

Patient, Visitor and Staff Catering

Eating and Drinking for Health 2017-2020



Against the backdrop of the many challenges facing the NHS economy at present, we need to remain focused on the delivery of high-quality services that keep the needs of our patients and staff at the centre of everything we do.

I am passionate about achieving our vision of 'great healthcare from great people'. An area that is vitally important for achieving this vision – but can easily be overlooked - is the area of nutrition and hydration for patient and staff wellbeing. Everyone involved with providing care, clinical and non-clinical, has a part to play in helping us make significant improvements in these areas. My ambition is to improve nutrition and hydration within our hospitals beyond what we have achieved to date, so that everyone can benefit from better health and wellbeing.

Over the last four years, the Trust has been working with our catering provider, Serco, to help transform our patient, visitor and staff catering across the three acute hospitals.

The initial phase of this work sought to improve our catering facilities and menu content for both patients and staff and visitors. This included a significant investment in infrastructure and refurbishment of existing visitor and staff restaurants and cafes, as well as a major overhaul of the patient menu and how food is provided, with food now being served on the wards by dedicated ward housekeepers.

The next phase is now to bring everyone together around all aspects of nutrition, hydration and wellbeing. It is important that we develop shared goals around our ambitions for the future and that everyone fully understands how they fit in and can contribute. This applies equally to our patients, staff and Governors, as well as our suppliers and many partners like the League of Friends and post graduate facilities across the Trust.

There are different perceptions around what represents healthy eating. To increase our understanding of 'what's good for you', in terms of nutrition, hydration and wellbeing, I want to review our arrangements and best practice for providing food and drink across all areas of patient, staff and visitor catering. To better understand how we need to transform this area over the next three years, I would like us to engage more with all stakeholder and user groups. This work will dovetail with the ambitions around the NHS Five Year Forward View which focuses on health and wellbeing to help achieve better outcomes for patients.



Matthew Kershaw,
Chief Executive, East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust

Strategic context

Welcome to our Eating and Hydrating for Health 2017-2020 outline strategy document. It aims to shape our ambitions over the next three years to improve nutrition and hydration within our hospitals beyond what we have achieved to date, so that everyone can benefit from better health and wellbeing.

Malnutrition and dehydration are a significant risk to our patients, particularly older people and those with long term conditions. They are associated with increased mortality rates, hospital admissions and the development of various comorbidities, such as impaired cognitive function, falls, poor control of diabetes and hypothermia. It is recognised that malnourished patients in hospitals stay longer and are more likely to develop complications or infections.

Sir Robert Francis QC, in his final report of the Mid Staffordshire Foundation Trust Public Inquiry (2013), detailed 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”.

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” (Department of Health August 2014). The report aims to improve food and drink across the NHS so that everyone who eats whilst under NHS care has a healthier food experience and that everyone involved in its production is properly valued. The standards focussed on key areas which are captured within our strategy area:

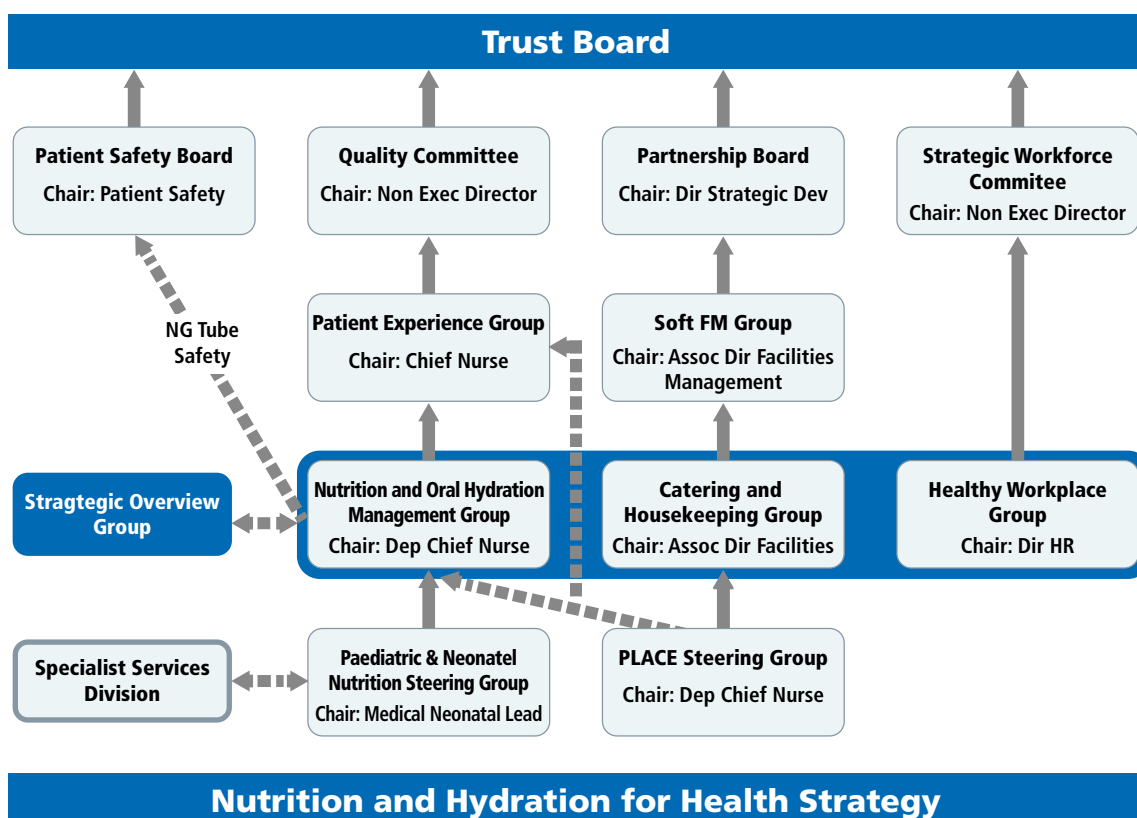
- Patient nutrition and hydration
- Healthier eating for our staff and visitors
- Sustainable procurement of food and catering services.



