



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Public sector food and catering policy for England

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

Proposed document for June 2022 consultation

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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1. Executive Summary

Government is adopting an ambitious and transformational approach to public sector food and catering, as set out in the Government Food Strategy (2022). Public sector food and catering is a powerful lever to stimulate demand of local, sustainable food and support the Government's efforts to promote a healthier and more sustainable food system. 1.9 billion meals are served in the public sector each year. Catering contracts cover a range of organisations and people, from schools and hospitals to prisons and armed forces personnel and include provision for many vulnerable individuals and groups.

The objective of this policy document is to lay out the proposed changes and additions to the existing 'Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services' (GBSF). These include:

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 sustainable soy, local and cultural engagement and customer satisfaction.
5. New data reporting requirements.

Once agreed and finalised, this policy document, including a revised version of the GBSF, will be published alongside further guidance and resources, tailored for different sectors. This will ensure public sector contracting authorities, and those businesses that supply into the public sector, have clarity on the steps they need to take to guarantee their food and catering services meet the standards, and deliver positive health, animal welfare, environmental and socio-economic impacts.

2. Who is this document for?

- This document is for everyone involved with public sector food and catering.
- Public sector food and catering policy, including the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering (GBSF) and reporting requirements, is mandatory across all Central Government Departments, their Executive Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies in England (“in-scope organisations”).
- 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.
- Other contracting authorities (e.g. schools, universities, local authorities) are strongly recommended to apply these standards.
- Please note, for the purpose of this document, unless context suggests otherwise, ‘food’ should be read as meaning any drink, substance, or product, whether processed, partially processed, or unprocessed intended for human consumption.

3. Introduction

Public sector food and catering is a powerful lever to stimulate demand of local, sustainable food and support the Government's efforts to promote a healthier and more sustainable 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 (Figure 1).

We want to see transformational change in the way that public sector organisations buy and serve food – ensuring a fair and transparent buying approach which supports small and local suppliers. The combined purchasing power of public sector organisations can shift supply and demand for local, sustainable, healthier food. This has the potential to boost local economies and promote local food culture and identity, deliver on net zero, promote biodiversity, and tackle obesity and diet-related ill-health.

We understand the scale of the journey ahead, but we are confident that through setting higher standards, engaging with the sector, and driving transparency through data we can achieve our vision of buying and serving better food for people and the planet.

Objectives of the policy proposals set out in this document 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 (SME), 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

One of the key changes being proposed (set out in part 3) is the data reporting requirements. This data will mean that, for the first time, Defra will be able to report the impact of public sector spending on food and catering services and the public sector will be held accountable. Further to this, we believe that increased transparency in the supply chain will drive continuous improvement, and consumer trust and appreciation of food provenance.

Figure 1: Our vision for public sector food: how intended policy outcomes create positive impact.



4. How to use this document

This document is split into 3 main sections:

Part 1: Fair and transparent procurement guidance principles

- A summary of principles for fair and transparent food procurement guidance.
- Defra intends to publish comprehensive guidance and resources to support and inspire change based upon these principles, within the existing framework of procurement policies, guidance and regulations. This guidance will be tailored to different audiences, so the principles can be embedded across the supply chain.

Part 2: The government buying standards for food and catering (GBSF)

- Mandatory and best practice standards clearly indicate Government expectations for healthier, more sustainable food and catering services.
- Mandatory standards must be met by in-scope organisations
- There is an expectation that, through regular engagement with suppliers, best practice standards will be incorporated into contracts over time to ensure public sector food and catering procurement remains an exemplar.
- The 'verification of compliance' column contains questions or measurable indicators which correspond with each mandatory standard. These should be used during tender process to verify suppliers' compliance with GBSF standards. They can also be used as contract management Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), as required.

Part 3: Data reporting requirements

- Data on the metrics within part 3 must be reported to Government by in-scope organisations.
- We strongly recommend that, wherever possible, the relevant standards and data requirements are included in contract specifications. This is to ensure suppliers are contractually obliged to comply with the mandatory standards and provide the relevant data. There should be sufficient flexibility built into contracts to allow for updates to the data requirements and standards, as these evolve.

Part 1: Fair and Transparent Procurement

Guidance Principles

Food and catering services, like any other goods and services, should be procured in line with [public procurement policy](#) and all the associated regulations, directives and guidance, where applicable.

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 below. 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.

Generating environmental and social value

- The Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services should be used in the contract specification and considered when evaluating and awarding tenders.
- In-scope organisations must ensure compliance with [PPN 06/20](#) on social value and should consider how this can support local communities working in the food supply chain.
- The cost to quality ratio in tender competitions should maximise the social and environmental value of the food procured. We recommend tenders have a 10% social value (as minimum), 40% cost, 50% quality weighting.
- Contracts should be awarded on the basis of the Most Advantageous Tender (MAT), rather than the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT).
- In scope organisations must ensure compliance with [PPN 06/21](#) on taking account of carbon reduction plans and check their suppliers have published a carbon reduction plan as per the template, where the contract value is above £5 million per annum.
- Where procurements are not in scope of PPN 06/21, Contracting Authorities should consider encouraging their suppliers to produce a carbon reduction plan during the life of the contract. This carbon reduction plan should include commitments to meeting Net Zero emissions (including scope 3) by at least 2050. Care should be taken to ensure such a requirement does not place undue burden upon suppliers and is proportionate and relevant to the requirements of the contract.

Opening up public sector supply chains to a wider range of companies

- Contracting authorities must engage as widely as possible with the market pre-procurement to ensure that the proposed approach will attract a wide diversity of

suppliers to bid such as SMEs, VCSEs and other under-represented businesses. This includes proactively engaging with the local market to determine what produce is available locally.

- The procurement process should be as accessible as possible to SMEs. To achieve this, wherever possible, contracts should be broken down into smaller lots to enable supply from businesses who may have limited product ranges.
- Wherever possible seek to provide opportunities for small, local suppliers to supply certain goods directly to your organisation as nominated suppliers, alongside larger suppliers.
- Contracting Authorities should look to influence Tier 1 suppliers to help promote SMEs within their supply chains, such as using nominated suppliers.
- In compliance with [PPN 11/20](#) in scope organisations can reserve procurement by supplier location and reserve procurement for Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) or Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs) for goods and services contracts beneath the given thresholds.
- Wherever possible use frameworks or procurement systems which offer greater flexibility for smaller suppliers to join contracts.
- Contract documents should be simplified, with a degree of standardisation and requirements clearly stated up front, and guidance on applying provided.
- Tenders should be advertised for at least 30 days, after a period of engagement with the local market.

Ensuring fair and ethical trading

- Suppliers of food and catering services provide prompt payment terms for subcontractors in their supply chain in compliance with [PPN 05/15](#), including payment of undisputed invoices to subcontractors in the supply chain within 30 days.
- In scope organisations must ensure compliance with [PPN 07/20](#) on 'Taking account of a bidder's approach to payment in the procurement of major contracts'.
- The food supply chain is at high risk of modern slavery and labour abuse, particularly where temporary workers are used to harvest, process and pack food. In scope organisations must ensure compliance with [PPN 05/19](#) on tackling modern slavery in Government supply chains.
- The [Modern Slavery Procurement Guidance](#) should be used. This summarises the key actions to be taken to ensure modern slavery risks are identified and managed, both on existing contracts and in new procurement activity. It is recommended that procurers use the [Modern Slavery Assessment Tool](#) which supports public bodies to assess their supply base for modern slavery risk.
- Contracting authorities should check their suppliers are carrying out adequate checks and mitigations. As a minimum, procurers must check their suppliers' modern slavery statements meet [the legal requirements](#), where required.

Continuous improvement

- Measures should be taken to monitor and manage performance throughout the life of the contract, and suppliers should be encouraged to continually improve their performance.
- The metrics proposed in part 3 will need to be reported to Defra annually and can be used as KPIs for contract management. Compliance indicators found within the GBSF can also be used as KPIs, as required.
- A realistic target for percentage of food spend with SMEs and/or VCSEs must be set, reported and monitored annually. We recommend a target of 33% minimum and a plan should be in place in order to reach this target.
- Contracting authorities should demonstrate progress towards the aspiration that 50% food spend is on food produced locally or to higher environmental production standards.

Part 2: Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services

The standards are presented in three sections, according to their intended audience. Food suppliers will need to comply with standards in section 1, whereas catering service providers or procurers will also need to consider section 2 and section 3 standards as well.

Within these 3 sections there are sub-sections which group standards on a related theme together.

1) Food sourcing (standards 1.1 - 1.18)

- Local and environmentally sustainable sourcing
- Animal source foods
- Sustainable and responsibly sourced commodities
- Nutrition specification of foods

2) Healthier, more sustainable menu choices (standards 2.1 - 2.10)

- Nutritional aspects of menu choices

3) Sustainable catering services (standards 3.1 - 3.11)

- Waste prevention, collection and management

Social, economic and environmental sustainability, animal welfare and health and wellbeing are at the heart of the intended impacts of the standards, in line with our policy vision. Figure 2 summarises some of the key mandatory standards and illustrates which intended impacts are linked with the standards in each section.

Figure 2: A summary of the standards linked to their intended impacts

| Impacts |  Environment |  Economic |  Social |  Animal welfare |  Health |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| Food sourcing | All food must meet UK food and farming legislation including animal welfare standards, or equivalent. | | | | Food and drink must meet energy, salt, sugar, fibre, saturated fat and pack size specifications. |
| | At least 20% food spend must be on food certified to higher environmental production standards. Wherever possible, food sourcing should prioritise locally produced food and food produced to higher environmental production standards. | | | | |
| | All seafood must be sustainably caught or responsibly farmed. | | | All in-shell and liquid eggs must be sourced from cage-free systems. | |
| | All palm oil, soy, cocoa, tea, coffee, and bananas must be demonstrably legal and sustainable. | | | | |
| Healthier, more sustainable menu choices | Menus must vary throughout the year to reflect the natural growing or production period for the UK. There must be at least one menu cycle change every 3 months. | | | | Menu choices must include healthier options to encourage and support people to achieve a healthy balanced diet, in line with the Eatwell Guide. |
| | Menus must support UK food traditions and take account of cultural, religious, and special dietary needs of consumers. | | | | |
| | Menus and pre-packaged food must be labelled in line with current rules on allergens and origins of animal source foods. | | | | |
| Sustainable catering services | Non-recyclable waste must be prevented by removing single use plastics wherever possible. | Customer satisfaction should be monitored and feedback addressed. | | | |
| | Catering services must have an energy management policy. | Opportunities for employment and routes for development within the catering service must be accessible and promoted. | | | |
| | Catering equipment must meet criteria in the Energy Technology List and be re-used, repaired or refurbished at end of use, where possible. | Caterers must have an equality and diversity policy in place | | | |
| | Catering services must use WRAP's Target Measure Act approach, or equivalent, to preventing and managing food waste. | | | | |

