

F&Y2 trends: Chapter 2: Concerns about food

Introduction

The FSA's role, set out in [law](#), is to safeguard public health and protect the interests of consumers in relation to food. The FSA uses the Food and You 2 survey to monitor consumers' concerns about food issues, such as food safety and production, nutrition, and food-related behaviours in the home.

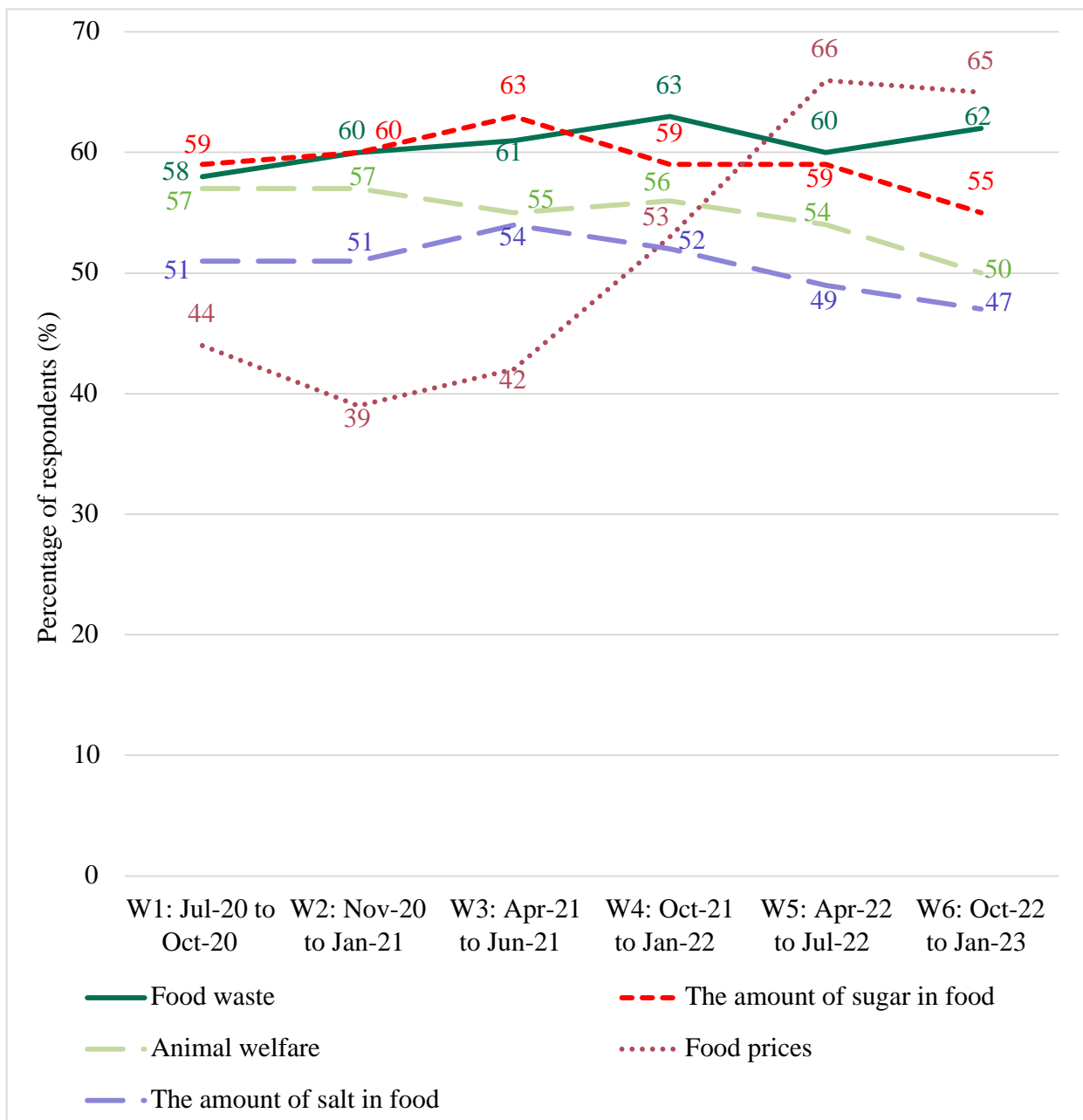
This chapter provides an overview of respondents' concerns about food between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023).

