

# Karri Kitchen



**Profile:** Karri Kitchen is an award winning healthy ready meal company focusing on South East Asian inspired dishes. Established in 2018 by Shera McAloran in Craigavon Co. Armagh, the business initially operated from Shera’s premises but has expanded beyond the purpose-built home manufacturing premises and now operates from production premises in Carn Industrial Estate, Portadown.

**Challenge:** Assistance was required in the manufacturing scale up stage. This included help with recipe compilation and back of pack labelling, to include allergens and nutritional claims.

**Solution:** Brenda Kelleghan, Food Innovation & Technology Specialist at Southern Regional College assisted Shera through the InnovateUs programme. Funded by the Dept for the Economy, the InnovateUs programme provided up to 60 hours of specialist time. This was invaluable as the programme provided Shera the necessary tools to create retail food safe products. A flexible, bespoke plan was put in place to assist with the retail market scaling up process. Recipes were reviewed, developed and tweaked to ensure correct nutritional and calorie composition. Advice on shelf life was also provided which led onto an Invest NI Innovation Voucher application to verify chilled shelf lives of food produce. Further to this, Shera and her team completed Food Safety Training at Southern Regional College.

**Benefits:** Business has grown from strength to strength. At the start of the InnovateUs programme, Shera had 2 staff, now the team has grown to 20 staff and is continuing to grow. The product range reaches over 50 stores and is continuing to expand. Following a recent Aldi deal, meals will be supplied to a further 145 Aldi stores in the Republic of Ireland. In March 2022, Karri Kitchen was the winner of the “Healthier Product Innovation Award” sponsored by Food Standards Agency (FSA) in Northern Ireland as well as highly commended for “Small Company Product Awards” sponsored by Firmus Energy. FSA were very impressed with Shera who has worked alongside Brenda Kelleghan to develop and adapt recipes in order to meet balanced nutritional targets for FSA’s voluntary front of pack labelling guidance.