
Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) Biannual Public Attitudes Tracker

Wave 5, November 2016

Food Standards Agency

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Executive summary

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) runs a biannual consumer attitudes survey on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) to track consumer awareness of the scheme, attitudes towards it and the use of the ratings over time. The questions on FHRS are included in the wider TNS consumer omnibus survey tracker.¹ This report sets out the findings from Wave 5 of the FHRS tracker. The previous wave (wave 4) of the survey took place in May/June 2016.²

Fieldwork for Wave 5 of this FHRS tracker took place beginning in November, 2016. Face to face interviews were conducted with a representative sample of 2,100 adults across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The key findings are highlighted below. More detail, including socio-demographic differences, is included in the main section of the report.

Some comparisons are also made to findings from the FSA's Biannual Public Attitudes Tracker (also part of the TNS omnibus survey) which included some questions on the FHRS over a number of waves (from November 2011 to May 2014).³

Unless stated otherwise, all comparisons made in this report between population groups and changes over time are statistically significant at the 5% level. This means that if in reality there was no difference between the two groups or points in time, it would be unlikely (< 5% chance) that we would have observed such a large difference in their results in this survey.

Wave 5 Key Findings

Awareness

- Half of all respondents in England and 57% in Northern Ireland were aware of the FHRS. The figure was higher in Wales (69%). This figure has increased since Wave 1 in November 2010, from 44% in England and from 42% in Wales, but has not seen any significant change in Northern Ireland.
- The most common source of information was the rating being on display at or within a food business. (82% or 88% when including prompted responses), which was also the most common source in all previous waves.

¹ See www.tnsglobal.com

² See <https://www.food.gov.uk/science/research-reports/ssresearch/foodsafetyss/fs244011w4>

³ See <http://www.food.gov.uk/science/research/ssres/publictrackingsurvey>

- An area of interest introduced in this wave was around the three component scores that determine the overall rating. Of those who had seen FHRS online, 49% were aware of the three component scores. Of those aware, 64% used them to help make decisions about where to eat or buy food,
- Food standards issues such as those concerning allergens, labelling and composition were considered by 73% of respondents as issues that should be taken into account during an inspection. This was also a new question introduced in this wave.

Recognition

- Consumer recognition of FHRS stickers continues to be slightly higher in Northern Ireland (85%) and significantly so in Wales (90%), than in England (78%).
- There was a significant increase in levels of recognition in England from the previous wave (78% up from 75%) and in Wales (90% up from 82%).
- Of those aware of any hygiene rating scheme, most respondents report having seen a sticker on display in the last 12 months – 80% of respondents in England, 87% in Wales, and 92% in Northern Ireland.

Use

- A total of 38% of respondents in England, 39% in Wales and 48% in Northern Ireland said that they would definitely decide to eat out somewhere based on the FHRS rating the business received and 29%, 27% and 33% in England, Wales and Northern Ireland respectively said that they would „maybe“ do this.
- In terms of actually checking the rating, 44% of respondents in England, 39% in Wales and 62% in Northern Ireland report either often or sometimes doing so before deciding to purchase food from an establishment, and most commonly do so by checking the food business door or window (62%).
- The proportion reporting „often“ or „sometimes“ using FHRS ratings to make a decision has increased significantly in Northern Ireland (63% up from 44%). This increase occurred over the period in which Northern Ireland introduced the statutory display scheme (October 2016).
- As in previous waves, a rating of 3 was identified most frequently as the lowest acceptable that consumers would consider in Wales (54%) and in

Northern Ireland (50%). The lowest acceptable rating has changed in England, moving from a rating of 3 (40% in Wave 4) identified in previous waves to a rating of 4 in the current wave (38%).

Views on Mandatory Display

- The proportion of respondents who report that business should have to display their ratings continues to be high in England (83%) and Wales (88%). As in previous waves, the figure continues to be higher in Northern Ireland (98%).

1. Introduction

1.1 About the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS), which operates in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, was formally launched in November 2010 (a similar scheme known as the Food Hygiene Information Scheme, FHIS, operates in Scotland). The scheme is a Food Standards Agency/local authority partnership initiative which provides information about hygiene standards in food premises at the time they are inspected to check compliance with legal requirements. The transparency that this provides enables consumers to make informed choices about where to eat out or shop for food and provides an important incentive for businesses to achieve and maintain compliance with food hygiene law.

The scheme covers businesses supplying or serving food direct to consumers such as restaurants, takeaways, cafés, pubs, hotels, schools, hospitals, care homes, supermarkets and other retailers. Since late November 2014, the scheme in Wales also covers businesses that trade only with other businesses, for example, manufacturers.

There are six hygiene ratings on a simple numerical scale ranging from „0“ (urgent improvement necessary) at the bottom, to „5“ (very good) at the top. The ratings are published on the FSA website (and via phone apps), and there is open access to the data. Businesses are given stickers showing their rating for display at their premises. Businesses in England are encouraged to display these stickers while those in Wales and Northern Ireland are required by law to do so (the legislation for this was introduced in November 2013 in Wales and October 2016 in Northern Ireland).

1.2 About the FHRS tracker survey

In 2001 the FSA commissioned a biannual Public Attitudes Tracker survey to monitor key areas of concern for consumers in relation to food. New questions were added in 2010 relating to awareness of initiatives and schemes concerning the hygiene standards of places people eat out or purchase food. These questions explored awareness of the FHRS and recognition of scheme materials.

A bespoke FHRS Biannual Public Attitudes Tracker survey was introduced in 2014, so that consumer attitudes to FHRS could be explored in greater detail. This new survey monitors consumer awareness of the scheme, attitudes to it and use of ratings.

This report includes the findings from Wave 5 of the bespoke tracker, the fieldwork for which was conducted in November 2016.

1.3 Methodology

Fieldwork took place in 2016, between the 23 of November and 4 of December. It was conducted as part of the TNS omnibus survey which uses face-to face interviews and a random location sampling method.

A representative sample of 2,100 adults (aged 16 and over) across England, Wales and Northern Ireland were interviewed. The questionnaire is reproduced at [Annex A](#).

1.4 Reporting

This report provides findings from FSA analysis of the survey data. This is the fifth wave of the FHRS survey but a number of the questions included in it were previously included in the FSA's wider Public Attitudes Tracker survey. This allows some wave on wave comparisons with earlier data. Such comparisons are statistically significant where made, unless otherwise specified. As the FHRS survey continues to run, more wave on wave data will be available.

All socio-demographic differences cited are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

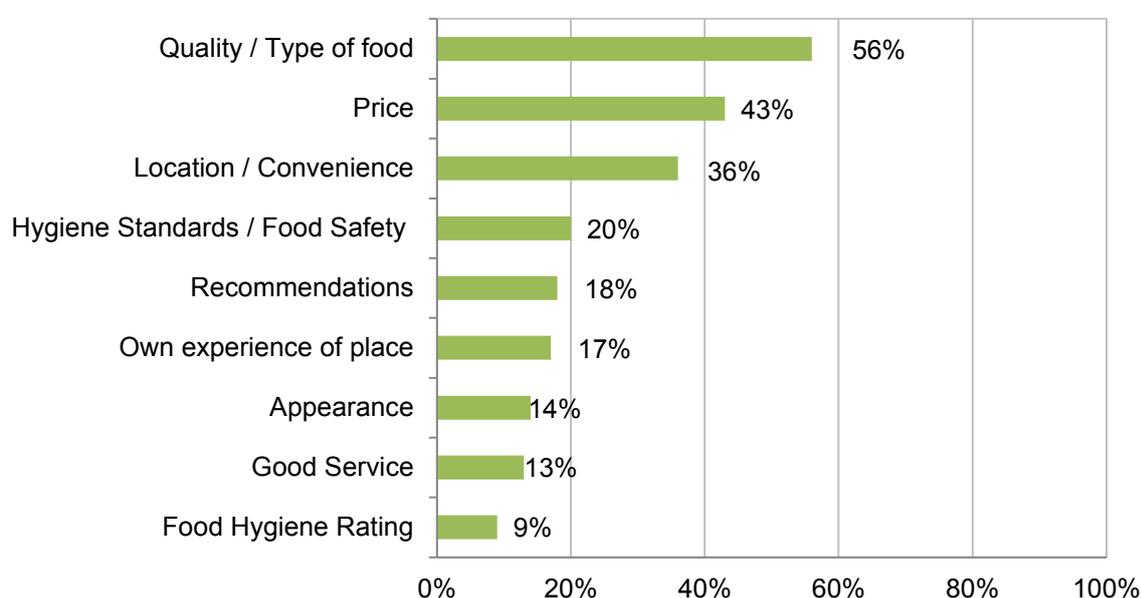
Although key socio-demographic differences are frequently highlighted throughout the report, further differences may also be evident in the underlying data. Full data tables, which include a variety of different socio-demographic differences, are available on request.

2. Consumer considerations

2.1 Considerations when eating out or purchasing takeaway food

Respondents were asked to consider what they take into account when deciding where to go when eating out or purchasing takeaway food. This question is open-ended and unprompted, designed to provide evidence on the extent to which food hygiene is top of mind when making decisions about where to eat. [Figure 1](#) provides a breakdown of the common responses.

Figure 1: Spontaneous considerations when eating out or purchasing takeaway food



Base: All respondents

England Unweighted base (1756), Weighted base (1757)

Wales Unweighted base (216), Weighted base (104)

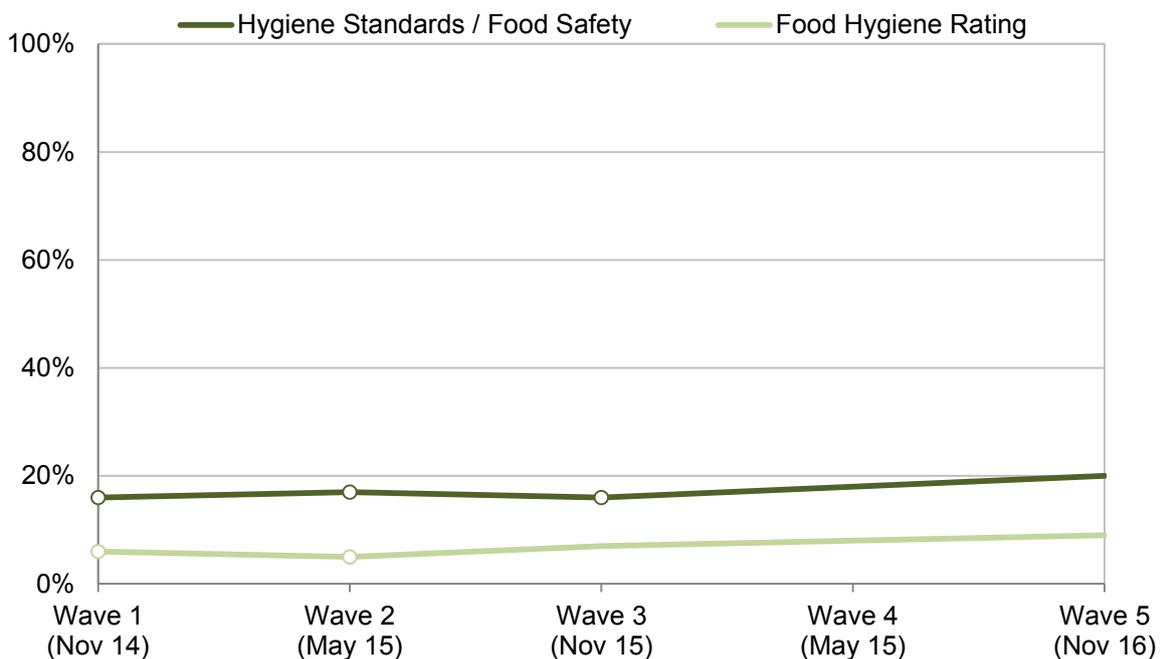
Northern Ireland Unweighted base (128), Weighted base (68)

The findings have not changed significantly over waves to date.

The most common considerations continue to be Quality/Type of food (56%), Price (43%) and Location/Convenience (36%).

The Food Hygiene Rating is only mentioned by a small proportion of respondents (9%), though a greater proportion reported generally considering the hygiene standards/food safety (20%) they observed in a food business.

Figure 2: Reported consideration of hygiene standards and the Food Hygiene Rating over all waves of the survey



Base: All respondents

Unweighted: Wave 1 (1971), Wave 2 (2073), Wave 3 (2102), Wave 4 (2098), Wave 5 (2100)

Weighted: Wave 1 (1826), Wave 2 (1917), Wave 3 (1944), Wave 4 (1935), Wave 5 (1928)

Differences between socio-demographic groups:

Social grade AB respondents⁴ were significantly *more likely* to mention the quality/type of food (66%) than any other social grade (C1 – 58%, C2 – 54%, DE – 49%).

Minority Ethnic respondents were significantly *more likely* to mention the Food Hygiene Rating (16%) than White respondents (8%).

Those **respondents with children** were significantly *more likely* to consider the Food Hygiene Rating (11% compared to 8%).

⁴ Refer to Annex B for an explanation of social grade criteria

3. Awareness and recognition

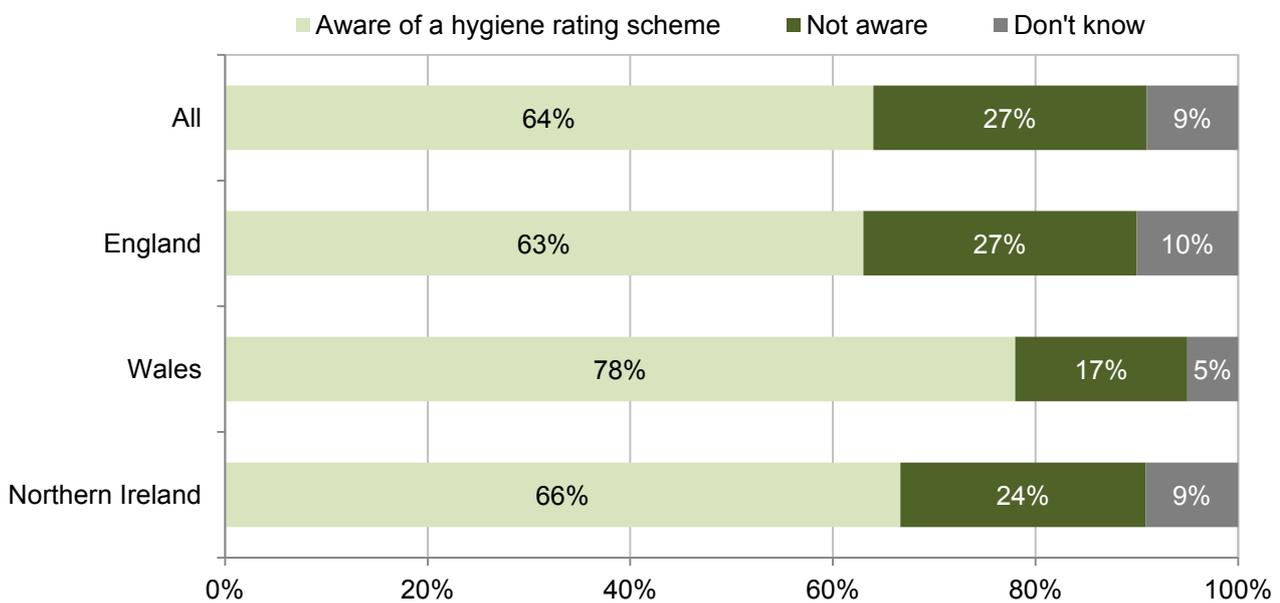
3.1 Awareness

One aim of consumer access to food hygiene ratings is that they can make informed decisions about where they eat out or purchase food. The following questions aim to monitor the extent to which consumers are aware of the FHRS and have access to ratings.

Respondents were initially asked whether they had seen or heard of any rating schemes that provide information on hygiene standards of places they eat out at or purchase food. This question did not make any explicit reference to the FHRS.

In total 64% of respondents reported having seen or heard of any such rating scheme (see [Figure 5](#)). Respondents in Wales were significantly more likely to have seen or heard of a rating scheme (78%) than respondents in Northern Ireland (66%) and England (63%).

