



# ANNUAL REPORT

**Review for the year ended 31  
March 2024**

# Foreward

In March 2024 Food Matters celebrated turning 20, a significant achievement improving food systems and enabling populations. From our beginnings drafting the UK first food strategy, we are proud to be part of a movement which has brought food policy to the forefront of public discussion and advocacy, as well as national and local policy. We have plans to celebrate these achievements through next year, including planning for the next 20.

This year we continued to participate in the Sustainable Food Places campaign focussed on the cost-of-living crisis, the end of the Household Support Fund, and the rising levels of food insecurity experienced by millions of families across the UK, where we emphasised the importance of taking a systems approach to food policy. Elsewhere our policy roundtable and briefing on prison food reform highlighted the need for and benefits of transformational change in what and how we provide food to those in custodial settings.

Food Matters is proud to have focused on increasing equity, diversity and inclusion throughout the food system, we undertook work both internally and through our work on the Sustainable Food Places programme. Food Matters was the first organisation in the UK to undertake the REDI (Race, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) process twice, developing a baseline for internal EDI (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) work in 2022, with a follow-up REDI review process this year. Although we have made good progress, as an organisation we recognise that there is much to do including work to demonstrate our changing approach and culture. This work will continue as a central theme of developing our EDI culture through the coming years. And we are delighted that our work with food partnerships across the SFP network embedding REDI principles has been described as ‘trailblazing’ by sector leaders.

Many years work gathering data about the value of food partnerships and food strategy work, culminated in the development of a state-of-the-art visualisation tool to help share and communicate this impact more widely. This interactive set of tools demonstrate the scope and scale of work being done across the SFP network and supporting our ongoing work towards food system transformation.

As we moved through the year Food Matters joined others in the sector to press for food system transformation policies and commitment across the political spectrum in the run up to the local elections and General Election. This included engaging with over 50 MPs at the Sustainable Food Places Day of celebration and action in parliament. We will be continuing working with sector partners to advocate for food system change.

This year Food Matters continued to offer our unique services to partners throughout the UK. Working to scale and embedding some of our project work including food partnership development and good food governance towards a food systems mentoring programme. Offering training and courses to build greater food skills and resilience in many settings. Digitization of elements of our food and criminal justice programme. We will also be developing our priorities and Theory of Change for the next 3 years.

Finally, we would like to thank all of our partners and staff who have contributed this year, as we look forward to another year of innovation and success.

**Tim Marsh**  
Chair of Food Matters Board of Trustees

## Trustees during the financial year covered by this report:

- Tim Marsh (Chair)
- Colin Havard (Treasurer)
- Kath Dalmeny
- Lindy Sharpe
- Charlie Powell



**F**ood Matters: campaigning for sustainable, fair food systems to create a better food future for all. We do this by working nationally and locally on our own projects and in partnership with other organisations, and at both strategic policy and community levels.

Our current areas of focus include:

**Transforming Food Systems** - Supporting the successful development of food partnerships to strengthen local food systems through embedding the principles of whole food systems work, driving innovation & best practice on all aspects of healthy and sustainable food. Delivered through the nationally significant and internationally recognised Sustainable Food Places programme, and food partnerships advice and support, and good food governance consultancy work.

**Food and Criminal Justice** – Working to see food as central to rehabilitation and recovery in the criminal justice system, enabling people to make better food choices to support their physical and mental wellbeing, and campaigning for prison food reform at policy level.

**Capacity Building** - Through innovative facilitation and engagement strategies at both national and local levels we help groups and communities navigate complex or divisive issues to reach consensus and empower individuals to actively participate in their food systems.



# Transforming Food Systems

## Sustainable Food Places

For more than 10 years Food Matters has worked alongside the food charities Sustain and the Soil Association to deliver the Sustainable Food Places (SFP) programme, nurturing a group of just 13 local food partnerships which has now grown into a prospering, UK-wide network of over 100 members.

