

BRIEFING NOTE – DECEMBER 2010

FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY FOOD HYGIENE CAMPAIGN AND RELATED INITIATIVES

This Briefing Note provides you with an update on the Agency's Food Hygiene Campaign and related activities. We hope that the campaign is helping to support your work at the local level.

The Briefing Note is published on the Enforcement area of the Agency's website (<http://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/>) and distributed to Local Authorities in England via the Agency's 'Dedicated Mailbox' and EHCnet systems.

The Briefing Note is also circulated by email to other copy recipients as shown above, and to local authorities outside England by the Agency's offices in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Please bring this Briefing Note to the attention of relevant staff within your service.



Bob Martin
Foodborne Disease Strategy Branch

Distributed to:

All Heads of Environmental Services

All Heads of Trading Standards

Local Government Regulation (LGR)

Chartered Institute of Environmental health (CIEH, Policy Advisor for Food Safety)

REHIS (Chief Executive)

Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee (SFLEC)

Health Protection Agency

Health Protection Scotland

Public Health Authority NI

All CCDCs (via HPA)

Infection Control Nurses Association (ICNA)

Royal Institute of Public Health (Centre Manager)

Royal Society for the Promotion of Health

Society of Food Hygiene Technology

Institute of Food Science and Technology

FOOD HYGIENE CAMPAIGN AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

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FOOD HYGIENE CAMPAIGN

FOOD SAFETY WEEK 2011- WHAT GOES ON BEHIND CLOSED DOORS?

Next year Food Safety Week will be held from 6-12 June 2011. As a theme, we will be looking at what goes on behind closed doors to see what people really do in their own home when preparing and cooking food and debunk some of those common food hygiene myths like: why you really shouldn't wash poultry and why you shouldn't eat food past its use by date.

We will be encouraging Local Authorities and other our delivery partners to get people talking about their own food hygiene habits and practices. To help them do this the Agency will be developing a cost effective package of support resources to aid with planning and delivery. We are working on this at the moment and will provide further updates to you on this as soon as possible.

The theme of the week will also enable those local authorities that choose to launch or promote the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in their authority area during this week to tie in to the overall theme.

In the meantime if there are any popular food hygiene myths or misconceptions that you think should be de-bunked please send us their details and we'll see whether we can include them (email: Catherine.clarke@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk)

We will announce further developments as they arise, but to be kept informed

directly of future developments, please make sure that you have registered your details at foodsafetyweek@ecgroup.co.uk including 'Register' in the subject line.

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITY

The Agency will shortly be issuing a press release highlighting its food simple safety steps for Christmas. This year will be issuing a template version of this press release that local authorities can easily amend and use to send out to their local media contacts as a way to get these important seasonal messages as widely communicated as possible. A copy of this release is attached to this update.

If you have any questions regarding this please contact Bradley.smythe@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

FOOD HYGIENE UNDER SPOTLIGHT AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Food Standards Agency and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health are bringing together experts from local and national government, the food industry, public health and consumer representation to discuss the future of food hygiene delivery. The Future Food Hygiene Conference takes place on Friday 3 December 2010 at the CIEH's 15 Hatfields facility in London.

Delegates will participate in sessions about the FSA's Food Hygiene Delivery Programme, different international frameworks for delivery, culture towards food hygiene in businesses and enforcement and how to respond to the changed economic circumstances.

Lord Young, whose report *Common Sense, Common Safety* (http://www.number10.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/402906_CommonSense_acc.pdf) endorses the Food Standards Agency's Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, will give the keynote speech. Delegates will also hear from international speakers and national experts on how culture, behaviour and innovative practices influence standards of food hygiene. With the inquest into the death of Mason Jones taking place during the week before the conference delegates will be well aware of the importance of the issues under discussion. Mason died, aged five, from an *E. coli* O157 infection – one of the 157 people who fell ill during the outbreak in South Wales in 2005.

Delegates participating in the event will be contributing to both the Food Standards Agency's and the CIEH's future work on improving food safety. Attendance is free, but places are limited. If you would like to find out more, to register your interest in attending, or to contribute to discussions on the future of food hygiene, further details are available on the Future Food Hygiene website (<http://www.glasgows.co.uk/futurefoodhygiene/index.html>).

