UK Food Security Report Guidance

Food Statistics Team

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# 1 About

This is an experimental site for documentation and guidance relating to producing the UKFSR. Its intended audience is mainly the production team, present and future. The source is [here](https://github.com/FoodchainStats/ukfsr-docs). Got suggestions for things to add/change? Go [here](https://github.com/FoodchainStats/ukfsr-docs/issues), open a new issue and submit your comments.

## 1.1 What is this and how do I use it?

The plan is to capture everything related to UKFSR2024 production based on lessons from UKFSR2021 which might be useful, and end up with a repository to pick up again once UKFSR2027 is being planned.

The guidance covers the mechanics of preparing text and graphical content, preparing for print, organisation of data and files, etc. Editorial decisions about content to inclide are out of scope. We aim for a logical structure, but there may be some nuggets dropped in unusual places. At the moment its a brain dump!

**Rationale**

We are working in the open as much as we can, so this is not a Defra Sharepoint repository but a public Github one. We know that this means its not quite so accessible for policy professionals to edit, but we will work on this. Working in the open doesn’t mean that we are not allowed to have internal conversations. We don’t put anything in here that we are not prepared to make public - its for future teams, to make sure we’ve captured all the useful info to make their lives easier. If there are sensitive messages/lessons, we store them somewhere else.

This approach mirrors our approach to data and the production process: we are storing the relevant code we use to wrangle data and produce graphics in a similar repository. Data that is not open will of course not be shared.

Being as open and reproducible as we can is one of the current ambitions for official statistics production. This site is part of our way of trying to meet that ambition. That does not mean we will not make necessary internal decisions as needed - those will be recorded appropriately and documented safely for future reference elsewhere.

## 1.2 UKFSR Infrastructure

The UKFSR is more than just a single document. It has a number of components as part of its underlying infrastructure:

* The text content (probably drafted and hosted on Sharepoint during production)
* The underlying data and graphics content, hosted on an Amazon S3 bucket
* The [code](https://github.com/Defra-Data-Science-Centre-of-Excellence/UKFSR2024) to produce the graphics and data for preview
* The [ukfsr](https://github.com/FoodchainStats/ukfsr) R package containing miscellanous helper functions
* This documentation

All of this content is combined to produce *two* key outputs:

* the report on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/united-kingdom-food-security-report) (this is the UKFSR to all intents and purposes for the public)
* the physical printed edition laid in the HoC Library (important, but a limited print run and inaccessible to all except MPs)

In addition, there may be other published outputs, such as condensed reports, technical annexes etc, depending on individual feedback.

## 1.3 Timings, resources and pinch points

The project plan is outside of the scope of this guide. However it is worth noting some salient features of the process.

* **Data cutoff:** With a diverse set of data sources and a wide ranging release calendar, it may not be possible to match the drafting process to the release of the latest data. In some cases content can be drafted with the data available at the time and updated once the latest is published. This will apply most to annual releases. In others, for example inflation, data is more frequent. In all cases, essentially a decision has to be taken on the point at which no new data will be included, and the text finalised to cover the latest data at that point.
* **Content lock:** It may be an obvious point, but there needs to be a point at which the content is set and no further amendments can be made, to allow the publishing process to start. It may be a naive hope, but this needs time. And locking content means finalising SoS input etc. Web publishing is a specialist role, and there are a limited number of people who can set publications up on Whitehall Publisher. **This is a pinch point with little remediation**.

# 2 Text style guide

For chart design guidance, see Section 3. There is a GDS style guide for all content published on gov.uk is available [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/style-guide). The UKFSR guide is intended to complement this.

## 2.1 Formatting styles

Use appropriate styles in Word, particularly for *headings*. Heading styles are critical to the structure of the web publications (see 6), and building the table of contents in the print version (see 7). If you dont use styles during drafting, its massive horrible job to retrofit them at the end when time is short.

