

Local Authority Audit – Feedback Survey

Food Standards Scotland Consultation

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland. For information only England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

1. Executive Summary

Food Standards Scotland is currently consulting local authorities on their experience of the recent audits undertaken by its Audit Assurance Team. The focus of the consultation is not the audit findings themselves, but how the audit process operates in practice, including its clarity, consistency, proportionality and overall effectiveness.

The feedback will inform the future development of the audit approach and is intended to support improvements in how audits are planned, conducted and communicated across Scotland's local authority food law enforcement services.

Responses are due by **Friday 31st July 2026**.

[Click here](#) for further information and to submit your response.

2. Overview

The Audit Assurance Team within Food Standards Scotland carries out audits of local authority food law enforcement services to provide assurance on the delivery of statutory functions and to support continuous improvement.

The current consultation seeks to capture the experience of local authorities in engaging with this audit process. This includes how audits are scheduled and communicated, the clarity of expectations placed on services, the approach taken during audit activity, and the effectiveness of post-audit engagement and feedback.

The consultation forms part of Food Standards Scotland's wider commitment to ensuring that audit activity remains consistent, transparent and proportionate, while also supporting constructive engagement with local authority regulatory services.

Key Areas of Desired Feedback

Local authorities are invited to reflect on their overall experience of the audit process, including the clarity and timeliness of communication before and during audits, and the extent to which expectations were clearly defined in advance.

Feedback is also sought on the consistency of approach between audit teams, the level of interaction and dialogue during audit activity, and whether the process supports meaningful engagement and shared understanding.

Authorities are also asked to consider the operational impact of audits, including the proportionality of evidence requests, the administrative burden placed on services, and the extent to which audit activity aligns with available capacity and resources. Views on how effectively audit outcomes are communicated and how well the process supports learning and improving are also welcomed.

3. Consultation Questions

The consultation questions are categorised as follows:

Topic	Questions
Before the Audit	3
During the Audit	8
Following the Audit	3
The Approach of the Audit	1

The consultation questions are available in full below:

1. Was the appropriate length of notice given for the Audit?
Strongly Agree; Generally Agree; No Strong Opinion; Generally Disagree; Strongly Disagree; Not Applicable
2. Was the guidance and instructions contained in the audit notification letter appropriate?
Strongly Agree; Generally Agree; No Strong Opinion; Generally Disagree; Strongly Disagree; Not Applicable
3. Was the purpose, scope and objectives of the Audit and the auditing process detailed within the initial communication sufficient/appropriate?
Strongly Agree; Generally Agree; No Strong Opinion; Generally Disagree; Strongly Disagree; Not Applicable
4. During the opening meeting, was the audit scope, and the audit process (including the follow up process) clearly outlined during the meeting?

Strongly Agree; Generally Agree; No Strong Opinion; Generally Disagree; Strongly Disagree; Not Applicable

5. The Audit was delivered in a logical manner?

Strongly Agree; Generally Agree; No Strong Opinion; Generally Disagree; Strongly Disagree; Not Applicable

6. The frequency of updates provided by the Auditors throughout the Audit was satisfactory?

Strongly Agree; Generally Agree; No Strong Opinion; Generally Disagree; Strongly Disagree; Not Applicable

7. How satisfied were you with the opportunities to comment on the Auditors' observations?

Very Satisfied; Satisfied; No Strong Opinion; Dissatisfied; Very Dissatisfied; Not Applicable

8. The Auditor's requests for additional information were reasonable and clearly communicated?

Strongly Agree; Generally Agree; No Strong Opinion; Generally Disagree; Strongly Disagree; Not Applicable

9. How would you assess the effectiveness of the Audit's closing meeting?

Very Effective; Effective; No Positive or Negative Opinion; Not Very Effective; Not Effective at All; Not Applicable

10. The length of time allocated to the Audit was appropriate?

Strongly Agree; Generally Agree; No Strong Opinion; Generally Disagree; Strongly Disagree; Not Applicable

11. The Audit was carried out professionally and objectively?

Strongly Agree; Generally Agree; No Strong Opinion; Generally Disagree; Strongly Disagree; Not Applicable

12. How satisfied were you with how the contents of the final report was reached?

Very Satisfied; Satisfied; No Strong Opinion; Dissatisfied; Very Dissatisfied; Not Applicable

13. The final report's recommendations addressed the key issues and was soundly based?

Strongly Agree; Generally Agree; No Strong Opinion; Generally Disagree; Strongly Disagree; Not Applicable

14. The recommendations in the final report will improve control and/or performance?

Strongly Agree; Generally Agree; No Strong Opinion; Generally Disagree; Strongly Disagree; Not Applicable

15. How would you assess the effectiveness of the adopted approach of the Audit which included on-site meetings?

Very Effective; Effective; No Positive or Negative Opinion; Not Very Effective; Not Effective at All; Not Applicable

4. APSE Comment

This consultation represents an important opportunity for local authorities to provide structured feedback on the practical operation of the Food Standards Scotland audit process. Given the pressures facing environmental health and regulatory services, it is essential that audit activity is clear, consistent, proportionate and supportive of constructive dialogue and continuous improvement.

APSE encourages member authorities to engage with the consultation to ensure that the operational realities of deliver food law enforcement services are fully reflected in the future development of the audit framework.

APSE will continue to support members through our networks and discussion forums, providing opportunities to share experiences of regulatory audit activity and wider service pressures. Members are encouraged to respond to the consultation and help develop a more effective and proportionate audit approach going forward.

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Sign up for APSE membership to enjoy a whole range of benefits

APSE member authorities have access to a range of membership resources to assist in delivering council services. This includes our regular networks, specifically designed to bring together elected members, directors, managers and heads of service, together with trade union representatives to discuss service specific issues, innovation and new ways of delivering continuous improvement. The networks are an excellent forum for sharing ideas and discussing topical service issues with colleagues from other councils throughout the UK.

Networks are a free service included as part of your authority's membership of APSE and all end with an informal lunch to facilitate networking with peers in other councils. If you do not currently receive details about APSE network meetings and would like to be added to our list of our contacts for your service area please email enquiries@apse.org.uk

Our national networks include:

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- Catering (School Meals)
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- Local Government Reorganisation Network
- Highways and Street Lighting
- Housing, Construction and Building Maintenance
- Local Authority Social Value, Procurement and Commercialisation
- Parks, Horticulture and Ground Maintenance
- Recovery and Renewal
- Renewables and Climate Change
- Roads, highways and street lighting
- Sports and Leisure Management
- Vehicle Maintenance and Transport
- Waste Management, Refuse Collection and Street Cleansing
- Armed Forces and Veterans Network

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