



# ARE UK SUPERMARKETS DOING ENOUGH TO TACKLE FOOD WASTE?

Data Report

24TH FEBRUARY -  
03RD MARCH 2023

30,244 VOTES

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# 01 | INTRODUCTION

**30,244**

**TOTAL VOTES**

**10,721**

**VOTES AGE 5-11**

**19,523**

**VOTES AGE 11-18+**

**Please Note:** The sample size featured reflects the number of students that cast their vote on this topic during the week in which this vote was held. This sample size does not reflect the number of students who discussed this topic but did not get a chance to participate in the voting.

## ARE UK SUPERMARKETS DOING ENOUGH TO TACKLE FOOD WASTE?

**4 OUT OF 5**

voters aged 11-16+  
said No.



Many emphasised  
**CONSUMERS**  
also need to change  
their habits.

Ahead of **Food Waste Action Week (6th-12th March)**, voters considered the actions being taken by **UK supermarkets** to tackle this ever-growing problem. In the lessons, they explored what is being done and how – if at all – this might be improved.

We received a total of 30,244 votes within our voting period, 19,523 of which came from young people over the age of 11. Our 5-11 questions received 10,721 votes in total.

Secondary and College voters all considered: **“Are UK supermarkets doing enough to tackle food waste?”** while Primary 7-11 voters discussed: **“Do supermarkets need to do more to tackle food waste?”** and Primary 5-7 voters debated: **“Are supermarkets helping us to throw away less food?”**



So far in 2023, we have collected almost 300,000 votes from young people!



# 02 | RESULTS

**77% Yes**

**PRIMARY 7-11**

**80% No**

**SECONDARY**

**82% No**

**16+ & COLLEGE**

Our Secondary, 16+ & College voters discussed the same question this week and all had majority 'No' votes. Comparatively, our Primary vote was divided into two questions, which you can find details of below.

The 7-11 result had a majority 'Yes' outcome, which placed them in agreement with the older year groups (due to the wording of the question being different). The 5-7 vote had a majority 'Yes' outcome, which showed a more sympathetic view of the supermarkets than the older ages.

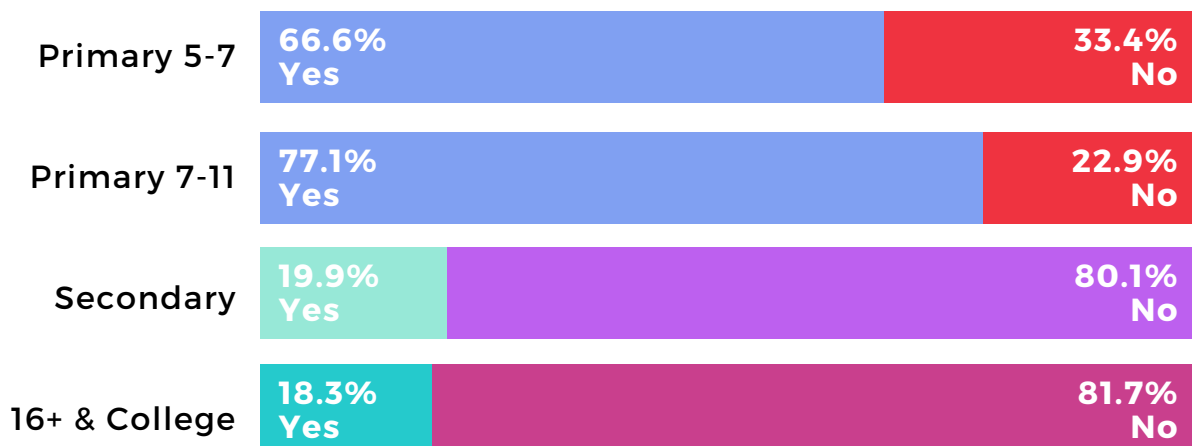
**We made a commitment to our young voters that their voices would be heard for Food Waste Action Week.**

These were the VoteTopic questions, discussed amongst the different age groups:

**Primary 5-7:** "Are supermarkets helping us to throw away less food?"

**Primary 7-11:** "Do supermarkets need to do more to tackle food waste?"

**Secondary, 16+ & College:** "Are UK supermarkets doing enough to tackle food waste?"

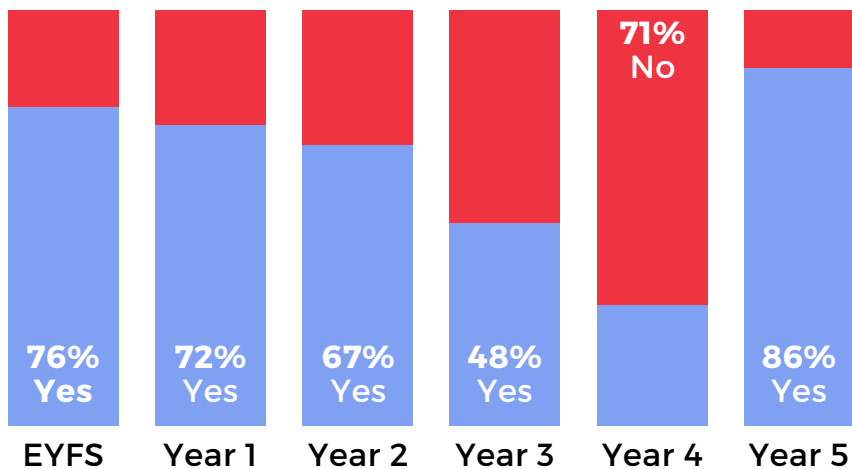


See Appendix 1 for full results.



