

Appendix B: The Evidence Use Process

What is evidence-use process?

The Guiding Principles are broadly organised according to three different stages of the evidence-use process:

- Generation: the creation of evidence (which might be primary research studies or secondary generation through review and synthesis)
- Translation: the interpretation, communication and dissemination of evidence to evidence users
- Adoption and implementation: the integration of evidence into policy or practice, and its conversion into deliverable actions.

Evidence generators are able to directly influence the first and second stages of the evidence use process. For the first stage, generators have the capacity to decide the content, methods and types of evidence created. For the second stage, generators also make translation decisions in terms of how that evidence is initially communicated and disseminated. Others also play a role in communication and dissemination, as discussed throughout the document. Most evidence generators can influence the adoption and implementation of evidence only indirectly, because there are many other influences on adoption and implementation into policy and practice than simply the provision of evidence (these too are examined throughout the report). Figure 3 provides an ideal-type illustration of the evidence use process. In reality though, the process may be less linear, and more iterative, and involve partnership development throughout, blurring the boundaries between the stages.

Figure 2: The evidence use process

Source: Authors

Figure 2: The evidence use process (accessible version)

1. Evidence generation: identify gaps and create evidence
2. Evidence translation: message crafting and communication
3. Evidence dissemination
4. Evidence adoption
5. Evidence implementation
6. Review and evaluate

Who is involved in the evidence-use process?

Table 3 provides a quick reference on the different actors in the evidence-use process, and examples in the field of diet shift.

Table 3: Who is involved in the diet shift evidence use process

| Evidence use process stage | General actor groups/actors | Diet shift actor examples |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Generation (creation) | Academic researchers (based at university or government-funded research institution) and researchers working in other organisations (such as think tanks) | Food Academic Researchers, Government Departments and Agencies in-house research (such as DEFRA and FSA) and Other Food Researchers |
| Generation | Commercial practitioners, third sector practitioners | Food Industry Food NGOs and Non-profits Local Food Hubs Policy Think Tanks |
| Generation | Research Commissioners | Government Departments and Agencies such as Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Food Standards Agency, etc. Research Funding Bodies, such as the UKRI Transforming UK Food Systems Programme, European Commission |
| Translation (interpretation, communication and dissemination) | Evidence Generators | Academic Researchers and other researchers |
| Translation | Intermediaries and evidence brokers, such as consultants, professional or industry trade associations, network operators | Food Industry Trade Associations Professional bodies, for example: BDA, IFST Public Health Networks Local Food Hubs Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming |
| Translation | Research Commissioners | Government Departments and Agencies (for example, DEFRA, FSA) |

| | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| Adoption | Policymakers (elected officials, civil servants) | National Government departments and Regulatory Agencies (for example, DEFRA, FSA, OHID) Local Authorities (health, planning, etc) Public Sector Food Purchasers (including schools, prisons, armed forces, procurement managers, etc.) |
| Adoption | Commercial Practitioner Decision-makers, such as business owners, upper management, corporate bodies, etc. (with decision-making power over adoption) | Food Businesses (including manufacturers, retailers, cafes and restaurants) Public Food Provision Bodies (including prisons, armed forces, schools) |
| Implementation | Practitioners working on-the-ground (interacting with the public) | Health Practitioners (Dietitians/Nutritionists, GPs; Health Visitors) Commercial Staff (food retail staff, stallholders, chefs etc) Local Authority Officials (such as Environmental Health, Public Health, Trading Standards) |
| Implementation | Managers | Food Businesses (Including SMEs, food suppliers, procurement managers, catering, store sustainability / nutrition teams) Public Food Provision Bodies (including prisons, armed forces, schools) |
| Implementation | Third sector practitioners | Food Campaign Organisations (for example: WWF, Sustain) Sustainable Food Places Network Local Food Hubs Food Banks Community Kitchens |

| | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Implementation | Contracted/Commissioned Bodies | Local Charities Food Banks Local Food Hubs Local Authorities Public Food Provision Bodies (including prisons, armed forces, schools) |
|----------------|--------------------------------|---|

Source: Authors

The reality: blurred evidence roles

Distinguishing between the stages of the process, and the different types of actors in each stage, can aid understanding of the evidence-use process, but in reality the divisions between stages and actor roles are blurred. Evidence is generated not only by academics and other research organisations, but also by governments, think tanks, trade associations and third sector organisations. Public policy is made by governments, but businesses are also ‘policymakers’ - they set internal corporate and industry/sector policies, and introduce expected (best) practice and standards as well as demanding interventions (such as certification; labelling; voluntary commitments on reformulation, advertising etc) for themselves and their suppliers.

Figure 3 illustrates the blurred and sometimes overlapping nature of the roles diet shift stakeholders may have in the evidence-use process, which is the reason that one of the Guiding Principles is to identify the policymakers and practitioners your evidence is relevant to without making assumptions.

Figure 3: The blurred roles diet shift stakeholders may have in the evidence use process

Source: Authors

Figure 3: The blurred roles diet shift stakeholders may have in the evidence use process (accessible version)

- **Policymakers, corporate practitioners, government bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs):** generators, translators and end-users
- **Professional researchers, academics and think tanks:** generators and translators
- **Local businesses:** end-users
- **Practitioners groups (health, education and business):** translators and end-users