**15 GUIDELINES TO GET YOU ON THE SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT (FAST TRACK)**

1. Develop a catering strategy and integrated sustainability policy which includes procurement purchasing processes using the NHS contract frameworks and government buying standards for purchasing. This should also include other public sector organisations and local food groups that are in your area to with which to network on your programme.
2. The main objectives are to support local small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which follow government policies, government buying standards and guidelines. Highlights sustainability and improves the local health economy which in turn promotes local jobs.
3. To encourage any start-up business or social enterprise schemes where they are growing locally produced crops on a seasonal rotation using the organic route. This will enable a percentage of your menu to be assessed under the Food for Life scheme with the Soil Association and is a recommended good practice identified with PLACE audits.
4. Social Value: this is also where we can support our service users through social enterprise schemes such as Sussex Partnership by introductions to obtain work placements, training on the job plus NVQs leading to full-time work opportunities.
5. Contact your local Chamber of Commerce and advise them of your objectives. Obtain a list of local enterprises that are local growers and food producers which can be included in the hub of a cooperative framework.
6. Liaise directly with the Hospital Caterers Association (HCA), join your local branch and share your programme with your local members. Network with the Soil Association, Leaf Marque, SALSA, NFU, DEFRA, FABBL, STS Red Tractor, EBLEX, BPEX and BRC. They will advise on supplier listings and certified growers, producers and processors who, ideally, combine transport in-house or with other local distributors that can maintain lower carbon footprints and travel miles. Think sustainably.

At Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust we have realised that local means an average 70 mile, 180 degree radius; east, west and north (bearing in mind we are situated on the south coast) other areas inland will have the opportunity to look at the full 360 degree range for their areas.

1. Engage with your trust’s main board. It is essential that you have “Full Buy” in from your Chief Executive Officer (CEO), senior managers and clinicians to your programme to obtain their full operational support on this work stream. Always highlight how it will improve the quality and choices for your patients and service users.
2. Encourage visits to local businesses as the programme develops with your directors, senior managers and non-executive directors. Where practical, appoint a director to lead on the work reporting to the main board and in your monthly briefings and newsletters to staff.
3. Check with your local newspapers and farmers markets; usually they move around the county and are often on a Saturday, so you can combine a visit to one of your in-patient units and still have time to network at each location. Find out where the local quality fresh food is being grown and produced. Go and visit them and build up a relationship.
4. Once you have established a range of suppliers covering fruit and vegetables, fresh meat, morning goods and dairy, local fish and any dry flours and sauces, condiments or other food ingredients produced in your area, arrange an event or workshop which is open to all, including the local newspapers and other media to celebrate your work and to get the message out to the wider sector.

Working with each supplier, review them with their food safety and hygiene systems and HACCP, due diligence audited accreditation and traceability; also with any producer supplying them under EU regulations. These must be audited, (ISO4000, 9000 BRC, STS, etc.). This will be an essential requirement prior to being able to tender for contracts.

As was quickly discovered, regular support will have to be given so take a step-by-step approach.

1. Involve your ward manager and service users and engage directly with forums and community meetings to share this work and where your local food ingredients come from. Include the use of raw fresh local ingredients in your Skills for Life kitchen supporting the occupational therapies and rehabilitation programmes in your Trust. If practical, organise farm visits for small groups of service users and nursing staff to feed back to the care group by whom they are being looked after.
2. Introduce key performance indicators (KPIs) from your patient and service user’s surveys which are linked to your menu choices and communication links on the wards. Participation of nursing and occupational therapy staff to discuss quality, choice, menu ideas, portion control and waste. Introduce theme days to the menu once a week and make it a highlight for your patients. Reduce the high-salt, high-sugar takeaway meals being purchased externally.
3. Introduce “Lean Processing” and change from daily/weekly invoicing with all you suppliers to “Consolidated Invoicing” with daily/weekly scanning of your delivery invoices from your supplier. This will immediately release revenue and reduce administration time and corporate costs under cost avoidance, or as a contribution to cost improvement (CIPs) recurring savings on your budgets. This will also encourage your supplier to be more competitive with prices.

We have, at Sussex Partnership, taken a further step in this “Lean Approach” by the introduction of Government Procurement Purchasing Cards, which speed up payments to both large and small suppliers; this proactive relationship also creates further budget savings.

1. Set up a Food Nutrition and Dietetics steering Group with clinicians and dieticians fully involved in menu design, menu range (4-week cycle or better) that follows the PLACE food assessments every day, not just a snapshot audit once a year. Make this section a weekly review with facilities, KPIs; a monthly review on progression of the steering group.
2. Set up a sustainability group with Estates, Facilities and Corporate Governance which looks at the environmental issues; catering, chemicals, plus the health and wellbeing of staff.

**Shortened bullet point version:**

1. Develop a catering strategy with an integrated sustainability policy that supports the Government Buying Standards
2. Network your area, contact and support local SMEs for sustainable and seasonal locally grown produce.
3. Support any small start-up businesses that are using organic methods to grow vegetables as a percentage. Your menu will enable you to include this in your assessment for Food for Life accreditation with the Soil Association and is a good practice recommendation under PLACE audits.
4. Social value; introducing social enterprise schemes where we can support our service users in training and job placement which are linked to our local procurement and local suppliers.
5. Contact your local Chamber of Commerce to obtain the list of locally registered farmers, growers and food producers.
6. Your local HCA branch networking with DEFRA (EBLEX, PBEX) Leaf Marque, Soil Association, NFU, local farmers, SALSA, FABBL and Red Tractor. Note: STS hold a database of approved suppliers.
7. Buy in from Trust CEO, chair, main board and senior managers.
8. Visits to local farmers with your main board and your non-executive director with a nominated champion reporting to the board and your communications newsletters.
9. Contact and review with your local newspapers and ask them for support, plus when farmers markets are on in your area; a great place to meet and sample local produce.
10. Review suppliers and new SMEs Food Safety systems and start with Safer Food Better Business from the FSA, which is a good baseline to start them on the right track. Follow this with EHO and STS audit step-by-step approach.
11. Involve your ward managers, nursing staff, service users, occupational therapist and supervisors who work in the operational arenas.
12. Introduce key performance indicators (KPIs) monthly and quarterly to report on progress.
13. Introduce “Lean Processing” with consolidated invoicing, achieving administration savings.
14. Set up a nutritional steering group and meet bi-monthly to review all aspects of patient care.
15. Set up a Sustainability Group to cover all E&F covering all areas as part of trust strategy.

**Author**

**William McCartney**Head of Catering ServicesSussex Partnership NHS Foundation TrustAmberstone HospitalAmberstone Catering CFPUFeatherbed LaneCarters CornerHailsham BN27 4HU

Tel: 01323 444143 ext.2543  
Tel: 01323 440022  
E-mail: [william.mccartney@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk](mailto:william.mccartney@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk)