

Report on the Audit of Food Law Service Delivery and Food Business Compliance

North Somerset Council
11-13 October 2016



Foreword

Audits of local authorities' feed and food law enforcement services are part of the Food Standards Agency's arrangements to improve consumer protection and confidence in relation to food and feed. These arrangements recognise that the enforcement of UK food and feed law relating to food safety, hygiene, composition, labelling, imported food and feeding stuffs is largely the responsibility of local authorities. These local authority regulatory functions are principally delivered through their Environmental Health and Trading Standards Services.

The attached audit report examines the Local Authority's Food Law Enforcement Service. The assessment includes the local arrangements in place for database management, inspections of food businesses and internal monitoring. It should be acknowledged that there will be considerable diversity in the way and manner in which local authorities may provide their food enforcement services reflecting local needs and priorities.

Agency audits assess local authorities' conformance against the Food Law Enforcement Standard ("The Standard"), which was published by the Agency as part of the Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities and is available on the Agency's website at:
www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/auditandmonitoring.

The main aim of the audit scheme is to maintain and improve consumer protection and confidence by ensuring that local authorities are providing an effective food law enforcement service. The scheme also provides the opportunity to identify and disseminate good practice and provide information to inform Agency policy on food safety, standards and feeding stuffs. Parallel local authority audit schemes are implemented by the Agency's offices in all devolved countries comprising the UK.

The report contains some statistical data, for example on the number of food premises inspections carried out annually. The Agency's website contains enforcement activity data for all UK local authorities and can be found at:
www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/auditandmonitoring.

For assistance, a glossary of technical terms used within the audit report can be found at Annex C.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report records the results of an audit at North Somerset Council with regard to food hygiene enforcement, under relevant headings of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Enforcement Standard. The audit focused on the Authority's arrangements for the management of the food premises database, food premises interventions, and internal monitoring. The report has been made publicly available on the Agency's website at www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/auditandmonitoring/auditreports.

Hard copies are available from the FSA's Regulatory Delivery Division by email LAAudit@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk or phone 01904 232116.

Reason for the Audit

- 1.2 The power to set standards, monitor and audit local authority food law enforcement services was conferred on the Food Standards Agency by the Food Standards Act 1999 and the Official Feed and Food Controls (England) Regulations 2009. This audit of North Somerset Council was undertaken under section 12(4) of the Act as part of the Food Standards Agency's annual audit programme.
- 1.3 Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, includes a requirement for competent authorities to carry out internal audits or to have external audits carried out. The purpose of these audits is to verify whether official controls relating to feed and food law are effectively implemented. To fulfil this requirement, the Food Standards Agency, as the central competent authority for feed and food law in the UK has established external audit arrangements. In developing these, the Agency has taken account of the European Commission guidance on how such audits should be conducted.¹
- 1.4 The Authority was selected for this core audit following a 1 day LAEMS audit carried out in January this year. The initial LAEMS audit was carried out in relation to the Authority's LAEMS submission for 2014/15 which indicated that the Authority had relatively high numbers of overdue interventions and there were also concerns about the resources currently allocated to the Service in terms of full time equivalent (FTE) officers. The visit also identified a number of other issues to be addressed concerning the Authority's Service Plan and the configuration of its database.

¹ Commission Decision of 29 September 2006 setting out the guidelines laying down criteria for the conduct of audits under Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on official controls to verify compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules (2006/677/EC)

Scope of the Audit

- 1.5 The audit examined North Somerset Council's arrangements for food premises database management, food premises interventions and internal monitoring, with regard to food hygiene law enforcement. This included a reality check at a food business to assess the effectiveness of official controls implemented by the Authority at the food business premises and, more specifically, the checks carried out by the Authority's officers to verify food business operator (FBO) compliance with legislative requirements. The scope of the audit also included an assessment of the Authority's overall organisation and management, and the internal monitoring of other related food hygiene law enforcement activities.
- 1.6 The audit aimed to verify the actions taken by the Authority since the initial audit in January. In addition it sought assurance that key authority food hygiene law enforcement systems and arrangements were effective in supporting business compliance, and that local enforcement was managed and delivered effectively. The on-site element of the audit took place at the Authority's office at Tickenham Rd, Clevedon, BS21 6FW on 11-13 October 2016.

