

Seventh Meeting of the ACSS

Tuesday 22nd June 2021 (13.00 – 16.00)

Remote meeting

Attendees

ACSS members

- Professor Susan Michie, (SM), Chair
- Ms Julie Hill (JH), Deputy Chair
- Professor Julie Barnett (JB)
- Dr Seda Erdem (SE)
- Professor Dan Rigby (DR)
- Professor George Gaskell (GG)
- Professor Spencer Henson (SH)
- Mr John McTernan (JM)

Food Standards Agency

- Rick Mumford (RM), Head of Science, Evidence and Research Directorate (SERD)
- Michelle Patel (MP), Head of Social Science
- Tim Johnston (TP), Interim Head of Analytics
- Lucy King (LK), Social Researcher
- Rebecca Gillespie (RG), ACSS Secretariat
- Catherine Bartle (CB), ACSS Secretariat
- Sarah Brabham (SB), ACSS Secretariat
- Peter Learmonth (PL), Economist
- Nick Daniel (ND), Economist
- Eirini Petratou (EP), Economist
- Ely Mirzahosseinkhan (EM), Social Researcher
- Jo Disson (JD), Social Researcher
- Laura Broomfield (LB), Social Researcher
- Marfot Miah (MM), Strategic Insights Analyst
- Manisha Hartigan (MH), Science Council Project Officer
- Chun-Han Chan (CC), Science Council Secretariat

Other Attendees

- Professor Sandy Thomas (ST), Science Council chair
- Susan Bond (SB2), Social Researcher, Food Standards Scotland
- Raquel De Luis Iglesias (RD), IPSOS
- Tom McFarland (TM), IPSOS
- Sophie Thompson (ST2), IPSOS

Observers

- Professor Anne Murcott (AM), University of London
- Serena Walker (SW), Student, SOAS University

Apologies

- Dr Hannah Lambie-Mumford (HLM)

Materials

- 7.1: FSA Analytics Unit Update (item 5)
- 7.2: SAC Update (item 6)
- 7.3: Assurance working group update (item 8)
- 7.4: Kitchen Life 2 working group update (item 8)
- 7.5: Climate Change and Consumer Behaviour working group update (item 8)
- 7.6: Climate Change and Consumer Behaviour Workshop: draft executive summary (item 9)
- 7.7: 'Food and You' 2, Wave 1: executive summary (item 10)

Summary of the Meeting

- Michelle Patel and Tim Johnston updated on key projects within the FSAs analytics unit.
- Professor Sandy Thomas, Science Council Chair gave an update on the outputs from the Science Council working groups.
- The ACSS Secretariat are exploring how best to utilise the website and will circulate a paper to this effect.
- The working groups gave updates on their various work stages, with particular focus on the Climate Change and Consumer Behaviour Working Group. This included highlighting the need to work closely with the Science Council and identify other relevant work on climate change (within the FSA, and internationally).
- Presentations were given on 1) key messages from the Climate Change and Consumer Behaviour Expert Workshop 2) Food and You 2 Wave 1 results Key findings from both were discussed.

Summary of Actions

Action 7.1. To enquire with FSA as to whether the food hypersensitivity willingness to pay questionnaire can be circulated among ACSS members.

Owner: ACSS Secretariat

Due Date: End of July 2021

Action 7.2. To add an item at the next ACSS plenary meeting to discuss equity and inequalities in work of the analytics unit.

Owner: ACSS Secretariat

Due Date: Next meeting

Action 7.3. To complete the SAC appraisal form and/or to let the Secretariat know if there are any comments or barriers to completion.

Owner: ACSS Members

Due Date: 9th July 2021

Action 7.4. To produce a proposal regarding how best the ACSS can utilise the website going forward and circulate this to members for comment.

Owner: ACSS Secretariat

Due Date: End of July 2021

Action 7.5. To explore issues with access to external Microsoft Teams folder and escalate to IT.

Owner: ACSS Secretariat

Due Date: End of July 2021

Action 7.6. To explore ad hoc requests and map these onto key areas of the FSA, to identify which parts of the organisation are utilising this function and which we may want to engage further with.

Owner: ACSS Secretariat

Due Date: Next meeting

Action 7.7. Science Council to share info re recruitment gaps to enable ACSS to suggest possible routes to fill gaps.

Owner: Science Council Secretariat and ACSS members

Due Date: Next meeting

Action 7.8: ACSS secretariat to feed back relevant work on climate change at working group meeting.

Owner: ACSS Secretariat and MP

Due Date: 7th July (working group meeting)

Action 7.9: MP to discuss research around climate change and consumer behaviour with international counterparts and feedback to the Working Group..

