



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

Corporate Plan
2024-26



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1 | Introduction: continuing to deliver our strategy, our focus for the next two years

On 19 May 2021 we published our strategic ambitions for the next five years. Our [Strategy for 2021-26](#) 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 five year period, building on the progress we have made since FSS was established in 2015. In the context of a changing food environment, which has required a reset of priorities and to address a number of new challenges, we aim to deliver our 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.

In 2021 we also published our three year [2021-24 Corporate Plan](#) which outlined concrete actions against the ambitions of our strategy. Our 2024-26

plan describes how we will build on the achievements of our first nine years, whilst aligning our five strategic outcomes to a set of core values and guiding principles. These values and principles contribute to the Scottish Government's National Missions for Scotland (equality, opportunity and community) whilst striving to deliver collaboratively on the Scottish Government Public Sector Reform (PSR).

All of our work is directed towards the achievement of our five strategic outcomes, outlined in **figure 1**.

Delivery of these outcomes is through the seven roles of FSS (**figure 2**), which describe how we will deliver our statutory functions as defined in the [Food Scotland Act 2015](#). The Act sets out the objectives, general functions and powers of FSS, and provides for governance and accountability arrangements as a Scottish public body. Each role is supported by our core business activities and priority deliverables for 2024-26. In addition, we have described two change programmes which we have recently put in place to develop the capacity, capabilities and delivery structures needed to enable FSS to deliver its statutory functions effectively into the future.



Figure 1 Our five strategic outcomes

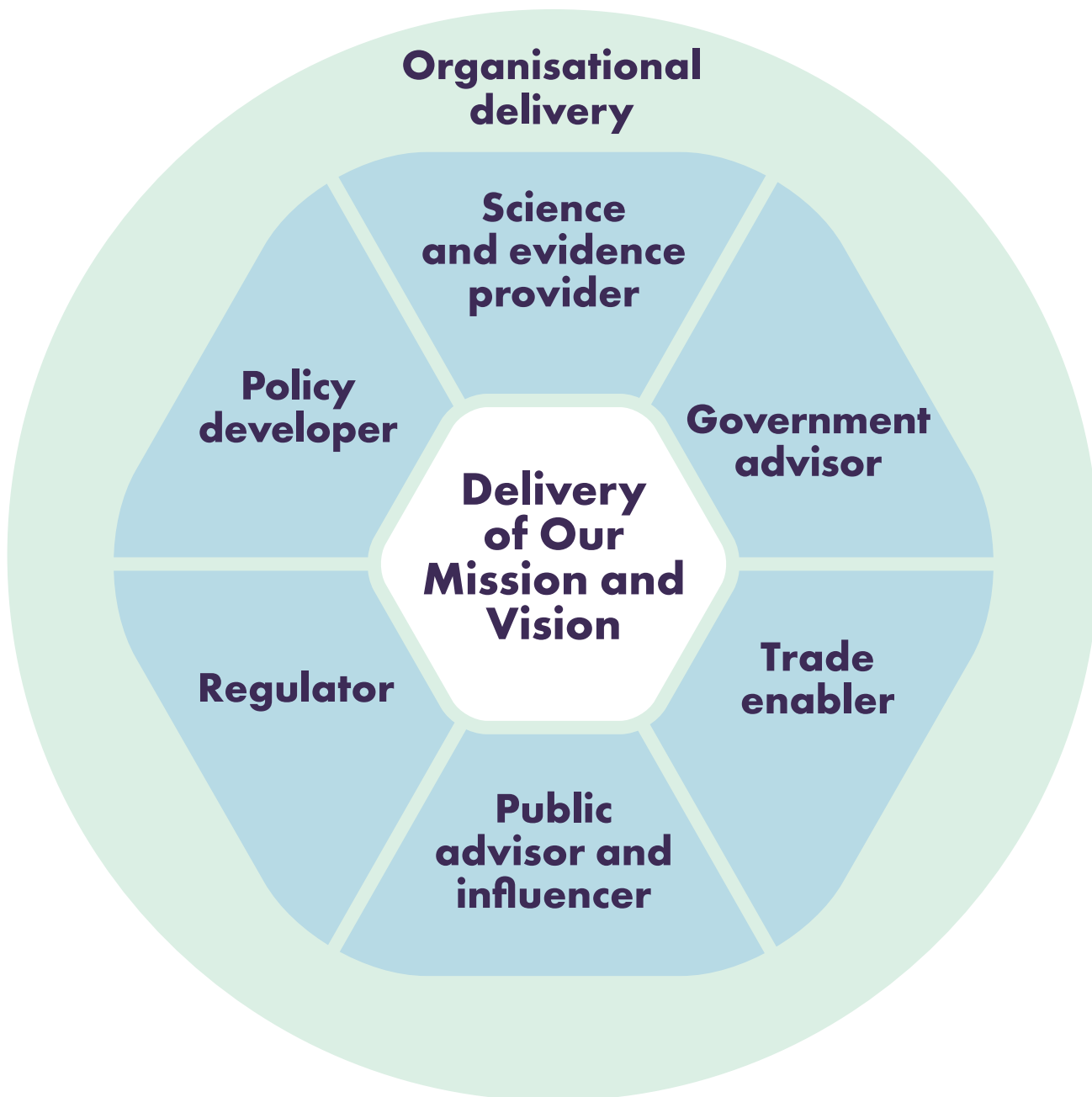


Figure 2 Our seven roles provide a framework for supporting delivery of our mission and vision

This corporate plan describes the work FSS aims to deliver, between 2024–26, under our seven roles and five strategic outcomes. Our progress will be reviewed through a set of Strategic Performance Indicators (SPIs) and performance metrics to

monitor delivery and assess how our activities are contributing towards successfully delivering our strategy and corporate plan. Further information on our SPIs and metrics are detailed in **section 5.5**.

