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**Performance and
Resources report
Q3 2020/21
FSA 21/03/10**

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Food Standards Agency
Business Committee
10 March 2021



Contents

Foreword	3
Executive summary - Our performance	4
Delivering our corporate priorities	5-6
Local Authority delivery in England	7
Food Hygiene Rating Scheme	8
Meat food business compliance (FBO audit)	9
External communications during COVID-19	10
National Food Crime Unit (NFCU)	11-12
Spend vs HM Treasury limits	13
Breakdown of corporate priorities	14
Breakdown of key areas of spend	15

Foreword

Chris Hitchen, Director of Finance & Performance

Q3 saw an extensive period of ‘winter planning’ for the FSA to ensure that we were adequately prepared for the impending second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and the end of the EU Exit Transition Period on 31 December. Our incident plan to safeguard food safety to protect consumers was implemented in mid-November leaving the FSA prepared as the situation developed rapidly towards the end of December as the second wave of the pandemic heightened and we fine-tuned plans in line with the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation agreement (TCA) announcement. Despite this, teams across the FSA continued to work tirelessly in providing a flexible and effective emergency response delivering official meat controls thereby helping maintain food supply. As we progress into 2021, we continue to remain confident that we are suitably prepared and ready to take on any further challenges presented including the Northern Ireland Protocol (NIP) coming into effect. We continue to remain alert to the rapidly changing situation.

The EU Transition Programme has now moved into its post Transition Period (TP) phase: assessing whether changes put in place are adequate, preparing for handover to business-as-usual and programme closure at end of March ‘21. All FSA projects within the programme completed their minimum viable product requirements for 31 December 2020. The outputs of these projects were relevant in both deal or no-deal scenarios with the EU, so no additional products were required by end of TP as a result of the deal agreed at the end of December. Further outputs from some projects, e.g. import arrangements for EU food and feed products and implementation of NIP will be due later in 2021 in line with wider Government timetables and these will continue after programme closure.

On the FSA’s second strategic priority on regulatory reform, the Achieving Business Compliance Programme, progress continues to be slowed by the impact of COVID-19, and other winter planning pressures. Following earlier work that established evidence and the basis of a hypothesis for exploring a different regulatory relationship with the largest influential retailers (as they have consistently high levels of compliance and a significant impact across the food system), discussions with these major retailers are underway, with a view of identifying impactful levers and interventions that could be utilised in a new regulatory approach with this segment in the first instance. Work to further develop our understanding of the regulatory implications of the food platforms sector is also progressing well, with a current focus on complaints and new entrants. Work to map the existing Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, and identify its inherent value from different perspectives has been completed.

The FSA’s National Food Crime Unit performance is captured on slide 11, with further background to this new information on slide 12. The FSA continues to seek PACE powers which would support its important work on food crime.

Executive summary

Our performance in Q3 2020/21 (difference from Q2 / annual performance)



Meat FBO compliance



98.5%
(↓1.4%)

% of Meat FBO premises
rated 'Good' or
'Generally satisfactory'



1.5%
(↓1.4%)

% of Meat FBO premises
rated 'Improvement
necessary' or 'Urgent
improvement necessary'



56%
(↑10%)

Our audit capacity
compared to normal levels,
focusing on audits that
have been long due and /
or considered high risk

National Food Crime Unit (NFCU)



543
(↓148)

Intelligence reports
reported and disseminated



11
(↓8)

Number of new
operations opened



75
(↑14)

Disruptions in Q3

Social media response



4.3%

Engagement rate

(↑0.8% above the FSA's
November 2020 average ER)

For our reopening business
checklist post on LinkedIn
following the 2nd national
restrictions in England

Delivering our corporate priorities



8
(↓1)

Corporate Milestones
delayed due to COVID-19



(↑1)

Corporate Milestones
delivered despite COVID-19
reprioritisation

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)



73.2%

% of businesses with an
FHRS rating of 5 – very
good (↑0.6% points)

