

Food and You 2 trends: Chapter 1: Food you can trust

Introduction

The FSA's overarching mission is 'food you can trust'. The FSA's vision is a food system in which:

- food is safe
- food is what it says it is
- food is healthier and more sustainable

This chapter provides an overview of respondents' awareness of and trust in the FSA, as well as their confidence in food safety and the food supply chain between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024).

Confidence in food safety and authenticity

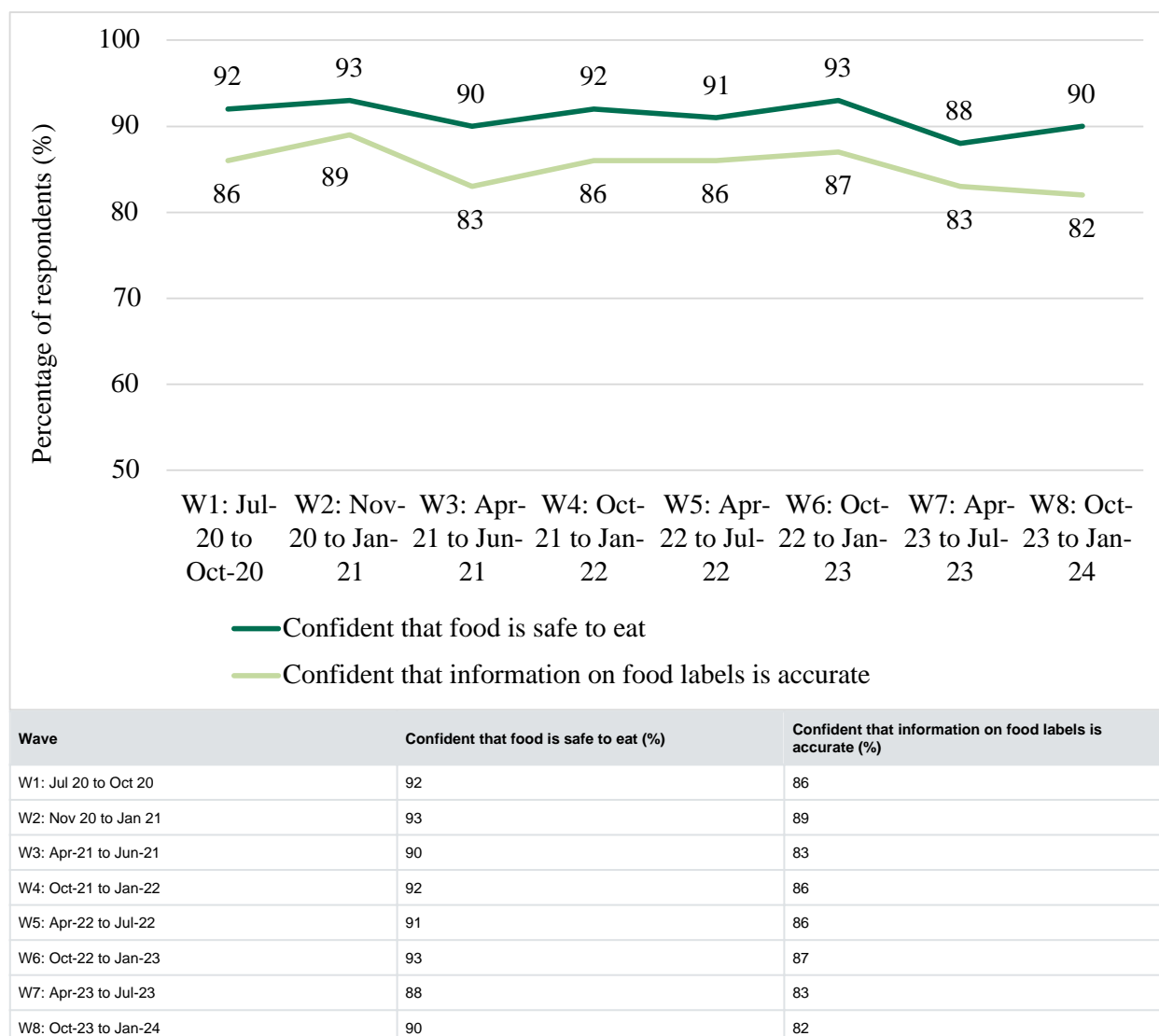
Although there has been some variation between waves, consumer confidence in food safety has generally remained high, with around 9 in 10 respondents reporting that they were confident (i.e., very confident or fairly confident) that the food they buy is safe to eat across all waves. A small decline in confidence that food is safe to eat was observed in Wave 3 (90%), Wave 7 (88%) and Wave 8 (90%) compared to other waves** (Figure 1).

