

The 2014

FOOD and YOU

Survey

Wales Bulletin
Executive Summary

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Executive summary

This summary presents the key findings from Wave 3 of the Food and You survey for Wales, commissioned by the Food Standards Agency (FSA or the Agency). The Food and You survey is used to collect information about reported behaviours, attitudes and knowledge relating to food safety issues. It provides data on people's reports of their food purchasing, storage, preparation, consumption and factors that may affect these, such as eating habits, influences on where respondents choose to eat out and experiences of food poisoning.

Wave 1 of the survey was carried out in 2010, Wave 2 in 2012 and Wave 3 in 2014.

Wave 3 consisted of 3,453 interviews with a representative sample of adults aged 16 and over across the UK, including 503 interviews in Wales, on which this report is based.

In addition to this executive summary, descriptive overviews of the key findings for Wales from Wave 3 have been published in four separate bulletins, one for each of the following main topics:

- Eating, cooking and shopping
- Food safety in the home
- Eating outside the home
- Experience of food poisoning and attitudes towards food safety and food production

Eating, cooking and shopping

Around two in three respondents (65%) reported that they cooked or prepared food for themselves every day. Women were more likely to report preparing food for themselves (78%) and others (64%) on a daily basis compared with men (51% and 26% respectively). Respondents aged 16-64 and 75 and over were less likely than those aged 65-74 to report cooking for themselves every day (63% and 59% compared with 80% respectively). Those aged 75 and over (44%) were more likely than younger respondents aged 16-74 (13%) to report never cooking for others.

The majority of respondents (74%) said that they did not have any specific dietary restrictions. Ten per cent reported being on a diet to lose weight, seven per cent reported avoiding certain foods for medical reasons and five per cent said that they avoided foods for other reasons, such as foods that did not agree with them. One per cent of respondents reported that they had a food allergy, and nine per cent of respondents reported living in a household in which someone had a food allergy (not necessarily clinically diagnosed).

Respondents were most likely to report having learnt to cook from a family member (72%) with 56% saying this was the main way they had learnt. Around three in ten (28%) reported that their cooking was mainly self-taught. There was greater variety in the main ways respondents reported having learned about food safety: 36%

reported learning about food safety from family and friends, 31% reported being self-taught, 13% did a course and 10% learnt at school.

While respondents were most likely to report currently finding information about food safety from family and friends (41%), food TV shows (33%) and product packaging (29%), they were most likely to say that, in the future, they would use internet search engines to find information on food safety (reported by 37% of respondents). The proportion using internet search engines at present (17%) was similar to Wave 2 (14%). The proportion of respondents saying they would use food magazines in the future for finding information about food safety (12%) was lower than at Wave 2 (26%) and this was also the case for reported current use of food magazines which was lower at Wave 3 than at Wave 2 (19% compared with 31%).

Around six in ten respondents (63%) said their household did a 'main' food shop on a weekly basis and 92% said large supermarkets were used for their household's main shopping trip. Around a quarter (27%) relied solely on large supermarkets for their household's food shopping.

Women were more likely than men to say they were responsible for all or most of their household's food and grocery shopping (69% compared with 34%).

Respondents were most likely to report usually buying raw meat that was fresh (92%) rather than frozen (39%), not specifically free range or organic (76%) and pre-packaged (78%). This was most likely to be from a large supermarket (72%), although three in ten (30%) reported usually buying meat from an independent butcher.

Overall, 49% of respondents at Wave 3 said that they had made at least one change to their food buying or eating arrangements in the last six months for financial reasons, similar to the proportion at Wave 2 (52%). Respondents were most likely to report buying items on special offer more (27%), eating out less (22%), eating at home more (20%) or eating fewer takeaways (18%). The findings were similar to those at Waves 1 and 2.

Food safety in the home

The extent to which reported food safety practices were in line with Agency recommendations varied depending on the type of practice.

Around eight in ten respondents (82%) reported **cleaning** behaviours in line with recommended practices, saying they always washed their hands before starting to prepare or cook food and after handling raw meat, poultry or fish.

Around half (51%) of those who reported storing raw meat and poultry in the fridge reported practices in line with those recommended to avoid **cross contamination**. This meant that they reported storing raw meat and poultry separately from ready-to-eat foods and in sealed containers or at the bottom of the fridge. Three quarters (75%) reported keeping certain foods in certain parts of the fridge, and, of these, 78% said this was for reasons of food safety, hygiene, or to stop cross contamination.

Other behaviours that risk cross contamination were also explored. Around half of respondents (49%) said they always used different chopping boards for different

types of food. Forty-four per cent of respondents reported that they never washed raw meat or poultry, excluding chicken and 37% said that they never washed raw chicken.

Just over half of respondents who had a fridge (52%) said the fridge temperature should be between 0°C and 5°C (the recommended temperature). In total, 11% of respondents who had a fridge reported behaviour in line with recommended practice for **chilling** (i.e. checking that their fridge temperature is between 0°C and 5°C, at least monthly, using a thermometer). Around half of respondents who had a fridge (52%) reported never checking their fridge temperature.

