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Food Matters in Prisons

Briefing Paper

**food
matters**
inside & out

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“Having a healthier diet helps me to improve my self-esteem, because I’m being more caring of my body. It helps me, dealing with depression and other negative emotions. I feel better with myself. Therefore, it increases my confidence, I look better, more energy, particularly daytime, so I’m more active, consequently sleep better at night.”

- Prisoner on drug treatment
abstinence programme

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Executive Summary

The World Health Organisation has emphasised the importance of seeing prisons as whole food systems. In this paper, Food Matters highlights numerous opportunities for food to play a broader role in prison life.

In January 2023, Food Matters organised a roundtable workshop to discuss the issue of food in prisons, involving experts from the voluntary sector, academia, and individuals with lived prison experience. The central theme was the significant role of food in prisons and its impact on the lives of those held in them. We coupled the findings from this workshop with a review of related policy and literature in an interim paper which was shared with key stakeholders, including His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, the Care Quality Commission, the Independent Monitoring Board, Clinks and other voluntary sector organisations.

This paper explores the crucial role of food in shaping prisoners' identities and relationships and its potential to have positive impacts in prisons, including fostering relationships; promoting education, exercise and meaningful activities; enhancing cultural understanding improving physical and mental health; enhancing safety; and reducing reoffending. Food Matters has concluded that food should move from being a functional aspect of prisons to become a focal point for various activities and improvements to prison regimes.

Key findings and considerations include:

1. **Opportunities for building on existing initiatives:** Positive initiatives related to food and nutrition have been undertaken in prisons by voluntary sector organisations, supported by HMPPS and/or individual governors and more recently by HMPPS itself in promoting self-production initiatives and creating healthy recipes. However, limited resources and short-term funding have hindered the sustainability and long-term impact of these efforts. There is potential for collectively sharing best practices and building an evidence base for food and growing-related initiatives across prisons.
2. **Opportunities for greater transparency over food quality, standards and sustainability** following strengthened government commitments to adopting sustainable food procurement, the introduction of new nutritional guidance for public catering and requirements for data reporting on food procurement and waste. More broadly, there is potential for widespread adoption of mainstream public health initiatives in prisons, including accreditation schemes for caterers and food suppliers. There is also scope for enhanced independent inspection and parliamentary oversight to encourage more creative approaches to be taken, building on a thematic review that explored the role of food in connection, comfort, and mental health support in prisons.
3. **Opportunities for HMPPS to adopt a strategic approach to developing food-related initiatives, integrated within a range of policies and practices** such as rehabilitation, learning and skills development, family ties, and well-being and ensure that opportunities for self-catering, communal dining, and sustainable food production are maximised in redevelopment and new building projects.

About Food Matters

Food Matters, a national charity, believes that healthy, sustainable, fair food should be available to everyone. For many years, the charity has worked with people facing the challenges of low income, young people leaving care, young parents, people with poor mental health, people involved in the criminal justice system (in prisons and in the community), people who are homeless and people with substance use needs. The focus is on empowering individuals to make food choices which support their mental and physical health, and systems reform to ensure those food choices are possible.

In prisons, Food Matters works directly with people serving sentences, as well as with staff working in catering, food procurement, education and health. This includes delivering healthy eating materials through wellbeing newsletters, in-cell learning and workshops, cooking courses, practical toolkits, peer mentoring schemes and providing staff training sessions and consultancy to catering and food procurement services.

Initiatives to date include:

- Her Wellbeing monthly newsletter focused on mental health and wellbeing, currently distributed in paper format across the female estate and digitally in some prisons and community settings.
- The Feel Good Food Club in-cell learning course to support prisoners' mental health and wellbeing through food-related in-cell activities. The course comprises six modules, with a module being sent out once a month. Each module is formed of a 4-page learning leaflet and a 4-page activities leaflet.
- Development of the Food Matters Inside and Out Programme delivered in prisons including HMP High Down and HMP Wandsworth.

About this briefing

In this paper, we consider how the collective endeavours and experiences of those involved in aspects of food provision in custodial establishments in England and Wales can shine a light on how best to promote the importance of good food and nutrition and how this could be maximised within prison life.

We bring together our own insight from the initiatives we have delivered with that of other voluntary sector organisations, along with the perspectives of some academics and other stakeholders, to examine opportunities to enhance various aspects of food provision in prison including catering, canteen, and gardening projects, as well as to broaden the contribution food could make to health, education, culture, and rehabilitation. We are grateful to those who shared their views with us at two roundtables and in subsequent discussions.

The Food Matters Roundtable

In January 2023, Food Matters organised a roundtable workshop to discuss the issue of food in prisons from the perspective of the voluntary sector, academics involved in research and people with lived experience. Academic and voluntary sector delegates were experts in their own field. Annex 1 lists the organisations which were represented at the Roundtable. Other organisations unable to attend were invited to submit views. We held a further event to share our preliminary findings and conclusions in June 2023.



Why Food Matters in prison

The central role that food plays in prisons and the crucial links of good nutrition to physical and mental health have long been recognised in international public health advice.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) stated in 2015 that:

Food is a central component of life in correctional institutions and plays a critical role in the physical and mental health of incarcerated people and the construction of prisoners' identities and relationships.ⁱ

In the context of England and Wales, the National Audit Office identified in 2006 the importance of nutritious and plentiful food in prison:

Prisons aim to provide food which is nutritious, well-prepared and served, reasonably varied, and sufficient in quantity, as otherwise mealtimes can become a catalyst for aggression. Inadequate portion sizes, lack of variety and poorly cooked food can contribute to serious complaints and dissension, with a risk to the Prison Service's goal of maintaining good order. Providing prisoners with the opportunity to choose a healthy, nutritionally balanced diet and with enough knowledge to make informed choices is important because prisoners can be in custody for long periods and are dependent upon prison food to meet their nutritional needs.

Food Matters Roundtable experts concluded that food is **currently seen primarily as a function of prisons**. A thematic inspection in 2016 by the then Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) examined the application of prison operational policies, including Prison Rules and a Prison Service Instruction (PSI), which specify requirements for the provision of meals.ⁱⁱ These include for example, that prisoners must be provided with three meals a day, and that these should be "wholesome, nutritious, well prepared and served, reasonably varied and sufficient in quantity".ⁱⁱⁱ The current PSI also acknowledges that prisons have a responsibility to meet cultural, nutritional and diversity needs in respect of food provision and that HMPPS has a responsibility to communicate with people in prison on meal provision, educate them and give them the opportunity to eat healthily.

The World Health Organisation has recognised the much wider part that food could potentially play within prisons:

'[a]n understanding of the role of food in correctional settings and effective management of food systems may improve outcomes for incarcerated people and help correctional administrators to maximise the health and safety of individuals in these institutions.'^{iv}

For example, in a literature review of food systems in correctional settings, WHO drew attention to initiatives such as nutritional education, gardening, inclusion of healthy choices in the prison shop inventory, culinary training and self-sufficiency programmes which could influence health and behavioural outcomes in prison settings. See box for further details.

The World Health Organisation description of food systems

Within correctional settings internationally, food systems usually include institutionally run catering services which may be cooked on site or delivered, self-cook facilities, and informal food preparation. It is common for people in prison to cook and eat food in their cell from items purchased using basic cooking appliances such as kettles and hot rings. Where this is prohibited, prisoner may use unconventional methods of cooking.

Some facilities enable prisoners to cook and eat with visitors more formally and to take part in programmes such as farming and gardening. People in custody may also participate in prison employment or job training projects in which they cultivate fruit, vegetables, and herbs, or raise animals that are used in the institution's food preparation and sold to other prisons or markets in the community.

Cultural and personal preference can be incorporated into the diet, with meals being prepared halal, kosher, vegan and other dietary requirements taken into consideration. Those who cook and serve the meals varies and includes prisoners, prison staff, civilian staff or a combination of these.

In most correctional settings, people have access to a canteen or prison shop where they can purchase foodstuffs, clothing, and hygiene items. Money to purchase these items can be earned through work or sent in from family outside.

The role of food in prisons

We explored the current role of food within prisons with Food Matters Roundtable experts who identified a wide range of opportunities including:

- building relationships
- promoting education, social skills, boosting employability
- improving cultural understanding, promoting diversity and fostering inclusion
- improving, engagement, safety and compliance
- promoting physical and mental health and wellbeing
- promoting physical exercise and meaningful activity
- supporting family relationships and visits
- reducing reoffending
- creating a sense of agency and boosting self-esteem

Listening to those with lived experience

Through face-to-face interactions and correspondence, Food Matters maintains a dialogue with people with lived experience of prisons. This has highlighted that portions sizes and their calorific and nutritional content remain a contentious subject amongst those serving custodial sentences.

Food Matters has found that feedback from women has been both that portion sizes are too large and too small, as well as too high in fat and carbs. Dissatisfaction with the food offered has related to the desire to lose weight, the triggering of eating disorders and meals not meeting specific health needs such as the menopause, gut disorders, allergies and intolerances.

'I'm out in 4 months and I'm really struggling. I've put on 3 stone in 1 year and it's affecting my mental and physical health' - **Woman at HMP Eastwood Park**

'My relationship with food is not healthy as I have an eating disorder that means I just stop eating and can drop to 3000 calories a week. If I am having to eat overprocessed and overcooked veg, meat products, that then sets off my eating disorder and it becomes a vicious cycle. There are many times when I just want to give up and stop eating all together.' - **Woman at HMP Downview**

Food Matters' feedback from men, particularly younger men, is often that portion sizes are too small, and that the meals are low in protein, since the differing age-related nutritional requirements are not currently provided for. These views also partially reflect the goal of some to attain a muscular big build while in prison (possibly as a protective strategy). This means that men going to the gym with the intention of building muscle may have a higher energy and protein requirement than the reference recommended amounts for men.

