

# Consumer Insights Tracker

**December 2023**

The Consumer Insights Tracker is an online monthly tracking survey commissioned by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). It monitors the behaviour and attitudes of adult consumers aged 16+ in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in relation to food.

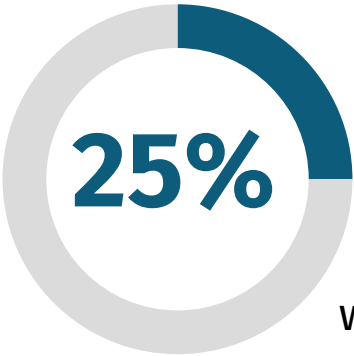
The survey includes topics such as food availability, food affordability, consumer concerns in relation to food, confidence in the food supply chain and in the FSA as a regulator.



# Key findings for December 2023


Please click the headings to be directed to the specific section of the report

## Food affordability



25% are worried about their household being able to afford food in the next month, comparable with last month (26%)

## Food availability



22% are worried about there being enough food available for their household in the next month, in line with last month (22%)

## Food concerns



88% are concerned about food prices and 75% are concerned about ultra-processed, or over-processing of food, both in line with last month

## Food concerns



Concern about ultra-processed, or the over-processing of food appears to rise consistently with age and level of education.

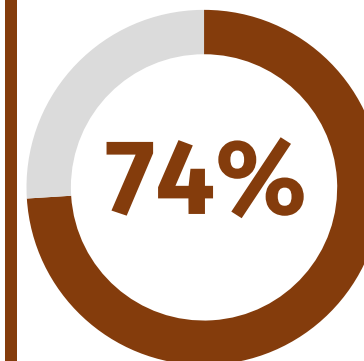
## Food supply chain



Following a slight increase in confidence in the food supply chain in November (60%), confidence has returned to levels seen previously (57%)

## The FSA

Of those with some knowledge of the FSA

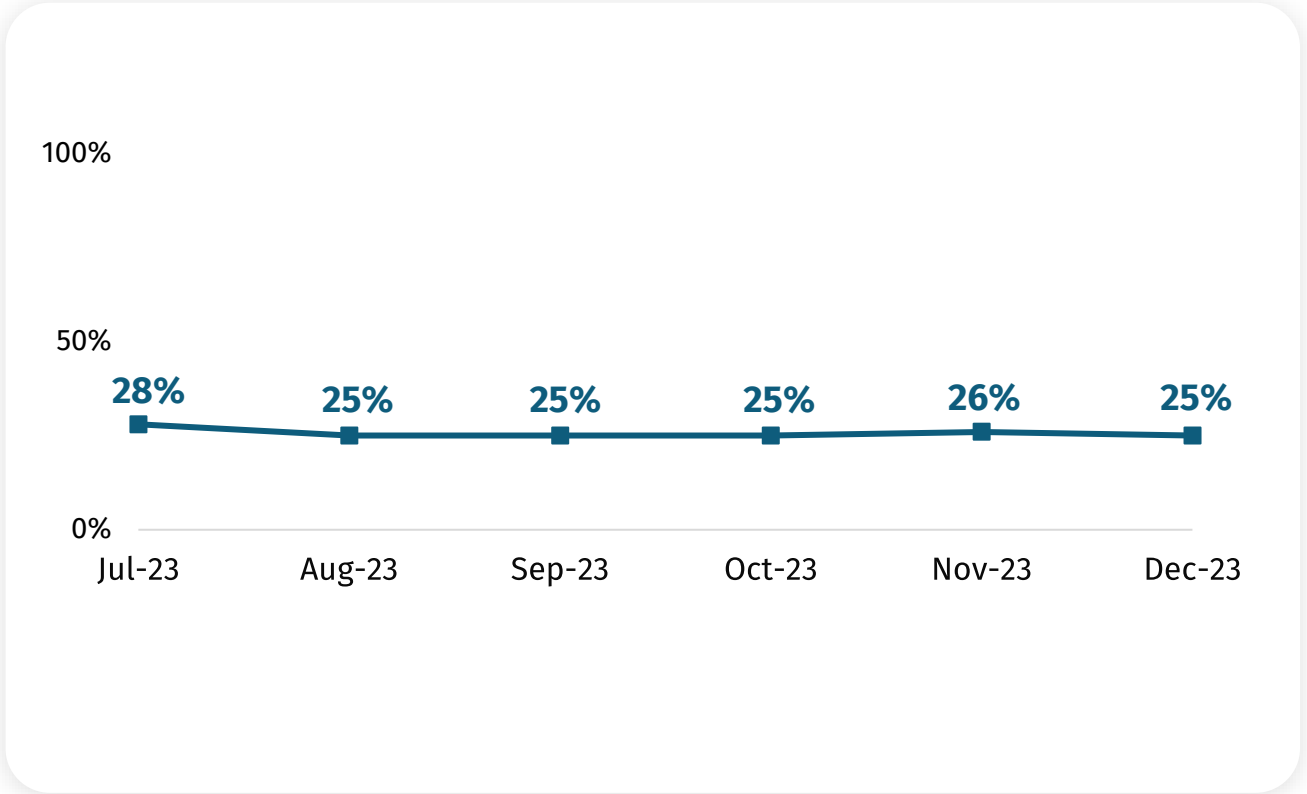


are confident that the FSA protects the public from food-related risks, broadly comparable with last month (76%)

# One in four (25%) are worried about their household not being able to afford food in the next month

This is comparable to November and more recent months, but statistically significantly lower than in July.

