



Food in Scotland Consumer Tracking Survey

SUMMARY REPORT - Wave 1 December 2015

Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	1
2. Background and objectives.....	4
3. Method and Sample.....	5
4. Protecting other interests of consumers in relation to food.....	8
5. Food is safe.....	10
6. Food is authentic.....	20
7. Consumers have healthier diets.....	23
8. Responsible food businesses flourish.....	26
9. FSS is a trusted organisation.....	29



1. Executive Summary

The results from the first wave of Food Standards Scotland (FSS)'s Food in Scotland Consumer Tracking Survey will act as a baseline in monitoring Scotland's attitudes, behaviours and knowledge in relation to food. The survey will be undertaken biannually and will consist of a set of consistent questions at each wave, with modules focusing on food safety and authenticity, and diet and nutrition running annually.



The survey was undertaken by TNS on FSS's behalf amongst a representative sample of adults in Scotland (online self-completion survey of 1,003 people aged 16+ between 8 and 15 December 2015).

Food Standards Scotland has six strategic outcomes it is working towards delivering:

- 1. Food is safe**
- 2. Food is authentic**
- 3 Consumers have healthier diets**
- 4. Responsible food businesses flourish**
- 5. FSS is a trusted organisation**
- 6. FSS is efficient and effective**

This survey includes measures relating to the first five strategic outcomes (with the sixth being covered by the Civil Service People Survey, amongst other measures).

The survey was developed and designed to explore the interests of consumers in Scotland in relation to food in order for FSS to put those interests at the heart of the work it does.

1.1 Strategic Outcome – Food is safe

- Consistent hand washing is the norm but there is scope for improvement on this - 76% wash hands after handling raw meat poultry or fish, and 51% wash fruit or veg to be eaten raw.
- Less than half (46%) use a thermometer to accurately check fridge temperature.
- Around half follow each of these recommended practices to avoid cross-contamination: 60% use the bottom shelf of fridge to store raw meat/poultry, 45% never wash raw chicken or poultry (FSS advice is not to wash raw chicken or poultry as this splashes bacteria around) and 51% always use

different chopping boards for different foods/wash when switching between foods.

- Recommended cooking practices are more widely followed, but still only half of consumers (50%) check that reheated food is hot in the middle and only 37% know what Campylobacter – the bacteria which causes the biggest number of food poisoning cases in Scotland each year - is.

1.2 Strategic Outcome – Food is authentic

- There is some desire to find out more about where food comes from, driven by concern about authenticity. 79% are concerned about food not being what the label says it is, and 55% agree that they would like to know more about where the food they eat comes from.
- Labels are widely referred to when both shopping and at home, primarily for date information (95% ever look at food labels when shopping).
- There is good awareness of what the label information refers to but it is not necessarily displayed in a way that is understandable – only 52% agree that information on food labels is clear and understandable.
- Use by dates are moderately well understood and referred to as the best indicator of food safety (69%).

1.3 Strategic Outcome – Consumers have healthier diets

- While many are fairly comfortable with how healthy their and their family's diet is, there is also a significant degree of uncertainty, with only 53% thinking that the kinds of meals and snack foods they and their family eat and drink are very or quite healthy.
- Though most feel they have clear information about eating healthily, there is a significant level (69%) of perceived expert contradiction over which foods are good or bad for you, resulting in confusion amongst over a third (35%) as to what's supposed to be healthy and what isn't.
- A significant proportion recognise Scotland's obesity problem, and are concerned about what is in food. 74% agree that there are too many people who eat unhealthily in Scotland, and over 80% are concerned about the amount of sugar, salt, fat and/or saturated fat in food.
- Links between health and diet are, however, well-established, with 85% agreeing they know that an unhealthy diet can cause lots of health problems, like cancer and heart disease.

1.4 Strategic Outcome – Responsible food businesses flourish

- There is widespread concern about food hygiene when eating out, and a desire for establishments to pay more attention to this, with 75% agreeing that restaurants, cafes, takeaways and catering establishments should pay more attention to food safety and hygiene. 78% are concerned about 'food hygiene when eating out'.
- However, price is the key factor when deciding to eat out, and consumers primarily judge hygiene standards of places they eat out at by appearance of the staff and premises (78%).
- A quarter of people in Scotland (25%) worry about getting food poisoning when eating out.

1.5 Strategic Outcome – FSS is a trusted organisation

- The survey was undertaken eight months after FSS was set up on 1 April 2015. FSS has achieved a good level of brand recognition (44%) in that short time, and a widespread degree of trust, with 70% of those aware of FSS trusting the organisation to do its job.
- FSS performs best in those areas where consumers most expect it to be operating, with 49% of those aware of FSS rating the organisation as excellent or very good at ensuring that food in Scotland is safe to eat. However there is less knowledge of FSS's role in diet and nutrition, with just under half (49%) being aware that FSS is responsible for promoting and enabling healthy eating.

2. Background and objectives

2.1 Background

Food Standards Scotland (FSS) is the new public sector food body for Scotland. FSS became independent from the UK Food Standards Agency on 1 April 2015. FSS was established by the Food (Scotland) Act 2015 as a non-ministerial office, part of the Scottish Administration, alongside, but separate from, the Scottish Government.



FSS's vision is “to create a food and drink environment in Scotland that benefits, protects and is trusted by consumers.”

FSS's three statutory objectives are to:

- a) Protect the public from risks to health which may arise in connection with the consumption of food;
- b) Improve the extent to which members of the public have diets which are conducive to good health; and
- c) Protect the other interests of consumers in relation to food.

2.2 Study objectives

An online quantitative survey was undertaken by TNS, an independent research company, in December 2015. The main purpose of the research was to obtain current information on consumer attitudes, knowledge and reported behaviours in Scotland across a range of food safety and nutrition issues.

This report summarises the findings in relation to the following FSS strategic outcomes:

1. Food is safe
2. Food is authentic
3. Consumers have healthier diets
4. Responsible food businesses flourish
5. FSS is a trusted organisation

FSS intends to use the findings from the 2015 survey as a baseline against which changes in food safety and healthy eating knowledge, attitudes, behaviours can be monitored over time. Questions about food safety and authenticity and healthy eating will alternate between surveys, with a core set of questions being retained at each wave.

3. Method and Sample

To ensure that the views and behaviours of the public in Scotland towards food safety and authenticity and healthy eating were accurately captured, FSS commissioned a large-scale quantitative survey among a representative sample of adults, aged 16+ in Scotland.



This data was collected using an online self-completion questionnaire. The sample was drawn using a dual panel approach. These panels operate to the highest standards of panel member recruitment, maintenance and quality checks, to ensure that robust data is collected.

The target of 1000 completed questionnaires was achieved during the period 8 – 15 December 2015. The survey length was 30-40 minutes, and although long was described by 45% as very enjoyable and 91% rated the questions easy to understand.

Quotas were applied in order to provide a survey sample that was representative of the adult population in Scotland in terms of gender, age, socio-economic status and region. Additionally, to ensure that the achieved sample exactly matched the population on these key variables, a weighting¹ matrix was applied to the total sample results.²

The achieved and weighted sample profiles are shown in Table 3.1

¹ Weighting is the process by which data are adjusted to reflect the known population profile. Through weighting specified profiles are adjusted to match targets and through the use of a number of targets each respondent is assigned a weight within the sample that represents the extent to which their answers are adjusted.

