F&Y2 trends: Executive Summary

Results available: Results available
Maes o ddiddordeb ymchwil: Food and You 2
Research topics: Social science
Cod prosiect: FS430662
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Cynhaliwyd gan: Food Standards Agency
DOI: https://doi.org/10.46756/sci.fsa.dpl504
Statws y prosiect: Wedi'i gwblhau
Dyddiad cyhoeddi: 7 Rhagfyr 2023
PDF
Gweld Food and You 2: 2020-2023 trends report as PDF(Open in a new window) (691.79 KB)

Food and You 2 is a biannual 'Official Statistic' survey commissioned by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The survey measures consumers' self-reported knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to food safety and other food issues amongst adults (16 years and over) in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

This is the first Food and You 2 trends report which provides an overview of key trends between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023).

Headline findings

- public confidence in food safety and authenticity has remained high across all waves.
- public trust and confidence in the FSA has remained high across all waves.
- following a period of stability, reported levels of household food insecurity increased from 15% in Wave 3 to 25% in Wave 6.
- the percentage of respondents who were highly concerned about the affordability of food almost doubled, from 26% in Wave 2 to 51% in Wave 6.

Food you can trust

Across all waves, respondents' confidence that the food they buy is safe to eat (Wave 1-6 average: 92%), and that the information on food labels is accurate has remained high (Wave 1-6 average: 86%).

Respondents' confidence in the food supply chain (Wave 1-6 average: 76%), and that many actors in the food supply chain ensure that the food respondents buy is safe to eat (for example, farmers Wave 1-6 average: 88%), has remained high across all waves.

Across all waves, confidence that the FSA can be relied upon to protect the public from food-related risks (Wave 1-6 average: 83%), takes appropriate action if a food-related risk is identified (Wave 1-6 average: 82%), and is committed to communicating openly with the public about food-related risks (Wave 1-6 average: 78%), has remained high. Trust in FSA to do its job, that is to make sure food is safe and what it says it is, has remained high (Wave 1-6 average: 76%), across all waves.

Concerns about food

Between Wave 1 and Wave 4 the most common concerns were food waste and the amount of sugar in food. There has been a notable increase in concern about food prices, increasing from 39% in Wave 2 to 66% in Wave 5, becoming the issue most respondents were concerned about from Wave 5.

The percentage of respondents who reported that they were highly concerned about the affordability of food almost doubled between Wave 2 (26%) and Wave 6 (51%).

Food security

Following a period of stability between Wave 1 and Wave 3, the percentage of respondents classified as food insecure increased, from 15% in Wave 3 to 25% in Wave 6.

Eating out and takeaways

Since monitoring began in Wave 2, the percentage of respondents who reported that they had heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) and had knowledge about it has increased over time (47% Wave 2, 58% Wave 6). There were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents in England and Wales who reported that they had checked the food hygiene rating of a business, however, this has slightly decreased in Northern Ireland.

Eating at home

There were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported that they always wash their hands before preparing or cooking food (Wave 1-6 average: 75%); always cook food until steaming hot and cooked all the way through (Wave 1-6 average: 77%), and never eat chicken or turkey when it is pink or has pink juices (Wave 1-6 average: 91%).

There were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who identified the use-by date as the information which shows that food is no longer safe to eat (Wave 1-6 average: 67%), or the frequency with which respondents check use-by dates before they cook or prepare food (Wave 1-6 average: always 64%, sometimes 33%).

Food shopping and labelling

There were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported that it was important to buy meat, eggs and dairy which are produced with high standards of animal welfare (Wave 1-6 average: 91%); support British farmers and food producers (Wave 1-6 average: 89%); to buy food which has a low environmental impact (Wave 1-6 average: 85%), or the frequency with which respondents buy meat, eggs and dairy products which have information on animal welfare (Wave 1-6 average: always 25%, most of the time 39%).