Consumer Insights Tracker November 2023

Maes o ddiddordeb ymchwil: Consumer Interests (aka Wider Consumer Interests)
Statws y prosiect: Wedi'i gwblhau
Awduron: Food Standards Agency
Dyddiad cyhoeddi: 12 Rhagfyr 2023
PDF
Gweld Consumer Insights Tracker Report November 2023 as PDF(Open in a new window)
(514.22 KB)

The Consumer Insights Tracker is an online monthly tracking survey commissioned by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). It monitors the behaviour and attitudes of adult consumers aged 16+ in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in relation to food.

The survey includes topics such as food availability, food affordability, consumer concerns in relation to food, confidence in the food supply chain and in the FSA as a regulator.

The full data set is published on data.food.gov.uk: Consumer Insights Tracker July 2023 - present
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Key findings for November 2023

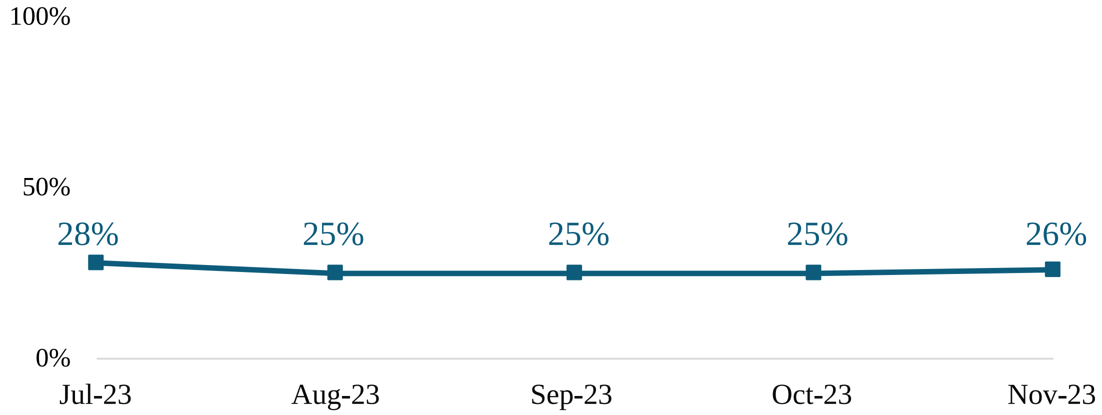
- Overall, measures related to food affordability, food availability and trust and confidence in the FSA have been stable over recent months.
- Food prices remain the top concern for consumers, with around 9 in 10 saying they are concerned about this. Ultra-processed, or the over-processing of food, remains a concern for around three-quarters of respondents. This has remained stable since tracking began (75% in August 2023 to 76% in November 2023).
- Those worried about food affordability are more likely to report practicing certain 'risky' food behaviours to save money, such as reducing the length of time food is cooked for, turning off a fridge/freezer that contains food or eating food past the use-by date. Under 35s and those from the most deprived areas are also more likely to report practicing these kinds of 'risky' behaviours and are also generally more worried about food affordability. This pattern has been consistent since August 2023.
- There has been a small but significant increase in the proportion of respondents reporting confidence in the food supply chain (from 54% in October to 60% in November). More data is needed to confirm whether this is an upwards trend.

Food affordability

Around one in four (26%) are worried about their household not being able to afford food in the next month.

This figure has been broadly stable between July and November.

