

Applying for approval of a meat or food establishment

How to apply for approval of a meat or food establishment

Where you need to apply for approval of a food or meat establishment depending on the type of your establishment and your location.

Some meat and food establishments require approval before they can start operating. Depending on what activities you carry out and where you are based, you may need to apply for an approval from either the Food Standards Agency or your local authority.

Establishments approved by the Food Standards Agency

The following establishments must be approved by us before they start trading:

England and Wales

- slaughterhouses
- cutting plants
- game handling establishments
- wholesale meat market

Northern Ireland

- slaughterhouses
- cutting plants
- game handling establishments
- wholesale meat market
- collection centres of raw milk
- processing plants of liquid milk
- packing centres - packing and grading of eggs by quality and weight

You cannot start trading before receiving an approval. You must not commence any business activity which requires approval unless you have received conditional or full approval for your proposed activity from the FSA. If you start trading without approval, it is an offence which may lead to prosecution.

Establishments approved by local authorities

England and Wales

General establishments

- cold stores
- re-wrapping and re-packaging establishments

Meat establishments

- minced meat establishments
- meat preparations establishments
- mechanically separated meat establishments
- meat products processing plants
- rendered animal fats and greaves processing plants
- treated stomachs, bladders and intestines processing plants
- gelatine processing plants
- collagen processing plants

Fish and shellfish establishments

- live bivalve molluscs (LBMs) establishments including dispatch centres and purification centres
- establishments working with fishery products using factory and freezing vessels, processing plants, fresh fishery products, auction halls, wholesale markets

Dairy establishments

- collection centres of raw milk where it is cooled and filtered
- processing plants treating, processing and/or wrapping of dairy products (milk or any milk-based product)

Egg and egg product establishments

- packing centres - packing and grading of eggs by quality and weight
- processing plants - processing of egg products
- liquid egg plants - handling of unprocessed egg contents after removal of shell

Northern Ireland

General establishments

- cold stores
- re-wrapping and re-packaging establishments

Meat establishments

- minced meat establishments

- meat preparations establishments
- mechanically separated meat establishments
- meat products processing plants
- rendered animal fats and greaves processing plants
- treated stomachs, bladders and intestines processing plants
- gelatine processing plants
- collagen processing plants

Fish and shellfish establishments

- live bivalve molluscs (LBMs) establishments including dispatch centres and purification centres
- establishments working with fishery products using factory and freezing vessels, processing plants, fresh fishery products, auction halls, wholesale markets

Dairy establishments

- processing plants treating, processing and/or wrapping of milk-based products

Egg and egg product establishments

- processing plants - processing of egg products
- liquid egg plants - handling of unprocessed egg contents after removal of shell

Applying for approval of a meat or food establishment by the FSA

How to apply for approval by the Food Standards Agency, approval assessment and right of appeal.

[List of establishments approved by the Food Standards Agency \(FSA\).](#)

Application for a new establishment

Use our [approvals service](#) to apply for approval of your establishment by the FSA. You will need to create an account to use this service.

When we receive your application one of our veterinary officials will contact you within two weeks to arrange a visit to conduct an assessment.

PDF

[View Step by step guide for meat approvals application as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (559.42 KB)

Application for additional activities

Use our [approvals service](#), if you are already approved as a meat establishment and want to apply for approval of additional activities or species.

- [Apply for approval by the FSA](#)

Managing your application

Once you've submitted your application, you will be able to manage and track it in our approvals applications service.

England and Wales

Advisory visits

If you want to obtain approval for your establishment you may request an advisory visit. Advisory visits aim to help you identify the welfare and hygiene requirements which may apply to your proposed approval activities. Areas of advice include building structure, equipment and facilities, operational hygiene considerations and HACCP, good practices, record management and standard operating procedures as well as animal welfare.

Advisory visits will be charged at a set fee which is payable before the visit is scheduled to take place. This fee for the financial year 1 April 2026 to March 2027 is £438.96 inclusive of VAT. This fee is strictly non-refundable.

You can request an advisory visit, when you submit your application form using our approvals service.

England and Wales

PDF

[View Advisory Visits Guidance as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (274.89 KB)

EU references in FSA guidance documents

Directly applicable EU legislation no longer applies in GB. EU legislation retained when the UK exited the EU became assimilated law on 1 January 2024, published on legislation.gov.uk. References to any legislation in FSA guidance with 'EU' or 'EC' in the title (e.g. Regulation (EC) 178/2002) should now be regarded as assimilated law where applicable to GB. References to 'Retained EU Law' or 'REUL' should now be regarded as references to assimilated law.

For businesses moving goods from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, information on [the Windsor Framework](#) is available on GOV.UK.

The Windsor Framework was adopted by the UK and EU on 24 March 2023. The Framework provides a unique set of arrangements to support the flow of agrifood retail products from Great Britain (GB) to Northern Ireland (NI), allowing GB standards for public health in relation to food, marketing and organics to apply for pre-packed retail goods moved via the NI Retail Movement Scheme (NIRMS).

Approval assessment

As part of the approval process, we will assess:

- the equipment and infrastructure of your establishment
- your food safety management system, as part of the approval process.

You are not permitted to operate until a conditional approval has been granted.

After approval, one of our officials will return within three months to assess production and your [compliance with all the hygiene requirements](#) in:

- [assimilated Regulation \(EC\) 852/2004](#) and [assimilated Regulation \(EC\) 853/2004](#) for England and Wales
- [Regulation \(EC\) 852/2004](#) and [Regulation \(EC\) 853/2004](#) for Northern Ireland

Once approved, details of the premises together with information relating to types of foods produced are added to the [lists of approved establishments](#).

Right of appeal

You have a right to [appeal our decision](#) if your premises is refused approval under food law.

You can submit an appeal one month from the date when you were notified of the decision.

You can find a full process overview for the approval of meat establishments in chapter 1 section 4 of the [Manual of Official Controls](#) (MOC). It also explains the circumstances in which we would remove your approval.

- [Approval of food establishments in Northern Ireland: governance arrangements and approvals policy](#)

List of approved food establishments

A full list of establishments, such as cutting plants and slaughterhouses, approved to handle, prepare or produce products of animal origin for which requirements are laid down in assimilated Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 for England and Wales, and Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 for Northern Ireland.

- [Approved establishments in England & Wales](#)
- [Approved establishments in Northern Ireland](#)
- [Approved establishments in Scotland](#)
- [Approved establishments in the EU](#)

Applying for local authority approval of a food establishment

How to apply for local authority approval and the approval process

Establishments that require local authority approval

Approval is required for certain food establishments that handle products of animal origin, such as meat, fish, egg, dairy products, and processed products of animal origin, which supply other establishments.

These establishments may be subject to approval, either by the FSA or by a local authority.

Examples of such establishments can be found on [our How to apply for approval of a meat or food establishment page](#).

This webpage deals specifically with local authority approvals.

If you are unsure whether you require approval, or have any questions about applying for approval, please [contact your local authority](#)

Please note: It is a criminal offence for a food establishment that is subject to approval, to operate unless approval has been granted by the local authority.

Most food businesses that don't require approval, must be registered with their local authority.

Details on who needs to register and how to register can be found on our [Register a new food business page](#).

Apply for local authority approval

- England: [Food premises approval \(England\)](#)
- Wales: [Food premises approval \(Wales\)](#)
- Northern Ireland: [Food premises approval \(Northern Ireland\)](#)

List of approved food establishments

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