

Dealing with unacceptable behaviour by food business operators, and the withdrawal of inspection and veterinary services

Status: Closed

Date launched: 28 October 2015

Closing date: 26 October 2015

More about the proposed policy

The Food Standards Agency aims to work with industry to protect public health. However, there are times where our role as a regulator can come into conflict with the priorities or requirements of industry. In the majority of cases, good communication can resolve such issues, although on occasion FSA staff have been the victim of serious bullying and harassment and/or physical abuse by food business operators.

There is a legal requirement under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act for any employer to provide its employees with a safe working environment and not to expose staff to unnecessary risks to their health and safety. The FSA maintains such an environment by taking a zero tolerance approach to any form of bullying, harassment or physical assault.

The FSA currently does not benefit from a formal policy for dealing with instances of unacceptable behaviour by food business operators and specifically the withdrawal of inspection and veterinary services from approved establishments.

The actions taken by the FSA to tackle unacceptable behaviour by food business operators remains an emotive topic and can attract a significant amount of debate due to the possible financial implications of such decisions, therefore it is important that we seek the views of industry prior to its implementation.

The FSA is proposing a two-stage approach to dealing with issues of bullying and harassment and has developed a process which will identify whether an informal approach can be adopted and issues dealt with through measures such as discussion and/or mediation. Where more serious issues have been identified or where an individual has a history of such behaviour, a more formal approach may be adopted which can lead to the withdrawal of the inspection and veterinary services.

By adopting the prescribed policy, the FSA will ensure that it remains consistent in its approach where issues have been identified, whilst ensuring that the FSA remains compliant with its requirements under health and safety legislation.

The policy will apply to all food business operators, their employees and/or representatives, irrespective of their employment status or position.

When

Comments by Monday 26 October 2015

Contact

acnfp@food.gov.uk

What area the proposal applies to

- food law, monitoring and controls
- hygiene and food safety

Read the proposed policy and flowchart

England, Northern Ireland and Wales

PDF

[View Proposed policy: dealing with unacceptable behaviour by business operators, and withdrawal of inspection and veterinary services as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (55.43 KB)

England, Northern Ireland and Wales

PDF

[View Flowchart showing proposed process for dealing with unacceptable behaviour by business operators and withdrawal of inspection as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (190.52 KB)

Publication of response summary

Within three months of a consultation ending we aim to publish a summary of responses received and provide a link to it from this page.

You can find information on how we handle data provided in response to consultations in our [Consultations privacy notice](#).

Further information

This consultation has been prepared in accordance with [HM Government Consultation Principles](#). If an Impact Assessment has been produced, this is included in the consultation documents. If no Impact Assessment has been provided, the reason will be given in the consultation document.