

Getting ready to start your food business

This page provides guidance on how you can get ready to start your food business. Please read all the pages in this guide to ensure you have the information you need to run your food business.

Planning before you start your food business

Before starting a food business, you must take time to plan and prepare. Doing so will give you the best opportunity to run your food business safely.

Further guidance can be found in our ['things to consider before starting a food business' checklist](#) on this page.

Who needs to register

If you sell, cook, store, handle, prepare or distribute, you may be considered a food business and will need to [register with your local authority](#).

This includes food businesses trading:

- from physical customer-facing premises
- from home
- from a mobile unit or temporary premises
- online (for example via social media or a website) or through distance selling (distance selling means any selling that happens without face-to-face contact with the consumer)

Registration will apply to all types of businesses who sell food and or drink, regardless of where you operate from.

Companies involved with food distribution, brokerage or food supply that operate from an office should also register as a food business. This applies even if no food is kept at the premises.

If you operate in more than one location, you need to register each premise with the local authority in which they are located. If you are unsure if you need to register or require further advice, please [contact your local authority](#) in England, Wales or Northern Ireland.

Guidance on how to register your food business with your local authority

When you start a new food business, or take over an existing business, you must register with your local authority. You should do this at least 28 days before you start trading.

Registration of your food business is free and can't be refused. If you are already trading and have not registered yet, you need to register as soon as possible as this is a legal requirement.

If you supply food regularly, for free or otherwise, to the public, then you need to register as a food business.

Register your food business on the [food business registration portal](#).

Anyone who sells, cooks, stores, handles, prepares or distributes food for the public needs to register as a food business, however there are also other guidelines you need to follow to make sure you're running your business correctly.

When to register

You are required to register at least 28 days before trading. We recommend that you do not register too early, but that you wait until 28 days before you are ready to start your operations. [Use our checklist](#) to make sure that you have considered everything before you register.

If you cease trading at any point, you need to [inform your local authority](#).

Selling food from customer-facing premises

If you are trading from physical customer-facing premises, please make sure you also read our guidance on and [setting up your food business premises](#). You may also want to read our guidance on [selling food for delivery](#).

Selling food from home

If you are trading from home, please make sure you read our guidance on [starting a food business safely](#) and [starting a food business from your home](#).

Selling food from mobile or temporary premises

If you are trading from a mobile unit or temporary premises please make sure you also read our guidance on [starting a food business safely](#) and [setting up your food business premises](#).

Selling food online

If you are selling food online (for example via social media or a website) or through distance selling (distance selling means any selling that happens without face-to-face contact with the consumer) please read our guidance on [starting a food business safely](#), [setting up your food business premises](#) and [selling food for delivery](#).

Registering as a childminder

If you provide food with your childminding business in England, the details you provide to [Ofsted](#) or your [childminder agency](#) will also be used to register you as a food business with your local authority. You will not have to register separately.

You must comply with food safety and hygiene regulations if you provide food and drink for children or babies including:

- meals
- snacks
- drinks (apart from mains tap water)
- reheated food provided by a parent/carer
- food that you cut up and prepare

Childminder registration requirements differ in Wales and Northern Ireland if you provide food with your childminding business. Contact your local authority for more information.

You can find more information on food safety management for registered childminders or childcarers in our [Safer Food Better Business Pack](#).

Checklist: things to consider before starting a food business

England, Northern Ireland and Wales

WORD

[View Starting your food business safely checklist_0.docx as Word\(Open in a new window\)](#) (95.96 KB)

Planning

Having a business plan is important to running a successful food business. [Further guidance](#) on how to write a business plan, including examples of business plans are available online.

Registration

Once you are ready to start your food business, you must [register](#) with your local authority at least 28 days before you begin trading.

Permissions

If you are running your business from home, there are [certain requirements](#) that need to be met. For more information go to our guidance on [starting a food business from home](#).

Register as self employed

If you are starting a food business, you need to inform [HMRC](#) that you are self-employed. To get more advice on the financial aspects of becoming a food business owner, head to our [additional help and support](#).

Set up food safety procedures

Food businesses must have food safety management procedures in place. Read our guidance on [starting your food business safely](#).

Consider food safety training

It is important to demonstrate the highest standards of food preparation, handling, storage and serving. For more information read our guidance on [starting your food business safely](#).

Practice good food hygiene

Good food hygiene is essential to make sure that the food you serve is safe to eat. For more information read our guidance on [starting your food business safely](#).

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. For more information read our guidance on [setting up your food business premises](#).

Selling food online and delivering it safely

You must ensure that all food is delivered to consumers in a way that ensures that it does not become unsafe or unfit to eat. More information on safe delivery can be found in [selling food for delivery](#).

Provide allergen information and follow labelling rules?

Food businesses of all sizes are required to provide allergen information and follow labelling rules as set out in food law. More information on allergen management can be found in our guidance on [starting your food business safely](#).

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