

26<sup>th</sup> March 2020



ASHFORD  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

[www.ashford.gov.uk](http://www.ashford.gov.uk)



@ashfordcouncil



AshfordBoroughCouncil

## Advice for businesses or community groups proposing to start food deliveries in response to current COVID-19 situation.

As a result of the current coronavirus (COVID-19), an increasing number of food businesses and community groups are planning to start, or expand their range of hot and cold food deliveries

Current scientific advice is that it is very unlikely that COVID-19 can be spread through food but it is really important you think carefully about your proposed business to make sure you have controls in place so you can do this safely. We have listed key guidance for you below:

**Food Registered:** You must register as a food business with the council. If you are not registered, go to <https://register.food.gov.uk/new/ashford>. There is no cost.

**Allergens:** As the person preparing and providing the food, you have very clear responsibilities to make sure your customers know if any of the 14 identified allergens may be in the food you are supplying. This includes them being in sauces or flavouring you may have added to your recipe.

You must make allergen information easily available to your customers and the best time to do this is at the time of their order, but you are also strongly advised to include information about allergens on each item you supply.

There is a lot of information about the law and allergens on the Food Standards Agency Website [food.gov.uk](http://food.gov.uk) and a free on-line course you and your team can do which takes about 30-40 minutes.

**Cooking your food and keeping it hot:** Make sure your food reaches at least 75°C in the middle of the thickest part when you cook it. Make sure it does not fall below 63° at time of despatch. Use a thermometer to check this.

Deliver your hot food in insulated containers to keep hot and make sure it reaches the customer as soon as possible, ideally within 30 minutes but no longer than 2 hours.

**Keeping your food cold:** If you are delivering high risk cold foods aim for these to be below 5°C at time of despatch and deliver them as quickly as possible, ideally within 30 minutes but no longer than 2 hours. The use of insulated containers is advisable

**Protecting your food while cooking and packing:** All food must be protected against contamination. This means being very careful to make sure physical objects like hair, or chemicals like bleach or cleaning agents don't get in it.

To reduce the risks from bacterial contamination it is essential raw foods are kept in completely different containers from the ready to eat food.

**Food Containers:** It is recommended you do not re-use containers. If however you do intend to collect and reuse them, you must take careful precautions:

- ⊞ Keep the used containers completely separate from any bags or containers you are using for delivering food to your customers.
- ⊞ As soon as practicable thoroughly clean and disinfect them prior to re-use. Use high temperatures and / or sanitiser and where possible allow the containers to air dry.
- ⊞ Store so they are away from risk of contamination before reuse.

**Insulated boxes/bags:** High risk ready to eat foods must be kept covered using lidded containers – preferably insulated boxes or bags - with the food inside tightly wrapped using cellophane/aluminium foil tightly wrapped over the plate/bowl of food. Only use food grade disposable containers. All containers, insulated boxes / bags / trays must be cleaned and disinfected between deliveries.

**Delivery vehicles:** All vehicles used for deliveries must be well maintained and kept clean.

**Personal Hygiene:** All staff must practice the highest standards of personal hygiene at all times. After each delivery staff must sanitise their hands on return to their vehicle and thoroughly clean them on return to the business premises.

**Particular COVID-19 precautions:** There is a lot of advice for businesses and the public for individual protection during these extraordinary times. The government has issued [guidance on COVID-19 for employees and businesses](#).

This guidance is not specific for food businesses, but it does advise the public that if they have been asked to self-isolate, they should only order food by phone or online and should ask the delivery driver that the items are to be left outside, or as appropriate at your home.

For you operating your business, you must have a system in place whereby customers can notify you that they are self-isolating. In particular:

- ⊞ Check at the time of the order if your customer is self-isolating. Do not place your delivery agents at risk.
- ⊞ Staff should not enter customers' properties and should keep as far away from them as is possible when handing over the food. Consider leaving deliveries at the door. Knock on the door, step back at least 2 metre and wait nearby for your customer to collect it.
- ⊞ Take payment over the phone or via internet ordering. If in exceptional circumstances this is not possible staff must either wear single use disposable gloves and / or sanitise their hands after each transaction.

**Infection control:** You have responsibilities to ensure food handlers are fit for work under the food hygiene regulations. In addition you have a general duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of persons in your employment and members of the public.

Relevant staff must be provided with clear instructions on any infection control policy in place.

**Planning Consent:** The government have relaxed planning restrictions on pubs and restaurants allowing them to operate as takeaways during this difficult period.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-grant-permission-for-pubs-and-restaurants-to-operate-as-takeaways-as-part-of-coronavirus-response>

**Last updated 26th March 2020**