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**FSA 21-06-14**  
**Performance and**  
**Resources report**  
**Q4 2020/21**

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Food Standards Agency  
Business Committee  
16 June 2021



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# Foreword

Chris Hitchen, Director of Finance & Performance



This report includes the annual update on the FSA's headline food safety outcome measure of confirmed human cases of foodborne disease (slide 7). 2020 saw a reduction in confirmed laboratory reports for all four key pathogens included in this report. These figures are likely to have been impacted by COVID-19 in a number of ways including impacts on the surveillance system, changes in behaviour and implementation of non-pharmaceutical interventions. The FSA will be undertaking further work to better understand the reasons for these changes in reported cases seen during COVID-19.

The EU Transition Programme closed on 31 March 2021, having completed its key milestones for 1 January 2021 and handing many projects over to business-as-usual. Further outputs from some projects, e.g. import arrangements for EU food and feed products and implementation of the NI protocol will be due later in 2021 in line with wider Government timetables and these will be co-ordinated by the new 'FSA Transition Delivery and Assurance Group', established from 1 April. This group is responsible for continued coordination and oversight of both the remaining changes in some project areas and new challenges for the FSA now that the Transition Period has ended, such as our involvement with the UK Office of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Trade Assurance and plans for future border controls. An early priority is to ensure that businesses understand and apply the requirements for imports, and that we have good access to data from border systems to inform implementation.

On the FSA's second strategic priority on regulatory reform (additional to Operational Transformation Programme), the Achieving Business Compliance Programme has commenced pilots of a new Food Standards regulatory approach and early findings are currently being collected and assessed. Work in relation to the large influential retailers continues to progress with early planning for a roundtable event early autumn, with the objective to define and agree pilots on how these businesses may be regulated in the future. In addition, early scoping work has begun on a review of how food Hygiene official controls are delivered. The programme has also commissioned a review of all previous research conducted for the predecessor Regulating Our Future programme and ABC to date, which will serve as a richer source of analysis that current and future projects can use to support the rationale to progress activity. The programme is also presenting an update to the FSA Board in May 2021.

Following on from the FSA sampling framework, slide 8 outlines a summary of FSA sampling activity, including food authenticity which was highlighted in the NAO's Assuring Food Safety and Standards report.

For record, this report includes the FSA 2020 People Survey results as a comparison against the Civil Service benchmark of which discussion were held during the March 2020 Business Committee.

## Hygiene and Standards

### Meat FBO compliance



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



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



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

### Local Authority delivery



There has been no evidence to suggest that any local authority has been unable to meet the minimum expectations we set for the period to June 2021

### Food Hygiene Rating Scheme



Food hygiene ratings issued



Heading in the right direction back to previous average number of ratings issued

### FSA sampling activity



Total samples taken (covering 7 areas)



Estimated total tests taken (inc labelling checks)



Non-compliances

## Other

### Delivering our corporate priorities

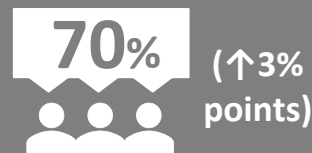


Corporate milestones delayed due to COVID-19



Corporate Milestones delivered despite COVID-19 reprioritisation

### People Survey Engagement Index score



The FSA remains a 'High Performing' Civil Service Department

### Social media response



Engagement rate

For our 'Food in a Pandemic' report (equalling the FSA average engagement rate for March 21)

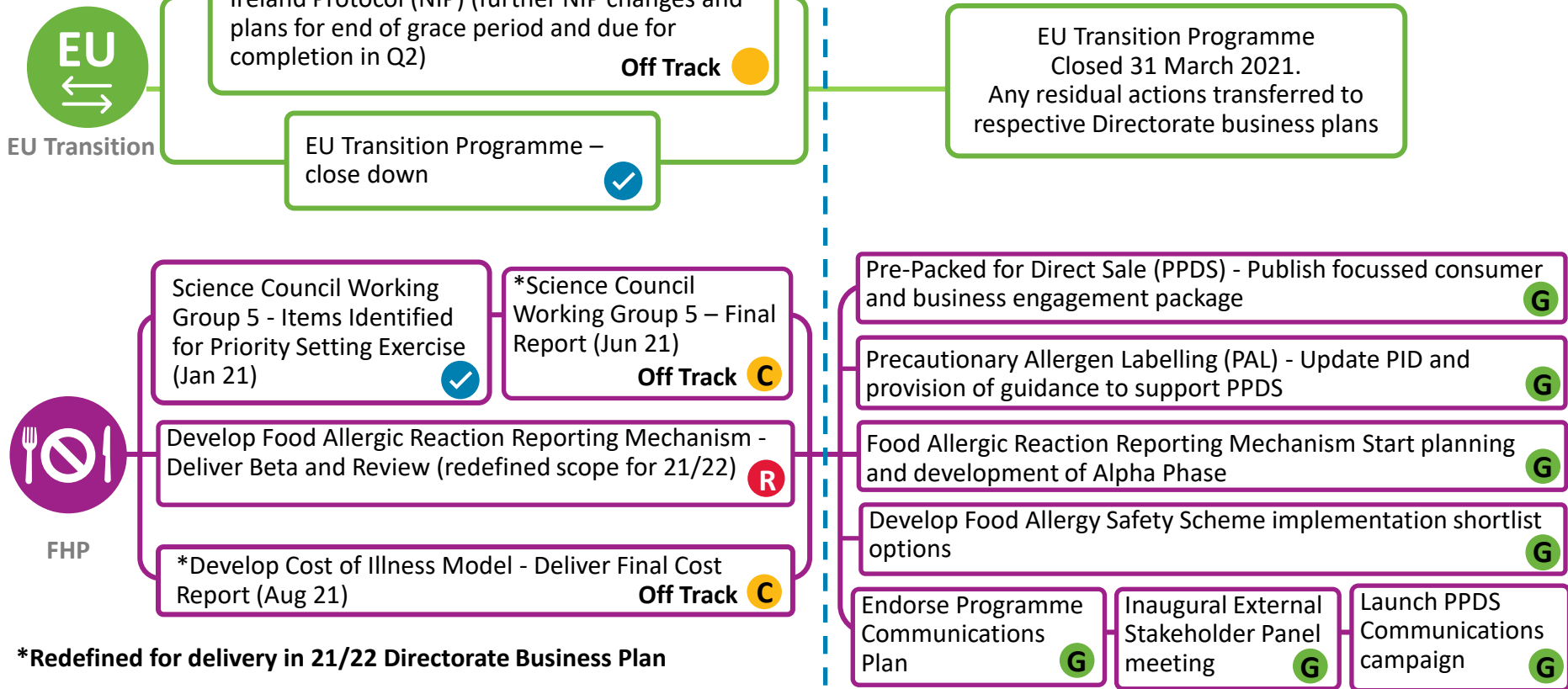
# Delivering our corporate priorities

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

## Q4 2020/21 (Jan - Mar)

## Q1 2021/22 (Apr - Jun) Forward look

## Q2 2021/22



### 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

## Q4 2020/21 (Jan - Mar)

## Q1 2021/22 (Apr - Jun) Forward look

## Q2 2021/22



ABC

\*\*RAFB - live ✔

**\*\*transferred to BAU**

\*Register a Food Business (RAFB) – 300 LAs onboarded C

\*Food Standards Model – completion of pilots (est Feb 22)

**Off Track** C

Communicate Approach to Large Influential Retailers (LIRs) and identify those to work with G

