

F&Y2 trends: Chapter 5: Eating at home

Introduction

The FSA is responsible for protecting the public from foodborne diseases. The FSA gives practical guidance and recommendations to consumers on food safety and hygiene in the home.

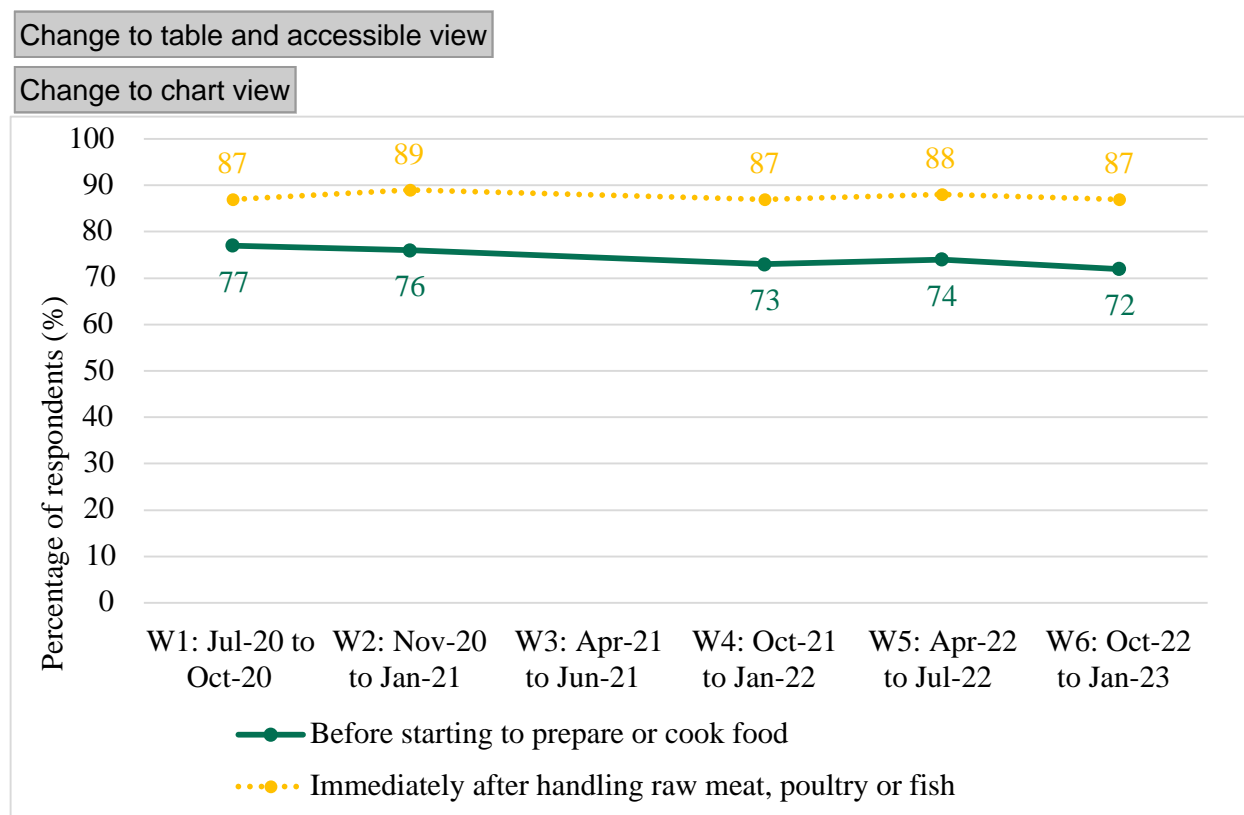
This chapter provides an overview of respondents' knowledge and reported behaviours relating to food safety and other food-related behaviours between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023).

Cleaning

Handwashing in the home

The FSA recommends that [everyone should wash their hands before they prepare, cook or eat food](#), after touching raw food and before handling ready-to-eat food.

Figure 27. The percentage of respondents who always wash their hands.



	Before starting to prepare or cook food	Immediately after handling raw meat, poultry or fish
W1: Jul-20 to Oct-20	77	87
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	76	89
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21		
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	73	87
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	74	88
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	72	87

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Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

There were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported that they always wash their hands before preparing or cooking food [\(footnote 1\)](#), or immediately after handling raw meat, poultry, or fish [\(footnote 2\)](#), between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023) (Figure 27).

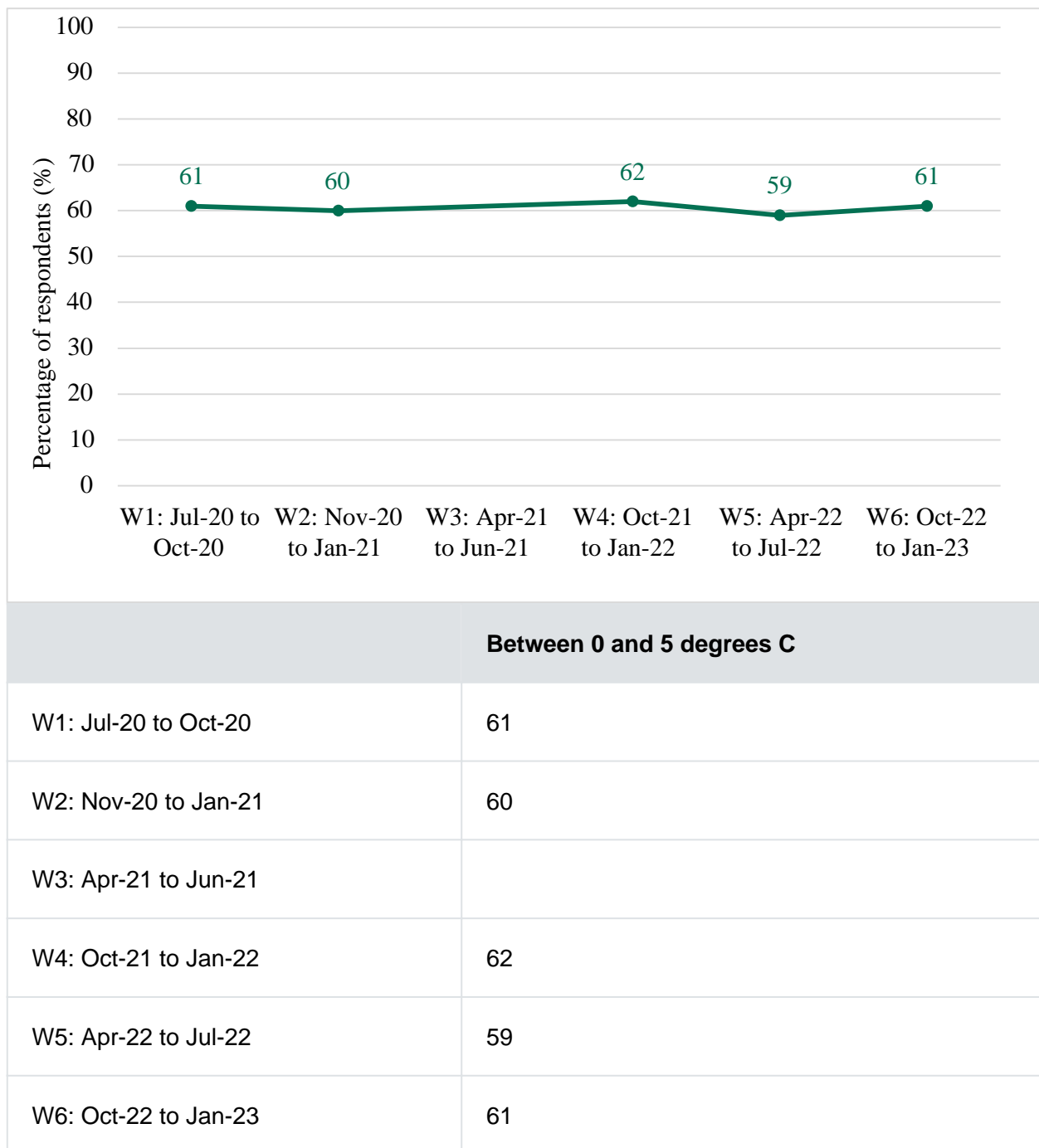
Chilling

If and how respondents check fridge temperature

Figure 28. The percentage of respondents who think that the inside of a fridge should be between 0-5 degrees Celsius.

