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# **Evaluation of 'Catering for Health'**

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## **Executive Summary**

The FSAW required research to assess the awareness of Catering for Health in Wales and gain an insight into its usage and impact amongst chef lecturers in Wales.

Specifically, the objectives of the research were to:

- Assess the awareness of the resource
- Explore usage by the target audience
- Explore views on usefulness of the guide with both chef lecturers and students
- Demonstrate evidence of the effectiveness of the guidance
- Identify barriers/limitations to use and implementation of the guide
- Explore lecturers perceptions of impact on student motivation and skills in healthier catering practice
- Inform further developmental work by the FSA Wales

This report contains a technical description of the research, an executive summary, a commentary on the findings and the tabulations arising from the survey.

# **1. Introduction and Background**

Research funded by MAFF demonstrated that nutrition training improved caterer's attitudes and enhanced motivation towards the provision of healthier menus. Despite the recognition of a need for training in healthier catering practices, most students studying for catering related qualifications in the UK received little or no teaching about nutrition.

'Catering for Health' was developed initially by the British Nutrition Foundation for the Department for Health and the Food Standards Agency in England to fill the training gap in healthier catering practices. It was later adapted by FSA Wales and endorsed by the Welsh Assembly Government to fit the Welsh context before being launched in May 2002.

It is targeted at chef lecturers and designed to help them incorporate healthy eating principles into their NVQ teaching. The end result of this resource is the delivery, to the industry, of newly qualified chefs, equipped with the skill and knowledge base to appropriately offer healthier menus and thereby contribute to improving the nation's health by driving up nutritional standards.

## **2. Methodology**

The research consisted of two parts, firstly a quantitative telephone survey of chef lecturers in Wales, then follow-up depth interviews with chef lecturers and catering students.

FSAW supplied details of 32 colleges or campuses (with separate contact information). These colleges were then contacted to establish firstly if they offered any catering courses, and if catering courses were offered, the names and contact details of the chef lecturers at the college. Catering courses were offered at 20 different locations, covering a total of 18 separate colleges. Across these colleges, 60 chef lecturers were identified. The telephone survey was conducted between 14th and 23rd October 2003 by telephone interviewers using Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing, using fully structured questionnaires pre-agreed with FSAW. A total of 47 interviews with chef lecturers were completed, including at least one lecturer from each of the 20 colleges or campuses offering catering courses.

Following this survey, depth interviews were conducted with 5 of the lecturers who had used the Catering for Health guide and 9 paired depth interviews were conducted with their students. These depth interviews were conducted in person and lasted approximately 40-45 minutes, using topic guides agreed with FSAW.

### 3. Results

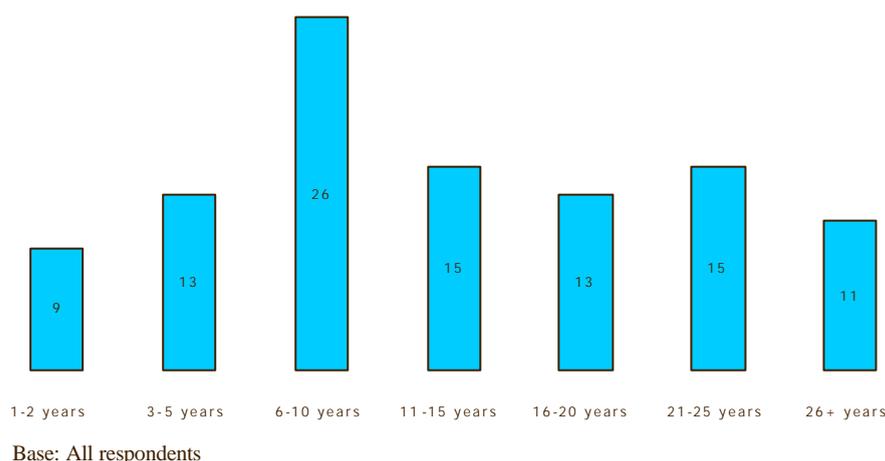
#### 3.1 Telephone Survey

##### 3.1.1 Background

Of the 18 colleges offering catering courses, the main courses available at the colleges were an NVQ course (all of the colleges), a BTEC course (offered by 9 colleges), a City and Guilds course (offered by 9 colleges), an HND course (offered by 3 colleges) and an ABC course (offered by 2 colleges).

The majority of respondents had a great deal of experience as a chef lecturer, with over half (53%) having been working as a chef lecturer for 11 years or more and a further 26% having been a chef lecturer for between 6 and 10 years.

