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Food and You 2: 2020-2024 trends (Waves 1-8)

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March 2025

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DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.46756/sci.fsa.qjy546>

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Executive Summary

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.

This report provides an overview of key trends between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024).

Food you can trust

Most measures of consumer confidence in the food system remain high but saw a slight decline in Wave 3 (April 2021 - June 2021), Wave 7 (April 2023 - July 2023) and Wave 8 (October 2023-January 2024). Trust and confidence in the FSA saw a gradual decline over time:

Confidence in food safety and authenticity

- Around 9 in 10 respondents (88% - 93%) reported confidence in food being safe to eat across all waves. This measure declined slightly in Wave 3 (90%), Wave 7 (88%) and Wave 8 (90%).
- Around 8 in 10 respondents (82% - 89%) reported confidence in food labels being accurate across all waves. This measure declined slightly in Wave 3 (83%), Wave 7 (83%) and Wave 8 (82%).

Confidence in the food supply chain

- Around three quarters of respondents (72% - 78%) reported confidence in the food supply chain across most waves, with confidence slightly lower in Waves 3 (73%), Wave 7 (68%) and Wave 8 (72%).

Trust and confidence in the FSA

- Between Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) and Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024) there was a gradual decline in confidence in the FSA being relied upon to protect the public from food-related risks (from 84% in Wave 2 to 79% in Wave 8); being committed to communicating openly with the public about

food-related risks (from 79% in Wave 2 to 72% in Wave 8); and taking appropriate action if a food-related risk is identified (from 84% in Wave 2 to 78% in Wave 8).

- Following a period of stability, there was a notable decline in trust in the FSA between Wave 6 (October 2022 – January 2023) and Wave 7 (April 2023 – July 2023), from 78% to 69%. Distrust in the FSA remained low (1-2%) across all waves.

Concerns about food

- Between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 4 (October 2021 to January 2022) the most common concerns amongst respondents were food waste (58%-61%), the amount of sugar in food (59%-60%), and animal welfare (55%-57%).
- Between Wave 5 (April 2022 to July 2022) and Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024) the top concerns for consumers have consistently been food prices (65%-68%), food waste (58%-63%), and the quality of food (56%-61%).
- Concerns about food poisoning have increased over time (from 38% in Wave 1 to 54% in Wave 8), whilst concerns about the amount of calories in food has broadly declined (from 42% in Wave 1 to 29% in Wave 8).

Food security

- The percentage of respondents classified as food insecure increased, from 15% in Wave 3 (April 2021 to 25 June 2021) to 24% in Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024).
- Following a slight decrease, the percentage of respondents using a food bank has remained broadly stable since Wave 3 (3-4%).

Eating out and takeaways

- Awareness and knowledge of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) increased

from 47% in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) to 60% in Wave 4 (October 2021 to January 2022). Since then, reported awareness and knowledge about the scheme has remained broadly stable (58-60%).

- Around 4 in 10 respondents reported they had checked the food hygiene rating of a food business within the last 12 months, with no notable changes across waves.

Food allergies, intolerances and other hypersensitivities

- There was a notable increase in the percentage of respondents who had experienced a food reaction from 42% in Wave 3 (April 2021 to June 2021) to 58% in Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024).
- Around 7 in 10 respondents reported that they felt comfortable asking staff for more allergy information when eating out, with no notable changes over time.

Eating at home

- Whilst most food safety behaviours in the home remained stable between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024), some changes included:
 - A notable decline in those who reported always washing their hands before eating (from 51% in Wave 1 to 41% in Wave 8).
 - A slight decline in those who reported 'never' eating chicken or turkey when it is pink or has pink juices (from 93% in Wave 1 to 90% in Wave 8).
 - A slight increase in those who reported that they would eat leftovers after 2 days or more (from 23% in Wave 1 to 29% in Wave 8).
 - A slight increase in those who reported that they wash raw chicken at least occasionally (from 35% in Wave 1 to 40% in Wave 8).

Food shopping and labelling

- The percentage of respondents who reported using online food sharing apps increased from 4% in Wave 3 (April 2021 to June 2021) to 14% in Wave 7 (April 2023 to July 2023). The use of most other online platforms has not changed.
- Between Wave 5 (April 2022 to July 2022) and Wave 7 (April 2023 to July 2023) there was a decrease in the percentage of respondents who reported that it is important to buy meat, eggs and dairy which are produced with high standards of animal welfare (from 90% in Wave 5 to 85% in Wave 7) and to buy food which has a low environmental impact (from 84% in Wave 5 to 74% in Wave 7).

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, our thanks go to all the respondents who gave up their time to take part in the survey.

We would like to thank the team at Ipsos who made a significant contribution to the project, particularly Kavita Deepchand, Kathryn Gallop, Stephen Finlay, Hannah Harding, Dr Patten Smith, Kelly Ward, Claire Bhaumik, Dr Ammeline Wang and Aamina Oughradar.

We would like to thank the FSA working group and our FSA colleagues – Joanna Disson and Clifton Gay.

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 Ireland¹. 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.

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.

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 2022 - 24 July 2022	6,770	4,727
6	12 October 2022 – 10 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.² More recent waves of the survey (Waves 6 and 7)

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.

were conducted during a period which saw the highest levels of annual inflation of the price of food and non-alcoholic drinks since 1977³. 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 years⁴. 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.

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)

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.

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 food supply chain between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024).

Confidence in food safety and authenticity

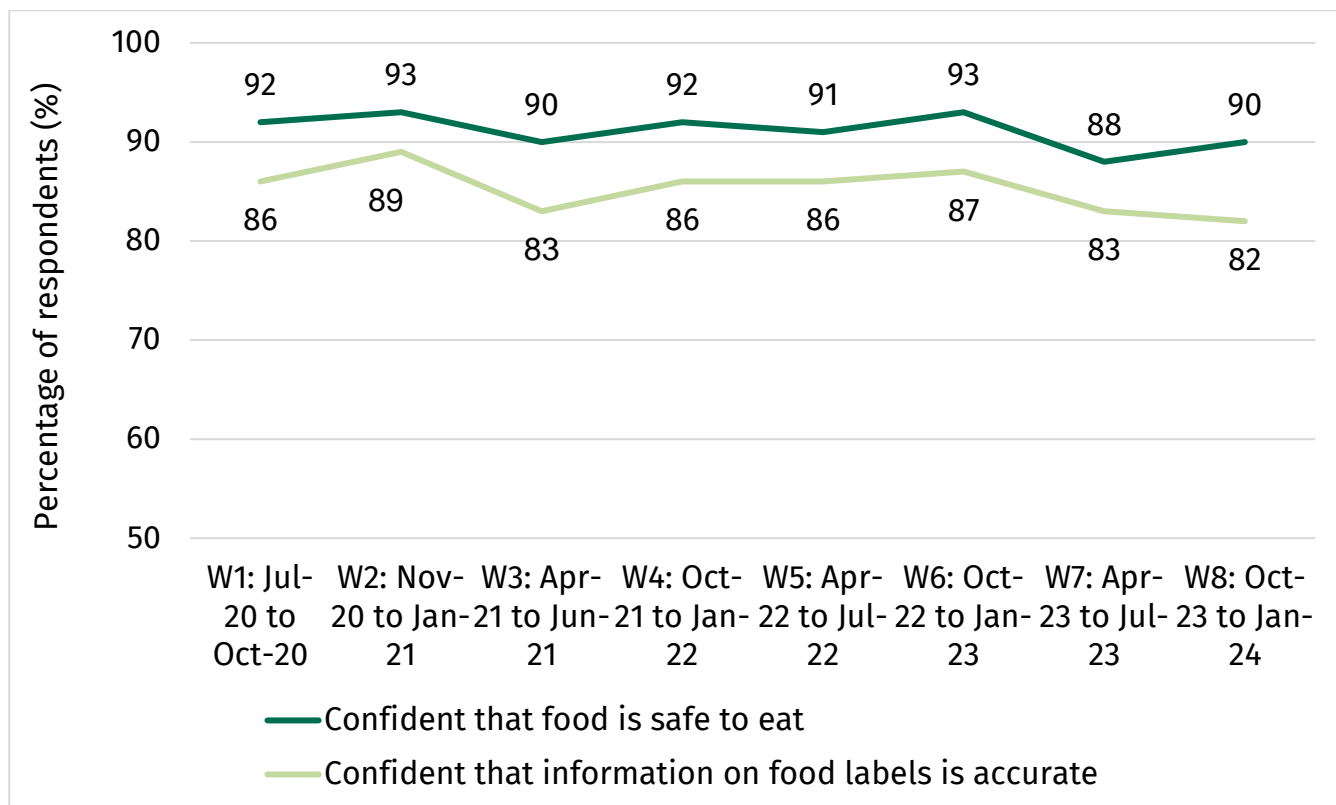
Although there has been some variation between waves, consumer confidence in food safety has generally remained high, with around 9 in 10 respondents reporting that they were confident (i.e., very confident or fairly confident) that the food they buy is safe to eat across all waves. A small decline in confidence that food is safe to eat was observed in Wave 3 (90%), Wave 7 (88%) and Wave 8 (90%) compared to other waves** (Figure 1).

Consumer confidence in food authenticity has also remained relatively high, with over 8 in 10 respondents reporting that they were confident that the information on food labels is accurate across all waves⁵. Similar to food safety, a notable decline in

⁵ 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. Total base across 8 waves = 49,563 (range between 9,319 in Wave 1 and 4,786 in Wave 4), all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire.

confidence that the information on food labels is accurate was observed in Wave 3 (83%), Wave 7 (83%) and Wave 8 (82%) compared to other waves** (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Confidence that food is safe to eat and information on food labels is accurate.



Food and You 2: Wave 1-8

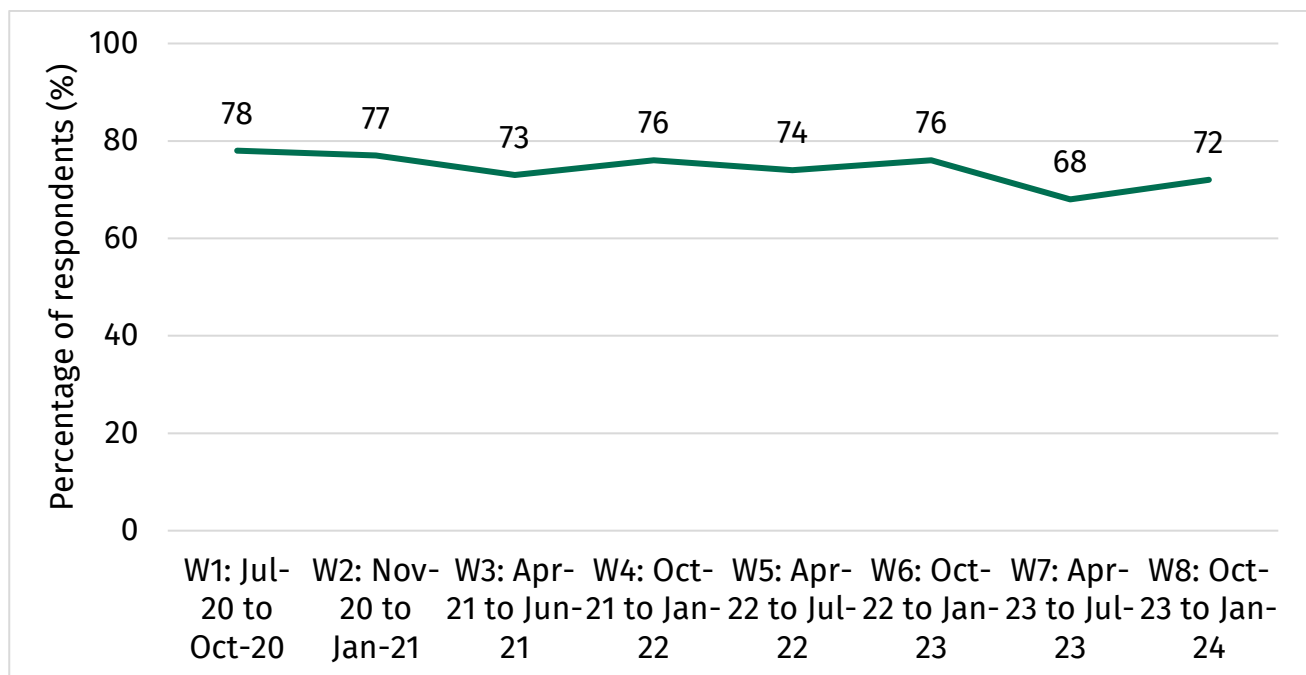
Confidence in the food supply chain

Across most waves, around three quarters of respondents reported confidence in the food supply chain⁶. However, there was a notable decline in confidence in the food

⁶ 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. Total base across waves 1-8 = 49,563 (range between 4,786 in Wave 4 and 9,319 in Wave 1), all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire.

supply chain in Wave 3 (73%), Wave 7 (68%) and Wave 8 (72%) compared to other waves** (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Confidence in the food supply chain.



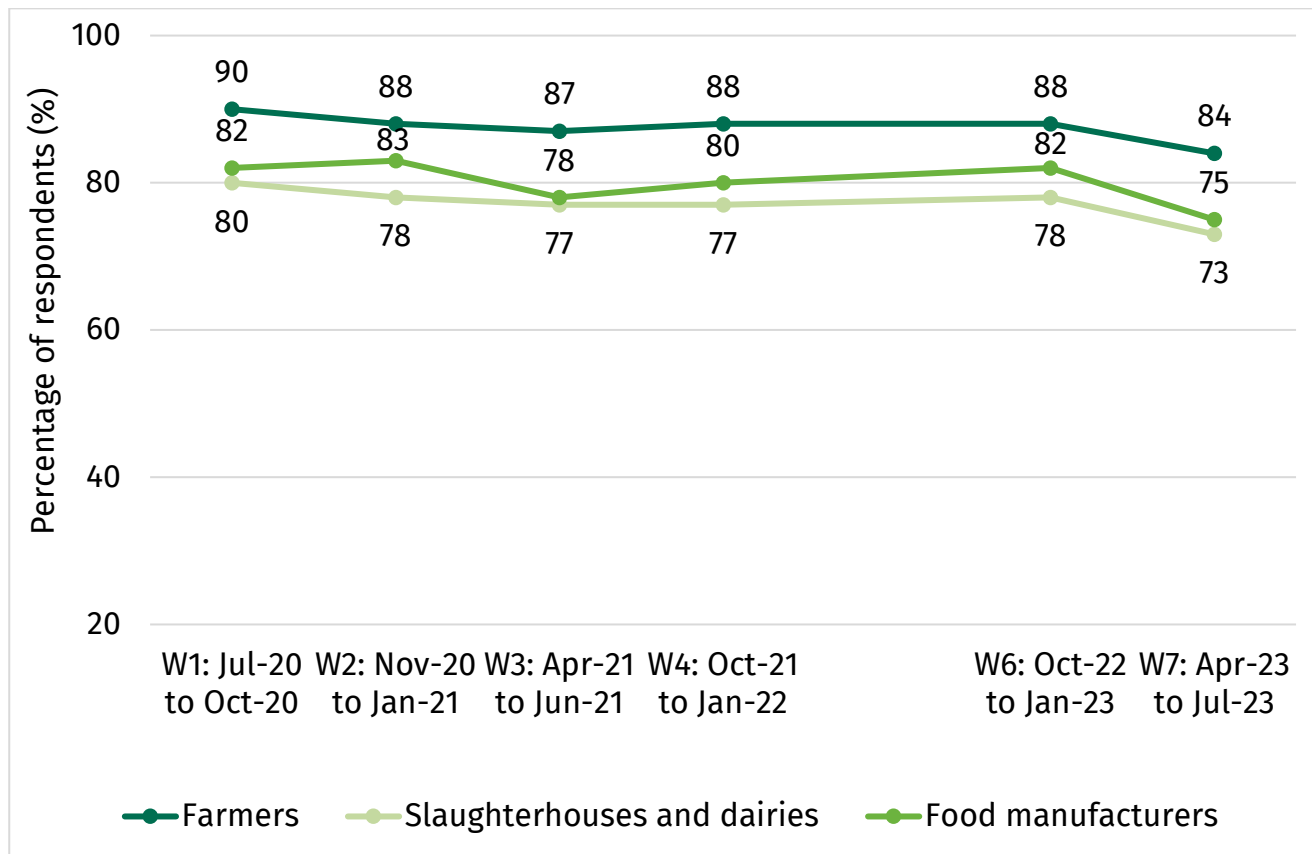
Food and You 2: Wave 1-8

Respondents were asked how confident they are that different food supply chain actors ensure the food they buy is safe to eat⁷. Following a period of stability between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023) there was a notable decline in confidence in all food production and manufacturing actors between Wave 6 and Wave 7 (April 2023 to July 2023) including farmers (88% to 84%), manufacturers (82% to 75%), and slaughterhouses and dairies (78% to 73%).

⁷ How confident are you that... Farmers, Slaughterhouses and dairies, Food manufacturers (e.g. factories), Shops and supermarkets ... in the UK (NI: 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. Total base across waves 1-4, 6 and 7 = 34,218 (range between 7,645 in Wave 1 and 4,755 in Wave 4), all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire.

Confidence was consistently highest in farmers with around 9 in 10 feeling confident that farmers ensure food is safe across all waves (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Confidence that food supply chain actors ensure food is safe to eat (food production and manufacturing actors)



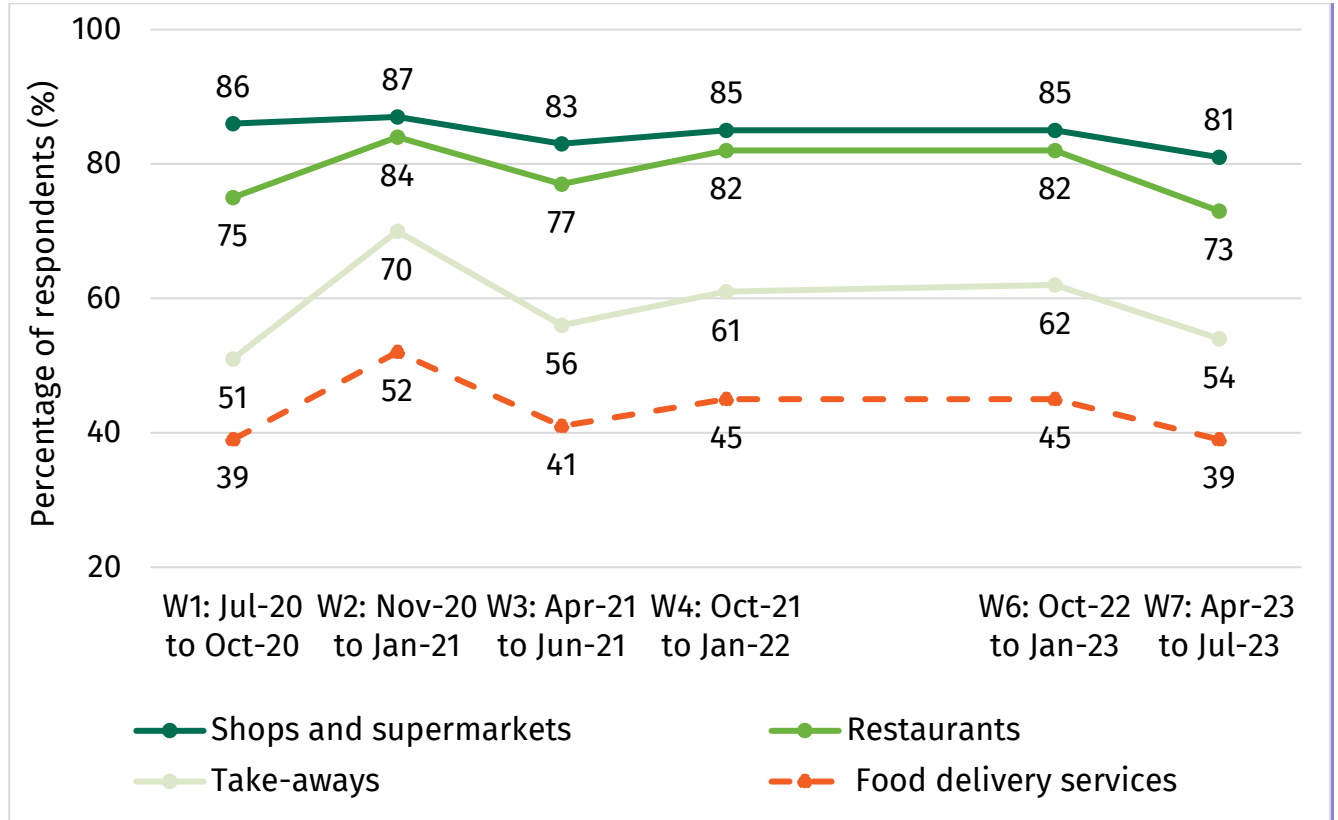
Food and You 2: Wave 1-4, 6-7

There has been some variation in confidence in retail and service sector actors over time, with confidence being highest in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) and lowest in Wave 7 (April 2023 to July 2023)⁸. Across all waves confidence was highest in

⁸ How confident are you that... Restaurants, Take-aways and Food delivery services (e.g. Just Eat, Deliveroo, Uber Eats) in the UK (NI: 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. Total base across waves 1-4, 6 and 7 = 34,218 (range between 7,645 in Wave 1 and 4,755 in Wave 4), all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire.

shops and supermarkets (81% - 87%) and lowest in food delivery services (39% - 52%) (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Confidence that food supply chain actors ensure food is safe to eat (retail and service actors)



Food and You 2: Wave 1-4, 6-7

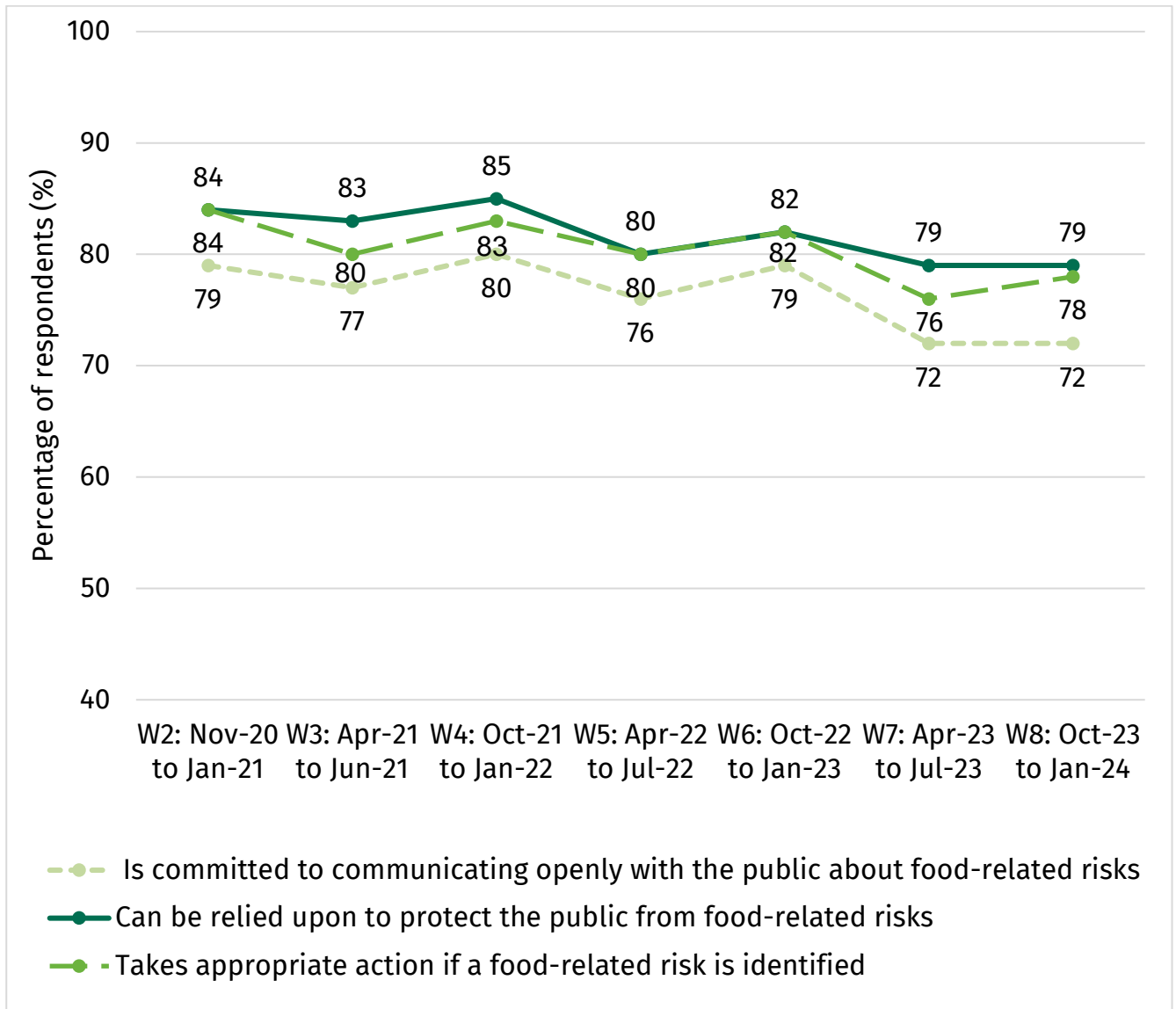
Awareness, trust, and confidence in the FSA

There has been a gradual decline in confidence in the FSA (or the government agency responsible for food safety) between Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) and Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024) ** although confidence remains relatively high across all waves⁹ (Figure 5). For instance:

- The percentage of respondents who reported being confident that the FSA can be relied upon to protect the public from food-related risks (such as food poisoning or allergic reactions from food) decreased from 84% in Wave 2 to 79% in Wave 8.
- The percentage of respondents who reported being confident that the FSA is committed to communicating openly with the public about food-related risks decreased from 79% in Wave 2 to 72% in Wave 8.
- The percentage of respondents who reported being confident that the FSA takes appropriate action if a food-related risk is identified decreased from 84% in Wave 2 to 78% in Wave 8.

⁹ 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. Total base across waves 2-8 = 42,340 (range between 5,796 in Wave 4 and 6,770 in Wave 5), all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire. Please note: 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. The data from Wave 1 is not present in the trends due to differences in filtering / question wording.

Figure 5. Confidence in the Food Standards Agency.

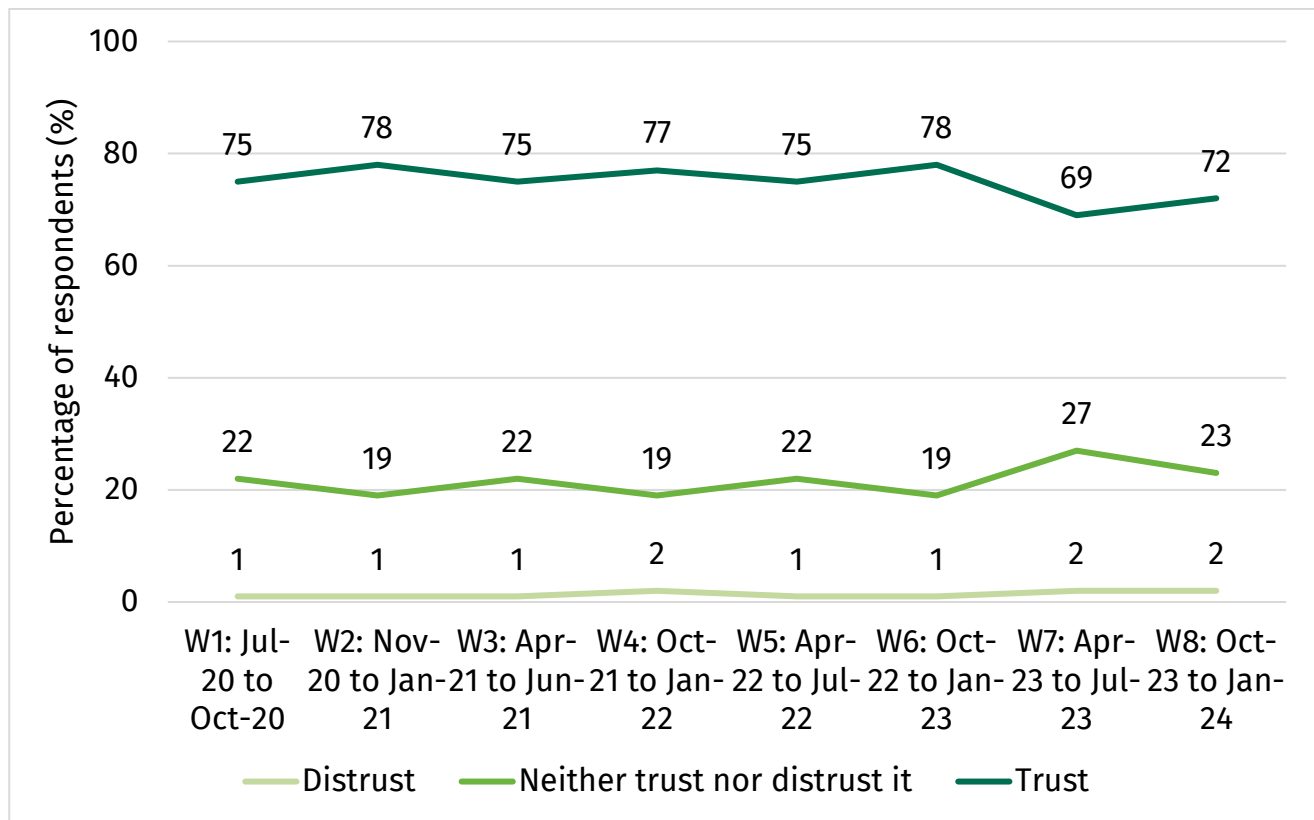


Food and You 2: Wave 2-8

Trust in the FSA amongst those who have at least some knowledge of the FSA was broadly stable, with some variation**, between Wave 1 and Wave 6, with around three-quarters of respondents reporting that they trust the FSA to do its job. There was a notable decline in trust in Wave 7 (69%) (April 2023 to July 2023) with a corresponding increase in the percentage who reported that they ‘neither trust nor distrust’ the FSA (from 19% to 27%)**. In Wave 8, trust remained slightly below three-quarters of

respondents (72%). Across all waves, distrust in the FSA has remained low (1-2%) (Figure 6)¹⁰.

Figure 6. Trust in the Food Standards Agency.



Food and You 2: Wave 1-8

¹⁰ 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. Total base across waves 1-8 = 30,510 (range between 3,309 in Wave 2 and 5,457 in Wave 1), all respondents who know a lot or a little about the FSA and what it does.

Chapter 2: Concerns about food

Introduction

The FSA's role, set out in [law](#), is to safeguard public health and protect the interests of consumers in relation to food. The FSA uses the Food and You 2 survey to monitor consumers' concerns about food issues, such as food safety, nutrition, and environmental issues.

This chapter provides an overview of respondents' concerns about food between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024).

Common concerns

Respondents were asked to indicate if they had concerns about several food-related issues, from a list of options. Between Wave 1 and Wave 8 the most common concerns have varied.

Between Wave 1 and Wave 4 the most common concerns were food waste (58%-61%), the amount of sugar in food (59%-60%) and animal welfare (55%-57%). Since Wave 4 (October 2021 to January 2022), there has been a notable increase in the percentage of

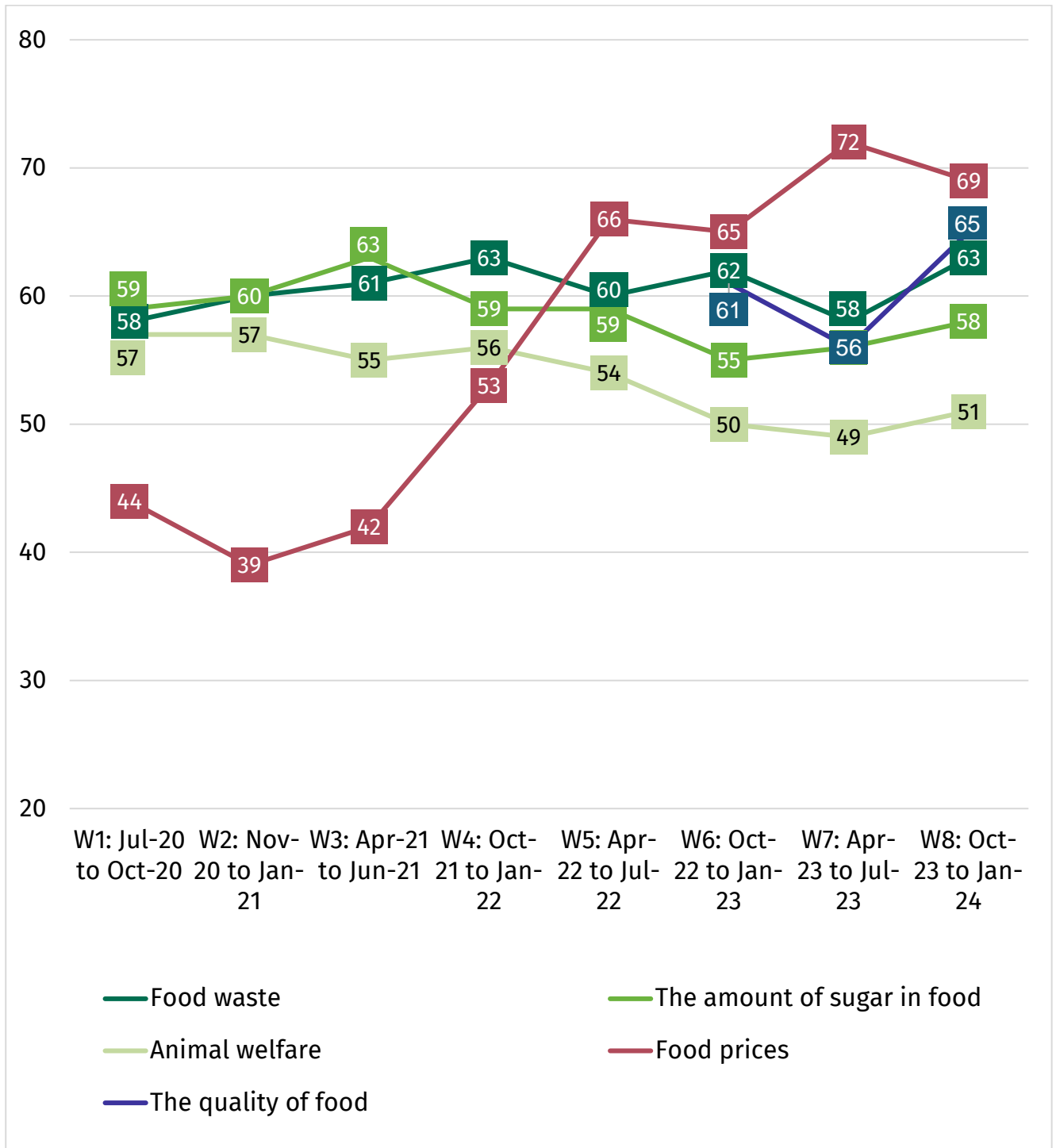
respondents concerned around food prices, with this becoming the most prevalent concern since Wave 5 (April 2022 to July 2022)¹¹.

Over the past four waves (Waves 5-8), the top concerns for consumers have consistently been food prices (65%-68%), food waste (58%-63%) and the quality of food (56%-61%)¹² (Figure 7).

¹¹ Question: Do you have concerns about any of the following? Responses: the amount of sugar in food, food waste, animal welfare, hormones, steroids or antibiotics in food, the amount of salt in food, the amount of fat in food, food poisoning (e.g. Salmonella and E. Coli), food hygiene when eating out, food hygiene when ordering takeaways, the use of pesticides, food fraud or crime, the use of additives (for example, preservatives and colouring), food prices, genetically modified (GM) foods, chemical contamination from the environment, food miles, the number of calories in food, food allergen information, cooking safely at home, the quality of food, the amount of food packaging, being able to eat healthily, none of these, don't know. Total base across waves 1-8 =33,164 (range between 3,617 in Wave 7 and 5,936 in Wave 1), all online respondents. Please note: the data from this question are not directly comparable across all waves due to new response options being added, see Technical Report for further details.

¹² 'The quality of food' has only been asked about since Wave 6 so longer-term trends are not available.

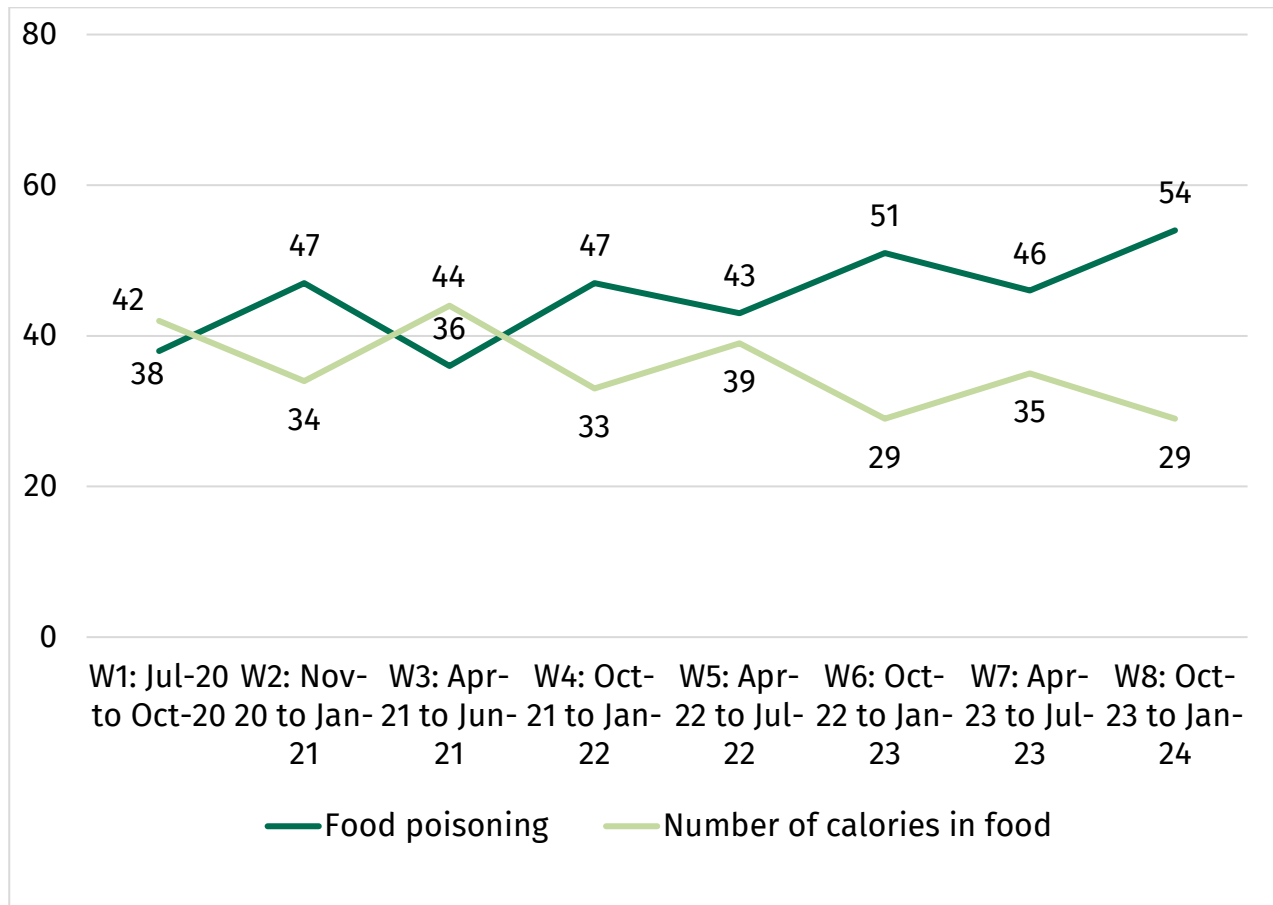
Figure 7: Prompted food-related concerns (top 3 concerns between waves 1-4 and 5-8).



Other notable changes in consumer concerns between Wave 1 and Wave 8 include an increase in the percentage of respondents concerned about food poisoning (from 38% in Wave 1 to 54% in Wave 8), whilst the percentage of respondents concerned about the amount of calories in food has notably declined (from 42% in Wave 1 to 29% in

Wave 8) (Figure 8). Concern about other food-related issues has remained broadly stable (data for other concerns can be found in the accompanying data tables).

Figure 8: Notable changes in consumer concerns over time (food poisoning and number of calories in food)



Food and You 2: Wave 1-8

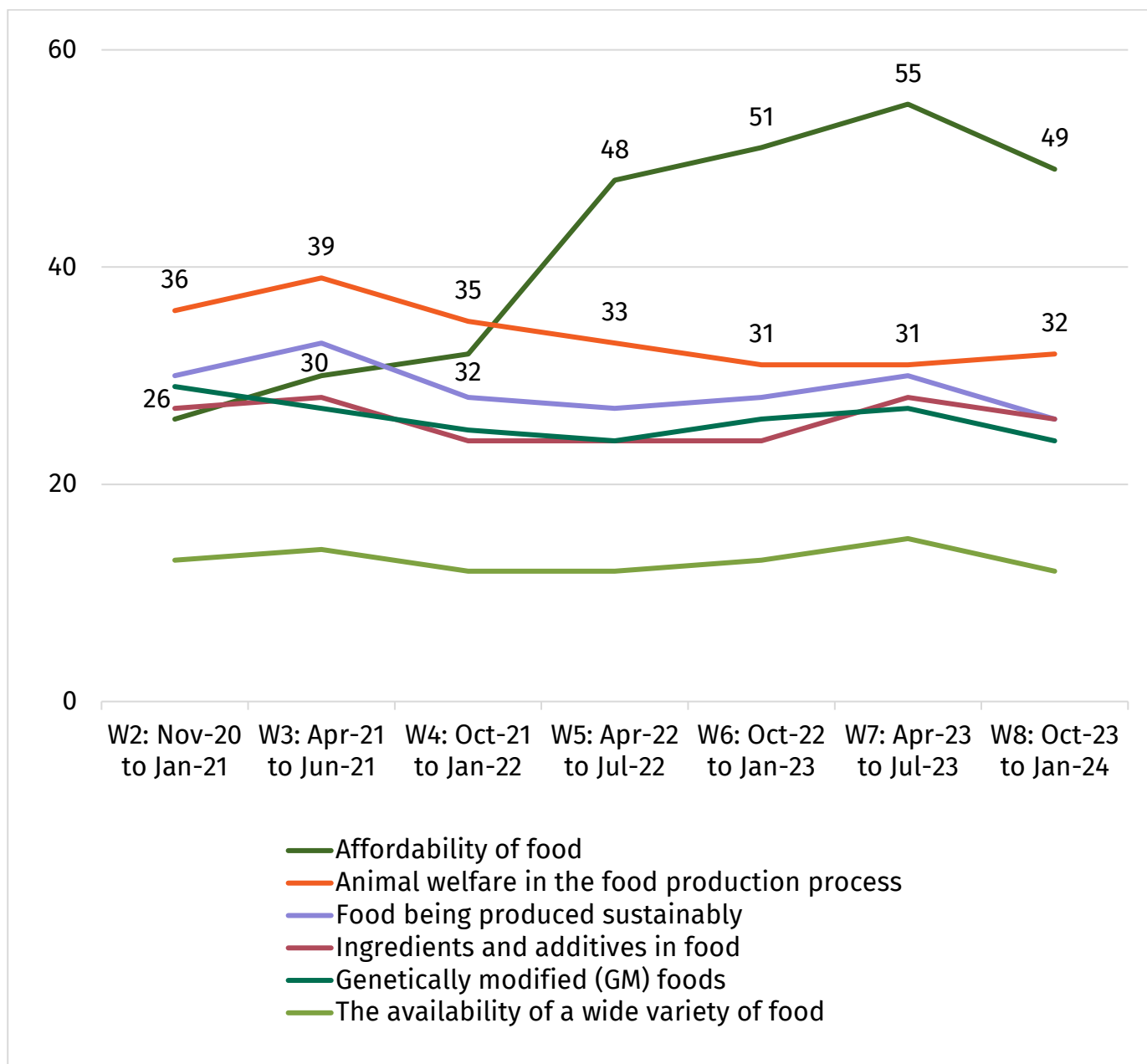
From Wave 2, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they were concerned about several specific food-related issues¹³.

¹³ Question: Thinking about food in the UK [question wording variation in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] today, how concerned, if at all, do you feel about each of the following topics? a) affordability of food b) food produced in [in England and Wales: the UK; [in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] being safe and hygienic c) food from outside [in England and Wales: the UK; in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland]

The percentage of respondents who reported feeling highly concerned about the affordability of food has notably increased over time (from 26% in Wave 2 to 49% in Wave 8). There has also been a slight decline in the percentage of respondents highly concerned about animal welfare (from a peak of 39% in Wave 3, to 32% in Wave 8**). Concerns about the availability of food, food being produced sustainably, ingredients and additives in food, genetically modified (GM) foods, and the availability of a wide variety of food have remained broadly stable (Figure 9).

being safe and hygienic d) food produced in [in England and Wales: the UK; in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] being what it says it is e) food from outside [in England and Wales: the UK; in Northern Ireland: the UK and Ireland] being what it says it is f) food being produced sustainably g) the availability of a wide variety of food h) animal welfare in the food production process i) ingredients and additives in food j) genetically modified (GM) food. Responses: highly concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, not at all concerned, Don't know. Total base across waves 2-8 =27,228 (range between 3,617 in Wave 7 and 5,936 in Wave 1), all online respondents. Please note: some question wording was modified for respondents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Figure 9: Those who reported feeling “highly concerned” about a range of food topics¹⁴



Food and You 2: Waves 2-8

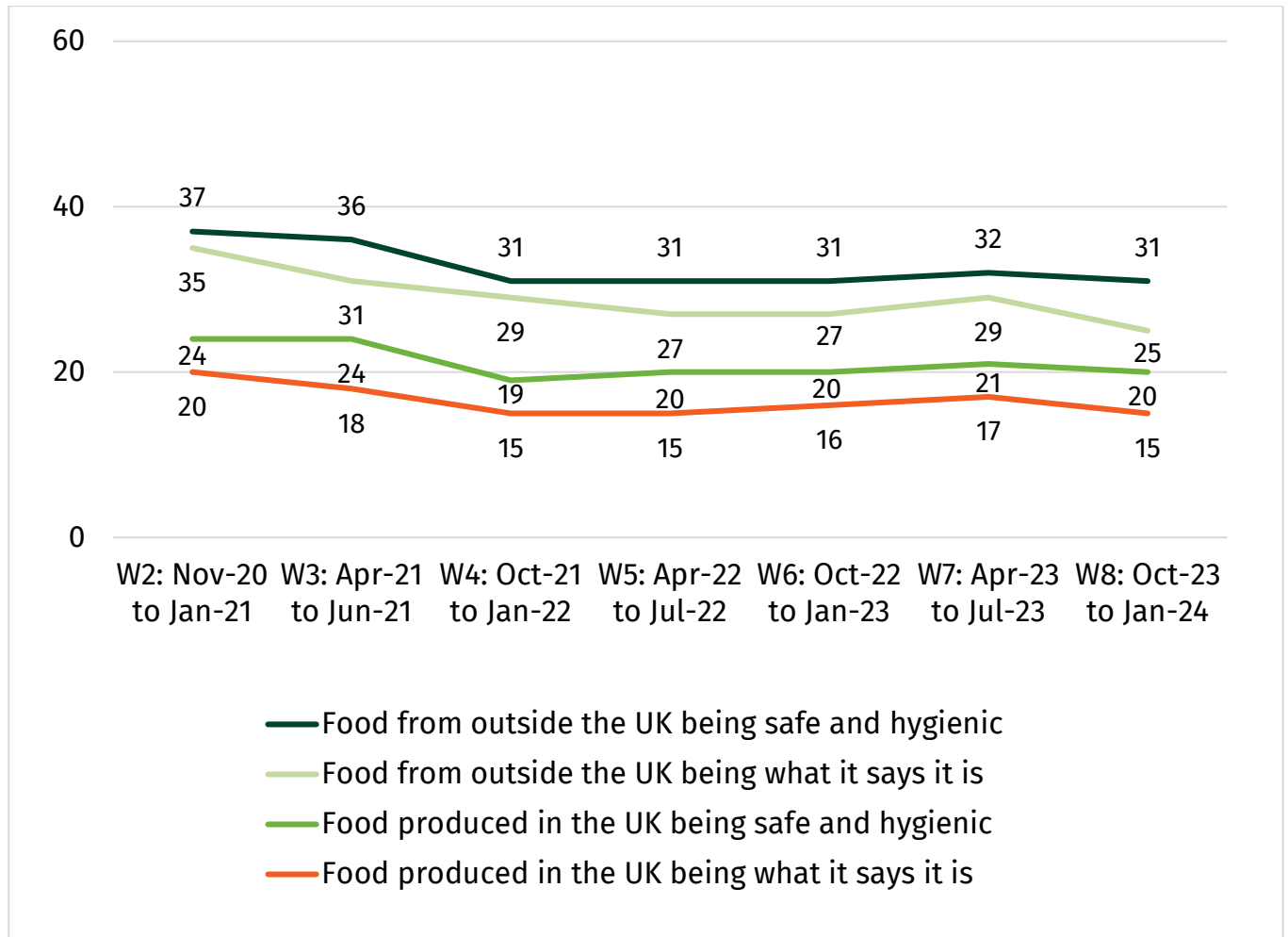
When asked the extent to which respondents were concerned about food produced inside the UK and food produced outside the UK being (i) safe and hygienic, and (ii)

¹⁴ Please note: data labels only included in graph for “Affordability of food” and “Animal welfare in the food production process”

what it says it is, a higher percentage of respondents reported being concerned about food from outside the UK than food from inside the UK across all waves.

The percentage of respondents concerned about the safety and authenticity of food from both inside and outside the UK declined in Wave 4 (October 2021 to January 2022) and have since remained broadly stable (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Those who reported feeling “highly concerned” about food production outside and inside the UK



Chapter 3: Food security

Introduction

“Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” [World Food Summit, 1996](#).

