

# Food and You 2 FHRs Wave 8: Chapter 3 - Use of the FHRs in decision making

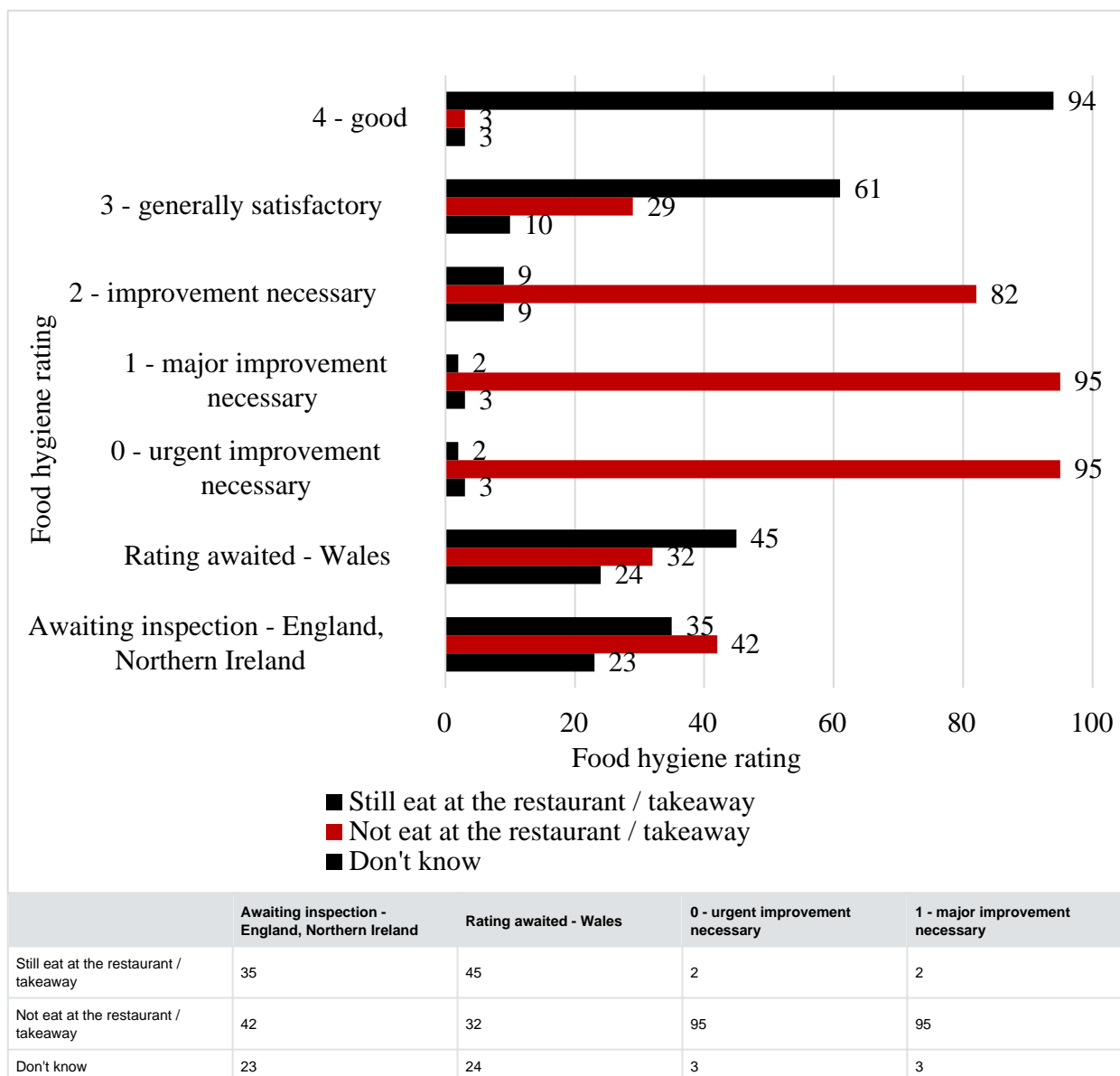
## Acceptable food hygiene ratings

Respondents were asked to consider whether they would still eat or order food from a restaurant or takeaway, if on arrival they saw a food hygiene rating sticker where the business scored lower than the maximum rating of 5 (very good). Most respondents said they would still eat at a restaurant or takeaway if they saw a food hygiene rating sticker with a rating of 4 (good) (94%) or 3 (generally satisfactory) (61%). However, most respondents reported that they would not eat at a restaurant or takeaway if they saw a food hygiene rating sticker with a rating of 2 (improvement necessary) (82%), 1 (major improvement necessary) (95%) or 0 (urgent improvement necessary) (95%) (Figure 13) [\(footnote 1\)](#).

