Chapter 1 Introduction

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1. Background and Functions

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1.1 Food Standards Agency

1.1.1 Food Standards Agency remit

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is an independent Government body, established in 2000 to protect public health and consumer interests in relation to food.

The FSA is the national authority responsible for food safety and food hygiene across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

FSA's remit includes:

- within the European Union, negotiations on behalf of England, Wales and Northern Ireland by legal experts and policy officials to ensure that EU law reflects the interests of consumers
- removing unsafe food from sale, in conjunction with other enforcement organisations
- ensuring good food hygiene, through various initiatives delivered in partnership with Local Authorities (LAs)
- ensuring meat hygiene in approved slaughterhouses and meat establishments throughout Great Britain; in Northern Ireland, this role is carried out by the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)

This guidance manual, the Manual for Official Controls (MOC), contains details of the tasks, responsibilities and duties FSA staff and veterinary contractors undertake in approved meat establishments.

The FSA's website is www.food.gov.uk

1.2 Food Standards Agency Operations (meat hygiene)

1.2.1 Principal functions

The principal functions of FSA staff working in approved meat establishments are listed in the table below together with the Government department that holds the policy lead.

Function	Policy lead
Provision of meat inspection and health marking	FSA
Enforcement of Food Hygiene Regulations in approved slaughterhouses, cutting plants and minced meat, meat preparations and meat products premises which are combined with approved fresh meat premises	FSA
Enforcement of controls over Specified Risk Material (SRM) and other animal by-products (ABP)	FSA, (TSE) Defra and Welsh Government
Enforcement of welfare at transport and slaughter regulations	Defra and Welsh Government
Collection and despatch of samples for statutory veterinary medicines residue testing and testing of suspect cases	Defra, Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD)
Collection and despatch of sheep and goat brain stem samples for the testing of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE)	Defra and Welsh Government
Supervision of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) testing	Defra and Welsh Government
Collection and despatch of samples for examination and testing for some notifiable diseases	Defra, Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)
Provision of export certification when required by the importing authority or by EU regulations	Defra / APHA
Inspection of imported meat in approved premises	FSA
Provision of services to British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) for the Cattle Tracing System	Defra (Rural Payments Agency)
Provision of other services on a repayment basis to other Service Level Agreement customers	Other customers

1.3 Contacts

Corporate Support Unit York Transactions Team	T: 01904 232177 F: 01904 232184
	CSU@food.gov.uk
Approvals and Registrations	T: 01904 232060
	approvals@food.gov.uk
SLA and Contracts	T: 01904 232093 F: 01904 232229
	sla.contracts@food.gov.uk
FSA Helpline	helpline@food.gov.uk T: 020 7276 8000
Data and Performance	operations.data@food.gov.uk
Guidance Team (MOC)	MOC@food.gov.uk
FSA National Food Crime Unit	foodcrime@food.gov.uk T: 0207 276 8787
FSA Throughput	T: 01904 232209
	FSA.Throughput@food.gov.uk
Food Incidents Team	foodincidents@food.gov.uk T: 020 7276 8448
Imported Food Team	Imported.food@food.gov.uk
Defra	https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs
APHA Find a relevant APHA regional office	T: 03000 200 301 https://www.gov.uk/government/animal-and-plant-health-agency
	https://www.gov.uk/animal-and-plant-health-agency/access-and-opening#field-services-offices-animal-health--welfare
Find a relevant LA office	https://www.food.gov.uk/contact/consumers/find-details/contact-a-local-food-safety-team
Companies House	T: 0870 33 33 636
	enquiries@companies-house.gov.uk
Food Standards Scotland – Operations	operations@fss.scot

2. Relationships with Other Bodies

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Defra

2.3 Animal and Plant Health Agency

2.4 Local Authorities

2.5 Meat industry

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Stakeholders and customers

The FSA has many stakeholders and customers, primarily consumers and the public, but also including:

- other government departments and agencies
- health ministers in England, Scotland and Wales
- meat industry
- halal, kosher and religious slaughter groups
- staff and their professional / representative organisations
- Local authorities (LAs)
- farming industry
- animal welfare organisations
- European Commission (EC)
- DAERA / Veterinary Public Health Unit (VPHU)

2.1.2 Service standards

Our approach to customers and stakeholders, including Food Business Operators (FBOs) and their staff, must be:

- courteous
- professional
- considerate
- patient

FSA officials must always make a clear distinction between statutory requirements and recommendations of best practice. All advice and enforcement action should be proportionate and comply with the Enforcement Policy.

Reference: For additional information see chapter 7 on 'Enforcement'.

2.2 Defra

2.2.1 Responsibility

Defra are the central competent authority for animal health and animal welfare legislation in England.

