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Standards  
Agency  
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**SCIENCE COUNCIL  
THIRD MEETING**

27/06/18  
Working Group 2

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# Acknowledgements

With thanks to those who contributed to this work:

1. Science Council Working Group
2. Science Council Secretariat
3. FSA Chief Scientific Adviser, Guy Poppy
4. FSA Director of Policy, Steve Wearne
5. FSA staff from the risk assessment unit, communications, science and policy teams
6. FSA Scientific Advisory Committees, Chairs and members

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**OVERALL PACKAGE TO  
DELIVER**  
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## Question set by FSA Chairman Heather Hancock on 16 June 2017

**What does the Council advise to be best practice in establishing and communicating risk and uncertainty?**

The FSA Chairman outlined the rationale for the question:

The FSA aims to make sure food is safe and what it says it is. In the future, the FSA needs to have established a strategic framework for making risk assessment and management judgments, and to be better at communicating risk and uncertainty to stakeholders, including the general public. Advice on this will enable the FSA to be more deliberate and clear in building consumer understanding about public health risks from food. It will also help the FSA to deal with the consequences of EU exit.

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## Ways of working

1. The Working Group is Chaired by Mark Woolhouse and the members are Sandy Thomas, Sarah O'Brien, John O'Brien, Mark Rolfe and Paul Turner.
2. The Council Chair, Working Group Chair and FSA Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) developed the Terms of Reference for the Working Group.
3. The Working Group took an iterative approach working with the CSA and FSA officials, including FSA Risk Assessment Unit and Communications, Science and Policy teams.
4. The Working Group has consulted the FSA's other Scientific Advisory Committees on the principles.
5. The Working Group met on 4 October 2017 and 5 February 2018. It held interim teleconferences on 14 November 2017 and on 8 May 2018 , and it also worked by correspondence. The details of its meetings are on the Science Council website.

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## Overall package to deliver

The Working Group took a phased approach so that the Council could deliver useful outputs as it worked. **Phase 1** focused on principles for establishing risk and uncertainty, and **Phase 2** looked at principles for communicating risk and uncertainty. In **Phase 1** the Working Group considered the key things that will need to be communicated *about*, to ensure these were covered in the approach to establishing risk and uncertainty.

### **In Phase 1 (by December 2017) the Working Group produced:**

- Best practice principles on establishing risk and uncertainty
- Recommendations for how FSA can strengthen its approach to establishing risk and uncertainty

### **In Phase 2 (by June 2018) the Working Group produced:**

- Best practice principles on communicating risk and uncertainty
- Recommendations on how FSA can strengthen its approach to communicating risk and uncertainty

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# PRINCIPLES

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## Background

- The Working Group noted that the FSA is already following globally recognised frameworks (notably the Codex Principles) but agrees there was a need to draw together an overarching FSA framework to show how it does this and demonstrate consistency in approach across different types of risks.
- The Working Group concurs with the FSA view that its current system is not broken but that there is:
  - an opportunity for continuous improvement and
  - a need to ensure that the FSA's approach is clearly set out and formally documented.
- Drawing up principles will make it evident that the approach has a sound basis in established good practice and help provide benchmarks against which FSA and others can assess how well it is performing in practice.

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## Background (continued)

- The scientific principles for risk assessment/risk analysis should be compatible with/have regard to and support the 5 principles of better regulation: Proportionality; Accountability; Consistency; Transparency; Targeting. We would add Agility and Adaptability to these.

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# Risk & Uncertainty Principles

See accompanying paper for the full list of principles

**Governance of Risk Analysis**

**Risk Assessment**

**Risk Management**

**Risk Communication**



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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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## Recommendations

- The Working Group makes 17 recommendations to the FSA.
- These are listed in the accompanying paper.
- Recommendations 1 to 8 were developed in phase 1 and reported at the Council's December plenary. These focus on best practice in establishing risk and uncertainty (and a recommendation for review has been added to these during phase 2 at number 5).
- The new Recommendations 9 to 17 were developed in phase 2. These focus on best practice in communicating risk and uncertainty.

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## **NEXT STEPS**

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## Next steps

- Working Group to hand over its recommendations and the principles to the FSA
- FSA to provide a response to the Working Group's recommendations
- FSA to provide periodic update to the Science Council on progress on their implementation.