

# HOSPITAL FOOD + SERVICE

THE PATIENT / THE WORKFORCE / THE VISITOR

JULY/AUGUST 2023

## BREAKFAST & MORNING GOODS

More choice on the breakfast menu

## ON SITE

We visit Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

## DISCOVERY DEN

Report from The Organic Pantry, which hosted a group of hospital caterers recently



## BREAKFAST SMOOTHIES



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**WELCOME**

# TIME TO DRAW BREATH

AFTER A VERY BUSY SPRING AND START TO SUMMER, THERE NOW APPEARS TO BE A BREAK IN THE CALENDAR TO PAUSE AND TAKE STOCK.



It's been a whirlwind so far this year, with big events, new legislation promised and other regulations postponed, strikes and the publication of the NHS Long-Term Workforce Plan.

The Care Home and Hospital Catering Forum in early June was the last in a rush of events for the sector so far in 2023. You can read all about it in our report in this issue on p28-29, but one of the strong messages, nutritionally, from the event, was to take every opportunity to build more fibre into the diet, throughout the day. NHS England's Andy Politi and Jo Instone both addressed the Forum and demonstrated some of the great work that is being done,

along with some creative thinking around menu design and development.

In this issue we also report on the 24/7 retail event (p12-13) hosted by NHS England and Compass Group in May, as hospital caterers try to get to grips with the best solution for their sites to provide nutritional food and drink around the clock for staff.

Another report from an event earlier this year, is the visit by the Love British Food Hospitals Working Group to The Organic Pantry (p32-33). This was a very enlightening visit, and a reminder to all about the importance of reconnecting our catering services with the sources of food and drink, and shouting about the positive results.

I was delighted to also catch up with the HCA's Caterer of the Year, Andrea Raymond for our On Site feature in this issue. Northamptonshire is a mental health and community Trust, which makes some aspects of the hospital caterer's work easier, and other aspects more tricky. This is a great story, so read all about it on p8-10.

And finally, I must thank Julian Fris for his contribution to this magazine as The Vole over the past couple of years. All good things must come to an end, and from the September/October issue we will be introducing a different style column for this slot.

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

*Amanda Roberts*

## CONTENTS

JUL/AUG 2023

### 4 INDUSTRY NEWS

### 8 ON SITE

Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS FT

### 12 TOP TABLE

The 24/7 challenge for hospital retail

### 14 DAIRY PRODUCTS

A look at the variety and benefits of dairy

### 18 WASTE & FOOD WASTE

Reduction is the aim of new regulations

### 24 BREAKFAST & MORNING GOODS

Creating more choice on the breakfast menu

### 28 REVIEW

Powering through Crisis at the recent CHHC Forum

### 32 DISCOVERY DEN

Hospital caterers visit The Organic Pantry

### 34 PREVIEW

A look ahead to Commercial Kitchen

### 36 NEW PRODUCTS

### 39 NHS SUPPLY CHAIN: FOOD

Events to ramp up as contract is renewed

### 43 THE VOLE

Julian Fris explains Vested Outsourcing



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# WORKFORCE PLAN LINKS RECOVERY TO PRODUCTIVITY

THE HIGHLY ANTICIPATED NHS LONG-TERM WORKFORCE PLAN, PUBLISHED AT THE END OF JUNE, FOCUSES PRIMARILY ON CLINICAL AND CLINICAL SUPPORT ROLES TO ADDRESS THE WORKFORCE SHORTAGES THAT ARE BEING EXPERIENCED NOW, BUT PARTICULARLY INTO THE FUTURE.



Improved productivity assumptions are at the heart of the modelling, and critical to achieving those improvements are the health and wellbeing of staff and the environment within which they work.

The Plan recognises that staff need time and space to rest and recover from work, with access to good quality rest areas, food and drink options and safe storage of personal possessions.

It urges all NHS organisations to review the National Standards for Healthcare Food and Drink, and the NHS Health and Wellbeing Framework, to ensure they are providing a working environment that supports the health and wellbeing of staff.

The NHS Long Term Workforce Plan is available here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-long-term-workforce-plan/>

## E&F DAY BUILDS ON LAST YEAR'S SUCCESS

The 2023 National Healthcare Estates & Facilities Day surpassed the success of last year's inaugural event, with 563 organisations registering to take part, reaching 287,425 team members (up by 25 and 36,000 respectively).

With more time to plan, and using the toolkit of ideas supplied via the website, as well as knowledge of what worked well last year, activities for the 2023 celebration were diverse and imaginative. As well as celebrating with cupcakes and coffee, activities included:

- Demonstrations and displays of the many roles E&F staff carry out
- Giving out team awards
- Making videos to showcase E&F staff doing their 'day job'
- Handing out badges, biscuits and books to staff
- Team building fun events
- Senior staff serving meals and refreshments for team members
- Personal thank you messages from CEOs, Directors and Board members
- Thank you wall to spotlight team members.



ANDREW GATE, REGIONAL DELIVERY DIRECTOR FOR NHS ENGLAND, SPENT TIME AT LEEDS TEACHING HOSPITAL AND HELPED OUT WITH THE PATIENT MEAL SERVICE





## UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL SOUTHAMPTON AND ONE RETAIL JOIN FORCES FOR STAFF WELLBEING OFFER

University Hospital Southampton has opened a staff Wellbeing Hub to deliver a much-needed area, that includes a free-to-use staff gym, meeting spaces and café. Launched on July 5 to mark the 75th anniversary of the NHS, the hospital has partnered with One Retail, Compass Group UK & Ireland's retail sector, to include an innovative new café - Bevans Café - with a focus on health, wellbeing and social value.

This project has been made possible with proceeds from the auction of Banksy's artwork, Game Changer. The painting was gifted to Southampton Hospitals Charity in May 2020, during the height of the Covid pandemic. Funds are being distributed throughout the UK to benefit a wider community of healthcare providers and charities across the UK that work to enhance the care and treatment provided by the NHS.

A proportion of this donation has been used to create a place where staff can go to rest and recharge, seven days a week. The café is integral to the solution, and has a strong focus on healthy, affordable, nutritious, delicious food and drink - such as salads and made-to-order fruit smoothies with a focus on breakfast, lunch and food to grab and go. Change Please coffee and hot beverages will also be served. This is a social enterprise that helps homeless people through the sale of its award-winning coffee.



## THE SHOW GOES ON

Since the adoption and lodging of its HCA Articles of Association and acceptance of the new bylaws, the HCA Executive team has been meeting regularly to plot the way forward and organise the next steps for the association. This work will help to shape the new HCA strategy.

The work of the Exec team is so important to the HCA, and National Chair Brian Robb is keen to foster a broader understanding of this among all members. The Exec team will be hitting the road, holding a meeting in Northern Ireland on October 3, to which local Branch officers will be invited.

Brian and Vice Chair Iain Robertson have also been busy representing the HCA at various events - from the CHHC and HEFMA Forums to the ongoing work of the Public Sector Catering Alliance, where staff recruitment and retention is a key topic.

Flip this issue and read Brian's full message on p3 of the Hospital Caterer.

## CARBON LABELLING COULD DRIVE SUSTAINABLE CHOICES

A new UK-wide survey has found that over half of all young adults agreed they would choose to eat more sustainably if carbon footprint labelling was included on food packaging. Over one in three adults (37%) aged 55 and over also agree they would choose to eat more sustainably if given the information on menus. These findings suggest that carbon footprint labelling could play a key role in reducing consumption of high carbon foods such as beef and lamb.

The research was commissioned from YouGov by the Vegetarian Society. Chief Executive, Richard McIlwain says: "Carbon footprint labelling could be a game-changer in the fight against climate change and it is heartening to see that so many young people are eager to make sustainable choices. We are therefore calling on government and food manufacturers to act urgently in rolling out clear carbon labelling on food packaging."

## FOOD LEADERS URGE GOVERNMENT TO INVEST IN LOCAL FOOD

In the absence of a cohesive government strategy on food and farming, a network of over 90 local food leaders convened in the Houses of Parliament in June to call for greater investment in local food economies, nature-friendly farming and healthy food access as part of tackling the most pressing economic, social and national security issues facing the country.

The UK government has not acted on most of the National Food Strategy, and has recently abandoned plans for a Horticulture Strategy. Scottish Government has passed a Good Food Nation Bill, and Welsh Government has promised funding for food partnerships in every local area. But no such commitments exist in England or Northern Ireland.

The event shone a spotlight on the role food partnerships play in attracting funding and investment and delivering long-term solutions to some of the most pressing issues in our food system, including food insecurity, supply chain disruption and inequity, and the climate and nature emergency.

Food partnerships, many of which came to prominence during the pandemic, are growing across the UK. Described as "local trailblazers," they are taking innovative and long-term approaches to building better and more resilient supply chains, creating good food jobs and bringing communities together over healthy, sustainable food.





## VEGETARIAN CAMPAIGN CLAIMS SUCCESS

Over 17,000 people from all corners of the UK signed up to take part in this year's National Vegetarian Week campaign.

The campaign called on participants to swap out meat for vegetarian and plant-based foods, as a means of reducing their individual carbon footprint, and the resulting pledges resulted in projected carbon emission savings equivalent to an amazing one million miles of driving.

Furthermore, 97% of meat eaters who took part pledged to incorporate more vegetarian and plant-based food into their diets, with nearly one in four participants (38%) expressing interest in adopting a vegetarian or vegan diet.

To help businesses and public sector organisations to respond and develop great-tasting meat-free alternatives for staff and customers, the Vegetarian Society's Cookery School team are offering training and a range of recipes.

## FEA CALLS ON GOVERNMENT TO BE MORE PROACTIVE ON SUSTAINABILITY

The Foodservice Equipment Association (FEA) says its members - equipment manufacturers and suppliers - have made huge strides in developing equipment that is more sustainable, more reliable and lasts longer - and would now like to see more support from the government.

For example, until recently the Energy Technology List (ETL) only featured refrigeration equipment for foodservice. That's recently been widened to include other categories, such as Professional Food Service Equipment (PFSE), following extensive lobbying from FEA and others. However, the government is not really promoting the list and is only now considering the procurement of equipment for public sector use to be solely from manufacturers on the ETL.

Similarly, while FEA and its members are pushing the message on the vital need to manage FOG (Fats, Oil and Grease), legislation in England remains weak. "We have approached DEFRA and the PM's office to discuss the matter further and talk about suitable measures that FEA members could help with, but there's been little appetite to meet us," says John Cunningham FEA Chief Executive. "Government needs to up its game and become proactive, and quickly."

Meanwhile, FEA has produced the FOG Superguide, which sets out the issues and good practice. It's available to download from fea.org.uk under the information tab.

## DELAY TO SCOTLAND'S DRS

The Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), which would see a 20p deposit on all single-use drinks containers made of plastic, glass or metal across Scotland, has been delayed. Originally due for introduction in March 2024, it is now unlikely to arrive before October 2025.

The imposition of conditions on the scheme by UK Government is being given as the reason for the delay. These conditions include the removal of glass and the requirement to align aspects of the scheme with those planned for the UK - none of which exist as yet, or have regulations in place.

The delay has been welcomed by businesses; UK Hospitality Scotland Executive Director Leon Thompson says the scheme was not ready to launch in March, even before UK Government interventions, which had been made clear to Scottish ministers.

"This is the third delay to the scheme and it is imperative that there is now a joined up approach from all governments," he adds.

## HAT TRICK OF AWARDS FOR NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS' NUTRITIOUS ICE CREAM

Researchers from Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust (NUH) who are on a mission to boost nutrition among older patients, are celebrating their third award win for their high protein-enhanced ice cream Nottingham Ice Cream (N-ICE Cream) in less than a year.

Just three months after scooping a category win in the prestigious World Food Innovation Awards, the team behind N-ICE Cream received another trophy - a win at the World Dairy Innovation Awards in June for Best Dairy Protein Product.

This followed a national award for NHS Innovation from Medipex, a healthcare innovation hub, which was presented to N-ICE Cream research leader Professor Opinder Sahota in October 2022.

Commenting on the latest award, Professor Sahota, a Consultant in ortho-geriatric medicine at NUH, says: "Yet again, judges from a prestigious external awards scheme recognised the potential of our nutritious muscle-targeted high protein ice cream, which has been designed to address the serious problem of malnutrition and muscle weakness among older people.

"We're not standing still with N-ICE Cream and are now working with a new manufacturing partner, Matlock Meadows Dairy Farm in Derbyshire, to develop new flavours."

He adds: "We know N-ICE Cream has the potential to help many more patients in NHS hospitals and older people being looked after in the community by the care sector."

**JOHN CUNNINGHAM TALKING AT A RECENT TRADE ASSOCIATION FORUM ON 'BEST PRACTICE, TAKING CLIMATE LEADERSHIP'**



## SUPPLIER NEWS

### THE FPA ISSUES GUIDANCE ON 'PLASTIC-FREE' PACKAGING CLAIMS

As foodservice retailers, including hospital caterers, prepare to meet the ban on certain single-use plastics, the Foodservice Packaging Association (FPA) has issued guidance to address the claims made by producers of 'plastic-free' packaging.

In response to the big increase in foodservice packaging claiming to be plastic-free - coupled with the confusion and misunderstanding surrounding the validity of plastic-free packaging claims - the FPA has published a list of requirements to help inform packing buyers conducting due diligence prior to purchase.

"Having board-based packaging that can hold hot fluids, sauces and oils safely, without some form of plastic lining or coating, is a huge attraction for retailers. However, while plastic-free packs don't contain the polyethylene (PE) or PLA most often used to make packs effective, many do contain other plastics, such as acrylic, as part of what is known as a dispersion coating. As such, there are packs claiming to be plastic-free, which are not," explains Martin Kersh, Executive Director of the FPA.

There is also much confusion regarding the certification used to evidence claims of 'plastic-free' and symbols used to demonstrate conformity. Some certificates are produced by organisations not recognised by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) - and there are other symbols which are totally fictitious and a clear breach of the Competition & Markets Authority Green Claims Code.

The FPA guidance for plastic-free packaging is available here: <https://foodservicepackaging.org.uk>

### BIDFOOD CALLS FOR SUPPORT AS IT SETS AMBITIOUS TARGET OF UKRAINE FOOD SUPPORT

Bidfood, one of the UK's leading foodservice providers, is continuing to partner with Hope4 to supply valuable food and drink aid for those affected by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

The company has already donated approximately £400,000 worth of products, with seven support loads providing around 73,000 meals for those in need. Bidfood aims to increase this to provide £1m worth of food equivalence support, working out at around 200,000 meals. It is encouraging suppliers, customers and competitors to fund and donate as well.

Bidfood and Hope4 have also worked together to support those affected by the recent earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, supplying similar food packages as well as sleeping bags, blankets and old freezer suits to keep those without a home warm at night.

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# AHEAD OF THE GAME

**HOSPITAL FOOD + SERVICE VISITS ANDREA RAYMOND, OPERATIONS MANAGER FOR CATERING SERVICES AT NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HEALTHCARE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST (NHFT), WINNER OF THE HOSPITAL CATERERS ASSOCIATION'S (HCA) CATERER OF THE YEAR AWARD.**

We caught up with Andrea at Berrywood Hospital, the Trust's largest inpatient site, in the light and airy Café Vie, the in-house operated retail unit that dominates the main reception area. Berrywood is a modern mental health hospital, opened in 2010 and built in the grounds of the former St Crispin's psychiatric facility, which dated back to the 1870s and was closed in 1995. Most of the original buildings of St Crispin's have been converted into flats, although the old clock tower still stands, saved in a campaign by local residents.

Berrywood is one of seven sites operated by NHFT across the county, each of which has a Café Vie. The Trust's facilities comprise:

- Berrywood Hospital (Northampton) - eight wards and around 120 patients
- Cynthia Spencer Hospice (Northampton) - 16-bed palliative care facility
- Isebrook Hospital (Wellingborough) - 54-bed community hospital and learning disability facility
- St Mary's Hospital (Kettering) - 80-bed (six ward) mental health facility
- Cransley Hospice (Kettering) - nine-bed specialist palliative care ward
- Danetre Hospital (Daventry) - 29-bed community hospital
- Brackley Hospital (Brackley) - 18-bed community hospital.

Andrea is responsible for all catering services - patient, staff and visitor - at each site, a position she has held for the last two years, although she has been with the Trust for 15 years. Prior to her appointment as Operations Manager for Catering Services, the Trust did not have a dedicated catering manager. Andrea had an overseeing role, as Food & Beverage Compliance Officer,

working alongside a colleague, but it was following the introduction of Natasha's Law and the work that was involved in becoming compliant, that her position in charge of catering was formalised.

## PATIENT FOOD

The patient meal service at Berrywood is fresh-cook, but elsewhere it's cook-freeze, using meals from apetito. The smaller units offer the Carte Choix range, an innovative meal solution which is served by flipping the pack onto a plate, enabling beautiful presentation even from low-skilled members of staff. On the Trust's community sites in particular, patients can need some encouragement to eat, so the meals have to look appealing. In common with most hospitals, and indeed the wider hospitality sector, attracting and retaining catering staff is a challenge for Northamptonshire, so a service style that is easy to manage - particularly on the smaller sites which only require a single member of staff - whilst also offering consistency and a high standard of presentation is the perfect solution.

On all sites, the Trust uses apetito's IDDSI and ethnic meals, which are a guarantee of safety and the range is broad



*“Rather than serving larger portions, the Trust supplies provisions on the wards, so at all times patients can make themselves toast or sandwiches”*



DEVELOPMENT DAY RECIPES



COMPETING IN THE NHS CHEF 2022 KITCHEN



enough to meet most - if not all - dietary needs. "I've not had a request yet that we can't meet within 24 hours," she adds. "We can usually find something at one of our sites."

In general, though, Andrea believes patient menus within her mental health facilities are easier to manage than in a typical acute, because the patients tend to be nutritionally-well and want to eat as they would at home. Medication can also increase appetite for these patients. Rather than serving larger portions, the Trust supplies provisions on the wards, so at all times patients can make themselves toast or sandwiches. In addition to healthy snack options, the wards stock tinned items, such as soup, tuna and corned beef. Fresh fruit is delivered twice a day. Patients that are well enough to leave the ward are also able to use the site's café, and vending machines where available.

