



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Healthier and More Sustainable Catering: Checklist

A series of questions to help assess whether your food and drink provision complies with our catering guidance to help organisations buy, cook and serve healthier and more sustainable food

About Public Health England

Public Health England exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. We do this through world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. We are an executive agency of the Department of Health, and are a distinct delivery organisation with operational autonomy to advise and support government, local authorities and the NHS in a professionally independent manner.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This checklist is designed to help food service commissioners, procurers of food and drink and caterers review their food provision and identify any changes needed to comply with Public Health England's **Healthier and more sustainable catering** guidance. Our catering guidance and supporting tools provide a consistent set of approaches for delivery of healthier and more sustainable catering across a wide range of settings to help people meet dietary recommendations and obtain the nutrients that they need.
- 1.2 Links to our guidance and supporting tools are provided for ease of reference. These also directly support those who must, or choose to, adopt the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services (GBSF). A link to GBSF is provided, and relevant GBSF criteria are highlighted, to support those who need to meet both sets of standards (for example, **hospitals**). The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) '**A Plan for Public Procurement: Food and Catering**' makes it easier for procurers and suppliers to meet and exceed the requirements of the GBSF. Key to this is the '**Balanced Scorecard for Public Procurement**', a simple and visual tool underpinned by GBSF which can be used to procure food and catering services by setting technical specifications and evaluating bids, encouraging innovation and best practice beyond the GBSF via use of award criteria.
- 1.3 The relevance of the different checkpoints within this checklist depends on the food and drink services that are made available in your setting. For example, calculation of nutrient-based standards for menu planning will not be relevant where meals are not provided. However, the first section of the checklist will support all those involved in healthier, more sustainable food and drink provision (including commissioners, procurers, caterers and catering support staff). This may include providing healthier options in vending machines and retail outlets, or in on-site canteens for staff and visitors.

What are food-based and nutrient-based standards and why do we need them?

- 1.4 **Food-based standards** are targets relating to specific foods, rather than the nutrients they contain. A food-based standard could be around provision of fruit and vegetables, for example.
- 1.5 **Nutrient-based standards** are targets defining the minimum or maximum provision of a range of nutrients that should be present in meals or menus. They

relate to both macronutrient content (particularly saturated fat, free sugars and fibre), and micronutrient content (that is, vitamins and minerals, including salt).

1.6 Setting – and achieving – food and nutrient standards enables organisations to offer people a “healthy food experience” that is a selection of food and drink to help the majority of people meet dietary recommendations and have the opportunity to get all the nutrients they need. However, this guidance is not intended for those serving people who may have different nutritional requirements due to illness or disease. For those with increased requirements tailored dietetic advice should be sought and a personal nutritional care plan implemented.

2. Healthier and more sustainable catering checklist

STRONG LEADERSHIP TO ENGAGE AND ENSURE DELIVERY OF HEALTHIER, MORE SUSTAINABLE CATERING				
Question to help assess compliance	Y	N	N/A	PHE guidance and supporting tools to help you make any necessary changes¹
Are all those involved in food and drink provision (for example, commissioners, procurers and caterers) aware of, and engaged in, the delivery of healthier and more sustainable food and drink choices?				PHE guidance and tools (including examples of healthier, more sustainable catering practice) are available to help those involved in commissioning, procurement and preparation of food and drinks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthier, More Sustainable Catering: Information for commissioners • Healthier, More Sustainable Catering: Information for those involved in purchasing food and drink • Healthier and More Sustainable Catering: A toolkit for serving food to adults • Healthier and More Sustainable Catering: A toolkit for serving food to older people in residential care • Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services (GBSF) Checklist

¹GBSF, guidance and tools to support their compliance are also available at: [Food buying standards for the public sector: The Plan: toolkit](#)

