



Scores on the Doors - Policy and procedure for the publication of food hygiene inspection scores on the Internet

INTRODUCTION

Maidstone Borough Council has been selected by the Food Standards Agency to take part in a pilot scheme to publish the results of food hygiene inspections (scores on the doors).

Whilst it is not a legal requirement either for Local Authorities or food business proprietors to publicise the results of food hygiene inspections, there is a public demand for this type of information. The Information Commissioner has made it clear that generally such information should be published under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Of the local authorities that have undertaken to provide such information, some have chosen to provide full details of their inspection reports, and others just provide a summary of the risk scores carried out in fulfilment of the requirements of Annex 5 of the Food Law Code of Practice. Maidstone Borough Council has chosen to implement a system based on the Food Standards Agency's risk rating scheme as contained in Annex 5 of the Food Law [Code of Practice \(pdf document 471kb\)](#). The individual scores and star awards for each premises will be posted on an Internet web site and food business operators will be given a certificate and window sticker which they may display on their premises.

Scope of the scheme

1. The award scheme generally includes all catering and retail food businesses that form part of the Council's food hygiene inspection programme. However, low risk businesses that are subject to an Alternative Enforcement Strategy other than inspection will not be given a star rating but will be identified as AES.
2. Certain categories will however normally be excluded. These are as follows:
 - Premises excluded for data protection reasons
 - Businesses operated from private homes, in particular childminders.

While the above policy will generally apply, all decisions regarding inclusion and exclusion from the scheme will be made on a case by case

basis. Premises that fall within a category normally excluded by the Council can ask to be included.

Decisions regarding inclusion or exclusion from the scheme will not affect the programmed inspection frequency of a food business.

3. The scheme will be updated as primary inspections (as defined by the Food Law Code of Practice and EC Regulation 882/2004) are carried out each year, in line with the inspection rating scheme in annex 5 of the Food Law Code of Practice.
4. The star rating will be derived from the scores given for Food Hygiene and safety, Structure of the Premises and Confidence in Management in line with the inspection rating system in annex 5 of the Food Law Code of Practice. These scores will be added together to give the star rating.
5. The score bands for the star ratings will be as follows:

Performance Level	Compliance General Guidance	Score	Star Rating
Excellent	Very high standards of compliance with food safety legislation. Demonstrating best practice in managing and achieving this.	0 to 5	5 star
Very Good	High standard of compliance with food safety legislation. Robust food safety management.	10 to 15	4 star
Good	Good level of legal compliance. Only minor safety issues not addressed.	20 to 25	3 star
Broadly Compliant	Mainly compliant with food safety legislation. An understanding of food safety and standards being maintained or being improved.	30	2 star
Poor	Some non compliance with food safety legislation - more effort required	35 to 45	1 star
Very Poor	A general failure to comply with legal requirements. Little or no appreciation of food safety	50 or more	No star

6. These scores will only be assessed at the time of the primary inspection (as in 3 above) 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 stand until the next primary inspection is carried out. However, if a business changes hands or substantially changes their operation the Council may choose to inspect the premises after a food premises registration form has been submitted.
7. Primary inspections will normally be unannounced and may be carried out at any time that the business is open for trading.
8. Should an officer discover serious hygiene defects in premises that previously scored well the next primary inspection may be brought forward (as per Section 4 chapter 4.1.7 of the Food Law Code of Practice). If at this new primary inspection the score indicates that the premises

should receive fewer stars then the record will be updated with the amended score posted on the Internet.

9. The Council will provide food business operators with information on how they can make representations if they feel that their premises has been incorrectly scored. The Internet web page will also include a "right to reply" section for the use of proprietors. Comments will be checked by officers before they are posted on the web-site and may be removed or amended if they are unacceptable. In general comments must be legal, decent, honest and true and should not include personal remarks aimed at individuals.

Notifying businesses

10. Food business operators will be notified of their score as soon as possible after the inspection and will be sent a certificate and window sticker with the relevant number of stars, which they may put on display. **This material remains the property of the Council and must be surrendered on request.**
11. Letters issued following inspections will confirm the rating given. All ratings given are checked by the Council's lead food safety officer. Certificates and window stickers will be issued after these checks have been made.
12. The 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.