

Shellfish production area assessments

How we assess live bivalve mollusc (shellfish) production and relaying areas.

We assess and classify a production or relaying area based on the outcome of a sanitary survey.

A new shellfish production area or relaying area cannot be classified until an assessment of the sources of pollution has been carried out. This includes an assessment of the sources of contamination (humans, wildlife and agriculture) in production or relaying areas.

Quantities of organic pollutants released into shellfish production areas can vary at different times of the year, so assessments consider seasonal variance.

This can include:

- rainfall readings
- discharges from waste-water treatment works
- seasonal variations of human and animal populations

Circulation in the water affects how pollutants move around, depending on:

- current patterns
- bathymetry
- tidal cycles

Sanitary surveys

Shellfish production and relay areas are affected by multiple sources of pollution. All new shellfish production and relay areas include:

- an assessment of the sources of pollution
- an identified monitoring point for routine sampling (RMP), located at the point likely to demonstrate highest E. coli presence and is therefore most protective of public health
- a sampling plan specifying the location and frequency of routine monitoring samples

Applicants (the harvester) should complete an application form in conjunction with the Local Authority, to request the classification of a new shellfish production or relay area. This provides the initial information for consideration of a sanitary survey. More information on the application process (including requirements before classification) and the application form can be downloaded from the [Shellfish classification](#) page.

After your shellfish classification application has been accepted, we will ask our contractor to carry out a sanitary survey. Official control samples collected in accordance with the sampling plan will be needed before an area is classified.

In certain cases, new areas will also require a physical assessment of the site and potential sources of contamination. This is known as a shoreline survey.

Survey Reports and Monitoring Assessments

The most recent sanitary survey and sanitary survey review reports can be found below:

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland

PDF

[View Belfast Lough 2008 Sanitary Survey as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (3.45 MB)

Northern Ireland

PDF

[View Belfast Lough 2014 Sanitary Survey as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (9.75 MB)

Northern Ireland

PDF

[View Carlingford Lough sanitary survey report 2011 as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (9.21 MB)

Northern Ireland

PDF

[View Carlingford Lough 2021 Sanitary Survey as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (11.01 MB)

Northern Ireland

PDF

[View Dundrum Bay 2012 Sanitary Survey as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (6.19 MB)

Northern Ireland

PDF

[View Dundrum Bay 2018 Sanitary Survey as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (1.51 MB)

Northern Ireland

PDF

[View Killough Harbour 2012 Sanitary Survey as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (4.73 MB)

Northern Ireland

PDF

[View Killough Harbour 2021 Sanitary Survey as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (2.99 MB)

Northern Ireland

PDF

[View Larne Lough 2025 Sanitary Review as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (8.16 MB)

Northern Ireland

PDF

[View Lough Foyle 2010 Sanitary Survey as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (9.61 MB)

Northern Ireland

PDF

[View Lough Foyle 2022 Sanitary Survey as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (12.61 MB)

Northern Ireland

PDF

[View Paddy's Point Sanitary Survey as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (1.47 MB)

Northern Ireland

PDF

[View Strangford Lough 2011 Sanitary Survey as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (9.24 MB)

Northern Ireland

PDF

[View Strangford Lough 2021 Sanitary Survey as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (8.57 MB)

England and Wales

- [Sanitary Survey Reviews April 2020 - present](#)
- [Classification zone assessments April 2020 - present](#)
- [RMP assessments April 2017 - March 2020](#)

Important

EU references in FSA guidance documents

Directly applicable EU legislation no longer applies in GB. EU legislation retained when the UK exited the EU became assimilated law on 1 January 2024, published on legislation.gov.uk. References to any legislation in FSA guidance with 'EU' or 'EC' in the title (e.g. Regulation (EC) 178/2002) should now be regarded as assimilated law where applicable to GB. References to 'Retained EU Law' or 'REUL' should now be regarded as references to assimilated law.

For businesses moving goods from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, information on [the Windsor Framework](#) is available on GOV.UK.

The Windsor Framework was adopted by the UK and EU on 24 March 2023. The Framework provides a unique set of arrangements to support the flow of agrifood retail products from Great Britain (GB) to Northern Ireland (NI), allowing GB standards for public health in relation to food, marketing and organics to apply for pre-packed retail goods moved via the NI Retail Movement Scheme (NIRMS).