

F&Y2 Wave 7: Chapter 5 Online platforms

Introduction

An online food platform is a technology business that facilitates the exchange of food between vendor(s) and consumer(s). Any business selling food online, including food delivery businesses, must be registered as a food business [\(footnote 1\)](#). The FSA provides guidance for food businesses, which use online platforms [\(footnote 2\)](#). A food safety officer from the local authority will inspect a business to check that it follows food hygiene law so that the food is safe to eat.

Food and You 2 asked respondents about their use and experiences with different types of food related online platforms. A range of online platforms are asked about including food business and delivery websites, food sharing apps and social media marketplaces.

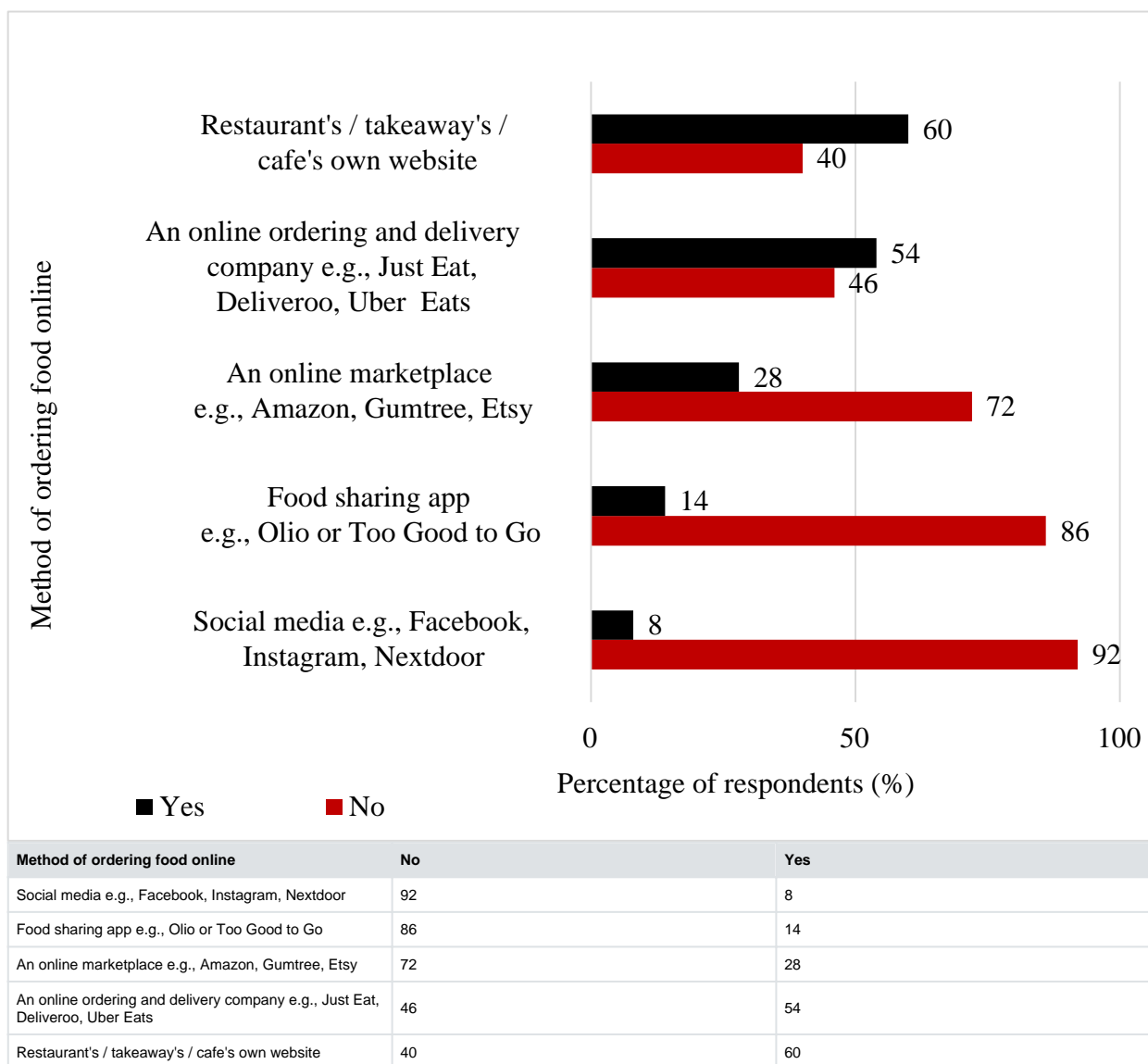
This chapter provides an overview of respondents' use of online platforms, including how frequently people use online platforms to buy food or drink, and the types of food and drink people order. It also provides information on people's awareness and use of food hygiene ratings and allergen information on online platforms.