Consumer confidence in food authenticity has also remained relatively high, with over 8 in 10 respondents reporting that they were confident that the information on food labels is accurate across all waves ([footnote 1](#)). Similar to food safety, a notable decline in confidence that the information on food labels is accurate was observed in Wave 3 (83%), Wave 7 (83%) and Wave 8 (82%) compared to other waves** (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Confidence that food is safe to eat and information on food labels is accurate

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Food and You 2: Wave 1-8

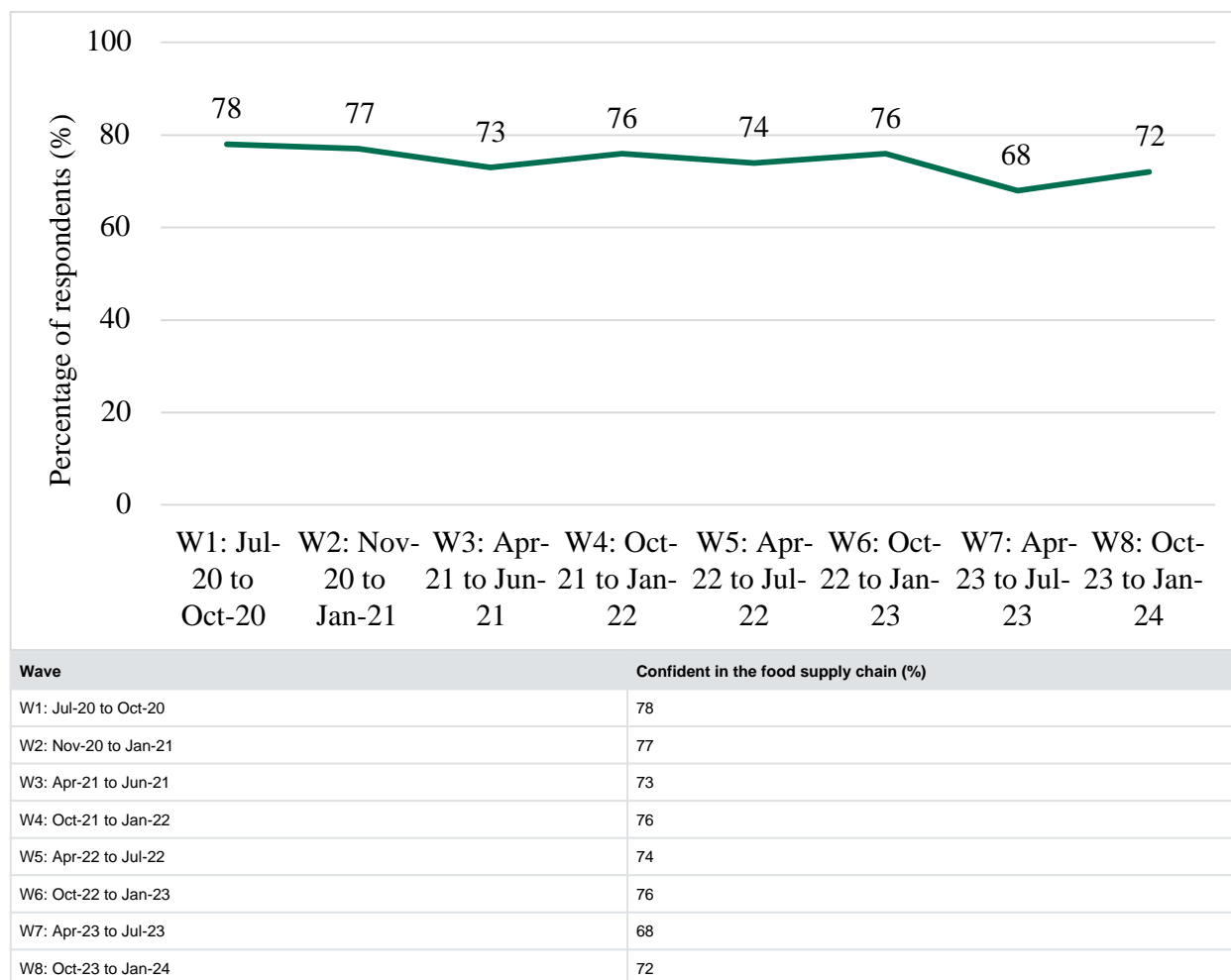
Confidence in the food supply chain

Across most waves, around three quarters of respondents reported confidence in the food supply chain [\(footnote 2\)](#). However, there was a notable decline in confidence in the food supply chain in Wave 3 (73%), Wave 7 (68%) and Wave 8 (72%) compared to other waves** (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Confidence in the food supply chain.

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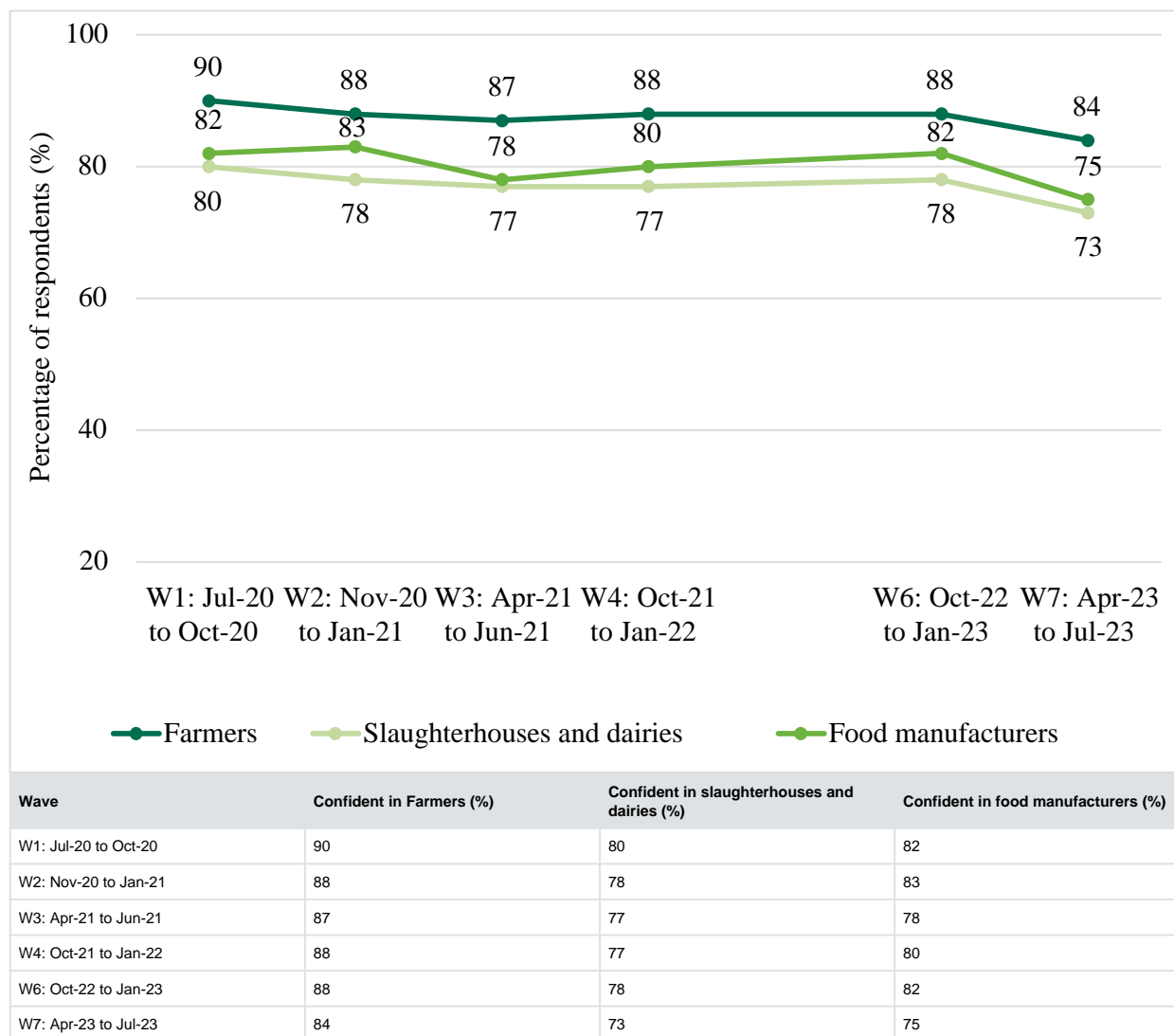
Food and You 2: Wave 1-8

