Food and You 2 Annual Report: Wave 11 (2025)

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Authors: Rachael Shillitoe, Robin Clifford and Matt Jenkins

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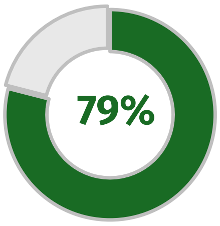
Contents

List of Figures

List of tables

Food you can trust

94% of respondents in Wave 11 (May - August 2025) **were confident** that the food they buy is safe to eat



79% of respondents in Wave 11 **trust the FSA** to do its job, to make sure ‘food is safe and what it says it is’

Food hygiene when eating out

92% of respondents in Wave 11 **had seen** the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme sticker before

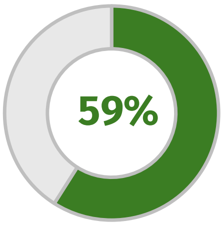
55% of respondents in Wave 11 **had checked** the food hygiene rating of a business in the last 12 months

Preparing food safely at home

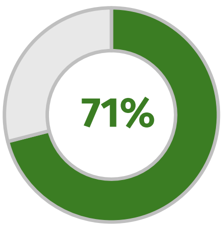
8 in 10 respondents (across all waves) always **cook food until steaming hot** and cooked all the way through

9 in 10 respondents (across all waves) would **never eat chicken or turkey when it is pink** or has pink juices

Food hypersensitivities



59% of respondents in Wave 11 had experienced a **bad or unpleasant food reaction**



71% of respondents in Wave 11 **felt comfortable** asking staff for more allergy information when eating out

Food security

79% of respondents in Wave 11 were classified as **food secure** across England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Healthy and sustainable diets

49%* of respondents in Wave 11 **ate less processed food** in the past 12 months

36%* of respondents in Wave 11 **minimised their food waste** in the past 12 months

* of those who made a change

Executive Summary

Food and You 2 is an annual official statistic survey commissioned by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The survey measures consumers' self-reported knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to food safety and other food issues amongst adults, aged 16 or over, in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. All content in this report applies to England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Findings for Scotland are reported separately by FSS[1].

This report presents findings from Wave 11 and describes the key trends across Wave 1 (July–October 2020) to Wave 11 (May–August 2025).

Food you can trust

Following declines in trust and confidence in the FSA and the wider food supply chain during Waves 7 to 9, levels went up again in Wave 10 and then stabilised in Wave 11. This reflects a broader upward trend across all trust measures. Wave 11 key findings on trust and confidence are summarised below:

Confidence in food safety and authenticity

- 94% of respondents reported that they were confident that the food they buy is safe to eat, and 86% were confident that the information on food labels is accurate.

Confidence in the food supply chain

- 77% of respondents reported that they had confidence in the food supply chain.

Trust and confidence in the FSA

- 79% of respondents, who had at least some knowledge of the FSA, reported that they trusted the FSA to do its job, to make sure 'food is safe' and 'what it says it is'.

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[1] Please see here for research and publications produced by Food Standards Scotland

- 83% of respondents reported that they were confident that the FSA (or the government agency responsible for food safety) can be relied upon to protect the public from food-related risks (such as food poisoning or allergic reactions from food), 78% were confident that the FSA is committed to communicating openly with the public about food-related risks and 81% were confident that the FSA takes appropriate action if a food-related risk is identified.

Food hygiene when eating out

- The percentage of respondents who reported that they had heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) and had knowledge about it (i.e., Yes, I've heard of it and know a lot / bit about it), notably increased from 47% in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) to 62% in Wave 11.
- Around 9 in 10 (92%) respondents in Wave 11 reported having seen the food hygiene rating sticker before.
- There was a notable increase in Wave 11 (55%), in the percentage of respondents who reported that they had checked the food hygiene rating of a business in the last 12 months compared to all other waves (41%-44%).
- When asked what the lowest hygiene rating usually considered acceptable when buying food, the most common rating selected was 4 in Wave 11 (52%). This had notably increased from 41% in Wave 4.

Preparing food safely at home

- Across all waves, almost 8 in 10 respondents reported that they always cook food until steaming hot and cooked all the way through, with 76% reporting this in Wave 11.
- Around 9 in 10 respondents, across all waves (92% in Wave 11), reported that they would never eat chicken or turkey when it is pink or has pink juices.
- Across all waves, around 8 in 10 respondents reported that they would reheat food only once, with 83% reporting this in Wave 11.

Food allergies, intolerances and other hypersensitivities

- There was a notable increase in the percentage of respondents who had experienced a bad or unpleasant food reaction, increasing from 42% in Wave 3 to 59% in Wave 11.

- 71% of respondents in Wave 11 reported that they felt comfortable asking staff for more allergy information when eating out, with no notable changes over time.
- Around 8 in 10 respondents, across all waves, reported that they were confident (i.e., very confident or fairly confident) that the information provided on food labels allows them to identify foods that will cause a bad or unpleasant physical reaction with 84% reporting this in Wave 11.

Food security

- In Wave 11, across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, 79% of respondents were classified as food secure (67% high, 12% marginal) and 21% of respondents were classified as food insecure (10% low, 11% very low).
- In Wave 11, most respondents (92%) reported that they had not used a food bank or other emergency food provider in the last 12 months, with 5% of respondents reporting that they had.

Healthy and sustainable diets

Three quarters (75%) of respondents had made at least one change for health reasons in the past 12 months. The most common changes reported by respondents in Wave 11 were:

- eaten less processed food (49%)
- eaten less sugar or food/drink high in sugar (48%)
- eaten more fruit and / or vegetables (46%)

Around half of respondents (55%) had made at least one change for sustainability reasons in the past 12 months. The most common changes reported by respondents in Wave 11 were:

- started to minimise food waste (36%)
- bought foods with minimal or no packaging (25%)
- started buying locally produced food or food that is in season (21%)

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, our thanks go to all the respondents who gave up their time to take part in the survey.

We would like to thank the team at Ipsos who made a significant contribution to the project, particularly Dr Ammeline Wang, Claire Bhaumik, Aamina Oughradar, Stephen Finlay, Hannah Harding, Kelly Ward, Kevin Pickering, Dr Patten Smith.

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Finally, thank you to our external reviewer Professor George Gaskell for his valuable direction and guidance.

Authors: Rachael Shillitoe, Robin Clifford and Matt Jenkins.

Introduction

The Food Standards Agency: role, remit, and responsibilities

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is a non-ministerial government department working to protect public health and consumers' wider interests in relation to food in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland[2]. The FSA's overarching mission is 'food you can trust'. The FSA's vision as set out in the 2022-2027 strategy.

Food and You 2 is designed to monitor the FSA's progress against this mission and to inform policy decisions by measuring, on a regular basis, consumers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland self-reported knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to food safety and other food issues in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

Food and You 2: Wave 1-11

Food and You 2 Wave 11 marks the first in the annual series of Food and You 2, from formerly being biannual between Waves 1-10. Wave 11 data were collected between 19th May 2025 and 7th August 2025. A total of 5,898 adults (aged 16 years and over) from 4,215 households across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland completed the survey (an overall response rate of 25.4%). Table 1 provides a summary of fieldwork dates and response rates.

[2] In Scotland the non-ministerial office Food Standards Scotland, is responsible for ensuring food is safe to eat, that consumers know what they are eating and for improving nutrition.

Table 1: Summary of Wave 1 to 11 fieldwork dates and responses.

Wave	Fieldwork dates	Number of respondents	Number of households
1	29 July 2020 - 6 October 2020	9,319	6,408
2	20 November 2020 - 21 January 2021	5,900	3,955
3	28 April 2021 - 25 June 2021	6,271	4,338
4	18 October 2021 - 10 January 2022	5,796	4,026
5	26 April 2022 - 24 July 2022	6,770	4,727
6	12 October 2022 – 10 January 2023	5,991	4,217
7	28 April 2023 – 10 July 2023	5,812	4,006
8	12 October 2023 - 8 January 2024	5,808	4,006
9	24 April 2024 – 1 July 2024	5,526	3,908
10	9 October 2024 - 7 February 2025	5,690	3,965
11	19 May 2025 - 7 August 2025	5,898	4,215

Food and You 2 is an annual survey. While earlier waves included rotating modules, the survey now uses a fixed set of questions, on various topics, repeated in every wave. These topics include: Food You Can Trust, Food Hygiene When Eating Out, Preparing Food Safely at Home, Food Hypersensitivities, Food Security, Eating at Home, and Healthy and Sustainable Diets. The move to annual and consistent structure helps to maintain stability between questionnaires and, in turn, supports long term trend analysis. Questionnaire review is now scheduled approximately every three waves (from Wave 11 onwards).

Scotland was included in the questionnaire for Wave 11, funded by Food Standards Scotland (FSS). Questions asked to Scottish participants mirrored those asked in England and Wales with alternative wording as appropriate for questions referring to country specific government bodies and food hygiene schemes.

This report presents key findings from the Food and You 2: Waves 1- 11. Where questions asked in Wave 11 have timeseries data available (having been asked in a minimum of 3 waves), the findings are presented in the form of trends data. Where questions in Wave 11 have been asked for the first or second time since Food and You 2 began, only the findings from Wave 11 are presented. The findings presented here represent core strategic indicators and key evidence areas identified by stakeholders. The full results are available in the accompanying data set and tables and further secondary analysis of Food and You 2 Wave 11 will be published in due course.

Interpreting the findings

To highlight **notable differences**, variations in responses are reported whenever the absolute difference is 10 percentage points or larger and is statistically significant at the 5% level ($p<0.05$).

Where a variation in response between waves is less than 10 percentage points but is judged to be of interest, and is statistically significant at the 5% level, these are reported as **slight changes** and indicated with a double asterisk (**).

Where there is no significant difference between responses across waves, the pattern of responses is described as being **stable**.

Percentage calculations are based only on respondents who responded. Reported values and calculations are based on weighted totals.

Apart from some breakdowns by country, subgroup analysis is not included in this report. However, such analyses are available in the full data set and tables. Further secondary reports providing a deep dive into the subgroup data will be produced after the publication of Wave 11. Key information is provided for each reported question in the footnotes, including:

- Question wording (question) and response options (response).
- Number of respondents presented with each question and description of the respondents who answered the question (Base= N).

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 11 (May 2025 to August 2025).

Confidence in food safety and authenticity

Most respondents reported confidence (i.e., were very confident or fairly confident) in food safety and authenticity in Wave 11. 94% of respondents reported that they were confident that the food they buy is safe to eat, and 86% of respondents were confident that the information on food labels is accurate.

Although there has been some variation between waves, consumer confidence in food safety has generally remained high and broadly stable, 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. It was lowest in Wave 7 (88%) before rising to a peak in Waves 10 and 11 (94%) ** (Figure 1).

Consumer confidence in food authenticity has also remained relatively high and stable, with over 8 in 10 respondents reporting that they were confident that the information on food labels is accurate across all waves[3]. Similar to the previous

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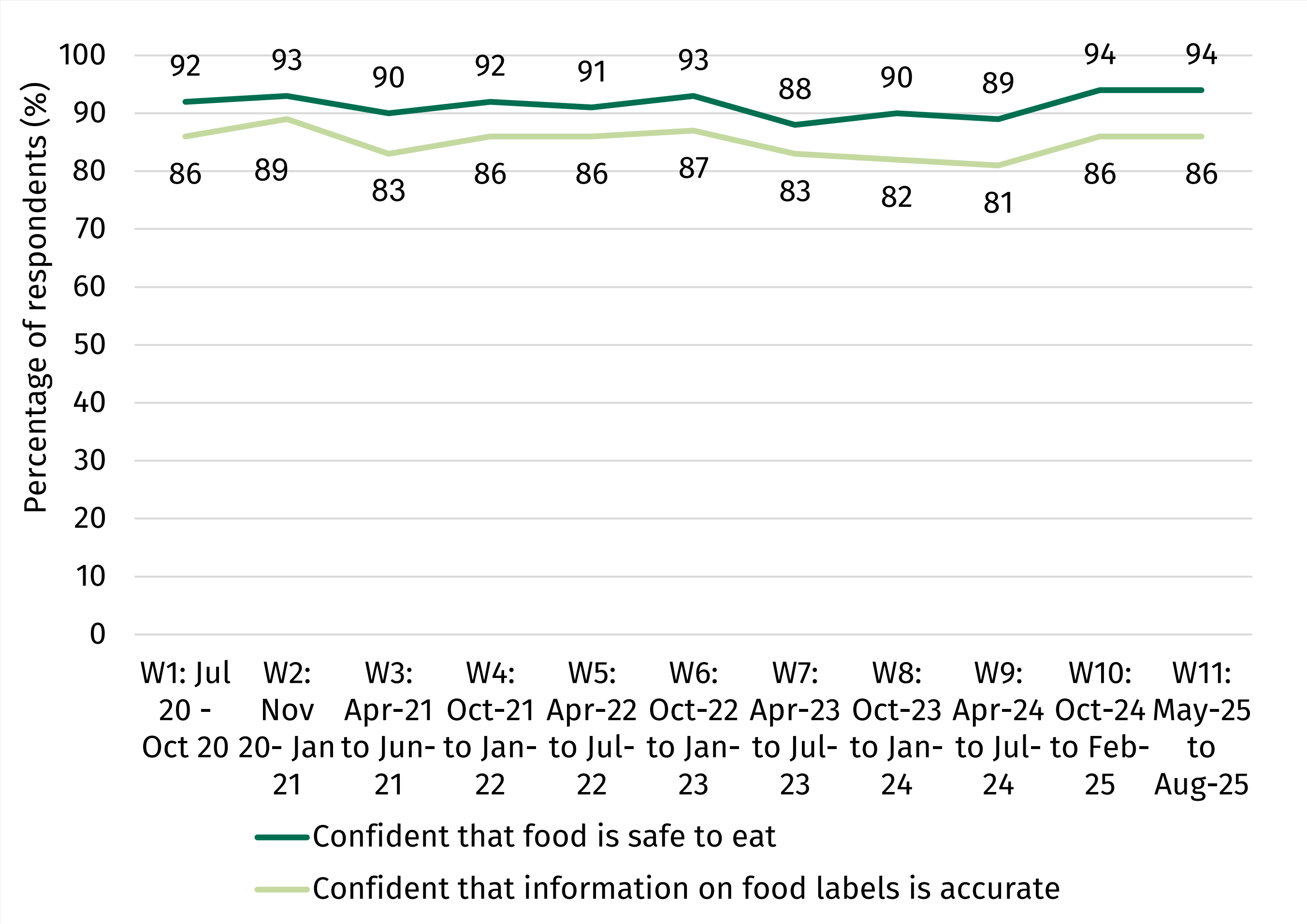
[3] Question: How confident are you that... a) the food you buy is safe to eat. b) the information on food labels is accurate (for example, ingredients, nutritional

question on food safety, confidence that the information on food labels is accurate has recently risen from a low in Wave 9 (81%) to 86% in Waves 10 and 11 ** (Figure 1).

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



Food and You 2: Wave 1-11

Confidence in the food supply chain

As with confidence in food safety and authenticity, we can observe a similar pattern of fluctuations regarding confidence in the food supply chain with around three quarters

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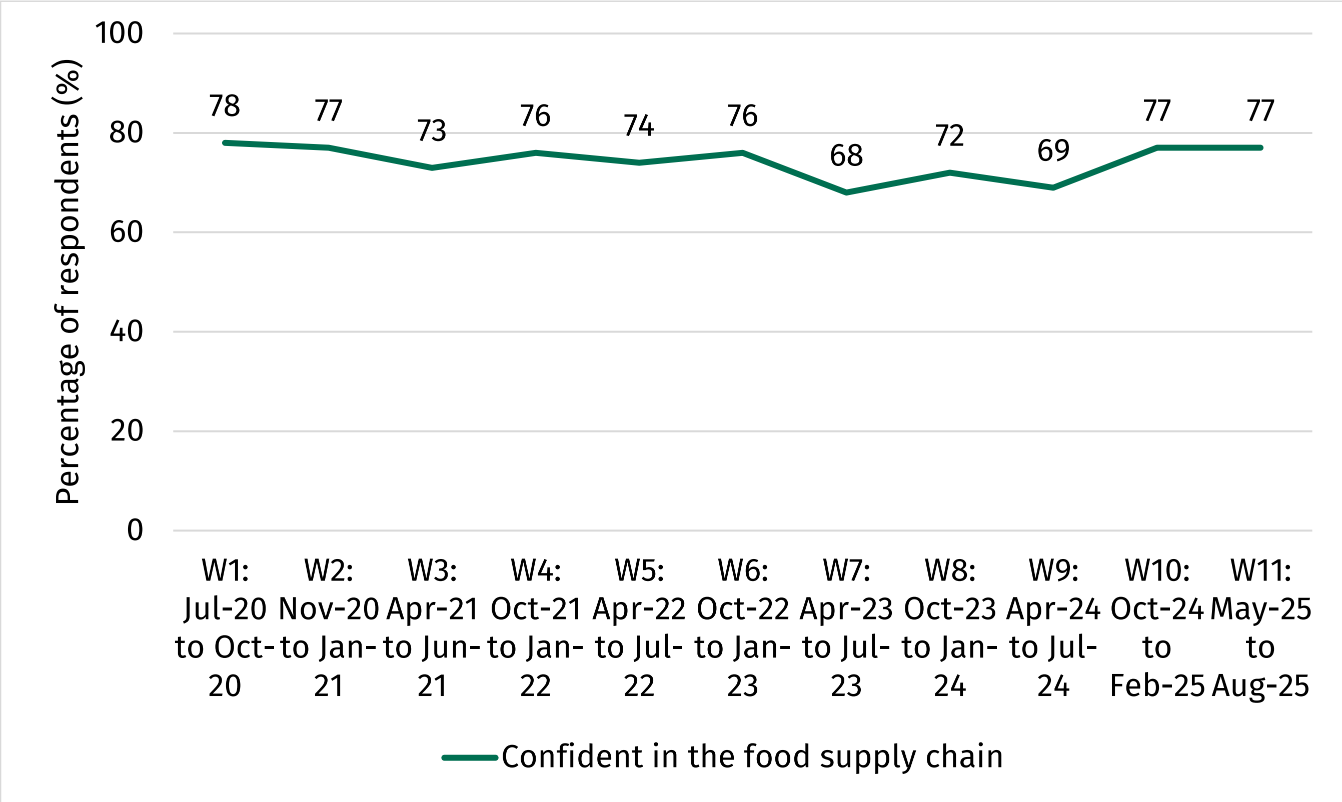
information, country of origin). Responses: very confident, fairly confident, not very confident, not at all confident, it varies, don’t know. Total base across 11 waves = 66,677 (range between 9,319 in Wave 1 and 4,786 in Wave 4), all respondents answering.

of respondents reporting confidence in the food supply chain across most waves[4]. Confidence in the food supply chain was lowest in Wave 7 (68%) before returning to 77% by Waves 10 and 11.** (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Confidence in the food supply chain.



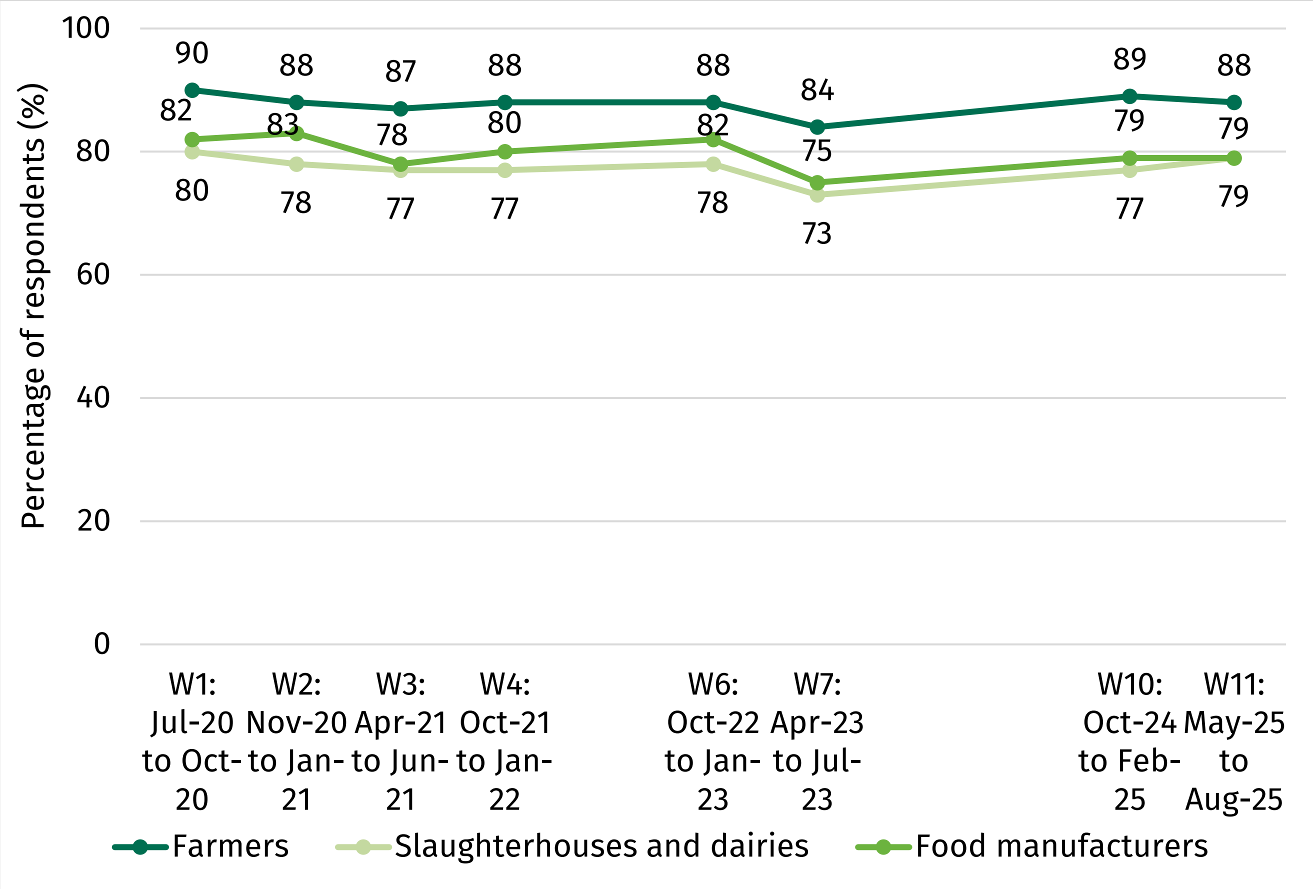
Food and You 2: Wave 1-11

[4] 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 1-11 = 66,677 (range between 4,786 in Wave 4 and 9,319 in Wave 1), all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire.

Respondents were asked how confident they are that different food supply chain actors ensure the food they buy is safe to eat[5]. Confidence in all food production and manufacturing actors was, again, lowest in Wave 7 before rising to more typical levels by Wave 10. For example, confidence in farmers rose from 84% in Wave 7 to 88% in Wave 11** and slaughterhouses and dairies rose from 73% in Wave 7 to 79% in Wave 11**. Confidence was consistently highest in farmers with around 8 in 10 feeling confident that farmers ensure food is safe across all waves except Wave 7 (Figure 3).

[5] 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, 6-7 and 10-11 = 45,806 (range between 4,755 in Wave 4 and 7,645 in Wave 1), all respondents in relevant waves answering. Responses for shops and supermarkets are reported with the results of the next question and Figure 4.

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



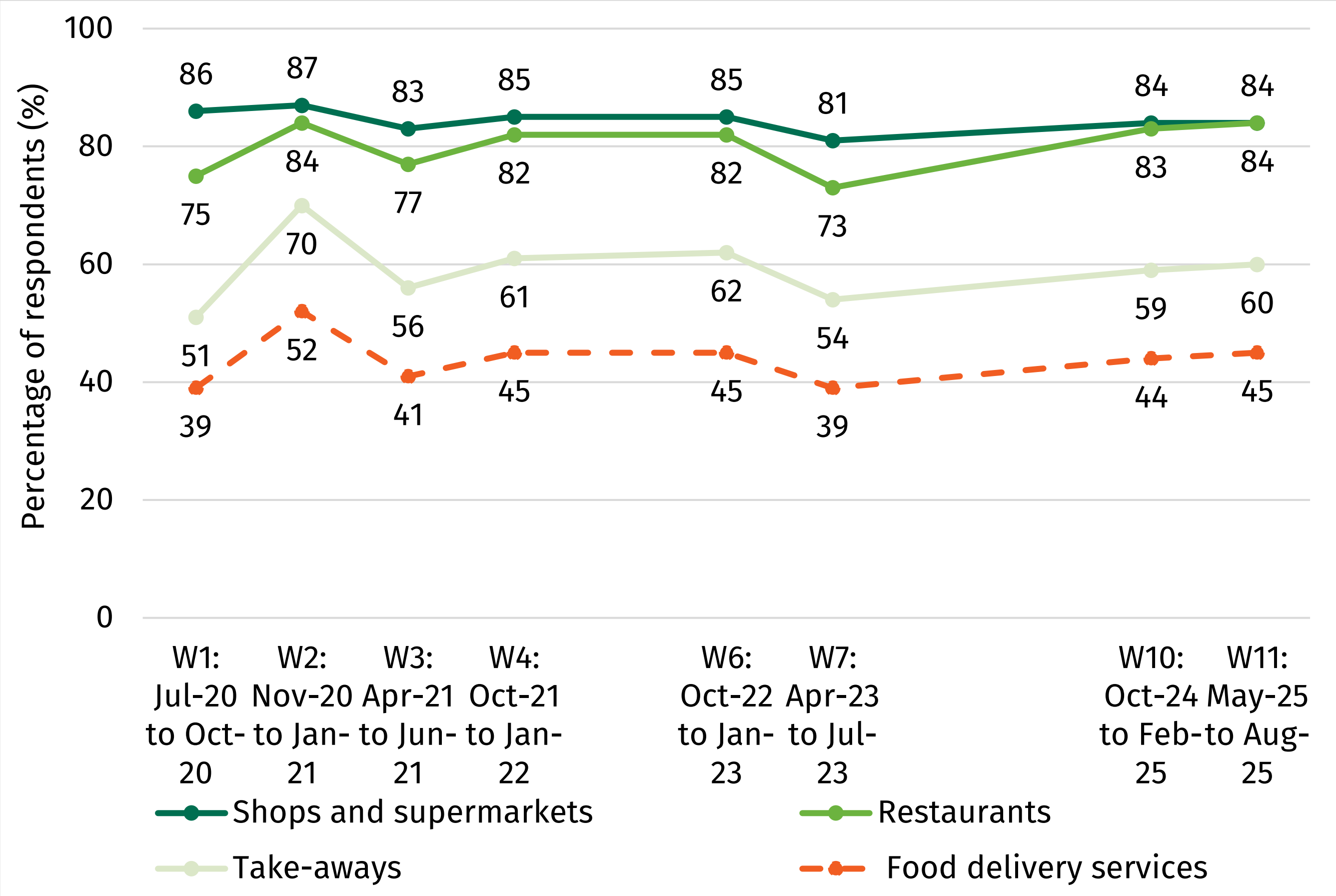
Food and You 2: Wave 1-4, 6-7, 10-11

Confidence in the retail and service sector has also fluctuated over time. For example, the largest and most recent change has been a notable improvement in confidence in restaurants between Wave 7 (73%) and Wave 11 (84%). Smaller increases across the same period can also be seen in takeaways (54% in Wave 7 to 60% in Wave 11**) and food delivery services (39% in Wave 7 to 45% in Wave 11**)[6]. Across all waves

[6] How confident are you that... Restaurants, Take-aways and Online ordering and delivery companies (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, 6-7 and 10-11 = 45,806 (range between 4,755 in Wave 4 and 7,645 in Wave 1), all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire.

confidence was highest in shops and supermarkets (81% in Wave 7 to 84% in Wave 11**) and lowest in food delivery services (39% - 52%) (39% in Wave 7 to 45% in Wave 11**) (Figure 4).

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



Food and You 2: Wave 1-4, 6-7, 10-11

Knowledge, confidence, and trust in the FSA

Knowledge of the FSA

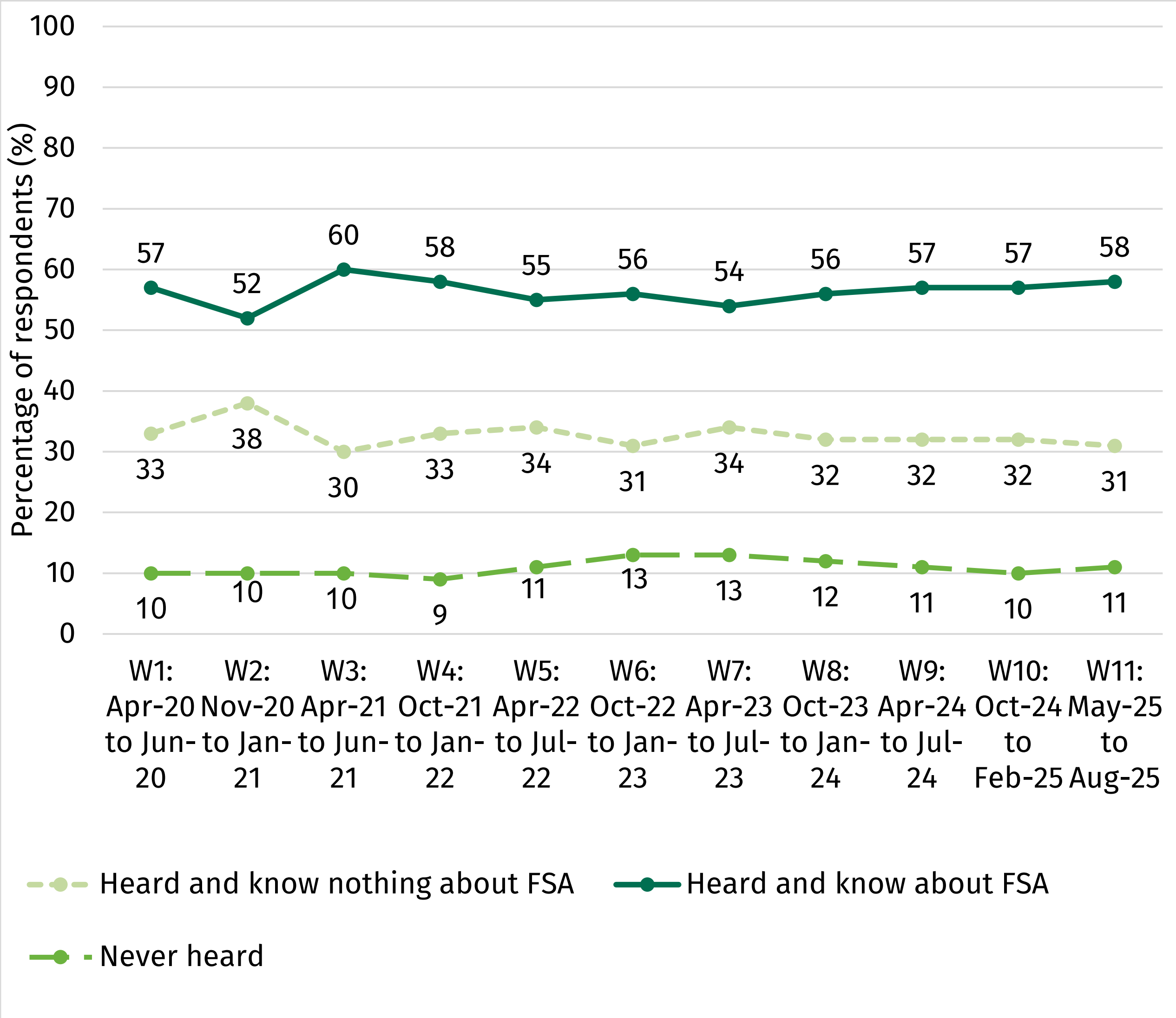
In Wave 11, most respondents reported at least some knowledge of the FSA, with 58% having heard and knowing something about the FSA[7]. 31% of respondents reported that they had heard of the FSA but knew nothing about it and around 1 in 10 (11%) had not heard[8] of the FSA. Levels of knowledge in the FSA have been stable since wave 6 (56%) (Figure 5)[9].

[7] Those who know a lot or little about the FSA.

[8] Those had not heard of the FSA until being contacted to take part in Food and You 2 and those who had never heard of the FSA.

[9] Question: How much, if anything, do you know about the Food Standards Agency, also known as the FSA? Response: I know a lot about the FSA and what it does, I know a little about the FSA and what it does, I've heard of the FSA but know nothing about it, I hadn't heard of the FSA until I was contacted to take part in this survey, I've never heard of the FSA. Base= 68,773 all respondents. Please note: All consumers taking part in the survey had received an invitation to take part in the survey which mentioned the FSA.

Figure 5. Knowledge about the Food Standards Agency (FSA).



Source: Food and You 2: Wave 1-11

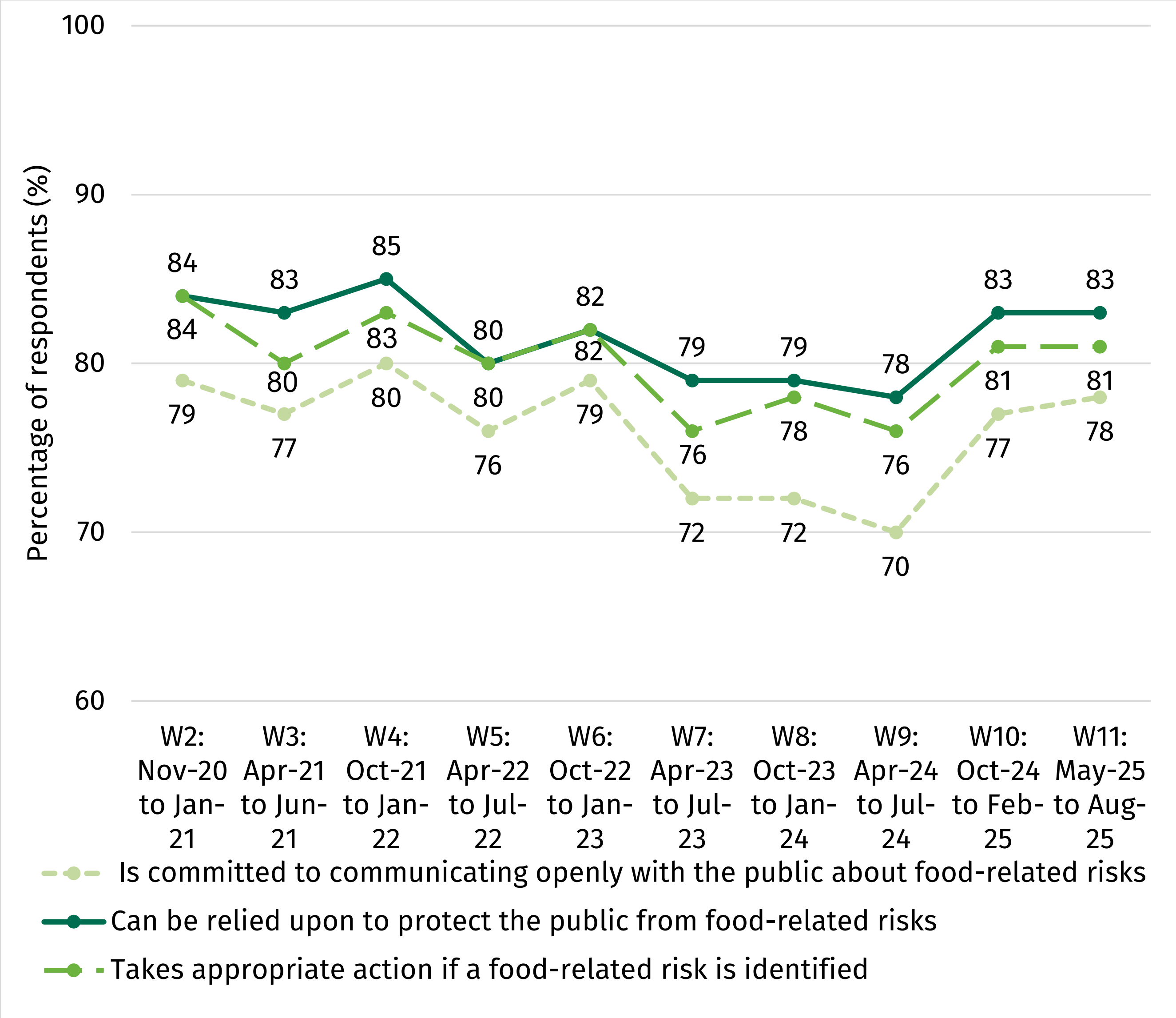
Confidence in the FSA

There was a gradual decline in confidence in the FSA (or the government agency responsible for food safety) until Wave 9, but this had recovered by Wave 11 **.[10] (Figure 6). 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 78% in Wave 9 before rising to 83% across both Waves 10 and 11**.
- is committed to communicating openly with the public about food-related risks, decreased from 79% in Wave 2 to 70% in Wave 9 before rising to 78% in Wave 11**.
- takes appropriate action if a food-related risk is identified decreased, from 84% in Wave 2 to 76% in Wave 9 before increasing to 81% across Waves 10 and 11**.

[10] 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. a) Total base across waves 2-11 = 59,454 (range between 5,526 in Wave 9 and 6,770 in Wave 5), b) Total base across waves 2-11 = 58,699 (range between 5,457 in Wave 9 and 6,111 in Wave 5), c) Total base across waves 2-11 = 58,655 (range between 5,458 in Wave 9 and 6,613 in Wave 5), All respondents in relevant waves who have stated whether or not they have heard of the FSA (answering). Please note: Respondents with little or no knowledge of the FSA were asked about 'the government agency responsible for food safety' and those with at least some knowledge of the FSA were asked about the FSA specifically. The data from Wave 1 is not present in the trends due to differences in filtering / question wording.

Figure 6. Confidence in the Food Standards Agency.

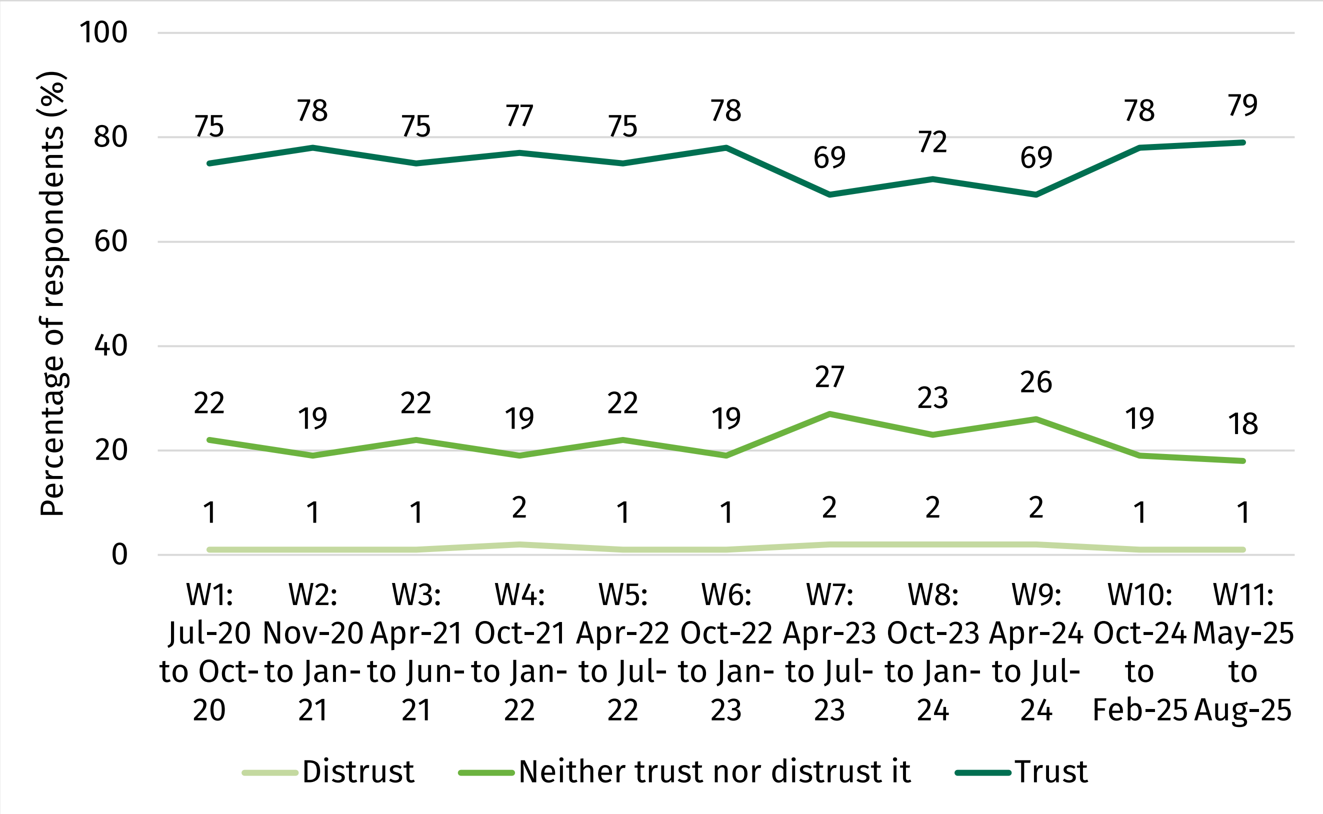


Food and You 2: Wave 2-11

Trust in the FSA

Trust in the FSA, amongst those who have at least some knowledge of the FSA, is slightly higher than levels observed in earlier Waves 1-6**. Between Wave 1 and Wave 6, around three-quarters of respondents reported that they trust the FSA to do its job. This was followed by a slight decline in trust between Wave 6 (78%) (October 2022 to January 2024) and Wave 9 (69%) (April 2024-July 2024). Trust then increased notably to 79% in Wave 11. These levels also corresponded with inverse changes in the percentage who reported that they 'neither trust nor distrust' the FSA. Across all waves, distrust in the FSA has remained stably low (1-2%) (Figure 7)[11].

Figure 7. Trust in the Food Standards Agency.



Food and You 2: Wave 1-11

[11] 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 1-11 = 40,811 (range between 3,274 in Wave 9 and 5,457 in Wave 1), all respondents who know a lot or a little about the FSA and what it does.

Concerns about food inside and outside the UK

Respondents were asked how concerned they feel about food produced inside and outside the UK being safe and hygienic to eat and being what it says it is[12]. Between Waves 2 -11, there has been a notable decrease in the percentage of respondents reporting concern[13] about food produced inside the UK[14] being safe and hygienic from 57% in Wave 2 to 36% in Wave 11 (Figure 8). Similarly, respondents' concern about food from the UK being what it says it is also decreased across waves from 55% in Wave 2 to 35% in Wave 11 (Figure 8).

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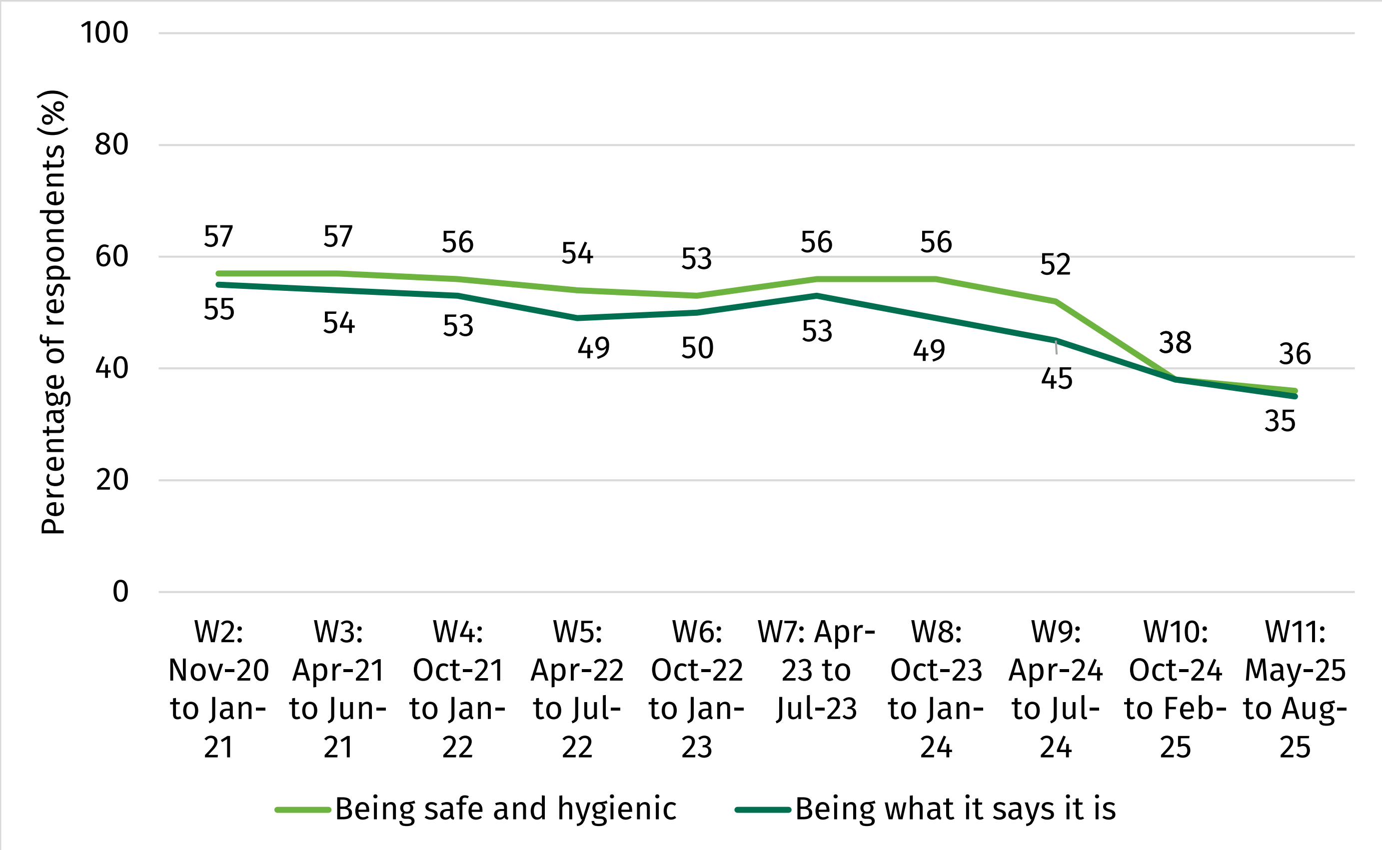
[12] Question: Thinking about food in the UK (In England, Wales and Scotland: 'the UK'. In Northern Ireland: 'the UK and Ireland') today, how concerned, if at all, do you feel about each of the following topics: a) Food produced in the UK (and Ireland) being safe and hygienic, b) Food from outside the UK (and Ireland) being safe and hygienic, c) Food produced in the UK (and Ireland) being what it says it is, d) Food from outside the UK (and Ireland) being what it says it is, Responses: highly concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, not at all concerned, don't know. Total base across waves 2-11 = 38,525 (range between 3,530 in Wave 9 and 4,326 in Wave 3), all online respondents in relevant waves. Please note, question not asked in Wave 1.

[13] Either highly or somewhat concerned.

[14] Respondents in Northern Ireland were asked about the UK and Ireland

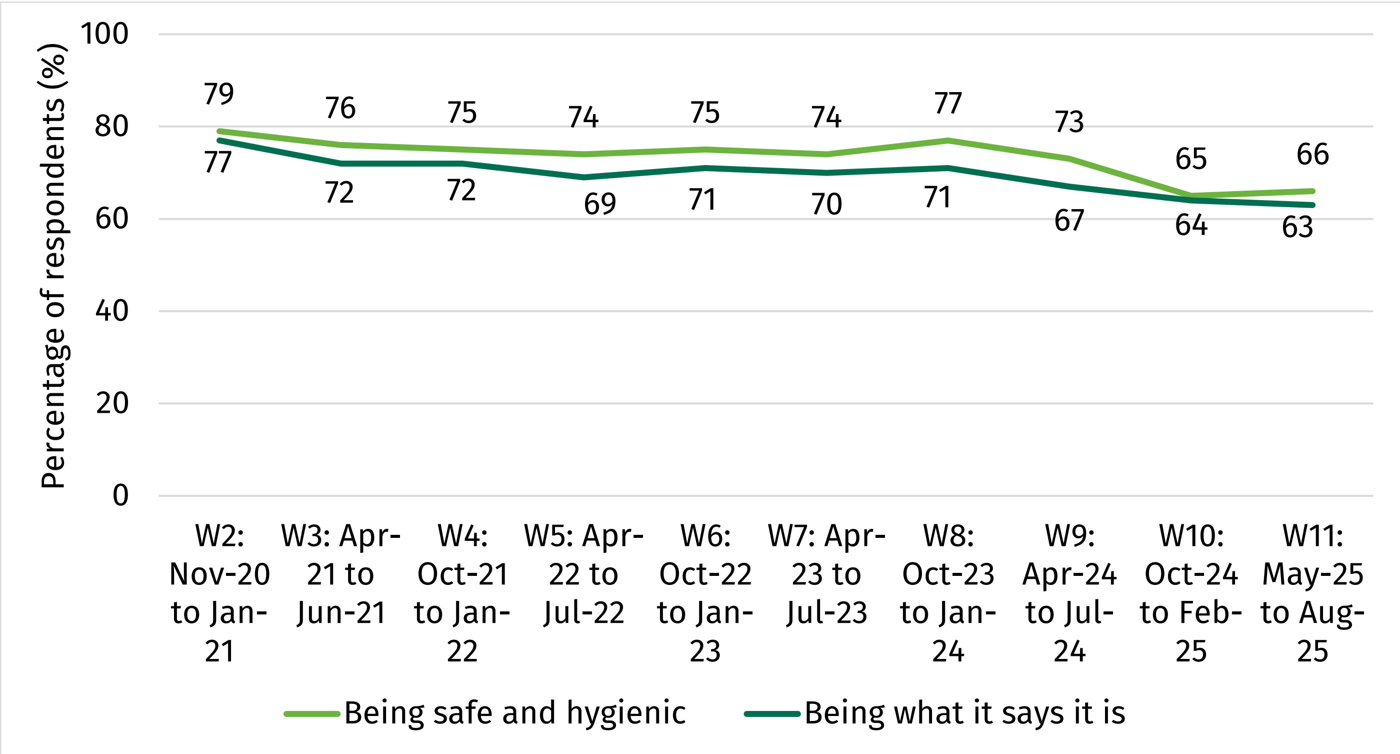
Figure 8. Level of concern about food produced inside the UK being safe and hygienic and being what it says it is.



Source: Food and You 2: Wave 2-11

Respondents were more likely to report concern about food from outside of the UK than food produced inside the UK. However, the patterns of concern over time were similar. Concern about food from outside the UK being safe and hygienic has also decreased notably from 79% in Wave 2 to 66% in Wave 11 (Figure 9). Similarly, respondents' concern about food from outside the UK being what it says it is, also decreased notably across waves from 77% in Wave 2 to 63% in Wave 11 (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Level of concern about food from outside the UK being safe and hygienic and being what it says it is.



Source: Food and You 2: Wave 2-11

Chapter 2: Food Hygiene when eating out

Introduction

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) helps people make informed choices about where to eat out or shop for food by giving clear information about the businesses' hygiene standards. Ratings are typically given to places where food is supplied, sold or consumed, including restaurants, pubs, cafés, takeaways, food vans and stalls.

The FSA runs the scheme in partnership with local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. A food safety officer from the local authority inspects a business to check that it follows food hygiene law so that the food is safe to eat. Businesses are given a rating from 0 to 5. A rating of 5 indicates that hygiene standards are very good, and a rating of 0 indicates that urgent improvement is required.

Food businesses are provided with a sticker which shows their FHRS rating. In England, businesses are encouraged to display their FHRS rating, however in Wales and Northern Ireland, food businesses are legally required to display their FHRS rating[15]. FHRS ratings are also available on the FSA website.

This chapter provides an overview of respondents' eating out and takeaway ordering habits, the factors that are considered when deciding where to eat out or order a takeaway from, and recognition and use of the FHRS between Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) and Wave 11 (May 2025 to August 2025)[16].

[15] Legislation for the mandatory display of FHRS ratings was introduced in November 2013 in Wales and October 2016 in Northern Ireland.

[16] Please note, other than awareness of FHRS, these topics were only included in the survey on an annual basis during the biannual cycle of Food and You 2 between Waves 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 before being included in each survey during the annual cycle from Wave 11 onwards.

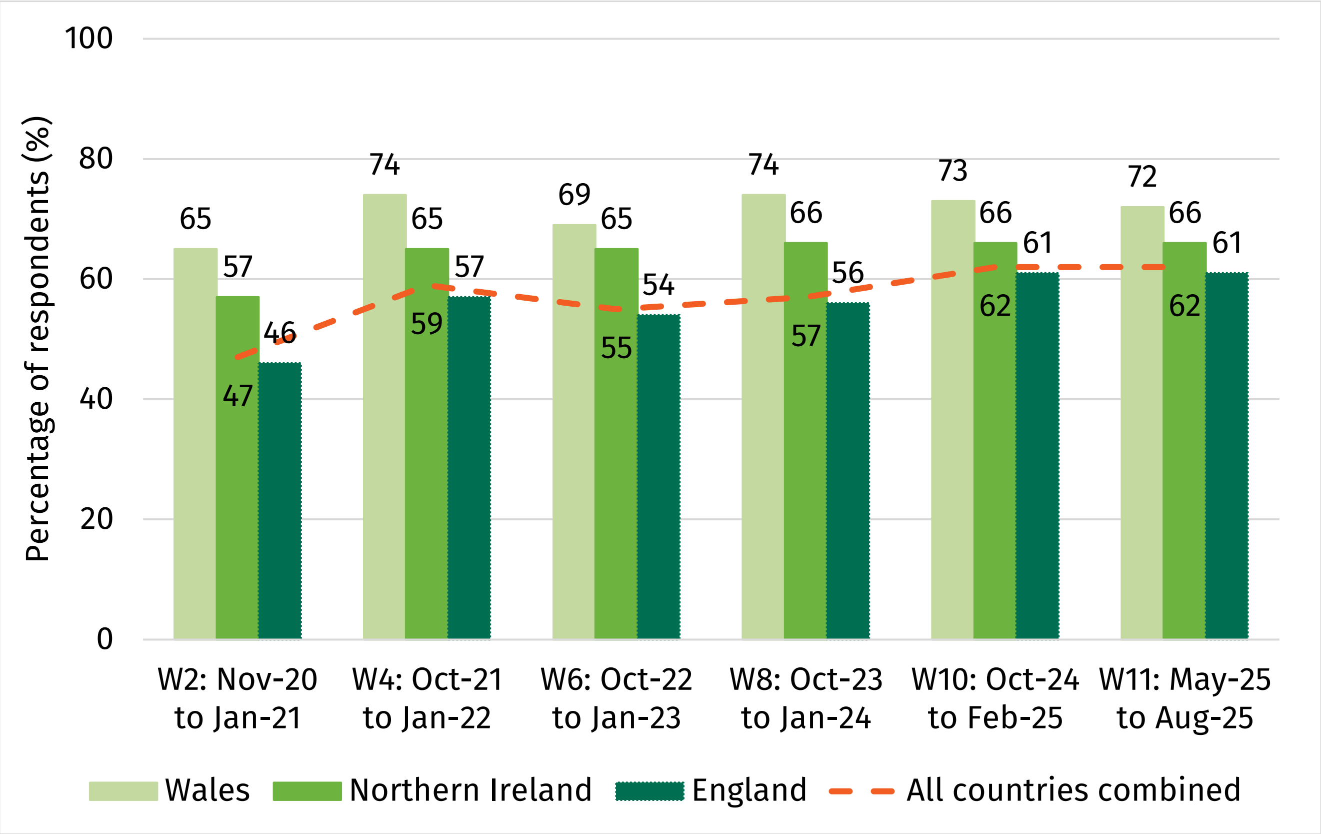
Awareness and recognition of the FHRS

The percentage of respondents who reported that they had heard of the FHRS and had knowledge about it (i.e., Yes, I've heard of it and know a lot / bit about it) notably increased from 47% in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) to 62% in Wave 11 (May 2025 to August 2025).

Across all waves, respondents in Wales (65-74%) had a higher level of awareness and knowledge of the FHRS than those in Northern Ireland (57-66%)** and England (46-61%) (Figure 10)[17].

[17]Question: Have you heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme? Responses: Yes, I've heard of it and know quite a lot about it, Yes, I've heard of it and know a bit about it, Yes, I've heard of it but don't know much about it, Yes, I've heard of it but don't know anything about it, No, I've never heard of it. Total base across waves 2, 4, 6, 8 (all countries combined) = 30,191 (range between 4,755 in Wave 4 and 5,898 in Wave 11), all respondents in relevant questionnaires (answering). Please note: this question was not included in Wave 1. Whilst data is available for waves 3, 5, 7 and 9 it is not directly comparable due to changes in question ordering and methodology in the survey design.

Figure 10. The percentage of respondents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland who had heard of the FHRS and had at least a bit of knowledge about it.

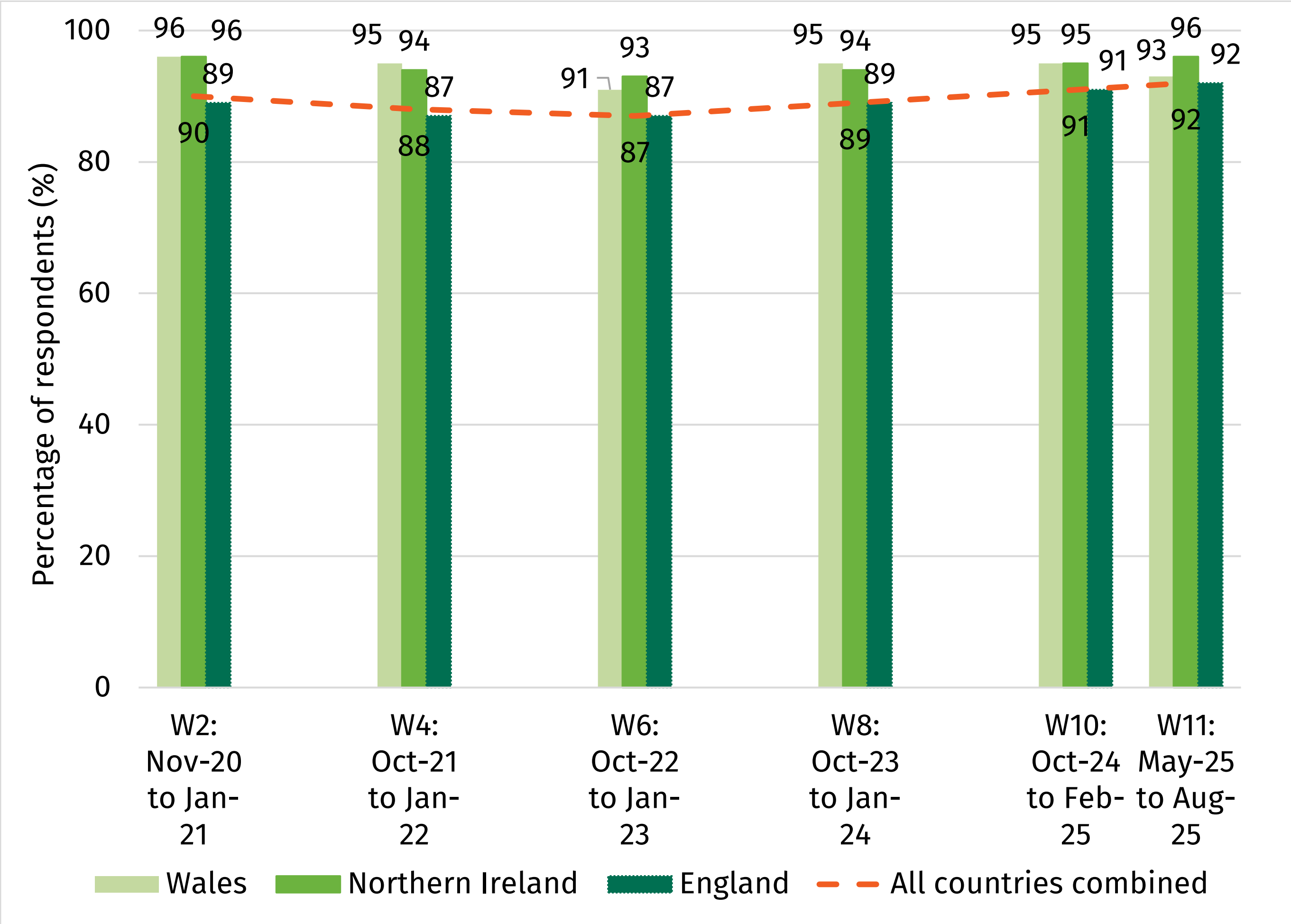


Food and You 2: Wave 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 11

Between Wave 2 and Wave 11, the percentage of respondents who reported they had seen the food hygiene rating sticker before showed slight changes (87-92%)**. Recognition was consistently higher across Northern Ireland (93-96%)** and Wales (91-96%)**, than in England (87-92%)** (Figure 11)[18].

[18] Question: Have you ever seen this sticker before? Responses: Yes, No, Don't know / not sure. Total base across waves 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 11 (all countries combined) = 30,191 (range between 4,755 in Wave 4 and 5,898 in Wave 11) all respondents in relevant questionnaires (answering). Please note: this question was not included in Waves 1, 3, 5,7 or 9.

Figure 11. Recognition of the food hygiene rating sticker in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.



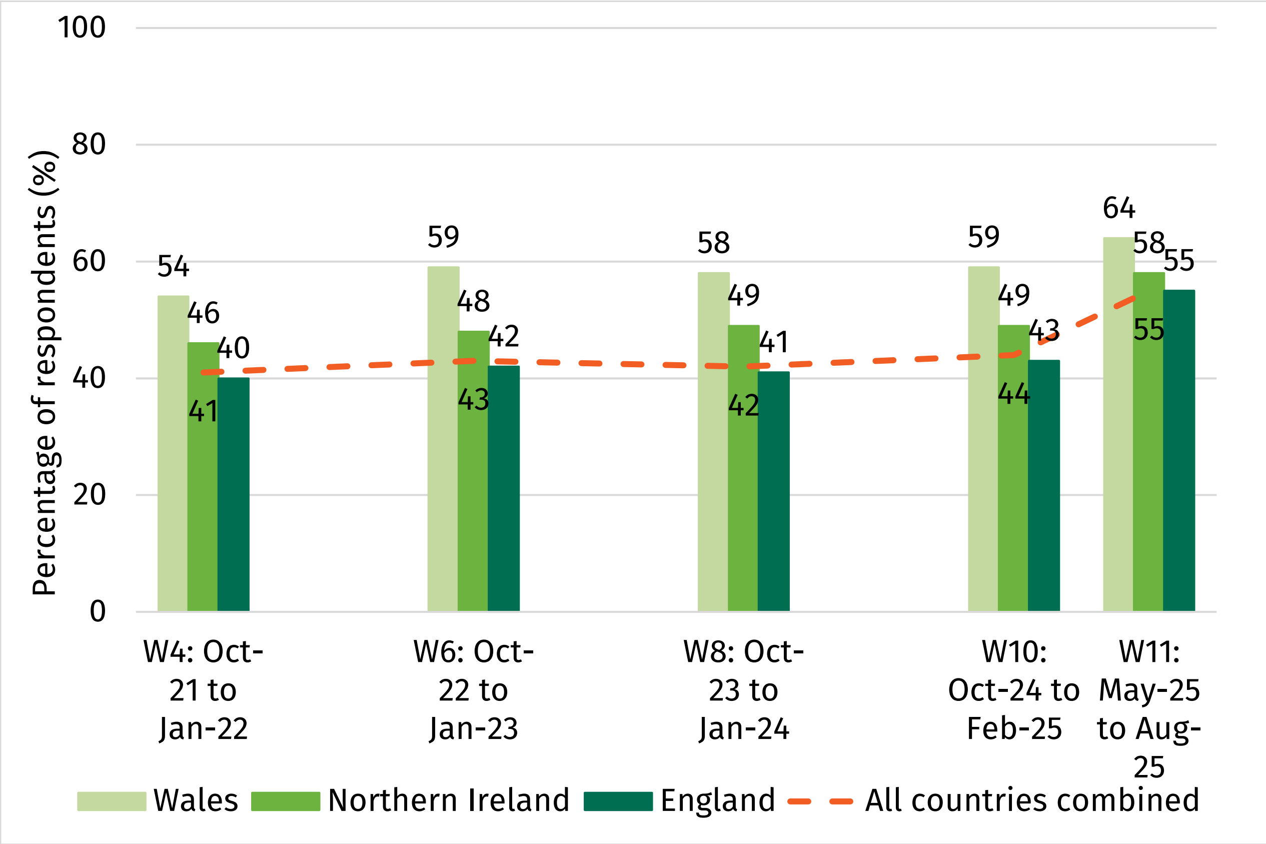
Food and You 2: Wave 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 11

FHRS usage

There was a notable increase in Wave 11 (55%), in the percentage of respondents who reported that they had checked the food hygiene rating of a business in the last 12 months compared to all other waves (41%-44%) (Figure 12)[19].

[19] Question: In the last 12 months, have you checked the hygiene rating of a food business? You may have checked a rating at the business premises, online, in leaflets or menus; whether or not you decided to purchase food from there. Responses: Yes, I have checked the Food Hygiene Rating of a food business, No, I have not checked the Food Hygiene Rating of a food business, Don't know. Total base across waves 4, 6, 8, 10 and 11 = 25,341 (range between 4,755 in Wave 4 and 5,898 in Wave 11), all respondents in relevant questionnaires (answering). Please note: this question was not included in Waves 1, 3, 5 or 7. In wave 2, different routing was used which means the data is not directly comparable, therefore it has been omitted from this graph.

Figure 12. The percentage of respondents who had checked the hygiene rating of a food business.



Food and You 2: Waves 4, 6, 8, 10 and 11

Respondents who had checked the food hygiene rating of a food business in the previous 12 months were asked how they had checked the rating. There were slight fluctuations between Waves 4 and 11 in the percentage of respondents who reported that they had checked the rating using a sticker displayed at the food business, with a slight increase between Wave 10 and Wave 11 (from 82% to 86%**). Those who reported checking a rating using an online food ordering website or app increased slightly between Wave 8 and Wave 11 (from 20% to 26%**) as well as those who checked the food business's own website between Wave 8 and Wave 11 (from 21% to 27%)**. There were no notable differences across waves for other ways of checking the hygiene rating. Participants were most likely to check the sticker displayed at the food business, across all waves (82%-86%)**[20].

Respondents were asked which food hygiene rating they would consider the lowest acceptable level. Across all waves, a rating of 4 (good) was consistently the most popular lowest acceptable level selected by respondents, increasing notably from 41% in Wave 4 to 52% in Wave 11. Only a quarter of respondents in Wave 11 (25%) considered 3 (generally satisfactory) as the lowest acceptable level, a notable decline from 40% in Wave 4. Those viewing 5 (very good) as the lowest acceptable figure has risen slightly from Wave 4 (8%) to Wave 11 (14%)** with all other acceptable ratings having remained stable across waves (Figure 13)[21].

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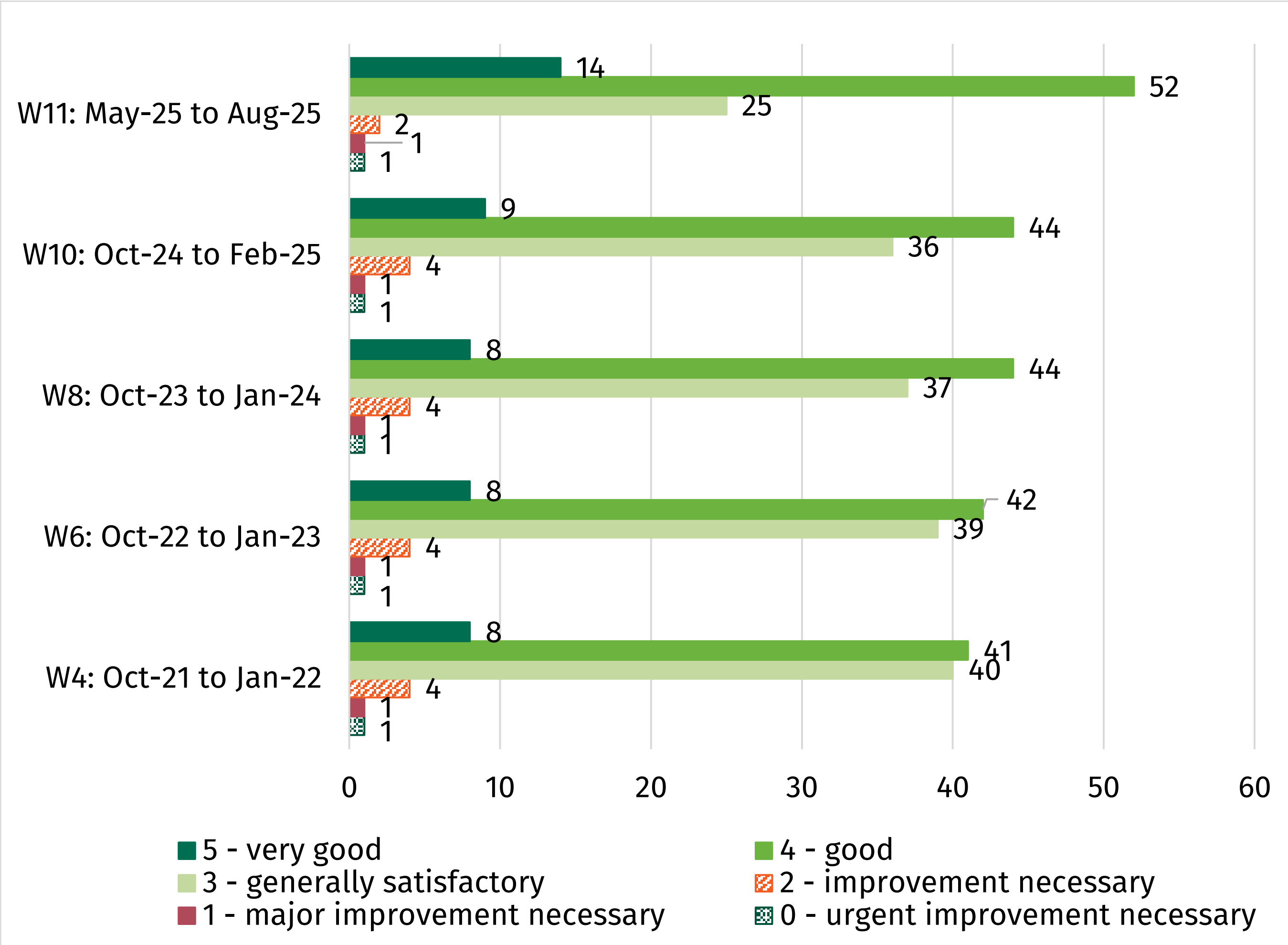
[20] Question: How did you check these ratings? Responses: I looked at an FHRS sticker displayed at the food business (such as in a business' window or on the door), I checked an online food ordering website or app (e.g. Just Eat, Deliveroo, Uber Eats), I checked the food business' own website, I checked on the Food Standards Agency's website, I checked on an app (e.g. Scores on the Doors Food Hygiene Rating), I checked on another website, I checked in a local newspaper, Other, Don't know. Total base across waves 4, 6, 8, 10 and 11 = 12,318 (range between 2,085 in Wave 4 and 3,263 in Wave 11), all respondents in relevant questionnaires, who have checked the Food Hygiene Rating of a food business in the previous 12 months (answering). Please note there has been minor rewording across the waves. This question was not included in Wave 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 or 9.

