

Heart of the South West Trading Standards Service



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Dear Volunteers

RE: FOOD STANDARDS AND THE CHARITABLE SUPPLY OF FOOD

As food costs continue to rise the current cost of living crisis is causing consumers to look for alternative food supplies. Volunteers and charitable organisations are increasingly looking for ways to provide essential food supplies to those who are most vulnerable.

In response to this we would like to offer the following guidance to help you ensure that the food you supply is safe to eat and meets the necessary legal requirements.

As a starting point you would need to decide whether your activity requires registration as a food business. Although a 'Food Business' includes any undertaking whether public or private or not for profit there needs to be some regularity in the provision of food for food registration requirements to apply. So, in a nutshell if it's a one off in the case of an emergency or a single charitable event rather than something that happens say at least on a monthly basis then the general provisions of food business registration won't apply. The occasional small-scale supply to the community for charitable purposes does not require Food Hygiene Registration but regular food banks or charity kitchens would need to be registered. You can register as a Food Business online [here](#).

Further guidance on the provision of food at community or charity events can be found on the FSA website:

[Providing food at community and charity events | Food Standards Agency](#)

There is a specific guidance document to help determine whether your activity would require registration:

[Community and charity food provision - guidance on the application of food hygiene law](#)

Commissioned by Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay Councils
www.devonsomersettradingstandards.gov.uk

For consumer advice, call 0808 223 1133
For business advice, call 01392 381381 from Devon, 01752 304147 from Plymouth,
0300 123 2224 from Somerset or 01803 208025 from Torbay
Privacy notice: devonsomersettradingstandards.gov.uk/privacy

Head of Trading Standards Fakir Mohamed Osman

The Control of Food Allergens

Some consumers may have allergies or intolerances to certain ingredients and it is important that they know what is in the food you are supplying so they can make informed choices about the food they eat. If your activity requires Registration as a Food Business then by law you are required to provide consumers with information regarding the presence of allergens in the food you supply. The way you provide the food will effect how you can provide this information:

- *Prepacked food* - In broad terms if you supply food that is prepacked you should check that allergens are highlighted in bold in the list of ingredients. Best practice would be to leave the food in its original packaging.
- *Prepacked for Direct Sale (PPDS)* – Natasha’s Law applies to food which is packaged in advance for consumers on the premises where it is supplied to consumers. This can include mobile or temporary outlets. In this case you must provide a full list of ingredients with allergens highlighted in bold. Further advice can be found [here](#).
- *Loose food* - If you need to remove prepacked food from its original packaging or food items are not already individually wrapped and you intend to supply the food loose without sealed packaging then you must ensure allergen information is made available to consumers either orally or in writing at the point of supply. The best way to achieve this is by providing copies of the original label or keeping a file of the original labels as a reference point and ensure this is available for use at the point of supply. If you intend to supply the information orally you should ensure you display a notice at the collection point advising consumers to ask for allergen information. A copy of this notice can be found [here](#).

[Free online allergy training](#) for any staff or volunteers handling food is available on the Food Standards Agency website. Keep a record of all training and ensure any casual or part time staff are suitably trained.

The overriding responsibility for anyone supplying food is that it must be safe to eat and best practice is to provide allergen information where requested. There is comprehensive guidance on the control of Allergens in food on our website [here](#).

Food Standards is all about making sure the food you supply is safe to eat and is what you say it is. Please visit our [website](#) for free online advice on a range of relevant Food Standards topics. In particular you should consider the following in relation to the charitable or voluntary supply of food:

- [General Food Labelling](#) – how you package and supply the food will determine what information needs to be on the label
- [Durability indications](#) – in times of need its even more important to avoid food waste and this document will help you decide when you can and can’t use food that is beyond its printed shelf life
- [Imported Foods](#) – what you need to know about foreign labelled food and how you can use it safely
- [Food Contact Materials](#) – making sure the packaging materials are safe for food use

The Heart of the South West Trading Standards Service is offering free tailored business advice in support of those looking to provide charitable or voluntary food supply to those in need during these difficult times. You can [register online](#) today to take advantage of this offer. You will also find details on our website of other services on offer which you may find useful.

Yours faithfully

The Team at Heart of the South West Trading Standards
A Service commissioned by Devon, Somerset, Plymouth and Torbay Councils