

Food and Drink Strategy 2022 - 2027

Our commitment to providing healthy food and drink in a sustainable way to meet the nutrition and hydration needs of all.



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Foreword

Welcome to our latest Food and Drink Strategy which outlines our ambitions to continuously strive for excellence in the delivery of high quality nutrition and hydration care, recognising the importance of offering healthy, balanced food and drink choices for our patients, visitors, carers, volunteers and staff.

Nutritious food and drink is fundamental to healthy living, providing the energy we require to live, heal and thrive. Malnutrition and dehydration can be a significant risk for our patients, contributing to extended periods of illness and recovery.

Meeting their nutrition and hydration needs is vital to ensure we can provide truly effective healthcare which supports recovery, optimises health outcomes and enhances their experience whilst in our care.

Our strategy aims to equip staff to support patients in receiving the nutrition and hydration care they require to meet their individual dietary needs.

Supporting the health and wellbeing of our staff and visitors is also a core part of our strategy, ensuring they have access to a range of healthier food and drink choices.

Our strategy outlines how we intend to build upon our current provision of food and drink for our staff, including a wider range of wholesome, nourishing choices.

We recognise that delivering high quality food and nutritional care requires the support and commitment of a wide range of staff and services across our Trust working together to realise our aims.

Sustainability is a high Trust priority and as a major purchaser and provider of food and catering services we have a responsibility and opportunity to contribute to the 'Zero Carbon Care' targets set by the Trust.

Our aim is to deliver this nutrition and hydration care in an increasingly sustainable and responsible way.

I very much hope you enjoy reading our new Food and Drink Strategy and that the strategic aims and action plan resonate with you. I believe it is everyone's responsibility to ensure we can provide our patients and their loved ones with the nutrition and hydration care they deserve.

Let's work together to make our ambitions a reality.



Maurya Cushlow
Executive Chief Nurse



Introduction

The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has developed a Food and Drink Strategy to reinforce our commitment to providing the best care and opportunities for good nutrition and hydration for patients, staff and visitors. The strategy details our vision to improve the quality of food and drink available across all settings in the Trust so that everyone who eats here has a healthier food experience delivered in a sustainable way.

Hospitals have a role as beacons of good practice, supporting staff, visitors and the wider public to make healthier choices.

We aim to empower and enable people through education to continue to make informed healthy food and drink choices to support health and wellbeing and consider the environmental impact of the decisions we make.

The Trust recognises the proven link between good nutrition and hydration with health and wellbeing and aims to ensure this is delivered through the food and drink services it provides.

Patients, staff and visitors will be offered a selection of food and drink that meets their daily nutritional needs, promotes good health and reduces the risk of ill-health.

The Trust also recognises patients require continuous high quality nutritional support to aid their recovery.

We aim to provide the right environment to promote good nutrition and hydration for those accessing our services, ensuring patient's nutritional needs are fully identified and met.

The wellbeing of our staff health is pivotal to the success of our strategy.

We recognise the benefits of providing our workforce with good quality nutritious food to support them in delivering optimal care, and to keep well hydrated at all times.





Context

This Food and Drink Strategy aims to ensure the recommendations contained within the 'Report of the Independent Review of NHS Hospital Food' are implemented, together with the updated recommendations of 'National standards for healthcare food and drink' (November 2022).

The Hospital Food Standards Panel published a report which identified five food standards which all hospitals should comply with, in order to provide the highest quality and nutritional value of food for NHS patients, staff and visitors (DH, 2014).

The standards are:

- 10 Key Characteristics of Good Nutritional Care (NPSA, 2009)
- Nutrition & Hydration Digest (British Dietetic Association, 2012)
- Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool or equivalent (British Association of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition, 2011)
- Healthier and More Sustainable Catering- Nutrition Principles (for staff and visitor catering) (Public Health England, 2017)
- Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services (DEFRA, 2015). Since April 2015, these standards have been included in the NHS Standard Contract and are legally binding.

The Panel also recommended that standards should be monitored via the annual Patient Led Assessments of the Care Environment (PLACE). PLACE audits now include a more comprehensive evaluation of the taste, flavour and presentation of hospital food. Many hospitals conduct mock PLACE audits and CQC inspections to support their ongoing progress towards compliance with these requirements.





Our Strategic Framework

The strategy has been developed by the Trust's multi-disciplinary Nutrition Steering Group in consultation with members, key stakeholders including our patient and service users.

