

Food Bank Policy and Procedures

August 2020

**Background**

In an attempt to ameliorate the social challenges that residents would face in light of welfare reform (Universal Credit in particular), the Management Board of St Matthew’s Big Local made a decision to establish an emergency food bank to ensure that in view of sanctions and other measures which St Matthew’s residents would face, they would be able to gain access to food for a limited period of time. Should the crisis persist; partner agencies, would make referrals to other organisations in an effort to support families over a long-term period to enable them to have access to good food on a regular basis.

After consultation with various partner organisations, the St Matthew’s Emergency Food bank was established in May 2018, with financial donations from various well-wishers as well as with the support of a small grant from the Ward Committee.

Front line agencies based in St Matthews would be able to identify residents in need, those agency staff would then be responsible for collecting the needed items on their behalf from St Matthew’s House and then these would be delivered directly to residents.

Each resident would only be allowed nine items in total – six food items and three non-food items. Agency staff would be given details to enable them to access St Matthew’s House 24/7 so as to assist residents as their needs arise.

This should be an emergency provision only and should only be used on one occasion per person. St Matthews Big Local however, accept that the agencies on the estate are best placed to know the individual concerned and can use their discretion to collect a second supply if needed.

* No provisions should be supplied to agencies or individual who live off the St Matthews Estate.
* No one should be told to come to St Matthews House. **Access to this provision is via partner agencies only.**
* Partner agencies should not tell other agencies they can access the provision.
* All items taken should be recorded in the note book in the storeroom.

**Note: SMBLL Emergency Food Bank aims to provide food which caters for users religious, cultural and ethnic dietary requirements.**

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10) Food with Use by Date, Food with ‘***Best******Before End Date’***

11) Ambient Food; Pasta, Rice, Ready Made Sauces, Breakfast Cereals

12) Tinned Goods, Tea and Coffee, Snack Goods, Eggs, Cooking Oil, Fruit and Vegetables

13) Bakery Goods

**Cleaning**

**Fridges**

The fridges must be cleaned once a week and the cleaning recorded on the chart.

The best time will be at low stock levels so, Friday afternoon or Monday morning are best but it will depend on manpower and how busy the food bank is.

Cleaning needs to be swift to ensure that the temperature does not rise above 8°C.

The disinfectant spray provided must be used along with cleaning cloths. This will reduce the risk of contaminating the fridge.

Working from the top shelving and all the sides of the fridge must be cleaned and wiped thoroughly.

This should be recorded on a cleaning record.

**Food Bank Floor**

This is best done at the end of an afternoon or before opening.

The food bank floor must be kept clear of clutter and debris.  
It must be cleaned at least once a week using hot water, disinfectant as well as the designated bucket and mop.  
The wet floor sign must be in place until the floor is dry.

The mop bucket used for cleaning must be emptied into toilet and the mop hung on door or handle down in bucket to allow head to dry.

Please inform the SMBL Manager if mop heads need washing or replacing.

**Stock Control**

**Food Safety**

Donations to the Food Bank come from the SMBL Manager purchasing items from financial donations from members of the public. To ensure we always comply with Food Safety Regulations the following must be observed:

**Fresh Products**

**Use by Date:**

It is a criminal offence to display or sell products beyond midnight of the use by date. **Therefore, all food past its use by date must be disposed of in refuse regardless of how fresh it looks.** These are generally fresh products that are likely to cause illness when out of date.

**Best Before End Date:**

Clients must be warned that products are past their best before date and given the option to refuse. These products are usually consumable for some days past the BBE Date but a visual inspection should be made to ensure they look edible.

**Eggs are an exception to the above rules.**  We cannot display or sell past the sell/display date, which is 7 days before the best before date. This is to allow the consumer 7 days to use the eggs.

When serving clients try to ensure that short dated food is offered as a priority – some may have freezers and be able to freeze some items.

**Packaged Foods**

Packaged food also needs to be checked on donation and before display. Best Before End Dates also apply to packets and tins. When stocking shelves, try to ensure short dated stock is at the front and used first. Products long past their BBE Date should be disposed of. **A common sense approach is required for this.** This will be identified at a monthly stock check and brought to the attention on the manager.

Products with no packaging and contents information should be disposed of. Torn or split packs must be disposed of.

Cans that are dented, damaged, rusty, bulging, produce a popping sound must be discarded. Any with dirty labels etc. must be inspected for signs of leakage and discarded if damaged.

**Allergies**

There are 14 main products in food that cause allergic reactions which can vary from mild symptoms to severe anaphylactic shock that can be fatal. Most people will know that they have allergies and can avoid foods with those products in.

Working at the Food Bank we need to be legally aware of the potential problems and have information available to avoid causing harm to a client.

Always ask the client if they have allergies as part of the initial introduction to the Food Bank.

The poster **“Think Allergy”** displayed on the wall should be referred to when necessary.

