

## FOOD STANDARDS SCOTLAND

# Healthy, Safe, Sustainable: Driving Scotland's Food Future



## CORPORATE PLAN

2021-24



# INTRODUCTION

## DELIVERING OUR NEW STRATEGY: OUR FOCUS FOR THE FIRST THREE YEARS

Our Strategy for 2021-2026 sets out our vision for ***a safe, healthy and sustainable food environment that benefits and protects the health and wellbeing of everyone in Scotland***. It describes how we will meet our statutory objectives over the next five years, building on the progress we have made since FSS was established in 2015 in the context of a changing food environment, which has required us to reset our priorities and address a number of new challenges.

We aim to deliver the strategy through our over-arching mission ***to be Scotland's leading authority on food safety, standards and healthy eating; using data and evidence to provide assurance and advice that inspires consumer confidence and improves public health***.

All of our work is directed towards the achievement of our **five strategic outcomes**, outlined below:

FOOD IS SAFE AND AUTHENTIC	CONSUMERS HAVE HEALTHIER DIETS	RESPONSIBLE FOOD BUSINESSES ARE ENABLED TO THRIVE	CONSUMERS ARE EMPOWERED TO MAKE POSITIVE CHOICES ABOUT FOOD	FSS IS TRUSTED AND INFLUENTIAL
We work with partners to understand risks to the food chain and implement measures which protect public health and consumer interests	We drive and influence policy aimed at improving Scotland's diet; helping to reduce levels of overweight and obesity and the burden of diet related disease	We ensure regulations are applied fairly: enabling food and feed businesses in Scotland to comply with the law and gain the trust of consumers and export markets	We promote a food environment which requires businesses to provide clear and accurate information that enables consumers to make informed purchasing decisions	We are recognised by consumers and stakeholders as Scotland's leading authority on food law and public health nutrition

Delivery of these outcomes is based on 6 goals, each of which is supported by four key activities. This corporate plan describes the programmes of work under each of these activities between 2021-24. Our progress will be reviewed annually through a set of performance metrics that will enable us to monitor delivery and assess how our activities are contributing towards the five strategic outcomes.

We have identified three strategic priorities for 2021-24, to help us to target resources to address what we consider to be our most important challenges at the current time: (i) *driving action to improve Scotland's diet*; (ii) *maintaining high levels of regulatory assurance beyond EU Exit*; and, (iii) *continuing to build the trust of consumers and stakeholders through the provision of robust, evidence based advice which enables us to influence food policy for the benefit of Scotland*.

## OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2021-24



### IMPROVING SCOTLAND'S DIET

Poor dietary outcomes present a significant threat to Scotland's health, prosperity and success. Two out of three adults are living with overweight or obesity and action taken by Scottish Government has had limited impact on the achievement of dietary goals.

*Scotland's diet has to change. FSS has a key role to play in driving progress - putting pressure on government and industry to improve the food environment and working with partners to improve dietary outcomes.*



### REGULATORY ASSURANCE

Leaving the EU has transformed the regulatory landscape, requiring FSS and our food law delivery partners to take on new responsibilities as we face significant challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be important to work with stakeholders to ensure our regulatory assurance systems keep pace with changes to our food environment - continuing to drive compliance, maintain high standards and safeguard public health.

*We will continue to promote better regulation, working with stakeholders to deliver a sustainable, resilient regulatory model which will maintain robust assurance over Scotland's food and feed chain into the future.*



### IMPACT AND TRUST

The food environment is a dynamic and crowded space, generating increasing amounts of information which can be confusing for consumers and businesses. As Scotland's leading food authority, it is essential that our advice continues to be supported by robust evidence and that we are able to communicate risks effectively in order to maintain the trust of consumers and influence policy on their behalf.

*By maintaining a strong science and risk analysis capability, supported by effective strategies for engaging with the people of Scotland, we will strengthen the impact of the information and advice we provide to protect public health and consumer interests.*

## SUSTAINABILITY






















We have committed to delivering our strategy for 2021-26 in the context of wider environmental, food and health policies and consumer interests relating to sustainability. This extends through all of the work described in this corporate plan; ensuring we deliver our goals in a sustainable manner and consider environmental and societal impacts when developing and implementing new policies on food safety, standards and nutrition. We will support research and policy on sustainable food systems and help Scottish Government and partner organisations such as Zero Waste Scotland to deliver strategies which promote sustainability in Scotland's supply chains-ensuring potential trade-offs relating to food safety and nutrition are addressed.

### Examples of our interests in this area include:

- Research and policy on sustainable food production
- Defining the principles for a healthy sustainable diet
- Interventions for mitigating the impacts of climate change on food production
- Food waste reduction initiatives and the circular economy for food
- Alternative protein sources for food and animal feed

# THE SIX GOALS AND HOW THEY CONTRIBUTE TO OUR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

	FOOD IS SAFE AND AUTHENTIC	CONSUMERS HAVE HEALTHIER DIETS	RESPONSIBLE FOOD BUSINESSES ARE ENABLED TO THRIVE	CONSUMERS ARE EMPOWERED TO MAKE POSITIVE CHOICES ABOUT FOOD	FSS IS TRUSTED AND INFLUENTIAL
<b>GOAL 1 - A food safety and standards assurance system that commands international respect and consumer confidence, supporting the Scottish economy beyond EU Exit.</b>					
<b>GOAL 2- A regulatory system that engages with businesses to educate and enable compliance, rewards best practice and applies appropriate sanctions when laws are broken.</b>					
<b>GOAL 3 - A research and data science capability which enables us to detect risks, monitor public health trends and consumer behaviours and translate evidence into action.</b>					
<b>GOAL 4 - A food environment which empowers consumers to make safe, healthy, and sustainable choices.</b>					
<b>GOAL 5- Be respected as an authority on food protection and public health nutrition, promoting change through impactful relationships within and beyond Scotland that enable us to influence, learn and collaborate.</b>					
<b>GOAL 6 - Engage with all parts of society in Scotland; understanding the issues that matter to consumers and providing information that is tailored to their needs.</b>					

# DELIVERING OUR GOALS: CORE ACTIVITIES BETWEEN 2021-24

## GOAL 1:

**A food safety and standards assurance system that commands international respect and consumer confidence, supporting the Scottish economy beyond EU Exit.**

## WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR SCOTLAND

Leaving the EU, and the enactment of the Internal Market Act 2020<sup>1</sup> has introduced complexity to the UK's food policy and trading environment, and the regulatory frameworks required to protect our food chain. In order to manage these changes, and maintain the high standards that already exist in Scotland, FSS will continue to build effective working relationships with UK Government and international food authorities. Taking over functions which were previously provided through our membership of the EU has also required FSS to implement new processes for identifying and analysing risks which ensure appropriate levels of regulatory oversight to protect consumers, and provide assurance to our future trading partners that food and animal feed produced in Scotland meets their requirements.

