

Brighton & Hove City Council Minimum Buying Standards for purchasing food

Brighton & Hove City Council recognises its responsibility to carry out its procurement activities in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. In 2012 Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) adopted a city-wide food strategy *Spade to Spoon: Digging Deeper: a food strategy and action plan*. The strategy sets out how the city works towards a healthier more sustainable food system, one which reduces food poverty, supports local food businesses and reduces the environmental impact of the way in which we produce, consume and dispose of our food. BHCC is a key partner in helping to deliver the strategy and has signed up to a number of commitments that seek to improve the food it serves every day to thousands of school children, clients, visitors and employees. Through the development and adoption of Minimum Buying Standards, BHCC can use its significant buying power and influence to encourage healthy and sustainable food production and consumption and drive local economic development.

The following Minimum Buying Standards are based on the Bronze Food for Life Catering Mark Standards, developed by the Soil Association. Meeting them should be seen as the initial stage of a progressive journey to improve the food served, therefore working through from Bronze, to Silver and Gold is encouraged.

Caterers securing contracts must be able to demonstrate they support the principles of these standards and for those contracts worth over £75,000 per annum, will need to be working towards and achieve the Catering Mark standard during the first year of the contract. Use of the Catering Mark logo demonstrates the independent endorsement from the Soil Association that meals are fresh, seasonal and better for animal welfare.

Minimum Buying Standards for purchasing food

	Minimum standards
Additives	All products or ingredients must not contain the following additives: E102 tartrazine E104 quinoline yellow E107 yellow 2G E110 sunset yellow E120 cochineal E122 carmoisine E123 amaranth E124 ponceau 4R E129 allura red E131 patent blue V E132 indigo carmine E133 brilliant blue FCF E151 black PN E210 benzoic acid

	<p>E211 sodium benzoate E621 monosodium glutamate E635 sodium 5 – ribonucleotide E950 acesulfame K E951 aspartame E954 sodium saccharine</p>
Trans fats	All products and ingredients must not contain trans fats
GM	All products must not be genetically modified (GM) or contain genetically modified ingredients
Freshly prepared	At least 75% of dishes must be freshly prepared from unprocessed ingredients on site or at a local hub
Eggs	All eggs (including liquid eggs) must be from free-range hens
Meat	<p>All meat and meat within products on the menu must be accredited by one of the following welfare schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assured Food Standards (Red Tractor Assurance) • Farm Assured Welsh Livestock (FAWL) • Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) • Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (FQAS) Northern Ireland • EBLEX Quality Standard Mark (English Beef and Lamb Executive) <p>Of these the higher standards are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic • Freedom Food
Fish	All fish served must NOT be on the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) ‘fish to avoid’ list, available at www.fishonline.org/fish-advice/avoid . This list is updated regularly according to the latest research. You must refer to the list when ordering fish
Seasonality	All menus are seasonal and in-season produce is highlighted. Menus need not be exclusively seasonal, but must show seasonal variation and ideally include seasonal meats and fish too. ‘Seasonal’ produce is fresh produce that can be produced outdoors in the UK at that time of year
Training	Catering staff are supported with skills training in fresh food preparation and where applicable, the Food for Life Catering Mark
Water	Free drinking water must be prominently available
Provenance information	Information must be on display about where food comes from. For example, the names of farms and/or local food businesses supplying locally produced ingredients could be displayed on menus, blackboards, posters, or communicated to your customers through

	flyers, websites or newsletters
Food safety	All suppliers must be verified to ensure they apply appropriate food safety standards, based on HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) principles
Nutritional standards	<p>Caterers in schools and academies, early years and residential care settings and hospitals must demonstrate their compliance with national standards or guidelines on food and nutrition.</p> <p>School and academy catering http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/schools/the-standards</p> <p>Early years settings http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/pre-school/resources/guidelines</p> <p>Residential care homes (adults 18-65 years of age) http://www.thenacc.co.uk/shop/Goodpracticeguides</p> <p>Residential care (older people) and community meals http://www.cwt.org.uk/publications.html#older</p> <p>Hospitals http://sd.defra.gov.uk/advice/public/buying/products/food/standards/</p>
Diet and cultural needs	Menus must provide for all dietary and cultural needs
Waste	There must be a clear plan in place to reduce food waste and packaging and this should be communicated to the public and reviewed on an annual basis
Fairtrade	All tea, coffee, cocoa and bananas are to be certified as fairly traded
Health	A range of healthy options must be provided for main meal, dessert and snacks
Training	All catering staff are encouraged to complete the NCASS Sustainability Training for Caterers online course.

Additional criteria for Fairtrade, Health, Waste and Training that are outside the **Bronze FFL Catering Mark standards** have been included in the list for MBS as these fit with current council policy.

Encouragement is given to always champion local, sustainable and higher welfare (e.g. Freedom Food or Organic) where available, affordable and appropriate.

Additional resources

Soil Association's Food for Life: [Catering Mark Standards Manual](#)

Government Buying Standards: [Food and catering services](#)

EU GPP criteria: [Food](#)

Healthy Choice Award: [For care homes, nurseries and breakfast clubs](#)

Brighton & Hove Food Partnership: [Food strategy](#) or [help with suppliers](#)