

WRS BOARD
21st June 2018

Food Hygiene “Triple Five Scheme”

Recommendation

That members note the report

Introduction

For many businesses WRS is still perceived as primarily a regulator, even though we have long adopted the principle of supporting businesses to thrive. Whilst we do not precisely know what the drivers are that help make for successful sustainable compliance, the figures we often quote to members are a success story. At the end of 2017-18 we had only 68 businesses rated at Level L0-L2 on the Food Hygiene Rating System (FHRS) indicating that they were not broadly compliant with food safety requirements from a FHRS database of some 4,700 premises.

Food safety is a high profile issue with much TV and newspaper coverage and despite such a high level of compliance, we seem to spend a lot of time thinking about, and rightly taking action against, poor performers. This helps demonstrate to businesses that we are fair but firm in our dealings with the food business sector.

Report

With promoting economic prosperity as one of our key drivers, coupled with excellent county wide compliance, it is proposed that we should shift some of our focus to Rewarding and Promoting our Good Businesses. Through our Food Lead Officer we are planning to introduce an innovative “Triple 5 Award” (working title only) for food businesses that have scored three consecutive L5 (Level 5 is the highest attainable score in the FHRS) inspection scores. This would cover a period of approximately 5-6 years.

Current data shows that just 234 premises would qualify for the award as proposed. This represents approximately 5% of our database and covers all sectors from independent businesses to chains, so it really would single out those who are committed to maintaining their standards.

The Partner split of businesses which would currently be eligible is as follows:

Bromsgrove	21
Malvern	45
Redditch	27
Worcester	39
Wychavon	48
Wyre Forest	54

The Award would be withdrawn if the FHRS score for a business drops below L5 for a year.

It is hoped that this approach would both recognise the achievements of these businesses in maintaining standards but also incentivise others to follow suit. The more businesses can demonstrate their ability to maintain the highest of standards, the less the service needs to consider intervening in their activities. At L5, compliance levels are well above minimum and systems should be in place to ensure compliance continues without the need for intervention.

Brief Overview of How the Award may Operate

Data would be drawn from the Uniform inspection database at appropriate intervals; current thinking is that this should be every quarter.

Those achieving the triple L5 score would be invited to an appropriate venue with Member representative(s) of the Partner Authority to be presented with a certificate. We would offer the session out to the press to cover the event directly, backing this up with press releases and photographs of our own.

If they continue to maintain the L5 standard we would issue a Plus 1, Plus 2, Plus 3 updated certificate post officer inspection visit. This would be for up to 3 further visits which would cover some 10 years, at which point a separate acknowledgement may be required for such an achievement.

Introducing an Award this year fits in well with our revised food safety website which will go live this summer. First event(s) could be held from September onward with a soft launch/event in each District for those businesses on the database found to be meeting the requirements at the nominated date.

The proposed scheme does not incur high resource demand nor does it need major operational officer involvement. The award events may attract some limited refreshment costs.



It will need initial set up time but once the model is established it is anticipated that it should be easy to run as part of WRS “business as usual”.

Benefits to WRS and District Partners

1. Reassure public of high standards of food safety in Worcestershire;
2. Supports every business size and type in database in addition to the independent food and drink sector through WLEP funded Worcestershire Food and Drink project;
3. Increase reputation for both WRS and Districts that we support our food businesses;
4. Positive publicity through all forms of media;
5. Use as a further tool to increase compliance;
6. Possible source of income if businesses require advice how to reach and maintain L5.

Financial Implications

There are no significant financial implications, although a light touch, less intensive inspection regime would ensure that resources could be even better targeted at problem premises.

Sustainability

The scheme, once up and running, should be sustainable and readily maintained.

Contact Points

David Mellors
Community Environmental & Trading Standards Manager
Worcestershire Regulatory Services
01562-738060

Background Papers

None