Which online platforms are used to order food or drink online?

Figure 18. Where respondents order food or drink online.

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Source: Food and You 2: Wave 7

Respondents were asked to indicate if they had ever ordered food or drink online from a number of different platforms. Six in ten respondents reported that they had ordered food or drink from the websites of a restaurant, takeaway or café (60%) and around half had ordered from an online ordering and delivery company (for example, Just Eat, Deliveroo, Uber Eats) (54%). Around 3 in 10 (28%) respondents had ordered via an online marketplace (for example Amazon, Gumtree, Etsy). The platforms used least by respondents were food sharing apps (for example Olio, Too Good To Go) (14%) and social media platforms (for example, Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor) (8%) (Figure 18) ([footnote 3](#)).

Use of online marketplaces (for example Amazon, Gumtree, Etsy) to order food or drink varied between different categories of people in the following ways:

- Age group: younger adults were more likely to have ordered food or drink from an online marketplace compared to older adults. For example, 41% of those aged 16-24 years had ordered food or drink from an online marketplace compared to 11% of those aged 75 years or over.

- Household size: respondents who lived in larger households were more likely to have ordered food or drink from an online marketplace than those living in smaller households. For example, 21% of those living in 1-person households had ordered food or drink from an online marketplace compared to 36% of those in households of 5-person or more.
- Children under 16 years in the household: 36% of those with children under 16 years in the household had ordered food or drink from an online marketplace compared to 25% of those without children under 16 years.
- Children under 6 years in the household: 39% of those with children under 6 years in the household had ordered food or drink from an online marketplace compared to 27% of those without children under 6 years.
- NS-SEC: those in lower supervisory and technical occupations (35%), full-time students (35%) and those who were long term unemployed and/or had never worked (34%) were more likely to have ordered food or drink from an online marketplace than those in other occupational groups (for example, 24% in intermediate occupations).
- Food security: respondents with low (43%) or very low (39%) food security were more likely to have ordered food or drink from an online marketplace than those with marginal (31%), or high (23%) food security**.
- Responsibility for cooking: those who cook (29%) were more likely to have ordered food or drink from an online marketplace than those who never cook (17%).
- Responsibility for food shopping: those who shop for food (29%) were more likely to have ordered food or drink from an online marketplace than those who never shop (16%).

Use of social media (for example, Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor) to order food or drink varied between different categories of people in the following ways:

- Age group: younger adults were more likely to have ordered food or drink from social media than older adults. For example, 15% of those aged 16-24 years had ordered food or drink from social media compared to 3% of those aged 75 years or over.
- Children under 6 years in the household: 7% of those with children under 6 years in the household had ordered food or drink from social media compared to 17% of those without children under 6 years.
- Annual household income: respondents with a lower income were more likely to have ordered food or drink from social media compared to those with a higher income. For example, 13% of those with an income of less than £19,000 had ordered food or drink from social media compared to 4% of those with an income of more than £96,000**.
- NS-SEC: full-time students (17%) and those who were long term unemployed and/or had never worked (17%) were more likely to have ordered food or drink from social media than those in some other occupational groups (for example, 7% in managerial, administrative and professional occupations).
- Region (England): respondents who lived in North-East England (20%) were more likely to have ordered food or drink from social media than those in other regions (for example, 6% in Greater London, 7% of those in Yorkshire and the Humber, 7% of those in East of England).
- Food security: those who were less food secure were more likely to have ordered food or drink from social media. For example, 17% of those with very low food security had ordered food or drink from social media compared to 5% of those with high food security.

