



Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Satisfaction Survey 2016

Background:

The National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) was introduced by the Somerset local authorities in December 2010. The scheme provides customers with at-a-glance information about hygiene standards in food businesses. Businesses in South Somerset are rated by food hygiene inspectors, and this helps customers make informed choices about where they buy and eat food.

There are currently 2015 registered food premises in South Somerset an increase of 353 businesses since the scheme was introduced. Of these 1603 come under the scheme and include restaurants, takeaways, cafes, sandwich shops, pubs, hotels, supermarkets and other retail food outlets. The remaining 412 premises are either excluded or exempt from the scheme as they do not sell direct to the consumer, (i.e. producers and manufacturers), or they are extremely low risk (i.e. a petrol station selling a few bars of chocolate or a chemist).

Once a business has been inspected by an officer of South Somerset District Council, they are given a rating for the standards of hygiene found at the time and issued with a rating sticker, which they are encouraged to display. Inspecting officers take into account:

- How hygienically the food is handled - safe food preparation, cooking, re-heating, cooling and storage.
- The condition of the structure of the premises - cleanliness, repair, layout, lighting, ventilation and other facilities.
- How food safety is managed and documented - using systems such as 'Safer Food Better Business' or equivalent.

Ratings are allocated as follows:

5 means that conditions are **very good**

4 means that conditions are **good**

3 means that conditions are **generally satisfactory**

2 means that **improvement is necessary**

1 means that **major improvement is necessary**

0 means that **urgent improvement is necessary**

The Survey:

In May 2011, six months after the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme was introduced in South Somerset the Food Safety team contacted a random sample of 250 businesses and asked them to complete a paper questionnaire on the implementation of the scheme and how they felt it had affected their business. This exercise was repeated in February 2013, December 2014 and more recently in December 2016 so a comparison could be made to determine if the scheme has been embraced by food business operators and achieved the desired effect of improved hygiene standards. The questionnaire also included a number of equality and diversity questions (Appendix A).

The 2014 and 2016 surveys were created using online survey software. Of the 250 businesses surveyed in 2016 159 food business operators, where an email address is recorded, were asked to complete the questionnaire online. The remaining 91 questionnaires were sent out by post and included a stamped addressed envelope to encourage completion. Only 16% (27) of the online questionnaires were completed compared to 40% (37) of those sent in the post, this is comparable with the return rate of the 2014 survey. The overall return rate was 26% and of those who completed the questionnaire 94% completed the optional equality and diversity section.

Appendix B details any comments made including suggestions on how we can improve our service to businesses.

Of the 1603 premises in the scheme ratings are allocated as detailed in table 1. Businesses achieving ratings of 0 (urgent improvement necessary) through to 4 (good) have been steadily reducing year on year since the scheme was introduced with the number of business achieving the highest rating of a 5 (very good) continuing to go up, which indicates that food business hygiene standards are improving.

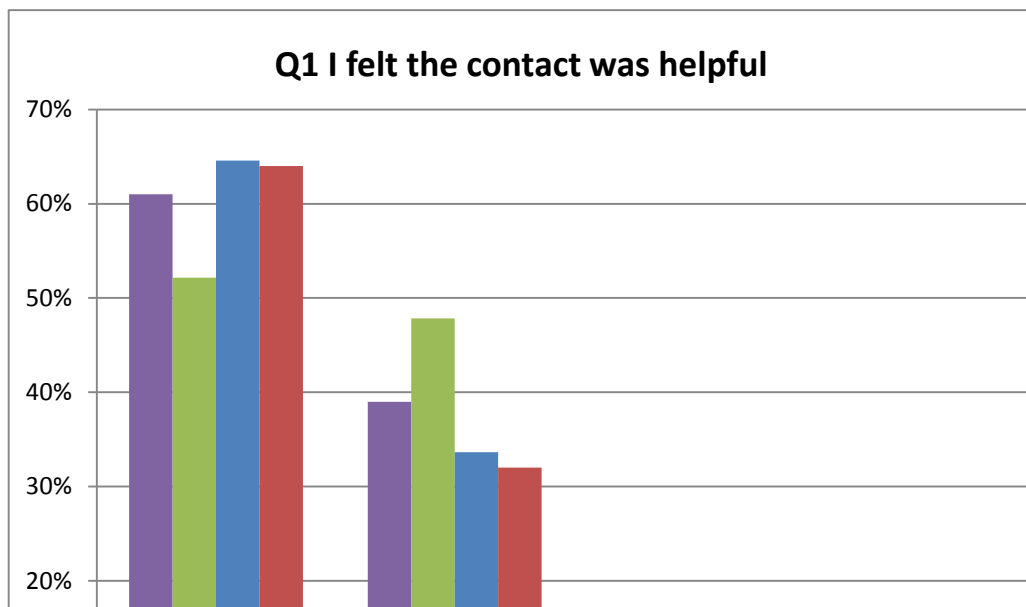
Rating		Year	Total	Percentage
0	Urgent Improvement Necessary	2016	0	0%
		2014	1	1%
		2013	1	1%
		2011	1	1%
1	Major Improvement Necessary	2016	14	1%
		2014	8	1%
		2013	17	2%
		2011	38	3%
2	Improvement Necessary	2016	20	1%
		2014	25	1%
		2013	40	3%
		2011	28	2%
3	Generally Satisfactory	2016	96	6%
		2014	142	9%
		2013	151	9%
		2011	229	16%
4	Good	2016	258	16%
		2014	345	21%
		2013	375	23%
		2011	427	31%
5	Very Good	2016	1184	74%
		2014	1055	64%
		2013	955	59%
		2011	630	45%
	Awaiting Inspection	2016	31	2%
		2014	59	3%
		2013	53	3%
		2011	34	2%

