

FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY CONSULTATION

Title: Guidance on how food law applies to food provision in village halls and to other community activities in England

CONSULTATION SUMMARY PAGE

Date consultation launched:	Closing date for responses:
19 February 2013	21 May 2013

Who will this consultation be of most interest to?
Local authorities and social and charitable organisations serving food.

What is the subject of this consultation?
The provision of food by social organisations and charities in village halls and other community settings.

What is the purpose of this consultation?
This consultation seeks views on draft guidance that seeks to provide clarity for stakeholders on how food law might apply to the supply of food by charities and social organisations in village halls and other community settings.
It is planned to put finalised guidance on the FSA web site in June of this year.

Responses to this consultation should be sent to:

Name David Gray Division/Branch Food Hygiene Policy FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY Tel: 020 7276 8940 Fax:	Postal address: Aviation House, 125 Kingsway London, WC2B 6NH Email: villhallguid@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk
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Is an Impact Assessment included with this consultation?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> See Annex A for reason.
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GUIDANCE ON HOW FOOD LAW APPLIES TO FOOD PROVISION IN VILLAGE HALLS AND TO OTHER COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES IN ENGLAND

DETAIL OF CONSULTATION

Introduction

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) frequently receives enquiries from local authorities, village hall users and other community organisations on how food hygiene legislation applies to community and charity food provision.

KEY PROPOSAL: The FSA has produced draft advice which intends to help local authorities and community food operations in village halls and other community settings determine whether those operations require to be registered as food businesses under EU food hygiene law.

The key point is whether the community food operation is deemed a 'food business operator' (or FBO) and requires to be registered and comply with food hygiene legislation. Operations that do not require registration are still legally required to supply food that is safe but they are not required to comply with food hygiene legislation in doing so. This consultation seeks views on draft guidance which aims to provide greater clarity for stakeholders on this issue.

Annex D provides examples considered by the FSA that either require or do not require registration as food businesses.

The proposed approach used

The governing laws are set out in EU food law (more detail on which can be found at Annex C). Food hygiene legislation states that for a food operation to require registration it must have both:

- 'a certain continuity of activities' and
- 'a certain degree of organisation'.

For the purpose of the guidance, the proposed rule of thumb is that food operations which provide food less frequently than once a month cannot be deemed to have a continuity of activity and should not require registration, regardless of the scale or complexity of the food provision undertaken.

Where food is provided at least once a month, decisions on whether such operations require registration depend on the degree of organisation involved. In considering this, regard needs to be had to a range of factors, such as the scale of the event, number of people provided with food, the nature of the food provided and the regularity of food provision.

Operations deemed to meet both the 'continuity' and 'degree of organisation' criteria require registration with the local authority and must comply with food hygiene regulations.

How the consultation documents are set out:

- Annex A provides advice on the consultation and a list of questions asked in the consultation for reference
- Annex B provides a list of interested parties
- Annex C provides detail about the relevant law, guidance on the law and the FSA's role.
- Annex D provides suggested examples of community food provision which we have grouped as follows: section A & section B, deemed not to require registration due to not meeting 'continuity' or 'degree of organisation'; and section C meeting both criteria and requiring registration.
- Annex E lists free sources of good hygiene advice.

The FSA positively welcomes the views of all stakeholders on the Annexes C to E to inform the basis of the proposed guidance document. Links to the various Regulations and documents are all contained in Annex C.

The basic underpinning principle remains that public health should be protected in a manner that is effective, proportionate and risk-based.

Responses

Please send your comments by **21 May 2013**, ideally by email to:
villhallguid@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

or by paper copy to:

**Food Standards Agency,
Village hall guidance consultation
c/o David Gray, Food Hygiene Policy
Room 3C, Aviation House
125 Kingsway, London WC2B 6NH**

Please state, in your response, whether you are responding as a private individual or on behalf of an organisation/company (including details of any stakeholders your organisation represents).

Thank you on behalf of the Food Standards Agency for participating in this public consultation.

Yours faithfully,

David Gray
Food Hygiene Policy
Food Standards Agency

Enclosed:

List of questions in consultation annexes

Annex A - Standard Consultation Information

Annex B - List of interested parties

Annex C - provides detail about the relevant law, guidance to the law and the FSA's role.

Annex D - provides suggested examples of community food provision that either require or do not require registration.

