

Local Authority Performance Update

FSA BC 25/03/06 - Report by Nathan Barnhouse

1 Summary

1.1 The paper updates the Business Committee on local authority performance in enforcing food law for the first 6-months of the financial year 2024/2025.

1.2 The Business Committee is asked to:

- **Consider and comment on** local authority performance including the ability of local authorities to deliver all interventions as prescribed by the Food Law Code of Practice and the increase in enforcement activity when completing inspections.
- **Consider and comment on** the challenges being managed in relation to the rollout of the new food standards delivery model and the anticipated delays to some authorities implementing the new model and **note** the actions we are taking to emphasise that local authorities should take appropriate steps to ensure Code compliance

2 Introduction

2.1 Local authorities are responsible for enforcing compliance with food safety and standards legislation for the vast majority of food businesses. [\(footnote 1\)](#) The FSA has statutory duties to monitor and report on their performance in doing so.

2.2 Following the end of the Covid Recovery Plan in April 2023 we have expected local authorities to return to business as usual and re-align with all the requirements of the [Food Law Code of Practice](#) (FLCoP). The FLCoP lays out requirements for the frequency and type of interventions (inspection, partial inspection, or audit, or alternative enforcement strategy) based on risk.

2.3 In the [September Board paper 2024](#), the 2023/24 local authority monitoring data was presented, and it was reported that local authorities had made good progress in completing interventions for higher risk categories. The pace of progress in reducing the lower risk volumes and completing first inspections for new business registrations was highlighted as a concern.

2.4 The October 2024 data which covers the first six months of 2024/25 indicates this trend has continued. Local authorities are continuing to make good progress on the higher risk categories, albeit there was a slight dip in October 24 compared to April 24 data, which is believed to be a seasonal trend and not a cause for concern. However, the pace of progress on lower risk and carrying out first inspections continues to be a concern as we approach two years since the end of the Recovery Plan.

2.5 Whilst the evidence indicates that interventions are delivered utilising a risk-based approach, many local authorities are reporting deteriorating standards in many lower risk premises. This increases the risk to consumers and increases demand on their teams in having to enforce non-compliance, the annual data for 2023/24 showing an increase on pre-pandemic

levels of formal enforcement activity of 23% and 44% for food hygiene and food standards respectively. It also raises the concern that businesses not receiving an intervention from the local authority could lead to a deterioration in standards and a greater risk to consumers. There is qualitative evidence from local authorities on deterioration of standards and having to enforce more, but the impact on public health is difficult to evidence as official controls act as a preventive measure, while low level food incidents are often not reported and are not a quantifiable measure.

2.6 The number of new businesses that are awaiting a first inspection continues to be high and is a significant concern as the risk they pose is less quantified. The number of new business registrations also continues to be high which has a direct impact on the demand that local authorities must handle.

2.7 Although we are seeing evidence of additional resource being employed by local authorities, the staff will require training to deliver interventions and as a result, will not have an immediate impact on dealing with demand.

2.8 Rollout of the new Food Standards Delivery Model continues to be a priority programme of work. Unfortunately, delays between local authorities and MIS providers on the required software updates and issues with data conversion have impacted on the planned rollout schedule. Despite this, our expectation remains that all local authorities with responsibility for food standards will be implementing the new model by 31 March 2025, the deadline set in the Food Law Code of Practice published in June 2023. Whilst we are providing support and taking action now, ultimately it is each local authority's responsibility to ensure compliance with the Code. We continue to monitor progress towards transition by the deadline and, should this not be achieved, will consider what action may be required on a case-by-case basis.

3 Food Hygiene

Intervention Data

3.1 The percentage of interventions completed and the number of establishments that are overdue an intervention gives us an overall concern that local authorities are unable to deliver their full legal requirements as prescribed in Official Control Regulations (OCR) and the FLCoP. It is encouraging that they are working in a risk-based way to protect consumers, but the speed of recovery and volumes of outstanding demand in the lower risk category is a concern, and supported by the evidence presented in Annex 1, specifically:

- Percentage of interventions completed broken down by risk category (A to E) in Charts 1 to 5 which show the trend over time from pre-pandemic (April 2020) through to October 2024, which shows a recovery to pre-pandemic levels for A and B Categories for the majority of local authorities and significant progress for Category C, whilst the trend lines for Category D and E are showing a much slower rate of delivery and the challenge to return to anything like pre-pandemic levels.
- The volumes of interventions that remain outstanding that were due to be carried out as per the risk category frequency remain high (Table 1). It is encouraging that the overall trend is an improving situation, reducing the total outstanding interventions to 95,000 in October 2024 from 142,000 in October 2023. However, whilst positive, the pre-pandemic level in April 2020 was 46,000 which highlights significant challenges remain. The major concern is the volume in the D and E categories where 29,000 and 56,500 respectively form the bulk of the outstanding demand.

3.2 The number of new business registrations that have not received a first inspection (unrated) remains high at over 42,000 (Annex 1, Table 3). This is of high concern as without an initial inspection of the business, the reality of what it is doing and how it is being run is unknown and the business could be trading for a long time without receiving appropriate advice, support, guidance or enforcement from the local authority and risking consumer health.

3.3 The total number of premises (rated A to E and not yet rated) continues to rise which is essentially extra workload for local authorities to manage where additional resources have not been allocated to meet this demand. Numbers of business premises reported for food hygiene increased from 580k to 582k since April 2024. This exacerbated the situation for local authorities' ability to deal with their workload.

4 Food Standards

4.1 Charts 6 to 8 in Annex 1 show the volume of interventions achieved at category A, B and C respectively, comparing from April 2020 (pre-pandemic) through to October 2024. Over 163,600 reported interventions remain outstanding at establishments rated A to C, with around 72,500 and 90,700 at the B- and C-rated establishments respectively (Annex 1, Table 2). The expectation during the COVID-19 pandemic was only for interventions at category A establishments to be achieved. The number of local authorities that flagged as a concern at the end of the recovery period was not significant, when around 84% of interventions at A-rated establishments were being carried out across the three countries. The October 2024 data indicates that only 71% of interventions at A-rated establishments were carried out.

