



North Norfolk District Council  
'Scores on the Doors'  
Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

Operational Policy  
for the  
Publication of Food Premises Rating Details  
on the  
'Scores on the Doors' Website

## **Purpose**

**To state the policy which governs the posting of food premises inspection information on the internet in support of a food hygiene rating scheme ('Scores on the Doors').**

## **Legislation and Guidance**

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Environmental Information Regulations 2004

Data Protection Act 1998

Article 3 of EC Regulation No 882/2004

Food Law Code of Practice Annex 5

## **Aims of the Scheme:**

The overall aim of the scheme is to improve food safety and hygiene standards among businesses providing food and drink to consumers living in, working or visiting North Norfolk.

The detailed aims of the scheme are:

- To raise food hygiene standards in food businesses within North Norfolk by encouraging food businesses to achieve high standards of food hygiene, leading to greater food safety and lower risk to consumers.
- To provide consumers with a user-friendly way to access the information they need to make informed choices about where to eat in the District based upon food hygiene standards.
- To ensure that those food businesses achieving consistently high standards of food hygiene are publicly recognised and rewarded. The scheme acts as good advertising for businesses which meet the requirements of food hygiene law.

## General Policy

Whilst it is not a legal requirement either for a Food Authority or a Food Business Operator to publicise the results of food hygiene inspections, there is public demand for this information and some 200 other local authorities provide such information already. The Food Standards Agency outlined a proposed national scheme in December 2008. This will be a six tier system (0 to 5 symbols), but final details are to be confirmed. The Council has agreed in principle to transfer to a national scheme once the details are known. This may take some time and there is demand from both businesses and consumers for a scheme in North Norfolk. The NNDC scheme is in accordance with the FSA's principles for independent 'scores on the doors' schemes.

NNDC has chosen to implement a system based on the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) food hygiene intervention rating scheme contained in Annex 5 of the Food Law Code of Practice. The scores will be used as the basis for the premises hygiene rating scheme. The ratings for each food business will be posted on an Internet website and certificates and window stickers will be provided to those premises scoring three or more stars. The Food Business Operator will be encouraged to display the certificate and window sticker on their premises. Businesses are also able to display additional information on their page; this is audited by environmental health prior to display on the website. It gives the public information that they are legally entitled to have in a format which is easy to understand.

The public are currently able to obtain this information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Whether or not premises display the information, the ratings will also be held on the website <http://www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk>. A link to this site will be available on NNDC's website <http://www.northnorfolk.org/>. It can also be accessed using mobile phone text/SMS or WAP services.

## Scope of the scheme

1. The scheme will initially cover catering and retail premises so that restaurants, cafes, takeaways, sandwich shops and other places that consumers eat food prepared outside of the home are covered, as well as retailers that also sell 'takeaway' food. These are the key consumer food businesses North Norfolk.
2. Facilities which cook food or prepare food at sites where public access is limited, e.g. schools, staff canteens and care homes will also have their scores published. Businesses which only sell packaged and/or low risk food, and Bed and Breakfasts, will not be included as the rating scheme cannot be applied in the same way.
3. Low risk premises where no open food is handled such as public houses selling only drinks and crisps do not receive regular inspections and can be subject to alternative enforcement strategies. These premises will not receive a star rating and are marked as "Low Risk Premises" on the database.

## How the scheme will work.

1. All food businesses are rated for food safety by qualified officers during routine inspections according to 8 main criteria. Three of these criteria are under the direct control of the operators of the businesses and directly reflect the standards of food hygiene and safety in the business. These are;
  - Food Hygiene and Safety
  - Structure and Cleaning
  - Confidence in managementThe scores range from 0 to 30 for each factor
2. The lower the total score the better the business is complying with the law and the more stars will be awarded, in accordance with the following table;

<b>*****</b>	<b>0-5</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>****</b>	<b>10-15</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
<b>***</b>	<b>20-25</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>**</b>	<b>30-35</b>	<b>Fair</b>
<b>*</b>	<b>40-45</b>	<b>Poor</b>
<b>No stars</b>	<b>&gt;45</b>	<b>Major Improvements Required</b>

A full description of how the scores are awarded is explained in the fact sheet, a copy of which is available on the NNDC website; <http://www.northnorfolk.org/>.

