

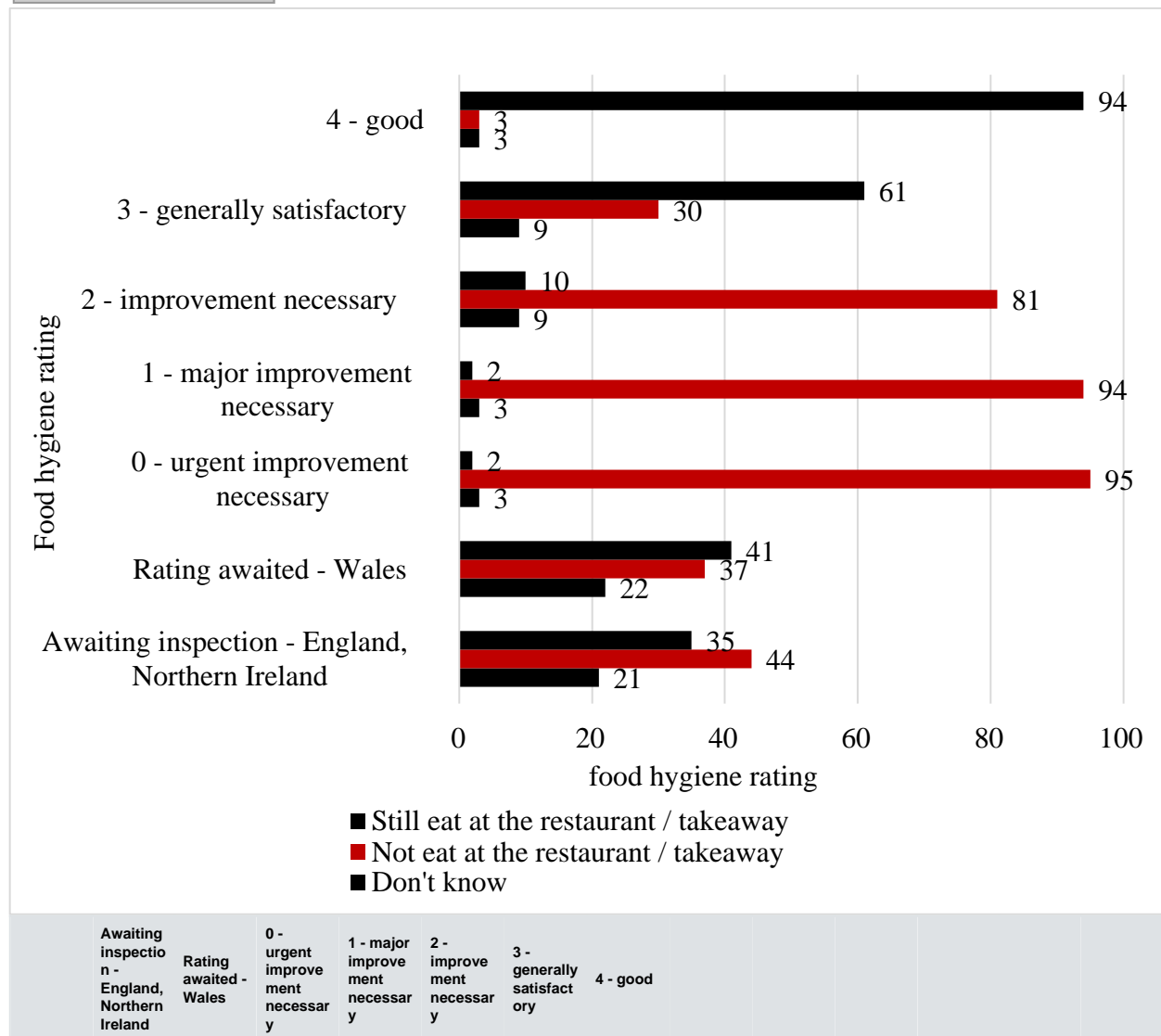
# Chapter 3: Use of the FHRs in decision making