Annex E - lists free sources of good hygiene advice for stakeholders.

List of questions asked in the consultation documents:

- Q1: Do local authorities consider that familiarisation with the guidance and its implementation might be burdensome (e.g. time-consuming)?**
- Q2: Do local authority officers feel that the guidance will help bring a more consistent approach to dealing with such operations across all local authorities?**
- Q3: Do local authority officers feel that public health could be put at risk by any of the draft advice provided?**
- Q4: Do local authorities consider that use of the guidance will result in any financial costs or benefits to them or result in the use of more or less resources?**
- Q5: Do community organisations consider that the guidance will be helpful to them in understanding if their operations require registration?**
- Q6: Are community organisations also content that the guidance as a whole will help maintain proper public health protection?**
- Q7: Do community organisations find the advice on the law in Annex C useful? Is it clear and understandable? Is there anything else on the law that could be provided which would be helpful?**
- Q8: From the information provided in Annex C, do community stakeholders such as charities, sports clubs, church and faith group volunteers consider the FSA's examples in Annex D are fair and proportionate?**
- Q9: Does the advice in Annex C reflect local authority officers' understanding of the law? Is there anything else on the law that you consider should be included in Annex C?**
- Q10: Do local authority officers agree that the FSA's suggested examples (in Annex D) are suitable and consistent?**
- Q11: Do local authority officers consider that the examples will help them make decisions on such operations? And, if not, what examples would be more helpful?**
- Q12: Do community organisations have any concerns that the examples in Annex D are not proportionate and may place burdens on their activities? For example, could use of this guidance result in greater costs, use up more resources, or mean that their activities take more time?**
- Q13: Will community organisations use the hygiene advice in Annex E? Do you find it helpful? Is there anything else that could be provided to help you supply safer food at community level (e.g. more advice on event or larger-scale catering)?**

Queries

1. If you have any queries relating to this consultation please contact the person named on page 1, who will be able to respond to your questions.

Publication of personal data and confidentiality of responses

2. In accordance with the FSA principle of openness we shall keep a copy of the completed consultation and responses, to be made available to the public on receipt of a request to the [FSA Consultation Coordinator](#) (020 7276 8140). The FSA will publish a summary of responses, which may include your full name. Disclosure of any other personal data would be made only upon request for the full consultation responses. If you do not want this information to be released, please complete and return the Publication of Personal Data form, which is on the website at <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/worddocs/dataprotection.doc>. Return of this form does not mean that we will treat your response to the consultation as confidential, just your personal data.
3. In accordance with the provisions of Freedom of Information Act 2000/Environmental Information Regulations 2004, all information contained in your response may be subject to publication or disclosure. If you consider that some of the information provided in your response should not be disclosed, you should indicate the information concerned, request that it is not disclosed and explain what harm you consider would result from disclosure. The final decision on whether the information should be withheld rests with the FSA. However, we will take into account your views when making this decision.
4. Any automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not be considered as such a request unless you specifically include a request, with an explanation, in the main text of your response.

Further information

5. A list of interested parties to whom this letter is being sent appears in Annex C. Please feel free to pass this document to any other interested parties, or send us their full contact details and we will arrange for a copy to be sent to them direct.
6. Please let us know if you need paper copies of the consultation documents or of anything specified under '**Other relevant documents**'.
7. This consultation has been prepared in accordance with HM Government consultation principles¹.

Impact Assessment (IA) and impact generally

8. The FSA has not produced a costed IA for this proposed guidance because too little data is available at this stage to populate it and it is not considered that such an IA would be helpful for stakeholders in considering the impact of the guidance; it is felt that this is better achieved through stakeholders concentrating on the guidance itself.
9. It is anticipated that there will be a 'familiarisation' cost for some local authorities and to some degree for local organisations. But it is not known to what extent the guidance will be taken up or how it reflects the current situation in the 'real world' and

¹ <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/bre/consultation-guidance>

therefore it is difficult to estimate the measure of its impact. However stakeholders have been asked whether costs or benefits might occur as a result of the guidance and these will be considered in finalising the guidance.

10. Of course, the draft guidance has been produced with the express intention of providing clarity and making decision-making easier. It should not, on the face of it, introduce any burden for stakeholders.