## Figure 13. Willingness to eat at a restaurant or takeaway with food hygiene ratings below 5

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Respondents were asked what they would usually consider the lowest acceptable food hygiene rating when considering buying food from somewhere. 8% of respondents would only consider a rating of 5 acceptable while most respondents said that a rating of 4 (44%) or 3 (37%) was the lowest rating they would consider acceptable. A minority of respondents considered a rating of 2 (4%), 1 (1%) or 0 (1%) to be acceptable ([footnote 2](#)).

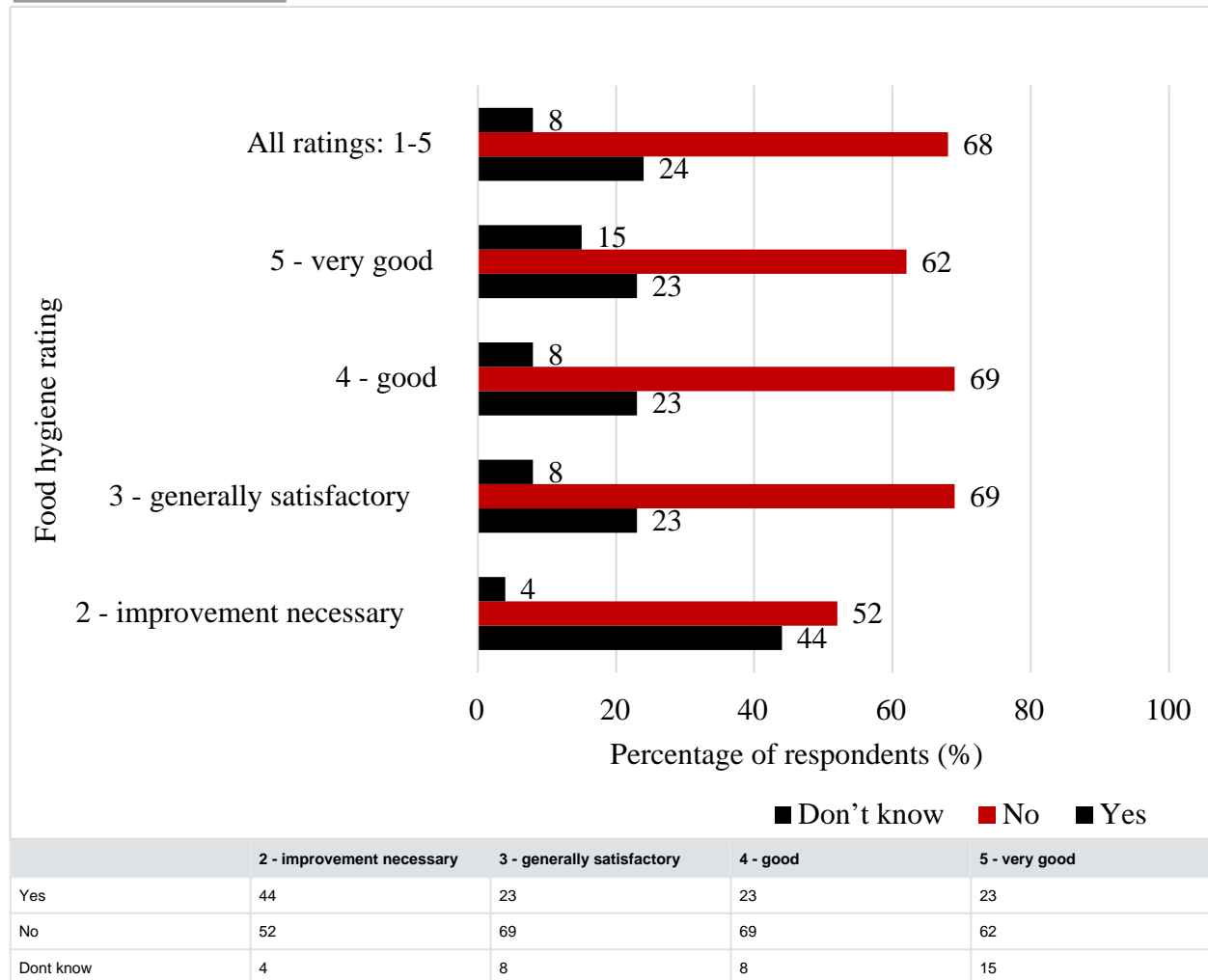
## Situations which impact acceptable food hygiene ratings

