

## FOOD SAFETY STAR RATING SCHEME

### INTRODUCTION

1. Reading Borough Council Consumer Protection Service is responsible for inspecting the majority of food businesses within the Borough. This is undertaken in line with the [‘Food Law Code of Practice, March 2006’](#), which is issued by the [Food Standards Agency](#). All Local Authorities must follow and implement the provisions of the code that apply to them.
2. This policy document outlines how the main principles of the Food Law Code of Practice scheme is applied to the Food Safety Star Rating System. The scheme will be accessible through the website and via stickers on food premises.

### ELIGIBLE FOOD BUSINESSES

3. The Star Rating scheme will encompass registered food premises within the Reading Borough Council boundary that prepare, cook, serve or sell food.
4. Some premises may not be inspected due to the low risk level of the food sold or prepared on the premises. These may be subject to alternative enforcement and will therefore not receive a star rating.
5. The Council also have the right to determine whether in exceptional circumstances the Star Rating of a particular premises should not be applicable.

### DETAILS OF THE SCHEME

6. Primary inspections (as defined by the Food Law Code of Practice and EC Regulation 882/2004) are carried out at each food business by qualified and competent Environmental Health staff in line with the inspection rating system in annex 5 of the Food Law Code of Practice. At the end of each inspection the officer will grade the premises on the basis of eight criteria. The sum of three of the eight criteria that make up the resulting Food Safety score will be used to produce the Food Safety star rating.
7. The three criteria used in this Star Rating scheme are:-
  - standards of food hygiene,
  - standards of structure of food areas and
  - degree of confidence in management at food premises.
8. The following table outlines the ratings and scores that are used in order to determine the Star Rating that will be given to the premises:-

Risk rating categories	Excellent ←—————→ Poor					
Food Hygiene & Safety	0	5	10	15	20	25

Structure & Cleaning	0	5	10	15	20	25
Management & Control	0	5	10	15	20	25

These scores are the only ones that are directly controllable by the food business and this is the reason they have been used to obtain the food business star rating.

9. The sum of the 3 categories in the above table is then given the star rating as follows:-

Score	Level of Compliance	Star Rating
Up to 5	Excellent	YYYYYY
6 to 15	Very Good	YYYY
16 to 25	Good	YYY
26 to 35	Satisfactory	YY
36 to 45	Poor	Y
Above 45	Major Improvements required	None

10. Following the primary inspection the food business owner will be informed of the overall risk rating score (according to the Code of Practice Annex 5) and the Star Rating to be applied to the premises. Only the latest Star Rating will be accessible from the website.

## **OPERATION OF THE SCHEME**

11. The Star Rating scheme will be implemented on a rolling basis from primary inspections carried out from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005.
12. The ratings will only be given following a primary inspection, not a secondary inspection or revisit. This is the score that will be publicised on the Internet.
13. After each primary inspection the Food business Operator will be given a sticker to indicate his Star Rating which should be placed in a prominent position at the food premises
14. Should an officer discover serious hygiene defects in a 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 websites and on the stickers.
15. If the Food Business Operator is concerned with the star rating given he/she may apply to the Council to have another primary inspection carried out before the next primary inspection is due. This inspection will be carried out without warning to the food business after payment to the Council of a fee that is laid out in the Council's fees and charges register. The rating carried out from this inspection will now form the new Food Safety star rating regardless of whether it is more, less or as favourable

as the last score. This re-inspection will only be carried out once at each food business.

16. The same criteria will be applied to the food inspection regardless of whether it is a programmed primary visit according to the code of practice, a primary inspection carried out instigated following a complaint or carried out after payment of the fee described above.
17. The data will be uploaded to the website approximately once per month.
18. New food businesses will not have their details uploaded to the site until they have received a primary inspection.
19. For the first 2 years from the initial implementation of the scheme all premises due to be inspected each quarter and not currently on the website will be informed about the scheme in writing and that the resulting scores will be posted on the Internet.
20. The Internet web page will include a facility for business owners to send a photograph or website address link which will be added to the site once verified as a true representation.

#### **CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP**

21. When the Service becomes aware of a change in the Food Business Operator, the Food Safety Star Rating will be removed and will be re-instated after the first primary inspection of the business under the new ownership.

#### **APPEAL PROCESS**

22. Where a food business believes that an inspection has resulted in an unfair rating of the hygiene standards therein then an appeal can be made in writing to the Consumer Protection Manager, Consumer Protection Service, Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, Reading RG1 7TD stating the reasons for the appeal. This will be given careful consideration and a response made in writing within 2 weeks.

#### **THE FUTURE**

23. The [Food Standards Agency](#) is undertaking a pilot project for this type of scheme to apply on a national basis. This may alter how businesses will be rated in the future. **It is important to note that both the score and the rating given to a premises is subject to change in the future. A Star Rating given could go down or up if a national scheme is different to the above scoring system.** The Council will endeavour to keep businesses and users informed of this.