

# Food Standards Agency

Understanding Northern Ireland consumer needs around Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) information in online retail environments

TNS BMRB Research

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# Executive Summary

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) commissioned [TNS BMRB](#) to conduct research with members of the public in Northern Ireland to explore interest in, expectations around and needs in relation to online display of Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) information on food ordering web sites. The research involved deliberative 'Citizens' Forum' workshops and a subsequent online forum. Key findings from this research are outlined below.

## ***How do participants engage with online shopping?***

- Participants used a wide range of online shopping platforms to purchase food but were primarily using supermarkets and takeaways.
- In terms of participant attitudes to online food shopping, while food poisoning was **not explicitly a "top of mind"** consideration, there was evidence that it was part of a wider decision-making process.
- When it comes to online food shopping, participants often felt they made **"trade-offs"** for convenience at the expense of quality.
- Interestingly, participants held **fewer concerns around supermarket hygiene standards** than takeaway hygiene standards when shopping online. This was often driven by "big brand loyalty" and an assumption that "someone else" in authority was monitoring these standards on their behalf.

## ***Awareness and usage of FHRS – speed and convenience trump quality and hygiene***

- Building on previous research in this area, **awareness of FHRS information was high yet usage was mixed**<sup>1</sup> in that even when participants expressed an interest or awareness in the scheme, they were often not using it as a decision enhancing tool.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/citizensforum-fhrs.pdf>

- This research found that participants were typically using **other measures** as a barometer for food hygiene, such as cleanliness of premises, “word of mouth” reviews and peer review websites (e.g. Just Eat, Trip Advisor etc).
- As with previous research in this area, while recognition of the FHRs system was high, knowledge and understanding of how the scheme operates in practice was a driver towards low usage. Participants expressed confusion around how the FSA conducted business inspections and had little understanding of what each of the ratings on the FHRs scale represented.
- While earlier research has suggested that “food hygiene” is not a “top of mind” consideration when buying food in an offline context, this was viewed as **even less of a priority** when online: trumped by the need for speed and convenience.
- Participants also experienced **different thought processes** when ordering food online in comparison with offline shopping. They were **often hungry or “in a hurry”** when ordering online food which had an impact on their ability to make **rational decisions**, which consequently led **to a lower ability to digest or process information and higher propensity to take risks**.
- Participants stated that they could also become **disengaged** with their food when ordering online, which had strong repercussions for food hygiene considerations. This was often caused by an **absence of visual cues** or **“physical indicators”** to draw assumptions when in an online environment. When faced with an absence of such barometers in the online space, instead of becoming more cautious or risk averse, participants commonly disengaged with food hygiene considerations.

### ***Where do participants want FHRs information positioned?***

- Participants need FHRs information **early in their online ordering journey** to allow them to make informed decisions, otherwise there is potential that they will ignore it.
- Participants widely held the view that once they had placed their food order in their online basket they had, from a psychological perspective, “purchased” it. Participants stated that they would be more likely to use FHRs appropriately if it was placed at the

beginning of their purchasing journey before “investing” or making a choice.

- **Clarity and visibility** were key to usage of information, and presenting FHRs information in an **accessible, easy to use format** will increase usage. **Lack of visibility** of FHRs information caused participants to **lose confidence** in the information and generally elicited negative responses. It is recommended that **consistency of approach** in the positioning of FHRs information will **create confidence in its legitimacy**.
- **Ease of access** is also vital for participants who were purchasing food through **online Apps** for supermarket shopping and takeaways across a **variety of devices**. It is recommended that FHRs online display facilitates ease of use on digital devices by placing FHRs information in a **consistent place which is easily accessible across a range of formats**.

#### ***How do participants want FHRs information to be displayed?***

- Due to competing priorities while ordering food online, participants overwhelmingly across both Waves of the research **preferred the Food Hygiene Scheme Rating itself to be displayed** (i.e. the ratings scale from 0-5).
- There were a minority of participants across both Waves of the research who would be **willing to click “offsite”** to check this, however these participants tended to be those who were **already engaged/interested** in food hygiene and had high awareness of the scheme.
- The **key drivers** behind their preference for the rating to be displayed centred on allowing and **empowering people** to make **“snap decisions”** on online platforms where convenience and speed were fundamental.
- When prompted, participants recognised that having the ratings displayed may **place a burden on businesses**. However, the majority of participants stressed that even when taking this into consideration, they would still find it challenging to take time to “click off” into another page.

- Participants largely viewed the concept of “clicking off” to another page as a **“barrier”** to their potential usage of FHRS information. Some were wary that they **would lose information**, others were concerned around **contracting viruses/hacking** and a few highlighted that they needed online shopping to be a convenient experience and that clicking on an additional link **created an added burden of responsibility**.

### ***Potential Areas of Confusion***

- There is potential for the rating to **“get lost”** with other **“click bait”** (i.e. spam advertisements/marketing) when placed on social media or business Apps. Participants relayed they were often **“bombarded” with advertisements** on food ordering websites and that they would only click on a link that they were sure was legitimate. It is suggested that **the inclusion of an FSA logo** may ease concerns and confusions.
- Many participants held **large degrees of trust with food aggregators** as reputable brands and often confused the **“customer reviews”** on popular aggregator sites as food hygiene information. Participants expressed that FHRS information would need to be presented in a **consistent, clear format** to avoid this.
- Participants’ **understanding of the FHRS was low** which inevitably led to a **lack of confidence** in the appropriate usage of this information to inform their choices.

### ***Opportunities to maximise uptake of FHRS information***

- Across the Wave 1 Forums, a number of participants highlighted that it would be useful to **“filter” restaurants on aggregator sites** by their FHRS rating, which could make FHRS information more attractive to use.
- Participants had **low awareness that their online supermarket food** could be fulfilled by branches other than their local outlet. Many participants expressed high trust in supermarket hygiene and yet when probed on these assumptions, were unable to provide reasons aside from brand loyalty. There was a definitive interest from participants in making better use of FHRS information in this area.

- Participants were generally wary of using social media apps to order food online and there is an opportunity for FSA to use FHRS information to be implemented in this context to fill this void of uncertainty currently evident with social media ordering.

### ***Recommendations***

- Participants were often “in a hurry” or hungry when ordering food online with low willingness to think about other considerations. There is an opportunity for FSA to raise understanding of the scheme outside of the “immediacy” associated with online ordering to maximise usage. These two elements are the key drivers for the subsequent preferences that participants were drawn to across both Waves.
- Participants stated that when food was placed in their online shopping basket they psychologically felt that they had already “purchased” the item. To facilitate usage, FHRS information needs to be provided as early as possible in the purchasing journey to influence usage.
- Participants need information in a recognisable, repeated format so that they can avoid having to search for this on a webpage or App. To maximise usage, FHRS information needs to be presented consistently and in a recognisable format to encourage behaviour change.
- Information needs to be immediately accessible to allow participants to make ‘snap decisions’ or they will ignore it. Due to the immediacy of online food ordering, participants preferred the rating to be displayed.
- Participants, who were particularly interested or curious about FHRS information and had been habitual users of the scheme outside of the online sphere, felt they needed an added layer of reassurance that the information they were receiving was authentic. They were also interested in gaining further understanding of a business rating. These participants still need the option to click to receive more information

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# 1. Introduction

This research report will outline the key findings from the public facing research exploring views on the online display of Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) information.

## 1.1 Background to the Research

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is an independent government department set up to protect the public's health and the public's interests in relation to food. Section 7(2) of the Food Standards Act states that the Agency has the function of "*ensuring that members of the public are kept adequately informed about and advised in respect of matters which the Agency considers significantly affect their capacity to make informed decisions about food*". It also has an overarching objective to reduce the incidence of foodborne illness.

In partnership with local authorities, the FSA operates the FHRS in England, Wales and Northern Ireland – and the similar food hygiene information scheme (FHIS) in Scotland. The scheme helps consumers choose where to eat out or shop for food by providing information about hygiene standards. The scheme also encourages businesses to improve hygiene standards.

Summary ratings for each food establishment – ranging from 0-5 – are published online, and businesses in England and Northern Ireland are also encouraged to display window stickers. In undertaking an inspection, a food safety officer will inspect a business to check that it meets the requirements of food hygiene law. The officer is from the local authority where the business is located. At the inspection, the officer will check:

- how hygienically the food is handled – how it is prepared, cooked, re-heated, cooled and stored;
- the condition of the structure of the buildings – the cleanliness, layout, lighting, ventilation and other facilities;
- how the business manages what it does to make sure food is safe and so that the officer can be confident standards will be maintained in the future.

Each of these three elements is essential for making sure that food hygiene standards meet requirements and the food served or sold to the public is safe to eat. The hygiene standards found at the time of inspection are then rated on a scale. At the bottom of the scale is '0' – this means urgent improvement is required. At the top of the scale is '5' – this means the hygiene standards are very good.

Since November 2013, FHRs display has become mandatory in Wales; businesses must display a sticker showing their rating in a prominent place such as the front door, entrance or window. Mandatory display will become law in Northern Ireland in 2016.

As people are increasingly ordering food online, the situation is less straight-forward, as the point at which people are actually making a choice is now not necessarily at the food outlet itself. This can occur in a number of scenarios, including:

- Individual businesses where people can order food online, directly from the food business' website.
- Popular online aggregators, such as Hungry House and Just Eat.
- Supermarket online delivery services, where people do not necessarily know which branch their goods will be selected from.
- It is now possible to order food directly via social media or other online sources.

As the popularity and use of these sites rises, it is important that consumer empowerment is maintained and that the public have access to information they need about a business' food hygiene – if they want it.

However, we were mindful across the project that any approach to online provision of FHRs information must also be practicable, allowing the public to access the information they need and for businesses to meet their mandatory display obligations – but not imposing undue burden on businesses or online retailers.

## **1.2 Aims of the Research**

The overarching purpose of this study was to provide the FSA with first-hand evidence based on consumer needs and preferences to determine how best to present FHRs information online. While this research focuses

on customers in Northern Ireland, we were mindful that one consistent approach is required which could potentially also be rolled out across England and Wales in the interests of consumers and industry more widely.

Specifically, this research aimed to establish:

- Participant needs in relation to, interest in and expectations around online display of FHRIS information on food ordering sites - to set the context for how ratings might be apprehended;
- Best practice presentation of FHRIS information, identifying:
  - How and where FHRIS information should be signposted to maximise awareness and use – in a way which meets needs and expectations
  - Any risks of misunderstanding or lack of clarity, causes of this, ways to overcome it; and additional ways to maximise ease of use

### **1.3 Overview of the Research Design**

In order to achieve these aims, we carried out an iterative, multi-method approach which allowed us to develop and robustly test concepts for presenting FHRIS information online. This involved three stages of research:

1. We firstly held a kick-off meeting with various FSA personnel to build an understanding and awareness of the project as an initial scoping exercise;
2. We engaged in initial face-to-face qualitative exploration and testing via Citizens' Forum workshops with a mixed sample of the general population of Northern Ireland; and
3. Then engaged in online qualitative testing sessions to further validate and refine findings.

Each stage of our approach is detailed as follows.

### **1.4 Development Stage**

Prior to primary research, we conducted an initial kick-off meeting in London with the FSA Consumer Engagement team, the FSA Northern Ireland Policy Team and other internal stakeholders to establish priorities

for research, explore boundaries for online display and brainstorm potential presentation options.

## **1.5 Wave 1: Citizens' Forum**

Wave 1 consisted of eight workshops with members of the public. Each workshop involved seven participants (giving a total of 56 participants), and lasted 90 minutes. The workshops took place in four locations: Belfast, Ballymena, Newry and Londonderry. Workshops explored participant attitudes and behaviours around online ordering, expectations and needs around online FHRs display and likely use and attitudinal/behavioural impact.

This Wave of research presented an opportunity for a first round of development and testing of presentation options and allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of what drives reactions and preferences for how FHRs information is delivered.

Overall, the sample was biased towards those who had noticed and used FHRs as the key audience for additional information, while also including some individuals with less experience of FHRs to ensure that the online presentation was clear and understandable for a general public audience as well. We excluded those without internet access (either computer, mobile or tablet) and those who do not and/or would not consider ordering food online. The sample was further a mix of SEG (Socio-Economic Group) e.g. ABC1 and C2DE groups, age and gender.

## **1.6 Interim Workshop**

Following the forums, the research team presented interim findings from the group workshops to the FSA team. This included discussion about the implications of the findings for presentation of FHRs information and identified options for further testing in an online forum. This informed discussion to begin to understand the best options in terms of wording and placement of the FHRs information/signposting, adjustments required, or any new options that required development.