Headline Hygiene policy Approach produced ●

Interim review of Food Standards New regulatory approach pilot G



OTP

Define framework for Industry Segmentation G

Understand future opportunities for Third Party Assurance G

Complete discovery of Resource Allocation System (RAS) to resource management G

Complete Risk Potential Assessment document G

Full defined Future Operating Model requirements G

Discovery of future audit arrangements G

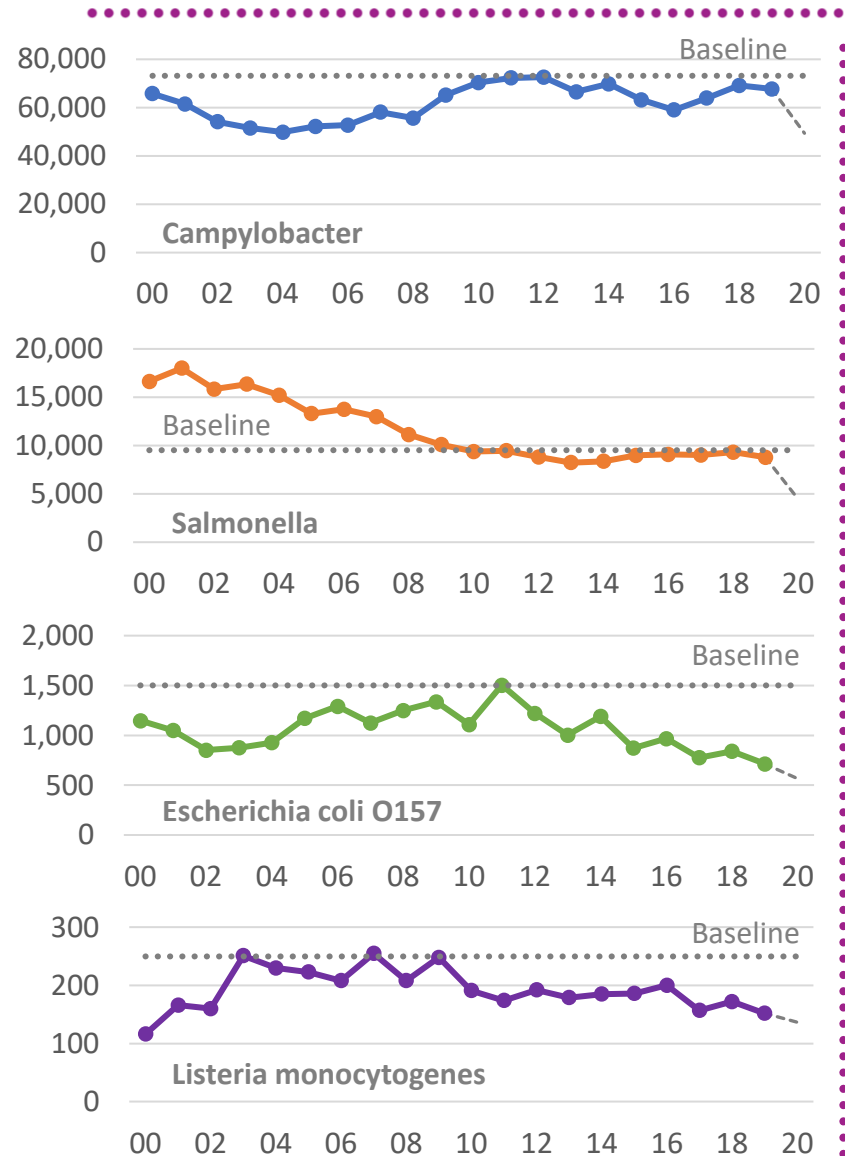
Delivery improvements to operational delivery model\* G

Complete Project and Programme mapping and deliverables G

\*Redefined for delivery in 21/22 Directorate Business Plan

\*Planning activities in Q1 will identify further granular deliverables by Q2

# Human cases of foodborne disease – confirmed laboratory reports



COVID-19 has likely impacted the decrease on confirmed laboratory cases during 2020 to **Campylobacter 49,222**, **Salmonella 4,442**, **E.Coli 566** and **Listeria 136**. Why?



**Underreporting in confirmed laboratory reports** – Not all ill people seek medical help, which may have worsened during COVID-19 as fewer people sought GPs or other medical care.



**Food related behaviours** – including meals eaten in restaurants, use of takeaways, home cooking from scratch and changes to hand hygiene, all may affect exposure to food safety risks. The impact of this change in behaviour is currently unknown.



**Implementation of non-pharmaceutical interventions** – may reduce underlying levels of human cases for some pathogens which may reduce foodborne transmission, however, less likely to greatly impact the four key pathogens.

## What work will the FSA be undertaking to estimate the impact COVID-19 has had on foodborne disease?

Undertaking a series of surveys on infectious intestinal disease during COVID-19, covering self-reported infection rates, access to medical care, likely sources of infection and related behaviours.

Analysis of hospital admissions at the more severe end of illnesses where underreporting is expected to be less of an issue.

Working with the UK's surveillance bodies to further interpret the various sources of data and intelligence on gas.

