Cartmel Commitment 2025

On behalf of young people in Cumbria we want schools, local authorities, businesses and community groups to work together to maximise the social, environmental, local economic and educational benefits associated with food. In particular we call for the following:

Education/skills

- ☐ *Students, especially those of primary school age, should have more field trips to farms/growing sites to learn where their food comes from and how it is produced.*
- ☐ *Provide gardening clubs/growing opportunities in schools: e.g. vertical farms*
- ☐ *Encourage partnerships with businesses from all areas of the food chain (farmers/growers, wholesalers, caterers, chefs etc) including work experience/ apprenticeships (strengthen links for older students)*
- ☐ *Include students in some of the logistics of food provision within schools*
  - *For example: Culinary lessons – like library lessons - watch the cooks cook the food and teach the students how it's done.*
- ☐ *More lessons around food: understanding the benefits of local, healthy, sustainable and seasonal (theory) in both primary and secondary schools.*
- ☐ *Promotion of basic cooking skills*
  - *Mandatory cooking lessons for primary schools and years 7 - 9 which includes how to cook with fruit and vegetables which are local and seasonal*
  - *Encourage parents of younger children to get involved*
  - *Help build older children's knowledge and cooking skills before they leave school to go to college, university or start working.*

Food in schools

- ☐ *Have a school food group (sustainability sub-group) to oversee what happens with food in schools*
  - *Create an environment where sustainability values are encouraged*
  - *People see the rewards of making changes.*
- ☐ *Get student input into the menu design and choice of dishes*
  - *Establish as a job for prefects or a school menu team*
  - *Provide a greater variety of menu options*
  - *Include more seasonal fruits and vegetables including specific term-time menus for the different seasons*
  - *Provide a greater number of healthy options*
  - *Provide more vegetarian and gluten-free options*
- ☐ *Prioritise local, sustainable and healthy food in schools across Cumbria*

Waste

- ☐ *Reduce food and plastic waste*
  - *Use reduced portion sizes and any other means available to minimise the amount of food wasted*
  - *Increase food waste provision (e.g. composting bins)*
  - *Remove packaging completely wherever possible*
  - *Minimise single use plastics wherever possible, especially those that are non-recyclable*
  - *Make sure there are recycling bins on school grounds for all forms of waste including drinks bottles and food packaging*
- ☐ *Encourage circular economy principles*
  - *Use reusable products (such as aluminum straws and plates) before compostable ones*
  - *Use compost to grow food on site*

Resourcing

- ☐ *Ensure schools are adequately funded in order to be able to deliver all the changes outlined above and are given support to understand and adopt best practice*

Outcomes

The objectives of the actions outlined above are to deliver the following outcomes:

- *School children will improve their knowledge about food and where it comes from. They will also develop skills, such as cooking skills, which will help them throughout their lives. More nutritious food will also result in both short term and long term health benefits, for example by reducing the risk of heart disease in later life.*
- *As well as being part of a school's Climate Action Plan, it will support personal development for pupils, an important element of Ofsted Inspections. Well nourished pupils will also learn better which will result in better exam results. Children will be more aware of issues such as litter and make conscientious decisions to reduce food waste and litter resulting in cost savings for schools and more attractive grounds.*
- *The environment will benefit by reducing emissions relating to food and by supporting biodiversity.*
- *Local food producers will benefit as it will help develop local markets for their products. It will also help build links between farms and local communities in an inclusive, more collaborative and help raise the profile of careers in food and farming which will make recruitment easier.*

This commitment was developed by Anastasiia, Erin, Honor and Najia as part of their 2025 Dream Placement at Cumbria Action for Sustainability with support from Cumbria Development Education Centre. Anastasiia, Erin, Honor and Najia are all students at schools in Cumbria

DreamPlacement Scheme is delivered by the Centre for Leadership and Performance

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