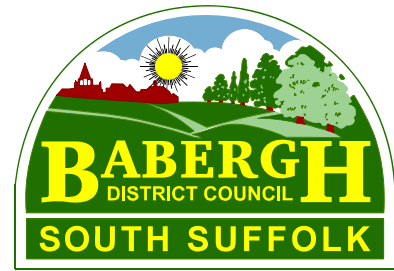


# Babergh Foodwise



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## Scores on the Doors notches up two years!



April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 sees the completion of the first two years of Babergh's food hygiene rating scheme – and it's a significant date, as it means that all eligible food business have now had at least one star rating. We feel that the scheme has been a success, with only a handful of businesses appealing against their score, and a high percentage of businesses achieving four or five stars. At the time of writing the breakdown is as follows:



To have 87% of our business either 'good' or better is very encouraging and shows that in most cases high standards are being maintained.

### Why aren't all businesses eligible?

We decided to exclude our lowest risk premises, which are due for inspection only every three years, because in most cases we do not visit, but keep in touch with them by letter and questionnaire. It would clearly not be fair to issue star certificates without site visits. However there are a few businesses which fall into this category because they are very well run, so we have made a few exceptions to this rule. At the time of writing 27 of our 502 lowest risk premises have been issued with a star rating certificate, and will be visited next time they are due.

**turn to page 2**

continued from page 1

## Is Babergh going to join the national food hygiene rating scheme?

You may have heard that the Food Standards Agency launched the national food hygiene rating scheme late last year. There are some differences between this and the Babergh scheme, and we have decided, along with our neighbours Mid Suffolk District Council, to see how the scheme goes for a while before we decide whether to join. In the meantime however we have been able to share our ratings on a national platform by joining with [www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk](http://www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk) where you can view ratings from 125 local authorities, now including Babergh and Mid Suffolk DC.

## Are there any differences between the schemes operated by the 125 councils on the Scores on the Doors website?

There may be some subtle differences, but all are operating five star schemes with the same score banding for each tier. This



## Are there any more changes planned?

In common with some of the other local authorities on the Scores on the Doors website we will now be awarding a special certificate to businesses which have achieved five stars at two consecutive visits, as an extra incentive to maintain high standards. Such premises will receive a Five Star Elite certificate.

We would love to hear your views on Scores on the Doors – email us at [food.safety@babergh.gov.uk](mailto:food.safety@babergh.gov.uk)

has resulted in us making a very small change to the Babergh scheme at the boundary between one and two stars which will take effect from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011. The above percentages show that this will affect only a very small number of businesses. The effect will be that a few businesses that would have received only one star under the existing bandings will receive two from April 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Food Safety in Catering Courses



- Did you know that an estimated one million people in the UK contract food poisoning every year?
- Did you know that bacteria such as Listeria can grow at temperatures as low as 3°C?
- Did you know that E coli can survive for at least 48hrs on stainless steel surfaces?
- Can you tell the difference between a detergent, a disinfectant and a sanitiser?

Keep yourself and your staff up to date with the latest findings in food safety by attending a Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering or a refresher course run by Babergh District Council.

Courses are run a few times a year at the Council Offices and can also be run on site for groups of 5-12 people.

The next level 2 course at the Council Offices is on **June 20<sup>th</sup> 2011** and costs £62 per delegate to include lunch and all course materials. (Refresher courses cost £45)

To reserve your place call 01473 825888 or download a booking form from the food safety pages on the Babergh website.

# Cooking Temperatures

## What should I aim for?

One of the questions we are most commonly asked during inspections is what is a safe cooking temperature? There is no single temperature that we can state as the correct one, because it is a combination of the temperature and the time that has the desired effect.

When we cook food we are aiming to kill harmful bacteria, as well as make the food palatable. The higher the temperature reached in the middle of the food, the more quickly bacteria will die. Here are some examples of core temperatures and the corresponding time taken to reduce bacteria to a safe level:

60°C for 45 minutes  
65°C for 10 minutes  
70°C for 2 minutes  
75°C for 30 seconds  
80°C for 6 seconds

You can see that once you get above 75°C bacteria are killed very quickly, so this is a good temperature to aim for. Also it's far more practical in a busy kitchen to check a temperature for 30 seconds rather than 2 minutes!



Don't forget though that some bacteria can survive cooking by forming spores, which is why it is crucial that even thoroughly cooked food is either kept hot (above 63°C), cooled quickly (to less than 5°C in no more than an hour and a half) or eaten straight away. Make sure that you include

these rules in your Safer Food Better Business pack or other food safety management system.

For more food safety advice contact the Food and Safety Regulation team on 01473 825888 or email [food.safety@babergh.gov.uk](mailto:food.safety@babergh.gov.uk).

# Choosing Refrigerators - Commercial or Domestic?

Whilst inspecting food premises we regularly come across kitchens fitted with domestic fridges rather than commercial ones. This is a very understandable choice especially during these difficult economic times, as like for like in terms of size, domestic fridges will be on the whole much cheaper to purchase than commercial ones. But perhaps this is a false economy? Whilst in small businesses the opening and closing of fridge doors is relatively occasional, and therefore choosing a domestic fridge may be commercially sensible; this is unlikely to be the case in a busy kitchen.

The reason why commercial fridges are more expensive to purchase is because they have been designed to be used in tough environments, where their doors are opened and shut almost incessantly during the busy periods of service, and where the ambient temperature of the kitchen is relatively high. Such fridges will be able to maintain their internal temperature below 8°C throughout that busy period of time.

In the case of domestic fridges the temperature is likely to rise above 8°C thus exposing any high risk foods stored within to too high a temperature. Trying to counteract these high temperatures means that the thermostat will have to be adjusted and more often than not it means that during the quieter periods (such as night time) foods stored in the fridge are likely to freeze.

The reason why commercial fridges are so efficient at keeping foods chilled is because they have more powerful refrigeration units and are generally fitted with internal fans to evenly distribute cold air. This also means that even if they are located close to a heat source, they will still function adequately unlike domestic fridges which can be impeded by a hot environment.



Another argument in favour of commercial fridges is advantages in terms of maintenance and in particular the replacement of damaged or worn door seals (as shown in the pictures). Whilst door seals in general are not cheap they tend to be easier to find for commercial units than for domestic ones. When we require premises to replace their door seals, we tend to find that businesses who use domestic fridges find it easier to replace the whole unit rather than change

the seals, thus spending more than they could have.

And whilst we are talking about door seals, don't forget to include them in your cleaning schedule before they look like these ones!



## STOP PRESS

### New guidance on preventing cross-contamination

On February 15<sup>th</sup> the Food Standards Agency issued new guidance for food businesses and enforcers on how to avoid cross-contamination. The guidance focuses particularly on E coli O157 but the control measures described will also help to reduce the risk from other food poisoning bacteria. You can view the guidance at

<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2011/feb/ecoli>

More details to follow in the next issue of Foodwise