

FSA publishes revised Food Law Code of Practice, Practice Guidance and introduces a Competency Framework in England and Northern Ireland

The Codes - there are separate but parallel Codes in England and Northern Ireland - provide statutory guidance to local authorities and port health authorities on the approach they should take to regulate food businesses.

The FSA has reviewed and revised the Codes, taking into account the responses to the recent consultation. Ensuring that the codes reflect current priorities, policy, and legislative requirements so that delivery of food control activities by local authorities and port health authorities remains effective, consistent, and proportionate.

The key changes include:

- modernisation of the baseline knowledge, skills, and experience requirements to enable a wider cohort of environmental health and trading standards professionals in England and environmental health professionals in Northern Ireland to undertake official food controls and other official activities, providing they can demonstrate they are competent
- replacing the existing competency requirements in the Codes with a Competency Framework that defines competency by activity rather than by role
- introducing a provision to enable the FSA to be more responsive in issuing advice, to enable local authorities to depart legitimately from the Code, in limited circumstances

Maria Jennings, Director for Regulatory Compliance, People and Northern Ireland, said:

“We’re committed to broad regulatory reform that will help local authorities and port health authorities target their skilled people where they are most needed. The revised Codes, Practice Guidance and introduction of the Competency Framework will facilitate more effective use of key professionals and will enable individuals with other qualifications to be recruited to undertake specified activities. This will help alleviate the challenges local authorities face in recruiting suitable people to deliver their food service.

“There will be further reviews of the Codes over the next few years to implement the FSA’s modernisation programme for reforming the regulatory delivery model to ensure we have a fit-for-purpose and sustainable regime that will protect consumers”.

The Food Standards Agency in Wales is still consulting on the proposed changes. The [consultation in Wales](#) closes on Thursday, 25 March 2021

For more information on the Codes of Practice, Practice Guidance and the Competency Framework, visit the FSA [Food Law Code of Practice webpage](#). To read the summary of the consultation responses visit the [England](#) or [Northern Ireland](#) consultation pages.