

Food Allergy Policy

POLICY

1. Cowslip Workshops is committed to **reducing the risk** to students, staff and visitors with regard to the provision of food and the consumption of allergens in food, which could lead to an allergic reaction.
2. This policy will be available on the Cowslip Workshops website and will be reviewed annually.

STATEMENT

3. Cowslip Workshops is unable to guarantee a completely allergen free environment. However, we will aim to **minimise the risk** of exposure, encourage self-responsibility and plan for effective response to possible emergencies.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

4. To **promote food allergen awareness** to staff, students and visitors at Cowslip Workshops.
5. To provide **clear guidance** to all catering staff on their responsibilities for the provision of food to anyone using the catering facilities who may have a food allergy, food intolerance or coeliac disease.
6. To ensure that relevant **food allergy training** and food hygiene training are provided for all catering staff.
7. To ensure appropriate **information and support** is available for catering staff and customers.

ALLERGY LABELLING LEGISLATION

8. From 13 December 2014, legislation (the EU Food Information for Consumer Regulation 1169/2011) requires food businesses to provide allergy information on **food sold unpackaged**. There are also changes to existing legislation on labelling allergenic ingredients in prepacked foods.

More information about the new European legislation can be found on the Food Standards Agency (FSA) website.

Background

WHAT IS A FOOD ALLERGY?

9. Food allergies affect **the body's immune system**. The body reacts to certain allergens in food by producing antibodies which can cause immediate and sometimes severe symptoms, such as: itching or strange metallic taste in the mouth, swelling of the throat and tongue; difficulty in swallowing or speaking; abdominal cramps, nausea and vomiting; skin hives (nettle rash) anywhere on the body. In most extreme cases, difficulties in breathing and a severe fall in blood pressure (anaphylactic shock) can prove fatal.

WHAT IS FOOD INTOLERANCE?

10. This does not involve the immune system in the same way and is not usually as severe as a food allergy. Symptoms usually **take longer to appear** and may include headaches, fatigue and digestive problems.

11. Food intolerance is harder to diagnose than a food allergy. The person with a known allergen trigger may know what food ingredient will provoke a reaction. However, they may well have eaten this food or a specific dish previously and had no adverse reaction.

COELIAC DISEASE

12. Coeliac disease is a **lifelong auto-immune disease** caused by a reaction to gluten.

- 1 in 100 people have the condition
- Symptoms include bloating, diarrhoea, nausea, wind, constipation, tiredness, sudden or unexpected weight loss, hair loss and anaemia.
- Once diagnosed, it is treated by following a gluten free diet for life.

WHO IS AT RISK?

13. Anybody can develop a food allergen or intolerance at any time in their life, irrespective of whether they have consumed the food previously. A person with an allergy is at risk **even if they consume a small amount** of the food allergen.

14. Food allergies and intolerances are **life-changing**. In the UK they affect around 8% of children and 2% of adults. In December 2014, the law on how allergen information is provided by food businesses changed to make it easier when buying food or eating out with an allergy or intolerance.

15. **Students and young people** living away from home are a vulnerable group who may be at higher risk if they have allergies. This is due to a number of factors that are associated with learning to look after themselves in a new environment and, in addition, possibly not wanting to appear different from their peer group. It is because of this high-risk group that the Catering Department will provide as much information as possible to any customers with food allergens or intolerance.

COMMON FOOD ALLERGENS

16. There are currently **14 allergens** which must be clearly stated if they are present in the food on offer. People may report allergies to other foods not on the below list. Most common in the UK are kiwi, peas, other legumes (beans etc.), other seeds and other fruits and vegetables. In some cases, people only need to avoid these when raw and can have them cooked.



celery



molluscs



crustaceans



mustard



eggs



nuts



fish



peanuts



gluten



sesame



lupin



soya



milk



sulphur dioxide

RESPONSIBILITIES

17. The Head Chef along with the café staff are responsible for ensuring all food provided by the café has the relevant allergy information available on the recipe stock system.

18. The Head Chef will ensure that all recipes and associated allergen information is **accurate and up to date** on the recipe stock system.

19. The Head Chef and the café staff will ensure that allergen information is available for all 'Common Food Allergens' listed above. This information is **readily available and up to date**.

STAFF TRAINING

20. The Head Chef must also attend the following mandatory courses:

- Food Hygiene Certificate
- CIEH Level 2 Food Safety
- A recognised training course on food allergy awareness

21. The café staff must attend the following mandatory courses:

- Basic Food Hygiene Certificate
- Food allergy awareness (delivered internally or externally)

22. All **training records** will be maintained by the manager and stored in a shared training file which will be regularly updated.

23. Casual staff must be trained on food allergy awareness by the Head Chef.

Good kitchen and service practices

24. All dishes which are produced in house will be from **standard ingredients from approved suppliers**. Any ingredient changes/supplier changes affecting standard ingredients will be detailed.

25. Where allergenic ingredients are packaged openly/loosely, they are **stored separately** to reduce the risk of contamination.

26. Equipment/utensils used in the preparation of food for people with a food allergy are **cleaned according to standard procedures** (see HACCP manual) which under normal circumstances should be sufficient.

27. All foods which are prepared for special diets must be prepared in an area which is **sanitised and free from cross contamination**. Separate colour coded chopping boards and equipment will be used for this purpose.

28. When cooking food for customers with a food allergy or intolerance this **must be prepared before** any other food to avoid cross contamination. The area must be thoroughly cleaned before preparation of food before and after use. The food once prepared must be stored with cling film and labelled as required.

29. Where dishes contain any of the 14 allergens this must be **clearly identified** to the customers.

30. The Chef must provide a **pre-service brief** to all front of house staff prior to the lunchtime service. This will include menu familiarisation and information relating to menu items containing allergens. Further information will be available in the Chef's file.

FOOD SERVICE

31. All front of house staff must be available for the pre-service brief.

32. The staff must be aware of any dishes which contain allergens and if in doubt must check with the Head Chef if a customer has requested further information on the presence of allergens.

33. If there is an event, the Head Chef or equivalent must provide a pre-service brief to the front of house staff to inform them of the **menu and its content**. If there are specific dietary requirements from the guests then it must be absolutely clear which items have been prepared for their meal.

34. **Separate utensils** must be used during service to avoid cross-contamination of allergens.

COMMUNICATION

35. Catering staff and managers are encouraged to communicate with customers who have specific dietary requirements and to help them to find a suitable product which is safe for them to eat.

36. The cafe will endeavour to provide as much information as possible on the **website and on the daily menus**.

37. Customers attending courses at Cowslip Workshops are requested to notify us of any allergies on their booking form. Customers needing further information are encouraged to contact the Manager to identify any **specific requests**.

July 2019

This policy will be reviewed annually

Policy owner: Joanna Colwill, Manager

Policy review date: July 2019