

# Good Food Training for London



What we have learned  
May 2009





Master butcher Viv Harvey at 'More than Mince: quality cuts for a public sector budget'. Lewisham College, May 2009. Photography by Simon Beesley.



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Chef Colin Capon at 'More than Mince'. Lewisham College, May 2009.  
Photography by Simon Beesley.



# 1. Introduction

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Good Food Training for London was set up in 2007 to provide free-of-charge food skills training to around 1,000 catering, procurement and other staff in schools, hospitals, prisons and care settings in London. Based on practical experiences of what works and analysis of the barriers to change, the project has also developed recommendations for future training policy and practical activities for London and the wider public sector.

The UK's public sector spends £2 billion on food annually and could play a significant role in improving local economies and communities, the natural environment, animal welfare, public health and reducing the very substantial climate change emissions associated with our food system<sup>1</sup>. In addition, the public sector is a significant employer and increasing the vocational skills available to its employees could provide a considerable boost to the sector. The Mayor's London Food Strategy (2006)<sup>2</sup> recognised that to secure benefits to health, the environment and the London economy, catering staff needed the skills and knowledge to plan, prepare and serve healthy, seasonal and locally-produced menus.

Sustain's Sustainable Food Guidelines describe what we mean by 'good food' and are available, with background information, at: [www.sustainweb.org/sustainablefood](http://www.sustainweb.org/sustainablefood). The guidelines and the Good Food Training programme are included in the new Sustainable Food Guidelines for the NHS, launched May 2009, with a foreword by Public Health Minister Ben Bradshaw<sup>3</sup>.



## 2. What is Good Food Training?

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Good Food Training for London (referred to throughout this document as 'Good Food Training') is run by a partnership of organisations, managed by the Greenwich Co-operative Development Agency (GCDA). GCDA and Sustain, the alliance for better food and farming, are the lead partners with input from NHS Greenwich. We also work with training colleges with catering expertise, including Lewisham College and Hackney Community College, and independent trainers. The project has received research support from the Centre for Food Policy at City University. The programme was funded by the London Development Agency as a major project of the Implementation Plan of the London Food Strategy<sup>4</sup>.



Seasonal food floor mat. Illustrations by Andrew Wightman. Copyright Good Food Training.

# 3. What we do

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Good Food Training is currently working with schools, nurseries, children's centres, borough councils, supported housing and residential care, hospitals, Local NHS Trusts and prisons. Good Food Training can train, and has trained, everyone in a participating organisation and promotes as good practice a 'whole institution approach' to change: catering manager to kitchen assistants; head teacher to lunchtime supervisors.

Good Food Training offers accredited training with nationally-recognised certificates (including National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and Open College Network (OCN) accreditation), plus bespoke courses flexible enough to fit into, for example, school or hospital timetables.

In more detail, the things we do include:

## a) Developing bespoke training courses

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Good Food Training designs new courses to cover important health and sustainability topics that no accredited catering training currently addresses, and adapts training to make it suitable for groups of staff who are not covered by existing training courses. This includes, for example, our 'Customer Service' short course for school cooks and lunchtime supervisors, 'Sustainable Food Purchasing' for catering managers, 'Food Waste and Energy Management' for kitchen staff, and 'Menu Planning' designed especially for play workers at after-school clubs.

We have also adapted healthy eating and basic nutrition courses to incorporate the principles of sustainable food purchasing, providing the relevant food skills and knowledge to achieve a healthy and low-carbon, high-welfare menu; 'Food for a Healthy Future'. Good Food Training's cookery club and healthy eating trainers have themselves received training in the principles of sustainable food. With them, we have produced a food purchasing and menu planning guidance booklet for cookery clubs.

Good Food Training recognises that any catering service has to be economically viable and our training has included topics to encourage financial sustainability throughout; for instance, customer service and food presentation to tackle elements of the catering service which may discourage people from using it. Our course in responsible food waste and energy management in a kitchen can have a 'double dividend' of environmental and financial benefits.

## b) Designing new training materials

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To assist our trainers to provide high-quality skills courses, we have created innovative training materials. These include a food calendar floor mat, with accompanying produce cards, to guide teaching about seasonality and the 'Why Lunchtime Matters' floor mat which explores the relationships between catering staff, school staff and customers, demonstrating how good customer service plays a vital role in the school lunch experience and in achieving a financially viable food service.

## c) Providing accredited training courses

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Accredited training offers nationally-recognised certificates and skills to trainees and is particularly important to people who have never held a qualification before. Good Food Training's accredited training options include NVQs at level two and above in all hospitality-related subjects, from Customer Service to Professional Cookery. GCDA is a National Open College Network (NOCN) centre and a Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Training Centre, and in April 2009 became one of four School Food Trust Food Excellence and Skills Training (FEAST) centres in London, offering all of FEAST's core offer qualifications<sup>5</sup>. With partner colleges and qualified independent trainers we also provide CIEH, NOCN and City & Guilds-accredited courses.

## d) Running procurement skills training events

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Good Food Training also holds day-long training events for catering managers, head cooks and other food purchasing decision-makers. These events cover, for instance, sustainable fish skills ('Beyond Cod'), the skills needed to benefit from cost-efficient cuts of higher-welfare meat ('More than Mince') and writing contracts for healthy and sustainable food, including accreditations, specifications and legislation ('Contracts: a Fresh Look').

## e) Providing tailored programmes of training

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**Golden Lanes Primary School:** The school has been a case study in the effectiveness of improving staff relations and inclusion of the catering staff in school procedures. The project manager has provided consultancy and training to the head teacher, supporting the school to set up their new 'family service' dining room and the parent-led food committee. Good Food Training has provided healthy eating training for school children and catering staff, as well as cookery club tutor training for enthusiastic parents. (One of the parents on the cookery club course is now running a weekly cookery and budgeting course for other parents at Golden Lanes). In addition, GFT has facilitated regular meetings between the school head teachers and catering company Caterlink, as well as a workshop to plan for the school's future attended by both catering and teaching staff.

**Holloway Prison:** We are training seven full-time kitchen staff at HMP Holloway as assessors so they can train prisoners working in the canteen and mess to achieve level two NVQs in Food Processing and Cooking. Good Food Training is also providing supplementary basic nutrition and sustainable food purchasing and menu planning training to staff and prisoners. This includes a course in 'Food and Mood', exploring the links between diet and mental health.

**Latchmere House Prison:** At HMP Latchmere House, we have provided extensive training in planning, building and planting a food growing garden. Work experience for trainees links to the local community through Richmond-based organisation School Food Matters. Garden produce will eventually supply the prison kitchen and local primary school.

**Good Food Summer School:** In August 2009 Good Food Training will run a Good Food Summer School for school children in Southwark aged 8 to 11 years old. The week-long course will explore healthy eating and cooking skills and also teach the children where food comes from, including seasonal planting and growing, how animals are raised for meat and a trip to a local city farm, Surrey Docks in Rotherhithe.

## f) Working on food skills training policy

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Throughout the project, we are seeking opportunities to promote healthy and sustainable food to catering organisations, industry bodies, public authorities and skills-development organisations that are in a good position to integrate healthier and more sustainable food into public sector policies and practices. This is a crucial aspect of the legacy of the Good Food Training programme, to ensure that what we have learned can affect training provision long into the future. For example, Good Food Training is currently working with People 1st – the sector skills council for the hospitality industry – as they review the National Occupational Standards for public sector-orientated catering qualifications (a process underway throughout 2008/09). Project manager Claire Pritchard also sits on the UK Food Policy Council, convened by Secretary of State for the Environment Hilary Benn, for which standards in healthy and sustainable food in the public sector are consistently important policy themes.





## 4. Good Food Training's successes so far

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Good Food Training for London has been providing fully-funded food skills training courses to London's public sector caterers since December 2007. Since then:

- Over 860 (May 2009) public sector catering employees have received at least six hours' training.
- Over 250 (May 2009) public sector catering employees have received NVQ training at level 2 and above, or equivalent level two qualifications, or above (including level three, assessor and verifier training).
- Good Food Training is working with 14 of London's 33 boroughs and has trained over 300 of Newham's school cooks, resulting in a significant increase in the number of children eating the borough's school meals.
- Imperial College London and a major national care provider, Anchor Homes, have both switched to Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)-certified fish, as a direct result of attending Good Food Training's 'Beyond Cod' event in 2009.
- The Royal Brompton Hospital, in South Kensington, has started using forequarter cuts of high-welfare, locally-produced meat, following attendance by the catering manager at Good Food Training's 'More than Mince' workshop in 2008. The hospital's butcher subsequently attended a repeat of the event in May 2009, and is now able to supply other public sector caterers in London with higher-welfare forequarter meat.
- After-school clubs in Southwark are using free-range chicken (a huge leap from the previous high-salt low-welfare hot dogs!). Cookery clubs are using seasonal fruit and vegetables and MSC-certified fish – two additional major steps towards a more sustainable menu.
- Good Food Training trained the member catering managers of London's Hospital Caterers Association in the principles of sustainable food procurement, in partnership with the national Food for Life programme that runs an accredited catering mark for sustainable caterers.

Here are some typical examples of what our trainees say:

*"Thanks for the great training event I thoroughly enjoyed it. Even if just 20 per cent of people that were there now look for and buy products with the MSC logo on, you have achieved a great deal. I look forward to receiving the recipes as I am now confident to gut and cook the fish myself. Thanks again - it was an excellent day for me."*

**Tanya Downes, National Account Manager, Brakes. ['Beyond Cod', January 2009]**

*"Great host, venue, speakers, trainers, demonstrations, etc. From start to finish - everything."*

**David Labbett, National Training Manager, Anchor Homes. ['More than Mince', May 2009]**



# 5. Results from the evaluation

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Evaluation is an important part of the programme and has been integrated throughout. Good Food Training's evaluation team is based at the Centre for Food Policy at City University and they are providing 'action research' to ensure that our training courses are relevant and effective. Every Good Food Training participant completes a feedback form at the end of their training and from the results, along with follow-up interviews and visits to the institution, evaluator Michelle Wu investigates for us:

- Changes in attitudes and skills among training recipients and their organisations.
- Any increase in availability of healthy and sustainable food.
- Improvements in customer uptake and approval of the meals.
- Improvements in attitudes and awareness of customers.