Figure 5: Awareness of schemes and initiatives that provide information on hygiene standards



Base: All respondents

England - Unweighted base (1756), Weighted base (1757)

Wales - Unweighted base (216), Weighted base (104)

Northern Ireland - Unweighted base (128), Weighted base (68)

Differences between socio-demographic groups:

White respondents were *more likely* to report awareness of a hygiene rating scheme than Minority Ethnic respondents (66% compared with 49%).

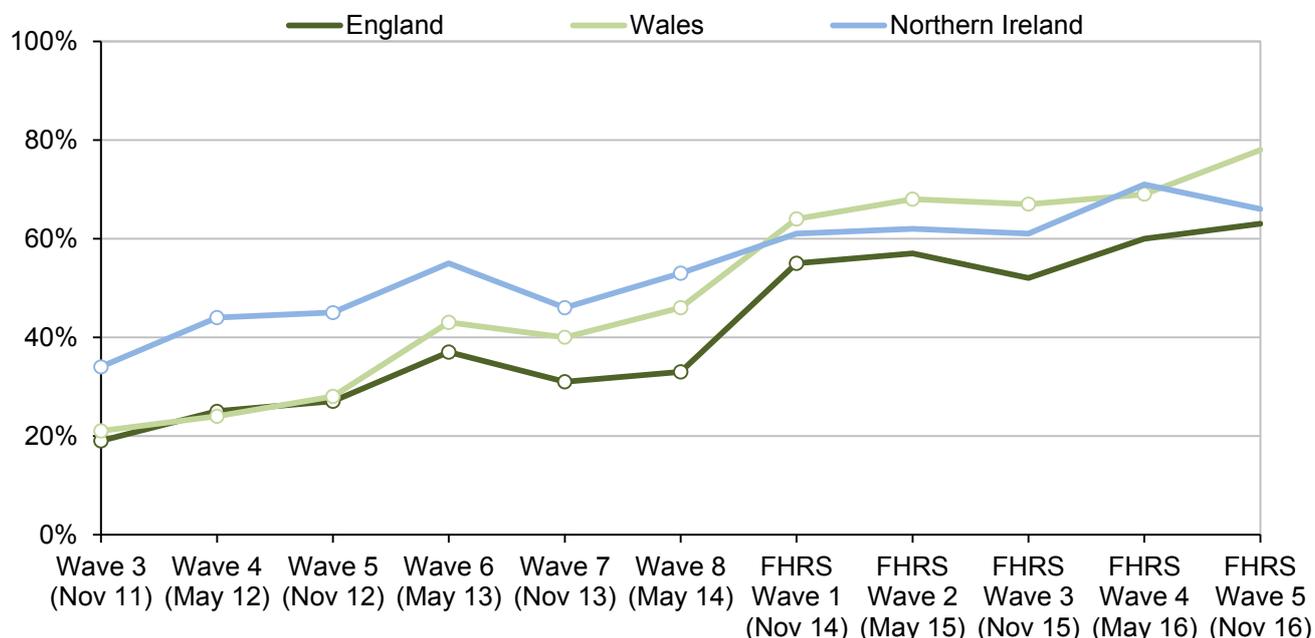
Respondents aged 75+ were significantly *less likely* to report awareness than any other age group of respondents (38% compared with 56%-74%).

Social grade DE respondents were the *least likely* to report awareness (51%). Both grades DE and C2 were significantly *less likely* than AB and C1 to report awareness of such a scheme (C2 – 63% compared to C1 – 70% & AB – 73%).

This question was also asked previously as part of the wider FSA Consumer Attitudes Tracker allowing for a comparison of any changes over a longer time period, as shown in [Figure 6](#).

There has been a significant increase in the proportion of respondents who report being aware in Wales (78%, up from 69% in Wave 4).

Figure 6: Changes in awareness of hygiene schemes and initiatives (England, Wales, and Northern Ireland)



Note: circles on the graph indicate where there are significant differences to the current wave.

Base: All respondents

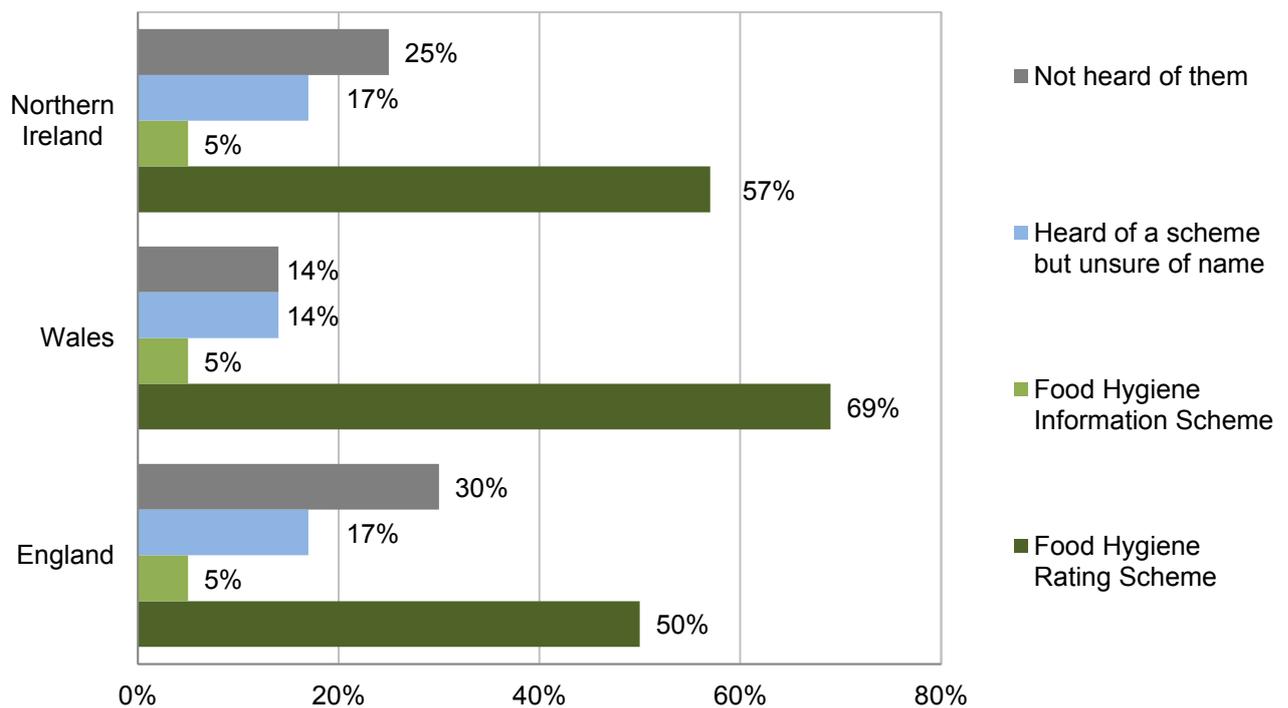
England – Unweighted base (1679-1778), Weighted base (1664-1776)

Wales – Unweighted base (171-218), Weighted base (80-104)

Northern Ireland – Unweighted base (110-128), Weighted base (60-68)

Respondents were next shown the names of the hygiene rating schemes operating in the UK - the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) and the Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS) operating in Scotland, and asked whether they had seen or heard of them. [Figure 7](#) provides a breakdown of the proportion of respondents who report having seen or heard of FHRS.

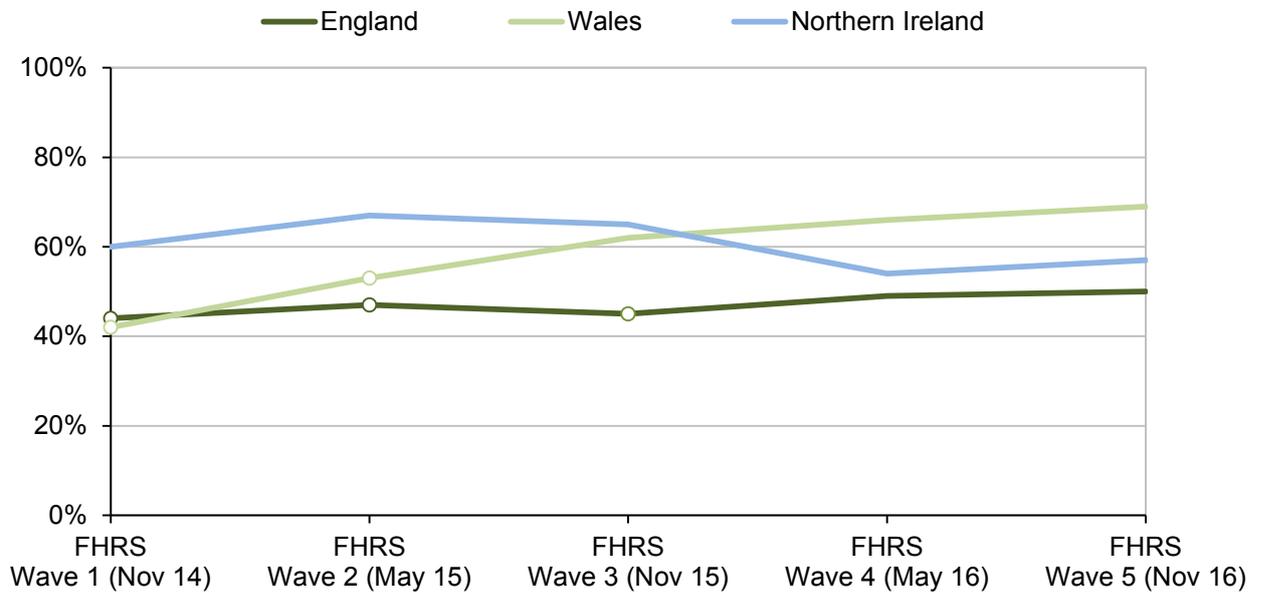
Figure 7: Reported awareness of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)



Base: All respondents
 England - Unweighted (1756), weighted base (1757)
 Wales - Unweighted (216), weighted base (104)
 Northern Ireland - Unweighted base (128), weighted base (68)

The proportion of respondents who reported having seen or heard of the FHRS was greater in Wales (69%) than in England or Northern Ireland (50% and 57% respectively). [Figure 8](#) illustrates how reported awareness has changed in each of the countries over the previous waves of the survey.

Figure 8: Reported awareness of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)



Note: circles on the graph indicate where there are significant differences to the current wave.

Base: All respondents

England - Unweighted (1679-1778), weighted (1664-1776)

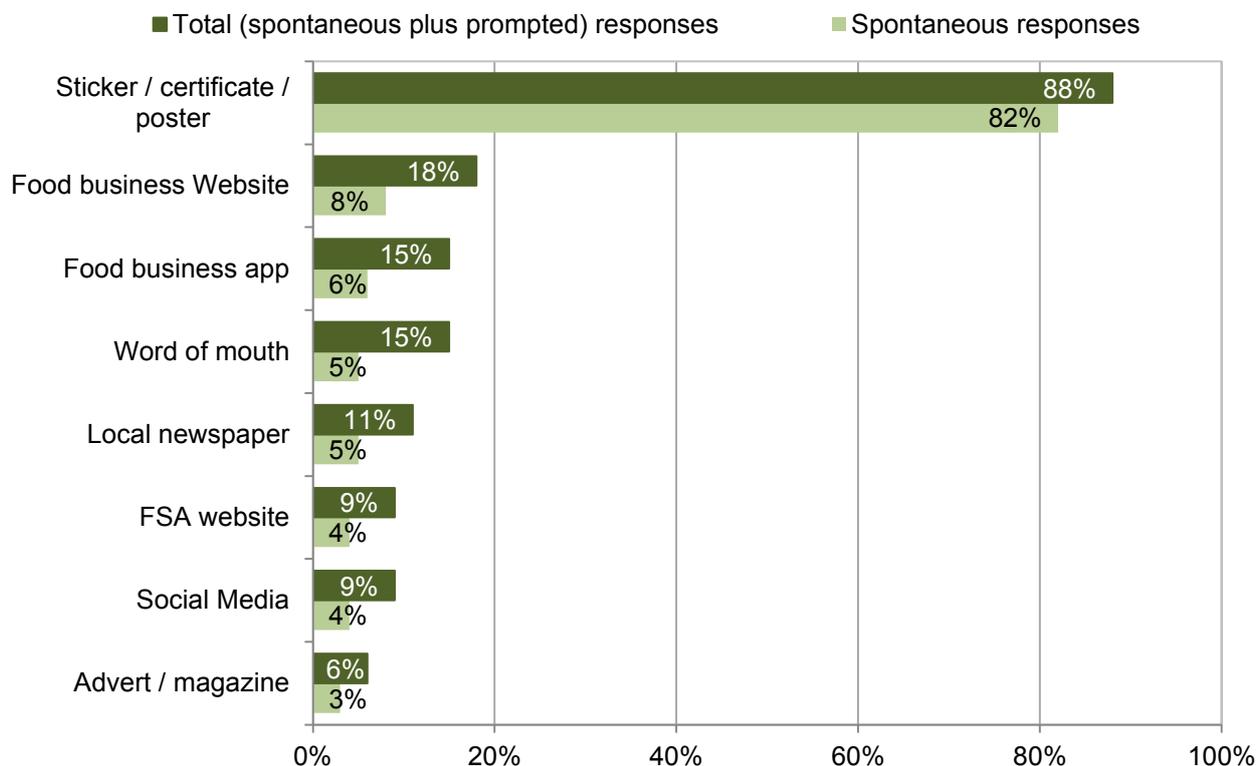
Wales - Unweighted (171-218), weighted (80-104)

Northern Ireland - Unweighted (110-128) weighted (60-68)

Respondents who reported being aware of the FHRS were next asked to recall where they remember seeing or hearing about the scheme. This year respondents were given the chance to answer spontaneously, as in previous waves, and were then prompted to give further answers.

The most commonly reported source of this information was a sticker, poster or certificate seen in the food business (82% provided this response spontaneously, this proportion rose to 88% when including prompted responses). [Figure 9](#) provides a list of other reported sources of this information. The overall pattern of responses is generally in line with that seen in previous waves.

Figure 9: Locations where consumers report having seen or heard about the scheme (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

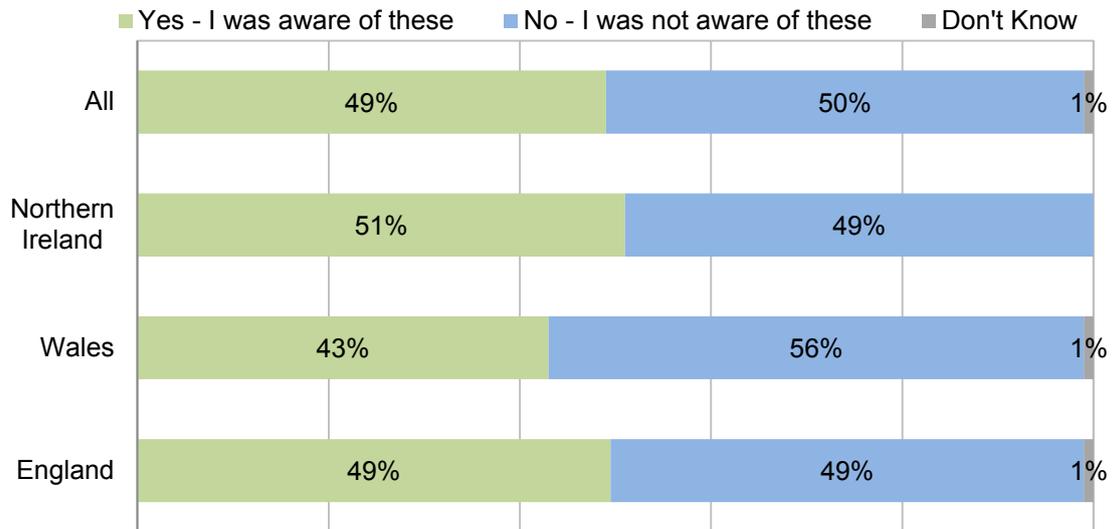


Base: All respondents aware of any scheme
 England - Unweighted (1416), Weighted (1457)
 Wales - Unweighted (199), Weighted (97)
 Northern Ireland - Unweighted (111), Weighted (59)

There were two further questions asked for the first time in this wave. Those respondents who reported having heard about the scheme online were then asked whether they were aware of the three component scores used to determine the overall rating; these cover how hygienically the food is handled, the condition of the structure of the buildings and how the business manages and records what it does to ensure food safety.