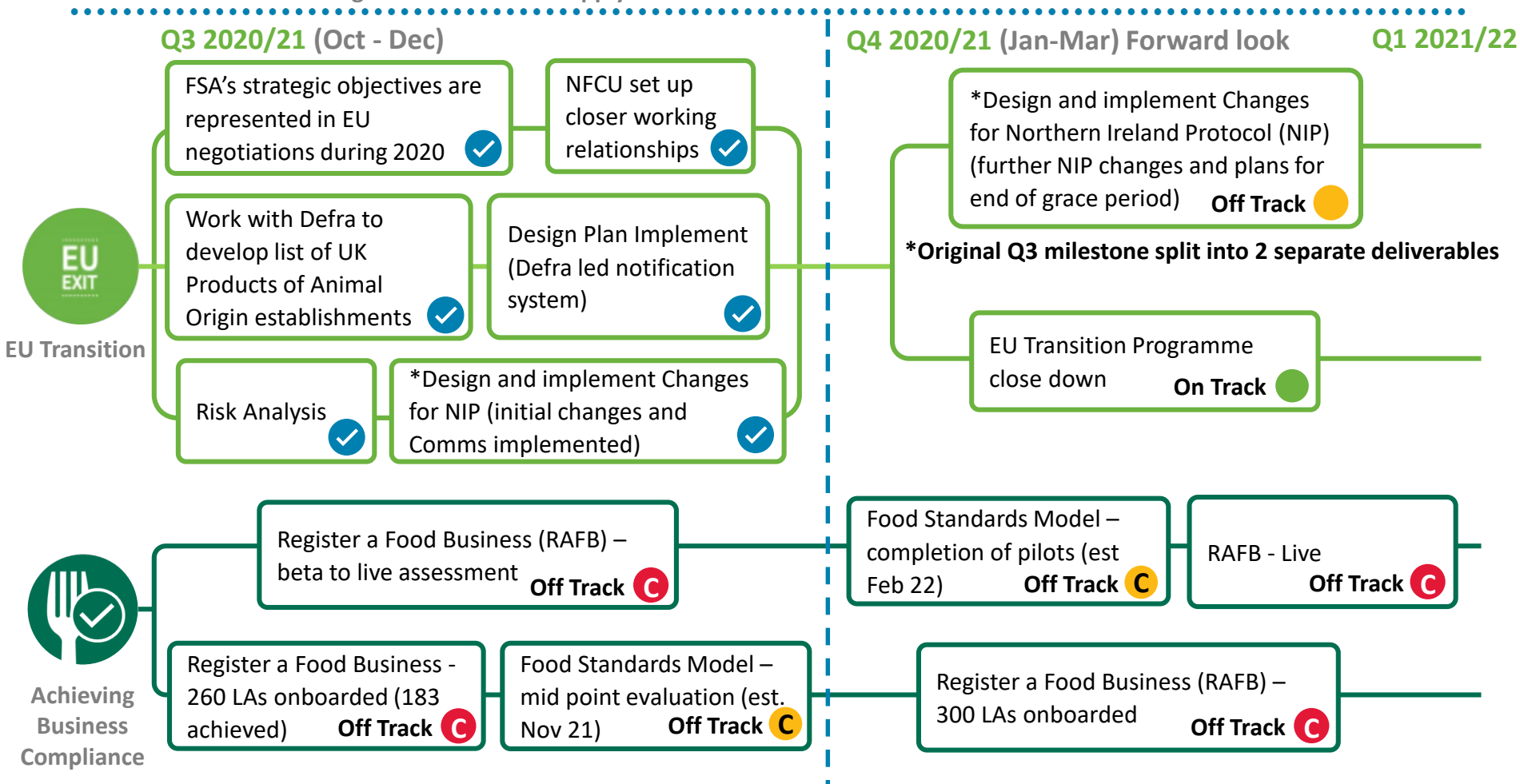


3.4%

% of businesses with an
FHRS rating of 2 or lower
(↓0.3% points)

Delivering our corporate priorities

The FSA's objectives throughout 20/21 and our COVID-19 response have been to ensure food safety, preserving the high level of consumer protection in the UK whilst supporting industry in maintaining the nation's food supply



Key



Delivered



Off Track due to COVID-19, delivery unaffected



Off Track due to COVID-19



On Track



Off Track, delivery unaffected



Off Track

Delivering our corporate priorities

The FSA's objectives throughout 20/21 and our COVID-19 response have been to ensure food safety, preserving the high level of consumer protection in the UK whilst supporting industry in maintaining the nation's food supply


