

NAVIGATOR



Communications Development Research
for a
National Food Hygiene Rating
'Scores On The Doors' - Scheme

Report

Prepared For

COI[®]

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Executive Summary

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is establishing a national food hygiene rating or 'scores on the doors' (SotD) scheme for England, Wales and Northern Ireland for rating of hygiene standards in food business establishments.

The scheme aims to provide consumers with 'at a glance' information about the hygiene standards at food business establishments. The scheme is based on six different ratings (six tiers) reflecting the range of food hygiene standards that local authority officers might find. The creation of a 'national' scheme aims to avoid further proliferation of the increasing number of different 'local' schemes that local authorities are operating. Research was required to explore different options for representing the scheme to consumers; names, descriptors, symbols, strap-lines and use of local authority and Food Standards Agency branding.

In Scotland some local authorities already operate a two tier food hygiene rating scheme, 'Pass' and 'Improvement Required', and this scheme is now being rolled out more widely in that country.

METHOD AND SAMPLE

Research was conducted in two phases. The first phase comprising 8 group discussions was exploratory in nature and set out to obtain reactions to potential scheme elements. The second phase set out to gauge the communications potential of scheme elements assembled in coherent design routes and comprised 64 individual interviews conducted in 'quali-halls'. The sample represented a spectrum of age, social grade and food buying behaviour. Fieldwork took place in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland across both phases.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

A SotD Scheme

Food hygiene was a consideration in choice of outlet to a greater or lesser extent for all participants in the research. In most cases they avoided outlets where they felt food hygiene looked questionable rather than seeking outlets which looked 'clean'.

Awareness of existing schemes was low however, and participants used visible cues as indicators of food hygiene standards, accepting that they were extrapolating from those cues to assume good hygiene practices were followed within the outlets. So for example, if a restaurant dining room was

clean and bright and the staff well turned out they would assume the kitchen was clean and hygienic.

A SotD scheme would offer them access to the 'back of house' areas (that is, the elements of a food business they could not see or judge) via a display of the local authority officer's rating.

A National Food Hygiene Rating ('SotD') Scheme

The idea of a national scheme was welcomed as it was thought that a universal 'look' would indicate common standards meaning that you could have the same level of confidence in the 'rating' irrespective of where you were buying food.

Participants also felt that they would be more likely to notice the scheme as if it was the same everywhere it would become familiar, and they would start to look out for it.

There was disappointment that display of the food hygiene rating on food business premises would not be mandatory. However, participants felt that if they got used to seeing the food hygiene rating, albeit only where good results had been achieved, they might be more likely to question the standards of outlets not displaying a food hygiene rating.

Attitudes towards 6 tier and 2 tier rating systems varied. The idea of a 6 point scale was questioned by some respondents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland who felt that it made the scheme more complicated to use. They argued that 2 tiers, or as they put it, a simple 'pass – fail' system was all that was required as either an outlet would have adequate hygiene, or it would not. They felt that a 6 point scale passed responsibility to the consumer to make a judgment. There was more of a mixed view from Scotland with some respondents expressing similar views to the above while others felt a 6 point scale allowed them to see degrees of 'good and bad', and also gave more of an incentive for businesses to improve beyond pass level.

After exposure to the standards used to determine the rating, the majority felt that while they would ideally buy their food from those with either the top or second top rating (in the six tier scheme), they would probably accept those with the third top rating and reject those with the three ratings in the bottom half of the scale.

Branding

Food Standards Agency branding would confer authority and credibility and suggest a national scheme.

Local authority branding alone would suggest a local scheme, while the effect of local authority branding in *addition* to Food Standards Agency branding varied from one local authority to the next. Given the use of a qualitative methodology this may reflect the views of the participants recruited, although it is possible that there may be variations between local authorities in terms of perceived credibility and authority.

Having said that, local authority branding did suggest on the ground presence and was also felt to offer consumers a more accessible channel for information and dialogue should they require it.

This suggests there is a case for dual branding with Food Standards Agency as the 'senior partner'.

Name

The use of the word 'hygiene' as part of the name was felt important in order to make the purpose of the scheme clear and unambiguous.

'Food Hygiene Rating' and 'Food Hygiene Standards' both worked well. 'Food Hygiene Rating' makes a direct reference to the 'rating' itself and infers an active process which may make its use slightly more appropriate

Symbols

A number of different options were explored including different types of 'star', 'plates', ticks, speech bubbles and numerically based routes.

There are a great number of local authority schemes in existence which use 'stars', and some participants felt that the national scheme should use stars, as they are familiar from a number of different uses in a food and hospitality environment. However, this familiarity could also be a reason for *avoiding* the use of stars, as the scheme's purpose could be confused with others that use stars, and also the consumer might unwittingly extrapolate from the scheme's remit, ie, food hygiene, to other aspects of 'food', for example, 'quality', nutritional content, 'dining experience', and so on. It was notable that even in the context of a scheme name which included the word 'hygiene' and despite the moderators pointing out that this was the extent of the scheme's remit some participants kept falling back into discussing the scheme as an indicator of food quality and dining experience.

There is a strong possibility that a star based scheme could be misinterpreted by the consumer in one way or another, and in turn this could mislead as to the significance of the rating in relation to food hygiene, particularly those with zero star or one star ratings. Once exposed to the underlying standards, some participants took exception to the idea that those scoring at these levels should receive stars at all, pointing out that stars are usually an award for positive achievement and that observing food hygiene standards is not a matter for congratulation particularly for businesses rated at these levels.

In addition other approaches seemed to offer greater potential for clear and effective communication.

Design Route



This design route was felt to be the most appropriate, having the following characteristics:

- A substantial look, it has presence and was thought likely to stand out in situ
- An official feel
- Clear communication of the food hygiene rating for the 6 tiers
- Visual illustration of a numerical scale thought to aid ease and speed of use
- Clearly a 6 point scale, in the sense that any rating was possible from level 0-5
- Ideally size of descriptor type and 'pointer' would be increased to facilitate ease of use

Descriptors

Rating	Descriptor
0	Urgent improvement necessary
1	Major improvement necessary
2	Improvement necessary
3	Satisfactory
4	Good
5	Very Good

These descriptors were felt most appropriate because:

- 'Satisfactory' was seen as a clear 'break point' between businesses that were performing to an acceptable standard and those that were not
- Other descriptors were clearly better or worse than 'satisfactory'
- The increasing strength of the descriptors reflected the numerical scale
- '...improvement necessary' had a dynamic quality, suggesting that action had been specified and that someone would check it was taken.

Strap-lines

The strap-lines with most strengths were...

- *Monitoring the hygiene of places that sell food*
 - this was felt to suggest a continuing process
 - this was reassuring assuming a reasonably frequent inspection cycle
- *Your guide to the hygiene standards of places that sell food*
 - this had a personal feel, inviting usage of the scheme
 - it is perhaps an over-promise of consumer experience of the scheme
- *Rating the hygiene of places that sell food*
 - this was felt to be effective in a purely descriptive sense

BACKGROUND

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is establishing a national food hygiene rating scheme or so called 'scores on the doors' (SotD) scheme for England, Wales and Northern Ireland for rating of hygiene standards in food business establishments. A different scheme is being rolled out in Scotland.

The scheme aims to provide consumers with 'at a glance' information about the hygiene standards found by local authority officers at food business establishments when they undertake routine food hygiene inspections. The primary purpose is to allow consumers to make informed choices about where they eat or buy food and, through this, to encourage businesses to improve hygiene standards.

The scheme is based on six different ratings (six tiers) reflecting the range of standards that may be found. The highest rating equates to compliance with the requirements of food hygiene legislation. The scheme being rolled out in Scotland is based on a two tier system, 'Pass' and 'Improvement Required'.

The creation of the 'national' scheme aims to avoid further proliferation of the increasing number of different 'local' schemes that local authorities are operating and, thereby, provide clarity for consumers and consistency for businesses.

The FSA must establish an identity for the national scheme (including a name for the scheme, an associated strap-line, and the symbols & descriptors that will be used for each of the different ratings) and wishes to seek consumer opinion to inform this. Research was commissioned to address that requirement.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- The overall aim of the research was to explore how to communicate effectively to consumers through the name of the national scheme and associated strap-line, and through the symbols and descriptors used for the six different tiers or hygiene ratings of food businesses as found by local authority officers at the time of inspection.
- More detailed research objectives were to explore:
 - which name for the scheme was preferred by consumers;
 - which associated strap-line consumers felt most appropriately reflected the purpose of the scheme;
 - which visual representations of the tiers were preferred by consumers and aided understanding of the SotD scheme;
 - which descriptions (words/phrases) of the tiers consumers found most appropriate to reflect the overall hygiene standards found and aid their understanding of the rating; and
 - which descriptions (words/phrases) of the three different criteria that are assessed by the local authority officer were most meaningful to consumers and aid their understanding of what ratings mean.

METHODOLOGY

A full description of and rationale for the methodology appears in the appendices. Copies of stimulus material appear in the relevant sections in the body of the report. A summary is as follows.

The research was conducted in two phases as follows.

Phase One: Midi Group Discussions

Phase one was designed to give initial feedback on the communications potential of various scheme elements presented individually and in combination:

- names
- strap-lines
- descriptors, words and phrases to describe tiers
- symbols, shown in the context of 'Foodsafe' name only, and in black and white in order to ensure consistency
- FSA and LA logos

It also sought to collect participants' thoughts on how the various elements could be used in combination, and any suggestions they had for alternatives to these scheme elements.

The sample, comprising 8 midi groups of 2 hours duration was arranged as:

- 1 x female, 18-24, C1C2
- 1 x male, 25-30, C2DE
- 1 x mixed, 30-45, BC1
- 1 x mixed, 30-45, C2DE
- 1 x mixed, 45-60, BC1
- 1 x mixed, 45-60, C2DE
- 1 x mixed, 60+, BC1
- 1 x mixed, 60+, C2DE

Respondents were recruited conventionally using a combination of approaches including home visits, telephone, street recruitment and referral. The sample included ethnic representation. A copy of the recruitment questionnaire is contained in the appendices.

Fieldwork was conducted in Southgate (North London Suburb), Belfast, and Cardiff from the 5th to the 9th March 2010.

Phase Two: 'Quali-Halls'

Following phase one a number of coherent routes were developed using combinations of the most promising scheme elements.

Phase two set out to explore the communications potential of these routes hence the use of individual interviews.

In this instance the preferred method for conducting individual interviews was a number of '**quali-halls**'. A 'quali-hall' is an exercise where participants are recruited on the street of a town centre for immediate interview by a moderator in a nearby venue. This approach allowed the opportunity to interview people in close proximity to both the time and place they make their decisions, so the relevant 'mindset' was relatively fresh and the perspective more 'grounded' in the buying environment. A copy of the recruitment questionnaire is contained in the appendices.

The sample comprised 64 individual interviews across four 'quali-halls' and included ethnic representation

- spread of sex, age, SEG
 - o 31 x M, 34 x F
 - o 31 x BC1, 33 x C2DE
 - o 35 x 18-34, 29 x 35+

Fieldwork was conducted in High Wycombe, Leeds, Birmingham and Edinburgh 15th to 22nd March 2010.

