

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council
Food Hygiene Rating Scheme – Information for Food Business Operators

Policy on Communication of Food Hygiene Ratings to Business.....2

Lodging an Appeal.....3

Making a “Right to Reply” comment3

Making a request for a re-inspection3

Calculation of Food Hygiene Rating5

Flowchart6

Policy on Communication of Food Hygiene Ratings to Business

Whenever an inspection of an eligible food business is carried out, the food hygiene rating score will be calculated and notified in writing within 14 days from the date of the inspection. The score given reflects how well the business meets the legal requirements for food hygiene, structure and management.

For multi-site businesses, we will ensure that the score is sent to the head office.

Following a food safety inspection the following information will normally be provided to the business:

- Schedule A - Items directly contravening legislation and required remedial works (if applicable)
- Schedule B - Recommendations for good food hygiene practice (if applicable)
- Schedule C - Food hygiene rating and priority actions/improvements necessary to achieve an improved rating

Information on how to appeal will also be enclosed as will the official branded window sticker which businesses are invited to display in their premises.

Hard copies of information and template forms will be sent on request only. Businesses without access to the internet may request hard copies of forms from the inspecting officer.

In cases requiring immediate intervention through, for example, discovery of standards severely below the required standard, more urgent action will follow from the Council including the option of statutory notices prior to the issuing of the official rating.

In all cases the Service's enforcement policy will apply.

Website

To allow the requisite appeal period to expire, the notified scores will not be displayed on the website until 14 days have elapsed from the date of notification.

**In order to ensure that the Scheme is fair to businesses, it has been designed to include a number of safeguards. These are: an appeal procedure, a 'right to reply', and an opportunity to request one re-visit when improvements have been made. A summary of these safeguards, and how to access them is provided below. The full document can be viewed on the Food Standards Agency's website:
www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/enforcement/fhrssafeguards.pdf**

Lodging an Appeal

If the food business operator believes the rating is wrong or unfair or that it does not reflect the conditions found at the time of the inspection he may appeal within 14 days of notification of the rating.

Informal Stage

The food business operator contacts the inspecting officer and raises the matter. If the dispute is settled at this point the rating will be published as planned. This stage is not a prerequisite to the formal stage but is encouraged.

Formal Stage

The food business operator should file an appeal by completing the necessary form located at www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/ratings or by requesting a paper form from the inspecting officer. Businesses should ensure the appeal is lodged within 14 days of notification of inspection rating.

The lead officer for food will conduct the appeal, or, where that person was the inspecting officer, the next senior qualified environmental health officer will instead conduct it. A decision will be taken as to whether to a further visit is necessary to verify conditions or whether it is possible to use evidence gathered as part of the original inspection. Where a revisit is necessary it will be unannounced. The lead officer for food (or their deputy) will review the rating in line with the comments made on the appeal form and the evidence to hand and will advise the food business operator the outcome of the appeal no later than seven days from the receipt of the formal appeal.

Although not part of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, the food business operator may, at any time, utilise Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's complaints procedure, details of which are available by telephoning 01372 732000 or from the web at www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk.

Making a "Right to Reply" comment

A food business operator may, at any time, make a comment on his score on the scheme website. Such comments might, for example, include reasons for why the rating was lower or higher than previously and any mitigations for this. To exercise the right to reply, food business operators should complete the form located at www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/ratings or request a paper copy from the inspecting officer.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council may edit the text in order to remove any offensive, defamatory, clearly inaccurate or irrelevant remarks.

Making a request for a re-inspection

The scheme permits one re-inspection of a business per initial visit upon request by that business. For example, where a business is visited annually, the business may request a second visit in that year to try and improve the rating.

A re-inspection of a food business will only be considered if the necessary improvements to address non compliance have been made. Businesses must explain what actions have been taken on the issues raised at the last inspection and include supporting evidence, such as receipts or photographs to show that work has been completed. This is important as the request may be refused if insufficient information and evidence is supplied.

Depending on conditions found during the re-inspection, ratings may go down as well as up.

Food business operators wishing to make a re-inspection request should complete the necessary form at www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/ratings or by contacting the inspecting officer.

Timings of re-inspection

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will observe a “stand still” period of three months following the initial visit. Although requests for re-inspection can be made immediately following receipt of the rating, the re-inspection will not take place until after this three month period. After this “stand still” period has elapsed Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will make the re-inspection within a further three month period. Therefore the maximum time from initial visit to re-inspection is six months.

All re-inspections will be unannounced and the timings will be at the discretion of the inspecting officer (subject to being within the second 3 month window) to fit in around the service demands of the environmental health team.

Charging for re-inspections

At present Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will not charge for re-inspections but is keeping the matter under review and may instigate a charge in the future.

Council instigated re-inspections

From time to time it is necessary to conduct re-inspections for various reasons such as to verify the conditions of a statutory notice are being adhered to. Only where this Council instigated re-inspection is sufficient to re rate the premises shall a new rating be issued. Typically such Council instigated re-inspections are focussed on one specific area and it will not be possible to generate a further rating from it.

