

Welsh Food Advisory Committee (WFAC) Director's Report – 18 May 2026

Report by Sian Bowsley, Director for FSA in Wales.

Summary

This report provides:

- a link to the paper introduced by the Chief Executive at the last Board meeting held on 25 March 2026; 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 March Board meeting.

Update from the Director for FSA in Wales

Since the WFAC's last themed meeting in February, we have progressed a range of strategic engagement activity. This report highlights the key activity delivered up to the end of April.

I wanted to take this opportunity to let the Committee know that this is my penultimate report as the Director of Wales, as I will be leaving the FSA in July. I would like to thank you for your support during my time in post, and to say how grateful I am for the opportunity to have worked with colleagues and partners across Wales. I am immensely proud of what we have achieved together since I took up the role in September 2024.

In February, the FSA Chair and I attended **Y Farchnad at the Senedd**, a meet-and-greet event connecting Members of the Senedd (MSs) with organisations working across Wales. We used the opportunity to highlight the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS), mandatory in Wales since 2013 and widely regarded as a clear success with Wales leading the way in terms of mandation. The scheme empowers consumers and drives sustained improvements in food safety. MSs voiced strong support, noting minimal food hygiene complaints from constituents. This feedback supports the position that the FHRS is working well and continues to command public confidence. Following Y Farchnad, I accompanied the FSA Chair and the WFAC Chair to a meeting with the **Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing**, enabling constructive discussion on areas of mutual interest and future engagement.

The Welsh Government has published the findings of its [Review of the FSA in Wales](#). As I have reported previously, the review was originally announced by the then Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing in 2021 and included a broad scope – looking at whether the FSA’s policy remit, current governance arrangements and the delegation of responsibilities between FSA and the Welsh Government are clear and remain appropriate. Rather than reshaping our role, the aim was to bring greater clarity to who does what and how we work together, with clear governance and responsibilities. The report concludes that the FSA’s current structure in Wales is effective, with no need for fundamental change. This provides a strong platform for implementing the recommendations, focused on refreshing the Concordat with the Welsh Government to clarify roles and strengthen governance, and build on our engagement approach with local authorities (LAs) to ensure effective collaboration.

I have been maintaining close and regular engagement with key stakeholders, particularly LAs and Directors of Public Protection Wales, recognising their critical role in delivery and assurance. Most recently we met to discuss progress on the [Collaborative Agreement](#) between the FSA, LAs and the Welsh Government, maintaining an ongoing dialogue to ensure that Welsh operational experience, insight and challenge are actively informing and shaping the Future of Food Regulation programme.

The FSA in Wales’ funding provision from Welsh Government for 2026-27 has been agreed at £5.656 million, noting that £0.49 million of this is ringfenced for funding the LA delivery of official feed controls. This budget allocation is provided to undertake the work priorities set out in the FSA in Wales’ broad Service Delivery Agreement for 2026-27 and as agreed by the Welsh Government.

Over the last quarter, the policy teams in Wales have been actively delivering a range of key workstreams, including:

- Publishing a **Raw Pet Food Survey**, alongside [consumer guidance](#) on safe handling and storage, helping to improve consumer awareness of the hygiene risks from handling raw pet food.
- Following up on our recent food supplements presentation to WFAC we have now created **a sub-group of the Food Supplements Working Group**, to explore a range of issues that include vitamins and minerals being sold above guideline amounts and whether current guidance and advice can be improved to help support business compliance and LA enforcement.
- Launching a [consultation on the revised system support for meat charging](#) seeking views on plans to revise financial support for abattoirs and game handling establishments in Wales, England and Northern Ireland. The proposals have been developed with extensive industry and key stakeholder engagement and delivered collaboratively with policy colleagues in England and Northern Ireland, ensuring a consistent and coordinated FSA approach. Responses to the consultation will inform the final policy and recommendations to the FSA Board, ahead of Ministerial agreement.

