

Hospital food review announced by government

The review will consider:

- how food can help aid faster recovery, taking into account the unique needs of vulnerable groups
- support from national bodies such as the Soil Association and National Caterers Association to source food services locally and reduce reliance on frozen or packaged foods
- new systems to monitor food safety and quality more transparently, including looking at how NHS boards are held to account
- how the NHS can be a standard-bearer for healthier choices for patients, staff and visitors
- more healthy food options for NHS staff, particularly for those working overnight shifts
- sustainability and environmental impact of the whole supply chain
- ensuring quality and value for the taxpayer

Every year, the NHS serves more than 140 million meals to patients across the country. The quality and nutritional value of these meals can vary substantially.

Alongside this, new national standards for healthcare food for patients, staff and visitors will be developed by NHS England, NHS Improvement and Public Health England (PHE). The new standards will reflect government nutrition advice, as outlined in [PHE's Eatwell guide](#).

The review will also look at how to increase the number of hospitals with their own kitchens and who have their own chefs.

Chair of the Hospital Food Review, Phil Shelley, will meet with catering managers at trusts across the country, looking at best practice from those leading the way in food quality and innovation.

Restaurateur and celebrity chef Prue Leith CBE will act as an adviser to the review, drawing on her experience working in catering, high-quality restaurants and as a former chair of the School Food Trust. Leith has previously spoken out on the need for hospitals to provide healthy options that aid recovery and for meals to be tailored to the individual needs of the patient.

The review follows the deaths of 6 people linked to an outbreak of listeria in contaminated food earlier this year. It aims to improve public confidence in hospital food by setting out clear ambitions for delivering high-quality food to patients and the public.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Since entering Downing Street, my focus has been clear – to make sure our world-class NHS has everything it needs to continue providing the very best frontline care.

Guaranteeing hospitals serve nutritional, tasty and fresh meals will not only aid patient recovery, but also fuel staff and visitors as they care for loved ones and the vulnerable.

Our NHS has led the way since the day it was formed. This review will ensure it remains the standard-bearer for healthy choices, as it works unstintingly to improve the nation's well-being.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

We all know how important the food we eat is to our health. We have a duty to ensure this same level of attention is given to the food served to patients in hospital, or our brilliant NHS staff working tirelessly for patients – and indeed to visitors.

When people are in hospital, they should be given all the help they can to get better – and that includes food. So I'm determined patients enjoy the best, most delicious and nutritious food to help them recover and leave hospital as quickly as possible. I'm delighted we've assembled a first-rate group to drive this agenda.

I have seen first-hand how using fresh, locally-sourced ingredients and cooking from scratch have improved the quality of their meals and I want to help more hospitals follow suit by sharing what works best across the country.