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1. **Introduction**

Eating well and enjoying food is fundamentally important for every individual’s health and wellbeing. In a hospital setting appealing food and good nutrition is more than this, here it is vitally important.

Catering provision in NHS hospitals should always be exemplary, promoting a healthy balanced diet for patients, staff and visitors. This is a complex task.

The challenge requires efficient service delivery, coordination, and excellent communication to share information, knowledge and understanding between caterers, procurement, suppliers and clinical staff. Further, input from patients is pivotal to the success of the provision of a well-rounded catering service. In a diverse hospital population, food must meet the nutritional requirements of patients as well as providing food that is appropriate for different age groups, religious, cultural and social backgrounds across a range of medical conditions.

Food provided for patients needs to be familiar, appealing and available at appropriate times. Above all it needs to be eaten and enjoyed. Maximising opportunities for individuals to eat and drink and delivering quality and choice are fundamental to improving consumption.

In line with the Trusts overall Vision to provide world class care, we recognise our role within the community to promote good nutrition and act as a beacon of good practice, providing healthy food choices at every opportunity for patients, staff and visitors.

The aim of this strategy is to support the current culture change surrounding hospital catering to one that recognises the fundamental importance of providing appropriate food for every patient as part of his or her treatment. It highlights the Trusts for the food and drinks provision for our patients, visitors and staff and defines our Visions for the next 3 years.

1. **Nutritional Care**
	1. *Nutritional Care for our Patients*

The Trust has a Nutrition and Hydration Steering Group which is representative of a cross section of patient services including patient representation that is responsible for ensuring that the Trusts dietitian, catering services and ward teams work together to provide the best possible nutritionally well balance foods and drink for our patients.

Details of all of the requirements wards must meet to provide their patients with the best possible nutritional and hydration care during their stay in hospital are highlighted within the Trusts Nutrition and Hydration Policy.

*Vision:*

* *Our Vision is to develop this steering group to become a force for change within the organisation; communicating standards and initiatives both internal and externally led.*
* *To ensure that patients receive the highest quality of nutritional care, leading to shorter bed stays and long term health improvement. We aim to provide meals that look appealing and are of a size that neither is too small or overwhelms the patient.*
	1. *Nutrition Link Nurses*

Wards are required to identify a member of their team to lead on nutrition and hydration. Their role requires regular liaison with the Dietitian and the Catering Department. They are expected to cascade information and training to their ward colleagues to keep them fully updated on current best practice and any changes in nutrition and hydration standards.

The Trust expects that the nutrition link nurses attend regular link meetings and conduct a bi annual assessment of nutritional care within their work area. The link nurses should ensure that lessons learnt from these meetings and assessments are disseminated to the rest of the staff within their clinical area.

*Vision:*

* *To strengthen the links between nutritional link nurses and the catering team, by offering catering ‘link’ staff for each ward who will conduct on ward observations of service, focusing on the qualitative aspect of mealtime service.*
* *To ensure representation from a member of the catering team at the Nutrition Link meetings to provide operational insight and promote communication between the catering service and the ward.*
	1. *Nutrition & Hydration Training for Ward Staff*

Our frontline caring staff, Health Care Assistants (HCA’S) and Nurses, are encouraged to take the fluids and nutrition online learning; as a measure to ensure that staff have the appropriate skills and competencies to enable clear identification of patient’s nutritional needs and to bolster their continuing professional development.

The Trust Dietitian provides introduction to nutrition at induction for clinical staff, and provides training to the Nutrition Link Nurses and HCA’s through link meetings. Training and other information relating to nutritional needs, is cascaded to all ward staff via a dedicated Nutrition Ward Folder. Relevant, up to date dietetic literature is shared through these folders to ward staff.

*Vision:*

* *To ensure that Clinical staff are trained to an appropriate level of Food Hygiene for their role.*
	1. *Nutritional Screening of Patients*

All patients are screened for malnutrition using the Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST) or equivalent within 24 hours of admission.

Patients who score 0 are considered to be at low risk from malnutrition. Those who score 1 are at medium risk, scores of 2 or more are high risk. The maximum score is 6.

Completion of the nutritional assessments is audited annually to assess each ward’s compliance and the accuracy of each assessment by the Trusts Dietitian. Results are reported to the Nutrition and Hydration Steering Group.

