

Performance and Resources report quarter 4 2022 to 2023: Nutrition Northern Ireland

Performance and resources results for nutrition in Northern Ireland.

Key successes

In 2022/23 the number of respondents that recognise, understand and use the Front of Pack nutrition label has increased, with an increase of 4%, 6% and 3% respectively.

MenuCal is a free, online tool provided by the FSA to support small to medium size businesses in Northern Ireland to calculate calories and manage allergens in the food and drink they serve. In 2022/23 there was an increase in the number of new users (37%), logins (187%), recipes inputted into the tool (72%) and updated (104%) demonstrating it is being well used. This year's substantial increases are greater than previous years and may be due to the introduction of mandatory calorie labelling in England.

Concerns/risks

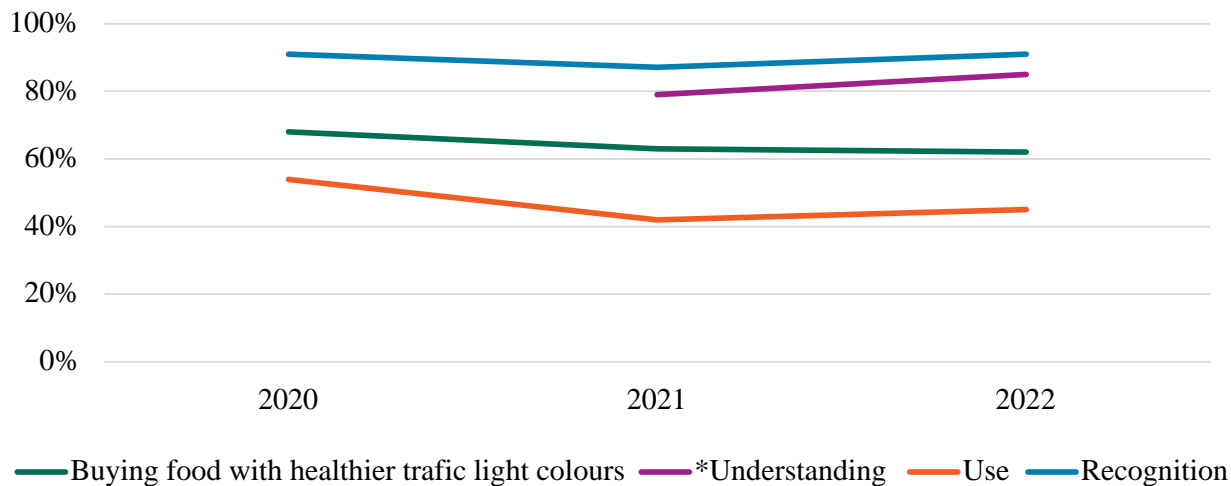
The Covid-19 pandemic, rising inflation and the war in Ukraine have resulted in significant increases in the cost of food, drink and energy, and impacted the availability of some foods. This has resulted in Northern Ireland (NI) consumers facing competing priorities when deciding what to buy and eat, meaning health may not be the primary influence. These factors, as well as staff shortages, have also affected food businesses which may impact MenuCal usage which may mean they engage less with health e.g. applying nutritional labelling.

Next steps

Continue to monitor NI consumers' understanding, knowledge and use of traffic light labels through the Eating Well Choosing Better consumer tracker survey. Questions for the next phase of the survey are being reviewed and the fieldwork for this is due to be completed in Autumn 2023 with the report expected in Spring 2024.

Gather user feedback to inform technical improvements to the MenuCal tool making it more user friendly and continue to monitor usage.

Eat Well Choosing Better survey results (fieldwork from September to November 2022)



*Data from 2020 is not available.

