

THE FOOD SAFETY CONSULTANT

August 2026 Food Safety Newsletter

Outbreak intelligence • FSA alerts • CIEH insight • NHS advice • Temperature control special

August 2026: Food Safety in Focus

August has delivered a timely reminder that food safety is not an abstract compliance exercise: it is an everyday public-health system built from purchasing decisions, supplier assurance, handwashing, segregation, allergen controls, temperature monitoring, traceability and well-trained staff. This month's newsletter brings together current information from the Food Standards Agency (FSA), UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) and NHS, with a practical focus on what the developments mean for cafes, restaurants, pubs, takeaways, canteens and other caterers. The headline issue is a national Salmonella Enteritidis outbreak being investigated across the UK.

UKHSA reported 207 confirmed cases as of 13 August 2026, with 206 of those cases reported in 2026. Investigators identified egg consumption as the strongest food signal at that stage, while stressing that investigations were continuing. The FSA subsequently published advice about safe egg storage, handling and use for catering. Alongside this, August brought recalls involving possible *Listeria monocytogenes* contamination in ready-to-eat pasta products and STEC contamination in red clover seeds intended for sprouting. These events reinforce familiar principles: know your suppliers, maintain traceability, prevent cross-contamination, follow recall information, control time and temperature, and make sure food safety procedures work in practice rather than only on paper.

This newsletter is written for food businesses and managers who want clear, usable information. It is not a substitute for business-specific legal advice or a validated HACCP study, but it can be used as a management briefing, toolbox-talk resource and prompt for reviewing your food safety management system.

Outbreak Watch: Salmonella Enteritidis and Eggs

On 18 August, UKHSA published an update on a national outbreak of Salmonella Enteritidis. The increase was first identified on 26 May through whole genome sequencing, which showed cases caused by a closely related strain. By 13 August, 207 confirmed cases had been detected with sample dates spanning August 2025 to August 2026; 199 cases were resident in England, six in Scotland, one in Wales and one in Northern Ireland. London and Yorkshire and the Humber had the highest numbers among English regions at that point.

The clinical impact is significant. UKHSA reported that 38% of cases with information available had been admitted to hospital because of salmonellosis symptoms, two people had bloodstream infection and one death was associated with the outbreak. Most people, however, experienced self-limiting gastrointestinal illness. Salmonella infection commonly causes diarrhoea, stomach cramps, and sometimes vomiting and fever. The NHS advises that food poisoning usually improves within a week, but dehydration, persistent vomiting, bloody diarrhoea or prolonged symptoms can require medical advice. Food-history interviews are particularly relevant to caterers.

Of 114 cases with completed questionnaires, 95 - 83% - reported eating food prepared outside the home in the week before symptoms began. Investigators identified five food businesses attended by two or more independent cases. Eleven linked cases reported eating dishes made with eggs, and UKHSA described egg consumption as the strongest signal in the investigation at that time. Food-chain work found multiple egg sources, including importers, and the report stated that no link had been identified to UK-produced eggs or poultry at that stage.

Possible cross-contamination events were also identified in two settings. For food businesses, the practical message is not to assume that a familiar ingredient is automatically low risk. Check supplier approval and traceability, retain invoices and batch information, follow current FSA egg guidance, and ensure procedures distinguish between eggs that can be used raw or lightly cooked and eggs requiring thorough cooking. Where

pooled egg is used, controls should minimise the time it spends at ambient temperature, utensils and containers must be effectively cleaned, and staff must understand how hands, shells, worktops and equipment can transfer contamination to ready-to-eat foods.

Managers should also review dishes such as mayonnaise, desserts, sauces, breakfast items and garnishes that may contain raw or lightly cooked egg. If the safety of an egg supply or process is uncertain, choose a safer process rather than relying on appearance or tradition. Food safety is strongest when purchasing, preparation, cooking and cleaning controls support each other.

FSA Alerts: Listeria and STEC

The FSA's August alerts provide two useful case studies for catering businesses. On 7 August, Greencore recalled three pasta products because of possible contamination with *Listeria monocytogenes*: Asda Cheese & Tomato Pasta Salad, Asda Nacho Cheese Pasta Salad and Morrisons Chicken and Bacon Pasta. On 10 August, A.Vogel Ltd recalled Rapunzel bioSnacky Das Original Red Clover Seeds for Sprouts and Seedlings after Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) was found in the seed. *Listeria* deserves particular attention because it can survive and grow at refrigeration temperatures.