**Note there is no need to worry about the specifics of formatting and the look of the text during drafting, in terms of font, colour, spacing etc. Concentrate on the content. Stick to marking text attributes such as heading level, bold, italic, bulleted list etc. The Defra publication template and web publishing process will deal with the look of the finished product.**

## 2.2 Spelling/Word choice

* Say “UKFSR” or “this report”, not “the Report”.
* Use ‘coronavirus (COVID-19)’ in the text at first mention, then ‘COVID-19’ after that.
* government, UK government (not capitalised unless it’s Welsh or Scottish Government)
* other government departments
* Use ‘the’ when talking about ‘the FSA’, but don’t use ‘the’ when talking about ‘FSS’
* FSA and FSS can be referred to collectively as “UK food safety bodies”, but not “food standards agencies.”
* Capitals when talking about ethnicities, e.g. ‘White’, ‘Black’
* Disabled people and not people with disabilities
* For the Ukraine War, refer to it as the “Ukraine War”, “the war in Ukraine” or “Russia-Ukraine War”.
* Talking about Brexit:
  + You can use the term ‘Brexit’ to provide historical context, but it’s better to use specific dates where possible. For example, use:
    - ‘31 December 2020’ rather than ‘Brexit’ or ‘when the UK left the EU’
    - ‘before 31 December 2020’ rather than ‘during the transition period’
    - ‘after 1 January 2021’ rather than ‘after the transition period’
* Dates: do not use a comma between the month and year: 4 June 2017
* white paper (lower case)
* Be very careful with the word “affordable”. Food is more affordable if it’s cheaper relative to incomes and other factors – if the price has gone down (but other factors mean it’s harder to afford) it’s simply *cheaper*. The general argument of the UKFSR is that over the last decade food *has got cheaper, but not more affordable* – so check this!
* Words to avoid:
  + Robust
  + Overarching
  + Strengthen (unless we are actually strengthening an architectural structure)
  + Tackling
  + Going forward
  + In order to (superfluous, never use it)
  + impact (do not use this as a synonym for have an effect on, or influence)
  + facilitate (instead, say something specific about how you’re helping)
  + focusing
  + key (unless it unlocks something. A subject/thing is not key - it’s probably important)

## 2.3 Sentence length

* Do not use long sentences. Check sentences with more than 25 words to see if you can split them to make them clearer.

## 2.4 URLs/Links

See 2.5 for references to academic reports. *Link to sources, data and relevant online material liberally*, and when in doubt, link! Remember that this is not necessarily relevant to the print edition but fundamental to the online version. Todays readers expect to be able to click through to verify or explore further the data and other sources we refer to. It is fundamental to the credibility of the report.

Alongside from the principle of ‘link liberally’, is the principle of ‘link sensibly’. This simply means point to the place where a user might generally expect to go when they click. This might be a specific document/report, a summary page containing relevant content, or even the home page for an organisation. Use your judgement and put yourself in the position of an end user. Some examples:

* **Data links:** Every chart must have a csv preview link. See Section 4 for guidance on that. In addition all sources must be linked to. Curious users might want to explore the raw data sources beyond our curated csvs if they are happy to do so. Either way they should have a link to the owner/producers of the data so we need to add links to unedited sources. Which leads on to…
* **Collection pages:** Most statistics and regular gov.uk publications have a ‘collection page’ which is a place to collate current and previous versions. Consider the difference between the [CPI collection page](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/previousReleases) which always shows the catalogue of recent publications, and an individual [release](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/september2023). Generally the collection page is more future proof for users, unless you are making a reference to a specific edition in the UKFSR. The UKFSR has its own [collection page](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/united-kingdom-food-security-report), although at the time of writing it only contains the UKFSR 2021 - eventually this will become an archive and repository of the most recent analysis.
* **General links:** If there is no logical place to go, link to the organisation home page or somewhere else sensible, eg [uktradeinfo](https://www.uktradeinfo.com/trade-data/ots-custom-table/). Keep in mind that these links need to be relevant for at least three years - in 2027 will they still take people to places that are useful? Its OK to link to time sensitive material such as dated news reports but consider whether links are persistent and will not become stale.

