

Changing the

NARRATIVE

GOVERNMENTS



Policy messaging guide

Project overview

This resource is for members of the Eating Better alliance and the wider food movement. It is intended to provide organisations with information and guidance on how to tailor their projects, messages and outputs so they are able to work in a more constructive way with governments. This resource was made through direct in-person engagement and feedback from policymakers and policy experts through our [Changing the Narrative](#) project, alongside desk-based research. It is intended to be used to inform Eating Better alliance members' reports and research, external engagement and campaigns, comms products and strategic thinking on 'less and better meat and dairy' in the context of policy.

"The ambitious changes we need to see in our food system demand that we work collaboratively. Changing the Narrative allows us to be bolder in demonstrating how we can make change happen and the positive story to be told with dietary change."

Andrew Stark

Senior Research and Policy Manager
Eating Better



Other resources in the series:



What this resource is and how to use it

This resource is for members of the Eating Better alliance and the wider food movement. It is intended to provide organisations with information and guidance on how to tailor their projects, messages and outputs so they are able to more effectively influence food policy. This resource is particularly designed to guide advocacy on food systems aiming for healthier and more sustainable diets, reflected in wider consumption and production of more plants, and less and better meat and dairy. Targets for advocacy include those working in and around Government(s), defined as public authorities and institutions at a local, national and global level that play a support and regulatory role in the food system. This resource will focus on local, national and devolved governments in the UK, whilst recognising that global food governance is a key part of wider changes to our food system, it is not a focus of the Eating Better alliance.

Important caveat: Food is a devolved policy area in the UK and each government of the UK has very different policy and economic landscapes, cultural attitudes towards food and unique ecosystems of food stakeholder relationships. This guide cannot speak to every possible angle across the UK, but is instead aiming to provide crosscutting framings and seeds for narratives that put forward a progressive food policy agenda.

Why policy change is key



Effective food policy at a local, national and global level is key to enabling a transition to diets that are healthy and sustainable across the UK. It is central to our focus at Eating Better, as set out in our [*Better by Half Roadmap*](#). Policy can provide a framework for various food system stakeholders to operate in, set a direction of travel for system change and create a more holistic understanding of food across related policy areas such as health (including animal health), farming and the environment. It can also act as a catalyst and supportive tool for much of the brilliant work happening at a community level to ensure access to nourishing food for all and the right to good food. Policymakers influence the tone of the public conversation around food and dietary change, often reinforcing public narratives in the media. Policy and policymakers therefore have a profound influence on how our food is produced, consumed and spoken about.

What needs to change



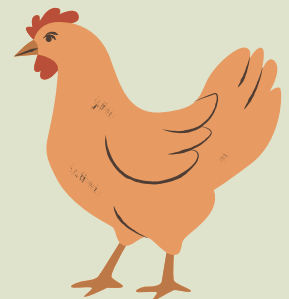
Despite some progress across the four nations of the UK, food policy is not currently fulfilling its immense potential to create a fair, healthy and sustainable food system, as evidenced in Eating Better's [2024 UK food policy review](#). To achieve this, as an alliance and across the food sector, we must continue to collaborate across siloes, reframe our arguments to policymakers, provide our evidence to them in a more effective format, highlight a more diverse set of spokespeople (powerful examples of this are Bite Back's [food activists](#), Food Foundation's [Food Ambassadors](#)), and better connect policy proposals to these experiences. Food policy, ideally enacted through primary legislation, can ensure a positive direction of travel, with transparency and accountability embedded in the policy process and the expectation that successive governments must act on food. It would also give food stakeholders – farmers, citizens, investors, food retailers and manufacturers – the certainty they need to invest in a healthier and more sustainable food system. Eating Better is proud to be a member of the Food Strategy Alliances alongside [Sustain](#), [Obesity Health Alliance](#), [Wildlife and Countryside Link](#) and [Plant-based Food Alliance](#). We are currently working to influence the UK Government's Good Food Cycle and have set out a number of [policy proposals](#).

The Better by Half roadmap shows actions to move us towards producing and eating less and better meat and dairy, creating a food system that is fairer, healthier and more sustainable for people, animals and the planet.

