

National 'Food Hygiene Rating Scheme' – Q&A on grant funding for local authorities

Introduction

This Q&A provides information on the grant funding that the Food Standards Agency is making available for local authorities intending to be 'early adopters' of the national 'Food Hygiene Rating Scheme' (FHRS). It outlines: the activities that will be funded; the application process; the criteria that will be used to assess applications and the assessment process; the process for reporting and evaluating the work carried out; and the arrangements and timetable for payment of grant funding. It also outlines the resource materials that are available to local authorities adopting the scheme.

Q&A

Q1. What activities are eligible for funding?

- A1. The funding is available to support local authorities in the 'start up' and 'pre-launch' work required for implementing the FHRS and, in particular, the following activities
- file/database checks and database cleansing activities;
 - scope checks, including identification of establishments that fall within the scope of the scheme;
 - development and implementation of a strategy for communicating with local businesses; and
 - co-ordination of activities of a number of local authorities – locally or regionally - by an officer from one of the authorities.

More information on 'start up' and 'pre-launch' activities is available at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/enfcomm/scoresdoorssteeringgroup/sotdguidance/>

Q2. Are any other 'start up' activities eligible for funding?

- A2. Yes. Although the activities identified above are considered to be key to pre-launch preparation, there may be others. Where a local authority has identified other 'start up' activities that are more appropriate to their particular needs, these may be eligible for grant funding. Where this is the case, an explanation should be given on the application form.

Q3. What is meant by file/database checks and database cleansing?

A3. These are the activities required to ensure that the local authority's records for each establishment covered by the scheme are up-to-date, accurate, and take account of the agreed 'data standard'¹ (published on the FSA website) that will be used for the UK-wide IT platform for publication of ratings. A copy of this, as it relates to the FHRS, is appended following the Q&A and lists the format in which the data will be required.

Examples of the type of checks needed include:

- **Business name:** this should be recorded only in the business name field and not also in an address field to ensure that the name does not appear twice when details are published on the national website or on certificates where these are generated using the national IT platform.
- **Business address:** a consistent approach to recording the address is needed as consumers will use this information to search for establishments on the website. The following illustrates why this is necessary. a search for establishments in 'Exampleton' would return the results for records 1 and 2 below as 'Exampleton' is part of each of these addresses but not for record 3 as 'Exampleton' is not part of the address, even although 'Italian Restaurant' is located next door to 'The Café'.

Record	Name	Address – line 1	Address – line 2	Address – line 3	Address – line 4	Postcode
1	The Café	2 The High Street	Exampleton	Essex		XX1 1XX
2	The supermarket	The new shopping complex	54 North Street	Exampleton	Essex	XX3 2XX
3	Italian Restaurant	4 The High Street		Essex		XX1 2XX

- **Inspection date:** this should be in one of the following UK date formats:

Format	Example	
dd/mm/yyyy	15/01/2010	Please note: dates using the US format - mm/dd/yyyy - are not acceptable (using the dd-mmm-yy format e.g. 15-Jan-10, should prevent the date being exported from their system in a US format).
dd month year	15 January 2010	
dd/mm/yy	15/01/10	
dd/m/yy	15/1/10	
d.m.yy	15.1.10	
yyy-mm-dd	2010-01-15	
dd-mmm-yy	15-Jan-10	

¹ See: <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/enforcement/sotditdatastandard.pdf>

Q4. What is meant by scope checks?

A4. These are the checks needed to identify and tag which establishments fall within the scope of the scheme i.e. establishments that are supplying food direct to consumers such as restaurants, cafes, takeaways, sandwich shops and other places that people eat food prepared outside of the home, as well as food retailers.

It also includes identifying and tagging:

- establishments that are 'exempt' from receiving a rating; and
- establishments which will receive a rating but details of which will not be published on the website because of security of other sensitivities.

Guidance on the scope of the FHRS is available on the FSA website.²

Tagging of records is required for data handling by the IT platform – information on 'excluded' establishments will not be published, data on establishments that are 'included' will be published and a certificate may be produced, data on 'exempt' establishments will be published and shown as 'exempt' and data on 'sensitive' establishments will not be published but a certificate may be produced.

Records should be tagged by assigning a value to each category of establishment (the way in which this will be achieved will depend on the local authority's Information Management System software). The values used are not prescribed as there will be a tool for 'mapping' these to the required categories. The mapping tool can also be used to specify what is indicated by no value e.g. if all establishments 'excluded' from the scheme have no scope value, 'no value' will equal 'excluded'.

Q5. What does development and implementation of a strategy for communicating with local businesses involve?

