

Food Alert

Are you ready for
Natasha's Law?



The law on allergy labelling is changing

Allergy awareness is a topic that's never been more relevant, with hospital admissions for severe food allergies tripling over the last 20 years. Coming into effect this October, Natasha's Law aims to protect the estimated 2 million people living with a diagnosed food allergy and prevent unnecessary deaths from food-induced anaphylaxis, which average 10 a year.

Here at Food Alert, our team of experts have pulled together a handy guide to help prepare your business for the new regulations.

What is Natasha's Law?

The [UK Food Information Amendment](#), also known as Natasha's Law, comes into effect from **1 October 2021** and will require food businesses in **England, Wales and Northern Ireland** to provide full ingredient lists and allergen labelling on foods pre-packaged for direct sale on the premises.

From this date EHOs will be adding this requirement to their inspection list and will issue enforcement/change orders and escalate as required.

Similar changes are expected to be introduced in Scotland by Food Standards Scotland.

How will your business be affected?

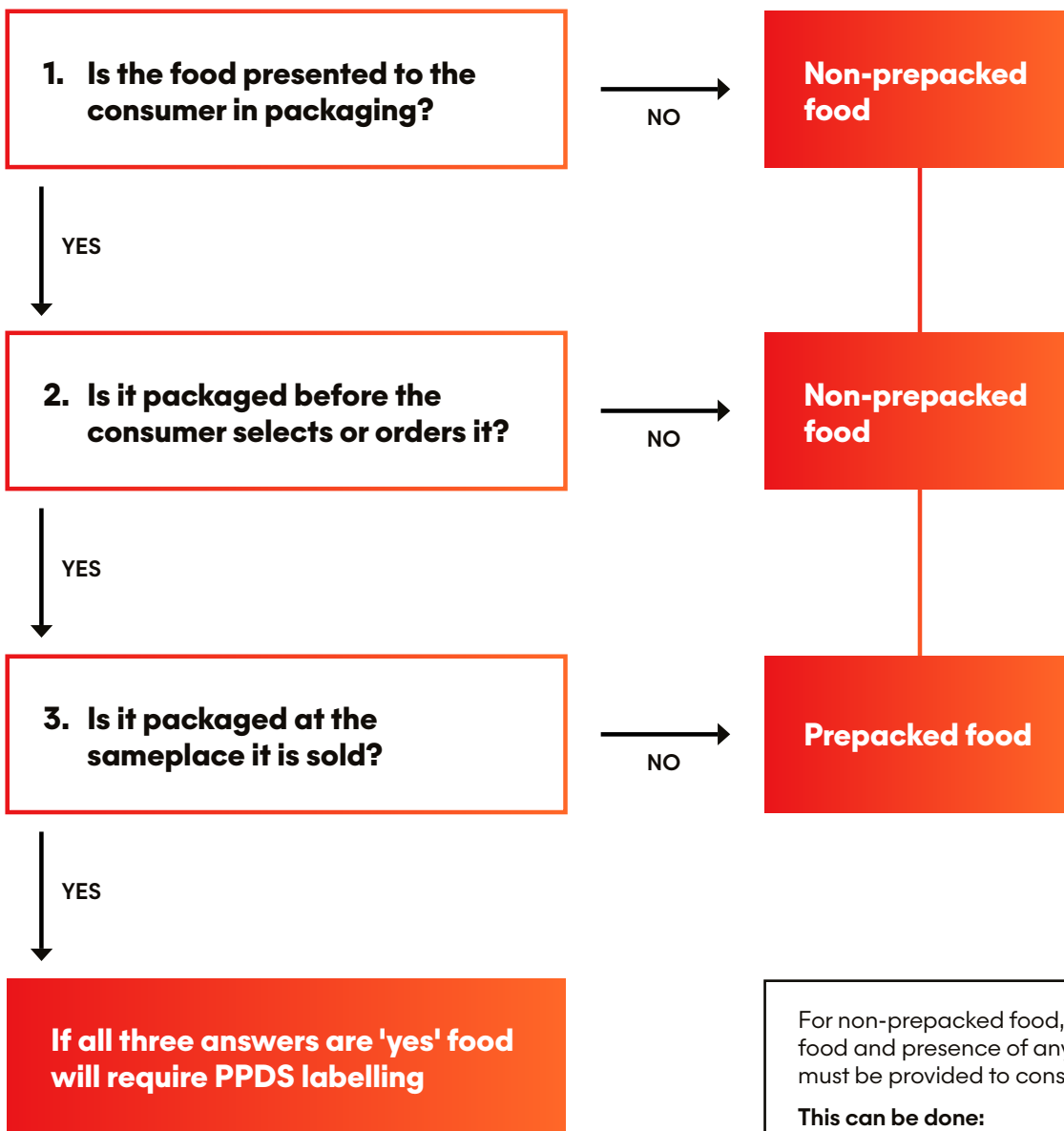
Any business that produces PPDS (**Prepacked for Direct Sale**) food will have to clearly display the following information on the packaging:

- 1 Name of the food**
- 2 A full ingredients list**
with allergenic ingredients emphasised (for example in bold, italics or a different colour)



How do I tell what is and isn't PPDS?

