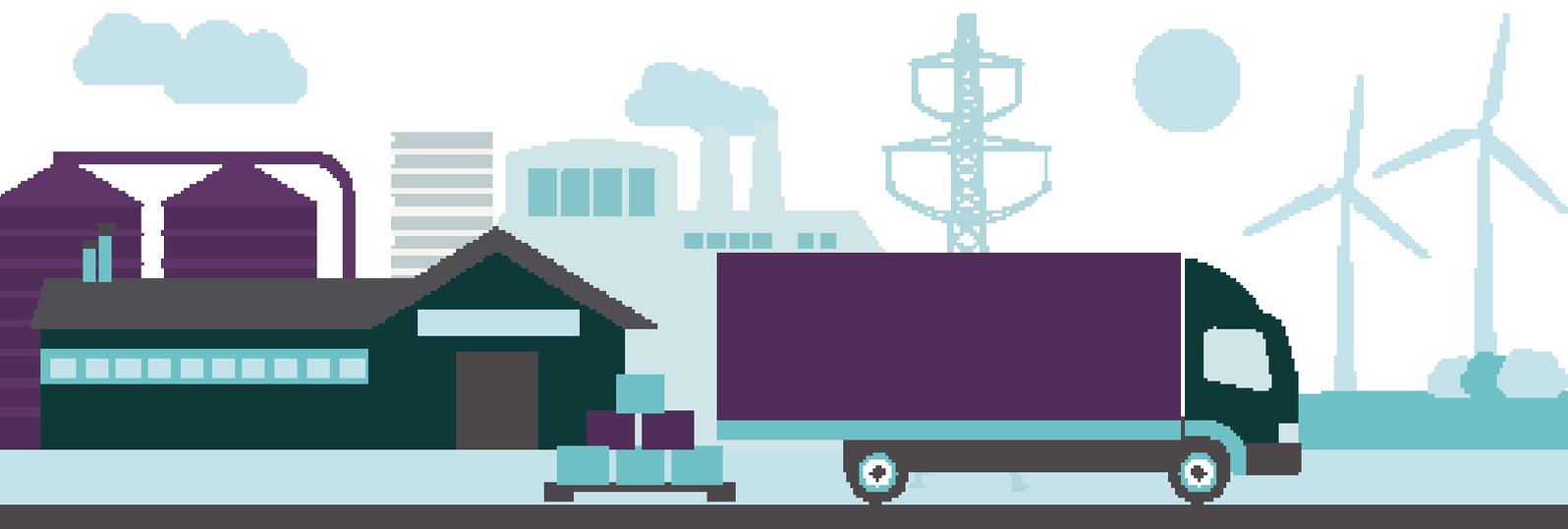




Responsible  
CATERING



# INTRODUCTION

The House of Commons Catering Services recognises its responsibility to carry out its business activities in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. Catering Services has a 'Food for Life' Bronze Award from the Soil Association and works closely with nominated suppliers, recognised trade associations and the community at large to deliver a range of initiatives.



## SOURCING

### What are your principles for sourcing products?

We adhere to the following principles that demonstrate our commitment to responsible catering:

- We source food that meets UK or equivalent standards of production and actively seek out food produced to higher environmental standards where possible.
- We only purchase seafood from sustainable, well-managed sources and continuously audit products against the Marine Conservation Society's 'Fish to Eat' ratings.
- We promote seasonal fresh produce on our menus.
- We only purchase meat and poultry that meets the UK's farm assured welfare standards.
- We only purchase free-range fresh and pasteurised egg products.
- All our coffee and tea is fairly traded.
- All our products are fully traceable to source.
- The products we source do not knowingly contravene any of the ILO conventions regarding working age, hours, pay, conditions or safety.



## BUYING BRITISH

### Do you have a 'buy British' policy?

We acknowledge that there may be an expectation that the House of Commons should be buying British wherever possible. However, as a contracting authority as specified in the European Parliament and Council Directive, we are subject to EU Public Sector Procurement directives. It is therefore impossible for us to demand that we wish to buy only British products simply on the merits of origin and must instead ensure that our specifications at tender stage, and ultimately our decision to award a contract, does not discriminate against products or supplies from other EU member states.

### What exactly does the Directive say?

The European Parliament and Council Directive states that the award of public contracts must comply with the principles of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). In particular the free movement of goods, freedom of establishment and the freedom to provide services, as well as the principles deriving therefrom, such as equal treatment, non-discrimination, mutual recognition, proportionality and transparency (Directive 2014/24/EU) must be adhered to.

### So you can't buy British at all?

Actually the vast majority of fresh products we purchase are in fact British - meat, poultry, dairy, eggs and most fruit and vegetables (when in season) are sourced from within the UK.

