

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) and your food business

Food businesses are facing many challenges at this time and we wish to support you with as much guidance as we can.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Public Health England (PHE) are leading the UK Government response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

### Advice and guidance

- Up to date information and guidance for the public on the risk from coronavirus is available on the Government Website (<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>)
- If you employ people, the Food Safety Advice [www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/food-safety-and-hygiene/food-safety-for-businesses/food-safety-advice](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/food-safety-and-hygiene/food-safety-for-businesses/food-safety-advice) will help you and your workers to prevent the spread of COVID-19

### Takeaway services

You will be aware the closure of food businesses and other businesses is now in place. If you are thinking of offering takeaway by collection or delivery service, you must revise your food safety management system to have safe procedures in place for this activity.

### At the premise

The food business operator must:

- Ensure food handlers are trained in food hygiene
- On arrival at the premise, wash your hands in a separate hand wash basin with running hot and cold water, liquid anti-bacterial soap, dry your hands with disposable paper towels, and turn off the tap with disposable paper towels
- Change into clean, laundered overclothing every time on entering the premise
- Ensure handwashing every time staff enter the kitchen and throughout food handling and preparation activities
- Maintain a safe distance – two metres staff and customers
- Ensure all raw and ready-to-eat foods are kept separate during storage, preparation, service and delivery
- Use separate equipment, overclothing and utensils for raw and ready-to-eat foods
- Clean and disinfect food preparation surfaces with disinfectant or sanitiser compliant with British Standards BS-EN 1276 or 13967, use disposable

single-use cloths and also pay close attention to all hand touch points including taps, fridge handles, till points, credit/debit card readers, telephones and door handles, Clean and disinfect throughout the day

- Cleaning in non-health care settings  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings)
- Keep high-risk foods chilled below eight degrees centigrade in a fridge, suitably covered and monitor the temperature throughout the trading day
- Cook foods to 75 degrees centigrade or above
- Hot held foods must be kept above 63 degrees centigrade

Temperature control is critical to prevent the growth of food poisoning bacteria in food. Monitoring is needed throughout the day using, for example, a digital probe thermometer. All monitoring checks should be recorded and records kept available for inspection.

### **Food Allergens**

All food handlers and service staff need to know how to deal with face-to-face and telephone allergen enquiries from customers.

If someone asks if a menu item contains a certain food /allergen, check all the ingredients (and what they contain), as well as what you use to prepare or cook the item. Always read labels and other information. Never guess.

If you are unsure what allergens the dish contains, tell the customer you cannot serve them. Refer to the Food Standards Agency [www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-guidance-for-food-businesses](http://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-guidance-for-food-businesses) for more information

### **Illness**

Food handlers, service staff and delivery personnel must not work if they have any symptoms of illness that will compromise food safety or cause the spread of infection.

If someone becomes unwell in the workplace with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they should be sent home and advised to follow current NHS advice [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)

Remind employees to wash their hands for 20 seconds more frequently and catch coughs and sneezes in tissues, which should be binned.

### **Takeaway practices, delivery vehicles and drivers**

Where possible you should prevent customers from visiting your businesses, and all transactions should be via telephone, social media or another web link.

If customers are to be allowed to visit to place or collect an order, customers should not be permitted to stay in the business to wait for or eat their food, all seating areas should be closed off and inaccessible.

Take payment in advance over the telephone, online or using a credit card reader if at the premise. Avoid handling cash.

It is necessary that the driver employed is insured for business purposes and has a vehicle or motorbike that is fully taxed and MOT certified. If deliveries are done by bicycle, it must be roadworthy and the appropriate helmet and high visibility clothing provided and worn by the rider. If using an external provider, make sure they too are reputable.

- All foods for customer takeaway and/or delivery must be stored in suitable food grade containers – for example. Polystyrene, foil and plastic with lids.
- These containers must be clean and stored hygienically
- It is not good practice to allow a food handler to touch the inner surface of the food container before any food is added.
- For hot food deliveries use an insulated bag to help retain heat.
- For cold food deliveries use a cool box or bag with ice blocks or packs.
- If using a storage box fitted to the back of a motorbike, the inside surface still needs to be kept clean and not come into direct contact with the outer surface of the food delivery container. For example, place the container into a paper or plastic food bag first.
- To ensure safety, remove the food delivery and leave on the door step.
- Ensure delivery personnel have both anti-bacterial spray and gel with them on all deliveries.
- Limit the radius of delivery to 2-3 miles maximum so that foods can be delivered from the final point of cooking and packing to the final point of destination for consumption so that food is still hot for the consumer to eat.

## **Health and Safety**

The health and safety and welfare of you, your staff and visitors is paramount at this very difficult time, like the provision of access to welfare facilities, maintaining a safe distance of two metres, hand washing measures and the provision of personal protective equipment where it is needed.

You will need to consider all aspects as part of your business risk assessment and take steps to ensure your workplace is a safe environment at which to work.

## **Further information**

- For general advice, please refer to the Health and Safety Executive [www.HSE.gov.uk](http://www.HSE.gov.uk)
- For further guidance, contact Environmental Health Food Safety team by calling 01323 41000 or email [Ehealth.ldc@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:Ehealth.ldc@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)