



Future proof:

**SUPPORTING EVOLVING TASTES
AND NUTRITIONAL NEEDS
OF AN AGEING POPULATION**



INTRODUCTION



A message from
Sadia Allam
Foodservice channel
controller at Premier Foods

“The Government’s new 10-Year Health Plan places greater emphasis on prevention and healthier lifestyles, especially in the wake of an ageing population. As care homes look to meet the nutrition and wellbeing goals of the residents of tomorrow, there is an opportunity to support health in later life through menu innovation. At the same time, our report has found that the next generation of care home diners are calling for more variety, with a strong interest in trying more global cuisines.

“Premier Foods is proud to be playing a part in the mission to bring exciting and highly nutritious dishes to care home menus. Our range of Homepride and Sharwood’s sauces are more than just versatile, they provide a source of fibre and vitamins C and D, making them a simple yet effective way for care sector caterers to enhance everyday meals with nutritional benefits. As well as the core line-up, our new range features global flavours such as Katsu Curry and Thai Sweet Chilli.

“Our sauces are designed with real-world care home kitchen challenges in mind. They’re cost-effective, easy to use, and offer portion control to reduce waste and support consistency. With a broad appeal that now extends to even more global cuisines, they add much-needed excitement and variety to the plate.

“As menu choices continue to evolve in line with national health objectives, we’re committed to supporting caterers with practical, trusted brands that meet rising expectations around taste, nutrition, and inclusivity – without compromising on efficiency in the kitchen.”

Between mid-2022 and mid-2032, the number of people at state pension age is projected to increase by 13.8%, from an estimated 12 million to 13.7 million people. This takes into account the planned increases in State Pension age to 67 for both sexes. There are about 16,566 care homes in the UK, with a population of approximately 441,479.¹

METHODOLOGY
This report is the output of nationwide research conducted by Censuswide, commissioned by Premier Foods, in July 2025. Participants include 1,000 respondents in the UK aged over 55. 28% of respondents were aged 55-59, 29% 60-64, 20% 65-69, 14% 70-74. **All statistics in this report are based on the Censuswide survey, July 2025, unless indicated otherwise.**



Meet the expert
Louise Wagstaffe,
Culinary Advisor

Louise is a culinary entrepreneur and seasoned chef, with three decades of experience in the food industry.