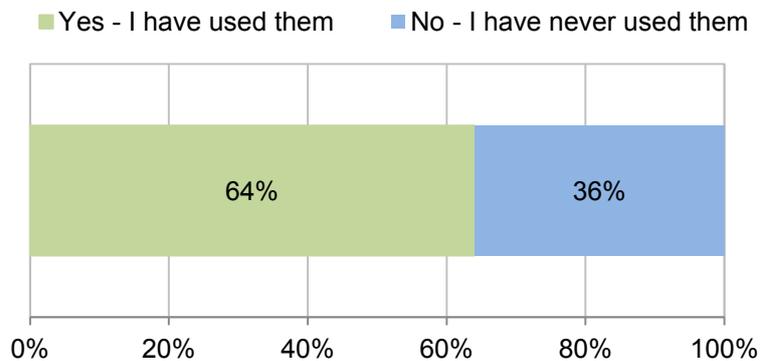
Those respondents who were aware of the component scores (49% across England, Wales & Northern Ireland) were then asked whether they used those scores or, whether knowledge of the component scores has ever affected the respondent's decision on where to buy food or drink. Of those aware of them, a majority have put them to use when making decisions on where to purchase food (64%).

Figure 10: Respondents awareness of three component scores considered in the FHRS rating



Base: All respondents who have seen FHRS online
 England – Unweighted (457), Weighted (487)
 Wales – Unweighted (46), Weighted (22)
 Northern Ireland – Unweighted (26), Weighted (15)

Figure 11: Whether respondents who are aware of the component scores have used them to make a decision concerning where to buy food or drink



Base: All respondents aware of the component scores
 England – Unweighted (226), Weighted (240)
 Wales – Unweighted (18), Weighted (10)
 Northern Ireland – Unweighted (13), Weighted (8)

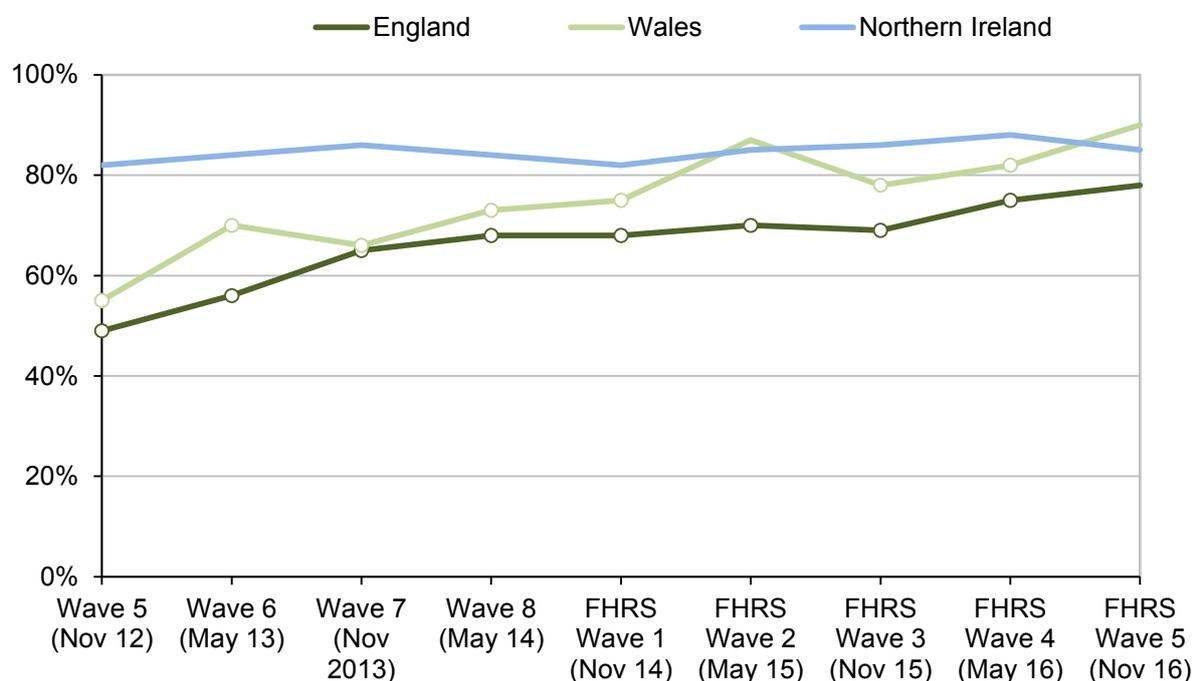
3.2 Recognition of FHRS branding

Respondents were next shown images of FHRS stickers. In total, 79% of respondents report having seen them before.

A larger proportion of respondents recalled having seen the FHRS stickers in Northern Ireland (85%) and Wales (90%) than in England (78%).

Changes in reported awareness of stickers over time are shown in [Figure 12](#). The figure found in England has risen significantly from Wave 4 (78%, up from 75%) and has also risen in Wales from Wave 4 (90%, up from 82%).

Figure 12: Changes in reported recognition of FHRS stickers over time



Note: circles on the graph indicate where there are significant differences to the current wave

Base: All respondents

England – Unweighted; (1679-1778), Weighted; (1664-1776)

Wales – Unweighted; (171-218), Weighted; (80-104)

Northern Ireland – Unweighted; (110-128), Weighted; (60-68)

Examples of stickers for the statutory scheme that has been operating in Wales since November 2013 were also shown to respondents. The stickers are similar to the stickers for the earlier voluntary scheme but also include the Welsh Government logo. The proportion of respondents reporting having seen these stickers significantly increased from Wave 4 (76%) to 85% in the current wave.

Differences between socio-demographic groups:

White respondents were significantly *more likely* to have seen an FHRS sticker than Minority Ethnic respondents (80% compared with 70%).

Social grade DE respondents were significantly *less likely* to report having seen an FHRS sticker (68%) than any other social grade (83% on average).

These differences were consistent with those found in the previous wave of the survey, with the exception that there is no evidence of the gender difference, seen in Wave 4, in the current wave.

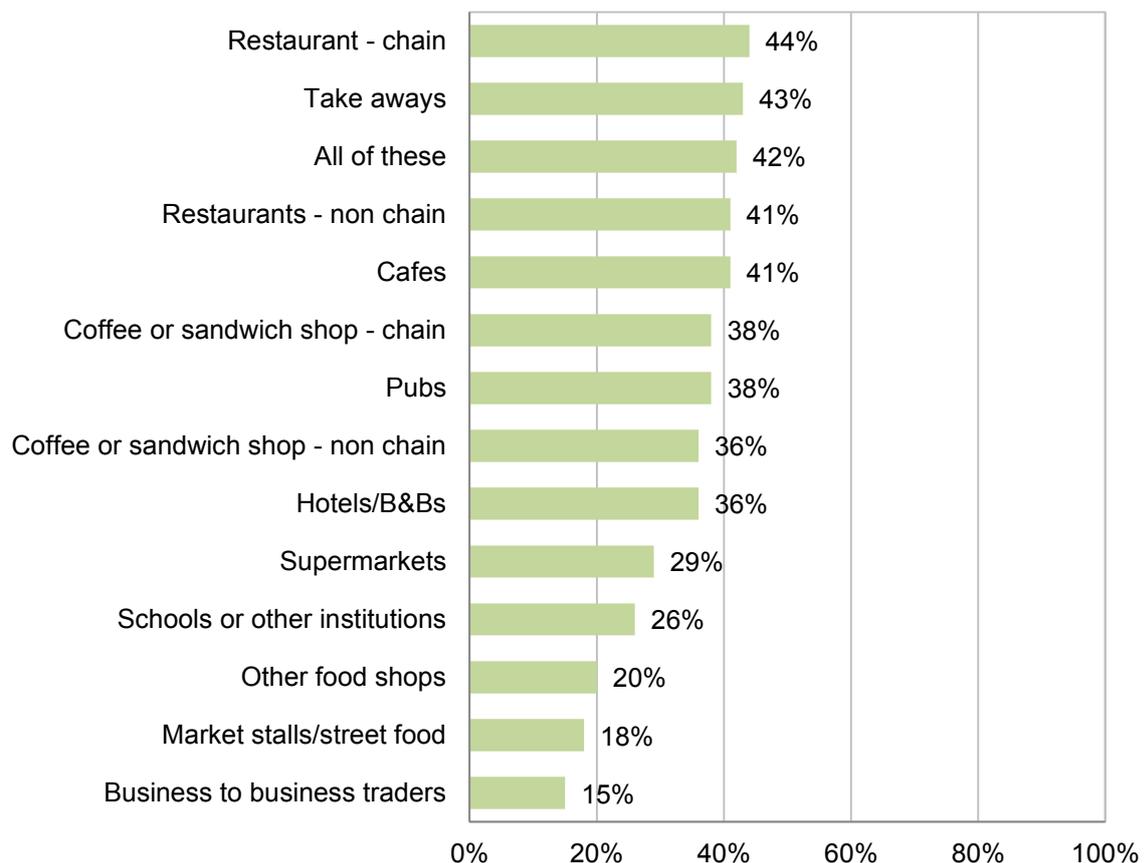
4. Consumer understanding of scheme

The FSA wishes to assess and monitor how well consumers understand the key elements of the scheme. Key elements include, what types of businesses are given a rating, who has overall responsibility for the scheme, and how the inspection process works. This information provides an indication as to how consumers actually understand and interpret the scheme, and whether any additional work is required to promote the scheme or clarify any misinterpretations.

4.1 Types of businesses given a rating

Respondents who report being aware of the FHRS were shown a list of food business types and asked which ones they believed were covered by the scheme. The full breakdown is provided in [Figure 13](#). There have been no significant changes on previous waves.

Figure 13: Business types considered to be covered by the FHRS



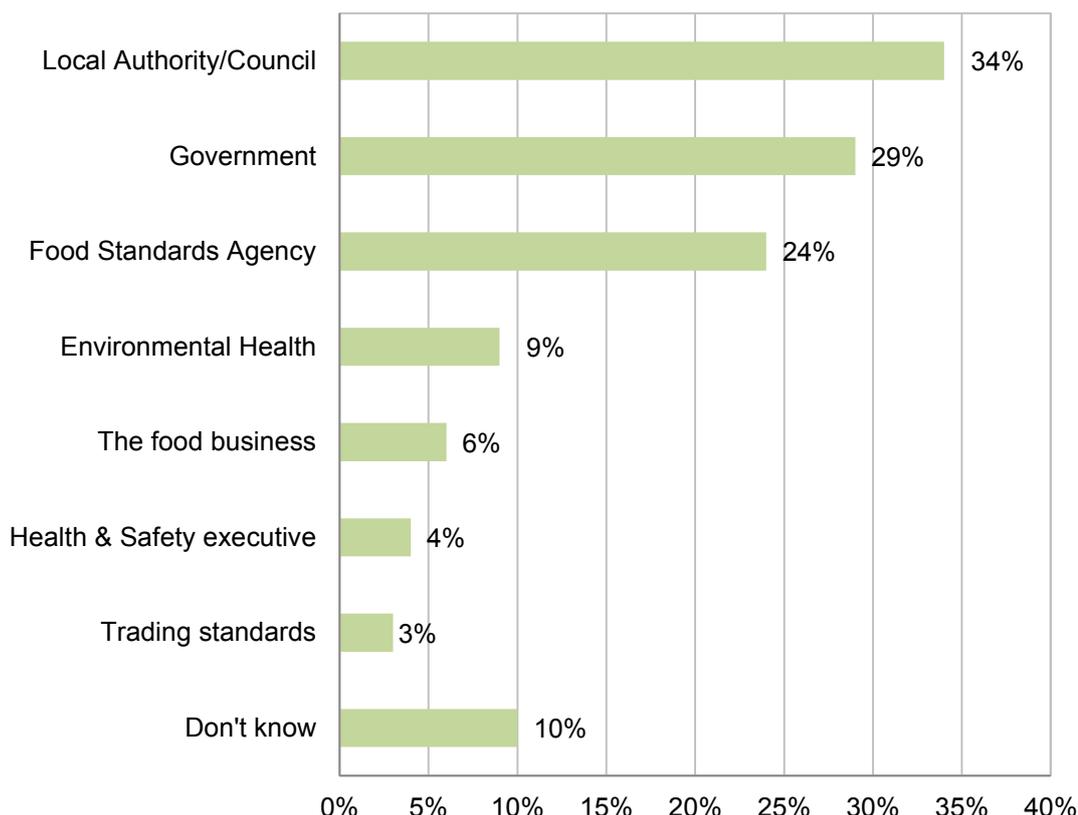
Base: All respondents aware of any scheme
England; Unweighted (1416); Weighted (1457)
Wales: Unweighted (199); Weighted (97)
Northern Ireland: Unweighted (111); Weighted (59)

4.2 Scheme responsibility

Respondents were subsequently asked who they thought held overall responsibility for the scheme.

Please see [Figure 14](#) for a summary of responses. The most common response continued to be the local authority/council (34%). There have been no significant changes over time in any of the responses.

Figure 14: Reported organisations responsible for the FHRS



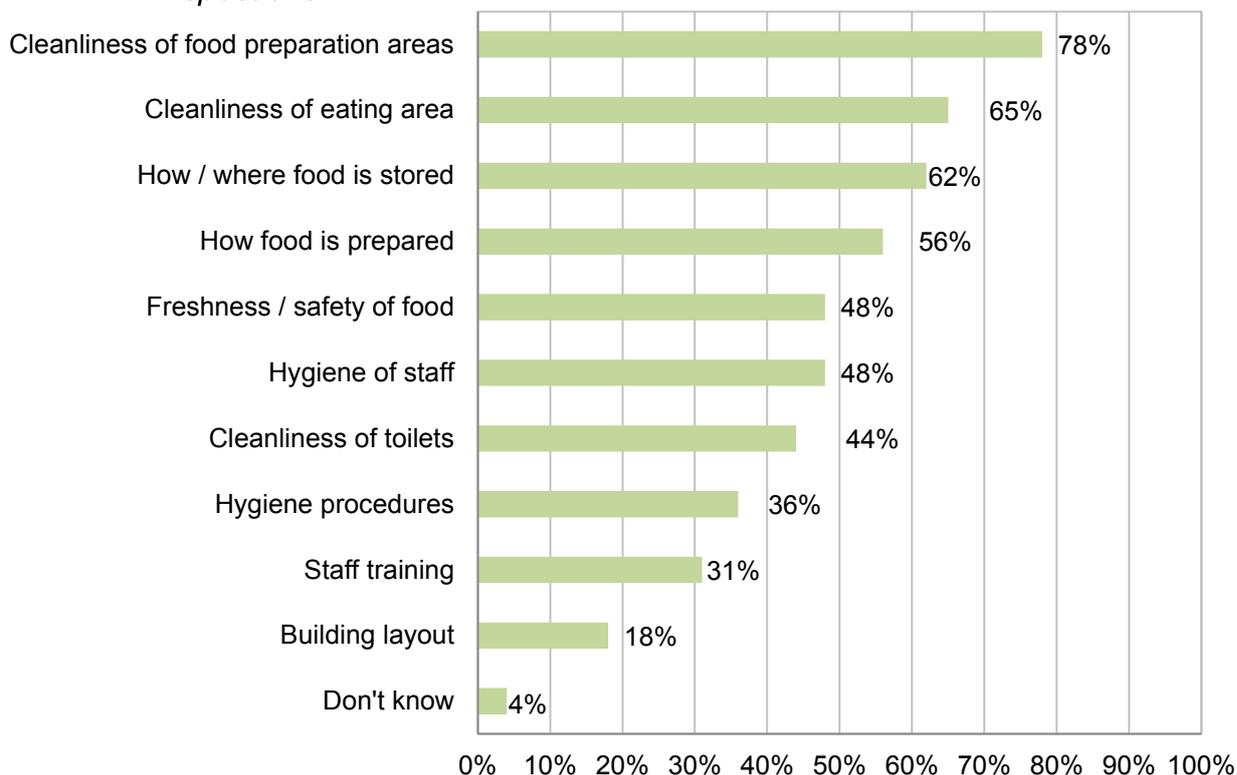
Base: All respondents aware of any scheme
England; Unweighted (1416); Weighted (1457)
Wales: Unweighted (199); Weighted (97)
Northern Ireland: Unweighted (111); Weighted (59)

4.3 Inspection process

Respondents were then asked to consider what criteria they thought are assessed during food hygiene inspections of businesses. Responses varied, but overall the most commonly mentioned is the „cleanliness of the food preparation and cooking area“ (78%). This was also the most frequent response in all previous waves.

