

[Report of the Medical Officer of Health for Woolwich].

Contributors

Woolwich (London, England). Metropolitan Borough.

Publication/Creation

[1948?]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/bpnn6w8h>

License and attribution

You have permission to make copies of this work under a Creative Commons, Attribution, Non-commercial license.

Non-commercial use includes private study, academic research, teaching, and other activities that are not primarily intended for, or directed towards, commercial advantage or private monetary compensation. See the Legal Code for further information.

Image source should be attributed as specified in the full catalogue record. If no source is given the image should be attributed to Wellcome Collection.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WOOLWICH

ANNUAL REPORT

on the Health of the
Metropolitan Borough of Woolwich
for the Year
1947

BY

T. STANDRING, M.D., B.S., D.P.H., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

Medical Officer of Health

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
HEALTH COMMITTEE.....	2
MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEE.....	2
PREFACE.....	3
VITAL STATISTICS.....	5
GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA, including those for MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.....	7
SANITARY ADMINISTRATION, including HOUSING.....	11
INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.....	13
PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES : DISINFESTATION.....	14

HEALTH COMMITTEE.

At 31st December, 1947.

THE WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR (Councillor J. F. PARKER, J.P.)

Councillor Mrs. E. BROOKS (Chairman).

Alderman Mrs. J. R. WHITING (Vice-Chairman).

Aldermen—

F. C. HALSE, J.P. M.I.O.B.

Councillors—

Major F. W. BEECH, J.P.

Mrs. K. HOWLETT

Miss M. CROUT, J.P.

E. S. W. LANGTON

C. H. DARBY

Mrs. M. E. POLLEY

Mrs. L. E. DRIVER

Mrs. K. M. RANCE

Mrs. L. R. DUFF

Mrs. E. L. REEVES

A. H. GILDER, M.B.E., J.P.

Miss G. E. WALTERS, J.P.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEE.

Comprising the Members of the Health Committee

Councillor Mrs. E. BROOKS (*Chairman*)

Alderman Mrs. J. R. WHITING (*Vice-Chairman*)

PREFACE.

*To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors
of the Metropolitan Borough of Woolwich.*

MR. MAYOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit the 47th Annual Report on the health of the Metropolitan Borough of Woolwich which, in accordance with the instructions of the Minister of Health, is again in an abridged form.

The health of the Borough remained good throughout the year. The incidence of infectious disease generally again remained low. For the third year in succession the notifications of measles (easily the most prevalent of the infectious diseases) were over 1,000 (1,183). Since the war the biennial periodicity of this disease has been upset. It may well be that this is due to the abnormal movements of the child population during and since the war, resulting in a variation of the usual pattern of the yearly number of susceptibles at risk. There was a slight increase in the number of cases of scarlet fever but the disease remained of a mild nature. The number of confirmed cases of diphtheria (7) was again the lowest ever recorded.

There were no deaths from diphtheria and no deaths from whooping cough. Extraordinarily the only death from measles—one of the most serious diseases of childhood—occurred in a woman of 57 years of age.

The number of scabies' notifications again showed a remarkable decrease, being less than half the number of the previous year. It appears that this disease, which was a problem of shelter life, is now receding to its pre-war level.

The epidemic of poliomyelitis, which affected the whole of the country in the summer and early autumn, was also apparent in the Borough but fortunately to a lesser extent than in many other areas. The total number of confirmed cases was 23, the highest incidence occurring in the week ending 16th August during which there were 7 confirmed cases. Precautionary measures were taken and advice given through the Council's services and the local Press. Among the precautions, the attendance rules for welfare centres were relaxed and children's functions curtailed. The special film on the disease was shown to several gatherings of local doctors.

Poliomyelitis is a serious disease, but it must not be assumed that an attack must automatically mean death or crippling for life. These disasters do unfortunately occur, but they are by no means inevitable. Of the 23 cases, 3 cases had serious remaining paralysis, 3 had some paralysis preventing complete participation in all activities, the remaining 17, for practical purposes, recovered completely. There were no deaths.