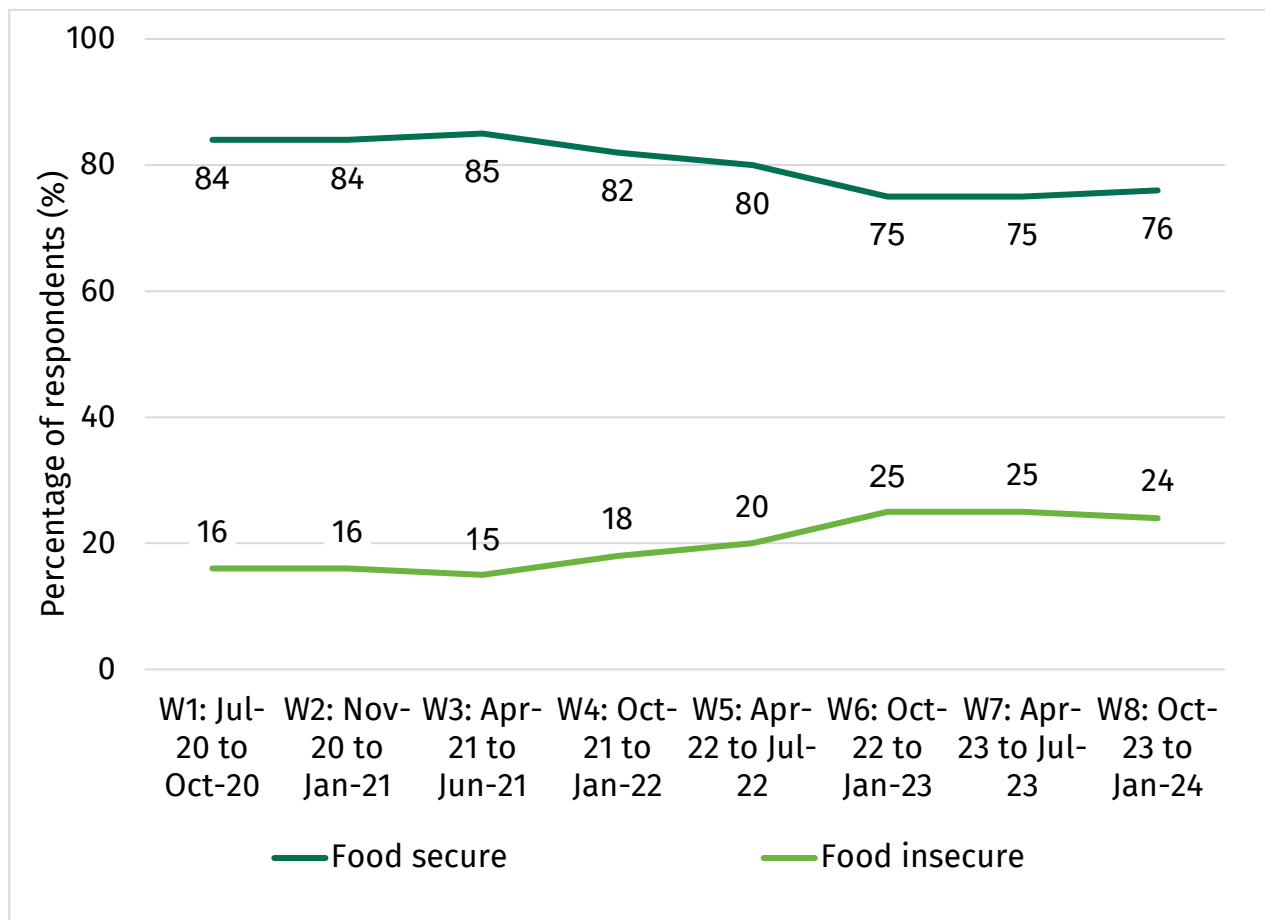
This chapter reports how food security and food bank use changed between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024).

Food security

Following a period of stability between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 3 (April 2021 to June 2021), the percentage of respondents classified as food secure (i.e., high or marginal food security) notably decreased, from 85% in Wave 3 to 76% in Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024). Conversely, the percentage of respondents classified as food insecure (i.e., low or very low food security) increased, from 15% in Wave 3 to 24% in Wave 8 (Figure 11)¹⁵.

¹⁵ Question/Responses: Derived variable, see [USDA Food Security guidance](#) and Technical Report. Total base across waves 1-8 = 51,659 (range between 5,796 in Wave 3 and 9,319 in Wave 1), all respondents. Please note: Those with high or marginal food security are referred to as food secure. Those with low or very low food security are referred to as food insecure. More information on how food security is measured and how classifications are assigned and defined can be found in Annex A and on the [USDA Food Security website](#).

Figure 11. Food security in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.



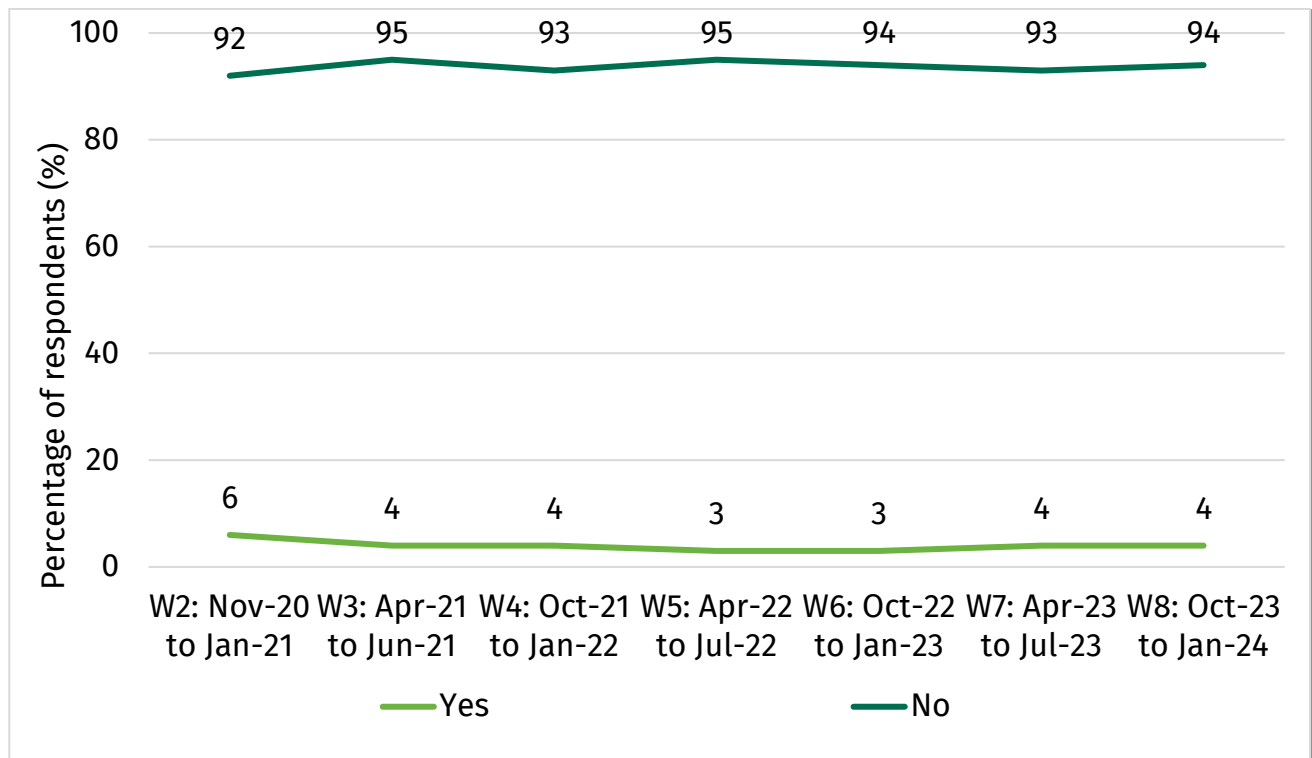
Food and You 2: Wave 1-8

Food bank use

The percentage of respondents reporting that they had received a free parcel from a food bank or other emergency food provider in the previous 12 months slightly decreased from 6% in Wave 2 (November 2020 to June 2021) to 4% in Wave 3 (April 2021

to June 2021)***. Since then, the percentage using a food bank has remained broadly stable at between 3 and 4% (Figure 12)¹⁶.

Figure 12. Use of food banks and/or other emergency food providers.



Food and You 2: Wave 2-8

¹⁶ Question: In the last 12 months, have you, or anyone else in your household, received a free parcel of food from a food bank or other emergency food provider? Responses: Yes, No, Prefer not to say. Total base across waves 2-8= 27,228 (range between 3617 in Wave 7 and 4,326 in Wave 2) all online respondents. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 1. Please note: [in 2020, a government-led scheme delivered boxes of emergency food to clinically vulnerable people across the UK. This was a large scale scheme, for example, over one million boxes were delivered to clinically vulnerable people in England.](#)

Chapter 4: Eating out and takeaways

Introduction

[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. Ratings are typically given to places where food is supplied, sold or consumed, including restaurants, pubs, cafés, takeaways, food vans and stalls.

The FSA runs the scheme in partnership with local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. A food safety officer from the local authority inspects a business to check that it follows food hygiene law so that the food is safe to eat. 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.

Food businesses are provided with a sticker which shows their FHRS rating. In England businesses are encouraged to display their FHRS rating, however in Wales and Northern Ireland food businesses are legally required to display their FHRS rating¹⁷. FHRS ratings are also available on the FSA website.

This chapter provides an overview of respondents' eating out and takeaway ordering habits, the factors that are considered when deciding where to eat out or order a takeaway from, and recognition and use of the FHRS between Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) and Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024). These topics were only included in the survey on an annual basis (Waves 2, 4, 6, 8).

Awareness and recognition of the FHRS

Across all countries, the percentage of respondents who reported that that they had heard of the FHRS and had knowledge about it (i.e., Yes, I've heard of it and know a lot / bit about it) increased from 47% in Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) to 60%

¹⁷ Legislation for the mandatory display of FHRS ratings was introduced in November 2013 in Wales and October 2016 in Northern Ireland.

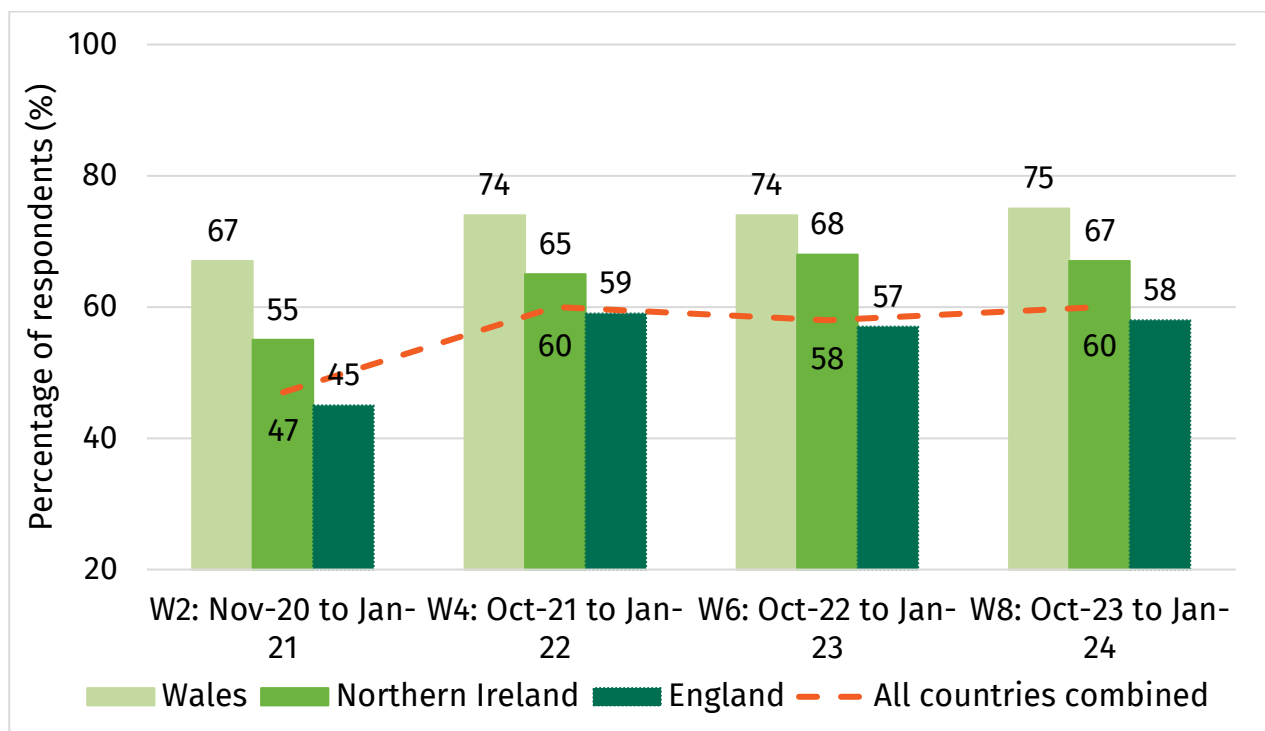
in Wave 4 (October 2021 to January 2022). Since then, the percentage of respondents reporting awareness and knowledge about the scheme has remained broadly stable (58-60%).

Across all waves, respondents in Wales (67-75%) had a higher level of awareness and knowledge of the FHRS than those in Northern Ireland (55-68%). The lowest level of awareness and knowledge of the FHRS was in England (45-59%) (Figure 13) ^{18,19}.

¹⁸ Question: Have you heard of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme? Responses: Yes, I've heard of it and know quite a lot about it, Yes, I've heard of it and know a bit about it, Yes, I've heard of it but don't know much about it, Yes, I've heard of it but don't know anything about it, No, I've never heard of it. Total base across waves 2, 4, 6, 8 (all countries combined) = 15,244 (range between 3,745 in Wave 4 and 3,915 in Wave 8), all online respondents. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 1. Whilst data is available for waves 3, 5, and 7 it is not directly comparable due to changes in question ordering and methodology in the survey design.

¹⁹ Responses to other FHRS questions not included in this report are available in the full dataset and tables. A more detailed FHRS report is published separately.

Figure 13. The percentage of respondents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland who had heard of the FHRS and had at least a bit of knowledge about it.

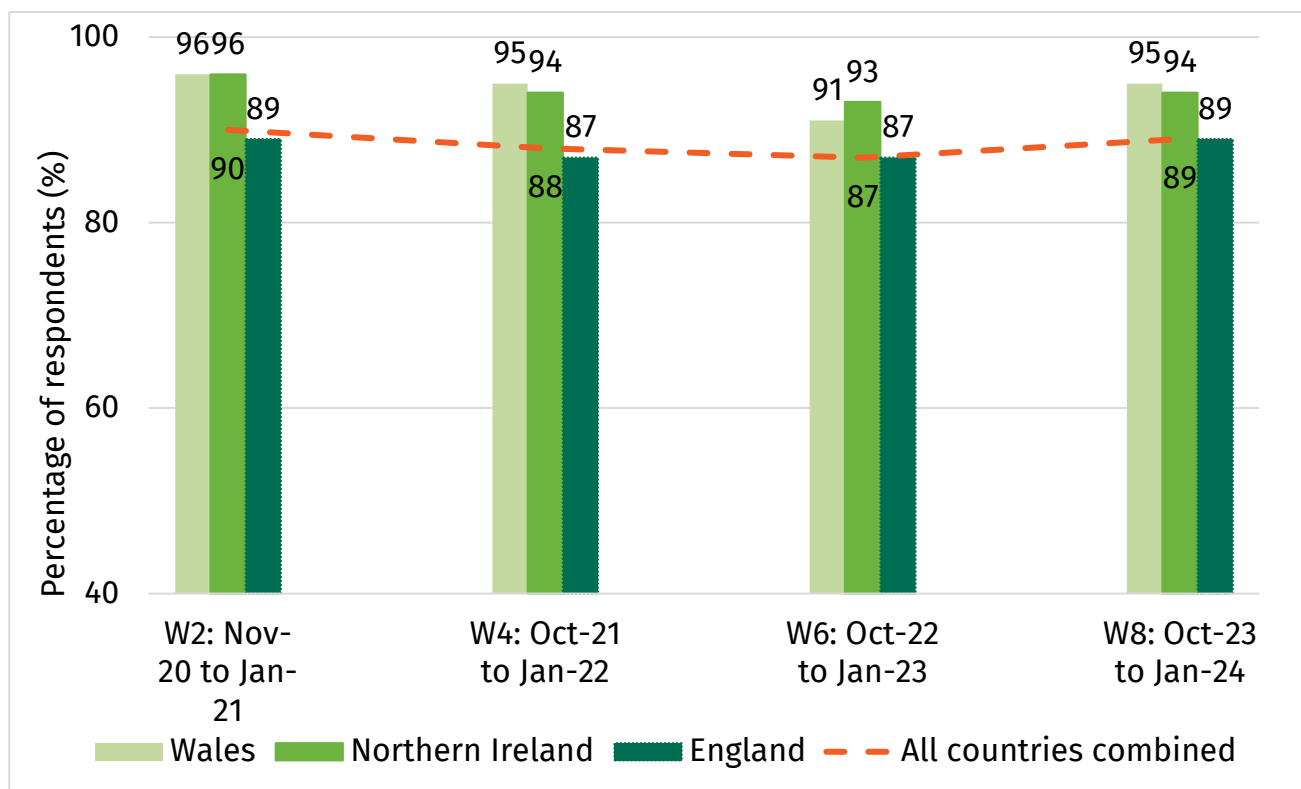


Food and You 2: Wave 2-8

Between Wave 2 and Wave 8 the percentage of respondents who reported that they had seen the food hygiene rating sticker before remained broadly stable (87-90%), with a slightly lower percentage in Wave 4 (88%) and Wave 6 (87%) than in Wave 2 (90%). Recognition was consistently higher across Northern Ireland (93-96%) and Wales (91-96%), than in England (87-89%) (Figure 14)²⁰.

²⁰ Question: Have you ever seen this sticker before? Responses: Yes, No, Don't know / not sure. Total base across waves 2, 4, 6, 8 (all countries combined) = 19,489 (range between 4,755 in Wave 4 and 4,966 in Wave 8) all online respondents and those answering the Eating Out postal questionnaire.

Figure 14. Recognition of the food hygiene rating sticker in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.



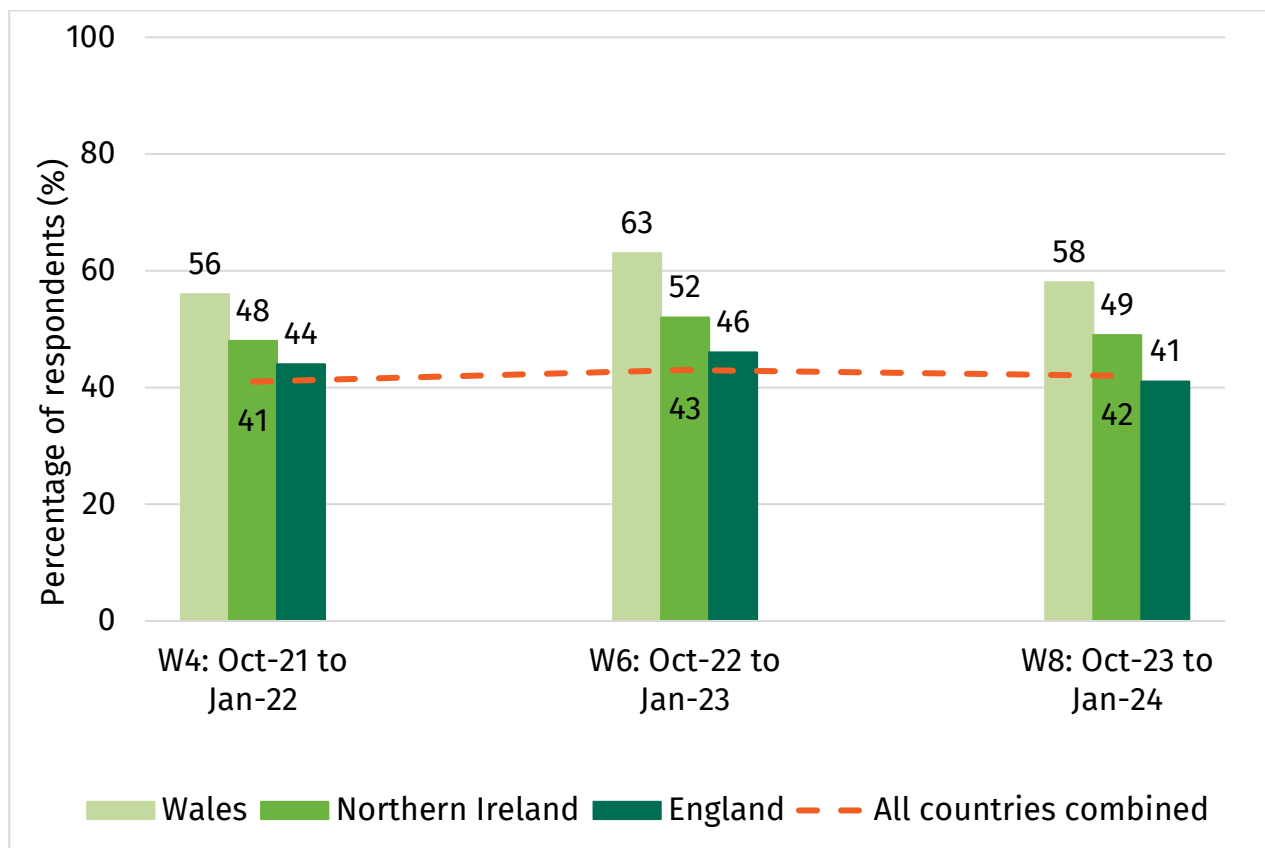
Food and You 2: Wave 2, 4, 6, 8

FHRS usage

There were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported that they had checked the food hygiene rating of a business in the last 12 months between Wave 4 and Wave 8, with around 4 in 10 respondents reporting that they had done this across all waves. The percentage of participants who reported checking the

hygiene rating of a food business was consistently highest in Wales (56-63%) and lowest in England (41-46%) (Figure 15)²¹.

Figure 15. The percentage of respondents who had checked the hygiene rating of a food business.



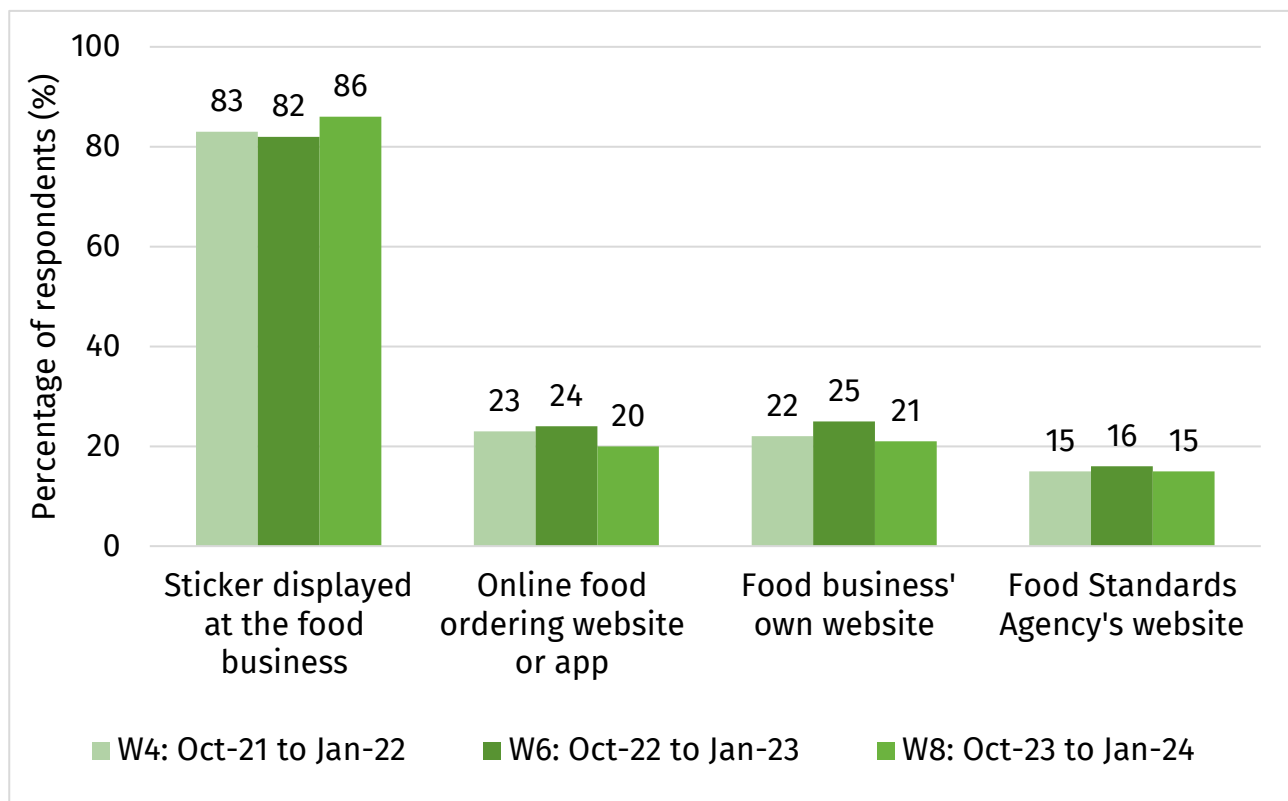
Food and You 2: Waves 4, 6, 8

²¹ Question: In the last 12 months, have you checked the hygiene rating of a food business? You may have checked a rating at the business premises, online, in leaflets or menus whether or not you decided to purchase food from there. Responses: Yes, I have checked the Food Hygiene Rating of a food business, No, I have not checked the Food Hygiene Rating of a food business, Don't know. Total base across waves 4, 6 and 8 = 14,639 (range between 4,755 in Wave 4 and 4,966 in Wave 8), all online respondents and those answering the 'Eating Out' postal questionnaire. Please note: this question was not included in Waves 1, 3, 5 or 7. In wave 2, different routing was used which means the data is not directly comparable, therefore it has been omitted from this graph.

Respondents who had checked the food hygiene of a food business in the previous 12 months were asked how they had checked the rating. There was a slight increase in the percentage of respondents who reported that they had checked the rating using a sticker displayed at the food business between Wave 4 and Wave 6 (from 82% to 86%**). There was also a slight decrease in the percentage who reported checking a rating using an online food ordering website or app between Wave 4 and Wave 6 (from 24% to 20%**). Consistently, across all waves participants were most likely to check the sticker displayed at the food business; with over 8 in 10 using this method (Figure 16)²².

