

## **ROTHER and WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCILS ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE**

### **OUR PUBLIC HEALTH WORK 2019/20**

The shared Environmental Health service for Rother and Wealden is committed to protecting the public health of the residents and visitors of Rother. This plan outlines how was done in 2018-9 and our plans for 2019-20.

Environmental Health is about everything that affects the health of the public. What we eat, where we live and work, the air we breathe and the land we stand on. Our aim, in everything we do, is to protect public health through proactive inspections, licensing, complaint investigations and routine sampling

The Environmental Health service contributes to the Rother DC Corporate Plan of 2014 -21 objectives for “safer stronger communities” and “sustainable economic prosperity”. Our mission statement is to “Deliver an increasingly efficient and effective public health service which strives to and sustain a safe, prosperous community for businesses, residents and visitors”.

In 2018 -9 we worked to improve public health in a wide range of areas;

Air pollution, gambling – betting shops, caravan sites, private water supplies, pest control, disease investigations, houses that harm, cosmetic piercing and dog fouling.

We are committed to work with partner organisations to achieve these aims, specifically Public Health England and the Director of Public Health, East Sussex County Council.

Environmental Health Contact details;

[Envhealth@rother.gov](mailto:Envhealth@rother.gov)

01424 787550

<http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/1127/Contact-Environmental-Health>

<http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/10151/What-you-can-expect-from-Environmental-Health>

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### Service overview

<b>Food Safety</b> Hygiene standards Exported Foods Food related illness Food hygiene Rating Scheme Training	<b>Licensing</b> Alcohol Animal Welfare Gambling Regulated Entertainment Taxis	<b>Health and Safety</b> in workplaces where HSE are not the enforcing authority (e.g. industrial premises) Accident investigations Safety Advisory Groups
<b>Community Protection</b> Anti social behaviour Contaminated Land Drainage Noise Waste	<b>Public Health</b> Infectious Diseases Private Water Supplies Filthy and Verminous Pest and Dog Control Funerals	<b>Environmental Protection</b> Air Quality Contaminated Land Permits Radiation monitoring

## AIR QUALITY

One of the most urgent public health issues, in terms of mortality, is that of air quality. The World Health Organisation (WHO) places the mortality rate from air pollution in the United Kingdom at 25.7 per 100,000.



Smog surrounds The Shard and St Paul's Cathedral in London April 2017 credit Reuters

Air pollution is caused by road traffic, industry, oil and wood burning and power plants and contributes to onset of heart disease and cancer. The WHO has described this situation as “a major Environmental Health problem affecting everyone”, where national and international policy makers need to tackle this “toxic air crisis”.

Officers monitor air quality at different locations within Rother to check levels of pollutants that can cause disease specifically nitrogen dioxide and particulate matters. These pollutants are caused by vehicle emissions. Monitoring for ozone is carried out in Rye Harbour because levels have been high since 2011. Ozone is formed when sunshine reacts with industrial emissions and is an issue in many parts of South East England.

The air quality report for the Rother district in 2018 shows that all national standards were met, it can be read at

<http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/12796/Monitoring-air-quality>

The data and information that Environmental Health Officers gather is used to notify the public of air pollution events through Sussex air Alert. Residents with asthma or any circulatory/pulmonary disease are encouraged to sign up for update texts on the air quality in their locality with Sussex Air Alert

<http://www.sussex-air.net/AirAlert/>

## GAMBLING RELATED HARM

The Gambling Commission announced in 2018 that gambling related harm is a public health issue. Problem gambling exists with other conditions such as mental health problems or substance misuse and leads to problems with housing, debt, criminal justice and employment. The Gambling Commission report estimates the cost to the public purse of problem gambling between £260 million and £1.2 billion a year in England.

In response Environmental Health designed an inspection project for betting shops with two aims; to reduce the likelihood of gambling related harms on the young and those vulnerable to gambling and to reduce the likelihood of work related violence to employees by ensuring that employers effectively manage health and safety.

The incidence of violence in betting shops against workers, often alone and at night has seen a dramatic increase in recent years. This photograph is from CCTV in a betting shop in Scotland and shows the moment a customer breached the betting booth and subsequently stabbed the employee.



Image courtesy BBC

Betting shops are licensed as “premises” by Rother District Council. Environmental Health Officers are authorised and experienced in both health and safety at work and licensing.

Environmental Health Officers inspected every betting shop in Rother in 2018-9. Each inspection took an average of two hours, advice was given as appropriate and instant feedback confirmed in a hand written report. Every business received a formal letter setting out the findings of the inspection. Overall compliance with both licensing and health and safety was good. All matters discussed were minor housekeeping.

Given the national concerns, it was re assuring that compliance in Rother betting shops was good – further inspections are not planned this year but inspection of off licences and family amusement centres are planned for 2019-20.

