

Summary

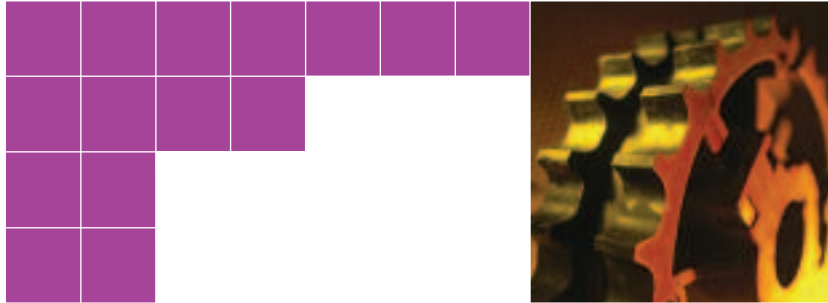
The importance of the Home Authority Principle is widely recognised by local authorities and central government. It provides a way for local authorities to work effectively in partnership with businesses within their local area to deliver robust and consistent enforcement and advice services across the UK.

However, the Home Authority Principle cannot remove the onus on your business for ensuring compliance with relevant legislation, nor does it remove the primary responsibility for enforcement from the local authority in whose area a specific incident has taken place.

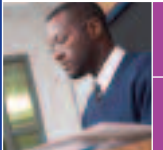


LACORS (the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services) is a local government central body created by the UK local authority Associations. Its role is to support and coordinate activities within a range of services relating to trading standards; food enforcement; civil registration; public entertainment and liquor licensing; gambling and health and safety at work. LACORS is accountable to its own Board of Directors made up of elected members nominated by the four UK local authority Associations. LACORS' vision is: 'To make a major contribution to the development of high quality, consistent and coordinated local authority regulatory and related services across the UK'.

LACORS, 10 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7SP
Tel 44 (0)20 7840 7200 Fax 44 (0)20 7735 9977
Email info@lacors.gov.uk www.lacors.gov.uk



An introduction to the **Home Authority Principle**



What is the Home Authority Principle?

As a business operating in the UK, you will need to comply with a wide range of legislation. Local authorities, who are responsible for enforcing much legislation, are there to help by providing advice, guidance and information for your business to comply with that legislation.

Businesses will generally build up a relationship with, and receive advice and information from, one particular local authority. This is usually the local authority where the business is based.

In relation to trading standards and food safety matters, local government has developed a scheme where we refer to that authority as the **Home Authority** i.e. *'the local authority where the relevant decision-making base of your business is located'*.

For example:

- a If you are a sole trader and only have one site or office, your Home Authority will be the local authority where this site or office is located. This also applies to businesses trading over the internet.**
- b For a business with multiple branches, stores etc throughout the UK, your Home Authority will generally be the local authority where the head office (or decision making centre) is located.**

The **Home Authority Principle** is therefore a scheme developed by local authorities to help businesses by providing contact points for advice and guidance in order to maintain high standards of public protection, encourage fair trade and develop a consistent approach to enforcement.

What are the benefits of the Home Authority Principle for my business?

A Home Authority relationship can:

- improve business-wide operating procedures or methods as a result of advice from your Home Authority on compliance and good practice;
- minimise unnecessary burdens arising from legislation, for example by agreeing, at an early stage, details of how to comply with new requirements or introduce new product lines;

- promote a better understanding and awareness with your Home Authority of commercial issues in relation to your business;
- provide a route for coordinating and resolving differences between local authorities and your business; and
- assist businesses based in that Home Authority area to trade successfully in other parts of the UK.

How can I set up a Home Authority relationship?

If your business would like to discuss the Home Authority Principle, you should contact the local authority where your

head office (or decision making centre) is located. Your local authority (Home Authority) will then advise on the format of the Home Authority relationship, e.g. a formal written or informal agreement, which will best reflect the level of commitment that can be agreed by your business and the Home Authority.

How does the Home Authority Principle work?

The local authority acting as your Home Authority may carry out a number of roles for your business. For instance, they may:

- provide contact officer(s) and identify the scope of its Home Authority service to your business;
- provide advice and guidance;
- visit your business and monitor trends, company policies, etc;
- ensure your business complies with all relevant legislation; and/or
- act as a contact point for other local authorities (see Originating and Enforcing Authorities) that may have queries and complaints about your business.

Your business should cooperate with its Home Authority and should:

- comply with all relevant legislation;
- be open and honest with all dealings with your Home Authority;
- be willing to disclose all relevant details e.g. procedures and standards;
- be prepared to supply evidence in support of statements, procedures and claims; and
- accept all advice offered by your Home Authority in good faith, recognising that it may subsequently have to be amended due to changes in legislation, case law, etc.

How does a Home Authority liaise with other local authorities?

All local authorities have a statutory responsibility to enforce the law in their areas and undertake investigations, inspections etc of a business, even if they are not the Home Authority for that business. The Home Authority Principle encourages local authorities to effectively liaise and communicate with a business' Home Authority before undertaking an enforcement role, local authorities are sometimes referred to as

Enforcing Authorities.

A business producing goods and services at a different location from where its head office is based, will also have contact with the local authorities where those production sites are located. The local authorities at these locations are sometimes referred to as **Originating Authorities**, and they will also have responsibility to ensure the business complies with all relevant legislation. Again the Home Authority Principle encourages these local authorities to effectively liaise and communicate with a business' Home Authority.

What is the role of LACORS?

LACORS helps support the operation of the Home Authority Principle by issuing guidance and hosting the Home Authority database on its website. The database is accessible to local authorities only and provides an important route of communication between the Enforcing Authorities and Home Authorities. LACORS can also have a role in resolving disputes and will assist where there are difficulties in relation to the identification of an appropriate Home Authority.

