

MEETING FOOD SAFETY REQUIREMENTS WHEN USING COMMUNITY KITCHENS

Who is this guidance for?

Sandwell has many community kitchens that can be used for catering events. Such events are a good way of raising funds or providing social activities for those in need and vulnerable groups. However, worries about meeting with food safety requirements mean that some voluntary, charitable and other providers are not using these facilities to their full potential.

In response to these concerns, Sandwell Council's Environmental Health Department has produced this guidance to assist individuals, groups and organisations who want to use local community kitchens. By taking some simple steps, it should be possible to hold catering events which are enjoyable and safe.

It is nevertheless important to remember that regardless of whether you, your group or organisation is supplying or selling food for charity or for a profit, the food is still required by law to be safe to eat. This means that food must not be 'injurious to health' or 'unfit for human consumption'.

The information provided here is designed to help ensure that any current or potential users can feel confident that they have sufficient information to understand both legal and best practice requirements when using community kitchens.

Do I need to register as a 'food business' if using a community kitchen?

A community kitchen does not need to be registered as a food business in its own right, but if your group or organisation want to use a community kitchen you will need to know if your particular food operation will need to be registered as a 'Food Business' with Sandwell Council. With voluntary and community groups undertaking a diverse range of activities this decision is not always straight forward.

The Food Standards Agency has provided guidance for those engaged in [Community Cooking and Food Banks](#) and guidance on [Community and Charity Food Provision](#). These guides help determine the requirement for registration, as well as to ensure that you meet with food safety requirements. However, we recognize that these guides do not cover all situations and it can be difficult to determine if registration is needed or not, so if in doubt, please contact the Environmental Health department.

The food safety guides are based on the main types of food operations that generally occur in community kitchens. A brief summary of the food operation each guide covers is provided overleaf.

| | TYPE OF FOOD OPERATION | FOOD SAFETY GUIDE SUMMARY |
|-------------|--|--|
| Pages 3- 5 | Provision of Tea, Coffee, Soft Drinks and Biscuits & Cakes | This guide covers operations where low risk foods are prepared and served. Low risk foods are those foods which can be kept safely at room temperature. This type of food operation would normally not require registration with the local authority. |
| Pages 6-12 | Occasional provision of high-risk foods including meat, seafood, poultry, eggs, dairy products, or foods that contain these, for example sandwiches, quiche and prepared salads. | This guide broadly covers food operations where food is provided less than once per month and there is considered to be no 'continuity of activity' e.g. Christmas fair. These operations generally do not require registration. However, an operation where there is complexity in terms of the food safety controls, or where food is supplied to vulnerable consumers (e.g. children under 5, chronically ill adults or those over 65), may each require registration because the food safety controls require a 'degree of organisation', even if they occur less frequently than once per month. |
| Pages 13-16 | Regular provision of hot and cold foods including the preparation of high-risk foods including sandwiches, hot dinners, soup etc. | 'Regular' provision generally means at least monthly provision of food that requires more complex safety control such as temperature control. The food operation should have 'continuity' and a 'degree of organisation'. For example, it would include volunteers serving hot soup and sandwiches on a regular basis to homeless and potentially vulnerable people. It would however, also include hot food served by volunteers on a less frequent e.g. quarterly basis to larger numbers of vulnerable persons as there is a sense of 'continuity' and the controls require a 'degree of organisation'. |

Further information is also provided at the end of this guidance document:

| | | |
|-------------|-------------------------|---|
| Pages 17-21 | Annex 1 | Information taken from the Food Standards Agency ' Community and charity food provision – guidance on the application of EU food hygiene law ' |
| Pages 22-23 | Annex 2 | Food Hygiene Training – Best Practice Guidance |
| Pages 24-26 | Annex 3 | Food Standards Agency ' Catering advice for charity and community groups providing food ' – A list of common questions and answers for volunteers and charity groups that want to provide food in a village hall, or other community settings. |

If you are still unsure about which category your food operation would fall into then please contact us for further advice

BASIC FOOD HYGIENE PRINCIPLES

Whether you need to be registered or not, there are some basic food hygiene principles that we should all be following.

Personal hygiene

- Hands must be washed thoroughly with soap and water;
 - * Before touching or handling any food or utensils
 - * After breaks.
 - * After visiting the toilet.
 - * After coughing into the hand or using a handkerchief.
 - * Before handling ready to eat foods
 - * After eating, drinking or smoking.
 - * After touching hair or face.
 - * After carrying out any cleaning.
- Check that you have hygienic facilities for hand drying e.g. paper towels. If these are not provided in the kitchen then you should bring a roll of paper towel with you. Cloth towels or tea towels are not recommended for hand drying as they can result in the spread of germs between kitchen users.
- Do not blow your nose or cough or sneeze over food.
- Do not handle or serve any food if you are suffering from or have suffered from vomiting and or diarrhoea within the last 48 hours.



Food storage, preparation and service

- When bringing any unwrapped foods to the kitchen ensure that they are protected from foreign body contamination. Use secure, washable lidded containers that will protect the food.
- As you may not know what food has been prepared in the kitchen before you, it is important that you ensure that you clean and disinfect any surfaces where ready-to-eat foods may come into contact during your use of the kitchen. Follow the basic two stage cleaning method.

Two stage cleaning

- Clean down work surfaces with hot, soapy water to remove any grease and debris
 - Make sure you have adequate cleaning cloths/brushes/scourers available for washing up and cleaning surfaces. You need to check with your kitchen provider to see if you need to bring your own. Where possible use disposable cloths for wiping work surfaces.

Then

- Use an anti-bacterial* spray or sanitiser to destroy any potential pathogenic organisms that could be left on the work surface. If it needs wiping off following application, ensure disposable paper towel is used.

*Antibacterial sprays and sanitisers should meet a certain British Standard (BS EN: 1276 or 13697). If the disinfectant or sanitizer meets this standard, it will be indicated on the label. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for dilution and contact time to ensure the product is effective.



- If you are using a chopping board for buttering toast, make sure that it is only used for ready-to-eat foods and not for cutting up raw meat. If in doubt about a chopping board use a clean plate instead.
- Milk, margarine and butter should be kept in the refrigerator below 8°C. Ensure that your food is not a risk of contamination from other users who may have raw meat in the same refrigerator. Any items being kept in the fridge must be stored in a way that does not cause contamination. Raw meat and unwashed salad and vegetables should be stored below any ready-to-eat foods.
- If you provide any ice-creams or frozen lollies then they should be stored in the freezer away from any raw meat. If they are to be left in the freezer for several weeks, then a temperature check should be made to ensure that it is operating at -18°C or colder.
- If you wish to store any food in the kitchen, either in a cupboard or refrigerator ensure that you have permission from the kitchen provider. Biscuits, open packets of food should be placed in lidded pest proof containers. If possible, any food should be kept in a locked cupboard or refrigerator to prevent tampering. You should ensure that the 'best before dates' or 'use by dates' are checked frequently to ensure that foods are not kept beyond their safe shelf life.
- If you spot any signs of pest activity e.g. gnawed food packaging, droppings, crawling insects make sure you report it immediately to your kitchen provider. If you are concerned that any food may have been damaged by pests then it should be thrown away. Do not continue to use the kitchen for any food preparation until you are satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to eliminate pests from the premise

COMMUNITY KITCHENS

A FOOD SAFETY GUIDE FOR KITCHEN USERS WHO PROVIDE LOW RISK FOODS

Do we need to register as a Food Business?

If you are just serving low risk foods like tea, coffee, biscuits, cake, toast then you do not need to be registered with Sandwell Council as a food business.

What are foods are categorised as being low risk?

Low risk foods are ambient-stable and are unlikely to be implicated in food poisoning such foods include:

- ✓ Tea and coffee (with or without milk)
- ✓ Milk (pasteurised)
- ✓ Soft and carbonated drinks
- ✓ Biscuits
- ✓ Cereals
- ✓ Confectionary
- ✓ Crisps
- ✓ Toast
- ✓ Crumpets
- ✓ Beans on toast
- ✓ Canned/packet/carton soup
- ✓ Cakes (not fresh cream cakes)
- ✓ Dried fruits
- ✓ Fruit, whole or cut
- ✓ Jams
- ✓ Ice creams and ice lollies



Do we need formal food hygiene training?

Current legislation does not require volunteers to hold a Food Hygiene certificate to sell or provide low risk foods like tea, coffee and cake. You should however ensure that everyone responsible for handling and serving food follows the basic food hygiene rules.

What food hygiene requirements do apply?

Low risk food operations are still legally required to supply food that is safe to eat but do not have to comply with specific food hygiene legislation when doing so.

The basic food hygiene principles which are covered on pages 3-4 should be followed by everyone who is responsible for preparing and serving low risk foods.

COMMUNITY KITCHENS

A FOOD SAFETY GUIDE FOR KITCHEN USERS WHO OCCASIONALLY PROVIDE HIGH RISK FOODS

Do we need to register an occasional food operation as a 'Food Business'?

A food operation must be registered if there is *'a certain continuity of activities'* (the food safety controls require a *'degree of organisation'*). Therefore, operations such as the occasional handling, preparation, storage and serving of food by private persons at events such as church, school or village fairs where the food is prepared occasionally would not need to be registered.

If, however, there is a degree of complexity in the activity in terms of food safety controls (e.g. hot foods or food requiring temperature control) or where food is supplied to vulnerable people (e.g. the elderly, infants under 5 years, expectant mothers and people with an immune suppressed illness) the activity may require registration. [Annex 1](#) to this guide has a list from the Food Standards Agency of the types of activities that do and do not require registration. If you require further guidance please contact us so we can advise you.

What is high-risk food?

The term 'high-risk' food is used in this guide to mean food that is potentially hazardous – that is food that has to be kept at certain temperatures to minimise the growth of any harmful bacteria that may be present in the food.

High-risk foods need to be handled carefully to keep them safe. If something goes wrong during the food handling process, harmful bacteria may grow and multiply and food can quickly become unsafe to eat.

High-risk foods can include meat, seafood, poultry, eggs, dairy products, or food that contain these, for example sandwiches, quiche and prepared salads.



