

FSA 3-Year Corporate Plan

FSA 3-year Corporate Plan: Executive Summary

This three-year corporate plan (the plan) is how we will turn the ambitions of our strategy into concrete actions.

PDF

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In 2022, we published [our 5-year strategy for the FSA](#). Our strategy confirms our mission remains “food you can trust”, and our vision for the food system is one in which food is safe, food is what it says it is, and food is healthier and more sustainable. It also sets out our roles and guiding principles.

This three-year corporate plan (the plan) is how we will turn the ambitions of our strategy into concrete actions.

The plan begins by stating our ambition for our mission and each part of the vision and how we will monitor progress. In the next 3 years we want to:

- maintain the current high levels of trust and confidence in the food system and FSA
- maintain food standards, so that food is safe and what it says it is, and consumers can continue to have confidence in their food
- grow our contribution to and influence on food that is healthier and more sustainable, building on the work we have started since we published our strategy

The plan also details how we will do this – through 9 objectives that align with our roles – including both core and change work. These are broken down into more detailed activities in the appendix, providing direction for our annual business plans.

Evidence generator (core): Ensure that our decisions are based on science and evidence and share this evidence to inform and influence others (consumers, businesses and policy makers).

Evidence generator (change): Build evidence, including through science and research, so we can anticipate opportunities and risks across the UK food system.

Policy maker (core): Make robust recommendations and support decision makers to take informed decisions on rules relating to food and feed, based on evidence and independent assessment.

Policy maker (change): Create a proportionate, effective, efficient and future focused approach to regulation through the risk analysis process and regulated products service, that protects consumers and removes barriers to innovation.

Regulator (core): Deliver our regulatory responsibilities to ensure food and feed businesses comply with the rules so that food is safe and what it says it is.

Regulator (change): Reform the food safety regulatory framework to deliver more proportionate and risk-based assurance, now and in the future.

Watchdog: Speak out publicly about areas of consumer interest to encourage high food standards in the UK.

Convenor and collaborator: Work in partnerships across the food system to develop and deliver better solutions for consumers and businesses.

Enabler: Provide the people, resources and processes needed to deliver our corporate objectives and priorities.

FSA 3-year Corporate Plan: Introduction

This 3-year corporate plan translates the strategy into action.

Purpose of the plan

In March 2022, the [FSA published its 5-year strategy](#) and vision for the food system, setting out its direction until March 2027. We also [published a set of priorities \(PDF\)](#) to deliver in the first year of the strategy, with a commitment to publish a 3-year corporate plan for the financial years 2023 to 2026.

This 3-year corporate plan (the plan) translates the strategy into action. It bridges the gap between the ambitions in our strategy and our more detailed annual business plans. It also includes progress indicators to show how we will evaluate progress against our strategy.

Our context and flexible approach

Our strategy emphasised the need to be flexible in our approach, against the backdrop of a fast-changing landscape. It also highlighted that the pace of change in technology and business models in the food system continues to accelerate.

Since we published the strategy, events have required us to reprioritise our work. These challenges and related pressures on our resources are likely to continue in future years and our planning must give us the agility to respond. We have therefore ensured that the plan allows sufficient flexibility by being explicit about what we must, should, or could achieve, as resources allow.

This has been informed by our Spending Review 2021 settlement from HM Treasury, which provided an essentially flat budget for each of the 3 years of the review period up to 2024/25. We therefore need to adopt a plan that can be delivered within our existing resources and allows us to absorb inflationary pressure or unexpected pressures.

Structure of the plan

This plan has 2 parts:

- our ambitions and progress indicators set out how far we want to take our mission and vision for the next 3 years and how we will monitor this - Appendix 2 includes further details on progress indicators

- our objectives set out how we will deliver these ambitions - Appendix 1 includes further details on the activities we will work on for the next 3 years

3 and 4 country working

This plan covers the FSA's role across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, reflecting our 'One FSA' approach. For all of the objectives, we have considered the specific circumstances of each country, and will ensure that stakeholders from each country are informed and heard. We also work collaboratively with Food Standards Scotland in line with our commitments to 4 country working. Further information on the FSA in Wales and Northern Ireland are set out in our [prioritised plan for Wales](#) and [report from the Director of the FSA in Northern Ireland](#).

FSA 3-year Corporate Plan: Our ambitions and progress indicators

This plan sets out our ambition for our mission and vision as food is safe, food is what it says it is and food is healthier and more sustainable.

Our strategy sets out our mission as food you can trust, and our vision as food is safe, food is what it says it is and food is healthier and more sustainable.

We are now setting our ambition for our mission and vision over the next 3 years.

Our ambitions

- maintaining food you can trust: our ambition is that trust and confidence in the food system and in the FSA remain at their current, high levels
- maintaining food standards, so that food is safe and is what it says it is: our ambition is to maintain the current high levels of food safety and authenticity in the UK
- growing our contribution to and influence on food that is healthier and more sustainable: our ambition is to grow our contribution to making sure that food is healthier and more sustainable, building on the work we have started since we published our strategy

To monitor whether our mission and vision are being delivered, we need to know what is happening in the food system. Having set our ambition for our mission and vision, we have identified progress indicators which provide an overview of whether the food system is continuing to deliver food you can trust or if there are areas needing more attention.

The indicators draw from existing data and information provided in FSA publications such as the [Consolidated Annual Report and Accounts](#), [Annual Report on Food Standards](#) and [more detailed research reports](#). We will publish annual updates on our progress indicators, ensuring we are accountable to our stakeholders and the public.

Evaluating the impact the FSA has on the food system is complex, and data needs to be considered in the context of wider influences and changes on the food system. These indicators will provide a snapshot to highlight where there are changes in the food system that may need to investigate and respond to, to ensure that we continue to deliver food you can trust.

The progress indicators under each part of the mission and vision are set out below.

Maintaining food you can trust

One of the [reasons the FSA was established](#) was to rebuild the public's trust in food safety after a series of high profile food scares in the 1980s and 90s. Food you can trust continues to be the FSA's mission.

Our ambition is that trust and confidence in the food system and in the FSA remain at their current high levels. Trust in the food system is affected by a wide range of factors, including the decisions by food businesses the way the system is regulated and the way it is reported on. Trust in the FSA itself depends on our competence, the visibility of our work and how we act in line with consumers' interests.

Progress indicators on trust

FSA's Food and You 2 survey question on trust, including:

- the food we buy is safe to eat
- the information on food labels is accurate
- we can rely on the FSA to protect the public from food related risks.

Research into stakeholder trust in the FSA.

Maintaining food that is safe and is what it says it is

The FSA's job, set out in the Food Standards Act 1999, is to protect public health from risks arising in connection with the consumption of food and to protect the interests of consumers in relation to food.

Food businesses themselves are responsible for making sure the food they produce and supply is safe and is what it says it is. Much of the FSA's work, including many of the statutory functions we deliver, is aimed at making sure this system is working and delivering safe and authentic food in the UK. To do this, we work both directly and with partners such as local authorities.

We anticipate there will continue to be challenges for the food system over the next 3 years. Economic pressures will continue to affect consumers and businesses. Local authorities' funding and staff shortages also present a continued risk. To continue to protect consumers, our ambition is to maintain the current high levels of food safety and authenticity in the UK.

Progress indicators on food that is safe and is what it says it is

- rates of foodborne disease (4 key pathogens)
- rates of business compliance (Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and meat processing establishment and dairy hygiene inspections)
- targeted sampling of food product compliance (FSA basket of goods survey)
- food incidents
- allergen related food incidents
- responses to food crime

Contributing to food that is healthier and more sustainable

To protect the interests of consumers in relation to food, we must also contribute to making food healthier and more sustainable. As the only department entirely focused on food, we will use our skills and expertise, to encourage and contribute to positive change.

In some areas we have a clearly defined role, for example, our policy responsibilities for healthier food in Northern Ireland. Beyond these defined roles we have greater discretion about how we contribute to delivering food that is healthier and more sustainable. We are working to identify how we best do this within our statutory remit and functions, for example by publishing evidence in our capacity as watchdog or contributing to cross-government projects.

In Northern Ireland we have responsibility for dietary health policy, surveillance, and nutrition labelling, composition, and standards. Whilst we do not have these responsibilities in Wales, we follow the requirements of [the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act \(Wales\) 2015](#), which requires public bodies in Wales to consider long-term impacts of their actions, including on health inequalities and the environment. Although we are not a named body under the Act, we work to the principles it contains.

We also work through the 4 [country frameworks](#), cross government processes that ensure a common approach is taken in devolved policy areas, and with a wide range of stakeholders to contribute on health and sustainability across the UK and beyond.

Progress indicators on food that is healthier and more sustainable

Northern Ireland

Case studies and data, including:

- the FSA's Eating Well Choosing Better programme and associated surveys
- Calorie Wise
- MenuCal

Growing our contribution

Case studies and data, for example:

- School Food Standards
- collaboration with WRAP* to reduce food waste

*The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) are a registered charity who work to tackle the causes of the climate crisis.

Food and You 2 Consumer Behaviour.

See appendix 2 for the most recent data on the indicators. We will provide updates on these indicators each year, allowing some flexibility for the set of indicators to evolve over time.

FSA 3-year Corporate Plan: Our objectives

This plan sets out how we will turn the mission and vision of our strategy into concrete action.