2 | Our framework

As well as establishing our ambition, this plan sets out how we will continue to turn the mission and vision of our strategy into concrete actions up to 2026. Our seven roles provide a framework for our priorities which also inform our annual business planning.

To ensure we meet our vision and strategic outcomes we have a robust governance structure which is designed to allow effective communication and monitoring throughout the organisation and support effective decision making, risk management and delivery of our priorities.

In delivering our priorities we will apply the guiding principles that we describe in detail in our [strategy](#).

Our work activities are broadly defined through three areas of work, i.e. our:

- 1. business as usual
(core business activities)**
- 2. priority deliverables
for 2024–2026**
- 3. change programmes**



Framework for delivery of our Corporate Plan

National Missions for Scotland

Equality:

Tackling poverty and protecting people from harm

Opportunity:

Building a fair, green and growing economy

Community:

Delivering efficient and effective public services

FSS Strategy 2021-26

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.

Vision

A safe, healthy and sustainable food environment that benefits and protects the health and wellbeing of everyone in Scotland.

Strategic Outcomes

Underpin our vision and contribute to the Scottish Government's National Missions for Scotland.

Governed and monitored by

FSS Board and senior leadership groups

Annual strategic performance reporting to the Board with biannual progress reports to senior leadership groups.

FSS Corporate Plan 2024-26

Seven roles of FSS

Provide a framework for how we will deliver our statutory functions as defined in the Food Scotland Act 2015.

Priority Deliverables

Priority work we aim to complete by 2026.

Business Plans

Management of day-to-day core business.

Finance and Business Committee

Biannual performance reporting which measures our progress towards our strategic performance indicators, priority deliverables and business plans.

Audit and Risk Committee

Quarterly strategic risk and issue reporting which detail risks and issues relating to the delivery of our Corporate Plan.

Change Programmes

Data and Digital Transformation

Aims to develop and facilitate the sustainable adoption of new technologies, maximising the power of data, to transform business operations toward achieving our strategic objectives.

Scottish Authorities Food Enforcement Rebuild (SAFER)

Aims to modernise the delivery of Food Law Enforcement in Scotland to ensure it is sustainably resourced, focused on risk, and highly efficient; utilising technology to support businesses and food safety professionals to provide safe food for Scotland.

Programme Boards

Quarterly highlight, exception and risk reporting which measures our progress against milestones.

3 | Our flexible approach

Our strategy emphasises the need to be flexible in our approach, against the backdrop of a dynamic environment. Since publishing our strategy we have faced a number of challenges.

Our plan details our response to these pressures through analysing our activities against our seven roles then mapping the resulting priorities against our strategic outcomes.

2021

On 1 January 2021 the UK left the European Union, which resulted in significant changes in our food environment and regulatory systems.

In response we undertook an impact analysis exercise and produced our FSS Workforce Plan which highlighted our business need for a real-terms 10% growth in resource to meet the EU Exit consequential arrangements.

Our strategy also highlights the significant changes that are taking place across our food system and the uncertainties we continue to face, such as the UK government's agenda and external policy drivers.

It is important to recognise the risks that will affect our ability to deliver and our key enablers will continue to be critical to our success.

The key risks for us over the next two years are shown in **figure 3**.

2022

In May 2022 the Scottish Government announced its spending review, which resulted in real-term reductions for the financial years 2022/23 to 2026/27.

In response we undertook a full organisational review, restructure and reprioritisation exercise to ensure delivery of our corporate and strategic plans.



Our enablers

Adaptability to change

Our expertise

Our ways of working

Data and digitalisation

Evidence and understanding

Sustainable delivery models

Our strategic risks to delivery

Shared services

Ensuring that the implementation of the Scottish Government’s Shared Services programme does not impact on our service delivery.

Official control delivery

Ensuring we fulfil our statutory obligations of official control delivery, for all sectors in which FSS is the competent authority.

Changes to FSS’s roles and remit

Being adaptable to changes in the environment recognising our dependence on ministerial decision and direction.

Public service reform

Supporting and delivering the public service reform programme whilst continuing to deliver our statutory and regulatory requirements.

Maintaining an effective food surveillance capability

Ensuring our surveillance programmes continue to provide appropriate levels of assurance over food safety and standards and keep pace with emerging risks to Scotland’s food chain.

Current strategic issues

Financial sustainability and workforce planning

Ensure our business, finance and workforce planning arrangements align with our corporate plan ambitions.

Local authority food law delivery model

Aims to improve public health protection and assurance through improved resourcing, digital infrastructure and a model focused on risk and non-compliance.

External pressures

Ensure FSS remains focused on priorities whilst recognising dependence on legislative changes and policy and public service reform.

Figure 3: Key risks to delivery and current issues

These challenges, and related pressures on our resources, will continue in future years, and our planning arrangements and risk mitigation measures have given us the ability to respond. As the

organisation continues to develop and adapt, it is important to ensure our structure allows for effective governance, scrutiny and oversight by executive officers and the FSS Board.

4 | Public service reform

We recognise that the medium to long-term projections of demand and cost for all Scotland's public services are extremely challenging. The immediacy of this means we must continue to deliver efficiencies and make more effective use of resources to deliver services in a fashion that reduces demand and cost and improves outcomes for communities. With this as a backdrop, the Scottish Government has committed to a ten-year PSR programme. Whilst still very early in its development the Scottish Government is in the process of laying out a portfolio of work to:

- ensure public services remain fiscally sustainable, by reducing the costs and long-term demand through investment in prevention,
- improve outcomes, which will improve lives and reduce demand, and
- reduce inequalities of outcome among communities in Scotland, recognising the need not just for improved outcomes, but a focus in policy and delivery on those most disadvantaged.

We will work closely with Scottish Government and partners in supporting and delivering the PSR programme whilst continuing to identify opportunities for cost reduction, increased efficiency and transforming the service.



5 | Delivering the plan

5.1 Seven roles of FSS

FSS has seven roles, which provide a framework for how we will deliver our statutory functions and ultimately support delivery of our mission and vision.