The Registrar-General's estimate of the mid-1947 population shows an increase of 5,730 over that of 1946. The total births, which for many years have been around 2,000 per annum, jumped to 2,903 in 1946 and to 3,193 in 1947. This is the first time there has been more than 3,000 births per annum since 1921. The increase is reflected in the birth rate of 22.8. This large number of births kept your maternity and baby welfare services employed to the full throughout the year; in spite of this pressure it is most gratifying to report that the infantile mortality

rate (27) was again the lowest ever recorded. It is perhaps ironical that this should be achieved in the last full year before the maternity and child welfare services pass from your control.

A summary of vital statistics will be found in Table No. 1 and detailed causes of death are shown in Table No. 2.

The Sanitary Inspectors again had a very busy year. Disputes over the extent of war damage as opposed to fair wear and tear were not so frequent but the effects of the lack of proper maintenance during the war years on the older houses in the Borough is now being felt. In spite of all the difficulties the Inspectors had considerable success in maintaining the standard of housing.

The abnormal floods in March endangered the safety of the water supply to North Woolwich and adjoining areas. General precautions were supplemented in North Woolwich by advice on the spot by Sanitary Inspectors, by warning posters, and by street announcements by loud-speaker vans frequently throughout the danger period. The public co-operated well, and no disease attributable to polluted water occurred.

In the abridged reports of the last few years, details of staff changes have been omitted; nevertheless, mention must be made of the retirement in July of Mr. H. S. Smith, Chief Administrative Assistant. Mr. Smith had been in the Council's service for 46 years. During that time he had seen, and in no small measure assisted in, the growth of the health services to their present state of which you are so justly proud. His vast knowledge and help was especially valuable in keeping the services running smoothly through the war years. He left with the very best wishes of Council and staff alike.

The continued confidence and encouragement of the members of the Council and particularly members of the Health Committees is much appreciated. Success is a co-operative effort and my thanks are also due to the chief officers of the Council and to the staff of the Department who have given me every support.

I am,

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

T. STANDRING,

Medical Officer of Health.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Table No. 1 contains extracts from the vital statistics for the year, with comparable figures for 1946. Table No. 2 shows details of causes of death.

TABLE NO. 1.

	1947.	1946.
Population (Registrar-General's Estimate) ..	140,150	134,420
Live Births—Legitimate.. .. . 3,074		2,740
Live Births—Illegitimate 119		163
	— 3,193	— 2,903
Birth Rate.. .. .	22·8	21·6
Still-births	65	78
Still-births—Rate per 1,000 total births ..	20	26
Deaths	1,626	1,531
Death Rate	11·6	11·4
Deaths from puerperal causes :—		
(a) From sepsis	1	—
(b) From other causes	2	1
Death rate from puerperal causes per 1,000		
total births	0·92	0·34
Death rate of Infants under one year of age :—		
(a) All infants	27·25	31
(b) Legitimate infants	26·7	31
(c) Illegitimate infants	42	36
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	260	238
Deaths from Whooping Cough	—	2
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under two years of age)	7	6

TABLE No. 2.

Nett Deaths during the calendar year 1947, including non-residents in Institutions in the Borough.