FOOD HYGIENE RATINGS - TOWARDS A NATIONAL APPROACH

During 2010 the UK-wide Steering Group completed work on the underpinning framework of the scheme and agreed the final elements of the guidance. Detailed information on the Steering Group is available at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/enfcomm/fhrssteeringgroup/>

The branding and the name of the national scheme, the 'Food Hygiene Rating Scheme' (FHRS) are based on consumer research which found consumers wanted the scheme to say exactly what it does and that they liked the ratings shown on a simple numeric scale with associated descriptors.

In the second round of grant funding for local authorities intending to be 'early adopters' of the FHRS publicised in August 2010, 89 applications were received covering 123 local authorities, which will carry out projects between 1 October 2010 and 31 March 2011.

At the start of October 2010, the consolidated guidance on implementation and operation of the FHRS (the 'Brand Standard') was issued to local authorities and the IT platform and website [food.gov.uk/ratings](http://www.food.gov.uk/ratings) went live. The guidance and a range of resources including a Communications Toolkit are available at the following link, where there are also details on how to order free certificate paper and stickers through EC group.

<http://www.food.gov.uk/safereating/hyg/hygieneratings/hygienscoresresources/>

Consistency training for local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland based on guidance developed by the Steering Group on application of Annex 5 of the Code of Practice has been organised for early adopters and will be rolled out to all local authorities in England during January-March 2011, each authority will have two places and the training can then be cascaded as appropriate.

Local authorities participating in the FHRS (and the Food Hygiene Information Scheme in Scotland) have started to upload and publish ratings. Promotion and publicity to consumers is planned around the 30 November when more data is available and consumers start to see ratings displayed at food outlets. Details of how to sign up and gain access to the IT platform are available in the latest progress updates at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/safereating/hyg/hygieneratings/fhrsbackground/sotdcorrespondence/>

The Lord Young report 'Common Sense, Common Safety', published on 15 October, gave very strong support for the Agency's national scheme and we have written to all local authorities about taking forward his recommendations:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/enforcement/enfe10042.pdf>

For further information, please contact:

David Millis (tel: 020 7276 8422, david.millis@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk).

In Wales - a FHRS Implementation Group has been formed with local authority membership and Agency representatives. Through this group the local authorities have been preparing for this national scheme, ensuring that their risk based approach to enforcement of the food hygiene laws is not compromised. In addition to

their inspection programme, they are working with food businesses in their area advising of the scheme, how it will operate and the impact it may have on their business. For further information contact

Rob Wilkins, Local Authority Delivery and Support Team (029 20 678957, rob.wilkins@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk)

In Scotland - Implementation of the Food Hygiene information Scheme

The implementation of the Food Hygiene Information Scheme continues to progress well across Scotland. Scotland has thirty two local authorities. The current position is that fifteen local authorities have already launched the scheme. A further five local authorities are planning to launch by the end of the financial year. A further six local authorities plan to launch by April 2012. Current data estimates are that by April 2012 based on full roll out, 88% of the catering sector and 86% of the retail sector of Scotland will be included in the scheme. For further information, please contact:

Peter Midgley (01224 285189, peter.midgley@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk) or Pauline Wilkinson (01224 285174, pauline.wilkinson@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk)

ACTIVITIES IN FSA WALES

The FSA in Wales has curtailed much of its former involvement in public events instead focusing on delivering healthy eating and food safety advice in schools through engagement with local authority and community run Crucial Crew events and through the delivery of a new award-winning workshop to primary and junior schools across Wales.

Letters to Directors of Public Protection in Wales

Copies of all letters sent to DPPW contacts from FSA Wales since January 2009 can be found at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/archive/enforcementarchive/enf/w/09>

ACTIVITIES IN FSA SCOTLAND

HHEAPS Initiative – Hygiene, Healthy Eating and Activity in Primary Schools

The HHEAPS initiative has developed into a well respected & successful resource delivering food hygiene, healthy eating and activity messages to P4-6 pupils, and has proved that the concept of using positive role models such as sports coaches to influence behaviour is a powerful one.

HHEAPS (Phase 6) for school year 2010-11 continues to develop in partnership with Scottish Rugby, the Scottish Football Association and Tennis Scotland, and is on track to deliver HHEAPS to around 16,500 children across Scotland. By the end of year 2010-11 over 50,000 school children in Scotland will have participated in the programme. A version of HHEAPS for Special Educational Needs pupils is under development and will be discussed further at a Teachers' Panel in November.

