Evaluation of the Food Standards Pilot in Wales: Conclusion

The Welsh food standards pilot project has been an important step in evidencing the suitability of using the proposed food standards delivery model in Wales ahead of a potential roll out across Wales. The evaluation found that there were no unintended consequences of the proposed model when implemented in the Welsh context.

The evidence gathered in this evaluation has built on the evaluation of the initial pilot of the food standards delivery model in England and NI. It has also contributed valuable evidence towards the England and Northern Ireland roll out, particularly on aspects of guidance and on the impact of the allergen risk score.

LAs clearly stated that they found the proposed model to be more effective at targeting their resource to high-risk businesses and the proposed model gave LAs flexibility on how to target their resources. This is supported by quantitative data on the change to intervention frequencies. The addition of the specific allergen information risk criteria and additional guidance around allergens within other risk criteria has been seen as beneficial and allows for a stronger, more proportional, focus on allergens and allergen practices within interventions. However, it should be noted that more clarity and guidance would be needed on the various aspects discussed throughout this report to support a potential roll out, ensure sufficient support to joint service LAs and maintain a level of consistency in scoring across LAs in Wales.

There may be concern over the 14% increase in interventions, but it must be recognised this data has been obtained from just two LAs over a 6-month period and there was variation between the two pilot LAs. It is expected that as LAs become familiar with the new risk assessment scheme, some of the risk scores may change. The FSA will continue to monitor the evidence gathered as the model is implemented across England and Northern Ireland to determine whether the intervention frequencies require amending.