

Paper 4.1

**FSA Social Science Update (December 2019)**

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**SUMMARY**

This paper provides an update on recent and upcoming FSA social science research publications. Hyperlinks for published reports are provided in the footnotes. This paper is for information only.

**PUBLISHED RESEARCH (March-November 2019)**

**March 2019**

- **Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) Tracker (Wave 7)<sup>1</sup>** – In 2014, FSA decided to explore the FHRS (Food Hygiene Rating Scheme<sup>2</sup>) in more detail and commissioned a bespoke annual tracker survey to monitor specifically consumer awareness, attitudes towards and use of the scheme. Findings from this wave show that around half of respondents in England (51%) and Northern Ireland (50%) were aware of the FHRS. The figure was higher in Wales (62%). In total 82% of respondents reported seeing a hygiene rating sticker; however in terms of actually checking the rating, 52% of respondents in England, 41% in Wales and 62% in Northern Ireland report either often or sometimes doing so before deciding to purchase food from an establishment. Overall 86% of respondents report that food businesses should have to display their food hygiene rating which is unchanged from the previous wave. The proportion of respondents who report that businesses providing an online food ordering service should display their food hygiene rating where it can be clearly seen by customers continues to be high in England (85%), Wales (87%) and Northern Ireland (97%).

**April 2019**

- **Food and You (Wave 5) combined report (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)<sup>3</sup>** – Food and You measures the public's reported behaviours, attitudes and knowledge relating to food safety and food issues. It provides robust evidence which is used by FSA stakeholders to inform policy decision-making and public awareness campaigns. It also helps to identify areas where further research may be required. A total of 3,059 consumers took part in Wave 5

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/fhrs-tracker-2018-wave-7.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) is a partnership scheme between local authorities and the FSA which aims to provide consumers with information on the hygiene standards of places they choose to eat out at or purchase food from. Since 2014, the FSA has used a bespoke tracker survey to monitor awareness, attitudes towards and use of the scheme.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/food-and-you-wave5-combined-report-web-revised.pdf>

between June and December 2018. Findings from this wave show that: the average IRP (Index of Recommended Practice) score is 67, showing that most respondents follow FSA recommendations on food safety in the home<sup>4</sup>; buying from mini supermarkets has increased from 35% to 43%, and supermarket home delivery has increased from 10% to 17%; 87% reported having seen the FHRS sticker; around three in five respondents mentioned good service (61%), a good hygiene rating score (60%) and the price of food (60%) as important in their decisions about where to eat out; 47% of respondents reported that they had experienced food poisoning at some time in their lives.

- **Food and You (Wave 5) secondary analysis paper on trust<sup>5</sup>** – This report describes the development of two new composite measures of (i) trust in the FSA, and (ii) trust in the food supply chain. The average score of the composite measure of trust in the FSA was 7.7 out of 10 for all respondents. The average score of the composite measure of trust in food supply chains was 3.41 out of 5 for all respondents in the sample. These new measures have subsequently been added to the FSA's biannual Public Attitudes Tracker so that trust in the FSA and food more generally can be monitored more closely by the Agency.

## May 2019

- **Food and You (Wave 5) country comparison report<sup>6</sup>** – This supplementary report provides a cross-country analysis, highlighting similarities and differences between respondents living in England, Wales and Northern Ireland based on the data from Wave 5 of the FSA's Food and You survey. It shows that respondents in England (4%) were slightly more likely to be vegetarian or vegan than those in Wales (3%) or Northern Ireland (2%); the proportion of respondents who reported an adverse reaction to some foods was higher in England (17%) than in Wales or Northern Ireland (12% and 14% respectively); levels of food security and insecurity were similar in all three countries; and unchanged from Wave 4, respondents in Northern Ireland have the highest average IRP scores (72, compared with 69 in Wales and 67 in England).

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<sup>4</sup> In order to get an overall picture of people's food safety behaviour, FSA uses the Index of Recommended Practice (IRP) as a composite measure of food hygiene knowledge and behaviours within the home.

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/foodandyou\\_wave5\\_trust-paper\\_v8-final\\_0.pdf](https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/foodandyou_wave5_trust-paper_v8-final_0.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/food-and-you-wave-5-country-comparison-report-190528-web\\_0.pdf](https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/food-and-you-wave-5-country-comparison-report-190528-web_0.pdf)

## June 2019

- **Food and You (Wave 5) Northern Ireland report<sup>7</sup>** – This report presents the Northern Ireland data from Wave 5 of Food and You. This includes responses to an additional module on ‘healthy eating’ which was only asked in Northern Ireland. A total of 461 respondents in Northern Ireland took part in Wave 5. There was a high level of awareness of the government recommendations to eat five or more portions of fruit and vegetables every day. Respondents were asked how many portions they should eat each day, and 81% of respondents gave ‘five’ as their answer. The proportions who correctly identified some types of fruit and vegetables as counting towards the recommended five a day have declined since earlier waves. The proportions who thought pure fruit juice counted has declined overall from 89% in Wave 1 (2010) and 90% in Wave 2 (2012) to 75% in Wave 5.

