

Food & You 2 trends: Introduction

The Food Standards Agency: role, remit, and responsibilities

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is a non-ministerial government department working to protect public health and consumers' wider interests in relation to food in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland ([footnote 1](#)). The FSA's overarching mission is 'food you can trust'. The FSA's vision as set out in the [2022-2027 strategy](#) is a food system in which:

- food is safe
- food is what it says it is
- food is healthier and more sustainable

Food and You 2 is designed to monitor the FSA's progress against this mission and to inform policy decisions by measuring, on a regular basis, consumers' self-reported knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to food safety and other food issues in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

Food and You 2: Wave 1-8

This report provides an overview of key trends between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024). Table 1 provides a summary of fieldwork dates and response rates.

Table 1: Summary of Wave 1 to 8 fieldwork dates and responses.

Wave	Fieldwork dates	Number of respondents	Number of households
1	29 July 2020 - 6 October 2020	9,319	6,408
2	20 November 2020 - 21 January 2021	5,900	3,955
3	28 April 2021 - 25 June 2021	6,271	4,338
4	18 October 2021 - 10 January 2022	5,796	4,026
5	26 April - 24 July 2022	6,770	4,727
6	12th October 2022 - 10th January 2023	5,991	4,217
7	28 April 2023 – 10 July 2023	5,812	4,006
8	12 October 2023 - 8 January 2024	5,808	4,006

Context

Earlier waves of the survey were conducted following the UK's exit from the EU in 2020, and during the COVID-19 pandemic. ([footnote 2](#)) More recent waves of the survey (Waves 6 and 7) were conducted during a period which saw the highest levels of annual inflation of the price of food and non-alcoholic drinks since 1977 ([footnote 3](#)). Since then, there has been a period of political and economic change; including a cost-of-living crisis where [food price inflation](#) and [energy bills](#) remained high. External sources have also reported lower levels of trust in government in recent years ([footnote 4](#)). Trends in key survey responses may have been impacted by some, or all, of these circumstances.

Interpreting the findings

This report provides commentary on changes over time between Wave 1 and Wave 8 of the Food and You 2 survey. All differences commented on in this report are statistically significant at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$).

Larger differences are typically described as “notable”, whereas smaller, but still statistically significant changes are typically described as “slight” or “small”. Where statistically significant differences are less than 10 percentage points, they are indicated with a double asterisk (**).

Trends are typically reported for data which has been collected in three waves or more. In some cases, where trend data has not been calculated or not included in the report, the data are available in the full data set. Due to the modular approach used in Food and You 2 data collection, not all questions are asked in all survey waves.

Key information is provided for each reported question in the footnotes, including:

- Question wording (question) and response options (response).
- The total number of respondents across all relevant waves (Total Base= N), and the range (smallest to largest) base across the relevant waves.

Key information is provided within each figure, including, the wave and fieldwork period of each data point. For example, W1 (July 2020 to October 2020) refers to Wave 1 and the fieldwork period of July 2020 to October 2020. In some graphs, intentional gaps in the axis labels are used to illustrate the missing waves of data where data was not collected or is not comparable.

1. In Scotland, the non-ministerial office [Food Standards Scotland](#), is responsible for ensuring food is safe to eat, consumers know what they are eating and improving nutrition.
2. See the [Timeline of UK government coronavirus lockdowns and measures](#), and a [summary of key actions from the UK government](#) between 2020 and 2022. See [Food in a Pandemic](#). (March 2021). Food Standards Agency / Demos.
3. See the [Cost of living insights: Food \(ONS\)](#).
4. See [Edelman Trust Institute](#) (2024), [Ipsos' Veracity Index](#) (2023 and 2024) and The National Centre for Social research's [British Social Attitudes survey](#) (2024)