Governments action to get us there:

1. Deliver a cross-departmental food, farming and public health strategy
2. Sustainable and healthy dietary guidelines underpin all appropriate policy development
3. Make sustainable diets the norm through public procurement
4. Every child has access to a hot, nutritious school meal
5. Develop and implement a strategy to facilitate a just transition for agriculture
6. Rebalance agricultural policy towards better meat, better dairy and better plants
7. Develop an integrated land-use plan
8. Local authorities improve access to fruit, vegetables and pulses
9. Make vegetables and better meat and dairy affordable
10. Assess future trade deals for their impact on human health, animal welfare and the environment

For more info on the practical actions on what needs to happen, explore Eating Better's [Better by Half roadmap](#).



The different levels of food policy

Food policy is at times a complicated and messy process. As the negative impacts of our food system have become increasingly visible and research has unveiled the interconnections between different policy areas, the need for joined up food policy has gained momentum and is now agreed upon by many food stakeholders. This is reflected in the consensus in the [campaign for a Good Food Bill](#) in the UK Parliament, and the campaign behind the Good Food Nation Bill in Scotland led by the [Scottish Food Coalition](#).

Food policy is developed and governed at different levels. In order to stay focused, this guide will not focus on the global level, but instead identify framings and narratives around the local, national and devolved levels. It is important to emphasise that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to explaining how policy is developed and influenced. Below is a short descriptor of the different levels of food governance in the UK.

Local

Local authorities have an important role in the implementation of national policy decisions as well as taking a more localised and place-based approach to food policy. Local authorities are often more effective at working with local stakeholders than a national government and can emphasise that particular localities' food strengths. This includes city and regional mayors, which are in some regions of the UK. [Local food partnerships](#), established partnerships between community food groups and local authorities, can act as a catalyst for supporting much of the good work happening on the ground. Local authorities directly run public and environmental health policy too, for example food hygiene inspections.

Local food policy can be developed in support of an overarching national framework. For example, each local authority and health board in Scotland is legally required to produce a Good Food Plan as a requirement of the Good Food Nation Act (2022). It can also be developed outside of this and driven by local food groups, for example the [Belfast Food Partnership](#), part of the [Sustainable Food Places network](#).

UK Government / devolved governments

Food is one of the many areas of policy that is devolved to the governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Devolution has been somewhat successful in delivering more powers to the governments and parliaments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and allowed these nations to deliver policies that are more suited to their own contexts than a top down approach by a centralised UK Government. That said, there is confusion at times amongst stakeholders about the extent to which certain policies are devolved, who is responsible for enacting them and a risk of policy divergence, where differences across different jurisdictions arise due to differing policies. A detailed description of devolution is available on the UK Parliament's website, ['Introduction to devolution in the United Kingdom'](#) (2024).

If you would like to see a fuller mapping of government actors and activities, this is set out in a 2020 briefing ['Who makes food policy in England?'](#)

State of food policy across the UK*

England

- The long awaited [Good Food Cycle](#) announced in summer 2025 set out the UK Government's vision for moving away from a 'Junk Food Cycle'.
- To date (April 2026), a citizens advisory panel and stakeholder workshops have been the primary engagement tool, although a lack of detail, confusion over timelines, corporate influence on the policy process and geopolitical challenges have delayed progress.
- As part of the [Food Strategy Alliances](#), Eating Better has collated 17 recommendations for the Good Food Cycle spanning policy coherence and implementation, alongside production and consumption measures.
- The campaign for a [Good Food Bill](#) is calling for primary legislation to be introduced, which Eating Better supports.

Wales

- Wales leads on taking a community centered approach, as all 22 local authorities have a local food partnership which is supported by funding from the Welsh Government. This approach to local food partnerships is underpinned by the Welsh Government's [Community Food Strategy](#).
- An opposition Food (Wales) Bill failed in 2023, led by Conservative MS Peter Fox.
- [Future Generations Commissioner](#) set up to support long term and strategic thinking across government.
- Free school meals and public procurement are seen as key avenues to support better food across the food supply chain.
- [Food Policy Alliance Cymru](#) (FPAC) is asking members of the next Welsh Government to Put Food at the Heart of Welsh Government in the run up to the May 2026 elections.

