



# Review of Ready-to-Eat Food Products Sold Over Social Media

Summary Report – December 2024

Taylor McKenzie Research

## Executive Summary

Food being sold over social media is an increasing trend. Despite this there has been little research to understand the types of food being sold, and the scale and proportion of the selling. This report provides a summary of the research conducted by Taylor McKenzie to address this need, where a focused study of ready-to-eat (RTE) foods sold on the Facebook Marketplace platform in Scotland was conducted. At the request of Food Standards Scotland who commissioned the research, the study focused specifically on ready-to-eat food (RTE), that is foods that are not thoroughly cooked before consumption.

## Summary of findings

An online survey of 1063 respondents designed to be representative of the Scottish population found that 21% of respondents had bought food from social media. This was from a range of platforms, Facebook Marketplace (55%), Instagram (50%), and X (formerly Twitter, 12%). Participants indicated a range of motivations for buying food over social media with the main reasons for buying being supporting a local business (48%) and convenience (42%).

In a subsequent stage of the research, of 500 respondents who bought food through an online platform at least every three months were asked about their willingness to purchase foods on Facebook Marketplace. The willingness to purchase differed depending on the food type, ranging from 30% for bakery and dessert or takeaway style foods to 11% for dips and condiments, 12% for products containing raw fruit and vegetables and 13% for cured meats including jerky.

The research identified 619 unique adverts from Facebook Marketplace. Once adverts which were not in Scotland, not for RTE foods or where not enough detail was provided to understand what was for sale, 476 adverts were included in the analysis.

Two systems were used to classify food products offered for sale on Facebook Marketplace. Using the higher level categorisation system, 54.4% of adverts were for Bakery, dessert, and confectionery products without fresh dairy cream (including products where it was unknown if fresh dairy cream was used), 12.1% of adverts were for takeaway meal-style foods and 10% were for Bakery, dessert, and confectionery products with fresh dairy cream. Using the more granular categories, the top five categories were Cakes where the seller did not specify if fresh dairy cream had been used (32.8%),

Confectionary (7.4%), Cheesecakes (5.8%), Biscuits (5.4%) and Takeaway meals - South Asian style (4.2%).

Food products which may pose a higher microbiological risk such as smoked fish, cured meat and sprouted seeds were available for sale in Scotland, however, at the time research was conducted, these formed a small proportion (1.2%) of the total foods identified for sale through the Facebook Marketplace platform.

Almost a fifth (18.2%) of all the adverts included in the analysis were for products which were a composite of different foods (for example an afternoon tea box), or for a buffet or catering service. These adverts often had limited information on specifically what foods would make up the product for sale.

Urban areas had a greater overall number of food products for sale, and also a greater range of food types available than rural areas.

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# 1. Introduction & Background

As the use of social media has increased over time, new uses for the platforms have developed. There has been an increase in food products being sold over various platforms. 'Facebook Marketplace', launched in 2016, has allowed individuals to manufacture and sell food over the platform with the food-press [reporting](#) a rise which accelerated during the COVID pandemic beginning in 2020.

However, understanding of how the market operates is limited, and no studies have been published which report of the microbiological quality of food sold over social media.

Taylor McKenzie (TM<sup>c</sup>K) was commissioned by Food Standards Scotland (FSS) to develop and undertake a programme of research into RTE foods being sold over social media. FSS defines RTE foods as:

"Foods that will not be cooked or reheated before serving, for example salads, cooked meats, smoked fish, desserts, baked goods, sandwiches, cheese and food that have been cooked in advance to serve cold, it includes foods which may or may not require refrigeration."

The RTE food category is further defined by the Health Protection Agency (HPA) (2009) into 13 separate categories to help with interpretation of results of microbiological food safety testing. These categories were used as a starting point for Taylor McKenzie to design the research.

## 2. Objectives

The overarching objective of this study was to conduct a market analysis of ready-to-eat food products being sold over social media, specifically Facebook Marketplace.

The data will allow FSS to better understand the nature of food for sale on social media in Scotland.

The key questions this study was designed to answer, are as follows:

- What types and proportions of ready-to-eat (RTE) commodities are currently being sold?
- How do sellers provide the food products to their customers, (e.g. customer collection, local delivery etc.)?
- What are the range of price points available for different foods for sale by commodity?
- Are there differences that can be identified between rural and urban areas?
- What information is typically included within adverts, for example, are ingredient lists or allergens published?
- Are there any other trends or patterns that can be drawn from the data gathered?

### 3. Methodology

The research was conducted in multiple stages. Table 1 provides an overview of stages, and the overall objectives of each stage. More detail about each individual stage is contained in the remainder of Section 3 (3.2 – 3.6).

#### 3.1 Methodology Overview

Table 1. The five stages of the research carried out

Stage	What was involved	Objectives
1 – Exploratory Desk Research	Gathering data and insights on the descriptions and terms used to describe and market each product type. Thematic analysis was carried out to best assign each phrase or word into a suitable HPA category. A full review of processes involved to ensure confidentiality is upheld and Facebook Terms and Conditions are adhered to during data collection at stages 4-5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Familiarisation with platform</li> <li>- Preliminary understanding of the ready-to-eat foods market landscape on FB Marketplace</li> <li>- Understand the appropriateness of HPA categories</li> <li>- Confirming the use of data meets Facebook policies and GDPR standards.</li> </ul>
2 – Omnibus Survey	Survey of 1063 Scottish consumers on their behaviours and attitudes towards purchasing food over social media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To gauge use of social media for the purchase of food across Scotland</li> </ul>
3 – Search Term Survey	A survey distributed to 500 Scottish consumers. Data was analysed and collated to understand most appropriate search terms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand the terminology that consumers use to describe different types of RTE food products</li> <li>- Refine search terms to use in next stages.</li> </ul>
4 – Consumer Landscape Analysis	100 consumers were each given four search terms to use to search for RTE products on Facebook Marketplace in their area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Broaden the geographic spread of the search activity.</li> <li>- Identify &amp; record products being sold in line with the main objectives.</li> </ul>

5 – Systematic Review	A systematic approach was taken to searching each region for RTE products sold on Facebook using the specified search terms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify &amp; record products being sold in line with the main objectives.</li> <li>- Verify data reported by consumers during Stage 4.</li> </ul>
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## 3.2 Exploratory Desk Research

The core objective of this initial desk stage was to gain a detailed understanding of Facebook Marketplace. Specifically, it was important to understand how the search functionality worked and the options available for filtering and tailoring results, as this understanding fed into the design of later stages of research process. The information gathered during this stage was primarily used to develop an appropriate approach to gathering and recording data during stages 4 and 5.

TMcK sought advice directly from Meta (the parent company of Facebook) and received a response which stated that Meta had no concerns with the process we were planning to undertake. Additionally, upon advice from the Information Commissioners Office (ICO), it was decided that a full Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) should be conducted on the proposed research methodology, to ensure that data protection requirements had been adequately considered. The DPIA found that information that would be captured in the project would be considered 'low risk', in terms of impacting confidentiality. Upon submission of the DPIA, the ICO did not identify any potential issues with the methodology from a data security/handling perspective.

The exploratory desk research stage was also used to understand how food could be best categorised for use in the subsequent data gathering stages. It was important to understand what specific search terms would return in order to ensure that the searches conducted at later stages of the research were as effective and relevant as possible and allowed for identification of a comprehensive range of RTE products. It was identified at this point that a step to use consumer feedback to shape the search terms to be used in the data gathering steps (the 100 participant survey at stage 3) was necessary to shape these search terms.

