

FY2 Wave 3-4 NI: Chapter 3 Food Security

“Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” World Food Summit, 1996.

Food and You 2 uses the [U.S. Adult Food Security Survey Module](#) developed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to measure consumers' food security.

More information on how food security is measured and how classifications are assigned and defined can be found in Annex A and the [USDA Food Security website](#).

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) ([footnote 1](#)).

Figure 5 Food security in Northern Ireland, England and Wales

[Change to table and accessible view](#)

[Change to chart view](#)



| COUNTRY | High | Marginal | Low | Very low |
|------------------|------|----------|-----|----------|
| Northern Ireland | 67 | 16 | 11 | 6 |
| England | 71 | 12 | 10 | 7 |
| Wales | 70 | 13 | 8 | 9 |

Download this chart

[Image .csv](#)

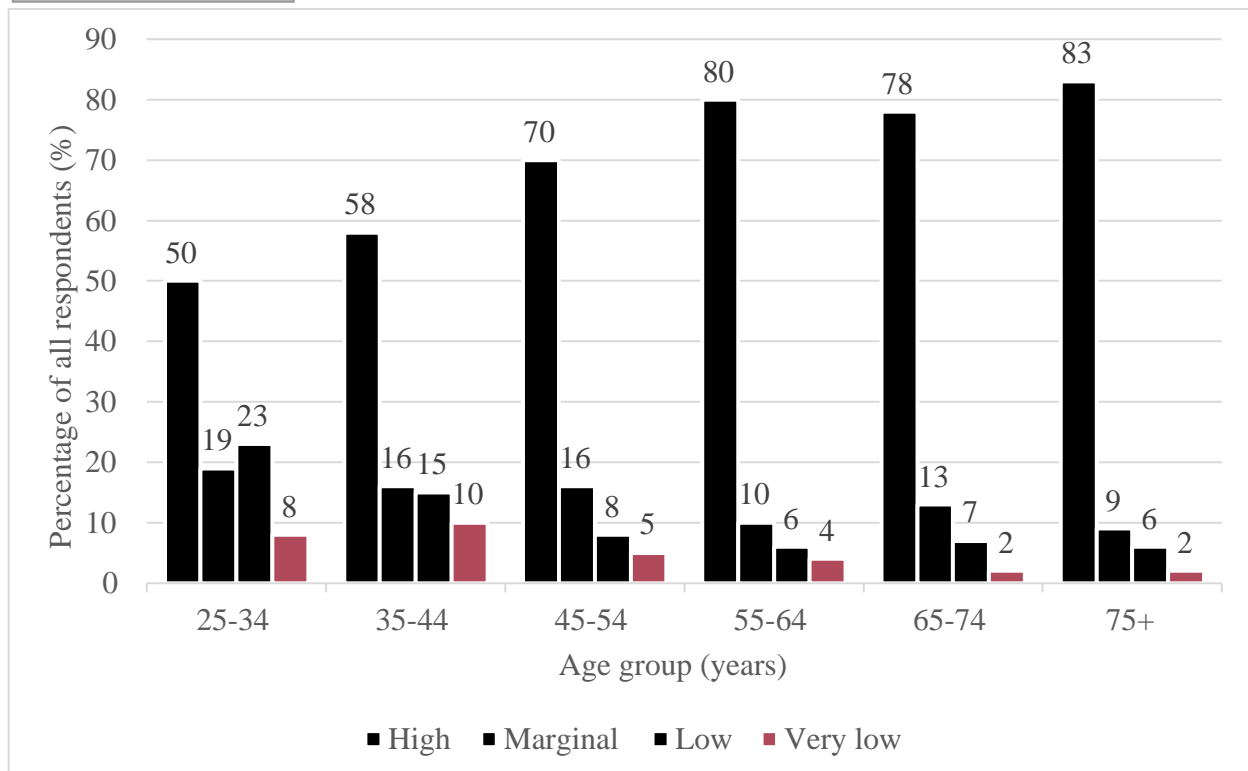
Source: Food and You 2: Wave 4

Food security levels were comparable across Northern Ireland, England, and Wales**. Around 8 in 10 respondents were food secure (i.e. had high or marginal food security) in Northern Ireland (82%), England (82%), and Wales (83%). Approximately 1 in 6 respondents were food insecure (i.e. had low or very low food security) in Northern Ireland (18%), England (18%), and Wales (17%) (Figure 5).

Figure 6 Food security by age group.

[Change to table and accessible view](#)

[Change to chart view](#)



| AGE | High | Marginal | Low | Very low |
|-------|------|----------|-----|----------|
| 25-34 | 50 | 19 | 23 | 8 |
| 35-44 | 58 | 16 | 15 | 10 |
| 45-54 | 70 | 16 | 8 | 5 |
| 55-64 | 80 | 10 | 6 | 4 |
| 65-74 | 78 | 13 | 7 | 2 |
| 75+ | 83 | 9 | 6 | 2 |

Download this chart

[Image .csv](#)

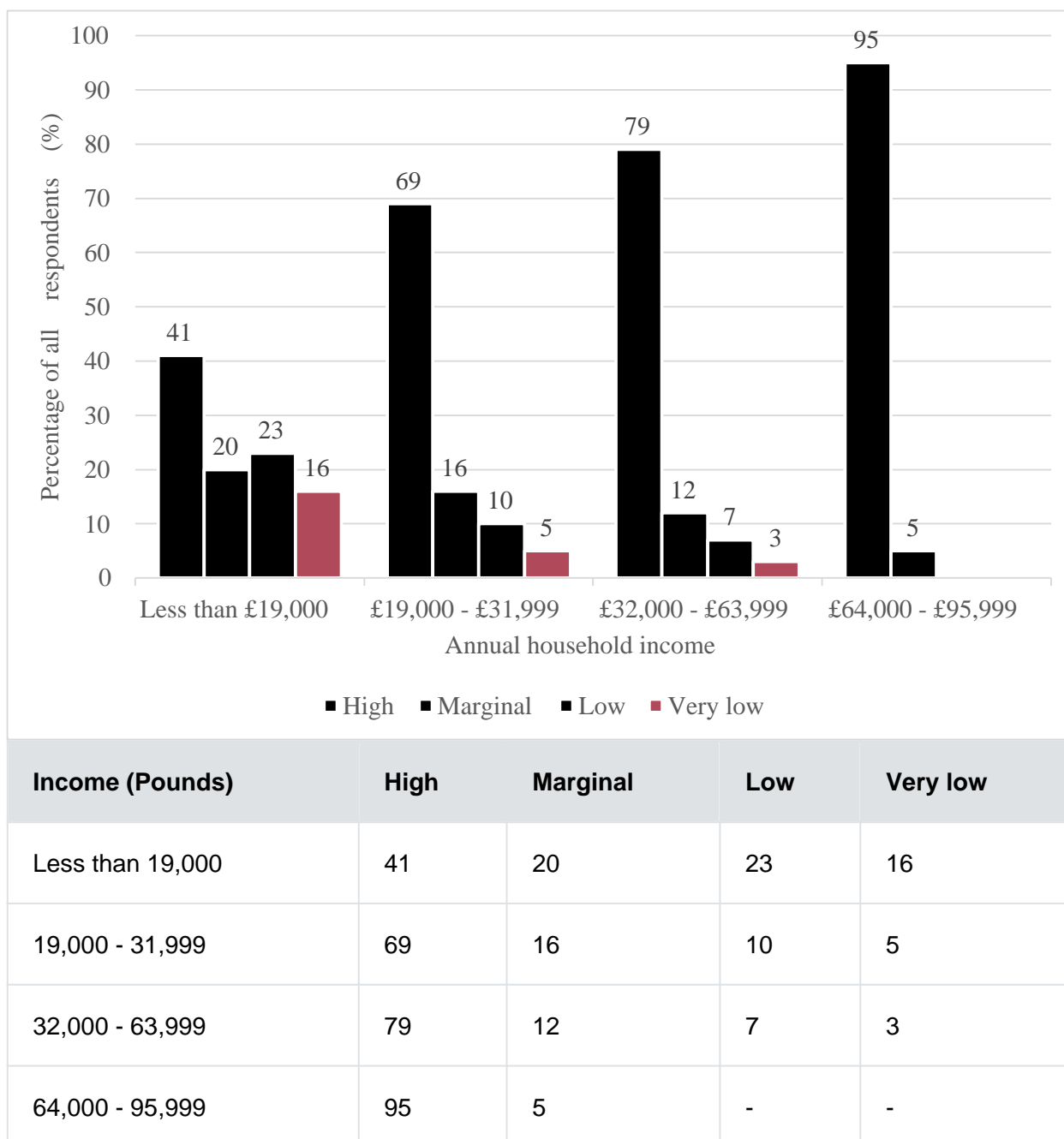
Source: Food and You 2: Wave 4

Within Northern Ireland food security varied by age group with older adults being more likely to report that they were food secure and less likely to report that they were food insecure than younger adults. For example, 31% of respondents aged 25-34 years were food insecure compared to 8% of those aged 75 years and over (Figure 6) [\(footnote 2\)](#).

