

Freezing Food: Important Update for all Organisations Distributing Food

As we enter 2021 The Felix Project knows that many of you are working as hard as ever to support those who are vulnerable and in need in your communities. We want to support you in your efforts to do this by making as much nutritious food available to you all as we can.

Across the UK, as well as here in London, most organisations that were once offering community based, cooked meals are now providing food parcels as COVID-19 prevents communities from socialising together. This has required a radical change to many of the organisations we work with. Witnessing the speed and agility of organisations adapting to this ever more challenging environment has been incredible to see.

Part of our role in supporting you is to make sure the donated and surplus food we supply is used in a way that keeps everyone safe. There are an increasing number of queries being raised by key stakeholders about the distribution of frozen food in food parcels. We therefore wanted to provide some guidance on the distribution of frozen food so you can all ensure that you are operating within the guidelines of the Food Standards Agency responsible for food safety law in England.

Frozen food that can be included in food parcels

- Any food that has been frozen by the food industry and arrives to you as a frozen product with all relevant food labelling can be included in food parcels.
- We would urge you to consider the facilities of the households you are providing frozen food to and whether they can safely store frozen food in the quantities you are providing to them.

Frozen food that CANNOT be included in food parcels

- Any food that you have frozen, such as a ready meal or pack of raw meat, cannot be included in a food parcel.
- This is a requirement of food safety legislation across England.

As a registered food business operator (FBO) you can freeze food that you will then use as part of a cooked meal. For example a pack of raw meat is frozen before its Use By Date expires. Once safely defrosted the meat is then used as part of a cooked meal such as a curry.

Further clarification is provided by the Primary Authority of the FareShare UK Network below:

*“All organisations receiving food are food business operators and must not **supply** any foods past the labelled Use By date, this includes foods which have been frozen. Use-by dates are legally required to indicate to the final consumer that food is safe to eat. The supply of food past the Use By date is a contravention of the law and the food business operator will be held responsible for the breach of the legislation”.*

If you have any questions regarding this advice do not hesitate to contact us or speak to your local Environmental Health Officer.

The Felix Project South London (Deptford) Community Engagement Team
Dept_Charity_Management@thefelixproject.org