*"81 per cent of all participants reported an increase in their knowledge and skills after receiving training. The evaluation work is following up individual participants and organisations to find out how learning has been put into practice."*

**City University, Good Food Training evaluation programme, spring 2009**

Comments from the participants explain the changes they have made as a result of the training:

*"I think about food waste - try to give less (sic) portions and try to explain that eating healthy food is very good for kids."*

*"I will check labels for hidden salts and sugars and encourage people to reduce their salt and sugar intake."*

Responses to the feedback questionnaire typically indicate that "Things are easy to do", when:

*"They cost little and are written in my responsibility."*

*"I live a healthy lifestyle which makes it easier!"*

*"Good budget available."*

*"Support from colleagues."*

*"We work in an area with easy access to markets and butchers."*

*"We have influence and we contribute to service users' menu."*

*"(They are) simple minor changes, cost and time."*





## a) Barriers to doing the training, reported by participants

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An important part of our work and evaluation is to investigate the barriers to including more healthy and sustainable food in public sector catering, and to participating in training – particularly from the point of view of procurement and catering staff in the public sector. So far, our analysis shows that these employees identified (and we have taken action to address) the following barriers:

**Time:** Staff time is expensive, and the catering industry often works awkward shift patterns. Good Food Training has been as flexible as practicable, arranging training for times specified by the institution; between ‘spilt shifts’, during half-term or on school inset days. Sometimes however, it proved impossible to get a suitable number of trainees together at the same time.

**Numbers:** Good Food Training could not cost-effectively provide one-to-one training or courses for very small numbers. NVQ providers commonly refuse to deal with a cohort of less than six. Often an institution could not arrange for all their catering staff to be away from the kitchen at the same time, or had only a small number of staff. Good Food Training addressed this problem with the ‘cluster’ approach, so neighbouring institutions could share the classes and venue, and become larger NVQ cohorts; and individual learners were invited to join existing courses. This was not always possible or satisfactory but it did provide a workable solution for some participating organisations.

**Management:** Head teachers, catering managers, and others are sometimes unwilling to co-ordinate and arrange training or are unconvinced of the need for it. Good Food Training has been working to address this through policy activities summarised above. We also plan to target management with training courses relevant to their requirements in the next phase of the project (see section 7, ‘Next Steps’).

**Complex contracting arrangements:** In hospitals for example, the catering contract may be a small element of a broad facilities contract. Across the public sector, the contract management team may have little expert knowledge of food and catering, and insufficient knowledge of food procurement legislation or of appropriate contract specifications to demand better quality food. The training day ‘Contracts: A Fresh Look’, scheduled for June 2009, was created in response to these issues.

**Lack of knowledge in the skills training sector:** Existing training providers are not always well versed in sustainable food or the particular requirements and responsibilities of public sector catering. Good Food Training has sought, where possible, to ‘train the trainers’, for example in HMP Holloway (see above), and by bidding successfully to become a FEAST network training centre for the School Food Trust. However, this remains an area that needs considerable additional work, especially to embed health and sustainability as core requirements of the sector’s National Occupational Standards (NOS), development of which is co-ordinated by the sector skills councils.

## b) Barriers to putting into practice what is learned, reported by participants

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We asked training participants to complete the sentence: “Things are difficult when...”, with the following responses as typical examples:

*“They all could be (difficult) unless all staff think along the same lines.”*

*“Other people need to make the changes, they are my management.”*

*“If things are not practicable, they are difficult to do.”*

*“No control over products bought.”*

*“Lack time and budget.”*

*“Equipment not available.”*

*“Cannot enforce choices on others - only advise.”*

*“People like sugary and fat (sic) products and don’t like fruits and veg.”*

*“You can control kids eating in the school but not after!”*

*“I think in the schools, children are eating healthy food but after school they can eat chicken, chips and sweets.”*

## 6. Conclusions

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The public sector has requirements and responsibilities that differ from those of private sector catering. There is a clear imperative – for environmental, social and economic reasons - to improve the healthiness and sustainability of all food; and responsibility and national policy ambition for the public sector in particular to show leadership on these issues. Unfortunately however, this is rarely born out in practice and we conclude that current training provision in the public sector shows very little sign of providing the necessary skills or impetus to bring about change. A huge gulf remains between policy and practice. Good Food Training has developed courses and a model of a ‘whole institution approach’ to training that could help to bring about the necessary changes in public sector policy and practice. It has the potential to contribute to transforming both regional and national public sector provision of food.

