

# Case Study

Good food is good for business

Brighton & Hove

**FOOD**  
Partnership



# Introduction – Good Food Procurement Group

## The hub: how it works

In 2012, as part of the city-wide food strategy, the Food Partnership established the **Good Food Procurement Group**.

**Large organisations** like the city council and local NHS Trusts **spend millions** of pounds on food and catering services each year, so **making changes** to the way their food is produced, where and when it's bought and how it's consumed and disposed of, can bring **huge benefits** to people's **health**, the **environment** and the **local economy**.

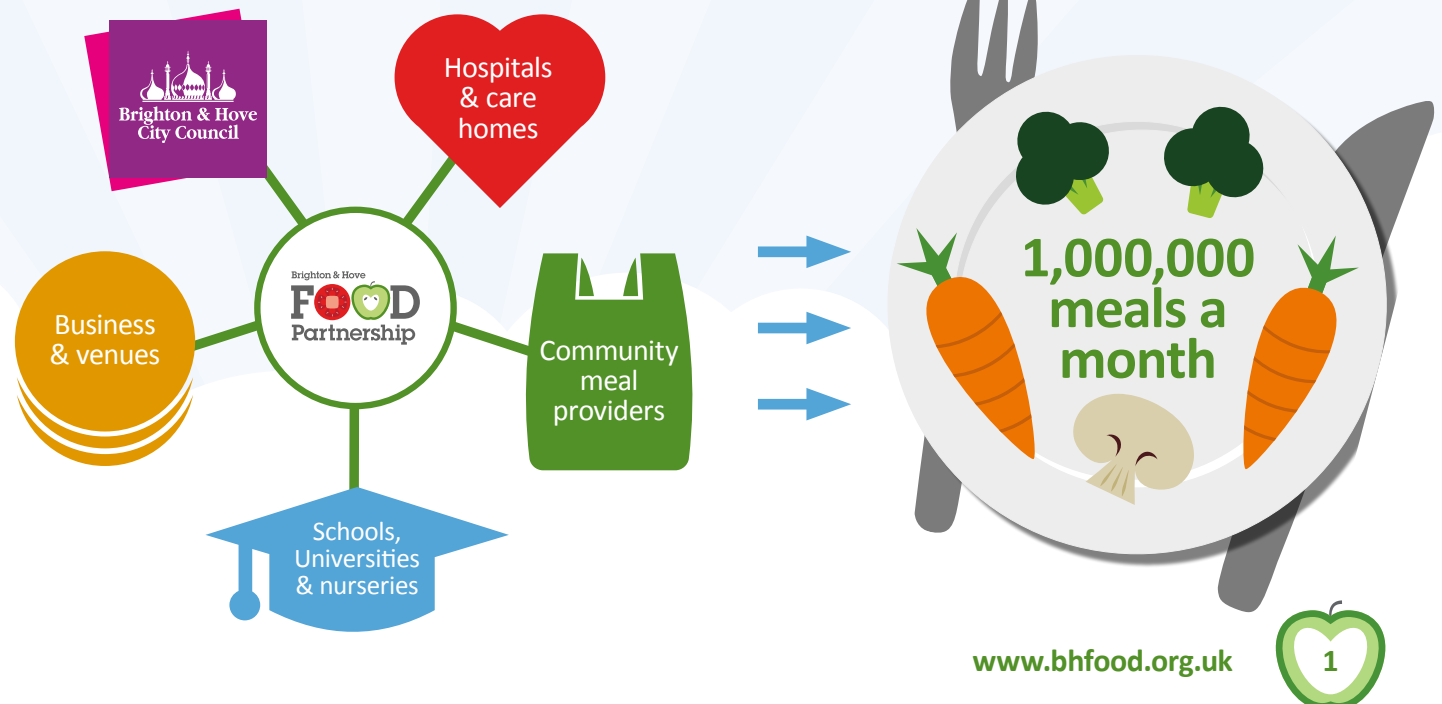
Our role has been to act as a **hub**, bringing together catering managers and chefs from different organisations to **share best practice**, to make **new contacts** and to **learn** about the benefits of buying and serving good food.

## The Food Partnership coordinates and supports this group by:

- Providing **networking opportunities**
- Arranging **workshops and visits** to share best practice
- **Promoting the achievements** of individual organisations within the group
- Identifying and **liaising with local suppliers**
- **Researching** best practice nationally
- **Connecting people** in similar roles

## Who's involved

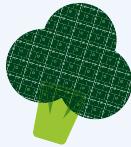
**Fourteen organisations have been involved in the group so far** including local NHS Trusts, universities, the city council, primary and secondary schools, community meals provider ('meals on wheels'), care homes, workplaces and major venues. These organisations represent **all the major public sector food purchasers** from across Brighton & Hove, and they **collectively serve over 1 million meals a month**. Some of the most vulnerable people in the city are served by these organisations, so it is vital that quality food is provided.



# What is Good Food Procurement?

Members of the group explore some, if not all, of these sustainable food issues:

- ✓ Freshly prepared
- ✓ Healthier catering
- ✓ Seasonal & local produce



- ✓ Supporting smaller suppliers



- ✓ Less but better meat
- ✓ Sustainable fish
- ✓ Improved animal welfare



- ✓ Group buying
- ✓ Sustainability criteria used in specifications for suppliers and in award of contracts



- ✓ Reduction and disposal of food waste



- ✓ External accreditations
- ✓ Sustainable Food Policy



- ✓ Living wage employer
- ✓ Training & skills



## Good food is good for business

All organisations are concerned about their bottom line, but making changes to the food served can positively impact on turnover, the workforce, take up of meals and the local economy.