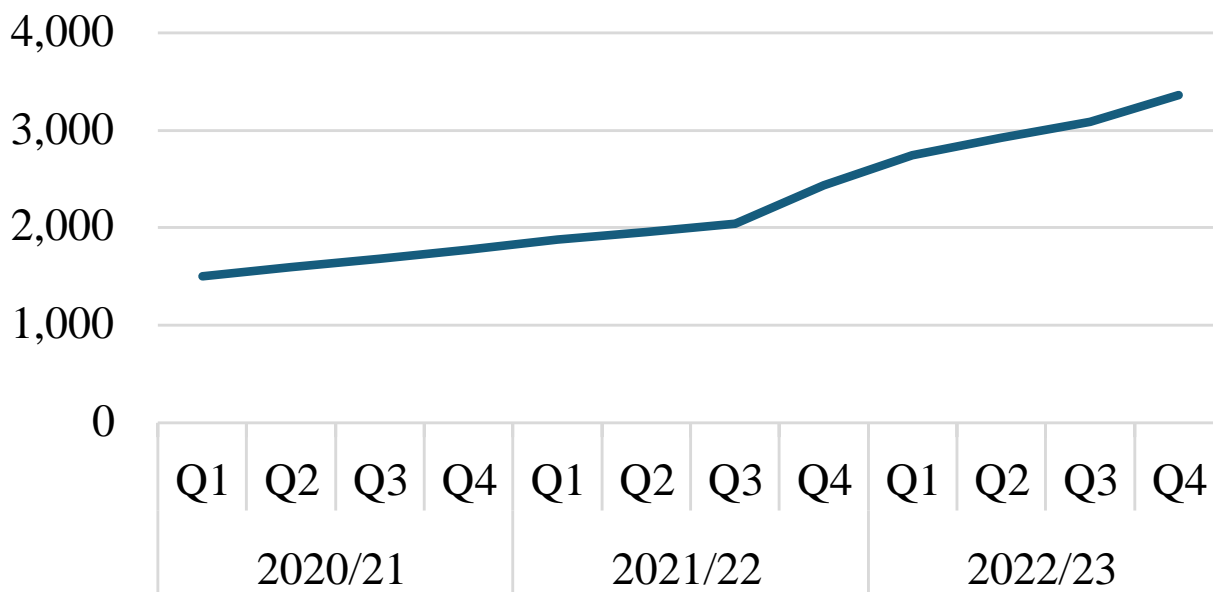
Recognition, use and understanding of the traffic light labels

- 91% recognise the traffic light label which has remained high and consistent throughout each survey. (increase of 4% points from 2021)
- 85% understand the traffic light label (increase of 6% points from 2021)
- 45% use the traffic light label (increase of 3% points from 2021)
- 62% buy food with healthier traffic light colours (green/amber) (decrease of 2% points from 2021)

Nutrition in Northern Ireland - MenuCal

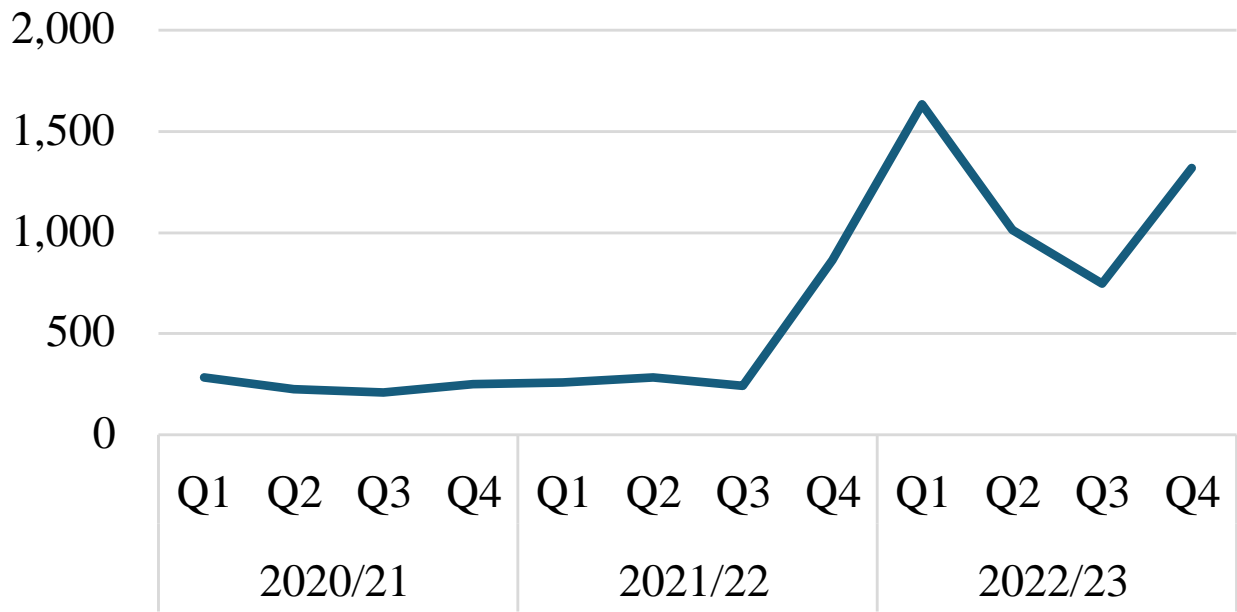
Number of active MenuCal users

38% increase in MenuCal users from March 2022 to March 2023.