## Proportion who reported worrying about their household not being able to afford food in the next month



▲▼ Statistically significant differences compared to November shown with arrows

Q3m. To what extent, if at all, are you worried you/your household will not be able to afford food in the next month?

Base: All in December (n=2,026), November (n=2,064), October (n=2,062), September (n=2,057), August (n=2,044) and July (n=2,085) 2023

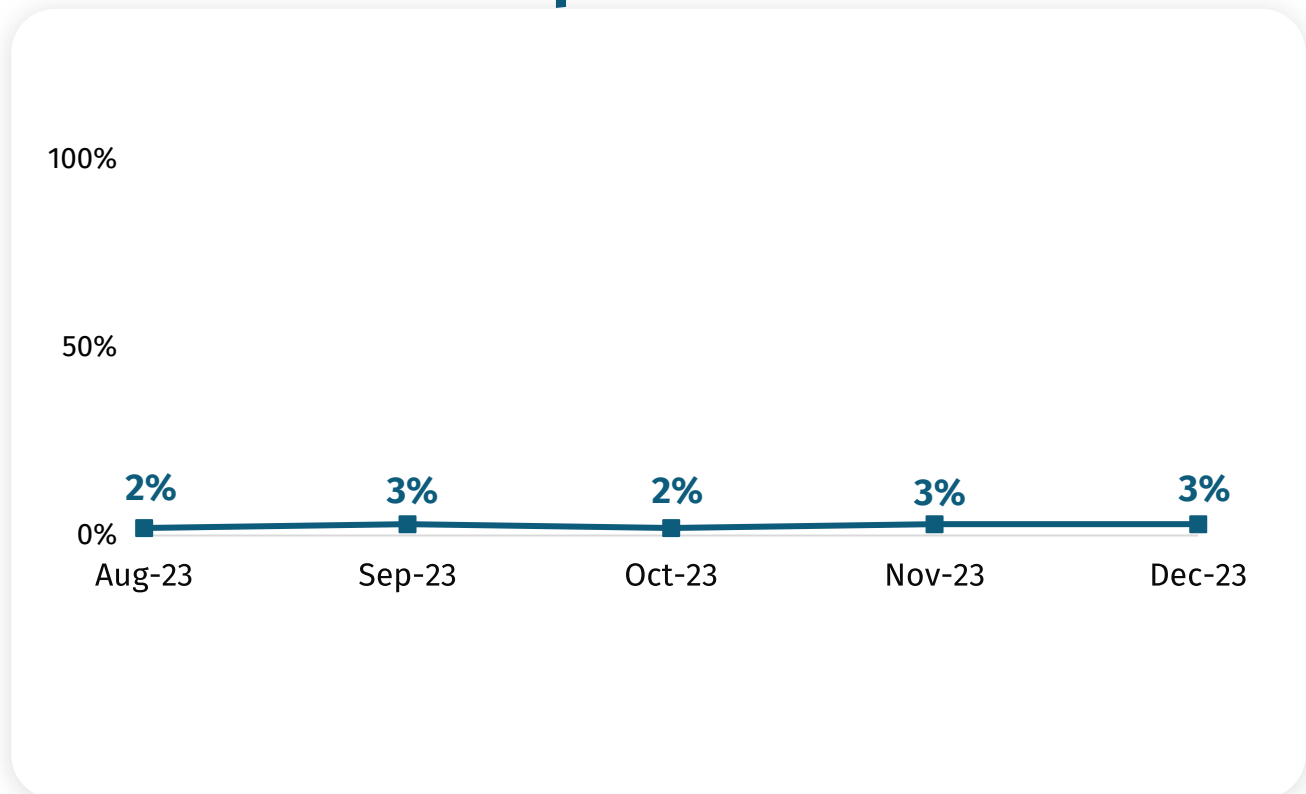
**3% report that they, or someone in their household, received a free parcel of food from a food bank or other emergency food provider in the last month**

**This figure has remained stable from August to December.**

Q3. In the last month, have you or anyone else in your household received a free parcel of food from a food bank or other emergency food provider?

Base: All in December (n=2,026), November (n=2,064), October (n=2,062), September (n=2,057) and August (n=2,044) 2023

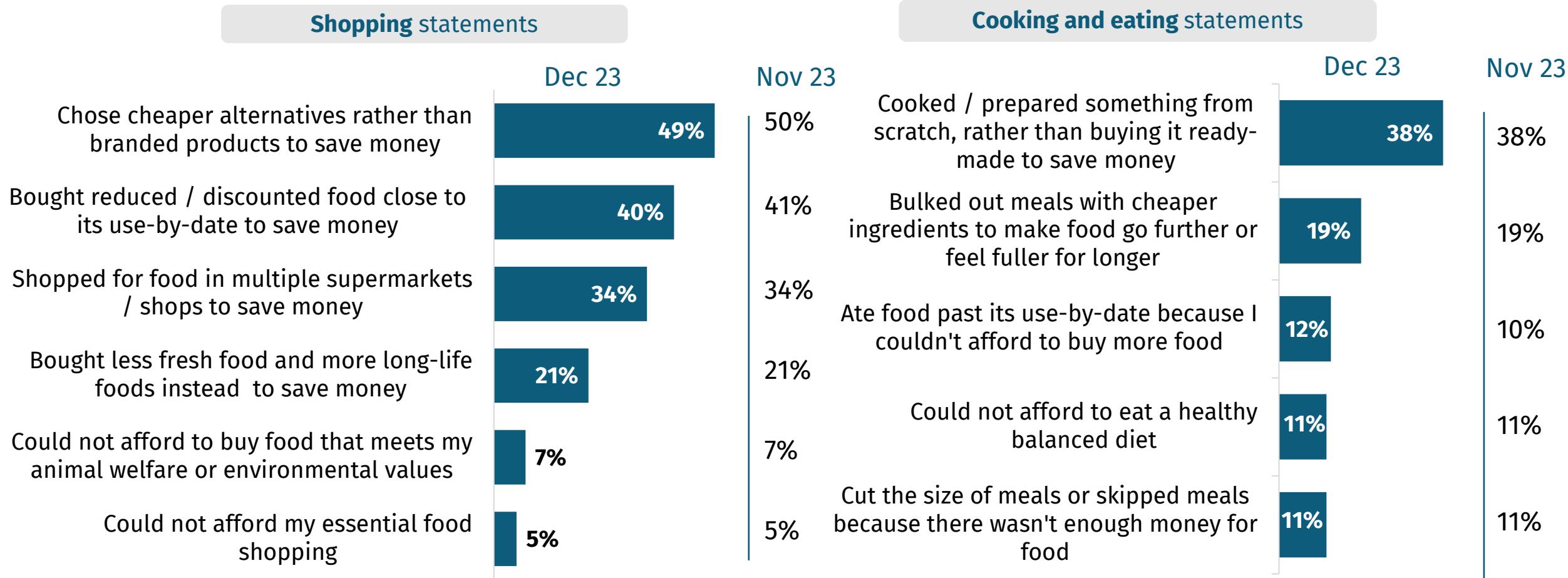
## Proportion who reported receiving a food parcel from a food bank or emergency food provider



▲▼ Statistically significant differences compared to November shown with arrows



# 73% report at least one of the following statements applies to them or their household

This is comparable with the proportion reporting this in November (74%).



Q6. In the last month, did any of the following apply to you, or someone else in your household? Please tick all that apply. I, or someone in my household...

Base: All in December (n=2,026) and November (n=2,064) 2023. Please note: Total values do not add to 100% as participants could select multiple responses.