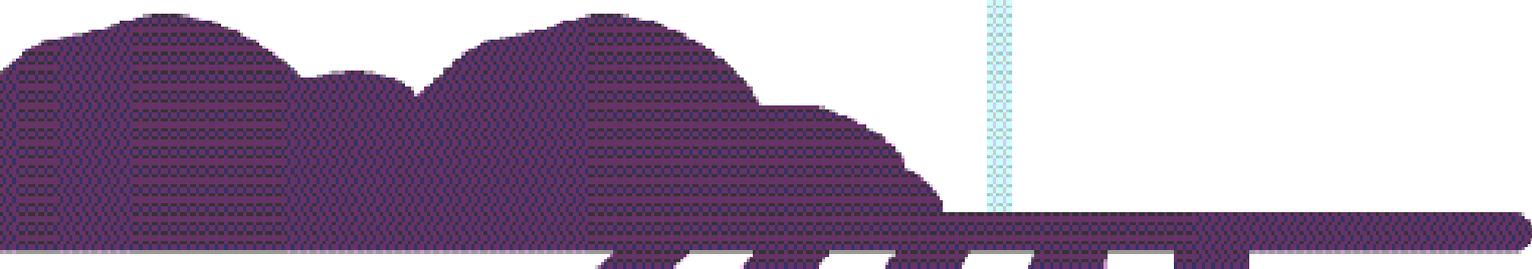
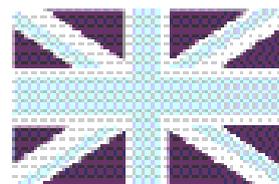
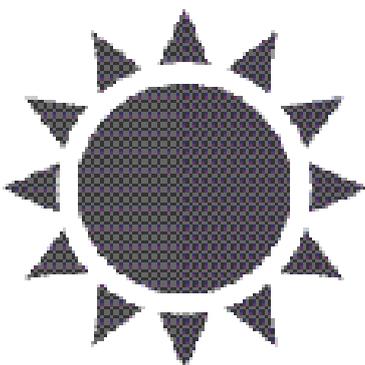
### How is that possible?

In the first instance, we demand that UK or equivalent standards of welfare and/or production must be met as this is a consideration of quality rather than origin. UK standards on the whole are easy to follow, robust, commonly accepted and enforced across each sector.

### What are the other benefits of buying British?

Product quality plays a huge part in our decision making processes and confidence in provenance and origin is one of the most crucial considerations of all.

By law we must be able to readily and accurately indicate the origins of all meat, meat products and dairy products, and at a time of low consumer confidence and media scepticism surrounding the food industry in general, this is simply much easier to guarantee when products are sourced from within the UK. That being said, we must make it absolutely clear that any EU schemes that can demonstrate equal levels of diligence, safety, quality and assured provenance are also considered equally.



# INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC FOOD CATEGORIES:

## MEAT AND POULTRY



### Is your meat and poultry sourced from farms that support animal welfare?

Yes, we demand that all meat and poultry come from farms which work to maintain high levels of animal husbandry and we purchase only from sources approved under an accredited farm assurance scheme.

### What welfare schemes are your meat and poultry accredited under?

Our suppliers are all Red Tractor Licensees and hold Quality Standard Mark certification for beef and lamb; one supplier is also certified by the Soil Association.

We will continue to evaluate opportunities for working in partnership with organisations, including but not limited to, Freedom Food certified meat and poultry, Red Tractor (which encompasses Assured British Pigs, Assured British Meat and the Assured Chicken Scheme), Sustain and the Soil Association.

### Where does your meat and poultry come from?

For a number of years over 99% of all fresh meat and poultry we purchase and serve is of UK origin and meets or exceeds UK welfare standards which are among the highest in the world.

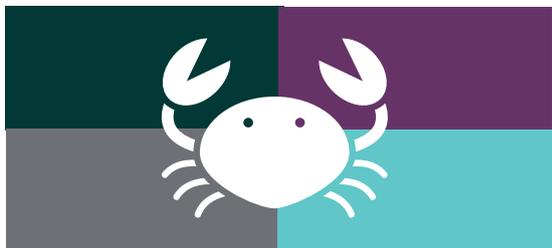
### What meat is not from the UK?

The remaining 1% mostly consists of veal offal and bones which come from Holland alongside a very small percentage of French poultry. All Dutch Veal must come from a recognised source and conform to welfare standards which ensure that the calves are given diets that are high in fibre (and not iron deficient), with generous space allowances and adequate bedding.

### With recent scandals, how do you ensure that meat is not contaminated with other species?

- All incumbent suppliers are certified under the highest possible level of food safety and hygiene. We will work only with EEC approved suppliers who themselves can only source meat from EEC approved plants.
- All suppliers have been rigorously audited by the FSA and our tender processes are robust. We elicit details of provenance and traceability systems as part of the tender evaluation. We also audit suppliers and use an independent food safety consultant to audit them annually as well.
- We look to our suppliers to ensure that they continue to work closely with assurance schemes throughout the supply chain that must include systems for animal movements, housing, feed, animal health and welfare, hygiene and food safety, and the environment.
- All our meat must be either EU stamped or come with an origin label that will allow us to quickly verify details of producer, slaughterhouse, cutting plant and wholesaler. Our suppliers have also committed to undertake regular species testing as an added safeguard for product legitimacy.

## SEAFOOD



### Is the seafood you serve sustainably sourced?

Yes, for a number of years we have worked towards managing out of the food supply chain all fish listed as 'to avoid' in the Marine Conservation Society's (MCS) 'Good Fish Guide' and as endangered in the FAO sponsored site operated by IUCN. Menu development does not knowingly feature endangered or vulnerable fish stocks.