Comments on the consultation process itself

11. For details about the consultation process (not about the content of this consultation) please contact: [Food Standards Agency Consultation Co-ordinator](#), Room 2B, Aviation House, 125 Kingsway, London, WC2B 6NH. Tel: 020 7276 8140.
12. We are interested in what you thought of this consultation and would therefore welcome your general feedback on both the consultation package and overall consultation process. If you would like to help us improve the quality of future consultations, please feel free to share your thoughts with us by using the Consultation Feedback Questionnaire at <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/worddocs/consultfeedback.doc>
13. If you would like to be included on future Food Standards Agency consultations on other topics, please advise us of those subject areas that you might be specifically interested in by using the Consultation Feedback Questionnaire at <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/worddocs/consultfeedback.doc> The questionnaire can also be used to update us about your existing contact details.

List of interested parties

All Saints' Community Hall	V Montgomery
Arun District Council	NABMA
Ashfield District Council	National Federation of Woman's Institutes
Aylesbury Vale District Council	North Devon Council
Babergh District Council & Mid Suffolk DC	Norwich City Council
Bowsden Village Hall	Oford Village Hall Management Committee
Breckland Council	A Rae
British Sikh Consultative Forum	Reading Borough Council
Castle Bytham Village Hall	P Ridley
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health	Riversway
Community Matters	Rochford Council
Cornwall Council	Rural Community Action Network
Denman College	E Savage
Eastbourne Council	Slaley Commemoration Hall
East Cambridgeshire District Council	South Derbyshire District Council
East Hampshire District Council	South Lakeland District Council
Food Solutions Publishing Ltd	South Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service
Gloucester City Council	St Andrew's Parish Church Cranwell
Great Wakering Community Hall	Taunton Dean Borough Council
Haemolytic Uraemic Syndrome Help	The Hall Reading Room and Recreation Ground Trust
Harborough District Council	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
Havant Borough Council	Sussex Village Halls Advisory Group
K Hough	Taunton Deane Borough Council
Ingham & Cammeringham Village Hall Committee	Wakefield Council
Lancashire Association of Village & Community Halls	P Weeks
Maldon District Council	Winchester City Council
Medway Council	Woodhouse Community Hall
Middleton and Todridge Village Hall	York City Council

How EU food hygiene law applies to village halls

Q7: Do community organisations find the advice on the law in Annexe C useful? Is it clear and understandable? Is there anything else on the law that could be provided which would be helpful?

Q8: From the information provided in Annex C, do community stakeholders such as charities, sports clubs, church and faith group volunteers consider the FSA's examples in Annex D are fair and proportionate?

Q9: Does the advice in Annexe C reflect local authority officers' understanding of the law? Is there anything else on the law that you do not think is covered and which would be helpful?

FSA position and role

The FSA is the central 'competent authority' in the UK on food matters, day to day decisions on the enforcement of food law relating to all retail and catering-type food operations is the responsibility of local food authorities.

The FSA is often asked by bodies such as charities, community organisations and faith groups how food hygiene law applies to their activities. In such circumstances, the FSA will point out the relevant law, the European Commission guidance and provide links to appropriate good food hygiene advice. With one-off events the FSA is confident in stating that registration will not be required and will direct enquirers towards hygiene advice. However, in most cases the FSA will suggest that the organisation contacts its local authority for advice. The FSA has not attempted to comment in detail or offer authoritative legal interpretations applicable to individual circumstances, which can be subject to innumerable variations.

The FSA has undertaken to produce guidance on which operations require registration and which do not to help local authorities in their decision making and to help community organisations understand the reasons for those decisions.

The law

[Regulation \(EC\) 852/2004](#) requires food businesses² to be registered and to comply with food hygiene rules.

Recital 9 of Regulation (EC) 852/2004 advises that registration and compliance with food hygiene rules should only apply to:

'..undertakings³, the concept of which implies a certain continuity of activities and a certain degree of organisation.'

Operations deemed to meet Recital 9 by food authorities are required to register⁴ as food businesses and comply with food hygiene law.