The importance of food and drink within hospitals has been recognised in a number of national reports and by regulatory bodies such as the Care Quality Commission, whilst the mission of the NHS Five Year Forward View (NHSE 2014) is to improve health now and for future generations. In addition, the NHS Five Year Forward View (NHSE 2014), provides a greater focus on working in partnership to achieve shared goals as well as implementing clinical quality improvements that will help achieve better outcomes for patients.

Within the newly published CQUIN there is a new standard focussed on the health and wellbeing of staff, directing collective action to develop a sustainable workforce. These strategic and operational challenges will need thinking through in order to develop a comprehensive action plan with realistic timescales for implementation and executive level buy-in across the Trust. It is intended that this outline strategy will build on existing achievements as well as reflecting national and local guidance and priorities.

The development of plans for the future regarding nutrition, hydration, and patient and staff wellbeing will be jointly reviewed within the existing governance frameworks within the Trust (i.e. the Soft FM Management group, the Health and Wellbeing group and the Nutrition and Hydration Steering group). Whilst the latter reports to the Patient Experience Group the others have different reporting structures which will need reviewing in order ensure effective communication links are maintained.



Focus

It is well known that our diet significantly affects our health. This is true for both under nutrition and over nutrition which has a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of patients.


The frequency and length of stay for patients in hospitals with malnutrition are likely to increase, with these patients being more vulnerable to developing infections or other complications. This has significant cost implications as well as impacting adversely upon patient experience. As most cases of malnutrition develop in the community setting, when a patient is admitted to our hospitals we focus on evaluating their risk of malnutrition and ways to help improve their nutritional intake.

For most patients, nutritional care is based on the food provided by the hospital. Some patients may require nutritional supplements or alternative feeding methods to ensure they receive enough nutrition. In addition to nutrition, adequate hydration is essential to help prevent and treat constipation, pressure ulcers, urinary tract infections and acute kidney injury.

At the same time, some patients will be dealing with illness brought on by overeating. Obesity also affects NHS staff and hospitals have a responsibility to support patients, staff and visitors to make healthy food and drink choices. Hospitals also have a wider social responsibility and, as a major purchaser of food and catering services, there is an opportunity to put sustainability at the core of our service provision.

Whilst implementation of some aspects of this strategy has already begun, our outline strategy for Eating and Hydrating for Health (2017-2020), seeks to set joint priorities which are core to developing future strategies around healthy eating, hydration and lifestyles. These include:

- A review of existing governance and reporting structures in order to ensure effective engagement and communication of shared goals
- The development of a jointly agreed action plan covering key priorities and goals around better engagement and implementation in relation to food, hydration, health and wellbeing and implementation of NHS England's CQUIN around health and wellbeing
- The development of key performance metrics, qualitative and technical, to allow analysis of trends and monitor progress being made
- Develop a communications plan that keeps everyone informed and up to date with progress.



The following provides a more detailed look at the three key areas and standards captured within this strategy:

Patient nutrition and hydration

During the past three years the Trust has focussed its efforts on a wide range of aspects of patient nutrition from assessment through to care planning; improvements to the meal service, menus, recipes and catering, and advanced nutritional support in the form of tube and intravenous feeding.

We have worked closely with our Soft FM and catering partner, Serco, to introduce a “Housekeeping service” on all our wards. This has enabled us to provide housekeepers on all wards who take meal orders, provide seven hot drinks per day, serve snacks and meals, clear away crockery and refresh water jugs. Prior to this, many of these jobs were undertaken by the nursing staff. The purpose of this change is to provide a seamless service from kitchen to ward service and enable the nursing staff to spend more time on assisting patients to eat and improving the patient experience.

We have developed a training programme for the housekeepers and their supervisors, led by Serco and the dietetic teams. This includes helping the housekeepers learn about food allergies, special diets, clinical signs such as NBM (Nil by Mouth), and practice communication skills, thus ensuring individual care is provided for each of our patients.

