

Natasha's Law & What it Means for Businesses

Since October 2021, food retailers in the UK have been required to include full allergen and ingredient labelling on each item of food pre-packed for direct sale (PPDS) under legislation known as Natasha's Law.

The legislation is intended to bolster consumer protection for people who suffer from allergies and intolerances, providing them with clear and accurate information about what ingredients are included in pre-packaged foods.

With the introduction of Natasha's Law, food retailers in England have been subject to more stringent packaging regulations. But what exactly is Natasha's Law, and what are its ramifications for businesses? In this post, we will take a closer look at these crucial questions.

What is Natasha's Law?

[The Food Information \(Amendment\) \(England\) Regulations 2019](#), also known as Natasha's Law, is a piece of legislation requiring food retailers in England to ensure that every item of food processed and packed on-premises contains full allergen and ingredient labelling.

The law was introduced following [the tragic death of 15-year-old Natasha Ednan-Laperouse](#) in 2016, after suffering a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a Pret a Manger baguette she had eaten, which contained undeclared sesame seeds baked into the bread.

Had the baguette been clearly labelled, and the presence of the sesame seeds in the bread declared to potential consumers, Natasha's death could have been averted. Following their daughter's death, Natasha's parents – Nadim and Tanya Ednan-Laperouse – campaigned for a change in the law; their campaign was successful and the ensuing legislation came into force in October 2021.

Offending retailers can be fined under Natasha's Law, breaches of which constitute a criminal offence. Financial penalties for businesses which fail to abide by the legislation are unlimited and violations can potentially result in imprisonment for those found to be responsible.

They're Scalable and Support Growth

As well as being highly efficient, barcodes are also easily scalable. Both small businesses and huge global corporations can use them because they can be adapted to suit the needs of different industries and companies of varying sizes.

Because they're so flexible and convenient to use, barcodes also help to [support individual businesses as they expand](#). The system will continue to work the same no matter how many items a company might have on its roster, making it easier to add new product lines.

Barcodes can be used on practically any kind of product across a huge variety of industries, so they're incredibly versatile as well. This has made them an invaluable tool for millions of businesses worldwide.

What businesses are affected by Natasha's Law?

Natasha's Law affects all retailers in England that prepare and sell foods packaged at the same place they are offered for sale. These items are collectively referred to as food pre-packed for direct sale, or PPDS.

The legislation therefore applies to a very wide range of businesses. These include – among numerous others – cafes, bakeries, restaurants, takeaways, food trucks, sandwich shops, supermarkets and convenience stores with on-site food preparation.

What does Natasha's Law mean for my business?

Businesses selling PPDS items are required to ensure that ingredients and allergens are clearly and accurately labelled. A full ingredient list must be included along with allergen information, and it must be clearly legible, visible and provided in a consistent and standardised format. Allergenic ingredients must be emphasised in bold text on the packaging label, which Cobalt can automate in our label design.

Before the introduction of Natasha's Law, some retailers would display signs in-store inviting customers to ask a member of staff about allergens. Since the introduction of the legislation, this is no longer sufficient, and all PPDS products must come with a full list of ingredients and allergens.

Products made at a customer's direct request do not need to come with an allergen label attached. However, businesses must provide this information to customers who ask for it.

According to a 2023 [report](#) from the Food Standards Agency, nine out of 10 food business operators (FBOs) surveyed said they knew about Natasha's Law, but only 68% felt that they had all the information they needed in order to abide by it.

Half of the survey's 900 FBO respondents reported that the legislation had increased their costs; this includes investment in new equipment to comply with the law, along with the additional time spent preparing and applying labels in accordance with it.

The study also polled 1,809 consumers to get their feedback on Natasha's Law. Among people living with a food hypersensitivity, 40% said the law had improved their lives, with people aged between 18 and 34 reporting a bigger impact than those aged 65 and over.

The introduction of Natasha's Law has marked a major change for food retailers selling PPDS items. It has provided consumers, particularly those living with food allergies, with potentially life-saving information and enabled them to purchase and consumed pre-packaged food safely.

For food manufacturers, labelling products accurately and appropriately is now a critical part of day to day business processes. At Cobalt, we have a long history helping food manufacturers deal with automatic, semi automatic and manual labelling situations. Our goal is the same, regardless of the scenario – we never send a bad label out.

That is quite rightly what Natasha's Law is striving to achieve and one which we can help you reach.

Contact us today to find out more about how we can help.