



University of
Reading

How research connects with policy

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Knowledge Exchange
Fellow

**UKRI Public dialogue on
ultra-processed foods**

14 April 2025

What is public policy?

What local, devolved, regional and national governments choose to do (or not do) about a particular issue or problem.

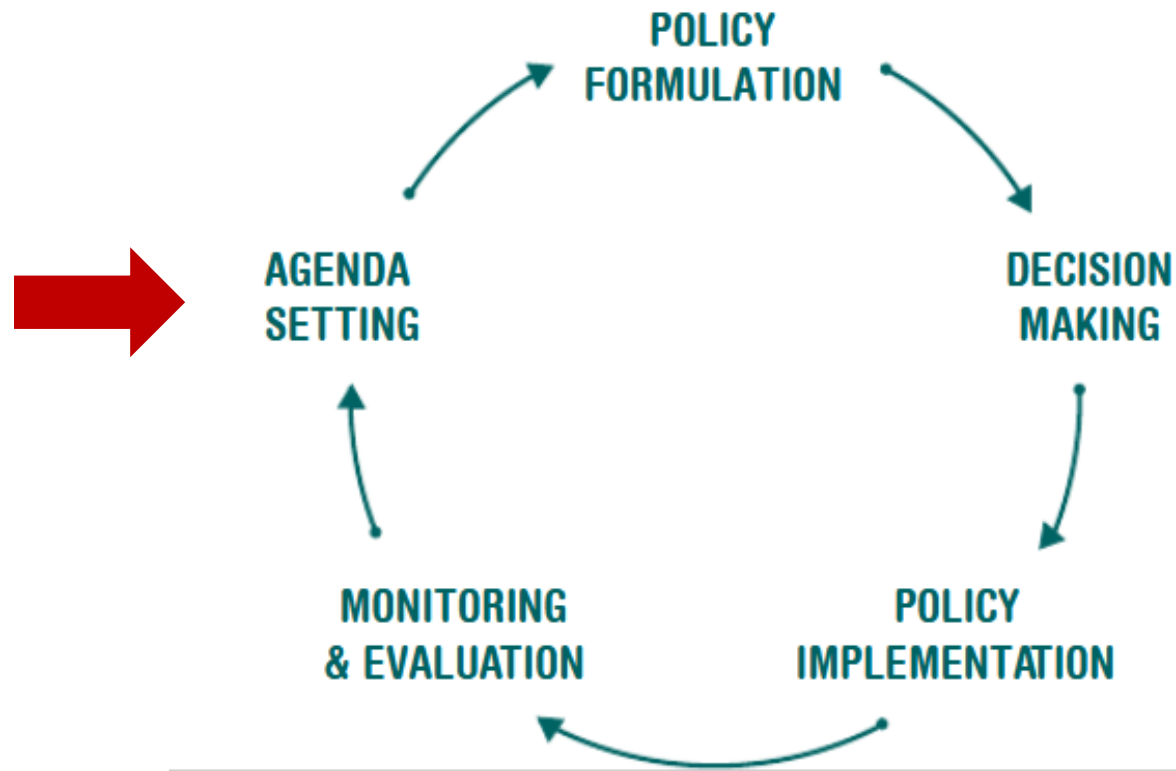
For example...

- Agriculture
- Defence
- Economic development
- Education
- Health
- Housing and communities
- Trade



How is public policy formed?

