

Appendix E: Hypothetical scenarios

Introduction

RSM UK Consulting LLP (RSM) has been jointly commissioned by the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland to undertake an independent evaluation of the food recalls and withdrawals system. To date, the evaluation has looked at how effective the processes have been in developing the new system, as well as the effectiveness of its implementation in delivering the planned outcomes.

We are here today to think more about the future and the glean learning on how you think the recalls and withdrawals system may respond to new and emerging food trends. We have three hypothetical scenarios to discuss with you that cover:

- online sales
- counterfeit candy and
- international recalls.

In doing so, we are interested in your opinion on the strengths and weaknesses that the system may have in responding to these scenarios. And of course, any wider learning or considerations that you think would need to be taken for the recalls and withdrawals system to effectively respond in each scenario.

My name is [Name of interviewer], and I am an evaluator from the RSM research team. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Is now still a good time to complete the interview? [Proceed if yes, reschedule if no].

This discussion should take around 60 minutes. Your comments will be completely anonymous and confidential, will be stored securely by RSM, and will not be attributed to you in our final report. [Informed consent taken] – check participant understands how their data will be processed and check if they have any questions. Gain explicit consent for audio recording of interview. Confirm confidentiality – for example, no individual names used in reports or outputs].

Background and introduction

Please can you describe a little more about your role, and how you became involved with the recalls and withdrawals project?

Hypothetical scenarios

We'll now go on to introduce each of the three scenarios, one at a time.

Scenario 1 theme: Online sales

Whilst on furlough during the Covid-19 pandemic, a keen home baker decided to use the opportunity to raise additional funds by selling home-cooked products. The baker produced an array of sweet goods and opted to sell them through Facebook Marketplace. The distributor was not registered with the Local Authority. After distributing food products for 18 weeks, it came to

light that goods were being sold without allergy labels.

1. How well do you think the system would respond to addressing recalls or withdrawals of online sales?
2. Where do you see the strengths and weaknesses of the systems in responding to online sales?
3. What, if any, additional steps, resources or considerations would need to be taken to address recalls/withdrawals of online sales?

Scenario 2 theme: Counterfeit candy

Recently, a criminal gang has been repackaging candy drops and selling them in American food stores across the UK as a well-known brand.

1. How well do you think the system would respond to addressing recalls or withdrawals of counterfeit candy?
2. Where do you see the strengths and weaknesses of the systems in responding to counterfeit candy?
3. What, if any, additional steps, resources or considerations would need to be taken to address recalls/withdrawals of counterfeit candy?

Scenario 3 theme: International Recall

A batch of Canadian maple syrup has been subject to an international recall due to concerns about the potential presence of small pieces of glass. No distribution to the UK is recorded, however, the Receipt and Management (RAM) Team identifies various outlets and wholesalers where the batch of maple syrup looks to be available to purchase. The Local Authorities are investigating if, and to what extent, the affected products are being sold in the UK.

1. How well do you think the system would respond to addressing recalls or withdrawals of international recalls?
2. Where do you see the strengths and weaknesses of the systems in responding to international recalls?
3. What, if any, additional steps, resources or considerations would need to be taken to address recalls/withdrawals of international recalls?

General reflections on the current system for the future

With the hypothetical scenarios in mind, we'd like to gauge your reflections more generally about how well equipped you believe the recalls and withdrawals system to be in dealing with evolving challenges for the future.

1. What challenges do you see that the recalls and withdrawals system may face in the future?
2. What new or emerging challenges can you foresee, or think may arise in the coming years?
3. How well do you think the system will respond to new and emerging trends in the food sector?
4. Where do you see the strengths and weaknesses of the system in responding to new and future needs?
5. What, if anything, do you think needs to happen next to allow the recalls and withdrawals system to respond to future needs?
6. Knowing what you know now, is there anything that you would change about the recalls and withdrawals system or how it was designed/implemented?

Thank interviewee for their time.