Our first Food and Drink Strategy launched in 2016 and provided a framework for 5 years of significant improvement in relation to Nutrition and Hydration for our patients, staff and visitors.

We prepared an impact summary paper when our previous Food and Drink Strategy ended, detailing our full list of achievements during the period of the strategy. Our 2022-2027 strategy builds on these key achievements to ensure we deliver safe, effective nutrition and hydration care and services.





Our Achievements



Our Patients

Food Allergens

As a high impact intervention to ensure patient safety we developed a food allergen policy and standard operating procedure to support staff to deliver safe care. We developed guidance documents and referral criteria to provide additional staff support.

Digital Malnutrition Screening

Working in collaboration with our digital team colleagues, daily malnutrition screening compliance data is available for all adult and paediatric inpatient areas. This allows us to monitor compliance and champion colleagues with ongoing training and support.

Hydration

We have launched a patient drinks menu to enable patients to view the range of hot and cold drinks available to them to meet their hydration needs.

We have undertaken a number of projects and audits working collaboratively with colleagues from other disciplines to identify how we can provide additional hydration support to patients. We have developed online hydration training for adult and paediatric colleagues and introduced adult and paediatric hydration patient information leaflets to disseminate key messages.

Snacks

We introduced a patient snack list to support the nutritional intake of all inpatients by ensuring they receive a minimum of two snacks per day from a wide-ranging choice of sweet and savoury snacks including nutritious drinks.

Patient Menus

We have developed a finger food menu to provide additional choice for patients who may have enhanced support needs. Following the appointment of a dedicated senior grade catering Dietitian, we have been reviewing all patient menus and recipes to ensure we are providing the best nutritional content. This work includes all core and therapeutic menus for adults and children. As part of the menu review we have undertaken questionnaires to ensure we are providing the range of menus patients wish to receive. This has led to the need for a plant based menu which is currently under development and we are ensuring we provide regional and cultural dishes to accommodate all patients needs.



Our Staff and Visitors

Bistro and Food to Go App

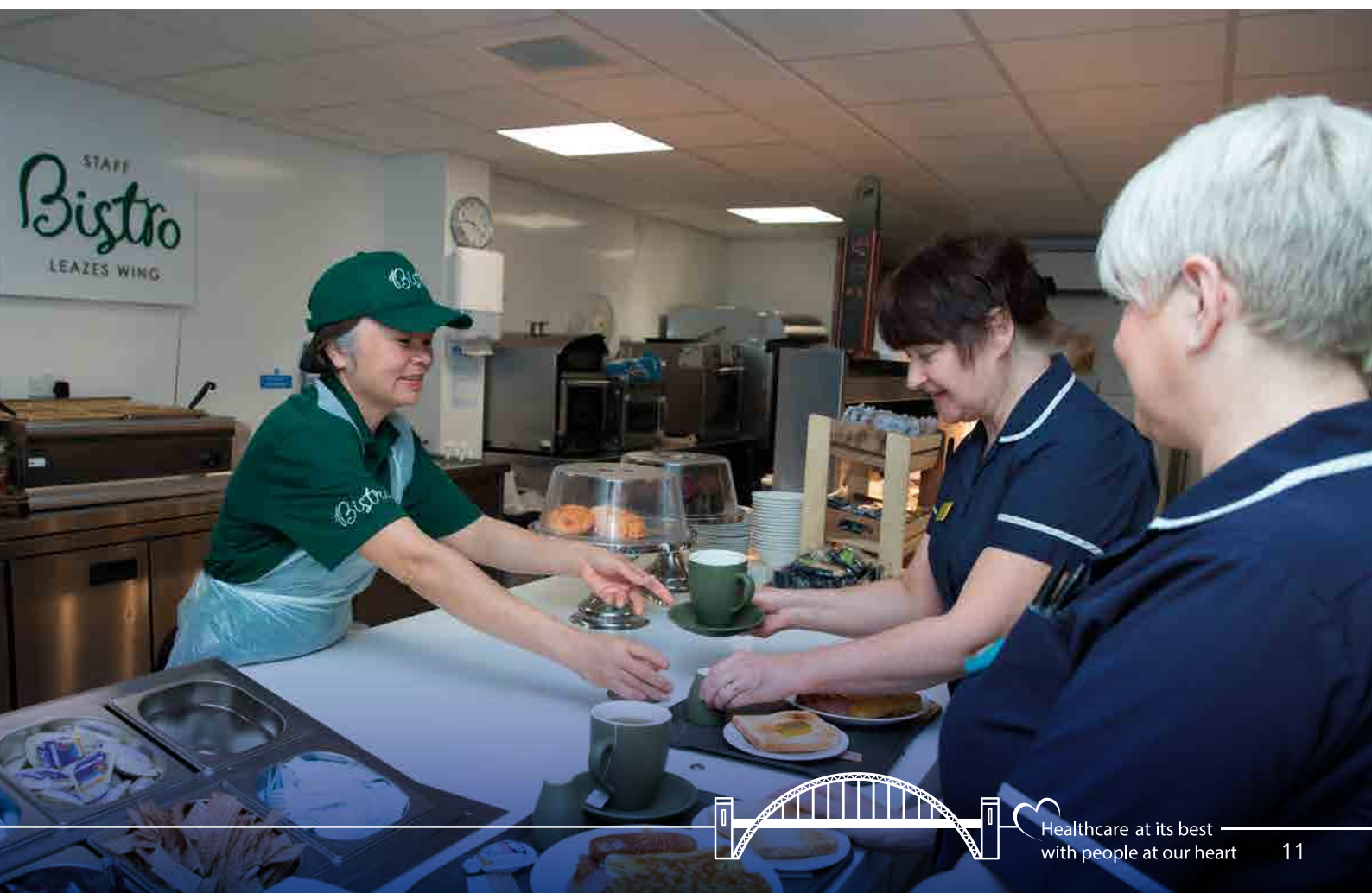
The catering team have established two staff Bistros to support staff by providing alternative cost-effective dining options. Staff can eat in or take out and the team also offer a food ordering app to support staff who have limited time during their working day. The catering team work with Trust colleagues to reflect multi-cultural meal options and endorse healthy eating through initiatives such as meat free Mondays.

