

FSA's flagship survey shows food affordability concerns have risen

The Wave 7 survey found that 55% of people across England, Wales and Northern Ireland were 'highly concerned' about the affordability of food, rising from 48% in Wave 5 which was conducted during the same period in 2022.

Eighty percent of respondents said they had made a change to their eating habits in the previous 12 months due to financial reasons. The most common changes were eating out less (49%) and eating at home more (45%). Some respondents also reported an increase in risky food safety behaviours, such as keeping leftovers for longer (21%) and eating food past its use-by date (21%).

Meanwhile, the number of respondents who reported levels of household food insecurity (which means having limited or uncertain access to adequate food) has remained at 25%, the same as the previous wave and the joint-highest level since the survey began four years ago. Four percent of respondents reported using a food bank in the last 12 months (compared to 3% in Wave 5), and 5% had used a 'social supermarket', which sells discounted food to those on lower incomes. Younger adults, households with a lower income, households with children and those with long term health conditions were among the groups that were more likely to report food insecurity.

This survey is an official statistic and measures self-reported knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to food safety and other food issues.

'The latest data shows increasing levels of concern about rising food prices, with almost nine out of ten people reporting that they were highly or somewhat concerned about the affordability of food – the highest level since our survey began. It is particularly concerning that some respondents were telling us they were turning to riskier food behaviours to save money, such as keeping leftovers for longer and eating food past its use-by date. These types of behaviours can lead to a higher risk of people becoming ill with food poisoning.

'To make food go further, we are encouraging people to follow our tips for keeping food safe, including freezing food on or before its use-by date if you are not going to use it. We've got lots of advice on [food.gov.uk](https://www.food.gov.uk) to help people use their judgement and make informed choices, while staying safe.'

Emily Miles, FSA Chief Executive

Key findings

- 88% of respondents reported that they were confident that the food they buy is safe to eat
- 55% of respondents said they were 'highly concerned' about the affordability of food, with a further 34% saying they were 'somewhat concerned' (a combined total of 89%)

- 80% of respondents reported that they had made a change to their eating habits for financial reasons in the previous 12 months. The most common changes were eating out less (49%), eating at home more (45%), eating fewer takeaways (44%) and buying items on special offer more (44%)
- Some respondents reported an increase in risky food safety behaviours due to financial reasons: 21% kept leftovers for longer before eating, 21% had eaten food past its use-by date more and 6% changed the setting on the fridge/freezer
- Of respondents who reported having a food concern (28%), the most common concerns related to food production methods (33%), nutrition and health (30%), and the quality of food (23%)
- 68% of respondents reported that they had confidence in the food supply chain

About the report???

Fieldwork for Food and You 2: Wave 7 was conducted between 23 April and 10 July 2023. A total of 5,812 adults from 4,006 households across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland took part. ???

Read the research???

The full Wave 7 report is available in the [research section of our website](#).