

Association of Port Health Authorities (APHA) and LACORS **Mapping our Roles and Responsibilities**

Aim

As organisations working with authorities responsible for the delivery of regulatory services LACORS and APHA have common goals. It is recognised that there is an overlap in the remit of the two organisations, and the following text has been agreed by APHA and LACORS to outline how both organisations can operate in a complimentary way, to ensure that local authorities are well represented and APHA /LACORS resources are used as effectively as possible.

Introduction

LACORS has a key role in representing local authority regulatory and related services in the UK and in the coordination of the regulatory services delivered by local government. LACORS is a local government central body created by the UK local authority associations and is mainly funded from local government monies. In England and Wales money is 'top sliced' from the Revenue Support Grant.

APHA provides technical support to local authorities and port health authorities and assists in co-ordinating the delivery of port health related regulatory services. Authorities pay an annual subscription to APHA who provide a secretariat to facilitate this work. APHA acts as a single point of contact for central government to help ensure that port health regulatory issues are addressed. APHA also benefits from support from the FSA to promote co-ordination and consistency in imported food controls at the borders.

Further information on the two organisations vision and mission is provided in [Annex 1](#) to this document.

Port Health and Membership of APHA

Corporate membership of APHA¹ is open to any Local Authority or Port Health Authority who has responsibility for public and/ or animal health in connection with aeronautical, maritime and coastal activities, and international and intra-community trade and travel. Regulation carried out in these areas is referred to as port health activity, this work is designated in legislation to the port health authority or the local authority as appropriate; for some regulations the local authority transfers its responsibility for enforcement to the port health authority by means of an Order.

The amount of port health work that is carried out by APHAs members varies considerably ranging from local authorities who have responsibility for a small port where Environmental Health staff carry out the port health function for a small percentage of their working day to large ports where there is a dedicated team of maybe 30 persons working shifts, particularly where there are large volumes of imported food.

Port Health Authorities

A Port Health Authority is a specially constituted authority with responsibility for public health controls at a seaport(s).

- A port health authority may be created from one or more riparian authority by special order under The Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984, the order specifies the

¹ In June 2008 there were 66 corporate members of APHA

area within which the authority has jurisdiction. For this reason a port health authority cannot be formed at an airport.

- Where the port health authority is formed from more than one local authority it is usually operated by a Board consisting of representatives from the local authorities, these are referred to as joint boards. There are 43 officially constituted port health authorities in England and Wales of which 10 are joint boards.

Why does Port Health need representation?

Many of the core areas of work that are carried out by local authority regulatory services are also part of the port health function carried out within a port, for example, the inspection of food premises and the control of polluting activities such as the unloading of dusty cargo. For these activities the health benefits are clear and are experienced locally.

However, for many of the port health functions the benefit may be experienced at a national or even international level, for example when checking hygiene on a cruise liner, assessing the safety of food being imported into the EC, or ensuring that animal health conditions have been met in respect of a consignment of animal skins.

Particular trades such as the import of groundnuts is focussed on perhaps four ports and the inspection burden is therefore placed on individual local /port health authorities, so funding is a critical issue, central funding and more often cost recovery measures are vital to the delivery of these services.

Port health is a local authority function which in certain cases is enforced by a Port Health Authority. It is important to ensure that this is recognised and understood in relevant legislation and by central government to ensure that the law can be enforced where required and that this work is performance managed along with local authorities.

Specific APHA Roles

- Representing APHA fee paying members on port health issues
- Providing technical advice and guidance in relation to port health legislation including imported food controls, ship/aircraft sanitation and other public and animal health issues at ports. (LACORS will not normally deal with such matters where they are specifically port health related).
- Responding to consultations on new legislation and guidance specifically related to port health work.
- Supporting the Port Liaison Network (PLaN), (which includes authorities who may not be members of APHA).
- Providing updates and technical information to APHA members and all relevant local authorities by email.
- Maintaining an open resource for port health related information via the APHA website.
- Discussing shellfish issues and contribution to shellfish liaison groups as appropriate
- Liaising with LACORS to highlight any key issues which they may need to be aware of in the context of any general national policy discussions they may be involved with. This will help LACORS represent as appropriate any strategic points of concern in relation to port health matters at meetings where an APHA representative may not be present.

LACORS' role in relation to port health issues

- Representing all local authorities and port health authorities (including joint boards) on issues within LACORS remit including food, environmental protection and animal health related matters.
- Ensuring that, when responding to general consultations and discussions on national policy which LACORS is involved with, a port health authority perspective is considered and included where appropriate.
- Providing all port health officers access to the LACORS website such that they can make full use of any relevant information which may assist them in their port health related work.
- Where necessary communicating with **all** local authorities to help ensure that they are aware of port health issues. On request from APHA, LACORS can highlight particular key APHA documents on the LACORS website relevant to port health authorities and any inland authorities that may have a related enforcement interest. Where necessary, and on request from APHA, access to such web items and downloads may be restricted to an enforcement only audience only through the use of a LACORS password to enter the LACORS website.
- Provide appropriate input where matters concerning local authorities with a sea and/ or air port are discussed and local authority representation / endorsement is needed e.g. in respect of the MoU with the MCA.
- Representing inland authorities (without any port) in their work generally, and in their monitoring of imported foods and other non food items. Working with the FSA to help produce policy and guidance for inland authorities in this area.
- Working with APHA and the FSA to promote understanding of controls carried out at the border and better linking up between authorities at the border and those inland..
- Where appropriate and in liaison with APHA, considering how best to raise the profile of port health issues which have a wider policy implications, for example by drawing any relevant matters to the attention of local authority elected members on the LACORS Management Board.