**Food Matters works in partnership with Sustain and the Soil Association to deliver the nationally significant and internationally recognised Sustainable Food Places programme (SFP). The programme works to initiate and support local food partnerships, good food activism and healthy and sustainable food, so that these become an integral part of the institutional and social landscape of towns, cities, boroughs, districts and counties across the UK.**

**Food partnerships aim to bring stakeholders together to help demonstrate the connections between food, health, community, social equity, the environment and economic prosperity to build more sustainable food systems, and to facilitate food system transformational change.**

## Participatory community action

This year we stepped up our work supporting food partnerships to increase engagement and representation in their place through training workshops and a grants programme exploring the use of participatory processes. 11 food partnerships received grants to support their work on engaging their communities in conversations about food systems change.

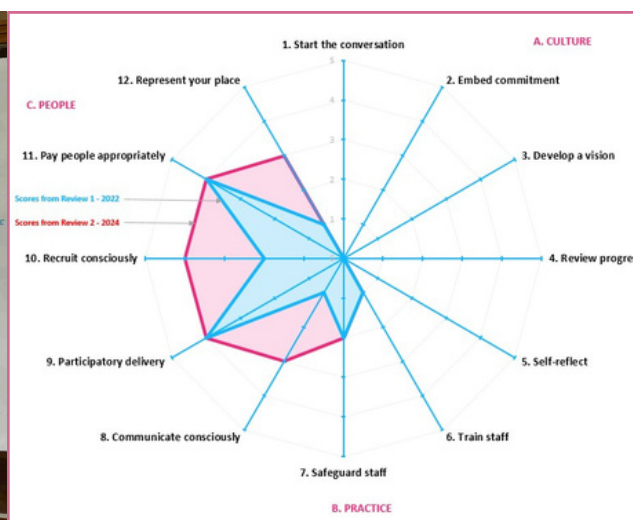
This also resulted in a host of case studies and resources to share good practice within the SFP network and beyond through the website, webinars and peer learning training sessions.

This year the PeerLink platform – developed and managed by Food Matters to connect SFP members with each other and share experience and good practice – continued to grow, providing invaluable peer-to-peer learning, including learning visits from Lincolnshire to Plymouth and the Tamar Valley and visits to the Open Food Network, Tamar Grow Local, The Good Food Loop, three food hubs and the Apricot Centre.



## REDI for Change: Race Equity Diversity and Inclusion

This has been a significant development year for our work on the Race, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion work (REDI) for SFP. Food Matters continued advocating the pilot projects to embed the principles of REDI into three SFP food partnerships using the REDI review tool. The tool has been refined this year following an internal REDI process with Food Matters staff and trustees. Food Matters is the first organisation in the UK to undertake the REDI process twice, developing a baseline for internal EDI work in 2022, with a follow-up REDI review process this year.



Our experiences from the pilots have been shared through case studies and new resources on the SFP

website and through training and learning webinars. Through a network consultation process Food Matters developed an anti-racism statement for the programme, which is available on the SFP website.

Towards the end of this year, we embarked on a series of workshop sessions, delivered by Food Matters and collaborating partner Animo Leadership, aimed at building capacity through baseline training, sharing best practice and culminating in the development of an anti-racism strategy for the SFP programme and network; this work will continue into next year.

*"SFP is trailblazing in its approach to this process and its serious commitment to this work".*

**- Kate Chester, Animo Leadership**

Learning from this work and about the REDI toolkit has spread wider this year, even finding its way to Victoria, Australia.

### About the REDI Review Tool

*'I've [ ] watched on YouTube a couple of recordings [of the REDI tool] on anti-racism in the food sector by SFP – both were brilliant and helpful for me as I consider VicHealth's future investments in the food system space (and who we must engage as part of our work).'*

**- Food System Co-ordinator,  
VicHealth, Melbourne, Australia**





## Growth of county food partnerships

Food Matters continued leading on the county food partnership working group, which included one-to-one food partnership meetings, co-ordinator inductions, grant support, and facilitating working group meetings. We gathered and collated evidence from the SFP county partnership working group for submission into the House of Lords Inquiry into the Future of Horticulture,

although the subsequent review was dropped by the then government. Food Matters and other leading food, health and farming charities continue making the case, and to press the government, for a Horticulture Strategy. The SFP network members provide the local evidence of need, and SFP is well placed to press for change at a national level.