# 02 | RESULTS

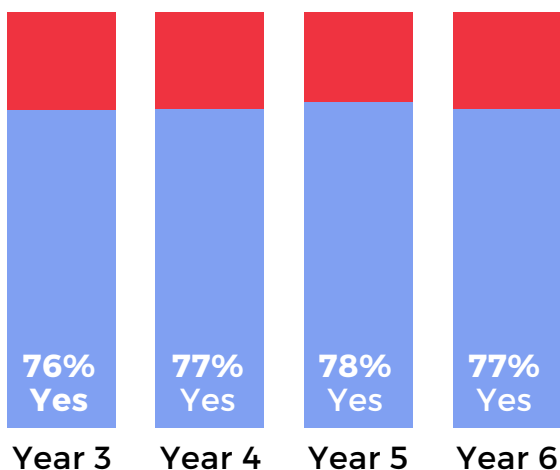
Primary 5-7: "Are supermarkets helping us to throw away less food?"



The results by year group for our age 5-7 vote varies quite widely. EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2 all have 'Yes' majorities within 10% of the overall national result. However, Years 3, 4 and 5 are outside this range, with Year 4 having a 'No' majority.

**“ Supermarkets have started introducing ways of reducing food waste but they definitely need to do more as an awful lot of food is still being wasted on a daily basis. A plan for 16 supermarkets is not enough as there are many independent local shops/markets that also need to do more too to reduce food waste. ”**

Primary 7-11: "Do supermarkets need to do more to tackle food waste?"



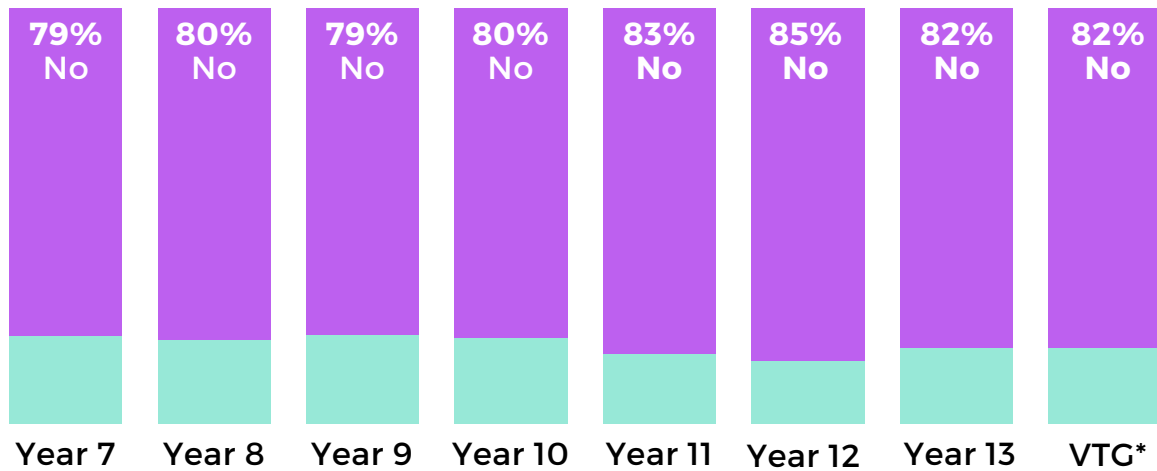
The results of our age 7-11 vote were much more consistent, with all year groups having majority 'Yes' votes in the high 70s. From Year 4 onwards, this majority seemed to increase slightly.

It is clear from these results that young people want to see a change in supermarket behaviour. In the majority, they believe supermarkets need to do more to tackle the food waste problem.

See Appendix 2 for full results.

# 02 | RESULTS

Secondary, College & 16+: "Are UK supermarkets doing enough to tackle food waste?"



\*Vertical Tutor Group

“

**I don't think supermarkets are doing enough tackle food waste. They could only sell seasonal food so there is less imported foods that are wasted. Also, they could extend the 'best before date' so things aren't thrown away so fast.**

”

Our 11-16+ vote answered the question, "Are supermarkets doing enough to tackle food waste?". Each year group had a majority 'No' vote, showing that young people of all ages want to see supermarkets do more to combat food waste.

Year 12 had the highest 'No' vote, with Years 7 & 9 having the joint highest 'Yes' vote.

The comments showed an equal desire for change, however not just from the supermarkets. As you can read from our Comments section on pages 11-13, young people want consumer behaviour to change to help solve the problem of too much food waste.

See Appendix 2 for full results.

# 04 | GENDER

**13,923**

**FEMALE VOTES**

**13,353**

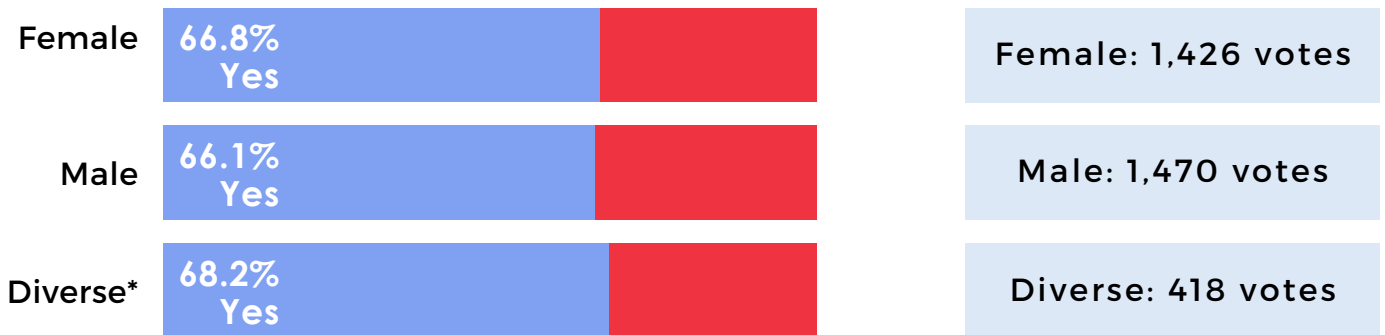
**MALE VOTES**

**2,968**

**DIVERSE VOTES**

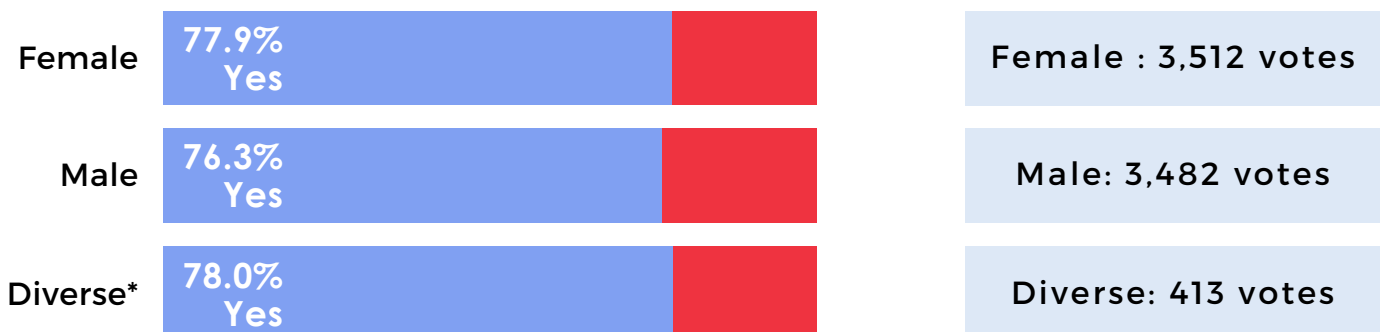
## Primary 5-7: "Are supermarkets helping us to throw away less food?"

See Appendix 3 for full results.



Unlike the result from the year group breakdowns, the gender breakdown is consistent across all categories for our age 5-7 vote.

## Primary 7-11: "Do supermarkets need to do more to tackle food waste?"



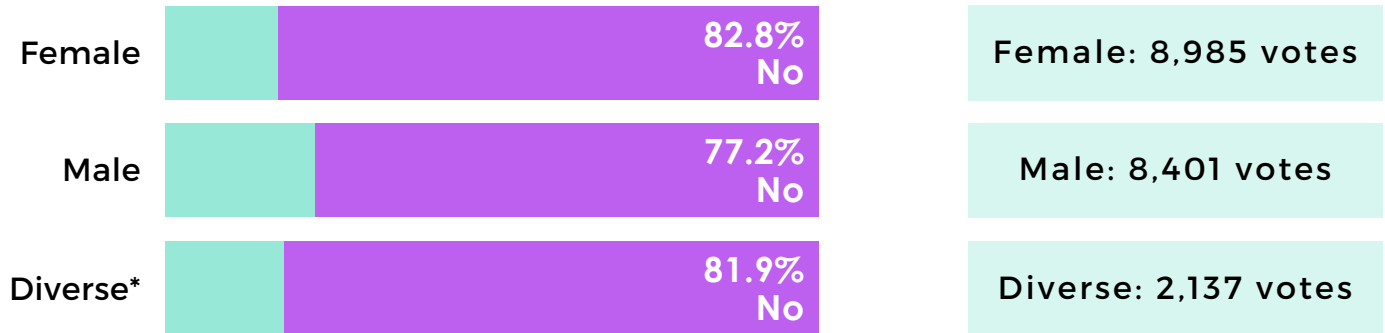
Similarly to the year group breakdown for this question, the gender breakdown is consistent across the three categories. Our highest 'Yes' vote came from the Diverse category, with the highest 'No' vote coming from the Male category. There was only 1.7% between these two categories.



# 04 | GENDER

## Secondary, 16+ & College: "Are UK supermarkets doing enough to tackle food waste?"

See Appendix 3 for full results.



\*Votes collected as "Diverse" include students that identify as gender diverse, as well as students that wish not to disclose or were not able to specify their gender.

The results for this VoteTopic show a clear desire from young people for supermarkets to do more to tackle food waste. However, the comments for this topic paint a much more varied picture, with many voters emphasising the need for consumers to change their habits to tackle food waste.

The most common ideas for cutting food waste produced by supermarkets was to remove best before dates, donate food to food banks and charities, reduce the price of older products and for consumers to only buy the things they need.