## Acceptable food hygiene ratings

**Figure 13. Willingness to eat at a restaurant or takeaway with food hygiene ratings below 5.**

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Still eat at the restaurant / takeaway	35	41	2	2	10	61	94						
Not eat at the restaurant / takeaway	44	37	95	94	81	30	3						
Don't know	21	22	3	3	9	9	3						

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Respondents were asked to consider whether they would still eat or order food from a restaurant or takeaway if on arrival they saw a food hygiene rating sticker with a rating lower than the maximum rating of 5 (very good). Most respondents said they would still eat at a restaurant or takeaway if they saw a food hygiene rating sticker with a rating of 4 (good) (94%) or 3 (generally satisfactory) (61%). However, most respondents reported that they would not eat at a restaurant or takeaway if they saw a food hygiene rating sticker with a rating of 2 (improvement necessary) (81%), 1 (major improvement necessary) (94%) or 0 (urgent improvement necessary) (95%) (Figure 13) ([footnote 1](#)).

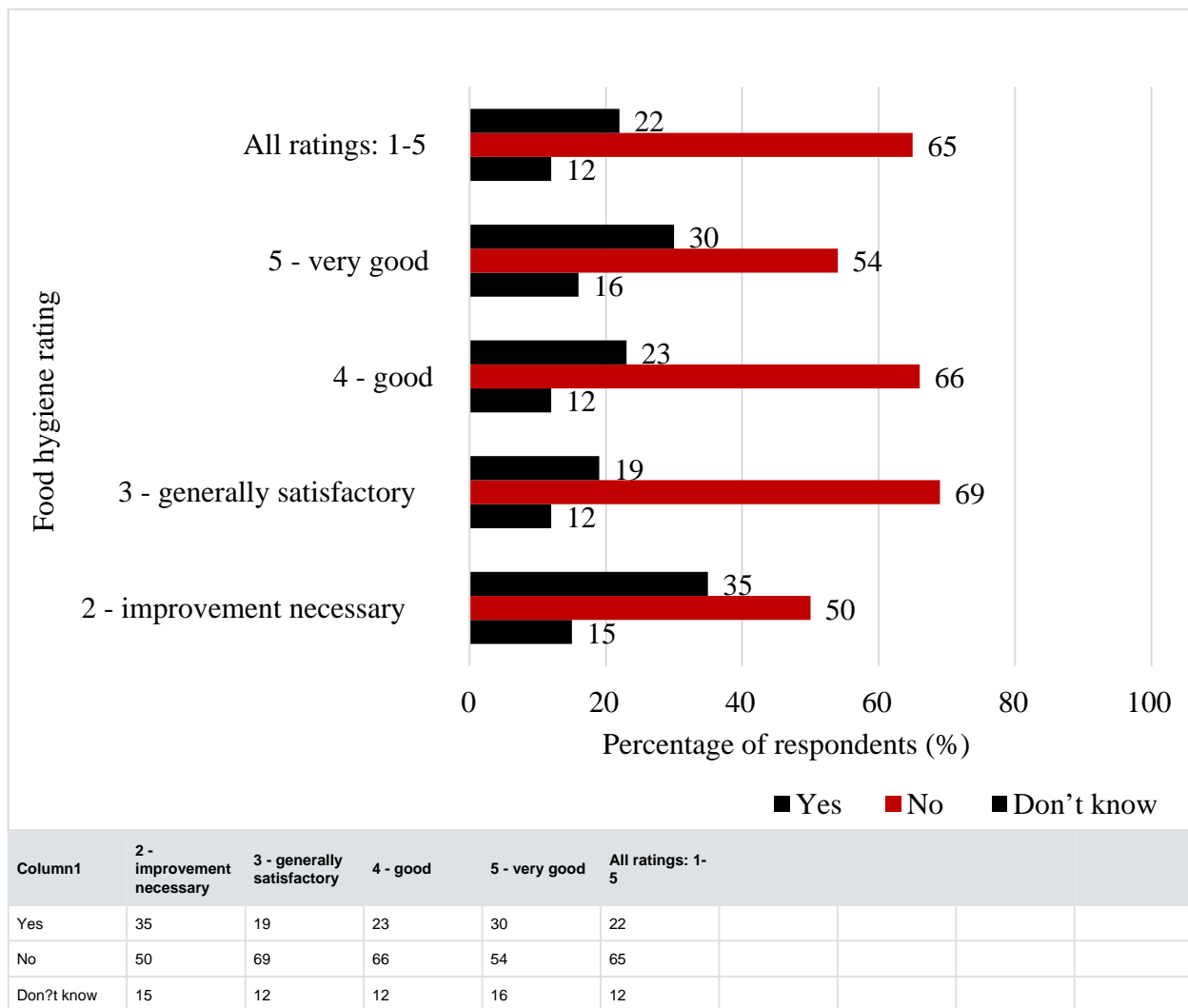
Respondents were asked what they would usually consider the lowest acceptable food hygiene rating when considering buying food from somewhere. Less than 1 in 10 (8%) respondents would only consider a rating of 5 (very good) as the lowest acceptable rating. Over 4 in 10 respondents (41%) would consider a rating of 4 (good) as the lowest acceptable rating, 40% of respondents would consider 3 (generally satisfactory), and 4% would consider 2 (improvement necessary) as the lowest acceptable rating. Approximately 1 in 100 (1%) respondents would consider a rating of 1 – major improvement necessary and 1% would consider a rating of 0 – urgent improvement necessary as the lowest acceptable rating ([footnote 2](#)).