As well as establishing our ambition, this plan sets out how we will turn the mission and vision of our strategy into concrete action. It sets clear objectives for the next 3 years. These objectives provide a framework for more detailed activities (see appendix 1) which inform our annual business planning. In delivering these objectives we will apply the guiding principles that we described in detail in our strategy.

Our strategy sets out 5 roles the FSA has in delivering food you can trust. These are evidence generator, policy maker, regulator, watchdog and convenor and collaborator. This plan builds on these 5 roles with objectives attached to each role.

Our strategy will be delivered by continuing to do our core work well, whilst also delivering some significant changes. We need to strike the right balance and so have both core and change objectives under our 3 established roles – evidence generator, policy maker and regulator. The 2 remaining roles – watchdog and convenor and collaborator - are less established and areas we want to grow.

We have also added an additional role called enabler. Under this role we have set out the important, but primarily internal, work that helps us to deliver all the other objectives.

Evidence generator, policy maker and regulator

The first 3 FSA roles represent the more established part of our work, and our statutory responsibilities. They will continue to be where the majority of our resources are.

Our evidence generator, policy maker and regulator roles are largely focussed on food that is safe and is what it says it is, with a select number of activities contributing to food that is healthier and more sustainable (including our nutrition policy remit in Northern Ireland and working in line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015).

Evidence generator

As an evidence generator, we produce robust scientific evidence and analysis and take input, scrutiny and challenge from experts and other stakeholders.

Evidence generator core objective: Ensure that our decisions are based on science and evidence, and share this evidence to inform and influence others (consumers, businesses and policy makers).

Evidence generator change objective: Build evidence, including through science and research, so we can anticipate opportunities and risks across the UK food system.

In our evidence generator role we will:

- provide robust science and evidence that informs our decisions and advice, helping to manage risk around food safety and authenticity and to help make food healthier and more sustainable.
- make sure that our evidence and analysis is available for further use by the science community, other government departments and wider stakeholders to support their own decision making
- understand changes in food technology, business models and consumer attitudes so we can assess changing risks effectively
- grow our contribution to food that is healthier and more sustainable

Through our evidence we improve regulatory decision making, reducing risk in the food system so that consumers can have assurance and be confident that the food system maintains food safety and authenticity.

Policy maker

As a policy maker we ensure that the body of guidance, rules and regulations that exist nationally, internationally and at a devolved level deliver food you can trust.

Policy maker core objective: Make robust recommendations and support decision makers to take informed decisions on rules relating to food and feed, based on evidence and independent assessment.

Policy maker change objective: Create a proportionate, effective, efficient and future focused approach to regulation through the risk analysis process and regulated products service, that protects consumers and removes barriers to innovation.

Our areas of responsibility:

Our policy remit across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is shown above. We have policy responsibility for food and feed safety and hygiene, which includes food hypersensitivity across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Additionally, we have policy responsibility for compositional standards and labelling in Wales and Northern Ireland, and for nutritional standards, labelling, and dietary health and surveillance in Northern Ireland only.

In our policy maker role we will:

- advise ministers about risks concerning food and feed safety and standards and about consumers' interests in relation to food based on the best available scientific evidence
- act as a transparent, independent and evidence-based policy maker, meaning that our advice is based on a body of guidance, rules and regulations nationally, internationally and at a devolved level

This means that consumers can be confident that the rules governing the food system ensure that food is safe and is what it says it is.

Regulator

We regulate some parts of the food system directly, with our staff and contractors delivering controls in meat, primary dairy and wine production. We regulate other parts of the industry indirectly, working with local authorities who inspect local businesses selling food. We set the inspection framework, provide advice and guidance and monitoring performance. We do the same for port health authorities who inspect food imports. We also provide guidance to food businesses.

Regulator core objective: Deliver our regulatory responsibilities to enable food and feed businesses to comply with the rules so that food is safe and what it says it is.

Regulator change objective: Reform the food safety regulatory framework to deliver more proportionate and risk-based assurance.

In our regulator role we will:

- monitor and ensure there is compliance with the rules, directly or working through other enforcement authorities
- respond effectively when something goes wrong and prepare for and prevent this as far as possible
- ensure we understand how the food system is working against the standards we have set
- make it easier for businesses to meet their obligations and do the right thing

This means consumers can be confident that food businesses follow the rules that are there to ensure that food is safe and is what it says it is.

Watchdog, convenor and collaborator

The strategy's fourth and fifth roles – watchdog and convenor and collaborator - represent areas where we want to grow our role and do more.

This will include work in support of achieving all 3 elements of our vision, food is safe, food is what it says it is, and food is healthier and more sustainable.

Watchdog, convenor and collaborator

Watchdog objective: Speak out publicly about areas of consumer interest to encourage high food standards in the UK.

In our watchdog role we will:

- monitor trends across the food system and help to spot emerging opportunities, issues and potential risks to consumers, which will allow the FSA, and others across government, industry and civil society to take action where appropriate

- use our independence, our voice and our evidence to inform and persuade others in line with our principle to be the trusted voice on food standards, protecting consumer interests.

This means consumers can be confident that the FSA speaks up for their interests and encourages others to work with us to address issues that could affect whether food is safe and is what it says it is. It also lets us identify opportunities to contribute to food that is healthier and more sustainable.

Convenor and collaborator objective: Work in partnerships across the food system to address issues affecting consumers and businesses.

The FSA is just one of the actors in the food system.

In our convenor and collaborator role we will:

- work in partnership with other parts of government (including the UK Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive, Food Standards Scotland and local authorities), our delivery partners, industry and consumer associations to combine our capabilities, resources and insights.
- convene food system stakeholders to consider and respond to system issues or concerns.

This means consumers can be confident we're working with a wide range of partners to achieve more than we could alone to deliver food that is safe and is what it says it is. It also helps us identify opportunities to contribute with others to achieving food that is healthier and more sustainable.

Enabler

The roles described in our strategy focus on our outward facing work to ensure that there is food you can trust. However, this could not happen without the significant contributions by our enabling functions that allow our organisation to operate.

Therefore, this plan has an additional role of enabler, reflecting the work we need to deliver in this space over the next 3 years.

Enabler objective: Provide the people, resources and processes needed to deliver our corporate objectives and priorities.

In our enabler role we will:

- deliver and improve supporting functions such as finance, human resources and culture, commercial and technology, as well as specialist skills in communications, legal, project and programme management and strategy, which are required for our organisation to run effectively
- make the best use of digital and data services to meet the needs of internal and public users

This ensures that all the parts of our organisation are equipped to deliver our objectives and ensure food is safe, is what it says it is, and is healthier and more sustainable.

See appendix 1 for more detailed specific activities to deliver each objective, by year.

FSA 3-year Corporate Plan: Appendix 1 our activities

This appendix includes a breakdown of each objective into more detailed and specific activities.

Our flexible approach

We have broken down each objective into a set of more detailed and specific activities. Given our context, we need to remain flexible in what we intend to deliver for the next 3 years.

To reflect this, we have further divided our activities into:

- **must:** things we absolutely need to deliver, which might be statutory responsibilities we need to maintain or changes we need to deliver in order to ensure the regulatory system continues to protect consumers
- **should:** things we will aim to deliver but may need to reassess if circumstances change
- **could:** things we will deliver only if resources and circumstances allow

We will review the balance of what we aim to deliver in our annual business plans. These will be discussed at our Business Committee in March each year.

Evidence generator

Objective (core): We will ensure that our decisions based on science and evidence and share this evidence to inform and influence others (consumers, businesses and policy makers).

Activity	Further detail
[EG1] We must ensure risk analysis decisions and priority 'core and change' work are informed by timely and robust science and evidence.	This will include provision of risk assessment, research and evidence to priorities described elsewhere in this plan, such as the Retained EU Law Review, Border Target Operating Model and our regulated products service. This work will carry on each year, in line with evidence needs.

Objective (change): We will build evidence, including through science and research so we can anticipate opportunities and risks across the UK food system.

Activity	Further detail
[EG2] We must develop a labs and sampling regime that is fit for purpose and resilient to the future to assure food safety and authenticity.	Public analyst official laboratories conduct chemical and compositional analyses on food and feed samples, sent by local authorities or port health authorities for enforcement and surveillance purposes. Direct intervention is needed to ensure the UK retains and builds the testing capacity and capability required to undertake routine testing, support incidents and enable research-related analysis. We have set out a 3-phase approach to addressing this. We will deliver phase 2 in 2023/24 and 2024/25, and then move to phase 3 in 2025/26.
[EG3] We should identify and test technical and scientific innovations to enhance the FSA's and our partners' capabilities.	This includes novel laboratory testing methods to enhance our surveillance capabilities such as genome sequencing and wastewater testing. This will be delivered through the cross-government Pathogen Surveillance in Agriculture, Food and the Environment (PATH-SAFE) programme . In 2023/24 we will continue developing the programme, ready for pilots of new approaches in 2024/25 and 2025/26. It also includes new analytical methods and approaches to help us better use data such as data trusts, which we will explore in 2024/25.

Activity	Further detail
<p>[EG4] We should maintain and where necessary build our evidence base on the public interest in food.</p>	<p>This includes people's values, attitudes and behaviours. We will keep publishing research on our website and use it to inform all our work. This also provides information to support our annual Food Standards Report, discussed below as part of our watchdog role.</p> <p>In 2023/24, we will focus on the impact of household food insecurity, then in 2024/25 and 2025/26, we may be able to begin expanding the scope of our evidence into healthier and more sustainable diets, in line with the FSA strategy. We intend to work with others to deliver this, including our involvement in the SALIENT Food Trials, to design and evaluate a series of trials across the food sector to encourage healthy and sustainable diets.</p>

If resources allow, we **could**:

[EG5] start to build more evidence on the externalised costs of UK-consumed food to the environment and people's health, to demonstrate the importance of the standard of food.