Joint University Research Projects

We continue to collaborate with public health research colleagues in Newcastle, Teesside and Aberdeen Universities to review the catering we provide for staff and visitors to ensure we are meeting the food health needs of all. We published a paper which looked at the nutritional support available for parents of children who are inpatients: [Parental perceptions of onsite hospital food outlets](#) – PubMed and are currently evaluating the impact of the fruit and vegetable stalls as well as looking at staff access to nutrition and hydration as part of future publications.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Stalls

We established a fresh fruit and vegetable stall on both main hospital sites so that staff and visitors to the Trust can easily access fresh healthy produce. The stalls are also available to the wider community including residents living close to both sites and students living and studying at Newcastle. The stalls provide 10% discount on produce for all staff and support other public health campaigns such as nutrition and hydration week, with fresh produce.



Sustainability

Food Waste to Green Gas

The catering team worked with colleagues in estates to implement a food waste dewaterer to reduce the volume and weight of food waste. Food waste from both the RVI and Freeman Hospital are sent to an anaerobic digester. The gas by-product from the system is sent straight to the National Grid and the digestate is provided to local farmers as a soil improver. In 2021/22 over 200 tonnes of food waste was diverted to anaerobic digestion.

Recycling Project

We undertook a recycling project with our contracted enteral nutrition supplier to embed recycling of enteral feed products into everyday practice in acute and community settings including patients own homes. [A Partnership Approach to Supporting a NET Zero NHS.](#)

Sterile Water for Enteral Feeding

We also completed a project to change practice in the use of sterile water in relation to enteral care for adult and paediatric patients which enabled us to reduce the use of single use plastic bottles and provide patients with an improved taste.



NHS
The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust



We are making a change to enteral feeding

Staff are advised they should no longer use sterile water to flush enteral feeding tubes as there is no evidence to support this.

After various discussions with teams across the Trust, it has been agreed you can now substitute the sterile water with freshly drawn tap water. Following discharge from our care, patients will no longer need to prepare cool boiled water and can also use freshly drawn tap water.

The exceptions to this change are:

- Children under the age of six months, in line with NHS England recommendations.
- Patients with newly established Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy (PEG) tube Radiologically Inserted Gastrostomy (RIG) tube and Surgical Jejunostomy tubes will require the use of sterile water for the initial water infusion to confirm the placement and patency of the tube following insertion. Once the tube has been confirmed as safe to use staff will administer all other flushes with tap water.

