

FSA response to National Audit Office (NAO) recommendations in its report: Ensuring food safety and standards

In June 2019 the National Audit Office published a report into the effectiveness of the current regulatory arrangements to ensure that food is safe to eat and is what it says it is. As part of this report the NAO made [a number of recommendations for the FSA and other government departments](#).

The FSA accepted all of the recommendations at the time and is now providing an update on our progress and a [response to the National Audit Office recommendations](#).

Emily Miles, FSA Chief Executive, said:

“Since the report was published, the pandemic and leaving the EU have brought into sharp focus the impact unpredictable challenges have on our food system. The FSA remains committed to doing everything we can to protect the public and making sure food is safe and is what it says it is. We accepted all the recommendations of the NAO report and I’m pleased with the progress we have made in addressing the NAO concerns.

“Highlights of our response to the NAO report include our commitment to publish, jointly with Food Standards Scotland (FSS), a new annual report on food standards. We will be assessing the state of the nation’s plate and addressing whether food standards are being maintained in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, what improvements we have seen, and what, if any, problems there might be.

“The NAO was also keen that we developed a better way of ensuring that local authorities are protecting food standards and we are introducing a new food standards delivery model to deliver this.

“We are also continuing to talk to ministers to secure additional investigatory powers for our [National Food Crime Unit \(NFCU\)](#) to address the gaps in enforcement powers identified by the NAO. These powers are critical for the NFCU to operate with greater autonomy and reduce the support required from law enforcement partners.

“And finally, the FSA continues to press for the mandatory display of Food Hygiene Ratings in England as encouraged by the NAO. The evidence from Wales and Northern Ireland, where it is mandatory to display food hygiene ratings, is that food businesses raise their standards when they have to display their ratings. We would like to see this benefit to consumers in England too.”

We have published our [response to the National Audit Office recommendations](#) on our website.