

# Food education: fit for the future?

Results of the survey with secondary food teachers on the current status-quo and future direction of food and nutrition education in English secondary schools

June 2023

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## Background

The current National Curriculum (England) for D&T Cooking and Nutrition Key Stage 1-3 has been in place since 2014 and is likely to be reviewed shortly. A lot has happened since 2014, including:

- more schools becoming [academies](#) and adapting versions of national curriculum subjects
- the publication of [core food competences](#) (adopted internationally) that set out in detail what should be learned by key age-related points
- the removal of A Levels in *Home Economics: Food and Nutrition* and *Food Technology* – see articles by [Davies/Ballam](#) and [Davies](#)
- food teaching ‘standards’ for teachers – knowledge and skills ([primary](#) and [secondary](#))
- publication of [characteristics of good practice in food teaching](#) (primary, secondary and additional needs)
- research into the curriculum and food teaching: [Food Education Learning Landscape](#)
- publication of key government policy documents, such as the [National Food Strategy](#) recommendation and [Levelling up reports](#), exploring how food and diet underpins the health, well-being and potential of our society and expressing concern that too many young people are still leaving education without the skills and knowledge to cook and live healthily
- Government promoting accountability and transparency of [school food arrangements](#) by encouraging schools to complete a statement on their school websites, which sets out their whole school approach to food
- Growing awareness of the importance of education and training in improving understanding of healthy, sustainable diets in the population, how diet shift can play a role in supporting the achievement of national climate and nature targets and how UK Government and businesses can improve education and information on healthy, sustainable diets by embedding food education in school curriculums (BDA’s [One Blue Dot](#), WWF’s [Eating for Net Zero](#), Forum for the Future [Future Plates](#)).

Key players have begun to ask questions of the Food Teachers Centre to understand the shape and content of food education ready for any curriculum change in England.

These are big questions. If all young people are to get an opportunity to learn the skills and knowledge to cook and live healthily, *how should schools plan and implement this?* Food has been part of Design and Technology since the start of the National Curriculum in the 1990s; *should it remain as part of this subject? Should it stand outside of D&T? What can we learn from recent reviews in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland?*

There are strengths and weaknesses in the different positions and plans that might be adopted by schools. *But what will lead to a strong position for food education?*

## What happened?

This survey was divided into two distinct sets of questions. Firstly, it starts with asking teachers about the subject and curriculum that they teach now to give an overview of how schools are currently interpreting the national curriculum requirements. Secondly, it asks about the future, and the choices and changes that teachers would make with regards to the next steps of curriculum change.

A survey was published and access given to the food teachers in the closed Food Teachers Centre Facebook group. In addition, the British Nutrition Foundation sent out a link to the survey to its *Education News* newsletter subscribers. It was decided that this approach gave the best possible opportunity for food teachers to respond, with both sets of contacts being ring-fenced.

All respondents were self-selected. In total, 516 responses were received over a two-week period in May 2023. All responses were anonymous, and not all questions were answered by all respondents.

## Executive summary

### Section A: The participants

In May 2023, 517 participants responded to the on-line survey. These were food teachers from a range of schools including academies, maintained, independent and special schools. Those responding were mainly classroom teachers and heads of department, with a small number of senior leaders and trainee teachers.

### Section B: How food education is currently taught

#### 1. A shift has already been taking place

These results confirm that there has already been a shift in curriculum provision, with some schools delivering food and nutrition outside of Design and Technology (D&T) as a stand-alone subject (19.5%), but the majority are located within the D&T subject department or faculty (75%). This shift is mirrored in the subject name on the school timetable, whilst 'Food Technology' is still the most common name, it is almost as frequently called 'Food and Nutrition'.

#### 2. Timetabling and rotations affect the ability to deliver food education effectively

There are significant challenges in delivering the food curriculum, with just 38% agreeing that there is enough time to deliver it effectively. Only a minority of schools are timetabled with more than 60 hours at KS3, i.e. over three-years. There are very wide variations in how much time is allocated at Key Stage 3 (KS3), with an average of around 18 hours per year, and at KS4 18% of schools do not provide the recommended guided learning hours (GLH) of 120 hours for examinations. With 54% schools delivering on a termly (33%) or half yearly (21%) rotation, only 18% schools teach weekly food lessons throughout the school year.

#### 3. With limited time, most schools focus on the essentials

The current emphasis of food lessons focuses significantly on healthy eating, cooking and food hygiene. These topics are recognised and accepted across the teaching community as being important.

#### 4. Progression routes are not available for the majority of students wishing to study post 16

Nearly all of the schools offer GCSE or a vocational equivalent, but the majority of teachers believe that there is a lack of exam choice post 16, with very limited vocational routes and no A-Level. [Food Technology and Food and Nutrition A-Levels were removed in 2016.] Some schools prioritize academic subjects or A-level courses recognized by universities, leading to a lack of interest in vocational courses, such as Level 3 Food Science and Nutrition. School policies or decisions made by senior leadership teams (SLT) also play a role in determining which courses are offered. The feedback indicates a strong demand for the reinstatement of an A-Level course in the field of food. Many teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the limited options available, with only one vocational course (WJEC Level 3 Food Science and Nutrition) being offered in some schools. The current courses are criticised for being too focused on food science and nutrition, lacking practical skills, and not providing a suitable academic qualification. Students and parents desire an A-Level option to provide academic rigor and enhance future prospects.

The absence of an A-Level course also affects university acceptance, career progression, and the availability of qualified food teachers. There is a need for more diverse and tailored courses that cater to different interests, such as food science, food preparation skills, nutrition, and catering.

The vocational options available, such as BTEC courses, are not always preferred due to the perceived lack of academic status. Additionally, there is a desire for courses that align with the content and progression of the GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition.

The lack of suitable options affects both grammar schools and independent schools, with some schools only endorsing A-Level study and not offering vocational courses. Limited resources, facilities, and teaching capacity are also mentioned as challenges in providing post-16 food courses. Overall, there is a clear demand for more comprehensive, practical, and academically recognized options in the field of food studies at the post-16 level.

## Section C: How teachers would like food education to be taught in the future

### 1. Food should be removed from the D&T programme of study

Teachers indicated very strongly that food should be removed from D&T, and become a stand-alone subject, with equal status as the other national curriculum subjects. Many food teachers believe that the current integration of food into D&T is outdated and does not reflect the unique nature of the subject. Teachers feel that food education should have its own specific timetabled lessons, separate from D&T's rotation system. They also believed that the timetable time allocated to the current D&T: Cooking and Nutrition should be transferred with the subject. Most wanted timetabled lessons throughout the year (see Table 1).

Teachers call for a dedicated, more detailed curriculum (Programmes of Study) that places more focus on healthy eating and nutrition, practical cooking skills, and food preparation. They believe that Food has its own unique characteristics and should not be integrated or combined with other subjects. Food is seen as an important subject in its own right and deserves more recognition within the curriculum. There is a need for more curriculum time and autonomy for food education. The subject's relevance, importance, and connection to real-life skills and issues like healthy eating, sustainability, and food sources are emphasised. There is a call for food education to be accessible to all students, regardless of their background. It is seen as a valuable subject that provides essential knowledge and skills for all individuals.

Teachers feel that the current name 'Food Technology' is outdated and does not accurately represent the subject. The most popular names for the future subject are: Food and Nutrition, Food Preparation and Nutrition, Food Studies, Food Science and Nutrition, Cooking and Nutrition, and Food Education. They felt that future food education should increase its focus on nutrition and health, planning and cooking to feed yourself, sustainability, tackling food insecurity, where food comes from, food from around the world, food safety and food science (see Table 2).

Food teachers feel that they cannot effectively teach other D&T subjects, such as Resistant Materials (RM) or Graphics, because they are so different from food. The teaching approaches, content, and assessment methods for food and D&T are perceived to be very different, causing challenges for teachers.

