



Food Safety & Hygiene Policy

Last Updated: 2 April 25

Policy Scope

FEAST With Us (hereby referred to as FEAST) aims to provide a clean, consistent, and accountable service. This policy stipulates the good practice which must be implemented within all FEAST services to ensure safety of all stakeholders and is based on government guidance.

The scope of this policy refers to all stakeholders who are actively involved in any kitchen process that contributes to the production of a FEAST service. This includes (but is not limited to) chefs, ad hoc / contract chefs, volunteers, service users, partner venue staff, operational staff, and trustees.

The objective of this policy is to protect human life and health. This policy also aims to identify procedures for safe practice for all food handlers, to prevent cross contamination and potential food related illness for service users, staff, and visitors.

In doing this FEAST aims to ensure that staff are fully aware of all potential food hazards, that high standards of personal and environmental hygiene are adhered to at all stages, and to ensure that food safety is not compromised.

The final aim of this policy is to satisfy current legal requirements including:

- The Health Act – ‘Hygiene Code’ 2006.
 - Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006.
 - Food Hygiene (EC) Regulations 852/2004.
 - The Food Safety Act 1990.
 - The Food Hygiene (General) Regulations 1970.
 - The Food Hygiene (Amendment) Regulations 1990.
 - The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
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Collaborative Policy Implementation

FEAST collaborates with community kitchens based in day centres for vulnerable adults, hostels for homeless adults, sheltered accommodation for older people, faith centres and community centres. All community venues in which FEAST operates are registered with local councils (Islington Environmental Health, Haringey Environmental Health, Camden Environmental Health, Barnet Environmental Health, Westminster Environmental Health, Hackney Environmental Health) and are subject to routine unannounced inspection. Maintaining the venue kitchens is the joint responsibility of FEAST and the venue lead / manager, and together both parties will promptly respond to council advice and feedback following on from council inspection.

Notably, given that community kitchens may be used for other services, FEAST does not accept full responsibility for kitchen maintenance outside of FEAST programming. This is outlined in the service level agreement document signed by FEAST and each venue lead / manager.

Protective Clothing

All food handlers and visitors to food handling areas (including maintenance staff) must wear clean protective clothing including appropriate head and footwear.

When operating in the kitchen, no open toed shoes or loose clothing should be worn. Highly flammable materials (such as silk) should be avoided or minimised where possible. Footwear must be of a sensible, sturdy, low heeled and enclosed type and must be kept clean.

Food handlers must always wear appropriate clean clothing. Staff must wear aprons when working with food.

Staff are required to wear suitable hair nets to ensure that hair or dandruff do not contaminate food or surfaces. Additionally, all food handlers should ensure that hair is clean and long hair is tied back when handling food.

Outdoor and work wear clothing are to be kept separate. Protective clothing should not be worn travelling to and from work.

Personal Hygiene

It is vital that all food handlers maintain a high standard of personal and general hygiene to avoid the possibility of spreading infections or causing food poisoning.

Any food handlers must:

- Observe high standards of personal cleanliness and have a legal obligation to do so.
- Wash their hands regularly (in a nominated wash handbasin) during their shift and in particular:
 - On entering the kitchen
 - Before handling any food or equipment

- After handling any wrapped or unwrapped food, especially raw items
 - Before and after any cleaning procedure
 - Between different tasks
 - After touching ears, nose, mouth or hair
 - After any contact with service users or their immediate surroundings
 - After visiting the toilet facilities
 - After handling waste food or refuse
 - After eating or smoking (smoking is only allowed in designated areas)
- Hands must always be washed in a nominated wash hand basin only, with liquid soap and running water and dried using disposable towels. Hand wash basins must be cleaned regularly.
 - Cuts and abrasions must be covered by waterproof dressings.
 - Food handlers must not wear jewellery other than wedding rings and un-jewelled stud or sleeper earrings.
 - Nail varnish must not be worn. Nails are to be kept short and scrupulously clean.
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Sickness

Any staff or volunteers involved in kitchen activities will report to their manager as soon as possible if:

- On holiday they suffered an attack of diarrhoea and / or vomiting.
- If any member of their household is suffering from an attack of diarrhoea and / or vomiting.

Staff will report to their manager as soon as possible if they are suffering from:

- Vomiting.
 - Diarrhoea.
 - Septic skin, lesions, boils or infected cuts.
 - Discharge from the ear, nose, or any other site.
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Food Storage

The correct storage of foods is important to ensure adequate provision throughout the year. Failure to ensure satisfactory conditions of temperature, humidity, stock rotation, and the integrity of packaging can result in problems of unfit or spoiled food but will at the very least, result in a considerable reduction in shelf life.

Product Date Codes

To ensure good stock rotation and compliance with food labelling regulations, all foods with the exception of unprepared and uncut fruit and vegetables, sugar, wine, salt, and fresh baked bread must be date coded.