## 2.5 References

See 2.4 for general linking guidance. Include a reference in-text after the relevant sentence/paragraph. References should follow the style guide. When writing a reference:

* do not use italics
* use single quote marks around titles
* write out abbreviations in full: page not p, Nutrition Journal not Nutr J.
* use plain English, for example use ‘and others’ not ‘et al’
* do not use full stops after initials or at the end of the reference

*References can also be included as footnotes, particularly where too long or unwieldy for convenience in text.*

If the reference is available online, make the title a link and include the date you accessed the online version. For example:

* Although food availability is increasing in low and middle-income countries, fruit and vegetables are still high-value items, meaning fats and sweeteners will make up large parts of the increase in consumption (FAO. [‘OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2021-2030’](https://www.fao.org/3/cb5332en/cb5332en.pdf) 2021).
* There is a recurring reference through multiple themes to AUK, check for consistency to make sure it is referenced as follows: (Defra. [‘Agriculture in the United Kingdom 2020’](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1056618/AUK2020_22feb22.pdf) 2020)
* Example given on gov.uk: Corallo AN and others. [‘A systematic review of medical practice variation in OECD countries’](https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/health-policy) Health Policy 2014: volume 114, pages 5 to 14.

## 2.6 Acronyms

* Write out acronym for the first time in each theme, put abbreviation in brackets, then use abbreviation going forwards. This means acronyms should be re-introduced anew between the introduction and themes.
* Note that for web publishing, acronyms need a little more work (see 6.5.1). **Its a good idea to maintain a master list of all acronyms and their full descriptions** - it will help speed up the publishing preparation.

## 2.7 Labelling data

* Each data set (table, bar chart, etc.) should be labelled as ‘Figure’ with the corresponding indicator number and a letter. For instance, for data in theme 1, this could look like ‘Figure 1.1.2a’, Figure ‘1.1.2b’, etc.

## 2.8 Indicator section headings

Each indicator should have the following headings (check for consistent spelling):

* **Headline**
  + Brief summary of the key findings in the indicator – seen from a “what this means for food security lens” (ie, ‘the UK produces around 80% of the wheat it consumes; average production is stable with some fluctuations due to weather’ rather than ‘the UK produces x million tons of wheat’)
* **Context and Rationale**
  + Background information for the data and explanation why this data matters for UK food security
* **Data and Assessment**
  + Data and source
    - If multiple sources, list as follows:
    - Source: FSA; FSS
  + Description of what the data in the ‘Data and Assessment’ section is showing
* **Rating and Trends / Direction of Travel**
  + State any visible trends in the data: ie, things appear to be stable, or to fluctuate, or have a clear positive upward/downward trend, or it’s not clear from available data. Note also any important external factors.

## 2.9 The ‘Voice’

* Avoid using sentences such as ‘We produce x amount of wheat’. The tone should be more neutral, i.e. write ‘The UK produces x amount of wheat’.

## 2.10 e.g. / i.e. / etc.

* **e.g.** can sometimes be read aloud as ‘egg’ by screen reading software. Instead use ‘for example’ or ‘such as’ or ‘like’ or ‘including’ - whichever works best in the specific context.
* **etc** can usually be avoided. Try using ‘for example’ or ‘such as’ or ‘like’ or ‘including’. Never use etc at the end of a list starting with these words.
* **ie** - used to clarify a sentence - is not always well understood. Try (re)writing sentences to avoid the need to use it. If that is not possible, use an alternative such as ‘meaning’ or ‘that is’.

