

# FHRS Display Audit 2022 - Conclusions

A key finding from the research was that levels of compliance among businesses in Northern Ireland and Wales, in terms of displaying their food hygiene rating, had returned to pre-pandemic levels after a slight dip in 2021. Around nine in ten businesses in Northern Ireland (87%) and Wales (91%) were found to have their rating on display either inside or in a location visible from outside the premises (in 2021 comparable figures were 84% and 88% respectively). Compliance is therefore high in these countries where display is mandatory, although there are pockets of non-compliance, particularly among accommodation businesses, pubs, bars, and nightclubs in Northern Ireland (67% were found to have their rating displayed), and retail businesses in Wales (81%). Typically non-compliant businesses reported that there was nowhere suitable to display their rating. In England, around two-thirds (67%) of businesses were displaying a food hygiene rating, which was a continuation of an upward trend (55% displayed a sticker in 2017).

As found in previous years, most food businesses reported having heard of the FHRS (92% in each of England, Northern Ireland and Wales). Unlike previous years, that awareness was consistent across the three nations. Most were satisfied with their business' food hygiene rating (in 2022: England 91%; Northern Ireland 95%; Wales 89%). Awareness that it is a legal requirement to display their food hygiene rating sticker at their premises in Northern Ireland and Wales was extremely high (95% and 96% respectively). Support for mandatory display was also high in England, with 82% of businesses believing it would be a good thing, broadly in line with 2021 (85%). There was also a strong consensus that the display of food hygiene ratings should become mandatory for at least some online platforms (England: 92%; Northern Ireland: 93%; Wales: 93%), although audit results showed that only a small minority currently used their website or Facebook Business Page to display their rating (13% in England, 6% in Northern Ireland and 8% in Wales).

More than three quarters of businesses in each country recalled receiving their inspection letter (Northern Ireland 86%, Wales 82%, England 78%). Overall awareness that they could request a re-rating, appeal and had the 'right to reply' was high, with at least three in four aware of each option in England and closer to nine in ten aware in Northern Ireland and Wales, all in line with 2021 results. Of businesses that applied for a re-rating, more than half reported being awarded a higher rating.

Among businesses who were not satisfied with their food hygiene rating but chose not to apply for a re-rating, the most common reasons given were that the fees were too high, that they lacked time to do so, or that they perceived the system was unfair. In contrast to 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic was not mentioned at all as a barrier. Businesses who were not satisfied with their food hygiene rating and did not exercise their 'right to reply' were also asked why and the most common reason was because they would need to make the changes required (27%).

In line with previous years, most businesses are incentivised to maintain or improve their food hygiene rating and consider that the display of their rating has a range of positive impacts on customer perceptions of the business. Nearly all food businesses agreed that they work hard to maintain or improve their food hygiene rating (England 99%; Northern Ireland 97%; Wales 98%). In line with 2021, most businesses stated that they were proud of their food hygiene rating and that good food hygiene ratings were attractive to customers.