

Meat food business compliance

The FSA works with food business operators to identify where improvements are necessary.

It is the responsibility of meat food business operators (FBOs) to comply with food safety, hygiene and animal welfare regulations. The FSA conducts official controls and food business audits to verify compliance. We work with food business operators to identify where improvements are necessary, helping to ensure that 'food is safe'.

Audits of meat food businesses

The FSA uses a risk-based approach when auditing meat processing establishments with audit outcomes categorised according to compliance levels.

These are the meat food business operator compliance ratings March 2022 (difference from March 2021). The compliance ratings show 98.9% of meat FBO premises rated 'Good' or 'Generally satisfactory' and 1.2% rated 'Improvement necessary' or 'Urgent improvement necessary' as of 31 March 2022. We conducted 646 full audits of food businesses in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2021/22.

- Good: 59.7% (increase of 1.3% points)
- Generally satisfactory 39.2% (decrease of 0.9% points)
- Improvement necessary 0.7% (decrease of 0.9% points)
- Urgent improvement necessary 0.5% (increase of 0.5% points)

Number of meat FBOS by compliance rating

Figure 11: England

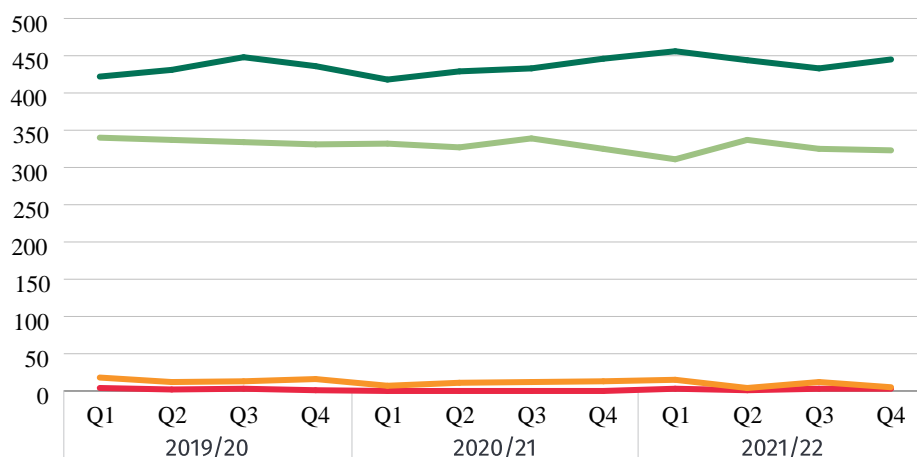


Figure 12: Wales

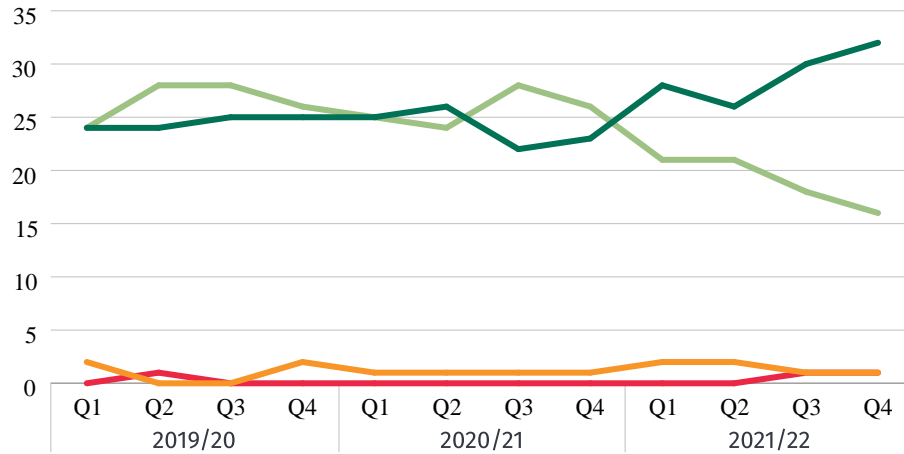
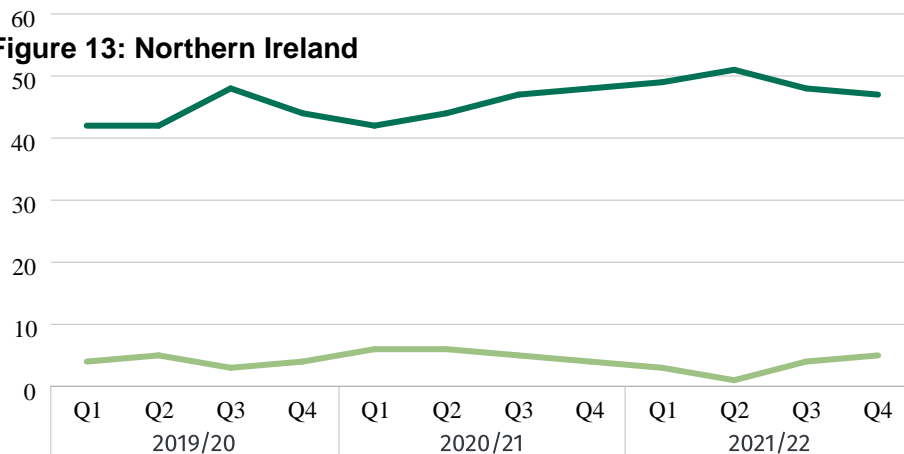


