Covid-19 Consumer Tracker Waves 1 – 4

This research was commissioned by Food Standards Agency and conducted by Ipsos MORI. Our thanks go to all those who gave up their time to take part in the study.

With thanks to Vicky Mullis and Daniel Cameron at Ipsos MORI, and to Richard Bridge, Katharine Porter, Alice Rayner, Lucy King and Helen Heard at Food Standards Agency.

Table of contents

1. Executive Summary

- Covid-19 has changed how consumers access food. Restaurants, cafés and sandwich shops were closed from 23 March 2020; whilst some re-opened during lockdown to provide takeaways, restaurants reopened on 4 July 2020. Restrictions changed – and continue to change – purchasing, consumption, nutrition, cooking and eating behaviours.

- Food insecurity remains a significant issue, particularly for those in younger age groups, those who are shielding or have Covid-19 symptoms, households with a child, and those who have a physical or mental health condition.

- The number of people who reported accessing food through a food bank or charity increased from 7% in May to 10% in June, remaining consistent into July (9%). There continues to be a particularly steep age differential, with 23% of 16-24 year olds reporting accessing food in this way in July but only 2% of those aged over 45 year olds doing so.

- Since May, the proportion of people concerned about food availability and affordability has remained broadly consistent, although both issues remain a concern for a significant minority of the population (July – food availability 20%, food affordability 21%).

- When asked what might reassure them that it is safe to return to eating out, a significant minority in both June (25%) and July (31%) said that they wouldn't do this for the foreseeable future. In July, 6% of respondents felt that it was already safe to eat out.

- A sizeable proportion of people continue to eat more risky foods past their use by date; in July, this ranged from 16% and 37% among those who had eaten the food. Food insecurity is a factor in this behaviour with those who reported cutting the size of their meals or skipping meals because they do not have enough money for food more likely to report doing so.

- During lockdown there has also been a sustained shift towards more localised food purchasing, with just under a third buying food from local shops more often and over a fifth saying they buy food from local suppliers (such a farm shops and vegetable boxes) more often when compared to before lockdown.

- There has also been a sustained shift towards people buying fewer takeaways during lockdown, and conversely a shift to cooking at home more often.

- Food consumption and nutrition behaviours changed during lockdown, with people reporting cooking from scratch and eating healthy meals more often, while buying processed food less often. Conversely snacking behaviours increased over lockdown, particularly amongst females.

- A substantial minority report wasting food less often between May and July.

- Whilst in May there was little net change in online ordering from supermarkets, there was a subsequent shift in June and July towards online shopping.

2. Background and methodology

Background and objectives

In April 2020 the Food Standards Agency (FSA) commissioned Ipsos MORI to develop its evidence base on issues affecting consumers and businesses in order to inform its Covid-19 response in the short to medium term. This monthly tracker survey is intended to understand the experience and behaviour of consumers as England, Wales and Northern Ireland went into lockdown.

The project objectives were:

- to understand the impact of concerns or experience of food unavailability, heath restrictions or household food insecurity on consumer food safety behaviours;
- to understand potential new food safety risks, for instance changes in reported adherence to FSA food hygiene guidelines;
- to understand shifts in food consumption or purchasing behaviours, for instance, increased online shopping or use of takeaways.

Methodology

Four waves of research were conducted between April and July 2020 using Ipsos MORI's online i:Omnibus. In each wave, Ipsos MORI surveyed a representative sample of approximately 2,000 adults aged 16-75 living in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The fieldwork dates and sample size for each wave are provided below.

Wave	Dates	Sample size
Wave 1	10-13 April 2020	2,039
Wave 2	8-12 May 2020	2,040
Wave 3	12-15 June 2020	2,045
Wave 4	10-14 July 2020	2,068

The data was weighted to best reflect the demographic profile of the adult population sampled. The questionnaire was expanded and edited to incorporate new areas of interest. Accordingly, time trends are not available for all measures. The questionnaires and sample profiles can be found in Appendix A and B.

Data tables and dataset

Data relates to findings in Waves 1-4 of this survey (April – July 2020). The data tables for each Wave are published alongside this publication – the SPSS dataset is available upon request. This enables the reader to see the data broken down by gender, age, social grade, region, urban/rural, marital status, household size, education, employment status, income, the presence of a child (17 or under) in the household, main shopper, and main earner. Please note that i:Omnibus does not allow for detailed analysis by ethnicity. From May to July 2020, we also asked questions around respondents' shielding status, whether or not they have Covid-19 symptoms and are self-isolating or not, whether they have a physical or mental health condition that has lasted or is expected to last for longer than 12 months or more, and finally whether respondents were fasting during this period (May 2020).

Unless stated otherwise, where comparisons are made in the text between different population groups or variables, only those differences found to be statistically significant at the 5% level are reported. In other words, differences as large as those reported have no more than a five per cent probability of occurring by chance.

The relationship between survey findings and different types of respondents were investigated using chi-square tests of association.

In terms of weighting, we applied these based on the overall profile of England, Wales and NI with weights for region/nation, gender, age, social grade and working status. The profile was generated from the latest PAMCo data.

Tables of weighted results were treated as if they were the product of simple random sampling. This does not completely account for the effect of the survey design but provides a straightforward way of highlighting the strongest relationships.

Throughout all waves, some questions asked respondents if they had changed their behaviour in the last month, whilst other questions asked around their behaviour compared to pre-lockdown. As a result, it may be that for the former type of question, respondents have compared their behaviour to pre-lockdown.

3. Main findings

Household food insecurity

During lockdown, respondents were asked each month whether they had cut down meal sizes or indeed skipped meals during the last month.[1]

Table 1: Food insecurity[2]

Food insecurity	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020
All respondents	18%	16%	18%	16%
16-24-year olds	35%	33%	31%	30%
25-34-year olds	30%	25%	31%	27%
35-44-year olds	16%	15%	20%	15%
45-54-year olds	12%	10%	14%	12%
55-75-year olds	6%	4%	6%	5%
Households with a child present	28%	24%	33%	26%
Households with no child present	14%	13%	13%	12%
Household size 4+	21%	19%	26%	21%
Physical / health condition lasting 12 months+	n/a[3]	19%	22%	23%
Households with someone in the shielded patient category present	n/a	24%	26%	25%
Households with suspected Covid-19 symptoms	n/a	n/a	56%*	53%*

Base for Wave 4: 2,068 Online, England, Wales and NI, adults 16-75, 10-14 July 2020, 16-24 (328), 25-34 (382), 35-44 (337), 45-54 (403), 55-75 (618), child present (547), no child present (1,521), household size 4+ (506), long term health condition (477), shielded (251), suspected symptoms (54). *Base size of less than 100.

The percentage of people (or people in their households) who had done so due to not having enough money remained stable between April (18%) and July (16%).

Age remains an important factor, with 30% of 16-24-year-olds reporting in July that they had cut down meal sizes or skipped meals due to not having enough money in

[1] In the last month, have you cut down the size of your meals or skipped meals for any of these reasons …

[2] As measured by those who have cut down the size of their meals or skipped meals for financial reasons. The Food Standards Agency collects detailed data in this area as part of its Food and You series

[3] Where reported, 'n/a' means that the data is not available for this wave.

at least one week in the last month (April 35%), with 6% reporting (April 7%) that they had done so every week.

Across all months, households with a child were more likely to report cutting meal sizes or skipping meals due to not having enough money (26% in July, 28% in April) compared to those without a child (12% in July, 14% in April). Larger households (4+ individuals) were also more likely than smaller households to report this.

Households with someone in the shielded patient category[4] (25% in July, 24% in May), were more likely than those in the total surveyed population to report cutting meal sizes or skipping meals due to not having enough money across all survey waves between May and July[5]. Respondents with a health condition lasting for 12 months or more were more likely to report this than the total surveyed population in June (22%) and July (23%), but not in May (19%)[6].

In June and July, respondents were asked if their household contained people with suspected Covid-19 symptoms. People from these households were also more likely than the total surveyed population to report having cut down meal sizes or skipped meals in the last month due to not having enough money (July 53%, June 56%). However, due to the limited size of this sub-group across both survey waves, these figures should be treated with caution.

There are also other factors that impact on whether people cut down on meal sizes or skip meals. Between April and July, the proportion of households reporting skipping meals or cutting down the size of their meals for each of these reasons decreased.

These are:

- due to not being well enough to shop for, or cook, food (14% reported this in July, 17% in April);
- due to having no means to get to the shops (15% reported this in July, 19% in April);
- due to being unable to get a delivery (19% reported this in July, 32% in April).

This contrasts with the proportion who skipped meals or cut down meal sizes due to not having enough money, which as outlined above, has remained consistent over the last four months.

