Food in Scotland Consumer Tracking Survey Wave 19

January 2025

Contents

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Background, method and sample

Background

- The Food in Scotland Consumer Tracking Survey monitors attitudes, knowledge and reported behaviours relating to food using a representative sample of Scotland's population.
- Established by Food Standards Scotland (FSS) in 2015, the survey is undertaken bi-annually in July and December.
- In 2023, the survey was adjusted to make it more comparable to the Food Standards Authority's (FSA) tracker that covers England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- The survey was set up by Kantar TNS who conducted waves 1-6. JRS Research conducted waves 7-16 and Union Data conducted Wave 17. Progressive carried out Wave 18 in July 2024 and Wave 19 in December 2024.
- A full review of the survey this wave resulted in new questions being added, format of questions changing and amendments being made. The revised survey was cognitively tested and further refinements made. Not all data will be comparable to previous waves.
- Significant* increases or decreases between Waves 18 and 19 are indicated by arrows ⬆⬇
- Margins of error calculated at the 95% confidence level are between ±0.61% and ±3.09%. As quotas were used to ensure sample was representative then these margins of error are indicative based on an equivalent probability sample.

Methodology

- The research methodology is consistent across research waves to ensure comparability

Online self-completion survey

Representative sample of **1,009** Scottish adults

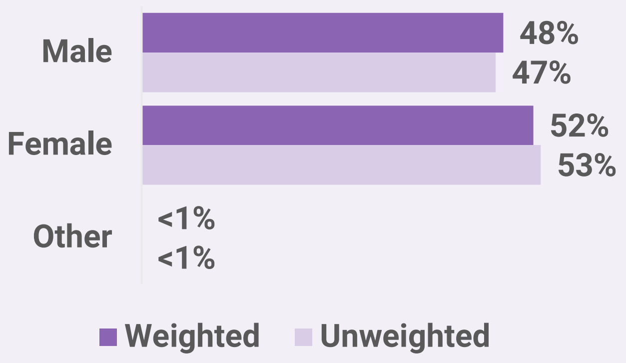
15-minute questionnaire length

4th - 18th December 2024

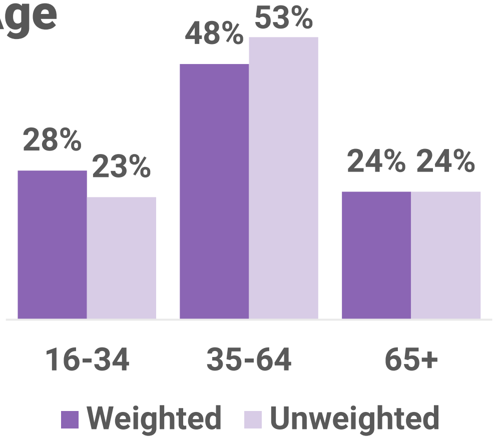
- Research was undertaken in strict accordance with the MRS Code of Conduct and UK GDPR legislation

Sample is representative of the Scottish population – data was weighted on key demographics to match the Scottish population.

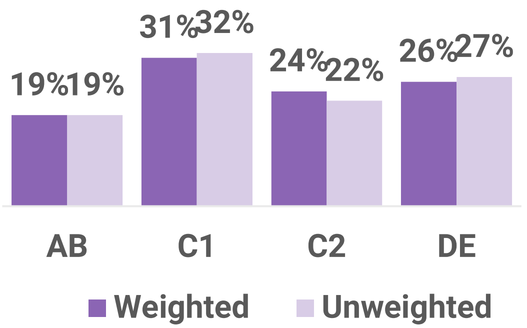
Gender



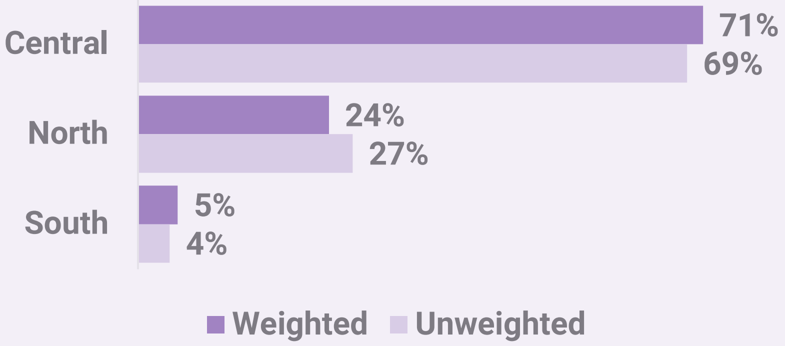
Age



Social Grade



Location



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Base: All respondents 1,009

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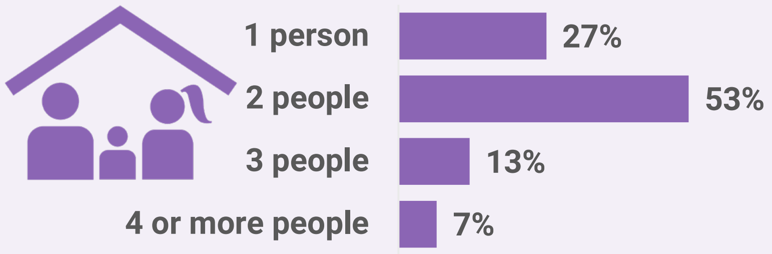
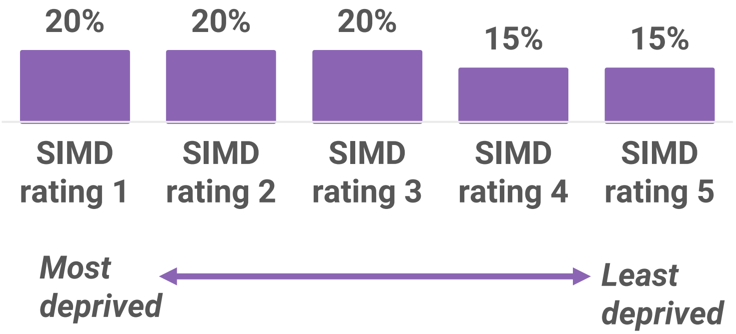
Sample Profile – Weighted

Household composition



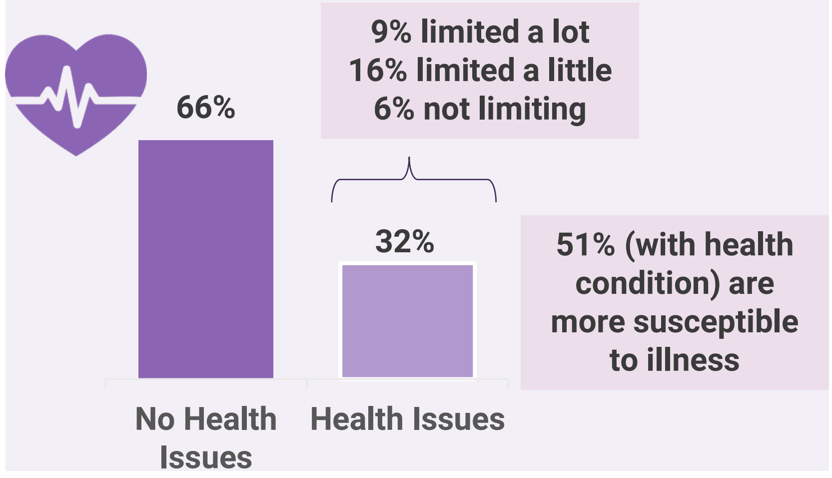
Includes 31% of households with children

SIMD quintile*

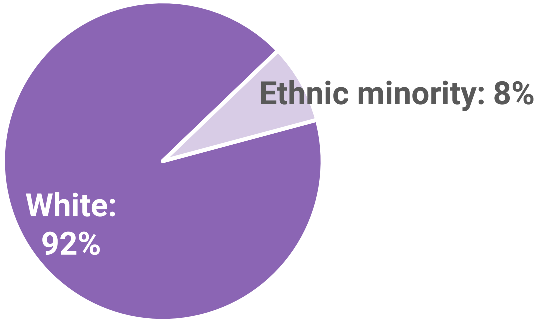


10% did not provide a postcode or the postcode was unclassified

Limiting Health Issues**



Ethnic Group



*SIMD is a relative measure of deprivation, which splits Scotland into 6,976 small areas, called 'data zones', with roughly equal populations. Each data zone is ranked based on a range of indicators of deprivation including income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime & housing.

Working status**

Food Standards Scotland

Base: All respondents 1,009

**'Other' and 'Prefer not to say' responses not shown

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Key Findings

*Awareness and Trust	Issues of Concern for Consumers	Activities	Affordability
When prompted the majority had at least heard of FSS. Just under half of the sample had some knowledge of FSS. Trust remains high amongst those with knowledge of FSS. FSS was rated highly against all attributes.	Food prices and food poverty continue to be top of mind for consumers and this is particularly true for women, DEs and younger age groups.	The cost of living is still having some impact on consumers' behaviour. They are still concerned about saving money where they can in relation to food purchases etc.; however, consumers are not doing these activities as often as they were in W18, suggesting some level of confidence in consumer spend in relation to food.	Results show indications of consumer confidence increasing; however, there are still cohorts of people who are worried about affording food and eating healthily. Lower SEG, those with children, living in the most deprived SIMD quintile and women were all more likely to experience food poverty indicators.

*Awareness questions were structured differently in W19.

Key Findings continued

Healthy Eating

Consumers could be supported a lot more to make healthy eating choices. More could be done regarding promotion and educating about healthy eating. At the same time, promotions and packaging of unhealthy foods needs to be controlled to support consumers in making healthy choices.

Labelling

In general, consumers agree that labels are clear and enough information is provided, although there is room to increase consumer confidence in ensuring what is in the food is clearly marked on the label, particularly for those with an allergy/intolerance and those susceptible to illness.

Food Security

Confidence in the UK food supply chain has increased for safety and quality after a dip last wave. While lower levels of concern for availability of food has been sustained, over a fifth still expressed concern this wave.

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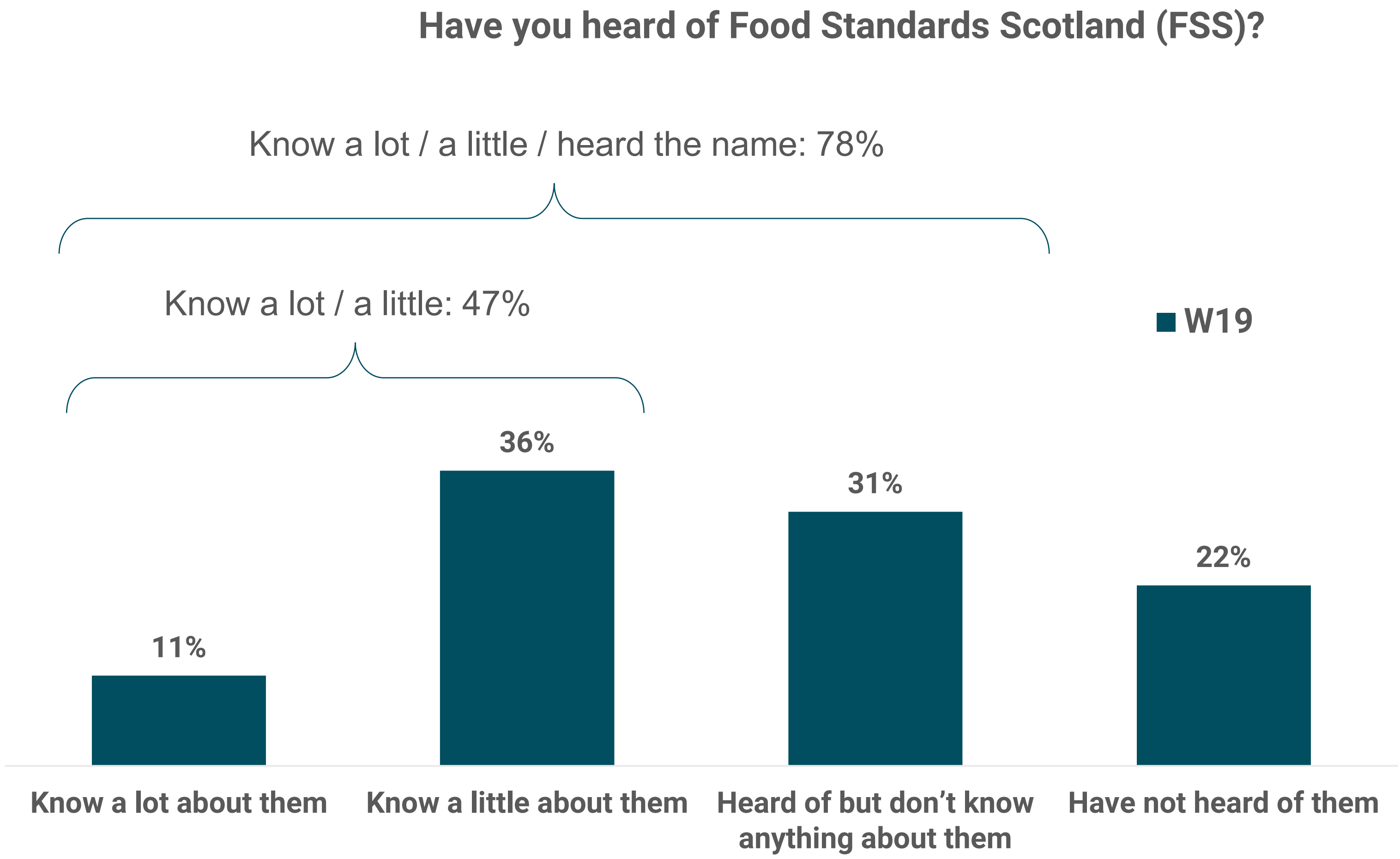
Awareness and trust

Just under half knew a little or a lot about FSS, and a further three in ten had heard the name but did not know anything about them.



- 16-34 year olds (17%) were more likely to state they know a lot about FSS compared to those aged 35+ (8%), whereas 65+ were more likely than younger age groups to have heard of FSS but not know anything about them (37%).
- Ethnic Minority respondents (19%) were more likely to know a lot about FSS compared to White respondents (10%) as did those with children in the household (18% vs 7% of those without children).
- Those who had clear information on eating a healthy balanced diet were more aware (51% know a lot/a little) of FSS than their counterparts (38%).
- Those who felt calorie/nutritional information should be available on request were more knowledgeable about FSS (50%) compared to those who didn't want information (37%).

Q2. Which of the following organisations are you aware of? Base (all) W19: 1009

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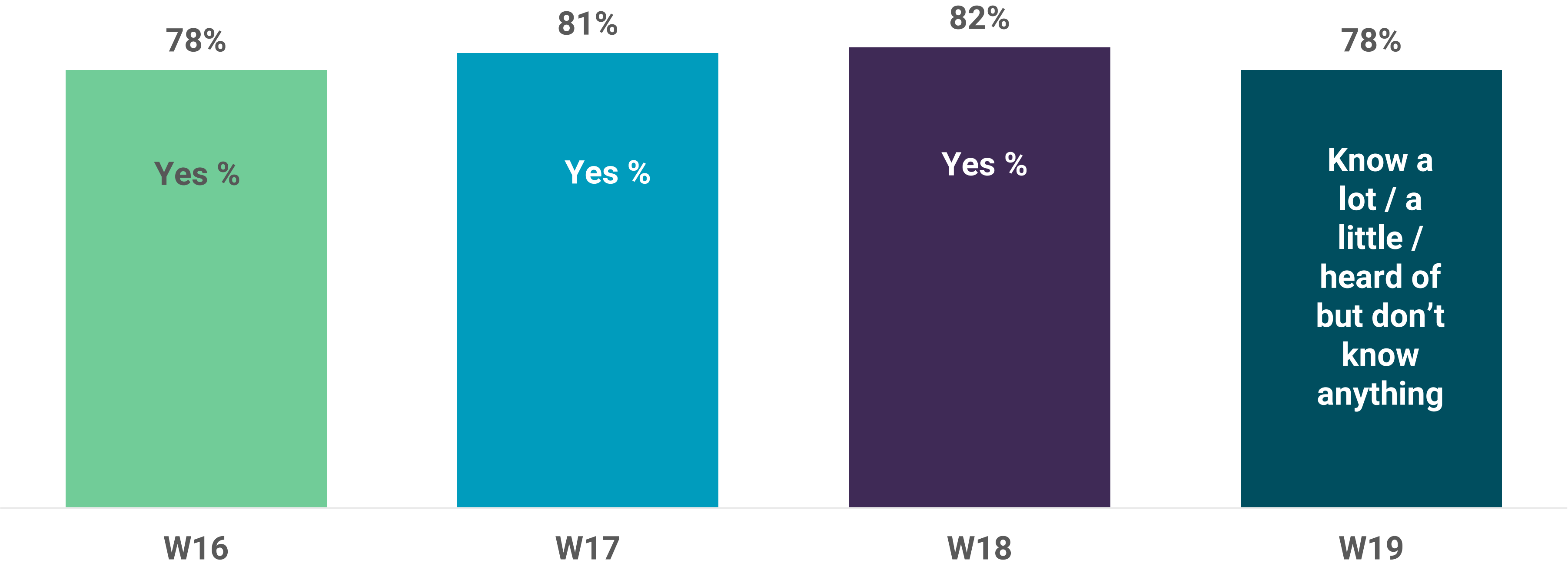
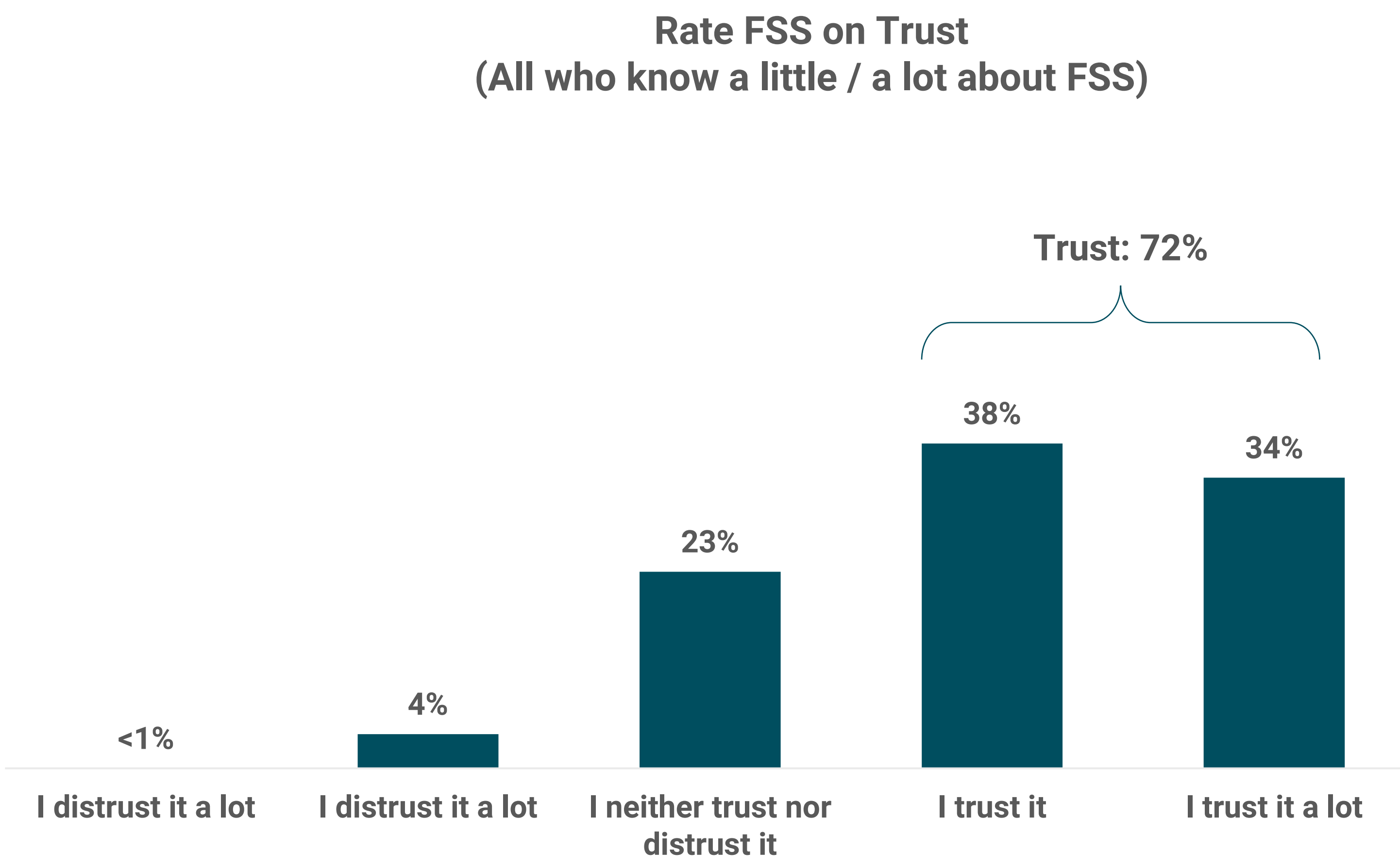
The question format differed this wave, so awareness data is not directly comparable. However, just under four fifths knew a lot, a little or had heard the name of FSS in W19. This is similar to the proportions that stated 'Yes' they were aware of FSS in previous waves.

