



## HMRC Unannounced Visits

**BE WARNED...** HMRC have setup task forces to carry out unannounced visits.

These will involve you answering 129 questions on things such as: cash handling, banking procedure, till reconciliation and stock control.

### WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

**ASK** why the visit is taking place and why it's necessary.

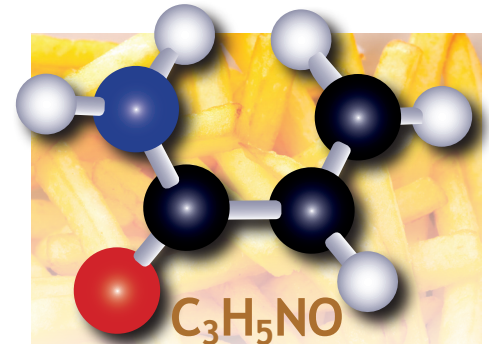
**CHECK** the identity cards of those visiting officers against the names shown on the notice of inspection.

**DECIDE** whether to allow the officers entry. Normally, we would hold your records, so the **VISIT SHOULD BE REFUSED.**

It may also not be convenient for either business or private reasons. **EXPLAIN** your reasons and offer an alternative date, time and venue.

### OF VITAL IMPORTANCE:

Give staff clear instructions **NOT TO GET INVOLVED IN ANY WAY.** YOU alone must deal with this. None of your staff **SHOULD OFFER ANY ASSISTANCE** or answer any questions.



## Acrylamide

All food businesses in the UK will be required to put in place practical steps to manage Acrylamide within their food safety management systems under new EU legislation, which will apply from April 2018.

Acrylamide forms naturally in potato-based and cereal-based products during high temperature cooking and processing such as frying, roasting and baking.

Action must be taken to try to ensure that Acrylamide levels are as low as reasonably achievable.

The Food Standards Agency have put together some helpful guidance about Acrylamide on their website: [www.food.gov.uk/science/acrylamide-0](http://www.food.gov.uk/science/acrylamide-0)

## Act NOW on GDPR

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) will apply from 25 May 2018.

If you store information about your staff or customers, you must obtain their permission to share their personal details. You must ensure that the personal data you hold for staff and customers is correct and that there is a lawful basis for holding it. **YOU MUST TAKE ACTION NOW!**

For guidance on requirements, please get in touch with Emma.

## Business Rates

The business rates discount of £1000 has been extended for a second year until March 2019. The frequency of property valuations will also be increased from every 5 to every 3 years from 2025.



If you have a query, just give us a call on: 01937 581 356 - and remember, our advice is free!



# Hearing Loss

**You'll be surprised to hear that it can really affect your bottom line!**

**Are you open for business to the 11 million people in the UK suffering from hearing loss?**

In a survey conducted by the charity, Action on Hearing Loss, over 90% of respondents said they wouldn't return to a venue that they found too noisy.

Consider reducing background music and using furnishings that absorb sound, for instance: table cloths, curtains or even fitting rubber caps to chairs.

Your staff need to be aware of this initiative so maybe it's time you started using "quiet" as a talking point.

In the past, pubs had a saloon (or lounge bar) as well as the public bar, and sometimes even a tiny snug. Maybe it's a case of "what goes around comes around," but in a different format.



In terms of increasing business, this subject has to be just as important as disability access.

## Try setting your Menu Free From

Sales in the "Free From" food market increased by over 25% last year, with more growth predicted.

With this in mind, you may wish to look at the meat alternatives being used successfully, which include: sweet potato, halloumi, Quorn, chickpeas and other pulses, avocado, cauliflower, mushrooms and jackfruit.

For more information on these alternatives, please contact Emma.

## Minimum Wage Rise

From the 1st April the new minimum wage comes into effect (see below).

The overall increases equate to nearly 5%, so you need to consider your retail prices and improving margin in other ways like portion control. Maintaining your bottom line profit must be your objective.

25+	From 1 Apr 18	£7.83ph
21-24	From 1 Apr 18	£7.38ph
18-20	From 1 Apr 18	£5.90ph
Apprn	From 1 Apr 18	£3.70ph
16-17	From 1 Apr 18	£4.20ph



**From the 6th April, your staff will have 3 times as much deducted from their wage for their workplace pension contributions (from 1% to 3%).**

At the same time, your contributions into their pensions will double from 1% to 2%. You should make your staff aware of the forthcoming increase in deductions from their wages.