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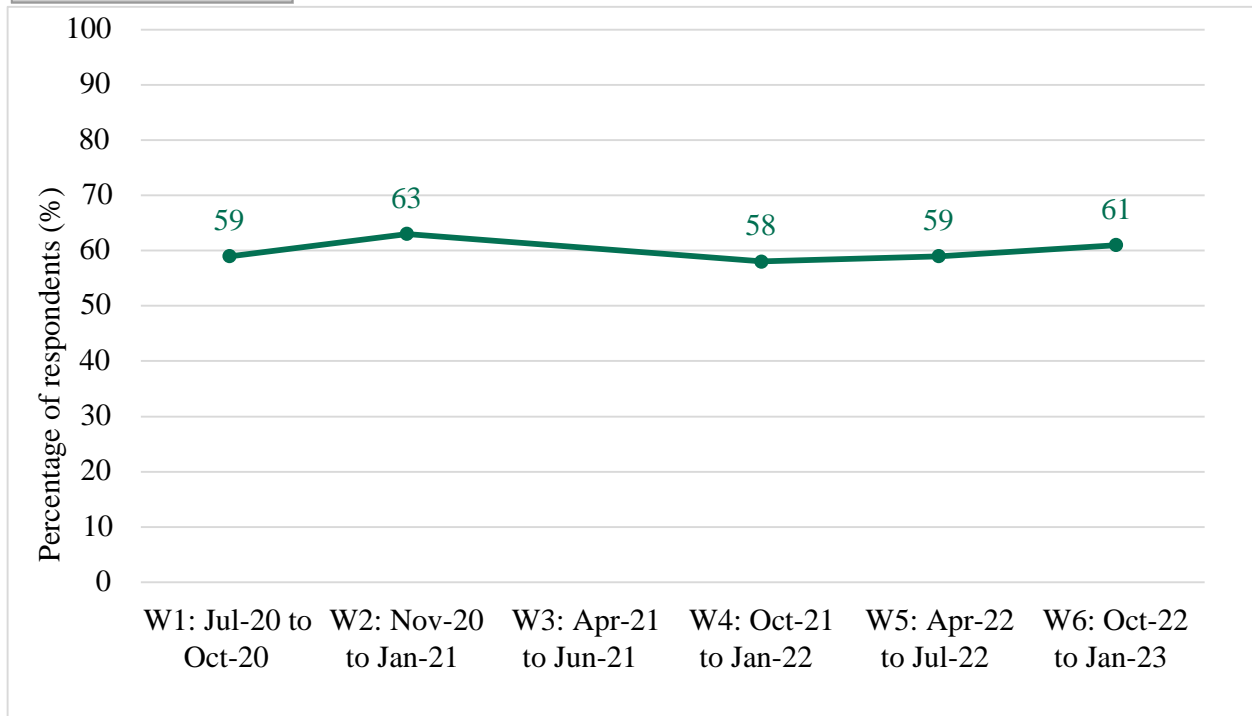
Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

The FSA recommends that the [inside of a fridge should be between 0-5 degrees Celsius](#). There were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported the temperature of the inside of a fridge should be between 0-5 degrees Celsius, between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023) (Figure 28) [\(footnote 3\)](#).

Figure 29. The percentage of respondents who check the temperature of their fridge.

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Yes/it has an alarm if it is too hot or cold	
W1: Jul-20 to Oct-20	59
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	63
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21	
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	58
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	59
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	61

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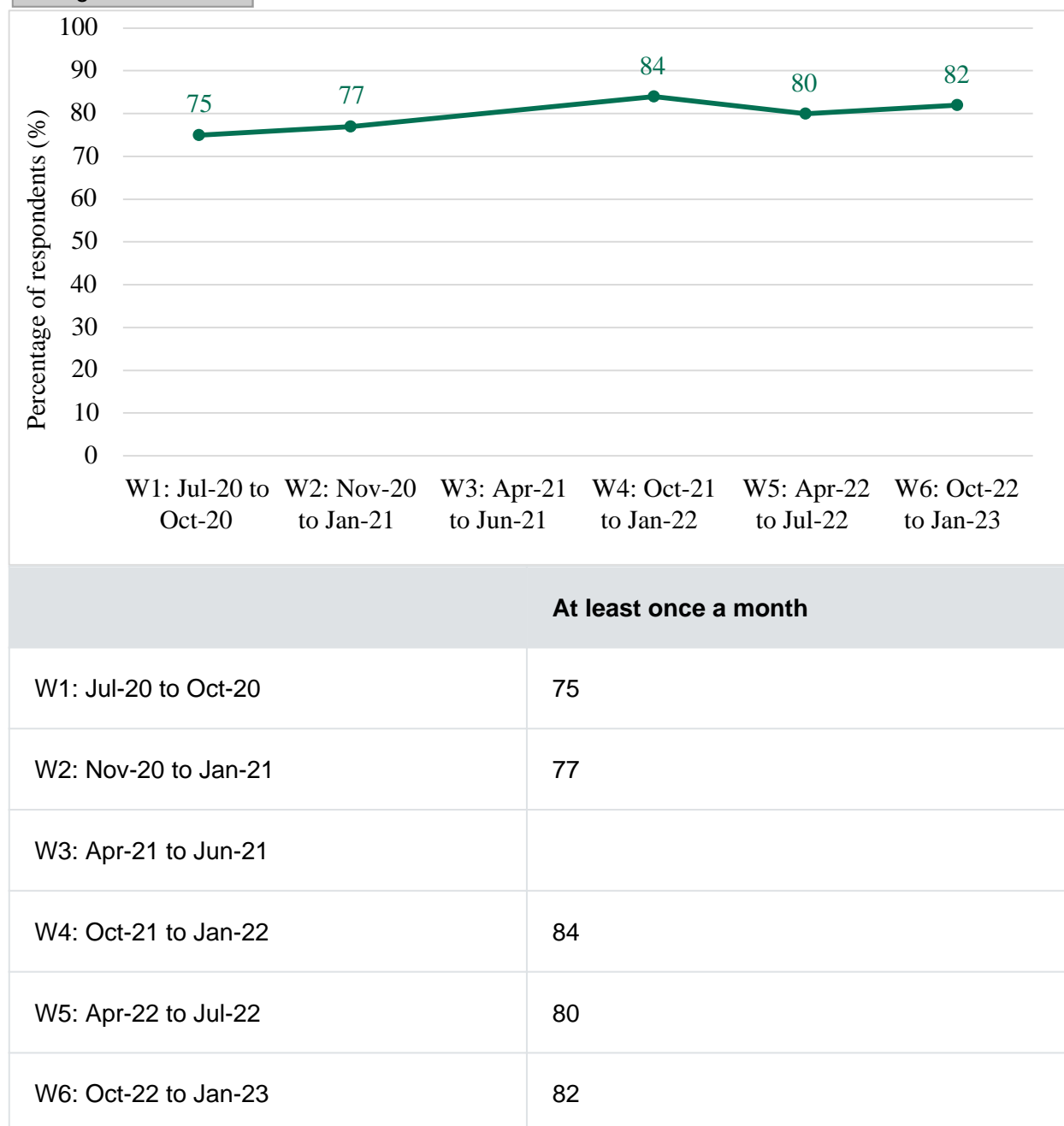
Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

There were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported that they check the temperature of their fridge or do not need to as it has an alarm, between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023) (Figure 29) [\(footnote 4\)](#).

Figure 30. The percentage of respondents who check the temperature of their fridge at least once a month.