Respondents were asked if they could think of a situation where they might decide to buy food from a business with a rating lower than their usual lowest acceptable rating. Across all ratings, around two-thirds (68%) of respondents could not think of a situation in which they might decide to buy food from a food business with a lower rating, while 24% could think of a situation (Figure 14) ([footnote 3](#)) ([footnote 4](#)).

**Figure 14. Willingness to buy food from a business with a food hygiene rating which is lower than their lowest acceptable rating**

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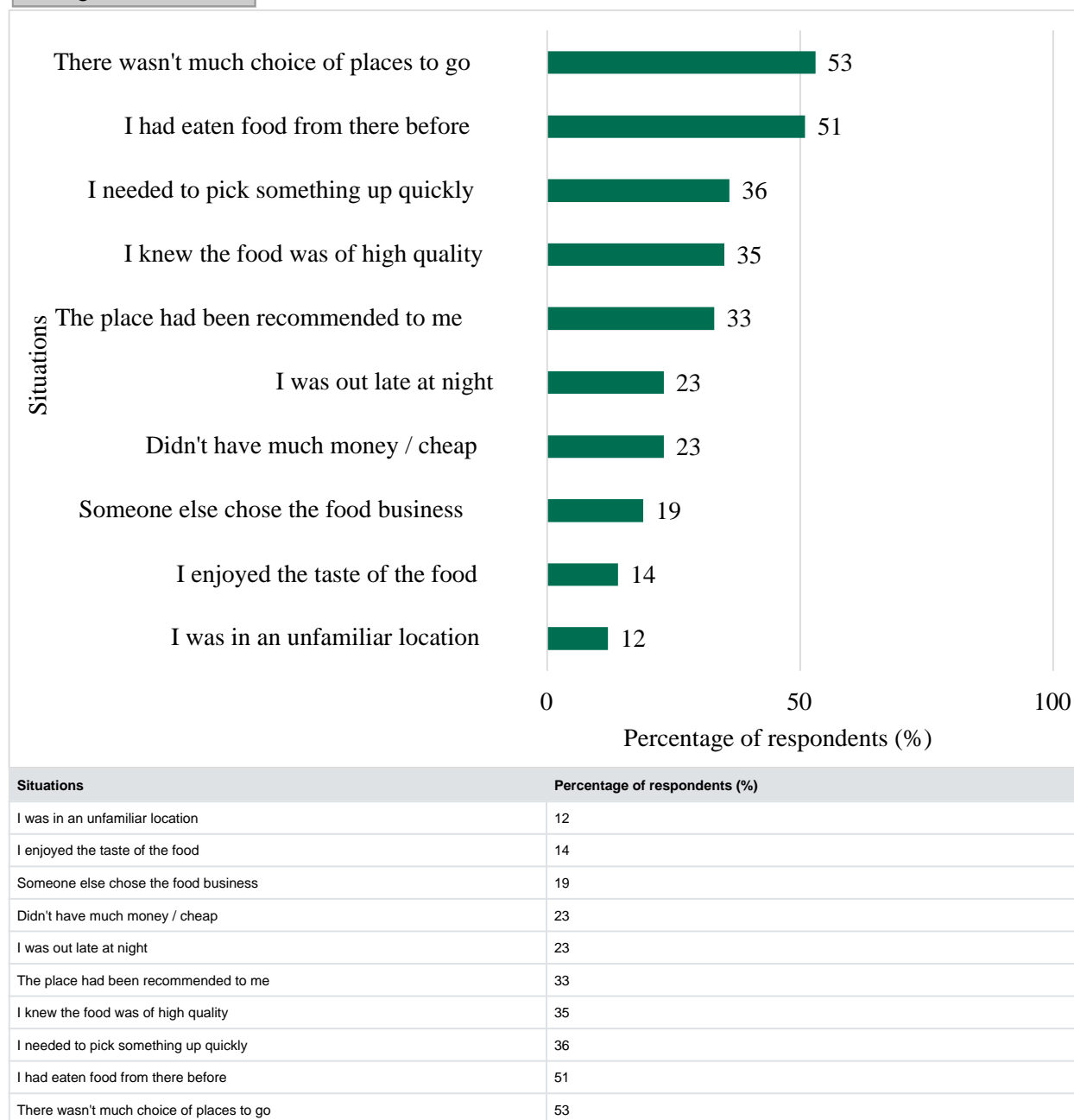
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Respondents who could think of a situation where they might buy food from a food business with a rating lower than what they would usually consider acceptable were asked what, from a given list, that situation would be. The most common situations were if there wasn't much choice of places to go (53%), if they had eaten food from there before (51%), if they needed to pick something up quickly (36%), or if they knew the food was of high quality (35%) (Figure 15) ([footnote 5](#)).

