

PROPOSED SCORES ON THE DOORS SCHEME

Results of

Focus Group Meeting on Thursday 1st May 2008

Key Points to Emerge from Discussions

- Varying views on home caterers. Some persons thought that home caterers should have to be part of the scheme, others thought they should not. The home caterer who was present believed that they should be included in the scheme.
- Overall consensus is that the department should go for the five award scheme
- Couple of businesses thought that the team should send businesses a scoring matrix, at a certain time before programmed inspection. This identifies areas where the inspector will focus on during the inspection. (CSCI have started doing this)
- Great deal of debate over the potential for a rescore if contraventions solved within a short period of time. Some attendees thought that this would be a good idea, others thought that the score should be kept until the next programmed inspection. This would then hopefully be a useful tool in improving standards.
- Businesses in general did not like the idea of EHOs scoring on the premises, thought it was better for the officer to leave premises and consider scoring. Thought it was better for officer to go away and look at history of compliance etc
- Some discussion over the use of percentages on the three compliance scores, such as being used increasingly in holiday brochures etc, although this would make individual officer scoring even more vital
- Some businesses thought that a three star rating limits the scope for businesses to improve - "only one way to go."
- Businesses seem to think that if there is a change of ownership, then the scores on the doors rating should be
- The hotel AA rating system was discussed. If a number of complaints are received regarding a premises then these will be investigated. Otherwise hotels tend to be inspected annually.
- All attendees seemed to think that food businesses should be written to advising of the areas where the officer will be expecting
- Representative from the pub trade advised that there were some concerns with the introduction to the scheme, although general consensus was that it is the way forward
- Organiser of the farmers market advised that a leaflet would be a useful way of communicating with a large number of businesses and public
- General consensus was that email, leaflets, food safety bulletin were all good methods of communication. Also businesses thought that a source of information such as a leaflet which they could give to consumers would be useful
- General consensus that all food businesses should be included in the scheme

- If a business received a score which they were disappointed with then as long as the inspection process was transparent then majority of businesses would not have cause to complain
- Varying views on rescore on a revisit
- One particular representative thought that self inspection (similar to what CSCI have started) should be introduced for businesses with a good record of compliance – earned autonomy
- Businesses in general thought charging for re inspection was acceptable, but if there had been improvements, there should be a limit of a 1 star category improvement at any one time
- Also some interest in consultation visits before inspection (possibility of charging)

Main Findings From Question Sheet at the End of Session

What are your main thoughts on scores on the doors? (Do you believe it's a good scheme? Do you have any concerns?)

- Star rating scheme is confusing, percentages could be used
- Scheme should be made into a legal requirement
- All food businesses should be included in the scheme
- Hopefully get rid of some of the "cowboys!"
- Favour the five star scheme
- Businesses should be given 28 days to rectify problems during inspection

How should the Council promote the scheme to businesses?

- Write to food businesses advising of the scheme, with outline and three area of compliance which the score will be based on. Also include current star rating
- Simple leaflet to be distributed
- More focus groups, presentations, email
- Media news coverage, local newspapers

Your next unannounced inspection may well determine your star rating when the scheme goes live next year. How do you feel about that?

- Would like another inspection before the rating scheme goes live
- Changes should be able to be made if within 14 days
- Criteria for inspection should be given
- Would like to know where we stand now, so improvements can be made

Do you think the rating should be revised if a business improves before the next main inspection?

- Yes, fee could be charged
- Businesses should not be able to improve star rating by rescoreing
- No, should have high standards at all times

Would you display your star rating at the entrance to your premises?

- Dependant on what others do
- If it was four/five star then I would
- Yes, if it wasn't my house
- Yes, we will be able to use it on our website

Would you still display if your star rating was not as good as you had hoped?

- Not sure
- Mixture of yes/no
- Yes, as it could be used to show customers that we are improving

How do you think the Council should deal with businesses that don't display their star rating?

- It is not a legal requirement, no further action
- Should become a legal requirement
- Media advertising of the scheme, which will allow the public to vote with their feet
- Results will be on website
- Ask why, and make it compulsory if part of the scheme