

HOSPITAL FOOD + SERVICE

THE PATIENT / THE WORKFORCE / THE VISITOR

MAY/JUNE 2023

VEGAN & VEGETARIAN

The days of poor choice and flavour in plant-based dining options should be in the past

ON SITE

Catey winner Ashford & St Peter's Hospitals

PREVIEW

NHSE's Andy Politi and Joanna Instone lead the speaker line-up for the CHHC Forum



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WELCOME

INSPIRING & INSIGHTFUL

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR WHEN THE WEATHER STARTS TO WARM UP (FINALLY) AND THE INDUSTRY'S EVENTS ALL ROLL OUT.



The HCA's Leadership & Development Forum in Birmingham delivered exactly what you want from such an industry event. The programme was reflective of some of the biggest issues affecting the sector, with insightful presentations from people sharing their views and solutions around some of the challenges that hospital caterers are grappling with at the moment. There are several reports and news items from the event in this issue, each focusing on different aspects. If you weren't able to attend in Birmingham, I hope these items give you a sense of the event.

One of the topics that featured on the programme was the challenge of providing 24/7 food and drink for staff. NHS England and Compass Group subsequently staged a 24/7 Showcase event, at the Imperial War Museum in Duxford. This was a fantastic, intense day, packed with ideas from suppliers, many of whom are only just beginning to engage with the NHS. From amazing technology to different food and drink solutions, it was quite an eye-opener. The round table discussion that concluded the event demonstrated so much positivity around this requirement - even though for some smaller hospitals, particularly community and mental health sites, the way forward is not yet clear.

The HCA Forum also heard from NFU President Minette Batters about working more closely with British farmers, another pertinent issue as we await the new Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services. Hospital caterers are again being invited to join a series of farm visits organised by the Love British Food Hospitals Working Group. This is such a worthwhile and educational experience. I was one of a group that visited The Organic Pantry in May, and there will be a report on this in the July/August issue.

At the time of writing, June is almost upon us - it may well have arrived by the time you read this. It will bring with it the second annual National Healthcare Estates & Facilities Day. As we go to press with this issue, registrations to participate in the day are up by 18% on last year, with a reach of 162,226 team members and 340 organisations. It certainly looks as though this year's celebration and awareness day will be even better than last year. Whatever you have planned within your catering teams, please do take hi-res images suitable for print and share with us after the event. We will include as much as we can in the next issue of Hospital Food + Service and Hospital Caterer.

Also coming up in June is the Care Home and Hospital Catering Forum. Don't miss this year's keynote presentation from NHS England's Andy Politi and Joanna Instone. Take a look at our preview on p30 of this issue for more information and details of how to book.

Please get in touch if there is anything you would like to see featured in the pages of Hospital Food + Service, or you are doing any work that you would like to share with others.

Amanda Roberts

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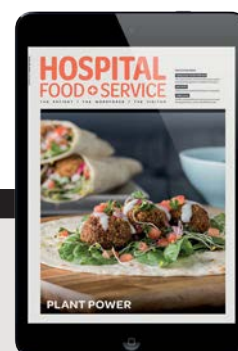
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HISTORIC MOMENT

AT ITS AGM ON APRIL 28, MEMBERS OF THE HOSPITAL CATERERS ASSOCIATION (HCA) VOTED TO ADOPT THE ASSOCIATION'S NEW BYLAWS. THIS IS A POSITION THE HCA HAS BEEN WORKING TOWARDS SINCE IT BEGAN TRADING AS A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE FROM NOVEMBER 1, 2021.

The adoption of the bylaws lays out the future foundation for the HCA, allowing it to move forward and continue to promote professional standards to enhance and improve NHS catering services across the 4 Nations.

"It was indeed a historic day for us, and every member can be proud that they played a part in the consultation," says National Chair Brian Robb.

The next step now for the HCA is to review its governance chart, which lists all relevant working documents and review/update to ensure they reflect the association's new status. This is



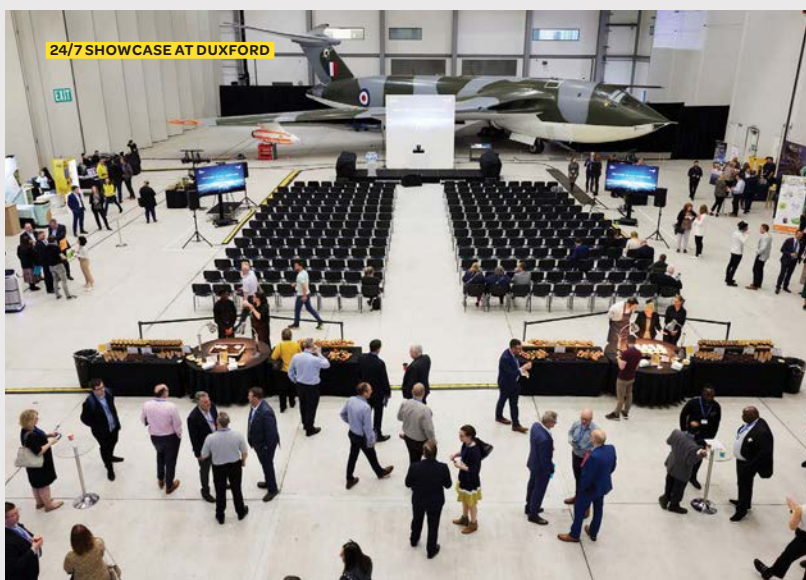
expected to take until at least the end of 2023 to complete.

To read Brian's full message and update on HCA activities, please flip this issue and turn to p3 of the Hospital Caterer.

INSPIRING 24/7 SHOWCASE DELIVERS IDEAS FOR CATERING TEAMS

NHS England (NHSE), alongside Compass Group UK & Ireland's Medirest and One Retail sectors, hosted over 100 people at the Imperial War Museum in Duxford to discuss the way forward for the provision of 24/7 hospital food, mandated in the National Standards for Healthcare Food and Drink.

The event brought together hospital caterers, dietitians, food experts and suppliers with potential solutions. Neely Mozawala, founder of the campaign 'No Hungry Staff' and Compass' Social Value Lead, addressed the event, highlighting the importance of nutritious, delicious and affordable food, as a health and wellbeing necessity that will benefit NHS staff. "This is so important," Neely says. "We know that good food aids mental and physical wellbeing and we know that people in the NHS deserve this support, especially during the cost of living crisis. Trusts have a responsibility, but businesses do too - let's work together to leave behind a legacy that we can all be proud of."



BAKE A BIRTHDAY CAKE FOR THE NHS BIG TEA

Catering teams up and down the country are an integral part of hospital life, providing nutritious, tasty food to support patient recovery and the wellbeing of our NHS staff. Why not ask your Trust's catering team to bake a birthday cake for the NHS as part of the NHS Big Tea.

NHS England would love to share photos of what your chefs create for the NHS Big Tea. Send photos to: Sophie.Brown67@nhs.net and keep an eye on NHS England social channels to see if your cake is featured!

NHS CHEF 2023 - APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

Applications are now open for the NHS Chef 2023 competition. The NHS Chef competition is an ideal opportunity to showcase the great work that is undertaken every single day by all NHS caterers.

NHS Chef 2023 will build on the success of last year's competition, won by Erica Bell and Shelley Pearson-Smith from Stepping Hill Hospital, Stockport. This year's menus will focus on reduced saturated fats, sugars and salts.

The closing date for applications is June 16, 2023. Please e-mail: england.greatnhsfood@nhs.net for more information.



PROVIDE A COFFEE FOR EVERY MOMENT



HOSPITAL CATERERS RENEW FARM VISITS

Organised through the Love British Foods Hospitals Working Group, hospital caterers from Trusts across the country are enjoying visits to farms, exploring how more British produce could be added to menus.

So far hospital caterers have toured Moor Farm, which farms Hereford Beef in Shrewsbury, and The Organic Pantry, a vegetable and salad producer in Tadcaster. There will be more on this visit in the next issue of Hospital Food + Service.



ORGANIC FOOD AND DRINK MARKET GROWS TO OVER £3BN

The sale of organic products in foodservice showed impressive growth of 152% in 2022 according to the latest Organic Market Report from the Soil Association, which reports overall growth of organic food and drink of 1.6% to £3.1bn.

All retail food and drink categories saw organic produce sales static at best or falling, impacted by rising inflation and the consumer's reduced spending power, but a post Covid return to organic hot drinks and milk drove growth across foodservice. Sales of organic dairy products grew by 4.2% year-on-year - the only other food and drink category to show growth was baby products, at 13.7% year-on-year.

The public sector is a strong and consistent growth area for organic food and drink, largely as a result of the Government Buying Standards which commit the sector to purchasing a minimum proportion of organic food. This figure is expected to rise in the new GBSF. Public sector organic spend through the Soil Association's Food for Life scheme in 2022 increased to £11.1m from £10m in 2021. However, it has yet to recover to pre-pandemic levels of £20m in 2019.

In 2023, several factors are expected to boost organic sales: the Scottish government has committed to double its organic land, which will have a ripple effect across supply chains; retailers will make more sustainable commercial decisions based on their sustainability commitments; and the consumer's understanding of, and engagement with organic, keeping pace with their appetite for solutions to the climate crisis.

NEW BDA DIGEST

The third edition of the BDA Nutrition & Hydration Digest will launch at an event in central London on June 15. The Food Services Specialist Group of the BDA (British Dietetic Association) has developed the new edition, which is the cornerstone of advice for providing special diets for those in hospital, and forms part of the new mandatory National Standards for Healthcare Food and Drink.

NUTRITIONALLY-ENHANCED ICE CREAM FROM NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS SCOOPS GLOBAL FOOD INNOVATION AWARD

A protein-enhanced ice cream to improve nutrition among older people, developed by researchers from Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust (NUH), has beaten off impressive competition to win a prestigious Food Innovation Award.

The N-ICE Cream is a high protein vanilla ice cream, fortified with additional leucine and vitamin D, developed to help address the serious problem of malnutrition in older people, bringing it to the attention of a wider audience.

Professor Opinder Sahota, Consultant in ortho-geriatric medicine at NUH, and leader of the N-ICE Cream project, says: "We were the only NHS Trust to win in these very competitive international awards - which attract hundreds of entries each year - so this throws the spotlight on why our innovation is so important for older patients."

He adds: "In the UK alone, according to the latest figures from NHS England, three million - one in 20 - older adults are affected by malnutrition. As well as the human impact, this equates to a cost of around £20 billion to the NHS each year, which is why our Nottingham-developed nutritious ice cream can make such an important difference."

The Food Innovation Centre at the University of Nottingham worked with NUH to develop N-ICE Cream as a product.



NEWS

MORE CASH FOR FARMERS CONVERTING TO ORGANIC

Farmers who convert to organic will receive up to a third more cash than last year as the government increases support for nature-friendly farming.

Payments for organic farming are rising by an average of 25% for those entering a new scheme with Countryside Stewardship. The government has boosted all payments for farming that benefits the environment via Countryside Stewardship, but the increase for organic is significantly above the average increase of 10%. Some farmers converting to organic will be able to earn twice as much as before from government incentives, in Countryside Stewardship agreements that will run for five years.

Options are also available for nature-friendly practices that are in harmony with organic principles, such as avoiding insecticides and protecting soils, via the new Sustainable Farming Incentives (SFI).

OVER HALF OF BRITS MOVE AWAY FROM TRADITIONAL ENGLISH BREAKFAST TEA AS THEIR PREFERRED BLEND

New research reports that Brits are moving away from tradition with over half (55%) opting for a herbal tea like green tea or Rooibos, or other leaf-based teas like Earl Grey, as their preferred choice of blend.

The findings, based on 2086 consumers, mark a shift away from the Traditional English Breakfast tea which has always been widely regarded as the UK's hot favourite.

The research into Brits' tea drinking habits by global tea specialists, The Tea Group, found that 22% of the nation would choose a green tea such as Matcha, and 11% pick a rooibos, ginger, peppermint, chamomile or fruit tea as their blend of choice. The remaining 22% chose Earl Grey or just specified 'other' for their tea, rather than Traditional English Breakfast.

FAILURE TO TACKLE OBESITY IS HARMING POPULATION HEALTH

A report from the Institute for Government finds that every government since 1992 has missed targets to reduce obesity. 'Tackling obesity: improving policy making on food and health', calls for government to learn from past mistakes. It recommends:

- Developing a long-term obesity strategy, backed up by robust analysis and targets, with interim goals and measures to drive progress towards a credible long-term goal, learning from the way it is approaching net zero.
- Addressing the lack of joined up policy making by creating a new food and health policy unit, jointly owned by Defra and DHSC, charged with developing the strategy and driving progress.
- Legislating for the Food Standards Agency to provide independent scrutiny of progress, including by producing an annual review of the state of the nation's food system, diet and health to boost its profile in parliament and increase accountability for inaction.

SUPPLIER NEWS

ANGLIA CROWN SOLD TO INTERNATIONAL OPERATOR BONCULINA

Anglia Crown, the specialist prepared meal provider for hospitals and care homes, has been acquired by BonCulina, an international expert in foodservice solutions. BonCulina's concepts include Smart Catering - a full contract catering solution, Plug & Play - a flexible catering offer and the innovative BonCulina Anytime, which enables a hot meal option to be available 24 hours a day.

Anglia Crown has licensed BonCulina's patented technology for its packaging for several years. Managing Director David Garland says BonCulina is excited to build on Anglia Crown's 30-year sector knowledge and experience.

This is BonCulina's second acquisition in the UK, following the procurement of the hot food vending company, Bon Appetit in April 2021.

MARLISH WATERS SWITCHES ALL PRODUCTION TO 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY

Sustainable soft drinks brand Marlish Waters is moving all of its production to 100% renewable energy following an infrastructure upgrade at its Marlish farm-based factory in Northumberland.

From the beginning of April, all Marlish products will be produced using 100% solar, wind and biomass energy, approximately 15% of which is already being produced on Marlish Farm itself, via on-site solar panels.

Marking a significant step in the brand's mission to eventually become carbon-neutral, the spring water and mixer producer has been producing its own solar energy on-site since 2015, but this latest upgrade will see all of its productions powered by renewable sources moving forward.

WIN A NEW RATIONAL ICOMBI STEAMER

In celebration of its 50-year anniversary, Rational has launched its 'Lifetime Achievement Award', a campaign to find the oldest Rational combi steamer in use within the UK and Ireland.

To be in with a chance of winning a new iCombi Pro 6-1/1 model, customers just need to send in a picture of their Rational combi-steamer and its serial number.


The competition closes on June 30, 2023.

Ts & Cs apply.



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The programme will focus on some of the significant issues facing caterers in the health and care sectors, including patient nutritional and hydration requirements, energy management within the kitchen, small and inexpensive steps to make a big difference, and exploring how to manage food safety when under financial pressures.

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CURATED APPROACH

LAST YEAR, SURREY-BASED ASHFORD AND ST PETER'S HOSPITALS WON THE HEALTHCARE CATERER OF THE YEAR FOODSERVICE CATEY FOR THE GROUND-BREAKING WORK TO TRANSFORM VISITOR AND STAFF CATERING. HFS FINDS OUT ABOUT THE JOURNEY, WHICH INVOLVED BRINGING THE SERVICE BACK IN-HOUSE ALONGSIDE DEVELOPING AN INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP, AND WHAT COMES NEXT.

Winning a Catey is like winning an Oscar - it's an accolade that is difficult to surpass. For Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals (ASPH), it is the latest in a series of recognitions. Phil Shelley, Chair of the Independent Review of NHS Hospital Food, has already awarded the catering service exemplar status, and Dame Prue Leith, Advisor to the Review was quoted as saying that the food is so good that the patients won't want to leave.

Wind back nearly four years to just before Covid arrived though, and turnover was less than £500,000, less than 26% of staff used the restaurant, and a 2018 customer survey revealed a satisfaction rate of 52%.

In more ways than one the pandemic was a trigger for change. Awareness of the challenges faced by NHS staff in their daily work was heightened as never before. Chris Bell, Director of Estates and Facilities at ASPH explains: "People were working long hours, they were tired and afraid. This was the reality of the situation and we knew we had to do something to help in areas that we could make a difference."

At the same time, the incumbent supplier of catering services had been in place for less than one year when Covid hit and the situation quickly became commercially unviable for the provider and the Trust.

The solution, proposed by Neller Davies and fully supported by the Board, was to do something different. The plan to transform the catering offer would not only bring services in-house, it would align the style of food and service with that provided in

other professional workplaces away from healthcare. It would engage hospital staff from the outset, improve physical and mental wellbeing for hard-working staff, and assist with recruitment and retention in a very competitive local employment market. What's more, this had to be achieved and the new service mobilised at speed.

Chris continues: "Our previous catering supplier did exactly what we contracted them to do, but the truth is that the contract didn't provide room for any innovation. Bringing our services in-house enabled us to change quickly.

"But we knew that we couldn't change on our own and we did need support. We are not catering experts so we needed advice and help. We wanted to move from a canteen to a restaurant mentality. We wanted to change the mindset and it was a real leap of faith."