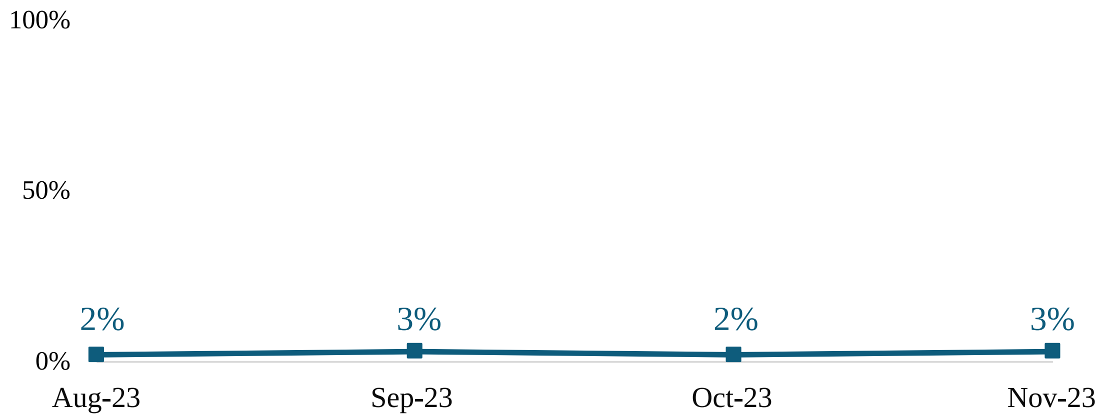
Proportion who reported worrying about their household not being able to afford food in the next month (footnote 1)



3% report that they, or someone in their household, received a free parcel of food from a food bank or other emergency food provider in the last month.

This figure is stable from August to November.

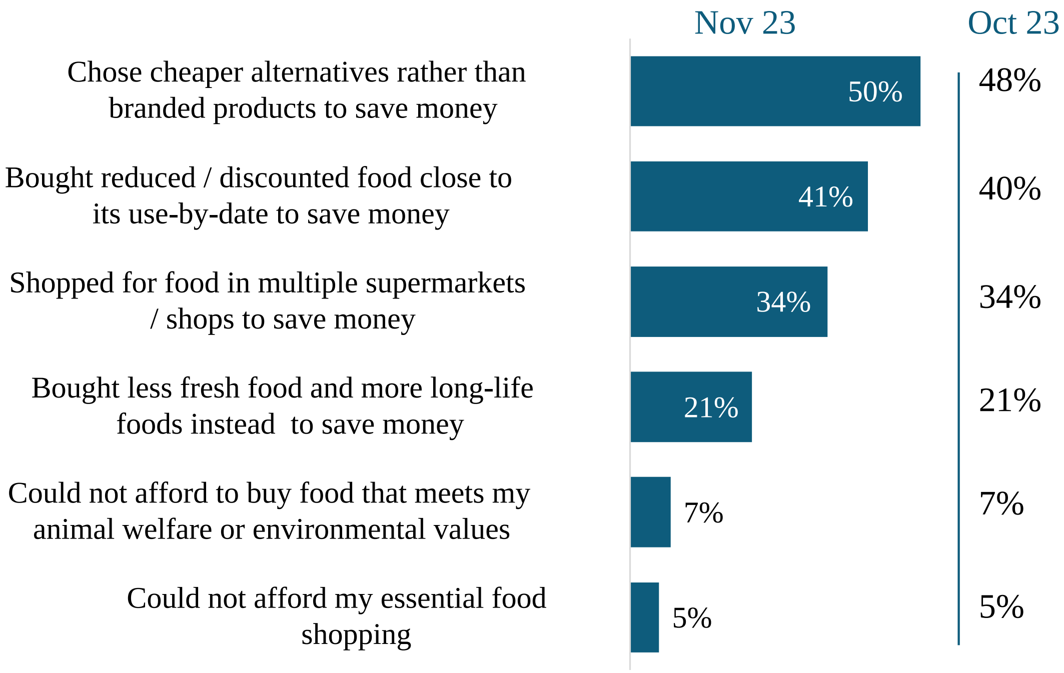
Proportion who reported receiving a food parcel from a food bank or emergency food provider (footnote 2)