*Vision:*

* *The Trust currently uses its own malnutrition screening tool. The Nutrition and Hydration Steering group has an objective to implement the nationally recognised MUST screening tool in line with the other local healthcare providers to ensure a standardised approach to malnutrition screening is employed.*
	1. *Patients Care Planning*

Following completion of a malnutrition assessment e.g. MUST a suitable Care Plan is produced for each patient who scores 1 or more. Patients who score 3 or more should be considered for referral to the Dietitian.

As part of the monitoring role of the Nutrition and Hydration steering group, the care plan will be monitored as part of the on-going audit programme. Remedial action plans will be devised and shared as audit results dictate.

* 1. *Patients requiring assistance to eat and drink*

The Trust uses a Red Tray system to identify patients who require assistance to eat their meals.

* 1. *Eating and Drinking Aids*

A range of adapted cutlery can be requested for patient use from the occupational health department.

1. **The Patient Meal Service**

Patient meals are prepared fresh daily by the Trust’s in house catering team. In 2019, a 4 week menu cycle was introduced, to improve the variety offered to patients, particularly those with long term inpatient stays.

Designed in collaboration with Trust dietitians, the trust now offers a programme of speciality menu’s to complement its standard patient cycle:

* Gluten Free
* Dairy Free
* Halal
* Kosher
* High Protein
* Children’s ‘Peacock Menu’
* Finger Foods
* Menu Suitable for Diabetes
* Menu Suitable for Renal Patients
* Vegan Menu
* Modified Texture (IDDSI)

Patients currently choose their menu up to 24 hours ahead of meal service, completing a paper menu form which is submitted to the main kitchen. This system relies heavily on patients to identify any alerts; such as allergies and on ward staff to ensure each menu receives the correct menu card. Inevitably, with menu’s being completed so far in advance & not necessarily ‘following’ the patient around the hospital, waste is an ongoing issue.

*Vision:*

* *To ensure that patient meal choices are asked as close to service as possible.*
* *To accurately record patient meal requests electronically so that it can be patient centred, easily analysed and waste minimised, whist reducing the risk of missed or incorrect allergen recording.*
	1. *Breakfast*

Breakfast is served from the main kitchen, offering a choice of at least 4 cereals including 2 high fibre options; freshly made porridge, a variety of fruits and where clinically indicated, a high protein cooked breakfast.

* 1. *Lunch and Evening Meals*

The standard menu cycle offers a choice of hot meals, including a vegetarian choice, freshly prepared sandwiches or salads, filled jacket potatoes and soups.

* Soups are all vegetarian and freshly made each day
* All sandwiches are provided with a choice if white or wholemeal bread
* Fresh, seasonal vegetables are provided on the menu every day
* All menus can be adapted on an individual patient basis to become allergen free

*Vision*

* *To continue to work closely with the pre-operative department to ensure dietary needs of inpatients are proactively sourced. This will include a review of communication channels to structure patients’ referral to the catering team for menu design/assurance.*
	1. *Texture Modified Food and Drink*

The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) detail the types and textures of food and drinks needed by patients who have swallowing difficulties and who are at risk of choking or Vision (food or liquid going into their airway).

The descriptors provide standard terminology to be used by all health professionals and food providers when communicating about an individual’s requirements for a texture modified diet.

The IDDSI framework consists of a continuum of 8 levels (0-7), where drinks are measured from Levels 0 – 4, while foods are measured from Levels 3 – 7.



All patients requiring a texture modified diet, or moving between levels, are assessed by the Trust’s Speech and Language therapist.

*Vision*

* *To review the process of communication to the catering team for patients moving onto, and between levels of IDDSI texture modified meals.*
* *To analyse the provision of texture modified meals and present these quarterly to the Nutrition & Hydration steering group.*
* *Revise the responsibilities of the ward mealtime coordinator to improve communication in regard to patient need.*
	1. *Therapeutic and Modified Diets*

The catering department has a diet kitchen that can cater for all therapeutic diets as well as foods requested for religious or cultural requirements. Therapeutic diets are prescribed and arranged by the Trusts Dietitian.

Modified diets are indicated by symbols on the patient’s menu card e.g. High Protein, FODMAP (Fermentable Oligo-, Di-, Mono-saccharides And Polyols).