Case study #1 - Wales

Welsh Veg in Schools is a pilot project coordinated by [Food Sense Wales](#) that aims to get more organically produced Welsh veg into primary school meals across Wales, supporting organic producers across Wales and bringing multiple social, economic and environmental benefits to Wales. This project helps demonstrate how to increase the consumption and production of the horticulture sector in Wales, supported by the Welsh Government's [Community Food Strategy](#) and investment in local food partnerships. The expected forecast for 2025 was for 1 million portions of organic veg to be served in schools. More information can be found by Food Sense Wales [here](#).

Scotland

- Scotland is the first country in the UK to have a statutory food plan in the UK, the [Good Food Nation Act 2022](#). The first [National Food Plan](#) was published at the end of 2025.
- Alongside a national plan, all 32 local authorities and 14 health boards must produce local food plans.
- An independent Scottish Food Commission was set up - after civil society campaigning - to support policy implementation and provide advice and monitoring to food stakeholders to make the Good Food Nation a reality.
- Despite this progress, there are questions by [stakeholders](#) as to whether the plan goes far enough, as it does not bring in any new policies, targets or indicators. It is also vague on delivery mechanisms and policy implementation.
- The [Scottish Food Coalition](#) have four asks of the Scottish Government to continue in the journey of Scotland becoming a Good Food Nation.

Northern Ireland

- The Northern Ireland Assembly (Stormont) returned on February 3, 2024.
- Andrew Muir, the Minister of Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Affairs, has led on food policy since his appointment as Minister in 2024.
- Minister Muir published the [NI Food Strategy Framework](#) in November 2024. Vision for the Framework: "A transformed innovative food system that protects and enhances natural resources for future generations, is environmentally sustainable, economically ambitious and provides safe, nutritionally balanced, accessible food for all."
- A follow up [Food Strategy Framework Action Plan](#) was published in May 2025 to drive forward the Plan up until 2027, when the next Northern Ireland Assembly elections will take place.

Case study #2 - Scotland

Scotland passed the Good Food Nation Act in 2022, a framework piece of legislation that was introduced after years worth of campaigning by [Nourish Scotland](#) and the [Scottish Food Coalition](#). This required the Scottish Government to introduce a National Food Plan, the first in the UK which was [published](#) in December 2025. It also requires every local authority (32) and health board (14) in Scotland to introduce food plans, setting Scotland up to have connected local and national food policy. The Scottish Food Commission was also set up to oversee and support the implementation of local and national Good Food Nation policy.

Did you know? The difference between...

Food Bill

A proposed piece of legislation - either by the government in power or by an opposition party - in parliament that proposed putting food policy changes into law

Approved bills then become 'Acts', which means it's now a Government's legal duty to enact what the Bill calls for. Any changes to law require a vote by Parliament, making it trickier to change. Depending on the length of the legislation and the breadth of topics covered, it can take a long time to pass and implement.

Recent examples include the successful Good Food Nation Act (2022) in Scotland (a Scottish Government Bill) and the unsuccessful Food (Wales) Bill (2023) which was a members Bill (from Conservative opposition).

The difference between primary and secondary legislation: Primary is written in law, and secondary legislation is usually more statutory guidance or regulations.

E.g. The Environment Act (2021) requires targets to be set on the environment, in primary legislation.

But the detail of the target wording is set in secondary legislation.

Primary legislation requires a vote in Parliament, whereas secondary legislation can often just be signed off by a Secretary of State (and devolved equivalent). Read more [here](#).

Food Plan/Strategy/Framework

These words are sometimes used interchangeably and can have overlapping meaning.

In effect, they are ideas and actions set out by governments to address food related issues. A recent example is the UK Government's Good Food Cycle for England. Strategies and frameworks set out policy intentions and commitments, without always requiring statutory/legislative backing. These can be great opportunities to secure commitments from governments and Ministers who want their departmental strategies to land well and be considered successful, which may then make them more likely to engage with the sector and consider policy campaigns. In the right circumstances, strategies can be drafted and delivered faster than legislation.