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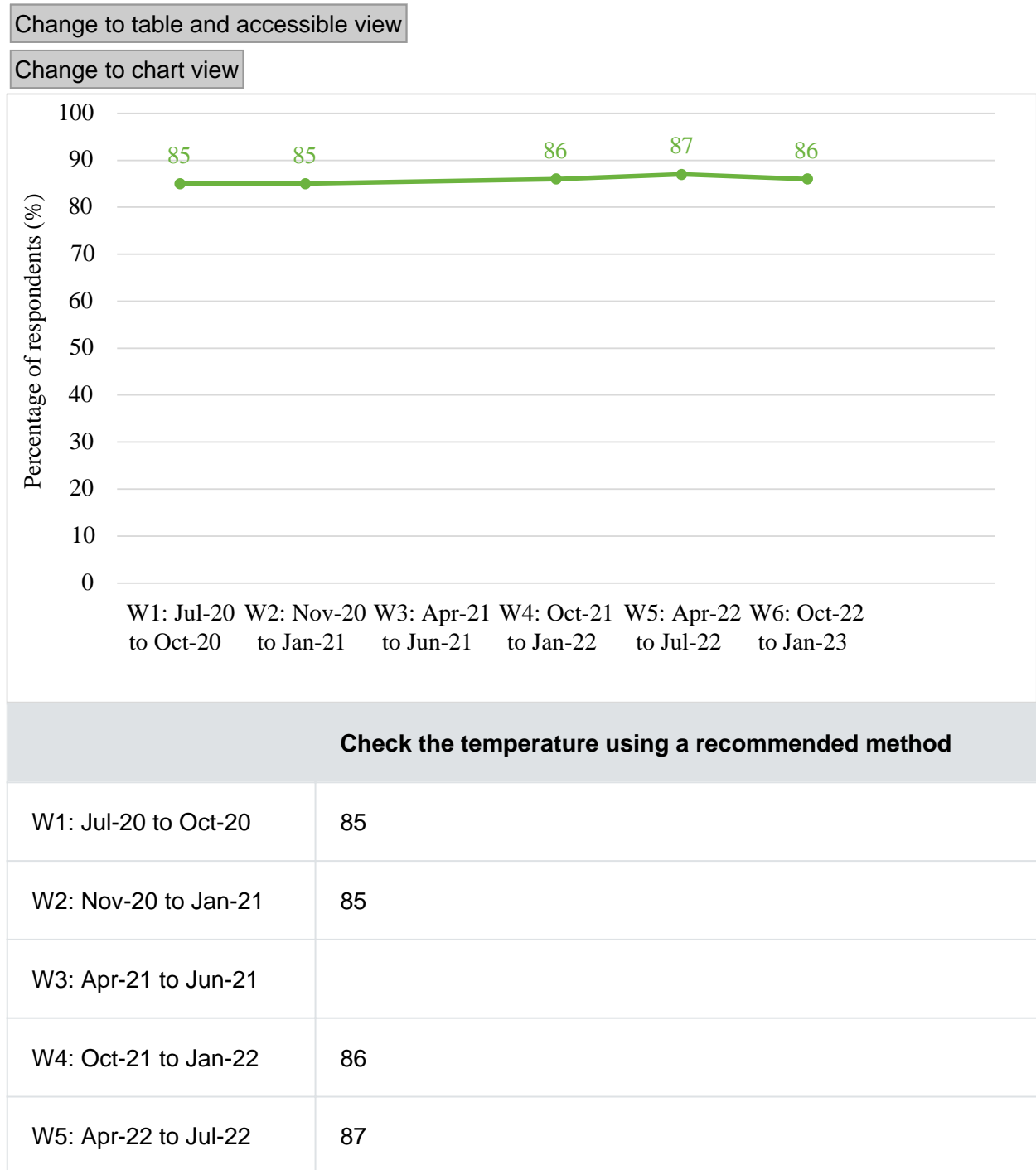


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The FSA recommends that people [check the temperature of their fridge at least once a month](#). There was a slight increase in the percentage of respondents who reported that they, or someone else in their household, checks the temperature of their fridge at least once a month between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023) (Figure 30) ** [\(footnote 5\)](#).

Figure 31. The percentage of respondents who check the temperature of their fridge using a recommended method.



Check the temperature using a recommended method	
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	86

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Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

Between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023) there were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported that they check the temperature of their fridge using a method recommended by the FSA (Figure 31) [\(footnote 6\)](#).

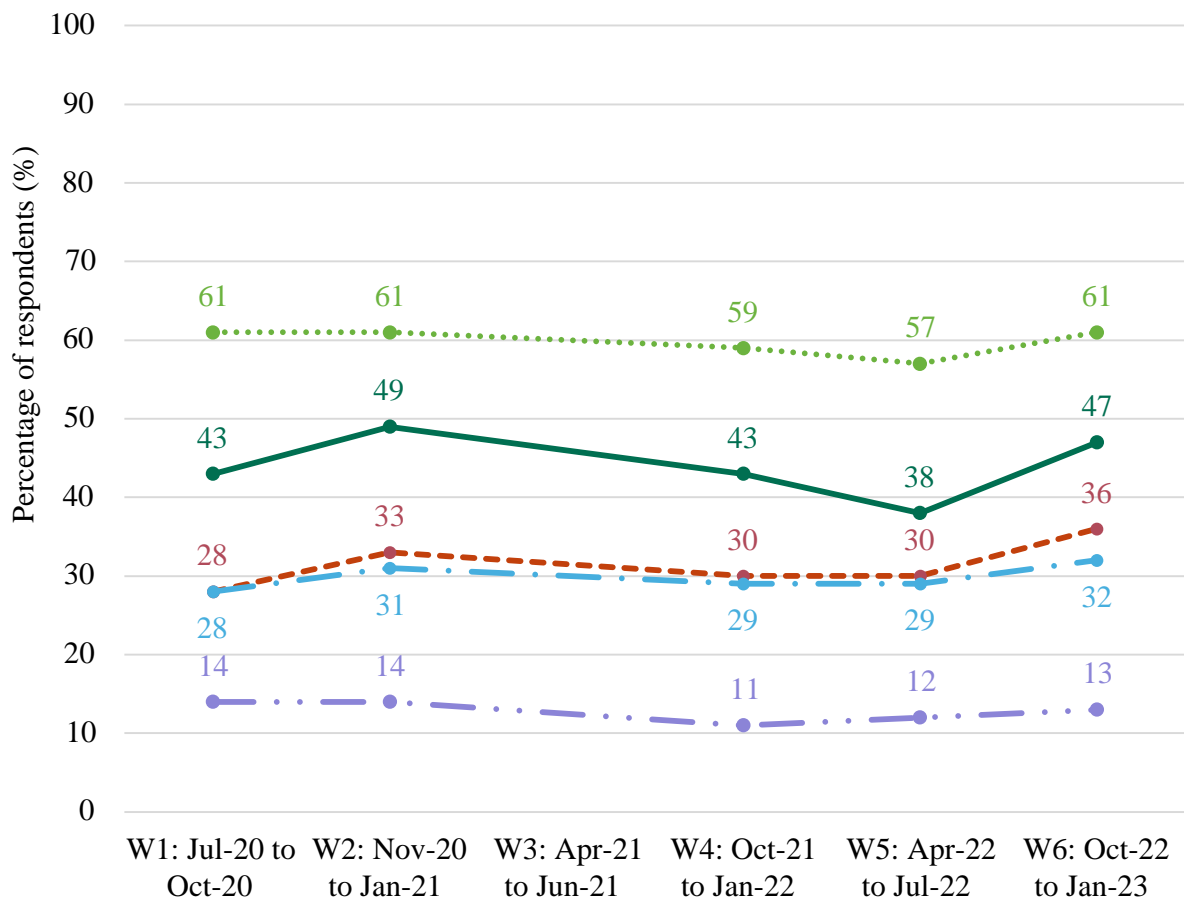
How and where respondents store raw meat and poultry in the fridge

The FSA recommends that [refrigerated raw meat and poultry are kept covered](#), separately from ready-to-eat foods and stored at the bottom of the fridge to avoid cross-contamination.

Figure 32. How respondents store raw meat and poultry in the fridge.

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- In its original packaging —●— Away from cooked foods
- In a sealed container —●— Covered with film/foil
- On a plate

	In its original packaging	Away from cooked foods	In a sealed container	Covered with film/foil	On a plate
W1: Jul-20 to Oct-20	61	43	28	28	14
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	61	49	33	31	14
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21					

	In its original packaging	Away from cooked foods	In a sealed container	Covered with film/foil	On a plate
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	59	43	30	29	11
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	57	38	30	29	12
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	61	47	36	32	13

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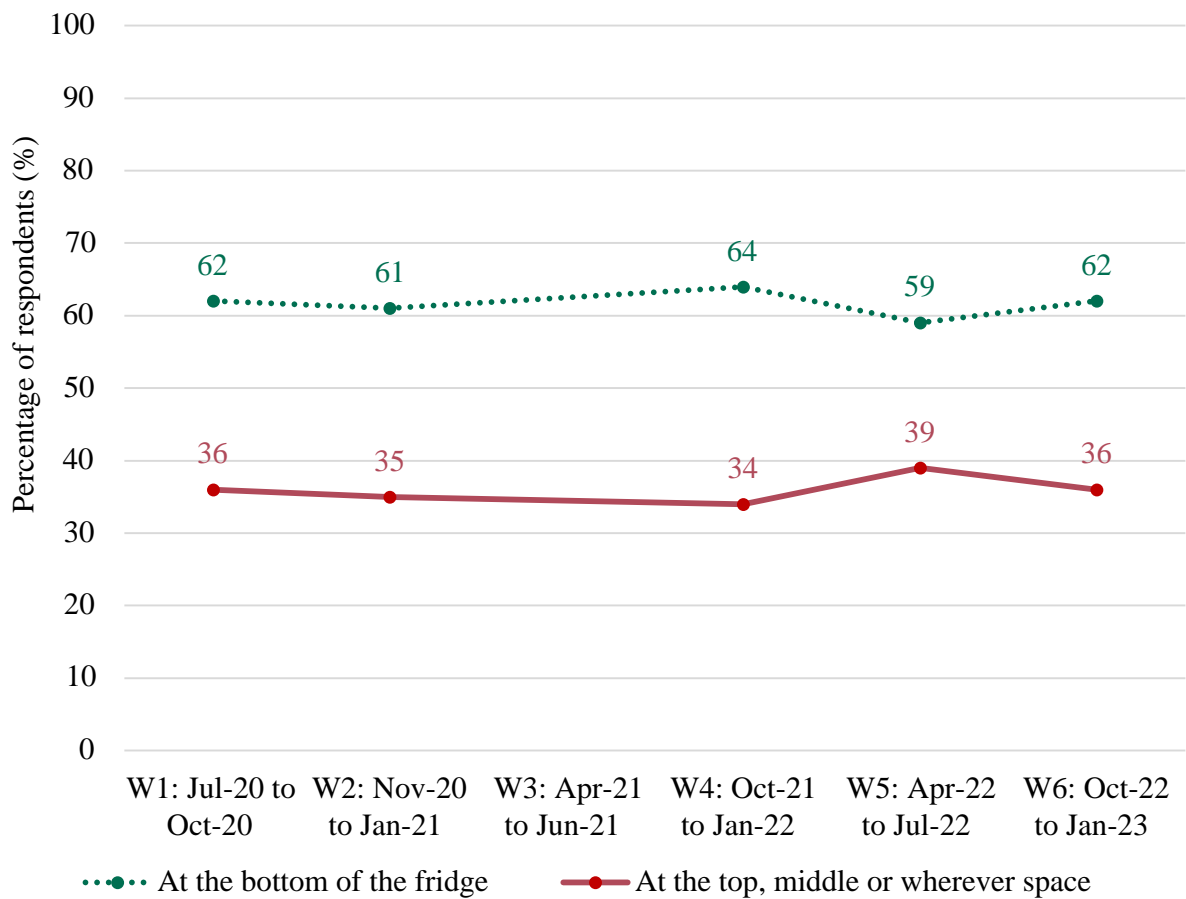
Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

Overall, there were no notable differences in how respondents reported storing raw meat and poultry between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023). However, the percentage of respondents who reported storing raw meat and poultry away from cooked foods has fluctuated (49% in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021), 38% in Wave 5 (April 2022 to July 2022)) and there has been a slight increase in the percentage of respondents who reported storing raw meat and poultry in a sealed container (Figure 32)** ([footnote 7](#)).

Figure 33. Where respondents store raw meat and poultry in the fridge.

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	At the bottom of the fridge	At the top, middle or wherever space
W1: Jul-20 to Oct-20	62	36
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	61	35
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21		
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	64	34
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	59	39
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	62	36

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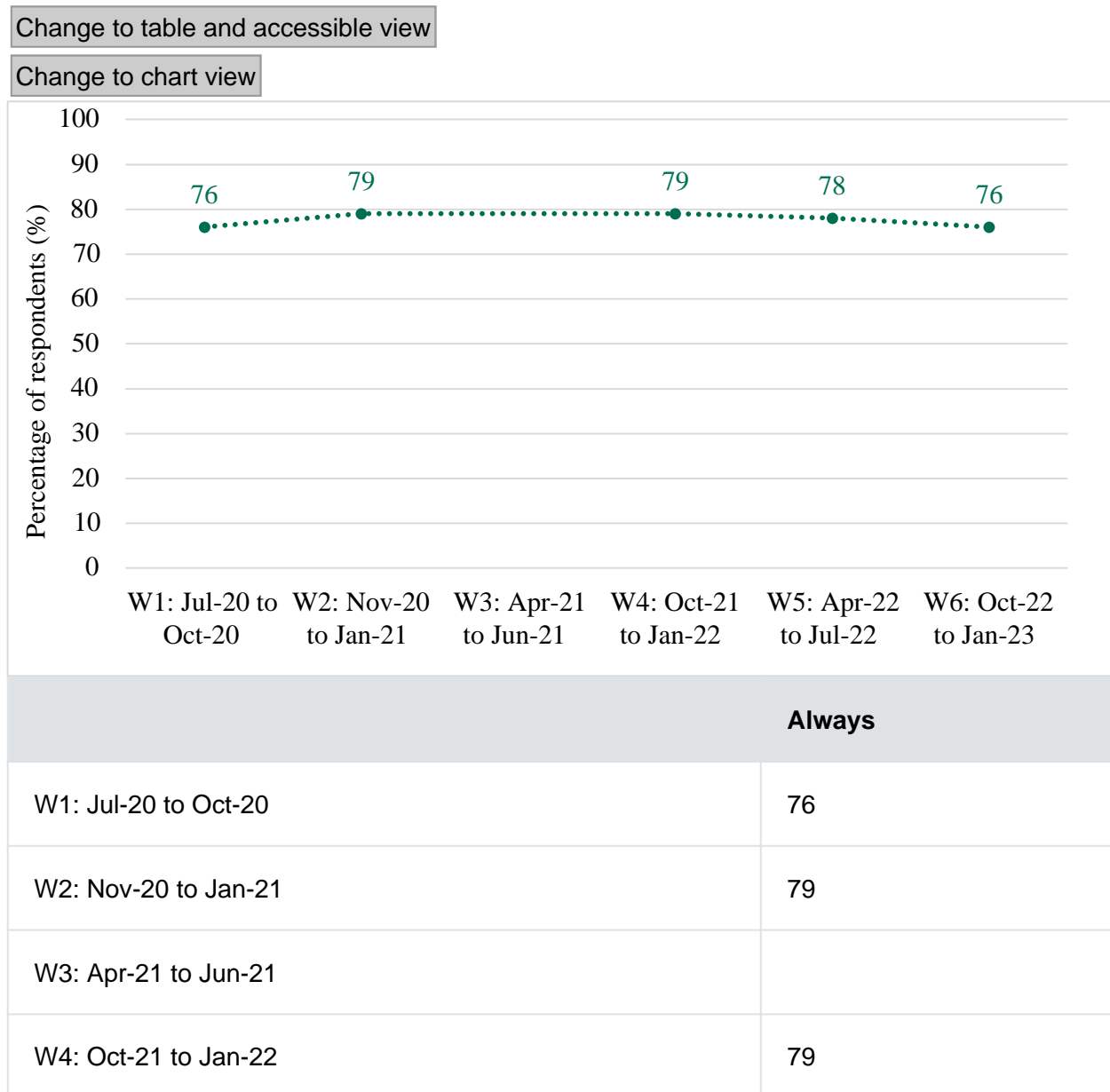
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Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

There were no notable differences in where in the fridge respondents reported storing raw meat and poultry between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023). Across all waves, around 6 in 10 respondents reported that they store raw meat and poultry at the bottom of the fridge, [as recommended by the FSA](#), and over a third of respondents store raw meat and poultry in other areas of the fridge (Figure 33) [\(footnote 8\)](#).

Cooking

Figure 34. The percentage of respondents who always cook food until it is steaming hot and cooked all the way through.



