

Food Allergy Policy

POLICY

1. Edge Hill University Commercial Services, Catering Department is committed to reducing the risk to students, staff and visitors with regard to the provision of food and the consumption of allergens in food, which could lead to an allergic reaction.
2. This policy will be available on the Edge Hill University website and will be reviewed annually.

STATEMENT

3. Edge Hill University Commercial Services, Catering Department is unable to guarantee a completely allergen free environment. However, we will aim to minimise the risk of exposure, encourage self-responsibility and plan for effective response to possible emergencies.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

4. To promote food allergen awareness to staff, students and visitors at Edge Hill University.
5. To provide clear guidance to all catering staff on their responsibilities for the provision of food to anyone using the catering facilities who may have a food allergy, food intolerance or coeliac disease.
6. To ensure that relevant food allergy training and food hygiene training are provided for all catering staff.
7. To ensure appropriate information and support is available for catering staff and customers.

ALLERGY LABELLING

LEGISLATION

8. From 13 December 2014, legislation (the EU Food Information for Consumer Regulation 1169/2011) requires food businesses to provide allergy information on food sold unpackaged. There are also changes to existing legislation on labelling allergenic ingredients in prepacked foods.
9. More information about the new European legislation can be found on the Food Standards Agency (FSA) [website](#).

BACKGROUND

WHAT IS A FOOD ALLERGY?

10. Food allergies affect the body's immune system. The body reacts to certain allergens in food by producing antibodies which can cause immediate and sometimes severe symptoms, such as: itching or strange metallic taste in the mouth, swelling of the throat and tongue; difficulty in swallowing or speaking; abdominal cramps, nausea and vomiting; skin hives (nettlerash) anywhere on the body. In most extreme cases, difficulties in breathing and a severe fall in blood pressure (anaphylactic shock) can prove fatal.

WHAT IS FOOD INTOLERANCE?

11. This does not involve the immune system in the same way and is not usually as severe as a food allergy. Symptoms usually take longer to appear and may include headaches, fatigue and digestive problems.
12. Food intolerance is harder to diagnose than a food allergy. The person with a known allergen trigger may know what food ingredient will provoke a reaction. However, they may well have eaten this food or a specific dish previously and had no adverse reaction.

COELIAC DISEASE

13. Coeliac disease is a lifelong autoimmune disease caused by a reaction to gluten. 1 in 100 people have the condition. Symptoms include bloating, diarrhoea, nausea, wind, constipation, tiredness, sudden or unexpected weight loss, hair loss and anaemia. Once diagnosed, it is treated by following a gluten free diet for life.

WHO IS AT RISK?

14. Anybody can develop a food allergen or intolerance at any time in their life, irrespective of whether they have consumed the food previously. A person with an allergy is at risk even if they consume a small amount of the food allergen.
15. Food allergies and intolerances are life-changing. In the UK they affect around 8% of children and 2% of adults. In December 2014, the law on how allergen information is provided by food businesses changed to make it easier when buying food or eating out with an allergy or intolerance.
16. Students and young people living away from home are a vulnerable group who may be at higher risk if they have allergies. This is due to a number of factors that are associated with learning to look after themselves in a new environment and, in addition, possibly not wanting to appear different from their peer group. It is because of this high-risk group that the Catering Department will provide as much information as possible to any customers with food allergens or intolerance.

17.

COMMON FOOD ALLERGENS

18. There are currently **14 allergens** which must be clearly stated if they are present in the food on offer. People may report allergies to other foods not on the below list. Most common in the UK are kiwi, peas, other legumes (beans etc.), other seeds and other fruits and vegetables. In some cases, people only need to avoid these when raw and can have them cooked.



RESPONSIBILITIES

19. The Commercial Services Manager, Catering and Events Operations Manager and the Kitchen Manager are responsible for ensuring all food provided by the Catering Department has the relevant allergy information available on the recipe stock system or in paper format stored in the Health and Safety File in the Kitchen.
20. The Kitchen Manager will ensure that all recipes and associated allergen information is accurate and up to date on the recipe stock system.
21. The Kitchen Manger along with the Catering and Events Operations Managers will ensure that allergen information is available for all 'Common Food Allergens' listed above. This information is readily available and up to date on Saffron.

STAFF TRAINING

22. All chefs must also attend the following mandatory courses:
 - Food Hygiene Certificate
 - CIEH Level 2 Food Safety
 - A recognised training course on food allergy awareness
23. The Food & Beverage Catering Assistants must attend the following mandatory courses:
 - Basic Food Hygiene Certificate
 - Food allergy awareness (delivered internally or externally)
24. All training records will be maintained by each manager or supervisor and stored in a shared training file which will be regularly updated.
25. Casual and agency service staff must be trained on food allergy awareness by the agency and/or complete an online allergy awareness course.
26. All staff to complete new online training to reflect recent allergen changes regarding pre packaged for direct sale (PPDS) products

GOOD KITCHEN AND SERVICE PRACTICES

KITCHEN

27. All dishes which are produced in house will be from standard ingredients from approved suppliers. Any ingredient changes/supplier changes affecting standard ingredients will be detailed.
28. Where allergenic ingredients are packaged openly/loosely, they are stored separately to reduce the risk of contamination.
29. Equipment/utensils used in the preparation of food for people with a food allergy are cleaned according to standard procedures (see HACCP manual) which under normal circumstances should be sufficient.
30. All foods which are prepared for special diets must be prepared in an area which is sanitised and free from cross contamination. Separate colour coded chopping boards and equipment will be used for this purpose.
31. When cooking food for customers with a food allergy or intolerance this must be prepared before any other food to avoid cross contamination. The area must be thoroughly cleaned before preparation of food before and after use. The food once prepared must be stored with cling film and labelled as required.
32. Where dishes contain any of the 14 allergens this must be clearly identified to the customers.
33. The Chef must provide a pre-service brief to all front of house staff prior to the lunchtime service. This will include menu familiarisation and information relating to menu items containing allergens. Further information will be available in the Chef's file.

FOOD SERVICE

34. All front of house staff must be available for the pre-service brief.
35. The staff must be aware of any dishes which contain allergens and if in doubt must check with the Chef or Duty Manager if a customer has requested further information on the presence of allergens.
36. If there is an event, the Hospitality Duty Manager or equivalent must provide a pre-service brief to the front of house staff to inform them of the menu and its

content. If there are specific dietary requirements from the guests then it must be absolutely clear which items have been prepared for their meal.

37. Separate utensils must be used during service to avoid cross-contamination of allergens.

NATASHA'S LAW

38. Any food that is classed as pre-packaged for direct sales (PPDS) must be labelled with the name of the product and the full list of ingredients any ingredients that qualify as allergenic ingredients must be emphasised in bold within the label.
39. PPDS includes food that a customer can select themselves, for example from a display fridge, hospitality delivered and left without service and items placed into packaging ahead of a lunch rush but kept behind a counter.
40. PPDS labels are in addition to the current allergen law where all allergens must be displayed in each outlet, available for the customer to access

COMMUNICATION

41. Catering staff and managers are encouraged to communicate with customers who have specific dietary requirements and to help them to find a suitable product which is safe for them to eat.
42. The Catering department will endeavour to provide as much information as possible on the website and on the daily menus.
43. If customers need further information, they are encouraged to meet with the Catering Managers to identify any specific requests.

May 2022

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Policy owner: Helen Connolly, Commercial

Services Manager Policy review date: May 2023