

To: Heads of Service in Local Authorities in England
Interested parties on appended list

22 February, 2010

Reference: EPC 251

Dear colleague,

'SCORES ON THE DOORS' (SotD) - TOWARDS A NATIONAL APPROACH

Please find enclosed the sixth Progress Update on the development of the national SotD scheme for England, Wales and Northern Ireland which was published on our website today. I should be grateful if you would draw it to the attention of relevant colleagues.

This latest update provides information on the recent progress made by the UK-wide Steering Group on developing the underpinning framework for the scheme. This includes endorsement of: guidance on scoring using Annex 5 of the *Food Law Code of Practice*; the agreed bandings for the six tiers of the scheme; and guidance on the mechanism for businesses to request a re-visit to be re-scored.

The Update also includes details of the allocation of grant funding to early adopters of the national scheme and details of how the IT platform that will support the national scheme (and the *Food Hygiene Information Scheme* in Scotland) will be developed.

If you have any questions about any of these issues, please get in touch with one of my Team, contact details are given at the end of the Update.

Yours faithfully,

Catriona Stewart
Head of SotD Team
Food Safety: Implementation & Delivery Division

Interested Parties list

Jenny Morris - CIEH
David Lock - LACORS

Which?
Consumer Focus
National Consumer Federation

Alliance of Independent Retailers
Association of Convenience Stores
Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers
Bed and Breakfast association
Brewing, Food & Beverage Industry Association British Beer and Pub Association
British Holiday & Home Parks Association Ltd
British Hospitality Association
British Independent Grocers Association
British Institute of Innkeeping
British Retail Consortium
British Sandwich Association
Chinese Take Away Association
Cinema Exhibitors' Association
Consortium of Caterers & Administrators (in Education)
DDGM media
East of England Regulatory Services Partnership
Federation of Small Businesses
Food and Drink Federation
Food Solutions
Horticultural Trades Association
Hygienewatch
Independent Food Retailers Confederation
Innpacked Training Consultants
Local Authority Caterers Association
London Retail Meat Traders Association
National Association of Master Bakers, Confectioners & Caterers
National Association of British Market Authorities
National Childminding Association
National Federation of Fishmongers Ltd
National Federation of Meat and Food Traders
National Market Traders Federation
Nisa Today's
Pizza Pasta and Italian Food Association
Praxis42 Ltd
Regional Development Agencies
Rural Shops Alliance
Transparency Data Ltd
UK Food Safety
Web-labs



TOWARDS A NATIONAL APPROACH: PROGRESS UPDATE 6 (FEBRUARY 2010)

Introduction

1. This note updates stakeholders on the development of the national 'scores on the doors' (SotD) scheme for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It outlines recent progress made by the UK-wide SotD Steering Group, provides information on support for local authorities, and details how the IT platform that will support the scheme will be delivered.

UK-wide SotD Steering Group activities

Scoring and banding

2. At its meeting on 13 January, the Steering Group endorsed recommendations on scoring in the form of descriptions of the standards expected at establishments for the numerical scores given under the intervention-rating scheme at Annex 5 of the *Food Law Code of Practice* for the three elements used for the SotD rating. For scores of 10, the descriptions reflect the need to prevent food establishments with significant non-compliances being judged 'broadly compliant'. The descriptions, together with a table that provides an 'at a glance' summary, are published on the Agency's website at: <http://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/enfcomm/scoresdoorssteeringgroup/sotdguidance/>

3. The intention is that the descriptions will be included in the guidance for local authorities on all aspects of the national SotD scheme. They will also form the basis of an Agency funded and organised programme of consistency training on Annex 5 scoring for all local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (not just those implementing the national SotD scheme). The Agency plans to commission the training and run one or two pilot courses before the end of March with the full programme rolling out from April.

4. The Steering Group also accepted recommendations on the mapping of the numerical scores from Annex 5 to the six tiers (or bands) of the national scheme. This is summarised below but further details are published on the website at the link given in para 2 above.

Annex 5 scores	0 - 15	20	25 - 30	35 - 40	45 - 50	> 50
Additional scoring factor	No score > 5	No score > 10	No score > 10	No score > 15	No score > 20	-
Tiers	Top	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Bottom

5. Consumer research, which the Agency is currently commissioning, will inform decisions on the symbols and descriptors that will be used.

Re-inspections/re-visits for re-scoring

6. The Steering Group also endorsed recommendations, in the form of guidance for local authorities, on the mechanism for businesses to request a re-inspection/re-visit for the

purposes of re-scoring. The approach taken reflects the need to balance the operation of this safeguard against the potentially adverse effects on the control and enforcement regime. The Agency is conscious of the potential impact on local authority resources and is committed to keeping the guidance under review and to revise and update it as necessary to reflect the experience of local authorities operating the scheme and, in order to ensure that its application does not compromise public health protection. The Guidance is also published on our website at the link provided at para 2.

Support for local authorities

7. **Grant funding** - There was a very positive response to the grant scheme announced in December 2009 for 'early adopters' of the national scheme. The Agency has now allocated just over £700,000 funding to a total of 96 local authorities (74 in England, 21 in Wales and one in Northern Ireland) to help them undertake the activities required prior to launch. Projects are now underway and Jaan Stanton and Nat Slade, the two local authority EHPs seconded to the Agency's SotD Team, are working with local authority colleagues to support them in delivery of these. In addition, Steve Ramm, Southend Borough Council, is working with the Agency to co-ordinate the activities of 'early adopters' in the East of England region.

8. **Resource materials** - The Agency has developed a number of resource materials to help local authorities that intend to adopt the national scheme – both for those receiving grant funding and others that wish to be 'early adopters'. This includes template briefings and presentations for informing elected members about the national scheme, and template letters to accompany a leaflet - *Good hygiene is good for your business* - for businesses telling them that the scheme is coming (template presentations for use with businesses will be added soon). The materials may be accessed at: <http://www.food.gov.uk/safereating/hyg/scoresonthedoors/hygienescoreresources/>

IT platform

9. The Agency has now completed work on the functional specification for the IT platform that will support the national six-tier scheme and also the *Food Hygiene Information Scheme* in Scotland. Different options for delivery of this specification were considered carefully in terms of costs and benefits and it has been decided that the Agency will undertake the development work in-house. The intention is to set up a small advisory group comprising local authority representatives to provide advice and guidance during the development, testing and implementation phases. Development work has just got underway and it is planned that the system will be ready to go live in July/August.

Further information

10. Detailed information on the Steering Group and Working Groups is available on the FSA website at: <http://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/enfcomm/scoresdoorssteeringgroup/>

11. If you require any further information, please contact one of the SotD Team:

Catriona Stewart	☎ 020 7276 8498	catriona.stewart@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk
Sally Hayden	☎ 020 7276 8422	sally.hayden@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk
David Millis	☎ 020 7276 8424	david.millis@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk
Gwen Aherne	☎ 020 7276 8445	gwen.aherne@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk
Andrew Stephenson	☎ 020 7276 8388	andrew.stephenson@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk
Michael Harding	☎ 020 7276 8730	michael.harding@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk
Jaan Stanton	☎ 07871 321600	jaan.stanton@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk
Nat Slade	☎ 07920 708197	nat.slade@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk