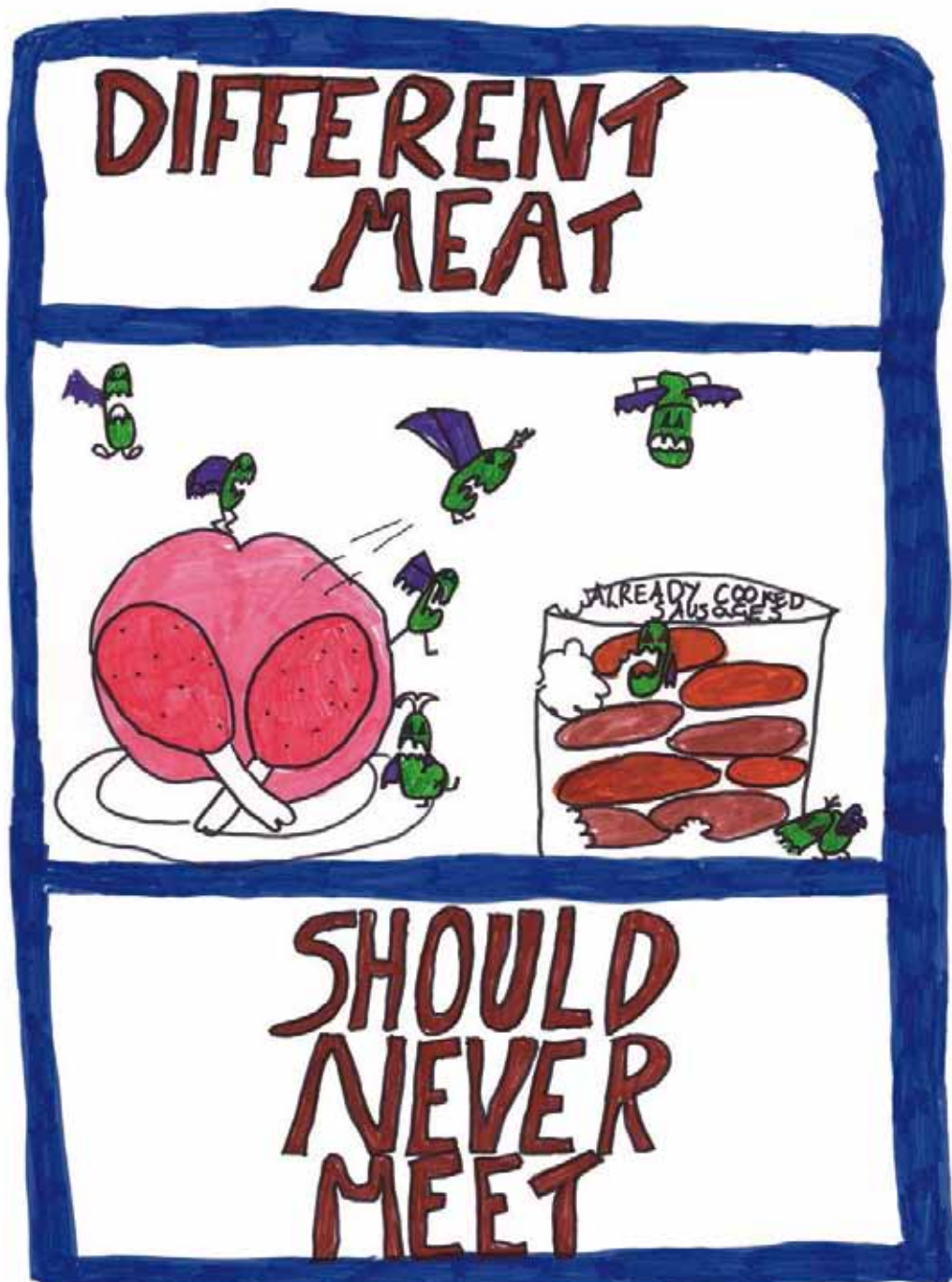
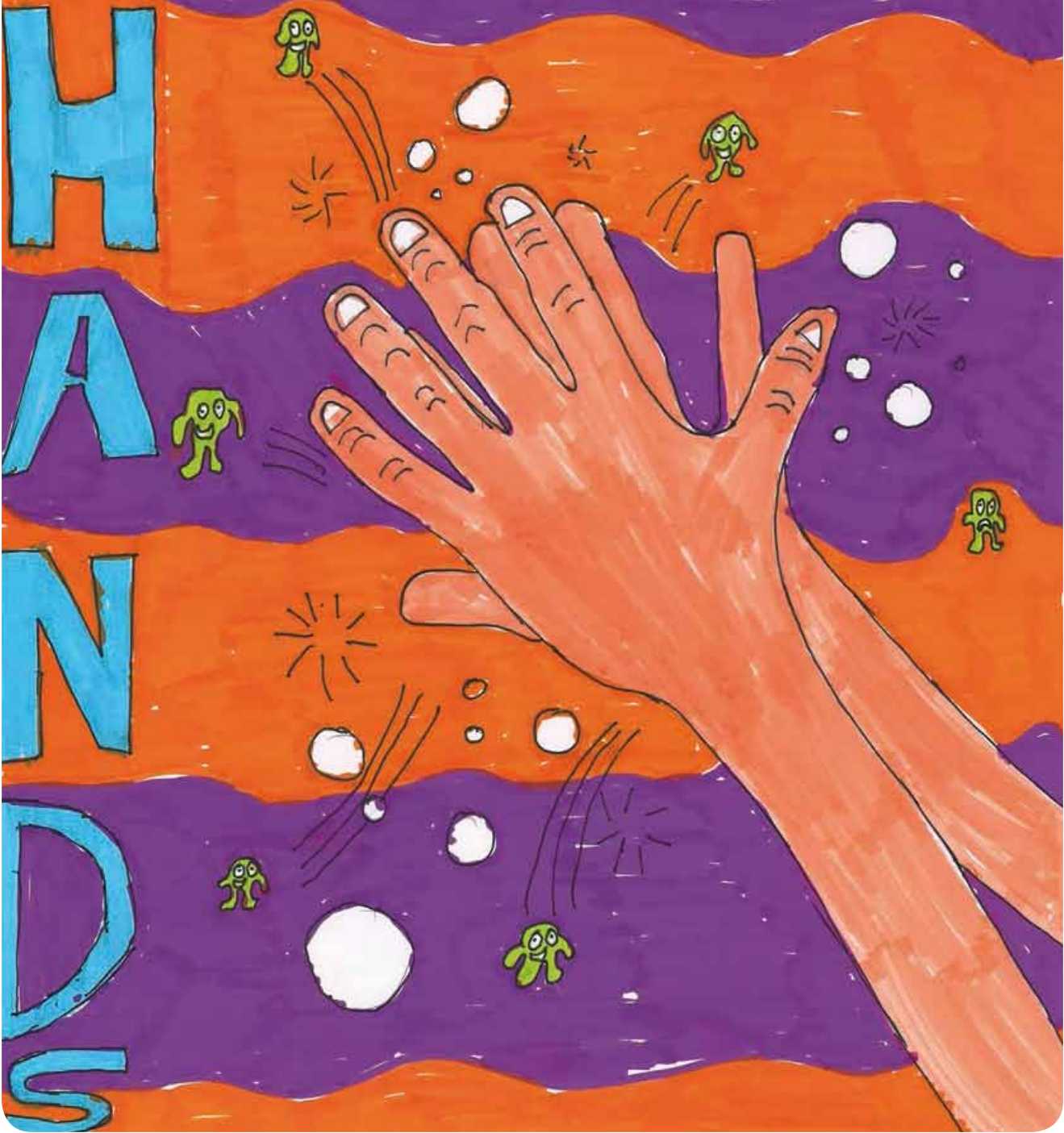