Background

- 1.7 North Somerset Council is a unitary authority, in SW England, covering an area of 145 square miles. The Authority covers an area from Weston Super Mare in the South to the Avon Gorge in the North. Neighbouring LAs include Bath and North East Somerset to the east, Bristol City to the North and Mendip and Sedgemoor District Councils to the South.
- 1.8 Based upon the 2011 census, around 135,000 people or approximately two thirds of the local population, live in the towns of Weston Super Mare, Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead.
- 1.9 The Authority has a broadly industrial base, including food processing, agriculture, hotels and catering. The Authority enjoys good transport links including the M5 which runs north to south and Bristol Airport.
- 1.10 The area is predominantly urban in nature with approximately 2071 registered food businesses including five establishments approved under Regulation (EC) 853/2004. The food business profile is largely made up of retailers, restaurants and catering food businesses with 6.1% of the local population employed in the hospitality and food service sector.
- 1.11 The Service acts as Home Authority for a major dairy products producer dealing with any complaints about the company or referrals from other

LAs. Although the Authority was supportive of the principle, no Primary Authority (PA) arrangements are currently in place.

1.12 Food safety enforcement was delivered by the Food Safety Team which formed part of the wider Environmental Health Department. The Service also contained the Trading Standards Service. Officers that delivered official food controls were also responsible for:

- Food Standards enforcement in food businesses
- Health and safety interventions, advice and guidance
- Accident investigations
- Infections disease investigation and surveillance
- Animal welfare licensing
- Environmental Protection within food businesses

1.13 The profile of North Somerset Council's food businesses as at 1st April 2015 was as follows:

Risk category	A	B	C	D	E	Unrated	Outside the Programme	Total
Number of businesses	1	38	396	714	805	70	34	2058

2.0 Executive Summary

2.1 It is clear that the Service is delivering official controls in a risk based manner, using the resources that are currently available. Although there are still a significant number of overdue lower risk interventions, the Authority has already taken actions that should result in significant improvements in the data submitted via LAEMS for 2016/17 in relation the overall percentage interventions achieved and therefore an improvement in consumer protection.

A small number of improvements were identified in order to further protect consumers and to comply with the statutory requirements of the Framework Agreement and the Food Law Code of Practice (FLCoP). A summary of the main findings and key improvements necessary is set out below.

2.2 **Strengths:**

The Authority currently benefits from the service of experienced professional officers to help support businesses to comply with relevant food hygiene legislation. Evidence was also observed of effective liaison with businesses and other relevant organisations including neighbouring authorities. Records for enforcement action showed a willingness to carry out a wide range of enforcement sanctions when appropriate.

2.3 **Key area for improvement:**

Intervention Strategy: The Authority should continue to tackle its backlog of overdue interventions on a risk basis using appropriate interventions detailed in the FLCoP, in order to maintain adequate consumer protection.

Internal Monitoring:

Improved qualitative monitoring by the Service should help to address the majority of administrative and documentary issues identified during the audit.

3.0 Audit Findings

3.1 Organisation and Management

Strategic Framework, Policy and Service Planning

- 3.1.1 The initial LAEMS audit in January 2016 audit confirmed that there were approximately 1446 businesses overdue some form of intervention at the time of the visit and the Authority had 3.0 FTE supplemented by a short term contractor to tackle some of the backlog. The audit also briefly explored wider aspects of the Service and the Service's resilience moving forward.
- 3.1.2 The Authority's formal response acknowledged the issues raised and proposed a number of actions to address some of the concerns. These included;
- The production of a revised Service Plan and detailed briefing note for the portfolio holder, clearly setting out the FSA's concerns following the audit, especially concerns over the FTE figure and the resources allocated to the Service. The report identifies the shortfall in service delivery and estimated that an FTE figure of 4.6 officers would be required to deliver the Service in line with the FSA's expectations and the FLCoP. The briefing also discusses plans for the future and the provision of more sustainable resources.
 - Re-organising the Team to increase the FTE dedicated to food interventions. This has raised the FTE from 3.0 to 3.6
 - Re- prioritising some lower risk interventions within the category D and E risk bands to carry out suitable official controls at businesses that are catering, those involving vulnerable groups or those handling/ preparing higher risk food products.
 - Employing a contractor to deal with overdue category D inspections with another contractor being employed to deal with unrated establishments. In addition an officer has been employed for 18.5 hours per week to deal with the lower risk category E alternative enforcement strategy which is ongoing.
- 3.1.3 Auditors can now confirm that the Authority's latest revised Service Plan, aided by the detailed briefing for the portfolio holder, meets the service planning guidance in the Standard in the Framework Agreement. Senior management and Members were provided with a detailed breakdown of all the demands on the service and the resources needed. The latest Plan made reference to the findings from the previous FSA audit in January.