Ward service varies between facilities. On some sites healthcare assistants serve patients with their food, on others ward caterers work as part of the domestic team to serve food.

A move to electronic patient meal ordering will be accompanied by the introduction of a complementary electronic stock management system at all sites - even the small ones. The menus may differ slightly across sites, but Andrea is working to streamline these into two menus in-line with her vision that the menu offered at each facility will be as similar as possible. This approach is also designed to help improve resilience in the event of problems in the supply chain. Each site has its own storage areas, so operating a similar menu at each means that in the event of a product shortage at one hospital, it should be possible to move stock around and ensure all patients receive their choice of meal.

*"Linking with the Action for Happiness calendar, each day a menu card features at the front of the café, and includes thoughtful quotes from the calendar"*

## RETAIL

Across every hospital or hospice, the Café Vie outlets are multi-purpose, open to staff, visitors and patients alike, and even other professionals. As we visited, the postman delivering to Berrywood stopped to buy a coffee, and, as a 24-hour site, ambulance staff and police often use this facility as a base. Although the café itself is not 24/7 at the moment, there is a vending machine, television and comfortable seating.

None of the Café Vie facilities are subsidised, so they have to operate on a commercial footing. Nevertheless, Andrea has a keen eye on supporting staff and other users as much as possible for their own health and wellbeing. For example, working with the Trust's wellbeing team and linking with the Action for Happiness calendar, each day a menu card features at the front of the café, and includes thoughtful quotes from the calendar. Every day of the week has its own wellbeing theme: Mindful Monday, Thoughtful Tuesday, Wellbeing Wednesday, Thankful Thursday, and Fabulous Friday. They also try to celebrate national wellbeing days, such as Time to Talk, with coffee and cake promotions designed to encourage staff to take a little time for themselves during their busy working day to chat and relax with colleagues, and Take a Break, offering a free KitKat with a purchase from the café. To celebrate the 75-year anniversary of the NHS, cupcakes were given away to the first 75 customers, with a coffee and cupcake deal on offer thereafter. In October, a themed menu for Mental Health Day will focus on healthy ingredients, such as wholegrains, encouraging staff to think about their diet.

## SUCCESSES

As well as Andrea winning the HCA's Caterer of the Year Award, a two-chef team from NHFT also reached the finals week of NHS Chef last year. Kerrey Healey and Natasha Day work at the Café Vie at Isebrook Hospital, where the kitchen is so small it won't even allow three people to work within it at the same time. The seating area is equally constricted. When it was decided to enter the competition, the catering team supported Kerrey and Natasha to develop the menu for the initial entry, tweaking it to ensure it met the criteria for calorie content, nutrition and cost, and that it was achievable in the time allowed. Then, before the first competition day, helping to weigh-up ingredients and prep everything ready to go.

Andrea is quite clear about the positive impact that taking part in NHS Chef has had, for the individual chefs who competed,



the team overall and the Trust. They had very little expectation of how far they could go in the competition, and simply lapped up the benefit of the experience at each stage. For example, from the outset it was clear that other teams had interpreted the instructions in different ways, and that alone was sufficient to give them ideas they had not thought of. At the competition's mentoring event, Kerrey and Natasha learned new skills and techniques that they probably would not otherwise have considered. Meeting other chefs, as well as the national NHS England team, and building those relationships, is immensely beneficial. As a result of this, the Trust is looking to work towards exemplar status, has taken part in a crockery trial, and Andrea is getting help from the national team on improving the sustainability of menus.

As a direct result of this team's success in NHS Chef, the Trust has approved funding and released the space to expand the Café Vie at Isebrook, tripling the size of the preparation area and converting the former IT offices into a much larger seating area - for 36 people as opposed to the former four! A second, quieter seating area will be created from a former store. Whilst the building work is being done, one of the windows will be converted into a door, with a view to giving direct access via a ramp to the courtyard garden at a later stage. A corridor links the space with the ward, so when it is complete the new café will also be promoted to patients.

## CHALLENGES

24/7 food and drink provision for staff is one of the biggest challenges for a Trust like NHFT. At Brackley, which is a new facility, the Trust has installed its first kitchen prep freezer following a very successful tasting. However, the service is not subsidised and there is a reluctance from staff to pay for it, especially since all staff rooms - at



ANDREA COLLECTING THE HCA'S CATERER OF THE YEAR AWARD

facilities across the Trust - have fridges and microwaves and access is controlled through a fob, giving staff the ability to do their own food. Palliative care units also have kitchens for family. Nevertheless, Andrea is working towards compliance with the requirements of the new National Standards of Healthcare Food and Drink, and is preparing a paper for the Board with possible solutions to suit the different sites.

Removing single-use plastics to comply with the forthcoming ban is another challenge. Andrea's plan is to move to reusables wherever possible. This will involve removing some of the compostable items that had already been introduced as alternatives to traditional plastics, as these also fall within the scope of the ban. Several years ago the Trust tried reusable cups without success. Staff did not want to buy them, but the tide has changed since then, and the experience of other Trusts is showing a surprising level of acceptance of - and willingness to pay for - the reusable cup. Andrea tells Hospital Food + Service that she would like to keep the Trust ahead of the game with the journey to reusables, maybe considering two levels of cups at different price points, giving staff the choice of a smart cup if they want to invest a little more.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

At the moment patient menus are on a three-week cycle. Andrea would like to have seasonal menus, and is looking at ways of streamlining and introducing seasonal changes. Working with purchasing colleagues on local supply agreements - particularly for



PATRIOTIC COTTAGE PIE FOR THE KING'S CORONATION

fruit and vegetables - is another long-term project, also involving work with NHS Supply Chain on pricing. However, for the immediate future, meeting the requirements of the food standards is the top priority, together with a revamp of the Trust's food strategy.

Andrea is also keen to raise the level of appreciation shown to catering assistants and other staff, so they feel more valued, which would help with recruitment and retention of staff. "There's such a lot of good work going on in hospital catering, but it's under-valued and under-appreciated," she says. "I would like to see more people pushing that."

NHFT has a good learning and development department and apprentice schemes, but is hindered by the banding and the career path. Not only is the difference in pay and responsibility between bands one and three disproportionate, which can discourage staff from wanting to progress, but for those who do want to move up, the opportunities to remain within catering in the higher bands become fewer.

Sometimes small initiatives can make a difference. For instance, as a result of the crockery trial that NHFT participated in, the presentation of meals has improved, inspiring staff to be more creative. For the Coronation, one chef piped the mashed potato on top of a cottage pie in the design of the Union Jack. "It's really made a difference," Andrea says. 🇬🇧

*“As a direct result of this team's success in NHS Chef, the Trust has approved funding and released the space to expand the Café Vie at Isebrook”*

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# TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY: MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

THERE SEEMS TO BE A RECOGNITION THAT PROVIDING FOOD AND DRINK AROUND THE CLOCK FOR HOSPITAL STAFF IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT'S GOING TO BE EASY TO ACHIEVE. AN EVENT IN MAY, ORGANISED AND HOSTED BY NHS ENGLAND WITH COMPASS GROUP UK & IRELAND'S MEDIREST AND ONE RETAIL SECTORS, BROUGHT TOGETHER SUPPLIERS, HOSPITAL CATERERS, DIETITIANS, CONTRACT CATERERS AND OPERATIONAL STAFF, WITH SUPPLIERS AND TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS, TO HOME IN ON THE CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS. **HOSPITAL FOOD + SERVICE** HAS THIS REPORT.

THE EVENT WAS HELD AT THE IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM AT DUXFORD, WHICH PROVIDED AMPLE SPACE FOR SUPPLIERS TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR INNOVATIONS THROUGHOUT THE DAY



The National Standards for Healthcare Food and Drink make it a requirement that hospitals must have a suitable food and drink solution available to staff 24/7, and that this offer must be appropriate for the demographics of the site. It's hugely challenging for most hospitals, but particularly for smaller sites and community and mental health facilities. This is partly because the footfall may be considerably lower than any acute with only a handful of staff on some shifts, as well as the particular needs, demographics and restrictions of some of these sites. The standards, however, make no exceptions, although they are clear that there is no one-size-fits-all, allowing the flexibility for Trusts - and even different sites within the

same organisation - to find a solution that suits their needs.

Speaking at the event, Phil Shelley, Senior Operational & Policy Manager for NHS England reminded all caterers to communicate with him and the national team to let them know about any support that may be helpful. Phil also advised that the national survey of NHS staff will this year include a question about the nutritional provision for staff at all times, which should help to raise the awareness of this issue at the highest level and make it harder for Trust Boards to ignore. That's not to say that compliance with this standard should become a tick-box exercise. The best advice is to be confident that whatever solution is decided on is fit for purpose, is sustainable, "and makes you proud," Phil said.

*"This isn't just the right thing to do for staff; a good quality 24/7 food and drink provision also has the potential to bring benefits to the Trust"*



PHIL SHELLEY AND NEELY MOZAWALA

## THE BIGGER PICTURE

This isn't just the right thing to do for staff; a good quality 24/7 food and drink provision also has the potential to bring benefits to the Trust. Neely Mozawala, founder of the campaign 'No Hungry Staff' and Social Value Lead for Compass, talked about the huge staff retention problem that the NHS faces and the equally huge cost of poor physical and mental health. Providing good services and improving the environment for staff could be a positive factor in staff retention, whilst focusing on the wellbeing of staff will help to reduce sick days. "This is not about profit, it's about changing lives for the better and leaving a legacy," Neely said.

Mark Webster, Managing Director of Compass One added that Compass Group's recent Eating at Work survey underscored the different expectations of young people in work - particularly Gen Z and millennials - how food is vital for attracting and retaining the best new talent, and how younger people want to associate with organisations that share their values, on the workforce, the environment and health and wellbeing. Think differently, and embrace innovation and technology to find the best solution for you, he recommended.

Many innovations were demonstrated at the event - from hot and cold lockers, robots to serve and deliver food, AI to scan trays, smart vending, micromarkets, self-service kiosks and the frictionless store (powered by Amazon). Tim Radcliffe, Net Zero Food Programme Manager for NHS England and Chair of NHS 24/7 clinical panel, described this as an opportunity for suppliers to partner with the NHS and showcase their innovations, and for NHS organisations to find the right solution for

their staff, so they are not penalised when working out-of-hours shifts.

## NEXT STEPS

Haley-Mae Downer, part of the NHS England 24/7 clinical panel and now Business Development Director for One Retail, which operates across travel, hospital and other retail markets, worked with Tim Radcliffe to stage this showcase event. She picked out her key takeaways as:

### Nutrition for health and wellbeing.

Providing good food and drink options will no doubt support better health for NHS staff, as well as acting as a tool for attraction and retention of talent. The Eating at Work survey found that Gen Z is expected to account for 27% of the global workforce by 2025, and the findings concluded that these younger UK workers are the most vocal working-age demographics advocating for improved, non-financial workplace benefits from employers. Looking after NHS staff to the best of our abilities is so important.

**Technology.** The need for out of hours options will be supported by tech and innovation, and the market is being driven in this direction, overtaking traditional vending.

**More than just food.** Staff don't feel they have somewhere to go to where they can leave behind the clinical environment, to rest and re-charge. Hospitals need to provide separate areas for this, be it quiet spaces, wellbeing areas or restaurants that provide a totally different environment.

**Supporting our NHS.** This requirement is a tool for Trusts that they should use as an advantage and opportunity - as a focal point for staff, for the future. It's also an opportunity to reinvent current operating and financial models. For instance, relying

on external expertise and making partners work harder to alleviate financial and time pressures away from Trusts. Think no subsidy and creating a revenue stream for the hospital, that has the potential to save money in other areas of the organisation too.

**Doing the right thing.** Trusts need to partner with organisations that care, or are looking at inhouse solutions that meet environmental targets, support social mobility, encourage local sourcing and deliver social responsibility. For instance, participating at this event was Change Please, an award-winning coffee solution that helps homeless people by training them and giving them jobs, as well as filtering profits back into helping homeless people. A great example of a provider that also does good within their work.

The positivity during the round table session that concluded this event was encouraging. Here, Compass shared the results of some more research, which revealed that although the majority of Trusts were yet to introduce a 24/7 solution (70%), they equally recognised that it is important to do so (8.56 out of 10), and that 24/7 has the potential to help with employee attraction and retention (7.24 out of 10). Furthermore, over 60% accepted that they did not expect a financial return from such a service, although cost neutral would be good.

Although it is undoubtedly challenging, a direction of travel has been set. As Haley-Mae says: "We have the opportunity to positively impact the lives of the one and a half million people working for the NHS." It's now up to caterers and their partners, with the support of the central team and suppliers, to seize that opportunity. 

# FULL OF NATURAL GOODNESS



DAIRY PRODUCTS CAN MAKE A CRUCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO GOOD NUTRITIONAL CARE FOR PATIENTS, AND SUPPORT NUTRITION, HEALTH AND WELLBEING FOR STAFF.

KERRYMAID DOUBLE CHEESECAKE

**Nutrient-rich foods are essential for patients who have lost their appetite and/or suffered unintentional weight loss to help build back health, and they also support healthy ageing. Dairy products are nutrient-rich, containing, for instance, vitamin A to support muscle and bone health, cognitive health and reduce the risk of malnutrition, as well as B vitamins, iodine, calcium, and they are also a source of energy and high quality protein.**

Danny Raleigh, General Manager of West Country Milk, recommends a food-first approach as the first step to address the needs of nutritionally vulnerable adults, with dairy products playing a valuable role in providing those essential nutrients. He references a recent study\*, carried out in 60 Australian care homes across two years, which supported residents to consume their recommended portions of dairy per day (typically 3.5 to 4.5 portions in Australia). By adhering to the guidelines, the residents' overall diets improved, with appropriate levels of calcium and protein helping to slow bone loss and maintain muscles. The study showed a significant reduction in falls (11%)

*“The study showed a significant reduction in falls (11%) and fractures (33%) following the increases in dairy intake”*

and fractures (33%) following the increases in dairy intake.

“Fortunately, incorporating more dairy into the diet is easy,” Danny advises. “Dairy products are incredibly versatile and can be enjoyed at every meal and snack occasion - in both sweet and savoury forms. Moreover, dairy products can also be used to fortify other foods or meals with added nutrients. For instance, at breakfast, consider preparing overnight oats soaked in whole milk fortified with 1-2 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder. In the morning, mix it with a creamy yogurt and add honey or fruit compote for a more luxurious taste.”

Other suggestions from Danny include using skimmed milk powder to provide an extra boost of protein and micronutrients in milky drinks, yogurts, sweet or savoury sauces, such as custard or cheese sauce, puddings, or creamy soups. Yogurt and cream can be added to curries and

puddings, like rice pudding, and can also be used as a base to make dips, dressings and spreads. Or for a refreshing treat pair fruit slices with an enriched, creamy vanilla yogurt dip. Milky drinks and smoothies can be made using cream and yogurts too.

“When it comes to desserts, the possibilities for including dairy are endless. Consider fortifying ice creams, cheesecakes, custards, or milky puddings with skimmed milk powder. Serve desserts with ice cream or extra thick cream, or creamy yogurt to create indulgent and nutrient-rich options.”

Kerrymaid Brand Manager, Karen Heavey points to the ability of dairy products to bring that much-desired home comfort factor to patient menus. “Incorporating dairy products across comforting menu items is a great way to help enhance patients' mental wellbeing within the hospital environment,” she says. “One of the key factors in maintaining patient morale within hospitals

is by providing uplifting dishes that can ensure a higher level of comfort.”

Hospital caterers choosing Kerrymaid appreciate its authentic taste of Irish dairy and understand and trust the brand’s commitment to helping them consistently prepare flawless, tasty dishes for patients. The Kerrymaid portfolio includes warm custards to top a hearty apple crumble, and easy-melt cheeses that can be melted into a variety of welcoming toasties or soups - an effective and cost-efficient way to ensure that patients are well catered for during their stay. It also includes Cream Alternatives, Spreads, Slices and Grated, as well as Kerrymaid Angelito Ice Cream Mix and Kerrymaid Angelito Thickshake.

“It is vital for hospital caterers to use great dairy produce in their puddings, and by partnering with Kerrymaid they can easily do this. The brand’s range of cream alternatives and custards uses generations of dairy craft to guarantee the very best creamy taste, appetising appearance and outstanding performance in kitchens. For instance, Kerrymaid Double can help hospital chefs meet the demand for more indulgent puddings. Whether poured, whipped or cooked, the versatility of Kerrymaid’s portfolio means they can be used in a wide range of sweet recipes,” says Karen.

Kefir is a particular type of fermented milk product, used for drinks and yogurts, which is packed with health benefits that few other products can match. Marc Burns, Foodservice Controller for Biotiful Gut Health, explains its drinks and yogurts offer a rich source of natural gut-friendly bacteria, vitamins, and minerals that aid in supporting the digestive system. A natural source of vitamin B12, Kefir contributes to the immune system’s normal function and supports in the reduction of tiredness and fatigue. “Packed with flavour, a good source of protein and with no sugar added, our nutritious, delicious drinks support your gut health, which, in case you didn’t know, is essential for overall wellbeing - it all starts with the gut,” Marc explains.

#### RETAIL RANGES

Biotiful Gut Health has recently moved into the healthcare sector, and is already supplying a few hospitals, with its products stocked by several mainstream distributors, including Bidfood. As a premium product, containing only natural ingredients, its Kefir drinks and yogurts tend to be premium-priced, so the biggest potential for them in hospitals is probably within retail.

“To drive financial success, hospital retail



KEFIR AND PROTEIN YOGURTS ARE DRIVING SIGNIFICANT GROWTH WITHIN THE DAIRY CATEGORY

operations should widen their offering and move in to products that tap in to specific needs and desires of their consumers,” Marc recommends. This might be patients, visitors or staff looking for tasty, nutritious, all-day snacks or breakfasts. “Kefir in the hospital catering environment offers not only a great financial margin but also drives up average spend and attracts new customers. Biotiful’s range of Kefir drinks, Kefir yogurts and Kefir Protein yogurts tap into these different occasions.”

