

Kathryn

If possible can we please submit the following views of our members?

Implementation and Enforcement – Food Hygiene Rating System

- a. Lack of distinction between different types of business, for example a restaurant and a shop selling pre-packed, is an issue for the industry who would like to see some sort of distinction added, such as colour-coding – for example a 5 rating can be afforded to a fine dining restaurant, a convenience store or a public sector school canteen – all stickers look the same and therefore don't help to differentiate between the various business types
- b. Some businesses have been advised they can never achieve the top rating due to limitations of the building they occupy, despite caring about this issue and wanting to be seen as a top business in this area. FSA stated that achievement of a 5 should be possible for all businesses as it simply requires compliance with legal requirement and involves no gold-plating. Concerns therefore with the implementation and advice being carried out through the Environmental Health Service isn't consistent.
- c. The industry would like pilot schemes for any future initiatives to be set up in order to assess the full cost to business involved
- d. A 'grace' period after assessment rather than an appeal system would allow businesses to rectify any issues identified during inspection would be helpful to business and deliver the same result
- e. Self-assessment and online recording of some information in advance would be useful and allow for more effective use of inspection time, business time and wider regulator time.
- f. Businesses have experienced a lack of consistency between council boundaries and individual officers from the same council area.
- g. Businesses are reluctant to use the appeals process for fear of being penalised at a later date and are generally unaware that regulators are supposed to take a graduated approach to enforcement in order to work with and advise businesses to help them become compliant – Businesses need to be assured that an appeals system is there to support them and not to go against them, when they have a legitimate complaint or issue.
- h. Inspection of premises should avoid service times unless it is actually to inspect the actual operation and not paperwork.
- i. The establishment of a primary authority scheme in NI where trade bodies could select a primary authority for its members who be a significant move in standardising requirements and enforcement.

Regards

Colin

Colin Neill
Chief Executive

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