## Making the Case – strategy, impact and evaluation

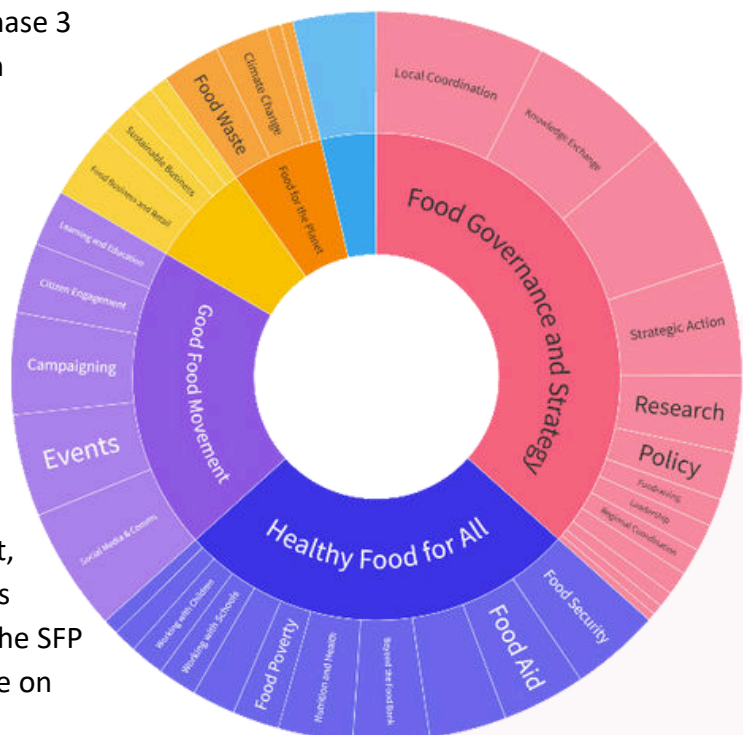
During our 10-year involvement with SFP, we have collected a huge amount of information on the work of food partnerships. Through surveys, consultations, interviews, reports and research studies, we have amassed a wealth of data covering what partnerships have done, what innovations they have led and what impact they have had.

This year has seen Food Matters take a lead role in developing a 'Making the Case' strategy for the SFP programme, identified as a strategic priority for the remainder of Phase 3 of the programme. This work focused on collecting, collating, and communicating existing data on the evidence of the impact of both local food partnerships and the SFP programme, supporting fundraising efforts, and driving policy change at a local and national level.

We also worked with partners across the SFP network to develop bespoke tools to capture and visualise this impact, creating a new open access food systems database that supports partnerships in the SFP network to capture and share knowledge on good practice and innovation.

We developed a state-of-the-art visualisation tool to help share and communicate this impact widely. These interactive tools demonstrate the scope and scale of work being done across the SFP network and provide a platform for exploring SFP impact data. Captured within this database are over 1200 case studies of partnership action, covering 33 areas of food systems impact.

These tools, the evidence database and the SFP Impact Hub were launched in January.



As a part of this new work area, we also increased our engagement with universities, academics and researchers across the UK and beyond, with the intention of sparking new, high-quality research exploring the impact of the programme. This has included involvement in multiple national research programmes,

including the UKRI Transforming Food Fund, the H3 consortium of food researchers, and the FoodSEquals project; as well as a number of international research projects, including the European Commission's FoodCLIC project and John Hopkins Food Policy Network in the US.

*'This is a phenomenal piece of work, I can only imagine the 100's of hours that have been spent putting it together. This is the best Xmas present I could have wished for as we try to justify our continuing existence here in Hull. Thank you so much to you and your team – it is going to be incredibly useful!'*

- Hull Food Partnership



## SFP awards into the future

The SFP awards are a fundamental part of the programme, demonstrating and celebrating the achievements and value of food partnership across the UK. This year the awards process underwent a full review, with the Food Matters team contributing to the redesign of the awards, through leading the participatory processes that were part of the network consultation.

One aim of the review was to streamline the process, making it easier and more transparent for SFP network members to participate and enable the SFP team to support more members to achieve awards. This year there were 7 silver and 15 Bronze award winners spanning the UK, from Plymouth to Glasgow.