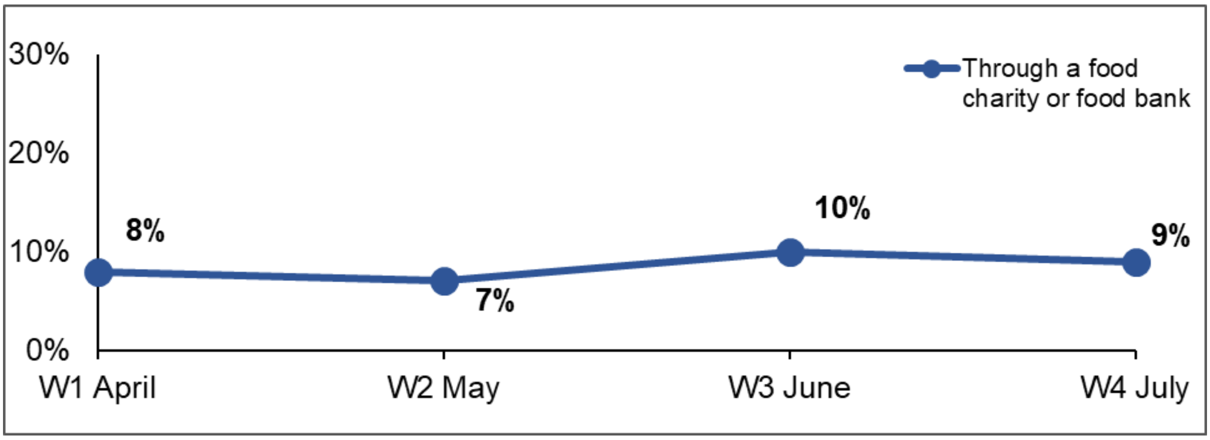
[4] When referring to 'shielded patient' category, a respondent has reported that they or a member of their household are in this category; more information about shielded patients can be found on the NHS website.
[5] This data is not available for April 2020.
[6] This data is not available for April 2020.

Food bank usage

Respondents were also asked about their usage of emergency food providers to access food.[7]

Figure 1 shows that usage of food banks or food charities remained relatively consistent between April (8%) and July (9%), although rose significantly between May (7%) and June (10%).

Figure 1: Accessing food through a food charity or food bank (by wave)



Base: Online, England, Wales and NI, adults 16-75, 10-13 April (2,039); 8-12 May (2,040); 12-15 June (2,045); 10-14 July (2,068).

As with food insecurity, younger people continued to be more likely to report having accessed food through food banks or food charities. Figure 2 demonstrates this for July, with 23% of 16-24 year olds using food banks or food charities in July (22% in April) and 16% of 25-34 year olds (15% in April); this compares to 2% of 45-54 year olds in July (1% April) and 2% of 55-75 year olds (2% April).

Households with a child were also more likely to have used food banks or food charities than the total surveyed population in each month from May[8] (Wave 2) onwards (18% in July, 13% in May). The proportion of households with a child present who report using food banks or food charities has increased between May and July.

In July, for the first time, respondents were asked about the reasons why they had accessed food through food banks or food charities in the last month[9]. Reasons primarily reflected economic hardship:[10]

- There was a delay or problems with benefits payments (27%);

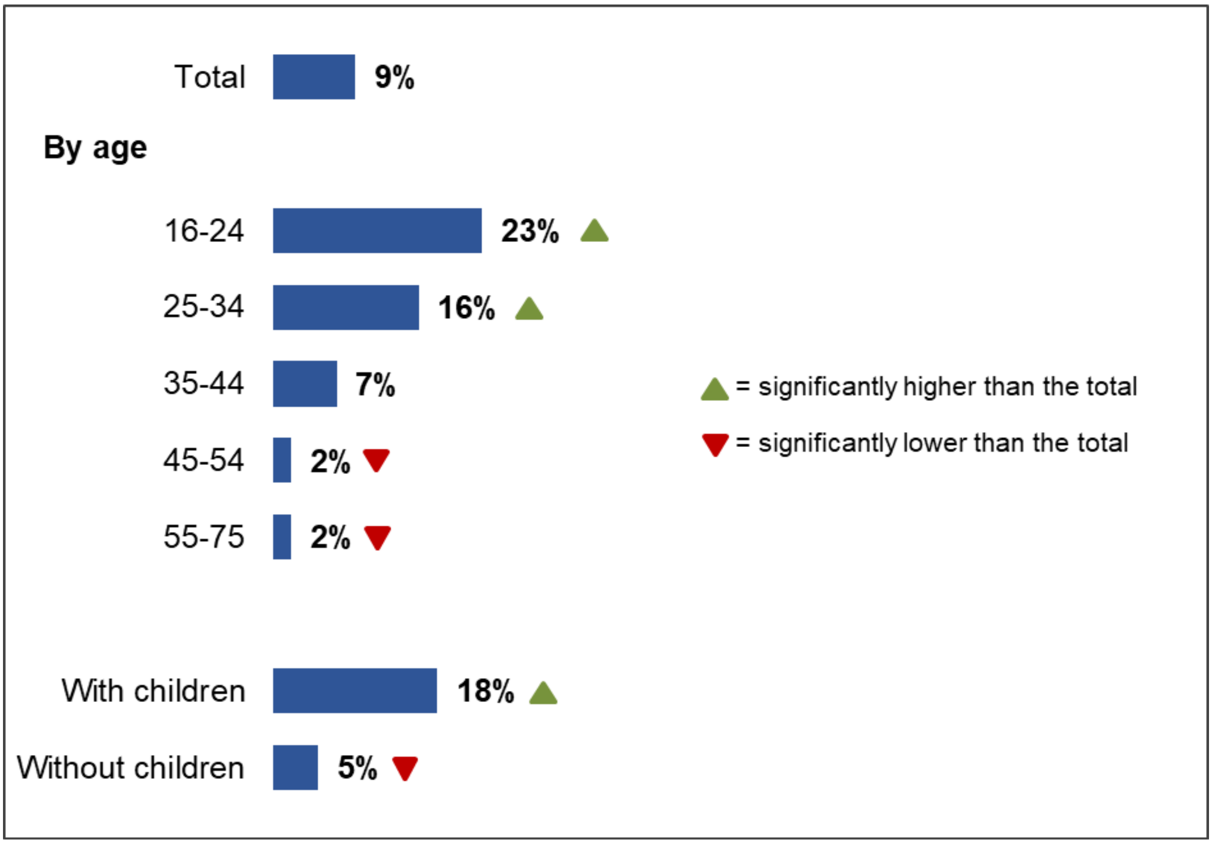
[7] In the last month, how often, if at all, have you arranged for food to be delivered to your house in the following ways? – Through a food charity or food bank.
[8] This data is not available for April 2020.
[9] Which of the following, if any, are reasons you have had food delivered to your house from a food bank or a food charity in the last month?
[10] Respondents were able to select up to 3 response options, therefore figures do not sum to 100%.

- Someone in the household lost their job (25%).
- We did not have enough money to buy food (20%);
- Someone in the household was on furlough (20%).

Non-economic reasons included:

- Someone in the household has been self-isolating or shielding because of Covid-19 (26%);
- We had difficulties travelling to get food ourselves (26%);

Figure 2: Accessing food through a food charity or food bank (by age and household composition) [11]



Base: 2,068 Online, England, Wales and NI, adults 16-75, 16-24 (328), 25-34 (382), 35-44 (337), 45-54 (403), 55-75 (618), child present (547), no child present (1,521), 10-14 July 2020.

Levels of concern about food availability and affordability

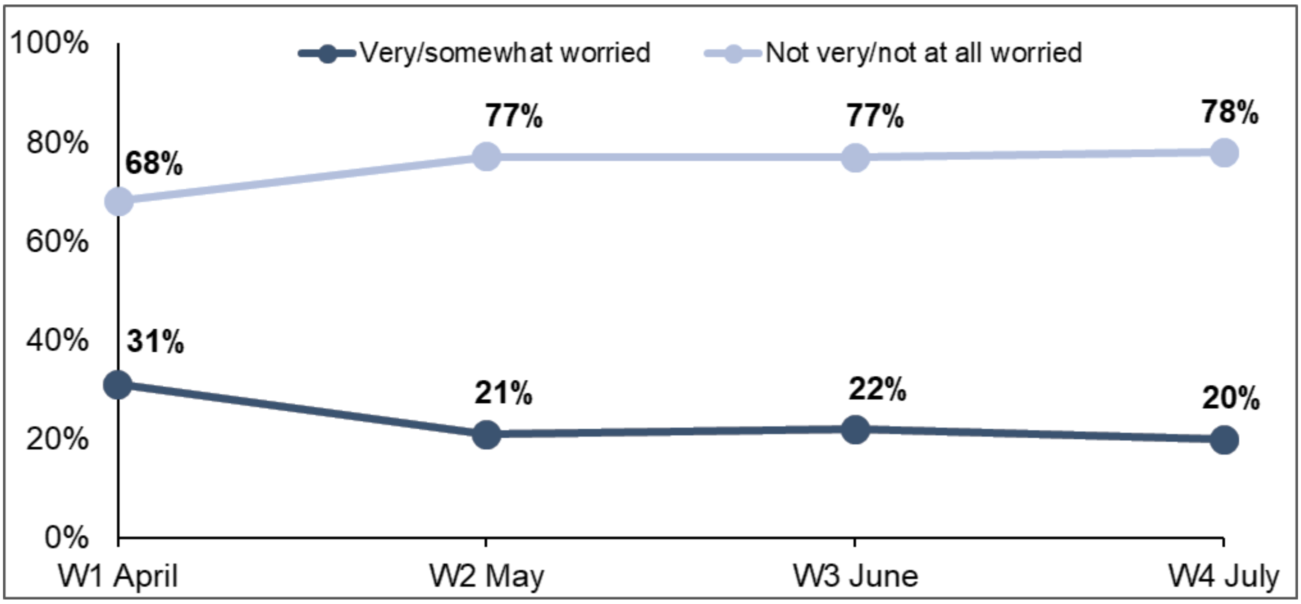
The level of concern about food availability[12] dropped significantly between April (31%) and May (21%), before remaining at a stable level between May and July (20%), see Figure 3. This may reflect a decrease in concern about the availability of

[11] In the last month, how often, if at all, have you arranged for food to be delivered to your house in the following ways? % done this in last month shown. May not sum to 100% as the “Prefer not to answer” options are not charted.

[12] 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?

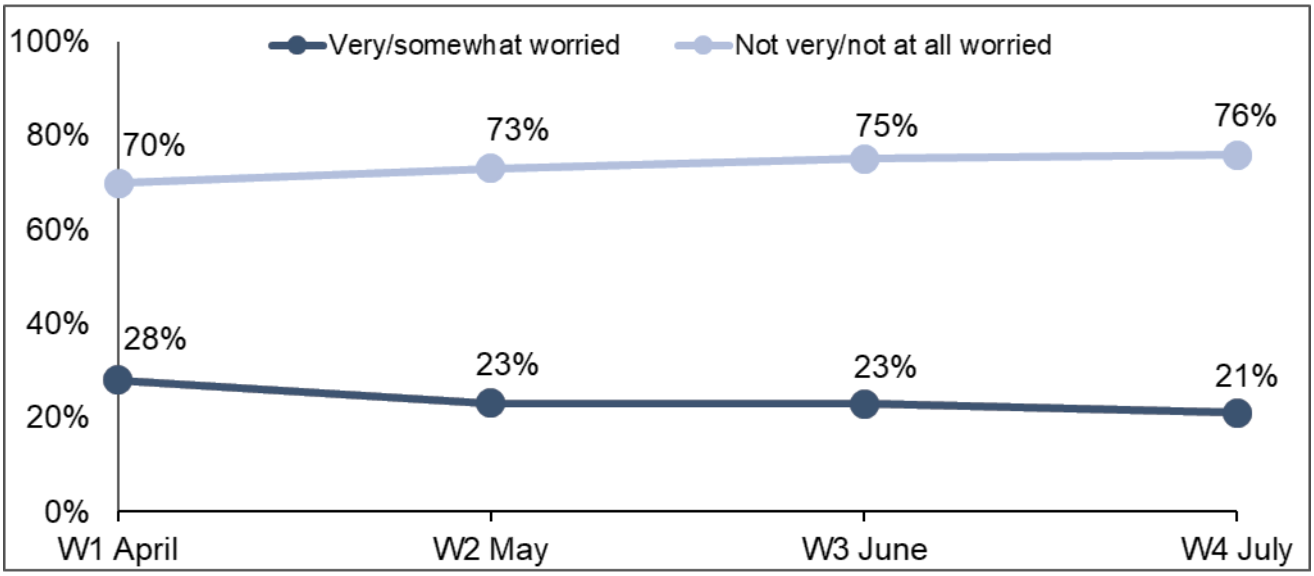
certain essential products that were hard to access early on in lockdown. However, one in five people remain worried about there not being enough food available to buy for their household in the next month.

Figure 3: Levels of concern about food availability over time



Base: Online, England, Wales and NI, adults 16-75, 10-13 April (2,039), 8-12 May (2,040), 12-15 June (2,045), 10-14 July (2,068)

Figure 4: Levels of concern about food affordability over time



Base: Online, England, Wales and NI, adults 16-75, 10-13 April (2,039), 8-12 May (2,040), 12-15 June (2,045), 10-14 July (2,068).

The level of concern around food affordability[13] also dropped significantly from April (28%) to May (23%) and decreased significantly between May and July (21%), as set out in Figure 4. Again, one in five individuals remain worried that they or their household will not be able to afford food in the next month.

Concern around both food availability and affordability remains higher for younger age groups and for those with a child in their household. In July, for example, concern around food affordability for 16-24 year-olds (36%) was more than four times that of 55-75 year-olds (8%). In the same month, 32% of respondents with a child in the household were worried about food affordability compared to 17% of those in households with no children present.

Food purchasing behaviours

Shopping online

Between April and May there was little net change in online ordering from supermarkets; however, in June and July there was a shift towards online shopping with a higher proportion of respondents doing this more often (24% in June, 26% in July) than less often (15% in June, 12% in July)[14] compared to before lockdown (see Table 2).

Those in the shielded category continue to be more likely to be ordering food online from supermarkets more often than before lockdown (45% in July) compared to all respondents (26% in July).

Buying locally

In May, June and July, there was also a shift towards more local food purchasing behaviour[15] with around a third of respondents (35% in May, 33% in June, 31% in July) buying food from local shops more often than in the previous month (see Table 3).

During the same period there was also a shift towards purchasing food from local suppliers, such as farm shops and vegetable boxes, with more than a fifth of respondents (24% in both May and June, 21% in July) doing this more often than before lockdown[16]. This behaviour continues to be more common amongst younger respondents and those in more affluent, higher-educated and higher social grades. In July, those in the shielding category (28%) were also more likely to report purchasing food from local suppliers more often than the population overall (21%).

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[13] To what extent, if at all, are you worried that you or your household will not be able to afford food in the next month?

[14] In May 2020, the question around food purchasing behaviour changed from how often people had done something to whether respondents had done it more or less often when compared to the period before lockdown.

[15] In the last month, have you done any of the following more or less often? – Bought food from local shops.

[16] Compared to the period before lockdown, have you done any of the following more or less often? – Purchased food from a local supplier (i.e. farm shops, veg box) either direct or online.

In July, both types of local purchasing behaviour were more common amongst those who were working, households with a child, larger households (four or more people) and those living in rural areas.

Table 2:Trends in food purchasing behaviour (May-July 2020)

Compared to the period before lockdown, have you done any of the following more or less often?		May 2020	June 2020	July 2020
Had an online food delivery from a supermarket	More	20%	24%	26%
	About the same	17%	18%	19%
	Less	18%	15%	12%
	I never do this	45%	42%	42%
Purchased food from a takeaway, either direct or online	More	16%	18%	19%
	About the same	25%	25%	25%
	Less	34%	34%	32%
	I never do this	25%	23%	24%
Purchased food from a local supplier (i.e. farm shops, veg box), either direct or online	More	24%	24%	21%
	About the same	25%	26%	24%
	Less	10%	11%	11%
	I never do this	41%	40%	43%
Had a food delivery from an online food ordering company (e.g. Deliveroo, Just Eat, Uber Eats)	More	14%	17%	17%
	About the same	18%	19%	20%
	Less	19%	20%	15%
	I never do this	49%	45%	48%

Base: Online; England, Wales and NI; adults 16-75; 2,040 (8-12 May 2020) 2,045 (12-15 June 2020) 2,068 (10-14 July 2020)

Table 3: Trends in buying food from local shops (May-July 2020)

In the last month, have you done any of the following more or less often?		May 2020	June 2020	July 2020
Bought food from local shops	More	35%	33%	31%
	About the same	43%	42%	47%
	Less	11%	13%	10%
	I have not done this	11%	12%	12%

Base: Online; England, Wales and NI; adults 16-75; 2,040 (8-12 May 2020) 2,045 (12-15 June 2020) 2,068 (10-14 July 2020)

Takeaways

In May, June and July, there was a move away from buying food from takeaways with around a third of respondents (34% in both May and June, 32% in July) doing this less often than before lockdown (see Table 2). Younger respondents on the other hand reported in July eating takeaways more often than before lockdown (38% of 16-24 year olds reporting that they ate takeaways more often in July compared to before lockdown, 23% reported doing this less often and 27% about the same).

