



The Larder — Food Safety Policy

1. Purpose

To ensure that all food prepared, handled, stored and distributed by The Larder is safe, wholesome and compliant with applicable food safety legislation in Northern Ireland. This policy sets out responsibilities, procedures and records required to protect our community members and maintain confidence in what we provide.

2. Scope

Applies to all food activities at The Larder (storage, preparation, display, distribution), staff, volunteers and anyone acting on behalf of The Larder at any site or event.

3. Legal & Regulatory Framework (key requirements)

The Larder will operate in line with the following legal framework and official guidance:

- Food Safety Act 1990 — general duties to ensure food is safe and labeled accurately.
- Food Hygiene Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 — requires food businesses to implement and maintain HACCP-based procedures and hygiene measures.
- Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 (retained and adapted where applicable in NI) — general hygiene rules across the food chain, including requirement for HACCP-based systems. (Note: NI continues to apply relevant EU food hygiene law under the NI Protocol.)
- Food Standards Agency (FSA) Northern Ireland guidance and Food Law Practice Guidance — practical guidance for food businesses, community cooking and food banks.
- Local registration and environmental health oversight — all food premises must register with the local council (Belfast City Council) at least 28 days before opening.

The Larder accepts that these laws require us to be the accountable food business operator and to implement, maintain and record safe systems (including HACCP-based procedures) and training.

4. Responsibilities

- **Larder Board & Manager:** Overall responsibility for ensuring food safety and legal compliance (register premises, maintain systems, liaise with local authority).
- **Manager:** Day-to-day implementation of this policy, ensuring staff/volunteer training, record keeping, and corrective actions.
- **All staff & volunteers:** Follow safe food handling procedures, report hazards and complete required records (temperature logs, cleaning checks, incident reports). (These duties align with the general FBO responsibilities under the Food Safety Act and hygiene regulations.)

5. Registration & Liaison with Local Authority

- The Larder is registered as a food business with Belfast City Council
- The Manager will be the primary contact for Environmental Health Officers (EHOs).

6. Food Safety Management System (HACCP-based)

- We will maintain and keep records of a food safety management system based on HACCP principles (hazard analysis, control measures, monitoring, corrective actions, verification, record keeping) as required by the Food Hygiene Regulations (NI) 2006 and Regulation 852/2004.
- Practical measures will include: written safe food procedures, critical control points (e.g., cooking, cooling, reheating, cold holding), monitoring plans and corrective action logs.

7. Training & Competence

- All staff and volunteers involved in handling food will receive induction training covering basic food hygiene, allergens, personal hygiene, cleaning and temperature control. Training records will be kept.
- Where appropriate, at least one person with a recognized food hygiene qualification (e.g., Level 2 Food Hygiene or equivalent) will be available during operations, and the Manager will ensure refresher learning as necessary. Guidance for community groups from FSA will be used to tailor training.

8. Personal Hygiene & Health

- Food handlers must wash hands at designated handwashing sinks at key times (arrival, after breaks, after using the toilet, after handling raw foods, after waste handling).

- Staff/volunteers must report any infectious illness or symptoms (vomiting, diarrhoea, jaundice) and must not handle open food until cleared per EHO guidance.

9. Allergen Management

- The Larder will maintain a written allergen policy: all 14 UK-recognised allergens will be identified for foods we prepare or serve. Staff must be able to advise on ingredients for any item and keep allergen information clearly available. Where pre-packed food is used, labels will be kept.
- Procedures will prevent cross-contact (e.g., separate utensils, cleaning between tasks, clear labeling).

10. Temperature Control & Storage

- Temperature-controlled foods will be stored, monitored and logged: chilled foods at $\leq 8^{\circ}\text{C}$ (best practice: $\leq 5^{\circ}\text{C}$ where possible for high-risk foods), frozen foods at appropriate freezer temperatures, hot-held foods at $\geq 63^{\circ}\text{C}$ (or per specific guidance). Monitoring and corrective action records will be maintained. (Exact target temperatures and procedures must be recorded in our HACCP plan.)

11. Cleaning & Pest Control

- A written cleaning schedule (daily/weekly/monthly tasks) will be used and signed off by staff.
- Approved cleaning products will be used and stored safely.
- The Manager will arrange pest control action if evidence of pests is seen and maintain records of checks and contractor visits.

12. Traceability, Labelling & Donations

- Foods received and distributed will be traceable to supplier/donor where applicable. Records of incoming donations, expiry/use-by dates and distribution will be kept.
- Food labelled with use-by dates will not be distributed past that date. Foods may be redistributed in line with FSA guidance for community and charity groups; the Manager will ensure compliance with guidance. [Food Standards Agency+1](#)

13. Food Safety Incidents & Recalls

- Any suspected food safety incident (illness linked to food, contamination, damaged packaging) must be reported immediately to the Manager and the local authority/EHO.
- The Manager will follow the agreed recall/withdrawal procedure, preserve samples where possible, and cooperate with EHOs.

14. Waste Management

- Waste food and packaging will be removed promptly, stored in sealed containers and disposed of according to local regulations. Food waste bins will be cleaned regularly.

15. Records & Documentation

The following records will be kept and made available to the local authority on request:

- Registration confirmation with local council. [Belfast City Council](#)
- HACCP-based plan + monitoring logs. [Legislation.gov.uk](#)
- Temperature logs (fridges/freezers/hot-hold).
- Cleaning schedule and sign-off sheets.
- Training records (induction and ongoing).
- Supplier/donation and distribution records.
- Incident/complaint records.

16. Approval

Approved by The Larder Belfast Trustees on Sunday 1st February 2026

To be reviewed on 1st February 2027 (or earlier if legislation/practice changes)

This policy and the documented procedures will be reviewed at least annually and after any significant change (new premises, change of activities, an incident or official enforcement action).