[21] Question: From a rating of 0 to 5, what is the lowest rating you would usually consider acceptable, if you were considering buying food from somewhere? Responses: 0 - urgent improvement necessary, 1 - major improvement necessary, 2 - improvement necessary, 3 - generally satisfactory, 4 – good, 5 - very good, Don't know, I do not usually notice the rating when I go into a food business. Total base across waves 4, 6, 8, 10 and 11 = 22,727 (range between 4,269 in Wave 4 and 5,338 in Wave 11), all respondents in relevant questionnaires, excluding those who have not heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme or 'Not stated' whether they had heard of it (answering). Please note: this question was not included in Waves 1, 3, 5, 7 or 9 and Wave 2 is not comparable

Figure 13. What rating respondents would consider the lowest acceptable food hygiene rating.



Food and You 2: Waves 4, 6, 8, 10 and 11

Views on mandatory display

Across all waves, around 9 in 10 (91-94%)** respondents reported thinking that food businesses should be required by law to display their food hygiene rating at their premises (Figure 17)[22]. These levels are similar across all waves in England (91-94%), Wales (93-95%)** and Northern Ireland (91-95%)**.

Respondents were also asked where they thought food hygiene ratings should be displayed.[23] There have been no notable changes across waves, with the vast majority (over 90%) of respondents consistently reporting that ratings should be displayed on the websites of restaurants, cafes, takeaways, hotels/B&Bs and food ordering/delivery apps and websites across all waves. Just over 8 in 10 respondents report that ratings

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[22] Question: Do you think that food businesses should be required by law to display their Food Hygiene Rating at their premises, or should it be up to the business to decide whether to or not? Responses: They should have to, It should be up to them to decide, Don't know. Total base across waves 4, 6, 8, 10 and 11 = 23,104 (range between 4,350 in Wave 4 and 5,406 in Wave 11), all respondents in relevant questionnaires, excluding those who have not heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme or 'Not stated' whether they had heard of it (answering). Please note: this question was not included in Waves 1, 3, 5, 7 or 9. Although asked in Wave 2, this data is not comparable.

[23] Question: Do you think the hygiene ratings should be clearly displayed on.... Food ordering and delivery companies' apps and websites that allow you to order food from a range of local restaurants and takeaways? / A food business's social media site / A restaurant's or cafe's own website? / A takeaway's own website? / A hotel’s or B&B’s own website if they provide food? / A supermarket's own website? Responses: Yes, No, Don’t know. Total base across waves 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 11 = 30,191 (except for ‘A food business's social media site’, which wasn’t asked in W2. Total base for this: 25,341) (range between 4,755 in Wave 4 and 5,898 in Wave 11), all respondents in relevant questionnaires (answering). Please note: this question was not included in Waves 1, 3, 5, 7 or 9.

should be displayed on the supermarket's own website (81%-87%) and food business' social media sites (81%-82%).

Chapter 3: Preparing food safely at home

Introduction

The FSA is responsible for protecting the public from foodborne diseases. This involves working with farmers, food producers and processors, and the retail and hospitality sectors to ensure that the food people buy is safe. The FSA gives practical guidance and recommendations to consumers on food safety and hygiene in the home.

This chapter provides an overview of respondents' knowledge and reported behaviours relating to food safety and other food-related behaviours between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 11 (May 2025 to August 2025).

Cooking

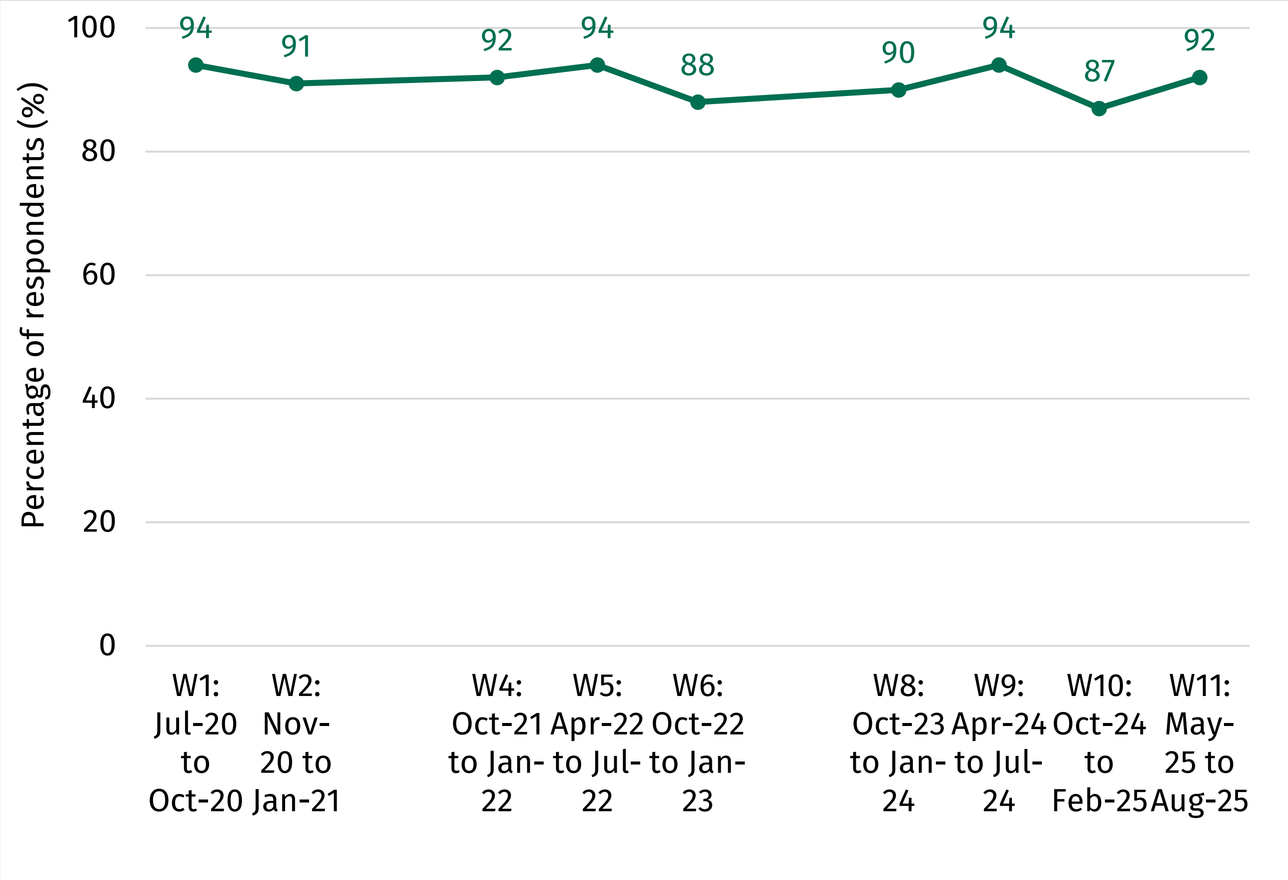
The FSA recommends that food is cooked until steaming hot and cooked all the way through. There were slight differences in the percentage of respondents who reported that they always cook food until steaming hot and cooked all the way through between Wave 1 and Wave 11. Across all waves, almost 8 in 10 respondents (76%-79%)** reported that they always cook food until steaming hot and cooked all the way through[24].

There was a slight decline in the percentage of respondents who reported 'never' eating chicken or turkey when it is pink or has pink or red juices between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) (94%) and Wave 11 (92%)**, although the Wave 11 figure represents a slight increase from Wave 10 (87%**). Overall, across all waves, around 9

[24] Question: How often, if at all, do you cook food until it is steaming hot and cooked all the way through? Responses: always, most of the time, about half of the time, occasionally, I don't cook food, never, don't know. Total base across waves 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 and 11 = 34,045 (range between 3,277 in Wave 9 and 5,539 in Wave 1), all online respondents in relevant waves who ever do some food preparation or cooking for their household (answering) -. Please note: this question was not included in Waves 3 or 7.

in 10 respondents reported that they would never eat chicken or turkey when it is pink or has pink or red juices (Figure 14)[25].

Figure 14. The percentage of respondents who never eat chicken or turkey when it is pink or has pink juices.



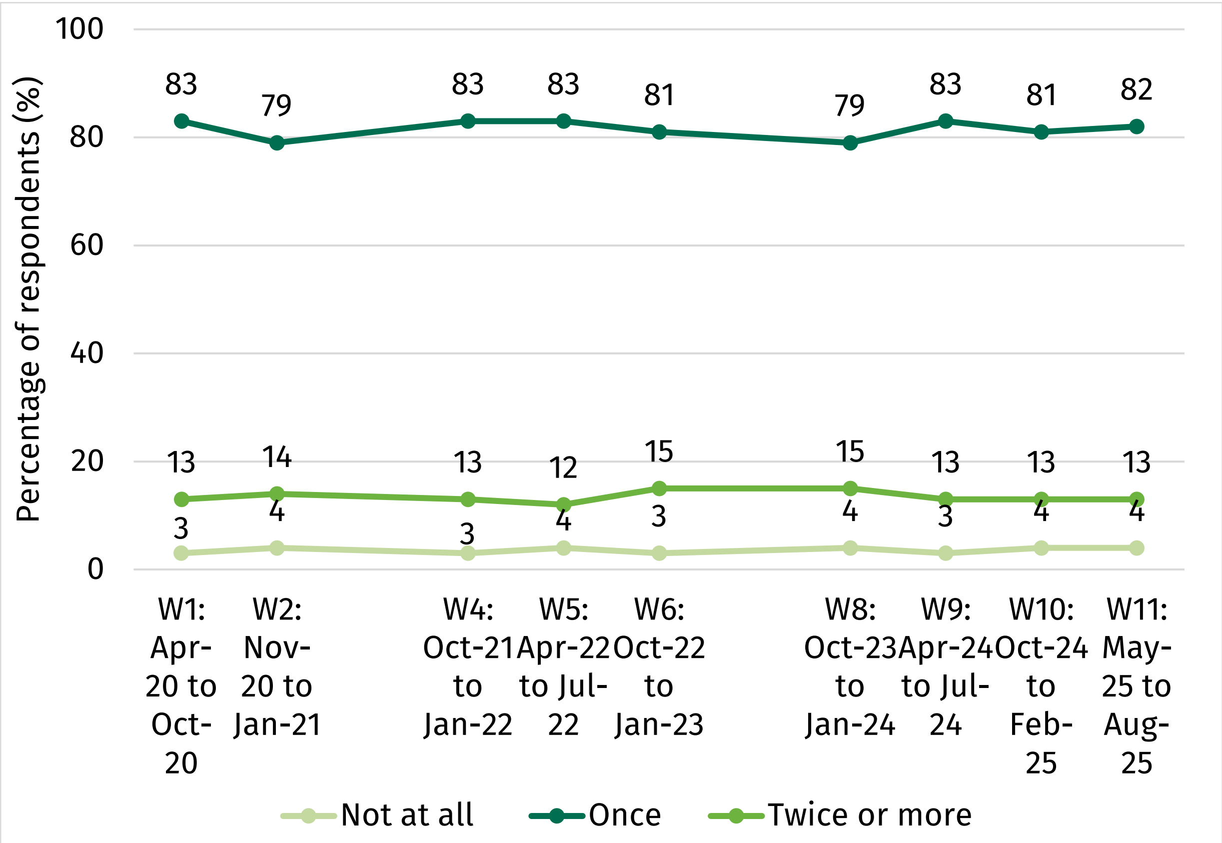
Food and You 2: Wave 1, 2, 4-6, 8-11

[25] Question: How often, if at all, do you eat chicken or turkey when the meat is pink or has pink or red juices? Responses: Always, Most of the time, About half the time, Occasionally, Never, Don't know. Total Base across waves 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 = 33,456, (range between 3,210 in Wave 9 and 5,449 in Wave 1) All online respondents in relevant waves who are not vegan, vegetarian or pescatarian, excluding those who do not eat chicken or turkey. Please note: this question was not included in Waves 3 or 7.

Reheating

As part of the FSA's consumer guidance on how to prepare food safely at home, the FSA recommends that food is only reheated once. Respondents were asked how many times they would reheat food after it was cooked. There were no notable differences in the number of times respondents would reheat food between Wave 1 and Wave 11. Across all waves, around 8 in 10 (79%-83%) respondents reported that they would reheat food only once** (Figure 15)[26].

Figure 15. How many times respondents would consider reheating food.



Food and You 2: Wave 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11

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[26] Question: How many times would you consider reheating food after it was cooked for the first time? Responses: not at all, once, twice, more than twice, don't know, I don't reheat food. Total base across all waves = 32,566 (range between 3,153 in Wave 9 and 5, 217 in Wave 1) all online respondents in relevant waves who reheat food. This question was not included in Wave 3 or 7.

Cleaning

Handwashing in the home

The FSA recommends that everyone should wash their hands before they prepare, cook or eat food, after handling raw food, and before preparing ready-to-eat food.

There were slight differences in the percentage of respondents who reported that they always wash their hands immediately after handling raw meat, poultry, or fish between Wave 6 (91%) and Wave 10 (93%)**, however, 92% of respondents reported that they always did this in Wave 11, mirroring levels observed in Wave 2[27].

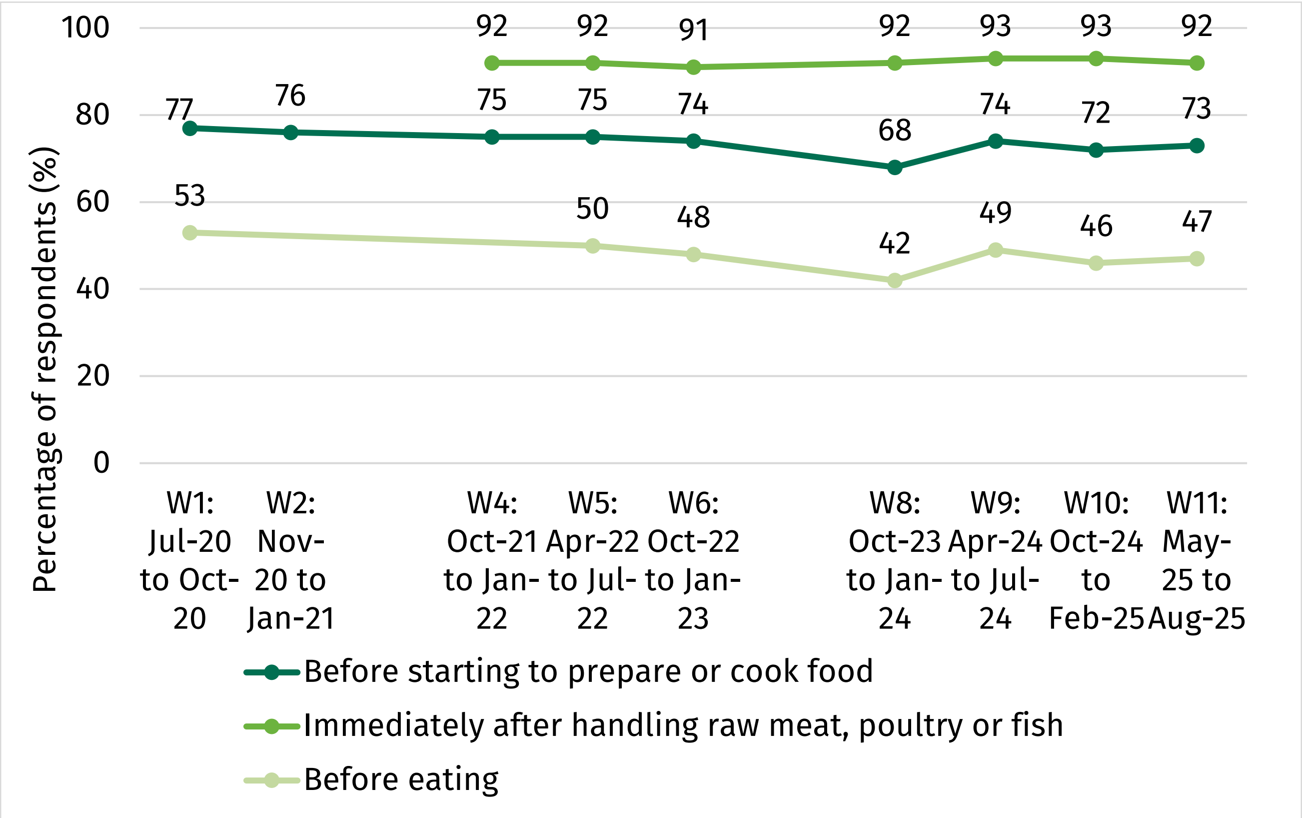
There was a slight decline in the percentage of respondents who reported always washing their hands before preparing or cooking food, from 77% in Wave 1 to 73% in Wave 11, but this represents a slight increase from Wave 8 (68%)** [28]. Similarly, there was a slight decline in the percentage who reported always washing their hands

[27] Question: When you are at home, how often, if at all, do you wash your hands immediately after handling raw meat, poultry or fish? Responses: Always; Most of the time; About half the time; Occasionally; Never; Don't know. Total base across waves 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 = 23,959 (range between 3,111 in Wave 9 and 3,603 in Wave 5), all respondents in relevant questionnaires who ever do some food preparation or cooking for their household, excluding those who don't cook meat, poultry or fish (answering). Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3 or 7 and Wave 1 and 2 is no longer comparable.

[28] Question: When you are at home, how often, if at all, do you wash your hands before starting to prepare or cook food? Responses: Always; Most of the time; About half the time; Occasionally; Never; Don't know. Total base across waves 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 = 34,045 (range between 3,277 in Wave 9 and 5,539 in Wave 1), all respondents in relevant questionnaires (answering). Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3 or 7.

before eating from 53% in Wave 1 to 47% in Wave 11. However, this still represents a slight increase compared Wave 8 (42%)** (Figure 16)[29].

Figure 16. The percentage of respondents who always wash their hands.



Food and You 2: Waves 1, 2, 4-6, 8, 9, 10 and 11

[29] Question: When you are at home, how often, if at all, do you wash your hands before eating? Responses: Always; Most of the time; About half the time; Occasionally; Never; Don't know. Total base across waves 1, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 = 29,009 (range between 3,530 in Wave 9 and 5,936 in Wave 1), all respondents in relevant questionnaires (answering). Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3, or 7 and Waves 2 and 4 are not comparable..

Chilling

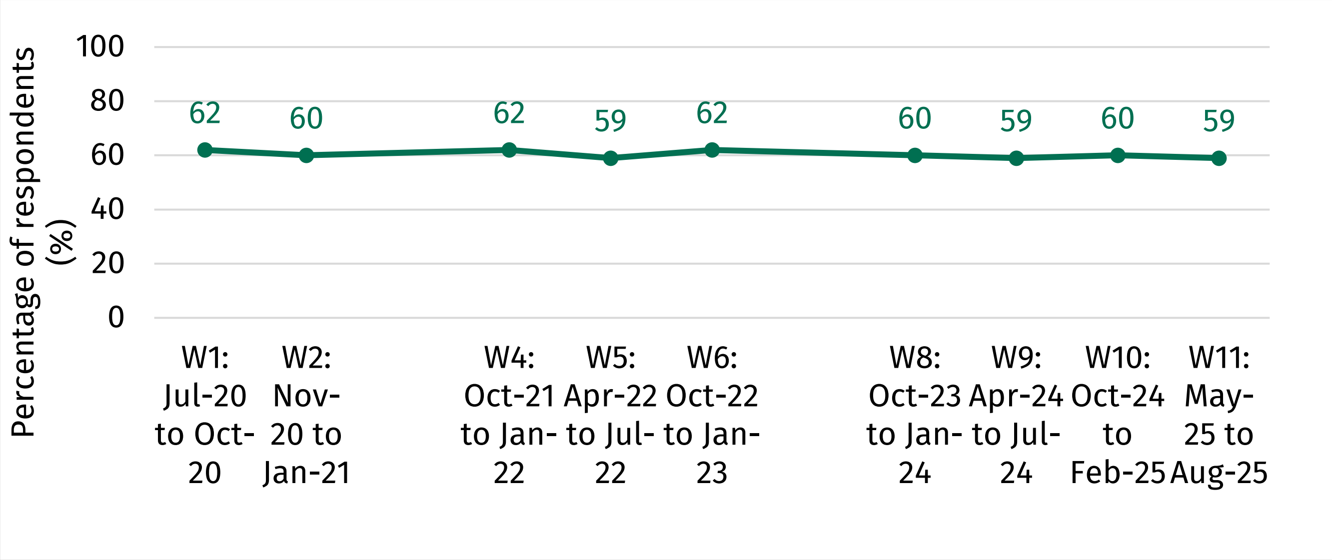
If and how respondents check fridge temperature

The FSA recommends that the inside of a fridge should be between 0-5 degrees Celsius, and that the temperature should be checked weekly, using a fridge thermometer.

The percentage of respondents who reported that the temperature on the inside of a fridge should be between 0-5 degrees Celsius has remained fairly stable across all waves with around 6 in 10 (59%-62%)** between Wave 1 and Wave 11 knowing the correct temperature as per FSA recommendations (Figure 17)[30].

[30] Question: What do you think the temperature inside your fridge should be? Responses: less than 0 degrees C (less than 32 degrees F), between 0 and 5 degrees C (32 to 41 degrees F), more than 5 but less than 8 degrees C (42 to 46 degrees F), 8 to 10 degrees C (47 to 50 degrees F), more than 10 degrees C (over 50 degrees F), other, I don't have a fridge, don’t know. Total base across waves 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 = 51,459, (range between 4,746 in Wave 8 and 9,304 in Wave 1), all online respondents and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire, excluding those who don’t have a fridge. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3 or 7.