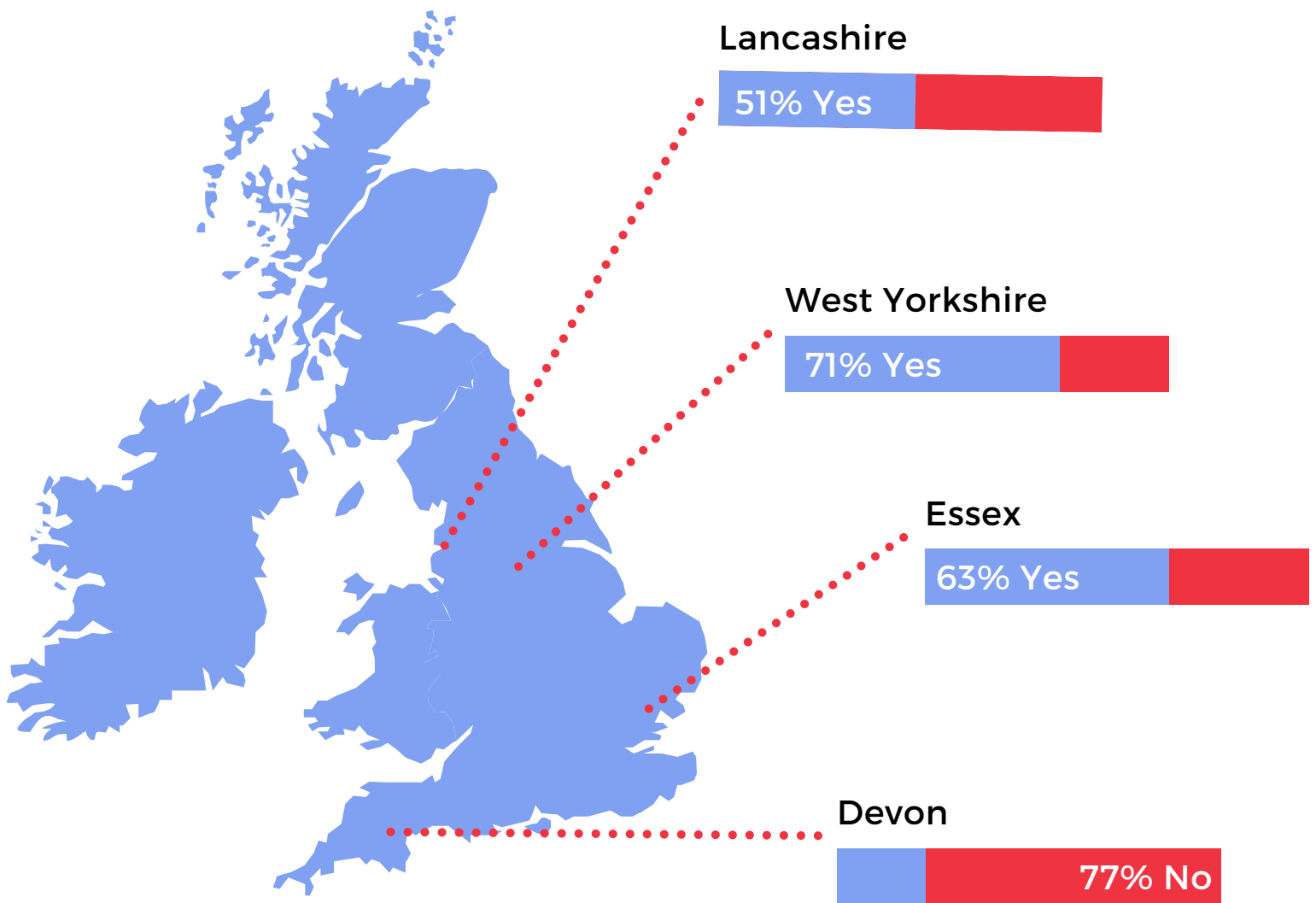
**“ It's not only supermarkets that need to help. We as consumers also need to do our part! We think it will take longer to reduce food waste by half in the UK than the current goal of 2030! ”**

# 05 | LOCATION

**Please Note:** The following visuals contain a small sample of the locations that have voted on this week's VoteTopic. To see all the locations that voted on each question, please go to Appendix 4 in the Appendices section of the report. Locations with 20 or less votes have not been included in the visuals or headlines but have been included in the raw data in Appendix 4.

## Primary 5-7: "Are supermarkets helping us to throw away less food?"

See Appendix 4 for full results.



**HIGHEST  
'YES' VOTE**

**Kent**

**95% YES**

**HIGHEST  
'NO' VOTE**

**Bedfordshire**

**96% NO**

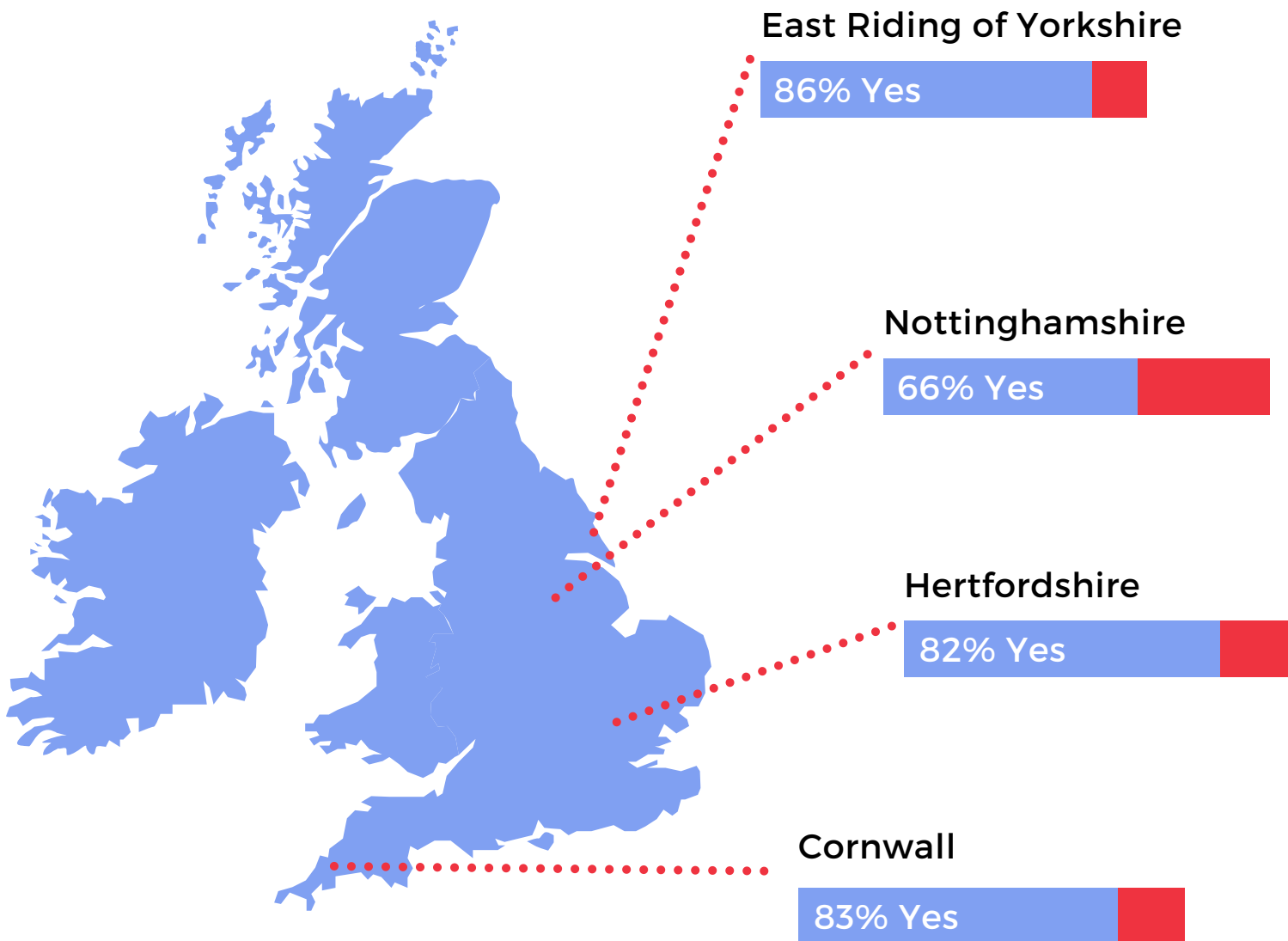
Locations with less than 20 votes have not been considered.

