



ONE-TO-ONE FARM ADVISORY SERVICE

Annual Report April 2023-June 2024

For Scottish Government

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scottish Government has a vision for Scotland to become a global leader in sustainable and regenerative agriculture. To deliver this, farmers and crofters need the support of a professional and credible advisory service to ensure they have the knowledge and support to make the right changes and to seize the new opportunities that change will bring. In Ricardo's delivery of the Scottish Farm Advisory One-to-One service, we deliver this support. FAS provides one-to-one consultancy support and business plans for approximately 1,000 businesses per year.

The needs of farmers and crofters are diverse, to meet this need there are currently 174 advisory organisations delivering one-to-one support on behalf of FAS, this comprises the FBAASS accredited advisers who deliver ILMPs and Carbon Audits, and the advisers whose credentials are verified to deliver Specialist Advice and the farmers and crofters who act as mentors. The Farm Advisory Service logo is a mark of quality. It paramount that no matter who the adviser may be that advice delivered under the Farm Advisory Service, is clearly branded and of the utmost quality. Quality assurance is a key activity undertaken by Ricardo, to quality check each advisor and each report delivered under the Service name to create a clear benchmark for the standard which all advisors should achieve and which farmer and crofter clients expect.

To verify the deliverables and meet quality expectations, feedback is collected from all businesses who engage with the service. Of the 1,098 businesses who provided feedback last year (2023-2024), 97% rated the quality of the report provided as excellent or good and 97% would recommend the service to other farmers. The most frequently mentioned benefits from users are that the support enabled; better planning and decision making; financial benefit from improved profit margins; improved soil and nutrients management; and livestock/crop improvements.

2. SERVICE DELIVERY

2.1 GRANTS OFFERED

There were 1,182 grants offered in the period April 2023-June 2024

Table 1 Number of applications for each grant scheme

	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	Total 2023/24	for Target year
ILMP	18	8	6	7	13	12	7	15	9	14	12	3	9	3	4	140	317
Specialist Advice	44	36	32	49	64	54	60	64	43	49	15	41	64	54	33	702	200
Carbon Audits	16	15	23	27	21	25	29	22	17	11	19	14	14	11	12	276	319
Mentoring	7	6	6	7	4	2	4	1	3	1	4	3	4	4	8	64	77
																1182	913

- The service has awarded 29% more grants than targeted to deliver as experience is that a proportion of applicants drop out before completion.
- The service has therefore committed to spend £1,037.500 of flow-through budget.
- Demand for Carbon Audits is very low compared to previous years. It is notable that many advisers are choosing to deliver via PSF where the funding is the same, but the requirement of a report is less stringent.
- ILMP demand continues to be low and demand for specialist advice very high. This is a pattern that has continued through the last few years.

2.1.1 Grants offered against targets for 12 months (April 2023- March 2024)

	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Total 2023/24	for Target year	% of target achieved
ILMP	18	8	6	7	13	12	7	15	9	14	12	3	124	300	41
Specialist Advice	44	36	32	49	64	54	60	64	43	49	15	41	551	100	551
Carbon Audits	16	15	23	27	21	25	29	22	17	11	19	14	239	250	96
Mentoring	7	6	6	7	4	2	4	1	3	1	4	3	48	60	80

2.1.2 Grants offered against targets for 3 months (April 2024- June 2024)

	April	May	June	Total for extension	Target for extension	% of target achieved
ILMP	9	3	4	16	17	94
Specialist advice	64	54	33	151	100	151
Carbon Audits	14	11	12	37	69	54
Mentoring	4	4	8	16	17	94

2.2 REPORTS COMPLETED

Table 2 Number of reports completed for each grant scheme.

	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	Total 2023/24	Target
ILMP	2	8	3	5	7	7	5	6	6	8	1	3	6	2	0	69	317
Specialist Advice	11	14	12	25	35	32	23	32	32	30	27	27	27	23	27	377	200
Carbon Audits	1	1	4	7	15	6	15	17	22	23	11	11	7	6	4	150	319
Mentoring	4	1	0	5	0	2	3	7	4	0	4	2	5	5	1	43	77
																639	913

- The service has delivered 70% (639 complete) of the target volume of reports completed for the year despite awarding 129% (1182 applications) of the target volume of applications.
- Report submission rates dropped in the final quarter- April-June, this is the impact of advisers being busy supporting SAF applications.
- As applications can be made at any time (i.e. not application window) there is a time lag of at least 4 months from application to delivery, therefore the data presented on reports complete does not accurately reflect the work undertaken in the whole year to administer and deliver the programme.

2.2.1 Grants completed against targets for 12 months (April 2023- March 2024)

	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Total 2023/24	Target for year	% of target achieved
ILMP	2	8	3	5	7	7	5	6	6	8	1	3	61	300	20
Specialist Advice	11	14	12	25	35	32	23	32	32	30	27	27	300	100	300
Carbon Audits	1	1	4	7	15	6	15	17	22	23	11	11	133	250	53
Mentoring	4	1	0	5	0	2	3	7	4	0	4	2	32	60	53

2.2.2 Grants completed against targets for 3months (April 2024- June 2024)

	April	May	June	Total for extension	Target for extension	% of target achieved
ILMP	6	2	0	8	17	47
Specialist Advice	27	23	27	77	100	77
Carbon Audits	7	6	4	17	69	25
Mentoring	5	5	1	11	17	65

2.3 WITHDRAWALS

Table 3 Number of withdrawals for each grant scheme

	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	Total 2023/24
ILMP	13	2	6	1	1	2	4	7	2	6	2	3	12	2	0	63
Specialist Advice	4	18	4	3	7	8	4	11	3	8	14	1	6	24	10	125
Carbon Audits	0	1	7	0	4	5	18	4	0	8	13	37	21	7	1	126
Mentoring	0	0	1	0	3	3	1	2	0	2	0	12	8	2	5	39
																353

- Withdrawals are high, 30% (353) of applicants later dropped out of the programme.
- To ensure the grant pipeline is as accurate as possible Ricardo follow up with participants and advisers where reports have not been submitted within the application year. Withdrawals will always occur; this is typically due to a change in business or personal circumstances. However, withdrawals for ILMP and Carbon Audits are very high as a proportion of grants awarded:
- ILMP- 45% of applicants went on to withdraw- a common thread is that applicants having spoken to an adviser have decided to utilise specialist advice rather than the more holistic ILMP as they are predominantly wanting to focus on one issue.
- Carbon Audits- 46% of carbon audit applicants go on to withdraw- in almost all cases this is due to the adviser suggesting the farmer moves to the PSA route with the following reasons being given for this:
 - The PSA route offers more money if a 2nd carbon audit.
 - The PSA route does not specify an in-depth report.
 - The PSA does not require the report to be scrutinised through a quality assurance process.

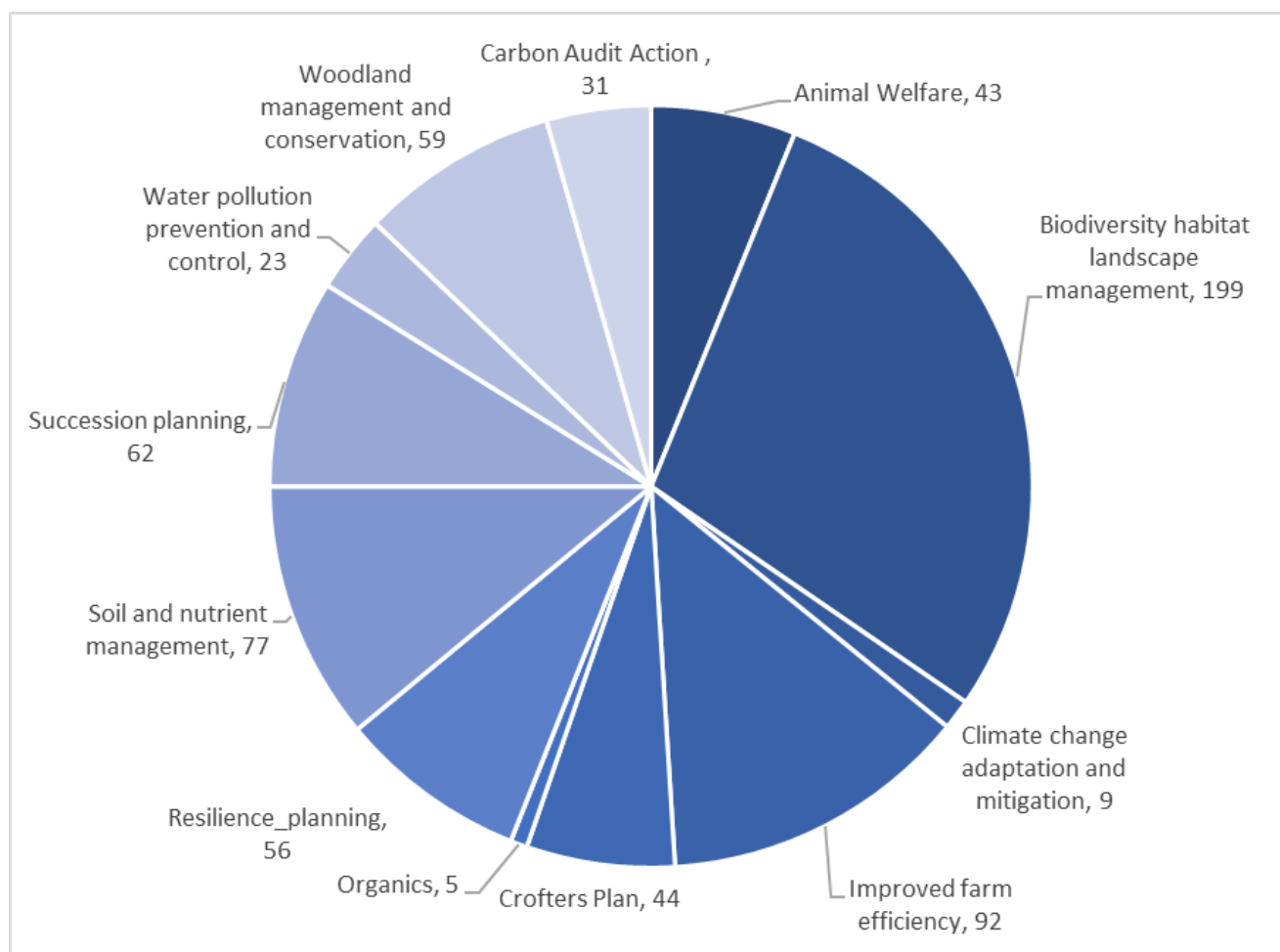
There have been occasions when reports have been quality assured, and the adviser has stated they do not have time to make the changes requested by FAS so the application has been withdrawn and the farmer has claimed via PSF.

- Withdrawals are a huge burden on FAS resources- requiring significant administration time to check the eligibility of the applicant and administer the award, and to follow up with applicants and then to process the withdrawal. There is a large amount of work involved with no contribution to delivery targets.
- A levelling up of requirement for a PSF audit to bring it in line with FAS would address this waste of resources.
- Potentially increasing the funding for an ILMP so it is less parable to Specialist Advice would entice advisers to go the extra mile to deliver this type of report.

2.4 TOPICS OF SPECIALIST ADVICE

Biodiversity, habitat and landscape management was the most popular specialist advice topic (28%), followed by Improved Farm Efficiency (13%), Soil and nutrient management (11%), Succession Planning (9%) and Resilience planning and Woodland management and conservation (both at 8%)

Figure 1 Topics of specialist advice support.



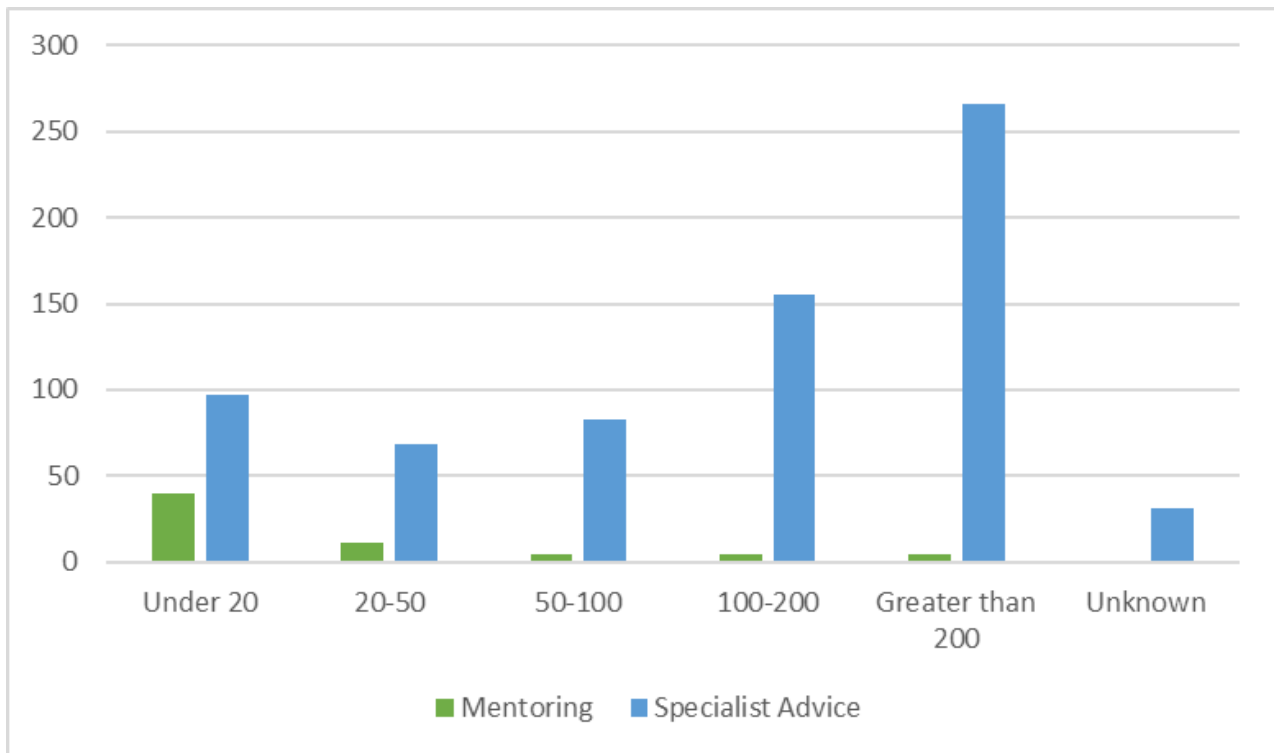
2.5 TRENDS IN DEMAND

In previous years we have ascertained that the demographics of uptake for services is comparable for ILMP, Specialist Advice and Carbon Audits, but different trends are seen in the mentoring, as such we have reported on the focused the following section on Specialist Advice and Mentoring rather than showing multiple repeats of charts for carbon audits and ILMPs which show the same trends as for Specialist Advice. The data is available for all grant services and can be interrogate further if there is an interest.

