

Food incident prevention strategic plan 2024-27

A model for the identification, analysis and implementation of measures to reduce or prevent the occurrence or re-occurrence of food/feed safety incidents and the identification and mitigation of future risks in the Scottish food and feed chains.

April 2024



Version control

Version	Date	Last review carried out	Next review date	Comments
1	June 2022	June 2023	June 2024	First version

Contact information

For information about the contents of this report, please contact foodcrime@fss.scot.

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

T: 01224 285100

www.foodstandards.gov.scot

At Food Standards Scotland We have a unique role, working independently of Ministers and industry to provide advice which is impartial, and based on robust science and data.

Our remit covers all aspects of the food chain which can impact on public health – aiming to protect consumers from food safety risks and promote healthy eating.

Contents

Abbreviations	3
1. Introduction	4
2. The importance of incident prevention in the delivery of FSS strategic objectives 4	
3. What is incident prevention?	4
4. Aim and scope of the strategy	4
5. Developing an incident prevention model for Scotland	5
6. Collaboration and partnership working	7
7. FSS strategic objectives.....	7

Abbreviations

ESRG	External Stakeholder Reference Group
FBO	Food Business Operator
FSA	Food Standards Agency
FSS	Food Standards Scotland
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
IPWG	Incident Prevention Working Group
LAs	Local Authorities
RCA	Root Cause Analysis
SFCIU	Scottish Food Crime and Incidents Unit

1. Introduction

Food Standards Scotland's Strategy to 2026 sets out a vision for a safe, healthy and sustainable food environment that benefits and protects the health and well-being of everyone in Scotland. Three of the priority outcomes are that Food is Safe and Authentic, responsible food businesses are able to thrive and FSS is trusted and influential.

Incident prevention plays an important part in this by identifying areas for improvement through analysis of a variety of sources that then enables preventative measures to be established and implemented to help ensure continuous improvement with a view to enable food businesses to thrive.

FSS long term goal is to have a process that will enable effective and efficient analysis of information to help inform prevention initiatives with an emphasis on helping food businesses reduce the number of incidents in targeted areas through education and information sharing. This work will link closely to FSS Root Cause Analysis (RCA) strategy.

2. The importance of incident prevention in the delivery of FSS strategic objectives

FSS will continue to put evidence first and as with the guiding principles and values, FSS will ensure work is underpinned by robust data, establishment of trust ensuring regulatory objectives and decision making is transparent and that actions are consistent and timely. FSS will give advice and recommendations alongside an evidence base to enable those impacted to understand the issue.

FSS will work closely with industry in a collaborative manner to ensure risks and mitigations can be identified, shared and implemented. It is important to identify learning from incidents accompanied by horizon scanning with a focus on identifying solutions to prevent incidents occurring or their reoccurrence. This information will be captured and shared with stakeholders and industry to develop an information sharing ethos with the ultimate aim to prevent incidents.

3. What is incident prevention?

Incident prevention is the process of making plans and preparations, and the implementation of these plans to prevent incidents or avoid having them reoccur. For FSS, it is a term used to identify effective long-term preventative actions to help mitigate occurrence and or recurrence of incidents to protect consumers.

4. Aim and scope of the strategy

This strategy sets out a framework for the analysis of information and data in relation to food and feed incidents with the aim of identifying effective long term preventative actions. An integral part of this is the sharing of information and learning between FSS, industry and key stakeholders.

FSS will look to identify potential issues through horizon scanning coupled with identifying common themes, best practice and lessons learned from incidents as well as utilising information and intelligence shared by industry. This strategy will take cognisance of other incident prevention work elsewhere in the UK and around the world to help ensure the furthest reaching data sets feed into FSS analysis and preventative action.

It is important to understand how the use of our data can be optimised across industry to prevent repeating occurrences of incidents. There is a need for FSS to have more proactive engagement and interaction with Local Authorities (LAs) and industry through communication and information sharing.

5. Developing an incident prevention model for Scotland

FSS and key stakeholders, including LAs and industry, hold crucial information which can be used to help identify specific opportunities, issues and wider trends. With appropriate analysis, this information can be developed and used to establish preventative measures and identify future challenges that could be mitigated.