Flushing enteral feeding tubes

- Staff are required to use freshly drawn tap water in a clean receptacle.
- The 60ml enteral / oral syringe used for flushes only can be retained for a maximum of 24 hours, it should be dated and changed at 24 hours. If it is contaminated with feed or medication it should be discarded and a new syringe used and dated for the next 24 hour period.
- All unused water should be discarded after each task and freshly drawn water used for each subsequent task.

Clinical guidelines and patient information have been updated to reflect this change.
<http://policies.app/launchtext.asp?launchit=5642>



Our Strategic Aims



Strategic Aim 1

To meet the Nutrition and Hydration needs of patients cared for in our Trust

Our ongoing aim is to provide high quality safe nutrition and hydration care through a multidisciplinary approach for all of our patients and service users.

We will ensure the provision of nutritious food and drink as a fundamental health requirement to maximise individual health outcomes. We will reinforce the importance of nutrition and hydration as an integral part of holistic care, supporting patients to ensure they are able to eat and drink to maintain or improve their health.

Malnutrition screening is an integral part of the nutritional care we provide, ensuring all patients are assessed for malnutrition, or being at risk of malnutrition using validated screening tools.

Aims	Key Objectives
Embed malnutrition screening in everyday practice.	<p>Ensure all patients have their nutrition and hydration needs assessed including completion of malnutrition screening within 24 hours of admission using a nationally recognised validated screening tool. Ensure malnutrition screening is reassessed weekly in acute care and three monthly or on condition change in community care settings.</p> <p>Develop a comprehensive suite of formal and informal education packages to ensure all staff are supported in developing understanding of the importance of nutrition and hydration and can translate this into practice</p>
Provide comprehensive nutrition and hydration support for all patients, prioritising those at greater nutritional risk.	<p>Ensure staff have the appropriate skills, knowledge and competencies to deliver safe nutritional care as detailed in the training needs analysis.</p> <p>Ensure all patients have access to nutritional meals, snacks and drinks to meet their individual health care needs.</p> <p>Implement appropriate nutrition care plans according to assessed nutritional risk.</p> <p>Monitor food intake via food charts and nutritional care plan.</p> <p>Provide assurance that oral nutritional support care pathway is being implemented at ward level through audit of current practice.</p> <p>Refer patients to dietetic services if indicated and to speech and language colleagues if there are any swallowing difficulties which may require texture modified food and fluids.</p>



Aims	Key Objectives
<p>Monitor dehydration risk and encourage regular hydration for all patients.</p>	<p>Monitor fluid intake according to clinical need and act upon dehydration signs and symptoms.</p> <p>Ensure patients have access to a drinks menu and are supported with regular provision of a range of nutritious and hydrating drinks.</p> <p>Ensure hydrating support initiatives such as red jug lid and beaker and other visual prompts are in place and robustly monitored.</p>
<p>Provide patients with all of the support they require at mealtimes.</p>	<p>Ensure meals are provided in accordance with the Protected Mealtime Policy to protect mealtimes from unnecessary and avoidable interruptions.</p> <p>Aim to provide an environment conducive to eating and drinking, advocating good patient nutrition and hydration.</p> <p>Provide patients with the support and assistance they need, to maximise nutritional intake.</p>
<p>Work in partnership with patients to ensure we meet their nutrition and hydration needs.</p>	<p>Food hygiene and safety will be observed at all stages of the food chain.</p> <p>Ensure a range of menus are available to provide meals to meet clinical, religious and cultural requirements.</p> <p>Provide patients with access to a range of methods to provide comments suggestions and feedback on all aspects of nutrition and hydration care.</p> <p>Provide feedback and learning from patient surveys and audits to ensure continual improvement.</p>
<p>Use digital pathways to support the delivery of nutrition and hydration care.</p>	<p>Aim to implement an Electronic Meal Ordering system, enabling patients and their carers to view the ingredients, allergens and nutritional information for each dish on the menu. Patients and carers will be able to make informed choices about their food selection, including snacks.</p>



Strategic Aim 2

Healthier Eating for Staff and Visitors

Provide access to healthier food and drink across all Trust facilities for patients, visitors, carers, volunteers and staff.

Our staff need healthy and nutritious food to support them to deliver the best clinical care. Our aim is to give them access to nutritious food and drink, with adequate breaks to support their health and wellbeing, and nutrition and hydration needs. Both staff and visitors need food services which encourage them to make healthier food choices which are affordable, tasty and healthy, aligned with public health guidance.

