

Paper 12.4 Kitchen Life 2 Working Group - Reflections (February 2024).

Summary

This paper outlines reflections from FSA project leads and ACSS Kitchen Life 2 (KL2) Working Group members, on how the Working Group supported KL2, in terms of the groups objectives, what worked well, and what could be done differently. This paper is for information and discussion.

Overall reflections

Kitchen Life 2 was a lengthy and challenging research project. The project team are grateful to the ACSS WG members who offered their advice and support for the duration of the study. Special thanks go to Julie Barnett (as Chair) for her coordination of the WG, particularly in the reporting phases, and the ACSS secretariat who assisted our engagement with the WG members. Overall, we believe that the ACSS KL2 WG provided a valuable contribution to this research and met all the stated objectives. This paper outlines the areas that worked particularly well and some things that could be done differently if a similar – project based - working group was created in the future.

What worked well

1. WG input in commissioning, scoping, and design stages of the project

Working group contributions were particularly beneficial in the design and scoping stages of the project. WG comments and contributions were greatly valued by the team.

During initial stages of the project, a workshop was held where WG members considered the scope of the study design and discussed emerging findings from a

literature review. This workshop was helpful to design the scope of the study, particularly relating to the behaviours of focus for KL2.

2. Proactive chair co-ordinating efforts from the working group

A final review session was conducted to discuss a draft of the report and the proposed behavioural interventions, where WG members provided useful comments. The WG Chair took a proactive role and co-ordinated this effort by dividing the draft reports across the WG members for review and comment and ensuring comments were obtained by the specified deadline. This support was greatly appreciated and reduced the burden on the FSA project team.

3. Dedicated Secretariat support

Having an ACSS secretariat member supporting the WG was very beneficial. They coordinated updates and meetings with the ACSS WG members and were able to provide accurate financial forecasting in regard to WG time and expense claims.

What could be done differently

Providing WG members with more detailed information before workshops

- Following data collection, a review session was held with WG members to inform thinking around behavioural interventions and discuss the focus and structure of the report. During this session, WG members made valuable contributions to thinking around key findings from KL2 and potential behavioural interventions.
- WG members suggested that, if it had been possible, having (a) sight of evidence before the workshop, and (b) tighter facilitation to bring people back to the data as the starting point, would have allowed for reflection on the relevant evidence base before the meeting and increased the value of the insights provided.

Guiding comments on early drafts of final outputs

- Early drafts of the reports were shared with the WG to allow more scope for change. Comments from the WG members about the best ways to structure the reports were helpful; they prompted leads to think about different stakeholders and their various needs, and to design the reports around this.

- Some members found the early drafts of the reports more challenging to review and commented on the quality of the reports being low. Whilst the effort required to review earlier drafts was greater, this allowed the WG to have more impact on the outputs, enabling the team to address comments and implement recommendations to a greater extent.
- It may be helpful to agree the reporting template at an early stage, possibly in conjunction with word limits, as well as having explicit review questions for members (e.g. flagging that the focus should be on the structure of the report) and highlighting the benefits of commenting on early drafts.

Having a single point of contact within the Working Group

- Whilst the WG provided ad-hoc support where possible (e.g., ethics procedure, Dashboard proforma, Dashboard draft, secondary analysis ideas), the WG were not involved in the day-to-day management of the study, and so were unable to advise at pace for some issues, particularly during fieldwork. For example, when ethical issues arose during the study, the project team often needed to take immediate action to resolve the issues and did not have time to update the group and seek input.
- With projects of this length, and complexity, it would have been burdensome on both the project team and WG members to update on the project too frequently.
- In future WGs of this nature (project focused, working to supplier deadlines), it may be helpful to have a single point of contact from the WG who is more involved in the project management (in a “consultancy-type” approach), who can facilitate discussion with the wider group as and when required.
- Whilst this approach would place a much higher burden (in terms of time and resource) on an individual ACSS member for an extended period, WG members support this suggestion.

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