## 2.11 Symbols

* ‘&’ use ‘and’, e.g. Context and rationale
* ‘/’ use ‘and’, e.g 2007/2008 = 2007 and 2008
* ‘-’ use ‘to’ (for example in dates), e.g. 2011-14 = 2011 to 2014

## 2.12 Numbers

* Write all other numbers in numerals (including 2 to 9) except where it’s part of a common expression like ‘one or two of them’ where numerals would look strange.
* Use a % sign for percentages: 50%
* Use ‘500 to 900’ and not ‘500-900’ (except in tables)

## 2.13 Quotation marks:

Use single quotes

* in headlines
* for unusual terms
* when referring to words
* when referring to publications

Use double quotes:

* Use double quotes in body text for direct quotations

# 3 Chart Style Guide

This section will cover guidance on chart design and themes. For the text styleguide, see Section 2. There is general guidance on chart design produced by the [Analysis Function](https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/data-visualisation-charts/).

**Please refer to Section 4 on preparing data for charting and publication as preview csv data.**

## 3.1 Colours

The UKFSR uses the Analysis Function palette as recommended [here](https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/data-visualisation-colours-in-charts/). There is an R package, afcolours available on CRAN, which helps with implementing the [palette](https://best-practice-and-impact.github.io/afcolours/).

There are a maximum of 6 colours available in the palette for categorical variables. This means that an individual chart may not have more than 6 series.

## 3.2 Chart context

Eache chart is accompanied by some additional features:

* CSV: the csv of the chart data is required for a preview/download link
* URL to source: the default is a kink to collection pages wherever possible.

## 3.3 Resolution/format

SVG/PNG

## 3.4 Helpers

We need a theme\_fsr theme for chart styleing. Defaults like linewidth = 1.5 for series need to be specified. We could have an fsr package a la ggfbs but is it sensible?

# 4 Data guide

How we prepare and organise data.

## 4.1 Format

The data underlying each chart needs to be stored in csv format. This is so we can offer a preview link for the data alongside each chart.

**GDS Transport font!!**

## 4.2 Storage

Raw data is stored in the Amazon S3 bucket s3-ranch-054. Storage is certified for sensitive data (although most data should be public domain).

### 4.2.1 Access

The bucket is accessible from across Defra (?)

library(aws.s3)  
  
contents <- get\_bucket\_df("s3-ranch-054")  
  
x <- aws.s3::s3read\_using(FUN = readr::read\_csv,  
 bucket = "s3-ranch-054",  
 object = "example.csv")

### 4.2.2 Structure

Here is the current suggested structure for the S3 bucket folders:

| Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 | Comments |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| theme\_X |  |  |  | Top level |
|  | TX\_s\_n |  |  | Indicator section and number (include description?) |
|  |  | data |  | Raw data in any form can be stored here. |
|  |  | output | graphics | Contains png and svg final graphic files |
|  |  |  | csv | Contains final csv required to reproduce the graphics in R. In tidy format. |
|  |  | misc |  | Optional folder to store random files, eg map shapefiles. |

### 4.2.3 File naming convention

UKFSR content files must adhere to a naming convention. Supplementary files such as raw data etc can be more fluid, although we recommend includint theme/ indicator numbers. If in doubt, err on the side of long descriptive file names - its 3 years befoer anyone will look at these again!

**Content filename template**

TX\_s\_nv\_description.svg/png/csv

where:

* X is theme number
* s is section number
* n is indicator number
* v is indicator variant, eg a,b,c, etc
* description needs to be enough to uniquely describe the content. Use *snake\_case* as necessary.
* **filetype** must be csv for data, svg/png for web/print respectively

### 4.2.4 Code

The S3 bucket is not a public resource (although generally its contents need not be stored securely). But the code to produce the content is stored in a public Github repository at <https://github.com/Defra-Data-Science-Centre-of-Excellence/UKFSR2024>. It is crucial that the content code for graphics and related output is captured here.

# 5 Theme guides

## 5.1 Theme 1

## 5.2 Theme 2

## 5.3 Theme 3

## 5.4 Theme 4

## 5.5 Theme 5

# 6 Web publishing guidance

## 6.1 Overview

The report is most likely drafted in Word, on a Sharepoint repository. This is the most effective way to create the content in a multiuser environment, but eventually the content needs to be converted for publication on gov.uk. This process, as with preparing for the physical print (Section 7) has a resource and time overhead.