Causes of Death.	Nett Deaths at the subjoined ages of "residents" whether occurring within or without the district.												Deaths in Public Institutions.		
	All Ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 2 years.	2 and under 5 years.	5 and under 15 years.	15 and under 25 years.	25 and under 35 years.	35 and under 45 years.	45 and under 55 years.	55 and under 65 years.	65 and under 75 years.	75 years and up-wards.	In Borough		Out-lying In-stitutions.
													Resid-ents.	Non-Rsds.	
All Causes	1626	87	10	10	12	31	40	67	126	271	395	577	325	88	484
Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cerebrospinal Meningitis	6	3	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	2	—	4
Scarlet Fever	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whooping Cough	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Diphtheria	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System ..	89	1	—	2	—	14	19	12	14	17	7	3	7	2	43
Other Tuberculosis Diseases	12	—	2	1	2	2	1	2	—	1	1	—	2	3	9
Syphilis	16	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	4	4	5	3	—	6
Influenza	7	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	2	1	2	—	—	3
Measles	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Poliomyelitis and Polioencephalitis ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Encephalitis Lethargica	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Cancer	260	1	1	—	2	—	1	9	30	72	77	67	67	19	70
Diabetes	12	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	6	4	1	1	6
Cerebral Haemorrhage, etc.	129	—	—	—	—	—	1	3	11	24	40	50	25	5	30
Heart Disease	505	—	—	—	—	1	4	10	25	66	144	255	83	12	116
Other Circulatory diseases	50	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	8	15	23	13	4	12
Bronchitis	130	2	—	1	1	—	1	5	10	21	37	52	13	2	18
Pneumonia	82	21	1	1	2	—	2	1	5	10	14	25	21	4	37
Other Respiratory diseases	15	—	—	—	—	—	2	3	—	4	4	2	2	—	6
Peptic Ulcer	16	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	4	3	3	3	8	1	4
Diarrhoea, etc.	7	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	3	3
Appendicitis	2	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Other Digestive diseases	27	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	5	3	6	11	14	1	13
Acute and Chronic Nephritis	21	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	6	9	4	2	8
Puerperal Sepsis and Post-abortive sepsis ..	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Other Maternal causes	2	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Premature Birth	14	14	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	4	10
Congenital Malformations, etc.	32	23	—	1	1	1	—	1	1	4	—	—	8	7	16
Suicide	17	—	—	—	—	2	—	5	3	4	2	1	3	1	1
Road Traffic Accidents	10	—	—	1	1	2	3	1	1	—	1	—	5	8	3
Other Violence	49	11	2	—	2	3	2	3	1	3	7	15	18	3	10
All other Causes	112	2	2	1	—	3	3	8	9	15	19	50	18	6	52

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

BIRTHS. The number of notifications received was 2,349 and the number registered in Woolwich was 2,326. After correction for inward and outward transfer the nett number of Woolwich live births was 3,193. It is known that at least 1,443 births took place in Institutions.

CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES. The following clinics and treatment centres were in use throughout the year :—

Woolwich Central Health Centre	..	Child welfare and ante-natal clinic. Sunlight clinic. Physical medicine. Foot clinic.
Plumstead Health Centre	Child welfare and ante-natal clinics.
Lionel Road, Eltham	Child welfare and ante-natal clinics.
Wesley Hall, Timbercroft Lane	..	Child welfare clinics.
Bardhill Sports Pavilion, Footscray Road, New Eltham	Child welfare and ante-natal clinics.
St. Luke's Church Hall, Westmount Road	Child welfare clinics.
Fernhill Street, North Woolwich	..	Child welfare and ante-natal clinics.
137, Alnwick Road, Horn Park	..	Child welfare and ante-natal clinics.
Turkish Baths, Plumstead High Street	Personal cleansing station.
Eltham Hill Health Centre, Sherard Road	Personal cleansing station. Foot clinic.
Maxey Road, Plumstead	Tuberculosis Dispensary.
11, Carnecke Gardens, Eltham	..	Tuberculosis Dispensary.

The attendances at the Maternity and Child Welfare Centres were as follows :—

Expectant mothers, 11,017 ; nursing mothers, 15,007 ; children, 65,581.

TODDLERS' CLINICS. The clinics were well attended and 3,725 inspections were carried out as compared with 3,720 in 1946.

One of the Council's Assistant Medical Officers reports that the attendances of toddlers, especially two-year-olds, have been good and their general condition satisfactory. Postural defects, knock knees and bowed tibia are relatively common in younger children though by no means necessarily of pathological import. Advice on shoes, sunlight treatment and, if necessary, attendance at the Physical Medicine Clinic, has in most cases cured them during the pre-school period. A number of toddlers have been sent for dental treatment though most of these have had adequate vitamins since infancy. This is a further illustration of our present incomplete knowledge of caries. Troubles arising from enlarged tonsils and adenoids have been investigated at the Ear, Nose and Throat Clinic. Advice, usually successful, has been given to mothers with "difficult children"—a few of these have gone to a Child Guidance Clinic for further treatment.

HEALTH VISITING. The number of visits paid by health visitors to children under five years of age was 18,610; the total number of visits was 24,160.

