

General guidance on the technical report

Results available: Results available

Area of research interest: [Changing diets](#)

Research topics: [Supporting research](#)

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

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[View Optimising Evidence Use in Policy and Practice: Shifting Toward Healthy and Sustainable Diets technical report as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (1.52 MB)

Headings, R., Doherty, B., Parsons, K., Heron, T., and Barling, D. (2022). Shifting toward healthy and sustainable diets: How to optimise evidence use for policy and practice. Technical report. Report for the Food Standards Agency.

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Overview

This document provides a technical summary of the 'Optimising Evidence Use in Policy and Practice: Shifting Toward Healthy and Sustainable Diets' project, including the context, methods, results and discussion of the results for the project. The central aim of the project was to understand how evidence on what works to shift people towards healthy sustainable diets can be better translated for, and adopted by, food policymakers and practitioners, including retailers and other on-the-ground actors. For this project, a healthy sustainable diet is understood as a 'pattern of consumption behaviour that prioritises both human (social, cultural and nutritional safety, sufficiency and adequacy) and planetary (considering planetary boundaries) health.' The objectives of the project were to investigate:

1. Current practices for evidence use by food policymakers and practitioners
2. Barriers to applying evidence to policy and practice

3. Enablers for improving the application of evidence to policy and practice

The remit was to focus on the retail-consumption end of the food chain, including retail, catering and eating, while acknowledging that the earlier activities in the chain - in particular manufacturing, but also farming - influence diets, and have a role to play in achieving a healthy sustainable diet shift. The research for the project was conducted between August 2021 and January 2022.

The Optimising Evidence project was conducted by a team of researchers from the University of York and University of Hertfordshire, through a co-creative process with evidence generators, policymakers and practitioners. The outputs include this technical report, a rapid review of evidence use literature and a practitioner toolkit for evidence generators entitled 'Guiding Principles, Promoting healthy and sustainable diets: How to effectively generate and translate evidence.' The report begins with both a lay and executive summary of the project. The context for the project is then introduced, followed by a detailed description of the methodology, including both the literature review and primary qualitative research phases of the project. The next section presents the research findings and includes a discussion of the results. The report ends with final thoughts from the research team and opportunities for future research in this area.