- 3.1.4 The Service had a wide range of demands placed upon it including a mix of large approved national manufacturers and smaller artisan meat and cheese producers. This profile of diverse specialised businesses typically places great demands on resources and training requirements for the team.
- 3.1.5 To help enhance the longer term resilience of the Service, the Authority had developed initiatives such as working in alliance with another neighbouring authority to pool available resources and assessing potential new delivery models.

Documented Policies and Procedures

- 3.1.6 The Authority had developed a range of useful documented procedures and work instructions for its food law enforcement service. These had been recently reviewed and re-issued by the team manager.
- 3.1.7 Evidence of a document version control process was noted during the audit. Documented policies and procedures were stored on a shared drive that could be accessed by all staff.

Officer Authorisations and Training

- 3.1.8 The Authority had developed and implemented a documented procedure for the authorisation of officers and had produced an authorisation matrix, referencing the latest updated competency requirements in the FLCoP that came into force in April 2016. The Authority had assessed officer competencies in line with the new competency requirements
- 3.1.9 The Authority provided evidence of an appropriate scheme of delegation and copies of officer authorisation documents. The Authority had developed a suitable authorisation procedure, referencing the latest updated requirements of the FLCoP. We noted that officers were authorised under all relevant hygiene legislation with the exception of the Trade in Animal and Related Products Regulations (TARP) 2011 and certain emergency control regulations.
- 3.1.10 Record checks showed that all officers had received the required 10 hours CPD in the past, with plans in place to ensure that the new FLCoP requirement for 20 hours CPD for officers is met over the next 12 months. Officers had undertaken a wide range of useful training on key topics such as HACCP, complex processes, approved establishments, imported foods and national FHRS consistency training.

- 3.1.11 Auditors were advised that officer competence and CPD requirements were assessed and monitored through the appraisal system, regular one to one discussions and occasional work shadowing or peer reviews by the team.

Recommendation 1 – Officer Authorisations

[The Standard – 5.1]

Review officer authorisation documents to ensure that officers are appropriately authorised for all relevant legislation.

[See paragraph 3.1.9]

3.2 Food Premises Database

- 3.2.1 The Authority was operating a database capable of providing monitoring returns to the agency. The system is backed up daily and a number of measures and procedures are in place to ensure that the system is secure.
- 3.2.2 The Authority database was managed by the Food Team Manager, aided by the Council's IT support. The Authority had developed a procedure for ensuring the accuracy of its database, dated 2016 and step by step work instructions for officers entering inspection data onto the database.
- 3.2.3 In relation to the issues raised at the previous audit in January, regarding database anomalies, although many of these remained on the database the database had been reconfigured so that the correct intervention frequencies were being allocated. Auditors also noted an area of good practice. The database had been modified to highlight data fields that would be included on the LAEMS return, to remind officers of the importance of accurate data entry.
- 3.2.4 Auditors were advised that accurate recording of current food businesses on the database was maintained and updated regularly through information received during the licensing and planning process and through searches of local and internet advertising media as well as social media.
- 3.2.5 Auditors carried out a basic internet search in advance of the audit. Out of six checked, all six businesses were identified on the Authority's food premises database.

3.3 Food Premises Interventions

3.3.1 File checks and database checks demonstrated that the Authority had implemented a risk based approach to its inspection programme. The Authority had a policy of carrying full interventions at higher risk category A, B and non-compliant C businesses. Since the previous audit in January the Authority had developed a suitable alternative enforcement strategy (AES) for lower risk businesses, involving sending questionnaires to relevant businesses, and was in the process of analysing and assessing the results of the returned documents.

