

## Work Package

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| Work Package Number: 7  |
| Work Package Title: Understanding consumer trust in the FSA and food system and implications for Comms and Strategy   |
| Indicative Budget Range: 50k  |
| Please provide evidence of budget approval (e.g. FS number): FS900551   |
| Deadline for response from Ipsos (usually 10 days): 14/08/2024  |
| Supplier Name: Ipsos  |
| <div></div>   |
| Work Package Start Date: 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2024  |
| Work Package End Date: February 2024  |
|   |
| <b>Specification of requirements</b><br>(to be completed between policy/comms and social research)  |
| <b>Background:</b>  |
| <u>Why is public trust important to the FSA?</u>  |
| Consumer trust in the FSA and the food system is a critical element to the FSA being able to deliver its mission - food you can trust. As a regulator, we want consumers to trust us and for us to be seen as a trustworthy organisation. People are more likely to follow FSA advice if they trust us and are familiar with who we are, which may in turn have a positive impact on people's food safety behaviour and health. |
| However, trust can be affected by internal and external factors. Given the nature of the work the FSA does, we should expect to see fluctuations in trust in the future.  |

particularly where high profile non-routine incidents occur. We also need to understand the wider context of the food system that the FSA, and Government more widely, operates in, and how external drops in trust more generally can impact trust in FSA. Given the strategic importance of trust to us as an organisation, we could and should be prepared to protect and then act to restore trust when necessary. To do so effectively, it is important to not only understand why fluctuations occur, but what practical actions we can take to restore trust when needed. We also want to understand whether our response strategy and our decisions would differ, depending on whether a decline in trust is driven by an incident or something wider (e.g. a general decline in trust in Government).

The new government has also highlighted building trust as a key goal – particularly around groups that are disadvantaged or vulnerable in some way (see [Labour manifesto](#))

#### What are current levels of trust in FSA?

The FSA currently benefits from high levels of consumer trust, and it is key that we continue to maintain and protect this.

However, between the end of 2022 and mid 2023 we observed a decline in consumer trust in FSA in our [Food and You 2 data \(Wave 7\)](#) for the first time since 2020. This trend is consistent with the downward trend in trust in government, [which has reached a record low](#). There is evidence through our other data sources on FSA reputation (RepTrak, Q4 2023 / Q2 2024, unpublished) and trust ([Consumer Insights Tracker, June 2024](#)) that we have been recovering from previous declines in trust and reputation, and that the FSA has a strong reputation in comparison to other public sector organisations.

While the F&Y2 Wave 7 data may indicate a temporary dip in trust that might be recovered by Wave 8 of F&Y2 (publishing September/October), it provides us with a trigger for a proactive learning opportunity to build our knowledge, tools and processes to rapidly respond to events in the future.

#### What do we already know about trust?

There is a wealth of existing FSA data and research on trust in food and its regulation, as well as external evidence that we can draw on to understand what FSA could do to maintain consumer trust and gain it back should we observe a decline. Such evidence includes (but is not limited to) data from our [Food and You 2 survey](#); our [Consumer Insights Tracker](#), a recent [literature review commissioned by EFSA](#) (2024); a [rapid evidence assessment and qualitative research](#) commissioned by FSA in 2018; and our research on the [UK Public's interests, needs and concerns around food research in 2022](#), including a consumer segmentation (unpublished) which includes trust as a variable.

We know from our 2018 literature review that at a more general level, trust was found to be influenced by: media coverage and crises; endorsement of others;

confirmation bias; perceptions of complexity; familiarity; honesty; consistency; independence; ability; and good intentions – and many of these factors may not have changed in 2024.

With this further research, we would like to build on our own existing evidence in terms of what we know about drivers and barriers relating to trust and how these translate into trustworthiness, and take this further by understanding how the FSA can regain its trustworthiness should it decline.

Alongside this research, the FSA's Social Science team will be conducting further analysis of our Food and You 2 data on consumer trust and related variables. We will be exploring: a) which demographic groups have seen a decline in trust in FSA between Wave 6 and Wave 7 and b) which demographic groups currently have lower levels of trust in FSA. The analysis will be complete by mid-end October as some will incorporate Wave 8 data (due to be published late September). We will also share this with Ipsos to inform this project.

#### Why are we commissioning this research?

This research is being commissioned to give us actionable insights on a) how to maintain high levels of public trust in FSA and b) how to rebuild public trust in FSA if this were to be eroded.

The insights gained through this research and the outputs that are delivered throughout the process will be fundamental to both our Communications and Strategy teams in terms of the decisions we make as an organisation.

The Strategy Unit are interested in understanding what external factors influence trust in food and the FSA, and how this could influence prioritisation decisions, feeding into business planning and future FSA strategies.

The Communications team are currently looking at the impact of our communications particularly in relation to incidents, what might improve the reach of our communications to more diverse audiences, and how we can use our campaign resources more effectively. Better understanding of how we recover trust will feed into both of these priorities, particularly how we can improve reach and effectiveness of communications among those with lower trust.

The insights will be used in the FSA to:

- Support strategic discussions with FSA Board and Executive team, building strategic narrative for the FSA for key commissions such as Spending Reviews, link to horizon scanning and scenarios work, and frame strategic decisions around prioritisation and business planning
- Develop tools and approaches to rapidly respond to future fluctuations in trust by better understanding why levels of trust change and the most meaningful and effective actions we can take to restore them. This may include influencing and informing policy development where relevant;
- Inform external communications approaches such as:
  - Raising awareness among consumers of our work on consumer protection;

- Improving the reach of our communications to broader audiences, particularly among population groups where awareness of our work and trust is lower (as identified through F&Y2 secondary analysis);
- Developing a more integrated approach to our communications response to incidents – in particular looking at how we can improve our reach to consumers we don't frequently reach and/or have lower levels of trust or familiarity with the FSA, and use trend data from incidents to develop proactive communications campaigns;
- Identifying opportunities to be more audience-led in our communications.

Informed communications approaches will be essential to rapidly respond to fluctuations in trust (i.e. shorter term actions). However, this and the other preceding research will also apply to longer term objectives of the organisation by informing – alongside other inputs – strategic discussions at FSA Board and executive management team, FSA strategy and strategic approaches in recognition of our mission “Food you can trust”. This will include:

- provide opportunity for the FSA to reflect whether the strategic ambition for the organisation to “maintain food you can trust” is on track or whether there is anything the organisation needs to do differently to ensure this ambition is realised. Changes we need to make as an organisation, and relevant workstreams, will need to be factored into business planning and prioritisation cycles; this research will be pivotal to inform prioritisation.
- Directly supporting and inform the development of the FSA's next organisational strategy (which we will start to look towards in 2025/26), reflecting the organisation's mission and first strategic ambition to “maintain food you can trust”
- Inform and advise the Executive and Board on key drivers of trust in the FSA and food system, informing how we can strengthen and maintain consumer trust through the way we behave and the choices we make, and what actions we can take as an organisation to recover rapidly from a dip in trust
- Greater understanding of the levers available to us to strategically influence a wide range of stakeholders including consumers, industry, other government departments and/or wider and how we can use those levers to maintain and restore trust in the FSA and food system

Additionally, an outcome of this piece of work will be our learning in terms of knowledge transfer. It will be valuable to learn from Ipsos' expertise in Communications and Strategy and in translating research findings to meet stakeholder needs, and how this can be used to develop a subsequent deliverable / output.

### **Objectives:**

The research questions:

- What can the FSA do to maintain consumer trust?
- What factors does FSA need to consider to respond rapidly and effectively to a fall in trust and to regain trust? This should cover falls in trust linked to:

- internal factors/factors within the FSA's control or influence (e.g. an incident); and
- external factors/factors outside the FSA's control or influence (e.g. a general wider decline in trust in government or the food system)?
- How can the FSA inform and influence longer-term strategic objectives in relation to the mission 'Food you can trust'?
- What can the FSA do to improve the reach of its communications among audiences with lower trust in FSA, and how we can use our campaign resources more effectively?

Sub questions that we may need to build on and update from previous research:

- What are the current drivers and barriers of trust in (a) the FSA and (b) the food system?
- What is the most effective way for the FSA to maintain its existing high levels of trust and take preventive actions?
- What factors within the FSA's control or influence are the most important in relation to consumer trust?

## **Methodology:**

### Evidence review and synthesis

We would like Ipsos to start by reviewing and consolidating both existing FSA evidence and external data and evidence on consumer trust in food regulation. For example, this should include findings from the following studies (see links in Background section):

- FSA research on Trust in a changing world (2018)
- Food and You 2 tracker (Waves 1-7, Wave 8 publishing September)
- FSA's Consumer Insights Tracker
- The UK Public's interests, needs and concerns around food (FSA, 2022)
- EFSA literature review (2024)

We would also like Ipsos to review the academic and grey literature, and include additional studies (not captured above) on trust in food and its regulation as well as trust in government and public bodies more generally, drawing on any relevant theories and frameworks to help shape findings. Findings should be presented in a written report (see outputs / deliverables section below).

As mentioned above, FSA's Social Science team is also currently conducting detailed secondary analysis on Food and You 2 which will feed into this project and inform the next stages. The findings will be shared with Ipsos as a written report to inform part of the evidence base for the workshop.