Figure 13: Northern Ireland



Northern Ireland have recorded no 'Improvement Necessary' or 'Urgent Improvement Necessary' from Q1 2019/20 onwards.

Audit activity

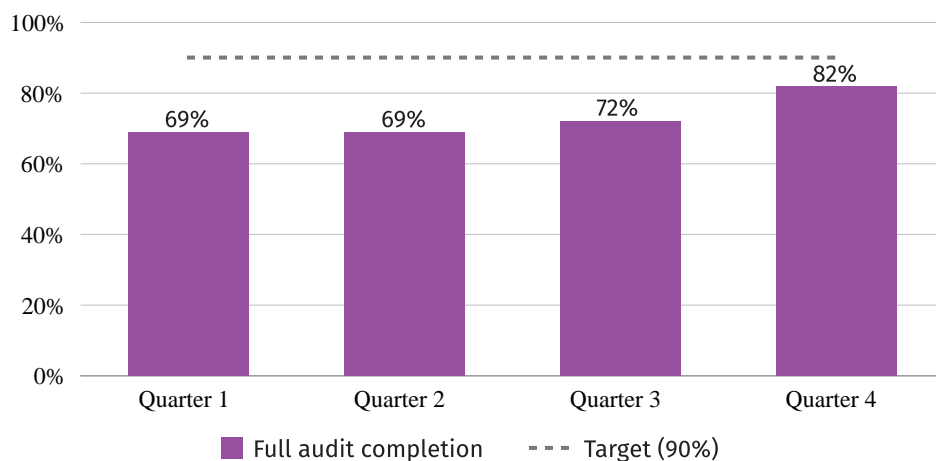
In 2021/22, COVID-19 continued to significantly impact our audit programme for meat FBOs. Social distancing requirements, sickness, changes in industry trading conditions, establishment closures and audit staff covering gaps in frontline service delivery all reduced the volume of audits conducted. The audit programme continued with a risk-based, targeted approach to audits where necessary and any concerns were mitigated by direct communication with businesses, tailoring the approach to each circumstance.

This continued to include:

- using remote and semi-remote auditing techniques
- high-risk premises remain subject to on-site audits

As a result of the FSA's official audit programme seeing delays from April 2020 due to COVID-19 and the reasons referenced above, not all FBO audits were able to be completed at their scheduled time resulting in additional numbers of full audits requiring completion during 2021/22. The FSA Audit teams focused the limited resources on protecting consumer health and prioritised higher risk establishments falling under the 'Improvement necessary' or 'Urgent improvement necessary' categories at their latest audit. Establishments who exported to third countries as per the scheduled requirement and partial audits were also prioritised.

Figure 14: Full audits completed against target for England and Wales



During 2021/22 the FSA prioritised audits previously deferred due to COVID-19 disruption completing 249 of these audits, and as a result by the end of March 2022 there were no outstanding deferred audits and the number of full audits completed against the target had returned to pre COVID-19 levels.

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