

Providing food and drinks at Church

This advice and guidance is based on the Food Standards Agency guidance (2018) on providing food in a village hall or other community setting for volunteers and charity groups.

It does not apply to Gathering Grounds or Alpha and Contact meals. These activities will require specific procedures and controls.

Food supplied or provided at church must comply with food law and be safe to eat.

Allergen information

When any food is served, warning notices MUST be displayed that states:

Please be aware that food may contain some or all allergen ingredients and we cannot guarantee that food has been prepared in nut free or allergen environments.

Should you wish to see any of the ingredient lists from any shop bought foods please ask to see the packaging.

Thank you

When a Bring and Share event is happening the following will be communicated through the bulletin/announcement

- Ask people to bring a list of ingredients if home baking
- If bringing bought items then keep the packaging to be viewed if required.
- To view the home baking guidelines on the website of planning to bake at home.

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Food hygiene certificates

A food hygiene certificate is not required to make and provide for church events. However, you need to make sure that you handle food safely.

Keeping food safe

Following the 4Cs of food hygiene will help you prepare, make and store food safely. The 4Cs of food hygiene are: Cleaning, Chilling, Cooking and avoiding Cross-contamination

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

- prepare food in advance and freeze it, if you can, but ensure the food is properly defrosted before you use it
- wash your hands regularly with soap and water, using hand sanitisers if hand washing facilities are not available
- always wash fresh fruit and vegetables
- keep raw and ready-to-eat foods apart
- do not use food past its use-by date
- always read any cooking instructions and 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
- keep food out of the fridge for the shortest time possible

Chilled food

Food that needs to be chilled, such as sandwich fillings served as part of a buffet, should be left out of the fridge for no 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.

Use-by dates

Use-by dates show how long the food remains safe to eat or drink. Check and follow the use-by dates of the food you serve. Food cannot be supplied in any circumstances if its use-by date has passed. This also applies if you are supplying people with packaged food from a food bank.

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Foods that need 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

These should not be served unless the Food Standards Agency guidance is strictly adhered to as described in the [Foods which need extra care](#) section in the [Safer food better business pack](#).

Cakes

You can serve home-made cakes at church events and they should be safe to eat if:

- Please read Home Baking Guidelines