NATASHA’S LAW:
what this means for hospital caterers

Plus
Hospital Food Review gets underway
New meal ordering technology
Healthy foods for healthy staff
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Angel Delight
Cling Film
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Dolmio Tomato & Basil
Lemon Curd
Uncle Ben’s Korma
oXo Cubes

BIRD’S CUSTARD
Eggs
Heinz Baked Beans
SANDWICHES
Uncle Ben’s Korma
Vegetables

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PG Tips
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WATER

JELLY

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A generational opportunity

Behind all the hullaballoo of Brexit things still manage to move forward and at last we have had an announcement from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock MP that we are embarking on the Hospital Food Review. I am so pleased that the Minster has listened to the calls for a proper lead to the enquiry and that our own Past Chair, Phil Shelley, has been named as the Review’s Chairman.

I have said many times that we do not need celebrity chefs to tell us what we need to do; we are the professionals in this field and having Phil at the head of the table will help keep everyone’s feet on the ground. I am sure that you will all join me in wishing Phil every success in this important role, and you can read more about the review in the interview with Phil on page 10.

We are the voice of the hospital caterer and, as promised, we have been offered a seat at the table. As your current Chair, I am proud to say that I have been accepted as your representative on the Senior Review Board of the Hospital Food Review. I hope that by the time you read this column you will have also received a copy of the open letter I sent to every member of the Association. As I stated in my letter, I genuinely believe that this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for us, the hospital caterers, to put our case to the senior politicians and the public at large.

We are portrayed in some elements of the media as a figure of fun, yet in patient surveys and the PLACE results (both of which are in the public domain) up to 9 out of 10 patients say they are satisfied with the food they were presented with in hospital. However, we cannot be complacent, we cannot deny many of the images that find their way into the tabloids, but they are signs that things have broken down at the critical end of service delivery – those Last 9 Yards. Whoever served them should have thought, “would I be happy to eat this meal?” We clearly still have work to do.

Thinking of the ‘Last 9 Yards’ reminds me of an encounter I made at the Royal Liverpool Hospital recently. I was there for a Food Standards Strategy Meeting and I bumped into Jenny Clarke, Matron for Estates, Facilities and PFI at Royal Stoke Hospital. She was telling me that she has found 13 similar Matrons for Estates and Facilities (E&F) nationally (are there any more?). They all have differing roles but their common themes include being the link between E&F and the clinical teams, patient dining and the environment, and infection prevention. These Matrons can make a tangible contribution to the ‘Last Nine Yards’ and I hope that in a future edition of Hospital Caterer we will be able to tell you more about their work.

Sharing information is critical to us all and that is why the Association is so important as a conduit for improvements – especially as we start the work on the Hospital Food Review. If I am to represent all of you effectively, I need to hear from you about what you think should be included in the review in terms of what you feel is right and what you feel needs improving. Not everything is broken so let’s use this exercise as an opportunity to put some really good news out there. As well as my Association email, the letter shared details of how you can contact me via surface mail as well.

I have already received some really good, heartfelt contributions from around the country, so please let this continue unabated from across all the four nations. We all have something to offer.

We have another great opportunity to showcase what we can do at the new Public Sector Catering Expo, which is being held on 19–20 November at the Telford International Centre. Each public sector association has been granted some free space to exhibit, so please try to come along and support us. Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall has been announced as a keynote speaker on the first day, with Prue Leith attending on day two. Entry is free if you pre-register and further details can be found on our website.

Having announced that the Hospital Food Review will now go ahead, the Food Standards Strategy Groups’ findings are now likely to be delayed but we continue to be represented in the various strands of this work and I thank everyone who is giving up so much time to make the many meetings. Some of the groups are now working towards their final papers so, hopefully, there will be something substantive to share with you all shortly.

These are exciting times to be your Chairman.

Best wishes

Craig Smith, Honorary National Chairman, Hospital Caterers Association

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for us, the hospital caterers, to put our case to the senior politicians and the public at large.
South West Branch

From Jane Wills

The South West Branch held its last meeting at The Royal United Hospital in Bath, kindly hosted by Sarah Wingfield, the hospital’s Food Hygiene Training & Audit Manager.