The risk is especially important for vulnerable groups, including pregnant people, older people and those with weakened immune systems. Ready-to-eat chilled foods can be problematic because there may be no further cooking step before consumption. Effective shelf-life controls, cold-chain management, cleaning, environmental hygiene and prevention of post-cook contamination are therefore essential. Sprouted seeds present a different but equally instructive hazard. The warm, moist conditions used for germination can also favour bacterial growth if pathogens are present on the seed. Washing alone should not be treated as a guaranteed kill step.

Businesses serving sprouts should buy from reputable suppliers, follow product instructions and recalls, maintain traceability and consider the intended consumer group. Every food business should have a simple recall-response routine. Someone on each shift should know where recall information is checked, how affected stock is identified and isolated, how sales are stopped, and how records are retained. Where a recalled ingredient has been incorporated into another dish, the business must be able to identify affected batches or service periods. "One step back and one step forward" traceability is not paperwork for its own sake; it allows unsafe food to be removed quickly and proportionately.

CIEH Spotlight: Allergen Safety Through Partnership

CIEH's August coverage highlighted the value of partnership working on allergen safety. The North East Regional Food Allergy Group, involving representatives from 12 local authorities, received the CIEH Outstanding Team Award 2026. The group brings together Environmental Health and Trading Standards professionals with partners including NHS professionals, Directors of Public Health and food retailers. CIEH reported that a targeted regional sampling programme saw food allergen failures fall from 33.6% in 2023/24 to 17.2% in 2024/25. That result matters to individual businesses. Allergen management improves when it is treated as a system rather than a single menu statement.

A reliable system starts with accurate ingredient and supplier information, continues through recipe control and staff communication, and finishes with clear information for the customer. Substitutions, new recipes, temporary ingredients and staff changes are common points where controls can fail. For cafes, pubs and restaurants, an August management check could include selecting five menu items at random and tracing each one from the customer-facing allergen information back to the current ingredient labels. If the information cannot be verified quickly, the system needs attention. Staff should never guess an allergen answer.

They should know where the controlled information is kept, who is authorised to confirm it, and what to do when an ingredient changes. The wider lesson from CIEH's example is that food safety outcomes improve through shared intelligence, consistent messaging, education and proportionate enforcement. Businesses can adopt the same philosophy internally: chefs, managers, front-of-house teams, purchasing staff and cleaners should not work in separate food-safety silos. Information must travel with the food.

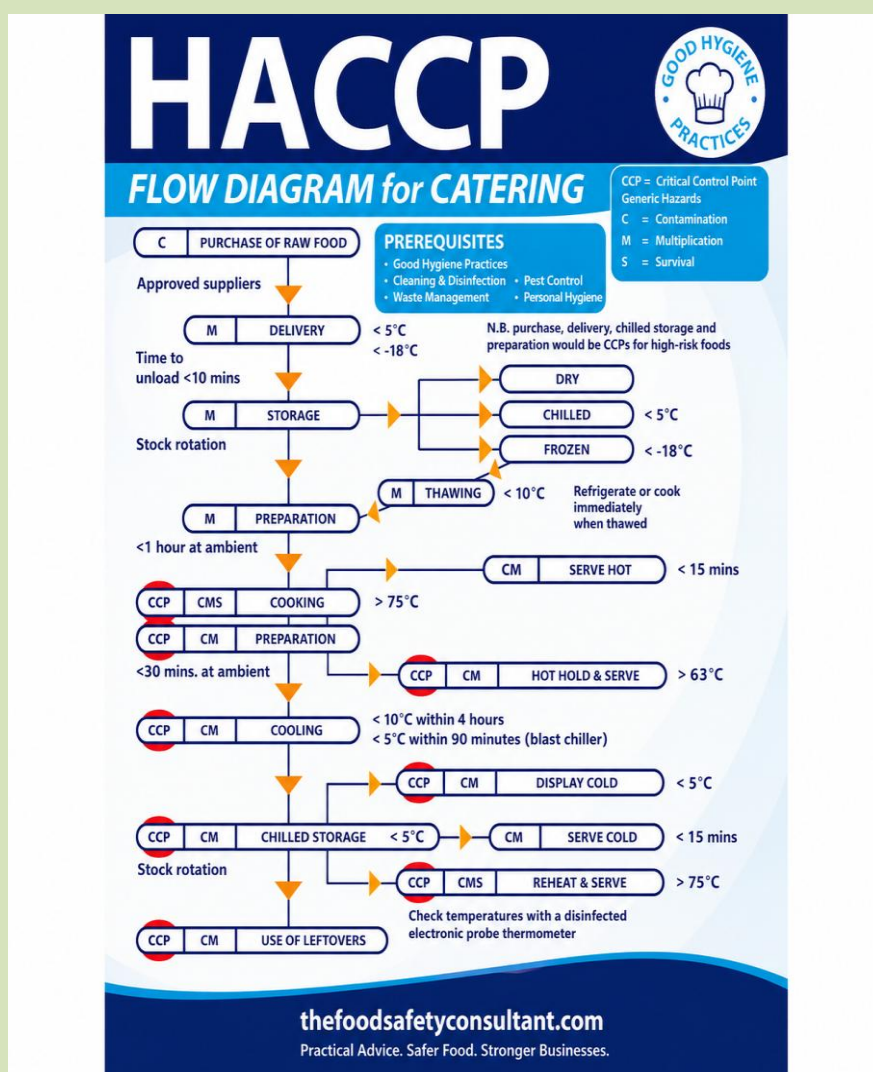
NHS Corner: Recognising Food Poisoning and Acting Early