Protecting consumers from *E.coli* 0157: summary report

March 2010



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Foreword by Professor Hugh Pennington

A Public Inquiry has two main tasks, to find the facts and to make recommendations for the future. It has a duty to pass the test set for formal investigations by the Hon Mr Justice Sheen ‘that members of the public should feel confident that a searching investigation has been held, that nothing has been swept under the carpet and that no punches have been pulled.’ But even if it passes this test, a big problem remains. Once its report has been published, its work is done. Others are responsible for implementation. My personal experience in this regard is not a happy one. In 1996-07 I chaired an Expert Group which made recommendations after the 1996 Central Scotland *E.coli* O157 outbreak. My hope that their implementation would prevent subsequent *E.coli* O157 outbreaks due to food hygiene failures in butchers was dashed by the events in South Wales in 2005. My fear now is that there might be a ‘Pennington 3’. That is why I enthusiastically welcomed the establishment of the Consumer Food Safety Group led by Consumer Focus Wales.

This authoritative review of progress towards the implementation of my recommendations appears on the first anniversary of the publication of my Public Inquiry report. It says that while much has been done, much remains to be done. The review is a powerful spur and stimulus to continued action.

One of the main themes of the review is money. Finance for those who deliver food safety in businesses and for their regulators is tight. Increased pressures on budgets will continue. But the threat from *E.coli* O157 isn’t going to change. Prevention must remain paramount. That is why I am looking forward to positive responses regarding food safety finance, as well as to all the other items for action highlighted so well in this review.

Hugh Pennington

On behalf of myself and my family and other affected families, I would like to thank Consumer Focus Wales for all the hard work they have carried out in compiling this report.

Transparency is what we called for after the recommendations were announced and I think this report gives us some much awaited answers to some of the questions which the agencies involved have failed to answer since Professor Pennington’s report was published.

This report shows us that although a little progress has been made, so much more is still yet to be done. That is why funding is so crucial.

I’d also like to express my thanks again to Professor Pennington.

To you we are all eternally grateful.

Sharon Mills

Mother of Mason Jones, who died on 4 October 2005 from *E.coli* O157

Overview

In September 2005, a major outbreak of *E.coli* O157 occurred in South Wales. Contaminated cooked meat, supplied by Bridgend-based butcher John Tudor and Son, was served to pupils in schools throughout four local authority areas. A total of 157 people, mostly children, became ill, and on 4 October 2005 a five year old boy, Mason Jones, died.

This report looks at what has been done since then to prevent another major incidence of *E.coli* O157. Following the 2005 outbreak a public inquiry was held, chaired by Professor Hugh Pennington. The inquiry made 24 recommendations aimed at public sector bodies and food businesses.

As an independent body Consumer Focus Wales has taken on the task of reviewing the work done to put the recommendations into action. This report looks at the picture one year on from Professor Pennington's inquiry report.

Quite clearly, all public bodies have taken the findings of the Pennington Inquiry very seriously. A great deal of time and money has been spent, particularly by local authorities, on addressing the issues raised in the inquiry. Much positive work has been achieved, and there is some promising activity currently in progress. However, three of the recommendations are not being put into action, and there are many other areas where Consumer Focus Wales believes more needs to be done.

The Welsh Assembly Government and local authorities in Wales need to ensure that enough funding is available to do the extra work necessary as a result of the recommendations, the total cost of which has been estimated at £2.5 - £3 million a year by the Welsh Local Government Association.

The law is not clear on whether Environmental Health Officers should be requiring food businesses to use separate machinery for raw meat and ready-to-eat foods. The Food Standards Agency should issue guidance on this issue to make it clear that complex, hard-to-clean equipment should never be used for raw and ready-to-eat meats.

Some issues are not being monitored as closely as we believe they should. The Food Standards Agency should monitor how many food hygiene inspections are carried out on a surprise basis. The safety of school meals also needs to be regularly surveyed: the last survey was carried out in 2006/07.

All agencies should look at how they engaged with affected families in the aftermath of the outbreak, to learn lessons for the future and ensure that people affected by *E.coli* O157 are always dealt with in a direct and sympathetic way.

We have identified many other actions that need to happen to increase consumer safety. Consumer Focus Wales will be ensuring that all agencies are aware of what we believe needs to be done to give consumers the best possible protection from *E.coli* O157 and other harmful bacteria that can live in food. We will continue to report annually on the work to turn Professor Pennington's recommendations into reality.

Introduction

The outbreak of *E.coli* O157¹ that occurred in South Wales in September 2005 was the largest of its type ever seen in Wales and the second largest in the United Kingdom. A total of 157 people became ill, most of whom were children from 44 schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf, Caerphilly, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil areas. Thirty-one people were admitted to hospital. On 4 October 2005 Mason Jones, aged five, died.

To this day many of the children are living with severe and chronic health conditions as a direct result of the *E.coli* O157 infection, including gastro-intestinal problems, brain damage and kidney damage.

Following the outbreak the then First Minister, Rhodri Morgan AM, appointed Professor Hugh Pennington to hold a public inquiry to examine how the outbreak occurred. Professor Pennington's report, which was presented to the First Minister on 19th March 2009, made a series of 24 recommendations aimed at public sector bodies and food businesses.

There is no doubt that the direct blame for the outbreak must lie with the butcher, William Tudor, who received a 12-month prison sentence after pleading guilty to seven counts of food hygiene offences. The inquiry found that substandard hygiene practices had been the norm at Tudor's, and that the inspections undertaken by environmental health inspectors were made less effective by William Tudor's dishonesty². Even so, the inspectors did not assess or monitor the

business's management of food safety as well as they could, or should, have done³.

