

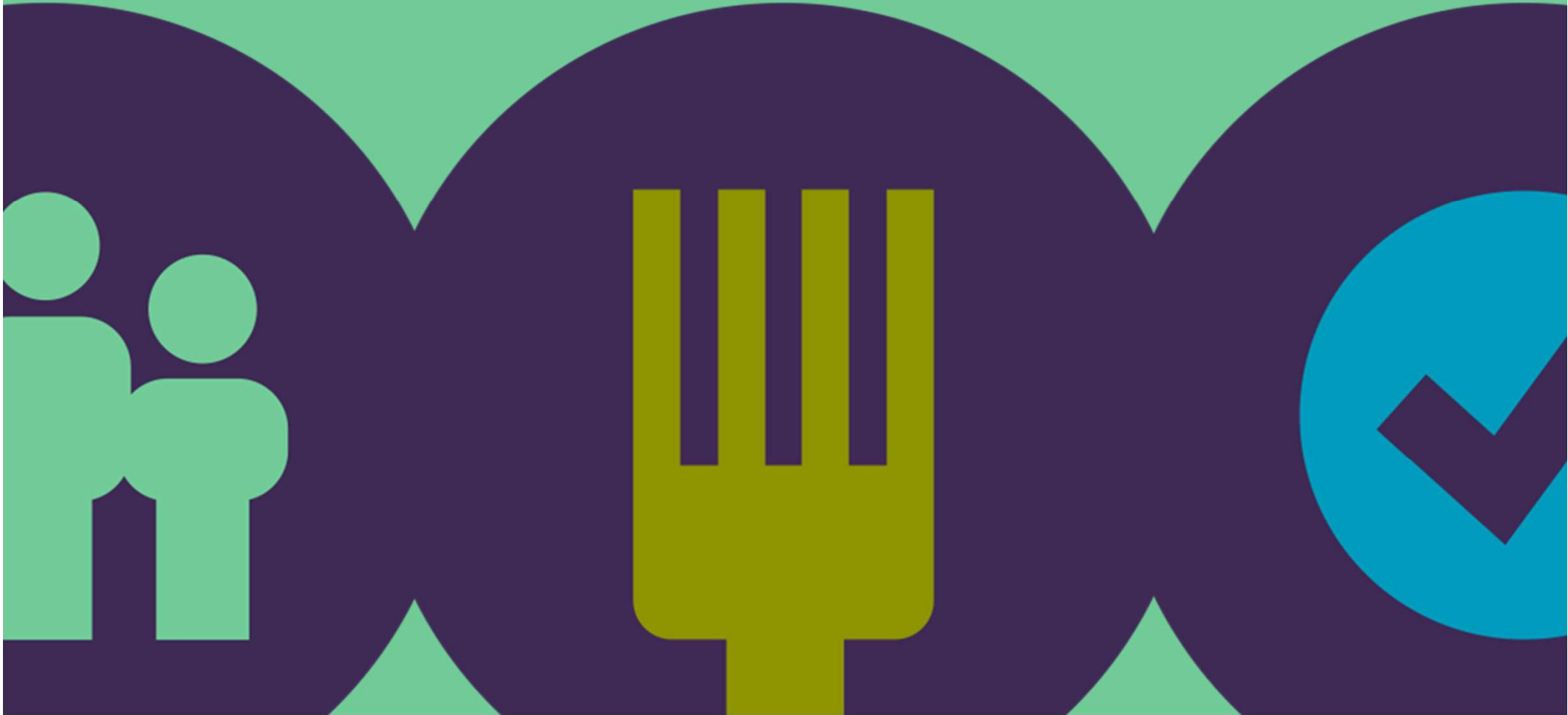


For safe food and  
healthy eating

# Food Standards Scotland: Strategy & Approach to Science

23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021

Geoff Ogle (Chief Executive)





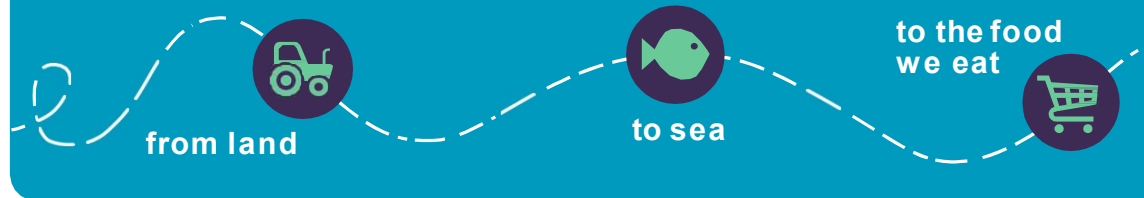
## **Presentation Content**

- 1. Background about FSS**
- 2. The Context we're now operating in**
- 3. Our Approach to the use of Science and Evidence**

## About Us

We're the public sector food body for Scotland. Our remit covers all aspects of the food chain in Scotland that can impact public health. We're here to protect consumers in Scotland from food safety risks and promote healthy eating.