## Celebrating our latest award winners and Members!





## Campaign work

This year we have been increasingly involved in the national SFP policy and advocacy work. A major campaign has focussed on the cost-of-living crisis, the end of the Household Support Fund, and the rising levels of food insecurity experienced by millions of families across the UK. We joined a national coalition of food campaign charities including Barnardo's, Trussell and IFAN (Independent Food Aid Network), to petition for policy interventions including retaining the Household Support Fund in the short term whilst reviewing welfare support systems in the long term.

This campaign highlighted the importance of taking a systems approach, such as the SFP framework, to provide the structure for local action to ensure healthy food for all. The campaign argued for:

- local food poverty action plans
- promoting Living Wage Employers and Living Wage Places
- removing barriers to breastfeeding
- promoting food access for older and disabled people
- universal free school meals for all ages
- improving the Healthy Start scheme by introducing auto-enrolment, increasing the value of payments and extending eligibility to more households, including those on No Recourse to Public Funds
- an overhaul of Universal Credit to cover the costs of everyday living.



This work included speaking at 'the future of crisis support' meeting - organised by End Furniture Poverty, Cash Perks, Greater Manchester Poverty Action and the Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN), - with 180 attendees, which received mainstream and social media coverage, including in the Big Issue. The Household Support Fund was later extended to March 2025.

## SFP 2025 and beyond

This year we contributed to strategic planning and management for the SFP network and programme beyond 2024, the final year of Phase 3 funding.

DONATION

DONATION



# Towards Good Food Governance

Food Matters works with food partnerships and other collaborative food organisations to embed core principles including representation, democratic accountability, transparency, inclusivity, generous leadership, to maintaining good food governance, fundamental to effective food systems transformational work.

## Wakefield



During this year we continued giving light-touch support to the fledgling good food partnership in Wakefield.

Working with stakeholders including Wakefield Council, we have been able to provide guidance and advice on good food governance, partnership development, navigating competing priorities, and building a coherent narrative, all working towards a launch event next year. We look forward to helping the partnership grow in the coming years.

## Southwark



Food Matters' work providing support to Southwark Food Action Alliance (SFAA) completed in June. We worked to help SFAA

become more financially resilient, which included supporting the steering group to position themselves as equal partners in the development of the food strategy as well as an important delivery partner. The food strategy, Good Food Southwark 2023-2026, which was launched this year, sets out five priorities for long-term action, including a good food partnership and a 'Right to Food' principle. Our work with SFAA also included helping to create a food systems identity, moving away from being regarded as solely an 'emergency food aid network', improving governance, and identifying potential income streams.

## Lambeth Food Partnership



Food Matters has continued providing tailored support to the Lambeth Food Partnership.

With funding we were able to recruit a Food Partnership Co-ordinator, which resulted in increased visibility and reach for the partnership, and greater capacity within the steering group to grow the partnership network. Work also included collaborating with Lambeth Public Health to deliver a Greater London Authority (GLA) funded Food Roots 2 programme which involved the development of a pilot project 'Food 5 Ways' in the Vassal and Coldharbour neighbourhood in Lambeth, based on the Pembroke House Walworth Neighbourhood Food Model, "... to build a strong and united neighbourhood using food as a catalyst for change through networks, connections and actions." Activities included planning workshops and a community consultation across the 5 Ways neighbourhood. Lambeth Heart is monitoring and evaluating the project to capture learning for the future.

An Affordable/Emergency Food working group has been set up within the partnership to share best practice and learning, and embed better signposting and training on wraparound support, including increasing uptake of Healthy Start. We also continued working on the internal structure of the Food Partnership to increase financial robustness and improve governance, diversity and participation.



## Food Roots 2

In a partnership with the Third Sector Investment Consultancy (TSIC), Sustain and First Love Foundation, we were awarded funding to deliver the learning element of the GLA Food Roots 2 grant programme, which will run up until June 2025. 21 successful food partnerships and food poverty alliances

received funding to pay for coordination time to work on building stronger partnerships and supporting strategic work on food insecurity. Throughout this year Food Matters has undertaken the training, facilitation, peer support and buddying elements of the programme.

Food Roots 2, a Greater London Authority funded programme offering financial support with a training, networking and peer support element to Food Partnerships and Food Poverty Alliances across London, delivering more robust and stronger partnerships and supporting strategic work on food insecurity.

## Building Good Food Infrastructure

### Greater Brighton food system infrastructure

This year we worked in partnership with Alex Britten-Zondani, food systems consultant, and the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership to identify potential food systems infrastructure investments that could be made across the Greater Brighton region. The work was funded through the Greater Brighton Economic Board (GBEB), which is made up of seven local authority areas (Brighton & Hove, Adur, Lewes, Crawley, Arun, Mid Sussex and Worthing), three main educational establishments (University of Brighton, University of Sussex and Chichester College Group) and four business partners (Adur & Worthing Business Partnership, Brighton and Hove Economic Partnership, the South Downs National Park and Coast-to-Capital LEP).

Over three months, the project team conducted research into potential investment

opportunities including: a new regional dynamic food procurement system; a new Greater Brighton sustainable food logistics depot; training and support programmes that would put local businesses at the forefront of circular economy practices; community supported agriculture; and community composting across Greater Brighton.

Taking a systems change approach, the final recommendations of the project were to combine these potential investments into one systems change project for the region – Greater Brighton: The Future of Food.

The report and associated recommendations were taken to the Greater Brighton Economic Board meeting in July 2023 and will feed into a Greater Brighton Food Plan due to be published next year.







## East Sussex county-wide approach to food systems working



Following the success of the East Sussex Food Mapping work undertaken last year, Food Matters continued working with the four food partnership in East Sussex: 3VA (Voluntary Action in Eastbourne, Lewes District and Weald), SCDA (Sussex Community Development Association), HVA (Hastings Voluntary Action) and Eastbourne Food Partnership CIC to deliver a seven-month programme of identified priority actions for the region, which included co-ordinating and growing the 'Good Food for East Sussex' network (over 255 members).

Food Matters also led the development of a longer-term strategy which included a 'strategy foundry' event. This work focussed on two shared priorities: improving food in schools and public sector institutions, and supporting the local food economy. Working collaboratively with the local food partnerships we were then able to develop a 'Good Food for East Sussex' campaign toolkit and a county-wide strategy launch.

Food Matters also led an event in March connecting suppliers and buyers, which was well received with over 50 attendees. The result of all this positive work has led the East

Sussex food partnerships to consider the possibility of going for an SFP gold award collectively.

Through this work we were able to demonstrate the added value of taking a food partnership approach, and this resulted in East Sussex County Council committing £250,000 long-term funding for the local food partnerships in East Sussex.

*'Being part of Good Food East Sussex has helped enormously in the recent relaunch of Rother Food Partnership. Already a trusted brand and with a wealth of knowledge and skills residing in the partner organisations, Good Food East Sussex, along with Food Matters, has enabled Rother Food Partnership to get off to a really strong start. It is great to be part of such a supportive, collaborative food partnership alliance.'*

*The work that Food Matters has done to help create such a strong food partnership alliance in East Sussex will undoubtedly be a huge benefit to all the partnerships, not just now, but in years to come.'*

**- Liz Maynard, Rother Voluntary Action**



# Food & Criminal Justice (F&CJ)

This year we were awarded a two-year grant from the Ministry of Justice to continue our work to support women in, or at risk of coming into contact with, the criminal justice system.



*'Good layout. Everyone can relate to the topics covered.'*

*Her Wellbeing readers' feedback*

*'Thank you for publishing Her Wellbeing as it's a great way to learn and get the tools for a healthier mind and body. It's short enough to really take in the information.'*

*'It's relevant to us and its suggestions for making the most of food/wellbeing inside.'*



## Her and His Wellbeing

After four years of print copies, this year we have worked with digital teams at several prisons to pilot digital, interactive versions of our health and wellbeing publications *Her Wellbeing* and *His Wellbeing*, which provide evidence-based information to support wellbeing, with a food focus, to people serving custodial sentences. The prototype digital magazines were produced by the prison estate's Creator Centres, which are training workshops for prisoners. This has meant our reach and impact have expanded from food, diet and health content provision to include contributing to employment skills development through the Creator Centres' work.

