



18 April 2018

## **BBC Watchdog: a statement by Iceland Foods**

We are extremely disappointed that the BBC this evening chose to broadcast a wholly inaccurate and highly defamatory report on temperature controls within one of our stores. The facts are as follows:

**The 'whistle blower' who instigated this programme** is a former store manager who raised no fewer than 10 grievances with Iceland before he was dismissed for dishonesty, fraud and falsifying records, and clearly has an axe to grind against the company.

**The BBC's 'undercover filming' showed a delay in transferring food to a chiller** on the only shift where their undercover journalist Nathan Lord worked for us in the chilled food area. Mr Lord's description was wholly artificial and unrepresentative, not least because he was responsible for the unpacking of the delivery himself, and was reprimanded by three Iceland colleagues for working so slowly while he was doing so.

**There is no shortage of chilled storage space in this store:** a third chiller was recently installed as part of a £0.5m refurbishment, increasing capacity by 50%. The chiller can accommodate pallets.

**There was no risk to public health from this isolated occurrence** since the BBC's filming took place on dates in February 2018 when the outdoor temperature varied between -1° and +6° Celsius, and when temperature of the store room featured was actually below this, making it colder than the store's chiller.

**The programme's 'expert' criticism of chilled food being stored 'at ambient temperature' was completely misplaced,** given that the ambient temperature at the time was within the correct range for chilled food.

**There are no generic issues with temperature control in Iceland** – a fact simply illustrated by the extremely low level of customer complaints we receive relating to food spoilage. In the last six months we sold more than one billion food products in the UK: complaints relating to 'off' chilled food are virtually non-existent. We have had no temperature control product liability claims in the last five years.

**We have comprehensive, proven and effective processes and procedures** to ensure correct food temperature control throughout our supply chain.

**97% of our stores in England, Wales and Northern Ireland have 5/5 (very good) or 4/5 (good) food hygiene ratings** from their local Environmental Health Officers. The store featured in this broadcast has a 5/5 rating.

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