



The
United
Reformed
Church

Help and Advice Group

Northern Synod Office, 4 College Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8JJ (0191-232 1168)

Bulletin 29: FOOD SAFETY

The Help & Advice Group was set up by Synod in 2009, to support local churches in being informed and effective in their life and mission. The Group is made up of four members of local churches, together with administrative support from the Trust Officer. We are willing to try to provide specific advice or organise training days on particular topics. Please get in touch if you have questions or wish to suggest a training or discussion event.

This article is part of a series giving an overview of particular subjects on interest for local churches. We also circulate general updates from time to time. Bulletins will also be posted on the members' area of the website with direct links to other websites.

Where readers are directed to web-based resources, the Synod Office is willing to respond to reasonable requests for printed out information for readers without web access, although they may find it more satisfactory to follow up their interest through their local library's web access.

Food Safety

The Food Standards Agency has published a guideline leaflet, *Community and charity food provision – guidance on the application of EU food hygiene law*:

www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/hall-provision.pdf

This makes clear that all food supplied outside of a purely domestic setting is legally required to be safe to eat.

Where that food provision has both 'a certain continuity of activities' and 'a certain degree of organisation', it is also necessary to register with your local authority environmental health department. The guidelines indicate that a one-off event, such as a church fair, or occasional events less than once a month, would not require registration. Neither would small-scale provision of low risk food, such as tea and biscuits.

Regular provision of food that requires more complex safety control, such as cooking hot meals at least once a month, would likely require registration.

The FSA has also posted *Catering advice for charity and community groups providing food* on its website, with helpful questions and answers:

www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/guidancenotes/hygguid/charity-community-groups

andrew.atkinson@urc-northernsynod.org