

Natasha's Law: Frequently Asked Questions

Natasha's Law is just around the corner and it'll mean big change for the food sector. If you're still unsure of your obligations or technical labelling information, we've pulled together a handy Q&A.



Natasha's Law and PPDS: how does it affect you?

Over recent months we've seen multiple webinars broadcast on the subject of Natasha's Law, new legislation coming into effect from 1 October 2021. These have been great at raising awareness, but often seem to generate more questions than answers. It's tough for foodservice providers to understand how to apply the new rules to their specific operation.

"Well what about...?"

We've collated the most common questions being asked and answered them below, with links to the relevant supporting information from official channels.

What do all the acronyms mean?

'PPDS', or pre-packed for direct sale, and 'PP', pre-packaged, both relate to the description of food items that are packaged before the customer purchases them. The key difference is that PP foods are packaged (and sealed) by the manufacturer with the label governed by the [Food Labelling Regulations 1996](#). Examples of this include pre-prepared sandwiches, confectionary, crisps and other manufactured, wrapped products.

[Food Information Regulations](#), relates to the legislation introduced in 2014 requiring all caterers to inform their customers if any food they provide contains any of the listed 14 allergens. The [Saffron Wellbeing Portal](#) helps caterers accurately maintain this and present their menus in an interactive, mobile friendly format.

So what food is pre-packed for direct sale food?

From 1st October 2021, all items that are prepared, wrapped and sold at the same place directly to your customers will need to meet the [new legislation](#) designed to protect your consumers by providing potentially life-saving allergen information on the package.

Simply put, if your customer can't pre-order their item and/or change the composition of the wrapped item you have produced, it will need to be labelled. This includes caterers who provide food across multiple outlets, for example those in a multi-outlet building, university campus with shops, cafes and restaurants, large schools and hospitals with cafés and staff feeding outlets.



To check whether your service falls within the legislation visit

<https://www.food.gov.uk/allergen-ingredients-food-labelling-decision-tool>.

Further information on labelling can be found at <https://www.food.gov.uk/allergen-labelling-changes-for-prepacked-for-direct-sale-ppds-food> where sector specific advice is given. The Food Standards Agency also provides [free online training](#) and, if in doubt, always seek advice from your Environmental Health Officer and trading standards representatives for guidance.

What about packed lunches?

Over the last 18 months there has been an increase in the provision of delivered services, such as packed lunches. As an example, the packed lunch may consist of a sandwich, piece of fruit, cookie and fruit juice. The key thing to consider here is whether the consumer can view and make an informed decision about each item in the bag - or whether the bag is sealed prior to collection. If the bag is pre-ordered, the ordering system should provide the relevant information required by the Food Information Regulations. But if it is prepared in bulk for collection, the bag will need to be labelled.

Does this affect my delivered buffets?

Buffets usually consist of a selection of dishes that are either served or can be chosen by the individual. In this instance the Food Information Regulations would apply requiring you to highlight the allergens present in each menu item.

We have a pre-order app and operate a 'grab & go' service. Do I need to label?

Similar to the packed lunch question, the answer lies in how your customer orders. If they pre-order then "no": the Food Information Regulations apply. However best practice says it would be a benefit to provide the detail at the point of collection or delivery anyway. If the items are already wrapped and displayed, then "yes": the wrapped items will need labelling. In addition to our EPOS interface, Saffron is designed to interface to both [CivicaFats](#) and any other pre-order apps, including Dynamify and Round.

We clingfilm our chilled patient meal orders?

Again, the requirement will be driven by whether your patient pre-ordered the plated meal, and if so, was the information presented to them at the point of order or managed through a patient meal ordering system such as Saffron Bedside.

We make sandwiches and snacks to go in a vending machine?

The items you sell in the machine should present the label information to the customer before they make the purchase and certainly before they open the item. To support this, you could create a QR code that links to the required information, such as the Saffron Wellbeing Portal.

Who is responsible for the ingredient data?

You should obtain all ingredient specifications from your suppliers. We can assist with pre-configured templates that enable the data to be uploaded. The data origin is tracked and audited in Saffron, then cross-referenced against the specification for the 14 allergens required under the Food Information Regulations. We can also integrate with Erudus, a source of accurate allergy, nutritional and technical food product data.



Can I print any label?

Saffron has been designed to interface with any label printing solution: LabelLogic, Wessex, Gen Labels, Date Code Genie and Daymark are some already being used by our customers. These enable the required label and font size plus the QUID, the list of ingredients in descending order of weight within the item, to be presented compliantly.

To reduce risk, all labels should be produced as close to the time of production as possible.

So what next?

With only a few weeks to go here is our advice on what you should be putting in place.

1. Confirm and finalise your approved supplier commodity lists/catalogues
2. Confirm, finalise and lock down your recipes for all applicable items
3. Test your service and labelling scenarios in a nominated site to confirm compliance
4. Update your policy and process documents
5. Define, publish and train your teams on your contingency plans
6. Print labels ready for the 1st October as near to the date as possible so any ingredient changes do not result in wasted labels.

Speak to our team to learn more about Natasha's Law and how Civica Saffron can support you in achieving compliance.

Contact us }