### Output for colleagues

Findings from the evidence synthesis should be used to:

- inform the development of an output (e.g. practical guide / toolkit, to be confirmed) aimed at colleagues within our Communications team. This

should equip the team with understanding the communications actions they might take to maintain and enhance high levels of trust in FSA, and also how to rebuild trust in the event of trust being eroded.

- Provide strategy team with prioritisation of impacts on trust and where and how they affect consumer behaviours. This should allow strategy to be able to identify key drivers and related FSA priorities/activities by understanding the interrelationships between consumer trust and the activities and services carried out by the FSA, including how changes in one impact the other. This will feed into annual business planning cycles, in-year prioritisation of work, as well as the next iteration of the organisation's strategy (planning for the next strategy to commence in the next financial year).

At this stage, we envisage that outputs will need to be tailored for the two internal audiences – comms and strategy. On the former, we are hoping for insight we can act on in a relatively short timeframe. Strategy outputs will likely need further deliberation with the Strategy Unit and leadership across the organisation to determine what actions need to be taken as a result.

We would welcome any suggestions from Ipsos around options for outputs.

#### Internal FSA workshop/s

We would like Ipsos to translate insights from the evidence synthesis and F&Y2 analysis to plan and deliver a workshop for internal FSA colleagues in our Communications and Strategy team, along with members from Analytics Unit and 1-2 ACSS members who will play an advisory and peer reviewer role on the project.

The purpose of the workshop is to help colleagues understand how to apply the theory and evidence on trust (gathered during the evidence synthesis) in practice to maintain high levels of public trust in FSA, and/or help rebuild trust if /when it is lost. For example, we would like to explore different scenarios and responses that FSA could take as a result of a decline in trust. For example, how responses may differ for different types of breaches in trust (e.g. an incident vs a general decline in trust in government); how to improve our communications among groups with lower trust in FSA.

From a Comms perspective, we expect that the part of the workshop that is relevant to them will focus on the actions that can be taken to tailor our communications messaging to maintain or recover from a dip in trust, including how to improve the reach of our communications activities to a wider range of stakeholders – particularly those with lower levels of trust in FSA.

From a Strategy perspective, focus should be on the findings of the research and how the organisational priorities and external factors impact trust. From this, we should be equipped to understand the impact FSA policy and priorities can have on trust and identify how the business should respond if trust should fall

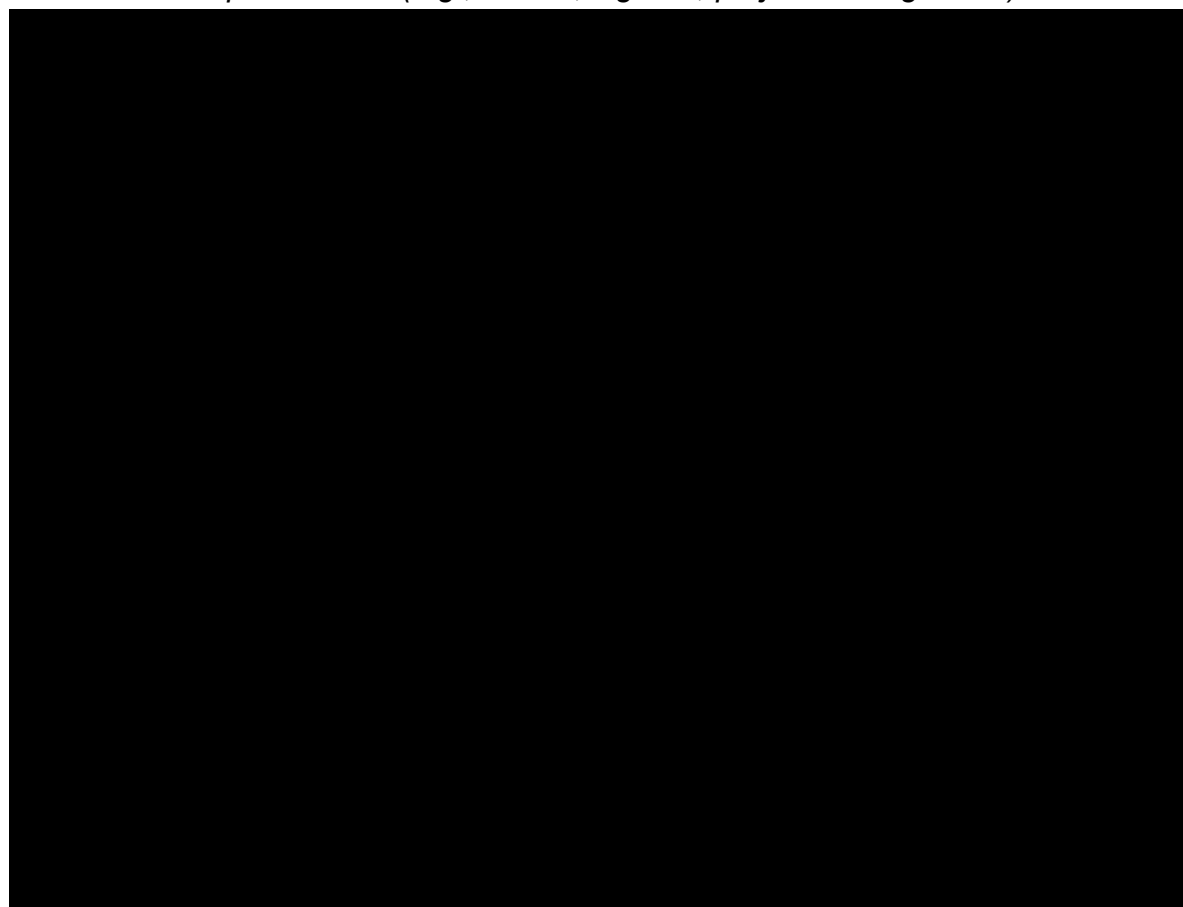
consistently (rather than a short term fall which would be more of a Communications response).

