



Food and Nutrition

Context

A sustainable and balanced diet has benefits for both people, in maintaining good health, and the planet. In 2019, the London Borough of Southwark estimated that 75,000 of their residents were food insecure.⁹

Food insecurity and a diet low in nutrition have population and public health impacts, increase health inequalities, and increase demand on health services.²⁰ Additionally, sourcing low-carbon local food reduces emissions related to transport, waste, and agriculture.

In the 2019 Hospital Food Review, there were eight recommendations for system-level change to ensure better hospital food, one of them being 'going green'. The review focused on where the biggest differences could be made:

- sustainable food procurement
- reducing food waste²¹

We recognise the need to ensure patient and service users in South East London have access to healthy, sustainable, affordable, local food while reducing the carbon emissions associated with food from our services through sustainable procurement and waste reduction.

⁹ The definition of food insecure used in the survey means not having enough money to buy food, forced to skip meals, cut down on quantities or not being able to afford a balanced diet.



Achievements to date

The majority of NHS Trusts currently measure their food waste, and all NHS Trusts have included actions on reducing food waste in their green plans.

Individual NHS Trusts have reduced the amount of food waste sent to landfill:

- SLaM, Oxleas, LGT, and GSTT send food waste from inpatient services to be used for biogas and/or fertiliser
- GSTT are undertaking a food waste pilot to measure food waste across the Trust and develop a baseline with the aim of redistributing edible surplus food to charities and food banks
- LGT have a programme to reduce patient food waste underway

Lambeth GP Food Co-op is a great example of a community-led collaboration, involving primary and secondary care, with the aims of increasing local food cultivation while improving patient health and wellbeing (see Case-study 8).

Case-study 8

Lambeth GP Food Co-op

Lambeth GP Food Co-op is community-led, involving patients, doctors, and residents. The co-op works with GP surgeries and NHS Trusts (KCH and GSTT) to provide not only a space to build gardens, but also a reason for people to socialise, learn, and grow food together to improve their health and wellbeing.

The aim is 'Improving the lives of local people living with multiple long-term conditions and the sustainability of the health and social care system'. The food grown is distributed and sold to NHS staff as well as to NHS hospital caterers.

Furthermore, the London Borough of Lambeth have been running a 10-year early years development programme using a system-wide workforce approach to addressing childhood obesity.

This has included training to develop the capacity of front-line staff not only to promote healthy food, diet, nutrients, and the maintenance of a healthy weight for early years and their supporting families, but also to embed this approach in their daily work. From the evaluation, 80% of participants felt more confident in raising issues of diet, nutrition, and child weight with parents/carers.



Commitment

- We will ensure all our inpatients have access to sustainable healthy food, and for food waste to landfill to be eradicated.

Action for Year 1

1. NHS Trusts to measure and monitor food waste and their associated carbon emissions annually, and use this data to identify priorities for action

Aim 1: To reduce GHG emissions associated with food waste

Actions for NHS Trusts

- Measure and monitor food waste and the associated carbon emissions annually, and use this data to identify priorities for action from March 2023
- Where inedible food waste is inevitable, recycle the food waste, e.g., for farm feed, fertiliser, or energy, and reduce the amount sent to landfill to zero by March 2025
- Where considerable edible food waste is inevitable, redistribute all edible food waste to VCSE organisations addressing food poverty by March 2025

Aim 2: Increase the number of low-carbon, sustainable, healthy, and locally sourced food options across the ICS

Actions for NHS Trusts

- Include at least one plant-based or vegetarian option for all patient and staff meals and reduce red and/or processed meat by March 2025
- Collaborate on the procurement (where appropriate) of catering services assigning increased weighting to healthier, lower carbon, and locally sourced options that take the cultural needs of patients into account by March 2025