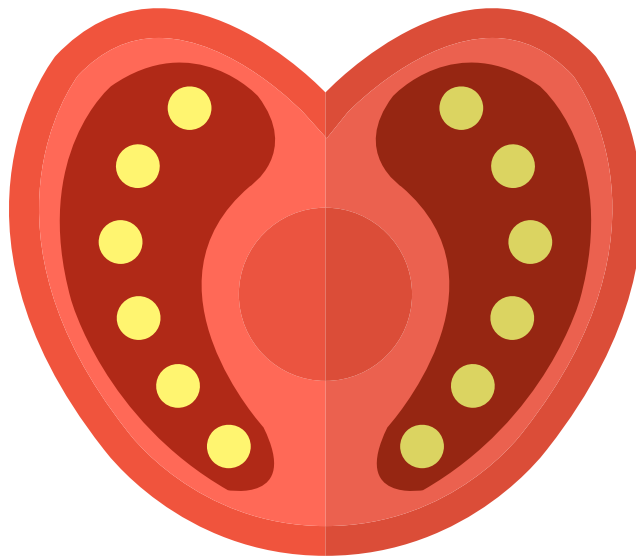
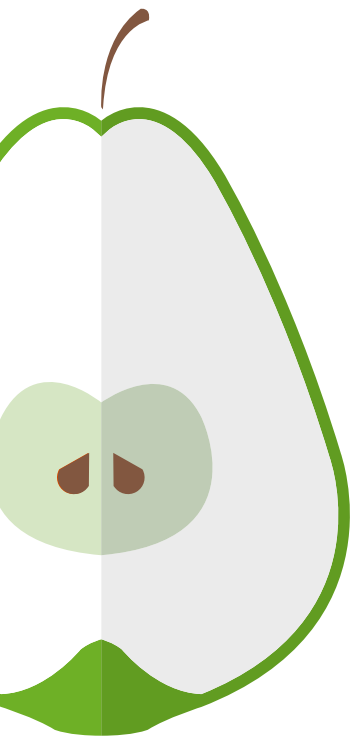


# Healthier Food Procurement





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# Foreword

You are what you eat – or so the saying goes. But all the evidence suggests as a nation our diet is not as healthy as it should be.

Obesity is one of the most important public health issues currently being addressed in this country. It is a cause of chronic disease leading to early death. Two thirds of English adults, more than one fifth of four to five-year-old children and more than a third of 10 to 11-year-olds are obese or overweight.

It is estimated that costs to the NHS of treating the health effects of poor diets are around £6 billion per year. So what can we do about it? Over recent years there's been a great deal of focus on school meals, to great effect. The success in that area shows something can be done. The public sector spends about £2.4 billion per year buying food and catering services – that's about 5 per cent of the entire sector.

Councils play a significant role in this. We employ 1.5 million people and many eat in our staff canteens. We run and commission leisure services where there are cafés and vending machines used by the young and old alike. And, through the care sector, we're responsible for the diets of thousands of people in our care.

But healthy catering and vending is not just about the people who consume our food and drink, it's also about leading by example. Through our work with partners from the NHS, which has already been instructed to improve catering for its staff, to our local businesses, we can make a huge difference.

The transfer of responsibility for public health in 2013 to councils has sparked a surge in innovative programmes. Some are featured in these case studies. They include councils spread across England, covering both rural and urban environments and with varying levels of deprivation and affluence.

Developing a healthy catering policy is only one weapon in our armoury. For those councils that choose to use it, I hope the key messages and case studies below will give some useful pointers.



**Councillor Izzi Seccombe**  
Chair, Community Wellbeing Board

## The Health Challenge

Obesity is one of the most important public health issues currently being addressed by this country. It is a cause of chronic disease leading to early death. Two-thirds of English adults, more than one fifth of four to five-year-old children and more than a third of 10 to 11-year-olds are obese or overweight.

A study by McKinsey and Company in 2014 estimated that obesity was a greater burden on the UK's economy than armed violence, war and terrorism, costing the country nearly £47 billion a year. The report found that obesity has the second-largest economic impact on the UK behind smoking, generating an annual loss equivalent to 3 per cent of GDP.

The country spends about £6 billion a year on the medical costs of conditions related to being overweight or obese and a further £10 billion on diabetes. Together obesity and diabetes cost as much as the UK's combined budget for the police and fire services, law courts and prisons. If current trends are not reversed, the cost of obesity and overweight conditions could increase from between £6 billion and £8 billion in 2015 to between £10 billion and £12 billion in 2030 (McKinsey, 2014).

The need for action at all levels of government and society has been recognised by the newly-announced partnership between Public Health England, the LGA, the Association of Directors of Public Health and Leeds Beckett University to support councils in designing a whole-system approach to reducing obesity. NHS England is also developing a programme of support to councils in developing healthy towns and communities.

These initiatives recognise that local authorities, through a wide range of their functions, are well placed to take action to combat obesity. A multi-faceted approach to tackling this issue appears in all local authorities' health and wellbeing strategies. A number of important publications have already drawn attention to the potential for local government to use its powers and influence in a variety of ways to combat obesity.

## The importance of diet

Diets high in salt and saturated fat, but low in fish, fruit, vegetables and fibre increase the risk of high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers, while consuming products that are high in fat and added sugars too frequently contributes to weight gain and, ultimately, obesity. But, unfortunately, as a nation we are not eating as healthily as we should.

The government recommends that people:

- eat at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day
- base meals on potatoes, bread, rice, pasta or other starchy carbohydrates – choosing wholegrain versions where possible
- have some dairy or dairy alternatives (such as soya drinks) choosing lower fat and lower sugar alternatives
- eat some beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins (including two portions of fish every week, one of which should be oily)
- choose unsaturated oils and spreads and eat in small amounts
- drink six to eight cups/glasses of fluid a day, including water, lower fat milk and sugar-free drinks, limiting fruit juice and smoothies to a total of 150ml every day.

The Eatwell Guide, overleaf, is a pictorial representation of the healthy eating advice.

Evidence from the National Diet and Nutrition Survey shows that the population consumes too much saturated fat, salt and sugars and eats too little fibre, fruit and vegetables and oily fish.

Only about a third of adults and one in 10 11 to 18-year-olds meet the five-a-day recommendations for fruit and vegetables.

A report by the Food Foundation in early 2016 warned the British diet was the “greatest threat” to the health and wellbeing of the public and the Department of Health has estimated that if diets matched national nutritional guidelines 70,000 deaths a year could be prevented with the health benefits valued at £20 billion a year.

# Eatwell Guide

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.

Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy	1046kJ	250kcal	13%	Fat	3.0g	LOW	4%	Saturated	1.3g	LOW	7%	Sugars	34g	HIGH	38%	Salt	0.9g	MED	15%
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of an adult's reference intake  
Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 687kJ / 167kcal

Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars



6-8 a day

Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.

Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.

Choose wholegrain or higher fibre versions with less added fat, salt and sugar

Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates

Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day

Fruit and Vegetables

Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins

Eat more beans and pulses, 2 portions of sustainably sourced fish per week, one of which is oily. Eat less red and processed meat



Eat less often and in small amounts



Choose unsaturated oils and use in small amounts

Dairy and alternatives

Choose lower fat and lower sugar options

Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

Sources: Public Health England in association with the Welsh government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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## What advice is out there

The main reference point in public sector catering is the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services (GBSF). They are aimed at ensuring food is produced to high levels of sustainability and nutritional standards. They make a number of requirements from ensuring portions of fruit are cheaper than a hot or cold dessert to not selling sugary drinks in containers larger than 330ml.

Central government and their agencies are required to apply GBSF and others, including councils, are encouraged to follow it. The GBSF are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-procurement-the-gbs-for-food-and-catering-services>

The GBSF form part of the toolkit on public sector food and catering procurement published in July 2014, which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-plan-for-public-procurement-food-and-catering>

Commissioners will often ensure that GBSF is stated within tender specifications when putting public sector food contracts/frameworks in place. Over and above this many will consider and implement sustainable development, a Quality Assurance and audit programme and assistance with schools working towards Food for Life.

The GBSF comprise both mandatory and best practice elements. The mandatory elements ensure a reduction in products that are high in salt, saturated fat and sugar and promote greater consumption of fruit, vegetables, fibre and oily fish.

The best practice nutrition-related elements cover confectionery, savoury snacks, sweetened beverages, menu analysis, allergen and calorie labelling.

There are a host of other pieces of guidance available. These include a range of tools from Public Health England, covering everything from general advice for adults to specific guidance for older people in residential care.

These are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthier-and-more-sustainable-catering-a-toolkit-for-serving-food-to-adults>

There are also dedicated guidelines for schools, hospitals and the care sector. For more links to them and other useful source of information see the final section, 'Want to know more?'

# Case studies

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## Blackpool spreading good practice on healthier vending

Blackpool Council's public health team has drawn up good practice guidelines to encourage the healthier stocking of the town's vending machines. The standards were drawn up 18 months ago and have started to be used by the three council-run leisure centres.

The guidelines state:

- At least 30 per cent of chilled drink options should be classed as sugar-free and plain water should always be available to purchase and placed at eye level.
- Lower fat milk drinks should be available and contain no more than 5 per cent of total sugars.
- All sugary drinks should contain no more than 330ml.
- All hot drinks are unsweetened and sugar/sweetener has to be selected as an option.
- Automatically sweet hot beverages should not be available.
- All confectionery and crisps should only be available in the smallest single serving size on the market.
- No multi-purchase offers for sugary drinks allowed.

Lynn Donkin, the council's public health specialist, says: "It has really made a difference. I wouldn't say we have got there completely yet, but we are making progress. You have to work with your procurement team and suppliers, but what the guidelines give us is a clear idea of what we want to achieve."

But the standards have not just been aimed at vending machines in council venues. The local hospital has also adopted them and the council is encouraging its partners and local organisations to follow suit.

Blackpool has also used the guidelines as one of their requirements for local businesses to achieve a healthy workplace award.

"We have tried to use them to encourage other places to take action. They give a clear idea of what can be done," adds Ms Donkin.

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## New Forest an ethical way to do vending

Vending machines offering healthier snacks and local products, which donate to charity and use recycled material, have been installed in the leisure centres run by New Forest District Council.

The Hampshire council changed providers at the end of last year after visitors raised concern about the lack of availability of healthier products in the machines.

Leisure services marketing assistant Kerry Johnston says: “They were typical vending machines – full of chocolate bars, crisps and fizzy drinks. What people were saying was that it was not really right to be doing something healthy and then be faced with a choice of high sugar snacks. So when the contract was up for renewal we looked for a healthy alternative.”

The council ended up signing a deal with Revive Vending, which supplies what is called “Honest Vending”. There are no high-sugar products. Instead, the machines sell fruit bags, nuts, dried peas and popcorn and fruit juices and flavoured water.

There is also a coffee machine that serves fair-trade coffees and tea made using fat-free milk. What is more 5p from every drink sold goes to the EdUKaid, a UK charity aimed at helping primary and secondary school children attend school.

As well as stocking alternative products, the machines also look different. They are assembled by hand with the wood surrounding the equipment taken from recycled pallets, sanded and then carefully joined together.

“They look really nice, but the most important thing is that they have been well received,” says Ms Johnston. “The feedback we have received has been extremely positive. I think people appreciate being able to buy something different.”

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## Bolton building on work with the NHS

The public health team in Bolton have been working with the local NHS trust for a number of years to ensure healthier food and snacks are available.

Changes started being made at Bolton NHS Foundation Trust sites in 2012 and have continued ever since. High-sugar drinks and high-fat crisps have been removed from sale from vending machines and the Royal Voluntary Service hospital shops and trolleys, while large chocolate bars, flapjacks and tins of biscuits are no longer sold either.

Multi-buy deals on unhealthy foods will shortly be phased out and traffic light labelling has been introduced on some items on the restaurant menu. Salt has also been removed from the tables, while the children's menu has been changed to make healthy options more attractive through the use of smiley faces and heart symbols.

To increase the availability of healthy food, a mobile van sells fruit and vegetables across the different sites run by the trust.

The work has been overseen by a food and nutrition working group, composed of staff from the trust and the council's public health team. Deputy leader Councillor Linda Thomas says: "It was important to increasingly create a healthier environment for staff, visitors and patients. There were a few complaints at the start, but not many. A lot of staff seemed very positive about the changes.

"The trust ran a marketing campaign around it to create a positive feeling to it all, emphasising that it was not about taking foods away, but about providing more healthy options."

To build on this, the council is now working with Bolton Community Leisure Trust, which operates several local leisure centres.

The proposals, which are under review, mean vending machine sales could be restricted to:

- chocolate bars and confectionery of 55g/250 calories and under
- crisps of 30g/120 calories and under
- cereal bars/flapjacks of 30g/130 calories and under
- drinks (100 per cent fruit juices) of 250ml maximum with no more than 12g sugar per 100ml
- drinks (all other) with no more than 2.5g sugar per 100ml with the exception of two options above that level but a maximum size of 330ml.

Mahendra Patel, the deputy partnership manager at Bolton Community Leisure Trust, says: "It is all designed to be practical to put in place. With the growing concern about sugar and obesity it is important we are proactive on this issue," says Councillor Thomas.

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## West Sussex ensuring healthier catering is at the heart of the tendering process

West Sussex County Council has sought to take a lead on healthy eating by making a whole range of food and drinks services healthier and encouraging those using the services to make healthier choices.

This has been done over the last 20 months by the council introducing new stipulations into catering contracts – either when they are extended or re-tendered.

In the meals on wheels contract, salad options are now routinely offered and tea-time snacks also include fresh fruit.

Meanwhile, vending machines have been removed from council buildings and there has been an overhaul of the food on sale and the way it is promoted in the four staff cafeterias.

These restaurants, which are also used by members of the public, have started displaying healthy food more prominently at point of sale and confectionery less prominently as well as reducing that range to only core items. Dishes have also been reformulated to make them healthier and customers have been provided with visual information about healthy eating and sugar swapping.

The most recent change, however, has been made to school meals. The council has worked in partnership with their main provider, Chartwells, to reduce the average sugar content of meals in primary schools through steps such as dropping some sugar-heavy desserts and moving to fruit and yoghurt options twice a week.

All menus are checked by the Children's Food Trust and over the course of the year a child eating a school meal every day will now consume 1.25kg less sugar than before. "You need to take different approaches for different contracts," says John Figgins, the council's catering service manager. "For example, while we have reduced the sugar content of foods in schools and staff cafeterias, you cannot do that for meals on wheels.

"Older people have different needs. So what we have done with that contract is just try to make sure there are some healthier, fresh options to give people the choice."

Mr Figgins says choice is an important element of the changes made in the staff cafeterias too. "You cannot just take all the cake and confectionery away. People would not be happy and go elsewhere. You have to have a balance between commercial viability and what your customers want. But changing the way it is displayed and offering smaller portions, which is something we have done with cake, is an important way of encouraging healthier behaviour."

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## Surrey and Buckinghamshire working with providers on a national scale

Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards has been running its Eat Out Eat Well scheme for the past seven years. It has been used to encourage local businesses to adopt healthier practices, such as grilling instead of frying and substituting high fat products for lower fat alternatives.

There are three classes of membership – gold, silver and bronze – to reflect the number of standards each organisation has met.

The scheme currently has over 350 members and is the best-established Eat Out Eat Well award in the country. This has enabled the service to help a local leisure provider use the award on a national scale.

In recent months the service has worked with Sports and Leisure Management Ltd to help it improve practices at 33 of its catering venues up-and-down the country.

This involved the service hosting a one-day nutrition course for 20 of the leisure firm's managers. Menus have also been revised.

Andy Coupe, head of food and beverage at the firm, says it was great to be able to work on a standardised healthy catering template in this way.

“As a large company working with many local authorities up and down the country, it's important that we have one standard and one company procedure.

“But over the years we have come up with issues with kitchen and café design or company standards. What is passed for one is blocked by another.”

In the summer of 2016 the initiative received recognition from the government when it received a highly commended award in the Business, Innovation and Skills Primary Authority Awards.

Richard Walsh, Surrey's cabinet member for localities and community wellbeing, says he was delighted with the achievement. “We believe it is the first time a partnership has been used to extend a healthy eating award across the country and support national goals of improving people's health.”

But this is just the start. The service is seeking fresh ways to use the award to improve catering. It is now looking to work with local hospitals to get them to take part on behalf of the staff and visitor restaurants as well as expanding it out to more and more businesses and local authorities.

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## Norfolk making school foods healthier

Following the release of the Government's Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) Report in July 2015 and the subsequent Public Health England (PHE) Sugar Reduction Plan, October 2015, Norse, a wholly owned company of Norfolk County Council, have been busy reformulating recipes behind the scenes.

Reducing sugar is not as straightforward as one might first think. It not only affects flavour but the texture, total energy and shelf life of foods. The new guidance, however, provided Norfolk County Council with the impetus to review their puddings to see where change could be made immediately, without compromising the taste and texture, and which would make them instantly healthier.

The first action was to reduce the portion sizes of cookies and biscuits to offer a 'mini' version and to serve this with a portion of fresh fruit. As a result Norse can proudly state that a third of their puddings now contain an average 66 per cent less free sugars. In real terms this is equal to six teaspoons less per child over the three week menu cycle. Every Wednesday is Fruity Wednesday where only fresh fruit and a yoghurt is served. This has all had the added effect of reduced time spent sitting and eating and more time in the playground playing with friends and being active.

Norse continue to work with their development chefs to reduce the free sugars in all of their puddings, looking at adding fruit to sweeten them naturally; with the added benefit of increasing the fibre content. Plus they are liaising with the council's suppliers of yoghurts, ice creams and mousses to negotiate healthier alternatives in line with the new government guidelines.

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# Want to find out more?

## **Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services**

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-procurement-the-gbs-for-food-and-catering-services](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-procurement-the-gbs-for-food-and-catering-services)

## **Government's Healthy Eating Recommendations: A Quick Guide**

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/347871/A\\_quick\\_guide\\_to\\_govt\\_healthy\\_eating.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/347871/A_quick_guide_to_govt_healthy_eating.pdf)

## **PHE Healthier and More Sustainable Catering: A Toolkit for Serving Food to Adults**

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/347873/Adults\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/347873/Adults_toolkit.pdf)

## **PHE Healthier and more sustainable catering: a toolkit for serving food to older people in residential care**

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/347890/Older\\_people\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/347890/Older_people_toolkit.pdf)

## **PHE Healthier, More Sustainable Catering (information for purchasers)**

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/347895/Tools\\_variety\\_and\\_choice\\_purchasing.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/347895/Tools_variety_and_choice_purchasing.pdf)

## **PHE Healthier, More Sustainable Catering (information for commissioners)**

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/347892/Tools\\_Information\\_for\\_Commissioners.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/347892/Tools_Information_for_Commissioners.pdf)

## **A Toolkit to Support the Development of a Hospital Food and Drink Strategy**

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/499745/Toolkit\\_Feb\\_16.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/499745/Toolkit_Feb_16.pdf)

## **PHE Healthier and More Sustainable Catering: Nutrition Principles**

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/347883/Nutrition\\_principles.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/347883/Nutrition_principles.pdf)

## **Eatwell Guide booklet**

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/528200/Eatwell\\_guide\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/528200/Eatwell_guide_booklet.pdf)

## **School Food Standards (set by the Department for Education)**

[www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards/](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards/)

## **Children's Food Trust voluntary guidelines for early years settings**

[http://media.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/2015/06/CFT\\_Early\\_Years\\_Guide\\_Interactive\\_Sept-12.pdf](http://media.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/2015/06/CFT_Early_Years_Guide_Interactive_Sept-12.pdf)

## **Children's Food Trust information for schools**

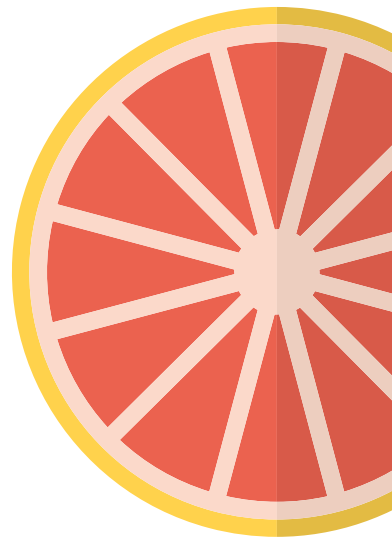
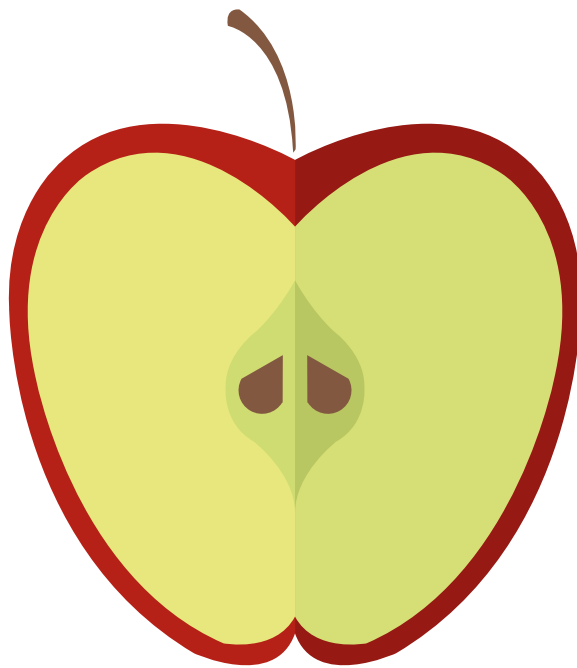
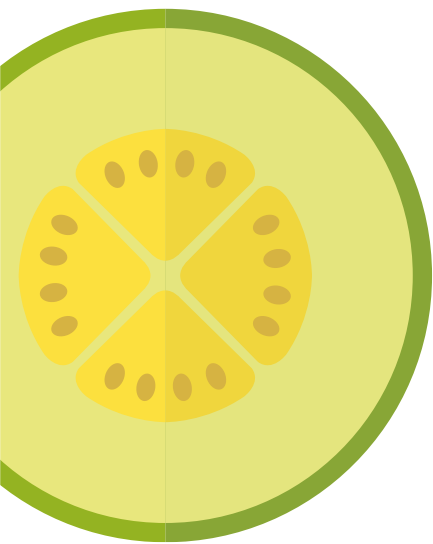
[www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/childrens-food-trust/schools/schools-resources/](http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/childrens-food-trust/schools/schools-resources/)

## **National Association of Care Catering best practice guidelines**

[www.thenacc.co.uk/shop/category/Good+Practice+Guides](http://www.thenacc.co.uk/shop/category/Good+Practice+Guides)

## **Catering guidance from PHE that offers practical guidance on how to make catering affordable, healthier and more sustainable**

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthier-and-more-sustainable-catering-a-toolkit-for-serving-food-to-adults](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthier-and-more-sustainable-catering-a-toolkit-for-serving-food-to-adults)





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