**Figure 15. Ten most common situations where respondents might buy food from a food business with a food hygiene rating lower than their usual lowest acceptable rating**

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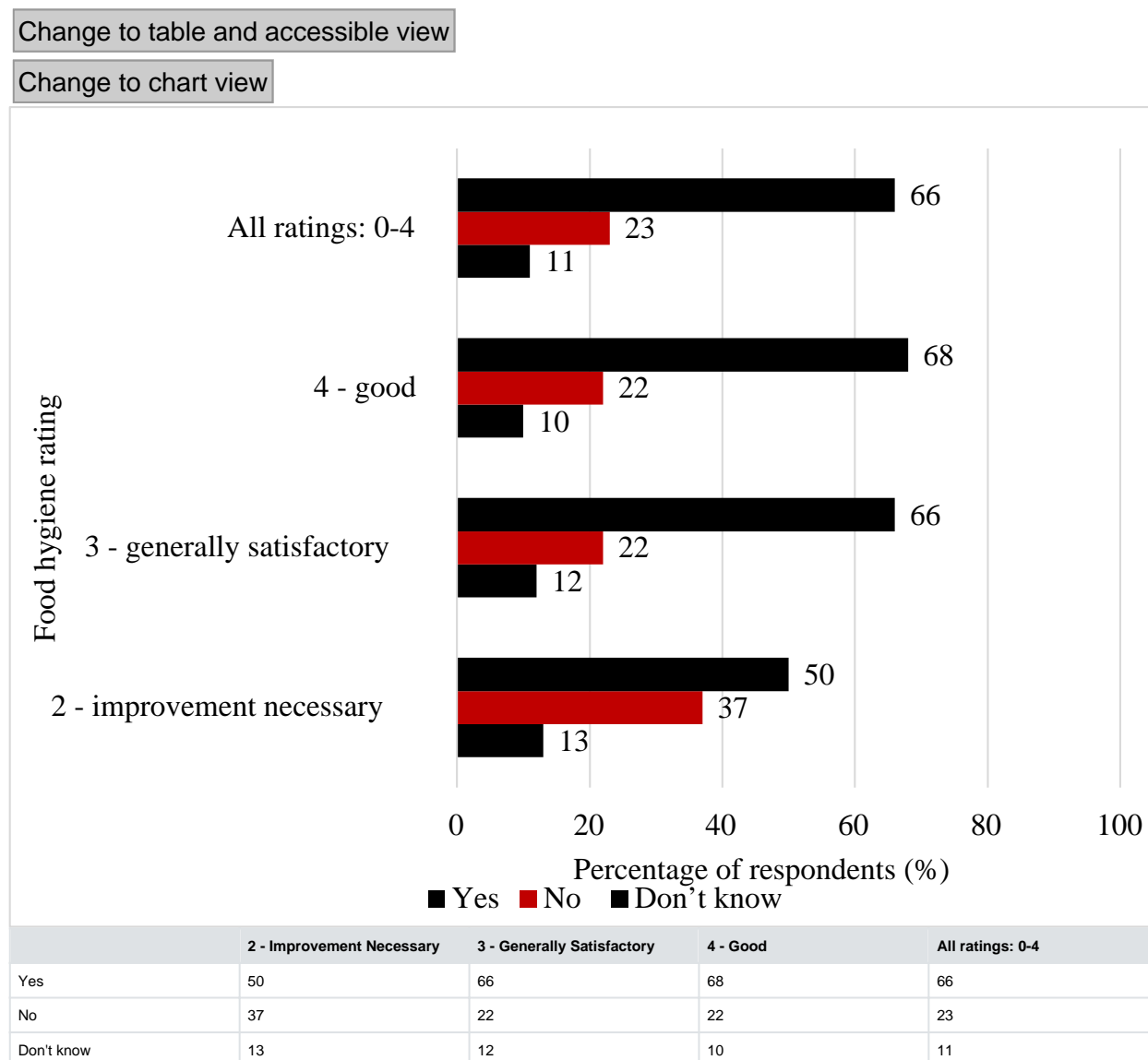
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Source: Food and You 2: Wave 8