Table 1

Findings:

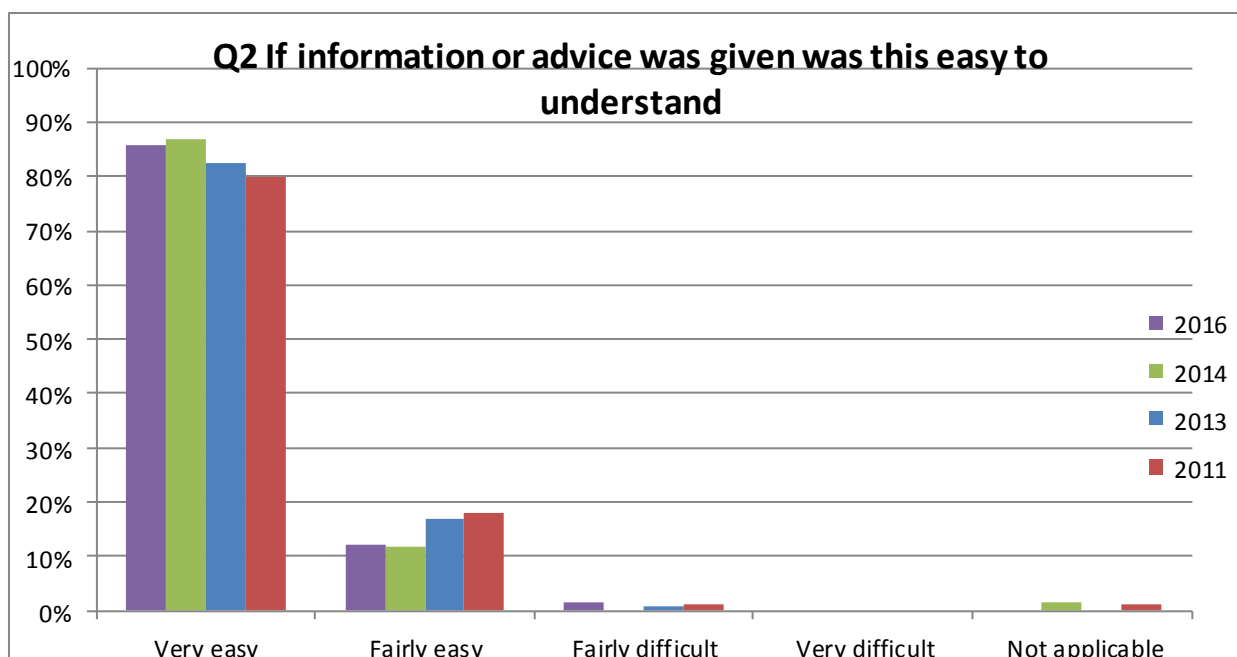
Question 1 - I felt the contact was helpful

	2011		2013		2014		2016	
Strongly agree	68	64%	73	64%	36	52%	39	61%
Agree	34	32%	38	34%	33	48%	25	39%
Disagree	4	3%	2	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Not applicable	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	107	100%	113	100%	69	100%	64	100%



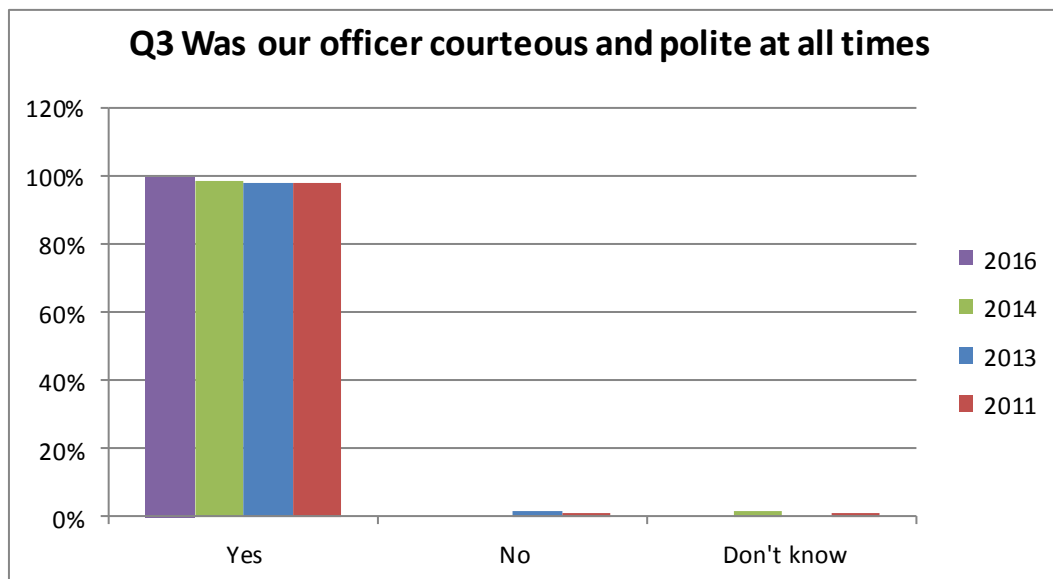
Question 2 - If information or advice was given was this easy to understand

