

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Online Display in Wales: Optimisation of FHRs online display

4.1 Consumers see no reason why mandatory online display shouldn't apply to all FBOs

Online display feels appropriate for all food businesses (including hotels, restaurants, community centres, supermarkets etc.).

[Older] “Anywhere that sells food should have it” – Cardiff

[Older] “If they put it on their doors then why shouldn't it be on their websites - people still eat the food from there?” - Cardiff

“And if the ratings were high, you'd think they'd be proud to show it” – Wrexham

4.2 The execution of FHRs online display could affect its impact

Consumers had several concerns about the ways in which FHRs ratings might be displayed, and how businesses might be able to circumvent regulations to lessen the impact of FHRs online display.

Consumers were concerned that businesses might be able to “hide” the information in obscure places on their website, or even that they might be able to post “fake” or out-of-date ratings. It may be possible to tackle these issues by requiring that a rating is displayed in a prominent place on the website as well as requiring that the embedded images of the rating contain a link to the specific FBO listing on the FSA website.

By directing consumers to the FSA website, this might also work to clarify consumers' questions about the scheme.

[Older] “But who's checking that they're using a real rating on their website? Why wouldn't they just put a picture of a 5 on there?” – Cardiff

4.3 Making FHRs ratings easy and convenient to access is key

Consumers are already navigating a haphazard information landscape in a quick-fire, rapid manner. As such, information that is not delivered front-and-centre, or requires special effort to access, is likely to be overlooked or even ignored.

To maximise impact, FHRs ratings should:

- Be displayed prominently
- Not require consumers to scroll or click through website pages or external links
- Not be hidden in small print

“I wouldn’t like to go through all that effort, I would want it right there in front next to the logo. I wouldn’t bother if it was right at the end” – Wrexham

4.4 There is appetite to extend FHRs online onto aggregator sites and beyond

Consumers agree that FBOs’ own websites are the most intuitive and expected location for FHRs displays, given that they exist offline too. However, there is also a strong appetite for the ratings to appear on aggregator websites, particularly as usage of these sites is becoming more regular. Indeed, some participants think FHRs ratings should also appear on Google searches in the way starred review ratings currently do.

Consumers are eager that aggregators should display ratings in the same way and that they are positioned clearly and intuitively on websites. Some would also like the ability to sort results by FHRs for ease of comparison.

[Older] “If Deliveroo are representing these places, they [FHRs scores] should be on it too. Why not?” - Cardiff

[Younger] “You should be able to compare their hygiene rating on the overview list on JustEat just like you can with distance and the star rating” – Cardiff

4.5 Consumers feel that online display could have a positive impact on FBOs

Overall, consumers feel that online display would have a positive impact on FBOs. They suggest mandatory online display could:

- Help smaller and newer businesses compete and stand out against large chains with stronger brand equity and high street presence, particularly if they had yet to receive many reviews
- Encourage greater compliance from FBOs thus improving quality

“For the restaurant, it would look more professional to have it on there” - Wrexham

[Older] “They’d have to work more for it. Keep them on their toes” - Cardiff

[Younger] “You’d be more likely to order a meal with them if you knew it was a 4 or a 5. If it was a 2 or a 1 you’d be like ‘I’m not going there’ even if the reviews were good” – Cardiff