Figure 17. The percentage of respondents who think that the inside of a fridge should be between 0-5 degrees Celsius.



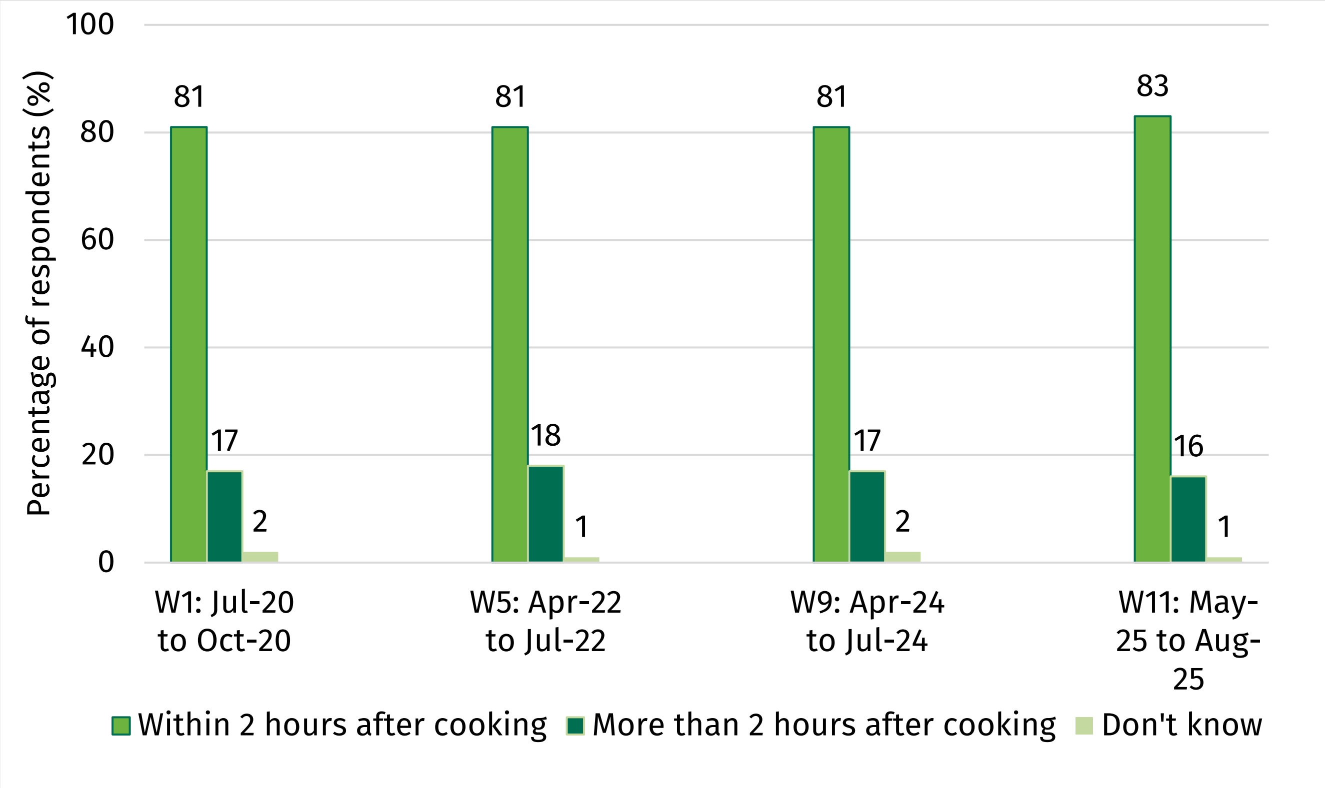
Food and You 2: Wave 1, 2, 4- 6 and 8-11

Leftovers

The FSA provides guidelines on how to store leftovers and recommends that they be put in the fridge within two hours after cooking, once properly cooled. Respondents were asked how soon after cooking they put any leftovers in the fridge or freezer. There were slight differences between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 11 (May 2025 to August 2025), with around 4 out of 5 respondents putting their leftovers in the fridge or freezer within 2 hours of cooking across waves (Figure 18)[31].

[31] Question: Typically, how soon after cooking do you put any leftovers in the fridge or freezer? Responses: straight away, within 1 hour of cooking, 1-2 hours after cooking, more than two hours after cooking, don't know. Total base across waves 1, 5, 9, 11 = 12,789 (range between 2,658 in Wave 9 and 4,206 in Wave 1), all online respondents in relevant waves who put leftovers in the fridge or freezer (answering)Please note: this question was not included in Waves 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 or 10

Figure 18. How soon respondents put leftovers in the fridge or freezer after cooking.



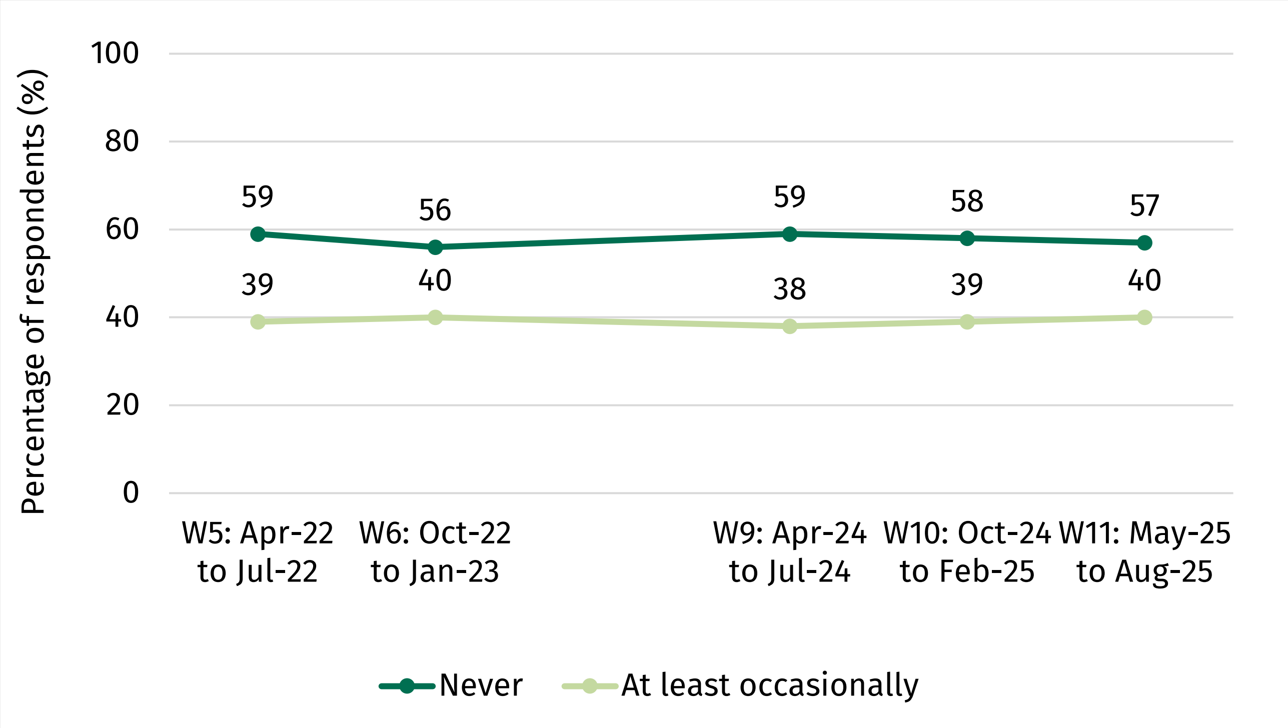
Food and You 2: Waves 1, 5, 9, 11

Avoiding cross-contamination

The FSA provides guidelines on how to avoid cross-contamination. The FSA recommends that people do not wash raw meat, fish or poultry. Washing raw meat can spread harmful bacteria onto hands, work surfaces, ready-to-eat foods and cooking equipment. Between Wave 5 (April 2022 to July 2022) and Wave 11 (May 2025 to August

2025), there was no notable change across waves with almost 6 in 10 never washing raw chicken across all waves** (Figure 19)[32].

Figure 19. The percentage of respondents who never and at least occasionally wash raw chicken.



Food and You 2: Wave 5, 6, 9-11

Use-by dates

Respondents were asked about their understanding of the different types of [date labels](#) and instructions on food packaging, as storing food for too long or at the wrong temperature can cause food poisoning. Use-by dates relate to food safety and best-before (BBE) dates relate to food quality.

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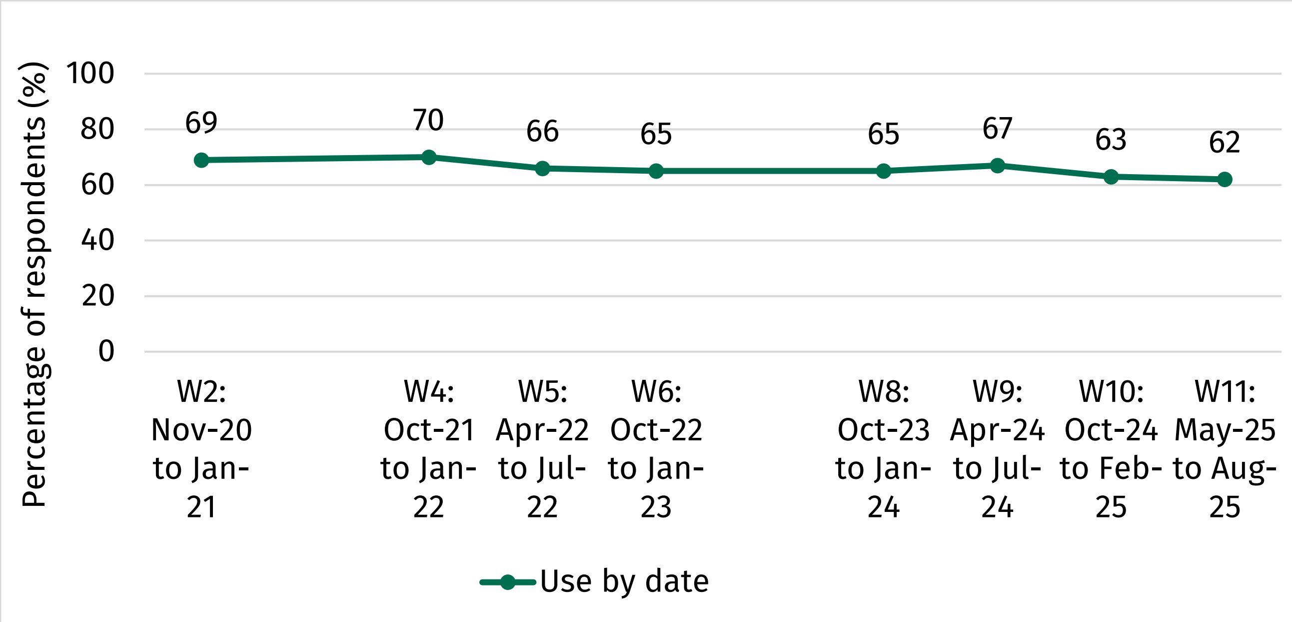
[32] Question: How often, if at all, do you wash raw chicken? Responses: always, most of the time, about half of the time, occasionally, never, don't know. Total base across waves 5, 6, 9, 10 and 11 = 25,878 (range between 4,462 in wave 10 and 5, 109 in wave 9), all respondents in relevant waves who ever do some food preparation or cooking for their household. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3 or 7 and Waves 1, 2, 4 and 8 are not directly comparable to Waves 5, 6, 9, 10 and 11.

Those who identified the use-by date as the information which shows that food is no longer safe to eat have remained broadly stable across waves, with a slight decline from Wave 4 (70%) to Wave 11 (62%)** (Figure 20)[33].

Figure 20. The percentage of respondents who identified the use-by date as the information which shows when food is no longer safe to eat.



Food and You 2: Wave 2, 4-6, 8-11

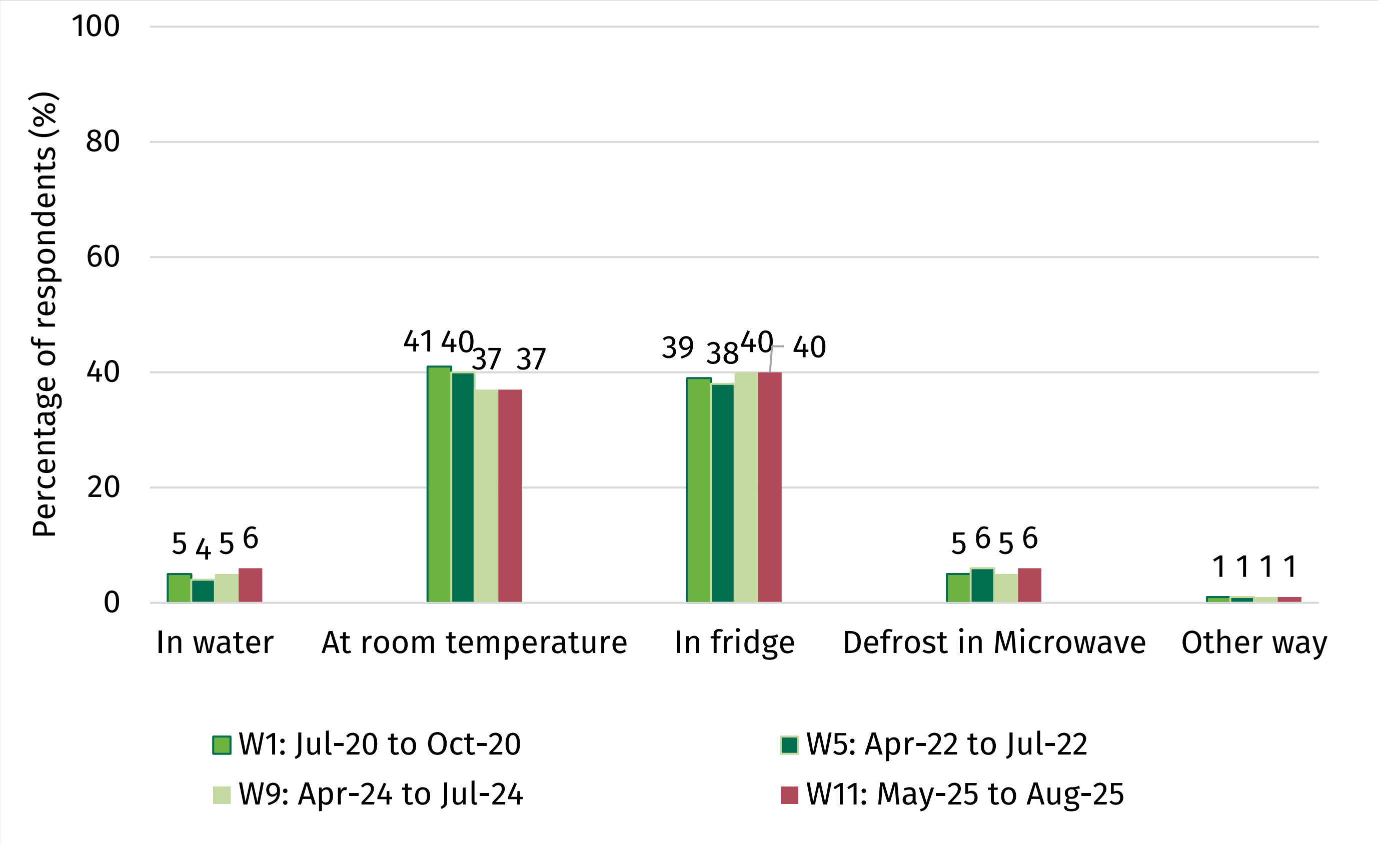
[33] Question: Which of these shows when food is no longer safe to eat? Responses: use-by date, best before date, sell by date, display until date, all of these, it depends, none of these, don't know. Total base across waves 2, 4-6, 8-11= 30,582 (range between 3,530 in Wave 9 and 4,041 in Wave 5), all online respondents in relevant waves. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 1, 3 or 7.

Defrosting

The FSA provides guidance on how to defrost food safely and recommends defrosting food in the fridge overnight in order to avoid food entering the 'Danger Zone'. Respondents were asked the method they use most often when defrosting frozen meat or fish. The proportion of respondents defrosting meat or fish in the fridge, in line with FSA advice, remained stable across all waves (38-40%), with 4 in 10 reporting doing so in Wave 11. There was a slight difference in the percentage of respondents reporting defrosting meat or fish at room temperature from 41% in Wave 1 (July 2020 -October 2020) to 37% in Wave 11 (May 2025 -August 2025)**. All other methods remained stable across all waves. (Figure 21)[34]. Around 1 in 10 respondents reported never defrosting meat and fish.

[34] Question: Typically, how do you defrost frozen meat or fish? Please choose the method you use most often. Responses: Place the meat or fish in water, Leave the meat or fish at room temperature (e.g. on the worktop on a plate, in a container or in its packaging), Leave the meat or fish in the fridge, Defrost the meat or fish in the microwave oven, Some other way, I never defrost meat or fish, don't know. Total base across Wave 1, 5, 9, 11= 16,161 (range between 3, 277 in Wave 9 and 5, 539 in Wave 1), all online respondents and all those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire, who ever do some food preparation or cooking for their household. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, or 10.

Figure 21. How respondents defrost frozen meat or fish.



Food and You 2: Wave 1, 5, 9, 11

Chapter 4: Food allergies, intolerances and other hypersensitivities

Introduction

'Food hypersensitivity' is a term that refers to a bad or unpleasant physical reaction which occurs as a result of consuming a particular food. There are different types of food hypersensitivity, including a food allergy, food intolerance and coeliac disease.

A **food allergy** occurs when the immune system mistakes the proteins in food as a threat. Symptoms of a food allergy can vary from mild to very serious symptoms , and can include itching, hives, vomiting, swollen eyes and airways, or anaphylaxis, which can be life-threatening.

Food intolerance is difficulty in digesting specific foods, which causes unpleasant reactions such as stomach pain, bloating, diarrhoea, skin rashes or itching. Food intolerance is not an immune condition and is not life-threatening.

Coeliac disease is an autoimmune condition caused by gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley and rye, including products using these as ingredients. The immune system attacks the small intestine, which damages the gut and reduces the ability to absorb nutrients. Symptoms of coeliac disease can include diarrhoea, abdominal pain and bloating, as well as longer-term health consequences if the disease is not managed.

The FSA is responsible for allergen labelling and providing guidance to people with food hypersensitivities. By law, food businesses in the UK must inform customers if they use any of the 14 most potent and prevalent allergens[35] in the food and drink they provide.

This chapter provides an overview of the prevalence of reactions for those with a food hypersensitivity, the availability of allergen information when eating out or ordering takeaways and consumer confidence in allergen information and allergen labelling. In most cases, data were collected annually between Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) to Wave 11 (May 2025 to August 2025).

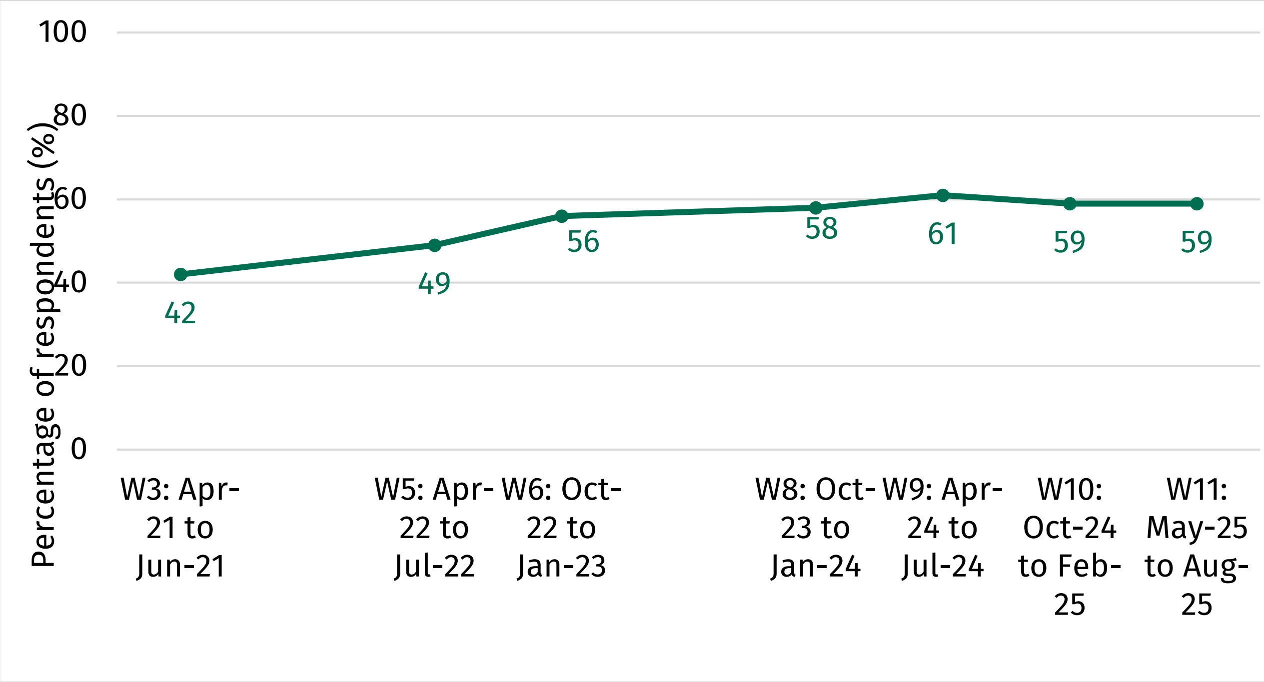
Prevalence of reactions

Respondents with a food hypersensitivity were asked if they had experienced a bad or unpleasant reaction to food within the past 12 months. Between Wave 3 (April 2021 to June 2021) and Wave 11 (May 2025 to February 2025) there was a notable increase in the percentage of respondents who had experienced a reaction from 42% to 59% (Figure 22)[36].

[35] Allergens: celery, cereals containing gluten (such as barley and oats), crustaceans (such as prawns, crabs and lobsters), eggs, fish, lupin, milk, molluscs (such as mussels and oysters), mustard, peanuts, sesame, soybeans, sulphur dioxide and sulphites and tree nuts (such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, Brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts).

[36] Question: In the last 12 months, have you experienced any bad or unpleasant physical reactions after consuming certain foods? Responses: Yes, No, Can't remember. Total base across waves 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 = 9, 622 (range between 1,228 in Wave 10 and 1,631 in Wave 5), all respondents who suffer from a bad or unpleasant physical reaction after consuming certain foods or avoid certain foods because of the bad or unpleasant physical reaction they might cause. This question was not included in Waves 1, 2, 4 or 7.

Figure 22. Proportion of respondents who had experienced a reaction in the last 12 months.



