

June 2023



healthy eating







Voluntary Calorie Labelling in Scotland

Guidance for Food Businesses















Table of Contents

1. Summary	03
2. Complying with food law	04
3. Methods of obtaining calorie information	05
1. The manufacturer or supplier's analysis of the food	05
2. A calculation from the known or average values of the ingredients used	05
3. Generally established and accepted data sources	06
MenuCal	06
Laboratory Analysis	07
4. Ensuring the accuracy of calorie information	08

5. The four key principles	09
Principle 1	10
Point of Choice	10
Displaying Information Clearly	11
Principle 2	12
Standardised Items	12
Daily Specials	12
Consistency	12
The Default Choice	12
Principle 3	13
Sharing Menu Items	13
Principle 4	14
Average Daily Calorie Requirement Information	14
Children's Menus	15
6. Appendices	16
xample menu displays in out of home settings	16 - 19

1. Summary

This document is aimed at food businesses that operate within Scotland and provide food and non-alcoholic drinks. This information intends to provide helpful guidance on how food businesses can introduce voluntary calorie information on menus and comply with food law when implementing this within their premises.

This guidance applies to all food and non-alcoholic drinks that can be consumed immediately upon purchase without any further preparation.

Providing customer with more information - such as the amount of calories in food and non-alcoholic drinks - will enable people to make informed, healthier choices when eating out, or ordering in.

This information has also been shown to stimulate businesses to review their offerings and encourage reformulation.

This guidance covers:

- Information on complying with food law.
- Methods of obtaining calorie information.
- Ways of ensuring that the calorie information provided is accurate.
- The 4 key principles to follow when providing calorie information at the point of choice.



2. Complying with food law

Kilocalories and Kilojoules are the units used to measure the energy value of food and drinks.

1 kilocalorie = 4.18 kilojoule



Food law requires that where businesses provide energy information on their products they must display energy values in both "kJ" (kilojoules) and "kcal" (kilocalories). Kilocalories are the unit used which is most understood by consumers in the UK and is usually abbreviated to be called calories. For the remainder of this guidance when referring to providing calorie information this includes both kJ and kcal.

The average calorie requirements for women are 2000 kcals per day and 2500 kcals for men.

Providing calorie information for non-prepacked food in catering establishments in Scotland is voluntary. However, if a business chooses to provide this information then it must meet the legal requirement that any information

provided to the consumer is not misleading ^{1&2}. It must also comply with the requirements for displaying nutritional information, as set out in article 7 of retained Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers (FIC)³.

This guidance has been developed for food businesses and enforcement authorities in Scotland. As requirements may be different in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, please refer to appropriate guidance as required.



¹ Food Standards Agency. 2009. The Food Safety Act 1990 – A guide for food businesses - section 15. [online]. Available at: The food Safety Act 1990 - A guide for businesses

² Legislation.gov.uk. 2004. The General Food Regulations 2004, Regulation 4(c).[online]. Available at: The General Food Regulations 2004 (legislation.gov.uk)

Legislation.gov.uk. 2016. Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to customers, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission Regulation (EC) No 608/2004. [online] Available at: www.legislation.gov.uk/eur/2011/1169

3. Methods of obtaining calorie information

Set out in the Food Information to Consumer Regulations, there are three legally accepted ways of obtaining calorie information³:

- 1. The manufacturer or supplier's analysis of the food.
- 2. A calculation from the known or average values of the ingredients used.
- 3. A calculation from generally established and accepted data sources.



1. The manufacturer or supplier's analysis of the food

If a food business opts to use the calorie information provided by the manufacturer or supplier, it is the responsibility of the food business to ensure that they take reasonable precautions to verify that the information they are providing is correct.

Information provided from suppliers will vary depending on business size. For smaller companies, this may mean keeping a copy of the label providing the nutrition information, and ensuring the label information is representative of the food they serve, e.g. cooking method and portion size. For larger companies, this information may be provided in the form of a product specification agreed between the supplier and caterer.

2. A calculation from the known or average values of the ingredients used

When obtaining calorie information for food items it is possible to calculate this manually using the nutrition labels of the ingredients used, however, it is important to consider how the food is cooked. Different cooking methods may impact the nutritional content especially for foods that are fried, as they require an estimation of how much cooking oil is absorbed by the food during this process⁵. Established data sources can provide information for foods based on their cooking methods and can be found within this guidance.

3. Generally established and accepted data sources

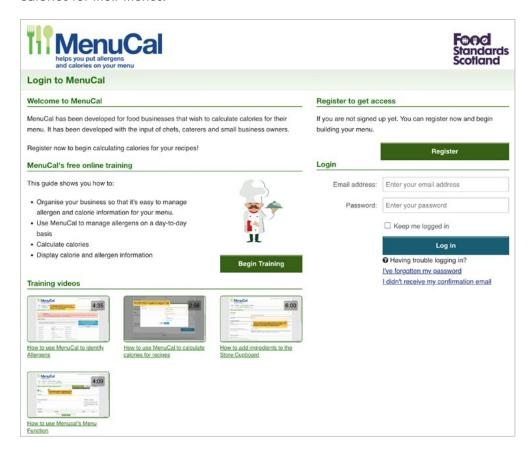
In addition to food labels, information on the calorie content of food items can also be extracted from established data sources. These data sources provide comprehensive nutrient data for the most commonly consumed foods in the UK. Foods that are less commonly consumed but are important in the diets of sub-groups of the population are also included.

Within the UK this usually refers to the McCance and Widdowson's Composition of Foods Integrated database (CoFID)⁴ which is available electronically as a searchable database **here** alongside an explanatory document which can be accessed **here**.

A number of software packages are available which can calculate calorie information. It is important to make sure that a generally established and accepted data source forms the foundation of the software. Any software package a food business uses should also allow the user to input their own manufactured product used into the database to increase accuracy.

MenuCal

In Scotland, in order to support food businesses, Food Standards Scotland (FSS) offers an online tool called MenuCal. This is a free-to-use, allergen management and calorie calculator tool developed for food businesses that wish to calculate calories for their menus.



⁴ Public Health England. 2015. Composition of foods integrated dataset (CoFID). [online]. GOV.UK. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/composition-of-foods-integrated-dataset-cofid

The MenuCal tool uses CoFID and is regularly updated to take account of any data updates, user feedback and to ensure it complies with legislative requirements e.g. changes to allergen requirements which came into place in October 2021.

Food businesses can also enter their own manufactured products into MenuCal using supplier information.

MenuCal can be accessed at menucal.fss.scot and includes free online training and user guides to support food businesses to familiarise themselves with the tool.

It is acceptable to use a combination of the methods mentioned above for the same product if it is made up of different constituent parts. For example, for a steak pie made using bought in pastry but a homemade filling, both software data for the filling and supplier data for the pastry can be used, to provide an overall figure for the pie.



Example of information provided through MenuCal

An alternative to the three methods for calculating calories as outlined above would be to have foods nutritionally analysed by a laboratory. This would be the most accurate way to determine calories but would come at a cost for food businesses.

Nutritional analysis can be undertaken by many laboratories. Any laboratory used should have ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation as a minimum. Ideally, they should also have United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) accreditation for each nutrition test conducted⁵.



Laboratory Analysis

⁵ UKAS. Laboratory Accreditation - ISO/IEC 17025. [online]. Available at: Laboratory Accreditation - ISO/IEC 17025 (ukas.com)

4. Ensuring the accuracy of calorie information

It is important for food businesses who provide calorie information to develop and implement processes to ensure that the calorie information is accurate, particularly when recipes or products change.

Below are some recommended steps that food businesses can follow to ensure the information they are providing to customers is as accurate as possible:

Record recipes carefully and accurately including weights or measures of each ingredient and cooking method to allow for reproducibility. This is especially important for food items that vary in size e.g. '45g of strawberries or four medium sized strawberries' not 'a handful of strawberries'.

For all ingredients (particularly branded and speciality products) check for calorie information provided by the manufacturer. This is likely to more accurately reflect the product being used compared with average data.