There is huge opportunity for growth within the dairy yogurt category, with nearly £500m sales over the last year and continued growth at a grocery retail level, driven by the natural health sub-categories of Kefir and Protein. “Kefir and Protein account for nearly 30% of total yogurt sales in grocery retailers, but over 90% of total yogurt growth,” Marc adds.

Biotiful Gut Health offers a range of convenient serving sizes to make it easier for customers to enjoy its Kefir products and to capitalise on these growth trends. 250ml Kefir drinks are available in an array of nutritious, delicious flavours including fruity cherry, tropical mango and indulgent vanilla, as are single-serve 125g Kefir yogurts and Kefir Protein yogurts. “Try our Great Taste Award-winning Kefir Protein with Blackcurrant Compote,” Marc suggests.

Danny Raleigh agrees that Kefir-based breakfast drinks are among the exciting new products offering brilliant retail opportunities for hospitals. “Despite the recent increase in dairy based alternatives, sales of milk and dairy products are as strong as ever with demand increasing every year,” he advises. “Customers are seeking sound, healthy solutions on-the-go and products like this offer a great option.”

The UK is self-sufficient in milk production and there are many fantastic British products to choose from. “With a growing focus around specific issues including reduction in sugar intake, increasing protein intake, buying locally and

sustainably, what better dessert to offer customers than a fruit-laden, creamy, luxury yogurt from one of the many local producers around the country?” Danny asks.

#### CHEESE

An impressive selection of over 750 named cheeses are produced in Britain. Perfect for sandwiches, Danny suggests experimenting with different condiments, such as jam, pickle, mustard, pesto, spicy mayo or relish to add an extra kick.

He adds: “For those seeking more adventurous flavours, explore the world of cheese toasties with tasty options like tuna melts, roasted veg and mozzarella with pesto, mushrooms with stilton, or sausage paired with Somerset brie and chilli jam. Or consider the trendy Scandi-style open sandwiches on rye bread - like smoked salmon and crème fraiche or mackerel pâté (made with soft cheese and a squeeze of lemon juice).”

Cheese platters can also offer a great assortment of flavours and textures. Combining a mix of cheeses, fresh and dried fruit, vegetables and chutneys with crackers and soft bread creates a tasty and visually appealing experience.

Cheesy snack options could include cheese scones or muffins with butter,

*“A natural source of vitamin B12, Kefir contributes to the immune system’s normal function and supports in the reduction of tiredness and fatigue”*

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**KERRYMAID**

*The Smooth Finish*



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BROUGHT TO YOU BY **KERRY**

*“For additional fortification for the nutritionally vulnerable, cheese can be sprinkled on scrambled eggs or on savoury dishes like soup, cottage pie or mashed potatoes”*

**KERRYMAID MILKSHAKES**



**EXTRA FORTIFICATION FOR THE NUTRITIONALLY VULNERABLE:  
PARMESAN CHEESE GRATED OVER CARROT FLAN**

cheese twists or breadsticks, toasted crumpets or fruit bread with cheese spread, soft cheese and on toast, veggies or pitta bread with cheesy dips, mini cheesy pasta pots or pizzas, mac ‘n’ cheese balls, or melted and baked cheese crisps.

For additional fortification for the nutritionally vulnerable, cheese can be sprinkled on scrambled eggs or on savoury dishes like soup, cottage pie or mashed potatoes. Cheesy sauces can be poured over fish, meat, pasta, rice, or veggies, while cream cheese can be used as an additional spread in sandwiches or transformed into a rich creamy cheesecake.

Karen Heavey describes cheese as one of the most versatile ingredients in cooking, and a kitchen essential. “Kerrymaid simplifies the category for caterers by offering a range of foodservice-specific cheeses, created for each of these purposes. For example, Kerrymaid Grated White can be used to create visually appealing variations on traditional sandwiches and wraps. Perfect for the afternoon tea occasion, the convenient pre-grated format saves time in the kitchen and helps hospitals to widen their appeal and selection across their menu. Kerrymaid Grated White offers

even more melt than standard cheddars, delivering a higher standard in hot sandwich options,” she says.

#### **HERE TO STAY**

With current trends around sustainability of food production, climate change and the growth of plant-based diets, dairy often gets a bad press, but the headlines are only part of the dairy story.

Kerrymaid expects dairy to feature in a variety of sweet and savoury dishes for years to come, amid growing consumer awareness about nutrition and the importance of health and wellbeing. “Whilst enjoying indulgent foods, diners are also on the lookout for health and nutritious benefits without compromise on taste. Looking ahead, brands that address this health trend with new launches that still taste great but also have nutritional benefits, such as low sugar, no artificial ingredients and are high in protein/fibre, will prove a hit,” Karen explains.

Danny Raleigh points out that milk is a ‘Whole Food’ and contains 18 of the 22 nutrients that are essential to health. It is also exposed to only minor levels of processing (for example, pasteurisation),

and is not a highly concentrated, highly processed product.

In addition, UK dairy in particular is becoming more and more sustainable. “With exciting goals being set around reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, UK farming generally has a fantastic opportunity to be part of the ‘solution’, protecting the land, improving farming techniques (for example, reducing methane production) and ensuring our fields and hedgerows remain a vital ‘carbon sink’ in the fight against climate change.”

Much of the land used for dairy farming is not suited to growing arable crops, and livestock grazing remains the only viable way to use such land to produce food. A dairy cow gets as much as 60-70% of its food from forage, and then converts that forage into a food (milk) that provides us with 40% more energy and protein than the cow consumed in the first place, all by eating plants that humans are incapable of digesting! 

**[www.biotifulguthealth.com](http://www.biotifulguthealth.com)  
[www.kerrymaid.com](http://www.kerrymaid.com)  
[www.wcmilk.co.uk](http://www.wcmilk.co.uk)**

\* <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34670754/>

# A NEW APPROACH TO WASTE

WHEN IT COMES TO HOT TOPICS, THEY DON'T GET MUCH HOTTER THAN THE ISSUE OF WASTE - BOTH FOOD WASTE AND SINGLE-USE PACKAGING. BOTH ARE THE SUBJECT OF NEW REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS, AIMING TO REDUCE WASTE AND IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY.

**The mandatory National Standards for Healthcare Food and Drink introduced last year, made food waste reduction a crucial priority for hospitals across England. To help improve food waste measurement and monitoring NHS England is changing the way food waste is recorded, requiring it to be broken down into categories, such as production waste, plate waste, unserved meals and spoilage.**

These changes recognise that measuring and recording volumes of food waste accurately is a critical first step to reduction, a sentiment that is endorsed by Paul Clark, Bio-Processor Product Manager at PRM Waste Systems. "It's important to establish where you are now in order to set targets and put plans in place for change," he explains. "This doesn't have to be as onerous as it sounds; there is equipment available to help record and track this for you. The PRM Bio-Processor, a food waste digester, offers access to a reporting portal which automatically and continuously records your waste volume."

This reporting portal will also enable reporting on other metrics, such as the carbon emission saving. The portal has the ability to link the machines across different

hospital sites so that Trusts can measure their performance in totality.

The advice of Gareth Newton, Managing Director of BGL Rieber, is to take a hard look at intelligent labelling. Statistics generated from tracking waste back from wards or restaurants will identify 'hot spots' of above-average waste which catering managers will be keen to tackle first. Bulk meal containers, plated meal delivery trolleys and dedicated waste collection boxes can all be labelled with smart labels to track waste in the kitchen as well as bulk and plate or tray waste from the wards, including liquids. Check/weigh machines will automatically read the labels and upload the results, requiring no additional labour.

Smart-labelled containers can also be used in retail sites to track and trace food waste and identify what dishes sell well and for how long they have been on the hot display counter. "Improving food management as it leaves and returns to the kitchen helps us understand how waste is generated," Gareth explains.

There is little doubt that this increased level of measuring and recording waste will bring many benefits in terms of identifying where waste is occurring and allowing interventions to be introduced to reduce it.

*"Statistics generated from tracking waste back from wards or restaurants will identify 'hot spots' of above-average waste"*



BIOMASTER FROM MEIKO



SORTING STATION UNDER A CONVEYOR BELT ON A MEIKO RACK DISHWASH

However, it will also require new systems to manage, store and process waste. "To store, measure and weigh waste means using extra floor space and resources, such as boxes and containers," says Paul Anderson, Managing Director of Meiko UK. The dishwash area will be a focal point in this respect.

"Food waste, sandwich and snack packaging, yogurt pots, napkins and so on, naturally come back to the dishwash, but not all dishwash areas have the floor or bench space for the extra workload involved in monitoring food waste."

Liquid food waste - from milk and other beverages to soup, and infant meals to oil - can be substantial. "Re-organising the dishwash area might find extra working space and accommodate mobile bin systems," Paul adds. "There may be a space-saving solution by introducing space-efficient sorting stations or using space-saving accessories, such as 180 and 90-degree powered bends, shelving and roller tabling."

### DEDICATED WASTE STREAMS

New legislation to be introduced under The Environment Act 2021 will classify food waste as one of five distinct, recyclable waste streams - the others being glass, metal,



plastic and paper/card. Products falling into any of these waste streams will have to be collected separately from other household waste, as well as discretely from each other, and taken for recycling or composting, not sent to landfill. This will apply to domestic and non-domestic premises, which includes hospitals.

Paul Clark explains how the thinking around 'unavoidable' waste is changing, so it is viewed as a valuable resource, and recycling food waste on site is one of the ways to accommodate these changes. "This is a process many hospitals have already successfully put in place by using equipment such as the PRM Bio-Processor. The machine, which is around the size of a 1100L wheelie bin, takes unavoidable food waste and within 24 hours reduces the waste volume by 80%, turning it into a substrate that can be composted to create a valuable soil nutrient, used to fuel biomass boilers or be sent to AD sites to produce green energy."

When choosing a system to recycle food waste, do ensure it will accept and process all of the food waste streams that hospitals produce, including solids, fats and liquids, Paul Anderson advises.

"It is a complete waste of labour and resources if hospitals have to separate different types of food waste to suit the available processing technology, using different equipment for liquids, fats, dry food and so on.

"The model proven to work across Europe is homogenisation, which reduces all types of food waste into liquid slurry, the ideal feedstock for biogas. Homogenisation creates a wet slurry that can be stirred and mixed with other liquids to create the perfect balance of proteins, starches and sugars to maximise biogas production by fermentation.

"Crucial for UK hospitals, homogenising waste hoppers, such as Meiko's BioMaster, do not require additional labour as they simply replace existing waste bins. The waste is

*"The thinking around 'unavoidable' waste is changing, so it is viewed as a valuable resource, and recycling food waste on site is one of the ways to accommodate these changes"*

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## Now is the time to recycle your food waste

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To see how MEIKO can help your hospital, visit [www.meiko-uk.co.uk](http://www.meiko-uk.co.uk)  
Email: [info@meiko-uk.co.uk](mailto:info@meiko-uk.co.uk) or call 01753 215120



**MEIKO** GROUP

deposited, processed and, later on, collected for conversion to biogas, a simple, hygienic, labour-saving solution that solves any issues with food waste for catering managers.”

One final piece of advice from Bergmann Direct’s David Boyd, is don’t leave it too long to start planning for compliance with this legislation, especially for sites using equipment such as macerators, for whom the changes will be significant. The timescale is as yet uncertain, but the decision-making process for hospitals is slow, and once a new system has been selected, building the business case and securing the funding add even more time. In addition, most manufacturers will require a period typically between eight and 12 weeks between receipt of order and delivery of new, replacement technology.

Bergmann Direct’s solution is the Eco-Smart Food Waste Dryer, which extracts the liquid content from the food waste, leaving behind a dry, sterile powder.

### **SINGLE-USE PLASTICS BAN**

In October, England will follow the example set by Scotland and introduce a ban on certain single-use packaging items. The Hospital Caterers Association recently held a webinar to explain the detail of this ban and explore alternatives (flip this issue and see the report on p8-9 of Hospital Caterer). The advice being put forward is to look to reusables as the first, and preferred option to replace single-use plastics.

“It’s back to basics for NHS food handling!,” says Gareth Newton. “NHS kitchens of old always used steel and aluminium reusable containers. Nowadays, you can add reusable plastics to the list of options.”

Of course, switching to reusables has implications for warewashing, which, says Paul Anderson, is a Meiko speciality. “Plastics must not be stored with any residual moisture, or there is a risk of mould growth. Meiko has decades of experience washing reusable plastic drinkware and food containers for airlines and healthcare. Our nationwide team of Regional Sales Managers can advise on the equipment and chemicals needed for plastics and the special racks that may be required to wash reusable plastic bowls and cups.

“Hospitals are also looking to switch to reusable sterilised enteral feeding systems to reduce waste further. There are savings in single-use plastics from switching to reusable feed bottles. Meiko’s long experience in medical sterilising dishwashing provides a useful source of helpful information and advice for hospitals.”

Meiko’s off-the-shelf washer/disinfector products include the TopClean 60 Multi-Washer, which operates to A0 60 disinfection.

### **PACKAGING SOLUTIONS**

apetito has announced a first for the NHS with its closed loop recycling system for meal trays. Following a successful pilot earlier this year with three hospitals, this innovative new scheme, named ‘Boomerang’, is now operating in over 20 sites with plans to extend across all of apetito’s NHS customers this year.

Under the scheme, all the plastic trays used in apetito’s Carte Choix and Specialist Nutrition ranges can be collected by apetito when new meals are delivered. The trays are then recycled into plastic flakes and transformed into completely new trays, at a UK facility. apetito guarantees that 100% of trays returned will be recycled into new trays.

Director of Corporate Affairs, Policy and Sustainability, Lee Sheppard says that having successfully launched the same scheme into its consumer business, Wiltshire Farm Foods 18 months ago, apetito saw how it could help NHS hospital caterers reach their Net Zero goals. “The results have been phenomenal,” he says. “Our return rates on Carte Choix trays already sit at an impressive 64%, compared to the local authority kerbside recycling rate of just 38% for UK plastic. This shows how quickly our NHS partners have bought into this project as part of their sustainability journey.

apetito estimates that if this scheme were rolled-out to all hospitals, over 64 tonnes of CO2e would be saved, equivalent to boiling a kettle 1.6 million times.

“Furthermore, it is not just about the carbon savings, there are also cost efficiencies for the NHS. By returning trays to us rather than paying for them to be collected, the NHS has the potential to save more than £30,000 per year,” Lee continues.



**APETITO'S NEW PLASTIC FOOD PACKAGING**

“We’re proud of this scheme - not only is it helping hospitals save money, but it’s the right thing to do from a sustainability point of view.”

Adrian Brown, Managing Director of Cofresco Foodservice recommends reducing waste from wrap and clingfilm used in the kitchen by swapping cardboard cutter boxes and loose rolls for a Wrapmaster® ultimate chef wrap system. As well as reducing waste, this will cut costs; on average Wrapmaster users enjoy a 25% cost saving, and chefs also report a noticeable reduction in waste and wrap usage\*.

*“Bringing staff on board with changes to the way food waste is handled and the approach to reducing packaging/removing single-use plastics will be critical”*



**THE WRAPMASTER ULTIMATE CHEF SYSTEM**

# MORE AND MORE HOSPITALS NOW DRY THEIR FOOD WASTE: **HERE'S WHY...**



- ✓ Environment Act 2021 Comes Into Force
- ✓ Macerators and Liquidizing Digesters Banned
- ✓ All Food Waste Must Be Collected Separately

**N**ew food waste disposal rules in England mean big changes for hospitals, hotels, restaurants and any commercial organisation producing food waste. The change is expected in late 2023 or early 2024.

## **Macerators and Liquidizing Digesters Banned**

Food waste will no longer be allowed to go into general waste or into machines which macerate or liquefy food waste before pumping it into the drain. It must be "presented separately for collection (Section 57, the Environment Act 2021.)

## **Are You Ready?**

If you haven't done anything about it yet, you need to act fast. Bergmann Direct have produced a guide on the new rules which sets out the options and how to comply with the rules. You can get a copy of the guide by going to our website (see panel alongside).

## **Drying Food Waste - The Hygienic Alternative**

The most hygienic alternative is to dry food waste in the Eco-Smart Food Waste Dryer and dozens of NHS hospitals throughout the UK are already drying their food waste ensuring:

- Compliance with the new food waste disposal rules
- Hygienic handling of food waste
- Elimination of risks from vermin and pests and manual handling of heavy wheelie bins
- 80% or more reduction in disposal costs if you are putting food waste in wheelie bins
- Lower carbon footprint from a huge reduction in vehicle trips.

See the panel alongside for more information.



Food waste dryers at a Yorkshire NHS hospital are ensuring compliance and hygienic handling of food waste while reducing disposal costs and carbon footprint.

**FREE GUIDE**

Get Your **FREE GUIDE** to the New food Waste Rules



Use the QR code or call us on

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[www.bergmanndirect.co.uk/freeguide](http://www.bergmanndirect.co.uk/freeguide)

**In Your Guide:**

- Key changes to the food waste rules
- What's allowed and what's not
  - Options to save money
  - Details of the Eco-Smart Food Waste Dryer

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Wrapmaster's Recyclable PE Cling Film also supports hospital caterers to reduce plastic waste. Plasticiser, BPA and PVC free, Wrapmaster Recyclable PE cling film can be used to wrap and cover all types of food and ingredients, and after use it can be recycled as part of a more sustainable, and circular, catering operation. Wrapping food will not only help extend its shelf life but also preserve that all-important quality and flavour.

The cling film is part of the Wrapmaster Sustainable Collection, which also includes the award-winning Flexsil-Lid™ re-usable silicone lids to cut back on food waste, and Compostable Baking Parchment made from sustainable sources.

