

# Wave 5: Chapter 1 Food you can trust

## Introduction

The FSA's overarching mission is 'food you can trust'. The FSA's vision is a food system in which:

- Food is safe
- Food is what it says it is
- Food is healthier and more sustainable

This chapter provides an overview of respondents' awareness of and trust in the FSA, as well as their confidence in food safety and the accuracy of information provided on food labels.

## Confidence in food safety and authenticity

Most respondents reported confidence (for example, were very confident or fairly confident) in food safety and authenticity; 91% of respondents reported that they were confident that the food they buy is safe to eat, and 86% of respondents were confident that the information on food labels is accurate ([footnote 1](#)).

Confidence in food safety varied between different categories of people in the following ways:

- NS-SEC ([footnote 2](#)): respondents in some occupational groups (for example, 95% of small employers and account workers) were more likely to be confident that the food they buy is safe to eat than respondents who were long term unemployed and/or had never worked (77%).

Confidence in the accuracy of information on food labels varied between different categories of people in the following ways:

- annual household income: respondents with an income over £96,000 (93%) were more likely to report confidence in the accuracy of food labels than those with an income of less than £19,000 (83%)
- food security: respondents with high food security (90%) were more likely to report confidence in the accuracy of food labels than those with low (80%) or very low (77%) food security. Most respondents with marginal food security (86%) were confident in the accuracy of food labels
- ethnic group: white respondents (89%) were more likely to report confidence in the accuracy of food labels than Asian or Asian British (78%) respondents.

## Confidence in the food supply chain

Around three quarters of respondents (74%) reported that they had confidence (for example, very confident or fairly confident) in the food supply chain ([footnote 3](#)).

Confidence in the food supply chain varied between different categories of people in the following ways:

- age group: respondents aged between 55 and 79 years (for example, 80% of those aged 55-64 years) were more likely to report confidence in the food supply chain than younger adults (for example, 69% of those aged 16-24 years)
- NS-SEC: respondents in lower supervisory and technical occupations (82%) were more likely to report confidence in the food supply chain than those in managerial, administrative, and professional occupations (72%), full-time students (72%) and those who were long term unemployed and/or had never worked (68%)
- food security: respondents with a high level of food security (77%) were more likely to report confidence in the food supply chain than respondents with very low food security (67%)
- ethnic group: white respondents (77%) were more likely to report confidence in the food supply chain than Asian or Asian British respondents (67%).

