

Guiding principles: Executive Summary

Results available: Results available

Area of research interest: [Consumer Interests \(aka Wider Consumer Interests\)](#)

Research topics: [Social science](#)

Authors: Dr. Kelly Parsons, Rachel Headings, Professor Bob Doherty, Professor David Barling, and Professor Tony Heron.

Conducted by: University of York in partnership with University of Hertfordshire, for the Food Standards Agency

DOI: <https://doi.org/>

Planned completion: 1 August 2022

Project status: Completed

Date published: 25 November 2022

Download the full PDF report:

PDF

[View Guiding Principles for translating evidence on diet shift for people in the real world as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (1.25 MB)

Parsons, K., Headings, R., Doherty, B., Barling, D., and Heron, T. (2022). Guiding Principles for translating evidence on diet shift for people in the real world. Promoting healthy and sustainable diets: How to effectively generate and translate evidence. Report for the Food Standards Agency.

List of figures

- [Figure 1. The guiding principles at-a-glance](#)
- [Figure 2. The evidence-use process](#)
- [Figure 3. The blurred roles diet shift stakeholders may have in the evidence-use process](#)
- [Figure 4. EAT-Lancet \(2019\) table on planetary boundaries](#)

List of tables

- [Table 1. Key types of evidence utilised by diet shift actors](#)
- [Table 2. Mechanisms for evidence communication and dissemination](#)
- [Table 3. Who is involved in the diet shift evidence-use process](#)
- [Table 4. Diet change actors to consider when identifying evidence user targets](#)

List of boxes and practical examples

- [Linking research, policy and practice; a range of terms](#)
- [Gaps in the diet-shift evidence base](#)
- [Practical Examples: Taking a joined-up approach to evidence](#)
- [Co...production...design...creation](#)
- [Practical Examples: Involving users and citizens](#)

- [Who exactly are policymakers?](#)
- [Identifying end-users, the What Works Approach](#)
- [Factors other than evidence which influence policymaking](#)
- [Understanding research relationships – How politics shapes evidence we use in Whitehall \(UK National Government\)](#)
- [Practical Examples: Identifying and understanding evidence users](#)
- [Practical Examples: Participant Recommendations](#)
- [Making policy recommendations: a fine balance between demonstrating relevance and demonstrating naivety](#)
- [Upstream solutions enable adoption](#)
- [Translating evidence to enable users to influence on the group citizens](#)
- [Practical Examples: Clear, concise and direct communication](#)
- [Practical Example: Framing evidence](#)
- [Practical Examples: Visual Communication](#)
- [Practical Example: Timing](#)

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the individuals who participated in this study for volunteering their time and insight. We also thank Professor Susan Michie and Nancy Hey for providing feedback on the project.

This project was completed by the University of York in partnership with the University of Hertfordshire and commissioned by the Food Standards Agency.

Executive Summary

There is an increasing amount of evidence generated in the area of healthy sustainable diets, including many academic studies on the problems caused by current diets and on interventions which could provide solutions. Yet a significant proportion of this evidence is not reflected in policy or practice. This report presents a set of guiding principles for researchers and research commissioners - or 'evidence generators' - on how to generate (create) and translate (communicate and disseminate) evidence effectively. The Guiding Principles have been developed to encourage and support evidence 'users' – for example, policymakers and practitioners in the public sector, food industry and third sector - to adopt and translate evidence on healthy sustainable diets, by helping evidence 'generators' to get the right evidence to the right users, in the most effective way possible. A unique dimension of this study is the focus on food practitioners at the local level.

These Guiding Principles were developed through a combination of research methods, including scoping and rapid evidence literature reviews, interviews, co-creative workshops, follow-up interviews and co-creative feedback sessions. The participants included 30 individuals who work as either food policymakers in national or local government, health practitioners, or decision-making practitioners in food retail, trade associations representing food manufacturers, small and medium enterprises (SME) and third sector or nongovernmental (NGO) organisations.

From the data, we have produced a toolkit of Guiding Principles to promote healthy and sustainable diets. Our eight Guiding Principles for evidence generators to consider when producing evidence for food policymakers and practitioners are:

1. [Take a joined-up approach to evidence in the food system](#)
2. [Involve evidence users and citizens in the generation](#)
3. [Identify who needs to see your evidence and understand their needs](#)
4. [Familiarise yourself with different types of evidence sources, where users find evidence and the role of evidence brokers](#)

5. [Be clear, concise, and direct](#)
6. [Think about how you want to frame your evidence](#)
7. [Be visual and explore multiple formats](#)
8. [Get your timing right](#)

These Guiding Principles aim to improve how evidence is generated and translated, so that evidence on what works to shift consumers towards healthy sustainable diets is more effectively translated to and adopted by policymakers and practitioners.

[Shifting toward healthy and sustainable diets: how to optimise evidence use for policy and practice technical report](#)