

Welsh Food Advisory Committee Director's Report – May 2023

Report by Nathan Barnhouse, Director of FSA in Wales.

1. Summary

1.1 This report provides a brief summary of subjects introduced by the Chief Executive at the last Board meeting, held on 22 March 2023, and other activities relevant to the FSA remit in Wales.

1.2 Members of the committee are invited to:

- **note** the update
- **invite** the Director to expand on any issues for further discussion

2. Chief Executive's Report to the Board

2.1 The Board received the [Chief Executive's Report](#).

3. FSA in Wales Senior External Engagement

3.1 Since the last WFAC themed meeting on 8 February, senior management have been involved in the following external engagement opportunities:

- 14 February – Nathan accompanied Torfaen County Borough Council on a food hygiene inspection.
- 7 March – Chief Medical Officer's Health Protection Advisory Group meeting.
- 16 March – The FSA in Wales Head of Incidents attended the Wales Civil Contingencies Conference which was a platform for the Welsh Government to launch 'Safe and Secure Wales - Together a Truly Resilient Nation'.
- 30 March – Meeting with Chair and Deputy Chair of DPPW, and Chair of Environmental Health Wales to discuss coordinating DPPW's and the FSA's workforce capacity and capability work.
- 4 April – Meeting with Defra and the Welsh Government to discuss the Food Data Transparency Partnership.
- 20 April – Meeting of the Safe, Sustainable, Authentic Food Wales group, which included an update on the draft Border Target Operating Model and the Food (Wales) Bill.
- 25 April – FSA in Wales/Welsh Government quarterly liaison meeting.
- 27 April – Nathan attended the Institute of Food Science Technology Spring Conference as a panel member discussing 'Getting the Balance Right' and also attended the pre-dinner networking event.

3.2 External engagement forward look:

- 17 May – Food Hygiene Delivery Model engagement event with Welsh Local Authorities – in person meeting in Llandrindod Wells.
- 18 May – Wales Food and Drinks Awards, Venue Cymru, Llandudno
- 6 June – Chief Medical Officer's Health Protection Advisory Group meeting.

- 20-22 June – Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) Conference, Birmingham.

4. Matters of interest to WFAC pertaining to FSA in Wales

4.1 Chwarae Teg FairPlay Employer Award – The FSA in Wales has received the first ever Gold+ FairPlay Employer Award from Wales's leading gender equality charity, [Chwarae Teg](#). Achieving the new Gold+ Award, given by FairPlay Employer, the commercial arm of gender equality charity [Chwarae Teg](#), is an exceptional accomplishment and recognises the FSA's ongoing commitment to creating an inclusive workplace where all employees can flourish. The FairPlay Employer programme has been running for over five years and supported hundreds of businesses, but the FSA in Wales is the first to reach the Gold+ standard to date.?

The success signifies that the FSA in Wales is committed to ensuring gender equality and diversity in the workplace, alongside a clear dedication to staff engagement – which aims to ensure equality of outcomes and opportunities for all. The innovative [FairPlay Employer programme](#) benchmarks organisations against others in their industry and region and identifies significant success factors and potential areas to improve. There then follows a path of guided support and improvement that includes a customised action plan and access to a variety of tools and events. In 2020, the FSA was the first employer in Wales to be awarded a Gold standard FairPlay Employer award, and we outperformed the 2020 scoring to achieve the Gold+ standard.

4.2 Cost of living interview – the team provided a segment for S4C and their weekday Welsh language magazine programme [Prynhawn Da](#) on the support and guidance available from the FSA around the cost of living. This was a great opportunity to share key messaging on making food last longer in a safe way, use-by dates and recently developed guidance for charitable organisations distributing food.

4.3 Review of Civil Contingencies in Wales – The team have been inputting into the Welsh Government review of civil contingencies since 2022 and a draft report has now been shared. This includes fifteen recommendations ranging from development of a national assurance framework for Wales through to improved training opportunities, investment and improving relationships with other organisations. The review is being used to shape early priorities of the Safe and Secure Wales programme of work which was launched at the Wales Civil Contingency Conference on 16 March. FSA in Wales were in attendance which allowed us the opportunity to raise the profile and remit of FSA through participation at the various workshops.

