



# Food safety advice

## **A BRIEF GUIDE TO COVENTRY FOOD & SAFETY TEAM**

### **WHO ARE WE?**

Coventry Food & Safety Team is part of Regulatory Services at Coventry City Council. We work together with Trading Standards, Environmental Protection and the Licensing Team.

### **WHO DO WE PROVIDE SERVICES TO?**

- ◆ Residents of the City of Coventry who have a problem with food they have purchased or food they have eaten from a Coventry business.
- ◆ Food businesses based in the City.

### **WHY DO WE HAVE A FOOD & SAFETY TEAM?**

The team carry out a wide range of statutory and advisory functions to ensure that all food produced, prepared and sold in the City is safe and without risks to health.

### **WHAT DOES THE FOOD & SAFETY TEAM DO?**

- ◆ Offer free food safety advice to food businesses and members of the public.
- ◆ Carry out food safety inspections at food businesses in the City.
- ◆ Enforce Government legislation to ensure continuous legal compliance.
- ◆ Work with partner organisations such as the Food Standards Agency.
- ◆ Investigate food complaints, taking appropriate and proportionate enforcement action (which may include prosecution) in accordance with our Enforcement Policy.
- ◆ Investigate cases of food borne illness.



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## **WHAT SORT OF THINGS DOES THE FOOD & SAFETY TEAM DEAL WITH?**

- ◆ Investigation of food complaints including foreign bodies found in food and mouldy food.
- ◆ Complaints regarding cleanliness/hygiene in food businesses
- ◆ Investigation of food poisoning cases/outbreaks and other instances of food borne/water borne illness. Help to prevent the spread of infection.
- ◆ Carry out routine food safety inspections and rate businesses under the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
- ◆ Carry out food sampling in the City.
- ◆ Give advice to people setting up new food businesses, including those run from home.
- ◆ Approve food manufacturers and issue approval certification.
- ◆ Advise food businesses regarding new legislation and changes to legislation/guidance.
- ◆ Advise businesses and consumers regarding food alerts issued by the Government.



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## WHAT CAN WE DO ✓

- ✓ Give advice to local businesses about what food safety legislation applies to them and how to comply with the law.
- ✓ Provide advice/information to members of the public regarding food safety.
- ✓ Provide advice to people importing food from abroad and produce export health certificates for exporters.
- ✓ Deal with complaints regarding food safety and hygiene/cleanliness.
- ✓ Target our limited resources effectively using a 'risk based' approach. Complaints are assessed on a case-by-case basis. This means we are not able to investigate all complaints/enquiries. However, we do provide advice/guidance to all people accessing the service.
- ✓ If the business involved is based outside Coventry or our investigations reveal that potential offences have been committed outside the City, we will pass the details on to the appropriate food safety team to deal with as they deem appropriate.
- ✓ If we are dealing with your complaint, we will keep you informed of progress and contact you at the conclusion of our investigation.
- ✓ Take enforcement action in accordance with our enforcement policy ranging from advice to prosecution.
- ✓ Officers can seize or detain food that they suspect is unsafe. Businesses can also be closed down if there is an imminent risk to public health
- ✓ Enter a food business at any reasonable time to carry out an unannounced inspection/investigation.

## WHAT CAN'T WE DO ✗

- ✗ Deal with anonymous complaints. Rest assured that any contact details you give to us remain completely confidential.
- ✗ Demand compensation or apologies from businesses or take enforcement action on your behalf.
- ✗ Deal with complaints regarding poor customer service or food quality.
- ✗ Insist on businesses taking action that does not form part of food safety legislation.
- ✗ Routinely submit samples of food bought to us to the microbiology lab or Public Analyst.
- ✗ Provide advice on matters relating to Trading Standards for example labelling. These enquiries should be directed to our Trading Standards Team.
- ✗ Take action in relation to food businesses that are not within the City boundary. Please contact the relevant Local Authority.