



## FOOD HYGIENE RATING

# Business Information Sheet

### 1. What safeguards are there for businesses?

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) includes a number of safeguards to ensure that the scheme is fair to businesses. These are: an appeal procedure; a 'right to reply'; and an opportunity to request a re-visit when improvements have been made in order to be re-assessed for a 'new' rating. Information for food businesses about these different safeguards is provided on the *Food Hygiene Rating Scheme - safeguards for food businesses*. To obtain a copy of any of the forms contact us using the details at the end or visit [www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourbusiness/foodsafety/hygieneratings](http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourbusiness/foodsafety/hygieneratings)

### 2. How much is the FHRS costing the Council?

The Council has been awarded a grant from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to cover start-up and launch costs. The FHRS website is managed by FSA and the Council will not have to pay to use it. The scheme is a way to achieve improvements that involves fewer resources i.e. better compliance reduces the need for inspections, letter and report writing, re-inspections and other enforcement action.

### 3. What additional costs/time will be incurred by businesses and what additional paperwork will they have to complete?

There will be no additional costs/time to businesses because the FHRS uses ratings that are already determined during routine inspections. Those businesses that comply with the minimum standards set down in the food safety laws will receive the top rating which they can show to their customers. Businesses will not have to complete any additional paperwork. The safeguards for businesses include a simple appeal form, a right to reply and a request for a re-visit.

### 4. What are the benefits to businesses?

A snapshot survey, recently carried out for the FSA, indicated that more than 8 in 10 consumers consider hygiene standards to be extremely important when eating out, significantly outweighing other considerations such as price and location. The aim of the FHRS is to help consumers to make informed choices about where

to eat out or shop for food. Businesses that improve their ratings are expected to benefit by attracting more customers. Good food hygiene is good for business.

### 5. What consultation has there been on the scheme?

The FSA has consulted widely with stakeholders during the development of the scheme. A UK-wide Steering Group working on the development of the details on the implementation and operation of the FHSR included business representatives. Locally, more than 9 out of 10 businesses who responded to a consultation carried out by the Council were in favour of introducing the scheme for businesses in Suffolk Coastal.

### 6. Will smaller businesses and/or those in older premises be at a disadvantage to large businesses and/or in new premises?

Businesses will not be marked down for having an old kitchen as long as it can be kept clean. Free resources designed to help small businesses are also available to help them manage food safety and comply with the law e.g. Safer Food, Better Business packs, further details can be found at <http://www.food.gov.uk/goodbusiness> More than eight out of ten Suffolk Coastal businesses are expected to get a food hygiene rating of ‘generally satisfactory’, ‘good’ or ‘very good’.

### 7. How will the FHSR use the 3 compliance ratings?

The FHSR is a six-tier scheme ranging from ‘5 - very good’ to ‘0 – urgent improvement necessary’. The tier is determined by the 3 numerical ratings (food hygiene and safety procedures, structure of the establishment and confidence in management) of how well a business meets the minimum standards set down in food safety laws.

<b>Total of numerical ratings</b>	0-15	20	25-30	35-40	45-50	> 50
<b>Additional rating factor</b>	No rating > 5	No rating > 10	No rating > 10	No rating > 15	No rating > 20	-
<b>Tiers</b>	Top	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Bottom
<b>Food hygiene rating</b>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<b>Descriptor</b>	Very good	Good	Generally satisfactory	Improvement necessary	Major improvement necessary	Urgent improvement necessary

### **8. Will the new owner inherit the old scores from the previous owner?**

No. New owners are already required to notify the Council where there is a change in ownership and the Council is then required to inspect and a new rating will be issued.

### **9. Will it be mandatory for businesses to display their rating?**

No. Mandatory display would require new legislation. It is expected that as consumers become familiar with the scheme they will come to expect ratings to be displayed and draw their own conclusions where they are not.

### **10. Will all types of food businesses be within the scope of the scheme?**

No. The scope of the FHRs extends to establishments supplying food direct to consumers such as restaurants, cafes, takeaways, sandwich shops and other places where people eat food prepared outside of the home, as well as food retailers. Certain businesses are exempt from the FHRs e.g. businesses that are a low-risk to people's health in terms of food safety such as a newsagent selling wrapped confectionery.

### **11. Will the public understand the scheme?**

The FSA undertook consumer research that informed the adoption of the descriptors and branding for the FHRs. The FSA began the roll out of the scheme during the winter of 2010. The roll out will be accompanied by national and local publicity e.g. via leaflets, newsletters and websites etc. Suffolk Coastal will publicise the scheme in the spring 2011 edition of Coastline that is distributed to all residents in the district.

### **12. Where can I find out more information about the scheme?**

To find out more you can:

- Visit [www.food.gov.uk/hygieneratings](http://www.food.gov.uk/hygieneratings)
- Visit [www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourbusiness/foodsafety/hygieneratings](http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourbusiness/foodsafety/hygieneratings)
- Get in touch with us using the contact details below

**For more information on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in Suffolk Coastal call 01394 444357 or email [foodsafetyteam@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](mailto:foodsafetyteam@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk)**