

Mandatory display

In Northern Ireland and Wales, food businesses are legally required to display their food hygiene rating sticker in a prominent place, for example at the entrance to their premises. In England, businesses are not legally required to display their rating but are encouraged to do so.

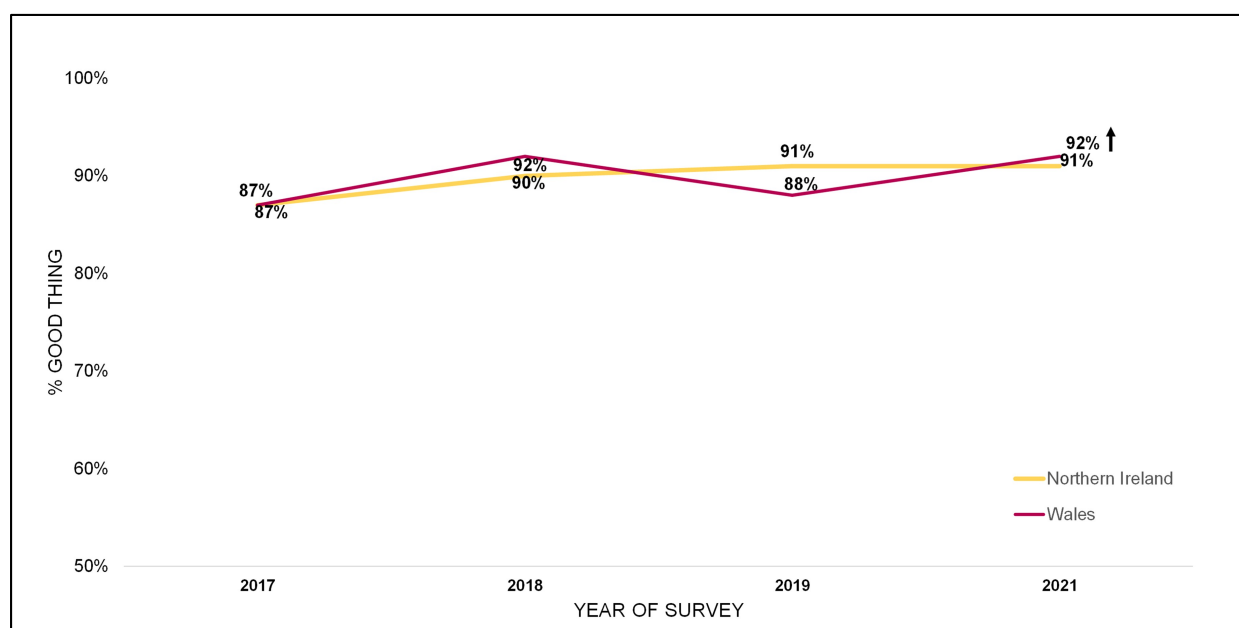
This chapter begins by exploring awareness of, and attitudes towards, the mandatory display of food hygiene ratings in Northern Ireland and Wales, before moving on to the views which food businesses in England have on mandatory display. The chapter concludes with findings around attitudes towards compulsory display online.

Awareness and attitudes in Northern Ireland and Wales

The vast majority of food businesses in Northern Ireland and Wales (96% of each) were aware that it is a legal requirement to have their food hygiene rating publicly on display. The level of awareness remains in line with previous years, with no significant differences between key sub-groups.

Over nine in ten businesses in Northern Ireland (91%) and Wales (92%) felt that the legal requirement to display their food hygiene rating was a good thing, with more than seven in ten of the opinion that it was 'very good' (Northern Ireland: 71%; Wales: 74%). As illustrated in Figure 6.1, between 2019 and 2021 there has been significant increase in the proportion of Welsh food businesses that considered mandatory display to be a good thing (92% vs 88%), causing agreement to return to levels reported in 2018. Attitudes of food businesses in Northern Ireland have remained consistent since 2019.

Figure 6.1 Positive attitudes towards mandatory display requirements in Northern Ireland and Wales



C12. How do you feel generally about the legal requirement to display your Food Hygiene Rating at your premises? Base: FBOs in Wales/NI (Northern Ireland: 475, Wales: 462). ? Denotes a significant increase from 2019.