'Beauty standards and ideals are not the same in prison as on the outside. Where outside observers might see a problem, prisoners won't. Young adults aim for what they call a "big" physique, essentially muscular with a lot of fat on top. This is very different from pretty much all fitness goals on the outside with maybe the only exception being those who train strictly for strength, the type of people you see in "strong men" competitions.' - **Man with lived prison experience**

Likewise, men in prison point out that those who undertake manual work (gardening, kitchen, cleaning etc.) are likely to have higher energy needs than those working in sedentary roles or not working.

Our conclusion is that there is significant scope for food not solely to be a function of prisons but to become a **focal point for a broader range of actions and activities across prison life, culture and outcomes.**

Building on existing initiatives

Food Matters Roundtable experts cited examples of positive initiatives, like those identified by the WHO, which had been undertaken in prisons in England and Wales, largely by voluntary sector organisations, which were characterised as “pockets of good practice”. These include activities which focus on culinary skills, nutrition and employability through catering and growing projects.

Examples of existing and previous food and growing initiatives in prisons in England and Wales

Food Matters – Food Matters Inside and Out Programme aims to change food systems and enable prisoners to make healthier food choices through a prison-wide approach. It has been piloted at HMP Wandsworth and HMP High Down and facilitates participatory healthy eating courses and cooking workshops, peer mentor ‘Food Champions’, staff training sessions, and consultancy to catering and food procurement services.

Food Behind Bars – uses professional chefs who work with catering managers and people in prison, to improve the food in prisons and provide employment training, for example developing an existing in-house bakery with catering staff at HMP Wealstun; teaching cooking skills to men in the wing kitchens at HMP Manchester.

Think Through Nutrition – Think Through Nutrition translate nutritional research into clear information and seek to empower individuals to think about their nutrition and make positive changes by understanding the importance of a healthy diet and how nutrition impacts the brain. They have developed a digital educational pilot programme which will be delivered to 5,000 people in prison at HMP Berwyn, HMP Wayland, HMP Newhall and HMP Askham Grange in 2024.

HMP Buckley Hall – The prison demonstrates an enthusiastic attitude to providing better food for in-mates, knowing how nutrition impacts on mental health. For example, after consulting the prison population, the catering manager David Hill made changes to the menu to encourage people to choose more plant-based alternatives, while maintaining a balanced diet. They offer a wide variety of salads and other plant-based meals, and introduce new flavours such as various herbs and olives, which people may not be familiar with. All bread served is homemade baked on site, but the kitchen also offers dishes with healthier carbs such as quinoa.

Growing projects

Greener on the Outside (GOOP) – Greener on the Outside established a regional programme working with prisons in the North West of England with the aim of reducing health inequalities with a particular focus on mental health, physical activity and healthier eating.^v The programme provides opportunities to increase physical activity levels through gardening, growing and cooking activities and seeks to increase knowledge and understanding of food and the food growing process, develop skills to increase employability and reduce worklessness, and foster family and social links that promote inclusion. GOOP also established ‘community hubs’ for sales of products and produce in the form of a food bank or food box type initiative. Individual prison projects demonstrated a positive impact on wellbeing, especially in relation to mental health and prisons reported that it had an impact both on behaviour and the prison environment.^{vi}

LettUs Grow – The first aeroponic container farm, called DROP & GROW, is being established at HM Prison Hewell.^{vii} It is a method of growing plants without soil, in a nutrient-rich mist, and enables the introduction of teaching in indoor farming practices and training in horticulture, especially to people in prisons with limited outdoor growing space, with the aim of helping them secure full-time employment upon release. The main purpose of the farm is training rather than food production, but the salad, vegetables and herbs produced will be incorporated into meals for people in the prison. Training will include plant husbandry skills, how aeroponics works, how to use a farm management software platform, indoor farm standard operating procedures, as well as HACCP and Food Safety.

Garden Organic – The Rye Hill Garden Project at HMP Rye Hill was delivered by Garden Organic's Master Gardener programme team, in conjunction with Substance Misuse Services and G4S, which operates the prison, and was funded by Public Health England. The aim was to provide an environment to support offenders who had a background of drug misuse, assisting their recovery, wider health and well-being through the organic cultivation of food in a Recovery Garden. The project was evaluated by the University of Coventry^{viii} and commended by HM Inspectorate of Prisons.

The experience of organisations who had delivered initiatives related to food within prisons—including Food Matters, Food Behind Bars and Think Through Nutrition—is that there are limited resources for such work and that any funding is typically localised, short-term and project-based. The impact of this is that once a project is over, things tend to go back to how they were and any benefit to people in prison or to prison environments is usually short-lived. For example, Food Matters delivered its Food Inside and Out Programme at HMP Wandsworth and HMP High Down between 2016 and 2018 but with limited long-term impact because of time-limited funding. Some of the examples of growing projects listed above have been similarly short-lived, despite evidence of their impact. The lack of continuity and longevity means that there is not sufficient momentum to progress our collective understanding of the benefits that a greater focus on food and nutrition could offer to people in prison, to prison environments and for prison reform.

An important aspect of Food Matters' learning is that creating an environment in which individuals feel that making better food choices is a possibility requires not solely raising awareness and education but wider changes in food provided, food promotional activities, encouragement to consume healthy foods at common gathering points and food portals, and leadership in setting policy and designing messages about healthy eating. Food Matters Roundtable experts felt that more resources could be made available by HMPPS and public health to enable voluntary sector organisations to offer more initiatives across the prison estate which focus on the whole prison, not solely cooking or employability.

In the current context of staffing shortages and a focus on managing safety and core regimes, Roundtable experts recognised that the capacity of catering managers, prison staff and governors to capitalise on opportunities to diversify the offer related to food and nutrition is in short supply. The examples of HMPPS' strategies for drugs (Prison Drugs Strategy^{ix}) and family (Strengthening Family Tie Framework^x) which both cut across various prison functions were identified as potential comparators for a broader strategy on food.

HMPPS itself aspires to broaden the range of projects related to growing and food preparation in prisons. This includes seeking to develop horticultural projects working in tandem with prison kitchens and creating more food production initiatives across the estate to cook bread, pasta, and pastries for internal consumption, for example. What is less clear is the scope for change in terms of the infrastructure of the existing estate and how quickly this aspiration can realistically be achieved given funding constraints.

An HMPPS cross-cutting strategy, like those for drugs and family ties, would provide an opportunity for food, nutrition, and wellbeing to be integrated more widely into existing operational and strategic policies and to develop prison food systems so that food becomes a focal point rather than solely a function.

Enhancing quality and standards

In 2010, prison services were identified as one of the four main sectors of public expenditure on food and catering.^{xi} At that time, £54 million was spent annually on food through centrally let contracts covering public sector prisons; private prisons contractually managed by private companies operate their own food supply chains. The Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (Defra) also undertook monitoring of the extent to which food procured was domestically produced and met sustainability standards. It estimated that 50% of food procured by the then National Offender Management Service (NOMS) (what is now HMPPS) for public prisons and 57% of food procured by private prisons in the previous year was domestically produced i.e., grown or reared in the UK. In comparison domestic production is about 75% of the total value of the food eaten in the UK (see further explanation below). It also demonstrated the very limited extent to which prisons were using Farm Assured (Red Tractor), Organic, fairly traded tea and coffee and seasonal produce.

In 2014, Defra acknowledged that food procured by government significantly affects the health, wellbeing, and habits of the consumers of that food across the public sector, including prisons, hospitals and schools, and introduced the balanced scorecard as a method for evaluating contract tenders. By 2016, this had been adopted by the Ministry of Justice, which confirmed that it was being used for a tender for prison food, worth £500m.^{xii}

The latest iteration of the scorecard is linked to the Government Buying Standards for food and catering services (GBSF)—a set of minimum mandatory standards for inclusion in tender specifications and contract performance conditions—refreshed in 2021,^{xiii} also seeks to put into effect the government’s dietary recommendations for eating healthily (also known as The Eatwell Guide^{xiv}) and is accompanied by nutritional standards accordingly.^{xv} The latter relates to reduction of salt, sugar and saturated fat intakes as well as increased fruit, vegetable, and fibre consumption. The government has stated its commitment to ensuring that across its services, all catering and hospitality arrangements are fully aligned with these standards.^{xvi} Compliance by prison governors and directors to the GBSF is referred to by HMPPS with respect to prison food within its Policy Framework on Sustainable Operations.^{xvii}

Defra did not continue its monitoring of public sector catering and there is not currently any information in the public domain about the extent to which food supply and sustainability standards are achieved in prison custody settings or about the performance of external contractors commissioned for catering services and the canteen. There has not been a recent external review of existing practices related to food and nutrition in prison which enables us to understand how the general guidelines related to nutrition and energy consumption are applied. However, HMPPS assured the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee that it finds it “relatively easy” to meet the standards both because they have one, tight contract and a good provider and because the catering team supervises the cooking of the meals. HMPPS also told the Committee that there is already sufficient monitoring of adherence to the Buying Standards, including quality assurance “because we get a party of prisoners and staff to test each meal” and through catering managers who “do menu management. [and] ... compliance with food standards”.

Governors are asked to display the Eatwell Guide^{xviii} in their serveries. Food Matters has found in its work in individual establishments that the Eatwell Guide may not be positioned in places that are accessible and there is a need for prison-wide information on healthy eating. We discuss below other evidence which suggests that the quality and quantity of food in prisons is not consistently of a sufficient standard.

Concerns have been raised previously about the extent to which prisons meet requirements for average energy consumption. For example, the National Audit Office found in 2006 that most meals offered to people in women’s prisons provided similar energy levels to those offered to those in male prisons and that for women’s prisons, meals offered over the course of a day often had an energy content that exceeded the government’s recommendations.^{xix} More recently, a national review of food provision observed that in prisons, breakfast usually consists of breakfast packs, which contain cereal, milk, whitener, tea bags, and in some cases some preserves and noted that people in prison complain about there not being enough fruit and vegetables and too much fat, carbohydrate, salt and processed food.^{xx} In addition, food served in prisons is not currently rated highly by those eating it; only 41% of adult males surveyed by the Inspectorate in 2021-2022 thought the food was good and only 39% said they got enough to eat each day. Observations about food from recent HM Inspectorate of Prisons reports are detailed in the scrutiny section below and paint a mixed picture about the quality of prison food. More broadly, the Inspectorate found meals being served at inappropriate times, for example, in one prison the evening meal was served at 2.30pm^{xxi}, leaving a significant period before the next meal would be provided. A study of women serving long prison sentences highlighted participants concerns about the impact of diet and access to exercise on long-term health problems.^{xxii}

Why quality and standards matter

Better prison food has important benefits. Poor diet in prisons not only has a lasting impact on individual wellbeing in custody and after release, but it should also be of practical and financial concern to those running prisons. Prison food can potentially affect safety in prison in three ways. Firstly, frustration over food or the detrimental impact on behaviour or poor nutrition can serve as a catalyst for aggression and dissent.^{xxiii} Second, studies on children and adult males have illustrated that nutritional supplements reduce disciplinary incidents, aggression, and violent behaviour,^{xxiv} pointing to the importance of good, balanced nutrition to safety in prisons in several ways. Finally, where cooking facilities are not made available in prisons, the way in which food is prepared informally—to support health or to cook food which is culturally appropriate – is unsafe, for example, dismantling kettles to cook in cells.

Poor nutritional provision in prisons could also lead to broader costs to the government related to ill health. A parliamentary committee recognised in 2018 that people in prison tend to be in poorer health than the general population and have a greater need for health and care. This was largely attributed to individuals' circumstances prior to prison and did not specifically examine the detrimental impact of imprisonment itself on health, including dietary health.^{xxv} Nevertheless, it is feasible to assume that various medical complications are likely to arise from poor nutrition in prison custody, including nutritional deficiencies, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and high cholesterol. There is also evidence about the effect of diet on mental health. For example, a diet rich in fruit, vegetables and fibre, such as the Mediterranean diet, can improve symptoms of anxiety and depression.^{xxvi}

Proposed improvements to standards by government

Recommendations related to prison food were made as part of a plan for a National Food Strategy stemming from an independent review to build 'a sustainable, healthy and fair food system' and "restore and enhance the natural environment".^{xxvii} These included:

- The introduction of a mandatory accreditation scheme for caterers in prisons, working with existing certification bodies such as Food for Life, to support caterers to reach baseline standards and encourage them to aim higher still.
- Working with existing certifiers – such as Food for Life – to introduce a mandatory accreditation scheme for the food served in prisons, including training and support for leaders and staff.

Wider recommendations in the plan which have a bearing on prison food were:

- Emphasising the importance of food quality over cost with all food supplied required to have been produced in compliance with UK standards which would require the removal of a loophole in the Buying Standards allowing substandard food (below legislative standards for food production and animal welfare) to be supplied where it is necessary to avoid a "significant increase in costs"; the removal of this exemption is supported by HMPPS.
- Developing a new 'Reference Diet' updated every 5 years, which might recommend serving less meat and dairy and more wholegrains, fruit, vegetables, and pulses, whilst maintaining nutritional balance, to maximise the health and sustainability of the food served.
- Increasing the participation of small and local businesses in food procurement.
- Developing a monitoring and enforcement mechanism to make sure that food served is healthy and sustainable.

The subsequent Government Food Strategy commits to “deliver a sustainable, nature positive, affordable food system that provides choice and access to high quality products that support healthier and home-grown diets for all”. The government notes that the UK produces around 75%* of food consumed and commits to maintain that. However, while the strategy introduces a funded programme to improve food in schools, it does not make any reference to prisons.^{xxviii}

A consultation to update the buying standards in 2022—to which the government has not yet responded—proposes introducing a target (which is described as both ‘ambitious’ and ‘aspirational’) that “at least 50% of food spend must be on food produced locally or certified to higher environmental production standards, while maintaining value for money for taxpayers”, where locally produced food is defined as that “produced/grown within the same region as it is consumed, or a neighbouring county”.^{xxix} This would include at least 20% (an increase from 10%) of food spend having to be on food certified to higher environmental production standards.

In recognition that existing data on food and catering activity in the public sector is very limited, government wishes to ask suppliers for more data and improve transparency, the consultation also proposed new data reporting requirements to assess the uptake of local, seasonal food, amongst the other standards and record progress against the aspirations. The government also wants to better understand what is being bought, served, and wasted so that they can monitor the environmental, economic, and social impacts of public sector food and catering.

Other potential improvements to standards

Unlike detailed standards and guidance which have been developed specifically for healthcare settings^{xxx} and schools^{xxxi}, there are no specific nutritional guidelines available to prison catering staff; neither the Prison Rules nor PSI 44/2010 stipulate reference values for daily calorific targets for prison meals and to our knowledge these are not measured or provided to residents to help them to make informed choices about the nutritional value of the food they consume.

The PSI does specify the minimum requirements that all those involved in the food supply chain must meet for legal, decency and health purposes. For example, it specifies the need to ensure that all meals and the food service provided for prisoners are undertaken in accordance with current legislation regarding food handling, storage, cooking/service and HMPPS’ Catering Specification.^{xxxii} As noted above, in 2021, general nutritional standards were introduced alongside the GBSF served under public procurement which prisons are obligated to meet.

HMPPS advocated for “basic plus” standards for prisons i.e. nutritional baselines which can be built upon to differences in the needs of particular cohorts within the prison population which may have additional requirements. They cited 15–18-year-olds and individuals with a history of drug use as examples. Other cohorts which Food Matters Roundtable experts identified as having differential nutritional and dietary requirements were women (including those who are pregnant, breastfeeding, menstruating or at various stages of menopause), young adults (who have an average higher requirement), older people (who have an average lower requirement), and people with specific health conditions, including inflammatory bowel disease and coeliac disease, for example.

* NUF and other leading experts calculate a different % - The UK grows 61% of the food it eats, according to the National Farming Union (NFU), Tim Lang, Professor of Food Policy at City, University of London, and DEFRA’s Agriculture in the UK paper (July 2017). Government sources sometimes quote a figure of 75% but this excludes ‘non-indigenous’ items such as exotic fruit – bananas and mangoes, tea, coffee and spices – foods that cannot be grown (either at all or on a meaningful scale) in the UK.

There is a risk of Vitamin D deficiency for people in prison because of the very limited access to outdoor direct sunlight. This can only be partially addressed through diet. There is a strong argument both for supplementing Vitamin D and for ensuring that there is access to at least 30 minutes outdoors daily between March and October to facilitate access to sunlight which enables people to produce their own Vitamin D.^{xxxiii} There is scope for more detailed guidance on this for people who might be at risk of deficiency.^{xxxiv} Public Health England recommended that for women there is a need to ensure there is sufficient food which contain good sources of iron and are offered to women on a daily basis.^{xxxv}

Public Health England sought to develop broader standards for women in prison to improve health and wellbeing which incorporate WHO recommendations, national public health guidance and nutritional standards guidance and advice, alongside international prison standards.^{xxxvi} The standards related to nutrition and food included:

- Prisons need to ensure all meal options available are healthy and should provide guidance to prisoners on the nutritional content of the food provided.
 - A lighter, lower calorie option should be available at each meal.
 - Meals offered over a day should not have an average energy content (calorie allowance) exceeding recommended levels for women.
 - A range of fruit and vegetables should be offered at each meal.
 - Fish should be offered at least twice a week, one of which is oily.
 - Provide healthier sources of carbohydrate, such as wholegrain or higher fibre versions with less added fat, salt and sugar.
 - Foods which have a high sugar, fat or saturated fat content or have been fried should be limited.
 - Reduced saturated fat intake through use of healthy cooking practices.
 - Lean meat should be used where possible and a meat free alternative should be offered at each meal.
- Encourage dietary habits that reduce the risk of excess energy intake (calories).
- Encourage healthy eating through self-monitoring and education.
- Snacks should be healthy and not calorie dense.
- Limit salt intake.
- Women in prison should be offered daily vitamin D supplements throughout the year.

- Women in prison who are pregnant, breast feeding or recently given birth should have access to a diet and supplements which support their specific nutritional requirements and should receive advice regarding their diet.
- Women in prison should be encouraged to develop cooking skills and be able to cook their own food.
- Meals should be offered in line with normal mealtimes in the community and accommodate religious practices and cultural choices.
- Women should be able to dine communally.