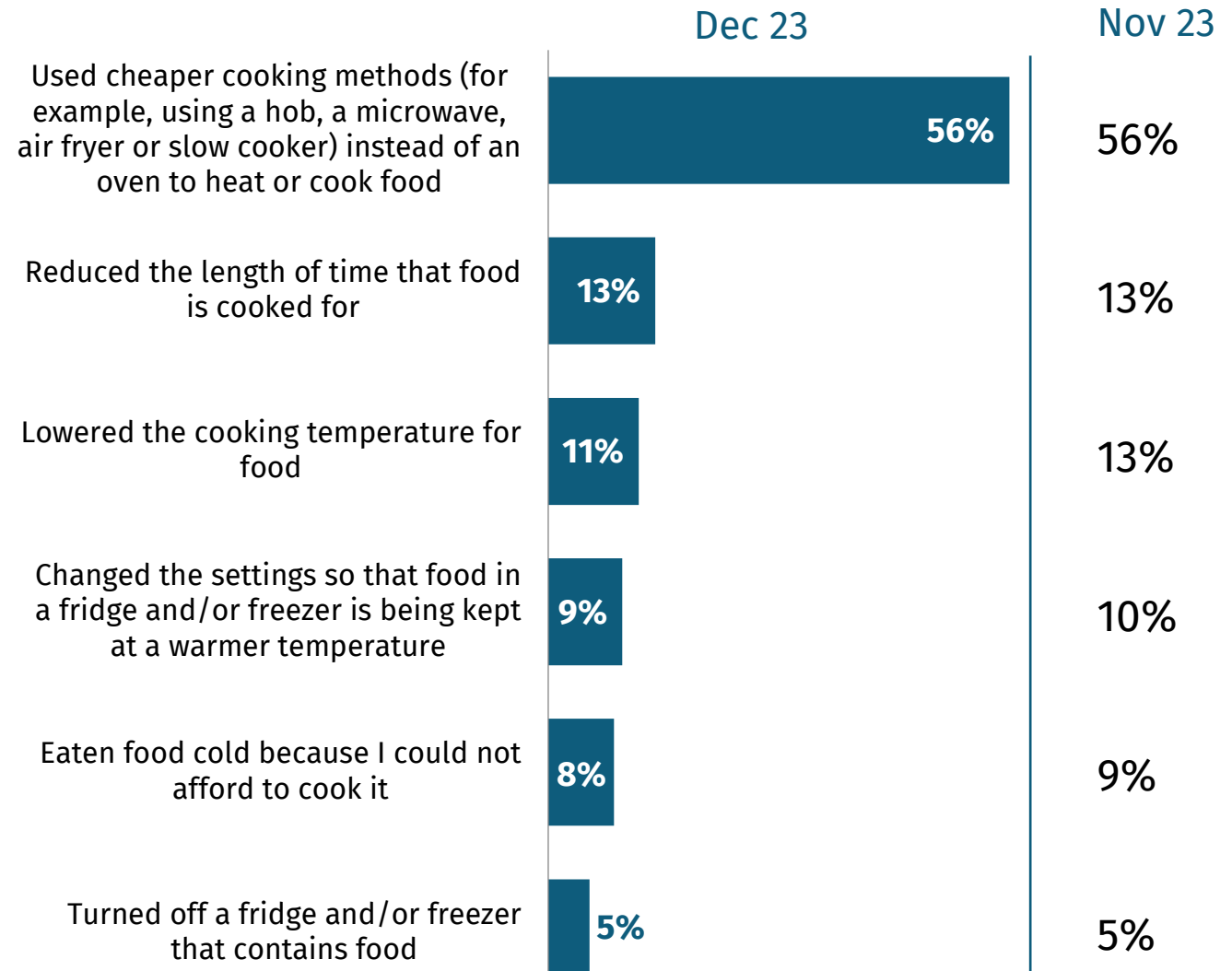
Statistically significant differences compared to November shown with arrows  

**56% have used cheaper cooking methods instead of an oven to heat or cook food in the last month**

**8% have eaten food cold because they couldn't afford to cook it**

**These figures are comparable with November.**

**Proportion who did any of the following to reduce energy bills or save money in the last month**



▲▼ Statistically significant differences compared to November shown with arrows

Q8m. In the last month, which, if any, of the following have you done to reduce your energy bills and save money?

Base: All in December (n=2,026) and November (n=2,064) 2023

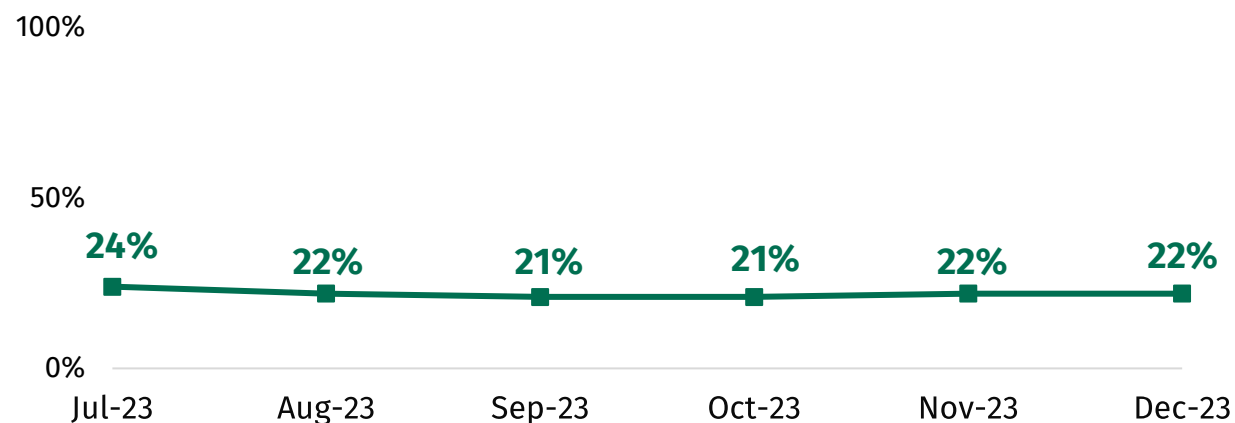
# One in five (22%) are worried about there not being enough food available for their household in the next month

This figure has been broadly stable between July and December.