## Why do we sample?

To inform our knowledge and information on the UK's food system, meet legislative requirements, inform risk assessment and provide information to LAs for follow up action. This compliments and supports the sampling undertaken by LAs and other key stakeholders. Targeted areas for surveillance sampling are informed by wider surveillance and intelligence information. Sampling is often targeted at areas if highest risk.

## Test result by type areas

	<b>Adulteration</b> (Reduction in food quality by including another substance)	<b>Composition</b> (Makeup of the substances in food such as nutritive substances)	<b>Authenticity</b> (Food product or its contents are not genuine)	<b>Allergens</b> (Undeclared ingredients classed as an allergen)	<b>Contaminant</b> (Chemical substances that have not been intentionally added to food and residues)	<b>Labelling</b> (Non-compliant, misleading or false labelling)	<b>Microbiological</b> (Microorganisms including toxin(s) & metabolites, with the potential to result in disease)
<b>Est. total tests</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>4,634</b>	<b>1,040</b>	<b>2,900</b>
<b>Non-compliances</b>	<b>50</b> (8.88%)	<b>134</b> (27.02%)	<b>22</b> (11.58%)	<b>49</b> (12.34%)	<b>158</b> (3.41%)	<b>7</b> (0.67%)	<b>64</b> (2.21%)

## Non-compliant result:

A sample that does not meet specific legislative requirements indicating the product should be removed or not placed on the market, or samples with misleading information or of inferior quality resulting in improvement actions.

Neither necessarily indicates a food safety concern.



The majority of non-compliances did not indicate a food safety risk.

 **7,510**

Total samples taken  
(covering 7 testing areas)

 **10,220**

Estimated total tests taken  
(inc labelling checks)



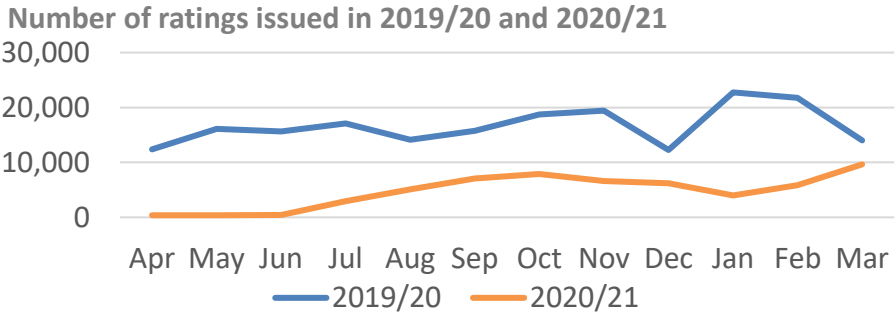
**484**  
(4.74%)

**Non-compliances**





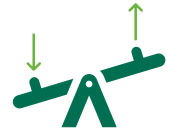
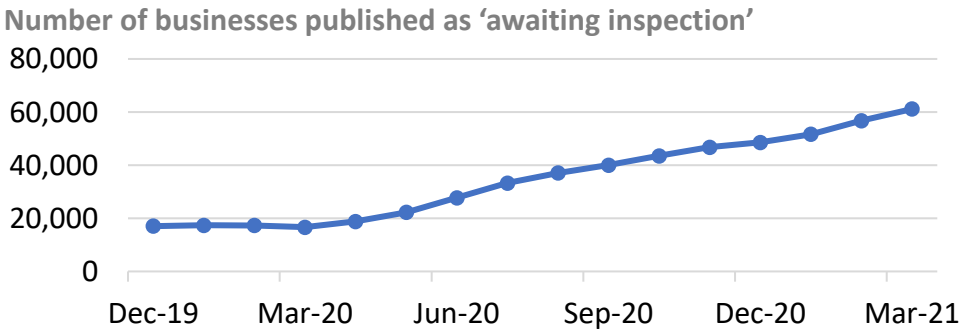
# Local Authority delivery and Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)



**61.2k** businesses published as 'awaiting inspection', an increase of 26% from Q3. (↑26% in Q4)



Of these businesses, over 30% are categorised as 'other catering premises' e.g. home caterers. These smaller scale operations, with a limited reach, are likely to be lower risk. As restrictions ease, it is anticipated that several of these businesses will cease to operate.