1. Food sourcing

Please note, for the purpose of this document, unless context suggests otherwise, 'food' should be read as meaning any drink, substance, or product, whether processed, partially processed, or unprocessed intended for human consumption.

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. 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.

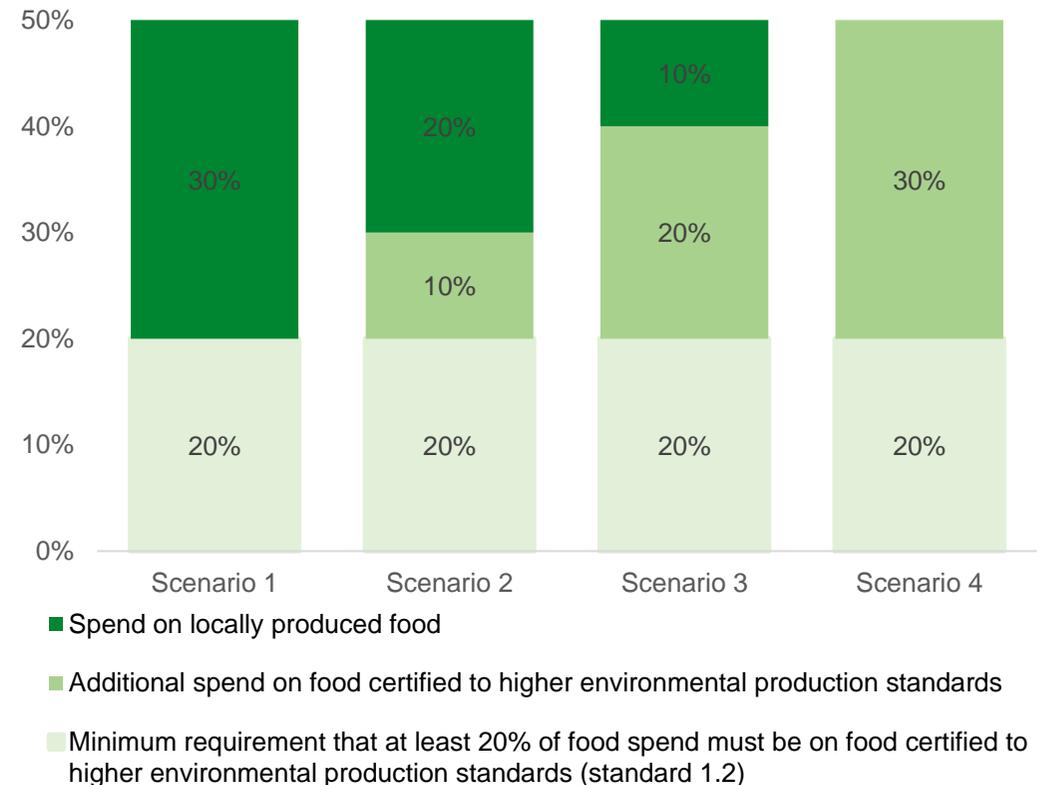
Higher environmental production standards:

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.

Figure 3 – Diagram demonstrating different scenarios of how the 50% target could be fulfilled



| Impact area | Mandatory standards | Verification of compliance |
|--|---|--|
| 1.1 Production standards | All food procured must be produced to UK food and farming legislative standards, or equivalent. Where food is procured from outside the UK sufficient evidence must be provided by the supplier to ensure equivalent standards are met. Assurance schemes can be used to evidence this. Further information on assurance schemes will be made available in supporting guidance, following the consultation. | All food procured meets UK food and farming legislative standards, or equivalent? (Yes or No) |
| 1.2 Higher environmental production standards | <p>At least 20% food spend must be on food certified to higher environmental production standards, as defined below:</p> <p><u>Higher environmental production standards:</u></p> <p>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).</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Organic production systems compliant with European Council Regulation 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products, as retained in UK law.</p> | % food spend food certified to higher environmental production standards by LEAF, or equivalent, or as organic. Note: the word organic is defined by law and all organic operators must comply with European organic regulations as retained in UK law. |

Animal source foods

| Impact area | Mandatory standards | Verification of compliance |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| <p>1.3 Animal welfare</p> | <p>All animal source food (including where meat, eggs and dairy are ingredients in a processed product) must be procured from production systems which comply with UK animal welfare standards, or equivalent. These apply to animals on-farm, in transport, at market and at slaughter. Additionally, all in-shell and liquid eggs must be sourced from cage-free systems, for example, barn, free-range or organic (this is above the UK minimum legislative standard which permits enriched cage systems).</p> <p>In relation to any imported products these must meet the following attested requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all meat from chickens, and chicken products, must be sourced from systems that have a maximum stocking density of 33kg/m², or up to 39kg/m² if ventilation, heating and cooling systems requirements are met • all pork and pork products, including sausages, bacon and ham, must be sourced from systems that do not use sow stalls (also known as gestation crates) • all beef, veal and dairy products must be sourced from systems that meet UK standards for calves in relation to space allocations, group housing and diet • all milk and dairy products must be sourced from systems in which cows are not treated with rBST growth hormone • all meat and dairy products must be sourced from systems that do not permit the use of electro-immobilisation, whether as a method of restraint, or for any other reason • all eggs and egg products must be sourced from systems that do not practice forced (or induced) moulting <p>International assurance schemes can be used to evidence these requirements. Further information on assurance schemes will be made available in supporting guidance, following the consultation.</p> <p>Procurers should work with suppliers to identify higher welfare products that go beyond UK legislative standards and seek to increase the proportion of higher welfare products supplied over the course of a contract.</p> | <p>Animal source foods meet UK animal welfare legislative standards and welfare codes? (Yes or No)</p> <p>In-shell and liquid eggs are from cage-free systems? (Yes or No)</p> <p>% animal source foods procured from 'higher welfare' production systems.</p> |
| <p>1. 4 Seafood</p> | <p>All seafood (including as an ingredient in a processed product) must be sustainably caught or responsibly farmed, evidenced by a rating of 1, 2, or 3 in the Marine Conservation Society's "Good Fish Guide" or Sustainable Fisheries Partnership score of 8 or above, or equivalent. Equivalent certification schemes which may be used have been benchmarked by the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative.</p> <p>A diverse range of seasonally available seafood species must be procured from locally caught or produced sources, where possible.</p> <p>Seafood with a rating of 4 or 5 in the Marine Conservation Society's "Good Fish Guide" must not be procured. Tuna and prawns (including where tuna and prawn are ingredients in a processed product) must not be procured, wherever possible.</p> | <p>All seafood is Marine Conservation Society rated 1, 2, or 3? (Yes or No)</p> <p>% seafood which is locally caught or produced</p> |

Sustainable and responsibly sourced commodities

Further information on meeting the standards using independent certification will be available in supporting guidance, following the consultation.

| Impact area | Mandatory standards | Best practice standards | Verification of compliance |
|---------------------|---|--|---|
| 1.5 Palm oil | All palm oil, palm kernel oil and products derived from palm oil used for cooking and as an ingredient in food must be demonstrably legal and sustainable (certification, or equivalent). | Not applicable. | Palm oil is certified sustainable, or equivalent? (Yes or No) |
| 1.6 Soy | All soy and soy products used for cooking and as an ingredient in food must be demonstrably legal and sustainable (certification, or equivalent) | Soy used for animal feed is demonstrably legal and sustainable (FEFAC benchmarking, or equivalent) | Soy is certified sustainable, or equivalent? (Yes or No) |
| 1.7 Cocoa | All cocoa and cocoa products used for cooking and as an ingredient in food, must be demonstrably legal and sustainable (certification, or equivalent). | Not applicable. | Cocoa is certified sustainable, or equivalent? (Yes or No) |
| 1.8 Coffee | All coffee procured must be demonstrably legal and sustainable (certification, or equivalent). | Not applicable. | Coffee is certified sustainable, or equivalent? (Yes or No) |
| 1.9 Tea | All tea procured must be demonstrably legal and sustainable (certification, or equivalent). | Not applicable. | Tea is certified sustainable, or equivalent? (Yes or No) |
| 1.10 Bananas | All bananas procured must be demonstrably legal and sustainable (certification, or equivalent). | Not applicable. | Bananas are certified sustainable, or equivalent? (Yes or No) |

In addition to the standards above, if any companies fall in scope of Government's due diligence requirements for forest risk commodities, then they must meet the due diligence requirements for regulated commodities.

Nutrition specification of foods

Food and drink choices on the menu must provide healthier options to encourage and support people to achieve a healthy balanced diet that is in line with the [‘Eatwell Guide’](#). The GBSF nutritional standards found in this section and **‘Nutritional aspects of menu choices’** help promote this diet. These standards must be met, unless superseded by more setting-specific guidance such as in the following bullets:

- **Schools:** Compliance with the [School Food Standards](#) is mandatory for all maintained schools (including academies and free schools).
- **Hospitals:** The specific nutritional needs of individual patients must always supersede the application of blanket principles. Refer to the [BDA Nutrition and Hydration Digest](#) for more information, and the *National Standards for Healthcare Food: Patient, Staff and Visitor* for hospital specific guidance.
- **Armed forces:** Food served to personnel undertaking periods of physical exertion on operations or field exercises may be exempt from the nutritional standards on a short to medium term basis. The Defence Catering Manual JSP456 contains energy, nutrient and food-based standards for the armed forces.