Owner: MP

Due Date: End of July 2021

Action 7.10: To update *The Food and You: Origin and Underpinnings* paper, tracking key decisions / governance of the Food & You survey after wave 4.

Owner: LK

Due Date: Spring 2022, to report at the ACSS June 2022 meeting

Action 7.11: MP to share the Kitchen Life 2 presentation with AM.

Owner: MP

Due Date: July 2021

1.1 Welcome and introductions

SM welcomed everyone to the meeting. SM will chair until 2.25pm and then JH will chair for the remainder of the meeting. SM noted that the meeting is being recorded. SM noted the apologies from HLM.

1.2 Declaration of interests

DR registered an interest (via the chat function) regarding working on the Food Hypersensitivity Willingness to Pay project. JH declared an interest in the Food & You 2 work due to JH's role in WRAP.

1.3 Actions from the last meeting

SM noted that there were no outstanding actions. RG will update on Action 6.3. "Secretariat to consider options for retaining ACSS institutional memory", which will be covered in secretariat update.

1.4 Chairs update

SM noted that there has been both an update with ST and a SAC Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) chairs meeting since the last plenary meeting. JH reported on key points from the update with ST (28th April).

1.5 Analytic update, Paper 7.1

MP noted that Vanna Aldin (former Head of Analytics and Chief Economist) has left the FSA. MP introduced TJ who will take over Vanna's role. ND has taken over the Chief Economist role.

MP/TJ gave updates on key projects within the Analytics unit:

- The first wave of Food and You 2 (F&Y2) has been published and the team are on track to publish the second wave by July.
- The Social Science team are recruiting to fill 5 new vacancies.
- A journal article based on the recently published [Food Allergen Communication In Businesses, Feasibility Trial](#) has been accepted by 'Food Control'
- TJ noted the Cost of Food Crime report, which is now looking at phase 2, working with Portsmouth University to model the cost of food crime.

- TJ mentioned work on estimating the financial cost to individual sufferers with food hypersensitivity, using willingness to pay (WTP) and a tracking survey.
- TJ noted that a research fellow from Exeter is looking at chemical contaminants and toxins, which will be a 2-year project. The team are looking to engage internationally on this, especially with Canada.
- TJ mentioned the work on a survey of Infectious Intestinal Disease (IID) during Covid-19 and noted that this work involves running 4 waves of an online panel survey asking about IID symptoms.

The group discussed the objectives of the food hypersensitivity WTP project. ND explained that it will be essential to feed into the cost of illness model, which estimates the cost or burden to the UK. This can be used for prioritisation, to help with impact assessments (to quantify benefits), and to support evidence as an organisation for upcoming spending reviews to put forward an argument for why we want to invest in this area. DR noted that this project brings food hypersensitivity to be treated on an even par with microbiological foodborne disease. GG noted that there was an oxymoron with food hypersensitivity and *willingness* to pay as sufferers have limited choice. DR agreed but explained that it captures willingness to pay to avoid e.g. if people could get a patch to alleviate the hypersensitivity. GG asked if the questionnaire could be circulated among ACSS members.

Action 7.1: Secretariat to enquire with FSA as to whether the food hypersensitivity willing to pay questionnaire can be circulated among ACSS members.

SM asked how the WTP project deals with the fact that what £1 means to one person means something different to someone else. DR responded that WTP is applying market rationale into a non-market context. The values from these studies will reflect people's incomes, preferences, experiences. SM highlighted that in terms of equity considerations and fairness, there has to be complementary analysis. DR agreed that holding everything else constant, WTP gives a partial story. JH commented (via the chat) that she agreed with SM and noted that there is a lot of controversy around WTP methodology. DR explained that this is why they ran 5 focus groups to revise the training materials, and that they found that people have become used to thinking of costs in terms of money. SM asked if equity analysis was part of the planned work. DR responded that income is always considered but acknowledged that equity is something that could be considered in more detail. DR commented (via the chat) that the WTP project sought social class, age and sex of registrants, and (sought to) invite a diverse group. SM flagged the importance of equity and inequalities in work of the analytics unit generally.

Action 7.2. Secretariat to add an item at the next plenary meeting to discuss equity and inequalities in work of the analytics unit.

1.6 Secretariat Update, Paper 7.2

1.6.1. Expenses: RG noted that in order to help members with their claims, the ACSS secretariat would like to adopt a new approach whereby the secretariat will contact members each month asking for details on the work they have done in the past month. This information will be used to pre-fill members' claim forms. RG explained that members will receive an email from the ACSS on the third week of every month. This is being done to reduce the burden on members and the Secretariat, and to improve the accuracy of forecasting.