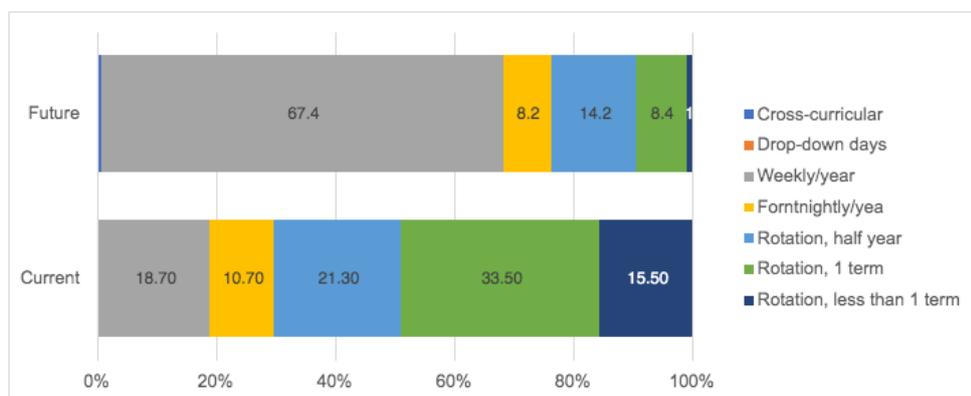


Table 1: Current and future timetabling patterns

## **2. Recognition as an academic subject**

Teachers argue that Food should be recognized as an academic subject in its own right, deserving of the same status and attention as other subjects. They highlight the educational value and relevance of Food and advocate for its inclusion as a core subject in the curriculum. Many teachers believe that food should be given more respect, recognition, and funding within the education system. The subject's position in key school performance metrics is also mentioned. Some stakeholders, such as students, parents, and SLT, may not fully value food education or understand its importance. There is a need to increase awareness and support for the subject. There is also mention of misconceptions about food education being an easy or low-level subject.

## **3. Stronger as a team, with career progression**

Some teachers saw benefits of keeping Food within D&T. These included natural links between the subject content and the shared focus on practical and problem-solving skills. Keeping food within the D&T department ensures that it receives curriculum time. There is a concern that if it is not delivered under D&T, it may be marginalized or lose curriculum time, especially at KS3. Some feel that changing its location may lead to confusion or make it more susceptible to being phased out. Some also feel that it has gained greater recognition and value since becoming part of D&T.

The support and expertise available within the D&T department are seen as important for teacher retention and career progression.

Having food within the D&T department allows for better collaboration and support among teachers, thus if food is to be a stand-alone subject alternative support structures would need to be in place to ensure the subject is strengthened rather than isolated. There is no single curriculum model from the teachers (for example, science, PE, PSHE, Art and D&T were all mentioned) indicating that this may vary from school, to school.

## **4. Collaboration with and input from teachers is vital**

Teachers express a desire to be more involved in the decision-making process, with opportunities through discussions and input before the final specifications/programmes of study are published.

## **5. Lack of recruitment and training of specialist teachers jeopardise the future of the subject**

There is a need for specialist Food teachers who have expertise in nutrition, food preparation and cooking skills (as well as other 'future' content indicated in Table 2). Teachers emphasize the importance of having dedicated professionals who can provide quality education in the subject. Some teachers express concerns about the lack of specialist training and expertise in teaching food, especially when taught by non-specialist teachers.

Many food teachers come from a D&T background and may teach both subjects. Moving Food to a different department may force teachers to switch departments, potentially leading to a transitional shortage of qualified food teachers. However, the clearer pathway to becoming a Food teacher, without having to be a D&T specialist, may encourage a wider range of potential teachers to come forward.

Teachers suggest that providing additional training on food security, food production and sustainability topics to enhance teachers' knowledge and teaching skills will be needed.

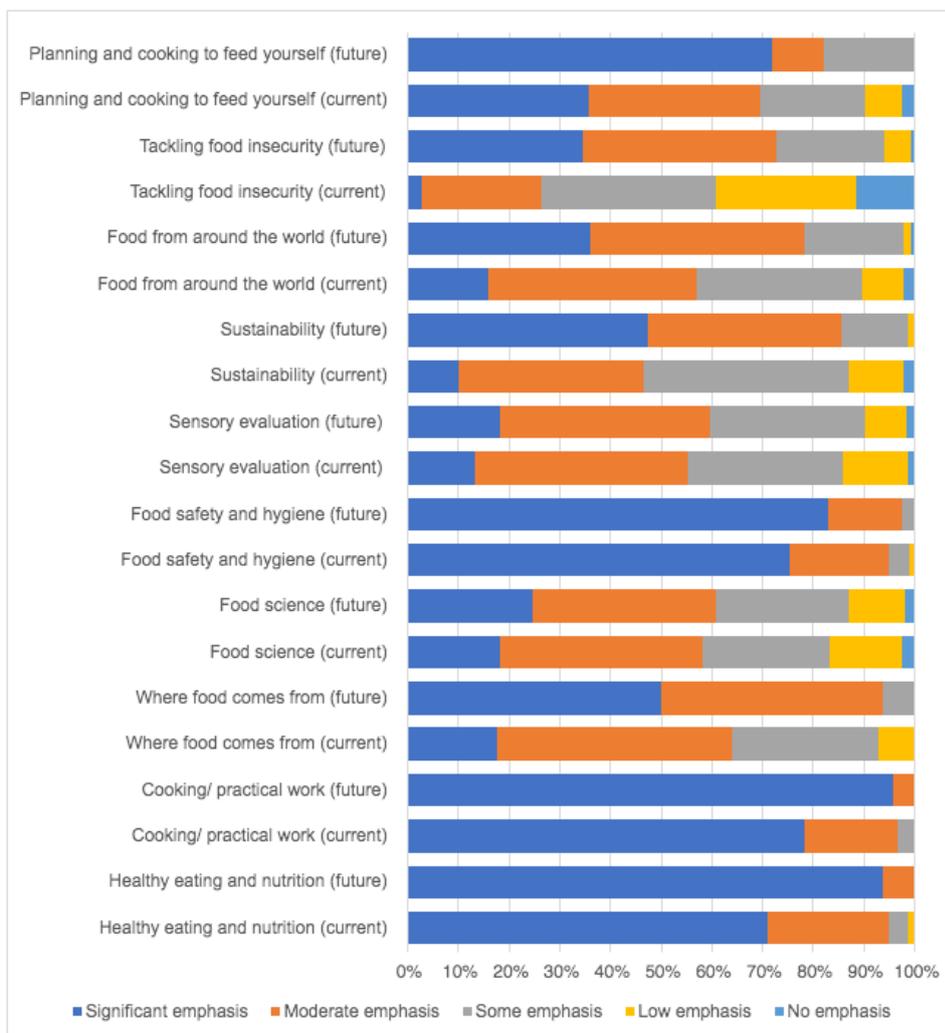


Table 2: Current and future subject content emphasis

## 6. Future success will be supported by funding, class sizes that match provision, and sufficient curriculum time.

The feedback highlights several challenges related to food education, specifically regarding upgrading of teaching rooms and recruiting teachers.

Teachers suggest that they will need on average 84 hours for KS3 (28 hours per year) to deliver the content, particularly if further subject content is added, for example sustainability, tackling food insecurity and food systems. Delivering the food education curriculum effectively within limited time frames, such as short lessons, is a challenge.

Overall cost of running food education programmes, including ingredients, equipment, energy, and staffing, is a significant concern. Limited budgets and the financial burden on schools impact the department's ability to provide quality food education are commonly discussed. Funding issues, especially for pupil premium students and low-income families, impact the provision of food education.

Class sizes have increased, making it harder for students to progress quickly and safely. Schools should be working within room capacities.

## **7. Current KS4 examinations are well supported, but a review of the non-exam assessment (NEA) is needed**

The feedback on current exams indicates that no major changes are needed to the specification and content, as 92% wish to continue with the current GCSE. However, some teachers do find it hard to teach all the content in the time they are allocated. Some respondents suggest incorporating key skills, such as budgeting, sustainability, and nutrition, into the course to make it more relevant and practical for everyday life.

The feedback suggests that a review of the NEA would be helpful. There is a consensus among teachers regarding the NEA1 (Food Science Investigation) component of the GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition assessment. Many teachers express dissatisfaction with NEA1, citing reasons such as it being time-consuming, wasteful of ingredients, repetitive, and not beneficial for students. Some feel that there is not enough time to complete the NEA1 and NEA2 tasks within the current timeframe of year 11. They propose removing NEA1 and reallocating the time and resources to practical skills and other relevant areas of the curriculum.