²² Question: How did you check these ratings? Responses: I looked at an FHRs sticker displayed at the food business (such as in a business' window or on the door), I checked an online food ordering website or app (e.g. Just Eat, Deliveroo, Uber Eats), I checked the food business' own website, I checked on the Food Standards Agency's website, I checked on an app (e.g. Scores on the Doors Food Hygiene Rating), I checked on another website, I checked in a local newspaper, Other, Don't know. Total base across waves 4, 6, 8 = 6746 (range between 2,085 in Wave 4 and 2,378 in Wave 8), all online respondents and those answering the 'Eating Out' postal questionnaire, who have checked the Food Hygiene Rating of a food business in the previous 12 months. Please note there has been minor rewording across the waves. This question was not included in Wave 1, 2, 3, 5 or 7.

Figure 16. Most common methods used to check food hygiene ratings²³.



Food and You 2: Wave 2, 4, 6, 8

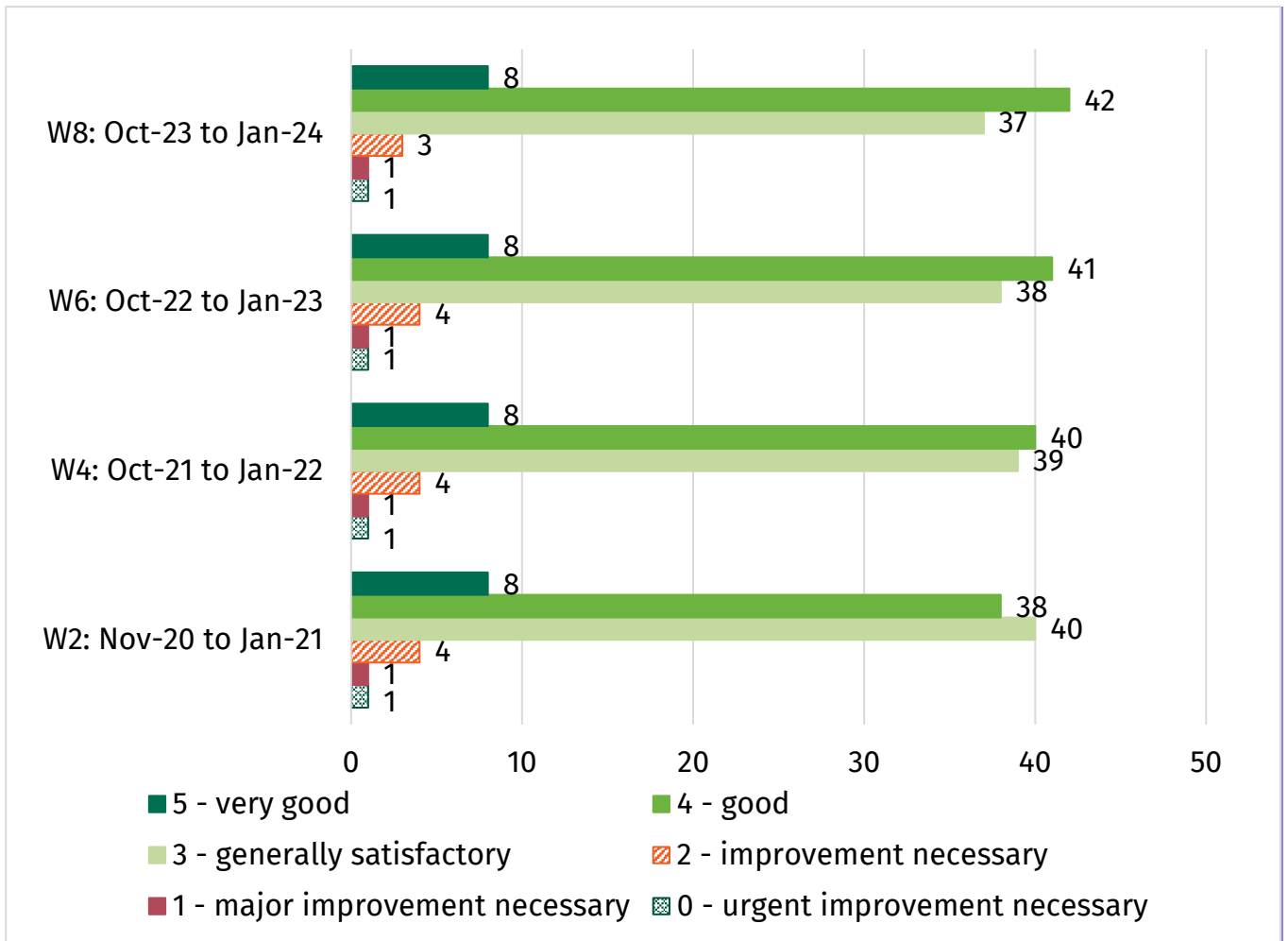
Respondents were asked which food hygiene rating they would consider the lowest acceptable level. Across all waves, about 4 in 10 respondents considered a rating of 4 – good as the lowest acceptable level and about 4 in 10 respondents considered 3 – generally satisfactory as the lowest acceptable level. There has been a slight increase in the percentage of respondents who stated that a rating of 4 would be the lowest acceptable level between Wave 2 and Wave 8 (from 38% to 42%)**. Similarly, the percentage who reported that a rating of 3 would be their lowest acceptable rating

²³ Only methods with 10% or more responses are shown. Results for other options can be found in the accompanying data tables.

decreased slightly over the same period (from 40% to 37%)**. Other acceptable ratings have remained stable since monitoring began (Figure 17)²⁴.

²⁴ 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. Total base across waves 2, 4, 6, 8 = 19,489 (range between 4,755 in Wave 4 and 4,966 in Wave 8), all online respondents and those answering the 'Eating Out' postal questionnaire. Please note: this question was not included in Waves 1, 3, 5 or 7.

Figure 17. What rating respondents would consider the lowest acceptable food hygiene rating.

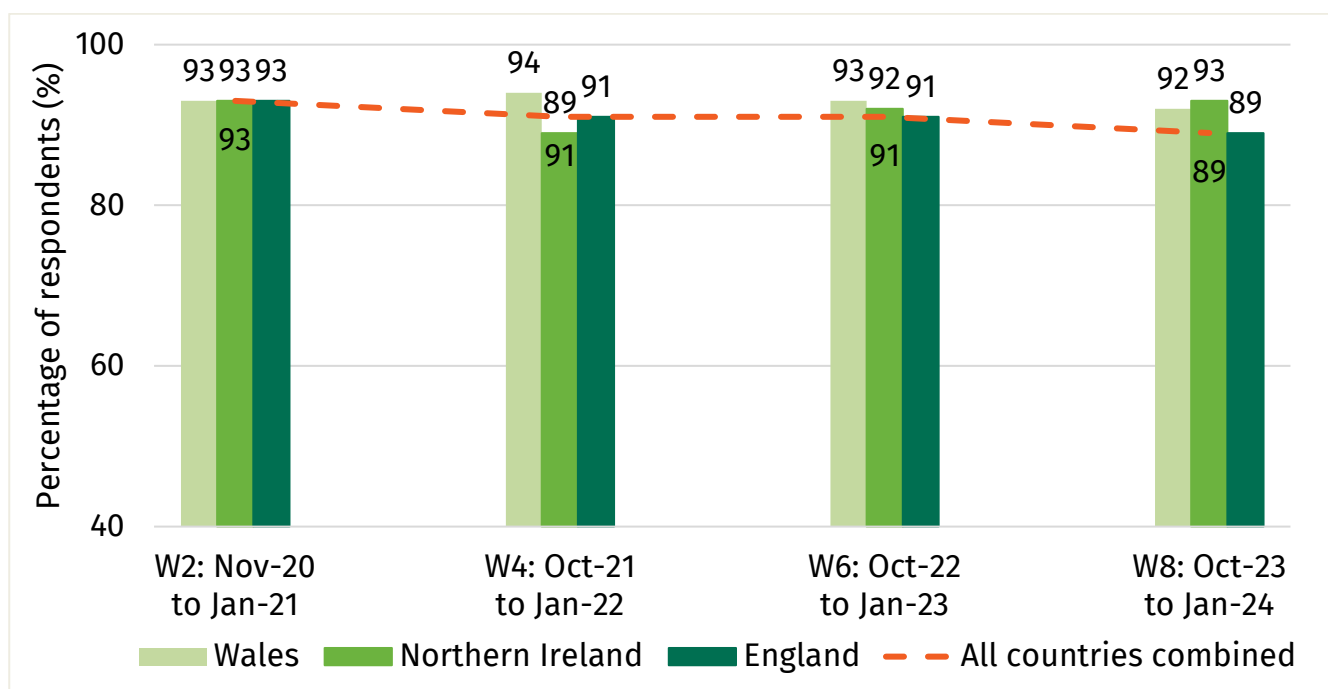


Food and You 2: Waves 2, 4, 6, 8

Views on mandatory display

There were no notable differences in views on mandatory display between Wave 2 and Wave 8 with around 9 in 10 respondents reporting that they think food businesses should be required by law to display their food hygiene rating at their premises across all waves (Figure 18)²⁵.

Figure 18. The percentage of respondents who think that food businesses should be required by law to display their food hygiene rating at their premises.



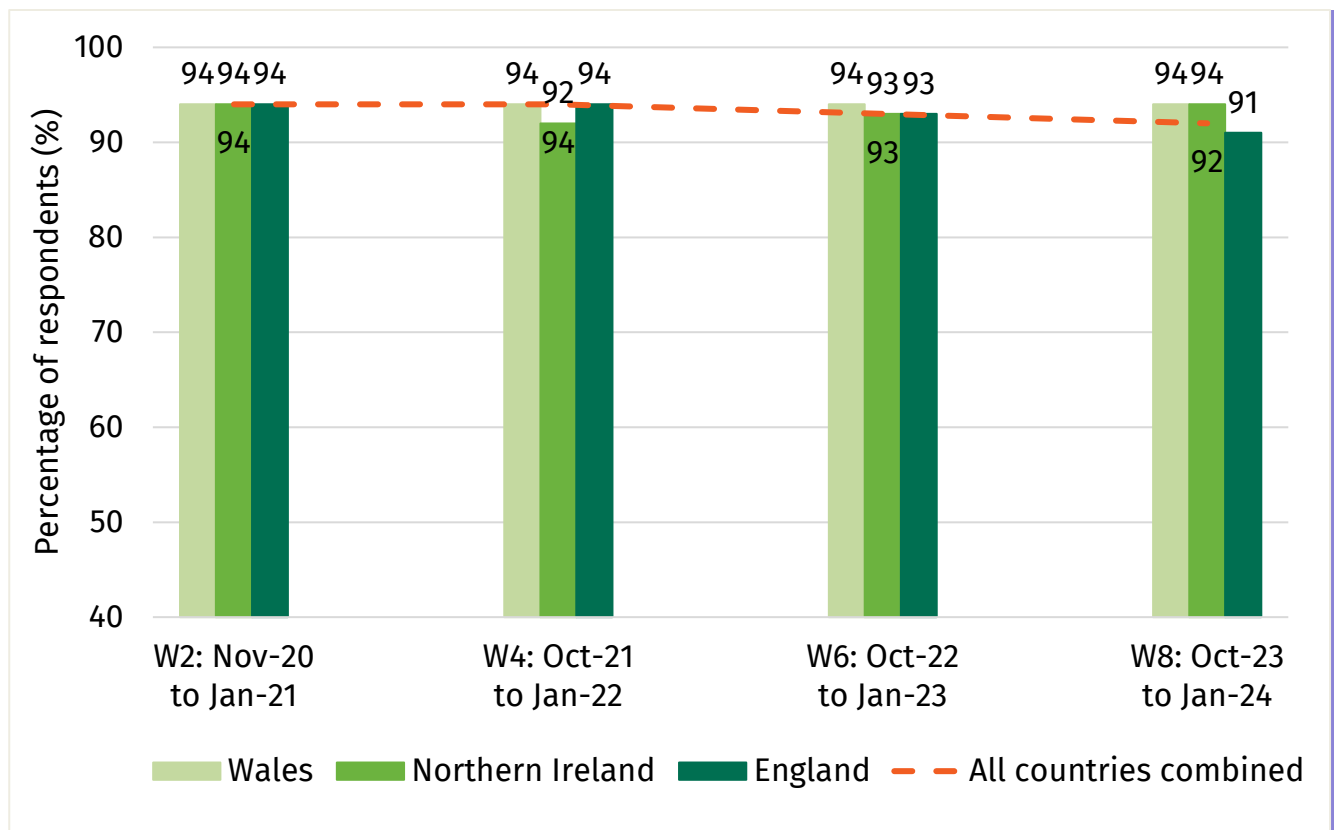
Food and You 2: Wave 2, 4, 6, 8

Similarly, there were no notable differences in views on the online display of ratings between Wave 2 and Wave 8, with around 9 in 10 respondents reporting that they think

²⁵ Question: Do you think that food businesses should be required by law to display their Food Hygiene Rating at their premises, or should it be up to the business to decide whether to or not? Responses: They should have to, It should be up to them to decide, Don't know. Total base across waves 2,4,6, 8 = 19,489 (range between 4,755 in Wave 4 and 4,966 in Wave 8), all online respondents and those answering the 'Eating Out' postal questionnaire. Please note: this question was not included in Waves 1, 3, 5 or 7.

food businesses providing online food ordering services should display their food hygiene rating where it can clearly be seen by customers before they order food across all waves (Figure 19).²⁶

Figure 19. The percentage of respondents who think that online food ordering services should display their food hygiene rating.



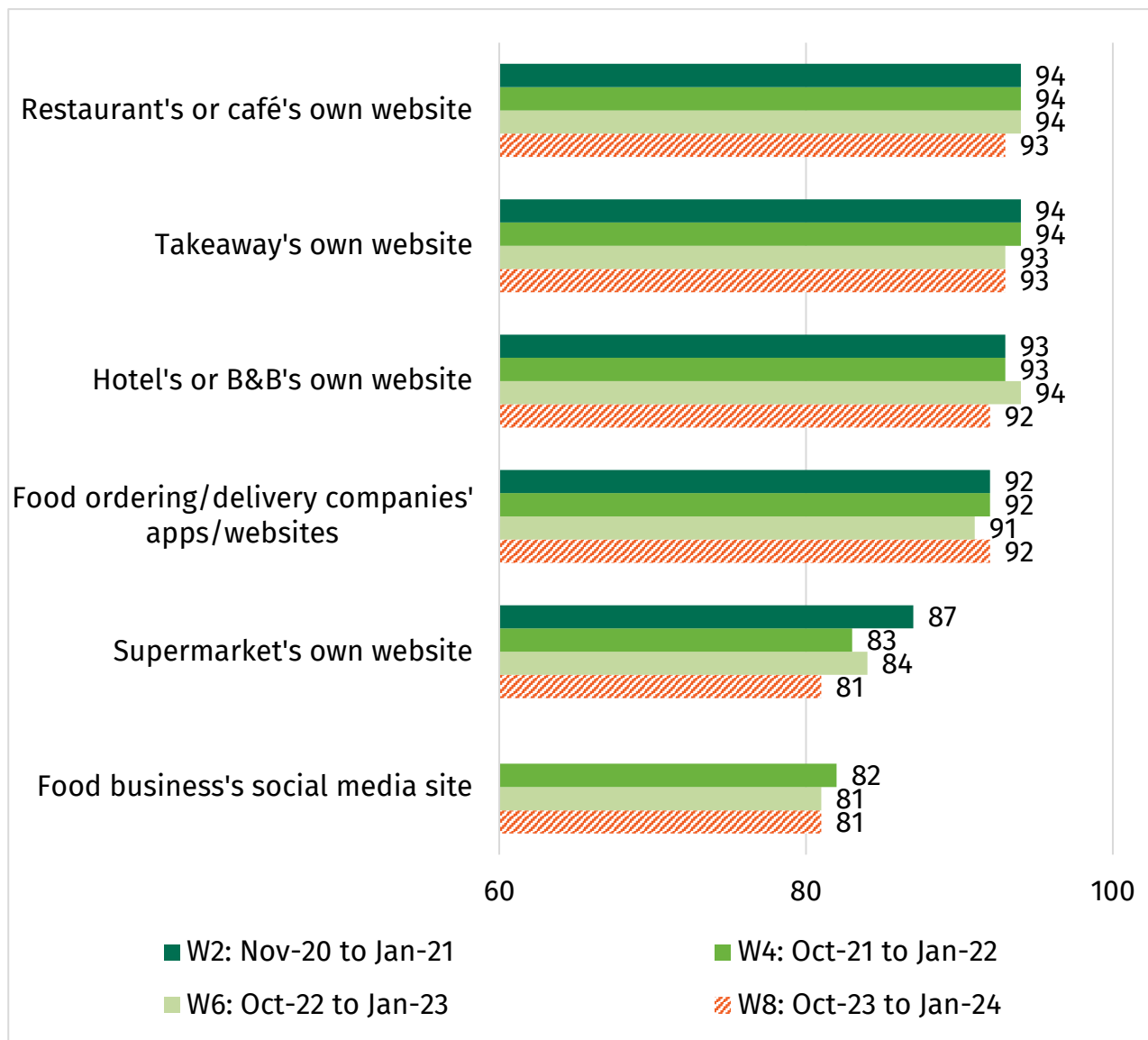
Food and You 2: Waves 2, 4, 6, 8

²⁶ Question: Do you think businesses providing an online food ordering service should display their Food Hygiene Rating where it can clearly be seen by customers before they order food? Responses: Yes, No, Don't know. Total base across waves 2,4,6,8 = 19,489 (range between 4,755 in Wave 4 and 4,966 in Wave 8), all online respondents and those answering the 'Eating Out' postal questionnaire. Please note: this question was not included in Waves 1, 3, 5 or 7.

Respondents were asked where they thought food hygiene ratings should be displayed.²⁷ There has been little change across waves, with the majority (over 90%) of respondents reporting that ratings should be displayed on the businesses' own website (including restaurants, cafes, takeaways, hotels/B&Bs and food ordering/delivery apps) across all waves. There has been a slight decrease in the percentage of respondents who reported that ratings should be displayed on a supermarket's own website from 87% in Wave 2 to 81% in Wave 8** (Figure 20).

²⁷ Question: Do you think the hygiene ratings should be displayed on.... Food ordering and delivery companies' apps and websites that allow you to order food from a range of local restaurants and takeaways? / A food business's social media site / A restaurant's or cafe's own website? / A takeaway's own website? / A hotel's or B&B's own website? / A supermarket's own website? Responses: Yes, No, don't know. Total base across waves 2, 4, 6 and 8 = 19,489 (range between 4,755 in Wave 4 and 4,966 in Wave 8), all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire. Base = 4966, all online respondents and those answering the Eating Out postal questionnaire.

Figure 20: Locations where respondents think food hygiene ratings should be displayed



Food and You 2: Waves 2, 4, 6, 8

Chapter 5: Food allergies, intolerances and other hypersensitivities

Introduction

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

A **food allergy** occurs when the immune system (the body’s defence) mistakes the proteins in food as a threat. Symptoms of a food allergy can vary from mild symptoms to very serious symptoms, and can include itching, hives, vomiting, swollen eyes and airways, or anaphylaxis which can be life threatening.

Food intolerance is difficulty in digesting specific foods which causes unpleasant reactions such as stomach pain, bloating, diarrhoea, skin rashes or itching. Food intolerance is not an immune condition and is not life threatening.

Coeliac disease is an autoimmune condition caused by gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley and rye, including products using these as ingredients. The immune system attacks the small intestine which damages the gut and reduces the ability to absorb nutrients. Symptoms of coeliac disease can include diarrhoea, abdominal pain and bloating, as well as longer term health consequences if the disease is not managed.

The FSA is responsible for allergen labelling and providing guidance to people with food hypersensitivities. [By law](#), food businesses in the UK must inform customers if

they use any of the 14 most potent and prevalent allergens²⁸ in the food and drink they provide.

This chapter provides an overview of the prevalence of reactions for those with a food hypersensitivity, the availability of allergen information when eating out or ordering takeaways and consumer confidence in allergen information and allergen labelling. In most cases, data was collected annually between Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) to Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024).

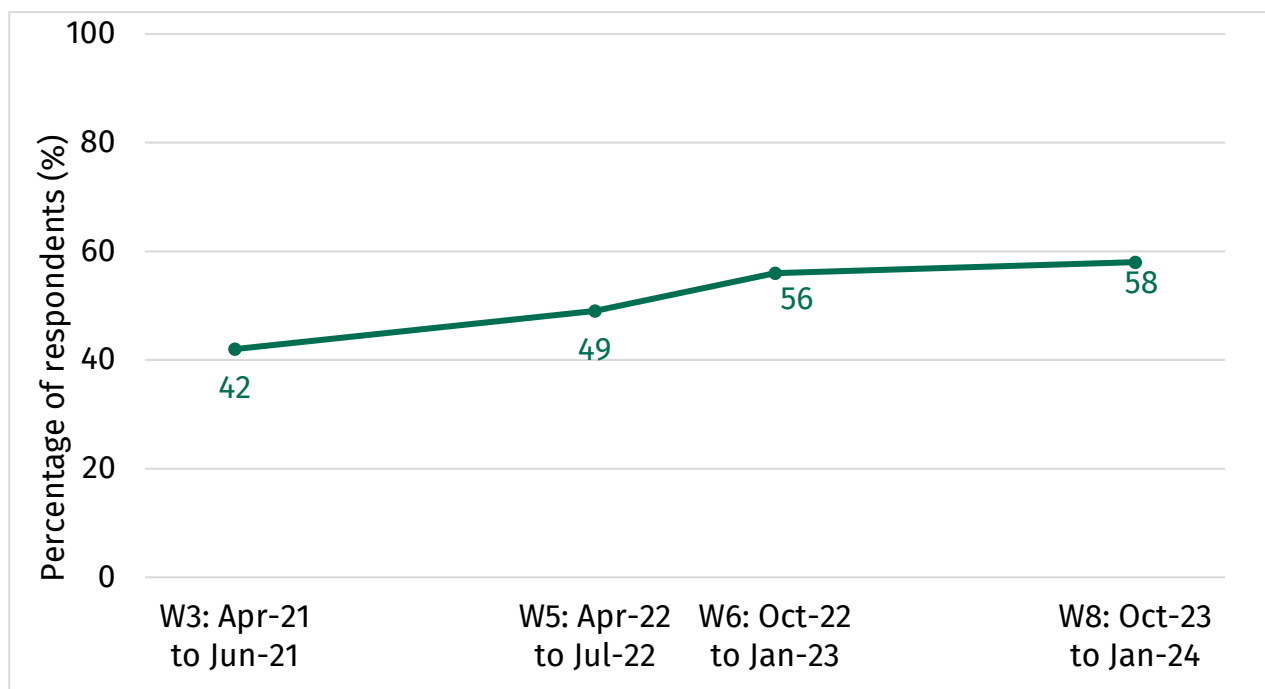
Prevalence of reactions

Respondents with a food hypersensitivity were asked if they had experienced a reaction to food within the past 12 months. Between Wave 3 (April 2021 to June 2021) and Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024) there was a notable increase in the percentage of respondents who had experienced a reaction from 42% to 58% (Figure 21)²⁹.

²⁸ 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).

²⁹ Question: In the last 12 months, have you experienced any bad or unpleasant physical reactions after consuming certain foods? Responses: Yes, No, Can't remember. Total base across waves 3, 5, 6, 8 = 5,614 (range between 1,255 in Wave 8 and 1,631 in Wave 5), all respondents 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. This question was not included in Waves 1, 2, 4 or 7.

Figure 21: Proportion of respondents who had experienced a reaction in the last 12 months.



Food and You 2: Waves 3, 5, 6, 8

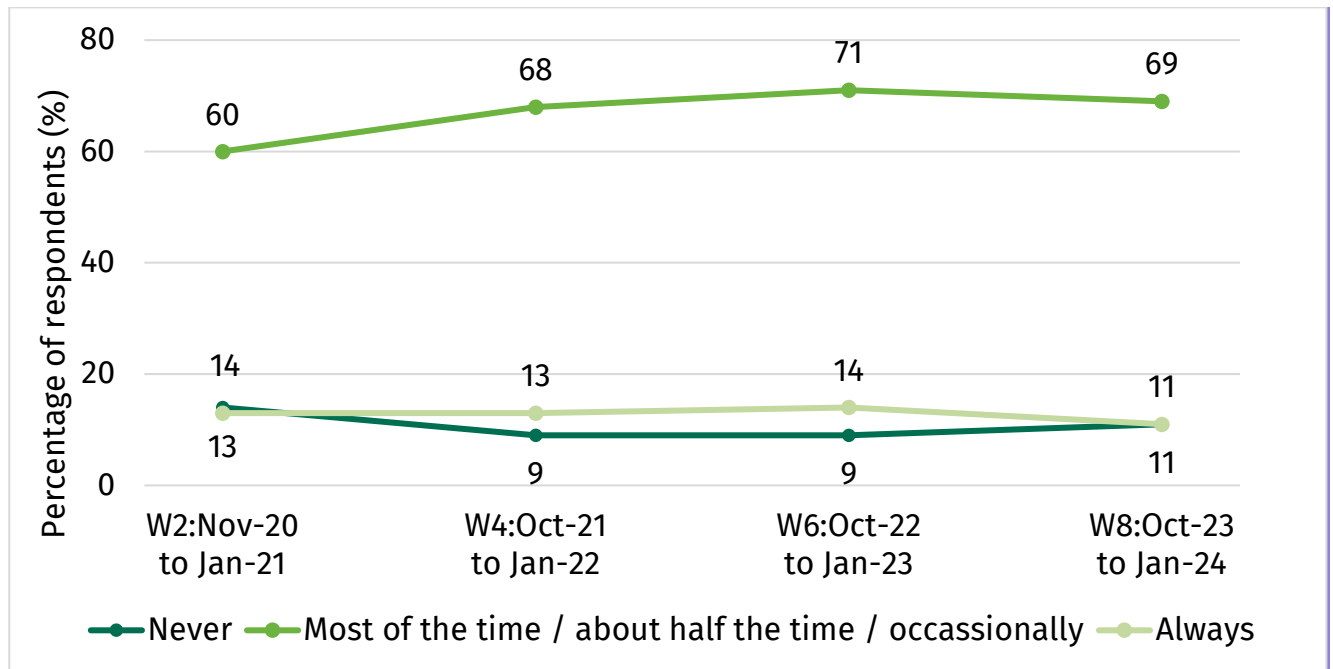
Availability of allergen information when eating out or ordering takeaways

The [FSA provides guidance for food businesses on providing allergen information](#). Food businesses in the retail and catering sector are required [by law](#) to provide allergen information and to follow labelling rules. The type of allergen information which must be provided depends on the type of food business. However, all food business operators must provide allergen information for pre-packed and non-pre-packed food and drink. Foods which are [pre-packed or pre-packed for direct sale \(PPDS\)](#) are required to have a label with a full ingredients list with allergenic ingredients emphasised.