3. We will upload the star rating onto the 'Scores on the Doors' website and issue a certificate and window sticker to the food business indicating the amount of stars achieved at the most recent inspection. Certificates and window stickers will be issued to all businesses attaining 3 stars or more. They are available on request for all businesses attaining 2 stars or less. This will be updated at each subsequent inspection. Each Food Business Operator is expected to display **the most up-to-date** certificate/sticker in a prominent position for the benefit of consumers. This material remains the property of the Council and must be surrendered or destroyed on request. Officers will remove stickers during inspections so that the most recent score is displayed at the premises.

4. **Initial Implementation of the Scheme June 2009**

All relevant food businesses have received a letter informing them that the Council is launching a scheme. These letters were sent out in May 2009. Premises that are to be included in the scheme were informed of their inclusion and asked to check that their details concerning their premises name, address and telephone number were correct. These premises were also notified of their star rating. At the launch, all appropriate businesses had the score from their last inspection published.

5. Each routine inspection will produce a new premises rating. The website records will be updated with the new rating within 1 month of the date of the inspection. The star rating that appears on the website will be based upon the outcome of the last routine inspection, the date of which could be up to two years before the date on which the website is viewed. It is the Food Business Operator's responsibility to ensure that high standards are maintained between inspections.
6. These scores will generally be determined at the time of a routine inspection. After a routine inspection we will confirm in writing all contraventions that require correction by the business. A food business may apply for a re-scoring visit, providing all the contraventions are put right within the timescales in the letter. This application must be made between 3 and 6 months after they have fully complied with any contraventions found during a routine inspection. A re-scoring visit will then be carried out free of charge. If a re-scoring visit is carried out this will **not** alter the date of the next routine inspection. A business can only apply for one re-scoring visit after each routine inspection.
7. If a business changes hands, the new Food Business Operator must submit a food premises registration form. The website will be updated in accordance with the Council's procedures. The first routine inspection will be carried out within two months of the date of registration. These premises will be removed from the star rating scheme until the first routine inspection has been carried out..
8. Routine inspections will normally be unannounced and can be carried out at any reasonable time.
9. A routine inspection of a food business may be brought forward (e.g. if unsafe practices or conditions are brought to the Council's attention, usually in the form of a significant and substantiated complaint). If the scores from the new routine inspection indicate that the business's rating has changed then the website record will be updated in accordance with the Council's procedures.
10. It is the responsibility of the food business operator to make sure their business is run in compliance with the law.

11. **Right to Reply and Appeals Procedure:**

The Council will provide each Food Business Operator with information about the operation of the scheme, the calculation of their rating and additional contact details if they wish to discuss these matters further.

Right to Reply: The website also contains a “right to reply” section for Food Business Operator’s to use if they wish to make a written comment about their rating. Each right to reply entry will be checked before it is posted on the website. The Council reserves the right to refuse to post, or amend, a comment if it is unacceptable. In general terms “right to reply” comments must be accurate, legal, decent and truthful and should not include personal remarks aimed at any individual.

Appeals Procedure: The rating is based upon a professional officer’s inspection and will not normally be changed. However, if a food business operator believes that they have been treated unfairly, or strongly disagrees with the rating, representations can be made as follows;

If the Food Business Operator is unhappy about the way their right to reply has been dealt with, or he/she has been treated, he/she can contact The Commercial Team Leader by telephoning 01263 516008 or emailing [commercial@north-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:commercial@north-norfolk.gov.uk). If the Food Business Operator is not satisfied with the response or justification given by the Commercial Team Leader a complaint can be made in accordance with the Council’s Complaints and Compliments Procedure. Details of this procedure are at; [http://www.northnorfolk.org/council/5499\\_5.asp](http://www.northnorfolk.org/council/5499_5.asp)

12. The Council will make every effort to ensure that its officers apply the scoring and rating schemes consistently. These measures include the provision of written guidance to officers, peer reviews of performance, accompanied inspections, management reviews of documents and records, and internal audits.
13. Food Business Operators can also upload pictures and website details of their premises on to their page. These will approved by the Council prior to them appearing on the public website.
14. This policy will be reviewed periodically.