4.2 The situation in relation to the number of food businesses that have registered but have not had a first inspection is a significant cause for concern. October 2024 data shows that over 84,000 new business registrations remain unrated across the three countries.

5 Food Standards Delivery Model Rollout

5.1 Our expectation of local authorities in England and Northern Ireland continues to be that they should all be working to the new Food Standards Delivery Model (FSDM) by end March 2025. This is in line with the end of the transition period allowed for in the Food Law Code of Practice published in June 2023. Unfortunately, despite a considerable amount of work being undertaken to prepare for and deliver the rollout and a nearly two-year lead in time, at the time of drafting, only two local authorities have onboarded to the new model.

5.2 Throughout the process of developing, consulting on and piloting the new model, there has been widespread recognition of the shortcomings with the historical approach to food standards delivery and support for the changes being introduced. These changes deliver a more effective framework for food standards interventions by local authorities and better outcomes for consumer protection, ensuring that consumers are not misled about the food they purchase. This includes ensuring that businesses are complying with legal requirements on allergen information, which can be fatal if not properly implemented. The piloting of the new model demonstrated that it resulted in better targeting of official controls towards those aspects of the food chain posing the greatest risk. This will enable finite local authority resources to be focused on where they can add greatest value in safeguarding consumers, whilst also reducing regulatory burden for less risky businesses. A significant amount of time and effort within the FSA and across local authorities has got us to this point. It is, therefore, critical that appropriate steps are taken by local authorities and their MIS providers to complete the rollout process as soon as possible.

5.3 During the last two years we have been very clear in stressing the importance of meeting this deadline in our communications with both local authorities and their contracted Management Information System (MIS) providers and we have provided support to facilitate the process as much as possible. This has included a range of training and guidance materials, dedicated

engagement opportunities and a regular dialogue with local authorities and MIS providers.

5.4 This has been a complex process with five different MIS providers and nine different MIS software versions in use across the 154 affected local authorities. Ultimately the responsibility for agreeing the timeline for implementing the necessary system changes for each local authority rests with them and their MIS provider. The latest information we have from our ongoing engagement with the MIS providers indicates that a significant number of authorities, potentially around half of the 154 local authorities in England and Northern Ireland with food standards responsibilities, are unlikely to be fully operating to the new model by the end March deadline.

5.5 More recently, we have been informed that the MIS testing and the process of converting data from the old model to the new model for some local authorities has highlighted significant data coding and quality issues. Many of these are very complex and historical in nature and we are working to provide what support we can to mitigate the associated risks, so that we can have the necessary assurances about the integrity of the data post transition. However, the specific contractual arrangements between each local authority and their MIS provider, and the variety of software solutions and historical approach to data capture, mean that ultimately these issues are for the authorities to resolve.

5.6 Officials continue to engage with all parties to emphasise timelines and identify any local authorities unlikely to be onboarded by the end March so we can consider implications, and any further action required. In recognition of the seriousness of our concerns and importance of transitioning to the new model, the FSA Chief Executive wrote earlier this month to the Chief Executives of all local authorities yet to complete the transition process. This letter reminded them of the Code requirements and the implications of failing to complete transition by the end of March deadline, including the potential for the FSA to take performance management steps where this is considered appropriate.

5.7 Over the coming year, the performance data we get on food standards will be complicated as there will be a mix of the old and new models. To allow local authorities the time to transition, embed the new model and ensure meaningful data is gathered, we are allowing a period of six months before we start collecting more frequent data and by April 2026, we should be collecting and reporting complete data on local authorities' delivery of food standards controls under the new model.

5.8 A consultation on amendments to the Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) is currently live and this includes proposed amendments to the Food Standards Delivery Model. Local authorities will continue to work to the model published in the 2021 Code and performance monitoring data collected in the current manner until the outcome of the consultation and next steps are known.

6 Other Monitoring Data

6.1 The number of establishments reported to have been subject to formal enforcement action following an intervention for food hygiene or food standards has increased post pandemic. The annual data for 2023/24 represents an increase on pre-pandemic levels of formal enforcement activity of 23% and 44% for food hygiene and food standards respectively. Local authorities are reporting lower compliance levels, and this is reflected in more formal enforcement work and written warning compared with pre-COVID levels and adds to the concern that not completing interventions in a timely manner could cause a drop in standards and increase the risk to consumers.

6.2 Sampling is one of many components of effective enforcement to protect public health. Some local authorities are reporting they do not have staff to undertake sampling, and the latest data suggests the volume of backlogs in the lower risk interventions may still be being prioritised over sampling. Although the data indicates sample numbers increased at the end of

the recovery period (Annex 1, Table 5), it has not returned to the levels reported prior to the pandemic.

7 Feedback From Local Authorities

7.1 Feedback is received from national and local food liaison groups, performance management engagement and annual consultation events. The feedback is often anecdotal and not always quantifiable, but nonetheless, important, as it does often add context to the data that is being reported. Recent feedback has been around food safety officers being diverted to deal with other demands including flooding and the need to inspect funeral homes and the impact on the food team's ability to deliver official controls and concerns in the resilience of the system. Local authorities continue to refer to difficulties in recruiting and retaining competent officers. Some authorities expressed concerns about the increasing number of new business registrations and first inspections and increased time and effort in trying to improve business compliance, deal with complaints, requested re-visits etc., generally all impacting on their ability to deliver all elements of the FLCoP.

8 Resources

8.1 Occupied and available full-time equivalent staffing for food hygiene has remained relatively stable since April 2024 (Annex 1, Table 6). This follows the increase in the overall reported allocated and occupied full time equivalent (FTE) staff resource for food hygiene in England and Northern Ireland since April 2023 and the very slight decrease in Wales. There was an overall increase in allocated and occupied FTE for food standards in England and Wales over the period April 2023 to October 2024 (Annex 1, Table 7). In the past year, local authorities have reported an increase in the number of trainees recruited for both responsibilities. It will take time for this additional resource to positively impact upon service delivery.