Our nursing, dietetic, and speech and language therapy staff have worked with the catering teams to ensure all of the recipes for our patient meals are of a consistently high quality and reflect the tastes of our patients. We supply a wide range of hot and cold meal choices, high calorie soups and a choice of sandwiches, with a variety of snacks provided throughout the day. 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. All our food is analysed by dietitians and, where appropriate, are coded for within the menus. The nutritional and allergen content of all food is available on request.

All patients are screened to assess their risk of malnutrition, using appropriate methods, when they are admitted to the wards. Any inpatient that is at risk of being malnourished or has developed a pressure ulcer is reviewed by the dietetic teams who put in place a specific nutrition plan of care.

Work has been carried out to support nutrition and hydration in patients with cognitive or physical impairment. Innovations include availability of finger foods and we have developed a pictorial guide for those unable to understand the written menu. We also provide red mats and red trays to highlight that patients need assistance and/or encouragement at mealtimes. Adapted crockery and cutlery is available for those who need it.

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

In looking to develop future strategies around patient nutrition and hydration, the following priorities for 2017-20 have been identified:

- Continue to monitor nutritional screening for all patients and report compliance to the Nutrition Steering Group
- With the development of our Housekeeping service, to ensure our housekeepers are embedded within both our nursing and catering teams and provide a consistent service throughout the week
- To improve the patient experience at mealtimes focussing on assistance and the environment
- Continue to work with our volunteers and provide expert training to enable them to provide additional support to patients at mealtimes
- To collaborate with our clinical colleagues around the further development of 'Memory Lane' Cafes
- Focus on completion of food and fluid balance charts for relevant patient groups
- Work closely with our catering partners to develop a new children's menu and finger food menu
- Regularly review our main and specialist menus to meet the changing needs of our patients
- Development of the diet chef service
- Develop a comprehensive plan around how to improve the Trust's PLACE scores.



Healthier eating for staff and visitors

Food and drinks for our patients have been the main focus of our work over the past three years. However, it is recognised the role that a health-promoting Trust has in contributing to the promotion and improvement of the health and wellbeing of all those we come into contact with, including patients, visitors and staff.

East Kent Hospitals has an active staff Health and Wellbeing programme, 'Take 5', which helps individuals and teams to improve their lifestyle choices in a range of areas.

Our site restaurants comply with legislation relating to labelling allergens within the food served enabling staff and visitors with food allergies to choose their food and drink safely. Gluten free items and soya milk are available on request.

Vending machines have been installed to offer a range of items including healthier choices. In looking to develop future strategies around healthier eating for staff and visitors the following priorities for 2017-20 have been identified:

Priorities for 2017-2020 are:

- Develop a plan that seeks to close the gap regarding the different perceptions that exist around what actually represents healthy eating both within a clinical environment (i.e. for patients and visitors), and what is on offer for our staff
- Work with Occupational Health and our catering suppliers to increase the opportunities for staff and visitors to consume healthier food and drink options with higher sustainability and nutritional standards
- Review the pricing strategy of foods and drinks to staff and visitors across the Trust including competitive pricing of healthier options and inclusion of healthier choices in meal deals
- Provide carbohydrate content of the foods and drinks for sale on request
- Review provision of food and drink for staff and visitors in the evening and at weekends to ensure adequate variety and access
- Develop a Trust wide signposting for healthier foods and drinks
- Joint development and implementation of NHS England's CQUIN around health and wellbeing
- Continue to review the contents of the vending machines throughout the Trust
- Continue to improve the choices for staff and visitors requiring special diets such as for a food allergy
- Develop a varied meal and drinks offer that better reflects customer needs through the day.

Sustainable food and catering services

Within the standards for Food and Catering Services:

We will work with our contractors and suppliers to meet Government Buying Standards (GBS) for Food and Catering Services (HMG Standards developed by Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2014).

Central government procurers directly, or through their catering contractors, are required to apply this GBS. Others are encouraged to follow it. It includes a set of minimum mandatory standards for inclusion in tender specifications and contract performance conditions and also includes some best practice standards which are recommended but not required.

The Balanced Scorecard is a supporting tool to use to procure food and catering services. It goes beyond production standards, resource efficiency and nutrition, helping provide a comprehensive tool for setting technical specifications and evaluating bids. The scorecard includes award criteria to reward good practice and to further stimulate investment and innovation.

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
 - Ethical trading considerations.
- Foods procured and served to higher nutritional standards relating to:
 - Reduction of salt
 - Reducing saturated fat and sugar
 - Increasing consumption of fibre, fish, fruit and vegetables.
- Procurement of catering operations to higher sustainability standards including:
 - Equipment
 - Waste
 - Energy management.

This strategy has received a wide consultation including:

- Nutrition and Oral Hydration Steering Group
- Heads of Nursing
- Nursing Senior Leadership Forum
- Catering and Housekeeping Group
- Healthy Workplace Group
- Soft Facilities Management Group
- Nutrition Strategic Overview Group.
- Multiple individuals through Quality Improvement Hubs and through the website.