Research Findings

INTRODUCTION

In order to put participants' feedback in context a number of surrounding issues were explored in the course of the project, both directly, and in relation to the scheme elements and routes. Canvassing views on these issues was not an objective of the research but the views expressed are relevant to the development of the national food hygiene rating scheme and, in particular, to communication with consumers about the scheme and its use once it is in place. Given this, these findings are covered in detail on pages 47 to 58 and the main points of relevance that emerged are described briefly below

- Attitudes towards food hygiene in businesses varied from those who described themselves as obsessive to those who took a more relaxed approach but with the majority somewhere in between.
- Concerns were much more likely to be couched in terms of *avoiding* questionable outlets than seeking out *more hygienic* outlets.
- Participants used visible cues to assess food hygiene, and commented that in using these types of cues they were taking what they could see as indicative of what they could not see.
- Awareness of current schemes was limited, although feedback on 'star' design routes suggested that some may have misinterpreted current schemes as other types of 'food' / hospitality awards schemes.
- All were aware or had assumed that food businesses are inspected for hygiene and food safety in one way or another, although knowledge of what is inspected, how often, and by whom was very patchy.
- There was a positive response to the idea of a national scheme as it was felt that a uniform 'look' would suggest common standards and criteria
- There was unanimous disappointment that it would not be mandatory for food businesses to display their food hygiene rating on their premises but it was felt that unification might make the scheme more 'visible', which might lead to consumers noticing and questioning the absence of a food hygiene rating when not displayed.
- There was spontaneous comment on 'awards' or accreditation schemes in the food industry and private schemes where companies verified their own standards so the need to avoid potential confusion with these other schemes should be borne in mind.

- Concerns were expressed about businesses with low ratings being open and participants did not accept that they did *not* represent a threat to health, particularly those with the bottom rating.
- Consumers felt they would only be likely to visit premises with the three top ratings;
- Participants in England, Wales and Northern Ireland were often taken aback by the 6 tier system as they had expected an approach more on the lines of the Scottish system where food hygiene was either designated good enough or not.
- There was a more mixed view from Scotland, where some responded favourably to the idea of 6 tiers because they felt this gave them more information and offered an incentive to businesses to improve past the 'bare minimum'.

PHASE ONE MIDI GROUPS: REACTIONS TO POTENTIAL SCHEME ELEMENTS

In phase one, scheme elements were presented individually, and participants were asked to consider their relevance and potential as communications components.

Participants were given the following description of the scheme in order to establish the context for the scheme elements.

It is very important that all food businesses comply with food hygiene law and supply food that is safe to eat. Consumers in certain areas can already see how well a food business complies with food hygiene law through food hygiene rating schemes run by some local authorities.

The primary purpose of these schemes is to allow consumers to make informed choices about the places in which they eat out and from which they purchase food.

Local authority food safety officers are responsible for inspecting food businesses to ensure that they meet legal requirements on food hygiene. Under the national food hygiene rating scheme, after a planned local authority inspection, each food outlet covered by the scheme is given a hygiene rating that reflects the inspection findings at that time and may display this in their premises where consumers can see it. The rating will also be published on a national website.

At the moment, more than 200 local authorities across the UK have hygiene rating schemes in place. These schemes vary in their design and the way that they are operated so the Food Standards Agency is working towards a national approach to avoid further proliferation of different arrangements in different areas, and so ensure consistency for consumers and clarity for businesses.

Branding / Source

Food Standard Agency and local authority branding was introduced, and participants were asked to consider how this might affect their reactions to a food hygiene rating scheme.



The scheme was felt to have little value without authoritative and credible provenance, and the Food Standards Agency was felt to provide this.

The Food Standards agency name was familiar to most. It was often associated with food hygiene, but also with other 'food standards' such as traffic light labelling of nutritional content, and the policing of food labelling, for example, ensuring that 'free range' eggs were exactly that

"The whole food process start to finish, like they would go to a farm to check free range eggs really were free range eggs."

Mixed, 30-45, BC1, Northern Ireland

"Do they do the colouring thing, the traffic lights you see in supermarkets, with problems like obesity I think of them as more focussed on getting people healthy."

Female, 18-24, C1C2, Northern Ireland

Even when it was not familiar 'Food Standards Agency' *sounded* official, particularly when participants registered its .gov.uk url having been exposed to its identity.

Food Standards Agency branding suggested a national scheme.

There were no negative connotations of Food Standards Agency branding. Local authorities' status in the area of food hygiene suffered to at least some extent from their being seen as 'jacks of all trades'. They seemed to be more or less respected in a wider sense in the different research locations, and this in turn affected their perceived credibility as scheme sponsors. Bearing in mind that this was qualitative research not designed to measure perceptions of local authorities, at one extreme local authority identities were thought to add little authority or even detract, while at the other extreme they were highly regarded to the extent that they could almost act as sole sponsor.

Sole or dominant use of LA branding would however suggest a *local* scheme designed and run by that local authority.

Use of a local authority identity was thought to suggest 'on the ground' presence. Equally, participants felt they might direct enquiries or complaints about food businesses displaying the scheme to their local authority because it felt accessible to them. Many knew where their council offices were, some had visited them, and the majority had had dealings of some sort with their council. In contrast the Food Standards Agency was not inaccessible, but did feel more remote.

Scheme Name

The following names were presented.

<i>Food Safe</i>	<i>Safe For Food</i>	<i>Food Hygiene Standards</i>	<i>Scores on the Doors</i>
<i>Food Hygiene Scores</i>	<i>Food Hygiene Rated</i>	<i>Food Safe Standards</i>	

'Scores on the Doors' was universally rejected as too flippant, lacking in authority, and unlikely to inspire confidence.

"You'd think you were going to meet Bruce Forsyth or something."

Mixed, 60+, C2DE, Northern Ireland

'Score' was also felt to sound relative and competitive, in the sense of the scores of two opposing teams. This was thought inappropriate as in this instance the 'score' should be a reference to an 'absolute' standard, rather than an indication of 'better than' or 'worse than' another outlet.

Use of 'safe', in '*Food Safe*', '*Safe for Food*', '*Food Safe Standards*' was questioned once participants had been exposed to 'standards and examples' (the standards expected and types of non-compliances found at each rating of the scheme) as they did not agree that ratings in the bottom three tiers were 'safe' (further information on reactions to 'standards and examples' is contained in the contextual findings).

It was also felt that 'safety' could have other meanings in relation to food, for example, animal husbandry, absence of 'GM' or pesticides, and levels of sugar, fat and salt in foodstuffs.

Some felt that 'Food Safe' had the advantage of brevity, arguing that the lack of a hygiene reference was unimportant if the name was juxtaposed with the FSA identity.

'Safe for Food' and 'Food Safe Standards' were felt to lose the advantage of brevity without gaining any other qualities.

A direct reference to hygiene, as in '*Food Hygiene Scores*', '*Food Hygiene Rated*', '*Food Hygiene Standards*' was thought desirable in order to avoid confusion with other food related issues such as those outlined in relation to 'Food Safe'.

'Food Hygiene Scores' suffered from the issues described in relation to 'scores' earlier.

'Food Hygiene Rated' and 'Food Hygiene Standards' were seen as the strongest contenders, with pros and cons of both 'rated' and 'standards'. In the context of the scheme each was thought to implicitly reference the thought represented in the other. 'Rated' was felt to be a reference to a 'rating', which would have been made against a recognised 'standard'.

"You're rated against a standard, how good it is within the standard."

Mixed, 60+, BC1, South

Participants suggested 'Food Hygiene *Rating*' as an evolution of the name as they felt this described what would be displayed.

'Standards' was felt to resonate with Food Standards Agency with a direct reference to the standard against which a food business would have been rated, with the rating displayed by the scheme.

Descriptors

Descriptors were thought a valuable component of the scheme as a shorthand for underlying standards. Participants accepted that it would be impractical for the scheme to use the level of detail contained in the 'standards and examples' (see appendices) once they had been exposed to them, as this would be too complex for a business to display and for consumers to use. They felt that the descriptors should help them make sense of a rating so they could respond as they would to the underlying detail of the inspection.

"But you don't know how good 3 out of 5 is or how nasty it is."

Mixed, 45-60, C2DE, Wales

"We want some indication of what we should see as acceptable."

Mixed, 60+, BC1, South

There was a strong desire among participants for a distinct separation between 'good enough' and 'not good enough' in the tier descriptors, although exploring the options prompted the question of why food businesses scoring at the bottom three levels (0-2 out of 5) were allowed to continue trading.

Descriptors – Option 1

Rating	Option 1
0	Urgent improvement necessary
1	Major improvement necessary
2	Improvement necessary
3	Satisfactory
4	Good
5	Very Good

'Satisfactory' was felt to be a clear tipping point between 'good enough' and 'not good enough', and was felt to mean that it should be possible to buy food from the business with confidence.

"Satisfactory is a better word, acceptable is just about getting there."

Mixed, 30-45, BC1, Northern Ireland

The other descriptors were thought clearly better or worse than 'satisfactory', even in isolation, while their increasing strength of language was felt to reflect the numerical scale.

"I'd use this one. Without being rude, it is more of a layman's term, everyone knows what 'necessary' means and 'satisfactory' and 'good' and 'very good.'"

Mixed, 45-60, C2DE, Wales

'...improvement necessary', was liked for having a dynamic quality sounding as if action had been specified, and that someone would be returning to check it had been taken.

There were a few remarks on potential confusion between 'urgent' and 'major', with those concerned either not sure which was worse, or pointing out that they were different axes rather than points on a single axis

Descriptors – Option 2

Rating	Option 2
0	Extremely low compliance
1	Very low compliance
2	Low compliance
3	Adequate compliance
4	Good compliance
5	Very good compliance

'Adequate' was seen as a clear threshold, as anything 'adequate' should be good enough to buy food from with confidence. 'Good' and 'Very Good' were clearly better than adequate, while low, very low and extremely low, clearly worse.

Compliance was liked by some as the language of standards and was thought to confer an official feel. 'Compliance' suggested a systematic process with concrete criteria corresponding to each tier.

Descriptors – Option 3

Rating	Option 3
0	Must do much better
1	Must do better
2	Should do better
3	Acceptable
4	Reasonable
5	First rate

Option 3, above, was dismissed more or less instantly. The language used to describe tiers 0-2 was thought reminiscent of the classroom and school reports and was seen by some to trivialise the subject.

"It's what I would expect in my 10 year old's school report."

Mixed, 30-45, C2D, South

The descriptors were thought insufficiently strong and forceful, suggesting that the food business would have received a mild ticking off but had no real reason to respond with any urgency.

The descriptors for the top three ratings, *Acceptable*, *Reasonable*, *First Rate*, were felt to not mirror the numerical progression of the tiers. '*Acceptable*' and '*Reasonable*' seemed too close in meaning, and were questioned as a continuum, as it was not thought clear which would be better or worse than the other when presented in isolation from the wider scale. There was felt to be a big jump from '*Reasonable*' to '*First Rate*' with the latter seeming rather old fashioned language.