### BETTER WASTE MANAGEMENT

Bringing staff on board with changes to the way food waste is handled and the approach to reducing packaging/removing single-use plastics will be critical. Technology can ease the process, for instance, by making the task easier and/or improving the experience for staff. Gareth Newton cites smart labelling and check/weigh/report systems that speed up the capture of information and pay for themselves in saved labour and ease of use.



BGLRIEBER'S EATTAINABLE FOOD CONTAINERS AND SCANNER

Handling food waste can be an unpleasant job, so Paul Clark suggests making the task as easy and hygienic as possible for the team to help to create a staff culture that supports food waste recycling. "The alternative to storing this messy, smelly waste in bins, awaiting collection, is to recycle it on site. Food waste digesters are a clean and easy way to do this and fully comply with the new regulations," he says. "We have sites that use our PRM Bio-Processor where the staff have become so fond of the equipment they've given it a pet name and treat it as part of their



TIPPING FOOD WASTE INTO PRM'S BIO-PROCESSOR

team. Ensuring all staff understand why new measures are put in place is really helpful in getting your team on board with change." 

- [www.apetito.co.uk](http://www.apetito.co.uk)
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\* Independent Chef Panel Research, 100 participants Nov 2018



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^Wrapmaster® Research, Independent Toluna Survey, 2021. \* Restaurant 3 week trial. 20% less cling film, 25% less foil and 25% less baking parchment vs cardboard cutter box.

# HEALTHY START

KERRYMAID'S BUTTERY WAFFLES

A GOOD BREAKFAST IS THE MOST IMPORTANT MEAL OF THE DAY, ESSENTIAL FOR PROVIDING ENERGY FOR STAFF TO FACE THE DAY AHEAD, AND FOR THE NUTRITIONAL CARE OF PATIENTS. HOWEVER, IT'S OFTEN THE ONE THAT IS GIVEN THE LEAST ATTENTION. BREAKFAST NEEDS TO BE ATTRACTIVE, NUTRITIOUS AND TASTY. IT ALSO NEEDS TO OFFER MORE CHOICE.

**“Given varying dietary preferences and requirements, the key to ensuring all patients get a nutritionally-balanced breakfast is through offering a variety of choice,” says Mike Iddon, Managing Director at Litmus Retail.**

“Breakfast service differs from hospital to hospital, but the trend over the past decade has been to move to a breakfast trolley operation where the patient is served what they want from a range of cold items, predominantly cereals, bakery items and juice, along with hot drinks. This is viewed by many as the simplest system that can be managed at ward level with limited need for food transportation.

“Hospitals could even look at introducing refrigerated cold items, such as cheeses, cold boiled eggs, yogurts or sliced meats, which you often see in European hospitals, to widen the choice and get around the issue of there being no hot food options.

“Having a choice of foods also ensures patients who are staying in hospital for multiple days can enjoy a variety of breakfast foods, as opposed to the same items each day, ensuring they are getting a varied and balanced diet; as well as combatting any food boredom.”

### TRANSFORMING BREAKFAST MENUS

Over the past year, Compass has been having collaborative conversations with NHS England about improvements that can be made to the

*“Hospitals could even look at introducing refrigerated cold items, such as cheeses, cold boiled eggs, yogurts or sliced meats, which you often see in European hospitals, to widen the choice”*

patient's breakfast. Its dietitians and chefs work to create nourishing and tasty meals, which offer patients choice and nutrition, so the teams embarked on a pilot project to review breakfasts served and explore the opportunities to enhance offers within hospitals.

Compass creates meal concepts based on patient feedback, which helps refine menus and makes sure that people enjoy the food. Therefore, an integral part of this project was to ask patients questions, such as what they usually eat for breakfast at home, what they would want to see on a breakfast menu within a hospital setting and how eating habits change from weekdays to weekends.

Compass gathered information and background by interviewing patients at four of its partner hospitals. The data showed that there was a distinct difference between weekends and weekday breakfasts, and that people would want to see more variation within their hospital breakfast offers, especially in the cereal, fruit and bakery items - a standard offer

would usually consist of a basic option such as bread and jams. Compass also noticed that eggs in different formats were in demand. In line with this feedback the culinary and dietitian teams started to consider innovative ideas to meet the demands of patients, which still offer affordability, flexibility and meet the taste and nutrition criteria too. In addition, one of the main challenges in offering breakfast is that wards are extremely busy in the mornings, and the resource isn't there to deliver additional breakfast options on top of clinical duties.

Compass has now conducted a pilot within two of its partner sites and worked alongside NHS England's Senior Operational & Policy Manager, and Chair of the Hospital Food Review, Phil Shelley, who also sampled menus. The trial included three wards from each hospital to include a mix of elderly, maternity, general medicine and surgery units to ensure a good cross section of patients with various needs. The feedback has been really positive - with



almost 60% of participants saying the offer was 'excellent', and overall, a 97.2% satisfaction rate.

Items like waffles, layered granola, scrambled egg rolls and baps came out as particularly popular - with patients commenting that the selection was improved. Compass has deliberately designed the menu with budgets, convenience and resource in mind, which are all major challenges to delivering a more comprehensive breakfast offer.

This is an ongoing process and Compass is now working with NHS England and its partner hospitals across the country to explore the findings of the project further. This information will help to understand the context of breakfast and the opportunity for

improvement across the NHS in this area. For many patients, breakfast is a crucial meal, for example some cancer patients often lack appetite and breakfast is the most likely time they want to eat. It's paramount this offer is as good as it can be, to ensure they are getting the most out of this meal.

Compass teams will be reviewing insights and data, and sharing learnings with NHS England and its clients. There is no doubt that the delivery of breakfasts can have its challenges, and this is certainly not a one-size-fits-all solution, therefore it plans to work with each of its partners to find a deliverable solution that works on the ground for each. Phil says: "The delivery and quality of our breakfast

provision in healthcare requires substantial focus, as such an important meal, often during a long day in a patient stay. Bruce [Toon] and his team have identified so many options, bringing today's choices from the high street into the NHS - this is what we need to see and experience from our catering teams."

#### **BREAKFAST BOOST**

Karen Heavey, Brand Manager for Kerrymaid, reiterates the importance of breakfast. "It provides a much-needed boost to energy levels first thing in the morning and helps improve concentration and memory. It's also

*"Items like waffles, layered granola, scrambled egg rolls and baps came out as particularly popular - with patients commenting that the selection was improved"*



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*“The ever-popular breakfast croissant becomes a more substantial savoury snack when filled with bacon, ham or mushrooms and topped with cheese”*

thought that eating a regular breakfast can help reduce obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease,” she says.

Cereals and porridge present an opportunity to boost calorie intake by fortifying the milk used with powdered milk or cream. Toasted products such as muffins and crumpets make a quick and easy light bite simply topped with butter, or a non-dairy spread for vegans, and offered with a selection of preserves. Kerrymaid Rich & Creamy Buttery spreads straight out of the fridge, while Kerrymaid Sunflower Light is a perfect alternative to a dairy spread for vegans.

**IN THE DNA**

“We’re passionate about helping people start their day in the best way and we are committed to doing this in a sustainable, responsible way. It’s in our DNA,” says Kristian Sharp, Foodservice Channel Manager at Weetabix.

The Weetabix Food Company, makers of leading breakfast cereals, Weetabix and Ready brek, has a mission to help people live better lives by providing better breakfasts. In the hospital sector, Kristian says Weetabix is “incredibly proud” of the positive impact of Weetabix Original and Ready brek porridge.

Weetabix has created portion packs to offer foodservice operators a convenient, tasty and nutritious cereal option for their customers and sales are growing strongly. “We’ve seen a significant increase in demand for portion packs in the post-Covid market,” Kristian confirms.

Weetabix Original is available as a one or two-biscuit portion pack in the classic Yellow Box format. Multigrain Hoops is new for 2023 in the 375g format offering even more choice, and Alpen Muesli is available in two bag formats - 1.1kg and 45g sachets.

“We are also introducing 600g Weetos packs to foodservice. HFSS compliant, this is a great product for all ages and ideal for those looking for a fun way to start the day, safe in the knowledge that their bowl remains a healthy one,” Kristian adds.

“Whether you’re expanding your continental breakfast offering or looking for convenient options to serve to patients, our new portion pack range helps caterers satisfy convenient individual servings, regulate portion control and provide lower volume service that appeals to everybody.”

Ready brek is another favourite product in healthcare. Its super smooth texture makes it easy for those with conditions like dysphagia to swallow. Easy to prepare and CQUIN compliant, Ready brek porridge is made with 100% wholegrain oats for 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.

**BRINGING THE HIGH STREET IN**

Compass is seeing breakfasts across the retail estate growing in popularity, and people are enjoying them throughout the morning, due to working shifts and hospital visiting hours. Breakfast offers staff, patients and visitors the opportunity to seek out a nutritious morning meal, or a small healthy snack or treat, that can set them up for the day.

Customers are always looking for that point of difference, and Compass believes that offering a product that can be tailored enhances customer satisfaction and experience. Personalisation can be created in many formats, from building a traditional breakfast to creating a nutritious breakfast

smoothie of choice combining a variety of ingredients. The traditional English Breakfast remains a great seller and caterers can add value, with messaging around sustainability, provenance and presentation, which further enhances and tailors the menus.

Think about catering for all taste preferences with a mixture of savoury and sweet breakfast offerings, is the advice of Karen Heavey. Cater for sweet-toothed customers with items such as pancakes or waffles, served with fruit, yogurt and maple syrup, whilst the savoury menu could take influences from international cuisines to create breakfast tacos and burritos, with fillings such as crispy bacon, eggs, potatoes, avocado and cheese, to put a new spin on the breakfast offering. The ever-popular breakfast croissant becomes a more substantial savoury snack when filled with bacon, ham or mushrooms and topped with cheese.

Kerrymaid offers a range of foodservice cheeses. Kerrymaid Grated Red and Kerrymaid Grated White produce a more even melt than many other cheddars, delivering a higher standard in hot sandwich options. Kerrymaid Slices also melt consistently, delivering a rich and creamy taste, and Vegan Slices are suitable for patients following a plant-based diet.

As cost continues to dominate the consumer’s purchasing mindset, Mike Iddon points to the ‘value for money’ messaging being rolled out by many high street brands, with promotions and special offers at breakfast and throughout the day. “Pret has its Coffee subscription, Yo! Sushi has its deal on sushi boxes and a drink, and there are many ‘kids eat free’ offers, particularly over school holidays,” he says.

“There are lots of ways to run breakfast offers and it comes down to what will most appeal to your audience; whether that’s a breakfast sandwich and hot drink special offer, discounted add-on purchases such as plant-based coffees or smoothies, or a ‘special of the day’ which brings the opportunity to offer more exciting trend-driven items such as Mexican-inspired breakfast burritos, protein pots, egg and avocado baguettes or Acai and almond butter bowls. Offering these daily specials also means that Trusts can trial new breakfast items and, if they prove particularly popular, could then look at adding them onto their main regular menus.”

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**www.kerrymaid.com**  
**https://litmuspartnership.co.uk/services/litmus-retail/**  
**www.weetabixfoodservice.co.uk**

# POWERING THROUGH CRISIS



NHS ENGLAND'S ANDY POLITI AND JO INSTONE



EVERY SESSION CONCLUDED WITH A LIVELY Q&A

THE ONE-DAY CARE HOME AND HOSPITAL CATERING (CHHC) FORUM IS A UNIQUE EVENT THAT PULLS TOGETHER CATERERS AND DIETITIANS WORKING ACROSS THE SPECTRUM OF HEALTH AND CARE CATERING. IT ENABLES EXPERIENCES AND INSIGHT TO BE SHARED ACROSS THE SECTORS, AND THE COMMON CHALLENGES FACED BY EACH TO BE EXPLORED. HERE'S A SNAPSHOT OF SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EVENT.

**The theme, 'Powering through Crisis', was chosen because for the last few years, one challenge after another has been thrown at care caterers - Covid, food inflation, energy prices, supply chain problems, staff shortages, climate change, carbon footprint, allergens, food waste - but through it all, patients and residents have to be fed. Whilst the challenges have not gone away, the speakers at this Forum all presented ways of moving forwards and tackling, or overcoming, various of these issues.**

This started with the opening keynote, from NHS England's National Development Chef, Andy Politi, and Net Zero Food Programme Dietitian, Jo Instone. One of the key points to emerge from this was the importance of fibre in the diet. The optimum is about 30g of fibre per day, but Jo outlined that most people are only consuming around

18g. Andy picked up on the importance of fibre, recommending intake is spread out throughout the day. Wherever possible look for natural sources of fibre from vegetables and legumes, perhaps adding them to dishes as thickening agents.

To make menus more appealing, Andy stressed seasonality, being aware of colour so the food looks attractive, thinking about how the dish is described on the menu, and making the plate look appetising - in particular, taking care not to overface patients with a portion that appears overwhelming - and engaging with patients and listening to their views.

He demonstrated some creative thinking to take foods everyone is familiar with and adapt them, with a simple twist. For example, try transforming the classic Bakewell tart into a breakfast - taking the opportunity to add fibre - with an oat-based porridge or granola and cherry compote. Another

*"The speakers at this Forum all presented ways of moving forwards and tackling, or overcoming, various of these issues"*



DELEGATES ARRIVING



example is a pina colada breakfast smoothie (minus the rum!) using spinach, mint and banana, blended with pineapple juice and incorporating chia seeds.

Discussing dehydration, Jo provided an example of an elderly relative, who had been living alone and was dehydrated, but didn't realise because her sensation of thirst was reduced. She was confused, tired, wobbly on her feet, all as a result of dehydration, as a consequence of which she fell. Other problems stemming from dehydration include greater risk of stroke due to thickened blood, UTI, kidney injury and constipation.



Leni Wood, Head of Nutrition and Wellness at Nellsar, a family-run group of 13 care homes, talked about balanced portions, stimulating appetite and presentation. Leni is a nutritional therapist and she leads on nutritional wellness. An initiative that is working very well is the creation of a nutrition lead role in each care home to provide a communication link between the kitchen, clinical team and residents.

Leni discussed encouraging appetite through portion control and presentation. Echoing some of Andy's comments, she recommended not overloading plates, keeping presentation simple but attractive, using colours. "We don't want yellow food and white food," she said. Use herbs and spices for flavour, but don't go over the top. Put foods together that belong together, and that create balance. Every meal or snack needs protein, and vegetables to support gut health and provide colour. Think about shapes as well - the example Leni used was meatballs with Brussels sprouts - if everything on the plate is round it becomes unappealing.

With responsibility for training, Leni also emphasised the importance of staff education. Bringing someone into the kitchen and expecting them to just get on with it when they've had no nutritional training is not the way to get good results, she said. "It doesn't need to cost much, but if we can get education going in the kitchen, train staff about presentation as well, it will make a big difference."

Sue Cawthray, National Chair of the National Association of Care Caterers focused on making a difference, and how the association helps caterers to do just that, providing support and help to members. Following Sue, National Chair of the Hospital Caterers Association, Iain Robertson discussed HCA activities and what membership has meant for him and his career\*.

Theo Bostock, Business Development Manager of the event's headline sponsor, Rational UK, gave delegates a whistle-stop tour of the company's cooking equipment for the hospital and care sectors, including getting more productivity from a small space, and labour-saving efficiencies.

The Forum received two case studies, one from each sector. Neil Russell, Chairman of P J Care, a specialist neurological care

provider, talked about the quality of the mealtime experience. "It's so much more than food," he said. In an environment where the pleasure of choosing food is reduced, it's vital that caterers get it right. Food should never be an afterthought, should never be just about refuelling, and this applies to the whole mealtime experience, which in a hospital starts with looking at the menu and ordering the food.

Larry Rosenthal, Chef and Catering Manager at the Royal Free Hospital then discussed what it means to be an Exemplar site, with a focus on culture\*.

From Vegetarian for Life, Chief Executive Amanda Woodvine and Roving Chef, Alex Connell, highlighted the growth in veganism and adapting menus to cater for patients following a plant-based diet. Points to look out for include making sure menus are achievable, nutritionally-balanced and culturally-appropriate, and providing choice at every menu point, for example, soy milk or oat milk to be offered with hot beverages.

"A superfood for the planet," is how Simon Billing, Executive Director of Eating Better, described pulses. The mantra of Eating Better is around more plants, and less but better meat, as a transition that is good for nature, bio-diversity and the climate. The power of pulses is being recognised, as is the potential to integrate more of them into the diet, as a good source of protein, fibre, iron and zinc, as well as being a natural product that is beneficial for gut health.

The final speaker on the programme, Militsa Pribetich-Gill, Head of Product Innovation at Sodexo Health & Care, honed in on the importance of seeing everything through the eyes of the patient who finds themselves in an unfamiliar environment - from menu choices to the times at which meals are served - and the suggestion that more flexibility would be beneficial.

The feedback from delegates and speakers was that the Forum is highly enjoyable and a valuable event that benefits from the input of both sectors. Watch out for the dates for 2024. 📅

\* Flip this issue and turn to p14 of the Hospital Caterer for a more detailed report of the presentations from Iain and Larry.

# TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER... SUPPLIER COLLABORATION CAN DRIVE REAL CHANGE IN THE NHS'S JOURNEY TO NET ZERO

LEE SHEPPARD, APETITO'S DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS, POLICY & SUSTAINABILITY, TALKS TO HOSPITAL FOOD & SERVICE ABOUT APETITO'S ONGOING JOURNEY OF INVESTMENT TO SUPPORT THE NHS WITH THEIR JOINT NET ZERO COMMITMENTS.



**As the National Health Service (NHS) takes crucial steps towards achieving its Net Zero target, the role of suppliers becomes increasingly significant.**

Suppliers who lead by example not only contribute to the overall carbon reduction efforts, but also inspire, support, and encourage local NHS Trusts in their journey to Net Zero.

Through a multitude of pathways – for example, adopting sustainable manufacturing processes, offering lower carbon menu options, using renewable energy sources, reducing the impact of packaging and minimising waste generation, to name but a few. By pro-actively driving their own programmes, suppliers become invaluable collaborators in the NHS Net Zero journey.

