



SoLO  
Life  
Opportunities

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Charity No. 1102297  
England Company No.  
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## **POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **Food Hygiene**

**Category:** staff/volunteers/members

#### **INTRODUCTION**

SoLO Life Opportunities is committed to safeguard the members of its organisation and the general public who will visit the organisation and this policy reflects this in relation to the preparation, storage and serving of food for general consumption.

SoLO Life Opportunities recognises it has a duty to ensure that all users should be kept as safe as possible from poisoning and related food-associated illness by the adoption of high standards of food hygiene and food preparation.

SoLO Life Opportunities recognises that the sharing of food and the preparation of food is fundamentally a social activity that builds relationships and enables people, at all levels, to contribute to the life of the organisation. It, therefore, recognises that the approach to be taken with regard to food safety should be proportional and reflect the differences between activities that involve a regular activity with a certain degree of organisation and those activities that are occasional and small-scale in nature.

It is recognised that, as organisation, we work with those who are considered vulnerable, namely those with a learning disability.

In all cases where food preparation is in relation to these groups, due care will be taken in relation to high-risk foods and suitable controls will be put in place.

#### **AIM OF POLICY**

This policy is intended to

- ensure that users benefit from having food provided for them that is of high quality, well presented and prepared and is nutritionally sound

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- protect users from food-related illness
- ensure that users can benefit from the social interaction that is provided from being involved in food preparation and sharing of food as safely as possible.

## **NUTRITION**

SoLO Life Opportunities recognises its role in supporting people to enjoy healthy lives and its place, particularly, in educating children and supporting vulnerable people to have access to a nutritious diet. Wherever possible and practicable it will give due regard to the provision of healthy alternatives to provide users of the facility with a well-balanced diet. This is particularly important in those areas that support people who are considered vulnerable.

## **PREPARATION**

Poorly prepared, stored or contaminated food can be the source of potentially fatal infections such as salmonella and listeria. Each person organising an event with SoLO Life Opportunities is responsible for ensuring that all food provided meets the necessary standards required.

All food preparation areas will be designed to permit good hygiene practice and be easy to clean and disinfect

All food preparation and storage areas will be designed and sited to provide adequate ventilation and to protect food against external sources of contamination such as pests and vermin — adequate pest control measures will be taken to ensure that the risk of contamination is minimised

All food preparation areas, storage areas and serving areas should be kept in good repair and condition at all times — regular risk assessment and maintenance checks will be made with the findings recorded and logged

All food preparation areas, storage areas and serving areas should be kept clean at all times — kitchens will be subject to regular cleaning by cleaning staff using colour coded equipment solely for use in kitchen areas.

User of the kitchen will be expected to clean food preparation surfaces, equipment and utensils at regular intervals and as required during food preparation and cooking.

Records of cleaning activity will be kept and random quality checks made by the responsible person within the organisation.

Adequate sanitary and hand washing facilities will be made available for all users of the kitchen.

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Lavatories will not lead directly into food handling areas.

Where an activity is of a regular nature (e.g. at least once a month) and requires a certain degree of organisation, it is expected that food will be prepared on-site by users with at least one person having an up to date food hygiene certificate. It is recommended that long hair is tied back and clean aprons are worn. Those preparing food must adhere to good hand washing practices. If food is prepared off-site, for regular activities it is expected that this will be in a kitchen that is registered for that purpose, stored correctly whilst being transported, and immediately stored or re-heated to meet food hygiene requirements.

Where an activity is of an occasional nature (e.g. staff meetings) it will be acceptable for food to be brought in from home, provided it is packaged correctly, stored at the appropriate temperatures and fresh. It is recommended that home prepared food is restricted to those foodstuffs that are considered low-risk e.g. cakes, vegetable dishes etc.

Users preparing food will take all reasonable, practical steps to avoid the risk of contamination of food or ingredients

All tools, equipment and surfaces that come into contact with food being prepared or served must be kept clean at all times.

At every stage of meal preparation food must be protected from contamination likely to render it unfit for human consumption.

Users should ensure that the correct colour coded knives and chopping boards are used when preparing food to avoid cross contamination, ie:

- Red - raw meat
- Yellow – cooked food
- Blue - raw fish
- White - bread and dairy products
- Green - salads and vegetables

All meat and hot food should be thoroughly cooked or reheated, especially poultry — cooks should use an appropriate cooking thermometer to check the temperature in the middle of food particularly meats, and cooked meat should be cut open to check that it is piping hot in the middle.

Starchy foods should be served directly after cooking — if this is not possible they should be cooled within an hour and kept in the fridge until reheating.

Cooked food should never be reheated more than once.

All deep frozen food should be thawed before cooking (especially important when using a microwave oven)

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All prepared fillings for sandwiches should be stored in a fridge until needed.

