

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD**

**UPDATE ON OUTBREAK OF E.COLI O157 IN SOUTH WALES AND  
SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS**

**Background**

An outbreak of *E.coli* O157, which resulted in over 150 cases, including one fatality, and affected 42 schools, occurred in South Wales in the period September to December 2005. In all, 28 children and five adults were treated in hospital. The outbreak was declared over on 20 December 2005.

**Investigations**

South Wales Police are leading a wide-ranging investigation that is ongoing.

**Chief Medical Officer's Review**

The review report was published on 6 January 2006. Action is underway in relation to many of the recommendations addressed to the Agency. The Agency is a member of the steering group to consider the recommendations made in the review and ongoing action.

**Public Inquiry**

The National Assembly for Wales has established the Inquiry under the Inquiries Act 2005 under the chairmanship of Professor Hugh Pennington with the following terms of reference:

“To inquire into the circumstances that led to the outbreak of the *E.coli* O157 investigation in South Wales in September 2005 and into the handling of the outbreak; and to consider the implications for the future and make recommendations accordingly.”

The Inquiry held its Preliminary Hearing on Tuesday, 27th June 2006.

The Preliminary Hearing is the first formal stage in the Inquiry, which is independent of the National Assembly for Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government and any other body or organisation. In his opening statement, Professor Pennington explained the nature of the Inquiry, his overall approach and how he will conduct the Inquiry as an open, transparent and thorough process.

The timing of further stages in the Inquiry will be published in due course, including its oral hearings and the appearance of witnesses. FSA Wales will liaise closely with the Inquiry team over the input required from the Agency. A full transcript of the preliminary hearing is available on the Inquiry website: <http://www.ecoliinquirywales.org.uk/ecoliinquiry>

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