Introduce controls to ensure that recipes are followed accurately including equipment, temperature and length of cooking (e.g. for fried foods the temperature of the oil and length of cooking time will impact on the amount of oil absorption).

Maintain a specified number of portions that the recipe will serve.

Provide training and guidance for all staff to ensure that they follow recipes and portion size guidance.

Implement a review process to ensure consistency in practices.

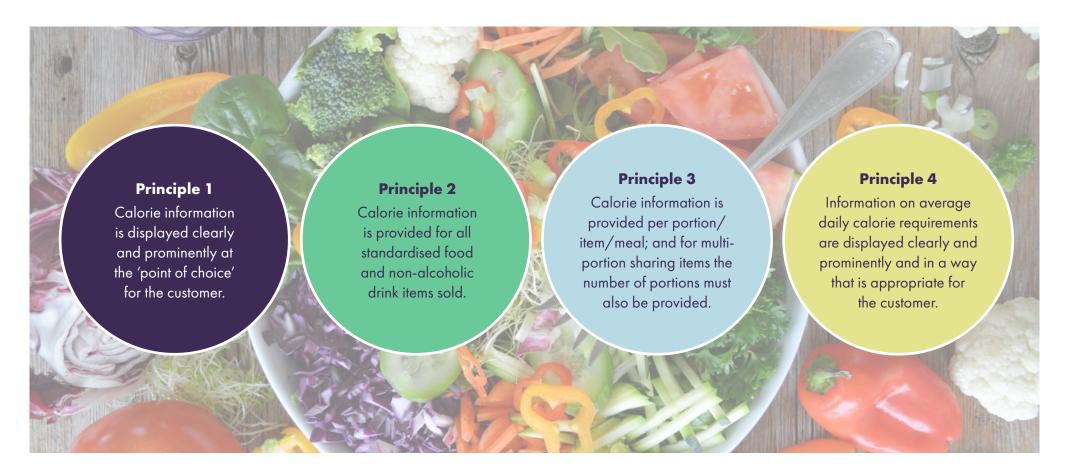
When using a software package, ensure the information is double checked once entered, especially weights and units of ingredients.

When using a software package, ensure the correct name and product description of each ingredient in the recipe is chosen, e.g. semiskimmed milk instead of milk; lean minced beef 5% fat instead of minced beef.

Update when new information is provided by suppliers and review ingredients and recipes every 6 months to capture any changes to products. Keep a record of supplier information, standard recipes, cooking methods, and portion size controls, so this can be provided as evidence if required.

5. The four key principles

Best practice in providing calorie information can be summarised into four key principles:



Calorie information is displayed clearly and prominently at the 'point of choice' for the customer.

Point of Choice

The 'point of choice' is the place from where customers choose from the food and drink on offer (see graphic).

For drive-through restaurants, it is recommended that calorie information is displayed on menus at the order point and on promotional menus/posters before the order point.

Calorie information may need to be displayed in multiple places, depending on how many places customers have available which are deemed point of choice e.g. paper copy menus as well as online ordering apps.

Availability of menus without calories

Some customers may find the display of calorie information on menus challenging and may highlight that they would prefer for this information not to be visible. Food businesses may wish to consider having a few copies of their menu without calorie values available upon the request of the customer. This aligns with **The Calorie Labelling (Out of Home Sector) (England) Regulations 2021 (the regulations)**.

Online menus (via scan-able barcodes or quick response codes (QR codes) Digital ordering apps Printed menus Menu boards (electric, drive through, chalk) Point of choice includes: Counter top menus Tickets or display information on food counters (e.g. salads, bread rolls, scones etc.) Third party companies Shelf edge tickets/label tags Interactive ordering terminals

Displaying Information Clearly

The calorie information for each menu item should be displayed clearly and prominently in the same size and font as the price to ensure it is noticed. This will enable the customer to use the information in the decision making process in the same way as price often is.

It may be beneficial to display the calories information in italics to help the customer distinguish between these and the price. It may be beneficial to display the price and calories in italics to help the customer distinguish between the two values.