Food and You 2: Waves 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11

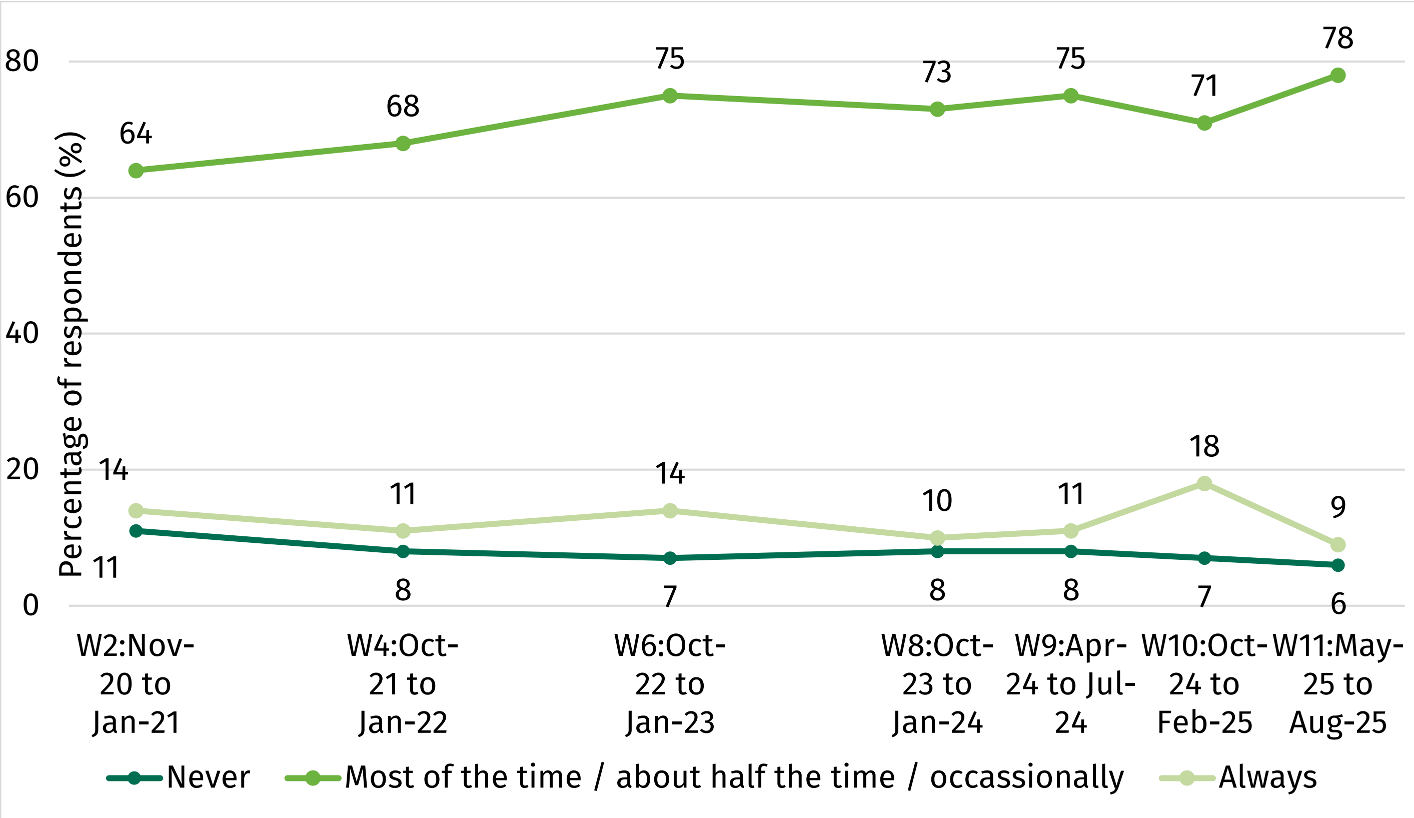
Availability of allergen information when eating out or ordering takeaways

The FSA provides guidance for food businesses on providing allergen information. Food businesses in the retail and catering sector are required by law to provide allergen information and to follow labelling rules. The type of allergen information which must be provided depends on the type of food business. However, all food business operators must provide allergen information for pre-packed and non-pre-packed food and drink. Foods which are pre-packed or pre-packed for direct sale (PPDS) are required to have a label with a full ingredients list with allergenic ingredients emphasised.

Those reporting this information as always being available fluctuates, with the highest point in Wave 10 (18%) and the lowest in Wave 11 (9%)**. There was a notable increase in the percentage of respondents reporting that this information is only available occasionally, half the time or most of the time, from Wave 2 (64%) to Wave 11 (78%).

Those reporting that this information is never available have been consistently lower than Wave 2 (11%), reaching the lowest point in Wave 11 (6%)** (Figure 23)[37].

Figure 23. The availability of allergen information when eating out or buying food to take out.



Food and You 2: Wave 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11

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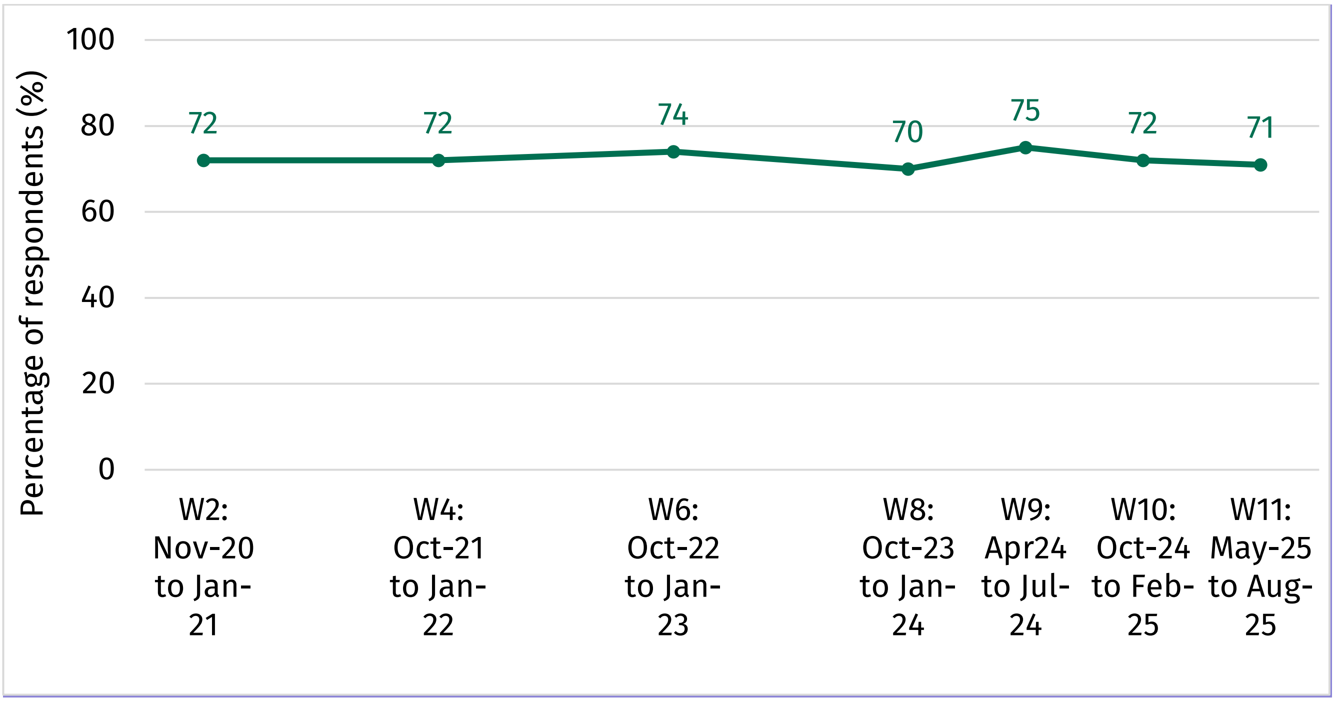
[37] Question: When eating out or buying food to take out, how often, if at all, is the information you need to help you identify food that might cause you a bad or unpleasant physical reaction readily available? Responses: Always, Most of the time, About half of the time, Occasionally, Never, Don’t know. Total base across waves 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11= 5,402 (range between 712 in Wave 2 and 844 in Wave 11), all online respondents in relevant waves who eat out or order takeaway and who suffer from a bad or unpleasant physical reaction after consuming certain foods, or avoid certain foods because of the bad or unpleasant physical reaction they might cause. Please note: there have been slight routing differences into this question across the waves. This question was not included in Waves 1, 3, or 5 and data has not been included from Wave 7. Due to variant routing, results are not strictly comparable with other waves.

Respondents with a food hypersensitivity were asked how comfortable they felt asking a member of staff for more allergy information when eating out. The proportion of respondents reporting that they were comfortable (i.e., very comfortable or fairly comfortable) ranged between 70% (Wave 8) and 75% (Wave 9), remaining stable across all waves (Figure 24)[38].

Figure 24. The percentage of respondents with food hypersensitivities who feel comfortable asking a member of staff for allergen information.



Food and You 2: Wave 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11

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[38] Question: How comfortable do you feel asking a member of staff for more information about food that might cause you a bad or unpleasant physical reaction? Responses: Very comfortable, Fairly comfortable, Not very comfortable, Not at all comfortable, It varies from place to place, Don't know. Total base across waves 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11= 5,402 (range between 712 in Wave 2 and 844 in Wave 11), all online respondents in relevant waves who eat out or order takeaway, who suffer from a bad or unpleasant physical reaction after consuming certain foods, or avoid certain foods because of the bad or unpleasant physical reaction they might cause.

Confidence in allergen information

Verbal and written allergy information

Respondents with a food hypersensitivity were asked how confident they were in identifying allergy information, when the information was provided in writing or verbally.

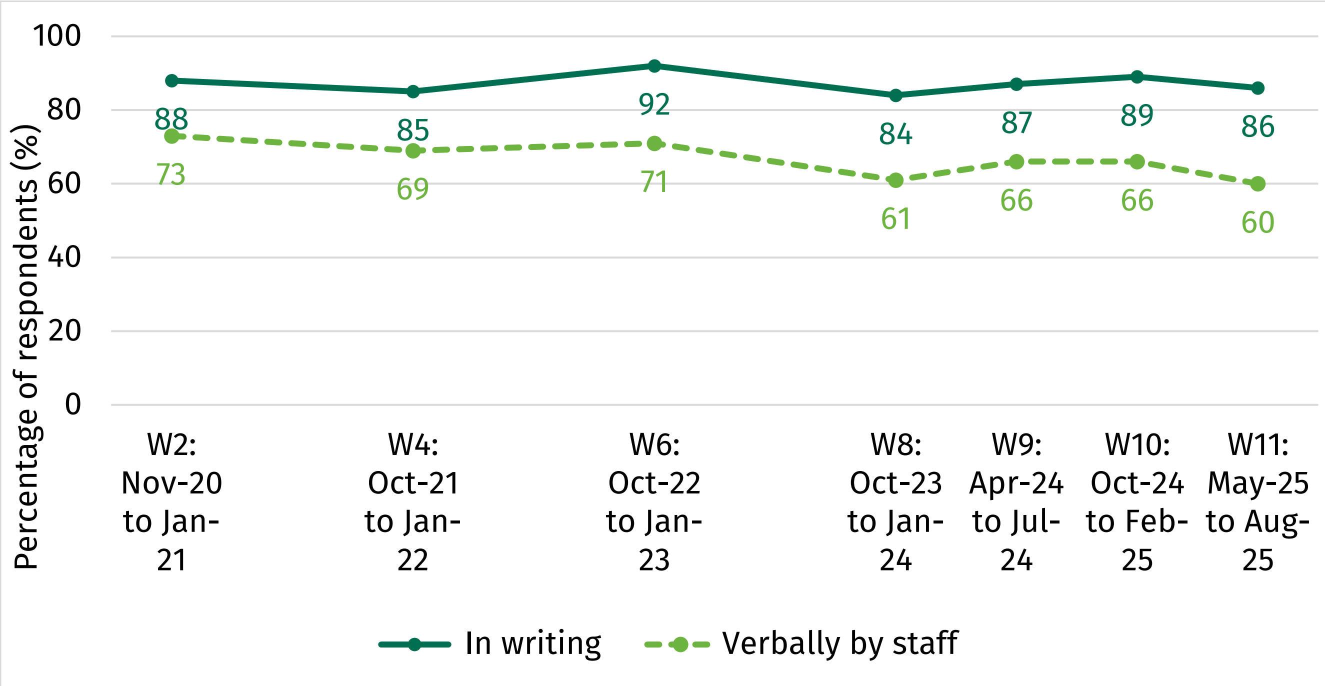
The percentage of respondents who reported being very or fairly confident [39] in allergen information provided in writing was similar in the first and most recent waves in which the question was asked (Wave 2 at 88%, Wave 11 at 86%).

There was a notable decrease in the percentage of respondents who reported confidence in allergen information provided verbally by staff from 73% in Wave 2 to 60% in Wave 11 (Figure 25)[40].

[39] i.e. very/fairly confident

[40] Question: How confident are you that the information provided will allow you to identify and avoid food that might cause you a bad or unpleasant physical reaction? a) when the information is provided in writing (for example, on the main menu or a separate allergen menu). b) when the information is provided verbally by a member of staff. Responses: Very confident, Fairly confident, Not very confident, Not at all confident, It varies from place to place, Don't know. Total base across waves 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11= 5,402 (range between 712 in Wave 2 and 844 in Wave 11), all online respondents in relevant waves who eat out or order takeaway, who suffer from a bad or unpleasant physical reaction after consuming certain foods, or avoid certain foods because of the bad or unpleasant physical reaction they might cause. This question was not included in Waves 1, 3, 5 or 7.

Figure 25. How confident respondents with food hypersensitivities were in allergen information provided in writing or verbally by a member of staff.

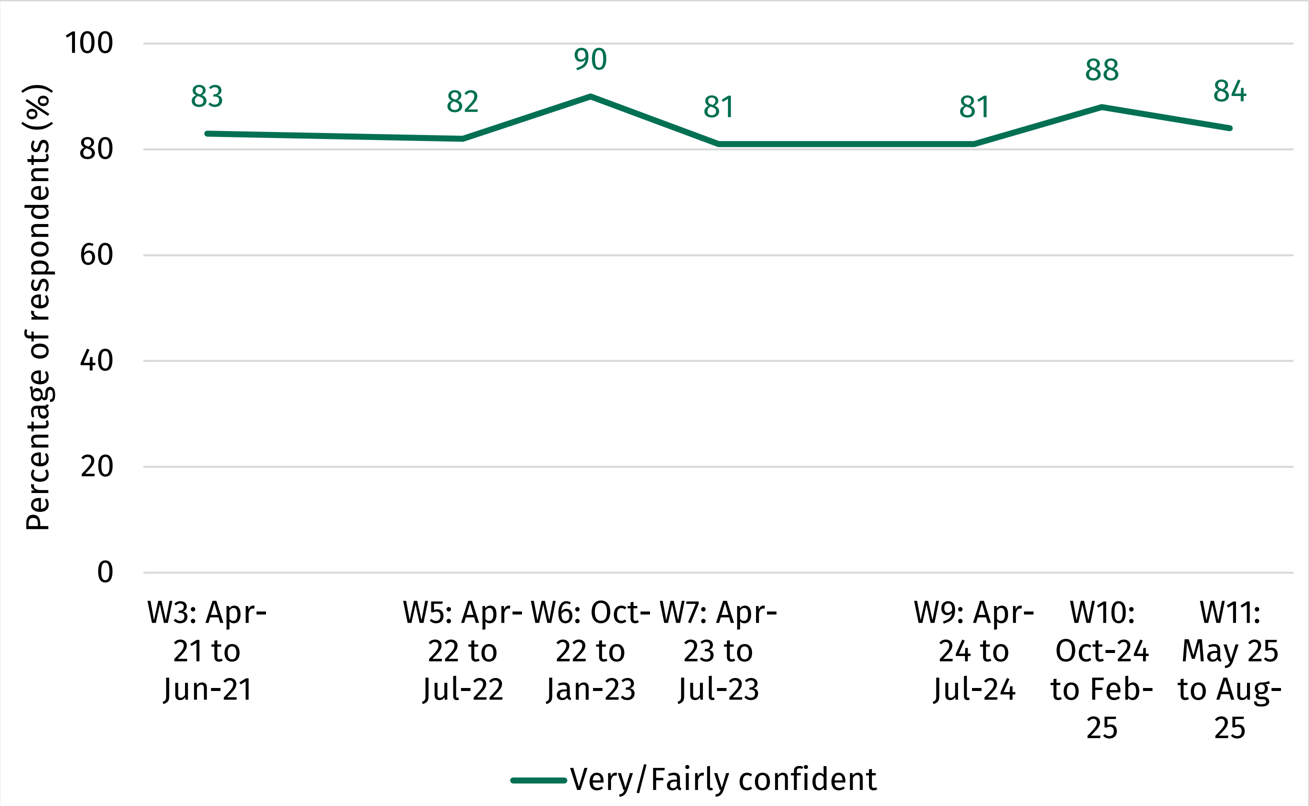


Food and You 2: Waves 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11

Confidence in allergen labelling when food shopping

Respondents were asked how confident (i.e., very confident or fairly confident) they were that the information provided on food labels allows them to identify foods that will cause a bad or unpleasant physical reaction. 84% of respondents in Wave 11 reported confidence in allergen labelling. This is broadly consistent with previous waves, although higher levels of confidence have been reported in Wave 6 (90%) and Wave 10 (88%)** (Figure 26). [41].

Figure 26. The percentage of respondents who are confident in allergen labelling.



Food and You 2: Wave 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11

[41] Question: How confident are you that the information provided on food labels allows you to identify foods that will cause you, or another member of your household, a bad or unpleasant physical reaction? Responses: Very confident, Fairly confident, Not very confident, Not at all confident, It varies from place to place, Don't know. Total base across waves 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11= 12, 618 (range between 1, 624 in Wave 7 and 1,995 in Wave 3), all online respondents in relevant waves who consider the dietary requirements of themselves / someone else in the household when shopping for food. Please note: this question was not included in Waves 4 or 8 and data from waves 1 and 2 is no longer comparable due to rebasing of question in wave 11.

Chapter 5: Food security

Introduction

“Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” World Food Summit, 1996.

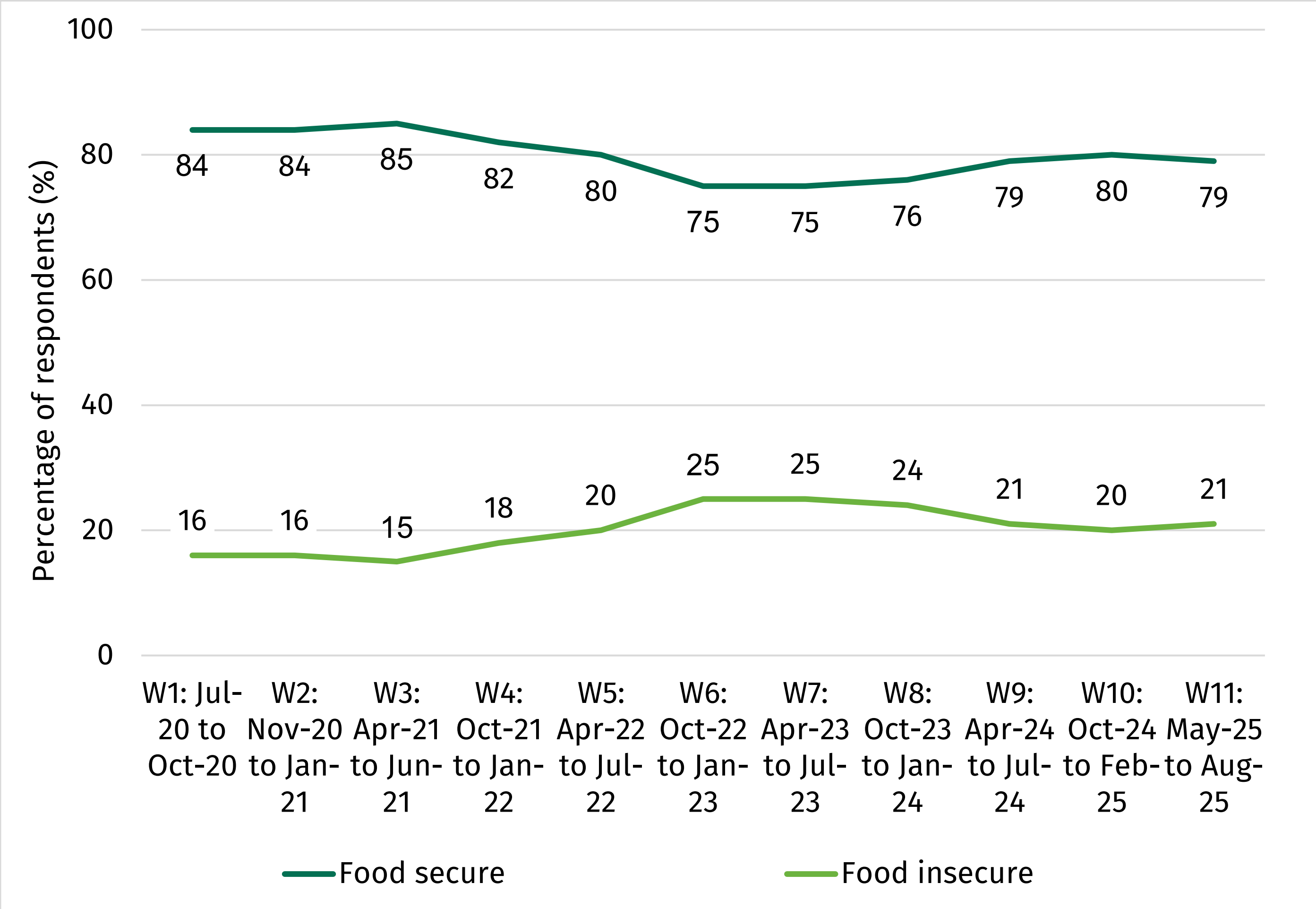
This chapter reports how food security and food bank use changed between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 11 (May 2025 to August 2025).

Food security

Following a period of stability between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 3 (April 2021 to June 2021), the percentage of respondents classified as food secure (i.e., high or marginal food security) notably decreased, from 85% in Wave 3 to 75% in Wave 6 (October 2022 – January 2023) and Wave 7 (April 2023 to July 2023). There has been a slight increase following Wave 8, and it has been stable since then, with 79% reporting being food secure in Wave 11 (May 2025 -August 2025)**. The percentage of respondents classified as food insecure (i.e., low or very low food security) shows the reverse pattern and increased, from 15% in Wave 3 to 25% in Wave 7, declining slightly to 21% in Wave 11** (Figure 27)[42].

[42] Question/Responses: Derived variable, see USDA Food Security guidance and Technical Report. Total base across waves 1-11 = 68,773 (range between 5,526 in Wave 9 and 9,319 in Wave 1), all respondents. Please note: Those with high or marginal food security are referred to as food secure. Those with low or very low food security are referred to as food insecure. More information on how food security is measured and how classifications are assigned and defined can be found in Annex A and on the USDA Food Security website.

Figure 27. Food security in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.