Other foods can become high-risk after they are cooked, such as noodles, rice, pasta and similar foods.

Do we need formal food hygiene training?

There is no mandatory requirement for volunteers providing high risk foods on an occasional basis to have a Food Hygiene Certificate. It is however expected that any volunteers who handle and prepare open high-risk food have at least read the basic food hygiene rules and understand how food poisoning can occur.

It is recommended that at least one person within a group/organisation will have a 'Level 2 Food Safety in Catering' Hygiene Certificate so that they can be available to supervise at events and/or pass on their knowledge to others where appropriate. **More information is provided in [Annex 2](#).**

How can my community group prepare safe food?

When providing high-risk foods to members of the public, even on an occasional basis, you will need to ensure good food hygiene practices are followed so that the food you make, or sell is safe to eat. The information in this guide should provide you with the important information that you and any volunteers need to achieve this.

PRINCIPLES OF FOOD HYGIENE

The basic food hygiene principles which are covered on pages 3-4 should be followed by everyone who is responsible for preparing and serving low risk foods

In addition, when handling high risk foods, extra care should be taken, as detailed below.

Food storage, preparation, cooking and service

Good food hygiene is all about controlling harmful bacteria which can cause serious illness. For good food hygiene remember to control the **FOUR C's** :

Cross contamination

Cleaning

Chilling

Cooking

Make sure you and your volunteers are aware of and follow the food safety guidance provided on the following pages.

Cross contamination

This happens when bacteria are spread between food, surfaces or equipment. It is most likely to happen when raw food touches (or drips onto) ready-to-eat food, or equipment or surfaces.



Actions to take to stop bacteria from spreading:

- Don't let raw meat, poultry or unwashed raw vegetables touch other foods.
- Never prepare ready-to-eat food using a chopping board, utensil or knife that could have been used to prepare raw meat, poultry or unwashed raw vegetables unless they have been washed and disinfected thoroughly first.
- Always wash your hands thoroughly after touching raw meat, poultry and unwashed raw vegetables, and before you touch anything else.
- Over handling food can lead to contamination, so try to handle food as little as possible once it is cooked and ready to eat. Tongs etc. may help to minimise risks. If you wear gloves to protect food, it is important to remember that these can get just as dirty as hands.
- Always cover raw meat and store it on the bottom shelf of the fridge where it can't touch or drip onto other foods.
- Root vegetables such as potatoes, leeks and carrots often have traces of soil on them which can contain harmful bacteria, so wash them thoroughly before use. Don't forget to wash other fruit and vegetables too, especially if they are going to be eaten raw.
- Use clean dishcloths.
- Ensure volunteers know that if they have suffered from sickness and/or diarrhoea that they must be symptom free for 48 hours before they undertake any food preparation.



Cleaning

Effective cleaning gets rid of bacteria on hands, equipment and surfaces, so it helps to stop harmful bacteria from spreading onto food.



Actions to take:

- Make sure that all volunteers wash and dry their hands thoroughly before handling food.
- Make sure there are adequate cleaning cloths/brushes/scourers available for washing up and cleaning surfaces. You need to check with the kitchen provider to see if you need to bring your own equipment. Where possible use disposable cloths for wiping work surfaces.
- Clean food areas and equipment between different tasks, especially after handling raw food.
- Clear and clean as you go. Clear away used equipment, spilt food etc. as you work, and clean work surfaces thoroughly.
- Follow the basic two stage cleaning method for food preparation areas:
 1. Clean down work surfaces with hot, soapy water to remove any grease and debris.
 2. Use an anti-bacterial* spray or sanitiser to destroy any potentially harmful micro-organisms that could be left on the work surface. If it needs wiping off following application, ensure disposable paper towel is used.

* Antibacterial sprays and sanitisers should meet a certain British Standard (BS EN: 1276 or 13697) If the disinfectant or sanitizer meets this standard, it will be indicated on the label. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for dilution and contact time to ensure the product is effective.



Chilling

Chilling food properly helps to stop harmful bacteria from growing. Some foods need to be kept chilled to keep them safe, for example food with a 'use by' date, cooked dishes and other ready-to-eat foods such as prepared salads and desserts. It is very important not to leave these types of food standing around at room temperature.



Actions to take:

- Ensure that any food being bought in by volunteers whether from home or the shops is placed inside a cold box to transport it to the kitchen or they should aim to get it to the kitchen within 30 minutes of removing it from the refrigerator.
- Ensure that sandwiches or other high-risk foods are never left in a hot car or car boot.
- On arrival at the kitchen put food that needs to be kept chilled in the refrigerator straight away. Make sure there is enough fridge space. If necessary, use cold boxes or ice blocks to keep food cool. Put low risk foods and drinks in a cool place or in buckets of ice if short of fridge space.
- If you are planning to cook food and then cool it before serving it then this must be done as quickly as possible. Food should be cooled down at room temperature for no longer than 90 minutes and then be placed in the refrigerator. If you have a large quantity of food to cool, speed up the cooling process by placing the food into several smaller containers.
- Keep chilled food out of the refrigerator for the shortest time possible during preparation.
- If you are planning to keep chilled food in the fridge for more than 4 hours, then it would be a good idea to check the temperature of the refrigerator using a thermometer. The refrigerator should be 8°C or colder.
- We recommend that after 3 hours at room temperature high risk food is discarded or placed in a refrigerator before final consumption within 24 hours. Food should **not be consumed after more than 4 hours at room temperature.**
- Sandwiches are particularly risky as they often contain high risk foods, can be over handled when being made and can often be left on display for long periods of time. Try choosing lower risk contents such as jams and spreads, cheddar cheese and pickle etc.