Between Wave 2 (November 2020 to January 2021) and Wave 4 (October 2021 to January 2022) there was a notable increase in the percentage of respondents who reported that this information is available occasionally, half of the time or most of the time, from 60% to 68%**. Since then, this figure has remained stable, with around 7 in 10

respondents reporting that this information is available occasionally, half of the time or most of the time (Figure 22)³⁰.

Figure 22. The availability of allergen information when eating out or buying food to take out.



Food and You 2: Wave 2, 4, 6, 8

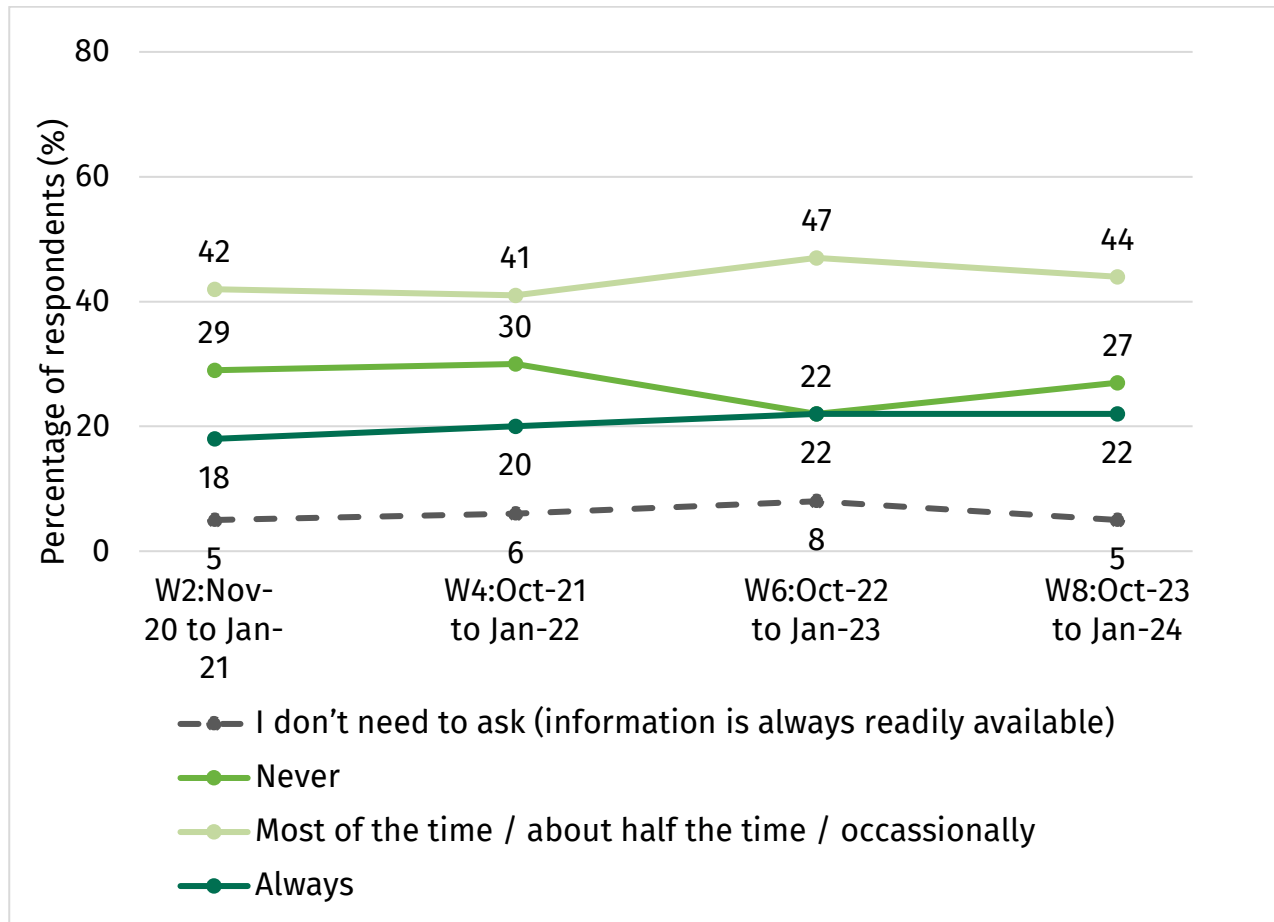
There were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who always ask a member of staff for more information when allergen information is not made readily

³⁰ Question: When eating out or buying food to take out, how often, if at all, is the information you need to help you identify food that might cause you a bad or unpleasant physical reaction readily available? Responses: Always, Most of the time, About half of the time, Occasionally, Never, Don't know. Total base across waves 2, 4, 6, 8= 4,999 (range between 1,186 in Wave 8 and 1,328 in Wave 2), all online respondents who eat out or buy food to take away and have a food reaction, and all postal respondents, 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, who eat out or order takeaway. Please note: there have been slight routing differences into this question across the waves. This question was not included in Wave 1, Wave 3 or Wave 5.

available between Wave 2 and Wave 8, with around a fifth of respondents reporting across all waves. Around 3 in 10 respondents reported that they never did this in each wave, except for Wave 6 where there was a slight reduction in those reporting that they never did this (22%)** (Figure 23)³¹.

³¹ Question: When information is not readily available, how often do you ask a member of staff for more information? Responses: Always, Most of the time, About half of the time, Occasionally, Never, I don't need to ask because the information is always readily available, Don't know. Total base across waves 2, 4, 6, 8= 4,999 (range between 1,186 in Wave 8 and 1,328 in Wave 2), all online respondents who eat out or buy food to take away and have a food reaction, and all postal respondents, 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, who eat out or order takeaways. Please note: there have been slight routing differences into this question across the waves. This question was not included in Waves 1, 3, 5 or 7.

Figure 23. How often respondents with a food hypersensitivity ask staff for allergen information when eating out or buying food to take out.

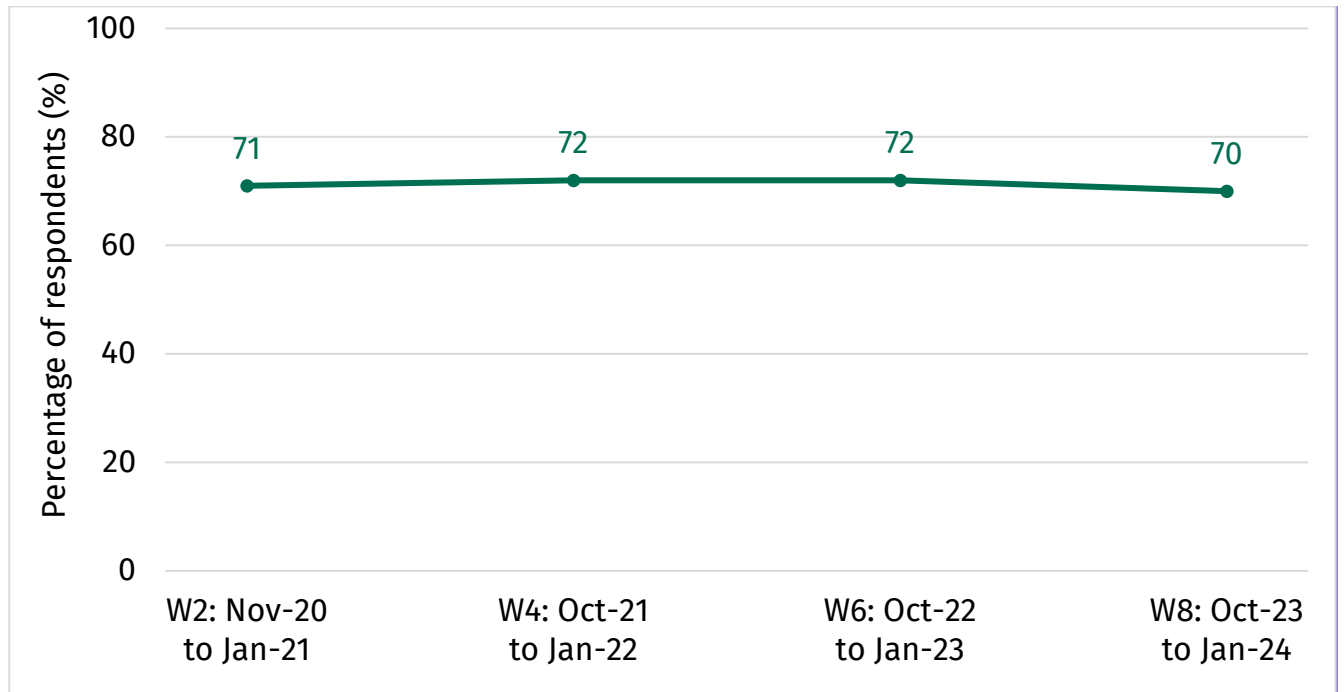


Food and You 2: Waves 2, 4, 6, 8

Respondents with a food hypersensitivity were asked how comfortable they felt asking a member of staff for more allergy information when eating out. There were no notable differences in how comfortable respondents felt asking staff for more allergy information between Wave 2 and Wave 8, with around 7 in 10 respondents reporting

that that they were comfortable (i.e., very comfortable or fairly comfortable) across all waves (Figure 24)³².

Figure 24. The percentage of respondents with food hypersensitivities who feel comfortable asking a member of staff for allergen information.



Food and You 2: Wave 2, 4, 6, 8

³² Question: How comfortable do you feel asking a member of staff for more information about food that might cause you a bad or unpleasant physical reaction? Responses: Very comfortable, Fairly comfortable, Not very comfortable, Not at all comfortable, It varies from place to place, Don't know. Total base across waves 2, 4, 6, 8= 4,999 (range between 1,186 in Wave 8 and 1,328 in Wave 2), all online respondents who eat out or buy food to take away and have a food reaction, and all postal respondents, 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.

Confidence in allergen information

Verbal and written allergy information

Respondents with a food hypersensitivity were asked how confident they were in identifying allergy information, when the information was provided in writing or verbally.

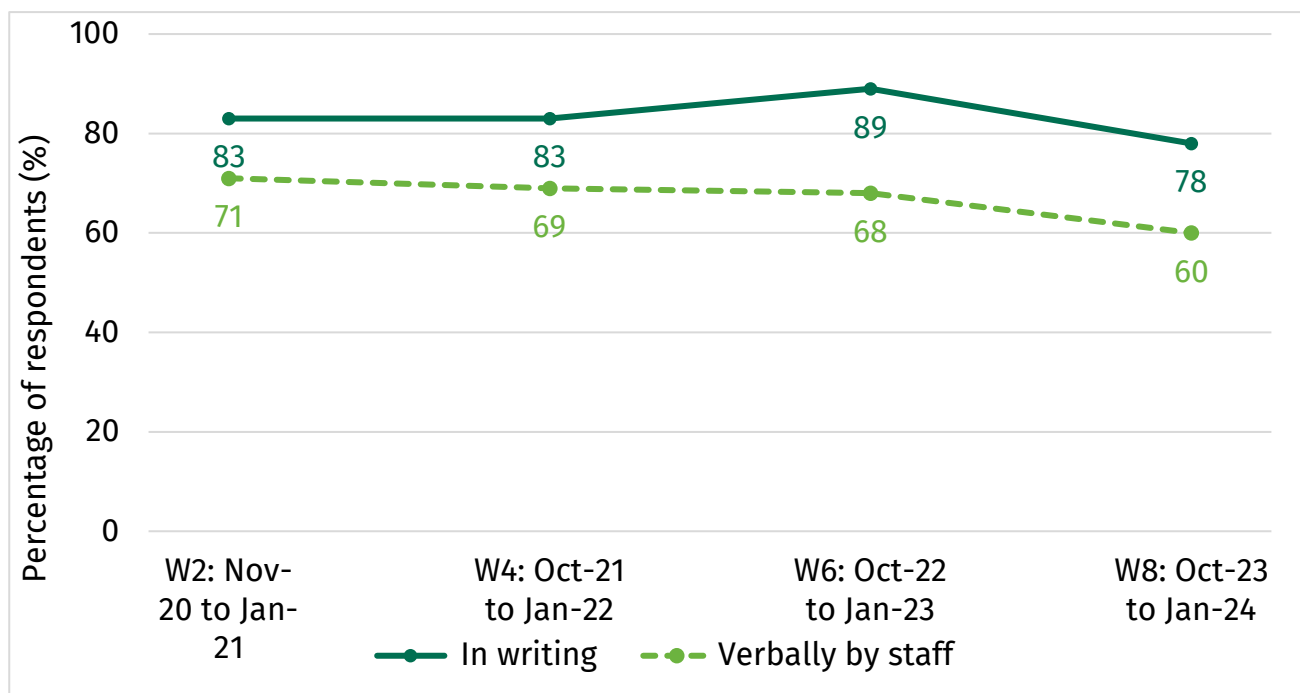
In Wave 6 (October 2022 to January 2023) there was a notable increase in the percentage of respondents reporting confidence³³ in allergen information provided in writing (from 83% in Wave 2 and 4, to 89% in Wave 6). However, this decreased to 78% in Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024)**.

The percentage of respondents who reported confidence in allergen information provided verbally also decreased in Wave 8 (60%) following a period of stability between Wave 2 and 6 (68-71%)** (Figure 25)³⁴.

³³ i.e. very/fairly confident

³⁴ Question: How confident are you that the information provided will allow you to identify and avoid food that might cause you a bad or unpleasant physical reaction? A) when the information is provided in writing (for example, on the main menu or a separate allergen menu). B) when the information is provided verbally by a member of staff. Responses: Very confident, Fairly confident, Not very confident, Not at all confident, It varies from place to place, Don't know. Total base across waves 2, 4, 6, 8= 4,999 (range between 1,186 in Wave 8 and 1,328 in Wave 2), all online respondents who eat out or buy food to take away and have a food reaction, and all postal respondents, 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, who eat out or order takeaways. This question was not included in Wave 1, 3, 5 or 7.

Figure 25. How confident respondents with food hypersensitivities were in allergen information provided in writing or verbally by a member of staff.



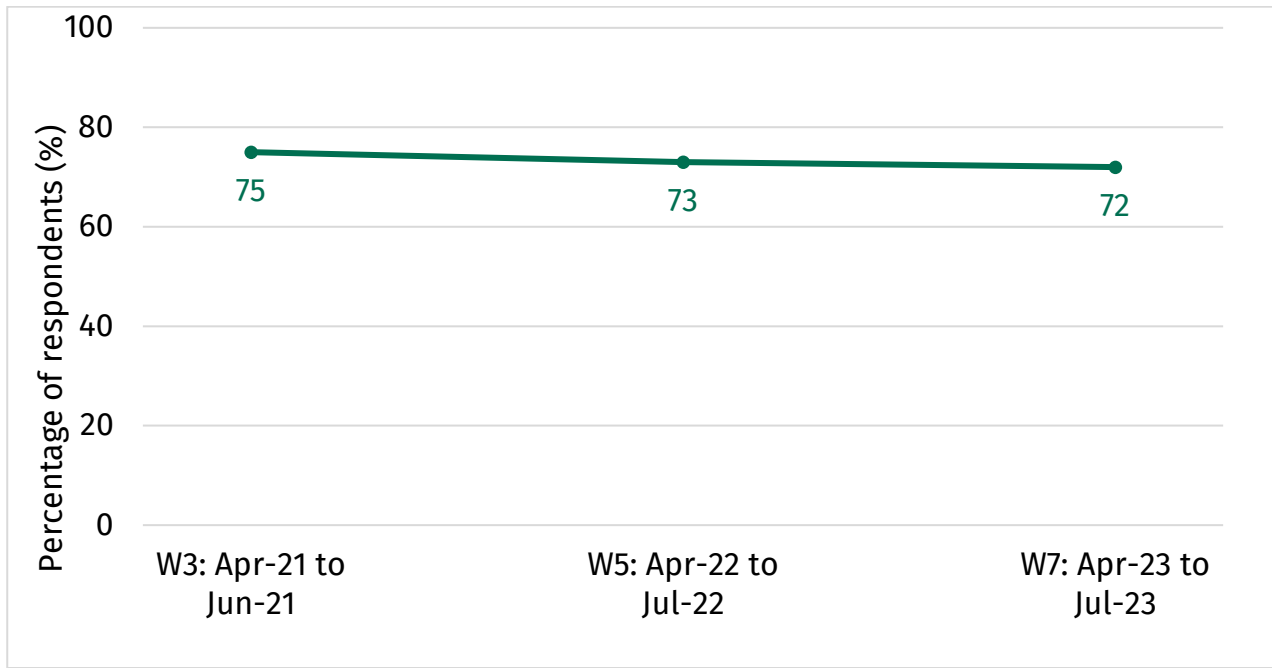
Food and You 2: Waves 2, 4, 6, 8

Ordering food and drink online

There were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported feeling confident in allergy information provided online between Wave 2 and Wave 8. Around three-quarters of respondents each wave reported feeling confident that the allergy information provided online, when shopping for food, allowed them to identify foods that might cause them or someone else in their household a reaction (Figure 26).³⁵

³⁵ Question: How confident are you that the information provided online for the food and drink you want to order allows you to identify foods that might cause you or another member of your household a bad or unpleasant physical reaction? Responses: Very confident, fairly confident, not very confident, not at all confident, it varies from place to place. Total base across waves 3, 5, 7 = 3,808 (range between 1,169 in Wave 7 and 1,376 in Wave 3), all online respondents who find allergen information when ordering food or drink online. This question was not included in Wave 1, 2, 4, 6 or 8.

Figure 26: Confidence in allergen information provided online



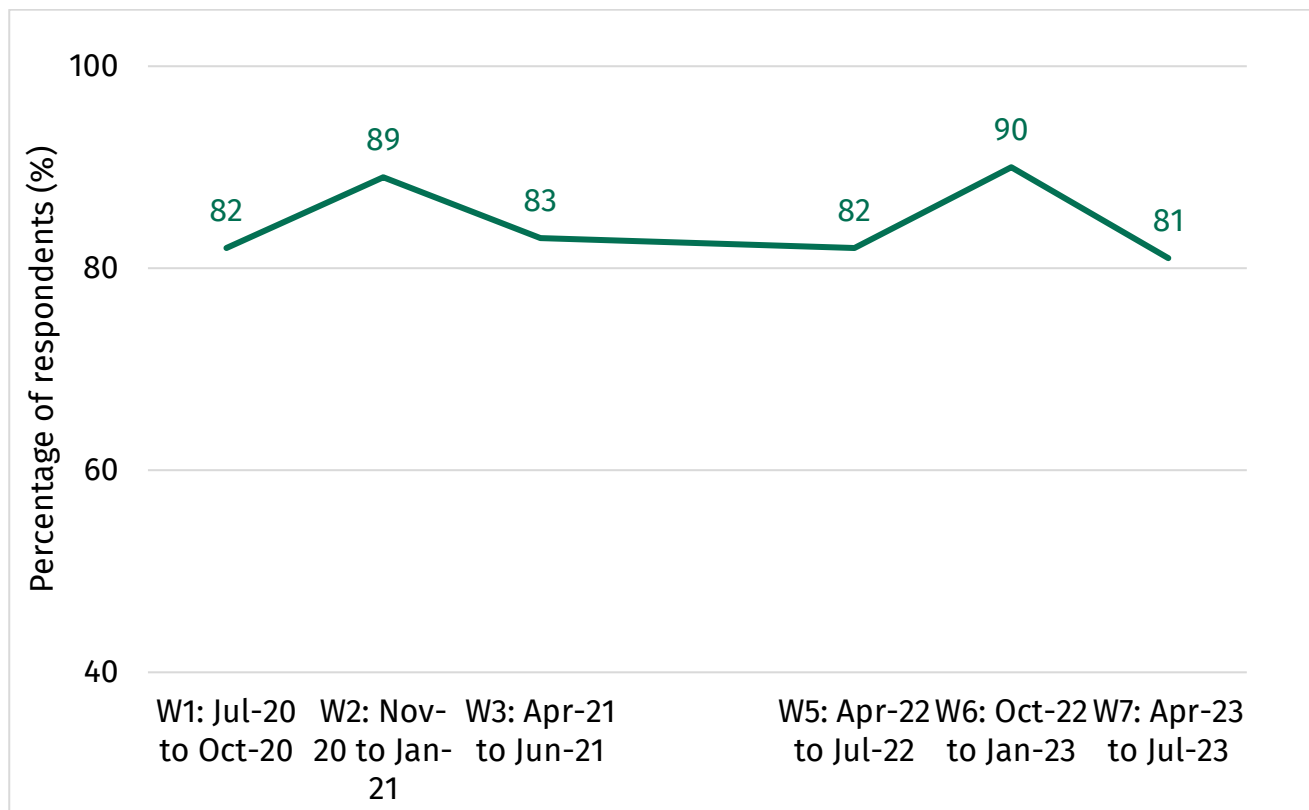
Food and You 2: Waves 3, 5, 7

Confidence in allergen labelling when food shopping

Between Wave 1 and Wave 7, the percentage of respondents who stated that they were confident (i.e., very confident or fairly confident) that the information provided on food labels allows them to identify foods that will cause a bad or unpleasant physical reaction has varied between waves. A slightly greater percentage of respondents reported confidence in allergen labelling in Wave 2 (89%) and Wave 6 (90%), than other waves (81%-83%) (Figure 27) ** ³⁶.

³⁶ Question: How confident are you that the information provided on food labels allows you to identify foods that will cause you, or another member of your household, a bad or unpleasant physical reaction? Responses: very confident, fairly confident, not very confident, not at all confident, it varies from place to place, don't know. Base= 11583, all online respondents who consider the dietary requirements of themselves/someone else in the household when shopping for food. Please note: this question was not included in Waves 4 or 8.

Figure 27: The percentage of respondents who are confident in allergen labelling.



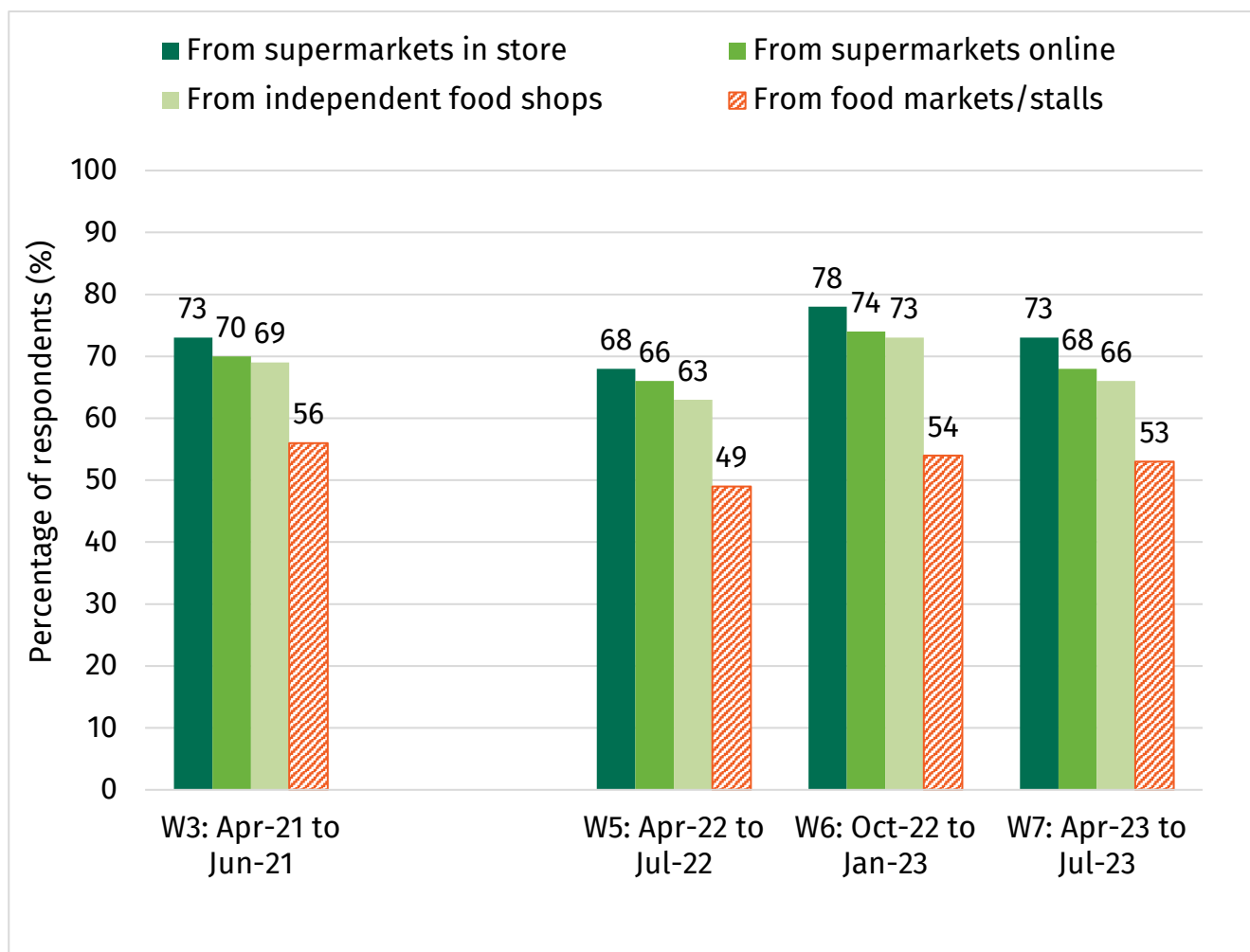
Food and You 2: Wave 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7

Buying loose food

Respondents were asked about their confidence in being able to identify foods that might cause them or another member of their household to have a reaction, when buying food that is sold loose in different settings. Consistently across all waves, respondents were more likely to be confident when buying loose foods in supermarkets, either in store (68-78%) or online (66-74%), and independent food shops (63-73%). Respondents were least likely to be confident when buying food from food markets/stalls (49-56%) (Figure 28)³⁷.