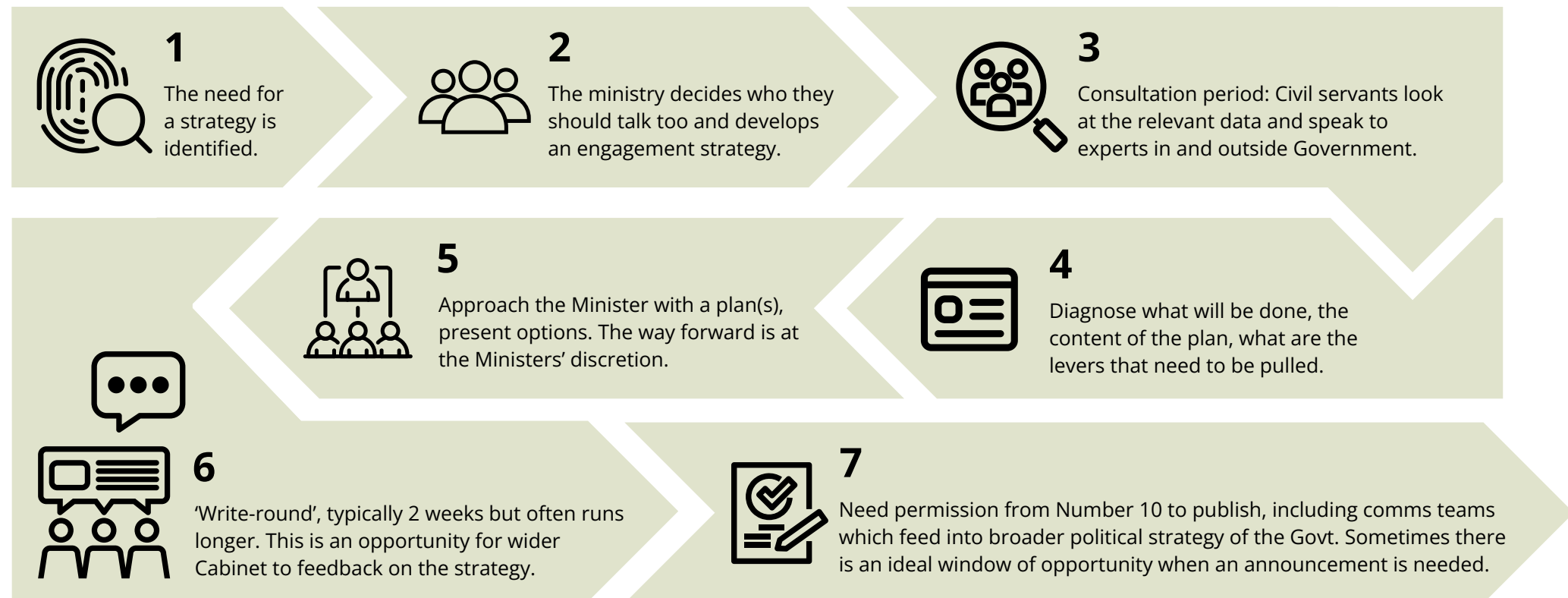
In order to work out how effective a strategy is:

- **Establish** if it was introduced via legislation or not. This can also help decide if there is a need for a campaign around legislation, as either a tactic as part of wider policy changes or a final outcome in itself.
- **Ask** experienced stakeholders in your network, has this Plan/Strategy/Framework delivered the changes it said it would?
- **What** are the safeguards to ensure this strategy does not get ignored or dropped by a change in government leadership?
- **Who** is making sure the government is achieving what the Plan/Strategy/Framework is aiming to achieve, and therefore providing accountability? A good example of this is the Climate Change Committee which was set up via the Climate Change Act (2008).

How a Plan/Strategy/Framework is developed in Governments

(focused primarily at UK Government level)

There are opportunities to influence at all steps along this process:



Effective framings

Tailoring your messaging is key for positive engagement and breaking through barriers between civil society and those shaping food policy, no matter the level you are trying to influence. Below are tips on what works well and what to avoid when engaging with food policy.

Four overarching considerations to build into strategies influencing policy are:



Understanding constituent concerns and recognising constituent power is key to successful advocacy. Constituents hold power in voting political parties in or out, and engaging with their elected representatives (which can include Councillors, MPs, MSPs, MSs and MLAs) can build a public mandate for policymakers to change.



Know the priorities of who you are meeting and shape your arguments around their needs. Balancing a flexibility in message whilst keeping the core is key to ensuring your arguments have relevance for who you are trying to influence. For example, do they have a human-rights based approach to policy making, or is economic growth top of their priority list?



Showing support from unusual suspects can be a useful way of showing that your ask for food policy is not just confined to organisations who think like you. For example, M&S signed the [Good Food Bill](#) campaign ask, which shows that some businesses agree with NGOs on the need for progressive policy change.



Address the reasons 'why now' and 'why not'? Politicians are always juggling important issues, and it can be hard to know what to prioritise now. You could be competing with local healthcare or international foreign policy issues for their time. Try to proactively pitch why this matters now and why they should prioritise your issue. Similarly, the more you can proactively address the reasons 'why not' to do something, the more you can likely convince the politician to lean in your favour. *Be prepared for an answer to, why is this worth the cost to the taxpayer or companies, why should the UK be a leader on this issue, why is it not going to be as burdensome as someone else is arguing?*

Councillors = elected representative who serves as a member of a local authority.

MPs = Members of Parliament, elected representative who serves as a member of the UK Parliament.

MSPs = Members of the Scottish Parliament, elected representative who serves as a member of the Scottish Parliament.

MSs = Members of the Senedd, elected representative who serves as a member of the Welsh Senedd.

MLAs = Members of the Legislative Assembly, elected representative who serves as a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Four overarching considerations to build into strategies influencing policy are:

- The below framings do not always neatly fit into boxes, and there might be cross-applicability across the different levels of policy.
- The policy contexts are very different across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. These countries have their own cultural attachments to food, histories around the food system and different socio-economic circumstances. That said, there is a degree of commonality amongst them as they are smaller nations with their own parliaments and sizable pro-independence parties (from the UK).

Framings that work well

At a local level



Those working on food at a local level are often understaffed and dealing with many competing priorities. Whilst this is often true at all levels, it is especially so at a local level. Ask how you can help support them in their day-to-day work and ensure you are seen as someone able to help rather than another burden. For example, think about how your briefing saves them from having to do additional research or read unnecessary extra information (what will they want to know, not what do I want to tell them). Policy can connect them to wider networks, even if not directly relevant to their role i.e. transport.



Ensure you have identified and built positive relationships with local spokespeople you know support your asks. This could be farmers, chefs, nutritionists, local campaigners or others who recognise the need for dietary change. What good work is already happening that food policy can support? An example of this in action is the [collaboration](#) between NGOs and local campaign groups in stopping the expansion of industrial livestock production in Norfolk.



Budget constraints are a reality for those working in local government. Positive food policy can support delivering across multiple objectives, as seen in school food and free school meals. Research into the impact of free school meals in London showed that many families saved money and were enabled “to spend money on ‘better’ and ‘healthier’ food at home. This included being able to plan better for meals, being more efficient when shopping and buying more fruit and vegetables. Three in five (60%) parents who completed the survey said they were able to spend more money on food for their family as a result of the policy” ([Impact on Urban Health 2023](#)).

Case study #3 - Northern Ireland

Belfast Food Partnership, a cross-sectoral partnership of over 23 organisations from across business, community, government and academia, was established in 2023. In [‘The Belfast Way: A Strategy and Roadmap to a Thriving, Fair and Resilient Food System’](#), the Partnership sets out their vision for Belfast’s food system in 2026 and beyond. This connects Belfast’s food movement to wider food policy development, including the NI Food Strategy Framework.

Framings that work well

At a devolved level



Understanding the cultural aspects of the nation you are operating in. This could be a specific language, historical relationships to the food system and the celebrated food culture in this nation. Welsh translations of policy documents help broaden your audience for engaging on policy, for example.



