GUIDANCE ON PREPARING FOOD FOR NEIGHBOURS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

There are many people who are living alone, who may be helped out significantly by a neighbour, friend, or an organisation delivering a home cooked meal. Neighbours may also want to lift people’s spirits by leaving a cupcake on the doorstep. However, this activity needs to be properly risk assessed as it could cause harm or spread the virus futher.

It is important not to prepare food if you or someone in your household has any symptoms of coronavirus

# If this activity is being carried out by an organisation, do you have insurance to cover incidents of someone being poisoned or made ill by food provided by yourselves? Think about the potential financial and reputational risk to your organisation.

# Please consider some of the following common sense approaches if you are considering this type of activity.

Formal Guidance

# There is a lack of formal guidance for individuals wishing to make cakes or meals for neighbours. However the relevant specialist bodies have issued the following advice:

# <https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/food-safety-for-community-cooking-and-food-banks>

# <https://www.businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/food-and-drink/labelling-of-non-prepacked-foods>

# <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses/guidance-for-food-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

Food preparation

# Ensure all utensils and surfaces are properly clean

# Wash your hands before you start preparing food, ensure hair is tied back and any cuts or abrasions are covered (with a plaster and/or gloves)

# Wash your hands after touching anything outside your food preparation area, such as going to a different room, opening cupboards etc

# Ensure that you use food well within its use by date

# Store food according to the guidance on the packaging

# Ensure food is properly cooked through

Delivery

* Minimise contact with the food as much as possible – using clean utensils to put into boxes etc
* Wash hands before putting the food into the bag or other container for delivery
* Label food with all ingredients in case of allergies
* Label the food with the date it was prepared
* Leave food on the doorstep and ring the bell. If the person is not in, remove the food and store it as appropriate
* If delivering to more than one person, wash hands, use hand sanitiser or change gloves in between each delivery
* Consider keeping a record of what food was delivered and when to be able to trace this if neccessary
* Vehicles should be wiped down inside before and after use and kept well ventilated

Data Protection

* Ensure that deliverers only have the information that they need – i.e address.
* This information should be kept as securely as possible, for example in a password protected spreadsheet