

F&Y2 Wave 8: Executive summary

Results available: Results available

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England, Northern Ireland and Wales

PDF

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Food and You 2 is a biannual 'Official Statistic' survey commissioned by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The survey measures consumers' self-reported knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to food safety and other food issues amongst adults in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

Fieldwork for Food and You 2: Wave 8 was conducted between 12th October 2023 and 8th January 2024. A total of 5,808 adults (aged 16 years or over) from 4,006 households across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland completed the 'push-to-web' survey (see Annex A for more information about the methodology).

The modules presented in this report include 'Food you can trust', 'Concerns about food', 'Food security', 'Eating at home', 'Food hypersensitivities', 'Eating out and takeaways' and 'Emerging issues'.

Food you can trust

Confidence in food safety and authenticity

- 90% of respondents reported that they were confident that the food they buy is safe to eat
- 82% of respondents were confident that the information on food labels is accurate

Confidence in the food supply chain

- 72% of respondents reported that they had confidence in the food supply chain

Awareness, trust and confidence in the FSA

- 90% of respondents had heard of the FSA
- 72% of respondents who had at least some knowledge of the FSA reported that they trusted the FSA to do its job (that is, to make sure 'food is safe and what it says it is')

- 79% of 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), 78% were confident that the FSA takes appropriate action if a food-related risk is identified and 72% were confident that the FSA is committed to communicating openly with the public about food-related risks

Concerns about food

- 79% of respondents had no concerns about the food they eat, and 21% of respondents reported that they had a concern
- Respondents with a concern were asked to briefly explain what their concerns were about the food they eat. The most common concerns related to food safety and hygiene (33%), food production methods (30%) and food quality (29%)
- Respondents were asked to indicate if they had concerns about several food-related issues, from a list of options. The most common concern was food prices (69%). Other common concerns were the quality of food (65%), food waste (63%) and the amount of sugar in food (58%)

Food security

- Across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, 76% of respondents were classified as food secure (60% high, 16% marginal) and 24% of respondents were classified as food insecure (11% low, 13% very low)
- Most respondents (94%) reported that they had not used a food bank or other emergency food provider in the last 12 months, with 4% of respondents reporting that they had

Eating out and takeaways

- 42% of respondents reported checking the food hygiene rating of a business in the previous 12 months
- 86% of respondents reported that they had heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS). Around 6 in 10 (57%) respondents reported that they had heard of the FHRS and had at least a bit of knowledge about it

Food allergies, intolerances and other hypersensitivities

- 12% of respondents reported that they have a food intolerance, 4% reported having a food allergy, and 1% reported having coeliac disease. Most respondents (77%) reported that they did not have a food hypersensitivity
- 24% of respondents who have a food hypersensitivity had been diagnosed by an NHS or private medical practitioner and 5% had been diagnosed by an alternative or complementary therapist. However, most respondents (76%) had not received any diagnosis
- 58% of respondents who have a food hypersensitivity reported that they had experienced a reaction in the previous 12 months and 37% reported that they had not experienced a reaction

Eating at home

Cleaning

- 70% of respondents reported that they always wash their hands before preparing or cooking food
- 92% of respondents reported that they always wash their hands immediately after handling raw meat, poultry, or fish

Chilling

- 60% of respondents reported that their fridge temperature should be between 0-5 degrees Celsius
- 58% of respondents who have a fridge reported that they monitored the temperature; either manually (46%) or via an internal temperature alarm (12%)

Cooking

- 77% of respondents reported that they always cook food until it is steaming hot and cooked all the way through, and 23% reported that they do not always do this
- 90% of respondents reported that they never eat chicken or turkey when it is pink or has pink juices. 7% of respondents reported eating chicken or turkey at least occasionally when it is pink or has pink juices
- 79% of respondents reported that they would only reheat food once, 11% would reheat food twice, and 3% would reheat food more than twice

Avoiding cross-contamination

- 56% of respondents reported that they never wash raw chicken, however, 40% of respondents reported that they do this at least occasionally
- 63% of respondents reported storing raw meat and poultry at the bottom of the fridge

Use-by dates

- 65% of respondents identified the use-by date as the information which shows that food is no longer safe to eat
- 66% of respondents reported that they always check use-by dates before they cook or prepare food

Changes to eating habits, meat alternatives and genetic technologies

- The most common changes reported by respondents were that they had eaten less processed food (43%) and started minimising food waste (38%)
- 27% of respondents reported that they currently eat meat alternatives, 22% of respondents reported that they used to eat meat alternatives but no longer do, and 44% of respondents reported that they had never eaten meat alternatives
- Respondents reported greater awareness and knowledge of genetically modified (GM) food than gene-edited or genome-edited food (GE) and least knowledge of precision bred food