



This advice note is intended to provide an overview of general food safety guidance to businesses or groups that are involved in the donation of food to the community

Introduction

The guidance has been drawn up with the current coronavirus pandemic in mind. Food banks perform a number of functions including receiving, holding, storing, packaging, repackaging and distributing food to be consumed off the premises, but do not generally process or serve food.

All food businesses whether donating or receiving and handling donated food must be aware of their legal responsibilities under food safety legislation and where appropriate these must be considered within the food safety management system. It depends on the nature of the business in terms of what would be expected regarding a documented food safety management system. To discuss this contact: Manchester City Council, Food, Health and Safety and Airport Team.

fsafoodreg@manchester.gov.uk

As a Food Bank - registration may be required as a food business with the local authority where you are based. This depends on the scale of the business and the types of food being handled. If temperature controlled foods are being handled and the food bank operates on a regular basis eg at least once a week then registration is likely to be required. If in doubt – for Manchester businesses please contact Manchester City Council, Food, Health and Safety and Airport Team.

fsafoodreg@manchester.gov.uk

Considerations to be made for sourcing from businesses

Donated food must be compliant with Food Hygiene, Safety and Food Information Regulations and only safe food shall be placed on the market. Before receiving goods you must consider your capacity for storage, temperature control and transportation of foods. Liaising with your food donor will enable you to ensure the suitability of donations. Food donations should ordinarily only be considered from businesses that have obtained a Food Hygiene Rating following an inspection from the relevant local authority. The Food Hygiene Rating reflects the standards of Food Hygiene found on the date of the inspection by the Local Authority and can be accessed via <https://ratings.food.gov.uk/>

Ordinarily food should only be accepted from food businesses with a food hygiene rating of 3-5.

There are however certain food businesses that are exempt or excluded from the Food Hygiene Rating scheme. Please see:

https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/fhrs-brand-standards-guide_2017.pdf

Premises such as primary producers, manufacturers and packers, importers and exporters, distributors (including wholesalers, and other inter-business suppliers) and transporters are excluded. Food may be accepted from such companies. As part of your food safety checks on your suppliers you may ask regarding their last food hygiene inspection/ ask to see a copy of the last inspection report etc.

Controls must be put in place at the point of delivery to ensure only safe food is accepted from donors.

A documented procedure for checking deliveries should be provided and checks would include :

- Physical checks for signs of deterioration, odours, spoilage, broken or damaged packaging that will impact shelf life or indicate contamination
- Products are clearly labelled and within the use by date. Food which is passed the Best before date may be safe to consume but may have deteriorated in quality. You must have a way of checking that food past its best before date is still safe to consume.
- The appropriate storage conditions have been adhered to by the donor (High Risk chilled food must only be accepted if it is at a temperature of 8 degrees Celsius or below or if it is in packaging that it has been stored according to instructions on the package which may say a lower temperature.)

Any unsafe food must be rejected and disposed of.

You must keep records of where you have obtained your food donations from to ensure traceability in case of any problems. Food donors must also keep records of who they have donated to. Food product recalls can occur at any time and you must legally be able to recall food or remove food from the market that has been deemed unsafe to eat.

Freezing Food Before Its Use By Date

If you are freezing foods before their use by dates, you must have a procedure for doing this which ensures that the food you supply to customers is safe. The date the foods are frozen should be recorded and the food should now be given a best before date that has been verified i.e. how long can the product remain frozen for. The product would need to comply with food labelling legislation also. Notably Regulation (EU) No. 1169/2011 and the Food Information Regulations 2014. Advice would need to be given to the consumer to consume the food within 24 hours of defrosting. Your Food Safety Management system would need to address this. If this is

something that you are considering - please speak to Manchester City Council, Food, Health and Safety and Airport Team. fsafoodreg@manchester.gov.uk
Please also see: <https://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/article/be-freezer-hero>

Suitability of your Premises

All premises and equipment used for food preparation should be able to be cleaned easily and keep food safe.

Points to consider:

- Can food be stored in a safe and hygienic way?
- If foods are to be stored in fridges/freezers you must have a way of regularly checking that they are kept at the correct temperature and you must have a procedure re; what to do if there is an issue with the temperature.
- Can the premises be properly cleaned - are wall/floor surfaces etc cleanable?
- Is the premises pest proof and free from pests?
- Are there a suitable number of sinks with hot and cold running water for cleaning purposes and wash hand basins for staff to wash their hands?

Training and recruitment of staff

You must ensure that all employees and volunteers are trained to a level appropriate for their work activity. It is expected that any volunteers have a basic understanding of food hygiene and a good knowledge of internal food safety procedures. Ongoing supervision should be in place to ensure the safety of food provision.

Persons who prepare and handle high risk food e.g. sandwiches, cooked meats, hot lunches should be supervised, instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters. Ideally, one person on each shift should be trained to a minimum of the Food Hygiene (level 2) or equivalent qualification. Please see below for further information on high risk foods.

Personal Hygiene and Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Any food handler who is unwell should not be at work. If they have symptoms, they should follow government advice. Food handlers should also follow the self isolation guidance in relation to household self isolation ie they may be well but will need to self isolate if a member of their household exhibits COVID-19 symptoms. Staff should not be volunteering if they are at risk from coronavirus i.e if they are in one of the vulnerable categories.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-how-to-help-safely--2/coronavirus-how-to-help-safely>

Although it is unlikely that coronavirus is transmitted through food, as a matter of good hygiene practice anyone handling food should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This should be done as a matter of routine, on entering the food premises, before and after handling food, after being in a public place, blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing. Where this is not possible alcohol hand rub with at least 60% alcohol may be used. All staff and volunteers should practice a high level of personal hygiene and avoid touching their face. A two metre distance rule from other people must be followed as part of COVID-19 social distancing advice. It is recommended that a daily staffing list is provided and daily checks are made to ensure all individuals are not symptomatic and good hygiene is maintained across all steps. It is advisable that handwashing signage, and signage about self isolation is displayed to encourage compliance with Government advice. Please see attached hand washing poster. Please see link re: how to wash hands properly:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>

You should follow guidance in the following guidance re food businesses and COVID-19

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses/guidance-for-food-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

Guidance is also available in the social distancing guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others>

You may require that staff wear gloves to handle food in the food bank. In this case – you must consider how gloves are worn. They must be regularly replaced and the old ones discarded. The gloves should not be re-worn. Gloves should be taken off according to the attached poster.

The gloves should then be put in a plastic bag and once full should be double bagged and marked “for storage until (72 hours ahead)” and kept for 72 hours in a secure storage area before being placed in the general waste stream.

Allergen Management & procedures to be considered across the whole chain

Suppliers must be able to identify and declare the presence of allergens in their products either on the label (if the food is packaged) or in another way such as on a specification or verbally upon request when required for allergen control. If the products are open such as celery then this should have been delivered in a way that would not potentially contaminate any other products, otherwise rejection of the consignment should be considered. Consider these points:

- Receiving goods - obtaining accurate allergen information from product labels and/or directly from the supplier - in the case of any missing information or unclear labelling the product must not be used due to the risk of an undeclared allergen. You must also capture any “may contain” allergen statements from packages to be able to pass this on to customers.
- Storage - contamination with allergens due to failure in segregation between allergen containing and non allergenic containing products. Avoid decanting foods or splitting foods from their original packaging. If you are to do this - please contact Manchester City Council, Food, Health and Safety and Airport Team. fsafoodreg@manchester.gov.uk for advice.
- Transportation - contamination from delivery vehicle, personal hygiene, damaged packaging.

Telephone/Internet Orders

If you take any telephone/internet orders you must have a way of capturing any special dietary requirements eg any food allergies/intolerances. If any customers have any allergies/intolerances they must not receive any foods that contain such allergens either as ingredients or as “may contain” allergens.

It is advisable to establish if anyone in the household where a delivery is to be made is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 infection/has COVID-19 infection. Also whether anyone in the household is from a vulnerable group ie being shielded or self isolating due to being in a vulnerable group. This information **MUST** be conveyed to the person doing the delivery so that extra precautions can be taken at point of delivery.

Please see Manchester City Council guidance note - COVID-19 - Food Safety Guidance for volunteers. (advice note for volunteers who are shopping for food supplies and delivering to those who are unable to leave their homes).

Deliveries

Durability dates must be available i.e. use by dates and best before dates on all foods supplied to customers.

Please see Manchester City Council guidance note - COVID-19 - Food Safety Guidance for volunteers. (advice note for volunteers who are shopping for food supplies and delivering to those who are unable to leave their homes).

Please also see the Greater Manchester Regulatory Centre of Excellence advice note: Food delivery and takeaway guidance for information

See also Food Standards Agency Guidance:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/food-safety-for-food-delivery>

Note for recipient

It is important to make recipients of deliveries aware to check received products in terms of:

- allergens- if they have any allergies/intolerances
- durability dates eg use by and best before dates
- any other dietary requirements eg due to religious reasons

Recipients are also advised to wash hands following receipt of a delivery, and to wipe and disinfect food packaging prior to putting away. Also to rinse and disinfect any money received in change.

Consider sending email be to recipients to this effect and/ or a note to be placed in a shopping bag?

High Risk Food Preparation

The main focus of this guidance is for food banks and charitable food provision where the vast majority of the foods will be pre-packed ambient/dry/tinned products. If you wish to carry out high risk food activities such as cooking, chilling, providing ready to eat foods such as sandwiches or hot meals, then more stringent food hygiene procedures must be in place. You must register with your relevant local authority environmental health department before commencing any work, and you must comply with relevant Food Hygiene law and Food information regulations law in relation to food hygiene/ safety including allergen controls and other food labelling. For Manchester businesses you are strongly advised to contact Manchester City Council, Food, Health and Safety and Airport Team.

fsafoodreg@manchester.gov.uk for advice.

Please look at the Food Standards Agency website for further information.

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance>

Useful Guidance/links:

Allergen Information/Guidance

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/loosefoodsleaflet.pdf>

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-guidance-for-food-businesses>

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/thinkallergy.pdf>

Websites / Links / Guidance

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/hall-provision.pdf>

https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/listeria-guidance-june2016-rev_0.pdf

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Coronavirus & Food -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses/guidance-for-food-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/consumers/food-safety/coronavirus>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874281/COVID-19_easy_read.pdf

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-how-to-help-safely--2/coronavirus-how-to-help-safely>