2.5.1 Farm size

Typically, applications for ILMP, Carbon Audits and Specialist Advice are dominated by the larger businesses. 63% of uptake for specialist advice is from businesses of over 100 ha. The reverse is seen for mentoring, 63% of mentoring applicants have farms or crofts of under 20ha,

Figure 2 Farm size of FAS applicants.



2.5.2 Farm Sector

Specialist advice uptake is dominated by Cattle and Sheep. The mentoring has a greater representation of horticulture businesses.

Figure 3 Specialist Advice applicants by farm sector.

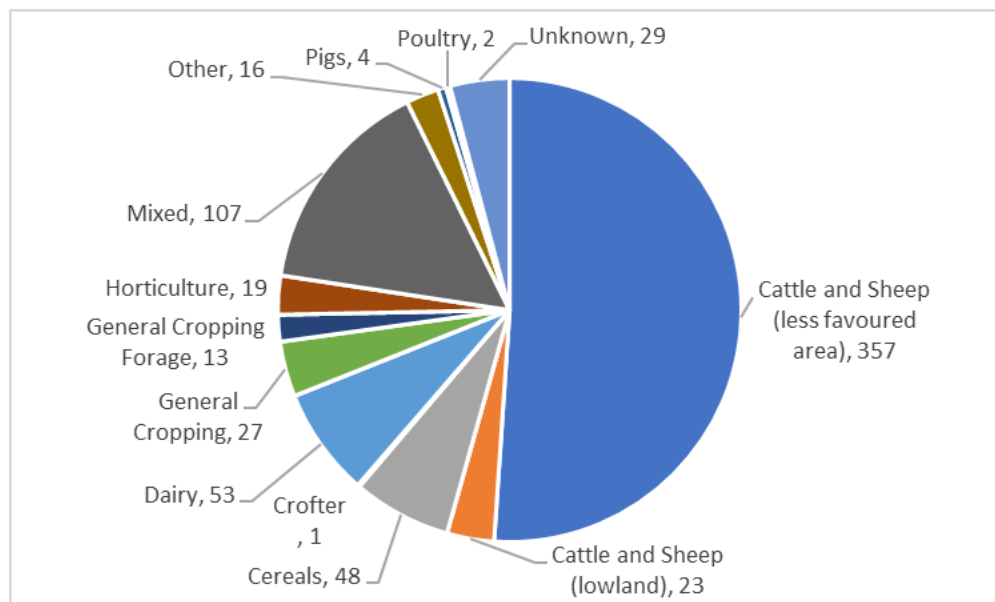
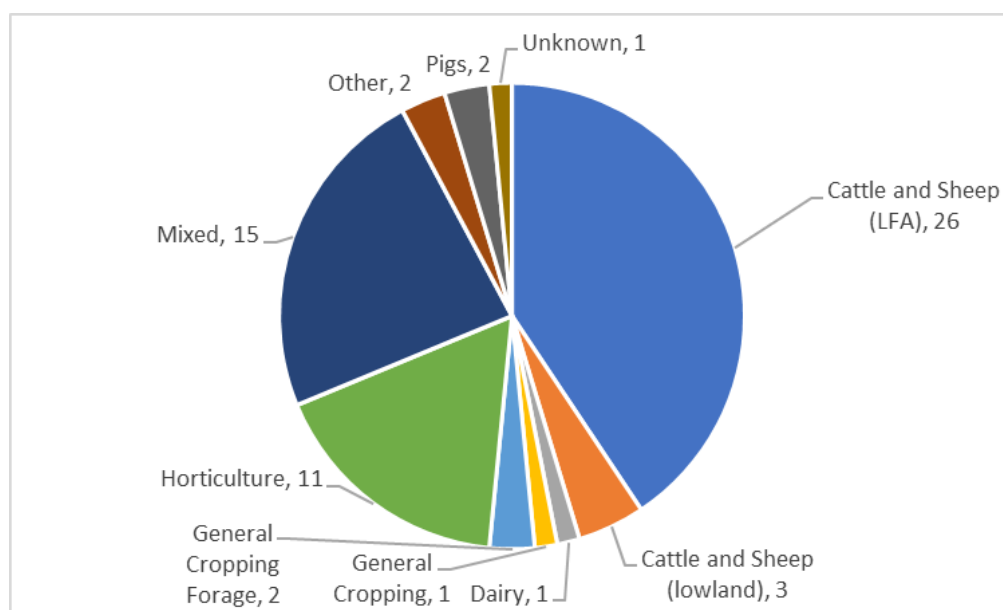


Figure 4 Mentoring applicants by sector.



2.5.3 Gender

Typically, uptake of grant support is male dominated (specialist advice, carbon audits, ILMP), but a reversal of this is seen with the mentoring. It is unclear whether this trend reflects a greater willingness of females to be mentored, is related to the younger demographic or other reasons.

Figure 5 Gender split of specialist advice applicants.