# 05 | LOCATION

Here, the vote has been broken down by location for the 7-11 question. This visual chart shows a selection of the data, however you can view the full location breakdown of results in the Appendices.

## Primary 7-11: "Do supermarkets need to do more to tackle food waste?"

See Appendix 4 for full results.



**HIGHEST  
'YES' VOTE**

**Merseyside**

**100% YES**

**HIGHEST  
'NO' VOTE**

**Norfolk**

**100% NO**

Locations with less than 20 votes have not been considered.

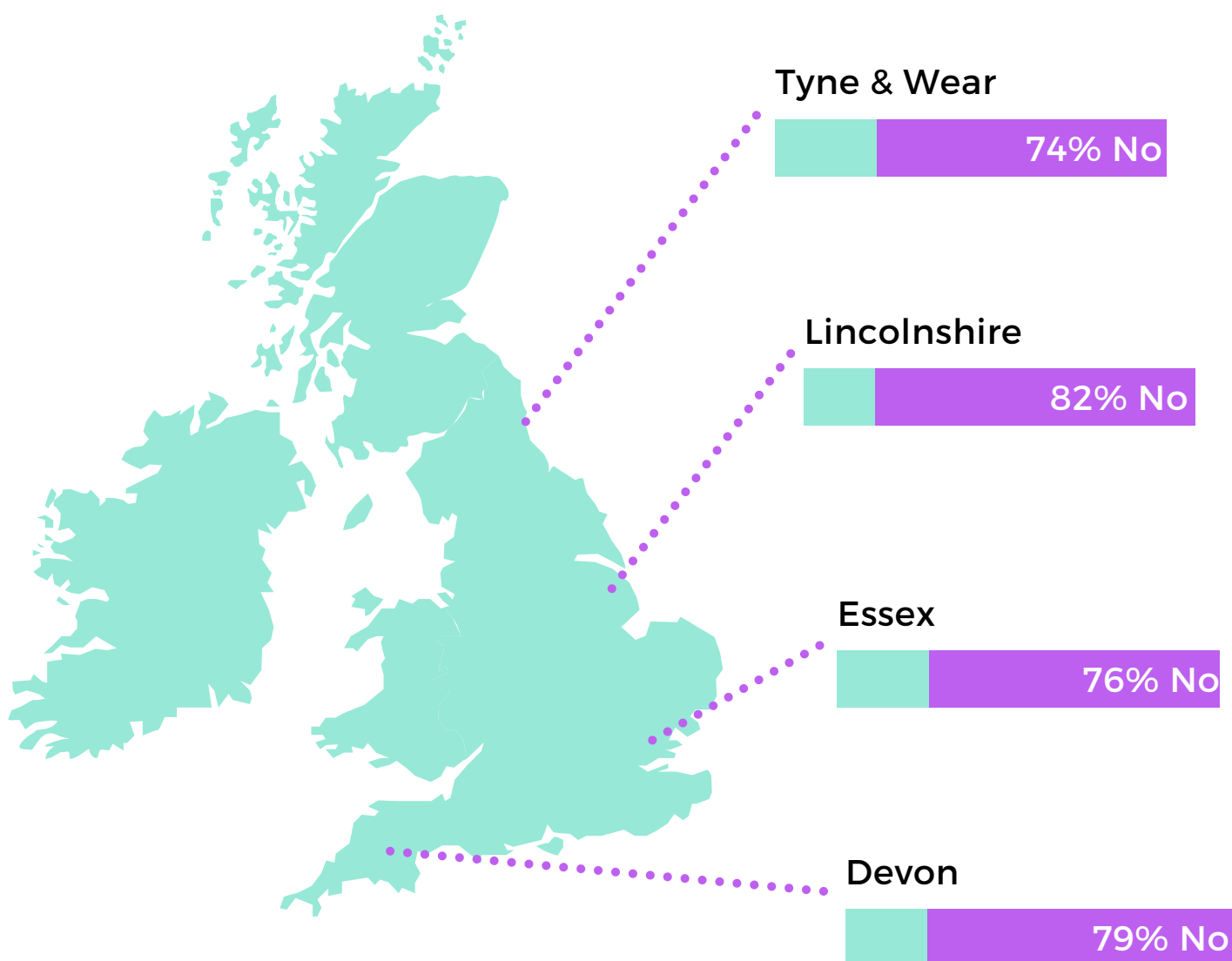


# 05 | LOCATION

Here, the vote has been broken down by location for the 11-16+ question. This visual chart shows a selection of the data, however you can view the full location breakdown of results in the Appendices.