Food and You 2: Wave 1-11

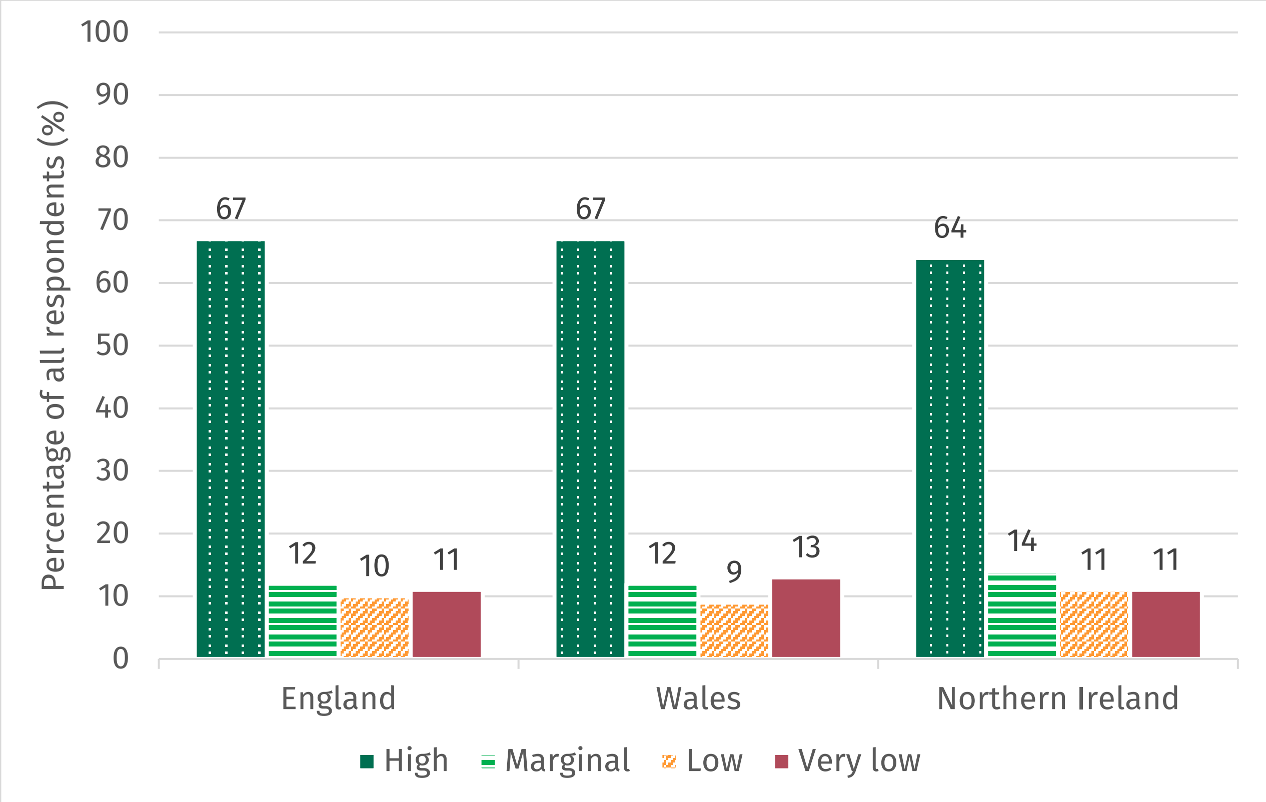
In Wave 11, across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, of the 79% respondents classified as food secure, 67% were classified as having high food security and 12% as marginal. Of the 21% respondents classified as food insecure, 10% were classified as having low food security and 11% had very low food security[43].

Around 8 in 10 of respondents were food secure (i.e. had high or marginal food security) in England (79%), Wales (79%) and Northern Ireland (78%). Approximately a

[43] Question/Responses: Derived variable, see USDA Food Security guidance and Technical Report. Base= 5898, all respondents. Please note: See Annex A for information about the classifications and definitions of food security levels.

fifth of respondents were food insecure (i.e. had low or very low food security) in England (21%), Wales (21%) and Northern Ireland (22%) (Figure 28).

Figure 28. Food security in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland by country.

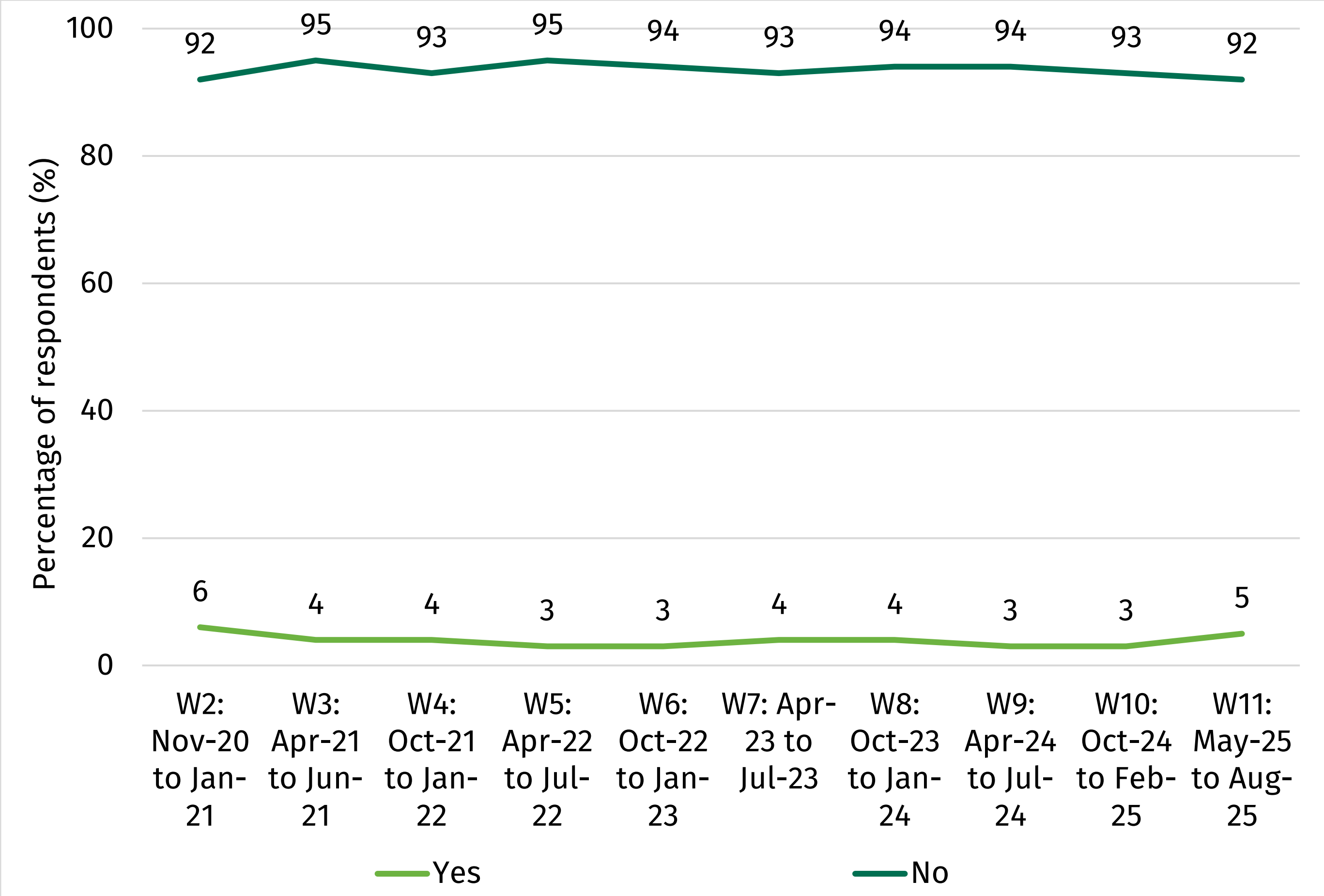


Source: Food and You 2: Wave 11

Food bank use

Respondents were asked if they or anyone else in their household had received a free parcel of food from a food bank or other emergency food provider in the last 12 months. The percentage of respondents reporting that they had received a free parcel from a food bank or other emergency food provider in the previous 12 months slightly decreased from 6% in Wave 2 (November 2020 to June 2021) to 3% in Wave 5 (April 2022 to July 2022)**. Since then, the percentage using a food bank has remained broadly stable with a slight increase in Wave 11 (5%)** (Figure 29)[44].

Figure 29. Use of food banks and/or other emergency food providers.



Food and You 2: Wave 2-11

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[44] Question: In the last 12 months, have you, or anyone else in your household, received a free parcel of food from a food bank or other emergency food provider? Responses: Yes, No, Prefer not to say. Total base across waves 2-11= 38, 525 (range between 3,530 in Wave 9 and 4,326 in Wave 3) all online respondents. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 1. Please note: [in 2020, a government-led scheme delivered boxes of emergency food to clinically vulnerable people across the UK. This was a large scale scheme, for example, over one million boxes were delivered to clinically vulnerable people in England.]

Chapter 6: Healthy and sustainable diets

Introduction

A core part of the Food Standards Agency's mission is ensuring that food is healthier and more sustainable. This chapter presents findings from questions exploring public attitudes and behaviours related to this theme, including those co-funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Defra plays a major role in food production and is responsible for key aspects of food labelling, such as composition and provenance. The Defra-funded questions reported here focus specifically on food provenance, sustainability, and animal welfare.

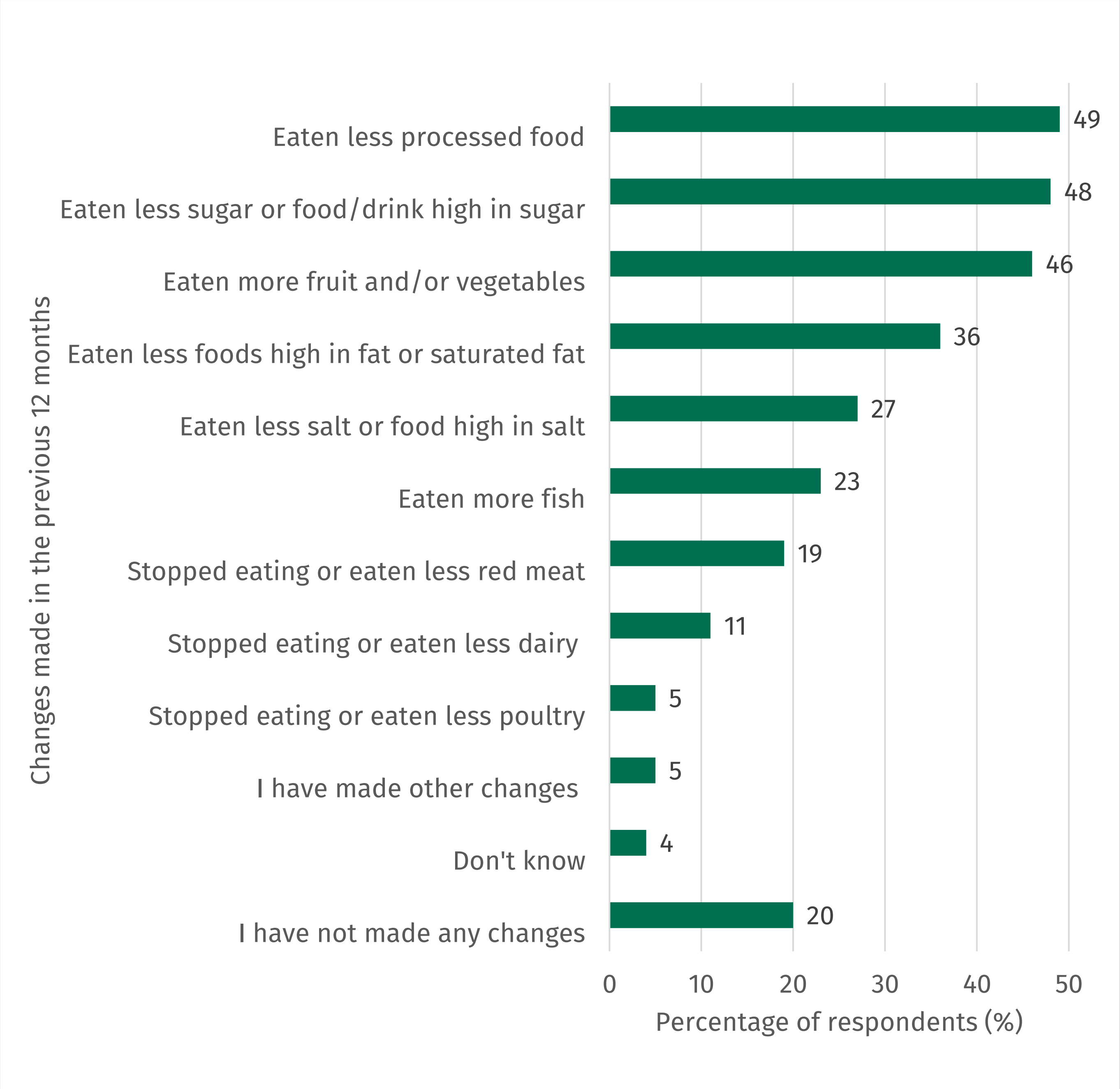
Changes to eating habits

This section provides an overview of changes respondents had made to their eating and food shopping behaviour for health or sustainability reasons in the last 12 months.

Respondents were asked, from a list of options, which, if any, changes they had made in the previous 12 months were for health reasons specifically. Three-quarters of the population in Wave 11 (75%) had made at least one change for health reasons in the past 12 months. The most common changes reported by respondents were that they had eaten less processed food (49%), eaten less sugar or food/drinks high in sugar (48%) and eaten more fruit and / or vegetables (46%). Around a third of respondents reported that they had eaten less foods high in fat or saturated fat (36%), with around a quarter reporting that they had less salt or food high in salt (27%). However, 5% reported that they made other changes not listed, 20% of respondents reported that they had not made any of the listed changes, and 4% of respondents reported that they did not know if they had made any of the listed changes in the previous 12 months (Figure 30)[45].

[45] Question Thinking about the food that you eat, which, if any, of the following changes have you made in the last 12 months for health reasons? Responses: Stopped eating or eaten less red meat, Stopped eating or eaten less poultry, Eaten more fish, Stopped eating or eaten less dairy (e.g., milk, cheese, butter) or eggs, Eaten less processed food, Eaten more fruit and/or vegetables, Eaten less foods high in fat or saturated fat, Eaten less sugar or food/drink high in sugar, Eaten less salt or food high in salt, I have made other changes (please specify), I have not made any changes to the food I eat for health reasons in the last 12 month, Don't know. Base= 3,841, all online respondents answering.

Figure 30. Changes respondents had made in the previous 12 months for health reasons[46].



Source: Food and You 2: Wave 11

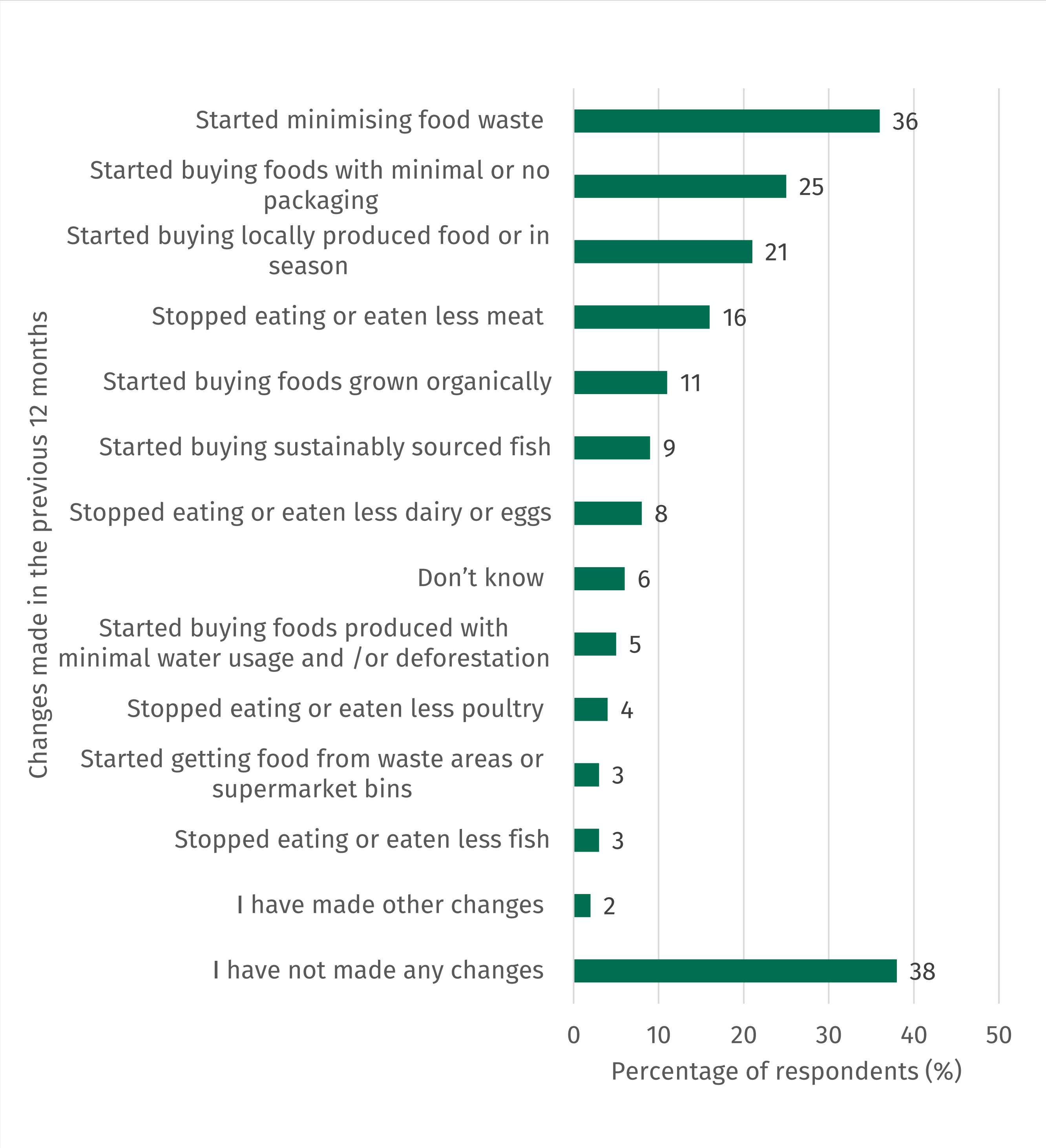
Respondents were then asked, from another list of options, which, if any, changes they had made in the previous 12 months for sustainability reasons. Around half of the

[46] Please note the response options on the y-axis are abbreviated labels. For full details of response options please see footnote 45.

population in Wave 11 (55%) had made at least one change for sustainability reasons in the past 12 months. The most common changes reported by respondents were that they started to minimise food waste (36%), started buying foods with minimal or no packaging (25%) and started buying locally produced food or food that is in season (21%). Around 4 in 10 (38%) respondents reported that they had not made any of the listed changes, 6% of respondents reported that they did not know if they had made any of the listed changes and 2% reported that they made other changes not listed, (Figure 31)[47].

[47] Question Thinking about the food that you eat, which, if any, of the following changes have you made in the last 12 months for sustainability reasons? Responses: Stopped eating or eaten less meat, Stopped eating or eaten less poultry, Stopped eating or eaten less fish, Stopped eating or eaten less dairy (e.g., milk, cheese, butter) or eggs, Started minimising food waste, Started buying locally produced food or food that is in season, Started buying foods with minimal or no packaging, Started buying foods that have been produced with minimal water usage and /or minimal deforestation, Started buying foods grown organically, Started buying sustainably sourced fish, Started getting food from the waste area or bins of a supermarket or shop (i.e., freeganism), I have made other changes (please specify), I have not made any changes to the food I eat for sustainability reasons in the last 12 months, Don't know. Base= 3,841, all online respondents answering

Figure 31. Changes respondents had made in the previous 12 months for sustainability reasons[48].



Source: Food and You 2: Wave 11

[48] Please note the response options on the y-axis are abbreviated labels. For full details of response options please see footnote 47.

What do respondents look for when buying food?

Respondents were asked what they consider to be most important when choosing which food to buy from a list of attributes[49]. The top three most frequently selected attributes were consistent across all waves: price/value for money, quality, and freshness[50] (Figure 32). The most frequently selected attribute being price/value for money rose from 48% in Wave 3 to 61% in Wave 7. This then declined to 53% in Wave 11**. Quality of food (39%-43%) and freshness (29% -34%) as important factors when choosing food have fluctuated slightly but overall have remained broadly stable across all waves **. Use-by dates increased slightly between Wave 3 (21%) and Wave 11 (26%), with taste dropping slightly from a quarter of respondents in Wave 3 (25%) to around a fifth in Wave 11 (21%)**. A slight decline in the proportion of respondents who viewed healthiness as one of their three most important concerns was observed from 25% in Wave 3 to 19% in Wave 11**.

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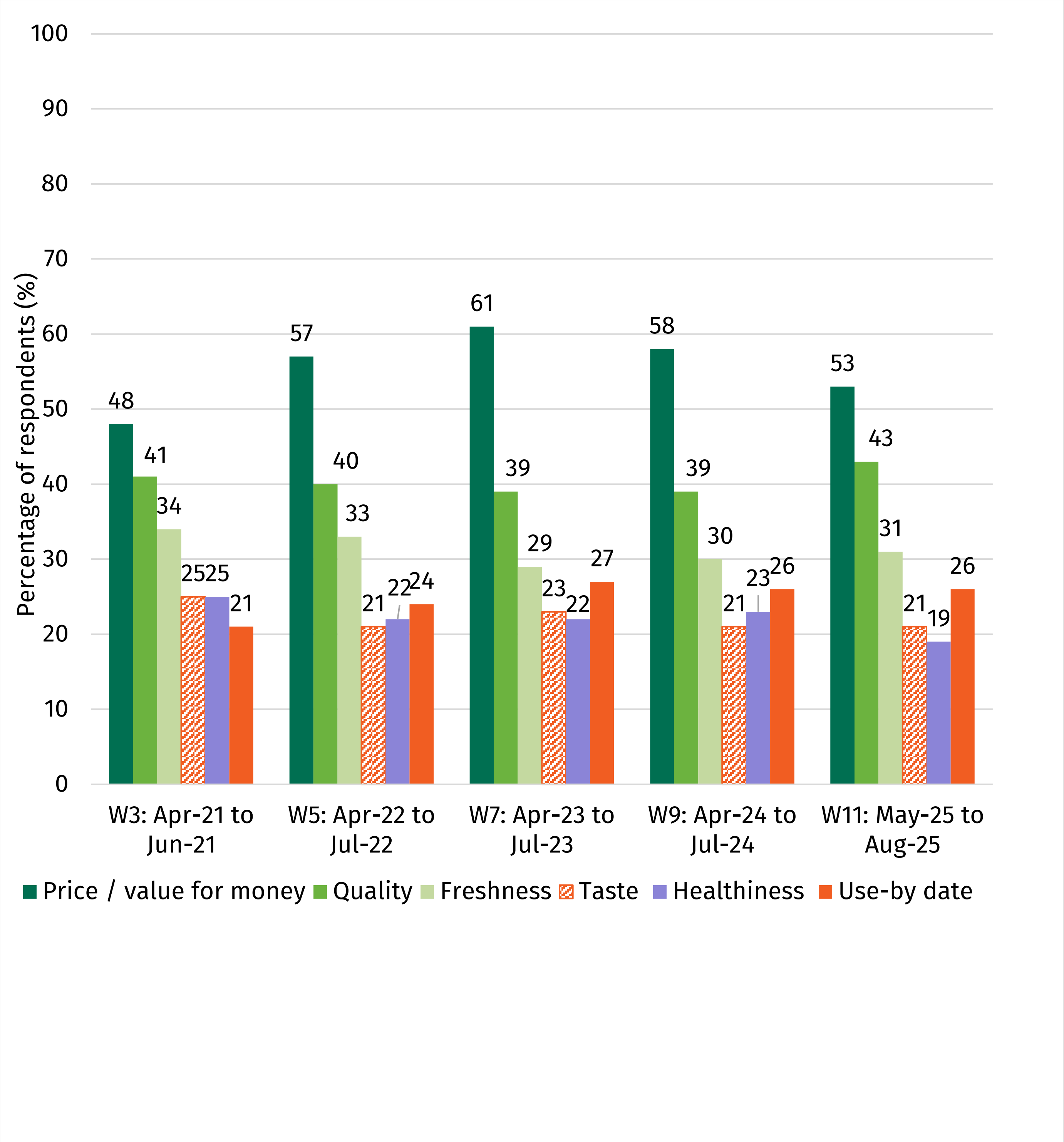
[49] Question: What is most important to you when you are choosing which foods to buy? Select up to three answers. Responses: Price/value for money, Quality, Freshness, Taste, Appearance of food, Healthiness, Use-by date/how long it will keep for, Country of origin, Ingredients, That it is ethical, That it is eco-friendly, Farming methods (for example, organic or free-range farming), How it is made or how it is produced, Choice/availability/variety, Buying what my household/ children want, Trust in supplier, Safety of product, Convenience/how easy it is to cook or prepare, Other, Don’t know. Total base across waves 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 = 29,067 (range between 5,157 in Wave 7 and 6,770 in Wave 5), All respondents in relevant waves (answering). Please note: this question was not included in Waves 1, 2, 4, 6, 8 or 10. Please also note that the potential options for this question have changed over waves, however this does not affects the results reported here.