Use of food sharing apps (for example Olio, Too Good To Go) to order food or drink varied between different categories of people in the following ways:

- Age group: younger adults were more likely to have ordered food or drink from a food sharing app than older adults. For example, 27% of adults aged 16-24 years had ordered food or drink from a food sharing app compared to 1% of those aged 75 years or over.
- Household size: respondents who lived in larger households were more likely to have ordered food or drink from a food sharing app than those who lived in smaller households. For example, 19% of those who lived in households of 5-persons or more had ordered food

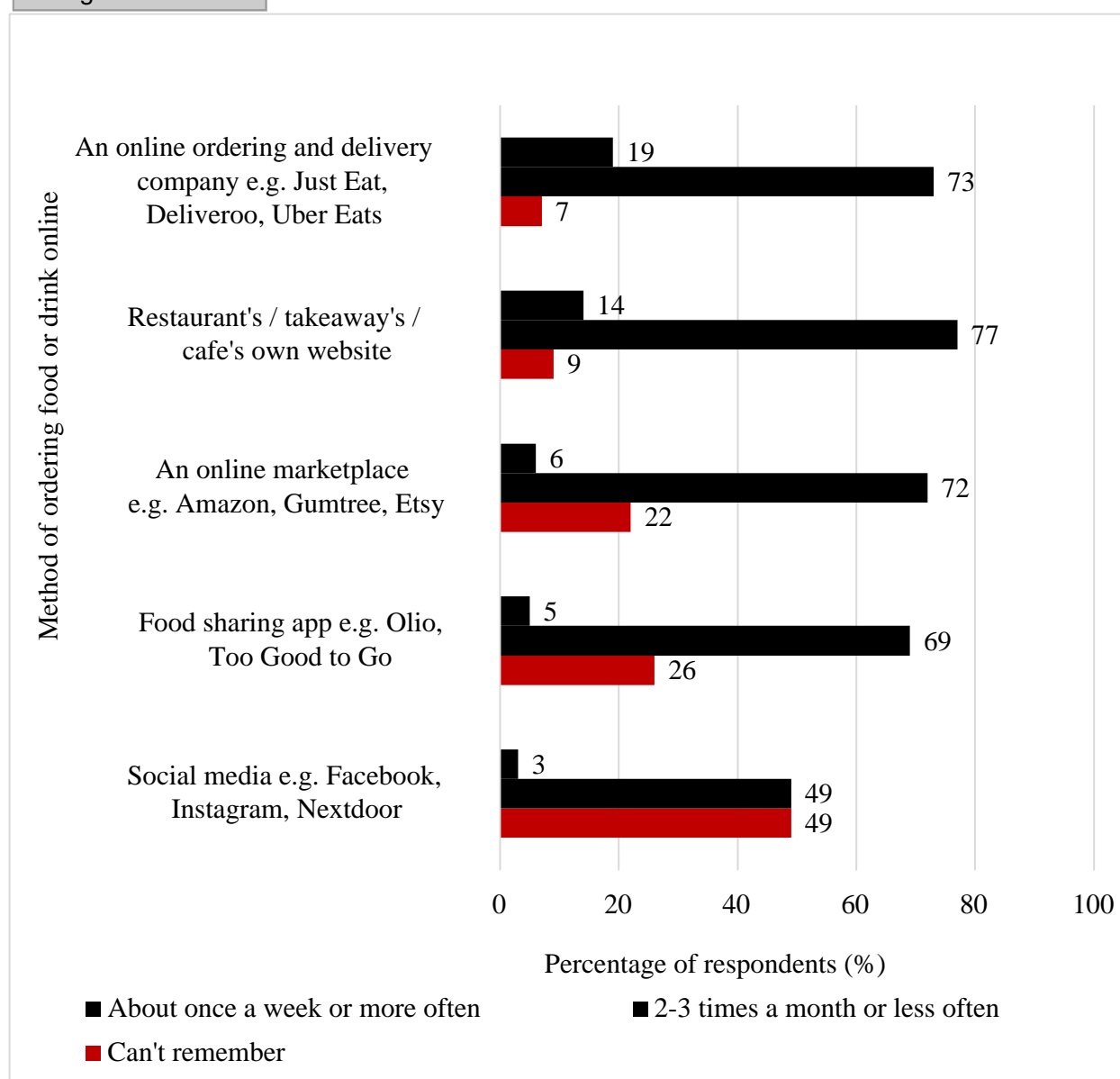
- or drink from an online marketplace compared to 8% of those in 1-person households.
- NS-SEC: full-time students (24%) were more likely to have ordered food or drink from a food sharing app than those in occupational groups (for example, 8% of small employers and own account workers) and those who were long term unemployed and/or had never worked (8%).
- Food security: those who had marginal (21%), low (18%) or very low (20%) food security were more likely to have ordered food or drink from a food sharing app than those with high food security (11%).