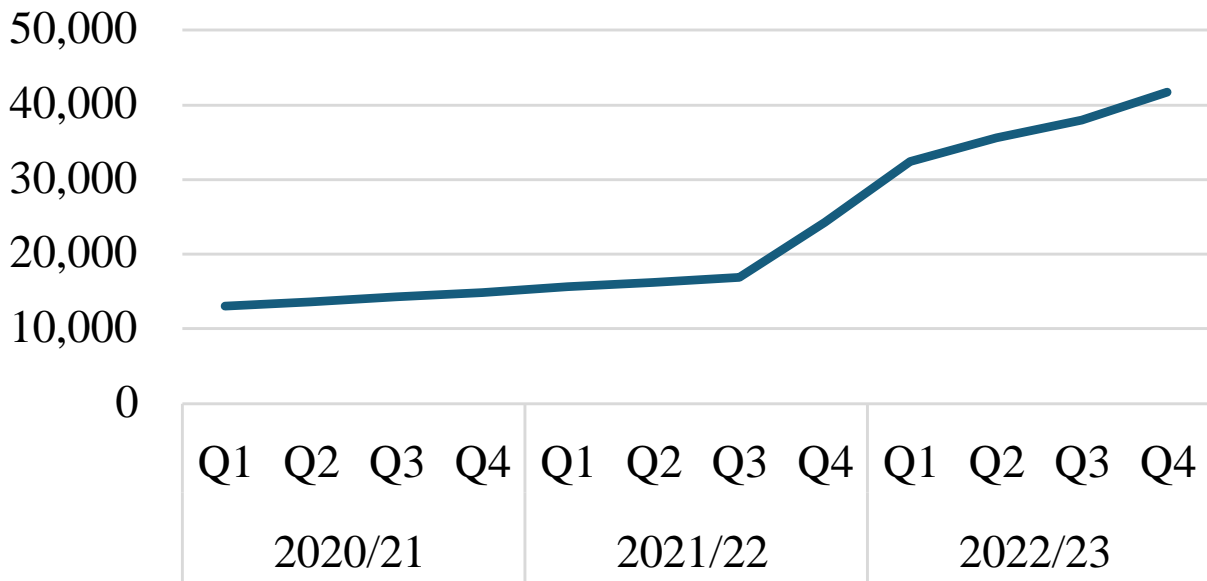
Number of logins to the MenuCal tool

187% increase in logins to the MenuCal tool in 2022/24 compared to 2021/22.



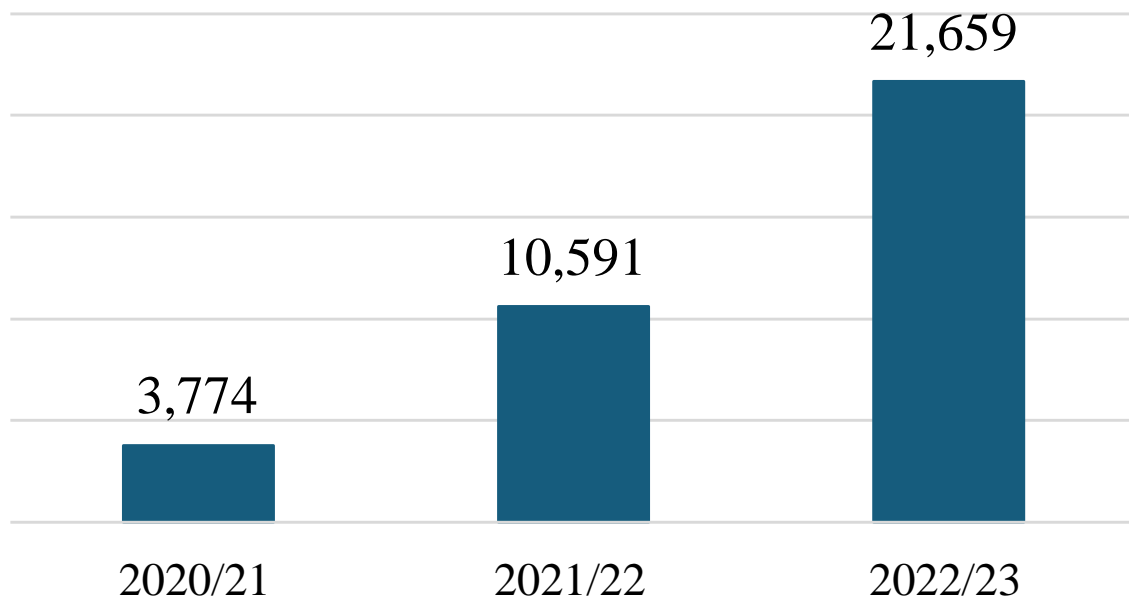
Number of recipes inputted to MenuCal

72% increase in recipes inputted into MenuCal from March 2022 to March 2023.



Number of recipes updated by users on MenuCal

104% increase in recipes updated in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22.



The MenuCal tool has been well used throughout the last year. The number of users that have signed up and recipes inputted into the tool have increased in 2022/23 Quarter 1 to 4. Despite fluctuating, there were more logins to MenuCal in 2022/23 than in previous years.

MenuCal is mostly used by small to medium sized businesses – 91% of the businesses that registered in 2022/23 reported having between 1 and 200 employees.