Food Standards Scotland
Inbhe Bìdh Alba

Food Standards Scotland
Pilgrim House
Old Ford Road
Aberdeen
AB11 5RL

5 November 2026

To: Chief Executives, Heads of Service,
Service Managers, Lead Food Officers

FSS/ENF/26/007

Dear Colleague

**SAFER Programme - Local Authority Baseline Cost Exercise for Food Law Delivery and Data Return Request.**

Food Standards Scotland (FSS) is writing to seek your council's participation in the SAFER Local Authority Baseline Cost Exercise.

The exercise form is part of the wider SAFER Programme and is intended to establish a robust evidence base for the costs associated with delivering Local Authority (LA) food law services under the current delivery model. The information gathered will support the ongoing development of the SAFER Target Operating Model (TOM) and future policy considerations relating to the sustainable delivery of food law services.

We have attached the following documents:

1. **SAFER Local Authority Baseline Cost Exercise - Guidance Document**
    - Provides an overview of the purpose, scope and methodology of the exercise.
    - Explains the distinction between:
        - the current cost of food law delivery;
        - the existing staffing resource available (expressed as FTE); and
        - the resource and cost required to deliver the full range of statutory food law obligations.

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2. **Appendix D - Local Authority Baseline Cost Exercise Template**
    - The spreadsheet template to be completed and returned to FSS.
    - Collects information relating to:
        - current staffing and salary costs;
        - existing food law delivery resources;
        - central support costs, attributable expenditure and associated income; and
        - the estimated resource and cost required to deliver a fully resourced food law service.

The exercise has been designed in partnership with the Society of Chief Officers of Environmental Health in Scotland (SoCOEHS) to provide a consistent national baseline while recognising local differences in service delivery arrangements. Participation does **not** imply agreement with any future funding mechanism, charging regime, or operating model. The information collected will be used solely to inform the evidence base being developed through the SAFER Programme.

**Food Law Staffing and the Local Authority Resource Analysis (LARA).**

As detailed in section 5 of the guidance, FSS holds aggregate FTE information for all 32 LAs through the LARA data that has been submitted previously. As part of this exercise, and thorough discussions with the SoCOEHS, a more precise breakdown by each role involved in delivering food law delivery services, has been identified as being beneficial.

Salary information will be collected solely for the purpose of establishing baseline service costs. Results will be aggregated for analysis and reporting and no identifiable individual employee salary information will be published.

**Laboratory and Sampling**

To assist with this exercise, FSS has acquired the information regarding your LA laboratory and sampling costs directly from your laboratory provider.

**Action Required**
Please arrange for the attached **Appendix D template** to be completed and returned to safer@fss.scot by the **7 December 2026**.

Unless otherwise stated, all requested information relates to Financial Year 2025/26.

If you require clarification on any aspect of the exercise, require a copy of your previous LARA data, wish to verify your laboratory and sampling figures, or wish to discuss the completion of the return, please contact the SAFER programme team at safer@fss.scot

FSS appreciates the time and effort required to complete this exercise and thank you in advance for your support and cooperation.

Yours faithfully



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