How often do respondents order food or drink through online platforms?

Figure 19. How often respondents order food or drink from different online platforms.

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Method of ordering food or drink online	About once a week or more often	2-3 times a month or less often	Can't remember
Social media e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor	3	49	49
Food sharing app e.g. Olio, Too Good to Go	5	69	26
An online marketplace e.g. Amazon, Gumtree, Etsy	6	72	22
Restaurant's / takeaway's / cafe's own website	14	77	9
An online ordering and delivery company e.g. Just Eat, Deliveroo, Uber Eats	19	73	7

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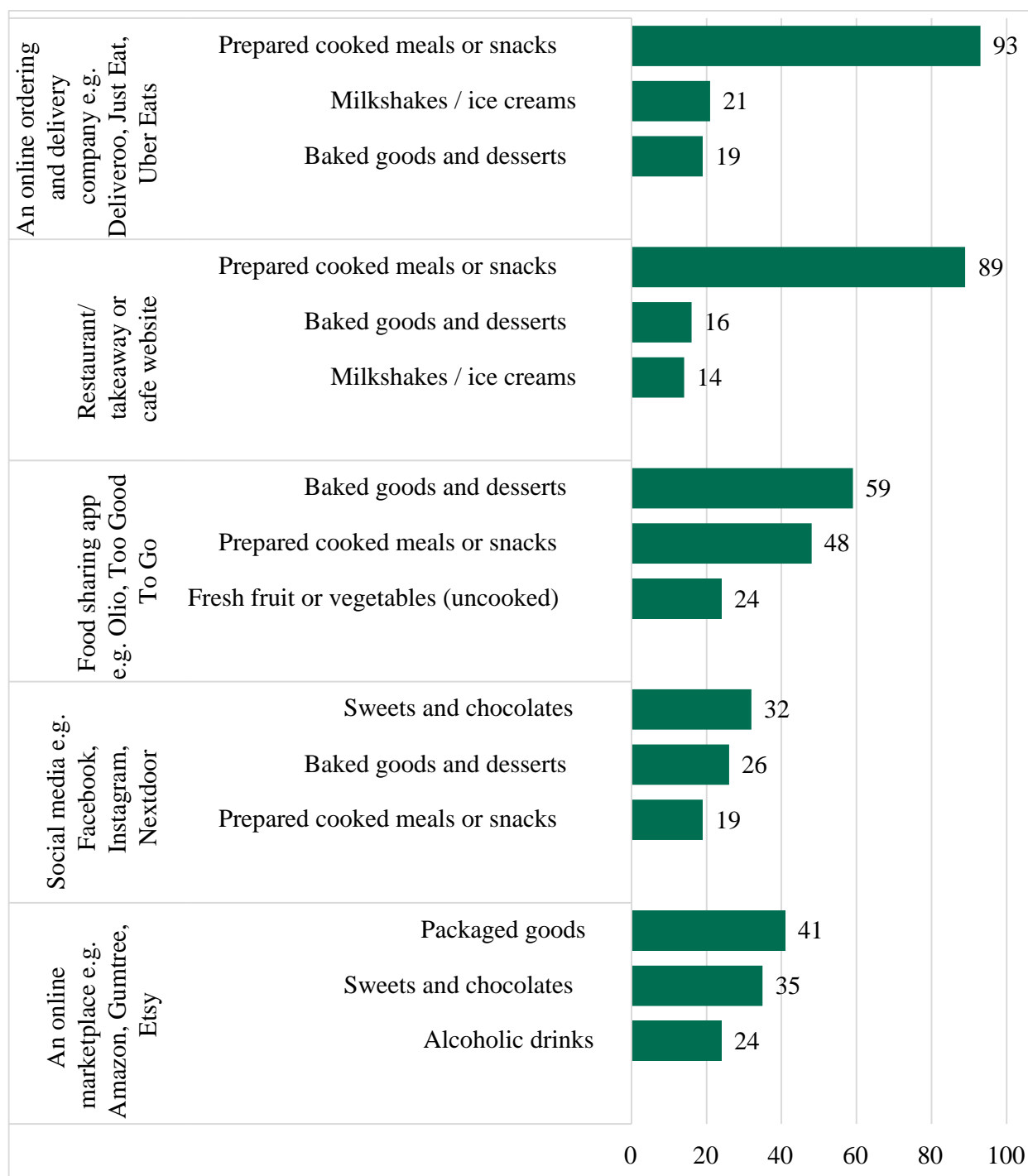
[Image](#) [.csv](#)

