

F&Y2 Wave 7: 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 (i.e., 'very confident' or 'fairly confident') in food safety and authenticity; 88% of respondents reported that they were confident that the food they buy is safe to eat, and 83% 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:

- Age group: older respondents were more likely to be confident that the food they buy is safe to eat than younger adults (for example, 85% of those aged 25-34 years compared to 93% of those aged 75 years or over)**.
- Annual household income: respondents with a higher income were more likely to be confident that the food they buy is safe to eat than those with a lower income, (for example, 94% of those with an income between £64,000 and £95,999 were confident compared to 86% of those with an income between £19,000 and £31,999)**.
- NS-SEC ([footnote 2](#)): respondents in occupations (for example, 90% of those in managerial, administrative, and professional occupations) and full-time students (86%) were more likely to be confident that the food they buy is safe to eat than those who were long term unemployed and/or had never worked (77%).
- Food security: respondents who were more food secure were more likely to be confident that the food they buy is safe to eat compared to those who were less food secure (for example, 93% of those with high food security compared to 79% of those with very low food security).
- Ethnic group: white respondents (91%) were more likely to be confident that the food they buy is safe to eat than Asian or Asian British (80%) respondents ([footnote 3](#)).
- Responsibility for cooking: respondents who are responsible for cooking (89%) were more likely to be confident that the food they buy is safe to eat than those who don't cook (76%).
- Responsibility for food shopping: respondents who are responsible for food shopping (89%) were more likely to be confident that the food they buy is safe to eat than those who don't shop (79%).
- Confidence in the accuracy of information on food labels varied between different categories of people in the following ways:

- NS-SEC: respondents in occupations (for example, 85% of those in intermediate occupations) and full-time students (88%) were more likely to report confidence in the accuracy of food labels than those who were long term unemployed and/or had never worked (63%).
- Food security: respondents who had high (86%), marginal (87%), and low (83%) food security were more likely to report confidence in the accuracy of food labels than those with very low food security (74%).
- Responsibility for cooking: respondents who are responsible for cooking (84%) were more likely to report confidence in the accuracy of food labels than those who don't cook (74%).

Confidence in the food supply chain

Around two thirds of respondents (68%) reported that they had confidence (i.e., very confident or fairly confident) in the food supply chain [\(footnote 4\)](#).