	Always
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	78
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	76

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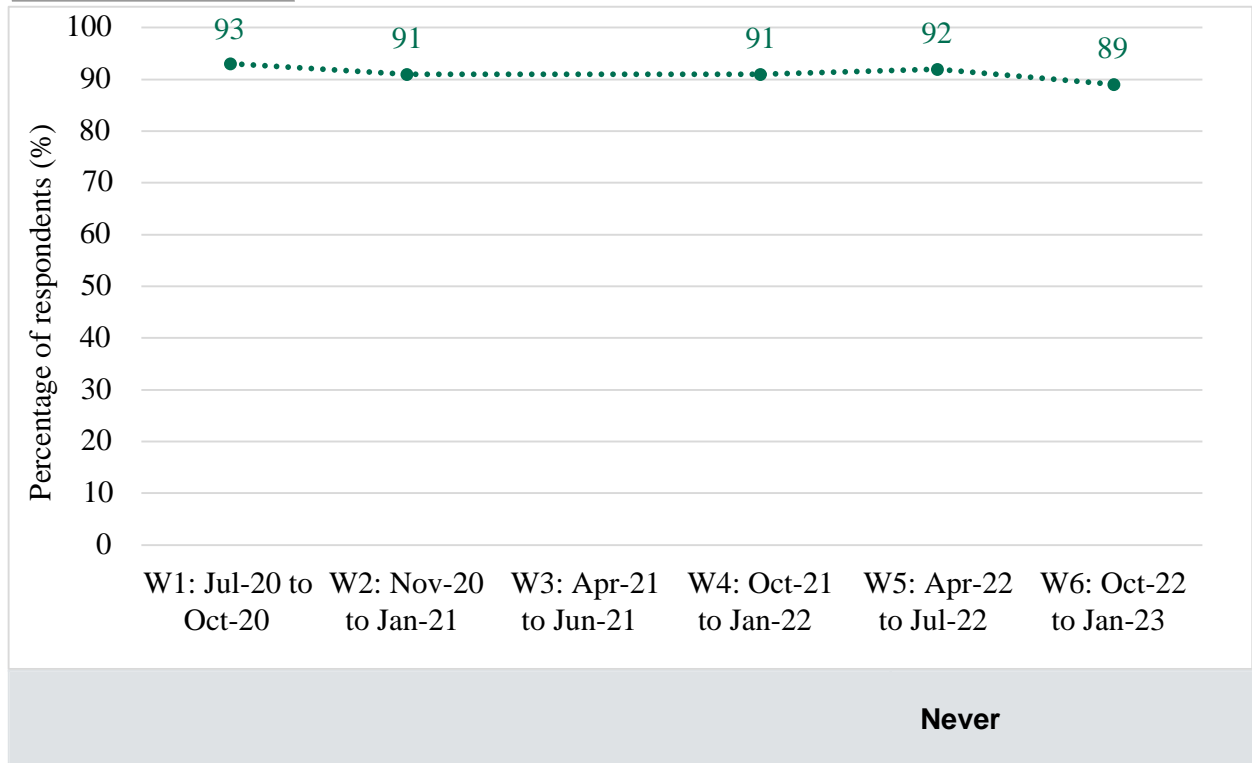
Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

The FSA recommends that [food is cooked until steaming hot and cooked all the way through](#). There were no notable differences the percentage of respondents who reported that they always cook food until steaming hot and cooked all the way through, between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023). Across all waves, around 8 in 10 respondents reported that they always cook food until steaming hot and cooked all the way through (Figure 34) [\(footnote 9\)](#).

Figure 35. The percentage of respondents who never eat chicken or turkey when it is pink or has pink juices.

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W1: Jul-20 to Oct-20	93
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	91
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21	
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	91
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	92
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	89

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Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

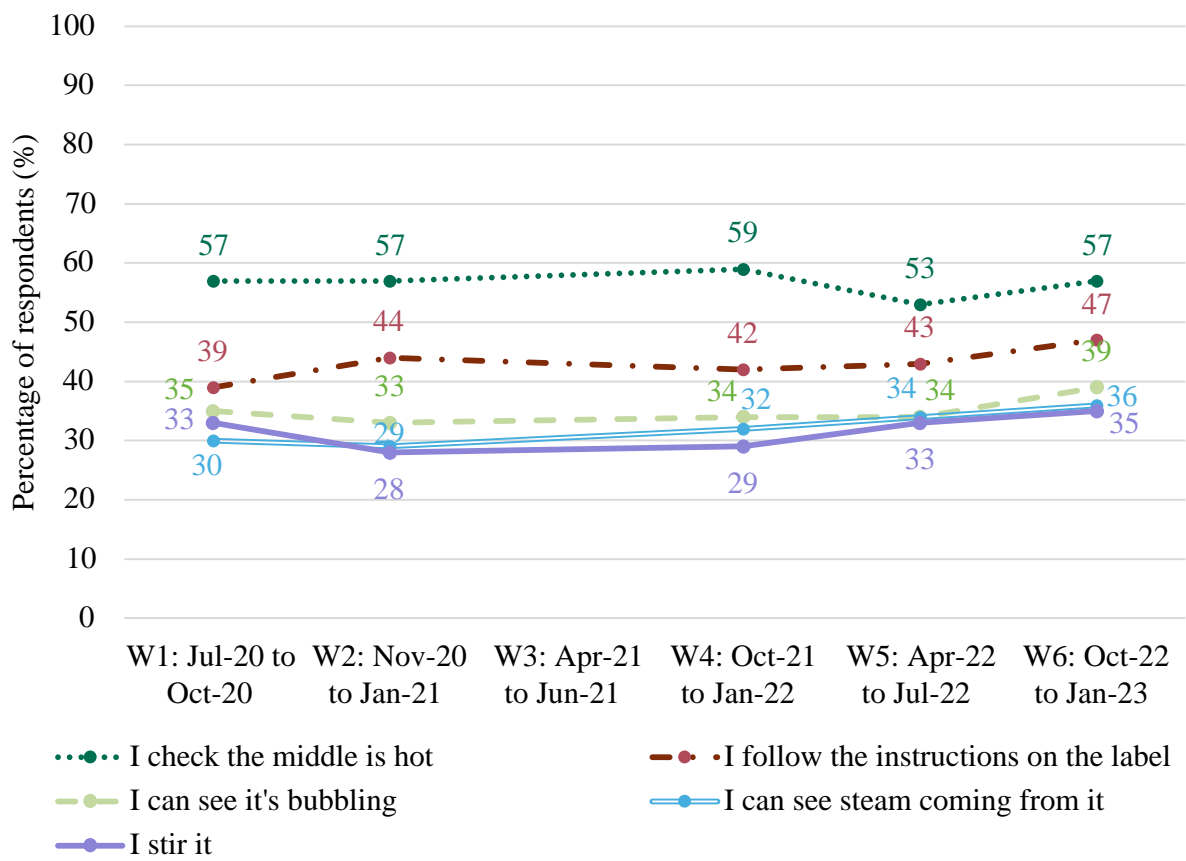
Between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023), there were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported that they never eat chicken or turkey when it is pink or has pink juices. Across all waves, around 9 in 10 respondents reported that they would never eat chicken or turkey when it is pink or has pink juices (Figure 35) ([footnote 10](#)).

Reheating

Figure 36. Most common methods used to check if food is ready to eat when reheating it.

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	I check the middle is hot	I follow the instructions on the label	I can see it's bubbling	I can see steam coming from it	I stir it	I use a timer to ensure it has been cooked for a certain amount of time	I check it's an even temperature throughout
W1: Jul-20 to Oct-20	57	39	35	30	33	30	28
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	57	44	33	29	28	30	29

	I check the middle is hot	I follow the instructions on the label	I can see it's bubbling	I can see steam coming from it	I stir it	I use a timer to ensure it has been cooked for a certain amount of time	I check it's an even temperature throughout
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21							
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	59	42	34	32	29	29	27
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	53	43	34	34	33	32	28
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	57	47	39	36	35	34	30

