbury
Brent	Mina Mistry	
Croydon	Brian Griffiths	
Hackney	Nigel Whiteley	
Haringey		Simon Thomas
Havering	Andy Bourlet	
Islington	Carole Milligan	
Kingston	Keith Fowler	
Redbridge	Henry Katsande	
Sutton	Jenny Winslet	
Tower Hamlets		Sandra Edmeade-Walters
Wandsworth	Peter Reddell	
Westminster	Laura Parrott	

Items

- 1 - Introductions
- 2 - Purposes of this small meeting
- 3 - The running of the Approvals Group
- 4 - The Approvals Group web-page on the CIEH - London Region website
- 5 - Guidance on simplified HACCP documents and records

1 - Introductions

NW chaired the meeting and took the minutes. The two officers who were new to the Approvals Group (LP and JW) introduced themselves and the establishments subject to approval in their authority.

2 - Purposes of this small meeting

NW announced that the first part of this meeting was for officers in the group who were interested in how the group is running. We needed to confirm which of our Approvals documents should go on the CIEH London Region website, and to discuss some detailed management matters.

He said that the second part of the meeting was for officers who are interested in starting a Working Group on Simplified HACCP Documents. We needed to look at some good published examples of simplified HACCP plans, and BG's initial draft for small bakeries making meat pies. KF agreed that after this initial meeting officers could communicate by e-mail.

3 - The running of the Approvals Group

3.1 - Scope of the Group

Should our Approvals Group discuss sushi production, and the shelf life determination of sushi made in sushi bars?

Agreed - The scope should be restricted to establishments subject to approval. Therefore we should include in our scope sushi production in manufacturing establishments, but not the production in sushi bars.

Action - We recommended that the LFCG co-ordinates the research being carried out by two organisations on the shelf-life of sushi in sushi bars, (Leatherhead Food International and our Public Analyst), to avoid duplication of work.

3.2 - 'Management group'

NW thought that this meeting may be the only time that officers in the group who were interested in how the group is running need to meet, so this informal 'management group' was not likely to develop into a clique.

3.3 - Minute-writer or Information Sheet writer

Peter Scott (the Co-ordinator of the LFCG) had written on 14/02/2008 (in his e-mail to NWh and MSt) that 'as yet no firm agreement has been made by ALEHM to fund a minute-taker' for our Approvals Group.

We were concerned that, if ALEHM were to agree to funding a Minute-writer, it would be better if the funding went towards an 'Information Sheet writer'. The reason for this is that the documents that officers wanted were those which give them information, or decisions, or advice, on a range of specific legal, or technical food safety, or enforcement matters, which requires the writer to research a matter, and to write it carefully. The minutes are of less value than such a series of Information Sheets on Approvals.

4 - The Approvals Group web-page on the CIEH - London Region website

4.1 - Minutes of meetings

PR and CM questioned what was the value of these minutes. NW said that they informed those who wanted to attend the meeting but could not of what was discussed. NW also said that he had received some valuable comments from Andy Bowles correcting us on some legal points.

4.2 - 'Information sheets'

PR much preferred 'Information sheets' or 'Decision Sheets' to Minutes of meetings, because they should make it easier for him to find the information he wants straight away. NW agreed to this. Mario Aquilina (formerly of L B Islington) had written a 'Guidance Note' some years ago on Fishery products requiring freezing to kill nematodes, and then used in sushi, which was a valuable, well researched, concise, one page document.

4.3 - Documents on the Open or Secure part of the websites?

NWh read out what Peter Scott (the Co-ordinator of the LFCG) had written (in his e-mail on 14/02/2008 to NWh and MSt), which NW agreed with.

With regards to open or secure web sites for the minutes I was going to raise this again at LFCG. ... If the minutes of meeting go onto a non secure website we may have to retract so much information that the resulting notes are illegible. ...

AB was concerned that an EHO working for a supermarket might read in our minutes about a problem in a factory which he could identify, and stop purchasing from that factory.

BG was concerned about a Freedom of Information Act request for minutes containing sensitive information, if on the secure part of a website.

NW suggested that:

- our Completed and Draft documents should be on the Open part of the CIEH London Region website.
- our Minutes should be on the Secure part of the LACORS website.

(For the reason that the minutes may contain sensitive information about businesses).

4.4 - Responses to FSA consultations

Agreed - To put the latest responses on our web-page, and remove them once the FSA have published the document that they consulted on.

4.5 - Format

NW wanted two headings on the page, with the following sub-headings, and the documents posted under these. (He had sent this list on 18/02/2008 in an e-mail to all attending this meeting).

- Completed documents
- Approvals specifically (including 'Information sheets').
- Food Hygiene generally
- The Approvals Group (Aims, scope and objectives, when completed).
- Minutes of meetings (The minutes could be put solely on the LACORS website).
- Responses to FSA consultations (The recent ones only).
- Draft documents
- Approvals specifically
- Food Hygiene generally
- The Approvals Group (draft Work plan).

PR wanted an Index to each document on the webpage.

4.6 - Documents for putting onto our web-page

NW briefly described the completed documents produced by the North East London Approvals Food Liaison Sub Group, (on Approvals specifically and on Food Hygiene generally).

Agreed - These completed documents should be put on the CIEH London Region website, and our responses to recent FSA consultations.

5 - Guidance on simplified HACCP documents and records

NW informed others of his draft 'Guidance on simplified HACCP documents for small food manufacturers and producers', and described how he had been inspired to write it by the consultant Paul Povey and his description of how he trained food business operators (FBOs).

BG then described how he had begun drafting even simpler guidance for small baking establishments in Croydon which require approval, 'Guidance for small and medium bakeries', which could accompany an approval application form. He sent on 20/02/2008 it to the officers attending this meeting. He wanted to improve on the Industry Guide: Baking Guide 'Possible hazards and controls for Meat pies'. From his experience of teaching food hygiene and HACCP in his local college, he wanted the guidance to be free from jargon, and usable by managers who had not run a food business before. KF liked BG's approach.

PR recommends the FSA 'Food safety management Diary for meat producers' to businesses, even to dairy producers. He wants to give FBOs a good example of a HACCP document, together and a template with spaces for the FBO to fill in the details for his own establishment. KF and JW agreed.

However CM told us that there are several HACCP plans which are available on the internet, and so queried why we should draft any more.

JW held the opinion that we should recommend that a FBO uses a consultant for his HACCP-based procedure, just as he uses an accountant for his tax return. If a FBO who is manufacturing meat pies does not understand food hygiene, then we should stop him operating by serving a Remedial Action Notice. She argued this after her experience with one FBO in Sutton.

Officers briefly discussed whether we should aim to raise the level of understanding of food business operators (FBOs), or whether officers should aim to communicate with FBOs at their low level, but did not reach an agreement.

PR recommends parts of the 'Safer food, better business for retailers' to butchers for training purposes. KF and JW agreed.

Action - BGr to send an EHCnet message asking if other food officers have written simplified HACCP plans.