Have you heard of Food Standards Scotland?
NOT DIRECTLY COMPARABLE – INDICATOR ONLY



W16-18 Q1. Have you heard of Food Standards Scotland? Base (all) W16 1017, W17: 1039, W18: 1027
W19 Q2. Which of the following organisations are you aware of? Base (all) W19: 1009

Positively, trust is high amongst those that claim to have knowledge of FSS. Reasons for trusting FSS were due to them doing a good job keeping consumers safe and acting in the public interest.



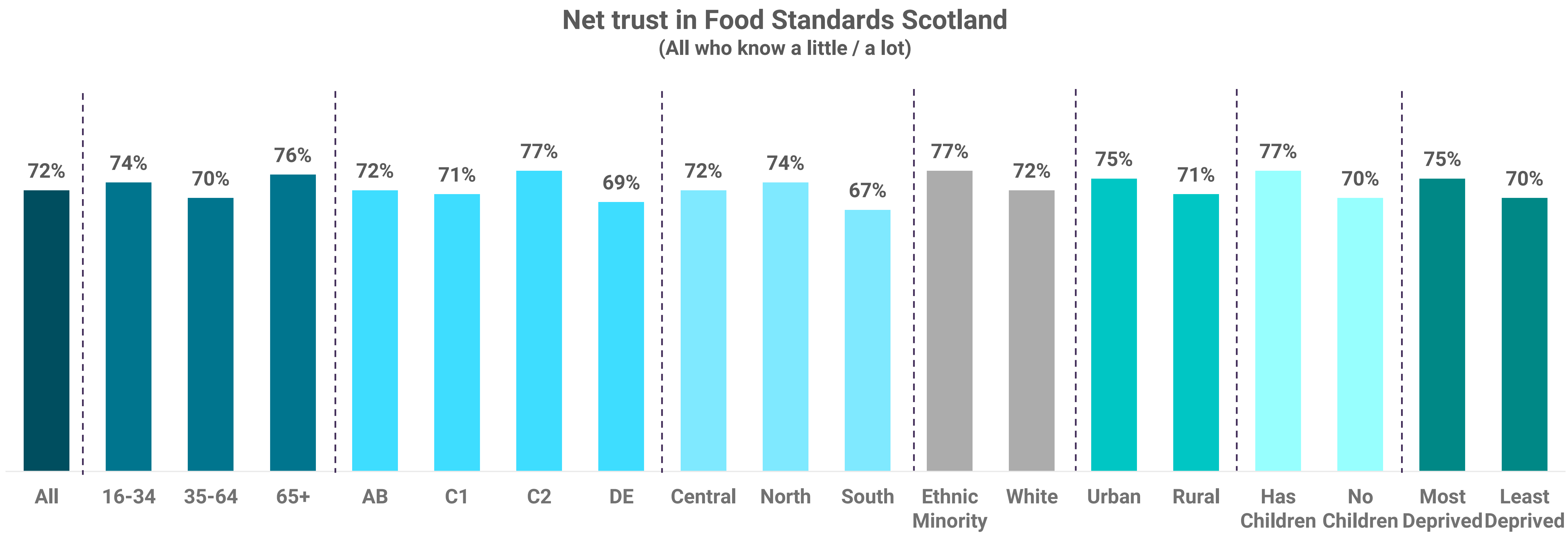
- Similar to W18, trust in FSS was higher among those who reported having clear information on eating a healthy balanced diet (78% vs. 54%) and those who felt calorie/ nutritional information should be available on request when eating out (75% vs. 60%).

- Reasons for trusting FSS were:
  - They keep consumers safe / act in public interest (20%)
  - Do a good job (19%)
  - Do important work (17%)
  - Trustworthy organisation (14%)
  - Provides quality information (10%)

- Reasons for not trusting FSS:
  - Unclear what is in food (23%)
  - Lack of transparency (18%)
  - Bad experience e.g. food poisoning (14%)
  - Not helpful for consumers (works more for companies) (14%)

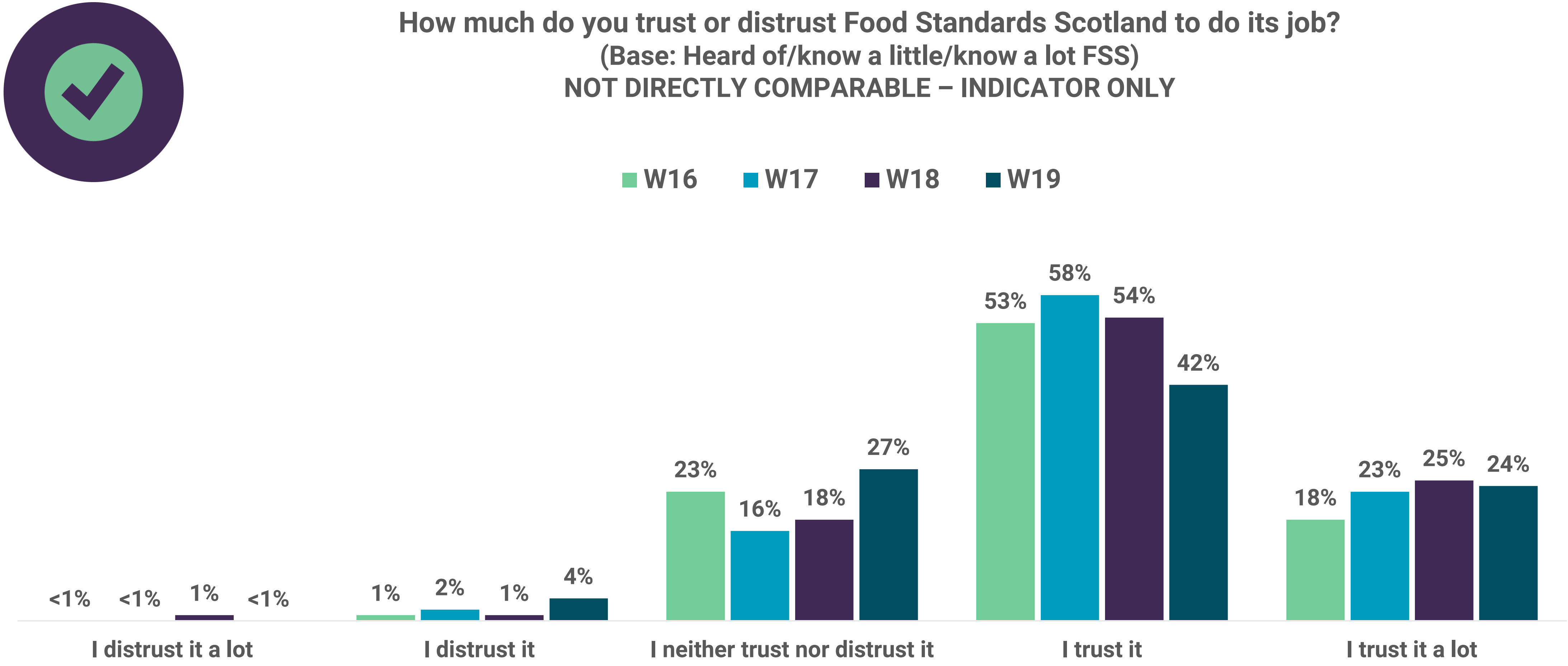
Q3. Thinking about Food Standards Scotland (FSS) in general, please use the scale to rate them on: Trust Base (those know a lot/a little about FSS) W19: 468. New question format for W19. Q3c. You said you trust/distrust FSS. What makes you think that? Base: (all who left a comment) Trust 339, Distrust 22

High levels of trust were experienced across all demographic groups, with no statistically significant differences reported.



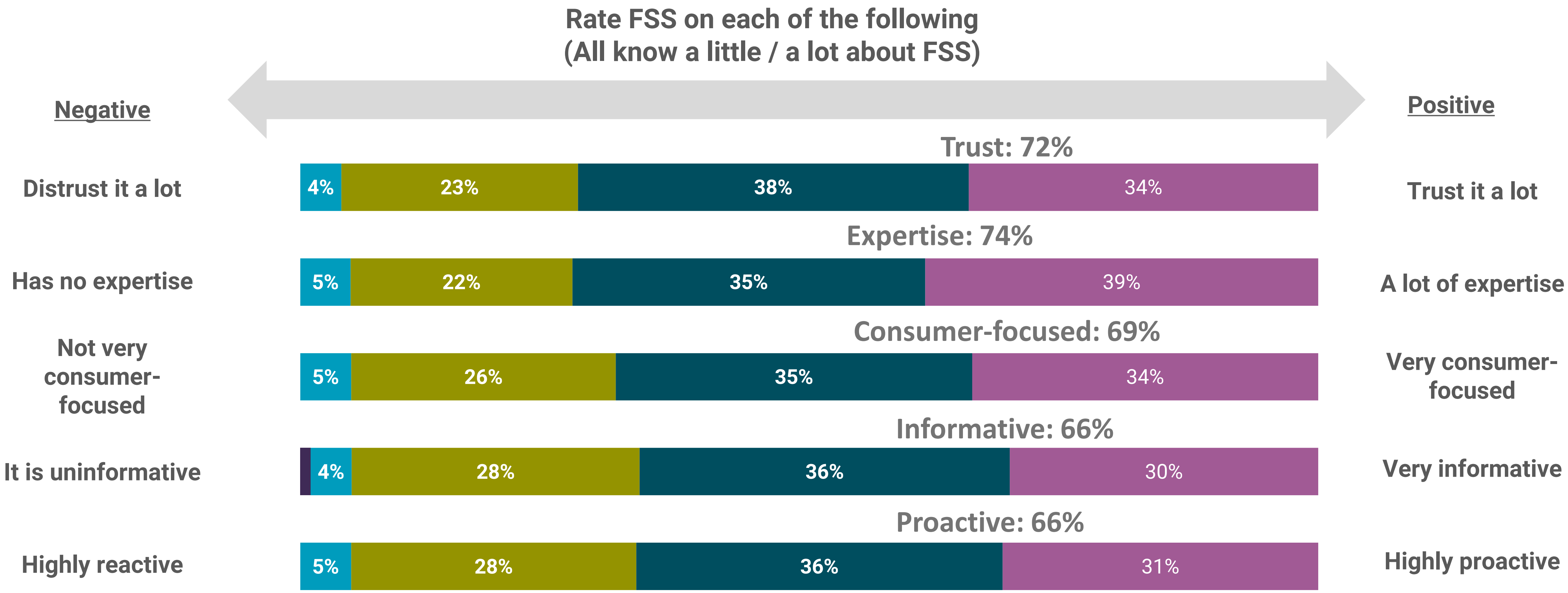
Q3. Thinking about Food Standards Scotland (FSS) in general, please use the scale to rate them on: Trust
Base (those know a lot/a little about FSS) W19: 468. New question format for W19

Two thirds of those who had heard of, know a little or know a lot about FSS, trusted FSS. This was lower than the level of trust reported in W18; however, the questions were asked in a different way in W19 and therefore the data is not directly comparable.



W16-W18 Q2. How much do you trust or distrust Food Standards Scotland to do its job? Base (those aware of FSS) W16 790,W17: 837, W18: 840
W19 Q3 Thinking about Food Standards Scotland (FSS) in general, please use the scale to rate them on: Trust. Base W19 (Heard of/know a little/know a lot): 782

Positive scores reported when rating FSS as having expertise, trusting FSS and being consumer-focused. Although still positive ratings, fewer rated FSS as informative and proactive.



Q3. Thinking about Food Standards Scotland (FSS) in general, please use the scale to rate them on each of the following….
Base (those know a lot/a little about FSS) W19: 468 New Question for W19

Awareness, Knowledge and Trust – Summary

- Spontaneous awareness of FSS was low, with 8% accurately naming FSS and a further 5% mentioning Food Standards.
- When prompted, the majority had heard of FSS or knew a little or a lot about FSS (78%). This is similar to awareness reported at W18 (82%); however, a less detailed question was asked then. Less than half (47%) knew a lot or a little about FSS.
- Awareness (know a little/a lot) of FSA (62%) was higher than FSS (47%).
- Younger respondents were more likely to know a lot about FSS (17% of 16-34 year olds), whereas 65+ year olds were more likely to have heard of FSS but not know anything about them. This differs from W18 where the younger audience had lower general awareness of FSS.
- Those who had clear information on eating a healthy balanced diet were more aware of FSS (51% know a lot/a little) than their counterparts (38%).
- The majority of those who knew of FSS placed trust in it. There were no differences between demographic groups.
- Along with trust, respondents also reported positive scores for all other attributes.

Good levels of prompted awareness, with the majority of consumers claiming to have at least heard of FSS. Trust remains high amongst those that have knowledge of FSS.

Issues of concern for consumers

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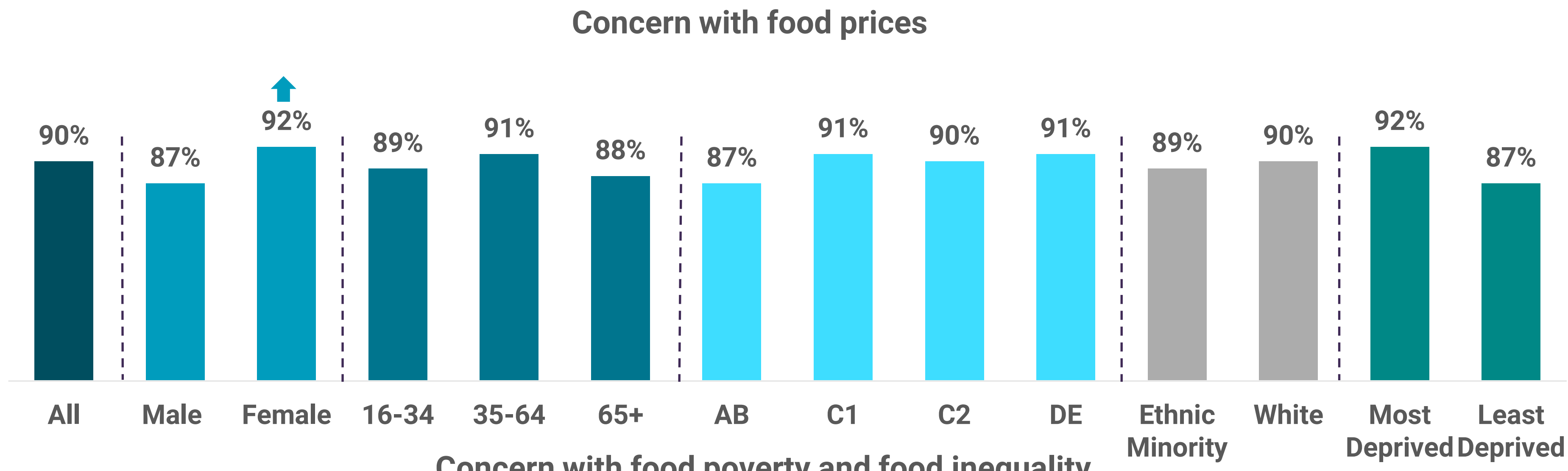
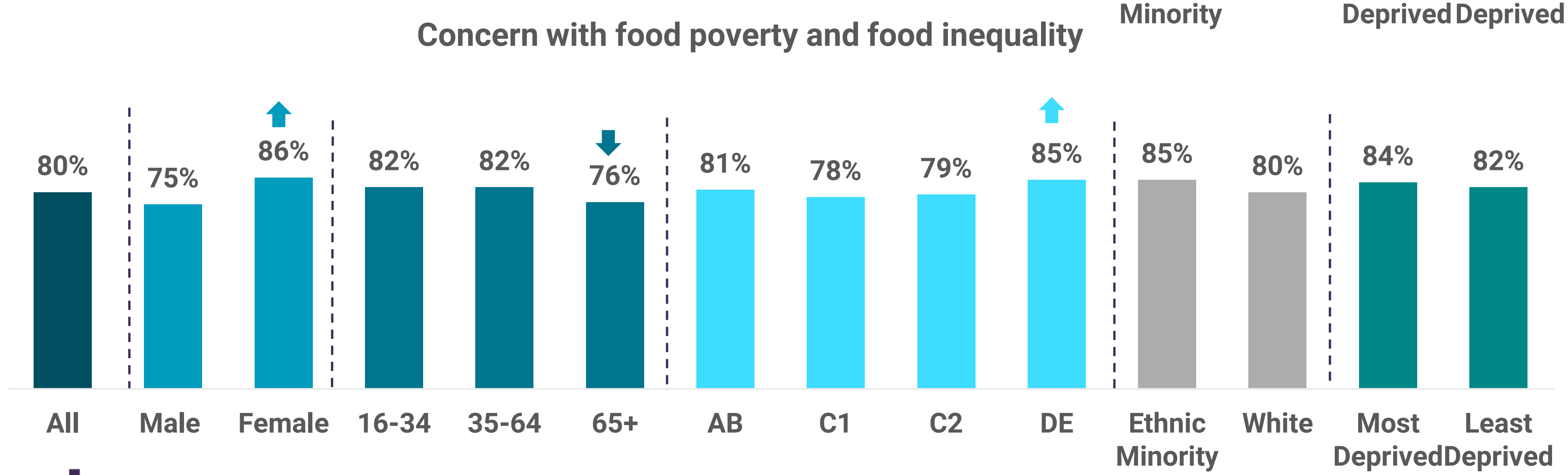
Key points of concern this wave were in line with last wave. Food prices, food poverty and food inequality and ultra-processed food continue to be the top three issues of most concern; however, ultra-processed food has increased to 81% from 78% in W18.

- Concern was high across all aspects among those who said they'd been worried about being able to afford food in the last year.
- Concern about food prices and food poverty remain the same as W18.
- Concern about the safety of food produced in the UK was lower than concern with the other aspects and has declined since W18 (57%).
- Concern was also **lower** in W19 than in W18 in relation to animal welfare (76% W18) and food availability/shortages (62% W18).
- Concern was **higher** this wave around the healthiness of people's diets (72% W18) and GM foods (67% W18) compared to W18.

Q4. Thinking about food in the UK in general. At the moment, how concerned, if at all, do you feel about each of the following topics?
Base (all): 1,009

Food prices and food poverty are issues of concern across all demographic groups.

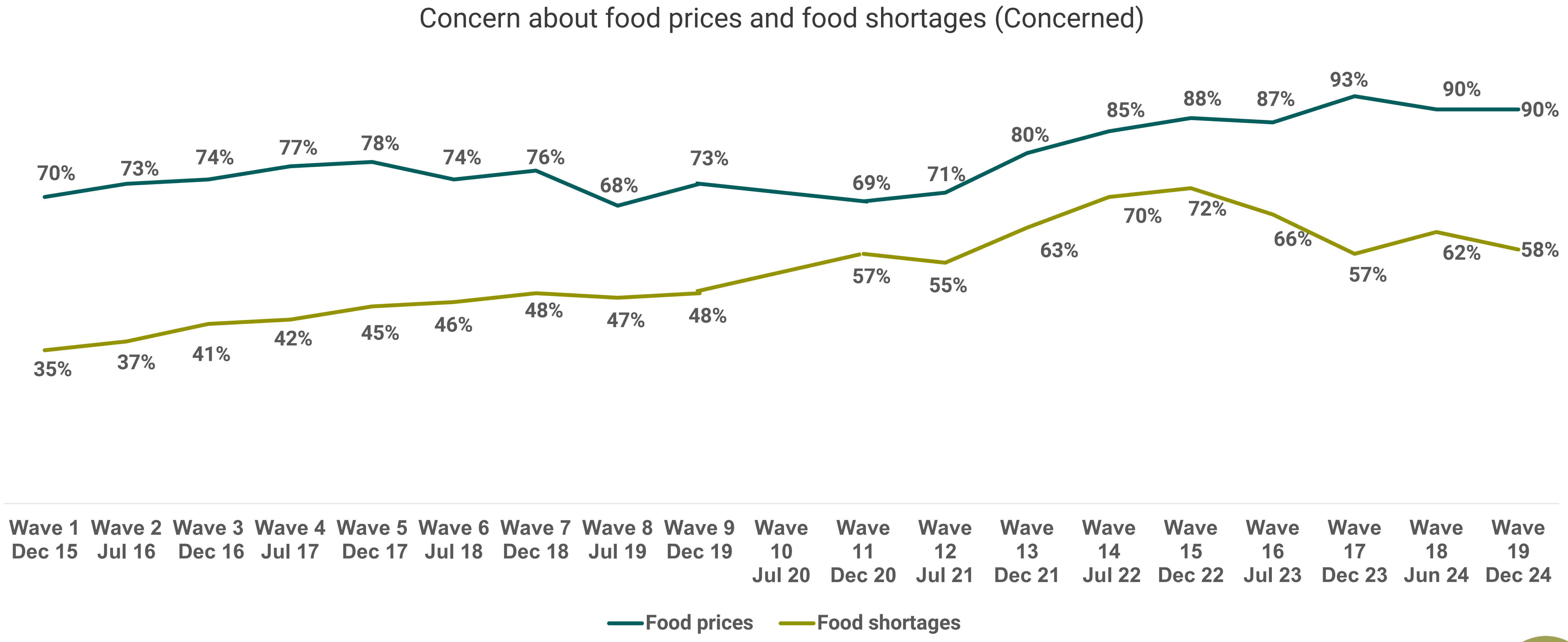




- Levels of concern about food prices are quite similar across different demographics.
- Concern about food prices is higher for women than men. Other differences shown were not statistically significant.
- Some differences do exist across demographic groups regarding concern about food poverty.
- Concern with food poverty is higher for women than men and for social class DEs, and lower for 65+ year olds than younger age groups.

Q4. Thinking about food in the UK in general. At the moment, how concerned, if at all, do you feel about each of the following topics?
Base (all): 1,009

Levels of concern about food prices have remained the same this wave (90%) as W18. Concern about food shortages has declined slightly (58%) and is now back in line with W17.



Q4. Thinking about food in the UK in general. At the moment, how concerned, if at all, do you feel about each of the following topics? Base (all) W19: 1,009. Questions regarding Food Prices and Food Shortages in previous waves had a sample of *n*>1,000 excluding waves 14-16 where the sample sizes varied between 790 and 860 and Wave 10 where these questions were omitted.

Issues of Concern for Consumers – Summary

- **Food prices are a concern for 90% of consumers while ultra-processed food (81%) and food poverty and inequality (80%) are a concern for four fifths of consumers. Ultra-processed food has started to increase as a concern.**
- **Concern was also lower around animal welfare (76% W18) and food availability/ shortages (62% W18) compared to W18.**
- **Concern was higher this wave around the healthiness of people's diets (72% W18) and GM foods (67% W18) compared to W18.**
- **Concern about the safety of food produced in UK was lower than the other aspects and has declined since W18 (57%).**
- **Concern was higher across all aspects among those who said they'd been worried about being able to afford food in the last year.**

Food prices and food poverty continue to be top of mind for consumers and this is particularly true for women, DEs and younger age groups.

Activities

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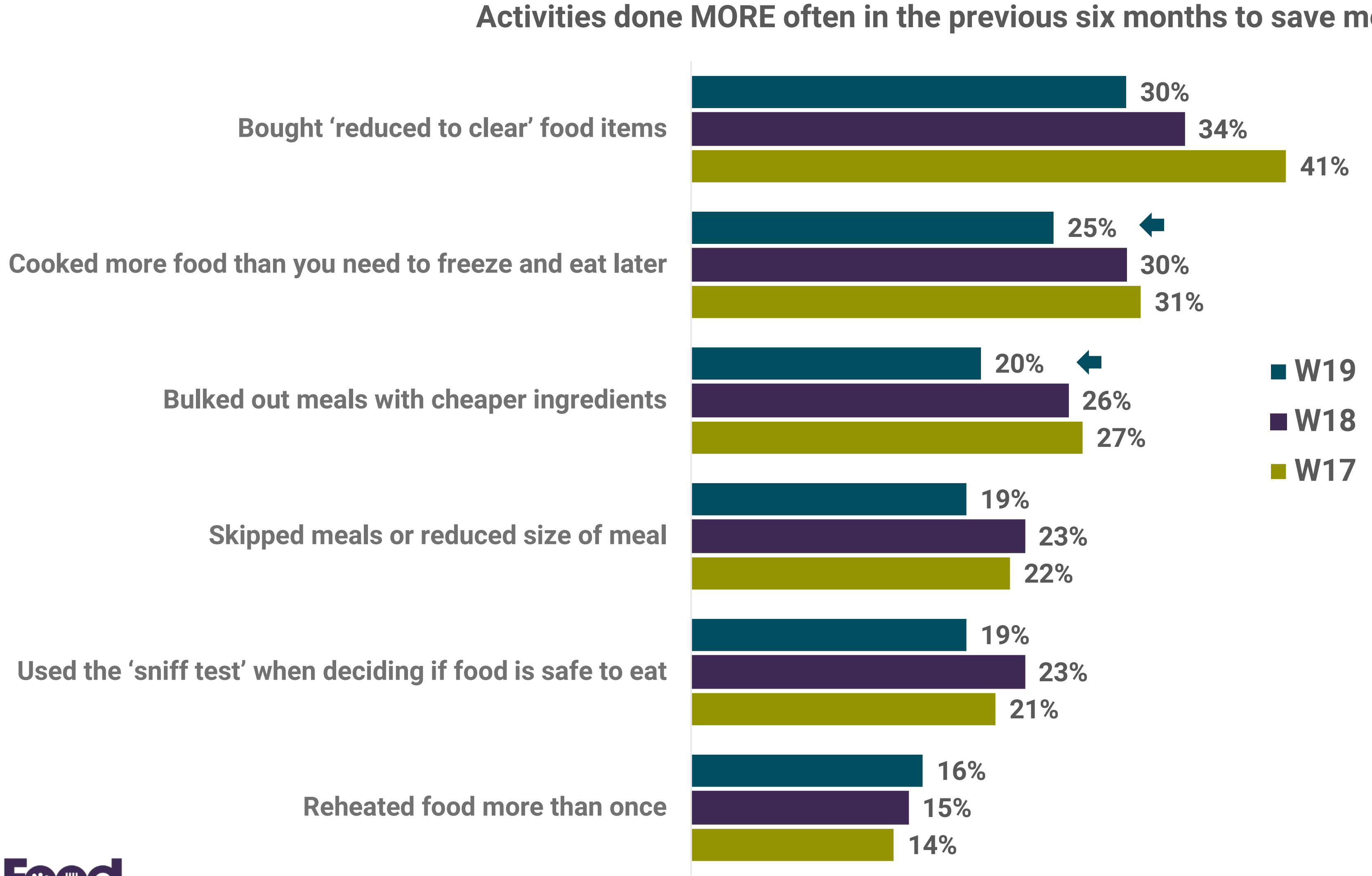
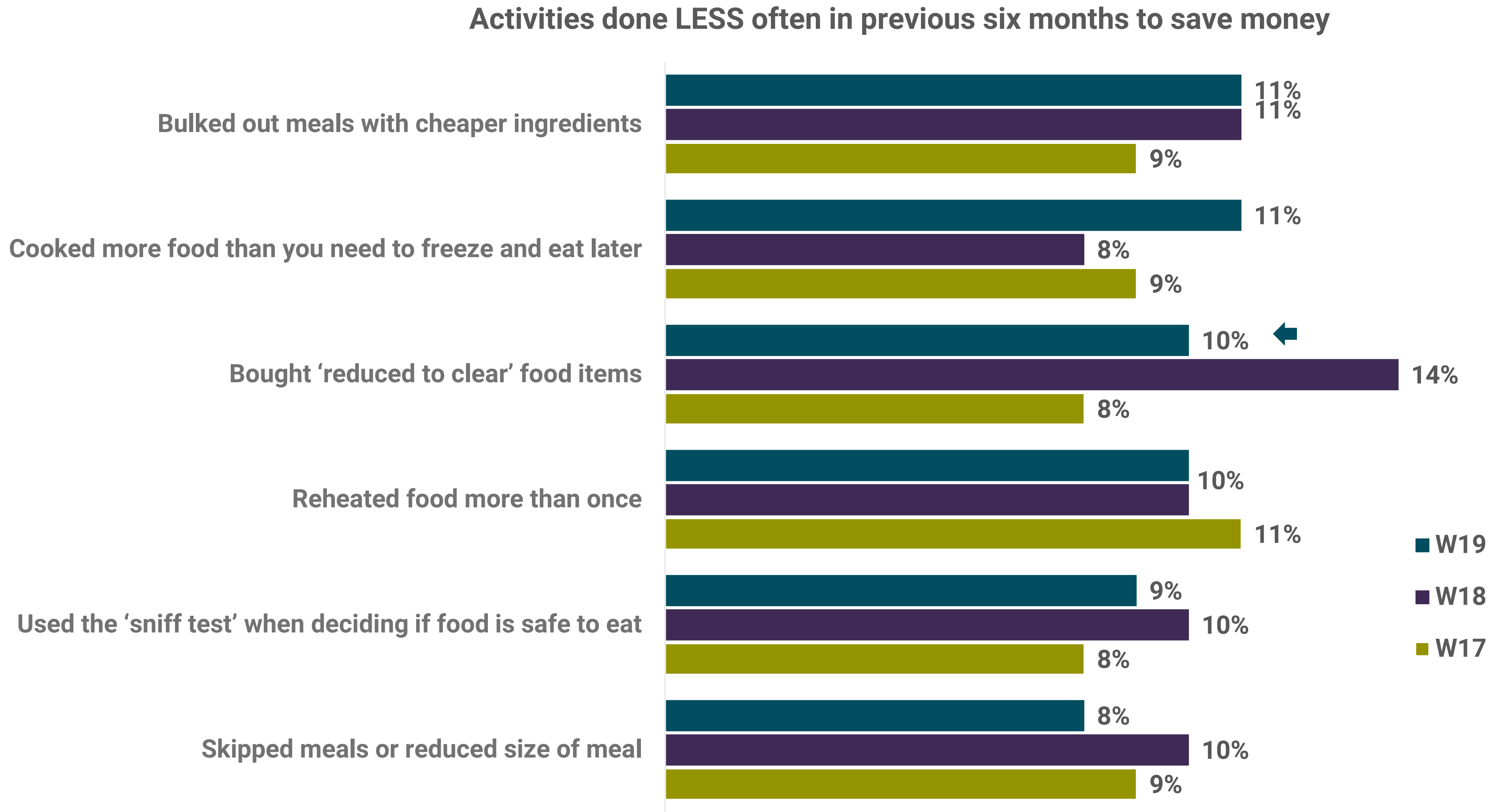
The most likely money saving activities were buying reduced to clear food items, cooking more food than needed to freeze for later, and bulking out meals with cheaper ingredients. However, although these were the top activities reported, the proportion cooking more food than needed and bulking out meals both significantly decreased from W18.



- The priority of actions taken to save money fall in much the same order as they did in Wave 18.
- For most of these activities, slightly fewer this wave said they had done it more often in the last six months.

Q5. Over the past 6 months, in order to save money, have you done any of the following more or less often? Base (all) W17: 1,039, W18: 1,027, W19: 1,009 [Note: Code added 'I do this but not to save money' at W19].

Around 1 in 10 had done these activities less often in the last 6 months.



Q5. Over the past 6 months, in order to save money, have you done any of the following more or less often? Base (all) W17: 1,039, W18: 1,027, W19: 1,009 [Note: Code added 'I do this but not to save money' at W19]. Q6. Over the past 6 months, have you bought or done any of the following more or less often? Base (all): W17: 1,039, W18: 1,027, W19: 1,009 [Note: Wording amend to question at W19 'Still thinking about saving money' was removed from the question]

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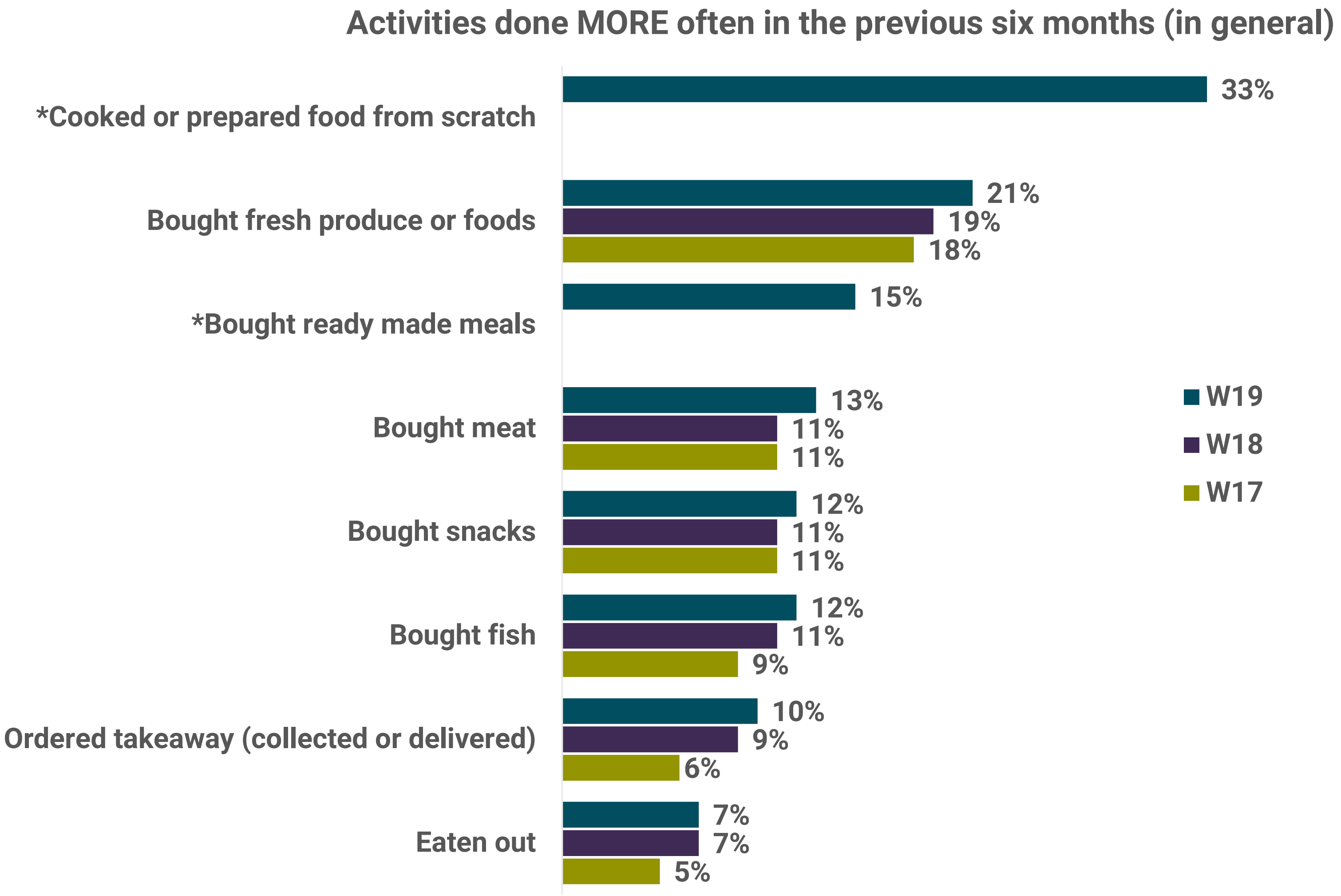
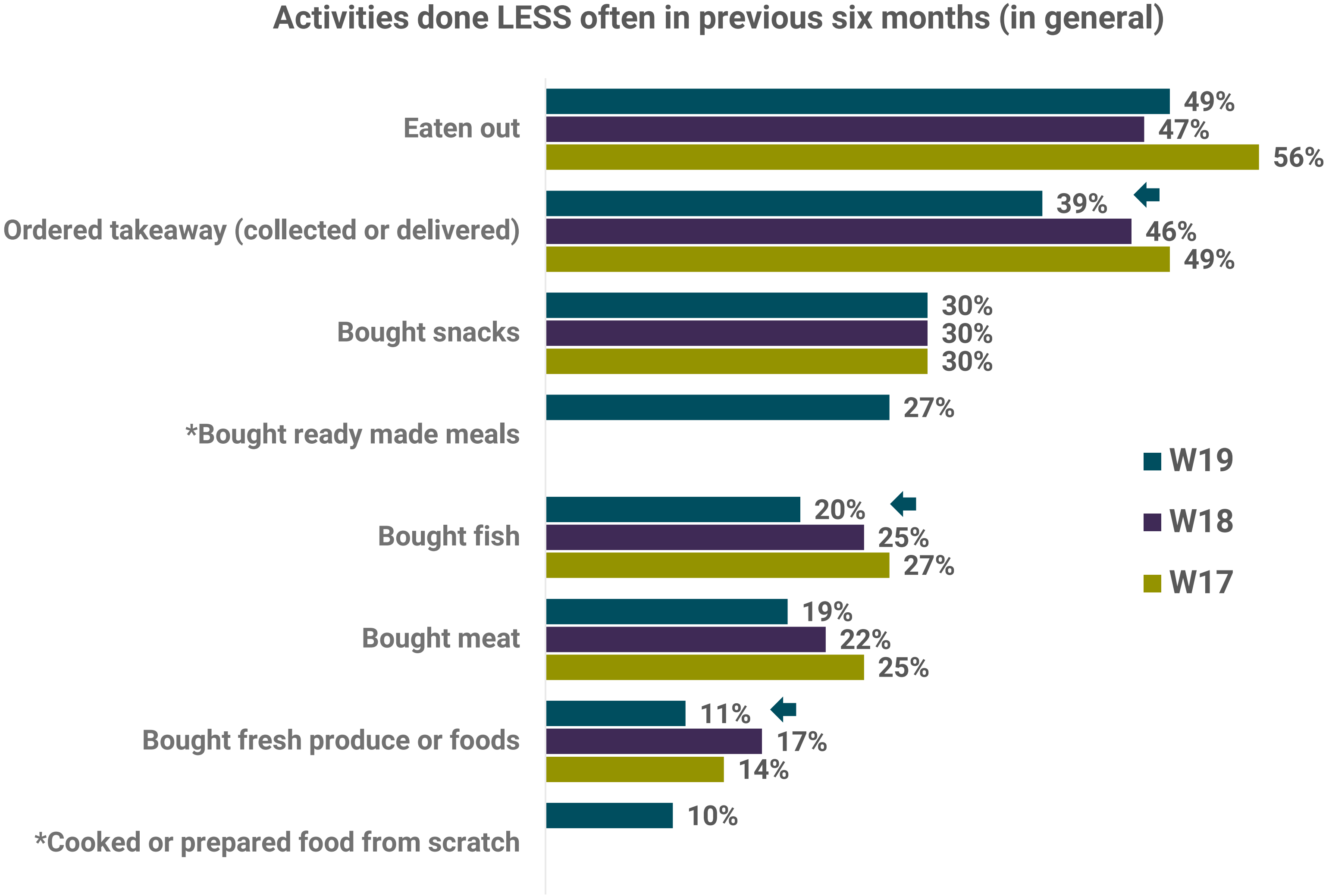
Other popular activities that respondents did more often in the last 6 months were bought fresh produce, and cooked food from scratch. Very few had done the other activities more often in the last 6 months.



Q6. Over the past 6 months, have you bought or done any of the following more or less often? Base (all): W17: 1,039, W18: 1,027, W19: 1,009 [Note: Wording amend to question at W19 'Still thinking about saving money' was removed from the question and those with * are new codes for W19]

The most likely activities to be done less often were eating out and ordering takeaways, followed by buying snacks, fish and meat.

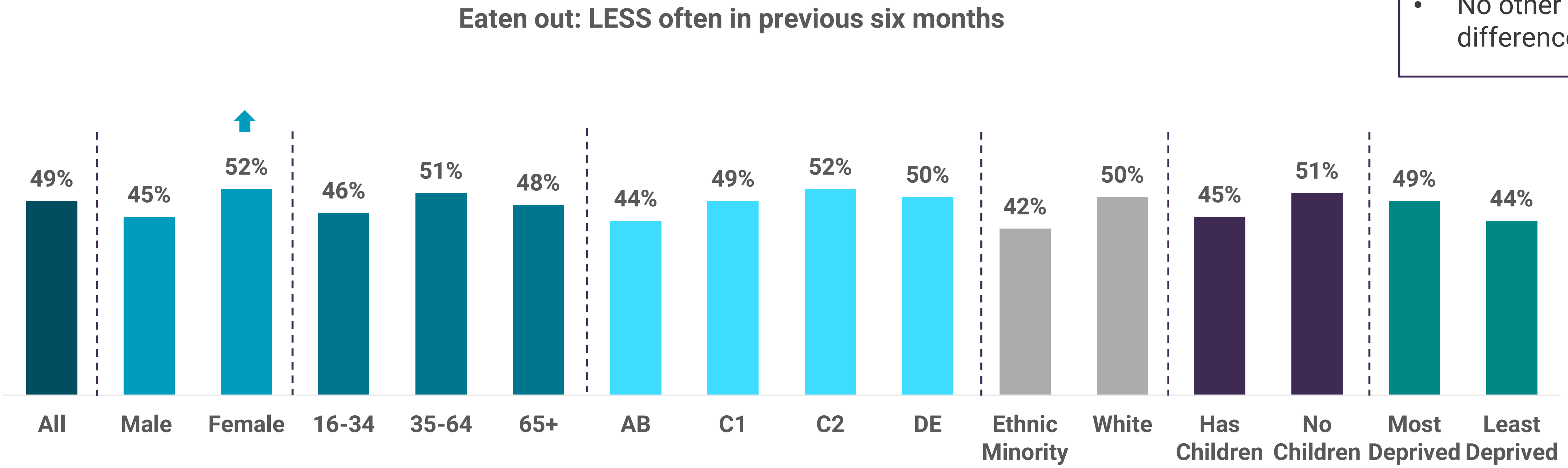


- Significantly fewer consumers said they had ordered takeaway, bought fish or fresh produce less often in the last 6 months compared to W18.

Q6. Over the past 6 months, have you bought or done any of the following more or less often? Base (all): W17: 1,039, W18: 1,027, W19: 1,009 [Note: Wording amend to question at W19 'Still thinking about saving money' was removed from the question and those with * are new codes for W19]

Very few differences across demographic groups regarding those that ate out less often in the last 6 months.

- More women than men claimed to eaten out less.
- No other significant differences were reported.



Q6. Still thinking about saving money over the past 6 months, have you bought or done any of the following more or less often? Base (all): 1,009

Activities - Summary

- The cost of living is still continuing to have some impact on consumers' behaviour, with a number of activities being undertaken to help save money.
- Key activities that consumers did more of to save money are below; however, the proportion saying the have done these more often in the last 6 months has declined from W18:
  - Bought reduced to clear food items
  - Cooked more food, frozen and eat later
  - Bulked out meals with cheaper ingredients
  - Skipped or reduced size of meals
- When asked about other activities in general a third of consumers were cooking from scratch more often and a fifth were buying fresh produce.
- Around half had eaten out less often in the last 6 months and two fifths had ordered takeaway less often. This had declined from W18.

Consumers are clearly still concerned about saving money where they can, and choice of food purchases play a big part in that. However, consumers are not doing these activities as often as they were, suggesting some level of confidence in food spend.

Affordability

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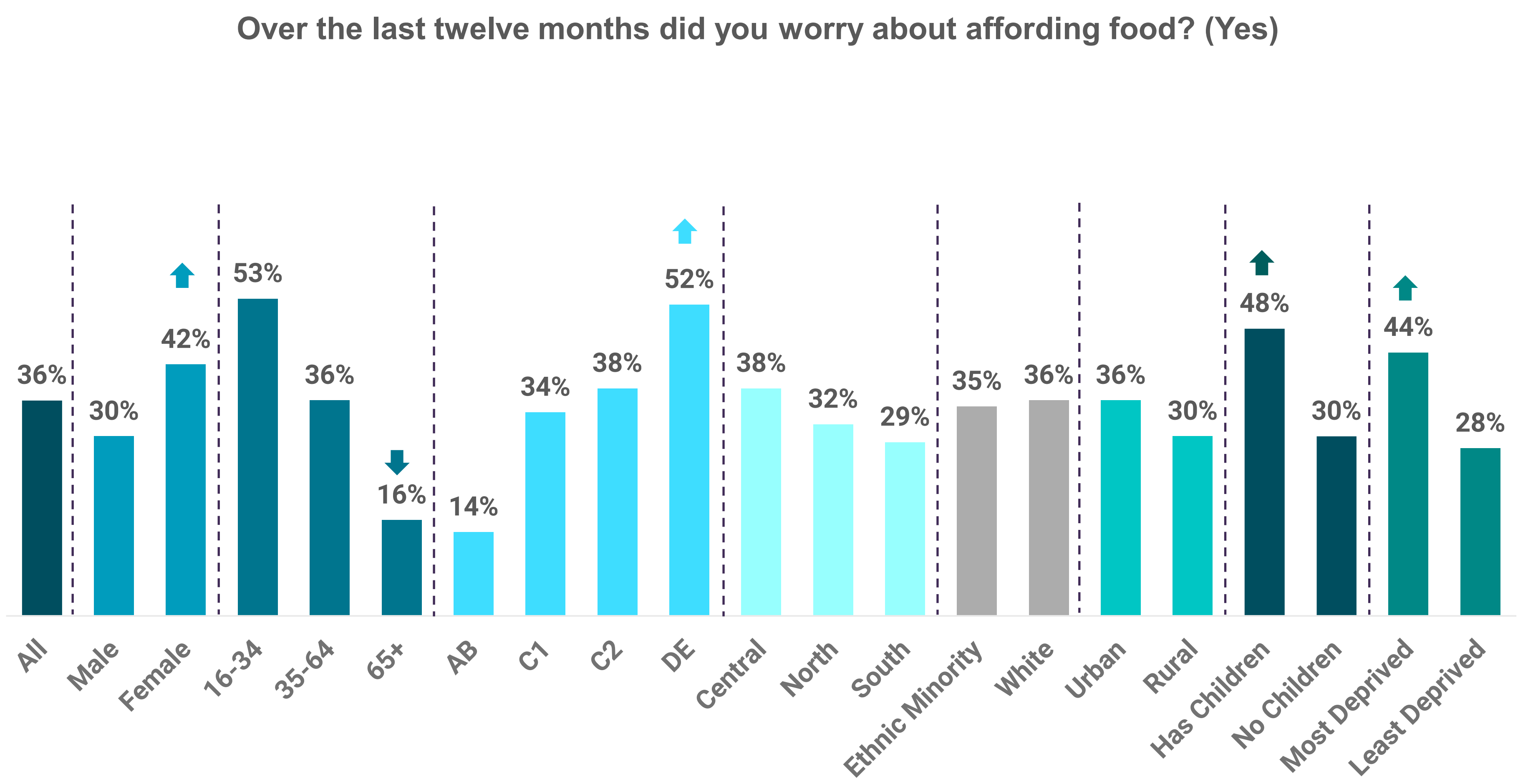
Just over a third worried about affording food during the previous 12 months. Women, younger age groups, lower SEGs, those with children, and those in the most deprived SIMD quintiles were more likely to worry about affording food than their counterparts.

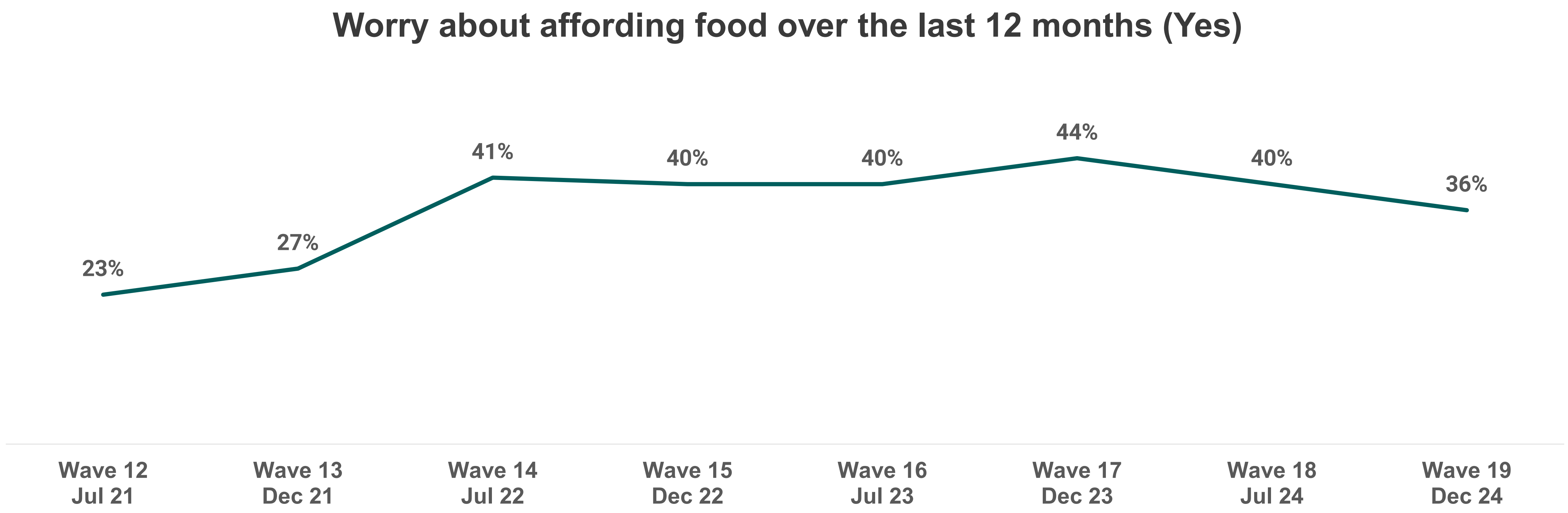


Other sub-groups that were more likely to be worried were:

- Those with diagnosed physical or mental health problems
- Those susceptible to illness
- Those with food allergy/ intolerance
- Those who receive help with their shopping
- Those who find it hard to eat a healthy balanced diet

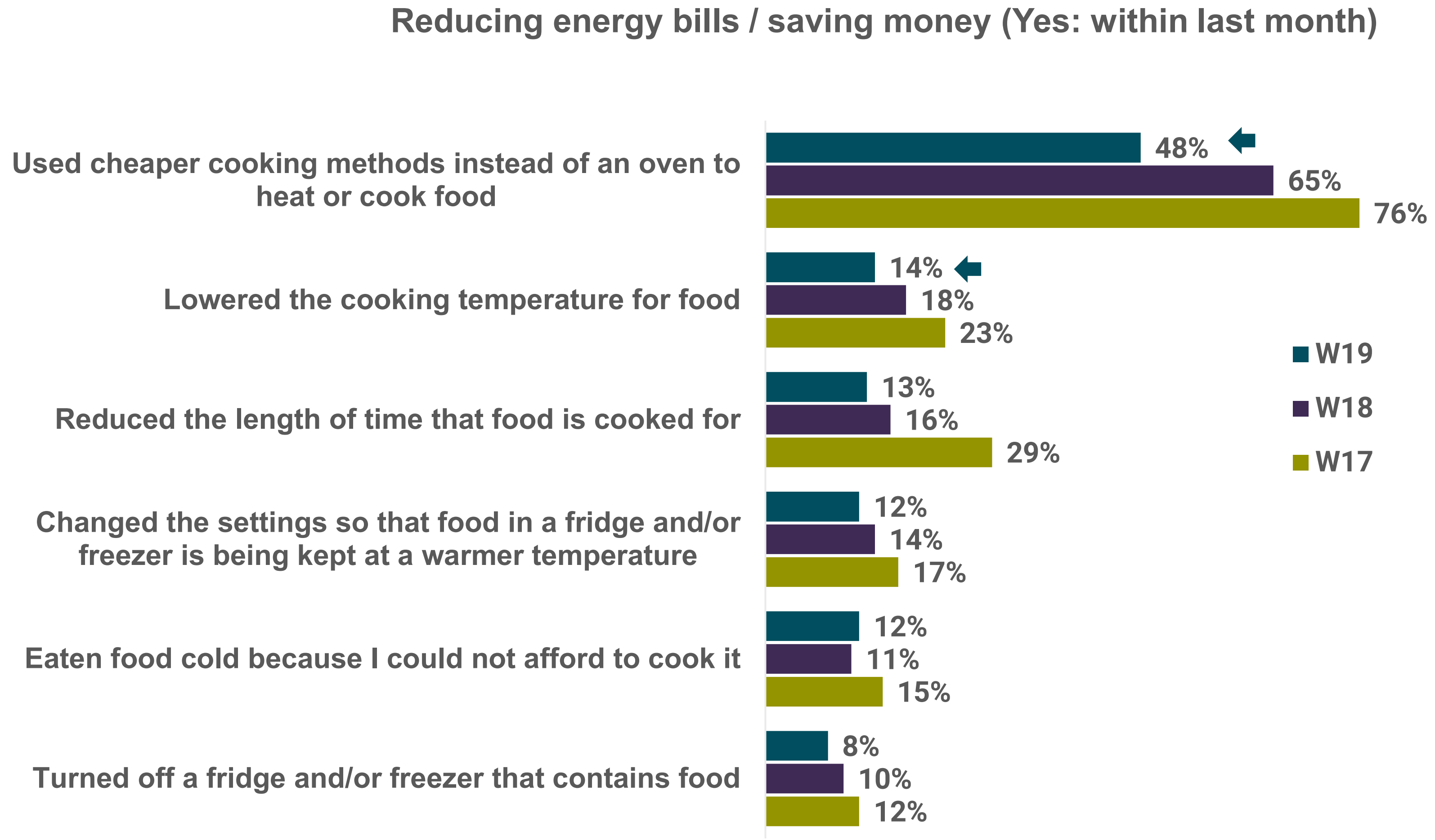
Q8. Over the last twelve months did you worry about affording food? Base (all): 1,009

Fewer consumers this wave were worried about affording food compared to last wave and although not a statistically significant decrease from W18 it is a significant drop from W17. This suggests consumers are starting to worry less about affordability.



Q8. Over the last twelve months did you worry about affording food? Base (all) W18: 1,027, W19 1,009. All waves from Wave 12 to Wave 17 *n*>1,000

This wave saw a further reduction across a couple of the money saving actions designed to reduce energy bills. This could reflect people becoming more comfortable with their energy prices and affordability.

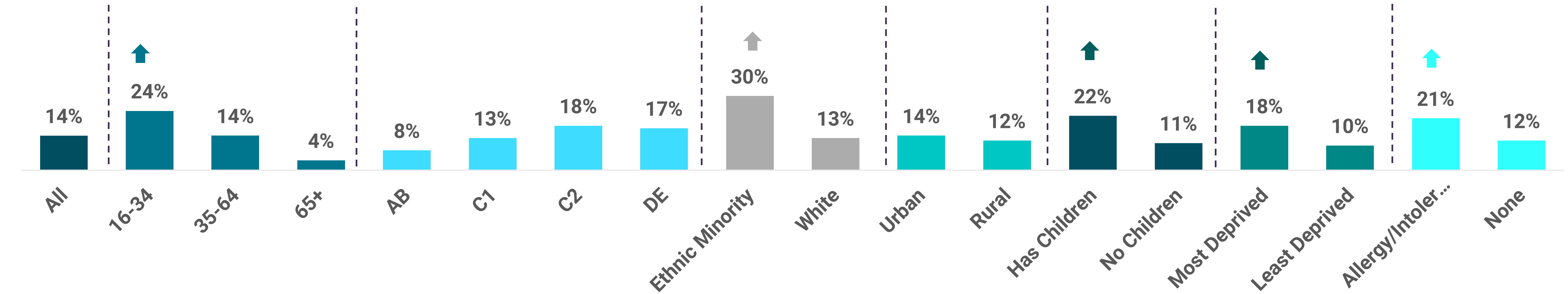


- Less than half of consumers had saved on energy bills by using cheaper cooking methods. This is a significant reduction since the last wave.
- One in seven (14%) had lowered the cooking temperature for food and one in eight (13%) had reduced the length of time food was cooked for.
- Respondents who said they had been worried about being able to afford food in the last year and those who received help with their shopping were more likely than others to have done each of the listed actions to reduce energy bills.
- Those who had a health condition and were susceptible to illness were more likely to eat food cold because they couldn't afford to cook it than those not susceptible to illness.

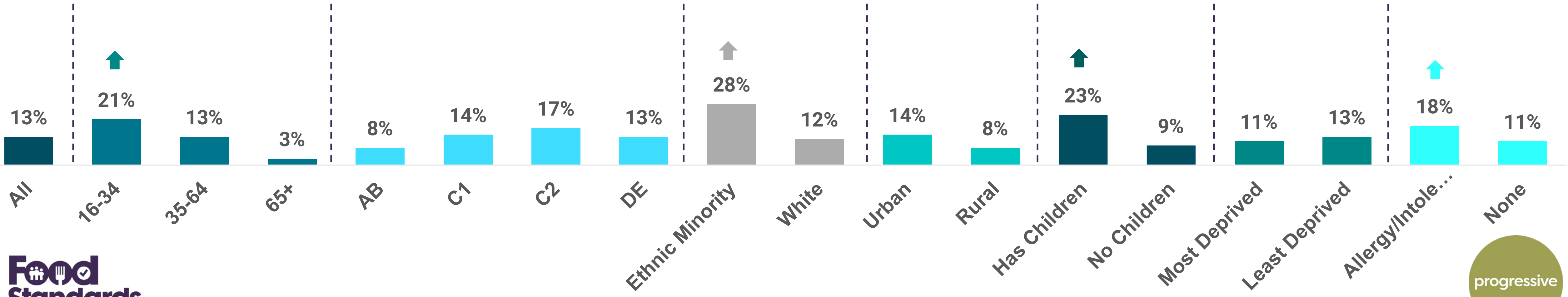
Q7. In the last month, which, if any, of the following have you done to reduce your energy bills and save money? Base (all) W17: 1,039, W18: 1,027, W19: 1.009

Riskier food preparation e.g. reducing cooking time or lowering cooking temperatures were more common in the youngest age group, Ethnic Minority respondents, those with children and those with an allergy/intolerance. Those in the most deprived SIMD quintile were also more likely to lower the cooking temperature.