The need for action at policy, procurement and practical level has been underlined at every stage of our work. Individual trainees can act as champions to implement what they have learnt after training courses, but without the support of colleagues and management their success is likely to be limited and potentially short-lived. A supportive environment where everyone understands the need for change and has the relevant skills to contribute, is necessary to ensure a healthy and sustainable food service is implemented, promoted and maintained, with enthusiastic support by staff and customers. A ‘whole institution’ approach is key.

Institutions must also build training into everything that they do, as a core requirement for staff working on food procurement, catering, and customer service. We judge that appointing one person in an organisation to be responsible for managing training, organising people, time and equipment, and valuing the training themselves, is the best way to ensure that the trainer’s time and the opportunity is used most efficiently. When no-one has ‘ownership’ of the training programme, and no duty to arrange and pursue training goals, it is likely that trainees will be unmotivated to arrive on time or stay till the end. They may be unconvinced of the importance of the training, unsupported by institutional policy and changes and less likely to implement their new knowledge and skills.

Another conclusion we have reached is that resources and training provision must work in tandem. When resources (budget, equipment and staff time) are not in place to support putting the training into practice, little difference can be made by skills training alone, so wasting the time and money spent on training. Conversely, if appropriate training is not provided, then the skills and knowledge needed to operate sustainably will be lacking, leading to for instance, food waste in the kitchen or on the plate.

Currently the government’s funding for work-based training is not spent in a way that encourages the development of skills for healthy and sustainable catering. The qualifications primarily funded by ‘Train to Gain’ (the £1billion for, in particular, NVQs at level two and above) are poorly suited to the needs of a catering sector aiming to achieve health and sustainability. The NVQ qualification currently focuses on observation of existing practices by the assessor and are not designed to develop new skills or knowledge, meaning that they are unsuited to promoting knowledge and skills for healthy and sustainable catering practices.

There has therefore understandably been a tension between Good Food Training and our funders, the London Development Agency, which has training targets that are strongly biased towards NVQ qualifications. Good Food Training’s remit is to provide skills training to promote healthy and sustainable food, in support of the London Food Strategy. However, our target of providing 250 NVQs has conflicted with this aim, as NVQs by themselves do not teach all the skills and knowledge required to produce healthy and sustainable meals, and can lack the flexibility to suit public sector workers and their employers. We have addressed this problem by pursuing the NVQ targets (to meet funder requirements), but also by developing a wide range of other courses in a range of formats better suited to the needs of the public sector.

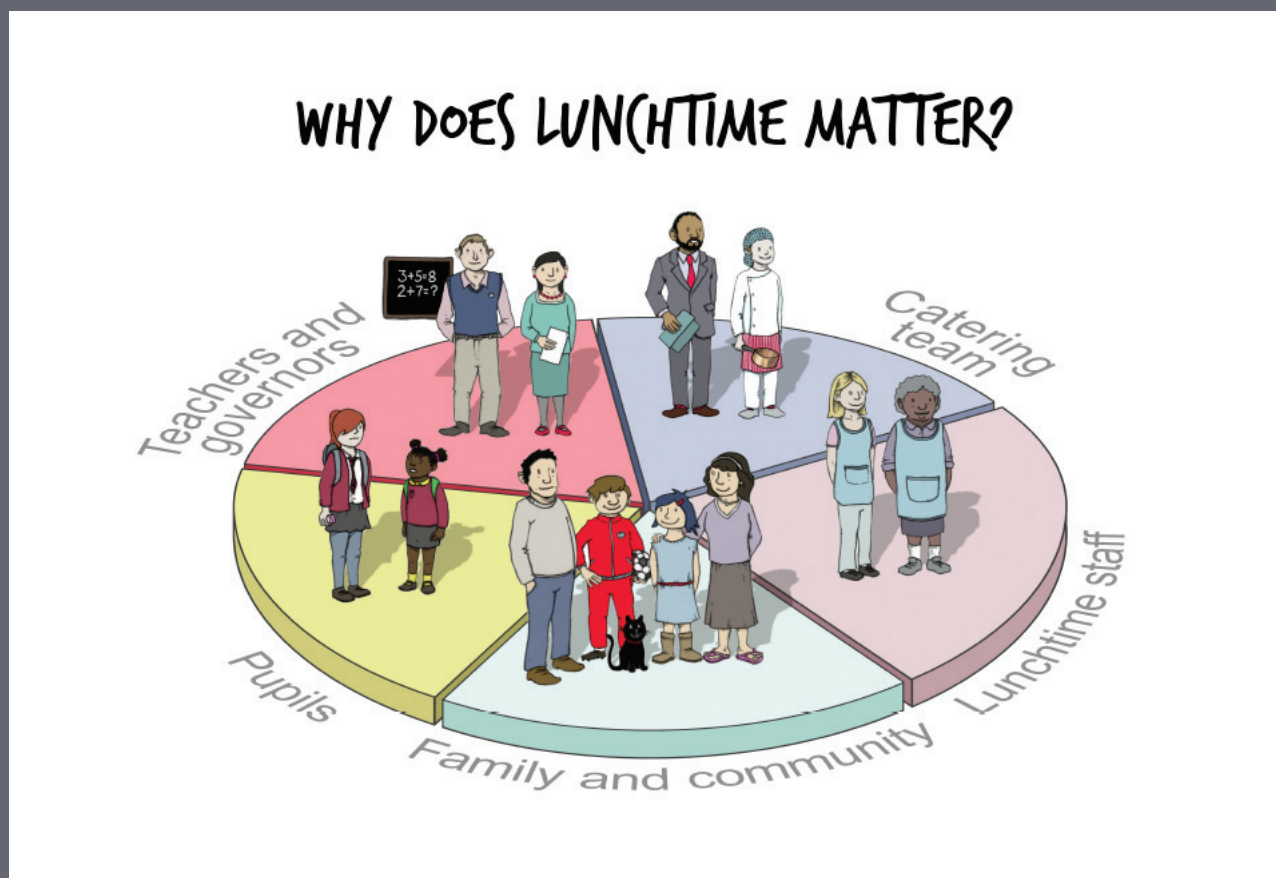
A focus on quantitative outputs set by the funders have hindered the project’s success in other ways. Good Food Training were required to meet substantial target numbers of trainees within a short time of beginning recruitment. In order to meet these deadlines a more strategic ‘whole institution’ approach to training, engaging all groups within an organisation, sometimes had to be de-prioritised. With the support of our evaluation team at City University, we would recommend to the LDA a greater emphasis on *quality* of outputs in future initiatives.