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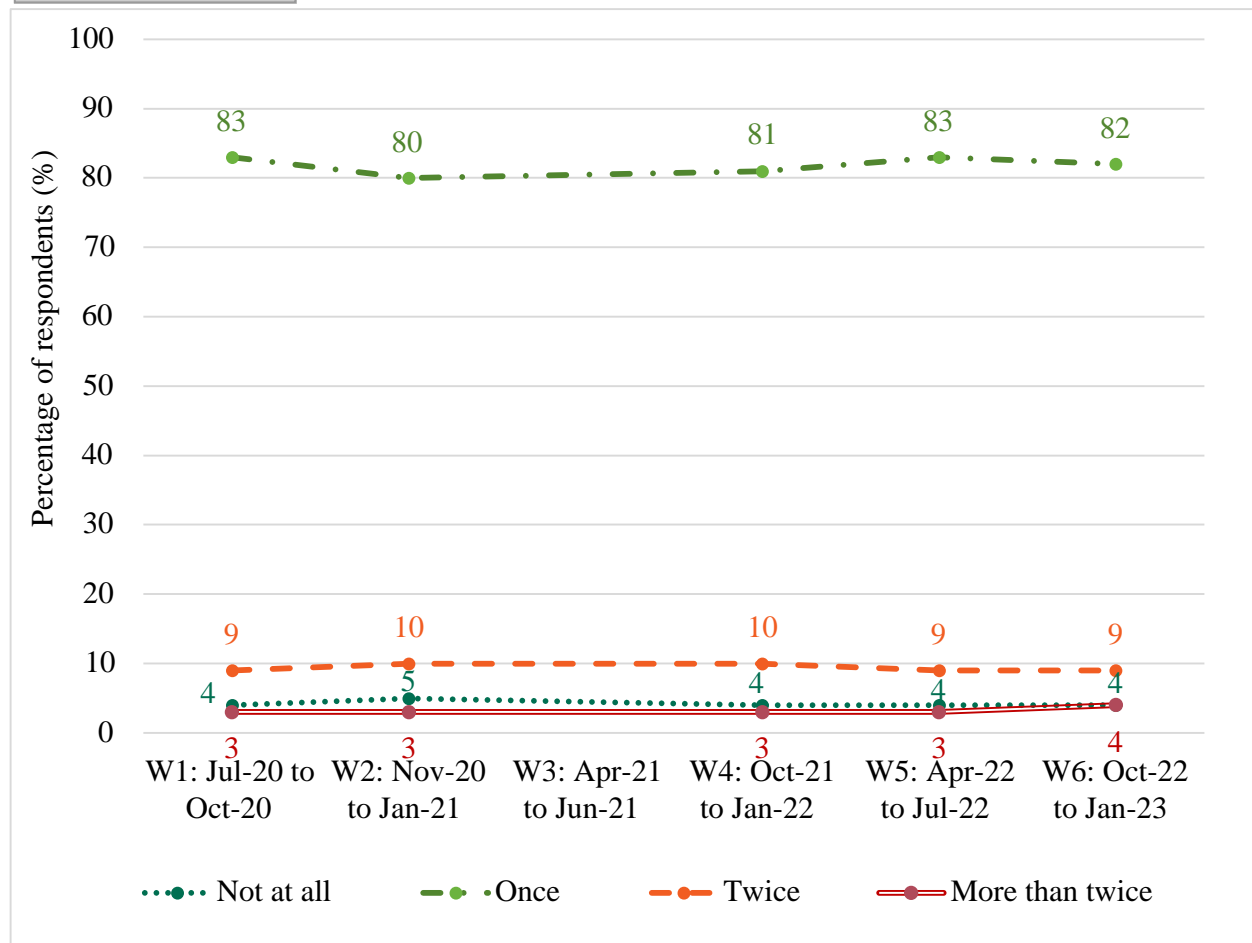
Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

There were no notable differences in the methods respondents used when reheating food to know when it is ready to eat, between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023) (Figure 36) ([footnote 11](#)).

Figure 37. How many times respondents would consider reheating food.

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	Not at all	Once	Twice	More than twice
W1: Jul-20 to Oct-20	4	83	9	3
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	5	80	10	3
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21				
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	4	81	10	3
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	4	83	9	3

	Not at all	Once	Twice	More than twice
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	4	82	9	4

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Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

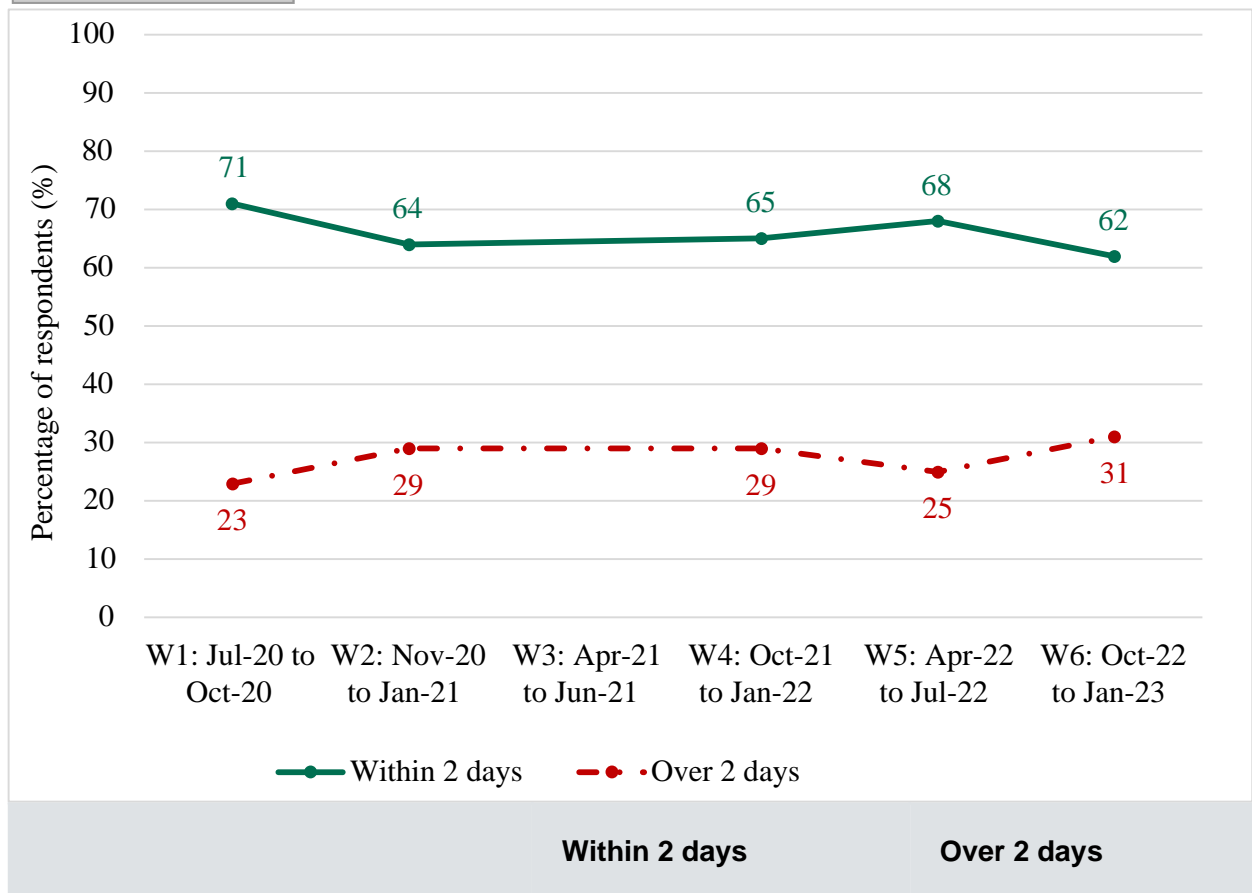
The FSA recommends that [food is only reheated once](#). There were no notable differences in the number of times which respondents would reheat food, between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023). Across all waves, around 8 in 10 respondents reported that they would reheat food once (Figure 37) [\(footnote 12\)](#).

Leftovers

Figure 38. The latest respondents would consume any leftovers stored in the fridge.

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W1: Jul-20 to Oct-20	71	23
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	64	29
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21		
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	65	29
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	68	25
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	62	31

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Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

Between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023) there was a slight decrease in the percentage of respondents who reported that they would eat leftovers within 2 days, and a slight increase in the percentage of respondents who reported that they would eat leftovers after 2 days or longer (Figure 38)** [\(footnote 13\)](#).

