



If you're interested in opening a new food or drink business in Shropshire, there are several steps you need to take. Here are some of the key considerations:

Develop a business plan: This will help you to identify your target market, set out your goals, and determine how you will finance your business. A good business plan should also include details about your menu, pricing strategy, and marketing approach.

Choose a location: Look for a location that is accessible, visible, and has good foot traffic. You should also ensure that the premises are suitable for food preparation and that you can obtain the necessary licenses and permits.

Obtain the necessary licenses and permits: You will need to obtain a range of licenses and permits, including food hygiene certificates, alcohol licenses (if you plan to sell alcohol), and planning permission (if you plan to make any changes to the building).

Register your business: Register your business with Companies House and HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) to ensure that you are compliant with all relevant tax and legal requirements.

Set up your kitchen and equipment: Invest in high-quality equipment and ensure that your kitchen is set up to meet all relevant health and safety regulations.

Hire staff: Consider the skills and experience you need for your business and hire staff accordingly. You should also ensure that all staff receives appropriate training in food safety and customer service.
Create a menu: Develop a menu that reflects your target market and sets you apart from your competitors. Make sure that your menu complies with all relevant health and safety regulations.

Market your business: Develop a marketing strategy to promote your business to potential customers. This could include social media advertising, email marketing, sending news to local papers and magazines, and local promotions.

Once you have decided that you are ready to start your business, gov.uk is your best place to start, this will take you through the options for the type of business you should set up as, usually as a Sole Trader (Self-Employed) or as a Limited Company. The link below will explain your options and link you to registration with Companies House.

<https://www.gov.uk/set-up-business>

At least 28 days before opening you need to register as a Food Business with your local council

For more about registering information visit: [Register a food business | Food Standards Agency](#)

To register your business visit <https://register.food.gov.uk/new>

This will mean that you may be inspected for your Food Hygiene Rating.

Premises

Running a food business from home

A lot of small producers start running their businesses by producing from home. Many of them permanently run from home and others outgrow and move to larger facilities.

'You're permitted to prepare some foods from your home domestic kitchen, depending on the risk and scale of production. The standards you'll have to meet in your home depend on a number of factors, such as the type and quantity of food you intend to prepare. Although we wouldn't expect to see the same things in a domestic kitchen as we would in a commercial one, we'd still expect the same high standards of food safety and hygiene.' Shropshire Council, shropshire.gov.uk

Food inspections

The Food Standards Agency website holds loads of important information and advice [Starting a food business | Food Standards Agency](#) and is well worth a visit.

Whether you run your business from home or from alternative premises you can be inspected by your local council at any point in the food production and distribution process. All inspectors must follow the [Food Law Code of Practice](#). Usually, you won't be told an inspection is going to happen.

Food safety teams at our local councils are, as follows:

food@shropshire.gov.uk

food@telford.gov.uk

[Introduction – Food inspections – Telford & Wrekin Council](#)

Food Hygiene

As a food business you are obliged to meet certain standards of cleanliness and hygiene. You must be registered with your local council which will then be required to inspect and advise you on the next steps.

HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) is a way of managing food safety hazards. Having a food safety management system that is based on the principles of HACCP is a legal requirement, when your local council inspects your food hygiene it is inspecting based on HACCP principles.

[MyHACCP | Helping you produce safe food](#) is aimed at small food manufacturing businesses in the UK

HACCP involves:

- looking closely at what you do in your business, what could go wrong, and what risks there are to food safety
- identifying any critical control points the areas a business needs to focus on to ensure those risks are removed or reduced to safe levels
- deciding what action you need to take if something goes wrong
- making sure that your procedures are being followed and are working
- keeping records to show your procedures are working

It is important to have food safety management procedures that are appropriate for your business.

www.salsafood.co.uk can help with your food hygiene certification, written by experienced food safety experts. SALSA is a robust and effective food safety certification scheme which is appropriate for smaller food producers and suppliers. SALSA is a non-profit making joint venture founded by the four main trade associations representing the UK Food Chain.

Business rates

Business rates are one of the UK's oldest taxes; its origins can be traced back to the Poor Law of 1601. Business rates can be roughly defined as the **tax paid for the occupation of a non-domestic property**. They approximately correspond to 50 per cent of the annual rent of the property. Business rates are based on a specific value, known as "rateable value" and all commercial properties are valued on the same day. Info from www.smallbusiness.co.uk

To find out about the business rates you may be required to pay a visit to either Telford and Wrekin or Shropshire Council website.

[Business rates | Shropshire Council](#)

[Business rates – Telford & Wrekin Council](#)

Food testing

For advice on shelf life, analysis, and allergen information the AGRI Project at the Regional Food Academy may be able to help you.