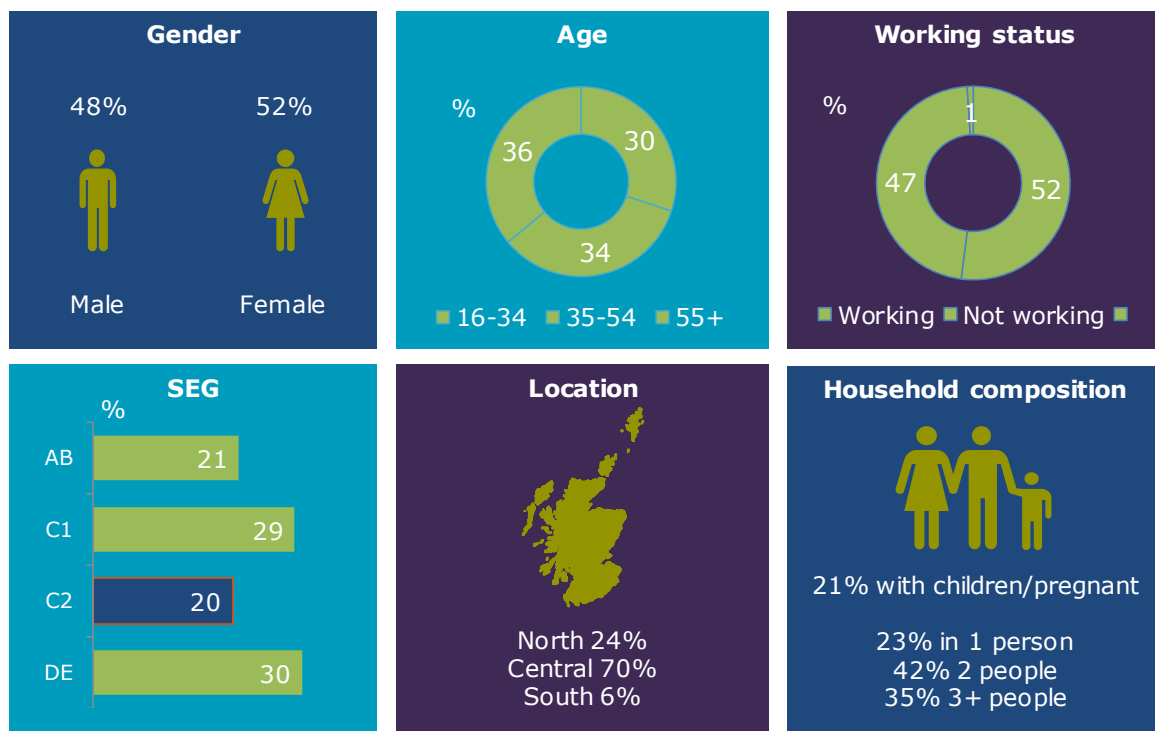
² The weighting is based on population estimates from the BARB (Broadcasters' Audience Research Board) Establishment Report 2011, ONS (Office of National Statistics) Mid-year population estimates 2011 and the 2001 Census

Table 3.1: Survey profile: achieved and weighted
Base: All respondents (1003)

Base:1003		Target %	Achieved %	Weighted %
Gender	Male	48	49	48
	Female	52	51	52
Age	16-34	30	19	30
	35-44	16	17	16
	45-54	18	21	18
	55-64	15	18	15
	65+	21	25	21
SEG	AB	21	27	22
	C1	29	32	28
	C2	20	16	20
	DE	30	24	30

An overview of the survey sample is shown in Figure 3.1, illustrating the range of the adult population surveyed.

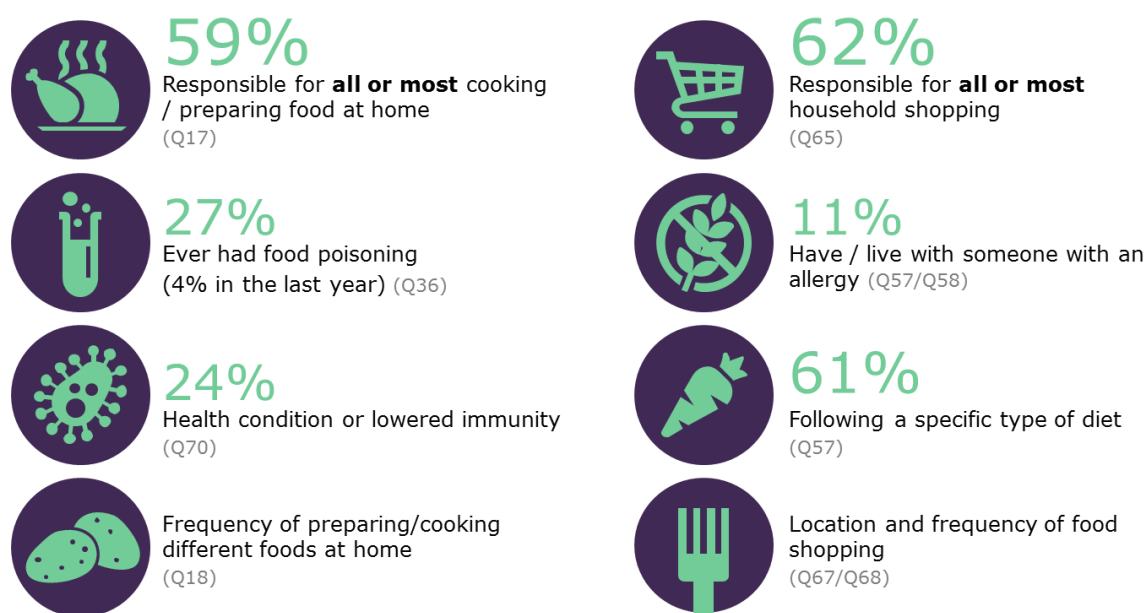
Figure 3.1 Sample profile
 Base: All respondents (1003)



The scale and scope of the survey also allowed for a number of questions to be included which are also usable as analysis variables. Though this report focusses on the findings among the total Scotland sample, the data tables provide a wealth of information for further analysis by a number of variables in addition to standard demographics. Some examples of the analysis variables available are shown in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 Analysis variable

Base: All respondents (1003)



A copy of the questionnaire can be found here:

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/food-scotland-survey>

The full results for each question are available here:

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/food-scotland-data-tabulations>

4. Protecting other interests of consumers in relation to food

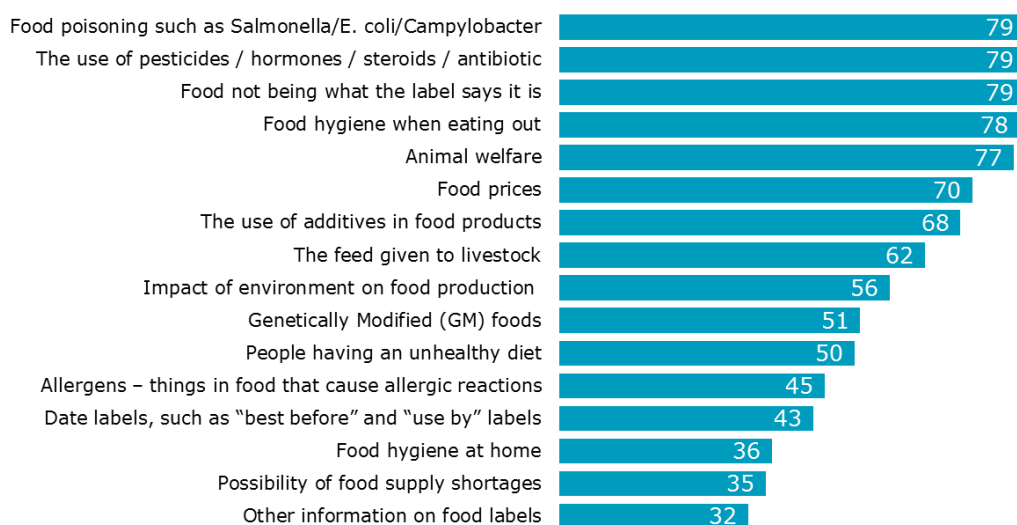
Given that Food Standards Scotland has a wide remit, it is important to understand what issues in relation to these areas are of greatest concern to the general public. Two questions were asked early in the survey to establish this.



Firstly, survey respondents were presented with a list of issues relating to food and were asked which of the issues concerned them and which did not. Given the large number of issues, the question was asked in an engaging way, asking respondents to ‘sort’ the issues into two groups, where they moved the issues on screen into boxes indicating whether they were concerned by the issue or not. The proportion concerned with each issue is shown in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1 Food issues causing concern - % concerned by each issue (prompted)

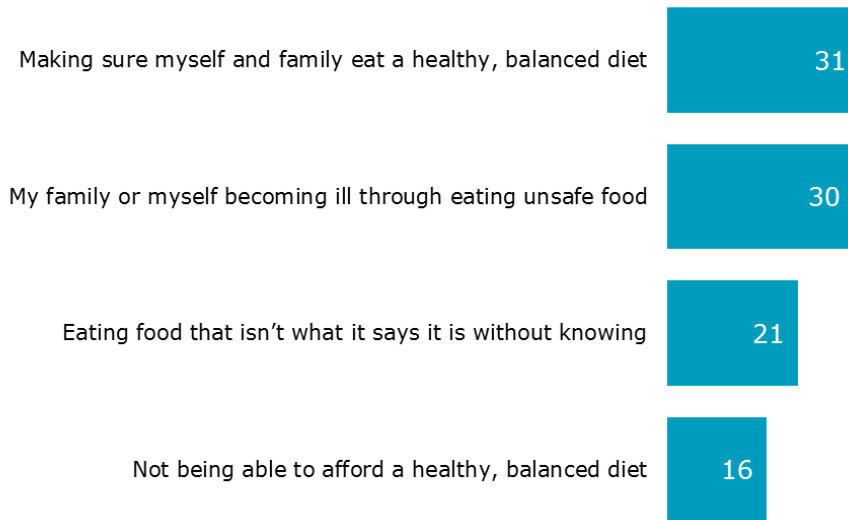
Base: All respondents (1003)



As shown in Figure 4.1, the public are concerned about a wide variety of food related issues, from hygiene to production and authenticity. Although food poisoning is a concern for many (79%), it is interesting to note the difference in the proportion concerned about food hygiene when eating out (78%) compared to food hygiene at home (36%), suggesting many consider eating out to be the bigger risk. Similarly, although there is a high degree of concern about food not being what the label says it is (79%) there is significantly less concern about date labels etc. (43%).

Respondents were also presented with four specific issues and asked which one they were most concerned about. The results of this question are shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 Most concerning food issue (prompted)
Base: All respondents (1003)



When prompted, three in ten people were most concerned about making sure they and their family have a healthy diet, and the same proportion were most concerned about coming ill through eating unsafe food. The cost of eating healthily was of least concern overall, but was still most important to 16% of the population.

5. Food is safe

By this FSS means that food is produced in line with relevant legislation, and that food placed on the market is not contaminated or injurious to health. Where appropriate, food is supplied with accurate instructions to ensure safe storage and handling, and consumers understand the risks and how to protect themselves and others from foodborne illness.

- Consistent hand washing is the norm but scope for improvement on this - 76% wash hands after handling raw meat poultry or fish, and 51% wash fruit or veg to be eaten raw.
- Less than half (46%) use a thermometer to accurately check fridge temperature.
- Around half follow each of these recommended practices to avoid cross-contamination: 60% use the bottom shelf of fridge to store raw meat/poultry, 45% never wash raw chicken or poultry (the advice is not to wash raw chicken or poultry as this splashes bacteria around) and 51% always use different chopping boards for different foods/wash when switching between foods.
- Recommended cooking practices are more widely followed, but still only half of consumers (50%) check that reheated food is hot in the middle and only 37% know what *Campylobacter* – the bacteria which causes the biggest number of food poisoning cases in Scotland each year - is.



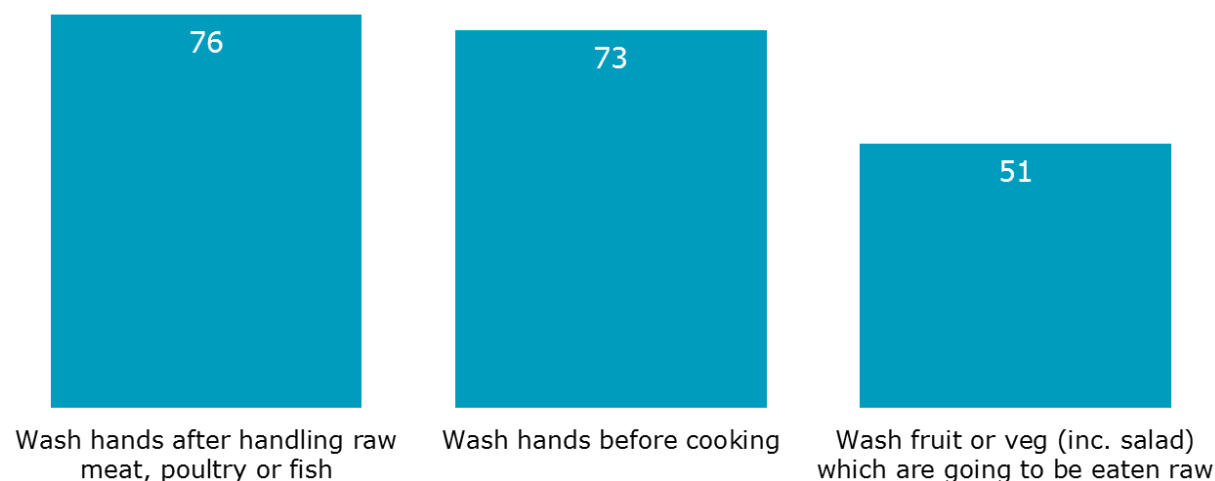
This chapter of the report outlines findings on the extent to which 'safe' behaviours are currently being followed, and looks at the overall proportion of the sample population complying with recommended practice around the 4 Cs i.e. – chilling, cooking, cross-contamination and cleaning.

All of the results in this chapter are based on the 95% of the sample who indicated that they had some responsibility for cooking and preparing food in their household.

5.1 Cleaning

In the context of food safety there are three behaviours associated with cleaning. In order to comply with recommended practice guidelines, each of these should **always** be carried out when preparing or cooking food. Figure 5.1 shows the total proportion claiming that they *always* do each of these.

Figure. 5.1: Extent to which recommended cleaning behaviours are followed (Q19)
Base: all respondents involved in preparing/cooking food (956)



A large majority of around three-quarters (76%) indicated that they always wash their hands after handling raw meat, poultry or fish, and a similar proportion (73%) claimed to always do so before cooking. By comparison far fewer are consistently washing fruit and veg which will be eaten raw – only around half the sample indicated that they do this (51%). So, while most are following recommended practice on washing their hands there is still room for significant improvement on washing fruit and veg that is to be eaten raw.

5.2 Chilling

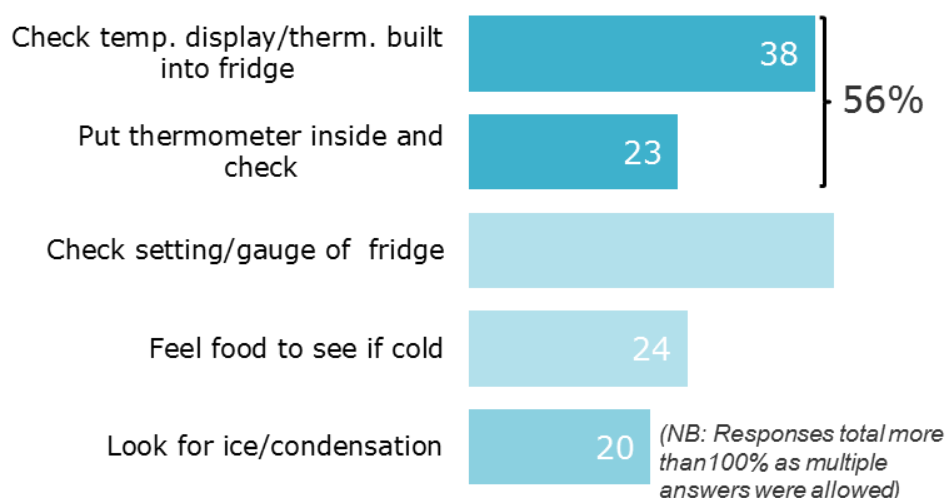
There are four recommended guidelines for chilling food:

- Knowing correct fridge temperature
- Checking fridge temperature accurately
- Defrosting meat/fish in fridge (or cool place)
- Eating opened packet of cooked/cured foods within 2 days.

The most positive response across these is for awareness of the correct temperature of a fridge. To keep the survey engaging, respondents were presented with an image of a thermometer on which they could select what they thought the temperature of their fridge should be. 86% of those responsible for food preparation/cooking correctly identified the answer as between 0 and 5 degrees centigrade. However, as shown in Figure 5.2, among those consumers who check their fridge temperature (some 81%) there is much less familiarity with accurate methods of checking that the fridge temperature is correct.

