



Food safety for community cooking

Hygiene and allergy advice for volunteers and groups preparing meals to share in their community.

This guidance provides food safety information and guidance for individuals or groups wishing to prepare meals at home for their community. This can include preparing or donating meals for individuals, community groups and local organisations.

Food provided for community groups must comply with food law and be safe to eat, you need a suitable level of knowledge to make sure that you handle food safely.

If you are donating or preparing food, it is important to make sure that those who receive the food know what is in it and how to prepare it. This is so it doesn't present a risk of making them ill.

Donating prepacked food products will make sure that the foods are properly labelled with instructions such as use-by dates, allergen information and storage guidelines.

If you are preparing meals, the four main things to remember for good hygiene are the 4Cs: **cleaning, cooking, chilling and avoiding cross-contamination.**

It's very important to store food properly to keep it safe. Storing food in sealed containers and at the correct temperature protects it from harmful bacteria, stops objects falling into it, and avoids cross-contamination with other ingredients.

Here are some practical tips for when you're making food for large numbers of people:

- wash your hands regularly with soap and water
- always wash fresh fruit and vegetables before cooking or consumption
- keep raw and ready-to-eat foods separate
- do not use food past its use-by date
- always follow cooking instructions
- make sure food is properly cooked before you serve it
- ensure that food preparation areas are suitably cleaned and sanitised after use, and wash any equipment you are using in hot soapy water
- ensure frozen food is safely defrosted in a fridge before you use it
- keep food out of the fridge for the shortest time possible.

Food temperature

Food that needs to be chilled, such as sandwiches, should be left out of the fridge for the minimum possible time, and never for more than four hours.

After this time, any remaining food should be thrown away or put back in the fridge. If you put the food back in the fridge, don't let it stand around at room temperature when you serve it again. It should be eaten as soon as possible.

Redistributing food and donating to food banks

Food cannot be sold, redistributed or consumed after the use-by date. Food should not be donated to food banks after the use-by date. The only exception is if the food has gone through a safe freezing or cooking process before the use-by date has passed. In this instance the food should be appropriately re-labelled.

Food with a best before date can be legally sold, redistributed, and consumed after this date, if judged to be of sufficient quality to be donated and made available to be eaten.

It is an offence for a person to sell or supply food which does not meet food safety requirements, or which is not of the 'nature, substance or quality' expected by the consumer. Food redistributors should have a system in place, based on Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point (HACCP).



Allergen guidance when cooking for your community or donating food

SDCC is registered as a food business, we are required to provide information about allergens present in the food we prepare. We aim to provide details of the relevant 14 allergens as this is best practice and this will allow people with food allergies to make safe food choices.

If you are cooking for a community group, you can provide allergen information by labelling food containers or providing a note for each meal.

Cooking for someone with a food allergy or intolerance can be worrying if you're not used to doing it. You can plan a safe meal by:

- asking what they can and can't eat
- making sure you keep allergens separate from other foods to avoid cross-contamination
- double-checking the ingredients lists on prepacked foods for allergen information
- checking the ingredients with the person who provided the food, if it was donated avoiding adding toppings or garnishes to dishes which might otherwise appear allergen-free
- cleaning work surfaces and equipment thoroughly to remove traces of anything you might have cooked before.

There are often good substitutes available for ingredients that someone may need to avoid. Don't hesitate to ask for help and suggestions for ingredients from those with a food allergy that you are cooking for.

Food that needs extra care - Some foods are more likely to cause food poisoning than others. These include:

raw milk

raw shellfish

soft cheeses

pâté

foods containing raw egg cooked sliced meats.

If you plan to serve any of these foods, consult the 'Foods Which Need Extra Care' section in our Safer food, Better Business guidance which is kept in the kitchen.

If an allergen-free meal has been requested, it should be clear when delivered which container it is in. You can use stickers or a note on the container to label each meal.



This is to confirm that I, as a volunteer of Stainland and District Community Charity have been provided with information about providing food at community and charity events. I have been directed to the SFBB booklet located in the Kitchen at the Community Centre and understand that I must remain vigilant when attending events in respect of Allergen information to protect anyone who could be vulnerable and have specific dietary requirements. When serving food, I am responsible for asking if the recipient has any allergies.

Signed _____

Print name _____

Dated _____