Overall, the feedback from teachers highlights a desire for a curriculum that is more practical, relevant, flexible, and inclusive, while reducing the burdensome and wasteful aspects of the current NEA1 component.

## **8. 89% of teachers want to introduce a new A level**

A new A-Level course in *Food Science and Nutrition* or *Food Preparation and Nutrition* is needed. The course should build upon the content covered at GCSE level, focusing on nutrition, cooking skills, food science, and practical applications. It should include in-depth knowledge of nutrients, dietary needs, food safety, food production, sustainability, and the impact of food on health and the environment.

The course may also cover topics such as food technology, food industry, food provenance, and menu planning. Practical skills development, research projects, and industry placements are also mentioned as potential components of the course. The emphasis on science, practical cooking skills, and the application of knowledge in real-life scenarios is highlighted. Some respondents also express a preference for a course that aligns with university-level studies or vocational pathways in the food industry.

As the previous two A-Levels have not been taught since 2016, the teachers identified challenges of implementing a new course, such as difficulty in recruiting additional, suitably qualified staff for teaching A-level Food, and lack of facilities, resources, or suitable kitchens. There were concerns about low uptake and the minimum groups sizes required by their schools for a brand-new course.

## Recommendations

- 1. Consult on new content and teaching requirements:** Continue information gathering and consultation with teaching and food-related professionals, for example, use focus groups to examine the issues raised in more depth and draft the desired content of the next food curriculum (programmes of study).
- 2. Model approaches:** Create curriculum and timetabling models of different approaches that schools may adopt to examine their strengths and weaknesses to ensure that food education has a strong and equal position to other subjects in the school.
- 3. Review the impact on D&T and other subjects:** Consider the wider implications of the research for other areas of D&T (such as textiles, design) and also consider how consistency and alignment can be achieved with PSHE, PE and Science in any future national curriculum review.
- 4. Plan for additional resource requirements:** Consider the communication, resources, staffing and continuous professional development required to achieve new curriculum models.
- 5. Train more specialist food teachers:** Develop a significant recruitment campaign to attract professionals with the appropriate food subject knowledge and skills to address the current staffing shortage and increase in staff needed for future provision.
- 6. Reintroduce A-level food:** Address the progression issues raised at 14-18 years due to the removal of A-Levels in Food, by providing new effective opportunities to study nutrition, food science, food systems and sustainability at A-Level, in addition to vocation catering route. Engage with universities, NGOs and the wider food industry sector to develop modern appropriate post-16 examination content.

## Results

These are the results from the teacher survey. The survey results are divided into the following key sections:

- Section A: The participants
- Section B: How food education is currently taught
- Section C: How teachers would like food education to be taught in the future

### Section A: The participants

This section gathered background information about the school.

#### Q1. What age phase is your school?

Age phase	Percentage
Primary	3
Primary through secondary	9
Middle	1
Secondary	87

N=517

#### Q2. What is your school type?

School type	Percentage
Academy	59%
City Technology College	0%
Faith school (inc. Faith Academies)	9%
Free school (UTC/Studio)	0%
Maintained	16%
Private school (independent)	12%
Special school	2%
State boarding school	1%

N=516

#### Q3. What is the percentage of free school meals in your school?

The average response was 28%, with the median 25%. The range was from 0% to 85%.

FSM range (percentage)	Number of schools
0% to 10%	82
11% to 20%	72
21% to 40%	107
41% to 60%	57
61% to 80%	25
81% to 100%	2

N=345

**Q4. What is your role in the school? (Select your most senior position.)**

<b>Role in school</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
School Senior Leader (deputy head/head)	3%
Classroom teacher	42%
Head of Department/Faculty	48%
Unqualified teacher	3%
Trainee teacher	1%
Other	4%

N=518

## Section B: How food education is currently taught

This section gathered information about how food is taught now in schools.

**Q5. What is the name of 'food education' lessons in your school? (i.e. What is it called on the timetable?)**

Top eight responses:

- Food Technology: 130
- Food and Nutrition: 109
- Design and Technology: 60
- Food Prep and Nutrition: 52
- Hospitality and Catering: 32
- Cooking and Nutrition: 15
- Food: 13
- Catering: 8

Others included: Food Preparation: 4, Food and Cookery: 4, Food Education: 3, Cookery: 3, Food Science: 2, Home Economics: 3, Art and Design: 2, Health and well-being: 1, Learning for life - food: 1, Food Exploration: 1, Life Skills: 1, MYP Design: 1, Product Design: 1, Food and Textiles: 1 and Living Skills: 1.

n=493

**Q6. In your school, where is 'food education' located (within a subject department or faculty) that contains the following subjects? (Select 1 or more that apply to you.)**

Where is food located?	Percentage*
Design and Technology	75%
Science	3%
PSHE	1.5%
PE	2%
Art	10%
Stand-alone	19.5%
Other	8%

N=517 \*Respondents were able to select more than 1 option.

**Q7. What is the department or faculty name where 'food' resides?**

Top eight responses:

- Design and Technology: 227
- Food and Nutrition: 75
- Technology: 51
- Art and Design Technology: 45
- Creative: 23
- Food Technology: 12
- Food preparation: 9
- Science, inc STEM: 15

N=514

**Q8. How many hours of food education do your students receive at Key Stage 3?**

The average reported for Key Stage 3 was 51.8 hours, 17.3 hours per year. The median was 45 hours over Key Stage 3. The range was from 12 to 200 hours over Key Stage 3.

Range of hours	Number of schools
12 to 30	120
31 to 60	176
61 to 90	51
91 to 120	41
121 to 150	5
151 to 200	6

N=399

**Q9. Key stage 4: Do you receive the 120 guided learning hours?**

Answer	Percentage
Yes	82%
No	18%

N=494

**Q.10 Rate the following: "Based on the time allocation I have indicated, the current curriculum can be delivered effectively."** (Refers to Q8 and Q9.)

Rating	Percentage
Strongly agree	8.5%
Agree	29.5%
Neither	11%
Disagree	38%
Strongly disagree	13%

N=516

**Q11. How is food taught in your school, for the majority of hours, for each Key Stage?**

Key stage 3

How is food taught?	Percentage
Cross curricular approach, adopting a theme	0.3%
'Drop down' or activity days	0%
Timetabled lessons, weekly throughout the year	18.7%
Timetabled lessons, fortnightly throughout the year	10.7%
Timetabled lessons on a rotation for half of the year	21.3%
Timetabled lessons on a rotation for one term per school year	33.5%
Timetabled lessons on a rotation for less than a term in the year	15.5%

N=495

Key stage 4

How is food taught?	Percentage
Cross curricular approach, adopting a theme	0%
'Drop down' or activity days	0%
Timetabled lessons, weekly throughout the year	91.2%
Timetabled lessons, fortnightly throughout the year	8.4%
Timetabled lessons on a rotation for half of the year	0%
Timetabled lessons on a rotation for one term per school year	0.4%
Timetabled lessons on a rotation for less than a term in the year	0%

N=478

**Q12. What is currently taught in your food lessons? What is the emphasis of its different components?**

Component	Significant emphasis	Moderate emphasis	Some emphasis	Low emphasis	No emphasis
Healthy eating and nutrition (n=516)	71.1%	24.0%	3.9%	1.0%	0%
Cooking/ practical work (n=512)	78.5%	18.2%	3.3%	0%	0%
Where food comes from (n=509)	17.7%	46.6%	28.7%	7.1%	0%
Food science (n=500)	18.4%	40.0%	25.0%	14.2%	2.4%
Food safety and hygiene (n=517)	75.6%	19.5%	4.1%	0.8%	0%
Sensory evaluation (n=504)	13.5%	41.9%	30.8%	12.7%	1.2%
Sustainability (n=507)	10.3%	36.5%	40.6%	10.7%	2.0%
Food from around the world (n=508)	15.9%	41.1%	32.7%	8.3%	2.0%
Tackling food insecurity (n=491)	2.9%	23.6%	34.4%	27.7%	11.4%
Planning and cooking to feed yourself (n=505)	35.8%	33.9%	20.8%	7.1%	2.4%

**Q13. Do you offer 'food' at Key Stage 4 (GCSE or vocational courses)?**

Answer	Percentage
Yes	96.5%
No	3.5%

N=491

**Q14. How many students in Year 10 and Year 11 this year?**

The average number in Key Stage 4 is 63 students (median 56), with the range 4 to 350.

