

Changes to Food labelling laws come into force on 13th December 2014.

From 13th December 2014 the law will require **food businesses** to be able to tell consumers if there are any of 14 specified allergens present in the food they are going to buy.

The law will only apply **to registered food businesses** so in general the labelling regulations will not apply to most food being sold by Congregations which won't need to be labelled, including food sold at one off events such as Church fêtes or coffee mornings. However, it would be good practice to consider the risks.

If your Congregation runs events which are more regular and organised e.g. a café, it is likely to be registered with the local authority as a food business, in which case the new labelling provisions will apply. If you sell loose foods – food not in its original manufacturers packaging- then your customers must be able to find out if any of your food has any of the 14 allergens specified in the regulation in it. The 14 allergens need to be mentioned either on a label or provided on a menu or you could have a notice directing people to speak to kitchen staff for more information. Staff will then need to be made aware of what ingredients are in the food so that they can answer any queries about allergens.

The 14 allergens which need to be mentioned are;

- eggs
- milk,
- peanuts,
- molluscs,
- mustard,
- nuts,
- sesame seeds,
- soya,
- cereals containing gluten,
- lupin,
- fish,
- celery,
- crustaceans and
- sulphur dioxide

Providing tea and biscuits after Church on a Sunday would not fall under the definition of a food business but it would still be best practice to avoid serving items such as biscuits containing nuts or any of the other allergens. In this case, where biscuits are provided from a packet, you could retain the packet so that you can answer any queries about ingredients by referring to it.

Some local authorities have already made direct contact with Congregations who are registered in their area as a food business. Additional user friendly guidance is available at;
Allergen Information For Loose Foods

<http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/publication/loosefoodsleaflet.pdf>