² A 'food business' means any undertaking, whether for profit or not and whether public or private, carrying out any of the activities related to any stage of production, processing and distribution of food. (Regulation (EC) 178/2002, Article 3.2)

³ EU Commission guidance on Regulation 852/2004 (point 3.8) states that: 'the term 'undertaking' is integrated in the definition of a "food business" (in accordance with Article 3(2) of the General Food Law (Regulation (EC) No 178/2002), a "food business" must be an "undertaking"'). Somebody who handles, prepares, stores or serves food occasionally and on a small scale (e.g. a church, school or village fair and other situations such as organised charities comprising individual volunteers where the food is prepared occasionally) cannot be considered as an "undertaking" and is therefore not subject to the requirements of Community hygiene legislation.

⁴ The person responsible for the activity needs to register with the local authority.

Operations deemed not to meet Recital 9 are not required to register but must still meet the requirement at Article 14 of [Regulation \(EC\) 178/2002](#) that food ‘shall not be placed on the market if it is unsafe’⁵.

European Commission guidance

Referring to Recital 9, the Commission provides some guidance as to which operations might and might not require registration:

‘Operations such as the occasional handling, preparation, storage and serving of food by private persons at events such as church, school or village fairs are not covered by the scope of the Regulation.’

and

‘Somebody who handles, prepares, stores or serves food occasionally and on a small scale (e.g. a church, school or village fair and other situations such as organised charities comprising individual volunteers where the food is prepared occasionally) cannot be considered as an ‘undertaking’ and is therefore not subject to the requirements of Community hygiene legislation.’⁶

Village halls used by more than one organisation

Village halls may be used by more than one organisation and kitchens are often shared. If the organisations are not food businesses they will not need to register, but should ensure food operations are hygienic and that the food supplied is safe. The FSA recommends that food preparation areas and equipment used are cleaned thoroughly after use. Advice on where to find advice is included in Annex E.

There exists some misunderstanding that the hall premises – as opposed to the person or persons responsible for any food operation that might use a hall - require registration but there is no legal basis for this in EU law. If organisations using village halls do require registration each food business must be registered separately.

Due diligence

This is a defence which is designed to balance the protection of the consumer against defective food with the right of suppliers of food not to be convicted of an offence they have taken all reasonable care to avoid committing. The result should be to encourage all concerned to take proper responsibility for their products. This defence covers one-off or occasional catering as well as bigger and more regular operations.

This defence is available where the person charged proves that they ‘took all reasonable precautions and exercised all due diligence to avoid the commission of the offence by himself or by a person under his control’. Although the burden of proof lies with the person or company accused, they need not establish their case beyond all reasonable doubt. They need only persuade the court that they exercised due diligence on the balance of probabilities.

Case law

The FSA is not aware of relevant case law at present⁷.

⁵ ‘Placing on the market’ is defined in Article 3.8 of Regulation (EC) 178/2002 as ‘the holding of food or feed for the purposes of sale, including offering for sale or any other form of transfer, whether free of charge or not, and the sale, distribution, and other forms of transfer themselves’. Article 14 of Regulation (EC) 178/2002 prohibits food being placed on the market if it is deemed to be unsafe (i.e. if it is considered to be: a) injurious to health; b) unfit for human consumption.)

⁶ *Guidance document on the implementation of certain provisions of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 On the hygiene of foodstuffs*

⁷ It is worth pointing out that decisions from magistrates’ courts (e.g. during a local authority prosecution) would not create any sort of binding precedent. This means that while the FSA could not cite such a decision as authority in guidance, it could be cited as indicating the view of the courts.

Non-exhaustive examples of village hall and community food provision and how the EU food hygiene regime might apply

Introduction

For an operation to require registration it must have both:

- 'a certain continuity of activities' and
- 'a certain degree of organisation'.

The following examples are intended to provide a framework against which local authorities can make decisions about the need to register community and charity food operations as food businesses. It is appreciated real examples of food provision are unlikely to exactly match the examples below.

A proposed rule of thumb is that operations which provide food less frequently than once a month cannot be deemed to have a continuity of activity and should not require registration, regardless of the scale or complexity of the food provision undertaken. Examples are provided below in section 'A'.

Where food is provided at least once a month, decisions on whether such operations require registration depend on the degree of organisation involved. In considering this, regard needs to be had to a range of factors, such as the scale of the event, number of people provided with food, the nature of the food provided and the regularity of food provision. Examples of where food provision may not be considered to have 'a certain degree of organisation' are provided at section 'B'.

Examples of food operations deemed to meet 'a certain continuity of activities' and 'a certain degree of organisation' can be found in section 'C'.