ALIGNMENT WITH GOVERNMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEALTHY EATING / FOOD-BASED STANDARDS					
Nutrition Principles Section 3 and Figure 1 – The Eatwell Guide and supporting messages					
Questions to help assess compliance	Y	N	N/A	PHE guidance and supporting tools to help you make any necessary changes	Relevant GBSF criteria²
Are water or other unsweetened fluids readily available?				Quick guide to Government’s Healthy Eating Recommendations	B16 (water)
Have the types and proportions of foods shown on the Eatwell Guide, and the supporting messages outside of the guide, informed your menu planning and/or provision of foods in order to make access to healthier food choices easier and promote less frequent consumption of foods high in salt, saturated fat and sugar easier?				<p>Building on the Principles of Healthier and More Sustainable Catering, the following toolkits provide tips on choosing, preparing and serving food as well as providing advice for those who must, or choose, to meet Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthier and More Sustainable Catering: A toolkit for serving food to adults – in particular, see Table 2 and Section 4 • Healthier and More Sustainable Catering: A toolkit for serving food to older people in residential care – in particular, see Table 2 and Section 8 	<p>B11 (salt reduction) B12 (fruit and vegetables) B13 (saturated fat reduction) B14 (breakfast cereals) B15 (fish)</p> <p>B26 (snacks) B27 (confectionery) B28 (sugar sweetened beverages)</p> <p>B30 (calorie and allergen labelling)</p>

²GBSF, guidance and tools to support their compliance are also available at: [Food buying standards for the public sector: The Plan: toolkit](#)

MENU PLANNING USING NUTRIENT-BASED STANDARDS					
Nutrition Principles Section 4 - 7					
Questions to help assess compliance	Y	N	N/A	PHE guidance and supporting tools to help you make any necessary changes	Relevant GBSF criteria³
<p>Have you developed and analysed menus that meet the food-based standards in line with government healthy eating recommendations and the relevant nutrient-based standards?</p> <p><u>Component considerations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the population group that you are catering for (age, gender)? – their average daily nutrient requirements? – the relevant nutrient insufficiencies and excesses to account for in this group? 				<p>Consider obtaining support from a registered nutritionist or dietitian to calculate the relevant nutrient standards and develop and analyse compliant menus using appropriate nutrient analysis software. The registered nutritionist or dietitian should also ensure that maximum safe levels of intake for vitamins and minerals are not exceeded.</p> <p>Healthier and More Sustainable Catering: Nutrition principles, details the relevant considerations in Sections 4-7.</p> <p>Nutrient based standards calculated for adults (men and women combined aged 19-74 years) and for older people (men and women combined aged 75 years and over living in residential care), are readily available within our healthier and more sustainable catering toolkits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthier and More Sustainable Catering: A toolkit for serving food to adults 	B29 (menu analysis)

³GBSF, guidance and tools to support their compliance are available at: [Food buying standards for the public sector: The Plan: toolkit](#)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you calculated the nutrient standards for your particular food service provision (taking account of average nutrient requirements and recommended targets for areas of excess or insufficiency)? • Have you developed and analysed menus to ensure they meet these standards? 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthier and More Sustainable Catering: A toolkit for serving food to older people in residential care For information on developing menus for your particular food service provision (eg for a meal occasion such as lunch only or provision across the whole day) see Healthier and More Sustainable Catering: Nutrition principles, Section 7 	
<p>Have you considered whether it is appropriate to provide targeted advice to groups within the population who may have particular dietary requirements that are not met easily within a planned menu, and put appropriate arrangements in place as necessary?</p>			<p>Certain groups within the population may have particular dietary requirements that are not easily met within a planned menu. For more information, see Section 6.13 in Healthier and More Sustainable Catering: Nutrition principles and Section 3.9 in Healthier and More Sustainable Catering: A toolkit for serving food to adults and Section 2.4 and 6.3 in Healthier and More Sustainable Catering: A toolkit for serving food to older people in residential care</p>	
<p>Have you an agreed protocol in place to cater for the dietary requirements of people with specific medical needs who may have different requirements?</p>			<p>Our guidance and supporting tools are not intended for those with specific nutritional requirements due to illness or disease. Caterers need to ensure that they cater for people with specific medical needs as they may have different requirements – these should be met on an individual basis as directed by an appropriately trained health professional</p>	