Symbols



This symbol's visual reference to a 'plate' was often missed, and was not felt to add anything to communication once explained. While participants understood the relevance of the visual reference of a plate to a catering environment they felt that it did not resonate with a retail environment.

In the above example, the '0' rating was easily misinterpreted as part of the plate. As a result the lower panel could be interpreted as showing ✓✓✓✓✓, that is 5 'ticks' rather than no ticks inferring the highest rather than the lowest food hygiene rating.



Use of a star was questioned, especially in the light of the standards and examples corresponding to the 6 tiers. Participants pointed out that stars were usually an award for positive achievement, and that food hygiene was a necessary part of running a food business and not a matter for congratulation, particularly for a business with hygiene corresponding to 'one star'.

"A star says good, and there is no way one of these with one star or two stars is good."

Female, 18-24, C1C2, Northern Ireland

"A star? And... major improvement necessary?."

Mixed, 60+, C2DE, Northern Ireland

"Anything that should do better shouldn't have any stars."

Mixed, 30-45, C2D, South

"Stars are a reward for something and somebody with a low rating doesn't deserve a reward."

Mixed, 60+, BC1, South



Potential for miscommunication emerged in relation to this particular use of stars, as at a glance some participants read the combination of the large star and the '1' as suggesting 'the best'.

While the descriptor could resolve this issue it was felt that it could be missed in the 'shop front' context in which the scheme would appear.



The descriptor in the example above was felt to illustrate that the use of star symbols was inappropriate given the juxtaposition of the star as a positive symbol with the words, 'major improvement necessary'. The style of this particular star was also thought to be relatively childish, due to the rounded 'points', undermining the authority of the scheme.



The style of star above, referred to as a 'sparkler' was thought evocative of a 'freezer rating' which could be problematic, as it might suggest the scheme focuses on one particular aspect of food hygiene, namely storage temperature.

"Ordinary stars would be better, they look like energy stars, or the ones you see on freezers."

Mixed, 30-45, BC1, Northern Ireland

This could be exacerbated in the context of the name 'FoodSafe' as this name did not indicate a broader 'hygiene' context. The more formal execution was thought tonally more appropriate to the scheme however.



Inclusion of the numerical rating as in the above example was generally thought to add clarity, although it transpired that participants were using either the 'stars' or the number when asked to describe how they were using the device.

At a preference level some argued for stars as they felt they were a frequently used device in food businesses. However, contextual feedback suggests this feedback should be treated with caution, and that this familiarity could in itself prove problematic as there was spontaneous comment and reference to various 'star' schemes in a catering context particularly. As a result the purpose of the scheme could easily be misinterpreted as to do with food quality, service quality, or overall dining experience, for example.

"They have that in chippies and that, a four or five star chippy."

Mixed, 60+, C2DE, Northern Ireland

"One star is not the best, but like if you go to a two star hotel and not a three star it can just mean they haven't got a car park or something like that."

Female, 18-24, C1C2, Northern Ireland

"Something you associate with quality, three star, five star, that must be good."

Female, 18-24, C1C2, Northern Ireland

"One star, it doesn't mean it's bad, it means it's basic."

Mixed, 45-60, BC1, South

It may equally be harder for a star based scheme focused on hygiene to stand out against other star based schemes.



The 'tick' suffered from similar issues to the star as a positive symbol, although to a lesser extent as it could be taken as an indication that something is correct, rather than as praise. Participants felt that a tick could also have connotations of a rating sheet, suggesting a systematic process.



Use of descriptors 'Good', 'Very Good' alone felt too subjective, and more like an opinion than an objective rating. This was exacerbated by the more relaxed style of the second example, and the font which was thought reminiscent of the 'Early Learning Centre' contributing to the approach's lack of authority.

"So bland, nice rounded letters, it looks like something for a child, it doesn't look serious."

Mixed, 30-45, BC1, Northern Ireland

Having said this, the approach was appreciated by some for its simplicity.



Adding the numerical rating, in this case 4 out of 5 helped to suggest more rigour. There was also a positive response to showing the scale, indicating in

this case a rating of 4 out of a possible maximum of 5. Participants felt that this would help them to decide how to interpret the food hygiene rating by indicating what *could* have been achieved, and therefore how close the rating was to a theoretical maximum. So in the above example, having achieved four *out of* a possible five the business could only have achieved one better, which would have been a maximum. 'Good' alone would not have conveyed this thought, as it might have been possible to achieve any number of grades beyond good, for example, very good, excellent, outstanding...

The 'speech bubble' reference was often missed in all of the above examples.



The above approach was thought easy to 'read' at a glance as it offered a visual illustration of where a rating fell on a clear scale from 0 to 5 from the location of the pointer and the use of the highlighted number.

Participants felt that as used in the above example the nature of a rating would be clear as '0' or 'zero' out of 5 would always be seen as a bad result.



As in the previous route, showing the breadth of possible results was thought to help interpretation of the food hygiene rating, as did the inclusion of the descriptor in the above example.



There were occasional queries over the ease of recognising a 0 rating without the descriptor as in this instance the highlight could be indicating the start of the scale rather than the rating itself.

Tonally this expression could seem a little simplistic and childish due to the choice of font and relatively simple overall look.

Colour

There were spontaneous suggestions for the use of colour to help the scheme to stand out in situ, and also of colour coding via use of 'traffic lights' to denote, 'good', 'ok', 'bad'. These will be covered in more detail subsequently.



Reactions to the above examples illustrated the need to guard against the potential for a colour scheme to miscue communication. Blue could be seen as suggesting refrigeration, while use of gold could be seen as intending to communicate positive achievement.

Strap-lines

<i>Monitoring the hygiene of places that sell food.</i>
<i>Your guide to the hygiene standards of places that sell food.</i>
<i>Rates the hygiene of places that sell food.</i>
<i>Rating the hygiene of places that sell food.</i>
<i>Judging places that sell food.</i>
<i>Now you know the hygiene standards of places that sell food.</i>
<i>Making sure places that sell food are hygienic.</i>

Use of 'monitoring' in '*Monitoring the hygiene of places that sell food*' was thought to suggest a continuing process rather than a 'one off' inspection. This was felt to be reassuring.

"Monitoring, they do it regularly, it's a big word, regularly, every 6 months or whatever."

Mixed, 30-45, BC1, Northern Ireland

'Your guide to the hygiene standards of places that sell food' felt personal, and invited usage of the scheme, although 'guide' was thought to be perhaps an over-promise given the amount of information the scheme would convey in practice.

'Rates (rating) the hygiene of places that sell food' were felt to be accurately descriptive without adding anything. 'Rating' was thought to perhaps have a slightly more active feel hinting at an ongoing process.

'Judging places that sell food' was felt to suggest a contest, and seemed too subjective and personal, as if the rating would be based on a judge's *opinion* rather than performance against a set of defined standards.

'Now you know the hygiene standards of places that sell food' was thought to be tonally inappropriate in that it felt like it was passing responsibility to the consumer to use the scheme and absolving the scheme's sponsor from further responsibility.

'Making sure places that sell food are hygienic' was rejected, as it was felt that food businesses with the bottom three ratings were *not* hygienic.

Participants' Suggestions

Participants were given the opportunity to assemble what they felt to be the most effective combination of scheme elements, and the outcome of this exercise is reflected in the routes that were presented in phase two.

As part of this exercise they were encouraged to offer any new or additional suggestions for representational elements such as names or descriptors. While participants did not have any additional suggestions for representational elements, they did have suggestions which focussed on the structure of the scheme itself.

A frequent suggestion was that the 6 tier system should be dropped in favour of a simple 'pass – fail' system.

It was felt that display of the food hygiene rating should be mandatory, as food businesses would only display positive ratings given the choice. Participants felt that this would be a much more powerful force for improvement, as customers would react badly to a negative rating and the business would be much more highly motivated to improve their standards as a result.

Participants felt that based on the 'standards and examples' provided to them, businesses given one of the bottom three ratings should be forced to close while they made improvements, and then re-inspected prior to re-opening.

In addition it was felt that the food hygiene rating should be dated so it was clear when it had been achieved.

"They should have a date on it, give you an idea of how regularly they're in."

Mixed, 30-45, BC1, Northern Ireland

Suggestions made for communications elements were motivated by a desire to convey the distinction between 'performing' and 'under performing' businesses with more force and immediacy. Use of traffic lights was a frequent suggestion.

"A traffic light system, red, amber, green, you can make a decision just like that."

Mixed, 60+, C2DE, Northern Ireland

An additional, and not entirely flippant suggestion was for alternative symbols, for example, 1, 2, and 3 chef's hats to match the top three ratings, and 1, 2, and 3 dead flies to match tiers the bottom three.

A suggestion was made that a route employing a numerical scale and 'ruler' as on page 39, could be laid out vertically rather than horizontally, as it was felt that this would help to make it clear that '0' was a minimum rating, rather than the start of the scale.

Respondents had some concerns that a food hygiene rating display could easily be duplicated, as they felt that unscrupulous owners might take advantage if it could be, and felt that any design needed to take this into account.

PHASE TWO QUALI-HALLS: REACTIONS TO POTENTIAL ROUTES

A number of exploratory design routes were developed following phase one feedback. These were presented to participants in a form which could resemble what the public might encounter as a complete scheme rather than as a series of scheme elements as had been the case in phase one. We should stress however that the overall approach was designed to be developmental, rather than a pre-test.

With the above in mind, the phase two methodology was conceived with the aim of focussing on comprehension and communications potential of a relatively limited number of routes. This led to the use of 'quali-hall' methodology, as described on page 12 and in the appendices. In summary, individual interviews allowed us to understand what each individual understood from each route, what they felt it signified in terms of an outlet's food hygiene, and how this might affect their behaviour. Group discussions are less appropriate for this type of task as each individuals' responses are affected by those of other participants. Equally, the same budget can afford a larger number of individual interviews than group discussions offering more opportunities to introduce each route 'first' which offers a clearer reading of how each works without any distortion resulting from previous exposure to other routes.

In the second phase of the research a relatively simple form of explanation was used where necessary, and if required this was introduced once reactions to the first 'route' had been obtained.

Local authority food safety officers are responsible for inspecting food businesses to ensure that they meet legal requirements on food hygiene.

Under the national food hygiene rating scheme, after a planned local authority inspection, each food outlet covered by the scheme is given a hygiene rating that reflects the inspection findings at that time and may display this in their premises where consumers can see it.

The rating will also be published on a national website.

A number of issues were common to all routes, and for the sake of simplicity we will deal with these first.

Cross Route Issues: FSA and Local Authority Logos

Feedback was in line with phase one. Use of the Food Standards Agency logo helped to anchor communication in the broad area of food hygiene and safety, conferred credibility and independence and suggested a national scheme.

"This is like a standard thing, everywhere, throughout the country."

Female, 30-34, C1, South, Quali-hall

"I think that would inspire me then and I think I would take more notice because it's got the 'Food Standards Agency' there."