We would welcome your views on whether a combined or separate workshop with these two teams would work best. Please provide options and costs for both. We imagine separate workshops would be most appropriate, as Strategy are more focused on what the research says and longer term how we would embed this knowledge into decision making – e.g. if we need to be more efficient, how do we do this and ensure we're not eroding long term trust – rather than needing to rapidly respond to decline. Other key areas of the business involved in strategy implementation include business planning, finance and portfolio and legislative strategy – so we may also include colleagues from these teams in any separate Strategy workshops.

We envisage a half-day workshop (in-person at FSA offices) run by Ipsos (with support from FSA). However we are open to alternative suggestions including using workshops to co-create the practical guide/toolkit with stakeholders.

**Research process – please include:**

- *Who from the FSA will be working on the project, and their roles/responsibilities (e.g., review, sign-off, project management)?*



- *For each part of the project, what is FSA's role and what is Ipsos' role?*

Evidence review and synthesis: Ipsos to draft research questions and search terms for the review. FSA to review and sign off. Ipsos to conduct evidence scoping / review and draft evidence review report. FSA to review all draft reports and sign off final report. Please note, we hope to publish this report (more details on dissemination below).

Development of outputs (e.g. guide / toolkit): Ipsos to develop outputs, with review and sign off from FSA. Outputs should be tailored to the two internal audiences i.e. comms and strategy, recognising and reflecting that these teams will view the insights and actions through different lenses and use outputs in different ways.

Internal FSA workshop/s: Ipsos to deliver workshop/s with support from FSA [REDACTED] Ipsos to provide workshop materials, and a write up following the workshop/s.

- *Will this need to be peer reviewed?*

We would like academic support throughout the delivery of this project, via expertise from member/s of our ACSS or via Ipsos' partnerships. Please provide any suggestions or recommendations for this.

**Analysis and review – please include:**

- *Any preferences for data analysis*

Please provide recommendations for the approach you suggest for the evidence review (e.g. evidence scoping, rapid evidence review). In your response, please provide detail of how you propose to conduct the review and analysis, and how this would inform development of a guide and workshop materials.

**Stakeholder involvement – please include:**

- *Who are the primary and secondary stakeholders for this research? (Please consider internal FSA, other Government departments etc)*
- *How will the stakeholders be involved in each stage of research? (e.g. sign-off, review)*
- *Who else might be interested in this research? (Please consider the public, non-government organisations, academics etc)*

FSA Comms and Strategy Unit are the primary stakeholders for this research. [REDACTED] will be involved in review and sign-off of the final evidence review report. They will also be involved in the stakeholder workshop – along with other colleagues from Comms and Strategy Unit (including Head of Strategy Unit [REDACTED] and potentially other teams (e.g. Planning and Performance, relevant analysts, Private Office), and reviewing / signing off the stakeholder workshop report.

Social Science / Analytics Unit are also key stakeholders for this research, in particular Social Science colleagues who work on Consumer Monitoring. This includes the Food and You 2 team (Social Science and Stats), Consumer Insights tracker team and other relevant Social Science colleagues who may be interested.



There may also be interest from other Government departments, particularly the Government Communication Service, academics and food sector organisations given the topic of trust, therefore we hope to publish the evidence review report so others can learn from the findings.

**Outputs and key deliverables–** (NB. all outputs must be in line with FSA brand guidelines and meet FSA accessibility requirements)

- *What outputs would be needed for this project?*
- *Are different outputs need for each of the stakeholders identified?*

Evidence review and synthesis – we require a full written report following the 1-3-25 style with an Executive Summary. This will likely be published on the FSA website and must follow accessibility requirements. We will provide a research report template and methodology guide that will need to be followed.