**Factor in prep for web time! (ideally 1 week) and lock the text**

The text must be converted to [Govspeak](https://govspeak-preview.publishing.service.gov.uk/guide), a flavour of Markdown. Graphics must be saved as separate files and uploaded to the publishing system. CSV files of data must also be prepared.

Web publishing for statistics is handled by a small number of people who are accredited to use Whitehall Publisher. We are fortunate to have two publishers in the food team. But there is an overhead.

* web team to commandeer additional resource to cover second-eyes etc process during web print conversion

## 6.2 Logistics

## 6.3 Converting Word documents to markdown

R code for

library(rmarkdown)  
pandoc\_convert(input = 'FILENAME.docx',  
 to="markdown\_mmd",  
 output = "FILENAME.md",   
 options = c("--wrap=none",  
 "--reference-links",  
 "--extract-media=./images/"))

## 6.4 Graphics

Images must be 960 pixels wide by 640 pixels high at 72 dpi. SVGs can be any size and do not need resizing before uploading.

## 6.5 Other useful things

### 6.5.1 Acronym markdown

Add to end of file, each one on a new line, using the format as per the example below. This will enable a feature of gov.uk which pops up the acronym definition on a tooltip whenever a user hovers their mouse over the text. See 2.6 for guidance on acronyms in the text.

\*[UKFSR]: UK Food Security Report  
\*[STEC O157]: Shiga toxin-producing E. coli O157

# 7 Physical print edition

The logistics of print will depend on the service used to create the print edition. For UKFSR2021 the printers needed a PDF of the final document to turn into the final laid report.

**Factor in print publication time! (ideally 1 week) and lock the text**

Do not forget that preparing for web publishing (Section 6) is a separate and different process that also requires time and resources.

## 7.1 Final Word version

The assumption is that the final version will be contained in multiple Word files: one for each theme plus introductions, appendices, glossary, etc. Once these are finalised a master print version can be produced.

* ‘Lock’ the content: set a deadline and get everyone out of the Sharepoint documents
* copy the final section docs into a new folder: this folder is the master print content
* get a copy of the Defra doc template which has a default front and back cover
* check and secure an ISBN/Defra document number
* check any standard copyright notice text
* check other cover/back cover/inside cover text: last time there was specific wording like ‘laid before the HoC Library on *date*’ that needed to conform with protocol.

With this cover sheet insert the section docs as ‘subdocuments’, in outline view. This allows the building of the master table of contents which covers the whole report. Insert the TOC and set up the Contents pages. Once all the content is in place, we can turn to formatting for print:

* Margins: each section of the report needs to be formatted with mirror margins so that there is a larger gutter where the binding will be. Otherwise the content will get lost in the printed doc.
* Page numbering: inside and outside so that they appear on the right and left hand side of the printed page. You need to set page numbers to inherit from each previous section so that they flow from 1-n and don’t reset at the start of each child doc.
* Pagination: this was a bit of a fiddle last time. Make sure that the content is settled (You probably want to eyeball the content for any errors with heading levels etc and fix all content snags before doing this or else you’ll have to do it again). Refresh the TOC, and then go through inserting white space where necessary to ensure page breaks don’t occur in unfortunate places.
* URLs: We dont need to worry about URLs working in a paper document, but in a PDF we might want clickable links. *This is pretty irrelevant to the final HTML publication (remember: the HTML is the publication, not some paper document!)*. Focus on maximising hyperlinks in the we b publication.

At this point the document should be ready for PDF conversion.

## 7.2 Create PDF

At this point it should be easy: export the master Word doc to PDF (PDF/A I think: check!). Worth checking accessibility even though the HTML version will be the truly accessible version. One thing worth checking: metadata. Check the author, organisation etc metadata in the word doc is what you want in the PDF version.