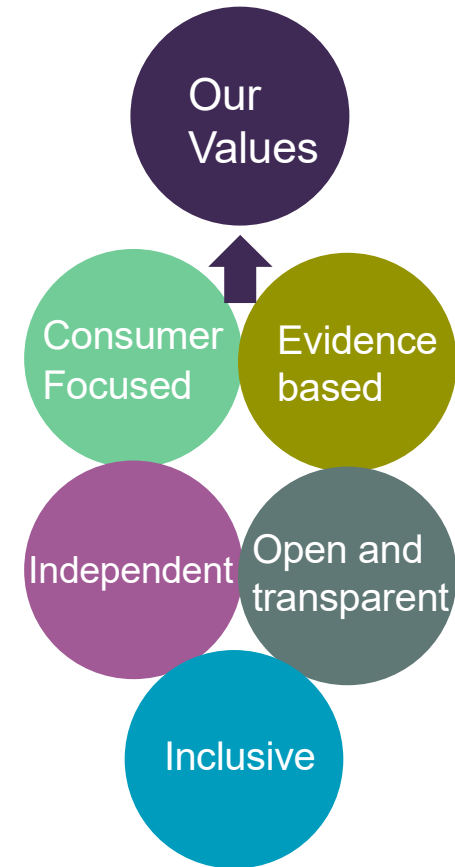
We work across the entire food chain



We continue to adapt and keep pace in a changing food environment. Prioritising public health protection and promoting sustainability.



## Role and Vision



## Strategic Focus 2021 - 26



## Governance



## Governance

**Ross Finnie**

Chairman



**Geoff Ogle**

Chief Executive



**Ian McWatt**

Deputy CEO &  
Director of Policy,  
Science &  
Operations



**Julie  
Hesketh- Laird**

Deputy CEO &  
Director of Strategy,  
Comms &  
Programmes



**Professor  
David Gally**

Chief Scientific  
Adviser



## FSS at a glance

Our head office is in Aberdeen



284 total employees



150 head office based

134 field based



35

Official FSS Veterinarians

69 Meat Hygiene Inspectors

+ 6 Trainee



£ 22.5m

Resource budget for 2021-22

Around 24,000 feed businesses regulated by FSS.



In 2019 – 20 FSS delivered official controls in 92 fully approved meat premises



66,521 food businesses operating in Scotland that are regulated by 32 Local Authorities.





## FSS outcomes for 2021-2026



Food is Safe and Authentic



Consumers Have Healthier Diets



Responsible Food Businesses  
are enabled to thrive



Consumers are empowered to make  
positive choices about food



FSS is trusted and influential



## Understanding the challenges

### Our Enablers

Adaptability to change

Our expertise

Our ways of working

Data and Digitalisation

Evidence and Understanding

Sustainable delivery models

### Key Risks to Delivery

**COVID-19**  
New risks to the food chain and diversion of regulatory resources to support public health response

**EU EXIT**  
Constitutional affairs - trade agreements and future relationships with the EU and UK Government

**EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND E-COMMERCE**  
Ensuring regulation and assurance keeps pace with new products and the expansion of online food markets

**MISINFORMATION**  
Promoting FSS as the expert voice and gaining the trust of consumers over unreliable sources of information on diet and health, recognising the particular challenges associated with social media

**PUBLIC SECTOR RESOURCING**  
Increasing pressures on Local Authorities and FSS result in a delivery model which lacks the resilience needed to meet future challenges



## Our Strategic Goals

### GOAL 1



A food safety and standards assurance system that commands international respect and consumer confidence, supporting the Scottish economy beyond EU Exit

### GOAL 2



A regulatory system that engages with businesses to educate and enable compliance, rewards best practice and applies appropriate sanctions when laws are broken

### GOAL 3



A research and data science capability which enables us to detect risks, monitor public health trends and consumer behaviours and translate evidence into action

### GOAL 4



A food environment which empowers consumers to make safe, healthy, and sustainable choices

### GOAL 5



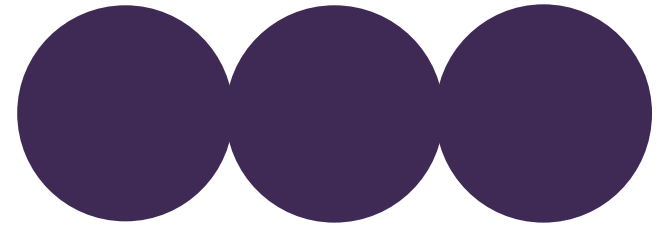
Be respected as an authority on food protection and public health nutrition, promoting change through impactful relationships within and beyond Scotland that enable us to influence, learn and collaborate

### GOAL 6



Engage with all parts of society in Scotland understanding the issues that matter to consumers and providing information that is tailored to their needs

**COLLABORATION IS KEY!**



## Our 3 key priorities

1. Strengthen our influence over policy aimed at improving **Scotland's diet**
2. Build capacity & capability in Scotland to maintain high standards of **regulatory assurance** as we adapt to the dynamic political landscape post EU Exit
3. Strengthen the impact of the **information and advice** we provide to ministers and consumers through effective use of **science and risk communication**

