

Gove to introduce 'Natasha's Law'

A new law will require food businesses to include full ingredients labelling on pre-packaged foods, Environment Secretary Michael Gove announced today in a drive to protect the country's two million food allergy sufferers.

Following the tragic death of Natasha Ednan-Laperouse, the teenager who died after suffering an allergic reaction to a Pret a Manger baguette, the Environment Secretary confirmed legislation will be brought forward by the end of summer to strengthen allergen labelling rules.

Under current laws, food prepared on the premises in which it is sold is not required to display allergen information in writing, meaning allergy sufferers sometimes lack confidence buying food out.

The new legislation, known as 'Natasha's Law', will tighten the rules by requiring foods that are pre-packed directly for sale to carry a full list of ingredients – giving allergy sufferers greater trust in the food they buy.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Nadim and Tanya Ednan-Laperouse have been an inspiration in their drive to protect food allergy sufferers and deliver Natasha's Law.

These changes will make food labels clear and consistent and give the country's two million food allergy sufferers confidence in making safe food choices.

Natasha Ednan-Laperouse's parents Tanya and Nadim said:

We are absolutely delighted that the Secretary of State has announced the government's decision to go ahead with full allergen and ingredient labelling. While Natasha's Law comes too late to save our beloved daughter, we believe that helping save other allergy sufferers and their families from the enduring agony that we will always bear is a fitting legacy for her life.

We would personally like to thank Michael Gove and Health Secretary Matt Hancock for their unflinching support in doing the right thing on behalf of all people with allergies, and their support in setting up the Natasha Allergy Research Foundation which we are launching today in Natasha's memory.

The government will introduce legislation by the end of summer mandating full ingredients labelling for foods prepacked for direct sale, and the new laws will come into force by summer 2021 – giving businesses time to adapt to the change.

The introduction of 'Natasha's Law' follows a consultation in January proposing four options, including full ingredient list labelling; allergen-only labelling; 'ask the staff' labels on products; and promoting best practice to businesses.

The consultation received overwhelming support from consumers for full ingredients labelling, with more than 70 per cent of individuals backing this option. The [Food Standards Agency's](#) recent advice also recommended government should implement full ingredients labelling.

Chair of the Food Standards Agency Heather Hancock said:

We want the UK to become the best place in the world for people living with food hypersensitivities.

The impact of food allergy and intolerance on quality of life can be as great or even greater than almost all other foodborne diseases.

Whilst it's impossible to eliminate the risks entirely, we believe this change will mean better protection for allergic consumers.

The reforms cover labelling requirements for foods that are prepared and packed on the same premises from which they are sold – such as a packaged sandwich or salad made by staff earlier in the day and placed on a shelf for purchase.

Currently, these foods are not required to carry labels, and if asked by a consumer allergen information must be given in person by the food business.

[Allergy UK](#) CEO Carla Jones said:

We are delighted with the news that Defra's labelling review backs mandatory full ingredient labelling for pre-packed direct sale food.

This move towards full ingredient labelling for pre-packed direct sale food will improve the lives of the allergic customer and it is warmly welcomed here at Allergy UK.

Food businesses across the country have already taken steps to improve food labelling and outlets are being urged to do all they can ahead of the implementation date to help consumers make safe food choices.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) will continue to provide food businesses with guidance on allergens, and through its 'Easy to Ask' campaign it works to empower young people to ask food businesses about allergens when eating out so they can make safe food choices.