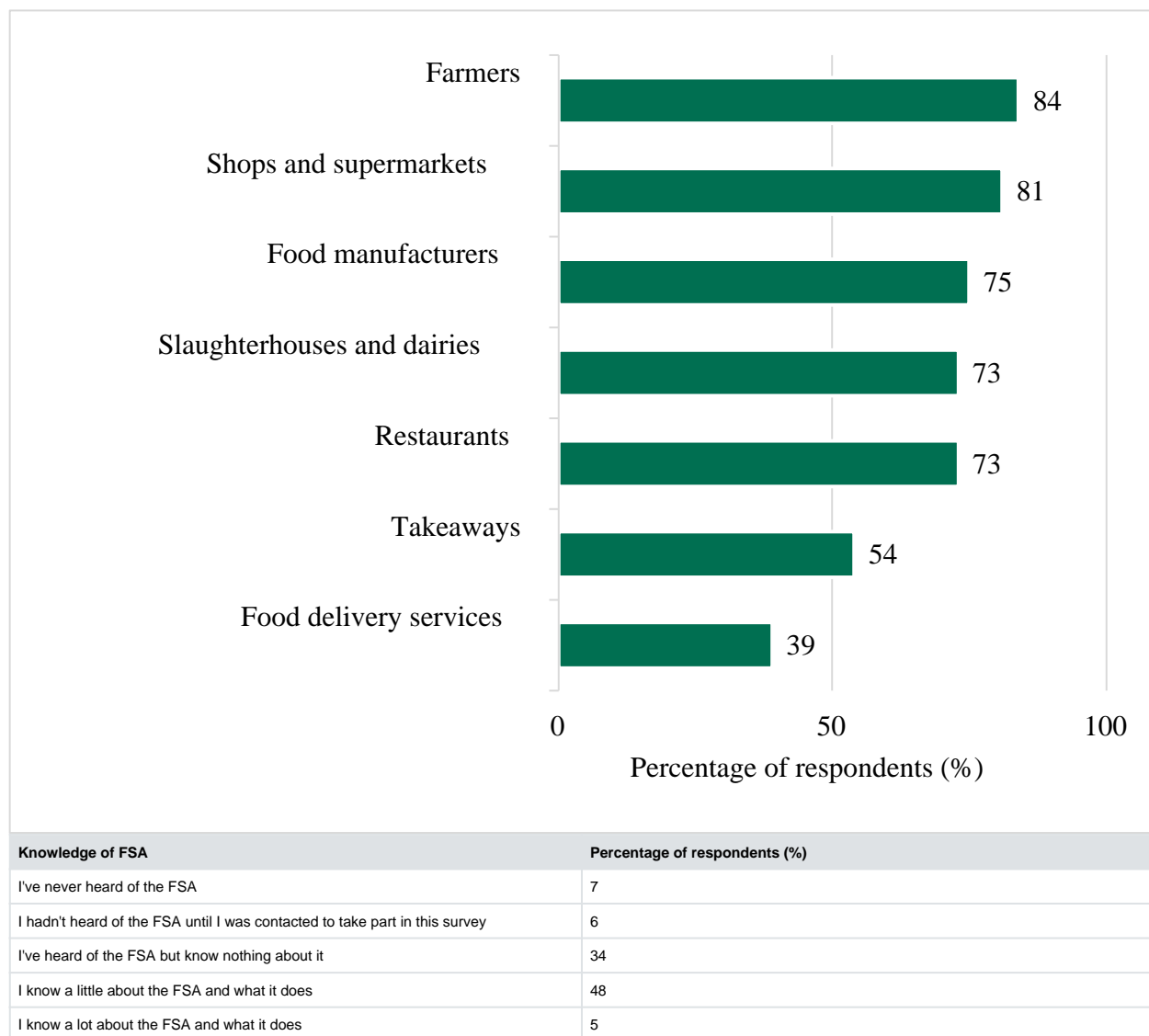
Confidence in the food supply chain varied between different categories of people in the following ways:

- Age group: respondents aged 75 years or over (78%) were more likely to report confidence in the food supply chain than those aged 54 years or younger (for example, 60% of those aged 25-34 years).
- NS-SEC: respondents in occupations (for example, 78% of small employers and own account workers) and full-time students (72%) were more likely to report confidence in the food supply chain than those who were long term unemployed and/or had never worked (57%).
- Region (England) [\(footnote 5\)](#): confidence in the food supply chain varied by region. For example, 74% of respondents in North-East England and 72% in South-West were confident in the food supply chain compared to 58% of those in Greater London.
- Food security: respondents who were more food secure were more likely to report confidence in the food supply chain than respondents who were less food secure (for example, 72% of those with a high level of food security compared to 57% of those with very low food security).
- Ethnic group: white respondents (71%) were more likely to report confidence in the food supply chain than Asian or Asian British (57%) respondents [\(footnote 6\)](#).
- Food hypersensitivity: respondents with a food allergy (73%) and those without a food hypersensitivity (70%) were more likely to report confidence in the food supply chain than those with a food intolerance (59%).

Figure 1: Confidence that food supply chain actors ensure food is safe to eat.

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Source: Food and You 2: Wave 7

Respondents were asked to indicate how confident they were that key actors involved in the food supply chain ensure that the food they buy is safe to eat. Respondents were more likely to report confidence (i.e. very confident or fairly confident) in farmers (84%) and shops and supermarkets (81%) than in takeaways (54%), and food delivery services for example, Just Eat, Deliveroo, Uber Eats (39%). Almost one in four (24%) of respondents reported that they don't know how confident they are that food delivery services ensure that the food they buy is safe to eat (Figure 1) ([footnote 7](#)).