Common concerns

Figure 7. Top 5 prompted food-related concerns.

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	Food waste	The amount of sugar in food	Animal welfare	Food prices	The amount of salt in food	The amount of fat in food	Hormones, steroids or antibiotics in food
W1: Jul-20 to Oct-20	58	59	57	44	51	52	53

	Food waste	The amount of sugar in food	Animal welfare	Food prices	The amount of salt in food	The amount of fat in food	Hormones, steroids or antibiotics in food
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	60	60	57	39	51	51	52
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21	61	63	55	42	54	55	47
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	63	59	56	53	52	52	50
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	60	59	54	66	49	50	46
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	62	55	50	65	47	44	36

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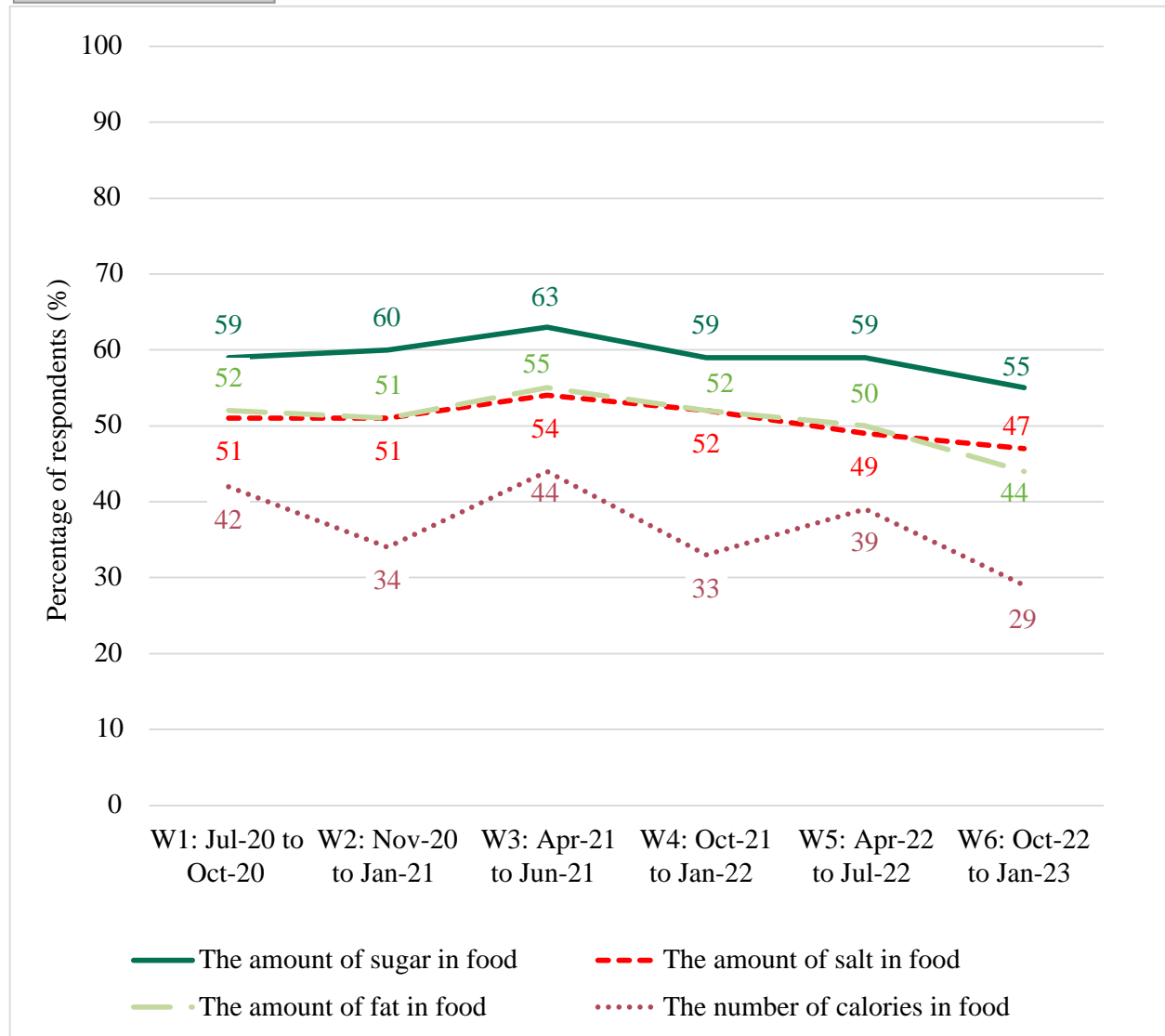
Respondents were asked to indicate if they had concerns about several food-related issues, from a list of options. Between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023) the most common concerns have varied. Between Wave 1 and Wave 4 (October

2021 to January 2022) the most common concerns were food waste and the amount of sugar in food. Since Wave 4, there has been a notable increase in concern around food prices, with this becoming the most prevalent concern in Wave 5 and 6 (Figure 7) ([footnote 1](#)).

Figure 8. Prompted food-related concerns related to nutrition.

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	The amount of sugar in food	The amount of salt in food	The amount of fat in food	The number of calories in food
W1: Jul-20 to Oct-20	59	51	52	42

	The amount of sugar in food	The amount of salt in food	The amount of fat in food	The number of calories in food
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	60	51	51	34
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21	63	54	55	44
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	59	52	52	33
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	59	49	50	39
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	55	47	44	29

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Across all waves, the amount of sugar in food was consistently the most common concern related to nutrition, followed by the amount of salt and the amount of fat in food. The number of calories in food was the issue related to nutrition that consumers were least concerned about across all waves.

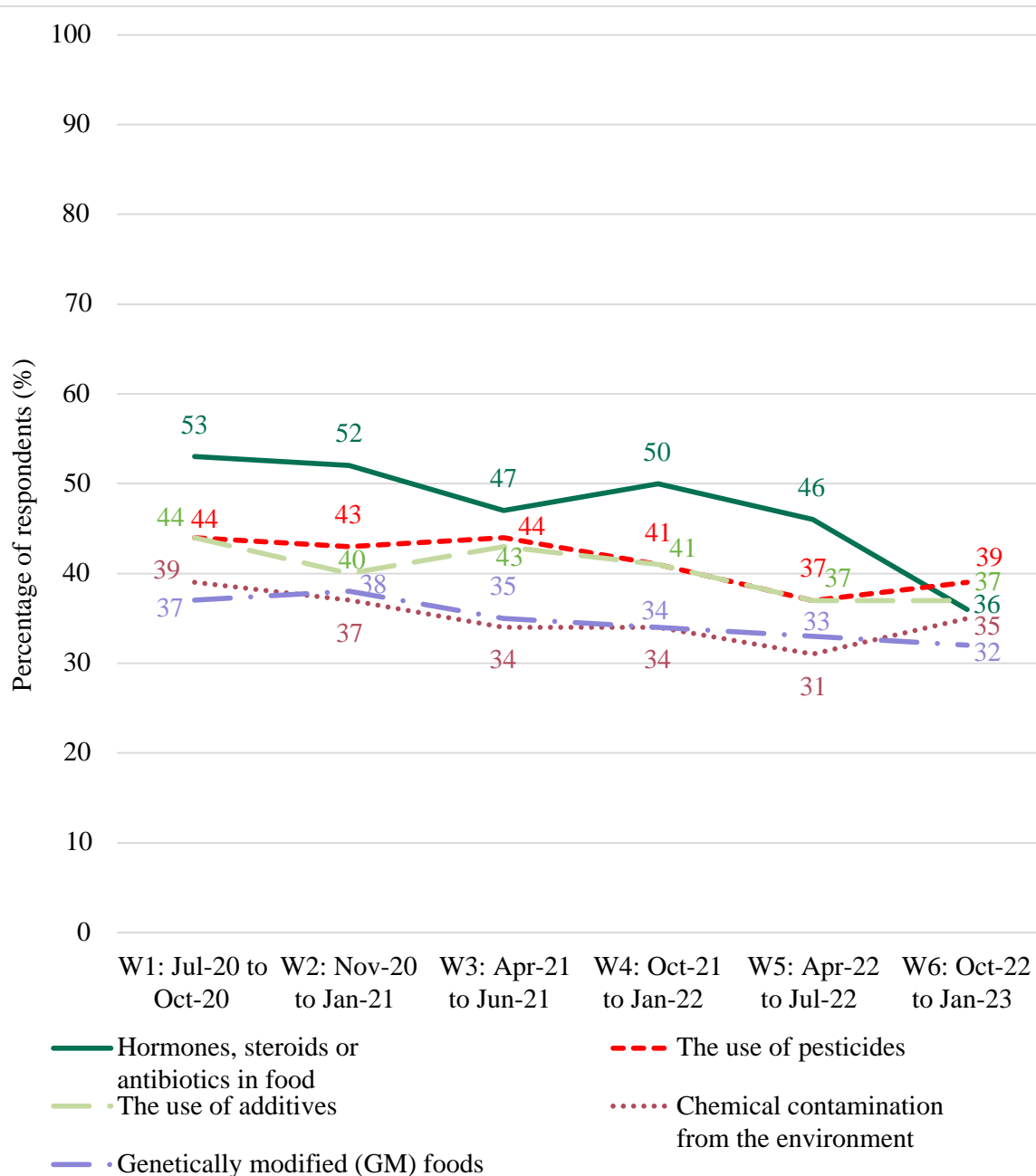
The percentage of respondents who reported concern about the number of calories in food, amount of sugar in food, amount of salt in food and the amount of fat in food peaked in Wave 3 (April 2021 to June 2021) and has slightly declined since **.

The percentage of respondents that reported concern about the number of calories in food has fluctuated across waves indicating possible seasonal effects; respondents were more likely to report concern about the number of calories in food in summer (for example, Wave 3: April 2021 to June 2021) than in winter (for example, Wave 6: October 2022 to January 2023) (Figure 8).

Figure 9. Prompted food-related concerns related to food production.

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	Hormones, steroids or antibiotics in food	The use of pesticides	The use of additives	Chemical contamination from the environment	Genetically modified (GM) foods
W1: Jul-20 to Oct-20	53	44	44	39	37

	Hormones, steroids or antibiotics in food	The use of pesticides	The use of additives	Chemical contamination from the environment	Genetically modified (GM) foods
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	52	43	40	37	38
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21	47	44	43	34	35
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	50	41	41	34	34
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	46	37	37	31	33
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	36	39	37	35	32

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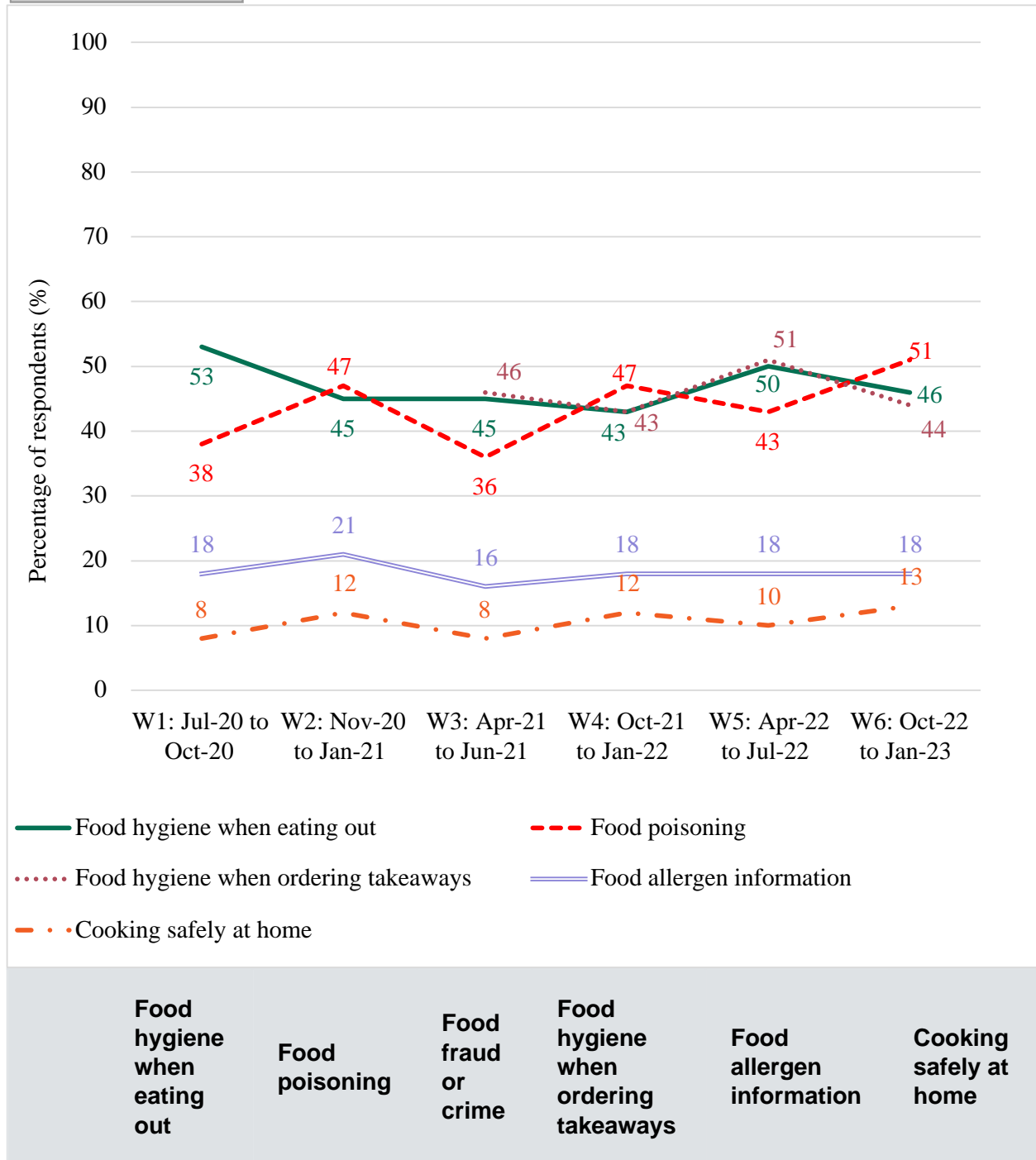
The percentage of respondents who reported concerns which relate to the production of food varied across waves. The percentage of respondents who reported concern about hormones, steroids or antibiotics has decreased since Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020), reaching the lowest reported level of concern in Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023).

Overall, the percentage of respondents who reported concern about the use of pesticides, the use of additives, genetically modified (GM) foods, and chemical contamination from the environment has slightly decreased since Wave 1 (Figure 9) **.

Figure 10. Prompted food-related concerns related to food safety and hygiene.