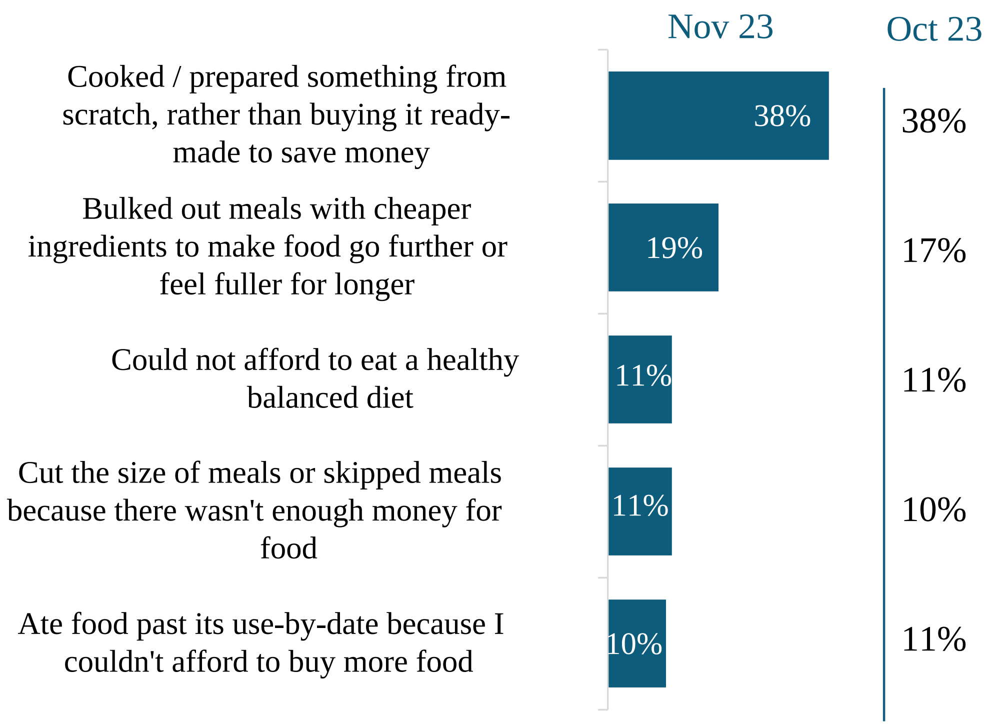
74% report at least one of the following statements applies to them or their household in the last month.

This is comparable with the proportion reporting this in October (73%).

Reported shopping statements [(footnote 3)]



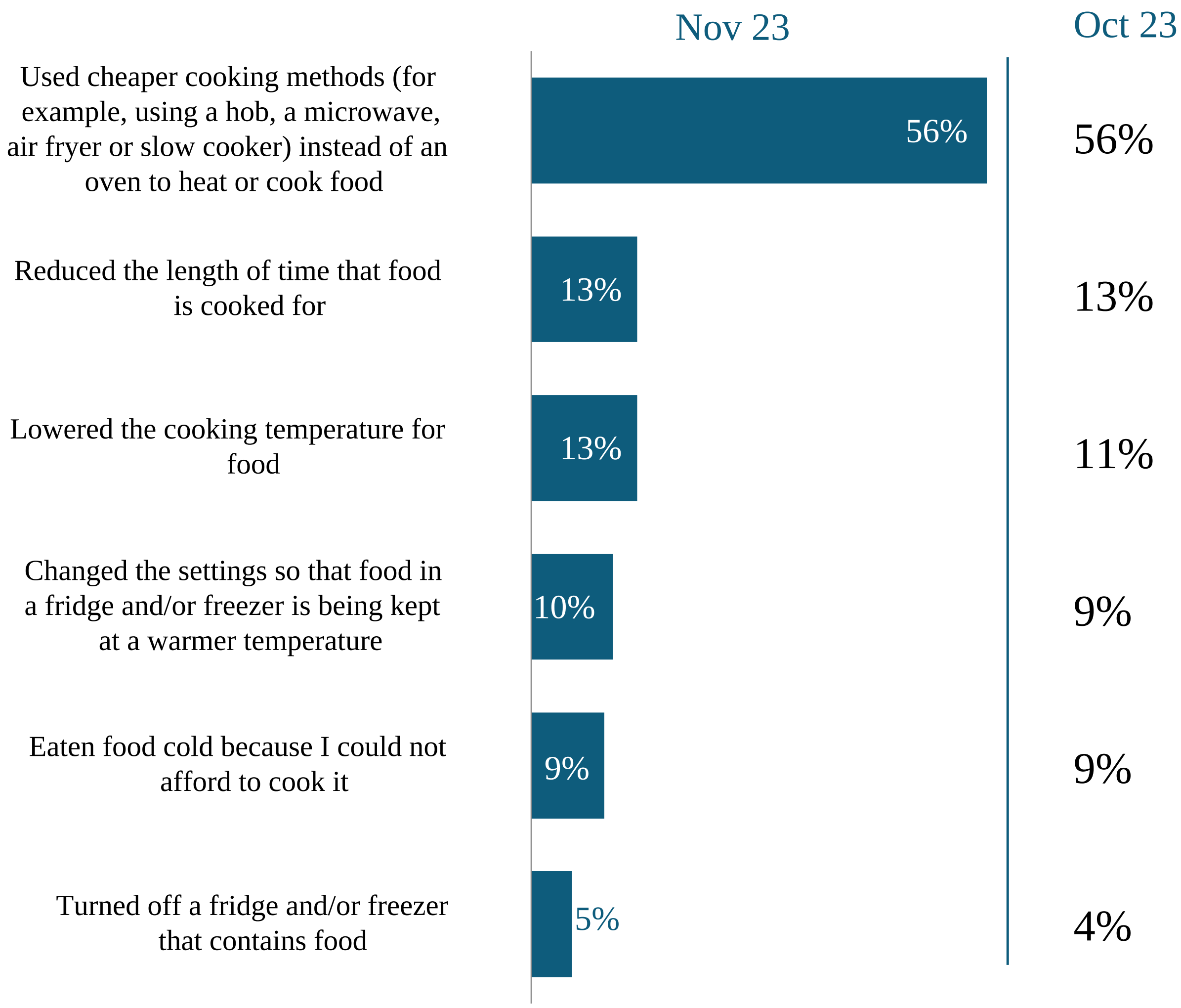
Reported cooking and eating statements



56% have used cheaper cooking methods instead of an oven to heat or cook food in the last month and 9% have eaten food cold because they couldn't afford to cook it.

These figures are comparable with October.

Proportion who did any of the following to reduce energy bills or save money in the last month [(footnote 4)]



The following groups are significantly more likely to report practicing certain ‘risky’ food behaviours to save money:

- Those worried about food affordability
- Under 35s
- Those from the most deprived areas

These differences have been consistent since August.

‘Risky’ food behaviours include reducing the length of time food is cooked for; lowering the cooking temperature for food; turning off a fridge/freezer containing food; changing fridge/freezer settings to a warmer temperature; or eating food past its use-by-date. [(footnote 5)]

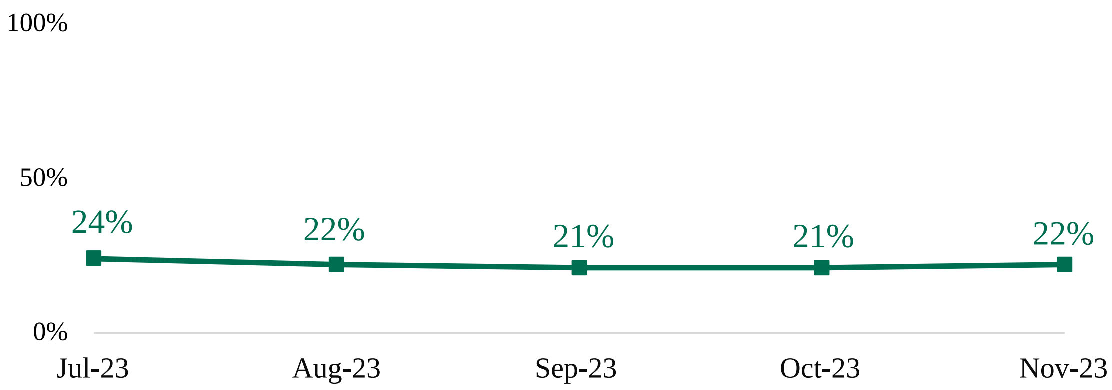
- **Those worried about food affordability** are five times more likely than those not worried to report they have eaten food past its use-by-date to save money (25% v 5%).
- **Under 35s** are twice as likely as those 55+ to report lowering the cooking temperature for food (18% vs. 9%), and three times as likely to report keeping their fridge/freezer at a warmer temperature to save money (16% vs. 5%).
- **Those in the most deprived IMD deciles** are four times as likely to report turning off a fridge/freezer containing food (8% vs. 2%) than those in the least deprived.