3.3.2 File checks demonstrated that some past inspections had not been carried out at the correct frequency prescribed by the FLCoP. The Authority was aware of this issue and was implementing actions to address this issue.

3.3.3 Analysis of the Authority's database confirmed that there were 1023 overdue interventions (not including those registered but outside the programme) allowing for the 28 day flexibility consisting of;

- 187 category C premises
- 253 category D premises
- 478 category E premises
- 105 unrated businesses

Further analysis of the database prior to the audit revealed 522 establishments that had not received a suitable intervention for 3 years or more, and 249 establishments where it has been over 5 years since receiving an intervention.

3.3.4 Whilst the list of overdue interventions largely included previously compliant businesses as well other very low risk businesses, it did still include a number of businesses potentially involving vulnerable groups such as private care homes and nurseries as well as some takeaways and hotels.

Recommendation 2 - Interventions

[The Standard – 7.2]

Carry out inspections at the frequencies prescribed in the Food Law Code of Practice.

[See paragraph 3.3.3]

- 3.3.5 The Authority had developed a suitable documented procedure to provide officers with instructions and guidance when carrying out interventions, which included detailed decision making flowcharts to give practical guidance for officers when deciding on the most appropriate course of action.
- 3.3.6 Officers used a range of suitable and appropriate inspection pro-formas and aides-memoire to record their inspection findings and assessments. These documents included appropriate prompts for officers on key food hygiene issues such as the assessment of business food safety management systems (FSMS), imported foods and control of cross contamination risks including the implementation of the FSA's E coli guidance by businesses.
- 3.3.7 Generally officers had recorded sufficient information on file to justify the risk scores allocated to businesses following inspection. Officers were providing businesses with detailed inspection findings and relevant guidance to support businesses, as well as taking appropriate and timely follow up actions including carrying out revisits where needed..
- 3.3.8 The Authority had developed a suitable documented procedure to provide officers with instructions and guidance when carrying out inspections at establishments specifically requiring approval under Regulation (EC) No. 853/ 2004.
- 3.3.9 Files relating to three approved establishments subject to specific EU legislation were reviewed. These included two dairy products establishments and a meat products business in the area. In all of the cases examined inspections had taken place at the correct frequency and businesses had been approved or re-approved in accordance with the FLCoP and centrally issued guidance.
- 3.3.10 Auditors recommended that officers included further details on file of their decisions to award conditional approval in complex cases such as smaller artisan producers perhaps producing intermittently, ensuring that these decisions are routinely reviewed by the Team Manager.
- 3.3.11 A range of specific and non- specific inspection aides memoire had been used in the past as well as file notes and email communications. Although in each case it was possible to identify inspection findings and follow up actions taken, auditors did recommend that the use of appropriate product specific aide memoire at every inspection. This would help officers to more easily demonstrate that approved establishments were being assessed against all relevant legislation on every occasion as well as providing easier retrieval of information and inspection histories. This is especially important given the high risk nature of some of the businesses examined, which included a small

scale unpasteurised cheese manufacturer and small scale artisan meat products producer.

- 3.3.12 Although it was clear that officers were working to provide businesses with information following interventions to help them comply with relevant legislation, auditors advised that businesses routinely receive a letter following inspections outlining any legal contraventions and recommendations and providing appropriate timescales for compliance. This should help to provide businesses with clearer advice, preventing any potential ambiguity about the actions required by businesses.
- 3.3.13 Approved premises inspection files were well organised and contained all the key business information required by the FLCoP. Auditors noted that files contained detailed and comprehensive plans and site photographs of businesses and also included dated HACCP plans with evidence of their assessment by officers. Officers had then provided these businesses with appropriate advice and guidance based on these assessments. Files also contained relevant sample results and evidence of appropriate follow up.

Recommendation 3 – Approved Establishments

[The Standard – 7.3]

Assess the compliance of approved establishments in their area to the legally prescribed standards.