It is important that patient’s menus are tailored to meet their specific needs – and therefore any Therapeutic/Modified menu should be completed on the relevant menu card and not annotated/added to a standard menu.

The hospital has designed its own special diets board, placed in each kitchen, which is used to indicate the diet a patient is on, whether they need help with feeding and actions needing to be taken from the screening tool. In addition there is a white board behind each bed with a space to identify patients dietary needs.

* 1. *Cultural and Religious Foods*

The patients we care for come from a wide range of religious and cultural backgrounds, and these patients’ dietary requirements require treating with respect and understanding.

As well as offering several cultural menus and part of the core menu package; the catering team will meet and discuss specific menu’s where a patients needs cannot be met by these options, or where further information is required to ensure the patient is confident with the food provided.

* 1. *Allergens*

The catering department maintains an Allergen matrix; a copy of which is regularly reviewed as part of the Trusts Food Safety Management System and a copy of which in Trust kitchens and on each ward.



*Vision*

* *The Food Information (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019 No. 1218) were laid before Parliament on 5 September 2019. These Regulations come into force on 1 October 2021 and will change the way in which food businesses in England are required to provide allergen information on prepacked for direct sale (PPDS) food. The Trust recognises its responsibility to abide by these laws, in all aspects of its catering operations including food prepared for patient, retail and charity events across site.*
* *Catering staff currently complete the FSA’s allergen e-learning package on induction. To ensure that all staff involved in the preparation and service of food are fully aware of the importance of allergen management, the Trust aims for all staff involved in food service – both within catering and ward based, complete this training on a 3 yearly basis.*
	1. *Meal Timing*

Breakfast: From 7:30am

Lunch: From 12 Noon

Supper: From 5:30pm

As meals are made fresh and served via heated trolleys to wards, each wards specific meal service time will differ depending on their trolleys arrival time.

* 1. *Supported Mealtimes*

The Trust recognises the importance of food in aiding a patients recovery, and therefore mealtimes are designated as protected, free from as many interruptions as possible to create a quiet, relaxed atmosphere or patients to enjoy their meal.

Ward staff are expected to ensure their mealtimes are protected by ensuring all non-essential activities on the ward cease during this dedicated time.

Whilst clinical activity is reduced, relatives or visitors who are assisting with feeding are encouraged to stay on the ward during this time to ensure all patients have the opportunity to enjoy their meal.

Ward doors will remain closed during this time and posters indicating the designated protected time are displayed at all ward entrances.



* 1. *Snacks Between Meals*

The catering department provides all wards with basic stock to offer snacks between meals, including:

* Biscuits
* Cheese & Crackers
* Fresh Fruit
* Yoghurts

*Vision*

* *Fixed mealtimes form an important part of the daily routine for in-patients during their stay in hospital. Set times can never suit all patients, however. Some patients will not feel hungry when the meal trolley comes round. Some will miss meals because of operations or treatments. Others will have eaten but will want a snack before the next meal. We aim to review the ward based snack provision, amending and updated where necessary to ensure all patients are able to access healthy food at a time suitable to them.*
1. **24 Hour Services for Patients**

All wards have a kitchen to provide patients with food and drink at any time of the day. Wards must, bread and butter and preserves, biscuits, hot and cold beverages.

*Vision*

* *The NHS Standard Contract (2020/21) states that Trust utilising retail outlets and vending machines, catering provision and facilities as appropriate, Service Users, Staff and visitors are offered ready access 24 hours a day to healthy eating and drinking options and that products provided and/or offered for sale meet the requirements set out in NHS Food Standards, including in respect of labelling and portion size. The Nutrition & Hydration Steering group will review the current provision of ‘out of hours’ food to ensure it complies with the detail see out in the contract and meets the needs of service users of the Trust.*
* *To raise staff awareness of accessibility of healthy snacks outside of normal mealtimes.*
1. **Hydration Care**
	1. *Water and Hot Drink Provision for Patients*

Patients must at all times have access to fresh water. This is provided with a lidded jug of water and suitable drinking beaker. A straw will be provided if required.

Patients are provided with fruit squash to encourage them to drink plenty of fluid.

Hot or Cold beverages are routinely offered to patients a minimum of 7 times per day.