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Food hygiene when eating out	Food poisoning	Food fraud or crime	Food hygiene when ordering takeaways	Food allergen information	Cooking safely at home
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W1: Jul-20 to Oct-20	53	38	43		18	8
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	45	47	43		21	12
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21	45	36	36	46	16	8
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	43	47	41	43	18	12
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	50	43	37	51	18	10
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	46	51	37	44	18	13

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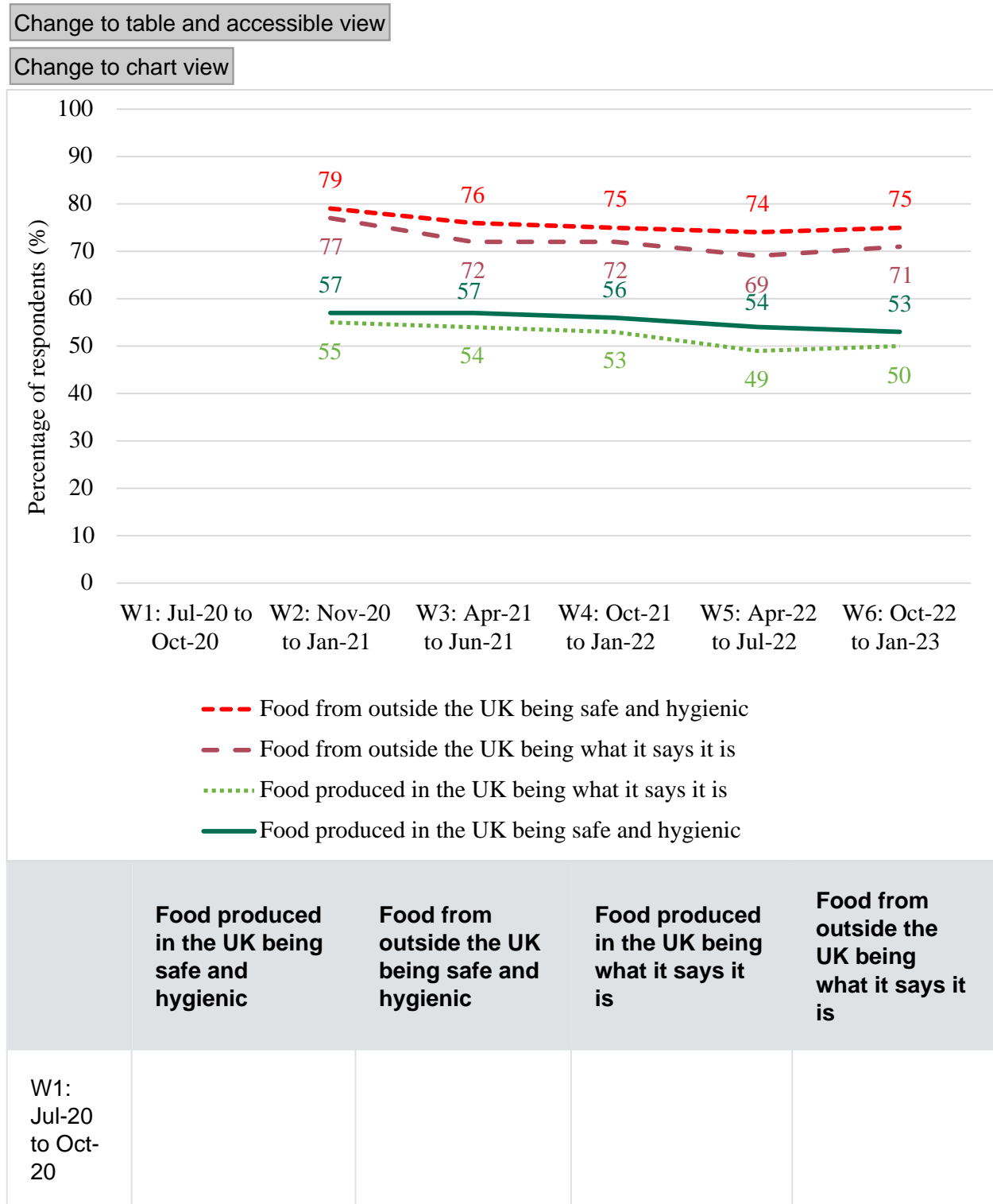
Across all waves, respondents were more likely to report concern about food hygiene when eating out or when ordering takeaways compared to cooking safely at home.

The percentage of respondents that reported concern about food poisoning fluctuated between waves, indicating possible seasonal effects. Respondents were more likely to report concern in winter (for example, Wave 6: October 2022 to January 2023) than in summer (for example, Wave 3: April 2021 to June 2021). To a lesser extent, the percentage of respondents that reported concern about food hygiene when eating out and food hygiene when ordering takeaways

fluctuated between waves, indicating possible minor seasonal effects**.

There were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents that reported concern about cooking safely at home and food allergen information between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (Figure 10).

Figure 11. Concern about the safety and authenticity of food produced in or outside the UK.



	Food produced in the UK being safe and hygienic	Food from outside the UK being safe and hygienic	Food produced in the UK being what it says it is	Food from outside the UK being what it says it is
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	57	79	55	77
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21	57	76	54	72
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	56	75	53	72
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	54	74	49	69
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	53	75	50	71

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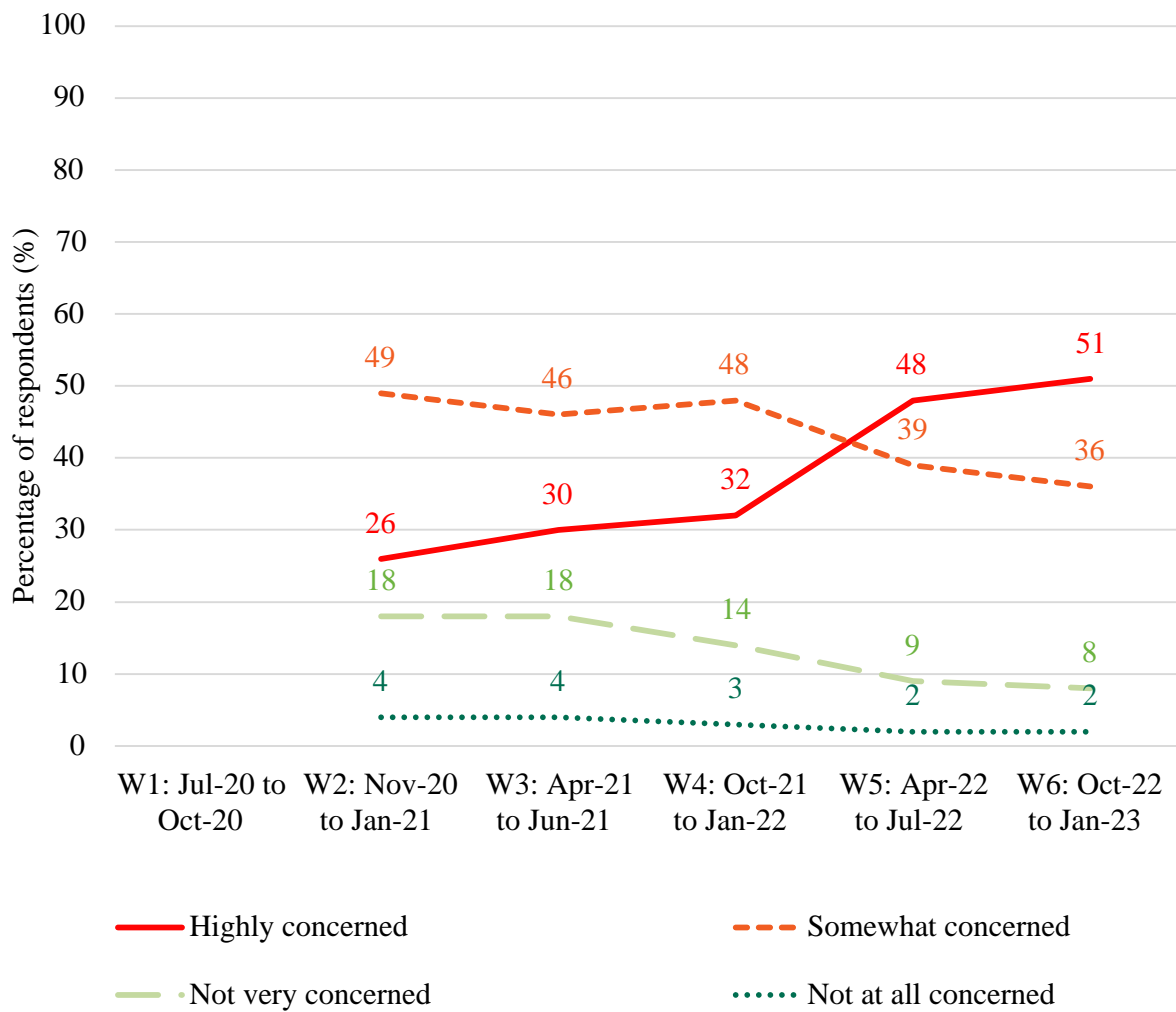
Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they were concerned about the safety and authenticity of food produced in the UK and food produced outside the UK. Across all waves, respondents were more likely to report concern (i.e., highly concerned or somewhat concerned) about the safety and authenticity of food produced outside the UK compared to food produced in the UK. The level of concern about the safety and authenticity of food produced in the UK and food produced outside the UK has slightly decreased since monitoring began in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) (Figure 11)** [\(footnote 2\)](#).

