Department of Health & Social Care

Department for Education

Research and analysis

Updating the school food standards: feasibility pilot findings - appendices

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Applies to England

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Appendix A: updated school food standards tested in the feasibility pilot

This appendix sets out the school food standards (SFS) pilot proposals for each food group. Schools used these standards during the pilot study to update the menus and dishes served to pupils.

Starchy foods

One or more portions of food from this group every day.

Three or more different starchy foods each week.

All pasta and rice to be brown, wholemeal or added fibre white varieties.

All bread to be a source of fibre (3 grams (g) per 100g).

Starchy food cooked in or with fat or oil (including during manufacture) on no more than 2 meal occasions each week and only as part of a meal.

Bread - with no added fat or oil - must be available every day.

Fruit and vegetables

One or more portions of vegetables or salad as an accompaniment every day (vegetables does not include potatoes and canned pasta in tomato sauce).

At least 3 different vegetables each week.

One or more portions of fruit every day (does not include fruit juice and canned fruit must not be in syrup).

At least 3 different fruits each week.

All desserts or second courses to be accompanied by, or contain, a portion of fruit.

At least once a week, fruit to be the only available dessert option for primary schools.

A variety of fruit or vegetables or both must be available in all school food outlets.

A portion of salad or vegetables must be served as an accompaniment to all main items whenever served (main items include traditional lunches such as roast dinner, lasagne, sandwiches, baguettes, panini, salad boxes, pasta boxes, baked potato, pizza and meat products).

Dairy and alternatives

A portion of food or drink from this group every day.

Lower-fat milk must be available for drinking at least once a day during school hours. In addition, plain, unsweetened or no sugar plant-based drinks and fortified with calcium, iodine, vitamin D, riboflavin or vitamin B12 can be served.

Dairy yoghurt to contain less than 3g per 100g total fat, less than 10g per 100g total sugar and not contain non-sugar sweeteners.

Plant-based yoghurts to contain less than 3g per 100g total fat and less than 7g per 100g total sugar and not contain non-sugar sweeteners.

All hard cheeses should be reduced fat.

Pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other non-dairy proteins

A portion of food from this group every day.

A portion of meat, poultry, or pulses as the main protein source on 3 or more days each week (pulses include beans, lentils and chickpeas. Does not include baked beans. Protein source does not include manufactured or homemade meat, poultry or vegetarian alternative products).

In meat-serving schools, oily fish to be served at least once every 3 weeks.

At least once a week all menu options to be based on pulses as the main protein source (pulses include beans, lentils and chickpeas. Does not include baked beans. Protein source does not include manufactured or homemade meat, poultry or vegetarian alternative products).

No more than 2 portions a week of meat and fish alternative products (manufactured or homemade). Excludes plain tofu and plain soya mince.

Foods higher in fat, sugar and salt

Coated food, pastry and processed meat
No more than a combined total of 2 portions of food from across the groups across the week. Food from any one of the following groups cannot be served more than once per week (meat and vegetarian versions served simultaneously count once):

- batter-coated or breadcrumb-coated
- food including pastry
- processed meat (note 1), meat and poultry products (note 2) whether manufactured or homemade. Meat products must meet the legal requirements - The Products Containing Meat etc. (England) Regulations 2014

Note 1: processed meat - any meat that has been preserved by smoking, curing, salting or adding preservatives, including sausages, ham, bacon, salami and pepperoni.

Note 2: processed meat, meat and poultry products are foods where meat is an ingredient, even if the other ingredient is 5% water. A product containing meat also includes foods containing multiple ingredients.

Where meat or poultry products are breaded, batter-coated or include pastry, these products should be classed in the processed meat, meat and poultry products category.

Foods that contain cheese
No more than 2 portions of food that contain cheese each week, including macaroni cheese, paninis, toastie, jacket potato and pizza.

Snacks
In primary and secondary schools, no snacks, except vegetables and fruit (excluding dried fruit and processed dried fruit products) with no added salt, sugar or fat, plain savoury crackers and breadsticks.

Confectionery
No confectionery, sweets, chocolate, chocolate-coated products or chocolate-containing products (confectionery includes cereal bars and processed fruit bars).

Salt
Salt must not be available to add to food after it has been cooked.