Female, 30-34, C1, South, Quali-hall

Similarly, there were no negative connotations of Food Standards Agency branding.

Response to Local Authority Logos varied according to the participants' views of the local authority in question, but in general their use supported the idea of inspection, and also offered a channel for dialogue should anyone wish to have it. Use of local authority logos alone would infer a local scheme.

"That's where you would report it, if you thought it didn't have adequate standards that's where you would go."

Female, 35-45, C1, South, Quali-hall

"Yes, that's where you could complain to if you had a problem, and it would be easier to complain to them because they're more local."

Male, 30-34, C1, South, Quali-hall

Cross Route Issues: Names

'Foodsafe' was the name most easily assimilated at a glance, a characteristic which offers obvious advantages, but there were also disadvantage to its use.

While partly an executional issue the name could overwhelm the other elements of the route. As a result some saw 'Foodsafe' as an award in itself and assumed that its presence would mean the food business had been awarded Foodsafe accreditation having *passed* inspection.

"Foodsafe, it's saying everything is fine."

Female, C2D, Quali-hall, North

'Foodsafe' could also be interpreted as an *absolute* guarantee which is perhaps more a concern in the light of the above. Once exposed to the standards and examples, many participants took issue with the use of the name Foodsafe in conjunction with the bottom three ratings of the scheme as they felt that businesses scoring at these levels could not be considered 'safe'.

Foodsafe was taken by some as a reference to the food they would ultimately eat, especially in a catering context. They felt the name encompassed all the business's areas of responsibility in putting food in front of the consumer, for example, product, storage, preparation, cooking, and serving. This was seen in a positive light as it put the onus on inspectors and outlets to look out for consumers.

"That is what you're going to be eating."

Male, 30-34, C1, South, Quali-hall

Having said this, others could interpret Foodsafe in line with food related issues that were more front of mind for them, for example:

- a reference to the food chain, ie, food that is fed, grown, reared 'properly'
- a lack of pesticides / GM
- 'safe' levels of sugar, fat, salt – partly in conjunction with FSA identity.

"Foodsafe could imply more than hygiene, it could imply pesticides..."

Female, 35-45, C1, South, Qualihall

"Safe could mean GMs, stuff like that."

Female, 30-34, C1, Scotland, Quali-hall

'Food Hygiene Standards' and 'Food Hygiene Rating' worked in similar ways and were thought to have similar qualities. 'Hygiene' was taken as a literal reference to cleanliness but was assumed to encompass all aspects of food safety, for example, cross contamination of fresh and cooked meat, refrigeration, product that is safe to eat.

"Food hygiene, that means it's not dirty and that."

Female, 35-45, D, Midlands, Quali-hall

Use of 'hygiene' was also thought to establish the scope of the scheme.

"The hygiene of food, nothing to do with the quality of the food, it's clear."

Female, 30-34, B, North, Quali-hall

"Food Hygiene, good, gives you an idea of what it's about."

Female, 45-54, C2, Scotland, Quali-hall

'Rating' was seen to make a direct reference to the rating awarded, and inferred an *active* process, with inspectors visiting and rating an individual outlet. 'Standards' had a slightly more formal feel, suggesting inspection against set criteria which would apply across all food businesses.

Cross Route Issues: Descriptors

'Compliance' emerged as a stumbling block for a significant minority of participants, who either did not know what the word meant, or were not completely sure.

"What's that mean, I haven't seen that before, that is a word I don't know that I really understand."

Female, 35-45, D, Midlands, Quali-hall

"Compliance is quite official, some people don't know what it means, I don't feel too sure, it's one of those words you see a lot and you're never quite sure what it means."

Female, 18-24, C2, North, Quali-hall

As in phase one those familiar with the word 'compliance' could favour its use as the word suggested standards. However there were also tonal issues, with some feeling that 'compliance' sounded grudging on the part of the food business, as if they were 'complying' because they had to, and not because they wanted to. 'Compliance' was also thought to have a 'static' feel, as though comment had been passed on the outlet but with no real sense of pressure or incentive to improve.

Rating	Option 1
0	Urgent improvement necessary
1	Major improvement necessary
2	Improvement necessary
3	Satisfactory
4	Good
5	Very Good

Reactions to Option 1 descriptors, above, were much as in phase one research, although the negative response to an outlet remaining open when displaying 'improvement necessary' was perhaps more vocal in a quali-hall setting.

"Why are they even allowed to operate if they're scoring nought to two."

Male, 30-34, C1, South, Quali-hall

'Satisfactory' was felt to be more reassuring than 'adequate', the alternative for the '3 out of 5' rating. Participants felt that they could buy food with confidence from a business described as 'satisfactory'. In contrast, 'adequate' was felt to be a 'politically correct' way of implying the business had only just met the standard.

"That's the politically correct way of saying it, adequate says, just about good enough."

Male, 30-34, C1, South, Quali-hall

"Adequate compliance, nice choice of works. Scraped through to my mind, mediocre."

Male, 60+, B, Scotland, Quali-hall

Phase Two: Design Routes



This approach was felt to have a substantial look, and thought likely to have impact when displayed. It had an official feel as its appearance seemed to have been driven by the functional presentation of information.

Participants found it easy to interpret the significance of the rating from this approach and many felt they could make a decision from the above example without a descriptor.

"That's giving you more information, it's nought to five, it's clear."

Female, 45-54, C2, Scotland, Quali-hall

The 'mid point', in numerical and visual terms was used as a benchmark for acceptable performance.

"I'd want to be in the middle or above."

Male, 35-45, B, Midlands, Quali-hall

"Ok, they've still got work to do, but 3 out of 5, it's still more than 50%."

Female, 35-45, C1, South, Quali-hall

An establishment rated at 2 and under would be avoided, and one scoring 3 and over would be accepted, although the majority felt that they would feel more comfortable with a food hygiene rating of 4 or 5, and those who had suffered food poisoning in the past were adamant that they would only consider a rating of 5.

"Two and down, no, three and over you'd think was acceptable."

Male, 25-30, B, Scotland, Quali-hall

The visual illustration of the numerical scale, in the sense that the rating was indicated by the position of the highlighted number, was thought to aid ease and speed of use. This approach was seen to be clearly a 6 point scale where any rating from 0 to 5 was possible.



Names have been covered earlier, but it is worth mentioning that in this route specifically 'Foodsafe' could overwhelm and miscue as previously described.



Inclusion of a descriptor was preferred, particularly for the bottom three ratings, as some felt that they might have taken a more charitable view of an outlet than they would have liked once they saw the descriptor.

The type size of the descriptor could invite criticism. This was partly a legibility issue, especially for older respondents who pointed out that they wouldn't necessarily have their reading glasses on when they encountered the route as a food hygiene rating. In addition the type size seemed almost faint hearted, as if the route was trying to avoid overt criticism of the outlet.

"The size is smaller, it looks like you're whispering that."

Female, 35-45, C1, South, Quali-hall

Participants felt the 'pointer' could be made more substantial so as to help bring attention to the rating. This was felt more important for 0 and 5 ratings where the significance of highlighting the number could be misinterpreted as indicating the top or bottom of the scale.



'Foodsafe' was least likely to overwhelm in this route as the relative prominence of the descriptor and the numerical rating drew attention to those elements.



However, the use of '3/5', '0/5', was not always immediately clear as a way of showing the rating, and could require thought. Exploring how participants used the route revealed that they tended to work first with *either* the numerical rating *or* the descriptor, and then attempted to integrate the two. This slowed the immediacy of the route's communication, although it did accommodate different preferences with some feeling more comfortable with the verbal descriptor and others more comfortable with the numerical rating, or 'fraction' as it was sometimes called.

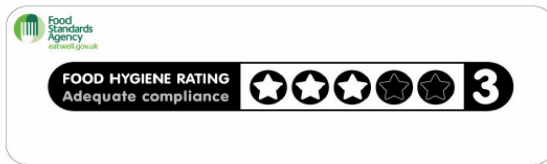


Tonally, the route gave the scheme a less rigorous feel due to its use of curves and the style of the font. This was exacerbated by the 'speech bubble' reference where this was noticed, as this suggested a more informal process rather than a clipboard and a check list.

"It's a bit like a speech bubble, ineffectual."

Male, 25-30, C1, South, Quali-hall

Having said this, the speech bubble reference was often missed.



Stars had the potential to miscue as phase one had indicated they might.

"Ambience, quality of food, service..."

Female, 45-54, C1, North, Quali-hall



The stars themselves could dominate the route, and some interpreted them in line with their expected significance in the food industry.

"Proper quality food, low fat, salt, stuff like that."

Male, 30-34, C1, South, Quali-hall

"I don't go for these starred restaurants, they're far too expensive, not good value."

Female, 45-54, C2, Scotland, Quali-hall

In a number of interviews the conversation drifted back to the implications of the route for taste, quality, service even after the moderator had established the hygiene context, either directly or by drawing attention to the scheme name.

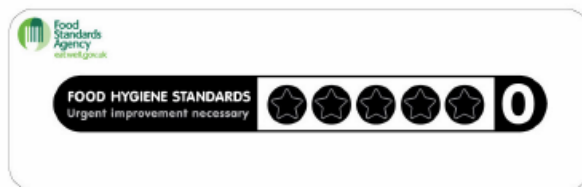
The use of stars would therefore put pressure on the name and the descriptor to establish the scheme's scope in such a way as to avoid possible confusion. This may be difficult to achieve other than with 'Foodsafe' due to the likely print size, and of course there are other communication issues with 'Foodsafe' as have been detailed.

A number of phase two participants argued for stars on the basis that they are a frequently used symbol in food businesses, however, we feel that it is precisely this familiarity that could potentially lead to the kind of confusion described.



Some participants felt they could assimilate the food hygiene rating easily and quickly from the above examples. Exploring how they used the route revealed that they tended to look at either the stars, *or* the number, although a few claimed to be absorbing the two elements as one.

Others found the ratings more difficult to assimilate. They had to pause to tie the number up to the stars. It was also clear that the rating was 'out of' a possible maximum number of stars, but they found they had to 'count' the stars and spaces to determine what this was.



A zero rating, i.e., no stars was also occasionally read as '5 stars' or a maximum rating in the above example, as a quick glance did not always reveal that the stars had not been awarded.

Some participants objected to the use of stars on 'principle' as they had in the first phase of research, pointing out that a star was usually a discretionary award for achievement beyond expectations, and that consumers had a right to expect food hygiene to be of acceptable standard as a matter of course.

"Stars are a bit childish, children get them for a good reasons, this is about food hygiene."

Male, Scotland, Quali-hall

"Stars always go with something good, and when you read the words, it's not."

Male, 18-24, C1, Midlands, Quali-hall

In addition one and two star ratings were read by some as 'basic but good'. Once they were exposed to the underlying standards they felt their initial impression had been misleading.



The 'tick' route suffered from similar issues to the 'star' route.

"Oh, now I look at it, no, I saw Food Safe and the ticks and thought it was a good, but presumably this is no ticks."

Female, 45-54, C1, South, Quali-hall

There was less strength of feeling in relation to the use of ticks as an affirmative signal, as the tick was felt to signify 'correct' but stop short of suggesting 'praise'. However, some still objected to its use.

"A poor standard of hygiene shouldn't get a tick at all in my opinion."

Male, 45-54, C2, South, Quali-hall



However, as used in these examples the 'tick' could be seen as indicating a 'check' of five different areas, for example, denoting a pass for cleanliness, a pass for refrigeration, a pass for staff behaviour, and so on.

"It's the five areas they're ticking off, 5 categories of food hygiene, you might think tick for hand washing, tick for wiping down the surfaces, tick for refrigeration."

Male, 30-34, C1, South, Quali-hall

Strap-lines

A strap-line was thought superfluous for the more successful routes, and some argued that the scheme should be designed to work without use of a strap-line, as having more to read could be off-putting meaning some people would be less likely to use the scheme. While it could be argued that there would be no need for people to read the strap-line and that they could disregard it and work from the core of the route alone this would in itself suggest that the strap-line is unnecessary. There is potentially a danger that if the overall look becomes more complex some might be put off from engaging with the scheme at all.

Reactions to the strap-lines were very much in line with the first phase of research, and these findings are reprised below.

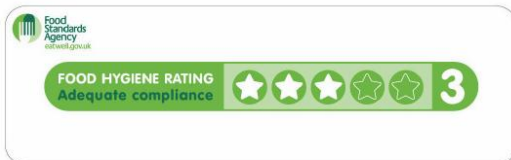
<i>Monitoring the hygiene of places that sell food.</i>
<i>Your guide to the hygiene standards of places that sell food.</i>
<i>Rating the hygiene of places that sell food.</i>

Use of 'monitoring' in '*Monitoring the hygiene of places that sell food*' was thought to suggest a continuing process rather than a 'one off' inspection, which was felt to be reassuring.

'*Your guide to the hygiene standards of places that sell food*' felt personal, and invited usage of the scheme, although 'guide' was thought to be perhaps an over-promise given the amount of information the scheme would convey in practice.

'*Rating the hygiene of places that sell food*' were felt to be accurately descriptive without adding anything. 'Rating' was thought to perhaps have a slightly more active feel hinting at an ongoing process.

Colour



Red and green could be interpreted as 'traffic light colours' with reactions suggesting their use could have unintended consequences, as the colour cues overwhelmed other elements of design leading participants to assume they had been chosen to communicate:

- red = danger = avoid
- green = go = eat

"Green if it's good, yes, red if it's no go, a traffic light system."

Male, 30-34, C1, South, Quali-hall

"Green has like got a healthy ring to it, and if was red you'd think danger."

Male, 45-54, C2, South, Quali-hall

There were also isolated instances where the choice of colour was taken as a signposting reference, that is an indication of the nutritional content of food.

Green was liked as a 'food colour' and for its reference to the FSA identity.

There was spontaneous comment on the need to avoid unintended reference to food brands, for example, red and blue were identified as 'Tesco colours'.

"It's good, it stands out, easier to see, Tesco use red and blue don't they, you could think it was something to do with them."

Male, 45-54, C2, Midlands, Quali-hall



This option was felt likely to stand out in situ, and was thought tonally clean reflecting the scheme's purpose, although 'blue' could also suggest refrigeration.

"That could be like refrigeration, just dealing with that aspect of it."

Male, 35-45, B, Midlands, Quali-hall



This was liked for its stand out, although the choice of colours was thought less likely to be associated with food. However it was relatively free of unintended communication.

Phase Two: In Summary

These elements emerged as having the most potential to combine in an effective scheme.



Rating	Option 1
0	Urgent improvement necessary
1	Major improvement necessary
2	Improvement necessary
3	Satisfactory
4	Good
5	Very Good

Monitoring the hygiene of places that sell food

Your guide to the hygiene standards of places that sell food

Rating the hygiene of places that sell food

CONTEXTUAL FINDINGS: HYGIENE AND CHOICE OF FOOD BUSINESS

This section draws together feedback from both phases of the project.

While all participants claimed that food hygiene was important to them levels of concern spanned a spectrum. At one extreme some described themselves as taking a robust approach. They would avoid anywhere obviously 'dirty', or unhygienic but felt they were not too concerned about the odd lapse here and there.

"Because you've never caught anything and you've never been ill you go."

Men, 25-30, C2DE, Wales

"I've eaten in some places that look terrible but the food is actually alright. I haven't had a problem."

Male, 25-30, B Scotland, Quali-hall

At the other extreme some admitted that they verged on the obsessive, avoiding or walking out of anywhere they were not totally confident of and experiencing an almost physical reaction if they spotted any kind of 'lapse' in hygiene standards.

"I do have a problem with it I know. I go to one or two places here and when we go on holiday there are only 5 places we go to. We've been going to the same place for 15 years."

Mixed, 45-60, C2DE, Wales

The majority fell somewhere between these extremes but were at the least 'put off' by obvious hygiene shortcomings, or what they felt constituted 'lapses' in appropriate staff behaviour.

Sensitivity was perhaps greater among older segments, and those eating out with infants, other than a few participants in quali-halls who had suffered serious food poisoning. Hygiene had become a real focus for these participants, who now saw any kind of lapse as unforgivable.

"Once bitten as they say, I had a bad experience I was off work for days and since then I've been a lot more careful."

Male, 30-34, C1, South, Quali-hall

Younger participants were probably most inclined to a relaxed view, particularly 'after the pub' by their own admission.

"It's drunken people food, I'd never eat in places like that normally, but when you'd got a few drinks in you..."

Female, 18-24, C1C2, Northern Ireland

Across the sample concerns were much more likely to be couched in terms of *avoiding* outlets where hygiene was thought questionable, rather than seeking out *more hygienic* outlets suggesting a 'binary' attitude to food hygiene, where once an outlet had to exceed a threshold of acceptability.

Participants took 'visible' cues as indicators of whether standards of food hygiene in both retail and catering environments might be lacking or not.

"If a place looks clean, and the staff look clean I wouldn't think about it."

Mixed, 60+, C2DE, Northern Ireland

"If it's got a friendly looking exterior so if the windows are clean and the paint job is nice and if there are people going in and out. Just if it looked welcoming really, and if I get in it and it smells of cigarette smoke (even though there's been a ban for 2 years now you can smell it in some places) then I will leave."

Mixed, 45-60, C2DE, Wales

"Dirty tables is a no."

Female, 25-34, D, North, Quali-hall

"If it feels dingy and uncared for, if they don't care about the place why are they going to care about the food."

Men, 25-30, C2DE, Wales

"If you see dirty finger nails and greasy hair you'd probably take a swerve at that one."

Mixed, 30-45, BC1, Northern Ireland

Examples of visible indicators given by participants included the following.

- General condition of premises
 - ageing cracked paintwork, dirty windows, illuminated signage with bulbs missing or broken
 - supermarket car park with litter, broken glass, vandalised trolleys
 - dull lighting
 - floors not swept, or dirty
- Condition of tables, place settings in cafes, restaurants
 - tables not cleaned properly, 'smeary' surfaces, crumbs, litter
 - lipstick on glasses
 - marks or stains on cutlery
- Appearance and behaviour of staff
 - dirty uniforms, fingernails
 - hair not tucked beneath caps or hats
 - touching food without wearing gloves
 - smoking, even when outside on their break
 - sneezing, touching hair, face and not washing hands
 - touching or handling different food types in succession
- Storage / display of food
 - food displays on the 'pavement' in smaller retail outlets
 - bakery products open to the elements
 - different food types kept close together, e.g., fresh and cooked meats.

Participants commented that in using these types of cues they were taking what they could see, which might have little to do with food hygiene, as indicative of what they could not see. For example, if a restaurant's dining room was light, bright, clean and attractive they accepted that they were assuming that the kitchen was hygienic and well run.

Some commented that as far as takeaways went they used primarily home delivery, so their knowledge of what went on at the premises was very limited.

Behaviour of other customers could also be off-putting, although participants accepted that this was not always within the control of the food business.

Various examples were given:

- handling unwrapped food and returning it to the display
- touching fresh salad

- coughing or sneezing near unwrapped food, or displays of hot food
- placing small children in nappies on the counter in takeaway restaurants

"She picked up a biscuit, showed it to her friend, then she put it back again!"

Mixed, 30-45, BC1, Northern Ireland

"It's not the store it's the customers, they have a lovely salad bar and this lady walks in and decides she's going to taste it."

Mixed, 45-60, BC1, South

"You can never be sure the person before you hasn't ignored the tongs and rummaged around for the softest roll."

Mixed, 60+, BC1, South

CONTEXTUAL FINDINGS: AWARENESS OF EXISTING FOOD HYGIENE RATING (SotD) SCHEMES

This section draws together feedback from both stages of the project.

Awareness of current schemes was limited, and participants were more likely to recall having seen certificates stating that members of staff had undertaken food hygiene training, while waiting for their order in takeaway restaurants.

"You notice them because you're standing there waiting for your food."

Female, 18-24, C1C2, Northern Ireland

Having said this, feedback on 'star' design routes suggested that some may have seen current schemes but misinterpreted them to be to do with food quality, or customer service, or some other 'food' / hospitality related awards scheme.

However, a minority had noticed food outlets displaying food hygiene ratings. Those in England and Wales reflected that they had only ever seen '5 star', or occasionally '4 star' ratings, while those in Scotland had only ever seen 'Pass', and never 'Fail'. There was one participant in the south who had seen a 'one star' award in a take-away kebab shop he used regularly. While he had wondered as to the significance of the 'award' it had not affected his using the outlet.

"The one with one star does a nicer lamb shish than the one down the road."

Mixed, 30-45, C2D, South

Some had realised that displaying the food hygiene rating was a voluntary option. They felt that this was wrong to the point of making the scheme largely worthless, as it seemed highly unlikely any outlet would display a poor rating.

"Is it voluntary maybe, perhaps that's why you only ever see a five star."

Mixed, 30-45, BC1, Northern Ireland

Some participants imagined that it might be possible to find the food hygiene rating on the internet, if only because they felt it was possible to find most things on the internet, although none had ever looked. Once they learned that it was possible to look up food hygiene ratings on local authority websites few felt they would actually take the trouble to look, as they felt this

was not the kind of decision you would research in this way, and that if you had any doubts you would simply go elsewhere. The only exceptions might be if, once aware of the scheme, you were taking a vulnerable person out to eat, for example, an elderly relative, or if you or a member of your party had experienced a stomach upset following a visit to a catering business.

All were aware or had assumed that food businesses are inspected for hygiene and food safety in one way or another. Knowledge of what is inspected, how often, and by whom was however very patchy. In some cases 'awareness' was pure assumption as it emerged that participants felt there was so much regulation nowadays that surely food businesses must be checked in this way.

Some awareness had stemmed from local food businesses being closed following inspection. This had sometimes been a surprise for participants as they felt there had been nothing in their experience of the 'front of house' of these establishments to suggest any hygiene shortcomings.

