

Paper 9.1 ACSS Secretariat Update (July 2022)

Summary

This paper is for information and provides an update to members on secretariat activity. Key meeting dates and topics of discussion at other FSA SACs are presented in Annex A.

ACSS secretariat update

1. Recruitment

We had a good number of high-quality applications to the recent recruitment campaign and are seeking approval to appoint 3 new members and a new Chair. New members will be appointed for a period of 3 years from October 2022, in line with extensions of terms of appointment for our current members. We are working up plans for an induction event and will seek ACSS input in due course.

2. SAC review

The FSA is 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 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.

Since the last review there has been the creation of the:

- Joint Expert Groups (JEGs)

- Science Council

- Advisory Committee on Social Science

The FSA was due to commence its Review in 2019, it was postponed due to the EU Exit and then the Covid-19 pandemic. Each SAC will undergo an internal review using the new self-assessment model (SAM) provided by Cabinet Office. The updated guidance also notes that a deep review should take place in circumstances where a body has been newly created since the last review cycle. Indicating that the ACSS (as well as the JEGs and Science Council) would benefit most from a deep review than a SAM assessment.

The timeline for the review is dependent on available resources, but we aim to complete the internal review using SAMs and publish the results by the end of September 2022. If a deep review was then undertaken, it would aim to be completed by the end of February 2023.

3. Secretariat staffing and resource

Maya King has now left the secretariat team and is returning to her studies at Aston University, Birmingham. We'd like to thank Maya for all her hard work during her placement year with us, and welcome Abbie Collins who has joined the team for a year from the University of Warwick. Abbie will be the secretariat support for the Climate Change and Consumer Behaviour Working Group and the Kitchen Life 2 Working Group.

The SAC Admin Hub have recently got approval for a new post whose focus will be supporting the Science Council and ACSS. As such, from around October, management of the ACSS website will be dealt with by the SAC Admin Hub.

4. SAC Appraisal

Thank you to all members for completing the SAC appraisal exercise. When results are available the secretariat will draft a paper for comment, outlining key findings and any actions needed to address. Depending on the appraisal findings, and members' views, we can either hold a bespoke meeting in the autumn to discuss or, alternatively, discuss at the plenary in early 2023.

5. GSR Review

The social science team, supported by the assurance working group, are looking to commission an independent evaluation looking at the social research output against Government Social Research (GSR) standards, and making

recommendations on any areas of improvement. As part of this work, we are reviewing assurance capabilities and processes within the social science team.

6. Future ACSS meetings

Subject to social distancing restrictions not being in place, we would like to encourage all members to attend plenary meetings in person where possible. To facilitate this, we will canvas availability for plenary meetings around 6 months in advance. Upcoming meetings are detailed below.

Assurance working group	18th July
Economics work group	25th July
Wide Consumer Interests working group	27th July
Kitchen Life 2 working group	13th July
9th ACSS Plenary (in person)	Early Feb 2023 TBC

SAC meetings and Key agenda items

1. Science Council

Last meeting: 23 June 2022, key agenda items included:

- The Chair presented a summary of the Science Council's activity over the last 6 months.
- The CSA updated the Council on his recent activity and discussions (including the Annual Report for Food Standards, Civil Service headcount reduced, Precision Breeding Bill, alternative proteins).

- An update on Working Group 6 on Food Safety and Net Zero Carbon (including final draft of the interim report).
- Updates from Science Council members attending Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs).

Next open meeting: 8 December 2022

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

Last meeting: 8th June 2022. Key topics included:

- Reviewing *Tetradenia riparia* (Iboza), a traditional food from a third country for the first time, further assessment of the Mung Bean protein dossiers, Barely Rice and the application of Calcidiol.
- The annual report for 2021 was discussed
- The Science Council reported on areas identified that would be relevant to the ACNFP.
- Dr Andy Greenfield was appointed as the Chair for the GM/GE sub-group.

Next meeting: 7th September 2022

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

Last meeting: 9th February 2022. Key topics included:

- [Pathogen Surveillance in Agriculture, Food and the Environment \(PATH-SAFE\)](#): The committee received a presentation and discussed this project commissioned to track foodborne pathogens and antimicrobial resistant

microbes in all four nations of the UK.

- [Food Standards Agency's Kitchen Life 2 Project](#). The committee was updated on the FSA's ongoing study on food safety behaviour in kitchens.
- [100th Meeting of the ACMSF – Reflections](#). Members reflected on the work of the committee over the years and had a forward look discussion on future work areas.
- [UK Food Security Report 2021](#) (published in December 2021). The committee discussed this report focussing on chapter related to foodborne disease and incidents.
- FSA surveys on frozen breaded/battered chicken, Salmonella, E. coli and antimicrobial resistance on frozen part-cooked breaded products was discussed.
- Updates from the Subgroups were also provided. Including subgroups on toxin producing Clostridial in food incidents and antimicrobial resistance. A new subgroup on animal feed has been set up. Draft minutes of the meeting can be found on the committee's [website](#).

Next meeting: June 2022.

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

Last meeting: 10th May 2022. Key topics included:

- Potential risk from exposure to microplastics by the inhalation route
- Potential approaches to mixture risk assessment for future UK REACH assessments

- A paper introducing a proposed update to the COT statement on the cabin air environment
- Presentation on the regulation of food contact materials
- The committee are continuing their work around the potential effects of vitamin D exposure in formula fed infants and children and lead in the maternal diet.

Next meeting: 12th July 2022

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

Last meeting: 2nd March 2022. Key topics included:

- Hydroxyanthracene derivatives in supplements
- Horizon scanning
- The Annual report
- Update to guidance statements including biomarkers, interpretation of cancer risk characterisation and alternative approaches

Next meeting(s): 21st July 2022 (17th November 2022)

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

Last meeting: 1st March 2022. Key topics included:

- Review of EFSA opinion on titanium dioxide
- Hydroxyanthracene derivatives in supplements
- Horizon scanning
- Smoke flavourings

- Draft COC guidance statement “The Use of Biomarkers in Carcinogenic Risk Assessment

- Draft COC, COM and COT document “How do the Committees evaluate the relevance and reliability of data when assessing a chemical of concern?”

Next meeting(s): 9th June 2022 (13th October 2022)