[Figure 15](#) provides a full breakdown of the other criteria mentioned.

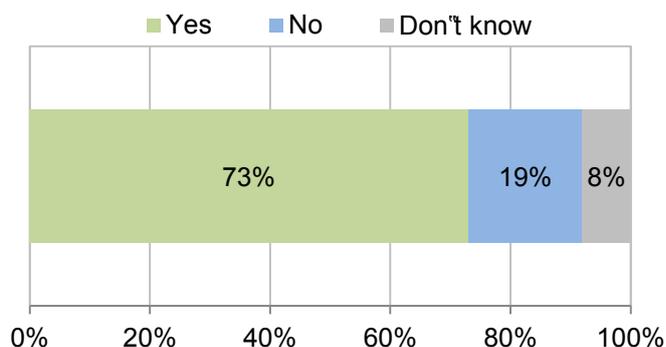
Figure 15: Criteria respondents think are assessed during food hygiene inspections



Base: All respondents
 England; Unweighted (1757); Weighted (1756)
 Wales: Unweighted (216); Weighted (104)
 Northern Ireland: Unweighted (128); Weighted (68)

A further question was asked for the first time in Wave 5, this was regarding whether respondents thought that the inspection should consider food standards issues such as allergens, labelling and composition. The majority of respondents (73%) thought that they should be considered. There were no differences in the distribution of responses between countries.

Figure 16: Respondents opinions on whether food standards issues should be considered during inspections



Base: All respondents
 England – Unweighted (1756), Weighted (1757)
 Wales – Unweighted (216), Weighted (104)
 Northern Ireland – Unweighted (128), Weighted (68)

Differences between socio-demographic groups:

White respondents were significantly *more likely* to expect hygiene inspections to take into account food standards issues (74%) compared to Minority Ethnic respondents (65%).

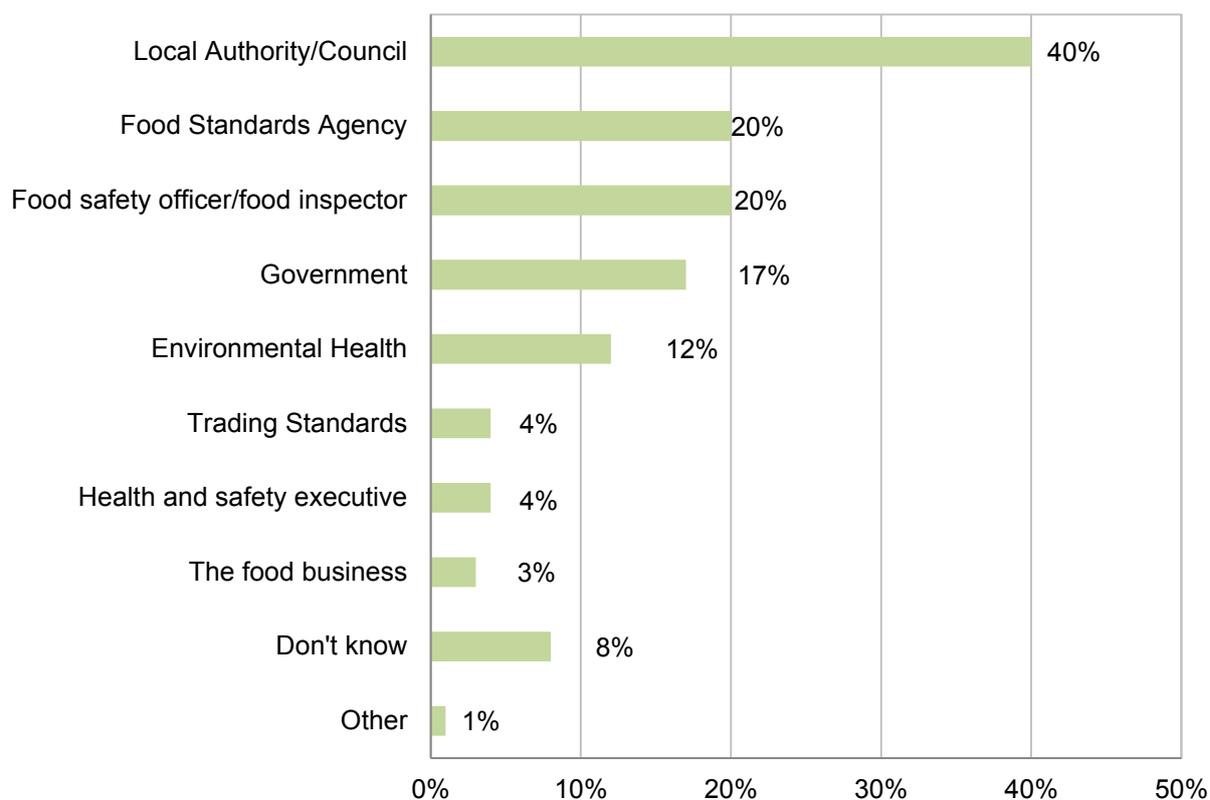
Those in a **one person household** were significantly *less likely* to expect these issues to be covered (65%) than those in larger households (75% on average).

4.4 Inspection responsibility

Next, respondents were asked who they believe is responsible for carrying out hygiene inspections.

The three most commonly reported answers were the Local Authority/Council (40%), followed by the Food safety officer/inspector and the Food Standards Agency (both 20%). These responses were also the most common responses in Waves 3 and 4. [Figure 17](#) provides a full breakdown of responses.

Figure 17: Organisations considered responsible for the inspection process



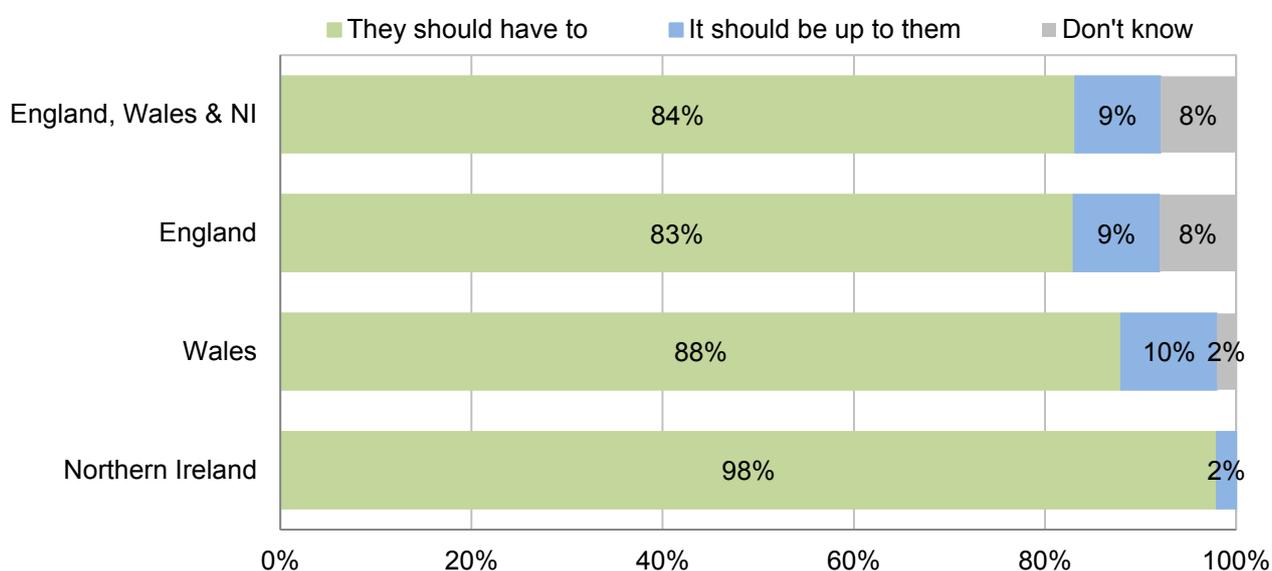
Base: All respondents
England: Unweighted (1756); Weighted (1757)
Wales: Unweighted (216); Weighted (104)
Northern Ireland: Unweighted (128); Weighted (68)

4.5 Views on business display

All respondents were asked to consider whether businesses should be legally required to display their ratings at their premises, or whether it should be up to them to decide.

Most respondents in England (83%), Wales (88%) continued to think they should be required to display the rating, with a slightly higher figure found in Northern Ireland (98%) than in either other country. The overall figure was 84% (see [Figure 18](#) for a breakdown).

Figure 18: Proportion of respondents who think businesses should have to display their rating



Base: All respondents

England - Weighted base (1757), Unweighted base (1756)

Wales - Weighted base (104), Unweighted base (216)

Northern Ireland - Weighted base (68), Unweighted base (128)

Differences between socio-demographic groups:

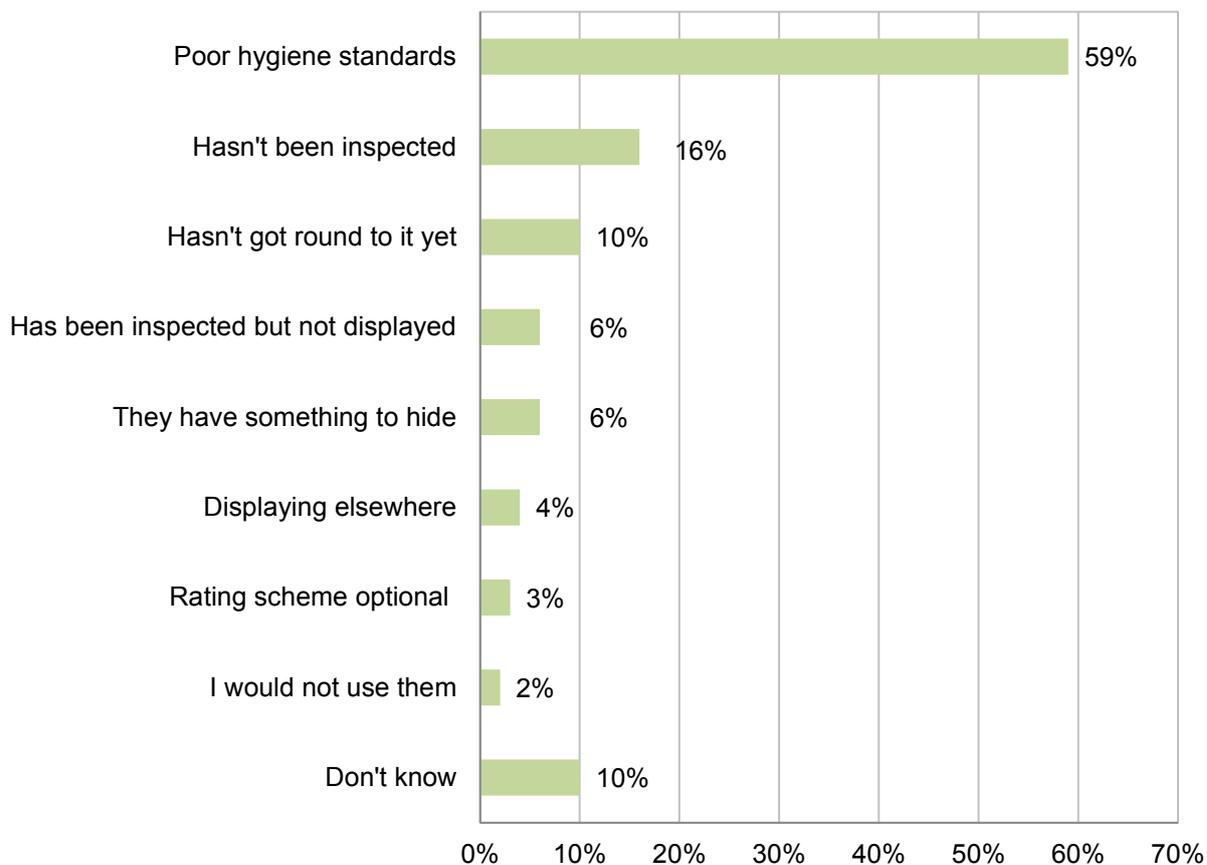
Social grade AB respondents were significantly *more likely* to think the rating should be displayed than any other social grade (87% compared with 81%-84%).

White respondents were slightly *more likely* than Minority Ethnic respondents to think that food businesses should be required to display ratings (85% compared with 73%).

Respondents were then asked what conclusions they might draw about a food business that was not displaying its FHRs sticker. A number of the most frequently mentioned responses are shown in [Figure 19](#).

The most common conclusion across all three countries continues to be related to “poor hygiene standards” (59%). This was also found in all previous waves to date. [However it is important to note that it is now a legal requirement for businesses in Wales and Northern Ireland to display their FHRs stickers prominently.]

Figure 19: Conclusions drawn when a business does not display its FHRs rating



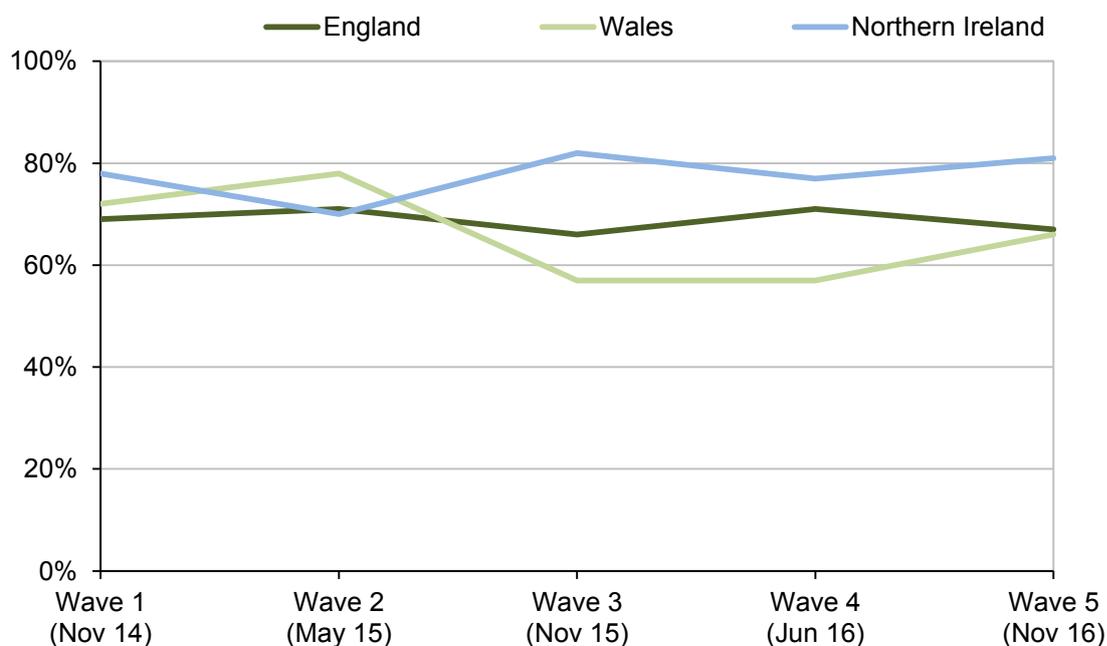
Base: All respondents aware of any scheme
 England: Unweighted (1756); Weighted (1757)
 Wales: Unweighted (216); Weighted (104)
 Northern Ireland: Unweighted (128); Weighted (68)

5. Use of food hygiene ratings

5.1 Use of ratings in decision making

Respondents are asked whether (hypothetically), they would ever decide to eat out or purchase food from somewhere based on the rating it had received as part of the FHRS. Respondents were given the choice of „yes – definitely“, „yes – maybe“, „no“, or „don’t know“ and [Figure 20](#) shows the proportion of respondents that claimed they would base a decision on the FHRS rating throughout all waves of the tracker.