Figure 1: The Policy-making cycle

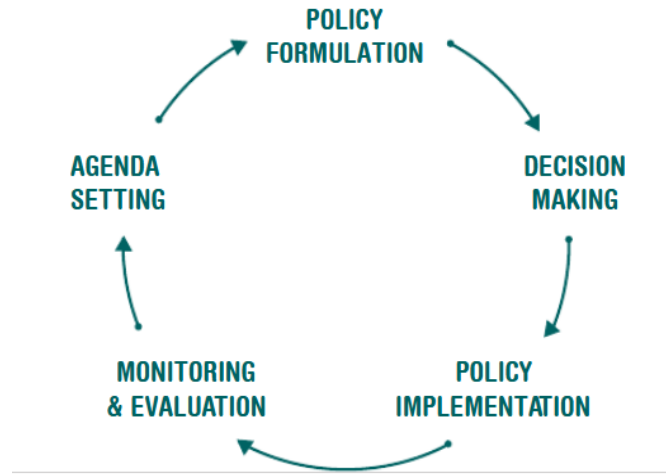


Evidence-informed decision making

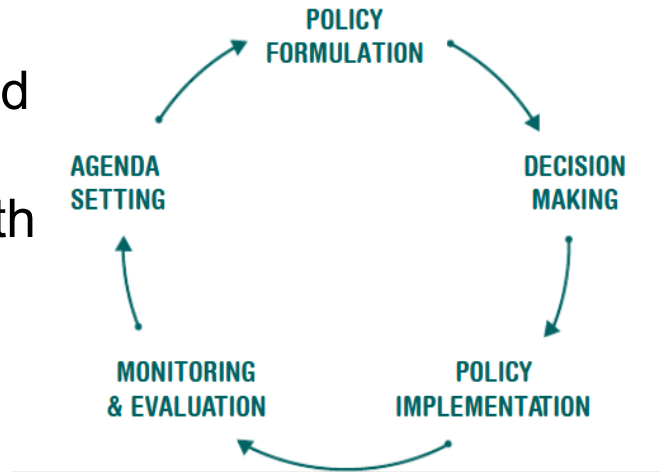
Evidence-based policymaking:

‘Helps people make well informed decisions about policies, programmes and projects by putting the best available evidence from research at the heart of policy development and implementation’

Example: Sugar reduction policy development

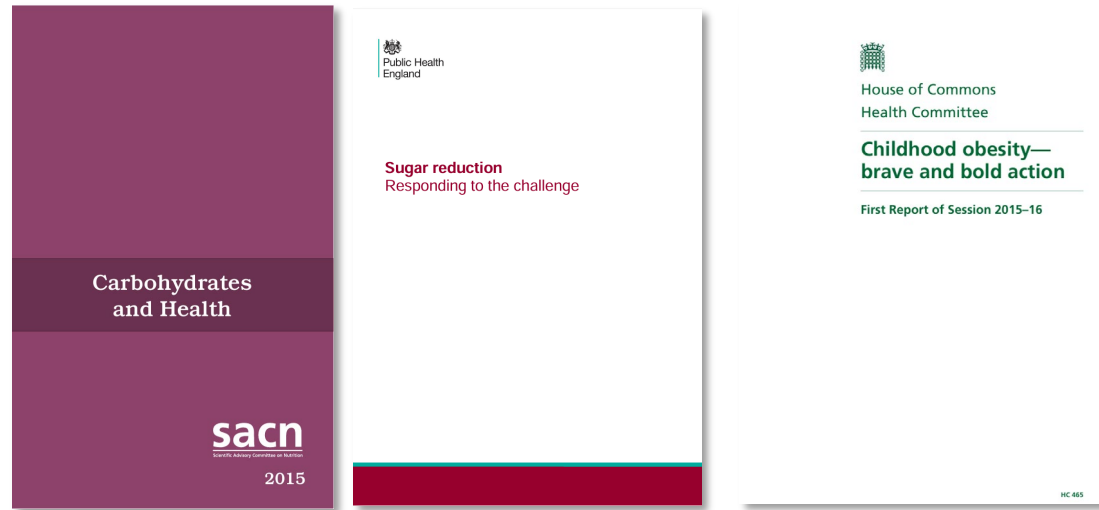


2008: Department of Health asked experts to clarify the relationship between carbohydrates and health



Example: Sugar reduction policy development

2015:

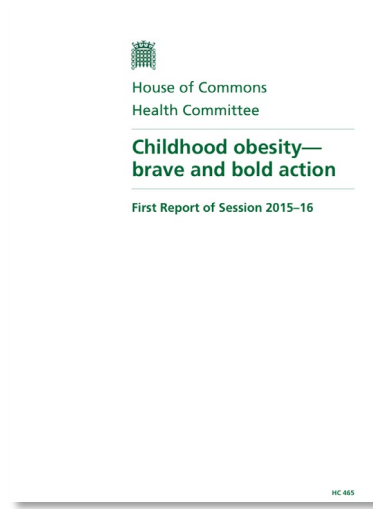
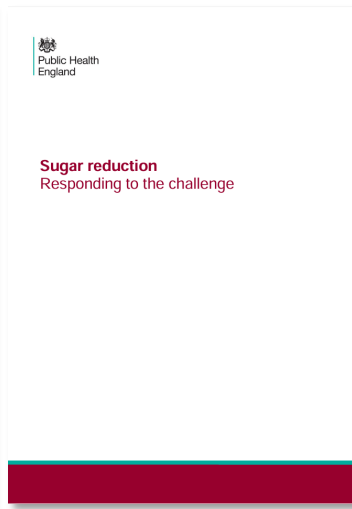
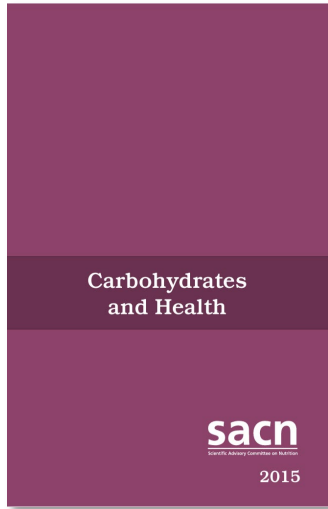


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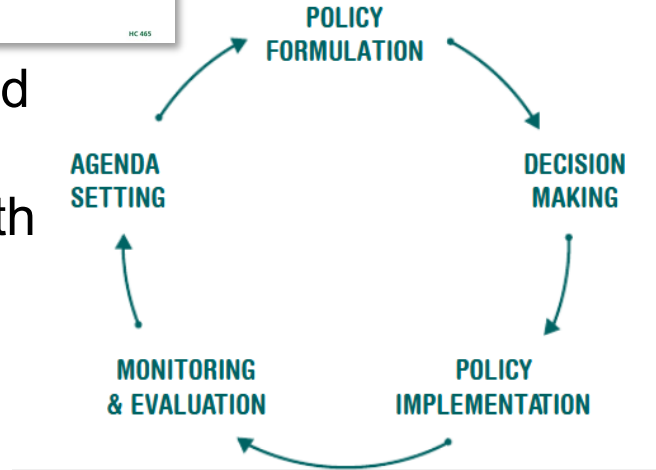


2016:

Budget statement included proposals for a soft drinks industry levy

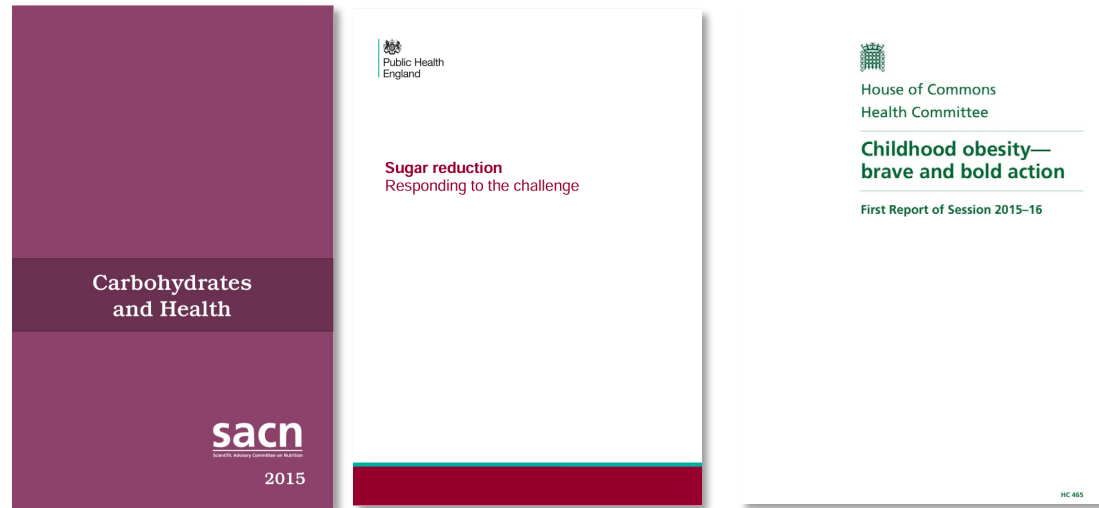


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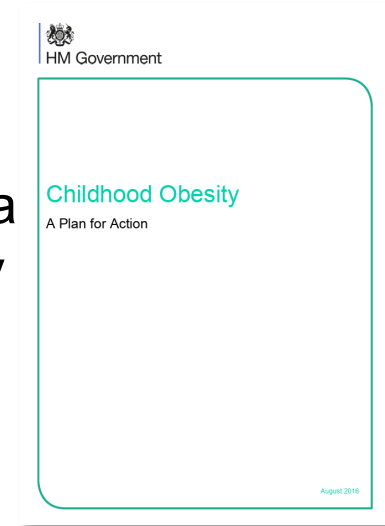
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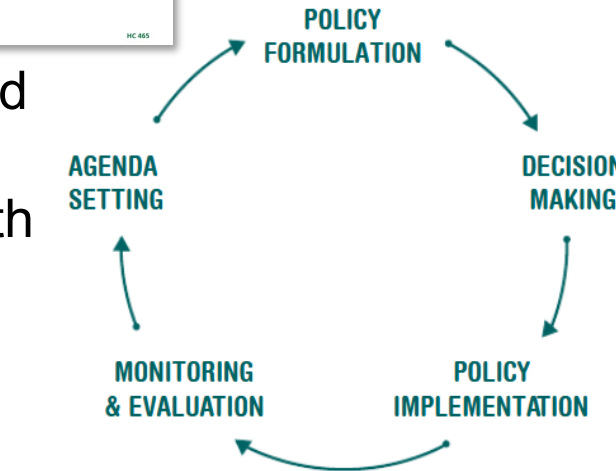
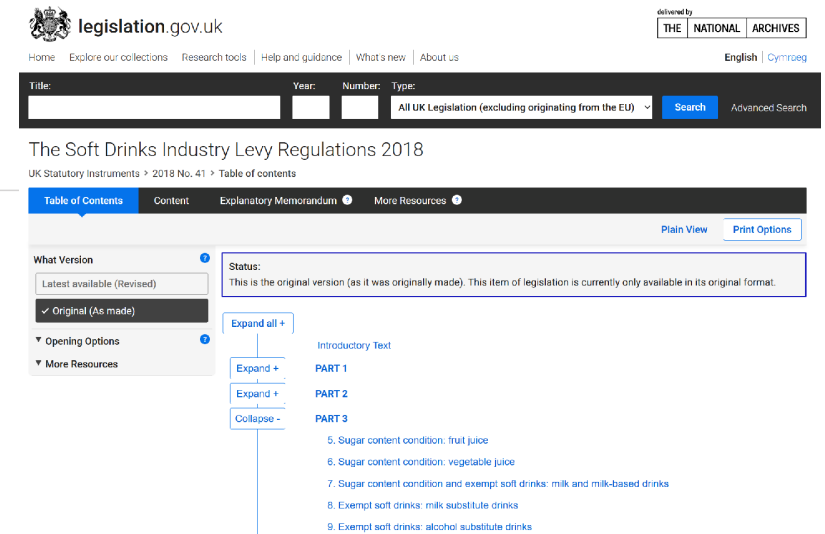
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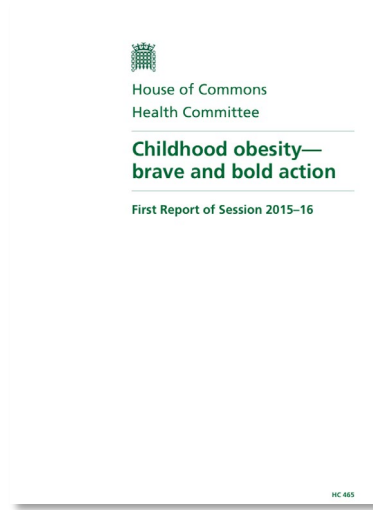
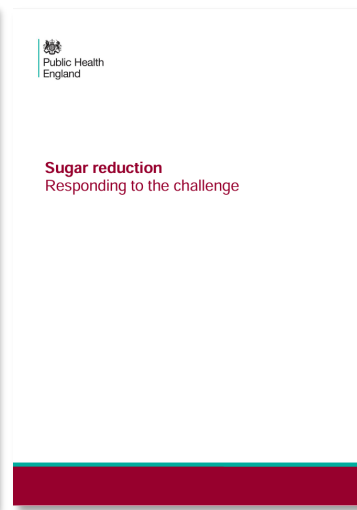
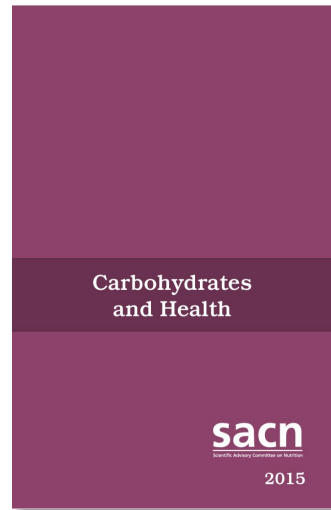


