

DURHAM UNIVERSITY FOOD ALLERGENS POLICY

1 Policy Purpose and Statement

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the University's position in relation to the management of food allergens on campus, to foster best practice, and promote legal compliance with the Food Information for Consumers Regulation 2014 (FICR 2014).

1.2 Definition

A food allergen is a substance in a food that can cause an allergic reaction. Food allergens are normally proteins and in some people, the immune system thinks food allergens are foreign or dangerous. The immune response to these allergenic proteins is what leads to allergic reactions.

1.3 Statement

Rates of food allergy and intolerance vary across the world. In the UK, an estimated 2 million people are living with a diagnosed food allergy, between 1-2% of adults, and 5-8% of children. The number of deaths related to food allergens is thankfully low (average of 10 per year), however, the most at risk are teenagers and those in their 20s who are starting to make independent food choices. These individuals can experience peer pressure or struggle with social acceptance and understanding and are more likely to take risks.

In December 2014, the Food Information for Consumers Regulation (No. 1169/2011) was introduced, requiring all businesses which manufacture or provide food or drink, either pre-packed or non-pre-packed to identify 14 specified food allergens. In October 2021 Natasha's Law was added, detailing labelling requirements for PPDS products (PrePacked for Direct Sale).

Durham University has approximately 20,000 students and 5,000 staff, who along with external visitors consume food and beverage across a wide range of catering facilities on campus, including; college dining halls, college bars, cafés, toastie bars, tuck shops, Durham University Nursery and Durham Students' Union etc.

Of the 20,000 students, 5,000 reside on campus in a variety of University accommodation with variable access to shared self-catering facilities. Whilst self-catering falls outside of the FICR 2014, the sharing of food and self-catering facilities creates the likelihood for those with a food allergy to be impacted by the actions of others.

2 Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all on campus catering facilities, including maintained and independent colleges, including; college dining halls, college bars, cafés, toastie bars, tuck shops, Durham University Nursery, and Durham Students' Union etc., to all third parties providing on campus catering services. And to all University members, including staff and students, at whatever level or grade.

The scope also includes guidance around on campus accommodation and the accommodation allocation process for students who have disclosed food allergies.

2 Responsibilities

3.1 PVC Colleges and Student Experience

a) Policy owner with overall operational accountability and responsibility for ensuring that systems are in place, to mitigate ill-health from food containing allergens on campus.

b) To ensure provision of resources required to establish, implement, maintain and continually improve the management of food allergens on campus.

3.2 Head of Operations

a) To ensure that systems are in place, to mitigate ill-health through the sale or service of food containing allergens on campus.

b) To ensure that food allergen communications are effectively disseminated to all appropriate University members in a timely manner.

3.3 Director of Operations

a) To ensure that room allocation systems are in place, to mitigate ill-health through food allergens within student accommodation on campus.

b) To ensure that food allergen communications are effectively disseminated to all appropriate University members in a timely manner.

3.4 Operational Line Management

a) To ensure that systems are implemented and local arrangements are operationalised for the day-to-day management of food allergens within their function.

b) To ensure all relevant team members are appropriately trained.

c) To maintain a current food allergen training register.

3.5 Health and Safety Service

a) To support the review of food allergen legislation and best practice.

b) To periodically review compliance against policy.

3.6 Operations Directorate Health & Safety Committee

a) To review food allergen legislation and best practice.

b) To monitor food allergen systems, performance and training compliance within area of responsibility.

c) To provide performance reports as requested by management or the Health and Safety Service.

3.7 Other Health & Safety Committees

a) To monitor food allergen systems, performance and training compliance within area of responsibility.

b) To provide performance reports as requested by management or the Health and Safety Service.

3.8 University Members Supporting a Catering Function

a) To cooperate with managers and supervisors and carry out any assigned tasks or duties in a safe manner, following any safety instructions they have been given.

b) To report any food allergen non-compliance to line management.

3.8 All Colleagues and Students

a) To ensure their own health and safety, and the health and safety of others affected by their acts or omissions.

4 Policy, Procedures and Enforcement

4.1 Provision of prepacked, prepacked for direct sale, and non-prepacked food and beverage

a) Catering facilities on campus are registered food businesses, therefore for all food and beverages sold or served, have a legal requirement to identify the 14 food allergens specified within the FICR 2014;

- b) The 14 mandatory food allergens are: celery, cereals that contain gluten (e.g. wheat, rye, barley and oats), crustaceans (e.g. prawns, crabs and lobsters), eggs, fish, lupin, milk, molluscs (e.g. mussels and oysters), mustard, tree nuts (e.g., almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, Brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts), peanuts, sesame seeds, soybeans, sulphur dioxide and sulphites (if they are at a concentration of more than ten parts per million).
- c) Food allergens can be identified as part of a conversation with the consumer, however, to ensure the information is accurate and consistent, information must be backed up in writing.
- d) Natasha's Law requires all prepacked for direct sale foods; food that is prepared, prepacked and offered or sold to consumers on the same premises to have labelling with both ingredients lists and mandatory food allergen information.
- e) All food allergen information or signposting must be consistent, easily accessible and visible.
- f) To be able to accurately identify food allergens, University members supporting the provision of food and beverage from a catering facility must: regularly check the ingredients list of all products used; use standardised recipes; check what is delivered is what was ordered; keep food allergen information up to date; keep ingredients in original or labelled containers; label pre-packed foods with food allergen information; train staff.

