

Briefing note for food businesses.

Business owners looking to improve food hygiene scores will soon be asked to pay for a visit from a council inspector.

Brighton & Hove City Council will be bringing in the charges from September 12, as part of a national pilot project, co-ordinated by the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

Up until now businesses not awarded the top food hygiene score of 5 have been able to request a visit from a council inspector and subsequent rescore, free of charge. However, under the new rules, will be charged £90 for a re-score revisit

Re-inspections initiated by the council undertaken to assess improvements and protect the public do not include rescoring will still be carried out free of charge.

Each year Brighton & Hove City Council receives between 50 and 60 requests for re-scores from food businesses in the city. Around half of these requests are from businesses awarded 3 or 4 FHRS which officers would not normally re-visit.

The pilot scheme also says:

- There will be no limit to the number of re-visits requested. However, to avoid paying for multiple re-visits, business owners are advised to address issues before submitting a request.
- The usual three month stand-still period following an inspection will no longer apply.
- Requested re-inspections will be carried out within three months of receipt of the request and payment.
- Charges will apply to all revisits requested during the pilot scheme (September 12 to November 7.)
- Business owners should be aware that during the re-visit, the officer will be looking at standards generally, not just at the specific areas they have been working to improve. So hygiene ratings could well go up, down or remain the same.

When the pilot project finishes, on November 7, Brighton & Hove City Council will decide whether to continue to charge or wait for further guidance from the Food Standards Agency.

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