Figure 7 Food security by annual household income

Change to table and accessible view

Change to chart view



Download this chart

[Image .csv](#)

Source: Food and You 2: Wave 4

Food security was associated with household income. Respondents with a higher household income were more likely to report food security than those with a lower income. For example, 95% of respondents with a household income between £64,000 and £95,999 reported high food security, compared to 41% of those with an income below £19,000 (Figure 7).

The reported level of food security also varied between different categories of people in the following ways:

- Household size: one person (86%) and 2 person households (87%) were more likely to report that they were food secure compared households with 5 or more people (72%).

- Children under 16 in household: 87% of households without children under 16 years reported that they were food secure compared to 72% of households with children under 16 years.
- NS-SEC: food security was more likely to be reported by respondents in managerial, administrative and professional occupations (88%) compared to those who were in many other occupational groups. For example, 70% of those in semi-routine and routine occupations were food secure [\(footnote 3\)](#).
- Long term health condition: respondents who did not have a long-term health condition (86%) were more likely to report being food secure compared to those who had a long-term health condition (76%).
- NIMDM: respondents who lived in less deprived areas were more likely to report being food secure compared to those who lived in more deprived areas. For example, 90% of those who lived in the least deprived area (NIMDM 5) were food secure compared to 75% of those who lived in the least deprived area (NIMDM 1).

Food bank use

Respondents were asked if they or anyone else in their household had received a free parcel of food from a food bank or other emergency food provider in the last 12 months. Most respondents (92%) reported that they had not used a food bank or other emergency food provider in the last 12 months, with 4% of respondents reporting that they had [\(footnote 4\)](#).

School meals, meal clubs and Healthy Start vouchers

Respondents with children aged 7-15 years in their household were asked whether these children receive free school meals. Most respondents (71%) with a child(ren) aged 7-15 years in their household reported that the child(ren) do not receive free school meals. One in four (25%) respondents reported that the child or children receive free school meals [\(footnote 5\)](#).

Respondents with children aged 7-15 years in their household were asked whether the child(ren) had attended a school club where a meal was provided in the last 12 months. Most respondents (74%) reported that the child(ren) in their household had not attended one of these clubs in the last 12 months. One in seven (15%) respondents reported that the child(ren) in their household had attended a breakfast club before school, 6% reported that the child(ren) had attended an after-school club where they received a meal, and 5% reported that the child(ren) had attended a lunch and activity club held during the school holidays [\(footnote 6\)](#).

Respondents who had children aged 0-4 years in their household or who were pregnant were asked whether they receive Healthy Start vouchers. Most respondents (88%) reported that they do not receive Healthy Start vouchers, with 7% of respondents reporting that they do [\(footnote 7\)](#).

1. Question/Responses: Derived variable, see USDA Food Security guidance and Technical Report. Base is 5796, all respondents. Wave 4. Please note: See Annex A for information about the classifications and definitions of food security levels.
2. Data for respondents aged 16-24 years is not reported due to a small number of respondents being in this group.
3. Data for long term unemployed and/or had never worked and full-time students were not reported due to a small number of respondents being in this group.

4. Question: In the last 12 months, have you, or anyone else in your household, received a free parcel of food from a food bank or other emergency food provider? Responses Yes, No, Prefer not to say. Base is 1017, all online respondents in Northern Ireland. Wave 4.

5.

Question: Does any child receive free school meals? Responses: Yes, No, Don't know, Prefer not to say. Base is 331, all respondents who had child(ren) aged 7 - 15 living in the household in Northern Ireland. Wave 4. The eligibility criteria for free school meals varies between England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

6. Question: Did your child/any of the children in your household attend any of the following in the past 12 months? Responses: A breakfast club before school, An after-school club where they also received a meal (tea/dinner), A lunch and activity club that ran only during school holidays, None of these, Don't know. Base is 266, all respondents with child(ren) aged 5 - 15 in the household in Northern Ireland. Wave 4.

7. Question: Do you receive Healthy Start vouchers for yourself or your children? Responses: Yes, No, Don't know, Prefer not to say. Base is 126, all online respondents who are pregnant or have child(ren) aged 0 - 4 in household, and all those who completed the paper questionnaire and have child(ren) aged 0 - 4 years living in the household in Northern Ireland. Wave 4.