Talk up what is happening at a food policy level across the UK. Internal UK competition can help ensure cross-nation learnings are used as a 'race to the top'. For example, Scotland has a net zero target 5 years ahead of the other nations in the UK. For food, pick out which existing commitments are related that you can use as a hook in your advocacy.



Working with organisations who only focus in one geographic area, such as country-specific NGOs or researchers, can enable your policy asks to be as accurate and as informed as possible. Country specific stats and accurate data ensures you are avoiding talking in generalities about the UK as a whole, and can hone in on the country specific elements of your advocacy.

At a UK level (also relevant at devolved level)



Decide whether to pitch your policy ask to be crossparty - support from multiple political parties - or not. Crossparty support can be useful to garner wider buy-in to your campaign ask and show a consensus on change for a particular policy issue. This is often true but if you're trying to persuade a Minister who is very tribal, or there are particular interparty dynamics, you may get further working with just one party (normally the governing party).



Link to other commitments made by Governments that have relevance for food and dietary change. For example, commitments around deforestation as a key element of intensive pig and poultry production, alongside water pollution impacts. This can highlight either their related legal obligations, thereby increasing political pressure, or indicate where 'win-wins' can be made that can deliver across multiple government objectives.



Consider international comparisons that may showcase how the UK could lead on this issue, or is behind on something, whilst being cognisant of the ongoing politics. For example, the current UK Labour Government is looking to align with the EU on certain aspects, but is also conscious of how this impacts US relations.



Emphasise the upsides of the policies you are advocating, ideally in the language and framing of existing government. For example with farming, highlight how farmers can get greater returns with lower costs focusing on higher quality meat products and, conversely, how intensively reared meat lowers farmers returns and has unintended societal costs. Analysis by The Wildlife Trusts '[Farming at The Sweet Spot](#)' shows how changing the farm system can lower costs, increase returns and deliver public goods.



Showcasing public support for your ask, including with balanced polling such as Eating Better's [Public Attitudes Surveys](#), can help to show politicians that you are not alone in calling for this. However, in an electoral context where trade-offs are real, the question politicians care about is whether there is a real electoral impact, and this is often harder - but more rewarding - to demonstrate.

At all levels

If possible, show how your policy recommendations can deliver cost savings or increased profitability to households, governments or food stakeholders such as farmers. The 'cost-of-living crisis' is used as a reason to oppose regulation from the food industry and is at the forefront of every Government's focus. It is important to be cognisant of how your policy asks will interact with food prices, and be prepared to outline how your asks will potentially benefit the wider food system.

Amongst the general public, messages centred around affordability, health, and enabling better food options are both more persuasive in terms of building public support for political action on food policy, and most insulated against backlash and polarisation when developing policy advocacy strategies.



Framings to avoid

At a local level



Avoid telling those working at a local level what works best or not in their area, and recognise the work that is ongoing in their community. A lot of positive food work that is happening at a local level is happening despite policy, not because of it. Useful case studies from either another policy area or abroad can help demonstrate where your policy ask has worked before.



When talking about dietary change, avoid talking bluntly about reducing livestock numbers and ignoring the place-based elements of the debate. The UK has a diverse landscape, with diverse constituent bases and farming practices within different areas (or lack of farming in more urban areas). Many people working on local food policy will be neighbours or colleagues of farmers, or could be farmers themselves or come from farming families. The continuation of good relations is key to achieving longer term change.