Salt not to be added to water when cooking pasta, rice and other starchy foods.

Condiments

Any condiments must be limited to sachets or portions of no more than 10g or one teaspoonful. These must be reduced sugar, salt and/or fat.

Fats and oils
Fat spreads and oils must be based on rapeseed oil, olive oil or sunflower oil.

Sweeteners
Foods and drink containing non-sugar sweeteners must not be served in primary and secondary schools (non-sugar sweeteners are synthetic and naturally occurring or modified non-nutritive sweeteners that are not classified as sugars).

Sugar and non-sugar sweeteners must not be available to add to food or drink after it has been cooked or prepared (non-sugar sweeteners are synthetic and naturally occurring or modified non-nutritive sweeteners that are not classified as sugars).

Sweetened baked products and desserts
No more than one portion of sweetened baked products (note 1) and desserts (note 2) (manufactured or homemade) can be served at lunchtime each week. These must contain at least 50% fruit and no confectionery or chocolate.

Note 1: sweetened baked products include cakes, buns, muffins, tray bakes, doughnuts, brownies, biscuits and cookies, flapjack, sweet pastries and products containing pastry, crumbles, tarts, pies, sponge puddings and scones. Excludes bread-based fruited buns.

Note 2: desserts include ice cream, mousse or whips, cheesecake, frozen yoghurt, trifle, jelly, meringues, waffles and pancakes. Excludes yoghurt, custard and rice pudding. These must be less than 3g per 100g total fat and less than 10g per 100g total sugar.

Deep-fried foods
No deep-fried foods.

Meal deals

A meal deal must include:

- at least one portion of vegetables or salad
- at least one portion of fruit

Meal deals must not include drinks.

Healthier drinks: primary schools

Free, fresh drinking water at all times and must be available in the dining room or where food is served.

The only drinks permitted are:

- plain, unsweetened and unflavoured water (still or carbonated)
- plain, unsweetened and unflavoured lower-fat milk or lactose-free milk
- plain soya and oat drinks - must be unsweetened or no sugar and fortified with micronutrients - calcium, iodine, vitamin D, riboflavin and vitamin B12

Healthier drinks: secondary schools

Free, fresh drinking water at all times and must be available in the dining room or where food is served.

The only drinks permitted are:

- plain, unsweetened and unflavoured water (still or carbonated)
- water (still or carbonated) that is sugar-free and contains no sweeteners
- plain, unsweetened and unflavoured lower-fat milk or lactose-free milk
- plain soya, oat and rice drinks - must be unsweetened or no sugar and fortified with micronutrients: calcium, iodine, vitamin D, riboflavin and vitamin B12
- tea or coffee without additions such as syrups, sprinkles or cream

Appendix B: additional qualitative sample information

This appendix sets out work undertaken by the research agency Verian as part of the

pilot study.

Sampling approach

Verian used purposive sampling, meaning they chose schools deliberately, rather than at random. This ensured the pilot included a range of specific school types and catering systems.

Verian set quotas for:

- school type
- catering model
- location
- percentage of students eligible for free school meals (FSM)

They also tracked the numbers of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in schools. This helped to ensure a range in the proportion of SEND children within the schools included in the pilot, without setting hard quotas.

Overall, 12 schools were recruited but 2 schools dropped out. One of these occurred before the pilot started and was replaced. However, one school dropped out during the pilot, before trialling the updated standards. In total, 11 schools piloted the updated standards (see table 1 below).

Research activities

Research activities took place between September and December 2025. This included the following.

Twenty-four online, in-depth interviews, each lasting 45 minutes, with catering and school contacts before any changes were made to the food and drink provided. These explored initial perceptions of the SFS pilot proposals and expectations of the implementation process.

A baseline survey (before the pilot started) to understand parents' and pupils' views of food at their school before the menu changes were made.

Eighteen online, in-depth interviews, each lasting 30 to 45 minutes, with schools and caterers who piloted the standards. In 5 schools, both school and caterer representatives were interviewed together at the participants' request. In 7 schools, there were separate interviews with school and caterer representatives.

Site visits to 6 schools, so the researchers could:

- observe pupil behaviour relating to the new school food
- interview catering staff about their experiences
- conduct short interviews with pupils and parents

Ten additional short, in-depth interviews conducted by telephone to ensure more parents were engaged in the research.