[See paragraph 3.3.11]

Verification visit to a food establishment

- 3.3.14 During the audit, a verification visit was undertaken to a local care home with an officer from the Authority who had carried out the last food hygiene inspection of the premises. The main objective of the visit was to assess the effectiveness of the Authority's assessment of food business compliance with food law requirements.
- 3.3.15 The officer had a good working relationship with the FBO and was able to demonstrate a detailed knowledge of food safety legislation and FSMS at the establishment. Auditors were satisfied that the conditions found on site reflected the inspection findings documented in the last inspection record. It was also clear that the business had acted on previous advice provided by the officer.

3.4 Enforcement

- 3.4.1 The Service had developed a suitable and appropriate enforcement policy approved by Members. The Authority had carried out a wide range of formal enforcement actions to ensure timely business compliance and officers were able to demonstrate their knowledge and willingness to use the full range of follow up actions from warning letters through to prosecutions. A number of documented procedures had been developed providing useful guidance for officers, across a range of possible formal enforcement actions. Auditors did note that the procedure for VCs required review to bring it up to date with the latest legal references and centrally issued guidance.
- 3.4.2 Auditors examined a number of Hygiene Improvement Notices (HINS), voluntary closures (VCs) and a prosecution file. The enforcement options selected were appropriate and justified given the inspection findings. In all cases enforcement notices had been drafted and served in accordance with the FLCoP and the Enforcement Policy appeared to have been considered.
- 3.4.3 Auditors did discuss the benefit of developing specific targets for monitoring the actions taken in relation to formal enforcement actions such as VC's, possibly using the food premises database or using documented forms.

3.5 Internal Monitoring, Third Party or Peer Review

Internal Monitoring

- 3.5.1 The Authority had developed a documented internal monitoring procedure which provided details of some quantitative and qualitative checks to be carried out by the Team manager. These included checks on the Enforcement Policy and checks on officer intervention records, risk ratings, frequencies, service requests and sampling. A system of peer review between officers to improve consistency is also described in the procedure and had recently been introduced. Targeted internal monitoring is essential to help ensure consistency amongst officers and the appropriate escalation of enforcement, where necessary.
- 3.5.2 The Authority provided evidence of a comprehensive range of quantitative monitoring being carried out by the Authority including regular quarterly management reports on the management of the teams intervention programme.

- 3.5.3 Evidence of some internal monitoring checks was found on files, involving cases where there had been significant changes to risk scores following inspection. However auditors discussed the need to extend monitoring checks to include other aspects of the Service including specific checks on approval decisions at relevant businesses and any actions following receipt of unsatisfactory sample results.
- 3.5.4 Auditors highlighted the FSAs “Making Every Inspection Count” which includes guidance on internal monitoring and has some useful ideas on effective and efficient internal monitoring techniques, especially assessments of LA databases.
- 3.5.5 The time needed to carry out effective risk based internal monitoring across the Service should be included in any calculation of the resources needed to deliver the service effectively, as part of service planning arrangements.

Recommendation 4 – Internal Monitoring

[The Standard – 19.1 &19.3]

Extend current risk based internal monitoring checks to include all relevant aspects of service delivery including officer authorisations, approval and inspection of approved establishments, sampling and any documented procedures. The Authority should continue to record evidence of any monitoring activity.

[See paragraph 3.5.3]

Food and Food Premises Complaints

- 3.5.6 The Authority had developed a suitable documented food complaints policy and procedure. This provided useful details of the Authority’s risk based triage approach to dealing with complaints.
- 3.5.7 Audit checks of five food and food premises complaint investigations found that generally appropriate and timely investigations and action had been carried out. Records of complaint investigations showed that officers had carried out appropriate investigations and taken appropriate follow up action as necessary in line with the Authority’s complaints procedure and Enforcement Policy.

Food Inspection and Sampling

- 3.5.8 The Authority had developed a documented sampling policy outlining its commitment to carrying out a range of effective risk based sampling. An annual sampling programme had been developed with the Authority regularly participating in regional sampling programmes on a range of different topics as well as carrying out appropriate sampling at approved establishments.
- 3.5.9 File records relating to five food samples were assessed. In each case the samples were taken in accordance with the Service's sampling policy and procedures and appropriate action had been taken on receipt of results, including providing written confirmation and appropriate advice to the businesses involved.
- 3.5.10 Auditors did however identify some cases where the wider implications of some unsatisfactory sample results could have been considered and recorded.

