

FHRS Audit Technical report 2022: Audit Fieldwork

Pilot fieldwork

Ahead of the pilot audit fieldwork, some refinements were made to the questionnaire used in the previous wave. Specifically, questions about the format of stickers and the date shown on the reverse of stickers were removed and questions about online display were added. [\(footnote 1\)](#)

Pilot audit fieldwork was conducted between October 6th and October 13th 2022 to ensure the questionnaire designed for the audit of food businesses was appropriate ahead of mainstage fieldwork. A small proportion of the starting sample was randomly selected for the pilot (114 businesses), from which the below profile of completes were achieved. In total, 43 audits of food businesses were conducted during the pilot. Tables 3.1 to 3.3 present the number of interviews completed by country, sector and FHRS rating.

Table 3.1 Profile of pilot audits of food businesses by country

Country	Completed audits
England	14
Northern Ireland	14
Wales	15
Total	43

Table 3.2 Profile of pilot audits of food businesses by sector

Sector	Completed audits
Accommodation & pub/bar/nightclub	6
Restaurant/café/canteen/other catering	16
Retailers	15
Takeaway/sandwich shop	6
Total	43

Table 3.3 Profile of pilot audits of food businesses by FHRS rating

FHRS Rating	Completed audits
0	0
1	2
2	1
3	4

FHRS Rating	Completed audits
4	8
5	28
Total	43

All auditors (via Mystery Shoppers) received a verbal and written briefing on the survey before the start of pilot fieldwork. The note differed from the 2021 audit instructions in the sense they were clearer and more prescriptive. This briefing provided the auditors with an understanding of the research background, the questionnaire design, the screening criteria, and the sample design.

The questionnaire performed well during the pilot. Auditors experienced no issues with any of the survey questions nor any issues with being able to conduct their assignment covertly. There was no need to adapt the audit materials ahead of mainstage fieldwork. The final version of the questionnaire used in mainstage fieldwork can be found in Appendix B of this report.

Mainstage fieldwork

Mainstage audit fieldwork took place between October 25th and November 23rd, 2022. In total, 1,525 audits were completed. The final profile of the audits achieved by country, sector and FHRS rating is detailed in Tables 3.4 to 3.6.

Table 3.4 Profile of mainstage audits of food businesses by country

Country	Completed audits
England	501
Northern Ireland	527
Wales	497
Total	1,525

Table 3.5 Profile of mainstage audits of food businesses by sector

Sector	Completed audits
Accommodation & pubs, bars and nightclubs	267
Restaurants, cafes, canteens & catering	608
Retail	417
Takeaways and sandwich shop	233
Total	1,525

Table 3.6 Profile of mainstage audits of food businesses by FHRS rating

FHRS Rating	Completed Audits
0	2
1	20
2	26
3	114
4	265
5	1,098
Total	1,525

As with the pilot, before the start of mainstage fieldwork all auditors received a briefing on the survey and were issued with written instructions. This ensured that interviewers understood the background to the research, the questionnaire design, the screening criteria, and the sample design.

During mainstage fieldwork there were some instances where it was not possible to conduct an audit. The main reasons for this included establishments being closed within their advertised opening hours, establishments no longer being in business and establishments not being publicly accessible (22 closed, 5 stopped trading/closed down, 30 inaccessible). Where it was not possible to complete an audit, auditors were given the details of a new establishment to audit, which met the same criteria in terms of region, outlet type and FHRs rating.

The majority of businesses and establishments that were not publicly accessible were in England (34, compared to 16 in Wales and 7 in Northern Ireland). In all countries, they were also more likely to be the Restaurant/Café sector (38, compared to 13 in the Accommodation & pub/bar/nightclub sector, 4 Retail sector and 2 in Takeaway/sandwich shop sector).

1. The questions removed were: What was the food hygiene rating format? (Sticker / Alternative format); What was the food hygiene rating format? (New style sticker (with dragon logo if Wales) / Old style sticker / Alternative format); What date was displayed on the sticker? (dd:mm:yyyy; N/A date not visible; Unable to access).