A toolkit to support the development of a hospital food and drink strategy

Nutritious Food for Patients
- Screening
- Snacks
- Help to Eat
- Hydration
- Care Planning
- Meal Timings
- Texture Modification
- Protected Mealtimes
- Nutrition
- Therapeutic Diets

Sustainable Food for All
- Restaurants
- Ward Trolleys
- Hospitality Services
- Vending Machines
- Ward Trolleys
- On-site Shops
- Plate Waste
- Resource Efficiency
- Seasonality
- Animal Welfare
- Production Waste
- Sustainable Purchasing
- Carbon Footprint
- Support for SME’s

Healthier Food for Staff and Visitors
- Restaurants
- Ward Trolleys
- Hospitality Services
- Vending Machines
- Ward Trolleys
- On-site Shops
- Plate Waste
- Resource Efficiency
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- Animal Welfare
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Introduction

The Department of Health has created this toolkit, in conjunction with the Hospital Food Standards Panel, to support NHS hospitals in the development of a food and drink strategy, one of the requirements identified in the NHS Standard Contract.

The strategy should address:
- The nutrition and hydration needs of patients
- Healthier eating for the whole hospital community, especially staff
- Sustainable procurement of food and catering services

The toolkit includes the relevant food standards identified as a requirement in the NHS Standard Contract:

**For patient catering**
- 10 Key Characteristics of Good Nutritional Care, NHS England [Click here.](#)
- Nutrition and Hydration Digest, the British Dietetic Association [Click here.](#)
- Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool or equivalent, BAPEN [Click here.](#)

**For staff and visitor catering (and applied as appropriate to patient catering)**
- Healthier and More Sustainable Catering – Nutrition Principles, Public Health England [Click here.](#)

**For all catering**
- Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services, Defra [Click here.](#)

Key considerations relevant to the whole strategy include:
- How will organisation wide buy-in be gained for the strategy?
- How will progress of the strategy be maintained, monitored and evaluated?
- How frequently will the content of the strategy be reviewed?

▲ Producing a food and drink strategy supports the requirements of a range of healthcare organisations and helps deliver increased value for money and high quality services.
The toolkit includes a suggested list of professions to be involved in the development of the strategy, a gap analysis and a list of prompt questions. Data sources and reference texts are included for information.

**Gap Analysis**

The following gap analysis should be applied to each of the sections:

- Nutritional Care
- Healthier Eating Across Hospitals
- Sustainable Food and Catering Services

**Find the problem**
1. Assess your service against the standard
2. Identify any areas for improvement
3. Prioritise which areas you will tackle

**Bridge the gap**
4. Set out the ideal position for each area
5. Measure and describe gap between points 1. and 4. above
6. Identify and describe what is causing the gaps

**Apply the remedy**
7. Identify all possible remedies, with costs and benefits
8. Select appropriate remedies, with timescales and success criteria
9. Apply remedies and assess the result

**Professions**

Professions to be considered in the development of the strategy:

- Nursing staff
- Catering managers
- Clinicians
- Dietitians
- Porters
- Patient representatives
- Procurement
- Estates and FM
- Service commissioners
- Human Resources
- Occupational Health
- Trade Unions
- All catering, retail and vending providers
- Sustainability officers
- Food service suppliers
- Suppliers
- Public health specialists
- Staff representatives
- Speech and Language Therapists
1. Nutritional Care

Food Standards
The required food standards relevant to nutritional care are:

- 10 Key Characteristics of Good Nutritional Care, NHS England [Click here.]
- Nutrition and Hydration Digest, The British Dietetic Association [Click here.]
- Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool or equivalent, BAPEN [Click here.]
- Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services, Defra [Click here.]

Ask yourself:

- What are your patients' needs and can you meet them all?
- What does your hospital food chain look like from procurement to consumption?
- What is the weakest link in the food chain?
- Could clinical and catering staff improve the way they work together?
- What do your patients think?
- What support can your commissioners offer?
- What support can your procurers and suppliers offer?
- How can you complete the "last 9 yards" of the hospital food chain more effectively?
- Would you be happy to receive the service you are offering?
- How many of your patients require special dietary needs and can you cater for all of them e.g. dementia?

Reference texts:

- A plan for public procurement: food and catering: the balanced scorecard [Click here.]
- PHE evaluation guidance [Click here.]
- Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services: nutrition criteria checker tool [Click here.]
- Healthier, more sustainable catering: information for commissioners [Click here.]
- Healthier, more sustainable catering: information for those involved in purchasing food and drink [Click here.]
- HCA website and guides [Click here.]
- FSA allergen training [Click here.]
- Catering gluten-free – training for the healthcare sector [Click here.]
- Texture Modification National Descriptors [Click here.]

Data sources:

- Patient-Led Assessment of the Care Environment (PLACE) scores
- Care Quality Commission inpatient survey
- Local surveys and Friends and Family Test
- Complaints/ Compliments
- Mortality and morbidity rates
- Patient demographics
- Hospital admission data
- Patient menus and nutritional information
- Finance and procurement data
- Care Quality Commission Inspection Rating reports
2. Healthier Eating Across Hospitals

Food Standards
The required food standards relevant to healthier eating across hospitals are:

- Healthier and More Sustainable Catering – Nutrition Principles, Public Health England [Click here.]
- Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services, Defra [Click here.]

Ask yourself:

- When will people need to eat?
- Are healthier foods available at all times?
- Do all outlets, trolleys, vending machines, restaurants and hospitality services offer healthier options?
- How can your suppliers help?
- Can you influence people’s choices through pricing, promotions and positioning?
- How else can you help and motivate people to eat more healthily?
- Who are your champions/role models?
- How can your commissioners help you?
- How can your procurers help you?
- How can you go further and exceed the minimum standards?
- Is nutritional information available/displayed?
- Is healthier eating information promoted within the organisation?

Data sources:
- Staff surveys
- Visitor surveys
- Procurement and finance data
- Product range/turnover and information from sales
- Feedback/suggestion schemes
- HR data – sickness absence

Reference texts:
- A plan for public procurement: food and catering: the balanced scorecard [Click here.]
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- Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services: nutrition criteria checker tool [Click here.]
- Healthier, more sustainable catering: information for commissioners [Click here.]
- Healthier, more sustainable catering: information for those involved in purchasing food and drink [Click here.]
- HCA website and guides [Click here.]
- Food for Life Hospital Leaders [Click here.]
- Food for Life Catering Mark [Click here.]
3. Sustainable Food and Catering Services

Food Standard
The required food standard relevant to sustainable food and catering services is:
- Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services, Defra Click here.

Ask yourself:
- What are the sources of waste?
- How can you reduce food waste?
- Can you support local small to medium enterprises?
- How can your commissioners help?
- How can your procurers and suppliers help?
- How can you better align procurement with standards?
- Can you use water and energy more efficiently?

Data sources:
- Estates Return information Collection (ERIC) data – including waste and energy
- NHS Supply Chain Information

Reference texts:
- A plan for public procurement: food and catering: the balanced scorecard Click here.
- Food for Life Catering Mark Click here.
- WRAP Click here.
- Sustainable Restaurant Association Click here.