

[Register a food business](#)

Registering

When you start a new food business or take over an existing business, you must [register your food business](#) with the local authority.

You should do this at least 28 days before opening. Registration of your food business is free and can't be refused. If you are already trading and have not registered, you need to do so as soon as possible.

Exceptions

Food businesses that make, prepare or handle meat, fish, egg or dairy products for supply to other businesses may require approval by a local authority and not registration. If you are unsure whether you need approval, check [Applying for approval of a food establishment guidance](#) or contact your [local authority](#).

Who needs to register

Registration will apply to all types of food businesses that serve customers directly, including:

- restaurants, cafes and takeaways
- catering businesses run from home, B&Bs, mobile catering and temporary businesses
- marquees, food stalls, food pop ups and food vans
- nurseries, schools and care homes
- distance selling, mail order and food delivery including online

You will need to register your food business if you:

- sell food
- cook food
- store or handle food
- prepare food
- distribute food

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

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Registering as a childminder

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

[Contact your local council](#) to apply for registration as a childminder if you provide food with your childminding business in Northern Ireland.

Volunteers and charity organisations

If you handle, prepare, store and serve food occasionally and on a small scale, you do not need to register.

You may need to register with your [local authority](#) as a food business if you provide food on a regular and organised basis. Registration still applies if you handle food regularly even if you are a not-for-profit organisation such as a food bank. There is further [guidance on providing food in a village hall or other community setting](#).

Food hygiene rating scheme

Once registered, you may be inspected by your local authority. Registering your business early and getting advice and guidance helps you prepare for inspections. Preparing thoroughly for inspection means your food business has the best chance of getting a top 5 rating under the [Food Hygiene Rating Scheme](#).

Businesses say displaying a high rating has helped them win more customers - we don't want you to miss out!

Updating your business details

You must:

- make sure your local authority always has up-to-date information about your premises
- tell your local authority if you are planning to make any significant changes to your business, including closure

If you operate more than one premises, you need to register each of them with the local authority in which they are located.

[Update your food business details](#)

If you want to make changes to your premises, you should tell your local authority as:

- you might need [planning permission](#)
- you will need to pay [business rates](#) on most premises