

F&Y2 trends: Chapter 4: Eating out and takeaways

Introduction

[The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme](#) (FHRS) helps people make informed choices about where to eat out or shop for food by giving clear information about food businesses' hygiene standards. Food businesses are provided with a sticker which shows their FHRS rating ([footnote 1](#)).

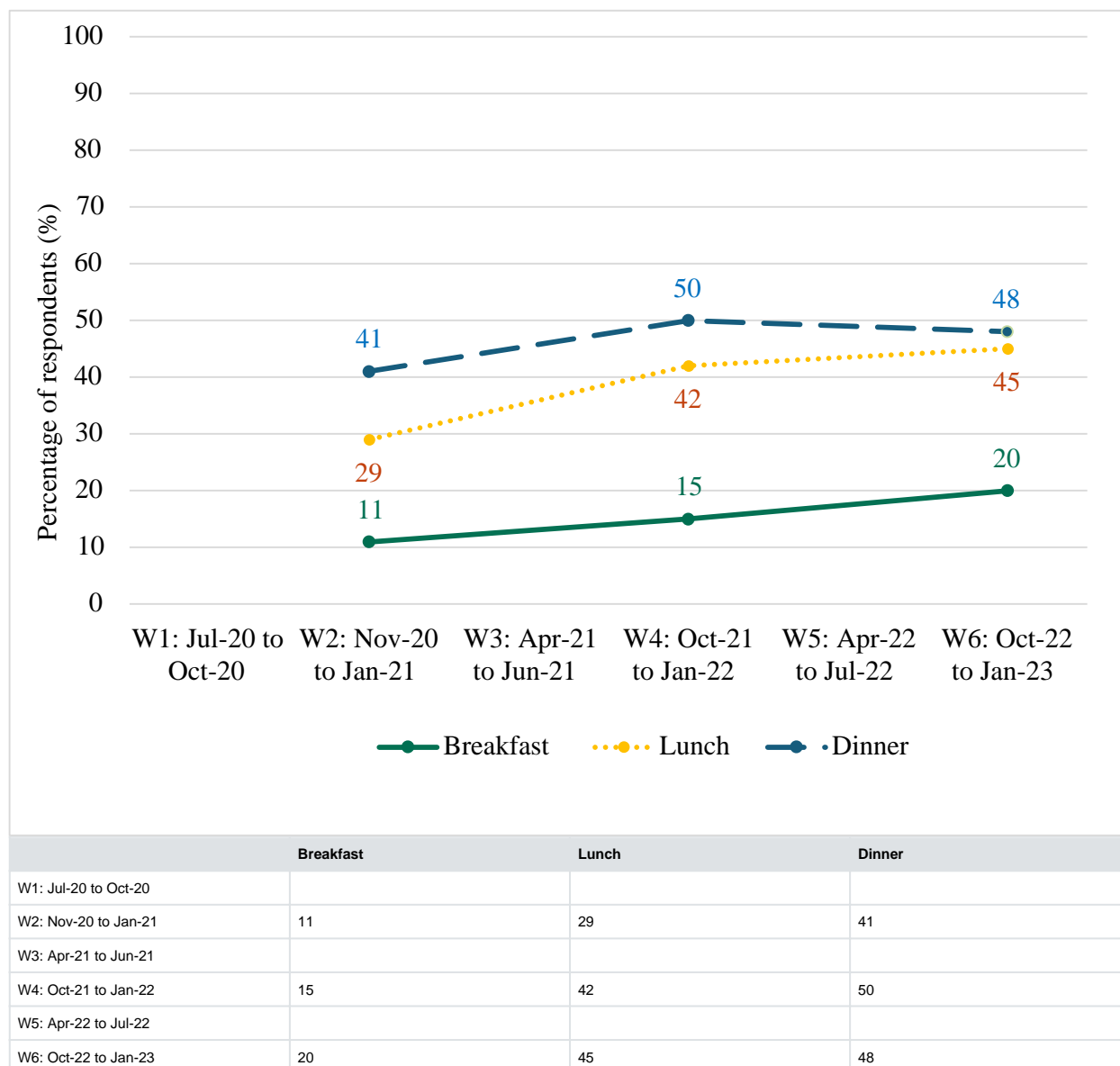
This chapter provides an overview of respondents' eating out and takeaway ordering habits, recognition and use of the FHRS, perceptions on mandatory display of the FHRS, and experiences of the availability and confidence in allergen information, between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023).

Eating out and takeaways by mealtime

Figure 15. The percentage of respondents that eat out or buy food to take out about 2-3 times a month or more often by mealtime.

