

Food and You 2 Wave 4: Technical report introduction

Results available: Results available

Area of research interest: [Food and You 2](#)

Research topics: [Social science](#)

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Survey background

The Food and You 2 Survey was commissioned by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in September 2019. The first wave of data collection (detailed in the Wave 1 Technical Report) took place between July and October 2020, the second wave (detailed in the Wave 2 Technical Report) took place between November 2020 and January 2021 and the third wave (detailed in the Wave 3 Technical Report) took place between April 2021 and June 2021. This report provides detailed results for Wave 4, which was conducted between 18th October 2021 and 10th January 2022 among a cross-section of 5,796 adults (aged 16 years or over) living in households in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Adults invited to take part in the survey were selected from a sample of the Royal Mail's Postcode Address File (PAF) using a random probability sampling methodology. The survey was conducted using a push-to-web methodology. This is a quantitative data collection method in which participants are contacted using an offline means of contact and asked to complete an online survey. In this survey, participants were contacted by letter, with those who chose not to complete the online survey, after the initial reminder, subsequently sent a postal version. The survey explored participants' food-related knowledge, behaviours and attitudes.

About the Food Standards Agency

[The Food Standards Agency \(FSA\)](#) is an independent Government department working to protect public health and consumers' wider interests in relation to food in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The FSA's overarching mission is [food you can trust](#), which means the Agency strives towards a food system in which food is safe, food is what it says it is and food is healthier and more sustainable. As such, understanding consumers' attitudes, knowledge and behaviour in relation to food is of vital importance to the FSA.

Food and You 2 is the FSA's principal source of methodologically robust and representative evidence regarding consumers' attitudes, knowledge and behaviour in relation to food. This

survey has an important role in measuring the FSA's progress towards its strategic objectives, providing evidence to support its communication campaigns and other activities, and identifying topics for further research or action.

History of Food and You

Since its inception in 2000, the FSA has commissioned surveys to collect quantitative data on the public's reported behaviour, attitudes and knowledge relating to food. Between 2000 and 2007 the FSA conducted an annual Consumer Attitudes Survey (CAS). In 2010, this was replaced by the more rigorous 'Food and You', a biennial survey conducted face-to-face. Food and You became the FSA's flagship social survey. In addition, the FSA conducted regular tracking surveys including the biannual Public Attitudes Tracker and annual Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) Consumer Attitudes Tracker. The [FHRS](#) is a scheme that helps consumers choose where to eat out or shop for food by giving clear information about the businesses' hygiene standards. The scheme is run in partnership with local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

In 2018, the FSA's [Advisory Committee for Social Science \(ACSS\)](#) recommended that Food and You and the Public Attitudes Tracker be replaced with a new 'push-to-web' survey. Food and You 2 was commissioned in 2019 with data collection for Wave 1 commencing in July 2020.

Due to differences in the survey methodologies, comparisons cannot be made between Food and You or the Public Attitudes Tracker and Food and You 2, therefore Wave 1 of Food and You 2 in 2020 represented the start of a new data time series. Data are collected through Food and You 2 on a biannual basis.

Summary of the survey

Design

The research for Wave 4 was conducted using a push-to-web methodology with households selected to take part in the survey receiving a letter that invited them to complete the Food and You 2 survey online. Up to two adults in each household could take part. Fieldwork was conducted from 18th October 2021 to 10th January 2022. It is important to note that some restrictions were in place, during the fieldwork period due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In Northern Ireland and Wales, during the later period of fieldwork, restrictions were in place limiting the number of people that were allowed to sit together in indoor social gatherings, including inside food businesses. Face coverings were compulsory in hospitality settings in Wales and recommended based on the Northern Ireland and England government guidelines. There were also some other restrictions in place during the fieldwork periods for waves 1, 2 and 3. Restrictions may have impacted some participants' behaviours relating to food, and in turn may have impacted how participants answered certain questions and how many people responded to the survey.