Figure 3.1.1: Time lecturing  
(% of chef lecturers)

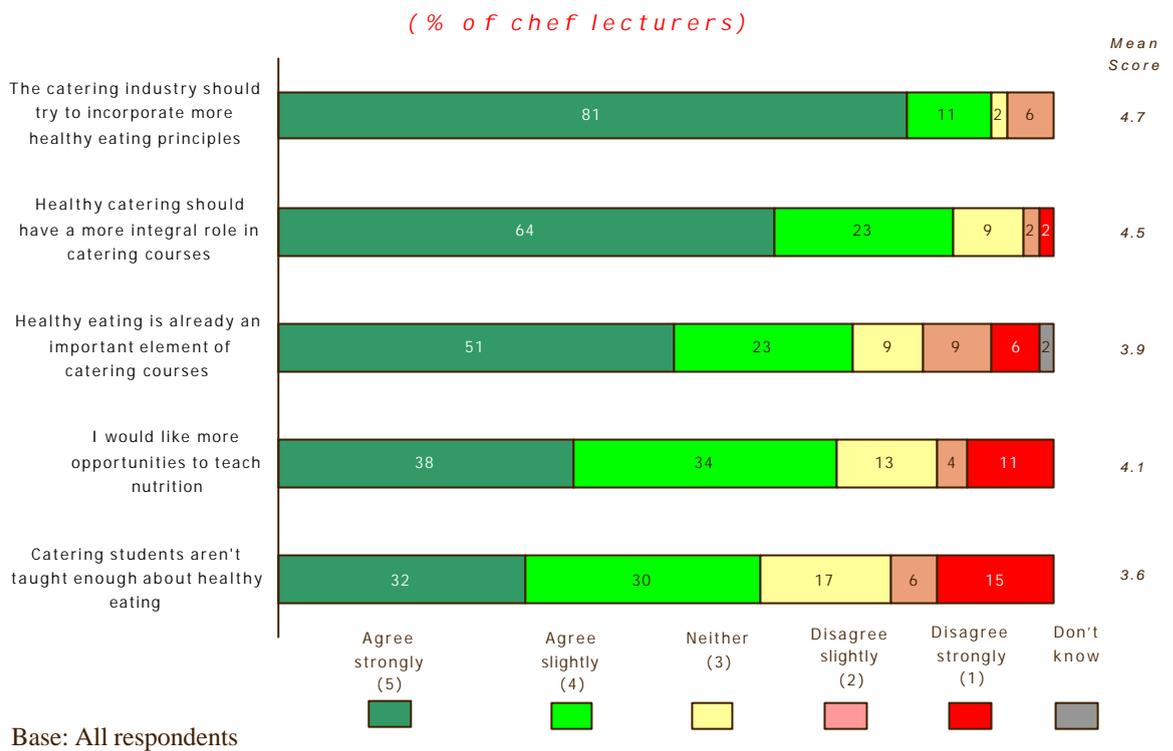


##### 3.1.2 Attitudes to healthy eating

All the chef lecturers were asked how strongly they agreed with a number of statements relating to healthy eating. Generally their responses show a positive attitude towards healthy eating and a willingness to teach it, with 81% of lecturers agreeing strongly that ‘the catering industry should try to incorporate more healthy eating principles’.

Most lecturers agreed that ‘healthy eating is already an important part of catering courses’, with just over half (51%) agreeing strongly with this statement. However, they also think that it should be more important, as evidenced by their agreement (with 64% agreeing strongly) that ‘healthy catering should have a more integral role in catering courses’, and 38% also agreed strongly that they ‘would like more opportunities to teach nutrition’, with a further 34% agreeing slightly with this statement. Around a third (32%) also agreed strongly that ‘catering students are not taught enough about healthy eating’, with 30% agreeing slightly.