She is currently Chef-Director at Delicious By Design and she also works with Premier Foods as senior culinary advisor. In 2021, Louise was named one of 44 Culinary Heroes by the Craft Guild of Chefs for her extraordinary work during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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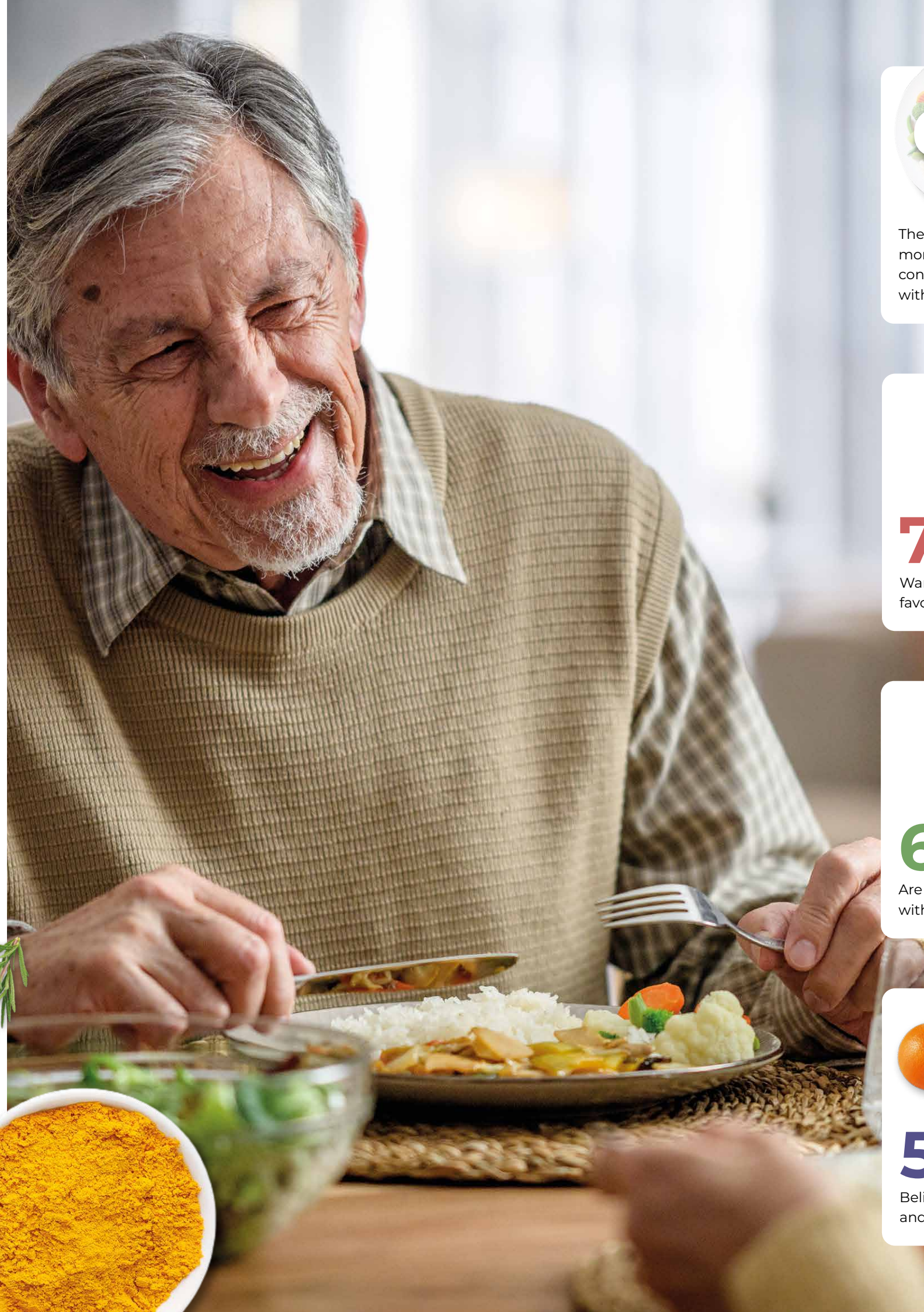
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE

This research highlights important trends in the dietary habits, preferences, and motivations of over 55s, offering valuable insights for care home caterers aiming to meet the evolving needs of the next generation of residents.

Nutrition remains a critical concern. **More over 55s are falling short of the recommended intake of fruit, vegetables, and fibre.** More than two thirds are unsure if their diet meets their nutritional needs. While only a small number report specific dietary restrictions, the **appetite for foods fortified with vitamins is strong.** This underscores the need for care home menus that are balanced, fortified, and clearly labelled to support better health outcomes.

At the same time, appetite for diverse cuisines is growing. While British cuisine remains dominant, cuisines such as Italian, Chinese, Indian, and Mexican are also popular, and many older adults express a desire for more variety, especially when asked about care settings. **Nearly 70% are more likely to choose dishes with global flavours,** creating a clear opportunity for caterers to offer internationally inspired meals.

Food choices are influenced by health, cost, and novelty and older adults value food that is nutritious, affordable, and exciting. While health and convenience are top priorities, **a notable number are motivated by trying new things, as well as by sustainability.** Care homes should look to balance classic dishes with innovative, globally inspired options to satisfy both the comfort and curiosity of future diners.



The percentage of over-55s more likely to choose a dish containing ingredients fortified with extra vitamins.



71%

Want to see more variety of their favourite cuisines in care homes.



69%

Are more likely to choose a dish with globally inspired flavours.



55%

Believe they eat 1-3 servings of fruit and veg on average per day.

NURTURING NUTRITION

Five a day facts:

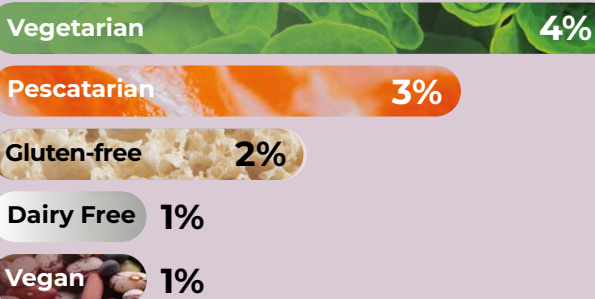
An adult portion of fresh, frozen or tinned fruit or vegetables is 80g. For dried fruit, a portion is 30g.²

Those over 55 have expressed concerns they are not always eating a nutritious diet, creating an opportunity for fresh ingredients, fibre and fortified sauces. **More than half (55%) of over 55s report consuming only 1-3 servings of fruit and vegetables per day**, which falls short of the NHS recommendation of at least 5 servings per day.

When it comes to confidence in meeting nutritional needs, our research suggests that **17% are unconfident their current diet meets their nutritional needs**, while **21% are neither confident nor unconfident**. It's a similar story for fibre, with **14% unconfident that they are getting enough of it**, and **20% are neither confident nor unconfident**.

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Only 15% of over 55s report having specific dietary requirements. The most common are:



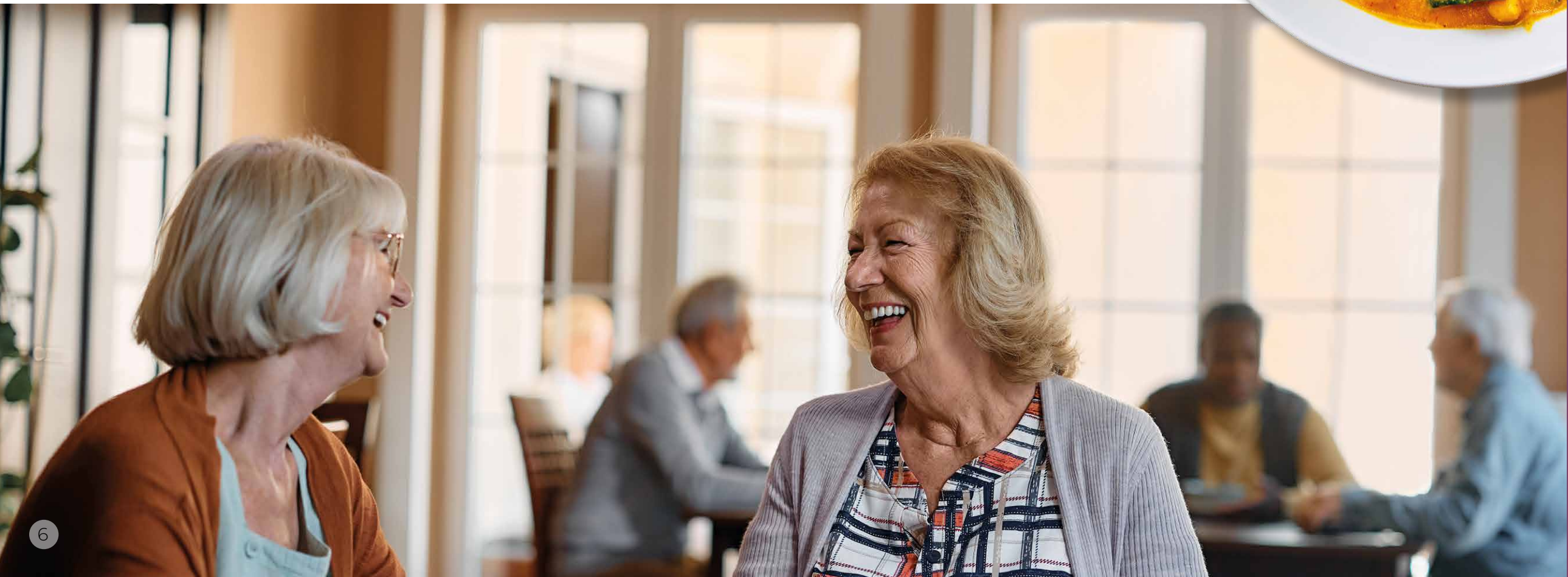
61% of over 55s would be more likely to choose a dish containing ingredients fortified with extra vitamins.



LOUISE WAGSTAFFE
Culinary Advisor

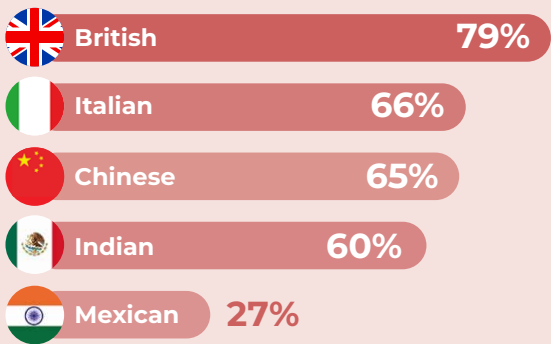
"The data suggests that many over 55s believe they are falling short of key nutritional benchmarks, particularly around fruit, vegetable, and fibre intake. For care home caterers looking to create the right menu for the next generation, this highlights an opportunity to build dishes that are not only tasty but also nutritionally balanced. Since a significant proportion of this age group lacks confidence in whether they are meeting their dietary needs, care homes can play a crucial role in closing that gap. This could mean incorporating more visible servings of fruit and vegetables into main meals, offering high-fibre alternatives in breads, cereals, and snacks – and incorporating our sauces, which are a source of fibre and vitamins C and D.

"Additionally, the low prevalence of dietary requirements such as vegetarian, gluten-free, or dairy-free suggests that caterers should not assume a high demand for niche diets, but they should still ensure these options are available and clearly marked. Lastly, with 61% saying they'd be more likely to choose meals with added vitamins, there is a clear opportunity to use fortified foods in a way that supports older adults' nutritional wellbeing without changing their eating habits drastically. Nutritional transparency and education can also help future residents make more confident food choices."



DIFFERENT CUISINES

Respondents were given the option to choose up to five favourite cuisines. The top preferences are:



Thai also featured as a top 5 cuisine for over a quarter, while Japanese was selected by 11%.

There is a clear opportunity for care home chefs to offer a spread of cuisines for future diners, with top choices spanning the globe. Some **71% would like to see a wider variety of their favourite cuisines** in a care home setting, while **69% would be more likely to choose a dish that features globally inspired flavours.**



Tip:

A ‘world food night’ or rotating international menu themes could offer variety without overcomplicating meal preparation. Using versatile Homepride and Sharwood’s sauces can help make dish creation straightforward, tasty and nutritious. Embracing these preferences can also support social engagement around food, helping make mealtimes more enjoyable.”

Louise, Culinary Advisor.



LOUISE WAGSTAFFE
Culinary Advisor

“While it could be tempting to default to traditional British meals, findings suggest a growing appetite for global flavours among over 55s. Italian, Chinese, Indian, and Mexican are highly popular, with Thai and Japanese also receiving significant mentions. This presents a powerful opportunity to diversify future menus with international dishes that are both exciting and age appropriate.

“Incorporating globally inspired dishes into weekly menus, while ensuring they are adapted for older adults’ dietary and texture needs, can enhance the dining experience, reduce menu fatigue, and help caterers meet the expectations of a more adventurous generation. Importantly, 71% want to see more variety of their favourite cuisines in care homes, suggesting that familiarity with global food is no longer niche but mainstream.

“Moreover, nearly 7 in 10 over 55s are more likely to choose a dish with globally inspired flavours. This indicates a real shift in palate that should not be overlooked.”



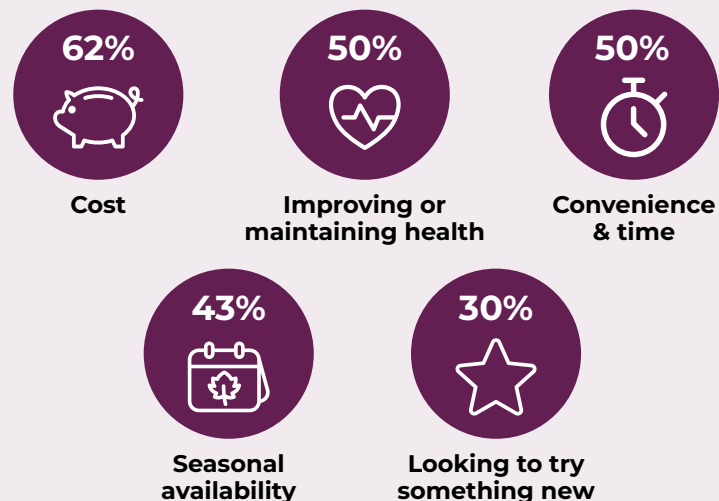


INFLUENCES ON FOOD CHOICES

Understanding the ‘why’ when it comes to food choices is an important part of putting together care home menus for the next generation of diners. It also presents chefs with an opportunity to make changes that suit their diners’ needs.

Choice cuts

Respondents were given the option to choose up to five things that influence food choices. The top influences are:

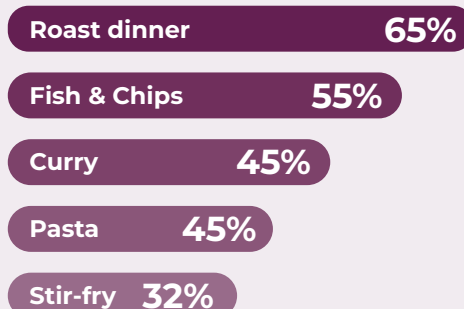


Other influences include a desire for globally inspired flavours (21%), recommendations from friends and family (17%), sustainability and ethics (16%) and dietary restrictions (10%).

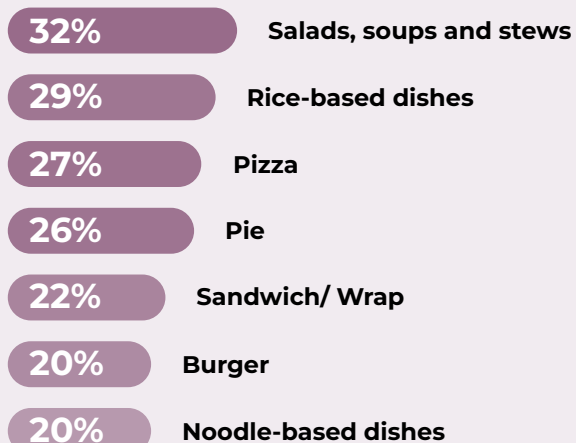


Respondents were given the option to choose up to five preferred meal types.

The top choices are:



Other popular meal types include:



LOUISE WAGSTAFFE
Culinary Advisor

The most significant influence among over 55s is cost, followed closely by health, convenience, and seasonal availability. For care home caterers, this highlights the need for food that is nutritious and well-balanced. Health is a top driver, meaning meals should support common health needs such as heart health, digestion, and bone density.

“That 30% of over 55s want to “try something new” as part of their top five choices shows that variety and novelty are also important to the next generation of residents. Dishes should strike a balance between familiar comfort foods and new experiences.

“Secondary influences such as sustainability, family recommendations, and global flavours, meanwhile, show growing awareness of ethics and social connections around food.

“Menu design could highlight sustainable ingredients or local sourcing efforts, helping residents feel part of broader food trends. Offering familiar formats such as curry, roast dinners, and pasta, with modern twists can satisfy evolving preferences while honouring long-standing favourites.”

MEET THE PREMIER FOODS
COOKING SAUCES RANGE:



LOUISE WAGSTAFFE
Culinary Advisor

"Our new sauces were launched after feedback that suggested there were some gaps in the range. The new range includes a multi-use tomato sauce that's great for dishes such as bakes and as a base for pizza.

"Our range of flavours offer the right balance between familiar dishes and more adventurous cuisines, with the new Sharwood's sauce evoking takeaway flavours for a mealtime treat."



- THAI SWEET CHILLI
- JAPANESE KATSU CURRY
- SWEET & SOUR
- KORMA CURRY
- TIKKA MASALA CURRY

A quick and convenient solution for schools, the Sharwood's range is ideal for curries with meat, lentils or veg, and they deliver consistent results every time. A source of fibre and vitamins C and D, with only milk as a declared allergen, they help support nutrition while keeping prep simple. Once opened, refrigerate and use within five days.



- EVERYTHING TOMATO
- TOMATO & BASIL
- BOLOGNESE

Homepride ready-to-use sauces are a simple, cost-effective way to add flavour and nutrition to care home menus. Certified by the Vegan Society and no allergens to declare, each one is a source of fibre and vitamins C and D, helping caterers deliver meals that are both tasty and nutritionally supportive. Once opened, refrigerate and use within five days.



1

HOMEPRIDE PASTA TRAY BAKE

Prep:	2 minutes
Cook:	40 minutes
Serves:	30
Allergens:	Cereals containing gluten
Suitable for:	Vegan, Vegetarian



2

HOMEPRIDE TOMATO SOUP

Prep:	5 minutes
Cook:	5 minutes
Serves:	25
Allergens:	Celery
Suitable for:	Coeliac, Vegan, Vegetarian



INGREDIENTS

- 1kg penne pasta
- 1L boiling water
- 1 x 2.25L Homepride Everything Tomato Sauce

METHOD

1. Pre-heat oven to 170°C, 325°F, gas mark 3.
2. Place pasta, water and Homepride Everything Tomato Sauce into gastro tray, stir, cover then bake for 30–40 minutes until pasta is tender.



Chef tip

This is a great recipe for a simple pasta bake or you can add other ingredients if you wish such as meat-free balls, mixed peppers, tuna and sweetcorn.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 x 2.25L Homepride Tomato Base Soup
- 50g Bisto Vegetable Bouillon Paste
- 2.2L Water
- 25g fresh parsley leaves, chopped

METHOD

1. Add the Homepride Everything Tomato Sauce to a large pan, add the Bisto Vegetable Bouillon Paste. Cover and bring to a light simmer.
2. Portion into bowls or mugs, garnish with chopped parsley if you wish.



Chef tip

Serve with a sprinkle of seeds, such as pumpkin or sunflower, for a natural boost of vitamins and healthy fats.



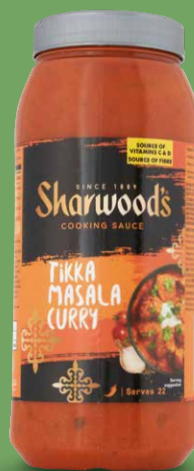
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SHARWOOD'S TIKKA MASALA SWEET POTATO AND LENTIL CURRY

Prep:	20 minutes
Cook:	40 minutes
Serves:	20

Allergens:
Celery, Cereals containing
gluten, Milk

Suitable for:
Coeliac, Vegetarian



4

SHARWOOD'S THAI SWEET CHILLI CHICKEN DINNER

with Hasselback Potatoes and Roasted
Vegetables

Prep:	15 minutes
Cook:	1 hour
Serves:	10

Allergens:
Cereals containing gluten,
Soybeans



INGREDIENTS

- 50ml oil
- 4 onions peeled and diced
- 1.5kg sweet potato peeled, and 1 cm diced
- 800g dry lentils, rinsed
- 3L Bisto Vegetable Bouillon Prepared
- 1 x 2.25kg Jar Sharwood's Tikka Masala Cooking Sauce
- 100g fresh coriander, chopped