Our plan details the focus our divisions will have in these areas over the next two years. Figure 4 provides more detail on the objectives of our seven roles.

Our seven roles:

1. **regulator**
2. **science and evidence provider**
3. **government advisor**
4. **policy developer**
5. **public advisor and influencer**
6. **trade enabler**
7. **organisational delivery**

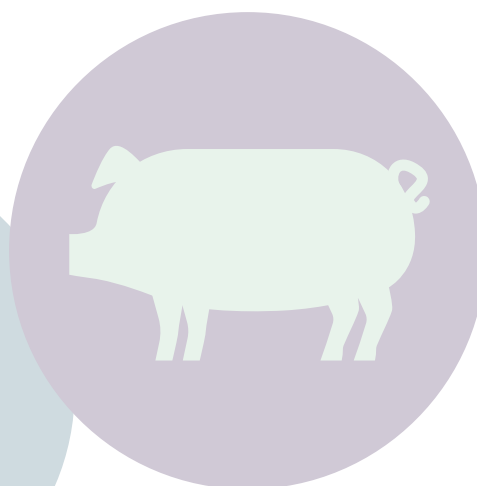




Figure 4 Our seven roles and objectives

5.2 Our core business activities

Our core business activities are where the majority of our organisational effort is placed. Focus on these activities ensure we meet our statutory objectives as set out in the [Food Scotland Act](#) which are:

- to protect the public from risks to health which may arise in connection with the consumption of food
- to improve the extent to which members of the public have diets which are conducive to good health
- to protect the other interests of consumers in relation to food

5.3 Our priority deliverables for 2024–26

Our priority deliverables support delivery of our five strategic outcomes and are areas of focus over a defined period of time. They primarily consist of work additional to our core activities however can also be core activities that require particular attention. Our priority deliverables for 2024–26 are defined below and aligned against our strategic outcomes and their respective FSS role.





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

Regulator

Our objective is to ensure food and feed is safe by working with delivery partners, professional associations, industry, and stakeholders to develop and implement more effective, efficient and sustainable approaches to regulation, official control delivery and regulatory assurance for food and feed law.

Office Control delivery

- Undertake our statutory obligations, as a competent authority for meat, shellfish, feed and wine.
- Ensure the delivery of official control activity in all meat approved establishments. Oversee the delegated monitoring programme for Shellfish and deliver an inspection and sampling programme for Feed and Wine standards.
- Ensure capacity to deliver by implementing a robust training programme for all areas of official control delivery and a strategy for the retention and recruitment of all authorised officers.

Trial more efficient and cost-effective approaches for shellfish official control sampling

- Work with the industry to deliver a Proof of Concept study on the feasibility of using shellfish harvesters to collect monitoring samples.
- Develop and deliver a Remote Supervision application and protocol, which will enable the verification of these samples for official control purposes.

Food crime

- Lead, co-ordinate and support the response to food and feed crimes impacting on Scotland.
- Implement and progress the Food Crime Prevention Strategy with a view to counteracting the occurrence or re-occurrence of food and feed crime impacting across Scotland.
- Tackle food crime in global supply chains by working collaboratively with international partner agencies and other stakeholders, including Operation Opson, European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) and the Global Alliance on Food Crime.

Incidents

- Lead, co-ordinate and support the response to food and feed safety incidents impacting on Scotland to mitigate the risk to consumers.
- Implement and progress the Incident Prevention Strategy to prevent the occurrence or re-occurrence of food and feed safety incidents impacting on Scotland.

Exercise our non-routine food and feed safety incidents function to assess and improve how we respond to serious incidents impacting on Scotland.

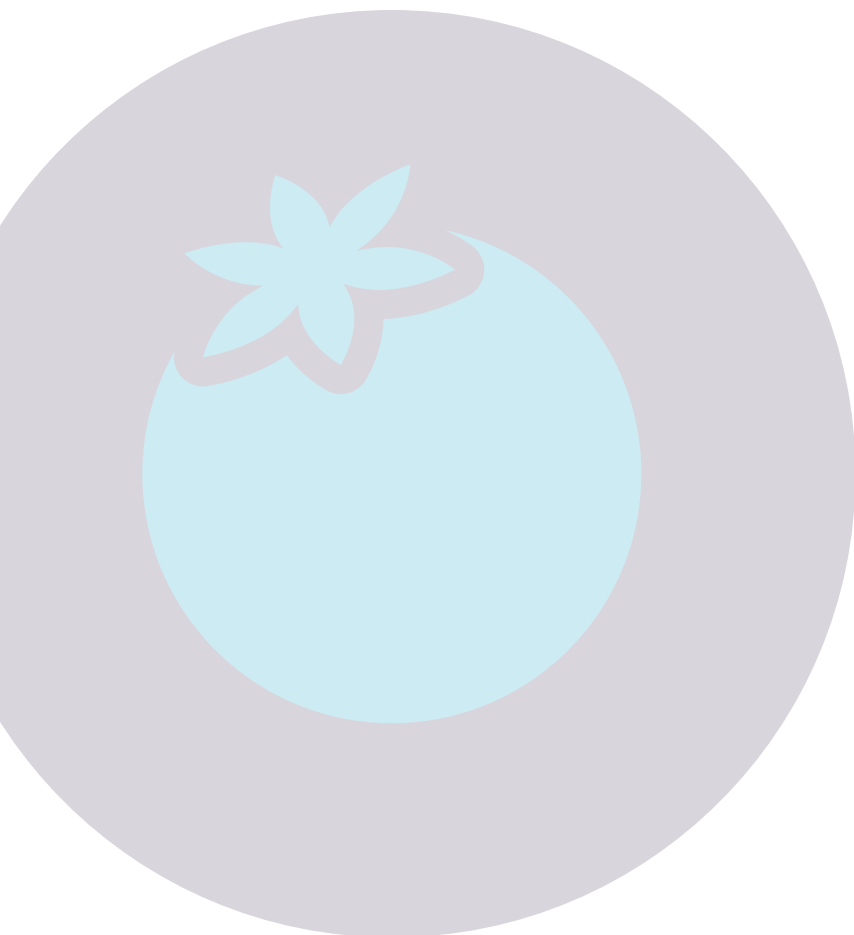
Measurement of Local Authority food law resource requirements

Deliver a time management exercise with all Local Authority food law services to gather data on time and effort taken to deliver food law interventions. The evidence base gathered will assist in determining resource required for future food law framework delivery and support development of cost recovery models.