Figure 3.1.2: Attitudes to healthy eating

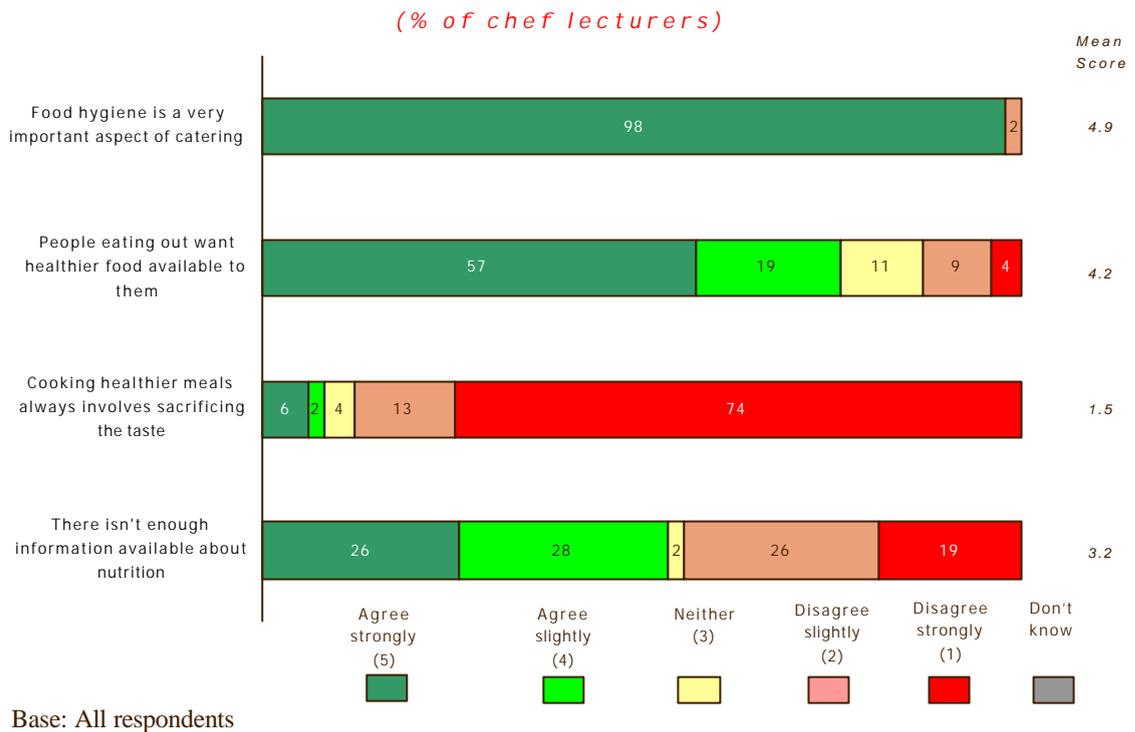


Whilst attitudes to healthy eating are positive, it does not seem to be considered to be as important to catering as food hygiene, with all but one lecturer agreeing strongly that food hygiene is a very important aspect of catering.

Lecturers also felt there was a demand for healthier food from the public, with 57% agreeing strongly that ‘people eating out want healthier food available to them’. Encouragingly, the majority did not feel that cooking healthier food necessarily means compromising on the taste of the food, with around three quarters (74%) disagreeing strongly that ‘cooking healthier meals always involves sacrificing the taste’.

When it came to the issue of availability of information on nutrition, there was a split of opinions, with just over half of the lecturers (54%) agreeing either strongly or slightly that there was not enough information available, whilst 45% disagreed either strongly or slightly with this statement (see Figure 3.1.3 overleaf).

Figure 3.1.3: Attitudes to healthy eating (Continued)



Generally, those lecturers who had been lecturing for 10 years or more showed a slightly more positive attitude to healthy eating than those who had been lecturing for a shorter period of time, as evidenced by the table below:

Statement	Time lecturing	
	Less than 10 years Mean score	10 years or more Mean score
The catering industry should try to incorporate more healthy eating principles	4.5	4.8
People eating out want healthier food available to them	4.0	4.3
Catering students aren't taught enough about healthy eating	3.2	3.9
Cooking healthier meals always involves sacrificing the taste	1.8	1.3

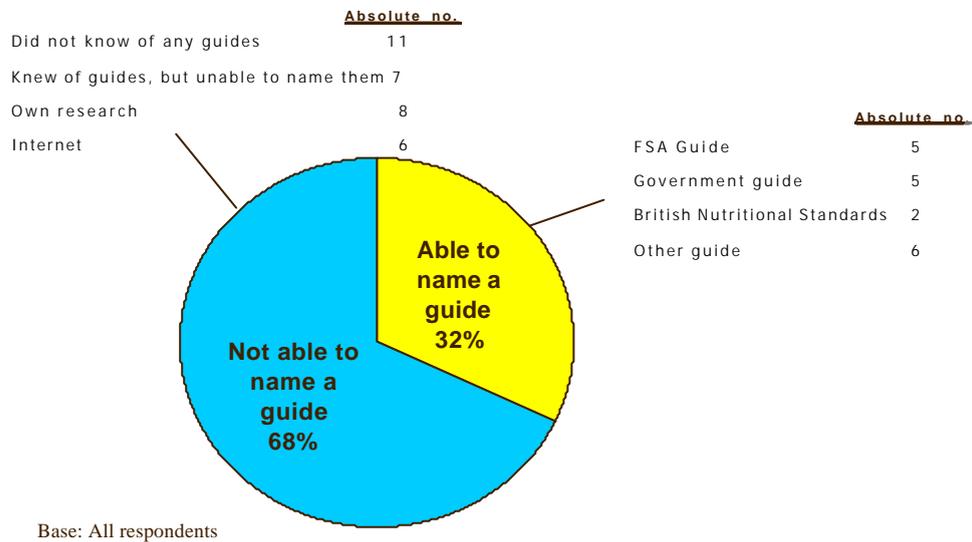
However, those who had been lecturing for 10 years or more were less likely to agree that there is not enough information available on nutrition (with a mean score of 3.0 compared with 3.3), presumably as they have had longer to build up their information on the subject.

### 3.1.3 Awareness of Catering for Health

To test spontaneous awareness of the Catering for Health guides, lecturers were firstly asked to name any guides they could think of about healthy eating and nutrition on an unprompted basis. Around two thirds of lecturers (68%) could not spontaneously name any guides available to them, with 11 lecturers (out of the total of 47) saying they did not know of any guides at all, 7 claiming to know of guides but being unable to remember the name, 8 saying they use their own research rather than a specific guide and 6 saying they use the Internet.

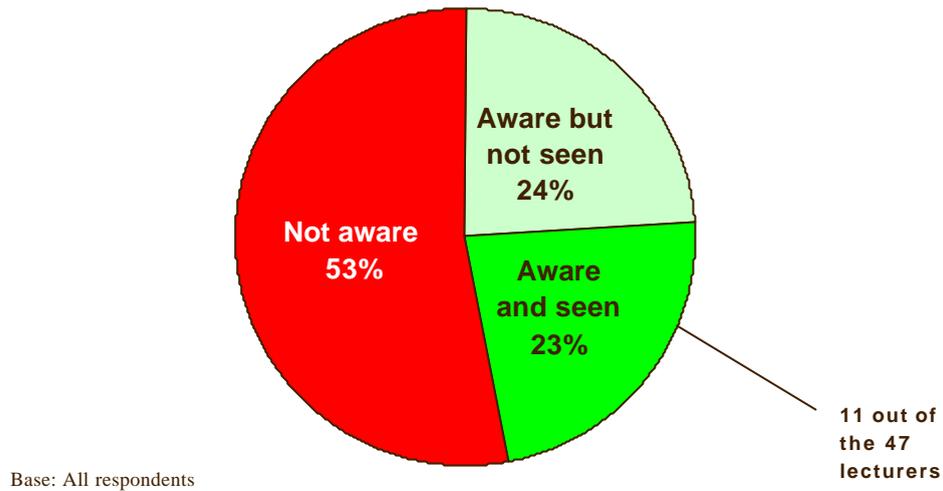
Amongst the remaining third of lecturers who were able to name a guide (32%), 5 mentioned the FSA guide, 5 mentioned the Government guide, 2 mentioned the British Nutritional Standards and 6 named other individual guides. However whilst the FSA was mentioned, there were no specific mentions of Catering for Health by name.

Figure 3.1.4: Awareness of guides on healthy eating and nutrition - Unprompted



Respondents were then asked whether they had ever heard of the Catering for Health guide. Just under half of the lecturers said they had heard of it. Those who had heard of it were also asked if they had ever actually seen a copy. Around half of those who had heard of the guide had also seen it, this equates to 11 lecturers in total.

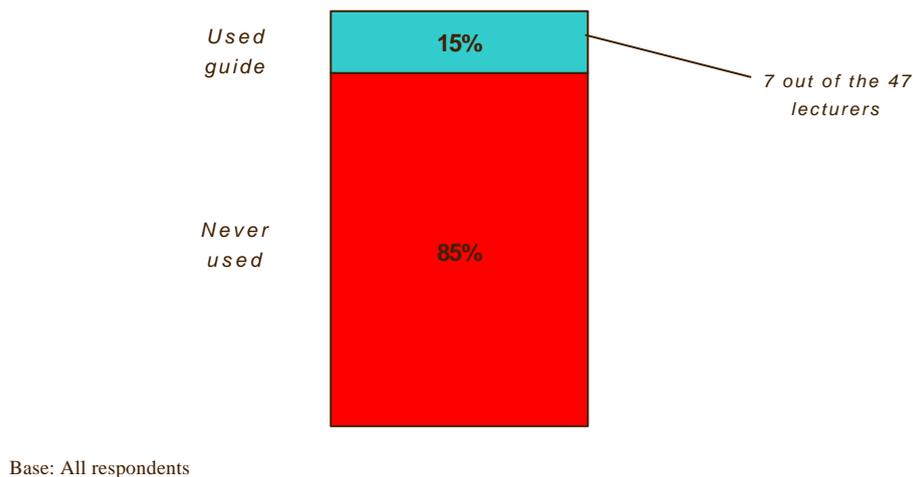
Figure 3.1.5: Awareness of Catering for Health Guide - Prompted (with name)



### 3.1.4 Usage of Catering for Health

When those lecturers who had seen the Catering for Health guide were asked if they had ever used it, 7 of the lecturers said that they had. This means that of all the lecturers surveyed, 15% had ever used the guide. The low usage levels seem to be as a result of the guide not reaching the lecturers (i.e. lack of awareness) rather than a lack of interest in the guide, as around two thirds of those who have seen a copy of the guide have used it to some extent (7 out of 11 lecturers).

Figure 3.1.6: Usage of Catering for Health



Those who had used the guide were asked what they had used the guide for. 4 lecturers said they had used it when teaching practical sessions, 3 had used it when teaching theory, 3 had used it when setting assignments, 3 used it for students to refer to, 2 used it for lesson planning and 2 used it for background information.

## 3.2 Lecturer Depths

### 3.2.1 Background

All of the depth interviews were conducted with lecturers who had used the Catering for Health guide. The five chef lecturers interviewed were from different colleges across Wales and had all worked in the catering industry before gaining their teaching qualifications. They were all experienced lecturers, with the main courses they taught being Food Preparation and Cooking, and Hospitality and Catering for NVQ qualifications. One of the lecturers had been involved with the design of the guide, and so had a more personal perspective.

### 3.2.2 Healthy eating education

Lecturers were asked about healthy eating education in general and the form that this takes at their college. Healthy eating and nutrition is largely not taught on a formal basis and is not a main requirement of the catering courses. There are elements of some courses (such as the City and Guilds course) that have a healthy eating certificate and where students have to answer questions on allergies and dietary requirements.

