

Food Complaints

The Food Safety Act and associated Regulations seek to ensure that all food offered to the public is safe to eat and is properly described. Both Public Protection Officers and Trading Standards Officers are involved in dealing with complaints relating to food.

Trading Standards Officers deal with complaints regarding composition and labelling of food purchased within the town.

Public Protection Officers deal with complaints which relate to Food Safety and include foreign bodies, bacterial and fungal contamination of food and foods which have been implicated in food poisoning.

If you believe you have grounds to complain in relation to food you have purchased you can:-

1. Decide not to involve the Quality Standards Division and return the food to the place of purchase.
2. Consult a solicitor and take their advice.
3. Ask that the Quality Standards Division deal with the complaint.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU COMPLAIN TO THE QUALITY STANDARDS DIVISION IS:

A member of staff will take details of the complaint, including where and when it was purchased. An Officer who will investigate the complaint will contact you and explain the action he intends to take and an estimate of the possible length of time of the investigation. It is important that proof of purchase, if available, and any packing material involved with the complaint are given to the Officer who undertakes the investigation.

The time taken to investigate a complaint can range from a few days to several months as it may sometimes require an Officer from another authority visiting a factory located outside the Blackpool area. Similarly, consultations with an Authority where the company head office is based, and/or laboratory examination of the complaint can delay the investigation.

When the investigation is complete the Officer will decide if a prosecution is appropriate. If proceedings are likely the Officer will ask you for a written statement for use in court.

If the company can demonstrate precautions and systems, designed and operating to prevent the type of complaint you have made, it is impossible for the Council to take any further actions as the law provides a statutory defence. Then, if you agree, the Officer will release your address to the company as they often wish to make a direct apology to a complainant.

At any time you may request details about how the enquiries are progressing and the Officer will give an indication of how much longer the enquiry is likely to take. Officers can usually be contacted between 08.45 to 09.30 hours and 16.00 hours to 17.00 hours.

NB The Quality Standards Division will not investigate a complaint on your behalf to enable civil action or to obtain compensation for you. In certain circumstances the Fair Trading section of Quality Standards may be able to advise or assist you in taking civil action.