

# Our people: our year in numbers

Our people at the Food Standards Agency key figures.

## Civil Service People Survey

- 68% employee engagement index score
- 35th out of 101 organisations

## Culture enquiry

- 22% increase in people's understanding of our guiding principles
- 79% of staff feel that leaders have a clear vision of the future

## Staff

- 56% of eligible staff are now on work from home contracts

## Diversity and Inclusion

- 70+ diverse panel members trained

## Social mobility index

- ranked 90th out of 203 in our first social mobility index submission.

## Staff engagement

The Civil Service People Survey (CSPS) gives our people a voice and an opportunity to let senior leaders know what helps them perform at their best and what more we can do to better communicate and collaborate. We conducted the survey in September/ October 2021 and 77% of staff responded. The overall FSA employee engagement score was 68%, our second highest engagement score and above the Civil Service (CS) benchmark of 66%, although our first decrease (2% since 2020) since 2016.

Our culture enquiry bolstered staff survey feedback. Which aimed to provide an understanding of our current culture. The enquiry was comprised of a survey and staff workshops. 293 staff (21% of our workforce) took part in workshops conducted and 268 responded to the Civil Service Culture Survey. The outputs provided a rich source of data which allowed us to identify themes that describe our culture. We also published our new FSA strategy 'food you can trust' this year. As part of strategy development, we engaged with staff to hear their feedback and start to shape implementation activities.

## 2020/21 objectives from the 2020 Civil Service People Survey

The FSA identified three priority areas arising from 2020 People Survey:

- discrimination, bullying and harassment
- inclusion and fair treatment
- learning and development

## Progress against 202/21 objectives

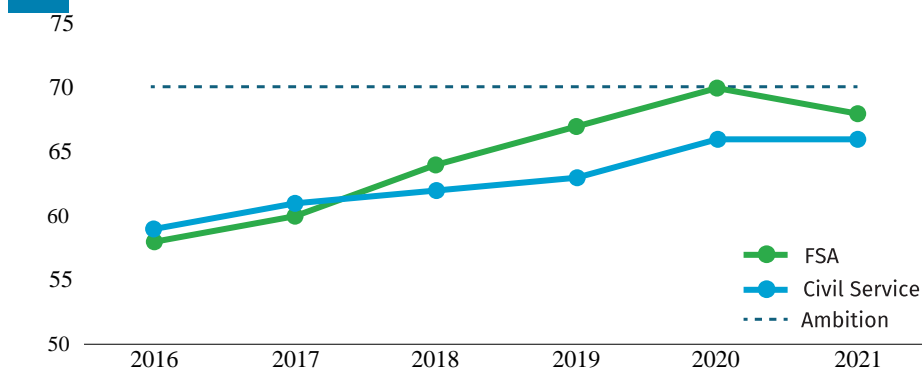
### A number of related workstreams were progressed including:

- the introduction of a new Dispute Resolution Policy
- the introduction of Fair Treatment champions
- the development of an 'Understanding the Unacceptable' initiative in collaboration with the Trade Unions
- the launch of a revised 'one stop' Intranet site on the subject of 'Speak up'

Our concentrated effort throughout the year encouraged people to engage with the comprehensive learning offer available to colleagues in the FSA. We held a dedicated week of 'Spotlight on Learning' lunch and learns during May 2021. These were well received by staff. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we worked with our training providers to move courses onto an online platform, where possible. We also participated several cross-Government talent initiatives including Future Leaders and Beyond Boundaries. In addition, we launched our newly developed FSA Accelerate programme for underrepresented groups.