Lowered the cooking temperature for food



Reduced the length of time food is cooked for



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Q7. In the last month, which, if any, of the following have you done to reduce your energy bills and save money? Base (all): 1,009

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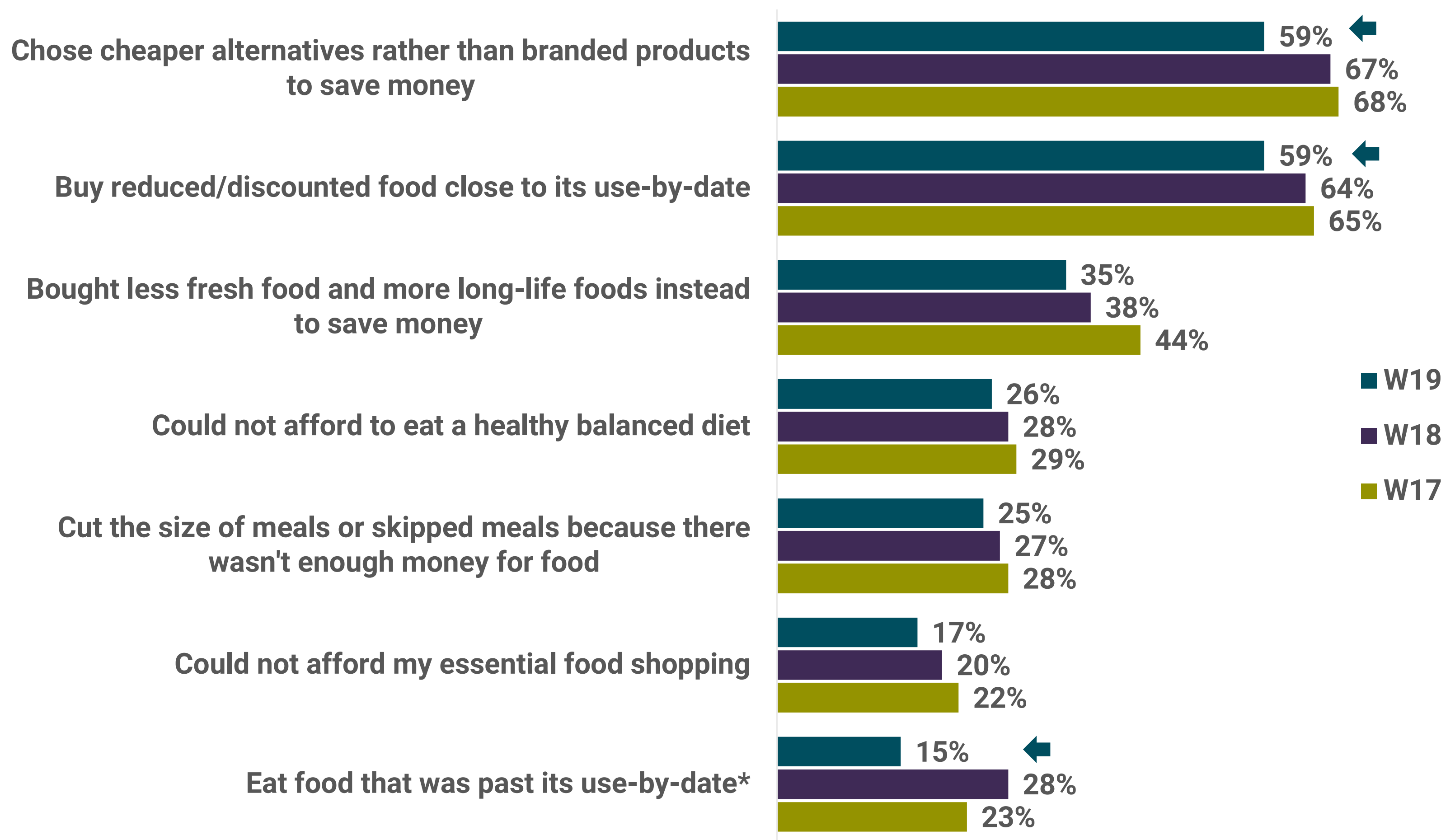
The top four most often mentioned money saving activities are in keeping with Wave 18; however, significant decreases were seen for choosing cheaper alternatives and buying reduced/discounted food close to its use-by dates. Positively, there was a significant decrease in the proportion who said they eat food past its use-by date (15% compared to from 28% in W18).

Money saving activities / affordability (Yes: within last month)

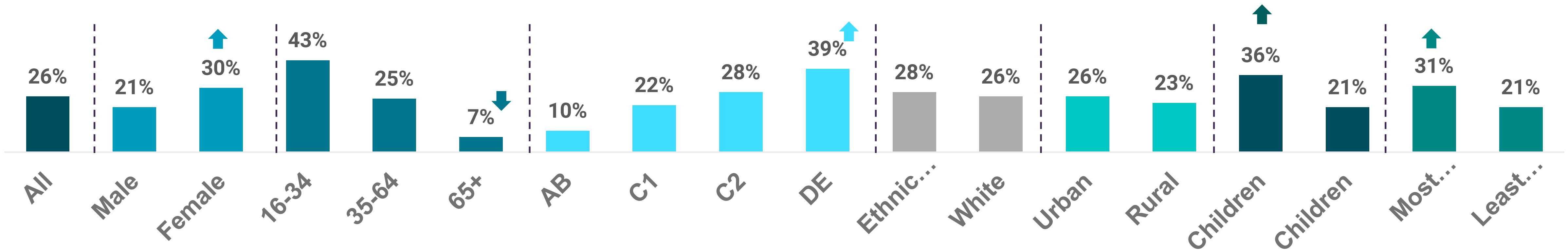


- Some sub-groups were more likely than their counterparts to be undertaking almost all money saving actions:
  - Those who said they'd been worried about being able to afford food in the last year
  - Those who received help with their shopping
  - Those who said they found it hard to eat healthy
  - Those susceptible to illness
  - Those who have an allergy/intolerance
- In keeping with last wave, 26% said they could not afford to eat a healthy balanced diet, and a similar proportion (25%) were either making meals smaller or skipping meals.

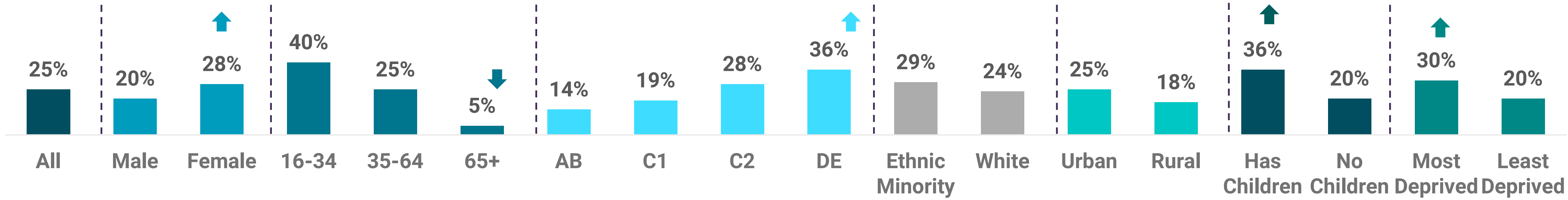
Q9. In the last month, did any of the following apply to you, or someone else in your household? I, or someone in my household... Q10. In the last month, did you, or someone else in your household buy reduced / discounted food close to its use-by-date to save money? Q11. In the last month, did you, or someone else in your household eat food that was past its use-by-date because they couldn't afford to buy more food? [*W19 New code added 'I do this but not because I can't afford food] Base (all) W17: 1,037, W18: 1,027. W19: 1,009

Those in the most deprived SIMD quintiles are more likely to experience these food poverty indicators than the least deprived areas. This is also true for women, younger age groups, higher SEGs and those with children.

Could not afford to eat a healthy balanced diet (Yes: in last month)



Cut the size of meals because there wasn't enough money for food (Yes: in last month)



Q9. In the last month, did any of the following apply to you, or someone else in your household? I, or someone in my household... Base (all): 1,009

Affordability – Summary

- Just over a third were worried about affording food: this has steadily declined since W17 suggesting an overall improvement in consumer confidence regarding food affordability; however it still remains an issue for some.
- This wave saw further reductions across many of the money saving actions designed to reduce energy bills, suggesting consumers are not feeling as pressurised to reduce energy bills/save money. However, although significantly reduced from W18, half of the sample did use cheaper cooking methods to reduce bills.
- Riskier food preparation methods, e.g. reducing cooking time or lowering cooking temperatures, were more common in the youngest age group, Ethnic Minority respondents, those with children and those with an allergy/intolerance.
- Other, more general money saving activities that were popular were very similar to W18, with respondents opting to choose cheaper alternatives or buy reduced/discounted food close to its use-by date. Although these were the main activities, both had significantly decreased, further evidencing an increase in confidence with affordability.

Results show indications of consumer confidence increasing; however, there are still cohorts of people who are worried about affording food and eating healthy. Those more likely to experience food poverty indicators such as food affordability, cutting food amount and skipping meals were lower SEGs, those with children, those living in the most deprived SIMD quintile and women.

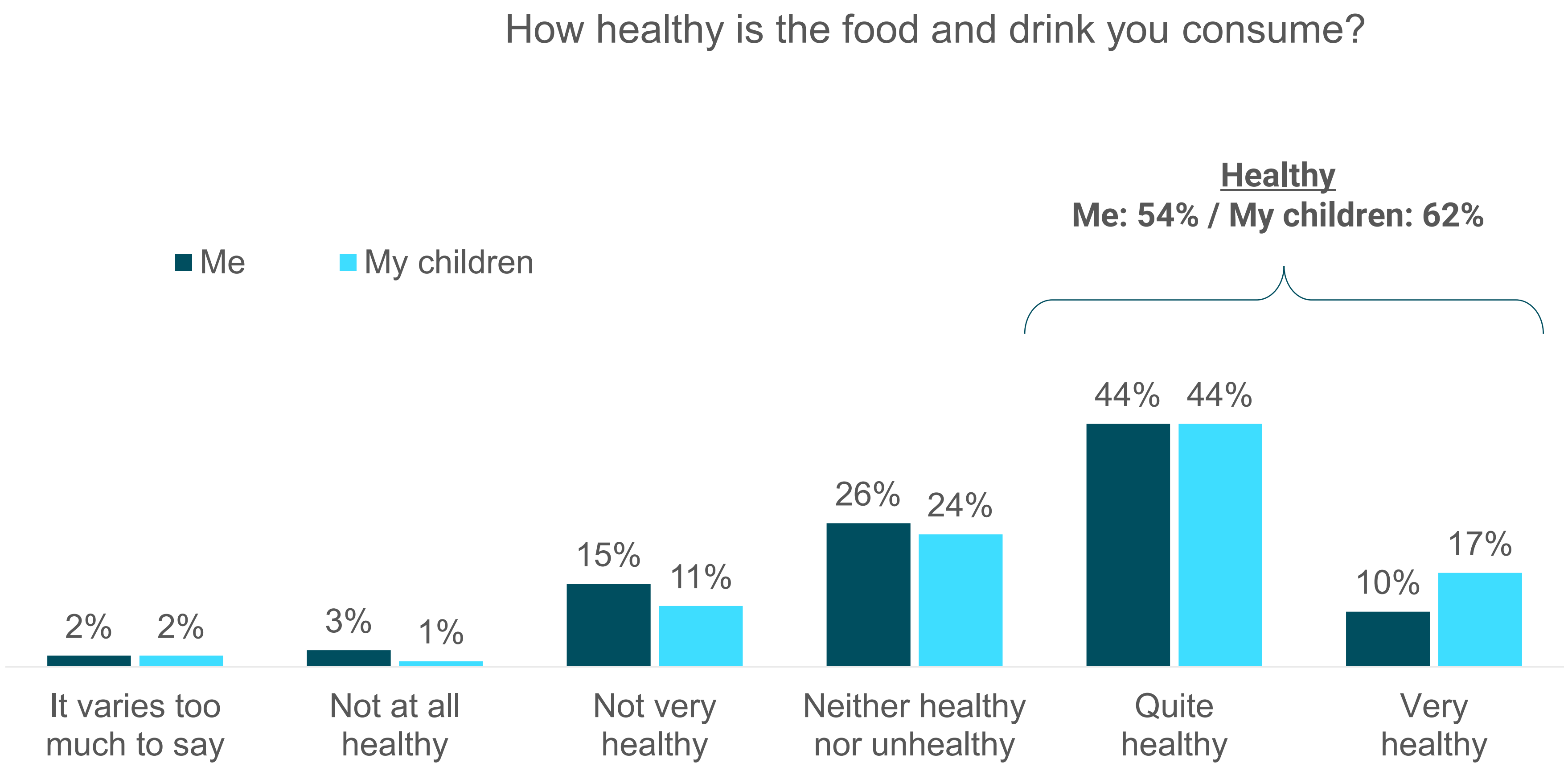
Healthy eating

New questions included in this section

Food Standards Scotland

progressive

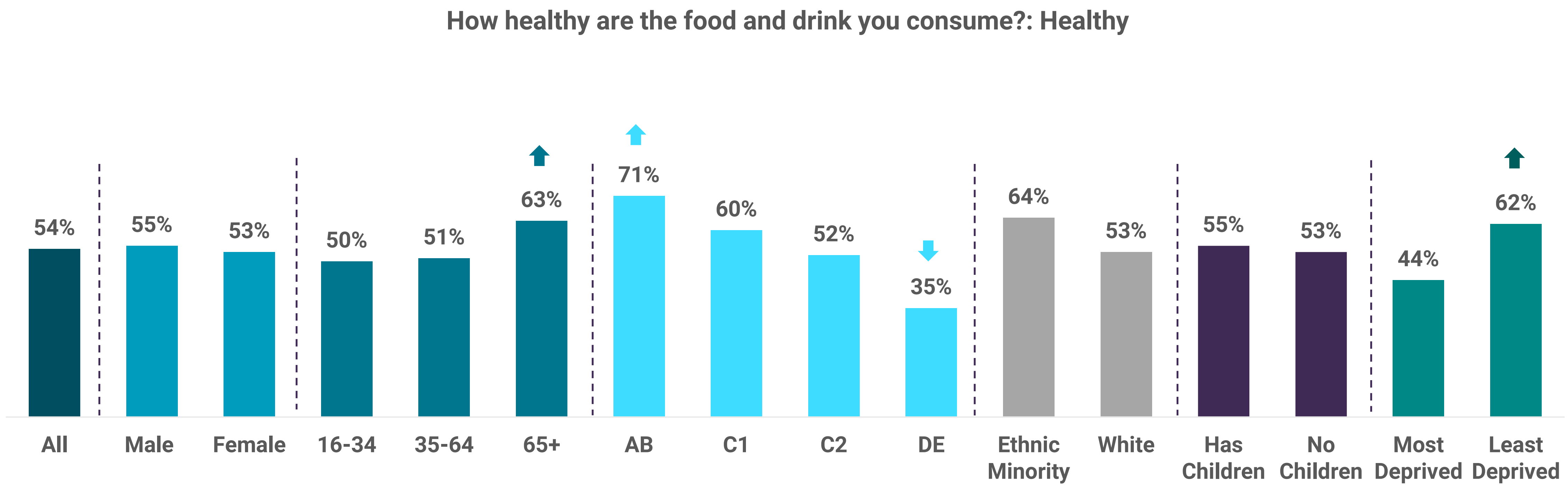
Just over half of respondents felt they eat healthily. When referring to their children eating healthily this increased to over three fifths.



- As expected, those who find it difficult to eat a healthy diet are less likely to state they eat healthy food (42% vs. those who don't find it difficult 75%)
- Those who have a health condition were also less likely to state they eat healthily (46%) vs. those who do not have a health condition (58%)
- Those who have clear information on eating healthily are more likely to say they eat healthy food (61%) than those who don't have clear information (37%)

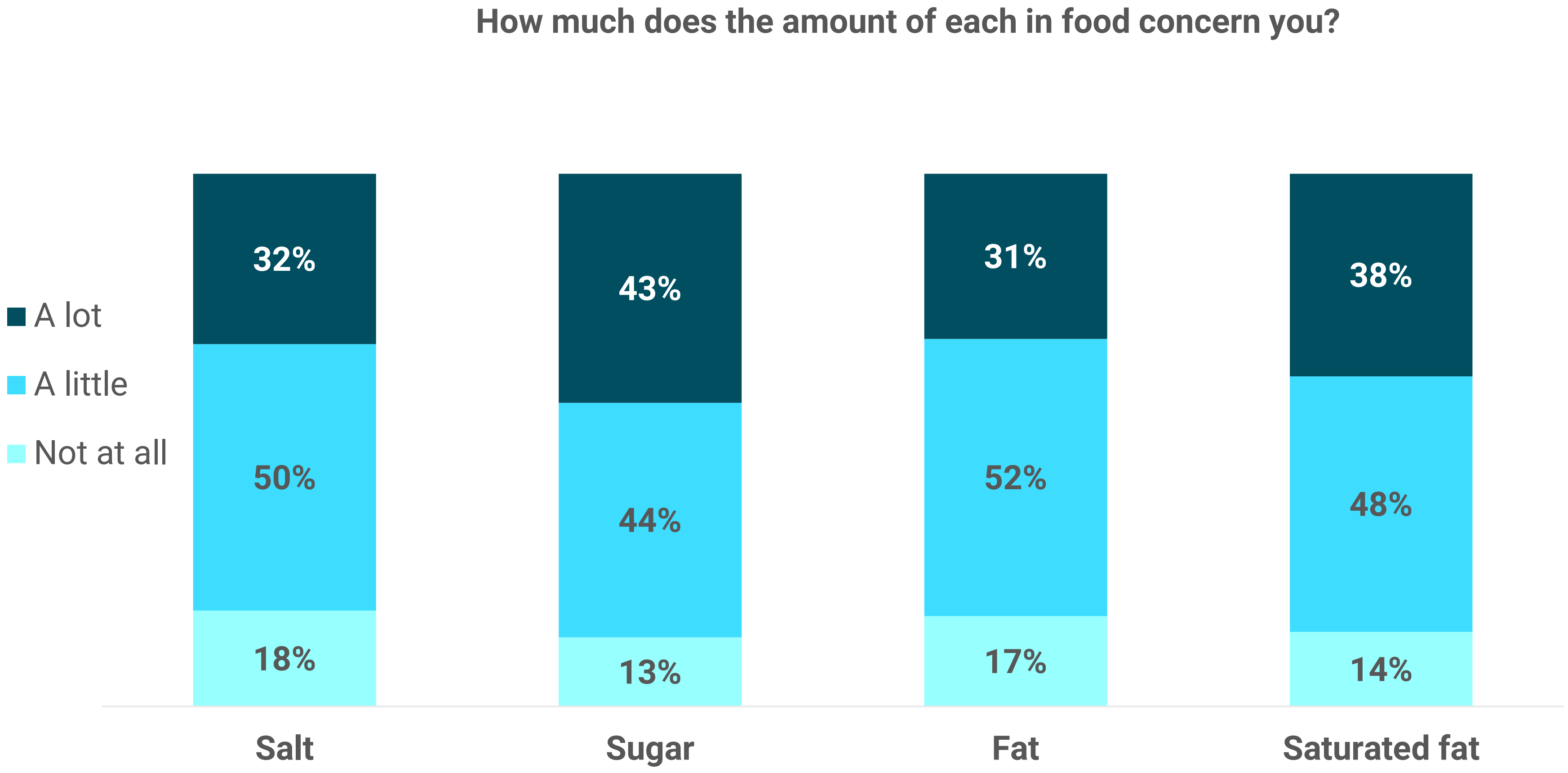
Q12. Thinking about the kind of foods you eat and drink (both for meals and snacks), how healthy do you feel these are? Base (all) W19: 1,009, (those with children) W19 : 303 New question for W19

Those more likely to claim they eat healthily were 65+ year olds, ABs and those living in the least deprived areas.



Q12. Thinking about the kind of foods you eat and drink (both for meals and snacks), how healthy do you feel these are? Base (all) W19: 1,009
New question for W19

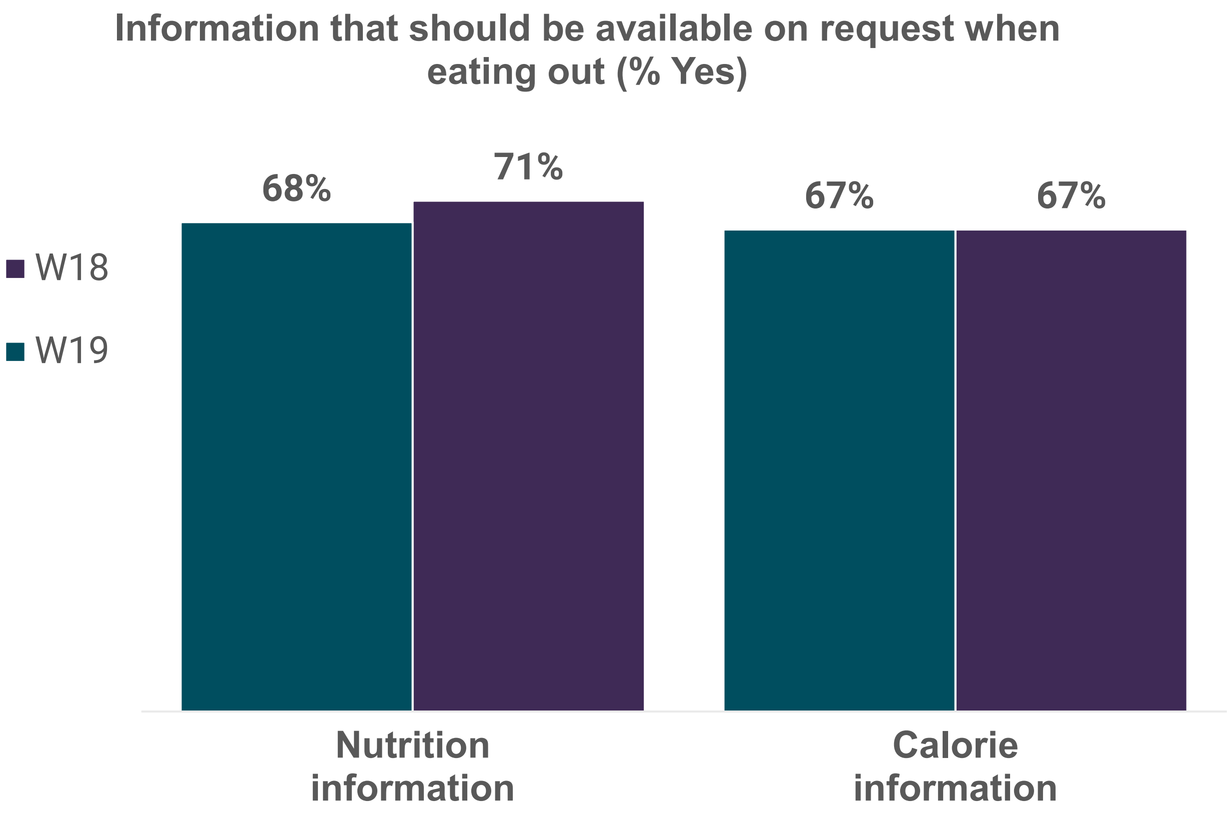
Concern was high regarding the amount of salt, sugar, fat and saturated fat in food. Sugar, in particular, was a concern with 43% concerned a lot and 44% concerned a little.



- There were very few differences between sub-groups.
- Those with children in the household were more likely to be concerned about the amount of fat in foods (87%) than those without (81%).
- Those who find it difficult to eat a healthy diet and those who believe nutritional/calorie information should be provided on request were both more likely to be concerned about these 'nutrients of concern' than their counterparts.

Q14. How much does the amount of salt/sugar/fat/saturated fat in food concern you? Base (all) W19: 1,009
New question for W19

Similar to W18, most consumers believe that nutritional and calorie information should be available on request when eating out. Just under two fifths said they would request it if each were available.



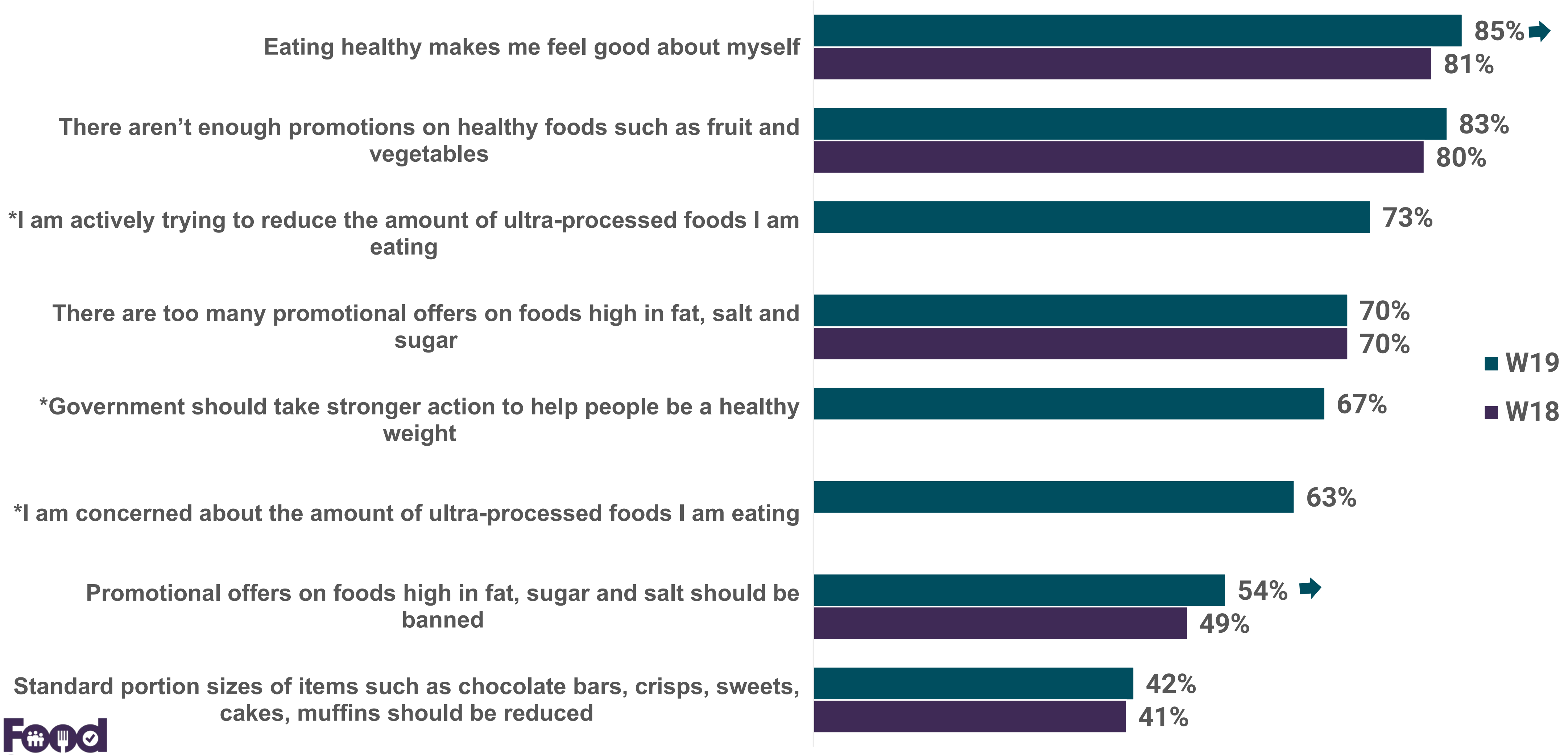
39% said they would request Nutrition information if it was available

35% said they would request Calorie information if it was available (W18: 36%)

Q20. Do you think that calorie information should be available on request when eating out? Q21. If calorie information was available on request, would you request it? And Q22. Should nutrition information be available on request? Q23. If nutrition information was available on request, would you request it? Base (all): W18 1,027, W19 1,009

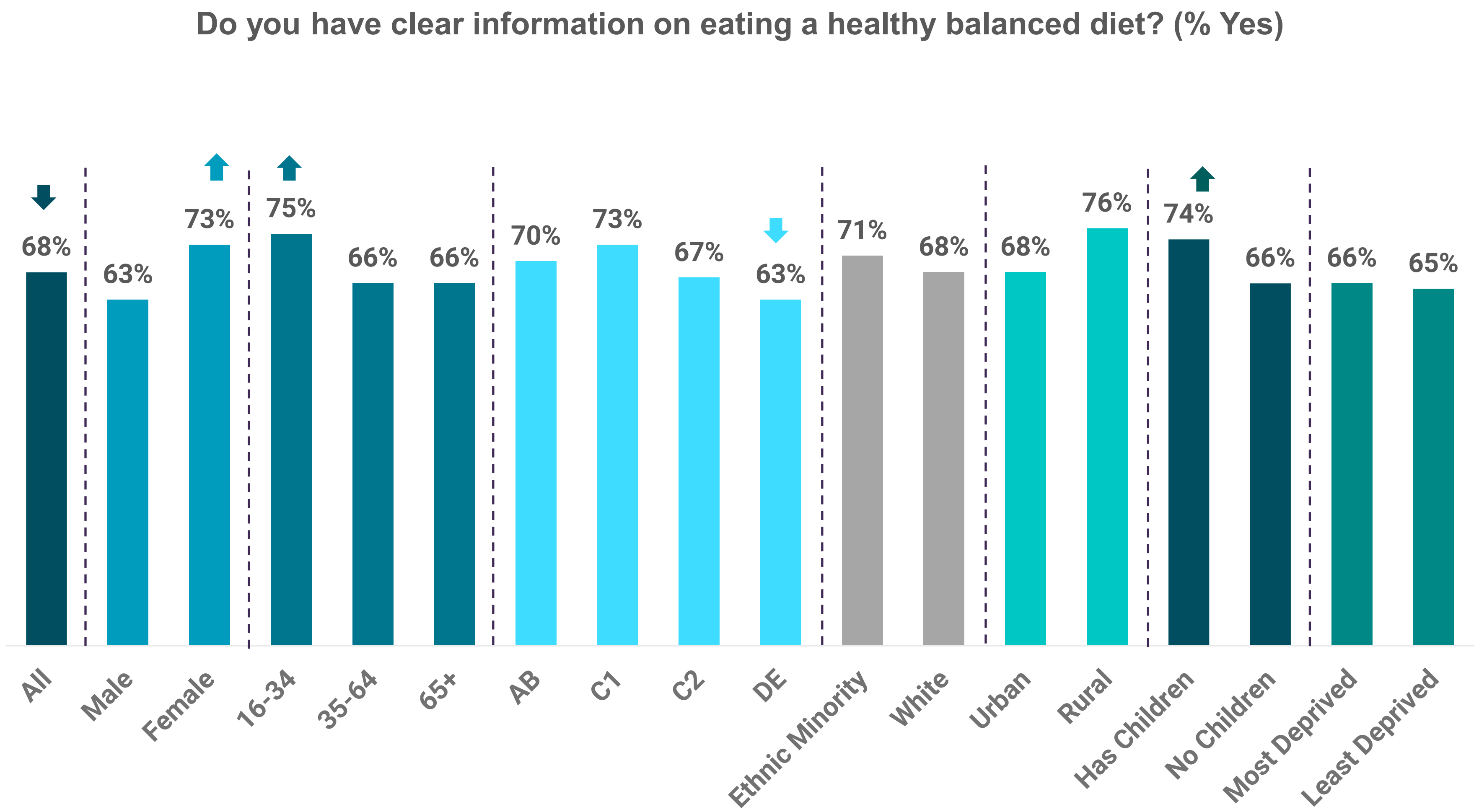
Most consumers agreed that healthy eating makes them feel good. Similar to W18, the majority also agreed there aren't enough promotions on healthy foods and too many on foods high in fat etc. Three quarters are actively trying to reduce the amount of ultra-processed (UP) foods consumed. Just under two thirds are concerned about how much UP foods they are eating.

Healthy eating (net agreement with statements)



Q15. How much do you agree or disagree with each of these statements? Base (all): W18 1,027, W19 1,009 *are new codes for W19

Just over two thirds claimed to have clear information on eating a healthy balanced diet. This has declined from W18 (73%). Females, younger age groups and those with children were more likely than their counterparts to say yes to this. DEs were less likely to feel they have clear information on healthy eating.



- Those who find it difficult to eat a healthy balanced diet were less likely to say they have clear information.

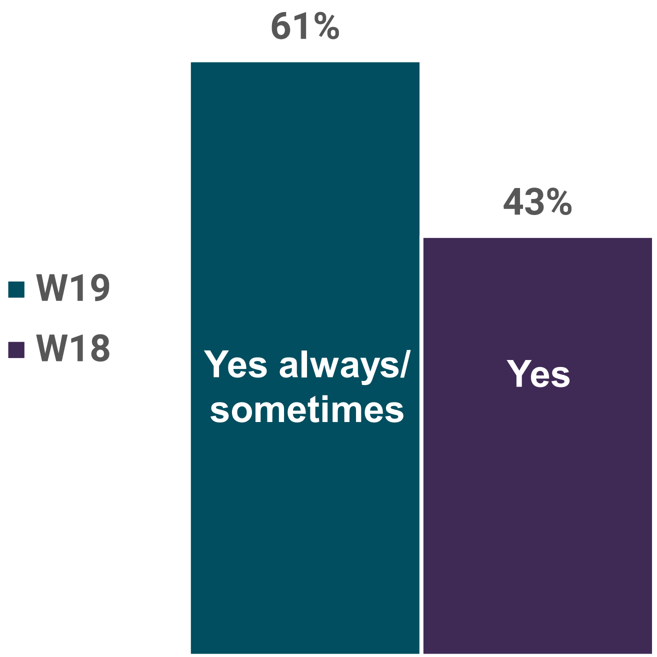
Food Standards Scotland

Q16. Do you have clear information on eating a healthy balanced diet? Base (all): 1,009

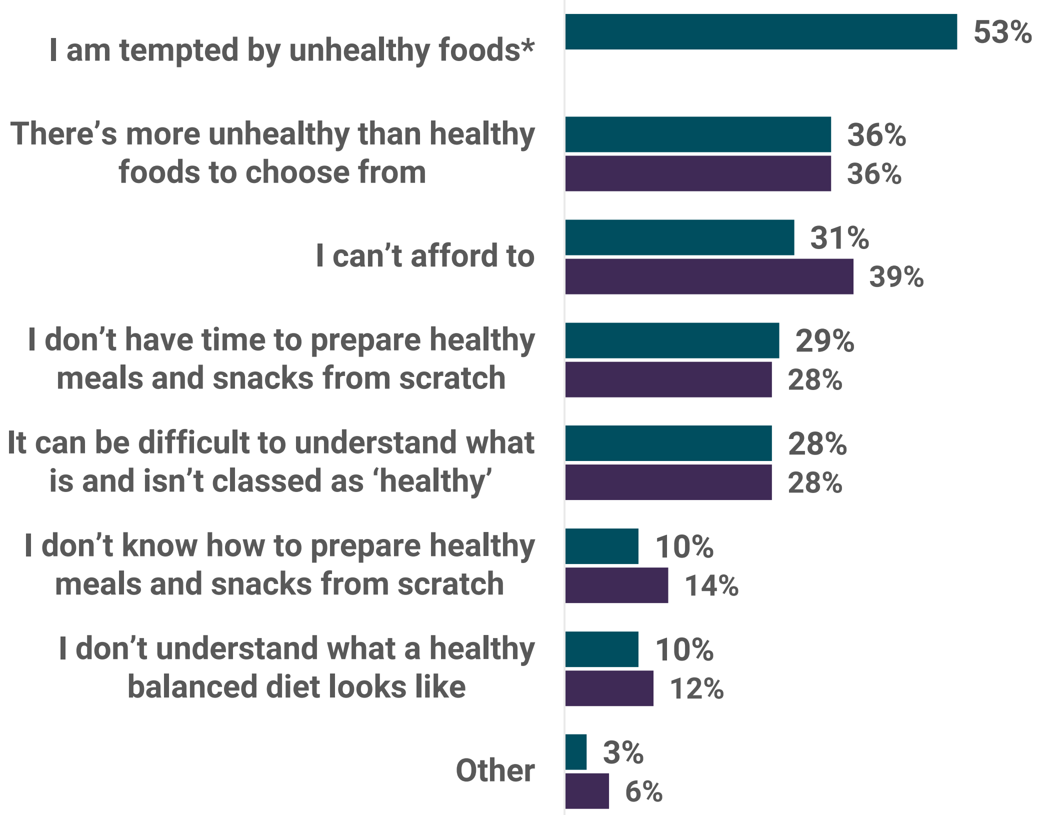
progressive

Three fifths claimed to find it hard to eat a balanced diet, which was a significant increase from W18 (please note codes differed). The main reasons were due to being tempted by unhealthy foods (new code for W19), availability of unhealthy foods and not being able to afford to eat healthily.

Do you find it difficult to eat a healthy balanced diet? (Yes always/sometimes %)
NOT DIRECTLY COMPARABLE TO W18



Why eating a healthy balanced diet is difficult (those who find it difficult)

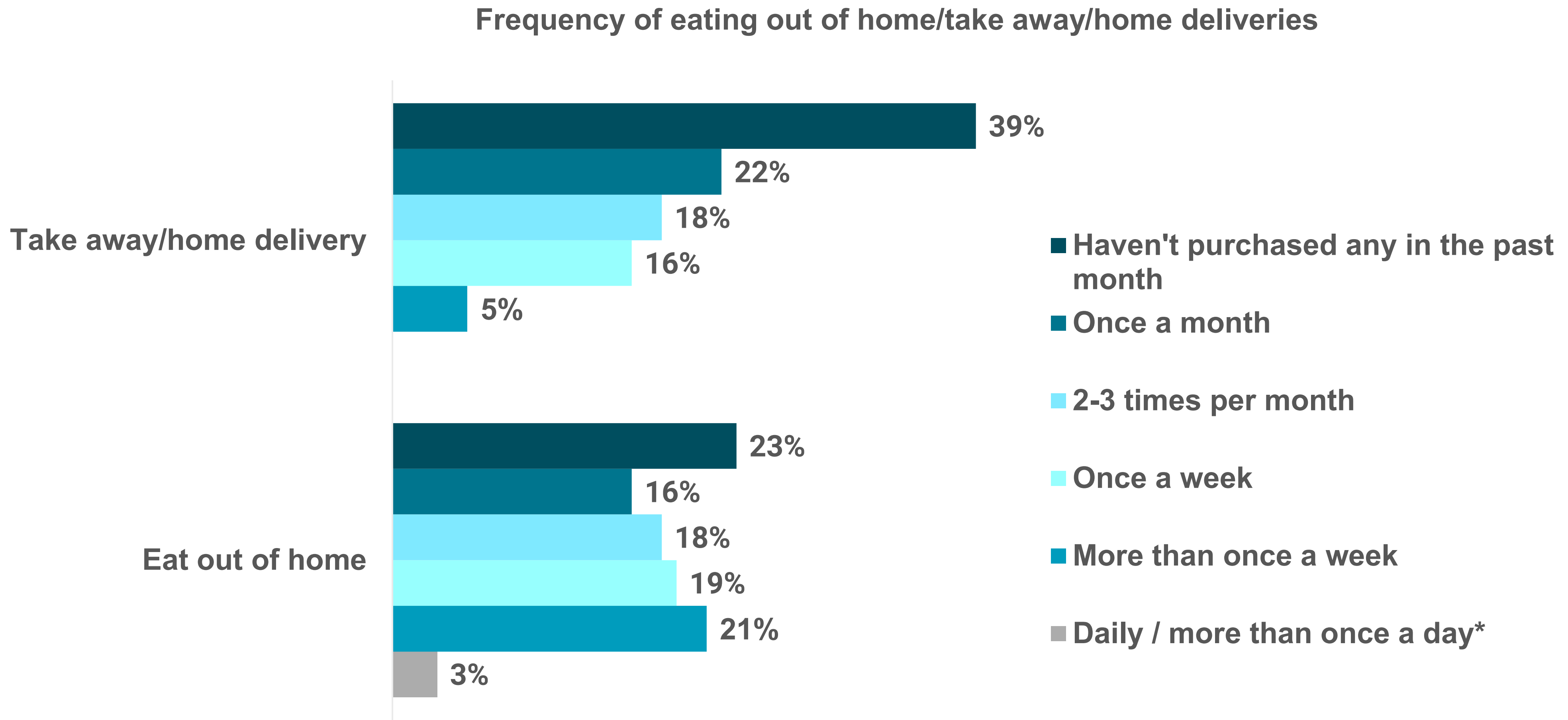


The following sub-groups were all more likely to find it difficult to eat a healthy diet more than their counterparts:

- Demographic groups: Women, younger age groups, SEG A
- Those with diagnosed health issues
- Those susceptible to illnesses
- Those who worry about affording food
- Those who think nutritional/ calorie info should be available
- Those who have help with their shopping.