### Situations which impact acceptable food hygiene ratings

## Figure 14. Willingness to buy food from a business with a food hygiene rating which is lower than their lowest acceptable rating.

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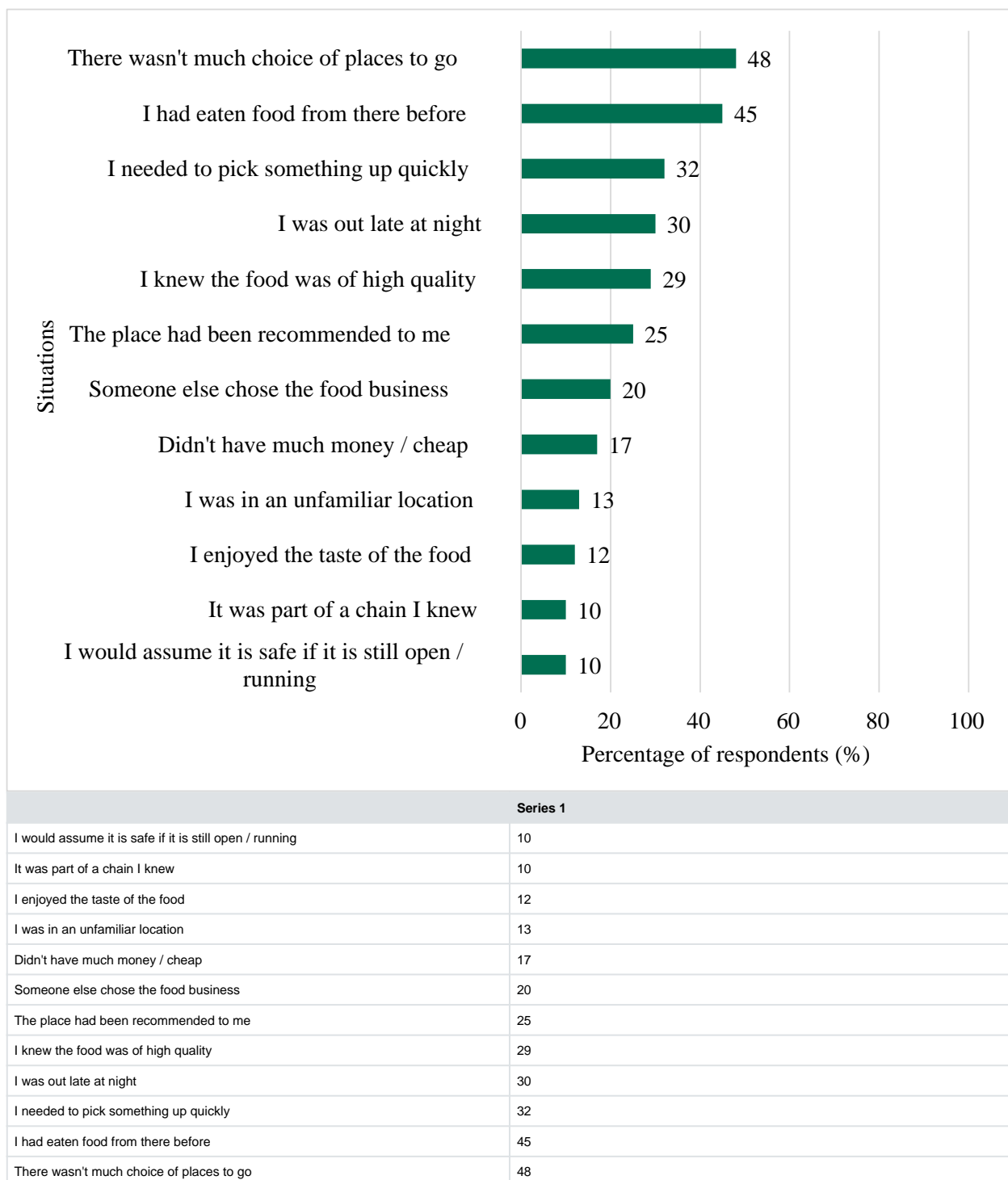
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Respondents were asked if they could think of a situation where they might decide to buy food from a business with a rating lower than their usual lowest acceptable rating. Across all ratings, around two-thirds (65%) of respondents could not think of a situation in which they might decide to buy food from a food business with a lower rating, 22% could think of a situation (Figure 14) ([footnote 3](#)).