Figure 5.2. Normal method to check temperature in fridge – prompted (Q22)

Base: all respondents involved in preparing/cooking food and who check their fridge temperature (779)



The two recommended ways of reliably checking the fridge temperature are putting a thermometer in the fridge & checking the temperature and, checking the in-built fridge display/thermometer. In total slightly over half of those checking their fridge temperature (56%) indicated that they correctly follow at least one of these practices. However significant proportions also use other ways, most commonly checking the fridge/gauge settings (41%), as well as feeling the food to see if it is cold (24%) and looking for ice (20%).

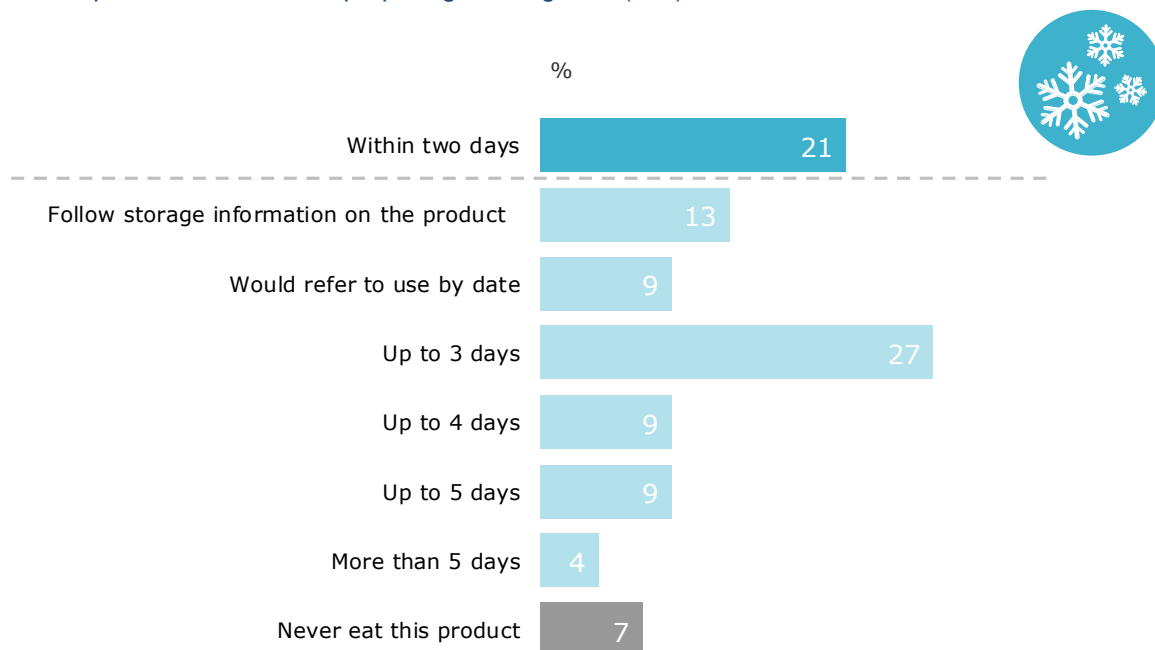
Overall therefore, while many know what temperature their fridge should be set at, far fewer are reliably checking whether or not their fridge is working at this temperature.

With respect to defrosting meat or fish in the appropriate manner, 50% of the sample indicated that they follow the recommended practice and either defrost meat or fish in the fridge (38%) or in a cool place (12%). Most of the remainder (37% overall) indicated that they allow the food to defrost at room temperature, with much smaller minorities stating they defrost these foods in the microwave (5%) or in water (4%).

Compliance with the fourth 'chilling' behaviour was determined by asking for the length of time an open packet of cooked/cured ham would be left open before deciding not to eat it. The results of this question are shown in Figure 6.3.

Figure 5.3 Length of time would keep opened packet of cooked/cured ham before deciding not to eat it (Q32)

Base: all respondents involved in preparing/cooking food (956)



The responses to this question are very varied. Those giving the recommended response ‘within two days’ comprise around a fifth of the sample, with a similar proportion claiming they would follow guidance on the packaging or refer to the use by date. However in total around half (49%) indicated that they would choose to eat the product beyond the two day limit, including 13% who would leave it at least 5 days. The remaining small percentage (7%) did not offer a response to the question, stating that they do not eat this type of food product.

5.3 Cross-contamination

The survey assessed compliance with seven specific behaviours associated with avoidance of cross-contamination, as follows.

Don't

Do

Don't store open tins in the fridge	Raw meat/poultry should be stored in fridge in sealed container
Don't wash raw chicken/poultry	Raw meat/poultry should be stored on bottom shelf of fridge
Don't wash raw meat	Use different chopping boards for different foods or wash chopping boards when switching between foods
Don't wash raw fish or seafood	

Compliance levels varied slightly for the behaviours that FSS recommends people do not undertake – the don'ts. The recommended practice that most claimed to comply with is '*never storing open tins in the fridge*', which 61% said they **never** do. By comparison the proportion following the guidelines to *not wash chicken or poultry* is significantly lower, with 45% indicating that they **never** do this, and even lower at 26% for not washing raw fish or seafood. However when this figure is re-calculated to exclude the significant proportion that does not eat raw fish/seafood compliance rises to 34%. The proportion claiming to **never wash other meat** was recorded between these two levels, at 51%.

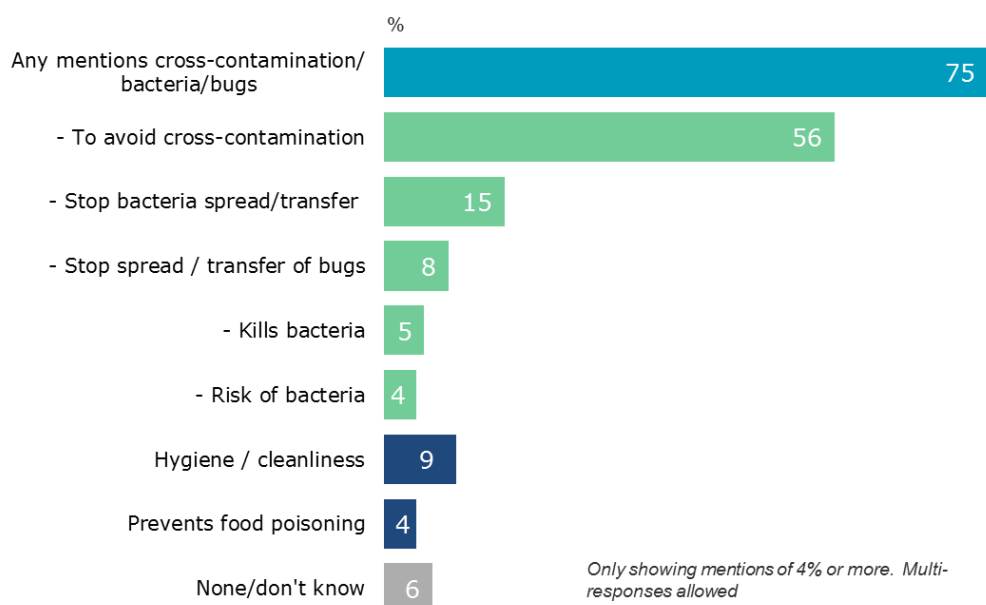
There was a similar spread of compliance levels for the behaviours that consumers are encouraged to do. Using *the bottom shelf of the fridge to store raw meat/poultry* is the practice most likely to be adhered to, with 60% claiming that they **always** do this, whereas a significantly lower proportion claimed that they **always store raw meat/poultry in a covered container** (40%).

Around half the sample claimed that they **always use different chopping boards for different foods, or wash chopping boards when switching between foods**. Most of the remaining sample (35%) claimed to do this most or some of the time, but there was a significant minority of 11% who stated that they never complied with this particular recommended behaviour.

Awareness of the reasons for washing chopping boards when using these to prepare different types of food is at a fairly good level, with most (79%) spontaneously citing some comment, which suggests they understand the risks of spreading bacteria and cross contamination. Figure 5.4 shows the main reasons given when asked 'why do you think you should wash chopping boards when using them to prepare different types of food?'