Q3 2020/21 (Oct - Dec)


Q4 2020/21 (Jan-Mar) Forward look


Q1 2021/22





FHP


Science Council
Working Group 5 -
Science Council
Report to FSA Board
on Evidence Base 


Develop Cost of
Illness Model -
Analyse Cost of
Home Consumption
(Jan 21) **Off Track** 


Young
Consumer
Awareness
Campaign (Feb
21) **Off Track** 


Prepacked for direct sale
(PPDS) support to LAs
and FBOs - Agree
Implementation Plan 


Develop Cost of Illness
Model - Analyse Cost of
Hypersensitivity Burden
(Jan 21) **Off Track** 


FBO Campaign on
Awareness of
Hypersensitivity
(Completion date TBD)
Off Track 


Develop Food Allergic
Reaction Reporting
Mechanism - Deliver Alpha
and Review (end Mar 21)
Off Track 


Develop Food Allergic
Reaction Reporting
Mechanism - Deliver Beta
and Review (deliverable re-
defined for 21/22 Business
Plan) **Off Track** 


Develop Cost of
Illness Model -
Deliver Final Cost
Report (Aug 21)
Off Track 


Science Council
Working Group 5 -
Items Identified for
Priority Setting
Exercise (Jan 21) 


Science Council
Working Group 5 -
Final Report (Jun 21)
Off Track 

Propose options for
Official Veterinarian /
Official Auxiliary trials 

Complete discovery work on
Poultry inspection (Feb 21)
Off Track 

Full defined Future
Operating Model
requirements **On Track** 

Understand future
opportunities for Third
Party Assurance
Off Track 

Define framework for Industry
Segmentation **On Track** 



Operational
Transformation

Impact of COVID-19 on local authority (LA) delivery – Q3

COVID-19 has created unprecedented challenges for LAs in delivering their statutory food functions as well as protecting their communities and controlling the spread of the disease. In response, we have adjusted our expectations of LAs and set out a clear prioritisation of activities identifying a set of minimum core activities. We have undertaken limited data gathering (see FSA 20-12-09) and have an exception reporting mechanism in place for LAs unable to meet the minimum expectations. In Q3 we have completed the following:



We are engaging with LAs where we become aware of concerns that they may not be delivering our minimum expectations, including acting on intelligence obtained at LA meetings we attend



16 LAs contacted us following the FSA Chief Executive's letter in October to all LA Chief Executives, most confirming that they are meeting the minimum expectations

We followed up with:



4 LAs in England



1 LA in Wales

These **5** LAs indicated that they were not meeting minimum expectations at the time of the temperature check with the two national LA focus groups in November 2020 – the follow up established that steps had been / were being taken to ensure minimum expectations are being met



1 LA required follow up in relation to inspection of fishing vessels and we facilitated access to the FSA funding available and they are now also undertaking this work



1 Regulatory partnership comprising **7** LAs contacted us setting out some of what they are doing and we are following up to confirm that minimum expectations are also being met

The position is still dynamic and LAs remain under significant pressures but are continuing to strive to deliver against our minimum expectations

FOOD IS SAFE
AND WHAT IT
SAYS IT IS

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)

FOOD HYGIENE RATING

0 1 2 3 4 **5**

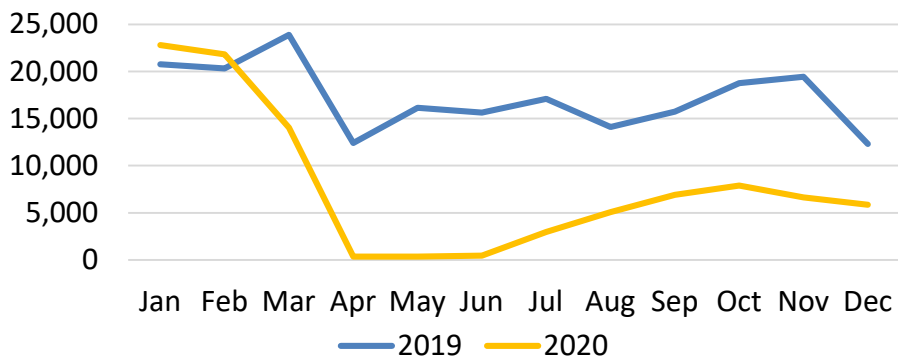
VERY GOOD

COVID-19 Local Authority guidance



From April 2020, inspections were deferred to minimise footfall in businesses and divert resources to urgent reactive work and COVID-19 related activities. Advice was updated in June to resume inspections, prioritising poorly compliant and higher risk businesses.

FHRS inspections per month between 2019 and 2020



New businesses are risk assessed based on the information supplied at registration and are being prioritised for inspection according to the risk they pose. If there are concerns about a potential public health risk the business will be subject to high priority intervention. This prioritisation has helped protect the integrity of the FHRS during the pandemic.



48.5k
(↑21% in Q3)

Businesses published as 'awaiting inspection' as at the end of Q3, an increase of 21% from Q2.



This increase reflects the reduction in on-site interventions during the pandemic as local authorities focus on high priority activities.

% of rated food businesses achieving FHRS rating of '5 – very good' and 2 or lower in Q3 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland consolidated)

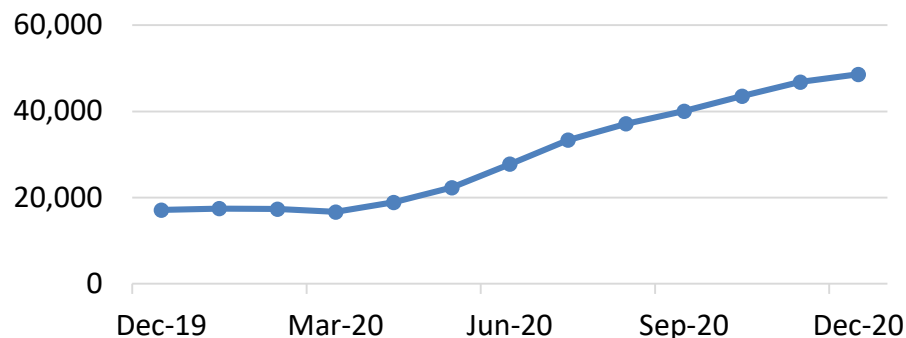
5 – very good

5 **73.2%**
(↑0.6ppt since Q2)

2 or lower

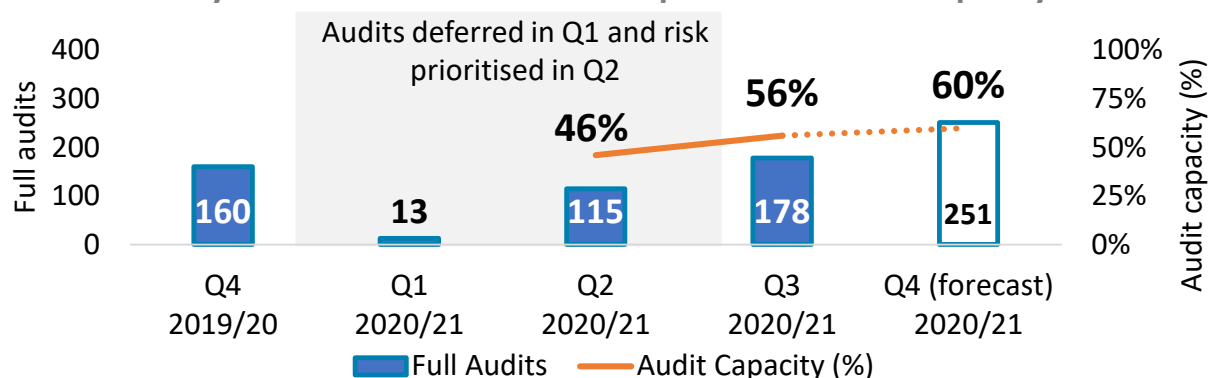
3.4%
(↓0.3ppt since Q2)

Number of businesses published as 'awaiting inspection'



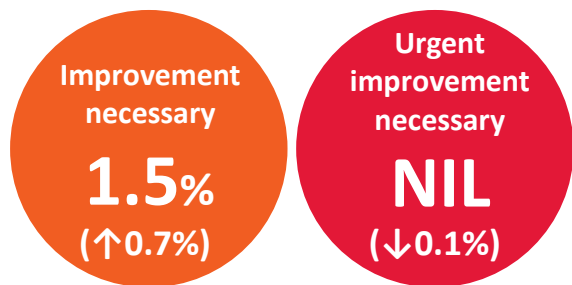
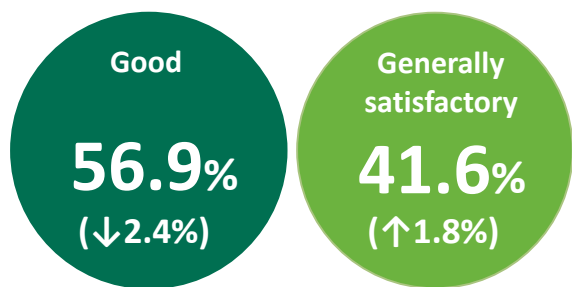
Meat food business compliance (FBO audits)

Audit Activity - Number of full audits completed and audit capacity %



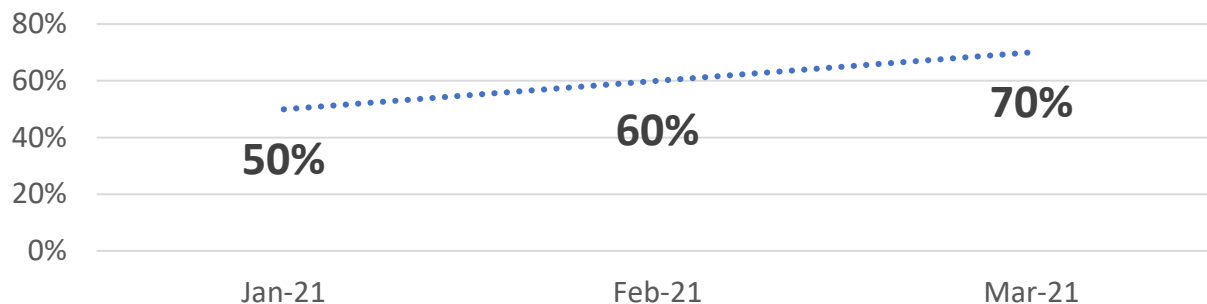
Audit capacity in Q3 compared to normal levels, focusing on audits that have been long due and / or considered high risk

Q3 20-21 % meat FBO ratings (England, Wales and Northern Ireland consolidated)



Forecast trend for Q4 20-21 capacity

Dependent on COVID-19 Industry operational status and export certification demands



COVID-19 impact

In July 2020, following extensive consultation with Industry, the audit programme recommenced a risk-based, targeted return to audits. Any concerns / impacts have been mitigated by communication with FBOs, tailoring the approach to each circumstance. This included:



Using remote and semi-remote auditing techniques



High-risk premises remain subject to on-site audits

FOOD IS SAFE
AND WHAT IT
SAYS IT IS

External communications during COVID-19

In Q3, our response to COVID-19 aligned with wider political and societal shifts. We pushed rapid shut-down and re-opening guidance to businesses regarding the 2nd National Lockdown and consumer messaging reinforced the importance of the continuation of handwashing on public safety



Facebook

A post on rapid shut-down guidance at the start of the National Restrictions in England on 4 Nov was the top performing COVID-19 post on Facebook. This received:



3%
Engagement rate



a reach of
4,000

(**↑0.5%** above the FSA's average engagement rate for November)

Instagram



Many food businesses have had to adapt to doing takeaways during COVID-19.

Our top post provided guidance for businesses, who recently changed the way they operated, to ensure they were up to speed on the food safety risk.



Social Media Response

LinkedIn

Our top performing COVID-19 post was a reopening business checklist following the end of the 2nd National Restrictions in England (20 Nov), this received:



6,500
Impressions



71 likes



4.3%
Engagement rate

(**↑0.8%** above the FSA's average engagement rate for November)

Twitter

When it comes to our own Q3 content, a handwashing post on Global Handwashing Day (15 Oct) received:



5,500
Impressions



Engagements, a **2.1%** engagement rate (**↑0.8%** above the FSA's Q3 average)

Our top performing COVID-19 post was a retweet of DHSC as a reminder to the public to remember to:



Wash hands



Wear a face covering



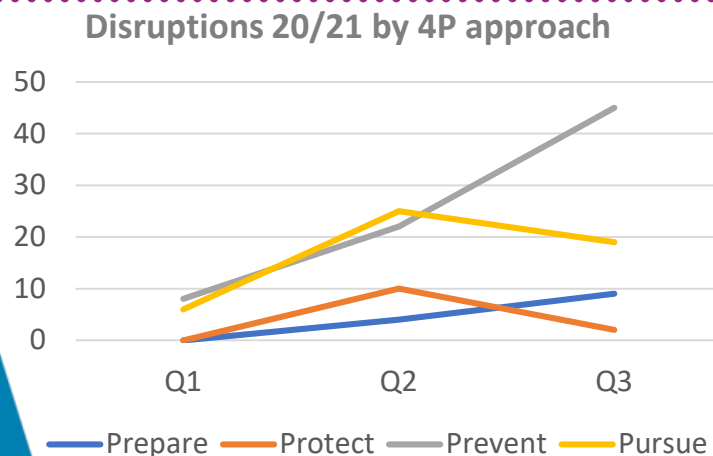
Watch your space

FOOD IS SAFE
AND WHAT IT
SAYS IT IS

National Food Crime Unit (NFCU)



Disruptions
150
Total disruptions
(YTD)



75 Disruptions in Q3 (↑14 from Q2), of which the FSA;



Led **23**



Supported **25**



Coordinated **27**

Notable NFCU disruption example in Q3



Coordination of LA activity resulting in the seizure of approx. 20 tonnes of meat products, which we assessed was to be used to facilitate fraud

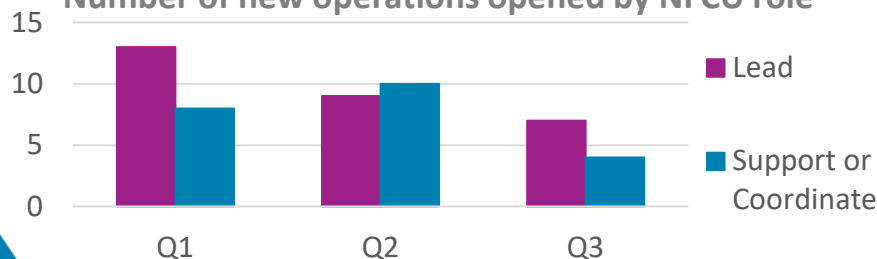
Investigations



51

New operations (20/21 YTD)

Number of new operations opened by NFCU role



30 operations open at Q3 end, of which the FSA are;

16
Leading

14
Supporting /
coordinating

Intelligence (2020/21 YTD)



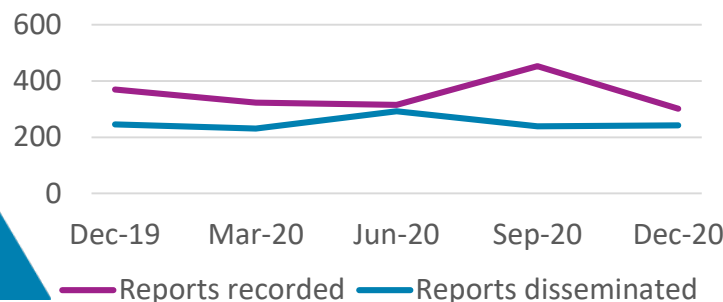
1,068

Intelligence
recorded



773

Intelligence
disseminated



Q3 reports recorded & disseminated

301

Recorded
(↓151 from Q2)

242

Disseminated
(↑3 from Q2)



National Food Crime Unit (NFCU)



Operational outcomes (disruptions): The NFCU uses the established UK law enforcement '4P approach' to plan and deliver operational outcomes across its end-to-end counter-fraud capability. Operational outcomes across the 4P approach are described as 'disruptions' and can be achieved where the NFCU lead, or where it is supporting or coordinating the work of partners. Increases in disruptions recorded from Q1 to Q3 is driven by NFCU achieving full operating capability and increased awareness amongst staff of identifying and recording disruptions resulting from their work.