| Impact area | Mandatory standards | Best practice standards | Verification of compliance |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 1.11 Increasing fibre intake | <p>Excluding pre-packed sandwiches, at least 50% of bread provided contains at least 3g fibre per 100g (i.e. is a source of fibre).</p> <p>At least 75% of pre-packed sandwiches provided contains bread with at least 3g fibre per 100g.</p> | <p>Excluding pre-packed sandwiches, to ensure at least 50% of bread provided contains at least 3g fibre per 100g (i.e., is a source of fibre), as per the mandatory standard and, in addition to the mandatory standard at least 25% of all bread provided contains at least 6g per 100g (i.e., high in fibre).</p> | <p>50% bread provided is 3% fibre minimum? (Yes or No)</p> <p>75% pre-packed sandwiches contain bread with 3% fibre? (Yes or No)</p> |
| 1.12 Savoury snacks | <p>Savoury snacks are only provided in packet sizes of 35g or less.</p> <p>Note: Savoury snacks include crisps and any product made from small pieces of potato, wheat, rice, corn or other base ingredient, which have been baked, extruded, cooked or processed in any way. Crisps are defined in this instance as products that comprise sliced whole, fried potato.</p> | <p>Savoury snacks are only provided in packet sizes of 30g or less.</p> | <p>Snack packet sizes are 35g or less? (Yes or No)</p> |
| 1.13 Reducing salt | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 75%¹ of meat products, breads, soups, cooking sauces and ready meals procured by volume, and 75% of breakfast cereals and pre-packed sandwiches provided meet current core salt targets², and any subsequent revisions to this target. | <p>At least 75%¹ of all products (procured by volume/provided) that are covered by the current core salt targets², and any subsequent revisions to this target, meet this target.</p> | <p>% meat products, breads, soups, cooking sauces, ready meals, breakfast cereals and pre-packed sandwiches which meet salt targets? (Yes or No)</p> |

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All stock preparations shall be lower salt varieties (i.e., below 0.6g/100mls reconstituted). <p>¹ Note: The 75% applies individually to each food category described in the above specification, and not only to the combined provision/volume. The requirement relates to meeting maximum targets or using an average target as a maximum where a maximum target is not set.</p> <p>² The deadline for compliance with this standard is 18th August 2024.</p> | | All stock preparations are lower salt varieties? (Yes or No) |
| 1.14 Reducing saturated fat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meat and meat products, biscuits, cakes and pastries should be lower in saturated fat, where available. At least 50% of hard yellow cheese procured by volume shall have a maximum total fat content of 25g/100g. At least 75% of ready meals procured by volume shall contain less than 6g saturated fat per portion. At least 75% of milk procured by volume is lower fat (semi-skimmed, 1% or skimmed milk). At least 75% of oils and 75% of spreads procured by volume are based on unsaturated fats. At least 50% of pre-packed sandwiches and other savoury pre-packed meals (wraps, salads, pasta salads) provided contain 400kcal (1680kJ) or less per serving and do not exceed 5.0g saturated fat per 100g³. <p>³ Note: At least 50% pre-packed sandwiches must meet these specifications by 18th February 2023, rising to at least 75% by 18th August 2024.</p> | Not applicable. | <p>Meat, meat products, biscuits, cakes and pastries are lower in saturated fat where available? (Yes or No)</p> <p>Saturated fat and calorie specifications for hard yellow cheese, ready meals, milk, oils and spreads pre-packed sandwiches and other savoury pre-packed meals met? (Yes or No)</p> |
| 1.15 Reducing sugar intake | <p>At least 75%⁴ of products provided that are included in the following categories covered by the sugar reduction programme to not exceed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> biscuits – 100kcal cakes – 220 kcal morning goods – 220 kcal puddings – 220 kcal yogurts – 120 kcal ice cream – 220 kcal | <p>Not applicable.</p> <p>⁴ Note: The 75% applies individually to each food category described in the above specification, and not only to the combined provision/volume.</p> | % products in sugar reduction programme meeting the required calorie-based portion sizes. |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <p>1.16 Breakfast cereals</p> | <p>At least 50% of breakfast cereals provided are higher in fibre (i.e. at least 6g/100g) and shall not exceed 12.3g/100g total sugars (10g additional allowance for dried fruit in cereal).</p> | <p>At least 50% of all breakfast cereals provided contain at least 6g per 100g of fibre (i.e. high in fibre) and shall not exceed 12.3g/100g total sugars (10g additional allowance for dried fruit in cereal), as per the mandatory standard.</p> <p>And, in addition to the mandatory standard.</p> <p>At least 25% of all breakfast cereals provided contain at least 6g per 100g of fibre (i.e. high in fibre) and shall not exceed 5g/100g total sugars (10g additional allowance for dried fruit in cereal).</p> | <p>% breakfast cereals provided meeting fibre and sugar criteria.</p> |
| <p>1.17 Confectionery</p> | <p>At least 75% of confectionery and packet sweet snacks provided are in the smallest standard single serve portion size available within the market and do not exceed 200 kcal (maximum) for chocolate and 125 kcal (maximum) for sugar confectionery.</p> | <p>All confectionery and packet sweet snacks provided are in the smallest standard single serve portion size available within the market and do not exceed 200kcal (maximum) for chocolate and 125kcal (maximum) for sugar confectionery.</p> | <p>% confectionery provided which meets calorie-based portion size criteria.</p> |
| <p>1.18 Beverages</p> | <p>No more than 10% beverages provided can be sugar sweetened beverages (SSB).</p> <p>At least 90% of beverages provided must be low calorie/no added sugar beverages.</p> <p>All SSB to be no more than 330ml pack size. Any SSB that are hot or cold milk-based drinks including milk substitute drinks such as soya, almond, hemp, oat, hazelnut or rice need to meet 300kcal cap.</p> <p>Any meal deals should not include any SSBs.</p> <p>At least 75% fruit juice, vegetable juice and smoothies to be provided in single serve packs.</p> <p>Further guidance on how sugar sweetened beverages, low calorie and no added sugar beverages are defined is available in the supporting documents.</p> | <p>All beverages (100%) provided must be low calorie/no added sugar beverages, that is, no SSBs are offered.</p> | <p>Beverage specifications met? (Yes or No)</p> |