Figure 12. Concern about the affordability of food.

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	Highly concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not very concerned	Not at all concerned
W1: Jul-20 to Oct-20				
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	26	49	18	4
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21	30	46	18	4
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	32	48	14	3
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	48	39	9	2

	Highly concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not very concerned	Not at all concerned
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	51	36	8	2

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Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about the affordability of food. Since monitoring began in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021), the reported level of concern about the affordability of food has notably increased. The percentage of respondents who reported that they were highly concerned about the affordability of food almost doubled between Wave 2 (26%) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023) (51%) (Figure 12) ([footnote 3](#)). In Wave 6, 87% of respondents reported that they were concerned (i.e., highly concerned or somewhat concerned) about the affordability of food.

1. Question: Do you have concerns about any of the following? Responses: the amount of sugar in food, food waste, animal welfare, hormones, steroids or antibiotics in food, the amount of salt in food, the amount of fat in food, food poisoning, food hygiene when eating out, food hygiene when ordering takeaways, the use of pesticides, food fraud or crime, the use of additives (for example, preservatives and colouring), food prices, genetically modified (GM) foods, chemical contamination from the environment, food miles, the number of calories in food, food allergen information, cooking safely at home, the quality of food, the amount of food packaging, being able to eat healthily, none of these, don't know. Base= 25632, all online respondents. Please note: the data from this question are not directly comparable across all waves due to new response options being added, see Technical Report for further details.
2. Question: Thinking about food in the UK [question wording variation in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] today, how concerned, if at all, do you feel about each of the following topics? a) affordability of food b) food produced in [in England and Wales: the UK; [in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] being safe and hygienic c) food from outside [in England and Wales: the UK; in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] being safe and hygienic d) food produced in [in England and Wales: the UK; in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] being what it says it is e) food from outside [in England and Wales: the UK; in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] being what it says it is f) food being produced sustainably g) the availability of a wide variety of food h) animal welfare in the food production process i) ingredients and additives in food j) genetically modified (GM) food. Responses: highly concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, not at all concerned, Don't know. Base = 19696, all online respondents. Please note: some question wording was modified for respondents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
3. Question: Thinking about food in the UK [question wording variation in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] today, how concerned, if at all, do you feel about each of the following topics? a) affordability of food b) food produced in [in England and Wales: the UK; [in

Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] being safe and hygienic c) food from outside [in England and Wales: the UK; in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] being safe and hygienic d) food produced in [in England and Wales: the UK; in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] being what it says it is e) food from outside [in England and Wales: the UK; in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] being what it says it is f) food being produced sustainably g) the availability of a wide variety of food h) animal welfare in the food production process i) ingredients and additives in food j) genetically modified (GM) food. Base = 19696, all online respondents. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 1. Some question wording was modified for respondents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.