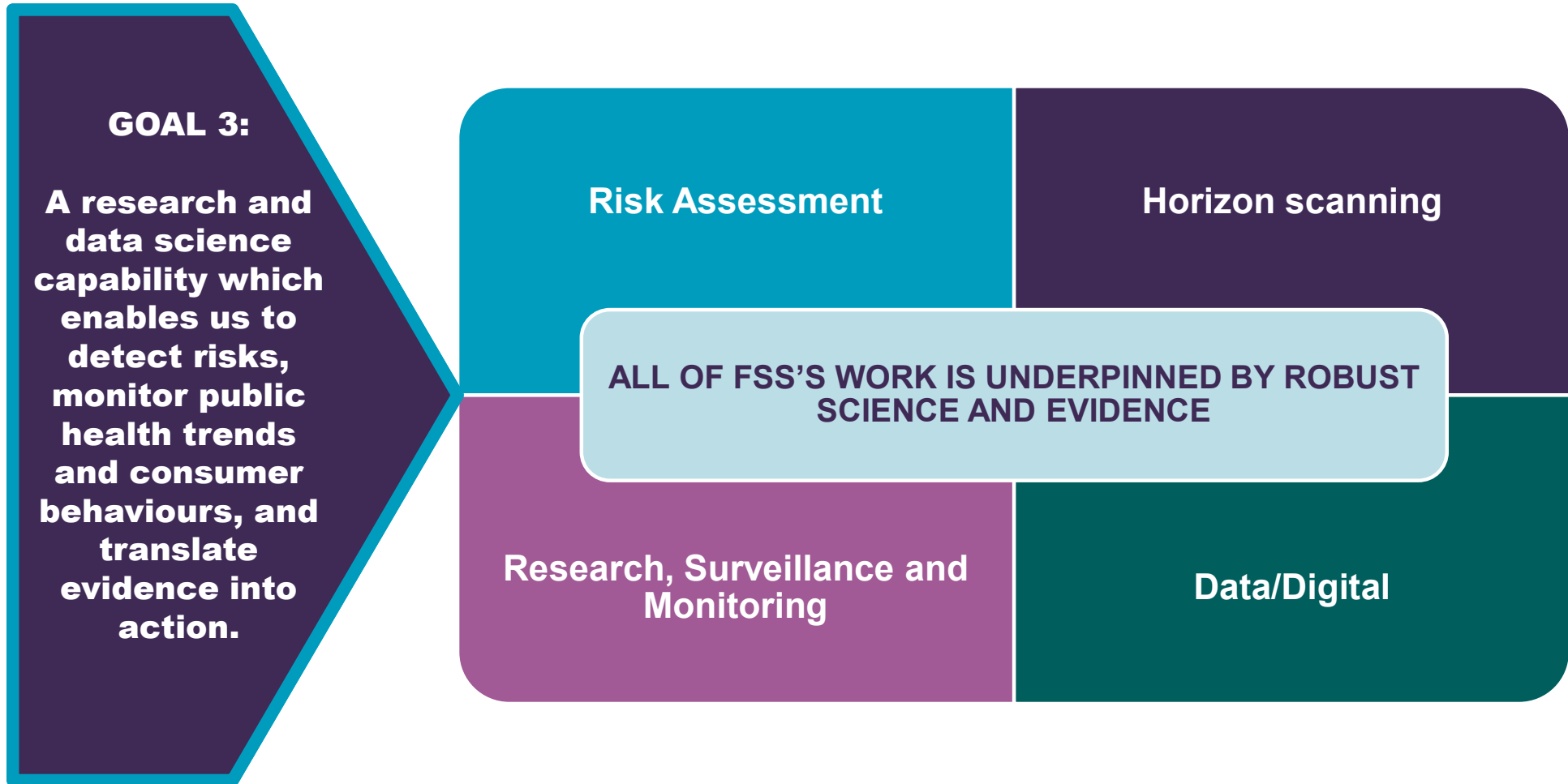
# Our Science

**Food  
Standards  
Scotland**

For safe food and  
healthy eating



## Science and evidence strategy



## Using data and evidence



Our evidence-based healthy eating advice helps consumers eat well and supports healthier living. Helping us eat a healthy and balanced diet with more fibre fruit and vegetables.

We use social sciences to understand how the changing food environment affects attitudes and behaviours and ensure UK policies take full account of consumer interests in Scotland.



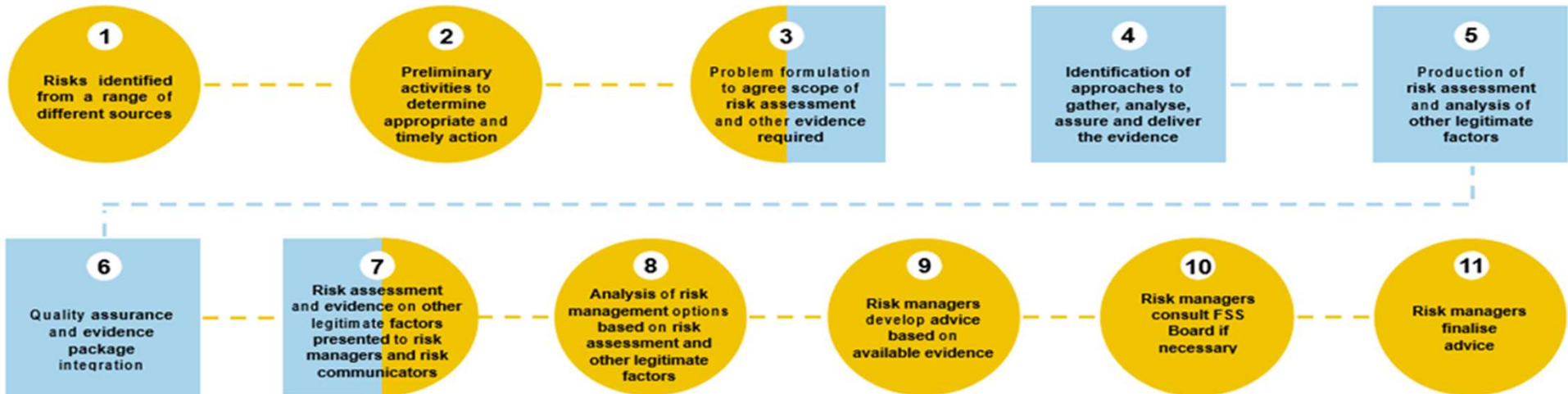
We make use of epidemiological and genomic sequencing data to identify where we can make the greatest impact in reducing the burden of foodborne illness: targeting interventions which control transmission and protect the population groups that are most vulnerable.





# Risk Analysis

This process flowchart shows the UK's risk analysis process which is one of the ways we will ensure that the high standard of food safety and consumer protection we enjoy in the UK is maintained after the Transition Period.



