

Food Preparedness Group (FPG): meeting summary, 6 October 2026

Item 1: Opening remarks

Members were welcomed to the inaugural meeting of the Food Preparedness Group (FPG).

The purpose of the group was outlined, including its role in bringing together expertise from across government, the food supply chain, local resilience structures and representatives of the voluntary, community and faith sectors to strengthen preparedness for food supply disruption. It was noted that the UK food system has demonstrated resilience through recent disruptions. However, that the risk landscape is becoming increasingly complex, reflecting wider geopolitical and environmental pressures.

The group will continue to provide a forum for discussing cross-cutting food preparedness issues, recognising that strong cross-sector partnerships remain essential to building preparedness and resilience.

Future engagement will mainly take place through the Supply Chain Food Preparedness Group and the Local and Household Food Preparedness Group. The groups will work closely together to support a whole-system approach to preparedness.

Item 2: Introductions and group administration

Members introduced themselves and the organisations they represented. The draft terms of reference, information handling arrangements and future meeting arrangements were discussed, this included plans to publish a summary of each meeting that will not attribute comments to individual participants or organisation

It was communicated that all meetings are to be treated as confidential. Defra will make handling expectations and classification clear for each agenda item and individual papers. Members will be able to share non-sensitive information to enable them to gather wider stakeholder views on appropriate topics.

Item 3: Food Preparedness programme

An overview of the Food Preparedness programme was provided. The programme aims to improve preparedness for major disruption affecting food supply. Members discussed work to:

- strengthen partnerships
- improve understanding of vulnerabilities across the food system

- develop resilience standards and expectations
- prepare shared plans setting out the roles of government, industry, local responders and households

The discussion also covered links with wider resilience work across government and how food-related risks are considered in preparedness planning.

Item 4: Current cyber risk

An update was provided on the current cyber threat landscape and ongoing government activity relating to cyber resilience.

The presentation emphasised the importance of cyber resilience to the food sector and outlined relevant government activity and opportunities for future engagement.

It highlighted some areas of good practice for industry, provided by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), including:

- using NCSC services such as 'Early Warning' and 'Exercise in a Box'
- encouraging reporting of cyber incidents to the NCSC
- engaging with NCSC assured services
- connecting with NCSC's trust groups – contact scst@defra.gov.uk if you are interested in joining one

NCSC would also encourage all organisations and their suppliers to certify themselves via the NCSC's Cyber Essentials programme.

Item 5: National power outage workshop

Members participated in a short workshop. This explored how essential goods could be moved from industry into communities for local distribution during a catastrophic event such as a national power outage.

Members discussed lessons from industry planning and the important role of local responders, local authorities, community organisations and existing support networks. They also recognised that different approaches may be required in different locations and circumstances.

The discussion emphasised the importance of:

- understanding food distribution arrangements and critical dependencies across the food system
- continued planning and coordination between government, industry and local partners

Item 6: Actions and close

It was noted that future engagement will primarily take place through the Supply Chain Food Preparedness Group and the Local and Household Food Preparedness Group. Next meetings of both groups expected to take place in late November or early December 2026.

The full Food Preparedness Group is expected to reconvene in spring 2027 to review progress and consider cross-cutting issues.

The chair thanked members for their participation. They welcomed the opportunity to begin working together to strengthen food preparedness through continued collaboration and the sharing of expertise.