Internal FSA workshop/s – depending on the proposed approach, we may require a written report that includes key workshop materials and a write up of what was discussed and agreed. We are open to suggestions for how this could be delivered.

Outputs (e.g. Guide / toolkit) – we are open to suggestions for how this could be delivered. For example, a written report, a visual report, a slide deck. Please provide suggestions in your proposal including how the outputs will be tailored to the two audiences (comms and strategy).

### **Dissemination**

- *What are your plans for publication and dissemination of this research?*
- *How will the outputs be shared with the identified stakeholders, and who will be responsible for this?*
- *Which aspects of dissemination would you like Ipsos to support with?*
- *What platforms/activities do you plan to use to promote this publication? When will each of these take place?*

We are hoping to publish the evidence review as a research report on the FSA website and disseminate to key internal stakeholders, other Government departments and selected academics. FSA will be responsible for disseminating to these key stakeholders, and we don't envisage support from Ipsos for dissemination. We would likely publish this in early 2025, following completion of the project.

**Timescale milestones –** *Using the template below as a guide, please outline any deadlines for this project, noting the reason for any hard deadlines (e.g. board meetings, which cannot be moved).*

*Please include any deadlines that occur after the project is complete (for example, known presentations, meetings or briefings that will use the findings).*

*Please also include a wash up meeting for feedback on the project.*

*Project timelines should account for annual leave/bank holidays, and enough time for relevant stakeholders to review/comment/sign off materials.*

The table below outlines rough timelines. We would like the evidence review and synthesis to complete by mid-end October, as this will then be used to inform the next stages. The workshops will ideally be completed by end November and the outputs in December (with sign off in January). Please provide an estimated time plan in the response, outlining what is possible in terms of answering our research questions and delivering the required outputs / milestones.

<b>Project Milestone</b>	<b>Due date</b>	<b>Notes (please include who is responsible for each deadline, and any annual leave)</b>
Submit work package	31 <sup>st</sup> July	FSA
Work package response	14 <sup>th</sup> August	Ipsos
Work package review	15 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> August	FSA
Work package amends	21 <sup>st</sup> – 23 <sup>rd</sup> August	Ipsos
Work package signed off	26 <sup>th</sup> August	FSA / Ipsos
Evidence review and synthesis	27 <sup>th</sup> August – mid/end October	Ipsos
F&Y2 secondary analysis report	By end October	FSA
Stakeholder workshop and guide / toolkit	Mid-end November	Ipsos

**Supplier response** – please provide a brief overview of your approach including a detailed methodology of how you will deliver the requirements, plus a dissemination plan for the outputs. Please include in the methodology section details of the analytical approach that will be taken and a justification for this.





