Our **RISK ANALYSIS PROCESS** is open and transparent. We publish the advice we provide to others and the analysis and evidence on which that advice is based. The process is underpinned by collaborative working across FSA, FSS and other government departments as well as consultation with interested parties.

Our independent risk, science and evidence-based advice and recommendations are presented to Ministers and others for decision. Decisions are then implemented and reviewed as needed. This process operates on a four-country model and can deliver, where appropriate, unified food and feed safety risk management recommendations for the UK. It will form the basis of all risk analysis activities but individual stages are flexible and can be adapted on a case-by-case basis.

**RISK COMMUNICATION**

We will embed effective risk communication mechanisms, ensuring interactive exchange of opinions and options throughout the process.

We will provide clear explanations of the findings of risk assessments and the analysis of other legitimate factors, and the basis of risk management decisions, using effective evidence-based and outcome-focused methods to communicate with consumers, industry stakeholders and other interested parties.

**KEY**

- Risk management
- Risk assessment and analysis of other legitimate factors

This diagram is for illustrative purposes.



# Understanding the Risks – Horizon Scanning and Surveillance

**Food Standards Scotland**  
Inbhe Bidh Alba

## A Food Surveillance Strategy for Scotland

A model for the collection, recording, analysis and interpretation of information and intelligence relating to the safety and authenticity of the Scottish food chain

**Horizon Scanning Activities Newsletter**  
March 2021

**Food Standards Scotland**  
For safe food and healthy eating

Food Standards Scotland is undertaking regular horizon scanning activities to identify current, emerging and increasing issues and risks in relation to food safety, food standards and food crime.

**UK Food Imports - Emerging Issues**  
The following issues have been identified as emerging UK import risks on the FSA's Risk Livehood Dashboard. This is a list of Country + Commodity + Hazard combinations with more alerts in the last 12 months than the historical average for that combination. Below are the top 10 such combinations (i.e. biggest increases against historical average) and therefore may require extra attention.

1. Pesticide residue on grapefruit (and other citrus fruits) from Turkey
2. Glycidyl esters on vegetables from Turkey
3. Pesticide residue on oranges from Egypt
4. Pesticide residue on bananas from Ecuador
5. Listeria in cheese from Austria
6. Listeria in goat from France
7. Listeria in milk from Belgium
8. Pesticide residue on peas from Canada
9. Labelling issues on tea from China
10. Aflatoxins in rice from Pakistan

**Logged issues from FSS's horizon scanning activity**  
Additionally, the following issues were recorded with a RAG status of Amber/Red or Red:

**Amber**  
A new emerging or re-emerging issue which presents immediate threat to public health, food safety, the environment, protection of aquatic life, and/or requires a significant response in Scotland/UK.

**Red**  
An issue of concern which can cause a moderate impact as it is being effectively managed or issue which does not pose immediate threat but requires more intelligence to assess risk.

**Red issues:**

- **Salmonella:** Presence of Salmonella in reconstituted chicken products from Poland continues to cause problems, with further product recalls during March. As noted last month, Public Analysts in Scotland are undertaking additional testing of these products. Salmonella has been detected in 2 of the samples collected, which have been sent to the Reference Laboratory for sequencing to determine if they are linked to the outbreak strain. Cross agency incident management continues as well as international discussions between UK, EU and Polish authorities on other steps to address the problem.
- **Ethylene oxide:** Residues of the unauthorised chemical ethylene oxide in produce from India is still a recurring issue. The chemical is used as a pesticide and antimicrobial but is classified as a carcinogen after regular consumption. Since the issue was first detected in secure seeds in September 2020, it has emerged as a widespread and persistent problem and resulted in recalls of a wide variety of sesame containing products (such as baked goods and spice mixtures). The chemical is now being found in other produce from India with recalls/withdrawals in Europe for ginger, turmeric and okra products.

Issued 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021

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**Horizon Scanning Activities Newsletter**  
March 2021

**Food Standards Scotland**  
For safe food and healthy eating

- **Salmonella:** Presence of Salmonella in black pepper from Brazil has been a recurring issue for some months now, with over 40 reports in various EU countries in the last 12 months. No reports have originated from the UK but the product is now listed as a high risk import on the FSA's risk livehood dashboard. Investigations are ongoing to assess prevalence of this product on the Scottish market.

