

Case studies from organisations that have achieved the Soil Associations Food for Life Catering Mark:

"Our income across the business has increased by 13% over the past 3 years - we attribute much of our success to the Catering Mark"

Gerry Clinton, Havering Catering Service (Gold)

Encore Hospitality Services has achieved Gold for Emirates Arena - the first UK leisure facility to serve Catering Mark meals

The Emirates cafe in this flagship sports venue is run by Encore Hospitality Services, who are the first leisure facility in the UK to achieve the Gold Food for Life Catering Mark. They see the food offering as a vital to the building's success. Since the changes in the menu, customers have really been noticing the improvements. "Whenever we've had events on, such as the recent Cycling Event, the cafe has been packed, with queues out of the door." It's not only amongst the customers in the cafe that people have been sitting up and taking notice of the positive changes. In the kitchen too, there is a definite sense of growing pride. "Our staff are taking advantage of this opportunity to learn." The changes have affected the staff's home lives too. Brian says: "My eating habits at home have really changed, we only ever get free-range eggs now, and I'm more aware about what the kids are eating at school."

Copper Box Arena Cafe - at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park - is now serving Bronze Standard meals through caterer Centerplate

Centerplate have demonstrated that good food, sustainable sourcing and conscious cooking can all be achieved without significant costs increases, showing just what can be achieved even when working to tight commercial budgets. Anna Standen, Centerplate's Corporate & Social Responsibility Manager, says: "There are costs involved in gaining this award and abiding by the Food Legacy Pledge but we feel the added value and reassurance that we are serving more sustainable food is worth it and will mean that customers spend more in our Café. More customers are questioning where their food comes from and achieving the Bronze Food for Life Catering Mark Award alongside committing to the Food Legacy Pledge ensures customers can trust the food we serve and get the food they deserve. Making everything from scratch costs can be controlled in a manner that minimizes waste, ensures great quality and still meet budgets."

Eden Foodservice have achieved Silver for all of their primary schools in Bristol

"A key part of the initiative was to implement it without having a negative financial impact on the business. Our Procurement Department, the Menu Development Team and our key supplier, Brakes, have worked closely together to create menus and use ingredients that meet the Silver Standards which are as cost effective as possible."

Centerplate has achieved Silver for Bristol City Football Club - the first stadium in England to achieve the Catering Mark

Anna Standen, Corporate & Social Responsibility Manager at The Lindley Group says: "Since achieving the award, there has been considerable interest from customers, who enjoy their meals knowing they are homemade using locally sourced produce; helping to support the local community. We have seen greater interest in where our food comes from and regularly asked questions about how we make our meals, in particular our fantastic homemade meat pasties."

HC-One is in the process of achieving the Bronze Food for Life Catering Mark across all 242 sites. HC-one will be the first care home provider to achieve the Catering Mark on this scale – providing approximately 33,000 meals for more than 10,000 Residents across the UK each day.

As with many care groups the menus focused on providing the correct balance of calories for a fixed cost. Whilst every effort was made to provide nourishing meals, the food quality standards were not defined. HC-One recognised that to consistently improve the food and beverage offer to Residents, there needed to be defined food quality standards in place which not only consistently raised quality and choice but also consistently met the recommended nutrition guidelines. Moreover this offer had to be delivered in an affordable way. This meant an entire review of food suppliers and new partnerships which included nutritionists and food safety experts. “The Food for Life Catering Mark standards enables us to promote fresh, healthy food at a time when we must also focus on cost efficiency. Keeping the exercise cost neutral meant negotiating very firm prices with suppliers and changing recipes to use less expensive ingredients. Overriding these challenges is a commitment and willingness to put food at the heart of the care we provide, for food to be more than an ancillary function and to deliver food that is consistently great, not just OK. As with any change programme, the Food for Life Catering Mark is about winning hearts and minds, and this always takes time when you have 240+ homes with their individual ways and 10,000 Residents with individual needs and preferences. But the fact is that food punctuates the day; it nourishes and it is something that Residents really look forward to.”

Financial implications

71% of public sector institutions meeting Food for Life Catering Mark criteria reported that the implementation of Food for Life sustainability criteria was cost neutral and 29% reported overall cost savings.¹

A Government commissioned report into Defra’s ‘Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative’ (PSFPI) concluded that costs decreased when there was an increase in the procurement of UK, regional, seasonal, farm-assured and small/local supplier produce (60% of those surveyed reported cost decreases or no impact on food costs).²

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust saved £20,000 per annum by buying local fruit and vegetables.³

Compassion in World Farming case studies with local councils have shown cost savings by moving to free-range eggs which are supplied by local farmers, with Hampshire, for example, seeing a 20% drop in costs.⁴

Collaborative procurement contracts that incorporate robust health and sustainability criteria can help public sector institutions benefit from combined buying power and reduce costs associated both with ingredients and the contractual process itself. The London Cluster, established by Sustain and the London Borough of Havering with support from the Greater London Authority as part of the London Food Strategy, now operates multi-million collaborative food-buying contracts that incorporate high food standards in line with British Food Plan and Food for Life Catering Mark objectives, www.sustainweb.org/resources/files/reports/GFPP_InHouseCaterers.pdf.