Public Health England (now the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities) recently worked closely with HMPPS to improve nutritional standards more directly by looking at meals served to ensure that what was offered was nutritionally balanced and to review the healthy food options available on the 'canteen' list. The prison canteen is the 'shop' from which prisoners can purchase food, drink, food supplements, toiletries and other supplies such as greetings cards, phone cards, nicotine products, stationery and religious items. Purchases are ordered on a weekly basis and delivered to cells on specified days. Individuals have varying amounts to spend in the canteen, depending on their privilege level, whether they are working and whether they receive any money from family.

GBSF do not currently apply to food retail in government services, although government strongly recommends that such outlets comply with the relevant food sourcing standards. Accordingly, the relevant operational guidance (PSI 23/2013) currently makes no mention of government healthy eating guidelines with respect to food purchasing.^{xxxvii} The only references to food refer to health and safety issues. For example, frozen food and items used exclusively in the preparation and cooking of food are only available to establishments that have suitable storage, preparation, and cooking facilities for individuals to prepare and cook meals for their own consumption.

Food Matters compared the proportion of food groups available in the canteen in HMP High Down with the proportions recommended in the Eatwell guidance and found that the proportion of sugary, fatty and/or salty food available greatly exceeded the more balanced food. HMPPS is in the process of changing its operational policies, including Prison Service Instructions and Prison Service Orders, into Frameworks. This is largely yet to happen for those related to food, other than brief references within the Sustainable Operations Framework.

Food Matters Roundtable experts proposed that procurement contracts for catering and canteen should be reviewed to ensure greater flexibility for procuring local and seasonal produce.

Implementing mainstream public health and sustainability campaigns

In addition to the GBSF, the government has committed to adopt “other sustainable food and catering guidance as appropriate”^{xxxviii} and has consulted on revised buying standards which address the recommendations of the national food strategy including updating targets and more clearly aligning with broader government policies, including on waste and dietary recommendations, for example.^{xxxix}

Nevertheless, there are broader standards that individual prisons could be encouraged to adopt, for example, the Soil Association’s Food for Life Sustainable Catering Standard and Green Kitchen Standard. Food Matters has advocated for individual prisons they have worked in to adopt mainstream public health campaigns, for example, related to the reduction of sugar or promoting healthier diets.^{xl} To further encourage the adoption of better dietary principles, mainstream health campaigns such as the Sugar Smart campaign and Meat Free Mondays could usefully be promoted by HMPPS. The extent to which this occurs currently is not clear. Care Quality Commission (CQC) could usefully seek to establish how mainstream health campaigns are implemented in the prison estate in England and Wales and Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) could work with the Ministry of Justice to promote them. Prisons in Scotland previously signed up to the Healthy Living Award, for example.^{xli}

Food Matters Roundtable experts were supportive of the potential for prisons to participate more in such initiatives as well as in mainstream sustainability campaigns and activities, including for example, waste audits. Waste minimisation plans were included in the proposed update to the GBSF, including making food waste audits and their reporting mandatory using the ‘Target, Measure, Act’ model.^{xlii} More widely in relation to sustainability, there is a commitment by HMPPS to use organic waste in maintaining grounds and to compost all waste vegetation and other organic matter on site where facilities to do so can be provided.^{xliii} Food Matters uses food diaries to gain an understanding of the quality of meals in prison which illustrate that the provision and consumption of vegetables varies and that the choice of side vegetables related to the main meal as well as the way in which they were cooked. This illustrates the potential for the reduction of food waste by understanding how food preferences and other factors contribute to food choices.^{xliv}

In relation to the GBSF target on locally produced food, 25 years ago, the prison system in England and Wales was “self-sufficient in food produced on [prison] farms” including milk, pork, bacon, and eggs and made a significant profit in doing so. This facilitated training in butchery skills, food production, packing, processing and distribution, for example. However, the farms were closed for fiscal purposes after an assumption was made that food could be purchased more cheaply commercially, despite the £3.2m profit that was being made.

HMPPS acknowledges that this overlooked opportunities for promoting training and skills for people in prison and there is now an effort to return to food production and a recognition that there is significant scope to do so given that £300,000 of HMPPS’ £52-£56m annual spend on food was on self-sufficiency produce.^{xlv} There is also value to the wider benefits of self-sufficiency to health, education and the environment and to meaningfully engage in activity people who are not in employment in prison, for example, older people. In 2020, there were 1,020 individuals employed in and around horticulture in 40 prisons growing vegetables and other crops, which are fed into the kitchen to be turned into meals.

There are five farms which have dairy, rare-breed pigs and chickens. Prisons also sell to the public via farm shops. At that time, HMPPS was also exploring the potential for making better use of its existing land, including scope for the use of aquaponics, vertical growing, and underground farms. We understand that this aspiration continues.

Within HMPPS, the Industries, Retail, Catering and PE department (IRCPE) is exploring the internal production of certain food products to broaden opportunities for working in catering beyond food production into manufacturing. For example, HMPPS currently buys in 5 million pies and sausage rolls and 300 tonnes of dried pasta a year, all of which could potentially be made in-house. IRCPE says that internally manufactured food products will be less expensive, lower in salt, more nutritionally beneficial and with lower food miles, as well as providing training opportunities.

Examples of such food production include:

- Pie making in HMP Berwyn
- Pasta making in HMP Berwyn, Norwich and Stocken
- A bakery at HMP Lindholme

IRCPE is also exploring the redevelopment of horticulture to provide salad and vegetable crops for use within the prison estate. For example, the Southwest horticultural project involves the strategic growing of crops by each prison which can then be shared between prisons in the Southwest. IRCPE is investigating the reintroduction of farming across the Estate and is consulting with Defra and agricultural colleges. A published strategy or Framework would enable greater transparency around these plans and the proposed timetable for implementation. A forthcoming Health Promotion and Improvement Policy Framework provides an opportunity to establish a broader set of expectations around this and the wider roles that food could play in prisons.

Public health and sustainability campaigns

Sugar Smart UK – a campaign devised and run by Jamie Oliver Food Foundation and Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, to help local areas across the UK to tackle excessive sugar consumption. The campaign encourages local organisations to take actions, from reducing sugary drinks for sale in restaurants and retail, to organising sugar awareness workshops in the workplace and community-based events. The campaign has an expansive set of resources available to support everyone interested in taking action to reduce sugar consumption, ranging from videos and case studies, policy templates and guidelines. A ‘shopping list’ approach allows participants to increase the number of actions they adopt over time, providing a way to keep them engaged.

Healthier Families – The National Health Service (NHS) public health campaign, Change4Life, focused on the importance of healthy eating for everyone. Recently, public health initiatives have prioritised educating families. The Healthier Families programme comprises a variety of initiatives to support families to eat healthier and live longer, including by eating 5 a day, including a variety of fruit and vegetables, a sugar calculator and guidance on portion sizes, accessible activities and healthier food swaps, along with easy recipes.^{xlvi}

Food For Life standards – These standards are included in the most recent GBSF. Awards are centred around four areas of development, which link to the criteria and create an action framework around food quality, food leadership and food culture, food education, and community partnerships. There are bronze, silver and gold awards. The latter shows that food served is healthy, ethical, uses a range of local ingredients and is animal and climate friendly, including a minimum of 15% organic and 5% free range foods.

Food For Life Sustainable Catering Standard – The Sustainable Catering Certification, also known as ‘Food for Life Served Here’, demonstrates that organisations care about the food that they serve by making a commitment to serve meals cooked from scratch, using sustainable fish, free range eggs and British meat which can be traced back to the farm.^{xlvii} This includes an emphasis on locally sourced and ethical ingredients that support the local economy and are better for health, nature and the climate.

Green Kitchen Standard – The Soil Association promotes the sustainable management of energy, water and waste in their kitchens and how these measures directly impact carbon footprint.^{xlviii} The Green Kitchen Standard, created in partnership with The Carbon Trust, demonstrates that caterers have scored a high percentage of points against the Soil Association’s framework for carbon action, the benefits of which include enhancing reputation, delivering efficiencies, and facilitating compliance with sustainability expectations. For public sector caterers, the Standard works in line with the Resource Efficiency section of Defra’s Balanced Scorecard for public sector catering, allowing them to evidence compliance with its requirements. If combined with the Soil Association’s Food for Life Served Here award, the standard also allows caterers to demonstrate the quality of the food provided.

Red Tractor – The Red Tractor logo can be used on food that has been produced, transported, stored and packed to Red Tractor standards—which apply to all farming sectors, including chicken, dairy and vegetables—and licensing rules.^{xlix}

The Good Egg Award (also Good Chicken, Good Dairy, Good Pig) – These awards run by Compassion in World Farming recognise companies that use or are committing to use (within five years) higher welfare systems for rearing animals for meat, eggs and dairy.ⁱ

Once the updated GBSF is in place, there is scope for the introduction of the new standards, nutritional guidance, and food waste audits to be used as opportunities to improve the understanding of people in prison about the importance of food choices for good nutrition and sustainability.

The proposed introduction by Defra of data reporting and monitoring on buying standards should provide additional transparency and scrutiny which will enable greater understanding of the extent to which HMPPS adheres to the standards and related nutritional standards.

Public campaigns

Food Matters Roundtable experts suggested that there may be some learning from public education initiatives which have sought to improve food in schools and hospitals by involving professional and sometimes celebrity chefs. For example, James Martin attempted to improve food standards in hospitals and Jamie Oliver did similar for schools.^{li} There have been some examples of professional chefs becoming interested in prison food and developing employability through culinary skills training. For example, Gordon Ramsey supported the establishment of Bad Boys' Bakery in HMP Brixton in 2012. Fred Sirieux founded the Right Course to improve food in prison staff canteens including at HMP Lincoln, for example, discussed further below.^{lii}

Learning from school and hospital initiatives

Chefs in Schools – Chefs in Schools is a school food charity, founded by the creator of LEON, which seeks to transform child health “plate by plate, class by class, school by school”. It works in schools in London, Sheffield and the South West, training school kitchen teams to make tasty, healthy, school food from scratch, using fresh ingredients.^{liii} For example, Chefs in Schools along with the LEAP Federation of Schools, created the Hackney School of Food, a cookery school set within productive gardens. The School offers schools and the community a broad range of courses to teach children and their families to cook nourishing food from scratch.

Operation Prison Food – James Martin's work with hospital trusts was promoted in a TV series. He sought to address the quality, nutritional value and creativity of the food and the motivation of the staff preparing it. This included advising on menus which could be delivered within tight budgets and addressing the quality of food waste.^{liv}

School Food Awards – Jamie Oliver established an annual School Food Awards to showcase achievements with school catering and wider school food systems.^{lv}

Prue Leith and Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall have both been involved in a Working Group for prison food.

Promoting changes across the estate

WHO proposes that food systems should be developed to match the circumstances and resources of each prison. Food Matters Roundtable experts emphasised the potential for both greater emphasis on centrally driven initiatives by HMPPS and activity by individual governors and/or catering managers to fund and promote projects at local level. HMPPS has involved academics in supporting the improvement of prison food, working with Think Through Nutrition (Institute for Food, Brain and Behaviour) and Professor Jonathan Tammam at Oxford Brookes University.^{lvi}

This included analysis of prison menus, nutritional recommendations and new menu guidelines for catering managers. A recipe bank of 1,100 recipes and menus is now available to catering managers. Nevertheless, experts noted that many prison kitchens are equipped for heating pre-prepared food, rather than cooking from scratch, and around half of catering managers are not specialist caterers. A published HMPPS strategy would enable greater transparency around the extent to which existing prison infrastructure is able to support the growth of food preparation from scratch and the timetable for achieving the aspirations of expanding self-production.

Food Matters Roundtable experts also identified the potential for greater cross-fertilisation of good practice across prisons in England and Wales, as well as nationally and internationally. Roundtable experts also emphasised the importance of building an evidence base that food and growing-related initiatives can achieve a range of benefits for prisons as well as the individuals involved. There are examples where food is being grown within the prison estate and prisoners are likely benefiting—through training and through food going into the prison food system, as well as by supporting the promotion of physical and mental health, but the outcomes are not systematically evaluated and where they have been evaluated and found to have positive benefits they are often not continued or replicated. Some food and/or growing projects, like The Clink and The Right Course, focus on food in staff or external restaurants with the benefits primarily focussed on improving employability by gaining culinary skills and experience. The HMP Lincoln project mentioned above will also provide food during visits.

Prison-based approaches

Governors have autonomy to set their own food budget. There is limited transparency about the amount currently spent on prison food. The national Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) noted that having remained static since 2014, food budgets had increased in 2022 and were up to £2.20 per head per day in some prisons.^{lvii} They emphasised however the challenges of inflation of food costs on the adequacy of provision. More recently Inside Time has established via Freedom of Information requests that in 2022/23 the actual spend was £2.68 per prisoner per day and that budgeted spend for 2023/24.^{lviii} The low costs are partially explained by the fact that prison catering staff train people in prison to prepare food which is not reflected in the per capita cost.^{lix}

An important conclusion Food Matters has drawn from its Inside and Out Programme is that creating an environment in which individuals feel that making better food choices is a possibility requires a multi-faceted approach. Such an approach includes for example, changes in food provided, food promotional activities, encouragement to consume healthy foods at common gathering points and food portals, and leadership in setting policy and designing messages about healthy eating.

There is also scope for greater linkages between food, health, exercise and wellbeing by connecting the development of prison food systems into wider public health work. For example, there could be an emphasis on diet and exercise as part of the Get Well, Stay Well Agreement a framework published in 2022 which aims for greater collaboration, health promotion and use of physical activity and sport across the welfare and justice systems developed by the Alliance of Sport in Criminal Justice.^{lx} Another example is the potential to link with OHID's regional work on healthier food environments.

Greater clarity could be given in operational policies regarding the respective roles of those staff who could promote healthy eating, including residential staff, prison catering managers, residency managers (for cooking facilities), those responsible at a national and local level for procurement of the canteen, education staff, healthcare services, family support services, and gym orderlies.

In-cell cooking

It is important to recognise that prisoners the world over cook in their cells. There is ample evidence of this through specialist prison survival websites, YouTube videos and published recipe books e.g. *From the Big House to Your House: Cooking in Prison* “Prison Ramen” “Commissary Cookbook: My Infamous Prison Cookbook”. These sources of information all demonstrate the ingenuity and creativity of prisoners in cell cooking and making dishes which are culturally acceptable to them. While at HMP Wandsworth, Food Matters ran a recipe competition which highlighted the extent of cooking in cells using kettles. It also showed that the recipes people cooked tended to be healthy - increasing fruit, vegetable, and protein intake, as well as reflecting cultural identity.

In England and Wales, kettles are used as an improvised means to cook. Some people simply use them to heat up food in boiling water while others will fry meat and vegetables, stew fruit etc. Less commonly, this will involve stripping down the kettle to make a tin foil oven or a still to distil hooch. In other countries different electrical equipment is used. In Denmark, for example, cells have coffee makers, and the hotplate can be used like a cooking ring, for example, to fry meat, cook pancakes and bake bread. HMPPS has introduced some constructive solutions to the possible dangers of cell-cooking including air fryers and multi-cookers (which can be used for sautéing, casseroles and baking) on wings but these are not universally available. Access can be limited and to our knowledge they are not permissible for purchase through the canteen to be used in cells.

Self-catering

Prisons in England and Wales largely provide catering directly to those residing in them in cafeterias or institutional kitchens, although in some prisons (primarily high security establishments and units for longer-term prisoners) there are self-catering facilities and some family visiting facilities include space for communal cooking. Where this is provided it is on a limited scale and on an optional basis. A good example of existing practice is HMP Full Sutton which was highlighted in an HM Inspectorate of Prisons report in 2020. Individuals have access to what HMIP describe as ‘excellent’ self-catering facilities whenever they were unlocked, and the prison runs an ‘opt out’ scheme for those who did not wish to receive prison meals but cooked their own food.^{lxi} The scheme provides each participant with a budget of £10 a week to order their own food and cook their own meals. Groups of individuals on the scheme can cook together, which provided them with the opportunity to socialise, plan meals and practise their budgeting skills. Elsewhere, the Inspectorate has found that self-catering facilities are poorly maintained or that their use has been suspended since Covid-19 lockdowns.^{lxii}

As noted above, the Inspectorate has found that self-catering is popular where it does exist. This echoes Food Matters and Food Behind Bars’ experiences of providing courses and activities that enable individuals in prison to cook together in a group. Participants have overwhelmingly expressed the desire to have permanent access to cooking facilities; they feel that they can cook healthier food themselves and include more fruit and vegetables which they buy themselves from the canteen. Where self-catering facilities are available people can access fresh and frozen food from the canteen National Product list.

HMP Full Sutton – Significantly more survey respondents (61%) reported that the quality of the food was very or quite good compared to those in similar prisons (39%), while 60% said they got enough to eat at mealtimes compared with 39% at other comparable establishments.^{lxiii} The kitchen was well organised and produced a four-weekly menu that catered appropriately for varying dietary and religious needs.

Self-catering opportunities were very good and facilities in all units were excellent, with residents having access to them whenever they were unlocked. The prison runs an 'opt out' scheme for those who did not wish to receive prison meals but cooked their own food which 154 residents were taking part in, with 25 on the waiting list. The scheme provided individuals with a budget of £10 a week to order their own food and cook their own meals. We saw residents cooking together, which provided them with the opportunity to socialise, plan meals and practise their budgeting skills.

There are examples internationally, for example in Finland, Denmark, and federal prisons in Canada, where people in prison are given weekly budgets, allowing them to choose and purchase food from a grocery list or internal grocery shop which they then cook for themselves in communal kitchens. Another aspect of normalisation is the timing of meals which, as we noted above, do not tend to relate to typical mealtimes outside prisons.

Denmark – In Denmark, people serving sentences cook their own meals. The exceptions to this are people in a remand prison and those in solitary confinement, who have meals provided for them. Within prisons holding people who have been convicted, there are common rooms with kitchens shared by small groups of tables. The common rooms have sofas, television and dining tables and chairs. People tend to cook and eat in small groups for economic and social reasons, but individuals are also free to choose to eat in the common room or in their own cells.

Buying food and cooking for themselves creates a normalised environment which aims to reduce the likelihood of people becoming institutionalised. Cooking is one aspect of self-administration which encourages normalisation and includes washing their own clothes and other aspects of self-care. The aim is that life while incarcerated reflects life outside as far as possible with the punishment being seen as the loss of liberty. It is not part of a system of privileges, which access to self-catering facilities can be in England and Wales, although if a person is segregated for misdemeanours, cooking facilities are not available to them.