[50] Only attributes with 10% or more responses are shown. Results for other options can be found in the accompanying data tables

Figure 32. Top 6 options important to respondents when choosing which foods they buy[51].



Food and You 2: Waves 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11

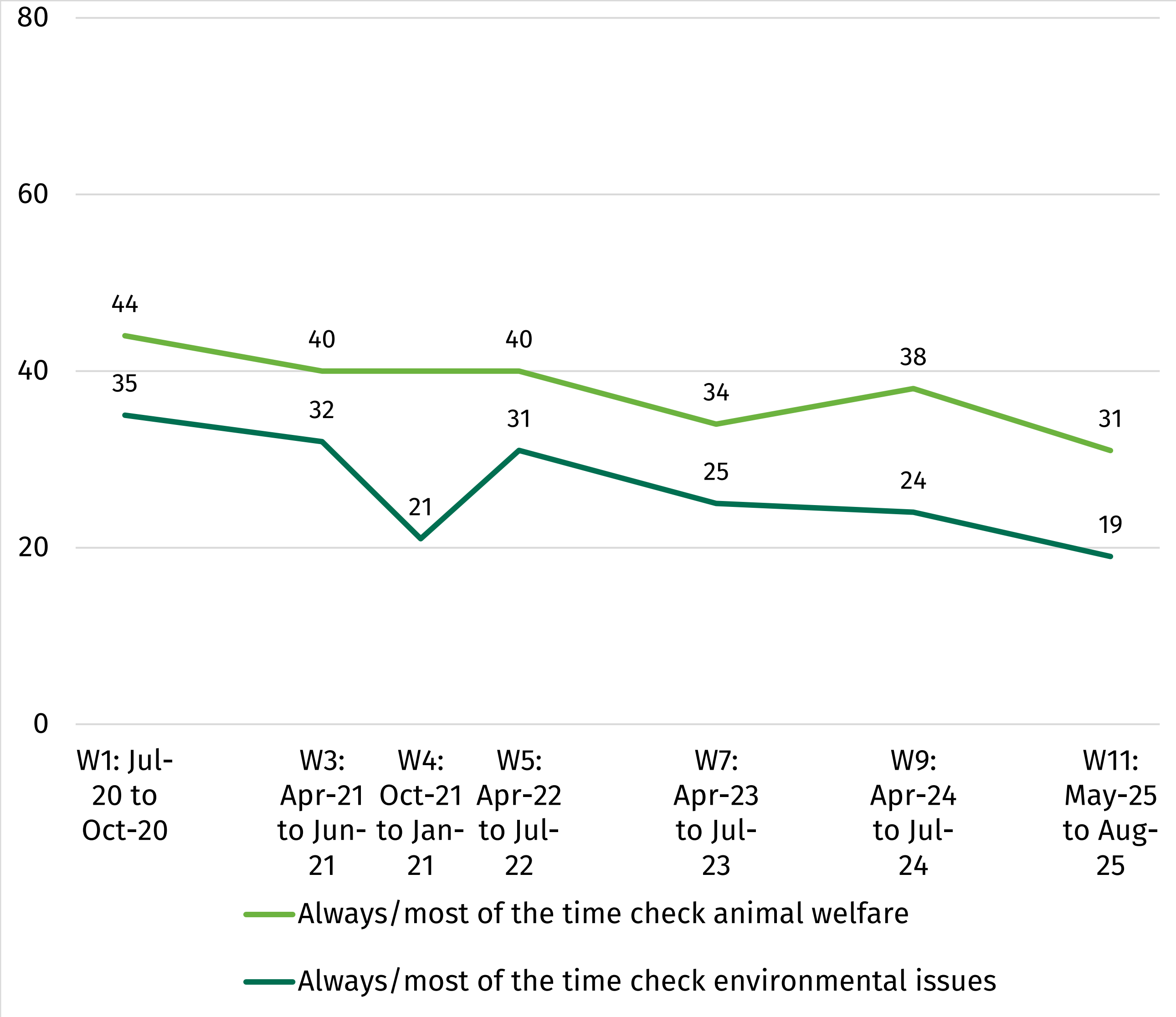
[51] Top six choices presented due to healthiness and taste being of equivalent rank over time. Full dataset can be found in accompanying wave and trend data tables.

Views on animal welfare, food and drink provenance and the environmental impact of food

Respondents were asked how frequently they check for information about the environmental impact and animal welfare of food when purchasing food[52]. There has been a decline in respondents checking for information on animal welfare always or most of the time from 44% in Wave 1 to 31% in Wave 11. This decline is also mirrored by respondents' habits when checking for information on environmental issues: around a third of respondents (35%) reported doing this always or most of the time in Wave 1, falling to around one fifth (19%) in Wave 11 (Figure 33). Correspondingly, those reporting never checking for animal welfare information when shopping increased from 17% in Wave 1 to 33% in Wave 11, and those never checking for environmental issues increased from 21% in Wave 1 to 39% in Wave 11.

[52] Question: When purchasing food, how often do you do the following…a) check for information on animal welfare. b) check for information on environmental impact. Responses: always, most of the time, about half the time, occasionally, never, don't know. Base= 38,386 (animal welfare) and 43,172 (environmental issues) All respondents in relevant waves (answering). Animal welfare question asked waves 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 and environmental issues question asked waves 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9 and 11. All respondents in relevant waves. Please note: these questions were not included in Waves 2, 6, 8 or 10.

Figure 33. Percentage of respondents who check, always or most of the time, for information about the environmental impact and animal welfare of food when shopping[53]



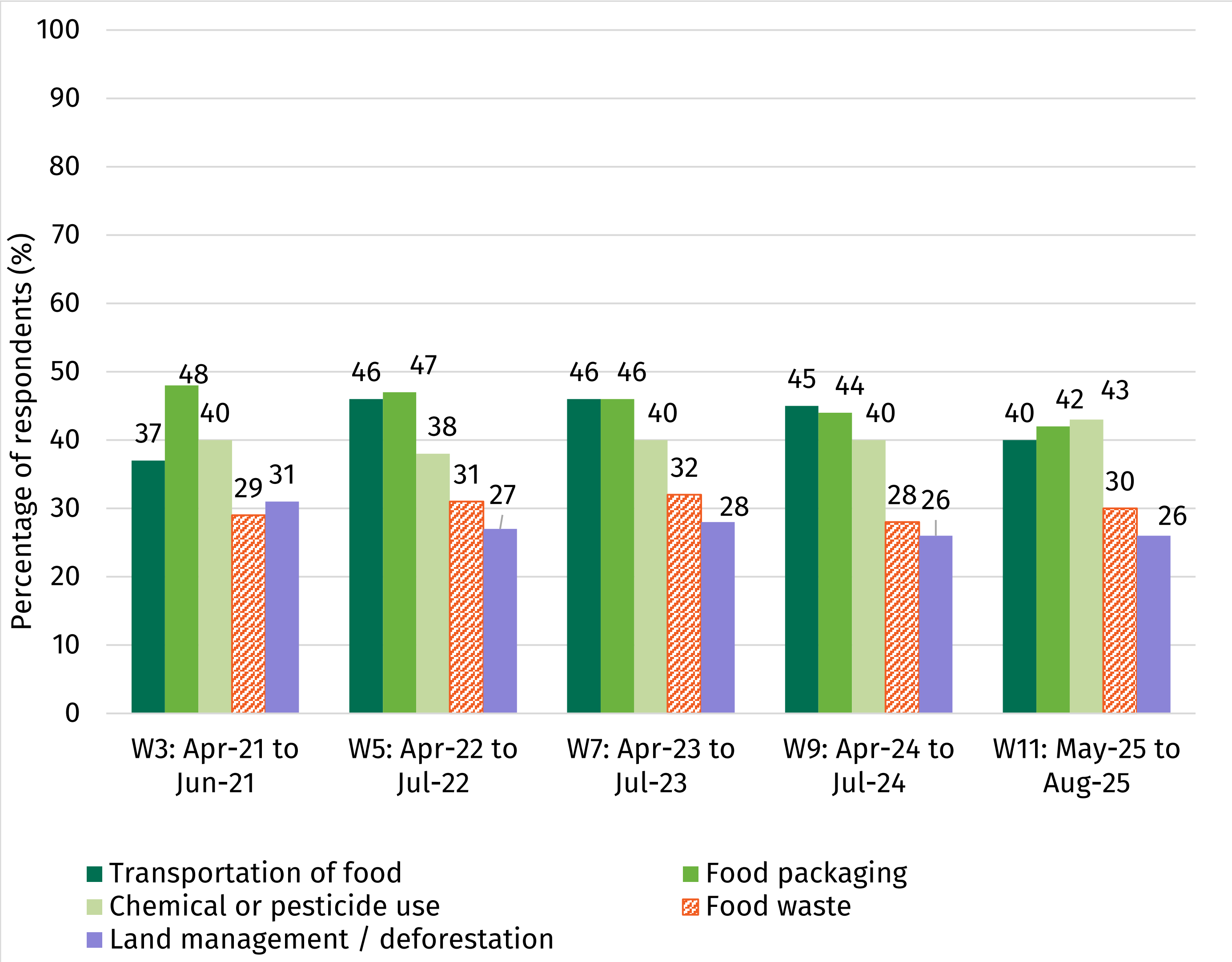
Food and You 2: Wave 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9 and 11

[53] Question about checking for information animal welfare was not asked wave 4

Respondents were also asked, from a list of options, what they think contributes most to the environmental impact of food.[54] The top five factors thought to contribute the most to the environmental impact of food, across waves 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11, have been food packaging (42%-48%), the transportation of food (37%-46%), the use of chemicals and pesticides (38%-43%), food waste (28%-32%) and land management and/or deforestation (26%-31%)** (Figure 34).

[54]Question: What do you think contributes most to the environmental impact of food? Please select up to three answers. Responses: Transportation of food, Food packaging, The way in which crops are grown, Food processing, Chemical or Pesticide use, Production of meat, Food waste, Land management / deforestation, Consumer demand / trends, Water usage, Other, please specify, Don’t know. Total base across waves 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 = 29, 067 (range between 5, 157 in Wave 7 and 6, 770 in Wave 5), All respondents in relevant waves (answering). Please note: this question was not included in Waves 1, 2, 4, 6, 8 or 10.

Figure 34. Top 5 important factors thought to contribute most to the environmental impact of food [55].



Food and You 2: Waves 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11

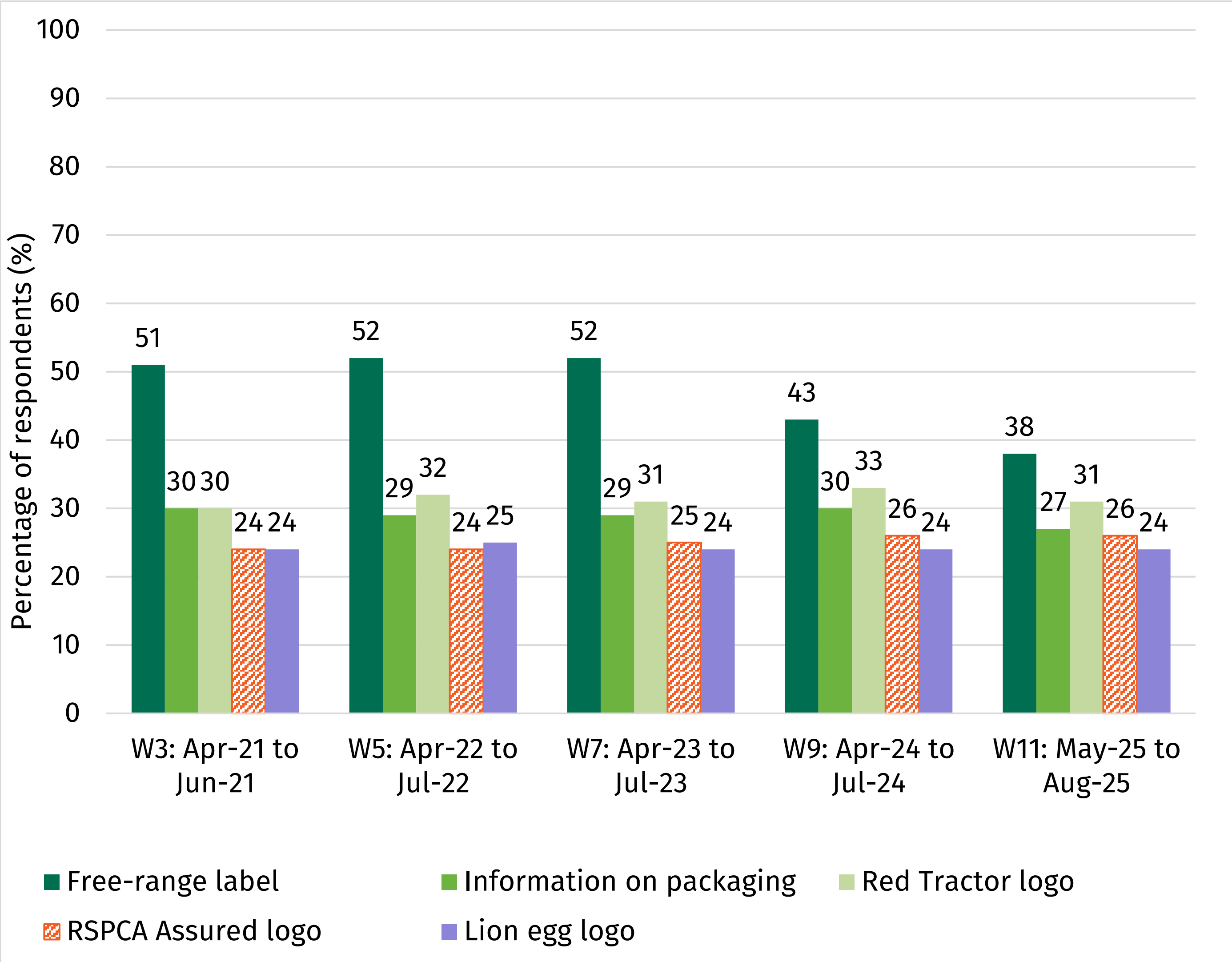
Respondents were asked, from a list of options, what would indicate whether a product containing meat, eggs or dairy had been produced with high standards of animal welfare. The most common indicator across all waves was a free-range label.

[55] Top five choices presented due to space. Full dataset can be found in accompanying wave and trend data tables.

However, this has declined from 51% in Wave 3 to 38% in Wave 11 (Figure 35)[56]. Other commonly selected indicators of animal welfare standards remained broadly stable across waves 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11. These were the Red Tractor logo (30%-33%)**, information on packaging (27%-30%)**, the RSPCA Assured logo (24%-26%) and the Lion Egg logo (24%-25%). The percentage of those reporting that they do not know what would indicate whether a product containing meat, eggs or dairy had been produced with high standards of animal welfare has slightly increased across waves from 11% in Wave 3 to 16% in Wave 11**.

[56] Question: What would indicate to you whether a product containing meat, eggs or dairy had been produced with high standards of animal welfare? Responses: Free-range label, Information on packaging, Country of origin, Traceability of product, Preferred store or brand, Appearance of product, Price of product, Generic organic label, Red Tractor logo, RSPCA Assured logo, Lion egg logo, Soil Association logo, Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) logo, Other certification/logo, Other, Don't know. Total base across waves 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 = 29, 067 (range between 5, 157 in Wave 7 and 6, 770 in Wave 5), All respondents in relevant waves (answering). Please note: this question was not included in Waves 1, 2, 4, 6, 8 or 10.

Figure 35. Top 5 Indicators of high animal welfare standards of meat, eggs, and dairy products to respondents [57].



Food and You 2: Waves 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11

[57] Top five choices presented due to space. Full dataset can be found in accompanying wave and trend data tables.

Annex A: Background and methodology

Background

In 2018 the FSA's Advisory Committee for Social Science (ACSS) established a new Food and You Working Group to review the methodology, scope and focus of the Food and You survey. The Food and You Working Group provided a series of recommendations on the future direction of the Food and You survey to the FSA and ACSS in April 2019. Food and You 2 was developed from the recommendations.

The Food and You 2 survey replaced the biennial Food and You survey (2010-2018), biannual Public Attitudes Tracker (2010-2019) and annual Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) Consumer Attitudes Tracker (2014-2019). The Food and You survey has been an official statistic since 2014. Due to the difference in survey methodology between the Public Attitudes Tracker, FHRS Consumer Attitudes Tracker and Food and You survey (2010-2018) it is not possible to compare the data collected in Food and You 2 (2020 onward) with these earlier data. Comparisons can be made between the different waves of Food and You 2.

From Wave 11, Food and You 2 moved from a biannual survey, whereby questions rotated in and out every 6 months to an annual survey, with the same questions repeated each survey. Prior to Wave 11, trends in variables were reported separately to results from individual waves. From this report for Wave 11, results and trends, where available, are reported together.

Previous publications in this series include:

- Food and You 2: Wave 1 Key Findings (March 2021)
- Food and You 2: Wave 2 Key Findings (July 2021)
- Food and You 2: Wave 3 Key Findings (January 2022)
- Food and You 2: Wave 4 Key Findings (August 2022)
- Food and You 2: Wave 5 Key Findings (March 2023)
- Food and You 2: Wave 6 Key Findings (July 2023)

Food and You 2: 2020-2023 trends (December 2023)

Food and You 2: Wave 7 Key Findings (April 2024)

Food and You 2: Wave 8 Key Findings (September 2024)

Food and You 2: Wave 9 Key Findings (March 2025)

Food and You 2: 2020-2024 trends (March 2025)

Food and You 2: Wave 10 Key Findings (September 2025)

Methodology

The Food and You 2 survey is commissioned by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The fieldwork for Wave 11 was conducted by Ipsos between 9th May 2025 to 7th August 2025. In Wave 11 Scotland was included in Food and You 2, funded by Food Standards Scotland (FSS). All content in this report is applicable to England, Wales and Northern Ireland[58].

It is a sequential mixed-mode 'push-to-web' survey (summary of method below), with the push-to-web approach helping to reduce response bias that otherwise occurs with online-only surveys. This method is accepted for government surveys and national statistics, including the 2021 Census and 2019/2020 Community Life Survey.

A random sample of addresses (selected from the Royal Mail's Postcode Address File) received a letter inviting up to two adults (aged 16 or over) in the household to complete the online survey. A first reminder letter was sent to households that had not responded to the initial invitation. A postal version of the survey accompanied the second reminder letter for those who did not have access to the internet or preferred to complete a postal version of the survey. A third and final reminder was sent to households if the survey had not been completed. Respondents were given a gift voucher for completing the survey.

[58] Findings for Scotland are reported separately by FSS.

The sample of main and reserve addresses[59] was stratified by region (with Wales and Northern Ireland being treated as separate regions), and within region (or country) by local authority (district in Northern Ireland) to ensure that the achieved sample was spread proportionately across the local authorities. National deprivation scores were used as the final level of stratification within the local authorities - in England the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), in Wales the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) and in Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM).

Due to the length and complexity of the online questionnaire it was not possible to include all questions in the postal version of the questionnaire. To maximise the coverage of questions, each wave prior to Wave 11 had two versions of the postal questionnaire containing a different selection of questions drawn from the online version for that wave. See the Technical Report of each wave for further details.

All data collected by Food and You 2 are self-reported. The data are the respondents' own reported attitudes, knowledge and behaviour relating to food safety and food issues. As a social research survey, Food and You 2 cannot report observed behaviours[60].

The minimum target sample size for the Food and You 2 survey is 4,000 households (2,000 in England, 1,000 in Wales, 1,000 in Northern Ireland). For Wave 11, a total of 5, 898 adults (aged 16 years or over) from 4,215 households across England (2,887 adults), Northern Ireland (1,564 adults), and Wales (1,447adults), completed the survey. An overall response rate of 25.4% was achieved (England 26.2%, Wales 26.5%, Northern Ireland 23.1%). Sixty-five per cent (65.1%) of respondents completed the survey online and 34.9% completed the postal version of the survey. The postal responses from 29 respondents were removed from the data set as the respondent had completed both

[59] A reserve sample of addresses was created to use if the target number of respondents was not achieved from the main sample of addresses.

[60] Observed behaviour in kitchens has been reported in Kitchen Life 2, an ethnographic study which used a combination of observation, video observation and interviews to gain insight into domestic kitchen practices

the online and postal survey. Further details about the response rates are available in the Technical Report.

Weights were calculated to compensate for known differences in respondent selection and potential response bias, as is usual practice in government surveys. After the weights were applied, the Food and You 2 data closely represented the population profile for key socio-demographic factors. In addition to individual wave weights, separate trend weights have been calculated for each country and for all countries combined. The purpose of trend weights is to allow data for individual questions to be compared across waves. For each trend weight, relevant wave weights are rescaled to equalise the weighted sample size in each wave. Further details about the weighting approach used and the weights applied to the Wave 11 dataset and the corresponding Wave 1 – 11 trends data are available in their respective SPSS User Guide.

The Food and You 2 questionnaire was simplified in Wave 11 as part of the move to an annual survey. Consequently, some questions no longer appear in the postal questionnaire but are still asked to online respondents. To allow direct comparisons between waves, the trend tables for these questions are now presented on an online-only basis. This means that the results can be different from previously published tables that also included the postal respondents as well. Any differences caused by this change will be small – typically no more than 1-2 percentage points. (The affected tables can be identified by the trend weight moving to weight A and the other relevant changes in the base description.)

The data have been checked and verified by the Ipsos research team and the FSA Statisticians. Further details about checks of the data are available in the Technical Report. Descriptive analysis and statistical tests have been performed by the FSA Statistics branch. R (statistical software) was used by the FSA Statistics branch to calculate the descriptive analysis and statistical tests (t-tests).

The p-values that test for statistical significance are based on t-tests comparing the weighted proportions for a given response within that socio-demographic and sub-group breakdown. An adjustment has been made for the effective sample size after weighting, but no correction is made for multiple comparisons.

Technical terms and definitions

Statistical significance is indicated at the 5% level ($p<0.05$). This means that where a significant difference is reported, there is reasonable confidence that the reported difference is reflective of a real difference at the population level.

Food and You 2 measures food security with food security defined as all people always having access to enough food for a healthy and active lifestyle (World Food Summit, 1996). The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has created a series of questions which indicate a respondent’s level of food security. Food and You 2 incorporates the 10 item U.S. Adult Food Security Survey Module and uses a 12 month time reference period.

For enquiries about this publication, contact the Food Standards Agency.

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