

FSA announces additional investigatory powers to tackle food fraud

From May 1st, nearly a decade after the NFCU was set up, new powers under PACE will enable NFCU investigators to apply for and execute search warrants, with the appropriate safeguards. This will help to protect consumers and businesses from food fraud more effectively.

The NFCU was set up following the Elliot Review, in the wake of the horse meat crisis of 2013. Since then the Unit has grown with the aim of preventing food fraud and supporting businesses to meet their responsibilities to make and sell safe food.

Over the past decade, the NFCU has worked with partner organisations such as the Police and Local Authorities (LAs) fighting food fraud, prosecuting and deterring offenders.

These new powers are a vital tool to ensure that NFCU investigations can be progressed more directly and effectively. Our investigators will be able to apply for and execute search warrants, increasing our ability to respond quickly to intelligence and to continue to ensure that swift action is taken to tackle food fraud.

Consumer confidence in the safety and authenticity of food is high, part of an environment which helps create the conditions for British businesses to flourish.

We'll still be working closely with partners like Police and Local Authorities, and our new powers will free up their vital resources so they can be diverted to other priorities while we have more capabilities to protect legitimate businesses and consumers.

Andrew Quinn, Head of the FSA's National Food Crime Unit (NFCU)

Making sure our food is authentic and safe for the British public to consume is vital, which is why it is essential to boost the National Food Crime Unit powers to tackle food fraud.

More broadly our cross-Government food strategy will make sure our food system can continue to feed the nation, realise its potential for economic growth, and protect the planet and nourish individuals, now and into the future.

Daniel Zeichner, Minister for Food Security and Rural Affairs

These new investigatory powers for the National Food Crime Unit will help protect consumers and support legitimate businesses across Wales.

Food safety is a critical part of public health and these enhanced capabilities will ensure swifter action is taken against anyone who seeks to undermine our food standards.

Sarah Murphy, Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Wales

The new powers that have been given to the FSA's NFCU are of huge importance in the on-going fight against food crime in the UK. The ability to enter and search premises immediately following the arrest of suspects will make it much more difficult for criminals to dispose of incriminating evidence and cover their tracks. I have supported this advance in the Unit's powers for many years and am delighted to see them coming into force. The many bona fide food businesses and UK consumers will be better protected as a result.

Professor Chris Elliott, Professor of food safety and microbiology at Queen's University

If you suspect food fraud, report it to Food Crime Confidential on? [Report a food crime | Food Standards Agency](#) ?or by phoning 0800 028 1180 (0207 276 8787 for non-UK mobiles and calls).