



The **Anaphylaxis** campaign  
Helping people with severe allergies live their lives

## How FSA allergen guidance has made an impact

The Food Standards Agency's "Guidance on allergen management and consumer information" is being used extensively by those businesses that are aware of it. They have used it either to check their procedures are up-to-date or, in many cases, to make fundamental changes to the way they tackle allergens and allergen labelling.

However, awareness of the guidance varies within the food industry.

These findings have emerged from the Agency's in-depth evaluation of the impact the 2006 guidance has made.

The Anaphylaxis Campaign – which was involved in producing the guidance – believes the document has an important role to play and hopes that once food companies have become familiar with it, they will then move on to adopting the Campaign's much more detailed Standard for allergen control.

### Main findings

- Just over a half of the food manufacturers surveyed (53%) were aware of either the full guidance or the leaflet.
- 48% were aware of the full guidance, while 22% were aware of the leaflet (with some aware of both).
- Awareness of either was much higher among large businesses (81%) than 'micro' businesses i.e. those with fewer than 20 employees (37%).
- Around a half of small-medium sized businesses, i.e. those with 20-249 employees, were aware of the guidance.
- Over three quarters of enforcement officers (78%) were aware of the full guidance or the leaflet.

## **Should the guidance become law?**

Almost two thirds of food manufacturers and enforcement officers agreed the guidance should be compulsory. However, the view was expressed among businesses that it should only become compulsory in the medium to long term.

Many food businesses had reservations about the guidance becoming compulsory. Although it was seen as easy to read and concise, it was rated less positively for being easy to apply and offering practical tools.

Evidence from qualitative interviews was that micro businesses are keen to avoid making the guidance compulsory because of the additional work involved.

## **Opinion of the guidance.**

- 100% of manufacturers rated the full guidance as useful.
- 74% did the same for the leaflet. Most of those that did not rate the leaflet as useful rated the full guidance as useful. The leaflet was not aimed at them.
- More than 80% of enforcement officers felt the full guidance and the leaflet were useful to both themselves and the businesses they work with.

## **Future steps**

The people interviewed made a number of recommendations to improve the guidance and leaflet and to increase awareness of it. The Agency is now considering these suggestions.

## **To access the full document go to:**

<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/publication/allergenmanage0409.pdf>