Calculation of Food Hygiene Rating

The assessment of the food hygiene performance of a business is carried out by a long standing national system. Details are available in the food law code of practice available from <http://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/enforcework/foodlawcop/>

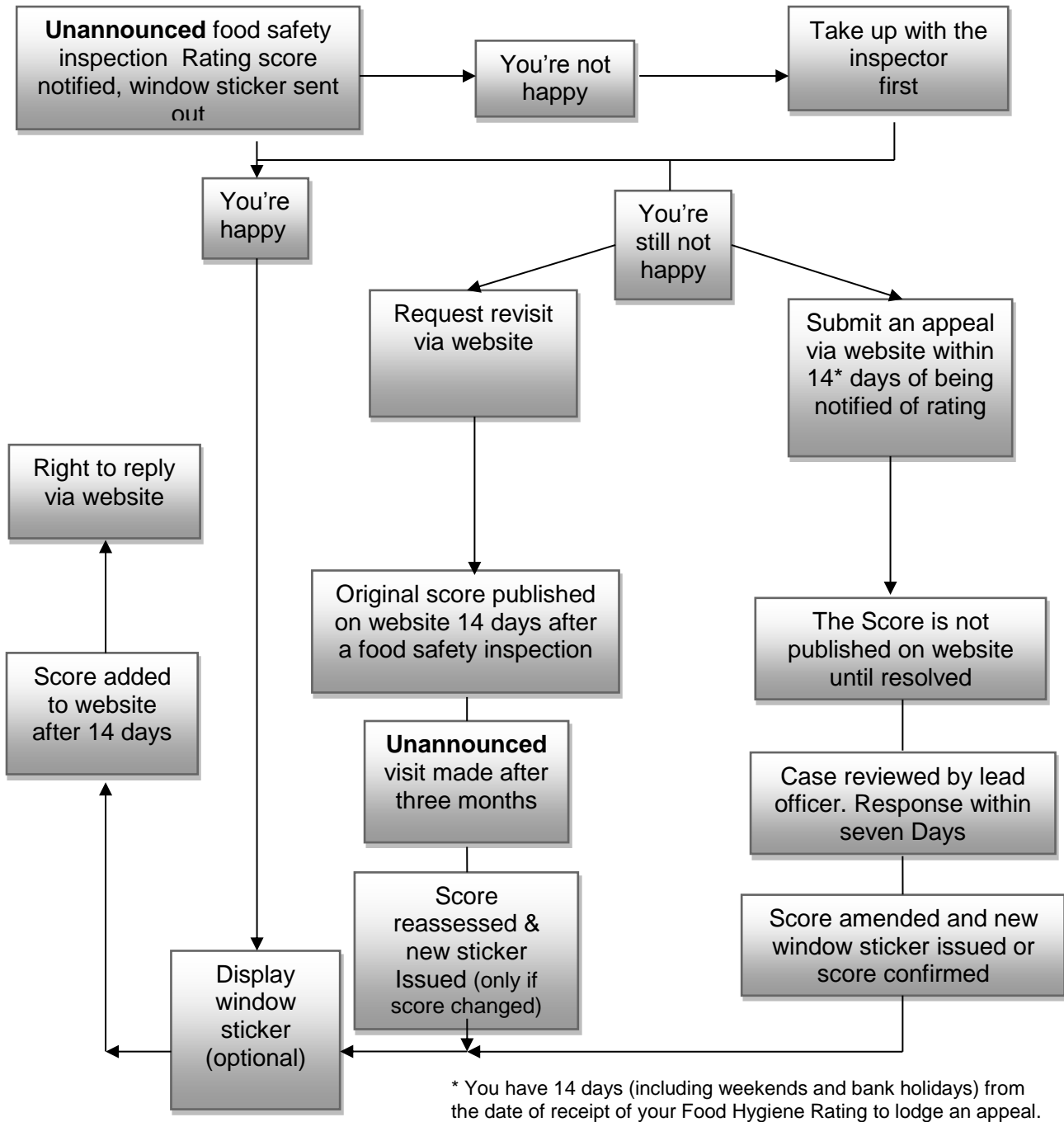
The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme utilises the following aspects of annex 5 of this document:

- Level of current compliance – food hygiene and safety procedures
- Level of current compliance – structure
- Confidence in management.

Each element is assessed separately and the scores “mapped” to the food hygiene rating for each inspection as follows.

Mapping of numerical scores from the intervention-rating scheme at Annex 5 of the <i>Food Law Code of Practice</i> to the six FHS food hygiene ratings						
Annex 5 scores	0 - 15	20	25 - 30	35 - 40	45 - 50	> 50
Additional scoring factor	No score > 5	No score > 10	No score > 10	No score > 15	No score > 20	-
Tiers	Top	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Bottom
Food hygiene rating	5	4	3	2	1	0
Descriptor	Very good	Good	Generally satisfactory	Improvement necessary	Major improvement necessary	Urgent improvement necessary

Flowchart



The website to request revisits, lodge appeals or submit a right to reply comment is www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/ratings