



# Our impact

2024–2025



# At Food for Life Scotland (FFLS), our vision is to make good food the easy choice for everyone.

We work towards this by: joining forces with the public sector to get more fresh, local and sustainable food onto the public plate; supporting caterers to serve meals using locally-sourced and nutritious ingredients; and advocating for good food as an investment not a cost, connecting with policymakers and producers, caterers and communities to make it a priority.

We continue to be inspired by local authority caterers' work providing nourishing, healthy and sustainable meals in Scotland's schools, and their commitment to achieving the Food for Life Served Here (FFLSH) certification year on year. It's been encouraging to see this extend into new areas of the public sector this year, too. Our expanded programme now supports further and higher education institutions, courts, care homes, workplaces and visitor attractions in Scotland to serve more good food through the FFLSH certification.

And with the Soil Association's newly-refreshed FFLSH Bronze standards – developed with caterers to ensure they remain relevant and useful – we continue to firmly believe in the FFLSH certification as a framework through which Scotland's caterers can make a difference, by providing food that's better for climate, nature and health, while also supporting the local economy.

We're excited to continue this work, supporting caterers across the public sector who already hold the FFLSH certification, and working with new partners – caterers, producers, suppliers and everyone along the supply chain. With commitments from organisations like Falkirk Council and NHS Grampian to explore the FFLSH certification for their services, the future is bright. Congratulations and thanks to all our caterers and partners for your ongoing commitment to making good food the easy choice for everyone.

Picture: Andy Buchanan



**Sarah Duley, Co-Director and Head of Food, Soil Association Scotland**

## Here's how we've made a difference in 2024–25



**24** FFLSH certification holders in Scotland

**1,554** FFLSH certified sites in Scotland



**17** local authorities

**1,537** local authority sites



**7** public sector certification holders through FFLS expansion

**17** other public sector sites



**114,702** FFLSH school meals served daily across Scotland\*

\* Number of meals served in early years settings and public sector sites certified as part of the FFLS programme expansion are not included due to availability of data.

# Sustainable catering in schools

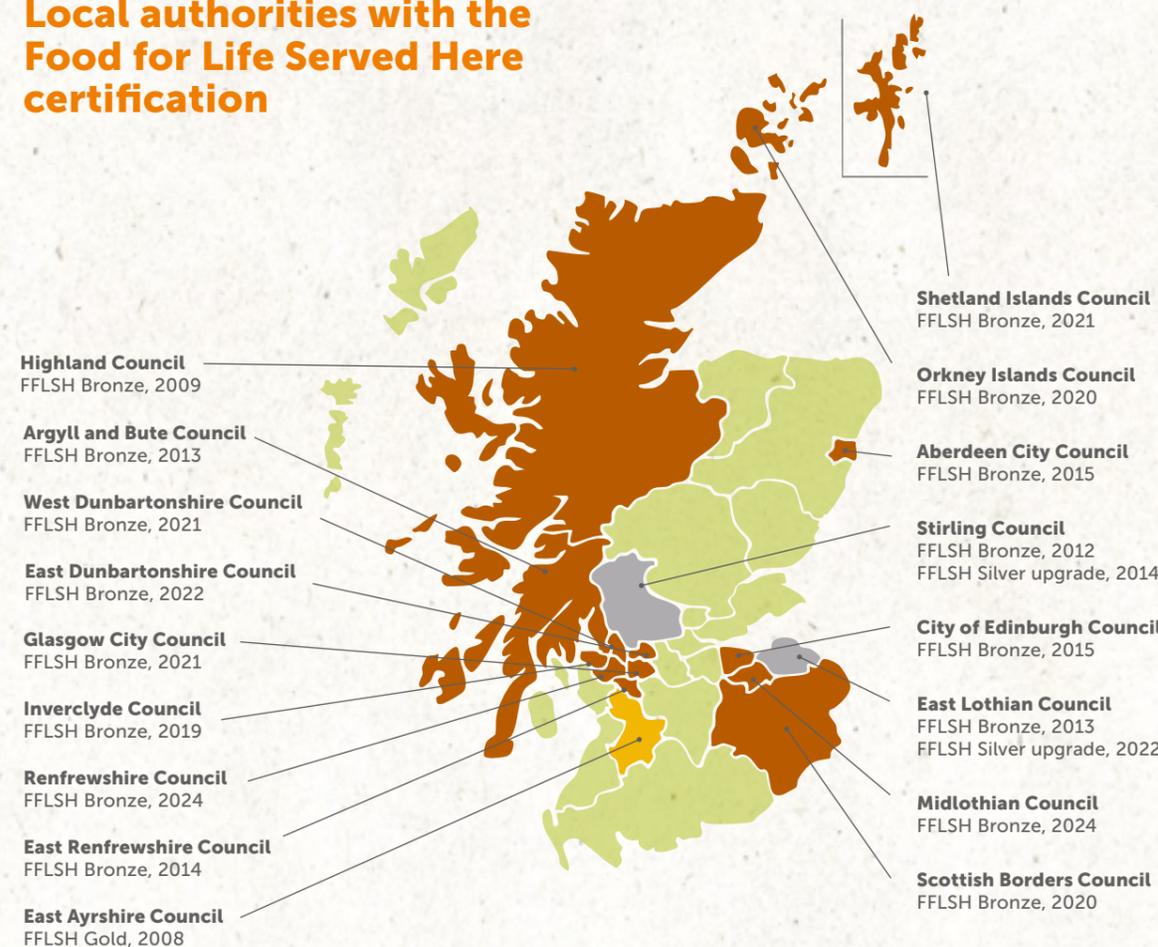
Food for Life Scotland supports Scottish local authorities to achieve the FFLSH certification for school meals services. There are 17 local authorities that hold the award at bronze, silver and gold – from East Ayrshire Council, which gained FFLSH Gold back in 2008, to Midlothian Council, which gained FFLSH Bronze for the first time in 2024.

This year, we were delighted to acknowledge milestone renewals for some local authorities. East Renfrewshire Council marked 10 years since they first

achieved FFLSH Bronze, Stirling Council celebrated a decade with FFLSH Silver, while Highland have achieved 15 years of FFLSH Bronze.

Glasgow City Council and City of Edinburgh Council both added early years sites to their certifications, while we were delighted to welcome back Renfrewshire Council, who have returned to the programme by gaining FFLSH Bronze for their primary school meals service. Congratulations to all local authorities that hold the FFLSH certification.

## Local authorities with the Food for Life Served Here certification



# Food for Life Served Here certification holders 2024–25

## Midlothian Council gains FFLSH Bronze

This year, Midlothian Council gained the Food for Life Served Here (FFLSH) Bronze certification for its 28 primary schools. Caterers are serving more than 4,000 meals a day, and the council is working with local suppliers, such as George Anderson and Sons, to source seasonal, Scottish produce. Pupils enjoy freshly made dishes including campfire chilli with rice and sweetcorn, homemade tomato pasta with mixed vegetables, and steak pie with mashed potatoes and mixed vegetables.

“This certification is a fantastic framework for local authorities to get more fresh, local and sustainable food into school meals,” said Grace Vickers, Chief Executive of Midlothian Council and Chair of Solace Scotland. “Holding a FFLSH certification will support our local Good Food Nation plans, as well as our health and wellbeing, education and climate goals.”

“Scotland’s schools are doing a great job serving fresh, local and sustainable food, and there are some outstanding school cooks and caterers going above and beyond,” said Sue McVey, Business Development Manager Scotland at Soil Association Scotland. “Food for Life Scotland is dedicated to helping caterers by offering a collaborative and supportive approach through our sustainable food programmes.”

