



The **Anaphylaxis** campaign

Helping people with severe allergies live their lives

Lord Rooker's role in a growing awareness of allergy

The appointment of Lord Rooker as the new chair of the Food Standards Agency has particular significance for The Anaphylaxis Campaign.

Lord Rooker – at that time known as Jeff Rooker – was Food Safety Minister at MAFF in the late 1990s when he met representatives of The Anaphylaxis Campaign to discuss food allergies. He demonstrated a good grasp of the issues and appeared to show a genuine concern both for the allergic population and the dilemma faced by the food industry.

Rooker saw the tragic side of food allergy in June 1999 during a Commons debate which coincided with the death of the Olympic athlete Ross Baillie. The 21-year-old track star suffered a devastating allergic reaction when he bit into a coronation chicken sandwich after working out with champion swimmer Mark Foster at Bath University. The sandwich contained nuts.

During the Commons debate, Rooker agreed that a Code of Practice for the catering industry would effectively address the serious issue of food allergy. Although this was not forthcoming, Rooker's term of office was an important milestone, leading to a growing campaign to raise allergy awareness among caterers that started with MAFF and continued with Food Standards Agency.

Lord Rooker replaces the outgoing chair Dame Deirdre Hutton and will take up his new duties on Monday, July 27.