



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

# Seeking views on possible changes to public sector food and catering policy

June 2022

We are the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. We're responsible for improving and protecting the environment, growing the green economy, sustaining thriving rural communities and supporting our world-class food, farming and fishing industries.

We work closely with our 33 agencies and arm's length bodies on our ambition to make our air purer, our water cleaner, our land greener and our food more sustainable. Our mission is to restore and enhance the environment for the next generation, and to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.



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## Overview

Government is adopting an ambitious and transformational approach to public sector food and catering. We are determined to use public sector purchasing power to ensure positive change in the food system. Our vision is that public sector food and catering is an exemplar to wider society in delivering positive health, animal welfare, environmental and socio-economic impacts.

We have developed a set of proposed changes to public sector food and catering policy, including the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services (GBSF), to deliver this vision.

Our objectives are to:

1. Promote procurement of local, sustainable, healthier food and catering.
2. Open up public sector supply chains to a wider range of companies, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to better support local economies, increase resilience, and encourage food producers to innovate.
3. Increase transparency of food supply chains to drive continuous improvement and build our understanding of what is bought, served, sold and wasted in the public sector.
4. Provide guidance and standards that:
  - are simple and engaging
  - reflect latest scientific evidence and national sustainability priorities
  - clearly align with broader Government policies, such as the Defra waste hierarchy guidance and Government dietary recommendations

The current [Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services](#) set out a range of mandatory and best practice standards for public sector organisations to apply when procuring food and catering services. These standards relate to food production, processing and distribution; nutrition; resource efficiency; and socio-economic considerations. Currently the GBSF is only mandatory within central Government Departments (e.g. catering in government buildings), the NHS (patient, staff and visitor catering in hospitals), the armed forces and prisons, as per the [Procurement Policy Note \(PPN\) 10/14](#) published in November 2014.

The nutrition standards within the GBSF were recently reviewed, updated and published in July 2021 alongside [supporting technical guidance](#). However, the other standards relating to social, economic and environmental sustainability and animal welfare have not been updated since 2014. The wider social and policy context has evolved since 2014, with a greater focus on net zero and levelling up – key drivers of the Government's Plan for Growth. The standards therefore need updating to reflect these priorities.

In 2021, public sector food procurement was the subject of [an inquiry within the House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs \(EFRA\) Select Committee](#) and has been featured in [Henry Dimbleby's independent National Food Strategy Report](#).

Recommendations from both reports include:

- updating the buying standards to ensure procurement of healthy, sustainable food
- making the standards mandatory across the entire public sector
- improving and monitoring compliance with the standards
- opening up supply chains to a wider range of businesses

These recommendations have been considered within the proposals of this consultation.

## Why your views matter

## Why we are consulting you

This consultation is expected to be of greatest interest to public sector contracting authorities, food business operators, the food industry, Government departments and agencies, local authorities, consumer groups and public bodies. We also welcome the views of any individual or organisation that has an interest, directly or indirectly.

We would like to hear your views on the proposed changes to public sector food and catering policy, as laid out in the accompanying document. We would like to know whether you think that the proposed policy changes are feasible in practice and will achieve our vision for public sector food and catering.

The policy De Minimis Assessment demonstrates that the proposed changes present minimal costs to businesses, as far as we are aware. We would like to hear from the sector on whether there are any cost implications not accounted for.

The consultation contains questions across five sections:

- a) Some information about you
- b) Public sector organisations in scope
- c) Fair and transparent procurement guidance principles
- d) Changes to the government buying standards for food and catering services
- e) Data reporting proposals

## What we are proposing to change

Currently, public sector food and catering policy comprises two main documents: the [Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services](#) (GBSF), and the [balanced scorecard](#) – a methodology for evaluating contract tenders.

In the new proposed policy, we have combined content from the GBSF and the balanced scorecard, streamlining the two documents into one. We have also added data reporting proposals to make the policy more robust and ambitious. Further support and guidance on implementing the new policy will be developed, based upon the fair and transparent procurement guidance principles, following the consultation when the policy is finalised.

A summary of the major proposed changes are as follows:

1. New fair and transparent procurement guidance principles.
2. A new ambitious target that 50% food spend is on food produced locally or certified to higher environmental production standards.
3. Updates to existing standards so they reflect latest scientific evidence and national sustainability priorities, and clearly align with broader Government policies, such as the Defra waste hierarchy guidance and Government dietary recommendations.
4. Additional new standards. These include standards on soy, local culture and diversity and customer satisfaction.
5. New data reporting requirements.

Some questions may be more relevant to some respondents than others. If you are unable, or do not want, to answer a question please select 'Not applicable' or move onto the next question.

## How to respond

The consultation will be open for 12 weeks from 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022. Responses should be received by 11:59pm on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2022. Our preferred way of receiving responses is through the online Citizen Space platform.

If you are unable to use Citizen Space, you can download the consultation documents and return your response by email to [food.procurement@defra.gov.uk](mailto:food.procurement@defra.gov.uk).

Alternatively, you can print the consultation documents out and return your response by post to the following address:

Consultation Coordinator  
Defra 2nd Floor, Foss House  
Kings Pool, 1-2 Peasholme Green, York  
YO1 7PX

Once we have had the opportunity to consider the responses to the consultation, we will publish a response on GOV.UK.

## Campaign responses

We recognise that respondents may choose to use some standard text to inform their response. Campaigns are when organisations (or individuals) coordinate responses across their membership or support base, often by suggesting a set of wording for respondents to use. Campaign responses are usually very similar or identical to each other. For this consultation, campaign responses may be analysed separately to other responses to ensure the breadth of views received can be summarised effectively and efficiently. All campaign responses will be taken into account in the final analysis of public views and campaigns help provide an indication of the strength of feeling on an issue. The

preferred route for all respondents to provide their views (including where a response is based on a campaign) is via the Citizen Space platform.