Regulated products

Certain food and feed products such as food and feed additives, known as regulated products, require a safety assessment and pre-market authorisation before they can be placed on the market in the UK. We will continue to work with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to deliver an effective and efficient Regulated Products Service across the UK. Our work in this area includes:

- working with FSA to undertake risk assessment of new regulated products applications as part of the risk analysis process for regulated products,
- provision of risk management recommendations and advice to Scottish Ministers to inform authorisation decisions in Scotland, taking account of feedback from public consultations, and
- delivery of any required changes to subordinate legislation in Scotland.





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Science and evidence provider

Our objective is to commission research and undertake analyses which ensure our evidence base is scientifically robust and supports advice and decision making on food safety, public health nutrition and consumer interests relating to food.

Understanding how to protect consumers from the risks of foodborne illness

- Continue to work with the FSA and Public Health Scotland (PHS) to update analysis on trends in infectious intestinal disease in the UK, and the pathogens and areas of the food chain that present the greatest risk to consumers.
- Review new evidence on the factors which make people vulnerable to foodborne illness; enabling us to target interventions which reduce the risks to consumers in Scotland.
- Contribute to cross government strategies (including the FSA-led PATHSAFE programme and PHS's pathogen genomics strategy) aimed at implementing whole genome sequencing and One Health approaches to improve the detection and tracking of foodborne illness and antimicrobial resistance in the UK.

Delivering an effective risk assessment function

- Contribute relevant scientific expertise to the UK risk analysis process, ensuring evidence relating to the public health and food production landscape in Scotland is fully represented.
- Deliver timely and robust risk assessments to support FSS's response to food and feed safety incidents.

Maintaining food surveillance capability in Scotland

- Work with our official control laboratory network to maintain a strong baseline of intelligence-led food sampling programmes that inform our understanding of risks to Scotland's food chain.
- Continue to work with Local Authorities and across government to support improvements in laboratory services for food and feed safety and standards.

Public health nutrition surveillance and monitoring

- Publish of an assessment of children and young people's diets in Scotland.
- Monitor the impact of policy on the food environment in Scotland, including publication of an out-of-home situation report.
- Develop and publish a dietary surveillance strategy alongside an assessment of mis-reporting in dietary intake surveys.



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Policy developer

Our objective is to continue to develop policy and advise on food and feed safety, standards, and public health nutrition.

Delivering an effective risk management function

As part of delivering the Scottish aspects of the UK risk analysis process, we will use evidence from risk assessment and other factors related to consumers' wider interests in relation to food, to inform risk management recommendations to Ministers and implementation of Scottish legislation where required.

Regulatory Reform

We will explore opportunities for targeted reform of the Regulated Products Service, working closely with the FSA and UK and devolved governments, to make the authorisation process more efficient and effective while maintaining high levels of consumer protection and improving the service to businesses.

Food Hygiene Information Scheme

Update the guidance on the voluntary Food Hygiene Information Scheme to reflect the Food Law Rating System.

Public health nutrition

- Support actions to improve the out-of-home food environment in Scotland including the Eating Out Eating Well Framework.
- Support improvements to the retail food environment in Scotland including legislative measures to restrict promotions of unhealthy foods.



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Government advisor

Our objective is to continue to advise, inform and assist the Scottish Ministers, public bodies, board members, and other persons in relation to food and feed matters and public health nutrition.

Retained EU Law (REUL), trade, constitutional landscape

We will work across government to ensure that FSS remains an authoritative voice on food and feed matters within the UK's evolving trade and constitutional landscape. This includes:

- Provision of joint FSS and FSA advice on new Free Trade Agreements to inform UK government reports required under Section 42 of the Agriculture Act 2020.
- Upholding World Trade Organisation obligations, including notification of new sanitary and phytosanitary measures applicable in Scotland where necessary.
- Contribute to the delivery of final UK common framework agreements within our policy brief and implementing them in line with those agreements. This includes development and roll-out of operational guidance.
- Consideration of matters arising in relation to Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023.
- Assessing the implications of the UK Internal Market Act 2020 for food and feed law in Scotland.

Public health nutrition

- Undertake and publish a review of the Scottish Dietary Goals.
- Assess the implications of climate change recommendations to reduce meat and dairy on dietary intakes of adults and children/young people in Scotland.
- Advise Scottish Government on evidence-based actions to improve the food environment.



Public advisor and influencer

Our objective is to work collaboratively with stakeholders and speak out publicly about areas of consumer interest to encourage high food standards and healthy eating in Scotland.

Public health nutrition

- Ensure consumer facing resources are updated to reflect emerging issues and proactively promote, including digital tools such as Eat Well Your Way, Healthy Eating tutorial, vitamin D assets and MenuCal.
- Support delivery of the Food and Drink Federation Scotland Reformulation for Health programme.
- Deliver creative assets to highlight the influence of the food environment on dietary choices.

Communications

- Increased focus on partnership marketing initiatives, collaborating with external stakeholders to amplify our messages and influence behaviour change.
- Ensure an 'always on' approach across the social media calendar to identify hooks and regularly share our core messages – for example, raising awareness of the risks of foodborne illness and how to control them – alongside reactive content.
- Introduction of media briefings to provide an opportunity to build rapport with key journalists, increased awareness of what we do whilst understanding what their interests are and how we can effectively engage with them in future.





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Trade enabler

Our objective is to ensure the safety of imported food and feed and support the strong international reputation of Scotland's food and drink sector by ensuring our exports are underpinned by an effective and sustainable regulatory system for food and feed law.

Imports

We will work with the UK and devolved governments to ensure relevant FSS input to implementation of the UK government's Border Target Operating Model (BTOM), and cross cutting policy issues arising from Windsor Framework implementation, including:

- delivery of any required changes to food and feed law and legislative import controls in Scotland,
- FSS policy input to Defra-led 'Trusted Trader' pilot proposals,
- delivery of Border Control Post authorisations for high-risk food and feed (not of animal origin) to ensure continuity of supply in light of changing trading landscape,
- supporting revision of import specific guidance (both FSS and intergovernmental) in light of BTOM changes,
- working across government to help ensure that food and feed law requirements apply to non-qualifying Northern Ireland goods, and
- ensuring appropriate levels of FSS input to relevant UK import monitoring plans.



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Organisational delivery

Our objective is to deliver within our resource constraints and continue to provide the people, resources, and processes to deliver our corporate and statutory services whilst investing in meaningful training, development and opportunity for our staff.

Shared services programme

Implementation of the Scottish Government's shared services change programme, specifically across HR and Finance, during the next two business years.

Accessibility and inclusive communications steering group

The recently formed group will drive FSS towards compliance with accessibility regulation through the development of an organisational plan (like the former [British Sign Language \(BSL\) plan](#)) and the introduction of appropriate software and training.

Content management system replacement

Having completed phase 1 of the new FSS website the 2024/25 financial year will see a move towards the scoping, build and deliver phases.

Integrated finance, business and workforce planning model

Corporate Services will strive to better align business and performance practices within an agreed workforce planning model.

5.4 Our change programmes

We have introduced two change programmes to this Corporate Plan which aim to strengthen our role as a regulator and the future delivery of food law official controls. These programmes are priority, cross-functional areas of work that are considered essential in enabling us to address one of our key strategic risks. However, it is important to note that

delivery of these programmes represent a level of transformational change which will be contingent on additional resources becoming available. Therefore while this section describes our overall ambition for these change programmes, the work delivered will need to be scaled in line with the budget and skills that are available to us over the next two years.

5.4.1 Data and digital transformation

Digital transformation has become increasingly important in enabling us to work smarter and optimise the data we collect, and we will continue to prioritise enhancements to the connectivity and analytics capability we will need to embed data-driven decision making across all areas of the business. Through new structures and ways of working we have developed a dedicated strategy and governance framework for overseeing future developments to our digital systems to ensure our work follows [Scottish Government's Technology Assurance Framework](#). We plan to continue to build on this work over the next two years to ensure our systems meet user needs, are aligned with strategic priorities, and provide best value for money.

Over the last eighteen months we have upgraded our IT infrastructure to support remote working, deploy improved communication and collaboration tools, and migration to Exchange Online and Microsoft 365 applications. We have carried out developments to our systems for collecting data sets relating to enforcement, food sampling and shellfish classification and monitoring to enhance the quality of data captured, and our ability to analyse, present, and share it with stakeholders.

In parallel, we have commissioned an upgrade to our website content management system, with

the aim of ensuring the software is up-to-date, supported, and to provide a more inclusive and intuitive system for our stakeholders to access FSS guidance, research reports and consumer advice.

In January 2024, we carried out a data maturity assessment to better understand digital and data science needs across the business, and current levels of capacity and capability for analysing and using data in a way that will help us to deliver our organisational priorities. We will use the results of this assessment to identify our strengths, areas where there is scope to build skills and expertise, and further develop our strategy by identifying opportunities across the public and private sectors for improving collaboration and data sharing.

Whilst we have made good progress, achieving our ambition to be a data-led, digitally driven organisation will rely on our ability to attract and retain competent digital and data expertise and make continuous improvements through the leveraging of emerging technologies and upskilling of staff across the business. On-going engagement with key stakeholders will also be critical in ensuring that our digital solutions are fit for purpose, and are deployed and modified with efficiency, agility, and consistency in accordance with [the Digital Scotland Service Standard \(DSSS\)](#).

5.4.2 Scottish Authorities Food Enforcement Rebuild(SAFER) programme

This programme is contingent on additional resources becoming available, and if not forthcoming then we will revert to core maintenance of the current system.

An effective food law enforcement regime is a crucial foundation of both public health and a flourishing food sector. However, Local Authority Food Law Enforcement is facing significant challenges. Both financial and staffing resources have been reducing rapidly for a considerable period. Over the last five years there has been a 25% reduction in full time equivalent staffing for food enforcement. At the current rate of decline, there would be no officers involved in food law enforcement in Scotland by 2036. SAFER is an ambitious programme to ensure the future delivery of an effective food law enforcement regime. It aims to achieve this across three broad objectives:

- increasing resources to deliver food law, through enabling additional officers to become involved and ensure additional financial resources,
- reducing demand by increasing business self-service and targeting intervention where most beneficial, and
- increasing efficiencies, implementing digital solutions, utilising data and artificial intelligence.

SAFER would plan to address the objectives across several workstreams supported by a robust project management workstream corralled across three broad themes.

Resourcing

The intent is to increase the number of officers available to deliver food law controls, through increasing the pathways available into the profession, raising awareness of opportunities, and facilitating a system that matches competencies with intervention activities to provide for officers with alternate qualifications and experience to undertake appropriate controls.

Additional financial resources will be required to ensure an effective food law enforcement regime, and this theme will also address potential for charging as well as financial penalties for non-compliance.

Digitalisation

Working with our data and digital transformation programme, modernisation of the current regime provides the opportunity to embed modern technology and to:

- realise significant efficiency savings,
- use data analysis to direct interventions towards areas of identified risk, and
- facilitate a much greater degree of food business self-service and self-assessment.