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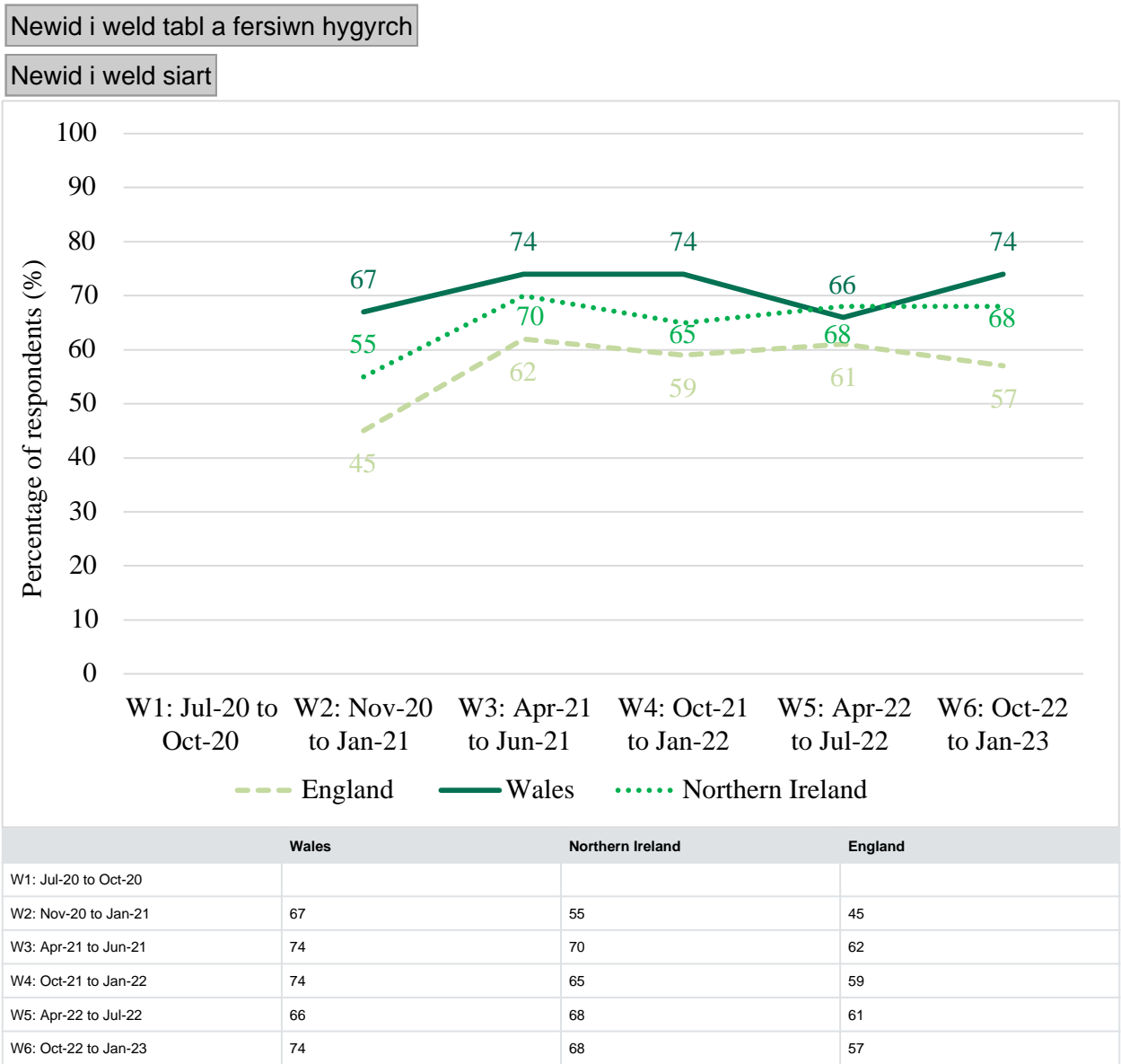
Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

Respondents were asked how often they ate out or bought food to take out for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Across all waves, respondents were most likely to eat out or buy food (i.e., about 2-3 times a month or more often) for dinner and least likely to eat out or buy food to take out for breakfast.

Since monitoring began in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) the percentage of respondents that reported eating out or buying food to take out for breakfast, lunch, and dinner has increased** (Figure 15) [\(footnote 2\)](#).

Awareness and recognition of the FHRS

Figure 16. The percentage of respondents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland who had heard of the FHRS and had at least a bit of knowledge about it.



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Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

Overall, the percentage of respondents who reported that that they had heard of the FHRS and had knowledge about it (i.e., Yes, I've heard of it and know a lot / bit about it) has increased since monitoring began in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021). Respondents in Wales had a higher level of awareness and knowledge of the FHRS than those in Northern Ireland. The lowest level of awareness and knowledge of the FHRS was reported in England (Figure 16) [\(footnote 3\)](#), [\(footnote 4\)](#).

Figure 17. Recognition of the food hygiene rating sticker in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

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Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

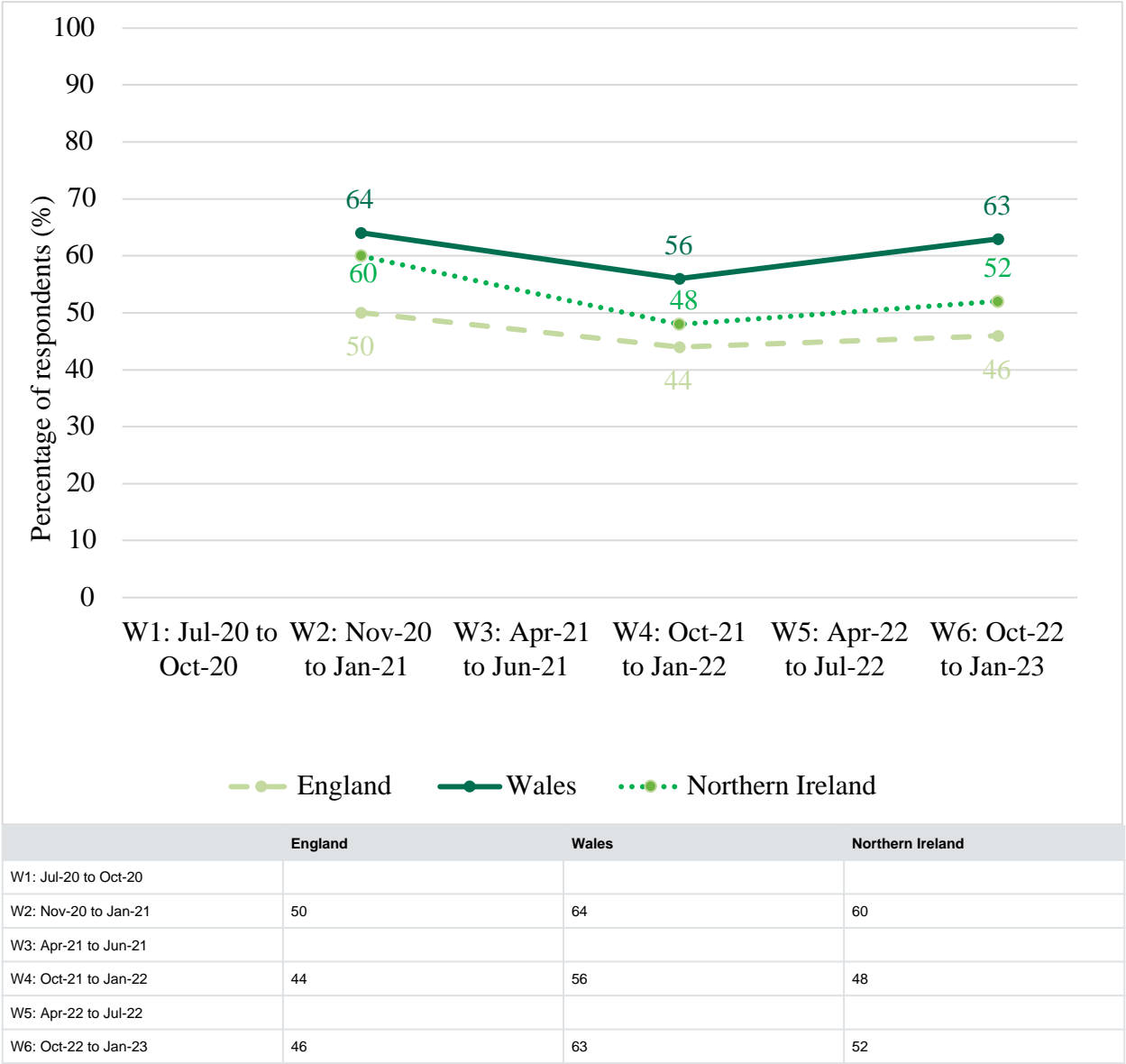
Since monitoring began in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) there were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents in England, Wales or Northern Ireland who reported that they had seen the food hygiene rating sticker. Across all waves, around 9 in 10 respondents reported that they had seen the sticker (Figure 17) ([footnote 5](#)).

FHRS usage

Figure 18. The percentage of respondents who had checked the hygiene rating of a food business.

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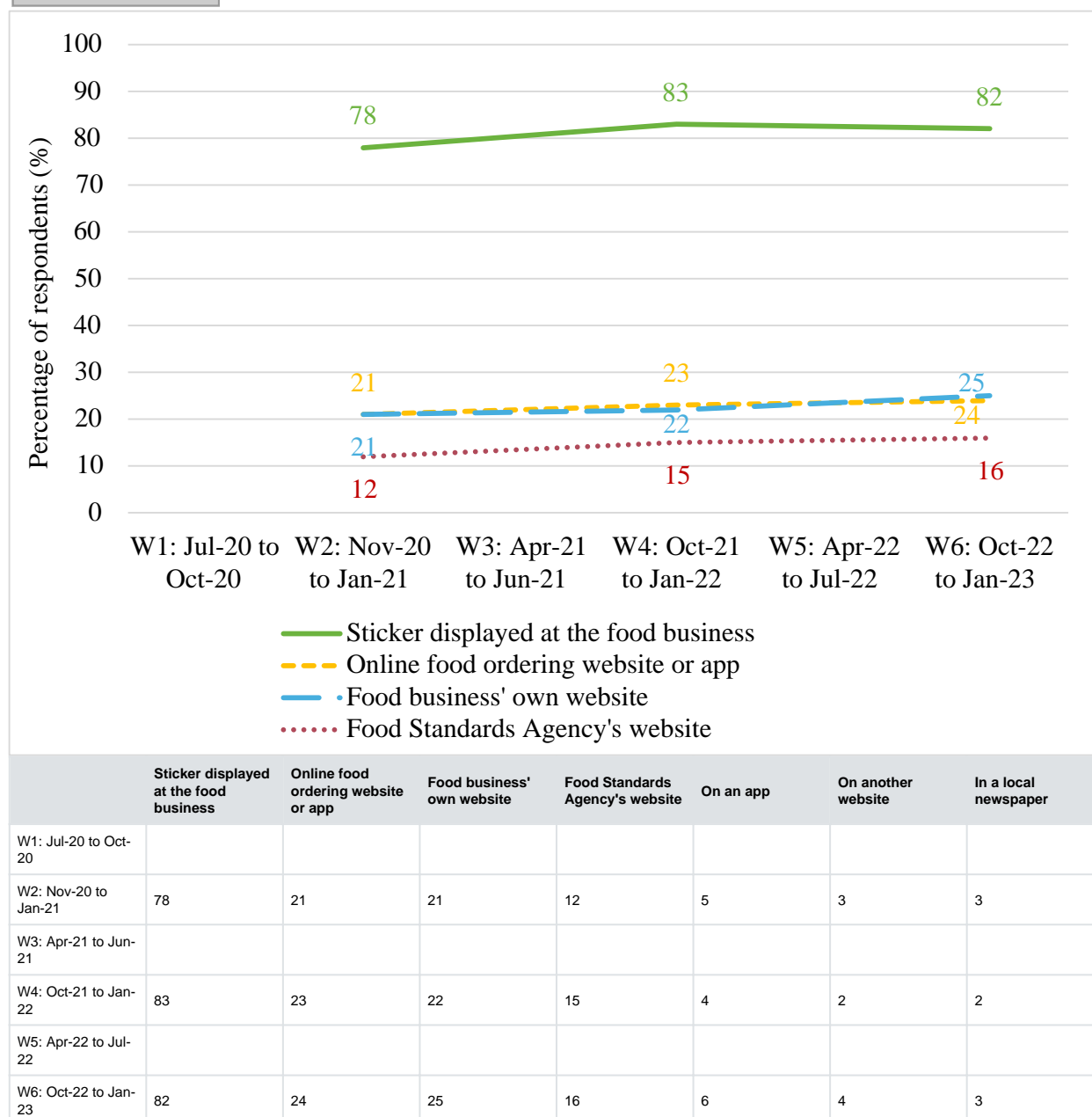
Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

Respondents were asked if they had checked the hygiene rating of a food business in the last 12 months. Overall, 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, since monitoring began in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021). Over the same period, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of respondents in Northern Ireland who reported that they had checked the food hygiene rating of a business** (Figure 18) [\(footnote 6\)](#).

Figure 19. Most common methods used to check food hygiene ratings.