The Agritech Growth and Resources for Innovation (AGRI) project is a knowledge exchange support programme run in partnership between Aston University and Harper Adams University. The project focuses on supporting SMEs based within the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin area to break down barriers to innovation resulting in an increase in efficiency and productivity within their business. The support provided is free to eligible companies and is available to SMEs who operate within or want to diversify into the agritech/food & drink sector. The project is part funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). www.agriprojects.org

Getting food labelling right is vital and is governed in the UK by Law, for more information on food labelling visit - <https://www.gov.uk/food-labelling-and-packaging>

Marketing

Marketing your business is essential to success. Take the following steps to ensure you are heading in the right direction:

Define your target audience: Determine who your ideal customer is, what they like to eat and drink, and where they live and work in Shropshire.

Identify your Unique Selling Proposition (USP): Determine what sets your food or drink business apart from competitors in Shropshire. This could be your ingredients, recipe, location, price, or customer experience.

Develop a brand identity: Create a brand identity that reflects your USP and target audience. This includes a logo, colour scheme, and tone of voice.

Build a website: Build a website that showcases your brand identity, menu, prices, and location. Make sure your website is mobile-friendly and easy to navigate.

Leverage social media: Use social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to promote your business and connect with potential customers. Share photos of your food and drinks, post updates about special events, and respond to customer feedback.

Attend local events: Participate in local events, such as food fairs, farmers' markets, and community festivals, to promote your business and build your brand.

Offer promotions and discounts: Offer promotions and discounts to attract new customers and encourage repeat business. Consider running promotions during slower times of the day or week.

Partner with other businesses: Partner with other businesses in Shropshire, such as local coffee shops or breweries, to cross-promote each other's products and reach new customers.

Monitor and adjust your marketing efforts: Monitor your marketing efforts and adjust your strategy as needed. Use analytics tools to track website traffic, social media engagement, and customer feedback.

Social Media

It's essential that any new business understands the benefits of using social media in the promotion of the brand to reach customers. The expectation from customers is that you will have a platform where they can learn about you and your story – use it, it's mostly free and can be fun once you get the hang of it!

Using social media platforms can be an effective and affordable way to promote your business, enabling you to increase awareness of your products or services, attract more customers, and build customer loyalty and engagement.

Here's some more information about creating a business profile on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter, summarising the key marketing resources and tools that these platforms provide.

Facebook

Facebook is the world's largest social media platform with over two billion monthly users. Marketing opportunities on Facebook include the following:

Creating a business page:

Facebook allows you to create a free page for your business, including your name and contact details as well as a profile photo and a short description of what the business does. Setting up a business page is a good way to connect with your target audience and share posts and updates about key business developments. You can also communicate through the Facebook messaging feature, and Facebook users can recommend your business and leave reviews.

Adding a 'call-to-action' button to your Facebook business page is an effective way of encouraging Facebook users to get in touch or visit your business website. For more information about Facebook business pages, go to:

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/business/pages/set-up>

Facebook shops:

Once you have a Facebook page, you can add a shop to list products for sale and connect with more customers. Any business that sells physical goods can create a shop, but Facebook says that the feature is most useful for businesses that sell apparel, home furnishings, accessories, and baby or kids' products. For more information about setting up a shop on Facebook, go to:

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/business/help/238403573454149?id=206236483305742>

Advertising on Facebook:

Ads Manager is an all-in-one tool for creating and posting paid-for adverts on Facebook and on Instagram (which is owned by Facebook). You can set the parameters of an advertising campaign, such as the audience you want to engage with. Ads Manager also lets you test how an ad will look on different platforms, set an advertising budget, and explore ad placement options before you launch an advertising campaign. For more information about Ads Manager, go to:

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/business/tools/ads-manager>

Page Insights:

Facebook provides you with Page Insights such as how many people see, like, and comment on your posts or click your call-to-action button. Page Insights also provide demographic information about the people who engage with your Facebook page, such as age, gender, and location. For more information about Page Insights, go to:

https://en-gb.facebook.com/business/pages/manage#page_insights

Instagram

Instagram allows you to create a profile page and share photos and videos. You can use it to promote your brand, products, and services, and it is particularly popular among businesses that want to sell directly to consumers.

Marketing opportunities on Instagram include:

Creating an Instagram business profile:

You can create a free business profile that includes the name of your business, a short description, a profile picture, contact details, and a link to your business website. You can also create a 'nametag', which is a unique identifier that makes it easier for Instagram users to find your business.

Instagram lets you include several free call-to-action buttons to encourage other Instagram users to engage with your profile, such as 'Book' to book an appointment or 'Reserve' to make reservations at a restaurant.

For more information about setting up an Instagram business profile, go to:

[https://help.instagram.com/307876842935851/?helpref=hc_fnav&bc\[0\]=368390626577968&bc\[1\]=835763516568404](https://help.instagram.com/307876842935851/?helpref=hc_fnav&bc[0]=368390626577968&bc[1]=835763516568404)

Instagram Stories:

These let you post photo and video content in a slideshow format. While Instagram Stories disappear after 24 hours, they are a useful tool for driving engagement or marketing a particular part of your business, such as a new product. For more information about using Instagram Stories to market a business, go to:

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/instagram-stories>

Advertising on Instagram:

You can create and run paid-for advertising campaigns directly from your Instagram profile and set the total amount you want to spend. If you also have a business Facebook page, you can use Facebook's Ad Manager to create and run ads that appear on both Facebook and Instagram. For more information about advertising on Instagram, go to:

[https://help.instagram.com/1554245014870700/?helpref=hc_fnav&bc\[0\]=Instagram%20Help&bc\[1\]=in](https://help.instagram.com/1554245014870700/?helpref=hc_fnav&bc[0]=Instagram%20Help&bc[1]=in)

Instagram Insights:

Insights provide information about users who interact with your business profile, such as their gender, age range, and location, as well as which stories and posts they are engaging with most. For more information about Instagram Insights, go to:

<https://help.instagram.com/1533933820244654>

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the world's largest platform for professional networking and allows you to promote your business and make new contacts. LinkedIn is one of the best-rated platforms for business-to-business lead generation and is mainly used by businesses that want to sell directly to other businesses. Marketing opportunities on LinkedIn include:

Setting up a company page:

LinkedIn company pages enable LinkedIn members to find out more about your business, its products or services, and its expertise. Creating a company page is a useful way to connect with customers, prospects, and other LinkedIn members.

A LinkedIn company page includes a description of the business, its logo, location information, and contact details. You can also use a company page to share updates and other content, such as blog posts, articles, and customer testimonials. LinkedIn figures show that posts that include an image get 98% more comments compared with text-only posts. LinkedIn members who follow a company page will receive updates about your business. For more information about setting up a company page, go to:

www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/topics/6227/6228/710

LinkedIn groups:

LinkedIn groups allow businesses and professionals in the same sector or with similar interests to connect, network, and share insights and experiences. Joining a LinkedIn group is a useful way to grow your network and promote your company page. For more information about LinkedIn groups, go to:

www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/1164/linkedin-groups-membership-overview?lang=en

Advertising on LinkedIn:

Campaign Manager is LinkedIn's advertising platform and offers a range of paid-for advertising services that can help you target key customer groups. You can set up and run advertising campaigns that meet specific business objectives, such as lead generation or improving brand awareness. For more information about how to advertise on LinkedIn, go to:

<https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions>

Twitter

Twitter is a 'micro-blogging' site that allows users to create and share short posts called Tweets. People use Twitter to find out about companies, individuals, news, events, and trends. With around 100 million active daily users, Twitter is an effective way to market your business. Marketing opportunities on Twitter include:

Setting up a Twitter profile:

Setting up a Twitter profile allows you to build your brand, connect with your target audience, and promote your products and services.

A Twitter profile should include a profile picture, a short description of your business, and useful information such as location, opening hours, and a link to the business website. Tweets with the highest engagement rates are typically short and include images or videos. Including hashtags in Tweets can help you expand your reach and tap into relevant or trending conversations.

Retweeting relevant content, such as positive customer feedback or helpful articles, and replying to Tweets are good ways to maintain an active Twitter presence. For more information, go to:

<https://business.twitter.com/en/basics.html>

Twitter analytics:

Twitter provides a range of useful data and analytics that can help you use it more effectively. A Tweet activity dashboard provides metrics on every Tweet you post so you can check how many times users have seen, retweeted, liked or replied to each Tweet. This information can help you identify which content is having the biggest impact. For more information about Twitter analytics, go to:

<https://business.twitter.com/en/analytics.html>

Advertising on Twitter:

Twitter Ads allow you to create and launch tailored paid-for advertising campaigns. When setting up an ad campaign, you can choose to promote specific Tweets, attract more followers or encourage users to take a particular action, such as following your account, visiting your website, or downloading an app. Businesses are billed when a user completes an action connected to a campaign objective. For more information about Twitter Ads, go to:

<https://business.twitter.com/en/help.html>

Design on Canva

Canva is a very cost-effective design platform that will be invaluable in making your new business look awesome. Here are some basic guidelines to help you get started:

Sign up for a Canva account: Go to canva.com and sign up for a free account using your email address, Google, or Facebook.

Choose a template: Once you've signed up, you'll see a range of templates to choose from. For a small food business, you might choose a template for a menu, business card, or social media post.

Customise your template: Once you've selected a template, you can customise it to match your brand. Change the colours, font, and images to reflect your brand identity.

Add your content: Add your content to the template, such as your menu items, prices, or contact information. You can easily edit the text by clicking on it and typing in your own.

Add images: Canva has a large library of images and illustrations that you can use to enhance your design. You can also upload your own images or photos.

Use Canva's design tools: Canva offers a range of design tools to help you create professional-looking designs. These include elements such as shapes, lines, and icons, as well as filters and effects.

Preview and download your design: Once you're happy with your design, preview it to make sure it looks good. You can then download it in a variety of formats, including PDF, PNG, and JPEG.

Share and print your design: Once you've downloaded your design, you can share it on social media or print it out for use in your business. You can also save it to your Canva account for future use.

It can do a range of design functions from helping design a basic logo to business cards, posters, and social media graphics.

Still not sure?

There are lots of amazing local marketing businesses and consultants that can help market your business as it grows, once you're in a position to pay for them.