## July 2019

- **Food and You (Wave 5) Wales report<sup>8</sup>** – This report presents the Wales data from Wave 5 of Food and You. Wave 5 was completed by 535 respondents in Wales.

## August 2019

- **Social media listening: emerging trends<sup>9</sup>** – In 2019 FSA commissioned an open listening project, drawing on 13.7 million conversations on social media about food throughout 2018. The project aimed to identify what food topics people were talking about, particularly any issues which we might not have previously identified. A combination of social listening and profiling, desk research, qualitative research and search term analysis were used to discover, analyse and future-proof findings of UK food trends and help understand the behaviours and attitudes that are influencing and propelling these emerging trends. The project listened to 13.5 million conversations about food across 14 online sources, categorised into 46 topics, refining these into four super-categories (meat reduction, food system, health and sustainability). Outputs from the project will inform our future horizon scanning exercises and our understanding of emerging risks. It will also feed into the Food Strategy.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/food-and-you-wave5-northern-ireland-report.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/food-and-you-wave-5-wales-report-english-version-web-final.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/fsa-social-media-listening\\_final-report.pdf](https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/fsa-social-media-listening_final-report.pdf)

## September 2019

- **Eating Well Choosing Better Tracking survey<sup>10</sup>** – FSA has been monitoring the impact of the Eating Well Choosing Better programme through a consumer tracking survey since November 2017. The purpose of this programme is to improve the nutritional quality of everyday products produced, served and sold to consumers in Northern Ireland. The tracking survey runs twice per year in May and November and is completed online by a representative sample of approximately 300 adults in Northern Ireland. Findings from the latest wave (May 2019) show that: 43% of women and 36% of men are aware of the correct daily recommended calorie intake; 96% of respondents recognised traffic light labels, and 67% report using the traffic light labels when shopping; 67% of respondents reported that they are more likely to buy reduced salt and reduced sugar products, and 63% are more likely to buy reduced fat products, compared to a regular version of the product; 50% or more of respondents found it difficult or very difficult to choose healthier food and meals from takeaways (67%), fast food restaurants (57%) and restaurants (52%).

## October 2019

- **Food and You (Wave 5) secondary analysis paper on food hypersensitivities<sup>11</sup>** – This report presents secondary analysis of Food and You data focusing on food hypersensitivities. This analysis was requested by FSA's Allergy and Intolerance Policy team to inform their programme of work. Analysis revealed that 79% of respondents report no food hypersensitivity while 21% report having an adverse reaction to consuming certain foods. Respondents with food allergies (55%) were more likely to shop at mini supermarkets than respondents with no adverse reaction to food and respondents with an 'other' adverse reaction (both 42%). Respondents with a food allergy were the most likely group to report always using a different chopping board for different foods (58%), to never store open tins in the fridge (79%), and to always wash fruit and vegetables to be eaten raw (67%). Respondents with a food intolerance (36%) were most likely to report 'word of mouth' as a source of information for hygiene standards when eating out, in comparison to 17% of respondents with an 'other' adverse reaction and 26% of respondents with a food allergy. This analysis highlighted areas where further research may be required and has informed the questionnaire development for Wave 6.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.food.gov.uk/research/research-projects/eating-well-choosing-better-tracking-survey>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/foodandyouw5secondaryanalysis-consumerswithfoodhypersensitivities.pdf>

## November 2019

- **Food and You (Wave 5) secondary analysis paper on the Food Landscape in Wales** <sup>12</sup>– This report presents secondary analysis of Food and You data focusing on the food landscape in Wales. This analysis was requested by colleagues in FSA Wales. Analysis revealed 10% of respondents in Wales reported experiencing low food security (10% marginal food security, 80% high food security). Respondents in Wales were more likely to have high trust in the FSA (40%) than those in England (32%) but less likely than respondents in Northern Ireland (47%). Respondents in Wales were almost evenly split between high trust (35%) and low trust (37%) in the food supply chain, with 28% reporting medium trust. Respondents in Wales (9%) were less likely than respondents in England (11%) but more likely than respondents in Northern Ireland (5%) to report that they were vegan, vegetarian or partially vegetarian. This analysis has highlighted areas where further investment may be required.

## UPCOMING PUBLICATIONS

### November 2019

- Understanding Welsh consumer needs around FHRS information in online retail environments

### December 2019

- Food Business Operators (FBO) Tracker

### January 2020

- CBD Consumer Insight
- Online Food Aggregators: Consumer Insights
- Biannual Public Attitudes Tracker (Wave 18)
- Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) Tracker (Wave 8)
- Food and You (Wave 5) secondary analysis on the current food landscapes across England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- AMR Consumer Insight

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<sup>12</sup> [https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/foodandyou\\_wave5\\_landscape-in-wales\\_v7.pdf](https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/foodandyou_wave5_landscape-in-wales_v7.pdf)