

More people using food hygiene ratings scheme, latest public attitudes tracker shows

[The public attitudes tracker](#) survey monitors changes in consumer attitudes to food-related issues. We survey consumers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The latest results, from May 2019, show the public's use of hygiene stickers has jumped to 66% compared to 60% in the previous wave from November 2018.

85% of respondents reported being aware of the hygiene standards in places they eat out at or buy food from. The most commonly reported ways of knowing about hygiene standards were via food hygiene ratings stickers (66%) and the general appearance of the premises (59%).

Angela Towers, Head of the Food Hygiene Ratings Team at the FSA said:

'The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme gives consumers the information they need to make informed decisions about where they eat out and enables them to vote with their feet.

'We are pleased to see continuing increased use of the scheme, which further highlights a need to make the information it provides more accessible in England through mandatory display of hygiene ratings.

'This has been successful in Wales and Northern Ireland and we remain committed to seeing this introduced in England.'

Businesses are given stickers showing their rating for display at their premises – those in England are encouraged to display these while those in Wales and Northern Ireland are required by law to do so.

[Ratings are also available to consumers on the FSA's website.](#)

Other areas covered by the report include:

Food issues of concern

The top food safety issues of concern for those surveyed were:

- Food hygiene when eating out (31%)
- Chemicals from the environment, such as lead, in food (30%)

- The use of pesticides to grow food (29%)
- Food poisoning (28%)

The top wider food issues of concern were:

- Food waste (51%)
- The amount of sugar in food (49%)
- Food prices (43%)
- Animal welfare (43%)
- The amount of salt in food (39%)

Concern about food safety in UK food outlets

41% of respondents reported concern about food safety in UK restaurants, pubs, cafes and takeaways. 37% of respondents reported concern about food safety in UK shops and supermarkets. These statistics indicate a general decline in concern about food safety in UK food outlets.

Awareness of the FSA

At wave 18, questions relating to trust previously included in the FSA's flagship survey [Food and You](#) were moved to the Public Attitudes Tracker to observe levels of trust more regularly. Measures of trust in the FSA and in the food system were developed based on responses to multiple questions. The average score of the composite measure of trust in the FSA was 6.9 out of 10 and the average score for the composite measure of trust in the food system was 3.8 out of 5.

Further findings demonstrate that 78% of respondents reported being aware of the FSA, similar to previous waves. Of those aware of the FSA, 66% trusted the FSA to do its job, and 72% reported that they trust the FSA to tell the truth in the information it provides. Ensuring that food was safe to eat was the main issue respondents (88%) reported the FSA to be responsible for.

Attitudes towards food production, sale and labelling

The majority reported that they trust that food is what it says it is and is accurately labelled (76%) and 76% trusted the authenticity of ingredients/origin/quality of food. Findings also demonstrated that 80% of respondents felt they had enough information about what food contains to make their food choices.

Background

Fieldwork for this wave took place in May 2019 when a representative sample of 2,150 adults in England, Wales and Northern Ireland were interviewed face-to-face.

[The report and data sets are available on our website.](#)