## KEY ACTIVITIES

**1. Work collaboratively across the UK and apply robust risk analysis processes to ensure the interests of Scottish consumers continue to be protected.**

From 1 January 2021, FSS and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) became responsible for assessing food and animal feed safety risks in the UK - a function which was previously carried out by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Commission. To deliver this, we have jointly developed a structured risk analysis process based on international best practice, which is supported by the UK's independent Scientific Advisory Committees<sup>2</sup>. This enables us to assess, manage and communicate risks to food and animal feed on a four-country basis. The key purpose of the risk analysis process is to inform recommendations to Ministers in the devolved administrations and the UK Government on changes to food and feed safety legislation, and the authorisation of new products (such as flavourings, enzymes or additives) through a UK Common Framework on Food and Feed Safety and Hygiene.

### ***We will deliver this by:***

- Facilitating, alongside Scottish and UK government leads, the implementation of common frameworks in FSS policy areas and effective partnership working which ensures these agreements are clearly understood and applied;
- Consolidating the dedicated structure and processes which have been established within FSS for undertaking our risk analysis responsibilities; maintaining a clear separation between risk assessment and risk management functions, and providing a co-ordinated mechanism for ensuring Scotland's interests are appropriately reflected in UK risk analysis;
- Implementing the GB regulated products application, validation and authorisation process within FSS, with a framework for identifying issues relevant to Scotland, and ensuring that recommendations are made to Scottish Ministers within required regulatory timescales.

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<sup>1</sup> [United Kingdom Internal Market Act 2020 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> [Scientific Advisory Committees | Food Standards Agency](#)

## **2. Ensure products imported from other countries are safe and meet the high standards expected by Scottish consumers.**

Leaving the EU single market and customs union has required UK regulators and enforcement authorities to develop new systems for ensuring that imported animals, high risk food and feed and food contact materials comply with legislative requirements and do not present a threat to our biosecurity or public health. In order to provide assurance to consumers in Scotland, it will be important for FSS to work effectively with the FSA and across government to ensure all imported products continue to meet legislative standards and that our future trading partners comply with UK import requirements. EU Exit also requires new Border Control Posts (BCPs) to be set up in Scotland, and FSS, working alongside Scottish government and local authorities, will have a role in ensuring statutory official controls (such as documentary, identification and physical checks) are undertaken on imported food and feed when they enter the country via these BCPs.

### ***We will deliver this by:***

- Putting a strategy in place for ensuring that risk based Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) official controls are undertaken on food and feed imported into Scotland from EU Member States and other third countries; engaging with Scottish and UK government leads to influence how SPS checks are undertaken on imported products of animal origin (POAO), and collaborating with the FSA to implement systems for identifying emerging risks in imported high risk food and feed of non-animal origin (HRFFNAO);
- Providing the necessary support and guidance for local authorities in delivering SPS official controls on HRFNAO (food) entering the UK at Scottish BCPs, including publication of an Imports Code of Practice, and associated practice guidance;
- Fulfilling our statutory role as Competent Authority for animal feed, by delivering a robust regime of SPS official controls on HRFNAO (feed) entering the UK via Scottish BCPs, and ensuring local authorities are suitably resourced and trained for undertaking feed official controls on behalf of FSS;
- Engaging with Scottish Ministers and stakeholders on the development of new import requirements and ensuring that guidance is in place which promotes awareness and understanding by businesses across Scotland;
- Providing technical food safety and standards expertise to support the Scottish government's engagement on current and future UK trade negotiations and priority to safeguard Scotland's high standards of food safety and consumer protection.

## **3. Develop the capability and capacity needed to ensure a robust system of official controls which are effective in detecting risks to the food chain that arise following EU Exit.**

EU Exit has placed new obligations on FSS, local authorities and the Scottish government, requiring us to review the systems in place for undertaking official controls to ensure they continue to be effective, and that we have resilience to deliver our regulatory obligations into the future. FSS will maintain the infrastructure and resources needed to support our official control regime, and ensure that our enforcement community is able to access the full range of skills and specialisms that will be integral to the effective delivery of these functions in a new regulatory landscape.

### ***We will deliver this by:***

- Developing and implementing a strategy which provides FSS with a resilient and competent workforce for delivering official controls across the Scottish meat and seafood industries. This strategy will ensure competence in official controls relating to food safety and those FSS undertakes on behalf of the Scottish government, including animal welfare, animal by-products, cattle identification, veterinary medicines testing and export certification;

- Supporting local authorities in maintaining and strengthening technical expertise and capability for delivering official control requirements through the updating of codes of practice and the provision of specialist training and guidance;
- Working with professional bodies for environmental health and food safety to modernise the route to professional entry, promoting a sustainable training and recruitment pathway that supports the profession now and for the future;
- Reviewing FSS's new delivery model for feed official controls to ensure the necessary resources and expertise are in place to provide robust levels of assurance, rolling out an annual training plan to maintain required levels of officer competency;
- Collaborating with the Scottish government, FSA and local authorities to develop a robust and resilient laboratory capacity and capability needed to deliver an effective official controls regime across the food and feed chain;
- Building strong relationships with other regulators, both domestically and internationally, to share intelligence on risks to the food chain and learn from best practice to inform our risk management and regulatory approaches.

#### **4. Implement assurance systems which protect the interests of Scottish consumers and exporting businesses requiring certification that products meet the standards of countries to which they are being exported.**

FSS's role in providing assurance over the safety, standards, and traceability of our food and feed supply chains supports the economic growth of these industries, instilling confidence in consumers and supporting Scotland's international reputation as a land of high quality food and drink. Leaving the EU has required FSS to strengthen its regulatory assurance functions to ensure that changes to our trading arrangements with the EU and other countries do not introduce risks to our domestic food chain and that we are able to support UK and Scottish government in facilitating export from food businesses in Scotland.

##### ***We will deliver this by:***

- Continuing to deliver an effective audit assurance system which ensures that food and feed legislation is properly applied across Scotland, maintaining high levels of assurance for consumers and trading partners and promoting best practice and continuous improvement in a positive and transparent manner;
- Updating the system for approving food businesses to create a system of 'Approved Exporting Businesses' that aligns with EU requirements and ensures the Export National Listing meets the needs of Scottish exporters;
- Undertaking official controls required for Scottish meat exports and supporting the export of Scottish seafood by resourcing and co-ordinating official controls in certification hubs across Scotland;
- Developing guidance and advice which ensures industry, enforcement authorities and consumers have a clear understanding of the impacts of new UK trading arrangements on food and feed safety and standards and how the Internal Market Act applies to regulatory standards across the UK;
- Leading Scotland's international assurance functions for food and feed safety and standards by supporting missions from countries importing from Scottish businesses, and contributing to UK audits and inspections overseas to ensure that exporting countries meet UK requirements;
- Working collaboratively with the FSA to jointly produce an annual report on the state of UK food safety and standards, to be laid before the UK and devolved Parliaments and Assemblies, as well any supplementary *ad hoc* reports that may be needed on the impact of new or prospective UK trade agreements on food safety and consumer protection.

## GOAL 2

**A regulatory system that engages with businesses to educate and enable compliance, rewards best practice, and applies appropriate sanctions when laws are broken.**

### WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR SCOTLAND

FSS's Regulatory Strategy<sup>3</sup> lays out how we deliver our statutory functions, and work with our partners to promote compliance across the food and feed industries in Scotland. We use a national 'compliance spectrum' approach which aims to ensure that food and feed businesses operating responsibly benefit from risk-based and proportionate regulation, and that dissuasive action is taken with those businesses which do not comply with legal requirements. In order to target interventions in this way, we require a flexible, evidence-based and sustainable delivery model, and effective relationships with businesses and enforcement authorities which help us to implement regulatory approaches that promote compliance and ensure the highest standards of food and feed safety and authenticity into the future.

### KEY ACTIVITIES

**1. Lead and support partners responsible for delivering food law in Scotland in implementing a fair, consistent and effective system of regulation.**

Maintaining effective working relationships with our local authority delivery partners, other regulators and the industry will be essential in achieving the aims of our Regulatory Strategy, especially as our food and feed industries recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Through collaborative approaches to regulation and the provision of guidance, we will develop frameworks that enable responsible businesses in Scotland to comply with their obligations and ensure that regulatory action is targeted, consistent and effective. These relationships, alongside our links with fellow law enforcement organisations also play a key role in our work to prevent, investigate, detect and disrupt food crime.

***We will deliver this by:***

- Working with Scottish local authorities to implement a COVID-19 Recovery Plan ( developed during the pandemic) to re-set the food law delivery programme against the Code of Practice in line with Scottish government's strategic framework<sup>4</sup>;
- Continuing to meet our legal obligations for delivering official controls in slaughterhouses, cutting plants and game handling establishments, ensuring the requirements of the Official Control Regulation are fully implemented, and working with food business operators, APHA, Scottish government and local authorities to protect animal welfare;
- Driving a consistent approach to official control delivery across Scotland; ensuring food business approvals are undertaken in accordance with the Scottish National Protocol<sup>5</sup>, and implementing the Official Control Verification model in FSS approved meat establishments and food businesses subject to enforcement by local authorities;
- Working with delivery partners and the shellfish industry to implement approaches for monitoring the safety of shellfish harvesting waters; optimising the use of data and sampling resources to provide high levels of public health protection and assurance;

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<sup>3</sup> [FSS Regulatory Strategy | Food Standards Scotland](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Strategic Framework update - February 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Approved Establishments Scottish National Protocol | Food Standards Scotland](#)



- Reviewing and updating codes of practice, guidance, supporting protocols and advice on the application of food and feed law needed to ensure FSS and the local authority enforcement community deliver consistent and effective official controls and enforcement activity;
- Implementing new compliance notices and an overarching Code of Practice for penalties and sanctions, to support the enforcement of food law and food information breaches in Scotland, providing training and guidance to authorised officers to ensure competence and consistency;
- Working with local authorities and the food industry to assess the feasibility of regulatory assurance schemes which allow information generated by third party audits to be taken into account in food law delivery regimes in Scotland;
- Continuing to support the Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee (SFELC)<sup>6</sup> as a means of co-ordinating food and feed safety enforcement activity, sharing best practice, and developing guidance to assist in the delivery of consistent enforcement throughout Scotland;
- Strengthening operating models across Scotland for tackling food crime; collaborating with local authorities, Police Scotland and other enforcement authorities to achieve the most effective operational response in relation to threat, risk and harm, and providing support and advice through access to subject matter expertise and specialist resources.

## **2. Develop evidence based regulatory approaches which are tailored to address the needs of different sectors and improve business compliance levels.**

A key aim of our strategy is to apply data-driven approaches which enable us to tailor interventions for improving compliance to the needs of different sectors. We have already developed a number of IT platforms which enable us to centrally record FSS and local authority records relating to food and feed businesses across Scotland and review trends in compliance. Over the next three years we will develop these systems further to enhance the collection, analysis and reporting of data relating to food law delivery and incidents. By combining this evidence with insights from social research, we will be able to build a compliance profile of the food and feed industry in Scotland which will inform the targeting of interventions and identify where improvements can be made through technical support and guidance.

### ***We will deliver this by:***

- Embedding digitalisation and technology into our Regulatory Strategy to provide a cohesive approach to the development of FSS-wide IT systems which allow us to record, monitor and target official control activities across all food and feed industry sectors;
- Analysing trends in data relating to food and feed incidents reported in Scotland and undertaking root cause analysis to identify common risks and issues to support the targeting of intervention approaches for improving compliance;
- Developing appropriate tools and guidance which help businesses in Scotland to comply with food and feed law based on an understanding of the needs of different sectors and their barriers and motivators to compliance.

## **3. Work with stakeholders to develop and implement more efficient and sustainable approaches for delivering official controls and regulatory assurance for food and feed law, including a new national model for animal feed in Scotland.**

Through our Regulatory Strategy, we have identified scope to build greater resilience into our models for delivering official controls for food and feed in Scotland. This has led to the implementation of a new national model for animal feed from 1 April 2021, with FSS taking over the Competent Authority role and co-ordinating delivery through Scottish local authorities. Over the next three years we will review and refine this

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<sup>6</sup> [Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee | Food Standards Scotland](#)

model as it is rolled out, ensuring it maintains high levels of assurance over our animal feed chain and adapts to changing priorities. In parallel, we will also examine more sustainable methods of official control delivery for all industry sectors, with the strategic aim of enabling and maintaining high levels of business compliance across Scotland.

***We will deliver this by:***

- Enhancing the delivery of our Competent Authority obligations for undertaking official controls on animal feed in Scotland; ensuring a national and consistent approach to delivery, (including delegation to competent third parties) through standardised protocols, training, and centralised digital recording which enables analysis and reporting of enforcement outcomes;
- Leading a review of food law delivery at primary production with the aim of identifying how the regulation of this sector can be modernised and improved;
- Working with the FSA to identify improved models for delivering official controls in meat plants which optimise the use of data and resources to provide more targeted, consistent and sustainable approaches for the future;
- Continuing to work in partnership with the Scottish meat, seafood and logistics industries to seek operational efficiencies in the delivery of official controls to facilitate export requirements;
- Collaborating with local authorities and other stakeholders to drive continuous improvement in the official control regime across Scotland; ensuring delivery models adapt to changes in the food and feed landscape, make best use of available expertise and resources, and are sustainable into the future.

**4. Develop a national framework that provides the scope and high-level principles for any future funding of official controls.**

Our programme of work to develop more sustainable approaches for delivering official controls on food and feed will also explore options for future funding, including mechanisms for extending the existing charging regime for meat inspection and seafood certification to other sectors to ensure a standardised approach across the industry.