**Read about the FFLSH-inspired menu at this year’s Solace Conference dinner on page 15.**

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If you don’t have the Food for Life Served Here certification, I recommend getting in touch with the Food for Life Scotland team, who are hugely knowledgeable and supportive through the process.

**Grace Vickers, Chief Executive of Midlothian Council and Chair of Solace Scotland**

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Picture: Andy Buchanan



## FFLSH welcomes back Renfrewshire Council

Having previously held the FFLSH Bronze certification from 2017 to 2021, Renfrewshire Council returned to the Food for Life Scotland (FFLSH) programme this year, gaining the FFLSH Bronze certification for its 47 primary school sites. Caterers are serving 6,000 meals each day, which showcase the council’s commitment to sourcing Scottish ingredients. QMS meat sourced from McLays, Scottish milk sourced from Muller and Scottish bread from McGhees are all on the menu.

“We’re delighted to welcome Renfrewshire Council back to Food for Life Scotland,” said Sarah Duley, Co-Director and Head of Food at Soil Association Scotland. “That Renfrewshire Council have chosen to return to the scheme demonstrates the value of the certification as a framework for councils looking to support Scotland’s food businesses, deliver on Good Food Nation requirements and offer healthy and sustainable meals to their young people.”

## Nine years of Bronze for Aberdeen City Council

Aberdeen City Council first received FFLSH Bronze for its primary school meals in 2015, and for secondary schools in 2017. Nine years later, caterers are now serving more than 13,500 nutritious, sustainable and locally sourced FFLSH-certified meals across 61 sites every day.

The council’s school catering team values scratch cooking and local sourcing, as shown through the award-winning Give Peas a Chance! project. This 12-month pilot project

– which is a partnership between Soil Association Scotland, Aberdeen City Council catering and procurement teams, pea producer Phil Swire of Balmakewan Farm, the Royal Highland Education Trust (RHET) and the Royal Northern Countryside Initiative (RNCI) and funded by Sustain’s Bridging the Gap programme – has opened up a new route to market for nutritious and climate-friendly organic dried spilt peas, and given pupils greater access to healthy and organic food at school.

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With the Good Food Nation Act underway, we believe we exemplify how to creatively implement real actions on the ground that support a better future. By partnering with the Food for Life team in Scotland, we are enhancing our capacity and ability to meet these challenges.

**John Landragon, Catering Manager, Aberdeen City Council**

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**Scan to watch the Give Peas a Chance! pilot project film.**





## City councils gain Food for Life Served Here for early years

Glasgow City Council and City of Edinburgh Council both added early years sites to their FFLSH certifications this year for the first time.

City of Edinburgh Council added 98 early years sites to its certification this year, serving more than 25,000 daily meals across a total of 194 FFLSH-certified sites every day.

“The wellbeing of our children and young people is at the heart of everything we do, especially when it comes to the meals they are provided while at school,” says City of Edinburgh Council Education, Children and Families Convener, Joan Griffiths.

In Glasgow, caterers are now serving 37,000 daily meals across 141 primary schools and 112 early years sites, highlighting the council’s commitment to putting good food on the plate.

Glasgow’s well-established partnership with Soil Association Scotland – through the Food for Life Scotland programme – saw another success this year. The Full of Beans campaign – a collaborative initiative led by the council, Glasgow Food Policy Partnership, Glasgow Community Food Network, and Soil Association Scotland to promote eating beans and pulses as part of healthy, climate-friendly diet – won The Special Award at the 2024 Scottish School Food Awards.

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The contribution from Soil Association Scotland has been a best in practice approach to supporting a client’s goals. We have benefitted from advice, guidance, training, communication and engagement, cost mitigation, menu design and a sharing of best practice that has made a mark across all our front-line catering teams and allowed us to improve our service delivery of over 38,000 meals every school day.

**Stephen Sawers, Head of Catering and Facilities Management, Glasgow City Council**

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## Highland Council celebrates 15 years of Food for Life

Despite the challenges of serving Scotland’s largest geographical council area, including some of the most sparsely populated parts of the UK, Highland Council has successfully maintained the Food for Life Served Here Bronze certification for its primary school meals since 2009.