COLLABORATION

One of the aspects that makes this project so ground-breaking is the way it sought a fresh perspective on hospital catering by deliberately choosing to work with a caterer with little experience in healthcare. Bartlett Mitchell (now BM Caterers) is a workplace caterer supplying the corporate sector with a client base of legal firms, media, financial and tech organisations.

"We needed a partner who knew what they were doing. If we want to create what is on the high street in our hospitals, it's important to bring that talent in," Neller Davies Director, Julian Fris explains.

Contracted to Neller Davies rather than





the Trust for three months, at a time when workplace catering was pretty much closed down during the first lockdown, BM worked with the Trust to develop and implement menus, sort out the kitchens and introduce the style of service that consumers expect. A relationship has continued, enabling the Trust to tap into BM's supply chain where products may not otherwise be available.

Raouf Mansour, previously a development chef at BM, is now Head of Catering at ASPH. "When we first came in, it was a bit of a surprise to say the least. We are used to working with large corporates and this was completely different.

"If I'm honest, we never treated it as a hospital. We genuinely went in with the belief that we could be one of the best places you can eat in the area.

"I was given carte blanche to develop the new menu, look at suppliers etc and we brought a lot of expertise, not just in cooking but also our supplier base. We respected each other's expertise."

However, it didn't come without its challenges. Raouf adds: "The main challenge was to take the catering team on the journey. It sounds simple but we needed to get them

excited about food again, rather than just running a kitchen."

This is happening. There has been a specific focus on staff engagement to overcome the original scepticism that change would simply result in more work. This has gathered pace as the new service has proven popular, gained peer recognition, and the improvement is clear for all to see. Now, catering staff who were previously demotivated are enthusiastic and keen to get involved.

THE FOOD

The menu has a three-week rolling cycle, with an emphasis on Mediterranean diet and healthy eating as standard, also featuring plant-based meals and street food. Seasonal menus, outdoor and indoor pop-ups, a ward takeaway range, themed days, guest chefs, BBQs and ice cream parlours all feature.

A delicatessen counter serves pies, scotch eggs and the like, whilst the salad bar is amazing. Chefs at St Peter's are baking their own cakes, which offer a good sweet treat alternative to traditional confectionery. Front of house, quick service for pizzas is supplied via a Merrychef, whilst a click & collect coffee service could be extended to other offers.

"The plan to transform the catering offer ... would align the style of food and service with that provided in other professional workplaces away from healthcare"



STAFF ARE NOW ENJOYING

DISHES SUCH AS KOREAN STEAMED HOISIN DUCK BUNS, LINE-CAUGHT GRILLED TUNA STEAK WITH WARM NEW POTATO SALAD, GRIDDLED LITTLE GEM SALAD WITH GARLIC AND HERB DRESSING, AND CHARGRILLED HALLOUMI, PICKLED RED CABBAGE, HUMMUS AND TZATZIKI.

OUTCOME

Whilst this service has improved financial performance, that was never the motivation. Turnover has increased to £1.4m pa, uptake has risen to 40% of staff, and satisfaction is up to over 70% (which is in-line with professional workplaces in the City). Social media and public endorsement has soared, with the restaurant being described by users as the best ever in a hospital, and food safety ratings across all outlets have gone up to five star. Fresh food production has rocketed to 90%. The Trust has struck a balance, with hot food subsidised and meals available for a maximum of £4, which is a compelling offer representing good value for money.

The real benefit - and value - has been in terms of staff health and wellbeing. Not only are staff able to access a nutritional food service, there is also a scheme to help any who may be struggling financially, with meals left over at the end of service boxed-up and distributed to help them and their families to maintain a good, healthy diet. The recognition afforded to catering teams has also improved morale significantly.

PATIENT SERVICES

Still working with Neller Davies, the Trust is now considering how its transformative approach to retail services could be applied to patient meals. The logistics of food distribution across a large hospital site make this more complex. However, a concept has been developed whereby ASPH develops the menus, working with dietetics to ensure the required nutritional balance, and then contracts with a CPU to produce the meals. This effectively turns on its head the traditional relationship between meal supplier and Trust. Trials are expected to take place over the next year.

WHAT'S NEXT

Other Trusts are showing an interest in this alternative approach to what has traditionally been a cut-and-dried choice, between in-house or outsourced. ASPH has demonstrated that it is possible to have your cake and eat it too. It has invested in the staff, the service, the restaurant serveries/ equipment and a new kitchen.

It has brought partners in to help and

“One of the aspects that makes this project so ground-breaking is the way it sought a fresh perspective on hospital catering”

benefited from their expertise, but it has also maintained ownership of the service and created an offering that is compelling. It's a model that may well spread as others, too, challenge the norm on hospital retail. As Chris Bell concludes: “We've shown that it can be done. It's possible with senior management support, collaboration and a bit of courage.” 



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*Nielsen 25/03/23



DYSPHAGIA IN THE HOSPITAL SETTING

EMILY STUART, DIETITIAN, BUSINESS SUPPORT FOR APETITO, OUTLINES WHY IT IS SO IMPORTANT FOR HOSPITALS TO HAVE A GOOD PROVISION OF TEXTURE-MODIFIED MEALS AND FOOD AND DRINK CHOICES FOR THE MANY PATIENTS WHO MAY SUFFER DYSPHAGIA.

Dysphagia, the clinical term for swallowing problems, can be linked to eating and/or drinking. Issues with swallowing can be seen in various stages of the swallow including the positioning of food in the mouth, chewing, moving food around the mouth, sucking, or in the general overall process of swallowing.

Dysphagia is a complex condition that is secondary to numerous primary conditions, including but not limited to¹:

- Neurological conditions such as stroke, Multiple Sclerosis, Motor Neurons Disease, Parkinson's Disease, dementia and head injuries
- Cancers, for example, head and neck cancers, or when radiotherapy treatment has led to swelling or soreness in the oesophagus (food pipe) which has impacted the swallow
- Intubation or insertion of a tracheostomy on the Intensive Care Unit (ICU)
- Cardiopulmonary disorders, such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Autoimmune disorders, examples being HIV, lupus and Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Other causes, for instance, ageing, gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD), or learning difficulties.

Dysphagia can be seen in both adult and paediatric populations in hospital settings. For some it remains present following discharge. It is prevalent among certain groups of people and can affect a significant proportion of those that also have high admission rates to hospital (up to 78% of stroke patients, 80% of patients with head and neck cancer and up to 57% of dementia patients^{2,3,4}). Dysphagia can have significant clinical implications on the individual and can lead to malnutrition, dehydration, impaired quality of life, choking, aspiration,

pneumonia and in severe cases, death. Dysphagia is also linked to an increased length of stay among hospital patients.

When we consider the wide range of conditions affecting people of all ages that can lead to dysphagia, we can see why it is so prevalent in hospitals. It is a condition that needs to be managed in collaboration between clinical and foodservice departments in healthcare settings up and down the country.

Regardless of the patient specialities within your hospital, dysphagia meal provision is likely to be a core part of your procurement needs. Texture modified (TM) foods are one of the treatments available for managing dysphagia in a hospital environment, as well as in care homes and community settings. Provision of the correct and most appropriate TM meal can provide a patient with safe food when they are clinically vulnerable, can promote patient-centred care, and can support their recovery by delivering vital nutrition.

IDDSI FRAMEWORK & THE ROLE OF TM FOOD

Standardisation of TM food and fluids is assessed against the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) Framework, which replaced the old 'National Descriptors' in 2019⁵. The purpose of the framework is to promote common (international) terminology to describe food and fluid thickness levels and to define testing methods that can be done by anyone using standard kitchen equipment such as a spoon or fork. To describe food thickness, the following definitions apply:

- Level 3/Liquidised
- Level 4/Puréed
- Level 5/Mincéd & Moist
- Level 6/Soft & Bite Sized
- Level 7/Easy to Chew

“Dysphagia can have significant clinical implications on the individual and can lead to malnutrition, dehydration, impaired quality of life, choking, aspiration, pneumonia and in severe cases, death”




EMILY STUART



Please see the IDDSI Framework for a detailed description of each of the levels and the accompanying testing methods.

When considering the provision of TM food for patients with dysphagia, safety and assurance, choice and variety, cost and nutrition are all key elements that need to be taken into account. Hospital caterers have an important role to play, in not only providing their patients with the correct meal, but in endeavouring to speak positively about TM food to patients. The perception of TM food can be poor within a hospital and, if not appropriately managed this can deter the patient from eating, further compounding the risk of malnutrition, which is already a problem for many in hospitals; malnutrition affects up to 34% of newly admitted patients⁶.

apetito has a range of over 200 TM meals suitable for use in hospitals. We provide products in levels 3, 4, 5 and 6, and we also have a range of products that are tested against the criteria for Level 7 Easy to Chew. Each of our TM product ranges have options that meet the British Dietetic Association (BDA) criteria for energy dense (ED)* and are designed to be higher in

calories to support the nutritional needs of patients with dysphagia who are at risk of malnutrition or are already malnourished. All our products comply with the BDA Nutrition and Hydration Digest⁷, and we have a variety of tasty options - from classics such as roast dinners, to curries and desserts. 

*ED criteria as specified by the BDA Nutrition & Hydration Digest, refers to complete meals with 500 or more calories, soups with 100 or more calories and complete desserts with 300 or more calories.

www.apetito.co.uk

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SAFE TO SWALLOW

TEXTURE-MODIFIED MEALS FOR PATIENTS WITH DYSPHAGIA HAVE COME A LONG WAY IN RECENT YEARS, WITH A FOCUS ON OFFERING A GOOD CHOICE OF NUTRITIONALLY-BALANCED, ATTRACTIVE-LOOKING MEALS THAT TASTE GREAT AND ENABLE SUFFERERS TO ENJOY MEALTIMES.

Awareness of the patient's individual needs, their swallowing ability and what this means for the food that is served to them, is a critical first step. The IDDSI (International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative) offers a standardised approach to the way texture-modified meals are described. Individuals involved with the preparation and serving of meals for patients with swallowing difficulties need to understand the IDDSI descriptors, working with their clinical and support colleagues, to ensure the food served is safe and suitable for each individual. Training is an essential part of this.



“Those requiring a texture-modified diet need a good choice of food and drink, and their nutritional needs and cultural/lifestyle dietary requirements must also be met”

Bosse Interspace's Harry Bosse tells Hospital Food + Service that training should be comprehensive and cover many different aspects, such as the impact of dysphagia, texture-modified diets, and food safety and hygiene. “It's crucial to be knowledgeable about the various degrees of texture modification and also how to prepare and serve food appropriately for individuals with dysphagia.”

It should also be recognised, and understood, that the needs of dysphagic patients change. “Their swallow may be re-assessed by a speech and language therapist daily - so their dietary prescription may change between the ordering and the eating of their meal,” Maxine Cartz, Dietitian with Medirest explains. “Part of our training is therefore to understand what the patient's needs are. Working alongside other professionals within the hospital, such as the hospital dietitians and speech and language therapists or care home teams, ensures that patients receive, eat and enjoy a meal that is safe for them and, of course, enables them to meet their nutritional needs.”

When it comes to who should receive training, Justina Kesterton, Roving Chef at Vegetarian for Life, points out that although it is not mandatory to have trained staff to serve food to patients with swallowing difficulties, training staff involved in both

cooking and serving dysphagia-friendly food is highly recommended. “This will prevent choking hazards caused by food handlers and minimise the risk of fatalities from choking.” As an example, she explains that gravy on food is commonly requested, however, adding it to a texture-modified dish would change the dish's thickness, rendering it unsuitable for safe consumption. “Chefs ideally should do hands-on training to get a ‘feel’ for the textures required for each level. Food servers should know how to prepare the table and to monitor the person as they eat, which means checking food is hot at the time of serving, and then 15 minutes and 30 minutes after serving, taking the plate away if it is no longer hot.”

CHOICE & NUTRITION

Like any patients in hospital, those requiring a texture-modified diet need a good choice of food and drink, and their nutritional needs and cultural/lifestyle dietary requirements must also be met.

Since the introduction of IDDSI, adapting to this framework, and developing meals to conform to each of the texture levels has been imperative. Maxine Cartz believes that understanding IDDSI, and developing new menus that comply with it, as well as training frontline teams has been a significant piece of development work

across the industry, which has helped to set improved mealtime standards.

But there is still more to be done. For instance, some people with dysphagia may also need their drinks thickened and there are IDDSI levels for liquids as well as foods. As adequate hydration is important for all patients, Maxine is pleased to see more innovation in pre-thickened beverages.

Patients with dysphagia also need snacks. "Smaller snacking options such as puréed level 4 tea and biscuits or a puréed level 4 scone and jam add variety, as well as providing additional calories and protein to help nutritionally vulnerable patients meet their nutritional needs," Maxine says.

Also don't forget that the IDDSI criteria for children are different to those for adults. Many manufacturers of modified texture meals now include paediatric meals, which offer suitable child-friendly dishes in the appropriate texture.

Maintaining good nutrition is important for all patients, and providing good choice will prevent boredom setting in and encourage appetite. The soups, sauces, gravies and custards from Bosse Interspace provide a range of flavours and textures to keep mealtimes interesting. Whilst for those who are nutritionally vulnerable, the high-protein 'Whisk & Serve' soups are an excellent choice for patients who require extra protein to support their recovery without compromising on taste.

ENSURING INCLUSIVITY

The big dietary trends and issues that we are seeing amongst the wider population also apply to people with dysphagia, hence the demand for texture-modified vegetarian and vegan options, as well as free-from meals is growing.

Furthermore, the growth in people preferring vegetarian and vegan options mean manufacturers are now increasing their ranges of these meals as well as ensuring a greater choice for people with food allergies.

According to Harry Bosse, inclusivity requires understanding and addressing the unique needs of each patient. Since dysphagia affects individuals of all ages and backgrounds, it is crucial to offer food options that are accessible and accommodating for everyone, including those with other dietary requirements, such as allergies, intolerances, or religious restrictions. Bosse Interspace's priority is to continually advance and enhance the texture-modified food products it offers for people who have dysphagia.

"Our soups are specially designed to provide high-protein nutrition for patients

with dysphagia. They are easy to prepare and come in individual 'whisk & serve' sachets that can be stored conveniently at healthcare facilities. Patients can enjoy a variety of delicious flavours, such as Leek & Potato, Creamy Tomato, and Thai Chicken. These soups are also gluten-free, ensuring that patients with dietary restrictions can enjoy them too."

Allergies require special attention. Clear and consistent labelling is essential and should include information on textures, nutritional content and allergens to ensure safety.

GOOD-LOOKING

Finally, it is now widely acknowledged that food needs to look appetising and can't just be functional. "Over the years we've seen more chefs present food in ways to make it look as appealing as possible," Maxine Cartz explains. "An example is moulding level 4 puréed items into the shape of the original food and for levels 5 and 6, re-plating them onto attractive plates or into ramekins to improve the dining experience." 

A NUTRITIOUS START

"We are incredibly proud of the positive impact our Ready brek porridge has had in the hospital sector," David Bone, Foodservice Channel Manager for Weetabix, tells Hospital F+S.

"Ready brek is the number one smooth porridge in healthcare' and especially in care homes, because its super smooth texture makes it easy for those with conditions like dysphagia to swallow."

Easy to prepare, Ready brek porridge is made with 100% wholegrain oats to give patients a nutritious, warming start to the day. It is also a source of Vitamin D for a healthy immune system. Ready brek is available in portion or bulk packs to meet varying volume needs of caterers.

¹ Annual Nielsen Data to 29.01.22

www.bosse-interspace.co.uk

www.compass-group.co.uk

www.vegetarianforlife.org.uk

<https://weetabixfoodservice.co.uk>

VEGETARIAN FOR LIFE MOUSSE



QUORN MEAT BALLS

PLANT POWER

THE MARKET FOR PLANT-BASED, AND VEGAN FOOD AND DRINK IS GROWING, DRIVEN BY A NUMBER OF FACTORS – FROM CONSUMERS SEEKING A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE, TO CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND INCREASING FOOD COSTS.

“Meat-free eating is no longer just a trend, it’s a developing consumer behaviour,” states Brett Wainwright, Business Unit Controller – Foodservice at Quorn Foods. “Health and sustainability now play a key role in everyday eating decisions, as we see more people realising the impact their diets can have on the planet and looking at ways to live a healthier lifestyle.”

“We know that nutrition is particularly important for patient wellbeing and a key consideration for menu planning in this sector. We are also all acutely aware of the impact increased food costs are having on society, especially across the public sector. That’s why we have been developing our new Cost Crunchers initiative.”

Cost Crunchers launched in April to help caterers to create affordable and delicious, nutritious and sustainable menus. Prices have been frozen and 50% extra free packs introduced on Quorn Mince and Quorn Vegan Beef Pieces. Meat Balls are going vegan.

“There’s no denying it’s a particularly challenging time for many people, and bringing delicious, nutritious food for patients across

the UK is a top priority for us as a business,” Brett continues. “We are dedicated to providing the tools to help our customers create great value, great tasting menus, so that caterers do not need to compromise on taste, health or helping the planet.”