***We will deliver this by:***

- Continuing to work with Scottish local authorities, the meat and seafood industries and other stakeholders to identify a proportionate, consistent and transparent approach to cost recovery, linked to business performance and compliance;
- Engaging with stakeholders to assess the application and feasibility of mandatory fees and charges across relevant industry sectors.

## GOAL 3

**A research and data science capability which enables us to detect risks, monitor public health trends and consumer behaviours, and translate evidence into action.**

### WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR SCOTLAND

FSS relies on robust, up-to-date science and evidence to identify and understand risks to the food chain and public health, and underpin our statutory consumer protection and regulatory functions. In order to build the strong evidence base needed to support risk analysis, and ensure our recommendations and advice are trusted and influential, it is important that we have appropriate governance processes in place for ensuring the quality of our research outputs and access to secure digitalised systems for collecting, analysing, sharing and presenting data. The evidence generated through our official controls, investigations, research, monitoring and surveillance programmes is integral to everything we do, and our science strategy aims to ensure we have the expertise and processes in place that enable us to use it effectively.

### KEY ACTIVITIES

**1. Develop and embed an enhanced data science and analytics capability, employing common standards and secure systems which translate and present FSS data in a way that enables it to be used effectively.**

A key aim for this new strategy is to become a more data driven organisation – optimising how we utilise the wealth of data that is collected across FSS and accessing external data sources which can support policy development and the delivery of our objectives. We have recognised the significant value that data science can contribute across all areas of our business, and the need for a strategic approach to ensure we are able to optimise its use. Improving our digital capabilities will also enable us to share our data more widely with others who are able to gain benefit from it, and make it available for research to generate new insights that can add value to our work. In order to do this, we will need to develop platforms that ensure our data is robust and accessible, and tools that enable our staff and external stakeholders to work with it.

#### ***We will deliver this by:***

- Developing a new data and digital strategy for optimising the accessibility and value of data collected across FSS, using platforms which support its analysis and presentation and enable us to share it with stakeholders;
- Strengthening our data science and digital capabilities by developing FSS staff, and building collaborations across the Scottish government and with external parties to share expertise and gain access to external sources which we can use to draw new insights from our own data;
- Producing interactive dashboards for analysing and reporting FSS and local authority food and feed law delivery and surveillance data in ways that enable it to be used across the enforcement community to report on performance and promote best practice;
- Digitalising the collection and presentation of data on consumer intakes and food purchasing in retail and out of home environments to support impactful reporting of trends in dietary behaviours;
- Working with the FSA and the research community to explore the use of digital and machine learning methods for understanding risks and protecting the Scottish food chain.

## **2. Implement a new research strategy which takes account of the changing food environment and consumer behaviours, promoting collaboration and ensuring FSS evidence needs are clearly defined and communicated throughout the science community.**

FSS's research programme plays a key role in the creation, development and evaluation of policy, and it is important that it is reviewed on an on-going basis to take account of our changing evidence needs. For our new strategy we have identified three priority research areas which we aim to develop as part of this Corporate Plan: i) using social research to improve our understanding of consumer attitudes, behaviours and perceptions; ii) working with partners to promote 'One Health' approaches to research on foodborne illness through improved linkage of food surveillance, environmental, veterinary and clinical data; and, iii) considering how environmental and economic factors influence our food system and dietary behaviours. Over the next three years we intend to develop a more co-ordinated approach to our science programme; prioritising the dissemination and communication of research requirements and outputs to identify gaps in our evidence base and promote the multidisciplinary approaches needed to address them.

### ***We will deliver this by:***

- Reviewing our evidence needs throughout the year based on priorities for our policy development, regulatory and risk analysis functions, ensuring an appropriate balance across strategic outcomes;
- Publishing our evidence priorities, seeking the views of stakeholders on priorities for research, surveillance and monitoring and opportunities for collaboration and joint funding;
- Collaborating with Public Health Scotland and NHS partners to improve the linkage of research, surveillance and epidemiological data; providing insights which improve our understanding of foodborne illness, dietary health outcomes and food allergy and hypersensitivity in Scotland;
- Enhancing our use of economic, social, climate and behavioural science to understand changing consumer interests and other legitimate factors to support our risk analysis and public health interventions, advice and recommendations;
- Engaging proactively with strategic research programmes on food systems and public health through Scottish Government's Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services (RESAS), UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and other funders; fostering collaboration, and influencing proposals and outputs to optimise policy impact.

## **3. Strengthen FSS's evidence base on diet and health by monitoring trends in food purchasing, intakes and insights on behaviours which impact on dietary choices and food practices using state of the art monitoring tools, social science, and market research.**

FSS has established a comprehensive dietary monitoring programme combining dietary intake, consumer insights and purchasing patterns, to establish a full picture of dietary habits in Scotland. We will build on this programme to focus on a data-driven digital approach to identify key areas for dietary improvement, provide evidence to the Scottish government and make robust recommendations to influence diet policy. Our digital solution, Intake24 will be used innovatively to extend our evidence base to include minority population groups and explore wider impacts on diet such as the contribution of calories from alcohol. Through our partnership with Public Health Scotland, we will also seek, wherever possible, to link outputs of dietary monitoring with data on health outcomes to highlight the burden of diet related disease.

### ***We will deliver this by:***

- Developing a dietary monitoring strategy for Scotland incorporating datasets on purchasing, intakes and consumer attitudes;
- Implementing a new national programme for monitoring the dietary intakes of the Scottish population against the Scottish Dietary Goals, using Intake24 within the Scottish Health Survey (SHeS) and enabling a comparison of dietary intakes with health parameters collected in the SHeS;

- Using the data sets generated by Intake24 to carry out more detailed demographic analyses of dietary trends in different age ranges, Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and under-represented groups;
- Exploring new ways of using of consumer retail and Out of Home (OoH) purchase data to provide an up-to-date indication of changes in purchasing behaviour;
- Using monitoring data to assess the impact of changes in the food environment and provide evidence and recommendations to the Scottish government on diet policy.

#### **4. Develop our evidence base on food safety and food authenticity through improved horizon scanning and surveillance strategies which are capable of identifying emerging risks.**

FSS has developed and implemented a food surveillance strategy for Scotland<sup>7</sup>, which has provided a model for the collection, recording, analysis and interpretation of information and intelligence relating to the safety and standards of food and animal feed. This is underpinned by a structured approach to horizon scanning; drawing on relevant data and working with the FSA and other stakeholders to identify potential emerging and future risks to the Scottish food chain. Evidence generated through horizon scanning and surveillance plays a key role in informing risk analysis, targeting regulatory resources, and directing approaches to food sampling. Strengthening our capabilities in these areas will therefore continue to be a key priority for our science and evidence programme over the next three years.

##### ***We will deliver this by:***

- Continuing to develop our horizon scanning capability, through joint working with the FSA to monitor global trends in food safety and food fraud, and improving the integration and analysis of intelligence to detect issues that could present risks to the food chain and public health in Scotland;
- Designing a sustainable food sampling strategy for Scotland which supports the verification of official controls and the provision of evidence needed to support food chain surveillance and risk assessment;
- Improving our use of external data sources to monitor social, economic and market research trends which are capable of identifying changes that signal potential risks to the food chain and public health in Scotland;
- Working with the FSA to ensure there is laboratory provision for food and feed testing programmes through the appointment of UK Official Control and National Reference laboratories in accordance with the Retained Regulation 2017/625<sup>8</sup> for Official Feed and Food Controls;
- Engaging with Scottish government, Public Health Scotland, official laboratories and research providers to support national capability for whole genome sequencing and other scientific methods required for statutory testing and surveillance needs in Scotland.

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<sup>7</sup> [Food surveillance system | Food Standards Scotland](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products](#)

## GOAL 4

### **A food environment which empowers consumers to make safe, healthy, and sustainable choices.**

#### **WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR SCOTLAND**

Everyone in Scotland has the right to know where their food comes from, what it contains, and how it has been produced. The Scottish diet must change and a priority for our strategy is to drive better health outcomes from food choices. Food availability and labelling has a direct impact on the choices consumers make, and producers, retailers and caterers all have a role to play in enabling us to make informed decisions through the provision of safe, healthy and sustainable food and accurate information about its composition and provenance. Consumers should also be able to trust the authenticity of their food purchases and recognise when they may be vulnerable to fraud. Over the next three years FSS will continue to drive and influence policies aimed at creating a food environment which promotes consumer choice and provides the information people need to make informed decisions about where they eat and the food they buy.

#### **KEY ACTIVITIES**

**1. Engage with the public, businesses, local authorities, and interest groups to develop a new consumer information scheme which allows the people of Scotland to make informed choices about where they purchase food based on compliance with food law.**

The Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS) was introduced in Scotland in 2006, and since then has played a key role in improving the transparency of information on the compliance of food businesses with legal hygiene requirements. Through our regulatory strategy, we undertook a review of FHIS which recommended that the scheme should be updated to cover a wider scope of compliance information, and that consideration should be given to making it mandatory. Over the next three years we will take work forward to develop proposals for a new consumer information scheme which provides greater transparency for consumers in Scotland and promotes compliance across our food industry.

##### ***We will deliver this by:***

- Developing a proposal for a new consumer information scheme covering all aspects of food law, consulting with consumers and interest groups to ensure it encapsulates modern consumer trends and preferences;
- Identifying the legal basis for implementing the mandatory display of information by food businesses;
- Designing a new digital platform which improves public access to food business information to raise awareness and promote uptake by consumers.

**2. Improve the transparency of labelling on food and drink, supporting businesses in providing accurate food safety, nutritional and allergen information.**

The food labelling and composition standards currently in place in the UK were developed to protect consumers' interests and facilitate trade within an EU context. These standards play a key role in enabling consumer choice by ensuring labelling information is consistent and understandable. A common approach which enables consumers to easily identify ingredients is particularly important with regard to food hypersensitivity, as for those with a food allergy, certain ingredients can trigger life threatening reactions. Labelling and composition standards are also important in providing consumers with the information they need to make healthy choices and to prepare food safely. Now that Scotland is outside the EU, FSS will work to maintain and strengthen the existing high standards of consumer information and labelling relating to food marketed in Scotland.

***We will deliver this by:***

- Ensuring effective implementation of new legal requirements for allergen and ingredient labelling on food sold prepacked for direct sale (PPDS) in Scotland by October 2021; engaging with local authorities and industry and delivering proactive communication campaigns to raise consumer awareness;
- Developing sector specific technical guidance to support businesses in complying with allergen labelling requirements, including the use of tools such as MenuCal<sup>9</sup>;
- Creating a new digital hub to act as a one-stop-shop on allergen information and guidance for consumers, industry and local authorities;
- Reviewing and updating the voluntary front of pack nutrition labelling scheme in conjunction with the other administrations across the UK;
- Providing advice and recommendations when required by the Scottish government and other administrations across the UK to inform improvements to nutritional information on alcoholic drinks, including calorie content;
- Continuing to raise awareness of the role of food labelling in food safety and waste prevention; working with partners including Zero Waste Scotland<sup>10</sup> to promote understanding and safe practice;
- Collaborating with the other administrations across the UK on reviews of food information and labelling, including any future proposals to amend retained EU legislation, and supporting Scottish Ministers in meeting obligations under international and UK law, with respect to the impact of labelling and composition standards on trade and the UK internal market.

**3. Drive and influence strategies for improving access to healthy and sustainable food and drink for the people of Scotland, drawing on evidence from international best practice and forming partnerships which facilitate positive action.**

The food environment has a significant influence on consumer choices as unhealthy products are often the most convenient and cheapest option. Therefore, national strategies that are aimed at improving the food environment will have greatest and most equitable impact across the population. It is important that a healthy and sustainable food environment is embedded in our culture to support public health improvements, but these changes require a coordinated multifaceted approach and commitment across a number of stakeholders. FSS will play a key role in promoting these changes by building impactful relationships with key partners and influencing policy to ensure our future food environment facilitates positive changes in consumer behaviour which lead to tangible improvements in Scotland's diet.

***We will deliver this by:***

- Providing the Scottish government with evidence to support urgently needed strategies aimed at redressing the balance towards healthier choices in the retail and out of home food environment;
- Working in partnership with the Scottish government and Public Health Scotland to support policies for improving out of home food provision, including the development of nutritional criteria within a new Eating Out Eating Well framework and a Code of Practice for Children's Menus;
- Supporting businesses to provide calorie labelling at the point of consumer choice through guidance and promoting uptake of the MenuCal tool;
- Publishing evidence on the impact of out of home calorie labelling on public health and industry to inform the development of Scottish government policy;

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<sup>9</sup> [MenuCal | Food Standards Scotland](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Zero Waste Scotland](#)

- Engaging the out of home food industry on proposals for mandatory calorie labelling in the sector to help consumers make informed choices about their food and drink purchasing;
- Collaborating with the Scottish government on strategies aimed at driving reformulation by small to medium enterprises (SMEs) to reduce calories, fats, salt and sugar in products manufactured in Scotland;
- Engaging and sharing information with our international counterparts to understand policies and interventions which have proven successful in other countries, driving change towards healthy, sustainable diets, and exploring the feasibility to apply these in Scotland.

#### **4. Continue to raise awareness of the risks of food crime, ensuring consumers and those working in the food and drink sector understand how to recognise and report it.**

Criminal intelligence and investigations have highlighted the threat posed by food crime to both consumers and food businesses in Scotland. Increasing our understanding of the nature and extent of that threat is key to our ability to effectively tackle the problem. The three lines of defence approach, as outlined in our food crime control strategy<sup>12</sup>, recognises the crucial roles that the food industry, consumers and partner regulator/law enforcement organisations play in developing a richer food crime intelligence picture that enables risks to be identified and addressed.

##### ***We will deliver this by:***

- Promoting awareness and understanding of food crime amongst Scottish consumers and those working in the food and drink sector, encouraging them to report intelligence to FSS and through the Scottish Food Crime Hotline, ensuring that the routes available to report on instances of food crime are accessible and confidential;
- Continuing to work with the FSA on a joint UK-wide Food Crime Strategic Assessment<sup>11</sup>, using the outputs to develop a Scottish Food Crime Control Strategy<sup>12</sup> which outlines priority threats and strategies for protecting consumers and the food industry in Scotland;
- Strengthening our collaborations with partners at a UK and global level, sharing information and intelligence in order to understand the threat that food crime poses to Scotland.

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<sup>11</sup> [Food Crime Strategic Assessment 2020 | Food Standards Scotland](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Food Crime Control Strategy | Food Standards Scotland](#)



## GOAL 5

**Be respected as an authority on food protection and public health nutrition, promoting change through impactful relationships within and beyond Scotland that enable us to influence, learn and collaborate.**

### WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR SCOTLAND

FSS is now fully established as the food body for Scotland, fulfilling our role as a national regulator, and earning the trust of consumers by providing a consistent and authoritative voice on diet, and the safety and standards of our food chain. The respect we have gained from other regulators, public health bodies, the food industry and the scientific community has also enabled us to build our evidence base and shape UK food policy. As we embark on our new strategy as a larger and more mature organisation, we face a number of new challenges which will rely on our ability to engage and influence on a more global stage. Upholding the strong reputation we have built as an authority on food protection and public health nutrition will require us to find new ways of promoting our work to stakeholders and consumers, and continue to raise our profile in the wider food policy arena, not only in Scotland, but across the UK and internationally.

### KEY ACTIVITIES

**1. Consolidate FSS's role as the primary source of evidence on diet in Scotland, drawing on our unique expertise and data-driven approaches to influence and inform policy development.**

FSS has a unique role as the only organisation which collects, collates and publishes a national picture of dietary purchase and consumption alongside health statistics for Scotland. Using this evidence we have influenced a wide range of diet and nutrition policies, and aim to build on this solid foundation through a data-driven monitoring strategy which will identify and influence areas of focus for dietary improvement. By making our evidence and recommendations for action more accessible, we aim to strengthen our influence on policy development and consumer attitudes, ensuring that our actions, communications and messaging are designed to minimise the impact of health inequalities.

#### ***We will deliver this by:***

- Designing a new Nutrition Hub for the FSS website to provide clear and consistent messaging on a healthy balanced diet and make our data and publications more accessible to consumers and stakeholders;
- Producing biennial situation reports on Scotland's diet to demonstrate progress towards achieving dietary goals and promote calls for action by the Scottish government;
- Providing evidence based recommendations to the Scottish government to support policy action on diet and nutrition;
- Working in partnership to provide clear and consistent messaging on a healthy balanced diet;
- Developing advice and recommendations on a healthy sustainable diet to support national food policy including the Scottish government's ambition to become a Good Food Nation<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> [Food and drink: Good Food Nation policy - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

## **2. Build on FSS's reputation as Scotland's food safety authority, working collaboratively to reduce the burden of foodborne illness and contributing expertise to support wider food and environmental policy.**

As Scotland's central authority on food safety, it is important for FSS to maintain strong networks across UK and Scottish governments in order to influence standards and ensure strategic environmental, food and public health policy is cognisant of our work. Over the next three years we will continue to work closely with the Scottish government and partners including the FSA, Public Health Scotland and local authorities to identify, understand and mitigate risks to consumers and ensure incidents involving food are addressed in a proportionate, consistent and timely manner. Through our strategy for reducing foodborne illness<sup>14</sup>, we will seek to target interventions through a co-ordinated 'One Health' approach by engaging with veterinary, environment, water and public health partners. We will also strengthen our collaborations across government to deliver shared commitments relating to sustainability and climate change adaptation.

### ***We will deliver this by:***

- Undertake a review of activities that underpin our strategy to reduce foodborne illness in Scotland, identifying priority areas for action based on current evidence relating to reported incidence and risk factors;
- Contributing to Scottish and UK government strategies for the monitoring, surveillance and mitigation of antimicrobial resistance<sup>15</sup> and environmental hazards which have the potential to impact the food chain;
- Collaborating with Zero Waste Scotland on initiatives to reduce food waste, ensuring implications for food safety are considered;
- Working with partner agencies in the UK and internationally to strengthen Scotland's incident response capabilities by enhancing our incident management procedures and ways of working.

## **3. Provide a trusted platform for Scottish enforcement authorities and food businesses to submit information and access evidence-based advice which supports compliance with food and feed law.**

One of FSS's key roles is to provide enforcement authorities and food businesses in Scotland with clear and accurate guidance on regulatory requirements and evidence that supports them in identifying risks and targeting interventions. In order to gain trust as Scotland's leading authority on food protection, it is important that we are able to offer our stakeholders the full range of resources that they need to understand the law, and platforms which enable them to share information securely and access data that can be used to support compliance.

### ***We will deliver this by:***

- Developing the FSS website to provide user friendly, up-to-date information on legislation and guidance presented in accessible formats that support knowledge and understanding;
- Undertaking a full review of the Cook Safe, Retail Safe and Butcher Safe guidance documents<sup>16</sup> with a view to improving accessibility and user flexibility including on-line interactive formats;
- Developing online systems which enable all food and feed business to make applications for registration and approval via the FSS website;
- Establishing an on-line system which facilitates the recording, analysis and presentation of data relating to official control shellfish monitoring, enabling local authorities and the industry to access real-time information on classification and biotoxin risk;

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<sup>14</sup> [A strategy for reducing foodborne illness in Scotland | Food Standards Scotland](#)

<sup>15</sup> [UK 5-year action plan for antimicrobial resistance 2019 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Food safety advice for caterers and retailers | Food Standards Scotland](#)

- Developing online systems for capturing and analysing data relating to enforcement activities undertaken by FSS at approved meat establishments in Scotland, reducing administrative burdens on the industry and enabling the interrogation of trends in compliance;
- Enhancing the reporting functionality of FSS's Scottish National Database and Animal Feed Management System to facilitate appropriate levels of access by enforcement authorities and other stakeholders.

#### **4. Establish FSS within key UK and international fora relating to public health, food safety and food crime, working in partnership to promote Scottish interests and share learning.**

Changes to the food policy landscape in which FSS operates at both domestic and international levels, have required us to reshape many existing organisational relationships and to develop new ones. Working with EU institutions and participating in international standard setting bodies, such as the Codex Alimentarius Commission<sup>17</sup> will require us to build new networks and strengthen engagement across industry, government, consumer and other stakeholder groups. As a result of new trading arrangements and changes to arrangements for sharing information between countries it will also be more important for us to collaborate effectively with other regulators and participate in global fora on food safety and food crime in order that we are able to influence policy and ensure Scottish interests are represented.

##### ***We will deliver this by:***

- Strengthening our collaborations with UK government, particularly FSA, DEFRA, Public Health England and the Department of Health and Social Care, on the development of policies on food safety and standards, diet and nutrition;
- Enhancing FSS's capacity for domestic and international engagement through the development of a refreshed stakeholder mapping and engagement strategy;
- Developing new relationships with EU institutions to ensure we are able to engage effectively on food chain risks and shared regulatory interests;
- Strengthening our capacity to participate in global food policy fora, including the Codex Alimentarius Commission, to support and influence the development of international food standards;
- Developing the capability to ensure Scotland's food safety and standards interests are represented as the UK builds its new relationship with the World Trade Organisation, and that FSS and Scottish Ministers meet their international regulatory obligations;
- Continuing to work with international law enforcement agencies, such as Interpol and Europol, to investigate and exchange information and intelligence on food crime, whilst playing a leading role in the work of the Global Alliance on Food Crime and the European Heads of Food Safety Agencies to develop collaborative approaches for investigating threats and building domestic and global capability.

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<sup>17</sup> [Home | CODEXALIMENTARIUS FAO-WHO](#)

## GOAL 6

**Engage with all parts of society in Scotland; understanding the issues that matter to consumers and providing information that is tailored to their needs.**

### WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR SCOTLAND

It is essential that FSS is able to engage effectively with the people of Scotland in order to understand their concerns, behaviours and attitudes, how these factors impact on their health and well-being, and to help them make appropriate choices when it comes to food. Our consumer surveys and insights from market research already generate a wealth of data on demographic and socioeconomic trends which help us to identify risk factors for foodborne illness and the dietary habits of different population groups. Over the next three years, we will continue to collect and analyse this data, ensuring our channels for reaching consumers and the methods we use to communicate are kept under review to ensure our advice has impact and lasting benefit. Engaging with hard-to-reach groups and deprived communities in Scotland will be a particular priority for our new strategy, working with partner organisations to ensure we are able to support wider Scottish government aims to address health inequalities.

### KEY ACTIVITIES

**1. Use the best available data and methods to strengthen insights on behaviours, attitudes and the wider food interests of the Scottish population.**

Consumer research plays a key role in developing the evidence base needed to underpin our communications and marketing activities, inform policy development, and gather insights on the modern food landscape. We will continue to adapt and strengthen our methods for collecting survey data to identify positive attitudes and behaviours and areas of concern in order that we are able to target our campaigns and advice and identify the most effective methods for reaching consumers across Scotland.

***We will deliver this by:***

- Continuing to track public opinion through our biannual Food in Scotland Consumer Tracker Surveys; ensuring our questionnaires are regularly refreshed to gauge changing attitudes and reported behaviours relating to diet and food safety, as well as wider issues affecting the food environment;
- Using social research to underpin the development of consumer surveys and engagement activities aimed at strengthening our evidence base on attitudes and behaviours;
- Implementing behaviour change evaluation models, third party research tools and in-depth campaign evaluations to assess the impacts of our communication and marketing strategies.

**2. Integrate evidence from public health research and demographic segmentation to ensure advice on foodborne illness reduction and dietary health improvement is targeted to the appropriate population groups for maximum benefit.**

We will ensure our communication strategies take full account of our wider evidence base by examining how insights collected through our consumer tracker surveys and marketing activities relate to evidence from social and scientific research, consumer purchasing data and public health surveillance. This holistic approach will help us to identify the population groups in Scotland that have the potential to gain most benefit from our advice and messaging, and channels for communicating with these groups that are likely to have the greatest impact.

***We will deliver this by:***

- Updating our food safety and healthy eating consumer segmentation models to support the targeting of our communication and marketing activities to the appropriate audiences, dependant on the message required;
- Optimising the use of evidence from FSS research programmes, dietary monitoring, consumer purchasing, and public health surveillance to tailor our messaging for target population groups and strengthen its impact;
- Keeping our stakeholder and consumer engagement strategies under on-going review, identifying representative organisations and sectors which provide new channels for extending our reach and communicating with target population groups at local, regional and national levels.

**3. Communicate advice using appropriate messaging through a range of channels including mass media, social/digital platforms and consumer engagement to reach the intended audience and sustain impact and understanding.**

FSS bases all of its communications and marketing functions on the latest industry standards to develop strategies, define objectives and identify platforms that best serve FSS outcomes; ensuring all activities are evaluated to assess impact and cost effectiveness. Over the next three years we aim to build on these functions through a renewed focus on consumer and stakeholder engagement. The COVID-19 pandemic has required us to make better use of online methods of communication and we will continue to develop these approaches to extend our reach. We will also build stronger links with stakeholders who can help us to engage at community level and with 'seldom heard' population groups in Scotland to ensure we take full account of equality and diversity in all of our work.

***We will deliver this by:***

- Implementing integrated communications and marketing strategies which employ the latest tools and enable us to incorporate segmentation models and consumer insights to help design and target our messaging;
- Running focussed social marketing campaigns which address issues identified through consumer insights and evidence, using channels, messaging and creatives best suited to the intended audience;
- Evaluating campaigns and digital marketing approaches through on-going consumer engagement and the use of digital analytics;
- Building strong media relations across the national, Scottish and industry trade press, striving to promote our strategic aims and presenting an honest, independent voice for consumer interests in Scotland;
- Participating in events which enable us to engage with the public; disseminating advice and seeking views and insights from different population and interest groups;
- Establishing effective partnerships with non-governmental organisations, charities and community groups to identify new channels for engaging with consumers; taking account of Scotland's diversity and promoting action for addressing health inequalities.

**4. Work with partners to support food education initiatives and strategies for improving diet and health which make the best use of our evidence and are tailored to the needs of communities across Scotland.**

FSS has developed a number of education resources to support teachers in delivering nutrition and food safety life skills to primary and secondary pupils. Under this corporate plan, we will evaluate these resources as part of our education strategy, identifying potential gaps and improvements and engaging with

teachers to develop new materials which support lesson plans on food and healthy eating. In year one, we will also deliver a new digital resource to provide evidence based dietary advice in a practical, pragmatic style, presented in a format that can be adapted and tailored to meet the needs of different population groups. We will work with partner organisations to ensure that we are able to target this resource to specific communities across Scotland with the aim of promoting positive dietary change.

***We will deliver this by:***

- Evaluating FSS's online education resources using teacher focus groups/panels to identify improvements, gaps in topic areas/age groups, and the best communication tools to raise awareness of our activities with teachers and educators;
- Collaborating with Public Health Scotland, community food organisations and other partners to promote engagement with FSS's new digital dietary guidance resource and ensure it reflects the needs of different population subgroups and changing influences on diet;
- Ensuring that healthy diet recommendations are integrated within food education initiatives led by the Scottish government including those taken forward through the Good Food Nation strategy;
- Engaging with schools, teachers and parents through owned communications and marketing platforms, such as FSS's Foodbites email newsletter, Facebook teachers group, school coordinators and education partners, to build trust and awareness in the FSS education resources.

## MAINTAINING ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE: OUR CORPORATE AIMS OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS

FSS will take this corporate plan forward in accordance with our statutory responsibilities as a public body, delivering our six strategic goals efficiently, through sustainable ways of working which ensure best use of resources and value for money. We are embarking on our new strategy as a re-structured organisation, with additional resources and responsibilities, requiring a new governance framework to provide appropriate levels of assurance over all areas of the business. EU Exit and the COVID-19 pandemic have had a significant impact on our remit and ways of working and it will be important to ensure we have sufficient resilience and adaptability to deliver our goals over the next three years, whilst keeping pace with the changing food environment. Promoting internal collaboration and external partnerships, alongside investment in staff development will therefore be key priorities for this Corporate Plan. **We will focus on four key areas to ensure we are operating efficiently and effectively and are carrying out all of our duties in a responsible way: governance, accountability, people and skills, and resourcing.**

<b>GOVERNANCE</b>	
<p><b>Ensure the use of robust, peer-reviewed science and evidence, and transparent risk analysis processes which clearly explain uncertainties, risks and benefits</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed a formalised risk analysis process within FSS, ensuring that risk assessment is functionally separate from risk management and that our advice is independent and based on robust science and evidence;</li> <li>• Deliver communication strategies which ensure the science, evidence and information used to support risk management recommendations are clearly understood internally, and by our external stakeholders and consumers;</li> <li>• Implement new approaches to support the prioritisation and co-ordination of our science and evidence programmes, ensuring resources are targeted to priorities for our policy development, regulatory and risk analysis functions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Implement internal control systems with appropriate levels of assurance, overseen by an audit and risk committee</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review processes for identifying and managing business and reputational risks that the organisation may face and implementing appropriate mitigating actions;</li> <li>• Undertake organisational level assurance as part of FSS's integrated risk management process, to ensure internal controls within the organisation are effective, and that they are reviewed and strengthened, where appropriate, at a Divisional and Executive Team level;</li> <li>• As an organisation, engage with both internal and external audit teams, to agree annual audit programmes led by assurance mapping, and deliver on agreed action plans;</li> <li>• Support FSS's auditors in completing an agreed, and risk based, audit programme which informs and assures appropriately, and which fosters a culture of continuous improvement in the delivery of both food and feed and management controls;</li> <li>• Review the FSS Resilience Policy, to ensure that the incident management and business incident management frameworks align and are effective in providing a structured approach to incident management.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ensure our working arrangements with key partners remain effective as the food and regulatory landscape changes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalise and keep under review, UK Common Frameworks in line with the protocols and guidance agreed by all four UK administrations;</li> <li>• Review our Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and Working Level Agreements (WLAs) with key partners to identify gaps and consider areas where additional arrangements are needed;</li> <li>• Update existing MoUs and WLAs regularly, to reflect changes in working arrangements in line with the time scales outlined in each document.</li> </ul>

## ACCOUNTABILITY

<p><b>Hold no less than four open board meetings annually, with regular reporting from the Audit and Risk Committee</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Board meetings include a quorum of four members including the Chair, with agendas and papers circulated promptly before each meeting. Minutes with key decisions and actions will be published on the FSS website;</li> <li>• Convene meetings of the Audit and Risk Committee no less than four times a year, ensuring regular engagement with FSS's Executive Leadership Team to provide the Board with assurance that risk management processes and mitigating actions are appropriate and correctly resourced.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Publish performance metrics for measuring progress with the six strategic goals defined in this document</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop metrics for assessing business performance and delivery of the Goals set out in this Corporate Plan; and review on an on-going basis to ensure that they continue to be meaningful and add value to our work;</li> <li>• Report performance metrics on business delivery and performance to the Executive Leadership Team and the Board at regular intervals and publish summaries for 6 monthly and annual reports.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lay an annual report of FSS's objectives, performance and accounts before the Scottish Parliament</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish annual progress reports using performance metrics to measure business delivery and performance, outlining financial accountability aligned to the goals and outcomes in the Strategy and Corporate Plan;</li> <li>• Ensure annual performance reports are in line with Audit Scotland's Performance Report Good Practice Guide and accounts prepared in accordance with relevant International Financial Reporting Standards and the Government Reporting Manual (FReM).</li> </ul>

## PEOPLE AND SKILLS

<p><b>Implement a people strategy and internal values which support the development and retention of a skilled, collaborative and motivated workforce</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with staff to develop and embed a new set of internal values for FSS which will support the delivery of our new strategic goals and design a new People Strategy aimed at maintaining a thriving and resilient workforce;</li> <li>• Develop a Workforce Plan to identify skills and capacity gaps in FSS, and which enables us to adapt to changing organisational needs and inform our succession planning activities;</li> <li>• Promote professional and personal development across the whole FSS workforce, providing opportunities for learning which ensure our staff are competent, capable, diverse and motivated.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Review FSS responses to the Civil Service People Survey, engaging with staff to recognise success and address issues</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the outputs from the survey to ensure the Executive Leadership Team and managers understand what is working well and needs to improve in the organisation and consult with staff on how best to deliver any changes required;</li> <li>• Benchmark our results against other government departments to learn from best practice in higher performing areas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Deliver effective internal communications across the FSS workforce, to promote engagement and understanding of the needs of individuals, regardless of their role and working pattern</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refresh our internal communications strategy, employing a gold standard approach with employee interest at the heart; using the latest technologies and theories to ensure all field, remote and office based staff understand FSS priorities, roles and responsibilities, and feel fully engaged in the delivery of our strategic goals, regardless of their working pattern or location;</li> <li>• Promote FSS's internal values, strategy and corporate plan so that all staff understand and are guided on every decision they make, including behaviours and priorities.</li> </ul>



## RESOURCING

<b>Ensure resourcing is aligned to strategic priorities and managed using effective accounting systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Match our resources to the relevant goals and outcomes in our new Strategy through structured business planning and budget exercises;</li><li>• Develop a longer term financial management plan in line with our five year strategy;</li><li>• Complete yearly reviews to report outturn of budget expenditure against the strategic priorities.</li></ul>
<b>Charge for regulatory services in a proportionate and transparent manner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review charging models to meet the needs of FSS's organisational structure and business requirements;</li><li>• Charge for regulatory services at rates which reflect the actual cost of delivery;</li><li>• Publish hourly charge out rates and supporting information, ensuring industry is kept fully informed.</li></ul>
<b>Improve delivery through sustainable ways of working which promote equality and best use of resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Produce an annual report on regulated procurement activity and the reporting requirements in the Corporate Procurement Strategy;</li><li>• Develop and report against a Best Value framework aligned to the Scottish Public Finance Manual to demonstrate continuous improvement in performance and value for money.</li></ul>