Food availability

One in five (22%) are worried about there not being enough food available for their household in the next month.

This figure has been broadly stable between July and November.

Proportion who reported worrying about there not being enough food available for their household in the next month (footnote 6)

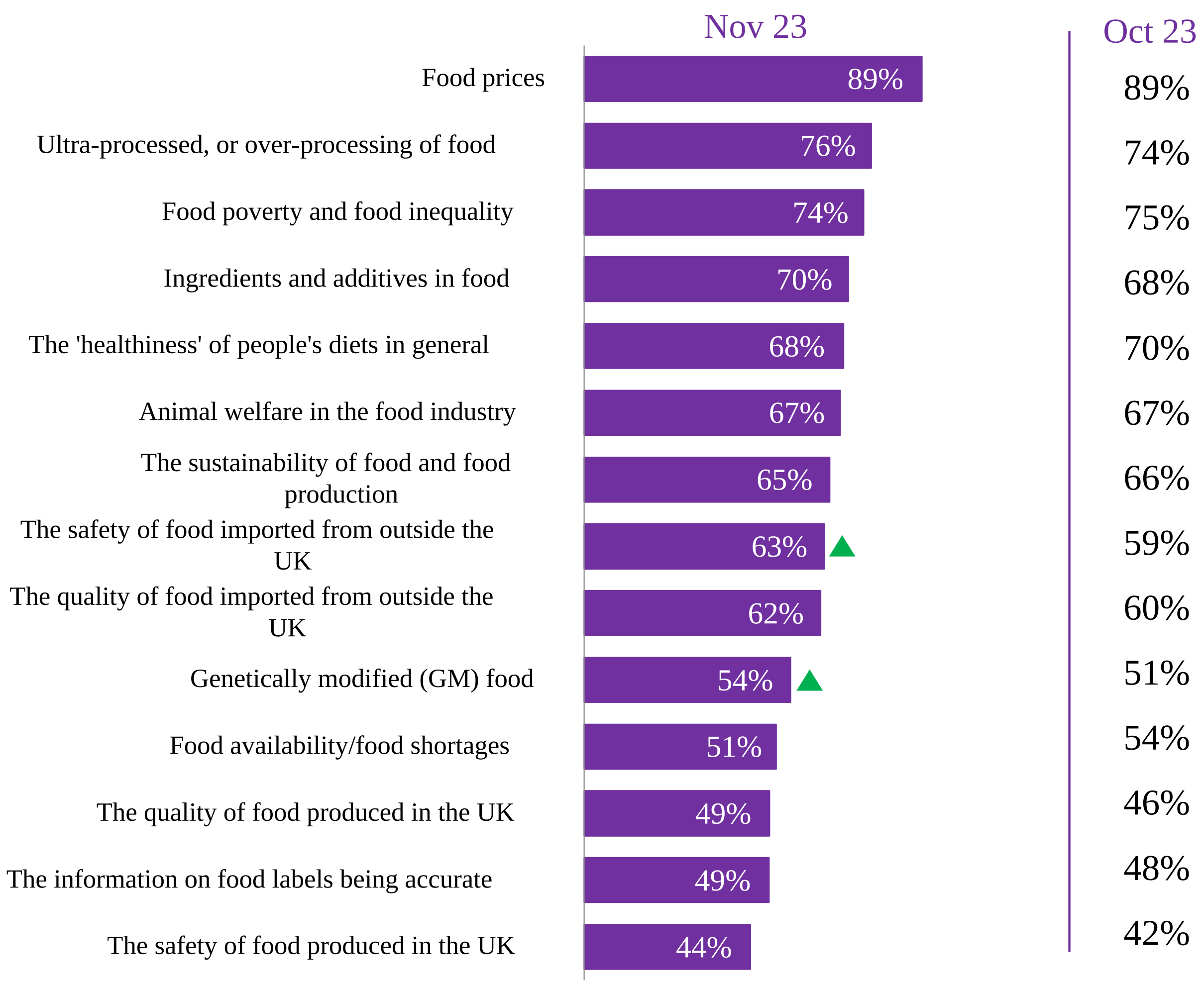


Food concerns

89% are concerned about food prices, 76% are concerned about ultra-processed, or over-processing of food.

