



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services (GBSF) Checklist

About Public Health England

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Introduction

This GBSF checklist will help you to check and monitor your food service provision against GBSF standards.

Central government procurers directly, or through their catering contractors, are required to apply these GBSF. Others are encouraged to follow it.

It includes a set of minimum mandatory standards for inclusion in tender specifications and contract performance conditions. It also includes some best practice standards that are recommended but not required.

GBSF is part of the Department for Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) 'Plan for Public Procurement: Food and Catering' that includes a toolkit containing the GBSF criteria provided in the checklist below and the 'balanced scorecard for public food procurement' (a simple and visual tool for implementing the requirements of the GBSF).

In terms of contract, once your specification is tight, the checklist can be used as a separate appendix, which will include something to the effect of:

- “The supplier to ensure that they meet the requirements below. The [body/trust/local authority etc] will from time to time update the list in accordance with regulation number... and agree in writing with the supplier that the supplier can meet these additional requirements if any”
- “Additionally, from time to time [mention regularity] the [body/trust/local authority etc] will audit the supplier to ensure that GBSF are applied appropriately as part of their supplier management”

GBSF checklist

IMPACT AREA	MANDATORY STANDARDS	Met/Not met	Comments
A. Production, processing and distribution			
1. Production standards	<p>All food served must be produced in a way that meets UK legislative standards for food production, or equivalent standards. Please refer to the appendix below for a list of relevant legislation.</p> <p>If in any particular circumstances, this leads to a significant increase in costs that cannot reasonably be compensated for by savings elsewhere, the procuring authority shall agree with the catering contractor or supplier to depart from this requirement and the reasons for doing so shall be noted and recorded. This decision shall be signed off by the Head of Procurement or equivalent senior official of the government department or other public body.</p> <p>Procurers or catering contractors must ensure that food is verifiable as meeting these standards by either checking that farm inspection systems meet UK standards of inspection or their equivalent, or if not, that they are subject to an independent assurance system.</p>		
2. Traceability of fresh, chilled and frozen produce	Catering contractors or food suppliers shall ensure the traceability of fresh, chilled and frozen produce in accordance with current UK legislation or equivalent.		
3. Authenticity	The catering contractor or supplier must have systems in place to enable it to check and ensure authenticity of products.		
4. Origin of meat	In line with the industry principles on country of origin information ¹ , food		

and dairy	<p>and catering service suppliers shall indicate the origin of the meat, meat products and dairy products either on the menu or accompanying literature. If this is not practicable, then at minimum the information must be available and be provided on request to the procuring authority or end consumer.</p> <p>¹http://www.fdf.org.uk/publicgeneral/principles_on_country_of_origin_information.pdf</p>		
Animal welfare			
5. Animal welfare	<p>All food served must be produced in a way that meets UK legislative standards for animal welfare, or equivalent standards. Please refer to: https://www.gov.uk/animal-welfare</p> <p>UK standards are generally similar to EU standards for food production. There are, however, differences in animal welfare standards for some aspects of pigmeat and broiler chicken production. Broiler chicken, pork and pork products must be compliant with UK standards, as set out in the Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations 2007 (as amended).</p> <p>If in any particular circumstances, this leads to a significant increase in costs which cannot reasonably be compensated for by savings elsewhere, the procuring authority shall agree with the catering contractor or supplier to depart from this requirement and the reasons for doing so shall be noted and recorded. This decision shall be signed off by the Head of Procurement or equivalent senior official of the government department or other public body. In such an eventuality, EU standards shall be met at minimum.</p>		
6. Eggs	<p>All eggs, including fresh in-shell, liquid and powdered eggs, are sourced from systems that do not use conventional cages. If from a caged system, enriched cages must be used.</p>		
Environment			
7. Higher	<p>At least 10% of the total monetary value of primary commodity (ie raw</p>		

