

FOOD SERVICES – ADVICE NOTE 78

Changing food business operations to offer takeaway & deliveries

East Riding of Yorkshire Council understand that as a result of COVID-19 businesses may look to change their business model and diversify in order to maintain their business and help the community during this time.

The Food Standards Agency have provided definitive advice and guidance on reopening and adapting your food business during COVID-19, here:



<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/reopening-and-adapting-your-food-business-during-covid-19>

Including, a useful reopening checklist for food businesses, here:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/reopening-checklist-for-food-businesses-during-covid-19>

The following advice is for those businesses that are looking to make provision for takeaways and deliveries where they have not done so before. A business will only be in a position to do this if they are already registered as a food business with a Local Authority. All foods must be delivered to consumers in a way that ensures that they do not become unsafe or unfit to eat.

Scientific advice is that it is very unlikely that COVID-19 can be spread through food, but, if you are changing how you are used to operating then you should think through the hazards and ensure that you have control measures in place.

You must review how you will do this safely and consider the following:

Food Hygiene and Cross Contamination:

Although it is very 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, before and after handling food, and especially after being in a public place, blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing.

Ensure that you have considered all the new risks from changing to deliveries and ensure all raw and ready to eat foods are delivered in a manner which keeps ready to eat foods separate and protected from raw foods. Ensure that by changing to this way of working it will not increase any risk of contamination of the foods by allergens.

You will need to update your food safety management system if any of your normal cooking processes have changed to provide delivered food, eg if you now cook – chill – reheat food to make food preparation quicker upon delivery, where before you used to just cook – serve. It's important to update your procedures on these changes to demonstrate you have considered any risks to food safety. Ensure any staff are made aware of these changes.

Employees should frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products.

Food Allergen Management:

Ensure that appropriate and accurate food allergen information is available and conveyed to customers both at the time of order taking and delivery.

If you have a website you should put a clear sign on this stating “Please speak to a member of staff if you have any food allergies”. When customers phone to place an order, you should ask them if they or any of the people eating the food have any allergies. If they do, make a note of their requirements and ensure their food is prepared safely for them then clearly labelled, for reference by both staff delivering the food and the customer. Any food prepared for allergenic customers should be stored separately for and during delivery.

Allergic reactions to ingredients can be fatal. There is a wealth of advice for businesses on allergen management on the FSA website at <http://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-guidance-for-food-businesses>

See also our allergens management web-pages at www.eastriding.gov.uk/business/food-services/food-allergen-management-control-and-communication/

Temperature Control:

Foods that need refrigerating must be kept cool while they are being transported. They may need to be packed in an insulated box with a coolant gel or in a cool bag.

If you are transporting hot food, it should be kept hot. This may need to be packed in an insulated box. It is recommended to keep distances short and times limited to within 30 minutes.

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.’ www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/distance-selling-mail-order-and-delivery

Food packaging and Transport:

Ensure you only use food grade packaging for foods to be delivered. Ensure all packaging is stored safely and hygienically.

Vehicles must be fit for purpose and food must not be subjected to potential contamination. Keep the interior of the vehicle clean and do not transport food with animals or chemicals such as fuel, oil and screen wash.

Check your vehicle insurance to ensure you are covered for business use.

Contact-free delivery:

Limiting contact when delivering orders will help keep everyone healthy, so you could consider leaving deliveries at the door of your customer, rather than handing it over to them. Knock on the door and step back at least 2 metres and wait nearby for your customer to collect it.

You should have a system in place to ascertain/develop a system whereby clients can notify the restaurant/delivery drivers whether they are self-isolating so that action can be taken accordingly as highlighted above.

Take payments over the phone or internet rather than taking a cash payment where possible.

Takeaways and restaurants offering a pick-up service:

Customers should be encouraged to order online, by app, or by phone.

Customers waiting to order or collect should wait in a designated area where a 2-metre distance from other people can be maintained. If this is not possible, customers should enter the premises one at a time and only when their order is ready to be made or collected.

Collection times should be staggered to discourage crowding outside the premises. Where queuing is taking place, you should use queue management systems to maintain a 2-metre distance between people.

Infection Control and Health& Safety:

You have responsibilities to ensure food handlers are fit for work under the food hygiene regulations and in addition you have a general duty to ensure the Health, Safety and Welfare of persons in your employment and members of the public.

Relevant staff must be provided with clear instructions on any infection control policy in place, and any person so affected and employed in a food business and who is likely to come into contact with food is to report immediately the illness or symptoms, and if possible their causes, to the food business operator.

The Government have issued sector specific guidance on how to open workplaces safely while minimising the risk of spreading COVID-19. You must ensure you have undertaken an appropriate risk assessment to make your business 'COVID-19 Secure' and shared this with your workforce:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery>

Relaxation of planning use:

The Government has announced a relaxation of planning rules to assist pubs and restaurants during the Coronavirus pandemic. For the next twelve months premises who were not previously, will now be able to operate as takeaways providing hot food and drink. Further information on relaxing planning rules can be found on the Gov.uk website.

Further Guidance:

The UK government has provided further guidance for food businesses and consumers on good hygiene practices specifically in response to coronavirus:

GOV.UK - COVID-19 guidance for food businesses <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses>

The guidance covers:

- social distancing in food processing plants / supermarkets / staff canteens and rest areas / takeaways and restaurants/offering pick-up services outdoor food markets/farmers markets.
- food hygiene, handling food packaging, cleaning and waste disposal, managing employee sickness and social distancing.

GOV.UK - COVID-19 guidance for consumers on food <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-consumers-on-coronavirus-covid-19-and-food/guidance-for-consumers-on-coronavirus-covid-19-and-food>

Chartered Institute of Environmental Health

The CIEH has also released a guidance document called 'Food delivery & takeaway' with further information for businesses:

<https://www.cieh.org/media/4070/covid-19-food-delivery-and-takeaway-guidance.pdf>

Advice for restarting and adapting food businesses after shutdown

The FSA website provides up to date extensive sector specific guidance on [reopening and adapting food businesses during the COVID-19](#) pandemic. This guidance gives a practical framework to help identify what FBO's need to do to continue, adapt, or restart their food operations.

There is also a comprehensive checklist which includes health and safety checks available from the [Institute of Food Science and Technology](#).