Professor Pennington's recommendations were aimed at a wide range of agencies, not just environmental health services. Procurement teams, responsible for awarding contracts for food supplied to schools, had failed to act on repeated complaints made by school catering staff about the quality of the meat coming from Tudor's. The Food Standards Agency, whose responsibility it is to assess how local authorities conduct inspections, had failed to identify, in its latest assessment prior to the outbreak, any serious problems in the way that Environmental Health Officers were working.

Since the outbreak much work has been done to put the recommendations into action and strengthen the food safety regime in Wales. However, there is still a great deal to do. As an independent body with legal powers to represent consumers and to investigate consumer matters, Consumer Focus Wales has taken on the task of reviewing the work done in the wake of the inquiry to prevent another outbreak. We have done this independently, with input from key organisations. Our view is that this information should have been in the public domain.

This publication is a summary of actions to date, one year on from Professor Pennington's inquiry report. It is based on information contributed by organisations including:

¹ The glossary in the appendix includes a brief explanation of what *E.coli* O157 is

² Pennington, H. (March 2009) The Public Inquiry into the September 2005 Outbreak of *E.coli* O157 in South Wales. p13, par 27

³ *ibid.* p13, par 27

- The Welsh Assembly Government
- Food Standards Agency Wales
- Welsh Local Government Association⁴
- Directors of Public Protection Wales
- Local Better Regulation Office
- Public Health Wales
- Haemolytic Uraemic Syndrome Help⁵
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Association of Independent Meat Suppliers
- National Federation of Meat and Food Traders

We have also ensured a high level of input from members of families affected by the 2005 outbreak as well as other people affected by *E.coli* O157. During this process it has become clear that none of the families we engaged with were aware of the extent of this work. It was also clear that they very much wanted this information. As a result of this project they are now considerably better informed.

The above organisations are represented on the Consumer Food Safety Group, a forum led by Consumer Focus Wales which aims to rebuild public trust in food safety in Wales in the wake of the 2005 outbreak.

This summary report includes an overview of some of the key critical issues. In the appendix is a glossary which includes explanations of technical terms. The full report takes an in-depth view, looking at each recommendation in turn, and can be accessed at

<http://consumerfocus.org.uk/g/4L9>

Hard copies are available from Consumer Focus Wales on (02920) 787100.

⁴ Views of local authorities in Wales were gathered through the Welsh Local Government Association

⁵ Haemolytic Uraemic Syndrome Help (HUSH) is a support group for people affected by *E.coli* O157

Main findings

Quite clearly, all public bodies have taken the findings of the Pennington Inquiry very seriously. A great deal of time and money has been spent, particularly by local authorities, on addressing the issues raised in the inquiry report. This has been entirely necessary, since at the time of the outbreak working practices in the Bridgend environmental health team were not significantly different from working practices in other local authorities⁶.

Positive achievements

Much of the work undertaken by public authorities in response to the inquiry has been thorough, timely and appropriate. In particular the following are positive achievements which will increase the safety of the public from *E.coli* O157:

- Every local authority has adopted a 'red flagging' system to highlight issues of concern for future inspections
- Some local authorities are requiring complete separation of equipment for raw and ready-to-eat meats, taking a strict interpretation of the law in order to increase consumer safety
- Safer Food Better Business, developed by the Food Standards Agency, is an approach to educating food businesses about hygiene that is based on robust research
- The Food Standards Agency is carrying out a programme of activity known as the Food Hygiene Delivery Programme, which includes a set of measures which will tell us, in time, whether the work undertaken in response to the inquiry has actually made a difference to public safety

- Every local authority has drawn up an action plan and appointed a senior management figure to co-ordinate work on the Pennington recommendations – this is a good start, but they need to make sure that these action plans deliver results that are consistent across local authorities.

Work in progress

It is also clear, however, that there is still a great deal to do. All the agencies that Professor Pennington's recommendations were aimed at – the Food Standards Agency, the Welsh Assembly Government, local authorities, and Public Health Wales – have got some work still to do in the coming months and years. Our main report explores the exact nature of that work in more detail.

Work not carried out

Consumer Focus Wales is particularly concerned that three of the recommendations are not currently being put into action. These three recommendations, as well as many others in the report, relate to HACCP, which is a method of organising food hygiene that all food businesses must by law use. HACCP – which stands for Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point – involves looking at what happens in a business, identifying where the danger points may be, and then keeping regular records to ensure that those dangers are avoided. Professor Pennington is strongly in favour of HACCP as the cornerstone of food safety.