## 3.3 Omnibus Survey

*Conducted: 27/11/23 – 22/12/23*

This stage allowed us to gather data on the use of social media to buy food, and consumer behaviours and attitudes around food purchasing on these platforms. As part of a wider survey conducted quarterly by Taylor McKenzie,



1063 people across Scotland were asked about their food purchase activity and perceptions when it came to RTE foods sold on social media. This part of the process was designed to provide a more consumer-centric look at the purchase of RTE products on social media. It allowed us to understand consumers' food purchase activity and perceptions when it came to RTE foods sold on social media more broadly, covering areas such as whether they used social media to purchase ready-to-eat food, the platforms they used, their views about food safety when purchasing, and the type of food they bought.

The survey was distributed online via TMcK's bespoke survey platform, TMPanel. A weight was applied to the data by age, gender and education level to ensure it was as close to representative of the Scottish population as possible.

### 3.4 Search Term Survey

*Conducted: 09/01/24 – 16/01/24*

A survey was distributed to 500 consumers across Scotland to help refine the final selection of search terms. This survey was designed by adapting the HPA RTE food categories using the findings of the omnibus survey and through discussion with FSS. The original HPA ready-to-eat categories were adapted to make the categories clearer for participants to understand and assign to adverts on social media, and to make sure that types of foods of greater interest to FSS would be identified. For example, in the original HPA guidelines sandwiches not containing salad would be in category 5, and sandwiches with salad would be in category 12. It was decided that, although this distinction is microbiologically useful, it would be very difficult to devise search terms that would allow these types of sandwiches to be distinguished so they were combined into a new "sandwiches" category. The modified categories are provided in Appendix 1.

The participants for this stage were chosen as individuals who reported using online platforms to purchase food at least once every three months.

This stage of the research involved providing participants with images for each of the modified HPA categories and questions to capture how the consumer would describe and search for these products, as well as how likely they would be to purchase the products over social media. Appendix 2 contains an example of the questions they were asked for one food group.

This stage allowed the finalisation of a list of search terms to be used in the final 2 stages of the research, optimised to best capture the modified HPA categories, while also ensuring that higher risk foods had been specifically included (for example ensuring that the raw fruit and vegetables category included sprouted seeds). In total 36 search terms were selected for use in stages 4 and 5, the general term “food” and 35 specific search terms (Appendix 5).

### 3.5 Consumer Landscape Analysis

*Conducted: 19/02/24 – 12/03/24*

Using the search terms developed using the Search Term Survey, a sample of 100 consumers from across Scotland were provided with four search terms, each term representing a food category or item (Appendix 5). Each participant was asked to search for “food” as well as three other terms that were randomly assigned on the Facebook Marketplace platform. An online survey form was developed for participants to input the data they gathered, to ensure consistency in the data that was received.

The participant instructions on how to complete the process are provided in Appendix 3.

The parameters participants were asked to set when searching on Facebook Marketplace were informed by the Exploratory Desk Research stage and were as follows:

- **Location:** Radius set within 20km of their location allowing for balance between enough products appearing whilst limiting the amount of overlap between locations.
- **‘Sort by’:** ‘Suggested / Recommended products first’ was preferred over ‘closest first’, as this was found to return a smaller proportion of less relevant products (which were found to outweigh the RTE foods when searching ‘closest first’).

Other filters (the data listed and the availability of the product) were instructed to be left as default settings, to capture the most realistic ways consumers would search.

For each search term the consumer was asked to capture:

- The number of results found within a 20km radius of their location.

- Up to 5 RTE food product results were recorded per search term, with the following information recorded for each item:
  - Advert name
  - The full product description
  - Price
  - If they perceived the seller to be a business
  - Any allergens or ingredients information provided
  - Method of providing product (collection or delivery)

A sample framework was designed to ensure that the 100 participants selected to take part were spread across all Scottish regions (Table 2). We also sought to recruit participants across a wide range of demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status) and a good mix of urban/rural locations. All participants were recruited via Taylor McKenzie's in-house participant database. The TMcK recruitment team filtered their database of over 10,000 Scottish individuals to select a sample of potential participants from each region. All potential participants were then taken through the questions in the recruitment screener, over the phone, to assess suitability and select the final 100 participants. Demographic information was recorded for those who fit the suitability criteria. Participants were deemed to be suitable if they were active on social media & confident online, regular users of Facebook and Facebook Marketplace, and had either purchased food in the past from Facebook Marketplace or would be open to doing so in the future. This ensured that all participants were genuine consumers and that they would all be able to comfortably complete the task being set.

Table 2 highlights the sample that was recruited to take part. The number of participants was broadly equal across health boards (with the Island health boards combined into one grouping). The number of participants was not weighted by overall population density of the area, as the main objective was to ensure that all areas were adequately represented, and weighting would have led to very low participant numbers in lower population regions.

Table 2. Number of participants recruited in each Health Board area for stage 3 of the research- the search term survey

Health Board Area	Number of Participants	Quotas
Ayrshire & Arran	8	Mix of participant demographics
Borders	8	
Dumfries & Galloway	8	
Fife	8	
Forth Valley	8	
Grampian	8	Mix of urban (city), suburban

Greater Glasgow & Clyde	9	(town), rural (village) and very rural (remote) as applicable to each area
Highland	8	
Lanarkshire	8	
Lothian	9	
Orkney / Shetland / Western Isles*	10	
Tayside	8	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	

\*Combining the Island health boards into one group as they are much less populated regions

Initially, when participants were searching based on the search parameter of 20km from their home location, it became clear that minimal adverts were being recorded from some rural areas. Whilst this was useful information in itself, there was a concern that continuing in this manner would result in too little data being gathered to draw any reliable conclusions. Therefore, a decision was made in conjunction with FSS to focus on more urban areas, to ensure that sufficient data was collected. From this point, participants were assigned a specific postcode (and asked to set their location on Facebook there), rather than searching using their home location parameters originally assigned. All other search criteria remained unchanged and a spread of searches across all 14 health board regions of Scotland was still achieved as planned.

Data from this stage was combined with data from the systematic review to form the full dataset of foods for sale which was categorised as outlined below.

### 3.6 Systematic Review

*Conducted: 26/02/24 – 13/03/24*

To verify and complement the results found in the consumer survey, a systematic approach was taken to searching for RTE food products across all regions of Scotland.

Using the same search parameters set within the consumer stage, Taylor McKenzie researchers conducted FB Marketplace searches for all 36 search terms at the 26 postcodes selected to represent urban and rural areas across the 14 Health Boards (See Appendix 4 for list of regions).

Where possible, postcodes were selected to;

- Represent one rural and one urban location in each health board: In accordance with the Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification (2020)
- A wide geographical spread across the region: Trying to limit over lap within the 20km radius
- To capture any areas that were not represented in the Consumer Landscape analysis.

In some cases, this was unachievable and were adapted suitably. For example, two additional locations were added in the Highlands area due to the size of the region.

Each postcode was searched once within the two-week time period, with up to half a day spent recording the full details of as many adverts as possible within that time.

For the five health boards which incorporate Scotland's larger cities, a comparison was made between the adverts recorded by the researcher during the systematic study for the urban and rural postcode.

The systematic review was designed to replicate all data points recorded by consumers with some additional information and nuances:

- The number of results found within their location.
- For all adverts recorded:
  - Name
  - Price
  - **Additional data field:** Further pricing information (if provided)
  - Business Status
  - Description
  - Allergens information
  - **Additional data field:** List of allergens
  - Ingredients information
  - **Additional data field:** List of ingredients
  - Contact method
  - Method of providing product (collection or delivery)
  - **Additional data field:** Notes (For any unexpected findings)

Combining results from the two stages of data collection (stage 4- consumer landscape analysis and stage 5 systematic review) ensured that as full as possible an overview of RTE food selling on Facebook Marketplace in Scotland was captured.

## 3.7 Data Analysis

### Data clean-up

Due to the method of data collection, duplicate products were highly likely to be recorded within the raw data (usually where regions overlapped, or where listings existed in multiple locations). To manage this, URLs were initially recorded and used to de-duplicate any lines of data before being deleted.

### Exclusions and additional analysis

A number of criteria were used to allow adverts which were not relevant to be removed, and adverts for inclusion in additional analysis to be identified. The excluded groups are shown in Table 3, with a description of what each group represents. The groups which were excluded from the overall analysis, but included in separate analysis are shown in Table 4.

Table 3. Exclusion criteria for adverts not included in further analysis

Group	Exclusion Criteria	Explanation
1	Advert is not for a RTE food being sold over Facebook marketplace which has been produced in Scotland	Excludes all adverts that are not for RTE food items (e.g. non-RTE foods, non-edible items such as bakeware, adverts encouraging someone to visit a food business). Additionally, foods which had been produced outside Scotland were excluded.
2	Food product advertised, but doesn't contain enough details for categorisation	Adverts offering food products, but which contain so little information that categorising the food product(s) is not possible (e.g. adverts which simply say 'homecooked food' or 'home baking')
3	Advert shows reselling of manufactured food products	Adverts which were identifiable as re-selling of commercially produced products (e.g. sachets of shakes from a slimming brand)

Table 4. Adverts included in sperate analysis

Group	Criteria	Explanation
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4	Advert for packed composite meals	Adverts which offered a range of individual food products sold together for a particular activity or theme, such as specialist food hampers or afternoon tea
5	Advert for buffet or catering services	Adverts for a catering service offering a range of prepared RTE foods such as a buffet

Finally, adverts which included products from a mixture of food categories were recorded as group 6. These were analysed as part of the main data set, and inclusion in this group allowed additional analysis to look further at the composition of these mixed adverts.

### Multiple product adverts (group 4, 5 and 6)

A number of adverts were for multiple products. This was either a number of different products to pick from (for example a list of different products to choose from – group 6), or a product that was a composite of multiple foods (for example an afternoon tea box - group 5).

For adverts with multiple products which could be selected from (group 6), these products were recorded using the classification systems outlined below, with the first product named in the advert annotated first and additional product columns completed in the order products were listed in the advert. Adverts were only recorded in group 6 if the foods included in the advert represented more than one modified HPA category.

To allow offerings consisting of multiple products to be considered further, adverts for products which were a composite of different foods (group 4, e.g. an afternoon tea box), and adverts that were for a buffet or catering service (group 5) were analysed separately. Entries which had insufficient information to allow categorisation, were still included in the assessment of composite products (such as afternoon teas) and catering where relevant, this is described below.

The remaining entries were categorised using two different classification systems (with greater and lesser levels of granularity) to allow flexibility in the analysis of the data. For both systems, the product 'Name' and 'Details Section' recorded by the participants, or the researcher were used to assign the product for sale to a category.

### Data Categorisation

## Modified HPA System

The first system was the 'modified HPA' system. These categories were used to design the initial search terms and allowed high-level classification of the food products for sale (Appendix 1). In total this system uses 14 categories. Pre-cooked ready-meals are included as a ready-to-eat food because consumers may not heat them sufficiently to inactivate microbiological contamination.

Where multiple foods were advertised in the same advert, these were recorded separately only where different modified HPA categories applied. For example an advert selling cupcakes, cookies or chocolate dipped strawberries would be categorised as category 4 ('Bakery, dessert, and confectionery products without fresh dairy cream') for the cupcakes and cookies, and category 12 ('Raw fruit, vegetables, herbs and spices, and products containing raw fruit or vegetables') for the chocolate dipped strawberries.

## Food Category Tree System

The second system was the Food Category Tree (FCT) system which is used by the Scottish Local Authorities to classify food samples on the Scottish Food Sampling Database and provides much more granularity in the categorisation of products than the modified HPA system. Some additional categories were added to this system to ensure the data could be classified in as useful a way as possible, for example the category 'snacks cooked chilled' was added as this type of product was not adequately captured by the existing categories. In total 57 categories were used in this system (Appendix 1).

When commodities were categorised, products made from multiple components were categorised according to the description of the final product. For instance, a product named 'cheese sandwiches' was categorised as 'Sandwiches' as opposed to 'Cheese'.

The inclusion of an advert in a category does not necessarily indicate that was home produced, for example where a meat platter was listed it would be recorded as 'Cooked and sliced meat', however it is possible that the seller has bought the meat as a cooked, sliced product as opposed to cooking and slicing themselves. Where multiple foods were advertised in the same advert these were recorded separately and different FCT categories applied, for example an advert selling cupcakes, cookies or chocolate dipped strawberries would be categorised as 'Cakes - unclear' for the cupcakes, 'Biscuits' for the cookies, and 'Fruit product - other' for the



chocolate dipped strawberries. For this reason, the overall counts for the modified HPA and the FCT categories were different.

In both classification systems a distinction is made between cakes with dairy toppings/fillings and those without, as the presence of fresh cream will affect the product's microbiological risk profile. It was difficult however to ascertain from many adverts if dairy cream had been used. When using the modified HPA categories cakes were categorised as '4' (Bakery and confectionery products without dairy cream) unless adverts made specific reference to dairy cream where they were recorded as '6' ('Cakes, desserts and pastry products containing fresh cream'). When using the Food Category Tree system three categories were used for cakes; 'Cakes – unclear' (i.e. where it was unspecified in the advert if dairy cream was used or not), 'Cakes – without fresh dairy cream' (i.e. where it was clear from the advert that no dairy cream had been used such as a plain fruit cake), 'Cakes – with fresh dairy cream' (i.e. where it was clear from the advert that fresh dairy cream had been used).

The Researcher and Participants also collected data on the following: price of product, method of delivery, whether ingredients or allergens were listed, regional location of the seller, and if the seller was a business, an individual, or if it was unclear.

Once data annotation was carried out, analysis of results was conducted using Microsoft Excel.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Omnibus Survey

The omnibus study found that when asked “have you ever used a social media platform to buy or order ready-to eat food” (where a definition of RTE was provided) 77% of the respondents (n=1063) had never used a social media platform to purchase ready-to-eat food. 21% had used it, and 2% were unsure.

Participants who had bought food on social media were asked which platform they had used using a free text box. Facebook Marketplace was the most popular platform, with 55% of the 223 respondents who had purchased food on social media using this platform. 50% of participants had used Instagram, 12% had used X (formerly Twitter) and 3% indicated that they had used another social media platform (Tik Tok). Other participants mentioned platforms that were not social media e.g. food delivery or purchase platforms (Just Eat, Too Good To Go etc) and supermarkets which were not included in the count of people who had purchased food on social media.

From the 223 people who had purchased food on social media, those aged 18-24 were most likely to have used social media to purchase RTE foods with 43% of the 133 participants in this age range having purchased food in this way. For the 25-34 and 35-44 age ranges 28% and 27% of participants had bought food on social media (n= 53 and n= 48), and this number fell further for the older age groups (15% of 45-54 year olds (n=28), 14% of 55-64 year olds (n=22) and 7% of those 65+ (n= 16)). Figure 1 shows the split between the platform used for the different age categories. Overall, as aged increased, the percentage of people who had used social media to purchase RTE foods decreased, and Facebook Marketplace was more popular with all age groups over 25 (Figure 1). Figure 2. outlines respondents' motivations for buying food on social media.

Supporting local food businesses (48%), and convenience (42%) were the main reasons for choosing to buy food on social media

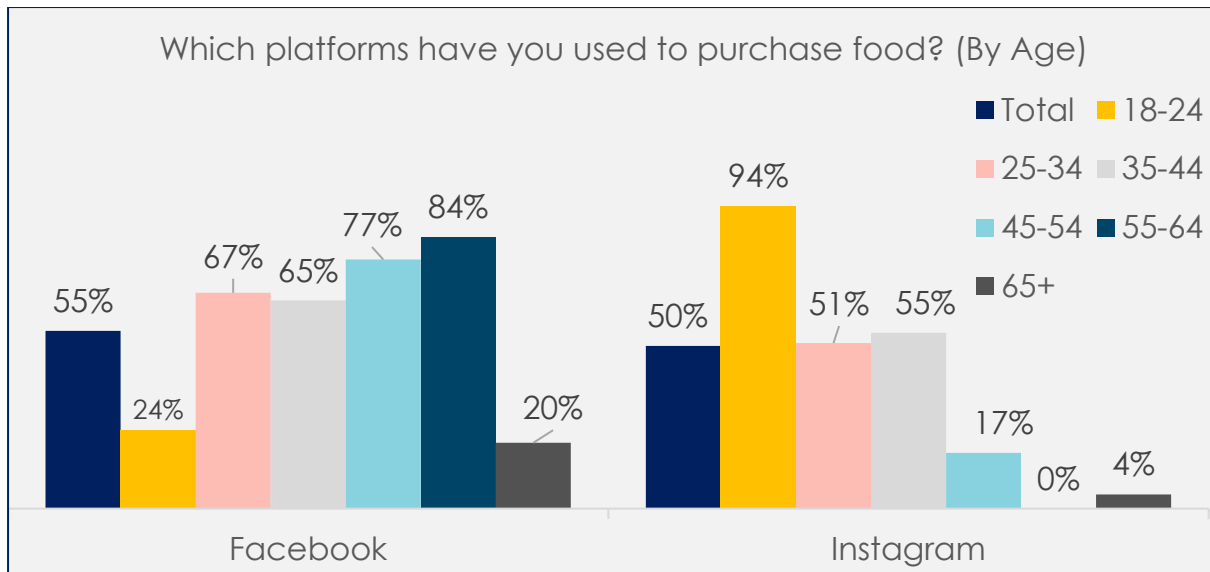
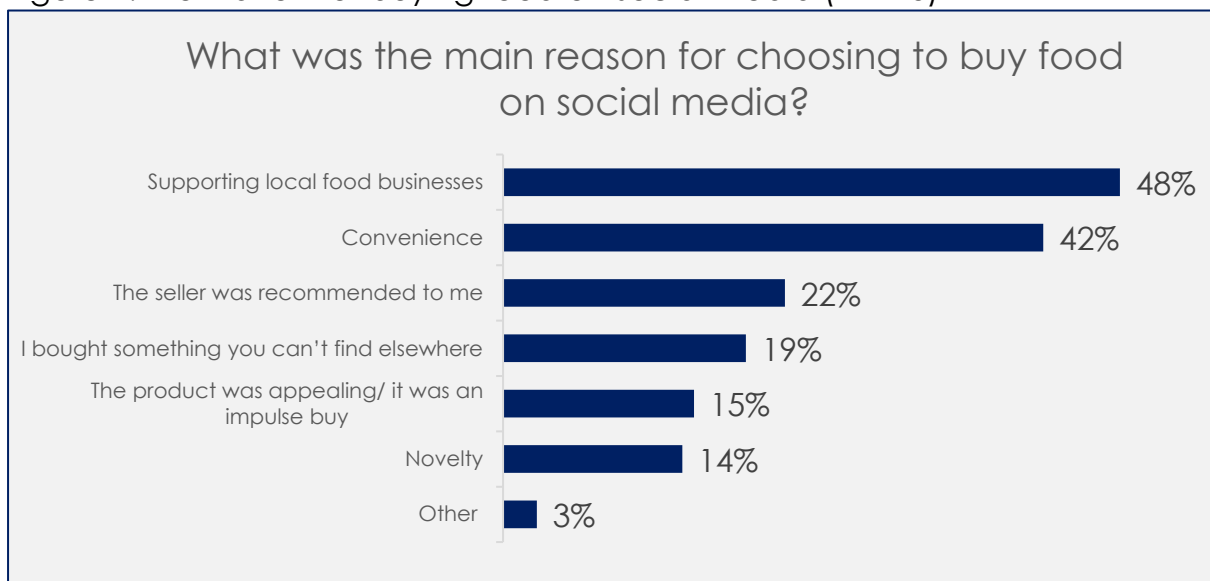


Figure 1. The platform used by participants who indicated that they had previously purchased food on social media (n=223) by age group

Figure 2. Motivation for buying food on social media (n=223)



Participants who reported buying food on social media were asked what food type they had purchased through the platform(s). Although the categories used at this stage in the research were not the same as those defined for later stages, desserts and takeaways were the main food types named by participants (49% and 27% respectively).

Participants were asked "When you purchase food generally (not over social media), to what extent do you consider food safety?" For just over half of people surveyed (57%), food safety was 'considered highly' when purchasing food generally. Those who had purchased food over social media were just

as likely to consider food safety highly compared to those who hadn't (61% and 57% respectively). Just 16% of the total sample stated that they didn't 'consider food safety much' when purchasing food (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Consideration of food safety when purchasing food



## 4.2 Search Term Survey

To enable us to identify the most appropriate search terms to use during the final two stages of the research, a survey was conducted to understand how the Scottish population would search for specific groups of food products. Based on the output from the survey, as well as input from Food Standards Scotland, the following search terms were taken forward into the final two stages of the research (Table 5). The search term "Food" was also used as a catch all term with the aim of increasing the number of products found overall.

Table 5. Search terms selected to identify food for sale from each of the Modified HPA categories and likelihood of participants to buy this type of food from social media

Category	Definitions - (Adapted by FSS from HPA RTE categories)	Search Terms
1	Ambient stable canned and jarred foods	'Jams', 'Sauces', 'Chutney' and 'Preserves'
2	Meals cooked/prepared immediately prior to sale or consumption	'Takeaway', 'Fast food'

3	Savoury cooked chilled foods, including ready-meal style products	<b>'Pastries', 'Sausage rolls'</b>
4	Bakery, dessert, and confectionery products without fresh dairy cream	<b>'Baked', 'Bread'</b>
5	Sandwiches	<b>'Sandwiches'</b>
6	Bakery, dessert, and confectionery products with fresh dairy cream	<b>'Cakes', 'Desserts'</b>
7	Dips, dressings, and fresh condiments	<b>'Dips', 'Coleslaw'</b>
8	Cheese and processed dairy products	<b>'Cheese', 'Yogurt', 'Kefir'</b>
9	Cooked meat	<b>'Cold meat', 'Cooked meat'</b>
10	Preserved food products –pickled, fermented, marinated or salted	<b>'Pickled food', 'Kimchi', 'Sauerkraut'</b>
11	Dried fruits, vegetables, herbs, and spices	<b>'Nuts', 'Dried Foods', 'Spices'</b>
12	Raw fruit, and vegetables, herbs and spices, and products containing raw fruit or vegetables, herbs and spices	<b>'Fruit', 'Salad', 'Sprouts'</b>
13	Cured and dried meats	<b>'Cured meats', 'Jerky', 'Salami'</b>
14	Smoked fish, dried fish	<b>'Smoked fish', 'Dried fish', 'Sushi'</b>

Three search terms specified by FSS were included to help understand if the emerging trend for fermented foods was reflected in the foods for sale on Facebook Marketplace (kefir, kimchi and sauerkraut).