Quorn products are versatile and can be easily adapted as an ingredient or used as a finished product. Quorn ingredient staples, such as Pieces, Mince and No-Meat Balls, enable menu planners to create a range of different recipes that are suitable for vegans, vegetarians and flexitarians, without compromising on texture or flavour.

Quorn mycoprotein, the main ingredient in all Quorn products, is nutritious and sustainable. It is naturally high in protein and fibre, low in saturated fat, contains

no cholesterol but does include all nine essential amino acids as well as a range of key micronutrients.

ALTERNATIVE PROTEINS

Ollie Bragg, Roving Chef at Vegetarian for Life explains how to balance proteins in vegetarian and vegan diets. “Protein is made up of chains of molecules known as amino acids. There are 20 amino acids found in nature that our bodies need to build protein. Of these, nine are considered essential, which means that your body cannot produce them itself, so we need to get them from what we eat.

“Plant foods are often referred to as ‘incomplete’ sources of protein. This is because protein from animal sources contains all nine essential amino acids in

“By eating a variety of plant foods and pairing certain things, it is entirely possible to obtain all the essential amino acids our bodies require”

sufficient amounts. Plants also contain all nine essential amino acids - however, besides a few exceptions, most typically offer a limited amount of at least one essential amino acid. By eating a variety of plant foods and pairing certain things, it is entirely possible to obtain all the essential amino acids our bodies require. For example, lentils, peas and many vegetables tend to contain low amounts of cysteine and methionine, rice is low in lysine, but a great source of methionine. Putting these foods together creates a complete amino acid package.

"For vegetarians there are sources that contain all nine essential amino acids, including eggs and dairy. For vegan amino acids sources, eating complementary proteins is more important."

There are many options for vegan, protein-rich foods such as nuts and seeds, pulses, grains and some vegetables. However, for complete sources of protein, quinoa, soybeans and buckwheat are among the few plant foods that offer all nine essential amino acids. Quinoa is also high in fibre, magnesium, B vitamins, iron, potassium, calcium, phosphorus and many vitamins. Soybeans are also a good source of fibre, iron, calcium, zinc and B vitamins. Eating soy protein in place of animal protein has been found to reduce bad cholesterol and triglycerides, which are linked to heart disease. Like quinoa, buckwheat is a pseudo grain. It is actually a seed and, like quinoa, is a great source of protein, fibre and minerals.

CURRENT TRENDS

Gordon Lauder, Managing Director of frozen food distributor Central Foods, identifies cost and the environment as two of the biggest factors contributing to the growth in awareness of - and interest in - vegan and vegetarian foods.

"Vegan mince, for example, can be significantly cheaper than standard beef mince and provides a greater yield - up to 20% more - so it's a great meat swap in many popular dishes such as lasagne, chilli or Bolognese. In addition, as well as helping to take the pressure off budgets, offering plant-based options really fits with the growing narrative around sustainability."

Gordon references a taste test carried out at Bristol University where caterers added non-meat ingredients, such as jackfruit, soya, mushrooms and lentils to traditional beef lasagne. The students voted the soya mince option as their favourite, claiming it was impossible to taste any difference.

Soya is also a complete protein, containing all nine essential amino acids. KaterVeg! vegan mince, vegan sausages and vegan meatballs from Central Foods are all made with soya, and are gluten-free, so they are also suitable for coeliac customers. Dual criteria ingredients and dishes help to avoid menu proliferation by providing options to suit a wide range of dietary requirements. In the same way, serving vegan and vegetarian menu items that are so tasty they will appeal to meat reducers, is a good approach.

"Although there has been an increase in the numbers of vegans and vegetarians, it's these meat-reducers who are driving a big part of the increasing demand for plant-based options. Kantar research indicates there is at least one person following a meat-avoidance or reduction diet in each UK household, with 12.5% identifying as flexitarian," Gordon adds.

"Caterers must now make their menus work even harder, so they are including fewer products but ensuring these are suitable for a maximum number of dietary requirements and menu dishes throughout the day."

INGREDIENT CHOICES

Careful ingredient choices are necessary to create menus that cater for a range of dietary requirements. Karen Heavey, Brand Manager for Kerrymaid recommends Kerrymaid Sunflower Light as an alternative to a dairy spread, suitable for vegans, and containing 80% less saturated fat than butter.

"Having a portfolio of products available for patients such as warm custards to top a hearty apple crumble, or easy-melt vegan slices that can be melted into a variety of welcoming toasties or soups can be an effective and cost-efficient way to ensure that patients are well catered for," she says. "Kerrymaid Vegan Slices offer the same great taste, texture, melt and cohesion associated with Kerrymaid Original Slices, perfect for operators seeking to offer vegan meals with no compromise on taste."

"Offering a level of customisation where possible can help avoid the danger of side-lining vegetarians who do eat certain types of dairy, for instance, the option of a vegan slice or a vegetarian-friendly dairy slice, such as Kerrymaid Original Slices, on top of their plant-based burger. While it's understandable that hospitals may want to simplify operations by making their meat-free options vegan, so they are suitable for all meat-avoiders, research indicates that 92% of all plant-based meals are eaten by non-vegans¹."

"Dual criteria ingredients and dishes help to avoid menu proliferation by providing options to suit a wide range of dietary requirements"



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A04916	Quorn Mince 50% EXTRA FREE	4 x 1.5kg

SCAN FOR
MORE INFO



Quorn



MAJOR MOROCCAN WINTER SLAW

MEAT MIMICKING

Kepak offers a range of meat-free products through its £107m² chilled ready meals brand Rustlers. The Rustlers 'Meatless Maverick' burger mimics its bestselling product, the Quarter Pounder, providing consumers with an easy swap while behaviourally fitting existing habits, therefore requiring less of a conscious shift while delivering on satisfying taste and convenience credentials. Rustlers Meatless Maverick Chick'un Fillet comprises a plant-based 'chicken' fillet with vegan mayonnaise in a soft roll - satisfying taste and convenience needs on-the-go.

The Rustlers Meatless Maverick range is offered at the same accessible price point as Kepak's meat products, and is available through micro-market and vending solutions.

OFFER CHOICE

"No longer is it acceptable to have a single vegetarian dish, almost as an afterthought, as patients, staff and visitors are looking for choice and variety," says Paul Saunders, Marketing Manager at Major International. He quotes a recent YouGov survey that states that more than a third of people in the UK are interested in following a vegan diet, while as many as 36% of UK adults say that a plant-based diet is 'an admirable thing to do'. In addition, growth in the plant-based sector is resulting in more and more revolutionary plant-based products becoming available. ING estimates the plant-based alternatives food market in the EU



PROPER CORNISH VEGAN PIZZA ROLL

and the UK will be worth €7.5 billion by 2025, compared to €4.4 billion in 2019.

"As a leader in the manufacture and supply of stocks, sauces and gravies, Major is committed to supporting our customers in creating a range of delicious vegan and vegetarian dishes."

Major works closely with the vegan and vegetarian society and more than half of Major's products are certified by one or both of these leading bodies. "This recognition gives chefs instant peace-of-mind that the ingredients and components they are using as part of their menu are suitable for customers



WELOVECAKE CHOCOLATE & SALTED CARAMEL TART

VEGAN BAKERY

The We Love Cake launch of Lemon Tart and Chocolate & Salted Caramel Tart quickly became best sellers in the range, and, as well as being suitable for those following a vegan/plant-based lifestyle are also suitable for those with gluten, wheat and milk allergies. There's no compromise on taste, which is clear when the Vegan Lemon Tart was awarded New Product of the Year in a conventional baking category at the Baking Industry Awards.

<https://we-love-cake.co.uk>

"Growth in the plant-based sector is resulting in more and more revolutionary plant-based products becoming available"

enjoying a vegan or vegetarian diet. What's more, we are committed to using the very best ingredients and manufacturing innovation to produce delicious flavour combinations and a consistent, quality texture, meaning there is no compromise in our range."

Choose from authentic flavours such as Mushroom Stock Powder, rich and intense Roast Onion Stock Paste, or the global cuisine flavours in Major's Mari Base range. The Major Basics Bouillon Powder is available in three distinctive flavours, Beef, Chicken and Vegetable, all allergen free and vegan certified.

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MAJOR MUSHROOM RISOTTO

Compass Group UK & Ireland (Medirest) offers patients over a third of vegetarian and vegan dishes, in line with the company's target of achieving Climate Net Zero by 2030, and switching 25% of meat-based proteins to plant-based by 2025. "Our meat-free options have been positively received by patients and we're witnessing increasing demands across our estate. They include popular dishes such as Zingy Penang Curry, Plant Powered, Wok Fried Greens and Smokey Hot Black Bean Sweet Potato Chilli Burrito & Fresh Lime," explains Culinary Director, Bruce Toon.

Its retail outlets, staff and visitor restaurants also offer good choice, with options such as flat bread with a mix of colourful vegetables and pickles, or 'Plant Powered' vegan keema with green peas. "Rather than creating a separate menu for vegetarian or vegan options, we let the quality and appeal of these dishes speak for themselves, gently encouraging people to try something new and we get great feedback on these dishes.

"Our recent trials with Dr Rupy in several of our hospital restaurants is a great example of continued innovation in this area - together we created fresh and vibrant menus to bring pop-ups to five of our partner hospitals and received excellent feedback on vegetarian options included."

With the upmost importance placed on nutritional value, Steamplicity meals are crafted by chefs, collaborating with specialist dietitians, within the Cuisine Centre. If nuts or pulses are used as the protein source, incorporating multiple types can further enhance the dish. For those following a vegetarian diet, eggs, milk, cheese, and yogurt can be used to provide protein. However, to

"If nuts or pulses are used as the protein source, incorporating multiple types can further enhance the dish"

add variety, plant-based protein options such as nuts, beans, lentils, and peas can also be included and are great for vegans. In addition, as the availability of alternative products increases, Compass is working towards enhancing its vegan and vegetarian offerings by including more of these products in its menus and meals.

"The days of uninspiring vegetarian dishes are gone and our teams are challenged to make these options tasty and innovative," Bruce concludes.

APPEALING TO THE SENSES

Consumers purchase with their senses, so any food offering has to be inviting. Pasties and savoury pastries are good options, as they can easily be baked-off in-store to provide that enticing 'baked at home' aroma.

Proper Cornish has seen significant growth in its vegan product sales. During 2022 vegetarian and vegan sales accounted for almost a quarter of the company's overall sales. Managing Director Paul Saunders identifies growing demand for clean label claims on plant-based foods as consumers seek a less complicated list of ingredients. Inspired by this trend, Proper Cornish developed the Vegan Pizza Roll. Reminiscent of a margherita pizza topping, the pizza roll provides a sweet aroma of tomato and herbs and a colourful, rich filling of soft tomatoes, mixed peppers and crunchy sweetcorn. The roll is encased in a unique recipe pastry, gently coated with a vegan glaze and finished with a mixed herb and rusk topping for extra crunch and flavour.

With an eye on sustainability, there is a shift towards regional agriculture, with shorter and more transparent supply chains. Consumers are beginning to count carbon as much as calories and are making conscious choices to protect the planet. Proper Cornish works with local farmers - its potatoes are brought in by tractor from a farm just seven miles down the road whilst swedes and onions come from a farm less than 30 miles away.

Consumers continue to use food to explore world and travel experiences with interesting and bold Mexican and Asian flavours. The new Vegetable Dhal Curry Pasty from Proper Cornish meets this trend, combining sweet potato, lentils, chickpeas, tomato and onion in a glossy sauce flavoured with coconut and spice with a mild heat that develops slowly.



At the same time, homely, unrefined foods that offer a sense of nostalgia are also in demand. The Proper Cornish Vegetable Pasty, containing a colourful selection of vegetables in a light vegetable stock, has always been a good seller in the vegetarian market. In 2021, this recipe was tweaked to make it suitable for the vegan market simply by changing to a vegan glaze, which resulted in a sales increase of 22%.

VEGANISE THE CLASSICS

A final recommendation from Claire Bannerman, Roving Chef at Vegetarian for Life: "Going beyond a pasta dish and veganising the classics will appeal to wider tastes. Nourishing dishes such as spicy bean casserole, mushroom risotto, vegetable curry, chilli non carne, hotpots or stews are ideal because they can be easily made by swapping out meat for extra vegetables, beans, pulses and meat alternatives such as soya pieces, tofu or Quorn.

"Lighter meal options might include vegan sausage rolls with beans, and a selection of sandwiches or baked potatoes, with vegan cheese being widely available."

¹ Lumina Intelligence

² Nielsen Total Micro Snacking, 52 we 18th Feb 2023

www.centralfoods.co.uk

www.compass-group.co.uk

www.kepakautomatedretail.co.uk

www.kerrymaid.com

www.majorint.com

www.propercornish.co.uk

www.quornnutrition.com

www.vegetarianforlife.org.uk



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TEMPERATURE CONTROL

THE TEMPERATURE OF FOOD SERVED TO PATIENTS IS FREQUENTLY HIGHLIGHTED AS ONE OF THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS IN PATIENT SURVEY FEEDBACK. HOSPITAL FOOD + SERVICE CONSIDERS WHAT CAN BE DONE TO OVERCOME THIS ISSUE USING MODERN FOOD DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS

Don't automatically blame the equipment, is the first point from Gareth Newton, Managing Director of BGL Rieber. When food is reported to be 'cold', it's often how staff use the distribution equipment that is at fault, not the transport equipment itself. Checks starting from the patient end of the food cycle may reveal where improvements are needed.

"A pool of expertise is freely available from the market to help caterers overcome issues like this," Gareth says. "The choice of solutions is plentiful, and no one size fits all. Consulting with colleagues can prove helpful, but hospitals are all different, and every site has unique problems. There are tried and trusted solutions, and people with experience in many different hospitals and their needs."



WAKE UP BREAKFAST TROLLEY FROM RATIONAL



THE RATIONAL EVOMULTI TROLLEY FROM BGL RIEBER

"A key benefit of digital systems is that users now log in to the trolley, protecting key parameters such as regen target temperature"

REGEN TROLLEY DEVELOPMENTS

The critical technical developments are in trolley temperature control and design. Temperature is now controlled digitally, providing much greater accuracy, reliability and flexibility than older systems. Digital control means you can give each trolley a (ward) name. Power-saving modes and status indicators also warn operators of issues such as 'door open', preventing wasted heat.

Rieber's Regiostation type 3 bulk regen trolley has a combination of cool or hot compartments, a maximum temperature of 170°C, and it is used for delivering hot breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Regiostation operates automatically to a set serving time. Warming, regenerating, or cooling cycles are stored and activated automatically, providing seven-day menus.

A key benefit of digital systems is that users now log in to the trolley, protecting key parameters such as regen target temperature. Regiostation has four login levels, Managers, Head Chef, Supervisor and Serving Operator. Each group restricts what the user can see or adjust.

Gareth says: "There can be no valid complaints about cold food with this level of control! Robust construction, good manoeuvrability and handles that are easy to grip and won't come off at the first knock

are also essential to long-lasting value for hospital caterers."

Regen design improvements have also led to compact and highly manoeuvrable smaller trolleys that deliver a significant volume of food. Rieber's Hybrid 200 single-compartment trolley for plated or bulk regeneration works off a single 13-amp socket so that it can be used in any ward or corridor. Capacity is 8 x GN 1/1 65 mm deep, but at only 662 mm wide and 981 mm tall, it fits through narrow doorways or goods lifts.

There's also a new hot cooking twist on bulk meal regen with EVOMULTI from Rational. It will regenerate GN containers and hold food hot or cold, but it can also work as a simple oven, finishing dishes or cooking food such as baked potatoes at up to 170°C. Available with up to three compartments, capacity is from 8GN 1/1 to 16GN 1/1.

The designers have also created a simplified and more agile multi-portion meal trolley designed for regen but with a maximum temperature of 120°C. Rational's 'EVOLITE' comes in small and large versions, with options for hot, cold, neutral and plate-warming compartments. High-quality insulation keeps the heat in, while the recirculating heating provides even temperatures without damaging food quality.



RIEBER'S SINGLE TUBE PLATE DISPENSER IS EASY TO MOVE AND IDEAL FOR WARD LEVEL CATERING

PLATED MEALS

Plated meals can often be transported over considerable distances, so the clever ultra-lightweight PROSERVE trolley for plated meal delivery scores highly for innovation and ergonomics. Because the trolley has no heating or cooling equipment, it is both light and not very tall, making it easy to manoeuvre through doorways and around corners.

PROSERVE works with the DSPRO docking station for all types of plated regeneration, giving managers maximum flexibility. The digital temperature-controlled heating and cooling system is so precise and powerful that it handles Cook&Serve, Cook&Chill and Cook&Freeze plated meals.

A new technical development offers hospital caterers a customised tray or multiportion service trolley in OPEN or BRIDGE versions which can be tailored to suit specific requirements.

Rational's PROACT has two chambers, and the capacity is 28 trays 2x14 GN 1/2, or 14 GN 1/1 for multiportion service. Adding a bridge to PROACT helps service of the multiportion meals.