All 26 back issues of *Her Wellbeing* and 8 issues of *His Wellbeing* are available in PDF format to people residing in the 18 prisons, where everyone has access to an in-cell Launchpad laptop. Additionally, 8 issues of an interactive format have been uploaded onto two digital platforms with access from shared computers in all 122 prisons in England and Wales, with a potential readership of the whole prison population of 88,000.

Four hard-copy editions of *Her Wellbeing* have been published and distributed across the women's estate reaching 3000+ women. The issues included feedback and tips from readers and featured topics including: blood pressure, exercise and diet; Premenstrual Dysphoria Disorder; the prison canteen; protein and exercise; mindfulness; and no cook recipes.



## The Feel Good Food Club



This year we have also continued to explore the potential to develop an interactive version of our in-cell learning course, The Feel Good Food Club, using learning platform Moodle to roll it out

across the prison estate. We have produced a pilot version of the first module and continue to receive feedback. This year our course has been used as a flagship model to demonstrate the use of Moodle in enrichment courses for prisoners.

*'[the Feel Good Food Club distance learning course] was very informative and useful in a practical way, thank you.'*

- Course participant

## Food Matters in prisons



After 12 months of research and evidence-gathering, this year we published a far-reaching state of food in the prison system, Food Matters in Prisons: A briefing. The report looks at the state of prison food systems now, and where they might be improved to benefit people in prison. It examines government policies relating to prison food, including procurement, nutrition and sustainability, and looks at what research exists to make a case for improved food being better

for prisoners as well as the public purse. The report highlights examples of good practice, not only in the UK but worldwide, and makes recommendations relating to what opportunities exist for stakeholders and the voluntary sector to work together to improve all aspects of prison food.

The report was well received garnering attention, shares, comments and reposts across social media platforms, with over 6000 impressions on X/Twitter alone.

*'It was a pleasure to contribute to this report and it should be priority reading for anyone with an interest in / responsibility for improving our prisons.'*

- Professor Rosie Meek PhD CPsychol AFBPsS

*'Food Matters worked with me and HMP Wandsworth when we tried to do prison reform ... and did some excellent work. Their full report hits on the key reasons why food matters in prisons more now than ever before. I urge you to read it and support Food Matters in trying to change the system!'*

- Ian Bickers, Founder of Unlocking Justice and Former Prison Group Director

The report also received good coverage in the mainstream media, including articles by 10 national networks and publications including Inside Time, Public Sector Catering and The Grocer. We were able to expand on particularly important issues covered by the report with blogs including 'Prison Food Procurement: Benefitting Prisoners and the Public Purse';

## Policy work

Our Director was asked to present project findings from our Innovations Grant 2019 project to the Innovations Grant Governance Panel in September. And University of Central Lancaster (UCLan), the academic team responsible for the independent project evaluation, presented their findings at the Nordic Health Promotion Research Conference in June 2023.

## Inside Time

This year we were approached to produce a monthly nutrition and recipe column in Inside Time newspaper, a charity-published monthly newspaper available to all men and women serving custodial sentences. We have produced 12 columns this year, covering lowering blood pressure, liver health, protein alternatives, controlling appetite, and why eating breakfast is a good thing.

insidetime January 2024 [www.insidetime.org](http://www.insidetime.org)



### Food for thought

**Helen Sandwell**

Food in prison is an emotive subject for those inside. Does it leave you still feeling hungry, or does it pile on the pounds? Will it trigger an eating disorder or other trauma-related behaviours? When you pick it up from the trolley, has it gone cold, is it all dried up, does it look and smell edible, is it contaminated, or is there even any left? All these considerations can leave you feeling pretty negative about food. At its worst, food can even threaten security.

Over the past year, Food Matters has organised roundtable workshops to talk about prison food.

be bothered to put it onto your plate in a respectable manner. So now it looks like absolute slop."

"If there's ever any sort of trouble in this prison, a riot or any sort of disruption or anything, it's going to be over the food - the portions they're serving up and the type of food."

But it shouldn't be like this. Food could and should be a power for good, in prisons as well as outside. Our report documents where food already has an important role - not just the food that's made in the kitchens and the food brought from the canteen, but elsewhere within prison systems. Cooking on the wings is an outlet for creativity, a means of expressing who you are, an opportunity for social interaction and a place to learn new life skills. In the kitchens, especially those which supply restaurants and bakeries, food provides a means of learning workplace skills which can mean employment and an end to prison revolving doors. (If only all necessary skills could be part of a service qualification and similarly lead to employment!)

