

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme – Consumer Attitudes Tracker (Wave 7)

Area of research interest: [Behaviour and perception](#)

Study duration: 2018-10-01

The survey moved from a biannual basis to an annual basis for Wave Six onwards. The next survey is due to take place in October 2019.

Background

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) is run in partnership between us and local authorities and provides information on the standards of hygiene found in food businesses at the time they are inspected. The scheme covers businesses providing food directly to consumers, such as restaurants, pubs, cafés, takeaways hotels, hospitals, schools and other places peoples eat away from home, as well as supermarkets and other food shops.

We previously commissioned a biannual public attitudes tracker survey to monitor key areas of concern for consumers in relation to food. In 2010, questions were added regarding awareness and use of the FHRS. In 2014, we decided to explore the FHRS in more detail and commissioned a bespoke consumer attitudes tracker survey to monitor specifically consumer awareness, attitudes towards and use of the scheme.

This is the seventh wave of the tracker.

Research Approach

Face to face interviews were conducted with a representative sample of 2,070 adults (aged 16 and over). Respondents were selected using a random location sampling method across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The questions primarily focussed on the following key areas:

- awareness of the scheme -the proportion of respondents who report being aware of the FHRS
- recognition of the scheme -the proportion of respondents who recognise the FHRS sticker, or who had seen a food business displaying one in the past year
- use of the scheme -the proportion of respondents who report using the scheme to base their decision on where to eat out or purchase food
- views on the scheme - for example, the proportion of respondents who believe food businesses should be legally required to display their rating

Results

Awareness

- around half of respondents in England (51%) and Northern Ireland (50%) were aware of the FHRS. The figure was higher in Wales (62%).

- across all three countries, the combined percentage of people aware of FHRS has slightly decreased from 55% in the previous wave to 51% in the current wave.
- since the tracker began awareness of FHRS has increased significantly in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from 45% (Wave 1, November 2010) to 51% this wave.
- the most common source of information was the rating being displayed at a food business (87% or 91% when including prompted responses), which has also been the most commonly reported source in all previous waves.
- of those who had seen the food hygiene rating online, 51% reported being aware of the three component scores that determine the overall ratings. Of those aware, 73% used them to help make decisions about where to eat or buy food.

Recognition

- in total, 82% of respondents reported seeing a hygiene rating sticker. Respondents from Northern Ireland were more likely to report having seen a hygiene rating sticker (89%).
- consumer recognition of FHRS stickers in England has stayed consistent from the previous wave (82% up from 81%). In Wales, consumer recognition has decreased to 85% from 91%. Recognition has also decreased in Northern Ireland to 89% from 92% at the previous wave.
- in the last 12 months, 86% of respondents reported having seen a food business displaying their hygiene rating sticker which has increased since the previous wave from 82%
- there has been a decrease in Welsh respondents reporting having seen publicity materials containing further information about how to access food hygiene rating in Wales (33% down from 50%)

Use

- in terms of actually checking the rating, 52% of respondents in England, 41% in Wales and 62% in Northern Ireland report either often or sometimes doing so before deciding to purchase food from an establishment. This represents an increase compared to the previous wave for England and Northern Ireland (up from 46% and 47% respectively).
- overall, use of FHRS by consumers has increased since the last wave from 46% to 51%.
- 69% of all respondents reported checking the rating by looking at the food business window or door.

Views on mandatory display

- the majority (86%) report that food businesses should have to display their food hygiene rating which is unchanged from the previous wave.
- the proportion of respondents who report that businesses providing an online food ordering service should display their food hygiene rating where it can be clearly seen by customers continues to be high in England (85%), Wales (87%) and Northern Ireland (97%).

Research report

PDF

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PDF

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