

Field Operations Resourcing

1 Purpose of the paper

To provide an overview of the current resourcing issues and future challenges facing FSS Operational Delivery Division.

1.1 For information.

1.2 This paper and the accompany presentation provides an overview of the current and future resource challenges for the field and the proposed and ongoing mitigation actions.

1.3 The Board is asked to:

- **Note the resource and delivery challenges for the field;**
- **Determine and agree whether the Board wishes to review its risk appetite given the challenges identified in this paper**

2 Strategic aims

2.1 This work supports FSS Strategic Outcome 1 – Food is Safe and Authentic; 3 – Responsible Food Businesses are enabled to thrive; 5 – FSS is trusted and influential.

3 Background

3.1 FSS provides a range of services, largely statutory functions known as Official Controls (OCs), in abattoirs, approved meat and game handling establishments throughout Scotland. The Food Standards Agency provide a similar service for England and Wales, while in Northern Ireland it is provided by The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

The majority of the services are charged to Food Business Operators (FBOs) with some paid for by SG and OGDs such as the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD). In order to deliver this service FSS employ around 120 staff made up Operations Leadership Team, Meat Hygiene Inspectors (MHIs) and Official Veterinarians (OVs). The Retained Regulation (EU) 2017/625, together with the Meat (Official Controls Charges) (Scotland) Regulations 2009 as amended, requires that FBOs are charged for OCs which are discharged by our MHIs and OVs.

In 2019, the FSS CEO commissioned an advisory review and a “Culture Survey” of the Operations Branch in FSS. This was in response to the 2018 Staff Survey results, which noted areas of concern around the themes of “leadership and

management of change”, “my manager”, “learning and development” and “pay and benefits”.

The main outcome of the review was a new delivery structure for the field, which following Executive and Board support was introduced in the spring of 2022. This created an operational platform from which the field management team service the frontline staff in the delivery of OCs in accordance with the outcomes of the FSS Strategic Plan. The continued supply of qualified resource for the new structure is vital to achieving our strategic outcomes to build and maintain an FSS team, which is fit for purpose today and for the future.

4 Discussion

4.1 The Executive normally makes decisions on field resourcing matters.

The reason why this matter is being brought to the Board at this time is to provide members with an overview of the current and future challenges that exist to resourcing for the field, the evolving risks to FSS being able to meet its statutory obligations, and the range of proposed and ongoing mitigating actions to tackle these. The Board will also be aware that in relation to legal issues –in this case being able to meet statutory requirements – the risk appetite is **averse** to approaches that fall short of legal requirements. Annex A includes the latest FSS risk appetite decisions.

Since leaving the EU there remains ongoing and serious challenge and concurrent pressures in both recruiting and retaining our veterinary workforce, ranging from the UKG approach to immigration to the higher salary differentials that are offered to OVs by the private sector. The full details of the resource and delivery challenges are contained within slide 5 of the accompanying presentation. A summary of the proposed and ongoing mitigation actions is detailed below:

- Continuation of the pay supplement of £4K for OVs
- Use of a contractor to support the core FSS employed model to provide a more effective/flexible approach to deployment as and when needed.
- Deploy MHIs to undertake Feed OCs.
- Recruitment of 4 Trainee Meat Hygiene Inspectors (TMHI) (FSS staff and 1 MHI (contractor staff)
- Review of Fish Hubs model:
- Explore potential business opportunities for income generation and sharing resource with OGD such as APHA.

4.2 Resource and Finance - The annual OV pay supplement of £4K has continued to be applied for 2022/23 and there is a business case being considered by the Executive recruitment panel to recruit 4 TMHIs and 1 agency MHI to address some

of the upcoming resource challenges, coupled with a proposed non-competitive agreement with a contractor, to provide a flexible support function to the core FSS employed structure. There is a strong likelihood that in order for FSS to continue to meet its statutory obligations it will require to pass on any increase in service charges to the meat industry.

4.3 Legal considerations/legal basis - FSS are the competent authority for the delivery of meat hygiene OCs in Scotland and has a statutory obligation to provide OV and MHIs to enable the operation of abattoirs, approved meat and game handling establishments.

4.4 The Operational Delivery Division have a well-established KPI system that underpins the performance management of OV and MHIs. FSS will monitor the implementation of the mitigation actions through the KPI system, in particular the KPIs of 72% for utilisation and 4% for absence management.

5 Identification of risks and issues

5.1 Without the proposed and ongoing mitigation actions there is a significant risk that FSS could fail to meet its statutory obligations as a competent authority as defined in food law and its statutory obligation to provide OV and MHIs to enable the operation of abattoirs, approved meat and game handling establishments.

5.2 The wider impacts and risks are presented in slide 8 'Forward Look' of the presentation that accompanies this paper.

6 Equality Impact Assessment and Fairer Scotland Duty

6.1 An EQIA has not been completed specifically for this paper, however due consideration will be given to this, and the requirements of the Fairer Scotland Duty, as FSS implement the proposed mitigation actions for field operations resourcing.

7 Conclusion/Recommendations

7.1 By implementing all of the mitigation actions to address its resource challenges, FSS will be in a position to build and maintain a strong workforce for the field, both now and for the future. By not doing so there is a significant risk that FSS will be unable to meet its statutory obligations and deliver a sustainable meat hygiene OC service to industry.

7.2 The Board is asked to:

- **Note the resource and delivery challenges for the field.**
- **Determine and agree whether the Board wishes to review its risk appetite given the challenges identified in this paper**

Please direct queries to:

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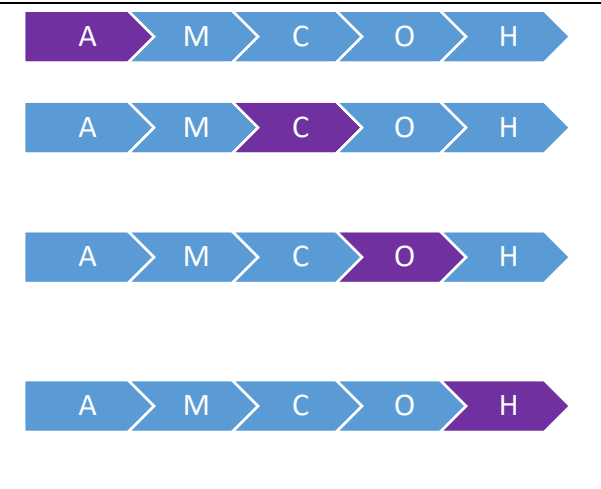
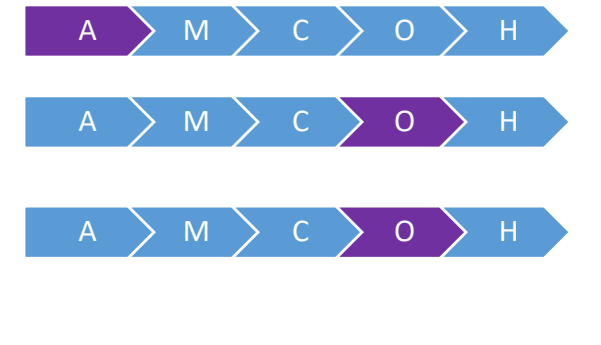
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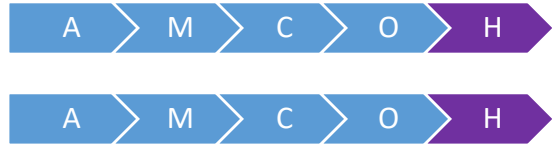
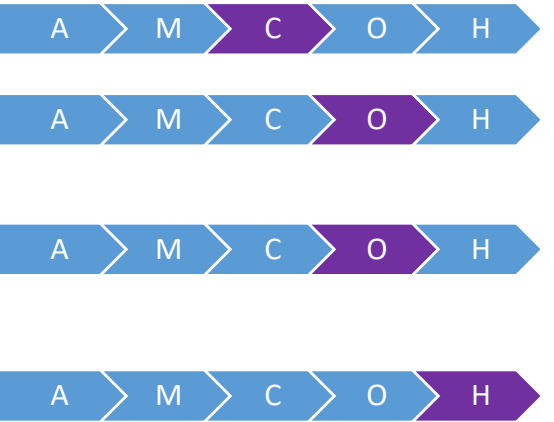
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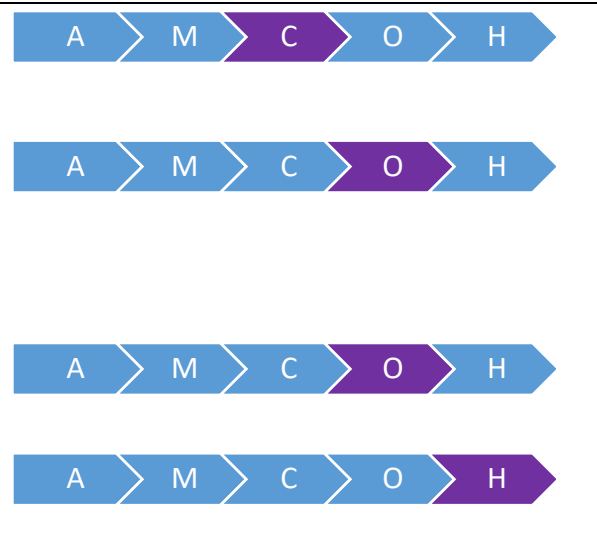
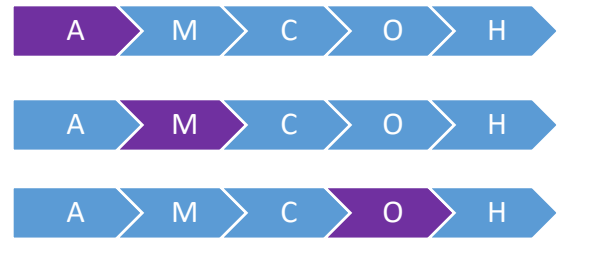
Annex A

FSS Risk Appetite



<p>Public Health / Consumer Protection</p>	<p>Averse to material risks that have potentially significant impact on public health</p> <p>Cautious where there is uncertainty around the balance of risks and benefits for public health or other consumer interests</p> <p>Open to new approaches and partnerships with the potential to enhance public health/consumer protection or to improve dietary health</p> <p>Hungry for innovative ways of improving the Scottish diet and reducing risks to the food chain</p>	
<p>Policy / Legal / Regulation / Enforcement</p>	<p>Averse to approaches that fall short of legal requirements</p> <p>Open to policy/regulatory approaches that are evidence based, with the potential to produce the best outcomes in Scottish-specific circumstances</p> <p>Open to pursuing innovative approaches for implementing Regulatory Standards where analysis indicates potential for significantly improved compliance</p>	

	<p>Hungry for policy approaches that combat the food-related effects of inequalities</p> <p>Hungry to apply the principles of better regulation, applying regulatory approaches which minimise burdens on businesses where appropriate</p>	
<p>Operational Delivery</p>	<p>Averse to approaches which could potentially compromise the safety or wellbeing of staff</p> <p>Open to partnership working with the potential for improved compliance outcomes</p> <p>Hungry to consider innovation (e.g. working practices, systems, new technologies) with the potential to deliver improved efficiency and effectiveness</p> <p>Hungry to develop a skilled, confident and empowered workforce</p>	
<p>Reputation / Authority / Public Confidence</p>	<p>Cautious about activities which could impact on our ability to influence effectively to protect consumers</p> <p>Open to making evidence-based decisions and recommendations and influencing opinion where we are clear that the benefits for consumers outweigh the risk</p> <p>Open to advocacy on behalf of consumers, where there is evidence to support their interests</p> <p>Hungry to exploit communication channels which promote FSS as the trusted source of advice on food safety, standards, diet and nutrition</p>	

<p>Relationships / Partnerships</p>	<p>Cautious around our relationships with industry and government to safeguard our independence and ensure our work prioritises consumer interests</p> <p>Open to contributing to Scottish Government strategy for promoting sustainable economic growth within the Scottish food and drink sector and supporting future export markets, ensuring there is no conflict with our consumer protection role</p> <p>Open to working with all partners who are able to help us in achieving our strategic goals</p> <p>Hungry to form partnerships with the potential to influence consumers' dietary behaviour</p>	
<p>Financial</p>	<p>Averse to risks of internal fraud or corruption</p> <p>Minimalist but willing to consider options with other financial risks if they have the potential to deliver success</p> <p>Open with regard to new approaches which could impact on efficiency and value</p>	
<p>External Factors</p>	<p>Minimalist to risk of impact of external events; robust business continuity and incident management plans in mitigation</p>	