

CHAPTER 6 - MENU POLICY AND FOOD INPUT STANDARDS

0601. **Introduction.** This Chapter directs the method by which Service Personnel receive a well-balanced and consistent standard of messing under CRL. Through the provision of the Core Meal a minimum set of specifications are mandated to provide the Core Offer. The availability of appetising and good value retail offers to enhance the overall food service is encouraged to attract all members of the wider defence community.

0602. **Entitlement.** Personnel, as detailed in para 0207, are entitled to purchase the core meal at the Core Meal price, which is set at the same rate as the Daily Food Charge (DFC) plus VAT. Non-Entitled personnel who opt to purchase the Core Meal offer are to pay the DFC Non-Entitled Core Meal Rate plus VAT. There are no entitlement restrictions to purchasing a Retail offer.

0603. **The Menu Offer (Retail and Core).** The Menu Offer will primarily consist of main, light and snack meals. The pricing structure of the Core meal is determined by the prevailing cash value of the DFC broken down by individual meal, and then adding the current rate of VAT. The menus and pricing structure for the Retail Menu Offer are to be set by the Industry Partner (IP) and presented to Authority staffs for comment and agreement prior to implementation.

0604. **Healthy Eating/Nutritional Requirements.** It is a requirement of the MOD that all Service Personnel are to have ready access to nutritionally balanced and healthy food at each establishment. The Menu Offer should be designed to incorporate the Armed Forces Food Based Standards based upon a selection of protein, carbohydrates, vegetables and dessert dishes as laid down in JSP 456 Pt.2 Vol 1 Ch 4 and are to be adhered to by both Service and IP staff. Combined with the menu planning advice in JSP 456 Pt.2 Vol 1 Ch 5, this will serve to ensure that there is a choice of suitable meals available during the agreed core hours as laid down in the contract.

0605. **The Core Offer.** The Core Meal shall be available during agreed core hours. The Core Meal content will make available a balanced diet, when taken in full, and its content will be adjusted to reflect the role and/or activity of the unit. The Core Meal will provide as a minimum: a breakfast, a lunch and a 3-course dinner based on the Core Meal Technical Charter (Annex B) and current Service menu policies inclusive of the following requirements:

a. **Vegetarian Option.** The cyclic Core Meal is to include, but not limited to, a named vegetarian option for each meal day. In units where the average uptake allows for a minimum of 3 hot core meal dishes the third option could be provided as an additional vegetarian choice. All vegetarian dishes are to be in line with Annex B.

b. **Catering for Diversity.** In accordance with JSP 456 Pt.2 Vol 1 Ch 5, provision must be made for all personnel irrespective of gender, race, religious belief, medical requirements and lifestyle choices. These are to be available on demand if no requirement exists to prepare such meals on a daily basis and, as with the vegetarian option, they must be considered in advance to prevent repetition.

c. **Portion Size.** Weights and portion sizes shall, as a minimum, reflect the recipes in the MOD Recipe Manual (formerly JSP 404) and/or Ceserani & Kinton and in line with Annex B. Potatoes and vegetables shall be on a self-service basis when purchasing the protein item(s). This does not include a right to use additional plates or return to the servery for “second helpings”. Local food services staffs are to ensure this entitlement is not abused.

d. **Healthier Options.** As noted above, the guidance in JSP 456 Pt.2 Vol 1 Ch 4 is to be followed in the production of meals. This includes the use of low-sugar and low-salt alternatives and the provision of artificial sweeteners and semi-skimmed milk.

- e. **Sauces / Condiments.** Sauces, that are an integral part of the dish, are to be provided within the cost of the core meal. Similarly, condiments¹ are to be provided within the cost of the core meal.

0606. **Choice.** A full selection of Core choices shall be available throughout Core Meal Times. Core Meals should be designed to deliver a minimum of 3000 kcals based upon a selection of the hot choices, vegetables and **desserts** over the 3 meals. Data, based on preference forecasting conducted in accordance with JSP 456 Pt.2 Vol 4 Ch 6 Annex A, will determine the number of choices provided in accordance with the average numbers fed, remembering that the DFC is broken down into 3 separate costed meals.