9 Update on Performance Monitoring of Local Authorities

9.1 Our approach to performance monitoring and management and the escalation procedure was detailed in the [December 2023](#) Board paper. There was an update on the number of cases in escalation in the [September Board 2024](#). Following the October 24 survey return, each local authority was assessed to give an indication on the level of concern in their performance and for those authorities in an open engagement from previous surveys or being monitored against an action plan, progress being made is further analysed and assessed. The number of cases that are open, being monitored or in escalation is constantly changing and reporting is only ever a snapshot in time. There are currently 43 open cases, 74 that are being monitored and 7 which are in escalation (5 at Stage 1 and 2 at Stage 2 of the procedure) across the three countries. Since the end of the Recovery Plan in March 2023, a pragmatic approach has been adopted to afford local authorities sufficient time to realign with the intervention frequencies detailed in the FLCoP, recognising the impact of the pandemic. Following the April 2025 data return (two years post the end of the Recovery Plan), a review will be commenced across the three countries to assess local authority progress and develop a consistent approach for dealing with poor performing local authorities.

10 Conclusions

10.1 The October 2024 data confirms that local authorities had made good progress in completing interventions for higher risk categories (Category A and B for FH, and Category A for FS) albeit there was a dip in performance since the April 2024 data was reported. This follows the trend from the same period in October 2023 and will require further scrutiny in the upcoming April 2025 survey to identify if the situation improves in line with the trend in April 2024. The pace

of the return to delivering the requirements of the FLCoP for both food hygiene and food standards for the lower risk categories (Category C, D and E for FH and Category B and C for FS) remains a concern, with the majority of local authorities not meeting the requirements. There is significant concern in the number of new business registrations which are awaiting their first inspection, as the risk to consumers is less quantified. Part of the issue appears to be linked to the ability of local authorities to work through the large backlogs following the pandemic alongside additional demand due to the high number of new business registrations, increased enforcement due to falling standards and diversion of resources to reactive duties.

10.2 The number of people in food teams, whilst showing a small increase, continues to be a concern. Whilst comparison data from pre-pandemic is provided, it should be noted that this is for context as there were concerns about resource levels prior to the pandemic, so these should not be considered the target to aim for.

10.3 The situation in relation to food standards is complex and challenging in transitioning local authorities to the new FSDM in England and Northern Ireland. Whilst we are taking all possible steps to support transition, we anticipate that a significant number of local authorities may be unable to move over to the new model by the end March 2025 deadline. Ultimately, the required changes can only be delivered by each local authority in consultation with their MIS provider and the FSA's ability to directly affect this is limited. Where any local authority has not transitioned to the new model from 1 April 2025 we will be considering our approach on a case-by-case basis. This will be dependent on the level of assurance we have that the necessary changes will be made and the timeline for this to be completed.

10.4 The Business Committee is asked to:

- Consider the progress local authorities have made in the delivery of official food controls in the past year.
- Consider and comment on the challenges experienced and the impact these are having on the ability of some local authorities to complete transition to the new food standards delivery model by the deadline of end March 2025

Annex 1

1 October 2024 Food law enforcement monitoring data

1.1 When comparing the October 2024 data with previous data it should be noted that:

- October 2024 data is based on 99.7% food hygiene returns and 98.9% of expected food standards returns. One local authority in England was unable to submit a food hygiene return by the time the paper was drafted due to staff resources issues and two local authorities in England were unable to submit a food standards return, due to staff resource issues and technical issues respectively.
- Some local authorities still report difficulty in extracting data accurately from their management information systems (MIS). Some that piloted the new FS Delivery model who continued to follow the proposed model, were unable to extract intervention data by risk rating from their MIS.

- The local authority that migrated on to the new food standards delivery model was not expected to complete a return.
- Some potential accuracy issues have been followed up and some issues are still being discussed, so there may be minor future changes to the data.

2 Food Hygiene

2.1 Charts 1 to 5 below show there are slightly different trends in the percentage of food hygiene interventions carried out in each country since 2020. The percentages carried out across all risk categories are less than those pre-COVID (April 2020). The October 2024 data indicate 93% As, 91% Bs, 77% Cs, 58% Cs and 29% Es of interventions that were due to be completed having been carried out. This equates to a total of 95,052 interventions not being completed (107 As, 764 Bs, 8,654 Cs, 28,969 Ds, 56,558 Es). This level of performance is lower than that achieved pre-pandemic. The April 2020 data indicated 99% As, 97% Bs, 92% Cs, 84% Ds and 73% Es, with a total backlog of interventions A to E of 46,381.

2.2 The overall percentage of interventions carried out remained stable compared with April 2024 data, but they have fluctuated since the end of the recovery period in April 2023 when local authorities were expected to return to delivery in line with the Food Law Code of Practice (FLCoP). The bi-annual returns have confirmed that the pattern of delivery changes throughout the year. The latest data indicates an improvement compared with October 2023, but the percentages of interventions carried out are less for the high-risk establishments rated A, B and C than in April 2024.

2.3 Table 3 shows the number of unrated new business registrations is over 42,000, which is much higher than in April 2020. Since April 2024 the number increased by over 1000, but levels were similar to those in October 2023. The number of new business registrations has gradually increased each period since the bi-annual returns began in October 2023. Local authorities should aim to undertake an initial food hygiene inspection within 28 days but there will always be a small proportion of new registrations that have not been inspected.

3 Food Standards

3.1 Charts 6 to 8 below indicate a decline in the percentage of food standards interventions carried out at the higher risk A-rated establishments in October 2024 in all three countries compared with April 2024, but percentages were higher than in October 2023. There has been fluctuation in the percentages of interventions carried out at the establishments rated B and C since October 2023, but some progress has been made in all three countries.

3.2 There has been a slight gradual improvement in the overall percentage of interventions carried out at establishments rated A to C for food standards since October 2023. However, the percentage carried out for each risk category in all three countries is less than pre-pandemic, when they were already low, especially for B- and C-rated establishments. The October 2024 data indicate 71% As, 20% Bs and 17% Cs of interventions that were due to be completed having been carried out. This equates to a total of 163,694 interventions not being completed (536 As, 72,503 Bs and 90,655 Cs). The level of performance reported in April 2020 was 78% As, 33% Bs and 37% Cs carried out, with a backlog of interventions A to C of 138,707.

Charts 1 to 5: Food hygiene

Chart 1: Percentage of food hygiene A-rated interventions carried out April 2020 to October 2024

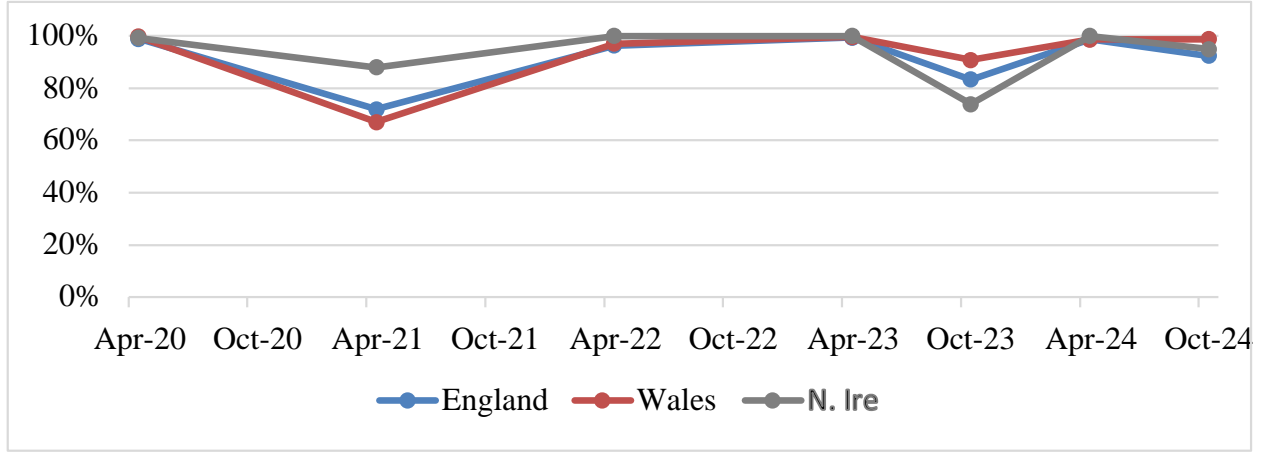


Chart 2: Percentage of food hygiene B-rated interventions carried out April 2020 to

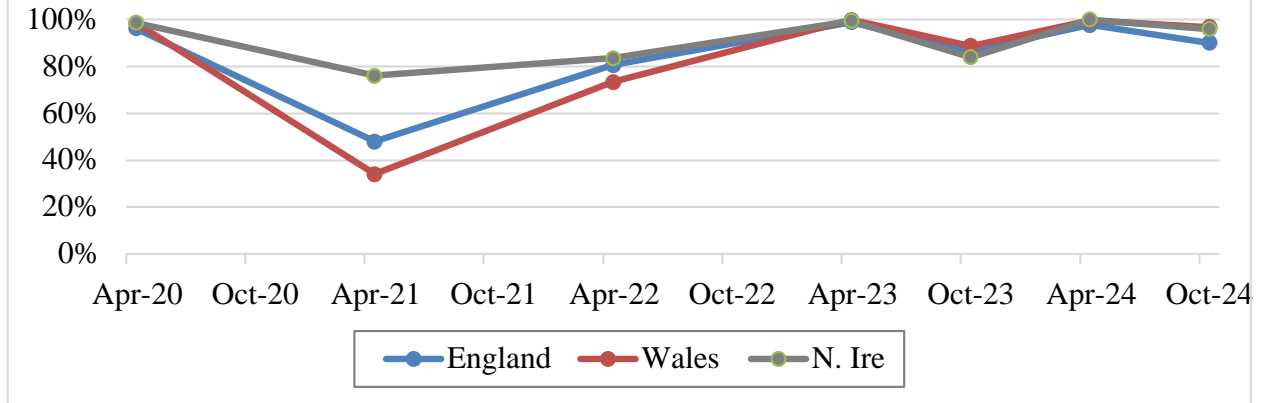


Chart 3: Percentage of food hygiene C-rated interventions carried out April 2020 to

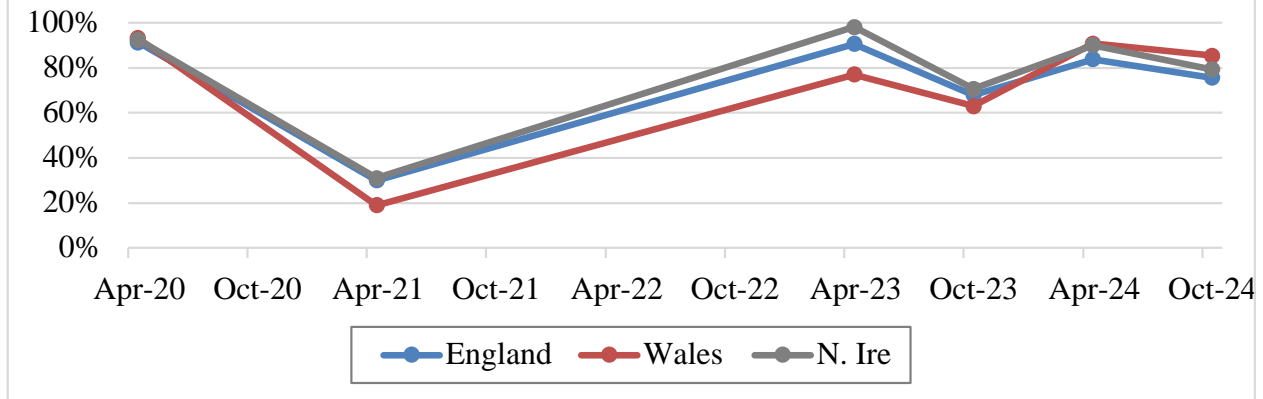


Chart 4: Percentage of food hygiene D-rated interventions carried out April 2020 to October 2024

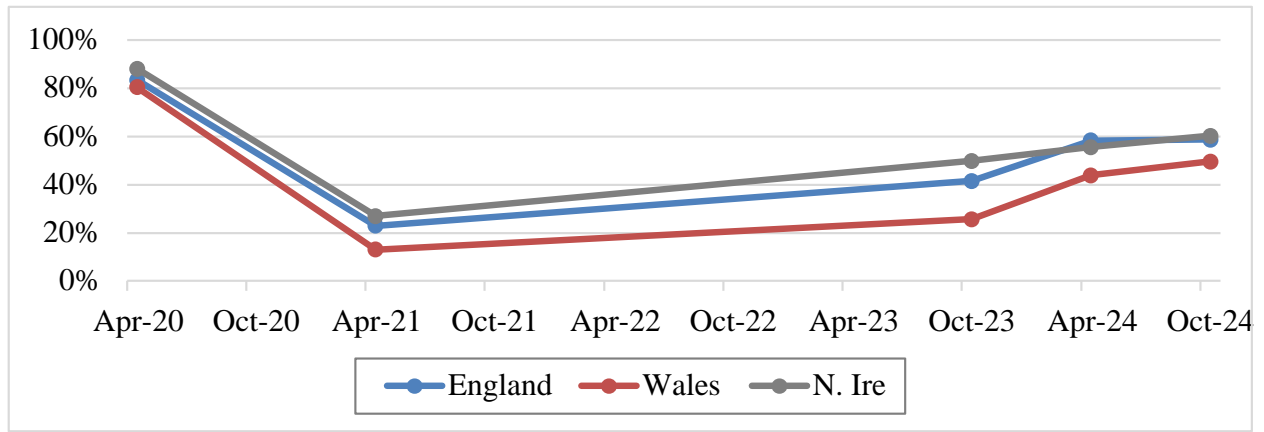
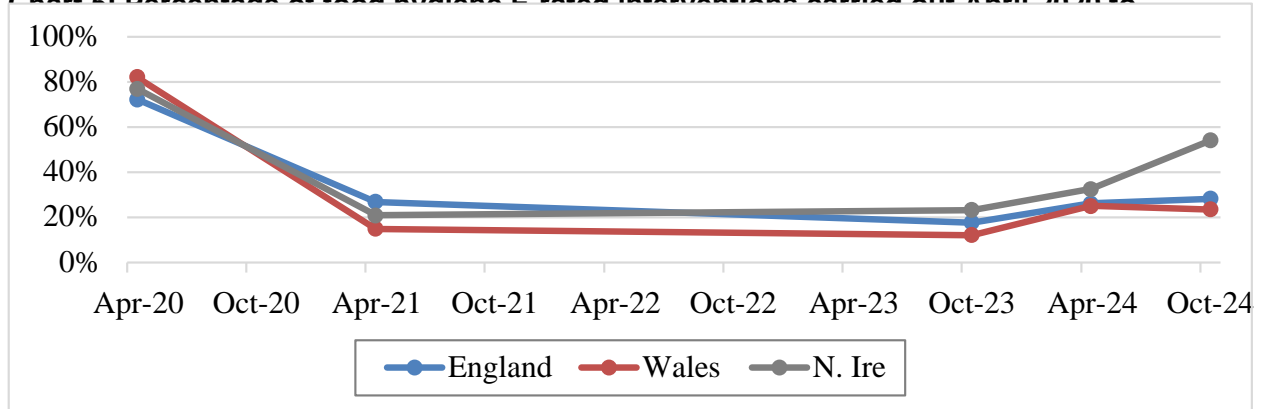
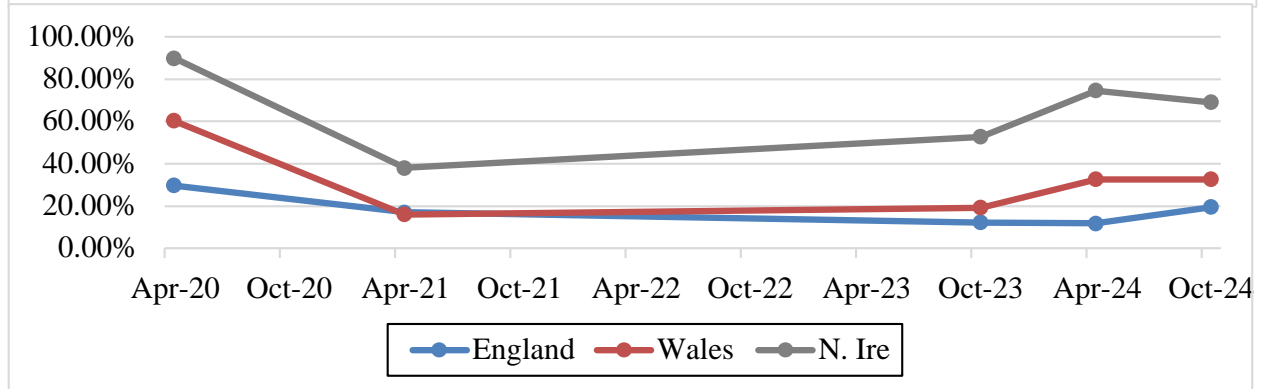
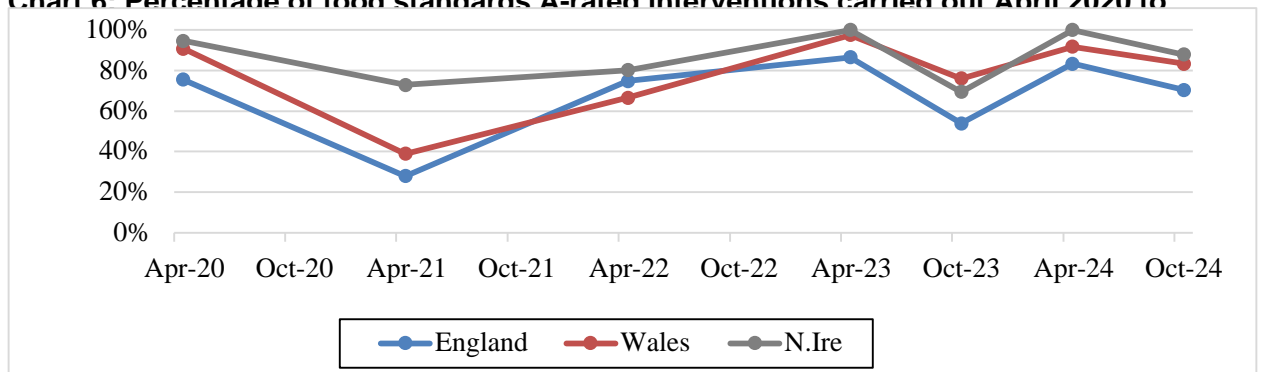


Chart 5: Percentage of food hygiene E-rated interventions carried out April 2020 to



Charts 6 to 8: Food standards

Chart 6: Percentage of food standards A-rated interventions carried out April 2020 to



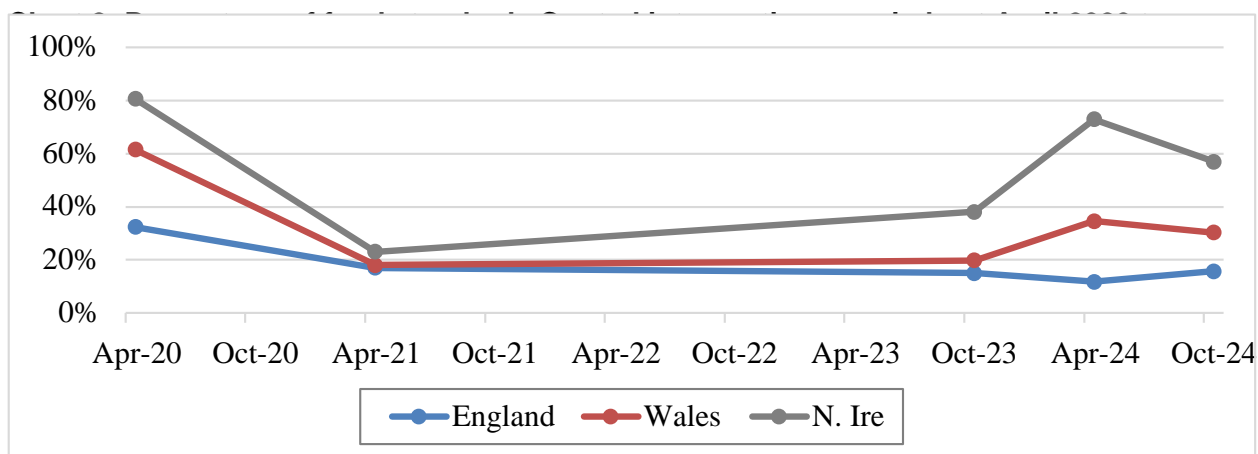


Table 1: Due food hygiene interventions outstanding at the end of the reporting period

| April 2020 | A | B | C | D | E | Total |
|---------------------|-----|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| England | 62 | 1,075 | 6,463 | 17,055 | 17,581 | 42,236 |
| Wales | 2 | 41 | 804 | 764 | 728 | 2,339 |
| Northern Ireland | 1 | 17 | 373 | 685 | 730 | 1,806 |
| Total | 65 | 1,133 | 7,640 | 18,504 | 19,039 | 46,381 |
| Total A to C | 65 | 1,133 | 7,640 | | | 8,838 |
| April 2023 | A | B | C | D* | E* | Total |
| England | 17 | 191 | 5,523 | | | |
| Wales | 1 | 3 | 2,254 | | | |
| Northern Ireland | 0 | 6 | 74 | | | |
| Total A to C | 18 | 200 | 7,851 | | | 8,069 |
| October 2023 | A | B | C | D | E | Total |
| England | 239 | 1,092 | 9,448 | 47,236 | 68,364 | 126,579 |
| Wales | 10 | 61 | 1,427 | 3,007 | 6,501 | 11,006 |
| Northern Ireland | 6 | 47 | 315 | 1,456 | 2,717 | 4,541 |
| Total | 255 | 1,200 | 11,190 | 51,899 | 77,582 | 142,126 |
| Total A to C | 255 | 1,200 | 11,190 | | | 12,645 |

| April 2024 | A | B | C | D | E | Total |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-------|--------|--------|---------|
| England | 15 | 212 | 4,723 | 31,210 | 54,635 | 90,795 |
| Wales | 1 | 3 | 343 | 1,720 | 4,929 | 6,996 |
| Northern Ireland | 0 | 0 | 127 | 997 | 1,969 | 3,093 |
| Total | 16 | 215 | 5,193 | 33,927 | 61,533 | 100,884 |
| Total A to C | 16 | 215 | 5,193 | | | 5,424 |
| October 2024** | A | B | C | D | E | Total |
| England | 105 | 737 | 7774 | 26,635 | 50,830 | 86,081 |
| Wales | 1 | 19 | 670 | 1,346 | 4,331 | 6,367 |
| Northern Ireland | 1 | 8 | 210 | 988 | 1,397 | 2,604 |
| Total | 107 | 764 | 8,654 | 28,969 | 56,558 | 95,052 |
| Total A to C | 107 | 764 | 8,654 | | | 9,525 |

* There was no expectation for interventions to be carried out at all D and E rated establishments in the COVID Recovery Plan. Data was not collected

** Oct 2024 data based on 99.7% of expected returns

Table 2: Due food standards interventions outstanding at the end of the reporting period

| April 2020 | A | B | C | Total |
|------------------|-----|--------|--------|---------|
| England | 911 | 68,976 | 62,814 | 132,701 |
| Wales | 35 | 2,265 | 2,055 | 4,355 |
| Northern Ireland | 13 | 203 | 1,435 | 1,651 |
| Total | 959 | 71,444 | 66,304 | 138,707 |
| Total A | 959 | | | 959 |
| April 2023 | A | B* | C* | Total |
| England | 542 | | | 542 |
| Wales | 6 | | | 6 |
| Northern Ireland | 0 | | | 0 |
| Total A | 548 | | | 548 |

| October 2023 | A | B | C | Total |
|------------------|-----|--------|--------|---------|
| England | 915 | 65,534 | 72,793 | 139,242 |
| Wales | 22 | 3,711 | 4,248 | 7,981 |
| Northern Ireland | 14 | 329 | 2,019 | 2,362 |
| Total | 951 | 69,574 | 79,060 | 149,585 |
| Total A | 951 | | | 951 |
| April 2024 | A | B* | C* | Total |
| England | 288 | 59,121 | 71,398 | 130,807 |
| Wales | 11 | 2986 | 3791 | 6788 |
| Northern Ireland | 0 | 139 | 1040 | 1179 |
| Total | 299 | 62,246 | 76,229 | 138,774 |
| Total A | 299 | | | 299 |
| October 2024** | A | B | C | Total |
| England | 516 | 69,685 | 85,902 | 156,103 |
| Wales | 16 | 2,660 | 3,880 | 6,556 |
| Northern Ireland | 4 | 158 | 873 | 1,035 |
| Total | 536 | 72,503 | 90,655 | 163,694 |
| Total A | 536 | | | 536 |

*There was no expectation for interventions to be carried out at all B and C rated establishments in the COVID Recovery Plan. Data was not collected.

**Oct 2024 data based on 98.9% of expected returns

Table 3: The number of unrated registrations in each country from April 2020 to October 2024 (food hygiene data)

| Date | England | Wales | NI | Total |
|--------|---------|-------|-------|--------|
| Apr-20 | 29,021 | 1,388 | 559 | 30,968 |
| Apr-21 | 70,635 | 5,102 | 1,299 | 77,036 |
| Apr-22 | 47,068 | 3,308 | 737 | 51,113 |
| Jul-22 | 45,406 | 2,902 | 549 | 48,857 |

| Date | England | Wales | NI | Total |
|---------|---------|-------|-----|--------|
| Oct-22 | 40,344 | 2,602 | 459 | 43,405 |
| Jan-23 | 36,732 | 2,295 | 505 | 39,532 |
| Apr-23 | 36,592 | 2,352 | 510 | 39,454 |
| Oct-23 | 39,070 | 2,263 | 679 | 42,012 |
| Apr-24 | 38,925 | 1,746 | 430 | 41,101 |
| Oct-24* | 40,061 | 1,880 | 412 | 42,353 |

*Oct 2024 data based on 99.7% of expected returns

4 Other enforcement data

4.1 Table 4 shows the number of formal enforcement actions reported for food hygiene in October 2024 was 2,800, which is similar to that in October 2023, 2,766. Formal enforcement actions for food standards increased from 287 to 322 in that period. Although the overall numbers reported are less than in April 2024, there are varying trends in each country for food hygiene and food standards.

4.2 The annual data for 2023/24 represents an increase on pre-pandemic levels of formal enforcement activity of 23% and 44% for food hygiene and food standards respectively. Local authorities are reporting lower compliance levels, and this is reflected in more formal enforcement work and written warning compared with pre-COVID levels

Table 4: Formal enforcement data in each country

(The number of establishments subject to formal enforcement actions)

| Date | Country | Food hygiene | Food standards |
|-------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|
| April 2020* | England | 4,278 | 395 |
| | Wales | 442 | 56 |
| | Northern Ireland | 64 | 7 |
| | Total | 4,784 | 458 |
| April 2023* | England | 4,923 | 482 |
| | Wales | 456 | 25 |
| | Northern Ireland | 88 | 11 |
| | Total | 5,467 | 518 |

| Date | Country | Food hygiene | Food standards |
|----------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|
| October 2023** | England | 2,455 | 241 |
| | Wales | 257 | 26 |
| | Northern Ireland | 54 | 20 |
| | Total | 2,766 | 287 |
| April 2024** | England | 2,842 | 335 |
| | Wales | 222 | 23 |
| | Northern Ireland | 68 | 13 |
| | Total | 3,132 | 371 |
| October 2024** | England | 2,512 | 287 |
| | Wales | 243 | 20 |
| | Northern Ireland | 45 | 15 |
| | Total | 2,800 | 322 |

*Annual data

**Six months data

Sampling

4.3 The number of samples reported dropped to 13,464 in 2020/21 at the start of the pandemic. The data in Table 5 indicates that local authorities had re-started sampling activity in 2022/23, with 40,144 samples reported compared with 44,026 in 2019/20. There was a slight reduction in 2023/24 bringing the level to 37,783 (October 2023 and April 2024 data combined), with decreases in England and Northern Ireland.

4.4 This October 2024 sample data shows the same trend as other datasets, with a reduced number of samples in the first part of the reporting year. The numbers reported in England were lower than in October 2023

Table 5: Total sampling carried out for food hygiene and food standards in each country from April 2020 to October 2024

| Date | Country | Total samples |
|-------------|------------------|---------------|
| April 2020* | England | 31,125 |
| | Wales | 4,385 |
| | Northern Ireland | 8,516 |

| Date | Country | Total samples |
|-----------------------|------------------|---------------|
| | Total | 44,026 |
| April 2021* | England | 8,764 |
| | Wales | 324 |
| | Northern Ireland | 4,374 |
| | Total | 13,462 |
| April 2022* | England | 19,519 |
| | Wales | 1,043 |
| | Northern Ireland | 9,202 |
| | Total | 29,764 |
| April 2023* | England | 28,682 |
| | Wales | 3,137 |
| | Northern Ireland | 8,325 |
| | Total | 40,144 |
| October 2023** | England | 12,368 |
| | Wales | 1,479 |
| | Northern Ireland | 4,019 |
| | Total | 17,866 |
| April 2024** | England | 13,929 |
| | Wales | 1,943 |
| | Northern Ireland | 4,045 |
| | Total | 19,917 |
| October 2024** | England | 11,607 |
| | Wales | 1,698 |
| | Northern Ireland | 4,183 |
| | Total | 17,488 |

*Annual data

**Six months data

5 Staff resources

5.1 Charts 9 and 10 and Tables 6 and 7 show that occupied and available full-time equivalent resource has remained relatively stable since April 2024. When looking at trends it should be noted that the October 2024 food hygiene and food standards data are based on 99.7% and 98.9% returns respectively.