4.2 Peanuts and tree nuts

- a) The University is not a nut free environment, however due to the likely high severity of any allergenic reaction to peanuts and tree nuts, the University has taken the decision not to sell, serve or use unpackaged peanuts or tree nuts on campus (with the exception of 4.2e).
- b) Packaged products sold or served containing peanuts and tree nuts must detail all ingredients on the packaging.
- c) Coconut, pine nuts and nutmeg are biologically different to tree nuts and may be sold, served, or used either packaged and unpackaged.
- d) The University cannot categorically state that some food products are 100% free of peanuts and tree nuts, as many products purchased from suppliers display disclaimer statements including "may contain nuts" or "made in an environment that is not free from nuts".
- e) Whilst discouraged, where students / clients provide unpackaged food items containing peanuts or tree nuts, for example wedding cakes with marzipan and mentors providing cakes for mentees, the presence of peanuts or tree nuts must be provided and clearly displayed or signposted for example on written menus. If the item is prepared by a non- food business, the requirements identified in sections 4.6 must also be followed.

4.3 Application and room allocation

- a) Standard accommodation application processes shall provide the opportunity for prospective residential students to disclose detail of food allergies and state a preference to be allocated to a flat with others with the same allergy or an 'allergy aware flat', with enhanced expectations around cleanliness, knowledge of food allergens and consideration for others.
- b) In section 4.3a it is important not to confuse 'allergy' with 'dietary requirement'.
- c) Accommodation allocation assessment processes shall include the preference to be allocated to a flat with others with the same allergy or an 'allergy aware flat'.

4.4 Procedures and training requirements

- a) A Food Safety HACCP Plan shall provide full procedures relating to the food allergen management processes.
- b) Training documents, including an Oracle Learning module have been created to ensure that University members understand the procedures when asked to provide food allergen information and know the risk of food allergen cross-contamination when handling and preparing foods.
- c) University members supporting a catering function or with a managerial responsibility for a catering function must complete the appropriate staff training document e.g. the Oracle Learning module.

d) University members with a managerial responsibility for accommodation, including allocation must complete the Oracle Learning module.

4.5 Self-catered kitchens and supplementary catering facilities

- a) Self-catered kitchens and supplementary catering facilities will include posters providing general food allergy information.
- b) Allergen awareness information will be included within residential student pre-arrival information.
- c) Alternative / secure food storage is to be available to those with a disclosed food allergy.

4.6 Community food provision

Individuals who are not food businesses and occasionally provide food at charity events or voluntary cake sales are exempt from the requirements of the FICR 2014; however, such provision on campus must ensure the following.

- a) All advertising and other information provided about the event is clear about how, where and by whom food is prepared.
- b) Volunteers understand that even food prepared at home is still required under law to be safe to eat, and guidance is provided to volunteers in regard to good practice around food hygiene/safety to ensure food is prepared, stored and transported safely.
- c) Once food prepared by volunteers is delivered to the venue, care is taken by organisers to ensure that the food is kept/served in safe, hygienic conditions.
- d) Where possible, a clear list of ingredients is displayed next to each dish.
- e) The following disclaimer is clearly displayed: "This dish was kindly prepared by a volunteer for this event in a domestic setting. Every attempt has been made by the volunteer preparing this dish, to ensure a full list of ingredients comprising this dish is included. However, we cannot guarantee this list to be comprehensive, nor can we guarantee that no food allergens may be present within any ingredient set out above. Therefore, in the event that you have any food allergy we recommend that for safety reasons, you do not sample the food prepared by our volunteers. However, should you choose to do so, please note that you do so at your own risk."

4.7 Adrenaline Auto-injectors

- a) Adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs) are devices to administer adrenaline to a person experiencing a severe allergic reaction.
- b) EpiPen®, Jext® and Emerade ® are some of the most popular brands of AAI.
- c) The University can't hold AAIs in first aid kits because they are a prescribed medicine. Whilst the Human Medicines Regulations 2017 identified that a first aider can have swift access to a school's emergency stock of spare AAI devices, to give lifesaving help to a child with a severe allergy. It is understood that the University falls outside of the Education Act's definition of a school (an educational institution which is outside of the further education sector).
- d) First aiders are covered under the University's insurance to administer student's own AAIs, provided that they are trained in their use and they are formally authorised as first aiders by the University. Therefore, all first aid training courses' content must include the administration of AAI pens.

4.8 Incident reporting

- a) Incident reporting relating to food allergens will follow the University's incident reporting procedures, and dependent on severity follow standard processes for critical incident or major incident.

4.10 Enforcement

- a) Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary procedures in line with the University's standard misconduct and disciplinary regulations.

5 Review

a) This policy, along with accompanying training documentation, are to be reviewed on an annual basis, including representation from; Director of Operations, Head of Operations, Health and Safety Business Partner and appropriate student representation.

6 Related Information

- a) Food Information for Consumers Regulation 2014 (No. 1169/2011)
- b) Food Allergen Labelling and Information Requirements under the EU Food Information for Consumers Regulations (No. 1169/2011) Technical Guidance
- c) Oracle HS Food Allergen Training
- d) Food Safety HACCP Plan

7 Version Control

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