



Healthier Vending Machine Guidance – Cumberland Council

Objective:

To enhance the wellbeing of residents and visitors by ensuring vending machines across Cumberland Council estates offer nutritious and balanced food and drink options.

Guidelines:

Nutritional Standards

- At least 50% of products must be classified as healthy (low in sugar, salt, and saturated fat).
- Dried fruit, nuts, protein bars and whole grain snacks should be available. Fresh fruit can also be provided.
- Sugary drinks must be reduced, with a priority on water, low-calorie beverages, and unsweetened options.
- Clear labelling is required to highlight calories, sugar, and other nutritional content.

Nutritious Snack Options

Vending machines should offer diverse, nutrient-rich options which align with health guidelines.

These include:

- Whole foods: Fresh fruit (apples, bananas, oranges, berries), mixed nuts (unsalted almonds, cashews, walnuts), and seeds (chia, flax, sunflower).
- Whole grain alternatives: oat-based bars, wholewheat crackers, quinoa chips, brown rice cakes.
- High-protein snacks: low-fat yoghurt, hummus with vegetable packs, hard-boiled eggs, roasted chickpeas, and protein bars with minimal sugar.
- Low-calorie & portion-controlled options: baked vegetable crisps, air-popped popcorn, low sugar dark chocolate bites.

Healthier Beverage Selections

Vending machines must prioritise low-sugar and hydrating drink options, including:

- Water: still and sparkling options, infused with natural fruit flavours if required (no added sugar). Plain water must always be available.
- Unsweetened beverages: herbal teas, black and green tea, coconut water. Unsweetened fruit juices can be available to purchase with a serving size of up to 150ml.
- All other soft or carbonated drinks available to purchase contain less than 2.5g of sugar per 100ml.
- Low-sugar alternatives: electrolyte-replenishing drinks with minimal sugar.
- Milk-based drinks: lower-fat milk drinks are available to purchase (e.g. semi-skimmed milk, dairy-free alternatives (almond, oat, soy milk etc)) and contain no more than 5% total sugars.



- Hot drinks: automatically sweetened drinks should not be available to purchase. Tea or coffee without sugar or sweetener added should be available, with sweeteners available to add if required.

Reduced-Sugar & Low-Sodium Packaged Foods

50 % of products must meet strict criteria for sugar and sodium content:

- Snacks must contain less than 5g of added sugar per serving.
- Sodium content must not exceed 140mg per serving for packaged food items.
- Artificial additives and preservatives must be minimised, with preference given to natural ingredients.
- All confectionary (including crisps, chocolate bars and packets of sweets) are only available to purchase in the smallest single serving on the market. Therefore:
 - savoury snacks can be available to purchase in a packet size of up to 30g
 - chocolate bars and confectionary can be available to purchase in a packet size of up to 50g
 - Cereal bars and flapjacks are available to purchase in a packet size of up to 30g

Healthy Incentives & Behavioural Nudges

- Healthier items must be priced competitively with less healthy options to encourage selection.
- Healthy choices should be positioned at eye level for greater visibility.
- Educational messaging should be displayed on vending machines, promoting balanced nutrition and the benefits of healthier choices.

Sustainability & Ethical Sourcing

- Prioritise locally sourced and environmentally friendly options where possible.
- Reduce plastic packaging by selecting eco-friendly, biodegradable materials for vending machine products e.g. coffee cups.

Vendor Selection & Compliance

- Contracts with suppliers must align with the council's healthy vending standards.
- Vendors must provide annual reports detailing product sales and compliance with healthy quotas.

Community Engagement & Feedback

- Conduct a survey after 12 months to assess satisfaction and improve offerings based on resident/staff feedback.
- Link in educational messaging/ campaigns through Public Health / Health Advocates / Comms to promote the vending policy and encourage awareness of healthy choices, a balanced diet and health benefits.