

Achieving Business Compliance

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Our aim is to make sure consumers continue to have food they can trust in the future in a rapidly evolving food sector. We need to regulate in a smarter way to make sure that food is safe and is what it says it is.

Our vision

The changes designed by the Achieving Business Compliance (ABC) programme should lead to a future in which:

- regulation evolves with the rapidly evolving food system, so all food is safe for consumers regardless of where and how it is bought.
- the FSA collaborates with local authorities and industry to make sure that food regulation is data driven, and that resources are targeted at the areas of highest risk. FSA tools and services make it easier for food businesses to provide food that is safe and what it says it is.

The programme will develop a set of regulatory approaches which:

- make it easier for businesses to provide safe and trusted food for consumers
- target regulatory resources at the areas which pose the greatest risk
- improve compliance across the system by working with and through others, including regulatory partners and influential businesses.

The ABC programme has three workstreams:

- targeted and proportionate regulation
- assurance of online food sales
- enterprise level approaches

Progress against objectives

We are starting to see progress across all the three workstreams following multiple research and discovery activities undertaken through 2021, setting the evidence base to develop the programme delivery. The team has continued to grow throughout 2022/23 which has given the programme more dedicated resource to advance the work.

Targeted and proportionate regulation

We completed the new food standards model pilot, and an evaluation and assessment of scalability is almost complete for planning amendments to the Food Law Code of Practice in the second half of 2022/23 for roll out in England through 2023/24. It is hoped that pilots can be carried out in Wales in due course.

Continue to develop systems that will support local authorities to deliver an intelligence-led approach. We continue to work with partners on digital, training and support solutions to overcome any potential barriers.

A new food hygiene model headline policy approach has been developed and consultation with local authorities is underway. We will also be carrying out an impact analysis on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

Assurance of online food sales

We worked with the three most popular online aggregators who came to the FSA with a the proposal of a Food Safety Charter. Online aggregators are third-party online platforms that consumers can use for food ordering and delivery. We worked with them to develop four headline areas which add assurance in regards to food safety.

We will work with the aggregators to develop the detail of these headline areas with an aim to developing a framework to apply this assurance and visibility beyond these online aggregators.

We researched the implications of the new innovations on the UK food buying and selling system. The findings recommended the FSA should adopt a 'highly proactive anticipatory role' in supporting industry to ensure food you can trust as novel business models and processes increasingly replace traditional ones.

Our commissioned research to understand how consumers interact with food sold online, and where they perceive risk, was completed in spring 2022. We have since [published the findings](#).

Enterprise-level approaches

We identified, engaged and discussed with large retailers (supermarkets) as a candidate for a new regulatory approach, what this would look like and the impact.

Following the 'Shaping Large Retailer Regulation' event in England, we secured 5 retailers and their relevant Primary Authorities (PAs) to undertake a proof of concept trial. This will include developing a new food safety management assurance framework, and creating a new relationship manager role for FSA. Trials are expected to commence in second half of 2022/23.

Qualitative research commenced, to understand key stakeholder views of the value of FHRS, which explored consumers views of possible changes to regulatory approaches in the future. This was fed into ABC-led projects. We continued discussions with retailers to allow the FSA/PA to access their enterprise level data. We continued to build trust with the retailers to ensure their information is safeguarded.

We tested the above model and frameworks regulatory 'sandbox' environment – this was outside and in parallel to the current regulatory model, which will continue as normal, until evidence shows the new model provides the same or improved assurance. Testing in the safe environment removed consumer risk and allowed quicker, more flexible testing as actual regulation was not impacted.

Next steps

Our intention is to develop regulatory approaches which are deliverable within existing food law, but that the programme will also identify and investigate any areas in which legislative change could support our objectives and could make recommendations for change.

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