Q2m. To what extent, if at all, are you worried about there not being enough food available for you/your household to buy in the next month?

Base: All in December (n=2,026), November (n=2,064), October (n=2,062), September (n=2,057), August (n=2,044) and July (n=2,085) 2023

## Proportion who reported worrying about there not being enough food available for their household in the next month



▲▼ Statistically significant differences compared to November shown with arrows



**88% are concerned about food prices, 75% are concerned about ultra-processed, or over-processed, or over-processing of food**

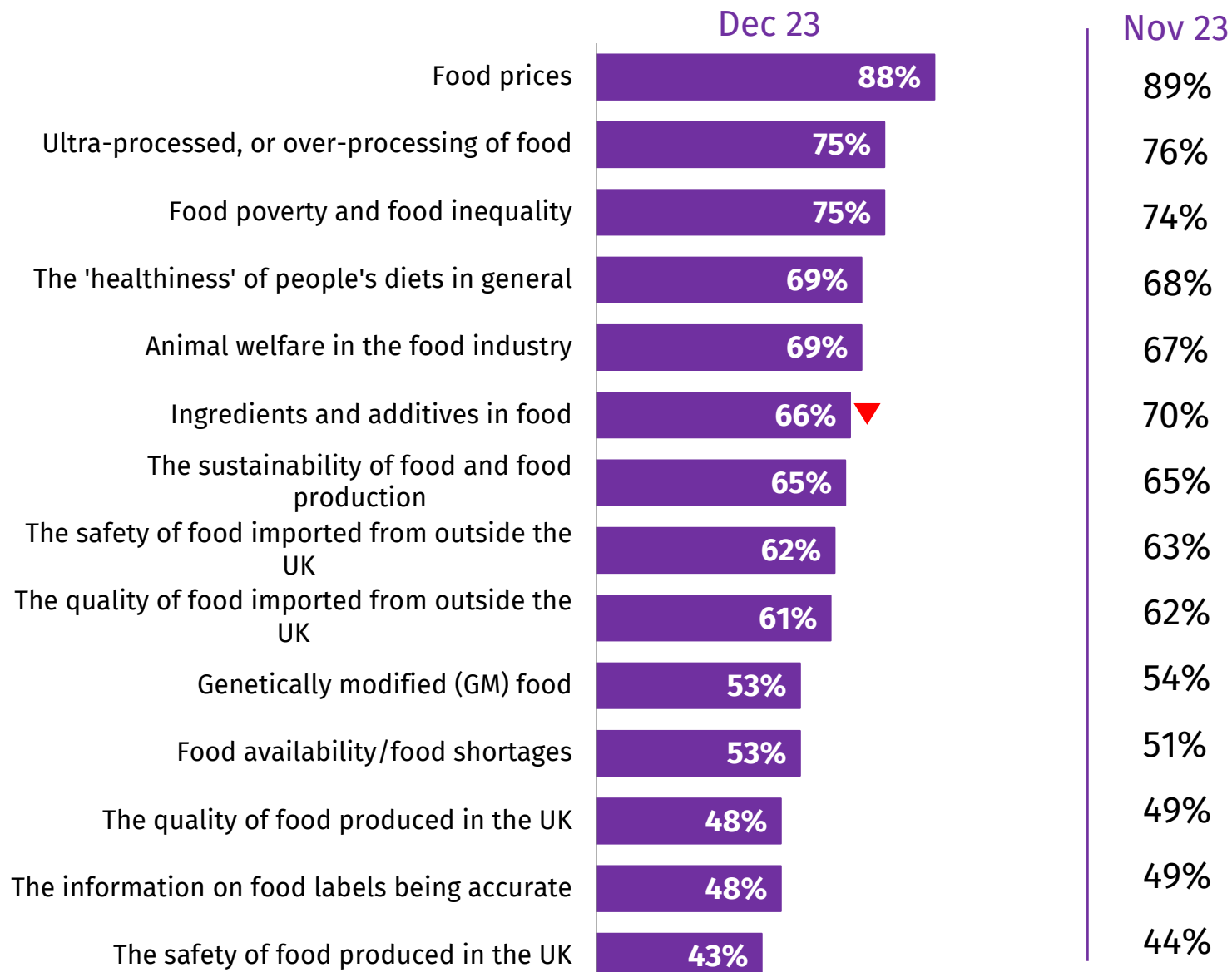
**These figures are comparable with November.**

Q12. Thinking about food in the UK in general. At the moment, how concerned, if at all, do you feel about each of the following topics?

Base: All in December (n=2,026) and November (n=2,064) 2023

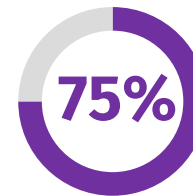
Respondents were shown all of the topics listed and asked how concerned, if at all, they felt about each. Figures shown in chart are the proportion 'highly concerned' or 'somewhat concerned'.