Training does not exist in isolation; the wider social and environmental context in which an institution operates will affect the trainees' ability to make lasting changes. For instance, parents may prefer to give unhealthy packed lunches than trust the school to provide good food that their child will eat. Likewise, if the child has access to fried chicken outlets around the school, and their friends eat there, they will be less likely to attend school dinners no matter how skilfully prepared. Whole institution food policies, supported by local and national policy, will therefore have a significant influence on whether or not food skills training will have a lasting effect on health and the environment.

A final important point is that existing training providers and colleges are not always able or appropriate to implement change on the scale required. This is particularly worrying given our national priorities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the contribution to obesity and other diet-related diseases by our food system. This is especially important in public sector catering, which has responsibility for the well-being of a number of vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly or those who are ill – and also large numbers of public-sector staff, many of whom may be on a low income. We judge that existing accredited training is insufficient to provide healthy and sustainable food skills at the speed and on the scale required to achieve the change set out in government and regional strategy documents. Other, non-accredited training, where it exists, fails to consider the skills and knowledge needed to provide healthy and sustainable food. Overall, very little training is public-sector specific (although some accredited sector-specific nutrition training now exists to help the schools sector meet national legislative requirements for nutrition standards for school meals). All of this can mean that the training that does exist, and the mainstream catering trainers who provide it, are not always relevant to public sector caterers.

We conclude that current training provision for public sector catering, procurement, management and front-of-house staff is ineffective in providing all the skills and knowledge needed for change. Action is needed by government, regional health authorities and sector skills councils to integrate health and sustainability into all food skills training, for the lasting benefit of the nation's health and wellbeing.



# 7. Next Steps for Good Food Training

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Good Food Training has a significant part to play in transforming public sector food. We are enthusiastic about contributing to change and helping others to apply what we have learned. Based on the emerging conclusions of our evaluation team, our practical experiences with public sector catering over several years, and on conversations with several representatives of policy organisations, we have identified several 'next steps' for the project to take after the first phase concludes in October 2009. As our next steps we plan to:

- Build a training kitchen with existing funding, and a further investment of £85,000 capital funding from the School Food Trust to train school catering staff in the London area.
- Create and sell innovative training materials; market and sell training packages and support.
- Continue to develop and provide training packages to cover the gaps in current food skills training, including head teacher training around the role of food in schools and business planning packages for opted-out schools.
- Provide food growing coaching for school children and link this to seasonal cookery clubs based on school menus.
- Develop and run long-term training courses for the whole range of staff in an institution; head teachers or catering managers, care assistants or meal time supervisors, nurses or teachers as well as all catering staff.
- Work with People 1st and accreditation bodies to create healthy and sustainable food skills qualifications specific to public sector catering. These will cover levels two, three and four and correspond to the new Qualifications and Credit Framework (please see Appendix One for detailed recommendations for qualifications and skills organisations).
- Promote our experience to other Regional Development Agencies and provide services to enable them to adapt the Good Food Training model across the UK.
- With the support of others, lobby the various policy organisations and authorities identified in our recommendations, to take the actions we have identified (please see Appendix One for details).

A key recommendation is that the London Development Agency, London Food and the London Mayor's Office should publicise, champion, continue to support and take due credit for the excellent Good Food Training that they have funded as part of implementation of the London Food Strategy. The work is innovative, effective and of national importance for achieving health and sustainability goals. These organisations are in a strong position to influence the public sector training policies of national and regional government and funding bodies (such as Government Offices and Regional Development Agencies), and to share good practice.

