Eat Safe Jersey

Stewart Petrie
Interim Head of Environmental Health
June 2015
What is Eat Safe?

Eat Safe is a Food Hygiene Awareness Scheme designed:

- to inform customers of the food hygiene standards within a premises, enabling them better to make informed choices.
- to use market forces to drive up standards within food premises, whilst reducing the burden of regulation on the safest food providers.
- to improve intelligence gathering, better to inform the proactive inspection regime, driving efficiency.
Why we created Eat Safe

Over 40% of the population of Jersey eat out at least once a week from a takeaway, café, pub or restaurant. A further 40% also eat a takeaway sandwich at least once a week (JASS 2007) and we have a tourist economy that accounts for 10% of employment on the island.

In 2013 88 residents of Jersey became ill after contracting a rare form of Salmonella Typhimurium DT 8. This was traced to a single caterer

Legislation exists, dating from 1966 and 1967, but is no longer fit for purpose. New Legislation is in the pipeline, but will take time.

With “scores on the doors” schemes operating in the UK for some time the Public has come to expect information on the hygiene standards of food premises.

Freedom of information was coming!
Aims

The purpose of the scheme is to reduce incidences of food poisoning by introducing an easy to use food hygiene information scheme which uses economic and reputational drivers to improve food hygiene standards within food businesses across Jersey.

The scheme provides islanders with information about the hygiene standards found in food businesses, allowing them to make educated choices about where to eat and where to buy food.

Businesses improve their food handling practices to ensure a higher score. Studies from other countries have found a direct correlation between a high food hygiene rating and improved takings for the business.
The process

In March 2014, Environmental Health brought together a small working party to investigate how historical food hygiene inspections could be adapted into a star rating scheme.

A clear remit was drawn up to create a branded, easy to access, searchable scheme, with no additional resource requirements for Environmental Health.

It was agreed not to follow UK and Guernsey models due to the differences in legislation between the jurisdictions.

It was also decided to make the scheme as user friendly as possible, by making the search function more intuitive and by adding a map function.
Customer Focus

It was clear from the outset that there were two distinct groups of customers and that their needs were very different.

Members of the public required something easy to recognise, understand and use.

Businesses required a scheme that was fair, consistent, and rewarded those who went beyond the minimum requirements of the law.

Excellence should be rewarded.
Meeting the Public’s needs

It was agreed that a rating system was the simplest and most user friendly way of conveying information.

It was decided from the start that the scheme must be:

• Branded, to enable customers to recognise a visual image as the hygiene Standard
• Simple, where a quick glance would make the standard clear
• Available online via numerous devices; mobiles, laptop, tablet and computer
• Easy to access through a short URL, enabling customers to access the web page via a branded URL gov.je/eatsafe.
• Searchable, to ensure it was user friendly and broken down by; rating, parish and premises name.
• Well communicated.
Meeting the needs of business

The food industry had increased the pressure on Environmental Health in the wake of the food poisoning outbreak, so it was important to ensure the scheme met the sector’s needs.

Consultation with businesses and a review of hygiene schemes from around the world identified a number of requirements to support a fair and transparent scheme:

Effective marketing of the scheme, ensuring it can be a useful marketing tool for the highest rated.

Clarity and consistency of approach;
Continued use of inspection standards adopted in 1990, ensuring all businesses have been assessed against the same standards for over 20 years.
Creation of the Eat Safe brand standard, enabling businesses to see how the rating is achieved.
Joint visits, auditing and training of the Environmental Health team to ensure consistent scoring.

Public Health Directorate
Meeting the needs of business

Support for businesses that wish to maintain 5 stars or improve their rating:

Self audit forms.
Eat Safe forum, created by Environmental Health and with Environmental Health acting as secretariat. The forum is business run and enables discussion of communication channels and latest food safety / hygiene developments.

Safeguards, to provide businesses with a support framework if they wish to challenge or improve their score:

Request for re-inspection.
Right of reply, to allow a business to add comments to the Eat Safe web page prior to their next inspection.
Appeal, if they disagree with their Eat Safe rating.
Innovation

It was agreed that a scheme that rewards the many businesses that have taken steps to, at a minimum, comply with Jersey legislation should be developed.

The IT programmers created a database that automatically calculates the rating of a premises daily and updates the Eat Safe web page without the need for human resources.

Premises that have stayed the same rating or better are updated on the web page within 48 hours.

Businesses that have allowed their hygiene standards to decline have a two week period before the web page is updated with their new rating.

The design company we used to create the logo was aware of the image requirements of the IT programmers. This ensured that the system used to extract the data was incorporated into a customer focussed, user friendly and interactive web page.
"look before you book"
Improvement in service / outcome

Improvement 1 – Rapid reduction in poor food hygiene standards. During the 4 weeks from writing to businesses with their Eat Safe rating to the public launch of the scheme, the number of premises at high risk of causing food poisoning decreased from 47 to 12.

Improvement 2 – Continuing improvements
Targeted inspections have seen this number continue to decrease from 12 to 5. The number of businesses achieving 4* and 5* ratings continues to rise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Launch</th>
<th>May 20th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Improvement in service / outcome

**Improvement 3 – Retargeted resources**
Eat Safe Jersey has enabled Environmental Health to change its strategy towards proactive inspections enabling those on 0, 2 and 3 stars to be inspected annually and actively encouraged to improve.

**Improvement 4 – Improved contact with businesses**
Businesses are able to benchmark themselves against their peers. It has enabled a more open dialogue between Environmental Health and businesses, resulting in the Eat Safe forum. This will continue to drive up standards. Eat Safe has been incorporated into food hygiene package, supporting the link between environmental health and businesses.

**Improvement 5 – Interactive web page**
The use of an automated web page has efficiency savings for the service. It is an automated process, updated daily by the uniquely designed computer programme. This has helped the public to make informed choices about where to eat out. At its height it received over 12,000 hits daily.
Eat Safe feedback and numbers

Eat Safe is the 6th most used site on Gov.je

There are a few of us [restaurants] who have got together to arrange group food hygiene training.”

restaurant owner

“I don’t want to display my sticker until I achieve at least 4 stars. But customers often ask what’s my rating.”

restaurant owner

“4 is OK but I won’t be happy until I achieve and maintain 5 stars.”

restaurant owner

3 minutes, 52 seconds – average time spent viewing Eat Safe

Over 85% of the public surveyed said they wouldn’t eat in a zero star premises.

JEP April ‘15

In its first six months there were over 40,000 visitors to Eat Safe. Of which nearly 12,000 were repeat visits.
Web site usage and the press

The initial response from the press was extremely positive and the launch of the scheme generated much interest. Whilst the JEP slipped into negativity this was soon reviewed and subsequent interest has been fair and accurate. There is a correlation between articles in the press and the number of visits to the Eat Safe web page. This has occurred at launch, Valentines Day and whenever the press report on a business at 0 or 2 stars.

The ‘Top Ten’ routes in to the Eat Safe site include all of the major press links for Jersey excluding the BBC rate as follows:

Google, Baliwick Express, ITV, Gov.je, Facebook, Bing, JEP, Channel 103, Yahoo and JT Insight.

Recent polls from the JEP asked ‘would you eat in a 0 star restaurant?’ 88% of respondents said ‘no’. A similar “yes” response was had to the question ‘should environmental health have powers to close a 0 rated premises?’
Outcomes

100 premises that were previously unknown to EH and therefore never inspected for food hygiene standards were identified.

reduction in the number of non-compliant food businesses from 9% to 1%

Improved hygiene standards at outdoor catering events

Incorporated Eat Safe into food hygiene training, including that provided by Highlands College.

Food Hygiene has become a regular topic on broadcast, published and social media in Jersey

Eat Safe contributed to an increase of traffic through the Gov.je website of 40% with over 40,000 hits to the website, and 11,600 repeat visitors
Next steps

Expand the scheme to include all food businesses (including business2business).

Add a “healthy options” endorsement

Develop stronger links with tourist industry

Target event organisers

Make display compulsory

Increase the use of social media through “Look before you book” campaigns

New Food Safety Law (in Law Drafting)

Self-financing Food Safety service by 2019?
Conclusions

The Eat Safe Jersey project which came in ahead of time and on budget has rapidly improved Food Hygiene in Jersey.

Eat Safe is understood by the Public who continue to use it regularly and in large numbers.

The industry has embraced the system and is very supportive.

The introduction of the New Food safety law will be much smoother because Eat Safe has paved the way.

Even the Environmental Health Team has come to love Eat Safe.