2. Healthier, more sustainable menu choices

| Impact area | Mandatory standards | Best practice standards | Verification of compliance |
|--|---|--|---|
| 2.1 Menu cycle and seasonality | <p>Menus must vary throughout the year to reflect the natural growing or production period for the UK, such as cauliflower, butternut squash and venison in the winter, and new potatoes, berries and lamb in the summer.</p> <p>There must be at least one menu cycle change every 3 months.</p> | <p>Menu cycles are analysed to meet nutrient-based standards relevant for the majority of customers using the catering provision.</p> <p>Menus are flexible to take advantage of seasonal gluts.</p> | <p>Menus reflect UK seasonality and the menu cycle changes every 3 months? (Yes or No)</p> |
| 2.2 Local and cultural engagement | <p>Menus must support UK food traditions. For example, Lancashire hotpot, Bakewell tart, Sunday roast. Local produce, UK seasonal produce, and traditional dishes must be indicated to the consumer on menus or through other means, such as posters or websites.</p> <p>Menus must take account of cultural, religious, and special dietary needs of consumers.</p> | <p>Foods with local or regional significance are incorporated within menus to give them cultural value. For example, those with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> protected designation of origin (PDO) protected geographical indication (PGI) traditional specialties guaranteed (TSG) status | <p>Local produce, UK seasonal produce, and traditional dishes are indicated to the consumer? (Yes or No)</p> |
| 2.3 Animal source food origin labelling | <p>Country or place of origin of meat, meat products, seafood, shell eggs and dairy products must be made available and provided on request to the contracting authority and end consumer. Wherever practical, this information must be indicated on either the menu or food packaging.</p> <p>This must be in line with the current food labelling and packaging rules, including the rule on primary ingredients and country of origin labelling. For example, a pork pie labelled 'British' that's produced in the UK with pork from Denmark, must state 'with pork from Denmark' or 'made with pork from outside the UK'.</p> | <p>Country or place of origin of meat, meat products, seafood, shell eggs and dairy products procured is always indicated on either the menu or food packaging.</p> | <p>Country or place of origin of meat, meat products, seafood, shell eggs and dairy products is made available to the contracting authority and end consumer? (Yes or No)</p> |
| 2.4 Calorie and allergen labelling | <p>Menus and pre-packaged food must include allergen labelling, following the allergen labelling rules.</p> | <p>Menus include calorie and allergen labelling where not stated in law.</p> | <p>Allergen labelling rules followed? (Yes or No)</p> |

Nutritional aspects of menu choices

Food and drink choices on the menu must provide healthier options to encourage and support people to achieve a healthy balanced diet that is in line with the [‘Eatwell Guide’](#). The GBSF nutritional standards found in this section and in **‘Nutrition specification of foods’** help promote this diet. These standards must be met, unless superseded by more setting-specific guidance.

| Impact area | Mandatory standards | Best practice standards | Verification of compliance |
|---|--|--|--|
| 2.5 Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption | <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 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> | Not applicable. | <p>Portions of fruit are sold at a lower price than other desserts? (Yes or No)</p> <p>% desserts which are at least 50% fruit.</p> <p>Main meals within a meal deal contain a starchy carbohydrate not prepared with fats or oils, and meal deal options contain at least 1 portion of vegetables and 1 portion of fruit? (Yes or No)</p> |
| 2.6 Increasing fibre | 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. | Number of meals containing beans and/or pulses as a main source of protein on the weekly menu. |
| 2.7 Fish | If caterers serve lunch and an evening meal, fish is provided twice per week (2 X 140g portion), one of which is oily. If caterers only serve lunch or an evening meal, oily fish (140g portion) is provided at least once every three weeks. | Not applicable. | Oily fish is provided at correct frequency on the menu? (Yes or No) |
| 2.8 Reducing salt | <p>Vegetables and boiled starchy foods such as rice, pasta and potatoes, shall be cooked without salt.</p> <p>Salt shall not be available on tables.</p> | Not applicable. | Salt is not added to vegetables and boiled starchy foods or available on tables? (Yes or No) |
| 2.9 Meal deals | <p>Any foods and drinks within a meal deal must also meet the relevant GBSF standards for the healthier options, e.g. healthier sandwiches⁵.</p> <p>⁵ This would be for all categories of 'meal deals' such as 'breakfast meal deals', 'hot food meal deals', 'sandwich meal deals', 'hot drink and snacks, e.g. confectionery / savoury snack / items under the reducing sugar category'. Meal deals should not include sugar sweetened beverages. Healthier breakfast cereals should be included in the 'breakfast meal deals'.</p> | Not applicable. | Meal deal criteria met? (Yes or No) |

