

For the Record – Press Statements

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Reporter	Heather Large
Headline	At last! Decent food at hospital
First paragraph/s of article	PATIENT meals are being revamped at Russells Hall Hospital with new menus offering a wider choice being rolled out across the wards.
Press enquiry	The Express and Star contacted the Trust following a report in November's board papers about our inpatient menu review. They asked whether the reported information was still correct and asked if there had been any further updates since November. A subsequent question asked about our investment in the project.
Trust response	
<p>COMMENT FROM PAULA CLARK, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, THE DUDLEY GROUP NHS FOUNDATION TRUST</p> <p>In response to patient feedback and a lengthy menu review, we are introducing a new <i>Chosen by Patients</i> menu for inpatients at Russells Hall Hospital.</p> <p>Our new inpatient menus are already in use in four ward areas; Ward B4, Ward C5, Children's Ward and our Medical High Dependency Unit. Our Trust-wide programme is still being finalised, but patients in all ward areas at the hospital will start to benefit from the new improved menus over the coming months.</p> <p>All the dishes on our new menus have been tried, tested and given the thumbs up by patients, staff, dieticians, executive and non-executive directors, governors and interested members of the public. As well as approving the food choices on offer, we have also made further changes to our inpatient food:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients told us they wanted more choice at mealtimes, especially for those 	

with specific dietary requirements and allergies. For lunch and supper, patients now have the choice of four hot meals, four cold options, six side dishes, and a variety of both hot and cold puddings. This is in addition to the 24 hot dishes available to pre-order from our special menu (includes gluten free, dairy free, vegan, vegetarian and halal).

- We also found that patients were keen to have fruit served throughout the day, and so we now offer a variety of fresh fruit at every mealtime.
- Patients also said that our sandwiches could be improved, by changing the fillings available and the type of bread used. We now use both white and wholemeal Hovis bread and offer at least three different sandwich fillings at lunch and supper.

If patients are elsewhere during mealtimes, or if they arrived in hospital between mealtimes, other options and light refreshments are made available to keep them comfortable until their next meal.

We have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from patients. Just a few of the comments we have received so far include:

“I was absolutely grateful for the amount and how fabulous the meals have been. Perfect – five star!”

“Quite a varied menu – a definite improvement on my last visit to hospital”

“Excellent to have a menu choice, especially same day prior to serving.”

COMMENT FROM PAULA CLARK, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, THE DUDLEY GROUP NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

The nutrition and hydration of patients is very important to us and makes up two of our quality priorities for 2014/15.

As our patient catering suppliers, our PFI partners Interserve are paid for the supply and delivery of inpatient meals at Russells Hall Hospital. We have been working closely with Interserve since July 2013 to make sure we give patients the best quality service possible under this contract.

This has involved the Trust investing a considerable amount of time and resource into surveying patients, gathering detailed patient feedback, analysing patient responses and comments, working with the Trust’s team of dieticians to ensure nutritious menu options, holding food tasting sessions, training both Trust and

Interserve staff, involving governors, directors and staff in the trials, and trailing new menus on selected wards.

The recent review of our inpatient menus; however, is just one part of the Trust's wider work to improving the mealtime experience for our patients.

Because we know that mealtime experience is not restricted simply to quality of food, we have recently trained 73 Nutrition Support Volunteers. These volunteers provide mealtime assistance by making drinks, helping with feeding, assisting with menu selection, encouraging eating and drinking and changing drinking water for patients. To make sure our patients receive the very best care and support during their stay, Nutrition Support Volunteers receive in-depth training provided by our nursing staff, dieticians and speech and language therapists.

As well as volunteers, we have recently recruited 13 Wellbeing Workers (a newly created role) to work specifically with our most vulnerable patients who need further support during their stay. Along with our Acute Confusion Team, our Wellbeing Workers make sure that nutrition and hydration is a priority for these patients, ensuring their needs are monitored closely. Due to the success of our Wellbeing Workers, we will be recruiting over the coming months to double the number working at the Trust.

We have also made some more subtle changes that have had a huge impact on the experience of our patients. In response to staff and patient feedback about the size and usability of teacups used on wards, we recently purchased 1,500 new mugs. The small teacups were replaced with larger, easy-to-hold ceramic mugs across all wards, along with the addition of a number of lightweight polycarbonate shatterproof mugs for patients with specific needs.

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