

THE SCORES ON THE DOORS

The five star rating scheme

Chiltern District Council Scores on the Doors Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

Purpose

A scheme which publishes information about food hygiene inspections which is accessible to the public. This broadens public choice about where to eat, and will also drive improvements in hygiene standards within food businesses.

Target Audience

Members of the public, food business operators and their employees, and enforcement officers.

Legislation and Guidance

Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006
Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 Article 3
Freedom of Information Act 2000
Environmental Information Regulations 2004
Food Standards Agency Code of Practice

Aims of the Scheme

The main aim is to raise food hygiene standards in food businesses operating within Chiltern District Council area. The scheme allows the public to make informed choices about where they choose to eat or buy food based upon food hygiene standards. It gives the public information that they are legally entitled to under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in a format which is easy to understand.

The scheme also serves as good advertising for businesses which meet the requirements of food hygiene law. This may improve turnover and reward businesses for their efforts.

Although not a legal requirement for local authorities or Food Business Operators to publicise the results of food hygiene inspections there is public demand for this type of information. Chiltern District Council has therefore chosen to implement a scheme based on the Food Standards Agency's risk rating system, contained in the Food Law Code of Practice Annex 5. The risk scores will be used as the basis for a star-rating scheme.

Businesses included within the scheme will be given certificates and stickers which they are encouraged to display in their premises and the star ratings will also be displayed on a website www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk and can also be accessed using mobile phone text/SMS or WAP services.



Chiltern
District Council



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OPERATION OF THE SCHEME

Businesses included in the Scheme

The scheme will include Registered Food Establishments within the Chiltern District Council area which form part of the inspection programme.

Initially the scheme will be restricted to businesses which primarily handle, prepare or process open, high risk, ready to eat food, supplying food to the final consumer and who are not explicitly excluded from the scheme (see below).

Examples of businesses that may be in the scheme include hotels; takeaways, including sandwich bars; in consultation with the registering authority, mobile traders and market stalls operating within Chiltern District Council; cafes; restaurants; hospitals and retailers of open, high risk, ready to eat food. Establishments where public access is limited but where food is prepared, cooked, or handled and served to consumers, such as schools, nurseries and residential care homes, are also included.

Where a contract caterer or franchise operates within another company's premises, e.g. providing meals at a hospital or school, then the star rating will relate to the caterer in question and not the host business.

Exclusions:

Those low risk food businesses that are subject to an alternative method of enforcement (self assessment questionnaire) will be excluded from the scheme.

Caring services provided in the home environment such as child minders will be excluded from the scheme.

Some types of operations are required to register as food business establishments but their primary business or activity is not food-related and they are not seen as food businesses by consumers as the food activity is only a small element of the businesses in comparison with its main activity. This includes, for example:

- visitor centres and similar establishments selling tins of biscuits or other wrapped goods amongst a range of other goods;
- leisure centres and sports clubs with only food vending machines selling only drinks or low-risk foods or where food is not prepared on site;
- newsagents selling pre-packed confectionery;
- chemist shops selling pre-packed confectionery and/or health foods; and
- village halls providing facilities for other caterers and organisations.

Establishments that do not supply food direct to consumers are also 'excluded'. This includes primary producers, manufacturers and packers, importers and exporters, distributors (including wholesalers, and other inter-business suppliers) and transporters.

The scheme will be reviewed at regular intervals as the aim is to include as many businesses in the Chiltern District area as possible.

How the star rating is calculated

The star rating will be derived from the scores given for Hygiene and Safety, Structure of the Establishment and Confidence in Management in line with the inspection rating system in Annex 5 of the Food Law Code of Practice issued by the Food Standards Agency. Annex 5 is a national scoring system used by most Local Authorities for assessing premises.

These criteria include the following factors:-

Hygiene and Safety – includes food handling practices/procedures and temperature control.

- Structure of the Establishment – includes cleanliness, layout, condition of the structure, lighting, ventilation etc.
- Confidence in Management – includes evidence of satisfactorily documented food safety management procedures (sometimes called HACCP or Safer Food Better Business), whether there is a good history of complying with food law and acting on previous advice and the attitude of the management towards hygiene and safety.

Compliance	Excellent	>	>	>	>	Poor
Hygiene and Safety	0	5	10	15	20	25
Structure of the Establishment	0	5	10	15	20	25
Confidence in Management	0	5	10	15	20	30

The scoring system in the Code of Practice is below. A lower score indicates better compliance than a higher score.

Star Rating	Points	Definition
★★★★★	0-5	Excellent
★★★★★	10-15	Very Good
★★★	20-25	Good
★★	30-35	Fair
★	40-45	Poor
0	>45	Major improvements required
NYI - Not Yet Inspected	Premises awaiting inspection under scheme	Not applicable
AES - Alternative Enforcement Strategy	Premises outside the inspection programme i.e. very low risk premises	Not applicable

Premises within Chiltern District are then given a number of stars based on the total of these points. The higher the standard of food hygiene compliance, the more stars will be awarded.