3. Sustainable catering services

| Impact area | Mandatory standards | Best practice standards | Verification of compliance |
|---|---|---|--|
| 3.1 Kitchen energy management | <p>Off-site preparation kitchen operations must have an energy management policy in place, appropriate to the nature and scale of their energy use and consumption. The policy must commit the organisation to the continual improvement of its energy performance.</p> <p>On-site operations must be run in line with the host building's overall energy management policy.</p> | <p>Technical and professional capability to perform environmental aspects of the contract is proved through an environmental management system (EMS) for catering services (such as EMAS, ISO 14001, or equivalent).</p> <p>On-site catering operations are run in accordance with the Carbon Trust Hospitality Sector Energy Saving Guide (CTG058v3).</p> | <p>Caterers with off-site operations can provide evidence of an energy management policy and continuous improvement? (Yes or No)</p> <p>On-site operations run in accordance with host energy management policy? (Yes or No)</p> |
| 3.2 Catering equipment | <p>The duty under Article 6 of the Energy Efficiency Directive applies (to on-site and off-site kitchens) when procuring catering equipment, in accordance with PPN 07/14.</p> <p>The use of the Energy Technology List (ETL) is mandated for Government procurement and must be the default tool for equipment selection within its categories. The 'Professional Foodservice Equipment' (PFSE) category will initially cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • combination steam ovens • convection ovens • undercounter dishwashers • hood-door type dishwashers • this may be expanded upon. <p>Other energy-related products that are subject to Energy Labelling legislation, must have the highest energy rating available on the market at the time of purchase.</p> | <p>The on-site catering operation is run in accordance with the Carbon Trust Hospitality Sector Energy Saving Guide (CTG058v3) and relevant Food Service Equipment Association (FEA) Guides.</p> <p>Contracts and service plans prioritise minimising the environmental footprint of equipment in use by always seeking to repair rather than replace, and by utilising repaired or refurbished equipment and parts wherever possible.</p> <p>Existing refrigeration units are upgraded with Energy Technology List retrofit technologies to improve energy efficiency.</p> | <p>Catering equipment meets criteria in the Energy Technology List? (Yes or No)</p> |
| 3.3 Employer Equality and Diversity Duty | <p>Caterers must have a written equality and diversity policy to help ensure they, and any sub-contractors, are compliant with employment law provisions in the UK Equality Act (2010).</p> | <p>Caterers take positive action in building a culture that champions diversity and inclusion, ensuring all employees are valued and enabled to thrive.</p> | <p>Caterers have an equality and diversity policy in place? (Yes or No)</p> |

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| 3.4 Food safety and hygiene | There must be systems in place to ensure food safety and hygiene legal obligations are met, as defined in Food Hygiene (England) regulations 2006 (as amended) and the General Food law EC/178/2002 (safety, traceability, product withdrawal and recall). Further guidance on food safety for caterers | Not applicable. | Evidence of food safety and hygiene audits are provided: local authority Environmental Health Officer reports OR independent food safety schemes?(Yes or No) Food hygiene rating (1 to 5) |
| 3.5 Customer satisfaction | There must be a system in place to monitor customer satisfaction and address customer feedback, with a plan in place for continuous improvement. This data must be shared with the contracting authority. | Caterers consistently receive high customer satisfaction ratings and can clearly evidence how they address customer concerns and continuously improve. | There is a system in place to monitor customer satisfaction and feedback data, and there is a plan for continuous improvement. (Y/N) |
| 3.6 Employment and skills | Opportunities for employment and routes for development within the catering service must be accessible and promoted. Development of skills & knowledge relevant to food, nutrition and food preparation must be encouraged through suitable training programmes for all staff. | New apprenticeship opportunities are created and talent from all backgrounds is fostered and retained. A structured learning framework for all staff is supported at the highest level to ensure that all team members are appropriately trained. | Opportunities for employment and routes for development are promoted? (Yes or No) Training programmes for all staff encourage development of relevant skills and knowledge? (Yes or No) |

Waste prevention, collection and management

The [Defra Food and Drink Waste Hierarchy](#) and [Waste Hierarchy Guidance](#) must be adhered to. Prevention of food waste must be prioritised, with any surplus food fit for consumption re-distributed (for example, gifted to charities/food banks). Prevention and re-use of other waste (such as packaging, utensils, recyclable materials or residual waste) must also be prioritised over disposal.