## Proportion who reported concern about food by topic



▲ ▼ Statistically significant differences compared to November shown with arrows

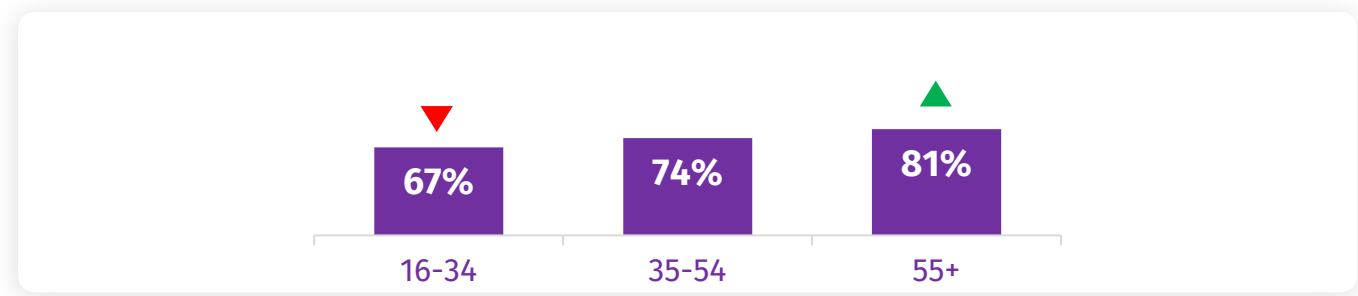




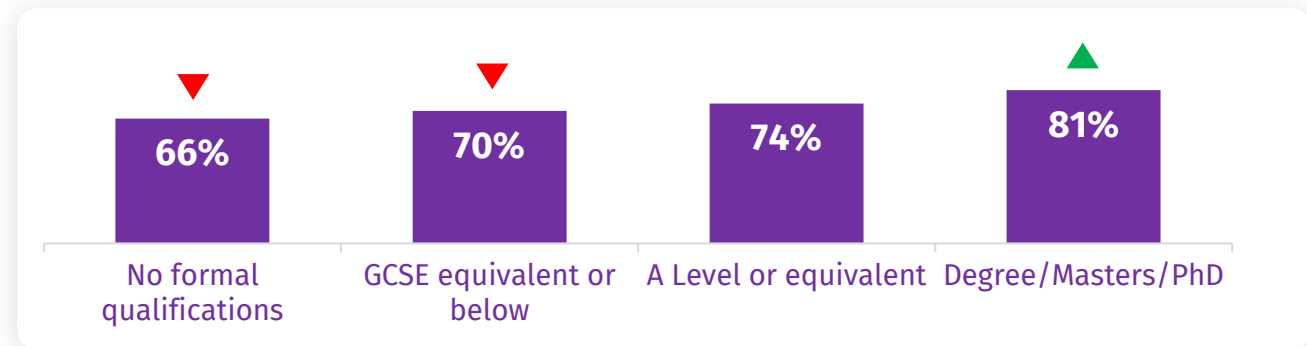
Total concerned over ultra-processed, or over-processing, of food

Proportion who reported concern over ultra-processed, or over-processing, of food:

Age



Education level



▲▼ Statistically significant differences to the total (75%) shown with arrows

Concern about ultra-processed, or the over-processing of food appears to rise consistently with age and education level, with the following groups significantly more likely than all survey respondents to report concern:

- Those aged 55+
- Those with a degree, masters or PhD

These differences have been consistent since first asked in August.

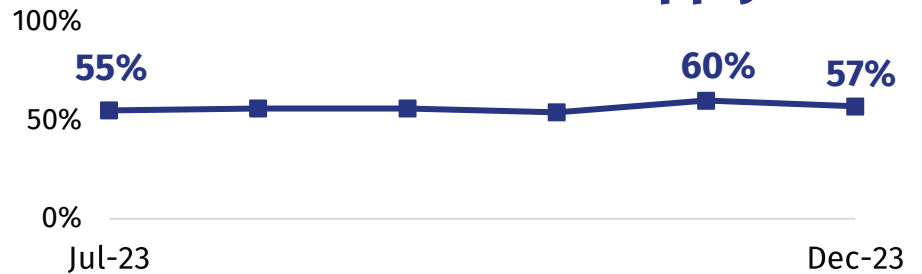
Q12. Thinking about food in the UK in general. At the moment, how concerned, if at all, do you feel about each of the following topics? Ultra-processed, or over-processing of food.