- In March, four precision fermentation (novel food) market authorisations were approved by the Minister in Wales and came into force on 24 March, alongside the authorisation of a traditional novel food, which takes effect on 31 March. We are now progressing our market authorisation work plan for 2026/27. This includes progressing with consultations over the summer on the next set of market authorisations including a batch of precision fermentation applications, a feed additive with an identified safety concern, and an additional traditional novel foods application. We will also be seeking Ministerial agreement to authorise the three CBD front runner applications which we consulted on last summer.
- Publishing an [Enforcement Guidance for Local Authorities in Wales on Precision Bred Food and Feed Products](#). The guidance has been developed with input from LAs in Wales to support the delivery of their official control duties following the introduction of legislation in England that enables the authorisation of precision bred food and feed products. Given mutual recognition principles which are prescribed in the UK Internal Market Act, these products can be permitted to be sold in Wales, with certain caveats. Equivalent nation specific guidance has also been published in England and Northern Ireland.
- We continue to provide support to shape the public health elements of a future **Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement**. This includes playing a key role in the FSA SPS Agreement Programme including for our broader remit for food standards as well as food and feed safety in Wales. As this work progresses, we are working with Welsh Government officials to plan implementation. Defra issued a [public announcement](#) on 9 March, outlining that all UK businesses will need to be ready to dynamically align with EU rules on the production, movement and trade of plants, animal products and food and feed safety by mid-2027. We wrote to industry, LAs and other stakeholders in Wales about the announcement and encouraged them to familiarise themselves with the potential regulatory changes.

Our **delivery teams**, who work closely with LAs and undertake the regulatory audit and consumer protection work in Wales, have recently been involved in the following:

- Providing four LAs with their formal database conversions to enable them to commence working to the new **Food Standards Delivery Model (FSDM)**. We continue to support LAs to implement the FSDM with regular one-to-one calls and the provision of training material, including several webinars delivered by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI). These webinars successfully reached 209 officers across Wales and are now available for LAs via the FSA YouTube channel. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 94% rating the training as Excellent or Very Good and 98% scoring its usefulness highly. Seven LAs plan to adopt the FSDM from April, demonstrating strong momentum towards wider implementation.
- The Feed Governance Group has agreed the proposal for the **2026-27 feed delivery programme** and we are currently awaiting the return of four Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) documents from the regional feed leads, with two having been returned to date.

- The project on **Enhanced Registration** where, in line with the collaboration agreement, we worked in conjunction with Local Authorities in Wales to explore whether an enhanced system of registration or licensing of food businesses, namely prior approval rather than right of registration, is required, has now been completed, with an update being provided to the Minister. The aim was to assess if asking FBOs for additional information at registration could help to improve compliance, by encouraging them to consider compliance requirements at the outset. Thus, reducing the burden on LAs. This programme of work has now moved into the Future of Food Regulation Programme and we will work across the three nations to take this forward.
- Sharing the **2026-27 Audit Plan** with LAs, providing early visibility of audit activity and enabling them to plan and prepare effectively, supporting transparency and a constructive approach to assurance. This programme will consist of a series of audits across Wales to assess the compliance with legislation relating to food hygiene and food standards sampling, as well as reviewing any relevant open audit actions following previous audits.
- Presenting **the work of the incidents team in Wales** to the Chief Medical Officer's Health Protection Advisory Group, using the infant formula incident to illustrate the complexity of the food chain. The session strengthened understanding of the FSA's role in incident management and follow-up engagement is planned with several Welsh Government departments to explore opportunities for closer collaboration.
- Consumer protection team has successfully managed and coordinated the FSA funded LA food standards sampling programme for 2025/26, this has seen 219 samples taken across 9 Local Authorities on areas such as meat speciation in takeaway meals, Quantitative Ingredient Declaration (QUID) in sandwiches, allergens in coffees, takeaways, school meals and loose/prepacked for direct sale goods, meat content in burgers & sausages and heavy metals in vegetables.