Respondents were asked how confident they are that different food supply chain actors ensure the food they buy is safe to eat (footnote 3). Following a period of stability between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023) there was a notable decline in confidence in all food production and manufacturing actors between Wave 6 and Wave 7 (April 2023 to July 2023) including farmers (88% to 84%), manufacturers (82% to 75%), and slaughterhouses and dairies (78% to 73%). Confidence was consistently highest in farmers with around 9 in 10 feeling confident that farmers ensure food is safe across all waves (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Confidence that food supply chain actors ensure food is safe to eat (food production and manufacturing actors)

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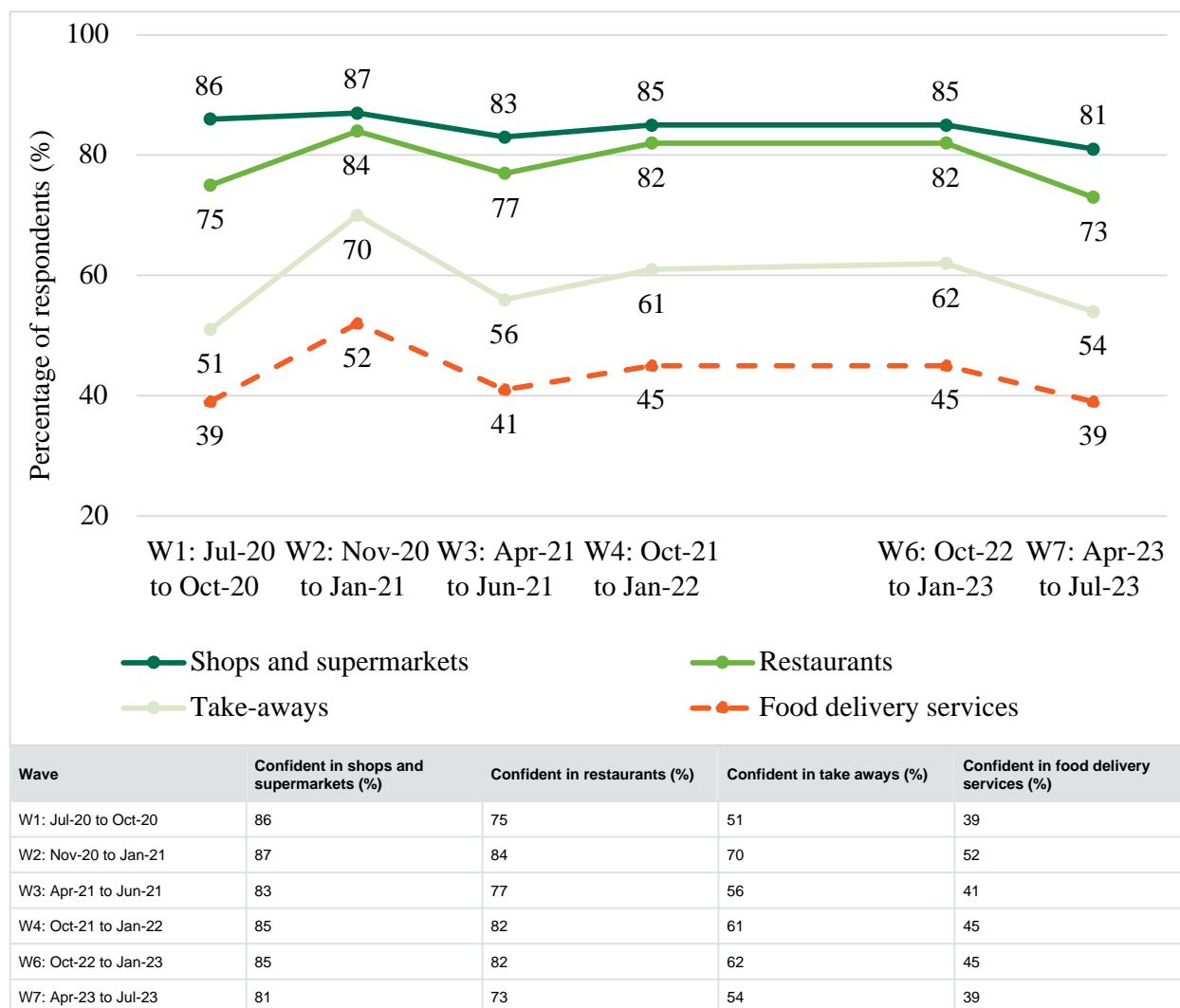
Food and You 2: Wave 1-4, 6-7