For caterers like Annette Burfoot, based on the Isle of Skye, the biggest joy comes from feeding smiling pupils, no matter what. “My priority is to ensure every child has something they feel they can eat each day,” she says. “The biggest satisfaction I get is a smiling face and a clean plate. Knowing I’ve made a difference to their day, when it may be the one hot meal they get that day – that feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment will never be topped.”

## Stirling Council celebrates 10 years of FFLSH Silver

The FFLS team visited Dunblane Primary School to present the FFLSH Silver certification to Stirling Council’s Head of Education Bryony Monaghan and Service Manager FM Janice Fanning. We also had the opportunity to hear from inspiring pupils who assist caterers with the school meals service as part of the school’s Chef’s Apprentice programme. Stirling Council first received the FFLSH Bronze certification in 2012 and upgraded to silver two years later. School caterers are now serving around 3,600 nutritious, sustainable and locally sourced FFLSH-certified meals in its 68 primary and early years sites every day. As a FFLSH Silver certification holder, the council ensures at least 5% of its ingredients budget is spent on organic produce. As a result, organic milk is served in all Stirling primary schools.

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Food for Life Served Here provides an important mechanism to help people enjoy food that is local, healthy and environmentally sustainable. Stirling Council’s efforts and success is a prime example of the collaborative working that is needed to help make Scotland a Good Food Nation.

**Mairi Gougeon MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs**

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# Sustainable catering in the public sector

From a place-based pilot project in Glasgow in 2022–23, the Food for Life Scotland public sector expansion has gone from strength to strength. Despite public sector caterers operating in a hugely challenging environment, we've been inspired by the commitment of caterers across the sector to deliver more fresh, local and sustainable food through the Food for Life Served Here (FFLSH) certification.

This year we've been delighted to welcome certified sites from different areas of the public sector. Building on last year's successes in their locations at Scottish Government Workplaces and higher and further education institutions,

BaxterStorey upgraded to FFLSH Silver at five sites. West Dunbartonshire Council gained the bronze certification for two care homes, in a first for Scotland. And the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh became the first visitor attraction to gain the certification as part of our expansion. Congratulations to all Scotland's FFLSH-certified public sector sites!

Looking ahead, we're working closely with sites across Scotland's public sector, including health boards, using the FFLSH certification as a framework to put more food that's good for health, the environment and the economy on to the public plate.

## Public sector sites with the Food for Life Served Here certification

### West Dunbartonshire

- West Dunbartonshire Council care homes
  - FFLSH Bronze, 2025
  - Crosslet House
  - Queen's Quay

### Glasgow

- Glasgow High Court
  - FFLSH Bronze, 2023
- Glasgow Sheriff Court
  - FFLSH Bronze, 2023
- Scottish Government Workplaces
  - FFLSH Bronze, 2023
  - FFLSH Silver, 2024
  - Atlantic Quay
- City of Glasgow College
  - FFLSH Bronze, 2023
- Glasgow Caledonian University
  - FFLSH Bronze, 2023, FFLSH Silver, 2025
  - George Moore Refectory
  - Hospitality

- Care Home
- Court
- Tourist Attraction
- Workplace
- Education

### Edinburgh

- Edinburgh High Court
  - FFLSH Bronze, 2023
- Edinburgh Sheriff Court
  - FFLSH Bronze, 2023
- Scottish Government Workplaces
  - FFLSH Bronze, 2023
  - FFLSH Silver, 2024
  - Saughton House
  - St Andrew's House
  - Victoria Quay
- Scottish Parliament
  - FFLSH Bronze, 2024
- Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh
  - All certifications since 2024
  - The Gateway (FFLSH Silver)
  - Terrace Café (FFLSH Bronze)
  - Staff catering (FFLSH Bronze)

# Congratulations to our new certification holders

## West Dunbartonshire care homes achieve FFLSH Bronze

Huge congratulations to West Dunbartonshire Council caterers at Crosslet House in Dumbarton and Queens Quay House in Clydebank, who have gained the Food for Life Served Here (FFLSH) Bronze certification – the first care homes in Scotland to do so. These sites serve more than 50,000 meals each year. West Dunbartonshire Council also holds the certification for its school meals service.