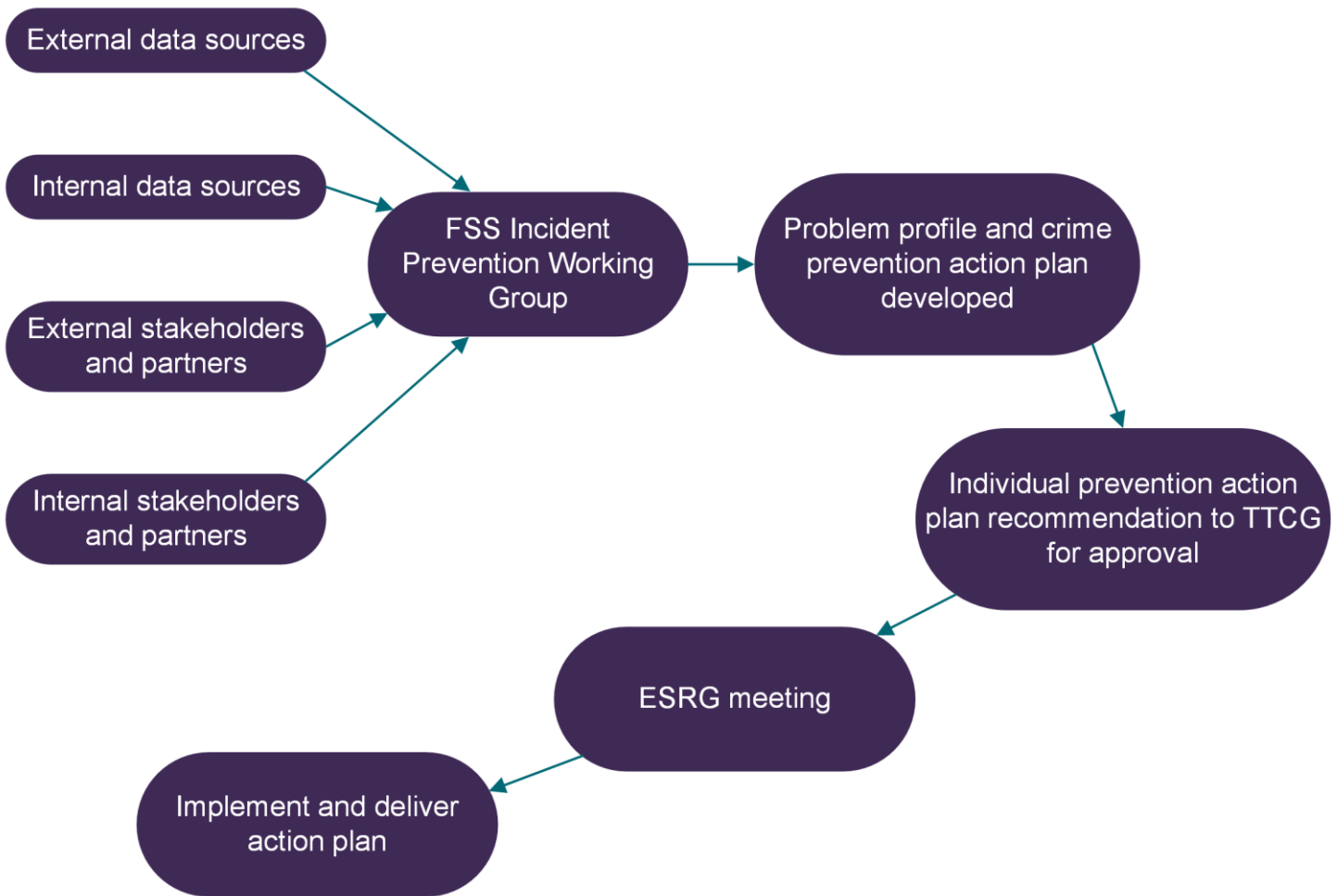
Through analysis of the available data sources, whether internal or external, a multi departmental review will be conducted through the governance of an Incident Prevention Working Group (IPWG). The IPWG will consider and analyse data to establish mitigating opportunities and develop an incident prevention approach to benefit the wider food and feed sectors.