Six search terms were outlined by FSS as higher risk foods (due to the way they are produced and the raw ingredients used) and therefore seen as of particular importance to the research overall. These six terms were:

- Smoked fish
- Sushi
- Cured meat
- Jerky
- Sprouts
- Microgreens

Whilst these products returned minimal results during the initial desk research phase (stage 1), their importance meant that they were taken forward to the next stages of the research.

## 4.2 Consumer Landscape & Systematic Analysis

Once data was collated and duplicate URLs were removed, there were 619 unique adverts in the dataset.

### Results from search terms

In total 36 search terms were used by the participants and researcher. Table 6 shows the number of times each search term was used, and the number of adverts that were identified using that search term. It is noted that the advert identified with a certain search term may not have actually been for that product. For example, the search term jerky returned one advert, but this advert was for a rice and meat takeaway style dish. This is likely to result from the way that the search function on Facebook Marketplace operates, and was why the food offered in all adverts were categorised using the Modified HPA and Food Category Tree categories for further analysis.

Table 6. The number of times each search term was used, and the number of adverts identified using each search term\*

Search term	Number of times used	Number of adverts identified
Baked	36	41
Bread	35	15
Cakes	39	146
Cheese	34	42
Chutney	32	4
Cold meat	32	0
Coleslaw	33	6
Cooked meat	35	9
Cured meats	33	5
Desserts	40	51
Dips	31	10
Dried fish	29	1
Dried Foods	33	15
Fast food	45	18
Food	120	195

Search term	Number of times used	Number of adverts identified
Kefir	29	10
Kimchi	31	4
Nuts	34	14
Pastries	39	16
Pickled food	32	4
Preserves	31	15
Salad	30	9
Salami	30	5
Sandwiches	40	23
Sauces	34	14
Sauerkraut	31	0
Sausage rolls	35	21
Smoked fish	33	5
Spices	31	8
Sprouts	33	2

Fruit	32	17	Sushi	33	6
Jams	35	32	Takeaway	42	11
Jerky	29	1	Yogurt	33	2

\*Each term is not mutually exclusive - the same advert may have been identified using more than one search term, for example "Jams" and "Sandwiches" in the same afternoon tea product.

### Data clean up and categorisation

Adverts were grouped and entries which advertised non-food products or foods not located in Scotland (74 adverts) or reselling of manufactured foods (45 adverts) were excluded (Table 3). Additionally, adverts which had insufficient information to allow for product identification (such as simply advertised as 'home baking' without further information) were also excluded from further analysis (24 adverts). After this process, 476 adverts remained. Those advertising composite products, catering or buffets (87) (Table 4) were moved into a separate analysis, leaving 389 adverts for categorisation.

As outlined above, if more than one product was advertised in the same advert, each product would be recorded separately. The total number of foods recorded, including adverts with more than one product, was 471 using the modified HPA categories and 570 using the FCT categories. The data analysis below is based on these overall numbers.

### Modified HPA categories

The number of foods recorded under each of the 14 categories is provided in Table 7. The most common category of food for sale was 'Bakery, dessert, and confectionery products without fresh dairy cream', accounting for 54.4% of the total foods for sale. The next most common category of food for sale was 'Meals cooked/prepared immediately prior to sale or consumption', these are takeaway style meals and account for 12.1% of the foods for sale. The five least represented food categories made up 3.5% of the total foods for sale. These were 'Dried fruits, vegetables, herbs, and spices', 'Preserved food products – pickled, fermented, marinated or salted', 'Cured and dried meats', 'Smoked fish and dried fish' and 'Sandwiches'. It is noted that sandwiches were commonly included in adverts for composite products which were analysed separately. No adverts were found which were classified as category 7 'Dips, dressings, and fresh condiments'.

Table 7. The number of foods recorded under each of the modified HPA categories

Category number	Category name	Number of foods recorded	Percent age
4	Bakery, dessert, and confectionery products without fresh dairy cream*	256	54.4
2	Meals cooked/prepared immediately prior to sale or consumption	57	12.1
6	Bakery, dessert, and confectionery products with fresh dairy cream	47	10.0
3	Savoury cooked chilled foods, including ready-meal style products	29	6.2
12	Raw fruit, and vegetables, herbs and spices, and products containing raw fruit or vegetables, herbs and spices	24	5.1
9	Cooked meat	15	3.2
1	Ambient stable canned and jarred foods	14	3.0
8	Cheese and processed dairy products	12	2.5
11	Dried fruits, vegetables, herbs, and spices	6	1.3
10	Preserved food products – pickled, fermented, marinated or salted	4	0.8
13	Cured and dried meats	4	0.8
14	Smoked fish, dried fish	2	0.4
5	Sandwiches	1	0.2
7	Dips, dressings, and fresh condiments	0	0.0

\*this category also includes products where it was unknown if they contained fresh dairy

### FCT categories

There were a total of 57 categories used in the FCT classification system (Appendix 1). Twenty-five of these categories were represented five or more



times, making up 89% of the foods recorded (Table 8). The remaining 32 categories made up the other 11% of the food products recorded, with 12 categories only recorded once. 'Cakes unspecified' (where it was unclear if dairy cream had been used or not) was the category where the highest number of foods were recorded (33% of the total number).

Table 8. The number of foods recorded under FCT categories with five or more products categorised

Category name	Number of foods recorded	Percentage
Cake - unspecified	187	32.8
Confectionery	42	7.4
Cheesecake	33	5.8
Biscuit	31	5.4
Takeaway meal - South Asian style	24	4.2
Snacks - cooked chilled	22	3.9
Kebab	20	3.5
Fruit product - other	14	2.5
Bread	13	2.3
Takeaway meal - other style	13	2.3
Cake - without fresh dairy cream	12	2.1
Meat - cooked	11	1.9
Jam/marmalade	9	1.6
Pizza	9	1.6
Cake - with fresh dairy cream	9	1.6
Sweet pastry - without fresh dairy cream	7	1.2
Fruit pie - cooked	7	1.2
Kefir	7	1.2
Chutney	6	1.1

Dessert - unspecified	6	1.1
Vegetables - fresh	6	1.1
Spice	5	0.9
Dessert - with fresh dairy cream	5	0.9
Chicken - cooked	5	0.9
Ready-made meals	5	0.9

### Comparison of modified HPA and FCT categorisation

'Bakery, dessert, and confectionery products without fresh dairy cream' made up the majority of the foods using the modified HPA categorisation system (54.4%). Using this system, products were recorded as not including dairy cream unless the advert specified that dairy cream was used. Bakery, dessert, and confectionery products with fresh dairy cream was the third highest category, with 10% of the foods recorded in this category.

The FCT categorisation system allows better understanding of the most common modified HPA categories, particularly allowing differentiation between bakery goods and types of takeaway style meals. Cake - unclear (i.e. where the seller did not specify if dairy cream had been used or not) were the most recorded food, with a third of adverts coming under this category. Confectionary (for example fudge or pick and mix sweeties bags) was the second highest category (7.4%) followed by cheesecake (5.8%), which was categorised as modified HPA category 6 (Cakes, desserts and pastry products containing fresh cream). Takeaway meals are presented in Table 9, with a total of 73 foods in these categories. It is noted that this overall number is higher than the number for the takeaway category in the HPA classification system (57) and this represents sellers offering foods that came under different classifications, for example a business selling pizza as well as pasta dishes would be recorded as 'pizza' and 'takeaway meal - other style'. This table shows that two thirds of takeaway style meal offerings were South Asian style food or kebabs.

