



**Food Standards Agency Audit of Local Authority  
Delivery of Official Controls on Milk and Dairy  
Products in England, Wales and Scotland**

**Audit Programme**

**October 2014 - March 2015**

**Audit Brief  
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## Background

1. The primary purpose of Agency audits of Local Authorities (LAs) is to provide assurance that local delivery of official controls for feed and food comply with EC and UK legal requirements and official guidance. The detailed guidelines for the conduct of audits of competent authorities are set out in an EC Decision of October 2006<sup>1</sup>.
2. Powers to set standards, monitor and audit local authority feed and food law enforcement services were conferred on the Agency by the Food Standards Act 1999 and The Official Feed and Food Controls (Scotland) Regulations 2009. The audit will be undertaken under section 12 of the Act and regulation 7 of the Regulations.
3. *The Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities* sets out the arrangements through which the Agency audits LA enforcement activities to help ensure that LAs are providing an effective service to protect public health. The overarching aims of the audit scheme are to:
  - Help to protect public health by promoting effective local enforcement of feed/food law;
  - Maintain and improve consumer confidence;
  - Assist in the identification and dissemination of good practice to aid consistency;
  - Provide information to aid the formulation of Agency policy;
  - Promote conformance with the Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities and any relevant central guidance or Codes of Practice;
  - Provide a means to identify under performance in LA feed/food law enforcement;
  - Promote self- regulation and peer review;
  - Identify continuous improvement.
4. This programme of audits will focus on LA systems and procedures for the planning, management and delivery of food law enforcement services and official controls related to the safety of milk and dairy products in England, Wales and Scotland.

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<sup>1</sup>Commission Decision (October 2006): 'Guidelines laying down criteria for the conduct of audits under Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on official controls to verify compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules'.

## Scope of the October 2014 – March 2015 audit programme

5. The programme will comprise of audits of LAs focusing on LA food law enforcement service arrangements for delivery of official controls on milk and dairy products. This will include cows, buffalo, sheep and goats milk products.
6. The aim of the programme is to gain assurance LAs are effectively implementing controls in approved milk and dairy establishments in accordance with relevant legislation and in particular with the key recommendations made by Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) following their audit in April 2013 of the controls relating to safety of milk and dairy products in the UK.
7. The programme will involve audit assessments at LAs and verification (reality) checks at food business premises.
8. Particular emphasis shall be given to LAs and business systems and procedures in place to ensure the safety of milk and dairy products in the UK.
9. The programme will take place between October 2014 and March 2015 at a range of selected LAs based upon the authority type, geographical location, the number of approved dairy establishments and the period since the last audit.
10. It is planned to carry out visits to 10 LAs in England in Q3, 2 LA visits in both Q3 and Q4 in Wales and 3 LA visits in Q3 in Scotland.
11. The audit will examine LA delivery of official controls particularly in relation to and relevant sections of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004, Regulation (EC) No 852/2004, Regulation (EC) No 853/2004, Regulation (EC) No 854/2004, Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009, Regulation No (EC) 2073/2005, Article 18 of Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002 and Council Directive 98/83/EC at establishments producing and processing milk and dairy products against the relevant sections and/or sub-sections of the 'Standard' in Chapter 2 of the Framework Agreement. Audit checks will include assessment of :
  - Service planning and delivery
  - Provision and adequacy of officer training and the authorisation of officers
  - Implementation and effectiveness of control activities, including inspection/interventions, food inspection and sampling and enforcement related to milk and dairy product controls
  - Maintenance and management of appropriate records in relation to official controls at FBOs
  - Internal service monitoring arrangements
  - Liaison arrangements between LAs and other agencies responsible for milk and dairy product controls.

## Audit programme objectives

12. The programme will seek to gain assurance that LA food law enforcement services are effective in their implementation of official controls related to the safety of milk and dairy products, and to disseminate good practice related to food control in this area.

## Audit approach

13. At each LA the audit checks will include :

- Structured assessments and evaluation of related LA service delivery planning and relevant food law interventions/inspections and enforcement activities;
- Checks on the provision and adequacy of officer training and authorisations, including the means by which the LA ensures that officers are competent to effectively assess hygiene standards at approved dairy establishments;
- Assessment of the maintenance and management of appropriate records in relation to official controls at approved dairy establishments to ensure that these are sufficiently detailed, accurate, up to date and effectively managed;
- Structured interviews with LA service managers and other enforcement officers;
- Reality checks to selected food businesses will be carried out to assess LA service enforcement records relevant to the scope of the audit;
- Internal service monitoring arrangements to ensure that these are consistent, appropriate, and effective and comply with internal procedures and corrective actions are implemented to ensure that interventions are carried out competently.

## Timing of the audit

14. The on-site audits at LA offices and the verification checks at food businesses will take place between **October 2014 and March 2015**<sup>2</sup>. Each LA will receive at least 4 weeks' notice of their audit. At this time a pre-visit questionnaire will be issued for completion and return at least two weeks before the audit.

Auditors may be accompanied by other Agency staff and some interchange of auditors to aid consistency between the countries involved may take place. It is envisaged the audits should take no longer than two day's at each authority plus half a day at each business subject to a reality visit.

<sup>2</sup> FSA England commencing Q3, FSA Wales commencing Q3 and Q4, FSA Scotland commencing Q3

## Audit reports and follow-up action

15. All audited LAs will receive an individual report which will be published on the Agency's website. A report will be compiled summarising the main findings from the audit programme, and any central policy considerations identified. This report will be published on the FSA website.
16. Individual draft audit reports will be produced within 20 working days of the final day of the audit. The Local Authority will then have 20 working days to agree the content of the report and draft an action plan. Final reports including the action plan will be produced within 10 working days of agreement of the draft report.
17. Full details of the Agency's LA audit arrangements can be obtained from the Enforcement Portal of the Agency's website:  
<http://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/auditandmonitoring/>

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