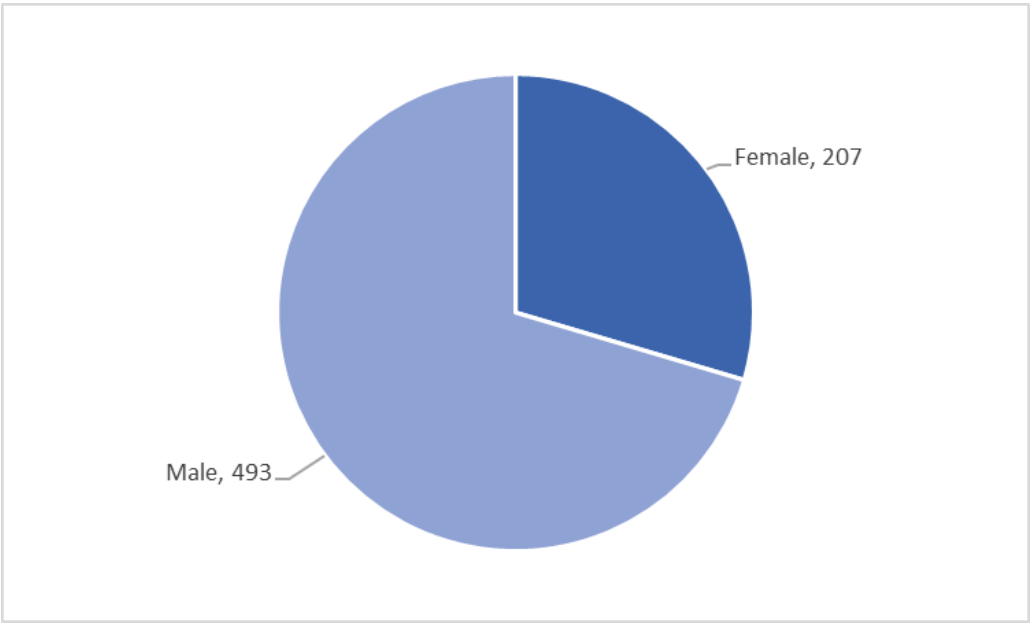
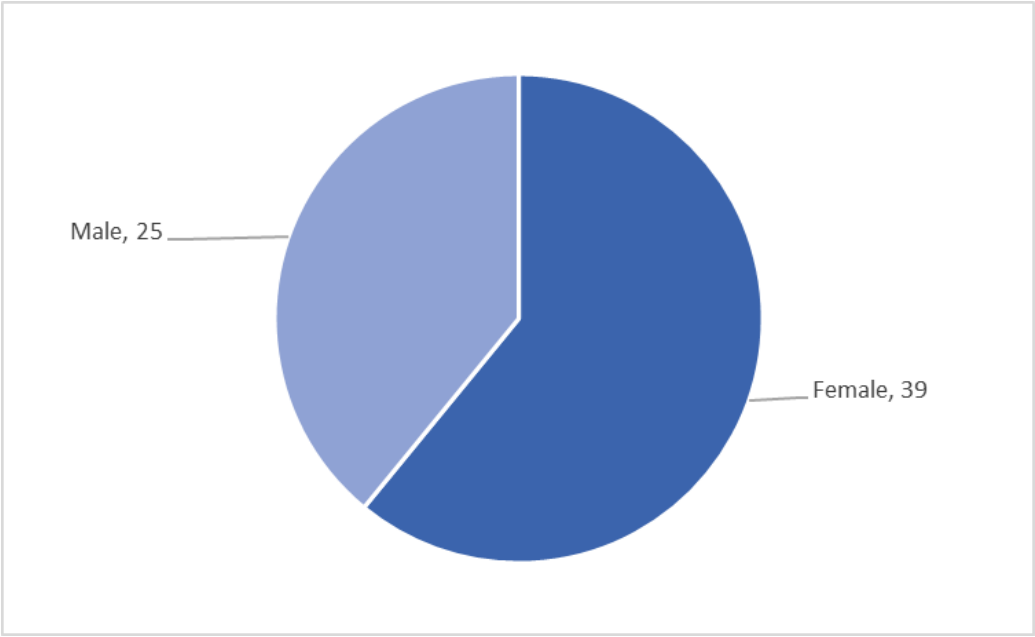


Figure 6 Gender split of mentoring applicants.



2.5.4 Crofting

Crofting is well represented in the mentoring (at least 31% of applicants), 38% of applicants did not declare if they were crofters or not. Uptake by crofters is less prominent in the specialist advice category.

Figure 7 Crofting uptake of mentoring.

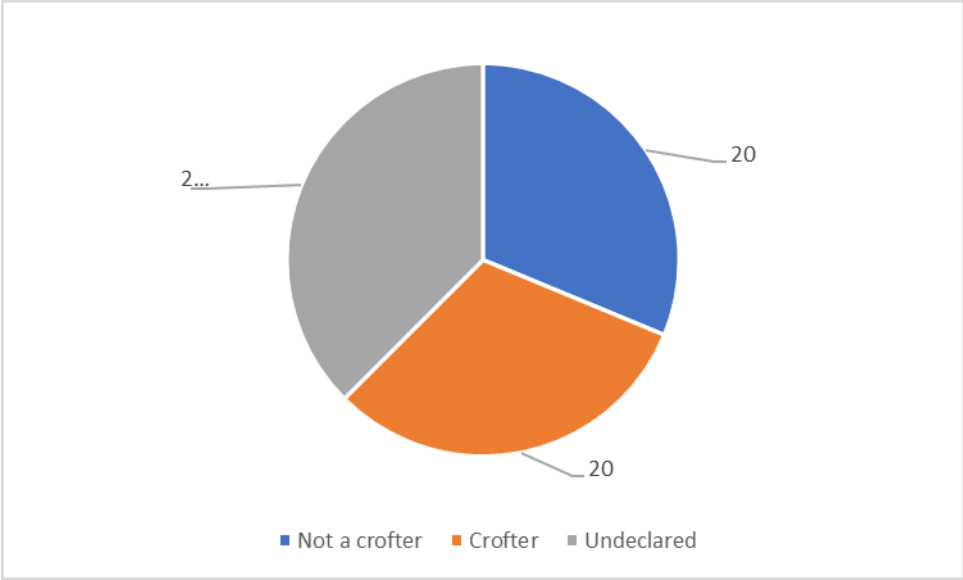
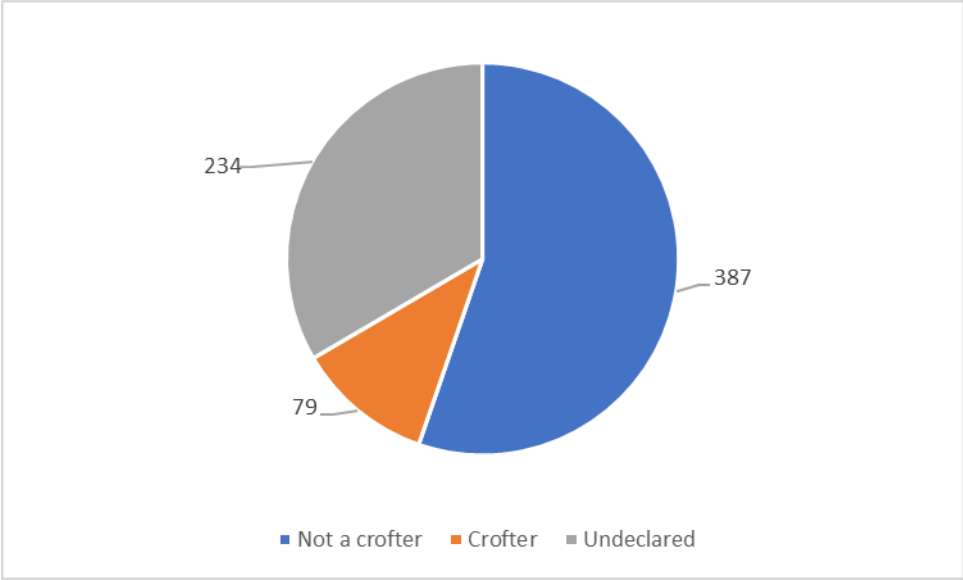


Figure 8 Crofter uptake of specialist advice.