⁶ Pennington, H. (March 2009) The Public Inquiry into the September 2005 Outbreak of *E.coli* O157 in South Wales. p334 par 18.49

The three recommendations that are not being fully put into action are:

- Recommendation 3 says that the Welsh Assembly Government should be making additional funding available to ensure that all food businesses understand and use HACCP correctly. Although some extra money has been given by the Welsh Assembly Government and the Food Standards Agency for this aim, local authorities tell us that the sums involved are nowhere near enough to pay for all the work that would be necessary to put Professor Pennington's recommendations into practice. The total cost of this work has been estimated by the Welsh Local Government Association at £2.5 - £3 million per year. Professor Pennington made similar recommendations in Scotland following a major *E.coli* O157 outbreak in 1996, and in response the Scottish Executive made an annual payment of £2.6 million for five years, ring-fenced for food hygiene.

Consumer Focus Wales believes that the Welsh Assembly Government and local authorities in Wales should ensure that sufficient funding is available to do the extra work necessary as a result of Professor Pennington's recommendations. The Welsh Assembly Government should give £2.5 to £3 million each year for five years and ring-fence the money to ensure it is spent on food hygiene and nothing else.

- Recommendation 8 is about the type of inspections that Environmental Health Officers carry out on business premises. Professor Pennington believes that a business's HACCP plan should form the starting point for the whole inspection: examining the HACCP plan and records, and then assessing the business to see if the activity matches what is written in the plan. Environmental Health Officers say it would take too long to do this at every inspection and would cost too much.

The Food Standards Agency has said it intends to review this issue. Consumer Focus Wales believes this review needs to be a priority. The Welsh Assembly Government and local authorities also need to ensure that sufficient funding is available to carry out this recommendation, particularly for higher-risk businesses such as butchers selling raw and cooked meats.

- Recommendation 10 says that Environmental Health Officers should obtain a copy of a business's HACCP plan at every inspection and keep it on file. Local authorities are not doing this, although they are taking detailed notes of the HACCP plan as part of the inspection. They say that it would cost too much to take a whole copy at each inspection and might be a storage problem.

Consumer Focus Wales believes that the Food Standards Agency and local authorities in Wales should explore all avenues for putting this recommendation fully into action, including the possibility of developing a website to allow businesses to operate online HACCP plans that could also be accessed by Environmental Health Officers.

Further work needed

Consumer Focus Wales has identified a number of areas where we feel that more needs to be done. Our main report goes into the full detail of that extra work. We will be ensuring that all agencies are aware of what we believe needs to happen in order to give consumers the best possible protection from *E.coli* O157 and other harmful bacteria that can live in food.

⁷ 'Ring-fence' means to direct the way that money is spent to ensure it cannot be used for anything else other than what it is intended for.

These are some of the key areas where we feel more work is required:

- The law is not clear on whether Environmental Health Officers should be requiring food businesses to use separate machinery for raw meat and cooked ready-to-eat foods.

The Food Standards Agency should issue guidance as a matter of urgency to make it clear that complex, hard-to-clean equipment should never be used for raw and ready-to-eat meats.

- The Food Standards Agency is developing a new scheme called Scores on the Doors, which will give every food business a hygiene score that will be available to the public. Consumers will be able to go to a website to look up the hygiene score of the businesses they buy from. We believe the Food Standards Agency needs to make sure that all consumers have easy access to this information.

The Food Standards Agency should pursue a change in the law to make it compulsory for food businesses to display Scores on the Doors on their premises.

- In his report Professor Pennington referred to the importance of carrying out surprise inspections on food businesses. Although we have been told that most inspections are unannounced in this way, nobody is keeping track of exactly how many are unannounced, which means that we do not know whether this recommendation is being put into action as effectively as it could be.

The Food Standards Agency should monitor how many food hygiene inspections are unannounced.

The Welsh Assembly Government and local authorities should ensure that funding is available to carry out spot checks in addition to routine inspections, especially for higher-risk businesses such as butchers selling raw and cooked meats.

- There has been much activity aimed at making hygiene a central consideration in the food buying process for schools. We need the success of this work to be systematically monitored. The only evidence we could find on the safety of school meals was a survey carried out between September 2006 and July 2007. This survey found that school food was, in general, safer than food available to the general public. However, the survey has not been repeated since then.

The Welsh Food Microbiological Forum should conduct this survey on a regular basis to ensure that more up-to-date information is available on the safety of school meals across Wales.

- The Food Standards Agency is carrying out a programme of work, known as the Food Hygiene Delivery Programme, which aims to put Professor Pennington's recommendations into action. This work is broad in scope and covers many of the issues raised. However, with an end date of April 2014 the programme is a long-running one, and in terms of the individual activities that are taking place within it, we have been struck by a distinct lack of clear, short-term deadlines.