A5. At the pre-launch stage, this very much relates to the file/database checks and liaising with local businesses to ensure that the data held on them is accurate and up-to-date. This may be achieved by writing to them with the current registration details held, telephoning them, undertaking 'street surveys' etc.

This may be combined with informing the business that the scheme is coming and reminding them of the tools that are available to help them comply with food hygiene legislation. As well as writing to businesses, this may be achieved through advisory visits, workshops, seminars, drop-in sessions etc. or working in partnership with local business fora. There are limitations, however, on the types of activities that the Agency will be able to fund in this respect because of the current wider Government spending restrictions so local authorities are encouraged to consider new/innovative methods that might be used.

Briefing the local authority's Communications Team about the activities that will be carried out with businesses once the scheme starts to roll out would also be appropriate here.

Q&A 8 outlines the resource materials that the Agency has produced for local authorities to help with communicating with businesses.

² See: <http://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/enfcomm/scoresdoorssteeringgroup/sotdguidance/>

Q6. What 'other' activities relating to 'start up' and 'pre-launch' might be funded?

A6. This might include the following but the list is not exhaustive:

- preparation of briefing for/presentations to Members/portfolio holders and Council leaders;
- updating inspection procedures/forms/letters etc. to reflect the introduction of the scheme; and
- developing database queries to obtain a profile of current ratings to allow future assessment of trends and the impact of the scheme on compliance;
- consistency checks of the Food Law Code of Practice Annex 5 intervention-rating scores that have been recorded.

Q7. Will the Agency fund co-ordinators to work within local areas or regions where a number of local authorities are going to adopt the FHRS and what role will they provide?

A7. Yes, the Agency will consider proposals to use some of the funding to cover time (salary) costs for an officer to co-ordinate activities where a number of local authorities in the same area or region are planning to adopt the FHRS.

These co-ordinators could be identified in liaison with colleagues in the Agency's Regional Presence Teams and the Agency's offices in Belfast and Cardiff.

The role would be to provide advice, guidance and practical assistance to the various authorities in the group so that they can launch the scheme around the same time.

Where a bid is being made for this activity, the local authorities involved should be detailed but the bid itself does not need to be a collaborative one and all the authorities involved do not necessarily need to also be bidding for funds.

Q8. Are there any resource materials to help local authorities with 'start up' and 'pre-launch' activities?

A8. Yes, the Agency has developed a number of resource materials to help local authorities that intend to adopt the FHRS – both for those receiving grant funding and others that intend to adopt the scheme. This includes:

- template briefings and presentations for informing elected members about the scheme;
- template letters to accompany a handout which updates the text in the leaflet '*Good hygiene is good for your business* - for businesses telling them that the scheme is coming (supplies of this leaflet are still available);
- template presentations for businesses.

The materials are on the FSA website at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/safereating/hyg/scoresonthedoors/hygienescoresresources/>

Q9. Are there any particular activities that will not be funded?

A9. Yes. These include:

- **Inspections and other official controls** – The funding cannot be used for statutory official controls or enforcement activities.
- **Consistency training** – The FSA is organising and funding a programme of consistency training for all local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- **Communication with consumers** – It is considered that such communication at this stage is premature and would be more appropriate when a significant proportion of businesses in the area have been given ratings and these are published on the national database.

Q10. Are collaborative bids with other local authorities eligible for funding?

A10. Yes, such bids are welcome.

Where projects involve only data cleansing and scoping checks, however, individual projects may be more appropriate.

More information on funding of a local authority officer to co-ordinate pre-launch activities of a number of authorities is provided at Q&A 7.

Q11. If a local authority received a grant award in the previous round of funding, is it eligible to apply in this second round, and will any particular types of bids be given priority?

A11. Grants will primarily be for those local authorities that did not previously receive funding, with bids from authorities that are involved with the **2012 Olympics** being particularly encouraged. Bids that involve **new and innovative approaches to launch**, which could be used as a model for other local authorities, are also welcome. This might include, for example, liaison with the management of large shopping complexes and liaison with Tourist Boards to promote the scheme to businesses.

Consideration will also be given to awarding a local authority a second grant for new or different activities where this is justified.

Q12. How will applications be assessed?

A12. All applications received by the deadline will be assessed against a number of criteria (see Q&A 13 below) by a panel comprising Agency officials with independent external input.

Q13. What are the assessment criteria for determining if funding will be awarded?

