

NewsLetter



FSA issue an update on National Level Regulation (NLR)

The Food Standards Agency have issued an update on “National Level Regulation (NLR); work with retailers in England; enforcement responsibilities of local authorities; and potential next steps”.

Last year, an article in the Grocer magazine “Supermarkets to take over ‘Scores on the Doors’ hygiene inspections” followed by a paper submitted to the FSA Board in September 2024 which discussed the long-term proposals for a new phased approach towards food hygiene regulation for some large, national businesses called National Level Regulation (NLR), caused a great deal of alarm to many local authorities. They claimed that they had not been consulted.

Last week the FSA issued an update on NLR and stated “any changes to the regulatory system must be considered with extreme care, with utilisation of the knowledge and expertise of those operating within it. If there are any proposals put forward in future for longer-term legislative change they would be subject to consultation and would not be undertaken without extensive stakeholder engagement across the system and involvement from Ministers.”

Why all the fuss?

In August 2024, the outgoing Chief Executive of the FSA, Emily Miles had been accused by some of tossing a “grenade over her shoulder” as she left office by implying that the FSA was moving toward a self-regulation model for the larger supermarkets.

She told [the Grocer](#) “For someone like Tesco, I don’t think local authorities can add a lot of value. If they (local authorities) can put the support into the local takeaways where they don’t have the luxury of big head offices with compliance departments, then that’s good news.”

It was pointed out that these comments were made less than three months after one person died and more than 120 others were hospitalised in the UK amid an E.coli outbreak linked to lettuce, which sparked a mass recall of sandwiches in supermarkets.

The FSA Board subsequently emphasised the importance of making clear that NLR was not self-regulation or deregulation but requested a pause in the NLR work pending consultation. Over the last few months, the FSA has been seeking views on NLR from a variety of stakeholders. In addition, they have scheduled a webinar for local authorities.

In its December meeting, the FSA Board signalled strong support for NLR but the project remains paused.

More Information

- [The Grocer: Supermarkets to take over ‘Scores on the Doors’ hygiene inspections](#)
- [National Level Regulation Update](#)

ABC Webinars

- Food Hygiene Rating Scheme