2.5.5 Location of applicant

	Animal Welfare	Biodiversity habitat landscape management	Climate change adaptation and mitigation	Improved farm efficiency	Organics	Resilience planning	Soil and nutrient management	Succession planning	Water pollution prevention and control	Woodland management and conservation	Carbon Audit Action Plan	Crofter's Plan	Total
Aberdeen City		5		3				2				1	11
Aberdeenshire	8	10		8		4	5	5		5			45
Angus		24		1			4		2	3	5		39
Argyll and Bute	2	9		1	1	2	6	3		6	2	10	42
City of Edinburgh		1									1		2
Clackmannanshire	1	1								1			3
Dumfries and Galloway	3	15	1	12		20	14	13	8	9	6		101
Dundee City		2								1			3
East Ayrshire	1	4	1	5			7	1	1	2	1		23
East Lothian		8		6	1	4	2	1		2	1		25
East Renfrewshire		1											1
Falkirk	1												1
Fife		8		5		1	1	2		3	2		22
Glasgow City	1	4				1		1	1				8
Highland	10	15	1	15		3	4	8		12	1	25	94
Inverclyde										1		1	2
Lanarkshire		5	3	2	1	2	11	4	6	1	4		39
Midlothian		7	1	3		1			1				13
Moray		2		3			2	2		1			10
North Ayrshire		2		1		1	3	1		1			9
North Lanarkshire	1												1
Orkney Islands		4											4
Other	1	13		3		4	2	6		5	2	5	41
Perth and Kinross	5	11	1	9	1	6	4	3	1	1	3		45
Renfrewshire							1						1
Scottish Borders	3	28	1	11		6	4	7	1	4	5		70
Shetland Islands		4											4
South Ayrshire	3	3		1		1	4		2				14
South Lanarkshire	1	2		2			1						6
Stirling	1	2			1		1	2		1			8
West Dunbartonshire								1					1
West Lothian	1	8		1			1						11
Total	43	198	9	92	5	56	77	62	23	59	33	42	699

3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Farming Advisory Service requires all users of the grant schemes to complete an evaluation of the service prior to payment of the grant. Whilst this report provides a high-level summary for April 2023- June 2024 detailed analysis of the feedback from each grant scheme has been provided as separate reports included as appendices to this report.

- Appendix 1 April 2023 to June 2024 FAS ILMP Feedback
- Appendix 2 April 2023 to June 2024 FAS Specialist Advice Feedback
- Appendix 3 April 2023 to June 2024 FAS of Mentoring Feedback
- Appendix 4 April 2023 to June 2024 FAS Carbon Audit Feedback

3.1 HOW USERS HEARD ABOUT THE GRANT?

As with previous years the primary source of referral for ILMP, Specialist Advice and Carbon Audits is through contact with an adviser. It is important that we continue to work with the adviser network to ensure that they are able and willing to promote the scheme to farmers they engage with. It is notable that advertising is the next most important source of referral for these services but is the most important source of referral for mentoring. It is important that FAS continue to focus on the work to utilise social media, direct mail, and articles in the farming press to promote the service. Referrals from a farming event are still a relatively low proportion, only 5% of ILMP participants had heard about the service from an event- this includes FAS events. Ricardo will work with SAC to identify what more can be done to ensure events are an effective source of referral to the one-to-one service.

3.2 FEEDBACK ON THE ADMINISTRATION

This section of the feedback form is intended to provide insight on the quality of the administration process delivered by Ricardo.

Table 4 Feedback on the administration of the service.

	ILMP	Specialist Advice	Carbon Audits	Mentoring
	<i>% rating excellent or good</i>	<i>% rating excellent or good</i>	<i>% rating excellent or good</i>	<i>% rating excellent or good</i>
The ease of access to information as excellent or good	97%	96%	90%	98%
Helpfulness at initial contact point as excellent or good.	100%	98%	94%	98%
Ease of application process as excellent or good.	98%	95%	90%	98%

Efficiency of scheme administration as excellent or good	92%	93%	87%	98%
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Feedback on the administration of all schemes is excellent. The key performance indicator (KPI) for this service is for the quality of advice to be rated as good or better by at least 85% of participants. This has been fully exceeded for every metric measured.

Commentary on how to improve the process focuses on the process being bureaucratic, improvements that Ricardo will investigate are:

- Could application forms be consolidated so a business applying for more than one service can do so on the one application form.
- To date the scheme has required that acceptance letters are physically signed to ensure that forms are not being return by an adviser and the business are fully aware and agree to the terms and conditions. Ricardo will investigate with Scottish Government if it is possible to offer docusign or another means of achieving this electronically.

3.3 FINDING AN ADVISER OR MENTOR

Generally, there seem to have been little problem finding suitable advisers and mentors.

- 100% of ILMP recipients state it is very easy or easy to find an adviser.
- 98% of Specialist Advice recipients state it is very easy or easy to find an adviser.
- 95% of Carbon Audit recipients state it is very easy or easy to find an adviser.
- 81% of mentoring recipients state it is very easy or easy to find a mentor.

The feedback from mentoring recipients who stated that finding a mentor was difficult. Acknowledge that the task was not easy due to their location or specific skills that they looked for in a mentor. In all cases Ricardo took on the search for a mentor and were successful in finding a suitable Individual or pair of mentors to meet the need.

Table 5 Feedback on finding an adviser or mentor.

	ILMP	Specialist Advice	Carbon Audits	Mentoring
	<i>% rating</i>	<i>% rating</i>	<i>% rating</i>	<i>% rating</i>
Very Easy	82%	68%	74%	47%
Easy	18%	30%	19%	35%
Not Easy	0%	2%	5%	19%

3.4 RECOMMEND TO OTHERS

- 100% of users of the mentoring would recommend the service to others.
- 96% of users of the ILMP would recommend the service to others.
- 98% of users of the Specialist Advice would recommend the service to others.
- 92% of users of the carbon audit would recommend the service to others.

As seen in previous years the number of farmers and crofters who would recommend the service to others is exceedingly high. This is a great testament to the value of the service.

3.5 ADVISER/MENTOR PERFORMANCE

The feedback on all grants is excellent. The key performance indicator (KPI) for this service is for the quality of advice to be rated as good or better by at least 85% of participants, this has been fully exceeded in all categories. It is pleasing to see that the advisers and the team delivering quality assurance of reports have continued to deliver to such a high standard.

Table 6 Feedback on adviser or mentor performance

	ILMP	Specialist Advice	Carbon Audits	Mentoring
	<i>% rating excellent or good</i>	<i>% rating excellent or good</i>	<i>% rating excellent or good</i>	<i>% rating excellent or good</i>
Working practices (helpfulness, understanding, expertise)?	99%	98%	97%	100%
How would you rate the quality of the report/support you received?	95%	97%	93%	93%

3.6 IMPACT OF THE SUPPORT

The most highly ranked benefits of engaging with the service are economic benefit and improvements in environmental performance. Accessing grant funding is clearly a driver for the uptake of carbon audits, but whilst this is detailed as a benefit, it is great to see this is not the most highly rated benefit.

Table 7 Benefits of engaging with the service.

	ILMP	Specialist Advice	Carbon Audits	Mentoring
RANK	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Impact</i>
1.	Livestock/crop improvements	Better planning/decision making	Improved soil and nutrient management	Better planning/decision making

2.	Financial benefit from improved profit margin	Financial benefit from improved profit margin	More awareness about climate change and energy use	Livestock/crop improvements
3.	Better planning/decision making	Livestock/crop improvements	Accessing grant support	Improved soil and nutrient management
4.	Financial benefit from reduced costs/overheads	Improved soil and nutrient management	Livestock/crop improvements	Take forward diversification opportunities.

3.7 IMPLEMENTING THE ACTIONS

- 82% of users of the Specialist Advice would implement all the actions recommended.
- 86% of users of the Mentoring would implement all the actions recommended.
- 80% of users of the ILMP would implement all the actions recommended.
- 72% of users of the Carbon Audit would implement all the actions recommended.

These statistics report on the number of businesses that will implement all of the actions. It is very clear from the commentary provided in the feedback forms that a large proportion of those who will not implement all do plan to implement some, or most. It is not surprising that less businesses state they will implement all the actions detailed in their carbon audit as the report provides a range of actions for the business, some of which will be new ideas to the business and need considering further, and many are not directly related to business performance and may require additional investment and technical support to implement fully.