The increase in businesses published as 'awaiting inspection' has continued to follow the trend seen throughout 2020/21



During Q4 there has been no evidence to suggest that any local authority has been unable to meet the minimum expectations we set out for the period to June 2021



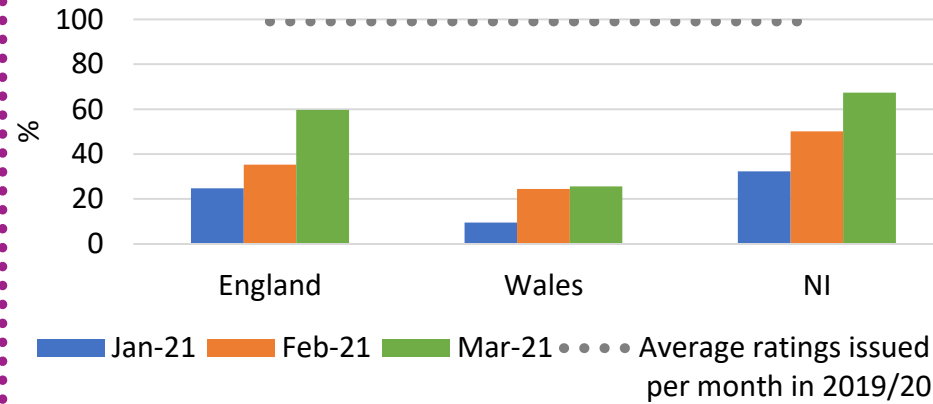
**9.6k**

Ratings issued in March 21 (58% of the 2019/20 average of 16.6K per month)



Heading in the right direction back to previous average number of ratings issued

Ratings issued per month in Q4 2020/21

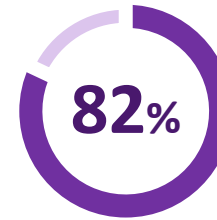
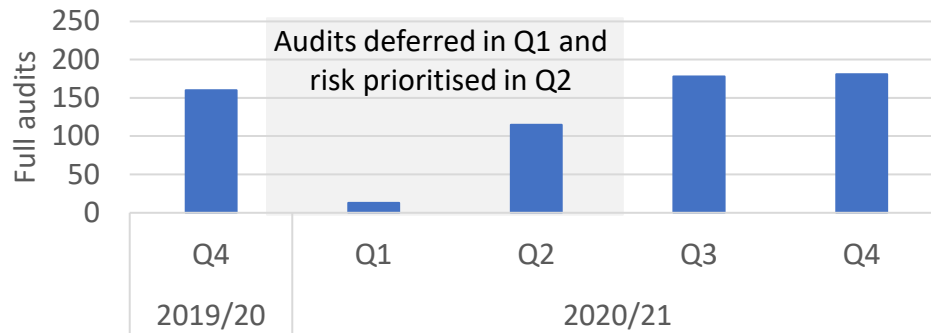


The number of inspections being carried out has increased

The responses by LAs to the pandemic have differed across the three countries. The recovery is strongest in Northern Ireland with 67% of the 2019/20 average achieved compared with 60% in England. LAs in Wales with 26%, whilst continuing to follow FSA guidance, are still providing the Senedd's response to the pandemic.

# Meat food business compliance (FBO audits)

## Audit Activity - Number of full audits completed

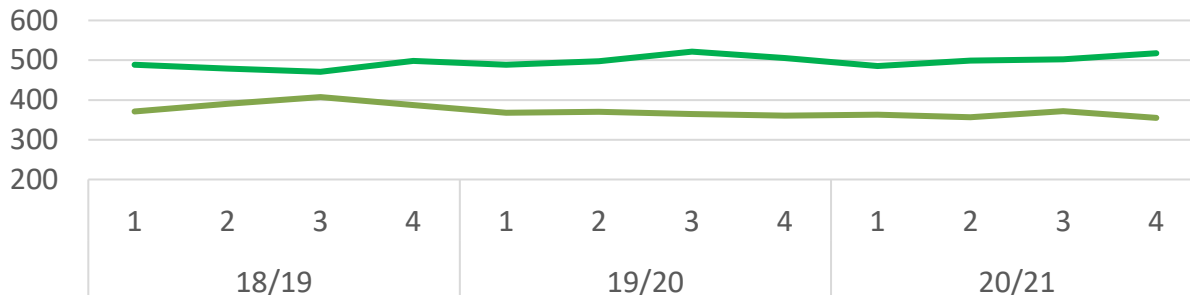


(↑ 26%  
from Q3)

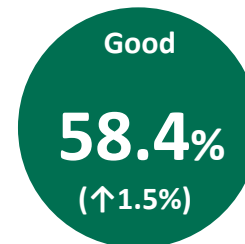
Audit capacity in Q4 compared to normal levels, focusing on audits that have been long due and / or considered high risk

A full (100%) audit capacity is an estimation of 6 full audits per auditor, considering 2 partial audits = 1 full audit.

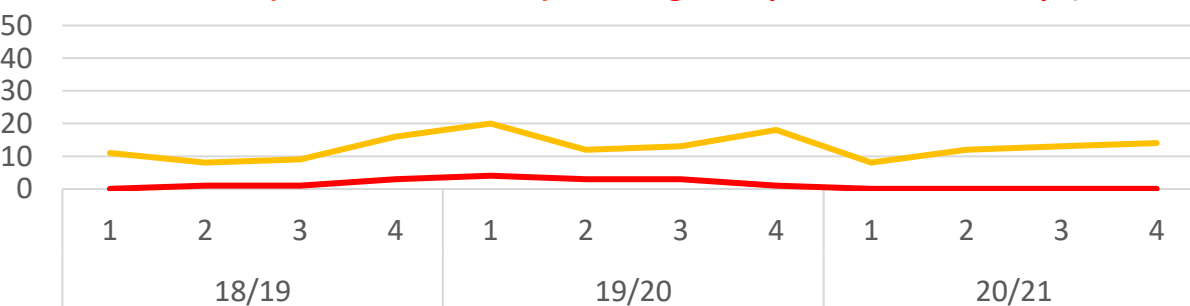
## Meat FBOs rated 'Good' and 'Generally satisfactory' (consolidated)



Q4 20-21 % meat FBO ratings (England, Wales and Northern Ireland consolidated)



## Meat FBOs rated 'Improvement necessary' and 'Urgent improvement necessary' (consolidated)



FOOD IS SAFE  
AND WHAT IT  
SAYS IT IS

# External communications during COVID-19

During Q4 restrictions continued, our social messaging was less frequent, becoming 'business as usual' during this period. Takeaways continued to operate and hospitality businesses remained closed to on-site customers. We published a 'Food in a Pandemic' report, exploring consumer experiences to better understand how the new food environment impacted people's behaviours.



## Facebook

A 'Here to Help' throwback post about food safety and delivery was the top performing COVID-19 post on Facebook. This received:



2%

Engagement rate



a reach of  
2,800

(↓1.47% below the FSA's average engagement rate for January 2021, however, 2% still represents an average industry ER for this platform)

## Instagram

The only COVID-19 on Instagram in Q4 was the same as the Facebook post about food safety for food delivery, receiving:



23 Likes

We have seen interactivity with COVID-19 content is reducing on this channel and we will look to hold content in this space until there is a significant shift in messaging.

## Social Media Response

## LinkedIn

Our top performing COVID-19 post in Q4 was the 'Food in a Pandemic' report. This received:



2,880  
Impressions



46 reactions



4.1%

Engagement rate

(equalling the FSA's average engagement rate for March 2021)

## Twitter

Our 'Food in a Pandemic' report performed the best receiving:



10,246  
Impressions



186

Engagements, a 1.8% engagement rate (↑0.4% above the FSA's Q4 average)