In both countries, there was some evidence of attitudes towards mandatory display varying by business characteristics. In Northern Ireland, takeaways and sandwich shops stood out as being less likely to think it was good thing (85% vs 91% overall). Meanwhile, in Wales, those with a rating of five were more likely to think it was good (94% vs 92% overall).

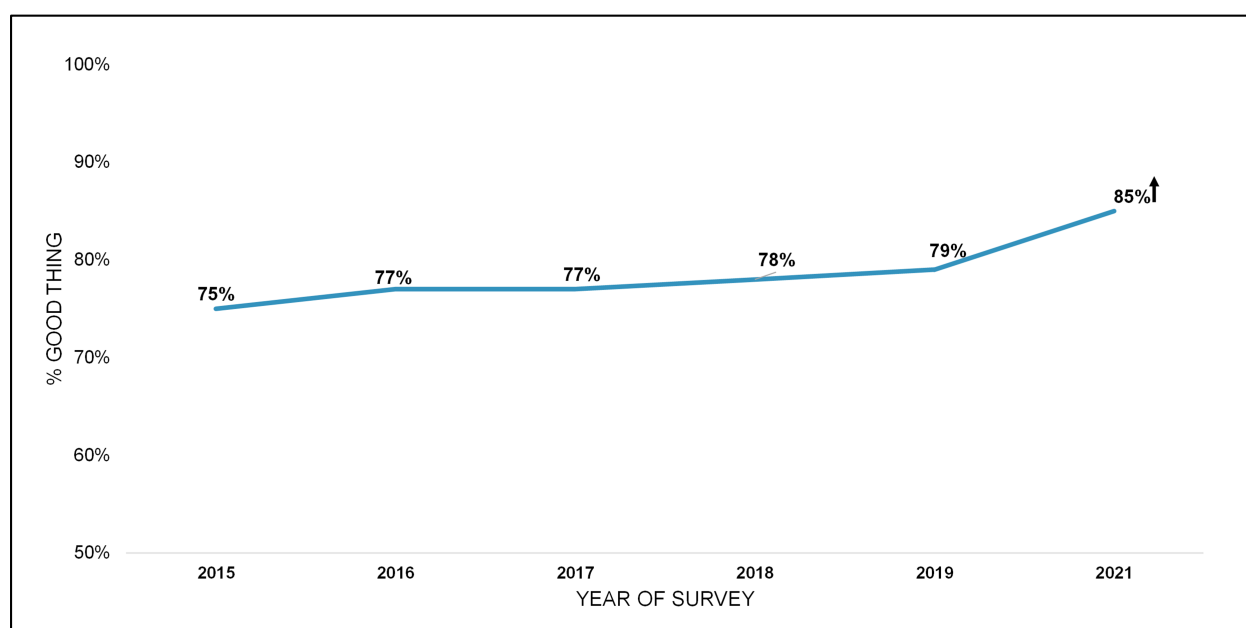
Amongst those that considered mandatory display to be a good thing, the most common reasons were because it showed customers that the business cares about good hygiene and has high standards (Northern Ireland: 41%; Wales: 40%) and because it builds customer trust and confidence (Northern Ireland: 27%; Wales: 29%). Amongst the minority of businesses in Northern Ireland and Wales that did not consider mandatory display to be a good thing (i.e., neither good nor bad, or a bad thing), this was typically attributed to reservations around the efficacy of the FHRS.

In Northern Ireland, of the 40 businesses that did not think mandatory display was good, 13 said that displaying the rating made no difference to their business and 9 said it was because they perceived there to be flaws in how ratings are determined. Similarly, in Wales, of the 34 businesses that did not think mandatory display was good, 10 said that displaying the rating made no difference to their business and 11 said this was because they perceived there to be flaws in the way ratings are determined.

Attitudes in England

In England, more than four in five (85%) agreed that the introduction of a scheme where food businesses are required by law to display their food hygiene rating was a good idea. Furthermore, over three in five (62%) considered it to be a 'very good' idea. Those with the top rating of 5 were more likely to have a positive view on the introduction of such a scheme (88% vs 85% average), meanwhile accommodation businesses and pubs, bars and nightclubs were less likely (73% vs 85% average). There were no significant differences by FHRS rating in Northern Ireland and Wales. As illustrated by Figure 6.2, since 2019 there has been a significant increase in the proportion of English food businesses that think mandatory display is a good concept.