CHILD LIFE PROTECTION. There were 23 foster mothers on the register at the end of 1947, two more than at the end of 1946, and there were 16 foster children. The number of visits paid by child life protection visitors was 113.

ARTIFICIAL SUNLIGHT CLINIC. A total of 10,007 treatments was given at this clinic, compared with 10,391 in 1946.

DENTAL TREATMENT. The numbers of mothers and children under five attending the dental clinic were 282 and 371 respectively, and the number of tuberculous persons was 22. The total number of attendances was 1,900.

MINOR AILMENTS. The number of children under five years of age referred to school clinics for treatment of minor ailments was 496.

ISSUE OF FRUIT JUICES AND OTHER SUPPLEMENTS. The distribution of the Government fruit juices and cod liver oil was continued throughout the year at certain welfare centres.

MIDWIFERY SERVICE. This is administered in London by the London County Council. No substantial change took place in the midwifery services, which were dealt with fully in the Annual Report for 1945.

Arrangements were made during the year for midwives' sessions to be held at the Central Health Centre, Market Street, Woolwich. Mothers attend at these sessions for booking and ante-natal examination. The innovation has proved beneficial to patient and midwife alike.

During the year 1,323 mothers were admitted to the British Hospital for Mothers and Babies. Of these, 824 were Woolwich mothers, 311 of whom were admitted under the Council's scheme. The number of admissions to the maternity unit of the Memorial Hospital was 280. Of these, 75 were Woolwich mothers, 66 of whom were admitted under the Council's scheme. Admissions to the Eltham Cottage Hospital numbered 62.

CARE OF PREMATURE INFANTS. The action taken in connection with the care of premature infants is in conformity with the Ministry of Health circular No. 20/44.

The number of babies born in the Borough whose birth weight was $5\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. or less was 113. Of these, 42 were born in hospital and 31 in private houses. Of those born in hospital, 2 died during the first twenty-four hours and 34 survived at the end of four weeks. Of those born in private houses, 5 were admitted to hospital; none died during the first twenty-four hours and 25 survived at the end of four weeks. No applications for the loan of draught-proof cots or other equipment or for the services of the Consultant Paediatrician were received.

HOME HELPS. The Council's scheme provides for domestic assistance in confinement cases and in cases of illness where the housewife is incapacitated or where old people are concerned. The total number of cases in which domestic help was provided was 561; 309 in confinement cases and 252 in cases of illness. Whereas

the home help is employed in the majority of maternity cases for two weeks, in many of the cases of illness, particularly in old people, the period of employment is of much longer duration.

WAR-TIME DAY NURSERIES. The three remaining nurseries were closed on the 5th April. The prefabricated buildings (including furniture and equipment) at Woolwich Common and Dahlia Road, Abbey Wood, were taken over by the London County Council as nursery schools. The County Council agreed that all day nursery children of 2 years of age and over could continue to attend the nursery schools.

A Daily Guardian Service (see next paragraph) was immediately instituted to make provision for any children under 2 years displaced from the nurseries and other special cases.

DAILY GUARDIANS. As nursery schools provide no accommodation for children under the age of two, the Council in April inaugurated a daily guardian scheme in order to provide for such children of mothers who, from necessity, found it essential to work. Under the scheme, which received the approval of the Ministry of Health, the mother made her own arrangements with the daily guardian, but 6s. 0d. per week of the amount required by the daily guardian was guaranteed by the Council. During the year 35 daily guardians were registered and 24 remained on the register at the end of the year. The number of children cared for by these guardians during the year was 24, and at the end of the year there were 8 on the register.

CARE OF ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN. The only direct provision for the care of illegitimate infants is provided by a scheme for guaranteed payments to foster mothers undertaking the care of such infants. The Council, however, makes a contribution to a fund administered by the Metropolitan Boroughs' Standing Joint Committee to provide financial assistance to Moral Welfare Associations. Welfare work in this connection is carried out by each health visitor in her own area, but there is close contact between the health visitors and the welfare workers of the Moral Welfare Associations working in the Borough. No applications were received during the year for assistance under the "guaranteed payments" scheme.