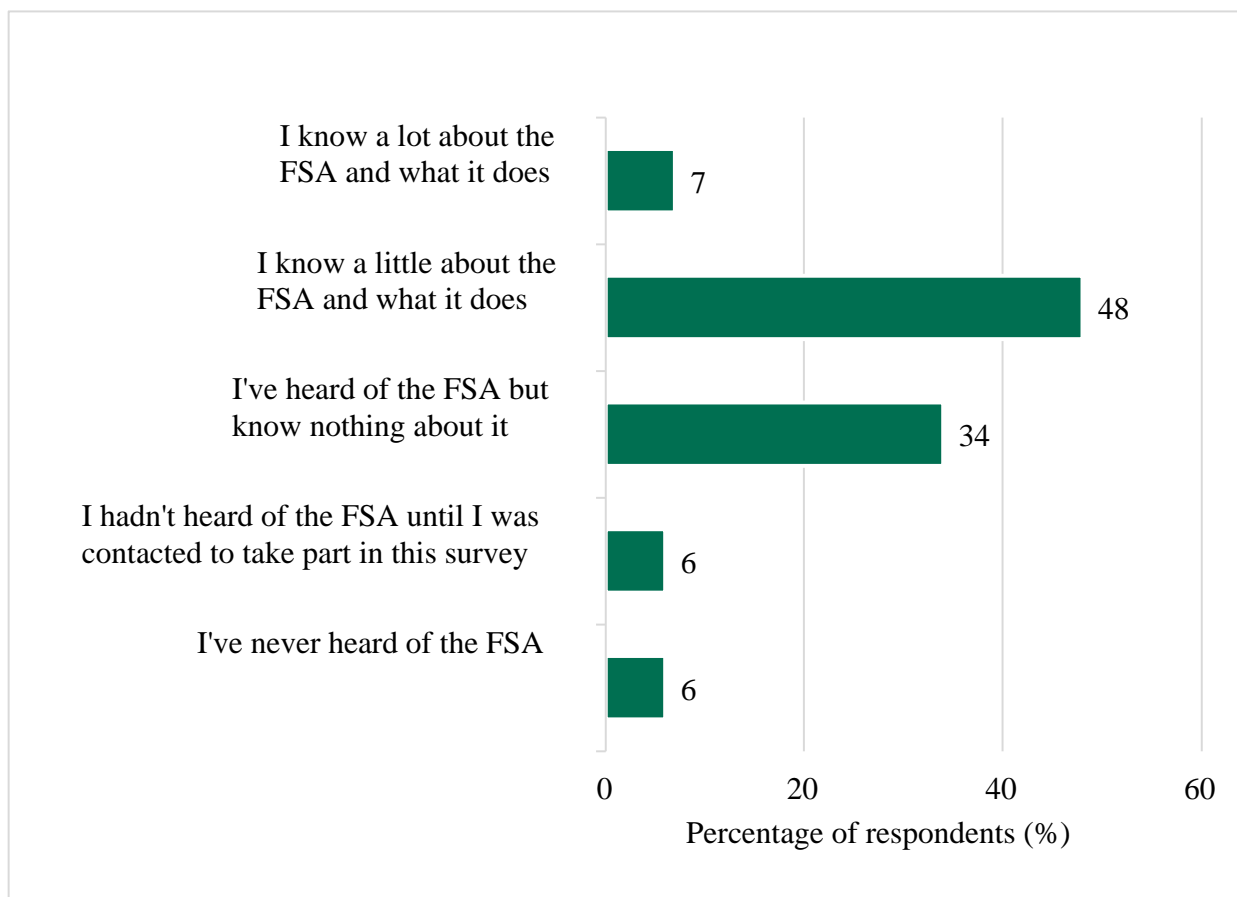
## Awareness, trust and confidence in the FSA

Most respondents (91%) had heard of the FSA ([footnote 4](#)).

Awareness of the FSA varied between different categories of people in the following ways:

- age group: older respondents were more likely to have heard of the FSA than younger respondents. For example, 97% of those aged 55-64 years had heard of the FSA, compared to 77% of those aged 16-24 years
- annual household income: respondents with an income of more than £32,000 (for example, 97% of those with an income of £32,000-£63,999) were more likely to have heard of the FSA than those with an income of less than £19,000 (82%)
- NS-SEC: respondents in most occupational groups (for example, 96% of small employers and account workers) were more likely to have heard of the FSA compared to full-time students (73%)
- ethnic group: white respondents (94%) were more likely to have heard of the FSA compared to Asian or Asian British respondents (77%)
- responsibility for cooking: respondents who were responsible for cooking (92%) were more likely to have heard of the FSA than those who do not cook (81%)
- responsibility for food shopping: respondents who were responsible for food shopping (92%) were more likely to have heard of the FSA than those who never shop for food (77%).

**Figure 1. Knowledge about the Food Standards Agency**



Source Food and You 2: Wave 5

Most respondents reported at least some knowledge of the FSA; 7% reported that they knew a lot about the FSA and what it does, and 48% reported that they knew a little about the FSA and what it does. Around a third (34%) of respondents reported that they had heard of the FSA but knew nothing about it, 6% had not heard of the FSA until being contacted to take part in Food and You 2, and 6% had never heard of the FSA (Figure 1) [\(footnote 5\)](#).