Here at apetito, our commitment to sustainability and Net Zero critically extends beyond our own operations. We understand that our role as a supplier to the NHS extends beyond the meals we serve, it involves helping shape a sustainable future for healthcare.

It's why we're investing £6.5 million into our production kitchens. We're investing in cutting edge technology to enhance our production capabilities and further strengthen the quality of our meals, whilst minimising environmental impact.

It's an ambitious programme that leads the way in putting resources back into the business for the future. Resources that reduce emissions and significantly increase energy efficiency, whilst making us more efficient as a business.

We believe the investment will set new standards for the industry and inspire others to follow suit. It's not just about driving growth and meeting demand; it's about doing the right





thing and shaping a sustainable future for all.

The 2022 Climate Action 100 report shows that whilst Net Zero commitments are increasing – and 50% of their focussed companies have full Net Zero commitments, it appears that less than 10% of those companies actually have short-term 2025 targets.

We know that action must be taken now to reach ambitious targets. It is too easy to make a long-term commitment, sit back and wait for something to happen.

We have to work together to inspire and motivate others to make a start. In truth no-one can define with any certainty their projects and journey all the way to Net Zero as we know that many things will change within the intervening period, but we believe it's important that we all act now.

And Climate Change continues to dominate our headlines. The UN wants countries to bring forward their Net Zero targets by a decade to avoid what is calls

“the growing climate disaster” and the UK risks falling behind in its efforts to reach Net Zero by 2050 without much faster action, according to the Government’s independent climate advisors.

Meanwhile, we have just seen the Earth’s average temperature set a new unofficial record high on July 6th (according to an unofficial measurement by Climate Reanalyzer), for the third time just one week. This simply serves to reinforce the urgency of the situation.

In 2020 the NHS adopted a multi-year plan to become the world’s first carbon Net Zero national health system in response to the profound and growing threat to health posed by climate change.

By working together, we can create a future that is sustainable, prosperous, and supports the NHS in its journey of reform and change.

[www.apetito.co.uk](http://www.apetito.co.uk)



**DISCOVERY**

**DEN**



**SALAD CROPS IN THE POLY TUNNEL**

# ORGANIC & TRADITIONAL

IN MAY, A GROUP OF HOSPITAL CATERERS PAID A VISIT TO THE ORGANIC PANTRY, A FAMILY-RUN BUSINESS BASED AT THE 300-ACRE ST HELENS FARM NEAR TADCASTER IN NORTH YORKSHIRE. HOSPITAL FOOD + SERVICE JOINED THE VISIT AND HAS THIS REPORT.



**PLANTING RED CABBAGES**

This visit was part of a series that began last year following the formation of the Love British Food Hospitals Working Group. Welcoming everyone to the farm, Love British Food founder, Alexia Robinson referred to these gatherings as exploring the “Magical World of Possibilities.” She added: “This is about what is possible. We’ve got to make it happen.”

There is no doubt that these visits are making a difference. For example, following a visit to the Hollis Mead organic dairy farm in Dorset last year, Somerset NHS Foundation Trust was inspired to write a new tender for dairy and bread products, which would put local suppliers higher up in the weighting criteria. The result was the award of a contract to a supplier based in Weston-Super-Mare which is new to the healthcare industry.

Whilst the political focus is on trade deals and exporting British produce, it is important that the supply of British produce to the domestic market is not forgotten. The NHS is a big customer and should use its influence to engage with British producers, support local

communities, and in turn give small farmers and other businesses the confidence to invest.

## **THE ORGANIC PANTRY**

Freddie Watson is the fifth generation of the family that has farmed at St Helens Farm for over 100 years. On some 80 acres of the 300-acre site, more than 40 different varieties of vegetables and salad plants are grown. Potatoes are the biggest crop, occupying half of the 80 acres and yielding around 500 tonnes per year. The remainder of the land follows a rotation of grass clover, which conditions the soil and ‘fixes’ the nitrogen from the air meaning less fertiliser is needed.

The Organic Pantry itself was established in 1999, taking the business in a new direction which would see a return to more traditional, pre-1950s farming methods. The initial ambition was to provide a service, growing crops from seed and selling directly to the end consumer. Today, the business delivers direct to consumers, as well as wholesale supply, and is building direct supply relationships with some

*“Potatoes are peeled and vacuum packed on the farm, but instead of using sulphite as a preservative The Organic Pantry uses a blend of lemon and orange juice”*

more substantial customers, including in the public sector. The business model removes the layer of complexity around packaging and distribution that is built into the typical supermarket supply chain and inevitably adds cost, and carbon. Sounds simple and logical, but it's a learning curve. "Twenty years in and we're still learning," Freddie told the hospital caterers on the visit. "It's a lovely way to farm. It's never the same twice. We have to think proactively about what we are doing, because once we can see a problem we've already lost the battle."

By this he means weeds. The Organic Pantry's natural and organic way of growing produce works in harmony with nature to control weeds and pests. Crop rotation, utilising cover crops, and optimising the soil for sowing a vegetable crop are all traditional techniques that discourage the growth of weeds. Furthermore, these traditional methods remain effective against weeds that are becoming resistant to herbicides, such as black grass.

The Organic Pantry is also using some other techniques. For example, a nursery facility at the farm starts off delicate salad crops under a poly tunnel. Here, a layer of cardboard is placed beneath the compost into which the seeds are planted to stop the weeds coming through. The following year, the cardboard is broken into the soil and the cycle repeated. This facility grows around 750,000 plants a year. An air system takes one seed at a time to help with planting, but otherwise, most of the work is done by hand.

### RE-INSTATING HEDGEROWS

In the early 1950s, when the farm invested in its first combine harvester, many of the hedges were cut down to enable the large machine to move freely between fields. Now, the farm is re-planting its hedgerows and it has a policy of only cutting them every other year, allowing them to thicken up and attract bird life.



British hedgerows are incredibly important - not only for the role they play in attracting and providing habitat for all kinds of wildlife, they are also big absorbers of carbon. Green on all sides they present a larger surface area than trees to draw down carbon.

### CROP ROTATION

Around 90% of The Organic Pantry's income is generated by just 25% of the land as a result of the policy of crop rotation, that sees some of the land out of production every year. Planting clover, the reasons for which have already been mentioned, used to be traditional practice, but from the 1950s/60s many farming traditions were abandoned in favour of greater mechanisation and chemicals. With the growth in the use of fertilisers, farmers stopped rotating the land, and the result, several decades later, is poor quality soil. This is starting to change, as understanding grows about how intensive farming practices are damaging the land, and farmers are being encouraged to return to traditional, and organic farming methods.

### INNOVATING

The Organic Pantry has developed the first organic, pre-prepped potato with a seven-day shelf life. Potatoes are peeled and vacuum packed on the farm, but instead of using sulphite as a preservative The Organic Pantry uses a blend of lemon and orange juice. The pre-prepped potatoes are supplied

in a variety of cuts, for example, half-cut, quarter-cut and chips. In addition to its own potato crop, the Organic Pantry buys-in around 500 tonnes of sustainably-grown potatoes to meet its growing customer base, which stretches from Inverness to Kent and includes a significant public sector contract to supply around 480 primary schools across Nottinghamshire, a contract which it has held for a number of years.

The Organic Pantry also supplies its own range of non-pasteurised, cold-pressed juices, containing no preservatives, in a range of six flavours direct to the consumer.

### TAKING ACTION

After the farm tour, the caterers present discussed initiatives they were undertaking at their own hospitals, as well as the challenges faced, and the way supply chain is changing with the Dynamic Procurement System. Events like this give caterers inspiration about how they can make a difference, through understanding how the food they serve is produced, where it comes from and how they can add value. Urging caterers to think about how they can do more, NHS England's Net Zero Food Programme Manager Tim Radcliffe said that public procurement has the opportunity to work with local producers. Buy the best you can and it filters down within the community and starts to add value from which everyone will benefit - the patient, the service, the community and the environment. 📢

*“The remainder of the land follows a rotation of grass clover, which conditions the soil and ‘fixes’ the nitrogen from the air meaning less fertiliser is needed”*



# THE INDUSTRY'S ONE-STOP-SHOP RETURNS

HOSTED ACROSS TWO DAYS ON SEPTEMBER 27-28, 2023 AT EXCEL LONDON, CASUAL DINING, COMMERCIAL KITCHEN & LUNCH! ARE SET TO RETURN FOR THEIR BEST EDITIONS YET.

**These co-located shows offer insight, inspiration and the latest products and services for restaurants, food-to-go, pubs, bars, cafés, coffee shops, supermarkets, contract caterers, hotels, delivery, wholesalers, distributors and more.**

Group Event Director Chris Brazier says: "We're excited to be planning another industry-leading event for 2023, that offers even more opportunities for trade buyers to connect, collaborate and innovate. This is THE place to learn about everything that's happening in the industry and meet the trend-setting suppliers and brands that will elevate ambitious operators across the UK. With free registration now open, we can't wait to welcome our visitors."

The three established events co-located for the first time in 2021, which provided a 'one stop-shop' for visitors to discover cutting-edge food and drink brands, plus the latest tech and kitchen equipment to help streamline businesses. lunch! is the event for the café, coffee shop and food-to-go sector, whilst Commercial Kitchen targets chefs and decision-makers for professional kitchens and Casual Dining is the restaurant, pub and bar event.

Last year over 8,200 attendees visited, including senior decision makers from top high food and drink street brands, retailers, leisure operators, restaurant chains, healthcare organisations and more.

"Having the three events together is massively important and creates that harmony in the industry. It's allowed me to think about how we innovate, not only from a food perspective but from an equipment perspective, which is equally as important for us as a brand, and an integral part of what we do," says Hannah Casey-Burnett, Head of Category and Wholesale for Greggs.

*"This is THE place to learn about everything that's happening in the industry and meet the trend-setting suppliers and brands"*



## SEVEN FREE THEATRES OF CONTENT

Running alongside the exhibition, the three shows will offer carefully curated content across the two days. A range of high-profile presenters and panel discussions will cover the industry's most pressing issues. Last year, the programme included the industry leaders from Caffè Nero, Itsu, GAIL's Bakery, Pret A Manger, LEON, Wahaca, JD Wetherspoon, Caravan and Dishoom - plus top chefs including Tom Aikens, Cyrus Todiwala OBE DL DBA, Cherish Finden - and more.

Attendees can expect to be inspired and informed by a wide range of talks and panels, exploring new ideas and actionable insights. The full programme will be announced soon.

"lunch! is a great opportunity to see current suppliers and explore potential new ones. Nothing really beats having supplier's full range laid out in front of you, alongside

## SUSTAINABLE CHALLENGE

Visitors are being asked to reduce their environmental impact when visiting this event:

- Bring a reusable water bottle
- Use public transport or carshare
- If you purchase food on site, look for sustainable options with local and organic ingredients
- Recycle any plastic bottles, cans or paper rubbish
- Use the event to hold meetings and remove the need to travel to meetings at other times.

any NPD they might be working on - you never know what you might come across," says Amanda Lowe, Head of Innovation at Soho Coffee.

"Attending Commercial Kitchen is extremely important to discover industry innovations. It ensures my kitchen is more sustainable and helps me improve the way I run it," says Cyrus Todiwala, Chef Patron at Café Spice Namasté.

"Casual Dining is a great opportunity to meet with suppliers and see what's new and exciting in the industry," says Brian Trollip, MD, Dishoom.

Pre-registration is encouraged to help secure a free ticket ahead of the shows. Registration is free (until 9.30am on September 27), but trade professionals must prove their trade status in order to visit. 

[www.commercialkitchenshow.co.uk](http://www.commercialkitchenshow.co.uk)

# From Their Homes to Yours

54 leading chefs share their lockdown recipes to help the restaurants we love



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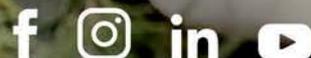
# CHEFTOP MIND.Maps™ PLUS BIG

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## NEW PRODUCTS



### APETITO SCORES BIG AT THE BRITISH FROZEN FOOD FEDERATION AWARDS

apetito has scooped three awards at the 2023 British Frozen Food Federation Awards, winning Gold for its Level 4 Purée Petite Spaghetti Bolognese and Bronze for its energy-dense Level 5 Minced Sticky Toffee Pudding in the Best New Specialist Meal Product category.

Both these texture-modified dishes make a real difference for people living with dysphagia, allowing them to still enjoy their favourite meals and dine with dignity.

apetito's Chicken Tikka Finger Food Bites also won Foodservice Innovation Product of the Year. The Finger Food Bites range (pictured) is hailed as an industry-first. Each 'Bite' encapsulates the flavours of a traditional dish, and the meal provides a source of protein, a portion of carbohydrates and a minimum 80g portion of vegetables.

This dish received special recognition for its innovative and accessible design, enabling those living with dementia and coordination difficulties to feed themselves nutritionally-balanced meals independently.

[www.apetito.co.uk](http://www.apetito.co.uk)

### THREE OVENS IN ONE CONVERGE TO GIVE POWER AND FLEXIBILITY



FEM (Foodservice Equipment Marketing) has launched Alto-Shaam's new range of Converge Multi-Cook Ovens, designed to give chefs the flexibility of a multi-cook oven combined with the versatility of combi cooking.

Using Alto-Shaam's structured air technology, these latest ovens are available in two or three chambered versions. Their ventless, self-cleaning design can steam, air fry, bake, grill and more, all at the same time, without flavour transfer. They increase production capacity without increasing

labour demands, eliminating the need for staff to watch or rotate pans.

Alto-Shaam's structured air technology provides superior cooking evenness with air entering vertically from the rear of the oven. This optimised, focused heat delivers faster, more efficient and consistent cooking than other methods. There is no food degradation and no hot or cold spots.

A key feature of the Converge ovens is the boilerless steam generation in each chamber, which eliminates maintenance and costs associated with traditional ovens using boilers.

[www.fem.co.uk](http://www.fem.co.uk)

### CENTRAL FOODS LAUNCHES NEW VEGAN COCKTAIL SAUSAGE ROLLS

Meeting the demand for tasty, plant-based products, and ideal for buffets or finger food platters, the KaterVeg! vegan sausage rolls are bite-sized and made from pea protein.

They are available ready-glazed and ready to bake - offering caterers a mini version of the 4-inch and 6-inch KaterVeg! vegan sausage rolls also supplied by Central Foods.

The 15g KaterVeg! vegan cocktail sausage rolls are available in packs of 200 and simply need baking off before serving.

[www.centralfoods.co.uk](http://www.centralfoods.co.uk)



### LOW-HEIGHT OPTIONS FOR PERFECTLY FORMED BOTTLE STORAGE

Williams Refrigeration has added a new low-height option to its range of bottle coolers. Standard models are 900mm high, but the new low-height option reduces this to just 850mm. This allows it to be installed under custom-built bespoke bars. While the external height is reduced, generous capacity and all the features of the standard version are retained.

The range includes one, two and three door models. Each features full sized double-glazed glass doors and efficient, low energy consumption LED lighting. Adjustable shelving allows them to be adapted to hold non-standard sized bottles or cans and they can also accommodate vertical stacking.

Each model is available either with a stainless steel or black PVC-coated galvanised steel exterior with the interior constructed from easy to clean, mirror-finish stainless steel. Internal temperature can be adjusted between 4 and 10°C to enable different drinks to be stored in their ideal conditions.

[www.williams-refrigeration.co.uk](http://www.williams-refrigeration.co.uk)





## HUBBARD SYSTEMS RUNS HOT AND COLD FOR THE PERFECT MULTIFUNCTIONAL STORAGE SOLUTION

Hubbard Systems is now supplying the new mobile Combi Station finishing and service terminal from Friulinox. The Combi Station is a versatile multifunctional unit that combines refrigerated and heated portable storage.

The Combi Station features two refrigerated and two heated drawers, which can be configured with internal dividers to provide simple and safe storage of a range of different products. The top of the cabinet can be used as a work surface to prepare fresh ingredients, and these finished or semi-finished meals can be stored in the heated drawers until required. The worktop then allows staff to serve food directly from it, making it ideal for canteen or buffet service.

The Combi Station can operate from a standard 13 amp supply, and is mounted on wheels allowing it to be easily transported where required. This makes it ideal for outdoors and remote catering, as it can be set up almost anywhere. Furthermore it can be combined with a high speed oven to create a fully self-contained cooking station.

[www.hubbardsystems.co.uk](http://www.hubbardsystems.co.uk)



## FSG PROUD TO SPONSOR HCA WEBINAR TO HIGHLIGHT THE BENEFITS OF REUSABLE PACKAGING

FSG - ECO to go, was proud to have sponsored the recent HCA webinar on finding cost-effective solutions as alternatives to single-use plastics. For over 15 years FSG has been at the forefront of change, providing sustainable reusable alternatives to single-use food and drink to-go packaging.

To date, FSG has been responsible for removing over 250 million disposables from polluting the environment, helping foodservice operators reduce carbon footprint and costs across all sectors.

The product range includes reusable takeout packaging and adapted dinnerware, items which have been successfully introduced into NHS hospitals and healthcare retail units.

FSG is now introducing its new range Eco containers with black base and clear lid. Contact FSG to request a free sample.

"Let us help you in your drive to a Net Zero NHS."

[www.fsg.uk.com](http://www.fsg.uk.com)

## PERFECT PIZZA, AFTER PERFECT PIZZA, AFTER PERFECT PIZZA...

For caterers wanting to serve good pizzas throughout the day without the hassle of wood-fired ovens, electric pizza ovens are the answer. The new Sirman Aetna electric pizza ovens, now available from FEM (Foodservice Equipment Marketing), are the perfect oven for operators producing high quantities of pizza over a long serving period quickly and consistently. They are available as a single or double-deck oven, cooking up to six pizzas in just 3.5 minutes.



[www.fem.co.uk](http://www.fem.co.uk)

## HOBART UNVEILS SUITE OF SOLUTIONS FOR REUSABLES

Hobart is unveiling a toolkit of innovative products aimed at supporting operators as the UK's circular economy, and specifically the usage of reusable plastics, continues on an upward spiral. The plastic washing and drying solutions include HYLINE Rinse Aid, custom racking and state-of-the-art drying.

