

Summary of Audit Findings

The Head of Public Protection had overall responsibility for the delivery of food law enforcement services. The food hygiene service was delivered within the Food Safety, Health and Safety & Communicable Disease team within the Environmental Health section whilst the food standards service was delivered within the Trading Standards and Licensing section.

The food law enforcement Service Plan developed by the authority was largely in accordance with FSA guidance. The authority had provided its work programmes for the year, identified the resources required to deliver them and had reviewed its performance against the previous year's performance. A number of variations in achieving the targets were identified and explained, however, variances relating to lower risk food establishments had not been clearly addressed.

The authority had arrangements in place to ensure effective service delivery by appropriately authorised officers which require amendment to ensure food standards officers are authorised under all required legislation. Officers had been authorised in accordance with their qualifications, training and experience. The provision of access to several portals of information for food standards officers was identified as an area of good practice.

A documented work procedure had been developed to ensure the accuracy of the authority's food establishments' database. Audit checks confirmed that overall, the food hygiene and food standards database was accurate and the authority had been able to provide an electronic Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS) return. The authority had been involved in a collaboration project to procure new Public Protection software for adoption by local authorities across Wales to improve consistency and value for money.

Record and database checks confirmed that the food hygiene service had achieved the required inspection frequencies at higher-risk and approved establishments. Some lower risk establishments were not being inspected at the frequencies required by the Food Law Code of Practice and centrally issued guidance. The food standards service had a similarly risk based approach where high risk establishments had been prioritised for inspection. A significant number of medium and lower risk establishments were overdue a food standards intervention.

Inspection records did not always demonstrate that a thorough assessment of business compliance had taken place during food standards inspections or for all aspects of food hygiene. Interventions at low-risk establishments had not generally been undertaken in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice. In general, risk rating, revisits and follow up action was being carried out as required for both food hygiene and food standards services.

Food hygiene inspection records and reports were being adequately maintained by the authority. Food standards reports contained some but not all of the information required by the Food Law Code of Practice; and would benefit from improvement to include actions to be taken by the authority and an indication of timescales for compliance.

Food and food establishment complaints, food sampling interventions, notifications of food related infectious disease and food incident interventions had generally taken place in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice. However, notifications of *Campylobacter* had not always been appropriately investigated.

The authority had been proactive in providing advice and guidance to food businesses in its area and undertaking promotional activities. Collaboration between food hygiene and standards officers and the authority's food procurement section and the use of social media to promote the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and food alerts were identified as areas of good practice.

The authority had used a range of enforcement tools to secure improved business compliance with food hygiene legislation whilst the food standards service had conducted a major investigation and prosecution in respect of food supplements.

There was some evidence of internal monitoring of the food hygiene and food standards services. Further development and implementation of the authority's internal monitoring procedures will assist in achieving improvements.