There has been some variation in confidence in retail and service sector actors over time, with confidence being highest in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) and lowest in Wave 7 (April 2023 to July 2023) ([footnote 4](#)). Across all waves confidence was highest in shops and supermarkets (81% - 87%) and lowest in food delivery services (39% - 52%) (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Confidence that food supply chain actors ensure food is safe to eat (retail and service actors)

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Food and You 2: Wave 1-4, 6-7

Awareness, trust, and confidence in the FSA

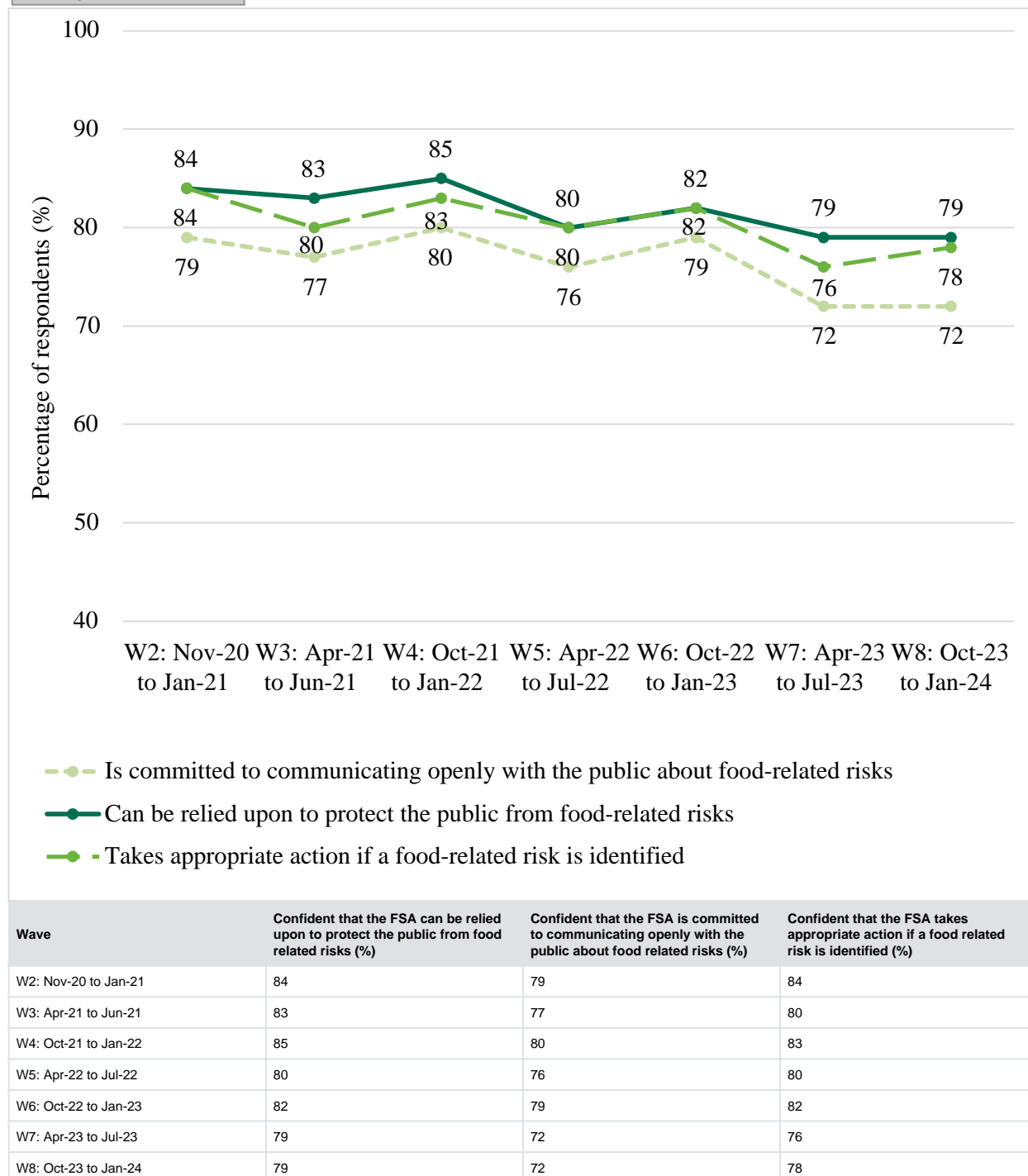
There has been a gradual decline in confidence in the FSA (or the government agency responsible for food safety) between Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) and Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024) ** although confidence remains relatively high across all waves ([footnote 5](#)) (Figure 5). For instance:

- The percentage of respondents who reported being confident that the FSA can be relied upon to protect the public from food-related risks (such as food poisoning or allergic reactions from food) decreased from 84% in Wave 2 to 79% in Wave 8.
- The percentage of respondents who reported being confident that the FSA is committed to communicating openly with the public about food-related risks decreased from 79% in Wave 2 to 72% in Wave 8.
- The percentage of respondents who reported being confident that the FSA takes appropriate action if a food-related risk is identified decreased from 84% in Wave 2 to 78% in Wave 8.

Figure 5. Confidence in the Food Standards Agency.

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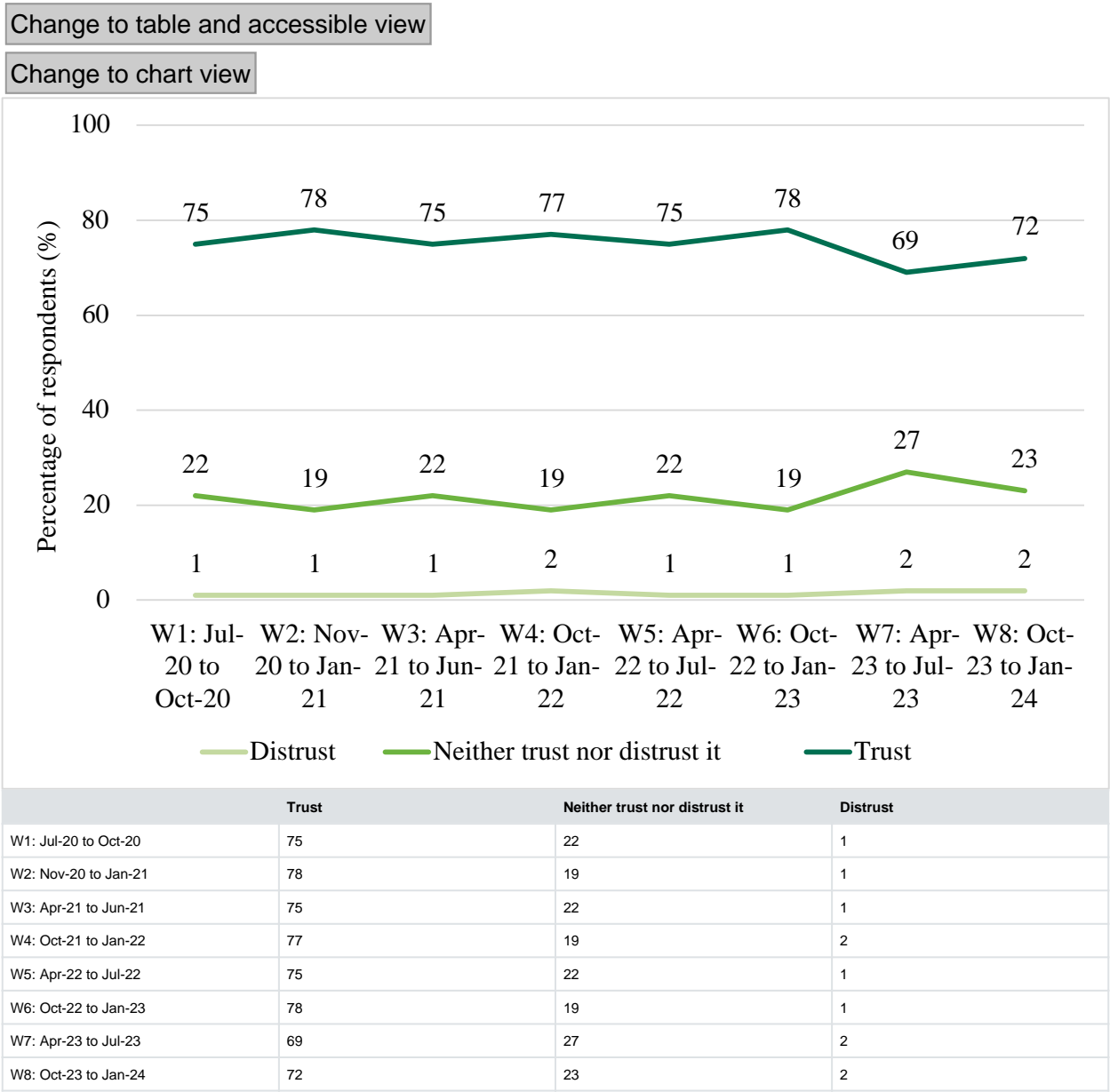
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Food and You 2: Wave 2-8