Policy maker

Objective (core): We will make robust recommendations and support decision makers to take informed decisions on rules relating to food, based on evidence and independent assessment.

Activity	Further detail
<p>[PM1] We must maintain an effective and efficient risk analysis process, supporting decision makers across all UK countries.</p>	<p>Risk analysis is the process of assessing, managing and communicating food and animal feed safety risks, making robust and independent recommendations about food safety and standards to decision makers. Risk analysis uses science and evidence to provide advice to government, business and consumers on food safety risks and what to do about them. It's how we ensure high standards of food and feed safety and protect consumers.</p> <p>This is an ongoing activity, we'll continue delivering a quality service each year.</p>
<p>[PM2] We must make recommendations to Ministers about which food and feed products should be authorised for sale on the market in Great Britain and advise on the implications of regulatory changes in Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>Certain food and feed products, called regulated products, require authorisation before they can be sold in the UK. The FSA with Food Standards Scotland (FSS) carries out risk analysis for regulated products and provides advice to ministers, who decide whether the product can be placed on the market in England, Wales and Scotland. We will continue to advise on the implications of regulatory changes in Northern Ireland, under the Northern Ireland Protocol and the Windsor Framework. This is an ongoing activity. We continue to deliver our programme of continuous improvement focused on making the service more efficient, for example through improving support for applicants and streamlining our processes. We will include specific improvement actions in our annual plans.</p>
<p>[PM3] We must assess and make recommendations on market access requests and provide technical input to other government departments on "Sanitary and Phytosanitary" and "Technical Barriers to Trade" issues in trade agreements.</p>	<p>We will continue to support government's work on trade opportunities for the UK, providing risk assessments of countries that want to start importing to the UK and demonstrating our own food safety arrangements to countries we export to. We provide advice to ministers on whether Free Trade Agreements maintain statutory protections for human health to support reports produced for the UK Parliament under Section 42 of the Agriculture Act 2020, and separately on requests to access our markets for specific commodities.</p> <p>This is an ongoing activity. Our advice on Free Trade Agreements will continue to be developed on request once new deals are agreed. In 2023/24 we anticipate agreeing a service level agreement for imports market access with Defra, in which case we would deliver in line with that.</p> <p>This activity also links to our watchdog role below, providing assurance to parliament and the public on trade agreements.</p>
<p>[PM4] We must provide policy advice to support delivery of effective and risk-based official controls.</p>	<p>Activities such as inspections, audits and surveillance, sampling in food businesses are known as official controls. We will ensure clear timely policy advice and recommendations to support the official controls process that makes the best use of available evidence, with early engagement across all UK countries to minimise divergence where appropriate.</p> <p>This is an ongoing activity, although we will set out particular policy goals in our annual plans in light of issues occurring at the time.</p>

Activity	Further detail
[PM5] We must manage divergence, meet our common framework obligations and ensure consistency for consumers and businesses across the UK.	<p>The devolved nature of food policy decisions means that, now Great Britain is outside the EU's harmonised system, divergence has already started to occur between the regulatory systems of different UK nations. We are committed to working with other parts of government to seek consensus in the advice we provide to ministers in each country. This includes participating in Common Frameworks – cross-government processes that ensure a common approach is taken in devolved policy areas.</p> <p>This is something we will continue to do on an ongoing basis, ensuring due consideration of divergence issues in all policy development.</p>
[PM6] We must ensure food standards and public health are maintained under the arrangements of the Windsor Framework for trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.	<p>On 27 February 2023, UK Government announced it had reached a new international agreement with the EU on changes to practical arrangements for the Northern Ireland Protocol.</p> <p>The FSA must implement aspects of the new agreement, beginning in late 2023/24 and through to 2025.</p>
[PM7] We must deliver a series of Statutory Instruments in England, Wales and Statutory Regulations in Northern Ireland take forward any agreed changes to REUL.	<p>The Retained EU Law (Reform and Revocation) Act contains a list of Retained EU Law (REUL) that will be revoked directly at the end of 2023 via a revocation schedule. All other REUL will be automatically transferred into domestic, UK legislation at the same date. We will review all pieces of REUL in our remit in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and advise ministers on each of them. We will need to make sure the body of law continues to work effectively as a whole and delivers obligations derived from international agreements. We will do this whilst developing a reform programme to maximise the FSA's ability to make change.</p> <p>Initial work to review REUL will take place in the first year of this plan, with longer term reforms delivered in 2024/25 and 2025/26.</p>

Objective (change): We will create a proportionate, effective and future focused approach to regulation through the risk analysis processes and regulated products service, that protects consumers and removes barriers to innovation.

Activity	Further detail
[PM8] We must develop a new regulatory regime for precision bred food and feed.	<p>Precision breeding describes a range of genetic techniques that can alter the DNA of plants and animals in a quicker and more precise way but resulting in outcomes that could have been achieved using conventional methods.</p> <p>The Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Act regulates precision bred plants and animals used in England. To support this and protect consumers, we will continue to develop a new evidence-based pre-marketing authorisation process, enforcement process, and public register for food and feed products developed using these technologies. We will also continue to advise ministers in Wales and Northern Ireland on the implications of the act in those nations.</p> <p>In 2023/24, we will design each element, consulting on our proposals. We expect to make the necessary regulations in 2024 (this is dependent on parliamentary timetables). Once the new regime has become law, we will be ready to receive applications under the new regulations.</p>
[PM9] We should explore targeted reforms to the regulated products regime through powers likely to be created under the Retained EU Law Bill.	<p>We will continue to proactively explore opportunities for regulatory reform to make the regulated products service more efficient and effective and remove barriers to innovation.</p> <p>We will take the opportunity of work on Retained EU Law to remove some of the inefficiencies inherited in the body of law derived from the EU, and to streamline the authorisation process making it more efficient to administer, reducing unnecessary delay and improving outcomes for consumers and for industry. This includes the regime for authorisation of novel foods (foods which have not been widely consumed by people in the UK or European Union before May 1997). Novel foods need to be authorised before they can be placed on the market in Great Britain and the FSA advises ministers on authorisation decisions</p> <p>In 2023/24, we will receive the findings of an independent review of novel foods regulatory approaches, and will evaluate these to consider which would be most fruitful to explore further. Where possible, we will take forward priority changes as part of the second stage of the work on Retained EU Law (by 2026). More ambitious reforms will be subject to the availability of resources to plan and implement change.</p>

Activity	Further detail
[PM10] We should explore options to improve the provision of allergen information for people with a food hypersensitivity.	<p>In addition to our core work on reducing harm to people with food hypersensitivity (such as responding to allergen incidents and providing advice and guidance to industry and enforcement officers), we have set out a programme of work which aims to improve the quality of life for people with Food Hypersensitivity.</p> <p>In 2023/24, we will continue to gather evidence, consolidate what we have so far and develop options for next steps on provision of information in the non-prepacked food sector. We will also publish updated guidance to industry on 'may contain' statements. In 2024/25 we aim to consult on a workable system for precautionary allergen labelling and test policy options in light of our earlier evidence gathering.</p>

We could go further if time and resources allowed:

- [PM11] Review and strengthen FSA capability to take into account environmental and health benefits and risks when considering other legitimate factors as part of risk analysis.
- [PM12] Influence thinking inside and outside government in relation to food to ensure consumer interests are protected, examples could include consumer information on environmental impact of food or long-term dietary health.

Regulator

Objective (core): We will deliver our regulatory responsibilities to enable feed and food businesses to comply with the rules so that food is safe and what it says it is.

Activity	Further detail
[R1] We must deliver our regulatory responsibilities as the national regulator to assure that food, feed and importing businesses are compliant with the rules.	<p>The FSA acts as a 'Central Competent Authority' – part of a 3-tier structure to oversee and verify compliance with food law. Food Business Operators are responsible for complying with the rules. Competent Authorities verify and enforce FBO compliance, and Central Competent Authorities audit and assure the work of Competent Authorities.</p> <p>This activity reflects our role as Central Competent Authority, we will continue to assure that those acting as competent authorities are effectively delivering their responsibilities and to provide support, predominantly but not exclusively to LAs, to deliver food and feed law official controls.</p> <p>This is an ongoing role which will continue throughout the 3 years of this plan. We will report each quarter on the progress of competent authorities in delivery of their responsibilities to the FSA Business Committee and the findings from our audit programme to the FSA Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.</p>
[R2] We must directly deliver official controls in meat, dairy and wine businesses (including exporters).	<p>In addition to our role as a Central Competent Authority, the FSA has direct (Competent Authority) responsibility for inspecting, auditing and assuring businesses in England and Wales producing meat, wine and dairy. The FSA and local authorities together deliver shellfish controls.</p> <p>This is an ongoing activity, we will continue to ensure appropriate assurance is delivered across all relevant activities, improving standards and assuring compliance. We will ensure that meat, dairy and wine official controls are effectively delivered to time, cost and quality in England and Wales with the correct capacity and capability. We will continue to update the Manual for Official Controls document, which sets out the tasks, responsibilities and duties FSA staff and veterinary contractors undertake in approved meat establishments. In 2024/25 will also publish a version of the Manual for Official Controls that meets accessibility requirements.</p>
[R3] We must deliver an efficient and effective response to food and feed incidents.	<p>A food incident occurs when concerns around the safety or quality of food and or feed may require action to protect consumers. We will continue to use surveillance methods to identify risks to consumers and spot potential food safety incidents and respond to these when they happen. This also draws upon responsive policy input into incidents, and well supported policy advice to support action.</p> <p>We will continue ensuring the FSA has the capacity and capability to effectively detect, respond and prevent food and feed safety incidents.</p>

Activity	Further detail
[R4] We must deliver an efficient and effective response to food crime.	<p>Our National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) works to tackle serious fraud and related criminality in food supply chains.</p> <p>We will keep delivering an efficient and effective response to food crime each year. We will also continuously improve the way we do this. In 2023/24 and 2024/25, we will continue to deliver our action plan to implement the findings of reviews of the NFCU completed in 2020 and 2022. By 2025/26 we will benchmark our work against the 'best in class' in UK Law Enforcement and other specialist food crime investigative structures in other countries. This improvement is closely linked to securing investigative powers, described below in the change section.</p>

Objective (change): We will reform the feed and food safety regulatory framework to deliver more proportionate and risk-based assurance, now and in the future.