Whole system approaches

A good example of a whole system public health approach to prison food developed by a statutory agency is NHS Forth Valley's work in prisons in the region of Scotland. The community-based Health Promotion and Public Health Nutrition Team, working in partnership with the Scottish Prison Service and others, have developed a model based on four Es: Education, Engagement, Employability and Environment. Initiatives include:

- Using food, cooking and growing activities to engage with people in prison and staff.
- Using food, cooking and growing activities to engage with families.
- Consulting with people in prison about food across the prison estate via food focus groups, food surveys and comment cards.
- Offering accredited food hygiene and food and health training and life skills cookery classes to people in prison – offering opportunities to develop everyday cooking skills and a basic nutrition knowledge.
- Offering support to transform an outdoor space into a learning and growing allotment area.
- This will provide gardening skills, a qualification and contribute to better mental health and well-being.
- Offering accredited food and health courses to prison service staff, NHS staff, family centre staff, volunteers and peer mentors to help build their capacity and support them to teach people in prison and their families essential food skills and a basic nutrition knowledge.
- Using innovative and creative approaches that focus on food eg multimedia campaigns, interactive quizzes, wellbeing challenges to incorporate mental wellbeing information and signpost to selfcare.
- Providing advice and support to prison service colleagues to improve access to a choice of healthy foods, snacks and drinks to people in prison, staff and visitors.
- Using promotion and marketing activities that support and encourage healthier eating.

Another example from is the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Oregon, US. Women at the facility identified unhealthy food and weight gain as priority health issues, with overeating being commonly used to deal with withdrawal from cigarettes, alcohol, and other drugs as well as emotional trauma, boredom, and stress. The Healthy Food Access Project identified that the calorific content of the menus was excessive (at 3,000 calories/day) and the canteen mostly offered high fat, low nutrition snack foods for purchase. They calculated that a medium sized woman who ate 75% of the food offered daily would gain 1 pound every 14 days or 21 lbs/year.

A partnership was established between the Department of Corrections, Public Health and The Food As Medicine Institute with funding from a private healthcare community benefit fund. The project adopted a comprehensive approach, the costs of which were thought to be budget neutral, to:

- Transform the food environment by expanding the garden and integrate freshly grown produce into improved menus with an increased availability of fresh fruits and vegetables
- Improve health by adjusting calorie intake to be gender appropriate and promote healthier food choices by displaying calorie information during mealtimes, reducing access to sugary snacks and drinks available through canteen, offering healthy options, including fruit, during special events and integrating nutritional awareness (including the benefits of a whole food diet) into education classes

- Increase food system skills and reduce reoffending by providing on-site training and teamwork skills e.g. gardening, kitchen skills, food production and food preparation and introducing a ‘Seed to Supper’ course
- Extend the benefits to the community both once people are released by promoting enrolment in food assistance programmes and by donating surplus food to a local community centre
- Promoting food sustainability by increasing urban food production and composting kitchen and garden waste
- Creating intergenerational benefits by empowering women with histories of poverty, trauma, substance abuse, and chronic health problems to learn how to grow, prepare and eat healthy food.

The Food Matters Inside and Out Programme at Wandsworth included:

- Consultation and recommendations to the catering department for meals both for prisoners and staff
- healthy eating courses for prisoners (which significantly positively changed food choices)
- training of prison officers in healthy eating
- training of peer support food champions
- general health promotion throughout the prison, particularly via Wandsworth’s own prison radio station Radio Wanno
- a strategic policy report
- audit and recommendations for the canteen.

Over the same period another organisation, the Conservation Society, developed a growing project, beehives and chicken keeping at Wandsworth, but this like Food Matters was funded by HMPPS for only one year.

Embedding change into national policies

In addition to activity related to catering, Food Matters Roundtable experts identified the potential for food and nutrition related initiatives to be integrated into HMPPS’ wider policies, including commissioning of learning and skills, preparation for release, family engagement, physical health and wellbeing, managing relationships between officers and people in prison and in efforts to embed rehabilitative cultures. For example, detailed recommendations were made about how food could contribute to building a rehabilitative culture by the Royal Society for the Arts in 2014.^{lxiv}

Roundtable experts acknowledged, as did HMIP in its blog,^{lxv} that there are limitations in the physical environment in some prisons which reduces scope for the proliferation of food-based initiatives. For example, many kitchens have not been designed for preparing food from scratch but for heating pre-prepared foods. Nevertheless, the government has embarked on a large-scale expansion of the prison system, spending £4bn to create 20,000 prison places which they wish to see “truly rehabilitate” people in prison.^{lxvi} The expansion comprises new houseblocks as well as new prisons, but while the government

has stated that the latter are of similar design to each other, there limited information about what this comprises, although there is mention of kitchens and polytunnels.^{lxvii} An architect which made recommendations on prison design during the previous prison expansion programme—including proposals for rehabilitative prisons and promoting wellbeing—noted that “[a]dequate dining and self-catering facilities can help encourage communal eating and taking an active role in the daily food preparation tasks needed for ‘normal’ life.”^{lxviii} The current modernisation programme therefore provides opportunities to make more effective use of space, including providing sufficient communal dining and expanding self-catering facilities. This need not be limited to newly built spaces. The refurbishment of HMP Manchester illustrates that this is possible within the existing prison estate.

HMP Manchester – During a recent refurbishment of HMP Manchester, HMPPS has installed kitchenettes within the residential units, adapting space such as cells and old shower facilities. The equipment on the units varies but as a minimum includes a microwave, air fryer, toaster and toasted sandwich maker. Some units also have ovens. HMP Manchester has engaged a voluntary sector organisation, Food Behind Bars, to provide cooking sessions for small groups of men to teach them how to make interesting and innovative meals using this equipment.

Refreshments and food served in visits rooms that people in prison can share with their loved ones could provide a significant opportunity to promote better quality food provision and nutritional education.

HMPPS should develop plans for more effective use of current prison spaces, and future prison buildings should be built with food production and preparation in mind, including food sustainability projects, self-catering options and communal dining being offered as standard in newly built prisons and large-scale expansions or refurbishments.

Exploring further the role of food, nutrition and sustainability in education and employment skills provision

Food Matters Roundtable experts agreed that there was a need for more nutritional education and information to be given to people in prison to ensure that there was widespread knowledge about healthy food options, both in the catering offer and in the additional offer from the canteen. There are some examples of this happening. For example, in an inspection of HMP Bullingdon in 2019, the Inspectorate commended the on-site dietician who had reviewed the nutritional value of the prison food and was helping individuals to make informed choices to improve their health. They noted that excellent nutritional advice and support for a wide range of conditions, including diabetes, high cholesterol and weight management, was also available. Think Through Nutrition have advocated for nutrition education to be considered a core skill and have emphasised the wider importance of nutrition in improving receptivity to education and other programmes, improving behaviour and overall well-being and reducing violence and self-harm. Some pilot projects are underway, supported by HMPPS.

The existing focus of education and employability in prisons is on culinary skills training, some examples of which are detailed in the box below.

Culinary skills training and prison-based restaurant projects

The Clink – created by Alberto Crisci MBE at HMP High Down, the charity runs commercial restaurants which train participants with six to eighteen months of their sentence left to serve who volunteer for up to 40 hours/week to gain a City and Guilds Vocational Qualification in a professional working kitchen. The Clink now delivers 36 training projects: 3 restaurants, 2 gardens, 1 events catering business, 1 bakery and 29 prison kitchens. It provides support to those qualified to secure employment and accommodation on release and an evaluation has demonstrated that participants are almost 50% less likely to reoffend after training.

The Right Course – founded by Fred Sirieix, the charity started as a pilot project in 2017 at HMP/YOI Isis. It seeks to transform staff restaurants in prison into high-street like food businesses using existing facilities and equipment and supported by grant support, fundraising and donations in-kind. The restaurants enable people in prison to gain qualifications (delivered by Novus) which includes training from guest chefs, and which will enable participants to secure jobs in the hospitality sector. At HMP Wormwood Scrubs, the staff canteen has been staff transformed into a high-street standard café and restaurant.^{lxx}

Food Matters Roundtable experts identified a range of qualifications that could usefully be offered, alongside developments in sustainability and healthy eating, including in horticulture, agriculture and food sustainability, for example. There has been some commitment by the government to consider this further. In 2018, the Ministry of Justice committed to work with HMPPS to support rehabilitation by offering learning and development opportunities, with appropriate certification in waste management and ecology, for example.^{lxxi}

The introduction of a new role of Head of Learning and Skills into all prisons is an opportunity to review and refresh existing provision through the focal point of food. The provision of education and skills should include access to opportunities for people in prison to learn cooking, gardening, and other life skills, as well as work-focused skills, as part of the core curriculum and think creatively about how food and growing activities can provide meaningful activity for people who are not required to be in employment or training.

Digital solutions and other media

The government has highlighted the potential transformative power of digital innovation as part of its plans to improve the existing prison estate.^{lxxii} Nevertheless, a relatively narrow vision was outlined related to food i.e., using in-cell technology and kiosks to enable people to access menus and place orders. Food Matters Roundtable experts proposed that there was greater scope for educational resources to be developed and used via in-cell technology, prison radio and prison TV channels (Wayout TV and Way2learn) to increase knowledge of healthy dietary choices. For example, Food Matters is currently working with HMPPS to develop its in-cell paper-based learning course, the Feel Good Food Club as a digital interactive course to be available via in-cell laptops and tablets. Food Matters is also writing a monthly column on healthy eating for Inside Time newspaper.

There is scope for publications aimed at the prison audience, in-cell technology and prison radio to be used more to promote nutritional awareness education and recipes.

Peer learning models

Some prisons have implemented peer support initiatives through which prison healthcare services have trained champions in healthy eating based on other peer support models related to promoting health and wellbeing. Food Matters trained some peer supporters at HMP Wandsworth as food champions who worked with people engaging with drug treatment services and assisted others in making menu and canteen choices, for example. We are aware of a similar model operating in HMP Polmont where peer educators supported participants in a healthy eating course. Such projects require funding for training and ongoing support. The Royal Society for the Protection of Health has recently run its Youth Health Champions project in young offender institutions which has included a focus on diet and mindful eating alongside exercise and other aspects of wellbeing, for example.^{lxxiii} The model is now being piloted with young adults in custody.

There is scope for peer supporters who can act as food champions to be used more widely across the prison estate.

Strengthening and broadening the evidence base

Some areas identified by Food Matters Roundtable experts as areas for research included inequality of access to food related to 'spend', the relationship between food, the informal economy, debt and violence, eating behaviour, exercise and wellbeing, changes in weight during periods of imprisonment and health outcomes both during imprisonment and beyond. For example, the Coffee Creek Facility mentioned above identified a need for a quasi-experimental evaluation of its programme which would survey the women involved; collect data on height, weight, and waist measurements and compare to weight/BMI at intake; assess whether project has impacted on the amount of weight gained and whether self-reported knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour have changed. One evaluation of the project focused on diabetes management. This involved access to the programme as well as reducing the energy value of meals by 800 calories/day. Exposure to the project over one year resulted in a modest improvement in glycaemic control in women with diabetes and the calorie reduction was not made up for in canteen purchases.^{lxxiv}

Royal Holloway University has recently collated survey data from HM Inspectorate of Prisons into a dataset which has been made available for further analysis. This includes responses to questions about food, which have changed over time, and provide an opportunity to better understand the perspectives of specific cohorts of people in prison about the food. Food Matters also sees scope to adapt the current questions asked by HMIP in their survey.

Horticultural projects in prisons and secure psychiatric facilities have been demonstrated through academic research to create a sense of ownership, help the participants develop life skills, and provide educational, occupational, and rehabilitative benefits.^{lxxv} There is a need to build on the evidence base that food and growing related initiatives can achieve a wider range of benefits within prison life and culture across the prison estate and within individual establishments to make food a focus rather than a function.

More research should be conducted on food in prisons, the various roles it plays and how the benefits of food might be realised more broadly, as well as to develop the evidence base about the dietary health of people in prison and the impact of existing growing, culinary skills, cooking and nutritional awareness projects.

Further collaboration

There are some existing groups which seek to improve current practice. For example, HMPPS has established a Food Working Group, comprised of a mixture of internal and external participants, to inform and guide change around food in the prison estate. This could present opportunities for a wider range of organisations, including voluntary sector, to be involved. A national Prison Food Network comprising academics, voluntary sector and prison staff. Its focus is discussing current practice and how that intersects with research projects. Further opportunities for collaborative working were discussed at the Roundtable, including the potential for a voluntary sector alliance which would potentially enable more joined up working, collective consideration of best practice and opportunities for advocacy to foster further change.

Enhancing independent scrutiny

The fact that there was a need for a thematic inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) is illustrative of the limited broader scrutiny of food and diets in prison custody. This is important because there is not much information available about differences in facilities and performance related to food across the prison estate.

HMIP's current inspection standards for both women and men include three high-level indicators related to food and nutrition:

- Having a palatable, varied, healthy and balanced diet which meets their individual needs.
- Food and meals are stored, prepared, and served in line with religious, cultural and other special dietary requirements and prevailing safety and hygiene regulations.
- Ability to purchase a suitable range of goods at reasonable prices to meet their diverse needs.

One of the ways in which the Inspectorate examines whether prisons meet these standards is to survey people detained as part of its inspections. Questions are asked about the quality of food and access to the canteen or shop, for example. Nevertheless, observations about food and catering facilities in HMIP inspection reports of individual prisons vary in their comprehensiveness and access to healthy food and nutrition does typically not feature at all. Observations about food in recent HMIP reports were analysed in March 2023 which illustrate the mixed picture of provision. A selection of these is set out in the box below.

Examples of observations from HM Inspectorate of Prisons reports

HMP Bullingdon – Only 28% of respondents said the quality of the food was good and only 24% that they had enough to eat at mealtimes.^{lxxvi} Menus catered for all dietary requirements. There was a choice of a hot or cold meal at lunch and a hot meal in the evenings. Breakfast packs were inadequate, but portion sizes of other meals were reasonable, and a good range was on offer. Few people raised food as an issue, and the catering manager attended the prison council group meeting. There were, however, some unnecessary delays for people requiring specific diets, such as vegan.

People were not able to dine communally, but instead ate in their cells next to their toilets. With the exception of one landing on C wing, there was no access to self-catering equipment, such as grills, microwaves and toasters. This was another missed opportunity to develop a community ethos and demonstrate a level of trust and respect fundamental to establishing a more respectful culture. The main prison kitchen was clean with adequate equipment and excellent storage facilities. Supervision at mealtimes was adequate, but there was poor adherence to some basic food hygiene standards. People serving food did not always wear the correct personal protective clothing and wing serveries were not always cleaned before evening lock-up. Staff had not been completing basic food hygiene procedures, such as servery checks and food temperature control, for several months.

HMP Wakefield – Food was plentiful, varied and of reasonable quality and regular consultation about the food and the shop took place, with changes made as a result.^{lxxvii} A four-week menu cycle provided a wide range of food and always included a healthy option, however food was served too early at weekends, leaving long gaps between meals. All those involved in food preparation and service were appropriately trained and most wore suitable personal protective equipment. Food serveries and trolleys were among the cleanest and most well maintained we have seen. There was good cross-function liaison with other areas of the prison and many special medical diets and religious festivals were catered for.

Residents on all wings had access to well-maintained cooking facilities which they appreciated but demand was high, and available for only a relatively short time during the week. There were also opportunities for people to eat with each other if they wished. Access to the prison shop for new arrivals could take as long as 13 days, which was unnecessary, given how few new arrivals were received and the proximity of the on-site DHL workshop where shop orders were processed and packed. The range of goods available was extensive and supported the self-catering arrangements on the wings.

HMP Eastwood Park – Only 34% of women said they got enough to eat at mealtimes and 31% said the food was very or quite good. The menu offered a reasonable choice, catering for a range of diets and portion sizes were adequate. Some equipment in the main kitchen needed to be repaired, and staffing levels had been poor until recently, which might have affected the quality of the food. There were limited opportunities for women to prepare their own food and some units did not have microwaves, toasters or cookers..^{lxxviii}

HMP Exeter – In the survey, 46% of respondents said the food was good or very good, which was similar to the previous inspection and comparator prisons. People chose their meals from a varied menu on a four-week rolling cycle. The winter menu was in place at the time of the inspection which included a hot option at lunch. People in prison were consulted about food through surveys, wing forums and separate consultations. These consultations had resulted in some changes to the menu, which was good.^{lxxix} All meals had to be eaten in cells, with no opportunity for individuals to eat together. On one wing there was a toaster and microwave but on other wings these were only available to the servery workers.

HMP Newhall – The food was adequate but unpopular, with the meat being of poor quality and women wanted more healthy options. Only 42% of women said the food was good, while just 31% said they got enough to eat most of the time. Individuals could eat their evening meal out of their cells, with one residential unit having a separate dining hall. Those returning from activities had to rush their meals as there was not enough time.

Meals were served too early, and breakfast packs were provided at lunch time on the previous day. Oversight of the food service was insufficient and did not make sure meals were served appropriately. One wing on one residential unit had access to a kitchenette but overall, there was a lack of self-catering facilities. A recently introduced enrichment programme offered on weekday evenings gave women (though those with enhanced status only) valuable opportunities to enhance their personal development and social well-being. For example, the cooking on a budget short programme was well received and enabled participants to develop a better understanding of budgeting, mathematics skills and the relationship between good nutrition and diet.

HMP Wealstun – The well-managed kitchen was clean and well equipped and provided a range of training opportunities.^{lxxx} The team provided a good variety of menu options, catering for a wide range of dietary requirements, and worked with a charity, 'Food Behind Bars', to provide a daily healthy option choice. Nevertheless, only 32% of respondents to the survey said that the quality of food was good and only 26% of respondents said that they got enough to eat at mealtimes. Portions were too small, and residents said they were often hungry.

HMP Pentonville – Food was a prominent source of complaint and lunch and evening meals were served very early.^{lxxxi} There were major problems with the prison shop provision, which the prison was addressing. Most residents had no option but to eat in their cell, except on one wing where tables were provided in the communal areas. Self-catering facilities were also only available on one wing and greatly appreciated by residents who were able to buy additional items from the prison shop to prepare in the wing kitchen.

HMP Garth – The main meals were of reasonable quality with lunch and dinner selected from a rolling monthly menu that offered a reasonable variety.^{lxxxii} The kitchen staff worked well with the health care department on meeting individuals' needs. The catering manager consulted about meals through the bi-weekly prison council meeting, surveys and comments books, but the books were rarely used. Meals were served too early, at between 11.15 and 11.30am and from 4pm. Breakfast packs, which were small, were issued with lunch the day before. Daily supervision of the meal service from wing serveries was ineffective and there were some unsafe practices. Self-catering fridges, microwave ovens and toasters were available on all the wings, as were grills and air fryers on request but these were not always clean or hygienic. There were only limited opportunities to eat meals outside their cell with others.

HMP Parc –The quality and quantity of food were inadequate; only 32% of those surveyed said that the food was either good or very good and only 28% said they got enough to eat.^{lxxxiii}

Most of those we spoke to complained that menus were repetitive, bland and unhealthy, with chips served most days with small portions of vegetables. Menu choices had recently increased from three to five each day. Fruit that was delivered to the wings was often mouldy. Some residents were supplementing the provision through purchases from the prison shop but shortfalls and restrictions in that service, including the shortage of fresh fruit and vegetables, compounded their frustration. Each wing had accessible toasters and microwaves and most residents were able to eat together on most days, something we have rarely seen in recent times.

At the height of the pandemic, the Inspectorate found that changes were made to make prison regimes to reduce risks of Covid-19 transmission. These included restricting the variety of menus and limiting the use of self-catering and communal eating facilities to support social distancing.^{lxxxiv} These have not been fully restored and there are now fewer opportunities for communal eating or self-catering.^{lxxxv} On the other hand, the Inspectorate also noted that food provision was generally accurate and judged by people in prison to have been higher quality than pre-pandemic.

A recent thematic review which considered aspects of racial inequalities took an interesting new approach and explored the importance of food “as a means of connection and comfort” and emphasised the importance of the role that cooking and eating together could play in helping to support mental health, improve relationships and support rehabilitation.^{lxxxvi} A related blog examined the potential for food-related activity to help build relationships and trust between prison staff and people in their care and foster inclusion and a rehabilitative culture.^{lxxxvii}

In the thematic review, the Inspectorate drew attention to the concept of the ‘cultural kitchen’ seen in immigration removal centres and proposed that an expanded version of this type of facility might provide a useful blueprint for prisons and noted that their inspections have demonstrated that self-catering kitchens work well, “providing prisoners with opportunities to socialise, plan meals and practice budgeting skills”.^{lxxxviii} In cultural kitchens in immigration detention centres, groups of detainees can obtain raw food ingredients, cook meals together and then invite others to share meals with them. HMIP has noted elsewhere that self-catering is ‘popular’.^{lxxxix} This is considered further below. Other food-related initiatives highlighted in the blog were cultural events centred around food and allowing prisoners and their families to eat hot meals during special visits. Nevertheless, in the experience of Food Matters Roundtable experts these activities are the exception rather than the norm.

There is an opportunity to develop inspection standards designed to improve the range of healthy food on offer and support healthier food choices. For example, people in prison who have sufficient money can purchase additional foods from “canteen” to supplement the meals provided which could enable them to eat a wider variety of healthy food options. HMIP states the expectation that “the list of products available meets the diverse needs of the population” yet makes no specific reference to the need for access to a good range of healthy food options, although it should be noted that the Inspectorate inspects more widely than purely against their expectations. We understand that the relevant survey question is due to change from *Does the shop/canteen sell the things that you need?* to *Can you buy the items that you need to buy from the canteen or catalogues?*

The Care Quality Commission is responsible for inspecting health and social care in prisons and young offender institutions and focuses on how people's nutrition and hydration needs assessed and met by examining the extent to which "detainees have a varied, healthy and balanced diet which meets their individual needs, including religious, cultural or other special dietary requirements."^{xc} Ofsted also plays a role in inspecting prison kitchens as part of their examination of purposeful activity.

Local Independent Monitoring Boards (IMBs) also have a role to play in scrutinising food in prisons. In 2022, 2.7% of complaints to IMBs related to food and kitchens, while 16.3% were regarding health, some of which may well be related to physical and mental health linked to diet.^{xc}

It is important that there is effective, ongoing monitoring of food standards and food-related activities through the Inspectorates. There is scope for HMIP, Ofsted and CQC to review their expectations to ensure that prisons are inspected against a wider range of opportunities to promote health, wellbeing and inclusion through food, and to report in such a way that access to healthy food both via catering facilities and the canteen are consistently spotlighted. IMBs could play a vital role in improving our understanding of the quality and quantity of food in prisons, perceptions of the menu, canteen and self-catering options, and the extent to which food is a focal point rather than a function.

Parliamentary Scrutiny

Parliamentary Select Committees have examined aspects of prisons in recent years. An Environmental Audit Committee examination of sustainability in government departments related to prisons in 2018 had a limited focus on food but mentioned initiatives to turn food waste into compost at HMPs Kirkclevington and Holme House and referred to the potential for incentivising this across the prison estate.^{xcii} More recently, the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs committee explored the government's proposals for changes to the GBSF and how this might impact on prisons. We have noted above that a Health and Social Care Select Committee inquiry on prison health did not include consideration of dietary health and to our knowledge the potential added burden of the quality and quantity of food to prison healthcare and wider NHS resources has not been determined.^{xciii} Similarly, diet was not covered in a recent Justice Select Committee inquiry on women in prison.^{xciv}

A cross-Committee inquiry on the role of food in prison by the Health and Social Care Committee and Justice Committee and for the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs Committee would provide helpful scrutiny of both the impact on prisons of the updated Government Buying Standards at a suitable period of time once they are implemented and the extent to which opportunities to make food a focal point are being maximised to improve prison regimes.

Conclusions and recommendations

We have considered how the collective endeavours and experiences of those involved in aspects of food provision in prisons in England and Wales can shine a light on how best to promote the importance of good food and nutrition and how this could be maximised within prison life.

The literature review and roundtable discussion brings together a wealth of ideas about **how food in prisons can become a focal point rather than simply a function of prison regimes**. This report highlights the multifaceted role of food in prisons and the significant potential for the positive change that food could offer in terms of nutrition, food quality, and overall well-being of people in prison. Improvements in food standards, sustainability, nutritional education and activities related to understanding, preparing and sharing food are essential for creating healthier, more meaningful prison environments.

The report's key recommendations for prison food system change.

- **An His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) cross-cutting strategy, like those for drugs and family ties, would provide an opportunity for food, nutrition, and wellbeing to be integrated more widely into existing operational and strategic policies and to develop prison food systems so that food becomes a focal point rather than solely a function (p.12).**
- **Future procurement contracts for catering and canteen could provide greater flexibility around procuring local and seasonal produce (p.17).**
- **The implementation of the updated Government Buying Standards for food and catering services (GBSF) will provide opportunities to improve the understanding of people in prison about the importance of food choices for good nutrition and sustainability (p.20).**
- **The proposed introduction by Defra of data reporting and monitoring on buying standards should provide additional transparency and scrutiny which will enable greater understanding of the extent to which HMPPS adheres to the standards and related nutritional standards. (p.20)**
- **Plans for more effective use of current prison spaces, and future prison buildings should be built with food production and preparation in mind, including food sustainability projects, self-catering options and communal dining being offered as standard in newly built prisons and large-scale expansions or refurbishments (p.27).**
- **The provision of education and skills should include access to opportunities for people in prison to learn cooking, gardening, and other life skills, as well as work-focused skills, as part of the core curriculum and think creatively about how food related activities can provide purposeful activity (p.28).**
- **Publications aimed at the prison audience, in-cell technology and prison radio should be used more to promote nutritional awareness education and recipes (p.28).**
- **Peer supporters who can act as food champions should be introduced more widely across the prison estate (p.29).**
- **There should be much more research on food in prisons, the various roles it plays and how the benefits of food might be realised more broadly to develop the evidence base about the dietary health of people in prison and the impact of existing growing, culinary skills, cooking and nutritional awareness projects (p.29).**
- **It is important that there is robust, ongoing monitoring of food standards through the Inspectorates. There is scope for His Majesty's Inspector of Prisons (HMIP), Ofsted, and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to review their expectations to ensure that prisons are inspected against a wider range of opportunities to promote health, wellbeing and inclusion through food, and to report in such a way that access to healthy food both via catering facilities and the canteen are consistently included in inspection findings (p.34).**

- **Independent Monitoring Boards (IMBs) are well-placed to improve to our understanding of the quality and quantity of food in prisons, perceptions of the menu, canteen and self-catering options, and the extent to which food is a focal point rather than a function (p.34).**
- **A cross-Committee inquiry on the role of food in prison by the Health and Social Care Committee and Justice Committee and for the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs Committee would provide helpful scrutiny of both the impact on prisons of the updated Government Buying Standards at a suitable period of time once they are implemented and the extent to which opportunities to make food a focal point are being maximised to improve prison regimes (p.34).**

Annex 1 - Expert Organisations participating in the Food Matters Roundtable Workshop

Butler Trust

Clinks

Do It Justice

Food Behind Bars

Food Matters

Garden Organic

Howard League

Independent Monitoring Boards

Inside Time

Royal Holloway, University of London

The Clink Charity

Think Through Nutrition

University of Plymouth

Women in Prison

Annex 2 – Glossary of key terms

This table is comprised of a list of words and acronyms which may be used within this report for reference.

BMI	Body Mass Index
CQC	Care Quality Commission
DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care
EFRA	Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs
GBSF	Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services
GOOP	Greener on the Outside
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
HMIP	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
HMP	His Majesty's Prison
HMPPS	His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
IMB	Independent Monitoring Board
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
NOMS	National Offender Management System
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
OHID	Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
PHE	Public Health England
PSI	Prison Service Instruction
WHO	World Health Organisation
YOI	Young Offenders Institute

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Food Matters was set up in 2004 to combat the inequalities in the food system. We create opportunities to bring about changes to see healthy, sustainable, fair food become a reality for everybody, every day.

Our work focusses on food system transformation through person centred action and advocacy. We aim to create food systems that enhance health and wellbeing, nourish the environment, reduce inequalities and promote social justice.

- We ensure people and communities are at the heart of food system transformation by using participatory approaches to take action at every level to empower people and make better food policy.
- We support people to develop skills, knowledge and confidence so they feel empowered to take control over decisions that affect their lives and their food choices.
- We believe that change happens when policy interventions align with people's ability to make change happen.

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Food Matters (Foundation) is a registered charity - No. 1178078