**Figure 15. Situations where respondents might buy food from a food business with a food hygiene rating lower than their usual lowest acceptable rating.**

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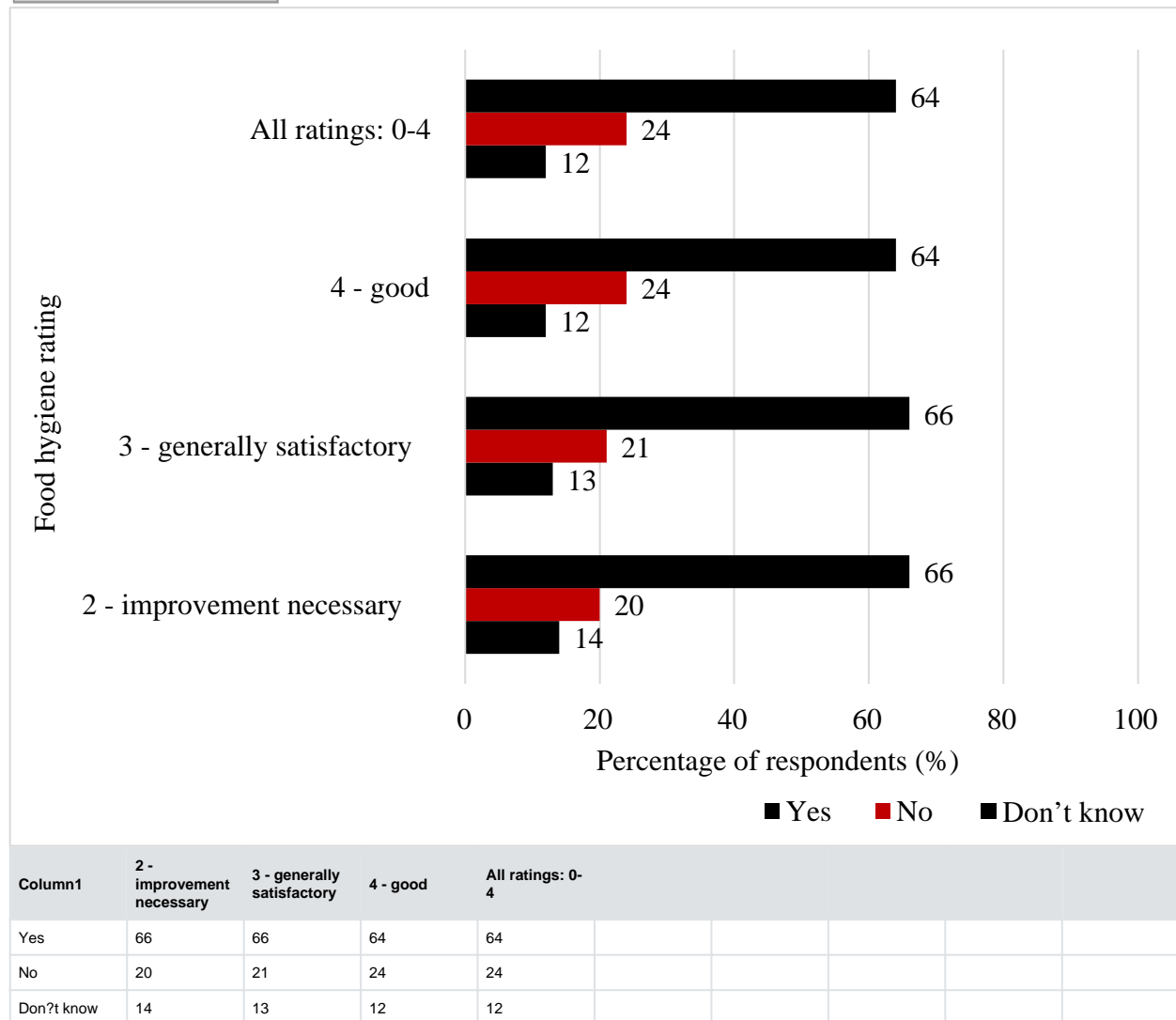
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Respondents who could think of a situation where they might buy food from a food business with a rating lower than what they would usually consider acceptable were asked what, from a given list, that situation would be. The most common situations were if there wasn't much choice of places to go (48%), if they had eaten food from there before (45%), if they needed to pick something up quickly (32%), or if they were out late at night (30%) (Figure 15) [\(footnote 4\)](#).

**Figure 16. Willingness to buy food from a business with a food hygiene rating which is higher than their usual lowest acceptable rating.**

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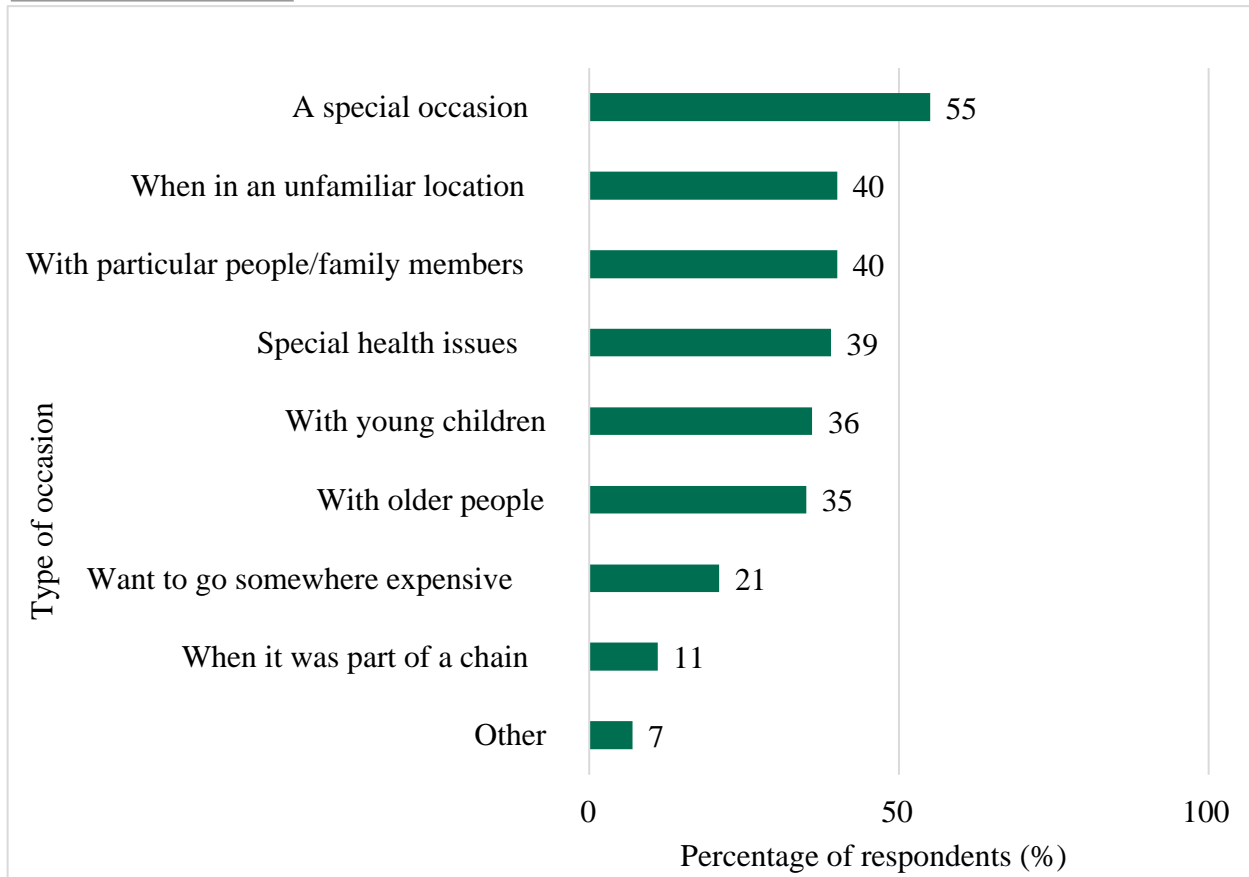
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Respondents were asked if they could think of an occasion in which they would only buy food from a business with a rating which is higher than their usual lowest acceptable rating. Overall, most respondents (64%) could think of a situation in which this would apply, and 24% of respondents could not. Most respondents who considered a rating of 2 (improvement necessary) (66%), 3 (generally satisfactory) (66%), or 4 (good) (64%) as generally acceptable could think of a situation in which they would only buy food from a food business with a higher rating (Figure 16) ([footnote 5](#)).

**Figure 17. Occasions where respondents would only buy food from a business with a food hygiene rating which is higher than the rating usually considered acceptable.**

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Occasion							
Other	7						
When it was part of a chain	11						
Want to go somewhere expensive	21						
With older people	35						
With young children	36						
Special health issues	39						
With particular people/family members	40						
When in an unfamiliar location	40						
A special occasion	55						

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Respondents who could think of an occasion where they would only buy food from a business with a rating higher than what they would usually consider acceptable were asked what, from a given list, that occasion would be. The most common occasions were special occasions (55%), when in an unfamiliar location (e.g., away with work or on holiday) (40%), when with particular people or family members (40%), or when the respondent or someone else had special health issues (e.g., illness or pregnancy) (39%) (Figure 17) [\(footnote 6\)](#) .

## Impact of food hygiene rating sticker on perceptions and behaviour

Respondents were asked if a food business did not have the food hygiene rating sticker present at the entrance to what extent, if at all, it would affect their decision to eat there. Of those who had heard of the FHRS, over half of respondents (57%) would be less likely (i.e., 'much less likely' or 'a little less likely') to eat at a food business that did not have the food hygiene rating sticker present at the entrance however, 28% of respondents reported that it would not make them any less likely to eat there.

A higher proportion of respondents living in Wales (66%) would be less likely (i.e., 'much less likely' or 'a little less likely') to eat at a food business which did not have the food hygiene rating sticker present at the entrance compared to those in England (56%). Around 6 in 10 (61%) respondents in Northern Ireland would be less likely to eat at a food business which did not have the food hygiene rating sticker present at the entrance \*\* [\(footnote 7\)](#).

Respondents were asked if, in the last 12 months, they had decided against using a food business because it did not display its food hygiene rating sticker. Of the respondents who had heard of the FHRS, 15% reported that they had decided against using a food business because it did not display its food hygiene rating sticker [\(footnote 8\)](#).

## Figure 18. Concerns respondents would have if a food business did not display their food hygiene rating sticker at the premises.

