

Food Preparedness Group (FPG) terms of reference

19 October 2026

1. Purpose

The Food Preparedness Group (FPG) is a stakeholder advisory group that brings together representative food system and local resilience organisations. It will support preparedness on acute and catastrophic food system risks.

The FPG supports delivery of the Food Preparedness programme to strengthen food system resilience and preparedness for future disruptions through 2 complementary thematic groups:

- Supply Chain Food Preparedness Group (SCFPG), focused on industry preparedness and resilience across the food supply chain
- Local and Household Food Preparedness Group (LHFPG), focused on the impacts of disruption at the local, community and household level and how to prepare effectively

The 2 groups will enable the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) to work strategically with industry and civil society to strengthen food preparedness. Together, they will provide trusted forums in which government and representative organisations can:

- discuss acute and catastrophic risks
- test plans and assumptions
- identify where further action is needed

The FPG will not duplicate the work of existing groups in this sector. Instead, it will connect representative public, private and third sector organisations.

2. Scope

The Supply Chain Food Preparedness Group (SCFPG) will consider how acute and catastrophic risks affect supply chains. They will focus on preparedness for major disruptions to the availability, movement, distribution or sale of food.

The Local and Household Food Preparedness Group (LHFPG) will consider how acute and catastrophic risks will affect local areas, communities and households. They will focus on preparedness for major disruptions that could affect people's ability to access food.

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The SCFPG and LHFPG will not duplicate wider food security or policy forums concerned with longer-term issues such as domestic production, climate adaptation, sustainability, productivity or chronic risks. However, they will cover these topics where they present an acute supply issue or directly impact preparedness for disruption.

The group is not a decision-making body. It does not replace the statutory responsibilities, governance arrangements or decision-making authority of Defra, other public bodies or participating organisations. All final decision-making relating to the Food Preparedness programme will remain solely with Defra and government ministers.

3. Membership, participation and wider engagement

The chair is Lizzie Chatterjee (Agri-Food Chain Director) or a nominated senior deputy.

The current membership is set out on the [Food Preparedness Group page](#).

Organisations should nominate an appropriate director-level representative with strategic oversight of the:

- food supply chain, for the SCFPG
- local food system and resilience, for the LHFPG

Defra may invite additional organisations or experts for specific topics requiring deeper expertise, operational insight or wider sector coverage. Their attendance does not make them a standing member.

Participants should, where appropriate, gather and represent views from their organisations or networks and share agreed messages through those networks.

Where appropriate, the FPG may take issues or agenda items to groups convened by Defra or to participating organisations for direct discussion with, and feedback from, their members. This wider engagement will be used flexibly where it adds value, extends reach or provides access to relevant sector expertise.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The chair is responsible for:

- convening and chairing meetings
- setting priorities and keeping discussion focused on the group's remit
- ensuring the group's insights inform relevant Defra food preparedness activity

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Members are responsible for:

- providing evidence, expertise and constructive challenge relevant to the group's remit
- gathering and representing views from their organisations, members or networks
- supporting two-way information sharing, including communicating agreed messages where appropriate
- confirming attendance one week before each meeting

The secretariat (Food Preparedness team) is responsible for:

- sending out meeting papers the week before a scheduled meeting
- preparing and circulating papers and records of discussion
- supporting the chair and members by coordinating follow-up actions and communications

5. Term

The FPG will be established for an initial one-year term from October 2026. Its duration will remain under review, with a decision on whether to extend its term to be taken in September 2027.

6. Meetings

The FPG will meet 6 times a year, with an additional launch meeting in October 2026.

Of these 6 meetings, 4 will be the SCFPG and LHFG meeting separately. These meetings will take place online.

Every 6 months, Defra will convene an in-person joint meeting between the SCFPG and LHFG. This will be to consider shared priorities, cross-cutting risks and dependencies, progress and future work.

Table 1: meeting schedule

Meeting timing	Purpose	Location
Early October 2026	Joint meeting launching Food Preparedness Group	In person

Meeting timing	Purpose	Location
Late November 2026	SCFPG and LHFPG meetings	Online
January 2027	SCFPG and LHFPG meetings	Online
March 2027	Joint meeting discussing shared priorities and cross-cutting issues	In person
May 2027	SCFPG and LHFPG meetings	Online
July 2027	SCFPG and LHFPG meetings	Online
September 2027	Reviewing progress and agreeing a forward plan.	In-person

The secretariat will issue placeholders for all meetings in the next 12 months by the end of October 2026. They will send out reminder emails before each meeting, asking members to confirm their attendance. Members must confirm at least one week before the meeting is scheduled to take place.

Defra will convene and chair meetings and provide secretariat support. Agendas will reflect emerging risks, the food preparedness programme of work, previous discussions and issues raised by participants. They will send out final agendas one week before a meeting.

7. Information sharing and handling

The group is intended to support open and trusted discussion. However, we expect all meetings to be treated as confidential. Defra will make handling expectations and classification clear for each agenda item and individual papers. Particularly sensitive material may be subject to additional arrangements, including non-disclosure agreements where appropriate.

Members will be able to share non-sensitive information to enable them to gather wider stakeholder views on appropriate topics.

Participants recognise that certain topics, including non-public commercially sensitive information, cannot be discussed between competitors. The chair and secretariat will ensure that agendas and discussions are managed accordingly.

8. Outputs and follow-up

Defra will publish a summary of the key themes discussed at each meeting on GOV.UK. Published summaries will not attribute comments to individual participants or organisations and will exclude sensitive or confidential information.

Content proposed for publication may be subject to review and clearance by relevant Defra leads, Directors and group members, as appropriate, before publication.

Where appropriate, actions will be assigned and progress reviewed at subsequent meetings. The group's advice and evidence may inform Defra's work but do not constitute formal decisions or bind Defra or participating organisations.

9. Review

Defra will review these terms of reference within 6 months of the groups' establishment, and then as required. This is to ensure they remain fit for purpose and aligned with the objectives of the food preparedness programme.

10. Glossary

Preparedness

'Preparedness' means ensuring that organisations and individuals are ready to respond to food supply disruptions through clear roles and responsibilities, planning, exercising, and capacity-building. ([The Amber Book, 2010](#)).

Acute risks

'Acute risks' are time-bound and often unexpected events that can rapidly disrupt the food system, causing immediate impacts on food availability, supply chains, costs and consumers. For example, extreme weather, input shocks or major incidents, ([The UK Government Resilience Action Plan, 2025](#)).

Catastrophic risks

'Catastrophic risks' are acute risks that are less likely but have exceptionally high impact, with the potential to overwhelm the food system's ability to function. For example, widespread infrastructure failures or major global supply chain disruptions. ([The UK Government Resilience Action Plan, 2025](#)).