

# **Guidance notes for sustainable food policy** (updated January 2015)

## ***Introduction***

These guidance notes have been prepared using the GBS/DEFRA (Government Buying Standards/ Department of the Environment Food and Rural Affairs) standards as a basis. These are detailed along with current University practice in Appendix 1.

## ***Responsibilities***

The following have specific roles in implementing the policy

### **Head of Procurement**

The Head of Procurement will have the lead responsibility to the Sustainability Task Group for the implementation of this Policy and for reporting progress annually against critical success factors associated with this Policy

### **Procurement Manager, Hospitality and Accommodation Services**

Ensure that relevant standards are included in tender documents and reviewed periodically during the term of the contract.

Work with regional and national consortia to continue to improve on standards included in their agreements.

Provide advice on sustainable food policy procurement

### **Executive Chef**

Be aware of best practice & any future developments

### **Food Forum**

Discussion of sustainable food policy issues and initiatives

### **Sustainability Task Group**

Monitor implementation of the policy

## ***Guidance on policy statements***

Work with staff and students to:

1. Promote good nutrition and encourage healthier food choices that should have a positive impact on their wellbeing by:-
  - Ensuring that healthy options are available throughout all catering outlets
  - Providing gluten free soups

- Using less salt and offering a lo-salt alternative
  - Offering more fish within the menus and reduce the use of red meat
  - Ensuring that vegetarian options are always available
  - Ensuring that gluten free products are available
2. Raise awareness of the benefits of a healthy diet through:-
    - Support from Sports Centre
    - Wellbeing Days
  3. Maintain and strive to improve on high standards of food safety and quality by:-
    - Continuing to monitor standards both in-house and where applicable at supplier's sites
    - Staff Training
  4. Increase use of seasonal produce by:-
    - Where possible seasonal fruit and vegetables will be used in menus.
  5. Contribute to achieving the University's carbon reduction targets by:-
    - Encouraging awareness of carbon footprint of food practices (e.g. red meat)
    - Implementing initiatives to reduce carbon where appropriate
  6. Reduce the environmental impacts from purchased water by:-
    - Purchasing water efficient equipment
    - Implementing water efficiency initiatives
    - Encouraging the use of tap water
  7. Ensure value for money by:-
    - Following EU Public Sector Procurement legislation and best practice in procurement
    - Making improvements and efficiencies in order processing e.g. introduction of e-marketplace and e-invoicing
  8. Avoid/reduce food waste by:-
    - Monitoring portion sizes (flexibility in portion sizes)
    - Ensuring quality of food is high
  9. Avoid/reduce use of disposables by:-
    - Working with customers to minimise use of disposables where feasible
    - Using more eco-friendly options when disposables have to be used
  10. Offer food choices that reflect the ethnic backgrounds of our customers by:-
    - Continuing to liaise with relevant groups e.g. Food Forum and review offer accordingly.

Work with contractors and suppliers to:

1. Continue to reduce the environmental impact of the commodities they provide by:-
  - Continuing to include sustainability criteria in tender specifications
2. Encourage use of local suppliers and local produce (where feasible)
  - Within constraints of EU Public Sector Procurement legislation
3. Contribute to sustainable economic growth by:-
  - Discussion with suppliers at review meetings
4. Encourage participation of SMEs in relevant tenders
  - Within constraints of EU Public Sector Procurement legislation
5. Reduce packaging when possible and/or encourage use of more eco-friendly alternatives by:-
  - Specifying requirements with suppliers at tender and discussing progress at review meetings
6. Continue to improve animal welfare standards by:-
  - Using only Free range eggs
  - Using locally sourced cheese when available unless other origins are required
  - Using fresh British produced meat with Red Tractor accreditation whenever possible
  - Encouraging suppliers to improve the animal welfare standards of products they supply
7. Ensure ethically sourced products are available by:-
  - Continuing to maintain the University's Fairtrade status
  - Continuing to review the product range of Fairtrade and other ethically traded goods.
  - Discussing the availability of Fairtrade and ethically traded products at supplier review meetings

Work with HE sector and food purchasing consortium - TUCO Limited to:

Ensure that the Consortium's Sustainable Food Procurement Policy includes commitments that are substantially similar to those set out in the University's Sustainable Food Procurement Policy and support the University in the fulfilling its commitments in regards to sustainable procurement by:-

- Working with TUCO on its Sustainability Policy as it is reviewed and updated

Ensure that the Consortium commits to removing barriers to entry such that suppliers within the locality and region of the University, and SME and ethnic minority suppliers irrespective of locality or region are encouraged and enabled to compete for Consortia contracts.

- This is being done

Where appropriate encourage Consortia to competitively tender contracts on a regional basis to avoid suppliers in the region being precluded from competing due to the geographical nature of the Consortia.

- This is being done

- Monitoring sector best practice via EAUC for example.

Work with University academic community to:

Seek advice on food procurement issues where appropriate by:-

- Including relevant academic staff on procurement groups such as Fairtrade and Food Forum.

Provide material for research and teaching where appropriate.

See also 'Food Facts' <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/community/university-campus/retail/Foodfacts.aspx>

Review – at least annually

Critical Success Factors:-

Overall carbon footprint via University CMIP

Number of Fairtrade & ethical trade products sold

Animal Welfare standards achieved

Reduced food waste

Reduced use of disposables

Healthier foods offered

The following section summarises current performance, which will be reviewed adapted and improved to reflect changes in sustainable food practices.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Feasibility of Implementing Government Buying Standards/DEFRA Food and Catering Services Standards at the University of Birmingham**

This document is based on the standards and guidance set out by GBS/DEFRA which can be found on the following website: <http://sd.defra.gov.uk/advice/public/buying/products/food/>. The accompanying notes refer to the University's ability to meet these standards and will be updated as necessary as new information becomes available. It should be noted that these standards were developed for Central Government so a few of the points may be more applicable to schools or care homes rather than HE Institutions.

It is recognised that this is a starting point that will be built on in the future.

### **Production standards**

The University should source food, subject to no overall increase in costs, meeting UK or equivalent standards of production.

### Meat and dairy

All British fresh meat used in our kitchens has the minimum standard of Red Tractor status. Where possible our suppliers provide fresh meat sourced from the UK. Origin of all meat can be traced.

Some cheeses are now Red Tractor standard.

### Animal Welfare

All fresh eggs have been free range since 2007 and liquid eggs used in food production areas have been free range since early 2011.

Our primary sandwich supplier (Urban Eats) uses only free range eggs in its products.

The University has been awarded a "Good Egg Award" by Compassion In World Farming in 2011. Further information is available from [www.ciwf.org.uk](http://www.ciwf.org.uk).

### Seasonal Produce

Seasonal produce is incorporated in menus when available, however customer demand may require out of season produce to be purchased for specific events. It is not always practical to print information on menus (e.g. wedding brochures are only printed once per year), but where it is practical to do so, seasonal produce is highlighted on menus.

### Fish

Our fresh fish supplier works closely with the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), Marine Conservation Society (MCS), Seafood Choices and Sustain to ensure the highest standards of sustainability are maintained. Frozen fish is purchased from a different supplier and the majority of this is also MSC certified. The University is working with the MSC towards gaining its accreditation for its kitchens.

The University meets the DEFRA standard of ensuring that fish is provided on menus at least twice a week, and that one of these is oily.

### Environmental Protection Standards

The number of organic products on sale at the University is limited. Organic soft drinks are available and specialist tea bags are organic, Fairtrade and Soil Association certified. Catering has trialed other organic products in the past and found that customers have not been prepared to pay extra for organic. The product range will continue to be reviewed periodically.

### Ethical Trading

Most coffee served in the University's catering outlets is Fairtrade. Costa coffee is not Fairtrade but does have Rainforest Alliance certification. All bananas sold in the catering outlets are Fairtrade (and have been for several years). Fairtrade or Rainforest Alliance certified teas are available in all catering areas. A variety of other Fairtrade and ethically traded products are also available such as fruit juice, a wide range of confectionery, hot chocolate, wines, cakes and snacks. Sugar sachets are also Fairtrade. Sales of Fairtrade products continue to grow year on year.

### Water

Water coolers are available for use by staff, students and visitors in public areas such as the Noble Room, the Library, University Centre, the Sports Centre and individual colleges are responsible for deciding whether/where coolers are installed and for paying for the coolers and bottled water. However policy encourages move towards plumbed in tap water.

As part of the contractual arrangement between the University and the water cooler supplier, end users are encouraged to install plumbed in systems wherever this is practical.

### Water on the Hospitality Menu

Bottled water provided in the Staff House meeting rooms is from filtered tap water. Fresh Thinking, the University's delivered food service, needs to continue to provide bottled water as it is the only practical way to deliver water to sometimes remote areas. PET bottles are used to for health and safety reasons.

### Reducing Salt

Vegetables and boiled starchy foods such as rice, pasta and potatoes are cooked without salt.

Salt is available on tables however a 'Lo-Salt' option will also be offered.

### Increasing Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

At least 50% of the volume of desserts available is based on fruit – which can be fresh, canned in fruit juice or frozen.

Fresh fruit is available at all catering outlets.

A portion of fruit is cheaper than a portion of hot or cold dessert.

Meal deals include a starchy carbohydrate, vegetables and one portion of fruit.

Fruit and vegetables are purchased from local suppliers who source as much produce as practical from local producers.

### Reducing Saturated Fat

Meat and meat products, biscuits, cakes and pastries (procured by volume) are lower in saturated fat where available.

At least 75% of ready meals produced in our kitchens contain less than 6g saturated fat per portion.

All milk is semi-skimmed except in the Nurseries where full fat must be served in addition to semi skimmed.

Rapeseed oil and low fat vegetable spread are used.

### Cereals

At least 50% of breakfast cereals (procured by volume) are higher in fibre (i.e. more than 6g/100g) and do not exceed 12.5g/100g added sugars.

### SMEs

The University encourages SMEs to participate in tender procedures as far as possible within the constraints of EU Public Sector Procurement legislation. In addition the University holds a monthly Farmers Market and there is a permanent stall selling fruit and vegetables.

### Reducing Landfill

The University provides facilities for recycling cans, bottles, cardboard and plastics at all catering outlets.

Additionally general waste is no longer sent to landfill, but to an energy-from-waste facility

### Food Waste

Food waste is sent to an anaerobic digestion plant. Currently approximately 1.6 tonnes of food waste is recycled each month.

### Energy Management

All parts of the University are responsible for delivering the University Carbon Management Implementation Plan (CMIP). HAS have prepared a local CMIP which is reviewed regularly, <http://www.climatechange.bham.ac.uk/wecan/DOcuments/CMIPHAS0611.pdf>.

### Catering Equipment

The minimum mandatory Government Buying Standards for catering equipment apply where relevant:

- Domestic refrigerators and freezers - it meets a minimum Energy efficiency standard A+ and meets standards on greenhouse gases.
- Commercial refrigerators and freezers - it meets at least the latest Enhanced Capital Allowance criteria and meets standards on GHGs.
- Covers for refrigerated units – it meets at least the latest Enhanced Capital Allowance criteria
- Domestic electric ovens – it meets at least Energy Efficiency standard A, at varying energy efficiency indices depending on cavity size.

- Domestic dishwashers – it meets at least Energy Efficiency standard A, at varying energy efficiency indices for overall energy efficiency, drying and cleaning performance.
- Kitchen taps – have flow rates of not less than 5l/min delivered through either automatic shut off, screw down/lever, or spray taps; and non-flow rate elements shall meet the Enhanced Capital Allowance Scheme (ECA) Water Technology List criteria.
- The energy efficiency of equipment will be taken into consideration for future purchases and the life cycle costs considered including the costs of energy consumed and carbon produced.
- Catering equipment should be used in the most energy efficient manner

### Paper Products

Environmentally friendly catering disposables are used wherever this is financially viable however a crockery option is available in most eat-in areas and from Fresh Thinking.

The following are not in GBS/DEFRA Guidance but are relevant to HE Institutions:

### Responsible Drinking

Responsibility Deal pledges are putting the onus on the alcoholic drinks industry to “foster a culture of responsible drinking, which will help people to drink within guidelines”. The University will work with the industry and TPL to promote responsible drinking initiatives.

### Vending Machines

The University’s vending provider will ensure that healthier options are available – spirals are marked with a green sticker.

In addition, an energy saving unit is currently being trialed on a vending machine. If cost-effective the units will be fitted to all vending machines.

The University is contributing towards a zero-carbon vending project in collaboration with other public sector organisations.