Number of students	Number of schools
Up to 10	16
11 to 40	142
41 to 80	197
81 to 120	73
121 to 160	34
161 to 200	4
201 to 300	1
300+	1

N=468

**Q15. Do you currently offer post 16 food/catering vocational courses?**

Answers	Percentage
Yes 86 – 23%	23%
No, we do not offer any post 16 food courses	59%
No, we do not offer any post 16 courses	18%

N=371

The following question was asked to respondents who answered 'YES' to Q15.

**Q16. Which course/s do you offer?**

The majority of schools, who were able to offer Level 3, offered WJEC Level 3 Food Science and Nutrition courses. Other related topics mentioned include BTEC Hospitality, Leith's Professional Cookery Level 3, IB Food Science and Technology, and BTEC Home Cooking Skills. The data also includes mentions of enrichment courses, such as "Lunch on a Loan" and "Culinary Skills," as well as in-house culinary skills training. It appears that the courses mentioned are focused on providing knowledge and skills in food science, nutrition, hospitality, catering, and cooking, with the aim of preparing students for further studies or careers in these fields.

N=85

The following question was asked to respondents who answered 'NO' to Q15.

#### Q17. Why do you not offer post 16 courses in food?

Feedback primarily highlights the reasons why there is a lack of availability or interest in offering A-level or Level 3 food science and nutrition courses in schools. Here are the main themes that emerge:

- **Curriculum and Awarding Organisation Choices:** The limited availability and recognition of suitable qualifications, such as not having A-level Food and Nutrition or having a limited choice of exam boards like WJEC, impact the decision to offer these courses. Some schools mention the discontinuation of A-level courses (Food Technology and Food and Nutrition) or lack of highly awarded qualifications as reasons for not offering them.
- **School Priorities and Policies:** Some schools prioritize academic subjects or A-level courses recognized by universities, leading to a lack of interest in vocational courses such as Level 3 Food Science and Nutrition. School policies or decisions made by senior leadership teams (SLT) also play a role in determining which courses are offered.
- **Lack of Demand for vocational courses:** Many schools mention a lack of student interest or insufficient student uptake as a reason for not offering A-level or Level 3 Food Science and Nutrition courses. This lack of demand is often attributed to the removal of A-level food courses, small class sizes, competition from local colleges, or students leaving at 16 to pursue other educational opportunities.
- **Funding and Viability:** Budget constraints, lower budgets for post-16 education, and the need for sufficient student numbers to make the course financially viable are mentioned as challenges in offering A-level or Level 3 food courses.
- **Staffing and Expertise:** Staff shortage, a shortage of qualified food teachers, and insufficient subject knowledge among existing staff members are commonly cited reasons for not offering these courses. Some schools mention the difficulty in recruiting specialized food teachers or the need to train unqualified staff members.
- **Facilities and Resources:** Limited facilities, such as a lack of food rooms or insufficient rooming capacity, are mentioned as barriers to offering A-level or Level 3 courses. Schools with only one food room often find it challenging to accommodate additional courses. Additionally, issues related to timetabling and limited resources are mentioned as hindrances.

N=215

#### Q18. Generally, are there sufficient post 16 (level 3) 'food' vocational exam choices available?

Answer	Percentage
Yes	7%
No	93%

N=306

Teachers were invited to discuss their answer:

The feedback indicates a strong demand for the reinstatement of an A-Level course in the field of food. Many teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the limited options available, with only one vocational course (WJEC Level 3 Food Science and Nutrition) being offered in some schools. The current courses are criticised for being too focused on food science and nutrition, lacking practical skills, and not providing a suitable academic qualification. Students and parents desire an A-Level option to provide academic rigour and enhance future prospects.

The absence of an A-Level course also affects university acceptance, career progression, and the availability of qualified food teachers. There is a need for more diverse and tailored courses that cater to different interests, such as food science, food preparation skills, nutrition, and catering.

The vocational options available, such as BTEC courses, are not always preferred due to the perceived lack of academic status. Additionally, there is a desire for courses that align with the content and progression of the GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition.

The lack of suitable options affects both grammar schools and independent schools, with some schools only endorsing A-Level study and not offering vocational courses. Limited resources, facilities, and teaching capacity are also mentioned as challenges in providing post-16 food courses. Overall, there is a clear demand for more comprehensive, practical, and academically recognized options in the field of food studies at the post-16 level.

N=277

## Section C: How teachers would like food education to be taught in the future

This section gathered information about the future of food education.

### Q19. In terms of the National Curriculum, should food be removed from D&T?

(NB - this would be for primary and secondary age phases, not just one age phase.)

Answer	Percentage
Yes	73.5%
No	26.5%

N=517

Questions 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 were answered by respondents who answered 'YES' to Q19.

### Q20. Where should 'food education' sit?

Select the subjects that would form the department or faculty. (Select 1 or more.)

Answer	Percentage*
Science	13.1%
PSHE	4.5%
PE	6.3%
Art	0%
Stand-alone subject	94%
Other	2.4%

N=381 \*Teachers could select one or more.

### Q21. What would 'food education' be called as a subject? (i.e. as on the school timetable)

The responses provided various names for a subject related to food, nutrition, cooking, and health. Some of the popular ones include Food and Nutrition, Food Preparation and Nutrition, Food Studies, Food Science and Nutrition, Cooking and Nutrition, and Food Education.

Some respondents suggested adding additional topics such as sustainability and catering, while others stressed the importance of keeping the subject simple and accessible. A few respondents mentioned issues with affordable healthy food and the need for better food education.

Top 5 names

- Food and nutrition 66
- Food preparation and nutrition 29
- Food studies 12
- Cooking and nutrition 8
- Food education 5

N=374

## Q22. What is your reason for this change?

Based on the provided data, some key points that emerge regarding the subject of Food and its separation from Design Technology (D&T) include:

- **Dedicated curriculum:** Teachers call for a dedicated curriculum (Programmes of Study) that focuses on nutrition, health, practical cooking skills, and food preparation. The subject's relevance, importance, and connection to real-life skills and issues like healthy eating, sustainability, and food sources are emphasised. They believe that Food should be given sufficient time and attention, and that the curriculum should reflect the importance of these aspects. Many food teachers believe that the current integration of food into D&T is outdated and does not reflect the unique nature of the subject. There is a perception that food and D&T have minimal links and that food is "shoehorned" into D&T.
- **Stand-alone subject:** Teachers express a strong desire for Food to be treated as a stand-alone subject, distinct from D&T. They believe that Food has its own unique characteristics and should not be integrated or combined with other subjects. Food is seen as an important subject in its own right and deserves more recognition within the curriculum. There is a need for more curriculum time and autonomy for food education. Teachers feel that the current name "Food Technology" is outdated and does not accurately represent the subject. Teachers feel that food education should have its own specific timetabled lessons, separate from D&T's rotation system.
- **Recognition as an academic subject:** Teachers argue that Food should be recognized as an academic subject in its own right, deserving of the same status and attention as other subjects. They highlight the educational value and relevance of Food and advocate for its inclusion as a core subject in the curriculum. Many teachers believe that food should be given more respect, recognition, and funding within the education system.
- **Change:** There is a desire for a change in the perception and image of food education, moving away from outdated notions of 'baking' and focusing more on broader aspects like nutrition and food science.
- **Specialist teachers:** There is a need for specialist Food teachers who have expertise in nutrition, cooking skills, and food preparation. Teachers emphasize the importance of having dedicated professionals who can provide quality education in the subject. Food teachers feel that they cannot effectively teach other D&T subjects, such as Resistant Materials (RM) or Graphics, because they are so different from food. The teaching approaches, content, and assessment methods for food and D&T are perceived to be very different, causing challenges for teachers. Some teachers express concerns about the lack of specialist training and expertise in teaching food, especially when taught by non-specialist teachers.
- **Healthy eating and sustainability:** There should be an emphasis on the importance of teaching students about healthy eating habits, sustainability, and food security. Teachers believe that these topics should be integrated into the Food curriculum to promote awareness and responsible practices.