## Privacy notice and data protection

A summary of responses to this consultation will be published on the government website at: [www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra). An annex to the consultation summary may list all organisations that responded but will not include personal names, addresses or other contact details. Defra may publish the content of your response to this consultation to make it available to the public without your personal data, personal name and private contact details.

If you answer on 'Yes' in response to the question asking if you would like anything in your response to be kept confidential, you are asked to state clearly what information you would like to be kept as confidential and explain your reasons for confidentiality. The reason for this is that information in responses to this consultation may be subject to release to the public or other parties in accordance with the access to information law (these are primarily the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs), the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)). We have obligations, mainly under the EIRs, FOIA and DPA, to disclose information to particular recipients or to the public in certain circumstances. In view of this, your explanation of your reasons for requesting confidentiality for all or part of your response would help us balance these obligations for disclosure against any obligation of confidentiality. If we receive a request for the information that you have provided in your response to this consultation, we will take full account of your reasons for requesting confidentiality of your response, but we cannot guarantee that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances.

If you answer on 'No' in response to the question asking if you would like anything in your response to be kept confidential, we will be able to release the content of your response to the public, but we won't make your personal name and private contact details publicly available.

Responses may be shared with other government departments. There may be occasions when Defra will share the information you provide including any personal data, with external analysts. This is for the purposes of consultation response analysis only. Where Defra shares your personal data with third parties, we will ensure that we have the right data sharing agreements in place to protect your data and to govern the relationship between Defra and the third party. This consultation is being conducted in line with the Cabinet Office "Consultation Principles" and be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>.

Please find our latest privacy notice uploaded as a related document alongside our consultation document.

If you have any comments or complaints about the consultation process, please address them to:

Seeking views on possible changes to public sector food and catering policy  
Consultation Coordinator, Defra  
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**1. Would you like your response to be confidential? (required)**

Yes

No

If you answered Yes to this question, please give your reason:

## Some information about you

**2. Who are you responding as? (select one option only)**

Individual – You are responding with your personal views, rather than as an official representative of a business / business association / other organisation

Public sector contracting authority - In an official capacity as a representative of a local government organisation / public service provider / other public sector body in the UK or elsewhere

Industry - In an official capacity representing the views of a business

Campaign group/NGO - In an official capacity as the representative of a non-governmental organisation / trade union / other organisation

Academia - In an official capacity as a representative of an academic institution

Other (please specify):

**3. What is your role in the public sector food supply chain? (If you have multiple roles, select the one which best represents your interests in this consultation response) (select one option only)**

Primary food producer

Food manufacturer

Food wholesaler or distributor

Professional buying organisation

Facilities/estates/building manager (budget holder or client)

Procurer

Contract manager

Procurement consultant

Caterer

Retailer

Consumer, or parent/guardian/on behalf of a consumer

Other (please specify):

**4. Which areas of the public sector do you currently carry out this role in? (select all that apply)**

Central government department or executive agency

Armed forces

Prison and probation service

Hospital

Residential care

School

Further or higher education

Local authority<sup>1</sup>

None currently

Don't know

Other (please specify):

**5. Which region(s) of the UK do you currently carry out this role in? (select all that apply)**

South East

London

North West

East of England

West Midlands

South West

Yorkshire and the Humber

East Midlands

North East

Wales

Scotland

Northern Ireland

Outside of the UK

Not applicable

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<sup>1</sup> Includes procurement by county councils, district councils, unitary authorities, metropolitan districts, and London boroughs.

## Business size

Please answer this question if you are responding as 'Industry' or 'Campaign group/NGO'.

### 6. Please identify if your organisation is one of the following (select all that apply).

Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME)<sup>2</sup>

Voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE)<sup>3</sup>

None of the above

## Current route for procurement of food

Please answer this question if you are responding as a 'Public sector contracting authority'.

### 7. Through which routes does your public sector contracting authority procure food? (select all that apply)

Catering service supplier with integrated food distribution

Wholesale food distributor

Professional buying organisation or framework

Nominated suppliers (via wholesale distributor)

Outsourced to procurement consultant

Direct contracts with individual food suppliers

Donations

Not applicable

Other (please specify):

---

<sup>2</sup> For this consultation a Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) is defined as an organisation with fewer than 250 employees and an annual turnover under £50 million.

<sup>3</sup> The voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSEs) includes charities, social enterprises and voluntary organisations.

## Scope of the policy

It is currently mandatory for central Government departments, their executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies in England to comply with the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services (GBSF) and use the Balanced Scorecard methodology, as per the [Procurement Policy Note \(PPN\) 10/14](#) published in November 2014.

This includes NHS hospitals (patient, staff and visitor catering), the armed forces and HM Prison and Probation Service. The wider public sector is encouraged, but not mandated, to comply with the standards.

In response to the [EFRA Select Committee](#) and [Henry Dimbleby's independent National Food Strategy Report](#), we are seeking views on whether there is support for making public sector food and catering policy mandatory across all public sector organisations in England. It is important to note that expanding the scope of the policy would involve further engagement and consultation to fully assess impacts.

We will continue to work with the Devolved Administrations on the impact of these proposals, including on the UK internal market.

### 8.

**a. Do you think the policy should also be made mandatory for:** (select one option per setting)

#### **Educational institutions**

Early years? Yes  No  Don't know

Primary schools? Yes  No  Don't know

Secondary schools? Yes  No  Don't know

Further education? Yes  No  Don't know

Higher education? Yes  No  Don't know

**Local authorities**<sup>4</sup>? Yes  No  Don't know

**Residential care**? Yes  No  Don't know

**b. Why do you think the policy should, or should not, be made mandatory in these sectors?** Please provide details and be clear which setting your explanation refers to.