Activity	Further detail
[R5] We must ensure the new food standards and revised hygiene delivery models for local authorities are in place and working well.	<p>We want to better support local authorities so that they can focus their time and expertise where it adds the most value and best protects consumers. This includes modernising the way local authorities regulate food hygiene and food standards in food businesses. This will help address shortcomings with the current models.</p> <p>For the food standards model, revised Food Law Codes of Practice will be introduced in England and Northern Ireland early in 2023/24, and local authorities will commence transition to implement the new model. We will also agree initial key performance indicators and a way to collect data. Our ambition is for all local authorities to implement the new code in 2024/25, and then we would conduct a post implementation review in 2025/26. In Wales, we will pilot the new model in 2023/24, and we anticipate a revised Food Law Code of Practice will be proposed in 2024/25.</p>
[R6] We must work effectively with governments in each country to agree and deliver the Border Target Operating Model for import controls.	<p>Government has set out a UK Border Strategy, which includes a long-term Target Operating Model (TOM) for the border. This includes introduction of Sanitary and Phytosanitary import controls on EU goods and reform of the controls on non-EU goods. The FSA has worked with other government departments on the development of the Border TOM. Our priority is to ensure levels of food and feed safety are maintained or improved when the new Border TOM is introduced.</p> <p>We anticipate publication of the proposed Border TOM in 2023, with implementation of the model beginning by the end of 2023 and through 2024 and continuous improvement in 2025/26.</p>
[R7] We must develop a sustainable and legally compliant model for official controls.	<p>The food landscape has changed dramatically in the 3 decades since the current regulatory system was introduced. Although regulation has continued to evolve, it has not kept pace with the significant changes in the food industry. For some parts of the food sector, there may be more effective ways to make sure businesses comply with the rules than our current regulatory model, which is based heavily on in person and regular inspection of food business premises by local authorities.</p> <p>In 2023/24, we will trial a new form of enterprise-level regulation with some of the major retailers in England. This could be implemented later in the 3-year period depending on the outcome of the trial.</p> <p>During 2023/24, we will also begin policy work on the longer-term options available for a future regulatory model, and we expect to continue that work in subsequent years.</p>
[R8] We should secure access to appropriate additional investigatory powers for the National Food Crime Unit.	<p>The National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) does not currently have the full range of powers needed to gather the evidence necessary to secure prosecutions in complex and challenging cases of food crime. Although it has access to some powers and investigatory tools, it remains reliant on external partners, primarily the police, or potentially local authorities to carry out certain basic investigatory functions. In line with the recommendations of reviews of the NFCU (see the Kenworthy Review, NAO) we are in the process of securing these powers. In April 2022 Parliament passed the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act. It provides a power for the Secretary of State to confer relevant powers to officers of the NFCU in England and Wales.</p> <p>In 2023/24, we will pursue opportunities for a suitable bill to enable the remaining gap in primary legislation (surrounding oversight by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services) and lay out a clear timetable. We anticipate a statutory instrument being made in 2024/25, and the Unit will adopt the powers, with operational use of them continuing into 2025/26.</p>

Activity	Further detail
[R9] We should work toward primary legislation making display of Food Hygiene Rating Scheme scores mandatory in England.	<p>Food hygiene ratings reflect the standards of food hygiene found at the time of the inspection by the local authority at individual food businesses. Businesses are issued with a sticker showing their rating that can be displayed at their premises. Display of rating stickers at premises is mandatory in Wales and Northern Ireland, but voluntary in England. The FSA is committed to pressing the case for mandatory display at premises and online in England.</p> <p>The timing of work to deliver this commitment will depend on identifying a suitable route to make primary legislation and a suitable fit with government priorities, and depends on the support of the Department for Health and Social Care.</p>
[R10] We should improve effectiveness and efficiency of FSA's direct delivery of official controls.	<p>In addition to the reforms described above to deliver a sustainable and legally compliant model for official controls, we will continuously improve our own direct delivery of official controls in the meat, wine and dairy sectors within the current regulatory framework.</p> <p>In 2023/24, we will become a more effective operational delivery function, through technology and process improvements. These improvements will include, for example, how we collect and communicate inspection results, how we equip our auditors to collect and store information, and how we use data to better target our resources and interventions. We will also produce and deliver against a new, optimised operational performance framework. We will continue identifying new improvements into 2024/25 and 2025/26.</p>
[R11] We should improve our approach to preventing and managing incidents.	<p>We always look to improve our approach to managing incidents, including rapid policy development. We also want to make greater use of emerging technology and insights, therefore developing our understanding of links between incidents to support prevention.</p> <p>In 2023/24, we will implement recommendations of a strategic review conducted in light of lessons learnt from the incident arising from the war in Ukraine, and we expect to embed new structures and implement changes to the Incident Management Plan. We will also establish capabilities to provide better insight and analysis of incidents, for example, using root cause analysis surveillance and sampling. We will continue implementing the outcomes of the strategic review in 2024/25 and make further improvements into 2025/26.</p>

We could go further if time and resources allowed:

- [R12]: Trial further new approaches to regulatory assurance.

Watchdog

Objective: We will peak out publicly about areas of consumer interest to encourage high food standards in the UK.

Activity	Further detail
[W1] We must produce advice on human health statutory protections in trade deals on request by the Department for Business and Trade for section 42 reports, and otherwise comment publicly on the impact of a trade deal where appropriate to protect consumer interests in relation to food.	<p>FSA and Food Standards Scotland provide assurance under section 42(4) of the Agriculture Act 2020, on whether, or to what extent, the measures in trade deals between the UK and other countries maintain levels of statutory protection for human health for the areas within our statutory remit.</p> <p>This is an ongoing activity, which we will perform for each year of this plan. Exact timelines and requirements are dependent on the speed and pace of government ambition to negotiate and agree trade deals with priority countries. Deadlines on section 42 are driven by the Department for Business and Trade.</p> <p>This activity is closely linked to the advice we provide on trade deals described above as part of our policy maker role.</p>
[W2] We should monitor the standard of UK food and produce regular reviews of the state of national food standards (concerning safety and authenticity), including both domestic and imported food as well as the state of the food regulatory system.	<p>In 2022, FSA and Food Standards Scotland published our first annual review of food standards across the UK. In this report we asked whether our food standards have been maintained over the reporting year with a view to protecting consumers' interests.</p> <p>In 2023/24, we will publish the 'year 2' food standards report and develop a 5-year programme of work for the following years. We will publish further reports in 2024/25 and 2025/26.</p>

We could go further if time and resources allowed. Our ambition as a watchdog could include:

- [W3]: Expand our monitoring of standards to include health, sustainability, animal welfare and social impact, and in relation to consumer behaviour. This could then be incorporated into expanded annual food standards report.

Convenor and collaborator

Objective: We will work in partnerships across the food system to address issues affecting consumers and behaviours.

