

COVID- 19: Food Delivery and Takeaway Guidance

Plymouth City Council understands that food businesses will be doing all they can to stay trading during this time. The following advice is for those businesses that are making provision for takeaways and deliveries.

The government intends to relax planning rules and will set out measures so that pubs and restaurants can operate as hot food takeaways to serve people having to stay at during the coronavirus outbreak for a period of up to 12 months. Click for details: [Government to grant permission for pubs and restaurants to operate as takeaways as part of coronavirus response](#)

You must tell the Plymouth City Council's planning authority when the new use begins and ends.

IMPORTANT

Any person who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) must not be permitted to work in a food business (including making deliveries). This is to help prevent the spread of the virus.

Symptoms include:

- high temperature and/or
- a new and continuous cough.

Scientific advice states that it is very unlikely that COVID-19 can be spread through food, but it can be spread easily between people.

Infection Control

Food Business Operators must 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 your employees and members of the public.

Staff must be provided with clear instructions on your infection control policy, and any employee 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 guidance on COVID-19 for employees and businesses <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>

This guidance is not specific for food businesses, but it does advise that 'if you have been asked to self-isolate, you can order by phone or online, such as through takeaway services or online shopping deliveries. However, make sure you tell the delivery driver that the items are to be left outside, or as appropriate for your home'.

Caterers new to food takeaway services

If you are changing how you are used to operating then you should think through the new hazards and ensure that you have suitable control measures in place to protect both your customers and your staff.

A business should only consider takeaway/delivery activity if they are registered as a food business with a Local Authority. You should also review and update your Safer Food Better Business Pack or other Food Safety Management System to include this new activity.

The following sections are covered in more detail with useful safe methods to follow on the Food Standards Agency pages for [Safer Food Better Business for Caterers and Retailers](#). Links have been provided throughout to help you.

If you are now offering your menu choices as a takeaway or delivery choice it is recommended that food is offered 'intended for immediate consumption'.

Check at the Point of Sale whether there are any allergens or intolerances that need to be catered for. Inform the kitchen in the usual way if there is.

Hot food 'intended for immediate consumption' (recommended)

The safest way to offer your menu as takeaway or delivery items is freshly cooked, piping hot and ready to eat immediately on receipt by your customers.

Takeaway hot food for collection – things to consider:

- Hot holding (this should be above 63°C and for no longer than 2 hours)
- A clean separate area to pack your food into suitable, food safe containers
- When specified by the customer, allergen information is marked on the pack or lid.
- A suitable collection point that does not place your staff or other customers at risk.

Takeaway AND delivery service:

All foods must be delivered to consumers in a way that ensures that they do not become unsafe or unfit to eat.

You will need to consider:

- A suitable insulated container(s) to place your food items inside
- Safe distancing arrangement between delivery staff and customers

An additional SFBB safe method on hot holding and food intended for delivery can be found [here](#).

The driver, where possible, should avoid coming into the main kitchen area and avoid contact with kitchen staff. It is suggested that one of the kitchen staff 'box up' the food and place in a low risk area of the kitchen ready for the driver to pick up and deliver. Ensure that the delivery vehicle is insured for business use.

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 delivery times limited to within 30 minutes.

Food or meals requiring further preparation or storage

Foods that are prepared or cooked, chilled and packed (by you) for the customer to store, portion, reheat or assemble at home require more controls and information provided in a label or leaflet.

If you are supplying food to customers that contain cold meat, salads or desserts or a part-cooked meal that requires further preparation, reheating or portioning you will need to provide instructions on how to do this safely.

The required information includes:

- Name of the food
- Allergens present in the food
- A safe Use-By or Best Before date
- Storage instructions
- Cooking instructions
- You may also need to state whether food is suitable for home freezing

Foods that need refrigerating must be kept cool while they are being transported. These may need to be packed in an insulated box with coolant gel ice blocks or in a cool bag. It is recommended to keep distances short and delivery times limited to within 30 minutes.

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 step, back up at least 1 metre and wait nearby for your customer to collect it.

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

Some daily tips

- Keep a close eye on employee sickness i.e. signs of symptoms and act accordingly and record actions
- Wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds using hand wash soap (ideally anti-bacterial liquid soap). This should be done on arrival (at work/

home), and between activities such as handling raw food, taking out the rubbish, after touching your hair or face, and after cleaning activity

- Keep your hands away from your face, particularly your eyes and nose
- Regularly sanitise (clean & disinfect) all contact points including switches, door handles, taps, cool boxes, tables, till points and card machines etc.
- Consider reducing the use of trays, self-serve water and refillable cups
- Encourage contactless payments to avoid handling money
- Nominate one person to take change where contactless payment isn't an option
- Reinforce effective hand washing at key times for staff and customers by using informational signage
- For customers collecting food, encourage this to happen quickly perhaps waiting in cars with a text message to say their order is ready.
- If waiting areas are used, these should be limited to enable 2 metre (3 steps) between people and no more.

In depth advice and guidance:

Safer Food Better Business for Caterers

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/sfbb-caterers-pack-fixed.pdf>

Additional pages for hot holding and delivery

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/sfbb-chinese-05-cooking-09-hot-holding-and-delivery.pdf>

Food labelling for caterers

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

Labelling of non-pre-packed foods

<https://www.businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/food-and-drink/labelling-of-non-prepacked-foods>

Allergens advice for non-prepacked foods

<https://www.businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/food-and-drink/food-allergens-and-intolerance#Allergeninformationnonprepackedprepackedfordirectsale>