

**CONCORDAT BETWEEN THE FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY  
AND  
THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES COORDINATING BODY ON FOOD &  
TRADING STANDARDS (LACOTS)**

## **Introduction**

1. This Concordat sets out an agreed framework for co-operation between the Food Standards Agency and the Local Authorities Co-ordinating Body on Food and Trading Standards (LACOTS). It is not a legally binding agreement or a contract between the Food Standards Agency and LACOTS, nor is it intended to cover every detailed aspect of the relationship between the two organisations. Rather, it is a statement of the principles which will guide working level relations between the Food Standards Agency and LACOTS to ensure sufficient communication and co-ordination to enable each to discharge their respective responsibilities effectively. The Concordat is also intended to contribute to meeting the need for the Food Standards Agency to promote links with other organisations to ensure effective consultation, as specified in the Food Standards Act 1999. The Concordat cannot override the statutory duties and powers of the Food Standards Agency. The concordat will be published.

## **General Principles**

2. The Chief Executive of the Food Standards Agency, and the Executive Director of LACOTS jointly affirm their commitment, in the interests of food safety and consumer protection, to develop effective working relationships so as to ensure that both organisations deliver the best possible service. Officials will continue to maintain regular contact (both formal and informal) in order to discuss business of mutual interest. Good communication will be essential to effective working within and between both organisations.

3. In particular, the Food Standards Agency and LACOTS agree:

- to keep each other promptly and regularly informed about all work in which the other organisation has an interest;
- to give appropriate consideration to each others views;
- to request advice and information in good time, together with an account of its expected use;
- to inform the other organisation without delay of any relevant information which would require their action;
- to provide each other with as full and open access as possible, to relevant scientific, technical and policy information, and research and surveillance findings;
- to pursue opportunities for joint planning and to co-operate fully where joint programmes or initiatives are appropriate.

## **FSA and LACOTS Responsibilities**

4. The remits of the Food Standards Agency and LACOTS are set out in Annex A. The general arrangements through which the Food Standards Agency will routinely exercise its functions and responsibilities with regard to its links with local authorities are contained in Annex B. The Food Standards Agency will discharge these functions and responsibilities in accordance with this Concordat and follow any relevant central government guidance applicable to dealings with local authorities.

5. In addition to regular informal contact at official level, the Food Standards Agency and LACOTS will hold twice yearly bilateral strategy meetings between representatives of the Food Standards Agency and LACOTS.

## **Operation and Review of Concordat**

6. The Food Standards Agency and LACOTS are committed, wherever possible, to solving any disagreements under this Concordat through normal administrative channels.

7. Amendments to this Concordat may be made at any time by agreement between the Food Standards Agency and LACOTS. This Concordat will be kept under regular review at intervals to be agreed between the Food Standards Agency and LACOTS and be updated in the light of experience of its operation and practice.

(Signature) .....

Chief Executive.

Food Standards Agency.

(Signature).....

Executive Director

LACOTS

## **Annex A: The Remits of the Food Standards Agency and LACOTS**

### **The Remit of the Food Standards Agency**

The main objective of the Food Standards Agency is to protect public health from risks which may arise in connection with the consumption of food, including risks caused by the way in which it is produced or supplied, and otherwise to protect the interests of consumers in relation to food.

Under the Food Standards Act 1999, the Agency has responsibility for the development of food policy and for the provision of advice, information and assistance in respect of matters connected with food safety, or other interests of consumers in relation to food, to public authorities and to the general public or to individuals and bodies who are not public authorities.

### **The Remit of The Local Authorities Co-ordinating Body on Food & Trading Standards (LACOTS)**

LACOTS overall aim is to enhance the quality of trading standards and food law enforcement by local authorities within the United Kingdom through strategies designed to promote co-ordination, consistency and good practice.

In relation to the Food Standards Agency, LACOTS will represent the interests of UK local government, ensuring its views are co-ordinated, where appropriate with the local authority Associations. LACOTS will offer leadership, co-ordination and support to facilitate enforcement consistency by local authorities. It will also provide important information to local authorities to ensure the effectiveness of enforcement and give advice on matters relevant to local implementation of legislation.

LACOTS on behalf of local government will challenge other bodies, which might include the Food Standards Agency, and local authorities where it is considered necessary and appropriate having regard to the collective interests of UK local government and the effectiveness of regulatory services.

## **Annex B: Arrangements through which the Food Standards Agency will exercise its functions and responsibilities in respect of its links with local authorities**

- LA Enforcement Framework Agreement
- The Local Authority Enforcement Liaison Group, associated Sub Groups and liaison groups in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Statutory consultation
- Statutory Codes of Practice issued under section 40 of the Food Safety Act 1990, Article 39 of the Food Safety (NI) Order 1991 and associated guidance on food law enforcement
- Facilitating update Seminars and Training events for LA food service managers and enforcement officers.
- Provision of timely information and advice on technical and legislation issues.
- Liaison with local authority representative organisations and professional bodies
- Service level agreement on the LACOTS role as the UK Single Liaison Body
- Identification of enforcement burdens and associated resource requirements arising from legislation and food control measures
- Powers of Direction and Default (FSA 1999)
- Effective communication links with local authorities
- Exploring mechanisms to provide effective support to local authorities in their enforcement activities