The key points collectively indicate a strong belief among teachers that Food should be treated as a distinct subject, with its own dedicated resources, curriculum, and specialized teachers. The data reflects a strong desire for food education to be recognized as a distinct subject with its own curriculum, teaching approaches, and dedicated lesson time. Teachers emphasize the importance of providing comprehensive education about nutrition, practical cooking skills, healthy eating, and sustainability, while addressing important societal issues and recognising Food as an important academic discipline.

N=364

### Q23. Who would be the winners/losers of this change?

In the feedback, there are multiple responses indicating winners and no losers in the scenario of making Food a standalone subject. The winners mentioned include students, teachers, food departments, specialist teachers, public health, families, future generations, and the subject itself.

Some responses also highlight the potential benefits such as improved curriculum, better education, increased subject recognition, enhanced life skills, and healthier eating habits. However, a few responses mention potential losers, such as D&T departments losing time, staffing and timetabling issues, budget constraints, and possible challenges for lone food teachers.

Overall, the majority of the responses emphasize the positive outcomes and advantages of making Food a standalone subject.

N=336

### Q24. If 'food' were to be removed from D&T, do you believe that the time allocated to 'food' in D&T should be removed and transferred elsewhere?

Answer	Percentage
Yes	64%
No	36%

N=367

Teachers were provided to option to provide additional feedback, which included:

- There is a shortage of teachers, particularly in subjects like D&T (Design Technology) and Food.
- There is a need for more time to cover all the National Curriculum points for D&T.
- Some suggest that PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education) or Child Development courses should be utilized to address issues such as child poverty, parenting, and budgeting.
- Some schools have implemented a rotation system for teaching Food and D&T, but there are challenges in fitting everything within the limited time available.
- There are suggestions to allocate dedicated time for food as a standalone subject, separate from D&T. Some argue that D&T should have its own allocated time to encourage innovation, problem-solving, and practical application of Math and Science.
- The allocation of time between Food and D&T varies across schools, with some advocating for equal time and others emphasizing the need for more time for one subject over the other. Staffing issues and timetabling challenges are mentioned as factors influencing the allocation of time between Food and D&T.
- There are calls for more time for practical activities and skill development in both Food and D&T.
- The importance of teaching food as a standalone subject and its impact on health and well-being are highlighted.
- Suggestions are made to allocate more time to both Food and D&T, either by redistributing existing time or by advocating for longer rotations or extended lessons.
- Some express concerns about the impact of allocating more time to Food on other subjects or the overall curriculum.
- The need for training food teachers and addressing curriculum content is mentioned.
- Some schools already allocate separate time for Food and D&T, while others combine them within a department or rotation system.
- The importance of practical skills, informed consumer choices, and the cultural significance of food are emphasized.

- The impact of timetabling, funding, and the overall curriculum structure is mentioned as factors influencing the allocation of time.
- Some mention the need to enhance D&T education and skills development, while others argue for the protection and promotion of food education.

N=181

The questions 25 and 26 were posed to respondents who answered 'NO' to Q19, should food be removed from D&T. Respondents who answered 'YES' to Q19 did not answer these questions.

#### Q25. What is your reason for keeping food in D&T?

The feedback suggests that there are several reasons to keep the subject of food within the Design and Technology (D&T):

- **Flexibility and variety:** Teaching staff in the D&T department can teach multiple disciplines, allowing for the offering of multiple groups per year at Key Stage 4 (KS4). This flexibility works well with other D&T subjects and provides a range of skills for students.
- **Natural links:** There are natural connections and links between food and other D&T subjects, making it a suitable fit within the D&T curriculum. It is seen as a design subject based on practical work, which aligns well with other D&T disciplines.
- **Curriculum value:** Keeping food within the D&T department ensures that it receives curriculum time. There is a concern that if it is not delivered under D&T, it may be marginalized or lose curriculum time, especially at Key Stage 3 (KS3). Some also feel that it has gained greater recognition and value since becoming part of D&T.
- **Staffing and support:** Having food within the D&T department allows for better collaboration and support among teachers. Teachers trained in practical methods are more equipped to teach food, and there is concern about allocating non-specialist teachers from other departments to teach the subject.
- **Teamwork and support:** Being part of a larger department, such as D&T, provides support, collaboration, and shared resources. Food teachers appreciate the teamwork and cross-subject experiences that a larger department offers.
- **Historical context and familiarity:** Food has traditionally been part of the D&T department, and there is a sense of familiarity and continuity associated with this arrangement. Some feel that changing its location may lead to confusion or make it more susceptible to being phased out.
- **Practical and problem-solving skills:** Food education is seen as an important subject that imparts practical skills and problem-solving abilities. It is believed to fit well within the D&T department, as it shares a focus on problem-solving and practical skills.
- **Life skills and health education:** Food education is considered an essential life skill and is seen as foundational to personal, social, and health education (PSHE). It supports children in understanding food preparation, healthy eating, and important life skills for adulthood.
- **Teacher expertise and retention:** Many food teachers come from a D&T background and may teach both subjects. Moving food to a different department may force teachers to switch departments, potentially leading to a shortage of qualified food teachers. The support and expertise available within the D&T department are seen as important for teacher retention.

N=131

## Q26. Would any changes be needed to keep food in D&T?

Key points raised include:

- **Curriculum Content:** Some respondents believe that the current curriculum documents for Food are already separate enough from Design and Technology (D&T), while others feel there should be a more detailed and standalone curriculum for Food.
- **Integration and Differentiation:** There are differing opinions on whether food education should be integrated with other subjects or stand alone. Some suggest more individuality for each subject within D&T, while others emphasize the distinctiveness and merit of food education as a separate subject.
- **Practical Emphasis:** Many respondents express a desire for greater emphasis on practical skills and less focus on theoretical knowledge in food education.
- **Curriculum Time:** Several respondents suggest allocating more time on the timetable for food education, including longer lessons or additional Design and Technology (D&T) lessons at Key Stage 3 (KS3).
- **Teacher Training and Staffing:** The data highlights challenges related to teacher expertise and recruitment. Respondents mention the need for more training for non-specialist teachers and the difficulty in finding qualified food teachers.
- **Funding and Resources:** Lack of funding for schools is a recurring concern, with some teachers having to buy food ingredients themselves, resulting in lower quality ingredients for cooking classes. Respondents emphasize the need for significant investment in equipment, resources, and regular budget allocation for quality ingredients.

N=106

## Q27. Where would the SLT in your school want 'food education' to sit curriculum wise (subject department/faculty)?

Answer	Percentage*
Stand-alone subject	50%
Science	11.3%
PSHE	8%
Art	7.4%
PE	6.6%
D&T	14.8%
Health and wellbeing	0.6%
Unsure	5.6%
Other	3.3%

N=486 \*Teachers could select one or more.

## Q28. What do your SLT believe are the challenges for 'food education' (if any)?

The feedback highlights several challenges related to food education, specifically regarding rooms and teachers. The key points:

- **Recruitment and staffing:** The shortage of food teachers is a recurring issue. Recruiting qualified food teachers is a significant challenge, and there is a shortage of specialist food teachers. Staffing constraints affect the availability and quality of food lessons and the ability to offer the subject to all interested students. Finding qualified food teachers is difficult and costly.
- **Cost and resources:** The overall cost of running food education programs, including ingredients, equipment, energy, and staffing, is a significant concern. Limited budgets and the financial burden on schools impact the department's ability to provide quality food education are commonly discussed. Providing fit-for-purpose food rooms is expensive, and modernizing them can be a financial challenge. Class sizes have increased, making it harder for students

to progress quickly and safely. Money is required to provide ingredients and maintain equipment. Funding issues, especially for pupil premium students and low-income families, impact the provision of food education.

- **Integration with other subjects:** There are discussions about how food education fits into the curriculum, whether it should be a standalone subject or part of a Design and Technology rotation. The subject's position in key school performance metrics is also mentioned.
- **Time and timetable constraints:** Delivering the food education curriculum effectively within limited time frames is a challenge. Limited time frames, short lessons, and scheduling conflicts with other subjects are mentioned as challenges. Timetabling issues arise due to the availability of food rooms and teachers.
- **Facilities and rooms:** Limited availability of food rooms and the need for additional rooms due to high demand are mentioned as challenges. The cost and logistics of building new rooms contribute to the difficulty.
- **Perception and support:** Some stakeholders, such as students, parents, and SLT (Senior Leadership Team), may not fully value food education or understand its importance. There is a need to increase awareness and support for the subject. There is also mention of misconceptions about food education being an easy or low-level subject.
- **Student engagement and preparation:** Engaging students in written work and theory-heavy components, such as GCSE exams and NEA (Non-Exam Assessment), can be challenging. Some students may lack knowledge of healthy food and food preparation skills.

N=409

#### Q29. Thinking about timetabling. How should food be taught in the future?

Key stage 3

How is food taught?	Percentage
Cross curricular approach, adopting a theme	0.8%
'Drop down' or activity days	0%
Timetabled lessons, weekly throughout the year	67.4%
Timetabled lessons, fortnightly throughout the year	8.2%
Timetabled lessons on a rotation for half of the year	14.2%
Timetabled lessons on a rotation for one term per school year	8.4%
Timetabled lessons on a rotation for less than a term in the year	1%

N=500

Key stage 4

How is food taught?	Percentage
Cross curricular approach, adopting a theme	0%
'Drop down' or activity days	0%
Timetabled lessons, weekly throughout the year	96%
Timetabled lessons, fortnightly throughout the year	3.8%
Timetabled lessons on a rotation for half of the year	0%
Timetabled lessons on a rotation for one term per school year	0.2%
Timetabled lessons on a rotation for less than a term in the year	0%

N=477

**Q30. What should be taught in future food education? What should be the emphasis of different components?**

Component	Significant emphasis	Moderate emphasis	Some emphasis	Low emphasis	No emphasis
Healthy eating and nutrition (n=511)	94%	6%	0%	0%	0%
Cooking/ practical work (n=513)	96%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Where food comes from (n=510)	50%	44%	6%	0%	0%
Food science (n=487)	25.3%	36.8%	26.7%	11.3%	1.8%
Food safety and hygiene (n=511)	83.2%	14.5%	2.3%	0%	0%
Sensory evaluation (n=505)	18.4%	41.4%	30.5%	8.3%	1.4%
Sustainability (n=510)	47.5%	38.2%	13.3%	1%	0%
Food from around the world (n=509)	36%	42.4%	19.6%	1.4%	0.6%
Tackling food insecurity (n=507)	34.7%	38.3%	21.1%	5.3%	0.6%
Planning and cooking to feed yourself (514)	85.8%	12.1%	21.1%	0%	0%

**Q31. How many hours to you think you would need to deliver the curriculum effectively?**

KS3: The average suggested for Key Stage 3 was 84 hours, 28 hours per year. The median was 80 hours over Key Stage 3. The range was from 12 to 360 hours over Key Stage 3.

Range of hours	Number of schools
12 to 30	44
31 to 60	130
61 to 90	88
91 to 120	120
121 to 150	8
151 to 200	13
201 to 250	9
251 to 300	4
301 to 350	0
350+	2

N=418

KS4: The average reported for Key Stage 4 was 139 hours, 69.5 hours per year. The median was 120 hours over Key Stage 4. The range was from 60 to 360 hours over Key Stage 4.

Range of hours	Number of schools
60 to 100	4
101 to 120	230
121 to 160	143
161 to 200	39
201 to 250	10
251 to 300	2
300+	1

N=429

**Q32. In the future, should food education include sustainability, food systems and food security topics as part of the content?**

Answer	Percentage
Yes	86%
No	14%

N=514

**Questions 33, 34 and 35 were posed to respondents who answered 'YES' to Q32. Respondents who answered 'NO' to Q32 did not answer these questions.**

**Q33. What would this look like?**

Feedback suggests that the topic of food sustainability and its related aspects are integrated into the curriculum at various levels. The lessons involve a combination of theory and practical activities, focusing on topics such as food waste, seasonality, sustainable farming methods, food miles, and the environmental impact of food production.

There is an emphasis on teaching students to make informed choices, budget effectively, and reduce food waste. Cross-curricular connections are encouraged to provide a holistic understanding of food systems and their implications. Practical experiences, visits, guest speakers, and real-life examples are incorporated to enhance learning.

The goal is to educate students about sustainable food practices, foster awareness of the environmental and social impacts of food production, and empower them to make responsible food choices.

N=341

#### Q34. Would additional time/resources be needed? If yes, what?

The data suggests that there is a general consensus among students and teachers that more time, resources, and funding are needed to effectively incorporate sustainability and food systems education into the curriculum. They also highlight the importance of practical experiences, collaboration with external stakeholders, and integration of the topic across various subjects.

Various themes and suggestions image from the feedback:

- **Time:** Many participants mentioned the need for more time allocated to sustainability and food systems education. Suggestions include increasing timetable hours, dedicating specific lessons or double lessons, and incorporating the topic into the regular curriculum.
- **Resources and Funding:** Participants emphasized the need for adequate resources and funding to support effective teaching of sustainability and food systems. This includes access to teaching materials, textbooks, videos, worksheets, and online resources. Funding is also required for ingredients, equipment, school kitchen gardens, trips, and guest speakers.
- **Teacher Training and Development:** The data highlights the importance of training and professional development for teachers. Participants suggest providing additional training on food security, food production, and sustainability topics to enhance teachers' knowledge and teaching skills.
- **Practical Application and Hands-on Learning:** Many participants expressed the desire for practical experiences and hands-on learning opportunities for students. Suggestions include incorporating activities like growing food, gardening, and visiting farms or food producers to provide real-world context.
- **Integration with Other Subjects:** There is a recurring suggestion to integrate sustainability and food systems education with other subjects, such as science, geography, humanities, and PHSE (Personal, Health, and Social Education). Participants believe that cross-curricular connections can enhance students' understanding and engagement with the topic.
- **Collaboration and External Engagement:** The data highlights the importance of collaboration with external stakeholders, including industry experts, local communities, and organizations. Participants suggest inviting guest speakers, arranging industry tours, and engaging in community work to provide students with practical insights and real-world connections.
- **Accessibility and Up-to-date Information:** Participants stress the need for up-to-date and accessible information and resources on sustainability and food systems. They suggest using technology, online platforms, and signposted resources to make the subject more engaging and readily available to students.
- **Sustainable Practices:** The incorporation of sustainable practices, such as recycling, waste reduction, and responsible food consumption, is mentioned as an essential component of sustainability and food systems education.

N=295

### Q35. If sustainability were added, would this mean keeping 'food' within D&T?

Answer	Percentage
Yes	23.2%
No	76.8%

N=423

Teachers were given the opportunity to explain their answer.

- Many teachers argue that sustainability should be taught as a cross-curricular topic and not exclusively within D&T or food subjects. They believe that sustainability is relevant to multiple subjects, such as geography, science, and humanities.
- Some respondents emphasize the uniqueness of food sustainability and suggest that it should be taught as a separate subject rather than being grouped with D&T. They believe that food has its own specific issues and should be treated independently.
- There is a division of opinions regarding whether food should be integrated into D&T or remain a standalone subject. Those in favour of integration suggest that there are natural links between food and design, such as sustainable packaging, while others argue that food and D&T have distinct focuses and should be separate.
- Several respondents mention that sustainability is already taught in their school's food curriculum, indicating that it is recognized as an important topic.
- Many participants mention the cross-curricular nature of sustainability and its presence in various subjects like geography, science, and PSHE (personal, social, health, and economic education). They suggest that sustainability should be included in all subjects as appropriate.
- Some respondents express a lack of understanding regarding the link between sustainability and D&T, believing that sustainability is not exclusive to DT and can be addressed in multiple subjects.
- There is a mention of sustainability in relation to specific areas within D&T, such as sustainable materials and sourcing, suggesting that sustainability is already considered within the D&T curriculum.
- A few respondents highlight the importance of sustainability in food education, particularly regarding food production, provenance, air miles, fair trade, and food waste. They argue that sustainability should be a significant aspect of learning about food.
- Some respondents mention the need for specialist food teachers or expertise to effectively teach sustainability within the food curriculum.
- Overall, there is recognition that sustainability is a crucial topic and should be taught to students, regardless of whether it is integrated into D&T or remains a standalone subject. The importance of teaching sustainability as a way of life and its relevance to future generations is emphasized.