Sarah Duley, Co-Director and Head of Food, Soil Association Scotland, said: "We're delighted to see care home sites achieving the Food for Life Served Here certification, and serving more sustainable and climate-friendly food to their residents every day. The Food for Life Scotland team can offer support to public sector caterers across Scotland, to follow in the footsteps of West Dunbartonshire Council and other FFLSH certification holders in Scotland."



The Food for Life Served Here Bronze certification allowed catering staff to further enhance their menus and source environmentally sustainable and ethical food ... It really was a team effort and reflects the ethos of person-centred care. We look forward to achieving the silver certification next!

**Fiona Taylor, Head of Health and Community Care, West Dunbartonshire HSCP**



## Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh awarded FFLSH Silver certification

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE), in collaboration with catering partner Heritage Portfolio, this year became the first tourist attraction in Scotland to receive the FFLSH Silver certification. This achievement recognises RBGE's dedication to serving fresh, local, and sustainably sourced food, in alignment with the core values of the Food for Life Scotland programme.

"The FFLSH certification is a testament to the work being done across the board at the Botanic to advance our journey with sustainability," says Catriona McCaughrean, Heritage Portfolio Sustainability and Marketing Manager at RBGE. "As one of the biggest visitor attractions in Scotland ... we are committed to serving food that truly is good for our planet and good for our people. The certification shows that we take this mission for sustainability seriously."



# BaxterStorey sites upgrade to Silver

Huge congratulations to caterers at BaxterStorey sites at Scottish Workplaces in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and at Glasgow Caledonian University, who all upgraded to the Food for Life Served Here Silver certification this year

Scottish Government Workplaces at Atlantic Quay in Glasgow, and Victoria Quay, St Andrew's House and Saughton House in Edinburgh first gained the bronze certification in April 2023. In May

2024, they achieved silver. Collectively, these locations serve an estimated 53,000 meals a year. And, because of the upgrade to silver, there's more organic produce on the menu.

"As we were moving to silver, we were building on the knowledge we learnt through bronze," says Samantha Woodhouse, Group Lead Chef, BaxterStorey. "Bronze is the big adjustment, but it's also a stepping stone to improving our offerings with more local and organic produce."

To help meet the FFLSH Silver certification requirement of 5% of ingredients spend being used to purchase organic ingredients, BaxterStorey serves organic milk from Mossgiel Organic Farm in East Ayrshire. Data from the Cool Food Pro calculator – a carbon savings calculator tool created for the catering sector – shows that by using organic milk, BaxterStorey are saving an estimated 11,529 Kg CO2e every month.

Picture: Andy Buchanan

At Glasgow Caledonian University, BaxterStorey achieved the FFLSH Silver certification in March 2025, having gained bronze in December 2023 for 220,000 annual meals. Alongside City of Glasgow College, these were the first higher and further education sites to gain the certification as part of the Food for Life Scotland programme's public sector expansion.

The team sees the certification as a way to not only serve more sustainable food, but also to support the local economy. As part of their organic spend, BaxterStorey source organic vegetables, flour and dairy products from Scottish suppliers including Mossgiel and Mungoswells Malt & Milling in East Lothian.

"Receiving the silver award was a huge moment for us" says Alan Ratcliffe, BaxterStorey General Manager at Glasgow Caledonian University. "It validated all the work and passion that went into this. And it reminded us of what's possible when values and food align. We know other universities are thinking about how they can make food more sustainable. The Food for Life framework gives you the tools to do it in a real, measurable way."