Figure 5.4 Reasons for washing chopping boards when preparing different types of food (spontaneous open-ended question)

Base: all responsible involved in preparing/cooking food (956)



5.4 Cooking

The responses to six different measures were examined to gauge compliance with recommended cooking practice. These included the following:

Table 5.1 Cooking behaviour

Always cook food until it is steaming hot throughout
Never eat chicken or turkey if the meat is pink or has pink or red juices
Never eat burgers or sausages if the meat is pink or has pink or red juices
Never eat whole cuts of pork or pork chops if the meat is pink or has pink or red juices
Reheat cooked food (only once)
When reheating, check food is cooked all the way through (by checking the middle is hot)

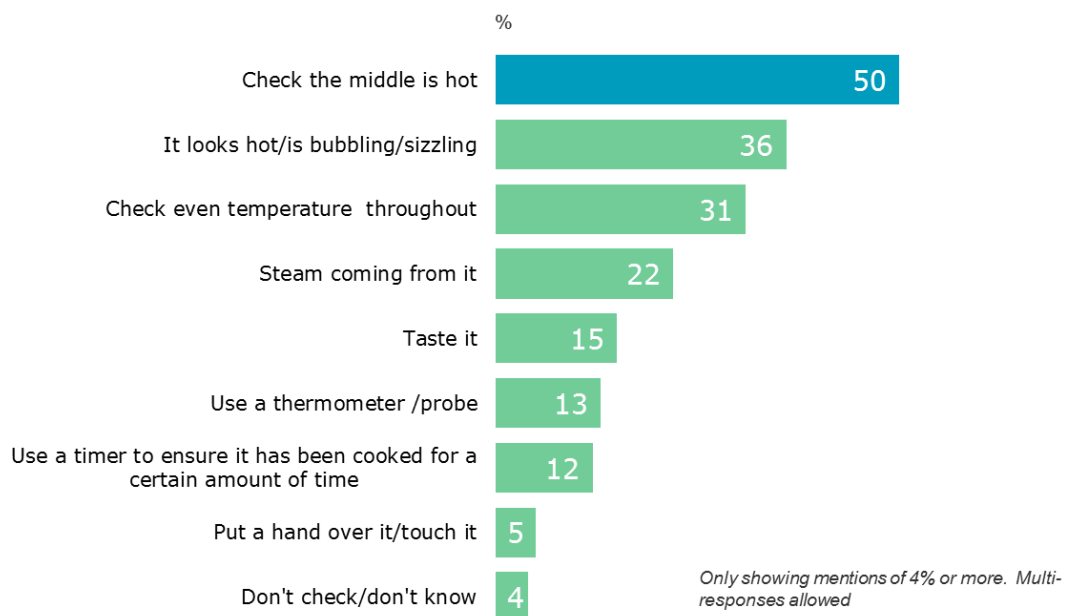
Four of the cooking guidelines relate to the methods used to determine whether or not food has been cooked safely. The first of these, *cooking food until it is steaming hot throughout*, is **always** adhered to by around three-quarters of the sample (74%). Similar proportions agreed that they **never** eat burgers/sausages if pink/with pink or red juice (72%), and **never** eat pork if pink/with pink or red juice (72%). An even higher proportion indicated that they **never** eat poultry if pink/with pink or red juice (83%).

In terms of reheating food, the safety advice to ‘*reheat cooked food only once*’ is widely adhered to. Just over three-quarters (78%) claimed that they would consider reheating cooked food a maximum of once, with a further 11% stating that they would not do this at all. Only 9% of the sample would not follow the recommendation and would reheat twice or more.

However the level of compliance with safe cooking practices is considerably lower with respect to the method used to check that food has been reheated properly. On this measure only 50% selected the correct response – *check the middle is hot*. The full results given in response to the question ‘how do you usually tell that food has been reheated properly?’ by those who would consider reheating cooked food are shown in Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5 Methods used to check food is reheated properly - prompted (Q34)

Base: all respondents involved in preparing/cooking food and who would consider reheating food (888)



In addition to *checking the middle of the food is hot*, a variety of other methods are used to ensure reheated food is properly cooked. For example, small minorities indicated that they *use a thermometer/probe* (13%) or *set a cooking time period* (12%). More commonly though food is checked by ‘*looking hot/sizzling/bubbling*’ (36%) and having ‘*an even temperature throughout*’ (31%). Checking reheated food is hot throughout therefore has the lowest level of compliance of the six recommended safe cooking behaviours.

5.4.1 Awareness of Campylobacter

Awareness of Campylobacter was a further measure used to assess knowledge of good cooking practice. Campylobacter is the most common form of foodborne illness (in Scotland, UK and most of the developed world). The illness normally lasts for around a week, but can also cause more serious illness post- infection and at worst it can kill³. It is an infection that is passed from animals to humans, and is particularly prevalent in raw chicken.





When asked whether or not they had heard of Campylobacter, just over a third of the sample (37%) indicated that they had.

5.4.2 Overall compliance with the 4 Cs

Across all 20 recommended food behaviours there is a huge variation in compliance levels; from 90% for not reheating cooked food more than once to 22% for eating an open pack of cooked ham within 2 days. The extent to which each behaviour is complied with, from best level to worst, is highlighted in Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6. Proportion undertaking '4Cs' behaviours

Base: all responsible for preparing and cooking food in the home

"C"	Recommended Practice	%
	Wash hands before starting to cook or prepare food	73% Always
	Wash hands immediately after handling raw meat, poultry or fish	76% Always
	Wash raw fish or seafood	24% Always (25% n/a)
	Wash fruit or veg (inc. salad) which are going to be eaten raw	51% Always
	Temperature inside fridge should be between 0 and 5C	86%
	Meat usually defrosted in fridge (or in a cool place other than fridge)	50%
	Check fridge temperature using thermometer or built in thermometer	46%
	Would keep an open packet of cooked/cured ham for up to 2 days before deciding not to eat it	22%
	Raw meat / poultry in fridge should be stored in a covered container	40%
	Raw meat poultry should be stored at bottom of fridge	60%
	Use different chopping boards for different foods or wash chopping boards when switching between foods	51% Always
	Wash raw chicken or poultry	45% Never
	Wash raw meat other than chicken / poultry	51% Never
	Store open tins in the fridge	61% Never
	Cook food until it is steaming hot throughout	74% Always
	Reheat cooked food no more than once	78% Once (11% never)
	When reheating check food is cooked all the way through	50% (check middle is hot)
	Eat chicken or turkey if the meat is pink or has pink or red juices	83% Never
	Eat burgers or sausages if the meat is pink or has pink or red juices	72% Never
	Eat whole cuts of pork or pork chops if the meat is pink or has pink or red juices	72% Never

³ See more at: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/food-safety-standards/foodborne-illness/campylobacter#sthash.WUP4tJtc.dpuf>

On average 11.7 of these 20 behaviours are observed. No one carries out all 20 and 5% do 5 or less. More commonly (for 57%) 11-15 behaviours are followed, and a small minority, of 5%, claimed to do 17 – 18.

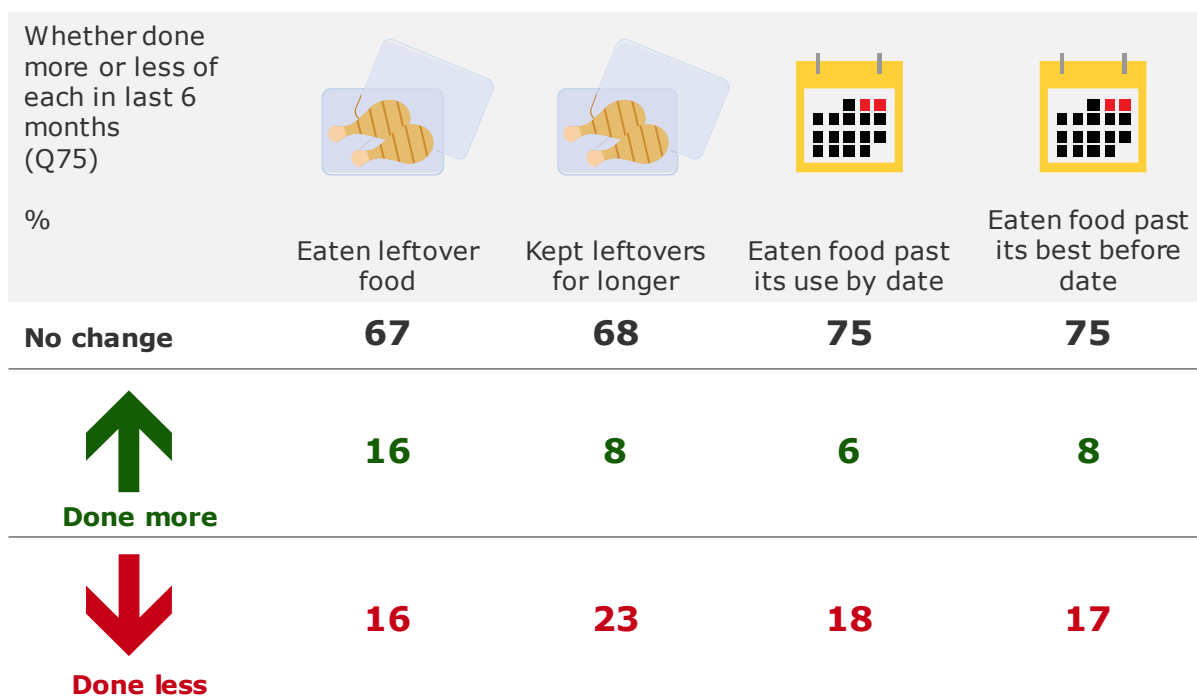
The average number of observed behaviours within each of the 4Cs ranges from 2 out of 3 for Cleaning to slightly over 4 out of 6 for Cooking. Overall, recommended practices appear to be moderately well adhered to, but some are observed by only a minority. This is despite 92%⁴ agreeing that they have clear information on how to prepare and cook food safely and hygienically.

5.5 Changes in food safety behaviours

Respondents were presented with four food safety behaviours and asked whether they had undertaken each behaviour more or less in the last 6 months. The results of this question are shown in Figure 5.7.

Figure 5.7 Changes in food safety behaviours in the past 6 months

Base: all respondents (1003)



At least two thirds claim not to have changed how often they do each of the four food safety behaviours. 16% claim to have eaten leftover food **more**, and are doing so to avoid waste and to save money. The same proportion – 16% - have eaten leftover food **less**, and the main reason given for doing so was food safety. Food safety was also the main reason given for the 23% who have kept leftovers for longer **less**, 18%

⁴ See results for Q19

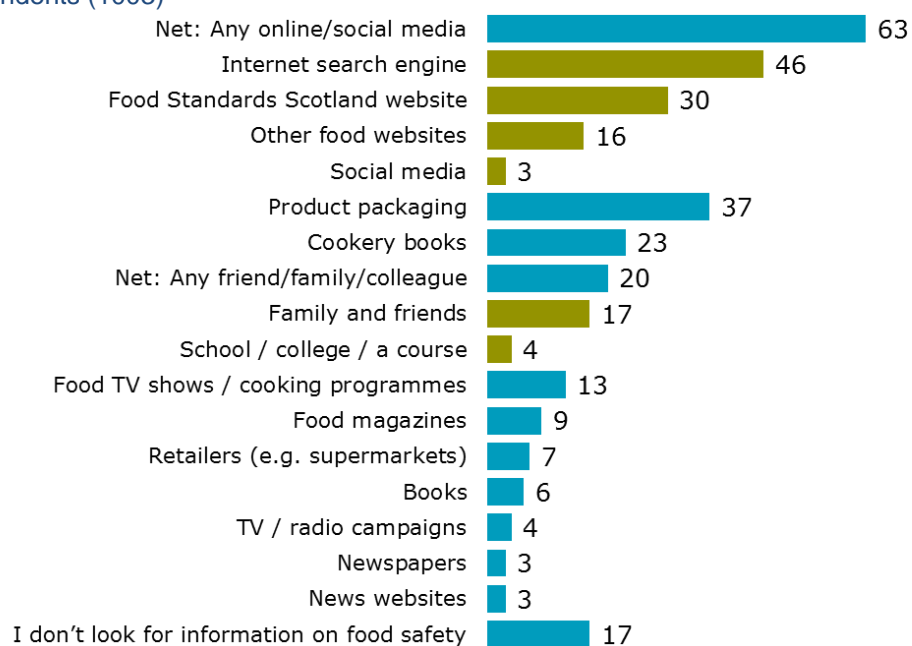
who have eaten food past its use by date **less** and 17% who have eaten food past its best before date **less**.

5.6 Sources of information about food safety

As shown in Figure 5.8, when prompted with a list of possible sources of information, the main source of information about food hygiene, and how to prepare and cook food safely at home is the internet, which was mentioned in some way by three fifths (63%), with almost half claiming they would use an internet search engine (46%). Three in ten (30%) also indicated on prompting that they would use the FSS website.

Figure 5.8 Sources of information about food hygiene, and how to prepare and cook food safely at home

Base: all respondents (1003)



In addition to going online, the second most common source of information is product packaging (37%), followed by cookery books (23%) and friends and family (20%).

6. Food is authentic

By this FSS means that food is of the nature, substance and quality as described by the supplier. This includes its:

- Nature - the foodstuff is from the specified plant, animal or geographical location described;
- Substance - the ingredients of the food are as described and in the appropriate quantities;
- Quality - the food meets the requirements of any quality marketing standard which has been applied, and that the product's specific qualities have not deteriorated.

- There is some desire to find out more about where food comes from, driven by concern about authenticity. 79% are concerned about 'food not being what the label says it is, and 55% agree that "I'd like to know more about where the food I eat comes from".
- Labels are widely referred to when both shopping and at home, primarily for date information (95% ever look at food labels when shopping).
- There is good awareness of what the label information refers to but it is not necessarily displayed in a way that is understandable – only 52% agree "information on food labels is clear and understandable".
- Use by dates are moderately well-recognised and referred to as the best indicator of food safety (69%).



This chapter of the report focuses on a number of attitudinal statements relating to food sources and food labelling as well as reporting on the extent to which consumers use and understand the purpose of 'use by' and 'best before' dates.

6.1 Interest in food authenticity

When prompted with a list of options, 79% of the total sample claimed that they are concerned with *'food not being what the label says it is'*. Moreover, just under half the sample (47%) agreed that *'it worries them that what's in food might not be what's on the label'*. These results thus highlight that most consumers are interested in authenticity, although significantly fewer would consider themselves worried by this.

Interest in country of origin is also at a moderate level, with over half the sample (55%) agreeing that they would *'like to know more about where the food they eat*

comes from'. Around four in ten (41%) indicated that they would like to 'talk to people about things that interest or concern them about food and food issues'.

6.2 Usage and understanding of food labels

There is evidence to suggest that consumers believe the information on labels could be improved. For example, while most (70%) agreed that they have 'clear information on what the labels on the food they buy means', significantly fewer (52%) indicated that 'the information on labels is clear and understandable'. Additionally, only half the sample agreed that they 'trust the information on food labels'.

The survey results also provide clear evidence of the importance of food labels for consumers, with nearly all agreeing that they **ever** look at food labels when shopping (95%) and read food labels at home (93%). The main reasons for looking at labels when shopping and when at home are summarised in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1 Main things looked at on labels when shopping/at home – prompted (Q39)
Base: all respondents (1003)

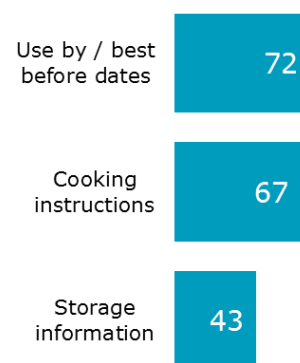
95%

Ever look at food labels when shopping
– top 3 things looked for:
(Q39)



93%

Ever read food labels at home
– top 3 things looked for:
(Q40)



The use by/sell by date is the most widely sought piece of information whether in the shops or at home, with a large majority indicating that they look at labels for this purpose. Indeed these dates are significantly more widely sought out than the price or ingredients when shopping.

6.3 Understanding use by/best before dates on labels

While dates on packaging are used as a source of information, the findings also demonstrate that consumers are not necessarily aware of the difference between the various dates on labels. Around two-thirds (69%) correctly selected 'use by date' when asked which type of label date was the best indicator of whether food is safe to eat. However nearly one fifth chose the 'best before date' (19%) and much smaller proportions selected 'sell by date' (4%) and 'display until date' (2%).

In keeping with these figures, around two thirds (63%) indicated that the last day an item with a use by date of 15th January could safely be eaten was 15th January – a further 16% said 14th January. However, again a significant remainder offered a different response – 6% indicated that the item would be safe to eat on 16th January, and a further 13% claimed that 'it would depend on the condition of the food'.