<p>environmental production standards</p>	<p>ingredient) food and drink procured shall be inspected and certified to:</p> <p>i) publicly available integrated production (IP) or integrated farm management (IFM) standards that require the systematic and integrated management, at farm level, of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • natural habitats and biodiversity • prevention and control of pollution • energy, water and waste • management of soils, landscape and watercourses <p>and contain within their scope requirements that are consistent with the definition of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) contained in European Council Directive 2009/128/EC</p> <p>OR</p> <p>ii) Publicly available organic standards compliant with European Council Regulation 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products.</p> <p>NOTE: The 10% is of the total monetary value and can be made up of any combination of commodities allowing the procurer flexibility to find the best solutions for their circumstances.</p>		
<p>8. Palm oil</p>	<p>From the end of 2015 all palm oil (including palm kernel oil and products derived from palm oil) used for cooking and as an ingredient in food must be sustainably produced¹.</p> <p>¹Support and advice on procuring sustainable palm oil is available from http://www.cpet.org.uk/ (email cpet@efeca.com, telephone 01305 236 100).</p>		
<p>9. Fish</p>	<p>All fish¹ are demonstrably sustainable with all wild-caught fish meeting the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (includes Marine Stewardship Council certification and Marine Conservation Society ‘fish to eat’, or equivalent).</p> <p>No ‘red list’ or endangered species of farmed or wild fish shall be used (Marine Conservation Society ‘fish to avoid’).</p>		

	¹ Fish includes all fish including where it is an ingredient in a composite product.		
Variety and seasonality			
10. Seasonal produce	In respect of the use of fresh produce, menus shall be designed to reflect the natural growing or production period for the UK, and in-season produce shall be highlighted on menus.		
B. Nutrition			
11. Reducing salt	Vegetables and boiled starchy foods such as rice, pasta and potatoes, are cooked without salt.		
	Salt is not available on tables.		
	At least 50% of meat and meat products, breads, breakfast cereals, soups and cooking sauces, ready meals and pre-packed sandwiches (procured by volume) meet Responsibility Deal salt targets and all stock preparations are lower salt varieties (ie below 0.6g/100mls). NOTE: The 50% shall apply individually to each food category described in the above specification, and not only the combined volume.		
12. Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption	At least 50% of the volume of desserts available is based on fruit – which can be fresh, canned in fruit juice, dried or frozen.		
	A portion of fruit is cheaper than a portion of hot or cold dessert.		
	Meal deals include a starchy carbohydrate, vegetables and one portion of fruit.		
13. Reducing saturated fat	Meat and meat products, biscuits, cakes and pastries (procured by volume) are lower in saturated fat where available. At least 50% of hard yellow cheese has a maximum total fat content of 25g/100g; at least 75% of ready meals contain less than 6g saturated fat per portion; at least 75% of milk is reduced fat; and at least 75% of oils and spreads are based on unsaturated fats.		

14. Cereals	At least 50% of breakfast cereals (procured by volume) are higher in fibre (ie more than 6g/100g) and do not exceed 22.5g/100g total sugars.		
15. Fish	If caterers serve lunch and an evening meal, fish is provided twice a week, one of which is oily. If caterers only serve lunch or an evening meal, an oily fish is available at least once every three weeks.		
C. Resource Efficiency			
16. Water	Tap water is visible and freely available and such provision is promoted.		
	Pre-bottled water (mineral or spring) is not included in the hospitality menu.		
17. Reducing landfill	Where waste management is included in the contract, facilities shall be available to staff and customers for recycling cans, bottles, cardboard and plastics.		
18. Food waste	<p>Food and catering supplier with off-site meal preparation operations shall provide evidence of a systematic approach to managing and minimising the impacts of waste throughout their direct operations ie those operations over which they have direct financial and/or operational control. This shall include evidence of a continual improvement cycle of objective setting, measurement, analysis, review and the implementation of improvements actions.</p> <p>Catering service suppliers which will supply on-site catering services shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take steps to minimise food waste in their on-site operations by creating a food waste minimisation plan, describing what actions they will undertake • review and revise the actions they are taking with suitable regularity so as to continue to reduce food waste wherever possible; and 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feed back to clients on progress and results with suitable regularity 		
	The contracting authority shall check whether a separate food waste collection service can be provided. If the service can be provided, while achieving value for money, then it shall meet the best practice standard.		
19. Energy Management	<p>Energy management policy (off-site catering operations) Catering service contractors with off-site preparation kitchen operations shall have in place an energy management policy appropriate to the nature and scale of their energy use and consumption. Their policy shall commit the organisation to the continual improvement of its energy performance</p> <p>Energy management policy (on-site catering operations) On-site catering operations shall be run in accordance with the host building's overall energy management policy.</p>		
20. Catering equipment	<p>The minimum mandatory Government Buying Standards for catering equipment apply as well as the duty under Article 6 of the Energy Efficiency Directive.</p> <p>Kitchen taps shall have flow rates of not less than 5l/min delivered through either automatic shut off, screw down/lever, or spray taps; and non-flow rate elements shall meet the Enhanced Capital Allowance Scheme (ECA) Water Technology List criteria.</p>		
21. Paper products	The minimum mandatory Government Buying Standards for paper products shall apply where relevant: eg kitchen paper, napkins and cardboard cups.		
D. Social-economic			
22. Ethical trading	At least 50% of tea and coffee is fairly traded		
23. Inclusion of	Provide opportunity for separate contracts for supply and distribution;		

