

# Engagement and consultations

Our approach to consultations is explained in this policy statement, which informs how we seek and take into account views when we make legislation, guidance and policy decisions.

It is our duty to ensure that decisions are properly informed, and consulting with those that have an interest is necessary to ensure that our decisions take account of relevant opinions and are evidence based.

We consult on changes to food and feed law, including assimilated law, and on policy proposals, including regulatory guidance, that directly impact stakeholders.

## Who we consult

We aim to reach stakeholders that are directly affected, or have specific expertise in the subject under consideration. We consider whether proposals might impact on specific stakeholder groups, including minority groups or those that might normally be less likely to respond to government consultations, and try to involve them in the consultation process.

## How we consult

We will adapt our approach to the issue on which we are consulting and the key stakeholders we are trying to engage. Our aim is to undertake meaningful engagement with our stakeholders throughout the decision making process.

For significant policy and legislative changes we will undertake a formal consultation. We publish all consultations on our website and alert stakeholders to this.

Formal written consultation is not always the most appropriate approach and other engagement methods are better suited to deliver meaningful engagement.

Other engagement methods we use include:

- issuing letters to Interested Parties to obtain their views
- face-to-face meetings with individuals or small groups of stakeholders
- public meetings
- focus groups, professional or social networks
- social media and other on-line communication platforms

We take into account access needs and can provide the consultation documents in alternative formats such as Braille.

In our consultation documents, we aim to:

- use plain English and avoid using jargon wherever possible,
- be transparent about what decisions stakeholders can influence, by being clear about the scope of our consultations and what we are seeking views on,
- provide clear information about how to respond and get involved, and

- provide an assessment of the impact of any proposals to identify the benefits, costs and risks.

We normally ask specific questions to focus attention on key issues and we encourage stakeholders to provide evidence and reasoning to support their views.

## Responding to consultations

We aim to be flexible in how we receive consultation responses, including emails and letters but also by phone, or in person at a meeting where stakeholders make clear that they want their views captured as part of the consultation process.

## How responses are handled

We aim to publish summary reports of responses on our website within three months of the closing date of the consultation.

Information provided in response to FSA consultation may be subject to publication or release to other parties or to disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Full details of how the FSA handles data received through consultation is published in the [consultations privacy notice](#) and included within our consultations.

Responses to consultations that are deemed to be malicious or threatening and/or otherwise inappropriate, including unacceptably offensive or abusive language, are not acceptable. Such responses may be discarded in their entirety from consideration for the purposes of any FSA consultation process and forwarded to the appropriate authority to take action where we consider they may constitute a criminal offence.

## Welsh Language scheme

Where appropriate we produce consultations in Welsh as well as English, and we do so simultaneously in accordance with our Welsh Language Scheme. The scheme allows exceptions to translation only when the document is of a technical nature or aimed at a specialist or limited audience. Annexes and Summaries of Responses are not translated.

## Access our consultations

Our consultation process follows the Cabinet Office Consultation Principles and complies with The Regulators' Code.

[Search our recent Consultations](#)

[Search our archived Consultations](#)