	2011		2013		2014		2016	
Very easy	86	80%	93	82%	60	87%	55	86%
Fairly easy	19	18%	19	17%	8	12%	8	12%
Fairly difficult	1	1%	1	1%	0	0%	1	2%
Very difficult	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Not applicable	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%
Total	107	100%	113	100%	69	100%	64	100%



Question 3 - Was our officer courteous and polite at all times

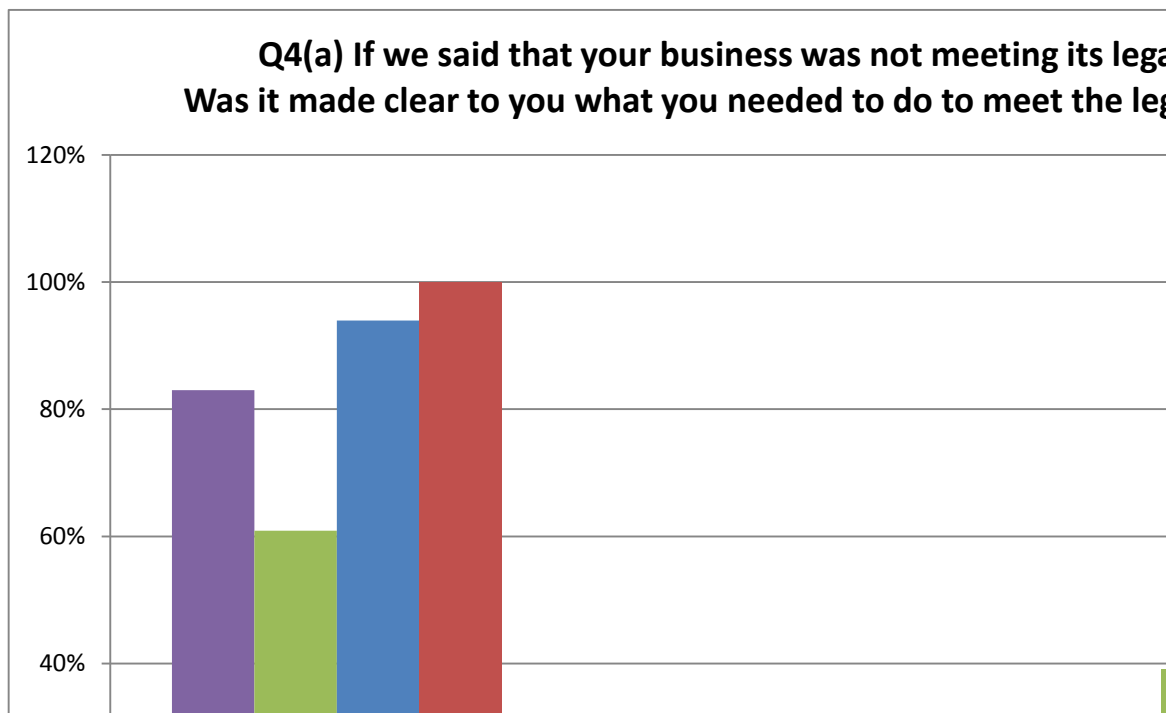
	2011		2013		2014		2016	
Yes	100	98%	111	98%	68	99%	64	100%
No	1	1%	2	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Don't know	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%
Total	102	100%	113	100%	69	100%	64	100%



Question 4 - If we said that your business was not meeting its legal obligations

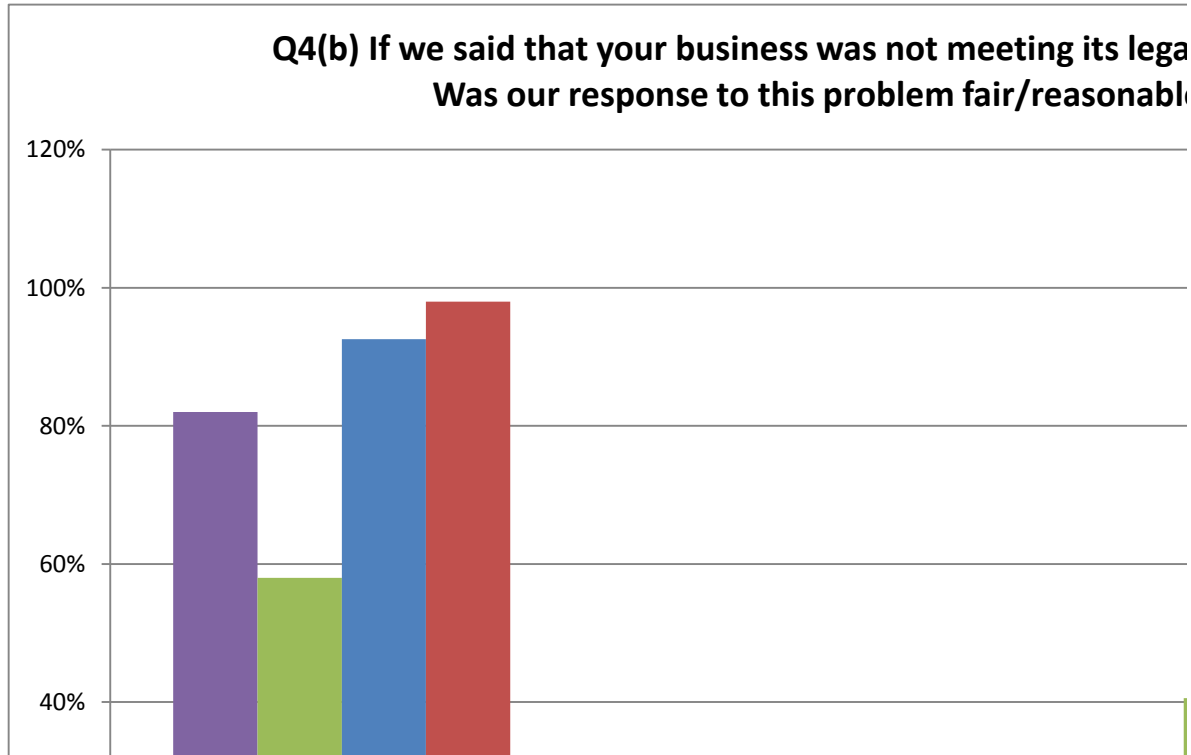
a) Was it made clear to you what you needed to do to meet the legal requirements?