Respondents were asked if they could think of an occasion in which they would only buy food from a business with a rating which is higher than their usual lowest acceptable rating. Overall,

most respondents (66%) could think of a situation in which this would apply, and 23% of respondents could not. Most respondents who considered a rating of 2 (improvement necessary) (50%), 3 (generally satisfactory) (66%), or 4 (good) (68%) as generally acceptable could think of a situation in which they would only buy food from a food business with a higher rating (Figure 16) [\(footnote 6\)](#) [\(footnote 7\)](#).

**Figure 16. Willingness to buy food from a business with a food hygiene rating which is higher than their usual lowest acceptable rating**



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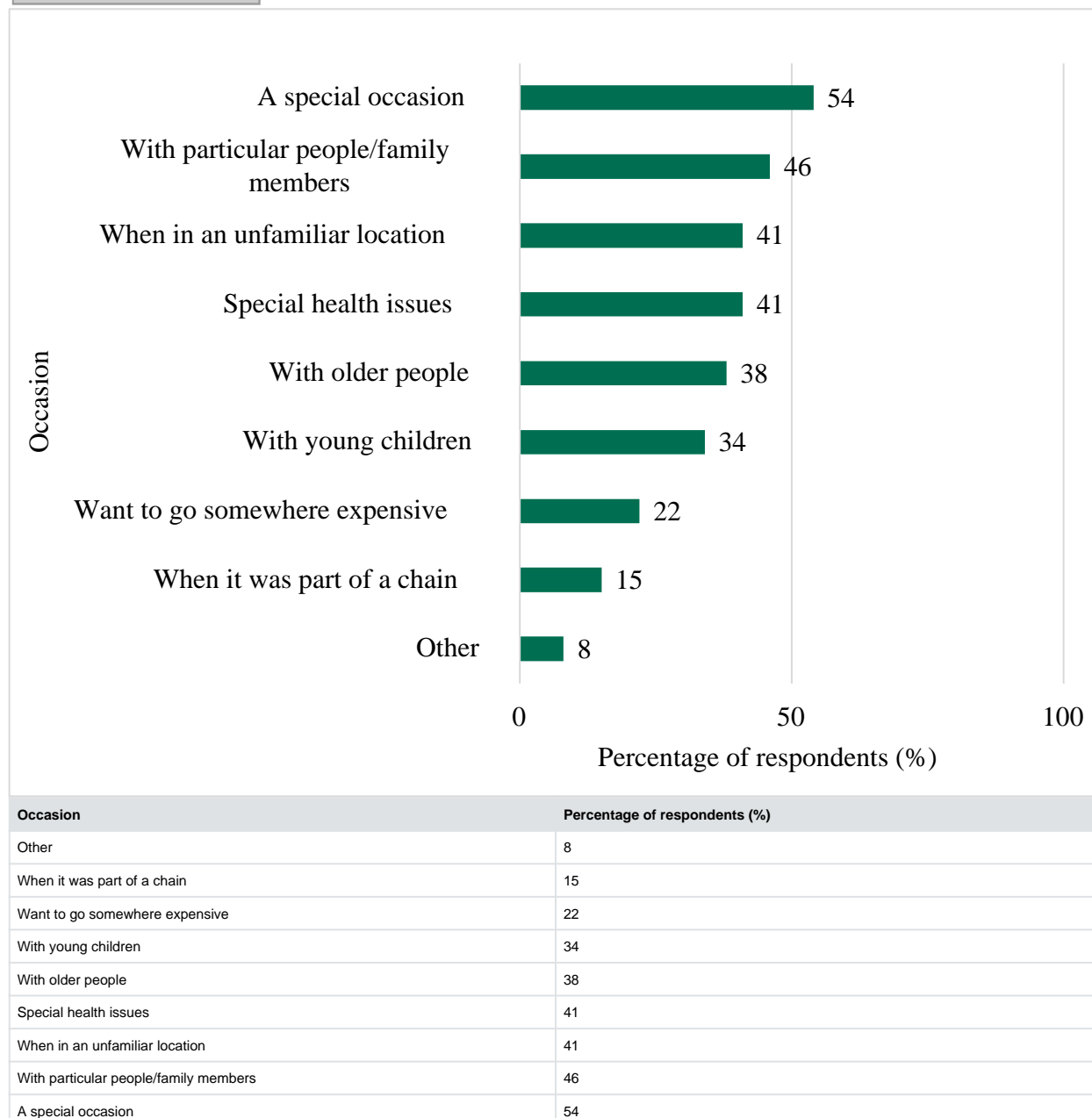
Respondents who could think of an occasion where they would only buy food from a business with a rating higher than what they would usually consider acceptable were asked what, from a given list, that occasion would be. The most common occasions were special occasions (54%),