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Respondents were asked what concerns they would have if they visited a food business that did not display its food hygiene rating sticker on the premises. The most common concerns were that the food business had poor hygiene standards (48%) and that the food business had a poor or low food hygiene rating and was trying to hide it (45%). Over a quarter (27%) of respondents would not notice the food hygiene rating sticker was missing and 4% would not be concerned about anything if the sticker was not displayed (Figure 18) [\(footnote 9\)](#).

1. Question: For each of the following hygiene ratings, please state whether you would still eat at the restaurant or takeaway on seeing the rating, or whether you would decide not to eat at the restaurant or takeaway. Responses: I would still eat at the restaurant / takeaway, I would not eat at the restaurant / takeaway, Don't know. Base= see FHRS11\_rebased table for base numbers, all online respondents and those answering the Eating Out postal questionnaire who have heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
2. 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. Base= 4269, all online respondents and those answering the Eating Out postal questionnaire, who have heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, excluding 'not stated'.
3. Question: Can you think of a situation in which you might decide to buy food from a food business with a rating of lower than ... (rating)? Responses: Yes, No, Don't know. Base= 3289, all online respondents who said they consider an FHRS rating of ... (rating) ... acceptable when buying food from somewhere, excluding those who have not heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Please note: The score presented was the response from the previous 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?'
4. Question: When would that be? Responses: If there wasn't much choice of places to go, If I had eaten food from there before, If I was out late at night, If I knew the food was of high quality, If I needed to pick something up quickly, If it was a place that had been recommended to me, If I didn't have much money to spend\wanted somewhere cheap, If someone else in my party chose this food business, If I enjoyed the taste of the food from the place, If I was in an unfamiliar location (away with work, on holiday, etc), If it was part of a chain I knew, Because I would assume it is safe if it is still open\running, If the food business served a particular type of food (e.g. Cuisine or vegetarian / vegan options), If I was taking food away rather than eating in, Other, Don't know. Base = 700, all online respondents who can think of a situation where they might buy food from a food business with a rating lower than what they would usually consider acceptable, excluding those who have not heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
5. Question: Can you think of an occasion where you would only buy food from a food business with a rating of higher than ...(score)? Responses: Yes, No, Don't know. Base = 3092, all online respondents who said they would eat at a food business with an FHRS rating of .... (score), excluding those who have not heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Please note: The score presented was the response from the previous 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?'

6. Question: When would that be? Responses: When it's a special occasion (birthday, anniversary, celebration, etc), When I am with particular people/family members, When I was in an unfamiliar location (away with work, on holiday, etc), When I or someone else had special health issues (illness, pregnancy, etc), When I am taking older people, When I am taking (young) children, When I want to go somewhere expensive, When it was part of a chain, Other. Base = 1907, all online respondents who said they would only eat somewhere with a higher rating, excluding those who have not heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
7. Question: If a food business does not have the FHRS sticker present at the entrance to what extent, if at all, will this affect your decision to eat there? Responses: It would make me much less likely to eat there, It would make me a little less likely to eat there, It would not make me any less likely to eat there, Don't know. Base = 4350, all online respondents and all those who completed the Eating Out postal questionnaire who have heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
8. Question: In the last 12 months, did you ever decide against using a food business, because it did not display its Food Hygiene Rating Scheme sticker? Responses: Yes, No, Don't know/ can't remember. Base = 4345, all online respondents and those answering the Eating Out postal questionnaire who have heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
9. Question: If you visited a food business that did not display their Food Hygiene Rating Scheme sticker on the premises, would you be concerned about any of the following? Responses: The food business had a low/poor Food Hygiene Rating and was trying to hide it, That the food business had poor hygiene standards, Whether the food business has been inspected by the relevant authorities or not, There would be a higher risk of food poisoning/illness/infection when eating there, The safety of eating at the food business, The food business doesn't meet legal requirements, I would not notice that the sticker is missing, I would not be concerned about anything, Other, Don't know. Base = 4350, all online respondents and those answering the Eating Out postal questionnaire who have heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, excluding 'not stated'.