Table 9. Takeaway categories

<b>FCT category</b>	<b>Number of foods recorded</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Takeaway meal - South Asian style	24	32.9

Kebab	20	27.4
Takeaway meal - other style	13	17.8
Pizza	9	12.3
Sushi	3	4.1
Takeaway meal - East Asian style	2	2.7
Takeaway meal - British / American style	2	2.7
total	73	

### Multiple products

76 adverts were for multiple food items spanning different modified HPA categories. In some cases, these adverts were for a mixture of very diverse products (for example vegetables, spices, soft drinks and single cream all offered in one advert), whereas the majority were for similar products (e.g. cooked chilled snacks alongside takeaway food, or baking with and without dairy cream offered in the same advert). This demonstrates the complexity of adverts for food posted on the platform.

### Higher risk foods

FSS asked for six search terms to help identify selling of food of higher microbiological risk to be included in the list of search terms used. These were smoked fish, sushi, cured meat, jerky, sprouts/sprouted seeds, and microgreens. There were no adverts for smoked fish, sprouted seeds/sprouts, or jerky identified, despite using these as specific search terms. Three adverts for sushi, two adverts for microgreens, and two adverts for cured meat (both salami) were identified. This suggests that at the timepoint where this data was collected, that these higher risk foods represented 1.2% of the foods for sale on Facebook Marketplace.

### Emerging food trends

FSS also asked for the search terms kefir, kimchi and sauerkraut to be included to see if the trend for fermented foods was represented in social media selling. Seven adverts for kefir grains (the starter culture for producing kefir) were identified, representing 1.2% of foods categorised using the FCT system. One advert for kimchi was found. The title of this advert was "Kimchi from South Korea 500g" and it is unclear if this was a home produced

product or reselling of a commercially produced product. Another advert for kimchi was discounted from analysis because it was a named brand. No adverts were found for sauerkraut.

### **Composite foods and catering services**

Data was also annotated to investigate the proportion of adverts which were for either composite foods and/or buffet/catering services. Of the 476 adverts included in the analysis, 46 offered packed composite products, which includes meals such as 'afternoon teas', 'brunch boxes' and food hampers. 34 advertisements offered buffet /catering services. Additionally, seven sellers offered both composite products and buffet /catering services in the same advert, giving a total of 53 adverts for composite products and 41 adverts for buffet and catering services. Eighty-seven of the total number of adverts included in the analysis (18.2%) were for composite foods and or buffet/catering services.

Many of these adverts lacked detail on what foods are included in the offering. For example, of 53 adverts for composite products, 15 include no information on what foods will be provided focusing instead on price or reasons for purchasing e.g. "afternoon tea for one £13, afternoon tea for 2 £25" or "afternoon tea, great as a gift". For the other 37 adverts some information was provided on what foods will be provided as part of the composite product, but again the level of detail was variable. For example, all 27 adverts for afternoon tea said that sandwiches were available, but fillings were only listed for 11 of them. Similarly, 21 afternoon tea adverts mentioned that scones were included, with only 13 of these stating if fresh cream and/or jam was included with the scone.

Of the 34 adverts for buffet/catering services 18 provided some examples of what foods could be provided, while 16 did not, instead describing their offering descriptively, for example a "quality service", a "healthy buffet" or a "hassle free party". In all cases a customer would need to contact the seller to receive details of all the options available and agree their specific requirements. Some adverts advised that the price was available by contacting the seller, while other adverts included an indicative "prices from" sum.

While some adverts state that certain products are homemade (e.g. savoury snacks like sausage rolls and quiche, or jam), many do not give any information, so it is unclear if the seller is using food products manufactured elsewhere. For the sweet baked components most adverts do not state if the items are home baked, although buyers may presume that these items will be home made. A small number of adverts state that butchers' products are

provided, for example butchers' meat for sandwich fillings, or butchers' chipolatas.

### Method of product receipt

The results showed that of the 476 adverts analysed (this excludes adverts removed via group 1, 2 and 3), 79 offered collection only, 65 offered delivery only, and 61 offered the option of either collection or delivery. For the majority of adverts, the receipt method was unclear, with 271 not providing any delivery method.

### Comparing rural and urban sellers

Three adverts were recorded from both the urban and rural search postcode within a Health Board and were not considered further. This overlap for a small number of adverts is not unexpected because a 20 km search radius was used for each postcode. One of these was from Grampian and two from Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

Table 10 shows the total number of adverts recorded by the researcher for the urban and rural postcodes within the Health Boards included. This includes adverts for composite products and/or buffet/catering services but does not include adverts excluded in groups 1-3.

Table 10. Number of adverts recoded from the urban and rural postcodes for five of the Health Board areas

Health board	Urban	Rural
Greater Glasgow & Clyde	72	22
Lothian	23	0
Grampian	22	0
Tayside	9	0
Highland	6	1

A total of 155 adverts were recorded from the urban postcode from the five Health Boards in scope. Nineteen of these met the exclusion criteria (groups 1-3) and were not included in any analysis. Twenty-one of these were for composite products and/or buffet/catering services and these were included in the dedicated analysis.

This left 111 adverts which were classified using the two classification systems. A total of 132 foods were recorded using the modified HPA system (Table 11), and 155 using the FCT system (data not presented).

A total of 32 adverts were recorded from rural areas in scope. Nine of these met the exclusion criteria (groups 1-3) and were not included in any analysis. Three of these were for composite products and/or buffet/catering services and these were included in the dedicated analysis.

This left 20 adverts which were classified using the two classification systems. A total of 23 foods were recorded using the modified HPA system (Table 12) and 28 using the FCT system (data not presented).

Table 11. Proportion of foods, as assigned by modified HPA category, found searching from the urban and rural postcode in the in-scope Health Boards

<b>Category</b>	<b>Urban (N=132)</b>		<b>Rural (N=23)</b>	
	<b>No. of foods recorded</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>No. of foods recorded</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Bakery, dessert, and confectionery products without fresh dairy cream	73	55.3	20	87
Bakery, dessert, and confectionery products with fresh dairy cream	14	10.6	3	13
Meals cooked/prepared immediately prior to sale or consumption	13	9.8	0	0
Raw fruit, vegetables, herbs and spices, and products containing raw fruit or vegetables	11	8.3	0	0
Savoury cooked chilled foods, including ready-meal style products	6	4.5	0	0
Cheese and processed dairy products	5	3.8	0	0
Dried fruits, vegetables, herbs, and spices	4	3	0	0
Cooked meat	3	2.3	0	0
Ambient stable canned and jarred foods	2	1.5	0	0
Smoked fish, dried fish	1	0.8	0	0

As only 23 foods were recorded from rural sellers it is difficult to compare between the foods available on Facebook Marketplace from urban or rural sellers. The data does suggest that a wider range of commodities are available in urban areas, particularly category 2 (takeaway style meals) which represented 10% of urban sales but were not represented in the data from rural sellers. This has not been tested for statistical significance.

## Price

Many adverts including unrealistic prices (e.g. £12,345, or \$123) or no price at all. Additionally adverts with multiple products often included multiple prices in the product description making it difficult to accurately record this data. Because of this it was not possible to analyse price further.