SMEs	and advertise all food-related tenders to SMEs.		
24. Equality and diversity	The catering contractor or food supplier shall have a written equality and diversity policy to help ensure it and its sub-contractors are compliant with employment law provisions in the UK Equality Act (2010). In addition, to ensure the procuring authority meets its public sector equality duty, the contractor or food supplier shall have a policy in place as to carrying out its business, such as in terms of awarding sub-contracts or procuring goods, in a way that is fair, open and transparent.		
IMPACT AREA	BEST PRACTICE		
A. Production, processing and distribution			
25. Environmental production standards	At least 40% of the total monetary value of primary commodity (ie raw ingredient) food and drink procured shall be inspected and certified to: Publically available Integrated Production standards or Integrated Farm Management standards, or publicly available organic standards compliant with European Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products.		
B. Nutrition			
26. Snacks	Savoury snacks are only available in packet sizes of 30g or less.		
27. Confectionery	Confectionery and packet sweet snacks are in the smallest standard single serve portion size available within the market and not to exceed 250kcal.		
28. Sugar Sweetened Beverages	All sugar sweetened beverages to be no more than 330ml pack size and no more than 20% of beverages (procured by volume) may be sugar sweetened. No less than 80% of beverages (procured by volume) may		

	be low calorie/no added sugar beverages (including fruit juice and water).		
29. Menu analysis	Menu cycles are analysed to meet stated nutrient based standards relevant to the major population subgroup of the catering provision.		
30. Calorie and allergen labelling	Menus (for food and beverages) include calorie and allergen labelling.		
C. Resource Efficiency			
31. Environmental Management Systems	The contractor must prove its technical and professional capability to perform the environmental aspects of the contract through: an environmental management system (EMS) for catering services (such as EMAS, ISO 14001 or equivalent).		
32. Packaging waste	Packaging waste in delivering food for the catering service is minimised. i. tertiary and secondary packaging consists of at least 70% recycled cardboard; and ii. where other materials are used, the tertiary packaging must either be reusable or all materials contain some recycled content.		
33. Food waste	The food waste minimisation plan includes actions and estimated quantifiable reductions. The supplier ensures that appropriate training is given to staff to ensure best practice in terms of food waste minimisation. Surplus food that is fit for consumption is distributed for consumption rather than sent for disposal as waste eg gifted to charities / food banks.		
34. Energy efficiency	The on-site catering operation is run in accordance with the Carbon Trust food preparation and sector guide (CTV035).		
35. Waste minimisation	Food and drink to be consumed in restaurants and canteens must be served using cutlery, glassware and crockery which are reusable		

	and washable.		
36. Catering equipment	The best practice Government Buying Standards for catering equipment apply where relevant: Domestic dishwashers Commercial cooking equipment, including ovens, fryers and steam cookers Domestic fridge freezers		
37. Paper products	Disposable paper products (eg napkins, kitchen tissue, take-away food containers) meet the requirements of the EU Ecolabel, or equivalent.		
D. Social-economic			
38. Ethical trading	All tea, coffee, cocoa and bananas are certified as fairly traded.		
	Where food is sourced from states that have not ratified the International Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998), or are not covered by the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprise, the supplier of catering and food services shall carry out due diligence against ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998). Risk based audits have been conducted against social / ethical supply chain standards eg SA8000 compliance, audit evidence for Ethical Trade Initiative (ETI) Base Code compliance, or equivalent. Working with suppliers to improve conditions through pro-active, direct engagement programmes.		
	Dairy products meet the Voluntary Code of Practice on Best Practice on Contractual Relationships Measures are taken to ensure fair dealing with farmers through, for		

	<p>example, the guidance contained in the Groceries Supply Code of Practice: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/groceries-supply-code-of-practice/groceries-supply-code-of-practice</p>		
<p>39. Inclusion of SMEs</p>	<p>Contracts are broken into “lots” to facilitate bids from small producers; Contract documents are simplified, with a degree of standardisation. Requirements are clearly stated, up front; Contract lengths are geared to achieve the best combination of price and product; Longer-term contracts are offered to provide stability; Tenders are widely advertised; Potential bidders are advised on how to tender for contracts; Projects to help small producers do business are undertaken; Social enterprises are encouraged to compete for contracts; Small producers and suppliers are made aware of sub-contractors/suppliers, so that they know who to do business with; Competition on quality rather than brand Fair treatment of suppliers Suppliers of food and catering services provide fair and prompt payment terms for their supply chain eg 30 days maximum. Length of contracts and notice period are agreed fairly with suppliers</p>		

Salt targets to be met by 2017 were published in March 2014. GBSF criteria relate to the targets to be met by 2012 . Where products meeting the 2017 targets are available these should be purchased in preference.