Awareness, trust and confidence in the FSA

Awareness of the FSA

Most respondents (89%) had heard of the FSA ([footnote 8](#)).

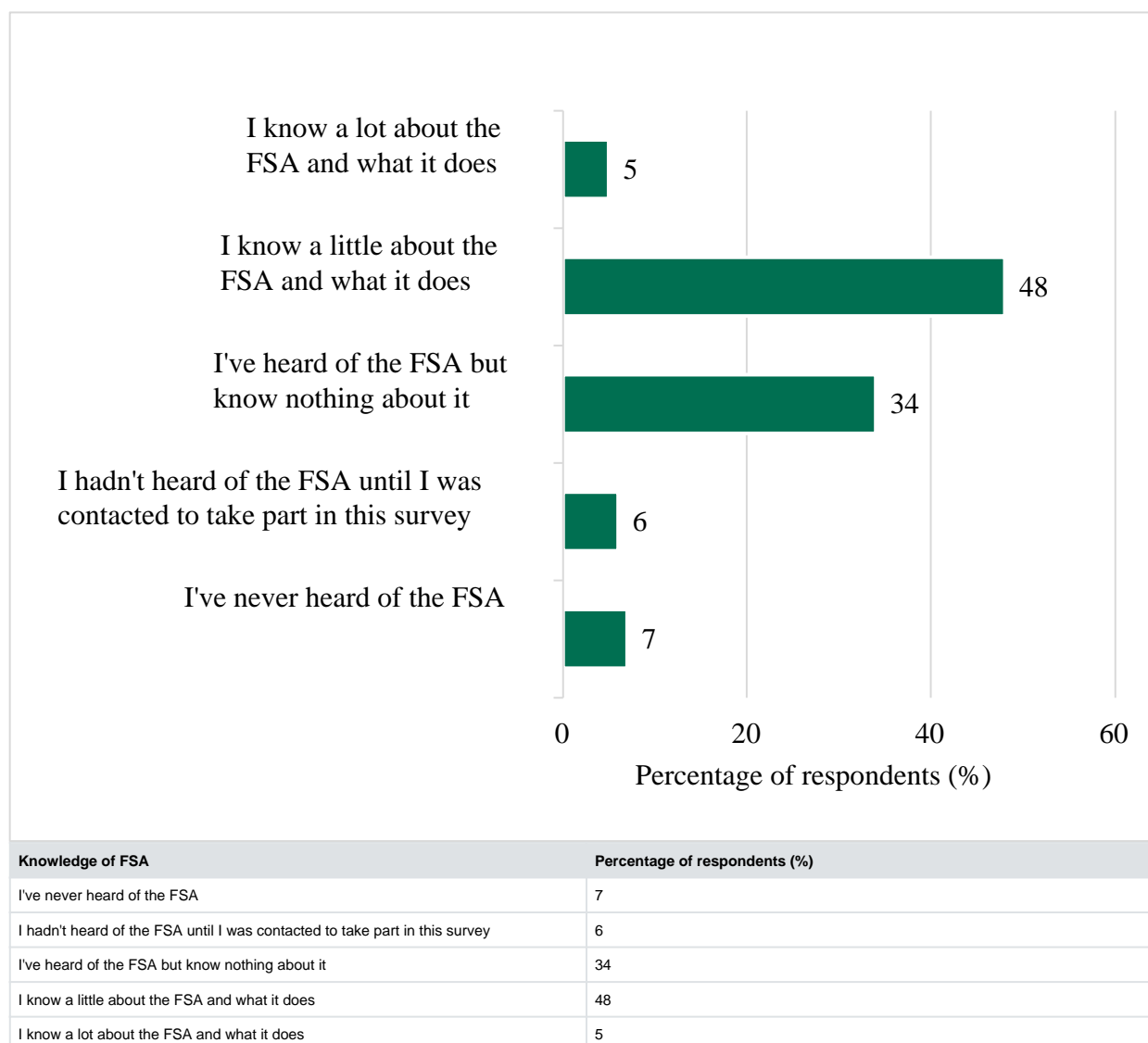
Awareness of the FSA varied between different categories of people in the following ways:

- Age group: older respondents were more likely to have heard of the FSA than younger respondents. For example, 97% of those aged 65-74 years had heard of the FSA, compared to 74% of those aged 16-24 years.
- Size of household: respondents who lived in smaller households were more likely to have heard of the FSA than those who lived in larger households. For example, 95% of those who lived in one-person households had heard of the FSA compared to 82% of those who lived in households of five persons or more.
- Annual household income: respondents with a higher income were more likely to have heard of the FSA than those with a lower income. For example, 97% of those with an income between £64,000 and £95,999 had heard of the FSA compared to 82% of those with an income of less than £19,000.
- NS-SEC: respondents in most occupational groups (for example, 96% of those in intermediate occupations) were more likely to have heard of the FSA than full-time students (72%) and those who were long-term unemployed or had never worked (56%).
- Food security: respondents who were more food secure were more likely to have heard of the FSA than respondents who were less food secure (for example, 92% of those with a high level of food security compared to 82% of those with low food security).
- Ethnic group: white respondents (92%) were more likely to have heard of the FSA compared to Asian or Asian British respondents (71%) [\(footnote 9\)](#).
- Responsibility for cooking: respondents who are responsible for cooking (90%) were more likely to have heard of the FSA than those who do not cook (69%).
- Responsibility for food shopping: respondents who are responsible for food shopping (90%) were more likely to have heard of the FSA than those who never shop for food (70%).

Figure 2. Knowledge about the Food Standards Agency (FSA)

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Source: Food and You 2: Wave 7

Most respondents reported at least some knowledge of the FSA; 5% 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 the Food and You 2 survey, and 7% had never heard of the FSA (Figure 2) [\(footnote 10\)](#).

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

- Age group: respondents aged between 35 and 74 years (for example, 63% of those aged 45-54 years) were more likely to report knowledge of the FSA compared to younger respondents (36% of those aged 16-24 years) or the oldest respondents (47% of those aged 75 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, 63% of those with an income between £32,000 and £63,999 compared to 46% of those with an income of less than £19,000).

- NS-SEC: respondents in managerial, administrative, and professional occupations (60%) were more likely to report knowledge of the FSA than those who were in other occupational groups (for example, 47% of those in semi-routine and routine occupations). Those who were long term unemployed and/or had never worked (31%) or full-time students (36%) were least likely to report knowledge of the FSA.
- Region (England) ([footnote 11](#)): knowledge of the FSA varied by region. For example, 61% of respondents in the South-West of England reported knowledge of the FSA compared to 41% of those in Greater London and 48% of those in the East of England.
- Urban / rural: respondents in rural areas (61%) were more likely to report knowledge of the FSA than those in urban areas (52%)**.
- Ethnic group: white respondents (55%) were more likely to report knowledge of the FSA than Asian or Asian British respondents (42%) ([footnote 12](#)).
- Food hypersensitivity: respondents with a food allergy (63%) were more likely to report knowledge of the FSA than respondents without a food hypersensitivity (53%).
- Responsibility for cooking: respondents who are responsible for cooking (55%) were more likely to report knowledge of the FSA compared to respondents who do not cook (35%).
- Responsibility for food shopping: respondents who are responsible for food shopping (56%) were more likely to report knowledge of the FSA compared to respondents who never shop (28%).

Trust in the FSA

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. A majority (69%) of respondents reported that they trusted the FSA to do its job, 27% of respondents neither trust or distrust the FSA to do this, and 2% of respondents reported that they distrust the FSA to do this ([footnote 13](#)).

