

To: Heads of Service and Lead Officers (Food) in all Local Authorities in Scotland

18 February 2016

Ref : FSS/ENF/16/003

Dear Colleagues

**Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS)
Information and Guidance for 2015/16 Returns**

LAs are asked to note:

- 1) Essential IT work is being carried out to migrate the Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS) on to a new server. This means the system is not available for LAs to test data and there may be a brief period when the site will be down. It is anticipated that LAEMS will be ready for the 2015/16 data upload by the start of April as usual and there will be no changes made to the system itself. However, we are reliant on our IT supplier and we will keep you informed if there are any unavoidable delays. We will notify you when the system is open for the 2015/16 monitoring returns.
- 2) The LAEMS Top Tips document below provides advice on preparing monitoring returns and reporting on LAEMS.
- 3) If you have used UKFSS to record your official samples for the whole of the 2015/16 reporting year, you will have the option to use UKFSS data as the sample part of the LAEMS return. To avoid discrepancies between UKFSS and LA data, please remind your laboratories to record results on UKFSS by early April.

Please do not hesitate to contact the LAEMS team if you have any questions. E-mail: laems@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

The objective is to have the deadline for sign off as **Friday 27 May 2016**. This should enable us to collate the data that has been validated, checked and signed off by the Head of Service and so allow us to provide information back to local authorities.

I would ask you to please contact me as soon as possible if you envisage any difficulties in meeting this deadline.

Technical assistance on issues arising from uploading should be directed in the first instance to:

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Should you wish to consult the LAEMS statistics, the annual report and individual local authority statistics are available at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/monitoring/laems/mondatabyyear/enforcement-data-2014-2015>

As a reminder, the LAEMS database can be accessed at <https://laems.foodapps.co.uk/> and comprehensive guidance on the LAEMS process is available at <http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/enforcement/laemsguidance.pdf>.

Thank you for your continued support on this issue. If you experience any problems whilst uploading your LAEMS data the LAEMS team are there to help.

Yours sincerely



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Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS) Top tips for local authorities

- **FSA Guidance:** Make use of the general information and guidance on LAEMS on the Agency's website: <https://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/monitoring/laems>
- **FSA support:** Work closely with the FSA's LAEMS Team at the early stages of data summary generation and when problems are identified to ensure that an accurate and timely submission can be made.
- **Internal guidance:** Introduce internal local authority user and data guides.
- **Internal monitoring:** Implement a documented internal monitoring procedure and update it with lessons learned after the LAEMS submission.
- **Verification checks:** Run regular verification reports to check database anomalies, particularly in relation to unrated premises, premises outside the programme, overdue interventions and premises risk ratings.
- **Cross-referencing checks:** Liaise with other LA departments such as Planning, Building Control, Business Rates, and carry out routine cross-referencing checks of businesses held on the premises database against other listings of local businesses and websites that review food businesses to ensure information is up to date about new premises opening, changing ownership and use or closing.
- **Database checks:** Before extracting the data upload file ensure that your database is up to date and that:
 - there are no duplicate records and the number of food premises and premises breakdown reported in your Authority's Service Plan is the same as reported in the LAEMS return
 - the numbers and type of food businesses recorded for food hygiene and food standards are the same
 - records for the premises that ceased trading have been closed correctly on your database on both food hygiene and food standards
 - new premises are entered onto the database only when they start trading (until then they should be recorded on a separate database or spreadsheet)
 - premises awaiting an initial inspection remain as unrated until they are inspected as per the Code of Practice (do not allocate a nominal risk rating)
 - premises outside of the programme are not reported as unrated (e.g. primary producers)
- **Uploaded data checks:** In case of discrepancies between the uploaded data and your internal reports, open the XML file in Excel to see data by individual establishments to cross-check data summary tables.
- **Interventions:** Record **all** interventions at food businesses particularly revisits, sampling visits, specific visits aimed at providing business advice or education and Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES) activity (including questionnaires).

- **Enforcement actions:** Ensure that **all** enforcement actions including written warnings are included (written warnings are all communications with the proprietor/owner/manager of a food establishment which refer to infringements of legislation and could be a letter, inspection report or email and may include written warnings left at the time of inspection/visit).
- **Mapping:** Review mapping of LAEMS categories of interventions to make sure all interventions carried out by your authority are reported and correctly mapped (see LAEMS guidance Annex A, e.g. revisits incorrectly recorded as inspections, AES not reported or incorrectly mapped).
- **Inter-Authority Audits (IAA):** Participate in IAAs and work closely with neighbouring authorities to share good practice on maintaining data accuracy.

Reporting

- **Manual adjustments:** If you need to adjust figures manually, make sure that the adjustments are entered in the right columns (especially the enforcement actions) and consistently across the data summary tables (e.g. if you change the number of interventions achieved in the *Interventions carried out* table you must also apply the same changes to the number of interventions achieved in the *Interventions due and by risk rating* table).
- **Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts:** Avoid double counting of FTEs for food hygiene and food standards work and report on FTE posts **allocated** to the food service and **occupied** to reflect the actual proportion of the time spent by professional and administrative staff (this figure should reflect the time actually engaged solely in food law enforcement work).
- **Due interventions:** Report all due interventions outstanding, including outstanding interventions that were due before the reporting year or those that are not included in the inspection programme due to resource issues.
- **Enforcement actions:** Report the number of food businesses subject to enforcement actions and not the number of formal enforcement actions in each category.
- **Imported food data:** Remember to report imported food enforcement data as this should be provided both by ports and inland authorities where imported food sampling and enforcement activity is undertaken.
- **Source of sampling data:** Clarify in the supporting information box if sample data for both the food hygiene and food standards responsibilities should be taken from UKFSS or LAEMS.
- **Sampling data:** Avoid duplicating the sample information under food hygiene and food standards which results in double counting of sample data.
- **Sign off:** Ask the Head of Service to carry out a robust verification check on the data before it is signed off.