

Compass Group UK and Ireland reports significant progress in delivery of healthier meals

2 years ago



The UK's largest food and support services company, Compass Group UK and Ireland, has reported on its nutrition and wellbeing progress, as it works to support the lives, health and productivity of its customers and employees.

The food business which produces over 180.9m meals a year, has carried out an initial reformulation programme of 36,000 recipes, across the business, with its team of Registered Nutritionists and Culinary Directors. The focus was on reducing the levels of fat, sugar, and salt using the traffic light labelling criteria*. This programme has been hugely successful resulting in >90% of its recipes now containing low to medium amounts of sugar and salt.

The company that feeds people from children through to adults and the elderly has enhanced many of its healthy eating programmes to meet the varying nutritional needs of its customers. For example, in school meals over the past few years it has worked hard to reduce sugar, which has seen a 30% reduction in sugar across their menu cycles to date, exceeding the Government's target of 20%. This has been achieved through careful recipe reformulation and recipe creation. For example, its "fruity picnic bar" contains 66% fruit including apple, bananas and raisins and its "secret brownies" that contain beetroot, carrot, and sweet potato.

In its Business and Industry sector, which feeds thousands of the country's workers every day, it has switched 80% of its starchy carbohydrates into wholemeal varieties (up from 11% in 2020). In addition, 62% of its recipes now contain one of your five a day (an increase from 41% in 2020).

The company has also been working with its culinary leads and suppliers to improve the nutritional profile of menus. Changes include: – full fat mayonnaise switched to light mayonnaise in January 2023, removing over 30,000 grams of fat (equivalent of 60 blocks of butter); as well changing chocolate spread provider, which has removed >700kg of sugar.

As the UK's largest food and support services provider, the company takes its responsibility to provide healthy choices to customers and clients very seriously. This commitment will see the continued rollout of its reformulation programme.

The company's health and wellbeing strategy is focused on reducing salt, fat and sugar, while also increasing positive nutrients, embedding behavioural science, and educating customers, clients, and its own employees. The business has now set itself further targets which will see less than 10% of its dishes being high in saturated fat, and less than 5% of its dishes being high in salt by 2030. This is alongside its wider programme to reduce sugar ahead of Government reduction targets.

Whilst looking at nutrient reductions Compass is also focused on increasing wholegrains, fibre and vegetables. This is being done through working with culinary development teams, additional recipe reformulation, and working with our suppliers to source alternative products.

Nicky Martin, Director of Nutrition and Wellbeing, Compass Group UK & Ireland said: "As the UK's largest food and support services provider, serving over 180.9m meals a year, it is our responsibility to ensure that all our customers – from children through to the elderly, as well as our own people, have access to healthy and nutritious meals. I am delighted by our progress to date. We have achieved a huge amount through menu reformulation, but it's also important to continue providing our customers, clients, and employees with information on the food that they eat and provide access to nutritional information and wellness. I am looking forward to expanding our health and wellbeing strategy, which will see us take our menus above and beyond our existing healthy meal options."

Compass has also committed to providing its employees access to a Registered Nutritionist. Compass Group's [Nourished Life](#) platform provides accurate nutrition and health information on a range of relevant topics. There are also seasonal, healthy, sustainable recipes that are quick and easy to make at home. Nourished Life is accessed for free by thousands of people both in and outside the organisation every month and is continually updated.

Background data

The outcome of the reformulation work has resulted in:

- <6% of recipes are high in sugar
- <7% of recipes are high in salt
- <13% of recipes are high in fat
- <17% of recipes are high in saturated fat

*Saturated fats are found in many foods, both sweet and savoury. Most of them come from animal sources, including meat and dairy products, as well as some plant foods, such as palm oil and coconut oil. Eating too much saturated fats in your diet can raise "bad" LDL cholesterol in your blood, which can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. Cholesterol is a fatty substance that's mostly made by the body in the liver. It's carried in the blood as: low-density lipoprotein (LDL) and high-density lipoprotein

(HDL).

**The traffic light labelling system will tell you whether a food has high, medium or low amounts of fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt. The traffic light label is colour coded and shows that green is low in a particular nutrient, amber means medium and red is high in a nutrient.

- Red means the product is high in a nutrient and you should try to cut down, eat less often or eat smaller amounts.
- Amber means medium. If a food contains mostly amber, you can eat it most of the time.
- Green means low. The more green lights a label displays, the healthier the food is.