Starting a food business from your home

This page provides specific information for those running a food business from home. Please read all the pages in this guide to ensure you have the information you need to run your food business.

This guidance is for individuals starting food businesses from home. However, you must also read our guidance on getting ready to start your food business and starting your food business safely.

We also have guidance on selling food for delivery.

While you may not define yourself as a business, if you are providing food on a regular and organised basis, you are a food business under food law.

Once you have registered as a food business, local authority officers will make arrangements to visit your home to conduct a food hygiene inspection. This inspection is to assess whether your food preparation areas and food safety procedures are suitable for running a food business.

Tips
Remember, if you supply food regularly to the public, for free or otherwise, you need to register as a food business.

Managing food waste

All food businesses, including home-based businesses, must dispose of waste securely and properly.

To prevent your kitchen from being flooded with waste and sewage you should put all food waste in the bin rather than down the sink and use sink strainers to stop fat, oil and grease (FOG) and small bits of food waste entering the sewer network.

Instead of pouring any cooking fats and oils down the sink, these can be collected in a container like a jam jar or yoghurt pot. The fat, oil and grease solidifies as it cools down. Once it is solid, you should put it in the bin. Any liquid foods like gravy can be soaked up using kitchen roll or newspaper and then also put into the bin.

It is important to dispose of FOG in this way because not only can blockages flood your home, but you could also risk prosecution if your business disposes of FOG carelessly. Contact your Local Authority to check the correct way to dispose of waste responsibly.

Practical requirements for setting up a food business from home

Register as self-employed

When you start a food business from home you need to inform HMRC that you are self-employed. This is to alert them that you will pay tax through Self-Assessment. You need to register as self-employed when starting a food business, even if you are part-time or have another job.

You should register at GOV.UK to verify your account and confirm the specifics of your food business. Failure to register may result in a fine.

HMRC has further guidance on working for yourself and how to check if you should set up as a limited company instead.

Running a business from home

The government has guidance for running a business from home. This includes advice on:

- getting permission from your mortgage provider or landlord
- getting permission from the local council
- insurance
- tax allowances
- business rates
- health and safety

FSA Explains

Starting a food business from home checklist

Register with your local authority

You should register with your local authority at least 28 days before you start your food business.

Check you have the appropriate permissions

If you are running your business from home, or a domestic premises, you need to ensure you have the appropriate permissions in place.

Register as self-employed

When starting a food business, you need to inform HMRC that you are self-employed.

Contact your local authority for advice

Your local authority's website may have helpful guidance relating to starting your food business.

Set up food safety procedures

You should have a safety procedure in place for your food business.

Consider food safety training

Contact your local authority's Food Safety or Environmental Health team for advice on relevant food safety training courses.

Practice good food hygiene

Good food hygiene is essential to make sure that the food you serve is safe to eat.

Prepare your premises to run a food business

Your food business premises, which could be your home, must be kept clean and maintained in good repair and condition.

Ensure you manage waste correctly

All food businesses, including home-based businesses, must dispose of waste securely and properly.

Learn about selling food without face-to-face contact and delivering it safely

More information on selling without face to face contact and via delivery can be selling food for delivery.

Provide allergen information and follow labelling rules?

Food businesses of all sizes are required to provide allergen information.