

Paper 12.8 Understanding Regulatory Change Working Group - Update (February 2024).

Summary

This paper provides an update on progress for the Understanding Regulatory Change Working Group. It summarises the background, key activities, and future action of the group. This paper is for information and discussion.

Background

1. The ACSS Understanding Regulatory Change (URC) working group was set up in January 2024 and is tasked with exploring how potential changes to food regulations may be perceived by, and impact upon, consumers and wider stakeholders.
2. A first ask for the group is to support FSA activity around consumer perceptions of potential changes to the regulated products risk analysis process, as part of the Regulated Products Reform Programme (RPRP).
3. No other requests are in train for this group, however as the regulatory landscape changes in light of the UK's exit from the EU (e.g. divergence amongst the devolved administrations, the Windsor Framework, targeted operation model), it's likely that other commissions will come in on this topic (terms of reference will be revised accordingly).

Members

4. The Working Group is comprised of the following members:

- Ms. Julie Hill (Chair)

- Dr Seda Erdem
- Professor Julie Barnett
- Professor Spencer Henson
- Dr Hannah Lambie-Mumford

Terms of reference

5. The ACSS Understanding Regulatory Change working group will support the FSA by:

- Supporting FSA activity around consumer perceptions of potential changes to the regulated products risk analysis process, as part of the Regulated Products Reform Programme (RPRP). The main objective of the RPRP work will be to help ensure that any primary research commissioned in this area answers relevant research questions (phase 1), fills evidence gaps (phase 2), uses appropriate methodology - subject to budget and time restraints (phase 3) and is reported and interpreted correctly (phase 4).
- Supporting relevant future commissions as the regulatory landscape changes in light of the UK's exit from the EU.

Key activities to date

6. Since its inception the Understanding Regulatory Change working group attended a workshop to consider research questions put forward by FSA related to RPRP. URC working group members discussed the research aims, provided feedback on how well the research questions meet research aims, and suggested revised questions (phase 1).

Current/Ongoing activities:

7. The following activities are ongoing or planned for 2024:

- **RPRP Phase 2: Evidence Summary Review (Jan-Feb 2024)**

The working group will be asked to contribute to a summary of evidence, produced by the social science team, outlining how well the research questions are answered in existing evidence. The group will also be asked to consider to

what extent primary research might be required to fill any evidence gaps. An update on this review (initial findings if available) will feed into a RPRP paper being discussed by the FSA board in mid-March.

- **RPRP Phase 3: Support commissioning of primary research (TBC)**

If primary research is commissioned, the working group will be asked to inform the development of the research specification and contribute to the tender evaluation panel.

- **RPRP Phase 4: Assure fieldwork materials and final research publications (TBC)**

If primary research is commissioned, the working group will be asked to provide ongoing assurance (i.e. reviewing fieldwork materials, analysis plans) and per review final outputs.

Julie Hill, ACSS URC Working Group Chair

Laura Broomfield, FSA URC Working Group Lead