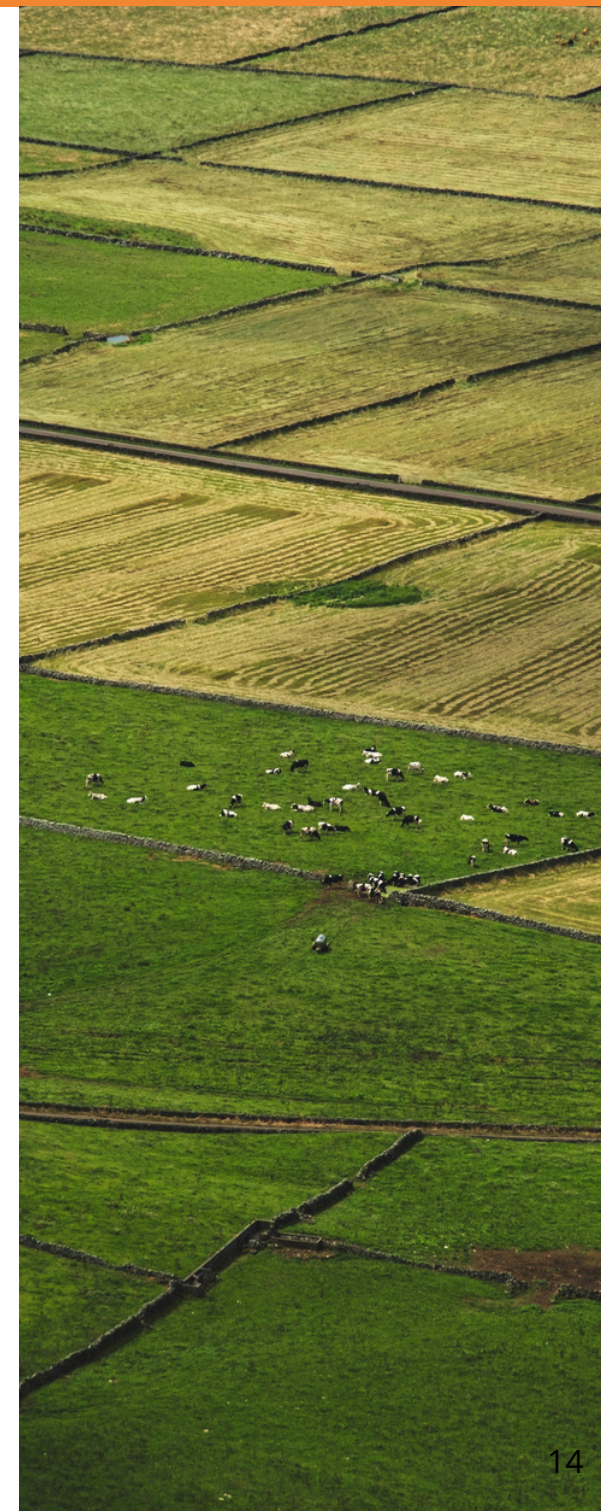
At a devolved level



It is vital that you know the devolved policy area of the subject in which you are engaging, at least at a basic level. For example, a long-awaited [Land Use Framework](#) was recently announced for England. In Scotland, there has been a Land Use Strategy since 2009. Recognising where each nation is at is vital. Eating Better carried out a four-nation policy review in 2024 you can find [here](#).



Avoid politically sticky policy topics that can cause tension amongst stakeholders. Inter-UK relations are far from smooth post-Brexit and many food-related markets are still finding their way.



At a UK level



Make sure you know the context of what the Government has been working on. If they feel you are asking for something which already exists or they have already committed to, they will point you to that and struggle to engage with next steps. Think of the relevant hook for your ask and why it matters to their work.



Avoid framings that put up costs, as any policy that is perceived as increasing food or business costs will face opposition from the public, scepticism from MPs, and be vulnerable to counter-messaging. Affordability is currently the dominant concern shaping how all audiences engage with food policy.

At all levels

Policies need to focus on addressing structural drivers of problems, not blaming individuals or scolding individual behaviour. Framings and policies that come across as penalising individuals for their choices will inevitably be derailed by ideological arguments about the "nanny state" and be off-putting to skittish policymakers. However, it is also crucial to be aware that some politicians, media figures and particularly industry groups will present any effective policy as "nanny state", harmful to business or otherwise ideologically objectionable. There has been extensive work conducted for how to address this - which includes a strong evidence base (on both the problem and the solution), a focus on structural drivers rather than individuals, and focusing on inequalities in health outcomes. FFCC's [Food Conversation](#) work provides further detail on this area.

Case study #4 - England

The Soft Drinks Industry Levy (SDIL) is a mandatory tax on sugar in soft drinks for manufacturers (also known as the sugar tax), and was introduced in 2018. The Levy aimed to improve public health outcomes and incentivised drinks manufacturers to adapt their businesses and reduce sugar content in soft drinks by an average of 47%. The policy also improved life expectancy for children and adolescents, whilst raising over £2.2bn for the UK Exchequer since 2018. This example highlights how policy and regulation can be good for public health and the economy. Further information is available [here](#) from Sustain.

Examples of counter-arguments we hear from policymakers

These illustrative examples of counter-arguments are by no means definitive, and there will be different answers for different policymakers and civil servants. That said, they can help illustrate some of the examples that Eating Better and its members hear and some guiding responses to help answer challenges.

Example

Response

"If we focus on dietary change, we will be endorsing closing farms."

Doing nothing on dietary change will lead to this scenario in any case, as the status quo is not working for farmers or workers in the food supply chain. This can be seen with closures of processing facilities seen across the UK and half (49%), consistent decline in the number of dairy producers (8720 producers in 2019 versus 7010 in 2025) and the decline in the breeding beef herd to 1.3 million in 2025, versus around 1.7 million in 2005. Part of the 'better' meat and dairy structure involves more local abattoirs and regional infrastructure to support farmers with processing more locally, shielding them from the corporate intensification of agriculture and the pricing out of many small-medium producers.

"We've got no money to source any better food."

Recognise the fiscal constraints that face policymakers upfront, but demonstrate the potential cost savings of a 'less and better' approach to them in the long term and reframe the argument and present good examples if available. This could be savings through financial support reform and from increasing plant-based elements on menus lowering overall costs, improving taxation or lowering expenditure by addressing poor public health. Research in WWF's 2023 Eating for Net Zero report shows how their Livewell diet can be achieved without costing more, whilst research modelled by Oxford University showed that flexitarian diets with low amounts of meat and dairy reduced household costs by 14% (Oxford University 2021).

"We don't want to tell people what to eat."

Focusing on the food environment and the structures around people's food options ensure the focus is not on the individual. People are also hugely influenced already through the food system via marketing and advertising and promotions. For example, the UK Government has estimated that children in the UK were exposed to over 15 billion online advertisements for High Fat, Sugar, and Salt (HFSS) products in 2019 (House of Lords 2024, p.96). Henry Dumbleby and Dolly Van Tulleken's report Nourishing Britain shows how policymakers can navigate the paternalistic critique.

Example

Response

"We don't have time for long-term changes."

We need to balance both short-term priorities with long-term change. Governments are often under immense political pressure - internally within their parties and externally from the public and media - which can affect long-term planning. Be adaptive to this and think, how can my proposals support them in their priorities and be useful to them? For example in a farming context, short-term impacts of climate change are already here, with extreme weather leading to three of the five worst harvests on record this decade, and so we need to act ([ECIU 2025](#)). More mixed farming methods deliver on resilience and environmental outcomes.

"People aren't interested in better food."

Annual polling by Eating Better demonstrates that public support exists for action on food policy. Polling by Eating Better in 2025 shows that 66% of people surveyed are open to the idea of reducing their meat consumption, people want to eat more beans and pulses than those who do not (44% versus 33%) and 53% think they're a good replacement for meat because they save money ([Eating Better 2025](#)).



Advocacy tips for meeting stakeholders

Every meeting or engagement is different but it is worth making sure you are up to speed with the specific context. Whilst policymakers have a lot in common, they also have very different priorities and drivers and preparation is essential to successful engagement.

Do your homework: prepare for the meeting by researching the politician's political background, understanding who their constituents are, what have they said in relation to food in their parliament, what are their party priorities that food can help solve. If meeting a civil servant or advisor, understand which department they are in and if you don't know, ask! Try and understand what policy levers are within the remit of the people you are meeting and have specific asks covering areas they have power over.

Be specific in what you want to see happen: ensure your briefings and messaging can be lifted and taken into proposed policy or legislative changes.

Gain an understanding of the political party of the Government you are trying to influence and their voter base: this includes a knowledge of the positions of opposition parties. Stories, narratives and language framed by the party you are working with, or trying to influence, are key to success.

Shape messages around what you think the problem is, for whom and why: Be clear as to what you mean by these factors, otherwise those you are trying to influence will put responsibility elsewhere. The key theme in your advocacy must be *who* and *what* do you want to affect and influence.

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