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# The role of whistleblowing in the regulation of food

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# The project: whistleblowing and food regulation

- What is whistleblowing?
- What is food regulation?
- Food-borne illness – many illness; hospitalisations; deaths; cost to economy.
- What role should whistleblowers play?
- South Wales – failure by employees to disclose what was happening.

# The past: complaint focus

- Consumer complaints - primary method of receiving information about non-compliance.
- Whistleblowing - underexplored and treated the same as a complaint.
- Should be treated differently.
- Lack of standardised approach to dealing with whistleblowers.
- Many different regulators - information sharing is important.

# Methodology – how are we investigating?

- Research questions
  - What role does whistleblowing play in food regulation? How many disclosures received?
  - How do authorities deal with whistleblowing disclosures? What procedures are in place? Are they followed?
  - Where do disclosures lead?
- How are we going to answer these?
  - FOIA Requests

# Early Findings

- Small pilot sample – 40 authorities.
- Authorities are receiving whistleblowing disclosures.
- Inconsistent handling of disclosures.
- Some authorities treating same as consumer complaints.
- Non-compliance with best practice.

# What's next?

- Move from pilot phase.
- Send out all FOIA requests.
- Supplement requests with semi-structured interviews to explore deeper.
- Data analysis.
- Outputs

Questions?