Figure 20: The proportion of respondents by country that claimed they would base their decision on where to purchase food on its FHRS rating (Combined ‘Yes – definitely’ and ‘Yes – Maybe’)



Base: All respondents

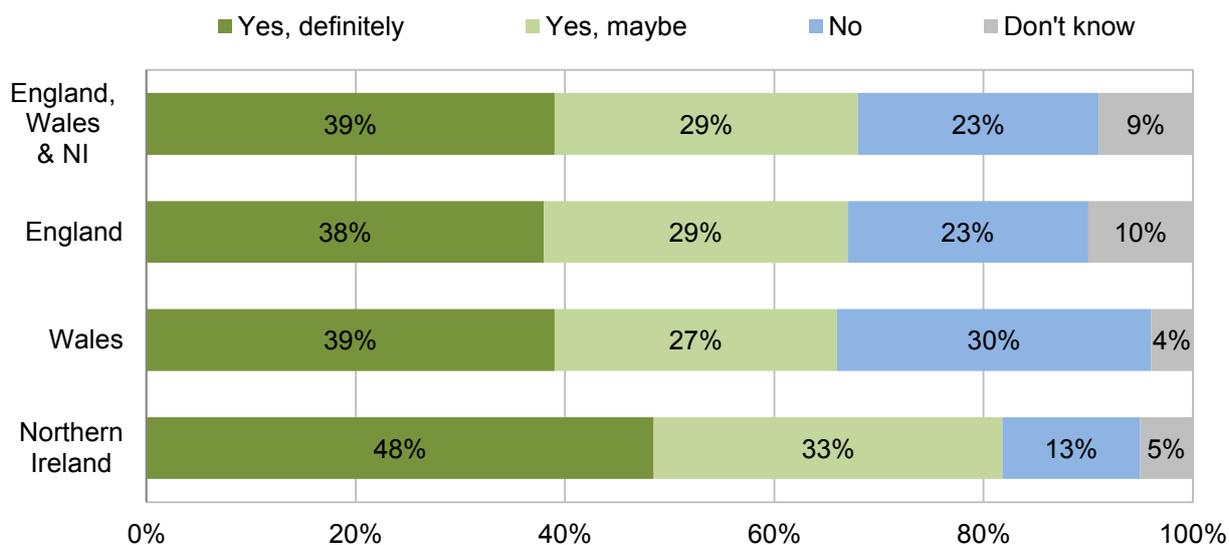
England – Unweighted; (1679-1778), Weighted; (1664-1776)

Wales – Unweighted; (171-218), Weighted; (80-104)

Northern Ireland – Unweighted; (110-128), Weighted; (60-68)

In the current wave, 68% of respondents reported either „yes-definitely“ (39%) or „yes-maybe“ (29%) across all three countries. See [Figure 21](#) for a breakdown of responses by each country.

Figure 21: Reported use of food hygiene ratings when deciding to eat out or purchase food



Base: All respondents

England - Unweighted base (1756), Weighted base (1757)

Wales - Unweighted base (216), Weighted base (104)

Northern Ireland - Unweighted base (128), Weighted base (68)

In England, the proportion of those responding „yes – definitely“ and „yes – maybe“ has decreased significantly from 71% in Wave 4 to 67% in the current wave. This is reflected in a decrease in the overall figures for England, Wales and NI, falling from 71% to 68%. Comparatively, those responding „yes – maybe“ in England has increased from 25% in Wave 4 to 29%.

Differences between socio-demographic groups:

Female respondents were slightly *more likely* than male respondents to report „yes – definitely“ (41% compared to 36%).

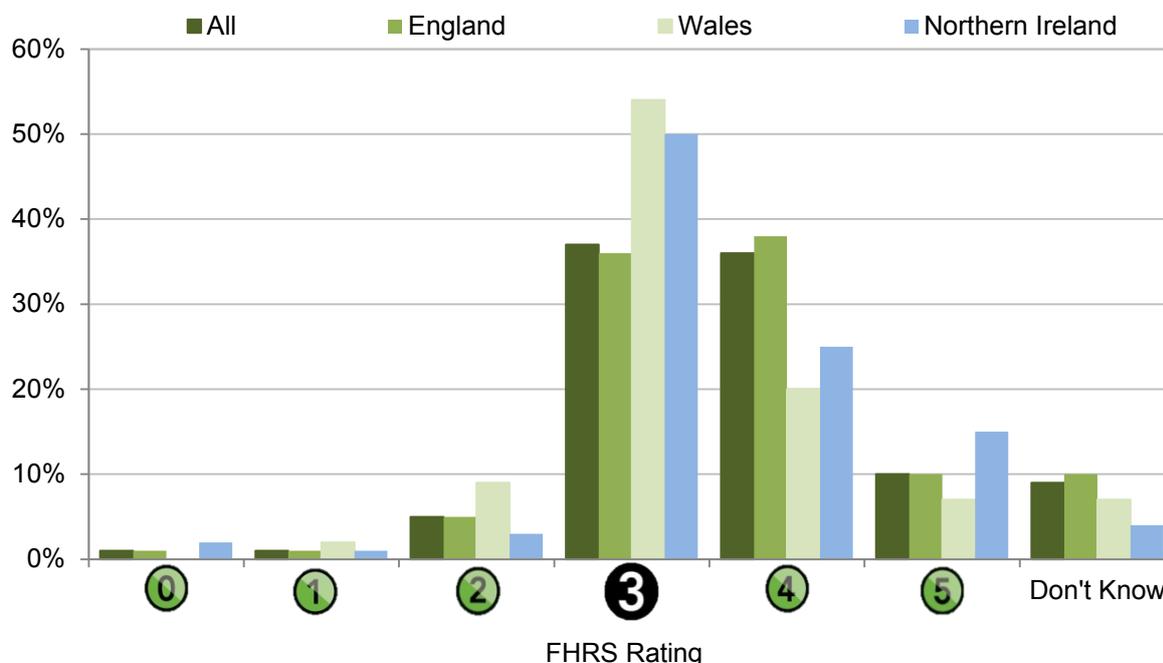
Social grades AB and C1 were *more likely* to report „yes – definitely“ than grades C2 and DE (averages of 43% compared to 34%).

5.2 Minimum acceptable rating

Respondents were then asked which rating on the 0 to 5 scale they would consider the minimum acceptable when eating or buying food.

Figure 22 shows the responses for each country. A rating of 3 was most frequently mentioned as the lowest acceptable in Wales and Northern Ireland (54% and 50% respectively) and 4 was the lowest acceptable in England (38%), with 36% for a 3 rating.

Figure 22: Lowest rating respondents report acceptable when buying food

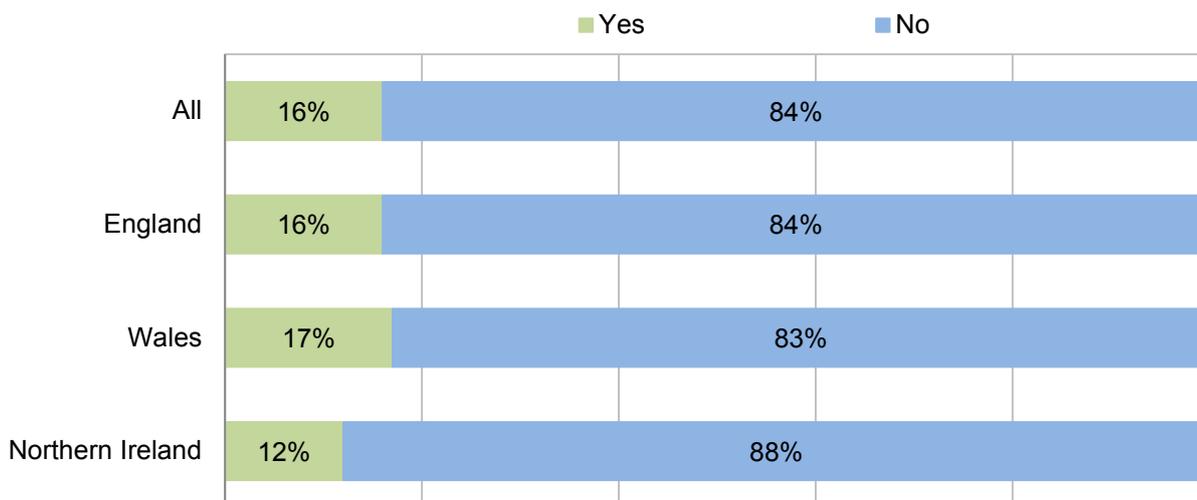


Base: All respondents
 England – Unweighted (1756), Weighted (1757)
 Wales – Unweighted (216), Weighted (104)
 Northern Ireland – Unweighted (128), Weighted (68)

In previous waves, all three countries have been in agreement that a rating of 3 was the lowest acceptable. However, in the current wave the most common response in England has risen to a rating of 4 with 38% opting for this compared to 36% for a 3 rating. The proportion opting for a 3 rating in England was significantly lower in this wave compared to all previous waves which lead to a rating of 4 being the most common response given.

Respondents were next asked to consider whether they would ever decide to buy food from a business with a lower rating than the one they identified in the previous question. As in previous waves, the majority of respondents state that they would not. Figure 23 provides a full breakdown of responses.

Figure 23: Proportion of respondents who report that they would consider buying food from a lower rated business



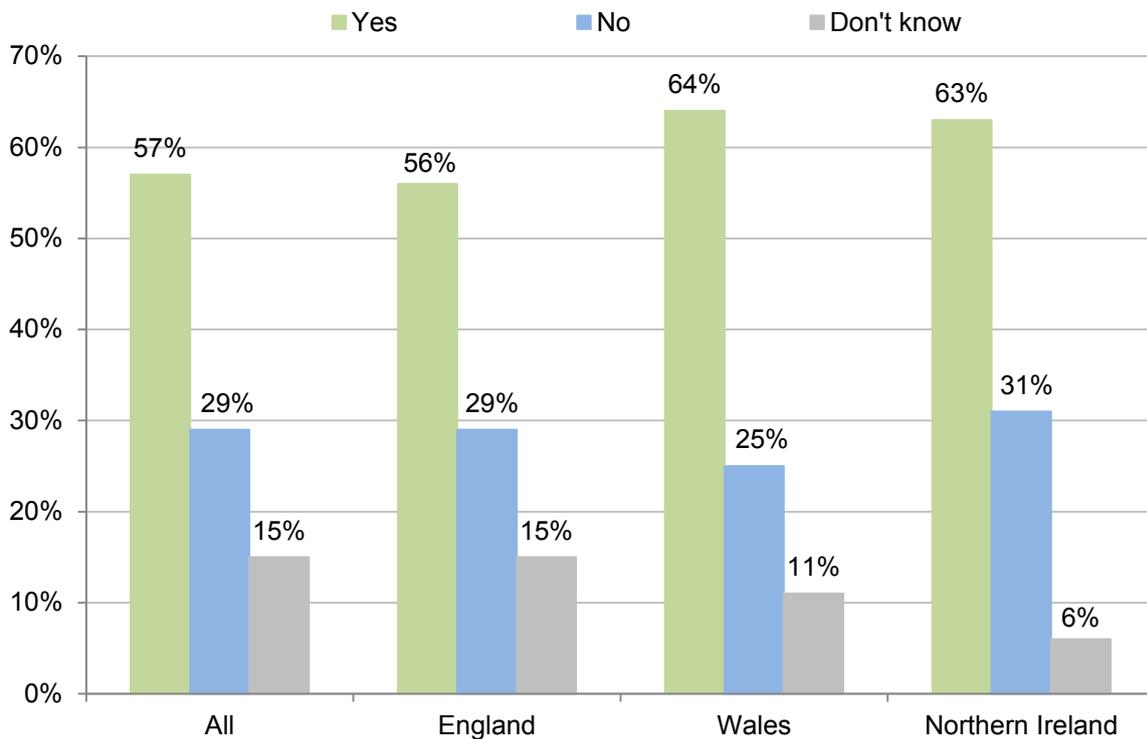
Base: All respondents who gave a lowest rating of 1 – 5
 England – Unweighted (1557), Weighted (1575)
 Wales – Unweighted (198), Weighted (96)
 Northern Ireland – Unweighted (121), Weighted (64)

Respondents who reported that they would consider buying food at a lower rated business were asked under what circumstances they would consider doing so.

The two most frequent responses were: „When there wasn’t much choice of places to go” (33%) or „when it was a place I already knew” (23%). Other frequently mentioned reasons included: „When I needed to pick something up quickly” (20%); „When I knew the food was good” (14%); „When I was out late at night” (12%) and, „When it was a place that was recommended to me” (10%). There have been no significant changes in the pattern of responses on previous waves.

Respondents were subsequently asked to consider whether there would be any particular occasions when they would only go to a food business with a higher rating than their minimum acceptable rating (this question was only asked of those who listed a 0 to 4 as their minimum acceptable rating). The findings are summarised in [Figure 24](#) and have not changed from previous waves.

Figure 24: Proportion of respondents who report circumstances where they would only go to a higher rated food business



Base: All respondents that gave a lowest acceptable rating 0 – 4
 England – Unweighted (1375), Weighted (1405)
 Wales – Unweighted (183), Weighted (89)
 Northern Ireland – Unweighted (105), Weighted (55)

The majority of respondents across all three countries reported that there were such occasions. Respondents were then asked to report on what the circumstances would be when they would only consider going to a food business with a higher rating than their minimum.

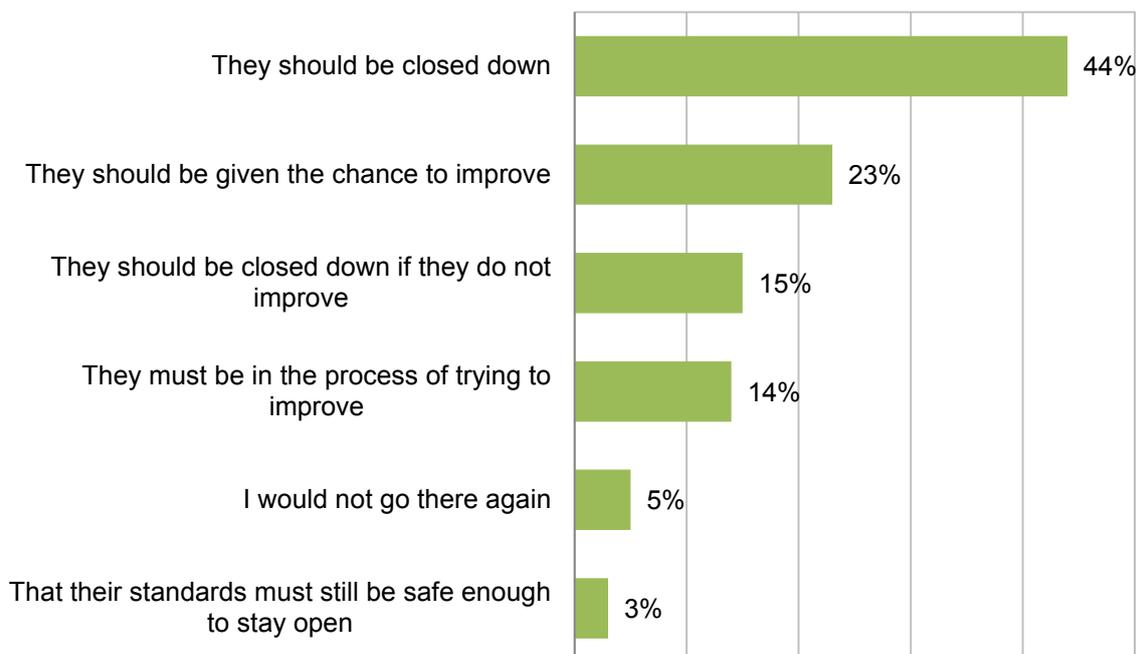
As in all waves to date, „a special occasion“ continues to be the most common reason for doing so (53%). Other reasons also include „When I am taking (young) children“ (21%); „when I am with particular people“ (18%); „when I or someone else had special health issues“ (12%) and „when I want to go somewhere expensive“ (11%).