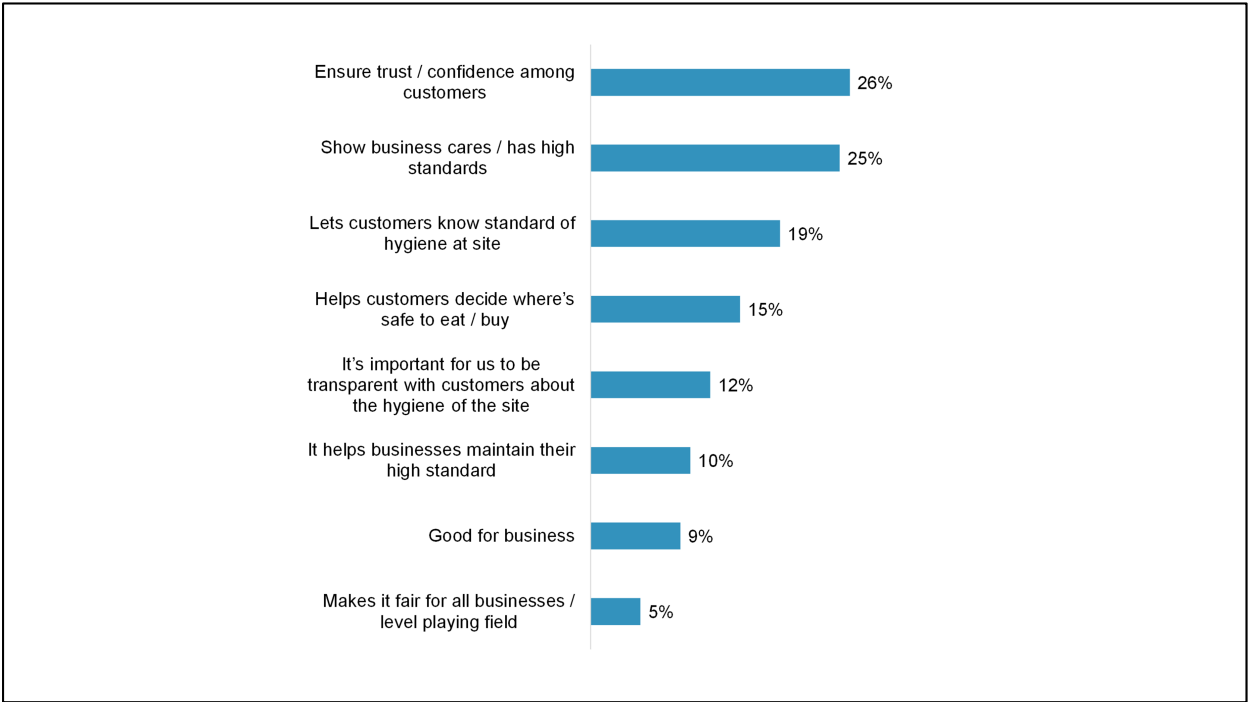
Figure 6.2 Positive attitudes towards mandatory display in England



C9. How would you feel if a scheme was introduced where you were required by law to display your Food Hygiene Rating? Base: FBOs in England (469). ? Denotes a significant increase from 2019.

Amongst the food businesses in England who had positive views on the introduction of mandatory display of food hygiene ratings, the most common reasons were because it builds customer trust and confidence (26%) and because it showed customers that the business cares about good hygiene and has high standards (25%) (see Figure 6.3). These were also the top two reasons why Northern Irish and Welsh businesses had positive attitudes towards mandatory display.

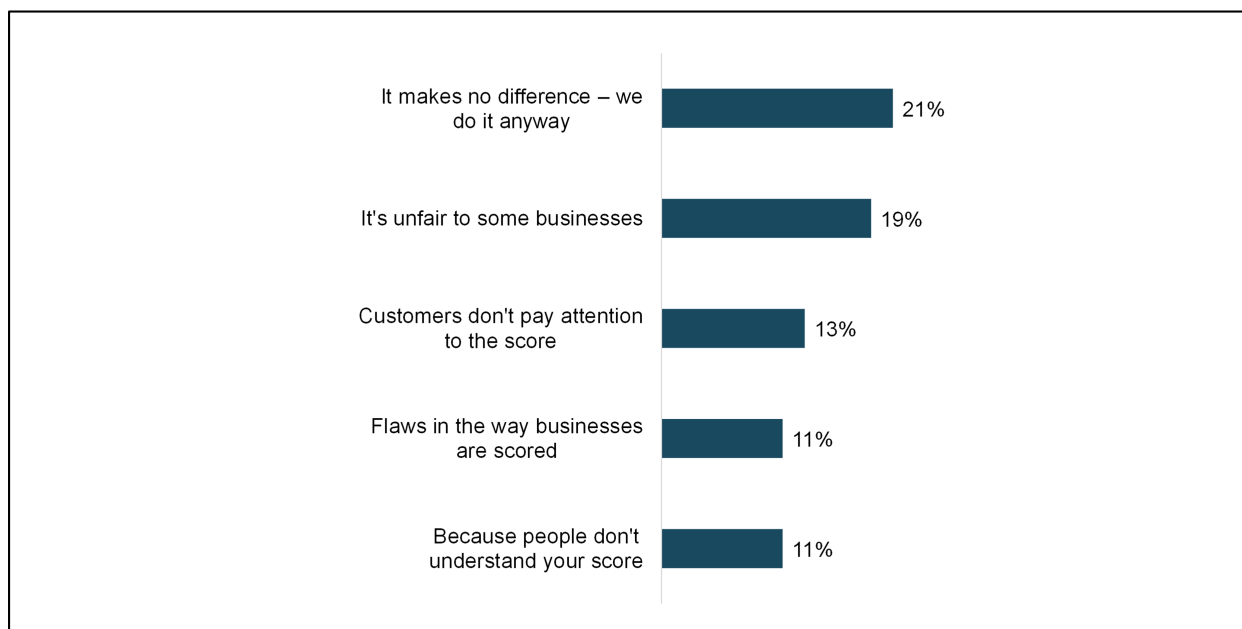
Figure 6.3 Reasons for positive attitudes towards mandatory display in England (Unprompted)



C10B. Why do you say it would be a good thing? Base: FBOs who think it would be a good thing if it was a legal requirement to display FHRS in England (374). Please note this was an open-ended question.

As presented in Figure 6.4, amongst English food businesses that thought mandatory display was not a good thing (i.e., neither good nor bad, or a bad thing), the most common reason for this was because the business already displayed their food hygiene rating and so the introduction of a legal requirement would make no difference to the business (21%). Other reasons included the view that it would be unfair to some businesses (19%) and because they believed that customers are unlikely to pay attention to ratings on display (13%).

Figure 6.4 Reasons given by those businesses reporting negative attitudes towards mandatory display of FHRS ratings in England.



C10A. Why do you say it would be a bad thing? Base: FBOs who think it would not be a good thing if it was a legal requirement to display FHRS in England (61).

