

## Meeting 1 : ACSS WG2 - Risk Communications

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Date: 14 August

Time: 15:30 – 16:30

Location: Clive House or T/C

Attending: Julie Barnett, John McTernan, Spencer Henson, Steven Pollock (FSA), Michelle Patel (FSA), Sarah Kovacs (FSA).

Apologies: Julie Hill, Seda Erdem, George Gaskell, Helen Atkinson, Dan Rigby

### Agenda

- Welcome
- Review and agreement of draft terms of reference and work protocols
- Decide ways of working and next steps

### Minutes

Welcome and Terms

1. Julie welcomed all to the first working group meeting for risk communication, and noted apologies.
2. The group agreed working group terms of reference and work protocols without amendments.

### **ACTION: Helen to publish terms on the ACSS website**

Background and Update

3. Julie explained that she would like to use the time to discuss the objectives and then later to agree how work would be taken forward.
4. She then asked Michelle to explain that there was an opportunity for early work, particularly on objectives 1 and 3 to feed into a paper being considered by the FSA Board in December on how the FSA proposes to ensure robust risk analysis and management following EU Exit.

Objectives

5. In considering objective 1 – Gap Analysis of the Science Council (SC) Principles for Establishing and Communicating Risk and Uncertainty, the group discussed whether to only look at the principles for risk communication, or at all of them, and concluded that a reasonable approach would be to look at all of the principles, including those not directly about risk communications, in terms of their impact on risk communications in practice.
6. The working group then discussed some of the wider issues for consideration, including the contextualisation of risks, the importance of risk to the integrity of the organisation, the political context including potential devolution issues and

the organisational practices required to make any risk framework useful and used.

7. We moved on to objective 2 – Academic support on a review of existing and recent risk communications frameworks for UK Government.
8. Michelle Patel declared a conflict of interest as she will be conducting the literature review herself as part of an MPhil/PhD project.
9. The working group discussed the feedback presented in writing by Julie Hill, and concluded that it was important to establish such an evidence base and to learn from what has worked in the past and more importantly, what has not worked.
10. The working group emphasised that conversations with practitioners as well as an academic review would be key to developing practical recommendations.

**ACTION: Michelle to circulate proposal for planned literature review**

11. Moving to objective 3 – Advice on a draft risk communications framework and on how this can be most usable, the working group returned to some of the wider principles discussed alongside objective 1 and emphasised that it would be important to think systematically about context, audience, message, the characteristics of the situation as well as the risk.
12. John McTernan mentioned that the most useful frameworks can be summed up in a simple aide-memoire. Steven Pollock said that in times of media pressure most frameworks are not used; the challenge will be to make something that is situational and practical.
13. The group was keen to think about the practicality of moving from the principles into a working framework.

Ways of working

14. The working group agreed that there was significant overlap in terms of the scope of conversations supporting objectives 1 and 3 and that these might be best sequenced with some early intensive work to meet deadlines for the December paper as well as to provide a sound starting point for work on all objectives.
15. Julie suggested that the group meet in person for an extended meeting (a day) in October for an in depth and structured discussion of a) the SC principles and b) the other or wider contextual issues relevant to the development of a risk communications framework. The working group agreed that this discussion might involve the relevant FSA officials.
16. Julie suggested that there might perhaps also be time to discuss and advise on the literature review (objective 2), though this would not be the urgent priority of the meeting.
17. Spencer Henson suggested that he might be able to attend a meeting in London in early October.

**ACTION: Michelle to find suitable dates and venue in early October, and to circulate a proposed agenda for the day.**