Working Together/ Links

1. For consultation responses on government proposals for regulations or guidance, there may be joint areas of interest for local authorities and port health authorities. LACORS and APHA would normally liaise to ensure responses submitted by APHA and LACORS are compatible and complimentary. Where a joint response is needed to help create a more robust submission the two organisations will work together to agree a common document which can be jointly badged.

Areas where cooperation might be needed would include:

- Animal health, local authorities / port health authorities involvement with border inspection posts and with international catering waste
- Control of disease, procedures where provisions would be used by local authorities generally and port health authorities.
- Application of food hygiene legislation to ships and aircraft
- Application of smoke free legislation, in relation to ships and aircraft

- Sampling issues where there may be implications for local authorities generally and port health authorities (e.g. in the case of micro-biological sampling in England the HPA provides a service to both port health authorities and inland authorities).
 - Matters relating to shellfish where LACORS might assist in relation to national issues
 - Strategic local government funding or other issues which have a bearing on port health authorities including performance management audit and monitoring
 - Alerts and associated operation of home authority / primary authority principle
 - Regulatory enforcement approach and consistency issues
 - Competency of local authority officers
 - In liaison with APHA, LACORS *would wish to support* and help publicise any initiatives to facilitate links between APHA and non APHA members on a local or regional basis via the Port Liaison Network (PLAN).
2. APHA's involvement as necessary with LACORS policy and technical groups is recognised as important. This should help promote liaison between the two organisations for mutual benefit. Papers for groups where relevant food and other issues are discussed will be made available to APHA for information and possible attendance if need be.
 3. The need for occasional (ad Hoc) LACORS attendance at APHA meetings should a specific need arise is recognised.

4. Contact details

LACORS current contact details on port health imported food issues is david.lock@lacors.gov.uk

General Enquiries

LACORS
Local Government House
Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ
Email: info@lacors.gov.uk
Website: www.lacors.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 7665 3888

Fax: 020 7665 3887

Current APHA engagement with the relevant Environmental Health / Food LACORS Policy Forum is: Kirsty Dawes kirsty.dawes@porthealth.co.uk

General Enquiries

Association of Port Health Authorities

2.02 Suffolk Enterprise Centre
Felaw Maltings
44 Felaw Street
Ipswich
IP2 8SJ

E: apha@porthealth.co.uk

T: 01473 407040

Annex 1

LACORS' Vision

"To be an exemplar local government organisation, leading on policy development, driving improvement and adding value to regulatory services".

LACORS' Values

LACORS is driven by a number of values which reflect our commitment to the needs of our stakeholders both within the organisation and within local government. Our values can be summed up in the following ways;

- To ensure our primary focus is towards the needs of local authority regulatory services and the wider local government family.
- To work professionally with our key external stakeholders.
- To operate as a socially and politically responsible body driven by the needs of local government rather than other interests.
- To provide a friendly and positive working environment.
- To encourage, support and develop our staff.
- To be an equal opportunities employer.

LACORS' Mission

LACORS mission is to enhance the reputation of local government by informing policy development as well as guiding, supporting and improving the delivery, coordination and consistency of local authority regulatory services.

LACORS will achieve its mission by:

- Raising the profile of regulatory services, supporting and promoting local authority excellence.
- Lobbying for positive changes in legislation, policy and funding that serves the best interest of local government.
- Developing an intelligence-led approach that drives improvement in the performance of local authority regulatory services.
- Disseminating high quality advice, guidance and best practice to help develop the capacity in local authorities to deliver effective and efficient services.

The Association of Port Health Authorities vision is:

To be the lead agency in promoting port health in the UK by assisting our members in the provision of consistent, high quality services for the protection of public, animal and environmental health.

This vision will be achieved through the following **aims** and **objectives**:

- Promoting consistency amongst member authorities by developing policy, enforcement guidance, and identifying and disseminating good practice.
- Influencing central Government departments, Agencies and the European Commission regarding policy, legislation and enforcement.
- Supporting and promoting effective co-ordination, cooperation and collaborative arrangements between Local Authorities and Port Health Authorities.
- Developing effective partnership and collaborative working arrangements with key stakeholder organisations and relevant European and international agencies.
- Increasing capability of member authorities through the provision of training and information.
- Continuing to raise the profile of port health services with key stakeholders including local authorities, Government Departments and Agencies, European Commission, industry bodies and consumer organisations.
- Identifying and developing strategy and policy to tackle any emerging issues of port health significance.