Cooking



Thorough cooking kills harmful bacteria in food, so it is very important to make sure that food is cooked properly.



Actions to take:

- When cooking or reheating food always check that it is piping hot all the way through. As an extra check you can use a sanitised probe thermometer* to check that it has reached at least 75°C in the centre.
- Even if people are waiting to eat, don't reduce cooking times, always make sure food is properly cooked before you serve it
- It is especially important to make sure that you thoroughly cook poultry, rolled joints and products made from minced meat, such as burgers and sausages. Cut these products in half to check there is no pink meat in the middle. They should not be served pink or rare and should be piping hot all the way through.
- If you cook food in advance and want to keep it warm then it should be kept above 63°C or otherwise it should be **eaten within 2 hours** or placed in the refrigerator.

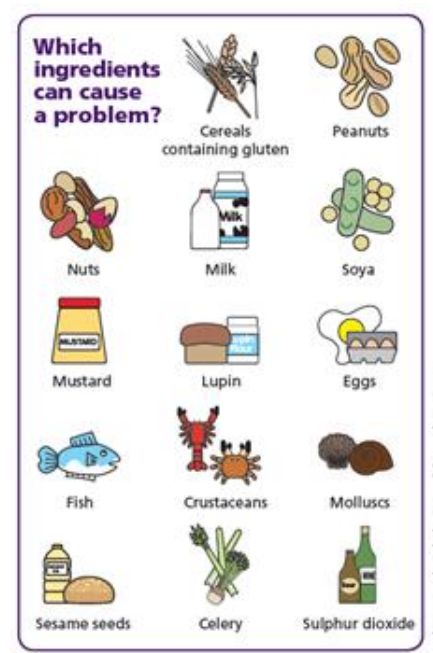
*Using a temperature probe

| THERMOMETER TYPE | WHERE TO USE THE THERMOMETER | HOW TO USE THE THERMOMETER |
|---|--|---|
| Digital thermometer  | These are generally easy to use and accurate. They can be used with lots of foods, but they are not suitable to go in the oven. | Clean and disinfect the probe, then insert the probe. Wait for the display to stabilise before taking a reading. Clean the probe thoroughly and disinfect it before you use it again. This helps to prevent cross-contamination. |
| Infra-red thermometer  | These types of thermometers are used for testing cold surface temperatures of food when delivered or in fridges and freezers. They cannot be used for checking the temperature in the centre of cooked, reheated, or cooling food. | Direct the probe at the surface of the food avoiding any reflective packaging or sticky labels (as this gives a false reading). If the temperature seems high, use a clean, disinfected probe thermometer to confirm the reading. |

Do we need to provide allergy information?

If you are a charity or community food operation which is not required to be registered as a food business, you should still be prepared to give information about the ingredients in the food that you are serving, if you are asked by a customer. A reasonable response could include “it may contain xxx” and you should also say this if the kitchen may have residues of allergens that your food may have come into contact with.

The Food Standards Agency has produced a variety of booklets, posters, information cards and other useful material that is free for you to use. Go to www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-guidance-for-food-businesses



COMMUNITY KITCHENS

A FOOD SAFETY GUIDE FOR KITCHEN USERS WHO REGULARLY PROVIDE HIGH RISK FOODS

Do we need to register a regular food operation as 'Food Business'?

Yes, if you or your group or organisation provides food at least monthly and the food provided is considered to be high risk (requires more complex safety control such as temperature control), then it will need to be registered with Sandwell Council as a 'Food Business'. Examples include volunteers serving hot soup and sandwiches on a regular basis to the homeless and potentially vulnerable

You can register your establishment by completing the online registration form register.food.gov.uk/new/sandwell. It is a legal requirement to register and once we receive your form we will send you a letter confirming receipt. Following this, an officer will contact you to clarify the type of food business you intend to start and when.

The kitchen is already registered as Food Business by another group, do we still have to register?

Yes, you still need to register. A single community kitchen can be registered by multiple users. We will need to discuss with you how you plan to operate and ensure that the food preparation and handling practices being undertaken from that kitchen will be done so safely. The registration process is a legal requirement and gives us the opportunity to provide you with important food safety information and advice. This also a good time for you to raise any questions or concerns you have before starting up.

Will we receive a food hygiene inspection?

We will need to inspect the kitchen that you plan to use for your food business to ensure that it meets with food safety requirements. Follow this link for further information about [food safety inspections](#) in Sandwell.

What food hygiene training do are staff or volunteers need?

