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United around food data



# Prepacked for Direct Sale

PPDS - 1 Year On

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# Introduction

**Natasha's Law came into effect in October 2021 - a little over a year ago.**

Since then, businesses in foodservice have been overhauling the packaging of their Prepacked for Direct Sale (PPDS) foods, but it's fair to say that this is the beginning of a process and it would be understandable if many products still have room for improvement.

Erudus exists to make life easier for our customers, and for our Caterer users that means ensuring they can effectively meet legal requirements for displaying and communicating allergen information. This includes PPDS labelling, and so in order to get a better idea of where Caterers are going right when it comes to Prepacked for Direct Sale products and the areas in which they still need to improve, we decided to analyse a sample of PPDS products currently on the market to see how compliant their labels are with Natasha's Law.

As you'll see, the results indicate that there remains much confusion around how best to display Allergen ingredients, and that for many businesses there's still a long way to go...





## Background

This report looks at the state of PPDS packaging across the food industry post-Natasha's Law, a piece of legislation that was passed in September 2019 and came into effect on 1st October 2021.

PPDS stands for "Prepacked for Direct Sale" and applies to those food products that are packed and labelled on the same premises from which they are being sold – for example salads and sandwiches made by staff earlier in the day and placed on a shelf for consumers to purchase, or goods baked on-site and then placed in multi-pack boxes or packets and placed at a point of sale near the bakery door - such as a box of donuts.



As of 1st October 2021, the packaging of these goods is now legally required to include full ingredient labelling. What does this mean? The Food Standards Agency (FSA) states that:

**"The label needs to show the name of the food and the ingredients list with the 14 allergens required to be declared by law emphasised within it. These need to be in line with the legal requirements that apply to naming the food and listing ingredients. Food businesses must still ensure they comply with existing relevant food information and labelling requirements for the country they operate in."**

Natasha's Law is named for Natasha Ednan-Laperouse, the 15-year-old who tragically died in 2018 after an allergic reaction to a Pret a Manger artichoke, tapenade and olive baguette purchased at Heathrow airport. Ednan-Laperouse was allergic to sesame seeds, which were present in the sandwich but not listed as ingredients on the packaging, and her family successfully argued that the reaction might have been avoided had the allergen been clearly communicated on the packaging.

For more information visit the FSA's Introduction to Allergen Information for PPDS foods.

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/introduction-to-allergen-labelling-changes-ppds>





# Sampling

The total number of products sampled for this report was 116.

Geographically the products were sourced from across the UK, with particular prominence of goods sourced from the Northeast of England.

All samples were purchased randomly from a mix of outlets, including;

- Food markets
- Farm shops
- Food festivals
- Deli
- Cafés

The product samples had to be classed as PPDS products, as per the FSA:

Prepacked for direct sale or PPDS is food that is packaged at the same place it is offered or sold to consumers and is in this packaging before it is ordered or selected.

It can include food that consumers select themselves (e.g. from a display unit), as well as products kept behind a counter and some food sold at mobile or temporary outlets.

Prepacked for Direct Sale (PPDS) food includes the following:

- Sandwiches and bakery products which are packed on site before a consumer selects or orders them.
- Fast food packed before it is ordered, such as a burger under a hot lamp where the food cannot be altered without opening the packaging.
- Products which are prepacked on site ready for sale, such as pizzas, rotisserie chicken, salads and pasta pots.
- Burgers and sausages prepacked by a butcher on the premises ready for sale to consumers.
- Samples of cookies given to consumers for free which were packed on site.
- Foods packaged and then sold elsewhere by the same operator at a market stall or mobile site.

Further information from the FSA can be found here:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/introduction-to-allergen-labelling-changes-ppds>



# Approach

The information we chose to capture from the sample products followed what the FSA states a PPDS product should include on its label.

## What needs to be on the label?

The label needs to show **the name of the food** and the ingredients list with **the 14 allergens required to be declared by law emphasised within it**.