## Annex 1 – Financial Template

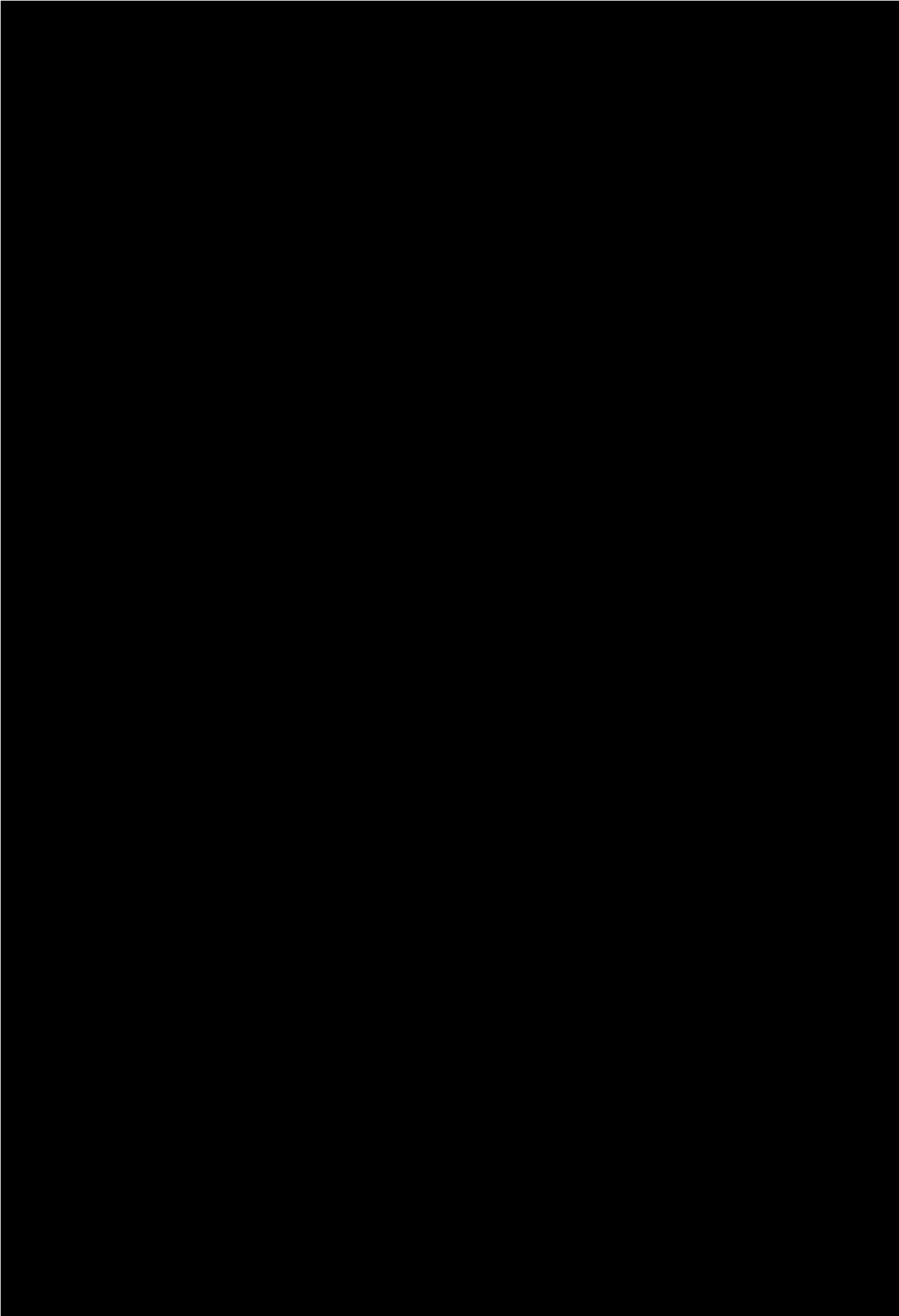
Tender Reference	FS900269
Tender Title	WP7: Understanding consumer trust in the FSA and food system
<b>Total Project Costs (excluding VAT) **</b>	<b>£ 49,200.00</b>

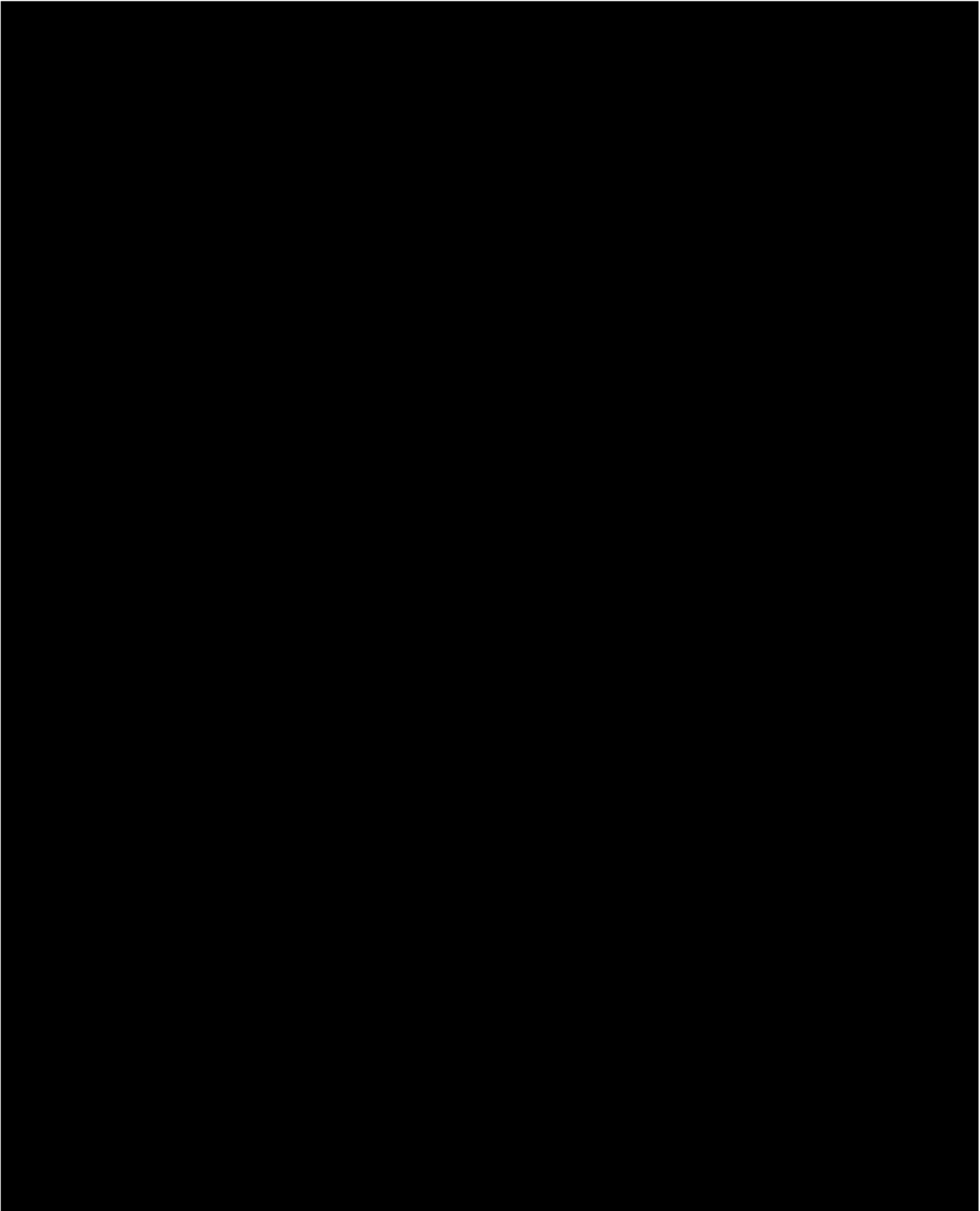
\* Please indicate zero, exempt or standard rate. VAT charges not identified above will not be paid by the FSA

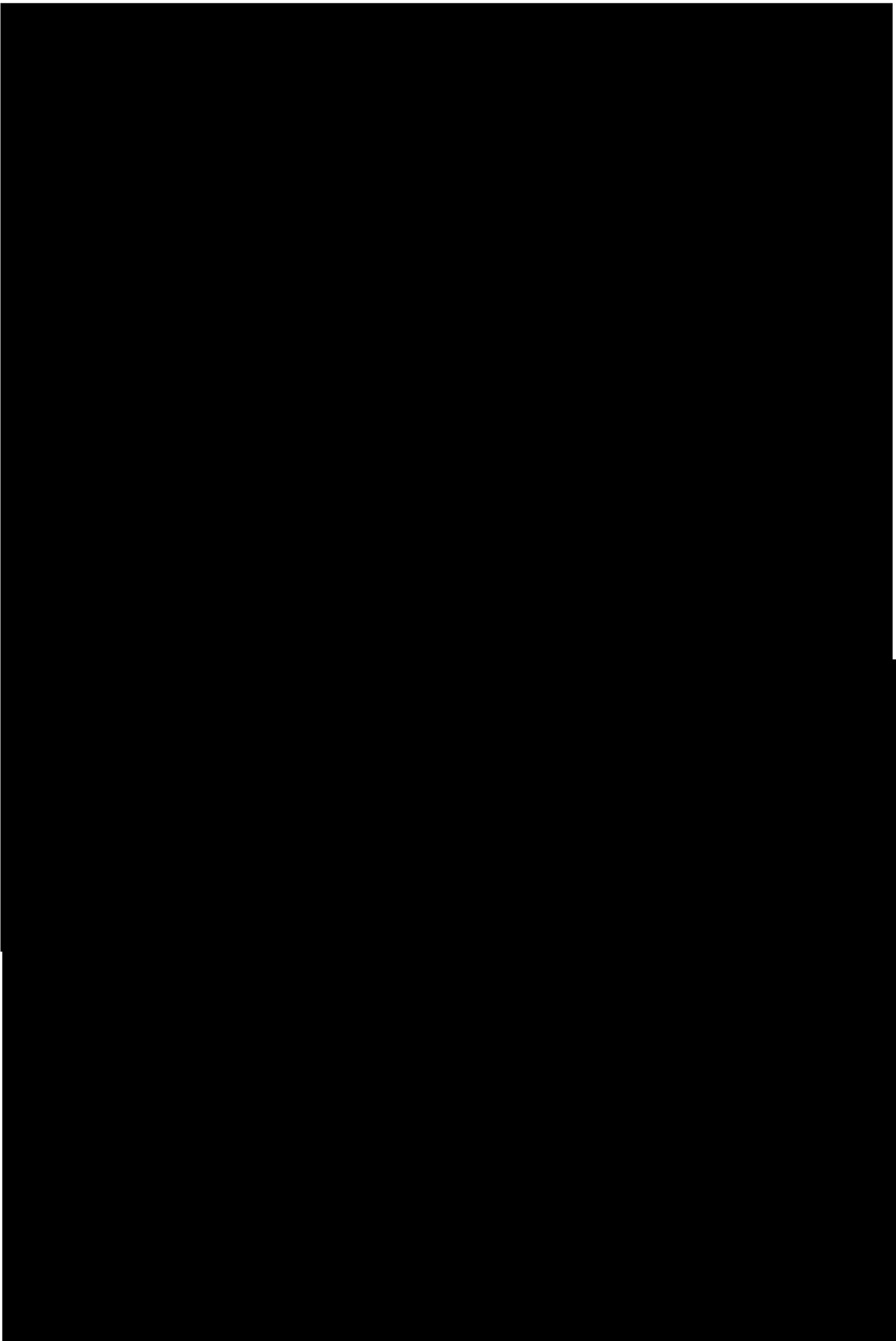
\*\* The total cost figure should be the same as the total cost shown in table 4