Any businesses who display menu information online will be required to display the same calorie information as they do in store and are responsible for the information displayed by any third parties e.g. via mobile phone apps.







Mains:

Classic Lasagne **£10.95** (977kcal / 4088 kJ)

Caprese Risotto **£9.95** (725 kcal / 3033 kJ)

Roasted Vegetable

Linguine £9.00 (553 kcal/ 2314 kJ)

Chicken Caesar

Salad £8.50 (529 kcal / 2213 kJ)

Pizzas:

Margherita Pizza **£9.95** (889 kcal / 3720 kJ)

Pepperoni Pizza ······· £10.95 (979 kcal / 4096 kJ)

Farmhouse Pizza **£10.95** (850 kcal / 3556 kJ)

Sides:

Focaccia £3.50 (894 kcal / 3740 kJ)

Breadsticks £2.00 (420 kcal / 1757 kJ)

Caprese Chips £4.00 (1030 kcal/ 4310 kJ)

Desserts:

Gelato of the day **£4.00** (250 kcal / 1046 kJ)

Tiramisu £5.00 (555 kcal / 2322 kJ)









*Adults need around 2000 kcal a day

Example of calorie information on a menu

Calorie information is provided for standardised food and non-alcoholic drink items sold.

Standardised Items

A standardised item is a menu item that can be reproduced and is offered for a minimum of 30 days in a year⁴.

A standardised item is also a menu item that has not been altered at the request of the customer e.g. removal of salad or condiments from a burger.

Daily Specials

It may be difficult or too time consuming for businesses to obtain calorie information for foods that are specials or those which appear on menus less than 30 days a year.

However businesses can still provide calorie information for these types of menu items if they choose to do so.

Consistency

The calorie information should be reflective of the food served, and there should therefore be clear processes in place that ensure the food is produced consistently each time it is made.

The Default Choice

A food business may encounter occasions where there is too much information to display for a product or the item is customisable by size, portions or additional items (e.g. meal deals where there are multiple drink or side order choices). The calorie information for the default choice can be provided in this case which offers businesses the opportunity to simplify the information they provide about their products before the customer customises these.

The default choice is:

- The most popular item ordered by customers.
- The option provided to the customer when they do not state their preference (e.g. a panini with white bread if the customer does not specify wholemeal).

It may be best practice for food businesses to include supplementary text advising customers that the calorie information provided is the default option and provide alongside the calorie information of additional ingredients they can customise the dish with to assist the decision-making process of the customer. Some examples of how this can be incorporated into menu designs can be seen in Appendix 1.

For food choices where different sized options are available, it is recommended to display the information for the largest option available. This ensures calories provided to the customer are reflective of the largest food option they can choose.

Calorie information is provided per portion/item/meal; and for multi-portion or sharing items the number of portions must also be provided.

Calorie information should be provided for what the customer is purchasing, e.g. per portion, item or meal.

Sharing Menu Items

For menu items that are intended for sharing, the number of servings the menu item provides and the calorie information per portion should be provided.

ANTIPASTI SHARING PLATTER SERVES TWO

Platter of Italian meats with roasted vegetables and buffalo mozzarella served with crusty bread and oils.

£15 (500kcal/2092 kJ per portion)

Self Service

For self-service foods where there is not a 'standard' portion size, calorie information should be given via a standard sized serving method such as per item, spoonful or scoop. This allows the customer to make informed decisions when controlling portion sizes for example at buffets, salad bars, condiments, sauces and dressings.



320 kcal/ 1339 kJ per roll

SWEET AND SOUR CHICKEN

350 kcal/ 1464 kJ per spoon

Example of calorie information provided on a sharing dish

Example of calorie information provided at self-service

Information on average daily calorie requirement is displayed clearly and prominently and in a way that is appropriate for the customer.

It is best practice to display information on the average amount of calories a customer needs each day. This provides context around the diet to the customer and equips them to understand the food choices they make⁴.