N=308

**For those that answered 'NO' to Q32, should sustainability be taught, the following question was posed.**

**Q36. Why would you not include sustainability, food systems and food security?**

Key points:

- Many teachers express concerns about time constraints and the potential impact on practical skill-building. They argue that there is already limited time available and that practical skills and healthy eating should take priority.
- Some respondents suggest that sustainability and related topics are already covered in other subjects like geography, PSHE, and science. They propose integrating these topics into existing subjects rather than creating standalone courses.
- Several teachers mention that sustainability is an important aspect that should be included, but they are less convinced about the necessity of food systems and food security in the curriculum. They believe that sustainability can be taught through practical engagement and an understanding of nutrition.
- The lack of time and excessive content in the curriculum are recurring concerns. Respondents worry that adding more topics would lead to a superficial coverage of all subjects and a loss of focus.
- A few teachers highlight the importance of practical skills, nutrition, and healthy eating. They argue that the emphasis should be on teaching students how to cook nutritious meals on a limited budget.
- Some respondents suggest that sustainability should be included at the KS4 level, while others argue for its inclusion across all grade levels. There are differing opinions on the appropriate timing for teaching these topics.
- A few participants mention the potential overlap between sustainability and D&T or other subjects, suggesting that these topics can be covered within existing courses.
- Overall, while there is recognition of the importance of sustainability, there are concerns about time constraints, content overload, and the potential impact on practical skill-building. Integrating sustainability into existing subjects is suggested as a possible solution, and opinions vary regarding the inclusion of food systems and food security.

N=65

**Q37. Overall, what should the content emphasis of future food education be?**

The feedback indicates that there is a strong emphasis on practical skills, nutrition, and healthy eating in food education. There is a desire to teach students how to choose, prepare, and cook healthy food within a budget, while also addressing issues such as food waste and sustainability. Many respondents highlight the importance of life skills, including budgeting, meal planning, and understanding the nutritional content of food. There is a call for more practical cooking and less focus on written work or scientific aspects unless at higher levels of study. Overall, the aim is to equip students with the knowledge and skills to lead healthy lifestyles and make informed food choices.

Based on the feedback, the following topics occur frequently:

- **Food education for all:** There is a call for food education to be accessible to all students, regardless of their background. It is seen as a valuable subject that provides essential knowledge and skills for all individuals.
- **Practical skills:** There is a strong emphasis on practical cooking skills and the ability to cook nutritious meals. Students are encouraged to learn basic cooking techniques, meal planning, healthy substitutions, and food presentation styles. Practical skills are seen as essential life skills.
- **Healthy Eating and Nutrition:** The importance of nutrition, healthy eating, and understanding dietary needs is highlighted. Students should be knowledgeable about the nutritional content of food, make healthy food choices, and develop a balanced diet. The

focus is on promoting good health and well-being, meal planning, balanced diets, and addressing health issues like obesity and diabetes.

- **Budgeting and cost-effective cooking:** Teaching students how to budget, shop for affordable ingredients, and cook nutritious meals on a budget is mentioned frequently. The aim is to provide practical knowledge and skills for cooking affordable meals for oneself and the family.
- **Life skills and independence:** Many respondents believe that food education should focus on equipping students with practical life skills, such as the ability to cook for themselves and their families, as well as how to cook on a budget and make cost-effective food choices. This includes teaching students how to plan, prepare, and serve nutritious meals independently.
- **Critical Thinking and Research:** Some respondents mention the importance of teaching students how to critically evaluate information and debunk misinformation related to nutrition. This includes promoting accurate knowledge based on scientific research and providing tools for students to make informed choices.
- **Career and Industry Relevance:** There is a desire to prepare students for careers in the food and hospitality industry. This includes developing skills that are relevant to the industry, such as food preparation, understanding food production systems, and practical knowledge for working in the field.
- **Sustainability and food waste:** There is a concern for sustainability and reducing food waste. Students should learn about the environmental impact of food choices, food production methods, and ways to reduce waste through meal planning, using leftovers, and making sustainable food choices.
- **Food science:** Some teachers mentioned the importance of understanding food science principles and the role of nutrients in the body. This includes learning about food processing, food safety, and the impact of food on health and disease prevention.
- **Food provenance and sourcing:** Several responses mention the importance of knowing where food comes from and understanding food provenance. This includes learning about food production methods, seasonal foods, and making informed choices about food sourcing.
- **Food safety and hygiene:** The importance of food safety and hygiene is mentioned as an integral part of food education. Students should learn proper food handling, storage, and preparation techniques to ensure safe and healthy meals.

Overall, the feedback reflects a comprehensive approach to food education, combining practical cooking skills, nutrition knowledge, sustainability, and an understanding of the broader impact of food choices on health, the environment, and society.

N=428

**Q38. Would you want to continue to offer KS4 in ‘food’ (GCSE and vocational courses)?**

Answer	Percentage
Yes	99.5%
No	0.5%

N=475

**Q39. Would any change be necessary? What would they be?**

The feedback suggests that there is a consensus among teachers regarding the NEA1 (Food Science Investigation) component of the GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition curriculum. Many teachers express dissatisfaction with NEA1, citing reasons such as it being time-consuming, wasteful of ingredients, repetitive, and not beneficial for students. Some participants feel that there is not enough time to complete the NEA1 and NEA2 tasks within the current timeframe of year 11. They propose removing NEA1 and reallocating the time and resources to practical skills and other relevant areas of the curriculum. More time for NEA2: Several respondents mentioned the need for additional time to complete NEA2, as it is currently challenging to balance NEA tasks with exam preparation in Year 11.

Teachers emphasised the need for more flexibility and practicality in the curriculum, including elements such as budgeting, food choice, and real-world applications. They suggest reducing the emphasis on food science and theoretical content, particularly for lower-ability students, while increasing practical elements and hands-on learning experiences. Many respondents felt that the GCSE course has too much content to cover in the given time. They suggested reducing the content to allow for a more manageable workload.

Some participants feel that there is too much emphasis on food science in the course, and they would prefer a greater focus on practical cooking skills, nutrition, and other relevant topics. Suggestions include reducing the content, removing or reducing the scientific investigation, and including more real-life skills like budgeting, meal planning, and sustainability. Some respondents suggested incorporating key skills, such as budgeting, sustainability, and nutrition, into the course to make it more relevant and practical for everyday life.

There are calls for more support, resources, and training for teachers, as well as a need for more staff to effectively deliver the curriculum. Some teachers suggest introducing additional qualifications, such as a GCSE in catering, and offering vocational courses alongside the traditional GCSE to cater to a wider range of student interests and abilities. Some participants suggest revaluing vocational education and treating subjects like Hospitality and Catering on par with academic subjects. Some teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the current exam board and suggested considering a different Awarding Organisation for the GCSE course.

Overall, the feedback from teachers highlights a desire for a curriculum that is more practical, relevant, flexible, and inclusive, while reducing the burdensome and wasteful aspects of the current NEA1 component.

N=379

**Q40. Would you want to introduce an A-level offer to your students in the future?**

Answer	Percentage
Yes	89%
No	11%

N=336

**Question 41 was posed to respondents who answered 'YES' to Q40. Respondents who answered 'NO' to Q40 did not answer this question.**

**Q41. What would the title and main content of an A-level include?**

The feedback suggests that a course in *Food Science and Nutrition* or *Food Preparation and Nutrition* is desired at the A-level. The course should build upon the content covered in the GCSE level, focusing on nutrition, cooking skills, food science, and practical applications. It should include in-depth knowledge of nutrients, dietary needs, food safety, food production, sustainability, and the impact of food on health and the environment.

