

# Scores on the Doors



## Aylesbury Vale District Council Scores on the Doors – A 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 within Aylesbury Vale. The scheme allows the public to make informed choices about where they choose to eat or buy food based upon food hygiene standards (businesses are also able to display additional information on their page – and 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 ask for this information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

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

Businesses included within the scheme are given certificates and stickers which they are encouraged to display in their premises. To ensure the information is available irrespective of whether a premises displays the information, the ratings will also be held on a website ([www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/scores](http://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/scores) or <http://www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk> and can be accessed using mobile phone text/SMS or WAP services.

### **Background Information:**

Aylesbury Vale District Council's Environmental Health Team is responsible for undertaking food hygiene inspections. After each primary inspection officers use a nationally accepted rating scheme (as detailed in Annex 5 of the Food Standards Agency Code of Practice) to risk rate and determine the date when the next programmed primary inspection will be. A primary inspection is a full inspection or a

detailed audit of a business. The rating looks at fixed factors relating to the premises i.e. number of people supplied, what they do (retail, catering, processing etc) and also factors concerning the premises compliance with the law at the time of inspection. It is this rating which determines when the next routine inspection should be carried out. It is the compliance factors which are translated into a star rating.

A number of local authorities have been publishing their hygiene inspection data for a number of years. Each authority has developed its own scheme. The Food Standards Agency has sponsored a number of pilot schemes and launched a public consultation in May 2008. The consultation closed in August 2008 and an outline of a national scheme was announced in December 2008. The Food Standards Agency will be a six tier system (0 to 5 symbol), but final details are to be confirmed. AVDC's system is a 5 star system (0-5 stars) and therefore it will be possible to transfer to a national scheme in the future.

## **Operation of the Scheme:**

### Businesses included in the Scheme

Initially the scheme is restricted to premises which primarily undertake catering. The types of premises which will be included are hotels, public houses, takeaways – including sandwich bars, cafes, staff canteens, restaurants, schools, hospitals, residential and nursing homes.

Other types of businesses may be included at a later stage such as supermarkets, higher risk retail premises such as butchers, and manufacturers.

Low risk premises where no open food is handled such as public houses selling drinks and crisps only 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 “AES” on the database.

New premises which have not yet been inspected have not been included on the website, but will be added as they are inspected.

The Council has 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. The Council will also decide whether to transfer on to a national scheme once the details are known.

### How the star rating is calculated

The star rating given to premises is calculated 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 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.

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

<b>Compliance</b>	<b>Excellent</b>					<b>Poor</b>
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		20	30

Premises within Aylesbury Vale 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.

<b>Star Rating</b>	<b>Points Score</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
★★★★★	0-5	Excellent	High standard of compliance with statutory obligations and industry codes of recommended practice; conforms to accepted good practice of the trade.
★★★★	10-15	Very Good	High standard of compliance with statutory obligations and industry codes of recommended practice, minor contraventions of food hygiene regulations.
★★★	20-25	Good	Some non-compliance with statutory obligations and industry codes of recommended practice. The premises are in the top 50% of premises and standards are being maintained or improved.
★★	30-35	Fair	Some major non-compliance with statutory obligations – more effort is required to prevent fall in standards.
★	40-45	Poor	General failure to satisfy statutory obligations – standards are generally low.
0	>45	Major Improvements Required	Major improvements are required – formal action may be considered.

### Updating the Star Rating

The website is updated on a monthly basis as primary inspections are carried out. Primary inspections are carried out at a frequency determined by their risk. The risk is calculated using all elements of the Code of Practice Annex 5. Transfer from the Council's database to the website is done following validation. This is undertaken at the start of the month following the month that the inspection was undertaken, therefore there will be a slight delay in posting the information.

If a business changes ownership or there are substantial 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 if there are significant changes or if they close. Food business operators must complete a Food Registration Form if they are starting a business, or they become the new operator/owner or there are significant changes in the operation.

Should an officer be made aware of serious hygiene defects in a premises, the next primary inspection can be brought forward (the Code of Practice permits this to happen). Once this inspection is complete the star rating will be calculated and displayed.

### How the Star Rating is Displayed

The star rating on the website relates to the most recent primary inspection. The website is updated on a monthly basis.

Within two weeks of an inspection having been undertaken the premises will be awarded a certificate and sticker. If a premises does not wish to display their sticker and/or certificate then they should let the officer know at the time of inspection. For the launch of the scheme all premises included were issued

with stickers and certificates. It is voluntary that a premises displays them, although they are encouraged to participate.

The stickers and certificates remain property of Aylesbury Vale District Council, and therefore they may not be altered or tampered with. Officers will remove stickers during inspections in order that the most recent score is displayed at the premises.

The ratings will only be given following an inspection or audit. Scores will not be changed following a revisit or secondary inspection. It is anticipated that premises which get a low star rating will be revisited, however the original score will remain until the next primary inspection.

The purpose of the scheme is to show how well businesses comply with the law and how well they maintain those standards. The majority of our inspections are unannounced and can be undertaken at anytime that a premises is trading. The Council undertakes a number of inspections at weekends and outside of normal office hours.

#### Initial Implementation of the Scheme March 2009

All food businesses that the Environmental Health Team were aware of received a letter informing them that the Council was launching a scheme. These letters were sent out in February 2009. Premises which were 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. Prior to the launch premises were also given access to the website to see their star rating before the public launch on 16 March 2009.

#### **Right to Reply and Appeals Procedure:**

The website includes 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 Principal Environmental Health Officer will check comments before they are uploaded on to the website. The comments could appear verbatim on the website and members of the public will be able to see them. In general comments must be legal, decent, honest and true and should not include personal remarks aimed at individuals. Aylesbury Vale District Council reserves the right to refuse to post comments which 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.

Aylesbury Vale 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 internal audits.

The rating is based upon a professional officer's inspection and will not normally be changed. If a food business operator believes that s/he has been treated unfairly or strongly disagrees with the rating, representations can be made to the Principal Environmental Health Officer. The Principal Environmental Health Officer can be contacted by telephoning 01296 585605 or emailing [envhealth@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk](mailto:envhealth@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk). If the Food Business Operator is not satisfied with the response or justification given by the Principal Environmental Health Officer then a complaint can be made in accordance with the Council's Comments, Complements and Complaints Procedure. Details of the CCCP procedure are at [www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/comments](http://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/comments)