Healthy eating principles and nutrition are taught within different and varied sections of the course and therefore it is taught on an informal, ad hoc basis. The degree to which it is emphasised appears to be dependent on the lecturer and how much they choose to incorporate healthy eating within their teaching and practical work. All the lecturers however believed healthy eating and nutrition to be important aspects of their catering instruction (even though as will be seen later there are restrictions to the amount they can cover on the topic).

*“(healthy eating education) is not visible but it is taken into account”*

*“We adapt menus on a regular basis. The recipes in Practical Cookery are high fat and high sugar recipes so we often cut those down on a practical basis within the kitchen...it’s really a hands on, individual approach. Each chef will work in an individual manner and the student picks up on the process. The students benefit from that, I think everyone has got a different idea about healthy eating and catering”*

*“We deal with nutrition really only if it comes along. We have a coeliac here so the students know they’re not able to eat wheat products. If we didn’t have one they wouldn’t know what a coeliac is”*

*“Nutrition will be there 3-4 times on an identified basis then another 30 times on an ad hoc basis”*

Lecturers felt that healthy eating education needed to start earlier than the age of 16 when students came to college, as by the time they start on the catering course, they have formed their own ideas about healthy eating and their own dietary behaviour and food choices have already been established.

*“Healthy eating doesn’t start at the age of 16”*

*“The problem we have with students in catering is that they haven’t had a proper diet at home...so it’s very difficult for us to educate and try and change their views on their own diets...it may be that it should be targeted as GCSE level at schools”*

*“Young people 16+, come straight from school, they like to browse so they’ve either got a chocolate bar or a can of pop in each hand, and to sit down for a proper meal is a bit of a novelty. So within this catering department we try to provide healthy options”*

The main way in which healthy eating education was taught on these courses was on a practical level for example when working on recipes and deciding about menus. All five lecturers believed that if students are able to put theory into practice within their cooking, then they are much more likely to retain the information.

*“The hands on approach is very good. We’ve got a party of coeliacs in over Christmas so we’ve had to write a menu around that”*

*“It’s up to us (in the kitchen) with our cooking.... we try here to put a healthy alternative on the menu. We use ‘Practical Cookery’ but we find we change some of the recipes for example to make a roux they say use 1lb butter but we say use half”*

*“Our students are more aware of the practical when it’s hands on...the majority are not academic students...the theory is more difficult to retain and concentrate on”*

*“My concern is that they (students) put the practical side of it into their cooking...if I can get them to apply things I’ll do that as much as possible. I’m less concerned about the stats”*

*“We look at different ways of preparing food and ask students to compare frying to perhaps slow roasting...getting them to think practically rather than saying oh no that’s all bad”*

### **3.2.3 Usage of the Catering for Health guide**

All the lecturers selected for the depth interviews had made use of the guide to some extent. Some consistent themes emerged regarding the use made of the guide. Lecturers do not use the guide on a daily basis for lesson planning. The guide is used largely as a reference document and as additional information for students. A particular section mentioned was the one on special dietary requirements because this is a curriculum requirement and students are assessed on this.

*“It’s more of an information guide pack which people pinch things out of”*

*“I’ve used it but not a lot...if there’s something I need to look up I’ll look in there – a reference”*

The guide is rarely given to students in its entirety but sections are photocopied and given by lecturers as handouts. The students would not be expected to read the guide fully.

*“If you gave this to a student they’d probably get 3 pages into it. If you gave it to a member of staff they would skim it which is what I did when I got it”*

*“From a catering point of view it’s easy for us to understand and follow. As far as students go I wouldn’t give it out to them because it’s too complex for them”*

As may be expected given the experience of the lecturers, the information was not new to them and they already had access to the information from other sources.

*“There’s nothing really that fantastically new that we don’t already know, it’s just that (healthy eating) it’s not been in fashion”*

### **3.2.4 Opinions of the guide**

Aspects of the guide felt to be **positive** by the lecturers were:

The fact that it was a designed especially for those in catering (which was different to other information sources used)

*“The main thing that did appeal to me was it leaned on the people who did the cooking. It tries to change people’s methods and how they’re thinking in the industry which is excellent really”*

The fact that the guide contained helpful (if not new) sections of information to them as lecturers, which they could incorporate within their teaching.

*“It’s quite easy to use. The things I’ve taken out are based around the practical side. What I do is condense it all down to 1 page, to use as a handout and teaching aid for myself”*

The guide was said to have useful information and nothing lacking in terms of content.

*“As far as I’m concerned it’s easy reading and quite informative as well... as background information”*

*“As a lecturer I’m happy with it – its easy to read, there’s bright colours that draw your eye. The information is good with key points for students”*

The fact that it came from the FSA, which meant added confidence in it. The FSA was perceived to be an authoritative source.

*“They’re (FSA) the body aren’t they, they’re ‘the man’ as it were... like the Health and Safety Executive for health and safety”*

*“I think that having it endorsed by the FSA is extremely important – the fact it’s been put together by professional people”*

*“At the end of the day we’re all working together, and if we can get it all working in one line it’d be even easier”*

When asked for any **criticisms** they might have of the guide, or suggestions of how it could be improved, the main comments made by lecturers were that the guide does not have a direct impact on students because it is not something that they would be given to them. This is because of the types of information and language contained within the guide, which was felt to be too complicated for students of this ability. In particular the graphs and statistics were not areas that the student would fully understand and retain.