To have maximum impact, daily calorie requirement information needs to be easily seen by customers. It is best practice for this to appear on each page of a menu and be displayed clearly and prominently anywhere a menu is displayed e.g. a self-service ordering terminal.

Daily calorie requirement information does not need to appear at every point of choice, especially where space is limited, but ideally would be displayed in a prominent position elsewhere in a location that customers will notice when they are choosing which food to buy. For example, in counter service outlets this could be done by providing one clear and prominent statement on the main menu board. For hand-held menus this information would be most effective if it is easy to find, prominent and located on each page of the menu. Further examples of this can be seen in Appendix 1.

Average Daily Calorie Requirement Information

To align with front of pack nutrition labelling and **The Calorie Labelling (Out of Home Sector) (England) Regulations 2021 (the regulations)**, calorie information provided on menus should be based on the average intake for women.

FSS recommend the following statement is included on a menu: "Adults need around 2000 kcal a day".

	MUN	CHIES	
Paninis		Breakfast roll	s:
Mexican chicken (455 kcal/1904 kJ)	£ 2 .90	Bacon (364 kcal/1523 kJ)	£ 2 .00
BLT (520 kcal/ 2176 kJ)	£ 2 .75	Sausage & Egg (430 kcal/ 1799 kJ)	£2. 2 5
Cheese and pesto (490 kcal/ 2050 kJ)	£2.50	Black Pudding (385 kcal/ 1611kJ)	£ 2 .20
		Egg (400 kcal/ 1674 kJ)	£1.90
Cakes & Traybal	kes:		
Lemon Drizzle	£1.20 (375 kcal/ 1569 kJ)	
Poppyseed muffin	£1(38	0 kcal/1590 kJ) ((
Malteaser traybake	£1 (350	Okcal/1464 kJ)	
*Adults need around 200	00 kcal a day		

Example of a daily requirement information statement provided on a menu board

foodstandards.gov.scot

Children's Menus

FSS do not encourage the display of calorie information on children's menus or food items marketed for children typically aged 12 years old and under. This is because it is not necessary for children of this age to use this information to make food choices. Children's choices should be based on appetites, tastes and preferences.

FSS are working with the Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland to develop a code of practice for children's menus with the aim of improving the options available for children when eating out of home (OOH).

In addition to this, healthier catering guidance is available for caterers which provides tips to offer healthier options for children when they eat out. This will help children learn to choose foods which are good for them and to eat more healthily, supporting customers to have a healthier lifestyle.

This guide can be found here⁶.





For safe food and

Healthier Catering Guide for children's menus

Healthier eating is becoming more important to customers. The guide covers key areas where changes could be made to give children healthier options when they eat out. This will help children learn to choose foods which are good for them and to eat more healthily, supporting your customers to have a healthier lifestyle.

You may already be achieving several of these tips but be prepared to go further and make real changes to help your customers make healthier choices.



Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are good sources of vitamins, minerals and fibre. To ensure children can eat their 5 a day, all main meals should include at least one portion of vegetables and/or fruit as standard (at least 40g). These can be fresh, frozen or canned.

- Experiment with different presentation of colourful vegetables, such as veggie sticks served with a sandwich or with a dip as a starter. Vegetables could also be added to sauces, such as pasta sauce, and as pizza toppings.
- Vegetable soups, particularly blended versions, are often popular with children and can include a wide variety of vegetables.
- Offer a portion of fruit as a dessert choice This could include cooked fruit (e.g. fruit crumble).

- Chopped fruit is often far more appealing to children than whole fruit.
- Fats (such as butter or cream), salt or sugar should not be added to vegetables or fruit before serving.
- Where a packed lunch in a box is offered, always include fruit and/or vegetables as a choice.

foodstandards.gov.scot

⁶ Food Standards Scotland. 2021. Healthier Catering Guide for children's menus. [online]. Available at: Healthier_Eating_Guide_-_kids_menu_-_May_06_2021.pdf (foodstandards.gov.scot)

6. Appendices

Example menu displays in out of home settings



BEST BURGERS



MAINS:

Burger and fries £11.50 (940 kcal / 3932 kJ)