HYLINE Rinse Aid provides superior drying performance for plastic cups, cutlery and dishes. Ordinarily, plastics would come out of the machine moist and dripping with water, but Rinse Aid negates this completely hygienically.

Bespoke racking systems are designed to keep lightweight plastics in place. In the large warewash machines, the flight type conveyors come with adjustable height bars that operators can set to suit the dimensions of their reusable plastics.

Hobart's innovative warewashers are designed to deliver consistent and reliable plastic washing and drying results. From undercounter machines with innovative Top Dry functionality that keeps heat energy within the machine, through to tabletop dryers with hood machines and flight type dishwashers, there is a machine purpose-built to help every operator keep pace with the rise of reusables.

[www.hobartuk.com](http://www.hobartuk.com)





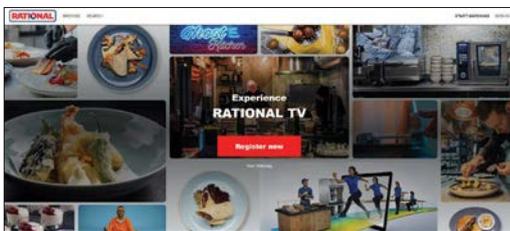
## VALENTINE EQUIPS CATERERS TO HANDLE FOOD ALLERGIES

In a move to support caterers and reduce the risk of cross-contamination, Valentine is introducing its range of Allergen Control Fryers.

Part of the company's Evolution series, the Allergen Control Fryers come in two variants, a standard pumped filtration model and a turbo pumped filtration model for rapid temperature recovery and greater output. The twin pan basket design, complete with independent filtration systems delivers simple, efficient filtering to reduce the risk of cross-contamination and prolong the life of the cooking oil.

It's in minimising the risk of cross-contamination that the Valentine Allergen Control Fryers come into their own. Using entirely separate fry pans, each pressed from a single sheet of stainless steel to enhance durability and aid cleaning, and with completely independent filtration systems, oil from each pan is kept entirely separate. For added usability, the entire system is colour coded as standard, including the basket, oil discharge pipe, filter basket and filter itself - helping operators to identify which pan is used, for example, for gluten-containing and gluten-free recipes.

[www.valentinefryers.com](http://www.valentinefryers.com)



## RATIONAL LAUNCHES VIDEO ON-DEMAND PLATFORM

Rational UK has announced the launch of Rational TV, a new free-to-register video on-demand platform. It offers a comprehensive choice of videos bringing knowledge and inspiration to the hospitality and catering industry.

Viewers have access to an exciting array of content with new videos added on a frequent basis. From customer stories, application training, through to hot topic webinars that showcase the benefits of the Rational iVario and iCombi Pro cooking systems.

"Rational's ethos to deliver maximum customer benefit continues to give rise to innovative new services and products. The way customers seek and receive information has dramatically changed, and in recognition of this we were first to market with online webinars. Rational TV, another first, provides viewers the freedom to be inspired at their convenience," says Adam Knights, Marketing Director, Rational UK.

To join Rational TV, subscribe for free at: [www.rational-online.tv](http://www.rational-online.tv)

## PANASONIC'S ENERGY EFFICIENCY PERFORMANCE TRIUMPHS IN INDEPENDENT TESTING

Panasonic's NE-1878 microwave has generated outstanding results in energy efficiency and overall performance in a comparative assessment of the performance of commercial microwave ovens, independently commissioned by Panasonic UK.



Three tests took place - electricity consumption on full power, heating efficiency and internal radiation efficiency

- with the Panasonic NE-1878 performing best overall when compared with two equivalent models from competitors and its predecessor the NE-1853.

During a two-minute full-power heating period, the NE-1878 consumed the least power, and consistently achieved the most heating using the lowest amount of electricity. The heating efficiency concluded the NE-1878 was best in this category, and most energy efficient. For internal radiation efficiency, the NE-1878 heating was most consistent between the front and back, compared to the two competitor microwaves.

Microwave emissions were also spot-checked during testing, with the NE-1878 being the safest. More of the microwave radiation is retained within the oven due partly to the unit's full metal door; a USP of this model.

[www.panasonic.co.uk/pro-cooking](http://www.panasonic.co.uk/pro-cooking)

## WRAPMASTER® EMPOWERS CHEFS TO REDUCE KITCHEN WASTE AND CUT COSTS

Wrapmaster® - the ultimate chef wrap system - is calling on chefs and operators to act now on food waste, and embed cost-saving habits before the 2030 legislation comes in.

Moving towards eliminating food waste from landfill, in 2023/24, operators will need to separate their food wastage from general waste, as well as other recyclable waste, and send it for recycling. By 2030, foodservice sites will no longer be permitted to send their food waste to landfill or incineration.

With early planning, Wrapmaster's innovative food wrap system offers an effective solution to help chefs and foodservice operators tackle the challenges posed by the new food waste legislation.

The award-winning dispenser has the ability to minimise food waste by protecting and preserving valuable ingredients far better and more cost-effectively than traditional cutter boxes and loose rolls.

Recommended by food safety professionals, Wrapmaster can be sanitised and disinfected in a commercial dishwasher to reduce the risk of cross-contamination and keep food safe.

[www.wrapmaster.global/en/](http://www.wrapmaster.global/en/)



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

# NHS SUPPLY CHAIN: FOOD CONTRACT RETENTION ANNOUNCED

**NHS SUPPLY CHAIN: FOOD HAS RECENTLY RETAINED THE CONTRACT TO PROVIDE FOOD SERVICES INTO HOSPITALS ACROSS ENGLAND.**



**ATTENDEES RECEIVE CERTIFICATES OF ACHIEVEMENT**



**CHEFS AT A TRAINING EVENT**

**T**he new contract term started on July 5, 2023 and means NHS Supply Chain: Food will be the Category Management Service Provider until March 2027. This marks a new chapter, where NHS Supply Chain: Food can further enhance the great foundations already laid, driving savings into Trusts through frameworks, as well as providing added value such as Chefs Academy, Food Forum events and various other activities.

NHS Supply Chain: Food is delighted to be able to further evolve the contract as a committed partner, having supplied food to the NHS for the past five years, supporting procurement and catering teams within hospitals, and providing the best supplier solutions for Trust's needs, acting as the perfect partner as their supplier of food.

NHS Supply Chain: Food will continue to provide services associated with the supply of food, negotiating the best possible prices and delivering commercial savings, as well as offering a compliant route to market. New activity will start now, including working with Key Priority Trusts to drive significant savings, as well as increasing Chefs Academy and Food Forum events for Trusts, and an enhanced innovative approach towards the work done with Trusts to enable NHS Supply Chain: Food to work even more closely with them.

## **CHEFS ACADEMY EVENT OFF TO A FLYING START**

The new contract year is already off to a good start for the award-winning Chefs Academy, with plans to further accelerate this training events programme. Started in the last contract term, this training events programme was designed and led by NHS Supply Chain: Food to inspire and equip NHS chefs with new skills. It allows chefs to take back new recipes and skills to their hospitals, enabling them to enhance the catering offer when meal planning and cooking at their sites.

The NHS Supply Chain: Food Chefs Academy training team, made up of the Culinary Team, chefs Michael Sharp and Nick Vadis, alongside the Dietetic Team, Idrees Anwar and Abigail Attenborough, recently hosted events in West London and Norwich.

At each Chefs Academy, the NHS Supply Chain: Food team teach culinary skills through hands-on cooking, inspire through new recipes and analysis (including a look at cost and time efficiency), and provide chefs with the opportunity to learn new dishes from the Culinary Concepts recipe books developed by NHS Supply Chain: Food, using approved products. Attendees are encouraged to turn up ready to learn and cook new dishes, mentored by the Culinary and Dietetic Teams. Attendance can also count towards any chef currently undertaking an NHS Chef Apprenticeship.

## **CULINARY CONCEPTS REFRESH**

NHS Supply Chain: Food's Culinary Concepts recipe books were recently relaunched, using Nutritics software, to create enhanced recipe cards, in line with NHS England which also uses this technology. The new recipe cards have great nutritional information and are a much simpler recipe format for NHS chefs to work from.

Michael Sharp, Culinary Specialist at NHS Supply Chain: Food says: "The Culinary Concepts have become the core of what we do, to help offer further added value to the Trusts we engage with. This will enhance our new concepts due to launch soon, including Children's Feeding and 24/7 Food To Go. These new improved recipe cards will reinforce the robust recipe database that is available to Trusts for future use, thereby improving food even further in hospitals."

## **LOOKING FORWARD - FOOD FORUM EVENTS**

The Food Forum events programme will continue, with the first event of the new contract year running in the Midlands in September. These events will be regionally located for Trusts, bringing product and procurement updates, insights, trends and education around NHS Supply Chain: Food savings opportunities, and the opportunity to sample some Culinary Concepts recipes. 🍴

Additional Information

<https://www.supplychain.nhs.uk/event/chefs-academy/>

<https://www.supplychain.nhs.uk/categories/food/>



# NHS

## NHS SUPPLY CHAIN

# FRAMEWORK DIRECTORY

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Linking the dairy chain

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## HOT BEVERAGES AND VENDING SOLUTIONS

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# #GREATHOSPITALFOOD

I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT TRADITIONAL OUTSOURCING AND BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS ARE BASED ON WIN-LOSE ARRANGEMENTS WHERE ONE PARTY BENEFITS AT THE OTHER'S EXPENSE. WE SEE THIS ACROSS THE NHS, WHERE ADVERSARIAL CONTRACTS ARE SET UP THROUGH THE OFTEN LITIGIOUS AND RESTRICTIVE PUBLIC CONTRACTS REGULATIONS.

We have a perverse scenario where companies have a right to bid for business but have no cultural fit with their clients. They provide an off-the-shelf, commoditised solution which is controlled by a carrot and (mostly) stick performance management mechanism with low levels of trust and compatibility. In contrast, a Vested agreement creates a relationship in which both parties are equally invested in one another's success based on a relational contract with mutualisation terms.

I am a proponent of Vested Outsourcing, a contract process based on a partnership mentality with mutual trust, a shared vision and objectives, adoption of guiding principles, and alignment of expectations and interests.

Developed from research by Kate Vitasek from the University of Tennessee, a Vested contract is developed around five rules:

- Agreements should be outcome-focused, not input or output-focused
- Focus on the 'what', not the 'how'
- Desired outcomes should be clearly defined and measurable
- Pricing model incentives should be optimised for cost/service trade-offs - essentially, we win together and we lose together in a shared risk environment
- Governance should be based on insight rather than oversight.

One or more desired outcomes must be mutually agreed, and these can be objectively measured to determine if the relationship is successful. This outcome can include cost reductions, revenue increases, schedule improvements, increased market share and better levels of patient care and customer service. Deals are set up together, and buyer and supplier teams work together to achieve the desired outcome, with operators, procurement, sales, legal and finance teams together in the same room from the start, progressing through a series of workshops to develop the contract.

## HOW A DIFFERENT APPROACH WORKS

What is critical is that, rather than focusing on the success of the contracted relationship, the Vested approach commits both the buyer and the supplier to the success of each other's organisation. This strengthens the sense of partnership and encourages a more long-lasting relationship. By sharing their expertise and aligning their goals, both parties can drive innovation, adapt to changing needs and mitigate risk, while working towards mutual success.

This, to my mind, is a fantastic 'third way' in solving the age-old issue of in-house vs outsource, command and control-style management, and instead focuses on delivering what the patients



and customers really want. It brings people together to achieve a common aim rather than pitting them against each other.

We have used some of these ideas already on our catering projects and the results have been phenomenal. Our collaborative project at St George's University Hospital in London saw us engage the workforce and customers in a wholesale transformation of staff catering services, and the

figures speak for themselves. Within three months, daily revenues doubled, subsidy halved, prices reduced by 15%, average spend increased by 20%, and customer satisfaction increased by almost 25%.

We didn't outsource to a contractor because we didn't want to have a cost-constrained service. I am not blaming the suppliers here - they are only playing the rules of a failed game. Instead, we used strategic partnerships with commercial and other public sector providers who contributed their expertise in a highly collaborative environment and there has been no issue about who they work for because the staff and customers are fully on board.

Andrew Asbury, Group Chief Infrastructure, Facilities & Environment Officer for St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, himself said the project had delivered "beyond our wildest dreams" and there was "amazing" enthusiasm from staff to be delivering this offer.

In the world of Vested, relationships depend on collaboration, transparency, flexibility, and trust. This may all sound like common sense, but many will think that it can never happen in the real world. Traditional business relationships are rooted in an 'us and them, we know best' mentality. This leads to less-than-ideal quality and value is eroded because the contracts are defensively run on a tit-for-tat basis and any savings disappear fighting disputes, change control and general apathy from both buyer and supplier.

This is my final Vole piece, so I just want to leave you with the thought that NHS catering is changing, and despite all the negativity and bad press, great outcomes can be achieved. For this to succeed, you need to have the courage, strength, leadership, expertise, and humility to make it happen. Our approach is very much open-source and we're happy to share it and for our successes to be copied and improved upon so that across patient care and staff welfare the highest standards are continuously maintained.

Thanks for reading and I wish you all well for the future. 

## JULIAN FRIS

Director, Neller Davies

# 24/7 HOT FOOD READY MEAL VENDING SOLUTIONS

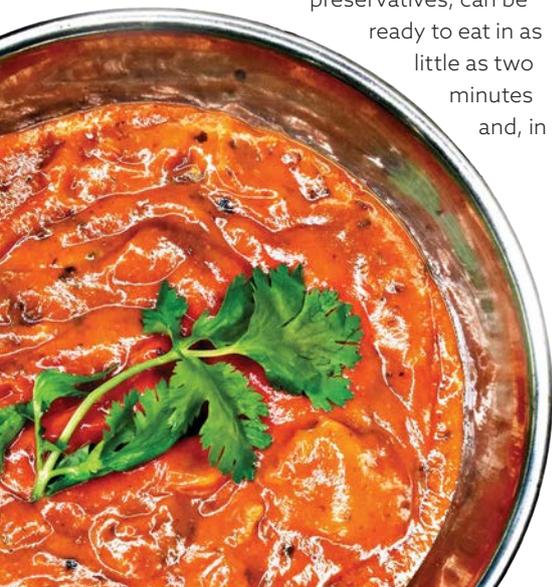
**THE PERFECT SOLUTION FOR THE PROVISION OF, 'OUT OF HOURS' NHS FOOD SERVICE. 'DINE IN' OR 'TAKEAWAY' TO EAT AT YOUR LEISURE. OFFERING A FANTASTIC MENU - (EAST MEETS WEST).**

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For the NHS, our 24/7 ready meal vendors offer not only a very cost effective 'out of hours' provision of a hot meal solution for NHS staff (from as little as £4.55 per day) and reducing food wastage and your Carbon Footprint, as the meals do not require any refrigeration and have a shelf life of 9 to 18 months without deterioration of quality.

- Healthier eating with low calories, low fat, lowered salt
- Vegetarian and Vegan options, Gluten and dairy free recipes
- Religious requirements met with recipes using Halal accredited chicken
- Offering good portion control and balanced nutrition
- Caters for allergens, dietary and diverse cultures

These meals have no artificial colouring or preservatives, can be ready to eat in as little as two minutes and, in



many cases, are available gluten-free and halal approved (these fall within CQUIN guidelines issued by the NHS).

## MACHINE RANGE

The machines will operate as ambient models and will have as standard a full change giving coin mechanism with optional extra of a contactless payment solution. There are two models of machines, standard glass fronted spiral vendor and a spiral glass fronted vendor with elevator and vend port for speedy and safe delivery. Both models offer two branding options, All machines will vend biodegradable sport sets – knife, fork, spoon, and napkin.

**Self-Fill Operation** – the machines are supplied on a self-fill basis, they are simple to restock and very low maintenance – as there is no fridge unit, and with the optional benefit for over the counter sales and emergency patient feeding if dietary requirements are not immediately available.

**Staff Health and wellbeing** – many hospitals lack the facilities to cater for 'out of hours' catering, it is too costly in terms of staffing to keep the restaurant open that extra hour until 8pm or later and operate a reduced catering service over weekends. The health and wellbeing of staff working nights and long shifts along with improvement in hospital food and "out of hours" food service.

## ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF MICROWAVE READY MEALS

The meals can cater for dietary and allergen requirements, and satisfy requirements for diverse cultures and religions, cater for patients who miss a meal or had procedures during meal service times and over the counter sales from the restaurant.



### For further information

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**FAIRTRADEVENDING**

# FOOD SAFETY STUDY DAY FOR HOSPITALS

**IN 2019 THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION LAUNCHED 'WORLD FOOD SAFETY DAY' TO INSPIRE ACTION TO HELP PREVENT FOODBORNE RISKS AND CONTRIBUTE TO HUMAN HEALTH. TO COINCIDE, ON JUNE 7, 2023, HCA WESSEX HELD A FOOD SAFETY STUDY DAY FOR HOSPITALS.**

**T**he Ark Conference Centre, on the grounds of Basingstoke Hospital, made the perfect venue. It felt quite 'vintage' to be a purely face-to-face event, but valuable to bring everyone together.

Andy Whittingham, Wessex Chair and Head of Catering Operations from University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust hosted:

- Phil Shelley set the scene by outlining NHS England's National Standards, to have a named board member for food (safety) and a nominated food safety specialist. Phil provided guidelines for competent, responsible and authorised persons, and emphasised the role of leadership to inspire, influence and innovate.
- Narriman Looch, Head of Food Hygiene and Foodborne Disease Control at the Food Standards Agency (FSA) presented a reminder on controlling the risk of Listeriosis in chilled, ready to eat foods. The 2019 Listeria outbreak report found the 'Listeriosis guidance' to be inconsistently implemented across hospitals. The results of a survey undertaken to identify barriers is now available on the FSA website.
- Tina Potter, FSA's Head of Incident, delivered a presentation on incident and outbreak management, highlighting the importance of collaborative working, open and prompt communication channels between hospitals and the FSA. Legally, hospitals must (confidentially) report incidents (e.g. allergic reaction, pathogens) immediately to the local authority or directly to the FSA. Tina also explained the power of genome sequencing for *L.monocytogens* detected by hospitals.

- Tom Hollands, Innovation and Technical Director for Raynor Foods, developed the British Sandwich Association's 'Controlling Listeria in the supply chain' guidance for manufacturers. Tom explained the challenges this pathogen presents, even when the most rigorous measures are put in place, such as at Raynor's. This highlights the importance of every link in the chain to the customer following bespoke guidance, with emphasis on <math>5^{\circ}\text{C}</math>.
- Kirstin Morris, NHS Supply Chain Business Director presented the importance of the role of procurement in food safety, and explained the commitment of NHS Supply Chain, and arrangements in place for suppliers on their frameworks.
- Janne Shack, Speech & Language Therapist from Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust, is closely involved with the international IDDSI framework for texture and thickness of food and drink. Janne gave an overview of the risks from dysphagia and choking, and the framework. Janne's team provide training in catering for dysphagia diets.
- Fiona Sinclair, Director of Inspectrum Food Safety presented on Food Safety Culture. Sub cultures can exist across departments, and Fiona made the suggestion of an interdepartmental culture plan as a tool to promote consistency of mindset and behaviour across a Trust. Fiona also touched on how we approach food safety systems, and how training can have a positive impact on culture.
- Caroline Benjamin from Food Allergy Aware emphasised the importance of careful communication and management for food hypersensitive



patients and visitors, and encouraged near miss reporting and root cause analysis as tools to avoid future incidents.

- The programme was rounded off with a Panel Q&A with Branch Chair Andy Whittingham, Director Ian Robertson from Solent NHS Trust, Steve Fullwood from Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust and Phil Shelley. The feedback from the day was that it was very worthwhile.



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# LEARNING LESSONS AT THE CARE HOME AND HOSPITAL CATERING FORUM

**THE CARE HOME AND HOSPITAL CATERING FORUM 2023 WAS HELD RECENTLY AT THE HABERDASHERS HALL, LONDON (SEE PAGE 28-29 OF HF+S FOR A FULL REPORT). THE HCA WAS WELL REPRESENTED BY VICE CHAIR, IAIN ROBERTSON, WHO GAVE HIS MAIDEN SPEECH IN THE ROLE, AND LONDON AND SOUTH EAST BRANCH MEMBER, LARRY ROSENTHAL, CATERING MANAGER AT THE ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL.**

Iain had been invited to provide an update on the activities of the HCA and he wasted no time in explaining just why, when his old manager had suggested that it would benefit him, he joined the Association in 2014. He clearly explained how we are structured and what we represent; lobbying on behalf of patients in our care to secure the funding to deliver a safe, nutritious food service for everyone. This culminated with the inclusion of hospital food in the Health and Social Care Bill.

During his speech Iain reminded everyone of some recent events including our recent successful Forum, the theme of which was 'the voice of the hospital caterer', and the superb HCA 4 Nations showcase at the Hotel, Restaurant and Catering Show. He heralded the National Healthcare Estates and Facilities Day and the work the Wessex Region had done to celebrate World Food Safety Day (see p16).

He then moved on to look into the future, using the opportunity to give us an insight into some of the priorities he feels he would like to challenge during his time as National Chair. He said: "I am particularly keen on addressing how we can get younger people, at the start of their careers, who show a desire to progress within hospital catering to join the HCA." Historically, Iain believes that people have generally joined the Association once they reach managerial level. "I believe strongly," says Iain, "that this is something we need to change due to the issues we face around recruitment, retention and succession planning."

Getting younger members into more junior positions will accelerate their professional development, and being part of the HCA will only be a positive influence on their careers.

Later in the day Larry Rosenthal delivered an interesting case study on being one of NHS England's Exemplar sites. He spoke about providing a 24hr hot patient meal service. "Not everyone wants to eat at 7.30am, noon and 5.30pm. It's just not what we do at home, so why should we when we are in an institution?" He explained that his team were constantly looking to improve, but in a measured way rather than trying to do everything at once.

Already they are introducing some 'small touches', such as improving the quality of sandwiches and ensuring that they are quartered prior to being placed before the patient, and a new international Halal menu that, based upon patient feedback, will include global favourites such as Mediterranean and Jamaican dishes as well as some traditional British dishes.

At the Royal Free they want to know if they are delivering a safe and responsive service. Larry explains the wide range of audit and verification stages his team complete as a matter of course. These include working with external partners such as the local Council as well as internal checks. All of these are carefully documented and filtered into monthly reports that are readily available for the Trust's Management Team.

A great deal of this success comes down to simply listening. Listening to

the patients, staff and visitors and all the service users who interface with the catering department. This might not sound like rocket science, but ask yourself, does all this really happen on my site? Because the whole thing boils down to creating a culture within the catering department that is focused simply on doing the absolute best that we can; consistently, day-in and day-out.



IAIN ROBERTSON



LARRY ROSENTHAL

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# WELCOME TO SOME NEW FACES

**AT THE AGM IN APRIL, WE WELCOMED IAIN ROBERTSON INTO THE POSITION OF VICE CHAIR. THIS WAS A VERY SPECIAL VOTE OF CONFIDENCE, AS IAIN WILL ONLY SERVE A SINGLE YEAR IN THE ROLE BEFORE TAKING ON THE CHAIN OF OFFICE AS NATIONAL CHAIR OF THE ASSOCIATION.**

Since the Forum and subsequent webinar, many more of you will be familiar with Iain, who is currently the Catering Operations Manager at Solent NHS Trust. He has been working in the NHS since 1998, when he went to Poole Hospital as an agency worker. This is such a familiar route into hospital catering; many people see it as an unexciting part of the industry, but it isn't until you get inside the place that you realise what a wonderfully rewarding profession it is - helping others, particularly the sick and the vulnerable.

Starting as a chef, Iain worked his way up the managerial ladder, finally becoming Head Chef at Poole Hospital before dropping his whites in 2014 for the next stage of his career. Now married, and with his first child, Iain decided that this was to be his long-term career and he hasn't looked back. His route through the HCA has been a similar stellar rise. He is seen as a shining star from the Wessex Branch and was finally convinced, after a few

years of cajoling, to take on a wider role. He represented the Association at this year's Public Sector roundtable at the House of Commons, and made his debut speech at the Care Home and Hospital Catering Forum in London recently.

During his speech Iain talked about his own vision, saying that: "I am particularly keen on addressing how we can get younger people at the start of their careers, who show a desire to progress within hospital catering, to join the HCA." Clearly, Iain has a passion for the HCA, so we look forward to seeing the forthcoming strategy statements as we anticipate a brighter future.

It is unusual for a Vice Chair to only have a single year to get used to the rigours of being the Chair and leading such an honourable association. For this we needed a person who has strength, drive and confidence and we are certain that Iain fits this role perfectly. We hope that all members will unite to wish him every success in his new role.

Everyone was delighted to see that Nicola Strawther, Branch Director of the Trent Branch, was elected to the position. Nicola has been a strong supporting member of the Association for many years, having been part of the Celtic Manor Forum Committee in 2018, and has contributed to a number of webinars and discussion groups.

Nicola is currently the Chief Dietetic and Catering Technician for Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust and plays a pivotal role in linking the two departments as well as representing the 'Power of Three' in a really tangible way.

Both Iain and Nicola have been leading figures in NHS England's 'Great Food - Good Health' Expert Panels, who are due to present their reports later this year in response to work carried out since the Independent Review of NHS Hospital Food. They also represent a generational change in the senior leadership of the association, ensuring that it will be fit to support the NHS for another 75 years.



IAIN ROBERTSON

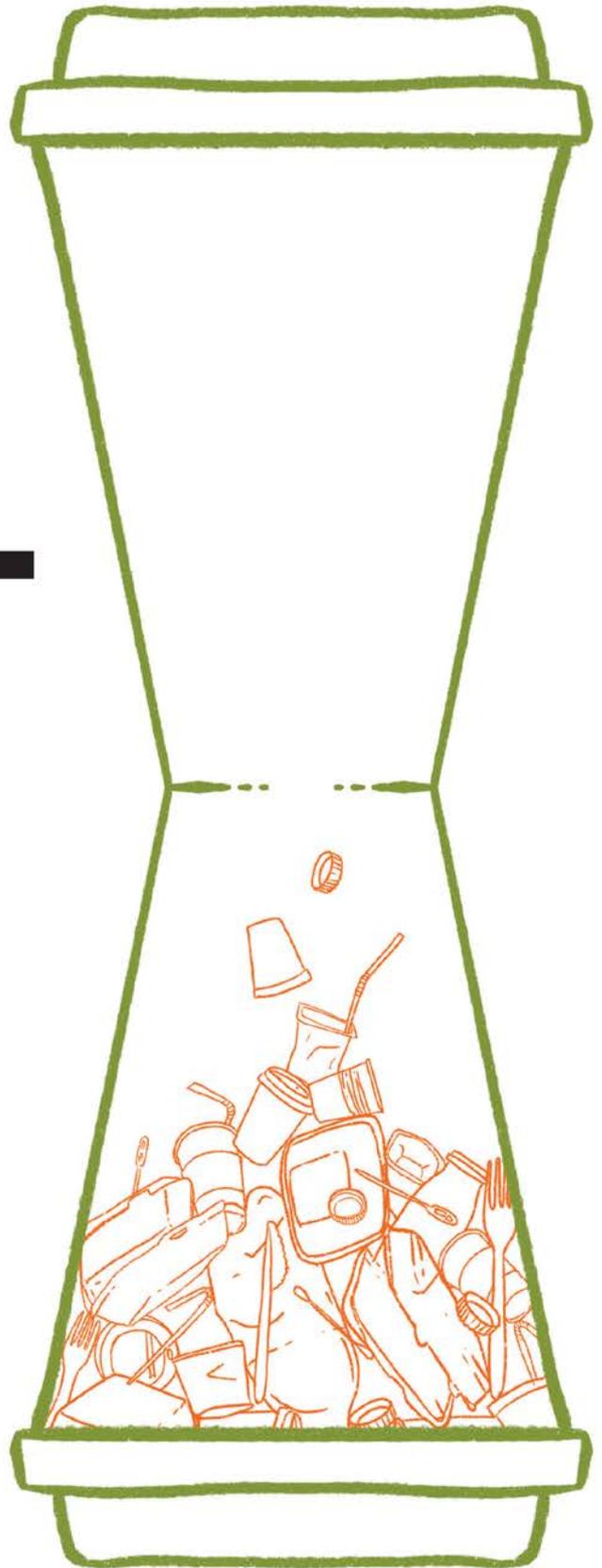
## NICOLA JOINS THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

With Iain being unanimously voted in as Vice Chair, a vacancy opened for a new face on the National Executive. Traditionally this person would already be a Regional Director and we were pleased that a number of people raised their hands to be considered.



NICOLA STRAWTHER

# Time's Up for Single- Use



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# WHAT'S NEW IN THE THIRD EDITION

**MORE THAN TWO YEARS IN DEVELOPMENT, THE THIRD EDITION OF THE BDA'S NUTRITION AND HYDRATION DIGEST WAS RECENTLY LAUNCHED AT A WELL-ATTENDED EVENT IN THE WELLCOME COLLECTION IN CENTRAL LONDON.**

**A**s a sign of its significance, the BDA's CEO, Liz Stockley came along to give the opening address and to praise the Food Services Specialist Group (FSSG) for their perseverance throughout the pandemic to update what is commonly referred to as the 'Bible' of healthcare catering standards.

After a brief overview of the third edition and its significant changes, it was our own Phil Shelley who took to the stage to explain what the new National Standards for Healthcare Food and Drink mean for healthcare food service and the role of the dietitian. He referred to the 'Power of Three' and how both the standards and the digest form integral supports for this initiative.

Those chapters that have changed most significantly were then outlined in more detail, starting with Chapter Two, led by Ruth Smith. She explained there are now new resources to support and champion the role of the foodservice dietitian, including sample job descriptions, a person spec and, perhaps most importantly, guidance on how to write a business case to support the appointment in each Trust, which was one of the recommendations of the Independent Review.

A brand-new chapter (#4) covers Environmental Sustainability. Chapter Leads, Maxine Cartz and Dr. Mabel Blades (both HCA members) gave a rousing overview of the chapter, which is based on the BDA's original One Blue Dot. They also pointed out that the Digest dovetails



into the sustainable plans of all 4 Nations. The BDA's Sustainability Specialist Group Chair, Tanya Haffner then gave a fascinating, whirlwind tour around the world, and why this subject is so important to the healthcare sector. NHS England's Net Zero Food Programme Dietitian, Jo Instone rounded off this session perfectly by talking about what carbon labelling is and how it can be used appropriately within foodservice. She announced that she had been working on a range of new menus that are designed for reduced carbon footprint, whilst still meeting the challenging targets expected on the main menu cycles across all patient groups.

Jo's talk was followed by Chapter 10 Leads, Rachel Liston and Tom Dodd, who discussed the changes to the nutrition standards to be used for menu planning. They went into the rationale for an increased target protein requirement of 79-92g per day. The chapter fully explains the reasons, but caterers will be

allowed a period of 18 months to consider how best this can be implemented. It is, perhaps, one of the few controversial elements within the new edition. Chapter 12 Lead, Elise Kelly talked about menu coding, promoting and communicating higher protein options to patients. She introduced a new symbol P or + for higher protein; and three updated criteria for Higher Energy E or ↑.

The new Digest is now available online. It is easy to navigate, and you will be able to search and print by section. There are also hotlinks to almost every reference included throughout the document. The pdf version will be available very soon at the same link.

FSSG Chair, Lauren Bowen is delighted to introduce the new edition saying: "This has been an epic task considering the pandemic and has included the efforts of some 35 dietitians and caterers from around the 4 Nations. We cannot underestimate the impact of this document and its value as the evidence based, best practice resource to be used not only by dietitians, but caterers, estates and facilities, procurement, nurses and policy makers to improve outcomes through nutritional care in our food services. Our launch was a super celebration of the dietitians who came before us, they paved the way for us to become the respected high profile specialist group and the now go-to voice for credible foodservice dietetics."

<https://www.bda.uk.com/the-nutrition-and-hydration-digest.html>



## FSG'S BENEFITS OF REUSABLES

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- Popular with many customers, especially the younger generation

experiences from our operational colleagues. Oxford Branch member and HCA Caterer of the Year 2023, Andrea Raymond, got the ball rolling. Andrea is the Operations Manager - Catering Services for Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust which has seven mental health and palliative care sites, each with a café, across the county. The Trust's journey started in 2017 with the introduction of compostable items. The following year it introduced a 10p discount for customers who used their own cups. The initiative was well received, particularly by the staff who were seeing other environmental initiatives being created across the Trust.

By the end of this year, Andrea hopes that they will remove all single-use disposable containers from their seven café outlets. The staff are also being encouraged to bring their own containers or purchase the Trust branded ones from the café. Andrea is keeping the compostable cutlery for the time being but is actively investigating alternatives.

Sian Langford, Facilities Compliance & Sustainability Manager at Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt NHS Foundation Trust (RJA) explained that her Trust, like most others, signed the NHS Pledge in 2019 and the use of reusable items is "business as usual" now at her orthopaedic specialist hospital in Oswestry. Here, they also use reusable items and paper and plant-based packaging for patient services as well as retail outlets.

Sian said that the Trust "wanted to use

the ban as starting point," but recognised that one size doesn't fit all. The Trust can take action for the services within its control and hopes to lead by example, influencing others, such as the charity-run cafés that this is the right thing to do. Sian reminded viewers that mini steps add up to significant change and added that, if you haven't already, you should "make friends with your Sustainability Manager, as they would love to hear from you too."

As with all new initiatives there are lessons that can be learnt. Reusable products coming through dishwashers do not dry as quickly as conventional materials, so consider which rinse aid is more appropriate. Cups of hot drink can represent a serious health and safety risk. Sian's Trust's H&S Officer undertook some illuminating tests that showed the efficiency of heat retention with different cups. The results form part of the slide deck.

Each participating Trust had bought branded cups which they subsequently sold on to their customers, as did John Greenwood (Ecups founder) when he worked at York University. He originally sold the cup for £5 which included the first drink, but in hindsight he felt that he should have simply given the cups away, as just 12 reuses are sufficient to recover the initial outlay.

RJA is now looking to its next steps, perhaps with the re-introduction of glass milk bottles for its restaurants. The drive to reduce carbon footprint continues.

## CHOOSING REUSABLES

The webinar was sponsored by FSG and Ecups who both delivered strong reasons why everyone should consider turning to reusable products, and gave examples of how their customers are embracing the current trends.

Gary Sweeney, Sales Director for FSG graphically outlined the problem. Hubbub research has concluded that 10.7 billion items of disposable takeout packaging are used just once and discarded yearly in the UK. Trent Branch Associate Member, Lynn Johnson founded the company 15 years ago, when she started banging the drum for reusable products. To date, her company has diverted over 250 million disposables, but this is just the beginning.

In his role as Commercial Director at York University, John Greenwood realised that the younger generation was expecting a greener approach. It was on the back of this experience that he designed the Ecup, which has only two elements, the lid and the cup, with integral fins that act as the heat guard. This cup also comes with a QR code that allows each cup to be tracked, recording usage, and means the owner could be rewarded for repeated use, for instance, offering the tenth coffee free of charge.

Clearly the webinar was a success, as it concluded with an entertaining Q&A session. If you missed it, don't worry, it can all be found on the Hospital Caterer website.