Table 8 Reasons for not implementing all of the actions recommended:

	Too costly	Insufficient time to implement action	I do not understand why this was recommended	I do not think this is necessary for my business
Mentoring	1	0	0	1
Carbon Audits	23	9	6	16
ILMP	7	8	1	3
Specialist Advice	82	33	4	49

Cost is the most frequently mentioned reason for not implementing actions, this is stated 47% of the time.

5. ADVISERS

There are currently 174 advisory organisations delivering one-to-one support on behalf of FAS (many of whom are micro-organisations or one-man bands), this comprises the FBAASS accredited advisers who deliver ILMPs and Carbon Audits, and the advisers whose credentials are verified to deliver Specialist Advice and act as mentors.

5.1 FBAASS ADVISERS

Ricardo work closely with Lantra who manage the FBAASS accreditation of advisers. It is a requirement of advisers delivering ILMPs and Carbon Audits to be FBAASS accredited. Lantra work independently to manage this accreditation process and reaccredit advisers on an annual basis. In accrediting advisers Lantra consider evidence of ILMP reports that they have reviewed during the previous delivery year. If an adviser is new to the programme or has not delivered an ILMP within the year, then they are required to provide further examples of their work for evaluation. In addition to evidence of work, Lantra also stipulate that each adviser must demonstrate continued learning and 20 CPD points during the year.

Lantra are tasked with ensuring the advisor panel is sufficiently robust with approximately 90 advisers and an appropriate ratio of advisers from SAC to other organisations.

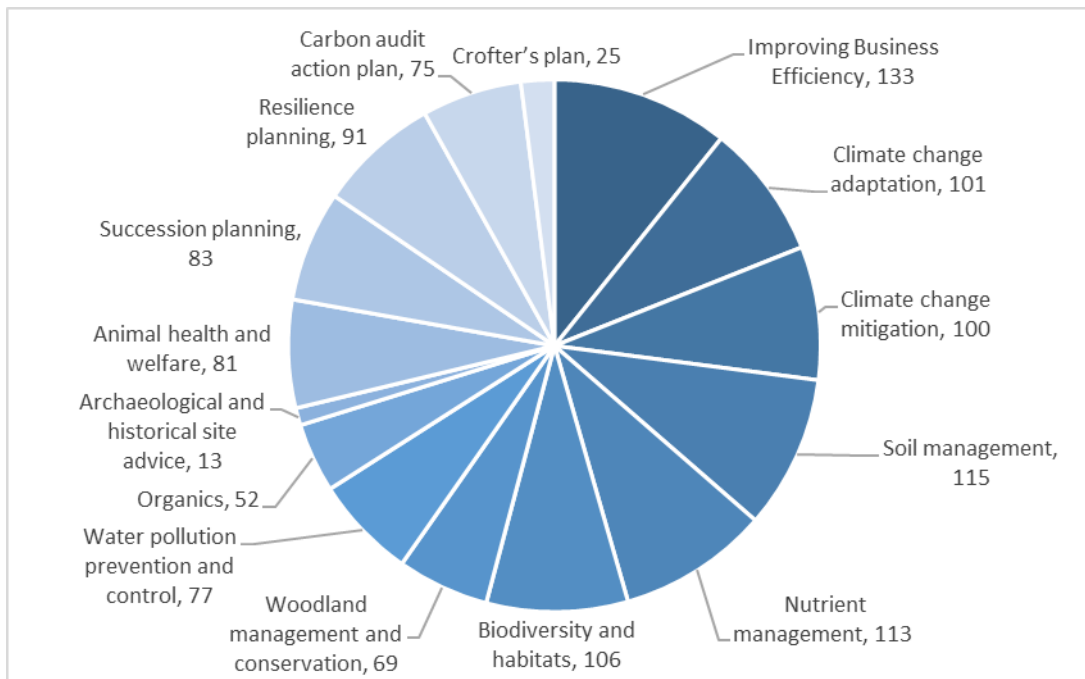
At the close of June 2024, there were 110 full advisers and 39 associates, 3 advisers had moved from associates to fully accredited advisers in the last year. The overall FBAASS pool has remained like last year after growth in each of the last 3 years. Of the organisations providing FBAASS advisers, SAC Consulting is the largest pool, accounting for 59% of the advisers, this reflects SAC's interest in delivering Carbon Audits, for which FAS and the Pilot for Sustainable Farming require recommendations to be drawn up by an FBAASS accredited adviser.

There continues to be few advisers based on the Islands, though many of the advisory organisations do cover these areas, it can mean a wait for some island businesses for the advisers to make the journey. The map below shows the geographical spread of FBAASS advisors (based on their main office location).

Figure 9 Geographical location of FBAASS advisers (based on company home office)

Advisers delivering specialist advice are required to have evidence of relevant academic qualification and a minimum of 4 years' experience delivering in their specialist area. There are 233 advisers currently approved to deliver Specialist Advice on behalf of FAS. The figure below shows the number of advisers currently approved to deliver support on each specialist advice topic. Applicants are not limited to choose from this list and can select their own adviser, Ricardo verify that any new advisers have appropriate credentials and experience.

Figure 10 FAS advisers per specialist topic.



5.3 MENTORS

FAS currently have 107 mentors for new entrants.

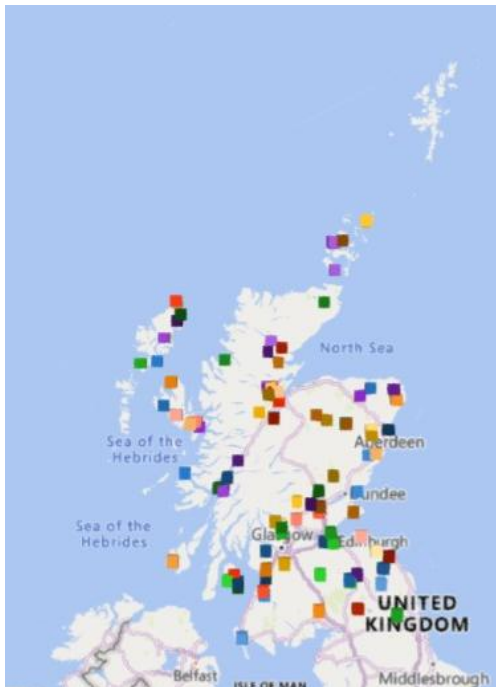


Figure 11 Map to show current location of mentors.

When looking to find a mentor for a new entrant FAS will first look to the specific requirements of the mentor and location of the new entrant. We try to find a suitable mentor with the skills required but also as geographically close to the new entrant as possible. If there is not a suitable match on our current database we will go out to our stakeholder networks and the new entrant's own local knowledge to establish suitable candidates.

5.4 QUALITY ASSURANCE

The quality of delivery is paramount. Ricardo operates several tiers of assurance.

5.4.1 Advisor/mentor approval at application stage

Ricardo verifies that the chosen adviser or mentor has the requisite experience, accreditations and or academic qualifications at application stage and only with this approval is work commissioned.