Base: All in December (n=2,026)

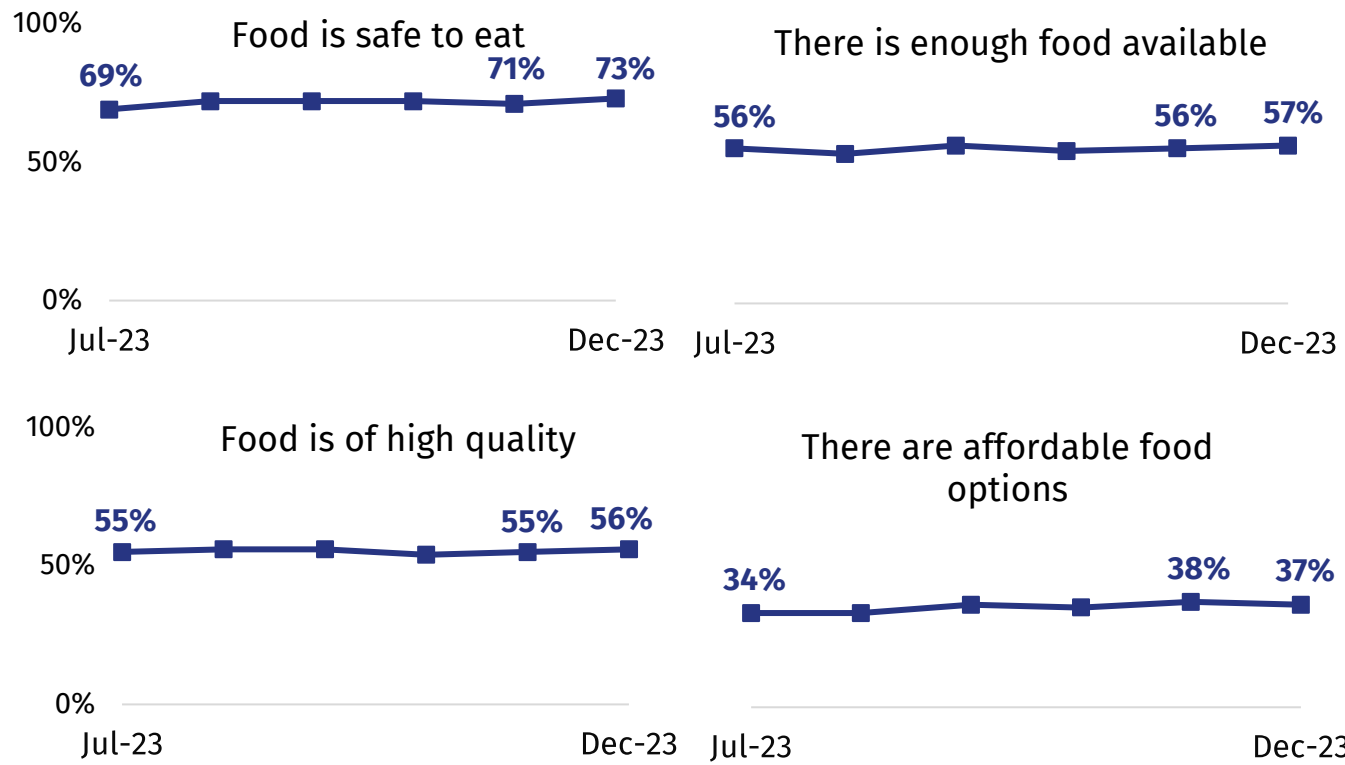
# 57% are confident in the food supply chain overall

Following a slight increase in November, confidence has returned to similar levels to October.

### Proportion who reported confidence in the food supply chain



### Proportion who reported confidence that those involved in the food supply chain ensure that...



▲ ▼ Statistically significant differences compared to November shown with arrows

Q13. How confident are you in the food supply chain? That is all the processes involved in bringing food to your table.

Q14. How confident are you that those involved in the food supply chain in the UK...

Base: All in December (n=2,026), November (n=2,064), October (n=2,062), September (n=2,057), August (n=2,044) and July (n=2,085) 2023