2.2.2 Defra executive agencies

FSA Operations carries out work on behalf of the following Defra Executive Agencies:

- Rural Payments Agency (RPA), which incorporates BCMS for cattle identification matters
- VMD for medicinal residues
- APHA for animal welfare, identification and disease control and monitoring

2.2.3 Work on behalf of Defra

The work that FSA undertake on behalf of Defra and its agencies is outlined in this chapter at section 1.2.

2.2.4 Contact information

Defra can be contacted via their website:

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs

2.3 Animal and Plant Health Agency

2.3.1 Background

FSA Operations works closely with APHA on matters relating to animal welfare and disease control.

2.3.2 Contact information

More information on the operational responsibilities and structure of APHA can be found via their website:

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency

2.4 Local Authorities

2.4.1 LA purpose

LAs provide services directly to the local communities. These services include trading standards and environmental health.

2.4.2 LA Animal Health Enforcement Officers

County Councils, Unitary Authorities, Metropolitan Borough Councils and London Boroughs are responsible for the enforcement of legislation relating to the health and welfare of farmed animals. The Trading Standards departments within these authorities usually provide this service, but this is dependent on the individual structure of each authority.

LA Animal Health Officers are responsible for the enforcement of legislation related to the health and welfare of animals on farms and during transport. The legislation covers animal identification, animal movements, disease control, animal welfare, animal by-products, bio-security and contingency planning.

LA Food Officers may visit food premises and have right of entry.

2.4.3 LA Food Enforcement Officers

LA Food Enforcement Officers are responsible for enforcement in all food establishments, except for those requiring approval by the FSA under the food hygiene legislation.

Food establishments falling within the remit of the LA range from major national manufacturers to stand-alone cold-stores where the FSA is not present.

LA Food Enforcement Officers are also responsible for the prevention of illegal slaughter outside approved establishments, and for investigating food complaints from consumers.

2.4.4 FSA and LAs

Our officials are required to work closely with LAs. Particularly Animal Health and Food Standards Enforcement Officers, Trading Standards Officers (TSOs) and Environmental Health Officers (EHOs).

- welfare of animals in transit
- confirmation of validity of cattle passports
- processing of animal by-products
- identification of animals
- movements and documentation of animals
- bio-security
- beef labelling requirements
- ‘use by’ date marking
- complaints from the general public relating to physical and chemical contamination of meat
- issues relating to meat hygiene outside approved establishments

2.4.5 Relationships

Effective communication between FSA staff and LA enforcement officers is essential. Communication can:

- identify local risks and concerns
- promote understanding of individual pressures and priorities
- facilitate successful enforcement activities that make the most effective use of local resource

2.4.6 Means of communication

Local communication channels between FSA officials and the LA officers must be maintained, for example:

- proactive and informal communication when LA enforcement officers are attending slaughterhouses
- maintaining ongoing discussions in relation to referrals or areas of common interest
- inviting FSA staff to LA regional meetings where appropriate, to discuss LA priorities and issues; FSA staff attending LA regional meetings where resource allows, and contribute to discussions
- considering possible joint local training opportunities, and sharing of information

2.4.7 Partnership working

Effective partnership working by the FSA and LAs will help achieve enforcement objectives and will also be resource effective.

The FSA should always provide LAs with referral information at the earliest opportunity.

LAs should respond to the referrals at the earliest opportunity or advise when and how they will be able to respond. Where LAs are unable to respond straight away, the LA should offer advice to the FSA staff on any immediate action required to ensure future enforcement action can be successful.

LAs should proactively advise the FSA staff on the outcomes of any non-compliance detected within the slaughterhouse and explain why such an enforcement approach has been taken.

2.4.8 LA food complaints

Periodically LAs receive complaints from consumers and retailers about meat, meat products and meat preparations produced in approved establishments.

In order that the matter is investigated, the LA should refer the complaint to Corporate Support Unit (CSU) at York.

CSU will assign an appropriate officer at the establishment concerned to investigate. The assigned officer will be provided with a Food Complaint Investigation Report for completion.

Once the investigation is concluded and the form completed by the assigned officer, it must be returned to CSU and any physical evidence handed back to the LA officer who referred the matter (observing all security and continuity of evidence issues).

2.5 Meat industry

2.5.1 Liaison with industry

As well as day-to-day dealings with FBOs, the FSA also liaises with industry customers through their representative organisations.

2.5.2 The Meat Industry Guide

The Meat Industry Guide (MIG) provides guidance for FBO's on compliance with public health, animal health, and animal welfare legislation. It also provides guidance for Official Veterinarians (OVs) who audit compliance with the legislation. MIG was produced by FSA in consultation with, and endorsed by, the meat industry, and is designed to assist FBOs in meeting the requirements of the legislation.