5.4.2 Report review.

Quality assurance is undertaken to quality check each advisor and create a clear benchmark for the standard which all advisors should achieve – this relates to both technical competences, style, and use of language. All reports are subject to quality review. Ricardo work with a panel of peer reviewers convened by Lantra to review ILMPs. The panel comprises: Jim Seaton; Euan Hart; John Eccles; Ian Pearce; Ali McKnight and Tamsin Morris.

The ILMP reviewers score reports against the following matrix.

Score	Description
10	Technical advice provided appears to fully meet client requirements
9	Technical advice provided appears to substantially meet client requirements
8	Minor omission in terms of technical advice which does not substantively affect the business.
7	Minor omission in terms of technical advice which affects the business and should have been identified and explored within the report.
6	Significant omission in terms of technical advice which affects the business and should have been identified and explored within the report.
5	Major omissions in technical advice in one part of the report which could have a significant effect on the business.
4	Inappropriate advice in one part or throughout the report which is clearly identifiable from the evidence presented in the report.
3	Serious technical errors in most of the report
2	Serious technical errors in all areas of the report
1	Insufficient technical information in to allow any assessment (report generic not tailored to the client)

The quality of reports received during this period was high, the average score across all reports was 8.8, the lowest score was a 7, and 40% of reports scored a 10. When a report is graded as less than 10, the reviewer will identify points to address and the Ricardo team will work with the adviser to ensure that these are satisfactorily completed prior to Ricardo issuing the report to the client.

The Quality Review Group meet on a quarterly basis throughout the year for a standard setting day. The group jointly review ILMP reports to ensure consistency in scoring between the group. Jim Seaton, the head reviewer also provides a secondary review of reports on occasions when a reviewer has significant concerns.

Specialist Advice and Carbon Audit reports are reviewed by a team of inhouse reviewers. Ricardo work with the adviser to ensure that any identified weaknesses in reports are addressed prior to delivery to the client.

5.4.3 Feedback from client

Each report is issued to the client with a feedback form, it is a condition of the grant that the recipient completes this feedback in order for payment to be released. Ricardo administrators read each feedback form and enter data into the CRM. Any issues raised are brought to the attention of the programme manager in real time for appropriate follow up with the client or their adviser.

5.5 TRAINING

The one-to-one programme provided training to advisers via on-line meetings and ongoing communication through the advisers' newsletter.

- Training to SAC advice line staff (May 2023) - training was provided to ensure the advice line staff are able to answer basic questions regarding the availability of one-to-one services and how to apply
- Training for specialist advice quality assurance (May 2023) - The uplift in demand for specialist advice requires an expansion of the team managing the quality assurance of reports.
- Training for advisers; An introduction to carbon auditing using the new Agrecalc cloud functionality (August 2023) Delivered by the Agrecalc team at About | Agrecalc
- Training for advisers; Ammonia - the problem, the policy environment and mitigation actions for farmers (August 2023) delivered by Dr Jeremy Wiltshire, Ricardo Energy & Environment
- Training for advisers; Practical training to save time and get the best out of an ILMP (March 2024) delivered by Ian Pierce and Caroline Wood. This training was repeated and offered as an in-person and on-line session.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

FAS understand the range of communication needs of our target audiences. We focus on providing communications that clearly articulate how FAS can support you, providing practical examples of the types of issues FAS can solve and case studies and articles demonstrating the real-life experience of others.

6.1 STAKEHOLDER PACK

The FAS stakeholder pack provides an introduction and links to all FAS press resources, case studies, press releases, articles and flyers. A new pack is issued on a quarterly basis. The premise of the stakeholder pack is to provide information in order that stakeholders can pick and choose relevant material for inclusion in their own publications. The stakeholder pack is sent to a growing list of stakeholders, currently 258. Links below provide detail of the content of each pack.

- The [April 2023 stakeholder pack](#) shared ways farmers and crofters can use the range of grant-funded advice services provided by FAS to meet the specific needs of their businesses. Services like Integrated Land Management Plans can be tailored to the individual needs of each farmer and crofter, from experienced farmers to new entrants.
- The Summer 2023 edition of the [Farm Advisory Service \(FAS\) stakeholder pack](#). In this pack, we share solutions for how the agricultural community can meet the challenges faced by climate change and adapt to changing weather patterns, including soaring temperatures and heavy rainfall. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, so we've suggested how to combine different advice options to suit different farming and crofting businesses..
- The Autumn 2023 edition of the [Farm Advisory Service \(FAS\) stakeholder pack](#). This pack provided articles and suggested tweets and social media posts to promote the variety of support available through FAS. Content ranged from personal support managing change in the business; to harnessing the benefits

of legumes to reduce your inputs of artificial fertilisers and carbon footprint; raising awareness of ammonia pollution and farm management considerations to reduce impacts.

- The Winter 2024 edition of the [Farm Advisory Service \(FAS\) stakeholder pack](#). This edition focuses on crofters and the FAS services available to support crofters in addressing climate change, supporting biodiversity, and securing a more prosperous future. We also take a look at the difference between 'sustainability' and 'resilience' and how FAS support can help farming businesses attain both
- The Spring 2024 edition of the [Farm Advisory Service \(FAS\) stakeholder pack](#). focuses on how grant-funded specialist advice through FAS can support farmers and crofters in Scotland and protect the environment in various ways. We also touch on how fully funded mentoring through FAS can guide new entrants through the vital setup of their business, hearing from Carol Glennie about how the FAS mentoring service supported her when she inherited Whitemyre Farm

6.2 FAS VIDEOS

1. Climate impact and biodiversity [Farm Advisory Service One-to-One Case Study - James Biggar & Keesje Avis Part 1 \(youtube.com\)](#)
2. Climate change 'our responsibility'. [Farm Advisory Service One-to-One Case Study - James Biggar & Keesje Avis Part 2 \(youtube.com\)](#)
3. James Biggar, FAS support to find improvements in the business and reduce the businesses carbon footprint [Farm Advisory Service One-to-One Case Study - James Biggar \(youtube.com\)](#)

6.3 CASE STUDIES

1. Mentoring for new entrants- this case study is based on an interview with a mentor 'Cara Cameron' and follow up with mentees that she has worked with. The focus of the case study is providing prospective farmers/crofters with more of a feel of who the mentors are and how the mentoring works as well as sharing the endorsement of fellow users.
2. Mentoring for new entrants- Carol Glennie, this is a case study of a new entrant who took on a farm from her grandfather but soon felt out of her depth. Mentoring has allowed her to recruit the help of a local farmer who is supporting her to gain the skills and confidence to manage her new business.
3. New Entrant's ILMP- the ILMP is a fantastic tool for new entrants. This case study seeks to promote the value of getting an ILMP early, featuring both an adviser and a new entrant who has recently benefitted from taking up this support.
4. Succession Planning- this case study focuses on specialist adviser Heather Wildman and businesses that she has supported via the FAS. The aim of this case study is to give farmers/crofters a feel of how succession planning can be approached, and what they can expect to get out of engaging with the Service.
5. Mentoring for new entrants- This case study focuses on Danielle Troy who explains how the mentoring service provided her with the support of a local shepherd who helped her build both her knowledge and confidence.
6. Mentoring for new entrants- This case study features Roderick MacFarlane, an experienced businessman and his wife who took on the management of a farm on the West Coast of Islay with the support of FAS mentor, Peter McDermid, a third-generation beef farmer.