Trust in the FSA amongst those who have at least some knowledge of the FSA was broadly stable, with some variation**, between Wave 1 and Wave 6, with around three-quarters of respondents reporting that they trust the FSA to do its job. There was a notable decline in trust in Wave 7 (69%) (April 2023 to July 2023) with a corresponding increase in the percentage who reported that they ‘neither trust nor distrust’ the FSA (from 19% to 27%)**. In Wave 8, trust remained slightly below three-quarters of respondents (72%). Across all waves, distrust in the FSA has remained low (1-2%) (Figure 6) [\(footnote 6\)](#).

Figure 6. Trust in the Food Standards Agency.



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Food and You 2: Wave 1-8

1. Question: How confident are you that... a) the food you buy is safe to eat. b) the information on food labels is accurate (for example, ingredients, nutritional information, country of origin). Responses: very confident, fairly confident, not very confident, not at all confident, it varies, don't know. Total base across 8 waves = 49,563 (range between 9,319 in Wave 1 and 4,786 in Wave 4), all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire.
2. How confident are you in the food supply chain? That is all the processes involved in bringing food to your table? Responses: very confident, fairly confident, not very confident, not at all confident, it varies, don't know. Total base across waves 1-8 = 49,563 (range between 4,786 in Wave 4 and 9,319 in Wave 1), all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire.
3. How confident are you that... Farmers, Slaughterhouses and dairies, Food manufacturers (e.g. factories), Shops and supermarkets in the UK (NI: and Ireland) ensure the food you buy is safe to eat? Responses: very confident, fairly confident, not very confident, not at all confident, it varies, don't know. Total base across waves 1-4, 6 and 7 = 34,218 (range between 7,645 in Wave 1 and 4,755 in Wave 4), all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire.
4. How confident are you that... Restaurants, Take-aways and Food delivery services (e.g. Just Eat, Deliveroo, Uber Eats) in the UK (NI: and Ireland) ensure the food you buy is safe to eat? Responses: very confident, fairly confident, not very confident, not at all confident, it varies, don't know. Total base across waves 1-4, 6 and 7 = 34,218 (range between 7,645 in Wave 1 and 4,755 in Wave 4), all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire.
5. Question: How confident are you that the Food Standards Agency / the government agency responsible for food safety in England, Wales and Northern Ireland...a) Can be relied upon to protect the public from food-related risks (such as food poisoning or allergic reactions from food). b) Is committed to communicating openly with the public about food-related risks. c) Takes appropriate action if a food related risk is identified? Responses: very confident, fairly confident, not very confident, not at all confident, don't know. Total base across waves 2-8 = 42,340 (range between 5,796 in Wave 4 and 6,770 in Wave 5), all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire. Please note: Respondents with little or no knowledge of the FSA were asked about 'the government agency responsible for food safety', those with at least some knowledge of the FSA were asked about the FSA. The data from Wave 1 is not present in the trends due to differences in filtering / question wording.
6. Question: How much do you trust or distrust the Food Standards Agency to do its job? That is to make sure that food is safe and what it says it is. Responses: I trust it a lot, I trust it, I neither trust nor distrust it, I distrust it, I distrust it a lot, don't know. Total base across waves 1-8 = 30,510 (range between 3,309 in Wave 2 and 5,457 in Wave 1), all respondents who know a lot or a little about the FSA and what it does.