## 1.7 Wave 2: Online Forum Testing

Wave 2 online testing consisted of an online forum approach, in which participants viewed a range of “mock up” samples for testing on their own computers/tablets/mobiles. This stage allowed us to:

- Understand whether the adjustments we made addressed participants’ needs (by including participants from Wave 1);
- Assess reactions from participants seeing the online presentation options for the first time – and how they performed without researcher support, to gain indications of more real-life experience;
- Understand how the revised presentation options performed when participants were in an online space; and
- Explore any follow-up or additional questions about likely participant use of FHRS information on online ordering sites.

The online environment provided us with a more realistic context in which participants could access mocked-up materials – and follow-on FHRS information – in their own time, at their own pace, in their own space.

The workshop took place over 5 days with a total of 35 participants – including 20 ‘fresh’ respondents and 15 who participated in the Wave 1 workshops. Participants were able to log in when they chose to over the five day period, but were asked to log in a minimum of 3 times in order to explore different presentation options and respond to moderator questions.

Wave 2 included a mix of Wave 1 participants (15) and fresh sample (20). Otherwise, the sample criteria for Wave 2 mirrored those for Wave 1.

## 1.8 Structure of the Report

Following this outline this report is split for ease of reference into the following 7 sections. **Section 2** focuses on participant behaviours around online shopping. **Section 3** will focus on awareness and usage of FHRS information. **Section 4** summarises participants’ views on FHRS positioning. **Section 5** will present participant preferences with respect to FHRS rating display. **Section 6** will focus on participant confusions/misunderstandings uncovered across the research and opportunities for maximising uptake of FHRS information moving forward.

**Section 7** will lay out a number of recommendations and concluding thoughts on the future display of FHRS information.

All quotations are verbatim, drawn from audio recordings of the workshops or from transcriptions from the online forum.

## 2. Online Food Purchasing

In this section we discuss participants' online shopping habits to set the context for how they interact with food online and to understand the extent to which food hygiene is an important consideration in the online customer journey.

### Key findings from this section:

- **Participants were mainly using online shopping to purchase from supermarkets and takeaways.**
- **When it comes to online food shopping, participants often felt they “trade-off” quality for convenience.**
- **There was a strong resonance that participants valued trust and recognition in the online sphere.**
- **Across both Waves, the usage of social media to buy food as a general shopping method was low.**

### 2.1 Online Food Behaviours

Participants across both Waves relayed a number of different outlets through which they were currently ordering food online. For the most part, across all age groups and socio-economic group segments, participants seemed comfortable with purchasing food online. Those in the family and retired life stages showed some apprehension with online platforms, but this was mainly focused on security of financial information.

There was a positive sense across both Waves that the ability to online shop had improved general wellbeing for participants by freeing up more time for family or leisure activities, and placing less pressure on people to “cook from scratch” or venture into a supermarket.

**Predominantly, participants were using online supermarket shopping for their weekly grocery shop**, and some were using this less frequently (i.e. once a month) to purchase in bulk, which they could then have delivered to their home if they were particularly busy. The key driver behind shopping online for supermarket produce was

mainly around convenience, in order to fit shopping around busy daily schedules. This rang true across all groups regardless of socio-economic group, gender or age.

Those in the lower socio-economic category were more likely to 'shop around' for the best deals online, while those in the higher socio-economic category were more inclined to be drawn by "brand loyalty". As a result, those in the higher socio-economic groups were more likely to "stick" to a brand they trusted and were more likely to repeat order from a business, whereas in comparison, those in the lower socio-economic category were more flexible in their attitudes to using new online shopping platforms.

**Participants were also frequently using takeaway food ordering due to work/family pressures.** Those in the higher socio-economic groups were more likely to order takeaways on weekends or on special occasions; the key reasons underlying this were allowing themselves to "have a treat" or dealing with busy lifestyles. In contrast, those participants in the lower socio-economic groups and more predominantly male respondents relayed that they would often use takeaway sites a number of times a week. The key reasons behind this were not having enough time to "cook from scratch" and other family and work orientated pressures. Young single participants were more likely to order takeaways a few times a week (particularly young single males) as some viewed this as a quick and simple way to cook for one person, but with recognition that this was not always the healthiest option.

**Convenience was the common top priority across all participants across both Waves.** In terms of the benefits and drawbacks of online food services, the most commonly cited in order of preference are highlighted below:

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<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convenience</li> <li>Speed</li> <li>Saves money compared to "cooking from scratch"</li> <li>Avoids temptation of buying extra food in the supermarket</li> <li>Repeat shopping lists are saved to allow for ease of shop</li> <li>Access to customer reviews</li> </ul>
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<b>Drawbacks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower quality of produce</li> <li>Substitutions when products are not available</li> <li>Not appropriate for all foods (e.g meats)</li> <li>Larger margin for error (problems with deliveries)</li> <li>Potentially unhealthy</li> </ul>
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There was a general trend towards “repeat ordering” across groups, i.e. participants were likely to return to the same takeaways or order from a supermarket chain wherein they were already buying food in store. Others used aggregator sites such as “Just Eat” and “Hungry House” to compare customer reviews to inform their decision-making. Some respondents used well-known brand Apps such as Domino’s, Tesco, and Asda on their mobile devices for quick, easy transactions.

**There was a strong resonance that participants valued trust and recognition in the online sphere** and that by using these well-known brands and repeated formats felt more comfortable with the largely “unseen” world of online food ordering.

**Across both Waves, the usage of social media to buy food as a general shopping method was low.** Participants were using this often for “one-off” purchases from Facebook/Twitter sites which were offering boutique services such as custom-made cakes, jams and chutneys. In the Wave 2 forums, a few participants highlighted that they were beginning to order food via social media from reputable brands instead of through an established App and had encountered

positive experiences, for the most part.

*“Through Facebook, I set up a #Easyorder button for Domino’s Pizza. This saves my details and my previous orders, favourites etc and safely stores my payment details. The service has been reliable and because the brand is known, I never thought about food hygiene.” (Male, 57, ABC1, Online Forum)*

Across both Waves, but particularly in the online forum, a number of participants had highlighted security concerns around using social media to order food;

*“No, I know of privacy hacks on social media. It just doesn't feel as encrypted as it's social networking rather than an encrypted space. I prefer to order through an app.” (Male, 23, ABC1, Online Forum)*

**Participants were using “outside of the norm” websites to purchase food to find those items not available on the high street.** A few participants were also ordering food through Ebay and Amazon and other less well-known websites to purchase food, but again while not alluding to food poisoning per se, as with social media channels; there was a general element of risk-taking in terms of quality when using these outlets. Participants in the higher socio-economic category groups were primarily using these sites to purchase specialist food items, such as coconut oils, protein shakes, confectionary, teabags and specific salad dressings.

Those in the lower socio-economic category groups were more likely to use these sites to purchase food stuffs which were cheaper to buy online than on the high street, such as buying food in bulk. The key driver for this group alongside convenience and speed was seeking out promotions and finding the best deal online.

In the next section we will examine in more detail how the above shopping habits had an impact on participants’ behaviours and attitudes towards food hygiene.

## 3. Awareness and Usage of FHRS (Food Hygiene Rating Scheme)

In this section, we examine participant awareness and usage of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS). More broadly, we examine the potential use of this information in the online sphere.

### Key findings from this section:

- **Participants hold fewer concerns around supermarket hygiene standards than takeaway food hygiene standards, which is often driven by “big brand loyalty”.**
- **Feeding into previous research in this area, awareness of FHRS is high yet usage is mixed, with participants typically using other measures as a barometer for food hygiene.**
- **While “food hygiene” is not a “top of mind” consideration in general, this is even less important in the online ordering sphere, where speed and convenience are fundamental.**
- **Respondents can become disengaged with their food when ordering online, which has repercussions for food hygiene considerations.**
- **The absence of visual cues when online shopping has an impact on participants’ priorities around food hygiene.**
- **Participants also experience different thought processes when ordering food online in comparison with offline shopping, which has an impact on their ability to digest information.**

### 3.1 Online Shopping – Food Hygiene Considerations

As with previous FSA research<sup>2</sup>, despite food poisoning not being a “top of mind” issue for participants when ordering food online, it forms part of a wider decision-making process. While participants across both Waves did

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/citizensforum-fhrs.pdf>

not explicitly mention “food poisoning” or the ability to contract this, this was broadly touched upon under a number of different guises and there were “hints” to suggest that this was a factor that was often considered, albeit subconsciously;

*“I’d never use Tesco for meat...it’s just the fear about what I’m going to get. Is it fresh?” (Male, ABC1, Citizens’ Forum, Ballymena)*

As is illustrated with the above quotation, participants often hinted that they potentially did not order specific types of food online such as meat/dairy products, instead preferring to use a local butcher. This attitude centred on the idea of getting to “touch” and “see” these types of food before purchase. Participants stated that the main concern here was around the potential quality of the food they would receive, but again not explicitly mentioning food poisoning.

**Participants had lower concern around supermarket food hygiene as opposed to takeaway or less familiar options.** Participants had low knowledge and awareness around food hygiene in supermarket establishments. Again, as previously highlighted this rests on the “big brand” trust.

*“Honestly, I would never even think of checking the food hygiene of my local Tesco’s as it is such a large organisation that it’s hard to imagine that they would have anything less than a 5 rating.” (Female, 37, C2DE, Online Forum)*

*“You put your trust into the supermarkets. You assume they have to meet a certain standard.” (Female, C2DE, Citizens’ Forum, Ballymena)*

Upon probing in the Wave 1 Citizens’ Forums, some participants expressed interest in having a better understanding of how the FHRs system works within the supermarket context as many were surprised to learn that their shopping could potentially come from a number of different stores. However, there was a general opinion across both Waves that participants held less concern around food hygiene standards with their supermarket shops than smaller takeaways/businesses.

*"I don't really see the point of the rating system for large stores such as Tesco's but I do see the point for small food outlets where there is more chance of things going wrong, people cutting corners."* (Male, 25, ABC1, Online Forum)

These findings suggest that "big brand loyalty" drives assumptions that food hygiene standards are being monitored by "someone in authority". Some participants relied on "big brand" names as a marker for high food hygiene standards, stating that these corporations/businesses would prevent hygiene issues from emerging due to the potential reputational damage which could be caused by a high profile media case.

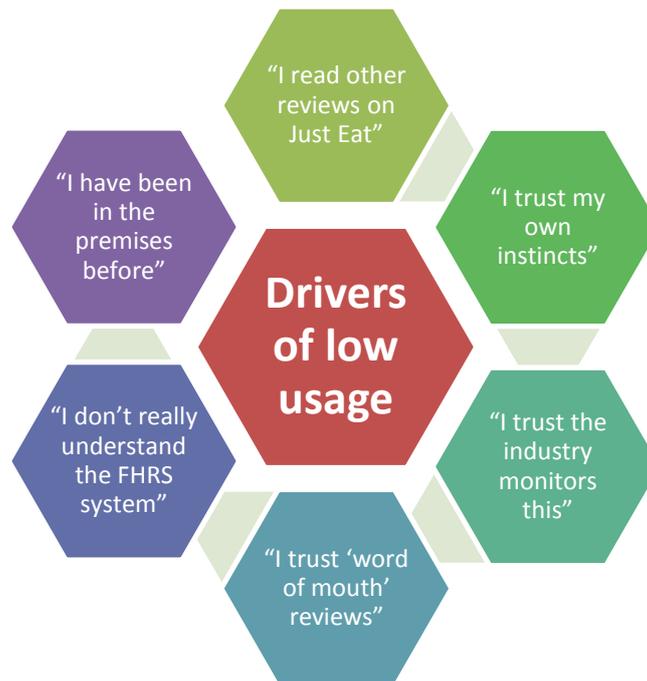
We will explore further in Section 6, the potential for the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to maximise use of FHRS information with the online supermarket shopping audience.

### **3.2 General Awareness of FHRS Information**

**Participant awareness of FHRS information is high while the usage of this information is mixed** in that even when participants expressed an interest or awareness in the scheme they were often not using it as a decision-enhancing tool. This was largely driven by a lack of knowledge around what each of the ratings constituted.

*"At what point on that scale am I going to get sick...is it the cleanliness of the counter or is it the food? It's rather vague."*  
(Male, ABC1, Citizens' Forum, Belfast)

This lack of knowledge was driving participants to consider other proxy measures such as trusting their own instincts, trusting the industry to monitor standards, and taking into consideration peer reviews and "word of mouth" recommendations from friends and family as illustrated below;

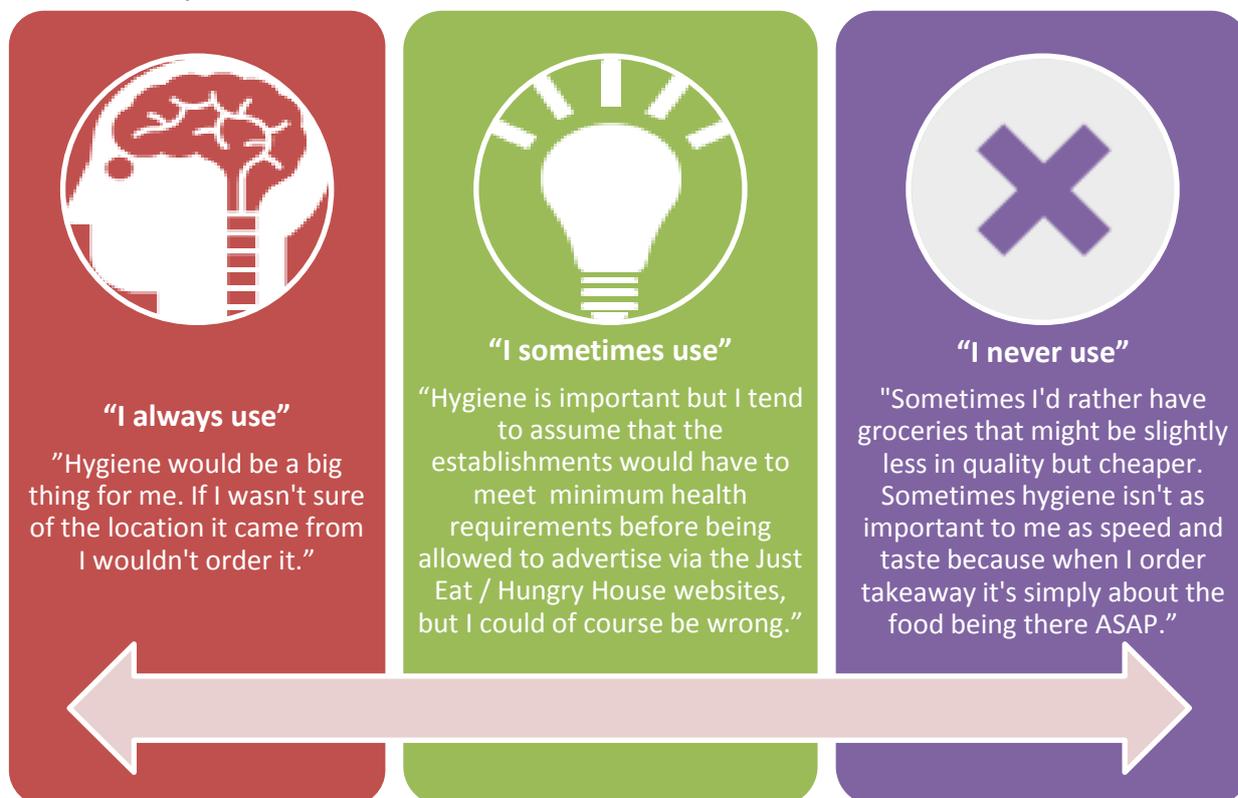


While a growing body of literature already undertaken by FSA exists to suggest that food hygiene is not a "top of mind" consideration, participants relayed that this became even less of a consideration when ordering online.

In terms of insight across the sample, in terms of age, younger participants were more likely to use online shopping as a channel to purchase food, which tied in with their tendency to use "digital by default" across many activities in their daily schedule. Due to high usage and high digital confidence, young participants, particularly in the higher socio-economic groups, did not specifically mention food hygiene as a concern.

In contrast, family to older groups were more sceptical about food hygiene when ordering food online, this was often implied to be more of a consideration due to potentially having several people in their family, including young children, resting on the success of their choices. Older groups also expressed more concerns around security of financial information and seemed to express more apprehension around the lack of visual cues to food hygiene in the online space. They tended to stick to "tried and tested" websites and repeat ordering to allay these concerns.

Participants fell broadly into three categories when it came to food hygiene awareness based on attitudes, behaviours and usage of the FHRS information;<sup>3</sup>



- **"I always use"** – These participants were already engaged and frequently using FHRS information to inform their decisions around food purchasing outside of the digital sphere. They expressed a keen interest in using this information when browsing online platforms also. Some relayed that their attitudes towards food hygiene had been influenced by past negative experiences wherein they had become ill or had contracted food poisoning.
- **"I sometimes use"** – These participants, which represented the majority across both Waves of the research, liked the "idea" of FHRS but only really engaged with food hygiene when prompted to. They tended to trust "big brands" in terms of food hygiene monitoring, and

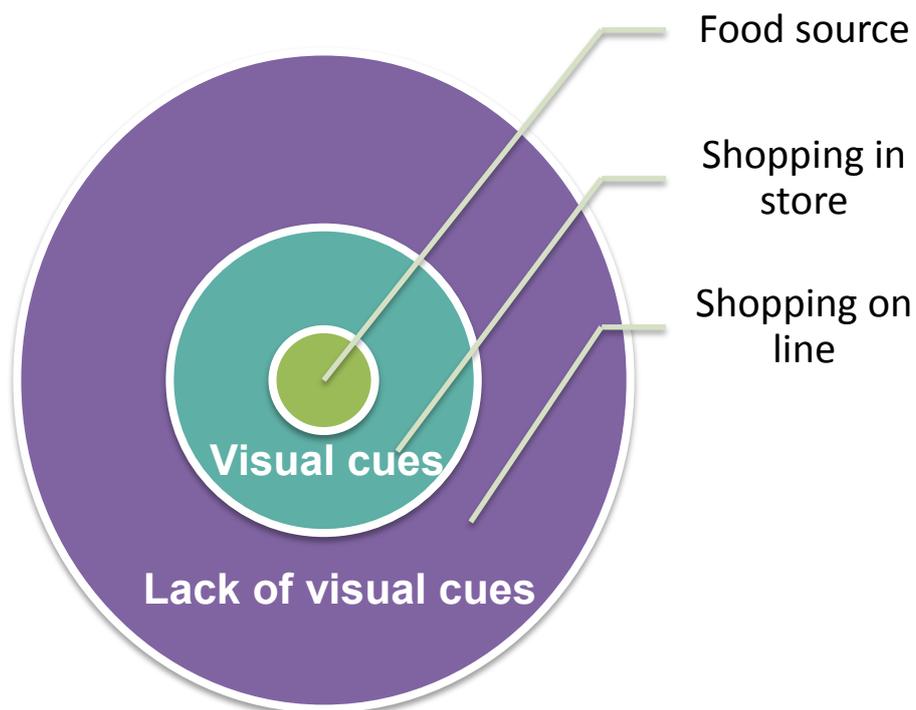
<sup>3</sup> Participants predominantly fell into the middle grouping but the qualitative basis of this typology means it is not helpful to generalise from this sample. The purpose of the typology is to explain why and how people's views differed, rather than attempt to measure the number of people in each group

held assumptions that “others” (government bodies, industry, FSA, businesses) were monitoring standards and therefore removing any responsibility/ownership to monitor standards themselves.

- **“I never use”** – These participants placed food hygiene low in their list of priorities both online and outside of the digital sphere. They generally preferred speed and convenience over quality and hygiene. These participants tended to have no past negative experiences with food, e.g. contracting food poisoning and had a tendency to “trust their own instincts” when it came to food hygiene.

### 3.3 The Absence of Visual Cues

There was a general sense that participants became “de-sensitised” and “disconnected” with food when they ordered online. This seemed to have a knock-on effect on their ability to consider food hygiene while ordering on digital platforms (see figure below).



Participants highlighted across the research that they use a wide range of visual cues while physically in a premises to determine whether they consider food hygiene standards to be maintained. These can include barometers such as clean bathrooms, general hygiene of the waiting staff and general cleanliness of premises.

Interestingly, in the absence of visual cues when ordering online, participants seemed to disengage with food hygiene considerations. The key driver here is based upon feeling “disconnected” with the food and the establishment and having fewer indicators available to them to enable comparisons and satisfy/reassure themselves.

*“You don’t get to pick, I like to physically look at the avocado but you get what you’re given.”* (Female, ABC1, Citizens’ Forum, Derry-Londonderry)

When these visual cues are unavailable to participants, instead of becoming wary and looking for other measures, it was commonly felt that participants tended to disengage with food and consequently the food hygiene of a product. This disengagement often presented itself in the form of removing responsibility for food hygiene and making broad assumptions that “someone else was taking care of this”. This “other” was often ill-defined but the trust that this was being overseen by an “authority” was high across participants.

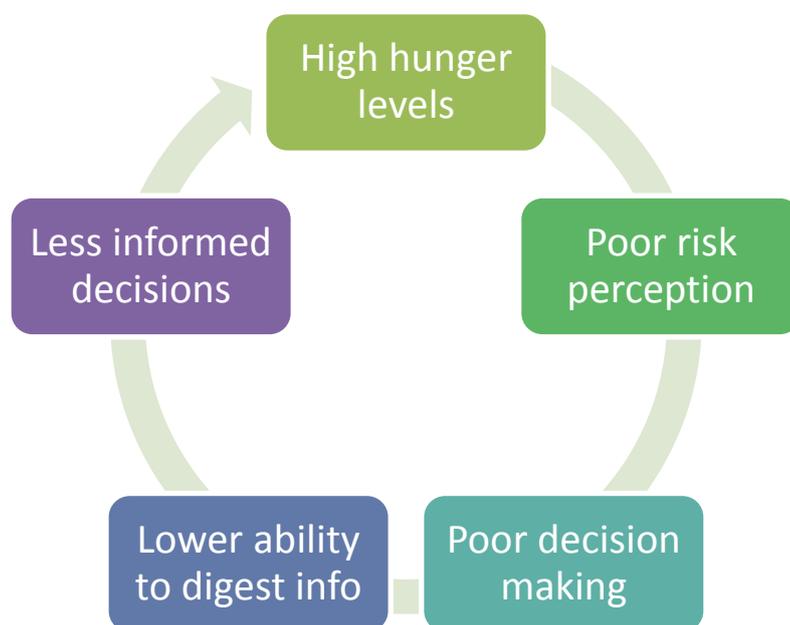
*“When you go into a restaurant you’re always looking for the [FHRS] number, but when you’re online you don’t pay any attention.”* (Female, C2DE, Citizens’ Forum, Derry-Londonderry)

Some participants only ordered online from those restaurants/supermarkets where they had previously been physically on the premises to undertake their own “personal inspection” to avoid this disconnection. Others used peer reviews sites, “word of mouth” reviews from family/friends and others took a “leap of faith” based on several indicators and relying on their gut instincts.

### 3.4 Convenience and its Impact on Thought Processes

**Participants experience different thought processes when ordering food online in comparison to offline.** Interestingly, the key thought processes when ordering food online in comparison to offline settings seemed to have an important impact on participants' ability to digest information. For the majority of participants, the reason for venturing on to an online platform to order food was underlined by two key priorities; hunger and convenience.

**The 'hunger effect':** When ordering takeaway food aside from convenience, special occasions or wanting to "treat" themselves, participants often found that they had sought out online ordering platforms due to extreme levels of hunger. There is a body of behavioural science literature<sup>4</sup> which suggests that hunger levels can have a detrimental impact on the brain's ability to digest information, which in turn can lead to poorer decision-making and lowers risk perception (see figure below).



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<sup>4</sup> "Metabolic State Alters Economic Decision Making Under Risk in Humans", M.Symmonds et al, June 2010 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0011090>

This was a critical finding as participants' potential ability to digest FHRS information on online platforms was commented to be much lower, as they are likely to place speed and convenience above viewing information that may slow down their ordering process. We will examine in later sections how "The Hunger Effect" has an impact on participant preferences.

***Supermarket shopping – Convenience is fundamental:*** In terms of the average participant thought process when online supermarket shopping, participants relayed that the main reason for using these platforms was convenience and efficiency. Participants were often competing with busy work/family schedules and therefore were driven primarily by receiving their online shopping as quickly as possible. This obviously had a direct impact on their ability to pay attention to other information which could impede or slow down their ordering process.

The emotional space outlined above is a key driver for the practicalities around participants' suggestions in later sections and provides insight around the overall needs for presentation of FHRS information in the online space. The next section will examine how the above attitudes and habits impacted on participant preferences to FHRS positioning.

## 4 FHRS positioning preferences

In this section, we examine participant preferences around how the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) information should be presented and the key reasons behind these needs. Across both Waves we used a variation of different stimuli (attached at Appendix C) displaying a range of potential positioning options. The findings below set out the overall feedback from these stimuli in terms of preference and broad themes are discussed to facilitate usage of FHRS information going forward.

### Key findings from this section:

- **Participants needed FHRS information early in their journey to allow them to make informed decisions, otherwise there is potential they will ignore it.**
- **Clarity and visibility were key to usage of information, and presenting FHRS information in an accessible, easy to use format will increase usage.**
- **Lack of visibility caused participants to lose confidence in the information and generally elicited negative responses.**
- **Ease of access was vital for participants who are now purchasing food through online Apps for supermarket shopping and takeaways across a variety of devices.**
- **Consistency of approach in positioning of FHRS information will create confidence in its legitimacy.**

### 4.1 Early in the Journey

**Participants needed FHRS information early in their journey to allow them to make informed decisions, otherwise there is potential they will ignore it.** It was commonly expressed across participants that they would only be likely to use FHRS information if this was presented at the beginning of their customer journey.

Participants were keen to stress that they were mainly using online platforms as a convenience tool and that any information presented, needed to facilitate a “snap decision” in the interests of time.

*"This should be displayed before the order is given as if it is a bad rating the person may change their mind and feel that they have been 'lead on' to making the order before being told the truth." (Female, 32, ABC1, Online Forum)*

There was a powerful sense of "investment" once food had been selected and placed in an online ordering basket, and therefore reluctance to remove items in the interest of convenience, at a later stage.

*"Let's say we take making a cup of tea as an analogy... I don't want to boil the kettle, get a cup, put a teabag in the cup, get a spoon, brew the tea, add the sugar and then go to the fridge to find there's no milk and I have to start all over again after I've been down to the shop. I'd check to see if the pre-requisites are there before I stick the kettle on in the first place, same thing here." (Male, 36, ABC1, Online Forum)*

Participants widely held the view that once they had placed their food order in their online basket that they had in their mind already "purchased" it. As the below quote illustrates, when a participant placed food in their online shopping basket, they had already psychologically "bought" this item and had begun to anticipate it's arrival.

*"I've gotten to the menu, placed an order and started to get excited about what I'm getting to eat by this stage. It's a bit late in the game to have to change my mind because I find the place has a one star rating. It's too late in the game." (Male, 36, C2DE, Online Forum)*

## **4.2 Clarity and Visibility**

**Clarity and visibility are key to usage of information;** and participants relayed that FHRS information needed to be presented in an accessible, easy to use format. Building on online food priorities of speed and convenience from early sections in this report, participants need clear, visible information to encourage use of FHRS information.

In terms of positioning, participants expressed that the FHRS sticker should sit “where the eye is naturally drawn”, i.e. to those parts of the webpage where they would naturally and obviously look.

*“It should be in a prevalent place on the home screen and ideally in a place where you are naturally drawn to on that screen.”* (Female, C2DE, Citizens’ Forum, Newry)

Others expressed that if the display was deemed mandatory that they felt businesses should be making an effort to draw attention to it.

*“If it’s compulsory it needs to be immediately in your face.”* (Male, ABC1, Citizens’ Forum, Ballymena)

Many participants spontaneously reacted to the stimuli presented by stating that this should naturally sit near the top of the page under “top tabs” or to the right of the webpage. The key driver behind this appeared to be that this was the most common positioning for items in an online food basket. Other participants could see the value of also placing this on information pages where they would usually look for other general store information, such as opening hours.

#### **4.3 Lack of Visibility and Impact on Confidence**

In terms of positioning, participants elicited negative reactions to positioning FHRS information at the bottom of a webpage. There was general agreement across both Waves, that this seemed more like an “after-thought” and generally diminished the importance of the information and consequently their potential to engage with it in their decision-making process.

*“It looks like small print the sponsorship, legal certificates and company information that people don't pay much attention to.”* (Male, 31, ABC1, Online Forum)

Participants relayed that they were only likely to look at the bottom of a web page if they had an issue or if they were looking for terms and conditions information. They stated that by placing FHRS information here, they would be likely to “miss” it or overlook it.

*"Why would you put something at the bottom of the page? I know I only look at the bottom of a page if I want to either contact the retailer or unsubscribe from emails. If the information is important it should be easily viewed."* (Female, 32, ABC1, Online Forum)

As the above quote highlights, high visibility of information on web pages was likely to convince participants that this information was of high importance.

Participants also relayed that by placing information "out of sight" this could potentially raise suspicions, not just around legitimacy of a link, but also around confidence that a business may have a low rating and may be attempting to "hide" this from their customers.

Transparency and its role in supporting usage of FHRS information was a key theme which emerged across the research findings and also played a large part in the findings around preferred rating display options covered in the next section of this report.

#### **4.4 Accessibility on a Variety of Devices**

**Ease of access was vital for participants who are now purchasing food through a number of different online Apps for supermarket shopping and takeaways.** It is recommended that positioning now takes into account that participants are accessing online food ordering platforms across a range of different devices including personal laptops, tablets, phones and on many occasions through Apps. Many participants highlighted that visibility in Apps in particular would be vital to encourage usage as this often presents the "bare minimum" in terms of website graphics and space is at an optimum.

There were also some concerns around usage on tablets and mobile phones concerning clicking on an icon that was potentially a virus or "click bait". Positioning in an obvious, clear format should help participants feel confident in accessing FHRS information.

## 4.5 Consistency of Approach

**Consistency of approach in positioning of FHRs information will also create confidence in its legitimacy.** Participants relayed that positioning should appear consistently across websites to encourage use. This would build legitimacy and usage through recognising content and being aware of where FHRs information should sit on a web page.

As convenience and speed were key priorities, having to “go and look” for the FHRs rating as opposed to being aware of where this should sit under mandatory requirements, could potentially dissuade participants from using FHRs information in the online sphere.

Participants also relayed that consistency in positioning would allow them to compare businesses in terms of their food hygiene rating. There were a number of spontaneous suggestions from the Wave 1 Citizens’ Forums, which proposed that people could potentially filter comparators with online aggregator sites to help them choose the most hygienic takeaway options.

# 5 FHRS Rating Display Preferences

In this section, we examine participants' preferences around rating display in terms of expectations and needs. We will also provide an overview with respect to the language, display and colour of the tested model.

Participants were presented with a range of options showing a variation of different rating display options and were asked to give feedback on their preferences. The stimuli used across both Waves are attached at Annex C.

## Key findings from this section:

- **Due to competing priorities while ordering food online, participants overwhelmingly across both Waves of the research preferred the food hygiene scheme rating displayed. This was displayed across both "fresh" participants and those who had attended the Citizens' Forums.**
- **There were a minority of participants across both Waves of the research who would be willing to click "offsite" to check the rating on the FSA website; however, these participants tended to be those who were already engaged/interested in food hygiene and already had high awareness of the scheme.**
- **Participants largely viewed the concept of "clicking off" on to another page as a "barrier" to their potential usage of FHRS information.**
- **The key drivers behind their preference for a rating display centred on allowing and empowering people to be able to make "snap decisions" on online platforms.**

## 5.1 Rating Display Preferences

**Participants across both Waves expressed strong preferences for displaying the FHRS rating on online food ordering platforms** and there was a noted preference towards the stimuli wherein this was included. Participants were drawn to stimuli where the actual rating was displayed (i.e. 0-5 rating) in comparison to those where there was a link provided to check the rating on the FSA website.

**The key driver behind rating preference was the ability for a participant to then use this information to make a “snap decision” on which outlet to choose.**

*“It's immediate information and allows you to make a decision quickly which is the whole purpose of these takeaway websites; to make your life a bit easier and to be able to order food quickly and conveniently.” (Male, 33, ABC1, Online Forum)*

When it comes to food ordering from takeaway outlets, again as highlighted in earlier sections, when participants were online shopping they are usually in a high state of hunger and therefore their key aim is for their food order to arrive as quickly as possible.

*“When you are hungry you want to order food as quickly as possible and not want to start navigating elsewhere.” (Male, 23, ABC1, Online Forum)*

*“I am quite impatient when ordering so if I had to click through to find out the information, I wouldn't. I had already made the decision to order from that specific place so I would go ahead.” (Female, 42, ABC1, Online Forum)*

Many participants highlighted that online food shopping was a “convenience space” for them and therefore receiving factual information “at a glance” was vital to whether or not they processed it in a meaningful way.

*“It's convenience food; it should be a convenient order. Don't over complicate things.” (Male, ABC1, Citizens' Forum, Derry-Londonderry)*

Some participants highlighted outside pressures, like busy lifestyles, while others stated that they often potentially purchased food online under the influence of alcohol after socialising or late at night when they were often tired following a day of work. Those in the family life stage were also coming under pressure to provide food for a hungry family, others cited work strains as affecting their ability to “cook from scratch”.

*"I am a busy mother of two, I want to get my shopping online completed quickly." (Female, 32, ABC1, Online Forum)*

**Despite the majority of participants preferring the rating to be displayed, there were a smaller number of participants who, when faced with the potential for fraudulent, out-of-date information, were willing to "click off" to the FSA website.** However, these participants were largely in agreement that they would not be willing to then "search" for the restaurant on the FSA FHSR website, expecting that this link would take them directly to the relevant business page.

For some participants who fell into this category, a number still wanted the rating displayed, but wanted this additional option to click through to further information as reassurance.

*"Because I want to see the rating without having to look at a different site but may check it if I had concerns." (Female, 52, C2DE, Online Forum)*

Participants in this category also hinted that the potential for fraudulent ratings would make them more likely to click through and had higher awareness that FSA potentially conducted a number of inspections across a year and would want the most up-to-date information.

*"If the information is static on the page there is a risk that the rating may not be the most up to date version." (Female, 56, C2DE, Online Forum)*

*"Anyone can steal an image from another website and pass it off as their own score. I think it makes sense to have the score printed, but for there also to be an FSA link (as part of the same image) to confirm that someone isn't pulling the wool over your eyes." (Female, 26, ABC1, Online Forum)*

## **5.2 Business Resource**

Across both Waves, when prompted to consider the potential for FSA to manage oversight of the scheme and also potential strain on business

resource to provide the most-up-to-date information, participants as a whole recognised these potential difficulties, but still stated that they felt it was their “consumer right” to receive this information as a customer.

Some suggestions recognised these difficulties, but still stated that if the information was not presented “up-front”, they would not be inclined to use this when making a decision.

*"That's going to be tough to police... We need a quick futuristic click and reveal current status box, without leaving their page... Not much to ask eh? And probably not cheap sorry." (Male,23 ABC1, Online Forum)*

### **5.3 Lack of Information as a “Barrier” to Empowerment**

Following on the insight from the previous section, most participants viewed the idea of “clicking off” site to view information as a potential “barrier” to usage of FHRS information.

From our analysis, this is grounded on two specific drivers; 1) that information could be “lost” or 2) potential security concerns around hacking, accidentally clicking on a fraudulent link.

In terms of security concerns, some participants had encountered negative experiences when clicking off websites and the potential for “fraudulent” icons which could lead to phishing, hacking or accidentally downloading an online virus.

*"I do not like clicking on links to external websites as you can never be sure that it is a genuine link and you would be afraid that it could be fraudulent and potentially harmful to your laptop, PC etc." (Male, 27, ABC1, Online Forum)*

*"Well the concern is that if it's a fraudulent banner/link then you could potentially be harming your PC if you clicked on it and a virus was downloaded without your knowledge." (Male, 26, ABC1, Online Forum)*

Participants also raised concerns around using Apps on phones and tablets and the potential for data loss or an order to be lost on the system if a participant was to click off to see the FHRS ratings.

*"Especially if you're on an App. You're on an App because you don't have time. I don't have time to log into my laptop I want to order, order, order. I'm not going to be clicking something that I know is going to take me somewhere else and then my session has timed out and you have to start the order again..."*  
(Male, C2DE, Citizens' Forum, Ballymena)

#### **5.4 Non-Display and Transparency Issues**

As with positioning in the previous section, non-display of FHRS ratings elicited a number of negative responses from participants:

- Suspicions around "hiding of ratings"
- Views around "letting businesses off the hook"
- Lack of confidence in a process that is not transparent

Participants expressed suspicions around what they viewed as the "hiding" of food hygiene ratings. This had an impact on their perception of businesses but also on FSA oversight of the FHRS process.

There was a general feeling that by not displaying the rating, that FSA was potentially "letting business off the hook" in terms of the obligation to their customers. Many participants stated that they should wear their food hygiene rating like a "badge of honour" and that by facilitating a lack of transparency there was low potential for "shaming" businesses into raising their standards.

*"Overall clear and concise marketing....but why is the hygiene rating been hidden? If it's good enough show it off! - it would boost customer confidence."* (Female, 34, ABC1, Online Forum)

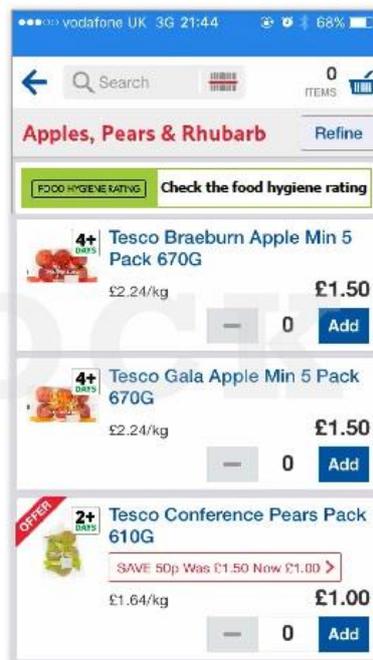
Participants felt that by not displaying the rating they would feel less confident about the legitimacy of the information presented and therefore would feel less inclined to use it. Many made comparisons with food aggregator site peer reviews and the high transparency of these and that the FSA link to "click" might seem out of place when placed alongside these.

*"Why is this hidden? When using media sites Just Eat and Hungry House we can see the customer comments quite clearly but cannot see the hygiene rating." (Female, 22, C2DE, Online Forum)*

## 5.5 Language and Layout

In Wave 1, there was a general positive reaction to the language used in the stimuli produced and Wave 2 provided further evidence that the language used in the stimuli would entice participants to click on the sticker provided (please see below stimulus).

STIMULUS A – Supermarket Mock Up (Tesco)



This stimulus has been created by TNS BMRB purely to generate discussion within groups, and is in no way associated with the brands included here.

In the Wave 2 Online Forum, a number of participants suggested that inclusion of the word "click" might encourage participants to go off site and check FHS information. Participants expressed that the language used needed to be "enticing" yet avoiding "bossy" terms and imposing language which may place a burden on the customer.

In terms of legitimacy and the layout, a number of participants clearly recognised the black and green colour scheme associated with FHRS information in restaurants which they had previously visited. There was demonstrated trust and awareness of the brand behind the FHRS sticker, with participants recognising the 0-5 scale and its easily identifiable, familiar format. Participants felt that the consistency in the usage of these colours and the scale and format made the sticker immediately recognisable and therefore increased consumer certainty that this was genuine, certified government information.

Many participants conveyed that the inclusion of the FSA official logo could potentially increase their propensity to click on to the site. Some participants said they would struggle to link this information to an official government source and that by providing the FSA logo they would feel more secure around the authenticity and independence of the information.

*"There is nothing from the image that tells me it's from the Food Standards Agency. Perhaps a logo added or a hyperlink to the Food Standards agency website visible would make me more confident that it's official information."* (Female, 34, ABC1, Online Forum)

There were concerns from participants around fraudulent ratings that businesses could place on their own sites, therefore creating a sticker which looked certified and authoritative was key.

*"The addition of reference on the link to the FSA would make it clearer that the rating is official, objective and independent, and therefore reliable."* (Male, 27, C2DE, Online Forum)

## 6 Areas of Confusion & Opportunities

In this section we will provide an overview of those areas of confusion or stress which could lead to disengagement with FHRs information when this is presented online. We will also provide areas where we believe there are opportunities for better engagement with FHRs information which could maximise uptake of the service.

### The key findings from this section are:

#### Potential Areas of Confusion

- **There is potential for the rating to “get lost” with other “click bait” (i.e. spam advertisement/marketing) when placed on social media or business apps.**
- **Many participants confused the “customer reviews” on popular aggregator sites as food hygiene information. Participants expressed that FHRs information would need to be in a consistent, clear format to avoid this.**
- **There were general low levels of knowledge around what the FHRs ratings constituted which was having a detrimental impact on participant’s ability to use this information to inform decision-making.**

#### Opportunities to maximise uptake of FHRs information:

- **Across the Wave 1 Citizens’ Forums, a number of participants highlighted that it would be useful to “filter” restaurants on aggregator sites dependant on their FHRs rating, which could make FHRs information more attractive to use.**
- **Participants had low awareness that their supermarket food could potentially be delivered from a number of different outlets in their area. This is a potential area of FHRs growth for participants who may be more likely to use FHRs information in this setting.**

- **Participants are generally wary of using social media Apps to order food online and there is an opportunity for FSA FHRS information to be used here to maximise usage.**

## **6.1 Potential Areas for Confusion**

Participants displayed a number of potential confusion areas across both Waves of this research and it is recommended that these are considered in design of FHRS information.

***Potential for FHRS sticker to be viewed as "click bait":*** Participants highlighted that when using social media or business apps for both takeaways and online shopping orders, it was possible that they could view the FHRS sticker as "click bait" (i.e. spam advertisement/marketing) or that this could potentially become "lost" within already graphic-laden websites. Participants relayed that they were often "bombarded" with advertisements on food ordering websites and that they would only click on a link if they were assured that it was legitimate.

By keeping consistency and ensuring authenticity through inclusion of the logo, participants could feel more assured around the validity of the FHRS sticker.

***Misunderstanding customer reviews with food hygiene ratings:*** Across the Wave 1 forums there was a tendency for participants to confuse customer reviews on aggregator sites with food hygiene ratings. Many participants held a large degree of trust with food aggregators as reputable brands and viewed customer ratings and hygiene ratings as "one and the same". Lack of awareness of the scheme more generally was the key driver for this misperception.

It is recommended that when developing the final format for presenting FHRS information, designers are aware of the potential for customer perplexity and the need to make the FHRS information look distinct from peer review systems.

**Low knowledge of FHRs information and how businesses are assessed:** There are general low levels of knowledge around what the FHRs scheme ratings constitutes, which is having a detrimental impact on participant's ability to use this information to inform decision-making.

*"At what point on that scale am I going to get sick...is it the cleanliness of the counter or is it the food? It's rather vague ..."*  
(Male, ABC1, Citizens' Forum, Belfast)

Participants would benefit from increased knowledge on how the FHRs rates businesses and what exactly constitutes as a "safe" hygiene rating. Participants were particularly interested on the "finer detail" behind ratings.

## 6.2 Potential Opportunities to Maximise Uptake

From the analysis across both Waves of the research, there were a number of opportunities for the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in terms of maximising usage of FHRs information within the online sphere.

**Increased usage with online supermarket shoppers:** Participants had low awareness that their supermarket shopping could potentially be delivered from a number of different outlets in their area. When prompted on this, many had not particularly thought about food hygiene within this space.

Some of participant perceptions here centred on the difference in "food handling" between takeaways and supermarkets. Whilst others highlighted that they trusted "big brands" to maintain hygiene standards as opposed to smaller businesses. Overall, there was general consensus that participants were confused as to which parts of the supermarket the FHRs was rating. For example did it apply to the drivers, food handlers, packaging or transport?

*"If you're putting your trust in someone making and handling the food you're actually going to be eating whereas if you're ordering online from a supermarket you're going to be handling it and cooking it."* (Female, C2DE, Citizens' Forum, Ballymena)

*"What part are they rating? What process does this apply?"*  
(Female, C2DE, Citizens' Forum, Ballymena)

Participants also held concerns around which part of the shop this would be referring to or if the same measures applied with overseas products not sourced from within the UK.

*"Not all products are British sourced...if my strawberries are coming from Namibia how are they ruled? I assumed Tesco has done its background checks."* (Female, ABC1, Citizens' Forum, Ballymena)

*"I'm not sure whether the rating is for their bakery, restaurant, fresh food isles, perishable....does this badge cover all?"* (Female, 32, C2DE, Online Forum)

There is an opportunity for the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to raise awareness with hygiene within supermarkets. Participants were highly interested in supermarket hygiene when prompted and there appeared to be genuine curiosity for more usage of FHRS information in this area.

*"I like this option as you can compare local stores and this would encourage people to shop at those with higher standards and hopefully force improvements on those with lower scores."* (Female, 29, ABC1, Online Forum)

**Ability to filter on Aggregator sites:** Most participants could see themselves using the FHRS star rating and customer's ratings as a way of assessing which outlet to choose – particularly on aggregator sites. Some suggested it should sit alongside the star rating (clearly labelled). This also applied to those participants who had low food hygiene standards (i.e. it could actually create interest).

Some participants when probed, would still use customer reviews, but stated that if food hygiene was available this may trump all other considerations.

*"Reputation may be of a high standard, but you can't the fake food hygiene rating."* (Male, ABC1, Citizens' Forum, Derry-Londonderry)

*"For me, I'd rather know the hygiene rating rather than what 326 people thought about their dinner."* (Male, ABC1, Citizens' Forum, Derry-Londonderry)

*"If it is sitting up there alongside the rating, I might consider using both instead of just the star rating"* (Male, ABC1, Citizens' Forum Derry-Londonderry)

There were genuine, spontaneous reactions to being able to use FHRs information in this way, which participants viewed as a positive way to engage with food hygiene information, even if this had previously been a low priority for them.

**Usage of FHRs on social media:** There was minimal use of social media to purchase food online. Participants are generally wary of using social media apps to order food online and there is an opportunity for FSA to maximise usage of FHRs information in this area to allay fears.

*"I have never used "social media" to order food online, and never would as I would not trust it if it's not an official site of its own."* (Female, 29, ABC1, Online Forum)

Uncertainties with ordering food on social media seemed to stem from participants' fears around security concerns and the potential for hacking of financial information.

*"Anything I've bought via social media in the past feels "uncertain" with a lot of jumping around between external payment portals and the like."* (Male, 27, ABC1, Online Forum)

*"No, I know of privacy hacks on social media. It just doesn't feel as encrypted as it's social networking..."* (Male, 55, C2DE, Online Forum)

There is an opportunity here to make use of this "uncertainty vacuum" to entice participants to use FHRs information on Facebook and Twitter to provide greater assurance and certainty around ordering food on these platforms.

# 7 Conclusions & Recommendations

Following on from the insight gained in the previous sections, we recommend the following actions for your consideration emanating from the key findings:

- 1. There is an opportunity for FSA to raise understanding of the FHRs outside of the “immediacy” associated with online ordering to maximise usage.** Participants were often “in a hurry” or hungry when ordering food online with low willingness to think about other considerations. Participants lacked knowledge and therefore trust in the FHRs due to not understanding the rating scale. When participants are hungry or “in a hurry”, they are less likely to engage with this information.
- 2. FHRs information needs to be provided as early as possible in the purchasing journey to influence usage.** Participants stated that when food was placed in their online shopping basket they psychologically felt that they had already “purchased” the item. To facilitate usage, FHRs information needs to be provided as early as possible in the purchasing journey to influence usage.
- 3. Information needs to be presented consistently and in a recognisable format to encourage behaviour change.** Participants need information in a recognisable, repeated format so that they can avoid having to search for this on a webpage or App. To maximise usage, FHRs information needs to be presented consistently and in a recognisable format to encourage behaviour change.
- 4. Information needs to be immediately accessible to allow participants to make ‘snap decisions’ or there is potential they will ignore it.** Information needs to be immediately accessible to allow participants to make decisions “at a glance”. Due to the immediacy of online food ordering, participants preferred the rating to be displayed.
- 5. Some participants are willing to “click-through” to access FHRs information.** Participants who were particularly interested

or curious about FHRS information and had been habitual users of the scheme outside of the online sphere, felt they needed an added layer of reassurance that the information they were receiving was authentic, but were also interested in gaining further understanding of a business rating. These participants still need the option to click to receive more information.

## Conclusions

***Hunger, loss of connection and convenience are key to participant preferences:*** Food ordering in the online sphere presents an even greater difficulty for people to engage with FHRS information. We are aware from previous research that food hygiene is not a “top of mind” consideration for the majority of the general population when purchasing food, but this situation becomes more complicated within the digital sphere.

Online food shoppers have less “connection” with the food that they buy. They are not able to tangibly handle their food in comparison to physically being present in a supermarket, they are not able to “inspect” the premises through a visual assessment and they are unable to get a “feel” for the premises without physically setting foot inside.

It is this absence of visual cues, which participants might use to assess hygiene standards while out eating in restaurants or shopping, that drives participants to disengage further with food hygiene considerations, which in turn makes them more likely to make risky, less rational decisions.

The main challenge and also opportunity for the FSA is “filling the uncertainty void” is this absence of visual cues by providing FHRS information to build empowerment and confidence.

***Speed and convenience will always trump other priorities when ordering online:*** The challenge for the Food Standards Agency is that participants are usually purchasing food online because it is convenient and fast and these priorities are the key reasons for using these platforms in the first instance.

The obstacle here is that people are trying to make “snap” decisions when they are hungry, which has a direct impact on not only their ability but

also their willingness to digest and interact with information relating to their order.

To maximise usage of the FHRs information, any future design of FHRs information for online platforms needs to be based on the four following principles; clarity, accessibility, consistency and authenticity.

- Clarity - Participants need information to be presented in a logical, coherent format which they can view as soon as they enter a home-page.
- Accessibility - If information is not immediately accessible to participants they will be unable and unwilling to engage with it or use it in their overall decision-making.
- Consistency - There needs to be consistency in the positioning of information to build confidence, recognition and an ability to compare restaurants in terms of rating.
- Authenticity - Building brand awareness through creating a sticker that makes it clear to the public that this is official, certified FSA information will build trust in the sticker as an authoritative source which should be referenced.

***Raising knowledge of the FHRs rating scale:*** Low usage of FHRs information across the research was underpinned by participant misunderstanding and perplexities around the FHRs rating scale. Building on the recommendations outlined, the public may benefit from awareness raising, specifically in the following areas highlighted across the research;

- What inspections entail?
- How these are carried out?
- How often these are carried out?
- What does 0-5 scale mean?
- What is the difference in standards across this scale?
- At what point on the scale should the public consider that an establishment is unsafe?
- How the public can assess further information on inspections for those who want further information?

By building awareness, the FSA may be able to affect behaviour change with people who are interested in FHRS information but lack the clarity around what it constitutes and what this might mean for their purchasing habits. Hopefully by engaging with people outside of the “convenience sphere” when ordering online, food hygiene will move higher up the public priority list and lead to increased usage, understanding and confidence in FHRS information.

# Appendices Contents

- 1. Appendix A – Discussion Guide Citizens’ Forum**
- 2. Appendix B – Topic Guide Online Forum**
- 3. Appendix C – Mock Stimuli used**

## Appendix A – Discussion Guide Citizens’ Forum

### FSA Online FHRS Display – Wave 1 Citizens’ Forum Discussion Guide v0.1

#### Aims and Objectives

- To explore consumer needs in relation to expectations around online display of FHRS ratings information on food ordering sites.
- To begin to build an understanding about consumer context in this area and how ratings might be apprehended.
- To inform the development of best practice in the presentation of the FHRS ratings information. Specifically identifying:
  - How and where the FHRS ratings information should be signposted to maximise consumer awareness and use;
  - The best means of presenting the FHRS ratings so that consumers can easily access useful information that empowers them to make informed choices;
  - What drives consumer reactions and preferences and the impact this will have on how FHRS information should be delivered;
  - Any risks of misunderstanding or lack of clarity, the causes of these confusions, and ways to prevent misunderstanding and maximise accessibility;

## Notes on the guide

### Materials:

Material	Description
1. Example landing pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several examples of online takeaway ordering pages (website or app) to prompt respondents' memories of their customer journey.</li> <li>• One page containing several examples of online supermarket landing pages (website or app) to prompt respondents' memories of their customer journey.</li> </ul>
2. FHRS rating 'sticker'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One page displaying FHRS 'sticker' to test for respondent recognition and prompt discussion around usage of FHRS rating scheme</li> </ul>
3. Information needs table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Template table to allow researchers to capture FHRS information needs in relation to online food ordering. To encourage respondents to suggest reasonable and proportionate response.</li> </ul>
4. Information option cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cards to hand out and open discussion around how the online display could look – FHRS logo with text 'To check the food hygiene rating before you buy, click here'.</li> <li>• Mix of visual examples to cover:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Different locations on page</li> <li>○ Mix of landing page/individual business/restaurant page (anonymised)</li> <li>○ Mix of ordering sites</li> <li>○ Mix of website and app examples</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Key Questions	Materials	Approx timing
1. Welcome and Introduction		5 minutes
<p><b>1.1 Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce TNS-BMRB – independent research company</li> <li>• Research is being carried out on behalf of FSA</li> <li>• Introduce purpose of research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We are going to explore how FSA food hygiene ratings can be made more accessible and useful to you. We will be discussing how you order your food online through various channels and what you want and need from this experience. We will be presenting you with a range of “mock-up” sites to gauge how you want food hygiene ratings to be presented and how these can be improved to make accessibility easier for you. There are no right or wrong answers, this is an explorative exercise.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Introduce FSA representative(s) (if present at group) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Individual introductions, explaining their role for the group</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Confidentiality – their views will be used, but not identifiable</li> <li>• MRS guidelines</li> <li>• Ground rules</li> <li>• Length of discussion: 90 minutes</li> <li>• Any other housekeeping (fire exits, loos, etc)</li> </ul>		
2. Food ordering habits and attitudes		10 minutes
<p><i><b>Aim:</b> To establish respondents’ food ordering habits (e.g. order takeaways vs. eating out and online supermarket shopping vs. shopping in-person) and to understand the context in which consumers will view FHRS information.</i></p> <p><i><b>Researcher:</b> Alternate starting point across groups between the difficult online ordering options (takeaways, supermarkets, online chains, Amazon etc)</i></p> <p><b><u>Takeaways/Restaurants</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do they / how often do they order takeaways online vs. eating out?</li> <li>• Do they/ how often do they order food from a restaurant to eat at</li> </ul>		

<p>home?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what circumstances do they order takeaways online vs. eating out?</li> <li>• What types of outlet?</li> <li>• What type of foods?</li> <li>• What are they looking for from an online takeaway / restaurant take out order?</li> <li>• What are the benefits/drawbacks of ordering online from takeaways/restaurants to them personally?</li> <li>• Do they have any concerns about ordering food from takeaways/restaurants? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Researcher to note any spontaneous mention of food poisoning risk here.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b><u>Supermarkets</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do they / how often do they order their supermarket shopping online vs. doing it in-person?</li> <li>• In what circumstances do they order supermarket shopping online vs. doing it in-person?</li> <li>• What type of outlet?</li> <li>• What type of foods/products?</li> <li>• What are the differences between the two experiences (what are the positives/negatives)?</li> <li>• What are they looking for from their supermarket shop? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Researcher to note any spontaneous mention of food poisoning risk.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b><u>Ordering from online commercial food businesses</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do they/how often do they order food from online catering services (bakers/catering/cake makers)?</li> <li>• Do they order food stuffs from online shops such as Amazon/Ebay?</li> <li>• What are the advantages of ordering food through these channels?</li> <li>• What types of outlets do they use? <i>Probe on examples</i></li> <li>• Do they have any concerns about ordering through these channels?</li> <li>• Can they give a positive/negative example of using these channels to order food? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Researcher to note any spontaneous mention of food poisoning risk.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b><u>Ordering food online through social media and apps</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do they use social media or any particular apps to order food? Can they give some examples?</li> <li>• What do they feel are the main benefits/drawbacks of using social media and apps to order food?</li> </ul>		
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<p><i>consumer awareness and use.</i></p> <p><i>Explain to group that we now wish to explore their interest in the food hygiene ratings of an establishment or business from which they would potentially order food.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If not already covered in above sections, is food poisoning a concern? When eating out? When ordering takeaways online? When ordering supermarket shopping online? When ordering from restaurant websites? When ordering through social media/apps?</li> <li>• Is food hygiene important to them?</li> </ul> <p><i>*Researcher to note differences in levels of concern across different food ordering types.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any differences between each of these groups? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What are the reasons for these differences?</li> <li>○ What are the reasons for their views when ordering online?</li> <li>○ Are there differences between ordering takeaway online vs. supermarket shopping online?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How do respondents address any concerns in this area? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What sources of information do they use?</li> <li>○ What are the reasons behind these concerns?</li> <li>○ Do attitudes and behaviours differ across different food ordering types? Why?</li> <li>○ What are the reasons for attitudes and behaviour in this area relating to ordering online?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>*Researcher to note spontaneous mention of FHRS</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If not mentioned, researcher to draw attention to FHRS</li> <li>• Are respondents aware of the scheme?</li> <li>• How often would they encounter information about the scheme?</li> <li>• Why do they think the scheme exists?</li> <li>• Do they use the scheme? When? How?</li> <li>• What are the reasons for using / not using the scheme?</li> <li>• Have they ever used the scheme to decide whether or not to</li> </ul>	<p>FHRS rating 'sticker'</p>	
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<p>purchase from a particular provider? If yes, can they provide examples?</p>		
<p><b>5. Spontaneous views on presenting FHRs information for online ordering sites</b></p>		<p><b>15 minutes</b></p>
<p><i><b>Aim:</b> To explore consumer needs in relation to expectations around online display of FHRs ratings information on food ordering sites/apps to begin to inform best practice in this area.</i></p> <p><i><b>Researcher:</b> To explain we are interested in scoping out all possible options on presenting FHRs information for online ordering sites. To emphasise the purpose of the exercise is to ascertain respondents' needs and views in this area whilst balancing what is practical, reasonable and proportionate for businesses.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researcher to invite suggestions about information they would want in this area when either (1) ordering takeaway food online or (2) ordering supermarket shop online (3) ordering food from commercial/ catering businesses (4) ordering food through social media/apps</li> <li>• Researcher to capture all information needs on template flip chart table.</li> <li>• Researcher to clarify and capture for each information need; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Why do they need this information?</li> <li>○ How would they personally use the information? At what point in the ordering journey?</li> <li>○ How often would they personally use the information?</li> <li>○ Is there an alternative (with lower demands on businesses) to meet this need?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>*Throughout, researcher to push back on 'the rating, for every business, on every site', reminding of the outlined purpose of the exercise.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researcher to check for any additional / different information needs when (1) ordering takeaway food online or (2) ordering supermarket shop online depending on rotation. (3) ordering food from commercial/ catering businesses (4) ordering food through social</li> </ul>	<p>Information needs flip-chart</p>	<p><b>10 minutes</b></p> <p><b>5 minutes</b></p>

<p>media/apps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researcher to clarify and capture for each additional / different information need; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Why do they need this information?</li> <li>○ How would they personally use the information? At what point in the ordering journey?</li> <li>○ How often would they personally use the information? Is there an alternative (with lower demands on businesses) to meet this need?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
<p><b>6. Group Exercise: Presenting and testing draft options for delivering additional information</b></p>		<p><b>20 minutes</b></p>
<p><i><b>Aim:</b> To inform best practice in the presentation of FHRS information in terms of how and where FHRS information should appear to maximise awareness, reduction of confusion and maximising ease of use.</i></p> <p><i><b>Researcher:</b> To hand out cards showing different options for presenting information about FHRS components</i></p> <p><i><b>Researcher:</b> To hand out respondent notes page and ask participants to capture initial responses to each option on paper (specifically thinking about clarity, comprehension, ease of use, how they would respond, any questions)</i></p> <p><i><b>*Researcher to note that mock Dominoes slide with FHRS rating will present how these will be presented under mandatory regulations and explore this with group</b></i></p> <p><i><b>Researcher:</b> To remind respondents purpose of exercise is to create a reasonable and proportionate solution (i.e. that meets consumer needs whilst balancing the burden placed on businesses)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group discussion about initial views of each option.</li> <li>• Researcher to note spontaneous mention of; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clarity</li> <li>○ Comprehension</li> <li>○ Ease of use</li> <li>○ How they would respond</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Information option cards</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Note any questions/concerns raised</li> </ul> <p><i>If not mentioned, prompt on each of the above areas.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researcher to assess overall consumer views on each option, noting benefits and downsides of each presentation option, and ideas for adjustment.</li> <li>• Do any of the options impact on perceptions of food businesses/online ordering sites/regulators and the FSA? Which ones? How? Why?</li> <li>• After all options are shown, researcher to ask which options respondents prefers. What are the reasons for this?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>7. Creative co-creation exercises to workshop solutions for best/alternative presentation of the information</b></p>		<p><b>10 minutes</b></p>
<p><i><b>Aim:</b> To inform best practice in the presentation of FHRS information; how and where FHRS rating information should appear to maximise awareness, reduction of confusion and maximising ease of use.</i></p> <p><i><b>Researcher:</b> To ask respondents to create their preferred solution to presentation of FHRS information, combining elements from options viewed in both section 5 (spontaneous views) and 6 (draft options).</i></p> <p><i><b>Researcher:</b> To remind respondents purpose of exercise is to create a reasonable and proportionate solution (i.e. that meets consumer needs whilst balancing the burden placed on businesses)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents present their preferred combination of elements from exercise using cards from section 7.</li> <li>• How and where should the FHRS ratings info be signposted to maximise consumer awareness / use?</li> <li>• Are there any risks of misunderstandings / lack of clarity? What are the causes of this? Could this be prevented? How?</li> <li>• Would they use this information? Why? Why not? What could increase use of information further?</li> </ul>		<p><b>5 minutes</b></p> <p><b>5 minutes</b></p>
<p><b>8. FSA Questions</b></p>		<p><b>10 mins</b></p>

<p><b><i>If FSA representative is in attendance, please proceed with this section, if not please continue to closing</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Aim:</i></b> To allow respondents to pose outstanding questions to FSA representative and / or explore food hygiene ratings information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researcher to invite FSA representative to pose questions about expectations / presentation needs in the area.</li> <li>• Researcher to invite respondents to ask outstanding questions to FSA.</li> <li>• Researcher to moderate level of detail in answering questions and capture any unanswered questions which are out of scope.</li> </ul>		<p>5 minutes</p> <p>5 minutes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Wrap up</b></li> </ul>		<p><b>5 mins</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank respondents, inform of next steps and close</li> </ul>		

## Appendix B – Topic Guide Online Forum

### FSA NI FHRS ONLINE DISPLAY- Topic Guide

#### Research aims

#### Welcome Section

Hello and welcome to the online community and thank you for agreeing to take part. We really appreciate your participation and value you taking the time to share your views!

This research is being conducted by TNS BMRB – an independent research agency specialising in social research – to hear your views about how food hygiene should be presented on online platforms where you purchase food.

#### Online Forum Ground Rules

Participation in the forum is voluntary, confidential and anonymous – we will not share your name or details with FSA, or any other organisation and your name will not be used in the report.

This community lasts for 5 days from Saturday 19 March – Wednesday 23 March 2016, and there are 7 activities to complete in total. We ask you to please do the following;

- Please login at least three times across the five days to complete activities posted. We anticipate that across the five day period this should take you no longer than 90 minutes.
- There are 7 activities in total, please complete these in number order.
- Please keep the conversation going if we or someone else on the forum replies to one of your posts - we want to keep the discussion flowing.
- Please check your email notifications as we will be following up with further questions and comments.

#### Information on the Research Project

The research is on behalf of the Food Standards Agency (Northern Ireland). You may already be aware of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme which provides summary ratings for each food establishment – ranging from 0-5 – which are published online, and businesses in England and Northern Ireland are also encouraged to display window stickers.

The Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland is now interested in hearing people's views about how this information could be presented online.

Please be reassured that this is not a test of your knowledge. There are no 'right or wrong' answers. It is meant to be a safe, non-judgmental space which gives you the opportunity to discuss your experiences and views on food hygiene information and share any insights on how you would like to see this information presented. Please feel free to read other participants answers and like or comment to discuss them further.

We look forward to your posts!



## THE TNS BMRB TEAM

### **Activity 1 – Objective: To “warm up participants” and collect general attitudes on food hygiene**

#### **Task 1**

Now you know more about us and the research, we would love to know more about you!

Firstly, could you please tell us a little bit about yourself? (What do you do for a living? /hobbies?)

What is your favourite food/takeaway?

[Free text box]

**Moderator prompt:** *To probe on any interesting hobbies/favourite foods etc to try and ensure a flow of conversation*

#### **Task 2**

What kinds of foods do you like to order online? From which outlets?

[Free text box]

**Moderator prompt:** *To probe on any interesting purchases or outlet options to ensure a flow in conversation*

#### **Task 3**

Please look at the below statements. How important are the following when you purchase food online (through social media, takeaways, online food shopping)? Can you please provide reasons for your "top choices" in the below text box?

- **Speed**
- **Convenience**
- **Promotions/deals**
- **Hygiene**
- **Quality**
- **Taste**

**Moderator prompt:** *To probe on any choices which are made to try and understand in more detail which things are higher/lower priority and why*

### **Activity 2 – FHRs Awareness - Objective: To gain insight into how participants are using FHRs information and their general awareness of the scheme**

#### **Task 1**

Thanks very much for sharing your thoughts with us so far - it is really interesting to share the detail.

We now just want to ask you a few questions relating to your opinions on food hygiene.

How important is food hygiene to you in general?

To what extent do you think about food hygiene when you buy food? Why/why not?

[Free text box]

**Moderator Probes:** *To try and uncover why participants think food hygiene is important/not important? To probe on differences in food type/ Do they pay more attention in certain circumstances/with certain retailers?*

### **Task 2**

Now we want to talk a bit about your knowledge and experience of food hygiene information.

1. Have you come across the below image before?
2. Where have you noticed it?
3. What do you know about this scheme?
4. Why do you think it exists?

Please use the text box below to respond.

[FSA rating icon displayed]

[Free text box]

**Moderator Probes:** *To try and gain the level of knowledge and awareness of the Scheme and probe on the objectives behind it/Probe on level of awareness*

### **Task 3**

We now want to speak to you more generally about how you may/may not use food hygiene information.

You may already be aware of Food Hygiene Rating Scheme which provides ratings for each food establishment – ranging from 0-5 – which are published online, and businesses in England and Northern Ireland are also encouraged to display window stickers. The scheme helps consumers choose where to eat out or shop for food by providing information about hygiene standards. The scheme also encourages businesses to improve hygiene standards.

1. Have you ever used the below scheme to decide where you have eaten out or bought food online?
2. If you have, can you provide an example of when you used the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme to decide whether or not to purchase food?
3. If you have not used the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme before, what makes you chose not to use this information when buying/purchasing food?

[Free text box]

**Moderator Probes:** *To probe on examples where this may/may not have been used and why? To try and bring out further detail of past experiences*

### **Task 4**

1. How do you judge the food hygiene standards of a food outlet when you buy food online (e.g. at a restaurant, takeaway or supermarket)?
2. What sources of information do you use?"
3. Please provide any additional sources in the box below.

[Free text box]

**Moderator Probes:** To probe on personal indicators for food hygiene, i.e. do they use their own instincts/word of mouth reviews from friends/family/Trip Advisor/Just Eat peer reviews? How do they rate a Supermarket's hygiene standards?

**Activity 3 – FHRS Information Positioning – Objective: To understand how participants would like FHRS information positioned in terms of online display**

**Task 1/2/3 (We are asking participants to look at a number of different positioning stims and give us a view on which is their favourite)**

1. Thank you for participating so far, we hope you are enjoying taking part. Please keep an eye out for further discussions and commentary from our moderators and please join the conversations!

Please can you take a look at the below image, specifically focusing on where the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme sticker is positioned.

Imagine you are about to purchase food online from this site;

Using the green tick marker, please tell us **what you like about the positioning of this sticker and why?**

Using the red cross marker, please tell us **what you dislike** about the positioning of this sticker and why?

Please **explain** why you have marked the sheet in the way you have.

**Please drag and drop the markers** over the information sheet to tell us which parts you like and dislike, particularly any language that is clear/unclear.

*Note: You will need to scroll down for the text box to write your response*

[Mark up documents]

*Moderator Probes: To probe further on likes/dislikes and reasons behind these/ also to draw out any potential for confusion/frustration*

**Task 4 (providing participants with an image to mark up where they would like FHRS positioning)**

Please can you take a look at the below image.

Imagine you are purchasing from an online retailer. Can you please use the markers provided to;

- Highlight the area where you would **most** prefer Food Hygiene Ratings Scheme information to be displayed and why? (in text box)
- Highlight the area where you would **least** prefer Food Hygiene Ratings Scheme Information to be displayed and why? (in text box)

*Moderator Probes: To probe on why they have chosen the specific locations on the image and the reasons behind these*

**Activity 4 – Objective: To gain insight into how FHRS information should be presented in terms of rating**

**Task 1**

Please take a look at the below pictures and the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme sticker provided.

You will notice that this image contains a link to the Food Standards Agency website to check the food hygiene rating of this retailer.

Please can you imagine you are making a purchase online, and use the markers to explain whether you like/dislike this link option and why?

Please use the additional text box to explain your reasons further.

[Mark up and free text box]

*Moderator Probes: This is a key area for the research objectives, we want to get to the crux of how happy consumers would be to click on a link to the FSA site and why they would not like to do this?*

**Task 2**

Please take a look at the below pictures and the Food Hygiene Rating sticker provided.

You will notice that this image contains the actual food hygiene rating of this retailer as opposed to a link to the Food Standards Agency site.

Please can you imagine you are making a purchase online, and use the markers to explain whether you like/dislike this option and why?

Please use the additional text box to explain your reasons further.

[Mark up and free text box]

*Moderator Probes: This is a key area for the research objectives; we want to understand the reasoning for potentially needing/wanting an upfront FHRS rating as opposed to a link?*

**Task 3**

Following on from the previous question, please chose one of the following statements;;

1. I would be willing to click on a link to the Food Standards Agency website to check for the most up-to-date information, as hygiene inspections may take place a number of times across the year.
2. I would like to see the actual “scored” Food Hygiene Rating on a first web page of a retailer (0-5 sticker) as I would not be willing to click into another page to view this.
3. To avoid receiving potentially false information, I would be willing to click on a link to the Food Standards Agency website, to check that the Food Hygiene Rating is correct.

*Moderator Probes: Please fully probe on the selection here building on the previous exercise, why have they chosen this option/would they not consider using a link?/ Would they not access FHRS information if it was not displayed right away? Why?*

#### **Task 4**

If you were to use FHRS Information, at what point during your purchase would you like this information displayed?

- At the beginning on the home page of a website
- Just before I pay for a food item
- At the beginning, but also at several points throughout the process
- On a separate page which might also contain other general information such as opening hours and contact details
- Before I make a choice to buy a food item

*Moderator Probes: Please fully probe on participant choice here. Why is it important to have this information at the stage chosen? Why would they be more likely to use this information at this stage? At what stages are they least likely to use this information?*

#### **Activity 5 – FHRS Display Language – Objective: To gain an understanding of how participants wish FHRS language to be presented.**

##### **Task 1**

Please take a look at the image below with specific interest in the Food Hygiene Rating information presented.

Please give us your views on the language used in particular;

- Whether this would encourage you to view the Food Hygiene Rating?
- How this could be improved to encourage you to view the Food Hygiene Rating?
- Your suggestions/comments on re-wording to make this more user –friendly or easier to understand?

*Moderator Probes: Please fully probe on the potential for misunderstanding/confusion with language?/Does the language make them more/less likely to click?*

##### **Task 2**

Please take a look at the Food Hygiene Rating information in the below image and in particular the language used.

Which of the following statements would you prefer to be used alongside the Food Hygiene Rating which would encourage you to click on the link?

- **Check the Food Hygiene Rating**
- **Click to check the Food Hygiene Rating**
- **Food Hygiene Rating Available here**
- **Please click here to check the Food Hygiene Rating**

*Moderator Probes: Please fully probe on choice selected, why have they chosen this particular wording? Is their choice more likely to make participant consider viewing this information?*

### Task 3

Looking at the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme link in the below image, from its appearance would you trust that this is official Food Standards Agency Information? Why/Why not?

Would any additional information improve your trust that this is official Food Standards Agency Information?

[Open text box]

*Moderator Probes: Please probe fully on recognition and trust in how the link is currently presented? Consistency of colouring from other FSA material? Would inclusion of the official FSA logo help build trust that this is official? Why?*

### **Activity 6 – FHR Social Media – Objective: To gain insight into participants use of social media to buy food and where they would like the rating link presented**

#### Task 1

Please use the below text box to respond to these questions;

1. Do you ever order food online through social media?
2. What kinds of foods have you ordered and what has been your experience of using social media to order food?