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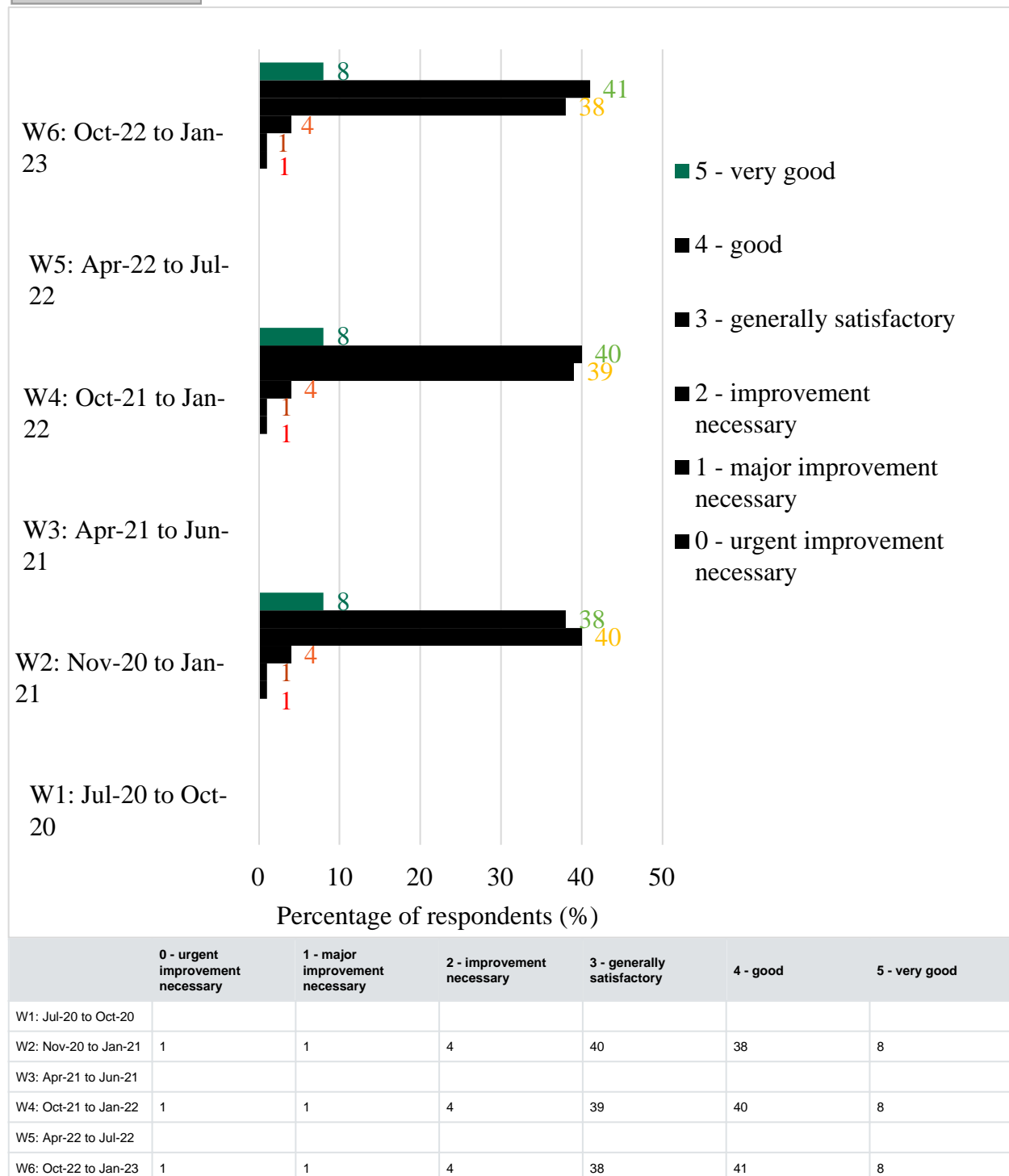
Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

Respondents who had checked the food hygiene of a food business in the previous 12 months were asked how they had checked the rating. Since monitoring began in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) there were no notable differences in how respondents checked the food hygiene rating of a business (Figure 19) ([footnote 7](#)).

Figure 20. What rating respondents would consider the lowest acceptable food hygiene rating.

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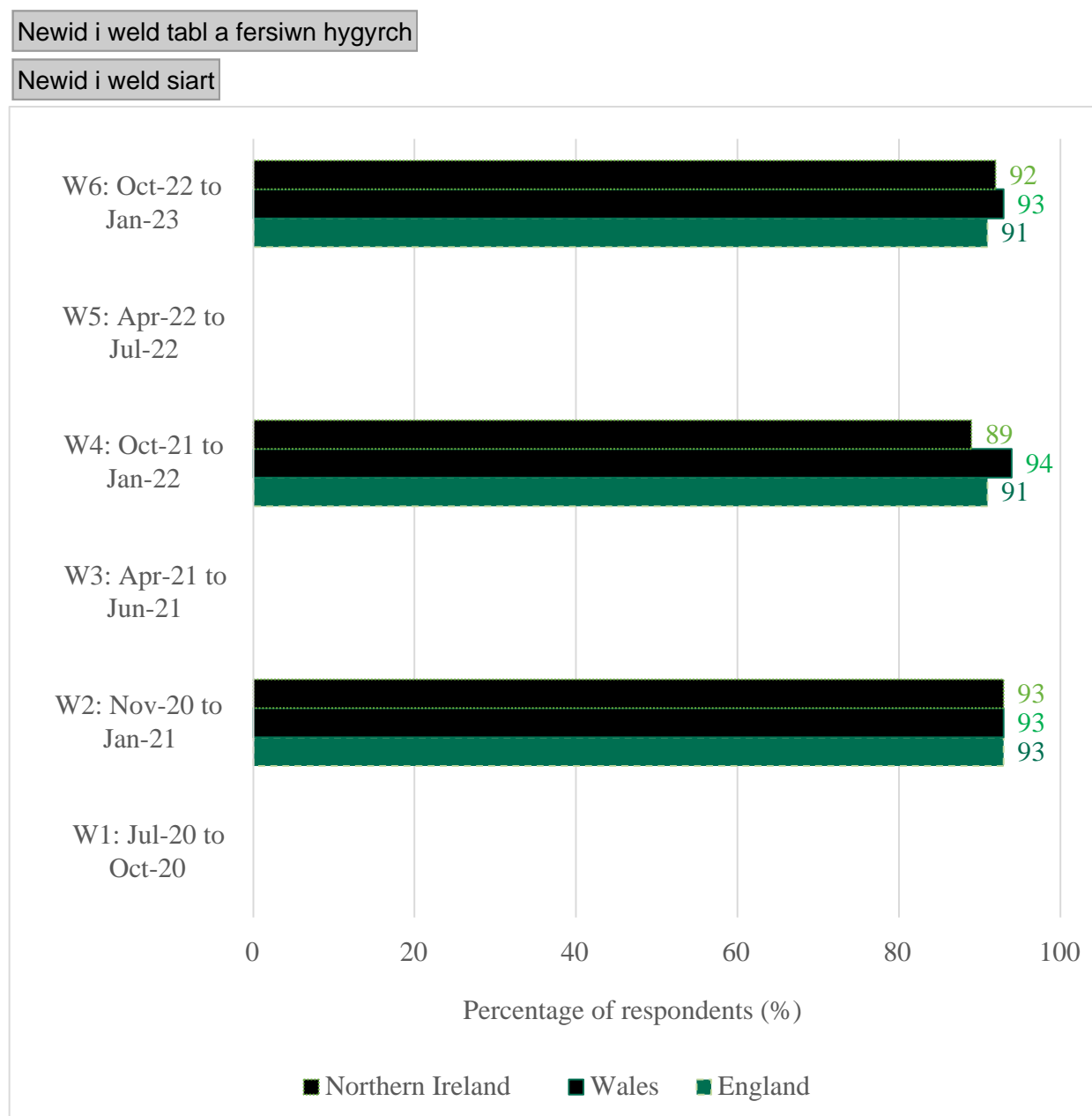
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Respondents were asked which food hygiene rating they would consider the lowest acceptable level. Since monitoring began in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) there were no notable differences in the food hygiene rating which respondents would consider the lowest acceptable level. Across all waves, about 4 in 10 respondents considered a rating of 4 – good as the lowest acceptable level and about 4 in 10 respondents considered 3 – generally satisfactory as the lowest acceptable level (Figure 20) ([footnote 8](#)).

Views on mandatory display

Figure 21. The percentage of respondents who think that food businesses should be required by law to display their food hygiene rating at their premises.



	England	Wales	Northern Ireland
W1: Jul-20 to Oct-20			
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	93	93	93
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21			
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	91	94	89
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22			
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	91	93	92

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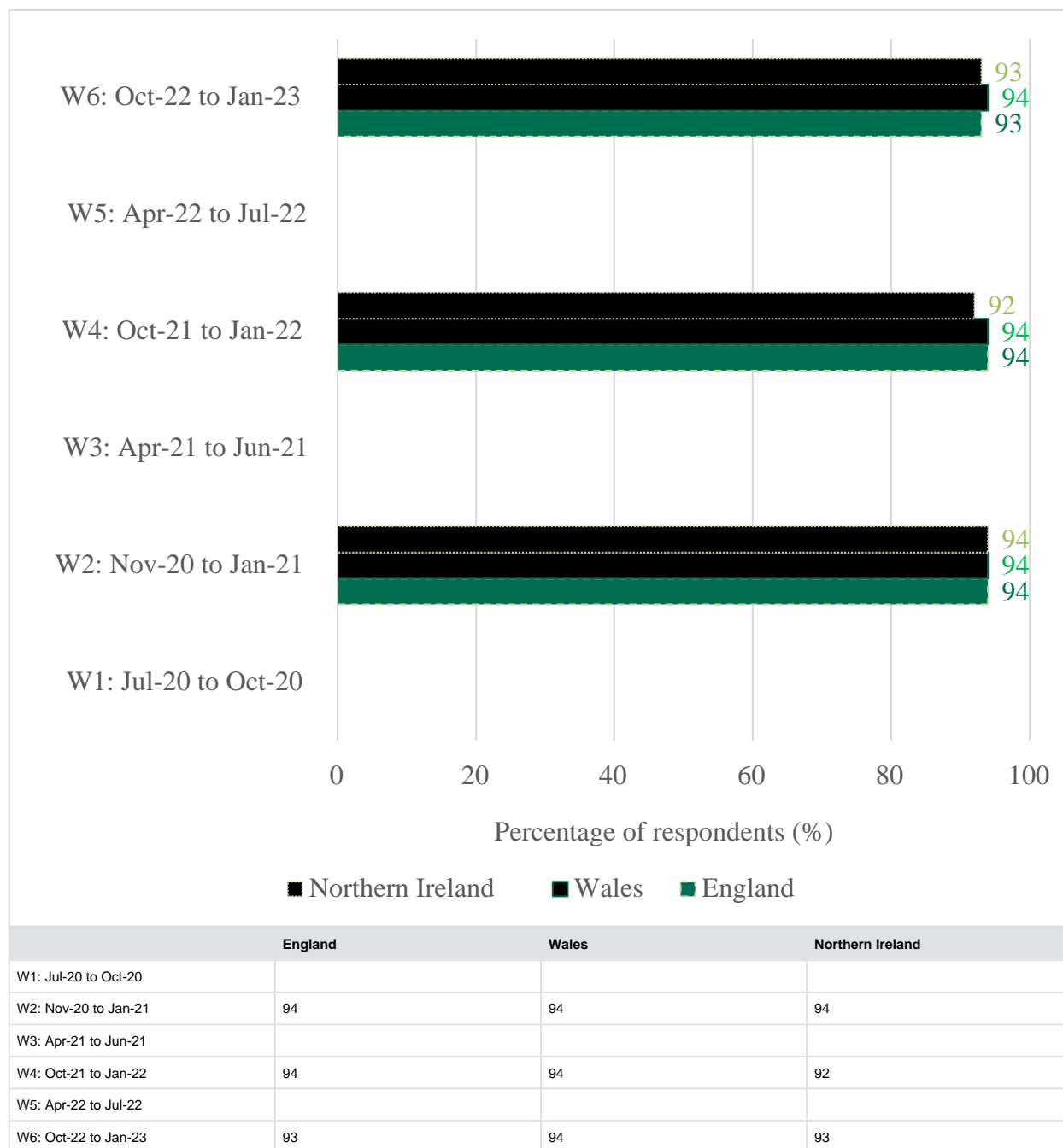
Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

Since monitoring began in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) there were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland who think that food businesses should be required by law to display their food hygiene rating at their premises. Across all waves, around 9 in 10 respondents reported that they think food businesses should be required by law to display their food hygiene rating at their premises (Figure 21) ([footnote 9](#)).

Figure 22. The percentage of respondents who think that online food ordering services should display their food hygiene rating.