Stakeholders intending to carry out *any* large or complex food supply operation are recommended to contact local authorities who can provide free advice on food safety and how the law might apply.

Q10: Do local authority officers agree that the FSA’s suggested examples (in Annex D) are suitable and consistent?

Q11: Do local authority officers consider that the examples will help them make decisions on such operations? And, if not, what examples would be more helpful in achieving that?

Q12: Do community organisations have any concerns that the examples in Annex D are not proportionate and may place burdens on their activities? For example, could use of this guidance result in greater costs, use up more resources, or mean that their activities take more time?

A. Food provision at the following operations would not require registration as they are deemed not to have a ‘continuity of activity’:

1	A one-off event such as a church or school fete
2	Christmas dinner, Easter or other religious or festive meals
3	Street parties, e.g. celebrating a national holiday, royal wedding etc.
4	Cub Scout/Girl Guide camps etc.
5	Amateur drama society serving food for show audiences for limited periods (e.g. one week every three months)
6	Charity events holding quarterly fashion shows and providing food for the audience

B. Food provision at the following operations <u>would not</u> require registration as they are deemed not to have a 'degree of organisation':	
1	Church volunteers serving hot and cold drinks, biscuits and home-made cakes in the church hall
2	Church/charity volunteers serving small numbers of hot meals (e.g. 20 on an infrequent basis)
3	A club or association where members provide home-made buffet food such a salad, sandwiches and desserts.
4	A 'cooking club' where members bring in own food ingredients or pay the course leader to supply the foods. Those attending learn to cook using equipment in the hall and then all sit down to eat together or take food home.
5	A 'foraging course/event' or similar where a group of people gather wild products (e.g. wild garlic, nettles, rosehips for cordials, mushrooms, sloes for 'sloe gin'). These products are brought back to a hall and cooked or otherwise handled and eaten (such courses may last a few hours and are held over weekends throughout the year and daily in July and August.) Note – in this example those attending are gathering 'primary products' which, if for private use, falls outside the scope of the Regulations.
6	School 'breakfast club' involving provision of simple breakfasts such as cereal, toast, yoghurt etc. by parents, helpers etc.
7	
C. Food provision is deemed to meet continuity of activity (on at least one occasion per month) and degree of organisation and <u>would</u> require registration	
1	Church/charity volunteers serving larger numbers of hot meals, (e.g. more than 50 people)
2	Church/charity volunteers serving smaller numbers of hot meals (e.g. 20 each day from Monday to Friday)
3	Sports club serving hot and cold food regularly during the season (e.g. football club serving food every other Saturday from September through to May)
4	Charity or faith group serving hot soup and sandwiches on regular basis (e.g. daily) to homeless people
5	Volunteers in a village hall serving cold food and sandwiches to larger numbers (e.g. over 50)
6	Nursery providing hot or cold food to children on a regular basis

Sources of good hygiene advice and a Q&A

Q13: Will community organisations use the hygiene advice in Annex E? Do you find it helpful? Is there anything else that could be provided to help you supply safer food at community level (e.g. more advice on event or larger-scale catering)?

1. NHS web site

The main source of consumer food safety advice is found on the Department of Health web site.

Food safety:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/homehygiene/Pages/Homehygienehub.aspx>

How to prepare and cook food safely:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/homehygiene/Pages/Foodhygiene.aspx>

Barbecue food safety:

<http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/summerhealth/pages/barbecuefoodsafety.aspx>

2. FSA web site

The majority of FSA publications are intended for businesses, but if you are carrying out community catering any advice for small businesses will be helpful.

Safer food better business

This has been developed to help small businesses put in place food safety management procedures and comply with food hygiene regulations. However it also provides helpful hygiene advice for all organisations catering on a bigger scale based on the “4Cs” (cooking, cleaning, chilling and cross-contamination):

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

Allergens – what you need to know:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/publication/loosefoodsleaflet.pdf>

Food safety and flooding of buildings:

It's important to follow good food hygiene to stop harmful germs that might be present in flood water spreading to food.

<http://www.food.gov.uk/policy-advice/microbiology/flood>

3. Your local authority

Local authorities can provide advice on all aspects of food operations

In England, environmental health officers can provide advice to community and charitable groups about food quality, hygiene and safety issues. They also deal with consumer complaints about supplied food.