Some had seen Television programmes following 'inspectors' on their rounds, or references to the need for food hygiene in other programmes, for example, Gordon's Kitchen Nightmares.

In addition many had past experience of working in the food industry in supermarkets, restaurants, pubs, even if this had only been casual employment in their youth where the need for food hygiene, and the need to satisfy the inspectors had been made clear to them.

CONTEXTUAL FINDINGS: REACTIONS TO THE CONCEPT OF A NATIONAL FOOD HYGIENE (SotD) RATING SCHEME

In the first phase of the research the moderators explained the concept of the national scheme using the following description in order that the respondents understood the context for the scheme elements they were then exposed to.

It is very important that all food businesses comply with food hygiene law and supply food that is safe to eat. Consumers in certain areas can already see how well a food business complies with food hygiene law through food hygiene rating schemes run by some local authorities.

The primary purpose of these schemes is to allow consumers to make informed choices about the places in which they eat out and from which they purchase food.

Local authority food safety officers are responsible for inspecting food businesses to ensure that they meet legal requirements on food hygiene. Under the national food hygiene rating scheme, after a planned local authority inspection, each food outlet covered by the scheme is given a hygiene rating that reflects the inspection findings at that time and may display this in their premises where consumers can see it. The rating will also be published on a national website.

At the moment, more than 200 local authorities across the UK have hygiene rating schemes in place. These schemes vary in their design and the way that they are operated so the Food Standards Agency is working towards a national approach to avoid further proliferation of different arrangements in different areas, and so ensure consistency for consumers and clarity for businesses.

There was a positive response to the idea of a national scheme as it was felt that a uniform 'look' would suggest common underlying standards, the same criteria for scoring, frequency of inspection, similarly qualified inspectors, and so on.

"They'd all be at the same standard. If it goes to individual councils it would vary."

Mixed, 30-45, C2D, South

There was unanimous disappointment that it would not be mandatory for food businesses to display their food hygiene rating on their premises as this seemed a logical step forward from the current state of affairs. As with

existing schemes, participants thought they would be unlikely to use the internet to look up food hygiene ratings, other than in very particular circumstances, and they anticipated that only positive ratings would be displayed on premises.

"They'd be too embarrassed to show it."

Mixed, 30-45, C2D, South

However, some thought that the scheme might become more 'visible' as a result of unification, as they would become used to seeing it. In turn they might be more likely to notice if an outlet was *not* displaying its food hygiene rating leading them to wonder if the outlet had been rated at a low level. When asked how they would respond in this event they thought they might avoid the outlet, depending on other choices available, or, if it was somewhere they used habitually they might ask the manager or proprietor why they were *not* displaying their food hygiene rating, and what their rating was.

CONTEXTUAL FINDINGS: FOOD INDUSTRY ACCREDITATION / AWARDS SCHEMES

This section draws together feedback from both stages of the project.

There was spontaneous comment on 'awards' or accreditation schemes in the food industry. These were seen to fall into two types.

'Publicly' recognised schemes, externally verified, with a broad distinction between the well known and respected for example, Michelin, AA, RAC... and lesser know schemes of varying status and credibility, for example, 'Best Chippy', 'Best served Guinness', 'Best pub dining', and so on with a variety of sponsors including local media, breweries, and Licensed Victuallers Associations.

Private schemes where companies verified their own standards, for example, McDonalds 'service' stars.

While these types of scheme serve quite different purposes from the national food hygiene rating scheme, their relatively high profiles suggests that the need to avoid potential for confusion in the scheme's development should be borne in mind.

CONTEXTUAL FINDINGS: REACTIONS TO DESCRIPTIONS OF STANDARDS FOR EACH TIER

This section draws together feedback from both stages of the project.

Respondents were exposed to descriptions of the standards and examples of non compliances found at each of the 6 grading levels. A copy of the stimulus used is contained in the appendices.

The majority were surprised by the standards and examples, as the scheme seemed much more lenient in its scoring than they would have anticipated. For example, there was surprise that anything less than perfection could get a top rating, and that establishments rated at 2 or below were allowed to stay open.

"Yeah it should be perfect, nothing wrong, even though it's almost impossible it should be."

Mixed, 45-60, C2DE, Wales

"I was shocked at the four. It should almost be perfect and four should be perfect."

Mixed, 45-60, C2DE, Wales

There was some frustration that shortcomings seemed to be tolerated as participants could see no obvious reason for this tolerance. The explanation that these outlets did not present a threat to health was not found convincing, as participants thought that '0' rated examples *did* present a risk to health. They felt the public had a right to expect better. Further detail was provided to participants as necessary during discussions to explain more fully the standards and examples of non compliances found at each grading level.

The majority felt that tier 3 would be the minimum standard they would accept, as tier 2 examples seemed to describe what they felt were serious shortcomings, that is, 'poor personal hygiene', 'pest infestation'.

"I think if someone's got a pest problem they should stop trading, are they allowed to stay open while they're improving?"

Mixed, 30-45, C2D, South

Having said this many felt that they would *only* accept tier 3 if they found themselves in a situation where they had no choice, and that they would normally accept a minimum of 4 or even 5.

Participants in England, Wales and Northern Ireland were often taken aback by the 6 tier system as they had expected a more 'binary' approach (e.g. along the lines of the Scottish system) where food hygiene was either designated good enough or not, with no allowances made for price, type of food, etc, etc.

*"What is basic hygiene and what is brilliant hygiene?
For me it's clean enough or it's not."*

Mixed, 30-45, BC1, Northern Ireland

*"I don't think we need 6 ratings, it's either good enough
or it isn't."*

Mixed, 60+, C2DE, Northern Ireland

*"I'm sure we only want to know that somewhere is at
least satisfactory."*

Mixed, 60+, BC1, South

*"Hygiene should be the same from a burger bar to a
Michelin starred restaurant because it's about health."*

Female, 30-34, C1, Scotland, Quali-hall

Some felt that the 6 tier system passed the buck to the consumer to make a judgment as to whether to take the risk, rather than being able to rely on a food hygiene professional making the judgment on their behalf.

*"It leaves us to make our own decision, you need to
know what it means."*

Mixed, 60+, BC1, South

Interestingly perhaps, there was a more mixed view from Scotland. While some expressed similar views to the above, others liked the idea of 6 tiers, because they saw this as offering them more information. They felt that the 'pass' / 'fail' system obscured degrees of good and bad, and also that the 6 tiers offered an incentive to businesses to improve.

*"That's quite good, you'd hope that if they got a 4
they'd be trying a bit harder to get a five."*

Female, 45-54, C2, Scotland, Quali-hall

*"I like the more detailed approach. It is good to know
how good a place is and to be able to gauge different
places from just about ok to very good."*

Female, 30-34, C1, Scotland, Quali-hall

Description Of The Criteria Used For Calculating Food Hygiene Ratings

The criteria used for calculating the rating is based on an assessment of:

How hygienically the food is handled – safe food preparation, cooking, re-heating, cooling and storage.

The condition of the structure of the premises – cleanliness, layout, lighting, ventilation and other facilities.

How the business manages and documents food safety using a food safety management system.

For further clarification the above description was used to explain the three different criteria used by local authority food safety officers to arrive at a score.

Participants felt that the three areas of inspection seemed logical, although it often proved difficult to explain them without use of concrete examples such as those contained in the 'standards and example of non compliance'. Most felt that this 'framework' should be between the inspectors and the establishment, with no need for consumer involvement or exposure, although the information could be made available on a website for those that wanted it.

Appendices

Methodology

Letter Of Thanks For Participation And Consent Form

Recruitment Questionnaires

Discussion Guides

Descriptions Of The Standards And Examples

METHODOLOGY

The research utilised a combination of 'midi' group discussions and 'quali-halls' in a phased approach.

Phased Approach

The two methods were deployed in phases in order to facilitate incorporation of learning from the project into development of ideas.

Phase one utilised midi group discussions, and was designed to give initial feedback on the communications potential of various scheme elements presented individually and in combination. Following phase one a number of coherent routes were provided by the FSA using various combinations of the most promising scheme elements.

Phase two set out to explore the communications potential of these routes hence the use of individual interviews.

Phase One: 'Midi' Group discussions

As part of the research participants were asked to consider how a scheme could be constructed using a number of options and their constituent elements as stimulus. They were also encouraged to use this material as a springboard for generating their own ideas. This type of activity works better in a group, as each participant's thoughts act as a stimulus and a prompt for others to respond to, which creates a positive and energetic environment helping new ideas and thinking to emerge.

The decision was taken to work with 6 participants per group rather than the more conventional number of 7-8. While only a relatively slight adjustment this offered each participant a little more 'airtime' allowing for exploration of responses in detail, and time to establish the reasons and background for choices and suggestions.

Groups were of 2 hours duration.

Phase One: Sample and Procedure

- Sample, comprising 8 midi groups which included ethnic representation was arranged as:
 - 1 x female, 18-24, C1C2
 - 1 x male, 25-30, C2DE
 - 1 x mixed, 30-45, BC1
 - 1 x mixed, 30-45, C2DE
 - 1 x mixed, 45-60, BC1
 - 1 x mixed, 45-60, C2DE
 - 1 x mixed, 60+, BC1
 - 1 x mixed, 60+, C2DE
- Participants were recruited according to quotas designed to ensure a spread of knowledge, attitudes and behaviour in relation to food purchasing and consumption
 - a spectrum of food buying behaviour was represented
 - more and less frequent eating out and retail purchasing
 - use of a spread of different types of outlet
 - those who had suffered serious food poisoning were excluded from the research
- Respondents were recruited conventionally using a combination of approaches including home visits, telephone, street recruitment, and referral.
- Fieldwork was conducted in Southgate (North London Suburb), Belfast, and Cardiff from the 5th to the 9th March.
- Procedure

Pre task

- to establish food outlet repertoire, reasons for choice, importance of hygiene, respondents were asked to complete the following task in advance of attending the group.

Please complete the following before attending your group.

A) Thinking back over the last two weeks, make a list of all the places you have bought food from. Please list all types of food shops you have used, for example:

- *shops you have bought food from like supermarkets or local shops*
- *cafes, restaurants, coffee shops, pubs - eating in*
- *'take aways' snacks or meals*

B) In each case could you make brief notes on the following:

- 1. What alternatives did you have in each case?*

2. *What were your main reasons for each choice?*
3. *How important was food hygiene in that choice?*
4. *If you noticed anything about food hygiene in this outlet and if so what this was*

Discussion

Each of the group discussions followed the structure below:

- scheme introduced and explained
- scheme elements explored in rotated order in order to eliminate order effect
 - names
 - strap-lines
 - descriptors, words and phrases to describe tiers
 - symbols, shown in the context of 'Foodsafe' name only, and in black and white in order to ensure consistency
 - FSA and LA logos
- hygiene standards introduced and explored
- criteria used for assessing the score introduced and explored
- co-creation exercise; participants were invited to suggest combinations of scheme elements and to suggest alternative names and descriptors where these occurred to them

Phase Two: 'Quali-Halls'

Another key consideration in research design was the need to understand the potential of a number of different scheme 'routes' to communicate food hygiene scores clearly and effectively.

