

FSA launches campaign to encourage all new food businesses to register with their Local Authority

The Covid-19 period has seen a huge increase in food being sold from people's homes with the internet making it easier for this type of market. According to our Register a Food Business digital service (RAFB), 37% of new ventures registered since the start of the pandemic (March 2020) are run from domestic kitchens at private addresses.

We also know that many of these home-based sellers do not consider themselves to be a food business, and therefore have not registered with their local authorities. As a result, some newly established home-based sellers could be putting consumers at risk because they haven't demonstrated good food safety knowledge.

Michael Jackson, Deputy Director - Head of Regulatory Compliance, at the FSA said:

"Local Authorities need to know the businesses trading in their area so they can give them the help and support to ensure businesses get their hygiene and standards right to protect consumers from the moment they open.

"If you cook, store, prepare, sell or distribute a food product then you are a food business, and you need to get [registered straightaway](#).

"Our advice is clear, if you're planning to start a new food business, or taking over an existing food business – you must register with your local authority. Registering is free and easy to do."

All food businesses have a legal obligation to [register with their local authority](#) 28 days before opening and it is an offence not to do so. Businesses must register whether they sell food via social media (Facebook Marketplace or Instagram store), sell via e-commerce sites such as Amazon or eBay, trade from a physical customer-facing premises or simply run a food business from a home kitchen. Businesses must also register with the local authority if they are taking over an existing food business.

Registering a food business means that local authorities will be aware of the operation and will carry out a food hygiene inspection. Without registration a local authority cannot assess the nature of the business and give a Food Hygiene Rating. Local authorities also provide businesses advice on how to improve food hygiene and food safety practices.

Register a Food Business digital service

The FSA's Register a Food Business (RAFB) digital service, has been running since September 2018. Traditionally, food registrations were completed on paper and submitted manually to the local authorities for processing. We introduced the RAFB service to digitise this for the benefit of local authorities as well as making it easier for food business operators to register and receive useful guidance at the point of registration.

Currently 70% of local authorities across England, Wales and all District Councils in Northern Ireland are using the service, and recently we reached an impressive milestone of 100,000 digital registrations since the service was launched.

Further information on [registering a food business](#) can be found on our website.