

Online display of food hygiene ratings by food businesses in Wales: Executive summary

Results available: No results available

Area of research interest: [Emerging challenges and opportunities](#)

Research topics: [Emerging issues](#) , [Enforcement](#) , [Food hygiene](#) , [Food safety](#)

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The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) was commissioned by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to facilitate a workshop to explore regulators views about proposals to introduce mandatory online display of food hygiene ratings by food businesses in Wales. This report details the findings.

Participants were supportive of the FSA's proposals and welcomed the opportunity for engagement at an early stage. They were unanimous in their views that mandating the display of food hygiene ratings online by businesses would represent a natural progression of the current scheme which has evolved over time, reflecting changes in the landscape whereby online food sales have increased dramatically.

A gradual approach to introducing any new requirements for food businesses was favoured with voluntary online display by pathfinder businesses initially, followed by phased implementation of a statutory scheme.

The likely IT challenges associated with implementation, particularly for small food businesses was highlighted as a concern by participants who welcomed the prospect of a potential technological solution which would automatically update business websites and social media accounts with up-to-date ratings.

The resource implications for already stretched local authorities associated with verifying business compliance was highlighted, but the opportunity for this surveillance to be done remotely by the FSA or others was identified, with LAs only needing to be notified in the event of a problem or non-compliance being identified for potential enforcement action.

Investment in technology was identified as key to the success of this initiative as there was a general feeling that whilst the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) has developed over time, the technology supporting it has not. Participants suggested that a mobile app should be developed to provide consumers with quick, easy to access up-to-date ratings information. A mobile app would also enable other benefits to be realised.

Early engagement about proposals with aggregators and identification of pathfinder food businesses were identified as potential next steps for the FSA, together with continuation of work

to explore technological fixes to reduce potential burdens on businesses and regulators associated with implementation of the Scheme.