Prepare - ensure the necessary capabilities exist to tackle food crime



Prevent - stop individuals / businesses from committing food crime



Protect - reduce the vulnerability of businesses and consumers to food crime threats and risks



Pursue - prosecute offenders and confiscate the proceeds of food crime

Investigations / operations: While there are no individuals currently charged or within a criminal justice process arising from an NFCU-led investigation this quarter, this is primarily due to the timescales of investigating complex fraud offences and submitting the case file to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). There are multiple NFCU investigations ongoing which are expected to submit case files to the CPS in 2021.

Not all operations to deliver a 4P disruption have the same timescales as a criminal investigation and as such the duration of some operations may be shorter in comparison. For example, within 3 weeks the NFCU initiated and concluded the operational activity which resulted in the seizure of 20 tonnes of meat products which the NFCU assessed was to be used to facilitate a food crime. In the year to date, the NFCU has opened 51 new operations. At the end of Q3 there remained 30 open NFCU operations of which 16 the NFCU are the lead organisation.

Intelligence: Volumes of intelligence recorded and disseminated has remained stable throughout the year, having seen a year-on-year increase since 2015 as the NFCU has grown in size and developed relationships with partners across LAs, law enforcement and other government departments. Intelligence recorded is assessed against a standard set of law enforcement criteria as well as NFCU-specific thresholds and priorities. There are clear decision points in NFCU processes which provide consistency to intelligence-led activity which may include:



Disseminating intelligence to partners to inform their own decision making about any further action they deem necessary



Establishing an operation to expand the intelligence picture and support or coordinate the activity of partners, to enable the planning and delivery of a 4P disruption



Initiating an NFCU-led criminal or financial investigation to prosecute offenders or confiscate the proceeds of crime

Affordability – How the FSA is performing against HM Treasury limits 2020/21

	20/21 Full Year Forecast £m	20/21 Limits £m	Under (A) / (Over) (R) Spend Availability £m	Fav/(Adv) Variance %	Under (G) / (Over) (R) spend
FSA total (RDEL & CDEL exc AME)	118.8	124.2	5.4 (A)	4%	● (G)
Westminster (including EU Exit)					
Net Admin Expenditure	48.0	49.7	1.7 (A)	4%	● (G)
Net Programme Expenditure	49.6	51.2	1.6 (A)	3%	● (G)
Capital (CDEL)	7.1	8.3	1.2 (A)	13%	● (G)
Wales					
RDEL & CDEL	3.4	3.7	0.3 (A)	8%	● (G)
Northern Ireland					
RDEL & CDEL	10.7	11.3	0.6 (A)	5%	● (G)

Breakdown of corporate priorities

	2020/21 Full Year Forecast £m	2020/21 Budget £m	Under (A) / (Over) (R) Spend Availability £m
FSA total (RDEL & CDEL) (of which):	118.8	124.2	5.4 (A)
Risk Assessment and other Science	10.2	11.3	1.1 (A)
Risk Management and other Policy	6.4	6.9	0.5 (A)
LA Support & Delivery of official controls	6.3	6.5	0.2 (A)
National Food Crime Unit (NFCU)	4.0	4.8	0.8 (A)
Operations excl. NFCU & COVID-19	21.3	24.0	2.7 (A)
Doing the day job well	45.8	48.8	3.0 (A)
Capital	2.1	3.7	1.6 (A)
Key priorities (see next slide for breakdown):	22.7	18.2	(4.5) (R)

Breakdown of key areas of spend

	2020/21 Full Year Forecast £m	2020/21 Budget £m	Under (A) / (Over) (R) Spend Availability £m
Key priorities (of which):	22.7	18.2	(4.5) (R)
COVID-19 (see next slide)	5.1	0.0	(5.1) (R)
EU Transition excl. NFCU	9.8	10.2	0.4 (A)
Achieving Business Compliance	1.9	1.9	0.0 (A)
Operational Transformation	1.3	1.3	0.0 (A)
Food Hypersensitivity	1.8	2.0	0.2 (A)
Surveillance (inc. Sampling)	2.8	2.8	0.0 (A)