## 7.3 Accessibility

There was an unfulfilled request for a large print version last time. With a bit of luck, any MPs with such requirements will accept the HTML version as accessible, zoomable and screen reader friendly. If not, repeat the document conversion process and edit the style definitions to up the font size. I think there might be practical printing issues which mean it would have to be printed as multiple documents. UKFSR at 300 odd pages I think was approaching the limit of what perfect binding print can handle. Speak to the print supplier about these issues.

# Appendix

# 8 Miscellaneous

## 8.1 Legal basis

[Agriculture Act 2020](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/21/part/2/chapter/1/enacted)

## 8.2 OSR feedback on UKFSR2021

[Here.](https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/mark-pont-to-ian-lonsdale-united-kingdom-food-security-report/)

## 8.3 General legal guidance from 2024

## 8.4 Publication deadline

[from legal comments 11/01/2024]

The date you should lay the report is actually 3 years from the date of the last report so that would be the 15 December 2024 (although note that this is a Sunday so the last sitting day before this date would be appropriate). There is no reason not to publish before this date if needed and it would be advisable not to leave it to the last possible date. Section 19 of the Agriculture Act 2020 states that **a new UKFSR is required “at least once every three years”**. We think that the safest way to interpret this would be that each UKFSR laying starts a three-year ‘clock’ by which another UKFSR must be published. As the first UKFSR was laid in Parliament on December 16 2021, the three-year clock means that the next must be laid by December 15 2024, but can be any time before. If UKFSR2 is instead laid on, for instance, September 1 2024, UKFSR3 will have to be laid by August 31 2027.

Also please note that although preferable, **Parliament does not absolutely have to be sitting for a paper to be laid.** This has previously been considered by policy and legal and whilst the UKFSR was published as an Act paper, if it must be published on a non-sitting day in order to avoid breaching statutory duties, Parliamentary Team consider that it could in exceptional circumstances be laid as a Command Paper with the full knowledge of the Journal Office and with the relevant changes made to its cover. This may not be necessary in future but for now it is advisable.

**Further, the UKFSR is Official Statistics**, which require notice of publication at least four weeks before the intended publication date, and publication on that date. Once the date is pre-notified, any failure to publish on that date will invite scrutiny from the Office of Statistical Regulation. This does not touch on any of the other rules, but if coming out on the same day should take account of the time it takes to lay documents in Parliament, so the next UKFSR should probably commit to publish at noon or so rather than 0930.

### 8.4.1 Late laying of the report

If the report is laid later than deadline date there would be a breach of this statutory duty. The risk of a legal challenge being brought (our assessment is that there would be a low risk (less than 30%)) would depend on the circumstances that caused the delay and the length of the delay. However, if it is brought the chances of successful challenge are medium-high (50-70%) given that there is a clear statutory duty to publish by a certain date. We could perhaps mitigate this depending on the circumstances which would lower the risk. For example, the Courts would likely look more favourably on SoS if the reason for delay was an election. However, if you know there will be an election then steps should be taken to avoid delay as much as possible. In short, unavoidable circumstances would look more favourable to the Courts than avoidable ones.

### 8.4.2 Environmental principles policy

We have considered whether the Environmental principles policy would apply here. Section 17(5) of the Environment Act 2021 sets out 5 principles that ministers will need to consider when making policy, namely:

* integration principle
* prevention principle
* rectification at source principle
* polluter pays principle
* precautionary principle

Whilst any particular concerns arising from considerations in the EPP statement will likely not apply when collecting data and compiling the report, any policy development that follows on from the reports’ findings should have due regard to the principles. This is just something to flag at this stage.

### 8.4.3 General considerations

Lastly, and as a general legal point, if the contents of the report were to be challenged, the ground would likely be rationality. It is therefore important that information sources are referenced correctly and checked. The 2021 report will of course provide an excellent starting point and seeing as that was not challenged, adopting a similar approach would be sensible.