In the morning we had four very informative presentations, starting off with Elliot Perry from Datasym. Elliot spoke about the benefits of being able to order meals closer to each meal time using Menumate, to ensure the correct meal goes to the patient and that there is a reduction in wasted meals. Elliot explained that a bespoke system can be set up to satisfy the needs of individual hospitals, with the ordering system including a checking system that ensures no patient misses a meal, and a traffic light system that enables progress around the hospital to be tracked.

Mark Moran from Hydrate for Health Ltd then demonstrated a new product that he designed following a stay in hospital. During his stay he became very aware how vital good hydration was to the recovery process. The Water drop system comprises a 1 litre bag of water that is hung on a drip stand with a tube feed for the patient to drink from; ice can be added to the water to cool it down for the patient. A hydration bottle has also been produced with a similar tube feed. This has the potential to help avoid using an IV drip to rehydrate patients, which, in turn, reduces the cost and the use of plastics involved with an IV. There is also the added benefit of it being kinder for the patient.

Zoe Farmer and Amy Gaudier Porter from Nim’s crisps spoke about Nim’s and the fruit and vegetable crisps they produce. Local and wonky fruit and vegetables are purchased within 40 miles of the factory, and all products are air dried in an allergen-free factory. All of the products – with the exception of pineapple – are unpeeled and, therefore, 100 per cent of the raw product is used and little waste is created. Other products available include edible tea, infusion slices and Hawkers potato and soya crisps. New flavours, share bags and multipacks are currently being launched.

Sarah Wingfield then spoke about the introduction of Natasha’s Law, which is going to be implemented by Summer 2021. This follows the sad death of Natasha Ednan-Laperouse and ensures all pre-packaged foods – sandwiches prepared on site but also items such as in house salads – are fully labelled with all ingredients and allergens in the future. The Law is still in draft form but it will govern how food produced inhouse must be labelled. This will potentially have a big implication to caterers nationwide, including hospital caterers.

After an enjoyable lunch, our Branch meeting was held, then we went off for a night at Bath races, where, in addition to the racing, three tribute bands played late into the night. An enjoyable and productive day was had by all.

East of Scotland Branch

From David Williamson

It is with real sadness that I have to inform you of the death of Gary Adamson on 11 July after a short illness. Gary was a long time member and supporter of our Branch, and a friend to many of us. He was only 63 years old.

Many will know Gary from his time representing Diversey at our National Conferences and, latterly, Forums, as well as his visits to the hospitals in his area. He retired from Diversey three years ago.

A member of the East of Scotland Branch committee for many years, Gary was a always ready to organise a Branch event or help others who were new to the committee. He held the post of Branch Secretary on two separate occasions and always issued accurate (well, nearly accurate!) minutes prior to our meetings. He was also a founder member of the East of Scotland HCA Malt Whisky Society, and in the evening at the Conferences/Forums or study days he would pass round a mystery single malt for tasting. You would have to work out or guess its age, region and what distillery it came from. Gary once tested us to the limit by bringing a single malt from Japan, although he did give us the clue “It’s from an island.”

We rarely got it right, but we had lots of fun trying to identify the whiskies.

Gary was a great lover of music, particularly live music, and over the years we attended a number of rock concerts together as well as taking guitar lessons. While neither of us were very good on the guitar, we had great fun trying to learn the song for the next week, when we had to play it to the teacher.

When Gary retired he became one of the ‘Whisky Boys’ or ‘Gents Who Lunch’. Approximately once a month we would meet up to have lunch and then retire to the Scottish Malt Whisky Society to taste their recent bottlings of cask strength malt whisky. The Whisky Boys will raise a glass in his honour the next time we meet.

Our thoughts are with his wife Isabel, daughters Karen and Lauren, and his granddaughter Holly.
Our July meeting at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital in Sheffield was a sell out, with more members attending than ever before (well, certainly in living memory.) Members discussed the reports from the Branch Officers study day and the changes that will need to be made to the constitution and rules.

Our original plan was for the meeting to be held on a Thursday, with a barbeque after the meeting as our summer social. Unfortunately, this plan fell through, and we reverted to Plan B, also known as ‘Let’s go to the dogs again!’ Moving to Tuesday meant that some members missed the event because they had other commitments, but those that managed to get there enjoyed a great social atmosphere.