1.6.2. Appraisal: RG noted that in order to gain feedback on how the committee is operating, the ACSS are taking part in a SAC wide appraisal process.

Action 7.3: Members to complete the appraisal form and/or to let the Secretariat know if there are any comments or barriers to completion.

1.6.3. Institutional Memory: RG noted that the Secretariat took an action at the last meeting to explore options for how best to retain institutional memory. RG explained that across the SACs, this is largely done through meeting minutes and there is a new approach to summarise minutes up front. RG stated that the Secretariat has adopted this approach since the last plenary and will continue to do so. RG noted that the Secretariat will also continue to use the website as a key repository for key documents, but also to provide a running commentary on working group activity.

Action 7.4: Secretariat to produce a proposal regarding how best the ACSS can utilise the website going forward and circulate this to members for comment.

RG additionally noted the development of an external teams folder for sharing work and improving ease of reviewing documents. SM flagged the burden of testing/establishing access. RG flagged that access issues are primarily based on an individual's email domain or previous interaction with teams.

Action 7.5: Secretariat to escalate known access issues to IT.

1.6.4. Ad hoc work

RG mentioned the outputs from members' ad hoc work, thanking members for their work. RG reminded members that if they are approached directly for ad-hoc work, to please let the Secretariat know, as it is important for the annual review. SM noted that it would be helpful if the ACSS can know which parts of the organisation requests are coming from.

Action 7.6. Secretariat to explore ad hoc requests and map these on to key areas of the FSA, to identify which parts of the organisation are utilising this function and which the ACSS may want to engage further with.

1.7 Update from Science Council chair

ST thanked members for their input the Science Council (SC) Working Group 5 on food hypersensitivity final report which was delivered to the interim FSA chair in May and recommendations presented at the last FSA board meeting. ST thanked everyone who had contributed, particularly JH, JB, and HLM. ST asked if the Secretariat are sharing the reports. MP confirmed this (via the chat), noting that the secretariats for SC and the other SACs have regular co-ordination meetings.

ST explained that the SC produced a triennial report, which was published in February 2021. If the ACSS wish to adopt a similar model of reporting, the SC would be happy to share lessons learnt. ST noted that looking forward, the SC's ways of working will involve a mixed portfolio of work. The council is to expand, adding two new members. ST noted the need to do more to recruit the right people, who are comfortable working in broad areas but also with thinking about science in FSA. Following further discussion, it was felt the ACSS members could potentially help the SC identify networks to recruit from.

Action 7.7. Science Council to share info re recruitment gaps to enable ACSS to suggest possible routes to fill gaps.

ST mentioned discussions with JH about the net zero work. The SC have identified two pieces of work, the first (an 18 month to 2 year project) looking at food on the farm and primary processing. The second, thinking about what disruption to the food supply chain by climate change will look like. Work has not yet begun.

1.8. ACSS working group updates

- 1.8.1. Assurance Working Group: RG presented key points from paper 7.3. The working group is meeting on the 21st July to discuss future activity, building on previous work exploring the possibility of developing a toolkit to support researchers in commissioning science, particularly when under time pressure. SM noted that this was a very important part of work and more details will be shared in future.
- 1.8.2. Kitchen Life 2: JB presented key points from paper 7.4. JB noted that the pilot work has started. SM said that it is very exciting work, measuring actual behaviour not just what people say about behaviour.
- 1.8.3. Climate Change and Consumer Behaviour, Paper 7.5
JH presented key points from paper 7.5. and flagged that a full workshop report is being drafted. MP recommended taking outputs from the work to the FSA strategy unit and strategic insights team, to feed into horizon scanning activities. SM requested further information on this. MP provided a link to the horizon scanning [board paper](#). Further details of FSA work relevant to the working group were also requested.

Action 7.8: ACSS secretariat to feedback relevant work on climate change at working group meeting.

Attendees discussed the importance of ensuring that the activity of the working group complemented SC work in this area. RG noted that the SC secretariat are coming to 7th July working group meeting and will present their plans for this area.

1.8. Key findings from Climate Change and Consumer Behaviour workshop, Paper 7.6

RD presented key points from paper 7.6. MP reflected that other FSA work on emerging technologies identified plastic alternatives and packaging as a top priority to look into. GG noted that this is picking up a lot of issues which are ongoing debates at the moment. GG suggested that maybe climate change will accelerate these debates and also added that prices could be considered, as food availability may decrease due to climate-related events such as droughts. JH noted that our focus was on the behaviour trends being adopted by consumers in regards to concerns over climate change. JH said that a fuller report will be available in due course. RD reiterated that the workshop focused on mitigation as opposed to adaptation for climate change. JH thanked the secretariat for their work in terms of developing and setting up the workshop.