A13. The following criteria will be used:

- There must be a firm commitment that funding will be used for pre-launch preparation for implementing the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
- Any proposed 'start up' activities must be clearly and directly linked to the preparation for launch of the national scheme.
- As we will want to demonstrate that the allocated funds have assisted the local authority in this preparation there should be mechanisms in place to assess whether the specified activities have been achieved.
- We will assess the level of funding requested along with details of the methods of delivery and mechanisms in place to assess whether the specified activities have been achieved in order to see whether this represents value for money.
- We will assess how realistic the timings set out are in view of the specified activities to be achieved and the resources allocated to this.
- Where a local authority received funding in the first round of grants, we will assess whether the planned activities are sufficiently different or innovative to attract further funding.

Q14. When must applications be submitted, when will local authorities be notified of the results of applications, and when must contracts be signed?

A14. Application must be with the Agency by **Friday 27 August 2010**.

The Agency will aim to confirm the allocation and level of grant awarded **by Friday 17 September 2010**.

All contracts must be agreed and signed before the start date specified in the application.

Q15. When must the project activities be undertaken?

A15. The duration of projects may vary but they must take place in the period between 1 October 2010 and 31 March 2011.

Q16. What will the terms of the contractual agreement be?

A16. The Agency's General Conditions of Agreement are set out at **Annex C**.

Applicants are asked to sign the declaration in the application form (**Annex A**) to confirm that they have read these.

Successful applicants will be required to sign an agreement to undertake the activities for which the grant funding has been awarded and specifically for the purpose of adopting the FHRS.

A draft agreement is provided following the Q&A.

Q17. What will the reporting arrangements be?

A17. Local authorities receiving grant funding will be required to submit an End of Project Report. This should outline the planned activities, report the results and evaluate how these have assisted in preparation for the planned launch of the FHRS. A final report template will be sent to local authorities when contracts are agreed.

Q18. What are the arrangements for payment of funding?

A18. Payment will be made in two stages - 50% at the start of the contract and 50% on receipt of the End of Project Report. The final invoice should be submitted with the Report, along with evidence in support of the cost of the project.

Payment at both stages will be made within 30 days of receipt of invoice.

Q19. Will payments include or exclude VAT?

A19. Generally, all costs paid will exclude VAT, the only exception being where VAT has been charged by contractors/suppliers and the local authority does not intend to reclaim it from Customs and Excise. The Agency is not able to provide advice or opinions to applicants on the VAT status of any services supplied by the applicant to the Agency, nor on the status of any supplies made to the applicant by their own subcontractors. It is the responsibility of the local authority or participant to confirm the VAT status of services to the Agency with their own Finance Department or their local VAT office.

Q20. What expenditure will the Agency cover and what will it not cover?

A20. This is set out in the table below.

Expenditure which will be covered	Expenditure that will not be covered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff costs related to the national scheme (overtime/backfilling) • Project management • Project administration • Mileage/travel costs • Hire of equipment • Seminars/workshops/road shows/visits • Venue/refreshment costs • Stationery/printing & postage costs • Local/regional coordinator costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff costs for statutory duties – including official controls • Capital costs for equipment that is purchased • Publicity material costs • Website development • E-learning/interactive tools • Consumer communications • Consistency training

Q21. Who should local authorities contact for further information?

A21. **Andrew Stephenson** or **David Millis** from the Agency's SotD Team will be happy to provide further information on any aspect of the grant funding scheme. Their contact details are:

Andrew Stephenson

☎: 020 7276 8388

Email: Andrew.stephenson@foodstandards.gsigov.uk

David Mills

☎: 020 7276 8424

Email: david.millis@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Agreed data standard

Data field name	Required format	Comment
Local Authority ID	Alpha-numeric	This ID is the same ID used for the Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS). Supply of this data in not mandatory.
Local Authority Name	Text - 255 character limit	The name of the local authority. Supply of this data in not mandatory.
Establishment ID	Alpha-numeric – 255 character limit	This is the premises ID/unique premises reference number
Establishment Name	Alpha-numeric – 254 character limit	The name of the business
Operator/Proprietor	Text – 255 character limit	The name of the food business operator - this will not be published on the consumer-facing website. Supply of this data in not mandatory.
Establishment telephone number	Numeric - 15 character limit	This will not be published on the consumer-facing website. Supply of this data in not mandatory.
Address line 1	Alpha-numeric – 255 character limit	No individual address line is mandatory but the supply of a valid address is, so at least one of the address lines must contain data and it is the responsibility of the local authority to ensure that a valid and recognisable address is supplied.
Address line 2	Alpha-numeric – 255 character limit	As above
Address line 3	Alpha-numeric – 255 character limit	As above
Address line 4	Alpha-numeric – 255 character limit	As above
Post Code	Alpha-numeric – 9 character limit	This should usually be supplied for each establishment, except when the establishment does not have a post code
Business type (category)	Text - 100 Character limit	This will follow the business categories used in LAEMS. If the local authority does not categorise businesses on their local system using the LAEMS categories, it will be able to use the mapping facility on the FHRS IT system to indicate how the categories used relate to the LAEMS categories.