Produce delivered by nominated suppliers will be date coded as part of the purchase specification. Date codes are classified under two headings: 'USE BY' - applied to highly perishable, 'high risk' products such as cooked meats, dairy products. 'BEST BEFORE' - applied to perishable and non-perishable foods, e.g. cereals and packed products, cans, bottles, usually with a shelf life of over three months.

All products must be used before the expiry of these dates, but care must be taken when using products to also check additional instructions, for example: refrigerate after opening, use within three days of opening.

Opened packs of food should be decanted into clean containers with close fitting lids, labelled, and date coded.

The rule FIRST IN ~ FIRST OUT (FIFO) should always be applied.

Refrigeration

The following rules should be applied when storing food in a refrigerator:

- High risk foods should be stored between 0 - 4°C.
- Fresh meat, poultry and fish should be stored between 0 - 1°C.
- Frozen foods to be stored at or below -18°C.
- Cook-chill products to be stored at 3°C or below.
- High risk foods are usually those which contain protein and are intended for consumption without treatment which would destroy such organisms, e.g.:
 - All cooked meat and poultry.
 - Cooked meat products including gravy and stock.
 - Milk, cream, artificial cream, custards, and dairy produce.
 - Cooked eggs and products made with eggs, e.g. mayonnaise, but excluding pastry, bread, and similar baked goods.
 - Shellfish and other seafood, for example, oysters.
 - Cooked rice.

Refrigerators should be easily accessible and not be positioned near to any heat source. Ideally, they should be in well-ventilated areas away from direct sunlight.

Refrigerators should be packed in a manner which allows good air circulation. All food should be covered to prevent drying out, cross contamination and odour absorption. However, food packaging should not be stored as this may introduce contamination into the refrigerator.

Highest risk foods should be given priority if space is limited and should be stored at the rear of the refrigerator and always above raw foods.

Thermometers should be located externally and be easily readable with the door(s) closed (where possible).

Cleaning

Cleaning should take place on at least a weekly basis using food safe chemicals.

Spillages should be cleaned as soon as they occur.

After cleansing, the surfaces need to be completely dried.

If the refrigerator does not defrost automatically defrosting should take place at least once a month to ensure that there is no build-up of ice.

A cleaning record should be kept and easily accessible in case of inspection.

Regular temperature checks using an independent thermometer should also be made.

Frozen Food

Frozen food from contract and outside suppliers should be stock rotated and used before the expiry date.

Food produced by FEAST and frozen for storage has a shelf life of 30 days and should be used within this period. If it is not used within 30 days, the food should be discarded.

Food Preparation

Thawing Frozen Food

The following steps should be taken to avoid cross contamination during thawing:

- Remove external packaging and place in container.
- Defrost food away from other high-risk foods ideally in a thawing cabinet (12-15°C).
- Clean contaminated work surfaces e.g. chopping boards.
- Leave for sufficient time.
- Dispose of any raw juice carefully.
- Cover defrosted food and put in refrigerator.

Dry Goods Storage

Dry goods require protection from:

- Low temperatures.
- Damp.
- Excessive heat.
- Direct sunlight.
- Pests.

This requires:

- Steady temperatures of 10 - 15°C.
- Ventilation (relative humidity 50- 60%).
- Pest proof structure.
- Shelving and structure which can be cleaned easily.
- Products stored off the ground.
- Routine cleaning.
- Stock rotation.

Preparation Surfaces & Equipment

After each use, food preparation surfaces must be cleaned to remove all loose food debris, washed down with an appropriate hot water and detergent solution, rinsed off and left to air dry. Food preparation equipment must also be cleaned after each use.

Cleaning schedules must be in place to ensure that all equipment in a food preparation area is cleaned regularly, and a cleaning record kept.

Contamination

To avoid cross contamination, it is important that the same equipment is not used for handling raw and high-risk products without being disinfected. To prevent this from occurring it is recommended that different colours are used. Colour coding may be extended to include washing facilities, trolleys, protective clothing, and packaging material.

Cooking Food

Internal cooking temperatures of above 75°C should be achieved to ensure bacteriological safety; however, some bacteria do survive these temperatures. The centre of cooked meat should be checked regularly with an accurate temperature probe which is always disinfected before use. The external surface of a joint of meat, for example, may give the appearance of being thoroughly cooked but the centre temperature may be quite low.

All foods should be temperature probed before service.

Reheated foods should be heated to a temperature of at least 70°C. Meals heated for consumption must be probed to ensure that the correct temperature has been achieved.

Food Service

Hot Foods

All hot food should be served at or above 70°C. It should not be left on the counter for a period of longer than 30 minutes. If food does not maintain the required temperature, it should be discarded, under no circumstances should it be re-heated.

Any food remaining at the end of service may be cooled and stored safely, in accordance with this policy, for future services, subject to adequate reheating.

Cold Foods

All cold food should be served from a chilled display unit at a temperature of or below 5°C.

All food intended for service on a particular day should be discarded if not served, it should not be re-served the following day.

Equipment Maintenance

All items of equipment used in connection with the transportation, storage, production, and service of food must be in good repair and condition. Maintenance of such equipment an integral component of the FEAST's management obligations. FEAST is therefore committed to a pro-active and systematic assessment of equipment needs.

The maintenance of equipment in kitchens / food handling areas should never be carried out by any members of FEAST and is only carried out by the partner / venue Estates & Facilities Department, qualified maintenance engineers and / or engineers from the specific manufacturers of the equipment, in accordance with the procedure.

Equipment in need of repair should be reported immediately to the service or venue manager so that the appropriate engineer is called.

Old equipment which has deteriorated with age becomes incapable of being cleaned thoroughly. Cracked, chipped, broken, and badly pitted equipment allows the harbourage of dirt and bacteria and should be replaced. Replacement equipment requirements should be reported to the Catering Department.

All replacement equipment should be subjected to Portable Appliance Testing (PAT), arranged by the Service / Venue manager.

Sink Use

It is imperative that sinks have hot and cold running water. The lack of hot water should be reported to the venue manager and FEAST kitchen and logistics coordinator or operations manager immediately. Sinks must be cleaned thoroughly after each use.

Food goods and food preparation equipment must NOT be stored under the sink.

Sinks in kitchens are for the washing of food preparation equipment only.

A separate hand wash sink is to be used for hand washing only (where appropriate, depending on venue).

Waste

Refuse must not be allowed to accumulate in kitchens and must not be left overnight. Waste generated may be stored in black polythene bags which are removed when full and at the end of each day. These bags must not be overfilled and must be tied to prevent problems from insects.

The containers for such bags should be maintained in a clean condition and be foot operated and staff should be trained to wash their hands after using the receptacles.

Receptacles used for the storage of food should not be used for refuse. Suitable facilities should be provided for the storage of waste prior to its removal from the establishment, refuse collectors should not have to enter food or dining areas.

For further information on appropriate storage and removal of waste in venue kitchens, please contact either the venue lead / manager or FEAST's kitchen and logistics coordinator.

Pest Control

All venues are covered by a pest control contract, which is the responsibility of the venue owner / manager.

The contractor should visit all venues on a regular basis (regularity is defined by the contract) to ensure that no infestation has taken place. The contract covers the control of rodents (rats and mice), and cockroaches.

If there is any evidence of infestation from these or other pests the Pest Control Contractor should be contacted immediately. An Incident Form must be completed.

All spillages should be removed as soon as possible. Waste receptacles should be provided with food pedals and tight-fitting lids and not overfilled. Waste bags should be removed from the kitchen as soon as possible and stored in an appropriate and maintained waste storage area.

Training & Documentation

All FEAST volunteers are trained in food handling and food safety and hold up-to-date food safety and hygiene certificates. Records of certification are kept in each kitchen venue's folder as well as online in Breathe HR. FEAST covers the cost of certification for volunteers.

FEAST volunteers should be allocated clear roles to minimise risk of contamination.

In each kitchen venue's folder, there should be information outlining best practice and records of food handling processes including:

- Food Safety and Hygiene Certificates of Volunteers
- Safer Food Better Business pack completed by the venue lead / manager containing: (link: https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/sfbb-caterers-pack-fixed_0_3.pdf)
 - Cleaning Schedule/Instructions.
 - Opening and closing checks.
 - Diary to be completed.
- All relevant staff training records (DBS, food hygiene, safeguarding etc.)
- Cooking / Cooling / Reheating records to record temperatures of food.
- Safe catering sheets for temperature checks. The first three are to be printed and filled in regularly:
 - Food Delivery Record - To record the monitoring of incoming deliveries.
 - Fridge / Cold room / Display chill temperature Records to record the performance of kitchen units.
- The amalgamation of the above should form a checklist to be filled out at each FEAST session, incorporating opening, and closing checks, temperature checks, a register/incident log, and a record of allergens.
- Guidance on keeping a record of the ingredients/allergens that goes in a meal and recording sheet (see Food Allergens Action Plan).
- Blank labels for food parcels with handling guidance.
- Health and Safety Policy of FEAST and venue, including incident log.
- Volunteer/safeguarding policy of venue.
- Cleaning diary recording sheet.

Venue leads/managers must work through this pack and have completed all the relevant safe methods, leaving volunteers or FEAST chefs to complete the diary at each FEAST session.

Non-Compliance

All employees have a role to play in enforcing the policy and are required to deal with any observed or reported breaches. Should employees feel apprehensive about their own safety regarding addressing any breach, they should seek senior management support.

Failure to comply with this policy may lead to a lack of clarity over job role, learning needs or expected standards of performance, resulting in reduced effectiveness or efficiency, underperformance and putting service delivery at risk.

Any member of staff refusing to observe the policy will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with FEAST's disciplinary policy and procedures up to and including dismissal.

Contacting Us

If you have any questions about this policy, please contact us at info@feastwithus.org.uk.

Reviewed and approved on 2 April 2025 by Caroline Monkhouse Flower, CEO, and Helen Burgess, Chair of the Board of Trustees, on behalf of the board.

Signed by:



Helen Burgess
Chair of the Board of Trustees

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