Chicken Nuggets

and fries £9 (602 kcal / 2519 kJ)

Chicken Drumsticks

and fries£10 (490 kcal/ 2050 kJ)

BBQ Ribs £11 (750 kcal / 3138 kJ

SIDES:

Onion Rings £3 (501 kcal / 2096 kJ)

DESSERTS:

Banana Split£5 (894 kcal/ 3741 kJ)

Smores Brownie £6 (774 kcal / 3238 kJ)

DRINKS:

Fizzy Drink£1.50 (140 kcal / 586 kJ)

Ice Cream

Milkshake£5 (513 kcal / 2146 kJ)

An example of a standard restaurant menu

^{*}Adults need around 2000 kcal a day



An example of a restaurant drive through



An example of a mobile app menu

Starters:

1. Spring Rolls (5)	£1.99 (825 kcal/3451 kJ) V
2. Dumplings (10)	£1.50 (320 kcal/1339 kJ)
3. Samosas (5)	£2.30 (420 kcal/1757 kJ) V
4. Prawn Toast (10)	£3.50 (500 kcal/ 2092 kJ)

Soups:

5. Chicken & Sweetcorn	£2.80 (260 kcal/1087 kJ)
6. Chicken Noodle	£3.20 (350 kcal/1465 kJ)

Noodle Dishes:

7. Crispy Chicken	£5.80 (900 kcal/3766 kJ)
8. Szechuan Beef	£6.30 (950 kcal/3975 kJ) 🥒
9. Peanut Chicken	£6.50 (950 kcal/3975 kJ)





^{*}Adults need around 2000 kcal a day

Curry Dishes:

10. King Prawn	£4.90 (620 kcal/ 2594 kJ)
+ rice	£6.00 (920 kcal/ 3849 kJ)
11. Chicken	£4.90 (600 kcal/2510 kJ) 🥒
+ rice	£7.00 (900 kcal/3766 kJ)
12. Vegetable	£3.90 (500 kcal/2092 kJ) V
+ rice	£5.00 (800 Kcal/3347 kJ)

Sweet & Sour dishes:

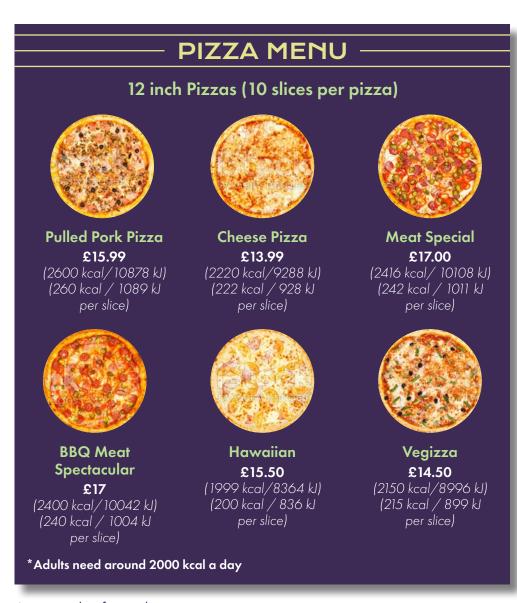
13. Chicken	£4.90 (600 kcal/2510 kJ)
+ rice	£7.00 (900 Kcal/3766 kJ)
14. Prawn	£4.90 (600 kcal/2510 kJ)
+ rice	£7.00 (900 Kcal/3766 kJ)
15. Vegetable	£4.90 (580 kcal/ 2427 kJ) V
+ rice	£7.00 (880 kcal/3682 kJ)

Sundries:

16. Chips	£2.50 (700 kcal/2929 kJ)
17. Rice	£2.10 (300 kcal/1255 kJ)
18. Curry Sauce	£1.20 (213 kcal/891 kJ)

V - Vegetarian

✓ - Spicy





Bread Roll

Ingredients: **Wheat** Flour (**Gluten**), Sunflower Oil, Yeast, Spices (salt, ground black pepper)

*Adults need around 2000 kcal a day

£1.00 254 kcal

An example of an online menu

An example of a shelf edge



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