Records

- 3.5.11 Records were maintained in paper and electronic format. Records were easily retrievable during the audit.

Third Party or Peer Review

- 3.5.12 The Authority had not recently participated in any IAA with neighbouring authorities.
- 3.5.13 The LA was regularly represented at the regional West of England Food Liaison Group.

Auditors: Andrew Gangakhedkar – Lead Auditor
Alun Barnes - Auditor

Food Standards Agency
Regulatory Delivery Division

ANNEX A - Action Plan for North Somerset Council

Audit date: 11-13 October 2016

TO ADDRESS (RECOMMENDATION INCLUDING STANDARD PARAGRAPH)	BY (DATE)	PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS	ACTION TAKEN TO DATE
<p>Recommendation 1 – Officer Authorisations [The Standard – 5.1]</p> <p>Review officer authorisation documents to ensure that officers are appropriately authorised for all relevant legislation.</p> <p>[See paragraph 3.1.9]</p>	31/03/2017	Officer Authorisations updated.	Officer authorisation documents updated to include Trade in Animal and Related Products Regulations (TARP) 2011. Emergency Control Regulations will be updated following further advice from the FSA.
<p>Recommendation 2 – Interventions [The Standard – 7.2]</p> <p>Carry out inspections at the frequencies prescribed in the Food Law Code of Practice.</p> <p>[See paragraph 3.3.3]</p>	01/04/2017	Restructure to be implemented 01/04/2017 and updated structure chart to be provided to FSA by 01/04/2017	Draft restructure document provides for a minimum of 4.3 FTEs to carry out food safety interventions. This no. will allow inspections to be carried out at the frequencies prescribed by the FLCoP. Current tally of registered food businesses 1908.
<p>Recommendation 3 – Approved Establishments [The Standard – 7.3]</p> <p>Assess the compliance of approved establishments in their area to the legally prescribed standards.</p> <p>[See paragraph 3.3.11]</p>	Complete	All officers to be updated of advised procedure at next planned food team meeting.	Approved premises procedure document reviewed and updated to include recommendations made during the audit regarding documentation of approved premises, using appropriate inspection forms for premises requiring approval for POAO. The application is now assessed against this document and records updated accordingly. See attached procedure document.

<p>Recommendation 4 – Internal Monitoring [The Standard – 19.1 &19.3]</p> <p>Extend current risk based internal monitoring checks to include all relevant aspects of service delivery including officer authorisations, approval and inspection of approved establishments, sampling and any documented procedures. The Authority should continue to record evidence of any monitoring activity.</p> <p>[See paragraph 3.5.3]</p>	<p>31/03/2017</p>	<p>Internal monitoring as a topic for discussion is now on team meeting agenda and subject to ongoing improvement. Anticipated all to be completed by 31/03/2017</p>	<p>Monitoring checks now extended to include all officer activity/database accuracy/approval of premises/competency documents informing approvals. Please see attached documents.</p>
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ANNEX B - Audit Approach/Methodology

The audit was conducted using a variety of approaches and methodologies as follows:

(1) Examination of LA policies and procedures.

The following relevant LA policies, procedures and linked documents were examined before and during the audit:

(2) File reviews – the following LA file records were reviewed during the audit:

(3) Review of Database records:

- To review and assess the completeness of database records of food hygiene inspections, food and food premises complaint investigations, samples taken by the authority, formal enforcement and other activities and to verify consistency with file records
- To assess the completeness and accuracy of the food premises database

(4) Officer interviews – LA EHO and the Lead Officer

Opinions and views raised during officer interviews remain confidential and are not referred to directly within the report.

(5) On-site verification check:

A verification visit was made with the Authority's officers to a local food business. The purpose of the visit was to verify the outcome of the last inspection carried out by the Local Authority and to assess the extent to which enforcement activities and decisions met the requirements of relevant legislation, the Food Law Code of Practice and official guidance.