Overall labels are widely used, with the use by date well recognised as the best indicator of food safety. However this information is not always checked either when shopping or when preparing food. In order to better understand how labels are used, and to help keep respondents engaged throughout the survey, they were asked to complete an exercise where they were shown a typical example of food packaging and asked to read the packet just as they would as if they were in a shop – not for any more or less time than normal. In total, respondents spent an average of 43 seconds looking at the labelling – 19 seconds at the front of the packaging and 24 at the back. Whilst it is recognised this artificial methodology may not give a true read of time spent looking at food labels in a retail environment, this exercise will be repeated at future waves to determine whether consumers spend longer looking at labels as a result of the importance of doing so being made clear.

7. Consumers have healthier diets

FSS dietary advice is based on the Eatwell Guide, produced by Public Health England in association with FSS and other UK governments. The Guide encompasses consensus evidence from the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition Report on Carbohydrates and Health, together with existing dietary recommendations.

- While many are fairly comfortable with how healthy their and their family's diet is, there is also a significant degree of uncertainty, with only 53% thinking that the kinds of meals and snack foods they and their family eat and drink are very or quite healthy.
- Though most feel they have clear information about eating healthily, there is a significant level (69%) of perceived expert contradiction over what foods are good or bad for you, resulting in confusion amongst over a third (35%) as to what's supposed to be healthy and what isn't.
- A significant proportion recognise Scotland's obesity problem, and are concerned about what is in food. 74% agree that there are too many people who eat unhealthily in Scotland, and over 80% are concerned about the amount of sugar, salt, fat and/or saturated fat in food.
- Links between health and diet are, however, well-established, with 85% agreeing they know that an unhealthy diet can cause lots of health problems, like cancer and heart disease.



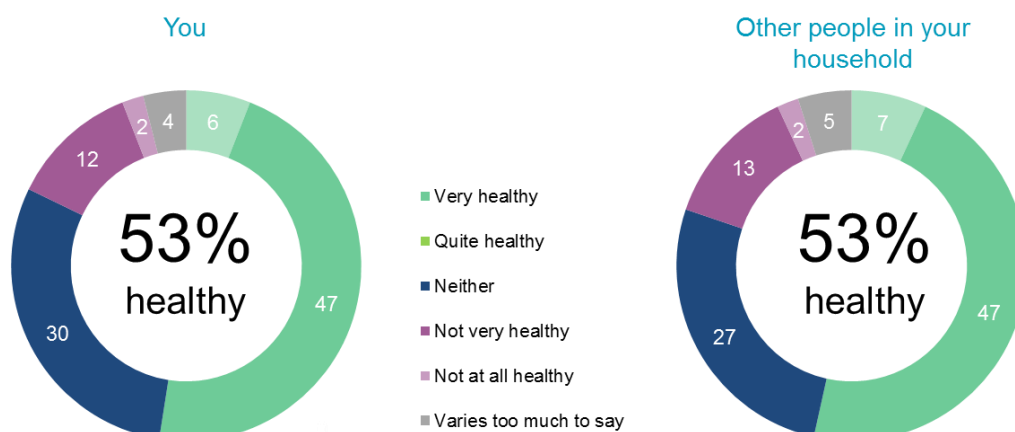
This chapter of the report mainly focuses on attitudes towards healthy eating: covering issues such as healthiness of food and drinks normally consumed, information on healthy eating and health concerns around specific types of food. The Healthy Eating questions in Wave 1 represented a small section of the survey, with this being expanded in Wave 2.

7.1 Healthiness of food/drink

To gauge perceptions towards the healthiness of the types of food and drink that people consume, survey respondents were asked to rate their own consumption as well as that of other people in their household. The results are summarised in Figure 7.1

Figure 7.1 Perceived healthiness of own/household's diet (Q53/Q54)

Base: all respondents (1003)/all in multi-person households (757)



The key points are firstly, that there is no difference in perceptions towards a person's own diet and that of their household generally. Secondly, only slightly over half the sample (53%) regards the food and drink which they/their family normally consume as healthy. Finally, while a significant minority (14% and 15% respectively) rated their own / their family's diet as unhealthy, significantly more were likely to indicate that their diet /their household's diet was neither healthy nor unhealthy (30% and 27% respectively).

7.2 Information on eating healthily

With regard to information and guidance on eating healthily, the results from the survey indicate that while most (89%) agreed that they have 'clear information on eating a healthy balanced diet', there is also widespread agreement that *'the experts contradict each other over what foods are good or bad for you'*. 69% agreed with this, including 23% definitely agreeing, and only 7% disagreeing.

Additionally, around a third (35%) agreed with the statement 'I get confused over what's supposed to be healthy and what isn't'.

7.3 Concerns around healthy eating generally and specific ingredients in foods

The survey also found that a high proportion of respondents recognise that Scotland has an obesity problem, with 74% agreeing that *'there are too many people who eat unhealthily in Scotland'* (35% 'definitely' agreed and only 6% disagreed).





Furthermore, when presented with a list of 16 issues that might be of concern, about half of respondents (50%) indicated they were concerned with *'people having an unhealthy diet'* and just over half (56%) disagreed that *'the problems around people in Scotland being overweight are often exaggerated'*. These results therefore

suggest that there is a fairly high level of awareness that the people of Scotland need to improve their diet.

Respondents were also asked to rate their level of concern with the amount of salt, sugar, fat and saturated fat in food using the scale: 'a lot', 'a little' and 'not at all' concerned. The results are summarised in Figure 7.2.

Figure 7.2 Level of concern with ingredients in food (Q55)

Base: all respondents (1003)

	Any concern	A lot Of concern
 Salt	83%	34%
 Sugar	86%	44%
 Fat	87%	39%
 Saturated fat	87%	40%

Over eight in ten respondents were either concerned 'a lot' or 'a little' about levels of each of salt, sugar, fat and saturated fat. The ingredient causing most concern was sugar, with 44% of all respondents concerned 'a lot', whereas fewer (34%) recorded strong concern about salt.

The links between diet and health are also familiar to most, with 85% agreeing that they '*know that an unhealthy diet can cause lots of health problems, like cancer and heart disease*'. However, despite this well-known connection, a considerable proportion agreed (51%) that they '*know they need to do something to eat more healthily*'. Likewise, a significant proportion (41%) agreed that they '*know they eat too many 'treats' like cakes, biscuits, chocolates or sweets every day*'. This highlights that knowledge and understanding are in themselves insufficient to motivate changes to current eating habits.

8. Responsible food businesses flourish

FSS's regulatory approach is in line with the principles of better regulation. It rewards compliant businesses and supports them both in domestic and export markets. FSS deals effectively with those that are non-compliant, to either achieve compliance, or deliver meaningful sanctions that prevent non-compliant businesses from operating.

- There is widespread concern about food hygiene when eating out, and a desire for establishments to pay more attention to this, with 75% agreeing that restaurants, cafes, takeaways and catering establishments should pay more attention to food safety and hygiene. 78% are concerned about 'food hygiene when eating out'.
- However, price is the key factor when deciding to eat out, and consumers primarily judge hygiene standards of places they eat out at by appearance of the staff and premises (78%).
- A quarter of people in Scotland (25%) worry about getting food poisoning when eating out.



This chapter focuses on factors considered when eating out, with particular reference to food hygiene and Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS) – the food hygiene information scheme operated by FSS.

8.1 Attitudes towards eating

Nearly eight out of ten (78%) indicated that '*food hygiene when eating out*' was a concern to them when presented with a list 16 issues that might be of concern. This was the fourth highest level of concern recorded at this question, with just one percentage point more citing food poisoning (79%), use of pesticides (79%) and food not being what the label says it is (79%). Furthermore (at the same question) just 36% indicated concern with *food hygiene when eating in the home*.

A difference in attitude towards food safety in the home compared to food safety when eating out is also illustrated by the response to the question, "when you eat out how safe would you say the food that you eat is, compared to when you eat at home?". Respondents were four times as likely to say that food safety was worse when eating out, than to say it was worse when eating at home (28% and 7% respectively).

In keeping with these views there was widespread agreement (75%) that ‘restaurants, cafes, takeaways and catering establishments should pay more attention to food safety and hygiene’ (only 4% disagreed).

Furthermore, when eating out, a quarter of all respondents (25%) agreed that they ‘worry about getting food poisoning’.