SUPPORTING COMPLIANCE

Digital control and smartphones working with an app can eliminate paperwork but still provide comprehensive support to HACCP.

Rieber's CHECK system is powerful but simple, collecting temperatures using a

smartphone and Bluetooth-enabled core temperature sensor, which uploads info to the CHECK CLOUD app. The critical point is accuracy and speed; this scan-measure-send system has a fast response time of three seconds.

As a failsafe, in the event of deviations from the prescribed limit value, the right corrective measures/actions can be automatically sent to the user.

MULTI-PURPOSE WARD TROLLEY

Used for breakfast and afternoon tea, the equipment for this type of service should include multiple hot drink options - tea, coffee and hot water. Many patients do not drink regular tea or coffee; they may prefer decaffeinated, fruit or herbal tea, or chocolate.

"A large work surface provides space on top for preparing trays and holding multiple hot drinks containers, leaving room below for trays, or bread rolls, bacon rolls and wrapped products such as chocolate croissants and biscuits. It's handy to have optional extra capacity using baskets that clip to the side of a trolley," Gareth explains.

New from Rational is a high-capacity 'WAKEUP' 40-tray breakfast trolley, which features an extendable work surface using optional supports on the sides.

A protective cover can shield the thermal beverage containers on the worktop.

CUT THE DISTANCE

Another way of ensuring that hospital patients receive freshly cooked food at the correct temperature, is to cook the meals as close to them as possible, serving each meal with minimal transportation.

Across its healthcare estate, Compass Group UK & Ireland provides hospital food to 23 NHS Trusts using its patient dining solution, Steamplcity. "Our development chefs and registered dietitians at the Cuisine Centre create tasty recipes using fresh and raw ingredients, which are then steam cooked in under five minutes at ward level, which enables teams to deliver them to patients on the ward nearby quickly," John Harvey, National Account Manager for Steamplcity explains.

"We prioritise patient feedback and research in creating our menus, taking into account factors such as taste, choice and temperature. We agree that set mealtimes can be problematic in hospitals, and that cooking meals as close to the patients as possible mitigates the risk of cold food. The Steamplcity concept provides flexibility around mealtimes, offers choice, and is cooked at ward level, resulting in optimal temperature and minimal transportation."

To ensure a seamless food journey from the kitchen to the patient, Compass has also trained its teams to implement the all-important 'Last Nine Yards' initiative. This emphasises the importance of multi-disciplinary teams at ward level working together to ensure an excellent meal service experience for patients. "Our catering teams receive training based on this guidance, to prevent any meal from failing at the last hurdle," John adds. 🍴

www.bglrieber.co.uk

www.compass-group.co.uk

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"High-quality insulation keeps the heat in, while the recirculating heating provides even temperatures without damaging food quality"



RIEBER'S HYBRID OVEN THERMOPLATE

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Good food is essential for patients recovery, it's easier to implement than you think. The intelligence of RATIONAL cooking systems takes the hard work of your hands, thinks along with you and always produces your desired result. So that vitamins, taste, texture and appealing colour have a chance to reach the patient.

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IMPROVED COOKING QUALITY FOR CATERING TEAM AT RUH BATH

The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust (RUH) serves around 2,000 meals a day to patients, staff and visitors. The kitchens are very busy environments, with lots of bulk cooking based on locally sourced ingredients wherever possible.

"The challenges of hospital catering at the RUH Bath are to produce a large number of meals at the same time, serving them across a large site," says Philip Watson, head of facilities at the RUH.

"We need to do that with a good speed of service and in a very cost-effective manner. We also need to ensure the quality of cooking is high. Rational appliances have helped us achieve all this and more, increasing the volume of food we produce in the time available."

The RUH's main kitchen has five Rational vario technologically advanced bratt pats and five Rational combi steamers, while the smaller south kitchen, catering for visitors and staff, has one of each.

A key benefit of the Rational cooking systems has been the savings the RUH has made. "We were told to expect a 10% saving on meat going into dishes with the multifunctional cooking systems, but it's been 15% plus, from day one with an improved quality to the dish," says Lee.

"We're reducing the use of our fryers because the vario's work wonderfully as deep fat fryers and they make savings in oil," says Lee Johnston, food production manager at the RUH. "They do a lot of the work for you, automatically lowering and raising the baskets." They also have a Rational oil cart. "We filter the oil from the multifunctional cooking systems directly into the cart, enabling us to get a much longer life from the oil."

Lee comments on their Rational combi steamers, "They are very good pieces of equipment, we steam and use them as

dry ovens, or a combination of the two. A function I really love is overnight cooking: we load the combi with joints early in the evening and when we come in the next morning they are cooked to perfection."

Both cooking systems use the same control panel, which has helped staff to quickly get familiar with the Rational technology. "It's very simple to program the cooking processes for specific dishes, so that we can ensure consistency across our food products. The processes save time too. This means we can cook to a tighter timeline and, when it's time to serve, our customers enjoy a better, fresher meal."


The catering team at the RUH is proud of its record on sustainability. "We've won the Trust's team of the month and team of the year awards for our local food provision," says Philip. "We've also been nominated for a NHS sustainability award. The Rational equipment has enabled us to go further, with a reduction in water of around 50% on our kitchen usage and a saving in energy consumption."

The RUH makes use of Rational's

ConnectedCooking network solution, "ConnectedCooking enables us to create and share cooking processes," says Philip. "We have seasonal menus that change regularly. ConnectedCooking gives us the ability to change and update the automatic cooking processes on multiple appliances.

"As a hospital we use an Assured Safe catering system. With ConnectedCooking we can collect HACCP data from all our Rational appliances making everything much easier. This has reduced the amount of paperwork we need to produce while giving us far better data for our HACCP process."

"Rational has enabled us, as a team to provide an improved service to the patients, visitors, and the staff that we feed every day. We've managed to do this more efficiently, more effectively, and the support offered by Rational is second to none."

RATIONAL Cook Live events and webinars: Discover how RATIONAL cooking systems can benefit your hospital operation, register here: www.rational-online.com/en_gb/lp/gb-awareness-4 



CHALLENGE AND CHANGE

HOSPITAL FOOD + SERVICE REPORTS FROM THE RECENT NATIONAL LEADERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT FORUM OF THE HOSPITAL CATERERS ASSOCIATION.

There was a real sense of change, of progress being made, and a recognition of areas where more work was needed, running throughout this event. The HCA is undergoing significant change since it became a company limited by guarantee, with the transition of its constitution into a new set of bylaws, about which National Chair Brian Robb updated members. The established boundaries and expectations of hospital catering are also being pushed to new levels.

The new mandatory National Standards of Healthcare Food and Drink are shaping priorities and providing a direction of travel that hospital caterers are embarking on. It's a road that is pitted with challenges, and it may be that some Trusts are only just beginning their journey, but the mood of the Forum was not for taking a detour. It was for tackling those challenges and finding solutions.

This is not to say that the event took a 'rose-tinted spectacles' view of hospital catering because it didn't. Shortcomings were acknowledged too, at times to tear-jerking effect.

Simon Corben, Head of Profession and Director of NHS Estates and Facilities at

“Go back and check what you are doing in your Trust to make sure parents staying with their children are being looked after and fed”

NHS England reiterated the importance of the new standards, but also of recognising when something is not as good as it should be and calling that out. Trusts that may be struggling should not be left behind. He confirmed that the number of Trusts adopting the standards has risen to around 80%, with the goal firmly set at 100%.

Catering also needs to make its contribution to carbon reduction and Simon confirmed a new online bank of carbon-measured and nutritionally-analysed recipes is under development, as well as guidance for special diets and children's wards.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE OFFERING?

Charlotte Fairall founded the charity, Sophie's Legacy, following the death of her

daughter, Sophie, from cancer, aged just 10. Her presentation exposed one area where many hospitals could probably do better. The aims of this charity are to deliver on Sophie's 'bucket list' including things she wanted to change based on her experience of three different English hospitals. The issue that Charlotte highlighted was the difficulty of accessing food as a parent staying with a critically ill child in hospital. Not only could Sophie not understand why her mother was not offered food so they could eat together, but often she was so ill she would beg Charlotte not to leave her.

This message was reinforced by Kate Pye, Deputy Director of Children and Young People's Nursing at NHS England, who shared the stage with Charlotte and issued a challenge to everyone in the room. "Go back and check what you are doing in your Trust to



make sure parents staying with their children are being looked after and fed.”

Between January and March 2022, a working group reviewed food choices, flexibility and facilities for parents at ten Trusts and found parents relying on family members to deliver food, or being forced to spend a lot of money in expensive, privately-run retail outlets. It also found a disconnect between the services that hospital staff thought they were offering and what was actually available.

When parents staying in a hospital are effectively part of the nursing staff, helping to care for their child, Charlotte posed the pertinent question: “If we don’t look after the parents, how can they look after their children?”

Following on from their moving presentation at the 2022 HCA Forum, Nadim and Tanya Ednan-Laperouse returned to update delegates about significant progress made in the last 12 months by the Natasha Allergy Research Foundation (NARF). In addition to the launch of the three-year oral immunotherapy trial, this cause, to consign allergy to the history books, now has the support of the Prince’s Foundation following a two-day allergy symposium, hosted by King Charles and attended by 17 of the world’s leading allergy experts.

NATIONAL & GLOBAL ISSUES

The pre-recorded keynote from Sharon Hodgson MP (Labour) called for certainty and clarity for the public sector and pledged support to make catering an industry fit for the future, with an emphasis on what is made in Britain being used in Britain, and taking food security seriously.

Lisa Dittmar, NHSE’s Net Zero and Sustainable Supply Chain Lead provided an overview of activities to reduce emissions with initiatives around decarbonising the supply chain, reducing food waste, developing the national recipe and menu

bank, improving education and removing single-use plastics. She confirmed the impending launch of the Evergreen Sustainable Supplier Assessment - a tool for use by suppliers and Trusts which will help to drive conversations about investing in sustainability. Also in the pipeline is the roll-out of a food waste toolkit.

NFU President Minette Batters, championed the use of British food across the public sector, outlining that the NFU and its members are keen to work more effectively with the HCA. Working together, the NFU, the HCA and the wider public sector can become one voice and send a strong message to government, recognising the importance of British farming and the challenge of food security. She urged government to be ambitious in its approach to sourcing when developing public sector policy, with the wish that it will promote dynamic food procurement. Minette described the rhetoric of successive governments that Britain is a wealthy country and can continue to import its food as naïve.

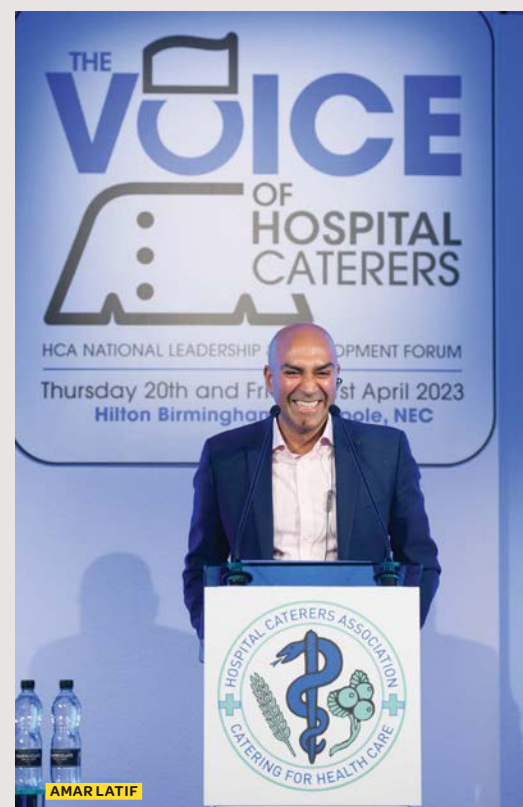
Dr Ed Maile of the Global Centre for Healthy Food Environments, and Dr Thomas Kelley, CEO of Sprink, both former junior doctors at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford focused on global food challenges and how they relate to what is happening in healthcare. They singled out three core trends: population health with a shift to preventative care; staff wellbeing with a strong link between mental health and a healthy diet; and net zero with the need to decarbonise food supply chains.

The inspirational Amar Latif challenged everyone to think differently, to open their eyes to opportunity rather than barriers. Amar, who was the first blind contestant on BBC’s *Celebrity MasterChef*, has not allowed his blindness to hold him back. It was a positive message for everyone.

The final presentation was from Dr Ally Jaffee, who at the age of 26 was among the youngest the room, but who held everyone

“... this cause, to consign allergy to the history books, now has the support of the Prince’s Foundation following a two-day allergy symposium, hosted by King Charles”

in thrall with her very candid discussion of personal and professional stress and its effect on her mental health. **T**



The Forum programme also included presentations from HCA members - caterers and dietitians - sharing their experiences, work programmes and views for the benefit of other members. For more on this aspect of the Forum, please flip this issue and turn to p8 of Hospital Caterer.

POWERING THROUGH



CRISIS

CHHC (THE CARE HOME & HOSPITAL CATERING FORUM) RETURNS ON JUNE 8. WITH A KEYNOTE FROM NHS ENGLAND'S NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHEF ANDY POLITI AND NET ZERO FOOD PROGRAMME DIETITIAN JOANNA INSTONE, THIS ONE-DAY EVENT IS ONE NOT TO MISS FOR ANY HOSPITAL CATERER.

The CHHC Forum is a unique event that brings together caterers across the health and care sector to delve into the shared challenges and complexities of providing quality, nutritious food, within budgetary requirements, for some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Andy Politi has over 20 years of professional catering experience, including sports and performance nutrition and

preventive medicine. Joanna Instone is a dietitian with over 30 years' experience working in hospitals, care homes and in the community. Andy and Jo will underpin the themes for the day with a presentation that explores nutrition and hydration for the nutritionally-well and the nutritionally-vulnerable. Andy admits to being on a mission to improve the health and nutrition of the nation and this involves using diet and food

as part of the patient's treatment to aid recovery, and also as preventive medicine to assist people who may be living with particular health conditions. Expect to hear about the importance of fibre, food presentation, adapting an offering for different needs and how to make food more appealing - all of which will be explored in more detail during the course of the day.

At NHS England, Andy and Jo are working on initiatives including a national menu bank, analysed for nutritional and carbon content and snacks that can be served at any time of day to help patients with reduced appetites to boost their calorie intake.

The day will feature case studies from both sectors. Larry Rosenthal, Chef and Catering Manager at the Royal Free Hospital, one of



ANDY POLITI



LYNSEY PENNY



IAIN ROBERTSON



SIMON BILLING



LARRY ROSENTHAL



JOANNA INSTONE

“Expect to hear about the importance of fibre, food presentation, adapting an offering for different needs and how to make food more appealing”

NHS England’s exemplar sites for catering, will discuss the hospital’s approach to food and beverage provision and service. From the care home sector, Neil Russell, Chairman of PJ Care will discuss catering in the context of a specialist neurological care provider.

In a two-part session, the professional associations representing care caterers will outline their latest initiatives and activities. National Chair Sue Cawthray will address delegates on behalf of the National Association of Care Caterers (NACC), and Iain Robertson takes the stage for the Hospital Caterers Association (HCA). Iain is the new National Vice Chair for the HCA. Expect his presentation to hone in on the benefits of being a member of the HCA, particularly for younger people starting out in catering roles, as part of their professional development.

As the number of people following a vegan or vegetarian diet continues to grow, Amanda Woodvine and Alex Connell from Vegetarian for Life (VfL) will look at the complexities of offering fortified and texture-modified meals and snacks for vegans. Amanda is Chief Executive of VfL and has a particular interest in plant-based nutrition. Alex is a VfL Roving Chef who has been a vegetarian himself for the past 30 years, 10 of those as a vegan. “Working in the care sector has its own set of challenges and rewards,” he says. “I hope to pass on my passion for excellent vegetarian and vegan catering to chefs, managers and above all, those we care for.”

Tying in with the vegan and vegetarian agenda, and delving more deeply into a theme already highlighted by Andy and Jo, Simon Billing, Executive Director of Eating Better, will focus on the opportunity of pulses in the diet. Earlier this year, Eating Better launched a campaign, entitled ‘Anything is Pulse-able’, showing how lentils, peas and beans are the unsung heroes of kitchens around the world.

Food waste remains high on the agenda for any caterer, and never more so than now as the government has announced plans for legislation that will require food waste to be collected as a separate waste stream. In addition, monitoring and actively reducing food waste, across production waste, plate waste and unserved food is one of the eight mandatory standards for healthcare food and drink introduced last year by NHS England, to be measured through the ERIC return. Lynsey Penny, Sector Specialist within WRAP’s UK Hospitality and Food Service team, will provide some insight, tips and advice.

Encouraging appetite through presentation is a theme that will be returned to by Leni Wood, Head of Nutrition and Wellness at Nellsar, a family-run group of 13 care homes. Raising nutritional standards across the group is part of Leni’s remit, providing personal assessments and meal plans for residents and leading a team of Nutrition Champions.