# COST-EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS

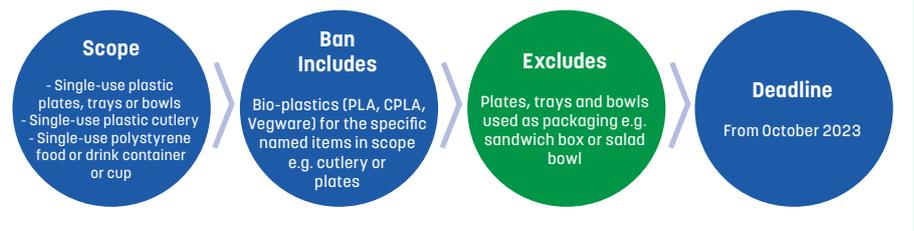
**IN JANUARY 2023, ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY, THE RT HON THÉRÈSE COFFEY MP ANNOUNCED THAT A RANGE OF POLLUTING SINGLE-USE PLASTICS WILL BE BANNED IN ENGLAND. THE BAN WILL INCLUDE SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PLATES, TRAYS, BOWLS, CUTLERY, BALLOON STICKS AND CERTAIN TYPES OF POLYSTYRENE CUPS AND FOOD CONTAINERS. IT WILL BE INTRODUCED FROM OCTOBER 2023, ALLOWING BUSINESSES TIME TO PREPARE. THE LATEST HCA WEBINAR, CHAIRED BY VICE CHAIR IAIN ROBERTSON, INVITED SPEAKERS FROM AROUND THE NHS TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES, ALONG WITH SPONSORS FSG AND ECUPS.**

Iain recognised in his introduction that this would be a challenge for some, both operationally and financially, but that it also represents an opportunity to find solutions for more sustainable alternatives and help to meet the NHS Net Zero drive.

Nicole Fletcher, Sustainable Procurement Lead at NHS England explained the reasons behind the ban, and that it will be incorporated into the Environmental Protection Regulations.

Nicole introduced a useful Business Case that any Trust or Board could adopt when considering the required switch. The business case mentions Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust who, in the first year

## KEY POINTS



According to estimates<sup>1</sup>, England uses 2.7 billion items of single-use cutlery - most of which are plastic - and 721 million single-use plates per year, but only 10% are recycled. If 2.7 billion pieces of cutlery were lined up, they would go around the world over eight-and-a-half times (based on a 15cm piece of cutlery).

A catering guide is available on the Central Commercial Function CCF Hub: <https://future.nhs.uk/PTOMHub/view?objectId=28690032>

(Log-in rights are only available with an NHS email address or by invitation).

<sup>1</sup> Far-reaching ban on single-use plastics in England – GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))



of implementation, saved £68,000 and removed over 1.9 million single-use catering plastic items by moving to reusable items in patient catering. Her slides also referred to a number of useful links that are all available on the Hospital Caterer website: <http://www.hospitalcaterers.org/webinars/>

Iain reminded everyone that this issue is not just about replacing plastics with other items. It is about the potential to reduce single-use items that create waste with better alternatives.

Scotland is already ahead of the game, and Shaun Taylor, Policy Manager at the Net Zero Unit of the Scottish Government set out its goals, viewing this as an opportunity to tackle the throw-away culture and align the nation's policies with EU directives on single-use plastics.

One of the measures to be introduced

is a minimum charge for beverage cups, which would encourage the increased use of reusable cups. This charge may be as high as 25p. NHS Ayrshire & Arran undertook an eight-week trial, charging just 10p for every single-use cup within its retail areas. The Board saw the use of reusable cups rise from 1% to a staggering 43% over the trial period, with no reduction in sales volumes. It also saw that customers were actually supportive of the change.

All the speakers reported positive comments from both staff and visitors, as the penny is finally dropping that we need to do something to change our environmental practices.

## PRACTICAL STEPS

After hearing from the policy makers, it was time to get some first-hand

## SOME PICTURES FROM E&F DAY

E&F staff were celebrated across the country on Wednesday, June 21 for National Healthcare Estates and Facilities Day. This second annual awareness and celebration day, which is supported by HCA, was even bigger and better than last year, with 563 organisations registering to take part, reaching 287,425 team members.

FACILITIES TEAM AT BROADWAY HEALTH PARK



TEA, COFFEE AND CAKE AT BURNHAM ON SEA



BALLOON ARCH AT NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HEALTHCARE



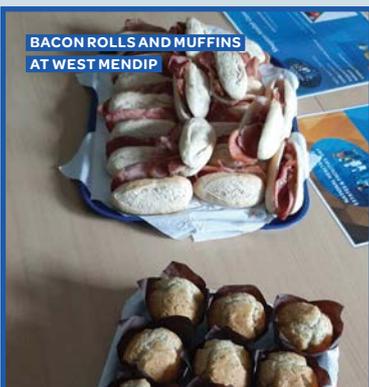
STAFF TAKE SOME TIME OUT ON THE PATIO AT CREWKERNE HOSPITAL



CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT PRESENTATION TO TERESA CROKKER-TOOGOOD



BACON ROLLS AND MUFFINS AT WEST MENDIP



PROMOTING E&F ROLES IN NORTHUMBRIA



E&F AWARENESS STATION AT NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NHS FT





RAY JUPP, JOE GILBEY AND MCKILTIE

## WEST OF SCOTLAND BRANCH

Report by Margaret Valenti

The last Branch meeting was held on May 24 on Teams, where a warm welcome was extended to four of our newest members:

- Scott Gemmell - Assistant Catering Manager (NHS Ayrshire and Arran)
- Michelle Gray - Strategy Dietitian (NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde)
- Lesley Chappell - Soft FM Manager (NHS Lanarkshire)
- Robert Murray - Catering Manager (NHS Lanarkshire)
- Certificates were presented (virtually) and introductions made.

The Forum Committee has been working with Andrew Archer and his team and preparations are underway for next year's Forum in Aviemore. Our little Coos have also been hard at work out and about on their travels promoting the event. It's quite a job keeping up with them all and great to see what they have been getting up to.

A recent visit to Crosshouse Hospital in Kilmarnock saw the handover of Branch Coo - McKiltie - and a tasty visit to the latest Bramble Café which was newly opened recently.

Our next meeting will take place on Friday, July 28 on Teams.



MARGARET VALENTI AND JANICE GILLAN VISIT THE BRAMBLE CAFÉ

## WESSEX BRANCH

Report by Fiona Sinclair

The Branch held a Food Safety Study Day for Hospitals on June 7, to coincide with World Food Safety Day. Hosted by Andy Whittingham, Wessex Branch Chair and Head of Catering Operations at University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust, the event heard from NHS England's Phil Shelley; Narriman Looch, Head of Food Hygiene and Foodborne Disease Control at the Food Standards Agency (FSA); Tina Potter, FSA's Head of Incident; Tom Hollands, Innovation and Technical Director for Raynor Foods; Kirstin Morris, NHS Supply Chain Business Director; Janne Shack, Speech & Language Therapist from Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust; Fiona Sinclair, Director of Inspectrum Food Safety; and Caroline Benjamin from Food Allergy Aware.

For a full report of this event, see p16 of this issue.



## OXFORD BRANCH

Report by Mabel Blades

The Oxford Branch has long been interested in environmental issues and sustainability. In line with this the Branch has planted over 300 trees, had virtual farm walks with the Chair of Nature Friendly Farming around his farm, and also keenly supported Love British Food with local events and initiatives.

Hospital and care caterers will be well aware of the BDA's Nutrition and Hydration Digest and that it contains all the standards on hospital food including special diets. The original version was initiated by our retired member Anne Donelan. An updated third edition of the digest has been compiled, and Maxine and I completed a chapter in this new edition on sustainability. This was presented at the launch of the updated Digest in London in June (see separate report on p10). The event was well attended and it has been decided there will be a presentation about it to the Oxford Branch.

## NORTHERN BRANCH

Report by Colin Chapman

Northern members have been busy putting our Branch on the map over the last few months. Congratulations to:

- Graham Whitworth, Kitchen Superintendent at Northumbria Healthcare who was the overall winner of the Wessex Branch Salon Culinaire



GRAHAM WHITWORTH RECEIVES THE TROPHY WITH PHIL SHELLEY (LEFT) AND IAIN ROBERTSON (RIGHT)



STARTER, ONION BHAJI WITH CUCUMBER & MINT RAITA



MAIN COURSE, CHICKEN THIGH JALFREZI WITH GARLIC PILAU

- Iain Clarke, Deputy Trust Catering Manager at Newcastle upon Tyne Hospital Trust who was a finalist in HEFMA's Leader of the Year award
- Carol Birch, Associate Director of Facilities at Synchronicity Care (CDDFT), winner of HEFMA's Leader of the Year award
- Geoff Moyles BEM, who attended the Coronation of King Charles III in Westminster Abbey as an invited guest. Geoff said it was a fantastic experience, and one he will never forget.



IAIN CLARKE WITH HIS FINALIST CERTIFICATE



CAROL BIRCH RECEIVING HER AWARD FROM HEFMA NATIONAL CHAIR, KAY MULCAHY AND LEE NEALE, ACCOUNT DIRECTOR FROM AWARD SPONSOR, INVIDA

## NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH

Report by Karina Watterson

We welcomed HCA Members to Cater 2 along with suppliers from Valentine, True Refrigeration, Meiko and Rational. Members enjoyed a 15-minute demo and Q&A with each supplier. The small group format enabled some quality interactions and proved to be very informative for all involved.

We also held the Branch meeting, after which everyone enjoyed a visit to the Pizza Truck to order a fresh wood-fired pizza, and also enjoyed scampi and chips cooked on the new FryLight oven by Valentine.

The day was completed by a raffle with prizes sponsored by the four suppliers present.

On June 9, members visited the Love Your Food Show at Titanic Showroom Belfast. Members were able to meet local suppliers and sample their produce. Everyone who attended made many purchases and enjoyed the day. A Branch meeting was held in the sunshine where we sampled lots of local produce.



MEMBERS AND SUPPLIERS AT CATER 2



BRANCH MEMBERS VISIT LOVE YOUR FOOD SHOW



MEMBERS ON THE PKL FACTORY TOUR

## SOUTH WEST BRANCH

Report by Jane Wills

PKL kindly hosted the South West Branch meeting and members had an insightful tour of the factory. Jon Stewart, FER Divisional Director and Andy Mellor, Senior Sales Executive gave informative presentations about the service they provide and the rental options they have available, including the Rental + and kitchen live solutions. The sheer volume of equipment that is held is vast; the preparation, servicing and logistical issues of having the right piece of equipment in the right location on the right day is no simple task.

Ian Smithyman from LoweConex then spoke about making data work for individual businesses. LoweConex gathers and monitors data, controls energy consumption and predicts failures, and can provide hard and software support systems that are constantly monitored on a centralised system.

Following the site tour the Branch met in the amazing setting of The Ellenborough Park Hotel for lunch and the Branch meeting.

Karoline Rowlands reflected on the successful Forum that was hosted by the Branch and the great team work. We were overwhelmed by the sheer generosity of Branch members, families and friends who supported our nominated charity - The RNLI station in Lyme Regis in Dorset. £725 was raised during the President's dinner where the first ever HCA auction was held. I would like to say a huge thank you to Mark Hayman for facilitating this. The raffle made £4,360 - thank you to the generosity of all suppliers, individuals and Branches who donated prizes. Betty's 5p pots and the collection buckets raised £595.83, and I have since dropped into the station another £37.00. To date the total raised is £5717.83. The Branch has made the decision to support the RNLI for the rest of this year, as money is still rolling in.

Anne Shore, one of our founder members, recently celebrated her 90th birthday with family and friends.

And finally, our highland cow was named. After a vote on names put forward he was called McMoo, and following the meeting it was agreed that he also needs a first name. We now welcome Sir Lion McMoo to future Branch meetings and eagerly await updates on his travels. He is currently spending his time in Gloucester and Ireland following a hectic tour of the Dorset coast.



ANNE SHORE ON HER 90TH BIRTHDAY

## EAST OF SCOTLAND BRANCH

Report by Loraine Hartley

The Branch held a committee meeting on May 2 via Teams and a business meeting on May 23, with presentations from apetito's Seton Steele on developments regarding recycling containers (Operation Boomerang), and Cofresco's Allan McKenzie on the Wrapmaster System and Flexsil-Lid. Further details of both presentations are available, and video links - please get in touch with the Branch.

On June 21 many sites across the region celebrated and acknowledged the National Healthcare Estates & Facilities Day, with initiatives from specially-designed cupcakes and coffee, to thank you cards, to videos showing appreciation. Members also celebrated the 75-year anniversary of the NHS.

There are currently no event plans for July, and the next committee meeting will be held on August 1 at 4.00pm.

The Branch accepted the challenge issued at the HCA Forum in Birmingham, and a little McCoo travelled back from Birmingham with Sean in the car to keep him safe. He has been named McFudge, and he is so busy that he has his own planner for the rest of year! Follow him on twitter/forum Website - because he is a Winner.

Wednesday, August 30 will see the Branch visiting McCains, in Arbroath. Members will have a site tour, meet the McCains team, sample some products (okay chips) and finish the day with a business meeting starting at 10.30am (to be confirmed).

A team building day will be held on Friday, September 29. More details of the event and venue to be confirmed.

The Branch is also looking at the feasibility of holding a Study Day on Tuesday, October 24 at the Carnegie Conference Centre in Dunfermline. Watch this space for further updates.



LEFT: MCMOO RESEARCHES HIS NEXT JOURNEY, WITH A BIT OF HELP FROM MICHAEL PALIN  
RIGHT: MCMOO RELAXING ON A DECK CHAIR AT LYME REGIS



# THE SHOW GOES ON

**SINCE I TOOK ON THE ROLE OF NATIONAL CHAIR OF THE HCA IN APRIL 2021, THE TASK OF MODERNISING THIS WONDERFUL ASSOCIATION SO THAT IT CONTINUES TO SERVE HOSPITAL CATERERS FOR ANOTHER 75 YEARS, HAS BEEN UNRELENTING.**

**A**s I reported at our National Forum and in the last issue of *Hospital Caterer*, the second part of this process has now been completed, with the adoption and lodging of our HCA Articles of Association and acceptance of our new bylaws.

Since then the pace may have slowed down, but work has not stopped, and our Executive team are meeting regularly to plot the way forward and organise our next steps. We are now going through the governance phase, which involves examining our records. This is key for the next six months, as we start to consider what our strategy might look like. As I've made quite clear on many previous occasions, this strategy will be meaningful and measurable, and the National Chair will be able to report to members on progress.

The work of the Exec team is so important to our association. As part of my ambition to foster a broader understanding of this among all members, we are looking to take the Exec team to Northern Ireland to hold a meeting there on October 3, ahead of the Branch Study Day on October 4. The plan is to invite the local Branch officers to attend the meeting, so they can see and hear for themselves what goes on behind the scenes to further the cause of hospital caterers. I am also delighted to be

asked to facilitate the Branch Study Day.

As your Chair I have also been busy continuing to represent the HCA at various events. These include the HEFMA Forum in May, which was a fantastic event, and the Craft Guild of Chefs awards in June. The Public Sector Catering Alliance has continued to meet, and we are in the process of agreeing a strategy and a way forward for us all collectively, with recruitment and retention of staff being a key topic, as well as continuing high inflation rates. We are considering an appropriate representative in the House of Lords to help further this agenda. Coming up soon I will also be representing the HCA at the TUCO event in St Andrews.

I was unable to attend the recent Care Home and Hospital Catering Forum, but National Vice Chair, Iain Robertson attended and spoke to delegates about the advantages of membership of an association such as the HCA. You can read more about Iain's presentation in this issue on p14. We've also enjoyed the second National Healthcare Estates and Facilities Day. I know many of you participated in this, hosting events across your sites. Indeed, the numbers for 2023 surpassed last year, with 563 organisations registering to take part, reaching 287,425 team members (up by 25 and 36,000 respectively). Let's

not also forget our most recent Webinar on Single Use Plastics which was again a successful event, and my thanks to the H2O Publishing team and our Webinar committee for pulling this together. Great speakers and a very good panel session ensued. For a full report see p8-9.

I would like to congratulate the BDA's Food Specialist Group on the publication of the third edition of the Nutrition and Hydration Digest. Several HCA members have had an input into this, which forms the backbone of NHS Catering and embodies the spirit of the Power of Three - caterers, nurses and dietitians working together. Read more about this in our report on p10.

Finally, the Forum Management Team from the West of Scotland Branch are already working hard on the programme for the 2024 Forum in Aviemore. Please make sure the dates are in your diary - April 17-18. Every Branch has its own coo, and these Forum mascots are busy touring the country and beyond, popping up at factory tours, farm visits and Branch meetings. My own Branch coo, named McFudge, is about to attend the Scottish Open with me this week, as I take some annual leave to volunteer as a marshal!

Enjoy your summer everyone.

**Brian Robb**, National Chair Director

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## IN THIS ISSUE:

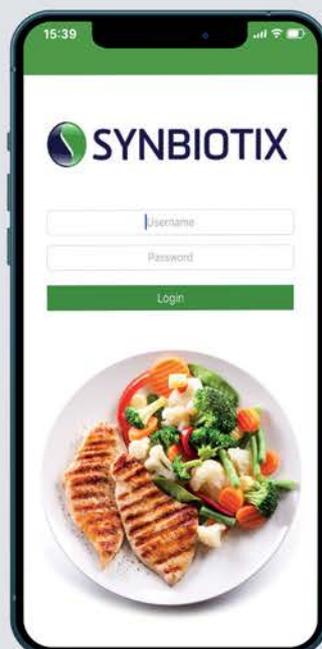
- 04** Branch News
- 08** Single Use Plastics Webinar Report
- 10** BDA Digest Launch
- 12** Meet some New Faces
- 14** The HCA at the CHHC Forum
- 16** Food Safety Event Report



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# HOSPITAL CATERER

## **SINGLE-USE PLASTICS BAN**

Our webinar examines the scope of the ban and debates alternatives

## **STEPPING UP TO SENIOR ROLES**

Meet our new Vice Chair, Iain Robertson and Exec team member, Nicola Strawther

## **FOCUS ON FOOD SAFETY**

Wessex Branch Study Day provides insight on managing foodborne health risks



## **BDA Digest**

Third edition launches