Table 6.1

Minimum Number of Core Choices According to Average Uptake per Mess for Lunch

Average numbers fed	Hot Dishes ²	Salad Bar	Light Lunch	Catering for Diversity inc Vegetarians may be call-order	Potatoes	Vegetables or a Side Salad
1-30	2	To order	✓	✓	2	2
31-99	2/3	✓	✓	✓	2	2
100 +	3	✓	✓	✓	2	3

Table 6.2

Minimum Number of Core Choices According to Average Uptake per Mess for Main Meal

Average numbers fed	Hot Dishes ²	Salad Bar	Catering for Diversity inc Vegetarians may be call-order	Potatoes	Vegetables or a Side Salad	Hot Sweets	Cold Sweets
1-30	2	To order	✓	2	2	1	2
31-99	2/3	✓	✓	2	2	1	2
100 +	3	✓	✓	2	3	2	3

0607. **Restricted Service Days.** On certain days such as weekends or block leave, there may be a reduced number of personnel eating from the servery. On such occasions, and with the agreement of the Authority staffs, it is permitted for a restricted service to apply. The level of this service is to be agreed between the unit Authority staffs and the IP. Individual Services have different methods of addressing this issue e.g. centralised messing, reduced opening hours. It is acceptable to operate a call order service for small messes, tailored to the unit’s requirement with the agreement of the Authority staffs. If call order is to be used, the standards of the relevant KPI are to be adhered to regarding timings and quality of service.

0608. **Breakfast Menu.** The minimum **core meal** offer for breakfast is shown below:

Standard Breakfast Menu

- a. **Six items from:** Fruit juice (not squash), fruit segments, cereals (including the necessary amount of milk), bacon, British Farm Assured³ **premium breakfast** sausage, egg, ham, cheese, baked beans, tomatoes, potatoes, **toast and condiments**¹. (Up to a maximum of 3 proteins, no more than 2 of each item).

¹ Condiment range includes, but are not limited to, salt/lo-salt, pepper, vinegar, mustard, mayonnaise ketchup, brown sauce and tartare sauce. A serving consisting of a salt, pepper and an accompanying sauce.

² The 3rd hot dish could be provided as an additional vegetarian dish, subject to unit agreement.

³ British Farm Assured is the minimum standard, whilst recognising that this is not a product available in overseas stations i.e. BFC

Healthy Breakfast Menu. The minimum **core meal** offer for healthy breakfast is listed below:

- b. Fruit juice; and
- c. A choice of yoghurt or porridge; with and up to 2 toppings from a selection of granola, seed mix, preserves, honey and dried fruit.
- d. One portion of fresh fruit or grapefruit segments.
- e. A poached or boiled egg;

Accompaniments for both the Standard and Healthy Breakfast Menus:

- f. Personnel are entitled to 2 slices of medium white or wholemeal bread, with **spread**⁴ and preserve (**20g portion**).
- g. **Beverages:** Cold water (**unlimited**) and a **glass**⁵ of squash shall be available. In addition, a hot beverage⁶ (tea or coffee) **plus** accompaniments including sweeteners or a glass (**175 ml / 6fl oz**) of milk are included as part of the core meal.

0609. **Lunch Menu.** The number and type of choices to be offered are shown in Table 6.1 and in compliance with para 0605 above. No main choice shall be repeated within 24 hours unless expressly agreed with the on-site Authority staffs. **The “offer” is to comprise of the following:**

- a. The main choice shall consist of a freshly cooked hot protein commodity (meat, fish or egg dishes) in line with Annex B, serial 3&4 refer.
- b. Two choices of potato shall be available throughout the Core Meal period with at least one choice not being fried. Pasta or rice may be offered as an alternative **to a potato dish**.
- c. A choice of vegetables shall be available throughout the meal period with at least one choice being fresh (but ideally all), in accordance with Table 6.1.
- d. **Instead of the** vegetable choices, a self-service side salad shall be provided using a separate 500 cc container. Dressings **and toppings** are to be made available separately.
- e. Personnel are entitled to 2 slices of medium white or wholemeal bread, with **spread**⁴.

Alternative options:

- f. A **self-service** salad bar is to be available, Annex B serial 12 refers, allowing the consumer to select simple, lightly dressed and compound salads by filling a 750cc container, alongside a protein choice that may be pre-portioned. **Dressings and toppings are to be made available separately.**
- g. In addition, Personnel are entitled to 2 slices of medium white or wholemeal bread, with **spread**⁴.

⁴ A *spread* serving is 2 x 10g packets of either butter or a low-fat (high in polyunsaturates) alternative. All are to be made available.

⁵ The standard 6fl oz glass/tumbler, as provided through Defence Accommodation Stores (DAS).

⁶ The standard cup as provided through the DAS.

or,

h. A two course 'light-lunch' option consisting of either a 10" baguette, [wrap](#) or 2 rounds of sandwiches (4 slices of medium white or wholemeal bread) or a jacket potato, with a choice of high quality fillings. A piece of fresh fruit [and](#) yoghurt is to accompany the 'light-lunch'. [Annex B serial 5 refers](#).

[Beverages to accompany all options:](#)

i. [Cold water \(unlimited\) and a glass⁵ of squash shall be available. In addition, a hot beverage⁶ \(tea or coffee\) plus accompaniments including sweeteners are included as part of the core meal.](#)

0610. **Dinner Menu.** The main meal consists of 3 courses: a starter, a hot main course and hot or cold [dessert, in compliance with para 0605 above](#). Table 6.2 shows the number of menu choices according to the average numbers fed. No dish shall be repeated within 24 hours unless expressly agreed with the on-site Authority staffs. Similarly, any variations to the set requirements e.g. theme nights, are to be approved by Authority staffs. Menus are to be compiled using the following criteria:

a. First course:

(1) The starter shall consist of homemade soup (1 choice per meal) with a bread roll or sliced French bread plus [one portion of spread \(see footnote 4\)](#), or a simple dish or fruit juice.

b. Second Course:

(1) The main choice shall consist of a freshly cooked hot protein commodity (meat or fish dishes) in accordance with Table 6.2 and Annex B, serial 6-9 refers.

(2) Two choices of potato shall be available throughout the Core Meal period with at least one choice not being fried. Pasta or rice may be offered as an alternative.

(3) A choice of vegetables shall be available throughout the meal period with at least one choice being fresh (but ideally all), in accordance with Table 6.1.

(4) [Instead](#) of vegetable choices, a self-service side salad shall be provided using a separate 500 cc container. Dressings [and toppings](#) are to be made available separately

[Alternative Second Choice option:](#)

(5) A self-service salad bar is to be available in line with para [0609f and Annex B serial 12 refers](#).

c. Third Course:

(1) Hot and cold [desserts](#) with appropriate sauces according to Table 6.2 shall be available. [Furthermore](#), fresh fruit or yoghurt shall be offered as [an alternative cold dessert](#) choice.

[Beverages to accompany all options:](#)

d. [Cold water \(unlimited\) and a glass⁵ of squash shall be available. In addition, a hot beverage⁶ \(tea or coffee\) plus accompaniments including sweeteners are included as part of the core meal.](#)

0611. **Night Duty Meals.** Night Duty Meals are to be provided in accordance with the lunch menu policy. In order to ensure that these are prepared in a timely fashion, it is acceptable that a pre-order system be introduced.

0612. **Packed Meals.** Packed Meals (issued at Crown expense): [refer to JSP 456 Vol 1 Chap 5 para 0514](#). Packed meals suitable for vegetarians and personal with religious beliefs shall be available on request in accordance with para 0605b. Each establishment will have flexibility over dish composition to reflect local preferences, examples might include a baguette, salad or additional drinks up to the value of the packed meal allowance. Packed Meals issued at Crown expense will be paid for by the MOD at the prevailing charge.

0613. **Container and Hotlock Meals.** Meals provided in Containers and Hotlocks (issued at Crown expense) [are to](#) reflect the menu policy. These meals are to be claimed at the prevailing [core meal](#) price for that meal.

0614. **Special Diets.** For those individuals who require authorised special diets, this must be provided within the Core Meal charge. Should the IP be unable to provide the necessary meals within the Core Meal price then the IP should seek additional recompense from the Medical Vote for food costs incurred. Refer to JSP 456 Pt.2 Vol 1 Ch 5.

0615. **Food Supply.** The IP is to purchase, through their own arrangements, all food, beverages and other supplies to support the outputs of the contract.

0616. The IP shall ensure that the food supplied in order to deliver the Core and Retail menus shall adhere to the Defence Food Quality Standards which is available on the Internet via [mod.gov.uk](#). The IP shall ensure that any ingredients supplied for the composition of recipes and menus for all CRL outlets, adhere to all Government regulations as published by the Food Standards Agency. In addition, the IP is required to support MOD healthy eating and nutrition initiatives.

0617. **Shopping Basket.** For all Shopping Basket and Bench Marking procedures please refer to [the relevant contract](#).

0618. **Menu Evaluation.** [An illustrative menu can be found at Annex A. Menus should reflect the AFFBS detailed in JSP 456 Vol 1 Chap 4 and should be assessed by the INM on a regular basis. As a public sector department, the MOD has made a commitment to improving the health of its personnel and will ensure that Government policy recommendations are enacted by the Industry partners. The IP should ensure that they offer sufficient healthy retail options, as part of and in addition to the Core Meal offering, to encourage personnel to follow a healthier lifestyle.](#)

0619. **The Enhanced Core Offer (ECO).** CRL mandates a Core Meal, individual Officers' and SNCOs Mess Committees, in consultation with the IP, may consider an additional charge, similar to Extra Messing Charge (EMC)/Extra Messing Income (EMI), to be added to the cost of the Core Meal in order to deliver an enhanced offer.

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