## Allergen and ingredient information, health claims and certification claims

Only four adverts explicitly declared the presence or potential presence of allergens in a product, those allergens were nuts, (two mentions), wheat (two mentions), egg (one mention), barley (one mention), milk (one mention), sesame (one mention), and soya (one mention). Six adverts asked to be notified of any allergies when ordering, mentioned that food was prepared in a kitchen handling allergens, or stated that they have an allergen awareness certificate.

A number of adverts had additional ingredient information, nine mentioned being 'dairy free' or 'lactose free'; 15 mentioned being 'gluten free'; 14 mentioned 'vegan' or 'vegetarian' options; seven mentioned being 'halal'.

Four adverts, two for microgreens, one for kefir and one for panjeeri included some sort of health claim (e.g. improving certain diseases, benefiting the immune system etc.).

Nine adverts claimed accreditation with some sort of health certification. Five referred specifically to "Food Hygiene and Safety for Catering" certification and/or "Level 2 Food Hygiene and Safety", whilst the remaining two did not specify the qualification.

## Business status

Of the 476 adverts (excluding adverts removed via group 1, 2 and 3), 97 (20.4%) were judged to have come from a 'business seller', 289 (60.7%) were judged to have come from an 'individual seller', and for 90 (18.9%) it was unclear whether the adverts were placed by an individual seller or a business

seller. It is noted that this status was recorded by the researcher or participant and represents their perception of the business status of the seller from their interpretation of the advert. Only nine adverts specified that a seller was “fully registered” or a “registered home baker”. All nine of these adverts also stated that the seller was insured.



## 5. Limitations

Whilst the study and its use of various research stages represents a rigorous approach to conducting research of this kind, there are a number of limitations that it is important to be aware of.

This research does not provide a full analysis of all the RTE food available for sale on Facebook Marketplace in Scotland. The research only represents a cross section of products available on the site. The data can also only provide a 'snapshot' of what was available during the time that the research was conducted. The products listed on the site are constantly changing. The results discussed represent what was found during the specific time periods in which the research took place. We would expect certain listings to have been removed, and others to have been added since data collection took place.

Although care was taken to select search terms to ensure that they were as representative as possible of the Modified HPA categories, food products for sale which did not include any of the search terms used in the advert title or product description would not have been identified. The search terms listed in this report were used exactly as outlined in Table 5 and finding adverts with a different spelling (for example take-away for the search term "takeaway") or singular (for example cake for the search term "cakes") is dependent on the performance of the search function within the platform.

It is also worth noting that we expect that the results found on Facebook Marketplace are influenced by previous search terms used, and potentially other activity carried on the browser being used. The exact impact of this is impossible to mitigate without knowledge about how Facebook's algorithm works.

During Stage 4 – Consumer Landscape Analysis, there is an expectation that, despite care being taken to provide clear succinct instructions, there will be some level of error in the listings recorded by the general public. Whilst checks were conducted to ensure that all listings that have been included in the final raw data set were accurate, it has not been possible to guarantee that all products/listings which met the parameters set were identified (see appendix 3). Additionally, as we did not ask participants to collect images from the adverts (due to the potential for associated metadata to include personal data which could make sellers identifiable) it was not possible to see the full information the participant could see. As images were not saved as part of the data gathering stages, the categorisation of the foods for sale was reliant on only the advert title and product description, meaning any

information that sellers were sharing via photographs available to aid in product categorisation.

There was considerable product overlap evident when searching across urban and rural locations within a particular region, as well as some regional overlap. As such, the raw data set which was used in the analysis was checked to ensure only unique URLs were included. Further product listing crossover is apparent where products appear under more than one search term. This is in part due to product descriptions provided by sellers, as they may include words connected to search terms or where more than one product type is offered. It is noted that there were a number of adverts which were identical or very similar which had been posted by the same seller on different occasions. Because these were separate individual adverts, as opposed to the same advert being recorded multiple times, these adverts were left in the data set for analysis. This means that some sellers were represented more than once, but we believe that this represents the likelihood of a potential buyer encountering an advert from a seller.

To ensure that the picture of food selling on social media across Scotland was adequately represented, we were asked to ensure that all Health Board areas were represented in the dataset. Additionally, we were also asked to ensure that both urban and rural areas across Scotland were represented when gathering data. We therefore utilised participants from across Scotland for stage 4 of the research, and stage 5 involved the researcher searching using an urban and a rural postcode for each Health Board area. This, however, led to some difficulties in identifying appropriate “urban” postcodes in predominately rural areas. For this reason, the analysis to directly compare adverts from urban and rural areas was limited to the researcher data from the Health Boards with Scotland's larger cities (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Perth and Inverness). This meant a limited number of adverts were available for inclusion from the rural postcode within each of these areas, but ensured that a clear distinction could be made between sellers in urban and rural areas.

Only nine adverts specified that the seller was “registered and insured”. For the other 88 adverts recorded as a business seller this was the interpretation of the participant or researcher based on the information in the advert or the pictures associated with the advert. The actual number of registered businesses could be much less than the number recorded here, particularly where an advert looked very professional.

We were asked to include pricing information in the analysis, however, pricing information on the platform turned out to be very difficult to interpret. Listings often contain pricing information which does not apply to all products in the listing, is in different currencies, or is either unrealistically high or low. As such, it was not possible to provide any analysis of pricing.

## 6. Appendices

### Appendix 1: Food categories used in this research

#### Modified Health Protection Agency (HPA) ready-to-eat categories

Category number	Category name
1	Ambient stable canned and jarred foods
2	Meals cooked/prepared immediately prior to sale or consumption
3	Savoury cooked chilled foods, including ready-meal style products
4	Bakery, dessert, and confectionery products without fresh dairy cream*
5	Sandwiches
6	Bakery, dessert, and confectionery products with fresh dairy cream
7	Dips, dressings, and fresh condiments
8	Cheese and processed dairy products
9	Cooked meat
10	Preserved food products – pickled, fermented, marinated or salted
11	Dried fruits, vegetables, herbs, and spices
12	Raw fruit, and vegetables, herbs and spices, and products containing raw fruit or vegetables, herbs and spices
13	Cured and dried meats
14	Smoked fish, dried fish

\*this category also includes products where it was unknown if they contained fresh dairy

Modified from: Health Protection Agency, (2009) Guidelines for assessing the microbiological safety of ready-to-eat foods placed on the market. Pg.

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**Food category tree categories (alphabetical order)**

Biscuit	Fruit pie - cooked	Seafood - cooked
Bread	Fruit product - other	Seafood - dried
Cake - unspecified	Honey	Snacks - cooked chilled
Cake - with fresh dairy cream	Ice cream	Soup
Cake - without fresh dairy cream	Ice cream - without fresh dairy cream	Spice
Cakes - without fresh dairy cream	Jam/marmalade	Sushi
Cheese	Kebab	Sweet pastry - unspecified
Cheesecake	Kefir	Sweet pastry - with fresh dairy cream
Chicken - cooked	Meat - cooked	Sweet pastry - without fresh dairy cream
Chutney	Meat - cured	Takeaway meal - British / American style
Confectionery	Meat - smoked	Takeaway meal - East Asian style
Confectionery - with fresh dairy cream	Meat pie	Takeaway meal - other style
Crispbread and crackers	Nuts	Takeaway meal - South Asian style
Dessert - unspecified	Oil - infused	Tea
Dessert - with fresh dairy cream	Pickle	Vegetable product - fermented
Dessert - without fresh dairy cream	Pizza	Vegetables - fresh
Fish - cooked	Ready-made meals	Vegetables - salad
Fish - dried	Sandwich	
Fruit - dried	Sausage roll	
Fruit - fresh	Scones, pancake, crumpets and muffins	

These categories were taken from the categorisation system used for the Scottish Food Sampling Database (SFSD). Further information on SFSD can be found: [The Scottish Food Sampling Database \(SFSD\) | Food Standards Scotland](#)

## Appendix 2: Search Term Survey Example

### Category O



For the above pictures...