Food safety law requires all registered food businesses operators to ensure that everyone who handles food receives appropriate training. Volunteers involved in the actual cooking and preparation are advised therefore to undertake appropriate training in Food Hygiene. The standard, nationally recognised training course, CIEH Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering (which has replaced the Foundation and Basic courses). This is normally a day long course followed by a multiple-choice exam. Whilst it's not mandatory for **all** lunch club volunteers to take this training, it is expected that there will always be someone with Level 2 training in the kitchen to supervise others. Those not directly handling food should be made aware of basic food safety issues during their induction.

The Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering should include cross contamination, safe storage, cooking, reheating, hot holding, and cleaning. **More information is available in [Annex 2](#).**

Refresher Food Hygiene training is recommended to be taken every three years. This training can be tutor based or online, examples of reputable training courses include:

www.highspeedtraining.co.uk, www.virtual-college.co.uk , www.itrainingcourses.co.uk.

Staff and volunteers who have undertaken Level 2 Hygiene training will receive a certificate on successful completion of the course. It is important that copies of these training certificates should be kept available for inspection.

Where do we find information about food safety requirements?

You can find out more information at the Food Standards Agency website www.food.gov.uk. The Food Standards Agency provides guidance for new businesses - '[Starting Up a Food Business](#)' on all aspects of running a food business includes registration, hygiene, labelling, licensing, paper work and finance.

You must also ensure that all food handlers are aware of the risk of E. coli O157 cross contamination if you plan to handle and prepare raw foods, such as raw meat and unwashed vegetables alongside ready-to-eat foods. Ready-to-eat foods are foods that will not be cooked or reheated before being eaten and include foods such as cooked meats, sandwiches, cheese, salads and desserts. For important information on how to protect your customers please read the Food Standards Agency advice on [E. coli O157](#)

What records do we have to keep?

All food businesses are now required to maintain a written food safety management system. The Food Standards Agency has provided a free food business pack called '[Safer Food Better Business - for Caterers](#)' to help business operators meet with this requirement. You can type directly into the on-line version but as you cannot save it you must print it once completed. Alternatively, you can print it and complete it by hand. Some sections of the pack may not be relevant to your food operation and these do not need to be completed.

What documentation will the Environmental Health Officer want to see when they inspect?

Once your food operation is up and running unannounced food safety inspections will be made to see your food business in action. It is very important that the following documents are kept with you every time you operate:

- * A written food safety management system e.g. completed Safer Food Better Business Pack.
- * A cleaning schedule.
- * Temperature records for cooking, cooling, hot holding and refrigerators.
- * Training records for food handlers.

Do we have to provide allergy information?

The Food Information Regulations 2014 place a legal requirement on all food businesses and caterers to provide customers with more information on the presence of the 14 allergens in food they serve if they request it.

This legislation requires any caterer providing ‘loose food’ (e.g. buffets, cooked lunches etc.) to give information, if asked, about allergic ingredients used in any food and drink served.

Either by:

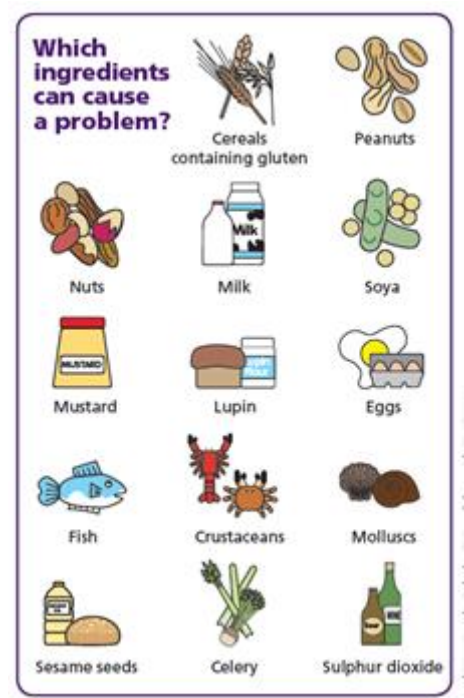
A sign displayed, telling customers or their carers that allergen information is available. The allergen information should then be collated in a table or food labels kept for reference;

Or

Allergen information could be shown on a display board by the food;

Or

Allergen information could be shown on a menu.



The Food Standards Agency has produced a variety of booklets, posters, information cards and other useful material that is free for you to use. Go to:

www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-guidance-for-food-businesses.

Pre-packed for direct sale

You need to be aware that there are extra rules around labelling for foods that are classed as pre-packed for direct sale. Prepacked for direct sale or PPDS is food that is packaged at the same place it is offered or sold to consumers and is in this packaging before it is ordered or selected.

It can include food that consumers select themselves (e.g. from a display unit), as well as products kept behind a counter and some food sold at mobile or temporary outlets. Further guidance can be found here: www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/introduction-to-allergen-labelling-changes-ppds

Further information on the requirements for Pre-packed for direct sale food is provided on the Food Standards Agency website - www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/labelling-guidance-for-prepacked-for-direct-sale-ppds-food-products

If you still require further information on provision of allergen information or Pre-packed for Direct Sale, please contact the Trading Standards team on EHTS_Enquiries@sandwell.gov.uk

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme



Sandwell Council have adopted the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, further information about this is available at [Sandwell's Food Hygiene Rating Scheme for Businesses](#). Following a food safety inspection your food business be awarded a food hygiene rating score. This score will be published on the [Food Standards Agency Ratings](#) website and you will receive a window sticker showing the score that has been awarded.