6. Consumer attitudes towards the scheme

6.1 Views on low rated businesses

Respondents are also asked for their views about food businesses that receive a FHRs rating of either 0 or 1. [Figure 25](#) shows a breakdown of the common responses given across England, Wales and Northern Ireland combined.

Figure 25: Respondent views on food businesses rated 0 or 1



Base: All respondents aware of any scheme
England – Unweighted (1756), Weighted (1757)
Wales – Unweighted (216), Weighted (104)
Northern Ireland – Unweighted (128), Weighted (68)

In previous waves respondents in Northern Ireland were significantly more likely to report that a food business „should be closed down“ compared with respondents in England and Wales. However, in the current wave the proportion from Northern Ireland decreased and there was no longer a difference between Northern Ireland, Wales and England (53% compared to 42% and 44% respectively reporting the view that they should be closed down).

Respondents in Northern Ireland were more likely to respond that they „should be given a chance to improve“ than in Wave 4 (47%, up from 33%). This view is also more frequently reported in Northern Ireland than in England and Wales (22% and 20% respectively).

Differences between socio-demographic groups:

Those respondents in education were *less likely* to report that businesses should be closed down (31% compared to an average of 45% across all other respondents).

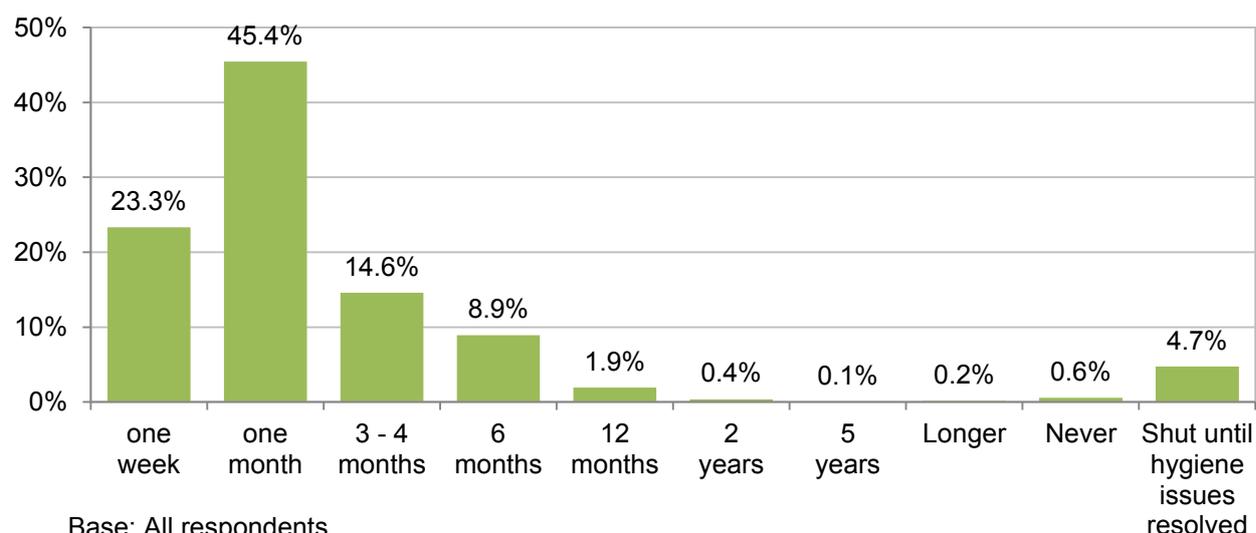
Minority Ethnic respondent are *more likely* to have the view that the business are trying to improve than White respondents (21% compared to 14%).

Those respondents with any children are *more likely* to take the view that the business should be given a chance to improve.

6.2 Views on inspection frequency

Respondents were subsequently asked how much time there should be between inspections. See [Figure 26](#) for a breakdown of responses.

Figure 26: Respondent views on inspection frequency



Base: All respondents
England – Unweighted (1756), Weighted (1757)
Wales – Unweighted (216), Weighted (104)
Northern Ireland – Unweighted (128), Weighted (68)

As in previous waves, respondents continue to report that there should be relatively short time periods between inspections, with the vast majority of responses falling in the range of one week to 12 months.

In the previous wave, respondents in Northern Ireland were more likely to report that a business should be „shut down until the issues are resolved“ (11%) compared with respondents in England (4%) and Wales (1%).

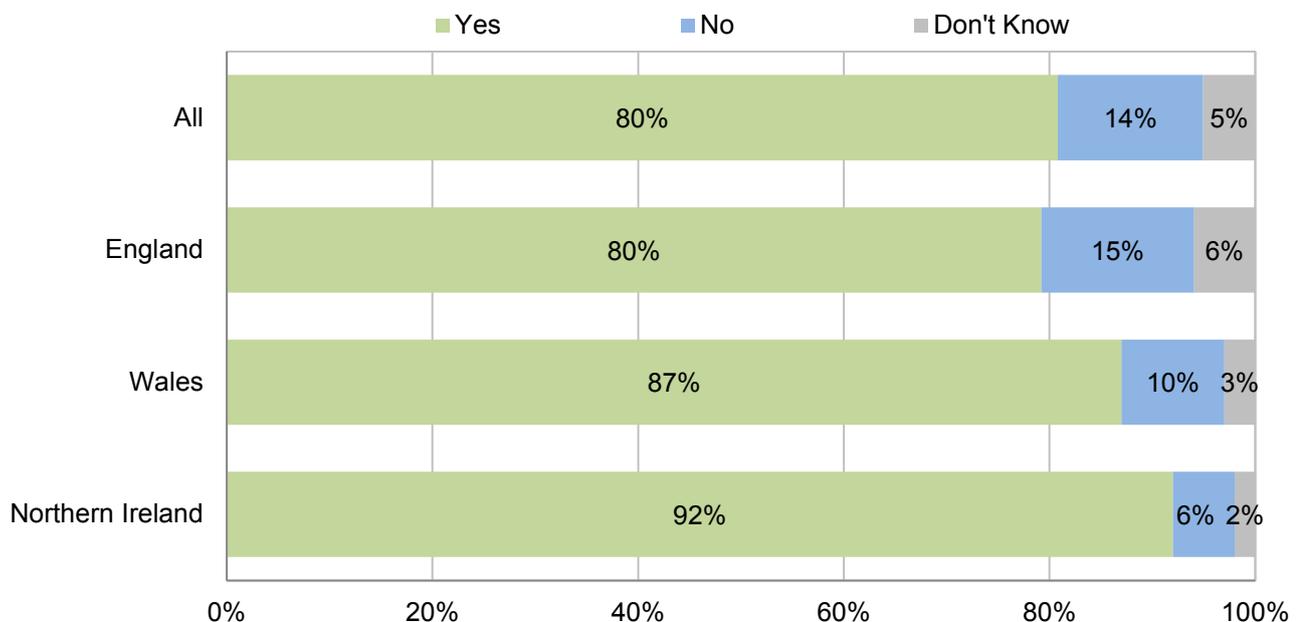
However, in the current wave no respondents in Northern Ireland gave this response, compared to 5% of people in England and 3% in Wales.

Those in Northern Ireland and England were significantly more likely to respond „one week“ (23%-30% compared to 16%) and those in England less likely to respond „6 months“ (8% compared to 19% and 20%).

6.3 Awareness of business display

Respondents were then asked whether they had ever seen a food business displaying its hygiene rating sticker in the last 12 months. See [Figure 27](#) for a breakdown of these responses and [Figure 28](#) for a breakdown on changes over waves to date.

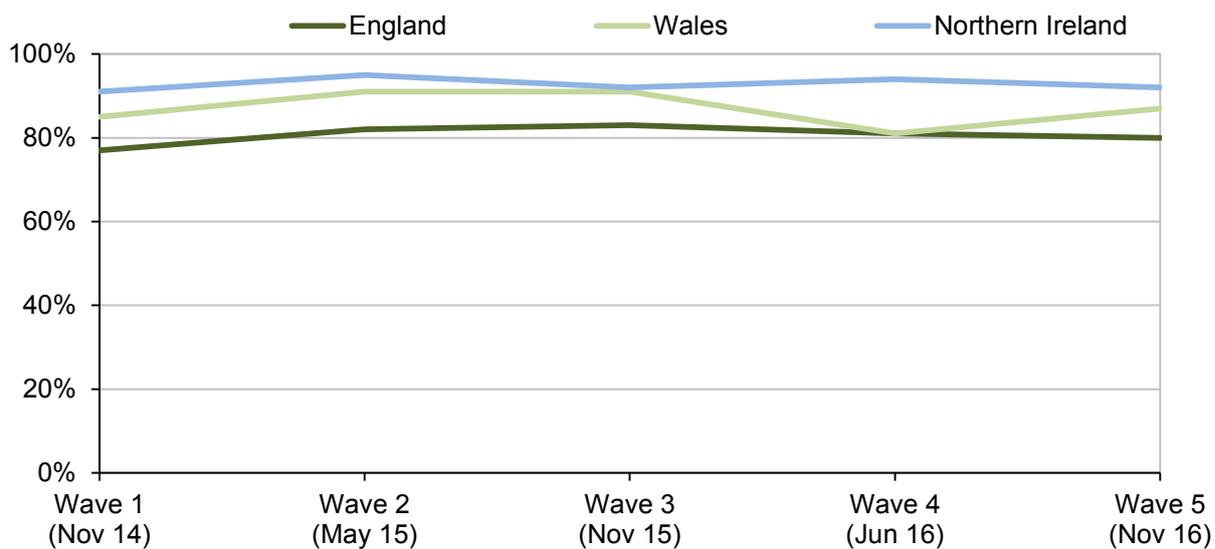
Figure 27: Proportion of respondents who report having seen a food business displaying a rating in the last 12 months



Base: All respondents aware of any scheme
 England – Unweighted (1416), Weighted (1457)
 Wales – Unweighted (199), Weighted (97)
 Northern Ireland – Unweighted (111), Weighted (59)

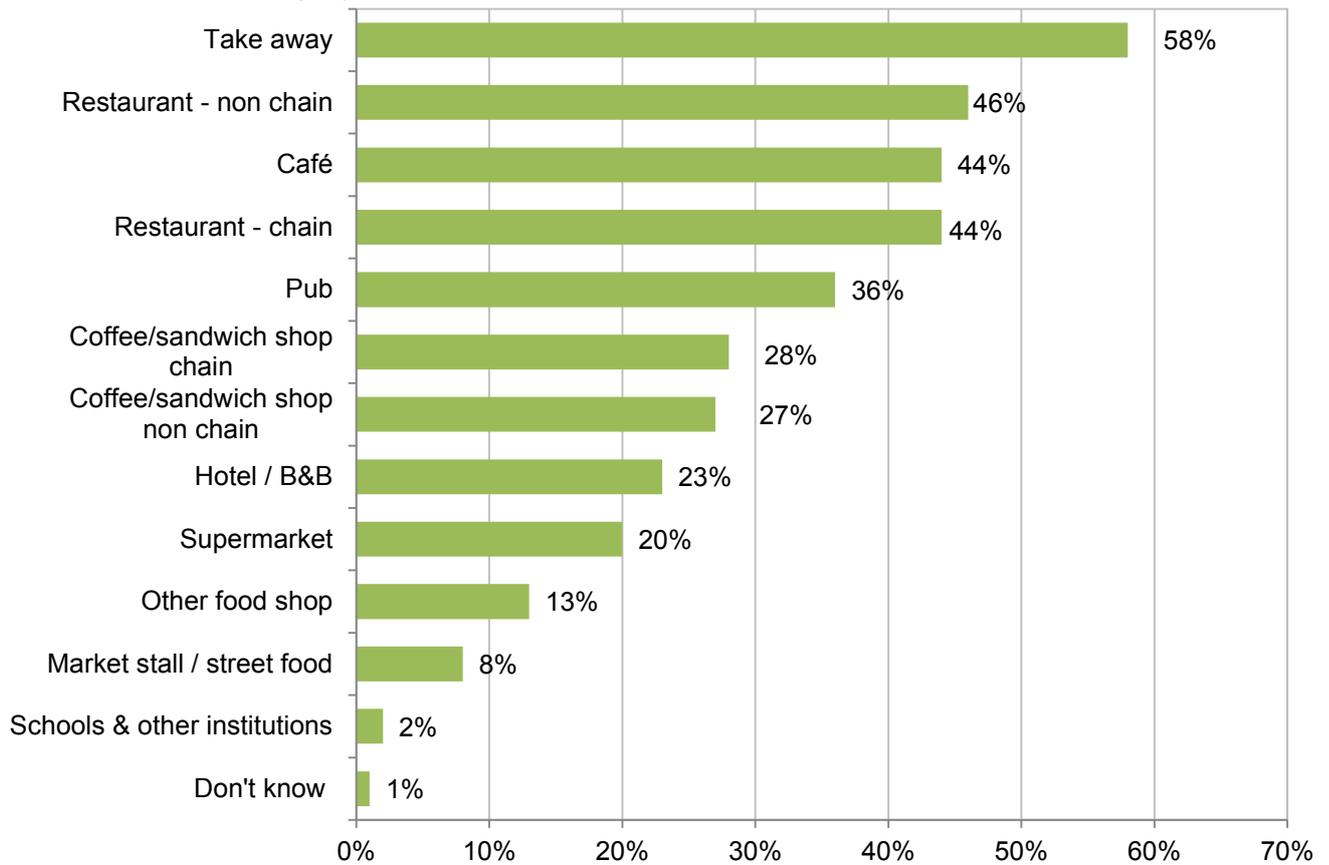
As in previous waves, the majority of respondents in England (80%), Wales (87%) and Northern Ireland (92%) reported that they had seen a business displaying their FHRS rating in the last 12 months.