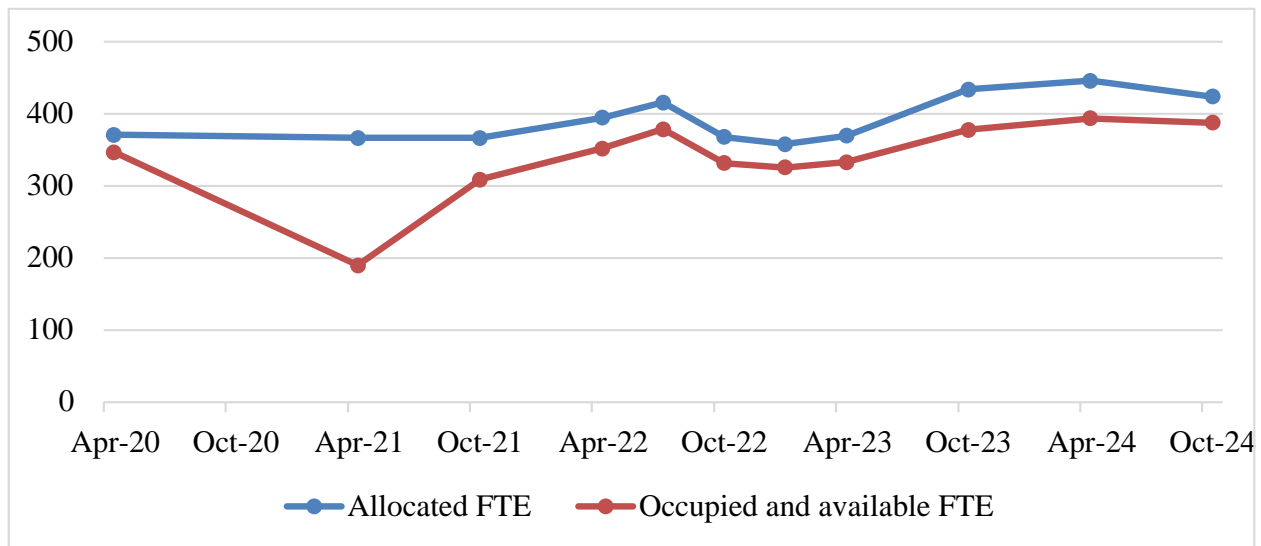
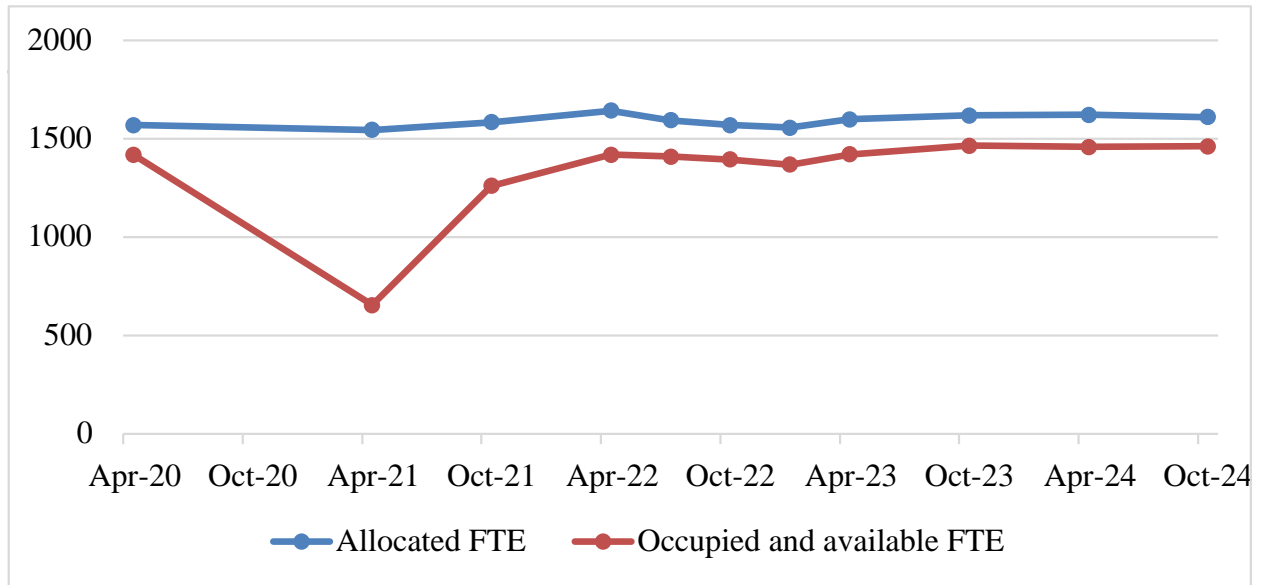


Table 6: FTE Resources April 2023 to October 2024 for three countries: Food hygiene

| Date | Country | FTE Allocated | FTE Occupied and available |
|------|---------|---------------|----------------------------|
|------|---------|---------------|----------------------------|

| | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|
| April 2023 | England | 1,377 | 1,226 |
| | Wales | 165 | 144 |
| | Northern Ireland | 58 | 50 |
| | Total | 1,599 | 1,421 |
| October 2023 | England | 1,394 | 1,265 |
| | Wales | 164 | 146 |
| | Northern Ireland | 61 | 54 |
| | Total | 1,620 | 1,466 |
| April 2024 | England | 1,396 | 1,258 |
| | Wales | 163 | 142 |
| | Northern Ireland | 64 | 59 |
| | Total | 1,623 | 1,459 |
| October 2024* | England | 1386 | 1,262 |
| | Wales | 164 | 144 |
| | Northern Ireland | 61 | 58 |
| | Total | 1,611 | 1,463 |

*Oct 2024 data based on 99.7% of expected returns

Table 7: FTE Resources April 2023 to October 2024 for three countries: Food standards

| Date | Country | FTE Allocated | FTE Occupied and available |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| April 2023 | England | 279 | 252 |
| | Wales | 58 | 53 |
| | Northern Ireland | 33 | 28 |
| | Total | 370 | 333 |
| October 2023 | England | 338 | 292 |
| | Wales | 66 | 59 |
| | Northern Ireland | 30 | 27 |

| Date | Country | FTE Allocated | FTE Occupied and available |
|----------------------|------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| | Total | 434 | 378 |
| April 2024 | England | 348 | 304 |
| | Wales | 68 | 64 |
| | Northern Ireland | 29 | 27 |
| | Total | 446 | 394 |
| October 2024* | England | 321 | 294 |
| | Wales | 71 | 63 |
| | Northern Ireland | 32 | 31 |
| | Total | 424 | 388 |

*Oct 2024 data based on 98.9% of expected returns

1. As part of the Food Standards Agency duties under the Food Standards Act 1999, and in accordance with the requirements of Regulation (EU) No 2017/625 (OCR) on official controls (retained law in England and Wales).