*“Looking at some of the students we get in catering who are pretty low level this isn’t pretty to read – it’s too difficult for them”*

*“For some of the foundation course students the reading age is below 10”*

*“This is far too complex for our students. They have a major issue with key skills anyway and understanding basic figures”*

*“It would frighten one or two, it just looks like graphs”*

It was felt that the distribution of the guide could be improved. Although the guide was sent to the relevant department, it was not sent directly to the relevant named individuals within the department and so was dependent on the guide being successfully distributed internally. Other information sources and publishers do send information on books directly.

*“If it hadn’t been given to me I wouldn’t know about it. It was passed down to me by the Assistant Principle. Publishers send us stuff or we get a promotional CD or e-mail from a company”*

*“It would be better if it came to me directly rather than the Head of Catering – if it stipulated a name on there”*

In the main, lecturers said they were happy with the format and layout of the guide and some commented on it being an attractive, colourful, handy sized document. One lecturer however felt that the layout and in particular the pictures were old fashioned and could be modernised. Another lecturer felt that more pictures were needed as students react better to visual aids.

*“The pictures are very 1950s style, they could be updated. Could be a bit more glossy”*

*“If there are a few little pictures it gives everyone a chance, no matter how big a high flyer they are, you tend to remember pictures/images you see more than the written words”*

It was also felt that the information in the guide repeated itself, which might have been a symptom of the fact that there were so many authors.

*“The one thing I did want to say is there is a lot of repetition in there. If I had any comments from a detrimental point of view it would be the repetition”*

### **3.2.5 Barriers to usage**

The main reasons given by lecturers for not using the guide more often were:

The dearth of time within the curriculum dedicated to teaching healthy eating / nutrition

*“The curriculum has changed, the course is only 21 hours a week”*

*“It’s just one small part of what we do really – simple as that...it’s got its place – 5% of what we teach, maybe less than that. To do more on it is unnecessary really. There’s so much to teach – has to be a certain amount on hygiene, safety etc”*

*“There is (within the course guidelines) fat, fibre, salt... it’s very basic. That’s all they have because the biggest percentage (of the course) is product knowledge...we don’t get to talk about nutrients, carbohydrates, healthy balanced diets to the extent we’d like to because we haven’t got the time to do it”*

*“It (a barrier) would be time – the whole course would have to be re-structured”*

*“Most students today if they do 16 hours it’s about full time...you’re limited to what you can get in. The government say you have to do key skills, so where you might be able to spending an hour looking at nutritional bits you’re going to be spending it on IT”*

The lack of a formal requirement to teach healthy eating and nutrition

*“And of course it’s not regulated. It’s not timetabled in, controlled. You could say it’s a little bit ad hoc”*

*“Also it’s not actually a requisite of this examining body”*

*“The structure of the theory sessions doesn’t allow us to discuss this as a complete topic – it has to be addressed within certain aspects of the NVQ”*

The lack of interest of students in learning about facts and figures, compounded by the fact that the types of nutritional information are difficult to teach in a way that will be retained by students was mentioned as a barrier.

*“The students tend to become very uninterested when you get to things like vitamins, nutrition and so on. It’s very difficult to get over. It’s definitely the*

*areas I've struggled with personally in teaching it... I can't get all the information to stick in my head and I'm sure they can't – all the vitamins and nutrients”*

*“A full time course is only 18 hours long. Now if they're particularly coming here to become chefs, the majority of students are only interested in preparing and cooking food and serving the food... we also have to fit into that 18 hour timetable key skills”*

*“It's very difficult to link the information to something that is tangible – to put it to something that they can see and understand in the classroom, it's easier in the kitchen”*

The current nature of training and education at this level and the emphasis on occupational training (i.e. the skills to do that specific job rather than a wider educational experience) also prevents them covering healthy eating in more detail.

*“There used to be a requirement for nutrition. We actually had a nutritionist in the catering department but that's all gone...now it's a realistic cooking environment...I believe the change was brought about by industry who said that students weren't qualified”*

*“We've got a group of mature students from the nursing homes, so they're very restricted. They've come here to learn more of the fancier stuff, to add a bit of zest to cottage pie”*

The fact that the information is already to hand via other sources that have been collected over the years.

*“Over the years I've picked up info – a lot of things have come my way. Obviously there's books to call on but I've got a lot of pamphlets and so on”*

### **3.2.6 Improvements to healthy eating education**

Lecturers were asked how they thought healthy eating education at this level generally could be improved, and specifically in relation to the guide. Suggestions made were to go directly to those involved with other information sources used on the course such as the Practical Cookery authors/publishers as this is what students use on a practical level and on a daily basis. Practical Cookery is the main book used on the NVQ course, and was mentioned both by lecturers and students as the main information source. It would be advantageous if more healthy alternatives were featured within this.