Militsa Pribetich-Gill, Head of Product Innovation at Sodexo Health & Care, will take a more detailed look at enhancing the patient and staff experience by looking beyond the meal itself. Militsa worked in an acute Trust for five years to improve the patient and staff experience, and was part of the team that set up the Nightingale in Bristol at the beginning of the pandemic.

Theo Bostock, Business Development Manager at Rational UK, completes the Forum’s speaker programme with a presentation that centres on the professional kitchen of the future.

The CHHC Forum takes place at Haberdashers Hall in London on June 8. Registration and exhibition viewing is from 9.30 with the Forum programme opening at 10am. Register and book your place at: www.careandhospitalcateringforum.co.uk. Tickets are just £50 each, or use code 2FOR1 at checkout to get two tickets for the price of one. 🍷

“Vegetarian for Life (VfL) will look at the complexities of offering fortified and texture-modified meals and snacks for vegans”

CLEANING, KITCHEN

HYGIENE & MAINTENANCE

KEEPING IT CLEAN

A COMBINATION OF TRAINING, PLANNED MAINTENANCE, GOOD CLEANING ROUTINES AND UTILISING TECHNOLOGY AS WELL AS THE SUPPORT THAT IS AVAILABLE FROM SUPPLIERS IS KEY TO A CLEAN AND EFFICIENT KITCHEN.

Following a stringent hygiene routine will ensure a higher level of food safety and provide the best and safest experience for all employees, patients and visitors. But it's more than that. Riccardo May, HoReCa Marketing Manager for Tork, an Essity brand, tells Hospital F+S that implementing and following a regular equipment cleaning routine helps to keep kitchen workflow running smoothly, reduces the risk of infection, as well as cross-contamination, and creates a more pleasant, compliant working environment.

To ensure that catering equipment undergoes consistent and thorough cleaning, Tork suggests using its evidence-based insights, recommendations and innovations designed specifically for the healthcare sector. It further recommends implementing rotas and posters to remind employees of their duty of care. Regular cleaning and decontamination procedures can also be completed via Tork's own Safe at Work: Healthcare Toolkit. Furthermore, Tork's Foodservice Toolkit indicates best practice routine cleaning and sanitising recommendations for high-traffic areas and anything which has contact with food.

OPTIMISING CLEANING ROUTINES

The CHECK CLOUD hygiene and HACCP system from BGL Rieber is an app that works on a smartphone or tablet, designed to help hospital managers manage cleaning and maintenance. It is a scalable system suitable for managers and all levels of staff to use for food safety, cleaning and hygiene tasks, including traceability.

Cleaning status can be CHECKED using photos to provide proof of cleaning or to create alerts, such as 'missing curtain from dishwasher'. CHECK stores online manuals, videos and instructions for cleaning, so staff can access them at any time and make sure they are using the right chemicals in the right way.

CHECKLISTS can be created so staff can tick off all the elements for a kitchen deep clean, or how to wash and sanitise a ward food delivery trolley. CHECK collects HACCP data and stores it in a secure database in the cloud. Core temperatures can be CHECKED, probed, and stored using QR codes to identify the food container or service point.

"What is most impressive about Rieber CHECK is that it works for everyone, at all levels, to get rid of paperwork and manage the workload," says BGL Rieber Sales Manager for Connected Products, Neil Parmar.

With Rational's ConnectedCooking digital kitchen management solution, cleaning schedules are created via the MyDisplay configurator. This ensures that all iCombi cooking systems are clean, hygienic and ready for use. The dashboard gives caterers an accurate overview of whether cooking systems are clean and maintained. Users can also create and save custom cleaning time schedules using the easy drag & drop function on the display.

"It is a scalable system suitable for managers and all levels of staff to use for food safety, cleaning and hygiene tasks, including traceability"



BGL RIEBER'S CHECK SYSTEM IN ACTION

FOOD HYGIENE

Food hygiene and personal hygiene go hand-in-hand. Contaminated hands will spread bacteria around a kitchen very quickly. To prevent cross-contamination, frequent and effective cleaning removes bacteria on hands, equipment and surfaces, helping to stop them spreading onto food.

What's more, Mark Hogan, Commercial Director of Foodservice Equipment Marketing (FEM) asserts that food safety can help minimise wastage as it acts as a benchmark for quality control. "Much less food will be wasted once your staff are fully trained in food safety and hygiene best practices," he explains. "The most critical aspects of food hygiene include regular cleaning procedures, cross-contamination prevention, personal hygiene, cooking temperature, safe storage of food and allergen awareness control."

FEM offers a range of products to help with allergen control and the prevention of cross-contamination. For example, the Saf-T-Zone System, from San Jamar, comprises a purple cutting board and purple-handled tools, including 12-inch stainless-steel tongs; 10-inch stainless-steel, commercial-grade chef's knife and a high-temperature, angled nylon turner. All tools and the board securely snap into a durable, matching purple case that keeps everything separate from other equipment and allergens, helping to prevent cross-contamination.

FEM recommends that all members of staff complete a Food Safety and Hygiene certification.

HAND HYGIENE

"Frequent hand washing to a high standard in any food setting is the foundation to protecting against cross-contamination and keeping everyone involved safe," says Riccardo May. To support catering staff and improve sustainability, Tork has developed a range of products that reduce environmental impacts with no compromise on quality.

This range includes two new soaps, dermatologically proven and certified with the EU Ecolabel. Supplied in factory-sealed one-litre bottles with single-use pumps, risk of cross-contamination is reduced. Tork Odour-Control Hand Washing Liquid Soap is specially designed for professional chefs, whose hands are subject to heavy wear and tear, especially in high-risk hospital settings. Tork Clarity Hand Washing Foam Soap has been developed with sustainability in mind. 99% of the ingredients are from natural origins¹ and seven of the nine ingredients are from vegetable origins. The full formula is readily biodegradable².

"In addition to the products used, ease of movement and staff productivity can have a detrimental impact on the standard of patient care in hospital environments. Therefore, hand cleaning systems should be strategically placed and refilled consistently to ensure staff are serving food in a hygiene manner," Riccardo continues. "Tork has created an evidence-based guide which demonstrates optimum placement for

dispensers; recommending that hand sanitiser dispensers and signage are present at all entrances and accompanied with information on the importance of hand hygiene."

Hand hygiene is also vital in the dishwash operation to prevent cross-contamination. "Where gloves are worn, studies show there is a risk of complacency and potentially higher levels of cross-contamination from using gloves than bare hands only. Good practice, enforcing separation of clean from dirty areas and frequent hand washing - especially before using and after removing gloves - are essential to maintaining good hygiene in the dishwash area," Paul Anderson, Managing Director of Meiko UK explains.

EQUIPMENT LONGEVITY

Correct cleaning of equipment is not only essential to maintain food standards, it will also help to extend the lifespan of expensive kit, comply with manufacturer warranties and ultimately save energy and water. Staff training and education is vital. "Your employees are essentially your front line of defence in ensuring consistent hygiene levels across a hospital," says Julian Fisher, Head of Marketing at First Choice Group.

First Choice supports caterers to ensure their cleaning programme is up to scratch, and helps to effectively train staff on best practice. Its website and mobile app feature a library of 'how-to' videos demonstrating the process of cleaning some of the most popular combi-ovens and warewashers. "The easy-to-follow videos, produced by our own training team, show a step-by-step process and offer expert advice on cleaning and maintaining your kitchen equipment, providing the perfect tool to train staff."

Rational's iCombi Pro has the option of an ultra-fast interim clean in approximately 12 minutes which is ideal for busy hospital kitchens, reducing non-production times and improving efficiency. Caterers have a choice of nine cleaning programmes: strong, medium and light cleans, in both normal and eco modes as well as a rinse without tabs function. The iCombi Pro will suggest the right programme for every level of soiling. All HACCP data can be downloaded with just the push of a button, the care status and cleaning status can be clearly displayed, and cleaning plans created.

Introducing a Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) plan for equipment is the advice of Litmus FM. "Think of maintaining your kitchen equipment like you would a car - you don't wait to book your MOT and servicing



MEIKO ENGINEER EXPLAINS
CONTROL PANEL FIGURES

once things go wrong; they are booked proactively as part of the general upkeep of the vehicle," says Head of Asset Management FM, Terry Wyldes.

Without a PPM, it is more likely that equipment running at a sub-optimal level won't be spotted, leading to unexpected problems, even equipment failure, which disrupts the catering operation.

A PPM programme creates a record of what equipment and assets are installed, the manufacturer's details and serial numbers, any service details and an indication of the asset's residual life. Once that's done, a Forward Maintenance Register (FMR) can be created.

The detail from the FMR enables any problems to be identified and addressed before the equipment breaks down, resulting in potentially costly call-out fees and unexpected repair costs. It also enables Trusts to budget-plan effectively over the coming years, and detail exactly when maintenance needs to be allowed for and when equipment needs to be replaced.

Follow the manufacturer's guidelines on equipment maintenance, but also adapt servicing programmes to reflect the individual operation and usage. Terry elaborates: "If cooking equipment is used a lot more than the average then it should be maintained more than the average guidelines suggest. Equally, if it's used a lot less then it won't require as much maintenance meaning Trusts aren't wasting valuable time and resource unnecessarily."

Tec Line has been supporting catering businesses with equipment service and preventative maintenance for more than 35 years and has a high first-time fix rate of 96.5%. "It pays to have a regular preventative



PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE WITH TEC LINE



BLUE COLOUR CODING INSIDE A MEIKO FLIGHT MACHINE

maintenance schedule in place that is delivered by a reputable, experienced and reactive provider,” stresses Technical Director Jason Krebbs. “From the basics of properly cleaning filters and sensors to prevent compressors and fans from having to work harder than needed, to checking and replacing door seals to reduce energy wastage, correct servicing schedules help a business save money.

“What’s more, a regular preventative maintenance schedule can identify more serious faults and issues before they occur. Helping to prevent untimely breakdowns, an effective equipment service can reduce food waste caused by faulty appliances and even reduce or eliminate the cost, stress and hassle of having to replace broken down catering equipment.”

Tec Line offers emergency repair, preventative maintenance contracts, installation and commissioning, annual testing and full certification.

Paul Anderson also recommends PPM as the best way to ensure its warewashing equipment operates at the correct temperatures, and that self-cleaning cycles work efficiently. “Caterers must have confidence that all their dishwashing and food waste handling equipment - including ward dishwashers operating at a distance from the central kitchen - perform consistently to the highest hygiene standards.”

The latest Meiko machines record the number of washes, door openings, deep cleans and temperature parameters so managers can keep accurate HACCP records. Meiko’s dishwashers also feature blue colour-

coded components for easy identification that those parts can be touched, operated or cleaned, helping to ensure every part of the dishwasher gets a thorough clean.

CLEANING CHEMICALS & MATERIALS

Maintenance plans can also come with sustainable chemicals. Meiko developed its own range of sustainable and ECO chemicals to give its sustainable-minded customers more choice.

The Meiko ECO detergents and rinse aids have ‘Nordic Swan Ecolabel’ approval, which is little known in the UK, but used throughout the Nordic countries to make it easy for consumers and professional buyers to choose the environmentally-best goods and services. Meiko’s chemicals are also highly concentrated, reducing package size, the number of deliveries, and cutting road miles.

When choosing cleaning chemicals, Julian Fisher advises using manufacturer-approved products as these will also help to maintain warranties and protect crucial components inside equipment. First Choice Group stocks thousands of items, and offers next day delivery as standard (on orders placed before 7pm weekdays). Its extensive range includes OEM branded cleaners such as rinse aid and detergents for leading warewashing manufacturers and approved combi oven and microwave cleaners for top brands, specific proprietary hygiene products and compliant PPE.

The Rational Active Green cleaning chemical for the iCombi Pro combi steamer is a powerful advance in environmentally-

friendly professional cleaning chemicals. When combined with the iCombi Pro’s iCareSystem, it helps to deliver reductions of up to 50% on chemical usage, without sacrificing any cleaning power.

Active Green is a concentrated tablet that is free of phosphorous and phosphate but is just as effective as conventional chemicals, guaranteeing superb results, without compromise and without harming the environment.

The iCareSystem intelligent cleaning function within the Rational iCombi Pro recognises the level of soiling and makes cleaning recommendations on that basis, including the quantity of cleaner and descaler required for an optimal result. Operators can benefit from up to 50% less consumption of cleaner and up to 30% less water. Automatic descaling also eliminates the costs of water softening.

Recently Winterhalter relaunched its warewasher chemicals to include several ‘green’ e-chemical options, including F420e, an all-purpose detergent that has been awarded the EU Ecolabel. This is given to products and services that meet high environmental standards throughout their lifecycle.

Winterhalter’s e-chemicals have all been developed for warewashing to meet the specific needs of the hospitality sector. They have been formulated to work in conjunction with Winterhalter machines to deliver guaranteed results, but they are also suitable for use with other warewasher brands.

“All the e-chemicals are very close to being PH Neutral, so they are safer to use, kinder



to the waste water treatment system and better for the environment than conventional chemicals,” explains Paul Crowley, Marketing Development Manager of Winterhalter UK. “They include F720 BLUe, a detergent that’s especially useful for delicate items; and A100e and A140e, both of which are enzymatic pre-cleaners designed to remove stubborn dirt.”

Winterhalter offers trials of its e-chemicals, enabling customers to test the results for themselves before committing to the switch from their existing, conventional warewasher chemicals.

TRAINING

Improved access to training helps manage daily/weekly cleaning routines for hospital kitchens. “Meiko has championed the development of online training and education for the catering industry because it is so crucial for our future,” says Paul Anderson.

The expansion of digital online training means new kitchen staff and dishwash operators can be trained using online video tools when they start, learning at their own speed and looking up information when needed.

Meiko’s Experience Zone provides learning tools, lectures, presentations, videos and conferences covering many topics, whilst the Meiko Academy offers continuous professional development at the touch of a button.

Rational continues to focus on educating customers about best hygiene practices for its cooking systems. This includes providing more help in understanding cleaning chemicals and how to use them, as well as providing service and assisting with setting up and maintaining cleaning regimes, via the Rational ConnectedCooking software platform.

¹ Essity Hygiene & Health Study 2020

² Clarity formulation following the ISO16128.

- www.bglrieber.co.uk
- www.fem.co.uk
- www.firstchoice-cs.co.uk
- <https://litmuspartnership.co.uk/services/facilities-management/>
- www.meiko-uk.co.uk
- www.rational-online.com
- www.tecline.co.uk
- www.tork.co.uk
- www.winterhalter.com/uk-en/

“Hand cleaning systems should be strategically placed and refilled consistently to ensure staff are serving food in a hygiene manner”



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Elevate your sustainable hygiene management with our high quality, effective hand hygiene solutions. Depend on our broad, proven assortment of effective soaps, sanitisers and dispensers to meet the new hygiene expectations. Our specially formulated products and award-winning dispensers pair with industry-leading Tork paper products to promote hand hygiene.

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Think ahead.



NEW PRODUCTS

WE PROUDLY SERVE STARBUCKS® COFFEE PROGRAMME DEBUTS NEW SUMMER BEVERAGE

The We Proudly Serve Starbucks® Coffee Programme is shaking things up this summer with the launch of a new beverage for UK customers.

The popular Brown Sugar Iced Shaken Espresso will be available in hospitals for the first time from May this year. Made with Starbucks® signature espresso roast, shaken with brown sugar syrup and ice, and finished with a milk of choice, this beverage offers consumers a refreshing treat this summer.

Catering to dietary needs, the

Brown Sugar Iced Shaken Espresso is a popular choice for consumers looking for an iced beverage which can be made using dairy alternative milk, with many favouring oat as their milk of choice.

Claudine Bergeron-Girard, National Account Manager at Nestlé Coffee Partners, comments: "The We Proudly Serve Starbucks® Coffee Programme continues to create comforting moments to meet all dietary needs and preferences with the same high-quality, ethically-sourced arabica coffee served in Starbucks® cafés around the world.

"Our popular seasonal beverages delight and intrigue customers throughout the year, so we're excited to be bringing a firm favourite from Starbucks® to our healthcare customers in May. The popular Brown Sugar Iced Shaken Espresso provides hospital staff, visitors and patients with a velvety smooth iced beverage to enjoy in the warmer months."

To find out more about serving Starbucks® beverages in your hospital, visit the website.

www.weproudlyservestarbucks.com/gb/



GREEN PRODUCT AWARD RECOGNISES THE EAT TAINABLE REUSABLE FOOD CONTAINER SYSTEM

Rieber GmbH & Co. KG has won the prestigious Green Product Award 2023 in the packaging category for its eat TAINABLE digital and deposit-free reusable food container system.

This award honours, presents and promotes the best concepts and implementations of sustainable design products worldwide. The judges described eat TAINABLE as a: "Great reusable portfolio for gastronomy, reflecting the forward-looking legislation for plastic-free food packaging." They also recognised the addition of a QR Code as: "a strong investment in reusable infrastructure."