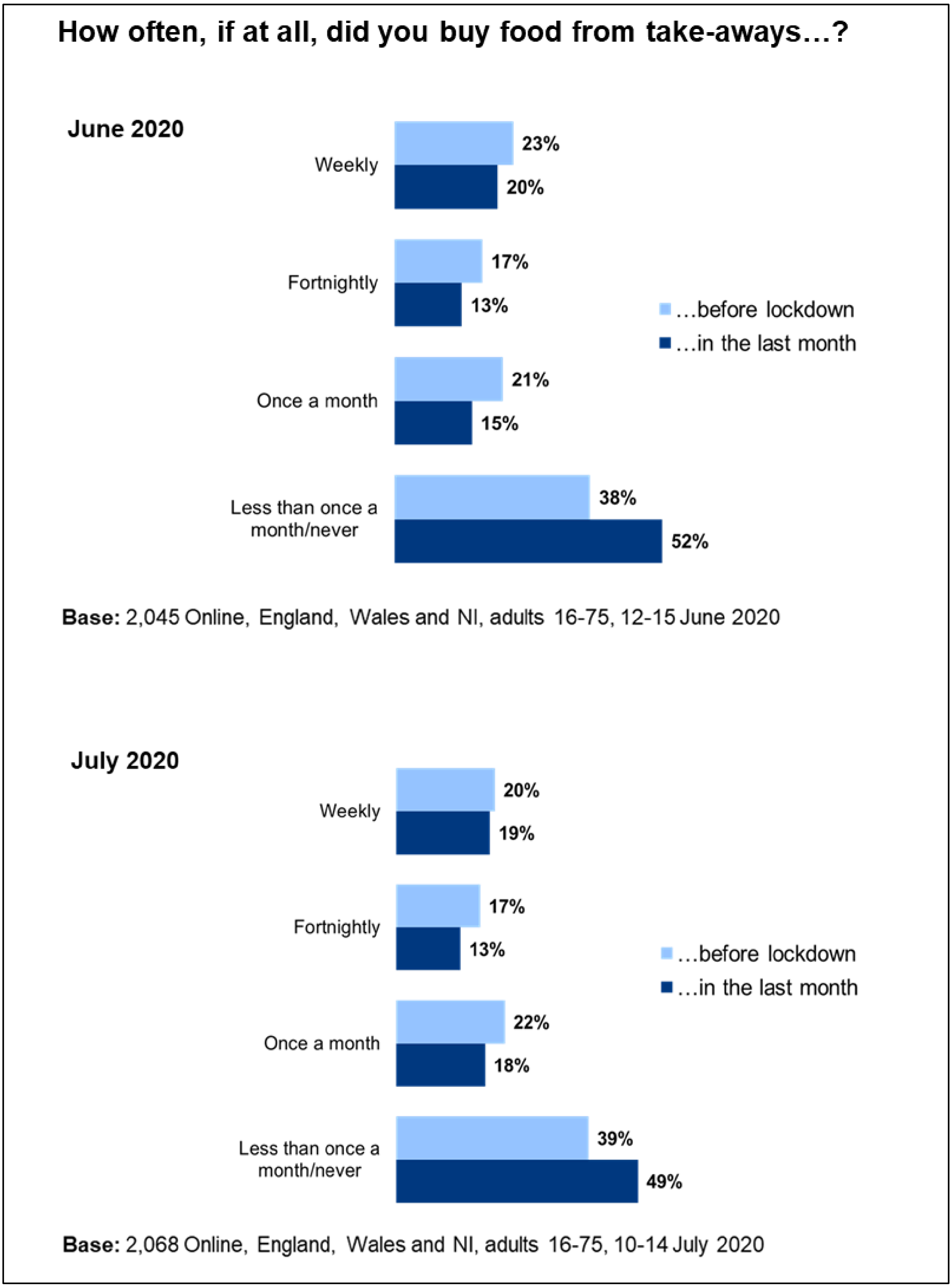
In June a question was added to understand the frequency of takeaway consumption before and during lockdown[17]. Frequency of takeaway consumption remained stable across June and July with around a half of respondents purchasing a takeaway at least once in the last month (47% in June, 50% in July) (see Figure 5[18]). Again, younger respondents (under 35) were more likely to report eating takeaways weekly or fortnightly compared to older respondents.

When those who reported eating takeaways less often than before lockdown were asked for their reasons for doing so[19], the most common reasons reported were cooking at home more (36% June and July), wanting to save money (35% June, 29% July), takeaways not being open (33% June, 25% July) and concerns around Covid-19 (32% June, 36% July) (see Figure 6).

In July, older respondents (aged 55-75) were more likely to give ‘concerns about Covid-19’ and ‘wanting to follow guidelines of staying at home’ as reasons for eating fewer takeaways when compared to younger age groups (those aged 16-44).

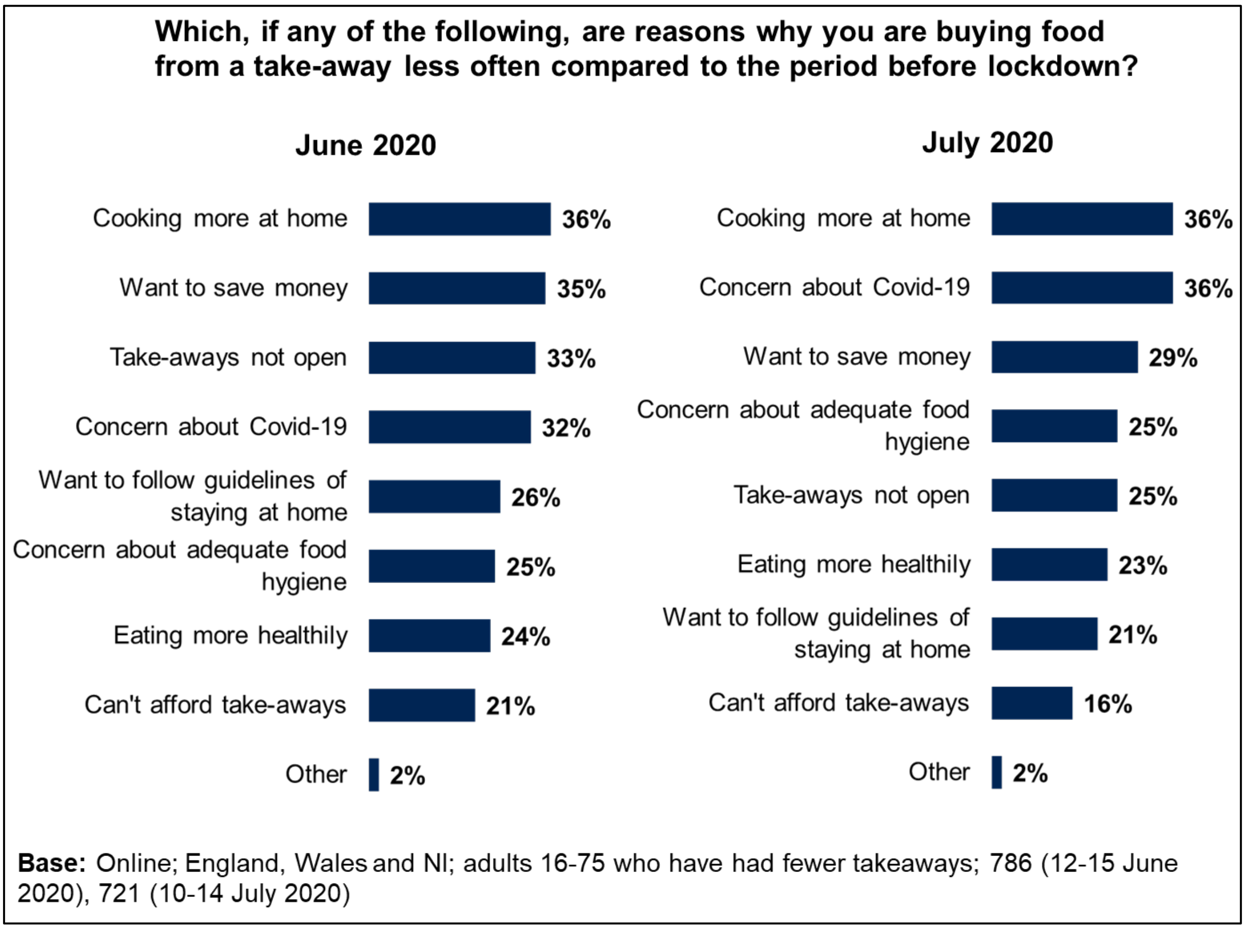
[17] How often, if at all, did you buy food from takeaways (a) before lockdown and (b) in the last month?
[18] Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
[19] Which, if any of the following, are reasons why you are buying food from a take-away less often compared to the period before lockdown?

Figure 5: Frequency of takeaway consumption before and during lockdown (June and July 2020)[20]



[20] Figures may not add to 100% as the "don't know" option is excluded.

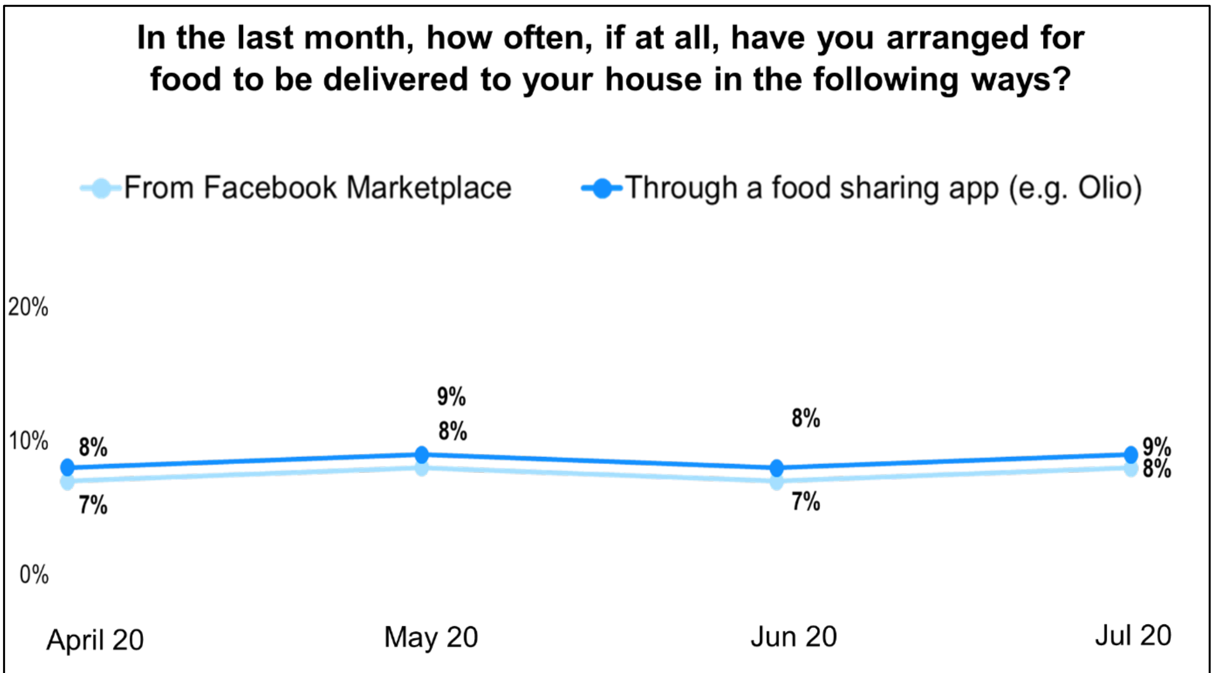
Figure 6: Reasons for buying fewer takeaways (June and July 2020)



Other methods of accessing food

The number of respondents accessing food from Facebook Marketplace and through food sharing apps, such as Olio, remained stable between April and July (see Figure 7). Those more likely to access food in these ways continue to be male, younger (under 35), and from London.

Figure 7: Other methods of accessing food over time



Base: Online, England, Wales and NI, adults 16-75, 10-13 April (2,039); 8-12 May (2,040); 12-15 June (2,045); 10-14 July (2,068)

Use by dates

Checking use by dates

In May, June and July, most respondents who cook[21] reported that they do not always check use by dates before preparing or cooking food. However, the proportion of respondents who report 'always' checking use by dates before cooking increased from 42% in May to 46% in July (see Table 4).

Table 4: Trends in checking use by dates (May-July 2020)

How often, if at all, do you check use-by dates when you are about to cook or prepare food	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020
Always	**42%**	**43%**	**46%**
Most of the time	32%	32%	30%
Sometimes	21%	21%	20%
Never	5%	4%	4%
Net: Not always	**58%**	**57%**	**54%**

Base: Online; England, Wales and NI; adults 16-75 who cook; 1993 (8-12 May 2020) 2,012 (12-15 June 2020) 2,016 (10-14 July 2020)

[21] 98% of all respondents in May (n=1993) and June (n=2,012); 97% of all respondents in July (n=2,016).

Respondents who reported cutting the size of their meals or skipping meals at least once in the last month because they didn't have enough money for food[22] were less likely to report always checking use by dates (33% in July) compared to those who hadn't cut the size of, or skipped, meals (49% in July).

Eating food past its use by date

In April, 58% of respondents indicated that they (or someone in their family) had eaten food that had gone past its use by date[23]. In May, a new question was added to understand whether respondents had eaten five specific foods deemed by FSA microbiologists to pose a risk if eaten beyond their use by date (cooked meat, smoked fish, bagged salad, soft (mould ripened) cheese[24], and pasteurised milk[25])[26]. When asked about specific foods, the proportion of respondents who reported eating these past their use by date was lower and ranged from 17%-36% in May and 17%-39% in June, depending on the food.

In July, the question was amended as the question did not capture whether adults had actually eaten the food in the last month and therefore percentages reported were for all adults, rather than just those who had eaten the food. In July, respondents who had eaten each type of food were most likely to report eating bagged salad (37%) and cheese (34%) past it use by date and least likely to eat smoked fish past its use by date (16%) (See Figure 8).

[22] In the last month have you cut down the size of your meals or skipped meals because you did not have enough money to buy food?
[23] In the last month have you or anyone in your family eaten food that has gone past its 'use by' date?
[24] This was changed to 'cheese' in June.
[25] This was changed to 'milk' in June.
[26] In the last month, have you or anyone in your family eaten any of the following foods that has gone past its 'use by' date? Cooked meats; smoked fish; bagged salads; soft (mould ripened) cheeses; pasteurised milk.

Figure 8: Eating food past its use by date (July 2020)

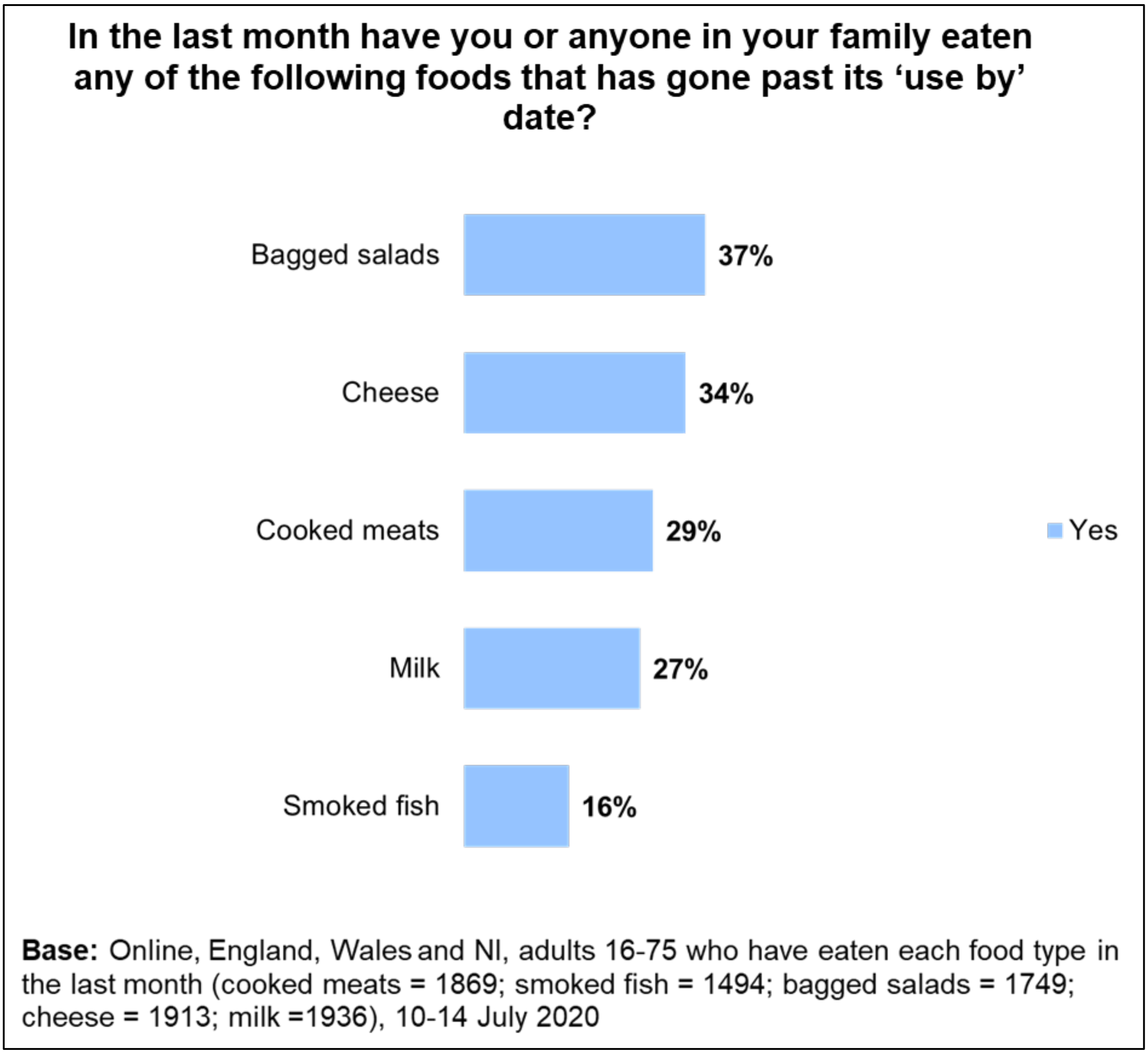


Table 5 presents the groups of respondents who were significantly more likely to eat food past its use by date compared to the total surveyed population. Those eating food past its use by date tend to be working, live in a household with a child present, or be in the shielding category. They are also more likely to be younger, in higher social grades and more highly educated.

Respondents who reported cutting the size of their meals or skipping meals at least once in the last month because they didn’t have enough money for food were more likely to eat each food past its use by date compared to those who hadn’t reported doing this. Similarly, respondents who were worried about affording food[27] were also more likely to eat food past its use by date than those who were not worried.

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

Table 5: Demographic differences in eating food past its use by date (July 2020)

	All	Men	Younger age groups	Household with 4+ people	Child present	In work	AB social grade	Degree/ Masters /PhD	Advised to shield	London
Bagged salads	**37%**	-	44% (16-24) 45% (25-34)	-	44%	40%	43%	43%	-	-
Cheese	**34%**	-	39% (25-34)	-	39%	37%	38%	37%	44%	-
Cooked meats	**29%**	32%	-	33%	38%	31%	34%	-	39%	-
Milk	**27%**	-	34% (16-34) 32% (25-34)	-	34%	30%	-	31%	36%	33%
Smoked fish	**16%**	18%	29% (16-24) 25% (25-34)	20%	25%	19%	21%	19%	25%	22%

Base: 2,045 Online, England, Wales and NI, adults 16-75, 12-15 June 2020, male (980), female (1045), 16-24 (323), 25-34 (388), urban (1737), London (305). Figures in the table indicate a statistically significant increase in comparison to the total surveyed population ('-' is used where no statistically significant result occurs).

Eating in restaurants

In June, respondents were asked what might reassure them that it is safe to return to eating in restaurants[28]. Several options were provided, and respondents were able to choose up to three in their response. In July, the question was amended to reflect the fact that restaurants had re-opened[29], and a further response option was added: 'I feel it is already safe to eat out'. Any differences across the two months should therefore be treated as indicative only due to these changes to the questionnaire.

In both June and July, the same five food safety provisions were the most popular:

- Appropriate social distancing measures (32% in July; 36% in June);
- Good hygiene and safety measures (28% in July; 35% in June).
- Good handwashing facilities, including provision of hand sanitiser (26% in July; 30% in June);
- Visible and regular cleaning (22% in July; 24% in June);
- Local Covid-19 infection rate is low (20% in July; 26% in June);

In June, one in four (25%) respondents reported that they would not eat out for the foreseeable future, rising to 31% in July. Across both months, older age groups were more likely to choose this than younger age groups, with 15% of 16-24 year olds reporting this in July, compared with 41% of people aged 55-75.

Households with no child present (34% in July, 27% in June), and households where someone had been advised to shield (37% in July, 30% in June), were also more likely than the total surveyed population to report not planning to eat out any time soon. Respondents who had a long-term physical or mental health condition were also more likely to report this (39% in July, 30% in June).

In July, 6% of respondents reported that they felt it was already safe to eat out (i.e. they did not need additional reassurance). Men (8%) were more likely than women (4%) to say they felt it was already safe to eat out.

Consumption behaviour

Respondents were also asked about changes in their consumption behaviours, including whether they had wasted or thrown away food[30], and eaten together as a family more or less often in the past month (see Figure 10, Table 6)[31]. On the whole, consumption behaviours have remained stable between May and July, with most people conducting each behaviour "about the same" as in the last month. As Figure 10 below illustrates, in July, people reported wasting or throwing away food

[28] Now I want you to think about when restaurants re-open after lockdown. Which, if any, of the following would most reassure you that it is safe to return to eating out? Please choose up to 3 options.
[29] Restaurants have now re-opened after lockdown. Which, if any, of the following would most reassure you that it is safe to eat out? Please choose up to 3 options.
[30] In the last month, have you done any of the following more or less often? Wasted or thrown away food
[31] In the last month, have you done any of the following more or less often? Eaten together with the family

considerably less often than more often on the whole, and to some degree, eating together as a family more often than less often.

Wasted or thrown away food

In July, across all groups, respondents were more likely to have wasted food less often compared to more often over the past month; however, the extent to which this was the case differed between groups.

Younger age groups were most likely to have wasted or thrown away food more, with 18% of 16-24 year olds, and 14% of 25-34 year olds reporting doing this “more often”, compared to only 4% of 55-75 year olds. This is despite younger people showing greater levels of concern about food affordability. Nevertheless, it is important to note we do not have baseline levels of food waste to be able to compare absolute levels of waste between age groups. The same point applies to other groups.

Respondents in social grade AB were more likely to have increased their food waste behaviour than those in lower grades, with 13% saying “more often”, compared to only 6% of people in DE social grade.

Between May and July, there was a significant decline in those who reported wasting food “less often” over the past month as lockdown progressed, and a corresponding increase in those who answered “about the same”, potentially indicating a sustained lower rate of wastage than before lockdown.

Eating together with the family

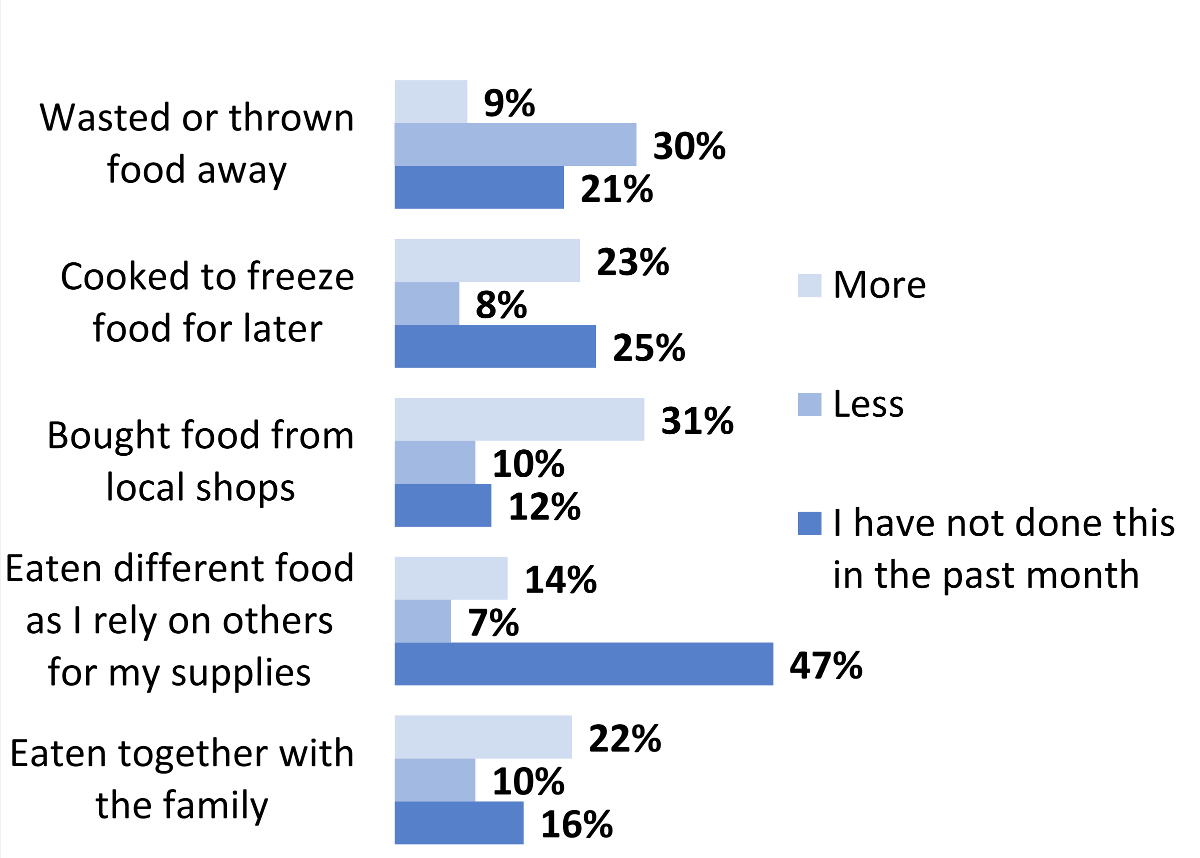
On the whole, people had eaten together with the family more often during the past month, with 22% (in July) saying they had done this “more often”, though the majority reported doing this “about the same”.

Slightly fewer respondents reported eating together “more often” with their family in the previous month in July compared to May and June (24% and 26% respectively), however, more people indicated that they had eaten as a family “about the same” as in the previous month, again indicating a sustained change in eating together as a family since the inception of lockdown.

Younger age groups were the most likely age group to have increased their levels of eating with the family, with 38% of 16-24 year olds (in July) reporting having done this “more often”, compared to 10% of 55-75 year olds.

Households with children (41% in July) were more likely to report eating together more often than those without children (16% in July). Eating together more often as a household was correlated with higher household income, with wealthier households more likely to report eating together more often than households with lower incomes.

Figure 9: Changes in food consumption behaviours[32]



Base: 2,068 Online, England, Wales and NI, adults 16-75, 10-14 July 2020

Nutrition behaviour

On balance, respondents in July reported cooking from scratch more often compared to less often across the board, and overall reported buying processed food slightly less often than more often. Whilst respondents reported eating healthy meals more often, they also reported eating snacks (such as cakes, biscuits, confectionary and savoury snacks) more often. Reported data can be found below (see Figure 11 and Table 7).

Cooking from scratch

In July, 34% of respondents reported that they had cooked from scratch more often over the last month (39% May, June).

AB and C1 respondents were most likely to report cooking from scratch more often (38% and 35% respectively for July), compared to C2 and DE respondents (both 29% in July).

Snacking on cakes, biscuits, confectionary and savoury snacks

Overall, 33% of respondents reported eating snacks more often over the past month. However, this was lower than in June (40%) and May (42%). In July, females were

[32] In the last month, have you done any of the following more or less often?

more likely to report having increased their snacking behaviour in the last month than males (39% compared to 27%).

Eaten healthy meals and bought processed food

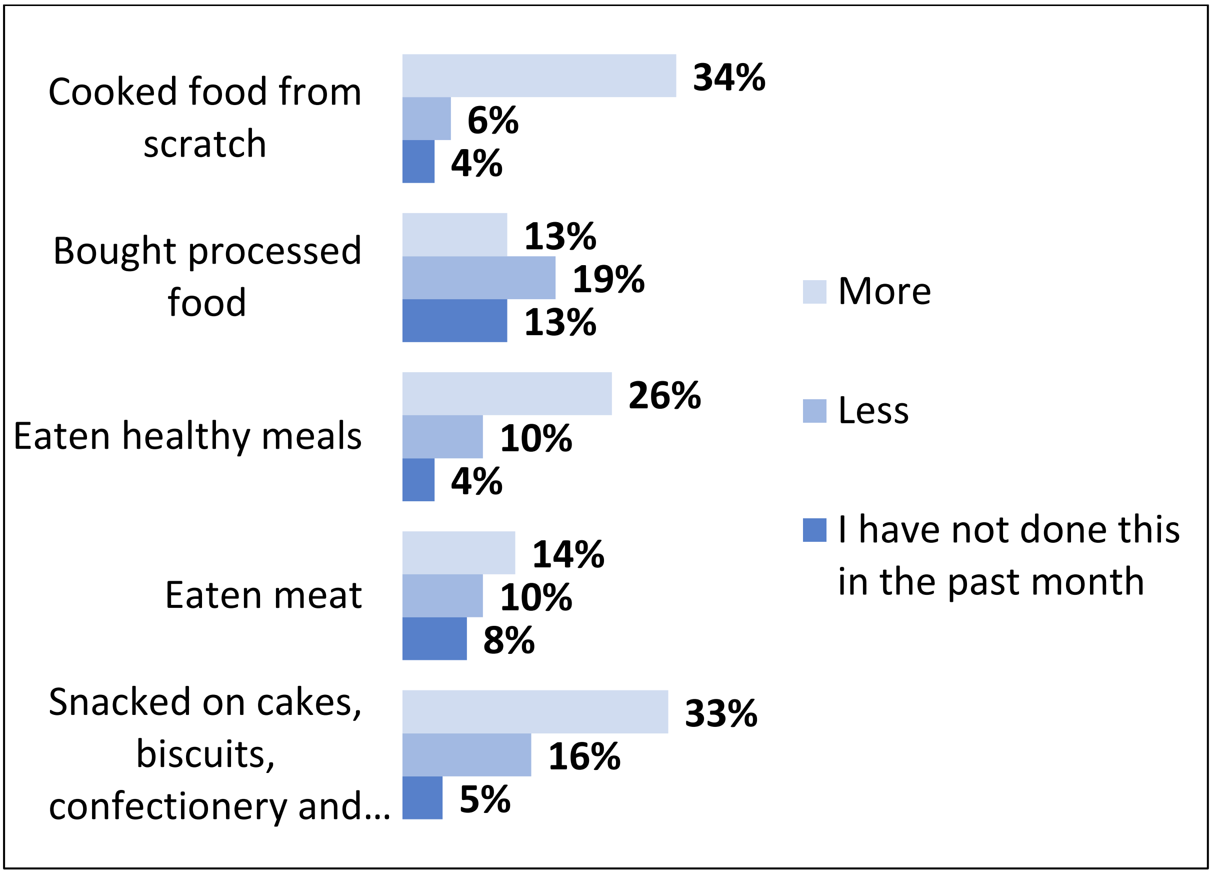
In July, 26% of respondents reported they had eaten healthy meals more often in the last month, broadly similar to May and June (26% and 27% respectively). Younger age groups were most likely to report having eaten healthy food more often (for 16-24 year olds, 41% in July). Conversely, this age group reported buying processed food more often in the last month, with 25% reporting that they had bought it more, compared to 13% for the surveyed population.

Table 6: Trends in food consumption behaviours (May-July 2020)

In the last month, have you done any of the following more or less often?		**May 2020**	**June 2020**	**July 2020**
Wasted or thrown away food	**More**	**8%**	**10%**	**9%**
	About the same	36%	37%	40%
	Less	**35%**	**32%**	**30%**
	I have not done this in the past month	21%	21%	21%
Cooked to freeze food for later	**More**	**24%**	**25%**	**23%**
	About the same	44%	42%	45%
	Less	**8%**	**10%**	**8%**
	I have not done this in the past month	24%	24%	25%
Bought food from local shops	**More**	**35%**	**33%**	**31%**
	About the same	43%	42%	47%
	Less	**11%**	**13%**	**10%**
	I have not done this in the past month	11%	12%	12%
Eaten different food as I rely on others for my supplies	**More**	**17%**	**17%**	**14%**
	About the same	32%	30%	32%
	Less	**8%**	**8%**	**7%**
	I have not done this in the past month	43%	45%	47%
Eaten together with the family	**More**	**24%**	**26%**	**22%**
	About the same	49%	47%	52%
	Less	**10%**	**11%**	**10%**
	I have not done this in the past month	17%	16%	16%

Base: Online; England, Wales and NI; adults 16-75; 2,040 (8-12 May 2020) 2,045 (12-15 June 2020) 2,068 (10-14 July 2020)

Figure 10: Changes in nutrition behaviours[33]



Base: 2,068 Online, England, Wales and NI, adults 16-75, 10-14 July 2020

[33] In the last month, have you done any of the following more or less often?

Table 7: Trends in nutrition behaviours (May-July 2020)

In the last month, have you done any of the following more or less often?		**May 2020**	**June 2020**	**July 2020**
Cooked food from scratch	**More**	**39%**	**39%**	**34%**
	About the same	51%	51%	57%
	Less	**6%**	**6%**	**6%**
	I have not done this in the past month	4%	3%	4%
Bought processed food	**More**	**14%**	**15%**	**13%**
	About the same	57%	55%	55%
	Less	**19%**	**19%**	**19%**
	I have not done this in the past month	10%	11%	13%
Eaten healthy meals	**More**	**26%**	**27%**	**26%**
	About the same	60%	59%	60%
	Less	**11%**	**11%**	**10%**
	I have not done this in the past month	3%	3%	4%
Eaten meat	**More**	**14%**	**13%**	**14%**
	About the same	70%	68%	67%
	Less	**9%**	**12%**	**10%**
	I have not done this in the past month	7%	7%	8%
Snacked on cakes, biscuits and confectionary	**More**	**42%**	**40%**	**33%**
	About the same	40%	40%	46%
	Less	**14%**	**15%**	**16%**
	I have not done this in the past month	4%	5%	5%

Base: Online; England, Wales and NI; adults 16-75; 2,040 (8-12 May 2020) 2,045 (12-15 June 2020) 2,068 (10-14 July 2020)

Food safety and hygiene at home

The Food Standards Agency recommends certain food safety and hygiene practices. A question around these practices was introduced in May.

Food safety behaviour in the home has remained relatively stable between May and July (see Table 8). Most respondents report ‘always’ cooking food until it is steaming hot throughout, in line with recommended practice. However, the majority do not always follow instructions on packaging which tells consumers how long food should be stored once opened. Similarly, the majority of respondents do not always report using different chopping boards for different foods. Almost a half of respondents report washing raw chicken at least sometimes, which is not recommended.