Figure 28: Proportion of respondents who report having seen a food business displaying a rating in the last 12 months



Base: All respondents aware of any scheme
England – Unweighted (1242-1416), Weighted (1270-1457)
Wales – Unweighted (136-199), Weighted (72-97)
Northern Ireland – Unweighted (92-111), Weighted (52-61)

Figure 29: Types of businesses at which respondents report having seen a rating on display



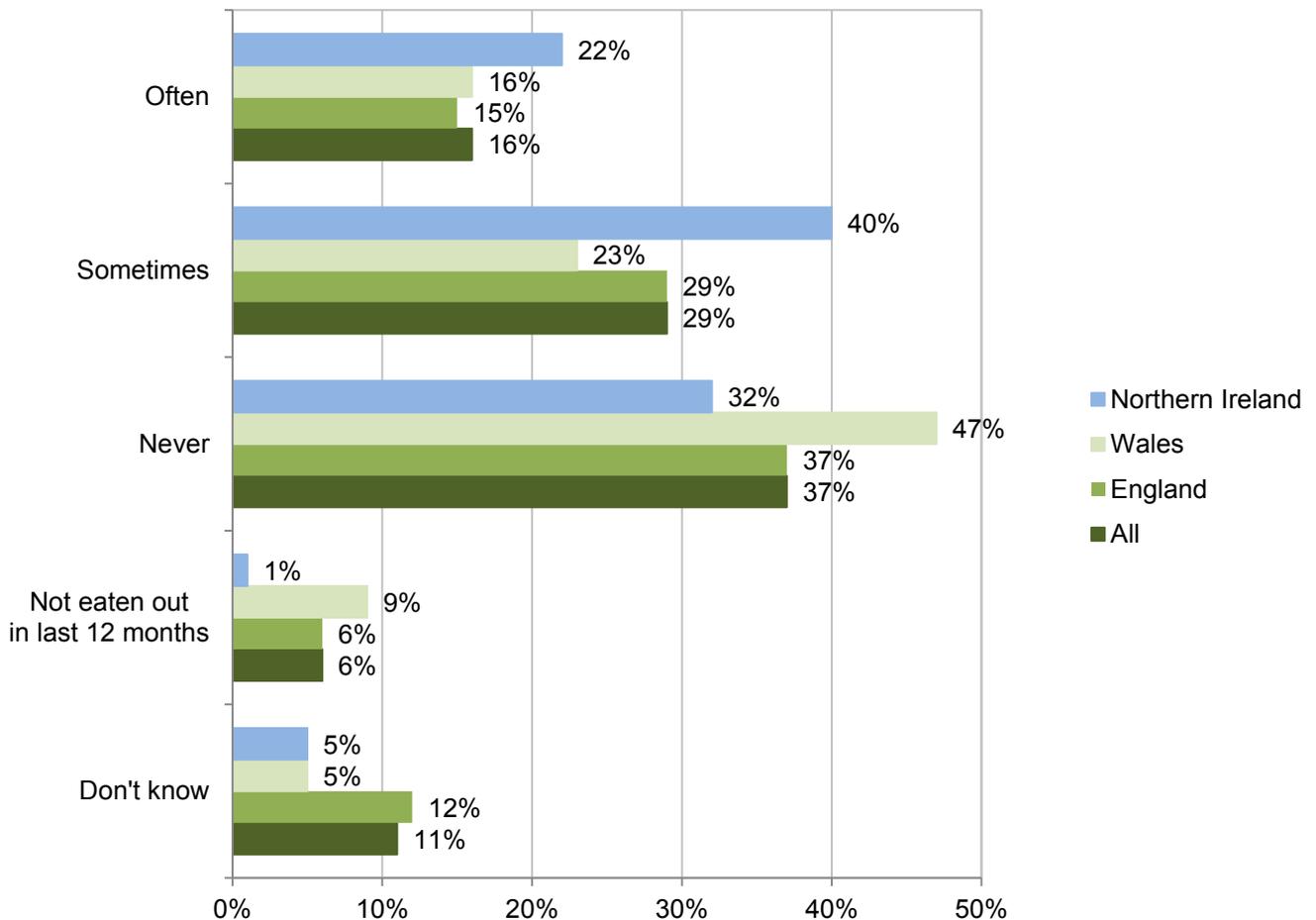
Base: All who have seen a food business displaying a rating in the last 12 months
 England – Unweighted (1111), Weighted (1160)
 Wales – Unweighted (174), Weighted (84)
 Northern Ireland – Unweighted (101), Weighted (54)

Respondents who reported having seen a business displaying a rating in the last 12 months were asked what type of business they had seen doing so. The responses given are summarised in [Figure 29](#) with a take away business being the most frequently reported type where respondents (58%) remembered seeing a rating displayed. This was also the most frequent business type reported in all previous waves of the tracker.

6.4 Frequency of checking FHRs ratings

Respondents were then asked how often they had checked a food business’ hygiene rating before deciding to eat out or purchase takeaway food, in the last 12 months. [Figure 30](#) shows responses in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

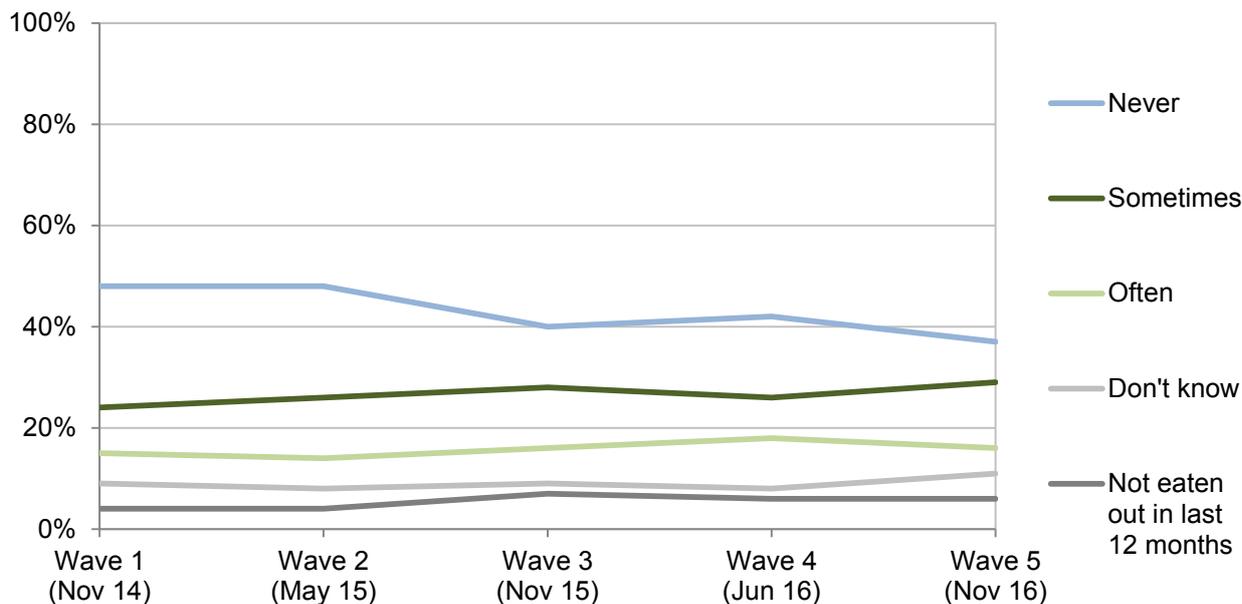
Figure 30: Frequency of checking FHRs ratings before deciding to eat out or purchase food



Base: All respondents aware of a scheme
 England – Unweighted (1416), Weighted (1457)
 Wales – Unweighted (199), Weighted (97)
 Northern Ireland – Unweighted (111), Weighted (59)

Respondents in Wales were more likely to report having „never“ checked the hygiene rating before deciding to eat somewhere than respondents in England and Northern Ireland (47% compared with 37% and 32% respectively). In Northern Ireland, responses of both „often“ and „sometimes“ have increased by 11% and 17% respectively from Wave 4, coinciding with their introduction of the statutory display scheme in October 2016. Therefore, in the current wave, ratings were reported to have been checked „sometimes“ more often in Northern Ireland than in England or Wales (40% compared to 29% and 23% respectively).

Figure 31: Changes over time in the frequency of checking FHRs ratings before deciding to eat out or purchase food



Note: circles on the graph indicate where there are significant differences to the current wave

Base: All respondents aware of any scheme

England - Unweighted (1242-1416), Weighted (1270-1457)

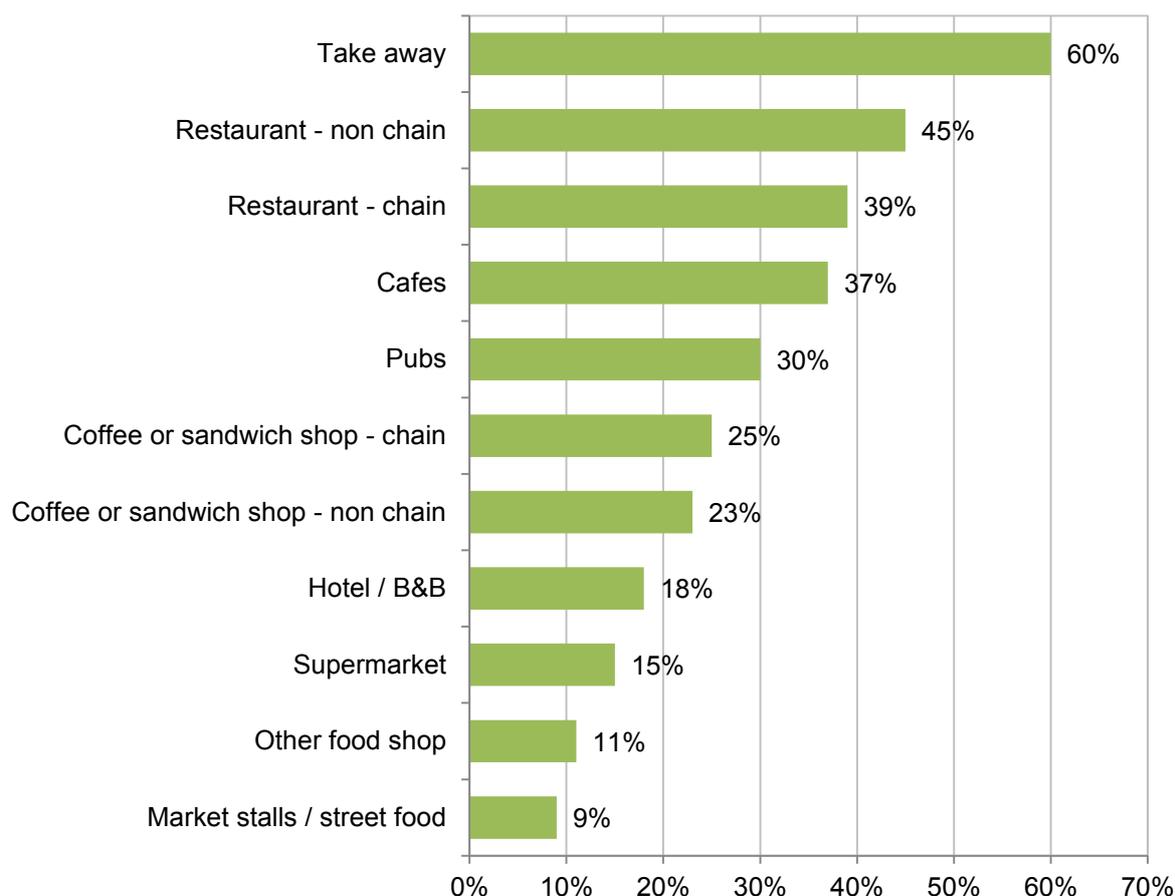
Wales – Unweighted (136-199), Weighted (72-97)

Northern Ireland – Unweighted (92-111), Weighted (52-61)

Looking at responses from the three countries combined, there have been no significant changes in the frequency that respondents check ratings when looking back over the previous waves.

As shown in [Figure 32](#), respondents who reported checking these ratings either often or sometimes reported doing so for takeaways (60%) most frequently, a finding that has been consistent over previous waves.

Figure 32: Business types for which respondents report checking the FHS rating before deciding to eat out

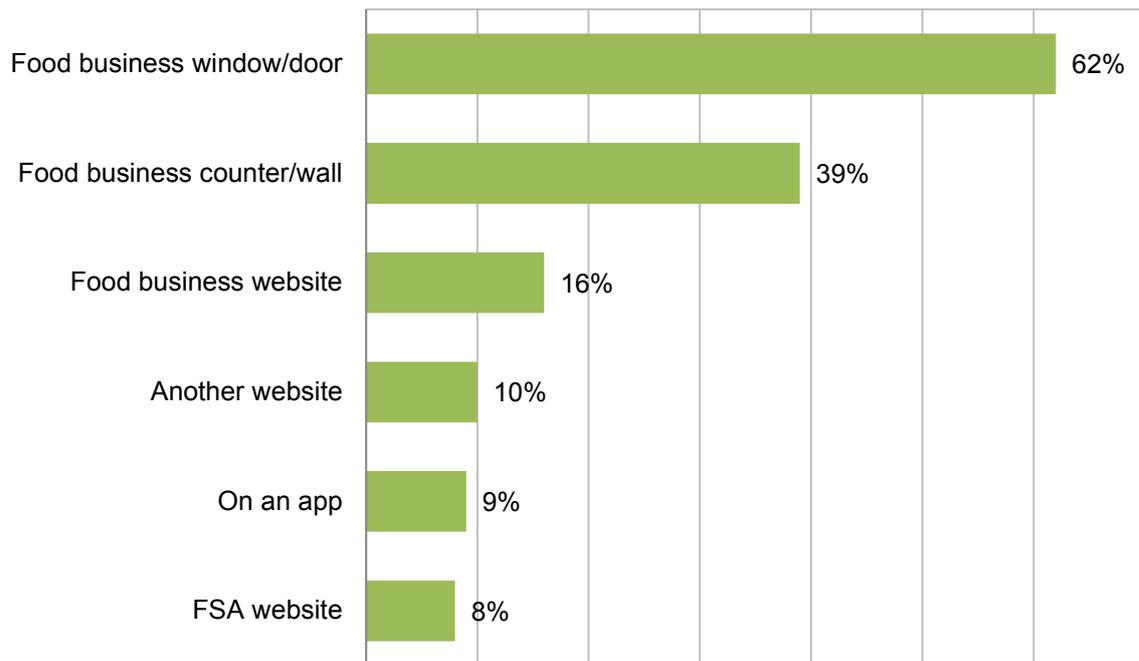


Base: All respondents who often or sometimes check out a business' food hygiene rating
 England – Unweighted (632), Weighted (651)
 Wales – Unweighted (78), Weighted (38)
 Northern Ireland – Unweighted (68), Weighted (37)

Those respondents who reported checking (either sometimes or often) a food business' hygiene rating before eating out or purchasing food were subsequently asked where they located this information.

Figure 33 provides a breakdown of the given responses. Overall, the food business window or door continued to be the most frequently reported location (62%), as in all previous waves to date. In England, significantly more respondents reported obtaining the rating from a food business website than in Wave 4 (17%, up from 12%) and from a third party app which uses open data on ratings published by the FSA. (9%, up from 4%).

Figure 33: Location where respondent reported obtaining rating

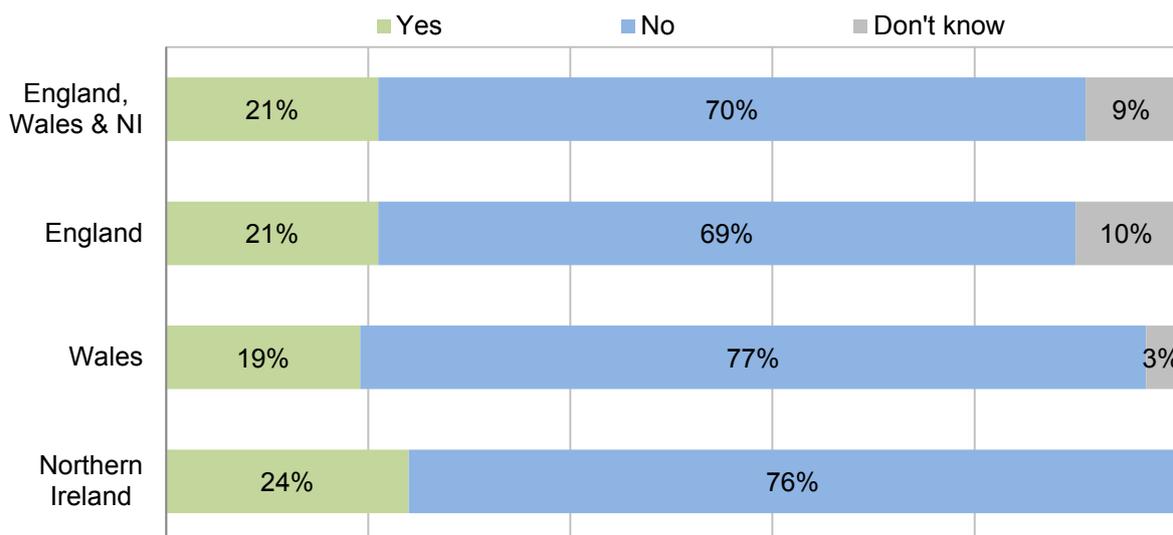


Base: All respondents who often or sometimes check out a business' food hygiene rating
England – Unweighted (632), Weighted (651)
Wales – Unweighted (78), Weighted (38)
Northern Ireland – Unweighted (68), Weighted (37)

6.5 Avoiding poor performing businesses

Respondents were asked whether they had decided not to eat out or purchase takeaway food from a business, or not to return there, because of an issue relating to its food hygiene in the past 12 months.

Figure 34: Proportion of respondents who report having avoided food businesses with poor hygiene

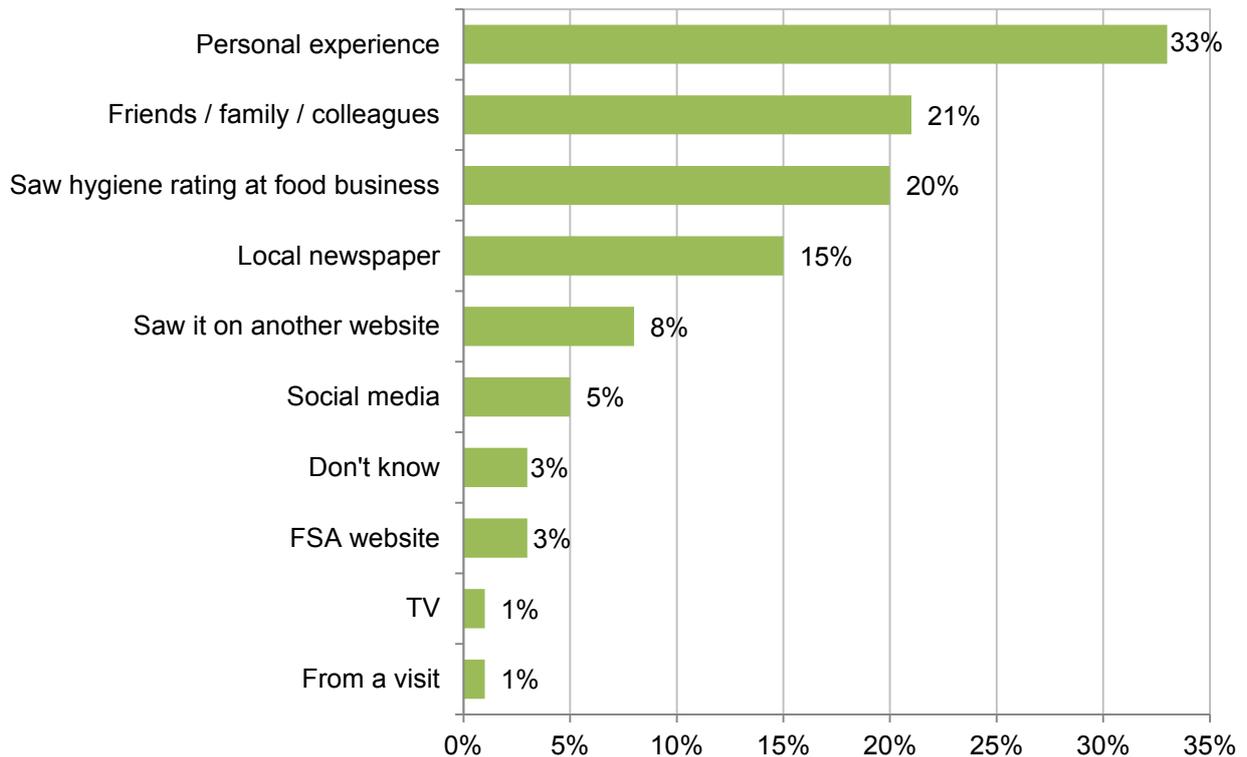


Base: All respondents aware of any scheme
 England – Unweighted (1416), Weighted (1457)
 Wales – Unweighted (199), Weighted (97)
 Northern Ireland – Unweighted (111), Weighted (59)

In this wave, there was a significant decrease in those who had avoided a food business due to poor hygiene, from 27% of respondents in Wave 4 to 21%. Driving this trend, in England the „yes“ responses decreased from 27% to 21% and in Wales, „no“ responses increased from 65% in Wave 4 to 77%.

All those who reported that they have before decided not to purchase food or not return to a business were then asked how they found out about the food hygiene issue. The most common sources of information concerning poor hygiene were reportedly from „personal experience“ (33%), and from „friends/family/colleagues“ (21%). Other commonly mentioned sources included „saw the hygiene rating at the food business“ (20%), and the „local newspaper“ (15%).

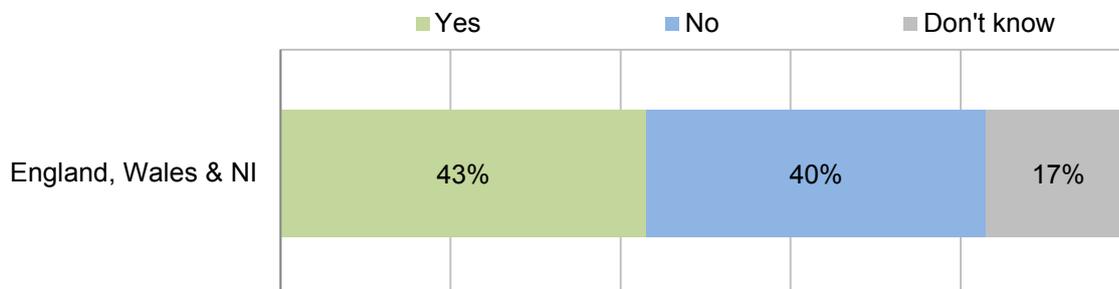
Figure 36: Reported sources of information on poor hygiene standards



Base: All who have decided not to eat out or get takeaway food, or not to return there
 England – Unweighted (288), Weighted (304)
 Wales – Unweighted (39), Weighted (19)
 Northern Ireland – Unweighted (26), Weighted (14)

When asked whether they knew what food hygiene rating the business had received, the responses were split – see [Figure 37](#).

Figure 37: Knowledge of the rating of a food business when choosing to avoid a food business due to a hygiene related issue



Base: All who did not mention the hygiene rating of the food business
 England – Unweighted (231), Weighted (243)
 Wales – Unweighted (30), Weighted (15)
 Northern Ireland – Unweighted (25), Weighted (14)

Finally, those respondents who said that they were aware of the hygiene rating of the food business were asked to identify what rating the business had received. Responses were varied - [Figure 38](#) provides a full breakdown of reported ratings.

Figure 38: Reported ratings of businesses that respondents chose to avoid due to a hygiene-related issue



Base: All who knew the rating of the food business
England – Unweighted (156), Weighted (163)
Wales – Unweighted (23), Weighted (12)
Northern Ireland – Unweighted (15), Weighted (8)

Annex A: Survey questionnaire

Q1. When you eat out or buy takeaway food - so in restaurants, cafes, pubs, coffee and sandwich shops, takeaways and so on – what do you take into account when deciding where to go? What else? (Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI)

- Location \ convenience
- Price
- Quality \ type of food
- Appearance of the place (layout \ design \ how busy it is \ ambiance \ atmosphere)
- Hygiene standards \ food safety (cleanliness of the place, appearance of the staff, being prepared, food preparation area etc)
- Recommendations (from friend \ family \ colleagues, customer reviews, etc)
- Own experience of the place
- Good service
- Food Hygiene Rating
- Other, namely...

Q2. Top three most important factors when deciding where to go to eat out or buy takeaway food. (Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI)

- [From options given above]

Q5. Have you seen or heard of any rating schemes that tell you about the hygiene in places where you eat or buy food? Please don't include customer reviews or rating schemes which focus on other things like the quality of the food, the customer service, and so on.

(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/Not sure

Q6. To check, have you seen or heard of either of these two rating schemes?

(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI)

- Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (run in England, Wales and Northern Ireland)
- Food Hygiene Information Scheme (run in Scotland)
- Heard of a scheme, but not sure of exact name
- No not heard of them

Q7. Whether seen food hygiene rating scheme sticker. Have you ever seen this sticker before?

[Shown image of the FHRS sticker given to businesses]

(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI)

- Yes
- Yes – old Welsh stickers
- Yes – new Welsh stickers
- No

Q12. Whether seen other countries' food hygiene rating scheme sticker?

(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI)

- Yes
- Yes – old Welsh stickers
- Yes – new Welsh stickers
- No

Q15B. And have you seen the rating on any publicity materials in Wales? By publicity materials I mean materials such as food business flyers and menus.

(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI who are aware of any scheme)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q16. Where have you seen or heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme?
(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI aware of any scheme)
[Spontaneous answers]

Q16B. Prompted answers then given for Q16.
(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI aware of any scheme)

- A sticker/certificate/poster in a food business
- On the FSA's website
- On another website
- On social media
- On a food business app
- In the local newspaper
- In an advert or magazine article
- Word of mouth
- Other, namely...

Q16C. And when you have seen the Food Hygiene Ratings online were you aware of the additional information published on the compliance scores which make up the rating? These component scores cover how hygienically food is handled, cleanliness and condition of buildings and management of food safety etc.

(Base: All who have seen FHRS online)

- Yes – I was aware of these
- No – I was not aware of these
- Don't know

Q16D. And have you used any of these component scores? By this I mean have they ever effected your decision on where to eat or buy food or drink from?

(Base: If aware of component scores)

- Yes – I have used them
- No – I have never used them
- Don't know

Q17. Which of these food businesses do you think are covered by the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme?

(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI who are aware of any scheme)

- Restaurant chains
- Restaurants not part of a chain
- Cafes
- Take aways
- Coffee or sandwich shop chains
- Coffee or sandwich shops not part of a chain
- Pubs
- Hotels / B&Bs
- Supermarkets
- Schools and other institutions
- Market stalls / street food
- Other, namely...

Q18. Who is responsible for the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme?

(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI who are aware of any scheme)

- The local authority / council
- The Government
- The owner of the business
- The Food Standards Agency
- Environmental health
- Trading Standards
- Health and safety executive
- The Welsh Assembly
- Other, namely...

Q19. When a food business is inspected on its food hygiene, what do you think the inspection covers? What else?

(All Adults in England, Wales and NI)

- How \ where the food is stored
- How the food is prepared
- Freshness \ safety of the food
- Cleanliness of the food preparation and cooking areas
- Cleanliness of the eating area
- Hygiene of the staff
- Cleanliness of toilets and washrooms
- Staff training
- Certification \ paperwork
- Whether building \ layout is appropriate
- Other, namely...

Q19B. And do you expect hygiene inspections to also take into account food standard issues such as allergens, labelling and composition?

(Base: All adults in England, Wales and NI)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q20. Who do you think carries out these official inspections to check the level of hygiene in food businesses?

(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI)

- The local authority \ council
- Food safety officer \ food inspector
- The Government
- The restaurant chain
- The Food Standards Agency
- Trading Standards
- Environmental Health
- Health and Safety executive
- The Welsh Assembly
- Manager in the food business
- Other, namely...

Q21. Do you think that all food businesses should have to display their food hygiene rating, or should it be up to the business to decide whether to or not?

(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI)

- They should have to
- It should be up to them to decide
- Don't know

Q22. What would you assume about a food business that did not display their food hygiene rating scheme sticker or certificate for people to see at their premises? What else?

(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI)

- Poor hygiene standards
- Hasn't got round to it yet
- Hasn't been inspected
- Is displaying but elsewhere
- Has been inspected but not displayed sticker \ certificate
- Rating scheme optional and food business not taken part
- Other, namely...
- No answer
- Don't know

Q23. Would you ever make a decision whether or not to eat out or buy food from somewhere because of the rating it had in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme?

(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI)

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, maybe
- No
- Don't know

Q24. 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?

(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI)

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Don't know

Q25. Would you ever decide to buy food from a business with a lower rating?

(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI who gave a lowest acceptable rating (1-5))

- Yes
- No

Q27. When would that be? When else?

(Base: All who would buy food somewhere with a lower than acceptable rating)

- When there wasn't much choice of places to go
- When I needed to pick something up quickly
- When I was out late at night
- When I didn't have much money to spend \ wanted somewhere cheap
- When it was a place I already knew
- When it was a place that had been recommended to me
- When it was part of a chain I knew
- When I was taking food away rather than eating in
- When I knew the food was good
- When I was in an unfamiliar location (away with work, on holidays, etc.)
- Because I assume it is safe if it is still open \ running
- Other, namely...
- Don't know

Q28. Are there some occasions where you would only go to a food business with a rating higher than your lowest acceptable rating?

(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI who gave a lowest acceptable rating (0-4))

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q29. When would that be?

(Base: All who would on occasion only go to a food business with a higher rating)

- When it's a special occasion (birthday, anniversary, celebration, etc.)
- When I am taking (young) children
- When I am taking older people
- When I am with particular people \ family members
- When I or someone else had special health issues (illness, pregnancy, etc.)
- When I want to go somewhere expensive
- When it was part of a chain
- When I was in an unfamiliar location (away with work, on holiday, etc.)
- Other, namely...
- Don't know

Q30. What would you think about a food business that had a hygiene rating of 0 or 1?

(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI)

- That they should be closed down
- That they must be in the process of trying to improve
- That they should be given the chance to improve
- That they should be closed down if they don't improve
- That their standards must still be safe enough to stay open
- Other, namely...
- Don't know

Q31. If a food business is officially inspected and receives a rating of 2 or less for its food hygiene standards, how long do you think it should be before it is inspected again?

(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI)

- One week
- One month
- 3-4 months
- 6 months
- 12 months
- 2 years
- 5 years
- Longer
- Never
- Should be shut down until they have sorted out their hygiene issues

Q32. In the last 12 months, have you ever seen a food business displaying its hygiene rating sticker or certificate?

(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI who are aware of any scheme)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q33. What type of food businesses have you seen displaying the sticker or certificate?

(Base: All who have seen a food business display a rating sticker in the last 12 months)

- Restaurant chain
- Restaurant not part of a chain
- Café
- Takeaway
- Coffee or sandwich shop chain
- Coffee or sandwich shop not part of a chain
- Pub
- Hotel / B&B
- Supermarket
- Other food shop
- Market stall / street food
- Other, namely...

Q34. In the last 12 months, how often have you checked a food business' hygiene rating before deciding to eat out or buy takeaway food from there? Have you...

(Base: All Adults in England, Wales and NI who are aware of any scheme)

- Often
- Sometimes
- Or never look at the hygiene rating before deciding whether to eat out or buy takeaway from somewhere?
- Not eaten out or bought takeaway in the last 12 months
- Don't know

Q35. Looking at these food businesses, for which have you looked at the hygiene ratings before eating out or buying takeaway food from there?

(Base: All who often or sometimes check out a business's food hygiene rating)

- Restaurant chains
- Restaurants not part of a chain
- Cafes
- Takeaways
- Coffee or sandwich shop chains
- Coffee or sandwich shops not part of a chain
- Pubs
- Hotels \ B&Bs
- Market stalls \ street food
- Other, namely...

Q36. Where did you check these ratings? Where else?

(Base: All who often or sometimes check out a business's food hygiene rating)

- Food business window or door
- Food business counter or wall
- Food business website
- On the Food Standard Agency's website
- On another website
- On an app
- In a local newspaper
- Other, namely...
- Don't know

Q41. In the last 12 months, have you decided not to eat out or get takeaway from a food business, or not to return, there because of an issue about its food hygiene?

(Base: All adults in England, Wales and NI who are aware of any scheme)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q42. Where did you go to find about this hygiene issue?

(Base: All who have decided not to eat out or get takeaway food, or not to return there)

- Friends \ family \ colleagues told me
- I looked it up on the FSA website
- Saw it on another website
- Heard via social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.)
- Local newspaper
- Saw the hygiene rating at the food business
- Other, namely...
- Don't know

Q43. Can I just check, do you know what food hygiene rating that food business had?

(Base: All who did not mention the hygiene rating of the food business)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q44. What rating did it have?

(Base: All in England, Wales and NI who knew the rating of the food business)

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Don't know

Annex B: Occupational Groupings

Grade	Approximate percentage of population	General description	Retiree description
A	3	These are professional people, or are very senior in business or commerce or are top level civil servants	Retired people, previously grade A, and their widows
B	20	Middle management executives in large organisations, with appropriate qualifications Top management or owners of small business	Retired people, previously grade B, and their widows.
C1	28	Junior management owners of small establishments: and all others in non-manual Positions Jobs in this group have very varied responsibilities and educational needs	Retired people previously grade C1 and their widows.
C2	21	All skilled manual workers, and those manual workers with responsibility for other people	Retired people previously grade C2 with a pension from their job Widows if receiving pensions from their late husband's job
D	18	All semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, and apprentices and trainees to skilled workers	Retired people previously grade D with a pension from their job Widows if receiving pensions from their late husband's job
E	10	All those entirely dependent on the state long term, through sickness, unemployment, old age or other reasons. Those unemployed for a period exceeding 6 months (otherwise classify on previous occupation) Casual workers and those without a regular income Only households without a chief wage earner will be coded in this group	N/A