³⁷ Question: When buying food that is sold loose (e. g. at a bakery or deli counter), how confident are you that you can identify foods that will cause you or another member of your household a bad or unpleasant physical reaction? Responses: Very confident, fairly confident, not very confident, not at all confident, it varies from place to place.

Figure 28: Confidence in identifying foods that might cause a reaction, when buying food that is sold loose



Food and You 2: Waves 3, 5, 6, 7

Total base varies according to setting and wave. See data tables for further details on base sizes, all online respondents who consider the dietary requirements of themselves/someone else in the household when shopping, excluding 'I don't buy food from here'/'I don't buy food sold loose' (answering). This question was not included in Wave 1, 2, 4 or 8.

Chapter 6: Eating at home

Introduction

The FSA is responsible for protecting the public from foodborne diseases. This involves working with farmers, food producers and processors, and the retail and hospitality sectors to ensure that the food people buy is safe. The FSA gives practical guidance and recommendations to consumers on [food safety and hygiene](#) in the home.

This chapter provides an overview of respondents' knowledge and reported behaviours relating to food safety and other food-related behaviours between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024).

Cleaning

Handwashing in the home

The [FSA recommends](#) that everyone should wash their hands before they prepare, cook or eat food, after handling raw food and before preparing ready-to-eat food.

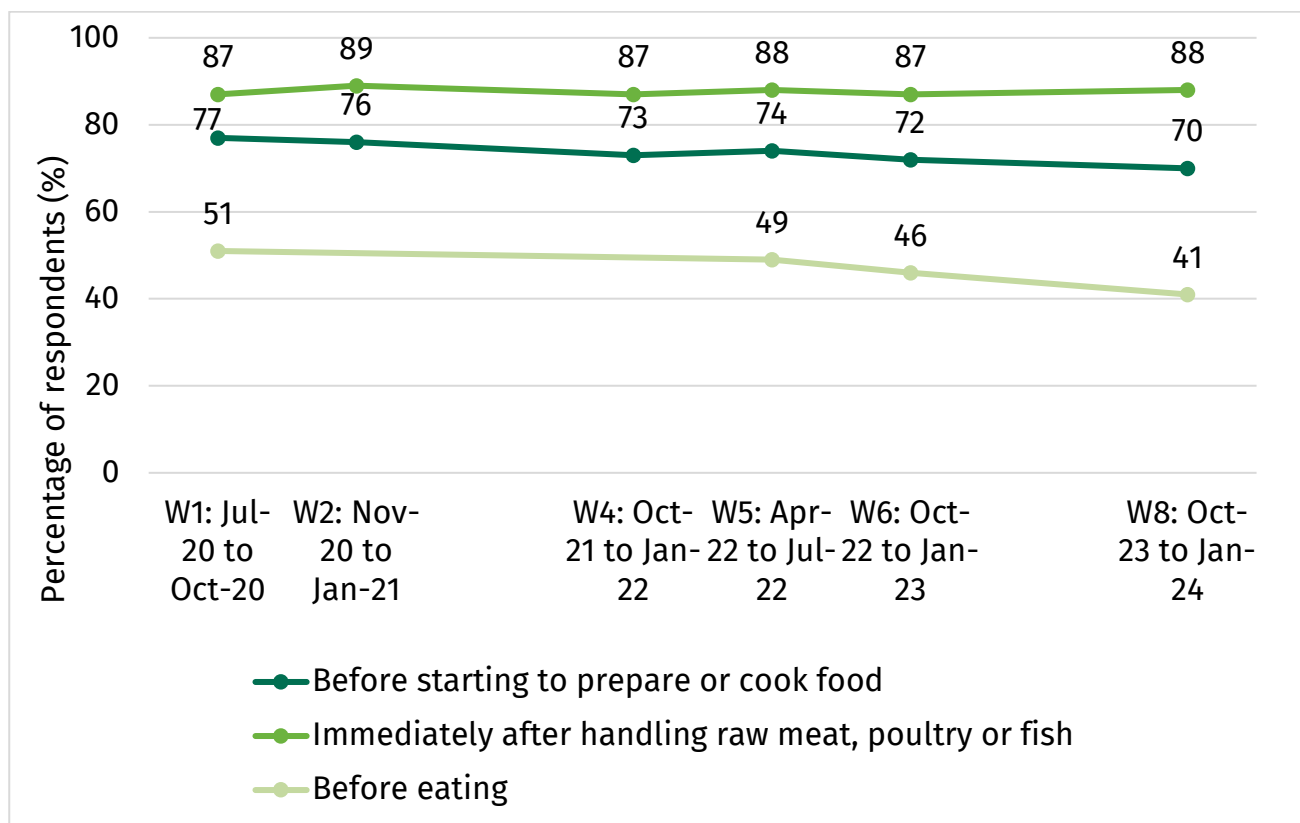
There were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported that they always wash their hands immediately after handling raw meat, poultry, or fish between Wave 1 and Wave 8, with around 4 in 5 respondents reporting that they always did this. However, there was a notable decline in the percentage of respondents who reported always washing their hands before preparing or cooking

food, from 77% in Wave 1 to 70% in Wave 8³⁸. Similarly, there was a notable decline in the percentage who reported always washing their hands before eating (from 51% in Wave 1 to 41% in Wave 8) (Figure 29)³⁹.

³⁸ Question: When you are at home, how often, if at all, do you ... a) wash your hands before starting to prepare or cook food? b) wash your hands immediately after handling raw meat, poultry or fish? Responses: always; most of the time; about half the time; occasionally; never; don't know; a) I don't cook, b) I don't cook meat, poultry or fish, I don't cook. Total base across waves 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 = 33,149 (range between 4,431 in Wave 8 and 8,922 in Wave 1), all online respondents and all those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire, who ever do some food preparation or cooking for their household. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3 or 7.

³⁹ Question: When you are at home, how often, if at all, do you wash your hands before eating? Responses: always; most of the time; about half the time; occasionally; never. Total base across waves 1, 5, 6 and 8 = 25,739, (range between 4,757 in Wave 8 and 9,319 in Wave 1), all online respondents and all those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 2, 3, 4, 7.

Figure 29. The percentage of respondents who always wash their hands.



Food and You 2: Waves 1, 2, 4-6, 8

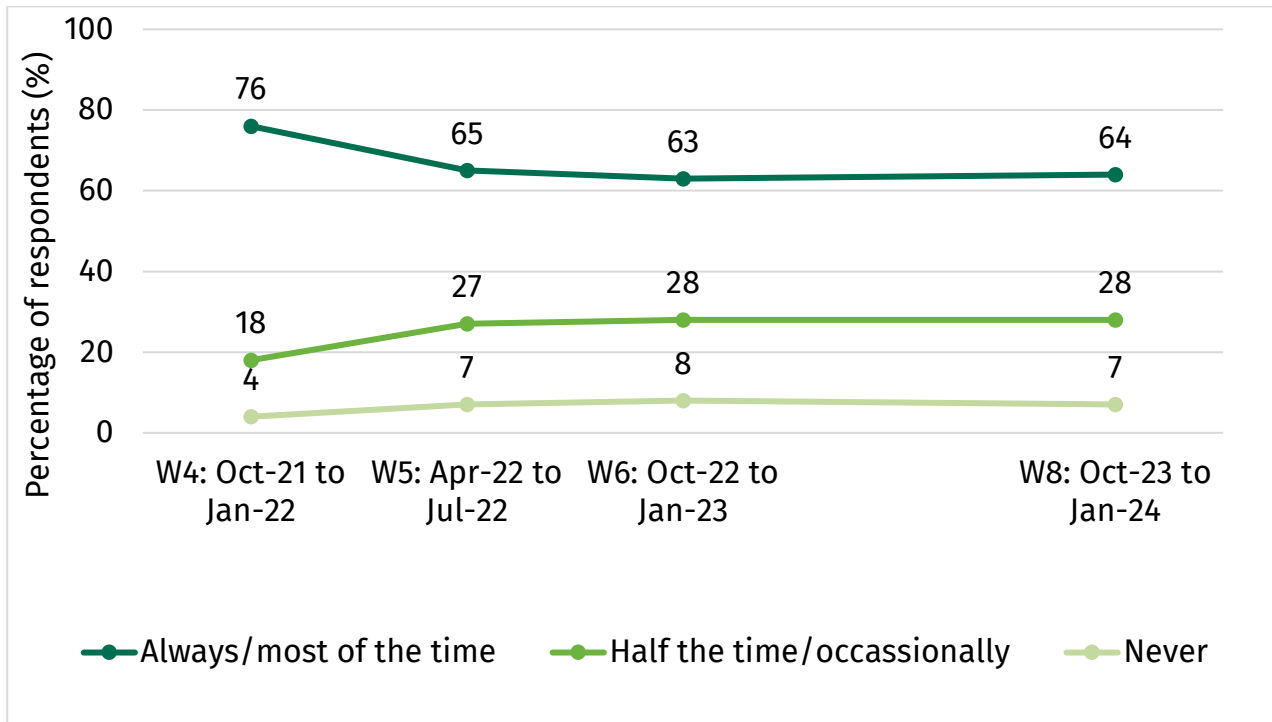
Handwashing when eating out

Respondents were asked, how often, if at all, they washed their hands or used hand sanitising gel or wipes before eating when they ate outside of their home⁴⁰. The percentage who reported doing this ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’ notably decreased from 76% in Wave 4 (October 2021 to January 2022) to 65% in Wave 5 (April 2022 to July 2022). Since then, the percentage has remained stable, with just over 6 in 10

⁴⁰ Question: When eating outside of the home, how often, if at all, do you wash your hands, or use hand sanitising gel or wipes before eating? Responses: always, most of the time, About half the time, Occasionally, Never, Don’t know. Total base across waves 4, 5, 6 and 8 = 21,384 (range between 4,755 in Wave 4 and 6,770 in Wave 5), all online respondents and those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire who ever do some food preparation or cooking for their household. Please note: this question was not included in Waves 1, 2, 3 or 7.

respondents reporting that they wash their hands 'always' or 'most of the time' when eating outside the home each wave (Figure 30).

Figure 30: Percentage who always or most of the time wash their hands when eating outside of the home



Food and You 2: Waves 4-6, 8

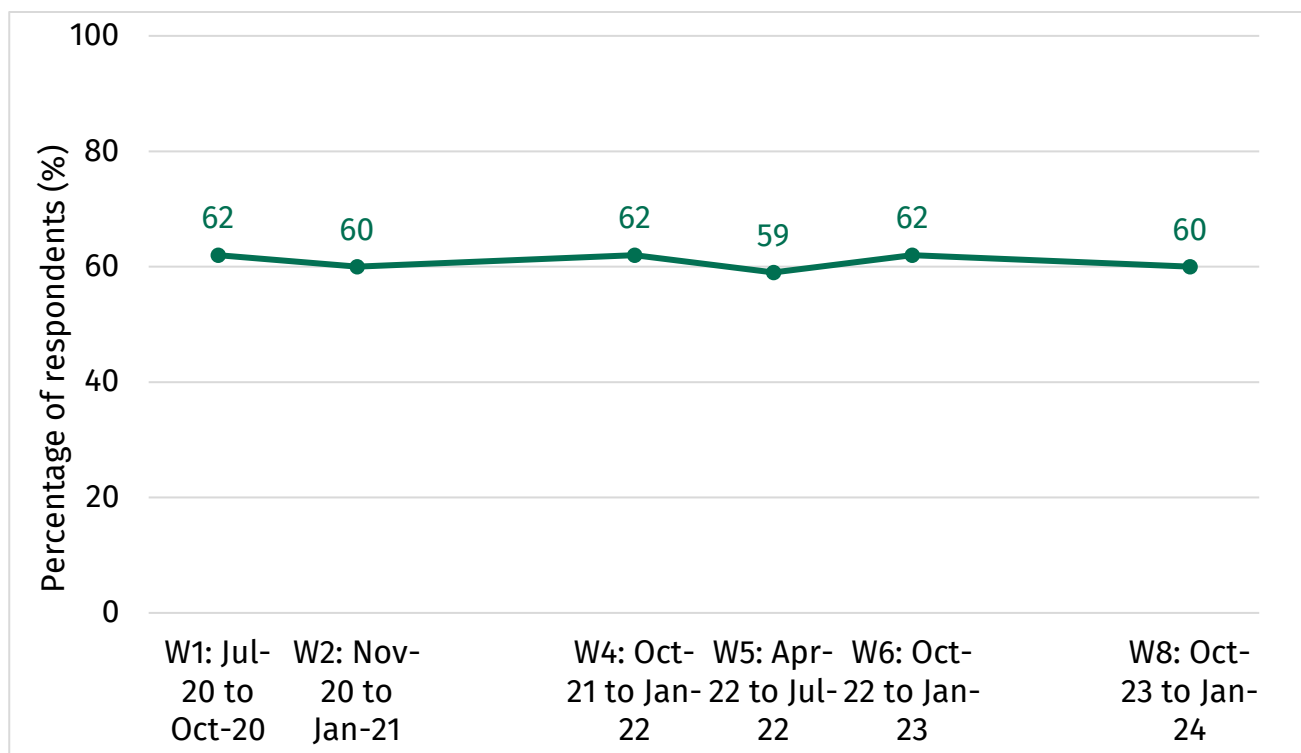
Chilling

If and how respondents check fridge temperature

The FSA recommends that the [inside of a fridge should be between 0-5 degrees Celsius](#), and that the temperature should be checked weekly, using a fridge thermometer.

There were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported the temperature on the inside of a fridge should be between 0-5 degrees Celsius between Wave 1 and Wave 8 (Figure 31)⁴¹.

Figure 31. The percentage of respondents who think that the inside of a fridge should be between 0-5 degrees Celsius.



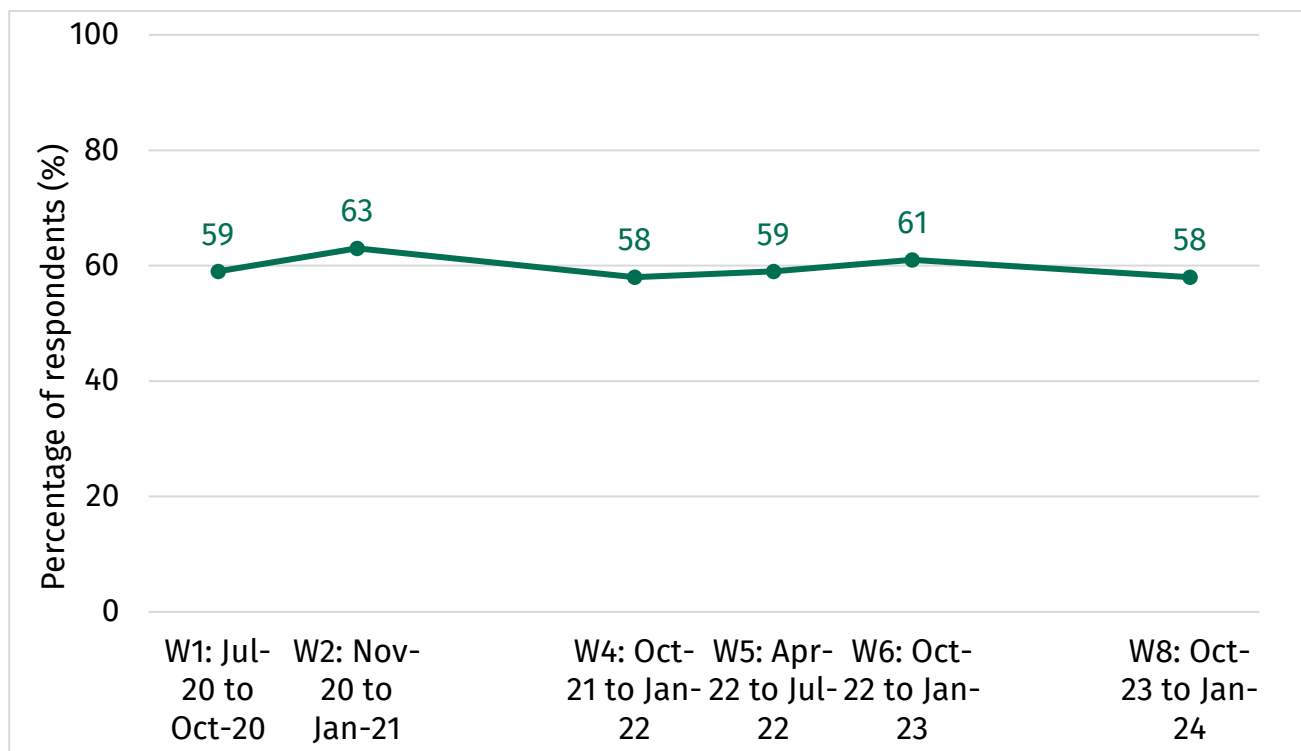
Food and You 2: Wave 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 8

Slightly more respondents reported that they check the temperature of their fridge, or do not need to as it has an alarm in Wave 2 (63%) compared to other waves**,

⁴¹ Question: What do you think the temperature inside your fridge should be?
 Responses: less than 0 degrees C (less than 32 degrees F), between 0 and 5 degrees C (32 to 41 degrees F), more than 5 but less than 8 degrees C (42 to 46 degrees F), 8 to 10 degrees C (47 to 50 degrees F), more than 10 degrees C (over 50 degrees F), other, I don't have a fridge, don't know. Total base across waves 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 = 35,271, all online respondents and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire, excluding those who don't have a fridge. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3 or 7.

however, generally there have been no other notable changes between Wave 1 and Wave 8 (Figure 32)⁴².

Figure 32. The percentage of respondents who check the temperature of their fridge.



Food and You 2: Wave 1, 2, 4-6, 8

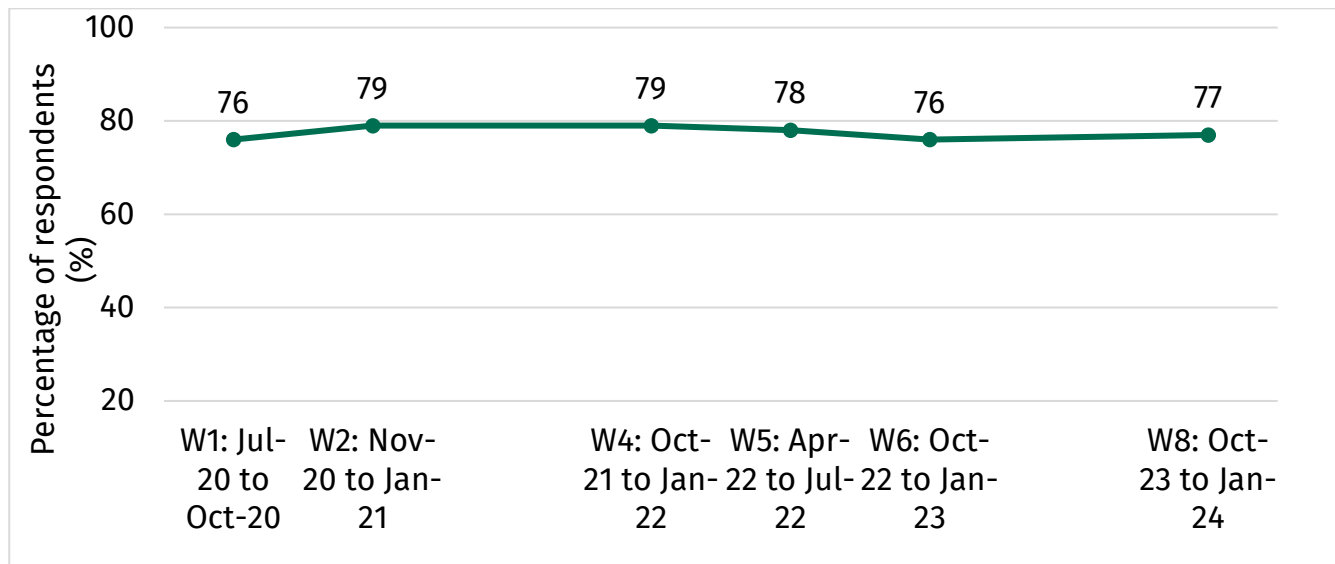
Cooking

The FSA recommends that [food is cooked until steaming hot and cooked all the way through](#). There were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported that they always cook food until steaming hot and cooked all the way through between Wave 1 and Wave 8. Across all waves, around 8 in 10 respondents

⁴² Question: Do you, or anyone else in your household, ever check your fridge temperature? Responses: yes, no, I don't need to - it has an alarm if it is too hot or cold, don't know. Total base across waves 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8 = 35,261 (range between 4,740 in Wave 8 and 9,305 in Wave 1), all online respondents, and all those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire, excluding those who don't have a fridge. Please note: this question was not included in Waves 3 or 7.

reported that they always cook food until steaming hot and cooked all the way through (Figure 33)⁴³.

Figure 33. The percentage of respondents who always cook food until it is steaming hot and cooked all the way through.



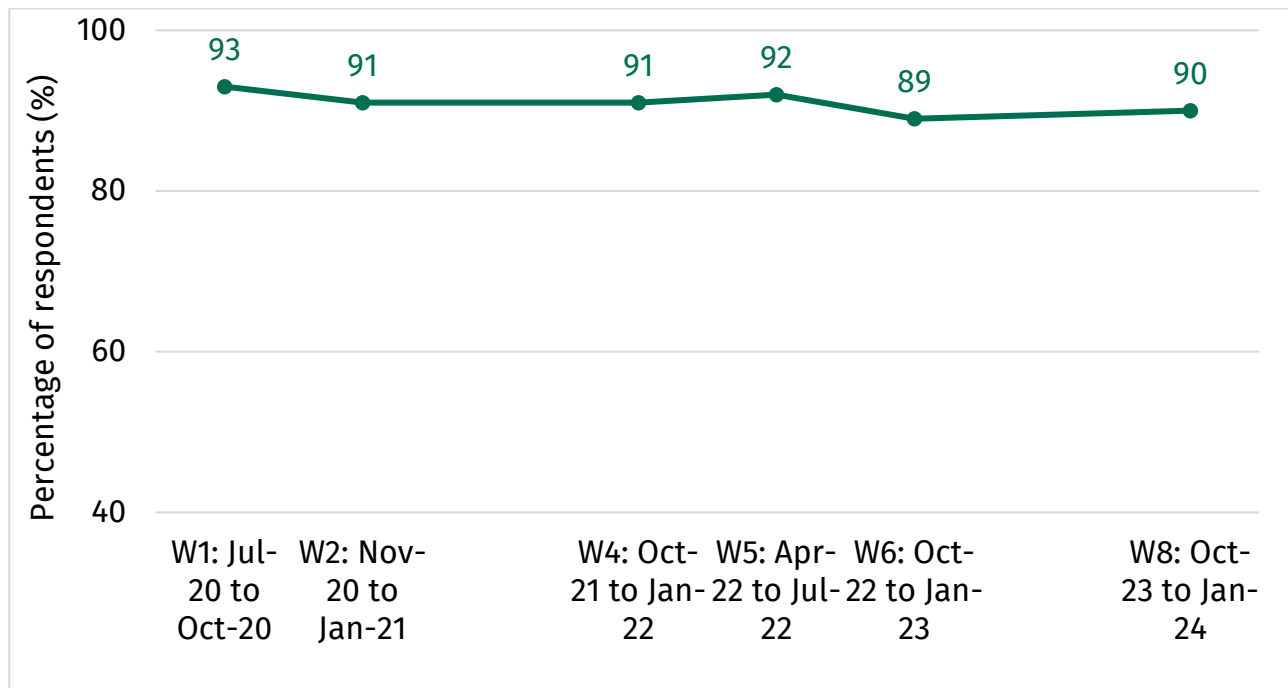
Food and You 2: Wave 1, 2, 4-6 and 8

There was a slight decline in the percentage of respondents who reported ‘never’ eating chicken or turkey when it is pink or has pink juices between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) (93%) and Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024) (90%). However, across

⁴³ Question: How often, if at all, do you cook food until it is steaming hot and cooked all the way through? Responses: always, most of the time, about half of the time, occasionally, I don't cook food, never, don't know. Total base across waves 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 = 33,149 (range between 4,431 in Wave 8 and 8,922 in Wave 1), online respondents and all those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire, who ever do some food preparation or cooking for their household. Please note: this question was not included in Waves 3 or 7.

all waves around 9 in 10 respondents reported that they would never eat chicken or turkey when it is pink or has pink juices (Figure 34)⁴⁴.

Figure 34. The percentage of respondents who never eat chicken or turkey when it is pink or has pink juices.



Food and You 2: Wave 1, 2, 4-6 and 8

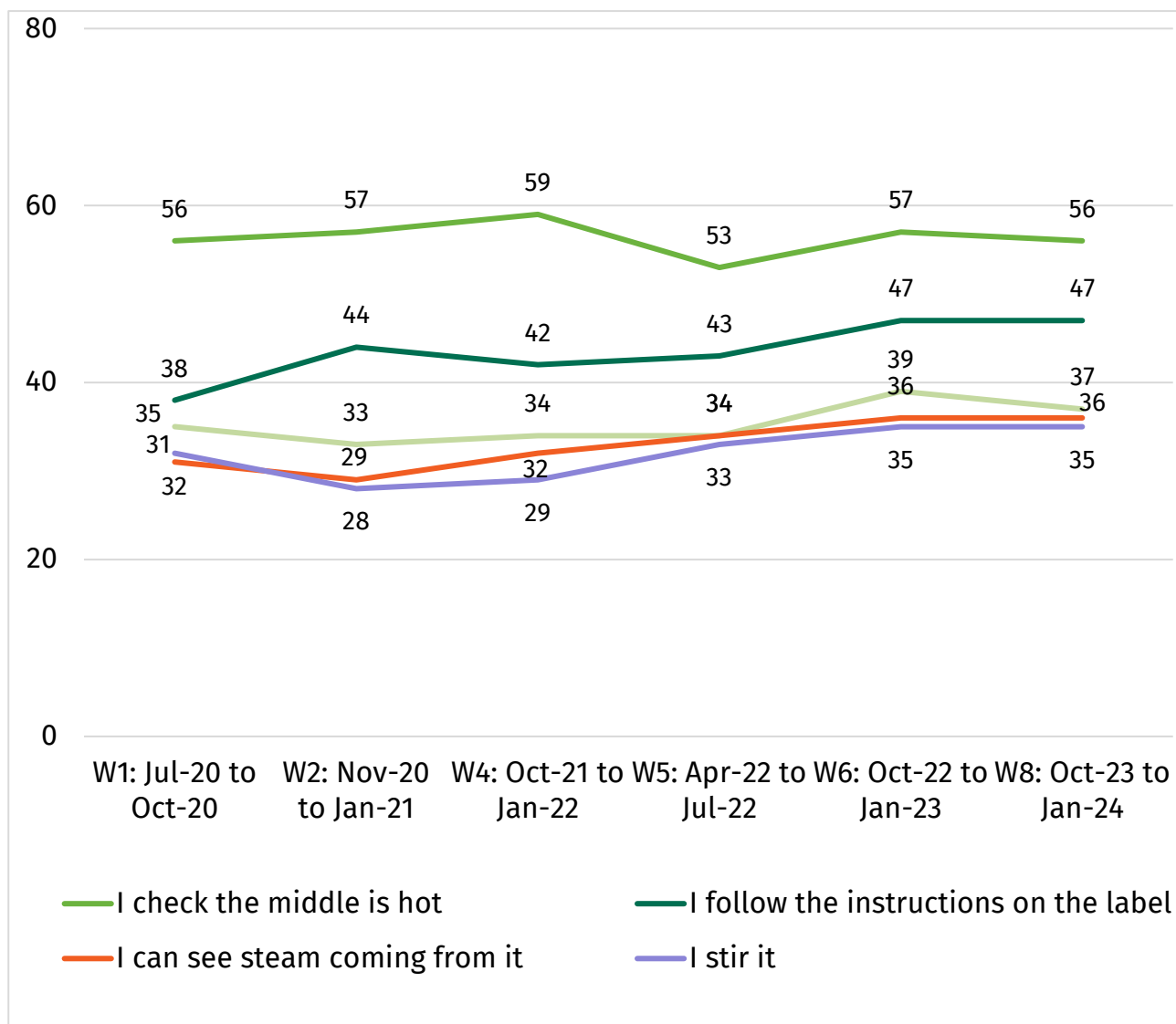
⁴⁴ Question: How often, if at all, do you eat chicken or turkey when the meat is pink or has pink or red juices? Responses: always, most of the time, about half of the time, occasionally, never, don't know. Base = 32,686, (range between 4,381 in Wave 4 and 8,672 in Wave 1) all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire, who are not vegan, pescatarian or vegetarian, and who do eat chicken/turkey. Please note: this question was not included in Waves 3 or 7.

Reheating

Respondents were asked how they know food is ready to eat when reheating it. Across all waves, the top 5 methods for checking food have remained consistent with the most respondents reporting that they 'check that the middle is hot' in all waves (53%-59%). Between Wave 1 and Wave 8, there was an increase in percentage of respondents who reported looking for steam coming from food (from 31% to 36%) and followed instructions on the label (from 38% to 47%)⁴⁵ (Figure 35).

⁴⁵ Question: When reheating food, how do you know when it is ready to eat? (Select all that apply). Responses: I check the middle is hot, I follow the instructions on the label, I can see its bubbling, I use a timer to ensure it has been cooked for a certain amount of time, I check it's an even temperature throughout, I can see steam coming from it, I taste it, I stir it, I put my hand over it/touch it, I use a thermometer/probe, None of the above, I don't check. Total base across waves 1, 2, 4-6 7 and 8 = 31, 388, (range between 4,208 in Wave 4 and 8,375 in Wave 1) all online respondents and all those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire, who ever do some food preparation or cooking for their household, excluding 'I don't reheat food' and 'not stated'. Please note: this question was not included in Waves 3 or 7.

Figure 35. Most common (top 5) methods used to check if food is ready to eat when reheating it.

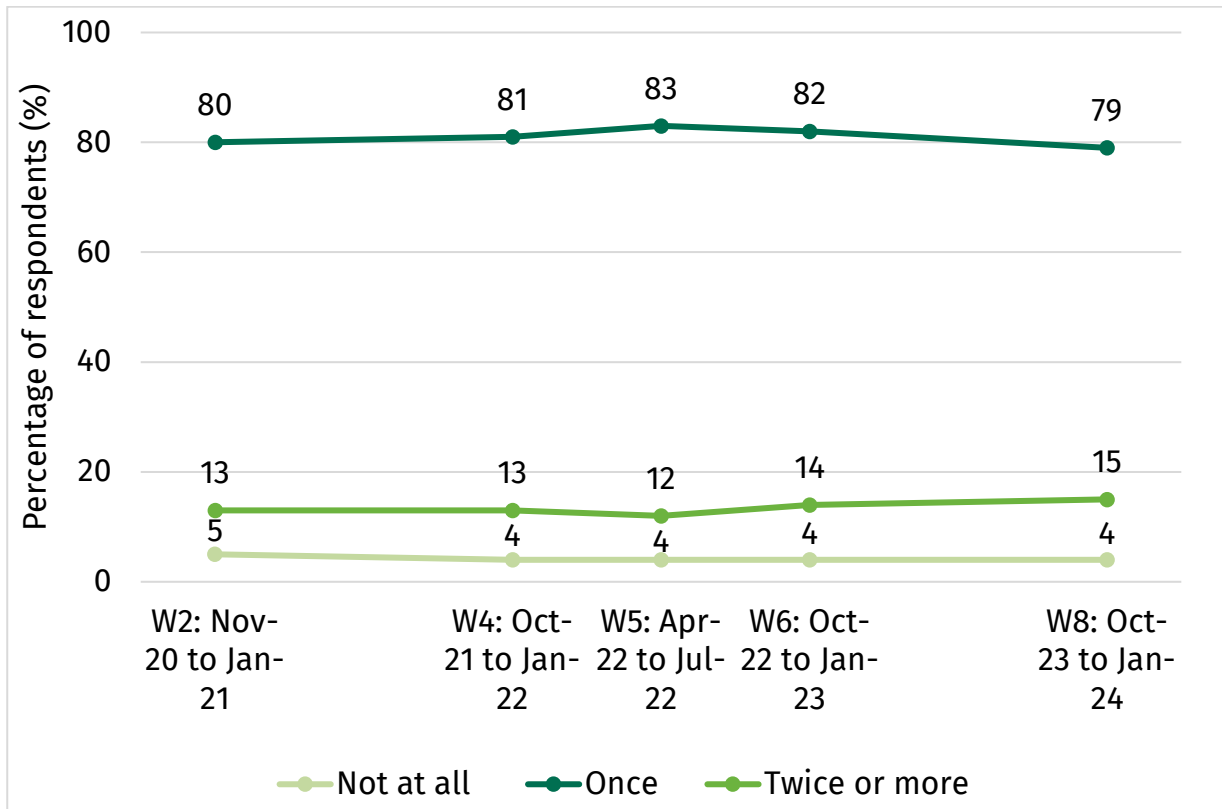


Food and You 2: Wave 1, 2, 4-6 and 8

The FSA recommends that [food is only reheated once](#). There were no notable differences in the number of times respondents would reheat food between Wave 1 and Wave 8. Across all waves, around 8 in 10 respondents reported that they would reheat food only once (Figure 36)⁴⁶.

⁴⁶ Question: How many times would you consider reheating food after it was cooked for the first time? Responses: not at all, once, twice, more than twice, don't know, I don't reheat food. Total base across all waves = 23,130, (range between 4,402 in Wave 2

Figure 36. How many times respondents would consider reheating food.



Food and You 2: Wave 2, 4, 5, 6, 8

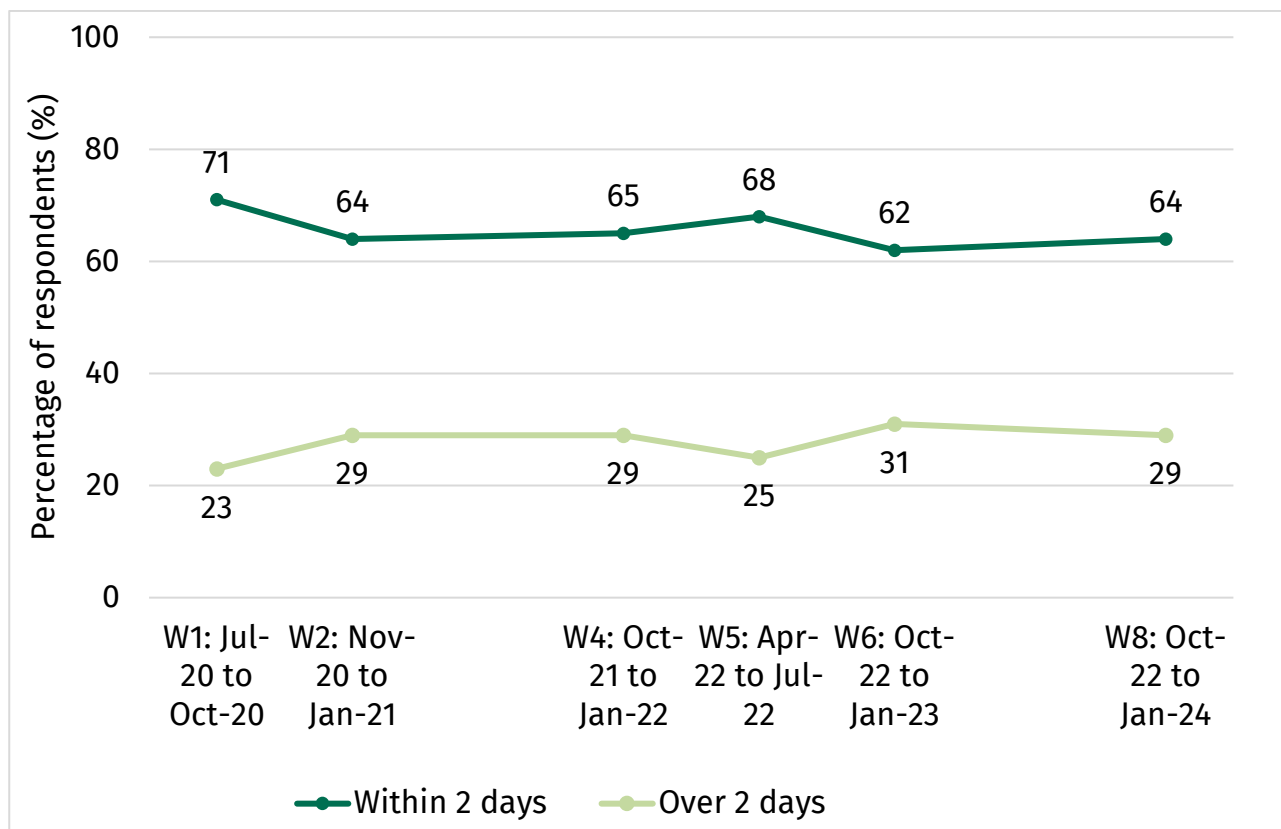
Leftovers

Between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024) there was a slight decrease in the percentage of respondents who reported that they would eat leftovers within 2 days (from 71% in Wave 1 to 64% in Wave 8), and a slight

and 5,918 in Wave 5) all online respondents and all those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire, who reheat food using one of the methods in the previous question. Please note: this question is not comparable in Wave 1, and was not included in Wave 3 or 7.

increase in the percentage of respondents who reported that they would eat leftovers after 2 days or more (from 23% in Wave 1 to 29% in Wave 8) (Figure 37) ^{**47}.

Figure 37. The latest respondents would consume any leftovers stored in the fridge.



Food and You 2: Wave 1, 2, 4-6, 8

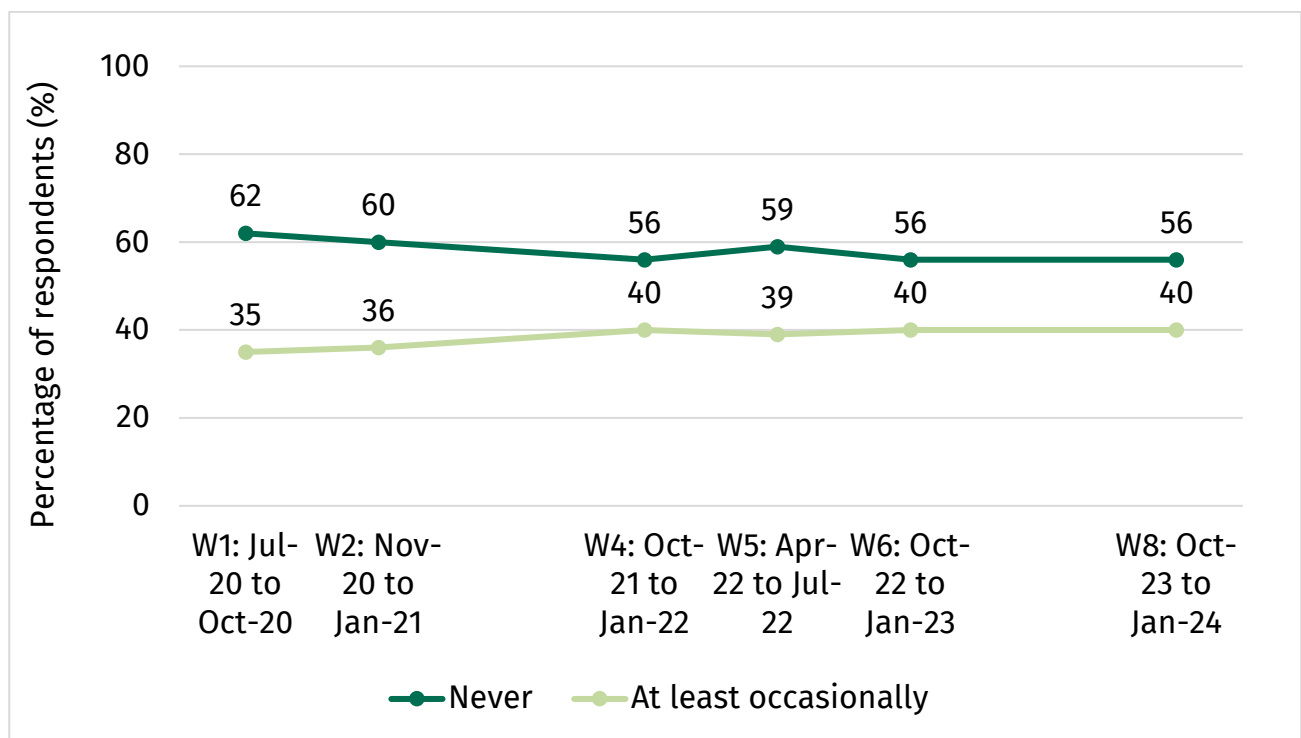
Avoiding cross-contamination

The FSA provides guidelines on [how to avoid cross-contamination](#). The FSA recommends that people do not wash raw meat, fish or poultry. Washing raw meat can

⁴⁷ Question: When is the latest you would consume any leftovers stored in the fridge?
 Responses: the same day, within 1-2 days, within 3-5 days, more than 5 days later, it varies too much, don't know. Total base across waves 1, 2, 4-6 and 8= 35,339 (range between 4,757 in Wave 8 and 9, 319 in Wave 1), all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3 or 7.

spread harmful bacteria onto hands, work surfaces, ready-to-eat foods and cooking equipment. Between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 8 (October 2023 to January 2024), there were a slight increase in the percentage of respondents who reported that they wash raw chicken at least occasionally (from 35% in Wave 1 to 40% in Wave 8), whilst those who report never doing so have decreased over time (from 62% in Wave 1 to 56% in Wave 8)** (Figure 38)⁴⁸.

Figure 38. The percentage of respondents who never and at least occasionally wash raw chicken.



Food and You 2: Wave 1, 2, 4-6, 8

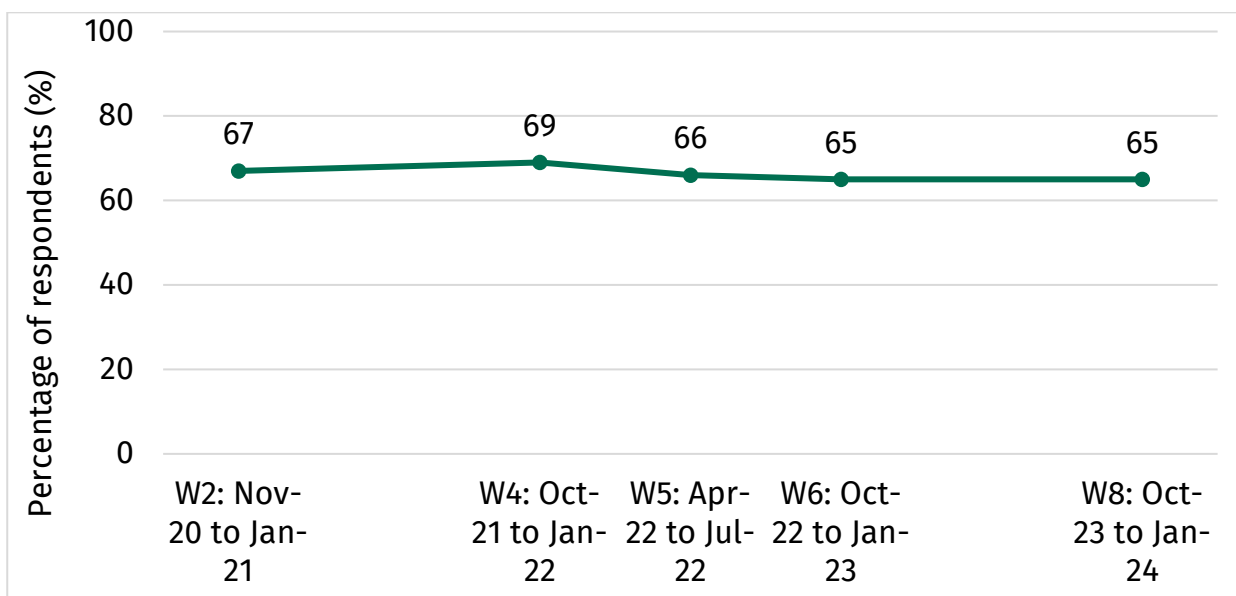
⁴⁸ Question: How often, if at all, do you wash raw chicken? Responses: always, most of the time, about half of the time, occasionally, never, don't know. Total base across waves 1, 2, 4-6 and 8 = 33,058 (range between 4,407 in wave 8 and 8,922 in wave 1), all online respondents and all those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire, who ever do some food preparation or cooking for their household. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3 or 7.

Use-by dates

Respondents were asked about their understanding of the different types of [date labels](#) and instructions on food packaging, as storing food for too long or at the wrong temperature can cause food poisoning, use-by dates related to food safety and best before (BBE) dates relate to food quality.

Across all waves, over 6 in 10 respondents identified the use-by date as the information which shows that food is no longer safe to eat. Slightly more identified this correctly in Wave 4 (69%), compared to other waves** (65-67%) (Figure 39)⁴⁹.

Figure 39. The percentage of respondents who identified the use-by date as the information which shows when food is no longer safe to eat.



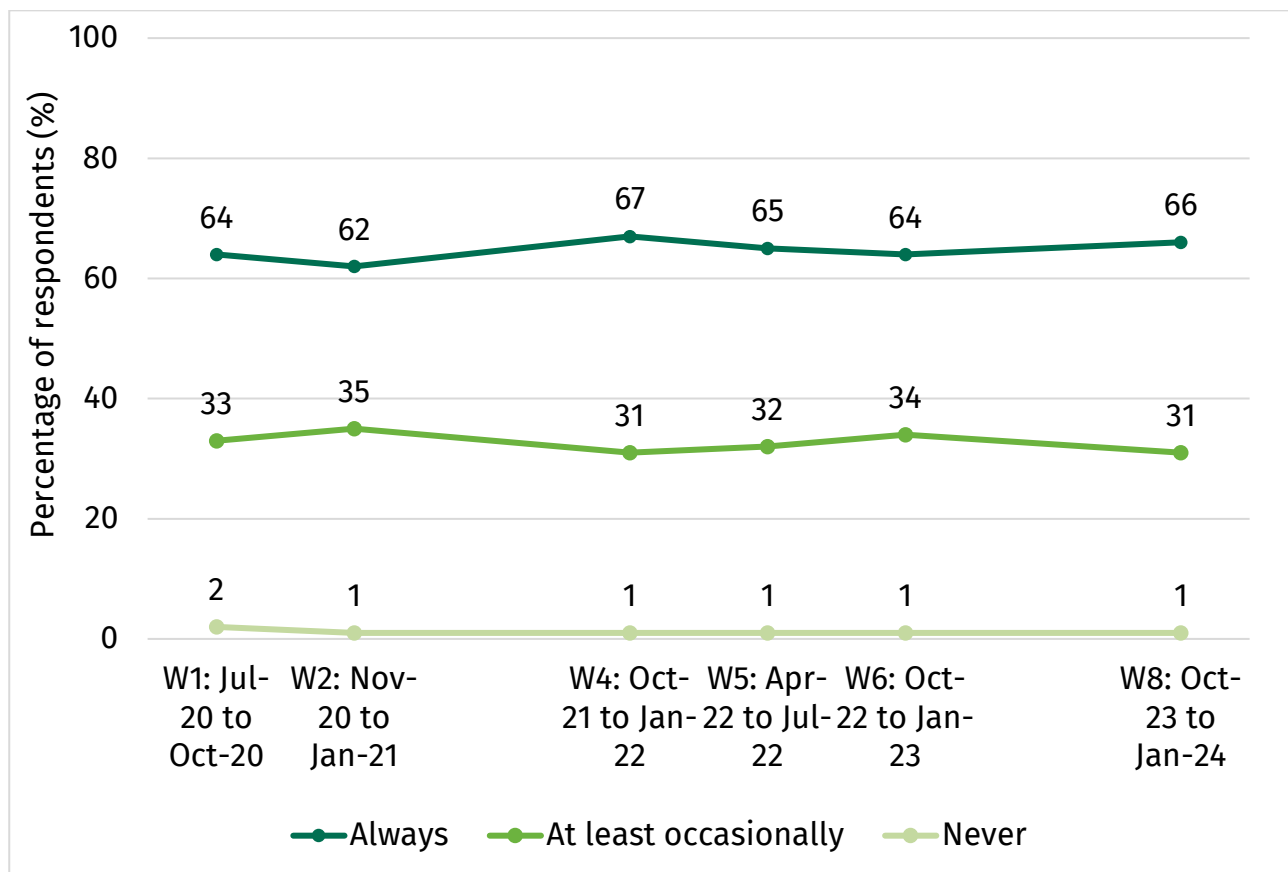
Food and You 2: Wave 2, 4-6, 8

There were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported checking use-by dates before cooking or preparing food between Wave 1 and Wave 8.

⁴⁹ Question: Which of these shows when food is no longer safe to eat? Responses: use-by date, best before date, sell by date, display until date, all of these, it depends, none of these, don't know. Total base across waves 2, 4-6, 8= 26,020 (range between 4,757 in Wave 8 and 6,770 in Wave 5), all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 1, 3 or 7.

Across all waves, over 6 in 10 respondents reported that they always check use-by dates before they cook or prepare food (Figure 40)⁵⁰.

Figure 40. How often respondents check use-by dates when they are about to cook or prepare food.



Food and You 2: Wave 1, 2, 4-6, 8

⁵⁰ Question: How often, if at all, do you check use-by dates when you are about to cook or prepare food? Responses: always, most of the time, about half of the time, occasionally, never, it varies too much to say, I don't cook/prepare food, don't know. Total base across Waves 1, 2, 4-6, 8 = 33,149 (range between 4,431 in Wave 1 and 8,922 in Wave 1), all online respondents and all those who completed the relevant postal questionnaire, who ever do some food preparation or cooking for their household. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 3 or 7.

Chapter 7: Food shopping and labelling

Introduction

The remit of food labelling is held by multiple bodies, that differ between [England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#)⁵¹.

This chapter provides an overview of food purchasing online and what respondents look for when they are shopping between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 7 (April 2023 to July 2023).