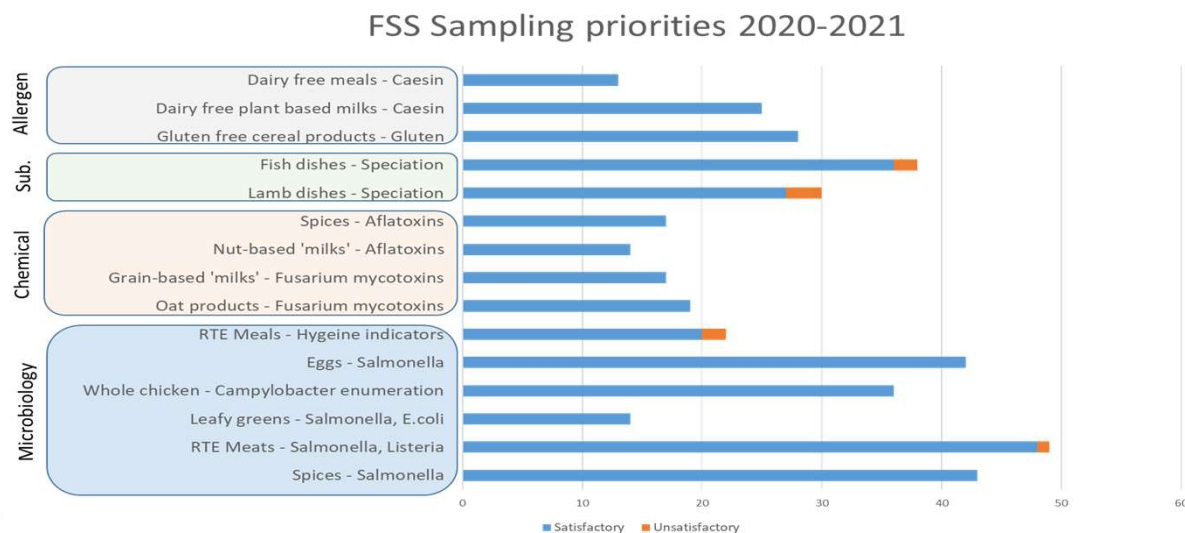
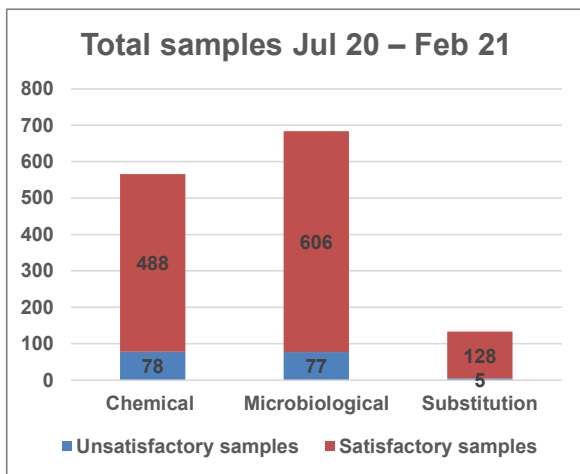
**Amber/Red issues:**

- **Home based businesses:** The risk posed by increasing numbers of unregistered home businesses has been flagged again this month. A private UK survey commissioned by Chris's Kitchen suggested ordering food from unregistered businesses was commonplace and more than a third of consumers were unaware that food businesses were required to be registered and inspected. Facebook was the most common platform for purchasing food from home based producers, accounting for 77% of the sales. By their nature, figures on true numbers of unregistered businesses are hard to obtain but anecdotal evidence suggests it is a growing problem in the UK and beyond (for example, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland reported that twice as many unregistered businesses were investigated in 2020 compared to 2019).

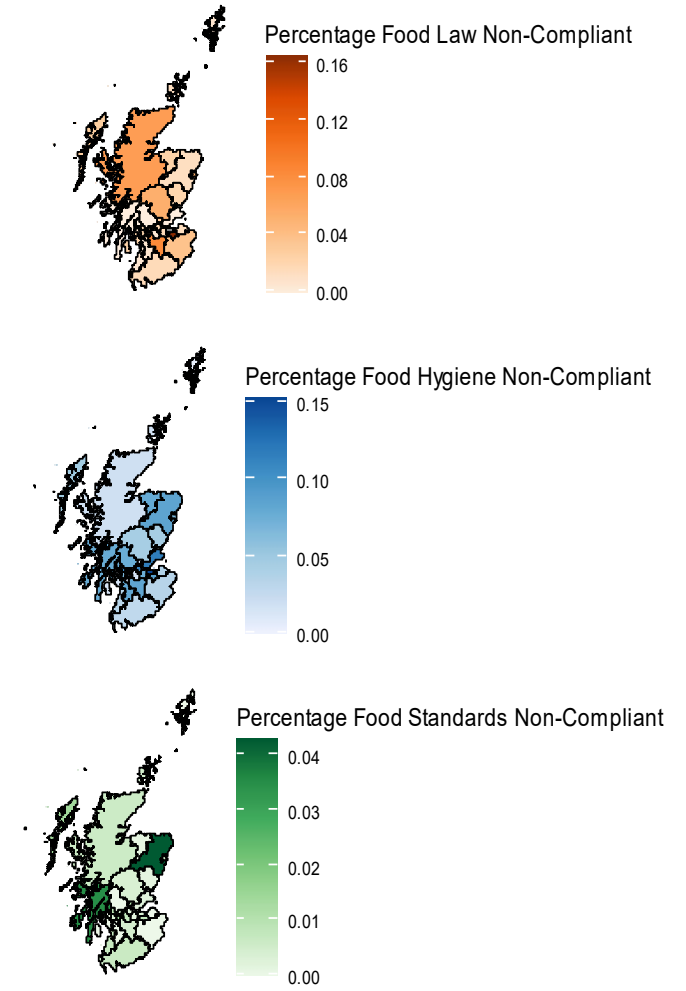
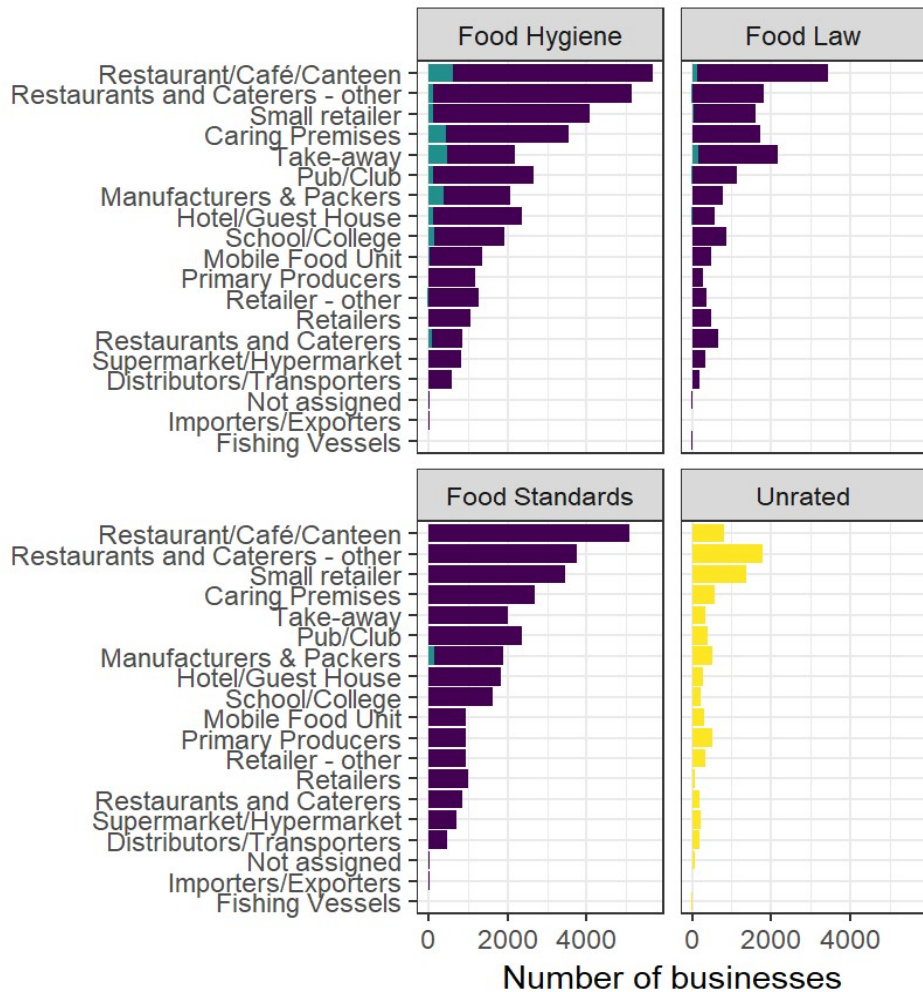
**Lower risk issues of interest:**

- **Foreign bodies:** Reports and recalls associated with foreign bodies have increased over the last 12 months compared to the normal average. This has not been attributed to any particular commodity as it has occurred across a wide range of food types. Unknown factors may be causing genuine increases in cases, or could be as a result of improved detection technologies and/or increased testing and reporting.
- **Salmonella:** A Salmonella outbreak occurred in Norway this month, which affected at least 20 people. Initially the source of the outbreak was unknown, but has now been attributed to beef that was imported from Germany and used to make mince products. There is no evidence of other countries including the UK being affected by this outbreak.
- **Seafood fraud:** An article published in The Guardian in March generated a lot of interest regarding potentially high rates of fraudulabelabelling in seafood worldwide ([Ethical seafood fraud: happening on a vast global scale](#) (E3J), The Guardian). Previous authenticity testing by FSS and FSA has not indicated widespread issues in the UK for the most commonly eaten species. The authors of the report also make the caveat that many studies target species that are known to be at high risk of mislabelling so the reported rates may not be representative of all seafood.

Issued 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021



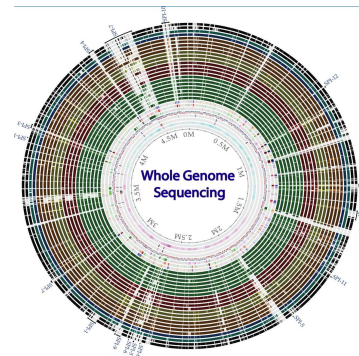
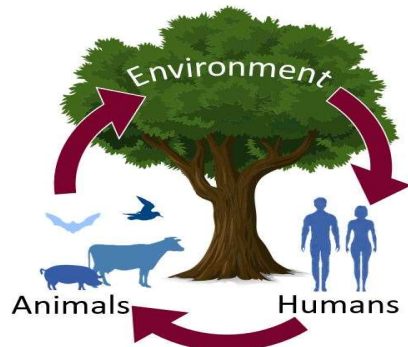
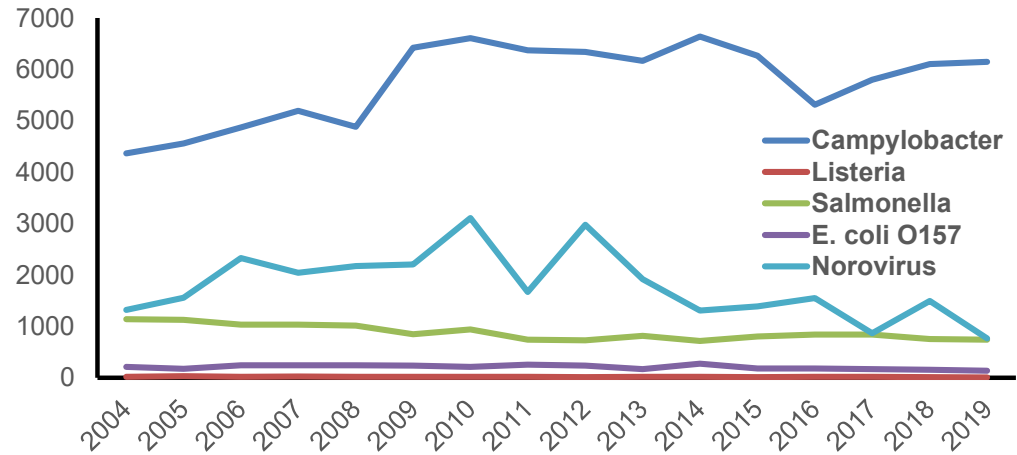
# Using SND to understand compliance



# Understanding the Risks – Tackling Foodborne Illness

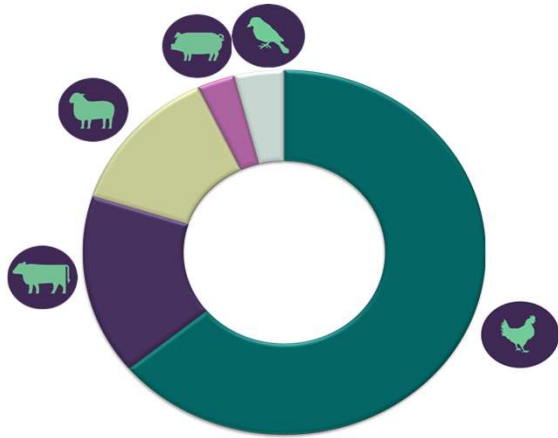
## A One Health Approach

**GOAL 3:**  
**A research and data science capability which enables us to detect risks, monitor public health trends and consumer behaviours, and translate evidence into action.**

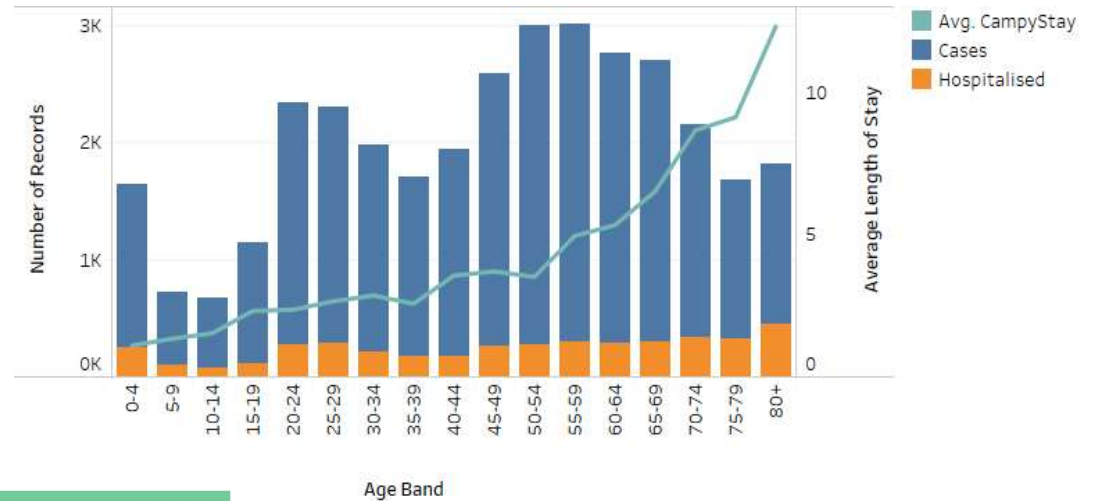


# Research – Campylobacter

## Understanding the sources



## Understanding the population groups at risk



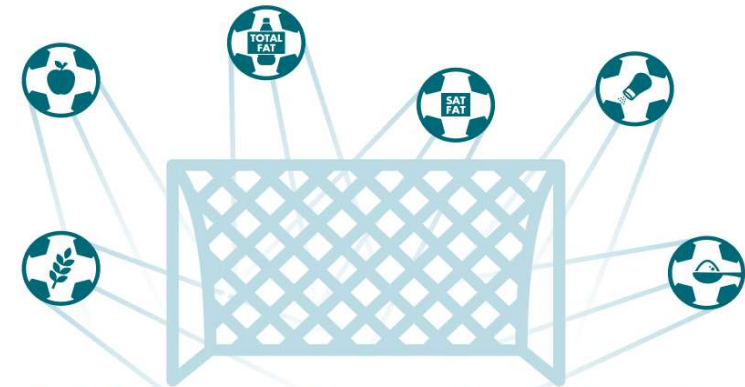
## Research - STEC

- Diversity of strains in human infection
- Prevalence in the food chain
- Managing risks in food production



## Monitoring the Scottish Diet

- **FSS is the only government body to collect and publish robust national trends in diet and nutrition in Scotland through our monitoring of purchase and estimated consumer intakes.**
- We use these trends to monitor progress towards achieving the Scottish Dietary Goals.



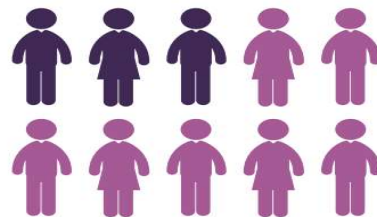
Scotland has been consistently missing its dietary goals for over 17 years.

