

Public Petition Committee
Thursday 24 September 2026
3rd Meeting, 2026 (Session 7)

PE2217: Bring the Food Standards Agency hygiene rating scale to Scotland, and make it mandatory to display

Introduction

Petitioner Johnny Lee Kimberley

Petition Summary Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to adopt the Food Standards Agency hygiene scale, similar to the ones they have down in England. I am someone who suffers with anxiety over food hygiene, and I don't think a simple pass or fail is enough information to base off. It should also be mandatory that the hygiene scale is displayed on the food establishment's main window.

Website <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE2217>

1. This is a new petition that was published on 24 June 2026.
2. A full summary of this petition and its aims can be found at **Annexe A**.
3. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 30 signatures have been received on this petition.
4. A SPICe briefing has been prepared to inform the Committee's consideration of the petition and can be found at **Annexe B**.
5. The Committee seeks views from the Scottish Government on all new petitions before they are formally considered.
6. The Committee has received a submission from the Scottish Government which is set out in **Annexe C** of this paper.

Action

7. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerks to the Committee
September 2026

Annexe A: Summary of petition

PE2217: Bring the Food Standards Agency hygiene rating scale to Scotland, and make it mandatory to display

Petitioner:

Johnny Lee Kimberley

Date published:

24 June 2026

Petition summary:

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to adopt the Food Standards Agency hygiene scale, similar to the ones they have down in England. I am someone who suffers with anxiety over food hygiene, and I don't think a simple pass or fail is enough information to base off. It should also be mandatory that the hygiene scale is displayed on the food establishment's main window.

Background information:

The type of scale I believe that we should be using is similar to the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme used in England, Wales and Northern Ireland where businesses are inspected and then given a hygiene rating between 5 (very good) and 0 (urgent improvement required).

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/how-food-hygiene-ratings-work>

Annexe B: SPICe Briefing



Scottish Parliament
Information Centre
Ionad Fiosrachaidh
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee on petition PE2217: Bring the Food Standards Agency hygiene rating scale to Scotland, and make it mandatory to display, lodged by Johnny Lee Kimberley

Brief overview of issues raised by the petition

Consumer information on food hygiene

Food hygiene and food standards more broadly are devolved. Food Standards Scotland is responsible for food hygiene in Scotland, while the Food Standards Agency is responsible in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

In all four UK nations, food hygiene is inspected and businesses are given a rating. Hygiene ratings from businesses in all four nations are [collated in a shared database](#).

However, the legal framework, consumer information system, rating scale and rules around displaying ratings differ across the UK.

In terms of the rating system, in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, [a six-point scale is used](#). In Scotland, [businesses are either awarded a 'pass' where they have met the legal requirements for food hygiene](#), or an 'improvement needed' where the business did not meet the legal requirements and needs to make improvements.

The petitioner would like to see Scotland adopt a similar type of scale to the rating system used in the rest of the UK to give the consumer more information than 'pass'/'improvement needed'.

Display of food hygiene inspection outcomes

In Wales and Northern Ireland, it is mandatory, broadly speaking, to [display the food hygiene rating near the customer entrance](#) (in Wales, there are slightly different rules for takeaway food). In Scotland and England, [displaying the rating on the premises is voluntary](#).

The petitioner would like it to become mandatory to display the food hygiene rating on the premises in Scotland.

The Scottish Government has the power to bring forward regulations requiring businesses to display their certificate showing their food hygiene rating in or on food premises. This is provided by [section 16\(1\)](#) and [Schedule 1](#) of the Food Safety Act 1990 ([as amended by the Food \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#)).

Food Standards Scotland SAFER Programme

A broad programme of work to reform and modernise the delivery of food law in Scotland is currently underway.

The [SAFER Programme](#) –

“supports Ministerial commitments to wider public service reform and is a programme of reform to secure improved public health outcomes through model redesign, developing and embracing new and more efficient ways of working, better use of data and digital technologies, and ensuring financial sustainability.”

The objectives of the programme are to:

1. Review and reform the food law delivery model for Scotland, benchmarked against leading international approaches to ensure ambition and best practice.
2. Develop options to sustainably fund delivery of official controls and consider a transparent and proportionate cost recovery system.
3. Explore innovative regulatory strategies for reform, focused on risk, assurance, increased efficiency, and measurable public health outcomes.
4. Utilise new technologies to support food safety professionals, incentivise business compliance, and enhance consumer protection

Part of this programme is the reform of the consumer information system, which includes the Food Hygiene Information Scheme (communication with Food Standards Scotland, 12 August 2026).

In relation to the ratings system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the Food Standards Agency is also [undertaking work to establish a Future of Food Regulation Programme](#). One of the proposed workstreams surrounds “evolving the Food Hygiene Rating System to assess impacts of reforms and modernise it as required.”

Key Organisations and relevant links

- Food Standards Scotland
 - [Food Hygiene Information Scheme](#)
- Food Standards Agency
 - [Food Hygiene Rating Scheme](#)
- Key legislation:
 - The [Food Safety Act 1990](#) – Main legislation relating to e.g. food safety, food information, consumer protection, administration and enforcement.

- The [Food \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) – Established Food Standards Scotland and provides for their duties and powers.
- [Regulation \(EC\) No 178/2002](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety (as amended and assimilated into UK law).
- [Regulation \(EC\) No 852/2004](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs (as amended and assimilated into UK law).

Anna Brand
Senior Researcher
13 August 2026

The purpose of this briefing is to provide a brief overview of issues raised by the petition. SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However, if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at spice@parliament.scot

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in petition briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

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Annexe C: Written Submissions

PE2217/A: Bring the Food Standards Agency hygiene rating scale to Scotland, and make it mandatory to display

Scottish Government written submission, 26 August 2026

Does the Scottish Government consider the specific ask[s] of the petition to be practical or achievable? If not, please explain why.

The Scottish Government have consulted with Food Standards Scotland, who are the public sector food body for Scotland, to respond to this petition.

The provision for mandatory display already exists within the Food Scotland (Act) 2015.

As with all new policies, this would involve significant consultation with stakeholders, namely food business representatives, the regulators who would be required to enforce any mandatory display and consumers.

The introduction of any mandatory display of compliance ratings would include a review of whether the Pass and Improvement Required classifications continue to meet the needs of consumers when they make choices of where to eat.

What, if any, action is the Scottish Government currently taking to address the issues raised by this petition, and is any further action being considered that will achieve the ask[s] of this petition?

Scottish Ministers have provided funding to Food Standards Scotland (FSS) under the Scottish Authorities Food Enforcement Rebuild (SAFER) programme.

SAFER has been created as a public service reform programme to modernise the delivery of food law in Scotland to ensure safe and authentic food for consumers.

The strategic intent of SAFER is a system wide approach, to secure improved public health outcomes through model review, developing and embracing new and more efficient ways of working, through better use of data and digital technologies, and ensuring financial sustainability.

This will include exploring new methods to advise consumers of compliance standards, including mandatory display.

The timelines for SAFER are ambitious with many project and workstreams already in progress and the programme is currently scheduled to run to 2028/29.

Is there any further information the Scottish Government wish to bring to the Committee's attention, which would assist it in considering this petition?

The application and delivery of food law in Scotland does differ significantly from how it is undertaken in England.

In Scotland, inspections of food business are undertaken by Environmental Health Officers (EHO) and Food Safety Officers (FSO) and focuses on the full scope of food law, not just hygiene, and includes issues such as labelling, composition, allergen control, training and food safety management systems. In 2019, Food Standards Scotland introduced a new rating system, which focusses on the full spectrum of food law and prioritising resources on the areas of greatest risk. A new consumer information scheme, will be reflective of food law delivery in Scotland, to ensure consumers are able to make informed choices of where they eat.

Population Health Division, Scottish Government