

Our Ref: Food/Star Ratings

Community & Environment
North Wiltshire District Council
Monkton Park
Chippenham
Wiltshire SN15 1ER
DX 34208 CHIPPENHAM

February 2007

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Publication of Food Premises Hazard Ratings and Star Rating System

In line with Government Directives and Guidelines, the Council intends to publish the food hazard ratings of all food premises routinely inspected from April 2007 on its website – www.northwilts.gov.uk.

The hazard rating comprises of an aggregate score given for eight parameters set in a Government framework agreement and, currently, such ratings are recorded on both manual and electronic premises files. These parameters cover types of food handling; potential hazard; methods of processing; consumers at risk; compliance with handling practices and procedures; compliance with structural and equipment requirements and confidence in management with an option to additionally weight the rating for vulnerable groups and significance of risk. Hazard rating is based upon findings at the time of inspection and is normally discussed by the inspecting officer with a representative of the food business at the time.

For all catering businesses the Council will additionally publish a star rating system, based on the compliance with handling practices and procedures, compliance with structural and equipment requirements and confidence in management parameters. This star rating system will have a range of 0 stars (poor) to 5 stars (excellent) as a means of demonstrating compliance with food safety and hygiene standards found in catering premises in North Wiltshire.

Normally a premise would not be reassessed until due for its next routine food hygiene inspection, determined by the hazard rating score. However, provision for re-rating will exist in circumstances where there has been a significant material change in the business, for example, change of ownership or reopening following major refurbishment works. There will also be an appeals procedure for those businesses that feel they have been incorrectly rated.

Publication of the above information concerning food businesses in North Wiltshire is provided for by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

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Approximately 200 other Local Authorities have already introduced similar schemes and have reported significant improvements in food safety and hygiene standards. In some of these schemes there is provision for the award or issue of certificates, that are displayed voluntarily on the premises (Scores on the Doors Schemes). At this stage, North Wiltshire District Council does not intend introducing certificates until such times that a single, nationally recognised scheme is in place.

If you require any further information on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact this department on 01249 706555.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Doran', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mike Doran
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