2,859

Pageviews on  
food.Gov.uk



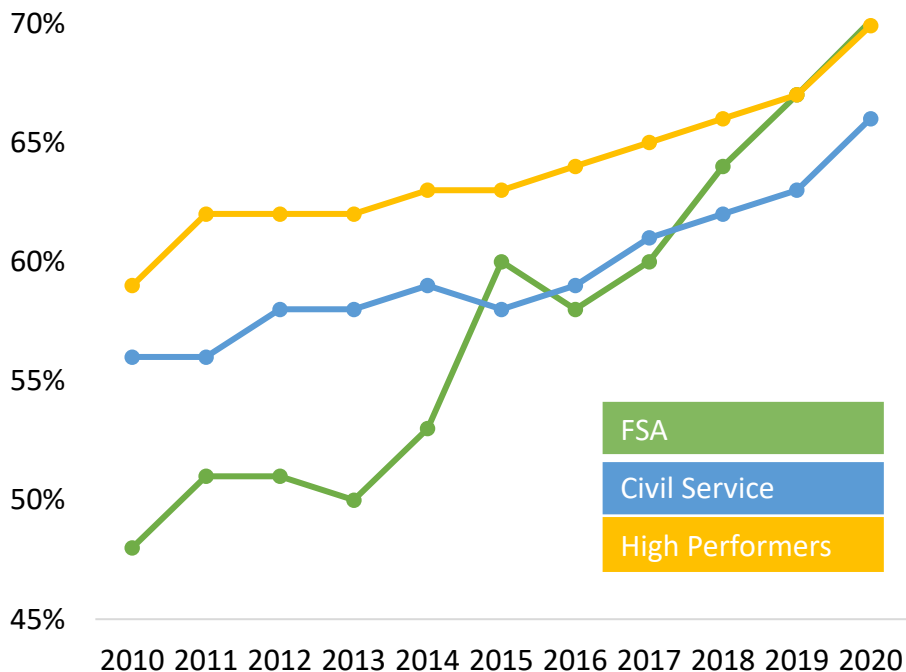
631

Pageviews on the  
research page

Demos, an independent cross party think-tank, also hosted the report and posted about it on social media.