Over the years, we have had varied success and failure at trying to pick the winning dog. As an experiment, those of us who don’t know one end of a dog from the other (as proven by the lack of winnings in previous years) tried backing the number 4 dog in each race, which at least limited the losses to the price of a latte grande, and we all went home with our shirts on.

Our next meeting will be held at the Steelite factory in Stoke.

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**West of Scotland Branch**

*From Robert McLaughlin*

On 19 June, the East & West of Scotland Branches held a joint meeting at Murrayfield in Edinburgh, the home of Scottish rugby.

The last meeting for the West of Scotland Branch was on 18 September at Inverclyde Royal Hospital, hosted by Kate Murray. We discussed several plans that are currently in action in Scotland, namely Food in Hospitals Audit, FMS Benchmarking, Menu Harmonisation, and Scottish Food Waste reduction.

Also discussed was information from the National Program Board and Catering Services Expert Group, plus the venue for this year’s AGM.

Future dates include our next Branch meeting on 23 October at 1.30pm at Bidfood in Larbert, and our Annual Development Day on 7 February 2019 at Seamill Hydro Hotel Ayrshire. The theme of the day is ‘2020 Catering Vision’, and will be chaired by National Chair Craig Smith, followed by the infamous Ayrshire Burns Supper.

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**Trent Branch**

*From Allan Gimson*

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**Branch meetings calendar**

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<td>6</td>
<td>East Anglia Branch AGM</td>
<td>Ufford Park</td>
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<td>12/13</td>
<td>South West Branch festive social &amp; AGM</td>
<td>Saunton Sands Hotel, Devon</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Trent Branch Christmas Social</td>
<td>The Ringwood Hotel, Chesterfield</td>
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<td>Wales Branch AGM</td>
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The Northern Ireland Branch held its annual seminar on 11 September at La Mon Hotel, Belfast. The seminar, entitled Food is Treatment Supporting Clinical Need, attracted more than 80 delegates comprising catering managers and supervisors, nursing staff, school meals staff and speech and language professionals. The accompanying exhibition had 24 stands showcasing products and services.

We were honoured to have Alison McCree, National Vice-President, as our keynote speaker. All presentations focused on collaboration and demonstrated how collaboration has, and can, improve patient experiences. Alison shared the background to The Perfect Meal; we heard from Ann Hayes, a service user who sits on the Clinical Nutrition Committee in South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust; from Pauline Mulholland MBE, Lead Dietitian, who shared how caterers and dietitians have worked together over the years to improve patients’ nutrition; from Dr Naomi Baldwin, who described Mealtime Matters, an initiative where nursing and catering have worked together to improve patient mealtimes; from Tony O’Hara, Senior Manager Patient Experience; from Clare Stevenson, Speech and Language Dysphagia Lead and Fiona Hillen, Dietetics Dysphagia Lead, who told us about their joint project creating texture-modified menus and recipe cards for residents of residential homes and day centres; and from Robert Lamont, Environmental Health Manager for Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, who informed us about upcoming amendments to allergen legislation, reminding us about our responsibilities and explaining how Councils can work with catering managers and support us in ensuring we provide safe food for our patients and customers and scaring us all enough to keep us on our toes. This all created an inspirational and informative day for all.
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The Government’s new hospital food advisor

Following the Government’s announcement to review hospital food, we are delighted that our own past Chair, Phil Shelley, is to lead the review. Judith Hindley caught up with Phil to find out more about the review.
When were you approached to be Chair of the Hospital Food Review?

Although a number of conversations took place in early July to sound out the possibility and willingness for me to step forward, it wasn’t until 25 July that Simon Corben, Director and Head of Profession, Estates and Facilities in NHS Improvement (NHSI), formally asked me to lead the review.

Was it a surprise to be asked?

As you can imagine, I was taken aback with the offer and opportunity to lead such a challenging and prestigious review. Having worked closely with Simon Corben and Emma Brookes from NHSI in recent years, I hope that there is a level of trust and confidence in each other to ensure we can provide a positive impact on this important topic.

Did you accept immediately?

After a deep breath, yes, in the knowledge that this would need to be discussed with my Chief Executive. If he supported my involvement and believed that it would benefit the Trust as well as me personally then it would seem right to accept the offer.

When did the review start?

It started in earnest on 23 August, although there was a great deal of preparation a few weeks beforehand. We have been asked to provide a report and our recommendations in January 2020 but this will need to be reviewed by a number of colleagues prior to Matt Hancock (Secretary of State for Health and Social Care) receiving the final version.

What will the role involve?

The biggest element of the review is listening to colleagues, associations and experts in their field. Food in the NHS is an emotive topic and most people have a view and/or opinion on what ‘good looks like’. I hope that I give enough people the opportunity to help provide the information required to shape the report. There will be a review board, which will be small in numbers, alongside a selection of groups that I will meet with separately – patient groups, food suppliers, linked associations and NHS colleagues.

This review has arisen owing to the Listeria outbreak but do you feel it should have happened before, given the differences in catering provision across hospitals?

It is never too early to question what we do and how we can improve. The Listeria outbreak was an incredibly sad and traumatic time for all those involved and it is vital that we learn quickly from these events to ensure that there isn’t a repeat.

All of us involved in NHS catering believe we need to provide an improved, cost-effective and consistent service to the patients that we serve – this is ‘our time’ to make the changes required to take us to the next level.
The review will involve talks with inhouse caterers, outsourcing companies and suppliers of fresh and frozen food. There is a lot of ground to cover in a short time so how will you be able to talk to everyone necessary?

I have set myself a huge task but I believe that I must speak to everyone that can influence the review in a positive way. This may be in groups, individually or by phone/email. I hope that those who have an opinion feel that they can approach me at any time to air their view.

Providing a quality catering service on a stretched budget and, sometimes, within outdated facilities, is becoming a difficult task for hospital caterers. In an ideal world, and maybe as a result of this review, what would you like to see provided for every Trust in terms of daily budgets and improved facilities?

There is no ‘quick fix’ for an industry that has been starved of investment and continually faced cuts in food provisions budget. We can advise a position for acute, community and mental health trusts in the hope that there will be suitable investment. However, we must also be held to account on the way we manage our budgets – our daily costs must be comparable for like-minded sites.

Would you like to see a uniform provision across the whole of the NHS?

There are too many varieties to have a ‘one size fits all’ scenario. However, there is a requirement for seasonal and fresh food to be incorporated into all NHS menus – this may only be as a ‘finishing kitchen’ but could make a tremendous difference to our presentation skills. There is a place for the current food contracts in operation but we must provide a suitable ‘Last 9 Yards’ to ensure that there is pride in the food we serve.

Having viewed sites around the country, there are great examples of fresh cook, cook-freeze and cook-chill and several other alternatives.
There are also great examples of in-house teams as well as contracted suppliers, but there are also poor examples and we must be prepared to be challenged if we are to change the reality and perception that hospital food is not good enough.

Prue Leith will be working as an adviser to the review. There have been several celebrity chefs involved with hospital food over the years so how do you think she will advise differently?

Prue’s experience, knowledge and public awareness will help support the profile required to maximise our industry. Having spoken to her on a number of occasions, there is no doubting her passion and motive for accepting the advisory role. She understands that good food empowers patient recovery and that change must happen if we are to improve the industry we work in.

Has Matt Hancock given confirmation that he will act on all your findings and undertake the necessary changes you believe will help improve the catering service or do you feel catering provision will still be constrained by Government finances?

I met with Matt Hancock and Jo Churchill from the Department of Health last week and they have made it perfectly clear that there needs to be a clear mandate to change the face of hospital catering. Safe, healthy and nutritious meals must be the basic requirement within our hospitals, with the opportunity to innovate our choices with the right equipment, surroundings and flair from our teams. There must be capital investment but it needs to be appropriate, as well as managers maximising the potential of their budgets.

There has been a lot of positive reaction from HCA members/suppliers following your appointment. Will you be calling on any HCA members for extra guidance/support or is this a standalone position?

I firmly believe that being a past Chair of the HCA puts me in a strong position to chair the current review and for that I am eternally grateful. The Association has a key role to play now and in the future and we must be able to communicate decisions through the HCA in the confidence that all Trusts take on board a consistent message. I have already met with colleagues and will continue to do so – the support shown to me demonstrates that we are a special workforce and our efforts will prove that we are determined to make a difference through this review.

If you would like to speak to Phil to share good practice, your opinion on change required and how best we can adapt for the future, please do not hesitate to contact him on: 07973 122597 Philip.Shelley@tst.nhs.uk