

Guidance for Food and Drink businesses and those serving food during Corona Virus period

FAQs

The Government has published extensive guidance on [Coronavirus for Food Businesses](#) which you should read in conjunction with the food related frequently asked questions (FAQs) below.

1. Which businesses can stay open?

Currently only businesses selling and delivering essential supplies. More information is available [here](#).

2. Do I need to be registered as a food business if I am making, selling or delivering food?

If your business is already registered but you want to start a short-term food takeaway service in response to Covid-19, you should inform the Food Safety Team <mailto:foodandsafety@n-somerset.gov.uk> of your plans. If you are not registered with the Council as a food business, you should complete a registration form, it's free <https://www.gov.uk/food-business-registration/north-somerset>

2. Can I just start delivering food?

There are several considerations you need to be aware of if your business would not normally deliver food. Food Standards Agency [guidance on delivering food](#).

- You must register or be registered as a food business with North Somerset Council BEFORE providing a food delivery service.
- You must make sure all food is safe to eat. You should review your food safety management systems to include the critical safety controls involved in delivering the food.
- Food that needs to be refrigerated must be kept below 8 degrees centigrade with ice blocks in an insulated box or cool bag or delivered within 30 minutes.
- Hot food should be kept above 63 degrees centigrade or delivered within 30 minutes.
- You should check and record cooking, storage and delivery temperatures to demonstrate safe practice. You can use the [Safer Food Better Business diary sheets](#) to help.

- The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have provided advice for business – '[How to manage a food business if you sell products online, for takeaway or for delivery](#)'.
- **Allergens:** There are 14 allergens contained in the regulations and you MUST know what is in your food. Try to avoid using them but flour, eggs and milk are included in many foods so you MUST have the information of what is in the food you make, available to the customer when they order it. You should also indicate what food contains the allergen/s if that would be unclear when it is delivered.
- To prevent allergens being cross-contaminated to non-allergen foods use separate spoons, equipment, boards and wash hands. Free training and advice on allergen management on the [FSA website](#).
- Those venues offering takeaway or delivery services must not include alcoholic beverages if they do not have a license to permit alcoholic sales off the premises.

Contact-free delivery

- It is very unlikely that COVID-19 can be spread through food, but packaging can become contaminated by contact.
- Think through the hazards and ensure that you have control measures in place, such as contactless payment or internet sales.
- Limiting contact when delivering orders is critical. Leave deliveries at the door, step back more than 2 meters and wait for your customer to collect it.

3. Is there any advice regarding Delivery vehicles?

- The delivery driver must be given clear instructions as indicated above.
- Staff must confirm each day that they are **not** suffering any Coronavirus symptoms (fever, persistent cough etc).
- Staff indicating Coronavirus symptoms MUST be instructed to follow current self-isolation guidance. Non-Coronavirus symptoms are subject to the usual restrictions for sickness and diarrhoea.
- The driver should avoid contact with other food handlers to reduce any potential to spread the virus both before and after deliveries.

One food handler should pack the order and place it in a low risk area or at the door of the kitchen for the driver to collect. The driver must wash their hands with soap and warm water as often as possible. Alcohol hand sanitiser at 60%+ alcohol content should be provided and used between deliveries.

Vehicle insurance must include 'business use' and evidence of valid MOT provided. The vehicle should be clean, tidy and, as a commercial vehicle, smoke free.

4. Infection Control

- You have responsibilities to ensure food handlers are fit for work under the food hygiene regulations and in addition you have a general duty of care to maintain the health, safety and welfare of employees and the public.
- Relevant staff must be provided with clear instructions on your infection control policy.
- Anybody involved with your food business must report any symptoms and, if possible their causes, to the food business operator immediately.

The Government have issued guidance to keep you safe on https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876212/COVID19_Guidance_Employers_and_businesses_.pdf

5. If I supply food how does it need to be labelled?

Prepacked food (canned and packet foods) should display all the mandatory legal information on the label, eg, ingredients, allergens, etc.

If you supply food from the premises where it is made via a takeaway delivery service, in a food grade container or packaging, you must make sure that the following information is available to the customer.

- Name of the food or food description
- Indication of ANY of the 14 specified allergens present in the food
- If any of the ingredients have been irradiated

Further details on allergens and how that information should be conveyed can be found [here](#).

Further advice on food labelling for caterers can be found here

<https://www.businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/food-and-drink/food-labelling-for-caterers>

Remember to check the ingredients of prepacked foods that you buy in so that the allergen information you pass on to your customers is accurate and up to date.

7. Cooking at home

Domestic equipment for cooking and storing high risk foods is not usually suitable for large scale catering in a safe manner and should be avoided. It is recommended to use a commercial kitchen, village hall or similar where there are adequate facilities for large scale catering.

For advice on food safety in the home and for occasions when you may cook food to support community friends and neighbours please contact foodandsafety@n-somerset.gov.uk or visit the Food Standard Agency at <https://www.food.gov.uk/food-safety>.

8. I have an 'on' license can I now start supplying off sales?

The government are reviewing the sale of alcohol for consumption off the premises. Until these changes are made lawful only duly licensed businesses can supply alcohol for consumption off the premises.

9. Who are the key workers in the food supply chain?

[Critical Workers are listed by the government](#) and include those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery, as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods.

Farmers are essential to the food supply chain as such any person undertaking an activity involved in the agricultural industry would be deemed as a key worker. Examples may include livestock hauliers, animal by product collectors, those who work in slaughter premises, feed suppliers and poultry catchers. This is not an exhaustive list and there will be other roles in the agriculture sector that will be additionally classed as key workers.

10. Can I operate a takeaway for a temporary period from my pub or restaurant?

The Government is relaxing planning rules to allow for pubs and restaurants to operate a takeaway for a temporary period as part of the coronavirus response. The measures will apply to hot food and drinks. The Government will introduce a time limited permitted development right to allow the temporary change of use of a pub (A4 – drinking establishment) or a restaurant (A3 – restaurants and cafes) to a hot-food take away for a period of up to 12 months only.

Businesses will be required to tell the local planning authority when the new use begins and ends. Should you wish to operate as a hot-food takeaway for a limited period please notify us here: <http://forms.n-somerset.gov.uk/forms/ContactUs/ContactUs>. Please include the date you started operating as a takeaway.

11. Is there any online training related to food businesses and Corona Virus?

To help in efforts to contain the rapid spread of the novel coronavirus, Intertek Alchemy has created a new training course "COVID-19: Overview" to ensure food manufacturing workers know how to:

- mitigate the spread of the coronavirus
- recognize symptoms and protect ourselves from respiratory illnesses
- prevent transmission to others

This course can be accessed here, <https://yourcampdenbri.co.uk/2I5E-1KFWT-8AST8I-10VLC0-1/c.aspx>.

This is an external non-governmental website so we cannot guarantee its contents.

Page last updated 7 April 2020.