In farms and gardens, food production is not only a means of skills-learning, but also for many, the outdoor, physical, and social aspects of horticulture provide a valuable tool in managing mental health. Eating a healthy

diet can also help keep you physically and mentally healthy; better still if it's appealing to eat. Inside Time has reported that in 2022/23, prisons spent £2.68 per prisoner per day on meals. HMPPS currently buys in five million pigs and sausage rolls, and 300 tonnes of dried pasta, each year. All of this could potentially be made in-house. Examples of food production in prisons include pig-making at Borewys, Norway's and Stocken; and a bakery at Lindholmen.

Our report looks at prison food systems and how they might be improved. We examine government policies relating to prison food, and what research exists. We also highlight examples of good practice, not only in the UK but worldwide. And we make recommendations of what opportunities exist for HMPPS, the Inspectorate, Monitoring Board, and voluntary sector to work together to improve all aspects of prison food.

People convicted of crimes go to jail as their punishment, and food should not be part of that punishment. On the contrary, food should be part of the solution to crime, forming an integral part of a rehabilitative environment. There are some excellent examples of where this is happening - we highlight some of these in our report, and a few are featured here.

'Food Literacy – the Forgotten Skill'; and The Role of Food within a Rehabilitative Culture'.

We are planning a series of webinars focusing on aspects of the report, the first of which will take place early next year and will focus on the 'Role of Food within a Rehabilitative Culture'.

### Inside Cookery

## Lowering the pressure

In Inside Time's monthly recipe column, a prison nutritionist provides ideas for creating your own tasty and healthy dishes.



**Helen Sandwell**

High blood pressure isn't just a condition of the elderly. In these times, with increasing obesity levels, sedentary lifestyles and highly processed diets, it's potentially an issue for everyone. There's a particular risk in prison, where weight gain is common and exercise is limited. Persistent high blood pressure puts you at risk of heart attacks, strokes and kidney failure and the difficulty is that it's not something visible to the eye. That's why it's important to get your blood pressure checked regularly.

There are some things you can do to reduce your risk of high blood pressure whilst in prison: do whatever exercise you can, eat more healthily and reduce your stress with mindfulness meditation or yoga. That said, although most exercise is good, weightlifting should be avoided if you have high blood pressure. Isometric exercise like the plank and wall squats are particularly good (see latest issues of His Wellbeing and Her Wellbeing for more information).

Reducing salt is recommended, so it's best to leave out salty foods like salami and other processed meats. Where foods are salty but otherwise form part of a balanced diet, such as cheese, and smoked oily fish like mackerel, it's better to eat in small amounts or eat less often. Eating lots of fruit and vegetables is really important in helping keep your blood pressure healthy. In studies, beetroot has been highlighted as having good blood pressure reducing properties.

This recipe contains smoked mackerel, containing healthy omega-3 fats, but would be on the 'eat occasionally' list for salt content. The saltiness of the mayonnaise is reduced by thinning with yoghurt and water.



**Beetroot and mackerel salad**

- 1 fillet of mackerel - smoked mackerel kept back from a meal, or tinned.
- 1 portion of couscous - made up according to packet instructions.
- 1 red onion - chopped.
- 1 medium beetroot - in 1cm cubes.
- 10cm chunk of cucumber - sliced.
- 2 teaspoons mayonnaise.
- 4 teaspoons natural yogurt.

- 1. Mix together the cooled couscous, red onion, beetroot and cucumber.
- 2. For the dressing, mix together the mayonnaise and yoghurt, then thin with teaspoons of water to drizzling consistency.
- 3. Plate up. Place the couscous mix on a plate, with mackerel on top and dressing drizzled over.

Helen Sandwell is the Inside & Out project lead at Food Matters, which produces the Her Wellbeing and His Wellbeing newsletters. Both are available digitally via Virtual Campus.



## F&CJ work in community settings

We continued publishing and growing our audience for Her Wellbeing in the community, which this year was sent out to over 100 organisations and recipients.