CONVALESCENCE FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE. The Council makes an annual grant to the Invalid Children's Aid Association in respect of children under five years of age recommended for convalescence. During the year, 74 children were sent to convalescent homes.

CLINIC FOR PHYSICAL MEDICINE. The attendances at this clinic totalled 11,188, compared with 12,249 in 1946.

PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOME. The provision of nursing assistance in the homes of patients suffering from certain infectious diseases, by arrangement with the local nursing associations as described in previous Annual Reports, was continued. The total number of visits paid by nurses on behalf of the Council was 1,474. An additional grant of £100 was made to the nursing associations for the nursing of children under the age of five years for non-infectious conditions,

distributed on the basis of a percentage of the total of such cases nursed by the nurses of each nursing association.

FOOT CLINICS. The attendances at the Council's foot clinics showed a slight increase on 1946. The number at the Central Health Centre was 7,916, compared with 7,826, and at the Eltham Health Centre, Sherard Road, the number was 5,571, compared with 5,030. The staff of chiropodists was increased from five to seven in February.

SUPPLY OF INSULIN TO PERSONS SUFFERING FROM DIABETES. The number of patients who received insulin during the year, in accordance with the sanction of the Ministry of Health, was 28.

TUBERCULOSIS DISPENSARIES. The reinstatement from first aid post and temporary dispensary enabled the premises at Maxey Road to revert to their former use as the main Tuberculosis Dispensary as from 1st December. The dispensary and the branch at Eltham—11, Carnecke Gardens—were fully used throughout the year. The work of the dispensaries is referred to in the section dealing with infectious diseases.

VACCINATION. The Vaccination Officer's return for the year shows that there were 1,986 entries in the birth lists. Of these, 1,128 were successfully vaccinated. The total number of successful primary vaccinations during 1947 was 2,154.

HEALTH PROPAGANDA. Apart from the normal health education work of the Council's visiting and clinic staffs, the display of posters, the distribution of leaflets and the *Better Health* journal, it was found possible during the 1946-47 "season" to recommence in a modified form the series of informal talks and display of cinema films.

Applications from the organisers of the many religious, social and educational bodies covering church guilds and clubs, women's guilds, youth clubs, rovers, scouts, guides, etc., were received, and a system of rationing had to be adopted to ensure that each organisation had at least one show during the season. In all, 48 shows were given to audiences totalling 1,750.

The cinema films covered—personal hygiene, tuberculosis, diphtheria, food, household pests, etc.

SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

COMPLAINTS. 5,261 complaints of nuisance were received and investigated. The necessary action was taken where defects or nuisances were discovered.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA. During the year, 26,784 inspections, including re-inspections, were carried out by the Sanitary Inspectors. The nature of these inspections is shown in Table No. 3, and details of nuisances abated are given in Table No. 4. The number of intimation notices served as a result was 3,084, and the number of statutory notices, 1,087. In only 23 instances were legal proceedings found to be necessary.

TABLE No. 3.

INSPECTIONS.

Complaints Investigated ..	5,261	Aged and Infirm Persons ..	567
Complaints Re-inspections ..	6,450	Common Lodging Houses ..	38
Outworkers' Premises ..	127	Tents and Vans	16
Houses Let in Lodgings ..	320	Factories	392
Houses <i>re</i> Overcrowding ..	1,152	Shops Act	254
New Houses <i>re</i> Water Supply	733	Food Premises	3,234
Houses <i>re</i> Infectious Diseases	454	Theatres and Cinemas ..	22
Houses <i>re</i> Smallpox Contacts	2	Urinals Accessible to the public	212
Houses <i>re</i> Verminous Cases ..	3,493	Women's Lavatories	154
Houses <i>re</i> Scabies Cases ..	697	Miscellaneous	3,122
Houses <i>re</i> Other Diseases ..	84		

TABLE No. 4.

NUISANCES ABATED.