Food law delivery

SAFER intends to implement a new approach to food law delivery, leveraging intelligence to provide a greater focus on higher risk establishments. The highest-risk establishments will continue to receive face-to-face interventions from highly skilled and qualified officers. The lowest-risk establishments will only receive very infrequent intervention, except where intelligence identifies a basis to intervene. The establishments in between will be subject to a range of interventions, including new approaches, from a range of officers to verify that risks are effectively controlled or otherwise need to be escalated as a high-risk establishment for intensive intervention.

5.5 Our measures of success

To monitor progress in delivering our strategic outcomes, we have identified fifteen SPIs.

The SPIs draw from existing data and information and we publish biannual updates on these indicators ensuring we are accountable to our stakeholders and the public.

We have identified how our priorities over the next two years align to our seven roles. These priorities

will define how we intend to achieve our mission and vision over the next two years, building on the work we have started since we published our strategy in 2021. Every quarter, progress on our priorities will continue to be monitored and reported.

In addition, progress monitoring is underpinned by a robust risk and issue management process with our strategic risks and issues being reported on a quarterly basis to our Audit and Risk Committee.

Strategic outcome	Strategic performance indicator		
Food is safe and authentic	SPI-1	SPI-2	SPI-3
	Campylobacter cases and other infectious intestinal disease	LA food samples tested as satisfactory / unsatisfactory	Total enforcement actions meeting the standards of performance
Consumers have healthier diets	SPI-4	SPI-5	SPI-6
	Percentage of people who say they eat healthily	Views of nutrition-related web pages	Retail calories purchased per capita per day
Responsible food businesses are enabled to thrive	SPI-7	SPI-8	SPI-9
	Food Business Operators audit outcomes rated as good or generally satisfactory	FSS registered and approved establishments – compliance levels	Number of trading food businesses
Consumers are empowered to make positive choices about food	SPI-10	SPI-11	SPI-12
	Number of consumers who have used the Food Hygiene Information Scheme	Number of education-related page views on FSS website	Active Mencual users
FSS is trusted and influential	SPI-13	SPI-14	SPI-15
	Consumers trust FSS to do its job	Number of page views on FSS website	Social media followers and engagement

Table 1 Our strategic performance indicators

6 | Our resources

6.1 Our finances

Our resource budget for 2024/25 at £22.7 million remains the same as 2023/24. This represents a real-terms decrease in our allocation. Our budget will be similar for the second year of this plan, the fourth year of the 2022 Spending Review.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) helps us gauge inflation. **Figure 5** demonstrates our budget allocation since the establishment of FSS and the impact of the CPI. As can be seen by the graph, apart from funding provided to FSS to support our additional responsibilities arising as a result of our exit from the European Union, our budget has remained static since our existence.

The challenge for FSS is to continue to get the right balance between staff and non-staff costs.

Our intention is to have a balance between staff and non-staff costs of 80%:20%, while managing standing costs which are increasing with inflation as well as significant increases in our pay costs.

We also monitor our budget against our strategic outcomes. **Figure 6** provides an indicative percentage split of our budget against these outcomes for the beginning of financial year 2024/25.

A Financial Management Plan has been drafted to assess financial sustainability of delivering the Corporate Plan. It will look to allocate resources and budget against strategic outcomes and our roles, following scrutiny by our senior leaders and the FSS Board.

Resource budget/profile CPI

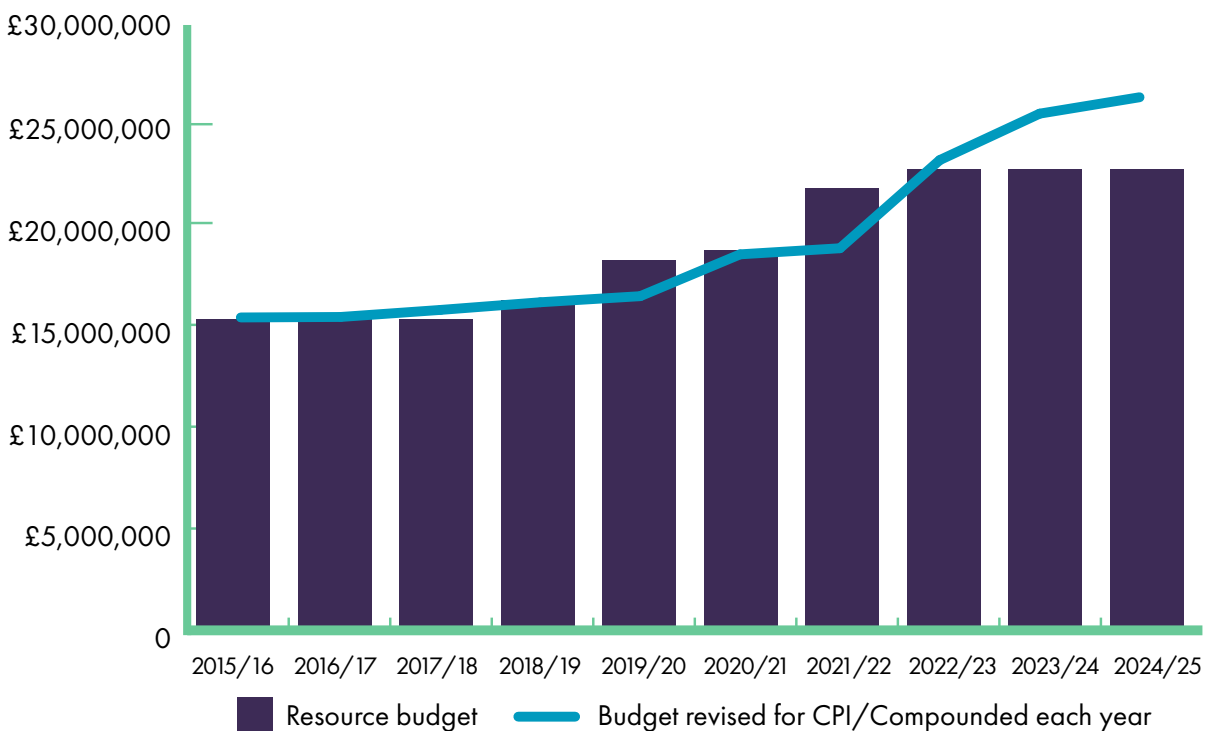


Figure 5 Our budget allocation and the impact of the Consumer Price Index (CPI)

FSS Budget 2024/25 - Allocation to our Strategic Outcomes

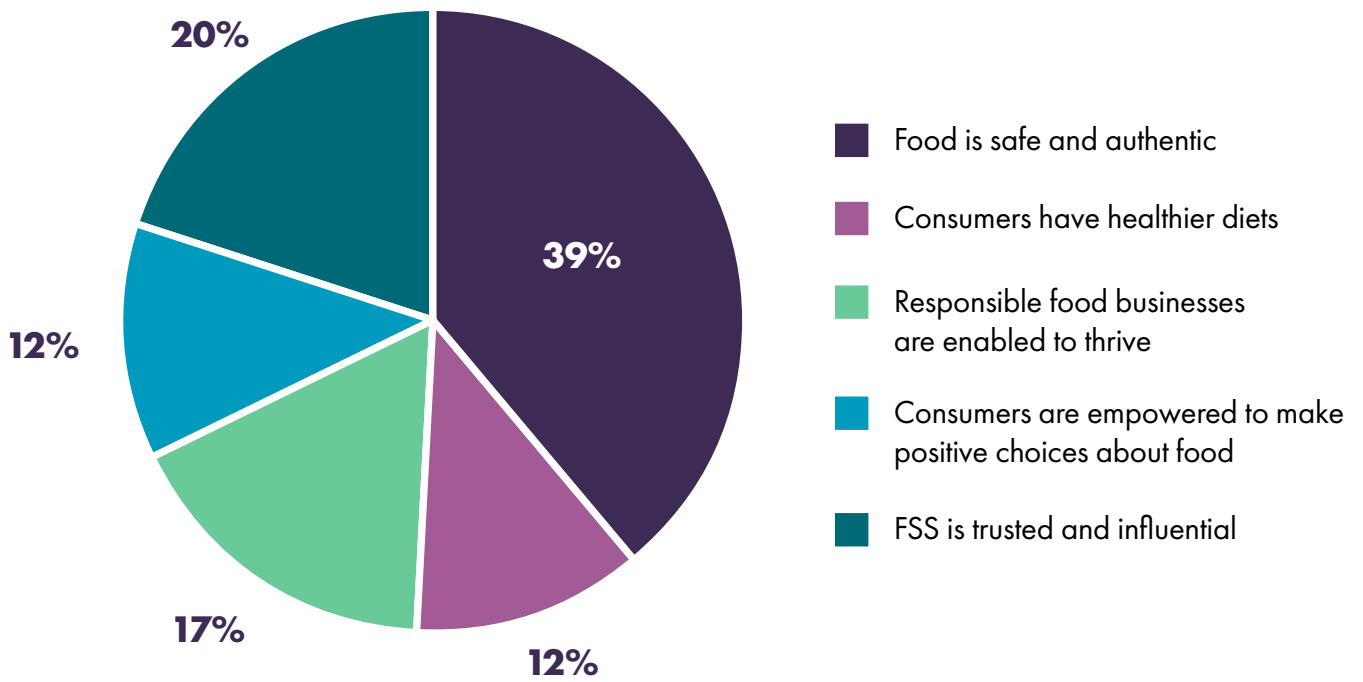


Figure 6 Our budget 2024/25 – Allocation to our Strategic Outcomes



6.2 Our staff

Everyone at FSS plays their part in delivering our outcomes. People across the organisation are our greatest asset and we rely on well-trained, skilled and motivated individuals and teams working collaboratively to achieve results.

We employ food safety, food standards and nutrition experts including veterinarians, scientists, meat hygiene inspectors, enforcement and policy delivery teams, and support staff including corporate services and administrative support.

Figure 7 demonstrates our staff profile since the establishment of FSS.

Since we took on the functions, that had been previously carried out in Scotland by the FSA on 1 April 2015, we have reacted to social, economic and political challenges. For example, leaving the EU resulted in changes to the way the food and feed industries operate, and to our trading arrangements

with other countries, and we invested in additional resource in order to meet this challenge.

Ongoing budgetary pressures, noted in **section 6.1**, now have us facing the challenge of reducing our costs by the equivalent of around 41 full time equivalents, while also continuing to operate with staff deficits in a number of key business areas. Traditional ways of working, both in location and process, have also been accelerated by digital transformation and COVID-19.

We recognise we operate in a constantly changing world, where we need to do more with less, and we are actively addressing these challenges through workforce planning, organisational review and other proactive measures. We will continue to adapt and become more agile in order to remain an employer of choice.