**Moderator prompts;** *Some participants at groups were unaware that they were purchasing through social media as they had made several one off purchases. Prompt on items like bespoke cakes, jams, or using Amazon for those hard to get products not available on the high street? Why do they choose to purchase these online?*

3. How do you make a choice to buy from these retailers?

**Moderator prompts;** *e.g. friends/family recommendations/other posts on their feed/wall?*

4. Do you ever think about food hygiene standards when buying food on social media?

*Moderator Probes: Please fully probe on response; is this a “top of mind” consideration, if not what is/what takes priority? Have they had any past experiences where what was delivered and offered was different? Can they give examples of good/bad experiences?*

#### Task 2

Please take a look at the below image. Imagine you are about to purchase a food item to order from this site, please use the markers below to highlight;

- Where you would most prefer Food Hygiene Rating Information to be presented and why?

- Where you would least prefer Food Hygiene Rating Information to be presented and why?

*Moderator Probes: Please fully probe on positioning of this and the reasons behind why this may be useful/not useful*

**Activity 7 – Final Activity – Objective: To understand the “take-away” messages and collect any further insights from participants**

Congratulations – you have made it to the final task! Thank you for all your hard work so far –your views and experiences will be really helpful to us and the Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland.

For the last task, we would love to know what is the one key thing that you will take away from this forum?

Did you learn something new/ or did you come across something another participant said that was particularly interesting?

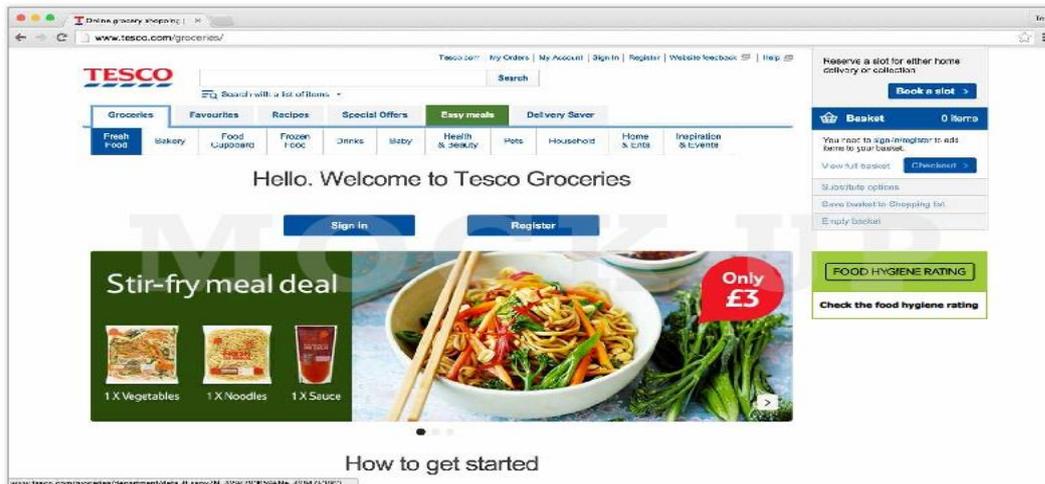
Good luck and thank you for taking part!

*Moderator Probes: Please probe on any interesting insights or lessons learned by participants or anything that they have found surprising? Draw attention to some important insights learned across the forum and ask participants to comment on these.*

## Appendix C – “Mock-Up” Stimuli

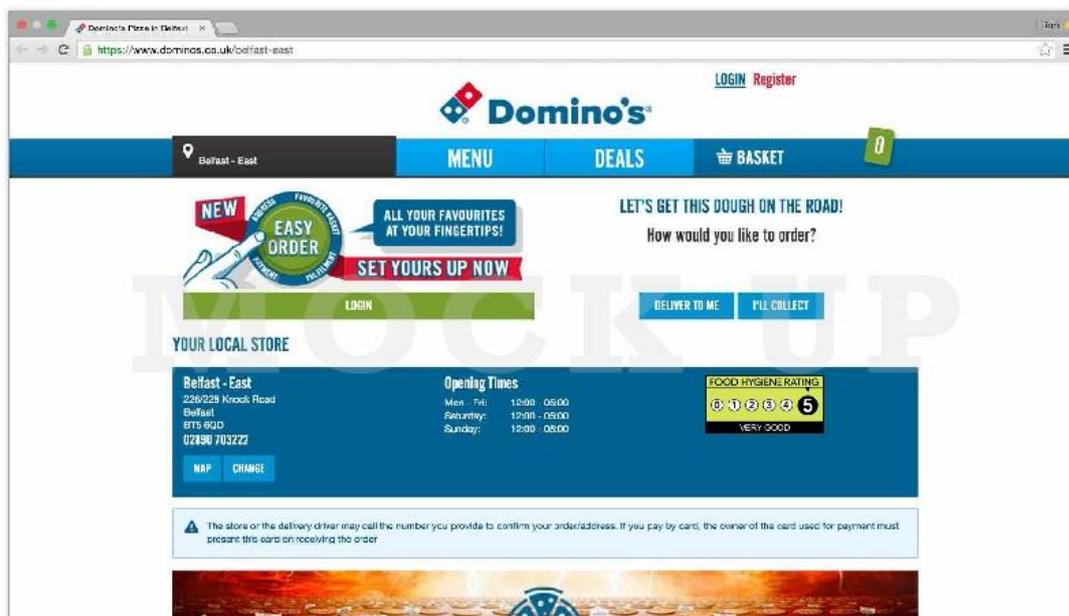
Please find below sample of the “mock-up” stimuli used in discussions across both the Wave 1 Citizens’ Forum and Wave 2 Online Forums.

STIMULUS A – Supermarket Mock Up (Tesco)



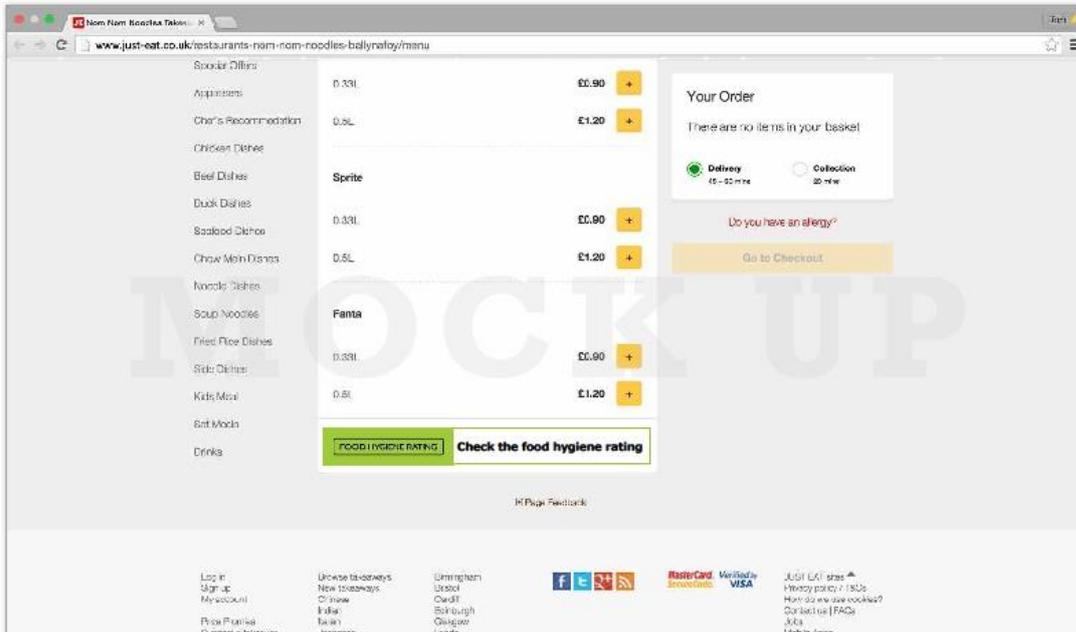
This stimulus has been created by TNS BMRB purely to generate discussion within groups, and is in no way associated with the brands included here.

STIMULUS C – Takeaway Mock Up (Dominoes)



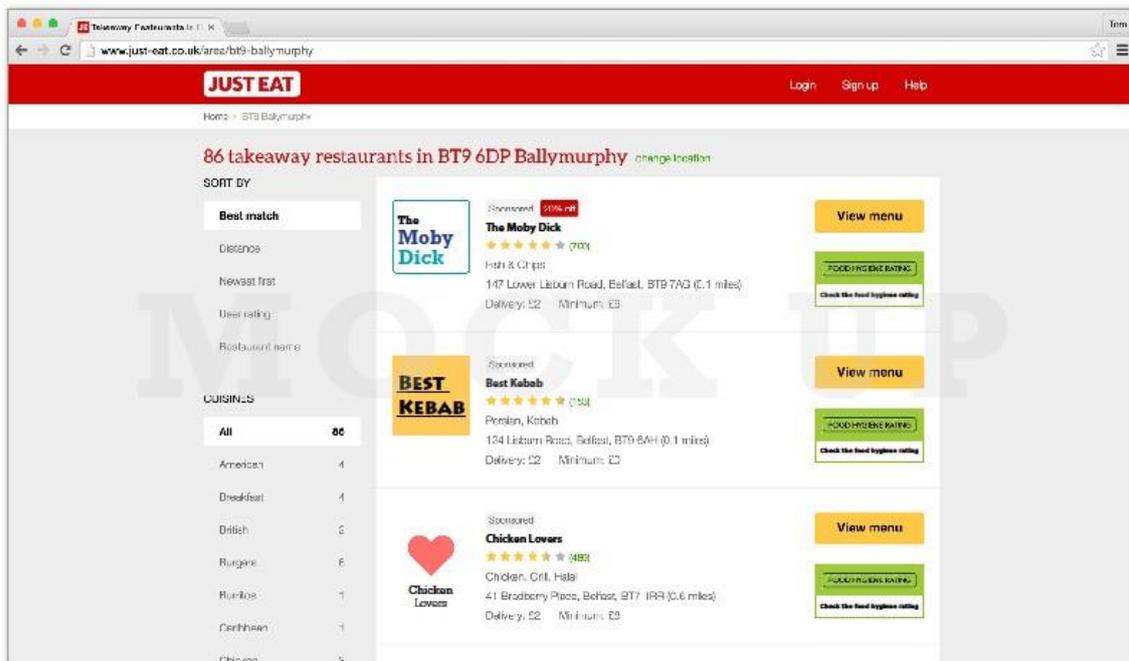
This stimulus has been created by TNS BMRB purely to generate discussion within groups, and is in no way associated with the brands included here.

STIMULUS B – Aggregator (Just Eat)



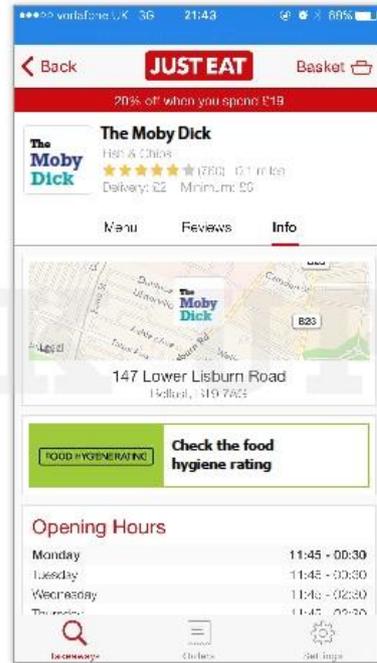
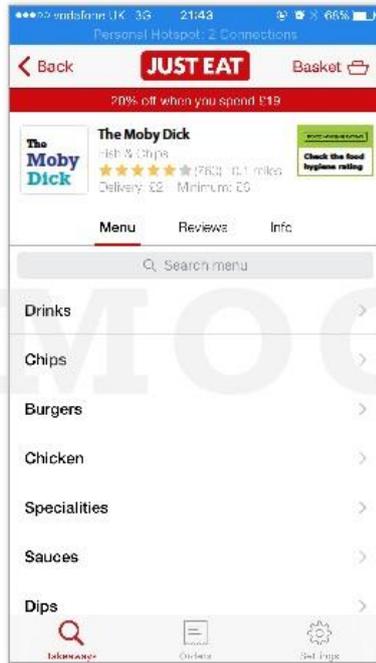
This stimulus has been created by TNS BMRB purely to generate discussion within groups, and is in no way associated with the brands included here.

STIMULUS B – Aggregator (Just Eat)



This stimulus has been created by TNS BMRB purely to generate discussion within groups, and is in no way associated with the brands included here.

STIMULUS 8 – Aggregator (Just Eat)



This stimulus has been created by TNS BMRB purely to generate discussion within groups, and is in no way associated with the brands included here.