



Chair's meetings since June 2020

- **July:** Second meeting with SAC Chairs from across Government arranged by **Patrick Vallance**. Science Council feedback on retention of overseas experts in UK institutions in October.
- **21 October:** The **FSA SAC Chair's** meeting including discussion on: FSA strategy; vision for science; research programmes; risk analysis procedure; EU exit transition; a critical appraisal of 3rd party evidence; and SAC ways of working.
- **October:** First of regular schedule of quarterly meetings with **Prof Julie Hill**, deputy Chair of the ACSS
- I have continued to have **quarterly** meetings with FSA Chief Executive **Emily Miles** to discuss FSA priorities
- I meet **monthly** with FSA Chief Scientific Advisor **Robin May** to discuss the work of the Science Council and future direction.

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FSA Board meeting 26 August 2020 : Working Group 4

Working Group 4 Question:

How can the FSA better understand the next phase of technology developments, recognising future challenges and opportunities, and having sufficient understanding of them to be able to ensure positive governance of the food system?

- Its recommendations, along with the FSA response, were reported to the [FSA Board at their meeting on 26 August 2020](#), in Board paper FSA 20-08-07. The report was warmly welcomed with the Board asking questions about data sharing
- Recommendations were to:
 - Champion an integrated approach to data standards;
 - Champion data access and open data and look to mandate improved data access if in consumer interests;
 - Have a more consistent completion of the 'innovation cycle' and long-term monitoring of impact for data innovations;
 - Resource to retain internal skillsets, but also endorse flexible means of providing data skills and capabilities for the FSA;
 - Encourage the development of data capabilities and skills across the FSA staff base; and
 - Grow the FSA's technical leadership for data.

FSA Board meeting 16 September: Working Group 5

Working Group 5 Aims:

1. Consider and advise on future research priorities and direction in respect to food hypersensitivity.
 2. Conduct a review of the science and evidence base for addressing food hypersensitivity, and the part the FSA and others should play in enhancing knowledge.
- Delivery of the Working Group 5 Report is the Council's current priority.
 - Considers the lessons learnt from previous FSA Food Allergy and Intolerance Research Programme and via a stakeholder survey to identify key priorities, establish the existing knowledge and identify gaps in current understanding to build future strategy and research programme for FHS.
 - Dr Turner provided a progress report to the [FSA Board at their 16 September meeting](#) and the final Report will come to the FSA Board in Summer 2021.
 - There will also be a horizon scan workshop early next year to look 5-15 years into the future, at emerging issues the FSA will need to prepare for on food hypersensitivity.

Critical review of 3rd party evidence

Aims:

How should the FSA evaluate the robustness of evidence submitted by non-commissioned third parties in an effort to change our policy, in order to ensure that the evidence considered to inform our advice and recommendations is sufficiently robust and based on the most up to date scientific information?

- Established in Sept 2020.
- Chaired by a leadership team of Sandy Thomas, Sarah O'Brien and Peter Gregory.
- The FSA is increasingly expected to form an independent position in response to a greater volume of evidence submitted by third parties to influence / change its policy.
- This review seeks to provide a set of principles/guidelines, providing assurance that the FSA will deliver a clear, robust and defensible screening process to filter out poor/weak evidence i.e. a minimum standards threshold for the objective, critical appraisal of third-party evidence submitted to the FSA
- It will deliver its conclusions by January 2021.

Looking forward to 2021

- Ways of working:
 - We will be looking to develop a mixed portfolio of work
 - Reviews will be short (up to 6 months), medium (6-12 months) or long (1-2 years)
 - This will allow the Science Council to do deep dives but also reactive agile work
- The Council will be expanding, adding two new members.
- The Science Council is looking at potential strategic science questions that it can address next year and beyond.
- COVID-19

Looking Forward to 2021 (cont).

- The end of the EU Exit transition period.
 - Science Council recommendations on science capability and assurance, risk and uncertainty and horizon scanning have all helped develop these areas within the FSA which were important ahead of EU-Exit.
 - Council is pleased that it was able to provide strategic science advice and continues to do so with our critical review of third-party evidence to set standards for data submitted to the agency.
- The Council will continue now and in the future to provide high-level, expert strategic insight, challenge and advice on the FSA's use of science to deliver FSA objectives of a safe food system.