There needs to be more urgency for this work. The Food Standards Agency needs to commit to firmer deadlines for the Food Hygiene Delivery Programme to produce some positive results from this programme as soon as possible.

Outstanding issues

A criticism made by parents who sat through the public inquiry was that the root cause of many of the issues raised by Professor Pennington's report was individuals not doing their job thoroughly enough. A key question is whether they were in fact unable to do their jobs more thoroughly. Did they have the resources to do better? Do they have the resources now?

Challenges facing environmental health: staffing

A key problem is a shortage of qualified environmental health professionals specialising in food hygiene. In comparison with other areas of environmental health, food hygiene is a high-risk, highly pressurised career path. Furthermore, a common view expressed by those within the profession is that the 2005 *E.coli* O157 outbreak, and the public inquiry that resulted from it, have further discouraged newly qualified officers from specialising in food hygiene.

Local authorities have been cutting back on environmental health traineeships and professional placements as a cost-reducing measure, meaning that there are fewer opportunities for environmental health graduates to begin a career. In short, there is too much work to do, and too few qualified people to do it.

Performance measurement

A further issue, according to some, is that the performance of local authority environmental health services is measured in a way that requires a high turnover of inspections. The pressure to carry out large numbers of inspections means Environmental Health Officers can feel that they are prevented from spending the right length of time with a particular food business. A greater emphasis on quality over quantity would provide a better environment for inspectors to respond to businesses' needs.

Role of the Welsh Assembly Government and funding

After having spent £2.3 million on holding the public inquiry, we would have expected the Welsh Assembly Government to have developed a plan for how work should proceed to put the inquiry's recommendations into action. Local authorities tell us they were expecting the Assembly Government to say clearly what was expected of local government in light of the report and how this work was to be funded.

The Welsh Assembly Government has not taken on that role but has allowed local authorities and other responsible agencies to decide for themselves how best to respond to the recommendations. Consumer Focus Wales believes that the Welsh Assembly Government should have taken a stronger role on directing this work, in order to ensure the best possible outcomes from the £2.3 million that the public inquiry cost.

This issue of leadership links to the issue of funding, which has been raised frequently by environmental health services as a major challenge. A view expressed by many in the profession is that the service does not enjoy the same status as other statutory services provided by local government. According to this view, environmental health has become sidelined so that today the profession is generally underrepresented on senior management teams. This means that they are less able to fight their corner when budgets are set and, according to some within the field, is a key reason why environmental health needs ring-fenced funding.

When the Scottish Executive made the decision, in the wake of the 1996 *E.coli* O157 outbreak, to ring-fence £2.6 million annually for five years for food hygiene, the financial climate was very different. More than ten years on, all levels of government are facing many competing priorities: education, health, social services and many other services have urgent funding needs.

Some small amounts of extra money have been given in recent years for food hygiene:

- The Food Standards Agency has given £615,000 to local authorities in Wales between 2008 and 2011 to promote HACCP to food businesses.
- Since 2007/08 the Welsh Assembly Government has given an extra £180,000 a year to be split between all local authorities to support food hygiene enforcement activity including HACCP. This money was not ring-fenced, meaning that it could in theory have been spent on anything, not necessarily food hygiene.

However, this money does not cover the total cost of putting Professor Pennington's recommendations into action, which has been estimated by the Welsh Local Government Association as between £2.5 and £3 million per year.

People affected by *E.coli* O157 pay the ultimate price, but the public purse also pays, whether it is by funding environmental health services or by funding the NHS when victims need treatment. It cost the NHS hundreds of thousands of pounds to treat just one individual, Karen Morrisroe of Wrexham, who contracted *E.coli* O157 in 2009 after eating a vegetarian burger. Twice a day for three weeks, and then once a day for many more weeks, Karen was being given blood plasma replacement treatments that cost £5,000 per treatment.