Attitudes towards mandatory display online

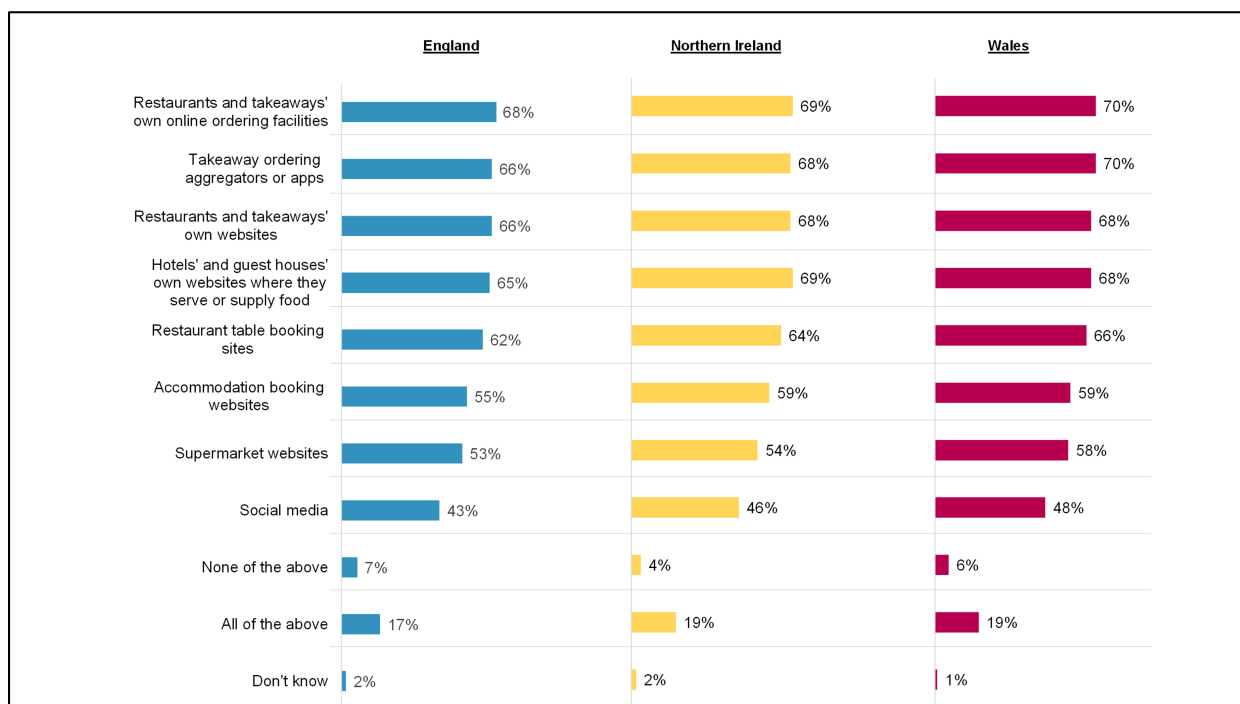
In addition to monitoring attitudes towards mandatory display of food hygiene ratings at physical premises, the research also explored views on whether the display of food hygiene ratings online should be made compulsory.

Across England, Northern Ireland and Wales, the majority of businesses felt that the display of food hygiene ratings should become mandatory for at least some online platforms (England: 91%; Northern Ireland: 93%; Wales: 94%), with around a fifth holding the opinion that food businesses should be required by law to display their rating on all online platforms used (England: 17%; Northern Ireland: 19%; Wales: 19%).

As presented in Figure 6.6, the top three most common types of online platforms where mandatory online display was felt to be required were the own online ordering facilities of restaurants and takeaways (England: 68%; Northern Ireland: 69%; Wales: 70%), takeaway aggregators or apps (England: 66%; Northern Ireland: 68%; Wales: 70%) and the websites of restaurants and takeaways (England: 66%; Northern Ireland: 68%; Wales: 68%).

However, fewer than half of food businesses in England, Northern Ireland and Wales felt that food businesses should be required to publicise their food hygiene rating on their social media accounts (England: 43%; Northern Ireland: 46%; Wales: 48%).

Figure 6.5 Online facilities that should be required by law to display Food Hygiene ratings



C13. Which, if any, of the following online facilities do you think should be required by law to display Food Hygiene Ratings? Base: FBOs who have FHRs (England: 469; Northern Ireland: 486; Wales: 479).

Within England and Northern Ireland there were notable differences by outlet type in terms of which online platforms display should be made mandatory.

In England, restaurants, cafés and other catering outlets were more likely to say that restaurants and takeaways should be required by law to display food hygiene ratings on their own online ordering facilities (75% vs 68% average). Meanwhile, accommodation businesses and pubs, bars and nightclubs were more likely than average to feel that online display was not necessary on any online platforms (14% v 7% average).

In Northern Ireland, accommodation businesses and pubs, bars and nightclubs were more likely to say that restaurants and takeaways should be required by law to display food hygiene ratings on their own online ordering facilities (80% vs 69% average) and on their own websites (79% vs 68% average).