Knowledge of the FSA varied between different categories of people in the following ways:

- age group: respondents aged between 35 and 79 years (for example, 65% of those aged 45-54 years) were more likely to report knowledge of the FSA compared to younger respondents (39% of those aged 16-24 years) or the oldest respondents (44% of those aged 80 years and over)
- annual household income: respondents with a higher income were more likely to report knowledge of the FSA compared to those with a lower income. For example, 67% of those with an income of more than £96,000 reported knowledge of the FSA compared to 50% of those with an income of less than £19,000
- NS-SEC: respondents in managerial, administrative, and professional occupations (63%) were more likely to report knowledge of the FSA than those who were in intermediate occupations (48%), or semi-routine and routine occupations (47%). Those who were long term unemployed and/or never worked (36%) or full-time students (34%) were least likely to report knowledge of the FSA
- ethnic group: white respondents (57%) were more likely to report knowledge of the FSA than Asian or Asian British respondents (41%)
- food hypersensitivity: respondents with a food intolerance (65%) or allergy (64%) were more likely to report knowledge of the FSA compared to who did not have a food hypersensitivity (54%)

- responsibility for cooking: respondents who were responsible for cooking (57%) were more likely to report knowledge of the FSA compared to respondents who do not cook (37%)
- responsibility for shopping: respondents who were responsible for shopping (57%) were more likely to report knowledge of the FSA compared to respondents who never shop (37%).

Respondents who had at least some knowledge of the FSA were asked how much they trusted the FSA to do its job, that is to make sure food is safe and what it says it is; 75% of these respondents reported that they trusted the FSA to do this [\(footnote 6\)](#).

Most 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) (80%), were confident that the FSA is committed to communicating openly with the public about food-related risks (76%), and were confident that the FSA takes appropriate action if a food-related risk is identified (80%) [\(footnote 7\)](#)

1. Question: How confident are you that... a) the food you buy is safe to eat. b) the information on food labels is accurate (for example, ingredients, nutritional information, country of origin). Responses: very confident, fairly confident, not very confident, not at all confident, it varies, don't know. Base= 6770, all respondents.
2. [The National Statistics Socio-economic classification](#) (NS-SEC) is a classification system which provides an indication of socio-economic position based on occupation and employment status.
3. Question: How confident are you in the food supply chain? That is all the processes involved in bringing food to your table. Responses: very confident, fairly confident, not very confident, not at all confident, it varies, don't know. Base= 6770, all respondents.
4. Question: Which of the following, if any, have you heard of? Please select all that apply. Response: Food Standards Agency (FSA), (England) Public Health England (PHE), (England) Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), (England) The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, (England) Environment Agency, (England and Wales) Health and Safety Executive (HSE), (Wales) Public Health Wales (PHW), (Wales) Natural Resources Wales, (NI) Public Health Agency (PHA), (NI) Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), (NI) Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI), (NI) Safefood, None of these. Base= 4041, all online respondents. Please note: All consumers taking part in the survey had received an invitation to take part in the survey from Ipsos which mentioned the FSA. An absence of response indicates the organisation had not been heard of by the respondent or a non-response.
5. Question: How much, if anything, do you know about the Food Standards Agency, also known as the FSA? Response: I know a lot about the FSA and what it does, I know a little about the FSA and what it does, I've heard of the FSA but know nothing about it, I hadn't heard of the FSA until I was contacted to take part in this survey, I've never heard of the FSA. Base= 6770, all respondents. Please note: All consumers taking part in the survey had received an invitation to take part in the survey which mentioned the FSA.

6.

Question: 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. Responses: I trust it a lot, I trust it, I neither trust nor distrust it, I distrust it, I distrust it a lot, don't know. Base= 3930, all respondents who know a lot or a little about the FSA and what it does. Please note: 'I trust it a lot' and 'I trust it' referred to as trust.

7. Question: How confident are you that the Food Standards Agency / the government agency responsible for food safety in England, Wales and Northern Ireland...a) Can be relied upon to protect the public from food-related risks (such as food poisoning or allergic reactions from food). b) Is committed to communicating openly with the public about food-related risks. c) Takes appropriate action if a food related risk is identified? Responses: very confident, fairly confident, not very confident, not at all confident, don't know. Base= 6770, all respondents. Please note: 'very confident' and 'fairly confident' referred to as confident. Respondents with little or no knowledge of the FSA were asked about 'the government agency responsible for food safety', those with at least some knowledge of the FSA were asked about the FSA.