

Health Choices initiative: What is it?



Today, the Council has approximately 70% of food business rated as “Five Star” premises across the five Islands. It is the intention of the EH team to increase this statistic to over 90% by the end of the summer season of 2020 through programmed inspections and pro-active initiatives.

The Healthy Choices initiative is a non-statutory proactive scheme delivered by the Council. The scheme is aimed at encouraging certain local business to consider how they may provide healthy menu item choices, incorporating local produce where practical. The intention of the scheme is to bring benefits to the food business operator, the customer and society as a whole. Customers will find themselves with a wider option of food choices across a menu that encourages additional trade within the business, whilst also promoting health across the Islands.

The initiative will be open to all businesses who have at least a Four Star Food Hygiene Rating System score. The business will need to demonstrate that they have significantly met the following criteria. *The application form has more information and suggestions on the following criteria...*

1. Have at least three “healthy options” available on their menu.
2. Utilises some local Island produce or suppliers.
3. Reduced calorie/ sugar drinks available
4. Reduce food Waste = flexible menu that allows FBO to use up food
5. fruit and vegetables available as sides or snacks or with meals
6. Include salad and vegetables within meal options
7. Evidence of reduced fats and salts in menu choices and lower fat cooking methods wherever possible.
8. Evidence of excellent allergy awareness and information to customers
9. Offer smaller portion size options for adults and children (*Children or “less hungry adult” option*)
10. Promote their healthier choices?

A successful application to the scheme will award the business a "Healthy Choices" Certificate and a sticker for the premises wall or window.

The proposal is aimed at food business operators that sell food directly to the public and this can include Bed and Breakfast businesses. Primary Producers etc would not generally be considered suitable for inclusion in the scheme due to the nature of food production and supply.

So what's in it for the business operator?

Assistance in gaining and maintaining a high food hygiene rating score. Recognition of the efforts to give healthy and alternative choices to consumers. The Council will award any successful applicant with a Certificate of achievement showing compliance with the scheme. A window sticker will also be given to the operator who can advertise the award alongside their food hygiene rating. The council will maintain information on its web site about any successful accredited business and will work with Island Partnerships and social media to promote success stories.

So what's in it for the Council?

This proposal fits with Councils Corporate Plan (CP) to develop and improve the delivery of our projects and statutory services. Safer and healthier food creates ongoing benefits to reduced service needs in healthcare in line with the CP's vision for promoting the health and wellbeing for the island's population as a whole. The project sits in harmony with our vision for "Growth" in the CP through complimenting the promotion of local produce. In relation to the vision for "Place" and evidences a platform for support to businesses provided through better performing statutory regulatory services.

- **PLACE:** Helping sustainability by promoting local businesses utilising other local produce.
- **PEOPLE:** Promoting healthy lifestyle and choices for the local population including young people. Developing local partnership working.
- **GROWTH:** Supporting Scilly as a great place to live and visit. Building strong links with partners. Supporting small businesses.
- **OUR COUNCIL:** Continuing to develop the effective delivery of statutory services (FHRS) whilst engaging with the community. Meeting the challenges faced by the organisation.

This initiative also creates a platform for Environmental Health to make pro-active communication and intervention with food businesses that may have a lower food hygiene rating, who wish to increase their score ahead of any statutory inspections. Environmental Health would like to see over 90% of food businesses making a five star FHRS score by the end of 2020 for the benefits that can be brought to the Islands and economies.