The FSA web site has a search facility to help you find the contact details of your local authority's environmental health team. Please note the results are given in order of distance from the location entered, so the first result may sometimes not be the correct authority:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/yourarea/>

General questions and answers

If you would like more advice, contact the environmental health service at your local authority.

What general advice is there if I'm making food for lots of people?

When you're making food for large numbers of people it's important to keep food safe. Here are some headline practical tips:

- Plan ahead. If you can prepare food in advance, this should make things easier later.
- Keep foods out of the fridge for the shortest time possible.
- Even if people are waiting to eat, don't reduce cooking times.
- Always make sure food is properly cooked before you serve it.

The parent-staff association at my children's school would like to have a stall selling home-made cakes at the school fair. But some people are concerned about hygiene. Is this kind of stall OK?

Home-made cakes should be safe to eat, as long as the people who make them observe good food hygiene, and the cakes are stored and transported safely.

At home, people making cakes should follow these tips:

- Always wash your hands before preparing food.
- Make sure that surfaces, bowls, utensils, etc. are clean.
- Don't use raw eggs in anything that won't be thoroughly cooked, such as icing or mousse.
- Keep cheesecakes and any cakes or desserts containing cream or butter icing in the fridge.
- Store cakes in a clean, sealable container, away from raw foods, especially raw meat.

On the day, people bringing in cakes from home or running the stall should follow these tips:

- Transport cakes in a clean, sealable container.
- Make sure that cheesecakes and any cakes or desserts containing cream or butter icing are out of the fridge for the shortest time possible.
- Avoid handling cakes. Use tongs or a cake slice instead.

How long can I leave food out on a buffet?

In general, foods that need to be chilled (which include most of the foods people tend to serve on buffets and most sandwich fillings) should be left out of the fridge for the shortest time possible. If they are left at room temperature for a long time, bacteria can grow or toxins can form, and both of these could cause food poisoning.

If you are preparing a buffet at home for friends or family, you should try and keep food out for a short time (not more than four hours). Then any remaining food should be thrown away or put back in the fridge. If you keep leftovers in the fridge, don't let them stand around at room temperature when you serve them again.

If you are not a food business the temperature controls below do not apply to you, but you can still ensure food is kept safe following the advice above.

However, if you are preparing a buffet (or any other food) as part of a business, which in some circumstances could include charitable or community events, you must follow food safety regulations. The law requires caterers to keep certain foods at specified temperatures for food safety reasons. Chilled foods must be kept at or below 8°C, while foods that are being kept hot before serving should remain at or

above 63°C. Contact the environmental health service at your local authority for more information on what regulations apply to you.

The law allows food to be left at room temperature for limited periods during service or when on display. The temperature of chilled foods can exceed 8°C for up to four hours, while the temperature of hot foods can fall below 63°C for a maximum of two hours. However, these flexibilities can be used only **once** for each batch of food. In other words, the same food can't be left out at room temperature for more than one period, even if the separate periods add up to a combined total of four (or two) hours. After one period at room temperature, food should be thrown away or chilled until final use.

Do I need to label cakes and jams sold for charity?

If you sell food for a charity, you might have to follow food labelling regulations. There isn't a straightforward answer to whether the regulations will apply to you or not because this will depend on how the food is sold and the organisation or charity selling them.

In general, the Food Labelling Regulations 1996 don't apply to food that isn't prepared as part of a business. So this means that most food being sold for charity won't need to be labelled, including food sold at one-off events such as church fêtes and school fairs.

But if you regularly sell packaged food for charity (for example, jars of jam or boxed cakes), you might have to follow the regulations. This is still the case if you don't make a profit.

Foods that are sold loose don't need to be labelled. So if you sell unpackaged cakes and buns, you wouldn't need to label them even if you sell them regularly. However, if any of the ingredients had been irradiated or genetically modified, you would need to declare this.

To find out more about what regulations apply to your situation, contact the trading standards department at your local authority. You may also need to follow food hygiene regulations – ask the environmental health department at your local authority for more information.

If you're not legally required to label a food, you could do it voluntarily, giving the product name, a list of ingredients (in descending order of weight) and details of any ingredients that could cause an allergic reaction (e.g. egg, milk, peanuts and tree nuts). If you do label a food, you must make sure that the information you provide is clear and accurate.