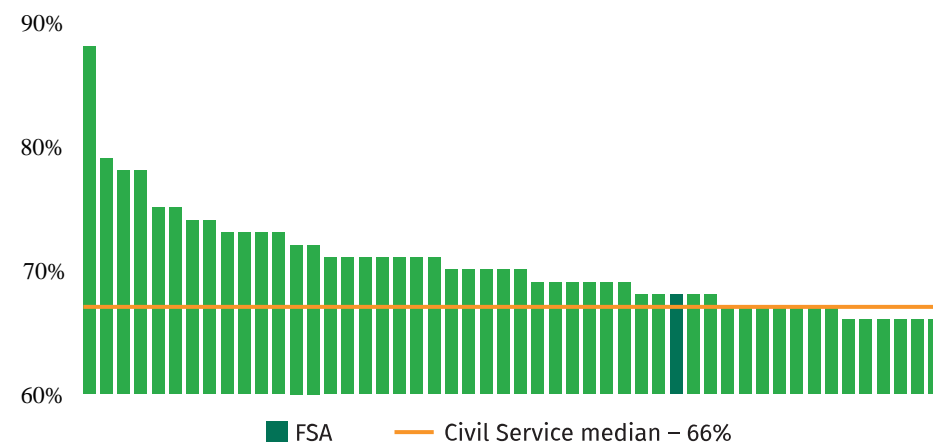
### Civil Service People Survey results 2021

Figure 25: People Survey engagement



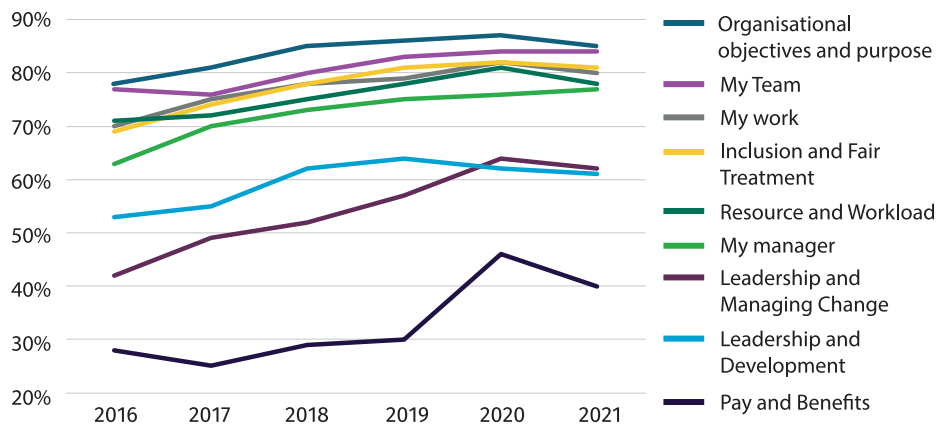
Of 101 organisations who took part in the Civil Service people survey, the FSA ranked 35th. Figure 26 shows how the FSA compared to the most engaged Civil Service organisations.

Figure 26: CSPS engagement score - top 50 organisations

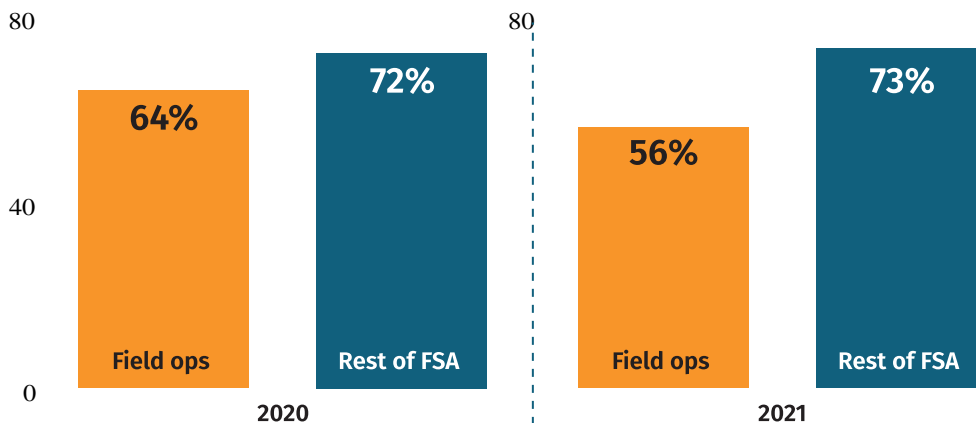


(the FSA ranked 35th out of 101 organisations in 2021)

**Figure 27: The FSA's Civil Service People Survey scores 2016 to 2021**



**Figure 28: Operations versus the rest of the FSA staff engagement**



The CSPS scores for frontline versus non-frontline staff differ significantly, with lower CSPS scores in Field Operations regarding senior managers, change management, choice on how work is carried out, support to adapt ways of working, pay and prioritising time for learning and development. We considered these differences when agreeing our organisational People Priorities and will factor in our forthcoming People Plan.