Based on **ALL THREE** pictures shown, how would you describe/define this category?

### Category O

Imagine you are searching for types of food shown on the previous page that you described as "**Q10**" to purchase online (e.g. via Google, Deliveroo/JustEat, or Facebook Marketplace).

In your own words, what search terms might you use to find this food type?  
Please provide at least one search term.

Search Term 1	<input type="text"/>
Search Term 2	<input type="text"/>
Search Term 3	<input type="text"/>

### Category O



How likely are you to buy this type of food on **Facebook Marketplace**?

- ☐ 0 - No chance, almost no chance I would buy on Facebook Marketplace
- ☐ 1 - Very slight possibility I would buy on Facebook Marketplace
- ☐ 2 - Slight possibility I would buy on Facebook Marketplace
- ☐ 3 - Some possibility I would buy on Facebook Marketplace
- ☐ 4 - Fair possibility I would buy on Facebook Marketplace
- ☐ 5 - Fairly good possibility I would buy on Facebook Marketplace
- ☐ 6 - Good possibility I would buy on Facebook Marketplace
- ☐ 7 - Probable I would buy on Facebook Marketplace
- ☐ 8 - Very probable I would buy on Facebook Marketplace
- ☐ 9 - Almost sure I would buy on Facebook Marketplace
- ☐ 10 - Certain I would buy on Facebook Marketplace

## Appendix 3: Consumer Landscape Survey Instruction Sheet

### Instruction sheet

Thanks very much for helping us with this research! This page contains an overview of what we want you to do. Hopefully it is all clear, but if you have any questions or issues, please contact [Greg@taylormckenzie.co.uk](mailto:Greg@taylormckenzie.co.uk).

### What you will be doing

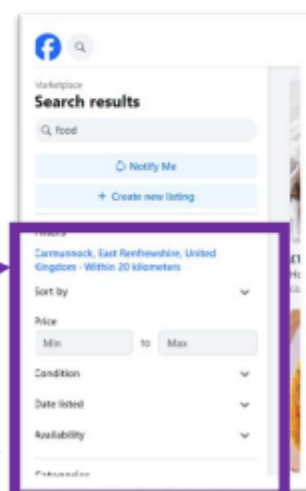
We need you to go onto Facebook Marketplace and look up different types of **ready-to-eat** food. As you are doing this, we want you to answer a series of questions in an online questionnaire.

### Some important things to remember:

- Please complete your task on a desktop or laptop computer so you can easily copy and paste between Facebook and the questionnaire.
- By ready-to-eat food, we mean food that does not require you to prepare it before eating. This could be anything from a takeaway burger or sandwich to cheese or cooked ham. **It does not include** things like raw meat, frozen food or a set of ingredients to be combined and cooked at home.
- You don't need to complete the task in one go. You can save it and come back later.

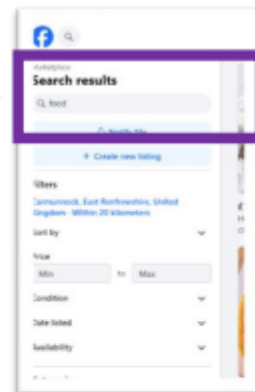
### Here's an overview of the process:

1. Open your questionnaire ([link below](#))
2. Add any personal info requested on the first page.
3. Set up your search parameters on FB marketplace. This can be done by changing the 'Filters' on the left-hand side of the page.
  - a. Click on the location and choose 20km radius then click apply.
  - b. Sort by - Suggested / Recommended.
  - c. Date listed – Select 'All'.
  - d. Availability – Select 'Available'.

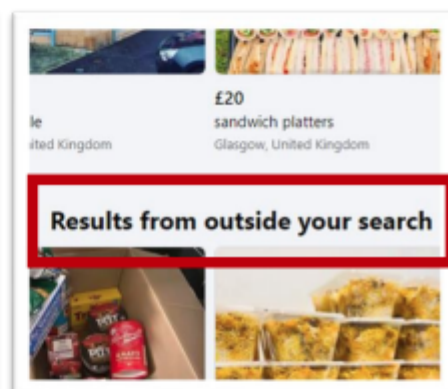
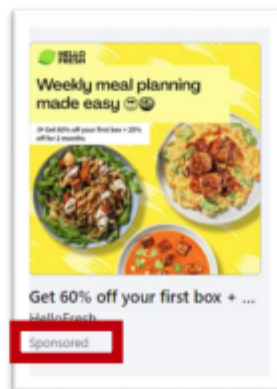




4. Search the first **search term** in the Facebook Marketplace search bar. You have 4 search terms to look up (**provided below**). →
5. Having searched, you will need to count the number of **ready-to-eat** food listings that appear (don't worry, you won't have to count beyond 10 listings!).



6. Please **DO NOT** include 'sponsored' adverts or 'Results from outside your search'.



7. You will then be asked to click on up to 5 of these listings and answer a few questions about each. Most of the info we need can be copy and pasted into the questionnaire, so it won't take long.
8. This process will then repeat for each search term, but some terms will have fewer results so it won't take long.

**You will need:**

**Your Questionnaire Link & Your Search Terms**

Please see the email this was attached to.

## Appendix 4: Systematic Review Location List

Health Board Area	Urban - Postcode	Rural - Postcode	Additional areas	
Ayrshire & Arran	Ayrshire & Arran Urban (KA1 1)	Ayrshire & Arran Rural (Brodick KA27 8)		
Borders	Borders Urban (TD9 9)	Borders Rural (TD11)		
Dumfries & Galloway	Dumfries & Galloway (DG12)	Dumfries & Galloway (DG13 0)		
Fife	Fife Urban (KY16 9)	Fife rural (KY14 7)		
Forth Valley	Forth Valley urban (FK1 1)	Forth Valley (FK8 3)		
Grampian	Aberdeen (AB10 1)	Alford (AB33 8)		
Greater Glasgow & Clyde	Glasgow (G2)	Inverkip (PA16)		
Highland	Inverness (IV1 1)	Kinbrace (KW11)	Fort William (PH33 6)	Thurso (KW14)
Lanarkshire	Carlisle (ML11 8)	Abington (ML12 6)		
Lothian	Edinburgh	Spott (EH42 1)		
Orkney / Shetland / Western Isles*	Stromness (KW16 3)	Lerwick (ZE1 0)		
Tayside	Perth (PH1 1)	Ballyoukan (PH16 5)		



## Appendix 5: Search terms used in the consumer landscape and systematic review collection stages

Search Terms	Count of Search term
Baked	36
Bread	35
Cakes	39
Cheese	34
Chutney	32
Cold meat	32
Coleslaw	33
Cooked meat	35
Cured meats	33
Desserts	40
Dips	31
Dried fish	29
Dried Foods	33
Fast food	45
Food*	120
Fruit	32
Jams	35
Jerky	29
Kefir	34
Kimchi	31
Nuts	34
Pastries	39
Pickled food	32
Preserves	31
Salad	30
Salami	33
Sandwiches	40
Sauces	34
Sauerkraut	31
Sausage rolls	35
Smoked fish	33
Spices	31
Sprouts	33
Sushi	33
Takeaway	42
Yogurt	33
(blank)	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1312</b>

\* All participants were given the search term "food" along with 3 additional terms from the list above.