

FSA Board announces plans to protect people with food allergies and intolerances

The measures were discussed as part of the quarterly Board meeting on Wednesday 18 September in Belfast.

The actions include:

- issuing a clear and easy to follow aide-memoire for enforcement officers (Environmental Health Officers and Trading Standards Officers) which is focused specifically on the action they should be taking within business in relation to food allergies
- publishing an urgent update of the highly-regarded 'Safer Food Better Business' guide, including a review of on the allergens information included
- at the end of the year, launching of an awareness campaign to remind businesses and consumers about how to keep people with food allergies safe
- implementing a pilot project to develop better reporting of allergic reactions
- focusing on the concerns raised by Owen's case at the next Industry Leadership Forum on food hypersensitivity in November
- meeting with Byron and their local authority to discuss the detail of Owen's case and lessons learned
- once all information is available, commission a full root cause analysis of this specific incident to ensure that lessons are shared

The Board stressed their commitment to supporting food businesses to keep consumers safe, and to develop a greater understanding of food allergens through further research, which would make a significant improvement to people's lives in this area.

As part of the meeting, the Board also considered other major public health risks, including campylobacter and AMR. There was a strong endorsement from the Board to sustain current achievements and continue efforts to tackle Campylobacter in smaller food businesses. The Board made clear they expected the larger retailers to remain transparent about campylobacter levels with consumers, and continue testing and sharing information on their campylobacter reduction programmes with the FSA.

The Board considered the global challenge of tackling antimicrobial resistance and discussed emerging issues such as the use of antimicrobials in crop protection. Recognising that the work the FSA is doing together with Public Health England (PHE) and the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA), the Board agreed to discuss further how best to consider new and complex global public health consequences of antimicrobial resistance when making food safety risk management judgments.

The Board also debated the Cost of Illness Model for Foodborne Diseases and Food Hypersensitivity, which the FSA is developing to support its assessment of public health impacts and priorities. It was agreed that the framework was an important step forward in allowing the FSA to illustrate how it prioritises and makes decisions on spending.

The Board once again stated its concerns about the ability to fund the people and systems required to deliver a reformed regulatory system. In discussions on a report on how food and feed laboratories may be utilised in the future, the Board accepted that the FSA would take a leadership role in the review. However, they advised the FSA could not take ownership as it was a cross-government responsibility requiring a strategic partnership approach.

Date of next meeting

[The full agenda and Board papers are available on the FSA website.](#) A recording of the Board meeting will be available later in the week.

The next meeting of the FSA Board will be on 4 December 2019 in London.