

Consultation Information

Title: Food hygiene rating schemes consultation to gather opinions from consumers and food businesses in Ireland

Start date of consultation: 26th May 2025

Closing date: 23rd June 2025

Consultation details:

What Are food hygiene rating schemes?

Food hygiene rating schemes provide easily accessible information about the cleanliness and food safety standards of consumer facing food establishments such as restaurants, cafés, takeaways, pubs, hotels and supermarkets. The ratings are based on official food safety inspections.

Many countries around the world have food hygiene rating schemes in place for example: UK (Northern Ireland, England, Wales and Scotland), Denmark, France, China and many states in the USA. Food hygiene rating schemes vary in how they are implemented, the types of food businesses covered, the type of rating, their design and how the rating is communicated to the public.



Figure 1. **Food hygiene rating scheme examples across the globe.** a) Smiley faces from France, b) Food hygiene rating scheme from Food Standards Agency in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, c) Smiley faces in China, d) Letter grading in New York City.

How do food hygiene rating schemes work?

A food hygiene rating scheme is a system that rates food businesses based on how well they comply with food safety and hygiene legislation. It is given following an official inspection carried out by food safety inspectors, who check cleanliness, food handling, and storage practices. The rating is then made public, often displayed as a number, letter, or symbol on the food business's front window and/or website. This helps consumers make informed choices about where they eat and purchase food from, while also encouraging food businesses to maintain high food safety standards.

Why is the FSAI carrying out a consultation?

Ireland does not currently have a food hygiene rating scheme in place. The FSAI's Strategic Plan 2025-2029 includes a strategic priority to evaluate the evidence relating to hygiene rating schemes for food businesses.

Information gathered from the consultation will inform a comprehensive evaluation report, expected to be finalised in early 2026. The findings will support the FSAI in making an evidence-based recommendation to the Department of Health, which holds responsibility for national food safety policy in this area.

Who is the consultation aimed at?

This consultation is aimed at consumers and food businesses in Ireland. This consultation is being carried out on behalf of the [Food Safety Consultative Council](#) of the FSAI which represents stakeholders including consumers and food businesses. The Food Safety Consultative Council of the FSAI would like to gather views from consumers and food businesses in Ireland on a national food hygiene rating scheme. Consumers' and food business's feedback will be very important to inform how such a system could impact consumers, food businesses, and food safety standards in Ireland.

Submissions to the consultation

Submissions are to be made through our [online questionnaire](#).

Feedback:

A report on the responses received will be prepared.

Next step:

Consumers and Food businesses have the option to submit their interest to participate to the next stage of the consultation (discussion groups or interviews) by adding their email address a separate link at the end of the consultation. Submitting interest does not commit consumer or food businesses to taking part, but it will add their email to a mailing list for future consultations in relation to food hygiene rating schemes. As the email address is requested on a separate link, responses provided by consumers and food businesses will remain anonymous and will not be associated with their name, business, or email.

Data protection

Any personal data submitted as part of the consultation process will be treated in line with the requirements of current data protection legislation. This includes the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and related legislation.

Freedom of Information

The FSAI is a FOI Body under the Freedom of Information Act 2014. Requests can therefore be made for submissions to consultative processes. Personal data contained in submissions, however, will not be made publicly available.