Reference: (EC) 852/2004, Articles 7 and 8.

Note: The MIG is available in electronic format via the FSA website:

https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/meat-industry-guide

3. Communication and Guidance

3.1 Lines of communication

3.2 Manuals and guides

3.3 Daybook

3.4 Official notebooks

3.5 Operations staff personal conduct

3.6 Authorisation certificate

3.7 Cutting plant unannounced inspection

3.1 Lines of communication

3.1.1 Communication procedure

All staff follow a standard set of procedures when dealing with communications and queries. These procedures allow FSA Operations staff to work efficiently and effectively. There are situations where the lines of communication are different to those detailed here and are outlined in the relevant instructions.

3.1.2 Summary

The table below summarises the point of contact for technical advice, and also provides points of contact where non-technical advice is required.

Note that the Operations Manager (OM) and Field Veterinary Leader (FVL) roles feature in the field structure in England, but not in Wales.

Note: In Urgent Improvement Necessary establishments, technical matters should be discussed by the Field Veterinary Co-ordinator (FVC) and the contactor's Area Veterinary Manager (AVM). The FVL should be involved in these discussions when necessary.

Advice required by	Technical Advice given by	Non-Technical Advice given by
MHI	OV	Inspection Team Leader (ITL)
cOV	FVC (following their contractors' procedure via their AVM)	Refer to their contractor's AVM
eOV	FVC	ITL
FVC	FVL	Operations Manager (OM) / Head of Operational Delivery (HOD)
ITL	FVC	Area Manager (AM) / OM
AM	FVC	OM / HOD
OM	FVL	HOD

3.1.3 FBOs seeking advice

FBOs should be made aware that they should ask for advice in the first instance from their OV.

3.1.4 Technical advice for OMs / HODs

AMs / OMs / HODs should always seek technical advice from the FVC / FVL when making decisions relating to application or enforcement of official controls.

3.1.5 OV to OV non-compliance reporting

When reporting an incident regarding any consignment arriving at the premises, which does not comply with the Regulations, the OV must complete a Non-Compliance Report (ENF 11/22).

Records of OV to OV reports are monitored in York. This analysis allows the premises regularly dispatching non-conforming product to be identified and enables follow-up action to be initiated.

Reference: See chapter 9 on 'Forms'.

3.1.6 Liaison with other Authorities

There will be occasions where it will be necessary for the OV to contact other authorities, such as Animal Health, LAs, Trading Standards. For ease of reference, the OV should be aware of their local points of contact.

LACORs (now LGR) produced a 'Farm to Fork' wall poster, which may be used to record contact details for each Authority.

Posters were issued to all slaughterhouses and the OV should ensure that contact details are entered on the poster.

Reference: See Annex 1 for an example of the poster.

3.2 Manuals and guides

3.2.1 Manual for Official Controls

The MOC provides details of the tasks, responsibilities and duties FSA staff and veterinary contractors undertake in approved meat establishments.

Volume 1 contains detail of the official controls and forms.
Volume 2 contains relevant legislation.

The manual includes guidance for staff on:

- inspection
- verification and audit
- health marking
- decision making and actions to be taken following official controls
- enforcement
- sampling procedures
- monitoring and surveillance programmes

Note:

1. The OV is responsible for ensuring that all members of the team read and understand the instructions and is also responsible for making the FBO aware of any changes to the manual.
2. All staff must be aware of and follow the instructions in the manual.

3.2.2 User identifies requirement for MOC amendment

Users of the MOC may identify areas of the manual where they feel that an amendment to existing instructions is warranted. In this case, they should email the Guidance Team, providing full details of their suggestion for improvement or amendment.

The Guidance Team will evaluate the suggestion and commission to the relevant Portfolio Group.

3.2.3 Meat industry guide

FSA Operations staff should refer to the MIG for guidance on the standards that industry should be achieving. However, compliance with the MIG is voluntary and staff should be aware that the FBO may choose alternative means of complying with legislative requirements.

Staff and contractors can access the MIG from the digital download, from Digital Workplace or via the FSA website at:

https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/meat-industry-guide

3.3 Daybook

3.3.1 Daybook maintenance

An official daybook must be maintained by FSA staff at each approved establishment. The day and date of operation must be entered by the Authorised Officer (AO) on arrival at the premises. All operational staff should contribute to the daybook when necessary. The daybook is the property of the FSA and must remain under official control at all times. The daybook should not be used in place of other operational records or to needlessly duplicate information recorded elsewhere.

After completion of the day's entries, the OV or Inspection Team Leader (ITL) should enter their signature then rule a line across the page, immediately below the signature. This is to prevent further, non-contemporaneous, entries being made.

3.3.2 Daybook access

All FSA operational staff must have ready access to the daybook. The OV should inform the FBO that they are entitled to read and make entries in the daybook and reasonable access should be provided.

3.3.3 Other daybook functions

The daybook should be used to:

- record the health mark number(s) issued to or used by operational staff
- record the serial numbers of seals applied
- record the start and end times of regulatory duties
- record the time of the first kill and last carcase inspected each day, along with any relevant comments; inspection teams may choose to record specific times for each species slaughtered at their establishment
- create a daily record of significant incidents, events or actions which occur at the establishment
- record certain specific actions taken by the FSA
- provide a means of communication between members of the operational team
- record significant details of non-compliances or offences that may become a source of evidence for legal proceedings
- record all informal enforcement action taken by operational staff
- record all verbal technical advice given by Veterinary colleagues or management
- record all verbal technical advice given by Veterinary colleagues or management to OVs or other operational staff

Note: Contemporaneous notes should be recorded in your personal official notebook where access to the daybook is not readily available. These notes need not be transcribed into the daybook although a reference to their existence should be made.

Reference: See topic 3.4 on 'Official notebooks' in this section for additional information.

3.3.4 Arrival and departure

For health and safety purposes all members of the FSA team and their visitors must print their name, designation and time of arrival and departure at the establishment. If necessary, extend the vertical lines by ruling down. After all expected staff have arrived, the ITL should rule across the daybook page leaving four blank lines to accommodate other FSA officials who may visit the establishment.

Note: These entries must be signed by the team member or visitor at the time of departure from the premises.

3.3.5 Use and recording of stamps

It is very important that Health Marks (HMs) are controlled to prevent fraudulent use. All stamps used by FSA staff working in approved establishments must be kept in secure storage when not in use and be recorded in the daybook when issued and returned.

3.3.6 Health mark stamp

All members of staff using a HM stamp must record:

- the number of the HM and the time of issue
- the time stamps are returned to storage

3.3.7 Guidance on daybook entries

All entries in the daybook may be disclosed, for example, to the FBO, and must be professional and courteous. The daybook is an open document and it may be used as evidence in court.

Entries in the daybook:

- must not be written in offensive language
- must not be derogatory about any individuals

- must adhere to the facts
- must state professional opinions that the author is prepared to defend in court if necessary
- must not be used to record disagreements within the team
- must not be used to record criticism of any FSA staff or policy

Daybook entries must be:

- indelible (in ink or ballpoint pen, not pencil)
- relevant
- factual
- legible
- concise
- unambiguous
- written in clear English
- contemporaneous
- signed (not just initialled - plus printed name if signature is illegible)
- dated

3.3.8 Record of incidents

The format to be used to record incidents should include:

- time of the incident
- description of the incident
- action taken, including details of evidence collected and held under official control and advice given
- names of FSA and FBO staff involved

3.3.9 Retention

In accordance with FSA retention policy, all daybooks should be securely retained at plant for a period of 6 years prior to disposal.

Older daybooks should not be sent for disposal without the approval of the OM / HOD.

3.4 Official notebooks

3.4.1 Official notebook use

These are to be used for recording contemporaneous notes where the daybook is not readily available; for example, where an incident occurs in the lairage that requires facts to be recorded immediately.

The use of the notebook is not to replace the plant daybook for recording of day-to-day activities and is only to be used for recording factual information, which may need to be presented at a subsequent prosecution.

3.4.2 Reference to notebook entries

Where information is recorded in an official notebook, this need not be transcribed into the daybook; however, an entry should be made in the daybook referring to the fact that notes have been taken.

3.4.3 Important points

The notebook may be inspected in court and the following guidance must be adhered to maintain validity:

- record name on front cover, designation and date started
- make all entries with ink or ballpoint pen
- include only original entries and do not copy notes from elsewhere
- record the date and time at commencement of an entry, and upon completion
- enter the notes at the time ‘the offence’ is witnessed or as soon as possible afterwards whilst the facts are fresh in the memory

  Note: Include names of other FSA staff present at the time
- make alterations by striking the pen through the words, writing the correction, and initialling in left hand column; **notes must not be erased**
- do not remove pages from the notebook
- sign and date each entry at the base of each page
- do not use the notebook for any purpose not connected with your official duties.

The notebook may have to be produced in court and read by all parties so entries must be relevant, factual, legible, concise and written in plain English.

3.4.4 Security

You are responsible for ensuring the security of your notebook and producing it in court. Further notebooks are available from CSU on return of your completed notebook.