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

- Age group: younger respondents were more likely to report that they trusted the FSA to do its job than older respondents. For example, 83% of those aged 16-24 years reported that they trusted the FSA to do its job compared to 65% of those aged 65-74 years.
- Household size: respondents who lived in larger households were more likely to report that they trusted the FSA to do its job than those who lived in smaller households. For example, 81% of those who lived in 4 person households reported that they trusted the FSA to do its job compared to 62% of those in 1 person households.

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) (79%). Around three quarters of respondents were confident that the FSA takes appropriate action if a food-related risk is identified (76%) and were confident that the FSA is committed to communicating openly with the public about food-related risks (72%) ([footnote 14](#)).

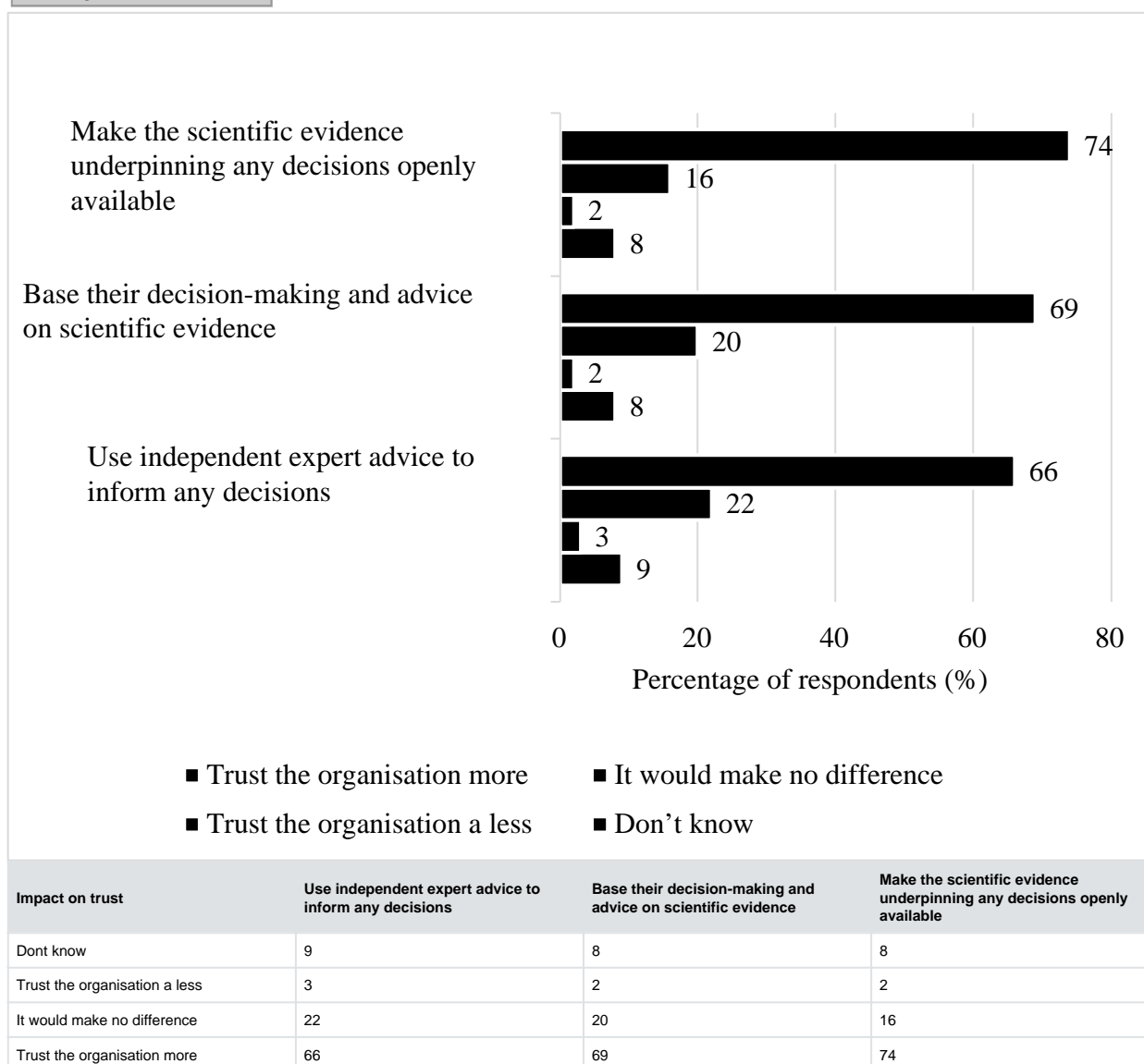
Trust in science and organisations

Respondents were asked how confident they were that scientific research produces accurate conclusions. Around 8 in 10 (78%) respondents reported that they were confident that scientific research produces accurate conclusions ([footnote 15](#)).

Figure 3. Factors which impact trust in an organisation

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Source: Food and You 2: Wave 7

Respondents were asked which factors, from a given list, would make them trust an organisation more or less. Around three quarters (74%) of respondents reported that they would trust an organisation more if it were to make the scientific evidence underpinning any decisions openly available, while 69% of respondents reported that they would trust an organisation more if it were to base decisions and advice on scientific evidence. Two-thirds (66%) of respondents reported that they would trust an organisation more if it were to use independent expert advice to inform any decisions, and 22% reported that this would not make a difference to how much they trusted an organisation. Around 1 in 10 respondents reported that they did not know how these factors would impact their trust of an organisation (Figure 3) [\(footnote 16\)](#).

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= 5812, all respondents.
2. [NS-SEC](#) (The National Statistics Socio-economic classification) is a classification system which provides an indication of socio-economic position based on occupation and employment status.
3. Please note: the figures of other ethnic groups are not reported due to low base / sample size.
4. 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= 5812, all respondents.
5. Regional differences were only considered in England due to the low sample / base size in Wales and Northern Ireland.