Table 8: Trends in food safety practices (May-July 2020)

How often, if at all, do you do each of the following?		May 2020	June 2020	July 2020
Cook food until it is steaming hot throughout	**Always**	**62%**	**65%**	**64%**
	Most of the time	24%	24%	24%
	Sometimes	11%	9%	9%
	Never	2%	2%	2%
	Net: not always	**38%**	**35%**	**36%**
Follow instructions on food packaging which tells you how long food should be stored once opened	**Always**	**30%**	**28%**	**32%**
	Most of the time	38%	39%	37%
	Sometimes	26%	26%	26%
	Never	6%	7%	6%
	Net: not always	**70%**	**72%**	**68%**
Washing raw chicken	Always	24%	22%	24%
	Most of the time	9%	11%	11%
	Sometimes	15%	15%	15%
	Never	**52%**	**53%**	**51%**
	Net: At least sometimes	**48%**	**47%**	**49%**
Use different chopping boards for different foods	**Always**	**30%**	**31%**	**31%**
	Most of the time	22%	22%	23%
	Sometimes	25%	24%	24%
	Never	24%	23%	21%
	Net: not always	**70%**	**69%**	**69%**

Base: Online; England, Wales and NI; adults 16-75 who cook; 8-12 May 2020; 12-15 June 2020; 10-14 July 2020

For some food safety behaviours in the home, there are demographic differences. For instance, in July, females were more likely to report practices in line with FSA recommendations such as always cooking food until it is steaming hot throughout (70%, compared to 59% of males) and never washing raw chicken (59%, compared to 43% of males); while 16-24 year olds were the least likely age group to follow these recommendations.

4. Appendix

Appendix A: Wave 4 (July 2020) Questionnaire[34]

ASK ALL

Q0. Which, if any, of the following applies to you? *Please select from the options listed*

MULTICODE -1-5, RANDOMISE 1-5

1. I, or a member of my household, is in the shielded patient category and is advised to self-isolate for 12 weeks
2. I, or a member of my household, have suspected Covid-19 symptoms
3. I have physical or mental health condition(s) or illness(es) that has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more
4. None of these [SINGLE CODE, FIX]
5. Prefer not to say [SINGLE CODE, FIX]

ASK ALL

Q1. 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? *Please select one answer only*

SINGLE CODE, FORWARD/REVERSE CODES

1. Very worried
2. Somewhat worried
3. Not very worried
4. Not at all worried
5. Don’t know FIX
6. Prefer not to answer FIX

ASK ALL

Q2. To what extent, if at all, are you worried you/your household will not be able to afford food in the next month? *Please select one answer only*

SINGLE CODE, FORWARD/REVERSE CODES

1. Very worried
2. Somewhat worried

[34] Please note that the questionnaire has changed slightly each wave. Changes are noted where relevant throughout the report

3. Not very worried
4. Not at all worried
5. Don't know FIX
6. Prefer not to answer FIX

ASK ALL

Q3. In the last month have you cut down the size of your meals or skipped meals for any of the following reasons? *Please select one answer for each statement.*

RANDOMISE ROWS 1-5. PROGRESSIVE GRID, SINGLE CODE PER ROW

ROWS

1. You did not have enough money to buy food
2. You (or others in your household) were not well enough to shop or cook food
3. You had no means to get to the shops to buy food
4. You were unable to get a delivery of food or obtain it in other ways

COLUMNS

1. Yes, this happened every week
2. Yes, this happened some weeks but not every week
3. Yes, this happened just one week in the last month
4. No, never
5. Don't know/can't remember
6. Prefer not to answer

ASK ALL

Q4. Compared to the period before lockdown, have you done any of the following more or less often? *Please select one answer for each statement.*

SINGLE CODE PER ROW. RANDOMISE ROWS. PROGRESSIVE GRID. FORWARD/REVERSE COLUMNS 1-5

ROWS

1. Had an online food delivery from a supermarket
2. Purchased food from a takeaway, either direct or online
3. Purchased food from a local supplier (i.e. farm shops, veg box), either direct or online
4. Had a food delivery from an online food ordering company (e.g. Deliveroo, Just Eat, Uber Eats)

COLUMNS

1. A lot more

2. A little more
3. About the same
4. A little less
5. A lot less
6. I never do this

ASK ALL HAVING TAKEAWAY/DELIVERY LESS (Q4_2 OR 4 = 4-5)

Q5. Which, if any, of the following are reasons why you are buying food from a take-away less often compared to the period before lockdown? *Please select from the options listed*

RANDOMISE, MULTICODE 1-8

1. Take-aways not open
2. Cooking more at home
3. Eating more healthily
4. Can't afford take-aways
5. Concern about Covid-19
6. Want to save money
7. Concern about adequate food hygiene
8. Want to follow guidelines of staying at home
9. Other (specify) FIX

ASK ALL

Q6. In the last month, how often, if at all, have you arranged for food to be delivered to your house in the following ways? *Please select one answer for each statement.*

SINGLE CODE PER ROW. PROGRESSIVE GRID. RANDOMISE ROWS 1-8

ROWS

1. From Facebook Marketplace
2. Through a food sharing app (e.g. Olio)
3. Through a government or local authority scheme
4. Through a food charity or food bank

COLUMNS

1. Every week
2. Some weeks but not every week
3. Just one week in the last month
4. I have not done this in the last month
5. Don't know/can't remember
6. Prefer not to answer

ASK Q6 (4=1,2,3)

Q6A. Which of the following, if any, are reasons you have had food delivered to your house from a food bank or a food charity in the last month? Please choose up to 3 options.

RANDOMISE.MULTICODE UP TO 3.

1. We did not have enough money to buy food
2. Someone in the household has been self-isolating or shielding because of Covid-19
3. There was a delay or problems with benefits payments
4. Someone in the household lost their job
5. Someone in the household was on furlough
6. We had difficulties travelling to get food ourselves
7. Other (please specify)
8. Prefer not to answer

ASK ALL

Q7. In the last month have you or anyone in your family eaten any of the following foods that has gone past its ‘use by’ date? *Please select one answer for each food.*

SINGLE CODE PER ROW. RANDOMISE ROWS. PROGRESSIVE GRID.

ROWS

1. Cooked meats
2. Smoked fish
3. Bagged salads
4. Cheese
5. Milk

COLUMNS

1. Yes, this happened every week
2. Yes, this happened some weeks but not every week
3. Yes, this happened just one week in the last month
4. No, never
5. We haven’t eaten this in the last month
6. Don’t know/can’t remember
7. Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

Q8 In the last month, have you done any of the following more or less often?

Please select one answer for each statement.

RANDOMISE ROWS 1-10. PROGRESSIVE GRID. SINGLE CODE PER ROW. FORWARD/REVERSE COLUMNS 1-5

ROWS

1. Cooked food from scratch
2. Cooked to freeze food for later
3. Wasted or thrown away food
4. Bought processed food
5. Eaten different food as I rely on others for my supplies
6. Eaten together with the family
7. Snacked on cakes, biscuits, confectionery and savoury snacks
8. Bought food from local shops
9. Eaten healthy meals
10. Eaten meat

COLUMNS

1. A lot more
2. A little more
3. About the same
4. A little less
5. A lot less
6. I have not done this in the past month

ASK ALL

Q9 How often, if at all, do you do each of the following?

Please select one answer for each statement.

SINGLE CODE PER ROW. RANDOMISE ROWS. PROGRESSIVE GRID.

ROWS

1. Cook food until it is steaming hot throughout
2. Follow instructions on food packaging which tells you how long food should be stored once opened
3. Washing raw chicken
4. Use different chopping boards for different foods
5. Check use-by dates when you are about to cook or prepare food

COLUMNS

1. Always
2. Most of the time
3. Sometimes
4. Never

5. I don't cook

ASK ALL

Q10 How often, if at all, did you buy food from take-aways?

Please select one answer for each statement.

PROGRESSIVE GRID. SINGLE CODE PER ROW.

ROWS

a) before lockdown
b) in the last month

COLUMNS

1. 4 times a week or more
2. 2 to 3 times a week
3. At least once a week
4. At least once a fortnight
5. At least once a month
6. Less often than once a month
7. Never
8. Don't know

ASK ALL
Q10 Restaurants have now re-opened after lockdown. Which, if any, of the following would most reassure you that it is safe to eat out? Please choose up to 3 options.
RANDOMISE.MULTICODE UP TO THREE 1-8. CODE 9 and 10 EXCLUSIVE

1. Local Covid-19 infection rate is low
2. Good food hygiene ratings on display
3. Appropriate social distancing measures
4. Visible and regular cleaning
5. Good handwashing facilities, including provision of hand sanitiser
6. Government guidance suggests there is low risk of infection nationally
7. The option to eat outdoors
8. Good hygiene and safety measures
9. I won't do this for the foreseeable future (EXCLUSIVE)
10. I feel it is already safe to eat out (EXCLUSIVE)
11. Other (specify)

Appendix B: Sample profile (July 2020)

Demographic category	**Number**	**%**
All respondents	2068	100%
Male	1020	49%
Female	1032	50%
16-24-year olds	322	16%
25-34-year olds	375	18%
35-44-year olds	351	17%
45-54-year olds	375	18%
55-75-year olds	644	31%
Social grade AB	555	27%
Social grade C1	746	36%
Social grade C2	305	15%
Social grade DE	463	22%
Households with a child present	540	26%
Households with no child present	1528	74%
Household size 1	422	20%
Household size 2	703	34%
Household size 3	443	21%
Household size 4+	501	24%
Urban	1753	85%
Rural	315	15%
Married / living as married	1142	55%
Single	679	33%
Widowed / divorced / separated	247	12%

Further data on sample profile (i.e. region, income, employment status, education) can be found within the data tables for each wave or the datasets, which are available upon application.