	2011		2013		2014		2016	
Yes	84	100%	62	94%	42	61%	34	83%
No	0	0%	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%
Don't know	0	0%	2	3%	27	39%	5	12%
Total	84	100%	66	100%	69	100%	41	100%



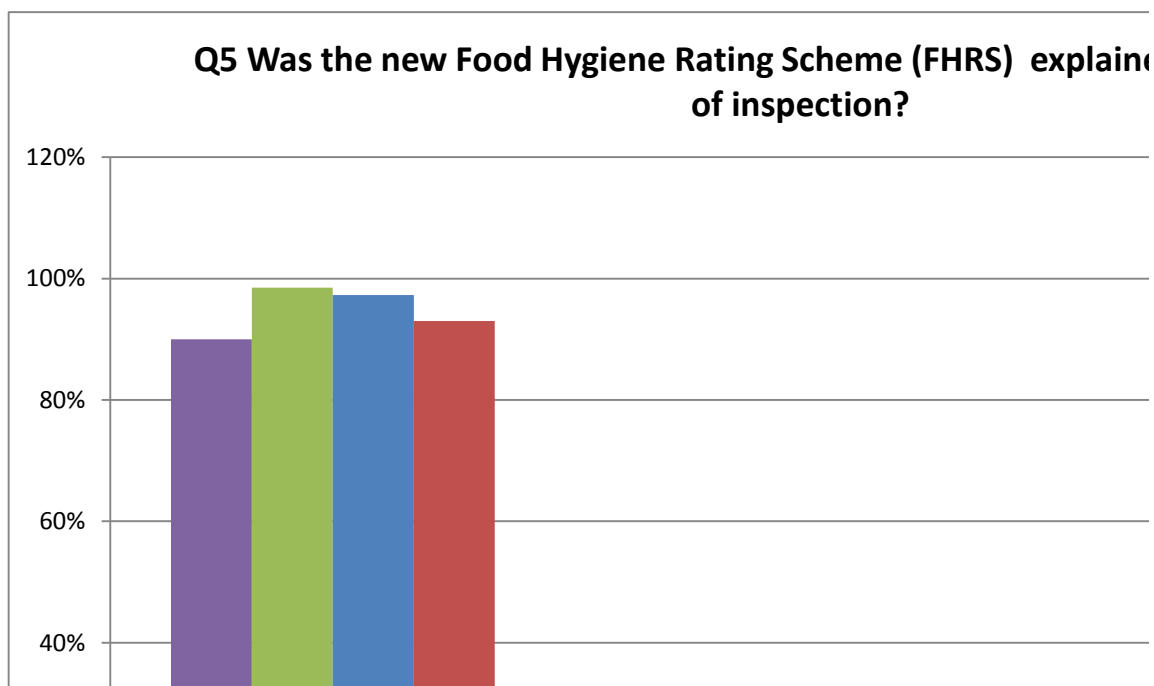
b) Was our response to this problem fair/reasonable

	2011		2013		2014		2016	
Yes	83	98%	62	93%	40	58%	32	82%
No	2	2%	2	3%	1	1%	1	3%
Don't know	0	0%	3	4%	28	41%	6	15%
Total	85	100%	67	100%	69	100%	39	100%



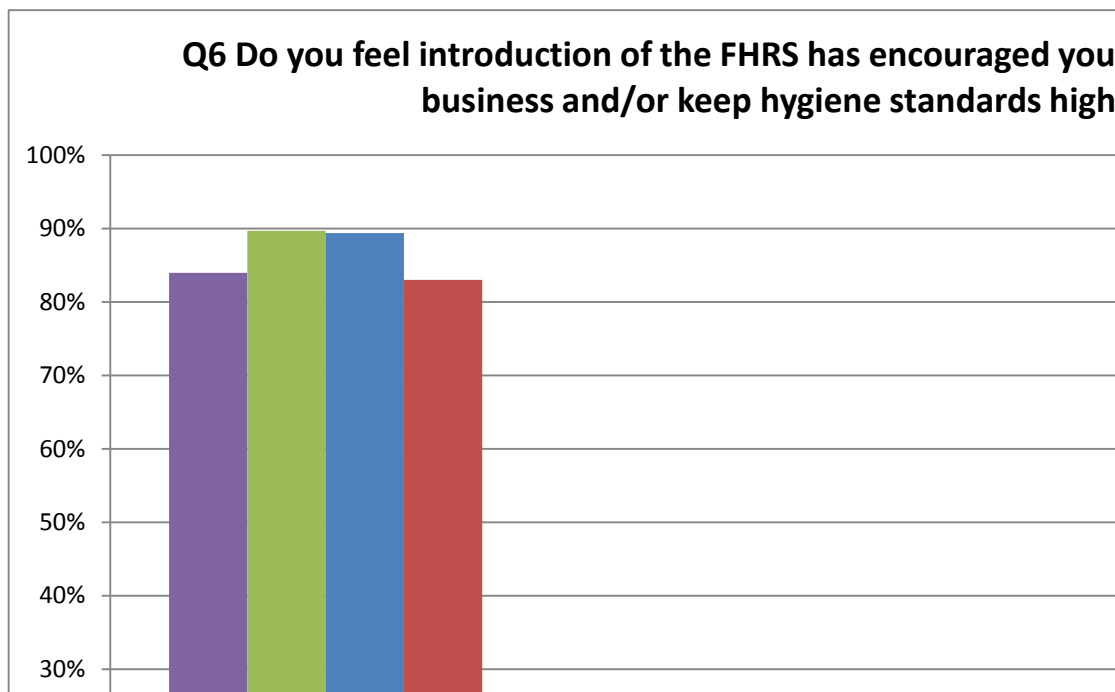
Question 5 - Was the FHRs explained to you at time of inspection?

	2011		2013		2014		2016	
Yes	96	93%	108	97%	67	99%	56	90%
No	7	7%	2	2%	0	0%	1	2%
N/A	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%	5	8%
Total	103	100%	111	100%	68	100%	62	100%



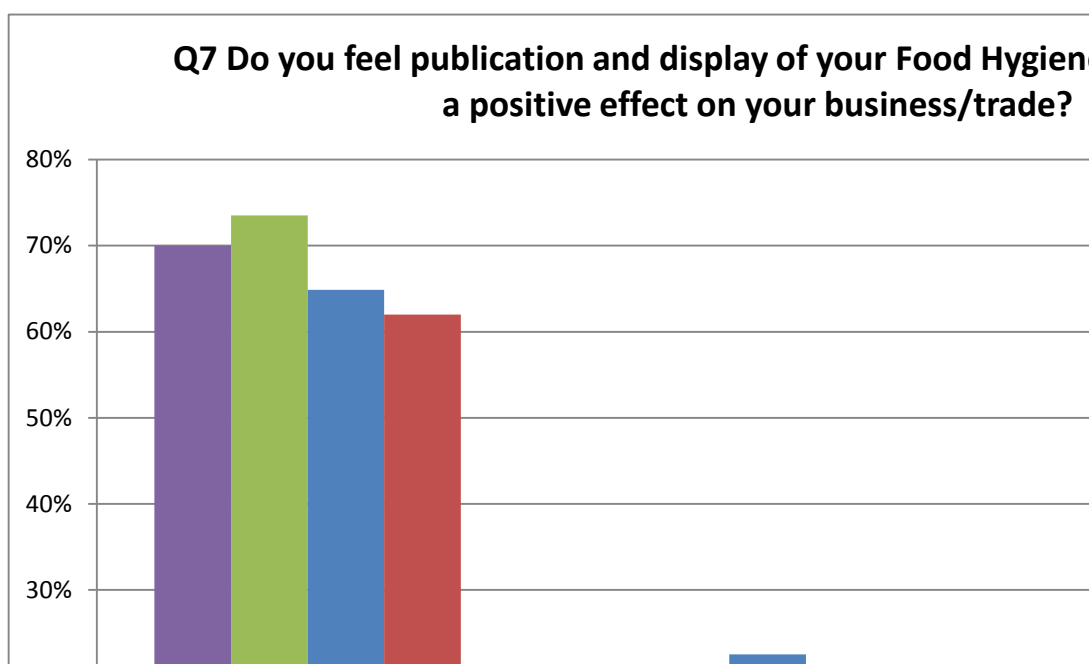
Question 6 - Do you feel introduction of the FHRS has encouraged you to improve your business and/or keep hygiene standards high?