Dirty Conditions	614	Drainage Defects	1,363
Damp Conditions	2,143	Water Closet Defects ..	2,272
Dilapidations	2,330	Dust Bins provided	223
Verminous Rooms Cleansed ..	947	Water Supply Defects ..	213
Defective Lighting	232	Foul Accumulations removed	42
Defective Ventilation	269	Miscellaneous	27
Defective Paving	171		

WATER SUPPLY. The Metropolitan Water Board is responsible for the water supply for all domestic purposes in the Borough, all dwelling houses being supplied direct from public water mains. There are a few wells in the Borough, used chiefly for trade and kindred purposes. No complaints were received as to the quality or purity of the water supply.

Nine specimens were bacteriologically examined as a precautionary measure when the supply to North Woolwich was affected by flooding of Metropolitan Water Board pumping station.

During the year a special investigation of the deep wells in the Borough was undertaken. There are seven still in use, but none for ordinary domestic purposes.

Two are used for trade and the rest for boiler supply and kindred purposes. The chemical and bacteriological reports showed that only one well was giving water unfit for drinking. This was a riverside well situated on Crown property and subject to contamination by tidal water from the river. In view of the restricted access to the site and the use to which the water was put (storage for fire-fighting), the quality of this water was not of serious consequence.

The water from one deep source, a spring, although reasonably safe for drinking purposes, was liable to pollution by animals. There was no evidence that the spring was used for drinking, but the owners of the land, at the instigation of the Council, rendered the supply inaccessible.

ERADICATION OF BED BUGS. The necessary action was taken in all cases where infestation by bed bugs was discovered, in accordance with the usual procedure adopted by the Department. This procedure has been fully described in previous Annual Reports. The total number of inspections of verminous premises was 3,493. Hydrogen Cyanide was used for the disinfection of 46 loads of furniture on removal to Council houses or flats, but no house was disinfested by this method.

The use of D.D.T. was commenced towards the end of the year and further particulars will be included in subsequent Reports.

RAT DESTRUCTION. The work of rat destruction continued during the year. The staff engaged on this work consisted of two investigators and four operators, working under the supervision of a sanitary inspector who devoted the whole of his time to rat destruction and prevention.

Under the scheme one investigator and two operators work systematically through the Borough, block by block. The other investigator and two operators deal with areas of infestation arising from reports and complaints.

The total number of premises surveyed during the year was 20,715, and the number of inspections was 35,405. Effective preventive measures were taken in 1,856 instances.

Maintenance treatments of the sewers in the Borough were carried out in June and December, and in these two treatments 1,057 manholes were baited. The results of these treatments continue to be satisfactory and indicate their worth in helping to keep the rat population of the Borough at a low level. In addition a test-baiting of 361 manholes was carried out in April.

The Transfer of Functions (Infestation Control) Order, 1947, which came into force on 1st September, had the effect of transferring to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries the main functions of the Minister of Health under the Rats and Mice (Destruction) Act, 1919, and the functions of the Minister of Food under the Rats and Mice (Destruction) Order, 1919, and the Infestation Order, 1943.

HOUSING. The total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects under the Public Health or Housing Acts was 7,302 and the number found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for habitation was 3,813. The number rendered fit in consequences of informal action by the sanitary inspectors, including the service of intimation notices, was 2,431. Statutory notices were served in respect of 910 houses.

The problems in relation to housing dealt with by the Department were aggravated by the acute housing shortage, notwithstanding the measures taken by the Council for its relief.

During the year considerable progress was made in the provision of new houses by the Council. Some 460 permanent and temporary houses were completed, bringing the total number of dwellings erected since the war to 963. At the end of December 474 further dwellings were under construction.

Building on the new Coldharbour Farm Estate commenced in February, and the first completed house was opened by the Minister of Health on the 12th July, 1947. By the end of the year 54 houses had been built and occupied on the Estate, and houses were being erected under five separate contracts, including one for 92 dwellings to be built by Direct Labour.

In addition, 95 houses were built by private enterprise and 119 temporary dwellings by the London County Council.

SQUATTERS. Many of the squatters, who last year occupied two army camps, left for various reasons and at the end of the year 55 families remained. Although all reasonable adaptations and additions had been carried out, the accommodation could never have been made wholly satisfactory and as each hut became vacant it was rendered unuseable.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

MILK. The number of milk premises on the register on the 31st December was 58. The standard of the milk supply was satisfactory; practically all the milk distributed in Woolwich is heat treated. All the 263 samples submitted for chemical analysis contained 3 per cent. or more of fat. The phosphatase test for adequate heat treatment was satisfied in 265 samples, and the methylene blue test for the keeping quality of milk in 144 samples. Only 1 sample failed to satisfy the methylene blue test, the phosphatase test being satisfied in all cases.

MEAT SUPPLIES. The one slaughterhouse used in the Borough during the year is under contract to the Ministry of Food. Up to September these premises had only occasionally been used. From this month, however, owing to the closure of slaughterhouses in nearby Kent towns, the Ministry concentrated the slaughtering at these premises; so much so that it was found necessary for the Council to utilise the full-time services of three inspectors for the inspection of carcasses.

Due to a change in the method of slaughtering, the flow of carcasses is now much more rapid as compared with pre-war and the arrival of the beasts for slaughter is irregular. As all carcasses must be inspected within a reasonable time of killing, the staff were frequently kept on duty late. This work has been further increased by the fact that the grade of bovine animals slaughtered is much below that of the pre-war quality, this necessitating an even more detailed inspection.

The number of animals slaughtered and inspected at this slaughterhouse was:—cattle, 8,438; sheep, 16,010; pigs, 293; calves, 1,235.

PREMISES WHERE FOOD IS PREPARED OR OFFERED FOR SALE. Routine visits were paid by the sanitary inspectors to all food premises in the Borough. The number of such inspections was 3,234.

ANALYSIS OF FOOD AND DRUGS. During the year the Public Analyst analysed 618 samples, including 562 informal and 56 formal. Of these, 25 informal and 3 formal samples were reported to be adulterated, giving a percentage adulteration of 4.5, compared with 2.8 in 1946. The adulterated samples included chillies, 1; coffee and chicory essence, 1; milk, 7; patent medicines, 4; sardines, 5; anchovy paste, 1; dried thyme, 1; jam, 1; lard, 1; meat cubes, 1; meat extract, 1; salad dressing, 1; sausages, 3.

UNSOOUND FOOD. During the year 123 tons of food was surrendered as unfit for human consumption. Most of this was utilised for animal feeding or for fertilisers. No seizures were made.

FOOD POISONING. The number of notifications of food poisoning was 10.

ICE CREAM. 49 samples of ice cream and ingredients for manufacture were examined by the methylene blue test; in those cases where the grading was low repeat samples were taken and the manufacturing methods investigated and advice given as necessary.

The Ice Cream (Heat Treatment, etc.) Regulations, 1947, came into force on the 1st May. These Regulations made under the provisions of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, provide, *inter alia*, that ice cream mixtures intended for sale for human consumption shall be raised to and kept at a temperature of 150° F. for 30 minutes or, alternatively, of not less than 160° F. for 10 minutes before freezing. The Regulation does not apply to a "complete cold mix" which is a product capable of being manufactured into ice cream with no addition except that of water.

Owing to grave difficulties in supply of certain essential recording instruments, the Regulations were not in full operation during the year.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

INCIDENCE. The numbers of cases of notifiable infectious diseases which occurred during the year after correction of diagnosis were as follows :—

TABLE No. 5.

Diphtheria	7	Ophthalmia Neonatorum ..	9
Scarlet Fever	297	Dysentery	30
Puerperal Fever	2	Cerebrospinal Meningitis ..	11
Puerperal Pyrexia	27	Zymotic Enteritis	61
Erysipelas	30	Measles	1,183
Pneumonia	194	Whooping Cough	546
Poliomyelitis	23	Scabies	189
Malaria	5		

DIPHTHERIA. The number of confirmed cases of Diphtheria, 7, was again the lowest ever recorded. There were no deaths. The causes of the waxing and waning of infectious diseases are often obscure. Caution must be observed, but even so, there must at least be some connection between this gratifying position and the sustained efforts of the department to secure immunity of the population.

The family doctor scheme and clinic immunisation sessions continued throughout the year. On the Register-General's estimated mid-1947 child population (29,400) the percentage of the child population in the Borough immunised is 74·6, but for reasons given in last year's report it is considered that this figure is low.

WHOOPING COUGH. Immunisation against whooping cough is provided by means of a "family doctor" scheme, under which injections are given by the family doctor whose fees are paid by the Council.

During the year 816 children received injections compared with 426 in 1946. Not all of these children received the full course of four injections.

TUBERCULOSIS. The work of the Tuberculosis Dispensaries is shewn below in tabular form, with figures for 1938 and 1946 for comparative purposes. It will be noted that the work of the Dispensaries has increased considerably :—

	1938.	1946.	1947.
Number of primary notifications	248	247	297
Number of persons examined for first time ..	1,312	1,691	1,968
Number of these found to be tuberculous ..	231	234	161
Number of contacts examined	512	403	505
Number of contacts found to be tuberculous ..	21	10	14
Total number of attendances	5,415	8,263	9,472
Number of patients referred by Medical Practitioners	437	926	1,118
Number of patients referred by Medical Boards	—	91	46
Visits to homes of patients by Tuberculosis Visitors	4,522	3,560	4,242
Visits to homes of patients by Tuberculosis Officer	285	75	92
Number of X-ray examinations	1,156	2,494	2,983
Number of specimens of sputum examined ..	1,059	970	1,191
Number of specimens of sputum positive ..	157	118	134
Number of patients admitted to hospital or sanatorium	344	318	300
Number of patients given dental treatment ..	38	5	22
Number of cases on register at end of year ..	874	1,263	1,438

Notifications include a number of Service and other personnel, some recently returned from abroad, who are now receiving treatment in this country but who have not yet returned to their homes in Woolwich, or had an opportunity of attending the Dispensary. In addition a number have been diagnosed during routine X-ray investigations.

The artificial pneumo-thorax clinic at St. Nicholas' Hospital continued its work during the year. The total number of attendances at the clinic was 2,912. Clinics at other London hospitals were attended by 83 patients, who received 2,110 refills.

The number of applications for maintenance allowances received during the year was 121. On the 1st January, 102 patients were receiving an allowance, 115 were granted an allowance during the year, and at the end of the year 108 patients were in receipt of an allowance.

The Tuberculosis Care Committee continued its excellent work of providing for the after-care of patients and assistance to dependants. Four quarterly meetings of the full Committee were held, and the General Purposes Sub-Committee met on 8 occasions. Assistance was given in many ways including the supply of pocket money, clothing, shoes, extra nourishment, beds and bedding, and fares for relatives to visit patients in institutions. The funds come from interest on investments; donations both from employees of firms in the Borough and from private sources; and by the sale of Christmas Seals.

LABORATORY FACILITIES. The Council's bacteriological work is carried out in the Pathological Department of the Woolwich Memorial Hospital. During the year 621 throat and nasal swabs were examined; 1,191 specimens of sputum; 26 specimens of faeces; 10 specimens of urine; 25 specimens of blood; 8 specimens of various foodstuffs and 9 specimens of water.

The practice of submitting samples of water from the public swimming baths for examination was continued. Fifty-eight such samples were submitted during the year and apart from some occasional slight over-chlorination, the results were generally satisfactory.

DISINFECTION AND DISINFESTATION. Infected articles of bedding, clothing, etc., and articles infested with bugs are disinfected at the Council's Disinfecting Station, White Hart Road, Plumstead; but the personal clothing of persons treated at the two Cleansing Stations is disinfected at those two stations.

During the year 15,475 articles were disinfected at the three stations. The number of rooms disinfected after cases of infectious disease was 502, and of these, 89 had been occupied by tuberculous persons. The number of rooms disinfested of vermin was 947.

Personal Cleansing Stations are situated at the Turkish Baths, Plumstead High Street, and at the Eltham Hill Health Centre, Sherard Road. Part of the premises of the Turkish Baths was adapted as a Cleansing Station as a temporary measure after the destruction in 1941 of the former cleansing station at White Hart Road. Pending fruition of a plan for the erection of a combined cleansing and disinfecting station the premises at the Turkish Baths were structurally altered, enabling the service to be more permanent and efficient.

The number of persons cleansed of vermin was 2,108 and the number of persons (including contacts) treated for scabies was 969. The total number of attendances was 3,739.