

<b>FOOD HYGIENE RATING ACT (N.I.) 2016</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> October 2016</b>
<b>TO: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE</b>	
<b>FOR INFORMATION</b>	

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)</b>	
<b>Strategic Theme</b>	Resilient, Healthy and Engaged Communities
<b>Outcome</b>	To advise members of the imminent introduction of the Food Hygiene Rating Act (N.I.) 2016 and associated Regulations.
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Head of Health & Built Environment
<b>Cost:</b> (If applicable)	Funded by Department for Communities

## **Background**

The Food Hygiene Rating Act (N.I.) and associated Regulations and Orders have recently passed the consideration stage by the Health Committee in Stormont. The Statutory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme will therefore come into force on 7 October 2016.

The new legislation will make it a legal requirement for food businesses who sell food directly to the public, and who receive a rating under the statutory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, to display their food hygiene rating sticker at their premises. The black and green food hygiene rating sticker will have to be displayed in a conspicuous place, at or near every entrance to a food premises where it can be readily seen and easily read by customers before they enter the establishment when it is open for business. Premises that fall within the scope of the scheme include restaurants, takeaways, mobile caterers, schools, hospitals, residential care homes, delicatessens and supermarkets.

Under the statutory scheme food business operators and their employees will also be required, if asked, to tell customers the rating the business has received. This will apply in a face to face situation as well as over the telephone. Online display of the food hygiene rating is also required where a business provides a means of ordering food online.

Previously the display of food hygiene ratings at food premises has been voluntary and the purpose of the new legislation is to improve consumer's access to information on the food hygiene rating of food businesses.

The new legislation will allow Council to charge a fee for re-rating revisits and to issue fixed penalties for the following offences relating to the display:

- failing to display a rating
- failing to display the rating in the location and manner specified
- displaying an invalid rating sticker

The Fees and Penalties Order to specify the fixed penalty and revisit fee amounts has yet to be considered by the NI Assembly but should be confirmed shortly.

The Food Standards Agency in partnership with local Councils in Northern Ireland have been working with businesses to ensure they are prepared for the introduction of the statutory scheme and have achieved as high a food hygiene rating as possible prior to the launch of the scheme.