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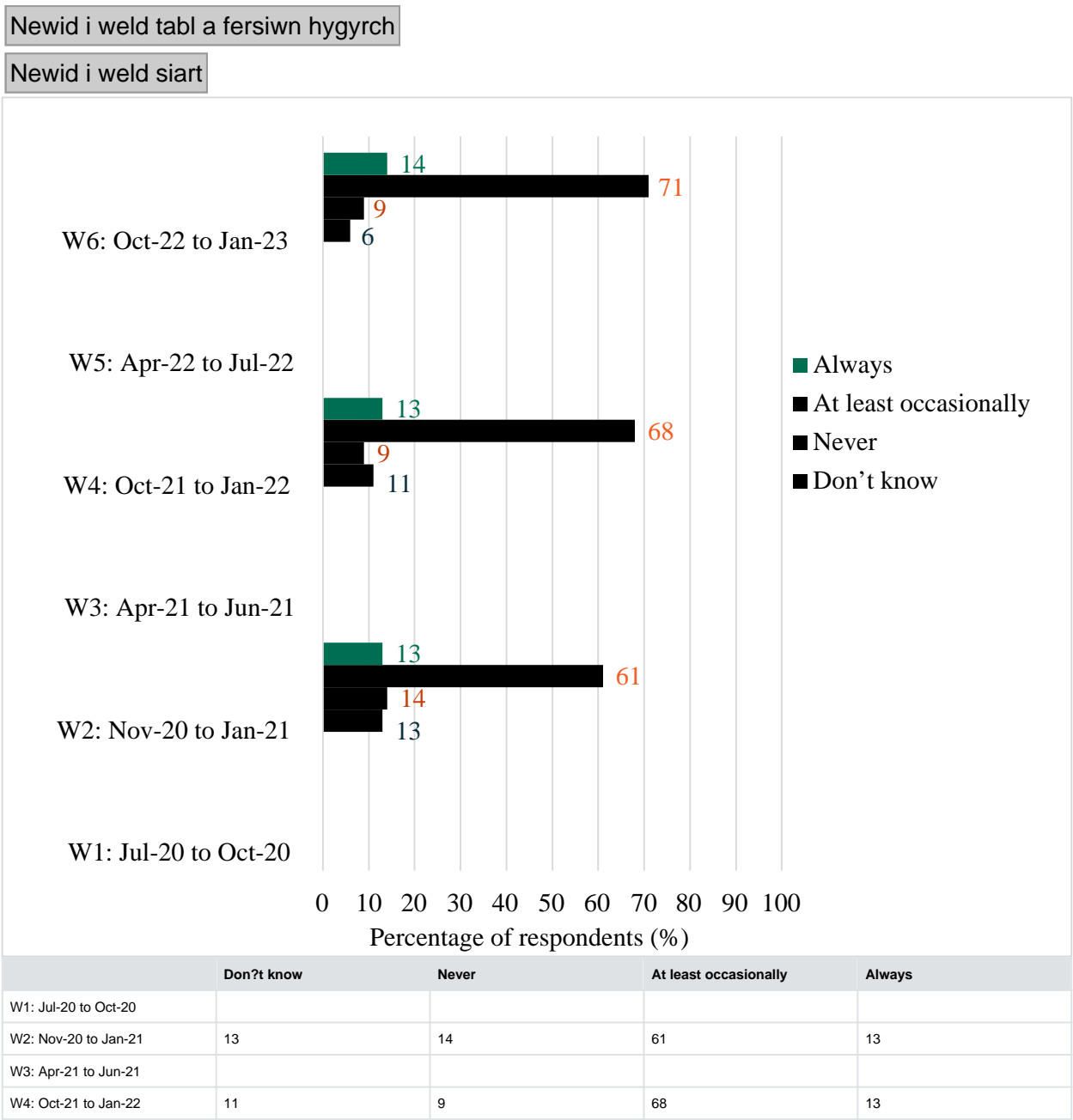
Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

Since monitoring began in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) there were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland who think that food businesses providing online food ordering services should be required by law to display their food hygiene rating where it can clearly be seen by customers before they order food. Across all waves, around 9 in 10 respondents reported that they think that food businesses providing online food ordering services should be required by law to display their food hygiene rating where it can clearly be seen by customers before they order food (Figure 22) [\(footnote 10\)](#).

Availability and confidence in allergen information when eating out or ordering takeaways

The [FSA provides guidance for food businesses on providing allergen information](#). Food businesses in the retail and catering sector are required [by law](#) to provide allergen information and to follow labelling rules. The type of allergen information which must be provided depends on the type of food business. However, all food business operators must provide allergen information for pre-packed and non-pre-packed food and drink. Foods which are [pre-packed or pre-packed for direct sale \(PPDS\)](#) are required to have a label with a full ingredients list with allergenic ingredients emphasised.

Figure 23. The availability of allergen information when eating out or buying food to take out.



	Don't know	Never	At least occasionally	Always
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22				
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	6	9	71	14

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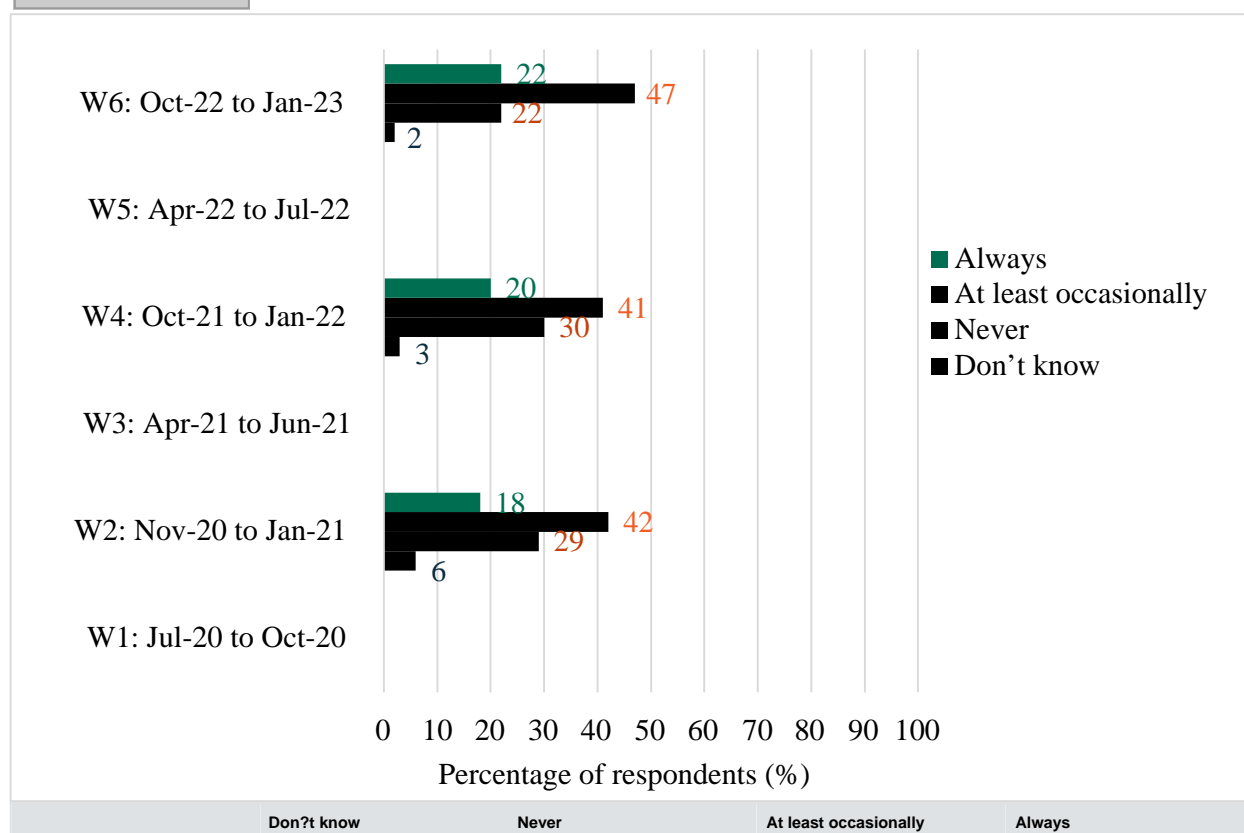
Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