A post-pilot survey to understand the extent to which parents' and pupils' views of school food changed as a result of the pilot.

Schools also filled in a form giving data they had access to on food costs (including ingredients and labour) and waste (food and packaging).

Supplementary interviews

To broaden the scope of the sample, Verian conducted 3 online supplementary in-depth interviews with caterers, local authority representatives and industry representatives who were not participating in the pilot. The main purpose of these interviews was to explore how they anticipated schools and caterers would receive the new proposed standards if they were rolled out in their current form.

The researchers also conducted 2 additional interviews, with a charity and a private caterer. This was to validate the findings and fill gaps in the researchers' knowledge about how these organisations and caterers operated.

Payments to schools

Schools received £500 for participating in the pilot. They also received £1 for each parent completing both the baseline and post-pilot surveys, up to a maximum of £150 per school.

Table 1: schools that participated in the trial

School setting	School type	Catering model	Number of interviews conducted	Site visit conducted
Primary school	Academy or free school, multi-academy trust	Private commercial caterer	4	Yes
Primary school	Special school, academy or free school	In-house caterer	3	Yes
Primary school	Maintained school, foundation	Charitable organisation	4	Yes
Primary school	Academy or free school, multi-academy trust	In-house caterer	3	No
Primary school	Academy or free school, multi-academy trust	In-house caterer	3	No
Primary school	Academy or free school, single academy trust	Private commercial caterer	4	Yes
Primary school	Academy or free school, multi-academy trust	In-house caterer	2	No
Primary school	Academy or free school, single academy trust	In-house caterer	3	No
Middle school (9 to 13 years)	Maintained school, community	In-house caterer	4	No
Secondary school and sixth form	Maintained school, voluntary aided faith school	Private commercial caterer	4	Yes

Secondary school and sixth form	Academy or free school, single academy trust	In-house caterer	4	Yes

Table 2: schools that dropped out of the trial

School setting	School type	Catering model	Interviews conducted	Site visit conducted
Secondary school	Academy or free school, single academy trust	In-house caterer	2	No
Secondary school	Maintained school, community	Private commercial caterer	2	No

Appendix C: nutrient analysis

This appendix sets out the methodology for undertaking the nutrient analysis of the menus used and dishes served before and during the pilot.

Aim

Verian worked with 3 registered nutritionists who conducted nutrient analysis for the pilot. Before the analysis began, the nutritionists developed a nutrition analysis plan. This was in anticipation of the large volume of food items schools would be serving. The nutritionists agreed, and set out in the plan, how foods would be selected from the menus for analysis and the methods to be used.

The nutrient analysis was carried out to identify whether the new menus served in schools (which complied with the SFS pilot proposals) provided better nutritional value per portion than menus designed under the current food standards (the baseline menus). This was assessed using the nutrient framework for school

lunches.

Step-by-step process

An 8-step process was followed to complete the nutrition analysis of the menus. This process was completed twice, once for menus used and dishes served before the pilot, and once for menus used and dishes served during the pilot.

Nutrition analysis step-by-step plan:

1. Schools sent Verian the full menu cycle.
2. Verian used a random number generator to select which weeks of menus would be included in the analysis. Two weeks of menus were used for primary schools, one week of menus was used for secondary schools.
3. Step 3 only applied to menus used and dishes served during the pilot. Verian shared the selected menu cycles with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) for light-touch compliance analysis. DHSC confirmed whether the menus were compliant with the SFS pilot proposals or if changes were required (focusing on the weeks selected for nutrition analysis). Schools updated menus according to feedback and shared these back with Verian, who shared them with DHSC. All updated menus needed to be finalised and ready to be launched after the October half-term.
4. Verian asked schools for detailed recipe, ingredient and portion size information for the weeks selected and shared this with the nutritionists. This included information on whether recipes were vegetarian and whether they were available to children receiving FSM. Verian also asked schools to share data on their most popular meals or food items.
5. If the number of menu items on selected menus was over 50, Verian used data on the dishes provided and what pupils chose, to inform the selection of menu items included in the analysis. DHSC reviewed and signed off these selections.
6. The nutritionists populated a spreadsheet with details of the menu options to be used in the analysis, with advice from DHSC as needed. This included portion size information. For primary schools, an average portion size was used if it differed between key stage 1 (children aged 5 to 7 years) and key stage 2 (children aged 7 to 11 years). For consistency, the portion size was weighted to align with the weighting used in the nutrient framework.
7. The nutritionists then performed the nutrient analysis. The nutritionists worked with

schools and caterers to ensure the information on recipes, portion sizes and ingredients was detailed enough for accurate analysis.