The majority of respondents reported always **cooking** food until it is steaming hot throughout (86%) in line with recommended practice. Eighty-seven per cent of respondents reported that they never ate chicken or turkey if the meat was pink or had pink or red juices, compared with 95% at Wave 2. The majority said they would reheat food only once (82%), in line with recommended **reheating** practice.

Around eight in ten respondents (81%) reported that they would eat leftover food within two days of cooking it, in line with recommended practice.

Women were generally more likely than men to report food safety practices in line with recommended practice. For example, women were more likely than men to report always washing their hands before preparing food (90% compared with 81%). Women were also more likely to report always cooking food until it is steaming hot throughout (93% compared with 79% of men) and usually defrosting meat or fish in the fridge (30% compared with 19%). Women were, however, more likely than men to report always washing raw chicken (43% compared with 33%) and raw meat or poultry other than chicken (33% compared with 21%).

Older respondents were less likely to report some practices in line with recommended practice compared with younger age groups. For example, those aged 55 and over were less likely to report never washing raw chicken (28% compared with 43% of those aged 16-54) and raw meat other than poultry (48% compared with 36% of those aged 16-54); those aged 75 and over were less likely to report always washing their hands before preparing food (72% compared with 89% of those aged 35-74).

Eating outside the home

Similar to Waves 1 and 2, 71% of respondents reported eating out or buying food to take away in the last week. Around one in ten respondents (nine per cent) reported eating out six times or more in the last week.

When asked what was important to them when deciding where to eat out, 65% of respondents said that the cleanliness and hygiene of eating establishments was important. Around four in ten said a good hygiene rating was important (38%). Good service (54%), recommendations and reviews (46%) and price (42%) were also selected as important factors when deciding where to eat out.

Forty-seven per cent of respondents who ate out said that food was less safe when eating out compared with eating at home, similar to the results at Wave 2 (55%).

While 76% of respondents said they were aware of standards of hygiene when eating out, 15% said they were not. Women were more likely than men to say that they were very aware (40% compared with 26%), as were older respondents compared with younger respondents (39% of those aged 35 and over reported being very aware compared with 20% of 16-34 year olds).

Respondents were most likely to report judging the hygiene standards of food establishments from their appearance or the appearance of their staff (52% and 37% respectively at Wave 3, compared with 66% and 51% at Wave 2). Around half (54%) said they used a hygiene certificate or sticker to judge hygiene standards, compared with 32% at Wave 1 and 33% at Wave 2. Around a third (35%) of respondents specifically cited using a sticker at Wave 3, compared with seven per cent at Wave 1 and 16% at Wave 2.

Around eight in ten respondents (81%) reported having seen the stickers and certificates belonging to different food hygiene rating schemes, compared with 59% at Wave 2. Recognition of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) in Wales was reported by 72% of respondents. The FHRS in Wales was included separately in the questionnaire for the first time at Wave 3, so there is no directly comparable figure for Wave 2. However, recognition of the FHRS in England and Northern Ireland (which uses a similar sticker to the Wales scheme) at Wave 2 among respondents in Wales was 43%. The vast majority of those who recognised the FHRS Wales sticker at Wave 3 said they had seen it in the window or door of a food establishment (94%).

Overall, around a third (35%) of respondents reported having used a hygiene rating scheme in the past 12 months to check an establishment's rating before deciding to eat there, compared with 13% at Wave 2. Amongst these respondents using a scheme, 83% said they had used the information on the establishment's door or window. Twenty nine per cent reported that they had checked the rating on the internet. Of those who had used a scheme, 94% said they found it helpful.

Food poisoning and attitudes towards food safety and production

Similar to Waves 1 and 2, around a third of respondents (35%) reported experiencing food poisoning in the past. Four per cent of respondents reported having had food poisoning in the past year, with one per cent reporting having had it more than once during this time. Men were more likely than women to report having food poisoning more than once (19% compared with eight per cent). As a consequence of having had food poisoning, 30% reported that they had stopped eating at certain food establishments.

Around three-quarters of respondents (73%) agreed with the statement 'I am unlikely to get food poisoning from food prepared in my own home' and 22% agreed that 'it is just bad luck if you get food poisoning'. Around four in ten respondents (41%) agreed that 'if you eat out a lot you are more likely to get food poisoning'. Three-quarters of respondents (75%) agreed with the statement 'restaurants should pay more attention to food safety and hygiene', compared with 85% at Wave 2.

Around six in ten respondents (58%) agreed that they always avoid throwing food away, similar to Waves 1 and 2.

Respondents were more likely to report concern about food imported from outside the UK (69%) than about food produced in the UK (46%). Greater concern was reported about meat than about fruit and vegetables: 68% of respondents said they were concerned about imported meat and 42% that they were concerned about meat produced in the UK, while 46% said they were concerned about imported fruit and vegetables and 27% about UK produced fruit and vegetables.