Without the help of the Food for Life Scotland team, I don't think we would have gone for Silver. The team is so enthusiastic and knows when you need some help and encouragement, and when you can be left to get on with things. It's a really collaborative process.

**Alan Ratcliffe, BaxterStorey General Manager at Glasgow Caledonian University**

## FFLS Expansion Timeline

**March 2023**  
BaxterStorey Scottish Government Workplaces  
**Bronze**

**April 2023**  
BaxterStorey Scottish Courts  
**Bronze**

**July 2023**  
BaxterStorey City of Glasgow College  
**Bronze**

**December 2023**  
BaxterStorey Glasgow Caledonian University  
**Bronze**

**May 2024**  
BaxterStorey Scottish Government Workplaces Upgrade  
**Silver**

**November 2024**  
Sodexo Scottish Parliament  
**Bronze**

**December 2024**  
Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh  
**2 Bronze 1 Silver**

**February 2025**  
West Dunbartonshire Council Care Homes  
**Bronze**

**March 2025**  
Baxter Storey Glasgow Caledonian University Upgrade  
**Silver**



# How Argyll and Bute Council introduced local wild venison to the school menu

An award-winning pilot project, launched in partnership with Argyll and Bute Council, Wild Jura, and Food for Life Scotland, is bringing the rich flavours of Scotland’s wild larder to school meals while promoting sustainability and supporting the local economy.

The pilot project supplies wild venison to six schools across the islands of Islay and Jura, including primary schools and Islay High School. The meat is nutrient-dense, rich in protein, and low in saturated fat, making it a healthy, sustainable and locally sourced addition to school meals.

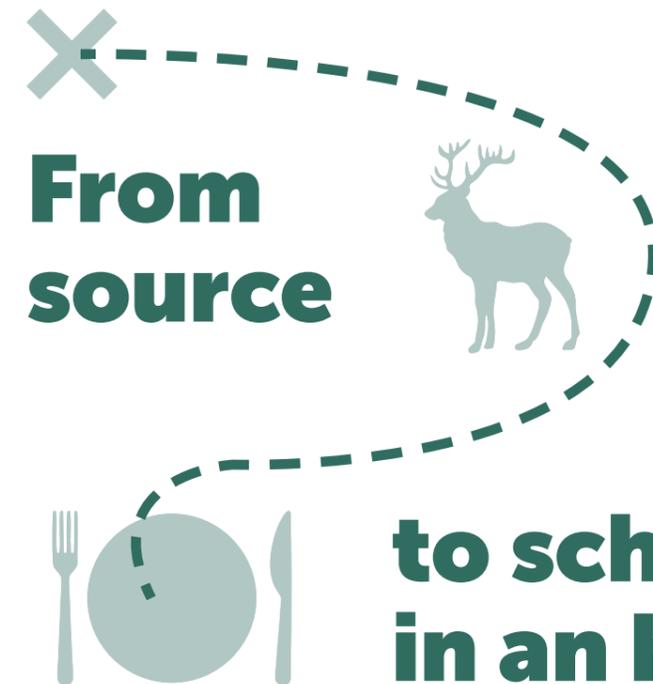
The success and innovation of the pilot was celebrated at the Public Sector Catering Awards in April 2025, with



Argyll and Bute Council receiving the Sustainability Award for the pilot.

“We were delighted when Food for Life Scotland approached us to collaborate on this pilot project, and we are extremely pleased with the positive response,” said Christine Boyle, Senior Manager for Catering, Cleaning, Events, and Food Strategy at Argyll and Bute Council. “In the past, we had explored ways to introduce locally sourced meat into school meals but encountered several challenges, with distribution and reducing food miles being the most significant barriers.

“When the opportunity to participate in this pilot project arose, it was an obvious choice for us. It allowed us to support local businesses while ensuring high-quality, nutritious food was served to our pupils. The response has been brilliant and while this is currently a pilot project on the two islands, we hope it can continue.”



