

Public Health Responsibility Deal (RD) Food Network and its High Level Steering Group (HLSG): Terms of Reference

The Food Network

The Food Network is one of four RD main networks. The Food Network's core purpose is to support and enable people to adopt a healthier diet. This provides a framework for the business of the Network; its work programme is made up of four pillars:

- information to consumers;
- content of food;
- improving the food environment, and
- promotion of healthier food choices.

The HLSG

The work of the Food Network is overseen by the HLSG whose purpose is to:

- set the direction, pace and work programme priorities;
- commission specific project plans to deliver the goals of the Network from working groups;
- oversee implementation of existing pledges, including action to broaden sign up;
- advise on and help address difficult issues referred to it by working groups, and
- provide final review of pledges developed by Food Network working groups (individual pledges will continue to be signed off by the Network Chair and the Department of Health).

Membership

Membership will generally be made up of:

- Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health (PS(PH));
- 1 independent Chair;
- 1 senior representative from a relevant health charity/non-industry public health organisation with relevant interests;
- 1 senior academic with expertise in nutritional impacts on public health;
- 1 senior representative from a relevant professional body;
- 1 senior representative from a relevant consumer body;
- 1 senior representative from each of the 3 main trade bodies (retail, catering and manufacturing), and
- 1 senior representative from a company in each of the 3 industry sectors (retail, catering and manufacturing) to be representative of the whole of that sector and shall be nominated by the relevant trade body, which will review the nomination periodically.

Membership will be agreed by the Chair and the PS(PH).

HLSG meeting frequency

The Steering Group will meet 4-5 times per year.

HLSG meeting papers

Papers for discussion or information at the HLSG and an action note will be posted on the RD website following every meeting.

HLSG secretariat

The secretariat will be provided by DH officials. The secretariat can be contacted via the Food Network mailbox: foodnetwork@dh.gsi.gov.uk.

RD Plenary Group

The RD Plenary Group, chaired by the Secretary of State for Health, oversees the Public Health RD.

Working arrangements

Task-specific working groups will be convened to deliver products commissioned by the HLSG. These working groups will be responsible for:

- drafting proposals for pledges within the scope of the commission set by the HLSG for their work stream;
- developing proposals, technical underpinning and /or guidance needed to facilitate development or delivery of pledges for their work stream;
- identifying opportunities to align the work of the Food Network with other initiatives, eg. C4L, and
- working up monitoring and evaluation proposals for their workstream.

Outputs from the working groups will be tested with a wider range of external partners through the e-Food Network (either electronically or via focused events). It is expected that the time-bound nature of their work will require focused activity usually over a period of a number of months.

The final makeup of each working group will vary depending on the needs of the workstream but will:

- reflect the need for a high level of involvement of all sectors of business, as well as the role for other partners such as NGOs and professional bodies embedded in the overall RD approach;
- be expected to include representation from a cross section of partner organisations to include both technical and broader policy input from industry, and
- be proposed by the Chair and secretariat following discussion and calls for expertise, as appropriate, and agreed with the HLSG.

Working arrangements will be flexed to ensure an appropriate balance between development and review of draft outputs, and may be carried out through a mix of physical meetings and/or electronic forums.

Working Groups Chairs, whether selected from the HLSG, DH or elsewhere, will be supported by DH officials in order to achieve the appropriate balance between leading the work with sufficient pace/momentum and providing technical/policy expertise to shape the work and deliver outputs that will meet Food Network and RD needs.

The Wider Network (the e-Food Network) has a key role in ensuring that the widest possible range of players from business, NGOs and others are able to take part in the work of the Network, influence it from an informed position, and act as advocates for the RD approach. Comprising the current participants as well as any other parties who have expressed a desire to be involved or kept informed of the work of the Food Network, it will:

- receive regular updates from the Food Network secretariat;
- act as a pool of expertise from which working group members will usually be drawn;
- have the opportunity to contribute electronically to the development of new pledges;
- attend events organised by Food Network working groups to seek input or test outputs relating to specific pledges, and
- have the opportunity to sign up ahead of the launch of new pledges.

Engagement, communication and advocacy activities

In order to maximise dissemination of information about participation and engagement in the Network's activities, these formal arrangements will be supplemented by:

- the opportunity for the wider Network to communicate with the secretariat via a single Food Network mailbox - foodnetwork@dh.gsi.gov.uk, and
- contacts with DH officials to facilitate discussion and commitment to individual pledges and support and advocacy of the Network. There will be at least two meetings per year of the full Network.

Food Network secretariat
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