

# FOOD FOR GOOD CHARTER

Fresh, local, healthy & sustainable food  
in public service catering



UNISON Scotland's Food for Good Charter makes proposals for Scottish food policy, bringing together issues of sustainability, health, public sector procurement, animal welfare and social justice, locally and globally.

At a time when emergency foodbank use has soared, with child poverty predicted to increase significantly by 2020, and with further major public spending cuts coming, it is a false economy to reduce budgets for food, with inevitable loss of nutritional quality and taste. (Compulsory Competitive Tendering showed the folly of an approach based on slashing costs, with most such contracts brought back in-house since.)

Food policy affects various budget areas and must be cross cutting. It must recognise the preventive spending role of delicious, fresh, locally sourced food that contributes to the health of the population, to children's ability to learn, to local economies and to Scotland's climate change targets. Public service catering, food procurement and related quality jobs and skills are important parts of the much needed 'Just Transition' to a low carbon economy. Fresh, local, healthy and sustainable food is possible at reasonable cost. (*For example, the pioneering work by East Ayrshire Council and the fact that a large number of Scottish schools serve meals certified by the Soil Association's Food for Life Catering Mark.*) Sustainable food procurement should be an explicit objective across public services, with annual reports giving clear details, including place of origin.

## Sustainability

Food should be fresh, prepared locally and sourced as sustainably as possible (incl 50-60% Scottish), with menus giving consideration to providing less meat-intensive diets. Food waste should be minimised.

Mains-fed water coolers should be provided, minimising the use of bottled water.

## Health

Universal free school meals are a major contributor to access to good nutrition, improving health and tackling childhood obesity. As a minimum, these should be provided in all primary schools.

The aim for all public service catering should be for a minimum of at least one daily option of an organic/ethically produced main meal, ideally locally sourced.

Vending machines on school/hospital premises should use healthy alternatives, not junk/fast food.

## Social Justice

Procurement across Scotland's public services should promote the use of sustainable food, ethical and fairly traded products, should tackle tax dodging and support strong employment standards and the Scottish Living Wage. It should recognise the 'whole life' cost of food.

Fairly traded food and free range eggs and fresh chicken/fresh meat from farm assurance or organic schemes should be used where possible, with targets of 100% by 2016 where relevant products are available.

Support for local food co-operatives/allotments/similar initiatives to improve access to quality food.

## Excellence

Quality training and proper pay and employment conditions, including training in sustainability.

Lessons in primary and secondary schools about sustainability and preparation of healthy meals. Awareness campaigns on sustainable diets and the global food system's high contribution to greenhouse gas emissions.

Proper funding for environmental health, trading standards and Scotland's new food standards body, which must provide independent checks on meat, crucial for consumers and to protect the industry.