Since monitoring began in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) there were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported that the information they need to help identify food that might cause a bad or unpleasant physical reaction is always readily available. However, over the same period, the percentage of respondents who reported that this information is available at least occasionally (i.e., occasionally, most of the time, about half of the time) has increased. The percentage of respondents who reported that this information is never available, or they do not know has slightly decreased since Wave 2** (Figure 23) [\(footnote 11\)](#).

Figure 24. How often respondents who suffer from a bad or unpleasant physical reaction after consuming certain foods ask staff for allergen information when eating out or buying food to take out.

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W1: Jul-20 to Oct-20				
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	6	29	42	18
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21				
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	3	30	41	20
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22				
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	2	22	47	22

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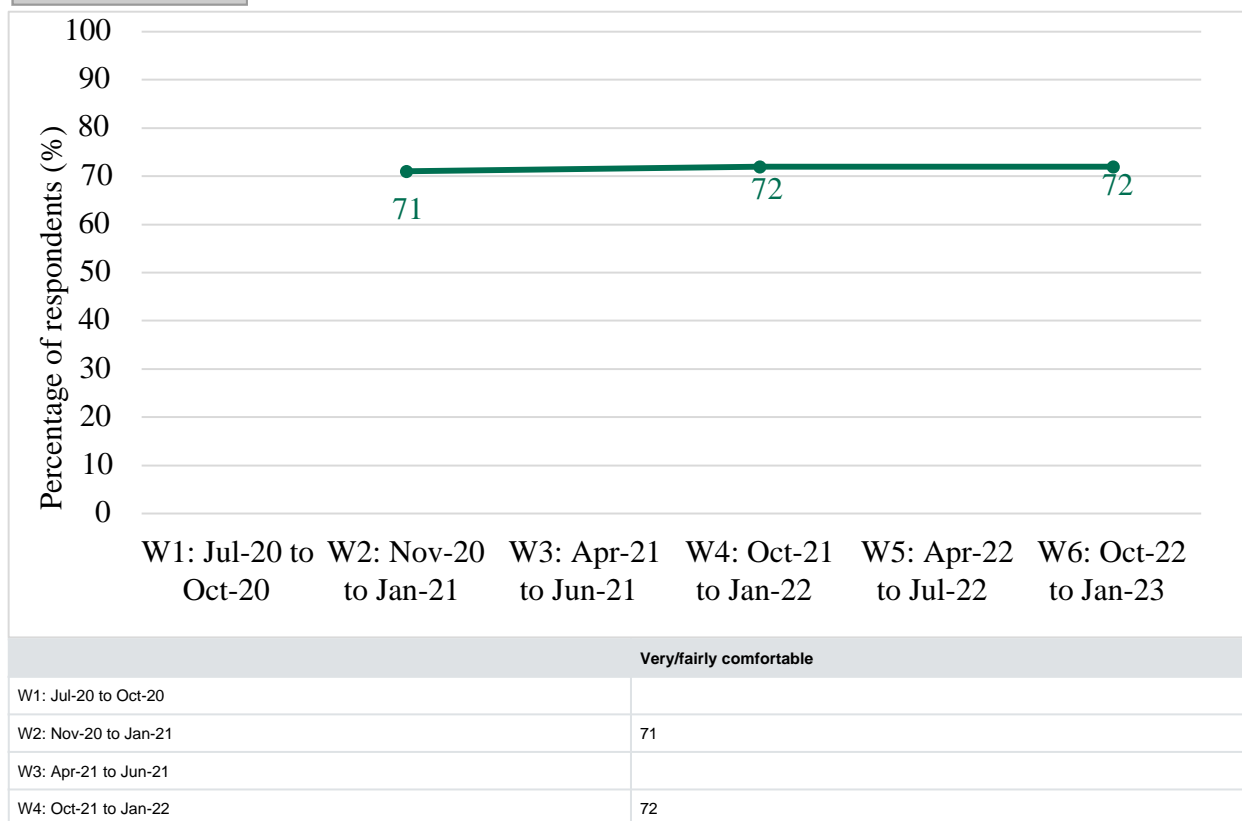
Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

Since monitoring began in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) there were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported that they always asked a member of staff for more information about food that might cause them a bad or unpleasant physical reaction. However, over the same period, there has been a slight decrease in the percentage of respondents who reported that they never did this (Figure 24) ([footnote 12](#)).

Figure 25. The percentage of respondents who suffer from a bad or unpleasant physical reaction after consuming certain foods who feel comfortable asking a member of staff for allergen information.

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Very/fairly comfortable	
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	72

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Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

Since monitoring began in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) there were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported that they were comfortable (i.e., very comfortable or fairly comfortable) asking staff for more information (Figure 25) ([footnote 13](#)).