Professor Pennington's view is that, unless the Welsh Assembly Government provides additional funding specifically for environmental health, the public is at greater risk of another serious outbreak of *E.coli* O157. In a letter to the Consumer Food Safety Group, he said, 'nothing is proposed to protect – never mind increase – the environmental health functions carried out by local authority staff. "Pennington Money" was allocated after my 1997 report. Without "Pennington 2 Money" the risk of "Pennington 3" is increased.'⁸

Enforcement

Consumers have said they don't understand why more businesses aren't closed down for failing to meet legal requirements on food hygiene. Currently premises can only be closed if they pose an 'imminent risk' to health. Consumer Focus Wales believes this threshold may be too high, and that a lesser threshold of 'significant risk' would enable Environmental Health Officers to use the threat of closure more effectively. **The Welsh Assembly Government and the Food Standards Agency should review the current effectiveness of Hygiene Prohibition Notices and Orders and consider pursuing a change in the law to maximise their effective use.**

⁸ Pennington, H. Letter to Consumer Food Safety Group (December 2009)

⁹ Food Hygiene (Wales) Regulations 2006

The consumer point of view

Re-building public trust in food safety

Research¹⁰ carried out for Consumer Focus Wales has found that people in Wales have a lower level of trust in the food safety regime than people in the UK as a whole. In September 2009 we found that 24 per cent of people said they were not confident in current measures to protect our health in relation to food safety, compared with 17 per cent of people in the UK.

Greater transparency is essential for re-building trust. This report is the first step towards that. However, action needs to be taken by all responsible agencies to publicise the work that has been done. For example, the action plans that local authorities have drawn up have not been presented in a way that is accessible to the public, although they contain a great deal of positive information about what has been achieved. **Local authorities should publish regularly updated action plans, presenting them in consumer-friendly language.**

Families affected by *E.coli* O157

As well as carrying out consumer research, we have also been in close contact with a number of families affected by the 2005 outbreak to find out about their experiences, how they have been treated, and what they would like to see happen in Wales.

Some have been in contact with responsible agencies to try to find out what has been done to turn the recommendations into action. They say that the response has been mixed. Some organisations have taken a very open approach, instigating face-to-face meetings with family members and taking steps to keep them informed.

The families say that other public bodies have been much more defensive in their attitude, engaging only by letter and only in response to approaches they have made. The language in such letters has often been quite formal and stilted, with frequent use of official jargon.

We would like to emphasise the good practice that others should learn from. It is not enough to correspond by letter with people who have suffered in *E.coli* O157 outbreaks. Discussions need to be held face-to-face, with sensitivity, ideally with families having a consistent point of contact to liaise with throughout the process.

Since the outbreak occurred, authorities have emphasised repeatedly that the main responsibility for the outbreak was Tudor's. This is not disputed. But the public protection system failed to protect the public, who in this case were vulnerable individuals. During Professor Pennington's inquiry, families witnessed criticisms being made of a number of individual professionals. This process led families to believe that jobs might be lost when the inquiry ended. Their expectation was not met, but rather it was the system that was said to be accountable, with apparently no individuals being held responsible for the way the system operated. The effect of this has been greatly to intensify distrust felt by many families, who feel that responsible agencies have acted to protect themselves.

We stress that we are not calling for people to lose their jobs. It is far too late for action of that kind. But we feel it is important to emphasise that agencies must acknowledge the extent of their responsibility, a vital first step towards providing families with closure and rebuilding trust. The way in which some public bodies handled the

¹⁰ Beaufort Omnibus Survey September 2009

Next steps

aftermath of the outbreak has demonstrated how a failure to engage at appropriate times and face-to-face can easily lead to an escalation of bad feeling.

Learning lessons

Important lessons can be learned from families affected by *E.coli* O157. Their experiences are a test of the systems for controlling outbreaks. In October 2009 Sharon Mills, the mother of Mason Jones, was invited to Edinburgh to speak at a Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland conference. She was invited because what she had to say to the audience of professionals demonstrated to them precisely what is at stake in their working lives.

The Food Standards Agency, the Welsh Assembly Government, and local authorities in Wales should recognise how the contribution and experiences of Sharon Mills, and other families who are still living with the consequences of the 2005 outbreak, could make a real difference here in preventing further outbreaks of *E.coli* O157.

Public authorities should provide a platform for Sharon Mills and others to speak to food hygiene inspectors, both trainee and qualified, to help them understand the importance of their role; to food businesses, to bring home to them the consequences of lax hygiene practices; to public sector budget-setters, to help them understand why environmental health needs to be properly funded; and to the wider public, to alert them to the need for vigilance about *E.coli* O157.

A number of food-related outbreaks of *E.coli* O157 have occurred in Wales since 2005. Each has been a test of the system, revealing strengths and weaknesses and throwing up new issues with implications for consumer safety. Issues like these will be a focus for the future work of Consumer Focus Wales. In addition, we will continue to report annually on the work to turn Professor Pennington's recommendations into reality, and our views will feed into the annual reports that the First Minister has committed to make to the National Assembly for Wales.