In this study, the fieldwork was structured around four mailings:

- Mailing 1: Initial invitation letter inviting up to two individuals per household to complete the Food and You 2 survey online
- Mailing 2: Reminder letter
- Mailing 3: Second reminder, which included up to two versions of a postal questionnaire
- Mailing 4: Final reminder letter

Mailings 2, 3 and 4 were sent only to those who had not completed the survey since the previous mailing, and households where there was a known second participant who was eligible to take part but had not yet completed the questionnaire. There was a question which asked for the

number of adults in a household. If one person responded in a household and they stated that there was only one adult in their household, they would not be sent a reminder letter. If they stated that more than one adult was present in their household then that household would be sent a reminder, unless both adults had completed the survey.

Questionnaire

The survey included an online version of the questionnaire and two postal versions. On both versions there were slight differences between the questionnaires in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, reflecting the different regional government bodies, their roles and responsibilities. For participants in Wales, both the online and postal surveys were offered in Welsh and English. Participants could take part in Food and You 2 via the online survey or using a postal survey.

The online questionnaire was structured as a series of modules covering key areas of interest to the FSA. Most questions were behavioural, asking participants to state their usual activities or to recall recent actions. A smaller number of questions were attitudinal, asking participants to state their opinions on various subjects, or knowledge-based, for example asking participants what they think the temperature inside their fridge should be. The questionnaire included demographic questions to allow the FSA to conduct subgroup analysis on the data. When analysing data from Food and You 2: Wave 4 it is important to note that behaviours are self-reported and therefore may not reflect actual observable behaviour. Measures were taken to minimise the impact of social desirability (for instance, stating that results are reported anonymously) and to increase accuracy (including time frames), but there is likely to be some difference in self-reported and actual observable measures.

Due to the length and complexity of the online questionnaire it was not possible to include all questions in the postal version of the questionnaire. The postal version of the questionnaire needed to be shorter and less complex to encourage a high response rate, so two versions were produced. Key modules (e.g. About You) were asked in both versions of the postal surveys, while one postal questionnaire included questions from the Eating at Home module and the other included questions from the Eating Out module. Details of which modules were included in each postal version are outlined below:

- Introductory Questions
- Food Hypersensitivities (Core)
- Eating Out ('Eating Out' postal version only)
- Eating at Home (Core) ('Eating at Home' postal version only)
- Emerging Issues
- Food Concerns
- Food We Can Trust
- Household Food Security
- Defra Questions ('Eating at Home' postal version only)
- About You and Your Household

Whilst steps were taken to make the online and postal questionnaires as comparable as possible, there were minor differences in the order questions were asked, question wording and the way routing was applied. The online and postal versions of the survey can be found in appendices linked to this report.

Further information on the questions asked in each module and questionnaire development can be found in the 'Questionnaire development and cognitive testing' section.

Sampling

A random sample of addresses was drawn from the Royal Mail's Postcode Address File (PAF), a database of all known addresses in the UK. The sample was drawn from the address list for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The size of the sample from each region aimed to provide an estimated minimum of 1,000 responses in each of Wales and Northern Ireland, and 2,000 from England. Wales and Northern Ireland were therefore over-represented in the sample. The samples were drawn in this way to enable effective subgroup analysis on the data.

The sample was further stratified by local authority to ensure even geographical spread across the three countries. Within each local authority the sample was stratified by degree of deprivation to ensure a broadly representative sample in terms of income level. More details on this can be found in the 'Sampling' section.

In each selected household, up to two adults (aged 16 years or over) were invited to participate in the survey. In the interests of maximising the response rate, no selection criteria (other than being aged 16 years or over) were imposed regarding the selection of individuals within each household.

The sampling strategy for this survey is described in greater detail in the 'Sampling' section.

Weighting

Weighting is a process by which survey estimates are adjusted both to compensate for unequal selection probabilities and to reduce demographic discrepancies between the sample who completed a survey and the desired survey population - in this instance, the populations of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Following data collection, two kinds of weight were applied to the data. First, selection weights were calculated to equalise selection probabilities for individuals across all sampled households. Second, these weights were adjusted to ensure achieved sample estimates aligned with ONS country population totals for selected variables. Following this, additional weights were created for use in combined-country analyses by scaling the country sample sizes to be proportional to their corresponding country population values.

Finally, a 'Wales & Welsh-England' weight was calculated to permit comparisons to be made between England (excluding London) and Wales after controlling for differences in age, gender, ethnic group, household size, and urban-rural mix.

The weighting process is described in greater detail in the 'Weighting' section.