

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND EMERGENCY EXERCISING

1 Purpose of the paper

1.1 The Board is asked to:

- **Note** the updated progress towards completion of Deloitte Incident Management report recommendations (Annex A).
- **Note** the developments in the Financial Year 2019-20 Emergency Exercising Programme

2 Strategic Aims

2.1 This work supports FSS Strategic Outcomes: 1 – Food is safe, 2 – Food is authentic, 4 – Responsible Food Businesses Flourish, 5 – FSS is trusted and 6 – FSS is efficient and effective.

3 Background

3.1 In January 2017, Food Standards Scotland (FSS) undertook an independent review of its incident management preparedness, with particular focus on the existing incident management plans and procedures. This included a review of how effective these were when supporting the response teams during a “non-routine” incident. The Incident Preparedness Review itself was informed by a desktop review of relevant documentation (including Incident Situation Reports, timelines, meeting minutes, media reports, the lessons learned we shared with the Board etc.), in-depth discussions and workshops with staff involved in incidents. The culmination of this was the Deloitte Incident Management Review Report. Following on from this a new framework was developed which will improve the way in which FSS handles both routine and non-routine incidents. The Incident Management Approach and Framework (IMF) and Incident Communications Plan (ICP) were agreed by the Board at their meeting on 22nd August 2018, and both documents are published on the FSS [website](#) .

3.2 Following Board discussions in May 2018 and August 2018, the executive agreed to provide the Board with updates on the progress towards completion of the 24 recommendations made in the Deloitte Incident Management review report.

4 Progress towards completion of Deloitte Incident Management recommendations

4.1 Since the May 2018 Board Meeting 18 of the 24 key recommendations are now complete, primarily as a result of the development and publication of the IMF and supporting internal incident management plans.

4.2 The outstanding recommendations are:

Recommendation 13 – The formal discussions required to progress this recommendation have yet to take place. Understandably, EU-Exit considerations have taken priority but this issue has not been forgotten. The concerns have been

raised by the Chair and CEO with Ministers and SG officials, but as stated the ability to move this forward has been hampered by Brexit related work. Clearly, the continuing pressure on Local Authority (LA) resources means that over time as LA resource reduces, there is potentially even less experience available within LAs.

Recommendation 14 – Supplementary Guidance on the investigation and management of outbreaks of foodborne illness in Scotland to support the Management of Public Health Incidents is due for publication in Q3 Financial Year 19/20.

Recommendation 17 – After lengthy negotiations with Health Protection Scotland, we agreed guidance for the handling of public communications during food outbreaks. This aims to embed fundamental communications principles and makes clear that FSS may choose to issue communications in relation to our remit during an outbreak, with the Incident Management Team maintaining an overview of all communications. However, it remains clear there is a difference of view on the level of information that can be issued to the public and potentially on the timing of when communications should be issued. FSS will strive to ensure the protocols and templates from our new Incident Communications Plan are incorporated into the development of the HPS public communications toolkit for a consistent and transparent approach which protects patient confidentiality.

Recommendation 21 – There has been extensive work carried out in this area, with over 40 members of FSS staff receiving training regarding incidents. This began in March 2019 with further training days in July and August which continue preparation for EU-Exit. This will also provide further resilience, should FSS be faced with a non-routine incident, whilst also beginning to address the need for succession planning.

Recommendation 22 – This recommendation refers to the delivery of regular training and exercising, and is reflected in the FSS Emergency Exercise Programme, which is covered in Section 5 below.

Recommendation 23 – This recommendation relates to measures to ensure adequate staffing resource in the event of a severe incident. There have been discussions at a Senior Management level, and an informal agreement is in place.

Recommendation 24 – This recommendation relates to the development of a contingency plan in the event that reference laboratories become unable to meet demand, and has been upgraded to a high priority given the potential impact on FSS should such a scenario unfold.

5 Emergency Exercise Programme

- 5.1 Following the delivery of the Incident Management Review Report, the Executive agreed it was important to continue to rehearse the new arrangements laid out in the IMF and ICP, in line with Recommendation 22 of the review report.
- 5.2 Although FSS has been involved in a number of routine (level 1) incidents since the creation of the IMF and ICP, we have not yet had the opportunity to lead on a non-

routine (level 2 and above). This makes the need to rehearse these processes even more important.

- 5.3 Following liaison with Scottish Government Procurement, a tender was issued to potential suppliers for the *Provision of a Food Incident Exercise for Food Standards Scotland* in May 2019 and a contract was put in place with the successful interested party, Deloitte LLP, on 15th July 2019.
- 5.4 The tender outlined the requirement to deliver a table top exercise at end of Q3/beginning of Q4 Financial Year 2019/20.
- 5.5 The exercise will incorporate the use of CLIO, the Incident management software used in routine Level 1 incidents, in order to rehearse its application during non-routine Level 2 and above incidents.
- 5.6 The exercise will be designed to provide opportunity for the Communications and Marketing team to rehearse social media, press and incident response procedures and to this end will incorporate the development of media clips to support the scenario development during the exercise.
- 5.7 It is expected that participants in the Exercise will include representatives from the Board, members of teams listed in the IMF, and potentially other multi-agency players (Local Authorities, Health Protection Scotland, NHS, Animal and Plant Health Agency), as appropriate.

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ANNEX A – Progress Towards Completion of Deloitte Incident Management Report Recommendations