This argued for use of individual interviews in the research design because:

- individual interviews would yield a greater number of rotation possibilities with the opportunity to explore more scheme options 'first' on more occasions. When options are exposed sequentially reactions to those introduced second or later are inevitably influenced by those seen earlier.
- an individual interview is more suited to exploring comprehension and communication, as reactions are not influenced by the responses of others
- individual interviews allow for a wider spread of sample variables than can be easily accommodated in groups, as participants need to be reasonably similar to one another to ensure positive dynamics.

In this instance the preferred method for conducting individual interviews was a number of '**quali-halls**'. A 'quali-hall' is an exercise where participants are recruited on the street of a town centre for immediate

interview by a moderator in a nearby venue. Interviews are of 15-30 minutes duration, tailored to the amount of time required to explore each participants' responses. A typical town or city centre will draw consumers from a wide geographical area, and contain a wide variety of food businesses, for example:

- supermarkets, corner shops, 'mini marts'
- delicatessens, butchers, greengrocers
- 'fast food' chains, burger / pizza centric
- 'sandwich' and coffee bar chains
- national chains and local independents
- 'proper' restaurants, casual dining, take outs

Town and city centres offer access to a wide spectrum of the population with different patterns of usage of food businesses. This approach allowed the opportunity to interview people in close proximity to both the time and place they make their decisions, so the relevant 'mindset' was relatively fresh and the perspective more 'grounded' in the buying environment.

Phase Two: Sample and Procedure

- Sample, comprising 64 individual interviews which included ethnic representation, conducted across four 'quali-halls'
 - 64 interviews in total
 - set out to represent a broad spectrum of sex, age, SEG, with no exclusions applied. Sample achieved as follows
 - o 31 x M, 34 x F
 - o 31 x BC1, 33 x C2DE
 - o 35 x 18-34, 29 x 35+
- Quali-halls convened in High Wycombe, Leeds, Birmingham and Edinburgh 15th to 22nd March
- Interview procedure
 - scheme routes (combinations of potential elements assembled to work as a cohesive whole) were introduced without pre-amble, with order of introduction of different examples rotated. Explored for:
 - o communication
 - o comprehension
 - o authority / credibility
 - o response
 - descriptors explored
 - explanation as necessary and appropriate
 - hygiene standards introduced and explored, route re-visited
 - second route introduced for comparison

Research Locations

England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, were represented in the project. Within these regions locations were chosen for their suitability for facilitating recruitment of a broad spectrum of age and social class, and ethnic representation.

LETTER OF THANKS FOR PARTICIPATION AND CONSENT FORM



March 2010

Dear Sir/Madam,

HYGIENE STANDARDS IN FOOD BUSINESSES

Thank you for expressing an interest in this piece of market research on a scheme designed to provide information to consumers about the hygiene standards of food businesses.

We are an independent research agency and are carrying out this project on behalf of the Food Standards Agency and the Department of Health and the Central Office of Information. We are a member of the Market Research Society and bound by their code of conduct (for further details please visit www.mrs.org.uk).

Your comments will form part of the feedback to the Agency and Department of Health but these will not be attributed personally to you and will be kept anonymous. Any personal details (for example, names, address) will be kept confidential, held securely and will not be used for any purpose beyond this specific project. All these details will be removed from our records on completion of the project.

If you have any further questions please feel free to call me, John Sargent, on the following number 01494 870502.

Yours faithfully,

John Sargent

Researcher
01494 870502
john.sargent@navigator-research.com

Informed Consent:

I confirm that I have read and understood this information sheet and have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had them answered satisfactorily.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. I agree to take part in this research project.

Name of participant

Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent

Date

Signature

RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE: GROUPS

Q1 I am conducting a market research survey. Can you tell me if you or any of your friends or relations work, or have ever worked in any of these occupations? **READ OUT:**

ADVERTISING	1
MARKET RESEARCH	2
PUBLIC RELATIONS	3
MARKETING	4
PUBLISHING	5
JOURNALISM	6
BROADCASTING	7
NUTRITIONISTS/DIETICIANS	8
MEDICAL PROFESSION	9
CATERING*	10
RESTAURANTS/CAFES/TAKE AWAY*	11
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	12

IF ANY OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED, CLOSE
*** MANAGERIAL, SUPERVISORY OR HEAD OFFICE FUNCTIONS**

Q2 a) Have you ever attended a market research group or interview?
 Yes 1 – **GO TO Q2b**
 No 2 – **GO TO Q3**

b) when did you last attend a group or interview?
 In the last year 1 – **CLOSE**
 Over a year ago 2 – **GO TO Q2c**

c) how many groups/interviews have you ever attended? _____

d) what was the subject of the groups/interviews you attended?

WRITE IN _____

RESPONDENTS SHOULD NOT HAVE ATTENDED MORE THAN 3 GROUPS EVER, AND NEVER ON THE SAME SUBJECT AS THE CURRENT ONE

Q3 Have you or any member of your household ever been hospitalised due to food poisoning or had a serious case of food borne illness in the past 3 months

Yes 1 – **CLOSE**
 No 2 – **GO TO Q4**

Q4 a) Thinking of eating out or buying food to eat at home or out, which of the following do you use regularly, which do you use occasionally, and which do you never use?

	Reg	Occ	Never
Ready to eat take away food from supermarket or shop	1	1	1
Takeaway sandwich outlet (chain / independent)	2	2	2
Fast food (chain/independent) e.g. fish and chip shop.	3	3	3
Other takeaway e.g. Indian, Chinese, Greek	4	4	4
Restaurant	5	5	5
Canteen/other facility at work/college/school	6	6	6
Pub/wine bar (independent / chain)	7	7	7
Coffee shop	8	8	8
Other 'eating out'	9	9	9
Supermarket or home delivery	10	10	10
Food store or mini market	11	11	11
Other retail outlet, eg, delicatessen, butcher baker	12	12	12
Corner shop that sells food	13	13	13
Mobile food outlet, eg, burger van	14	14	14
Other 'Retail' WRITE IN _____	15	15	15

**IN EACH GROUP:
 AT LEAST 2 TO CODE 3 OF 1-9 AS REGULAR, 2 TO CODE NO MORE THAN 1 OF 1-9 AS OCCASIONALLY
 ALL TO CODE AT LEAST 1 OF 10-13 AS OCCASIONAL OR REGULAR AT LEAST 3 TO CODE 1 OF 10-13 AS REGULAR**

Q5 a) Which towns or areas do you mainly shop in?

WRITE
 IN _____

b) which towns or areas do you mainly work in?

WRITE
 IN _____

c) which towns or areas do you do your leisure activities in?

WRITE
 IN _____

FOR REFERENCE

CLASSIFICATION

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER _____

OCCUPATION OF HOUSEHOLD'S MAIN INCOME EARNER

PROBE FOR FULL DETAILS

SOCIAL GRADE:	B	1	D	4
	C1	2	E	5
	C2	3		

BC1: GROUPS 3, 5 & 7

C1C2: GROUP 1

C2DE: GROUPS 2, 4, 6, & 8

OWN OCCUPATION _____

AGE:	18-24	1	55-60	6
	25-30	2	60-64	7
	30-34	3	65-75	8
	35-45	4		
	45-54	5		

GROUP 1: 18-24

GROUP 2: 25-30

GROUPS 3 & 4: 30-45

GROUPS 5 & 6: 45-60

GROUPS 7 & 8: 60+

SEX:	Male	1
	Female	2

ALL GROUPS MIXED MALE AND FEMALE

MARITAL STATUS:	Married/cohabiting	1
	Divorced/separated	2
	Widowed	3
	Single	4

Do you have any children under 15 living at home?

No	1
Yes	2
Empty nesters	3

18-30 GROUPS: MOST WILL NOT HAVE CHILDREN BUT 1 OR 2 PER GROUP COULD HAVE CHILDREN.

30-45 GROUPS: MOST WILL HAVE YOUNGER CHILDREN AGED UNDER 15.

45-60 GROUPS: MOST WILL HAVE OLDER TEENAGE CHILDREN OR OLDER INDEPENDENT CHILDREN.

60+ GROUPS: ALL EMPTY NESTERS.

ETHNIC STATUS:

	<i>White:</i>
British	1
Irish	2
Other	
WRITE IN _____	3
	<i>Mixed:</i>
White & black Caribbean	4
White & black Asian	5
White & Asian	6
Any other mix	
WRITE IN _____	7
	<i>Asian or Asian British:</i>
Indian	8
Pakistani	9
Bangladeshi	10
Other	
WRITE IN _____	11
	<i>Black or black British:</i>
Caribbean	12
African	13
Other black backgrounds	14
	<i>Chinese or other ethnic background:</i>
Chinese	15
Other	
WRITE IN _____	16

RECRUIT SOME ETHNIC REPRESENTATION THROUGHOUT THE SAMPLE.

DATE OF GROUP _____ TIME _____

I AM NOT A FRIEND OR RELATION OF THE RESPONDENT, AND TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE HE/SHE IS NOT KNOWN TO ANY OTHER RESPONDENTS IN THE GROUP

RECRUITER'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

Please complete the following before attending your group.

A) Thinking back over the last two weeks, make a list of all the places you have bought food from. Please list all types of food shops you have used, for example:

- shops you have bought food from like supermarkets or local shops
- cafes, restaurants, coffee shops, pubs - eating in
- 'take aways' snacks or meals

B) In each case could you make brief notes on the following:

5. What alternatives did you have in each case?
6. What were your main reasons for each choice?
7. How important was food hygiene in that choice?
8. If you noticed anything about food hygiene in this outlet and if so what this was

RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE: QUALI-HALLS

Q1 I am conducting a market research survey. Can you tell me if you or any of your friends or relations work, or have ever worked in any of these occupations? **READ OUT:**

ADVERTISING	1
MARKET RESEARCH	2
PUBLIC RELATIONS	3
MARKETING	4
PUBLISHING	5
JOURNALISM	6
BROADCASTING	7
NUTRITIONISTS/DIETICIANS	8
MEDICAL PROFESSION	9
CATERING*	10
RESTAURANTS/CAFES/TAKE AWAY*	11
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	12
IF ANY OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED, CLOSE	
* MANAGERIAL, SUPERVISORY OR HEAD OFFICE FUNCTIONS	

Q3 Can you tell me if you are a UK resident?

Yes	1 - GO TO Q4
No	2 - CLOSE

Q4 a) Thinking of eating out or buying food to eat at home or out, which of the following do you use regularly, which do you use occasionally, and which do you never use?