8. The nutritionists calculated average nutritional values for each school, and each baseline and pilot menu, based on the most popular:

- plated vegetarian main and side
- plated non-vegetarian main and side
- grab-and-go item
- drinks
- dessert

Menu selection

The menu options in scope differed between primary and secondary schools:

- for primary schools, the analysis focused on the 2-course plated lunchtime menu
- for secondary schools, the analysis focused on the morning breaktime and lunchtime grab-and-go menu, and the plated lunchtime menu

A selection of baseline and pilot weekly menus were selected from each school for the analysis. To avoid potential bias in menu selection, Verian asked schools to provide their whole menu cycle, then selected the weeks of the baseline and post-pilot menus included in the analysis at random.

Some schools noted that they would normally change from their spring and summer menu to the autumn and winter menu after the October half-term. To help reduce any additional burden with taking part in the pilot, these schools provided their spring and summer menu as the baseline, and their autumn and winter menu as the updated menu.

For primary schools, Verian randomly selected 2 weeks of baseline menus and 2 weeks of pilot menus for analysis.

For secondary schools, Verian randomly selected one week of plated lunchtime menus and one week of grab-and-go items, both at baseline and after changes had been made for the pilot, for analysis. Both the plated and grab-and-go menus included drinks and desserts.

For each school, the nutritionists aimed to analyse 100 menu items from the selected menus: 50 items at baseline and 50 items once changes had been made. The number of items on the menu offered per week varied by school. For some schools, it was not possible to analyse all menu items offered across a one or 2-week menu cycle. Where this issue arose, the menu items were chosen to include those that were most popular. The selection of menu items was confirmed with DHSC.

The nutritionists aimed to select a balance of items to provide average nutritional values for each school and for each baseline and pilot menu. The items were from:

- plated vegetarian main meal (main and sides)
- plated non-vegetarian main meal (main and sides)
- grab-and-go meal options (secondary schools only)
- desserts
- drinks

The completed nutrition spreadsheet was shared with DHSC at the end of the project. This allowed DHSC to run any additional analysis using popularity data from caterers.

Data collection

Schools and their caterers were required to share their baseline and pilot plated lunchtime menus. Secondary schools were also asked to provide their grab-and-go options.

For pilot menus, DHSC performed a high-level check on the weeks selected for analysis against the SFS pilot proposals. Feedback from DHSC on the menus was shared with schools and caterers, in case they needed to adapt their menus.

Schools were then asked to provide a detailed breakdown of the menu items for a specific week (secondary schools) or weeks (primary schools). This included ingredients, method and portion size.

The nutrient analysis depended on the quality and completeness of the recipe information shared by schools and caterers. Verian worked with schools to make sure they knew what information to provide, so the nutritionists had everything they

needed. Where schools did not provide complete data, Verian followed up to try to get the missing information and told the nutritionists about any data that could not be obtained.

Nutrient data used for the analysis of school menus

For the nutrition analysis, the nutritionists had to decide whether to use generic reference nutrient data or specific values from product labels or specifications. The generic data is set out in the composition of foods integrated dataset (CoFID).

CoFID data is more complete than product labels because it includes vitamins and minerals that are not listed on labels. It also works well for unprocessed foods such as fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, milk, eggs, flour and rice.

For foods like processed meat and poultry, bread, biscuits, soft drinks, cooking and table sauces, flavoured yogurts and breakfast cereals, CoFID values may not reflect recent changes in formulations - for example, any reductions in levels of salt and sugar. Nutrient content can also vary substantially by brand.

In practice, the nutritionists used a combination of both data sources. They intended to use CoFID for unprocessed foods, and use their knowledge and expertise to judge the most appropriate source for processed or composite foods on a case-by-case basis.