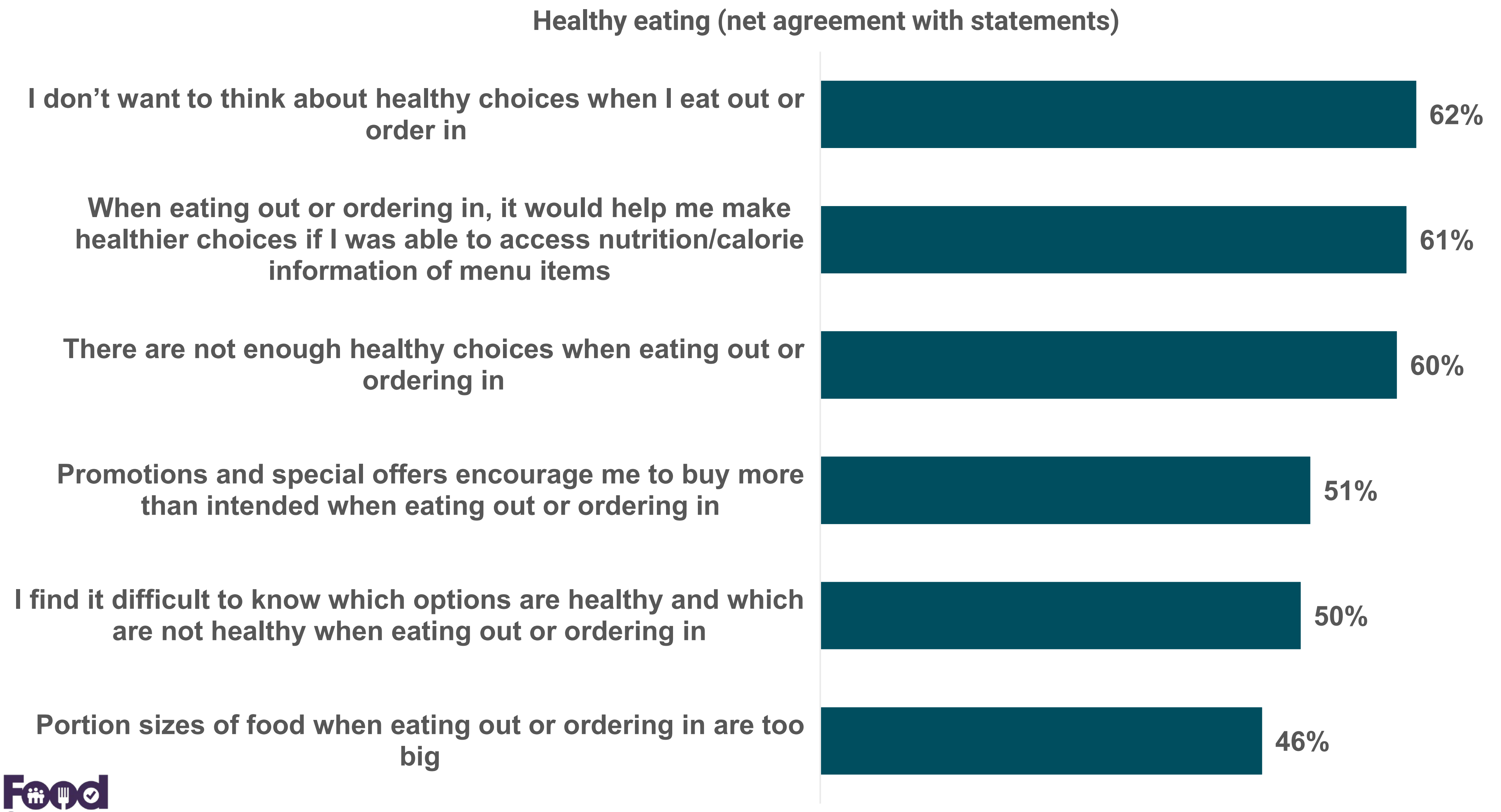
Q17. Do you find it difficult to eat a healthy balanced diet? Base (all): W18 1,027, W19 1,009, New response codes in W19
Q18. Why? Base (all who find it difficult): W18 439, W19 614. * New code added for W19

Around three fifths (61%) have purchased take away/home delivery in the past month. For around a fifth it was once a month, for the remainder it was more frequently. Just over three quarters (77%) purchased food to eat out of the home in the past month. This tended to be more frequently than take aways/home deliveries.



Q19. How often have you purchased food to eat out of home in the past month? This includes snacks or coffees on the go, as well as breakfast, lunch or dinner. Q24. How often have you had takeaway/home delivery food in the past month? Base (all) W19: 1,009. *Code not shown for Take away/home delivery

When eating out or ordering in, three fifths agree that they don't want to think about healthy choices, it would help if there was access to nutrition/calorie information, and there are not enough healthy choices. Less than half were concerned about the portion sizes being too big.



Food Standards Scotland

Q25. How much do you agree or disagree that…….? Base (all): W19 1,009 New question for W19

progressive

Healthy eating – Summary

- Over half believe they eat healthily, and this increases to over three fifths when referring to their children's diet.
- There are high levels of concern with the amount of salt, sugar, fat and saturated fat in food.
- The majority of consumers believe that nutritional and calorie information should be available on request.
- The majority agree that more needs to be done in terms of promoting healthy food and there are too many promotions on foods HFSS. Over half thought that promotions on foods HFSS should be banned, a significant increase from W18.
- There is concern about the amount of UP foods consumed, and three quarters are trying to reduce this.
- The majority claimed to have clear information of eating a healthy balanced diet, although this has declined to 68% from 73% in W18.
- Three fifths claimed to find it hard to eat a balanced diet and the main reasons were due to being tempted by unhealthy foods and more unhealthy food choices being available.
- Three fifths of respondents said they don't want to think about eating healthy when eating out/ordering in, although a similar proportion believe they would eat more healthily when out/ordering in if there were healthier choices or calorie information available.

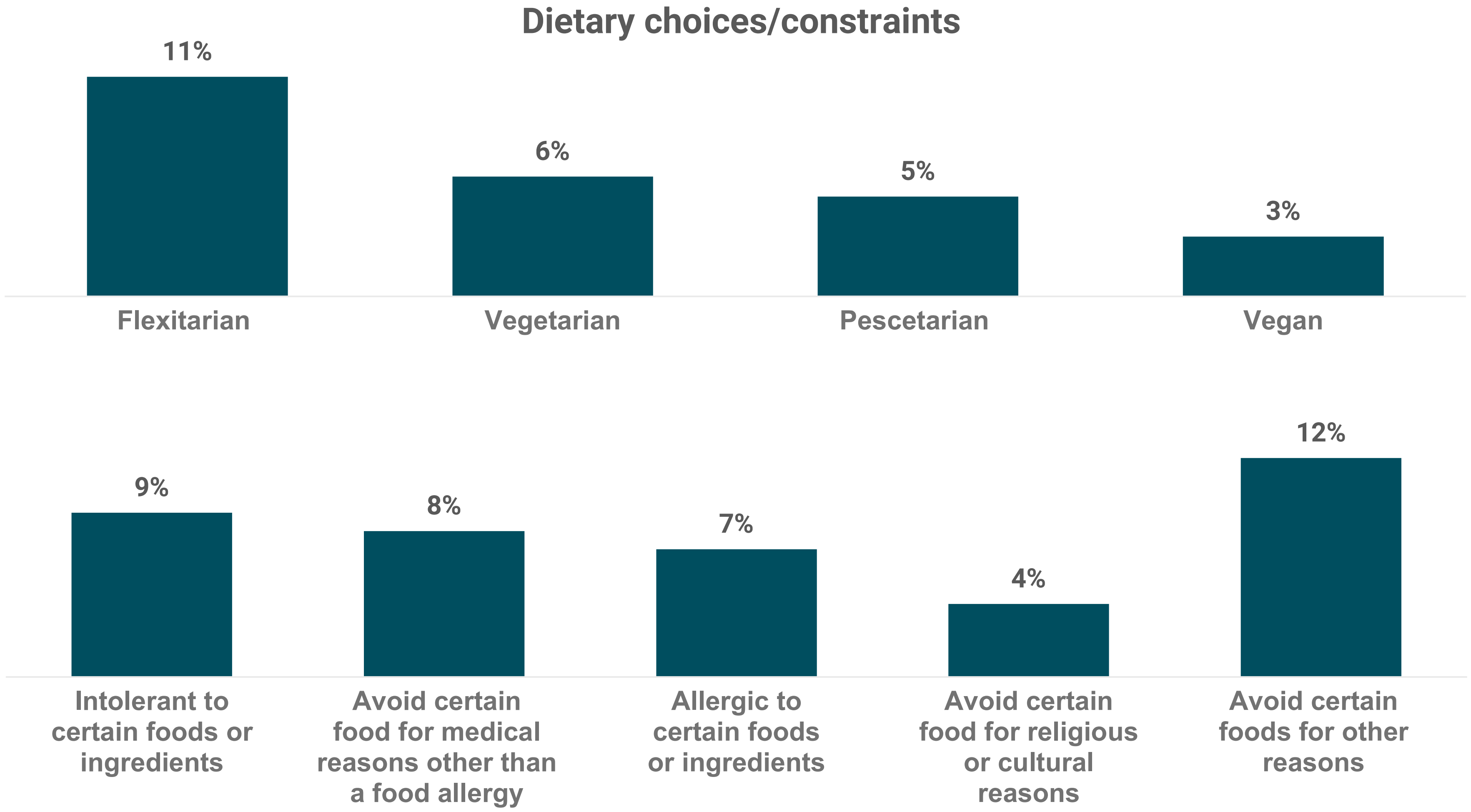
Consumers could be supported a lot more to make healthy eating choices. More could be done regarding promotion and educating about healthy eating. At the same time, promotions and packaging of unhealthy foods needs to be controlled to support consumers in making healthy choices.

Allergens

Food Standards Scotland

progressive

Over two fifths (43%) have/shop for someone who has some form of eating constraint. Over a quarter (28%) of consumers shop/cook for someone with dietary constraints which makes labelling very important.



- Over half of the sample (57%) had no eating constraints at all.

- 28% of the sample said they or someone they cook/shop for had an intolerance or allergy, and/or avoided some foods for medical or other reasons.

Q26. Which, if any, of the following applies to you or someone you cook/shop for? Base (all): 1,009

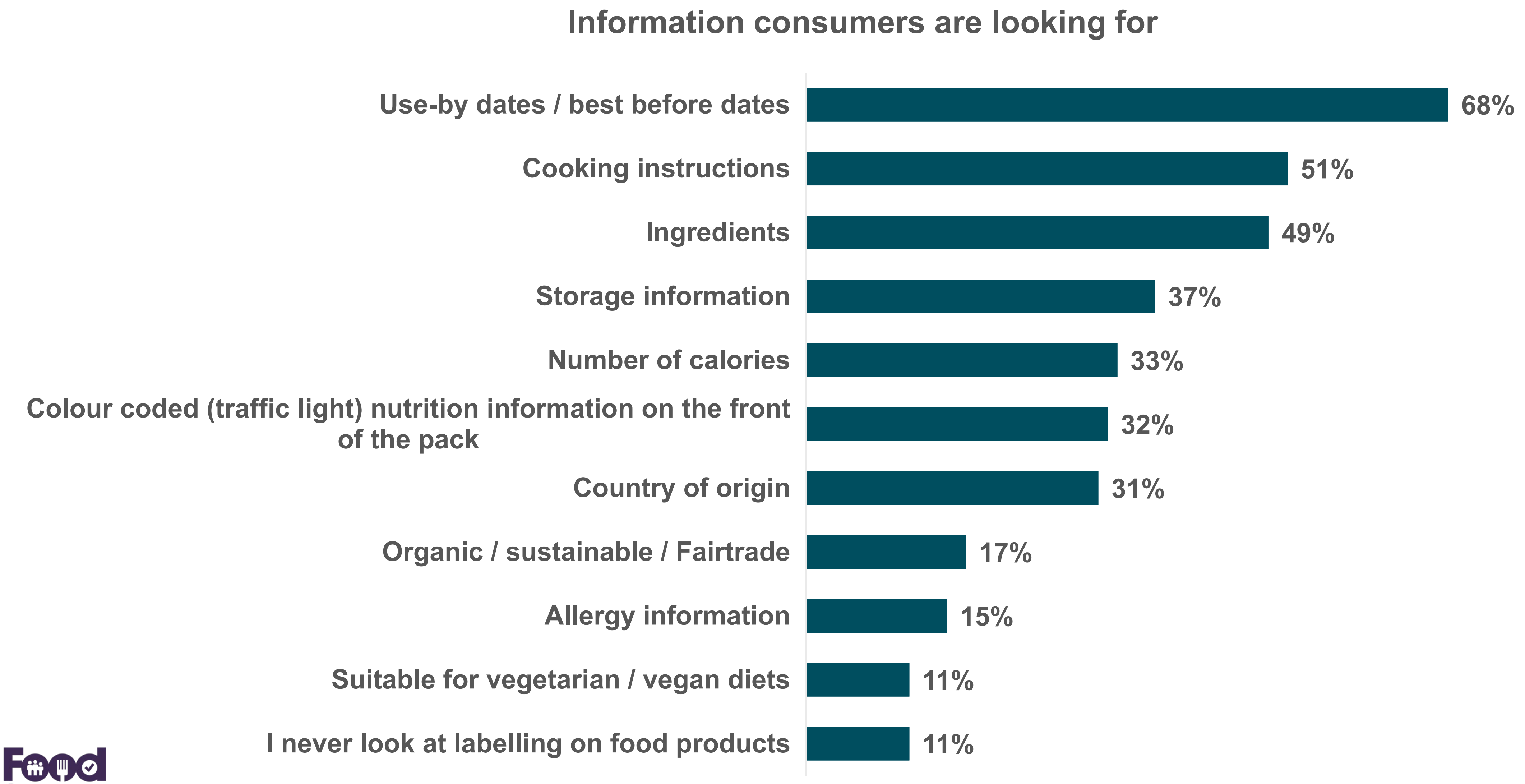
Labelling

New question set for W19

Food Standards Scotland

progressive

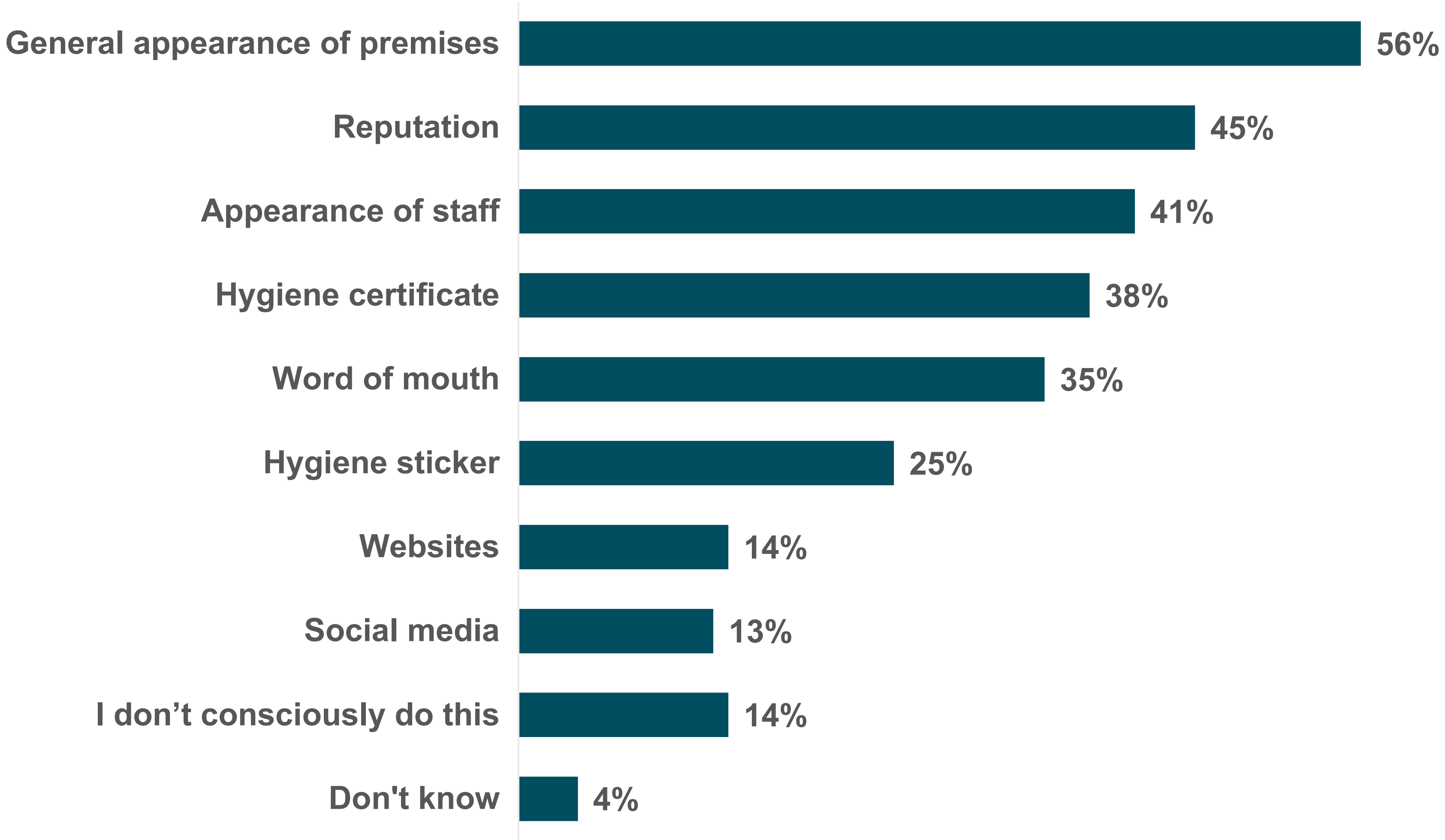
The most important piece of information on food labels is the use-by/best before dates followed by cooking instructions and ingredients. Storage, calories, traffic light nutritional information and country of origin was also information that was sought for by around a third.



Q27. What information are you looking for when you read food labels? Base (all): W19 1,009 New questions for W19

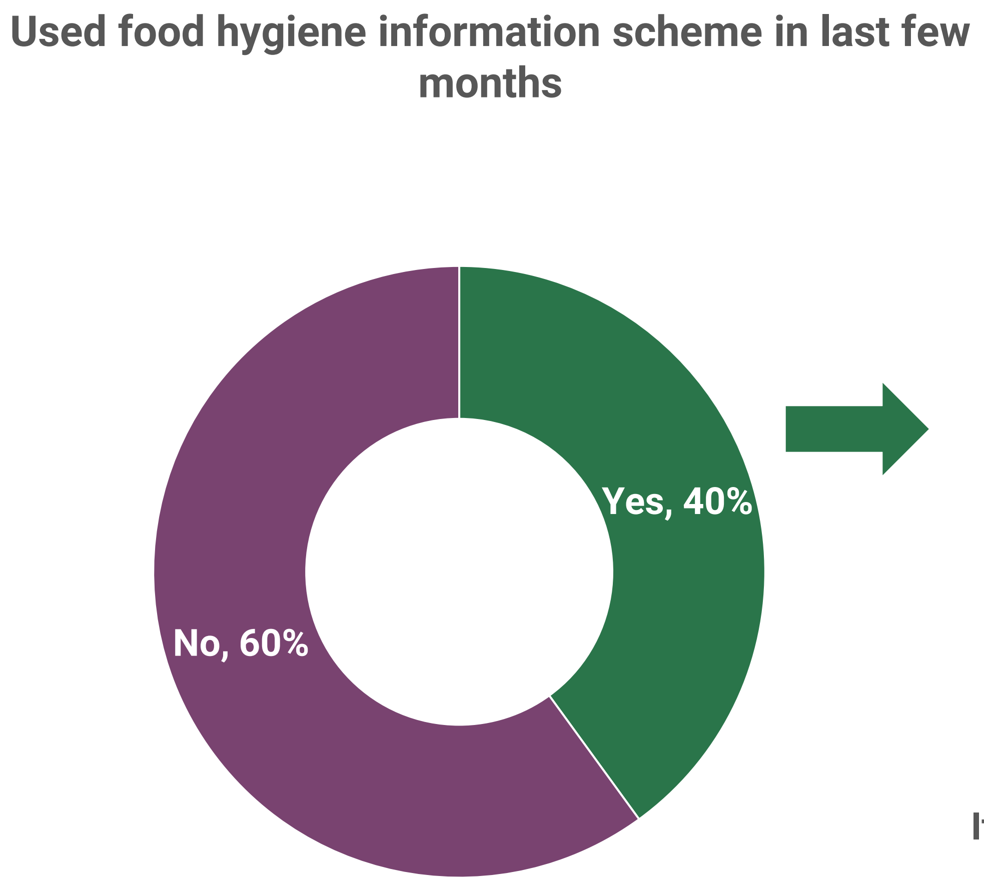
Over half were judging hygiene standards of a food premises by its general appearance. Other ways in which hygiene was judged was through reputation and appearance of staff. Less than two fifths referred to the hygiene certificate or word of mouth, and very few were using websites or social media.

