

ACSS Secretariat Update (January 2022) Paper 8.1

1. Recruitment

As discussed with individual members, we are seeking to extend terms of appointment to September 2025. We will launch an ACSS recruitment campaign in March to fill posts where members haven't extended, and strengthen expertise in topics identified in the emerging FSA strategy. We are working to the following timeline for this.

- Campaign launches: 12th March 2022
- Closing date for advert: 24th April 2022
- Sift meeting: 9th-11th May 2022
- Interviews: 19th-27th May 2022
- Induction to the ACSS: TBC
- In post: September 2022

2. ACSS Ad hoc requests

Action 7.6 from the June 21 ACSS plenary, tasked the secretariat with exploring the ad hoc requests received by the committee, by mapping them on to FSA policy areas. The majority of the ACSS ad hoc requests come from the social science team, informing research relevant to one or more of the FSA areas of research interest (ARIs). In 2021, the ACSS received 10 ad hoc requests. As per figure 1, most (8/10) of these were relevant to the **Innovation in Regulation** theme, specifically the ARIs relating to behaviour ('What role does consumer and Food Business Operator behaviour and perception play in ensuring food safety and standards?') and consumer interests ('What is the consumer interest in the food system, including on safety and standards, nutrition and health, choice, availability, access, sustainability and welfare?'). The **Future of Food Systems** theme was also well covered by ad hoc requests (4/10), particularly the emerging

challenges ARI ('How can the FSA remain responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities in the UK food system including unprecedented challenges such as those associated with Covid-19?').

Topics relating to the **Assuring Food Safety and Standards** theme (e.g. the impact of food borne pathogens, chemical contaminants) were less well covered (1/10) reflecting the different evidence needs for these ARIs. Only 2 requests related to the **Food hypersensitivity and allergy** theme, which is likely due to the narrow focus of this theme (containing just one ARI).

3. Equity and inequalities in the work of the analytics unit

Action 7.2 from the June 21 ACSS plenary, tasked the secretariat with adding an agenda item to discuss *equity and inequalities in the work of the analytics unit*. The FSA are currently undertaking a review of the factors included in our impact assessments, to ensure data on equity, inequalities and other factors, are appropriately considered. Given the relevance of this planned work, the secretariat will facilitate this discussion at a later date when the review of impact assessments is complete.

4. SAC triennial review

The FSA are preparing to commission a Review of its Scientific Advisory Committees. The FSA's SACs are non-statutory and advisory non-departmental public bodies (ANDPBs) or Departmental Expert Committees (DECs) which are subject to triennial review under the Cabinet Office Public Bodies review programme. The last [triennial review of FSA SACs](#) was commissioned in September 2015 and concluded in 2016.

The purpose of this Review is to provide assurance to the FSA that the SACs roles and purposes are appropriate in addressing the future needs of the FSA, consumers and wider Government, and that the bodies are operating effectively against their objectives and provide recommendations for future ways of working.

The Review of SACs is led by an independent review and supported by a review team.

The FSA is currently waiting for the launch of the Cabinet Office's revised guidance to the Review of Public Bodies (which Reviews of SACs are covered); this is expected to be released at the end of January / early Feb. Soon after this FSA will decide the scope of its Review of the SACs. The secretariat will update members when more details are available.

SAC meetings and Key agenda topics

1. Science Council

Last meeting: 9 December 2021 (Open session). Key topics included:

- The Chair presented a summary of the Science Council's activity over the last 6 months.
- The FSA provided an update on the Annual Science report to the FSA Board and the development of key performance indicators (KPIs) for FSA science.
- The CSA updated the Council on his recent activity and discussions (including the Government spending review, gene editing food, food labelling and alternative proteins).
- An update on the progress of Working Group 6 on Food Safety and Net Zero Carbon (including the workshop on 18 November).
- Updates from Science Council members attending Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs).

Next open meeting: 23 June 2022

2. Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP)

Last meeting: 24th November 2021. Key topics included: In addition to dossiers on mung bean protein, Calcidiol and a new dossier Cetylated fatty acids, preparatory work as reserved business for the Committee's review of further CBD dossiers and managing the future work on GM and Genome Editing (GE) food and feed products was discussed.

Next meeting: 2nd February 2022

3. Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF)

Last meeting: 21st October 2021. Key topics included:

- Work of the committee's subgroup on toxin-producing Clostridia in food. [An update was presented to the committee on the activities of this group](#) set up in April 2021.
- Botulism in cattle, sheep, and goats: [The FSA's revised systematic literature review concerning botulism in cattle, sheep, and goats](#) was presented to the committee for comments.
- Epidemiology of Foodborne Infections Group. The committee reviewed a [report on the outcome of the 9 June 2021 EFIG meeting](#) and the UK Health Security Agency presented on the use of whole genome sequencing for gastrointestinal pathogen routine surveillance and outbreak detection and investigation.
- Findings from the FSA's survey: Food and You 2: Wave 1.
- The FSA's Foodborne Disease Policy Framework.

Next meeting: February 2022

4. Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT)

Last meeting: 7th December 2021. Key topics included:

- Topic proposals for a [COT workshop](#) in March 2022,
- Part 2 of a discussion paper on the risk assessment of [cow's milk](#) in children aged 1 to 5 years,
- Maternal health, reviewing the first draft of a statement on the effects of excess [Vitamin A](#) and a discussion paper on the potential risks from [cadmium](#) in the maternal diet.
- Review of an interim paper on the potential health risks of [bamboo](#) food contact materials and the EFSA draft opinion and exposure protocol open for public consultation on [Phthalates](#).

Next meeting: 8th February 2022

5. Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COC)

Last meeting: 18th November. Key topics included: Horizon scanning, update to guidance statement on alternatives to the assessment of potential carcinogenicity, presentation on patient derived cell models.

Next meeting(s): 2 March 2022 (21 July 2022, 17 November 2022)

6. The Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COM)

Last meeting: 12 October 2021. Discussion topics included:

- Review of EFSA opinion on titanium dioxide

- Hydroxyanthracene derivatives in supplements
- Horizon scanning
- Draft Annual Report for 2020
- OECD Draft Detailed Review Paper on the Miniaturised Versions of the Bacterial Reverse Gene Mutation Test
- QSAR and Genotoxicity

Next meeting(s): 1 March 2022 (9 June 2022, 13 October 2022)

7. Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN)

Last meeting: 10th November. Discussion topics included:

- Nutrition and COVID-19,
- Feeding young children aged 12-60 months,
- National Diet and Nutrition Survey
- Horizon scanning.

Next meeting(s): 11th March 2022 (17th June 2022, Friday 11th Nov 2022)