



INFORMATION NOTE – FOOD HYGIENE INSPECTIONS & THE NATIONAL FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCHEME

1.0 Who carries out food hygiene inspections and issues Food Hygiene Rating Scores?

Inspectors in the Food & Safety Team carry out planned, unannounced inspections and issue Food Hygiene Rating Scores. In the year 2015/2016 there are 646 premises due for inspection. New businesses are inspected once they have registered with the Council, with advice being given prior to inspection to those who request it. The Team also investigate complaints from members of the public, such as allegations of unhygienic practises/premises, suspected food poisoning, foreign objects found in food, etc.

2.0 How often are food businesses inspected?

How often inspections take place depends on the potential risk to people's health if something goes wrong. This depends on the type of food being handled and the type of processes that is carried out before the food is sold or served to the public. Inspections are undertaken at frequencies between 6 months and 5 years. Poorer performing businesses will be inspected at least every 6 months and revisits will also be made in between these full inspections.

3.0 What is the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme?

Each business is given their hygiene rating following their food hygiene inspection. The officer inspecting the business checks how well the business is meeting the law by looking at: how hygienically the food is handled – how it is prepared, cooked, re-heated, cooled and stored; the condition of the structure of the buildings; the cleanliness, layout, lighting, ventilation etc.; and how the business manages and records what it does to make sure food is safe. A business can be given one of these ratings:



Currently the Borough has 735 0 to 5 Ratings published on the Food Standards Agency website. The numbers of businesses within each rating band are as follows:

Businesses scoring **5** – 471 or **64%**
Businesses scoring **4** – 161 or **11%**
Businesses scoring **3** – 81 or **22%**

Businesses scoring **2** – 11 or **1.5%**
Businesses scoring **1** – 11 or **1.5%**
Businesses scoring **0** – 0 or **0%**

The businesses scored 3 to 5 are classed as 'broadly compliant' with the law and make up **97%** of the total published on the website.

4.0 What can be done if a business gets a poor rating (0, 1 or 2)?

The Team have a range of options available to them in order to help businesses improve and ultimately achieve the highest score. Authorised Officers can:

- Close down businesses, or prevent the use of equipment, or the use of a process or treatment where there is an 'imminent risk of injury to health';
- Secure longer term improvements by serving Hygiene Improvement Notices;

- Provide information, advice and support; and
- Carry out revisits to make sure that required works have been completed.

However, in serious cases prosecution is also recommended.

5.0 If a business makes improvements does their Food Hygiene Rating score change?

Once the Food Hygiene Rating has been issued it is retained by the business until the next routine inspection unless they submit an application to 'Request a revisit'. On receipt of a valid application an officer will carry out an inspection and a new Rating will be issued based on the conditions found; the Rating can go up, stay the same or go down.

The inspecting Officers make sure that the businesses have made improvements, however, despite making improvements some businesses do not apply for a revisit and their poor score will remain on the FSA website until their next routine inspection.

The Team has recently been joined by a Regulatory Business Support Officer whose role is aimed at targeting the poorer performing businesses offering information, support and guidance driven by the requirements of the business in order to improve their Rating. The Officer will also be providing this support to new businesses. The Regulatory Business Support Officer does not have enforcement powers.

It is anticipated that the Regulatory Business Support Officer will provide up to 3 mentoring visits to 0, 1 and 2 rated businesses after which the business will be re-inspected. It is hoped that this targeted work will improve the overall Ratings of these businesses.

[More information can be found on the Council website in the Environment section or on the Food Standards Agency website at \[www.ratings.food.gov.uk/\]\(http://www.ratings.food.gov.uk/\)](#)