Using CoFID values, where available and appropriate, reduced the burden on schools as less information was required from them. It also reduced the need to estimate values for vitamins and minerals not listed on labels, which was helpful given the tight timescales. However, this approach may have overestimated the content of some nutrients, such as salt and sugar. Examples included:

- canned vegetables - generic CoFID values are for vegetables canned in unsalted water, but some brands' vegetables are canned in salted water
- baked beans - generic CoFID values may not reflect current levels of salt and sugar in baked beans - levels of salt and sugar in baked beans can also vary between brands
- bread and burger buns - there is variation in the salt content of different types of bread (such as tortilla wraps and burger buns) and different brands of the same bread (for example, 2 brands of wholemeal sliced bread) - CoFID values are generic and may not reflect the salt content of all products on the market

- plant alternatives to meat, including veggie burgers and sausages - generic CoFID values may not reflect the nutrient content of all products currently on the market, so product-specific values were used (there were also gaps in the nutrition information for some products for the levels of some vitamins and minerals)
- breaded or battered fish and fish fingers - generic CoFID values are suitable for these products, although there may be some variation in salt content between brands
- fries - generic CoFID values are likely to be acceptable for basic oven chips but there is likely to be variation in the nutrient content of seasoned or battered products

Analysis

Up to 50 menu items per school for each pre-pilot (baseline) and pilot menu, selected from the relevant menu cycle weeks, were analysed to estimate nutrient values per portion. The nutrients included in the analysis were selected from the nutrient framework (see below).

The nutritionists ensured that the average nutrient value estimates, compared between pre-pilot and pilot menus, were broadly representative of the meals pupils choose for themselves. To do this, they asked all schools to provide information on whether pupils had:

- a choice between non-vegetarian mains, vegetarian mains, sides, desserts and grab-and-go meal options and drinks - schools and caterers were asked to identify the most popular item each day (secondary schools were asked for the 2 most popular items each day)
- optional extras or sides available on the day, and whether they could choose as many of them as they liked - schools were asked to indicate which options were selected by more than 50% of pupils on an average day

To collect this data, a bespoke form was created for each school. The form covered every day of the menus selected for analysis. Analysis was carried out based on the nutrients per portion for the most popular menu items. For each school, the nutritionists estimated up to 5 average values, one for each of the following options as appropriate for the school:

- plated vegetarian main meals (main and sides)
- plated non-vegetarian main meals (main and sides)
- plated dessert courses
- grab-and-go meal options (secondary schools only)
- drinks

Some schools had fewer than 5 average values - for example, grab-and-go options were not relevant for primary schools. The level of information the school was able to provide on the most popular items per day determined how the average values were calculated. Some schools gave one preferred option per day in each category - for example, the most popular drink each day - and a simple average nutrient value of these options was taken across the week.

Some schools provided multiple popular options within each category, with approximate proportions of children who had each option per day. These were calculated as weighted averages. Average portions from the salad bar were calculated using the most popular salad bar options and the school's information about how much children were having on average.

One benefit of this approach was that it provided average nutrient values to compare pre-pilot and post-pilot menus based on the most popular meals. It also minimised the considerable burden on schools and caterers to provide the nutritionists with this information across each day.

National Diet and Nutrition Survey nutrient databank values were used to estimate free sugars.

The nutritionists had access to Nutritics, the nutrition database used for the nutrient analysis, until February 2026. At the end of the project, the data created in Nutritics was shared with DHSC.

Worked example: primary school

This example shows how this process worked for one primary school menu. For this primary school, the total number of menu items for 2 weeks of menus was less than 50. This meant all menu items could be included in the nutrition analysis spreadsheet. The nutritionists worked with the school to understand:

- how the menu worked
- how much choice pupils had between options
- which options were the most popular

Table 3 below shows the menu for this worked example.

Main plated meals
The school offered 2 options for the main plated meal each day: one was vegetarian and the other non-vegetarian. In this case, all the main options were included in the calculation to give the average nutrient value per portion for the main meals.

If there were more than 2 options each day, the school was asked to provide details on which main meal was most popular on each day.

More generally, primary schools were asked for the most popular non-vegetarian and vegetarian main meal across 2 weeks of menus. Secondary schools were asked for the top 2 most popular non-vegetarian and vegetarian main meals across one menu week.