Rieber eat TAINABLE is a digitally organised reusable system using food-safe stainless steel Gastronorm containers for all types of catering, including takeaway and delivery. Live digital GN container tracking reveals that as this issue went to press, 111,023kg of single-use packaging has been saved as a result of caterers using eat TAINABLE.

www.bglrieber.co.uk



NHS FOODSERVICE IS ON THE CUSP OF CHANGE - ARE YOU?

Traditionally foodservice was seen as a stand-alone business. But modern healthcare knows it is related to many other departments of the hospital. It's tightly connected to the 'power of three' and also to topics like waste-reduction, CO2 footprint and electronic patient data. This is Delegate Group Healthcare's focus for Foodservice solutions.

The successes its customers have reported are impressive:

- Drastically better Patient Outcomes: A reduction of clinical incidents by 30%: achieved through compliant patient menu offerings fully considering patients' assigned dietary requirements, allergies, likes & dislikes.
- 87.5% Waste reduction: Saving money on purchasing and waste removal as well as reducing CO2 footprint.
- No clinical incidents and bullet-proof patient-safety: Feeding the patient - and not the bed. Real-time GDPR compliant integration to any EMR ensures the ordered meal follows the patient and is changed in real-time if the patient's requirements change.

www.delegate-group.com

delegate

HOBART'S 'WAREWASHER OF THE FUTURE' ANSWERS THE KITCHEN CHALLENGES OF TODAY

Hobart is reintroducing its global-first Two Level Washer, as an innovative and unique solution that will help commercial kitchens to find operational efficiencies and manage gaps in resource.

Previewed across Europe in late 2019, but with its UK launch stalled by the pandemic, the Two Level Washer offers double the capacity and productivity of a conventional hood-type washer but with the same footprint as a single hood type.

The Two Level Washer boasts an additional stacked wash chamber. During lower periods of demand the bottom chamber can be disabled to minimise energy consumption and then re-enabled when there is a requirement for higher volumes. The lower chamber can be used as a dedicated utensil washer or as a standard dishwasher, enabling the simultaneous washing of different types of ware, saving time and keeping up with the kitchen flow.

Hobart's GENIUS X2 filtration system and Interlocked Strainer prevent food soiling from entering the main wash chamber which reduces detergent consumption, and the higher capacity means fewer wash cycles which reduces maintenance costs.

www.hobartuk.com



CONSISTENTLY HIGH-QUALITY BAKED GOODS MADE SIMPLE

The BAKERLUX Shop.Pro from Unox UK, is a compact convection oven designed to address the challenges faced by smaller grab-and-go sites looking to consistently cook high-quality products with limited space.

This range of state-of-the-art ovens has been designed specifically for baking frozen bakery products in commercial environments. Injecting controlled humidity into the ovens helps to guarantee a perfect bake, and keeps the moisture in the product, which would not be possible in a traditional convection oven.

The BAKERLUX Shop.Pro is also ideal for front-of-house use, offering a range of advanced features to ensure efficient and reliable cooking. Its compact design makes it perfect for small to medium-sized kitchens, and its attractive stainless-steel casing means it adds to the aesthetic behind the counter of a coffee shop without taking up too much worktop space.

www.unox.com



THE FOOD STORAGE REVOLUTION

FEM (Foodservice Equipment Marketing) has introduced Cambro's new FreshPro CamSquares storage containers, designed to transform kitchen storage, improve handling and prolong the stored product's shelf-life.

Made from Cambro Camwear, a durable polycarbonate material, the FreshPro CamSquares are available in seven sizes from 1.9 to 20.8 litres. All have moulded-in recessed handles so the containers take up less space than traditional storage options. They are stackable to save space when not in use.

Designed for ease of use, the moulded-in handles offer ergonomic lifting and have a drain hole for quick and sanitary drying. The FreshPro's curved corners and textured grip enable safer, four-corner pouring and easier handling.

Tight-fitting, easy-seal covers are available for all sizes to protect contents from cross-contamination and extend the shelf-life of ingredients. They are available in green, red and blue to allow for colour coding.

Also in the range are the reusable and sustainable 0.47 and 0.9 litre Polypropylene FreshPro CamSquares. These are reusable replacements for single-use containers and are ideal for fresh herbs, spices, condiments and butter.



www.fem.co.uk

FOOD PREP GETS BETTER WITH THE UPDATED ONYX FROM WILLIAMS

Williams Refrigeration has updated its popular range of Onyx prep stations. The new models have all been converted to eco-friendly natural hydrocarbon refrigerant and have been redesigned to improve efficiency and airflow as well as serviceability.

Onyx prep stations are designed to offer a flexible area for the preparation of food, combining refrigerated storage positioned beneath a worktop with refrigerated food wells providing instant access to regularly used fresh ingredients. They are ergonomically designed to be at the ideal working height, with the ingredient pans positioned in comfortable reach.

The large work area makes them suitable for preparing a range of foods including pizza, sandwiches, tapas, salad and desserts.

Capable of operating in ambient conditions up to 43°C and constructed from sturdy, food-safe stainless steel, the Onyx comes with a lift-off cover to allow ingredients to be stored overnight, and removable, easy to clean crumb catchers. A choice of customisation options is available, including drawers, a hinged lid, granite worktop, and a polypropylene chopping board.

www.williams-refrigeration.co.uk



THE JOKER 6-11: A VERY SERIOUS COMBI STEAMER

Taylor UK has launched the Joker 6-11 combi steamer into the UK market. Manufactured in Germany by Eloma, this combi's smart design makes it incredibly flexible. It's a compact combi steamer that can fit just about anywhere, yet can accommodate up to six full GN1/1 trays. In addition, it's a fully featured machine offering a wide range of automated programmes, so that even unskilled staff can cook the finest foods. Plus it offers special programmes including low-temperature, Delta-T, regeneration, hot holding, thawing and proofing.

The Joker can be customised so that it fits precisely into any work space and suits any work needs. For example, the control panel can be specified to the left of the oven chamber, to the right or even above it. The door hinges can also be mounted left or right.

In terms of operation, the Joker can be specified exactly to the customer's needs; no paying for functions that won't be used. There's a hybrid cleaning system offering a choice of three different set ups: solid tablets or liquid chemicals, both of which are automatic, or manual guided.

The Joker is a direct steam injection combi, with no boiler. This saves energy, as there's no need to keep water in a boiler at high temperature. It also means there's no need for extensive (and expensive) descaling.



www.taylor-company.co.uk

SELF-SERVE-ICE: LATEST SCOTSMAN DISPENSER OFFERS ICE ON (HANDS-FREE) TAP

The latest Scotsman hands-free ice dispenser, the DXN 107, is a compact counter-top machine, suitable for self-service, with the capacity to offer ice on-tap even in high volume sites.

The DXN 107 is one of Scotsman's EcoX models, so it's a green machine, uses only natural refrigerants and complies fully with F-Gas Regulations. The type of ice it makes is cubelet, which is both sustainable and reduces running costs, since the production process wastes very little water.

The ice dispenser's footprint is just 427mm wide by 552mm deep, and it is 622mm high, taking up minimal space.

It has a fully enclosed ice production system and this, combined with the magic eye dispense, guarantees that ice is hygienic and contamination-free. To operate the machine, the user simply places their cup under the chute and the ice is automatically dispensed.

The simple, square stainless steel body has an oversized black screen featuring blue icons, giving the DXN 107 an attractive, minimalist design that's ideal for front of house.

www.scotsman-ice.co.uk



MORE FEATHERLESS FEASTING WITH QUORN'S CHIQIN STRIPS

Meat free specialist, Quorn, has added Vegan Strips to its popular ChiQin range. Flying onto menus now, the succulent Vegan Strips have already plucked up a Craft Guild of Chefs approval certification, alongside Quorn's Buttermilk ChiQin Burger.

"Crispy chicken continues to be a staple on menus with diners looking for indulgent, comforting and creative dishes. Our ChiQin range provides chefs with endless opportunities to get creative with their meat free menus, whether it's naked strips or sticky salads," says Phil Thornborrow, Foodservice Director at Quorn Foods UK.

The crispy, golden and tender Vegan Strips are made using Quorn mycoprotein, the super protein at the heart of all Quorn products. Ready to cook from frozen, they are perfect in wraps, salads or sandwiches or dressed up to be served as sides and sharers, delivering solutions across menus.

The vegan ChiQin range already includes Crispy Wings, Vegan Fillet and the crowd favourite Buttermilk Style Burger, giving chefs all they need to elevate meat free menus.

www.quornnutrition.com



MULTIFUNCTIONAL SUBMARINE DEBUTS

Hubbard Systems is now supplying the innovative Submarine range from Friulinox. This blast freezer is also capable of low temperature cooking functions, including sous vide, and can be used for refrigerated storage and hot holding too.

The Submarine allows operators to take advantage of a number of different techniques. It features a high-performance refrigeration system that can reduce the temperature of cooked foods from 90°C to 3°C in just 90 minutes, or freeze them to -18°C in four hours. This preserves the quality, texture, and taste of food products, ensuring that they remain fresh and safe to eat for longer periods.

In addition to blast chilling and freezing, the Submarine is also capable of cooking products at temperatures up to 85°C. The cooking processes it offers range from slow cooking meat to proving and retarding bakery products. It's also capable of a range of processes that require precise control over temperature, such as sous vide, dehydrating products and melting chocolate and confections.

www.scotsman-ice.co.uk



SEEING DOUBLE AS FRI-JADO EXTENDS HOT AND COLD MCC RANGE

Fri-Jado's Modular Convenience Counter (MCC) range has been extended to offer six unique two-level formats. Achieving a complete solution for operators, the units are available in hot and cold functionality, drop-in or standalone.

A small footprint and flexible design ensure the range is ideal for any store layout or concept, where a consistent height allows units to be easily positioned inline, either side-by-side or back-to-back. Transparent sides and top achieve up to 75% more product visibility and up to 30% more display surface.

The new MCC 2-level range is available in the following:

- Hot self-serve - for packaged foods
- Hot self-serve humidified with doors - for packaged and unpackaged hot food
- Hot self-serve humidified - for unpackaged hot food
- Cold self-serve - for packaged cold food
- Cold self-serve with doors - for packaged cold food
- Cold full serve - for unpackaged cold food.

www.frijado.com



PROPER CORNISH LAUNCHES TWO NEW BRANDED PASTIES

Proper Cornish, the Bodmin based award-winning Cornish pasty and savoury pastry manufacturer has added Vegetable Dhal Curry Pasty and Lamb and Mint Pasty to its branded pasty range.

Inspired by the trend for Mexican and Asian flavours, the new Vegetable Dhal Curry Pasty is suitable for vegetarians and vegans. It combines sweet potato, lentils, chickpeas, tomato and onion in a glossy sauce. The predominant flavour and aroma is of coconut, and the spices give a mild heat that develops slowly. Proper Cornish is confident this new pasty will soon become a firm favourite with consumers looking to reduce their meat intake.

The second new addition, inspired by consumer demand for homely, tried and tested recipes, is the ever-popular combination of lamb and mint. Containing succulent minced UK lamb, mixed with fresh Cornish potatoes, onion and swede, combined with a sweet, fresh-tasting mint sauce, this pasty is reminiscent of a roast lamb dinner.

Both pasties are encased in a unique, pre-glazed, hand-crimped pasty case.

www.propercornish.co.uk

**NHS****NHS SUPPLY CHAIN**

A GREAT HCA FORUM 2023

THE HCA FORUM 2023 WAS A HUGE SUCCESS FOR NHS SUPPLY CHAIN: FOOD, IN TERMS OF GAINING NEW CONNECTIONS, AND A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR ACCOUNT MANAGERS TO NETWORK WITH TRUSTS, AND BUYERS TO MEET AND CONNECT WITH NEW SUPPLIERS.



The Forum kicked off on April 19 with afternoon tea and an opportunity to meet the buyers, as a preview to the launch of the Forum on April 20. Jane Wakeling, Head of Operations and Carrie Howes, Head of Business Development & Customer Experience, both from NHS Supply Chain: Food enjoyed meeting with various NHS England Trusts ahead of the main event.

During the two days of the full Forum programme, the lunch period gave delegates and suppliers a chance to network and make new connections whilst sampling the products on offer. NHS Supply Chain: Food served an exciting menu from its Khana Khana Culinary Concept, including a bircher muesli energy bar and a plant-based curry. Chefs Nick Vadis and Michael Sharp, as well as other members of the NHS Supply Chain: Food team, trayed up samples and shared them with delegates, whilst talking about switch and save opportunities for products, exciting new frameworks such as the Fresh Food DPS, potential new prospects for suppliers and much, much more.

At the President's Dinner on the evening of April 20, Nick Vadis and Michael Sharp worked with NHS chefs to deliver a superb dinner service. Dame Prue Leith toasted the chefs in an exciting reveal, as guests learnt that their dinner had in fact been prepared by the talented NHS chef team.

Day two saw delegates breaking out part way through the morning to participate in workshops. Nick Vadis, Culinary Ambassador for NHS Supply Chain: Food spoke at a workshop called Eating for Good Health, led by Jo Instone, Net Zero Food Programme Dietitian at NHS England. He discussed the award-winning Chefs Academy training programme rolled out across NHS England, as well as providing other insights into the good work NHS Supply Chain: Food is doing to contribute towards the importance of both patient and staff nutrition, such as the Pop Up events held at hospital kitchens across the country. Nick explained how the Culinary Concepts recipe books were devised by NHS Supply Chain: Food to inspire and develop NHS chefs across England, and the invaluable support being given on a daily basis to hospital staff. Food Account Managers, the Culinary Team (Nick and colleague Michael), and the Dietetic Team (Lead Dietitian Idrees Anwar and Nutrition Compliance Manager Abigail Attenborough), are advising Trusts on changes they could implement to improve patient, visitor and staff welfare and morale, as well as driving savings into NHS England, and increased profit for the hospitals, which can then be put back into essential healthcare for patients.

“NHS Supply Chain: Food served an exciting menu from its Khana Khana Culinary Concept, including a bircher muesli energy bar and a plant-based curry”

Kirstin Morris, Head of Commercial at NHS Supply Chain: Food says: “It was another great event, which we were thrilled to be part of. It was a great opportunity to talk to Trusts and suppliers, and further our understanding of the key issues facing hospital caterers today. We will take this knowledge forward to inspire our future work with Trusts and suppliers.”



For more information on NHS Supply Chain: Food frameworks please visit:

<https://www.supplychain.nhs.uk/product-information/contract-launch-briefs/?category=food>

**NHS****NHS SUPPLY CHAIN**

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21 JUNE 2023

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We are delighted to confirm that **June 21st** will be the next National Healthcare Estates and Facilities Day.

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OUT OF SYNC

REALIGNMENT OF CONTRACTS AND CLIENT REQUIREMENTS THROUGH ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION MAY BE NECESSARY IN THE POST-COVID WORLD.

As a consultancy, since 2005 we have procured over £10bn worth of catering and facilities management services in the public and private sectors as contracts, concessions or through collaboration deals. We have appointed large caterers and niche operators. Certain solutions included retailers like M&S, WHSmith and Costa Coffee. Approaches have varied from the rigid public contracts legislation (formerly known as OJEU), to frameworks and by invitation. More recently we have embraced Vested Collaborative Outsourcing.

In my previous job as the BBC's head of catering, I truly learnt the importance of including and listening to customers. A client cannot always determine what the customer wants just because it's written in a spec. The trick was to engage with customers and give them what they really wanted.

Our two in-house NHS catering projects at St George's and St Peter's have been a triumph, as we delivered exactly what the customers wanted and the subsequent reaction has been spectacular among the Trusts' staff.

We are now at a crossroads. Covid, Brexit and the economy (in particular) have significantly disrupted the market, as has some distorted media reporting, which may have undermined public confidence. Where we once had predictable volumes and guaranteed footfall all week long, we now have a more condensed working week, particularly in business and industry. Staffing is an issue for many.

Simon Stenning, in his recent Future of Foodservice report, suggested that the total UK catering market was worth £98.6bn, an increase of 2.3% on 2022 and a phenomenal 28% increase on the previous year. Contract catering is specifically worth £5.6bn with the most stable sectors being healthcare as well as defence and education.



THE PROCUREMENT ROUTE

Procurement generally provides a tried and tested template to bid for catering opportunities. Each process varies to requirement but essentially comprises a descriptive document or ITT which includes evaluation criteria, contract, spec, datapack, KPIs and pricing template. The idea is to ensure fair competition between shortlisted suppliers and eliminate collusion, inducement, and favouritism.

Mostly this works, but we all know that these outcomes are not always achieved. In the public sector, disgruntled bidders can challenge outcomes and are sometimes successful in overturning a decision on a legal technicality. This is not always ideal for the client who gets a provider imposed on them which may not necessarily be the one that best meets their needs or has a good cultural fit.

Bidding can be very polarised as the buyer and supplier protect their own positions rather than considering the wider implications for customers who ultimately "vote with their feet" if the solution is wrong.