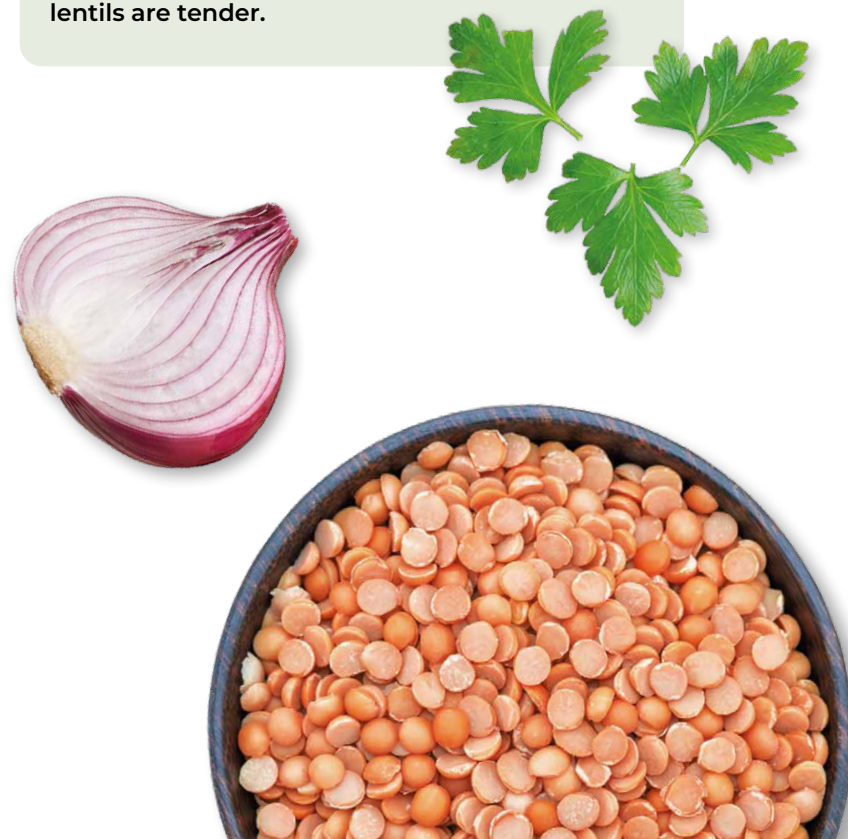
METHOD

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan, gently cook the onions for 10 minutes. Add the lentil and sweet potato and cover with 3 litres of prepared Bisto Vegetable Bouillon.
2. Bring to a simmer and cook for 20 minutes or until the lentils and sweet potatoes are tender. Pour over the Sharwood's Tikka Masala Cooking Sauce, simmer for further 10 minutes then finish with fresh coriander.



Chef tip

This curry can be cooked through in the oven. Just place it all in a deep oven dish, cover and bake for 30 minutes or until the vegetables and lentils are tender.



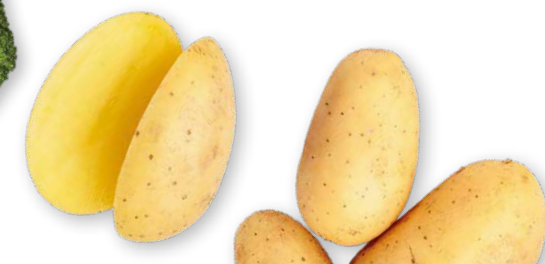
INGREDIENTS

- 20 new potatoes
- 10 x 80g pieces of chicken
- 500ml Sharwood's Thai Sweet Chilli Cooking Sauce
- 50ml oil
- 400g broccoli
- 400g sliced peppers
- 200g sweetcorn



METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 200°C, 400°F, gas mark 6. Keeping the potatoes whole, slice them 2 mm apart $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through each potato, repeat until all the potatoes are prepared.
2. Put the potatoes cut side up on a shallow tray and drizzle over the oil. Rub each potato with your hands to coat well in the oil, getting some in between the slices. Roast for 45 minutes until the potatoes are tender.
3. While the potatoes are cooking, place the chicken onto an oven tray, baste in the Sharwood's Thai Sweet Chilli Cooking Sauce and place in oven for 20-25 minutes to a core temperature of 75°C.
4. When the potatoes are tender, add the broccoli and sliced pepper to the tray and roast for a further 10 minutes.
5. Heat up the corn, then serve the chicken and sauce with the potatoes and vegetables.





FINAL WORD

THREE KEY TAKEAWAYS

NUTRITION NEEDS ATTENTION

Many in the over-55 demographic feel they fall short on key nutritional benchmarks, including fruit and veg intake as well as eating a balanced diet. However, there's a clear appetite for improvement: 61% are more likely to choose meals fortified with vitamins. This is a golden opportunity for care homes to offer future diners nutrient-rich, clearly labelled meals using fortified products that don't complicate prep. Our Homepride and Sharwood's cooking sauces, which include added fibre and vitamins C and D, can help kitchens meet nutritional goals without disrupting familiar formats, giving diners both comfort and health benefits.

GLOBAL FLAVOURS ARE IN DEMAND

Global cuisines are gaining strong ground. Italian, Chinese, Indian, Mexican, Thai and Japanese dishes are now widely enjoyed – and 71% of respondents say they want more variety in care home menus. A similar number are more likely to opt for meals with globally inspired flavours. For care caterers, this will be a chance to innovate within safe parameters, using adaptable sauces and familiar dishes to introduce global flair. International menu nights or themed meals can add excitement, spark conversation, and elevate the dining experience in meaningful and modern ways.

TASTE, COST, AND CURIOSITY SHAPE CHOICES

Food decisions for older adults are driven by a blend of practicality and pleasure. Cost tops the list of influences, followed by health, convenience, and a desire to try new things. This suggests that while nutritional value is a non-negotiable, meals also need to be affordable and engaging. Familiar formats like roast dinners, fish & chips, and pasta remain popular, but there's space for innovation. A third of over 55s want more novelty in their meals. By incorporating versatile sauces and thoughtful adaptations of global recipes, care homes catering for the next generation can meet these evolving expectations while staying efficient and inclusive.





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