The NHS describes food poisoning as an illness caused by eating food contaminated with germs. Common symptoms include nausea or vomiting, diarrhoea, stomach pain, a high temperature and feeling generally unwell. Symptoms may begin within hours or days, although some infections can take longer. Most cases are not serious and improve within a week, with fluids being important to reduce the risk of dehydration. For food handlers and managers, illness reporting is a food safety control. A worker with diarrhoea or vomiting can contaminate food, equipment and surfaces.

Businesses should have a clear sickness-reporting procedure and should follow appropriate exclusion requirements before a symptomatic food handler returns to food work. Managers should create a culture where reporting illness is expected, not discouraged because a shift is difficult to cover. The NHS advises seeking urgent help in circumstances such as persistent inability to keep fluids down, bloody diarrhoea, significant dehydration, diarrhoea lasting more than seven days or vomiting lasting more than two days. Severe symptoms may require emergency care. Businesses should not attempt to diagnose the cause of a staff member's illness; the operational priority is to protect food, exclude where required, clean and disinfect appropriately, and obtain professional advice where necessary.

Food poisoning prevention depends on multiple barriers: safe sourcing, personal hygiene, effective cleaning, separation of raw and ready-to-eat food, adequate cooking, safe chilling, controlled storage and good management. Temperature control is one of the most measurable of those barriers, which is why it is the special focus of this month's practical guidance.

Special Guidance: The Temperature Danger Zone



Temperature control is one of the most important barriers against foodborne illness. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, foods that require chilled temperature control should generally be kept at 8°C or below; FSA good practice is to operate refrigeration at 5°C or below, providing a useful safety margin. The FSA describes 8°C to 63°C as the “danger zone” because many food-poisoning bacteria can grow when food remains in this range for sufficient time. Hot-held food should therefore be kept at 63°C or above. Cooking must achieve a validated lethal treatment.