It was also suggested that nutrition and healthy eating should be made a more formal requirement of the qualification.

As mentioned earlier, lecturers thought it was important that healthy eating education starts at an earlier age, so that the principles of nutrition and healthy eating are understood and ingrained at an early age.

Lecturers suggested providing alternative formats of the information, such as CD ROMs and interactive learning formats as this was felt to be something that the students would be more likely to use. This way, students would be able to undertake study on healthy eating during their non-directed learning days. Some positive comments were also made about the Catering for Health web site, which was felt to be easy to navigate and had less repetition than the guide.

*“They could put an interactive CD together for the students... they do interactive learning on meat, fish etc. It’s better than a book I think it’s the type of thing that the FSA should be doing, something simple for them to do”*

It was thought that providing a shorter version of the guide that was more practical was something that lecturers would find useful. At the moment the information in the Catering for Health guide has to be modified by them so that it can be used on their courses. Providing materials that were simpler which they as lecturers could use directly and which are student friendly was suggested.

*“There could be something smaller with the main things that they can put into practice”*

*“I’ve read it and made notes and acetates from it. What I’d really like is to pick up a learning or teacher’s pack on carbohydrates, starches etc, like we have for the Basic Hygiene certificate. I’d like it all pre-prescribed, ready to deliver it because of the time factor”*

*“Just a booklet on the recipes would be easily used, easily photocopied for students, condensed down”*

*“It would be nice to have something like this at the beginning of September where we could put a pack together and they could use it for back up information for their course work as well”*

### **3.3 Student Depths**

#### **3.3.1 Background**

All of the 18 students were in their first or second year of an NVQ qualification in Food Preparation and Cookery or Hospitality and Catering. Almost all of the students had previously had or were currently involved with catering on a work experience basis (either working as waiters, chefs in restaurants, hotels or cafes). All of the students said they hoped to become chefs, and all said that they were enjoying their course, therefore any negative opinions expressed do not reflect an overall dissatisfaction with the course as a whole.

#### **3.3.2 Importance of healthy eating in catering**

When asked what they thought was most important to customers when they had a meal out, all students spontaneously said they thought the taste or appearance of the meal was most important. The healthiness of a meal was also felt to be important but this was discussed more on a prompted level, which implies this is not top of mind. Healthiness was seen as being important to some people – again if they were watching their weight or if they have special dietary requirements.

*“It depends if people are on diets or if they’re vegetarian”*

*“Not often (thought about) its just if people come in and they’re diabetic we need to cook something different for them”*

*“Some people are looking for a healthy range.....they’re probably on diets and into all that, watching what they eat and all that”*

*“I think if you compare shopping baskets now and before people are tending towards more healthy eating attitudes, definitely...people are more aware of heart disease, blood pressure so low fat, low salt diets which does have a knock on effect to the catering supermarkets and trade in general.”*

Students did feel that there was an emphasis on healthy eating and nutrition within the catering industry. Students at all the colleges felt that it was important for those involved in catering to provide a healthy eating option to customers. However the emphasis here was on ‘an option’ rather than providing generally healthier menus.

Definitions of healthy eating from students mainly related to reducing fat in recipes, though most did also talk about the need for a balance of foods from different food groups and not having too many high calorie foods.

*“Keep a balance – not have chips day and night”*

*“A balanced diet of fat and non-fat foods. Taking things in proportion, like not having chips every single day of the week and having a wide variety of foods”*

*“Balance it out – if you have fruit every day you could have some chocolate on Friday”*

*“I don’t know much but if someone asked me about healthy eating I’d say salads and that and try not to fry food so much, try grilling and not each chips every day, stuff like that”*

*“It’s watching what you’re eating – going for the healthy option not the fatty ones”*

*“Rabbit food – that’s what I call the healthy stuff!”*

*“Salads, non-greasy oils, olive oil...anything without fat and grease”*

### **3.3.3 Healthy eating as part of the course**

Students rarely spontaneously mentioned the healthy eating sections they had studied on the course as integral or especially enjoyable parts of the course. It does however need to be borne in mind that some had been on the course for less than a year and that healthy eating teaching does not have one section or unit dedicated to it.

Positively, when prompted no student said they found the healthy eating teaching uninteresting or irrelevant. Some more experienced students, in particular

spontaneously used the words 'vital', 'beneficial' and 'interesting' to describe the healthy eating and nutrition aspects of the course. The main reason why they felt that it was useful was because in the future they may have someone who asked for a 'special' menu (because of their dietary requirements) and they would need to know how to provide this for them. Again healthy eating was associated with special requirements rather than providing healthier food for everyone.

Students could rarely cite any specific books or information sources that were used on their course except for the 'Practical Cookery' book which was mentioned by most and described by a couple as their 'cookery bible'. A few thought they had received handouts from the Catering for Health guide but were unable to recall exactly what information it provided.