	2011		2013		2014		2016	
Yes	86	83%	101	89%	61	90%	54	84%
No	11	10%	9	8%	5	7%	5	8%
N/A	7	7%	3	3%	2	3%	5	8%
Total	104	100%	113	100%	68	100%	64	100%



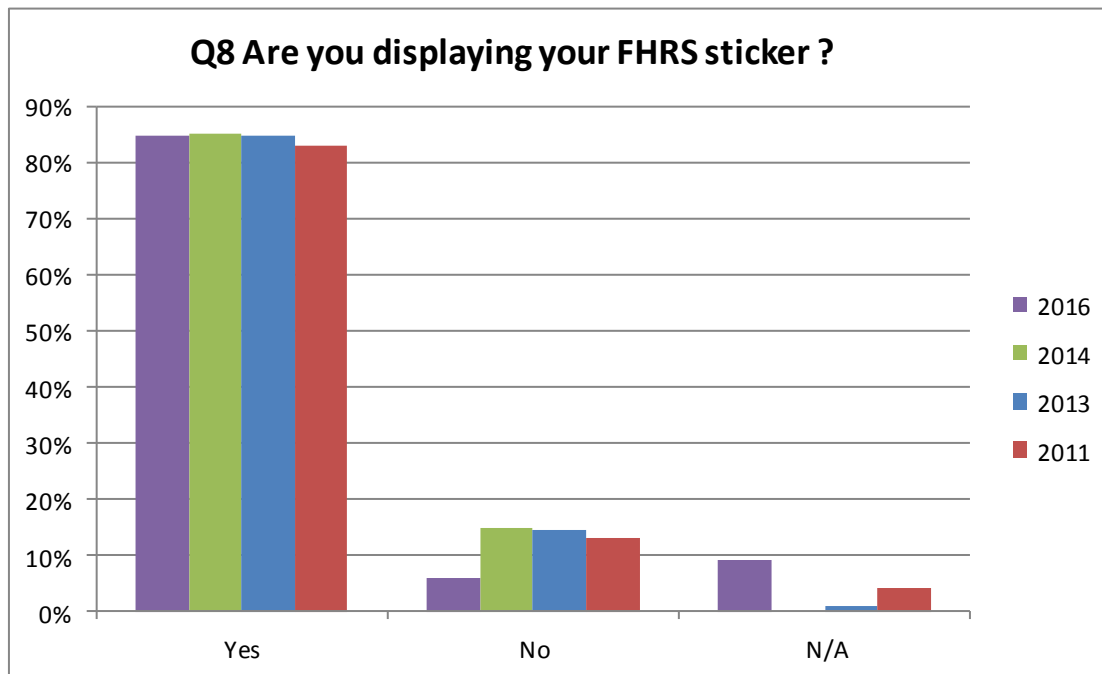
Question 7 - Do you feel publication and display of your Food Hygiene Rating has had a positive effect on your business/trade?

	2011		2013		2014		2016	
Yes	63	62%	72	64%	50	74%	44	70%
No	19	19%	25	23%	5	7%	9	14%
N/A	19	19%	14	13%	13	19%	10	16%
Total	101	100%	111	100%	68	100%	63	100%



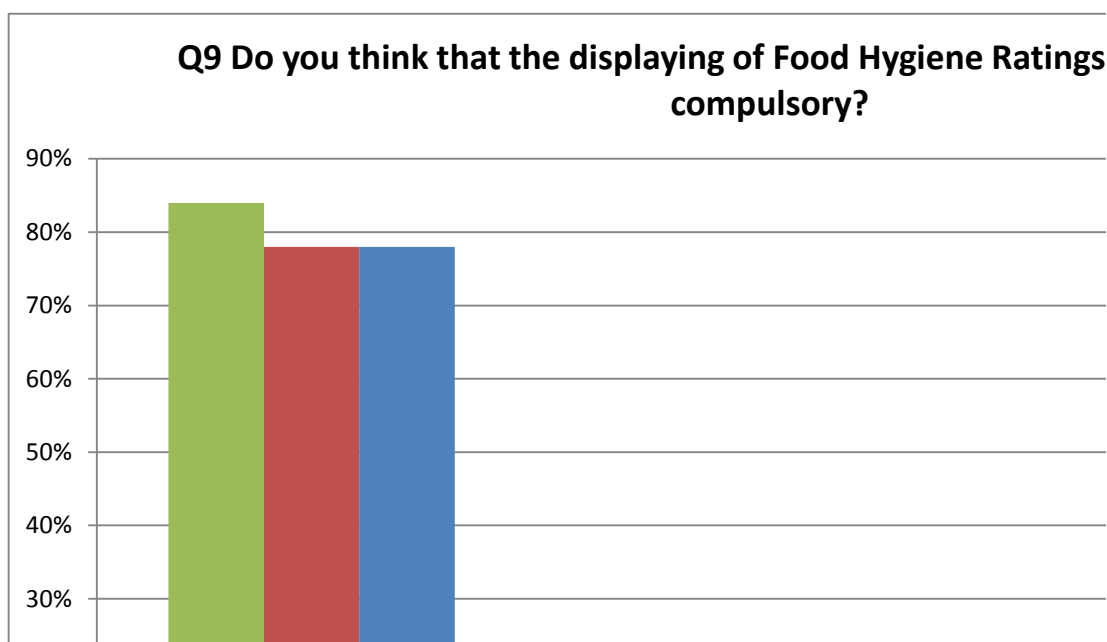
Question 8 - Are you displaying your FHRs sticker?

	2011		2013		2014		2016	
Yes	86	83%	94	85%	58	85%	54	85%
No	14	13%	16	14%	10	15%	4	6%
N/A	4	4%	1	1%	0	0%	6	9%
Total	104	100%	111	100%	68	100%	64	100%



Q9 Do you think that the displaying of Food Hygiene Ratings should be made compulsory?

	2013		2014		2016	
Yes	88	78%	53	78%	54	84%
No	21	19%	13	19%	7	11%
N/A	3	3%	2	3%	3	5%
Total	112	100%	68	100%	64	100%



The overall return rate of questionnaires from businesses was 26%, which was on par with 2014, but disappointing when compared with 45% in 2013. The return of paper questionnaires was double those completed online. With this in mind for the first time in the survey's history the preferred method of communication, as asked in question 19 of the Equality and Diversity section, is almost 50/50 with 51% preferring to be contacted by post, closely followed by email at 45%, therefore a higher return rate for those completing the survey online would have been expected.

There was very little difference in the results for the questions listed below over the three surveys. The results were either the same or a small percentage either way and all responses were very positive.

Q1. I felt the contact was helpful

Q2. If information or advice was given was this easy to understand?

Q3. Was our officer courteous and polite at all times?

Q7. Do you feel publication and display of your Food Hygiene Rating has had a positive effect on your business/trade?

Q8. Are you displaying your FHRS sticker?

Question 4 is in two parts and addresses the legal obligations of the food business operator. The 2016 survey revealed that 83% of businesses, compared with 61% in 2014 did agree that it was made clear what they needed to do to meet the legal requirements and 82% compared with 58% in 2014 thought our response to where legal obligations were not being met was fair and reasonable. This is a great improvement on the 2014 survey, but not as good as 2011 and 2013 where the response to these questions had been for part a) 100% and 94% and part b) 98% and 93% respectively. More people completing the 2014 and 2016 surveys indicated a response of 'don't know' in respect of this question.

With regard to question 5, 'was the FHRS explained to you at time of inspection'? 90% compared with 99% in 2014 agreed, however up considerably on previous years 8% said that this was question was not applicable to them. This response reflects changes to the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme where some businesses such as child minders and those risk rated 'E' (low risk) are no longer included.

The results year on year have been steady for question 6 with food business operators agreeing that the introduction of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme has encouraged them to improve hygiene standards, this view can be verified by the increase in businesses achieving a hygiene rating of 5, very good.

Question 9 has seen a small percentage increase in businesses who do think that the displaying of Food Hygiene Ratings should be made compulsory, this is encouraging as Wales have already introduced the requirement for businesses to clearly display their food hygiene rating and there is a campaign to extend this to rest of the United Kingdom.

In response to the equality and diversity questions the majority of respondents were of White British ethnicity as were their staff. 47% of staff employed by the businesses were female compared with 13% of males, 33% responded that there was no clear gender majority. These results reflect that reported in previous years.

Of the businesses who responded 12% are registered as social enterprise businesses and 24% were from the voluntary and charity sector. The majority of businesses have been operating for more than 5 years with the owners falling across all age brackets, but mainly within the mid bracket ranges of 36 – 65 years old.

Conclusion:

An area for concern in the 2014 survey was the results for question 4 and addressing the legal issues with businesses, the response in 2016 indicates an improvement, however more work can still be done in this area. As part of the Better Business for All project, and the Regulators Code we are reviewing our communication with businesses and our enforcement policy has recently been updated which should all assist in clarifying with businesses what is expected of them legally.

We need to continue to encourage businesses to provide us with email addresses and use this form of communication where possible as not only is it cost effective, but is becoming increasingly more the preferred method for communicating. Also as the Council progresses through the 'Transformation' process our interaction with business customers will be increasingly through electronic and digital means. However, we also need to respect the views of those businesses we work with where their preference is to receive correspondence by post.

Results show, where we have used a combination of online and paper questionnaires, that the traditional postal survey still achieves a much better response rate.

It can be concluded that overall the relationship between Food Safety Officers and Food Business Operators continues to be good and that six years since its introduction businesses are embracing the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. This is reflected by the marked increase in businesses achieving the highest hygiene rating of 5, very good, and that the majority of the businesses are supportive of legislative changes to make the display of the hygiene rating mandatory.

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Appendix A Equality and Diversity Findings

Q11. Which of the following would best describe the majority ownership of the business?

	2011	%	2013	%	2014	%	2016	%
White majority	73	78%	86	85%	54	90%	50	83%
Black/Black British majority	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
European migrant majority	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Mixed majority	6	6%	5	5%	1	2%	2	3%
Asian/Asian British majority	6	6%	4	4%	1	2%	0	0%
Chinese majority	5	5%	1	1%	1	2%	1	2%
Prefer not to say	0	0%	3	3%	3	5%	6	10%
Other majority	2	2%	2	2%	0	0%		
Total	93	100%	101	100%	60	100%	60	100%

Q12. Would the majority ownership of the business be male or female, or is there no clear majority?

	2011	%	2013	%	2014	%	2016	%
No clear majority	43	46%	49	49%	28	47%	26	44%
Female majority	25	27%	26	26%	21	36%	15	25%
Male majority	21	23%	18	18%	8	14%	14	24%
Prefer not to say	4	4%	7	7%	2	3%	4	7%
Total	93	100%	100	100%	59	100%	59	100%

Q13. Which of the following would best describe the majority of staff working for the business?