## CARAVAN SITES

Well laid out and well managed caravan sites are a safe environment for holidaymakers and contribute to a strong local economy.



Image of well laid out caravan park courtesy of UK aerial imaging

Poorly laid out caravan sites are a fire risk. Overcrowding on caravan sites can overwhelm site facilities particularly refuse disposal, sewage and toilets. In 2018 inspections were made of five licensed caravan parks and over forty complaints investigated. In all these cases advice was given to the businesses and instructions given to improve conditions.

To protect holiday makers and to maintain the touring and static caravan sites within the Rother District as holiday centres the Environmental Health department will;

1. Issue caravan site licences with standard conditions to regulate site conditions
2. Caravan sites will be visited in the summer months of 2019 to check they are compliant with their licences.
3. If fire precautions are an issue we will work with ESFRS to resolve
4. Enforcement action may be taken where sites do not comply

## PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES

There are between sixty and seventy households in the Rother district that are dependant on wells, boreholes and springs for their drinking water. Such supplies may not be treated with chlorine. Private water supplies can become contaminated with *Campylobacter*, *E.coli*, *Giardia* and *Cryptosporidium* and may pose a threat to health, especially for children.

In 2018-9 five separate private water supplies were visited by an Environmental Health Officer. Each supply feeds more than one household. The EHO inspected the system, assessed the conditions and sampled the water. The samples were analysed for a range of contaminants. One supply had unacceptable levels of contaminants and a temporary potable supply was used until the necessary works were completed.

To continue to make sure these risks are controlled the Environmental Health department will;



EHO Water sampling

- Provide advice to consumers through the website and in person
- Sample and risk assess the large supplies
- Act on significant risks to health found during the risk assessment
- Agree to sample from small supplies when asked by householders
- Survey the district for unknown supplies
- Check the source of water in all food businesses

For further details please go to

<http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/12231/Private-Water-Supplies>

## PEST CONTROL

The control of rats and mice is central to public health. Rats and mice can carry a variety of diseases including Salmonella and E.coli. When pests are found in a household they must be dispatched, the house thoroughly cleaned and the structure repaired to prevent their re entry. Wasp colonies establish in/outside homes in the late spring or summer. A swarm may arrive suddenly making rooms uninhabitable. A wasp sting is painful to most people but for some it can trigger an anaphylactic shock. In 2018 Rother Council received nearly one thousand calls from domestic households about pests. Rats were the most common offender. The overwhelming majority of households and businesses responded positively to the advice given to them by the pest control officer. There were four separate cases that posed such a threat to public health that immediate enforcement action was taken.

To control pests the Environmental Health department will continue to:

- Provide a pest control service to the residents of Rother & Wealden
- Treat households for rats, wasps and mice as soon as possible
- Investigate the sources of rat infestations
- Take enforcement action against landowners who have allowed rats to shelter and find food on their land



Photograph of a wasp's nest taken by pest controller

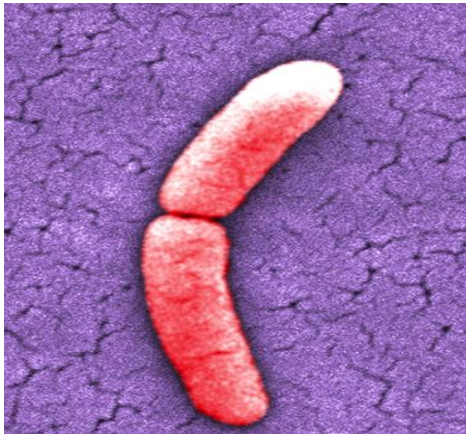
To learn more or to book a pest control treatment please goes to

<http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/1054/Pest-control>

## DISEASE INVESTIGATIONS

Public Health England report cases of infectious disease such as Salmonella and Campylobacter, which occur in the community to the Environmental Health department. These infections can be passed from person to person and through poor food preparation, so it is important that we advise on how they can be stopped. The Environmental Health department has a Duty Manager who is always available to requests for assistance with disease investigations by Public Health England.

In 2018 over two hundred cases were reported to Rother Council by Public Health England. Of these nine required urgent action, patients were interviewed and in some cases instructions were given not to prepare food. A workplace was found to be the source of one infection and enforcement notices were served requiring improvements. To continue to protect public health Environmental Health will;



Salmonella – Public domain image

- Contact every reported case with advice on personal hygiene and food preparation.
- Respond to all requests for assistance from Public Health England
- Where the case is a food handler we will interview them and if necessary take legal action to prevent them from going to work

Reports of TB in a dairy herd are received from the Animal and Plant Health Agency. Our role is to check immediately that the milk is not being used for human consumption or cheese making without pasteurisation.



Public domain image bottle of milk

In 2018-9 there were eleven reports of outstanding TB tests and subsequent TB failures.

In each case prompt contact was made with the business and in some cases arrangements had to be made for pasteurisation.



## HOUSES THAT HARM

An Englishman's home is his castle, so the saying goes. Reality can be so different.

An elderly owner occupier contacted Environmental Health after months of worry about the adjacent neglected property. No one had lived in it for four years and conditions had deteriorated – the garden was overgrown, rats had been seen, drains had overflowed, paintwork and render was cracked, weeds were growing in the structure of the house. Officers visited and agreed that the neglected property was deteriorating and action was needed to prevent further harm.



The owner of the property was located and a written warning sent. No response was received; an enforcement notice was served giving the owner two months to make the necessary repairs. No response received, no work done. A fixed penalty notice for £100 was issued for non compliance with the enforcement notice. This was paid but the work remained outstanding. A second fixed penalty notice was issued and the owner told that if they didn't do the work the council take action and recover costs. Quotes were sought from local firms and the work began. The garden was cleared first, the property was painted, cracks were filled, weeds removed. An invoice for £3769 was sent to the owner.



No payment for the works done was received from the owner. Rother DC paid the contractors and placed a charge with the land registry so when the property is sold all costs with interest will be recovered.

Absent owners who neglect their properties can cause harm to neighbours and incur costs with the local authority. Rother DC is now pursuing an enforced sale of this property which will bring the property back into use.

## ACUPUNCTURE, BODY PIERCING, ELECTROLYSIS, SEMI PERMANENT SKIN COLOURING and TATTOOING

Rother DC registers practitioners who use needles to penetrate the skin for treatments for acupuncture, body piercing, electrolysis, semi permanent skin colouring and tattooing. These treatments are popular and when done correctly can give the individual satisfaction with personal appearance.



Ear piercing image in public domain

Each practitioner must comply with the Council's Byelaws to make sure their operation is safe and does not transmit infectious diseases from one client to the next. Blood borne diseases such as Hepatitis are the major concern. There are extensive treatments available to the public on all high streets, microblading, semi permanent skin colouring piercing of eyebrows, lips, nose, genital organs, tattooing etc.

To protect consumers -

- Environmental Health Officers will check that all those who offer cosmetic piercing and associated treatments are registered.
- If not, applications to register will be invited and officers will check that applications are made
- Environmental Health Officers will visit and inspect on each application to make sure hygiene standards are observed

The full byelaws are available at <http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/2717/Byelaws-for-regulation-of-cosmetic-piercing-and-skin-colouring-businesses>

## DOG FOULING CAMPAIGN 2019

Are dog walkers more responsible when they think they are being watched? “YES” say Keep Britain Tidy! Their watching eyes are a major deterrent to irresponsible dog owners who refuse to scoop the poop.



Rother District Council adopted the Keep Britain Tidy campaign for the winter of 2018-9 to tackle fifteen dog fouling hotspots. The sites were in Bexhill, Battle, Rye and Westfield. The signs, which glow in the dark, were put at eye level about 25 meters from the different approaches to the hotspot. Each day the signs recharge from sunlight ready for another evening's vigilance.

The Community Warden visited each site eight times, at weekly intervals, to check the level of dog fouling and to talk to any dog walkers. Initially eleven of the fifteen sites showed an immediate improvement. This is a good result for everyone who enjoys Rother's public spaces and pavements. Four of the fifteen sites stubbornly did not show any significant improvement over the eight week programme.

The four sites are Bank Road Sidley, Hillside Road (rear twitten) Bexhill, Tollgates Battle and Westfield playing field. These are to be targeted for enforcement action – the community warden will make regular visits and will issue Fixed Penalty Notices for any dog walker seen to walk away without picking up. This will mean a fine of £80.

To report dog fouling email [foodhs@rother.gov.uk](mailto:foodhs@rother.gov.uk) with as many details as possible. Time, date, dog type, walker's description/details.

Help us to catch the irresponsible few.

## Environmental Health and Public Health

	Mental Health and wellbeing	Healthy lifestyle	Warm home	Healthy workplace	Health Protection	COPD/asthma	Hospital Admissions (reducing)
Air Quality					x	X	X
Health and Safety	X stress			P	x	X prevention	X
Food Safety		P			X		X
Housing Conditions Incl Caravans and Fuel Poverty	X		X		x	X	X
Licensing Alcohol	X	P			x		X
Licensing Gambling	X				x		
Nuisance Noise	X				x		X
Drainage					x		
Dogs					x		X
Pest Control					x		X
Disease control					X		X
Private Water Supplies					X		X
Cosmetic piercing					X		X

Key: X-direct impact; P= Potential Impact

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