

Food and drink strategy

2018-21



Foreword

As a trust, we are incredibly proud of the care we provide in our hospitals.

High-quality nutrition is critical when we care for patients. Studies have shown good nutrition and hydration play an important part in physical and mental health recovery following illness, as well as preventing other illness and complications. They also support healthy lifestyles, adding quality to life.

Our team members have very busy jobs where it is all too easy to neglect good nutrition and sometimes, with a relative in hospital, friends and family can need a little extra support to quickly and easily look after themselves.

So, as a trust we recognise the importance of supporting our staff and visitors to make healthy choices. We provide information and make sure healthy food and drink is available.

As a major purchaser, we have a great opportunity to support local business and not only that, we recognise our responsibility to reduce our carbon footprint by buying locally where we can, contributing to the trust's overall sustainability strategy.

These are areas where we become real partners.

I hope you can support the crucial role health food and drink can play in our trust for you as an employee, but also for our patients who need excellent care, supported by excellent nutrition and hydration.

Best wishes



Paul Bentley
Chief Executive

Why do we need a food and drink strategy?

The importance of food and drink in hospitals has been recognised in a number of national reports, including the influential **Hungry to be Heard**, published by Age Concern UK 2010. It challenged hospitals to put in place seven steps to end malnutrition in hospitals for elderly patients.

In his final report of the **Mid Staffordshire Foundation Trust Public Inquiry**, Sir Robert Francis QC detailed some shocking examples of poor nutritional care and recommended that the 'arrangements and best practice for providing food and drink to elderly patients require constant review, monitoring and implementation'.

The Francis report was helpful in putting forward some basic principles that should be considered to help improvements in nutrition and hydration.

As part of the response to the Francis report and other key documents, the Department of

Health published **the Hospital Food Standards Panel's report on standards for food and drink in NHS hospitals** in August 2014.

This report aims to improve food and drink across the NHS so that everyone who eats has a healthier food experience and that everyone involved in its production is properly valued. The report identified five food standards required of hospitals, which are captured in our strategy.

Our food and drink strategy has been developed by the Nutrition and Hydration Steering Group. It builds on existing work and reflects national and local guidance and priorities, including the **Five Year Forward View** (NHSE 2014).

This strategy focuses on three key areas:

1. Hospital patient nutrition and hydration.
2. Healthier eating across hospitals, for patients, visitors, volunteers and our staff.
3. Sustainable procurement of food and catering services.

The trust is also required to meet the standards within the following:

- The 10 key characteristics of food nutritional care (Council of Europe Resolution 2003).
- Nutrition and hydration digest (Association of UK Dietitians 2017).
- MUST - malnutrition universal screening tool (BAPEN 2011).
- Government buying standards for food and catering services (Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 2017).
- Healthier and more sustainable catering – nutrition principles (Public Health England 2017).

The trust has committed to comply with the following initiatives:

- Healthy foods for NHS staff, volunteers, visitors and patients (CQUIN).
- Sugar sweetened beverages sales reduction supplier commitment (NHS England).

What's in place to make sure we provide the right food and drink for patients?

We want to make sure that our community hospital patients receive the most appropriate nutritional care, in line with best practice guidelines.

The Nutrition and Hydration Steering Group provides direction and guidance to the trust to meet this goal. The group reports to the Patient Experience Group and includes representation from staff and patients. Its main focus is to make sure good nutritional practices are embedded and sustained across the entire organisation; providing appropriate assurance the trust complies with Care Quality Commission (CQC) standards for nutrition and hydration.

We have a Catering Operational Group to ensure delivery of good patient-centred, safe and effective food and drink, as well as ensuring

quality and improved outcomes and a better patient experience.

We work together to provide a hospital menu which meets national standards and provides a variety of meals for all different types of dietary requirements. We also work to find solutions to issues which may arise around catering, food delivery, service and patient satisfaction.

Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment (PLACE) was introduced nationally in 2013. The planned annual assessment is routinely completed, testing the quality of food and the organisation's strategic provision of patients' food and drink. The annual results are shared publicly and help drive improvement in the nutritional care provided to patients comparatively nationally and locally.

Supporting eating and drinking

During the past three years, we have focussed our efforts on a wide range of aspects of patient nutrition, for example assessment, care planning, improvements to the meal service, menus, recipes and catering.