The supplier aims to protect margin, reduce risk and manipulate outcomes, particularly if they have underbid and hope to play the client afterwards with change control. Where there are fewer market players in a particular sector, the buyer is compromised with this muscular approach. One could argue that catering supply into the NHS is becoming oligopolistic (few players with too much influence), which is particularly evident in the pre-prepared patient meals segment which itself is struggling to stay viable with rising costs as it is shackled to long-term fixed priced contracts. Equally, the bidder wants to transfer as much risk to the supplier as possible which can lead to the imposition of unreasonable terms on the latter. With some clients, they add a deflator - that is, returning enforced savings over the contract. Another is where the buyer has not acquiesced to footfall reductions due to Covid.

This lose-lose approach results in buyers becoming dissatisfied with the service and the supplier unable to trade properly, which then leads to failed contracts, step-in, more mergers and acquisitions, and impacts on the core business. In some cases, clients have lost faith in contracting altogether and have brought services back in-house.

Metropolitan Trusts, once the preserve of contractors, are coming back in-house - in London we see a rising cohort of self-delivered services such as at Guy's & St Thomas', Barts and Imperial.

A DIFFERENT APPROACH

So, the world has changed but the processes are clearly out of sync. Time to think of a different approach, perhaps? We are keen on collaboration at a number of levels - it works for many situations.

However, from the outset you need to consider the appropriate approach for buyer and supplier such as basic provider, preferred provider, Vested or joint venture. Start here and procurement works.

In the next article we will explore the types of contracts you could consider and provide a compliant route map for change. We are discovering that the public contracts regulations are not totally inflexible and there are upcoming changes which could help you.

JULIAN FRIS

Director, Neller Davies

ALAN DOUGAN & JAMES DOUGAN



This was followed by a main course of herb-crusted salmon, served with crushed baby potatoes, baby leeks and asparagus, finished with a lemon and cream sauce. Their raspberry cranachan, with toasted oats and a fruit coulis served with homemade shortbread completed the meal.

HCA Chair, Brian Robb attended the event and said afterwards: "What a day. The Hospital Caterers Association NHS 4 Nations Challenge exceeded all expectations. Nick Vadis calmed the teams prior to their experience, and wow they did not disappoint. Public sector catering was put back on the map with exceedingly high standards. All our competitors have left this experience with new friendships and treasured memories."

Chef Director of the Salon Culinaire, Steve Munkley paid tribute to all the chefs, saying that they were a credit to their sector, and he was extremely impressed with the standards that they had achieved in such a short space of time.

A PRIZE WORTH WINNING

Unox was proud to be supporting the International Salon Culinaire as combi oven partner for 2023. As part of the partnership, Unox offered an exclusive once-in-a-lifetime prize to ALL Live Theatre Best in Class winners, which included Alan and James who have been invited to attend an all-expenses paid two-day VIP study tour to Venice and the Unox HQ in Padova (in September 2023), where they will be treated to a full cooking demonstration by the Unox corporate chef team. The trip includes a tour of the Unox factory and HQ, where they will see the latest innovations being produced in Unox's sustainable production facility. They will also enjoy a Venice tour including a visit to a live Unox operational kitchen.

As James and Alan were also named as the 'Best in Class Winners' they will receive a year's free Craft Guild of Chef's membership. The Craft Guild is one of the UK's leading professional

"The NHS Chef competition has demonstrated just how good our chefs are, but this gave us a broader platform that I hope will go from strength to strength"

bodies for chefs with over 1200 members and 101 business partners. As a member of the Craft Guild of Chefs, they will benefit from access to professional support, advice and knowledge, networking opportunities, fantastic industry events, exclusive discounts and offers from its supplier partners as well as the recognition associated with being part of this great institution.



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SCOTLAND EDGES THE NHS 4 NATIONS CHEF CHALLENGE

JAMES DOUGAN AND ALAN DOUGAN, FROM GREATER GLASGOW AND CLYDE WERE AWARDED BEST IN CLASS IN A FIERCELY CONTESTED EXHIBITION THAT SAW SCOTLAND, NORTHERN IRELAND AND ENGLAND COME TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE LIVE COOKING THEATRE AT THE INTERNATIONAL SALON CULINAIRE HELD DURING HRC AT LONDON'S EXCEL.

The International Salon Culinaire is not a competition, everyone or no-one can win a gold medal, but the judges had their work cut out to separate the teams who were representing their various HCA Branches.

To gain a gold medal the chefs had to achieve a score in excess of 90%, so we were delighted to see four of our teams presented with their coveted gold medals. These included James and Alan along with the NHS Chef 2022 champions, Shelley Pearson-Smith and Erica Bell from Stockport NHS Foundation Trust; James Richardson and Joseph Hennigan, Solent NHS Trust; and Angela Dickson and Darren Taggart from Northern Ireland's Northern H&SC Trust H&SC Trust. James and Joe's achievement deserves special mention as Joe only started as an apprentice last autumn.

Silver medals were awarded to Shane O'Neil and Philip Rooney from Northern Ireland's South Eastern H&SC Trust and Kerrey Healey and Natasha Day from Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust. Les Beare and Josh Banner from Wye Valley NHS Trust were awarded a bronze, meaning that every team medalled on the day - something that is a magnificent achievement in such an internationally respected event.

SHOWCASING NHS CATERING TO A WIDER AUDIENCE

HCA Lead for the event, Phil Shelley says: "I am so pleased that we were able to get teams from three of the four nations to showcase their skills. The NHS Chef competition has demonstrated just how good our chefs are, but this gave us a



broader platform that I hope will go from strength to strength."

Tim Radcliffe Net Zero Food Programme Manager, NHS England was responsible on the day for pulling everything together. "It's been a challenge, with the early start and being on a Monday," he tells Hospital Caterer, "but it has been so worthwhile. The passion shown by everyone is unbelievable and it is so good to see the level of support they are getting, not only from their NHS colleagues but other chefs who are here to compete in their own events."

Each team had to produce a three-course meal, with three distinct portions, within a budget of between £5 and £6.

Alan and James' 'Best in Class' dishes included a starter of beetroot, delivered three ways - roasted, pickled and puréed.

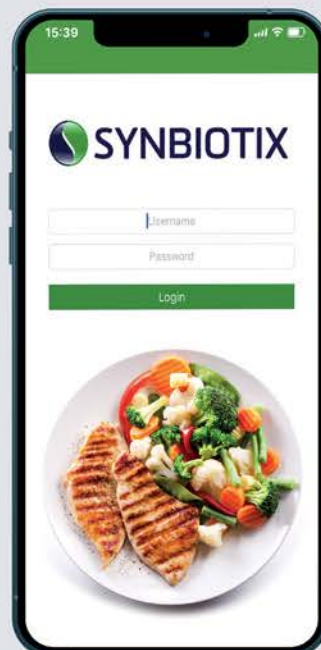
"Every team medalled on the day - something that is a magnificent achievement in such an internationally respected event"



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is a very engaging individual and has an easy style, a free speaker which draws in colleagues. A good listener, Kush can draw upon concepts and grow them into practical solutions.

Generous of nature and spirit, Kush has glowing inner radiance and is very caring. She is captivating and has a genuine passion and interest in what she does. So much so, people feed off her enthusiasm.



LEADERSHIP & EXCELLENCE

Clodagh Hastings, Assistant Support Service Manager, Gransha Hospital, Western Trust (Northern Ireland Branch)

Clodagh is selfless to a fault, and regularly goes above and beyond. She works hard, demonstrates great dedication and appears unaware of her own worth and because she is unaware of the level of respect that she receives from her teammates.

Clodagh may have one of the most stressful jobs on the site but she masks it so that she can keep her own team motivated. Clodagh lives by a problem-solving dictum, which when working with a team means everyone accomplishes much more than they could do on their own.



CHAIRMAN'S CHOICE

West of Scotland Branch

In 2022/23 the Branch recognised its role in supporting and linking members throughout the pandemic, hosting virtual meetings and combating rural settings. Having had to postpone its Branch Study Day and Burns supper events, in 2023 these came back even bigger and better. A number of members are involved in Association working groups.



WILMA WILKIE OUTSTANDING SERVICE

Carol Birch, Associate Director of Facilities, (Northern Branch)

Carol's career has spanned over four decades. She joined the NHS in 1983 as an Assistant Cook and has been a HCA member for over 25 years, holding Branch, National and Conference roles. She is a decisive, compassionate and inclusive leader, who consistently demonstrates initiative, and has a good sense of humour, being outgoing and fun to work with, approachable and confident.

Carol has extensive experience of managing NHS catering services alongside the whole range of estates and facilities services at both an operational and strategic level. She consistently demonstrates that she has a good grasp of the existing methods of delivery, but is not afraid of suggesting the unthinkable, with the aim of improving services.

A further quality Carol has in abundance is her tenacity to address difficult challenges, which many others would turn away from, and more importantly she is always willing to share the learning from those experiences be they good or bad.



TRADE STAND

Judging for the Trade Stand award took place during the opening morning of the exhibition and Ramco UK was announced as the winner.



SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION

Mark Hayman, National Vice President

Mark has been a HCA member for over 45 years, and has held many Branch and National positions, including National Chair and National Secretary.

Mark retired from the NHS in December 2016, after an illustrious 40-year career which began - in catering - in 1976. He reached the position of Estates Director in the Kent Healthcare system, and has also held roles in facilities, contracting and purchasing. He worked on business cases for 'collaborative procurement hubs' and became involved with healthcare commissioning procurement as Primary Care Trusts took up the mantle of 'World Class Commissioning' to drive improvements within the provider landscape.

The HCA is extremely fortunate to have benefited from Mark's knowledge and experience. He has provided leadership and support throughout the term of many National Chairs, specifically in recent years as the association went through the transition to company status.

WINNERS

DURING THE ANNUAL LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT FORUM, WE ANNOUNCED THE WINNERS OF OUR PRESTIGIOUS ANNUAL AWARDS. THESE AWARDS PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGE EXCEPTIONAL COMMITMENT AND OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS FROM HCA MEMBERS WHO HAVE BEEN NOMINATED FOR DEMONSTRATING EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION IN THE CHOSEN CATEGORY OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS. THE JUDGING PANEL CONSISTED OF HCA'S PRESIDENT THE RT HON LORD HUNT OF KINGS HEATH PC OBE, VICE PRESIDENTS MARK HAYMAN AND ALISON MCCREE, WITH NATIONAL CHAIR BRIAN ROBB. THE PANEL WERE MOST IMPRESSED WITH THE CALIBRE OF ENTRIES THIS YEAR.



CATERER OF THE YEAR SPONSORED BY HOBART UK

Andrea Raymond, Operations Manager - Catering Services Northamptonshire Healthcare Danetre Hospital (Oxford Branch)
Andrea is a hardworking and very diligent Catering Manager. She runs seven community hospitals and has achieved an impressive series of quality improvements for patients and staff across the patient food provision, with new meals and menus, standard recipes and photographic specification of how each meal should be served.

She is constantly reviewing services, a major example of which is the introduction of the MenuMark electronic stock system with patient meal ordering to be installed at all seven hospital sites. Other initiatives include a three-month promotion to remind staff to 'Take a break' by offering a free KitKat when a purchase was made in the café. 'Free Fruit Friday' is an offer across all café sites in collaboration with the Wellbeing Team.



CATERING TEAM OF THE YEAR

Stuart Wray, Head of Catering, Darlington Memorial Hospital (Northern Branch)
The Catering team at Darlington Memorial Hospital is high performing and committed to producing and serving safe, appetising, nourishing, flavour-packed and well balanced food and drink for patients, staff and visitors.

Every member of the team is committed to the service principles, which they have played a part in developing. These include exceeding the expectations of patients and customers; delivering high quality services within the agreed financial framework; involving patients and customers in shaping service delivery; striving to improve defined quality standards; improving efficiency across all activities; providing effective and professional leadership; and recognising and respecting the contribution of individuals to the delivery of services.

Named as one of the original 15

catering exemplar sites in England, the service has made a significant contribution to the new food standards and has shared templates and matrices with other NHS organisations to help them undertake a gap analysis against the standards.



EFFICIENCY & IMPROVEMENT SPONSORED BY HEFMA

Karen McLaughlin, General Manager for Catering and Domestic Services Trustwide, Northern Trust (Northern Ireland Branch)

Karen was instrumental in introducing the safety pause, which identifies shared responsibility between those preparing and serving the meals and those responsible for the patient's care. The safety pause brings swallowing and allergens to the forefront of everyone's mind, just before the service of all food or beverages.

RQIA (Northern Ireland's equivalent of CQC) recognised the value of this when it was doing a regional audit of management of those with swallowing difficulties, and saw how beneficial it was to patient safety. It has made it one of the recommendations issued as result of the audit, so ensuring the safety of all patients in Northern Ireland.



RISING STAR

Kush Naik, Senior Catering Dietitian, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (Trent Branch)

Kush displays all the values expected of a service leader in waiting. She has great enthusiasm for all things food, extending her remit involvement with all catering projects and services. Kush

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- Sleep deprivation affects food choices and tired staff are more likely to crave carb-dense food, sugar and salty snacks, so offer choice and balance.
- Flip the debate. The cost of staff leaving the NHS is massive. Invest in your staff, look after them and their mental and physical health so they stay healthy and continue working for the NHS and you're actually saving money.
- Sometimes it's not about money, it's just the right thing to do.

4 NATIONS UPDATE: Panellists, Deborah McNeill (Northern Ireland), Emma Brookes (England), David Wismann (Wales) and Loraine Hartley (Scotland) updated delegates on the key messages from each of the 4 Nations. Much of this discussion focused on the various standards and different approaches taken. For instance, in Wales, the food standards were introduced a few years ago and are due for review, and the NHS in Wales has just employed someone to take a lead on all issues of food safety - from staff training to kitchen audits. In Scotland, all Boards and hospitals will be required to write a food plan that links to the Good Food Nation Bill, the remit of which is to drive Scotland towards a self-sufficient future. In theory, this is a good move, but for procurement it is a challenge. Activities in



England are centred on the new standards and the national team is now looking at some addendums that would provide more bespoke guidance, for example, on religious diets, lifestyle diets and catering for children. Nutritional standards in Northern Ireland are retail standards which revolve around healthy eating.

NHS CHEFS STARRED IN THE KITCHEN

Events such as the recent HCA 4 Nations Challenge championed the achievements of NHS chefs, and delegates at the awards dinner were able to experience for themselves the cooking skills of some of these chefs, as six of them joined the kitchen brigade at the Hilton Metropole to prepare the three-course meal.

The event truly was a celebration of The Voice of Hospital Caterers.



The Forum programme also included keynotes and other presentations on some of the national - and international - issues affecting hospital catering and the wider food supply chain. For more on this aspect of the Forum, please flip this issue and turn to p28 of Hospital Food + Service.

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THE VOICE OF HOSPITAL CATERERS

HCA MEMBERS FROM ACROSS THE 4 NATIONS AND ALL BRANCHES SHARED THEIR WORK EXPERIENCES, INITIATIVES AND VIEWS WITH OTHERS DURING SESSIONS AT THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT FORUM, PROVING, WITHOUT A DOUBT, THAT THE HCA IS THE VOICE OF HOSPITAL CATERERS.

Forum Chair, Phil Shelley opened the event, describing the programme as one to inspire and challenge, and it was certainly that, celebrating the good and acknowledging where more needed to be done.

HCA President, Lord Hunt agreed that times are challenging, but he added the HCA and hospital caterers are in a good position to take advantage of the opportunities that are arising. In England, last year's Health & Social Care Bill is an opportunity for the government to mandate the new National Standards for Healthcare Food and Drink. Lord Hunt told delegates: "The big challenge for me - that I have put to ministers - is whether they are going to follow this up, do it, and ensure the NHS has the wherewithal to implement it. By that I don't just mean the actual day-to-day provision of food, but the capital needed to enhance catering facilities, training and development for our valued staff, and the development of good relationships with our stakeholders and the wider industry."

NEW STANDARDS

A session to drill into these new standards featured input from Iain Robertson, Catering Manager at Solent NHS Trust, Lauren Bowen, Head of Patient Foodservice at ISS UK, and Claire Gibson, Estates & Facilities Matron at Stepping Hill Hospital (Stockport NHS Foundation Trust), each of whom discussed aspects of the standards and what these mean in their own organisations. Among the key takeaways from this session were:

"I've been told to view 24/7 food and



drink as an opportunity, not a challenge. It's both, but the important part is doing what is appropriate for your demographic and that's very different from a large acute to a small community Trust. Embrace the ethos of this standard and do the best for your sites." *Iain Robertson.*

"Think about demographics, choice, hot and cold food and what's appropriate. The food standards are our legacy. Make your voice heard, so in the future people will look back and say 'they made a difference'." *Lauren Bowen.*

"We can drive for change. It's not about doing the bare minimum, and training attention has to be focused on the gaps, highlighted by Power of 3 audits. Whatever we do has got to be better than what we are currently doing. We must respond with grit, determination and heart to do our best." *Claire Gibson.*

WORKSHOP SESSIONS

In a first for the HCA Forum, delegates were divided into three groups, each based in a smaller meeting room, to focus on three topics of current importance, led by a host and a panel of speakers to help generate debate. The format enabled sharing of information between delegates and panellists to good effect.