Food Safety Information Pack for Childminders in Scotland

This pack contains a selection of Agency information primarily relating to food safety, and was developed in collaboration with the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and the Care Commission (CC). Since 2006, childminders have had to comply with food hygiene legislation and the pack provides childminders with a single source of information to help them understand their responsibilities. The pack was initially distributed to all registered childminders in Scotland in 2008 and is

distributed to new childminders each year, through information provided by the Care Commission.

Primary & Nursery Resource

Food Standards Agency in Scotland developed a new educational games resource consisting of a set of board and card games designed to support the learning outcomes of the new Scottish Curriculum for Excellence and the FSA Food Competences. The project was developed as a result of feedback from teachers highlighting a shortage of resources which raise awareness of the FSA key messages on diet and nutrition and food safety. The finalised resource was formally launched by Scottish Government's Minister for Public Health and Sport, Shona Robison MSP, on 3 September 2010 at the Dundee Flower and Food Festival. Local schoolchildren were invited along to the launch to test the resources, which were pronounced a great success. All Scottish primary schools will now receive a set of the resources.

FSA Eatwell Floor Mat

All primary, secondary and special educational needs establishments in Scotland have received an Eatwell Floor Mat along with guidance for use. The mats were produced and distributed by a local firm. A small supply of mats is retained and distributed upon requests from charity organisations or community groups.

Healthier Scotland Cooking Bus

Scotland's first Cooking Bus – a kitchen on wheels designed to help children, teachers, parents and community groups find out more about cooking and healthy-eating – was launched in Edinburgh in June 2008. The initiative represents a joint commitment from the Scottish Government, the Food Standards Agency in Scotland, the Focus on Food campaign, local authorities and community groups. On-board lessons will teach visitors how to cook simple healthy meals as well as essential food handling and preparation skills.

FSAS Christmas Calendar Competition 2010/11

As in previous years, the Agency in Scotland ran a calendar competition for primary schools as a means of promoting key Agency messages during 2011. Over 3200 entries were received from 130 schools. The winning picture and eleven highly commended pictures chosen by our judging panel form the basis of a calendar, which will be provided to schools and key stakeholders. The winner and eleven highly commended entrants will receive framed prints and prizes for themselves and their schools.

REHIS Elementary Food Hygiene Funding in Secondary Schools

Funding was initially agreed for three years, and further funding was provided for a fourth. The programme supports secondary schools to provide certificated elementary food hygiene training for pupils. The teaching input is provided by home economics teachers and the Agency provides financial support for exam registrations, course booklets and teaching materials. 150 schools have requested funding for such materials this year with just under 9000 students registered in the programme (181 schools received funding last year). Many teachers have requested that this programme be continued and feedback continues to be very positive.

FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT (FSM) GUIDANCE FOR SMALL CATERING AND RETAIL BUSINESSES

Support for the introduction of Food Safety Management Systems based on HACCP Principles.

ENGLAND - Safer food better business (SFBB)

The current fourth tranche of the SFBB Special Grant scheme projects is ongoing. Some of the projects finished earlier this year, while others are continuing on to the end of March 2011.

SFBB Packs

We are currently reprinting the Catering, Chinese Cantonese and the Indian versions of the pack. In the current economic climate we have fewer resources available to us and have had to look for ways to reduce costs in producing the pack. This new reprint of the pack will be presented in a 'shrink-wrapped' version, without the binders. Businesses can put the safe methods and diary inserts into their own binders and a SFBB sticker for the front and spine of the binder will be provided. The Retail pack and the other SFBB products are still available to order in their original format for now.

Copyright information for adaptations

From 30 September 2010 the Open Government Licence will replace the existing Click-Use Licence for use and re-use of Crown copyright material. Further information and the link to the Open Government Licence can be found at: <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/guidancelaadaptingsfbb.pdf>

SCOTLAND - CookSafe and RetailSafe

CookSafe is available in digital format from the FSA website in English, Chinese, Bengali, Punjabi and Urdu.

The Stationery Office is producing hard copies of *CookSafe* (in English, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali and Chinese) and *RetailSafe* on a commercial basis and can be contacted on 0870 600 55 22 or via their website at www.tsoshop.co.uk.

E-*CookSafe*, an interactive eLearning tool suitable for staff training, continues to be available for download, including Microsoft Vista, from the FSA website or is available from FSAS on 01224 285174.

Eat Safe Award Scheme

The success of the award scheme has continued to grow as many caterers, who formed part of the HACCP project, now have a HACCP based food safety management system in place and wish to demonstrate standards of excellence above compliance by attaining the Eat Safe Award standard. Over 765 awards have now been issued across Scotland (see www.eatsafe.gov.uk).