In collaboration with the IPWG, a prevention profile report will be produced which will identify recommendations along with an incident prevention plan. This will be presented to the Tactical Tasking & Co-ordination Group (TTCG) where agreement will be sought to proceed with the incident prevention plan and share with an External Stakeholder Reference Group (ESRG) where continuous improvement learning can be shared.

The ESRG will also provide the governance route for industry and stakeholders to share with FSS their data, issues and recommendations in respect of the prevention of food and feed incidents.

FSS will utilise a number of routes to share incident prevention learning with key stakeholders including meetings/events, the development of a dedicated sharing platform and a dedicated section on the FSS website.

FSS incident prevention model



Information from external and internal data sources, stakeholders and partners feeds into the FSS Incident Prevention Working Group. A prevention problem profile report will be produced which will identify recommendations along with an incident prevention plan. This will be presented to the Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Group (TTCG) where agreement will be sought to proceed with the incident prevention plan and share with an External Stakeholder Reference Group (ESRG) where continuous improvement learning can be shared. Once these are complete, the action plan is implemented.

6. Collaboration and partnership working

The vision for future incident prevention described by this strategy cannot be delivered by FSS in isolation. Effective communication and collaboration with external stakeholders including industry is critical to its success.

FSS will continue to build on the trust and strong partnerships that already exist with stakeholders to support the efficient and effective sharing of information and data with the ultimate aim to support industry in incident prevention.

FSS will look to establish an ESRG to enable the two way sharing of information with the combined purpose of identifying continuous improvement within incidents.

7. FSS strategic objectives

The ultimate FSS objective in relation to incident management is to mitigate risks to consumers from any incidents that may occur, however, FSS is keen to have a more proactive role in relation to the prevention of incidents and RCA is a crucial strand to this work. RCA information will enable FSS to identify the cause of incidents with a view to identifying trends which could be targeted as part of FSS incident prevention strategy

Goal 1: Identifying Stakeholders

Outcomes: Food is safe and authentic, responsible food business are enabled to thrive, FSS is trusted and influential

To achieve this we will:

- identify stakeholders to participate in both the internal and external incident prevention groups

Goal 2: Improve data analysis processes for review of data to identify trends and aid food crime prevention

Outcomes: Food is safe and authentic, responsible food business are enabled to thrive, FSS is trusted and influential.

To achieve this we will:

- create FSS Internal Incident Prevention Working Group including Terms of reference.
- review existing reporting mechanisms to make sure they are fit for purpose
- explore digital solutions to help aid data analysis and maximise the potential of our data.
- develop tools to identify and monitor trends and detecting risks.
- link datasets together to enhance our evidence base
- enhance data quality and availability
- strengthen our data capability

Goal 3: Improve stakeholder and consumer engagement

Outcomes: Food is safe and authentic, responsible food business are enabled to thrive, FSS is trusted and influential

To achieve this we will:

- raise awareness, consult and gather stakeholder views on Incident prevention and highlight why this work is important and how it can help the Scottish economy to flourish.
- develop a constructive feedback loop process to improve information sharing between FSS and stakeholders around incident management.
- work collaboratively with key stakeholders to help implement efficient and effective RCA amongst Food Business Operators
- creation of a ESRG along with terms of reference

Goal 4: Introduce communication channels between FSS and Industry for sharing of lessons learned and best practice

Outcomes: Food is safe and authentic, responsible food business are enabled to thrive, FSS is trusted and influential.

To achieve this we will:

- research current internal and external sharing platforms
- research new and innovative information sharing platform
- carry out further considerations in relation to having a technological solution to share information

Goal 5: Develop a 4 nations approach to incident prevention with the FSA to capture consistent data and identify UK wide trends.

Outcomes: Food is safe and authentic, responsible food business are enabled to thrive, FSS is trusted and influential.

To achieve this we will:

- develop consistent RCA and other data categorisation to allow efficient and effective analysis
- ensure continual engagement with FSA in relation to Incident prevention work
- ensure appropriate and timely FSS involvement in incident prevention work streams to help shape future developments