

Tower Hamlets schools serving award-winning lunches

59 local primary schools receive national recognition for plant-powered menus

A caterer in Tower Hamlets has won a national award for its new healthy and sustainable menus, securing Bronze in The ProVeg School Plates Awards - a national accreditation scheme recognising nutritious and planet-friendly school food.

Contract Catering Services, the borough's award-winning school meals provider, prepares and serves around 15,500 meals to children and young people in 54 schools and nurseries across the area.

To be eligible for an award, caterers must take various steps to promote plant-based school meals, which produce significantly less carbon than meat-based dishes. The dishes must also be nutritionally-balanced and, of course, tasty, while also encouraging children to opt for more sustainable choices at lunchtime.

Working with ProVeg UK, a non-profit organisation, Tower Hamlets' new menus include a wide range of delicious, planet-friendly dishes that the children love whilst helping them to make the connection between their food and its impact on the planet. New dishes include 'Falafel in Sumaq & Za'atar Sauce with Lebanese Rice', 'BBQ Pulled Jackfruit Burger with Spicy Diced Potatoes' and 'Lentil & Vegetable Dahl with Rice.' The menu is set to be introduced in November.

Jimmy Pierson, Director of ProVeg UK, said: "We're thrilled to acknowledge the great work the school is doing to create healthier and more sustainable menus. Contract Catering Services is not only improving childrens' health, they are also protecting their future. In the midst of a global climate crisis, reducing food emissions has never been more pressing, so it's heartwarming to see how much the children are enjoying the food and supporting more climate-friendly menus."

Hassane Taleb, Food Service Development Chef, Contract Catering Service said:

" We're really pleased to have been awarded the Bronze ProVeg School Plates Award which highlights that our menus are healthy and environmentally friendly. We will continue to develop and promote nutritious and delicious plant-based school meals to improve our children's diets and which are also good for the environment".

The ProVeg School Plates Awards launched earlier this year to set the standards for low-carbon menus across UK schools. The Awards are designed to recognise the positive steps taken by caterers to create healthier, climate-friendly menus.

ProVeg UK has supported 79 major catering partners across the UK transition to healthier and more sustainable school menus through its School Plates programme. Since the

programme launched in 2018, the non-profit has helped turn tens of millions of school dinners meat-free or plant-based while developing tasty, nutritious, and sustainable menus.

All UK schools can participate in The ProVeg School Plates Awards for free. To learn more, visit [ProVeg UK's website](#), or if you are a school caterer and would like to submit your menu for review, send it to schoolplatesawards@proveg.org.

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Notes to Editors

ProVeg UK:

ProVeg UK is a part of ProVeg International, a food awareness organisation working to transform the global food system by replacing conventional animal-based products with plant-based and cultured alternatives.

ProVeg UK works with local authorities and school caterers to increase the nutritional value and sustainability of school food. By reviewing menus and providing expert advice, new recipes, and plant-based cooking workshops, ProVeg increases the quality and quantity of plant-based food in schools.

ProVeg works with international decision-making bodies, governments, food producers, investors, the media, and the general public to help the world transition to a society and economy that are less dependent on animal agriculture and more sustainable for humans, animals, and our planet. ProVeg UK is a co-founder of the Plant-based Food Alliance UK, and raises awareness of the importance of plant-based food for people, animals, and the planet through our campaigns.

ProVeg has permanent-observer status with the UNFCCC, is accredited for UNEA, and has received the United Nations' Momentum for Change Award.

School Plates:

- ProVeg UK's School Plates programme has worked with caterers responsible for over 6,500 schools, serving school lunches to more than 1 million children.
- The School Plates team works with local authorities, schools, and contract caterers, offering a range of menu support services, including menu consultation and advice, new recipes and recipe development, chef training workshops, and impact assessment.
- The ProVeg School Plates Awards Handbook is available to download [here](#)
- Our School Plates brochures: The Guide and The Recipes can be downloaded for free [here](#).

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