### How do you assess and monitor the environmental sustainability of the seafood you serve?

Our entire seafood list is monitored carefully and audited each quarter. The sustainable rating for each product is kept up-to-date and any species that are on the MCS's 'fish to avoid' list are removed instantly from all menus.

We also engage with suppliers to make use of underutilised species wherever possible. In this way we are able to serve sustainably managed, Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified fish, and those rated as 'fish to eat' by the MCS  
<http://www.fishonline.org/fishfinder>.

### Is the House of Commons accredited under any schemes?

In 2011 we strengthened our commitment by signing up to the 'Sustainable Fish City Pledge', a campaign coordinated by Sustain and supported by the Good Catch Initiative, the MCS, the MSC Seafood Choices Alliance and other organisations. The pledge is a promise to take appropriate steps to buy sustainable seafood to protect precious marine environments and fish stocks and preserve good fishing livelihoods. In 2016 we also became accredited under the Soil Association's Food for Life Catering Mark scheme which encompasses sustainable seafood within the standards.

### How do your suppliers support this?

Crucially all of our suppliers are aware that we want to serve only sustainable fish. We ensure that our fish suppliers are accredited under a recognised and independent responsible fishing or ethical marine management scheme and we work closely with suppliers when selecting seafood for our menus.

Secondly in accordance with our specifications each delivery must be accompanied by a delivery note which gives details of species, provenance and catchment through batch numbers which we use to validate the ethical origins of the fish and the sustainability of any given species. We also get our suppliers to undertake periodical investigations to ensure that systems are working and to confirm the legitimacy of origin information.

## FRUIT AND VEGETABLES



### Do you insist on buying seasonal fruit and vegetables?

Yes, independent assessors for the Soil Association conducted an audit of our venues in March 2016 and concluded that upwards of 95% of the dishes on our menus are freshly prepared on-site each day. This would not be possible if we were not using the freshest ingredients available and making use of the abundance and quality of in-season products.

### So are all fruit and vegetables UK sourced?

Throughout the year we purchase hundreds of different varieties of fruit and vegetables to ensure that our menus are diverse and exciting. We will always opt for seasonal products when they are around, but of course there are a great number of exotic and tropical products regularly sourced from outside of the UK as well as some products not commercially available as UK grown or only available for a limited time.

We regularly support annual events such as British Tomato Week and British Food Fortnight and try to showcase regional produce wherever we can through our other promotions.

### How do your suppliers support this?

We seek to appoint fresh produce suppliers that have robust environmental and local sourcing policies and give preference to those that subscribe to Linking Environment and Farming marque (LEAF) and those that have strong links with the English Farming and Food Partnership (EFFP) programme. We receive regular market intelligence from our suppliers and maintain seasonal lists and market reports which are then used to help plan our menus.

## DAIRY AND ICE CREAM



### Where does your dairy produce come from?

All our fresh milk and cream comes from BRC approved, independent dairy processors who all carry the Red Tractor mark guaranteeing that it comes from farms that meet high standards of food safety and hygiene, animal welfare and environmental protection. Our principal supply of fresh milk and cream comes from Gloucestershire.

### What about your ice cream supplier?

Our real dairy ice creams and sorbets are produced by Jude's in Twyford, Hampshire. Jude's Ice Cream is a family company who have been making premium Ice cream for the last 12 years and are BRC certified.

### Do they have a responsible sourcing policy?

Jude's only use locally sourced milk, cream and free-range eggs to make their artisan British ice cream and sorbet. Jude's recycle all the cardboard, plastic and metal that they use. Millions of litres of water every year are recycled to cool the freezers and they consider energy efficiency when purchasing new equipment.

Jude's donate 10% of their profits to charities that support children and young people. This year Jude's have partnered with Home for Good who aim to find a good home for every child in the UK. Judes are also working with Spear, who help disadvantaged youth build self-esteem and get into work.

Jude's also support Naomi House Children's Hospice near Winchester, and also run educational programmes for nearby schools where children are invited to the dairy to learn about food production and set business challenges to raise money for charities of their choice.

## What about cheese?

Most of the cheeses we sell are regional and produced within Great Britain to very high standards of welfare and production. This needs to be balanced with offering choice to our customers and in some recipes continental cheeses are more appropriate. To this end, our supplier also purchases some products from Europe and these overseas suppliers are audited to ensure they meet ethical trading standards and that all products are produced in a safe and hygienic way.

## Do farmers get a fair price?

Offering a fair price to farmers is vital in securing the fate of the UK dairy industry, and we ensure that the main dairy providers are all on the National Farmers Union (NFU) dairy friendly list which guarantees to offer a sustainable milk price throughout their consortium.

## EGGS



## Are your eggs free-range?

All of the eggs that we buy are British and free-range. They are also Lion-standard stamped by the British Egg Industry Council and Freedom Food assured by the RSPCA. Lion mark is the UK's premier egg quality code of practice and guarantees high standards of quality, freshness, and welfare. 'Freedom Food' is the RSPCA's ethical food label dedicated to farm animal welfare. We have purchased only Lion stamped eggs since 1998, and in 2007 were inaugural winners of the Good Egg Award (run by Compassion in World Farming).

## Where do your eggs come from?

Our current egg supplier is The Lakes Free Range Egg Company Ltd., a family owned business based in the heart of Cumbria.

This supplier has an industry-leading (and award-winning) approach to animal welfare and environmental provenance, and abides by far higher standards than required by conventional codes of practice. This includes a programme of 'range enrichment', with tree planted pasture to ensure environmental biodiversity and a more natural environment for the hens; reduced carbon emissions and 'food-miles' from transport trucks; and exceptionally small flocks of hens, which are subjected to frequent random inspection by the RSPCA. All their eggs are fully traceable to source, right down to the individual farm.

Lakes also look for ways to reduce energy consumption, and have designed and built a state of the art egg packing facility that has a very low carbon footprint.

## What regulations need to be met when sourcing eggs?

- Fresh eggs must only come from independently approved farms that are licensed under a recognised welfare scheme such as Freedom Food or Red Tractor in the UK or other accepted EU equivalent.
- We demand that our fresh eggs not be sourced on the open market to ensure that we can guarantee product consistency and egg origin traceability.
- We will never purchase battery eggs and demand that eggs do not come from conventional cages or any other conditions that are detrimental to the wellbeing of egg laying hens.
- Eggs must always be stamped with a clear and recognised independently audited standard such as the BEIC British Lion Standard Mark or equivalent EU standard that can clearly demonstrate compliance with EU Council Directive 1999/74/EC on the Welfare of Laying Hens.

## What about liquid egg?

We purchase pasteurised liquid eggs for use in certain venues for various recipes and these are all free-range too.

## SANDWICHES

### Who makes your sandwiches?



Pre-packaged sandwiches served in our restaurants are made by Raynor Foods, a family-owned and run business in the heart of Essex. Raynors embody the Catering Services philosophy of responsible food production and sourcing. They strive to produce high-quality, delicious sandwiches with the environment in mind.

### Reasons why we use them:

They practice sustainable farming, have quality ingredients & quality taste. From production to disposal, Raynors puts the environment first by:

- Sourcing ingredients from local producers to reduce carbon emissions, they are low carbon and ISO 14001 certified.
  - Flour comes from Maldon, Essex (12 miles away)
  - Ham comes from Wicks Manor Farm, Essex (18 miles away)
  - Artisanal breads and rolls come from Danbury, Essex (6.5 miles away)
- From the sandwich making process producing only 4% waste, mainly bread crusts (which are then fed to pigs on local farms)
- Bread crusts fed to pigs are sent out in reusable crates – and the ham used to make sandwiches is then returned in the same ones, in a closed-loop recycling system. This cuts down on cardboard waste.
- Sending 0% of their organic waste to landfill. It is burnt in an anaerobic digester, and used to produce sustainable power instead.
- Redesigning their sandwich packaging, making it part-recyclable and reducing the amount that needs to be thrown away.
- Using ham in sandwiches that is 100% leg meat gammon ham, from specialist local pig farm 'Wick's Manor'
- Not using reconstituted chicken or mechanically recovered meat – all 100% white chicken breast
- Only using free range eggs
- Using tuna that's dolphin-friendly and responsibly fished from sustainable ocean stocks.
- Using 'Verity Grace' lettuce, a breed specially grown to reduce waste while maintaining crunch and taste. It produces 12% higher yields than previously, and takes only two cuts to prepare.

## HOT BEVERAGES



### Are your hot beverages fairly traded and responsibly source?

All coffee and hot chocolate we serve is Fairtrade. In 1997 the House of Commons became one of the first organisations in the world to serve only Fairtrade coffee in all of its catering facilities, a practice that has continued uninterrupted ever since. The coffee beans we use in our machines are sustainably sourced from international farms under the Fairtrade scheme.

We serve a range of Twinings teas. In addition to 100% of tea leaves used by Twinings coming from Ethical Tea Partnership scheme (ETP) certified farms, Twinings 'Everyday' tea carries the Rainforest Alliance seal.

Twinings Sourced with Care Programme sets the ambitious goal to improve the lives of 500,000 people in communities where they source our products by 2020 in the areas of livelihoods, life opportunities and living standards. So far, 39,064 women & girls have been supported with better health; 32,609 people have been reached by hand washing and hygiene programme; 29,800 people adopted clean cookstoves; 12,600 workers benefited from improved conditions and treatment; 14,319 children have been supported through health and education initiatives; 7,038 women & girls took part in life skills development initiatives; 5,904 people have been given access to clean drinking water; 5,365 gained access to sanitary latrines; 396 people have been reached by financial inclusion programmes and 5,054 farmers received training to increase their income.

Our second most popular breakfast tea is from Jacksons of Piccadilly and is Fairtrade certified. All of our other teas are accredited under the ETP scheme (an organisation which works to improve tea sustainability, the lives of tea workers, and the environment in which tea is produced).

## WATER



### Do you provide tap water?

We provide free, mains-supplied water fountains and ice in all of our cafeterias. This allows customers to fill their cups with water and to reuse their own water bottles. Jugs of tap water are also offered in all table service restaurants, whilst carafes are available in all committee rooms.

### Why have you selected aluminium cans instead of bottled water?

Since October 1st 2018, water in plastic bottles is no longer sold in any catering outlets on the Parliamentary Estate as part of Parliament's commitment to reduce single use plastics. Whilst the removal of single use plastics is great news, it is an industry challenge for us as caterers that most healthier beverage options, such as water, flavoured water, and juices, typically come in plastic bottles. As Parliament is still developing its infrastructure to better provide readily available free drinking water around the estate and under the expectation that some customers may still want or require a retail water option, we needed to source a replacement product that could be managed through our existing waste streams. After careful review, we established that water in aluminium cans was the best option available to us at present; they are lightweight, safer and easier to store and infinitely recyclable. The disposal of glass on the Estate is difficult and most other options are comprised of mixed materials many of which contain a plastic element that we are striving to move away from, meaning that aluminium is currently the better option.

However it is worth noting that the market is changing rapidly and new products are emerging all the time as consumers make the conscientious decision to move away from plastics. We have therefore committed to review the situation every three months to ensure that we are continuing to purchase the right product for Parliament, its customers, and the environment.

### You use Belu for glass bottles for events, do they do anything to support the environment?

Our supplier, Belu, are a social enterprise business and an environmental brand. The company donate 100% of their profits to WaterAid, to date they have raised over £3million, transforming the lives of people across 28 countries. They are also completely carbon neutral, having produced the UK's first carbon neutral bottled water to achieve PAS2060 standard - the highest standard for credible carbon neutral claims. Belu's ethical glass initiative has seen the development of the lightest clear glass bottles on the market; made in the UK using the highest recycled glass content in the formation of the bottle that Belu can find to be available, in 2017 this was 40%. Overall, this is 17% lighter and has a 17% reduction in its carbon footprint than the previous Belu glass bottle. All of their products are produced in the UK (bottled at the Belu source in Powys) and they never knowingly export them, in order to cut airmiles. They pledge to provide the "most ethical bottled mineral water available".

In April 2017 Belu were recognised for their approach and results when they received The Queens Award for Enterprise: Sustainable Development. In 2017 Belu reduced their carbon emissions per litre by 8% this represents an overall reduction in carbon emissions of 50% per litre since 2010.

### What is WaterAid?

WaterAid is an international charitable organisation whose mission is to transform the lives of the poorest and most marginalised people by improving access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene. Through their partners, they reached 2 million people with safe water and 3 million people with sanitation last year. Belu, our bottled water supplier has raised over £3 million for WaterAid, transforming the lives of 200,000 people since 2011.

## PEOPLE

We recognise that our people are the most important assets of the organisation and as a result are committed to a number of initiatives with an aim to build a motivated, resourceful and flexible workforce. We have great pride in what we do and in the vision and values which guide our work. The House of Commons is committed to being an inclusive employer and aims to provide a positive, inclusive working environment where people are valued for the skills and experience that they bring to work. Our aim is to be representative of the society we want to serve. This means making Parliament more accessible, diverse and free from discrimination, bullying and harassment. We encourage staff to use and follow the Independent Complaints and Grievance Policy. All staff deserve, and should expect, to be treated with respect for who they are and what they do. To deliver our commitments we amalgamate elements from a number of people-related initiatives, including:

- The Catering team is committed to actioning specific initiatives drawn out from staff opinion surveys.
- Expectations of competences/ behaviours are set out during a robust job review process, while allowing for individual flexibility and leadership style assessments which happen every two years.
- Staff from across the team are given opportunities to shadow or have secondments opportunities both inside and outside of the department throughout the year.
- Staff are encouraged to gain new skills and experiences through training, mentoring, on-the-job learning and other professional development.
- Performance conversations which include identifying future skills and competences and the resultant training and development ensure that managing people is at the heart of managers' responsibilities.

## What other development opportunities exist?

We recognise that professional development is not confined to classroom based or e-Learning activities. To this end we have helped team members with the following:

Placements – experience with comparable organisations in the wider industry e.g. Morgan Stanley at Canary Wharf, Vine Yard Hotel at Stock Cross, John Lewis roof garden pop up restaurant, Coutts Bank, Brit Insurance, Bob Bob Ricard, Westbury Hotel, Tonbridge Fire Station pop up dessert restaurant.

Supplier showcases – we actively encourage our suppliers to share their knowledge and passion for their products. In the past year we have hosted a seafood showcase, beer and wine tastings and tea workshops.

External college courses – NVQs at level 3 and specific food led courses in bakery, pastry and butchery.

Visits to trade shows and centres of excellence – wherever possible all staff are given the opportunity to attend Hotelympia, the Restaurant Show, Imbibe Live, Taste of London. Visits to large contract sites and supplier innovation centres are also arranged.

Competitions – mentoring and support are given to chefs entering competitions, be it on a National or International scale. We have successfully competed in Salon Culinaires at Hotelympia and the Hospitality Show. Also, we have competed in Young Chef of the Year, National Chef of the Year and Craft Guild of Chefs' Chef of the Year, World Global Chef, English Culinary Team, World Culinary Olympics. There has also been successes in the less traditional competitions – Wing Yip Young Chef of the Year and the BBQ Battle of Britain.

Apprentices - we have participated in the Speakers' Apprentice Scheme and have secured an industry placement for our most recent apprentice. We remain keen to support House initiatives for apprentices and have our own Butchery apprenticeship.

## Hospitality Action

As a commitment to the wellbeing of our staff we support the activities and initiatives of this charity. Established in 1837 Hospitality Action, the Hospitality Industry Benevolent Organisation, offers vital assistance to all who work, or have worked within hospitality in the UK and who find themselves in crisis.

## What do Hospitality Action do?

They support people who are:

- Suffering from life altering illnesses
- Experiencing poverty, bereavement and domestic violence
- Retired from the industry and may be isolated

## What does the money raised go towards?

- Grants for essential items including food, equipment and central heating
- Supporting isolated and lonely retired hospitality workers
- Running educational seminars advising catering students of the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse

## HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE WITH THE TEAM?

Alongside an open door policy that provides access to help and support our senior team are visible in the outlets, taking daily walk rounds and engaging with the teams.

Other channels are:

- Formal job chats and 121's are held to provide a more structured experience in which personal development opportunities can be explored.
- The teams participate in monthly team talks, designed to encourage the flow of good ideas and challenges throughout the team and maximise opportunities for continuous improvement.
- All staff meetings are held for the Catering Teams, the wider teams across In-House Services and for House staff in general. People are encouraged to attend and contribute towards these, as well as the Tea with Directors initiative which allows team members to quiz the senior team.
- All team members have the option of access to the Parliamentary network, to engage with colleagues via Yammer and to receive news about the wider, diverse parliamentary community.
- Notice boards are kept up to date in the back of house areas with key messages.
- People receive information about the business plan as well as periodic updates on how we are doing.

## COMMUNITY



### How does Catering Services support the community?

We support the local Westminster community and work with organisations across the country and Europe. This helps open the doors of Parliament to the nation and encourages participation.

### Placements

Since 2012 we have worked with the Oasis Academy in Shirley Park in Croydon offering 14-15 year old students the opportunity to have a fortnight work experience in the kitchens and front of house venues (Cafeterias and formal dining rooms and events). The scheme widened in 2016 to include students working in Maintenance and Operations and their contractors. Students from Southwest, Havering, and Westminster colleges have been provided with placement opportunities. International links are being forged and a culinary student from Zedelgem, Belgium has interned with us.

We have also supported a nationwide campaign for week long work placements organised centrally by the House of Commons, and oversaw two work place student placements for 17 year olds who were mentored by a waiter who oversaw their training in dining rooms and cafeterias. During National School Meals Week, 10 aspiring chefs from schools across the country undertook placements in the Commons' kitchens.

We are seeking to continue to invest in outreach and to strengthen relationships with schools and organisations. The main aim of this is to expose students to various styles of management and leadership, allow them industry/work experience and engage in thinking of their future career. Additionally, it is rewarding for staff who have the opportunity to mentor and influence a young person in their future.

### Tours

Tours of the catering facilities are provided to visiting colleges. These provide the opportunity for students to see first-hand the scale of the multi-site operation and have their questions answered by those working in the industry. They also benefit from seeing equipment and technology being put through its paces.

### Adopt a School

Adopt a School is a charity that organises training initiatives and the scheme is organised by the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts. It is aimed at children aged six to nine and teaches them about healthy eating, senses and flavours. The sessions are run by an Academy member or an organisation who 'adopt a school' over a number of years and each year spend two or three days with the school teaching the children in a fun and interactive way. We ran four visits last year.

## Judging

Our chefs contribute to development within the industry by acting as NVQ assessors for colleges and being involved in competitions. Our Executive Chef is Chair of Judges for Hotelympia and has completed the World Association of Judges course. He also designs tasks for the hugely demanding Craft Guild of Chefs Awards, as well as organising study trips for the finalists. Our Senior Sous Chef judges the CGOC Young and Senior National Chefs of the Year competitions and several other chefs participate in judging on a national scale.

## Supporting Westminster Community and Events

The scope of catering at the House of Commons is very broad – from feeding children to entertaining world leaders. Catering Services supports all these activities:

- Catering for Onsite Nursery - the House of Commons Nursery is a modern, welcoming facility with capacity for 40 children aged from three months to five years. Catering Services provide meals and snacks for the nursery in accordance with designated specifications.
- Lunches for Youth Parliament -the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) provides opportunities for 11-18 years olds to use their elected voice to bring about social change through meaningful representation and campaigning. The annual sitting in November of each year is the pinnacle of their elected year. Catering Services supports this initiative by arranging catering facilities throughout the day in Westminster Hall for up to 500 people.
- National Parliamentary Prayers Breakfast Meeting - the National Parliamentary Prayers Breakfast is held with the kind permission of the Speaker and Lord Speaker and is an annual recognition of the contribution that Christianity makes to the national life of the UK. The breakfast is traditionally held in June in Westminster Hall providing a seated breakfast for 750 people.
- Global Leaders Summits - in supporting the work of Parliament, Catering Services is asked to cater for 'one off VIP' events and conferences that represent EU, Commonwealth, Foreign Parliaments, United Nations and NATO.
- Public Dining - Public Dining Events was first launched in April 2015 and aims to open the Members' Dining Room in recesses, and since April 2017, the Strangers' Dining Room during sitting times to the general public thereby widening access to non-pass holders. Promoted through our restaurant booking system and social media the dining room opens for lunch on pre-determined days in the recesses and every Tuesday and Wednesday evenings when the House sits. Catering Services aim to sell the dining room up to six days a year in the recesses and on both days of the week the Houses sits, on condition of business in the chamber.



## ENVIRONMENT

### What measures do you take with regards to food waste and recycling?

Working closely with the Maintenance and Environment teams, Catering Services have removed approximately 247 tonnes of food waste from the general waste stream from September 2017 to August 2018. The separated food waste, along with that from the House of Lords, goes for anaerobic digestion which produces both liquid fertiliser and methane which is used for power generation. The House also benefits from a saving of £50.00 per tonne compared to if this waste went into an incineration at an energy for waste facility.

## USE OF DISPOSABLES

### Why are disposables used?

Many people buy products from us to take to other parts of the Estate. China crockery, metal cutlery and glassware are for use within our facilities only.

### What is purchased?

We purchase a wide range of front and back of house disposable products. The highest volumes are on things like our unbleached napkins and beverage cups, and plastics pots made from recycled materials. We don't buy any products that contain Polypropylene and Polystyrene

### What criteria are used when deciding what to purchase?

We have set an objective to purchase lower impact (lower carbon) products from renewable sources. We actively seek out information regarding sources of materials and manufacture and where possible conduct life-cycle analyses of new items – from virgin material sourcing and production through to ultimate disposal. When selecting products we try to ensure that products are either compostable, recyclable, or made from recycled materials, and we give preference

to products that come from renewable sources (such as those supporting sustainable forestry or low carbon processes). We do however, have to balance our purchasing decisions in terms of costs, as the slightest monetary impact can result in an increased spend of many thousands of pounds.

### Are your coffee cups biodegradable/recyclable?

Yes. As of the beginning of October, we introduced coffee cups and a range of other food and drinks disposable items which are made from plant fibres and/or plant based plastics which are certified as fully compostable. These items are captured separately from other waste streams and are sent to a process of 'in vessel' composting that turns them into solid compost. These are truly biodegradable unlike some plastics which claim to 'degrade', which in reality means they merely break down into microplastics and continue to be a problem in the environment.

### What products aren't used?

We still use some plastic items, although our current programme continues to actively review alternatives. However, we avoid the more environmentally harmful materials such as Polystyrenes, Polyvinyl Chlorides and low density Polyethylenes. We have also removed bespoke printed material and have therefore reduced the production impacts of many of our key items.

### What has been done to reduce the use of disposables?

We now offer reusable cups for sale at very good prices, and we have introduced a supplementary charge on disposable cups.

## USE OF OSCC (REDUCTION IN DELIVERY TRAFFIC THROUGH USE OF OSCC)

Since 2011, we have worked closely with the offsite consolidation centre (OSCC) a facility where all catering supply deliveries are sent for initial screening before onward delivery into Parliament to reduce delivery traffic. Due to the scope of business and the diversity of our menus throughout the Estate we would regularly see upwards of 35 vehicles coming onto the Estate each day, but through better category management, for example, we have changed weekly chemicals deliveries to a monthly bulk model, reduced wine deliveries from daily to 3 times per week, and in partnership, with the OSCC we have seen vehicle numbers drop to between 4 and 6 vehicles per day.

## SOIL ASSOCIATION AWARD

The 'Food for Life' bronze award has been accredited to the Terrace Cafeteria, Moncrieff's, The Debate and Bellamy's.

### What is the award?

This is an independent endorsement, backed by annual inspections by the Soil Association which demonstrates that we are taking steps to actively and continuously improve the food we serve. The scheme is based on some of the industry's most robust trading standards and we have achieved accreditation in recognition of our commitment to serve fresh food, source environmentally sustainable and ethical food, make healthy eating easier, and by championing seasonal ingredients.

- Free drinking water is prominently available
- No fish is served from the (MCS) 'fish to avoid' list
- Information is on display about food provenance
- All suppliers have been verified to ensure they apply appropriate food safety standards
- Menus provide for all dietary and cultural needs

### What do Bronze standards entail?

- No undesirable additives or trans fats
- At least 75% of dishes are freshly prepared from unprocessed ingredients
- Meat is from farms which satisfy UK welfare standards
- Eggs are from cage-free hens
- Menus are seasonal and in-season produce is highlighted
- Catering staff are supported with skills training in fresh food preparation and the Food for Life Served Here Award

### Where can I find further information about the award?

On the Soil Association website:  
<https://www.soilassociation.org/certification/the-food-for-life-catering-mark/>

## TRAFFIC LIGHT MARKING

### What do the red / amber / green symbols mean on the menus?

These give a guide to the fat content of dishes to enable customers to make informed decisions about their diet.

#### HIGH FAT - RED

- Meats and dishes with a higher fat content.
- Battered or breaded products which have been deep fried.
- Sauces may be thickened with fats and flour.

#### MEDIUM FAT - AMBER

- Less lean cuts of meat, fish or dishes that are usually braised or in a sauce.
- Sauces may contain a small amount of cream or flour.

#### LOW FAT - GREEN

- Lean cuts of meat, fish or dishes with no fats added during cooking process.
- Cooking method: oven baked or grilled.
- Fish cuts are either grilled or poached.

## WHAT INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ABOUT SPECIAL DIETS?

As standard we highlight dishes which are:

**V Vegetarian**   **Ve Vegan**   **GF Gluten Free**

Each venue aims to provide a vegetarian dish on the menu; at least one vegan dish is available on the Estate each day.

## ALLERGENS

### What steps do you take to safeguard those with food allergies?

We provide signage around our venues to make customers more aware that some of our foods do contain allergens and that we are here to assist in identifying customers needs. We currently follow all the necessary legal requirements in food labelling and allergen awareness and will continue to keep a close eye on how any new legislation will have an impact on our food offer and react appropriately.

## Which allergens do you mark on your menus?

Our menus and signage clearly show if a dish contains:

PEANUTS
TREE NUTS
FISH AND SHELLFISH
SESAME

We also mark dishes that are free from gluten.

## What information is available about other allergens?

Our teams have access to information about ingredients in our dishes and are happy to tell you if they contain:

MILK	SOYA
MUSTARD	CELERY
EGG	LUPIN
MOLLUSCS	SULPHIDES

## CATERING SAFELY

### What is the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme?

This is a National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme which provides consumers with information about hygiene standards in food business establishments at the time they are inspected (compliance with legal requirements on food hygiene). The food hygiene rating given reflects the inspection findings.

### What are the scores?

At present the House of Commons Catering Services kitchens throughout the Estate hold 5 stars from the Westminster Health Authority.

### What do Catering Services do to ensure food safety?

All Catering Services staff are trained in food safety and allergen awareness and undertake annual refreshers to highlight any changes to legislation, or to introduce systems or technologies designed to make the handling of foodstuffs even safer. Our Food Safety Management System follows the model of HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points), which is a system used throughout the food industry to analyse food risks and introduce controls at each stage to prevent food contamination and spoilage.

Our HACCP processes within the purchasing and stores environment look at every stage including supplier nomination, procurement, deliveries, goods receiving, allergen control, food handling, storage, and transportation.

These controls are designed to keep foods in the best possible condition for our customers by ensuring they stay within defined temperature parameters, and are safe from any physical, biological or chemical contaminants, by carefully managing the environments in which foods are handled.

All areas throughout the Parliamentary Estate are audited annually by third party food safety experts and Westminster Environmental Health Officers who scrutinise the robustness of our systems, the cleanliness of our premises, and efficacy of our systems.

## GENETICALLY MODIFIED

### Do you serve genetically modified foods?

The House of Commons Catering Service avoids, wherever identifiable, the procurement of foods that contain genetically modified materials. To this end, as part of the tendering process food suppliers are required to work to a strict GM policy and give assurances that goods supplied be free from genetically modified materials.

It is widely acknowledged that the vast majority (over 70%) of animal feed used predominantly in the poultry, pork and farmed salmon industries within the EU, is now derived from imported GM crops from the USA and South America. There is no legal requirement for importers to declare quantities of GM materials in protein-rich feed and so there can be very little guarantee that animals will not be fed GM materials, unless they were organically certified which would be cost prohibitive.

### What about GM materials in animal feed, is that allowed?

Under current Food Standard Agency (FSA) definitions; meat, poultry, and farmed fish etc. that have been reared on GM derived feed are not considered to be GM foods and are therefore not covered within our policy.

## SPECIAL DIETS:

### HALAL

#### Do you serve Halal meals?

Upon request from an event organiser we can provide pre-stunned halal slaughtered meat and poultry from certified and trusted suppliers that meet the standards for recognised accreditation schemes such as the RSPCA's Freedom Food and Red Tractor. Because of the nature and diversity of our business, it is not possible to adopt adequate segregation techniques that would enable us to deliver finished halal meals.

#### Why can't you segregate appropriately?

We use a number of pork products and other meats considered forbidden or 'haram'; keeping halal meat physically separate from haram products is difficult, and some halal approval authorities insist that independent fridges be used. It is also considered inappropriate to use cleaned equipment such as chopping boards, knives, trays, pots, pans and storage boxes which would have previously been used in the storage and production of haram meat and poultry and using an oven that was used to previously cook non-halal products is forbidden.

### KOSHER MEAT AND POULTRY

#### Do you serve kosher meals?

We outsource ready-made kosher meals upon request for events.

# FEEDBACK

We recognise the importance of customer feedback to help us to continuously improve our offer and service. We encourage customers to talk to us in the venue if something isn't to their liking. This gives us the opportunity to make things right. We publicise our feedback email address to allow feedback to be discussed in our daily management meeting and a course of action decided upon. This allows us to shape our service and ensure consistency across the estate.

We actively solicit feedback by way of in-venue surveys for our cafeterias twice a year. The results of these are used to shape our next planning cycle. We also run a mystery diner programme to provide insights on which to base our developments. All feedback is published on the Parliamentary website as part of our commitment to transparency.