A new clarification of the scope of the policy has been proposed as follows:

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<sup>4</sup> Includes procurement by county councils, district councils, unitary authorities, metropolitan districts, and London boroughs.

“Public sector food and catering policy applies to food service environments (e.g. cafes, restaurants, or vending) on public sector premises. This policy does not apply to food retail (e.g. convenience shops), although we strongly recommend such outlets comply with the relevant food sourcing standards.”

**9. Do you think that food retail should be exempt from public sector food and catering policy? (select one option only)**

Yes, fully exempt

No – retail should have to comply with the relevant food sourcing standards and data reporting requirements

Partly exempt from the data reporting – retail should have to comply with the relevant food sourcing standards only

Partly exempt from the standards – retail should have to comply with the data reporting requirements only

Don't know

## Fair and transparent procurement guidance principles

We recognise that organisations will need support to implement new proposals. Defra intends to publish comprehensive guidance and resources to support and inspire change, based upon the fair and transparent procurement guidance principles outlined in Part 1 of the proposed policy document. This guidance will be tailored to different audiences in the supply chain, including contracting authorities (procurers, estates/facilities managers, catering managers), small and large food suppliers, and food distributors.

### 10. How far do you agree or disagree that the proposed guidance principles will support each of our objectives? (select one option per objective)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Objective 1: Promote procurement of local, sustainable, healthier food and catering						
Objective 2: Open up public sector supply chains to a wider range of companies, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to better support local economies, increase resilience, and encourage food producers to innovate						
Objective 3: Increase transparency of food supply chains to drive continuous improvement and build our understanding of what is bought, served, sold and wasted in the public sector						

### 11. Do you think there are any ways the proposed guidance principles could better support our objectives?

12.

**a. Which percentage split, if any, should government recommend for the evaluation of all food and catering contract tenders?** You can find out more about the Social Value Model [here](#) (select one option only).

10% social value, 40% cost, 50% quality (as proposed)

10% social value, 30% cost, 60% quality

20% social value, 40% cost, 40% quality

None – this should be left to individual contracting authority discretion

Don't know

Other (please see percentage split below)

**b. If Other, please make sure the combination of values you choose below adds up to 100%:**

Social value:

Cost:

Quality:

**13. How far do you agree or disagree that you have the required information and resources to confidently measure and demonstrate (for suppliers) or evaluate (for procurers) the social value, as per the Social Value Model, of food and/or catering contract tenders?** You can find out more about the Social Value Model [here](#) (select one option only)

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

Not applicable

Please expand on your answer if you would like to:

# Changes to the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services

We have grouped the proposed standards into three sections, according to their intended audience, to increase clarity and ease of use.

- 1) Food sourcing
- 2) Healthier, more sustainable menu choices
- 3) Sustainable catering services

Sourcing food in alignment with these standards intends to ensure the public sector can maximise their contribution to delivering national priorities on health, environment, socio-economic sustainability, and animal welfare. Healthier, more sustainable menus centred around local, UK seasonal produce offer potential to shift eating habits and food culture. Likewise, sustainable catering services which invest in staff training and wellbeing can lead the way in prevention and management of waste.

We propose that a **one-year lead time** is provided for organisations to comply with the new standards once published.

The following questions are about changes to the **proposed target and mandatory standards only**.

## Food Sourcing

Changes made to the standards in the “Food Sourcing” section intend to support the objective of the GBSF to promote procurement of local, sustainable, healthier food and catering. See Annex 1 for information on the detailed changes.

### Local or environmentally sustainable sourcing

Procurement of, and increased demand for, locally produced food and/or food produced to higher environmental production standards will increase farmer/producer business confidence, supporting their efforts to produce food, protect the environment and promote biodiversity. Organic production systems and integrated farm management systems support the government’s goals of restoring and preserving natural habitats and increasing biodiversity through soil management, prevention and control of pollution, and reduction in

energy and water usage and waste<sup>5,6,7,8,9</sup>. This aligns with Government ambitions and interventions within the 25-Year Environment Plan and the Greening Government Commitments. Locally produced food can also provide societal benefits such as creating a personal connection between producers and consumers<sup>10</sup>, supporting local food cultures<sup>11</sup>, and improving traceability of food through shorter supply chains<sup>12</sup>.

**Table 1 Proposed new target for ‘Local and environmentally sustainable sourcing’**

Wherever possible, food sourcing should prioritise locally produced food and food produced to higher environmental production standards. Contracting authorities and/or tier 1 suppliers should aim for at least 50% of food spend to be on locally produced food or food certified to higher environmental production standards, as defined below, of which at least 20% must be spent on food certified to higher environmental production standards (standard 1.2).

Progress towards this target must be reported on annually (please see section 3 – data reporting).

Locally produced food:

Ingredients produced/grown/caught within the same region as it is consumed, or a neighbouring county (for counties at regional boundaries – this may include counties in Scotland and Wales). Multi-ingredient foods may qualify as ‘locally produced’ if at least 50% quantity (Kg or L) of their ingredients are produced/grown/caught in the local region. Please see supporting guidance for map of regional boundaries.

Higher environmental production standards:

Production systems demonstrating integrated farm management of natural habitats and biodiversity; soil management and fertility; prevention and control of pollution; energy, water and waste management; landscape and nature conservation (Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF) certified, or equivalent).

OR

Organic production systems compliant with European Council Regulation 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products, as retained in UK law.