Source: Food and You 2: Wave 7

Respondents who had ordered food or drink from a range of online platforms were asked how frequently they ordered food or drink from that platform. Most respondents ordered food or drink from each type of online platform 2-3 times a month or less often, with a minority using these types of platforms about once a week or more often. For example, 19% of respondents ordered food or drink from an online ordering and delivery company (for example, Just Eat, Deliveroo, Uber Eats) about once a week or more often, 73% of respondents did this 2-3 times a month or less often. Around half (49%) of respondents reported that they can't remember how often they ordered food or drink from a social media platform (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor) (Figure 19) ([footnote 4](#)).

What types of food and drink do respondents order through different online platforms?

Figure 20. The type of food or drink ordered by online platforms



Source: Food and You 2: Wave 7

Respondents who completed the survey online and had ordered food or drink from online platforms were asked what food or drink they had ordered from each of the platform(s). The most common type of food or drink ordered varied by the platform. Prepared cooked meals or snacks (93%) were the products most commonly ordered through online ordering and delivery companies (for example, Just Eat, Deliveroo, Uber Eats), and restaurant, takeaway or café websites (89%). Baked goods and desserts (59%) were the products most commonly ordered through food sharing apps (for example, Olio, Too Good To Go). Packaged goods were most commonly ordered via online marketplaces (for example, Amazon, Gumtree, Etsy) (41%) and sweets and chocolates were the products most commonly ordered through social media (for example, Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor) (32%) (Figure 20) (footnote 5).

Use of FHRs on online platforms

[The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme](#) (FHRs) helps people make informed choices about where to eat out or shop for food by giving clear information about the businesses' hygiene standards. Businesses are given a rating from 0 to 5. A rating of 5 indicates that hygiene standards are very good and a rating of 0 indicates that urgent improvement is required. The FSA runs the scheme in partnership with local authorities in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

Respondents who had ordered food or drink through an online platform and had heard of the FHRs were asked how often they look for FHRs ratings when ordering food and drink online. Almost half (46%) of respondents 'always' or 'most of the time' looked for the FHRs ratings, 31% of respondents did this about half of the time or occasionally, and 21% of respondents never looked for the FHRs rating when ordering food and drink online ([footnote 6](#)).

Respondents who reported looking for FHRs ratings when ordering food or drink online were asked how often the ratings were easy to find. Around half (52%) of respondents reported that the ratings were 'always' or 'most of the time' easy to find, 37% reported that the ratings were easy to find about half the time or occasionally, and 4% reported that the ratings were never easy to find ([footnote 7](#)).

Hypersensitivities and use of online platforms

Food hypersensitivity is a term that refers to a bad or unpleasant physical reaction which occurs as a result of consuming a specific food. There are different types of food hypersensitivity including, food allergy, food intolerance and coeliac disease ([footnote 8](#)).

The FSA provides guidance for food businesses on providing allergen information to their customers. By law ([footnote 9](#)), food businesses in the UK must inform customers if they use any of the 14 most potent and prevalent allergens in the food and drink they provide ([footnote 10](#)). The allergen labelling required differs depending on how food is being sold and the type of food being sold. If food is sold online allergen information should be available to a customer before the purchase of the food is completed and when the food is delivered ([footnote 11](#)).

Respondents who have a food hypersensitivity, or live with someone who has a food hypersensitivity, were asked how often they look for information which allows them to identify food that may cause a bad or unpleasant reaction when ordering food or drink online. Around 2 in 10 (18%) respondents who have a food hypersensitivity always looked for information that would allow them to identify food that might cause them a bad or unpleasant reaction, and 41% of respondents looked for this information less often (i.e., 'most of the time', 'about half of the time', 'occasionally'). However, 37% respondents who have a food hypersensitivity never looked for information that would allow them to identify food that might cause a bad or unpleasant reaction when ordering food or drink online ([footnote 12](#)).

