

20/09/03

UPDATE FROM DIRECTOR FOR FSA IN WALES

1. Ministerial Meetings

1.1 The Board Chair met with the Minister for Health and Social Services, Vaughan Gething MS on 22 July. It was a positive meeting. The Chair and Minister discussed the COVID-19 response and how the FSA and Welsh Government were coordinating. They also discussed the role of the FSA post EU Exit, including how the Welsh Ministers could access the FSA's expertise.

2. Safe Sustainable Authentic Food Wales (SSAFW)

2.1 A virtual meeting of SSAFW was held on 23 July. This was the first meeting of the group since lockdown. Agenda items included an update on the coordinated response to COVID-19 by local authorities, FSA and Welsh Government, an update from FSA and Welsh Government in relation to EU transition preparedness, and a report by CIEH on a workforce planning survey looking at the resources available within LAs in Wales to deliver food and feed official controls. Useful intelligence was provided by the catering and hospitality sector on the impact COVID-19, which was experiencing significant hardship with many businesses struggling to remain trading.

2.2 The SSAFW COVID-19 Working Group met on 12 August. The group continues to share intelligence and feedback on operational matters in relation to the COVID-19 response in Wales. With the response settling it was agreed that meeting frequency would reduce, but the group would retain the ability to increase frequency if required. The group has been a success – where information has been shared by the LAs and fed back into the FSA it has assisted the development of guidance.

3. Health Protection Advisory Group

3.1 I attend the Wales CMO's Health Protection Advisory Group (HPAG), which has been adapted to provide a national all-Wales level oversight of the national health escalation and response plan. HPAG meets fortnightly, with two meetings during August. Main topics of discussion in these initial meetings have been around the ensuring effective coordination of local, regional and national response.

4. Preparing to Return to Offices

4.1 Work is under way in preparation for any return to offices to ensure a safe environment for staff. COVID-19 risk assessments have been undertaken in each FSA office and a range of materials produced to prepare staff for any return. A video of each office has been prepared that shows what life might

feel and look like in the 'new normal', with occupancy levels being much lower.

5. Science Advisory Committee (SAC)

5.1 The SAC has relaunched its independent websites. These websites have been created for the FSA's independent SAC to help ensure the Agency remains open and transparent about its science.

5.2 In addition to the six committee websites, also launched is a new SAC hub; <https://sac.food.gov.uk/>.

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August 2020