

FHRS Display Audit 2022 - Introduction

Background to the FHRS

Under the scheme, places where food is supplied, sold or consumed are given a rating ranging from 0 to 5, with 5 indicating 'very good' food hygiene and 0 indicating 'urgent improvement necessary'. The ratings are determined by three elements: hygienic food handling; physical condition of the premises and facilities; and food safety management. Figure 2.1 provides examples of the FHRS stickers currently in use in England and Northern Ireland (left) and Wales (right).

Figure 2.1 Examples of FHRS stickers in England and Northern Ireland (left) and Wales (right)



In Northern Ireland (since 2016) and Wales (since 2013), businesses are legally required to display their ratings in a prominent place, like the front door, entrance or window of the business where it can be easily read by customers. They are also required to provide information on their rating verbally if requested in person or over the phone. Businesses in England are not legally required to display their rating at their premises but are encouraged to do so. Across England, Northern Ireland and Wales, food hygiene ratings are available to search on the FSA's rating website, and the FSA provides guidance and a free toolkit to help businesses get the most from their ratings.

In Wales, the scheme differs slightly in that it also applies to businesses that sell food to other businesses, including food manufacturers and wholesalers. Furthermore, establishments that supply takeaway food must include a bilingual statement on menu leaflets and flyers which tells customers how to find details of their food hygiene rating on the FSA website, as well as reminding consumers that they have a legal right to ask the food business for their food hygiene rating when they order.

Research objectives

The FSA has conducted research into the Display of Food Hygiene Ratings in England, Northern Ireland and Wales since 2011. As with the previous waves of the research, the objectives were threefold:

- provide a representative estimate of the display of food hygiene ratings by food businesses

- explore the reasons and drivers for display and non-display
- explore business awareness and attitudes towards the scheme

Methodology

To meet the research objectives a two-pronged approach was adopted, consisting of:

1. A covert audit of 1,525 food businesses in England, Northern Ireland and Wales (501, 527 and 497 respectively), conducted by Mystery Shoppers. [\(footnote 1\)](#)
2. A telephone survey of 1,500 food businesses in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, conducted by IFF Research (500 per nation).

Sampling

For both the audit and telephone survey of food businesses, a sample was drawn from the FSA's FHRS database. [\(footnote 2\)](#) The sample included food businesses that sell or serve food to the public and had received a food hygiene rating following an inspection by a food safety officer. [\(footnote 3\)](#)

Food businesses were excluded from the sample if they were a new business and had not yet been inspected and issued with a food hygiene rating. Food businesses were also excluded if not publicly accessible, a mobile food business or a food business in a residential property. [\(footnote 4\)](#)

The starting sample for the audit and telephone survey of food businesses included the following outlet types:

- accommodation (for example hotels) & pubs, bars, and nightclubs
- restaurants, cafes, and other catering businesses (for example event caterers and home caterers)
- retail (for example supermarkets, butchers, and bakeries)
- takeaways and sandwich shops

The sample frame for the 2022 wave of the FHRS Audit differed slightly from previous waves as Bed & Breakfasts were excluded from the sample of accommodation businesses due to the difficulty in gaining public access to these types of premises and home caterers were included in the sample of catering businesses for the survey. Although the 2022 sample frame differs slightly from the 2021 sample frame, there are no concerns about the comparability of data as Bed & Breakfasts and home caterers only make up a small proportion of their respective outlet type groupings.

The sample was stratified by country, outlet type, and food hygiene rating to reflect the profile of the underlying population of food businesses. Businesses in Northern Ireland and Wales, takeaways and sandwich shops and those with a food hygiene rating of 3 or less were oversampled to ensure that robust results could be produced for each sub-group.

More information on sampling for the 2022 wave of the FHRS Audit and Survey can be found in the accompanying Technical Report.

Audit of food businesses

Following a short period of pilot fieldwork, mainstage audit fieldwork took place between 25th October and 23rd November 2022. In total, 1,525 audits were completed. The final profile of the audits achieved by country, outlet type and food hygiene rating are detailed in Tables 2.1 to 2.3.

Table 2.1: Profile of audited food businesses - Country

Country	Completed audits
England	501
Northern Ireland	527
Wales	497

Table 2.2 Profile of audited food businesses - Outlet type

Outlet type	Completed audits
Accommodation and pubs, bars and nightclubs	267
Restaurants, cafes and catering	608
Retail	417
Takeaways and sandwich shops	233

Table 2.3 Profile of audited food businesses: Food Hygiene Rating

Food Hygiene Rating	Completed audits
0-2	48
3	114
4	265
5	1,098

Audit results were weighted so that findings were representative of the underlying population of food businesses in terms of outlet type and food hygiene rating within England, Northern Ireland, and Wales.

More information on the survey methodology, including pilot fieldwork and weighting, can be found in the accompanying Technical Report.

Telephone survey

Following a short period of pilot fieldwork, mainstage quantitative fieldwork took place between 1st November and 9th December 2022. In total, 1,500 interviews were completed. The final profile of the interviews achieved by country, outlet type, food hygiene rating and size is presented in Tables 2.4 to 2.7.

Table 2.4 Profile of mainstage interviews with food businesses - Country

Country	Completed interviews
England	500
Northern Ireland	500
Wales	500

Table 2.5 Profile of mainstage interviews with food businesses - Outlet type

Outlet type	Completed interviews
Accommodation and pub, bar, nightclub	314
Restaurants, cafes and catering	591
Retail	424
Takeaways and sandwich shop	171

Table 2.6 Profile of mainstage interviews with food businesses - Food Hygiene Rating

Food Hygiene Rating	Completed interviews
0-2	49
3	103
4	256
5	1,092

Table 2.7 Profile of mainstage interview with businesses - Number of employees

Number of employees	Completed interviews
1	73
2 to 9	810
10 to 24	415
25 to 49	131
50 to 99	42
100 to 199	19
200 to 249	2
250+	7
Don't know	1

In total, 484 food businesses that participated in the telephone survey were also audited.

Survey results from mainstage fieldwork were weighted so that findings were representative of the underlying population of food businesses in terms of outlet type and food hygiene rating within England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

More information on the survey methodology, including pilot fieldwork and weighting, can be found in the accompanying Technical Report.

Reporting notes

Throughout the report the terms 'business', 'establishment', 'premises and 'outlet' are used interchangeably to refer to food business sites.

In charts, upward arrows are used to denote a significantly higher figure – compared to the average or 2021 - while downward arrows are used to show a significantly lower figure. In tables statistically significant differences are denoted by asterisks (a single asterisk is used to denote a significant increase and two asterisks are used to denote a significant decrease).

All differences between sub-groups and previous waves of the research stated in this report are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level unless otherwise stated.

1. This encompassed both an audit of the businesses' physical premises and their website or Facebook Business Page, where they had one.

2. The FSA holds Food Hygiene Ratings and a summary of the standards found at the last time of inspection on behalf of local authorities in England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland. This data can be found at: [https:// ratings.food.gov.uk](https://ratings.food.gov.uk).
3. Kitchens without physical premises were not included in the audit Food businesses not accessible to the public (e.g. staff canteens) were also not intended to be audited, although in 2022 we conducted two audits of staff canteens.
4. The FHRS applies to food manufacturers and wholesalers in Wales. These businesses were excluded from the sample because their premises are typically not publicly accessible, and so it would not be possible to audit them.