

BEST BEFORE DATE POLICY (2022)

Background

Best Before dates

Best Before dates are about food quality not safety. If food has passed its Best Before date it does not mean it is unsafe. However, it might have started to lose its colour, flavour or texture.

Types of food:

- Usually found on food that lasts a long time, such as frozen, dried or canned foods.
- Some whole fruit and vegetables may also have a Best Before rather than a Use By date.

The Best Before date should be used as a guide but judgement should be made based on the quality, through sight, touch and smell.

WRAP Guidance

WRAP published new guidance¹ in 2020 underlining the fact that food past its Best Before can remain safe to eat for a long time after that date in a bid to reduce food waste. “The law states that all food with a Best Before date can be sold, redistributed and consumed after that date, as long as it’s still good quality. Depending on the type of food and whether it has been stored correctly, food can stay safe, and perfectly good to eat for days, weeks, months or even years after its Best Before”, the food waste charity said. The wrap guidance aims to increase the amount of food made available by businesses for redistribution by ensuring that all food items, including any approaching or past the Best Before date, are considered for redistribution, the Wrap guidance is endorsed by the Food Standards Agency and DEFRA. This policy aims to build on WRAP’s guidance and create a policy that works for FareShare and our partners.

FareShare Policy

This policy is aimed at increasing food redistributed by FareShare, not reducing quality of food.

Best Before Dates

- Fareshare’s Primary Authority, The Royal Borough of Greenwich, endorses this policy.
- Fareshare has chosen to use the Wrap guidance as a basepoint to formulate our own policy with a view to being able to accept more food from the industry and try in some way to cut down on the amount of manufacturer extension notes needed and used.

¹ <https://wrap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-07/WRAP-surplus-food-redistribution-labelling-guide-May-2020.pdf>

- A supplier can choose to opt out of this policy if they feel it is not appropriate for them, otherwise, FareShare will extend the Best Before life of goods as below and will redistribute products.

Category	Extension time	Checks needed
Frozen Food	3 Months	Temperature Monitoring
Fresh Produce	Common-sense approach	Sensory check i.e., visual, touch and smell.
Wrapped bread and bakery	3 days	Visual conformity
Pitta wraps and similar	1 Month	Visual conformity
Crisps	1 month	Packaging intact
Biscuits	2 Months	Packaging intact
Cereals	2 Months	Packaging intact
Tinned	3 Months	No dents in tins
Confectionary	3 Months	Packaging intact
Cooking sauce	1 Month	Packaging intact
Dried pasta, rice/pulses	3 Months	Packaging intact
Preserve and condiments	3 Months	Packaging intact
Soft drinks	1 Month	Packaging intact
Bottled water	3 Months	Packaging intact.
UHT Milk	1 Month	Packaging intact.

Items not included in this policy

Some food categories have a Best Before date but will not be included within this policy, these are:

- Eggs
- All Chilled items with a Best Before Date.

Extension notes on Best Before food

Some suppliers are not prepared to provide extension periods on their products or may only agree to limited Best Before Date extensions. Where this is the case FareShare will respect their policies and decisions which impact the quality positioning of their brands.

Any suppliers which are not happy to redistribute food past best before date, with or without an extension note will be identified by FareShare UK Food Team at the point of offer.

In the event that a supplier would like to provide an extension note for a food product, the extension note shall be passed to the charity as part of their Dispatch Note. FareShare will adopt the suggested extension time period given by the supplier if it differs from the suggested extension outlined in the policy.