

FSA publishes updated Food Law Codes of Practice and Practice Guidance in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

This marks the latest phase of the FSA's modernisation of food regulation, following extensive consultation and engagement with local councils (local authorities and port health authorities in England and Wales and district councils in Northern Ireland) and other key stakeholders. The changes are designed to help local councils target resources to where they make the most difference to public health outcomes.

The updated Codes and Practice Guidance reflect the FSA's wider commitment to modernise the food safety system in response to evolving food practices, changing consumer habits and ongoing pressures in the food industry.

"This update helps ensure that local councils have a more flexible, risk-based approach to carry out their vital work in a way that's both effective and sustainable.?? The changes we've made will strengthen the consistency of food law enforcement, support officer development and enhance consumer protection."

Rachel Cooper, Director of Strategy and Regulatory Compliance

Over the past two years, the FSA has worked closely with local councils and stakeholders to develop proposals for a modernised and risk-based approach to food regulation. A 12-week consultation was held in 2025 and the summary of responses for [England](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#) were published in August.

Key updates include:

- A more flexible, risk-based approach to prioritising initial official controls of new food businesses, allowing the flexibility for local councils to triage businesses when they first register
- Greater use of alternative control methods, including, in some cases, remote assessments allowing local councils more choice to support more efficient use of resource
- Broadening the cohort of professionals who can undertake certain activities to support delivery of official controls in England and Wales to ensure that officer's expertise is dedicated to where it can have the most impact
- The introduction of the new Food Standards Delivery Model in Wales. This updates how local councils regulate food standards within food establishments in Wales. This was implemented in England and Northern Ireland in 2023.

The updated Codes are now available and are expected to improve consistency in regulatory delivery, support innovation in food safety practice, and maintain consumer confidence.

As part of our ongoing work to support local councils in maintaining high food standards, the FSA has also launched a revised competency standard which may be used to ensure that officers

undertaking food safety checks are appropriately trained and competent. The standard, read in conjunction with the Food and Feed Law Codes of Practice, helps local councils assess the competency of their staff for the activities they undertake in their roles and is used as part of their ongoing professional development plan.

Next Steps

The updated Codes and Practice Guidance are now available to view on the [FSA website](#).? Separate versions are published and tailored to the legal and operational context in each nation.