1. [Advice to businesses selling food online, FSA \(PDF\). Regulation \(EC\) no 178/2002 of the European parliament and of the council of 28 January 2002 \(PDF\).](#)
2. [Distance selling, mail order and delivery, FSA. Food safety for food delivery, FSA.](#)

3. Question: Have you ever ordered food or drink online through...? a) a restaurant's, cafe's or takeaway's own website. b) an online ordering and delivery company e.g. Just Eat, Deliveroo or Uber Eats, etc. c) an online marketplace, e.g. Amazon, Gumtree, Etsy, etc. d) social media, e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, etc. e) a food sharing app, e.g. Olio or Too Good To Go, etc. Responses: yes, no. Base= 3617, all online respondents.
4. Question: How often do you order food or drink online...? A) a restaurant's, cafe's or takeaway's own website. b) an online ordering and delivery company e.g. Just Eat, Deliveroo or Uber Eats, etc. C) an online marketplace, e.g. Amazon, Gumtree, Etsy, etc. d) social media, e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, etc. e) a food sharing app, e.g. Olio or Too Good to Go, etc. Responses: every day, most days, 2-3 times a week, about once a week, 2-3 times a month, about once a month, less than once a month, never, can't remember. Base A= 3077, B= 2555, C= 1680, D= 813, E= 942, all online respondents and those who completed version A postal questionnaire who have ever ordered food or drink through A/B/C/D/E.
5. Question: In the last 12 months, what food or drink have you ordered online...? a) directly through a restaurant's, cafe's or takeaway's own website. b) through an online ordering and delivery company e.g. Just Eat, Deliveroo or Uber Eats, etc. c) an online marketplace, e.g. Amazon, Gumtree, Etsy, etc. d) through social media, e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, etc. e) through a food sharing app, e.g. Olio or Too Good to Go, etc. Responses: prepared cooked meals or snacks, baked goods and desserts, such as cheesecakes, cakes, biscuits, breads etc or dough/mixes to make these, milkshakes / ice creams, protein shakes, fresh fruit or vegetables (uncooked), dairy products, such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, butter etc, alcoholic drinks, such as beer, wine, spirits, cocktails, non-alcoholic drinks, other (please specify). Base A= 1991, B= 1649, C= 796, D= 169, E= 362, all online respondents who have ever ordered food or drink online through...A/B/C/D/E.
6. Question: When you order food and drink online, how often do you look for Food Hygiene Rating Scheme ratings? Responses: always, most of the time, about half of the time, occasionally, never, don't know. Base= 2423, all respondents who have ordered food and drink online and have heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
7. Question: When you look for Food Hygiene Rating Scheme ratings when ordering food and drink online, how often are they easy to find? Responses: always, most of the time, about half of the time, occasionally, never, don't know. Base= 1874, all online respondents who look for Food Hygiene Rating Scheme ratings when ordering food or drink online.
8. [FSA Explains: Food hypersensitivities. Overview: Food Allergy, NHS. Food Intolerance, NHS. Overview: Coeliac disease, NHS.](#)
9. [42 Regulation \(EU\) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 \(PDF\).](#)
10. Allergens: celery, cereals containing gluten (such as barley and oats), crustaceans (such as prawns, crabs and lobsters), eggs, fish, lupin, milk, molluscs (such as mussels and oysters), mustard, peanuts, sesame, soybeans, sulphur dioxide and sulphites and tree nuts (such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts).

11. [Allergen guidance for food businesses, FSA.](#)

12. Question: When you order food and drink online, how often do you look for information that allows you to identify food that might cause you or another member of your household a bad or unpleasant physical reaction? Responses: always, most of the time, about half of the time, occasionally, never, don't know, I don't order food and drink online. Base= 2185, all online respondents who have ordered food or drink online and who suffer from a bad or unpleasant physical reaction after consuming certain foods or avoid certain foods because of the bad or unpleasant physical reaction they might cause, and/or live with at least one other adult or child in their household.