Hot drinks are additionally available on request outside of these routine drinks rounds, these include:

* Tea, Coffee, Hot Chocolate, Ovaltine, Fruit Squash
	1. *Promoting Hydration to Reduce Infection*

The Trust recognises the link between poor hydration and incidences of Urinary Tract Infections.

The Trust will continue to work with the wider health economy to promote good hydration through posters on wards and in public areas, themed weeks to highlight good practice and attending meetings with this multidisciplinary group to provide a consistent approach to hydration care.

*Vision*

* *To introduce a visual way of highlighting patient’s fluid intake – considering best practice shared from other Trusts.*
* *Optimise patient’s hydration prior to theatre, including improved patient education and implementation of ‘water prescriptions’.*
1. **Caring For Staff & Visitors**
	1. *Restaurants & Cafe*

Denbigh’s restaurant offers a range of hot and cold meals and snacks 7 days a week for staff and visitors.

On a daily basis; the restaurant will offer at least:

* Homemade soup
* A choice of 3 main courses
* A fresh salad bar
* A selection of sandwiches and wraps
* A selection of panini’s and toasties

Prices are set to ensure healthy choices will always be the cheapest option to buy.

The also Trust has a Café, sited in the main entrance, operated by the League of Friends. The café offers a variety of cold options including sandwiches, wraps and snacks (Manufactured on site by the Trust catering team, and therefore produced to all standards; including allergen, labelling and portion size applied to NHS catering) as well as a selection of cakes and hot and cold drinks.

* 1. *Vending Options*

Vending machines, both snack, cold and hot drinks are situated in key patient & visitor areas including:

* Outpatients
* Pre Op
* Children’s Outpatients
* MCSI dining area
* Denbigh’s Foyer
	1. *A Health Promoting Trust*

Beyond offering healthy choices, the Trust’s ambition is to be recognised as a health-promoting Trust, one that makes an active contribution to promoting and improving the wider health and wellbeing of those with whom we come into contact; this includes patients, visitors and staff.

In practicality, this includes taking control of events in public areas to ensure they recognise the Trust’s messaging; contributing to the Trust’s wellbeing agenda; promoting Nutrition & Hydration week annually both internally and externally and making healthy choices easy when utilising our site as a whole.

*Vision:*

* *To promote good hydration for staff, by supporting wards & departments to have accessible cooled drinking water and considering hydration promotion through staff communication channels.*
* *To enhance availability of healthy food for staff out of standard mealtime hours, considering the use of pre ordering and delivery services.*
1. **Food Safety**

The Trust is committed to ensuring food and drink provided to patients, staff and visitors is safe.

As such, Estates & Facilities are responsible for food safety management in all areas of food preparation and service throughout the Trust; including main kitchens, restaurant, League of Friends Café, Ward Kitchens and any ad hoc events supplying food to patient’s, staff or visitors.

The Catering service maintains a bespoke food safety management system, based on the principles of HACCP which is reviewed in line with Trust policy.

Facilities management procure an annual review of food safety procedures by a recognised independently accredited consultant. This demonstrates food safety compliance and continual improvements of the service, through a report submitted to the Infection Control Working Group.

* 1. *Environmental Health – Food Hygiene Rating*

We are proud to have maintained a 5 star food hygiene rating on behalf of all catering facilities based at the Trust for many years.



*Vision:*

* *Maintain the Trust’s 5 star food hygiene rating.*
* *Ensure adequate staff across catering services are trained in Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) development and maintenance.*
1. **Food Waste**

The inherent uncertainties and fluctuations in demand for food services mean that food waste cannot be eliminated completely. However, with careful planning, consideration for patients’ needs and co-operation from all those involved, the Trust is able to manage, and where possible reduce food waste whilst still providing a quality service.

The Trust minimises food waste produced:

* The catering team employs a ‘just in time’ approach to food procurement,
* Patients menu’s collated to ensure recipes are modified prior to production
* Any over produced meals from the main kitchen are diverted safely to the restaurant for sale
* Restaurant specials monitored and where possible cooked to order

Food waste is monitored and analysed to identify where reduction may be possible:

* Untouched plates going to waste recorded by main kitchen
* Restaurant waste recorded by portion

Twelve million tonnes of municipal waste were landfilled in 2016, half of which was biodegradable. In line with National aims to eliminate food waste going to landfill by 2030; food waste is collected separately and collected by an anaerobic digestion facility creating renewable and nutrient rich fertiliser.