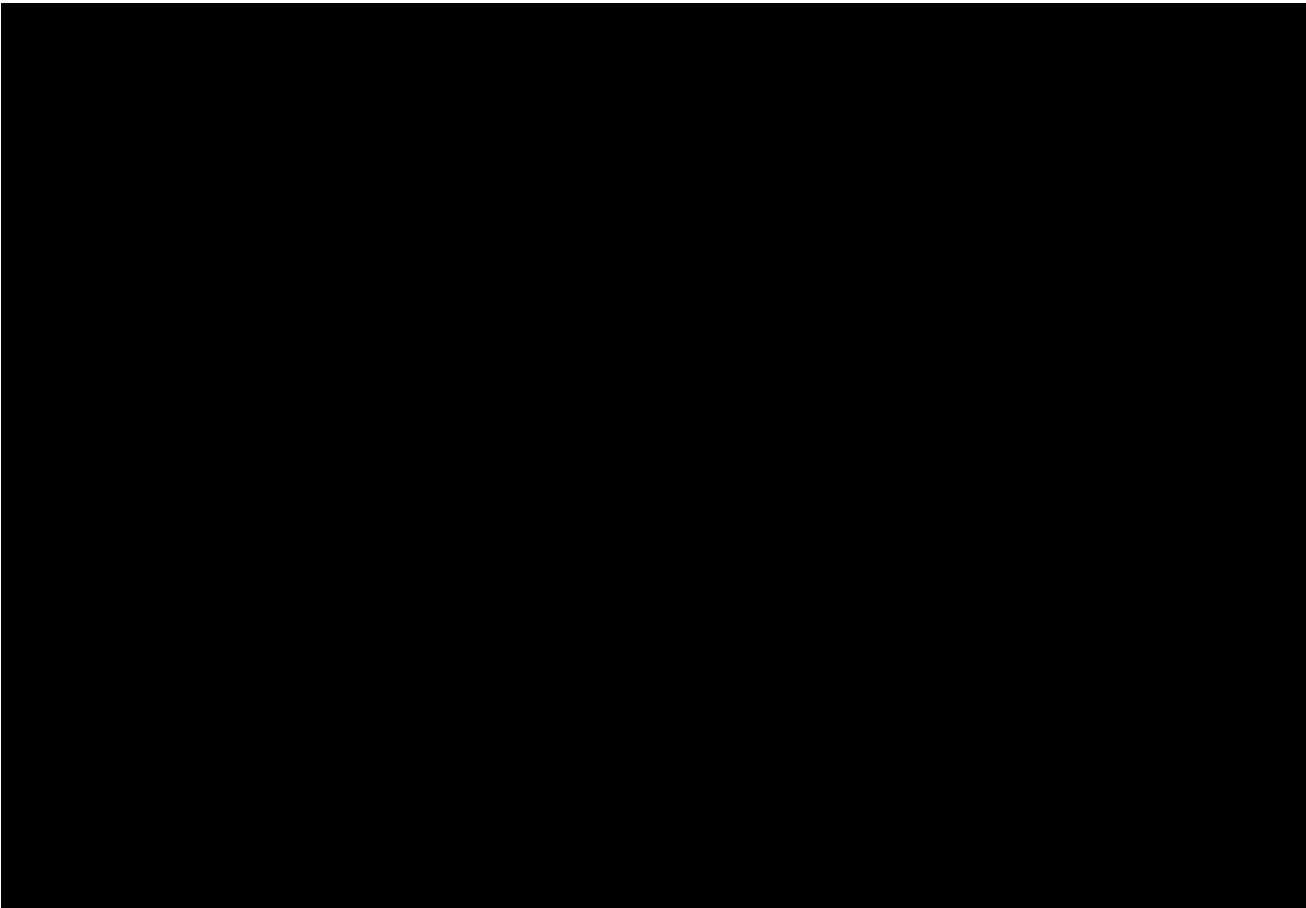
\*\* The total cost figure should be the same as the total cost shown below and in the Schedule of payments tab.











Financial  
Year  
(Update as  
applicable in  
YYYY-YY  
format)  
Total  
Amount

Year 1		
2024-25	Retention	Total
£ 39,360.00	£ 9,840.00	£ 49,200.00