**Findings from our strategy and internal quarterly surveys**

We recently completed our fourth internal quarterly survey (IQS) which acts as a health check between the CSPS. The results showed an increase in our overall engagement score from 68% in the 2021 CSPS to 71%.

**Other findings in our IQS:**

- significant increase in key CSPS benchmarks
- big leaps in people's understanding of guiding principles and strategy
- overall comfort with strategy at encouraging levels
- work to do around explaining pay and how the process works
- still low scores around people feeling like they have a say in our organisation

**Strategy survey findings**

- 22% increase in people's understanding of the strategic narrative/guiding principles

- 16% increase in people seeing how they could apply the guiding principles to their work when compared to the IQS a year previous.

Other results (correct as at 31 March 2021) were:

- 84% I am familiar with our mission
- 81% I am familiar with our vision
- 67% I can see how the strategy applies to my work
- 79% I feel our senior leaders have a clear vision for the future
- a 15% increase from the CSPA

During development of our new strategy, over 70 teams held meetings to discuss the strategy and provide their comments. We used these results, alongside other outputs, to help inform and update the strategy, and to help develop our people plan and action areas.

### **Brief next steps for our People Plan and action areas following results**

There are two main routes through which we will act on staff feedback received through the People Survey and our culture enquiry. The first is through our three people survey priorities which we have decided to focus on at an organisational level:

- wellbeing
- inclusion and fair treatment
- leadership visibility and future

Actions taken to support our people priorities will have a short to mid-term focus, allowing us to respond to staff feedback and to make an impact. The second route will be through the development of our three-year People Plan, through which we will be able to focus on longer-term change to support the FSA strategy.

The People Plan is due to launch late in the 2022/23 reporting period.

## **Supporting our staff**

### **COVID-19 pandemic response**

The health, safety and wellbeing of our staff has continued to be of utmost importance throughout the pandemic. Due to the nature of the pandemic and the ongoing additional demands placed on staff, we continued to implement a variety of support measures to enable staff to protect themselves and others, including:

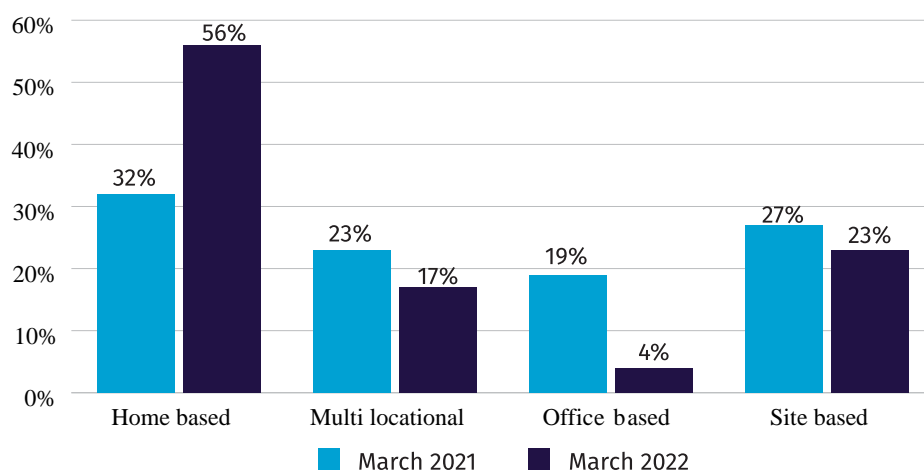
- provided an internal staff and manager information pack and Q&A to keep staff updated on information such as government advice and support available.
- utilised existing Our Ways of Working flexibilities to support staff to balance work and home commitments with any health and safety concerns.
- continued to conduct recruitments using online tools.
- continued providing a range of measures to enable staff to temporarily isolate to control the spread of COVID-19.
- COVID-19 risk assessments, for our delivery of official controls in food premises and in our own offices, were kept under review and promptly amended as needed.
- made offices available for staff to utilise, in line with Government guidance, using a priority rating approach with a reduced occupancy limit.