*Vision:*

* *In conjunction with the Trusts Sustainability Group, identify ‘waste champions’ across the Trust with the aim to monitor, advise and reduce waste, including food waste in their specific working area.*
1. **Patient Led Assessments of the Care Environment (PLACE)**

Patient-led assessments of the care environment (PLACE) help organisations understand how well they are meeting the needs of their patients, and identify where improvements can be made. They take place across NHS trusts, voluntary, independent and private healthcare providers and use information gleaned directly from patient assessors to report how well a site/organisation is performing.

The annual assessment considers all aspects of a patient’s journey, including the quality and availability of food and drink offered.

*Vision*

* *The Trusts aim is to continually improve the patient’s catering service provision, and aims to score above 95% or above across all food related elements in the national scoring criteria.*
1. **10 Key Characteristics of Good Nutrition & Hydration Care**

NHS England recognises that good nutrition and hydration are essential to health and wellbeing, help people recover more quickly from illness and set out 10 key characteristics for healthcare providers, including hospitals, to meet to ensure we get nutrition and hydration care right for every patient, every time.

Information on the 10 Key Characteristics can be found here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/nut-hyd/10-key-characteristics/>

The Trust assesses its compliance against these characteristics annually, which is reported and monitored by the nutrition and hydration steering group.

*Vision:*

* *Beyond meeting compliance, and in line with the Trusts wider , our Vision is to have a "World-class" catering service in order that food is consistently delivered to the patients in a manner we would expect.*

*We aim to achieve recognition for the high standards our team attain; challenging ourselves to achieve award winning status*

* *To achieve an average score above 8.0 in the CQC inpatient survey in relation to how patients would rate their hospital meal.*
1. **Procurement**
	1. *Government Buying Standards for Food (GBSF)*

GBSF identifies several clear opportunities for NHS trusts to help increase the overall performance, delivery and quality of hospital food. The GBSF criteria covers three key areas of sustainable food procurement:

Foods produced to higher sustainability standards

Food produced to higher environmental standards – for example fish from sustainable sources, seasonal fresh food, animal welfare and ethical trading considerations

Foods procured and served to higher nutritional standards

Food with reduced salt, saturated fat and sugar and increased consumption of: Fibre, fish, fruit and vegetables

Procurement of catering operations to higher sustainability standards

This includes the use of equipment, waste and energy management

* 1. *Red Tractor Assurance*

In 2014 the catering department committed to purchasing its fresh meat that has met Red Tractor assurance. The Red Tractor logo confirms that independent assessors have checked the meat meets comprehensive standards, from farms to fork. The standards cover:

*• Traceability*

*• Food, safety and hygiene*

*• Animal Welfare*

*• Environmental Protection*

* 1. *Sustainability Group*

This group leads on the implementation of the Trust Sustainability Strategy and policies in the areas of sustainability, corporate social responsibility and carbon reduction and insures that the Trust considers the wider impacts of purchasing decisions and that national guidance on reporting standards is met.

The committee will receive updates from the catering team in records to specific targets including:

* NHS England’s Plastic Pledge – reducing plastic from NHS catering operations. The Trust signed up to the pledge, referenced in The NHS Standard Contract 2020/21 in 2019, which sets reduction targets for single use plastic.
* Sustainable Procurement Standards – Government Buying Standards.
1. **British Dietetic Association**
	1. *Nutrition & Hydration Digest*

The Nutrition & Hydration Digest, revised in 2017, and updated in 2019 is a resource endorsed by the BDA, Hospital Caterers Association and NHS England which provides a comprehensive toolkit outlining the delivery of good nutritional support to patients under our care.

* 1. *Sustainable Eating Habits – One Blue Dot*

The One Blue Dot reference guide and associated toolkit describes the benefits and challenges of promoting more sustainable diet choices whilst maintaining a healthy and varied diet.

*Vision:*

* *The main patient menu currently has 22.2 % processed meat within its meat choices (Sausages, bacon etc.). To ensure we provide patients with quality healthy food choices, it is planned to reduce the use to 15% within 3 years.*