**20%**  
of all calories and fat we eat comes from discretionary products

**50%**  
of the sugar we consume comes from discretionary products



**2 out of 3 adults**  
are either overweight or obese



**30%**  
of children at risk of being overweight or obese

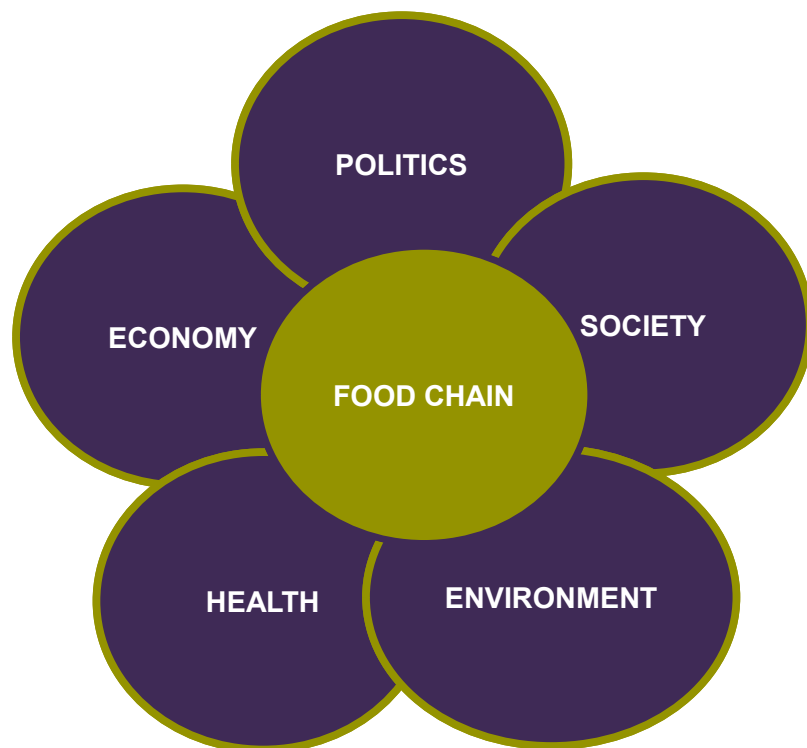
**Publish situation reports to benchmark the national diet and where we need to be:**

- Provides a call to action for Government and industry.
- A trusted, authoritative source of advice on diet and nutrition to support the development and implementation of policies aimed at achieving the dietary goals.



# Understanding the wider food landscape

## Challenges and Opportunities



## Working with others

We work with our partners across Scotland and beyond to achieve shared goals.



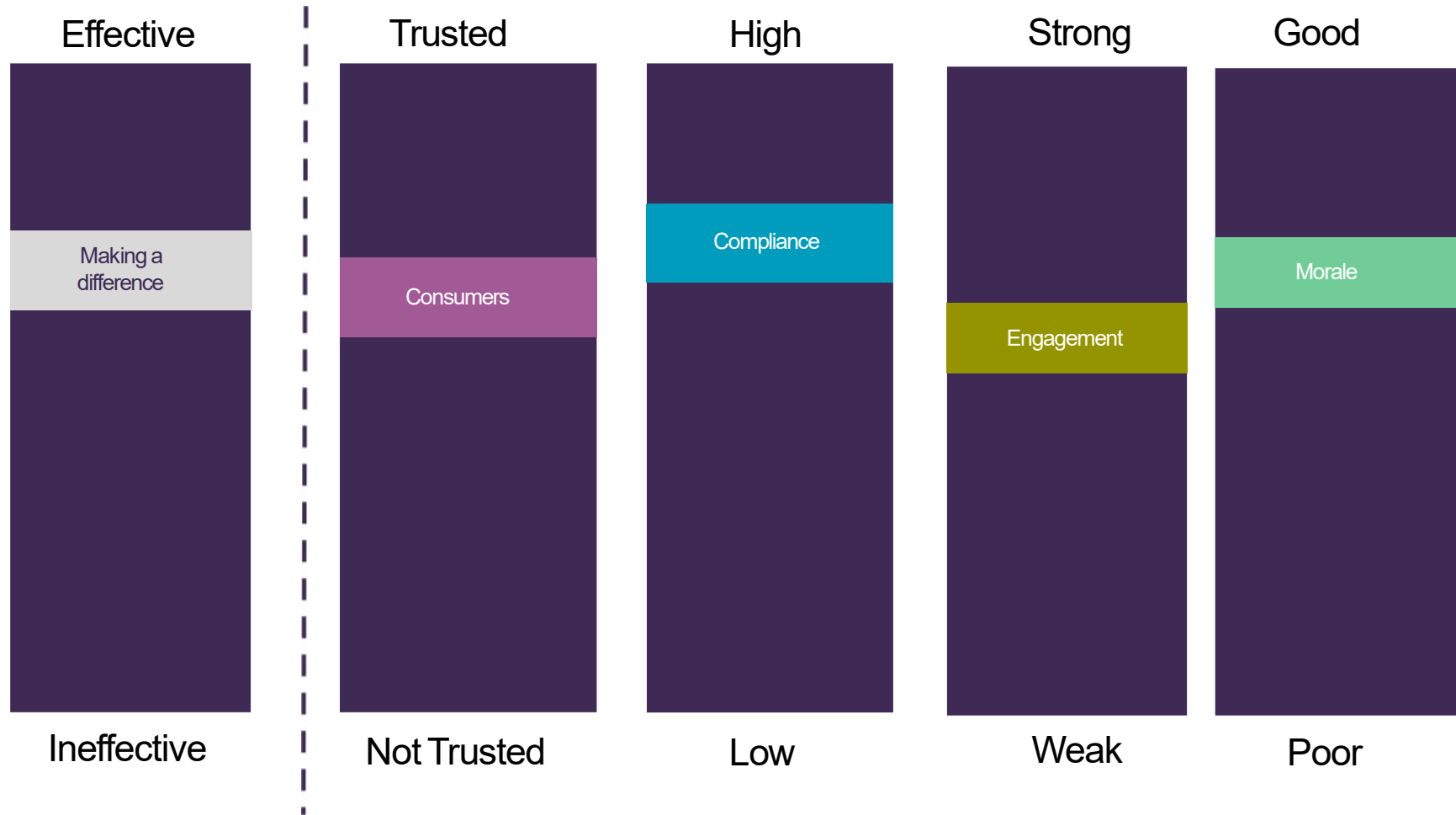
We use social sciences to understand how the changing food environment affects attitudes and behaviours and ensure UK policies take full account of consumer interests in Scotland.



We work with local authorities, ensuring businesses comply with food law.



## Co determinants of Effectiveness





**Food**  
**Standards**  
**Scotland**

For safe food and  
healthy eating

**Thank you**  
**Questions?**