6. Please note: the figures of other ethnic groups are not reported due to low base / sample size.
7. Question: How confident are you that... A) Farmers, B) Slaughterhouses and dairies, C) Food manufacturers for example, factories, D) Shops and supermarkets, E) Restaurants, F) Takeaways, G) Food delivery services for example, Just Eat, Deliveroo, Uber Eats...in the UK (and Ireland) ensure the food you buy is safe to eat. Responses: Very confident, Fairly confident, Not very confident, Not at all confident, It varies, Don't know. Base= 5812, all online respondents and all those who completed the 'Eating Out' paper questionnaire.
8. Question: Which of the following, if any, have you heard of? Please select all that apply. Response: Food Standards Agency (FSA), (England) Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), (England) The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, (England) Environment Agency, (England) UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), (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= 3617, all online respondents. Please note: All consumers taking part in the survey had received an invitation to take part in the survey which mentioned the FSA. An absence of response indicates the organisation had not been heard of by the respondent or a non-response.
9. Please note: the figures of other ethnic groups are not reported due to low base / sample size.
10. 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= 5812, 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.

11. Regional differences were only considered in England due to the low sample / base size in Wales and Northern Ireland.
12. Please note: the figures of other ethnic groups are not reported due to low base / sample size.
13. 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= 3323, 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.
14. 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= 5812, 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.
15. Question: How confident are you that scientific research produces accurate conclusions? Responses: Very confident, Fairly confident, Not very confident, Not at all confident, Don't know. Base= 3617, all online respondents. Please note: 'Very confident' and 'Fairly confident' referred to as confident.
16. Question: If an organisation were to...a) make the scientific evidence underpinning any decisions openly available b) base their decision-making and advice on scientific evidence c) use independent expert advice to inform any decisions...would this make you...? Responses: Trust the organisation a lot more, Trust the organisation slightly more, Trust the organisation a lot less, Trust the organisation slightly less, It would make no difference, Don't know. Base= 3617, all online respondents.