when with particular people or family members (46%), when in an unfamiliar location (e.g., away with work or on holiday) (41%), or when the respondent or someone else had special health issues (e.g., illness or pregnancy) (41%) (Figure 17) [\(footnote 8\)](#).

**Figure 17. Occasions where respondents would only buy food from a business with a food hygiene rating which is higher than the rating usually considered acceptable**

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## Impact of FHRS rating stickers on behaviours and perception

Respondents were asked to what extent, if at all, a food business not having the food hygiene rating sticker present at the entrance would affect their decision to eat there. Of those who had heard of the FHRS, 58% would be less likely (i.e., 'much less likely' or 'a little less likely') to eat at a food business that did not have the food hygiene rating sticker present at the entrance. However, 29% of respondents reported that it would not make them any less likely to eat there. 13% of respondents reported that they didn't know what effect a business not displaying their rating would have on their decision to eat there [\(footnote 9\)](#).

A higher proportion of respondents living in Wales (70%) reported being less likely to eat at a food business which did not have the food hygiene rating sticker present at the entrance compared to those in England (57%) and Northern Ireland (60%).

Respondents who had heard of the FHRS were also asked if, in the last 12 months, they had decided against using a food business because it did not display its food hygiene rating sticker. 17% reported that they had decided against using a food business because it did not display its food hygiene rating sticker, while 63% had not done this. 20% of respondents reported that they did not know or couldn't remember if they had decided against using a food business because it did not display its food hygiene rating sticker [\(footnote 10\)](#).