Initial Implementation of the Scheme June 2010

The Council identified food businesses in its area to be included in the scheme. These businesses were informed of their inclusion and asked to check that their details concerning their premises name, address and telephone number were correct. Prior to the launch premises were also given access to the website to see their star rating before the public launch on 7th June 2010.

Existing businesses registered with the Council will have the score from their last routine inspection converted into the star rating. The star rating scheme will launch with the ratings of those premises inspected after 1st January 2008. Where a premises most recent inspection occurred prior to 1st January 2008 they will be listed on the internet as **'Not Yet Inspected'**.

Updating the Star Rating

These scores will only be assessed at the time of a routine inspection (referred to as a primary inspection) and this is the score that will be publicised on the Internet. No subsequent visits will be undertaken with a view to modifying the scores given, or re-scoring premises even if remedial works have been completed. The score will remain until the next primary inspection is carried out. Primary inspections will normally be unannounced and may be carried out at any time that the business is open for trading. However, prior notification may be given as long as legal compliance and public protection are not compromised.

However, if there are significant changes in the food handling operation, the Council may decide to inspect the premises before its due date. Food business operators are required by law to inform the Council in these circumstances by completing a Food Registration Form. Once this inspection is carried out the star rating will be assessed and displayed.

When the Council becomes aware of a change in the Food Business Operator, the Food Safety Star Rating will be removed and will be re-instated after the first inspection/audit of the business under the new ownership. They will be listed on the internet as **'Not Yet Inspected'** until this time.

New businesses will not receive a rating until they have received a primary inspection. Between registration of the business with the Council and the first inspection the premises will be identified on the website as **'Not Yet Inspected'**. The primary inspection will be programmed into the Officers normal work load and will be carried out in due course.

The website will be updated on a monthly basis following the primary inspection which is carried out at a frequency determined by their risk in accordance with Annex 5 of the Code of Practice. Transfer of data from the Council's database to the website will be done following validation. This will be undertaken at the start of the month following the month that the inspection was carried out therefore there will be a delay in posting the information.

Should an officer be made aware of serious hygiene defects in a premises, the next primary inspection can be brought forward. If at this primary inspection the score changes, the records will be updated with the amended score posted on the Internet. Where a business is subject to emergency enforcement action e.g. closure or prohibition or has been convicted of food safety offences, then the premises will be re-scored accordingly and the outcome publicised on the website.

The Council reserves the right to determine whether in exceptional circumstances the star rating of a particular premises should not be included in the scheme. The scheme will be reviewed and changes made to enable as many premises as possible to be included.

Procedure after primary inspection

Food Business Operators will be notified of their score in writing following the primary inspection and will be sent a window sticker and Certificate with the relevant number of stars. These should be displayed on the premises. These materials remain the property of Chiltern District Council and must not be tampered with and must be surrendered on request. Officers will be taking window stickers and Certificates from premises if the star rating has changed.

'Right to Reply' and Appeals Procedure

The Internet web page will include a **"Right to Reply"** section for use by Food Business Operators. If the operator feels that standards have improved since the last inspection this facility can be used. The Environmental Health Manager or Senior Environmental Health Officer will check comments before they are uploaded on to the website. The comments could appear verbatim to members of the public on the website. In general, comments must be legal, decent, honest and true and should not include personal remarks aimed at individuals. Chiltern District Council reserve the right to refuse to post comments that are considered to be unacceptable. The Council will also contact the business to ensure that the comments were posted by a representative of the business and not by a third party. Food Business Operators can also upload pictures of their premises on to their page. These will be approved by the Council prior to them appearing on the public website.

Chiltern District Council will make every effort to ensure consistency in the allocation of scores by Officers. This will include issuing Officers with written guidance; peer reviews; accompanied inspections; review of documents and records and internal audits.

The rating is based on a professional officer's inspection and will not normally be changed. If a food business operator believes that she has been treated unfairly or strongly disagrees with the rating, representations can be made to the Environmental Health Manager who can be contacted by telephoning **01494 732057** or emailing envhealth@chiltern.gov.uk. If the Food Business Operator is not satisfied with the response or justification given by the Environmental Health Manager then a complaint can be made in accordance with the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure.

The Future

The Food Standards Agency has recently published details for this type of scheme to apply on a national basis. This may alter how businesses will be rated in the future. **It is important to note that both the score and the rating given to a premises may be subject to change in the future. A Star Rating given could go down or up if a national scheme is different to the above scoring system.** The Council will endeavour to keep businesses and users informed of this.

