



Safer food, better business – tips for running a workshop for businesses

Introduction

The trials of Safer food, better business (SFBB) and the experiences in the first tranche of the special grant scheme have shown that inviting catering businesses to a workshop, followed by one to one coaching on site has been an approach that has worked well.

Feedback from the trials and from local authorities and businesses, has highlighted the following tips to consider when organising a workshop.

The aim of the workshop

Delegates will be able to understand and implement Safer food, better business in their business. They should also be aware of who to contact if they require assistance or further information.

The objectives of the workshop

By the end of the event, participants will be able to understand:

- What SFBB is, and How it applies to their business
- Why and how SFBB was developed
- What the law requires
- What each section of the pack includes
- How to use SFBB
- The benefits of using SFBB
- That SFBB can be integrated with existing systems
- The role their LA will play in assisting them
- The pack and start completing safe methods
- The diary and how it forms their records

Getting the most out of your workshops

- **Contacting businesses:** Some local authorities have used the personal approach in engaging businesses and persuading food business operators to attend workshops and accept 1:1 coaching. Some have written to businesses, including mail outs and newsletters, however telephoning, or a personal approach during inspections, has also worked well. The toolkit includes templates for leaflets that can be tailored by local authorities and might be helpful in recruiting businesses.
- **Times and dates:** Providing a variety of times and dates for workshops and coaching sessions can overcome the time restrictions that many

businesses have. It has also helped to make sure that where possible, coaches attend workshops and make appointments with the business representatives before they leave. Notoriously busy times for businesses, such as over the lunch period, should be avoided.

- **Workshop size:** For a workshop to work well it seems that 20 is the maximum that can be accommodated at one time without making it too impersonal or intimidating. When inviting businesses to attend workshops take into account that a number of businesses will accept but will be unable to attend.
- **Keep it brief:** Try to limit the length of your workshop to last no longer than half a day to minimise the time away from the business.
- **Like with like:** Inviting the same types of businesses e.g. takeaways, can maximise the value of the workshop for delegates as they are able to concentrate on shared interests. You should be aware however that this may limit the choice of times and dates available.
- **Completing safe methods:** Having attendees complete one or two safe methods while attending the workshop has been found to be helpful. This will enable them to become familiar with using the pack with support, before they have to take it away and work on it themselves.
- **Laminating:** Providing laminated safe method sheets at workshops has been found to help attendees practice completion without them being concerned about 'making mistakes'. It also helps people to become more confident about putting pen to paper.
- **Diary:** When a business agrees to attend a workshop, try asking them to bring their diaries with them with times that they know they are free for coaching.
- **By appointment:** At some workshops, appointment times have been put on to large sheets and then put on the walls of the room where the workshop takes place, so free times can be easily seen and signed up.
- **Prompt follow-up:** Wherever possible, try to ensure that the coaching session takes place within 3 weeks of the workshop, as it is best to build on the knowledge participants have gained at the workshop while it's still fresh.
- **Keep them informed:** Many local authorities are communicating with their business via simple and informative newsletters and leaflets.
- **Incentives:** Where possible consider incentives, businesses may be more likely to attend workshops if participating results in an attendance certificate.

- **Location:** Holding workshops at business premises proved a popular option for some businesses. Consider venues that will ensure they are accessible to all possible attendees. Consider using a range of venues to ensure the entire local authority area is covered. Collaborative projects should encourage businesses to attend workshops in other areas if more convenient e.g. nearer where they live.
- **Slide presentation:** Amend the slide presentation to make it more relevant locally e.g. include current figures on local food poisoning incidence. Presentations for SFBB for caterers and SFBB for retailers can be found in the relevant folders on the enclosed Support material CD.

Ways to make your workshops more interactive

Group activities aid active participation and encourage participants to discuss the procedures and practises currently in use in their business. The following are ideas to consider:

- **Icebreakers:** These are a fun way for participants to get to know one another, such as 'Introduce your neighbour'.
- **Try a quiz or include exercises:** Including group exercises during the workshop encourages participants to discuss the procedures and practises currently in use in their business and makes the workshops more interactive. There are group exercises and discussions included in the Guidance notes to support the presentations. Try simple quizzes at the end of a workshop to assess how much the attendees have learnt – this also assists you in evaluating the success of the workshop.

There are additional quizzes and exercises available for you to use. These can be found as separate files in each of the workshop folders on the enclosed CD.

The Agency would like to thank Plymouth City Council, Rachael Harris and Richard Hooton for allowing us to use the material they have developed for the quizzes and exercises.