4.4 Food Standards Delivery Model – we have received expressions of interest from four Local Authorities (LAs) to participate in the pilot in Wales and are having initial discussions with these LAs.

4.5 Communications campaigns – over the last few months the communications team in Wales have worked with colleagues across the FSA to promote two consumer focussed campaigns:

- **Food and Allergy Alerts (running 13-26 March)** – A campaign to increase sign-ups to the FSA's food and allergy alert service and to raise general awareness by explaining what the service is, how it can help and how to sign up.
- **Spring clean your kitchen (running 3-16 April)** – A campaign reminding consumers of key food safety messaging around 'spring cleaning' kitchens, including avoiding cross contamination, cleaning cupboards, use-by dates, making best use of the fridge, and myth busting around food storage.

4.6 FSA in Wales office move update – The FSA in Wales will move to our new office space at Cathays Park on Monday 21 August. The team are working closely with Welsh Government to finetune the details.

4.7 Meat Fraud Investigation – The team in Wales are part of the Incident Management and Co-ordination Group for this investigation. Further details can be found in the [Chief Executive's blog](#) on this matter.

4.8 Local Authority Audit Plan – The plan and progress report for 2023/24 was signed off at the ARAC meeting on 14 March. We will be resuming our rolling programme of LA audits in Wales in 2023/24 to review previous audit action plans and assess LA progress as they transition back to the Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) intervention frequencies. We are finalising our audit documentation and have reviewed the latest temperature check LA performance data to help prioritise which LAs to target. We are sending a letter to LAs in Wales to inform them of our plans for 2023/24 and will then start contacting our first batch of LAs to request pre-audit information.

4.9 FSA People Plan 2023-2026 – On 20 April the FSA launched its [People Plan 2023-2026](#) which sets out how we will improve as an employer and the benefits this will bring us, the businesses we regulate and the public whose health we protect. It is our map for attracting the best people to our teams, helping colleagues grow and develop in their work, and for ensuring we become known for our great culture. This People Plan shows how we will do that over the next three years.

5. Consultations

5.1 Live Consultations:

- [Consultation on updates to the Food Standard's Agency's Technical Guidance on food allergen labelling and information requirements](#) - A consultation on two key guidance updates - standards for applying precautionary allergen labelling (PAL) and best practice guidance that No Gluten Containing Ingredients (NGCI) statements should not be used

Date launched: 27 March 2023

Closing date: 22 May 2023

- [Consultation on developing a modernised food hygiene delivery model in Wales](#) – This consultation is seeking stakeholders' views on proposed developments for a modernised food hygiene delivery model (FHDM).

Date launched: 3 April 2023

Closing date: 30 June 2023

6. Forward look:

6.1 Upcoming communications campaigns:

- **Food Hygiene Ratings Scheme social media campaign** (May) – campaign focussing on the unexpected places you may find a food hygiene rating e.g. cinemas, online sellers, food stalls at festivals. In time for season of food festivals and other festivals where there are food stands present.
- **Here to help** (Phase 2 due to launch in May) – The background of the campaign is that we want to show businesses that local authorities and EHOs are there to support food businesses and can bring a wealth of information and advice when visiting. Our priority audience for this campaign are micro businesses (a lot of which have developed during and post Covid). We've developed strong case studies with Welsh businesses and hope to secure a case study with an Environmental Health Officer from Wales.

6.2 Draft Border Target Operating Model (BTOM) – Following the publication of the draft BTOM before Easter, we will be hosting an FSA-led consumer briefing event on 16 May at 11:30am. The purpose of this event is to inform and collate feedback from those attending. At present the stakeholders from Wales who have been invited are NFU Cymru, Farmers Union Wales and Hybu Cig Cymru.

FSA policy representatives are attending the other engagement events (hosted by Cabinet Office and Defra) and are continuing to capture stakeholder feedback for our own insight.

Defra will shortly be publishing the risk categorisation for EU (where stakeholders can find out which category their products come under) and the new export health certificates. We are working on ensuring FSA are aligned with Defra comms.