## Secondary, 16+ & College: "Are UK supermarkets doing enough to tackle food waste?"

See Appendix 4 for full results.



**HIGHEST  
'YES' VOTE**

**Merseyside**

**38% YES**

**HIGHEST  
'NO' VOTE**

**Norfolk**

**100% NO**

Locations with less than 20 votes have not been considered.

## 06 | COMMENTS

Comments from our 5-7 category were the most mixed this week, with a range of voters arguing both sides. Many agreed that supermarkets are helping but suggested ways they could help even more.

Primary 5-7: "Are supermarkets helping us to throw away less food?"

“

**I think they are helping to not throw away as much food, which is good because they are giving it to people who don't have food.**

”

“

**Although the shops have been improving, not all have played their part yet.**

”

Many voters argued that consumers need to change their habits and this was a common theme throughout all of the VoteTopic categories.

“

**Supermarkets could sell more frozen food to help preserve them for longer. Sell food 2 days before the use by date for a cheaper price [...] Best Before Dates should be removed from all food products.**

”

“

**Supermarkets are doing their bit, it is now up to restaurants and cafes and us to do more.**

”

# 06 | COMMENTS

Primary 7-11: "Do supermarkets need to do more to tackle food waste?"

**“ I think supermarkets should do more as they are in control of what is in the shop and the date given. However, I think food waste should be down to the people buying it [...]. ”**

**“ 24 million pieces of bread being wasted a day is a staggering amount. That amount of food could feed every hungry person in the UK! ”**

Our 7-11 category comments, for the most part, argued that supermarkets can do more to prevent food waste. We received many comments from young people who were shocked at the amount of food waste created in the UK each day.

**“ Most supermarkets throw away odd looking fruits and vegetables. They need to keep them. ”**

**“ Supermarkets are already doing quite a lot to stop food waste like selling food for cheaper prices near their end date. However, it is everyone's responsibility at home to not waste food. ”**



# 06 | COMMENTS

Secondary, 16+ & College: "Are UK supermarkets doing enough to tackle food waste?"

**“ No, and they won't in the future either. Supermarkets, like most other companies, do NOT care about ethics, only profit earned. ”**

**“ Shoppers also have to play a part in reducing food waste. We can not pin all the blame on our shops when you have people refusing to buy a carrot because it's not 100% perfect in its appearance. ”**

A common theme in the 11-16+ comments was a push for consumers to do more to tackle food waste on a household basis. This could include choosing food close to its best before date, choosing singular fruit and vegetables and not discarding food that doesn't fit an appearance criteria.

However, the majority also believed that UK supermarkets should be doing more too. Some of our voters complained that supermarkets care more about profit than the environment and so they are unlikely to do enough.

**“ The supermarkets need to work harder to help this problem and this could be solved by donating more to food banks in the area. ”**

**“ Yes, supermarkets have done their part trying to stop food waste [...] The supermarkets have done their best by removing the best before dates and other stuff. ”**

# 07 | APPENDICES

In this section, the complete data set has been added for each data visual included in the report.

To find a specific table, please see the Appendix number at the end of each data visual.

## Appendix 1: Overall results from main VoteTopic questions

See page 3 for visual.

|            | YES    |       | NO     |        | Total  |
|------------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| 5-7 vote   | 66.63% | 2,208 | 33.37% | 1,106  | 3,314  |
| 7-11 vote  | 77.12% | 5,712 | 22.88% | 1,695  | 7,407  |
| 11-16 vote | 19.87% | 3,499 | 80.13% | 14,107 | 17,606 |
| 16+ vote   | 18.26% | 350   | 81.74% | 1,567  | 1,917  |

## Appendix 2: Year group breakdown

See pages 4-5 for visual.

### Primary age 5-7: "Are supermarkets helping us to throw away less food?"

|             | Yes    |       | No     |     | Total |
|-------------|--------|-------|--------|-----|-------|
| Early Years | 76.47% | 39    | 23.53% | 12  | 51    |
| Year 1      | 72.21% | 821   | 27.79% | 316 | 1,137 |
| Year 2      | 67.37% | 1,123 | 32.63% | 544 | 1,667 |
| Year 3      | 48.49% | 161   | 51.51% | 171 | 332   |
| Year 4      | 28.81% | 17    | 71.19% | 42  | 59    |
| Year 5      | 85.71% | 30    | 14.29% | 5   | 35    |
| VTG         | 76.92% | 10    | 23.08% | 3   | 13    |

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## Primary age 7-11: "Do supermarkets need to do more to tackle food waste?"

|        | Yes    |       | No     |     | Total |
|--------|--------|-------|--------|-----|-------|
|        |        |       |        |     |       |
| Year 3 | 76.28% | 1,209 | 23.72% | 376 | 1,585 |
| Year 4 | 76.61% | 1,471 | 23.39% | 449 | 1,920 |
| Year 5 | 78.29% | 1,760 | 21.71% | 488 | 2,248 |
| Year 6 | 76.69% | 1,224 | 23.31% | 372 | 1,596 |