More information on the 14 major food allergens can be found here:  
<https://erudus.com/food-allergens>

**These need to be in line** with the legal requirements that apply to naming the food and listing ingredients.

Food businesses must still ensure they comply with existing relevant food information and labelling requirements for the country they operate in.

Further information from the FSA can be found here:  
<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/introduction-to-allergen-labelling-changes-ppds>

## What information we captured

We captured the following information:

- The presence and suitability of a 'Product Name'
- The presence of an 'Ingredients Declaration'
- Emphasis of Allergen ingredients within the ingredients declaration
- Accuracy of Allergen declaration/s
- The use of Precautionary Allergen Labelling (PAL) and the volume of allergen ingredients mentioned
- Label type and legibility





# Questions

<b>Presence of a Product Name .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the packaging and/or label show the name of the food?</li><li>• Where a product name was stated, did the product name suitably describe the product?</li></ul>	
<b>Presence of an Ingredient Declaration .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the packaging and/or label show an Ingredient Declaration?</li></ul>	
<b>Allergen Emphasis .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where the product had an ingredient declaration and Allergen ingredients were present, were Allergen ingredients emphasised?</li></ul>	
<b>Accurate Declaration of Allergens .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Were Allergen ingredients declared accurately in the ingredients declaration and/or packaging?</li></ul>	
<b>Label Types &amp; Legibility .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is the label printed or handwritten?</li><li>• Is the label information legible?</li></ul>	
<b>Presence of PAL Label .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the packaging and/or label carry a Precautionary Allergen Label?</li></ul>	



## Presence of a Product Name

**Did the packaging and/or label show the name of the food?**

**76%** of all products sampled detailed the name of the food on either the label, packaging or both.

**24%** of products sampled failed to include any form of product name on the label, packaging or both.

**Where a product name was stated, did the product name suitably describe the product?**

**91%** of all products sampled detailed a product name that suitably described the product.

**9%** of products sampled failed to suitably describe the product.



**1/4**

of products sampled **failed** to include  
any form of product name.



# Presence of an Ingredient Declaration

Does the packaging and/or label show an Ingredient Declaration?

**67%** of all products sampled had **'some form'** of Ingredients Declaration on either the label or packaging.

**33%** of products sampled had no form of Ingredients Declaration.







# Allergen Emphasis

Where the product had an Ingredient Declaration and Allergen ingredients were present, were Allergen ingredients emphasised?

**58%** of products sampled where an Ingredient Declaration and Allergen ingredients were present emphasised allergens in some form.

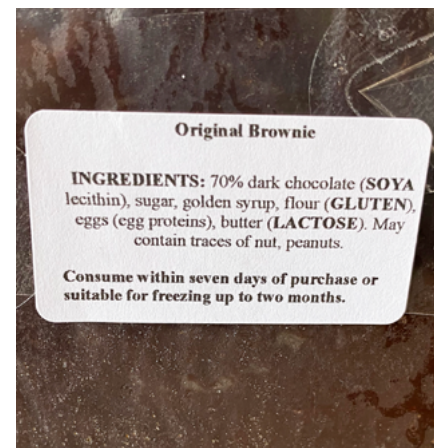
**42%** of products sampled where an Ingredient Declaration and Allergen ingredients were present failed to emphasise allergens.

Methods of emphasis used
Bold
Bold with larger font
Bold with capital letters and underlined
Bold with capital letters
Capital letters
Highlighted font colour
Mixture (bold, capitals, underlined)

**44%** opted to use Bold text for emphasising Allergen ingredients.

**25%** opted to use Capital letters for emphasising Allergen ingredients.

**18%** opted to use Bold Capital letters for emphasising Allergen ingredients.



**Top:** Allergen's emphasised using bold with capital letters. **Bottom:** Allergen's emphasis used bold text and underlined.



# Accurate Declaration of Allergens

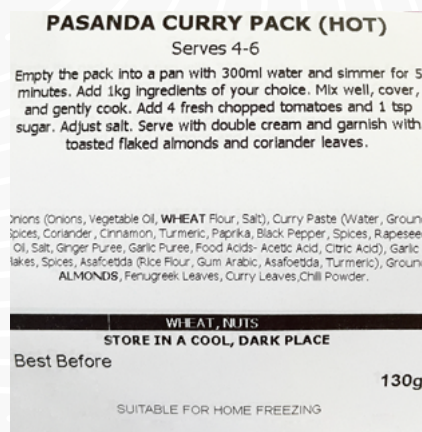
Were Allergen ingredients declared accurately in the Ingredients Declaration and/or packaging?

46%

of products sampled accurately declared the presence of Allergen ingredients.

54%

of products sampled failed to accurately declare the presence of Allergen ingredients.



**Left:** No emphasis was used to declare the presence of allergen ingredients. **Middle:** Allergen's emphasised using bold with capital letters. **Right:** No emphasis was used, plus the over-printed text makes the identification of allergen ingredients more difficult.



# Label Types & Legibility

Is the label printed or handwritten?

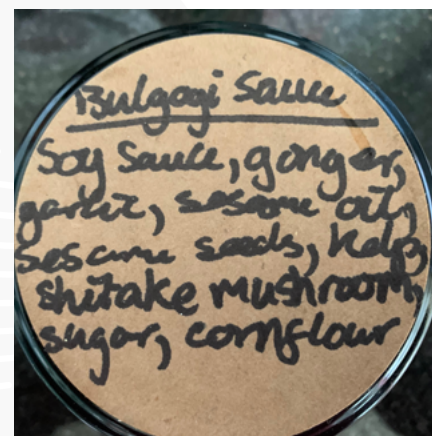
**78%** of all products sampled used printed labels on their products with **22%** opting for handwritten labels.

Is the label information legible?

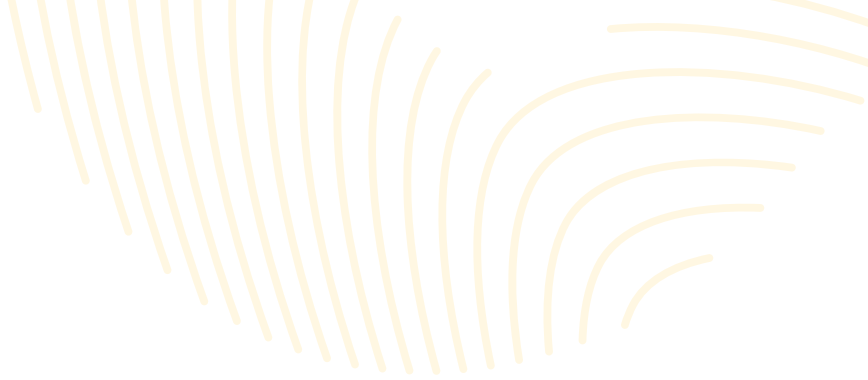
**70%** of all product labels were legible.

**30%** were not legible and the top reasons for not being legible are listed here:

Reason
Messy handwriting
Patchy printing
Printed text overlapping (Line height)
Printed text overlapping (Label edge)



**Left:** Patchy printing of text on the label. **Middle:** Text runs off the label edge. **Right:** Messy handwriting makes the identification of allergen ingredients more difficult.



# Presence of PAL Label

Does the packaging and/or label carry a Precautionary Allergen Label?

**32%** of products sampled carried a Precautionary Allergen Label and/or statement.

## Phrases used in the Precautionary Allergen Label/Statement

May contain

May contain traces of 'Allergen/s X'

Made in an environment that handles/uses/has present 'Allergen/s X'

Mixed environment therefore can't guarantee Allergens aren't present

Some of the ingredients may contain other Allergens and we handle Allergens in our kitchen

When we prepare food in our kitchen we handle ALL ALLERGENS including 'Allergen X' so we can't guarantee this product is Allergen-free

We work in a small kitchen, so please be aware that in addition to the ingredients listed, all our products may possibly contain traces of 'Allergen X'

Prepared in a kitchen which may handle 'Allergen X'

Made in a kitchen/bakery which handles 'Allergen X'

**32%** used 'May contain traces of 'Allergen/s X'.

**19%** used 'May contain 'Allergen/s X'.

**54%** of all PAL phrases used some variation of 'May contain'.





Number of Allergen ingredients stated in the Precautionary Allergen Label:

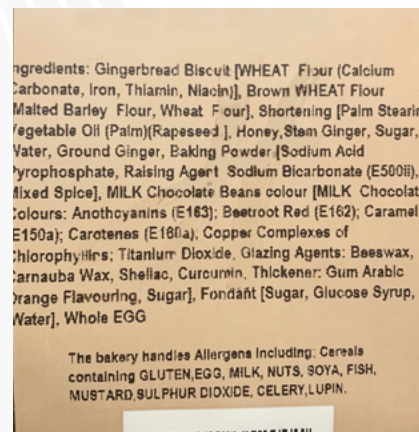
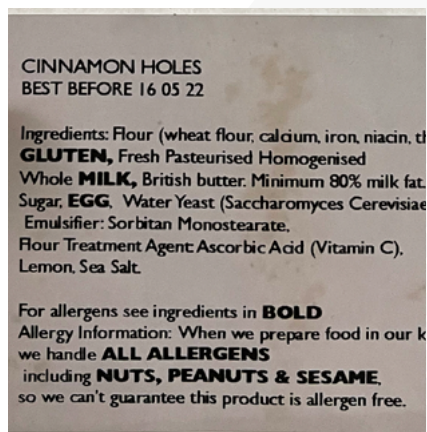
Allergen #	%	Allergen #	%
1 Allergen ingredient	30%	8 Allergen ingredients	3%
2 Allergen ingredients	8%	9 Allergen ingredients	0%
3 Allergen ingredients	16%	10 Allergen ingredients	5%
4 Allergen ingredients	5%	11 Allergen ingredients	0%
5 Allergen ingredients	8%	12 Allergen ingredients	0%
6 Allergen ingredients	3%	13 Allergen ingredients	0%
7 Allergen ingredients	11%	14 Allergen ingredients	11%

**30%** mentioned a single Allergen ingredient.

**11%** mention 7 Allergen ingredients.

**16%** mention 3 Allergen ingredients.

**11%** reference all 14 Allergen ingredients.



Left: PAL statement - all allergen ingredients. Middle: 'May contain Nuts' PAL statement Right: PAL statement - 10 allergen ingredients listed.



## Conclusion

**Evidence from our report suggests that whilst most foodservice businesses are making an effort to comply with new PPDS labelling regulations, many are missing the mark when it comes to being compliant.**

A quarter of the products we analysed did not actually include the product's name on the label, whilst a third of the products did not have an Ingredient Declaration.

When it came to inspecting the Ingredient Declarations themselves, we found that only half of the products that included them on the label emphasised any Allergen ingredients - a main component of Natasha's Law.

Precautionary Allergen Labelling (PAL) was used by a third of products studied in the report, with the inclusion of the phrase 'May Contain' followed by the name of an Allergen ingredient (e.g. Peanuts) on packaging being the most common way of doing so.

However, 1 in 10 of these products was over-zealous to the point of including all 14 major food Allergens on their PAL.

More troubling was the clarity of some labels - just under a third of the total products analysed had a label that was illegible, regardless of whether the information on it was correct.

From this display it's clear that there is a lot of work to be done to help Caterers bring their PPDS labelling in line with legislation, and Erudus are committed to getting them there. In addition to our existing tools and solutions, we will be looking into further ways to support Caterers in creating Natasha's Law compliant PPDS labelling in the easiest and most effective way.





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