Further Information:

- Remember, even voluntary or charitable organisations must comply with health and safety law. Visit the HSE website for information at www.hse.gov.uk/catering
- If you need clarification or more information about providing food in a community kitchen please contact Sandwell Council's Environmental Health Team:

CONTACT DETAILS:

Sandwell MBC - Environmental Health Team

Email us: EHTS_Enquiries@sandwell.gov.uk

Write to us: Citizen and Consumer Protection Business and Consumer, P.O. Box.
2374 Sandwell Council House, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3DE

ANNEX 1

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| <p style="text-align: center;">Food Standards Agency Community and charity food provision – guidance on the application of EU food hygiene law (March 2016 guidance)</p> |
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Principles on which registration of an operation are considered

The FSA's views on the terms 'a certain continuity of activity' and 'a certain degree of organisation' are set out in Box 2 below. Examples of food provision that the FSA considers either require or do not require registration are set out below in boxes 3A and 3B respectively.

In order for registration to be appropriate, a food operation must have both 'a certain continuity of activity' and a certain 'degree of organisation'.

As a starting point, the FSA suggests that provision of food on at least one occasion on an average monthly basis has 'a certain continuity of activities'. However, for more complex operations occurring less frequently than this, but where there is still some continuity of activity the FSA acknowledges that registration may be required in order that an appropriate degree of public health protection is in place. Local authority officers will need to assess these scenarios on a case-by-case basis and community food organisers should be aware that local authorities may consider some larger and more complex infrequent events to require registration.

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Box 2: The FSA's views on 'a certain continuity of activity and a certain degree of organisation'</u></p> |
| <p><u>A certain continuity of activity</u></p> <p>Generally, community or charity operations providing food on at least one occasion on an average monthly basis (or more), can be considered as having a continuity of activity.</p> |
| <p><u>A certain degree of organisation</u></p> <p>When deciding whether any food operation can be said to be 'organised,' consideration should be given to the overall nature of the organisation and the likely</p> |

risks to consumer health. This includes the practices involved in the safe handling and preparation of the food, the risks posed by any food and the complexity of controls needed to mitigate those risks to an acceptable and safe level; the needs of consumers (i.e. consumers at risk, vulnerable groups); and, the nature of the event/food supply operation (e.g. size of event, types of foods, whether the event is open to all consumers or restricted to a defined group).

Most community events will include the provision of food to consumers considered vulnerable (i.e. persons over 65, infants under 5 years old, pregnant women or people with a weakened immune system such as those with certain serious illnesses). Food providers must consider the needs of such consumers, particularly in relation to certain high-risk foods, and put suitable controls in place. The FSA has provided advice about safe practices as well as sources of information in the accompanying Q&A.

Provision of food such as tea and biscuits, packaged dry goods, and foods which can be prepared simply, stored and kept safely at room temperature are all low-risk activities and do not require a significant degree of organisation to manage their safety.

In terms of the nature of the event, infrequent large-scale community events, perhaps organised by the same community group, where a wide range of consumers can walk in off the street, are considered to require more organisation than events occurring to more restricted groups of consumers, such as at private clubs or closed events.

For regional or national organisations such as the Women's Institute (WI) or The Scouts, the term 'degree of organisation' should not refer to the wider organisation as a whole, only to those branches organising the event and/or handling or providing the food (e.g. a local branch of the WI). This consideration could change however if the wider body had some direct role in the organisation of the food supply or its safety controls.

BOX 3

Non-exhaustive examples of village hall and community food provision and how the EU food hygiene legislation might apply

3A: Registration unlikely: The FSA suggests that food provision in the following situations is unlikely to require registration.

| | |
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| 1 | <p>Situation: A one-off event such as a church or school fete, or a street party.</p> <p>Reason: Considered not to have 'continuity'.</p> <p><i>Organisers of large community events should read the FSA's Catering Q&A for charity and community groups providing food Q&A and / or contact the local authority for practical advice.</i></p> |
| 2 | <p>Situation: Daily small-scale provision in the weekday afternoons of low-risk foods by community / charity volunteers, such as provision of tea and biscuits in a church hall.</p> <p>Reason: Considered not to have a 'degree of organisation'.</p> <p><i>This is because it is low-risk and small-scale provision. However, if complex food safety controls are in place or high-risk foods are served then registration would be required.</i></p> |
| 3 | <p>Situation: School breakfast club where volunteers supply simple breakfast foods like toast and cereal and orange juice which is given to children and/or toddlers for two or three hours each day during term-time.</p> <p>Reason: Considered not to have a 'degree of organisation'.</p> <p><i>The food provided is low-risk (even though infants are the target consumer) and small-scale.</i></p> <p><i>Note: School kitchens will already be registered with the LA as food businesses, so if breakfast food is supplied by the school kitchen's staff then this should be considered as part of the kitchen's business activity.</i></p> |
| 4 | <p>Situation: A village hall event held about six times per year where a two course hot meal is served to about sixty people including elderly persons. The food is cooked at home by volunteers and is reheated in the hall kitchen prior to consumption.</p> <p>Reason: Considered not to have 'continuity'.</p> |

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| | <p><i>As with Example 1, organisers of large community events, even if infrequent, should read the FSA's Catering Q&A. The FSA also advises that organisers of such larger scale events contact the local authority for practical advice.</i></p> |
| 5 | <p>Situation: A small food bank operating for just an hour or two per day on an infrequent basis by volunteers collecting tinned and packaged foodstuffs not requiring temperature control donated by for distribution to local people.</p> <p>Reason: Considered not to have a 'degree of organisation'.</p> <p><i>The holding of such food is relatively low-risk.</i></p> |
| 6 | <p>Situation: Scout or Guide camp lasting a few days at a time and cooking food.</p> <p>Reason: Considered not have to 'continuity'.</p> |
| 7 | <p>Situation: Infrequent provision of food by members of a club or society for their shared consumption at a private event.</p> <p>Reason: Considered not to have a 'degree of organisation' (and may not have 'continuity').</p> |
| 8 | <p>Situation: Amateur drama group serving packaged foods and soft drinks for audiences for limited periods.</p> <p>Reason: Considered not to have 'degree of organisation' and possibly not 'continuity'.</p> |
| 9 | <p>Situation: A church hall providing food made by volunteers for mourners after a funeral.</p> <p>Reason: Considered not to have 'continuity' and may not have a 'degree of organisation' as a restricted event.</p> |
| 10 | <p>Situation: A 'cooking club' where members bring in the food ingredients or pay the course leader to supply the ingredients. Those attending learn to cook using equipment in the hall and then all sit down to eat together or take food home.</p> <p>Reason: Considered not to have a 'degree of organisation' (and may not have 'continuity').</p> |

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| 11 | <p>Situation: A 'foraging course/event' or similar where a group of people gather wild products (e.g. blackberries, mushrooms, wild garlic, nettles, rosehips for cordials, sloes for 'sloe gin') which are brought back to a hall and cooked or otherwise handled and eaten. Such courses may last a few hours and held over weekends throughout the year and daily in July and August.</p> <p>Reason: Considered not to have a 'degree of organisation'.</p> |
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| <p>3B: Registration likely: The FSA suggests that food provision in these situations does involve both continuity of activity (i.e. at least once per month in most cases) and a degree of organisation and would therefore require registration</p> | |
| 1 | <p>Monthly provision of free hot food by a faith group in a hall to local people.</p> <p><i>The fact that the food is provided free does not affect the consideration in this case.</i></p> |
| 2 | <p>A community café opening for three days per week on a pay-what-you-can basis offering food which has been donated by other businesses and by individuals.</p> <p><i>The fact that the food is donated does not affect the consideration in this case.</i></p> |
| 3 | <p>A sports club serving hot meals regularly during the season (e.g. an amateur football club serving food every other Saturday from September through to May to club members and visitors).</p> |
| 4 | <p>A charity volunteer operation organising the daily collection of sandwiches from supermarkets for distribution to homeless people.</p> |
| 5 | <p>A small community centre supplying approximately a dozen persons with free hot food for two lunchtimes per week. Some of the food has been prepared by volunteers at home.</p> |
| 6 | <p>A volunteer-run operation providing hot soup and bread to homeless persons each evening.</p> |

ANNEX 2

FOOD HYGIENE TRAINING – BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Recommended Training

It is recommended that at least one person within a community organisation will have a 'Level 2 Food Safety in Catering' Hygiene Certificate so that they can be available to supervise at events and/or pass on their knowledge to others where appropriate. The 'Level 2 Food Safety in Catering' provides information on cross contamination, safe storage, cooking, reheating and hot holding, and cleaning.

Level 2 training is normally a full days training and costs about £45 - £60 per person. It will usually be delivered in a local organisation like a college.

If you need to or would like to train more than one person then some trainers would be happy to come out and train in your venue. Explore this with the training provider – they will be able to discuss minimum numbers to make this a viable plan as well as the maximum number they can train (a group of 10-15 people can work).

Training Providers

If you or any volunteers want to undertake this training there are three Accredited Awarding Bodies for food safety qualifications:

- Chartered Institute of Environmental Health – www.cieh.org/training-and-courses/online-training/food-safety/
- Highfield Awarding Body for Compliance - www.highfieldabc.com
- Royal Society for Public Health - www.rsph.org.uk

Food hygiene training can also be undertaken online, examples of reputable training courses include: www.highspeedtraining.co.uk , www.virtual-college.co.uk
www.itrainingcourses.co.uk

A list of local training providers is also available by contacting the Environmental Health Department (contact details at end of this booklet).

Face to face or on-line training?

Face to face is better than on line for the initial training as the trainee will get the opportunity to practice what they have learnt and will also be able to ask questions and participate in group discussion.

Keeping up to date

It is recommended that your nominated food hygiene “lead” should do top up training every 3 years. In this case on line training would be fine as an alternative to face to face but you do need to ensure that the person undertaking the training sets aside enough time to complete it properly.

Cascade training

Someone with an up to date Level 2 Food Safety in Catering’ Hygiene Certificate level 2 could show others how to follow basic food hygiene rules. For example, at the start of the event or session they could run through rules and hand out a copy of the basic food hygiene principles (see below).

There are also a number of useful videos available on line that a group of staff could watch as part of a briefing. For example: the Food Standards Agency have a series of 10 short food safety videos on the FSAs YouTube channel, showing food handlers how to keep food safe. These can be found at [Food Safety Coaching on YouTube](#)

Catering advice for charity and community groups providing food

Advice for volunteers and charity groups that want to provide food in a village hall, or other community setting

Frequent Questions and answers

Is it okay to sell homemade cakes at the school fair?

There is no rule banning the sale of homemade cakes at school fetes or other community events. Homemade cakes should be safe to eat, as long as the people who make them follow good food hygiene advice and the cakes are stored and transported safely.

At home, people making cakes should follow these tips:

- always wash your hands before preparing food
- make sure that surfaces, bowls, utensils, and any other equipment is clean
- don't use raw eggs in anything that won't be thoroughly cooked, such as icing or mousse
- keep cheesecakes and any cakes or desserts containing cream in the fridge
- store cakes in a clean, sealable container, away from raw foods, especially raw meat

On the day, people bringing in cakes from home or running the stall should follow these tips:

- transport cakes in a clean, sealable container
- wash their hands as frequently as possible
- make sure that cheesecake and any cakes or desserts containing cream are left out of the fridge for the shortest time possible
- when handling cakes use tongs or a cake slice instead

How long can I leave food out on a buffet?

In general, food that needs to be chilled, such as sandwich fillings, should be left out of the fridge for the shortest time possible. If it is left at room temperature for a long time, bacteria can grow or toxins can form, and both of these could cause food poisoning.

If you are preparing a buffet, you should try to keep food out for a short time and not more than four hours. After this time, any remaining food should be thrown away or put back in the fridge but if you do put the food back in the fridge, don't let it stand around at room temperature if you serve it again.

Do I need to label cakes and jams sold for charity?

If you sell food for a charity or other community organisation, you will have to follow Food Labelling Regulations 1996 only if the charity or organisation is a registered food business. So, in general the labelling regulations won't apply to most food being sold for charity and so won't need to be labelled, including food sold at one-off events such as church fêtes and school fairs which are not registered.

How should homemade cakes be stored?

Wedding cake, Christmas cake and other baked goods

It is difficult to assess the storage time of cakes and other baked goods; much will depend on the recipe as this will influence the chances of any mould growth, which would be the major cause of concern. Cakes and baked goods with a high sugar content will keep for longer as this will delay any mould growth. Keeping cakes and baked goods in an airtight container is also important to prevent mould growth through absorption of moisture from the atmosphere. Storing the cake in the fridge will also mean it will last for longer, but may affect its quality.

It is worth consulting reputable cooking books and web sites as these may give some additional tips for storage.

Cream and other high moisture additions

If you add any high moisture additions after baking (e.g. cream) then the cake should not be left at room temperature but must be stored chilled (in the fridge) and eaten within the shelf-life of the added product.

However, there are some types of icing such as ganache and butter cream that can be stored without refrigeration because of the high sugar content and relatively low water content, which should prevent growth of harmful bacteria. While growth of harmful food poisoning bacteria should not be supported, it is possible that moulds and other spoilage organisms could grow so it's best to store the products somewhere cool and dry. The FSA advises that you check the guidelines for storage of the particular icing product you will be using and/or a reputable recipe. So inclusion of cream would mean you should keep product in the fridge, but butter icing etc should be ambient stable due to the high sugar content.

Can I sell home-made jam in re-used jam jars?

Re-using glass jam jars occasionally to supply food does not present a food safety concern. This means it is safe to sell home-made jam or chutney in re-used jam jars at village fetes and other occasional events. The key thing is good hygiene – if jam jars are re-used they should be free from chips and cracks, and should be sterilised. Well-fitting lids will also minimise any hygiene risks to the food in the jars.

The regulations on food contact materials apply to businesses and these regulations are unlikely to apply to the use of jam jars for occasional community and charity food provision. New domestic enforcement regulations relating to contact materials, which came into force in November 2012, make this clearer.

If you have any concerns about the re-use of jam jars you should contact your local authority.

What are the new requirements for allergens and do they apply to community and charity events?

New food information rules regarding the declaration of allergens apply from 13 December 2014. If you are a charity or community food operation which is not required to be registered as a food business, you don't have to provide information for consumers about allergens present in the food as ingredients. However, we recommend that you or anyone else managing charity operations, consider the risks. This would be good practice.

Community and charity food operations that are registered food businesses will need to comply with the new allergen rules. More information about allergens can be found via the link below. This is for charity operations not registered as food businesses as well as registered food businesses.

Should older people avoid certain foods?

Yes. People over 65 years of age, as well as pregnant women, young children and other vulnerable groups, are at higher risk of food poisoning. Some foods such as soft cheeses, pâté, raw eggs, raw milk, raw shellfish and cured meat are more likely to cause food poisoning than others. Read more about these and other foods on the [NHS Choices website](#)