## Secondary, 16+ & College: "Should non-LGBTQ+ people tell LGBTQ+ stories?"

|                | Yes    |     | No     |       | Total |
|----------------|--------|-----|--------|-------|-------|
|                |        |     |        |       |       |
| Year 7         | 20.71% | 786 | 79.29% | 3,009 | 3,795 |
| Year 8         | 20.21% | 766 | 79.79% | 3,024 | 3,790 |
| Year 9         | 20.61% | 773 | 79.39% | 2,978 | 3,751 |
| Year 10        | 20.41% | 717 | 79.59% | 2,796 | 3,513 |
| Year 11        | 16.61% | 202 | 83.39% | 1,014 | 1,216 |
| Year 12        | 15.04% | 137 | 84.96% | 774   | 911   |
| Year 13        | 18.38% | 120 | 81.62% | 533   | 653   |
| Vertical Group | 18.11% | 353 | 81.89% | 1,596 | 1,949 |

# 07 | APPENDICES

## Appendix 3: Gender breakdown

See pages 6-7 for visuals.

### Primary age 5-7: "Do stories help us understand our differences?"

|         | Yes    |     | No     |     | Total |
|---------|--------|-----|--------|-----|-------|
| Female  | 66.76% | 952 | 33.24% | 474 | 1,426 |
| Male    | 66.05% | 971 | 33.95% | 499 | 1,470 |
| Diverse | 68.18% | 285 | 31.82% | 133 | 418   |

### Primary age 7-11: "Do we see enough LGBT+ stories on screen?"

|         | Yes    |       | No     |     | Total |
|---------|--------|-------|--------|-----|-------|
| Female  | 77.85% | 2,734 | 22.15% | 778 | 3,512 |
| Male    | 76.28% | 2,656 | 23.72% | 826 | 3,482 |
| Diverse | 77.97% | 322   | 22.03% | 91  | 413   |

### Secondary, 16+ & College: "Should non-LGBTQ+ people tell LGBTQ+ stories?"

|         | Yes    |       | No     |       | Total |
|---------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| Female  | 17.22% | 1,547 | 82.78% | 7,438 | 8,985 |
| Male    | 22.79% | 1,915 | 77.21% | 6,486 | 8,401 |
| Diverse | 18.11% | 387   | 81.89% | 1,750 | 2,137 |



# 07 | APPENDICES

## Appendix 4: Location breakdown

See pages 8-10 for visuals.

### Primary age 5-7: "Are supermarkets helping us to throw away less food?"

| Location                 | Yes %  | Count | No %   | Count | Total Count |
|--------------------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------------|
| Nottinghamshire          | 100%   | 2     | 0%     | 0     | 2           |
| Tyne and Wear            | 100%   | 6     | 0%     | 0     | 6           |
| Kent                     | 95.24% | 20    | 4.76%  | 1     | 21          |
| Wiltshire                | 94.44% | 17    | 5.56%  | 1     | 18          |
| Cornwall                 | 92.59% | 25    | 7.41%  | 2     | 27          |
| Cumbria                  | 89.47% | 17    | 10.53% | 2     | 19          |
| Norfolk                  | 80.77% | 21    | 19.23% | 5     | 26          |
| Berkshire                | 75.00% | 75    | 25.00% | 25    | 100         |
| East Riding of Yorkshire | 71.43% | 55    | 28.57% | 22    | 77          |
| West Yorkshire           | 71.43% | 280   | 28.57% | 112   | 392         |
| Greater London           | 70.43% | 243   | 29.57% | 102   | 345         |
| Oxfordshire              | 69.57% | 16    | 30.43% | 7     | 23          |
| South Yorkshire          | 69.51% | 228   | 30.49% | 100   | 328         |
| West Midlands            | 68.74% | 409   | 31.26% | 186   | 595         |
| Hertfordshire            | 68.52% | 37    | 31.48% | 17    | 54          |
| Lincolnshire             | 66.67% | 24    | 33.33% | 12    | 36          |
| Derbyshire               | 64.62% | 42    | 35.38% | 23    | 65          |
| Greater Manchester       | 63.77% | 44    | 36.23% | 25    | 69          |
| Essex                    | 63.42% | 463   | 36.58% | 267   | 730         |
| Buckinghamshire          | 61.40% | 35    | 38.60% | 22    | 57          |
| Leicestershire           | 57.33% | 43    | 42.67% | 32    | 75          |
| Northamptonshire         | 55.88% | 38    | 44.12% | 30    | 68          |
| Lancashire               | 51.28% | 40    | 48.72% | 38    | 78          |
| Surrey                   | 40.38% | 21    | 59.62% | 31    | 52          |
| Devon                    | 23.08% | 6     | 76.92% | 20    | 26          |
| Bedfordshire             | 4.00%  | 1     | 96.00% | 24    | 25          |