Users should be aware of the risk of salmonella infection associated with foods containing uncooked eggs

Users should never reuse utensils with which have been used to prepare raw eggs or meat without first washing them with hot water and detergent

Users should never allow juices from raw meat to come into contact with other foods — cooked food and uncooked food should not be stored together and separate marked cutting boards and knives should be used for raw and ready-to-eat food.

Salads must be washed thoroughly.

Buffet food should be set out, no more than, half an hour before serving and disposed of within 3 hours. Any food that is left after this time must be thrown away or kept chilled at 8°C or below until it is used — cold foods can be kept above 8°C for up to four hours.

Any food left in the fridge must be labelled using the stickers:

- name of group
- date opened

Anything left in the fridge over 3 days old will be disposed of, unless it can be safely stored for longer.

## **FOOD WASTE DISPOSAL**

All food waste should be disposed of at the end of a session.

Refuse should not be allowed to accumulate in kitchens and, where possible, should be emptied after each session.

The facilities must be maintained in a clean and secure manner to ensure that they are free from pest activity and do not present a health hazard.

## **FOOD STORAGE**

All food used and stored must comply with Use by Dates.

SoLO Life Opportunities understands date codes to be of two types:

1. “USE BY” date codes apply to highly perishable, “high risk” products such as cooked meats and dairy products.

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2. "BEST BEFORE" date codes apply to perishable and non perishable foods, for example, cereals and packed products, cans and bottles.

All catering products will be procured from reliable, high quality sources.

All products must be used before the expiry of date codes.

Care must be taken when using products to check labelling instructions. These might indicate, for example, that the product must be refrigerated after opening or used within three days of opening, etc.

The rule FIRST IN - FIRST OUT should always be applied. Opened packs of food should be decanted into clean containers with close fitting lids labelled and date coded.

## **Refrigeration**

Within SoLO Life Opportunities, the following rules should be applied when storing food in a refrigerator:

High risk food\* should be stored between 0 - 4°C\*

Fresh meat, poultry and fish should be stored between 0 - 1°C

Frozen foods to be stored at or below -18°C

Cook-chill products to be stored at 3°C or below

High risk foods are usually those which contain protein and are intended for consumption without treatment which would destroy such organisms, eg all cooked meat and poultry, cooked meat products including gravy and stock, milk, cream, artificial cream, custards and dairy produce, cooked eggs and products made with eggs, for example mayonnaise, but excluding pastry, bread and similar baked goods, shellfish and other seafood, for example, oysters; cooked rice and prepared salads.

Refrigerators should be packed in a manner which allows good air circulation. All food should be covered to prevent drying out, cross contamination and the absorption of odour.

Higher risk foods should be stored at the rear of the refrigerator where possible and always above raw foods.

Refrigerators should be cleaned on at least a weekly basis using food safe chemicals.

Spillages should be cleaned as soon as they occur. After cleansing, the surfaces need to be completely dried.

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Refrigerator temperatures will be checked on a weekly basis and recorded.

### **ILLNESS OR SUSPECTED FOOD RELATED HEALTH PROBLEM.**

Any user who becomes ill while handling food should stop work at once and report to whoever is in charge at the time. If deemed necessary, they should see their GP and if the illness is food related it should be notified to the nominated person in the organisation. Anyone who becomes ill must not return to any kitchen activity for 48 hours.

Any suspected outbreaks of food related ill-health should be reported immediately to the local consultant in communicable disease control (CCDC) and infection control team.

### **ALLERGENS**

There are 14 recognised allergens:

- celery
- cereals that contain gluten (including wheat, rye, barley and oats)
- crustaceans (including prawns, crabs and lobsters)
- eggs
- fish
- lupin (lupins are common garden plants, and the seeds from some varieties are sometimes used to make flour)
- milk
- molluscs (including mussels and oysters)
- mustard
- tree nuts – such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts
- peanuts
- sesame seeds
- soybeans
- sulphur dioxide and sulphites (preservatives that are used in some foods and drinks)

Where food is prepared for a regular activity, recipes should be available which show the ingredients.

Where food is prepared and brought in from home for an occasional event, we would ask that any allergens included from the above list are declared.

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## **EXTERNAL HIRERS OF THE FACILITY**

SoLO Life Opportunities recognises its duty to provide any external hirers a safe place to prepare food in. It will be expected that any hirer will make their own arrangements in terms of food preparation and will require them to take all necessary steps to ensure the safety of those using the premises.

SoLO Life Opportunities will give guidance to hirers but will not take responsibility for any individual who is hiring the organisation on a private arrangement who does not adhere to good practice. However, where this is evidenced, SoLO Life Opportunities reserves the right to terminate the rental agreement.

## **TRAINING**

Users will be guided on the dangers of poor food handling and about proper hand washing techniques.

Where food hygiene certification is required, it will be the responsibility of the person in charge to organise this, however, SoLO Life Opportunities will organise this training for those it requires to hold the certification to carry out organisation catering.