Staff profile

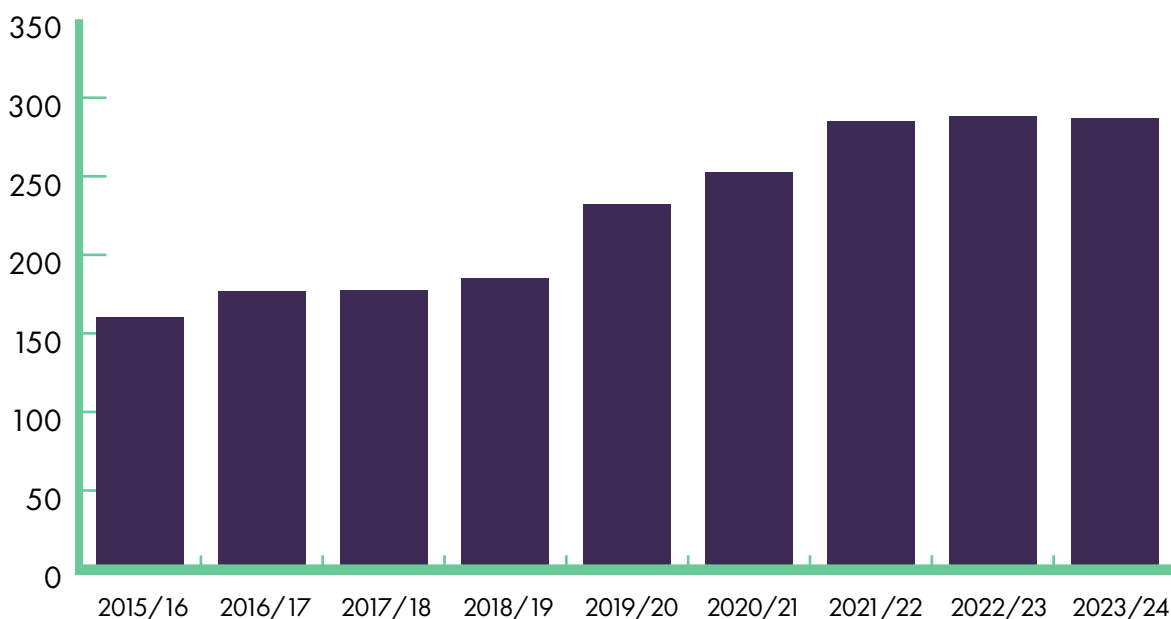


Figure 7 Our staff profile – average staff numbers per year

7 | Sustainability

Our Strategy noted the growing consumer interest in sustainability, and we committed to delivering our strategy 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 work in a sustainable manner and consider environmental and societal impacts when developing and implementing new policies on food and feed safety, standards and nutrition.

In 2022 we published our [Sustainability Plan](#) where we have identified specific areas and actions where we believe we can make a difference to improve environmental sustainability through our policies and business practices.

The areas identified below are where we will initially focus our attention to ensure a positive, measurable and lasting impact on sustainability:

- a focus on environmental sustainability as a key part of all future FSS Strategic Plans,
- considerations of environmental sustainability as part of FSS policy decisions, and
- a sustainable organisation reducing FSS's direct footprint

We have also identified a number of environmental programmes that can positively impact Scotland's food environment:

- integrating environmental sustainability opportunities into existing consumer campaigns,
- supporting Zero Waste Scotland in delivering initiatives aimed at reducing Scotland's food waste,

- supporting potential Scottish Government policies to integrate sustainability into food labelling,
- providing advice and risk analysis to ensure developments in sustainable food packaging are safe for consumers, and
- incorporating environmental considerations in our guidance to businesses on how to support healthy sustainable diets.

With regard to emissions reduction, the Scottish Government has a target of achieving net zero by 2045.

We have developed a carbon management plan along with a carbon management policy implementation plan. Both are strongly linked to our Sustainability Plan and detail ways in which we can work towards net zero targets.

The carbon management policy implementation plan has been designed to be a live document, which will allow it to reflect technological, process or legislative change.

The proposed approach is one where strategic direction is set against the background of the carbon management plan, with an overall target of emissions reduction.

Tactical and operational reductions are managed against the programmes of work that feature in the carbon management policy implementation plan.

These programmes focus on the short, medium and long-term organisational emissions reduction.

8 | Accessibility

At FSS we have a responsibility to provide access to our information and guidance to all the people of Scotland. One in five people in Scotland has a long-term health problem or disability. We provide information and services for everyone so we must ensure our digital services do not exclude anyone.

In light of FSS embarking upon the replacement of the current website and the recent recommendations of an accessibility audit from the website accessibility monitoring team at the Government Digital Service (part of the Cabinet Office), there is an increased focus and drive behind accessibility, in order to:

- be compliant with the [Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\) Accessibility Regulations 2018](#),
- meet the accessibility requirements for public bodies in Scotland which are primarily governed by the UK-wide Equality Act (2010), and
- improve the practice of inclusive communications across the organisation.

Guiding Principles

- Our stakeholders have diverse perspectives, interests and accessibility needs. Therefore, we have a responsibility to demonstrate a commitment to accessibility and inclusive communication considerations and guidelines to ensure inclusivity and equitable access.
- Prioritising accessibility and inclusive communication shows social responsibility and can enhance our reputation.

- Accessible practices are about improving services and information for everyone. This means that improving accessibility and inclusive communications will improve everyone's interactions with FSS.
- We also provide employment opportunities for people in Scotland. This means we also have a responsibility to make sure our digital workplace does not exclude anyone.

Definitions

'Inclusive communication' is defined as the practice of conveying information in a way that is considerate and respectful of the diversity of your audience. It aims to ensure that everyone, regardless of their background, experiences, or abilities, feels included and can understand the message.

'Accessibility' is defined as providing equal access to information, services, and products for individuals with disabilities and/or impairments. It ensures that people with various impairments, such as visual, auditory, motor, or cognitive, can perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with information or environments effectively.

Aims

There are many strands to this work and a dedicated cross office group has been set up with nine members and a chair to drive it forward over the next 12-18 months. Aims of the group include:

- Improving awareness and understanding across the organisation of the importance of embedding inclusive communications and accessibility into everyone's role at FSS.
- Identifying areas across the organisation where accessibility and inclusive communications can be improved and setting out actions to tackle these. A plan will be developed and shared with senior leaders for contribution and approval. Progress updates will also be provided.
- Identifying emerging legislation and technologies and setting out actions to make sure that we are prepared for change and up to date with the latest resources/tools available.
- Exploring the full remit of accessibility and inclusive communications across the wide remit of FSS, including physical accessibility and digital content accessibility.
- Setting out resources and information for colleagues to learn about accessibility and inclusive communications.
- Ensuring compliance with the UK's Equality Act and the Scottish Accessible Information Standard.