EATING FOR GOOD HEALTH:

Panellists, Elise Kelly (ISS UK), Duncan O'Neill (Stockport NHS Foundation Trust), Sophie Murray (National Association for Care Catering), Nick Vadis (NHS Supply Chain: Food / Compass Group UK & Ireland) discussed nutrition. Key points:

- The new BDA Nutrition & Hydration Digest is due to launch on June 15 and forms part of the new standards. A key change is showing your menu has the capacity to meet the needs of nutritionally-well and nutritionally-vulnerable patients, and the Digest includes a menu assessment checklist to enable this process to be completed.
- Following the success of the Chefs Academy, launching this June will be a new Skills Academy targeted at the general assistants working in the kitchens and front of house, to teach them some skills so that organically, over a period of time, these staff members may be able to move into kitchen roles and help fill workforce shortages.
- Competing in the NHS Chef competition is a commitment, but the benefits of competing far outweigh the challenges.

OPEN ALL HOURS: Panellists, Neely Mozawala (No Hungry NHS Staff campaign), Raouf Mansour (Ashford & St Peter's Hospital), Bruce Toon (Medirest) and Elisabeth Brown (Coco Labelle), shared their views around meeting the standard for 24/7 food and drink for staff. Key points:

- Food should be nutritious and affordable, of a high standard, and reflect regional demographics for cultural inclusivity, providing food that staff will want to eat.
- Do your homework and understand your customers. The food offer needs to be



N&H WEEK 2023

HCA members across the 4 Nations celebrated Nutrition & Hydration week in March.



In Chesterfield, the Derbyshire Support and Facilities Services PSA catering team assembled 1,000 cream teas for patients and visitors.

Across Northern Ireland, Trusts shared information, sampled meals and delivered water. At Braid Valley Hospital, bottles of water were given to staff. Causeway Hospital also had bottled water available at a hydration station and delivered water to the busy Emergency Department. In addition to chilled and filtered water 24/7 on the wards, patients were also offered a variety of flavoured teas, to be enjoyed with a sumptuous afternoon tea treat. Ulster Hospital's information stand in the staff dining room was manned by catering managers, dietitians, and speech and language therapists, with samples of dysphagia meals available. Antrim Hospital's pop-up information stand was manned by staff in Nutrition & Hydration T-shirts. Free refillable water bottles and pens were handed out and dietitians met patients and staff on the wards to advise them of the importance of nutrition and hydration.

At St Georges in London, a patient food tasting in the Grosvenor entrance received a great response, with comments about how much patient food has improved over the years. The hospital also participated in the National Tea Party, delivered by Mitie's patient catering team. Free fruit was provided with the main meal during the week and the ground-breaking changes to staff catering continued with restaurant-style food at affordable prices, set up by Neller Davies and the St Georges team.



The third edition of the British Dietetic Association's Nutrition & Hydration Digest will launch at an event in London on June 15 at which an engaging programme of speakers will highlight the changes in the new Digest. Tickets for HCA members to attend the launch are just £50 and can be booked here: <https://bit.ly/3nXdn97>.



The HCA's next webinar will address the challenge of removing single-use plastics from hospital catering operations, examining alternative materials and assessing the viability of reusables. 'Single Use Plastics: Cost Effective Solutions' takes place on June 27 at 12.30pm. It is free to attend for HCA members. Register at: hcawebinars.co.uk.



June 21, 2023 is the second annual National Healthcare Estates & Facilities Day. Building on the success of last year's event, this is the perfect occasion for every NHS, social care and independent healthcare organisation to celebrate the work of their catering and other E&F teams, raise the profile of these staff groups for the hugely rewarding career opportunities that they offer, and reflect on the achievements and sacrifices made by people in these roles on a daily basis. Register your interest in the day at: www.healthcareEFMDay.org where a supporters kit is available to download as well as a new promotional video.

NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH

Report by Karina Watterson

Two teams from the Northern Ireland Branch - Northern Trust and South Eastern Trust - represented the region in the HCA 4 Nations Chef Challenge at the esteemed international Salon Culinaire event in London. Menus were created following the predetermined criteria. I can testify there were some strange looks at airport security at our chefs carrying their equipment, such as pots, pans, blenders, crockery and glasses.

As usual, the Northern Ireland Branch was punching above its weight. Our teams sallied forth, and embraced and thoroughly enjoyed the challenge. As a result Northern Trust's Darren Taggart and Angela Dickson attained a Gold award and South Eastern Trust's Shane O'Neil and Philip Rooney attained Silver. Well done to all involved. What a great tribute to the talent we have within Northern Ireland.



WEST OF SCOTLAND BRANCH

Report by Margaret Valenti



The Branch has been very busy since the last update. We are extremely proud of James Dougan and Alan Dougan who were awarded gold medals and Best in Class at the HCA 4 Nations Challenge held at the HRC event in March. The Challenge was well supported and the camaraderie, spirit and talent display by

all of the teams was immense. Everyone was a winner that day.

Several members of the Branch managed to attend this year's Forum which was a great success and thoroughly enjoyed by all. Thank you South West Branch and VERY WELL DONE. We were also delighted to be awarded the Chairman's Choice award at the President's dinner.

We will be hosting the HCA National Forum in 2024 and reality set in following the official handover at the close of this year's event. Janice Gillan, our Forum 24 Secretary, received the flag from Phil Shelley and provided an overview of the planned event and venue.

McGlen, our Forum Coo, attracted so much attention he needed extra security, as did his young offspring who are now off on their travels with each Branch to promote the event. We are very much looking forward to hearing about their antics, as those little coos are already being quite naughty... So it's now over to us, plans are underway and we are all very excited.

Our next Branch meeting will be held on May 24 at McGhees Bakery in Glasgow both in person and via Teams. It's great to be out and about again visiting our contracted suppliers' premises and seeing first-hand how the food and drink we buy is produced and handled.



WEST OF SCOTLAND BRANCH MEMBERS CELEBRATE WINNING THE CHAIRMAN'S CHOICE AWARD

MERSEYSIDE AND NORTH WALES BRANCH

Report by Adam Johnson

It's been a busy 12 months for the Branch, following on from its successful Forum in 2022. Branch meetings have continued on a monthly basis via Teams - at members' request - although two face-to-face meetings have been scheduled for this year. The first of these will be hosted by Bidfood at its Salford depot on June 8.

The Branch was represented at Forum this year in Birmingham, where the exhibition was fantastic and the programme of speakers was both inspiring and motivational. It was really good to see so many old friends and colleagues alongside so many new faces and members.

At the AGM on April 28 Carol Delves stood down from her board role. The Branch would like to thank Carol for all the hard work she has undertaken in this role and as Forum Secretary for 2022.



At the 2023 Forum, HCA Vice President Mark Hayman handed over the chain of office to Stewart McKenzie, a former National Chair.

At the HCA AGM on April 28, Iain Robertson, Catering Operations Manager at Solent NHS Trust was confirmed as the Association's new Vice Chair. One of Iain's priorities will be attracting new and younger members to the Association, helping with their development and with succession planning for NHS catering services.

EAST ANGLIA BRANCH

Report by Samantha Girling

The Branch has been busy planning a mixture of face-to-face events and Teams calls for 2023. On the agenda so far are a visit to a potato farm and a college kitchen in Cambridge, talks on changing the plastics we use, reducing food waste, EDI and the impact it has and food allergies/intolerances - what they mean for the NHS caterer. As a Branch it's important we work together, provide support and where possible increase our membership.

The Forum was grand! For the first time in many years, more than 10 members of the Branch attended, including full and supplier memberships. All had a good time and learnt lots about the importance of food within healthcare and the benefits it provides to patients on their journey to recovery.

At the end of the Forum, Stewart Nimmo was given a mascot for the Branch. He's been named - MacAnglia - and the aim is for him to visit sites within the Branch throughout the year. He's already started with a day at the QE2 in Kings Lynn.

WESSEX BRANCH

Report by Fiona Sinclair

At the Branch meeting on April 14, held virtually, Rag Hulait, UK Director of Sales for Monika, provided an interesting presentation covering the Monika Prime temperature and hygiene management system. During the meeting discussions included upcoming events being organised by the Wessex Branch, namely our Salon Culinaire and a Food Safety Study Day.

Our Salon Culinaire is a one-day chef competition, open to participants nationally, being held on May 23 at Bournemouth & Poole College. This is always an enjoyable day and a great chance for chefs to showcase their skills. The Food Safety Study Day on June 7 is free for HCA members and is taking place at the Ark Conference Centre on the grounds of North Hampshire & Basingstoke Hospital.

The Branch is also looking forward to a face-to-face meeting taking place at Unox in Camberley during May.

Finally, Wessex Branch would like to send our wholehearted thanks to the South West Branch for delivering an absolutely fantastic HCA Forum, thoroughly enjoyed by all our members who were able to attend.



To close the 2023 National Leadership and Development Forum, Phil Shelley, Forum Secretary, passed the flag to Janice Gillan, 2024 Forum Secretary. The West of Scotland Branch will host the 2024 event in Aviemore.



Applications are now open for the NHS Chef 2023 competition and will close on June 16, 2023. The NHS Chef competition is an ideal opportunity to showcase the great work that is undertaken every single day by all NHS caterers.

LETTER OF THANKS FROM MARK HAYMAN

I would like to thank you all for such a great send off as Vice President after 13 years at this Year's Forum. My colleagues of the South West Branch delivered a great Forum with excellent speakers, a superb exhibition and a fantastic social side. What a great team effort.

I would also like to thank Andrew Archer and his team for my send off and for helping to make the 2024 Forum so great. The programme was good, Rupy was superb, making great links, asking probing questions and giving great comments. All of the speakers left delegates with some rich information, ideas and possible actions to take back to work. It was a fantastic learning experience for us all.

With your support the Branch also excelled at all the other elements of the Forum.

To achieve over £5k for the RNLI was a super effort from all branches, members, the trade and delegates, and holding the first Auction at the President's dinner. Thank you Laura.

I will always treasure the surprise at the end of the Awards with the National Chair's kind words, a Special Recognition Award and some golf vouchers. It was a complete surprise. Also, the many members and trade who stopped me to give some really kind comments. Thanks also to David for your part in the gang's deception.

It has been an honour to be an Officer and Vice President of the HCA. It has been great fun and I have made many friends in the members and trade.

Thanks again for all your help with Forum 2023 and good luck with Forum 2024.

There is never a right time to step down as Vice President but I hope that I have selected the right time to exit and have noted the following:

- In October 2023 the HCA will be 75 and must go on to the centenary. Looking around at the Board there are now younger members starting to establish themselves to



achieve 100 years of the Association.

- Membership numbers are increasing again.
- Thanks to the hard work of the Merseyside and North Wales Branch delivering the 2020/2022 Forum at Liverpool. They have taken away any financial risk to the HCA following Covid, which saw other organisations and businesses collapse.
- The work on changing the HCA structure into a Company with Limited Liability is nearing completion.
- The HCA has now set up successful webinar sessions providing further learning and information for members.
- The new Journal format has increased circulation to a readership in excess of 6,000 and is no longer a financial risk to the Association.
- The HCA has now re-established the Four Nations Hot Cookery Competition at the HRC.
- And finally, I'm very proud of my Branch who delivered a terrific final Forum for me as National HCA Vice President.

Thank you all for looking after Deborah and myself over many years at the Forums, study days etc. We have thoroughly enjoyed your company and friendship.

Mark Hayman

OXFORD BRANCH

Report by Craig Smith

Our March meeting celebrated the Spring with a discussion with Love British Food's Alexia Robinson. Many of us from the Branch had been looking forward to a farm visit in Northamptonshire. It would have been a chance for us to finally meet up face-to-face, as we haven't had a 'real' meeting since lock down, however, due to reasons beyond our control the visit was cancelled. We all used the opportunity of restating our commitment to British food and to helping our local farmers whenever we can.

The meeting celebrated the achievement of our successful duo, Kerrey Healey and Natasha Day from Northamptonshire Healthcare

Foundation Trust who had performed so well once again at the NHS Chef event at the recent Salon Culinaire. We also sent our congratulations to all the other teams who had represented the NHS on such an important stage.

Whilst we were discussing the issue of waste management, the topic of meals to A&E and other outpatients arose. Members were shocked to hear just how much this was now costing various Trusts. Some teams were reporting that they supply 50 meals per day to A&E (one even provides that many hot meals!) It appears to be a growing additional burden on hard-pushed catering budgets, so we would like to hear from other Branches if they are experiencing the same kind of issues.

We would also like to say how

proud we are of Andrea Raymond, Operations Manager - Catering Services at Northamptonshire Healthcare, Danetre Hospital who has been named as the HCA's Caterer of the Year. We were also delighted to see Kevin Westrip from Northampton shortlisted in the Leadership & Excellence Award, and grateful that our Branch was shortlisted for the Chairman's Choice Award.





A HISTORIC DAY

BACK IN 2018, I WAS PART OF A DELEGATION THAT MET WITH OUR PRESIDENT LORD HUNT TO DISCUSS RISK, SPECIFICALLY ANY RISK THAT COULD AFFECT THE ASSOCIATION. I WAS ONLY AN EXEC MEMBER AT THE TIME, AND NEVER DID I THINK I WOULD BE THE ONE LEADING THAT CHANGE.

The first step was engagement with members to ensure the adoption and lodging of our HCA Articles of Association, allowing us to trade as a Company Limited by Guarantee.

The next stage was the transformation of our constitution into a set of company bylaws. This huge volume of work has only been possible through thorough engagement of the Exec team, the newly-elected Board of Directors and the wider membership.

During 18 meetings - each scheduled for two hours or more and fully minuted - the Exec team revised the bylaws line-by-line, sharing following each review with members for feedback. I set a target for November 2022, and we achieved that, but following a discussion at Exec, I felt it prudent that we delayed for further consultation on Conflict of Interest.

The bylaws are required for us to satisfy Companies' House, our banking partners and accountants, and to lay out our future foundation for the Association. They will allow us to move forward and continue to promote professional standards that enhance and improve NHS catering services across the 4 Nations.

I am delighted that our membership voted for their adoption at our AGM on April 28. It was a historic day for us, and every member can be proud that they played a part in the consultation.

WORK CONTINUES

Our next step is to review and update our governance chart, which lists all our relevant working documents, to ensure they reflect our new status. Some of this will be straightforward, but I'm expecting it will take us until at least the end of 2023 to complete.

Those of you who were at our fantastic National Forum in Birmingham, will know that we are also working on electronic membership, training, and ways to celebrate and promote the work of our chefs and catering services.

Our membership is critical to us. We took a bit of a financial hit during Covid, as did many, but member numbers are rising. I would however, like to see us on a financial footing where our costs are covered by membership fees, enabling other revenue - from the Forum particularly - to be used to develop additional programmes, around chef and catering staff development for instance, attracting young talent into our NHS catering services. We're not there yet, but events like the recent HCA 4 Nations Challenge and our webinar series are a great start, to promote the value of our membership, the strength of its networking opportunities and the package we can offer.

More of this will feature in the Strategy which we are looking to develop. I am determined it will be a meaningful and measurable live document, so the Chair can update members annually on progress.

We need to keep selling ourselves, not only the career opportunities that catering within the NHS can offer and the role of the HCA within that, but also a pathway to a career in the further NHS. Like it or not; we are embedded within Facilities and we need to recognise our staff groups' abilities and plot an educational pathway that supports our members to reach their aspirational goals.

The second National Estates & Facilities Day is a great way of spreading that word and I hope you will all engage with this on Wednesday, June 21. Register online: www.healthcareEFMDay.org. A download kit is available via the website to help you plan for the day, as well as a promotional video (free to download and use).

One final task for me is to say a huge thank you to Phil Shelley and the Forum 2023 Management Team of the South West Branch, for the hard work that went into making the event such a huge success. Hindered and delayed by COVID-19, they continued on track, adapting the programme to meet the ever changing landscape, and surpassed all expectations. The event clearly showed the HCA is the "Voice of Hospital Catering."

Moving out of the 'Covid era', we are in a good place, with an improved financial position which will enable us to continue to modernise further.

Brian Robb, National Chair Director

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**FREE FOR
MEMBERS**



DEVELOPMENT WEBINARS

HCA are delighted to announce a series of exciting webinars looking at the development of the food and drink service within healthcare.

SINGLE USE PLASTICS

COST EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS

Although we know it is the right thing to do, finding a solution to the problem of single use plastics is no easy feat. This webinar will examine the alternatives, including packaging made from sustainable, non-plastic-derived materials and the viability – or not – of reusables, with insight and knowledge from NHS procurement teams and specialist suppliers.



**TUESDAY
27 JUNE 2023**

Start time: 12:30 pm



Book your place at
www.hcawebinars.co.uk



HOSPITAL CATERER

2023 FORUM REVIEW

Report from the HCA Forum:
'The Voice of Hospital Caterers'

HCA 4 NATIONS CHALLENGE

NHS chefs showcase their talents at new
International Salon Culinaire event

RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE

Read about the winners of the HCA's
annual awards

Dr Rupy Aujla

Facilitates our 2023 National
Leadership & Development Forum