### **Our Ways of Working (OWOW) for non-frontline staff**

We introduced our award-winning flexible working programme in 2017. In June 2021, we began to update the 'OWOW' offer to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and provides us with a competitive edge for recruitment campaigns. The main change in June 2021, was to decouple roles from specific offices and empower staff and new joiners to decide which contract type worked best for them out of multi-site and homeworking (with office-based contracts remaining available to existing office-based staff and new joiners with a health safety and wellbeing reason). This location agnostic approach to recruitment has resulted in successful campaigns, which quite often result in multiple appointable candidates, strengthening our reserve list.

The Executive Management Team agreed to revise the multi-location offer to allow staff to attend their contractual workplace between 40-60% of their working week. Previously this was a 50/50 split. Following the pandemic and the changes to the OWOW offer, 65% of non-frontline staff eligible for OWOW have chosen a home-working contract, 25% multi-site, and 10% office-based.

**Figure 29: OWOW contract choice split for all FSA staff**



**Figure 30: Geographical distribution of all FSA staff (as at March 2022)**

This chart shows the geographic distribution of all FSA staff was 19% in Yorkshire and the Humber as at 31 March 2022.

## Diversity and Inclusion

At the FSA, we commit to being a workplace where staff feel that we can be ourselves and our unique contribution is recognised, respected and valued. More detail can be found in the [FSA's Diversity & Inclusion \(D&I\) report](#).

### Objectives in 2021/22

- attract and retain a diverse workforce
- champion inclusivity across our leadership and management community
- develop and support staff networks in strengthening our diverse and inclusive culture

### Progress against objectives

Our Diversity Council reviews progress and our Diversity Networks have helped deliver our D&I achievements.

#### Attract and retain a diverse workforce

**Progression** – Launched and completed cohort 1 of the FSA Accelerate programme, a 12-week targeted development programme for staff from underrepresented groups.

**Inclusive recruitment** – Established and trained a pool of 70+ diverse panel members and made a commitment that all recruitment panels would include at least one diverse panel member. We undertook a pilot to remove hiring managers from selection panels to reduce potential recruitment bias.

We have commissioned an inclusive recruitment review to assess our recruitment processes, policies and practices and to make recommendations (due in June 2022).

Hosted interns through the Autism Exchange Internship Programme and Summer Diversity Internship Programme.

Our job vacancies are now all listed on the diversity and inclusion platform [Vercida](#).

**Representation** – Carried out a Diversity Data Matters campaign to increase declaration rates. Following the campaign, the declaration rate for all characteristics increased. Declaration rates for Sexual Orientation increased from 69% to 83%. We have added new diversity questions to our HR People System, covering socioeconomic background; carers; gender identity and disability categories.

### **FSA workforce representation by protected characteristics (31 March 2022 compared to 31 March 2021)**

- 4.7% (-0%) lesbian, gay, bisexual and other
- 7.4% (decrease of 0.4%) disability
- 12% (-0%) ethnic minority
- 43.9% (increase of 2.4%) women

Further detail on workforce proportion is provided on the Staff report page.

### **Champion inclusivity across our leadership and management community**

**Reverse mentoring** – Established a successful reverse mentoring scheme, which resulted in 21 partnerships representing a range of protected characteristics.

**Training** – Introduced new Disability Inclusive Management training including a pilot of neurodiversity training for line managers.

### **Develop and support staff networks to strengthen and support our diverse and inclusive culture**

**Provide training on best practice** – We supported our Diversity Network Chairs through the Radius Employee Network Leadership Programme.

**Established several new networks** – Such as Age, Neurodiversity, Carers and Faith & Belief and Social Mobility.

**Benchmarks** – Recognised as a family friendly UK employer by work life balance charity 'Working Families' for the 2nd year running; listed in the top 15.

**Completed the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index** – Our first application, in which we achieved a bronze award, will allow us to benchmark our progress and form and action plan to take forward.

**Completed the Social Mobility Index** – our first application, ranking 90 out of 203 organisations.

**Completed the Disability Confidence Scheme Employer level** – and subsequently submitted the leader level submission.

**Completed the Disability Smart Audit** – and are currently working with Business Disability

Forum to develop actions.

Back to the [Main report: Activities and Performances 2021/22](#).