

Collecting Surplus Food & Products through Neighbourly – important information

About the scheme

Neighbourly works with retailers and manufacturers to help them redistribute surplus food and products to where they are needed most in the community.

Recipients

Organisations that are eligible to participate in the scheme are registered charities, community groups or schools that support people with a genuine need for food or products. Groups must commit to a regular collection schedule and to making sure collections are not missed, wherever possible.

Requirements to join the scheme

Groups are required to register with Neighbourly and for food collections, have an FSA rating of 3 or above and a Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate, dated within the last 2.5 years. Where there are no premises and an FSA rating is not applicable, a Food Hygiene Certificate is sufficient. Documentation should be uploaded to the group's Neighbourly page and kept within date.

Donations

All surplus donations are provided free of charge to participating organisations. The items are variable and driven by what is available at the store. Each scheme has its own 'permitted items' list.

Surplus items are products that are no longer deemed suitable for sale by the company but have passed checks to make sure they are still edible or usable. Food items that have passed their 'best before' date can be donated as long as they pass these checks. Products with a 'use-by' date cannot be donated after this date for food safety reasons.

Notifications

Scheduled groups will receive a notification when surplus is available. The group should only attend a collection if they receive a notification, or in some cases an alternative form of confirmation from Neighbourly, which is important for traceability.

The receiver should respond to each notification to **inform Neighbourly if the donation can or cannot be collected.**

Collecting items

Donations will be made available at an agreed time and location for the recipient group to collect and transfer into their own boxes, bags or containers. **Plastic crates are the property of the retailer or manufacturer and should never be taken off the company premises.**

The transportation of food items should be kept to a minimum.

Safe handling of food items

Groups should:

- Safely and properly handle all donations, including storage, food preparation and transportation, in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- Check that items are of a good quality and are not mouldy, badly bruised or deteriorated upon collection.
- Only serve or distribute food that is safe, fit for human consumption and within the use by date stated on the packaging.
- Make sure adequate refrigeration and storage space is available for the food.
- Make sure beneficiaries are made aware of any allergens within food items.
- Make sure they have all the statutory licenses, registrations, approvals and permissions (as necessary) as a food service establishment relating to the service provided.
- Keep a record of all food donated for traceability purposes.
- Keep chilled items refrigerated at a temperature of between 0°C and 5°C.
- Keep frozen items stored in a freezer at a temperature of between -18°C and -24°C.
- Follow freezing guidelines: chilled food that is within its use-by date and has the home-freezing logo can be frozen upon receipt and consumed within one month of its original use-by date.

Redistributing surplus items

Donated food and products should:

- **Not be sold** by the recipient group, unless they have specific approval from Neighbourly that the project fits within the criteria for the scheme.
- Not be exchanged, supplied or used in any way other than to **support those in need**.

Social media posts

If food or other donated items are being posted on social media, the wording should make it clear that the items are being made available for those that need them, rather than for anyone to take. This will ensure there are no misconceptions around the donations being taken inappropriately.

Items in branded packaging

Branded packaging should be removed before distribution (except for foodbank distribution). Where it would be impractical to remove, or would result in the removal of allergen or ingredient information, please spoil the branding (e.g. score through with a marker).

Email communications

Individuals that are administering a Neighbourly page on behalf of a recipient group **must agree to receiving, reading and responding as required to service-related emails**. These emails contain important information about the running of the programme including schedule updates, collection arrangements and product recalls.

Termination of collections

Groups that no longer wish to collect surplus should notify Neighbourly immediately.

We may need to remove a group from the scheme, either temporarily or permanently if we believe that our [code of ethics](#) is not being followed, or the group is not able to comply with our [terms & conditions](#).

Contact information

Groups should contact Neighbourly with any queries or issues in the first instance, rather than the retailer or manufacturer:

FAQs: www.neighbourly.com/faqs

Email enquiries: food@neighbourly.com

Telephone enquiries: 0117 422 0871