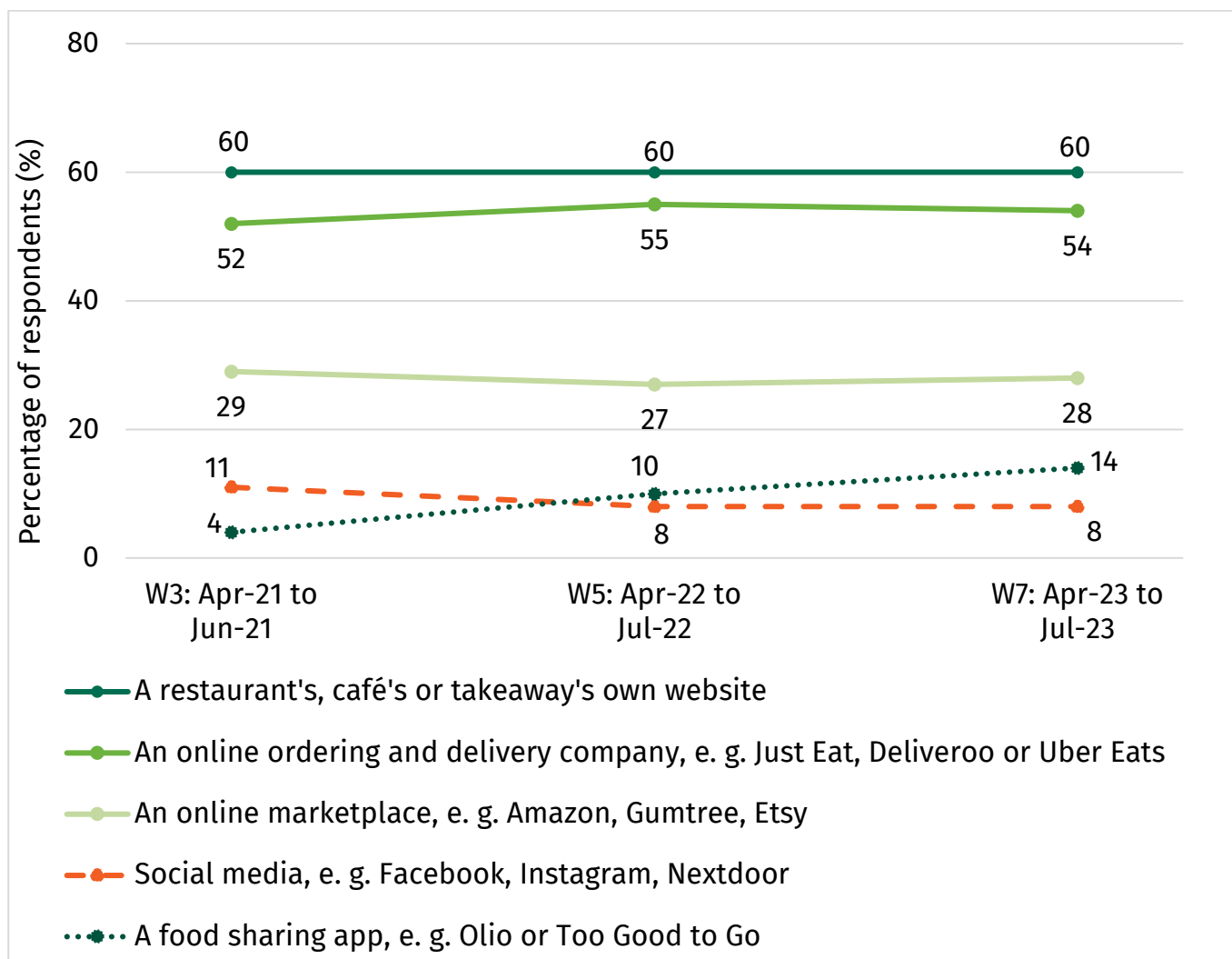
Use of online platforms

Between Wave 3 and Wave 7, there were no notable differences in the percentage of respondents who reported that they had ordered food or drink online through a restaurant, café or takeaway's own website, an online ordering and delivery company (e.g. Just Eat, Deliveroo or Uber Eats) or an online marketplace (e.g. Amazon, Gumtree, Etsy). However, during this period there was a slight decrease in those reporting use of social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor) from 11% in Wave 3 (April 2021 to June 2021) to 8% in Wave 7 (April 2023 to July 2023)**. There was also an increase in those reporting use of food sharing apps (e.g. Olio or Too Good to Go) from 4% in Wave 3 (April 2021 to June 2021) to 14% in Wave 7 (April 2023 to July 2023) (Figure 41)⁵².

⁵¹ Nutrition standards and nutrition food labelling is the remit of the Department of Health and Social care in England and the Welsh Government in Wales.

⁵² Question: Have you ever ordered food or drink online through a restaurant's, café's or takeaway's own website? Responses: yes, no. Total base across waves 3, 5, 7= 11,984 (range between 3,617 in Wave 7 and 4,041 in Wave 5), all online respondents. Please note: this question was not included in Waves 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8.

Figure 41: Where respondents order food or drink online



Food and You 2: Waves, 3, 5 and 7

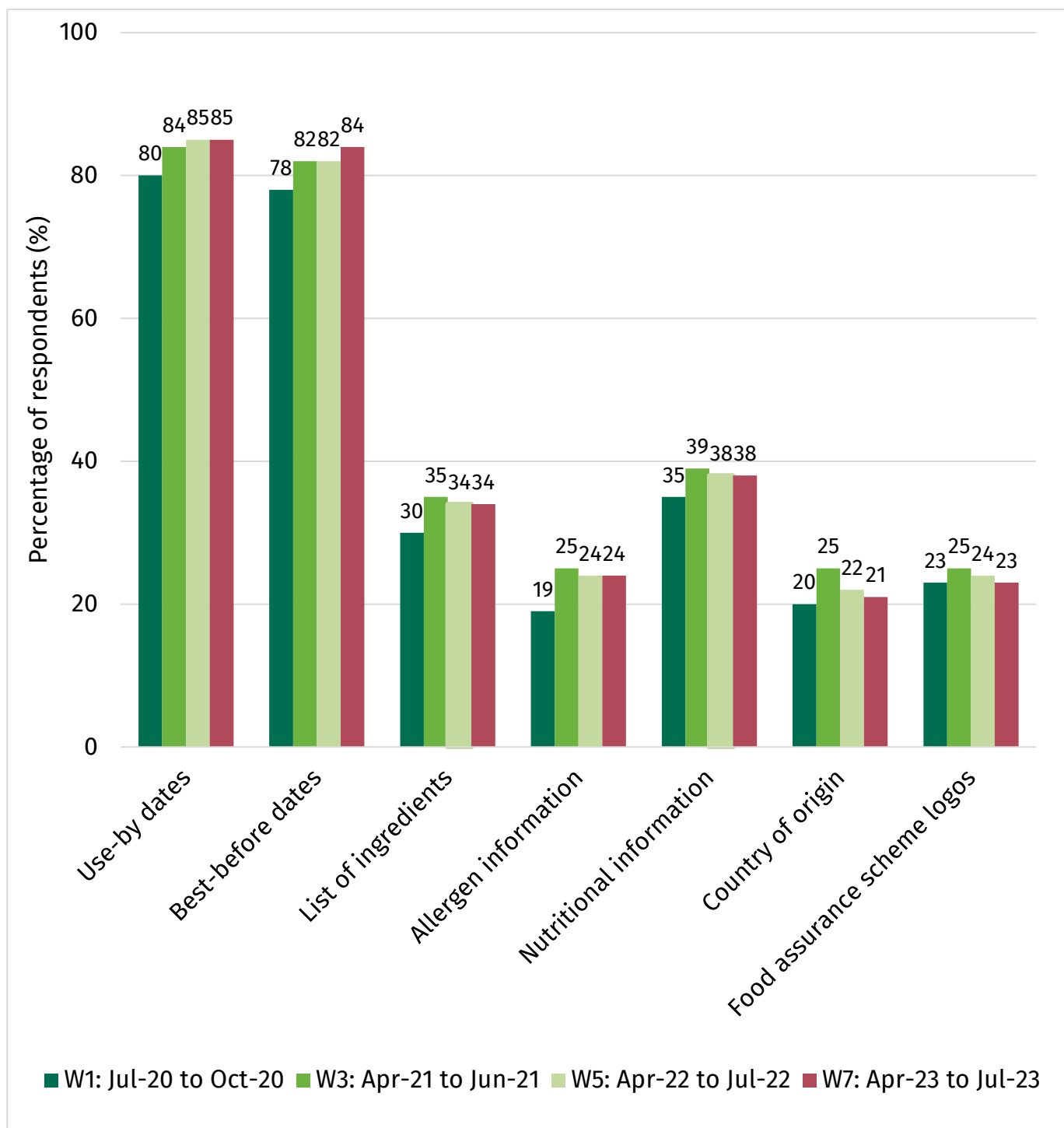
What do respondents report checking when buying food?

Between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 3 (April 2021 to June 2021), there was a slight increase in the percentage of respondents who reported they check (always or most of the time) use-by dates (from 80% to 84%) best-before dates (from 78% to 82%), list of ingredients (from 30% to 35%), allergen information (from 19% to 25%) and nutritional information (from 35% to 39%) when shopping for food**. Since Wave 3, these figures have remained broadly stable. Checking for country of origin remained stable in most waves (20%-22%), except for a slight increase** in Wave 3

(25%). There were no notable differences when checking for food assurance scheme logos during this period⁵³ (Figure 42).

⁵³ Question: When shopping for food, how often, if at all, do you check...? a) use-by dates. b) best-before dates. c) list of ingredients. d) allergen information. e) Nutritional information. f) country of origin. g) food assurance scheme logos. Responses: always, most of the time, about half of the time, occasionally, never, don't know. Total base across waves 1, 3, 5, 7= 16,727 (range between 3,394 in Wave 7 and 5,548 in Wave 1), all online respondents who ever do food shopping. Please note: this question was not included in Wave 2, Wave 4, Wave 6 or Wave 8.

Figure 42: What respondents check when food shopping (always/most of the time responses combined).



Food and You 2: Waves, 1, 3, 5 and 7

The importance of animal welfare, provenance and environmental impact when buying food

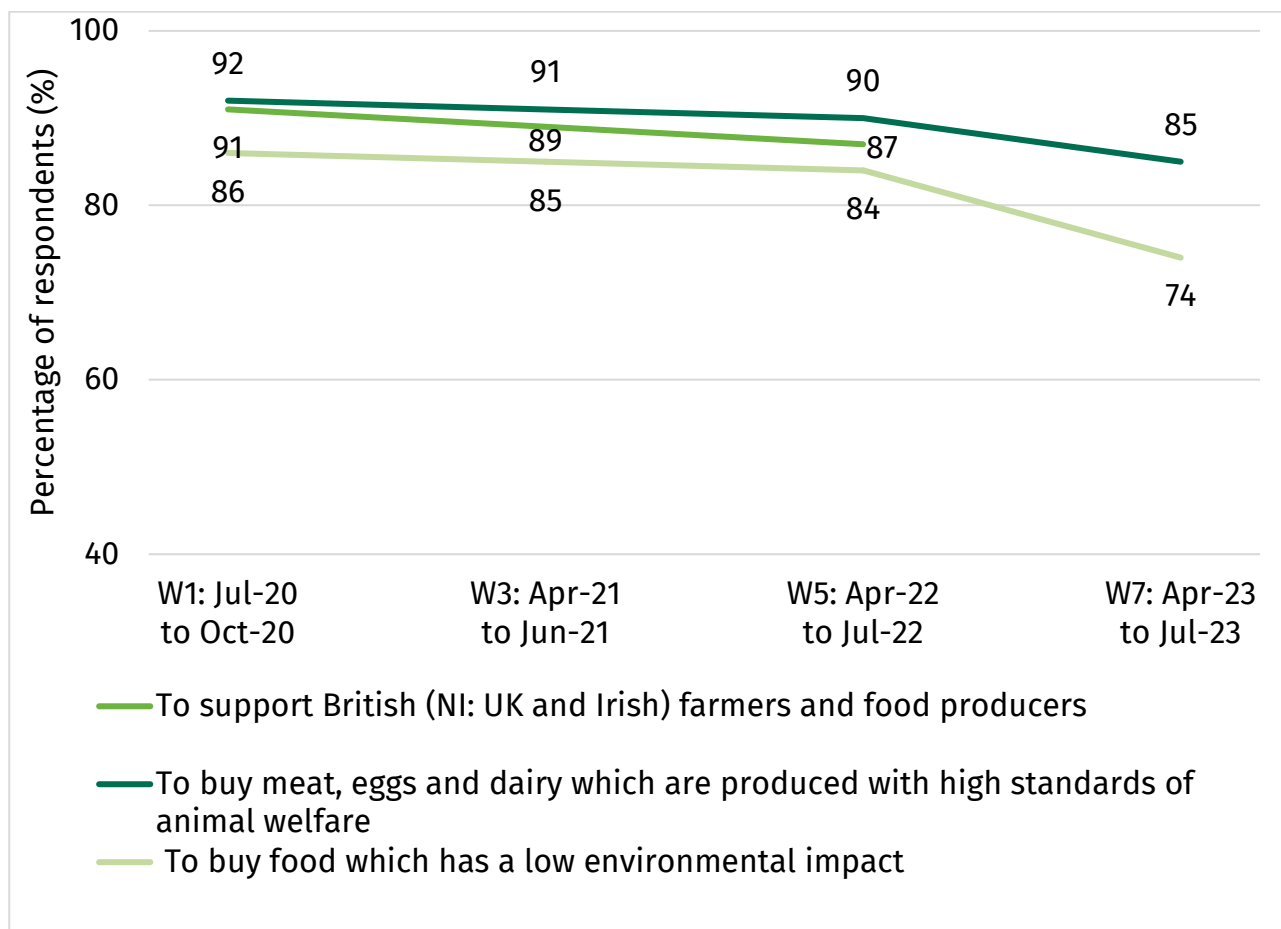
Following a period of stability between Wave 1 and 5, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of respondents reporting that it is important to buy meat, eggs and

dairy which are produced with high standards of animal welfare, from 90% in Wave 5 (April 2022 to July 2022) to 85% in Wave 7 (April 2023 to July 2023)**.

During the same period, there was a notable decrease in the percentage of respondents reporting that it is important to buy food which has a low environmental impact, from 84% in Wave 5 to 74% in Wave 7 (Figure 43)⁵⁴.

⁵⁴ Question: How important is it to you...a) to support British [if Northern Ireland: UK and Irish] farmers and food producers. b) to buy meat, eggs and dairy which are produced with high standards of animal welfare. c) to buy food which has a low environmental impact. Responses: very important, somewhat important, not very important, not at all important, don't know. Total base across Waves = 26,962 (range between 5,157 in Wave 7 and 9,319 in Wave 1), all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire. Please note: this question was not included in Waves 2, 4, 6 or 8 and option a) to support British [if Northern Ireland: UK and Irish] farmers and food producer, was not included from wave 7 onwards.

Figure 43: What factors are important to respondents when shopping.



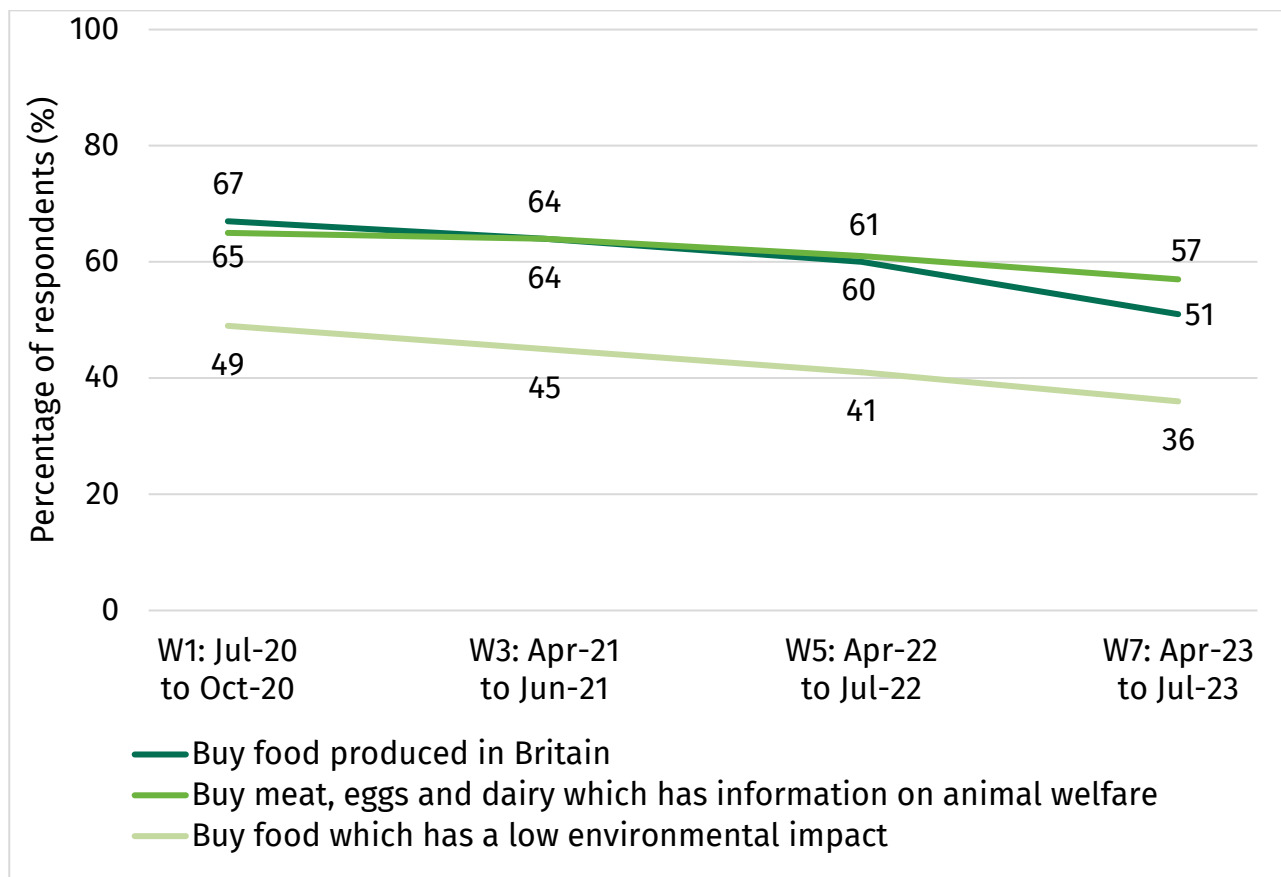
Food and You 2: Waves 1, 3, 5 and 7

Between Wave 1 (July 2020 to October 2020) and Wave 7 (April 2023 to July 2023) there was a decrease in the percentage of respondents who reported that, where possible, they always or most of the time: buy food produced in Britain⁵⁵ (from 67% in Wave 1 to 51% in Wave 7); buy food which has a low environmental impact (from 49% in Wave 1 to

⁵⁵ Respondents in Northern Ireland were asked about food produced in the UK and Ireland.

36% in Wave 7); and buy meat, eggs and dairy which has information on animal welfare either always or most of the time (from 65% Wave 1 to 57% in Wave 7)** (Figure 44)⁵⁶.

Figure 44: The percentage of respondents who, always or most of the time, buy food with a certain a provenance, animal welfare or environmental impact.



Food and You 2: Waves 1, 3, 5 and 7

⁵⁶ Question: How often do you do the following, where possible? a) buy food produced in Britain [If Northern Ireland: ‘the UK and Ireland’]? b) buy meat, eggs and dairy which has information on animal welfare. c) buy food which has a low environmental impact. Responses: always, most of the time, about half the time, occasionally, never, don't know. Total base across Waves = 26,962 (range between 5,157 in Wave 7 and 9,319 in Wave 1), all online respondents, and those answering the relevant postal questionnaire. Please note: this question was not included in Waves 2, 4, 6 or 8.

Annex A: Background and methodology

Background

In 2018 the FSA's [Advisory Committee for Social Science](#) (ACSS) established a new Food and You Working Group to review the methodology, scope and focus of the Food and You survey. The Food and You Working Group provided a [series of recommendations](#) on the future direction of the [Food and You survey](#) to the FSA and ACSS in April 2019. [Food and You 2](#) was developed from the recommendations.

The Food and You 2 survey replaced the biennial Food and You survey (2010-2018), biannual Public Attitudes Tracker (2010-2019) and annual Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) Consumer Attitudes Tracker (2014-2019). The Food and You survey has been an Official Statistic since 2014. Due to the difference in methodology between the Public Attitudes Tracker, FHRS Consumer Attitudes Tracker and Food and You survey (2010-2018) it is not possible to compare the data collected in Food and You 2 (2020 onward) with these earlier data. Comparisons can be made between the different waves of [Food and You 2](#).

Previous publications in this series include:

- [Food and You 2: Wave 1 Key Findings](#) (March 2021)
- [Food and You 2: Wave 2 Key Findings](#) (July 2021)
- [Food and You 2: Wave 3 Key Findings](#) (January 2022)
- [Food and You 2: Wave 4 Key Findings](#) (August 2022)
- [Food and You 2: Wave 5 Key Findings](#) (March 2023)
- [Food and You 2: Wave 6 Key Findings](#) (July 2023)
- [Food and You 2: 2020-2023 trends \(December 2023\)](#)
- [Food and You 2: Wave 7 Key Findings](#) (April 2024)
- [Food and You 2: Wave 8 Key Findings](#) (September 2024)

Methodology

The Food and You 2 survey is commissioned by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The fieldwork is conducted by Ipsos. Food and You 2 is currently a biannual survey. See Table 1 in the Introduction for the fieldwork dates for each wave of data collection.

Food and You 2 is a sequential mixed-mode 'push-to-web' survey (summary of method below). Push-to-web helps to reduce the response bias that otherwise occurs with online-only surveys. This method is accepted for government surveys and national statistics, including the 2021 [Census](#) and [2019/2020 Community Life Survey](#).

A random sample of addresses (selected from the Royal Mail's Postcode Address File) received a letter inviting up to two adults (aged 16 or over) in the household to complete the online survey. A first reminder letter was sent to households that had not responded to the initial invitation. A postal version of the survey accompanied the second reminder letter for those who did not have access to the internet or preferred to complete a postal version of the survey. A third and final reminder was sent to households if the survey had not been completed. Respondents were given a gift voucher for completing the survey.

The sample of main and reserve addresses⁵⁷ was stratified by region (with Wales and Northern Ireland being treated as separate regions), and within region (or country) by local authority (district in Northern Ireland) to ensure that the issued sample was spread proportionately across the local authorities. National deprivation scores were used as the final level of stratification within the local authorities - in England the [Index of Multiple Deprivation \(IMD\)](#), in Wales the [Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation \(WIMD\)](#) and in Northern Ireland, the [Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure \(NIMDM\)](#).

Due to the length and complexity of the online questionnaire it was not possible to include all questions in the postal version of the questionnaire. The postal version of the questionnaire needed to be shorter and less complex to encourage a high

⁵⁷ A reserve sample of addresses was created to use if the target number of respondents was not achieved from the main sample of addresses.

response rate. To make the postal version of the questionnaire shorter and less complex, up to two versions were produced. The content of the versions of the postal questionnaires differed between waves of data collection. See the Technical Report of each wave for further details.

All data collected by Food and You 2 are self-reported. The data are the respondents own reported attitudes, knowledge and behaviour relating to food safety and food issues. As a social research survey, Food and You 2 cannot report observed behaviours. Observed behaviour in kitchens has been reported in [Kitchen Life 2](#), an ethnographic study which used a combination of observation, video observation and interviews to gain insight into domestic kitchen practices.

The minimum target sample size wave of the Food and You 2 survey is 4,000 households (2,000 in England, 1,000 in Wales, 1,000 in Northern Ireland), with up to two adults in each household invited to take part as mentioned above. See the Technical Report for each wave for details about the sample size, response rate and number of respondents who were removed from the dataset.

Weights were calculated to compensate for known differences in respondent selection and potential response bias, as is usual practice in government surveys. After the weights were applied, the Food and You 2 data closely represented the population profile for key socio-demographic factors. Separate trend weights have been calculated for each country, for all countries combined and for 'Welsh-England' estimates. The purpose of trend weights is to allow data for individual questions to be compared across waves. For each trend weight, relevant wave weights are rescaled to equalise the weighted sample size in each wave. Further details about the weighting approach used and the weights applied to the Wave 1 – 8 trends data are available in the Trends SPSS User Guide.

The data have been checked and verified by the Ipsos research team and the FSA Statistics branch. Further details about checks of the data are available in the Technical Report. Descriptive analysis and statistical tests have been performed by the FSA Statistics branch. R (statistical software) was used by the FSA Statistics branch to calculate the descriptive analysis and statistical tests (t-tests).

The p-values that test for statistical significance are based on t-tests comparing the weighted proportions for a given response within that socio-demographic and sub-

group breakdown. An adjustment has been made for the effective sample size after weighting, but no correction is made for multiple comparisons.

Reported differences between socio-demographic and sub-groups typically have a minimum difference of 10 percentage points between groups and are statistically significant at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$). However, some differences between respondent groups are included where the difference is fewer than 10 percentage points when the finding is notable or of interest. Percentage calculations are based only on respondents who provided a response. Reported values and calculations are based on weighted totals.

Technical terms and definitions

Statistical significance is indicated at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$). This means that where a significant difference is reported, there is reasonable confidence that the reported difference is reflective of a real difference at the population level.

Food security means that all people always have access to enough food for a healthy and active lifestyle ([World Food Summit, 1996](#)). [The United States Department of Agriculture](#) (USDA) has created a series of questions which indicate a respondent's level of food security. Food and You 2 incorporates the [10 item U.S. Adult Food Security Survey Module](#) and uses a 12 month time reference period. Respondents are referred to as being food secure if they are classified as having high food security (no reported indications of food-access problems or limitations), or marginal food security (one or two reported indications—typically of anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house. Little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake). Respondents are referred to as being food insecure if they are classified as having low food security (reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake) or very low food security (reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake).

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Project reference: FS430662