

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme – Consumer Attitudes Tracker (Wave 8)

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

Study duration: 2019-10-01

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 eighth wave of the tracker.

Research Approach

Face to face interviews were conducted with a representative sample of 2,041 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

- 56% of total respondents reported an awareness of the FHRS (54% in England, 74% in Wales, and 59% in Northern Ireland). All three show an increase from the previous wave.
- Since the tracker began in November 2014, the proportion of respondents who are aware of the FHRS scheme has increased significantly in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from 45% in Wave 1, to 56% in Wave 8.

- The largest increase is seen in Wales with 42% of respondents reporting awareness of the FHRS scheme in Wave 1 to 74% in Wave 8. England has seen an increase from 44% in Wave 1 to 54% in Wave 8, whilst Northern Ireland has seen a slight decline (60% in Wave 1 to 59% in Wave 8).
- Of those respondents who reported awareness of the FHRS, the most commonly reported source of information were stickers or certificates in a food business (88% unprompted, 92% when prompted scores are included). This is consistent with previous waves.

Recognition

- In total, 84% of respondents reported seeing a hygiene rating sticker.
- A larger proportion of respondents reported having seen the FHRS stickers in Northern Ireland (95%) and Wales (92%) than in England (84%). The figures of recognition for all countries has increased across waves.

Use

- The proportion of respondents who reported that they 'often' or 'sometimes' check a food business' hygiene rating in the last 12 months has gradually increased across waves; a total of 40% in Wave 1, and 51% in Wave 8.
- 68% of all respondents reported checking the rating by looking at the food business window or door.
- The lowest acceptable food hygiene rating was reported as "3" and "4" equally (39% for both).
- In line with previous waves, the majority of respondents (82%) reported that they would not consider purchasing from a food business that had a rating lower than the rating that they considered 'acceptable'.

Views on mandatory display

- 86% of respondents thought businesses should be required to display their rating at their premises, which is unchanged from the previous wave.
- Respondents in Northern Ireland were the most likely to report that businesses should display their ratings (97%) compared to Wales (92%) and England (85%). The proportion of respondents in Wales reporting that businesses should display their ratings has significantly increased from the previous Wave (87%) to the current wave (92%).
- 85% of respondents reported that food businesses providing an online food ordering service should display their food hygiene rating where it can be easily seen by consumers.

Research report

PDF

[View FHRS consumer tracker report - wave 8 as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (1.2 MB)