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

- Continuing to grow our new bilingual social channels, which saw our [Dydd Gŷyl Dewi content](#) performing exceptionally well, demonstrating the strong impact of Wales' focused social media channels. Another example with particular relevance to this Committee is the content we shared following our [last themed meeting on Supplements](#), with a short video piece by myself highlighting the value of these meetings and using the opportunity to raise awareness of developing Welsh language terminology within the FSA's remit. The success of culturally relevant, Welsh language storytelling and on-camera staff content has reinforced the value of dedicated Welsh platforms, and this approach will continue to be prioritised to drive reach, engagement and profile.
- We recently worked with Business Wales on an article about the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in Wales: ['Every Food Business Can Achieve a Food Hygiene Rating of 5'](#) highlighting the benefits of a strong hygiene rating for food businesses and the vital role of LAs. The article was featured in the Business Wales newsletter, which has 15,000 subscribers, and shared via Business Wales and FSA social channels. This activity helped reinforce key hygiene messages with the business community and support improved compliance and confidence in the scheme.

- Over the coming months, a key focus of our communications and stakeholder activity will be delivery of a **mis- and disinformation campaign** during May and June. This will include a suite of bilingual blogs, videos and supporting materials currently in production and designed to provide clear, evidence-based and authoritative advice on topics that are particularly vulnerable to misinformation, including food and feed additives, food recalls and cell-cultivated products. Through this programme of activity, we aim to reinforce the FSA's role as a trusted and credible voice on food safety, increase public understanding of complex issues, and actively counter the spread of misinformation and disinformation in the food system. This campaign will be disseminated and amplified via partnership working and through our bilingual social channels in Wales.

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.

In advance of the Senedd election, we have been actively preparing by monitoring party manifestos and emerging policy positions relevant to the FSA's remit, and by reviewing the potential implications for our work in Wales. This has been supported by developing and updating internal briefings to ensure we are well positioned to engage early with newly elected Members of the Senedd and incoming Ministers, and to respond confidently to priorities as they emerge.

Following the election, we will take a proactive and structured approach to building relationships with newly elected Members of the Senedd and the Ministers appointed to the FSA portfolio. We will use established engagement platforms, including [Y Farchnad](#), alongside a programme of **regular communications with Members of the Senedd**, to raise awareness of the FSA's role in Wales, showcase our work, and highlight our key priorities. This will be supported by a clear and accessible overview of our strategic priorities and live projects in Wales, designed to support early engagement, informed dialogue and ongoing collaboration.

We will be supporting a targeted programme of engagement at the **Royal Welsh Agricultural Show** again this year, and are planning a series of stakeholder meetings for the FSA and WFAC Chairs to strengthen relationships and profile key priorities, particularly as we will have a new Government and new Ministers in Wales.

In addition, we are also planning our presence at the **National Eisteddfod** in August as a key opportunity to engage directly with consumers and the wider public. This year's event will be held in Llantŵd, in the heart of north Pembrokeshire and as usual we will be present via our engaging information stand, supported by our knowledgeable and approachable volunteers, providing face-to-face advice, supporting informed conversations on food safety, and raising awareness of the FSA's role, responsibilities and priorities in Wales, reinforcing public trust and understanding.

This September, the **FSA's Board will be meeting in Swansea**, and the Wales team are already involved in planning and supporting. This includes meeting arrangements and logistics, and facilitating a programme of insightful, food-related visits in the local area to showcase Welsh food businesses, innovation and regulatory delivery, and to support Board members' understanding of food systems in Wales.

Over the Summer, we will continue sharing our core food hygiene campaign with consumers in Wales, to align with the **World Food Safety Day** in June. Our activity will focus on driving behaviour change by improving consumers' understanding of poor kitchen hygiene practices and encouraging simple actions to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Messaging will target a broad public audience, with tailored outreach to vulnerable groups through partnership working,

supported by social content across our bilingual platforms in Wales. Will also share campaign toolkits with LAs and partners to support and amplify this campaign.

And finally, a date for your diaries. We will be holding our **annual parliamentary engagement event** in the Senedd on 1 December. Plans are very much in their infancy and I will provide a more detailed update in my next report to this Committee.