Aims	Key Objectives
To provide high quality affordable food and drink across all settings in the Trust, to enable everyone who eats there to have a healthier food experience which meets their individual dietary needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide opportunities for staff and visitors to access nutritionally balanced foods by ensuring healthier options are always available and promoted in all Trust provided outlets.Encourage other providers on Trust premises to provide equivalent levels of service.Ensure menus and food and drink offered comply with National Standards recommendations.Ensure staff working shifts have access to healthy options via food outlets or vending machines.Observe food hygiene and safety at all stages of the food chain.
Work in partnership with staff and visitors to ensure their nutrition and hydration needs are met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensure the views of staff and visitors on the food and drink offered are heard, acted upon with feedback provided.Undertake regular inspections of all catering providers on Trust facilities to provide assurance of safe standards.
Support staff health and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensure staff have adequate breaks and are provided with opportunities to remain well hydrated during their working period.Enable staff to have access to discounted meals at Trust catering facilities and the fresh fruit and vegetable stalls.





Strategic Aim 3

Sustainable Procurement for Food and Catering Services

We will make our catering services more sustainable to achieve Net Zero by 2030 and be a leader influencing healthcare food supply chains. Our aim is to build on work already undertaken within catering services to reduce plastic waste, enable lower carbon food choices and support the local economy. By reducing carbon emissions and improving the sustainability of our supply chains, we will help to mitigate the impact the climate emergency has on the food we provide to staff, patients, and visitors.

Aims	Key Objectives
Reduce emissions from food preparation and its transport across the Trust: aiming for net zero by 2030 (Newcastle Hospitals Carbon Footprint).	<p>Reduce air pollution and carbon emissions associated with our food and drink supply chain.</p> <p>Reduce the carbon footprint of the food we provide for our patients, staff and visitors and promote the sustainable choices on our menus.</p>
Reduce food and drink waste generated within the Trust: aiming for circularity by 2030 (no waste to landfill or incineration).	<p>Reduce the amount of food that we waste through improvements in our processes including digital innovations such as electronic meal ordering.</p> <p>Minimise the amount of single use plastics associated with our food, drink and catering services.</p>
Use procurement to reduce emissions generated within the food and drink supply chain (Newcastle Hospitals Carbon Footprint Plus): aiming for net zero by 2030 with an 80% reduction by 2026-2028.	Eliminate fossil fuels from the preparation and delivery of our food, through electrification of equipment and more efficient technologies.
Utilise the full potential of the social value weighting score in food and drink procurement to achieve net zero and circularity goals and recognise other factors such as fair trade/modern slavery in the supply chain, regenerative agriculture, organic food production, animal welfare and seasonality.	<p>Use our purchasing power to both procure more sustainable food and influence a more sustainable food supply chain.</p> <p>Lead on the provision of sustainable food, to benefit the health and wellbeing of our local community, through collaboration and innovation.</p>

Implementing and monitoring our strategy

This Food and Drink Strategy sets out the vision for the Newcastle Hospitals for the period 2022 to 2027. It sets out our key strategic priorities. These priorities will be incorporated into three detailed monitoring plans developed by the Nutrition Steering Group which over the period 2022 to 2027 will be implemented through a series of partnerships within the Trust taking account of relevant local and regional initiatives. The Trust Nutrition Steering Group will monitor the action plan. The Steering Group reports to the Harm Free Care Group who report to the Patient Safety Committee.

Supporting Trust policies and resources

[Nutrition and Hydration Policy](#)

[Protected Mealtime Policy](#)

[Food Hygiene Policy](#)

[Report of the Independent Review of NHS Hospital Food \(October 2020\)](#)

[National standards for healthcare food and drink \(November 2022\).](#)

[The Hospital Food Standards Panel five food standards \(DH, 2014\).](#)

[10 Key Characteristics of Good Nutritional Care \(NPSA, 2009\).](#)

[Nutrition & Hydration Digest \(British Dietetic Association, 2012\)](#)

[Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool or equivalent \(British Association of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition, 2011\)](#)

[Healthier and More Sustainable Catering- Nutrition Principles \(for staff and visitor catering\) \(Public Health England, 2017\)](#)

[Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services \(DEFRA, 2015\). Since April 2015, these standards have been included in the NHS Standard Contract and are legally binding.](#)





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