	2011	%	2013	%	2014	%	2016	%
White majority	67	79%	85	83%	48	84%	47	79%
Black/Black British majority	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
European migrant majority	2	2%	0	0%	1	2%	1	2%
Mixed majority	6	7%	5	5%	3	5%	4	7%
Asian/Asian British majority	5	6%	4	4%	1	2%	0	0%
Chinese majority	4	5%	1	1%	0	0%	1	2%
Prefer not to say	1	1%	5	5%	4	7%	6	10%
Other majority	0	0%	2	2%	0	0%		
<i>Details of other</i>	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%		
Total	85	100%	102	100%	57	100%	59	100%

Q14. Would the majority of staff working for the business be male or female, or is there no clear majority?

	2011	%	2013	%	2014	%	2016	%
No clear majority	29	34%	38	38%	18	31%	20	33%
Female majority	43	50%	45	45%	33	57%	28	47%
Male majority	14	16%	12	12%	5	9%	8	13%
Prefer not to say	1	1%	4	4%	2	3%	4	7%
Total	86	101%	99	100%	58	100%	60	100%

Q15. Are you a social enterprise business?

	2011	%	2013	%	2014	%	2016	%
Yes	7	8%	9	9%	4	7%	7	12%
No	86	93%	93	91%	56	93%	52	88%
Total	92	101%	102	100%	60	100%	59	100%

Q16. Are you a community or voluntary sector business or registered charity?

	2011	%	2013	%	2014	%	2016	%
Yes	9	10%	12	12%	19	34%	14	24%
No	83	91%	86	88%	37	66%	45	76%
Total	91	101%	98	100%	56	100%	59	100%

Q17. How long has your business been operating?

	2011	%	2013	%	2014	%	2016	%
Less than 2 years	18	19%	22	21%	3	5%	7	12%
2-5 years	18	19%	11	10%	9	16%	10	16%
5-10 years	18	19%	14	13%	12	21%	16	26%
10-25 years	20	21%	25	24%	18	31%	12	20%
25 years plus	21	22%	33	31%	16	28%	16	26%
Total	95	100%	105	100%	58	100%	61	100%

Q18. Within what age bracket would the majority ownership fall?

	2011	%	2013	%	2014	%	2016	%
Less than 25	8	7%	3	3%	1	2%	4	9%
25-35	17	15%	9	8%	1	2%	7	10%
36-45	35	31%	28	26%	8	15%	14	20%
46-55	29	26%	25	23%	17	33%	18	26%
56-65	22	19%	30	28%	21	40%	17	25%
66 plus	8	7%	12	11%	4	8%	8	10%
Total	113	105%	107	100%	52	100%	68	100%

Q19. How would you prefer to receive communication?

	2011	%	2013	%	2014	%	2016	%
By post	84	89%	82	76%	39	62%	31	51%
By email	10	11%	22	20%	19	30%	27	45%
By telephone	0	0%	1	1%	1	2%	1	2%
In person	0	0%	2	2%	0	0%	1	2%
No preference	0	0%	1	1%	4	6%		
Total	94	100%	108	100%	63	100%	60	100%

Q20. Do you require information in an alternative language or format. If yes please give details below:

Yes Tamil

Appendix B – Comments 2016

Comments to Questions 4 a & b

If we said that your business was not meeting its legal obligations, was it made clear to you what you needed to do to meet the legal requirements

If we said that your business was not meeting its legal obligations, was our responsible to this problem fair/reasonable

I found it difficult to understand all the rules and regulations. There seem to be an unnecessary amount of paperwork involved
17 respondees stated this question was not applicable.

Comments to Question 8

Are you displaying your FHRs Sticker and Certificate? (If no please state why)

It was only a 4

But only to our members on Project day.

don't feel it is necessary

I cook at home in my own kitchen, so there is no one to see it

No window display

3 Food Fairs per year only, cannot display

Comments to Question 9

Do you think that the displaying of Food Hygiene Ratings should be made compulsory?

Not entirely sure it's a fair system.

Too much red tape

Comments to Question 10

How do you suggest we can improve our services to businesses

All Good :-)

No suggestions, inspections have always been very helpful in enforcing staff standards by having independent inspection.

All EHO officers have always been very helpful, informative and fair.

Kitchen check lists would probably encourage more staff involvement rather than having to complete written records.

Not to be so condescending, be respectful, advise on practical cost effective improvements, and or minimum standards expected to satisfy a requirement.

Very happy with service.

From my experience I was totally happy with the service you provided and the support you are providing from inspection for some issues that need rectifying.

we need to make the general public more aware so they understand

In my years of experience, I feel the whole process of the EHO inspection is robust and fair.

The only thing I think could be of help, would be a little more notice of inspections and for any new suggestions or restrictions to be forwarded to us in advance.

Ensure it is approached with a supportive attitude so pre conceived ideas about environmental health officials can be eliminated so all businesses feel the department is approachable to be helpful and not to be concerned about.

I'm not sure I was happy with my experience

Less regulation

All good

Already excellent

Possibly to ensure any new legislation is well advertised

More communication

None identified at present time

Don't know

You already do very good

Am happy with service and find Alison Kilpatrick very helpful and I am very willing to take her suggestions on board

I really do think the Hygiene rating should have to be displayed by law

Keep on your toes

Not sure - the experience was extremely, positive, professional & helpful on all occasions.