

Citizens' views on the EU and food issues

Summary of findings - January 2018

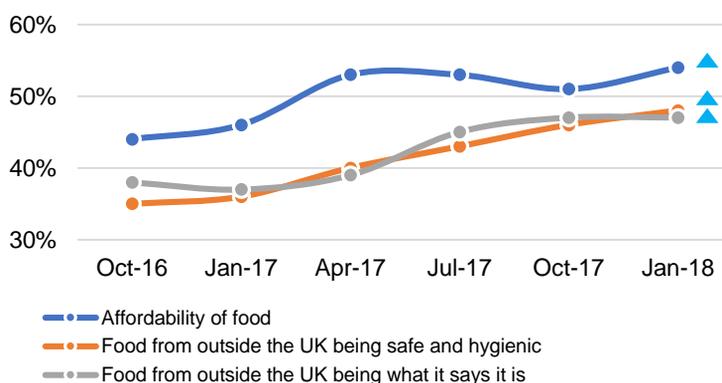


This headline note pulls out key findings from the sixth wave of online quarterly tracking on citizens' attitudes to food and regulation within the context of leaving the EU, with a focus on areas where views have changed over time.

Key findings:

- 1 The trend continues that citizens are more likely to think that the vote to leave the EU will have a **negative (37%) rather than positive (25%) effect on food** over the next 2-3 years
- 2 Findings suggest that citizens are **generally more informed and more concerned now than this time last year**, with significantly fewer 'don't know' or 'neutral' responses across most questions, and higher levels of concern and negativity
- 3 Nearly two thirds of citizens (**65%**) think that **food will become more expensive** as a result of leaving the EU; this proportion is significantly higher than this time last year (57%), but has remained fairly consistent since April 2017

- 4 Over half of citizens (54%) report that they are more concerned about **affordability of food** now that the UK has voted to leave the EU. Just under half are more concerned about **authenticity, safety and hygiene of food from outside the UK**. The proportion of citizens 'more concerned' has increased significantly for all issues compared to January 2017



(Q7. And would you say you were more or less concerned about the following food issues, now that the UK has voted to leave the European Union? NET More concerned: I am more concerned than I was / I am much more concerned than I was)

- 5 **Over half (59%) of citizens favour more regulation over less regulation.** A third believe that there will be more regulation as a result of the UK voting to leave the EU and feel that this is a good thing. The proportion believing that there will be less regulation and feeling that this would be a bad thing has increased significantly vs. last year (now at 26%)
- 6 **A third of citizens (33%) believe that laws relating to food come mostly from the EU;** this is significantly higher than this time last year (27%). **Citizens who think that all / most laws relating to food come from the EU are more likely to believe that leaving the EU will have a negative effect on food (39% vs. 28% among those who think all / most laws come from the UK).**

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Initial findings from the latest EU Exit qualitative research (Jan/Feb 2018) suggest that*:

- **Food regulation tends not to be top of mind** when it comes thinking about leaving the EU, and in many cases questions about future expectations are initially met with silence / confusion
- There is a general sense that **'if it ain't broke, don't fix it'** – people think that current food standards should be kept the same
- Consumers identify the following areas as important after leaving the EU: maintaining **safety standards** (inc. hygiene, ingredients, provenance, and animal welfare), maintaining (or improving) the **quality** of food, better / clear **labelling** of food, keeping food **prices** affordable, **supporting farmers** and reducing waste