All packaged food will have clear allergy information as part of the package. On new products potential allergens are printed **bold in the contents lists** and on the older packaging in a box beside the contents list.

It is important not to split packs where the information is only on the outer wrapping e.g. Cuppa Soups etc. The exception is very large catering packs of tea bags which can be split into smaller portions.

Ready to eat products such as Gregg’s products will not have such information and clients should make their own decision about the safety if they know they have allergies.

**Food Storage and Display**

**Chilled Foods**

Perishable foods must be refrigerated between 3-5°C or below.

Fridge temperatures **must** be checked and recorded on the Temp Check sheet daily.

If the fridge cannot keep at 8°C or below all perishables must be removed and the fridge serviced.

To prevent cross contamination always keep raw and ready to eat food separate. Raw food must be stored at the bottom of the fridge under **ready to eat food.**

**All USE BY** dates must be checked daily and food rotated to ensure the shortest dated food is at the front. As a priority, please try to use the short dated food first, when serving clients.

Fridges must be kept clean and any contamination cleaned immediately. The weekly cleaning procedure must be followed and recorded.

**Frozen Foods**

Frozen foods must be stored between **-18°C and – 20°C.**

Freezer temperatures **must** be checked and recorded on the Temp Check sheet daily.

All food needs to be labelled with what it is and when it was stored.

Where applicable, rotate stock so older food is at the top of the freezer.

**Fresh Fruit and Vegetables**

These must be stored off the floor in the dedicated fruit and vegetables container(s).

They must be checked daily that they are fit for consumption and any that have started to rot or mould must be discarded.

Always try to give fresh products rather than tins to clients when there is plenty available to save cans for times when there is no fresh produce.

**Fresh Bread and Bakery Products**

Fresh products must only be displayed on the day of collection and if not used discarded. The trays must be kept off the floor. They must be labelled with type and date.

Dates on bread and other bakery products must be checked and the short dated products offered first to clients.

Split products must be labelled with type and use by or best before date.

**Handling Food**

**Good hygiene is essential when working with food.**

Hand washing facilities are available in the kitchen and hand sanitizers are available in the food bank.

When serving freshly baked produce, plastic bags and gloves must be used.

Non-packaged root vegetables may be contaminated with soil and gloves or bags should be used when handling them. Always clean hands after handling fruit and vegetables.

Gloves must be discarded after a single use.

**Record Keeping**

Part of the Food Safety Regulations and Food Bank Regulation involves keeping records of:

* Where food has come from
* Where it has gone
* What has been discarded

**Food Coming In**

Please use the weekly **stock in sheet** to record donations to the Food Bank and where it is from, e.g. Tesco – Fareshare etc.

**Where Food Has Gone**

Please use the record book to list agency taking the item, What items have been taken and sex of person benefiting from the donation.

**Procedures for dealing with Disposal of Date Constrained Food Items:**

**Aim**

To ensure that as an emergency food provision, clients are offered quality, healthy and safe products.

**Background**

A Use by Date is a safety control, a Best before date is a manufacturer’s recommendation.

It is illegal to give out any Food items that have passed a Use by Date; the maximum term for any offence is up to two years in prison. There are no legal implications for giving products that are passed their best before dates.

**Procedures:**

**Food with a Use by Date**

This regulation is used mostly on meat, meat based and dairy products, however some fresh vegetables can also be labelled as *Use by*.

**No food stuffs that are passed a Use by Date can be given out to members of the public**. All such food items are to be disposed of in line with normal waste regulations.

Fresh Meat or Ready meals, previously un-frozen can be frozen for use later. These products must be frozen before their Use by Date and clearly labelled with what they are and when they are frozen.

Frozen meat and meals should be given out as soon as possible after freezing and stock must be rotated to avoid storing frozen food for longer than three months.

Dairy products should be discarded on the Use by Date if not given out by then.

**Best before dated foods**

The types of food range from bakery items, cereals, snacks to tinned goods, sauces or pasta. Most ambient food stuffs have this category of label. Their shelf life varies enormously as does their quality deterioration. There is no simple equation that can be applied to all food stuffs in this category and each various type needs to be managed differently. The key to ensuring quality and safety is regular checking.

**Ambient foods**

This consists of a range of products from dried pasta, rice, tinned foods, snacks and biscuits. All products usually display a best before date.

**Pasta**

**Dried pasta has a long shelf life**, it appears that the average best before date is **usually two years,** however more specialised artisan pasta can have a shorter shelf life. All pasta needs to be **checked quarterly** and any passed their use by date should be discarded. Any pasta with spoilt or split packaging should be discarded.

**Rice**

The **shelf life of rice is similar to pasta** and should be treated in the same way. Quality controls are required for specialist rice to ensure no contamination from their limited production. Again any worn or split packaging should be discarded.