6.4 PROMOTIONAL FLIERS

- FAS introduction to support for new entrant's flier- circulated to the FAS New Entrants to Farming Group, the NFUS Next Generation Farming Group, the Scottish Association of Young Farmer's clubs, to the Scottish Land Matching Service and to members of the FONE group. This was sent via direct mail to promote FAS services to new entrants to farming identified through the FAS database.
- Crofters' flyer- Ricardo worked with the One-to-many service to develop a crofters' flyer to promote the support available, highlighting the range of services available and the fantastic feedback provided by users of the service to date. Batches of hard copies were printed for the Crofting Commission and SCF and circulated to SAC to be made available at FAS events. This was sent as a direct mail to all crofters identified from the FAS database (395) held by Ricardo. The flyer was further uploaded to the FAS website and circulated as a pdf version to contacts at the Crofting Commission and Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF).

6.5 ARTICLES

The one-to-one service provide articles every two weeks to the FAS insert of the Scottish Farmer, these are further circulated to stakeholders for inclusion in wider publications via the FAS stakeholder pack.

Date	Topic
April	Water pollution prevention
April	Carbon audits return
May	Carbon footprint efficiency
May	Animal welfare specialist advice
June	Benefits of a carbon audit
June	Water scarcity, heat stress
July	Nutrient use efficiency, controlled release fertilisers and the benefit of a nutrient management plan
July	Benefits of trees on farm (biodiversity, shelter, value, water management, carbon sequestration)- the support through FAS, Forestry Grants and Government Policy
August	Grazing management- optimise your grassland- case study
August	Future uncertain, utilise the resilience support to secure the future of your business, incorporate elements of mental health support
September	Legumes in rotations, benefits for the environment and your budget
September	Ammonia, why you should care and what you can do about it (including discussion of manure management and spreading techniques)
October	Water pollution mitigation (case study) and support available through FAS
October	How nature based (low carbon, low input) agro-ecological systems can be adopted by current farming systems to improve climate resilience, biodiversity outcomes, sustainable production and protect profits.
October	How carbon audit action plans can help you follow up on your PSF carbon audit
November	How soil and nutrient management SA can help you follow up on your PSF soil sampling
November	How animal welfare specialist advice can help you follow up on your animal health and welfare PSF assessment
November	Crofters plan specialist advice
December	Help your croft remain profitable and sustainable in the years ahead
January	What does sustainability mean for farmers

January	Finding quality time for you and your family
February	Nutrient use efficiency, controlled release fertilisers, benefit of a nutrient management plan.
February	Trees - integrating Trees and providing a link to the Network Online Events
March	Value your soils
March	The value of mentoring - SFAS feedback stats/user quotes
April	Water pollution prevention
April	Biodiversity net gain
May	Mentoring- why you should get involved, with content from Cara Cameron
May	Succession – Including Heather Wildman quotations from the FAS case study
June	Funding and earning from on farm forest and woodland
June	Organic farming support

7. OTHER INITIATIVES

FAS works closely with government and stakeholders to ensure that services are well understood and integrated with other delivery mechanism to ensure the best support to farmers and crofters. Key groups engaged with are:

RSABI

FAS work with RSABI to ensure that businesses that RSABI identify would benefit from advisory support are able to access the support quickly and with RSABI engaged in the process in order that they can help where necessary to mediate discussions or embed the need for action. Through RSABI referral FAS provided 40 specialist advice supports through the period.

RPID

Ricardo has worked with RPID throughout the delivery year to ensure that we fully understand how best to support each other and the industry. Three highly valuable meetings took place.

- RPID Area office leadership team to answer any questions from the team and discuss opportunities to work together to support farmers.
- RPID area office staff (2 introductory sessions with approx. 100 participants at each) to ensure all staff have a clear understanding of what FAS can offer and how farmers and crofters can engage with the service.
- Pilot for Sustainable Farming; Ricardo has worked with Alan Elder through the year to ensure there is good information sharing with regards to Carbon Audits, preventing double funding and enabling signposting between the two services.

FONE Group

Ricardo attends the quarterly FONE Group meetings; this is an important opportunity to share knowledge and ensure that the one-to-one service integrates well with other government initiatives and we are cohesive in our messaging to farmers.

Crofting Commission

Ricardo has worked with the Crofting Commission throughout the year.

- FAS met with Karen Macrae and colleagues from the Crofting Commission to discuss how we can work together to promote awareness of the mentoring and wider FAS support to crofters and in particular how information may be promoted via the website and area representatives.
- Meeting with the Area Representatives, this was a valuable opportunity to connect in person and ensure those supporting and engaging with crofters have a good understanding of where FAS can provide further assistance.

8. SUMMARY OF DELIVERY

	Target Delivery	Delivered	Commentary
REPORTING AND MEETINGS	Monthly Reports (14)	14	Delivery Complete
	Annual Report (1)	1	Delivery Complete
	Bimonthly review meetings (7)	7	Delivery Complete
	Steering Group meetings (4)	4	Delivery Complete
	Stakeholder Group meetings (4)	0	Organisation currently sits with SAC contract
SERVICE DELIVERY	ILMP's complete (317)	69	Demand is low, there were 140 applications in 2023/24 (44% of target see Table 1). The new contract for 2024-27 seeks to rebalance the delivery targets
	Specialist Advice complete (200)	377	Demand exceeds targets, there were 702 applications in 2023/24 (351% of the target- see Table 1). The new contract for 2024-27 seeks to rebalance the delivery targets.
	Carbon Audits complete (319)	150	Demand is low as PSF offers an easier task for advisers for the same money, 276 positive additions in pipeline in 2023/24 (87% of target see table 1). The new contract for 2024-27 seeks to increase the rate to encourage advisers to deliver quality assured carbon audits via FAS.
	Mentoring complete (77)	43	Demand is moderate, 64 applications in 2023/24 (83% of target see table 1). The rate of application increases yearly. Important to continue to promote directly and via stakeholder organisations.
ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE	FBAASS accreditation of advisers (100)	108	Target exceeded
PERSONAL AND FINANCIAL DATA	Meeting of Quality Review Panel (5)	5	Complete
	Adviser pay-runs on 4 weekly cycle (15)	17	Complete- follows a set 4 weekly cycle
MONITORING & EVALUATION	Feedback from advice recipient, analysed and reported (x1)	1	Feedback is largely consistent with the previous year, reflecting very high levels of satisfaction with the service.
TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT	Presentations and training events (x6)	5	One training event was not delivered due to the difficulty in finding suitable dates for advisers in May/June.
	E-newsletter (x5)	5	Complete

COMMUNICATIONS	Web updates (x1)	1	Complete
	Video Case studies (x5)	2	Complete, 2 case studies were delivered as videos and an additional 4 as written case studies which then formed the basis of media articles
	Press releases and feature articles (x16)	18	Target exceeded
	E-tool kit to stakeholder contacts (x5)	5	Complete, the final stakeholder pack was held to the start of July to announce the new changes introduced with the contract starting on 4 th July 2024
	Social media updates (x26)	26	Complete
	Google Ads	0	Google ads were not undertaken, a review with the marketing team indicated that it was not beneficial to FAS to undertake such a broad-spectrum approach when we already had a well-defined audience and high penetration into this market through our established social media- in particular Facebook and direct mail.
	Direct Mail/E-mail (x4)	4	Complete
	Attendance at stakeholder events (x6)	6	Complete