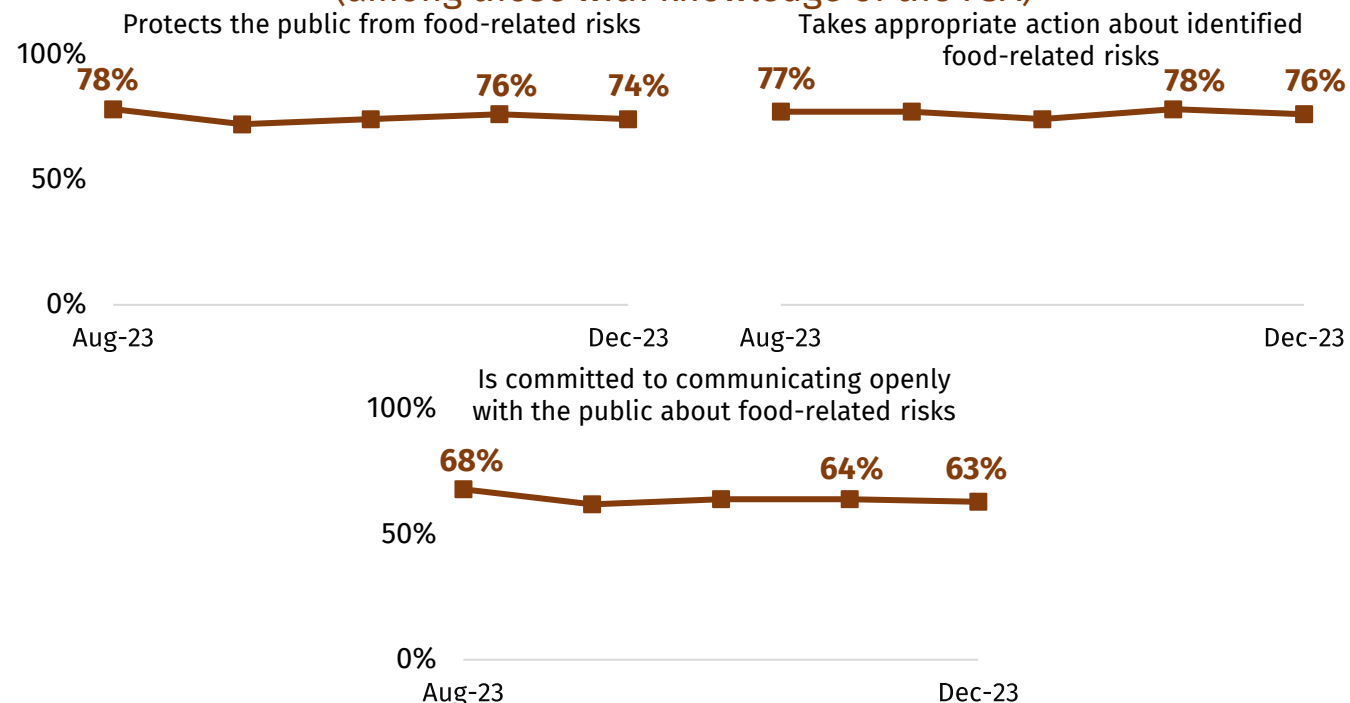
# 55% of those with some knowledge of the FSA trust the FSA to do its job

Trust in the FSA has remained broadly stable since September.

## Proportion that trust the FSA to do its job (among those with knowledge of the FSA)



## Proportion who reported confidence that the FSA... (among those with knowledge of the FSA)



Q16. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is the Government Agency responsible for food safety in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. 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.

Q15. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is the Government Agency responsible for food safety in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. How confident are you that the Food Standards Agency...

Base: Those who know a little / a lot about the FSA in December (n=1,134), November (n=1,183), October (n=1,175), September (n=1,161) and August (n=1,126) 2023

▲▼ Statistically significant differences compared to November shown with arrows

# Background and methodological information

## Changes in approach

Following a [review of the FSA's Consumer Insights Tracker](#) by the FSA's Advisory Committee for Social Science (ACSS), the project was recommissioned in early 2023.

In July 2023, the Consumer Insights Tracker was transitioned to a new supplier, YouGov. Changing supplier provided the opportunity to make the following methodological changes:

- Review the questionnaire content and question wording
- Expand the sample to include adults aged 16+ (previously 16-75)
- Boost the sample to include a larger number of participants from Northern Ireland
- Utilise a panel survey approach (previously an omnibus approach was used to collect the data)

Due to these methodological differences, data captured by YouGov (from July 2023 onwards) should not be directly compared to data captured by the previous supplier (April 2020 – June 2023).

## Method

- This research was conducted online using the YouGov panel which gives access to 400,000 active panellists in the UK.
- This report presents findings from December 2023. Where appropriate, comparisons are made to previous waves since July 2023.
- 2,026 adults across England, Wales and Northern Ireland took part in the December survey between 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
- Quotas were set by age, gender, education and region. The data is also weighted to be representative of the population by these demographic variables. All results are based on final weighted data.

## Notes for interpretation

- Figures may not add up to 100% on graphs due to rounding, or in some questions, respondents were able to select multiple answers.
- Significance testing is applied to the data to compare and determine whether a difference is “real”, or if it has occurred by chance (because not everyone in the population has been surveyed).
- Any differences between demographic groups and month to month which are reported (with arrows) are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.
- If you require further information on the statistical significance testing carried out, please contact the [social science team](#).
- Where analysis is conducted by IMD, respondents are categorised within the country where they live, before a combined measure is created for the full sample.

# For more information:

Visit our [Consumer Insights Tracker Webpage](#)

View the [Consumer Insights Tracker data tables](#)

Or please contact the FSA Social Science team  
([socialscience@food.gov.uk](mailto:socialscience@food.gov.uk))