

FSA publishes local authority food law enforcement report

This report provides a picture of local authority activity from April 2019 to March 2020. We acknowledge that towards the end of that period and since then COVID-19 has created unprecedented challenges for local authorities in delivering their statutory food functions as well as protecting their communities and controlling the spread of the disease.

Data for 19/20 shows:

Although there were some changes for different elements of food control delivery, in general terms, the overall picture in 2019/20 is not dissimilar to 2018/19 particularly in England and Wales. In Northern Ireland, there were some improvements in the picture including increases in the proportion of due interventions undertaken for food hygiene and for food standards. The report includes detailed information on the picture in each individual country.

For food hygiene, all but six LA returns were received in time for the data analysis for this report. The data from the six has been omitted from the analysis with the 2018/19 dataset, so that a fair comparison of the data is possible.

For food standards (composition, chemical contamination, adulteration and labelling of food), 100% of returns were received, so the full dataset for 2018/19 has been used for comparison.

Maria Jennings, Director of Regulatory Compliance at the FSA, said:

“Local authorities check that food businesses are meeting their legal responsibilities to produce food that is safe and what it says it is. One of the FSA’s roles is to have oversight and assurance that local authorities are delivering these checks and taking action against businesses where appropriate.

Whilst these figures are not dissimilar to those from April 2018 to March 2019, we acknowledge that COVID-19 has clearly created significant pressures on local authorities since the end March 2020 and we’ll be considering the impact the pandemic has had on their resources and on delivering their statutory responsibilities in relation to food at the FSA Board’s business committee [meeting on 8 December](#).”

Report

[LAEMS 2019-2020](#)

Background

[The Framework Agreement on the Delivery of Official Feed and Food Controls](#) by local authorities is the mechanism by which the FSA sets out the standards for local authority food law enforcement, which includes the FSA’s monitoring and audit processes.

The FSA monitors local authority performance through [Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System \(LAEMS\)](#) returns and reports on an annual basis which are published online.

LAEMS is a web-based system to which local authorities upload data generated from the local system on which they record data on food law enforcement activities. Once uploaded to LAEMS, the local authority data are aggregated to the pre-defined categories required by the FSA e.g. interventions, sampling and enforcement.