ANNEX C - Glossary

Authorised officer	A suitably qualified officer who is authorised by the local authority to act on its behalf in, for example, the enforcement of legislation.
Broadly Compliant	An outcome measure which the Food Standard Agency has developed with local authorities to monitor the effectiveness of the regulatory service relating to food law. It is based on the risk rating scheme in the Food Law Code of Practice which is currently used by food law enforcement officers to assess premises which pose the greatest risk to consumers failing to comply with food law.
Codes of Practice	Government Codes of Practice issued under Section 40 of the Food Safety Act 1990 as guidance to local authorities on the enforcement of food legislation.
County Council	A local authority whose geographical area corresponds to the county and whose responsibilities include food standards and feeding stuffs enforcement.
District Council	A local authority of a smaller geographical area and situated within a County Council whose responsibilities include food hygiene enforcement.
E. coli O157	E.coli O157 belongs to the group of verotoxigenic E. coli (VTEC) bacteria which are a toxin-producing strain of Escherichia coli that occur naturally in the gastrointestinal tract of animals such as cattle and sheep, and are pathogenic to humans. E.coli O157 is the VTEC strain that has been most commonly implicated in human infection in the UK.
External Temporary Storage Facility (ETSF)	A warehouse (formerly known as an enhanced remote transit shed or ERTS) designated by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), where goods are temporarily stored pending clearance by HMRC, and prior to release into free circulation.
Environmental Health Officer (EHO)	Officer employed by the local authority to enforce food safety legislation.

Feeding stuffs	Term used in legislation on feed mixes for farm animals and pet food.
Food hygiene	The legal requirements covering the safety and wholesomeness of food.
Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)	The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme provides information to the public about hygiene standards in catering and retail food establishments. It is run by local authorities in partnership with the Food Standards Agency. Businesses that fall within the scope of the scheme are given a 'hygiene rating' which shows how closely the business was meeting the requirements of food hygiene law at the time of inspection. The scheme also encourages businesses to improve hygiene standards.
Food Safety Management System	A written permanent procedure, or procedures, based on HACCP principles. It is structured so that this requirement can be applied flexibly and proportionately according to the size and nature of the food business.
Food standards	The legal requirements covering the quality, composition, labelling, presentation and advertising of food, and materials in contact with food.
Framework Agreement	<p>The Framework Agreement consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and Feed Law Enforcement Standard • Service Planning Guidance • Monitoring Scheme • Audit Scheme <p>The Standard and the Service Planning Guidance set out the Agency's expectations on the planning and delivery of food and feed law enforcement.</p> <p>The Monitoring Scheme requires local authorities to submit yearly returns via LAEMS to the Agency on their food enforcement activities i.e. numbers of inspections, samples and prosecutions.</p> <p>Under the Audit Scheme the Food Standards Agency will be conducting audits of the food and</p>

	feed law enforcement services of local authorities against the criteria set out in the Standard.
Full Time Equivalents (FTE)	A figure which represents that part of an individual officer's time available to a particular role or set of duties. It reflects the fact that individuals may work part-time, or may have other responsibilities within the organisation not related to food and feed enforcement.
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point – a food safety management system used within food businesses to identify points in the production process where it is critical for food safety that the control measure is carried out correctly, thereby eliminating or reducing the hazard to a safe level.
LAEMS	Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System is an electronic system used by local authorities to report their food law enforcement activities to the Food Standards Agency.
Member forum	A local authority forum at which Council Members discuss and make decisions on food law enforcement services.
Metropolitan Authority	A local authority normally associated with a large urban conurbation in which the County and District Council functions are combined.
Risk rating	A system that rates food premises according to risk and determines how frequently those premises should be inspected. For example, high risk premises should be inspected at least every 6 months.
Safer food, better business (SFBB)	A food safety management system, developed by the Food Standards Agency to help small catering and retail businesses put in place food safety management procedures and comply with food hygiene regulations.
Service Plan	A document produced by a local authority setting out their plans on providing and delivering a food service to the local community.
Trading Standards	The Department within a local authority which

carries out, amongst other responsibilities, the enforcement of food standards and feeding stuffs legislation.

Trading Standards
Officer (TSO)

Officer employed by the local authority who, amongst other responsibilities, may enforce food standards and feeding stuffs legislation.

Unitary Authority

A local authority in which the County and District Council functions are combined, examples being Metropolitan District/Borough Councils, and London Boroughs. A Unitary Authority's responsibilities will include food hygiene, food standards and feeding stuffs enforcement.