

Mr. Dilwyn Williams
Chief Executive
Gwynedd Council

SENT BY EMAIL

5 June 2018

Dear Dilwyn,

GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERING ITS' FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE

Thank you for your time and providing us with the opportunity to speak with you and your officials on Monday 21 May regarding the delivery of your authority's food law enforcement service. The number of overdue food hygiene and food standards interventions reported by your authority in 2016/17 is a matter of concern and we advised you of the requirement to deliver interventions at the frequencies set-out in the Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) (the Code).

At the meeting we discussed the need for you to undertake an assessment of the resources required to address the backlog of interventions, together with the resources required to carry out interventions that are due on an annual basis. Any shortfalls in resources should be identified and addressed by the authority. We would respectfully request that you share your resource assessment with us together with your plans for addressing:

- i. the backlog of overdue food hygiene and food standards interventions; and,
- ii. the food hygiene and food standards interventions that are due in 2018/19.

You advised that to reduce the overdue food hygiene interventions you had recently taken the decision to recruit an Environmental Health Officer on a fixed term contract.

At the meeting, we were advised that your authority had taken a risk-based approach to food hygiene interventions, prioritising those food businesses rated as higher risk, i.e. category A, B and C rated, over those rated as lower risk, i.e. category D and E rated, as per the Code. We explained that priority afforded to lower-risk food businesses was already mitigated by the

longer intervention frequencies assigned to D and E rated establishments. We further explained that this approach might lead to some establishments not receiving an intervention for 4 or 5 years, and how this could compromise the statutory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (the Scheme) in Wales. The credibility of the Scheme and its value to consumers relies on ratings being current.

We explained the importance of food standards interventions and our concerns that the authority had reported more than 500 food businesses were overdue an intervention in its 2016/17 LAEMS return. Food standards interventions are as important as food hygiene interventions, and we illustrated this in our discussion about food allergens. Allergens present a significant risk to specific vulnerable groups and I trust that we were clear resources for food standards should not be reduced to resource your authority's food hygiene intervention programme.

We discussed the support your authority might need to address our concerns and we agreed to raise the issue of funding at our next opportunity with officials from Welsh Government, specifically the formula used to calculate the food safety element of the Indicator-based Assessment (IBA). We also agreed to support you in developing a realistic resource plan for your food law enforcement service that evidences how the authority plans to address the regulatory interventions that are required.

Your authority's LAEMS return for 2017/18 is still awaiting sign-off. I would be grateful if the data could be signed-off by your nominated Head of Service as a matter of urgency.

I believe that the above provides an accurate summary of our discussions, but if you have any comment or amendments, please let me know.

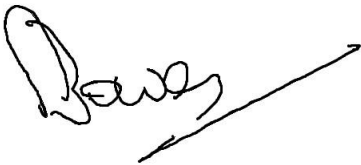
We look forward to receiving an update on your recent recruitment campaign, your estimate of resources required in 2018/19 and your plan(s) for addressing overdue and due interventions.

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I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank you and your officials for your hospitality during our visit.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bowen', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Richard Bowen
Director FSA Wales (Interim)

cc. Dafydd Wyn Williams, Head of Environment Department
Gareth Jones, Senior Manager Planning and Public Protection

Daniel Morelli, Head of Local Authority Support and Audit, FSA Wales
Craig Sewell, Auditor, FSA Wales