

FY2 Wave 3-4 NI: Executive Summary

Results available: Results available

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

Research topics: [Social science](#)

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Northern Ireland

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Overview of Food and You 2

Food and You 2 is a biannual representative sample survey, recognised as an official statistic, commissioned by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The survey measures self-reported

consumer knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to food safety and other food issues amongst adults in Wales, England, and Northern Ireland.

Food and You 2 uses a methodology, known as 'push-to-web', which is primarily carried out online.

Fieldwork for [Food and You 2: Wave 3](#) was conducted between 28th April and 25th June 2021. A total of 6,271 adults from 4,338 households across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland completed the survey. A total of 1,626 adults in Northern Ireland completed the survey.

Fieldwork for [Food and You 2: Wave 4](#) was conducted between 18th October 2021 and 10th January 2022. A total of 5,796 adults from 4,026 households across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland completed the survey. A total of 1,575 adults in Northern Ireland completed the survey.

The modules presented in this report include 'Food you can trust', 'Concerns about food', 'Food security', 'Eating out and takeaways', 'Food allergies, intolerances and other hypersensitivities', 'Eating at home', 'Food shopping and labelling' and 'Healthy eating'.

Findings presented in this report refer to data collected in Northern Ireland unless otherwise specified.

Food you can trust

Confidence in food safety and authenticity

- most respondents (94%) reported that they were confident that the food they buy is safe to eat.
- more than 8 in 10 (88%) respondents were confident that the information on food labels is accurate.

Confidence in the food supply chain

- around three quarters of respondents (76%) reported that they had confidence in the food supply chain.
- respondents were more likely to report confidence in farmers (90%), shops and supermarkets (85%), and restaurants (85%) than in takeaways (68%), and food delivery services for example, Just Eat, Deliveroo, Uber Eats (47%).

Awareness, trust and confidence in the FSA

- most respondents (91%) had heard of the FSA.
- most (81%) respondents who had at least some knowledge of the FSA reported that they trusted the FSA to make sure 'food is safe and what it says it is'.

- around 9 in 10 (86%) respondents reported that they were confident that the FSA (or the government agency responsible for food safety) can be relied upon to protect the public from food-related risks (such as food poisoning or allergic reactions from food), 84% were confident that the FSA is committed to communicating openly with the public about food-related risks, and 85% were confident that the FSA takes appropriate action if a food-related risk is identified

Concerns about food

- most respondents (88%) had no concerns about the food they eat, and only 12% of respondents reported that they had a concern.
- respondents were asked to indicate if they had concerns about a number of food-related issues, from a list of options. The most common concerns related to food waste (55%), the amount of sugar in food (54%) and food prices (52%).

Food security

- across Northern Ireland, England and Wales, 82% of respondents were classified as food secure (70% high, 12% marginal) and 18% of respondents were classified as food insecure (10% low, 7% very low).

Eating out and takeaways

- around 6 in 10 respondents had ordered a takeaway directly from a takeaway shop or restaurant (59%), from a café, coffee shop or sandwich shop (either to eat in or take out) (58%) or eaten out in a restaurant (57%). Less than 1 in 10 (8%) respondents had not eaten food from any of the listed food businesses in the previous 4 weeks.
- most respondents (92%) reported that they had heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS). Almost three quarters (65%) of respondents reported that they had heard of the FHRS and had at least a bit of knowledge about it.

Food allergies, intolerances and other hypersensitivities

- most respondents (79%) reported that they did not have a food hypersensitivity. 10% of respondents reported that they had a food intolerance, 3% reported having a food allergy, and 1% reported having coeliac disease.

Eating at home

Use-by dates

- over two thirds (69%) of respondents identified the use-by date as the information which shows that food is no longer safe to eat.
- almost three-quarters (71%) of respondents reported that they always check use-by dates before they cook or prepare food.

- most respondents reported that they had not eaten shellfish (89%), other fish (86%) and smoked fish (80%) past the use-by date in the previous month.

Food shopping and labelling

Where do respondents buy food from?

- most respondents reported that they bought food from a supermarket or mini supermarket (80%), or local / corner shops, newsagents or garage forecourts (65%) about once a week or more often.
- most respondents reported that they often (i.e. always or most of the time) check the use-by (90%) or best before (90%) date when they buy food.

Confidence in allergen labelling

- most respondents (84%) who go food shopping and take into consideration a person who has a food allergy or intolerance were confident that the information provided on food labelling allows them to identify foods that will cause a bad or unpleasant physical reaction.
- respondents who bought food loose were more confident in identifying these foods at independent food shops (68%), in-store at a supermarket (67%) and when buying food from a supermarket online (64%). However, respondents were less confident when buying food from food markets or stalls (51%).

Sustainability and environmental impact

- almost a third (28%) of respondents often (i.e. always or most of the time) buy food which has a low environmental impact.
- over half of respondents thought that eating less processed food (55%) contributed most to a sustainable diet, and around 4 in 10 respondents thought that minimising food waste (44%) and eating more fruit and/or vegetables (44%) contributed most to a sustainable diet.
- most (60%) respondents thought that buying locally produced food or food that is in season or buying foods with minimal or no packaging (43%) contributed most to someone making sustainable food shopping choices. However, 10% of respondents reported that they did not know what contributed most to someone making sustainable food shopping choices.

Healthy eating

- when asked how healthy they thought their usual diet was, most respondents reported that what they usually eat is fairly healthy (67%), with a further 20% reporting that what they eat is neither healthy or unhealthy.
- most respondents (79%) reported that they ate fruit and vegetables every day or most days.
- eating fruit and vegetables (94%), drinking plenty of water (70%), eating less salt (61%) and eating fish (61%) were considered the most important factors for people to have a healthy diet.

[Errata regarding Figure 4 in the Food and You 2: Northern Ireland Wave 3-4 Key Findings report | Food Standards Agency](#)