Activity	Further detail
<p>[CC1] We must work with wider governments in the UK, Wales and Northern Ireland, and with Food Standards Scotland to ensure FSA contributes to the delivery of key cross government priorities.</p>	<p>We work closely with other departments in UK Government, the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to deliver shared priorities and ensure consumer interests in food are represented. Several of these priorities are discussed above, including our work on the Border Target Operating Model and Windsor Framework.</p> <p>However, there are further cross-government priorities we will make significant contributions to. These include some legal obligations and formal policy responsibility, including:</p> <p>In Northern Ireland, the FSA will support the development and delivery of policy and research to achieve a healthier food environment within the outcomes in the new Department of Health led NI obesity strategy, supporting the NI consumer to access a healthier diet, for example, reformulation, nutritional labelling, restricting promotions and nutritional standards.</p> <p>We will continue to deliver our comprehensive Welsh language provision in line with our statutory Welsh Language Scheme, under the Welsh Language Act 1993 to ensure an active language choice for our consumers in Wales, so that everybody who receives a service from the FSA, or who communicates with us, can do so in the language of their choice, and will be of the same quality and as accessible as English services</p> <p>We will support Welsh Ministers in undertaking their planned review of the FSA in Wales, which will consider current structures, governance and stakeholder engagement to ensure that any findings and recommendations will strengthen our ability to provide the people, resources and processes needed to deliver the FSA's corporate objectives and priorities</p> <p>It also includes priorities we support due to our expertise and capabilities. The list of priorities we are involved with will evolve over time.</p> <p>This includes FSA and the Department for Education launching a School Food Standards Compliance pilot across 18 participating local authorities in England. This is a joint initiative, supported by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, and aims to design and test a new approach in supporting schools to comply with the existing School Food Standards. The standards ensure that schools provide children with healthy food and drink options, and that children get the energy and nutrition they need across the school day. We will complete and evaluate the results of the pilot in 2023/24 and then consider next steps.</p> <p>The FSA has also been working closely with Defra, Department for Health and Social Care and representatives from across the food supply chain to develop the Food Data Transparency Partnership (FDTP) to improve food system data and information. This will include developing consistent and defined metrics to measure the environmental sustainability impacts on food. We will develop government guidance on a standardised approach to the measurement and communication of scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions for the food and drink sector. We will also consider metrics that incentivise and more effectively measure progress towards improving the healthiness of food, and will enable and encourage food companies to demonstrate progress on the healthiness of their sales. The FSA (with industry) is responsible for the data workstream, which cuts across the entirety of FDTP.</p>
<p>[CC2] We must continue to influence the development of Codex Alimentarius food safety standards.</p>	<p>The Codex Alimentarius develops global food standards, guidelines and codes of practice for food safety and quality and was established nearly 60 years ago by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization to protect consumer health and promote fair practices in food trade. The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is the lead UK Government Department for Codex. The FSA takes the lead in many of the vertical committees dealing with food hygiene, food additives, methods analysis and sampling, food contaminants, and import and export certification systems.</p> <p>We will continue to lead on 5 Codex Committees, which will continue to meet routinely over the next 3 years to develop international standards.</p>

Activity	Further detail
<p>[CC3] We should build strong working relationships with industry and food system stakeholders to work with and through others.</p>	<p>This includes industry, academia, consumer representatives and our suppliers. Through these relationships we can identify opportunities to share information, disseminate guidance and better understand how we could work together in the consumer interest.</p> <p>This is an ongoing activity we will continue each year. However, in 2023/24 we will also pilot a new 'FSA Relationship Managers' approach during our test of new approaches to regulating large retailers, acting as a first point of contact and coordination for their businesses (see regulator above). We will then assess the effectiveness and impact of this approach and consider if it is something that could add value for the FSA as part of our future approach as a regulator.</p>
<p>[CC4] We should build our international reputation and influence as a leader in food safety and regulation.</p>	<p>The FSA has always played an important role internationally through a number of international fora. This includes our involvement in multilateral groups such as the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), the Standards and Trade Development Facility, and our collaborative work with other government departments at the World Trade Organisation. We value our membership of global technical and scientific groups, as well as reactive groups on crisis management and food fraud. We will continue to promote the use of modern digital and data approaches with our international partners. The integrated global structure of the food system requires strong and cooperative international engagement and partnership to maintain the safety of food on our market and otherwise protect consumer interests in relation to food. In order to make best use of limited FSA resources our activities will need to clearly support the priorities set out in the rest of this plan.</p> <p>In 2023/24 we will develop an internal workplan to set clear priorities for FSA activities and introduce changes to internal processes to better coordinate engagement. We will also continue to organise senior engagements in support of corporate plan objectives, which in 23/24 will include the International Heads of Food Agencies in Dublin and the Global Food Safety Initiative, and planned visits to the US, Canada, France, Israel and India.</p> <p>Throughout the period, the FSA will also continue to engage internationally and across Whitehall in support of targeted regulatory modernisation, which improves international food control systems and better protects consumers in the UK. In line with our strategy, we should also look to identify opportunities to build our presence in relevant international fora. Domestic initiatives which we are participating in, such as the School Food Standards (see above for details) has attracted attention from the United Nations World Food Programme and once the results of the pilot are published there will be potential opportunities to share good practice.</p> <p>The FSA is working with other government departments, including Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' newly established agriculture attaché network to identify suitable opportunities for engagement and influence. We will continue engagement to assist our learning and thinking relating to innovative methods for production of sustainable food products, including alternative proteins and cell-based meat which exploring various aspects to understand the processes but also the potential regulatory requirements which would need to be considered.</p>

We could go further if time and resources allowed. Our ambition as a convenor and collaborator could include:

- [CC5]: Convene food system stakeholders to solve key issues facing consumers. This would be reactive work, as and when a particular issue is identified.

Enabler

Objective: We will provide the people, resources and processes needed to deliver our corporate objectives and priorities.

Activity	Further detail
<p>[E1] We must attract, retain, and support our people, identifying current skills and needs and delivering and implementing the people plan.</p>	<p>This includes all of our business as usual activities to recruit people in a fair, innovative and effective approach, performance and talent management, and learning.</p> <p>Key activities included in our people plan include undertaking a review of our reward package of pay and benefits in 2023/24 and continuing to build on our committed and supportive organisational culture so that our people feel welcome during their time with us and want to come back to the FSA. We will also introduce a new management and leadership development framework that reflect our priorities and values. The people plan sets out activities for 2024/25 and 2025/26, our plan to ensure we have the right mix of skills in our organisation (for example, vets or scientists), pay arrangements, and plans for inclusion and diversity in our organisation.</p>

Activity	Further detail
<p>[E2] We must deliver and develop data and digital services for internal and public users.</p>	<p>Everyone in the UK is a potential user of FSA digital and data services. Consumers need food safety and hygiene information, businesses need information to run a food business safely and FSA staff members need services to work efficiently.</p> <p>We will continue to develop a range of digital and data services in line with our service standard and the Gov.uk service standard where applicable. This includes understanding users' needs and problems, choosing the right tools and working in an agile way to deliver them. Examples of the services we provide include applying for regulated products authorisation, or our risk likelihood dashboard, which monitors the likelihood of risky food and feed commodities imported into the UK for local authorities.</p> <p>We will continue to develop a portfolio of digital and data services each year, several specific digital services are discussed below as part of other activities, such as the refresh of several major systems.</p>
<p>[E3] We must refresh our systems to provide robust and efficient technology support including a new finance, payroll and HR system implementation.</p>	<p>Our work to provide fast, modern, reliable digital, data and technology services includes refreshing some of our major systems.</p> <p>One of the major systems being replaced is our finance, payroll and HR system (work to procure and implement this is known internally as the Connect Programme). In 2023/24, we will exit from our current suppliers and move data into the new system. In 2024/25, we will explore expanding the functionality of the system beyond the minimum viable product of finance, payroll and HR.</p> <p>In 2023/24, we will also begin the process of reviewing our Smarter Comms system (for communication with local authorities) and looking for a replacement for our Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (which captures data from local authorities on delivery of official controls), which are coming to the end of their life.</p>
<p>[E4] We must support the FSA's operating model by providing the right estate for our future needs.</p>	<p>The FSA maintains several offices across the UK, including Clive House (our London office) and offices in Cardiff and Belfast.</p> <p>In 2023/24, we will finalise our new Estates Strategy, setting out the FSA vision of our future estates and a plan to transition to it. In 2025/26, we anticipate exiting from our current Clive House London headquarters and moving to a new London office in outer London.</p>
<p>[E5] We must deliver and embed a new performance assurance framework.</p>	<p>We will implement new performance measures to give strategic oversight of our progress in delivering our objectives. The framework will help identify cross-cutting risks, support prioritisation decisions and provide an overarching view on whether we are on track to deliver or if not, discuss what actions we can collectively take to remedy.</p> <p>We will roll out our performance assurance framework in 2023/24, and then continue delivering and continuously improving it in 2024/25 and 2025/26.</p>
<p>[E6] We must develop evidence and the strategic approach to support the next spending review and other government commissions.</p>	<p>The FSA's budget is set by HM Treasury as part of regular spending reviews, by the Welsh Government in Wales and by the Northern Ireland Executive in Northern Ireland. Our current financial settlement runs until the end of financial year 2024/25.</p> <p>In 2023/24, we will prepare evidence for our next spending review submission. We anticipate a request from the HM Treasury to develop a new bid for future years in 2024/25.</p>

FSA 3-year Corporate Plan: Appendix 2 Our indicators

We will monitor progress against our strategy using the indicators described in this appendix.

We will monitor progress against our strategy using the indicators described in this appendix. At the same time, we will keep the list of indicators under review, updating them to reflect new measures. For example, as we grow our contribution to healthier and more sustainable food, we expect to identify new progress measures we can add.

The latest available data for each indicator is included. However, as this is the start of the first year of our plan, the data are intended to form a baseline and context for future years, not an assessment of progress over the last year.

Progress indicators must be interpreted carefully in their context, to give an accurate picture of delivery of our strategy. Many factors can cause change in the food system and the FSA does not

have direct influence on all of them.

Maintaining food you can trust

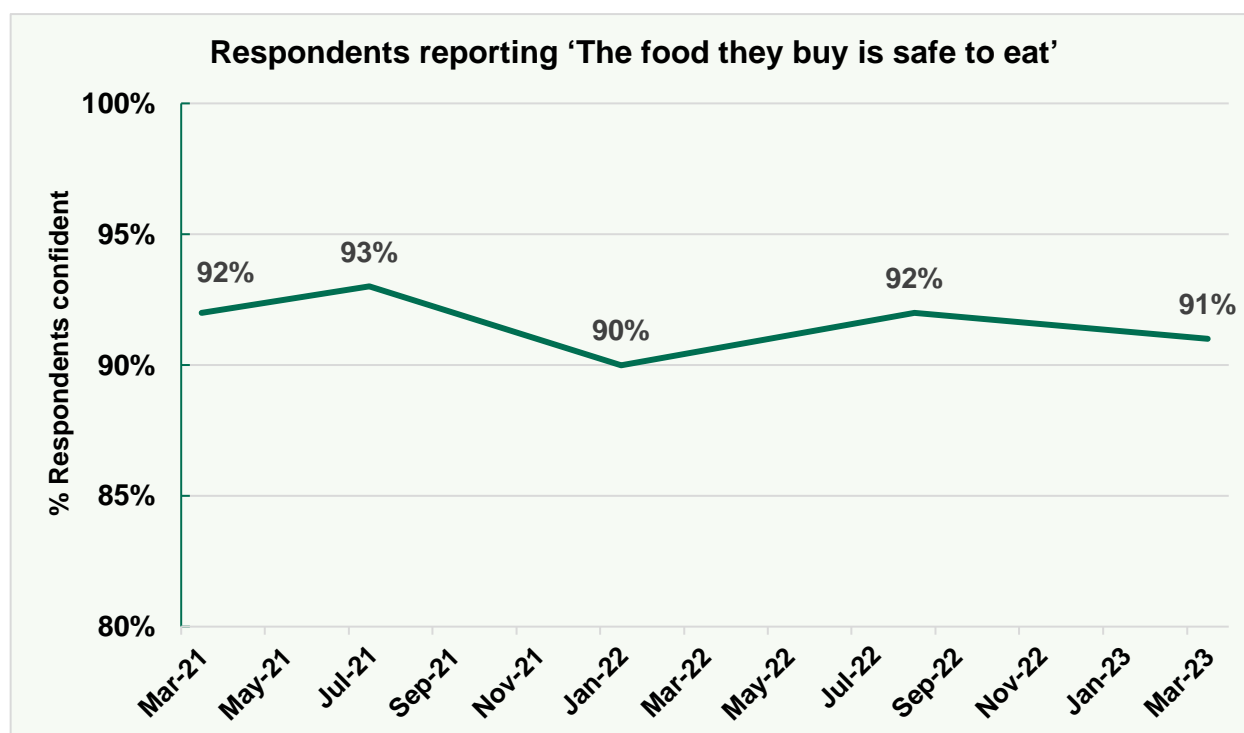
Measuring trust in food and the FSA is complex and influenced by a range of factors. We have both a direct and an indirect influence on some of the factors that lead people to trust food.

The FSA and our partners work to ensure that food is safe, is what it says it is and that food is healthier and more sustainable. This contributes indirectly to levels of trust in the food system. Our actions directly contribute to public trust in the FSA itself, which in turn contributes to trust in the food system.

Public trust in the food system is high. Wave 5 of our flagship social research survey, [Food & You 2](#) found that:

- 91% of respondents are confident that the food they buy is safe to eat
- 86% are confident that the information on food labels is accurate
- 80% are confident that the FSA (or government agency responsible) can be relied upon to protect the public from food-related risks

Respondents reporting 'The food they buy is safe to eat'.



Source: Food and You 2

Almost all small and micro food businesses have heard of the FSA (98%). Those who have contacted us score the agency on average 9/10 on trustworthiness. 95% of all businesses surveyed are confident that the FSA is influential in maintaining standards within the food industry and 93% are confident that we work hard to ensure that food safety and standards are maintained and improved.

According to qualitative research conducted for the FSA by IPSOS Mori (November 2021), stakeholders agree that we consistently put consumers first in our work:

- our key strengths are reported to be our transparency, openness, and integrity
- engagement with the FSA was found to be positive and productive
- we are perceived to be a science-led organisation, with a high level of independence and able to remain balanced and impartial.
- stakeholders identified some areas for us to improve, including greater clarity about our role, internal structure, and how we work with other government departments, and the level of FSA staff's experience of how different food sectors work on the ground.

Maintaining food that is safe and is what it says it is

Food businesses are responsible for delivering food that is safe and is what it says it is. Nevertheless, we have direct influence on this, for example through our work regulating meat businesses or responding to food crime. We also have an indirect influence through our work with partners such as local authorities who regulate most food businesses.

Our work makes it easier for businesses to meet their obligations around food safety and authenticity, and do the right thing, while at the same time taking action when something goes wrong. We also make it easier for consumers to make informed decisions about what they eat.

Foodborne disease

In line with the FSA's Foodborne Disease Framework, we monitor food safety through numbers of reported cases of foodborne disease through the annual rate of 4 key pathogens: Campylobacter, Salmonella, Shiga toxin producing E.coli O157, and Listeria monocytogenes. There are a number of issues that need to be taken into account when interpreting these figures including:

- a large volume of foodborne disease cases are not reported (for example, only an estimated 1 in 9 cases of Campylobacter were reported to national surveillance in 2008-9, see [The Second Study of Infectious Intestinal Disease in the Community \(IID2 Study\)](#))
- rates of some reported foodborne pathogens during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 reduced substantially and the continuing impact of behaviours developed during the pandemic is unknown

Foodborne Disease - reported cases per 100,000 population

Key Foodborne Pathogen	Median average for 2015 to 2019	2021
Campylobacter	97	101.5
Salmonella	15	8.8
Shiga toxin producing E.coli (STEC) O157	1.3	0.9
Listeria monocytogenes	0.3	0.3

Data is taken from the UK Health Security Agency, Public Health Wales, Public Health Scotland and Public Health Agency Northern Ireland. Data are provisional and may change.

Business compliance

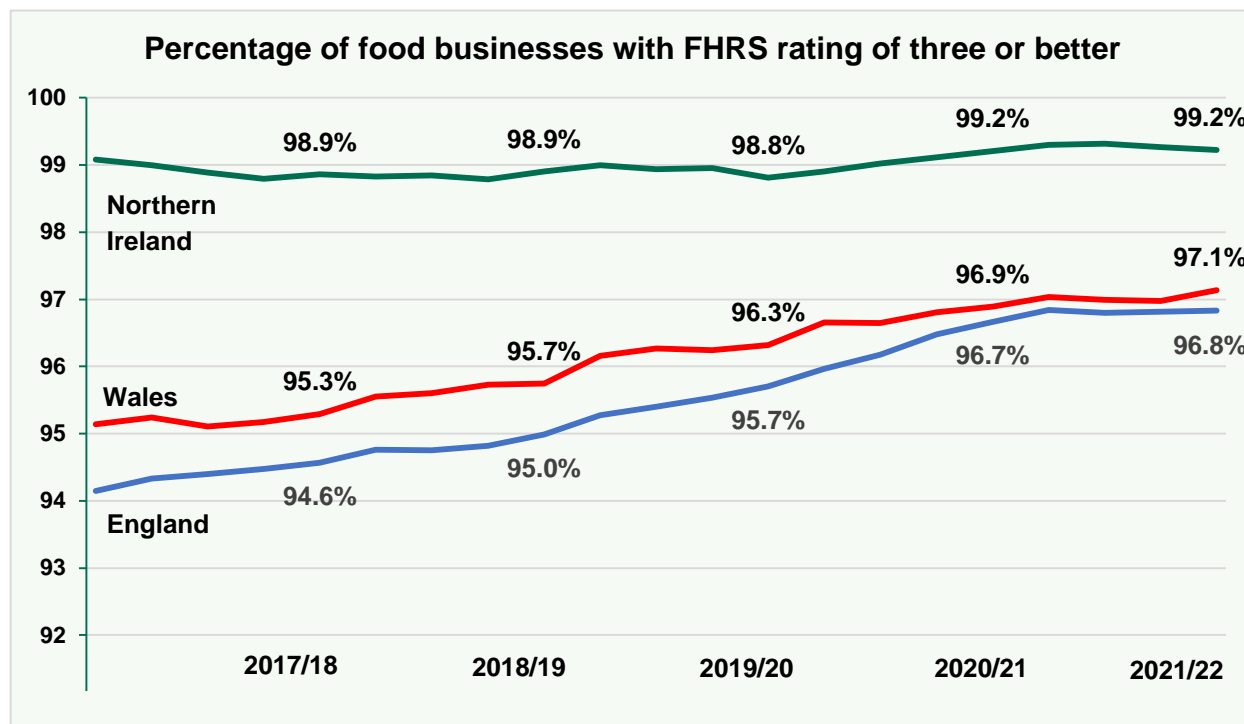
Food businesses are inspected to ensure that they comply with both food hygiene and food standards requirements. The results of inspection are key indicators of food safety and standards. There were over 600,000 registered food businesses in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2021/22.

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) is operated in partnership with local authorities across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The scheme helps consumers to make an informed choice when eating out or buying food by providing information about the hygiene standards of food businesses who supply consumers at the time of local authority inspections. In Wales only, the scheme also applies to businesses who sell to businesses including food manufacturers and wholesalers.

More than 470,000 businesses have a Food Hygiene Rating. FHRS covers approximately 85% of food businesses in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Businesses are rated from 0 to 5. A rating of 3 or above indicates generally satisfactory standards of hygiene. The top rating of 5 means that the business has very good standards. Display of FHRS ratings is mandatory in Wales and Northern Ireland and voluntary in England.