However, this is not enough. It is imperative that all training for public sector caterers (and for their private-sector counterparts – although this is beyond the remit of the current project) should fully integrate health and sustainability. London's public sector operates within EU, national and regional policy and legislation and is influenced by a number of training organisations with national remit. To be successful in achieving our aim (and the aim of the London Food Strategy) of healthy and sustainable public sector food, it is necessary to address these policy and training organisations. We have therefore developed a full list of recommendations for national authorities and regional organisations, shown in Appendix One.

We look forward to a continued working relationship with the London Development Agency, London Food, the Mayor's Office and other relevant organisations and agencies over the coming years to bring about the change we all seek: healthy and sustainable food for all.

**Greenwich Co-operative Development Agency and  
Sustain, the alliance for better food and farming.  
May 2009.**









# Footnotes

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1. London's greenhouse gas emissions from food amount to 19 million tonnes per annum – greater than either London's commercial and public sector, London's domestic sector or all London's transport (excluding aircraft), see: *London's Food Sector Greenhouse Gas Emissions: A report for the Greater London Authority*, Brooke Lyndhurst, November 2008: <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/publications/2009/docs/food-emissions.rtf>
2. *Healthy and Sustainable Food for London* The Mayor's Food Strategy, May 2006. Available at: [www.londonfoodstrategy.org.uk/upload/pdf/LDA\\_Food\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.londonfoodstrategy.org.uk/upload/pdf/LDA_Food_strategy.pdf)
3. *Sustainable Food – a Guide for Hospitals*, May 2009. Available on the Purchasing and Supply Agency website at: [http://www.pasa.nhs.uk/pasa/Doc.aspx?Path=\[MN\]\[SP\]/NHSprocurement/Sustainable%20procurement/Food/SustainableFoodGuide%20-%206may09.pdf](http://www.pasa.nhs.uk/pasa/Doc.aspx?Path=[MN][SP]/NHSprocurement/Sustainable%20procurement/Food/SustainableFoodGuide%20-%206may09.pdf)
4. *The Mayor's Food Strategy Implementation Plan*. September 2007 See the London Food Strategy website at: <http://www.londonfoodstrategy.org.uk>
5. These are Support Workers in Schools (SWIS) courses; NVQs and Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs). For information about the new London FEAST centres, see: [http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/news\\_item.asp?NewsId=174](http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/news_item.asp?NewsId=174)



# Appendix One: Recommendations for policy-makers, the public sector and skills training organisations

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Our overall recommendation is that all training for public sector caterers should fully integrate health and sustainability. Achieving this will require policy and practical action from a range of organisations and individuals. The following detailed recommendations identify influential organisations in a position to take this action. They are based on our practical experiences with public sector training over several years and on conversations with several representatives of policy organisations. Training is very important but we also recognise that it cannot bring about change in isolation. Supportive policies for a healthier and more sustainable food and farming system are also needed, as well as an adequate budget to put new skills into practice. However, we present the following list of recommendations which we believe, if implemented, would ensure that public sector catering training plays its part in the necessary transformation of our food culture.

## National government and authorities

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- **Secretary of State Hilary Benn** (who convenes the Food Policy Council) should champion mandatory health and sustainability standards in public sector food – including public sector training – to provide high-level policy support to instigate change.
- The national **Food Policy Council** ([www.defra.gov.uk/foodrin/policy/council/](http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodrin/policy/council/)) should continue to champion health and sustainability standards for food in the public sector, including appropriate training (based on the Good Food Training model) for public sector catering staff, procurement officers and managers to achieve these aims.
- The **Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs** and the **Department of Health** should integrate training requirements into all award levels of the Healthier Food Mark, the consultation for which was launched in April 2009. In the consultation document, nutrition training for one member of staff is included at the lowest award level, which we consider to be inadequate.
- **Defra** should make the **Healthier Food Mark** – with integrated training requirements – mandatory rather than voluntary for public sector institutions.
- The **School Food Trust** should ensure its FEAST training centres provide, in the interim, supplementary training in healthy and sustainable food purchasing and menu planning – and make this mandatory for any FEAST trainee. When sector-specific accredited training is developed, this should be integrated into all School Food Trust training. The School Food Trust should fund its FEAST training centres to provide these courses, as well as funding capital investment (current funding is capital only).
- The **Learning and Skills Council** should target funding to support qualifications providing the necessary skills and knowledge for a healthy and sustainable food service, not simply to record existing practice. Train to Gain should fund supplementary training that promotes new knowledge and skills for healthy and sustainable public sector catering. This could include funding the additional 15 hours' supplementary 'key skills' learning to support sustainable catering practices.
- The **Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS)** should ensure that colleges have adequate facilities to provide catering training to prisoners and staff and that catering training includes skills for health and sustainability. OLASS provider colleges should not be penalised for failure rates for circumstances out of the prisoner's, the college's or the prison management's control; for instance, sudden movement of prisoners between one jail and another. Funding should be increased to provide easier access to catering qualifications for health and sustainability. Qualifications should be flexible enough to be completed at a succession of institutions, if required.



## Regional government and authorities

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- The **London Development Agency, London Food** and **Mayoral Office (GLA)** should champion the innovative and timely approach they have supported in the Good Food Training for London project, and encourage other Regional Development Agencies and Government Offices (and whichever agency is given responsibility to implement the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative) to adopt a similar approach.
- **Regional Development Agencies** (RDAs) and regional **Government Offices** should invest in healthy and sustainable food skills training programmes, sharing good practice with the London Development Agency that has supported Good Food Training. They should also seek advice from Good Food Training to implement public sector training for health and sustainability in their own regions.
- The **Office of Government Commerce** should integrate training in healthy and sustainable catering into its Collaborative Procurement programme and encourage public sector institutions to participate.
- **Local councils, strategic health authorities and Local NHS Trusts** should integrate healthy and sustainable food in the public sector – including public sector training – into their health and environmental strategies and into their Local Area Agreements (taking the lead from authorities that have already done so such as Camden Council and NHS Camden, see: [http://www.sustainweb.org/londonfoodlink/good\\_food\\_for\\_camden/](http://www.sustainweb.org/londonfoodlink/good_food_for_camden/)).

## Qualifications and skills organisations

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- The **Qualifications and Curriculum Authority** should ensure, as a priority, that health and sustainability modules are incorporated (and made mandatory for public sector training via the ‘Rules of Combination’) in the forthcoming Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) for the hospitality sector (see: [www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_8150.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_8150.aspx) for details of the QCF).
- The **Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills** (DIUS) should commission the production of Qualifications and Curriculum Authority-approved ‘continuous professional development’ training for existing catering trainers, to update them on sustainable food knowledge and skills, and drawing on the experience and recommendations of Good Food Training. This should be funded by the **Learning and Skills Council**.
- **People 1st**, the sector skills council for hospitality, should take a lead role in ensuring that health and sustainability are fully integrated into all training for public sector catering, following the example of Lantra and Improve (the sector skills councils for the land-based sector, including agriculture and food and drink sector skills respectively).
- **City & Guilds** and other training accreditation bodies should work with Good Food Training to produce accredited training qualifications that integrate health and sustainability, specifically designed for public sector catering. These should be:
  - o Available at level two (kitchen staff), level three (supervisory) and level four (management).
  - o A combination of work-based skills assessment and classroom, internet, or home-based knowledge learning and assessment. Flexibility is paramount to ensure that training is accessible and suited to the demographic typical of employees in public sector catering.
  - o Modular, and correspond to the forthcoming Qualification and Credit Framework for the hospitality sector.

The **Learning and Skills Council** should ensure funding is available to catering colleges and other training providers to run the courses at no cost to public sector employers.

- The **Department of Health (DH) Food and Nutrition Training Sub-Group** set up as a result of the DH Nutrition Action Plan in 2007 and currently reporting to Ivan Lewis MP, should receive funding from the Department of Health to work with People 1st, Good Food Training and accreditation bodies to develop qualifications that integrate health and sustainability and are relevant to health and social care catering.
- The **NHS Core Learning Unit** should be funded by the **Department of Health** to integrate sustainable food skills into the commendable Food, Nutrition & Hydration e-learning programme ([www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare/Socialcarereform/Dignityincare/DH\\_087414](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare/Socialcarereform/Dignityincare/DH_087414)). The Technical Management Group from that programme should consult with Good Food Training.

- The **Local Authority Caterers Association**, the **London Universities Catering Association**, the **Hospital Caterers Association** and other sector-specific catering associations should work with People 1st to offer expertise on the distinct nutritional requirements and catering considerations of their sector.
- **Train to Gain** ([www.traintogain.gov.uk](http://www.traintogain.gov.uk)) and any equivalent or future funder of training should integrate health and sustainability into its criteria for funding awards. This might mean greater flexibility in the types of courses and continuing professional development that can be considered eligible for such support.

## Public sector organisations

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- Any **public sector organisations** undertaking a staff training programme should commission appropriate training for their whole staff team, from management and procurement staff, to head chefs, kitchen assistants and customer service personnel, to ensure everyone understands the need for improvement and has the necessary skills to contribute to change. Health and sustainability should also be built in to job descriptions, recruitment processes and training policy, as part of a 'whole institution' approach.
- **Public sector organisations** should also extend their education and training influence to the wider community and, where possible (for example) engaging parents via cookery or food growing clubs at schools.
- **Catering managers in public sector organisations** should review their goods and service suppliers to ensure they can provide the food and other services required to maintain a healthy and sustainable catering operation. This includes fresh seasonal produce, 'ethical' products like Fairtrade and species of fish not listed on the Marine Conservation Society 'Fish to Avoid' list as well as recycling and food waste disposal services. Catering managers should work with their suppliers to help them understand the need and market for improvement.



# Appendix Two: UK Government policy affecting public sector food training

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The UK government is taking an increasing interest in improving the healthiness and sustainability of catering – particularly catering paid for by taxpayers' money. The following notes outline current policy activities in this area, which set the scene for increasing attention by national and regional government on sustainability issues in food procurement – hence the need for greater attention to training.

## Cabinet Office 'Food Matters' strategy and the Healthier Food Mark

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The 'Food Matters' strategy (published in summer 2008) launched the government's plans for a 'Healthier Food Mark' to improve the healthiness and sustainability of food in the public sector. Development of this voluntary scheme is the responsibility of the Department of Health (DH) and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Draft guidelines were issued for consultation in April 2009, with the scheme to be piloted from December 2009. The Food Matters report also signalled that if the scheme is not successful then mandatory standards for healthy and sustainable food will be considered by 2012 for central government, agencies and prisons.

See: [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/strategy/assets/food/food\\_matters1.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/strategy/assets/food/food_matters1.pdf)

## Review of the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)

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Defra recently commissioned a review of the PSFPI, which funded work in UK regions to support particularly the UK food and farming industry by increasing the use of sustainable produce by public sector caterers. Government is currently preparing its response to the PSFPI evaluation. Recommendations from the review included, for example, greater government support for the scheme and training in sustainable food procurement across the public sector for catering managers and other food purchasing decision-makers.

See: [www.defra.gov.uk/farm/policy/sustain/procurement/pdf/090311-PSFPI-%20evaluation.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/policy/sustain/procurement/pdf/090311-PSFPI-%20evaluation.pdf).

## Sustainable Food – a guide for hospitals

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This new guidance, with a forward by public health minister Ben Bradshaw, was launched in April 2009. This is the first time – to our knowledge – that a government health minister has published guidance integrating both health and sustainability goals. For food in the public sector, if approached in the right way, these goals can be mutually reinforcing.

See: [www.pasa.nhs.uk/PASASWeb/NHSprocurement/Sustainabledevelopment/Sustainablefood/Health.htm](http://www.pasa.nhs.uk/PASASWeb/NHSprocurement/Sustainabledevelopment/Sustainablefood/Health.htm)

## Public sector training standards development

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Improve Ltd, the sector skills council for food and drink (manufacturing) has introduced sustainability into the sector's National Occupational Standards. Sustain is also in discussion with other sector skills councils such as People 1st for similar integration of sustainability. It is imperative that the sector has consistent standards to refer to that reflect the requirements of a healthy and sustainable public sector catering service.





## National nutrition standards for school meals

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National nutrition standards for school meals, first established by law in 2005, will be fully implemented by September 2009 (when the final food and nutrient-based lunch standards come into force for secondary and special schools). Although focusing primarily on nutrition, the School Food Trust also promotes sustainability issues, such as through its sustainable procurement guide (see: [www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/doc\\_item.asp?DocId=79&DocCatId=9](http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/doc_item.asp?DocId=79&DocCatId=9)), in its seasonal calendar ([www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/doc\\_item.asp?DocId=72&DocCatId=9](http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/doc_item.asp?DocId=72&DocCatId=9)) and in the food waste composting guidance and seasonal recipes in 'Let's Get Cooking!' cookery clubs ([www.letsgetcooking.org.uk](http://www.letsgetcooking.org.uk)).

With the introduction of nutrient based standards and investment in school meals, there has been a general improvement in the quality of school meals on offer. However, there has been an overall decline in national school meals uptake. This trend is beginning to reverse, but national take-up levels in April 2008 were only 43.6% in primary schools and slightly lower in secondary schools. With the implementation of the new secondary schools standards this autumn, there is considerable concern amongst caterers that the number will drop again. Training is therefore imperative to help schools buy and prepare delicious food and – with a whole-school approach – communicate quality and the importance of health and sustainability to the pupils and their families.

## EU Green Public Procurement proposals

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In 2008, the European Commission called on governments to aim for at least 50 per cent of food procurement to meet a set of common 'green criteria' by 2010, including organic production and waste minimisation. Examples of what has already been achieved include:

- In the Netherlands, the government has set a target for 100% of central government public procurement (including, but not limited to, food) to be from sustainable sources by 2010.
- In Italy, the Rome city authorities have established an exemplary school system that provides freshly prepared, nutritious and organic school meals to the city's children.
- In Nordic countries, the Swan Ecolabel standards, applied to public procurement and covering food issues, was identified as a 'world leader' in procurement policy by Defra.  
See: [www.svanen.nu/Default.aspx?tabName=NewsDetail&newsid=58701](http://www.svanen.nu/Default.aspx?tabName=NewsDetail&newsid=58701)

We also know of regional and national action in countries as diverse as the USA, Spain, France, Denmark and some of the Eastern European nations. In Brazil, the central government passed legislation back in 2000 which requires that a minimum of 70% of its school meals funding programme is spent on fresh fruit and vegetables from local sources.





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