Data field name	Required format	Comment
Inspection date	UK date format i.e. dd/mm/yyyy dd month yeardd/mm/yy dd/m/yy d.m.yy yyy-mm-dd dd/mmm/yy	This is required for all establishments.
Scope	Alpha-numeric	Identifier to indicate if business is: Excluded; Included; 'Exempt' 'Sensitive' establishment. The IT system will allow local authorities to specify what is indicated by no value e.g. if those establishments 'excluded' from the scheme do not have a 'scope' value, the mapping facility may be used to indicate that such establishments are 'excluded'.
Confidence in Management score	Two digits ^(a) Valid data values are 0, 5, 10, 20 or 30	The FHRS rating will be calculated from the three scores for Confidence in management, Hygiene and safety and Structural. The absence of these three values will indicate that the establishment is 'awaiting inspection' i.e. not yet rated.
Hygiene and Safety Score	Two digits ^(a) Valid data values are 0, 5, 10, 15, 20 or 25	As above
Structural score	Two digits ^(a) Valid data values are 0, 5, 10, 15, 20 or 25	As above
Re-score result	One digit ^(a) Valid data values are 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 (5 being a 'top tier' rating and 0 a 'bottom tier' rating)	This will indicate the new FHRS rating, when an establishment is given a new FHRS rating at a re-visit that is not an inspection/partial inspection or audit i.e. the intervention does not allow for the establishment to be re-risk rated, but there is sufficient evidence to give a new FHRS rating.
Re-score date	Date	The date on which the establishments was assigned a re-score.
Annex 5 Overall Score	Three digits	Voluntary field - showing the overall risk score for the establishment. This will not be published on the consumer-facing website.

Notes:

(a) Prescribed data values are required - the valid data values shown.

Draft agreement (see Q&A 16)

- THE AGREEMENT -

Invitation to apply for grant funding for 'start up' and 'pre-launch' activities required in preparation for implementation of the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

Subject to acceptance by the Food Standards Agency of the application made by⁽¹⁾ for funding of £..... (ex VAT), **of 'start up' and 'pre-launch' activities for implementation of the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme**, this agreement confirms that⁽¹⁾ agrees to be bound to the conditions of this Agreement, which shall comprise:

- This Agreement;
- Outline of requirements at Annex A;
- Price proposals at Annex B;
- Administration Instructions attached at Annex C;
- The General Conditions of Agreement attached at Annex D

I agree that the funding of £..... granted to⁽¹⁾ will be used solely for the activities described at Annex A for the purpose of adopting the national 'Food Hygiene Rating Scheme'.

You are hereby requested to indicate your acceptance of the terms and conditions of this Agreement by signing your application form and returning it to the FSA.

The Form of Agreement must be signed unaltered in any way: any amendment to the Form of Agreement without prior written approval of the FSA will render the document void.

Signed _____

Signed _____

(On behalf of the Local Authority)

(On behalf of the Food Standards Agency)

Name _____
(Print)

Name _____
(Print)

Date _____

Date _____

(1) Please insert the name of the Local Authority

ANNEX A - OUTLINE OF REQUIREMENTS

This information will be completed from information provided on the application form about the project activities, outcomes etc.

ANNEX B – PROJECT FINANCES

The costs in the tables in this section will be taken from the costs provided on the application form.

ANNEX C - ADMINISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

1 Duration of Agreement

1.1 The working period of this Agreement shall be from the Project start date until the date by which the final report must be submitted to the Agency.

2 Authorisation

- 2.1 The following person is authorised to act as the FSA's Representative on all matters relating to the Agreement: Sarah Appleby
- 2.2 The FSA's Representative may authorise in writing other officers to exercise on her behalf such powers as are contained in this Agreement that she defines.

3. Address for Payment

3.1 Invoices associated with paragraph 4.1 in Annex D should be sent to the FSA addressed to:

Payments Team
Room 109, Foss House, Kings Pool, 1-2 Peasholme Green, York YO1 7PR

3.2 They must include details of FSA's contact person and other details as required by FSA's representative, which will be provided to successful applicants.

4. Contact details

Day to day contact at FSA:

Andrew Stephenson
Food Standards Agency
Room 5C, Aviation House
125 Kingsway, London, WC2B 6NH
Telephone: 020 7276 8424;
Fax: 020 7276 8463
Email: Andrew.stephenson@foodstandards.gsi.goc.uk

Day to day contact at LA:

Name:
Address:
Telephone:
Fax:
Email: