

Starting a new Food Business

Prior to starting up a new food business or taking over an existing one, there are a number of things you must consider to ensure you are legally compliant. It is important to get things correct from the start. Small mistakes made early on can turn out to be costly further down the line.

Good structure, food hygiene and management of the business will protect the public as well as enhance your reputation with your customers.

1. Planning Permission

If you are making significant changes to the structure of your premises you may need to obtain planning permission.

The Planning and Development Services department is available for business advice and is located in the Customer Services Centre in the Guildhall, High Street, Newcastle ST5 1PW.

Opening hours are 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

They operate an appointment system for both the Development Management and Building Control services and these can be made in person at the reception desk at the customer services centre, or by calling 01782 742408.

2. Building Control

The North Staffordshire Building Control Partnership is responsible for making sure developments and buildings in the North Staffordshire region meet national standards and are safe.

You can find out more information about the building regulations, dangerous structures and demolitions by visiting the North Staffordshire Building Control Partnership website at <http://www.stoke.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/planning/building-regulations/>

Building regulations are national standards that apply to all types of buildings – from major new developments to an extension or alteration to your home. They deal with the structural details of the building works to ensure the health and safety of people in and around the building. The offices for the North Staffordshire Building Control Partnership are at:

PO Box 630
Civic Centre
Glebe Street
Stoke-on-Trent
ST4 1HH

Tel: 01782 232459
Email: bas@stoke.gov.uk

Opening hours are 9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 4.30pm Friday

3. Food Business Registration

All food businesses must be registered with the local authority at least 28 days before opening up. There is no charge for this service. Just simply fill in our online Food Registration Form at:

<https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/all-services/environment/food-and-safety/registration-food-businesses>

You may contact the Environmental health Department (01782) 742590 or foodsafety@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk to ask for advice and guidance. Depending on officer workload, they may be able to arrange an advisory visit to your premises if desired.

4. Training

All food handlers need to be supervised and instructed and/or trained in food hygiene to a level that is appropriate for their role in the food business.

It is strongly recommended that staff that prepare open high-risk foods or handle food and have a supervisory role should be trained to a level equivalent to the CIEH (Chartered Institute of Environmental Health) Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering within 3 months of starting work.

5. Structure

The design, structure and layout of your premises must meet legal requirements. Contact us on (01782) 742590 or foodsafety@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk for further information or advice.

6. Food Safety Management System/HACCP

HACCP involves you identifying those things that could make the food unsafe for your customers and putting in steps to control these risks. You need to think through your business processes and write down steps/particular things you do that are critical to food safety. For example; cooking to 75°C for 30 seconds.

These must then be properly controlled and checked with some simple records to show that these 'critical control points' have been adequately monitored. The arrangements for these procedures to be implemented properly by staff are your responsibility as the food business operator. You are also responsible for keeping your system up to date and reviewing it from time to time.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has provided free access to the Safer Food Better Business pack on their website:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/caterers/sfbb/sfbbcaterers>

It is a toolkit that will help small businesses put in place food safety management procedures and comply with food hygiene regulations.

7. Pest Control

Food businesses must take all reasonable precautions to prevent food pests, namely rats, mice, cockroaches and flying insects gaining entry into food storage and preparation areas. This is to prevent the contamination of foodstuffs. Any gaps and holes to external doors, windows, pipes, drains etc. must be filled or covered with a solid, durable material in order to minimise pest entry points into food preparation and storage areas.

You need to carry out regular, thorough checks for evidence of pests and keep a record of these checks on the premises. It is recommended that a contract is set up with Newcastle under Lyme Council or any similar reputable pest control company.

8. Waste

Waste and recycling arrangements need to be put into place with Newcastle Under Lyme Council trade waste department or any similar approved contractor.

9. Other Areas to Consider:

▪ Health & Safety

Health & Safety arrangements at your premises must be adequate. Additional information on specific topics you should consider in the Catering and Hospitality can be found on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/catering/>

▪ Allergens

Since the 13th December 2014, the EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation (EU FIC) came into force. This means that food business operators will need to provide information to customers about the 14 listed food allergenic ingredients which you use in your foods or you provide. More information can be found at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/allergy-guide/allergen-resources>

▪ Labelling

The Business Support team provides advice, support and training to Staffordshire businesses to help them comply with Trading Standards requirements. They also test and examine weighing machines, petrol pumps, weights and other measuring equipment used by traders to ensure customers get what they pay for. The team has responsibility for testing and examining food to ensure that it is correctly labelled and that it complies with requirements.

For support contact the Business Helpline: 0300 111 8002 or
Email: businessadvice@staffordshire.gov.uk

▪ Licensing

A license may be required for your premises if you intend to:

- Sell alcohol
- Putting on public entertainment
- Selling hot food and drink late night
- Selling food on the street

Contact the licensing department for further details:

Email: licensing@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk

Telephone: 01782 717717

▪ Business Rates

Non-domestic rates, or business rates, collected by councils are the way that those who occupy non-domestic property contribute towards the cost of local services. Except in the City of London, where special arrangements apply, the rates are pooled by central government and redistributed to councils as part of the annual formula grant settlement. The money, together with revenue from council tax payers, revenue support grant provided by the Government and certain other sums, is used to pay for the services provided by your council and other councils in your area.

Further information about the business rates system, including transitional and other reliefs, may be obtained at <https://www.gov.uk/introduction-to-business-rates/overview>

- Fire Safety

Contact your local Fire Officer for advice on fire safety requirements.
Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle or Staffordshire Moorlands

Telephone: 01785 898 085

Email: NSDG.Protect@staffordshirefire.gov.uk