

Food and Dietary Behaviour: Evidence from the Born in Bradford Age of Wonder Study 2023 - 25

Overview

Born in Bradford Age of Wonder is one of the largest, most comprehensive longitudinal research studies of teenagers in the UK. This summary presents findings from a paper on the dietary habits of 12–15-year-olds, focusing on fruit and vegetable intake, breakfast habits, and the consumption of fast food, energy drinks, and high-sugar drinks.

Methodology Note

Quantitative component:

The quantitative measures included cross-sectional survey data collected in academic years 2023/24 and 2024/25 from participants ages 12–15 across 25 secondary schools. Prevalence of consumption was captured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from every day to never.

Qualitative component:

The qualitative component consisted of semi-structured interviews and group discussions with adolescents.

Sample characteristics

60% Living in the most deprived quintile of neighbourhoods nationally

Asian/Asian British **44%**

White/White British **42%**

Other **14%**

Significance of Research

These findings can **inform targeted interventions and policy** initiatives in similar communities across the UK.

The ethnic diversity of the sample provides robust **evidence on dietary patterns in communities that are often underrepresented.**

The insights on peer influence, family modelling and cultural food practices provide a foundation for **designing interventions that work with, rather than against social dynamics** which shape young people's choices.

Key Findings

Fruit and vegetables



19% eat two or more portions of fruit daily



20% eat two or more portions of vegetables daily



Male participants reported higher daily consumption of fruit and vegetables than female participants

Pakistani origin

13% Daily veg consumption
20% Daily fruit consumption

White British

26% Daily veg consumption
18% Daily fruit consumption

Breakfast

31%
Girls

49%
Boys

Daily breakfast

29%
Girls

16%
Boys

Breakfast less than once a week or never

Fast food

1%
Girls

2%
Boys

Daily fast food intake

Pakistani origin

2% Eat fast food daily
9% Never eat fast food

White British

1% Eat fast food daily
5% Never eat fast food

Energy drinks and sugary drinks

6% consume energy drinks every day

36% consume them once a week or more

10% consume sugary drinks every day

66% consume them once a week or more

Pakistani origin youth reported higher daily energy drink consumption than White British participants (8% vs 5%)

Qualitative insights

Parental habits → shape food behaviours

I think it's a problem with the parents, if the parents do it then it's likely that the kids will do it

13-year-old Pakistani origin girl



Mixed feelings about school meals

Actually, it is really good
12-year-old White British girl

It's quite expensive for just a small hot meal

13-year-old White British boy



Energy drinks → have social currency

Having Prime [drink brand] is seen as such a thing to brag about... I have this younger cousin who literally lied about drinking Prime so his friends could think he was cool.

13-year-old Pakistani origin girl



Cultural identity → shapes food attitudes

Feel like being Pakistani, I feel like food is a part of our culture... that's how we express ourselves from food.

13-year-old Pakistani origin girl