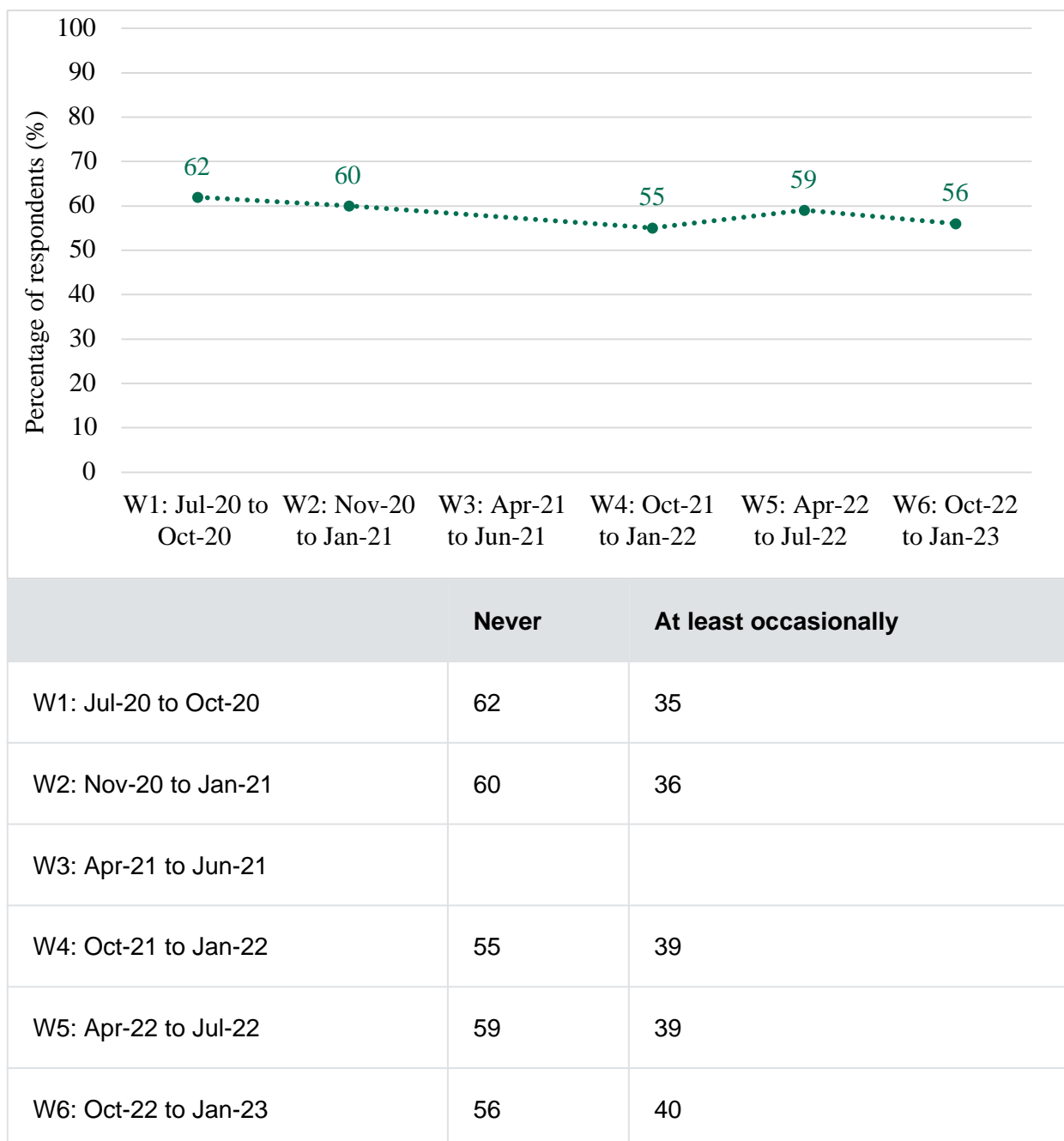
Avoiding cross-contamination

The FSA provides guidelines on [how to avoid cross-contamination](#). The FSA recommends that people [do not wash raw meat](#) as this can spread harmful bacteria onto your hands, clothes, utensils, and worktops.

Figure 39. The percentage of respondents who never wash raw chicken.

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Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

Between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023), there was a slight decrease in the percentage of respondents who reported that they never wash raw chicken**. Across all waves, around 6 in 10 respondents reported that they never wash raw chicken (Figure 39) ([footnote 14](#)).

Use-by dates

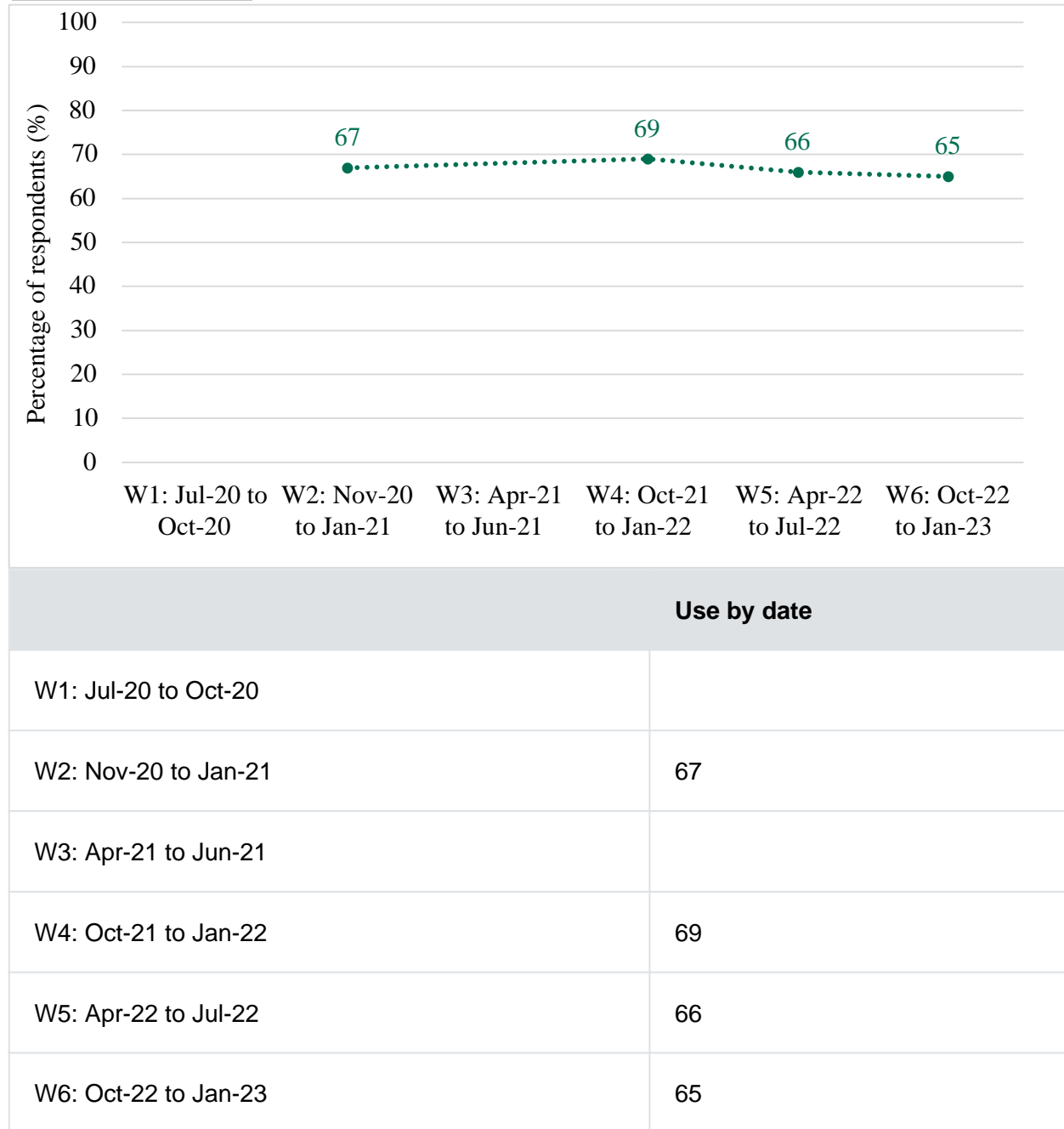
Respondents were asked about their understanding of the different types of [date labels](#) and instructions on food packaging, as storing food for too long or at the wrong temperature can cause food poisoning, use-by dates related to food safety and best before (BBE) dates relate to

food quality.

Figure 40. The percentage of respondents who identified the use-by date as the information which shows when food is no longer safe to eat.