For further information, please contact

Pauline Wilkinson (01224 285174, pauline.wilkinson@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk)

WALES

FSA Wales are in the process of providing funding to Welsh Local Authorities for the provision of Food Safety Management/ SFBB projects. These include seminars, one to one coaching and the provision of specialist translation coaching or seminars.

NORTHERN IRELAND - Safe Catering

Safe Catering is the N. Ireland model for assisting caterers in setting up procedures based on HACCP principles i.e. a food safety management system. Use of Safe Catering allows food business operators in catering establishments to comply with their legal requirements, to produce safe food and to aid in staff training. Copies of Safe Catering and record book SC8 have been issued to Councils in Northern Ireland, for supply, free of charge, to caterers. Hard copies of record books SC1-4 can now be ordered directly from The Stationery Office via their website at www.tsoshop.co.uk. All record forms can also be downloaded from the Agency's website, using the web address provided below. This new issue of Safe Catering adds to the 'toolkit' of resource materials provided by the Agency for caterers and can be accessed at:

www.food.gov.uk/northernireland/safetyhygieneni/safecateringni/

CONTACTS:

TOPIC	DETAILS
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<u>HACCP in catering and retail businesses</u>	
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<u>FoodVision</u>	LACORS FoodVision Officer 020 7665 3888, foodvision@lacors.gov.uk
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CHRISTMAS FOOD SAFETY PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE – FINAL VERSION
EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01 WEDNESDAY 15th DECEMBER 2010

[Name] Council’s environmental health team are reminding people in **[town/city]** to follow some simple safety steps this Christmas when preparing their turkeys to help keep the festive period free from the misery of food poisoning.

Following some practical steps from the Food Standards Agency when preparing your turkey can stop you becoming one of the [number] of people in **[town/city]** who get ill from food poisoning every year.

- If you buy a frozen turkey ensure it’s completely thawed before you cook it by checking there are no ice crystals in the cavity. Also use a fork to test the thickest parts of the meat. A larger turkey can take up to two days to defrost entirely.
- Don’t wash your turkey before cooking. Washing is more likely to splash any bugs on to worktops, dishes and other foods. Proper cooking will kill them more effectively than washing.
- Plan your cooking time properly. Follow the cooking times and other instructions on the label or, as a general guide, for a turkey under 4.5kg allow 45 minutes per kilo plus 20 minutes; for one weighing between 4.5kg and 6.5kg 40 minutes per kg plus 20 minutes; and for those over 6.5kg 35 minutes per kg plus 20 minutes. All at 180°C, 350°F, Gas Mark 4 (after the oven has preheated).
- Check the turkey is cooked properly by cutting into the thickest part of the meat. None of the meat should still be pink and any juices that run out should be clear. Finally, the meat should be steaming hot all the way through.

[Council spokesperson] said:

“....”

Bob Martin, a food safety expert at the Food Standards Agency, added:

“Don’t let food poisoning ruin your Christmas. Be sure to leave plenty of time for your turkey to defrost and cook properly. Many of us aren’t used to cooking such large poultry, but just remembering and sticking to the basic rules should mean food poisoning is one less thing to worry about over Christmas.

“One of the most common mistakes people make when preparing their turkey or chicken is washing the bird before they cook it. Our research has shown that 80% of us who cook a turkey at Christmas wash it before cooking. This isn’t necessary and can be harmful. Washing your turkey can splash bugs around the kitchen and proper cooking will kill them anyway.”

Campylobacter is the most common food bug found on turkeys. A recent study of poultry found contamination on more than half of the raw turkey sampled*.

The Agency has identified *Campylobacter* as the biggest source of food poisoning in the UK and estimates more than 370,000 people got ill from it in 2009, with around 26,500 cases in December alone. Symptoms include severe abdominal pain and diarrhoea. However, the Agency stresses that cooking your turkey properly will kill *Campylobacter* and any other bacteria.

For further advice on turkey preparation and cooking, people can email the FSA at the following address TurkeyMail@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

* A recent study carried out in raw retail poultry on sale in Northern Ireland reported prevalence of 56% for turkey and 91% for chicken. Moran, L., Scates, P., and Madden, R. H. (2009). Prevalence of *Campylobacter* spp. in raw retail poultry on sale in Northern Ireland. *J Food Prot* **72**, 1830-5.