

Welsh Food Advisory Committee (WFAC) Director's Report – 5 February 2026

Report by Sian Bowsley, Director for FSA in Wales.

Summary

This report provides:

- a link to the Chief Executive's report at the last FSA Board meeting on 10 December 2025; and
- an overview of developments and matters of interest to WFAC relating to Wales.

Members of the committee are invited to:

- note the update
- invite the Director to expand on any issues for further discussion

Chief Executive's Report to the Board

This is the latest [Chief Executive's Report](#) presented to the December Board meeting.

Update from the Director for FSA in Wales

Since the WFAC's last themed meeting in November, we have been involved in the following strategic engagement activities:

- The Wales and Northern Ireland teams have moved into the Policy Directorate which is led by Rebecca Sudworth. Both the Director of Northern Ireland and I have been working closely and collaboratively with Rebecca to help ensure a seamless transition. This move will help to strengthen and solidify three nation working.
- The final report from the **Welsh Government's review of the FSA's functions in Wales** has been approved by the Minister and is expected to be published shortly. This report sets out a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening how the FSA works in partnership with Welsh Government and collaboratively with local authorities (LAs). Once the report is published, we will work closely with the Welsh Government on the next steps, ensuring that our approach continues to support effective food regulation and delivery across Wales.
- I recently presented at the **Chief Medical Officer's Health Protection Advisory Group** on our current policy priorities. This included how we are supporting the collaborative One Health approach and an update on the future of food regulation and delivery in Wales. The presentation was well received, and the group expressed a strong interest in us delivering more detailed sessions on specific topics relevant to public health at future meetings.
- The team recently provided input into the development of the Wellbeing and **Future Generations Commissioner's** new [guidance](#) for Local Authorities in Wales on

strengthening local food systems, to ensure that food hygiene and safety were appropriately included.

- As part of our ongoing **stakeholder engagement**, we actively participated in key industry events, including the NFU Cymru Conference and the Royal Welsh Winter Fair in November. These events provided valuable opportunities to strengthen relationships with stakeholders, share insights on our policy priorities, and listen to sector concerns. In addition, we supported the Chief Executive in a series of introductory meetings with senior Welsh Government executives, helping to establish constructive dialogue and reinforce our commitment to collaboration across government and industry.

Over the last few months, the **policy teams** have been involved in the following workstreams:

- In early December, we published the [UK's first safety guidance](#) on **cell-cultivated products** (CCPs) working with the communications team to ensure stakeholders are informed.
- We also launched a consultation on **four precision fermentation applications** seeking views from stakeholders on the proposed authorisation, including the terms of authorisation, labelling requirements, and any other legitimate factors (i.e. social, environmental, economic etc) that should be considered. Further details can be found in the consultation section below.
- We authorised a novel food application for **Magnesium L-threonate**. With support from Welsh Government officials, this substance will be added to the vitamins and minerals annex of the Supplements Regulations in Wales. This will come into force in March.
- We worked with the **Chilled Food Association (CFA)** to review their industry-led good practice guidance, published this month.. The updated guidance offers practical advice to help food businesses manage the risk of Listeria monocytogenes in ready-to-eat foods, and we will work with stakeholders in Wales to socialise this guidance.
- We recently developed and published a consumer webpage providing clear guidance on the **safe consumption of food supplements**. The content highlights the risks associated with products sold above recommended guideline levels and provides clear advice to consumers on the actions they should take to ensure their safety. Alongside this, we have updated the **LA toolkit** on food supplements to support their enforcement work.
- Following the Board discussion and agreement in December, we are preparing for a Spring consultation on a **revised support system for the meat industry**. Feedback from the consultation will inform proposals on how the meat charging regime could operate. This will be considered by the Board later in the year, with a final decision taken by Ministers.
- We published updated **Home Slaughter Guidance for England and Wales** as a result of the World Organisation for Animal Health's (WOAH) reclassification of England and Wales' bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) risk status from 'controlled risk' to 'negligible risk' last year. The changes are solely to improve clarity and ensure the requirements are easier to follow.
- On 1 January, the **Official Controls (Import of High-Risk Food and Feed of Non-Animal Origin) (Amendment of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1793) (Wales) Regulations 2025** came into force introducing changes to import controls of some imported high-risk food and feed not of animal origin (HRFNAO) into Wales.
- We continue to provide support to shape the public health elements of a future **Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement**.

In the **local authorities (LAs)** partnership and engagement teams we have:

- Begun supporting LAs with the transition to the new **Food Standards Delivery Model (FSDM)**. This includes developing a training programme combining self-directed learning, facilitated online sessions, and in-person workshops. We have also hosted a session for lead officers to discuss the approach to roll out and how we will support this transition.

- Published an updated **Competency Standard** alongside the Food Law Code of Practice to provide LAs with an assessment method for officers to demonstrate their competency when undertaking official and non-official controls. A training video has been produced alongside updated assessment records for the local authorities to use.
- Delivered two **Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) consistency training** workshops for LA officers. These support consistent application of FHRS across the 22 LAs in Wales. 56 LA officers attended the training and gave positive feedback.
- Sponsored the annual Chartered Trading Standards Institute Wales Branch Training Event in November, bringing LAs in Wales together to receive training and share best practice to improve consistency within all areas of trading standards. We delivered two sessions on the revised Food Law Code of Practice including our support offer for the roll out of FSDM and an overview of recent incidents and emerging issues.

Consumer Protection team activity over recent months includes:

- Successful implementation of the new **PRISM mailbox** system to streamline and improve the management of incident communications. This update enhances efficiency, ensures better tracking and coordination of responses, and supports a more consistent approach to handling incidents across teams. The new system has resulted in a change to the team email addresses that are used for incident management and out of hours response, this has been communicated across relevant stakeholders.
- Opson XV**, sampling activity is underway in Wales with 4 LAs signed up to undertake targeted authenticity sampling as part of the national initiative, samples are due to be submitted to laboratories for testing in January and will be reported on as part of the wider Opson work in due course.
- Delivering a presentation at the **HELIX Programme Technical Conference** on 'Food Safety Incidents and Challenges'. The session provided an overview of our work, highlighting current challenges within the food system and how we respond to protect consumers. We also explored newly emerging risks and the strategies being developed to address them, while emphasising the importance of collaboration with key partners in managing these issues effectively.
- A non-routine incident with national interest relating to a product recall of infant formula with potential contamination of Cereulide toxin. A multi-agency incident management team was put in place to investigate, which included Public Health colleagues and support from Local Authorities in relation to surveillance sampling. Affected product was removed from the market, and investigations remain ongoing.

The Audit and Assurance team has continued to make progress across the following work areas:

- The allergen audit programme will conclude in February, with a total of six audits completed. A consolidated summary report of audit findings and best practice will be produced and published in the coming months. Initial planning activity is underway to scope and develop the 2026/27 audit programme.
- The [summary report](#) of the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 Audit Programme: local authority service delivery planning processes and arrangements and relevant open audit actions has been published on the FSA website.

Our bilingual communications team has continued to ensure the dissemination of key FSA messaging across Wales, which has included:

- Successfully launching our new bilingual Facebook and Instagram channels for Wales, marking a significant step in strengthening our digital presence. This has involved extensive cross-team collaboration to plan and deliver engaging content that maintains momentum and grows our audience over the coming year. A key focus has been creating unique,

culturally relevant Welsh-language content that resonates with consumers and businesses in Wales, ensuring our messaging is both useful and impactful.

- Over the festive period, we extended our successful “Bacteria Love It Here” campaign with a full calendar of Christmas-themed media content, including posts on our new bilingual Wales channels and partner collaborations to maximise reach. We also featured twice on the BBC’s Bore Cothi radio show to reinforce key messages – first encouraging use of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme when eating out, and later sharing [practical food safety tips](#) in an informal, accessible format. These combined efforts strengthened public awareness and complemented our digital engagement strategy.
- In December, the FSA issued a precautionary warning advising people with allergies not to consume Dubai-style chocolate products, following FSA findings that several items failed to meet food safety and labelling standards, posing a potential risk to consumers. We used our platforms and tools to amplify this warning – including sharing across our social media channels and through key partners, including LAs, who actively promoted the message on their own platforms. This proactive approach generated media coverage across Wales, helping to maximise reach and reinforce our commitment to consumer protection.

Consultations

The following consultations are live at present:

- [Consultation on Market Authorisation of 4 Regulated Food Products](#) – seeking stakeholders’ views in relation to the proposed authorisation of 4 novel foods.
Date launched: 15 December 2025
Closing date: 8 February 2026

Forward look

Much of the work in this report will continue over the coming months. In addition, we will also be working to progress the following projects and workstreams.

- The **Senedd Election** in May will mark a significant shift in Welsh parliamentary representation, with a new system increasing the number of Members of the Senedd (MSs) from 60 to 96. In preparation, we continue to strengthen our proactive engagement with MSs as we approach the election, ensuring that they are fully sighted on consumer interests in relation to food in Wales. We have an engagement session planned for February at *Y Farchnad* in the Senedd, where our Chair, Susan Jebb, will attend. This event will provide an opportunity to showcase 15 years of the FHRs and highlight the impact of the mandatory scheme in Wales. We are keen to engage with Members of the Senedd to discuss this flagship scheme and other food-related issues that matter most to their constituents.
- The Election will also require us to adhere to the **Welsh Government’s pre-election period guidance**. This means we must carefully consider how we communicate and engage during this time to ensure compliance with restrictions and maintain impartiality. Our approach will focus on continuing essential work while avoiding any activity that could be perceived as influencing the election.
- We will continue to support LAs with their transition to implementing the new **food standards delivery model**. This includes regular engagement with the LAs and their Management Information System providers to facilitate the changes required for LA computer systems, a dedicated single-point of contact for each LA and further engagement sessions to enhance understanding of the new model and answer any queries officers may have.

Our planned **communication and stakeholder activity** over the for the next few months includes:

- Work is underway to **migrate our public-facing web content to Gov.UK**, the central platform for government information, in response to security and budgetary requirements. This transition will require significant input from the Welsh language and communications teams, who are ensuring that the migration does not compromise the accessibility or quality of information available to consumers and stakeholders. The team will also lead on adapting and transferring content to the new platform to maintain clarity and usability. This work is being undertaken to a very tight deadline, with the project expected to be completed in June of this year.
- Our Wales Communications team is supporting the central team on work to tackle **food-related mis and disinformation**, which affects around four in ten UK adults online. To help create an environment where people can make informed choices, the team is developing a dedicated fact-checking hub and social media content to address common myths and provide clear, evidence-based answers. With so much conflicting information available, finding accurate facts can be challenging, and this initiative aims to make it easier for consumers. Content development is well underway, and we plan to begin sharing materials over the coming months.
- We will continue to work with colleagues and stakeholders to create informative, engaging and relevant **social media content** for our consumers and businesses in Wales.