

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme – Consumer Attitudes Tracker (Wave 1)

Research programme [Research projects -](#)
Study duration November 2014 to July 2015
Project code FS244011

Background

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) is a partnership scheme between local authorities and the FSA which aims to provide consumers with information on the hygiene standards of places they choose to eat out at or purchase food from.

The FSA previously commissioned a biannual public attitudes tracker survey to monitor key areas of concern for consumers in relation to food. In 2010, a number of questions were added regarding awareness and usage of the FHRS. In 2014, the FSA decided to explore the FHRS and consumers in more detail, and commissioned a bespoke consumer attitudes tracker survey to specifically monitor consumer awareness, attitudes towards and usage of the scheme.

Research Approach

This piece of work consisted of face to face interviews with a representative sample of 1,971 respondents (aged 16 and over). Respondents were selected using a random location sampling method across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The questions primarily focus on the following key areas;

- Awareness of the scheme - the proportion of respondents who report being aware of the FHRS
- Recognition of the scheme - the proportion of respondents who recognize the FHRS sticker, or who had seen a food business displaying one in the past year
- Usage of the scheme - the proportion of respondents who report using the scheme to base their decision on where to eat out or purchase food from
- Views on the scheme - for example, the proportion of respondents who believe food businesses should be legally required to display their rating

Results

Awareness

- Nearly half of respondents were aware of the FHRS, with 45% reporting that they had either seen or heard of the scheme.
- The most common source of information (79% of respondents) was a sticker/certificate at the premises.

Recognition

- Consumer recognition of the scheme materials was high - 69% of all respondents reporting having seen the FHRs sticker before.
- Recognition was significantly higher in Northern Ireland (82%) but not in Wales (75%).
- There had been no significant change on previous waves on recognition in any of the three countries.
- A large number of respondents reported that they had seen a food business displaying their rating in the last 12 months - 77% of respondents in England, 85% in Wales and 91% in Northern Ireland.

Use

- In terms of use, 40% of respondents in England, 36% in Wales and 51% in Northern Ireland reported that they would definitely base their decision to eat out somewhere on the FHRs rating it received.
- In terms of checking the rating, 40% of respondents in England, 39% in Wales and 23% in Northern Ireland (significantly lower than the other two countries) reported that they either often or sometimes do so before deciding where to eat out.
- A rating of 3 was identified most frequently as the lowest acceptable that consumers would consider - 42% in England, 46% in Wales and 54% in Northern Ireland.
- Only 16% of respondents said they would consider purchasing food from a business with a rating lower than their minimum acceptable rating.

Views on mandatory display

The vast majority of consumers (84% overall) believe that businesses should be legally required to display their rating – 84% in England, 89% in Wales and 94% in Northern Ireland. The figure for Northern Ireland was significantly greater than in England.

Research report

[View FHRs Biannual Public Attitudes Tracker Wave 1 as PDF \(2.27 MB\)](#)