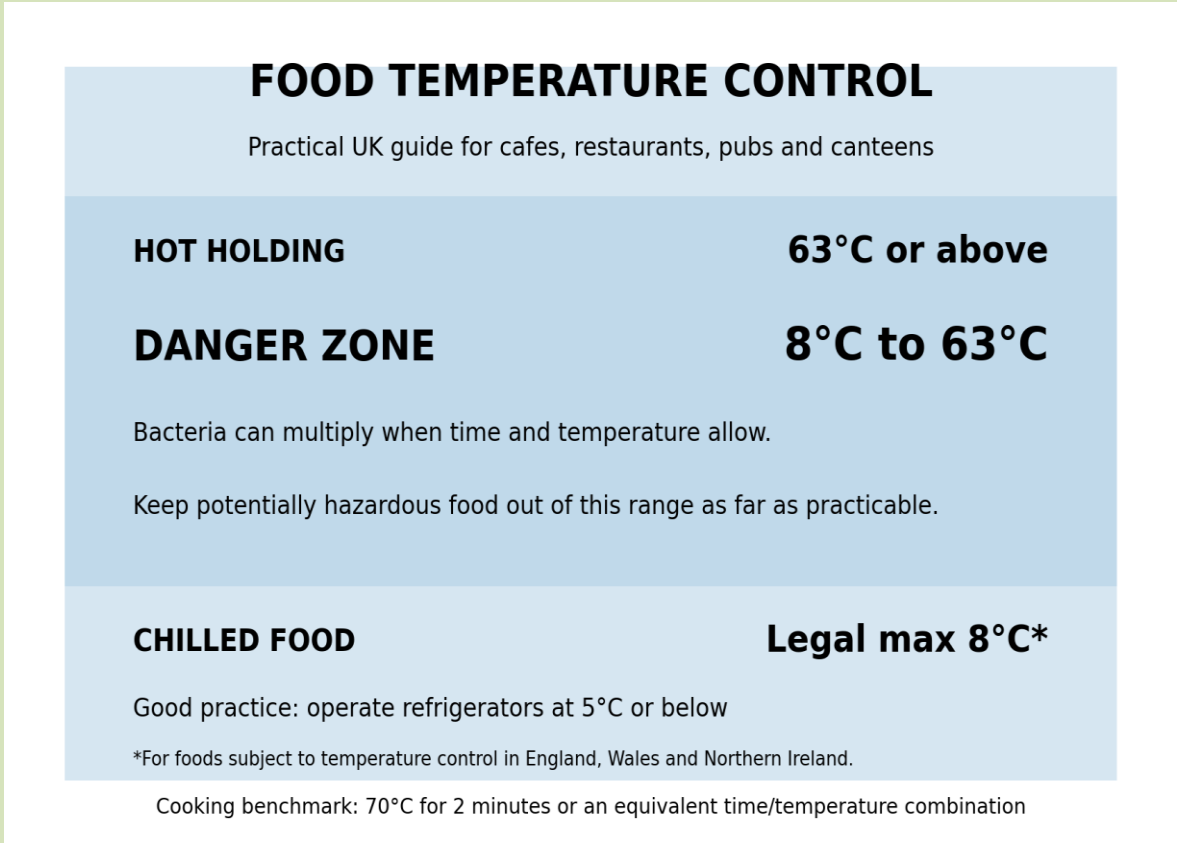
A widely used FSA benchmark is 70°C for two minutes at the centre of the food, or an equivalent time/temperature combination, such as 75°C for 30 seconds. A clean, disinfected probe should be inserted into the centre or thickest part. Reheating should make food steaming hot throughout and, as good practice, should be carried out only once. Cafes, restaurants, pubs and canteens should monitor delivery, refrigeration, cooking, cooling, reheating and hot holding

according to their HACCP-based procedures. Corrective action matters as much as recording: investigate abnormal temperatures, protect affected food, repair equipment, retrain staff where necessary and document what was done.

Figure 1. Temperature-control infographic based on FSA guidance. Always apply product-specific requirements and validated HACCP procedures.

August Data Snapshot

DATA SNAPSHOT FOR MANAGERS



207 confirmed cases: UKHSA’s reported total in the Salmonella Enteritidis outbreak as of 13 August 2026.

206 cases in 2026: almost all cases in the identified genomic cluster were reported this year.

38% hospital admission: among outbreak cases with relevant information available, more than one-third were admitted because of salmonellosis symptoms.

83% ate food prepared outside the home: among 114 interviewed cases with completed questionnaires, this was a striking reminder of the responsibility carried by commercial kitchens.

33.6% to 17.2%: CIEH reported this reduction in allergen failures between the North East regional sampling programmes for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

8°C: the general legal maximum for foods subject to chilled temperature control in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

5°C: FSA good-practice refrigerator operating temperature, giving a buffer below the legal maximum.

63°C: the legal hot-holding threshold.

70°C for two minutes: a recognised FSA cooking time/temperature benchmark, with equivalent combinations also acceptable when validated. These figures should not be memorised without context. The purpose of a food safety management system is to translate limits into controls: who checks, how often, with what equipment,

what is recorded, and what happens when the result is unacceptable. Numbers become food safety only when they trigger correct behaviour.

From Numbers to Control: Making Temperature Monitoring Work

A thermometer is only useful if the business knows what the reading means and what action follows. Begin with equipment. Refrigerator displays can be helpful but they do not always represent the actual temperature of food. Use an independent thermometer or a calibrated probe as appropriate, position checks intelligently and look for trends. A fridge repeatedly reading 7-8°C may be legally within the general chilled limit for relevant

foods, but it leaves little margin for door opening, loading, hot weather or equipment deterioration. Operating at 5°C or below provides resilience.

At delivery, assess whether chilled and frozen foods arrive under suitable temperature control and in good condition. Your monitoring method should be proportionate to the risk. High-risk chilled ready-to-eat food deserves particular attention. If a delivery is too warm, do not simply place it in a refrigerator and hope the problem disappears. Consider the product, measured temperature, duration of exposure, supplier specification and your food safety procedure. Reject food when safety cannot be demonstrated and record supplier issues so repeated failures are visible. During preparation, control time as well as temperature.

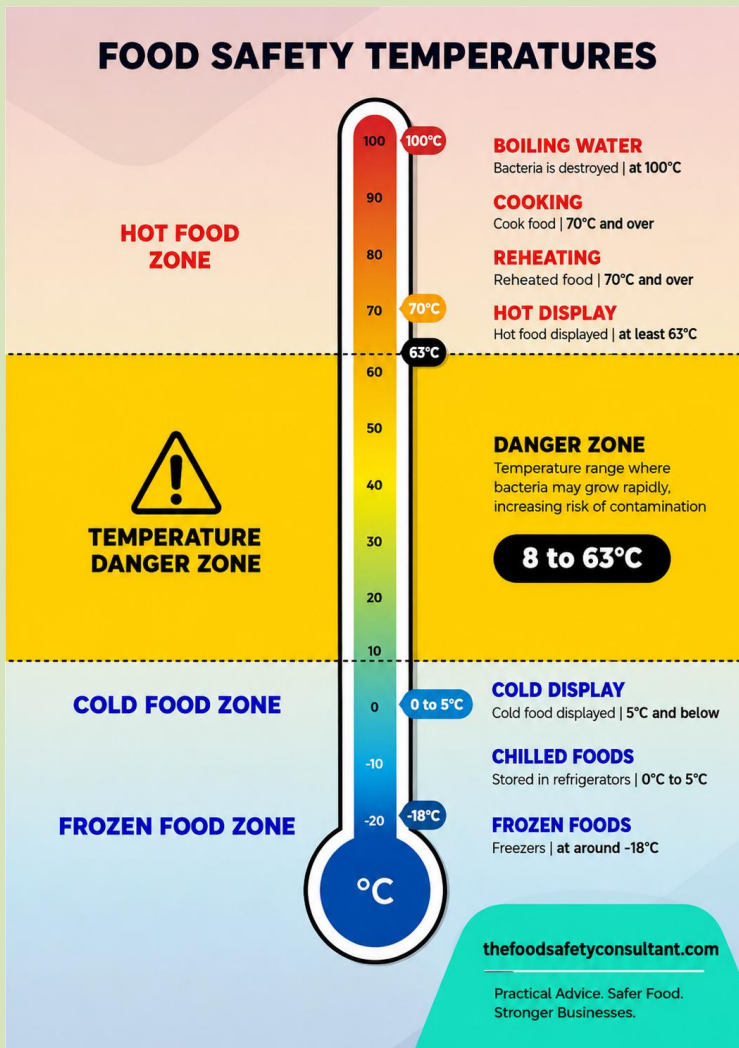
Large containers of meat, cooked rice, sauces, dairy ingredients and sandwich fillings can warm quickly in busy kitchens. Prepare manageable quantities, return ingredients to refrigeration promptly and avoid leaving food beside cookers or in direct sunlight. "We were busy" is not a control measure. Cooking checks should focus on the coldest part of the product. For thick foods, rolled joints, poultry, burgers, sausages, kebabs, curries containing large meat pieces and reheated bulk dishes, visual

appearance alone may be unreliable. Use a disinfected probe where your validated method requires it.

Between checks, clean and disinfect the probe to prevent it becoming a cross-contamination tool. If a target temperature is not reached, continue cooking and recheck. Cooling is frequently underestimated. A deep stockpot can remain warm for hours even when the outside feels cool. Divide food into smaller portions, use shallow containers, ice baths or blast chilling where suitable, and avoid overloading refrigerators with large volumes of hot food. Your HACCP system should define a safe cooling method and verification checks for the foods you actually produce.

Cooked rice, meat dishes, gravies and sauces require disciplined cooling because bacterial spores may survive cooking and multiply if cooling is slow. Hot holding is not the same as reheating. Food placed in a bain-marie should already be properly cooked or reheated; the unit is designed to maintain temperature, not reliably bring cold food to a safe core temperature. Keep hot food at 63°C or above. Stir suitable foods to reduce cold spots, avoid repeatedly topping up old food with fresh batches, and use smaller batches where demand is uncertain.

For chilled display, minimise unnecessary exposure. Certain legal flexibilities can apply in defined circumstances, but these should be understood and built into the business's food safety procedures rather than



used casually. When in doubt, keep chilled food under effective refrigeration. The safest operational rule is simple: cold food cold, hot food hot, and transitions between the two controlled, timed and documented. Calibration should be part of verification. Probe thermometers can be checked using appropriate reference points, following the manufacturer's instructions. Damaged, inaccurate or difficult-to-clean probes should be replaced.

Records should be meaningful: a page of identical temperatures written at the end of the week does not demonstrate control. Managers should review records, question unusual patterns and connect failures to corrective action. Finally, train staff in the reason behind the numbers. When employees understand that temperature affects microbial growth, they are more likely to respond correctly when a fridge fails, a delivery arrives warm or a batch cools too slowly. Good food safety culture turns temperature limits from numbers on a form into everyday decisions that protect customers.

August Management Action Plan

Use August as a mini internal audit. Check that your approved-supplier list is current and that invoices or delivery records allow ingredients to be traced. Review egg purchasing and identify dishes using raw or lightly cooked egg. Confirm that staff know how to respond to a food recall. Examine refrigerator temperatures over the previous four weeks for trends rather than isolated readings. Verify one cooking process with a clean calibrated probe and compare the result with your documented critical limit. Observe one cooling process from cooking to refrigeration.

Check that hot-holding equipment maintains food at 63°C or above. Review allergen information against current ingredient labels, especially where brands or suppliers have changed. Ask a member of front-of-house staff what they would do if a customer declared an allergy; the correct response should involve checking controlled information, not guessing. Check sickness-reporting arrangements and confirm staff understand the importance of reporting diarrhoea and vomiting. Walk through the kitchen looking specifically for cross-contamination opportunities: raw egg shells near ready-to-eat food, probe thermometers used without disinfection, cloths moving between raw and ready-to-eat areas, overloaded fridges, uncovered cooling foods, damaged seals, or utensils stored in standing water.

Small observations often reveal whether the written system is alive. If a problem is found, record the corrective action, responsibility and completion date. Effective due diligence is not demonstrated by perfect paperwork; it is demonstrated by identifying problems early and taking appropriate action.

How The Food Safety Consultant Can Help

The Food Safety Consultant supports food businesses in turning legal requirements and scientific guidance into practical systems that work during a busy service. Support can include HACCP development and review, food hygiene auditing, EHO inspection preparation, allergen management, food labelling, due-diligence records, approved-premises and manufacturing support, corrective-action planning and staff coaching. A strong system should be proportionate to the business. A small cafe does not need unnecessary bureaucracy, but it does need clear controls that staff can follow and managers can verify. A manufacturer may require more detailed validation, traceability, environmental monitoring and documented verification.

The goal in both settings is the same: safe food, confident staff, defensible records and continual improvement. This month's outbreak and recall news demonstrates why food safety systems must be dynamic. Supplier risks change, new evidence emerges, ingredients are substituted and equipment fails. Review your HACCP when significant changes occur and use incidents in the wider industry as prompts to test your own controls before a problem reaches your customers.

Sources and Editorial Note

Key sources consulted for this August 2026 edition include: UK Health Security Agency, Health Protection Report volume 20 issue 8, "National outbreak of Salmonella Enteritidis (t5.9411) in the UK", updated 18 August 2026; Food Standards Agency, "Food Fact Check: Can you get salmonella from eggs? What you need to know", 21 August 2026; Food Standards Agency food alerts dated 7 and 10 August 2026; FSA guidance on cooking, chilling, temperature control and Safer Food Better Business; CIEH, "Outstanding Team Award 2026:

Partnership working at its best to address growing risks around food allergies”, 18 August 2026; and NHS guidance on food poisoning, diarrhoea and vomiting.

Information reflects sources available on 23 August 2026. Outbreak investigations can change as new epidemiological, microbiological and food-chain evidence becomes available. Businesses should therefore check current official alerts and guidance when making operational decisions.

Official source links

- [UKHSA - August 2026 Salmonella Enteritidis outbreak report](#)
- [FSA - Salmonella and eggs fact check](#)
- [FSA - Cooking your food](#)
- [FSA - Recalls and alerts](#)
- [CIEH - North East Regional Food Allergy Group award](#)
- [NHS - Food poisoning](#)

Disclaimer: This newsletter provides general food-safety information and is not a substitute for legal advice, competent authority guidance, product-specific requirements or a business-specific HACCP assessment.