



Making Sense of Ultra-Processed Foods: A Public Dialogue Oversight Group Meeting #3

Date of meeting: Monday 14 July 2025, 14:00 to 16:00

Attendance: Michelle Patel (Food Standards Agency), Tazeem Bhatia (Department of Health and Social Care), Lucy Foster (Defra), Ciarán Forde (Wageningen University and Research), John Mathers (Newcastle University), Julie Lovegrove (University of Reading), Bob Doherty (University of York), Anna Taylor (The Food Foundation), Dan Crossley (Food Ethics Council), Nicki Whiteman (Bite Back), Lizzy McHugh (IGD), Kate Halliwell (The Food and Drink Federation), Anne Ferguson-Smith (BBSRC)

Chair: Dame Theresa Marteau (University of Cambridge)

Apologies: Tazeem Bhatia (DHSC), Julie Lovegrove (University of Reading), Bob Doherty (University of York)

Also in attendance: Representatives of Hopkins Van Mil (Henrietta Hopkins, URSUS Consulting (Anna Macgillivray, Hilary Livesey), Sciencewise (Diane Beddoes, Trupti Patel), Food Standards Agency (Sophie Watson) and UKRI-BBSRC Secretariat (Riaz Bhunnoo, Ashleigh Sladen)

Agenda item 1: Welcome and apologies

The Oversight Group welcomed new member Nicki Whiteman, Interim CEO of BiteBack, and thanked James Toop for his contributions to the group. Members were also asked whether there were any new declarations of interest since the last meeting and no declarations of interest were made during the meeting.

The Chair reiterated the importance of keeping declaration of interest forms up to date, as this promotes transparency, reflects UKRI's integrity, and helps further build public trust and confidence in the UPF Public Dialogue.

Agenda item 2: Updates on the UPF Public Dialogue

Henrietta Hopkins (Hopkins Van Mil) presented an overview of the dialogue process to date. This included a summary of what already had been shared with OG members in the interim report, including the survey findings that had shaped the dialogue design. The OG were reminded of the dialogue process which involved both online and in-person workshops.

Henrietta provided the following overview of the dialogue process:

- 18 specialists presented information to dialogue participants in the workshops, covering a wide range of topics to stimulate participant thinking on ultra-processed foods (UPFs) within the food system.
- Participants were provided with information in handouts, case studies, and other materials and reviewed these resources at various stages, from understanding the food system to developing their knowledge of what "research" means in the context of UPFs.
- Postcode Films contributed lived experience videos featuring interviews on UPFs, which were shown during the in-person workshop to offer additional perspectives.

Agenda item 3: Updates on the UPF Public Dialogue evaluation

Anna Macgillivray (URSUS Consulting) presented updates on the emerging evaluation findings for the dialogue:

- There was strong engagement with the Recollective website and homework tasks.
- Participants gained more than just knowledge and being heard. They valued the chance to make a difference, think critically, and collaborate.
- Overall, participants expressed high confidence that UKRI/BBSRC will act on their suggestions for research and innovation priorities.

Agenda item 4: OG reflections on the progress and process

Oversight Group members congratulated Hopkins Van Mil for a well-designed and thorough dialogue process that fostered a deep sense of trust, encouraged diverse views and constructive debates, resulting in a broad and diverse range of research priority suggestions from participants at the final in-person workshops. OG members found both the online and in-person sessions insightful, with information presented in ways that stimulated participant's thinking about the food system.

The Oversight group provided the following advice for the dialogue process:



1) Survey findings – OG members welcomed the survey findings. They recommended including separate contextual research in the final dialogue report from the [Food Conversation public dialogue](#) and a [Food Standards Agency research project on UK Public's Interests, Needs and Concerns Around Food](#).

2) Dissemination of the report – OG members advised on engaging stakeholders across the food system to explore the implications (the “so what”) of the UPF Public Dialogue findings. While this public dialogue primarily aims to inform UKRI’s research agenda, the findings could be used by other stakeholders.

Agenda item 5: Coding, analysis and reporting presentation

Henrietta presented an overview of the coding framework, including the draft codebook and the analysis of the large qualitative dataset and clustering method to create the set of codes. The Oversight Group agreed that the draft codebook is broadly sensible and provided initial feedback on the coding themes and draft report structure during the next agenda item.

Agenda item 6: Final report

The Oversight Group provided the following advice for the final report:

1) Important Content – Oversight group members advised emphasising the reflective views of participants and how UPF impacts on the realities of their lives. There were also suggestions on highlighting the strong sense of trust built during the dialogue, including instances where participants expressed contradictory views; adding a section on governance to describe the declaration of interest process; and exploring the perceived harms and benefits of UPFs. Additionally, OG members suggested clarifying what is meant by the food industry which could cover multinationals, brands, supermarkets, and local stores.

2) Report Structure – Members recommended making the report accessible and engaging by clearly distinguishing between the main content and the appendices. Alongside the research priorities, the report should highlight the thinking that led to these.

3) Impact Tracking – Members suggested evaluating the impact of the dialogue and sharing this with participants.

The Oversight Group also noted the upcoming half-day workshop on Wednesday 24th September in Birmingham, which will bring together participants and stakeholders, including those involved and not involved in the dialogue, to review the draft findings ahead of the final report’s publication early next year.

Hopkins Van Mil will review the report structure in the light of OG comments and OG members agreed to share their availability for attending the workshop on 24th September.

Agenda item 7: Close

The Chair summarised key discussion points. The final Oversight Group meeting will take place on **Tuesday 21st of October 2025**.