

What to do when opening a new shop...

The First Steps to Planning

For those who are thinking about buying a new fish & chip outlet or even a second shop, the following tips may be of help!

"Location of course is of great importance and paying attention to your competition's quality, said Bill Shaw of KFE Ltd. Have a good look around the shop and try their fish & chips - of course, it would be unwise to buy a chip shop next to an award winning shop with good product."

Speaking to the Council will also alleviate any later problems because local councils have different rules, so what would apply in one area would not necessarily apply in another.



Possible objections to your plans might include:

- **Smell** - though a carbon filter system would help control this
- **Parking** - creating more traffic is a big issue
- **Rubbish** - more litter for sure
- **Noise Disruption** - your hours of opening

Upon application be prepared to answer questions about the above. It is wise to take a good look around at local shops and takeaways to note their licensing and opening times, which will give you a good indication of what is possible.

There are three main considerations to take into account with regard to building regulations:

- Ensure that the duct route is approved
- Submit the duct route for approval
- Submit plans for signage indicating what lighting and materials you would prefer to use

Even though documentation is prepared in the proper way, approval can take as long as eight weeks and even up to four months if the authorities have further questions. However, there are independent consultants out there to help. It is accepted that should approval be denied, businesses can appeal, and in this case, it is useful to consult a professional, although, of course, it will incur an added cost!

Once approval is given and a shop fit is necessary, then it is wise to contact specialist shop fitters and ensure that at least two companies are asked to quote. A professional shop fitter will be able to prepare CAD drawings to ease liaison between themselves and equipment suppliers which should ensure that deliveries and fittings go according to plan.



The frying range that you decide upon is, perhaps, the most important decision as it is the engine of your business and should perform efficiently.

Below are suggestions to assist the fryer to make the right choice:

- Contact several suppliers before deciding whether you prefer the British traditional way of frying or the more technological Dutch style range. Both have their benefits and it is a personal choice.
- Choose a supplier that offers a complete back up service and has spare parts readily available. It is important to ensure that should you have a pan down, that response time is minimal.
- Insurance companies are now insisting on the duct being cleaned, and it is important to ask your supplier for advice with regard to this aspect.
- Once you have chosen your frying range, check that it will be delivered on time and that the drawing of your range is exactly what you require.
- Back-bar catering equipment should be sourced from wholesalers/distributors because should there be any problems, they can be dealt with quickly.

It is extremely important to ensure that a sufficient gas and electrical supply is available. Ask your range supplier what British Thermal Units are required for the new piece of equipment and advise TRANSCO so that the correct sized meter is fitted. Also ensure that you advise them in good time as fitting can take up to 12 weeks and incurs a cost of approximately £300.

Speaking to an Accountant about whether to pay for your shop fit and equipment outright or to lease hire, take out a bank loan or overdraft and/or lease rental is essential. It is also essential that the correct insurance cover is purchased.

Once all the above is in place and you open your doors, advertising is a must - although it is not advisable to do this on the first day because everyone needs time to get used to their new frying equipment and environment.

A good way to let the public know you have arrived and are serving fabulous fish & chips, is to contact the local press and suggest a support feature. This entails giving your contact a list of your suppliers, they will then ask them to advertise within your feature and you could be lucky enough to have a full page with advertising, editorial and pictures of your new operation.

Another good way to make the business known within the area, is to leaflet drop, this is inexpensive and effective.