## Concerns about food businesses not displaying an FHRS rating

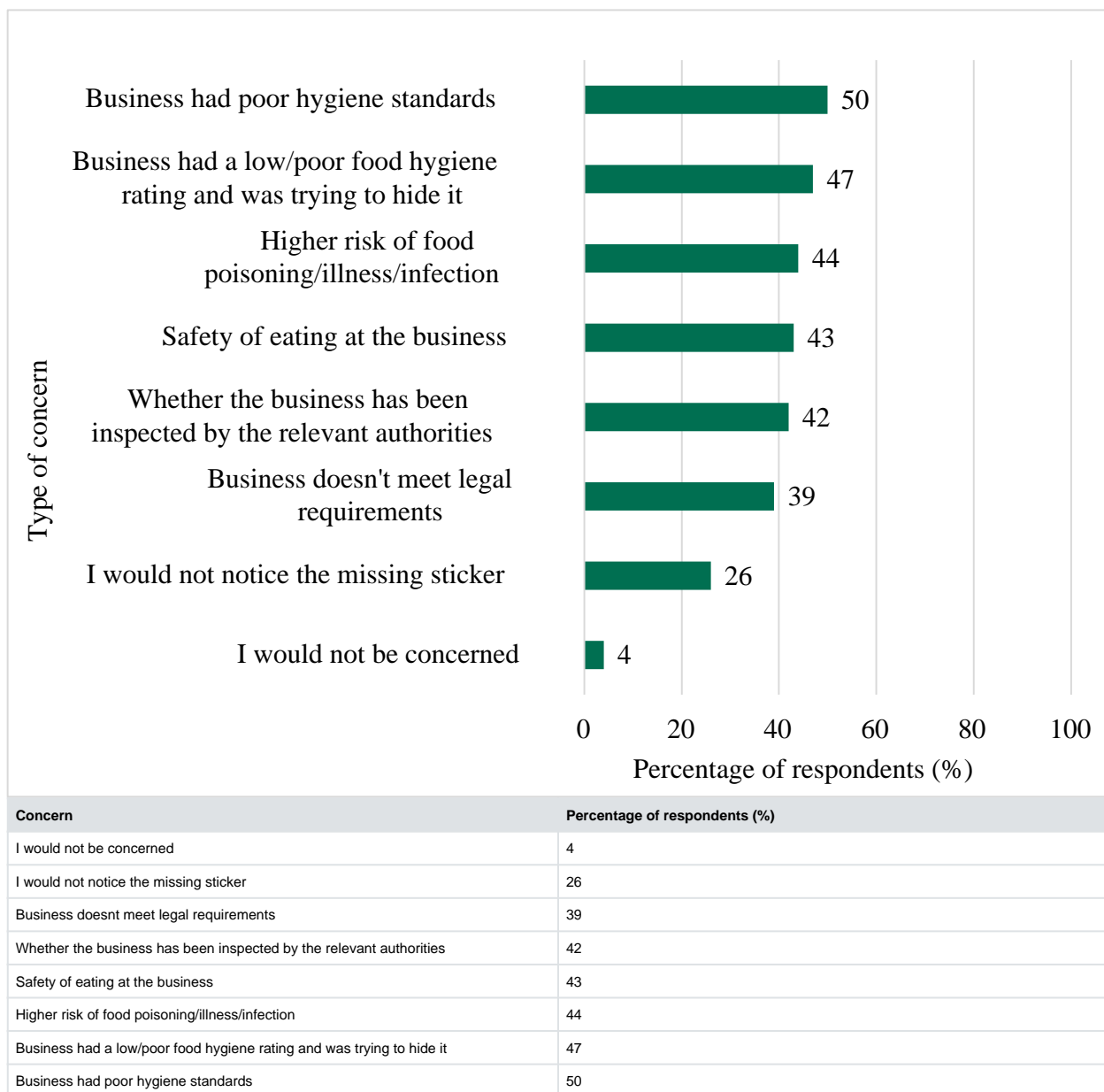
Respondents were asked what concerns they would have if they visited a food business that did not display its food hygiene rating sticker on the premises. The most common concerns were that the food business had poor hygiene standards (50%) and that the food business had a poor or low food hygiene rating and was trying to hide it (47%). Respondents in Wales (56%) and Northern Ireland (53%) were more likely to be concerned that the food business had a low/poor hygiene rating and was trying to hide it than respondents in England (46%)\*\*.

Over a quarter (26%) of respondents would not notice the food hygiene rating sticker was missing and 4% would not be concerned about anything if the sticker was not displayed (Figure 18) [\(footnote 11\)](#). Respondents in England (27%) were more likely to report that they would not notice if the sticker was missing than respondents in Wales (18%) or Northern Ireland (20%)\*\*.

## Figure 18. Concerns respondents would have if a food business did not display their food hygiene rating sticker at the premises

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1. Question: For each of the following hygiene ratings, please state whether you would still eat at the restaurant or takeaway on seeing the rating, or whether you would decide not to eat at the restaurant or takeaway. Responses: I would still eat at the restaurant / takeaway, I would not eat at the restaurant / takeaway, Don't know. Base = 3258, all online respondents and those answering the Eating Out postal questionnaire who have heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
2. Question: From a rating of 0 to 5, what is the lowest rating you would usually consider acceptable, if you were considering buying food from somewhere? Responses: 0 - urgent improvement necessary, 1 - major improvement necessary, 2 - improvement necessary, 3 -



generally satisfactory, 4 – good, 5 - very good, Don't know, I do not usually notice the rating when I go into a food business. Base = 4425, all online respondents and those answering the Eating Out postal questionnaire, who have heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, excluding 'not stated'.