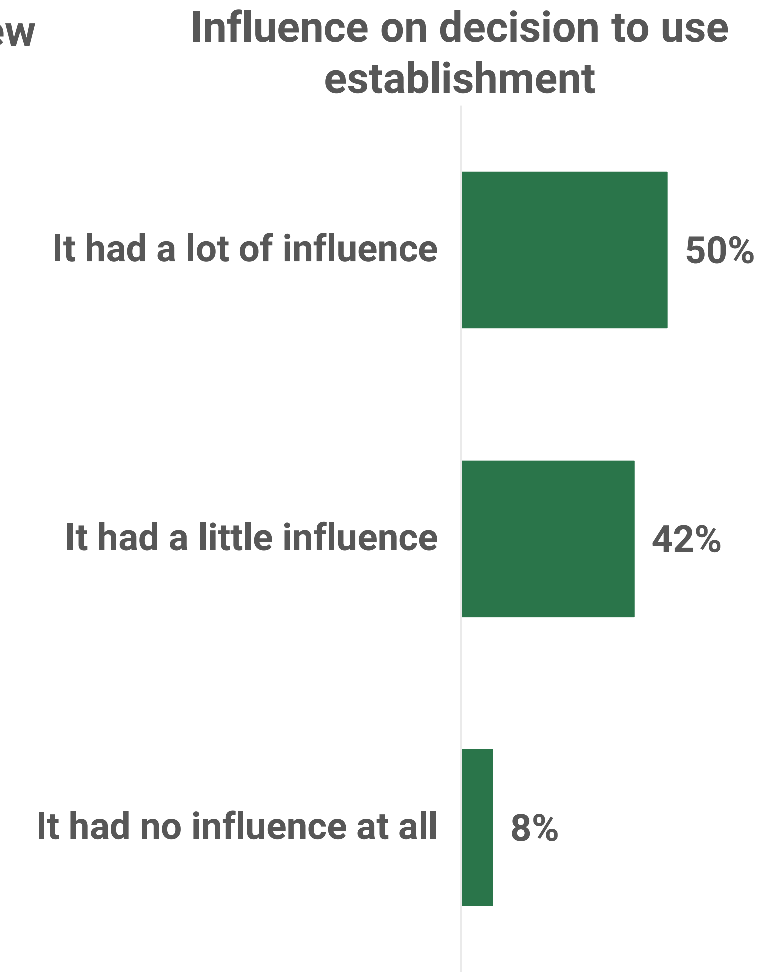
Judging hygiene standards



Q28. How do you judge the hygiene standards of the places you eat out at or buy food from? Base (all): W19 1,009 New question for W19

Two fifths said they had used the food hygiene information scheme over the last few months, and for the majority (92% of those who used it) it did influence their decision on whether to use the establishment or not.





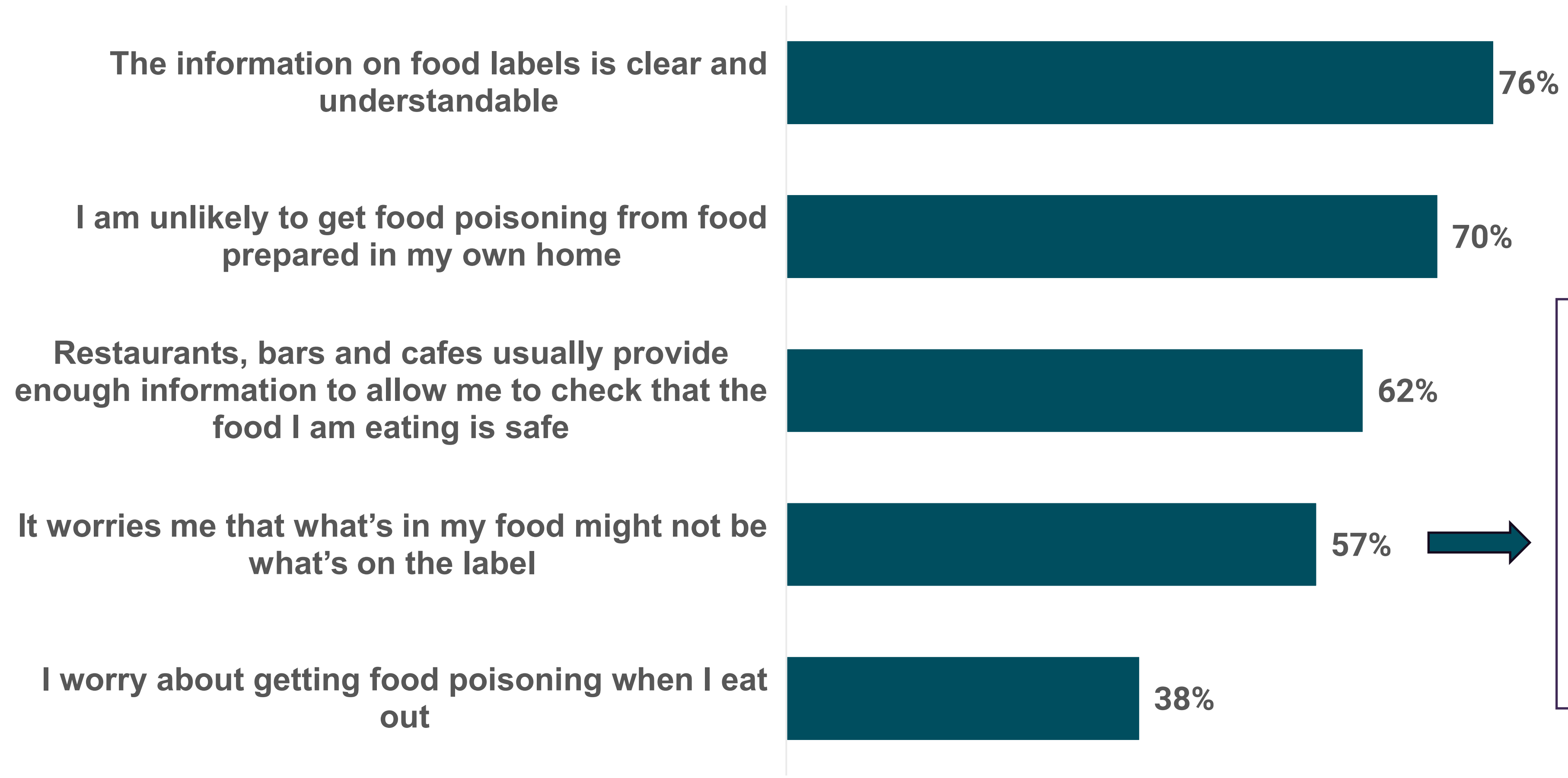
The following sub-groups were all more likely to use the scheme than their counterparts:

- Younger age groups (16-34 – 53%)
- Those with children in the household (55%)
- Those who had heard of/know of FSS (45%)
- Those who have help with shopping (69%)
- Those who think nutritional/ calorie information should be available (44%).

Q29. This is a certificate for a food hygiene information scheme in Scotland. In the last few months, have you used this food hygiene information scheme to check a food establishment's hygiene standards? Base (all): W19 1,009. Q30. And on that occasion how much influence did it have on your decision on whether or not to use that establishment? Base (all who used scheme): 392 New questions for W19

For the majority (76%) the information on food labels is clear; however, three fifths (57%) do worry about discrepancies between the food label and ingredients. For over three fifths (62%), eating establishments usually provide enough information to ensure food is safe. The majority (70%) believe they are unlikely to get food poisoning at home and less than two fifths (38%) worry about getting it when eating out.

Food labelling (net agreement with statements)



- Those with an allergy/ intolerance were more likely to agree that they were worried what is in the food might not be what is on the label (65%)
- Those susceptible to illnesses were also more worried than others (61%).

Q31. How much do you agree or disagree that…..? Base (all): W19 1,009 New questions for W19

Labelling – Summary

- A sizeable cohort (28%) shop and cook for someone with dietary constraints which makes labelling very important. Just over two fifths of the sample had some form of dietary constraint.
- The most important piece of information on food labels is the use-by/best before dates followed by cooking instructions and ingredients.
- Over half were judging hygiene standards of a food premises by its general appearance.
- Two fifths had used the food hygiene information scheme in the past few months, this tended to be younger age groups, those with children, those aware of FSS and who think nutritional/calorie information should be available. For those that used it, it did influence their decision on using the establishment suggesting that it is in an important source for a large proportion of consumers.
- The majority are satisfied with the information on food labels. The main concern for around three fifths was discrepancies between what is in the food and what is on the label. This was particularly the case for those with an allergy/intolerance and those susceptible to illnesses.

In general, consumers agree that labels are clear and enough information is provided, although there is room to increase consumer confidence in ensuring what is in the food is clearly marked on the label.

Food safety

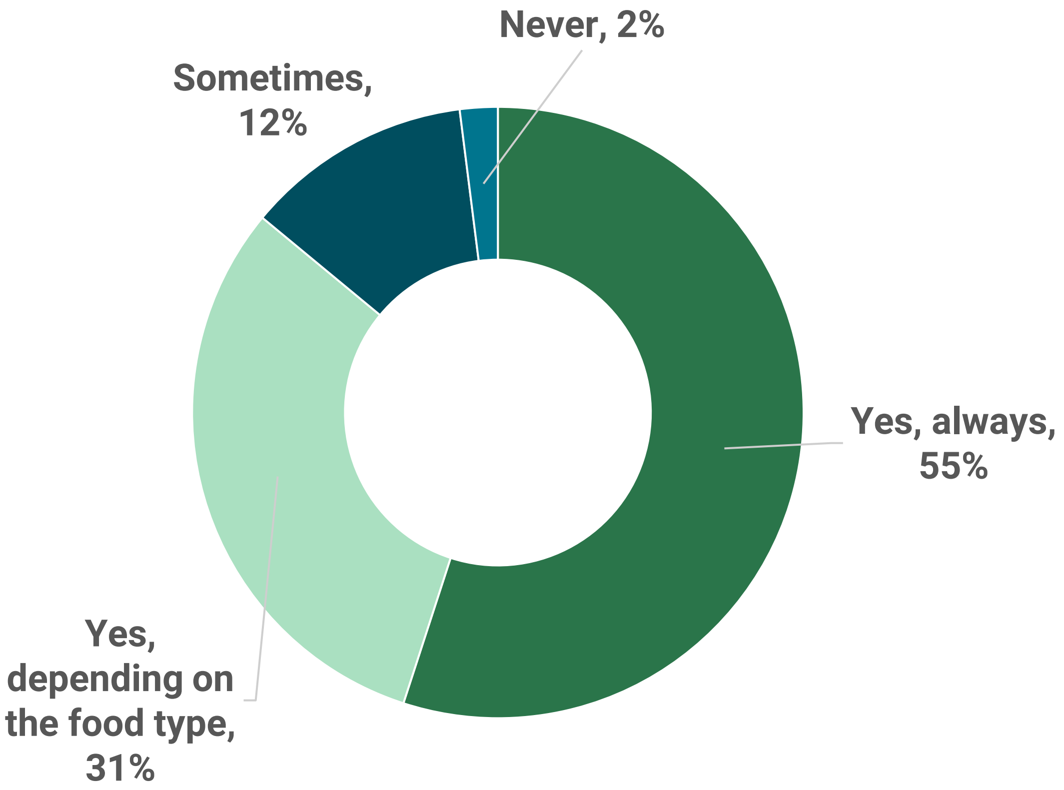
New questions set for W19

Food Standards Scotland

progressive

For over half, use-by dates are followed all the time and for almost a third they are followed depending on the food type. Very few (14%) only sometimes or never follow use-by dates. Reasons for this relate to reducing food waste or because they believe the food is safe to consume.

Do you check/follow use-by dates when preparing food?



Reasons for not following use-by dates (Sometimes/Never follow use-by dates)

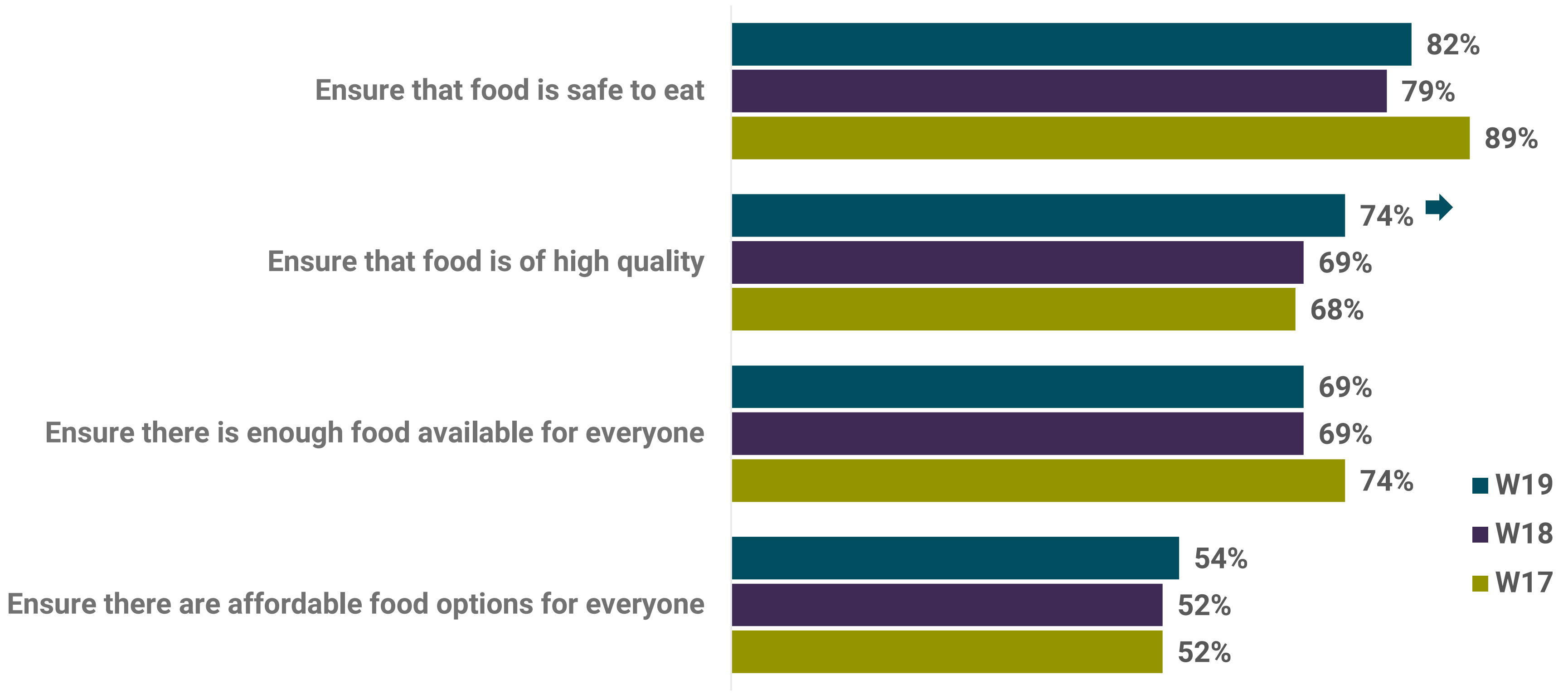
Q32. Do you check and follow use-by dates when you are about to cook or prepare food? Base (all): W19 1,009. Q33. Why do you not always follow use-by dates when you are about to cook or prepare food? Base (all who don't follow use-by dates): 143

Food security

progressive

Confidence in the food supply chain remains high this wave, with over four fifths confident that food is safe to eat and a significant increase in confidence in the high quality of food compared to W18. Confidence in ensuring there is enough food and affordable options remained similar to W18.

How confident are you in the food supply chain? This includes farmers, manufacturers and shops and supermarkets in the UK. How confident are you that they….?
(Very or Fairly Confident)



- Confidence was higher across all aspects amongst those that know a lot or a little about FSS.

Q34. How confident are you in the food supply chain? That is all the processes involved in bringing food to your table including farmers, manufacturers and shops and supermarkets. How confident are you that they: Base (all) W17: 1,037, W18: 1,027, W19 1,009

Food Security – Summary

- Confidence in the food supply chain remains high, particularly for food safety and quality. Those who expressed concern were more likely to be social class DEs and younger age groups.
- Confidence in affordable food options is lower than it is for safety, quality and availability.
- Concern over food being available reduced in W18, and this lower level of concern has been sustained this wave.
- Confidence in all aspects was higher amongst those who know a little or a lot about FSS.

Confidence in the safety of the UK food supply chain has increased for safety and quality after a dip last wave. While lower levels of concern for availability has been sustained, there is still over a fifth who expressed concern.

Appendices

Sub-group base size information (weighted)

*Aged under 18

	All	Male	Female	16-34	35-64	65+	AB	C1	C2	DE	SIMD 1	SIMD 5	Urban	Rural
Total sample	1,009	484	523	282	483	244	195	318	246	267	200	155	772	126
Those heard of/know of FSS	783	367	415	216	363	204	159	259	206	220	155	110	597	98

	South	North	Central	Working	Not in work	BAME	White	Long term health condition (lthc)	No lthc	Children at home*	No children at home
Total sample	51	242	716	585	414	79	924	320	668	311	696
Those heard of/know of FSS	40	194	549	452	323	53	727	252	516	254	528

	Have help with shopping	No help	Worried re: affording food (last 12 months)	Did not worry	Have clear info on diet	No info	Find it hard to eat healthy balanced diet	Don't find it hard
Total sample	130	868	364	626	690	218	616	675
Those heard of/know of FSS	107	666	284	486	553	150	477	293

	Aware FSS	Not aware	Have or cook/shop for someone with an allergy, intolerance or who avoids some foods	No food avoidance	Concerned about food availability in next month	Not very concern ed	Not at all
Total sample	783	226	284	572	587	320	92
Those heard of/know of FSS	783	-	221	442	467	240	69

Technical appendix

- Data was collected by online survey.
- The target group for this research study was adults aged 16+ living in Scotland.
- The sample type was non-probability. The sample source was a combination of access panels.
- The target sample size was 1,000, and the final achieved sample size was 1,009.
- Campaign fieldwork was undertaken between the 4th and 18th of December 2024.
- The criteria used in sample selection were that panellists fit the target audience criteria.
- Respondents to self-completion studies are self-selecting and complete the survey without the assistance of a trained interviewer. This means that Progressive cannot strictly control sampling and in some cases, this can lead to findings skewed towards the views of those motivated to respond to the survey.
- Quota controls were used to guide sample selection for this study. This means that we cannot provide statistically precise margins of error or significance testing as the sampling type is non-probability. The margins of error outlined below should therefore be treated as indicative, based on an equivalent probability sample. Margins of error calculated at the 95% confidence level (market research industry standard) are between ±0.61% and ±3.09%.
- The final data sets were weighted so that the sample would be broadly in line with the profile of age, gender and SEG for Scotland. The weighting efficiency was 98%. The overall sample base did not change size after weighting.
- Data gathered using self-completion methodologies are validated using the following techniques: Where the data is collected via an internet survey using an access panel, all respondents can only submit one response due to a system of unique IDs used by panel providers.
- Our data processing department undertake a number of quality checks on the data to ensure its validity and integrity, including checks for speeding, flatlining and quality of open-ended responses. Where 'other' type questions are used, the responses to these are checked against the parent question for possible up-coding.
- Responses to open-ended questions will normally be spell and sense checked. Where required these responses may be grouped using a code-frame which can be used in analysis.
- A SNAP programme set up with the aim of providing the client with useable and comprehensive data. Cross-breaks are discussed with the client in order to ensure that all information needs are met. The following methods of statistical analysis were used: Z tests, t-tests.
- All research projects undertaken by Progressive comply fully with the requirements of ISO 20252.

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