

Paper 9.6 Wider Consumer Interests Working Group - Update (July 2022)

Summary

This paper provides an update on progress for the Wider Consumer Interests Working Group. It summarises background, key activities and future action. This paper is for information and discussion.

Background

- The FSA is currently embarking on a programme of work drawing on our understanding of consumers' wider interests in relation to food as we develop our new strategy and approach for the coming years. This is an opportunity to demonstrate that the FSA lives up to its commitment to openness and enhances social equity by bringing the consumer perspective into wider food policy and providing evidence on some of the big challenges in the food system such as diet and nutrition, sustainability of food, food insecurity, provision, and choice.
- The main aim of this Programme is to amplify the consumer voice in food policy in the FSA and across Government and broaden the scope of our evidence gathering to include wider interests of consumers, helping to join up food policy.
- A number of projects have recently been delivered under this Programme of work, with many of the workstreams underway to be delivered by end of Summer 2022. Additionally, the steer from the FSA board at the June board meeting was to continue to explore and progress with the future work programme focused on household food insecurity, which will be completed under the Wider Consumer Interests Areas of Research Interest.
- The ACSS has been asked to consider how best to support the FSA's research to evidence the wider interest of consumers and have agreed that the creation of a Working Group will help support and assure the quality of this workstream.

Members

The Working Group is comprised of the following members:

- Professor Spencer Henson (chair)
- Ms Julie Hill
- Professor George Gaskell
- Dr Hannah Lambie-Mumford
- Dr Seda Erdem
- Professor Julie B

Terms of reference

The main objective of the Working Group is to provide impartial, ad-hoc advice, peer review the research and support broadening the scope of our evidence gathering to include wider interest of consumers and to help provide timely, relevant to robust evidence to join up food policy.

Key activities to date

Since its inception the Wider Consumer Interest Working Group has undertaken the following

- After circulating the proposition paper in November 2021, ACSS members reviewed the paper, contributed to discussion points, and decided if they wanted to join this new Working Group.
- The ACSS members met together as a group in December 2021 with the FSA lead where they spoke about how the Working Group can contribute to the Programme.
- Formally agreed on members and Chair of the Working Group.
- Developed terms of references and defined the scope of the Working Group.
- Input on title of recent research publication

Future Activities

The next Working Group meeting is on 21st July where the group will be discussing the recent publication, The UK Public's Interests, Needs and Concerns Around Food and the recent steer from the Board in terms of a priority focus on Household Food Insecurity under this programme of work.

Key activities for 2022 include:

- Keeping abreast of other external sources of information that could inform, improve and guide the Programme.

- Discussing and advising on the direction of work for the Programme for 2022/23 by providing a steer on evidence gaps that we may want to address, in line with our Strategy and board discussions around Household Food Insecurity.
- Exploring if we need/want to investigate and explore specific issues with certain groups of the population/consumer groups with protected characteristics
- Providing ad hoc support to the FSA Lead, e.g. peer review research material and final report, review and provide advice on research specifications, providing Board with updates etc

Spencer Henson, ACSS Wider Consumer Interest Working Group Chair

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