2018:



Example: Sugar reduction policy development

2015:

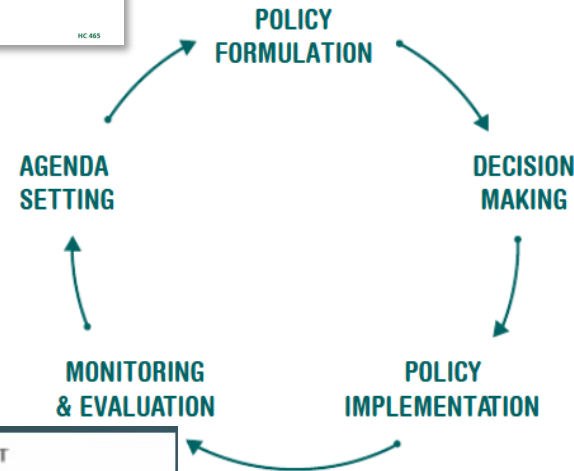


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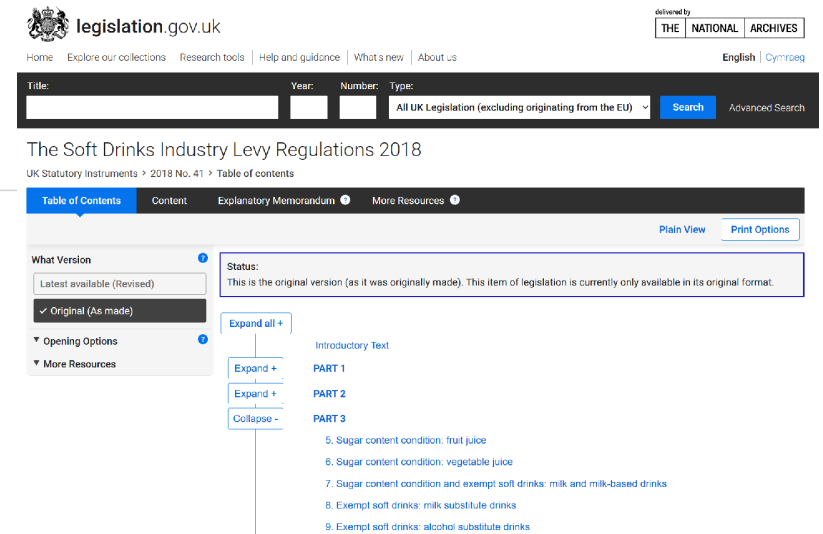
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2020:

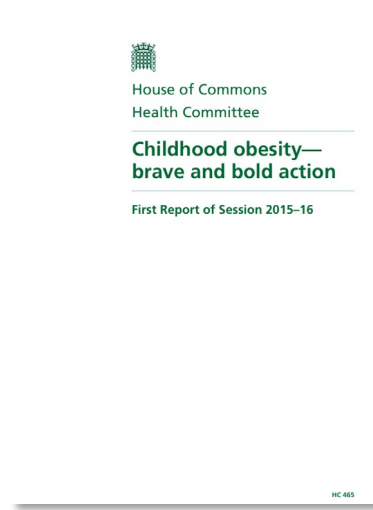
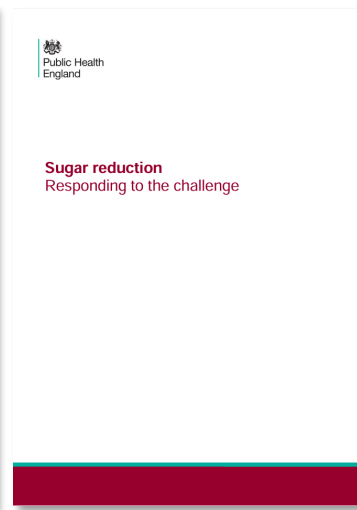
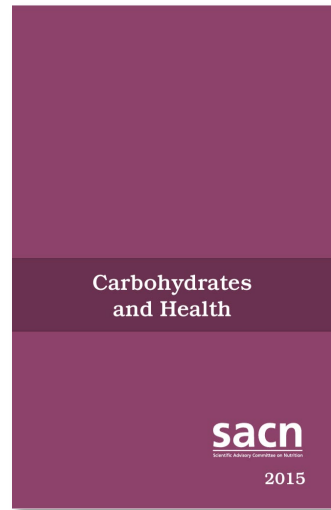


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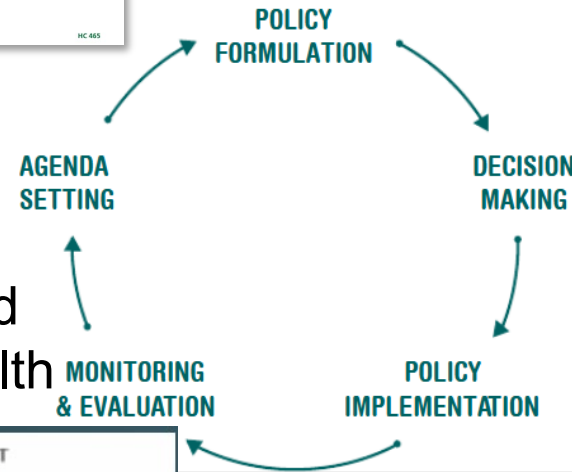
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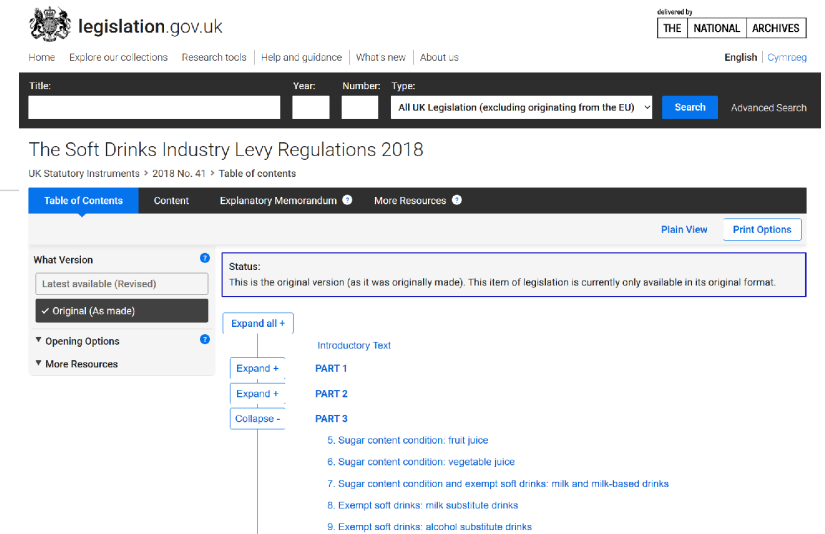
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Now: calls to expand the levy and spend the revenue on public health

2020:



2018:



Example: Sugar reduction policy development

Summary

Research can inform policy in many different ways:

- Defining issues and understanding situations
- Developing policy options and informing actions
- Informing scrutiny and debate
- Assessing risks
- Evaluating outcomes
- Adapting policies as new evidence arises

Thank you for listening



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<https://ukfoodsystems.ukri.org>