

Government of Jersey
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Deputy Hilary Jeune
Chair, Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel

BY EMAIL

24 February 2026

Draft Food (Jersey) Regulations 202- Foodborne Illnesses

Dear Chair,

Thank you for your letter, dated 17th February 2026 regarding foodborne illnesses following the Public Hearing on the Draft Food (Jersey) Regulations 202-, where you raised the following three questions:

- Of the confirmed cases of *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella* and *E.coli* recorded in the most recent reporting period, how many were traced to local food establishments?
- Where such cases were traced back to food establishments, how many involved premises that held a valid Eat Safe rating at the time of the incident?
- Does the Department routinely undertake tracking of food poisoning cases for the purposes of identifying potential links with food businesses, and if so, what methodology is used to determine attribution?

My team have prepared the following response to your questions:

The UK Food Standard Agency (UKFSA) reports that 2.4 million cases of food poisoning are reported annually in the UK with over 50-60% of cases linked to food consumed from restaurants or takeaways.

In Jersey, rates of General Practitioner (GP) confirmed cases of food poisoning involving pathogens such as, *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella* and *E.coli* infections have remained fairly stable over the last three years with a median rate of 95, 27 and 4 cases reported, respectively. However, it is important to stress that many cases of food poisoning are never reported for a variety of reasons (expanded upon below).

The Environmental & Consumer Protection team within the Regulation Directorate is primarily responsible for investigating cases of food poisoning on the island. However, this work is not undertaken in isolation, with several departments and multiple health professionals and disciplines involved in this process. Oversight of all communicable disease cases is provided by Jersey's Consultant in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC), Dr Victoria Matthews, along with other clinical professionals who include microbiologists, nurses and public health consultants. All

laboratory confirmed cases of food poisoning involving, but not limited to, pathogens such as *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella* and *E.coli* are required by law to be notified to the Medical Officer of Health.

All confirmed cases of food poisoning are discussed at weekly acute health protection meetings, which are chaired by the CCDC, who reports directly to the Medical Officer of Health (MoH). These meetings are attended by a multi-disciplinary team of health professionals whose primary aim is to protect the public health of the people of Jersey from diseases and public health threats that may be present or emerging at home and abroad.

Once a patient has submitted a faecal sample via their GP for analysis, positive results are then notified to the Regulation Directorate for investigation. Each confirmed case is then investigated and a patient questionnaire completed. Questionnaires cover multiple risk factors tailored to specific pathogens but commonly include questions about recent food history, food safety handling at home, visits to food premises, drinking water sources, exposure to lakes, rivers, streams, exposure to pets and farm animals, sexual activity, and recent travel history.

Based on this information, a risk assessment is made by the investigating officer to form hypotheses on where, when or how that patient may have become infected. Where officers suspect that a food business may be implicated in a specific case, officers may feel it necessary to undertake an investigatory visit/inspection of the premises to try and ascertain a causative link.

All notifications of food poisoning are treated extremely seriously, although not all cases necessarily justify further investigation. It is important to stress that food poisoning cases are often extremely difficult to prove, especially to the standards required for criminal prosecution in a court of law. Mitigating factors include but are not limited to:

- Delayed symptoms – pathogens have different incubation periods before symptoms appear, these range from hours to weeks, which makes it very difficult to trace the infection back to a potential source
- Multiple food/drink consumed over extended periods of time
- Reluctance of cases to visit the GP and submit a stool sample for laboratory analysis (cost of GP visits is an important factor in Jersey)
- Lack of evidence – foods may have been eaten/thrown away, kitchen and equipment may have been cleaned and disinfected by the time food safety officers are notified.
- Limitations of IT systems to effectively link food poisoning incidents and complaints to specific food businesses for epidemiological purposes

Bearing the above in mind, it is not surprising that only a small number of the reported cases of gastroenteritis involving common pathogens such as *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella* and *E.coli* infections over the last three years have been directly attributed to food business premises on the island. However, all of those businesses were part of the Eat Safe scheme and were mandatorily required to display their rating score under the law.

In addition, it is important to stress that much of the day to day work is reactive and the team often investigates complaints about food safety issues from members of the public, which is undertaken proactively outside the scheduled Eat Safe inspection programme.

Under the existing 1966 Food Law, Jersey has limited options to deal with food hygiene and allergen offences and does not directly include provisions to deal with modern food safety practices like Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP).

The 1966 Food Law also provides officers with a very limited number of enforcement options that are not proactive in nature. Closure of premises is currently the only option where an officer is satisfied that an imminent risk to health exists. In addition, offences involving allergens are extremely difficult to deal with, falling under food standards provisions rather than more specific and robust food hygiene provisions, like those proposed under the new food law.

The Jersey Food Law 2023 will address the above issues by offering a far more modern and graduated approach to enforcement. This will include options to serve a variety of enforcement notices, which are designed to deal with a varying level of specific food safety and hygiene issues and non-compliance, with closure being the absolute last resort. This more graduated approach aligns with the Regulation Directorate's enforcement policy and its 4 Es approach to regulation (Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce).

In addition, the new Food Law also introduces the requirement for food businesses to implement a food safety management system based on HACCP principles. HACCP was originally developed by NASA to prevent food poisoning while astronauts were in space. HACCP requires pre-requisites such as food safety and allergen training, effective cleaning, sickness policies, pest control, and provides a proactive, structured framework to identify, evaluate and effectively control food safety hazards. Consequently, where fully implemented, HACCP is proven, globally, to reduce food safety hazards in food businesses.

Recognising the importance of HACCP's guiding principles, the Regulation team has already provided resources and educational support to businesses for many years with the aim of improving food safety on the island. This has included the promotion of the UK FSA's Safer Food Better Business (SFBB) pack (a documented food safety management system based on HACCP principles) and tailored educational support visits to premises.

However, it is recognised that further support will be necessary in the lead up to the implementation of the new food law. Bearing this in mind, it is the Regulation Directorate's intention to provide as much support as possible so that businesses can smoothly transition into the new food law requirements. This will include the provision of information and resources by way of an industry toolkit, more comprehensive on-line information and face to face topic-specific educational support sessions for businesses on HACCP, allergens and labelling.

Ultimately, the proposed Regulations are intended to work holistically. They seek to achieve their goal by encouraging improvements in food hygiene controls using a number of levers all working in tandem with each other. The introduction of HACCP, mandatory food hygiene training, new hygiene controls and licensing all play a vital role in reducing incidences of food poisoning, allergic episodes and food complaints in general.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Luce', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Deputy Steve Luce
Minister for the Environment