Our nursing, dietetic and speech and language therapy staff have worked with catering teams to ensure all recipes for our patient meals are of consistent high quality and reflect the tastes and needs of our patients.

We offer a wide range of hot and cold meal choices and a choice of sandwiches. A variety of snacks are offered to patients throughout the day and a range of hot and cold drinks are offered at least seven times per day. Our bespoke menus are printed specifically for our patients, in a colourful and wipeable format. The nutritional and allergen content of all food is available, on request.

All patients are screened to assess their risk of malnutrition when they are admitted to the wards. Any inpatient at risk of being malnourished or who has developed a pressure ulcer is automatically seen by the dietitian who will put in place a specific nutrition plan of care.

Work has been carried out to support eating and drinking in patients with cognitive or physical difficulties. We now have easy-to-use cutlery and crockery and finger foods, where necessary.

We have a picture menu for patients with communication difficulties and red mats and red trays are used to highlight which patients need help or encouragement at mealtimes.

We have reviewed food choices for patients who have difficulties in chewing or swallowing, to make sure meals are suitable for their needs and they have enough choice.

Where possible, we encourage patients to sit together at a table at meal times.

We have put in place a training programme for nursing staff in our community hospitals to support them in meeting the needs of patients with swallowing problems (dysphagia).

We ask for regular feedback from patients about the quality and choice of food on offer. Patient experience of our food choice and quality is also reviewed in other ways such as PLACE inspections, CQC national patient surveys, compliments and complaints. Patient and public engagement events are used to further develop the service.

Priorities for 2018-21 are:

- continue to monitor nutritional screening for all patients and report compliance to the Nutrition Steering Group
- continue to improve the patient experience at mealtimes focussing on assistance and the environment
- continue to work with our volunteers and visitors and enable them to provide additional support to patients at mealtimes
- improved completion of food and fluid balance charts for relevant patient groups
- continue to regularly review our main and specialist menus to meet the changing needs of patients
- improvement to our PLACE scores
- ensure compliance with the nutrition and hydration digest
- working with families and carers of our patients to help patients with their eating and drinking in hospital.



Healthier eating for staff, visitors and volunteers

Food and drink for our patients have always been a key focus of our work. Consideration is also given to the whole hospital community, including patients, visitors, volunteers and staff.

Our catering facilities comply with legislation relating to labelling allergens within the food

served enabling customers with food allergies to choose their food and drink safely. Gluten-free items and soya milk are available, on request.

On sites where vending machines are installed they offer a range of items, including healthier choices.

Priorities for staff, volunteers and visitors 2018-21 are:

Healthier options are available at all times.

- Work with catering suppliers to increase opportunities for staff, visitors and volunteers to consume healthier food and drink options with higher sustainability and nutritional standards.
- Continue to review contents of the vending machines throughout the trust and, where those contracts are supplied by external providers, ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to comply with CQUIN requirements.
- Review provision of food and drink for staff, volunteers and visitors in the evening and at weekends to ensure adequate variety and access.

Promote healthier eating across the organisation

- Provide carbohydrate content of the foods and drinks for sale on request.
- Develop a trust-wide signposting for healthier foods and drinks.
- Review the pricing strategy of foods and drinks across the trust, including competitive pricing of healthier options and inclusion of healthier choices. Influence people's choices through pricing promotions and positioning.

Continue to improve the choices for all requiring specialist diets such as for a food allergy

- Develop a recipe book where all our pre-cooked foods meet varied dietary requirements.

Sustainable procurement of food and drink and catering services

We will work with our contractors and suppliers to meet the government's buying standards for food and catering services (developed by Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2014).

This standard covers the following areas of sustainable procurement:

- Foods produced to higher sustainability standards – covering issues, such as food produced to higher environmental standards, fish from sustainable sources, seasonal fresh food, animal welfare and ethical trading considerations.
- Foods procured and served to higher nutritional standards – to reduce salt, saturated fat and sugar and increase consumption of fibre, fish and fruit and vegetables.
- Procurement of catering operations to higher sustainability standards – including equipment, waste and energy management, for example we are committing to reducing our carbon emissions by 15 per cent.
- Continue to review the contents of vending machines throughout the trust and, where those contracts are supplied by external providers, ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place to comply with CQUIN requirements.



 In everything we do, **we care** 