One of the main options in the school was ‘make your own pizza’. For this meal, the school was asked whether this was the most popular vegetarian and non-vegetarian meal on that day, and which toppings were the most popular toppings for both the vegetarian and non-vegetarian pizza. Both the vegetarian and non-vegetarian pizza options were included in the estimate of average nutritional value for a plated vegetarian and non-vegetarian meal.

Sides
The school in the worked example had a list of sides available alongside the hot meals each day. The school was asked whether all pupils could choose between these options. Where pupils could only choose one option, the school was asked which was most popular. Where pupils could choose as many sides as they liked, the school was asked which options were selected by more than half of pupils.

The nutritionists then took an average nutrient value of the most popular sides selected by most pupils, alongside the plated main options. This was to estimate the average nutrient value of a plated meal.

For the salad bar, the school was asked whether they served salad as prepared (one recipe) or whether pupils could choose between different salad dishes (multiple recipes). If the salad bar offered multiple dishes, the school was asked to provide the recipe for each dish and to indicate which dishes were most popular on an average day. If the salad bar dishes changed each day, the school was asked to

provide the recipes for each day and to indicate which dishes were selected by most pupils for those days.

Drinks
For the school included in the worked example, the only drink option was water. If the school had provided pupils with different options, they would have been asked to give details of the most popular option on each day. This was based on the assumption that pupils would only have one drink with their meal.

Menu for the worked example
Table 3: primary school menu used in the worked example

Day	Hot specials	Daily favourites
Monday	Macaroni cheese (wheat and milk) or pasta with homemade tomato sauce (vegetarian) (wheat)	Homemade bread (wheat), salad bar, seasonal vegetables and fresh fruit salad (vegetarian)
Tuesday	Roasted rainbow trout (fish) or jacket potatoes with cheese and beans (vegetarian) (milk)	Homemade bread (wheat), roast potatoes, salad bar, seasonal vegetables and homemade granola bars (vegetarian) (wheat)
Wednesday	Make your own pizza (wheat, milk) (vegetarian) or vegetarian noodle soup	Salad bar, seasonal vegetables and yoghurt and lemon cake (vegetarian) (wheat, milk, egg)
Thursday	Homemade sausage and mash (milk) or crispy veggie nuggets (vegetarian) (wheat)	Homemade bread (wheat), seasonal vegetables, steamed rice and fresh yoghurt with fruit compote (vegetarian) (milk)
Friday	BBQ chicken drumsticks (mustard, sulphites, wheat) or BBQ cauliflower popcorn (vegetarian) (mustard, sulphites, wheat)	Skin-on French fries, salad bar, seasonal vegetables and homemade chocolate fudge cake (vegetarian) (wheat, egg, milk)

Nutrient framework

This nutrient framework underpins the SFS and specifies levels for 14 nutrients, including energy for the average lunchtime meal for both primary and secondary schools.

Riboflavin, iodine and potassium are not part of the nutrient framework, but were included in the analysis since intakes of these nutrients are below recommended levels for children aged 11 to 18 years. There is also some evidence of low iodine intakes in children aged 4 to 10 years.

The following nutrients were used in the nutrient analysis:

- energy (kilocalories (kcal))
- carbohydrate (g)
- free sugars (g)
- fat (g)
- saturated fat (g)
- protein (g)
- fibre (g)
- iron (milligrams (mg))
- zinc (mg)
- calcium (mg)
- vitamin A (micrograms (µg))
- vitamin C (mg)
- folate (µg)
- sodium (mg)
- riboflavin (mg)
- iodine (µg)
- potassium (mg)

Where data for any of these nutrients was missing, the nutritionists prioritised calculating values for those included in the framework and those they considered

most important for the recipe.

You can find more information on the nutrient frameworks in School food standards 2027: example menus and nutrient analysis.

Nutrient analysis data fields

In the nutrient analysis, the data fields listed below were used. The nutrients included were the same as listed above for the nutrient framework.

Date of analysis.

Menu item characteristics:

- name of menu item
- school
- pre-pilot or pilot menu
- week
- course (main, side, dessert, drink or grab-and-go)
- vegetarian
- available for FSM
- portion size

Menu and recipe information requested from schools

This section sets out examples of the menu recipe information schools and caterers were required to provide to Verian.

Brand and specific product name
Schools and caterers were asked to provide details of the brand and specific name of products bought into schools to make the dishes served.

Examples:

- brand A classic light mayonnaise

- brand B tuna chunks in brine

Form of the food
Schools and caterers were asked to state the form of the food that was used to make the dishes served (where appropriate), such as canned, dried, frozen or fresh.

Examples:

- canned sweetcorn
- dried lentils
- frozen peas

Detailed description of cuts for meat and poultry
Schools and caterers were asked to provide detailed descriptions of the cuts of meat and poultry that were used to make the dishes served.

Examples:

- lean beef mince (5% fat)
- skinless, boneless chicken breast

Whether the food is a reduced fat, sugar or salt version
Schools and caterers were asked to provide information on whether the foods used to make the dishes served were reduced fat, sugar or salt versions.

Examples:

- dairy milk - whole, semi-skimmed, 1% fat
- cream - single, double
- yoghurt - zero fat, low fat, standard
- baked beans - standard, reduced salt, no added sugar
- stock - standard, reduced salt
- sauces such as soy sauce or tomato ketchup - standard, reduced salt, no added sugar

Cooking and spreading fats
Schools and caterers were asked to provide details of the cooking and spreading fats used to make the dishes served.

Examples:

- oil - specify which oil used, such as olive, rapeseed or sunflower
- butter (unsalted)
- sunflower margarine
- sunflower reduced fat spread

Type of starchy foods (for example, pasta, rice or bread)
Schools and caterers were asked to provide details of the types of starchy foods that were used to make the dishes served.

Examples:

- white rice
- wholemeal pasta
- 50:50 (50% white, 50% wholemeal) bread

Information requested from schools to obtain correct nutrient data

The questions listed below set out the information needed by the nutritionists to ensure the correct nutrient data was used for the different ingredients used to make the meals served.

Does the weight refer to the raw or cooked food
There are differences in the weight and nutrient content of food whether it is served raw or cooked. The nutritionists needed to know if the quantity provided was for the food as raw (as it is in the packet before being cooked). They also needed to know if the quantity was for the food after it had been cooked - for example, rice once cooked in boiling water.

Examples:

- raw pasta
- cooked rice

Does the weight refer to the food as purchased or after preparation
The weight of a food differs if it includes or excludes certain parts - for example, the skin of a banana.

Examples:

- 100g onions with skin
- 100g onions after topping, tailing and removing skin
- 400g can chickpeas, drained

Measures and quantities of food and drink
Where the weight of an ingredient was not provided within a recipe, alternative measures used by the caterers were requested. This would ensure the correct weight of the ingredient could be calculated by the nutritionists. The measurements could be by number of items and the size of the item, or the size of spoon used.

Examples:

- 4 medium bananas
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon of butter
- 2 tablespoons of flour
- 1 stock cube

Serving spoons and ladles
Where a ladle or serving spoon was used to dish food up on to a plate, the weight of the food provided by the spoon or ladle should be provided.

Examples:

- a ladle of bolognese sauce = 100g
- 1 tablespoon of peas = 45g

Completed examples shared with schools

The text below sets out completed examples of recipes that were shared with schools. This showed the schools and caterers the acceptable level of detail needed to be able to accurately complete a nutrient assessment of that dish. Examples of an unacceptable level of information were also provided.

Example 1
Acceptable level of detail:

- 2 brand A omega-3 fish fingers, grilled
- 150g ladle of mashed potato (recipe: 1kg potatoes, boiled and drained, mashed with 5 tablespoons semi-skimmed milk and 10g spread)
- 80g ladle brand B reduced salt and reduced sugar baked beans

Not acceptable level of detail:

- fish fingers
- mashed potato
- baked beans

Example 2
Acceptable level of detail:

- makes 6 servings
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 medium onions
- 1kg skinless and boneless chicken thighs
- 3 level tbsp medium curry powder
- 300ml water
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 150g low fat natural yogurt

Method:

- fry the onions in the oil until soft
- add the chicken thighs and cook until brown
- stir in the curry powder, water and tomatoes and simmer for 30 minutes
- stir in the yogurt
- serve with 150g boiled wholegrain rice

Not acceptable level of detail:

- chicken
- curry powder
- onions

- canned tomatoes
- yogurt
- rice

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