3. Question: Can you think of a situation in which you might decide to buy food from a food business with a rating of lower than ... (rating)? Responses: Yes, No, Don't know. Base = 3471, all online respondents who said they consider an FHRS rating of 1-5 acceptable when buying food from somewhere, excluding those who have not heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, excluding 'not stated'. Please note: The score presented was the response from the previous question, 'From a rating of 0 to 5, what is the lowest rating you would usually consider acceptable, if you were considering buying food from somewhere?'
4. The sample of respondents who said that a food hygiene rating of 1 was the lowest rating they would consider acceptable was less than 100, so percentages for this subgroup have been excluded from Figure 14.
5. Question: When would that be? Responses: If there wasn't much choice of places to go, If I had eaten food from there before, If I was out late at night, If I knew the food was of high quality, If I needed to pick something up quickly, If it was a place that had been recommended to me, If I didn't have much money to spend\wanted somewhere cheap, If someone else in my party chose this food business, If I enjoyed the taste of the food from the place, If I was in an unfamiliar location (away with work, on holiday, etc), If it was part of a chain I knew, Because I would assume it is safe if it is still open\running, If the food business served a particular type of food (e.g. Cuisine or vegetarian / vegan options), If I was taking food away rather than eating in, Other, Don't know. Base = 767, all online respondents who can think of a situation where they might buy food from a food business with a rating lower than what they would usually consider acceptable, excluding those who have not heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and 'not stated'.
6. Question: Can you think of an occasion where you would only buy food from a food business with a rating of higher than ...(score)? Responses: Yes, No, Don't know. Base = 3201, all online respondents who said they would eat at a food business with an FHRS rating of 0-4, excluding those who have not heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and 'not stated'. Please note: The score presented was the response from the previous question, 'From a rating of 0 to 5, what is the lowest rating you would usually consider acceptable, if you were considering buying food from somewhere?'
7. The sample of respondents who said that a food hygiene rating of 1 or 0 was the lowest rating they would consider acceptable was less than 100, so percentages for these subgroups have been excluded from Figure 16.
8. Question: When would that be? Responses: When it's a special occasion (birthday, anniversary, celebration, etc), When I am with particular people/family members, When I was in an unfamiliar location (away with work, on holiday, etc), When I or someone else had special health issues (illness, pregnancy, etc), When I am taking older people, When I am taking (young) children, When I want to go somewhere expensive, When it was part of a chain, Other. Base = 2096, all online respondents who said they would only eat somewhere with a higher rating, excluding those who have not heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and 'not stated'.

9. Question: If a food business does not have the FHRs sticker present at the entrance to what extent, if at all, will this affect your decision to eat there? Responses: It would make me much less likely to eat there, It would make me a little less likely to eat there, It would not make me any less likely to eat there, Don't know. Base = 4510, all online respondents and all those who completed the Eating Out postal questionnaire who have heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme excluding 'not stated'.
  
10. Question: In the last 12 months, did you ever decide against using a food business, because it did not display its Food Hygiene Rating Scheme sticker? Responses: Yes, No, Don't know/ can't remember. Base = 4506, all online respondents and those answering the Eating Out postal questionnaire who have heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, excluding 'not stated'.
  
11. Question: If you visited a food business that did not display their Food Hygiene Rating Scheme sticker on the premises, would you be concerned about any of the following? Responses: The food business had a low/poor Food Hygiene Rating and was trying to hide it, That the food business had poor hygiene standards, Whether the food business has been inspected by the relevant authorities or not, There would be a higher risk of food poisoning/illness/infection when eating there, The safety of eating at the food business, The food business doesn't meet legal requirements, I would not notice that the sticker is missing, I would not be concerned about anything, Other, Don't know. Base = 4515, all online respondents and those answering the Eating Out postal questionnaire who have heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, excluding 'not stated'.