¹ Food for Life Catering Mark: <http://www.soilassociation.org/cateringmark.aspx>

² <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/policy/publicsectorfood/documents/090311-PSFPI-%20evaluation.pdf>, p.29

³ <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/policy/publicsectorfood/documents/090311-PSFPI-%20evaluation.pdf>, p.29

⁴ www3.hants.gov.uk/7.3_local_egg_partnership_-_jun_09.doc

In the long-term, buying better public sector food would significantly reduce costs caused by unhealthy food by tackling diet-related ill health which costs the NHS £6 billion every year.⁵ There are also potential long-term savings from reduced environmental damage; reduced food waste, which costs the NHS alone £14 million a year;⁶ lower risk of animal diseases; and local economic development, particularly in rural areas which Defra's Impact Assessment document for the original Government Buying Standards recognised.

Other facts and figures to support the move to procure sustainable and healthy food

Supporting the local economy

At the Oxford Farming Conference in January 2014, farmers argued that public sector procurement of British food falls way short of where it should be. The public sector bought £2.1bn worth of food and drink last year. ***"Local authorities could multiply the amount of money circulating in the local food economy by 400% if they gave procurement contracts to local food businesses."***

The public sector spends £2.5 billion each year on food and catering services, so changing food procurement to healthy and sustainable locally-produced food would bring huge benefits to people's health, the environment and local economies.

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (mental health provider across Sussex, including 2 hospitals in the city) now source 85% of their fresh produce from the local area, which goes into 800,000 patient meals a year, is local. This has led to the fruit and veg bill plummeting by 20% and meat costs decreasing by 10%. Using less used cuts of meat provide locally sourced top-quality meals at a competitive price. Their use of the local market garden supplier (JR Wholesale in Hailsham) proved so successful for the supplier that over four years, its turnover increased by 30%. In a recent PLACE survey (Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment), 91% of patients said the food was good / very good / excellent.

The new economics foundation's (nef) Social Return on Investment (SROI) research was carried out in Nottinghamshire and Plymouth. They found that the share of ingredient spend on seasonal, local produce had risen dramatically as a result of adopting Food For Life Partnership practices, by a nominal £1.65 million in Nottinghamshire and £384,000 per year in Plymouth (Kersley, 2011, p.2).

The SROI calculation found that over £3 in social, economic and environmental value was created for every £1 spent. This does not take account of any of the health, educational or cultural benefits of a whole-school approach to food which are the primary objectives of FFLP. Adding these benefits would result in a substantially higher return on investment (Kersley, 2011, p.2).

The greatest share of the benefits is experienced by local businesses – wholesale and primary producers – in the form of greater business security and, especially, enhanced local presence which leads to additional contracts and income. Of the total £5 million of benefit generated, around £3.6

The city has 4,400 hectares of farmland, but very little produce from this comes into the city.

⁵ Food Matters: Towards a Strategy for the 21st Century, Cabinet Office, 2008
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/work_areas/food_policy.aspx

⁶ BAPEN, Hospital Food as Treatment, <http://www.bapen.org.uk/professionals/publications-and-resources/bapen-reports/hospital-food-as-treatment>

Local fisheries at Shoreham export a large proportion of fish caught out of the city, but are keen to supply all fish to local markets.

The chalk downland that surrounds the city is ideal for sheep grazing that protects this unique habitat. City Services deliver a 'Conservation Grazing Scheme' which includes community shepherds. Currently most of this lamb is not sold directly to the city.

Health costs

Obesity is associated with a range of health problems including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. The resulting NHS costs attributable to obesity are projected to reach £9.7 billion by 2050, with wider costs to society estimated to reach £49.9 billion per year. These factors combine to make the prevention of obesity a major public health challenge.

The social care costs to local authorities for the care of house-bound residents suffering from obesity related illnesses, including arthritis, heart disease and diabetes and those requiring help towards walking aids and home adaptations may be considerable - and likely to increase in line with national predictions for obesity prevalence.

In the city, 50,000 adults are obese or morbidly obese. This is estimated to have cost the NHS in Brighton & Hove £78.1 million in 2010 and this is expected to rise to £83.5 million by 2015. 30% of 10-11 year olds in the city are obese or overweight.

Traceability of food

Buying traceable, local and British food has risen "*substantially*" up consumers' agendas since the horsemeat scandal, according to the latest research from Mintel (March 2013)

Food waste

In 2011, the cost of food being wasted in the UK hospitality and foodservice sectors was £2.5bn. That figure is set to increase to £3bn by 2016 if no action is taken. 21% of food waste arises from spoilage; 45% from food preparation and 34% from consumer plates. (WRAP figures 2013)
66% of consumers said they would order smaller portions if they could (SRA research 2013).

Cost to the environment

Research shows that food that is healthier for us is also healthier for the planet. Food is responsible for 10% of the city's carbon footprint and 17% of the city's Greenhouse Gas footprint. Meat and dairy are responsible for nearly a 1/3rd of the ecological footprint related to food.

Opportunity for Brighton & Hove.

Once a set of standards have been agreed for BHCC catering contracts, these will be taken out to other establishments and employers in the city which could lead to improvements in the food for thousands of school pupils, university students, hospital patients, tourists and employees across the city. The University of Brighton has recently been awarded the Bronze Food for Life Catering Mark for most of their establishments, serving 22,000 students and 2,500 staff. Through the Good Food Procurement Group, set up by the Food Partnership, we hope to roll out the MBS to other key organisations across the city.

Chloe Clarke, Project Manager, Brighton & Hove Food Partnership. May 2014