This year we have worked with Woking Women's Support Centre to deliver a range of food and wellbeing courses, focusing on staff training to support the people they work with as well as on how to support their own wellbeing.

We have had ongoing conversations with several women's support centres, including One Small Thing's Hope Street, a women's residential unit in Southampton, and Woking Women's Centre, to plan a partnership programme delivering a multi-year portfolio of food and mental wellbeing courses, training and peer-learning programmes.

# Capacity Building

## Community cookery: MoodAF



With funding from Chalk Cliff Trust, Awards for All England and Sussex Community Grants, we have been able to run a year-long 'MoodAF' programme working with

organisations supporting young people in Brighton, Hove and East Sussex.

We run weekly sessions with young people experiencing trauma and disadvantage by working in partnership with Impact Initiatives, the Young Peoples' Centre, Salvation Army young mother and baby service, Allsorts and The Hummingbird Project.

We collaborated with the Wild Mind Project and the Community Kitchen in Brighton and Hove to deliver the MoodAF sessions, which alongside cooking included activities on gut health, mindful eating, harvesting and foraging, cooking on an open fire, arts and other creative outdoor activities.

*'The trips were fantastic and it was clear the young people (yp) had a brilliant time taking part in these, particularly the community kitchen session as this was very hands on and they used initiative to cook meals and work together, this was a great way for the yp to connect. [some] had never met prior to this session and this opened up a line of communication between the two that they built upon throughout the session which was fantastic to see.'*

**- Young Peoples' Centre staff**

This programme, as with all our work, is adapted to the needs of the participants. This meant some of the courses also included formal qualifications such as AQA (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance) which contributed towards the participants' eligibility for social housing. Participants attending the sessions also attended a parallel course teaching baby massage funded by the MoodAF project.



## Supporting young people into the sector

This year we have been able to support a Masters student studying Communicating Health Messages on a work placement. The student assisted on the delivery and preparation of MoodAF sessions and also supported staff to deliver other food and wellbeing training sessions, including social workers' wellbeing session as part of World Social Work Day.

*'I just wanted to say, thank you so much for all the time and effort you are taking with me. I really appreciate it. It has been the best thing I have done on the course so far and I am feeling inspired to work in this area after graduating!'*

**- Food Matters Placement student**

## Training



The Food and Wellbeing team delivered a bespoke Carers UK Healthathon webinar for Carers Active April campaign, which received good feedback from the attendees and Carers UK.

We aim to develop more bespoke training programmes in the next year.

*'I'm just emailing on behalf of the whole team to say a massive thank you for the brilliant session you delivered at the Healthathon and all the work you put-in in preparation. It was such an informative and engaging session and covered so much. It was great to have so much interaction with the attendees throughout and brilliant to see that positive shift when people were asked about their confidence in food for physical activity. I also loved the way you did the demonstration - it was so clear.'*

**- Carers UK staff member**

## World Social Work Day 2024

We worked with East Sussex Social Work Team to design and deliver sessions on food and wellbeing as part of their World Social Work Day wellbeing programme of activities. These sessions explored the stressful aspects of social work – supporting traumatised people – and the impact that has on staff habits around food, and how to talk about these issues with both adult and young clients.

## Facilitation

Food Matters uses innovative facilitation and participation approaches, both nationally and locally. Facilitation and participation are methods of working with groups – or rather, methods of enabling groups to work – in ways that respect and include all voices, negotiate complex or divisive issues, and achieve consensual resolutions. We put these skills to use in developing and facilitating workshops and major events for





our own and our partners' projects. We also train others in facilitation and participation skills, by running training sessions, speaking at events, and supporting organisations to develop facilitation skills within their existing workforce.

This year Food Matters has worked with a range of local and national organisations, including:

- Training for Sustain: the alliance for food and farming staff on Participatory Workshop Facilitation

- Facilitation of the Strategy Away Day for Brighton and Hove Food Partnership
- Facilitation of a series of focus groups with Brighton and Hove Food Partnership to learn about the impact of disability on people's ability to access the food they need.

*I thought that it was an excellent session with wonderful facilitation from you (now I can say, as always!)*

- Session participant