Percentage of food businesses with FHRS rating three or better



Meat hygiene compliance

The [FSA audits approved meat business establishments](#), which are those that require veterinary controls. At the end of 2021/22, there were 873 approved meat establishments.

Approved meat establishments 99% rated good or satisfactory, March 2022.

We use a risk-based approach that categorises them according to compliance levels. Compliance ratings for approved establishments in March 2022 showed 98.9% rated 'good' or 'generally satisfactory' and 1.2% rated 'improvement necessary' or 'urgent improvement necessary'.

Dairy hygiene compliance

The FSA carries out hygiene inspections at all registered dairy farms in England and Wales. In Northern Ireland, dairy hygiene inspection is carried out by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Quality Assurance Branch. There were 7,978 registered dairy establishments at the end of December 2022.

In England and Wales, 98.1% of dairy establishments inspected achieved the highest outcomes of either Good or Generally Satisfactory in 2022. This is a notable improvement on the previous year's results and is due to a change in the way dairy hygiene compliance totals are calculated. It reflects the most up to date information we have on compliance and better aligns with the reporting methodology used by Northern Ireland.

Dairy hygiene compliance levels for assessed premises as of 31 December 2022

Nation	Good	Generally satisfactory	Improvement necessary	Urgent improvement necessary
England and Wales	75.0%	23.1%	1.9%	0.04%
Northern Ireland	59.5%	39.7%	0.8%	0.00%
Total	72.4%	25.8%	1.7%	0.04%

Food Incidents

A food incident occurs when concerns about the actual or suspected safety or quality of food (or feed) may require action to protect consumers. Incidents broadly fall into 2 categories:

- contamination of food or animal feed in processing, distribution, retail and catering
- environmental pollution incidents such as fires, chemical/oil spills and radiation leaks

Incident notifications received by the FSA



Food incidents vary significantly in their seriousness and the number of consumers and quantity of food affected. Numbers may also be affected by repeated incidents from the same source or by changes in sampling and detection.

The number of incidents fell during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and then increased steadily throughout 2021, while remaining lower than in 2019.

Allergen related incidents

Allergens are the second largest cause of incidents and can be fatal for people with a food hypersensitivity. There were 320 allergen related incidents reported in 2021/22.

Allergen incidents 320 2021 to 2022.

The FSA will explore and assess options to improve the provision of allergen information over the next 3 years and has already undertaken allergen awareness campaigns aimed at consumers and food businesses. Increased awareness of food hypersensitivity may lead to increased reporting of allergen incidents.

Food crime

A disruption is an action which is confirmed to have reduced the risk or harm done by food crime. Examples of disruptions include:

- a prosecution or arrest
- supporting a business to be more resilient to food crime

The impact of a disruption varies significantly depending on the number of potential perpetrators and victims affected. In 2021/22 there were 64 disruptions.

Food crimes that involve a risk to food safety are recorded as food incidents. Food crime affecting the authenticity of food, such as food fraud, may not pose a risk to public health.

Targeted sampling of food

The [FSA basket of foods survey](#) provides a snapshot of how well a range of food products comply with food safety and standards, including:

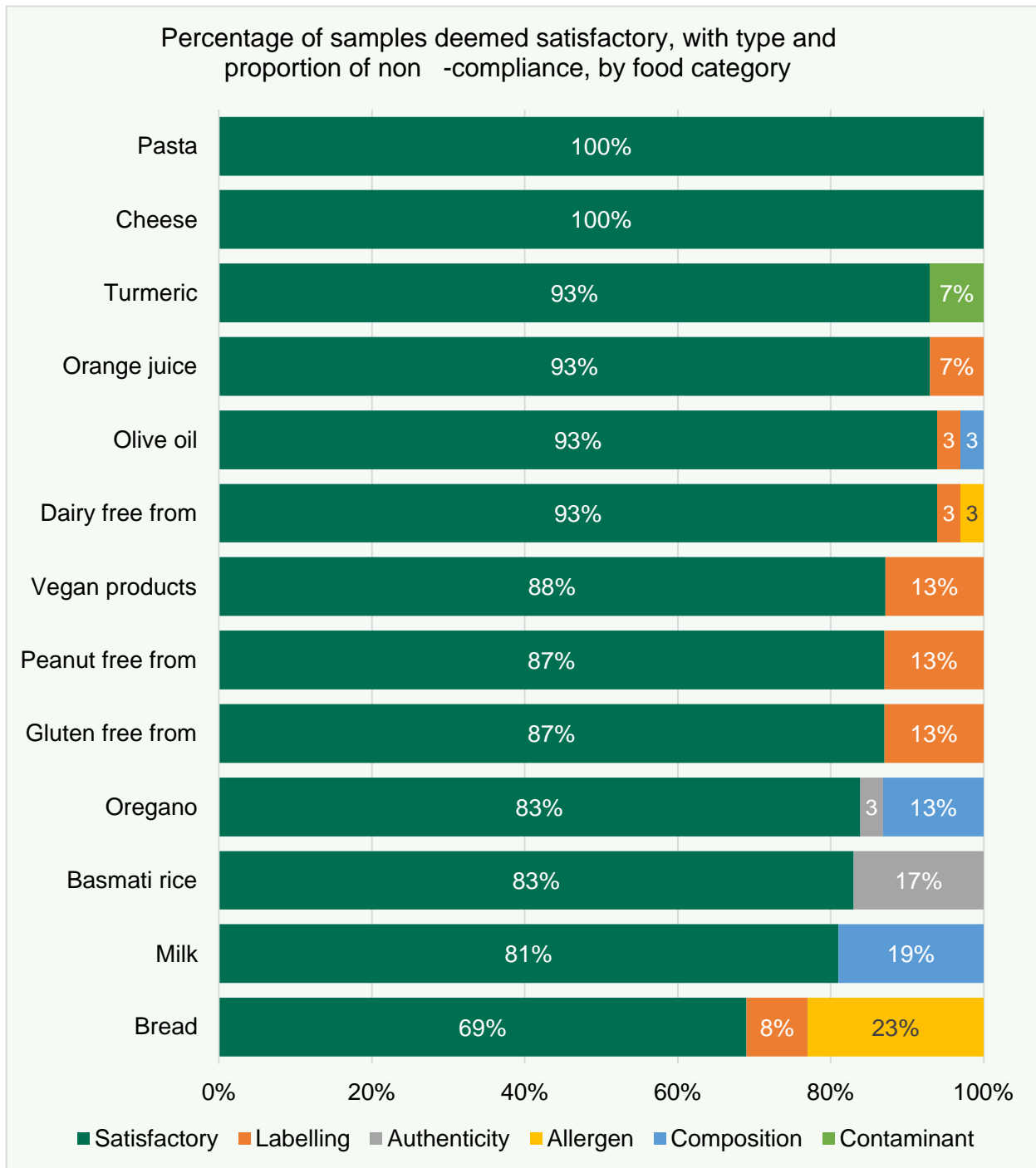
- the presence of allergens and contaminants
- consumer information relating to authenticity and labelling

The basket of foods survey is not a random sample of all available products. The survey targets products with prior authenticity issues (such as basmati rice, herbs and spices) and supplements them with some commonly consumed foods (such as bread and milk). In 2021, the majority of samples were taken from smaller food businesses across the country (including retail outlets and online), which undertake less routine sampling than large food businesses.

The survey showed that 89% of products tested were compliant with respect to the specific standards we tested.

The majority of non-compliances found were for labelling and composition.

Percentage of samples deemed satisfactory, with type and proportion of non-compliance, by food category



Source: FSA basket of food survey, 2021. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

