
What to expect at a verification (food safety inspection)

Your first verification will happen within 4-6 weeks of your food registration being approved.

1. Register your food business

Your food business can only be verified if you have a current food registration with us or have engaged us as a third party verifier.

[Application Registration Food New Business](#)

[Application Registration Food Renew Business](#)

2. Arrange a visit

A council verification officer (verifier) will contact you around 2 weeks before the date your verification is due to arrange a visit time and date that is convenient for both of us.

During the visit, they will look at things like:

- Paperwork – records required by your food control plan
- Temperature recording and monitoring – cooking and storage of food at the right temperatures
- Long-term maintenance plans and Pest control management
- Cleaning schedules and sanitising processes – to stop germs spreading
- Management competency and staff training

A verifier needs to understand how you run your business throughout the year and what systems you have in place to make safe food and address any risks.

3. What happens during the verification visit?

The length of the visit will depend on the size of your business and the processes you use. Generally, it will take around two hours onsite and extra time to follow up if there are things you need to fix or improve.

All food businesses are assessed on the same criteria linked to its risk-based measure (the type of food you prepare and how you prepare it).

On arrival we explain the purpose of the visit and carry our checks in a professional manner that is respectful of your business.

To verify your business, we follow a consistent process:

- The verifiers follow the What you need to Know, Do and Show set out in the Food Control Plan/ National Programme Guidance
- Observe food handling and processes
- Ask you and your staff questions and to show us how you do something
- Talk with you and your staff
- Check records and documents, if required
- Make decisions based on evidence
- Explain any issues they find and what you need to do to fix them. Explain throughout what the findings are for each topic and discuss appropriate resolutions if needed so there are no surprises
- Everything discussed is confidential
- At the end of the verification a closing meeting will be held to discuss the findings.

These checks help the verifier to confirm that food is being prepared safely and correctly.

4. What happens when issues are found?

If the verification finds something that needs to be fixed, it will be either recorded as an **Area for Improvement (AFI)**, whereby small alterations to the current process needs to take place and implemented before the next verification.

OR a

Corrective Action Request (CAR), where the process is not meeting the prescribed requirements and the verifier will;

- Discuss the problem with you
- Agree on a timeframe for you to fix it

5. What happens after the verification?

- You will receive a summary report within 10 working days detailing the findings and the overall verification outcome.
- If any CARs were issued, you need to fix them within an agreed timeframe.
- You will get an invoice for the verification (except if it is your prepaid initial verification)

6. How often are verifications/inspections done?

How often you will need to be verified in the future depends on the outcome of the verification, the current frequency, competency of management and your business's level of risk. This could be anything from three months to three years.