Annex 1: Glossary of terms

Association of Independent Meat Suppliers	An association representing small and medium sized abattoirs.
Better Regulation	An approach to regulation that aims to reduce unnecessary regulatory and administrative burdens.
Butchers' Licensing Scheme	Introduced after the 1996 <i>E.coli</i> O157 outbreak in Scotland. Set out requirements for butchers handling raw and ready-to-eat products.
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health	The professional body representing environmental health practitioners.
Cross-contamination	The transfer of harmful organisms from one surface to another. Can occur directly or indirectly from contact with hands or machinery, work surfaces or tools.
Directors of Public Protection Wales	A collective organisation of officers heading up public health protection services within local authorities.
Environmental Health Officer	An individual trained in environmental health issues such as housing, sanitation, food, clean air, noise and water supplies. Responsibilities include inspecting restaurants and other food premises and investigating cases of food poisoning.
Escherichia coli O157	A particularly virulent type of Escherichia coli bacteria that can cause severe illness.
Federation of Small Businesses	A campaigning pressure group promoting and protecting the interests of the self-employed and owners of small firms.
Food hygiene	The measures and conditions necessary to control hazards and to ensure fitness for human consumption of a foodstuff, taking into account its intended use.
Food hygiene audit	A comparison of a business's food safety management system with actual business practice to establish how well the system regulates food hygiene.
Food Law Code of Practice	Published by the Food Standards Agency and must be adhered to by authorities responsible for food hygiene inspections. Covers food safety practice and the conduct of inspections.

Food safety	The assurance that food will not cause adverse health effects to the final consumer when it is prepared and eaten.
Food Safety Management System	A system for ensuring a business maintains standards of food hygiene using HACCP principles. Must by law be kept by food businesses.
Food Standards Agency	An independent government department set up by an Act of Parliament in 2000 to protect the public's health and consumer interests in relation to food.
HACCP	Standing for Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point, a food safety management method designed to enable businesses to identify, evaluate and control hazards.
Haemolytic Uraemic Syndrome	A condition which can be caused by <i>E.coli</i> O157 infection, characterised by acute kidney failure, anaemia and thrombocytopenia (a lowered body level of platelets, which are needed for normal blood clotting).
Haemolytic Uraemic Syndrome Help	A charitable organisation set up after the 1996 <i>E.coli</i> O157 outbreak in Scotland, which aims to support families affected by <i>E.coli</i> O157.
Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice	Can be served if a food business proprietor is failing to comply with food hygiene regulations. Can result in premises or part of premises being closed down.
Hygiene Improvement Notice	Can be served if a food business proprietor is failing to comply with food hygiene regulations. Failure to comply with the terms of an Improvement Notice is an offence.
Hypothecated funding	Government money which is dedicated for a specific purpose. Otherwise known as 'ring-fencing'.
Key performance indicators	Statistics that are used to keep track of certain aspects of a public body's performance.
Local Better Regulation Office	A public body that aims to improve local regulation of business by environmental health, fire safety, licensing and trading standards services, in order to reduce the regulatory burdens on business while maintaining public and environmental protection.

Meat Hygiene Service	An executive agency of the Food Standards Agency, aiming to ensure hygiene standards in abattoirs as well as the health and welfare of animals being slaughtered.
National Federation of Meat and Food Traders	An organisation representing the independent meat and food trade, with specialist knowledge and expertise in fresh chilled foods.
National Public Health Service for Wales	Provides resources, information and advice to enable public bodies to discharge their statutory public health functions.
Outbreak	An increase in the number of people with an illness or disease above that normally expected to be seen in the population at a particular time, or two or more linked cases with the same illness.
Procurement	The process of buying goods and services.
Safer Food Better Business	Developed by the Food Standards Agency, a food safety management system for use by food businesses.
Scores on the Doors	Developed by the Food Standards Agency, an initiative that allows consumers to find out food hygiene ratings of businesses they buy from.
Supershedders	Animals, usually cattle, which excrete relatively large amounts of <i>E.coli</i> O157 bacteria in their faeces.
Vacuum packing	The removal of all or most of the air within a package of, for example, food, preventing its return by an airtight seal.
Value Wales	Part of the Welsh Assembly Government, a branch with responsibility for achieving better value for money in Welsh public services.
Variable Number Tandem Repeat	A robust typing method of typing the specific strains of bacteria such as <i>E.coli</i> O157.
Welsh Assembly Government	The devolved government of Wales.
Welsh Local Government Association	Represents the interests of local government in Wales.
Zoonoses	Infectious diseases that can be transferred from non-humans to humans.



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