	Reg	Occ	Never
Ready to eat take away food from supermarket or shop	1	1	1
Takeaway sandwich outlet (chain / independent)	2	2	2
Fast food (chain/independent) e.g. fish and chip shop.	3	3	3
Other takeaway e.g. Indian, Chinese, Greek	4	4	4
Restaurant	5	5	5
Canteen/other facility at work/college/school	6	6	6
Pub/wine bar (independent / chain)	7	7	7
Coffee shop	8	8	8
Other 'eating out'	9	9	9
Supermarket or home delivery	10	10	10
Food store or mini market	11	11	11
Other retail outlet, eg, delicatessen, butcher baker	12	12	12
Corner shop that sells food	13	13	13
Mobile food outlet, eg, burger van	14	14	14
Other 'Retail' WRITE IN _____	15	15	15

**AT LEAST 6 PER DAY TO CODE 3 OF 1-9 AS REGULAR, 4 TO
 CODE NO MORE THAN 1 OF 1-9 AS OCCASIONALLY
 ALL TO CODE AT LEAST 1 OF 10-13 AS OCCASIONAL OR
 REGULAR
 AT LEAST 8 PER DAY TO CODE 1 OF 10-13 AS REGULAR**

CLASSIFICATION

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER _____

OCCUPATION OF HOUSEHOLD'S MAIN INCOME EARNER

PROBE FOR FULL DETAILS

SOCIAL GRADE:	B	1	D	4
	C1	2	E	5
	C2	3		

OWN OCCUPATION _____

AGE:	18-24	1	55-60	6
	25-30	2	60-64	7
	30-34	3	65-75	8
	35-45	4		
	45-54	5		

Per Day at least 18-30 x 3, 30-45 x 3 45-60 x 3, 60+ x 3

SEX:	Male	1	Per Day at least 6
	Female	2	Per Day at least 6

MARITAL STATUS:	Married/cohabiting	1
	Divorced/separated	2
	Widowed	3
	Single	4

Do you have any children under 15 living at home?

No	1
Yes	2
Empty nesters	3

Ethnic Status

<p>White: British _____ 1 Irish _____ 2 Other _____ WRITE IN _____ 3</p> <p>Mixed: White & black Caribbean _____ 4 White & black Asian _____ 5 White & Asian _____ 6 Any other mix _____ WRITE IN _____ 7</p> <p>Asian or Asian British: Indian _____ 8 Pakistani _____ 9 Bangladeshi _____ 10 Other _____ WRITE IN _____ _____ 11</p>	<p>Black or black British: Caribbean _____ 12 African _____ _____ 13 Other black backgrounds _____ 14</p> <p>Chinese or other ethnic background: Chinese _____ 15 Other _____ WRITE IN _____ _____ 16</p>
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RECRUIT SOME ETHNIC REPRESENTATION THROUGHOUT THE SAMPLE.

INTERVIEWER'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

COI / FSA: 'SCORES ON THE DOORS' GROUPS DISCUSSION GUIDE

- **Introduction and warm up**
 - explanation of purpose of discussion/role of research, reassurance of confidentiality and objectivity
 - briefly outline flow of discussion
 - legitimise differences of opinion and interpretation within group, we're interested to hear everyone's thoughts, not hoping you are all going to say the same thing...
- **Non pilot area:** Briefly revisit pre-task – repertoire of outlets, factors in decision making process etc
- **Pilot area:** Revisit pre-task, probe for recognition and recall of any hygiene communication
- **Introduce the scheme** via explanatory stimulus and brief
 - initial reactions to concept of nationwide scheme
 - have they ever had concerns about hygiene – when, where and why
 - what do they need to know to feel reassured – measures/level of detail
 - how useful do they think it would be, would it impact upon their usage
 - when can they envisage using a scheme in their decision making
 - would a score encourage or dissuade them from using an outlet
 - how would they feel about outlets that did not display a rating
 - would they consider researching scores on line – if not why not? would it depend on motivation for visit /occasion?
- Reactions to different scheme **names**
 - spontaneous consumer generated suggestions for scheme names
 - probe *response* to names individually what do the names suggest
 - name optimisation - suggestions/alternatives
 - participants to construct hierarchy of appeal
- Reactions to associated **strap-lines**
 - elicit responses to strap-lines in isolation of scheme name – construct ranking of appeal and substantiate position in ranking
 - revisit in tandem with associated name
 - explore impact of name ranking and vice versa
 - consumers to construct optimal combination of name and strap-line

- Reactions to options for **descriptors**
 - present descriptors individually on word cards and explore consumer responses to the words in isolation of tier position
 - how do the descriptors make consumers feel in relation to food hygiene
 - which descriptors would encourage/dissuade usage, how would they change their behaviour, and why
 - what are the cut off points and why
 - ask participants to tier descriptors with rationale for their choice

- **Symbols**

Explore responses to approach e.g

 - symbol only vs
 - symbol plus rating
 - vs symbol and rating plus description of the rating

For each explore

 - impact
 - comprehension
 - communication

- **Colours**
 - reactions to different palette combinations
 - what effect would changing colour have

- Reactions to impact and role of **FSA logo**
 - awareness of FSA logo in itself, what does it represent
 - how do they feel when they see the logo
 - what does the FSA logo add here
 - how prominent should the logo be
 - probe feelings in relation to trust and confidence in the scheme in association with the FSA

- Show participants **their local authority logo**
 - initial response to the logo – do they recognise their LA logo
 - what is their knee jerk response to the logo
 - what do they associate their LA logo with

- ask participants to imagine their response to the scheme if their LA logo was included
- **Standards and Examples** (if respondents press for this information earlier, eg, in response to descriptors we will introduce it earlier)
 - explain that 'Standards and Examples' sheet is to give them an idea for what the descriptors and ratings correspond to
 - would this change the way they felt about the descriptors, do they feel that any of the options are more or less appropriate
 - or, do they feel that different descriptors are required
 - if so, what suggestions do they have for the various levels, bearing in mind that the system can't use inappropriate or defamatory language
 - alternatively would they re-think any of the other elements, either 'standalone' or in conjunction with the descriptors
- Explain their task, **co creation**, for the rest of the evening via 'your objectives'
 - participants to arrive at their 'most effective' combination of scheme elements
 - moderator to facilitate, play devils advocate, etc, where appropriate
 - create more than one scheme if 'strategic' choices dictate, eg, if there are two strong contenders for names
 - find the simplest solution they feel will work
 - explore what bringing in other elements would then add
 - participants to describe the strengths and weaknesses of their scheme(s) and any areas for further development
 - also any elements they feel should definitely be avoided and reasons for this
- Thank and close

COI / FSA: SOTD QUALI-HALLS DISCUSSION GUIDE

- Introduction and warm up
 - explanation of purpose of discussion/role of research, reassurance of confidentiality and objectivity
 - briefly outline flow of discussion
 - legitimise participant's opinion and interpretation...
- Establish participant's repertoire of outlets in local area
- Explain that they might see this (scheme option –) on the door or in a window (rotate between example of more and less positive score)

Impact

- would you notice this, would you pause to look at it
- if yes - what makes it stand out, get your attention
- does anything in particular hook your interest
- if not - why not - does it look like something you have seen before - if so what and where

Comprehension

- what do you think this is about, can you describe what it relates to / what it means
- do you think it is straightforward, simple and direct
- or do you think it is complicated/not clear enough
- does it need more/less information

Communication

- what do you think it is trying to get across
- is this something you have thought about/seen before
- is this something you want to be told about

Empathy and response

- how does this make you feel
- what impact does it have on your feelings about the outlet
- does it change the way you feel in terms of confidence/trust
- would it affect your decision to buy food from that outlet

- Feed in additional scheme elements if appropriate, and explore contribution and effect, eg, strap-line, FSA logo
- Ask participant to imagine it's the next day and they are visiting another outlet, introduce alternative example (more or less positive)
 - would you react differently on seeing this somewhere else
 - explore reasons for any difference in reaction

- Deconstruct contribution of scheme elements to the above
 - explore via use of versions with more and less elements
 - which elements drive main response themes
 - which are more or less crucial for driving comprehension and communication
 - are any elements 'tripping up' comprehension and communication
 - what is the minimum of elements required
- Introduce alternative scheme option, explore as above, compare and contrast
- Use elements from different schemes to explore how any issues could be resolved
- Explore reactions and response to descriptors by...
 - comparing different descriptors as they occur in different schemes
 - use of 'tabular' descriptor sheets
- Explain or introduce explanation of scheme if necessary / appropriate, reprise reactions in light of understanding
- Contribution of FSA logos
 - do you recognise the logo
 - what do you associate it with
 - how does it affect the way you feel about or interpret the scheme
 - does it play any part in communication
 - does it affect the scheme's credibility
 - does it confuse in any way
- What do they think of the idea of this scheme
 - if you had seen it in a few places would you start to look out for it
 - if you didn't see something like this in an outlet would that have an impact on the way you feel - if so what
- Introduce 'standards and examples', reprise reactions to schemes and elements in the light of this information
 - which version(s) do they feel best express the information
- Thank and close

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE STANDARDS AND EXAMPLES USED AS STIMULUS

Top 5	<p>Standards found at time of inspection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full or very good compliance. • No risk to public health identified. • Good or very good track record. No history of problems. <p>Minor non-compliances not critical to food safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some protective clothing not very clean. • A few cracked wall tiles in a non-critical area. • Some minor deficiencies/gaps in food safety management records.
Second 4	<p>Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For one or two of the three elements: full or very good compliance. • Other elements generally satisfactory - may be some that may become significant if not addressed. • No significant risks identified. • Track record –at least satisfactory. No history of previous problems. <p>Non-compliances not critical to food safety that need to be addressed, may be for one or two elements :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-risk food held under refrigeration generally at required temperature but some evidence of rising above this such as when busy, some lapses in monitoring. • Some minor disrepair, such as cracked and missing wall tiles near to a food preparation surface. • Staff generally suitably supervised, instructed and/or trained in food hygiene but there may be some minor issues e.g. not all staff fully aware.
Third 3	<p>Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For two or three of the three elements: generally satisfactory but some non-compliance that may become significant if not addressed. • Other area, if appropriate, full or very good compliance with only some minor non-compliance not critical to food safety. • No significant risks identified. • Track record – at least satisfactory. No history of serious problems. <p>Non-compliances that may become significant if not addressed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As in second tier but for two or all of the three elements.
Fourth 2	<p>Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some major non-compliance on hygiene handling and/or structure requirements. • Some significant risks identified. • Satisfactory food safety management/documentation or making satisfactory progress. <p>Major non-compliances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor stock control or poor personal hygiene leading to a food safety risk. • Damaged work surfaces, evidence of pest infestation/activity or inadequate waste disposal provision.

<p>Fifth 1</p>	<p>Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor standards with major and widespread non-compliance. • Widespread and significant risks. • Track record –could be satisfactory but may vary or have history of problems. <p>Major and widespread non-compliances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor standard of hygienic food handling, temperature control and staff personal hygiene. • Poor standard of structure, equipment and cleaning, not all appropriate hand and washing facilities provided.
<p>Bottom 0</p>	<p>Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very poor with almost total non-compliance. • Inappropriate or no food safety management system. • Widespread, serious and significant risks. • Likely to have a history of serious problems. <p>Almost total non-compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very poor standard of hygienic food handling, inadequate temperature control for high-risk food, serious food contamination risks. • Very poor standard of structure, equipment and cleaning, not all appropriate hand and washing facilities provided.