The course may also cover topics such as food technology, food industry, food provenance, and menu planning. Practical skills development, research projects, and industry placements are also mentioned as potential components of the course. The emphasis on science, practical cooking skills, and the application of knowledge in real-life scenarios is highlighted. Some respondents also express a preference for a course that aligns with university-level studies or vocational pathways in the food industry.

N=269

For those that answered 'NO' to Q40, the following question was posed.

**Q42. Why would you not wish to introduce A-level offer?**

Feedback included:

- **Recruitment Challenges:** It was mentioned that there may be difficulty in recruiting suitably qualified staff for teaching A-level Food.
- **Resource and Staffing Constraints:** Concerns were raised about the need for additional staffing, lack of facilities, resources, or suitable kitchens to offer A-level Food. It was noted that kitchens would need to be updated or improved before offering A-level Food.
- **Lack of Confidence or Competence:** Some respondents expressed a lack of confidence or competence in teaching A-level Food due to their own limitations or lack of subject knowledge and experience.
- **Time and Planning:** Some respondents expressed the need for sufficient time and planning to develop a new A-level course in Food.
- **Theory-based vs. Practical Focus:** It was noted that A-levels tend to be more theory-based, whereas some respondents believed that some students, particularly those interested in practical cooking skills may benefit more from practical lessons.
- **Low Uptake:** Concerns were raised about the lack of interest or low demand for A-level Food among students.
- **Availability of Alternative Options:** Some respondents mentioned that there are existing and better food courses offered at local colleges or sixth form centres, which provide more specialized resources and facilities. Some respondents suggested offering alternative qualifications such as Cambridge Technicals (Cam Tech) or BTEC instead of A-level Food.

Overall, the reasons and concerns revolve around factors such as personal subject knowledge, staffing, student demand, resources, practical focus, and availability of alternative options in colleges or specialized centres.

N=35

**Q43. What will it take to realise the changes you've described? (Consider curriculum updates, planning, schemes of learning/work, teacher training [initial & ongoing], resources ...)**

The feedback suggests that in order to improve food education in schools, there is a need for several changes and investments. These include:

- **Government Support:** Teachers emphasize the importance of government support and recognition for food education. This includes government approval, funding, and initiatives to promote the subject. Collaboration between the government, education sector, and the NHS is suggested to address the importance of healthy eating and nutrition.
- **Profile and Perception:** Teachers express the need to raise the profile and perception of food education, highlighting its academic nature and importance for students' future health and well-being. This involves rebranding food education, offering A-level courses, and challenging stereotypes associated with the subject.
- **Curriculum updates:** Teachers highlight the importance of continuity in curriculum planning and long-term support to ensure the successful implementation of changes in food education. The curriculum should be updated to reflect current food trends, sustainability, plant-based diets, and other relevant topics. This may involve revising schemes of work and lesson plans. The need for clearer marking schemes and standardization across exam boards is highlighted. Suggestions include incorporating food science and analysis into practical tasks and updating schemes of work.
- **Teacher Training and Recruitment:** There is a strong emphasis on better training and recruitment of qualified teachers. This includes initial teacher training, retraining existing teachers, and increasing the number of trained food teachers. Support for subject relevant

mentors and working with outside companies is also mentioned. There is a shortage of food teachers, and it is important to recruit and train more teachers who specialize in food education.

- **Funding and Budget Allocation:** Additional funding is seen as crucial for providing resources, ingredients, equipment, and facilities. Adequate budgets and budget allocation are emphasized to support food education effectively.
- **Time and Resources:** Teachers express the need for more planning time, better timetabling, and longer lesson durations. Adequate resources, including textbooks, kitchen equipment, and facilities, are also mentioned as essential for effective food education. There is a need for high-quality, up-to-date resources and digital tools to support food education, including a platform for teacher collaboration and support.
- **Collaboration and Cross-Curricular Integration:** Suggestions include collaboration with educational charities, cross-curricular integration with subjects like geography and business, and linking food education to real-world issues such as sustainability and food security.
- **Technician support:** Schools should have sufficient technician support to manage the provision of ingredients and assist with health and safety requirements in food classrooms.
- **Smaller class sizes:** Class sizes should be appropriate to accommodate practical cooking activities, and there should be a sufficient number of food rooms available.
- **Changes to GCSE specifications:** The current GCSE content and NEA assessment may need to be reviewed and revised to make them more practical, achievable, and suitable for students with different abilities.

Overall, the data highlights the importance of investment in teacher training, resources, curriculum updates, and government support to improve food education in schools.

N=411

#### Q44. Any last words on curriculum reform/change?

Teachers emphasised the importance of food and nutrition education in schools. They expressed concerns about the current state of food education and call for reforms to make it more relevant, practical, and engaging for students. The following key points were made:

- **Broad Access and Compulsory Education:** The subject should be accessible to all students and compulsory at all key stages to ensure that everyone learns basic cooking skills and nutritional knowledge.
- **Health and Economic Benefits:** Food education is seen as essential for improving the health and well-being of individuals and the nation as a whole. It is also viewed as a major employer and contributor to the economy.
- **Value of Food Education:** There is a need to educate young people about the value of food and its impact on their current and future health. This includes teaching them how to cook and make informed choices about their food. Teachers emphasize the need to prioritize food education, improve health and safety regulations, and create more career pathways through further and higher education after age 16.
- **Need for Government Support:** Teachers call for government support and recognition of the importance of food education. They want dedicated curriculum time, funding, and the reinstatement of an A-level qualification.
- **Perception and recognition of food as a subject:** Teachers feel that food should be valued and recognized as an important subject, not just seen as "cookery." They suggest promoting its importance, providing more career options, and improving funding and resources.
- **Reforms and Changes:** Teachers propose various reforms, including removing unnecessary components, reducing theory work, introducing practical exams, increasing funding and resources, and listening to the opinions of teachers in shaping the curriculum.
- **Collaboration and input from teachers:** Teachers express a desire to be more involved in the decision-making process, with opportunities for thorough discussions and input before final specifications are published.

- **Content:** There is a strong desire to emphasize practical aspects of food education, including cooking skills, presentation skills, food preparation, and budgeting. Some teachers believe that the GCSE food curriculum is too advanced for 15-16-year-old students and that it should be more suitable for KS5. They suggest removing NEA1 and adding it to NEA2, where students can discuss cooking methods in their reviews.
- **Provision of Ingredients:** It is important to provide ingredients for all students to ensure inclusion and practical learning.
- **Large class sizes and room limitations:** Teachers struggle with large class sizes, and it is suggested that there should be a legal limit on the number of students in a room to facilitate teaching food effectively.
- **Changes to GCSE:** The current GCSE curriculum is criticized for being too science-focused, inaccessible to average students, and lacking in practical elements. The NEA1 (non-exam assessment) component is particularly unpopular.

Overall feedback emphasises the urgency to improve food and nutrition education in schools, address practical aspects, make it relevant and enjoyable for students, and ensure government support and recognition of its importance. Teachers are advocating for changes that prioritise practical learning, address concerns regarding workload, assessment, and curriculum content, and promote the significance of food education. There is a consensus on the need for better support and recognition of food as an essential subject in schools, taking into consideration the concerns surrounding NEAs (non-exam assessment) at GCSE.

N=271

## Acknowledgement

The Food Teachers Centre wishes to thank:

- the teachers that completed the survey
- The British Nutrition Foundation
- The Design and Technology Association
- Pearson plc.

The survey and report were designed, collated and written by Louise T Davies and Roy Ballam.

## The Food Teachers Centre

The Food Teachers Centre is a professional support network with 8,000+ secondary school food teachers. It was established in 2013 to help with secondary school food and nutrition teaching, including Key Stage 3, GCSE and vocational exams in food and nutrition. The Food Teachers Centre shares resources and ideas, and discusses issues. It gives teachers a powerful national voice with its campaigns.

The Food Teachers Centre is a place of: creative and innovative ideas and action; practical solutions; learning and sharing. Its manifesto for 2020-2025 is:

- (1) Proud to teach food
- (2) Food lessons for all
- (3) Feed future skills
- (4) Bring learning alive by cooking.

For further information about the Food Teachers Centre, go to: [www.foodteacherscentre.co.uk](http://www.foodteacherscentre.co.uk)

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