PPDS is food which is packaged at the same place it is offered or sold to customers and is in the packaging before it is ordered or selected. It can include food that customers choose themselves as well as products kept behind a counter. Food will require labelling if it meets all three of the following criteria:



For non-prepacked food, the name of the food and presence of any of the 14 allergens, must be provided to consumers.

This can be done:

- ✓ On a notice
- ✓ On a ticket
- ✓ On a label that is readily discernible by the purchaser at the place where they choose that food.





Good allergen management

Do you have the right measures in place?

It goes without saying that keeping customers safe is a number one priority. Use this good practice checklist to help deliver effective allergen controls:

CHECKLIST

- **Staff Training:** Are all staff given basic allergen training on day one of their employment, do you have a written procedure and are staff aware of it? Training should also be tested regularly to ensure the team are competent and confident in dealing with allergens.
- **Engage with Suppliers and build good relationships:** Keep updated on any product or ingredient changes quickly. Your supplier has a legal obligation to provide you with the exact ingredient composition of any foods you buy from them. Act on these updates immediately ensuring all associated documentation is revised and communicated.
- **Review suppliers and ingredients:** Keep recipes simple to minimise allergenic ingredients. Are you confident your suppliers are reliable and will notify you of product ingredient / allergen changes? Your supplier has a legal obligation to provide you with the exact ingredient composition of any foods you buy from them. Do you act on these updates immediately and is all documentation revised and communicated?
- **Receipt of Foods:** Do you have the correct checks in place?
- **Only keep one copy of your current Allergen Matrix at each site:** Do all sites have the current version and are they made aware of any changes?
- **Food Preparation:** Do you have a designated area for allergen free preparation and is it 1 metre from other foods? Are your staff briefed to wash hands after working with major allergens?

CHECKLIST

- **Cooking of Foods:** Are cooking conditions suitable to ensure product identity and prevent cross contamination? For example, covered/ stored below non allergen containing foods and probe thermometer, stirring spoons etc are washed before use.
- **Allergen Labelling/Signposting:** Are allergens clearly signposted on your menu [both in venue and online] and is the information updated every time the menu or an ingredient is changed?
- **Dish Identity:** Is the allergen free dish clearly identifiable for staff to deliver to the customer – whether in the venue, click & collect, take-away or delivery?
- **Hygiene and Cleaning:** Is allergen control considered in your cleaning schedule – including single use wiping cloths and table/ chair prepared for an allergic customer [where possible]?
- **Communication:** Good communication is essential, whether this is between front and back of house or central production kitchen and restaurants. Are your systems simple and easy to implement and maintain?
- **Allergy Champion:** Have you appointed an Allergy Champion who is responsible for co-ordinating allergen management in the business or site?

How should I prepare for Natasha's Law?

Use the next six months as a countdown to being Natasha's Law ready. Follow this step by step checklist:

CHECKLIST



1. Audit suppliers and stock

- Is the supplier list up to date?
- Do you have all product ingredients?
- How do you manage ingredient changes?

2. Staff Education & Training

- Ensure all staff are trained and aware of implications and processes
- How will they handle queries?

3. Trial Runs

- Check your labelling and processes with your team and address any issues

4. Review & Refine

- Review managing substitutions – are they being picked up at delivery
- Check labels & fonts etc.
- Are all staff up to date / have they retained their knowledge?
- Arrange for a Food Alert expert to audit your processes

5. September - Is your business ready?

- Final review – one month to go
- Supplier, stock, software & staff ready?



What's next? Switch to digital compliance

Natasha's Law is very important, but it is another layer of compliance for an already burdened sector. And at Food Alert we understand the stress this can cause. That's why we have dedicated the past 30 years to making complex compliance as easy as possible for our clients.

The pandemic has brought to the fore the power of technology. In particular, the transfer of paper based hygiene and safety procedures to cloud based software solutions. For example, using software programmes such as Alert65 means tracking allergens doesn't have to be tricky or time-consuming.

Alert65's Allergen Management module lets you log which of the 14 prescribed allergens are present within each menu item or product, so you stay compliant, as well as providing you with a summary of that information for your customers and guests.

- Log allergens against each dish and update as needed to create a paperless trail
- Record and manage key nutritional information
- Export a customer friendly summary so you can keep your guests fully updated

If you've not made the switch to digital because you think it's too much hassle, then think again. At Food Alert we manage the entire switching process for you.



How can Food Alert help?

The measures and Food Alert solutions outlined in this guide only scrape the surface of what you need to do and how we can support you in order to prepare for Natasha's Law.

If you'd like the backing of our expert team, simply give us a call on **020 7244 1900** and our team will be happy to discuss your compliance needs. Or get in touch with us **online** and we'll call you back at a time that suits you.