<sup>5</sup> Lee, K.S., Choe, Y.C. & Park, S.H. (2015). Measuring the environmental effects of organic farming: a meta-analysis of structural variables in empirical research. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 162, 263–274.

<sup>6</sup> Reed, M., Lewis, N., and Dwyer, J. (2017) “The effect and impact of LEAF Marque in the delivery of more sustainable farming: a study to understand the added value to farmers.” The CCRI, Gloucester, England.

<sup>7</sup> Reganold, J.P. & Wachter, J.M. (2016) Organic agriculture in the twenty-first century. *Nature Plants*, 2, 15221

<sup>8</sup> Tuck, S.L., Winqvist, C., Mota, F., Ahnström, J., Turnbull, L.A. & Bengtsson, J. (2014). Land-use intensity and the effects of organic farming on biodiversity: a hierarchical meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 51(3):746–55.

<sup>9</sup> Tuomisto, H.L., Hodge, I.D., Riordan, P. & Macdonald, D.W. (2012). Does organic farming reduce environmental impacts? A meta-analysis of European research. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 112, 309–320.

<sup>10</sup> Sustain (2021). The case for local food: building better local food systems to benefit society and nature. Available at: <https://www.sustainweb.org/publications/the-case-for-local-food/> [last accessed 10/06/22].

<sup>11</sup> Enthoven, L., & Van den Broeck, G. (2021). Local food systems: Reviewing two decades of research. *Agricultural Systems*, 193, 103226.

<sup>12</sup> Morris, C., & Buller, H. (2003). The local food sector: A preliminary assessment of its form and impact in Gloucestershire. *British Food Journal*, 105(8): 559-566.

It is left up to the procuring authority and/or supplier to determine how this target can be fulfilled at a local level. We envisage the balance of locally produced food or food produced to higher environmental production standards will differ regionally, dependent on availability of produce in either category.

We have included neighbouring counties for counties at regional boundaries within the proposed definition of “local”. This is included to prevent the unhelpful consequence whereby an authority based close to the border between two regions would consider food sourced from the other end of the region to be ‘local’ while food sourced a few miles down the road from a county just across the regional border would not be considered ‘local’. For example, for an authority based in Wiltshire, ‘local’ could include food from Hampshire (which, although in a different region to Wiltshire, is a neighbouring county) as well as food from Cornwall (which is in the same region).

**14. How far do you agree or disagree that the proposed new target will be effective in delivering on the vision that public sector food and catering is an exemplar to wider society in delivering positive health, animal welfare, environmental and socio-economic impacts? (select one option only)**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**15. Based on the proposed definitions in Table 1, what proportion of your current food spend is on locally produced food and food produced to higher environmental production standards? (select one option for higher environmental and one for local)**

	Food produced to higher environmental standards	Food produced locally
None		
Less than 10%		
10-19%		
20-29%		
30-39%		
40-49%		
50-59%		

More than 60%		
Don't know		

**16. Table 1 contains our proposed definition of “local”. Please rank the following definitions of ‘local’ in your order of preference– where 1 is most preferred.**

- The number of miles from point of production to point of consumption
- The number of links in the supply chain between producers and consumers
- Ingredients produced/grown/caught within the same region as they are consumed, or a neighbouring county (for counties at regional boundaries)

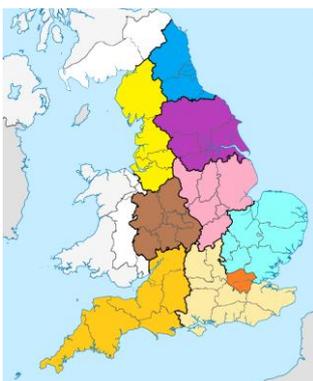
**17. The proposed definition of ‘locally produced food’ is ingredients produced/grown/caught within the same region as they are consumed, or a neighbouring county (for counties at regional boundaries). How do you think we should define ‘region’ for the purpose of this definition? Please see maps below. (select one option only)**

Map 1: The 9 English regions with allowance that London’s ‘local region’ can include the East of England and South East

Map 2: 4 multi-region “regions”: North West, North East, Yorkshire and Humberside grouped together, West and East Midlands grouped together; South East, East and London grouped; South West

Map 3: 3 multi-region “regions”: South West, South East and London grouped together; West and East Midlands and East grouped together; North West, North East and Yorkshire and Humber grouped together

Don't know



Map 1



Map 2



Map 3

**18. For procurers and suppliers of food to the public sector: Leaving costs aside, do you think it will be technically feasible for you to increase the amount of locally produced food you procure / you supply to the public sector? (select one option only)**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Not applicable

**19. For those who do not procure or supply food to the public sector: Leaving costs aside, do you think it will be technically feasible to increase the supply of locally produced food to the public sector? (select one option only)**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Not applicable

**20. What are your main barriers to achieving an increase in locally produced food in practice? How could government support you to overcome these? Please be specific where possible in your answers.**

Proposed mandatory standard 1.2 requires that at least 20% of food spend must be on food certified to **higher environmental production standards** (LEAF, Organic, or equivalent). Food certified to higher environmental production standards can also fulfil the proposed 50% target.

**21. What percentage, if any, do you think the mandatory requirement for food certified to higher environmental production standards should be? (select one option only)**

- None (no requirement)
- Less than 10%
- 10-19%
- 20-29%
- 30-39%
- More than 40%
- Don't know
- Please provide details on why you selected this answer:

**22. What are the likely cost implications, if any, of this proposed new requirement that 20% of food spend must be on food certified to higher environmental production standards? Please provide evidence where possible including estimates of increases/decreases in spend and where costs may be generated.**

23.

a. **Standard 1.3: Will it be feasible for the public sector to be entirely supplied with in-shell and liquid eggs from cage-free systems?** Previously eggs from enriched-cage production systems were permitted as the legal minimum (select one option only)

Yes

No

Don't know

Not applicable

b. **If you answered No, which of the reasons below, if any, explain your answer?**  
(select all that apply)

Cost implications

Lack of supply

Other (please provide details):

24.

a. **Standard 1.4: Will it be feasible for the public sector to be entirely supplied with seafood with a 1 to 3 rating in the Marine Conservation Society "Good Fish Guide" or Sustainable Fisheries Partnership score of 8 or above, or equivalent?** Previously any Marine Stewardship Council certified fish or Marine Conservation Society "fish to eat" were permitted. (select one option only)

Yes

No

Don't know

Not applicable

b. **If you answered No, which of the reasons below, if any, explain your answer?**  
(select all that apply)

Cost implications

Lack of supply

Other (please provide details):

25.

a. **Standards 1.5 to 1.10: Will it be feasible for the public sector to be entirely supplied with palm oil, soy, cocoa, coffee, tea, and bananas which are demonstrably legal and sustainable (certified or equivalent)?** (select one option only per product)

	Palm oil	Soy	Cocoa	Coffee	Tea	Bananas
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>					

No						
Don't know						
Not applicable						

**b. If you answered No for any of the products above, please explain your answer below, clearly identifying which product(s) this relates to.**

**26. What price difference would you anticipate businesses to see when sourcing demonstrably legal and sustainable palm oil and soy (compared with products that are not demonstrably legal and sustainable)?** Defra has evidence on the price differences of demonstrably legal and sustainable (certified, or equivalent) coffee, cocoa, tea, and bananas. (select one option only)

No price difference

+ 0-9%

+ 10-19%

+ 20-29%

+ 30-39%

+ 40-49%

+ 50-59%

+ 60-69%

+ 70-79%

+ 80-89%

+ 90-99%

+ 100% or more

If you answered 100% or more, please specify:

## **Healthier, More Sustainable Menu Choices**

This new section intends to provide clear guidance specifically for GBSF users involved with planning what food goes on public sector menus. We would like public sector menus to help people make healthier, more sustainable food choices and promote local food culture. We have therefore combined menu-related nutrition and sustainability standards in this section on healthier, more sustainable menu choices.

There are two proposed standards in the 'Healthier, more sustainable menu choices' section which present new requirements: standard 2.1 and 2.2. Please refer to Annex 1 for detailed changes.

27.

a. **Standard 2.1: Will it be feasible for public sector organisations to change the menu cycle at least once every 3 months?** (select one option only)

- Yes, this already happens
- Yes, although this does not happen currently
- No
- Don't know
- Not applicable

b. **If you answered No, which of the reasons below, if any, explain your answer?**  
(select all that apply)

- Additional cost/time to make the changes
- Limited of staff capacity (food preparation expertise)
- Increased cost of ingredients
- Increased cost of preparation
- Limited demand from consumers
- Other (please provide details):

28.

a. **Standard 2.2: Will it be feasible for public sector organisations to serve food that supports local food traditions and the cultural diversity of the local area?** (select one option only)

- Yes, this already happens
- Yes, although this does not happen currently
- No
- Don't know
- Not applicable

b. **If you answered No, which of the reason below, if any, explain your answer?**  
(select all that apply)

- Limited access to food ingredients/products which support local traditions
- Limited access to food ingredients/products which support cultural diversity
- Limited understanding of local food traditions
- Limited understanding of cultural diversity of consumers
- Limited staff capacity (food preparation expertise)
- Limited staff capacity (food preparation time/resource)
- Limited demand from consumers
- Increased cost of ingredients

Increased cost of preparation

Other (please provide details):

**29.**

**a. Standard 2.2: Will it be feasible for public sector organisations to indicate to consumers on menus, or through other means, local produce, UK seasonal produce, and local food traditions? (select one option only)**

Yes, this already happens

Yes, although this does not happen currently

No

Don't know

Not applicable

**b. If you answered No, which of the reasons below, if any, explain your answer? (select all that apply)**

Additional cost/time to provide this information

Lack of space to display this information

Do not have access to this information

Other (please provide details):

**30.**

**a. Do you foresee any major cost implications for your organisation in relation to proposed changes to mandatory standards 2.1 and 2.2? (select one option only)**

Yes

No

Don't know

Not applicable

**b. If you answered Yes, which kinds of costs do you anticipate being incurred for your organisation due to the proposed changes to mandatory standards 2.1 and 2.2? (select all that apply)**

- **One off set up costs** (for example, IT set-up, equipment costs, or training courses for staff) (select one option only)

None

£0 - £4,999

£5,000 - £9,999

£10,000 - £14,999

£15,000 - £19,999

£20,000 - £24,999

- £25,000 - £29,999
- £30,000 - £34,999
- £35,000 - £39,999
- £40,000 - £44,999
- £45,000 - £49,999
- £50,000 - £59,999
- £60,000 - £69,999
- £70,000 - £79,999
- £80,000 - £89,999
- £90,000 - £99,999
- £100,000 - £109,999
- £110,000 - £119,999
- £120,000 - £129,999
- £130,000 - £139,999
- £140,000 - £149,999
- £150,000 or more
- Don't know

If you answered £150,000 or more, please specify:

- **Familiarisation costs:** How many additional staff hours do you think it will take to familiarise your organisation with these standards? (select one option only)
  - None
  - 0 - 2 hours
  - 3 - 5 hours
  - 6 - 9 hours
  - 10 hours or more
  - Don't know

If you answered 10 hours or more, please specify:

- **Ongoing costs per annum:** How much do you anticipate the ongoing annual costs will be for your organisation each year? (select one option only)
  - None
  - £0 - £4,999
  - £5,000 - £9,999
  - £10,000 - £14,999
  - £15,000 - £19,999
  - £20,000 - £24,999
  - £25,000 - £29,999
  - £30,000 - £34,999

- £35,000 - £39,999
- £40,000 - £44,999
- £45,000 - £49,999
- £50,000 - £59,999
- £60,000 - £69,999
- £70,000 - £79,999
- £80,000 - £89,999
- £90,000 - £99,999
- £100,000 - £109,999
- £110,000 - £119,999
- £120,000 - £129,999
- £130,000 - £139,999
- £140,000 - £149,999
- £150,000 or more
- Don't know

If you answered £150,000 or more, please specify:

### Increasing the consumption of fruits, vegetables, and fibre

The Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services nutrition standards were consulted on by DHSC during Summer 2019. After consideration of the responses received, [updated nutrition standards](#) were published on 16 July 2021 and [supporting technical guidance](#) was published shortly after.

We would like public sector menus to make it as easy as possible for people to shift towards increased consumption of fruit and vegetables as part of a more sustainable and healthy balanced diet. As part of this consultation, we want you to consider whether the nutrition standards set out in Table 2 could go further still to support the objective of the GBSF to promote procurement of local, sustainable, healthier food and catering.

**Table 2: Existing standards relating to fruit, vegetable and fibre consumption**

Impact area	Mandatory standards	Best practice standards
<b>2.5 Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption</b>	<p>A portion of fruit shall be sold at a lower price than a portion of hot or cold dessert.</p> <p>Half of desserts available should contain at least 50% of their weight as fruit – which may be fresh, canned in fruit juice, dried or frozen. This excludes whole fresh fruit as a dessert option. Whole fresh fruit can be a dessert option but should not be included when</p>	Not applicable.

	<p>calculating whether half of dessert options contain at least 50% of their weight as fruit.</p> <p>Main meals within a meal deal should include a starchy carbohydrate which is not prepared with fats or oils, and the meal deal options should include at least 1 portion of vegetables and 1 portion of fruit.</p>	
<b>2.6 Increasing fibre</b>	Not applicable.	To ensure main meals containing beans and/or pulses as a main source of protein are made available at least once a week.

31.

- a. **How far do you agree or disagree that the recently updated mandatory standard 2.5 ‘Increasing the consumption of fruit and vegetables’ and best practice standard 2.6 ‘Increasing fibre’ (as set out above) supports/encourages individuals to increase the amount of fruit, vegetables and fibre in their diet?**  
(select one option only)

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

- b. **If you answered Disagree or Strongly disagree, please provide details about how you think these standards should be amended and why?**

## **Sustainable Catering Services**

This new section intends to provide clear standards and associated guidance specifically for GBSF users involved with managing and running kitchens and catering services. Many of the new standards in this section build on the former ‘resource efficiency’ section of the existing GBSF.

Proposed changes bring the standards into alignment with the Defra Waste Hierarchy and the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) approach to food waste – an industry standard. This alignment of Government policy language and ambition intends to ensure clarity of messaging and delivery on our objectives. Please refer to Annex 1 for detailed changes.

**32. How far do you agree or disagree that this proposed section provides clear standards and guidance on sustainable catering services to people involved with managing and running kitchens and catering services in the public sector?**  
(select one option only)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
- Not applicable

**33. Standard 3.7: How far do you agree or disagree with mandating the use of the 'Target, Measure, Act' approach and food waste data sharing, as described in [WRAP's Food Waste Reduction Toolkit](#)?** (select one option only and expand on your answer below)

- Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
  - Don't know
  - Not applicable
- Please provide an explanation for your response:

**34.**

**a. Standard 3.9 Will it be feasible, where single use items are required, to source recyclable versions within existing/future budgets?** (select one option only)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Not applicable

**b. If you answered No, which of the reasons below, if any, explain your answer?**  
(select all that apply)

- Would exceed existing or future budgets
- Some items do not have recyclable versions
- Items not available through existing supplier / would have to find new supply route

Other (please specify):

35.

a. Do you foresee any major cost implications to your organisation in relation to proposed changes to mandatory Sustainable Catering Services Standards (standards 3.1-3.11)? (select one option only)

Yes

No

Don't know

Not applicable

b. If you answered Yes, which kinds of costs do you anticipate being incurred for your organisation due to the proposed changes to mandatory Sustainable Catering Services Standards (standards 3.1-3.11)? (select all that apply)

- **One off set up costs** (for example, IT set-up, equipment costs, or training courses for staff) incurred for your organisation? (select one option only)

None

£0 - £9,999

£10,000 - £19,999

£20,000 - £29,999

£30,000 - £39,999

£40,000 or more

Don't know

If you answered £40,000 or more, please specify:

- **Familiarisation costs:** How many additional staff hours do you think it will take to familiarise your organisation with these standards? (select one option only)

None

0 - 4 hours

5 - 9 hours

10 - 14 hours

15 hours or more

Don't know

If you answered 15 hours or more, please specify:

- **Ongoing costs per annum** (for example costs of undertaking due diligence)

How much do you anticipate the ongoing annual costs to be for your organisation each year? (select one option only)

None

- £0 - £1,499
- £1,500 - £2,999
- £3,000 - £4,499
- £4,500 - £5,999
- £6,000 - £7,499
- £7,500 - £9,999
- £10,000 - £14,999
- £15,000 - £19,999
- £20,000 - £24,999
- £25,000 - £29,999
- £30,000 - £34,999
- £35,000 - £39,999
- £40,000 or more
- Don't know

If you answered £40,000 or more, please specify:

### **Lead time for compliance**

We propose that a **one-year lead time** is provided for organisations to comply with the new Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services once published.

**36. Considering all of the proposed changes, what lead in time do you think should be provided for organisations to comply with the new standards once published?** (select one option only)

- Less than 6 months
- 6 months – 11 months
- 12 months – 17 months
- 18 months or more
- Don't know

## Data reporting proposals

Data on food and catering activity in the public sector is currently very limited. As part of our ambition to drive transparency and continuous improvement of the sector, Defra is keen to better understand public procurement of food by enhancing data availability to assess the current performance of public sector organisations.

We would like to better understand what is being bought, served, and wasted so that we can monitor the environmental, economic, and social impacts of public sector food and catering. Ensuring public sector contracting authorities ask their suppliers or service providers for this data will drive increased transparency and awareness of their activities. This should help to promote continuous improvement in line with the ambitions of public sector food and catering policy.

We propose the following eight metrics (Table 3) and detailed data on food procured per category and sub-category (Table 4) to be reported to Defra on an annual basis. Quantity of food procured per sub-category will specifically enable Defra to estimate the associated greenhouse gas emissions and better understand how these can be cost-effectively reduced, to help meet the government's ambition to reach net zero. Defra will explore avenues to publish this data in a timely manner which will enable transparent monitoring.

### Proposed data reporting regime

We propose data to be collected on an annual basis wherever food is served within the in-scope organisations and reported to Defra within 3 months each year end. We propose the first measuring year will be end of March 2023 - end of March 2024 and therefore the first full year of reporting will be required by the end of July 2024. Each government department will determine how the contracting organisations under their responsibility will report this data to Defra. It may not be necessary for all of these metrics to be collected through one return if some are collected through other means already.

**Table 3: Proposed metrics for data reporting**

Number	Metric	Further detail
1	Total food and catering services budget (£)	Total spent on food and catering, including staff and equipment costs, over the year.
2	Total spend on food (£)	Total spent on food only over the year.
3	Number of meals served	Estimated number of meals served over the year.
4	% of total food and catering budget spent with SME or VCSE suppliers	The UK government definition of SMEs encompasses micro (less than 10 employees and an annual turnover under £2 million), small (less than 50 employees and an annual turnover under £10 million) and medium-sized (less than 250 employees and

		<p>an annual turnover under £50 million) businesses.</p> <p>VCSEs includes charities, social enterprises and voluntary organisations (also known as the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector).</p>
5	% of total food and catering budget spent on local staff	<p>'Local staff' are staff employed by the catering service who reside within the local region (as defined for the local and environmentally sustainable sourcing target) or a neighbouring county (for counties at regional boundaries). These staff wages have an impact on income retention in the local area.</p>
6	% food spend on food produced locally or to certified higher environmental production standards	<p>'Locally produced food' and 'certified higher environmental production standards' as defined for the local and environmentally sustainable sourcing target. N.B food which falls into both categories cannot be counted twice.</p>
7	Food waste as a % of food handled	<p>Food handled = total quantity (Kg) of food procured (which should equate to the sum of the food category quantity totals in Table 4. This should be reported to the contracting authority by caterers as part of the 'Target, Measure Act' approach to food waste prevention, as required in mandatory standard 3.7.</p>
8	Destination of food waste (Kg per category- anaerobic digestion, composting, incineration, landfill, sewer)	<p>This should be reported to the contracting authority by caterers as part of the 'Target, Measure Act' approach to food waste prevention, as required in mandatory standard 3.7.</p>
<p>Per food category: <b>Total quantity procured (Kg or L); spend (£); % spend local produced/caught grown; % spend produced to higher environmental production standards</b></p>		<p>Food categories are detailed in Table 4. This breakdown will enable us to understand which food categories are most commonly procured from local or environmentally sustainable sources, as well as environmental impacts.</p>
<p>Per food sub-category: <b>Quantity procured (Kg or L)</b></p>		<p>Food sub-categories are detailed in Table 4. This breakdown will enable us to estimate associated greenhouse gas emissions of food procured.</p>

## Why do we want data per food category?

Data on food procured per category (proposed below) is needed to help us better understand the environmental impacts of food procured by the public sector. The way we have proposed to categorise (and sub-categorise) foods is based on the data required to estimate associated greenhouse gas emissions – these categories have been developed and adapted from methodologies used by the World Resources Institute '[COOLFOOD](#)' global pledge, and other governmental initiatives.

**Table 4: Proposed data required per food category and food sub-category**

Please note: a more extensive list of which food products belong in which category will be included in supporting guidance.

Food category	Total quantity (Kg or L)	Spend (£)	% spend locally produced/ grown/ caught	% spend produced to higher environmental production standards	Food sub-category	Quantity (Kg or L) per sub-category
Beef, lamb and goat meat					Beef	
					Lamb/mutton and goat meat	
Pork and poultry meat					Pork	
					Poultry (chicken, turkey)	
Fats and oils (animal and vegetable)					Animal fats: lard, suet, tallow	
					Vegetable based oils and spreads	
Dairy and eggs					Milk, milk-based drinks, yoghurt/yoghurt-based drinks and spreads, cream and eggs	
					Butter	
					Cheese	
Seafood						
Plant-based milk substitutes (oat, almond, soya, rice milk)						

Plant based meat substitutes (mycoprotein, tofu, meat free sausages etc.)						
Potatoes and potato-based products						
Cereals, grains, nuts and seeds (flours, breads, rice, pastas, nuts etc.)						
Fruits						
Vegetables (excluding beans, pulses and potatoes)						
Beans and pulses (whole)						
Beverages (excluding milk included within dairy and nutritional drinks: water, soft drinks, juices, smoothies)						
Ready meals (main meals, sandwiches, wraps, soups etc.)					Animal based meal	
					Plant based meal	
					Fish based meal	
Stimulants and miscellaneous (tea, coffee, cocoa, dried herbs, spices, condiments)					Coffee	
					Cocoa	
					Condiments, sauces and spreads not listed	
Confectionary, snacks & desserts (sweets, biscuits, cakes, puddings, chocolate, bars, ice cream, desserts)						
Other						
<b>TOTAL (All food)</b>						

## Possible future changes

There is ongoing work across Government and industry to improve how we measure health and animal welfare impacts associated with food, in addition to environmental and socio-economic impacts. As these metrics are developed and adopted across the food system they will be included amongst this set of metrics, where applicable. This will enable us to better measure the full impact of public sector food and catering and ensure that it is an exemplar to wider society in delivering positive health, animal welfare, environmental and socio-economic impacts.

### 37. Does your organisation already collect this information? (select all that apply)

**Metric 1:** Total food and catering services budget (£)

**Metric 2:** Total spend on food (£)

**Metric 3:** Number of meals served

**Metric 4:** % of total food and catering budget spent with SME or VCSE suppliers

**Metric 5:** % of total food and catering budget spent on local staff

**Metric 6:** % food spend on food produced locally or to certified higher environmental production standards

**Metric 7:** Food waste as a % of food procured

**Metric 8:** Destination of food waste (tonnage per category- anaerobic digestion, composting, incineration, landfill, sewer)

**Quantity (Kg or L) on food procured per category**

**Quantity (Kg or L) of food procured per sub-category**

**Spend (£) on food procured per category**

Not applicable

### 38. How far do you agree or disagree that the proposed reporting requirements and publication of the data will increase transparency of the public sector food supply chain? (select one option only)

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

### 39. How far do you agree or disagree that the proposed reporting requirements and publication of the data will drive continuous improvement across the public sector food supply chain? (select one option only)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**40. How far do you agree or disagree that the proposed reporting requirements are sufficient for monitoring and enforcing compliance with the government buying standards?** (select one option only)

- Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
  - Don't know
- Please expand your answer if you would like to:

**41.**

**a. Could there be any unintended consequences of making the metrics publicly available?** (select one option only)

- Yes, for all of them
- Yes, for some of them
- No
- Don't know

**b. If you answered Yes, which the reasons below, if any, explain your answer?**  
(select all that apply and expand on your answer below)

- Increased competition
  - Increased costs
  - Suppliers unable to meet standards and take business elsewhere
  - Other
- Please explain your answer:

**42. How often should the proposed data be reported to Government?** (select one option only)

Once per financial year (beginning of April to end of March)

Once per calendar year

Once per 6 months

Other, please provide details and rationale:

**43.**

**a. Do you foresee any practical difficulties with obtaining data from your supply chain to report on the metrics, as proposed? (select one option only)**

Yes

No

Don't know

Not applicable

**b. If you answered Yes, which of the reasons below, if any, explain your answer? (select all that apply)**

Data required	Staff time/resource required to collect this data	Staff time/resource required to process this data	Limited access to this data from the supply chain	Technical or IT difficulties in extracting this data from ordering systems and/or invoices
Total food and catering services budget (£)				
Total spend on food (£)				
Number of meals served				
% of total food and catering budget spent with SME or VCSE suppliers				
% of total food and catering budget spent on local staff				
% food spend on food produced locally or to certified higher				

environmental production standards				
Food waste as a % of food handled				
Destination of food waste (tonnage per category- anaerobic digestion, composting, incineration, landfill, sewer)				
Quantity (Kg or L) of food procured per category				
Spend (£) on food procured per category				
Quantity (Kg or L) of food procured per sub-category				

Other (please provide details of other practical difficulties you foresee and which metrics these link to):

44.

a. **Do you foresee any major cost implications to your organisation in relation to the data reporting requirements?** (select one option only)

Yes

No

Don't know

Not applicable

b. **If you answered Yes, which kinds of costs do you anticipate being incurred for your organisation due to data reporting requirements?** (select all that apply)

- **One off set up costs** (for example staff training, internal and external IT and communications costs) incurred by your organisation? (select one option only)

None

£0 - £19,999

£20,000 - £39,999

£40,000- £59,999

£60,000 - £79,999

- £80,000 - £99,999
- £100,000 - £149,999
- £150,000 - £199,999
- £200,000 - £249,999  £250,000 or more
- Don't know

If you answered £250,000 or more, please specify:

- **Familiarisation costs:** How many additional staff hours do you think it will take to familiarise your organisation with these standards? (select one option only)

- None
- 0 - 4 hours
- 5 - 9 hours
- 10 - 14 hours
- 15 hours or more
- Don't know

If you answered 15 hours or more, please specify:

- **Ongoing costs per annum:** How much do you anticipate the ongoing annual costs to be for your organisation each year? (For example, the cost of undertaking due diligence and/or staffing resource) (select one option only)

- None
- £0 - £19,999
- £20,000 - £39,999
- £40,000 - £59,999
- £60,000 - £79,999
- £80,000 - £99,999
- £100,000 - £149,999
- £150,000 - £199,999
- £200,000 - £249,999
- £250,000 or more
- Don't know

If you answered £250,000 or more, please specify:

We are interested to know when it will first be possible to **report** on the proposed metrics. This is not when you will first be able to **meet** the proposed standards.

45.

a. **Which financial year period do you think it would be feasible to first report on this data?** (select one option only)

22/23 financial year

23/24 financial year (as proposed)

24/25 financial year

25/26 or beyond

Don't know

Not applicable

b. **If you answered that it would not be feasible to first report on these metrics for the full 23/24 financial year, as proposed, please provide details about your response.**