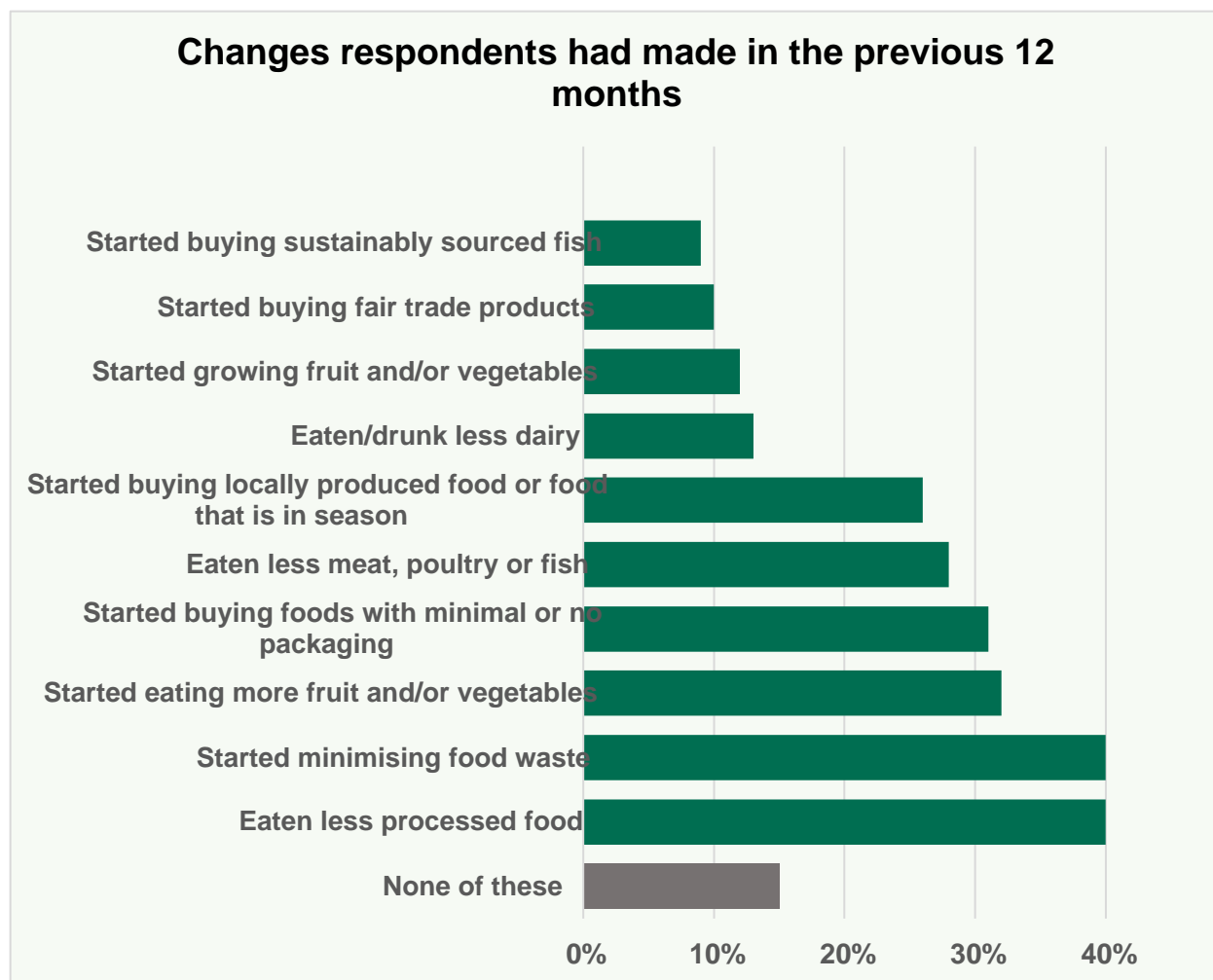
Contributing to food that is healthier and more sustainable

The FSA's ability to influence whether food is healthier and more sustainable is more limited than for food that is safe and is what it says it is. Other government departments hold policy responsibility for most of these areas, but the FSA can make some targeted contributions that make a real impact. As such, our indicators will focus first on consumer attitudes about healthier and more sustainable food and on our contributions, rather than food system outcomes.

Food and You 2 Survey

Our flagship social research survey, [Food and You 2](#), includes questions on respondents' food-related behaviours, these were covered most recently in an [earlier wave of the Food and You 2 survey in 2022](#). Consumers reported several changes of behaviour over the previous 12 months, for example 40% reported eating less processed food and the same percentage minimising food waste.

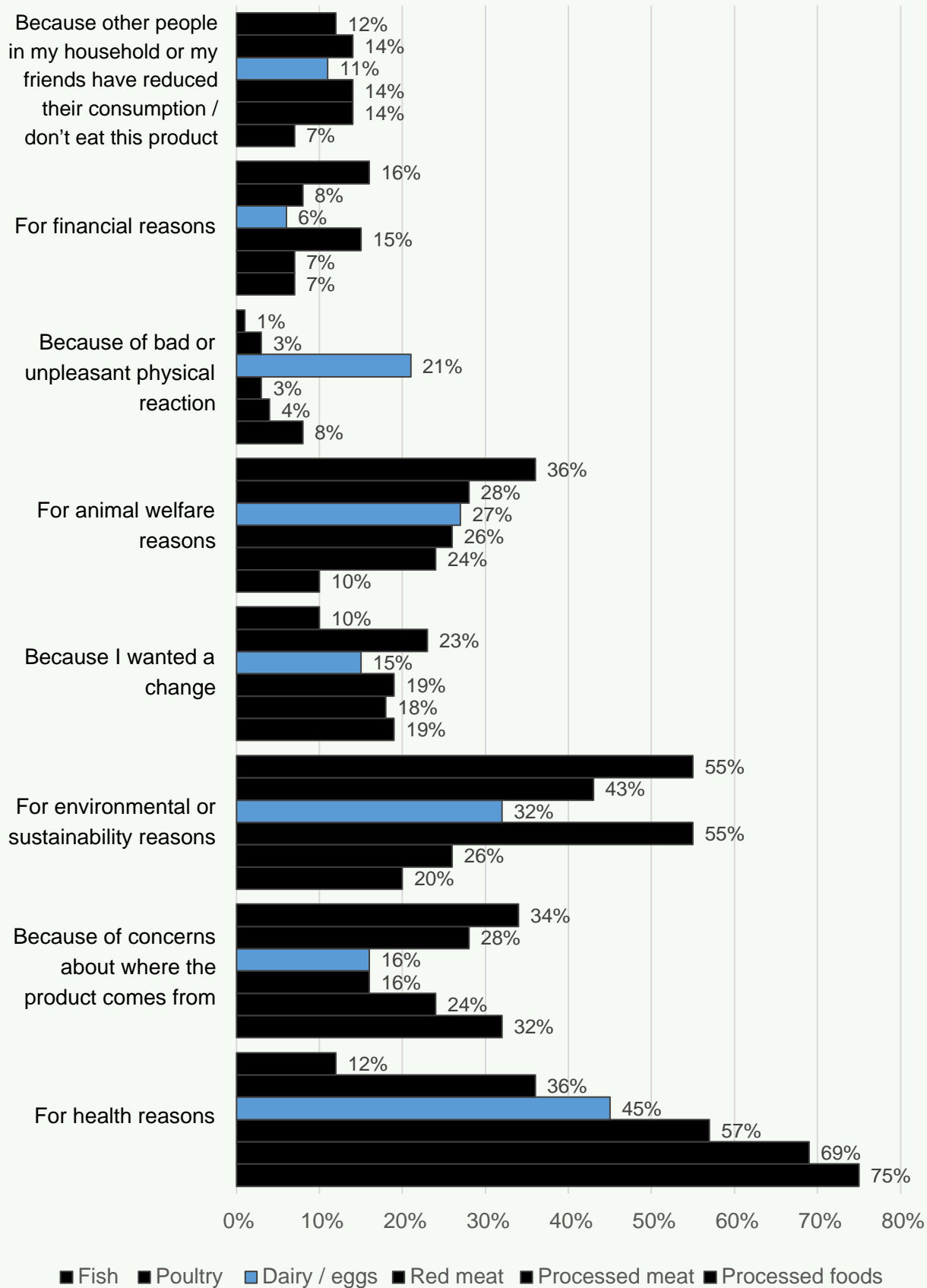
Changes respondents had made in the previous 12 months



Reasons for making these behavioural changes varied. Health reasons were the most common reason for several of the changes we asked about. Environmental or sustainability concerns were also often selected.

Common reasons that respondents had eaten less of specified foods in the previous 12 months

Common reasons that respondents had eaten less of specified foods in the previous 12 months



Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, the FSA is responsible for the delivery of some nutrition and dietary health policy. The aim is to improve nutrition and health outcomes by making healthier food products available and increasing consumers' understanding of nutrition.

Our contribution to delivering healthier and more sustainable food will be indicated by case studies and data from the FSA's Making Food Better (MFB) programme, Calorie Wise, MenuCal, and other relevant programmes and surveys.

Making Food Better

The Making Food Better programme supports small and medium sized food businesses to reduce the calorie, sugar, saturated fat and salt content of the food they produce, sell or serve, as well as reducing portion sizes to help consumers make healthier choices.

The FSA's webinar on reformulating bakery products to make food healthier has been viewed 1,226 times.

The Eating Well, Choosing Better Tracker Survey monitored NI consumers' understanding and knowledge of recommended daily calorie intake, use of traffic light labels, attitudes towards reformulation and calorie information, and awareness of campaign communications.

Key findings from the [Eating Well Choosing Better Tracking Survey - Wave 7 \(2021\)](#) included:

- 21% of male and 20% of female participants are aware of the correct recommended daily calorie intake for their sex
- 42% of respondents in 2021 use the traffic light label
- 79% of respondents in 2021 understand the traffic light label

MenuCal

MenuCal is a free online tool which helps food businesses put allergen and calorie information on their menu. 10,591 recipes were entered into MenuCal in 2021/22, a 63% increase on the previous year. This increase was likely influenced by the introduction of mandatory calorie labelling in the Out of Home Sector in England.

Growing our contribution

Outside of this role in Northern Ireland, we must work together with other government departments with direct responsibility for policy on health and sustainability, and with other stakeholders with expertise and influence to deliver improvements. For example, our work in Wales aligns with the goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015. We are setting a realistic ambition to contribute on health and sustainability given short-term constraints and the demands of delivering on our core remit.

For these areas, our indicators of progress focus less on the food system and more on the extent of the FSA's work collaborating with other actors. Change in the health and sustainability of food will be driven primarily by actions of the food industry, consumers, and other government departments. These factors, in addition to the nuances of measuring health and sustainability of food, mean that indicators of the FSA's activities will better evaluate the delivery of this part of the strategy. We will also seek to clarify what healthier and more sustainable food means for the FSA specifically.

Future indicators of healthier and more sustainable food could include case studies of our work on:

- the School Foods Standards Compliance pilot with the Department for Education
- the Food Data Transparency Partnership with DEFRA
- our work to make food more sustainable with the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) charity

[Back to top](#)