

Chair's stakeholder update - Food safety must be carefully considered in Brexit Freedoms Bill

Professor Susan Jebb

The Brexit Freedoms Bill is a piece of legislation that could have [profound implications](#) for public health and businesses alike.

This bill, also known as the [Retained EU Law \(Revocation and Reform\) Bill](#), has been introduced to allow ministers to replace EU regulations and directives with new domestic legislation. It will 'sunset' any remaining laws at the end of 2023, meaning they will be repealed automatically unless it's decided to extend, preserve, or replace them beforehand.

In the FSA, we are clear that we cannot simply sunset the laws on food safety and authenticity without a decline in UK food standards and a significant risk to public health. While I'm sure this is not the Government's intention with these plans, the current timeframe does cause me some concern. We will need to work through more than 150 pieces of retained EU law very quickly and to advise ministers on how best to incorporate important rules that safeguard food safety and public health within our domestic legislation. This is a very challenging task, and it inevitably means that we will have to deprioritise other important work.

Ensuring that people have food they can trust remains our number one priority. We also recognise this is an opportunity to review and reform these laws so that businesses have the right regulation to enable them to provide safe and trusted food, to trade internationally and to grow.

In due course, we think a new [UK Food and Feed Bill](#) would provide the best opportunity for a comprehensive rethink, tailored to the needs of the UK. Our experience tells us that developing policy in an evidence-based, open and transparent way is better for consumers and for businesses, but this takes time to get it right.

If you have any thoughts on the Retained EU Law Bill and its potential effects on food law, please do [contact us](#).