Cath and Andy McCallum are the founders of Wild Jura. Working with nearby estates like Ardlussa, Barnhill, Tarbert, and Ruantallain, they process wild venison from deer that roam freely on the hills.

“We had not seriously considered introducing our venison into school meals until we were approached by Food for Life Scotland,” says Cath. “The supply chain is remarkably simple. From source to school, the journey takes no more than an hour – from the hill to Port Ellen. Food miles are exceptionally low, processing is minimal, and any additional

ingredients are organic. We are grateful that these benefits are recognised and are now being enjoyed by local children, whom we have a collective responsibility to feed with care.”

Looking ahead, the council plans to monitor the project’s outcomes and explore opportunities to expand this initiative to more schools across Argyll and Bute. The success of this pilot could serve as a model for other local authorities seeking to integrate locally sourced, sustainable produce into public institutions.

“For others seeking to pursue similar initiatives, I would encourage them to look to Food for Life Scotland. They are partnering with numerous local authorities to develop healthy, locally sourced, and sustainable supply chains. Without their support, I am not sure we would have been able to achieve what we have.”

**Cath McCallum, Founder, Wild Jura**

Pictures: Maker Limited



## FFLS at ScotHot

We were thrilled to be back at ScotHot this year, once again hosting the Food for Life competition class, as part of the Scottish culinary championships.

Public sector caterers showcased their skills, creating dishes that not only tasted incredible but also reflected the Food for Life Served Here certification standards by using fresh, local and sustainable ingredients.

Huge congratulations to John Wright, Sous Chef for BaxterStorey at Glasgow Caledonian University, whose dish of Kames Steelhead trout with charred leeks and Shetland mussels received best in class.

Thank you to all our fantastic participants: Arun Kuhithadathil Joy of NHS Scottish Borders, Cameron Veal of Dynamic Earth, Ewan Grey of BaxterStorey, Leah Bryce of Renfrewshire Council, and Michelle Muir of Stirling Council.



The Food for Life Served Here certification emphasises our values of sustainability, seasonality and fresh scratch cooking.

**John Wright, Sous Chef for BaxterStorey at Glasgow Caledonian University and winner of the Food for Life Competition at ScotHot**



## Food for Life Scotland training

“Excellent and well-delivered. If only all training sessions were like this!” ”

The Food for Life Scotland team offer training in person and online, covering topics including seasonality and the FFLSH certification standards. This year, we trained 448 caterers across six local authority areas: Edinburgh, Glasgow, Midlothian, Orkney, Renfrewshire, Scottish Borders and West Dunbartonshire. This included caterers working in school meals services, as well as care home caterers in West Dunbartonshire. Thanks to all who took part!

Pictures: Andy Buchanan



## Putting good food on the table at Solace conference

In September, we were delighted to collaborate with Solace Chair Dr Grace Vickers and chefs at conference venue Melville Castle Hotel in Dalkeith, Midlothian, to give delegates the Food for Life Served Here (FFLSH) experience at this year’s Solace Conference dinner.

Menu items, which were inspired by the FFLSH certification standards, included salt-baked beetroot with whipped ricotta, apple and hazelnut, and baked stuffed courgette with wild mushroom, garlic and thyme butter, and herb roast potato. Local suppliers JB Foods, Midlothian, and Mark Murphy, Edinburgh, provided fresh vegetables, meat and dairy for the event.



The menu was designed to highlight the power that good food holds to deliver improved health outcomes, a greener environment and thriving economy in Scotland. It also inspired interest in the Food for Life Scotland programme for South Lanarkshire Council – watch this space!

## FFLS at Royal Highland Show

The Food for Life Scotland team were in residence at the Countryside Cottage for the 2024 Royal Highland Show, to raise awareness of FFLSH amongst parents, families and schools. School pupils took part in activities to learn more about seasonality and provenance, as well as our mission to make good food the easy choice for everyone.



Find out more about  
Food for Life Scotland

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