For salt targets see:

<https://responsibilitydeal.dh.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Salt-Targets-for-Responsibility-Deal.pdf>

<https://responsibilitydeal.dh.gov.uk/pledges/pledge/?pl=49>

<https://responsibilitydeal.dh.gov.uk/responsibility-deal-food-network-new-salt-targets-f9-salt-reduction-2017-pledge-f10-out-of-home-salt-reduction-pledge/>

Appendix 1. Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering: UK standards of production

If you are purchasing food from the UK or abroad you must ensure it is sourced from producers who adhere to the relevant UK or equivalent standards of production. The standards of production are contained in the legislative standards for cross-compliance as set out in Common Agriculture Policy legislation (Commission Regulation (EC) No 1122/2009 & 73/2009). The full set of cross-compliance rules for England can be found at <http://rpa.defra.gov.uk/CrossCompliance2014>.

Cross-compliance is the set of rules that serves as a baseline for all farmers in England applying for direct payments (such as the Basic Payment Scheme) and certain Rural Development payments. These rules cover the environment, animal, plant and public health, animal welfare and landscape features. They are split into two types; Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) which reflect specific elements of EU legislation, and standards of Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC). SMR standards are the same in all EU member states; however, GAEC standards will have some variation.

You must therefore ensure that:

- if sourcing from the UK or an EU member state, your producer must adhere to the relevant cross-compliance rules of the country of production
- if sourcing from a third country, your producer must adhere to all Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) in cross-compliance, and all England Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) which are of relevance to the farming land and system in that country of production

You should note that:

- cross-compliance rules differ between UK devolved administrations and can be found on each administration's website
- cross-compliance rules will change from 1 January 2015 as the new CAP scheme comes into force (Commission Regulation (EC) No 1306/2013). Details of these changes will be published on Gov.uk in late 2014

Summary of cross-compliance GAECs and SMRs:

Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions

- GAEC 1 - Soil Protection Review (SPR)
- GAEC 5 - Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- GAEC 6 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
- GAEC 7 - Scheduled monuments
- GAEC 8 - Public rights of way
- GAEC 9 - Overgrazing and unsuitable supplementary feeding
- GAEC 10 - Heather and grass burning
- GAEC 11 - Control of weeds
- GAEC 12 - Agricultural land which is not in agricultural production
- GAEC 13 - Stone walls
- GAEC 14 - Protection of hedgerows and watercourses
- GAEC 15 - Hedgerows
- GAEC 16 - Felling of trees
- GAEC 17 - Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)
- GAEC 18 - Water abstraction
- GAEC 19 - No spread zones
- GAEC 20 - Groundwater

Statutory Management Requirements

- SMR 1 - Wild birds
- SMR 3 - Sewage sludge
- SMR 4 - Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs)
- SMR 5 - Habitats and species
- SMR 6 - Pig identification and registration
- SMR 7 - Cattle identification and registration
- SMR 8 - Sheep and goats identification
- SMR 9 - Restrictions on the use of plant protection products (PPPs)
- SMR 10 - Restrictions on the use of substances having hormonal or thyrostatic action and beta-agonists in farm animals
- SMR 11 - Food and feed law
- SMR 12 - Prevention and control of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs)
- SMRs 13, 14, 15 - Control of foot and mouth disease, certain animal diseases and bluetongue
- SMR 16 - Welfare of calves
- SMR 17 - Welfare of pigs
- SMR 18 - Animal welfare

Animal welfare

In most cases UK standards of production are the same as those required by the EU. See <https://www.gov.uk/animal-welfare>. There are certain differences in production of meat chickens and of pigmeat, where the UK has more stringent standards:

- EU meat chickens can be stocked to a maximum of 42 kg per m² if conditions in Annex 5 of [Directive 2007/43/EC](#) are met, whereas England, Scotland and Wales have an absolute maximum of 39 kg per m²
- close confinement stalls for breeding sows have been unilaterally banned in the UK since 1999, whereas the rest of the EU still permits sows to be kept confined individually for four weeks after service; [Council Directive 2008/120/EC](#) , which partially bans the use of sow stalls, came into force on 1 January 2013