# Making the FSA a great place to work – 2020 Civil Service People Survey

Trends in engagement



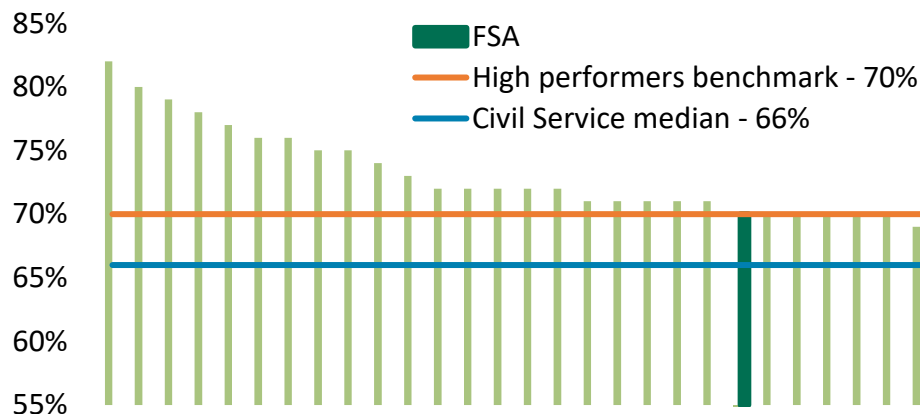
Civil Service engagement benchmark



22<sup>nd</sup>

Out of 108 organisations in 2020

Civil Service 2020 engagement score – Top 28 organisations



70%



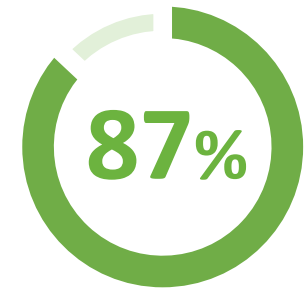
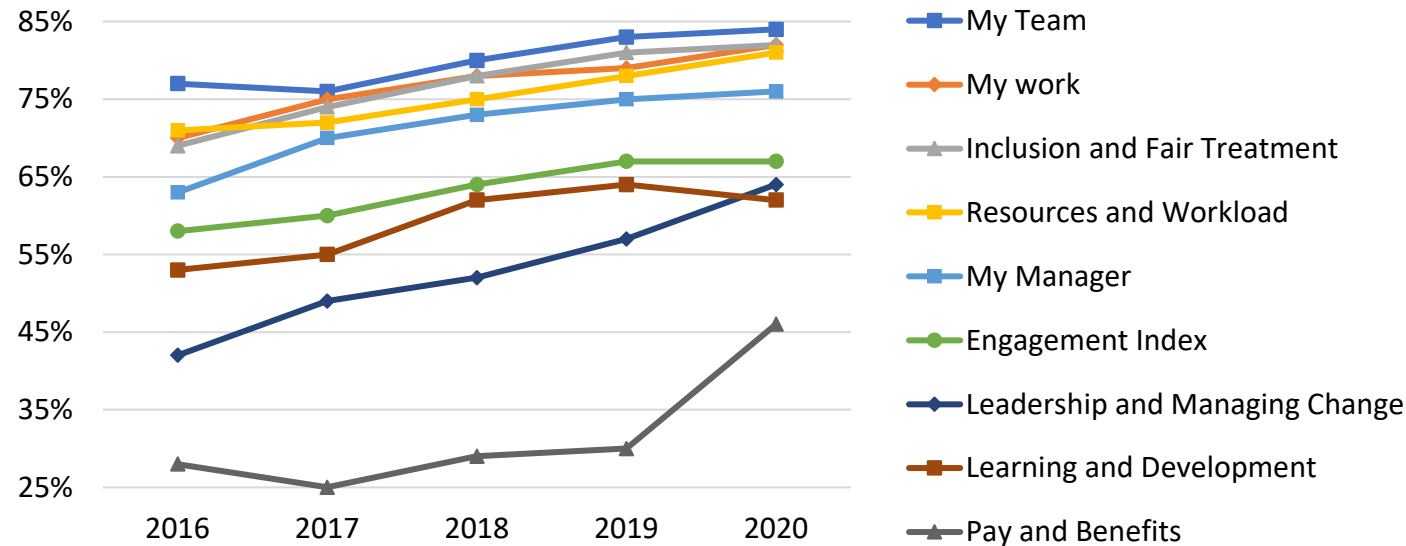
The FSA's 2020 Civil Service People Survey engagement index score (↑3% points from the 2019 survey)



The FSA continues to be classed as High Performing Civil Service Department, scoring in the top 25% for engagement

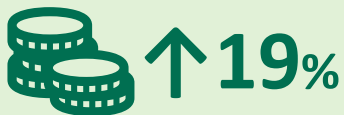
# Making the FSA a great place to work – 2020 Civil Service People Survey

People Survey - Trends in the FSA (Survey theme trends 2016-2020)

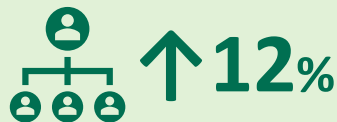


The FSA's response rate (equalling the rate from the 2019 survey)

The 2020 People Survey showed increases in practically all survey themes, equalling and in many cases exceeding our highest ever scores. The below shows the largest increases and largest decreases in % positive scores:



Increase in those who feel their pay adequately reflects their performance (46%)



Increase in those who believe senior managers are sufficiently visible (75%)



Increase in staff who would recommend the FSA as a great place to work (74%)



Decrease in those who feel the learning and development activities completed in the past 12 months have helped to improve their performance (60%)

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

	*2020/21 Full Year Outturn £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)	115.1	124.3	9.2 (A)	7%	● (G)
<b>Westminster (including EU Exit)</b>					
Net Admin Expenditure	47.1	49.8	2.7 (A)	5%	● (G)
Net Programme Expenditure	47.1	51.2	4.1 (A)	8%	● (G)
Capital (CDEL)	7.2	8.3	1.1 (A)	13%	● (G)
<b>Wales</b>					
RDEL & CDEL	3.2	3.7	0.5 (A)	14%	● (G)
<b>Northern Ireland</b>					
RDEL & CDEL	10.5	11.3	0.8 (A)	7%	● (G)

# Breakdown of key areas of spend

## Under (A) / Over (R) spend

	*2020/21 Full Year Outturn £m	2020/21 Budget £m	Under (A) / (Over) (R) Spend Availability £m
FSA Total (RDEL & CDEL) (of which):	115.1	124.3	9.2 (A)
Travel, Training & Meeting Room hire	1.2	5.0	3.8 (A)
Staff underspend	64.4	66.4	2.0 (A)
Science / Policy / R&D	8.8	13.1	4.3 (A)
Key Programmes	9.1	10.8	1.7 (A)
**Other	18.0	14.0	(4.0) (R)
N.I. & Wales (incl. staff and travel costs)	13.7	15.0	1.3 (A)

\*Subject to NAO audit

\*\*BAU incl. Operations, NFCU, HR, Finance, IT and Legal