| Impact area | Mandatory standards | Best practice standards | Verification of compliance |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 3.7 Food waste prevention | Caterers must provide evidence of a 'Target, Measure, Act' approach to managing and minimising the impacts of waste, as described in The Waste and Resources Action Programme's (WRAP) Food Waste Reduction Toolkit . Caterers must share data for on-site and off-site volumes of food waste, both separately and combined, with procurers. | There is consistent prioritisation of prevention and redistribution of food waste. Appropriate training is given to staff to ensure best practice in terms of food waste minimisation following Guardians of Grub advice . The target set for food waste reduction is in line with the targets in the Food Waste Reduction Roadmap and the UK's target of SDG 12.3 (50% reduction in food waste by 2030). Evidence provided by caterer suggests this target will be met. | Caterers provide evidence of a Target Measure Act approach to managing and minimising waste. This must include a yearly reduction in food waste as a % of total food handled (Yes or No) |

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| 3.8 Food waste collection and management | <p>Where food waste cannot be avoided through prevention or by re-distribution for human or animal consumption, it must be collected separately and recycled through composting or anaerobic digestion.</p> | <p>Caterers communicate the separation of food waste from residual waste in a clear and engaging manner to consumers and staff.</p> | <p>Unavoidable food waste is collected separately from other waste and recycled? (Yes or No)</p> |
| 3.9 Other waste (such as packaging, utensils, recyclable materials, or residual waste) prevention | <p><u>Re-usable items</u>: Must be used wherever possible, such as washable plates and cutlery. Caterers must also encourage their customers to use re-usable items. Tap water must be visible and freely available to reduce use of single use water bottles.</p> <p><u>Single use plastics</u> such as condiment sachets; plastic cups and bottles must not be used, unless essential (there is no safe or hygienic or re-usable alternative). Where use of re-usable items is not possible, recyclable single use items must be procured which come with less packaging and/or recyclable packaging. If single use cups are required, they must be 100% recyclable and made of at least 30% recycled material.</p> | <p>All options that generate avoidable waste are removed, including 'consumables' in all aspects of food service where it is safe and hygienic to do so.</p> <p>Measures are taken to minimise plastic in residual waste. This helps to limit GHG emissions where such waste is incinerated for energy recovery.</p> | <p>No single-use items are used in the catering service, where it is safe and hygienic to do so? (Yes or No)</p> <p>% single-use items procured which are recyclable (procured only when essential)</p> |
| 3.10 Other waste collection and management | <p>If waste cannot be prevented, priority goes to preparing waste for reuse, recycling, and then recovery. Glass, metal, plastic, paper and card must be collected separately and recycled.</p> | <p>Minimal possible waste is sent to landfill.</p> <p>Caterers communicate what can and can't be recycled in in a clear and engaging manner to consumers and staff.</p> | <p>Glass, metal, plastic, paper and card is collected separately and sent for recycling? (Yes or No)</p> |
| 3.11 Disposal of catering equipment | <p>At end-of-use, equipment must be made available for re-use, repair or refurbishment wherever possible. Unless there is a clear environmental disadvantage in doing so, steps must always be taken to maximise the usable life of catering equipment.</p> <p>At end of life, equipment must be disposed of to an authorised handler in an environmental sound way, ensuring the equipment enters the Waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) system.</p> | <p>Not applicable.</p> | <p>Equipment is made available for re-use, repair or refurbishment when no longer required? (Yes or No)</p> <p>At end of life, equipment is disposed to authorised waste handlers, ensuring the equipment enters the WEEE system? (Yes or No)</p> |

Part 3: Data reporting requirements

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, Government 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 the government buying standards.

We propose the following eight metrics (Table 1) and detailed data on food procured per category and sub-category (Table 2) 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 1: 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 an annual turnover under £50 million) businesses. |

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| | | VCSEs includes charities, social enterprises and voluntary organisations (also known as the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector). |
| 5 | % of total food and catering budget spent on local staff | '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 neighbouring county (for counties at regional boundaries). These staff wages have an impact on income retention in the local area. |
| 6 | % food spend on food produced locally or to certified higher environmental production standards | '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. |
| 7 | Food waste as a % of food handled | Food handled = total quantity (Kg) of food procured (which should equate to the sum of the food category quantity totals in Table 2). 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. |
| 8 | Destination of food waste (Kg per category- anaerobic digestion, composting, incineration, landfill, sewer) | 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. |
| Per food category: Total quantity procured (Kg or L); spend (£); % spend local produced/caught grown; % spend produced to higher environmental production standards | | Food categories are detailed in Table 2. 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. |
| Per food sub-category: Quantity procured (Kg or L) | | Food sub-categories are detailed in Table 2. This breakdown will enable us to estimate associated greenhouse gas emissions of food procured. |

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 procurement and ensure that public sector food procurement is an exemplar to wider society in delivering positive health, animal welfare, environmental and socio-economic impacts.

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 2: 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 | | | | | | |

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|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| Plant-based milk substitutes (oat, almost, 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 | |
| Confectionery, snacks & desserts (sweets, biscuits, cakes, puddings, chocolate, bars, ice cream, desserts) | | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | | |
| TOTAL (All food) | | | | | | |