Figure 26. How confident respondents who suffer from a bad or unpleasant physical reaction after consuming certain foods were in allergen information provided in writing or verbally by a member of staff.

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	In writing	Verbally by staff
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	83	69
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22		
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	89	68

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Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

Since monitoring began in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) there were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported that they were confident (i.e., very confident or fairly confident) that the information provided in writing or verbally by a member of staff would allow them to identify and avoid food that might cause a bad or unpleasant physical reaction. Across all waves, respondents were more likely to report that they were confident in the information provided in writing compared to the information provided verbally by a member of staff (Figure 26) ([footnote 14](#)).

1. Legislation for the mandatory display of Food Hygiene Rating Scheme ratings was introduced in November 2013 in Wales and October 2016 in Northern Ireland.
2. Question: At the moment, how often, if at all, do you eat out or buy food to take out for...? A) Breakfast, B) Lunch, C) Dinner. Responses: Several times a week, About once a week, About 2-3 times a month, About once a month, Less than once a month, Never, Can't remember. Base= 11329, all online respondents. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 1, Wave 3, Wave 5.
3. Question: Have you heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme? Responses: Yes, I've heard of it and know quite a lot about it, Yes, I've heard of it and know a bit about it, Yes, I've heard of it but don't know much about it, Yes, I've heard of it but don't know anything about it, No, I've never heard of it. Base = 19696, all online respondents. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 1.
4. Responses to other FHRS questions not included in this report are available in the full dataset and tables. A more detailed FHRS report is published separately.
5. Question: Have you ever seen this sticker before? Responses: Yes, No, Don't know / not sure. Base = 14523, all online respondents and those answering the Eating Out postal questionnaire. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 1, Wave 3 or Wave 5.
6. Question: In the last 12 months, have you checked the hygiene rating of a food business? You may have checked a rating at the business premises, online, in leaflets or menus whether or not you decided to purchase food from there. Responses: Yes, I have checked the Food Hygiene Rating of a food business, No, I have not checked the Food Hygiene Rating of a food business, Don't know. Base = 13162, all online respondents and those answering the 'Eating Out' postal questionnaire, who have heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 1, Wave 3 or Wave 5.

7. Question: How did you check these ratings? Responses: I looked at an Food Hygiene Rating Scheme sticker displayed at the food business (such as in a business' window or on the door), I checked an online food ordering website or app (e.g. Just Eat, Deliveroo, Uber Eats), I checked the food business' own website, I checked on the Food Standards Agency's website, I checked on an app (e.g. Scores on the Doors Food Hygiene Rating), I checked on another website, I checked in a local newspaper, Other, Don't know. Base = 6714, all online respondents and those answering the 'Eating Out' postal questionnaire, who have checked the Food Hygiene Rating of a food business in the previous 12 months. Please note: there has been minor rewording across the waves. This question was not included in Wave 1, Wave 3 or Wave 5.
8. Question: 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? Responses: 0 - urgent improvement necessary, 1 - major improvement necessary, 2 - improvement necessary, 3 - generally satisfactory, 4 – good, 5 - very good, Don't know, I do not usually notice the rating when I go into a food business. Base = 14523, all online respondents and those answering the 'Eating Out' postal questionnaire. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 1, Wave 3 or Wave 5.
9. Question: Do you think that food businesses should be required by law to display their Food Hygiene Rating at their premises, or should it be up to the business to decide whether to or not? Responses: They should have to, It should be up to them to decide, Don't know. Base = 14523, all online respondents and those answering the 'Eating Out' postal questionnaire. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 1, Wave 3 or Wave 5.
10. Question: Do you think businesses providing an online food ordering service should display their Food Hygiene Rating where it can clearly be seen by customers before they order food? Responses: Yes, No, Don't know. Base = 14523, all online respondents and those answering the 'Eating Out' postal questionnaire. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 1, Wave 3 or Wave 5.
11. Question: When eating out or buying food to take out, how often, if at all, is the information you need to help you identify food that might cause you a bad or unpleasant physical reaction readily available? Responses: Always, Most of the time, About half of the time, Occasionally, Never, Don't know. Base= 3812, all online respondents who eat out or buy food to take away and have a food reaction, and all postal respondents, who suffer from a bad or unpleasant physical reaction after consuming certain foods, or avoid certain foods because of the bad or unpleasant physical reaction they might cause, who eat out or order takeaway. Please note: there have been slight routing differences into this question across the waves. This question was not included in Wave 1, Wave 3 or Wave 5.
12. Question: When information is not readily available, how often do you ask a member of staff for more information? Responses: Always, Most of the time, About half of the time, Occasionally, Never, I don't need to ask because the information is always readily available, Don't know. Base= 3813, all online respondents who eat out or buy food to take away and have a food reaction, and all postal respondents, who suffer from a bad or unpleasant physical reaction after consuming certain foods, or avoid certain foods because of the bad or unpleasant physical reaction they might cause, who eat out or order takeaways. Please note: there have been slight routing differences into this question across the waves. This question was not included in Wave 1, Wave 3 or Wave 5.

13. Question: How comfortable do you feel asking a member of staff for more information about food that might cause you a bad or unpleasant physical reaction? Responses: Very comfortable, Fairly comfortable, Not very comfortable, Not at all comfortable, It varies from place to place, Don't know. Base = 3813, all online respondents who eat out or buy food to take away and have a food reaction, and all postal respondents, who suffer from a bad or unpleasant physical reaction after consuming certain foods, or avoid certain foods because of the bad or unpleasant physical reaction they might cause.
14. Question: How confident are you that the information provided will allow you to identify and avoid food that might cause you a bad or unpleasant physical reaction? A) when the information is provided in writing (for example, on the main menu or a separate allergen menu). B) when the information is provided verbally by a member of staff. Responses: Very confident, Fairly confident, Not very confident, Not at all confident, It varies from place to place, Don't know. Base= 3813, all online respondents who eat out or buy food to take away and have a food reaction, and all postal respondents, who suffer from a bad or unpleasant physical reaction after consuming certain foods, or avoid certain foods because of the bad or unpleasant physical reaction they might cause, who eat out or order takeaways. This question was not included in Wave 1, Wave 3 or Wave 5.