3.4.5 Return of all notebooks

Notebooks remain the property of the FSA and must be returned prior to leaving the FSA or when requesting a further notebook.

3.4.6 Storage of completed notebooks

Completed notebooks which have been returned as above will be stored and may be required for evidence in the future.

3.5 Operations staff personal conduct

3.5.1 Staff conduct

All staff should adopt, maintain and demonstrate best practice in the course of their duties and conduct themselves in a professional way at all times.

The FSA takes incidents of bullying and harassment very seriously. Information, including policies and other resources, can be found on Digital Workplace at:

https://foodgov.sharepoint.com/hr/Documents/Bullying%20and%20Harassment%20Policy.pdf

3.5.2 Health and safety

All employees will remain aware of their legal obligations and take seriously the responsibility for their own health and safety and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions. Information, including policies and other resources can be found on Digital Workplace at:

https://foodgov.sharepoint.com/hr/Pages/Health-and-Safety-Manual.aspx

3.5.3 Personal Standards

Every person working in a food-handling area is to maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness and is to wear suitable, clean and, where necessary, protective clothing.

Reference: (EC) 852/2004 Annex II Chapter VIII.

3.5.4 Personal hygiene

FSA staff are to:

- wear white, clean protective clothing when handling exposed meat
- wear hairnets (and beard snoods if appropriate) to cover the hair of the head and where necessary the neck
- wear clean waterproof footwear
- wear designated waterproof footwear and lairage coats when working in dirty areas or with livestock
- not wear watches, jewellery (except plain wedding rings), aftershaves and perfumes in production areas

3.5.5 Operational hygiene

When working in an approved establishment, FSA staff must:

- keep personal equipment clean and change protective clothing as necessary
- use the proper hygiene facilities at all times and in such a way that there is no risk of contamination of meat
- wash contaminated aprons in the apron wash facilities
- use a dedicated hygiene facility
- wash hands, or gloves, whenever they become soiled, and always after handling detained or rejected product
- use a rubber glove over a chain mail glove to reduce the risk of cross contamination
- use blue, food safe, waterproof dressings to protect cuts
  Note: some FBOs may require that dressings are also metal detectable.

3.5.6 Health status

FSA staff handling food or entering any food-handling area in any capacity where there is any likelihood of direct or indirect contamination must not be:

- suffering from a disease likely to be transmitted through food
- a carrier of a disease likely to be transmitted through food
- afflicted, for example, with infected wounds, skin infections, sores or diarrhoea

Reference: See the MIG for additional information.

3.6 Authorisation certificates

3.6.1 OA or MHI title

EC 854/2004 uses the title of Official Auxiliaries (OAs) for Meat Hygiene Inspection (MHI) staff.

MHIs can continue to use the title of MHI except when participating in enforcement action, when the title Official Auxiliary must be used. Authorisation certificates will also use the title Official Auxiliary.

3.6.2 Authorisation certificates

FSA staff are issued with authorisation certifications depending on their designations, along with photo ID cards.

You must sign the authorisation documentation, carry them whilst engaged in official duties, and be prepared to produce them on request. You are responsible for ensuring you possess all relevant authorisations for the establishment where you work.

When ceasing to work on behalf of the FSA you must return all authorisation certificates and letters of confirmation to your OM / HOD. Any lost or found authorisation certificates must be reported to CSU.

3.6.3 Devolved administrations

The FSA does not directly authorise officers of Defra and Welsh Government. We appoint on their behalf and provide letters of confirmation.

3.6.4 Powers of entry

Authorisations give the holder the powers to enter approved establishments within their authority and must be produced upon request. This power of entry exists at all reasonable hours and is for the purposes of ascertaining contraventions of provisions of the legislation for which they are authorised and the performance of statutory duties.

Reference: The Official Feed and Food Controls (E/W) Regulations 2009.

3.6.5 Action without authorisation

Do not take any enforcement action for which you have not been authorised, as such action is not valid.

If you are in any doubt as to whether you are appropriately authorised for any action, you should seek technical advice as detailed in the topic 'Lines of Communication' previously in this section.

3.7 Cutting plant unannounced inspections

3.7.1 Scope of guidance

This guidance is designed to provide a high-level outline of the unannounced inspection (UAI) process and to detail areas of responsibility for relevant staff. Individual guidance will be provided where necessary by the FVL and service delivery partner (SDP) management.

3.7.2 Background and purpose

Authorised officers (OVs, FVL, FVCs and MHIs) may undertake, as per FSA policy, UAIs to cutting plants under the direction of the relevant FVL.

EC law indicates official controls (which consist of audit or inspection tasks) should be carried out without prior warning (except audits). This process is intended to introduce unannounced inspections that may inform the periodic audit at cutting establishments to provide evidence of continuous and proper application of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) based principles by FBOs.

Reference: (EC) 882/2004 Recital 13, Article 3, Paragraph 2.

The purpose of UAIs are to:

- augment the work the OV carries out at the periodic audit and to provide evidence of continuous application of HACCP based procedures by FBOs; where HACCP deficiencies are identified by MHIs, their actions should address any immediate risks arising and leave escalation of any systematic failures to the OV
- bringing an unannounced element to official controls at cutting establishments
- follow up on non-compliances (NCs) raised by the VA and provide feedback to them via UAI reports
- take enforcement action as appropriate
- provide management information to inform the FVL and Service Delivery Partner (SDP).

Note: UAIs are an internal process to supplement and add value to the formal FBO audit. Following an UAI, the AO must provide the FBO with a verbal summary regarding the results of the inspection, followed by an exception report within 10 working days, where non-compliances have been identified. OVs will have access to all UAIs carried out, via SharePoint.

3.7.3 Programme of inspections

A programme of inspections will be established by the FVL and / or FVC, utilising information from audit outcomes and based on risk, liaising appropriately with the SDP.

This programme of inspections does not supersede review of approval protocols or emergency inspections following receipt of intelligence / food complaints.

All cutting plants must receive at least one UAI during the period between audits. After the initial UAI, the need for further UAIs may be identified and FVLs should utilise a risk based approach when scheduling such inspections. Time spent on UAIs will be variable, dependant on findings, and managed accordingly utilising local knowledge.

3.7.4 UAI reports

UAI report forms are based on audit categories, to allow appropriate benchmarking and to further inform future FBO audits carried out by OVs. FVLs

will manage inspections at a local level, advising on the relevant sections to be completed; for example, Ready to Eat (RTE) may be included only if it is appropriate to the premises.

The general inspection theme is set out below and inspections will encompass some or all of the following:

- hygienic production / operational practices
- environmental hygiene
- HACCP based procedures and implementation
- ABP
- TSE / SRM controls
- documentation
- structure
- traceability
- health marks and identification mark

Note: UAI reports can be found on SharePoint. http://core/Community/Operations/opsfieldmgt/VetPortal/Pages/AuditandEnforcements.aspx

3.7.5 Roles for inspections

The following table details which personnel should carry out UAIs at different types of establishment. These responsibilities have been identified as a suitable resourcing model based on the risk presented.

Type of establishment	UAI by
RTE products	RTE trained FVL / FVC / OV
Conditionally approved cutting plants	FVL / FVC
All other cutting plants	FVL / FVC / OV / MHI

3.7.6 FVL process

The relevant FVL is accountable and responsible for the UAI process, which may be carried out by employed or SDP staff. This process may be organised by the FVC with the agreement of the FVL.

The FVL may personally conduct UAIs or may nominate suitably experienced employed and competent OVs and MHIs who have the appropriate level of authorisation and training and passed the assessment to carry out the inspection.

The FVL should liaise with the SDP who will allocate suitably competent staff to carry out UAIs.

Note: Prior to an MHI carrying out such inspections, the FVL must ensure that the individual has received the necessary level of training, support and guidance.

3.7.7 FVL responsibilities

The table below details the FVL responsibilities.

NB. **Only trained MHIs will be allowed to undertake UAIs and take enforcement action.** Names of MHIs who have completed the FSA enforcement training course will be provided to the FVL and ITL. A central list of MHIs authorised to carry out UAIs will be recorded on the Establishments and People database.

Step	Process	
	Employed MHI	**OV**
1	From within cluster teams, the FVL will identify MHIs to act as AOs in carrying out UAIs.	The SDP (via the AVM) will be asked by the FVL to nominate suitably competent OVs. **Only OVs who have successfully completed the RTE training course should be considered to carry out inspections to that type of establishment.**
2	The FVL, using results of previous audits, inspection and enforcement activity for a cutting plant, will choose the establishments and the frequency of inspections by the AOs. The relevant ITL / SDP will be informed, so the inspections can be scheduled in liaison with the FVL, taking account of establishment and resource availability.	

3	MHIs will access the latest audit report and Enforcement Programme from the SharePoint site.	OVs should be provided by their management with copies of the latest audit report and ENF 11/5.
4	AOs must liaise with the OV who conducted the last audit to discuss the enforcement programme and the areas of operation to be reviewed following the last audit findings and capture areas the auditing OV would like checking.	
5	MHIs must liaise with their FVLs should they need to discuss technical issues prior to the inspection.	
6	Throughout the duration of the inspection carried out by the employed MHIs, the FVL should ensure that there is someone within the management chain available to take calls from the MHI should the need arise.	
7	If formal enforcement action is taken, the FVL and SDP must be informed on the same day. The FVL will liaise with the ITL / SDP to organise follow up inspections where appropriate.	
8	Following completion of the inspection, the MHI will complete any letters or notices necessary, depending on the findings of the inspection. They will also complete the inspection report, update the enforcement programme, then submit all documents to the FVL. These actions must be completed within 5 working days from completion of the inspection.	The SDP should send all the documents to the FVL within 10 working days from completion of the inspection.
9	Once the completed documents have been checked, they should be submitted to the appropriate SDP (if the inspection was completed by an MHI) and a further copy to Approvals and Registrations at York. The FBO will be provided with a summary of the inspection.	
10	At the monthly contract performance meetings, the FVL and AVM should review scheduling of future inspection, and outcomes and actions from inspections undertaken. Details of such meetings should be recorded in the template provided for contract management meetings.	

3.7.8 Pre-inspection preparation: Authorised Officer

Prior to carrying out any UAI to a cutting plant, the AO must ensure that:

- (MHIs only) they have received the training, guidance and support to enable them to carry out an unaccompanied UAI
- they have had discussions with the VA conducting the last audit and FVL prior to the inspection, to discuss the enforcement programme and the areas of operation to be reviewed
- they are clear on the scope of activities to be reviewed during the inspection
- they have received, read and understood the current Enforcement Programme (ENF 11/5) (where available) and most recent FBO Audit (AUD 9/-3)
- they have the contact number for the relevant FVL (or deputy) and that the FVL is aware of the day and time of the inspection
- they are equipped with:
    - authorisations and FSA ID card
    - printed version of the UAI report form for the inspection (**note:** this can be accessed and printed from the SharePoint site)
    - contemporaneous notebook
    - calibrated thermometer
    - camera
    - torch
    - appropriate enforcement forms

SDP staff carrying out UAIs will follow their own processes under the arrangements of the fully managed service.

3.7.9 AO refused access

If, when undertaking an UAI, the AO is refused access to the premises they should contact the FVL immediately to seek guidance and note the details in their contemporaneous notebook. SDP staff should also notify their line management in these circumstances.

3.7.10 During the inspection: authorised officer

The AO should carry out the inspection following the protocols established in the guidance and following any instructions provided, specific to the plant in question.

The AO should follow the printed UAI report form during the course of the inspection, making appropriate entries to aid subsequent electronic completion. Only those areas specified in advance by the FVL/SDP management should be reviewed, however, AOs must take an overall view of the operating practices on the day of the inspection.

Additionally, any FSA intervention should be recorded on the FSA Corrective Action Report.

Note: **If a serious public health contravention is identified during the course of the inspection, regardless of whether it is outside of the pre-defined scope of the inspection, the AO must immediately telephone the FVL / FVC / AVM as appropriate.** It may be appropriate to consider curtailing the inspection. The FVL / FVC / AVM will instruct the AO on the necessary enforcement action to be taken (where staff have the necessary competence and training) and appropriate evidence to be gathered.

It is always good practice to obtain corroboration whenever possible.

3.7.11 After the inspection: authorised officer

Using the entries made during the course of the inspection, the AO should electronically complete the UAI form. This must then be submitted to the FVL / SDP, together with the enforcement programme and any other relevant letters or notices, as detailed in sub-topic 3.7.7 on 'FVL responsibilities' in this chapter.

3.7.12 Time coding for UAI

Time spent undertaking UAI should be time-coded to the NOTH code.

However, should enforcement action become necessary during the course of the inspection, then the time should all be coded to INSP.

Note: If the inspection is carried out by the FVC / FVL, then this time will form part of their management controls (with the exception of enforcement action being taken and coded to INSP, as above).

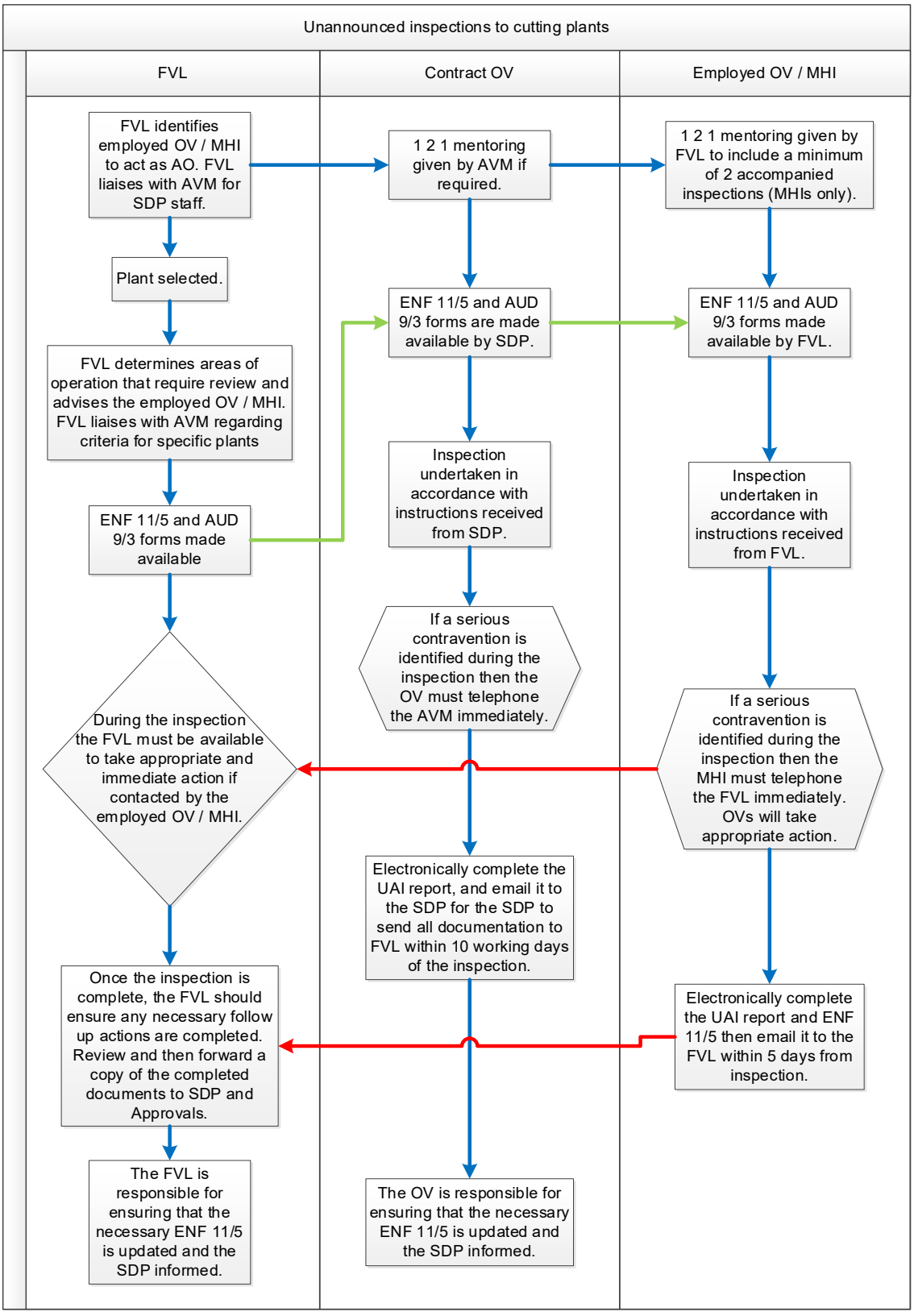
3.7.13 UAI

During UAI inspection, the AO must ensure that evidence is gathered to inform the OV auditor regarding enforcement action and progress of issues at the time of the last audit. Any updates on existing issues should be recorded on the UAI form.

MHIs that are trained to carry out enforcement shall update the enforcement programme with any new non-compliance identified and update existing non-compliances with additional entries, liaising appropriately with the OV.

Decisions to close NCs raised in previous audits remain with auditing OVs and information from the UAI reports may be utilised to inform such decisions.

3.7.14 Process map



4. Process Overview: FSA Approval of Establishments

4.1 Process overview

4.1 Process overview

4.1.1 Approval of meat establishments

EU Member States' competent authorities may grant approval to establishments handling, preparing or producing products of animal origin for which requirements are laid down in Regulation (EC) 853/2004.

Under the food hygiene legislation, meat plants require approval unless they benefit from specific exemptions.

4.1.2 Approvals operational policy

The FSA has published a document entitled ‘Operational Policy for the Approval of Meat Establishments Undertaken by the FSA’, which sets out the FSA’s implementation of the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004, for approving meat establishments with veterinary attendance under Regulation (EC) No 853/2004. For more extensive information regarding the FSA’s Approvals Policy, approval forms and legislation links, refer to the business guidance page on ‘Applying for approval of a food establishment’ found on the FSA’s website at https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/applying-for-approval-of-a-meat-establishment .

For detailed information on the approvals work undertaken by FVLs please contact the Approvals Team.

5. Annexes

Annex 1a	Sample Farm to Fork poster (England)
Annex 1b	Sample Farm to Fork poster (Wales)
Annex 2	Checklist
Annex 3	Glossary of abbreviations