These figures are comparable with October.

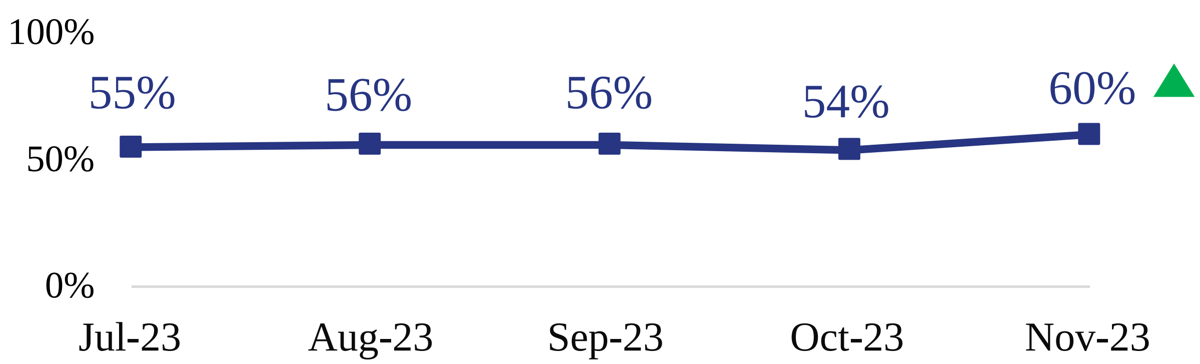
Proportion who reported concern about food by topic (footnote 7)



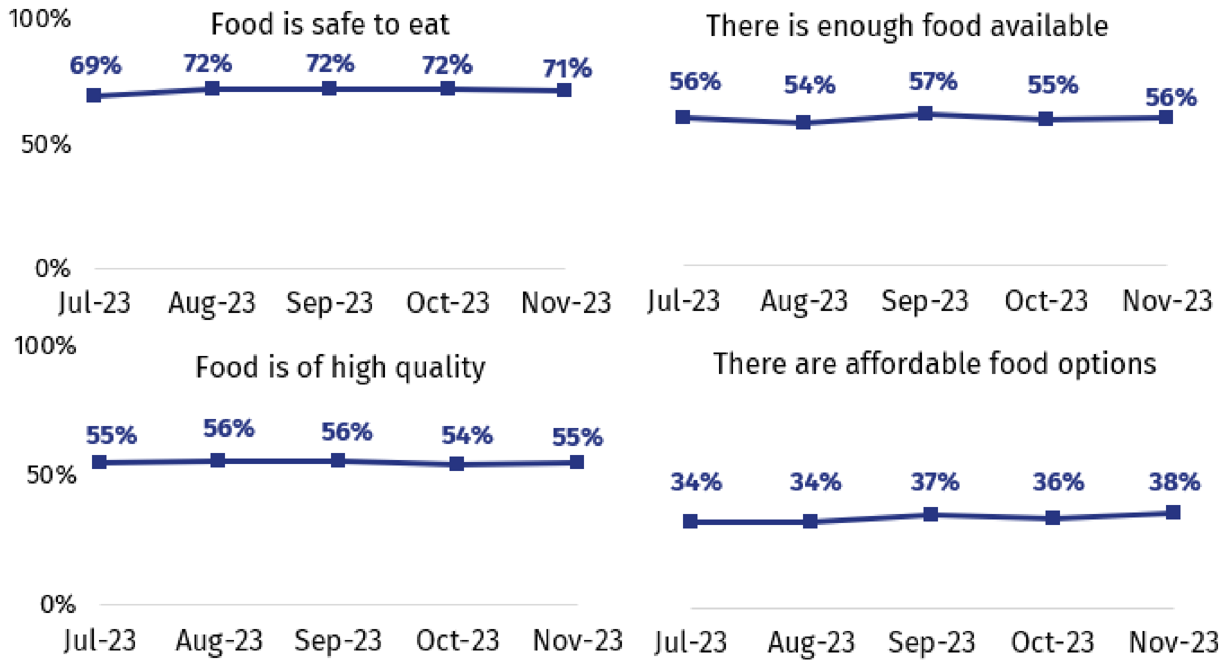
Food supply chain

60% are confident in the food supply chain overall, a small but statistically significant increase compared to October.

Proportion who reported confidence in the food supply chain [(footnote 8)]



Proportion who reported confidence that those involved in the food supply chain ensure that... [(footnote 9)]



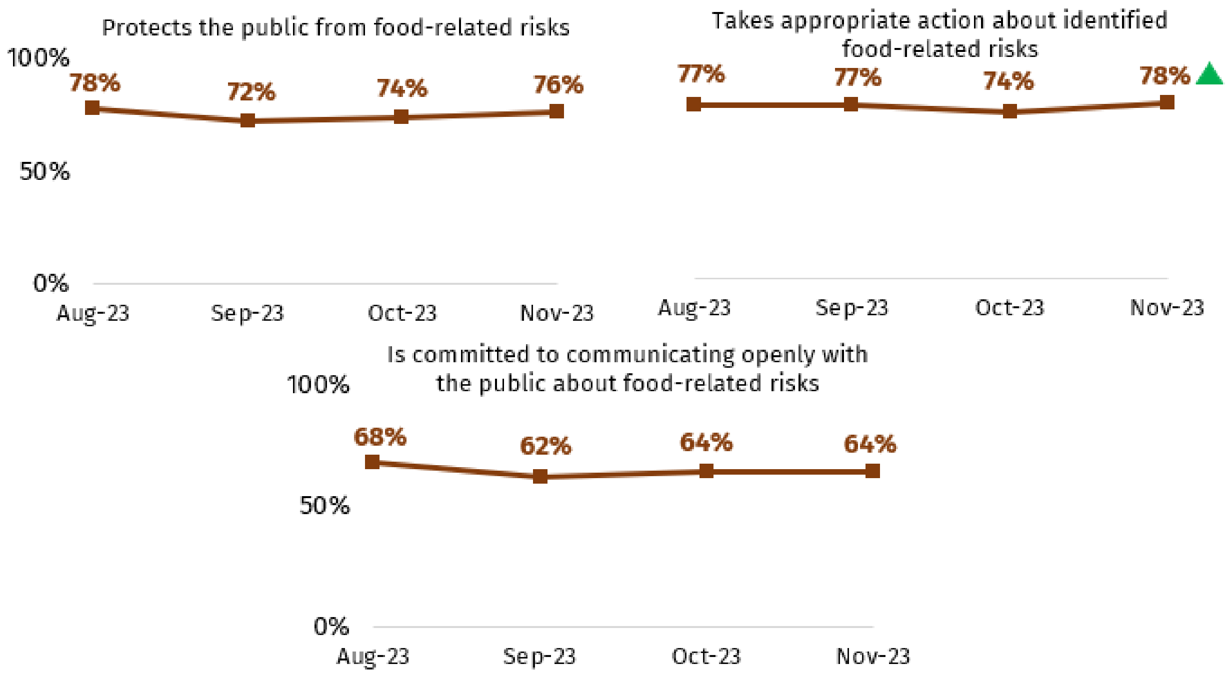
The FSA

59% of those with some knowledge of the FSA trust the FSA to do its job.

Following a slight dip in September, trust in the FSA has returned to similar levels to August.

Proportion that trust the FSA to do its job (footnote 10)

Proportion who reported confidence that the FSA... (footnote 11)



Background and methodological information

Changes in approach

Following a [review of the FSA's Consumer Insights Tracker] by the FSA’s Advisory Committee for Social Science (ACSS), the project was recommissioned in early 2023.

In July 2023, the Consumer Insights Tracker was transitioned to a new supplier, YouGov. Changing supplier provided the opportunity to make the following methodological changes:

- review the questionnaire content and question wording
- expand the sample to include adults aged 16+ (previously 16-75)
- boost the sample to include a larger number of participants from Northern Ireland
- utilise a panel survey approach (previously an omnibus approach was used to collect the data)

Due to these methodological differences, data captured by YouGov (from July 2023 onwards) should not be directly compared to data captured by the previous supplier (April 2020 – June 2023).

Method

- this research was conducted online using the YouGov panel which gives access to 400,000 active panellists in the UK.
- this report presents findings from November 2023. Where appropriate, comparisons are made to previous waves since July 2023.
- 2,064 adults across England, Wales and Northern Ireland took part in the November survey between 2nd-6th November 2023.
- quotas were set by age, gender, education and region. The data is also weighted to be representative of the population by these demographic variables. All results are based on final weighted data.

Notes for interpretation

- figures may not add up to 100% on graphs due to rounding, or in some questions, respondents were able to select multiple answers.
- significance testing is applied to the data to compare and determine whether a difference is “real”, or if it has occurred by chance (because not everyone in the population has been surveyed).
- any differences between demographic groups and month to month which are reported (with arrows) are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.
- if you require further information on the statistical significance testing carried out, please contact the social science team.
- where analysis is conducted by IMD, respondents are categorised within the country where they live, before a combined measure is created for the full sample.

For more information

- visit our Consumer Insights Tracker webpage
- or please contact the FSA Social Science Team

1. Q3m. To what extent, if at all, are you worried you/your household will not be able to afford food in the next month? Base: All in November (n=2,064), October (n=2,062), September (n=2,057), August (n=2,044) and July (n=2,085) 2023

2. Q3. In the last month, have you or anyone else in your household received a free parcel of food from a food bank or other emergency food provider? Base: All in November (n=2,064), October (n=2,062), September (n=2,057) and August (n=2,044) 2023

3. Q6. In the last month, did any of the following apply to you, or someone else in your household? Please tick all that apply. I, or someone in my household...
   Base: All in November (n=2,064) and October (n=2,062) 2023. Please note: Total values do not add to 100% as participants could select multiple responses.

4. Q8m. In the last month, which, if any, of the following have you done to reduce your energy bills and save money? Base: All in November (n=2,064) and October (n=2,062) 2023

5. Q8m. In the last month, which, if any, of the following have you done to reduce your energy bills and save money?
   Q6. In the last month, did any of the following apply to you, or someone else in your household? Please tick all that apply. I, or someone in my household...
   Base: All in November 2023 (n=2,064)
   The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is a measure of deprivation calculated based off postcode, which takes into account income, employment, education, skills and training, health, crime, housing and the living environment of an area.

6. Q2m. To what extent, if at all, are you worried about there not being enough food available for you/your household to buy in the next month? Base: All in November (n=2,064), October (n=2,062), September (n=2,057), August (n=2,044) and July (n=2,085) 2023

7. Q12. Thinking about food in the UK in general. At the moment, how concerned, if at all, do you feel about each of the following topics? Base: All in November (n=2,064) and October (n=2,062) 2023. Respondents were shown all of the topics listed and asked how concerned, if at all, they felt about each. Figures shown in chart are the proportion ‘highly concerned’ or ‘somewhat concerned’.

8. Q13. How confident are you in the food supply chain? That is all the processes involved in bringing food to your table. Base: All in November (n=2,064), October (n=2,062), September (n=2,057), August (n=2,044) and July (n=2,085) 2023

9. Q14. How confident are you that those involved in the food supply chain in the UK…Base: All in November (n=2,064), October (n=2,062), September (n=2,057), August (n=2,044) and July (n=2,085) 2023

10. Q16. The Food Standards Agency is the Government Agency responsible for food safety in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. How much do you trust or distrust the Food Standards Agency to do its job? That is to make sure that food is safe and what it says it is. Base: Those who know a little / a lot about the Food Standards Agency in November (n=1,183), October (n=1,175), September (n=1,161) and August (n=1,126) 2023

11. Q15. The Food Standards Agency is the Government Agency responsible for food safety in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. How confident are you that the Food Standards Agency... Base: Those who know a little / a lot about the Food Standards Agency in November (n=1,183), October (n=1,175), September (n=1,161) and August (n=1,126) 2023