

Paper 15.2 ACSS Working Group Update

Summary

This paper summarises previous and current activities for the 4 ACSS working groups and outlines potential future work for each. This paper is for information and discussion.

Assurance Working Group (initiated August 2019)

Main aim: To explore how best to facilitate assurance of the quality, value and impact of social science in the FSA. See the ACSS website for full [TORs](#).

Membership:

- Dr. Hannah Lambie Mumford (Chair)
- Julie Hill
- Prof. Julie Barnett
- Prof. George Gaskell
- Prof. Fiona Gillison
- Prof. Charlotte Hardman
- Joanna Disson (FSA lead)
- Megan Potts (Secretariat lead)

Since the last plenary update (March 2025) the group has:

Considered 2 projects through the Gateway Process:

- Consumer Insights Tracker (26-27 onwards)
- Best practice guidance on the provision of allergen information: interim data for process & impact evaluation

Continued supporting the FSA social science team review approaches to reaching vulnerable consumer groups in research.

Going forward the group will:

Continue reviewing new projects via the Gateway Process (ongoing, since 2022)

Support FSA activity around evidence translation including:

- Understanding and measuring the impact of FSA research.
- Mapping key research groups/institutions working in the area of food policy.

The group will next meet on the 4th December.

Wider Consumer Interests Working Group (initiated December 2021)

Main aim: To provide impartial, ad-hoc advice, peer review outputs and support broadening the scope of evidence gathering to include the wider interest of consumers and to help provide timely, relevant robust evidence to join up food policy. See the ACSS website for full [TORs](#).

Membership:

- Prof. Spencer Henson (Chair)
- Julie Hill
- Prof. Julie Barnett
- Prof. George Gaskell
- Dr. Hannah Lambie-Mumford
- Prof. Fiona Gillison
- Prof. Charlotte Hardman
- Dr. Raymond Obayi
- Dr. Rounaq Nayak
- Sophie Watson (FSA lead)
- Kristina Diprose (Sec lead)

Since the last plenary update (March 2025) the group has:

- Supported the FSA in contributing to a UKRI public dialogue project on UPFs.
- Reviewed a draft specification for a systematic evidence review of regulatory interventions to improve food systems outcomes for deprived communities.
- Provided signposting to academic research on mis/disinformation and its impact on consumers.

- Reviewed the Food & You 2 Wave 10 report.
- Continued to support the development of the Food & You 2 and Consumer Insight Tracker (CIT) surveys, including via regular contributions to CIT steering group meetings.

Going forward the group will:

- Review a draft specification for the retendering of the CIT.
- Continue to provide ad hoc support to the Wider Consumer Interests research programme, including peer reviewing research materials and final outputs, and reviewing and providing advice on research specifications (ongoing).
- Continue to support the development of Food and You 2, including via peer review of the Wave 11 report, advising on potential reporting/output changes, opportunities for secondary analysis, and improving response rates (ongoing).
- Continue to support the CIT, including via steering group meetings and through its retendering (ongoing).
- Support the systematic evidence review of regulatory interventions via contributions to expert roundtables and peer review of draft outputs.

The group will next meet on 8th December 2025.

Economics Working Group (initiated December 2021)

Main aim: To provide advice and guidance on economic analysis and guidance activities taking place under the management of the Analytics Unit. See the ACSS website for full [TORs](#).

Membership:

- Prof. Spencer Henson (Chair)
- Julie Hill
- Dr. Eleonora Fichera
- Dr. Luca Panzone
- Nicholas Daniel (FSA lead)
- Becky Gillespie (Sec lead)

Since the last plenary update (March 2025) the group has:

- Completed support of the Spending Review project, which included a Rapid Evidence Review (RER) and compilation of a Policy Impact Matrix (PIM) based on which an economic case will be made for the impact of current and proposed FSA activities.
- Attended quarterly review meetings to discuss updates on substantive economics projects (ongoing, since 2022).
- Discussed topics for possible member presentations at the Food Safety Regulatory Economics Working Group (FSREWG) 2026 conference.

Going forward the group will:

- Continue to attend quarterly meetings to discuss substantive economics projects (ongoing, since 2022).
- Explore opportunities for presentations in collaboration with FSA economics team.
- Seek opportunities to contribute research and expertise to the FSREWG, demonstrating active engagement within the international food safety regulatory community.

The group will next meet on the 1st December.

Understanding Regulatory Change (initiated January 2024)

Main aim: Support FSA research exploring how potential changes to food regulations may be perceived by, and impact upon, consumers and wider stakeholders. See the ACSS website for full TORs.

Membership:

- Julie Hill (Chair)
- Prof. Julie Barnett
- Prof. Eleonora Fichera
- Prof. Spencer Henson
- Dr. Hannah Lambie-Mumford
- Dr. Rounaq Nayak
- Dr. Raymond Obayi
- Dr. Luca Panzone
- Becky Gillespie (FSA lead)
- Megan Potts (Sec lead)

Since the last plenary update (March 2025) the group has:

- Supported the commissioning of any primary research needed around the FSAs meat charging scheme.
- Supported the development of evaluation plans, exploring the impact of the FSAs provision of information guidance, and provided feedback on a draft interview guide for businesses.
- Supported work around using a systems approach to better understand implementation of national level regulation (including leading 3 workshops with policy colleagues).

Going forward the group will:

- Support the development and implementation of evaluation activity, exploring the impact of the FSAs provision of information guidance.
- Complete work around using a systems approach to better understand implementation of national level regulation.

The group will next meet on the 1st December.