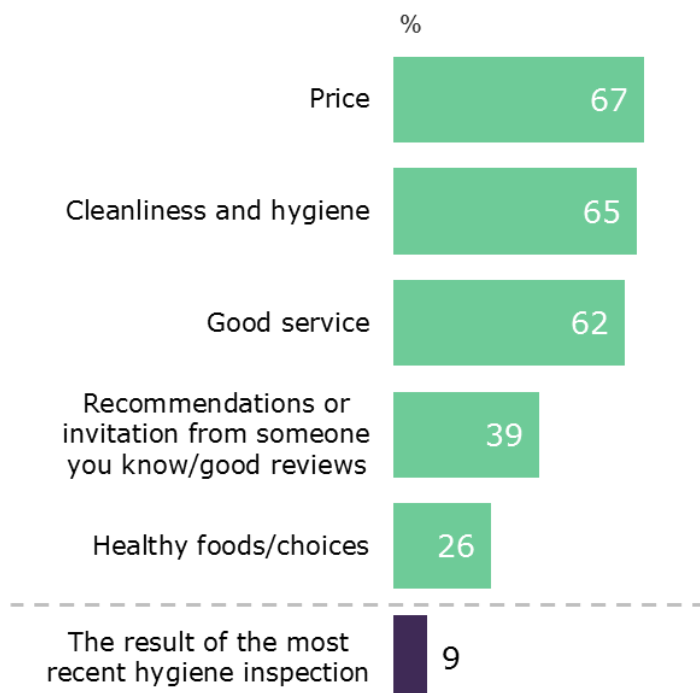
8.2 Factors when deciding where to eat out

When deciding **where** to eat out, cleanliness and hygiene was the second most important factor on prompting (after price). This compares with only one in ten (9%) claiming that the results of the most recent hygiene inspection is an important factor in their decision, thus highlighting that only a small proportion are using formal measures to judge hygiene when eating out.

The top six factors used when deciding where to eat out are shown in Figure 8.2.

Figure 8.2 Top 5 factors when deciding where to eat out – prompted (Q14)

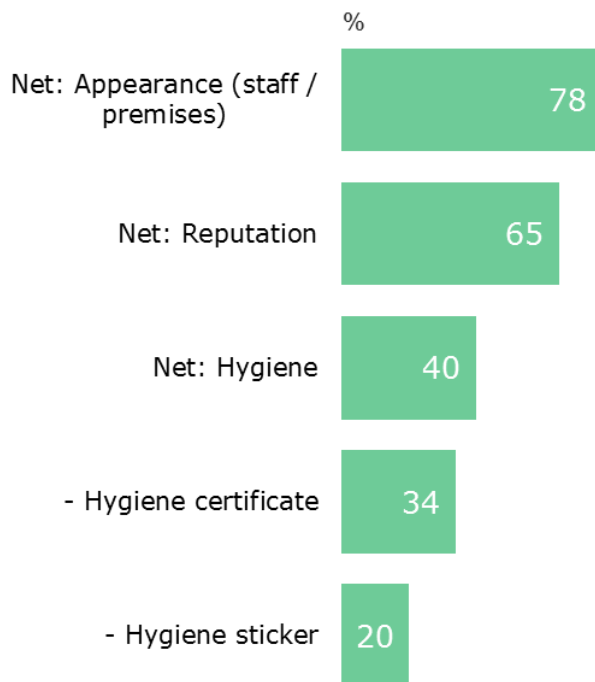
Base: All respondents (1003)



When all respondents were asked how they would judge the hygiene standards of the place they eat out at or buy food from, the most widely stated answer (78%) was appearance (staff and/or premises), followed by reputation (65%) and then hygiene certificates/stickers (40%). These results (summarised in Figure 8.3) confirm that the official measures of hygiene are not very influential despite cleanliness and hygiene being an important factor in deciding where to eat/buy food from.

Figure 8.3 Top 5 factors used to judge hygiene standards of places to eat out at/buy food from – prompted (Q47)

Base: All respondents (1003)



More specific questions regarding hygiene certificates confirm that these are under-utilised with only a quarter (26%) claiming they have clear information on ‘*how to check whether the food I am eating in a café/bar/restaurant is safe*’.

There is however some awareness of the existing scheme: when shown images of FHIS certificates, half of respondents (50%) claimed they had seen one: 44% had seen it in a window and 6% had seen it online.

Moreover among all respondents, a quarter (26%) had used the FHIS in the previous 12 months – again predominantly looking at the window/door of an establishment (90%) rather than through researching on the internet (8%).

Importantly, while only a minority have used this scheme to check hygiene standards, the vast majority of who have done so (83%) said it influenced their decision on whether or not to use that establishment (including nearly a third - 31% - who were influenced ‘a lot’) – indicating potential for the scheme if greater awareness can be generated.

9. FSS is a trusted organisation

FSS is trusted by people and food businesses, and the other organisations that we interact with, to act in accordance with our Values and Principles and to put consumers first. This section of the report explores the public's opinion and knowledge of FSS and its responsibilities, some eight months after the organisation was established.

- The survey was undertaken eight months after FSS was set up on 1 April 2015. FSS has achieved a good level of brand recognition (44%) in that short time, and a widespread degree of trust, with 70% of those aware of FSS trusting the organisation to do its job.
- FSS performs best in those areas where consumers most expect it to be operating, with 49% of those aware of FSS rating FSS as excellent or very good at ensuring that food in Scotland is safe to eat. However there is lower knowledge of FSS's role in diet and nutrition, with just under half (49%) being aware that FSS is responsible for promoting and enabling healthy eating.



9.1 Brand recognition, trust and knowledge

At the start of the survey, all respondents were shown the FSS logo and told that 'Food Standards Scotland' has taken over from the 'Food Standards Agency' as the organisation responsible for making sure people eat healthily and safely in Scotland. In total 44% claimed they had heard of FSS before taking part in the survey.

Among those aware of FSS, there was a widespread degree of trust, with 70% saying they either trust FSS 'a little' (51%) or 'a lot' (19%) and only a very small proportion said they did not trust the organisation (<0.5%). The significant remainder (28%) neither trust nor distrust FSS reflecting their unfamiliarity with the organisation.

Those aware of FSS were also asked what issues they think the organisation is responsible for (from a prompted list). As shown in Figure 7.1, the most selected issues were '*ensuring the food you buy is safe to eat*' and '*to work with the food industry to improve standards*' (selected by 80% and 75% of respondents respectively).

Figure 9.1 What issues respondents think FSS is responsible for (prompted) (Q8)

Base: All respondents aware of FSS (450)



The results from Figure 9.1 highlight that respondents are most likely to associate FSS with food safety and standards and least likely to be familiar with its responsibility for encouraging healthy eating and country of origin labelling. Awareness of the organisation’s remit for food authenticity, overseeing hygiene inspections, other aspects of labelling and safety in the home are moderately well-known.

9.2 Perceptions for FSS

Those aware of FSS were also asked to rate FSS on a variety of brand proposition statements using a five point scale ranging from excellent to poor. The combined percentage rating FSS at a top two box level (excellent or very good) is shown in Figure 9.2 for each statement.

Figure 9.2 Proportion rating FSS ‘Excellent’ or ‘Very good’ (Q10)

Base: All respondents aware of FSS (450)



The results show that the performance of FSS is considered strongest on ensuring food is safe and food safety expertise, with slightly under half awarding a top two box score for these statements (49% and 46% respectively). By comparison the percentages indicating an 'excellent' or 'very good' rating were slightly lower with respect to statements focusing on nutrition, food labelling and eating healthily (at 42%, 42% and 41% respectively).

The three lowest FSS 'top two box' scores (less than 40%) relate more to the way in which the organisation operates, rather than its functions. Additionally, these statements recorded the highest level of non-response, with around 15% unable to give an opinion compared to around 10% across all other statements.

Importantly the total percentage giving a positive rating, including 'excellent', 'very good' or 'good', ranged from 70% to 83% across all statements and only a tiny minority (2% or less) indicated that any aspect was 'poor'.

Overall therefore, FSS performs strongly across all aspects but is considered to be performing best where consumers expect it to be operating – in protecting and advising on food safety. The aspects with the lowest level of strong positive endorsement also tended to have the highest level of non-response, suggesting that ratings will improve as familiarity with FSS increases.



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