



A Guide to Primary Authority

Understand how it can help you!

What is Primary Authority?

Primary Authority is a national government-backed scheme that enables businesses to form a legal partnership with a local authority to receive bespoke, assured regulatory advice on environmental health and fire safety regulations.

NCASS have Primary Authority (PA) partnerships with **The Royal Borough of Greenwich**, **Wrexham County Borough Council (for Wales)** and **East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service**.

We work with our PA partners so that the sector specific advice, guidance and resources that we create for our members, is assured – it is approved and trusted by the PA scheme. This means that the NCASS Safety Management System (SMS), The Digital SMS and our training courses have been checked, verified and come with a seal of approval.

This makes regulation more efficient and consistent – instead of having hundreds of different Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) from across the UK review and comment on the NCASS SMS, this is done by just our PA Partners. This approval is then recognised by local authorities.

How it helps you:

As an NCASS member you are automatically covered by the PA scheme.

[The NCASS Digital SMS](#) and training courses e.g. [Level 2 Food Hygiene](#), [Safe Use of LPG](#) and [Allergen Awareness](#) courses have been assured by our PA partners. So you can have confidence in your membership resources, that they are up to date, accurate and meet the expectations of EHOs.

It enables you to stand out from others because you are following assured advice and guidance that is backed by a government scheme.

EHOs must contact our PA partners before taking any enforcement action against you, providing an opportunity for them to review the course of action and where appropriate negotiate a better outcome that ensures compliance without the need for enforcement action.

If you are properly implementing the NCASS SMS, your EHO will have no reason to request that you swap to using another system instead e.g. Safer Food Better Business (SFBB). While they may be more familiar with other systems, it should not be necessary for an NCASS member who is effectively implementing their SMS, to

use an alternative system. You have the option to review and improve your implementation of the NCASS SMS if this is found to be lacking.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich, who are the NCASS Primary Authority Partner have provided the following supporting statement:

“We have supported and assured the [NCASS Safety Management System](#) as part of the Primary Authority Partnership scheme. The system can confidently be used as an alternative to the SFBB system to help businesses understand and demonstrate their compliance.”

For more information refer to our guide comparing [Safer Food Better Business pack with the NCASS Safety Management System](#)

01.

At the start of any routine inspection or intervention, remind the EHO that you are an NCASS member and part of a PA scheme.



02.

If the EHO insists you should be using an alternative system e.g. SFBB, then politely push back.

Give NCASS a call, we can help you explain to the EHO why the system is suitable and has additional benefits for your business. We can also help you to improve your implementation of the system, if the EHO has outlined this as an area of required improvement.

03.

If your EHO has specific concerns about the NCASS SMS then please remind them to contact our PA partners, in line with the PA scheme.

04.

You can help by making sure you are properly familiar with the NCASS SMS and have adapted your risk assessment in line with your business procedures, so what is written down reflects what is happening in real life. Implementation is key to success!