# 07 | APPENDICES

## Primary age 7-11: "Do supermarkets need to do more to tackle food waste?"

| Location                 | Yes %  | Count | No %   | Count | Total Count |
|--------------------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------------|
| Gloucestershire          | 100%   | 10    | 0%     | 0     | 10          |
| Merseyside               | 100%   | 56    | 0%     | 0     | 56          |
| Tyne and Wear            | 100%   | 11    | 0%     | 0     | 11          |
| Buckinghamshire          | 89.66% | 26    | 10.34% | 3     | 29          |
| Suffolk                  | 88.89% | 16    | 11.11% | 2     | 18          |
| East Riding of Yorkshire | 85.71% | 90    | 14.29% | 15    | 105         |
| Wiltshire                | 85.29% | 29    | 14.71% | 5     | 34          |
| Cambridgeshire           | 84.38% | 27    | 15.63% | 5     | 32          |
| Berkshire                | 83.13% | 345   | 16.87% | 70    | 415         |
| Cornwall                 | 82.76% | 24    | 17.24% | 5     | 29          |
| Lancashire               | 82.55% | 123   | 17.45% | 26    | 149         |
| Greater Manchester       | 82.54% | 208   | 17.46% | 44    | 252         |
| Surrey                   | 81.76% | 130   | 18.24% | 29    | 159         |
| Hertfordshire            | 81.75% | 112   | 18.25% | 25    | 137         |
| North Yorkshire          | 81.25% | 13    | 18.75% | 3     | 16          |
| Greater London           | 80.84% | 464   | 19.16% | 110   | 574         |
| West Midlands            | 79.49% | 868   | 20.51% | 224   | 1,092       |
| South Yorkshire          | 78.55% | 487   | 21.45% | 133   | 620         |
| West Yorkshire           | 77.99% | 776   | 22.01% | 219   | 995         |
| Essex                    | 74.96% | 961   | 25.04% | 321   | 1,282       |
| Leicestershire           | 73.99% | 367   | 26.01% | 129   | 496         |
| Derbyshire               | 73.74% | 73    | 26.26% | 26    | 99          |
| Northamptonshire         | 71.54% | 176   | 28.46% | 70    | 246         |
| Nottinghamshire          | 65.77% | 73    | 34.23% | 38    | 111         |
| Lincolnshire             | 64.60% | 177   | 35.40% | 97    | 274         |
| Oxfordshire              | 61.36% | 27    | 38.64% | 17    | 44          |
| Staffordshire            | 57.14% | 12    | 42.86% | 9     | 21          |
| Durham                   | 54.84% | 17    | 45.16% | 14    | 31          |
| Worcestershire           | 40.00% | 8     | 60.00% | 12    | 20          |
| Bedfordshire             | 28.57% | 6     | 71.43% | 15    | 21          |
| Norfolk                  | 0%     | 0     | 100%   | 29    | 29          |

# 07 | APPENDICES

## Secondary, 16+ & College: "Are UK supermarkets doing enough to tackle food waste?"

| Location                 | Yes %  | Count | No %   | Count | Total Count |
|--------------------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------------|
| Merseyside               | 37.50% | 12    | 62.50% | 20    | 32          |
| Warwickshire             | 30.77% | 12    | 69.23% | 27    | 39          |
| Northamptonshire         | 27.97% | 616   | 72.03% | 1586  | 2202        |
| Greater Manchester       | 27.87% | 34    | 72.13% | 88    | 122         |
| Nottinghamshire          | 27.62% | 79    | 72.38% | 207   | 286         |
| Tyne and Wear            | 25.81% | 32    | 74.19% | 92    | 124         |
| Leicestershire           | 24.57% | 157   | 75.43% | 482   | 639         |
| Essex                    | 23.93% | 39    | 76.07% | 124   | 163         |
| Worcestershire           | 23.26% | 10    | 76.74% | 33    | 43          |
| South Yorkshire          | 23.11% | 540   | 76.89% | 1797  | 2337        |
| Derbyshire               | 22.80% | 148   | 77.20% | 501   | 649         |
| East Riding of Yorkshire | 22.77% | 23    | 77.23% | 78    | 101         |
| Cambridgeshire           | 22.58% | 28    | 77.42% | 96    | 124         |
| Berkshire                | 21.49% | 26    | 78.51% | 95    | 121         |
| Devon                    | 20.81% | 62    | 79.19% | 236   | 298         |
| Staffordshire            | 20.12% | 67    | 79.88% | 266   | 333         |
| Hertfordshire            | 19.86% | 140   | 80.14% | 565   | 705         |
| Cheshire                 | 18.92% | 165   | 81.08% | 707   | 872         |
| West Yorkshire           | 18.20% | 312   | 81.80% | 1402  | 1714        |
| Kent                     | 18.03% | 210   | 81.97% | 955   | 1165        |
| Lincolnshire             | 17.93% | 59    | 82.07% | 270   | 329         |
| West Midlands            | 17.70% | 428   | 82.30% | 1990  | 2418        |
| Lancashire               | 17.44% | 214   | 82.56% | 1013  | 1227        |
| Greater London           | 16.27% | 143   | 83.73% | 736   | 879         |
| Hampshire                | 15.48% | 39    | 84.52% | 213   | 252         |
| Wiltshire                | 13.98% | 59    | 86.02% | 363   | 422         |
| Bristol                  | 12.45% | 29    | 87.55% | 204   | 233         |
| Somerset                 | 12.08% | 40    | 87.92% | 291   | 331         |
| Isle of Wight            | 11.76% | 2     | 88.24% | 15    | 17          |

# 07 | APPENDICES

## (Continued) Secondary, 16+ & College: "Are UK supermarkets doing enough to tackle food waste?"

| Location    | Yes %  | Count | No %   | Count | Total Count |
|-------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------------|
| Shropshire  | 10.46% | 34    | 89.54% | 291   | 325         |
| Surrey      | 10.12% | 49    | 89.88% | 435   | 484         |
| East Sussex | 8.93%  | 10    | 91.07% | 102   | 112         |
| West Sussex | 8.73%  | 31    | 91.27% | 324   | 355         |
| Dorset      | 0%     | 0     | 100%   | 1     | 1           |
| Durham      | 0%     | 0     | 100%   | 5     | 5           |
| Norfolk     | 0%     | 0     | 100%   | 42    | 42          |

### Appendix 5: Images

Page 1 & 2: icons sourced from The Noun Project

Hyperlinked images have been sourced from iStock

All other images used in this report have been taken directly from Canva.