
WELSH FOOD HYGIENE AWARD SCHEME

1 Background

The scheme was initiated by a request from Directors of Public Protection in Wales to the All Wales Food Safety Technical Panel to investigate the introduction of a food hygiene award for food businesses in Wales. Following its formation in 2000 representatives of FSA Wales have attended meetings of the Technical Panel and supported the local authorities in their development of the scheme. The scheme was formally launched in Cardiff and Wrexham on 1st March 2002

2 Details of the Scheme

The scheme is targeted at food businesses that prepare and/or sell high risk foods. Awards are issued at the discretion of the local authority following an unannounced programmed food hygiene inspection.

The scheme assesses food businesses on three main criteria, shown below, all of which form part of the normal assessments made during a routine food hygiene inspection.

- a) Haccp / Hazard analysis compliance
- b) Risk rating based on the following criteria in Food Safety Act Code of Practice No. 9 Food Hygiene Inspections
 - (i) Compliance – Food Hygiene and Safety
 - (ii) Compliance – Structure
 - (iii) Confidence in Management
- c) Food hygiene training which should be in line with the requirements of the relevant Industry Guide to Good Hygiene Practice

As a result of this assessment businesses can be awarded a certificate at Gold, Silver or bronze level, in accordance with the following

Award	Rating*	Hazard Analysis	Training
Gold	0	Written working documents and implementation evidence	In accordance with relevant Industry Guide
Silver	5/10	Written for key risk activities with supporting documentation and evidence for those areas	as above
Bronze	15	Understanding, identification and control of critical control points (not required to be documented)	as above

* only businesses which achieve a score rating of 5 or less in compliance with the Food Hygiene and Safety element are eligible for an award with no more than a total of 15 points in the three categories listed in b) above

3. Award Conditions

- i) The Award Certificate is issued and owned by the local authority.
- ii) The Award is given at the discretion of the local authority following an unannounced inspection where required standards were achieved.
- iii) The Award may be withdrawn at any time but reasons for this action must be explained and there is a right of appeal to the Food Safety Manager.
- iv) The Award is valid until the next programmed inspection
- v) A change of proprietor invalidates the award.

4. Participation

All 22 Welsh local authorities are “signed up” to the scheme whilst the majority have embraced it with enthusiasm leading to the issuing of 798 awards by end of March 2003 and more than 1200 to date.

5. Evaluation

The Technical Panel has recently published a report of an interim evaluation which covers the period from the scheme’s launch on 1st March 2002 to 31st March 2003.

The first part of the evaluation sought to obtain factual information relating to numbers of awards issued and types of Award, as well as seeking the views of the issuing local authorities regarding the ease of implementation,

resource issues and the overall likelihood of success of the scheme from a local authority point of view.

The second part of the evaluation sought to obtain the views of food businesses, which received an award during the evaluation period.

Part 1 Local Authority Evaluation

A total of 16 local authorities participated, all of which had implemented the scheme and issued awards.

Fifteen of these authorities considered it to be a useful tool to improving food hygiene standards with several authorities reporting that businesses were actively seeking advice on what was needed in order to obtain a higher award. 13 of the authorities reported publicity in the local press.

More than 500 awards had been made to caterers, approximately 150 to retailers and just over 30 to manufacturers. Of these 58% have been Bronze awards, 34% Silver and 8% Gold

Resource implication had been minimal unless presentations had been organised, although it was considered that these added prestige. One authority was publishing details of its award recipients on its website. Other comments made were generally positive and supportive of the scheme. There was recognition that greater publicity and promotion was needed.

Part 2 Food Business evaluation

Responses were received from 317 businesses across Wales.

99.5% reported that they were pleased to have received their award and 90% had displayed their award on the premises. Those that hadn't displayed their awards offered positive comments and practical reasons for non-display in their explanations. Just under 70% stated that customers had commented on their certificates.

There was an expression of disappointment from some businesses that they had "only" received a Bronze award,

90% of the businesses thought that the Award scheme would result in an overall improvement in food hygiene standards and approximately the same number would like to see a list of businesses with awards published on the local authority and/or a national website.

The Food Safety Technical Panel has recognised that further, continuing assessment will be necessary as well as the need to seek the views of the public.

**FSA Wales
25 November 2004**