



Third Sector
Dumfries and Galloway

Policy Briefing No. 6

New Allergy Labelling Legislation

Working together to put our sector first

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Introduction

In the UK, it is estimated that 1-2% of adults and 5-8% of children have a food allergy. This equates to around 2 million people living in the UK with a food allergy, this figure does not include those with food intolerances. This means the actual number of affected people living with food allergy and/or food intolerance is considerably more.

An allergic reaction can be produced by a tiny amount of a food ingredient that a person is sensitive to (for example a teaspoon of milk powder, a fragment of peanut or just one or two sesame seeds). Symptoms of an allergic reaction can range from mild symptoms such as itching around the mouth and rashes; and can progress to more severe symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhoea, wheezing and on occasion anaphylaxis (shock).

There is no cure for food allergy. The only way to manage the condition is to avoid food that makes the person ill. Therefore, it is very important that clear and accurate information about allergenic ingredients is provided by those providing food.

New Legislation

On 13 December, new legislation (the [EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation 1169/2011](#)) requires food businesses to provide allergy information on food sold unpackaged, in for example catering outlets, deli counters, bakeries and sandwich bars.

For the third sector this would include **community cafés, day centres, lunch clubs, playgroups and nurseries.**

Exemptions

Individuals who are not food businesses and occasionally provide food at charity events or voluntary cake sales, for example, do not need to follow these requirements. However, good practice suggests that cakes with known allergens are labelled as such.

Food businesses can no longer say they 'don't know' what is in their meal OR refuse to serve those with allergies or intolerances, and they will have to have safe processes in place to provide this information rather than guessing or basing information on recall. The legislation requires all catering establishments to provide allergen information for the 14 specific allergens, if contained as an ingredient in the food they sell or serve.

This allergen information can be provided in a number of ways. It can be provided via recipe sheets, specification sheets or scrap book with labels of the ingredients. The [Food Standards Agency \(FSA\)](#) has some tools which can help businesses collect, record and report allergen information and work flexibly as the menu changes.

There will also be changes to existing legislation on labelling allergenic ingredients in prepacked foods. The [Food Information Regulations 2014](#) were laid in Parliament on 15 July 2014 and came into force on 15 August 2014.

How can I deal with allergen dietary requests?

There are a number of simple things you can do to help deal with allergen dietary requests. For more information visit: <http://mkgfoods.co.uk/allergen-rules-questions/>

Labelling of 'gluten free' foods

Around 1% of people in the UK have coeliac disease (sometimes referred to as gluten intolerance). This is a lifelong autoimmune disease which is caused by the immune system reacting to gluten. This makes labelling claims about gluten in foods an important issue. There is also [guidance](#) available on the specific requirements for 'gluten free' labelling.

Help available

An interactive [food allergy training tool](#) from the FSA highlights steps that should be followed to make sure good practice is used in the manufacture and production of food. It also offers practical advice to anyone wanting to learn more about food allergy, such as managers, staff and volunteers in third sector organisations.

For further information and help visit: www.food.gov.uk

For a front of house poster visit: <http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/allergen-signage.pdf>

For resources visit: <http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/allergy-guide/allergen-resources>

More information about food allergen labelling and the 14 allergens listed in Annex II visit:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/food-allergen-labelling-technical-guidance.pdf>

<http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/eu-fic-faq.pdf>

The advice contained in this document should not be taken as an authoritative statement of the law or its interpretation. Only the courts can decide whether in particular circumstances an offence has been committed.

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