The best way of teaching, which all students who participated in the research agreed on, was practical rather than theory based, backing up what the lecturers said about their learning preferences (though some said it was useful to have some written information to read through). This was also implicit throughout the discussion as the main way in which they recalled learning about healthy eating was via the menus or recipes that they had prepared. Main examples of healthy eating teaching recalled by students were choosing and cooking healthier dishes on their menus, cooking in healthier ways (such as grilling rather than frying), reducing the amount of fat or salt in the recipes and, mentioned less often, providing a balance of different foods.

*"In the first year she'd do things like health and safety and nutrition and then on Wednesday we'd do cooking and she'd tell us what was healthy to cook in and what wasn't and healthy options"*

Practical learning was said to be preferable because it was more enjoyable, interesting and (corroborating the lecturer findings) they were more likely to remember what they had been taught because they could see it.

*"It's best if it's taught in practical as well as theory – sinks in more"*

*"What would be put into theory one day would be put into practice the next so there's no time gap of a week where you could forget it.... I find it much easier to put the ideas into practice because it doesn't bare much relation when you're just scribbling it down"*

*"Things that were more fun instead of just sitting there – if we did a practical with it... doing something with your hands otherwise our class just chat"*

The main requirement from students for future educational materials or guides was that they were ultimately practical in nature. Some said they would like to use computer formats such as the Internet or a CD Rom.

*"It would be nice to have a disk on healthy eating and that...and then cook more healthy foods in the kitchen"*

*"Maybe some more IT – there's a lot on the Internet – if we had to go and research something on there?"*

*“Videos, and then answer questions after, they’ve got to watch it to answer the questions after, we’d rather watch something than read it”*

All the students could see why healthy eating education was relevant to their course and from a career point of view. None said they had too much about healthy eating on their course and most said they would like to know more about it. The main reason for this was that they might find themselves in a situation where they needed to put the knowledge into practice. It was this kind of ‘specific situations arising’ reason that was given more frequently than a general need to apply healthy eating principles.

*“Yes probably will (use it) - for people who come in and can’t eat fatty foods and can only have healthy foods”*

*“It’s good that we do know about healthy eating because when we go out in the world it’s good to say we do know how to prepare something for healthy eating”*

*“If I did become a pastry cook I’d know that there were certain types of fats, animal fats, vegetable fats that would be more acceptable to use...if I was to open my own business I’d be able to think of healthy options, vegetarian options etc for customers”*

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Chef lecturers generally had positive attitudes towards healthy eating, agreeing that it should be more integral to catering courses and that they would like more opportunities to teach about nutrition. They also disagreed that cooking healthier meals always involves sacrificing the taste.

When lecturers were asked to name guides available to them on healthy eating and nutrition, there were no spontaneous mentions of the Catering for Health guide, although 5 lecturers mentioned the FSA guide.

Around half of the chef lecturers surveyed had heard of the Catering for Health guide, but only half of these had actually seen a copy.

Only 7 of the chef lecturers (15%) had used the Catering for Health guide, but this was not on a regular basis. It tended to be used as a reference document, which was sometimes summarised by them for use in teaching.

From the lecturers who had used the guide, the positive aspects about it were that it is designed especially for those in catering, and that it is endorsed by the FSA. However, it was felt to have had no direct impact on students, as it is too complex for them. The distribution of the guide also needs to be improved to ensure it reaches the correct person.

Barriers to using the guide are a lack of time within the curriculum for healthy eating, a lack of a formal requirement to teach healthy eating, a lack of interest from students in theory and the emphasis on occupational training.

Students' understanding of healthy eating issues tended to relate to special dietary requirements and dieting rather than providing healthier food for everyone. Healthy eating was seen as something that should be provided as an option on menus.

Students expressed a preference for practical learning, backed up by the lecturers who said the students tended to remember better what they did in practical sessions rather than what they learnt in theory.

Improvements could be made to the guide by providing a shorter, more practical version of the guide for lecturers to use, for instance recipe booklets, and more interactive formats for students, for instance a CD ROM. It would also be easier to incorporate into teaching if the guide was related more closely to Practical Cookery, the main book used on the course.

### **Recommendations**

The distribution of any future information could be improved by sending it directly to named lecturers to ensure it reaches its target, rather than just being sent to the college. Whilst awareness of the Catering for Health guide overall was low, two thirds of those who had actually seen a copy of the guide had used it.

It would also be worth considering alternative formats to present the information in. Lecturers would prefer a shorter and more practical version of the guide, for instance

booklets of recipes, and both lecturers and students mentioned a more interactive format such as a CD ROM or Internet would have greater appeal to students.

The Catering for Health guide should be related more closely to Practical Cookery; the main book used on the course, as this would make it easier to integrate into teaching.

FSAW could also lobby for healthy eating to have a dedicated unit within the NVQ curriculum, as presently it is only incorporated on an ad-hoc basis and is dependent on the lecturer.

## Appendix

### *Classification and Sample Sizes*

	<b>Sample</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	47
<b>Heard of Catering for Health</b>	
Yes	22
No	25
<b>Used Catering for Health</b>	
Yes	7
No	40
<b>Catering students at college</b>	
60 or less	22
61 or more	25
<b>Years lecturing</b>	
Up to 10	22
10 or more	25
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	30
Female	17
<b>Area</b>	
North/Mid	19
South	28