**Ready Made Sauces**

These are normally jars of sauces, but occasionally they come in a soft package format. They usually have a **two-year shelf life** which should be checked on receipt and checked for any broken seals, rusty tops or damaged packaging. Any that are in this state should be discarded.

Any sauces past their Best before date still have value and the best tips suggest that Tomato and oil based sauces can last for one year past their BBE date and cream based sauces up to 8 months past the BBE date. As a safe guard all sauces should be discarded 6 months passed their BBE date.

**Breakfast Cereals**

Breakfast cereals need to be stored in a cool dry place, dry being the key word. They have a lengthy shelf life and quality is retained for up to six months past BBE date, but only if all packaging is intact and the cereal remains in the inner wax paper bag.

If the inner packaging is damaged or it is past six months from its printed BBE date it should be discarded.

Porridge oats should be stored in exactly the same way as other breakfast cereals but they have a longer shelf-life. As long as packaging is intact oats still retain their quality for one to two years after BBE date. To ensure quality any Oats past 12 months after the BBE date should be discarded.

All cereals should be checked on a **quarterly basis** for BBE dates and stock control.

**Tinned goods**

There is a huge variety of food stuffs that are packaged in tins from pulses to fruit, fish, meat, soup and vegetables. All have a long shelf life.

All tins need to be inspected **monthly**. Any tins that are rusty, badly dented, distorted or pierced should be disposed of.

Most tins have a useful safe life in excess of two years past any BBE dates. Any tins that are up to 12 months beyond BBE date are safe to use but those beyond 1 year should be discarded. All tins should be **inspected on donation.**

**Tea and Coffee**

Coffee has almost a 20-year life so there are no restrictions on its shelf life. It does not need to be checked for end dates.

Tea is still of good quality for up to 1 year past its BBE date therefore needs to be **checked on a six month basis** and discarded only after 6 months past the printed date.

**Snack foods**

These vary from cereal products to crisps, biscuits, nuts, popcorn and various savoury products. Due to the complexity of the products none should be distributed past their BBE date. They need to be checked on a **monthly basis**.

**Eggs**

Eggs have a surprising long shelf life at least three to four weeks after their BBE date. Within the food bank eggs usually go very quickly. We cannot display or give out past the sell by/display date, which is seven days before the best before date. This is to allow the consumer seven days to use the eggs. They should be **checked on a daily basis**, any cracked or broken eggs should be discarded.

**Cooking oils**

The two most common cooking oils in the food bank are vegetable oil and sunflower oil; both retain their quality for up to one year past their BBE date. Their normal BBE end date is usually one year. **Dates should be checked on a monthly basis.**

**Fruit and Vegetables**

Loose fruit and vegetables equally do not tend to have a label unless packaged in larger quantities. They need **checking daily**. Any signs of deterioration of quality need careful monitoring and discard.

**Bakery items**

Loose bakery items are not usually labelled and therefore must be carefully managed to ensure quality and safety controls.

All bakery items should be checked on a **daily basis**. The quality of each item needs to be assessed every day. Any item not passing a quality control should be sealed in a bag and disposed of.

Any products specifically donated by a bakery and not used by the close of work should be bagged and disposed of.

Any bakery product other than bread should also be disposed of by the close of work each day.

Bread should be **checked for quality daily**, if still good it can be displayed for a maximum of three days before being disposed of

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Mr Lee Nicholls Chairperson August 2020

To be reviewed August 2021

**ADDENDUM**

**FOOD BANK OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES IN LIGHT OF COVID-19**

**Preamble:** Since March of 2020 with the Covid-19 outbreak, SMBL’s food bank provision has increased drastically. Measures have been put in place to accommodate bulk food purchases and food donations for distribution to the community. As a result, the space to accommodate the food storage throughout the building has now included the main hall, which has been separated in two and the classroom. A standing, display fridge and freezer have been purchased. These have been used as communal equipment for residents to access to secure items on designated days. Additionally, a table has been placed outside the building where members of the community can gain access to various food items. A ‘cleaning station’ has also been set up where community residents have access to hand sanitizers, masks and gloves. They are encouraged to utilise these PPE prior to accessing the food table, fridge or freezer. Social distancing rules are also enforced.

**Food Distribution**

Due to the size of the building and in keeping with government guidelines in relation to social distancing and furloughing of workers, the Charity Manager and one volunteer have predominantly managed the SMBL food bank.

Vulnerable resident-participants, who have been self-isolating/shielding, were given regular door-to-door delivery of food at least twice per week. Deliveries to residents were done by volunteers from the Ride Leicester organisation.

**Health & Safety**

The Charity Manager has ensured that on returning to work after staff furlough period, there is adequate amount of PPE including hand sanitizers exist and are placed strategically throughout the building for staff and volunteers to use. Regular checks and reminders are given to staff, volunteers and service users to ensure that cleaning protocols and other health and safety measures are adhered to.