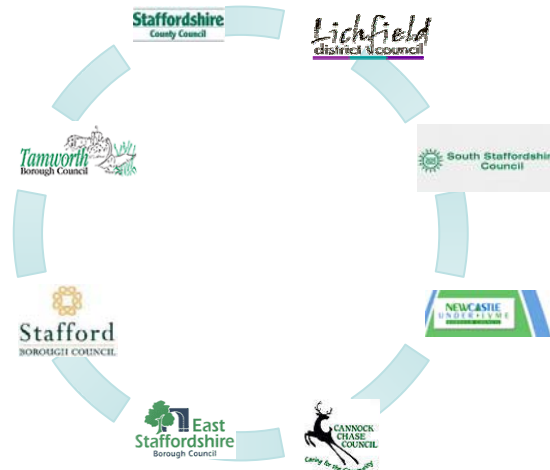


Policy Document



Background

Research reported on by the Consumers Association in 2005 revealed that almost everybody (97 per cent) feels that they're entitled to know how their local restaurants score for hygiene. Seven out of eight (87 per cent) people want to see this information before they enter a restaurant - so called 'scores on doors' - and nine out of ten (90 per cent) think scores should be available online.

The ratemyplace - Food Safety Star Rating Scheme is a partnership between 8 local authorities in Staffordshire and is designed to show how we feel businesses are run in accordance with their legal obligations under food law and where areas of improvements in food safety are possible.

Local Authorities undertake food hygiene inspections of certain businesses in accordance with a [Food Law Code of Practice](#) and associated [Food Law Practice Guidance](#). All Local Authorities must follow and implement the codes that apply to them.

Through the commitment by partner Council's in Staffordshire to a transparent enforcement approach, the ratemyplace scheme will enable consumers to access information which is held about food premises registered with their Local Authorities. This is supported by the Freedom of information legislation ([Freedom of Information Act 2000](#)) which makes it easier for members of the public to obtain information held by Councils.

This scheme is accessible through the ratemyplace web site or Links from individual Council's websites. Some businesses may wish to display a ratemyplace - Food Safety Star Rating Certificate, although there is no formal requirement to do so. This Certificate however, remains the property of the issuing Council.

Policy Document

ratemyplace - Food Safety Star Rating Scheme

The ratemyplace –Food Safety Star Rating Scheme will apply to all registered premises in Staffordshire Partner Councils involved in the scheme who prepare, cook, serve or sell food.

If no inspection information is available on ratemyplace about a business, then it may be because the business has not received its latest primary inspection or that details have not been uploaded yet.

During the start up of the scheme some Council's in the ratemyplace Partnership will be uploading all the food premises information at once and then rating premises from 2 April 2007, whilst others will gradually upload food premises information but will still rate premises from the 2 April 2007. Which ever is the case, it is envisaged that within 3 years all premises will be rated and information e.g. inspection reports held will be available to view.

Council's in the ratemyplace Partnership will endeavour to update the information held on the website on month by month basis.

Some premises may not be inspected due to the low level of risk of the food sold or prepared on there. In accordance with the [Food Law Code of Practice](#) these premises may be subject to alternative enforcement arrangements e.g. may not be visited or just given advice through the post and will therefore not receive a star rating.

Council's in the ratemyplace Partnership reserve the right not publish information held about a premises in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 e.g. if legal action is being taken against the premises. The Council also have the right to determine whether in exceptional circumstances the star rating of a particular premise should not be applicable.

How the ratemyplace is scored

Food Authorities operate a system for prioritising the food hygiene inspections they carry out (Annex 5 [Food Law Code of Practice](#)). At the end of each inspection by qualified and competent Environmental Health staff, the business is given a score called a food hazard rating. This reflects (amongst other things) how well the business complies with food law and how much confidence we have in the food operators ability to manage the business safely. The higher hazard rating, the higher the risk and the more often inspections are carried out.

The following criteria are the only ones that are directly controllable by food business operators (known as compliance scores) and are the ones that the ratemyplace - Food Safety Star Rating Scheme use: -

- standards of food hygiene,
- standards of structure and cleaning of food areas and
- degree of confidence in management at food premises.

Policy Document

In line with the [Food Law Code of Practice](#) Local Authorities in the Partnership will assess food businesses at the primary inspection for the star rating. Following this, the food premises will not be re-assessed until the next primary inspection. This could be anything from 6 – 36 months in the future. The rating carried out from this inspection will now form the new ratemyplace - Food Safety Star Rating regardless of whether it is more, less or as favourable as the last score.

The following tables give an example of how the scores against the above criteria determine the ratemyplace – Food Safety Star Rating:-

Compliance with the Law	← qualifies for ☆'s				no stars →	
	Food Hygiene and Safety	0	5	10	15	20
Structure and Cleaning	0	5	10	15	20	25
Confidence in Management		5	10		20	30

The score you receive for each of the 3 areas of 'Compliance with the Law' are highlighted below. The **lower the score** the better the premises is in terms of legal compliance and **the more stars** that will be rewarded. Any score in 'red area' in the table above will mean no star is awarded

Score	Star Award
0 to 5	☆☆☆☆☆
10 to 15	☆☆☆☆
20 to 25	☆☆☆
30 to 35	☆☆
up to 40	☆
45 and above	No Stars



Policy Document

When the Service becomes aware of a change in the Food Business Operator, the ratemyplace - Food Safety Star Rating will be removed and will be re-instated after the first primary inspection of the business under the new ownership.

New food businesses will not have their details uploaded to the site until they have received a primary inspection.

Appeal Process

Where a food business operator believes that an inspection has resulted in an unfair rating, then an appeal can be made in writing either through the comments link on the ratemyplace web site or in writing to the appropriate Local Authority within 2 weeks of the inspection. This would then trigger a paper review of the inspection by a Senior Officer to confirm the accuracy of the risk rating. This will not necessarily result in a change of score.

Comments

Food business operators can comment to their Local Authority through a link on the ratemyplace web site. They may wish to record any actions or improvements they have made since the award of the star rating. This may or may not be displayed on the web site.

Trading Standards Compliance

On the ratemyplace site you may see a 'green tick' by the words Trading Standards Compliance. Businesses are offered a Trading Standards Compliance Certificate when they are found to be complying with relevant Trading Standards law during an inspection. During an inspection checks are made to ensure that menu descriptions of food are not misleading, prices are appropriately displayed and that equipment used for serving beer wine and spirits is accurate, along with other checks for legal compliance.

Accessibility

This scheme is accessible through the ratemyplace web site or Links from individual Council's websites. Some businesses may wish to display a ratemyplace Star Rating Certificate although there is no formal requirement to do so. This Certificate however, remains the property of the issuing Council.

The Ratemyplace will include a facility for business owners to send a photograph of the business (inside or out) and/or website address link which will be added to the site once verified as a true representation. The image needs to be sent to the appropriate Local Authority in JPEG format within 2 weeks from the date of the inspection to be included on the website.

Policy Document

The Future of ratemyplace

At present the Food Standards Agency is undertaking research into the viability of a national food hygiene premises rating scheme. Depending on the outcome of this research this scheme may alter in the future and therefore premises star ratings may change if the scoring system is different from above. Businesses and the public will be informed if there are changes to the scheme.

Other Food Safety Related Schemes in Staffordshire

Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Moorlands operate similar food hygiene rating schemes with information on food premises. Links to their sites are available on the Ratemyplace website.

Disclaimer

The score and star rating published through the ratemyplace scheme, represents the circumstances found by an officer of the inspecting local authority on the date of that inspection. This 'moment in time' score may not represent the overall, long-term food hygiene standards of the business or its food quality.