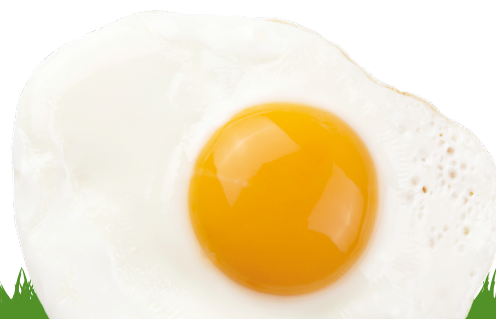
**Primary school meal take up has increased by 38%** due to improvements in quality of food served, along with changes made to the dining environment.

This has resulted in **increased buying power**, enabling absorption of a slight increase in costs due to sourcing better quality ingredients.

The University of Brighton reports **lower staff turnover**, retaining talented chefs who can use their skills and who share a commitment to quality, local, seasonal ingredients.

**“**...the fact that Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust have put their faith in local suppliers has meant that our farm and workforce are more secure and that our local suppliers are more secure. We've seen our turnover increase by 30% since we won the contract. A real example of investing in the local community.”

Roly Knight, Market Gardener, JR Wholesale



# Benefits for group members

## Example: Saving time, and finding new local suppliers

Members of the group had said that they were **willing to change to using local suppliers** but that they didn't have time to research into them and make those connections. In 2015, the Food Partnership organised a tour of a number of local suppliers: a fish merchant; an organic egg farm; and a bakery.

Ten members of the group came on the tour, representing all of the largest public sector organisations in the city. **Four new contracts** are in the pipeline with the local suppliers, with a few others being explored by finance and procurement departments. We have since shared with the group a comprehensive **Local Suppliers Directory** that we produced to enable them to make those connections themselves.

**“** *We were looking forward to today, but this has surpassed our expectations and we just wish that we could have brought more colleagues. We've been thinking of changing our supplier for a while and after our visit today, we really want to go for it and switch to this new local supplier. We just wanted to say a HUGE thank you to the Food Partnership, the suppliers were really informative and we appreciate how much work this must have taken to organise.”*

Imogen Lee,  
Brighton Centre Manager (Kudos Catering)



## Example: Cost & carbon savings

The Food Partnership arranged for members of the group to meet the suppliers and the team behind the **sustainable food procurement model developed by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPT)**. The Trust found local suppliers as cost effective as using national suppliers, even when providing meals across 14 hospitals.

SPT have been **nationally recognised** for their **outstanding work** to provide **good local and nutritious food** for people using **mental health services** across Sussex. Their model was even highlighted as best practice within the British Food Plan.

**“** *We need to showcase the great work that has been done here, so that other NHS Trusts can see what can be achieved.”*

Sir Peter Bonfield, Defra, at the 'field to fork' workshop and tour of local suppliers used by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Sussex Partnership **NHS**  
NHS Foundation Trust



- **85% fresh produce is local** in meals served to **800,000 patients** every year
- They've **reduced their fruit & veg bill** by 20% and their **meat bill** by 10%
- They're using less used cuts of meat, cooked longer – **higher welfare at competitive price**
- Helped to **reduce the Trust's carbon footprint** through **minimising waste and food miles**
- **Patient satisfaction** surveys consistently rate food as good or excellent (**91% in latest survey**)



# National recognition & awards

The Food Partnership actively supports the group in achieving appropriate awards because they are externally accredited and can help caterers to share their successes with the general public.

## Example: Minimum Buying Standards win national award



The Food Partnership helped all the Brighton & Hove City Council caterers to develop minimum food buying standards. The council were crowned 'food champions' at the 2015 Soil Association's Catering Mark Awards for being the first city to adopt these standards which require all major catering contracts to achieve the Soil Association Catering Mark within their first year of contract. **Three organisations have achieved the Soil Association's Catering Mark in Brighton & Hove.**



**Brighton & Hove City Council Primary School Meals Service (Caterer - Eden Foodservice) – SILVER**  
12,000 meals a day served across 64 primary & special schools



**The Brighton Centre (Caterer - Kudos) – BRONZE**  
Catering for 20 major conferences with capacity of 5,500, plus 250,000 attend concerts, each year



**University of Brighton (in-house team) – BRONZE**  
Serving 22,000 students and 2,500 staff across five campuses in Brighton, Hastings and Eastbourne

## Example: Sustainable fish certifications



With support from the Food Partnership, 5 members of the group have now signed the national **Sustainable Fish Cities** pledge to only serve sustainable fish (700,000 fish meals/yr).

In 2012, we arranged for the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) to present to the group on how to achieve **MSC certification** to buy, serve and promote MSC-labelled fish. The **University of Brighton** and the **Primary School Meals** contract (Eden Foodservice) have both since achieved this and a further **two organisations** are now also going to work towards getting **MSC certification** too.



When the group chooses to source sustainable fish as a priority area, this has a much greater impact on fish stocks than just one organisation making those changes alone.

\*  
**University of Brighton**  
HOSPITALITY SERVICES

Brighton & Hove  
City Council

eden

Brighton & Hove was the first and only city to win a Silver Sustainable Food Cities Award in 2015, due in part to the 'trailblazing' work around food procurement.



To find out more about the Good Food Procurement Group, the Food Partnership and any of the advice and support we offer, contact [info@bhfood.org.uk](mailto:info@bhfood.org.uk), call 01273 431700. Or visit [www.bhfood.org.uk/procurement](http://www.bhfood.org.uk/procurement)