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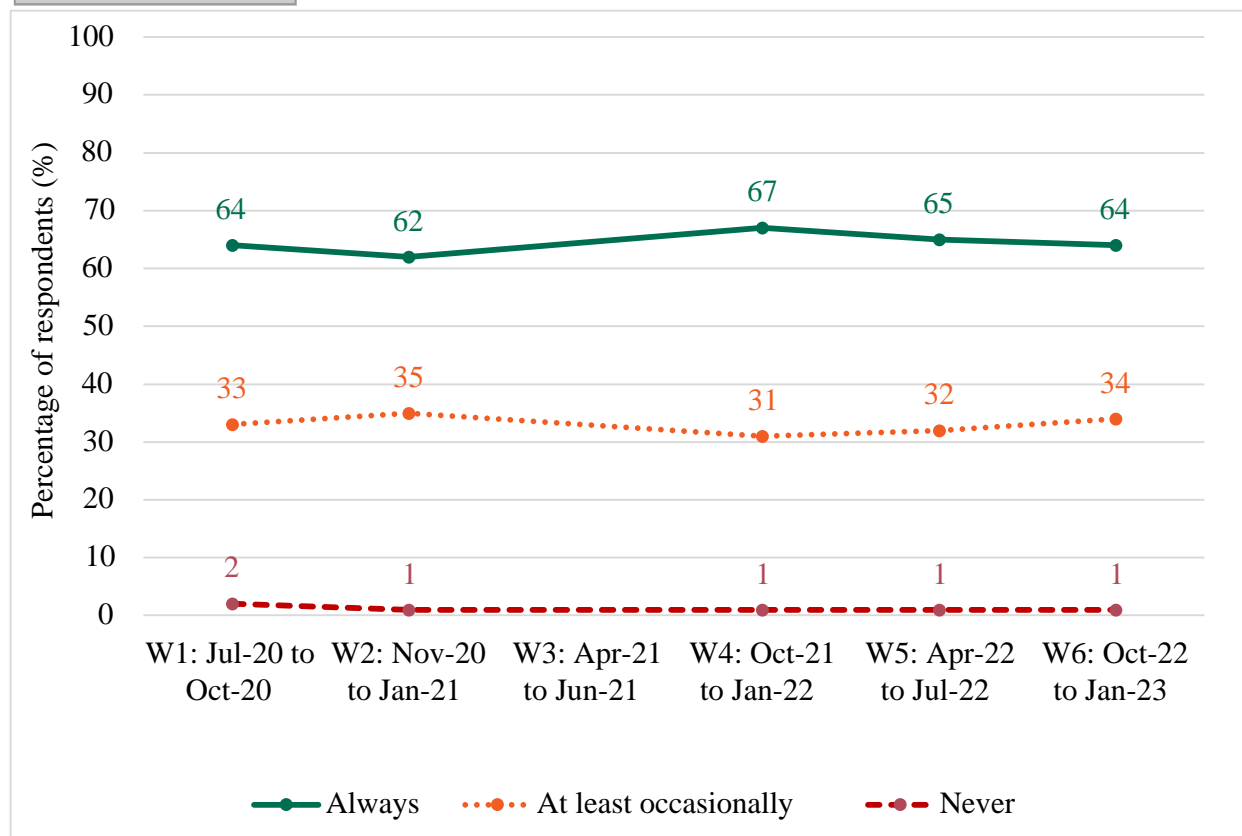
Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

Between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023), there were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who identified the use-by date as the information which shows that food is no longer safe to eat. Across all waves, over 6 in 10 respondents identified the use-by date as the information which shows that food is no longer safe to eat (Figure 40) [\(footnote 15\)](#).

Figure 41. How often respondents check use-by dates when they are about to cook or prepare food.

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	Always	At least occasionally	Never
W1: Jul-20 to Oct-20	64	33	2
W2: Nov-20 to Jan-21	62	35	1
W3: Apr-21 to Jun-21			
W4: Oct-21 to Jan-22	67	31	1

	Always	At least occasionally	Never
W5: Apr-22 to Jul-22	65	32	1
W6: Oct-22 to Jan-23	64	34	1

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Food and You 2: Wave 1-6

Between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023), there were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported that they always, occasionally, or never check use-by dates before they cook or prepare food. Across all waves, over 6 in 10 respondents reported that they always check use-by dates before they cook or prepare food (Figure 41) ([footnote 16](#)).

1. Question: When you are at home, how often, if at all, do you wash your hands before starting to prepare or cook food. Responses: always, most of the time, about half the time, occasionally, never, I don't cook, don't know. Base= 28718, all online respondents and all those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire, who ever do some food preparation or cooking for their household. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3.
2. Question: When you are at home, how often, if at all, do you wash your hands immediately after handling raw meat, poultry or fish. Responses: always, most of the time, About half the time, Occasionally, Never, I don't cook meat, poultry or fish, Don't know. Base= 28718, all online respondents and those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire who ever do some food preparation or cooking for their household, who ever do some food preparation or cooking for their household. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3.
3. Question: What do you think the temperature inside your fridge should be? Responses: less than 0 degrees C (less than 32 degrees F), between 0 and 5 degrees C (32 to 41 degrees F), more than 5 but less than 8 degrees C (42 to 46 degrees F), 8 to 10 degrees C (47 to 50 degrees F), more than 10 degrees C (over 50 degrees F), other, I don't have a fridge, don't know. Base= 30582, all online respondents and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3.
4. Question: Do you, or anyone else in your household, ever check your fridge temperature? Responses: yes, no, I don't need to - it has an alarm if it is too hot or cold, don't know. Base= 30521, all online respondents, and all those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire, excluding those who don't have a fridge. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3.
5. Question: How often, if at all, do you or someone else in your household check the temperature of the fridge? Responses: at least daily, 2-3 times a week, once a week, less

than once a week but more than once a month, once a month, four times a year, 1-2 times a year, never/less often, don't know. Base= 15324, all online respondents and all those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire, where someone in household checks fridge temperature. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3.

6. Question: How do you (or someone else in your household) normally check the temperature? Responses: Check the temperature display built into the fridge, Check the setting / gauge, Put a thermometer in the fridge and check, Feel food inside to see if it is cold, Check for ice or condensation, Other, Don't know. Base= 15324, all online respondents and all those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire, where someone in household checks fridge temperature. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3. There has been minor rewording of the question across the waves.
7. Question: How do you store raw meat and poultry in the fridge? Please select all that apply. Responses: away from cooked foods, covered with film/foil, in a sealed container, in its original packaging, on a plate, I don't buy or store meat or poultry, I don't store raw meat/poultry in the fridge I don't have a fridge, Don't know. Base= 30582, all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3.
8. Question: Where in the fridge do you store raw meat and poultry? Responses: wherever there is space, at the top of the fridge, in the middle of the fridge, at the bottom of the fridge. Base= 27704, all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire, who store raw meat/poultry in the fridge. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3.
9. Question: How often, if at all, do you cook food until it is steaming hot and cooked all the way through? Responses: always, most of the time, about half of the time, occasionally, I don't cook food, never, don't know. Base= 28718, online respondents and all those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire, who ever do some food preparation or cooking for their household. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3.
10. Question: How often, if at all, do you eat chicken or turkey when the meat is pink or has pink or red juices? Responses: always, most of the time, about half of the time, occasionally, never, don't know. Base = 28287, all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire, who are not vegan, pescatarian or vegetarian, and who do eat chicken/turkey. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3.
11. Question: When reheating food, how do you know when it is ready to eat? (Select all that apply). Responses: I check the middle is hot, I follow the instructions on the label, I can see its bubbling, I use a timer to ensure it has been cooked for a certain amount of time, I check it's an even temperature throughout, I can see steam coming from it, I taste it, I stir it, I put my hand over it/touch it, I use a thermometer/probe, None of the above, I don't check. Base= 28038, all online respondents and all those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire, who ever do some food preparation or cooking for their household, excluding 'I don't reheat food' and 'not stated'. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3.
12. Question: How many times would you consider reheating food after it was cooked for the first time? Responses: not at all, once, twice, more than twice, don't know, I don't reheat

food. Base= 27477, all online respondents and all those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire, who reheat food using one of the methods in the previous question. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3.

13. Question: When is the latest you would consume any leftovers stored in the fridge? Responses: the same day, within 1-2 days, within 3-5 days, more than 5 days later, it varies too much, don't know. Base= 30582, all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3.

14. Question: How often, if at all, do you wash raw chicken? Responses: always, most of the time, about half of the time, occasionally, never, don't know. Base = 28718, all online respondents and all those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire, who ever do some food preparation or cooking for their household. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3.

15. Question: Which of these shows when food is no longer safe to eat? Responses: use-by date, best before date, sell by date, display until date, all of these, it depends, none of these, don't know. Base= 21263, all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 1 or Wave 3.

16. Question: How often, if at all, do you check use-by dates when you are about to cook or prepare food? Responses: always, most of the time, about half of the time, occasionally, never, it varies too much to say, I don't cook/prepare food, don't know. Base= 28718, all online respondents and all those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire, who ever do some food preparation or cooking for their household. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3.