GG mentioned attending the ACNFP and suggested that the FSA discovers what Europe and EFSA are doing in this area to avoid duplication of work.

Action 7.9: MP to discuss research around climate change and consumer behaviour with international counterparts and feedback to the committee.

RM shared (via the chat) a previous [FSA report from 2010](#) and suggested that it might be a useful benchmark for both ACSS and SC work.

1.9. Key findings from wave 1 of Food and You 2, Paper 7.7

LK presented key points from paper 7.7, noting that the main report was published in March.

LK thanked GG for his review and also AM and Joy Dobbs (not in attendance) for their input. LK noted that F&Y2 now has core modules looking at households, food we can trust and concerns about food. There are also rotated modules such as allergies/intolerances and food security.

LK discussed the key findings, noting that confidence in food safety and authenticity is high, most people have no concerns about food they eat and

that food security is comparable across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. LK discussed the impact of the work so far, which included the work already informing FSA decision making. LK noted that wave 2 is to be published by the end of July.

JH asked whether responses are comparable with the previous survey. LK noted a decision made to break the time series due to the new methodology, however, observed that the top concerns being picked up are similar to those picked up previously. SE asked about how the results would vary if one looks at the difference between online reporting and postal reporting. LK noted that all of the questions on the online survey could not take place on the postal survey, but they were as comparable as possible. LK agreed that it would be useful to look at socio-demographics of the two formats but acknowledged that the weighting should take this into account. JH asked about the linkages between the climate change working group and food and you, to feed into questions for wave 4 in October. LK mentioned already being linked up with RG.

GG noted the assumption that people would be less pressured by social desirability bias when filling out a survey online compared to in person. GG asked about labelling and use by dates, noting that he has done work for the European Commission on this. GG mentioned a need to question the credibility of use by dates. LK mentioned discussing with EM in more detail the use-by qualitative research. JH declared interest in the work due to JH's role in WRAP and mentioned that use by dates can be quite precautionary. JH discussed a desire to look into this further and find out what proportion of people who don't follow use by dates then have adverse effects. MP acknowledged that it is difficult to have an answer on this.

SE suggested that you can map postcodes of participants with the social deprivation index to see whether you are missing certain individuals. LK mentioned that they do already consider deprivation and it feeds into the weighting process. GG mentioned that he has confidence in the sampling strategy as it has improved since previously. JH thanked LK for the presentation. SE asked LK (in the chat) whether F&Y2 data is available for sharing. LK responded that an [abridged version of the data](#) is available (MP shared the link) and mentioned that the team is in the process of uploading a more detailed dataset to the UK Data Service. SE noted that a full, raw dataset would be desirable.

1.10. AOB

AM referred to a paper presented at the December ACSS meeting (paper 6.7), produced by AM and Joy Dobbs (re the origins and underpinnings of the Food and You survey) and asked if there were plans to adopt the document's

recommendation of updating this paper to aid institutional memory. LK recommended updating after wave 4, to capture changes in the methodology and noting decisions made. LK noted that the wave 3 report will include an annex which notes methodological decisions.

Action 7.10. LK to update the Food and You underpinnings paper in the Spring of next year.

JH noted the importance of publishing papers in academic peer reviewed journals. MP mentioned that the FSA have been in discussions with the Food Policy journal. AM noted that it might be appropriate for the food and you paper to be the basis for a submission to a methodological journal.

AM asked for further details of the Kitchen Life 2 project.

Action 7.11. MP to share the KL2 presentation with AM.

Agenda

1. 13.00: Welcome and introductions (SM, 5 mins)
2. 13.05: Declaration of interests (SM, 5 mins)
3. 13.10: Actions from the last meeting (SM, 5 mins)
4. 13.15: Chairs update (SM/JH, 5 mins)
5. 13.20: Analytics Unit update (MP/TJ 15 mins)
6. 13.35: Secretariat update (BG, 10 mins)
7. 13.45: Update from Science Council chair (ST, 10 mins)
8. 13:55: ACSS working group updates
 - a. Assurance (HLM, 10 mins)
 - b. Kitchen Life 2 (JB, 10 mins)
 - c. Climate Change and Consumer Behaviour (JH, 10 mins)
- 14.25: Comfort break
9. 14.55: Key findings from Climate Change and Consumer Behaviour workshop
(IPSOS TBC, 10 mins + 20 Q&A)
10. 15.25: Key findings from wave 1 of Food and You 2
(LK/BA, 10 mins + 20 Q&A)
11. 15.55: AOB
12. 16.00: Close