

Nutrition for Older People – Catering Service Update

This update provides an overview of the work undertaken by the Catering Service (Department for Education & Children) in support of the Communities Department regarding catering and nutrition for older people (this is through a Service Level Agreement between the two Departments) during 2015/16. This mainly covers catering services provided in care homes and day centres.

1. Menus

Although there is no specific legislation relating to meals for older people, a proactive approach is taken to ensure the menu is nutritionally balanced (using specialist computer software) whilst at the same time ensuring they feel like they are in a home setting, eating food they like and as they would if still in their own home. Menus are tailored to specific requirements at each site rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. We are going to pilot using some additional software to analyse Community Meals. By using this we will be able to provide better advice on correct portion sizes with additional consideration to individual requirements.

2. Support for staff

We hold meetings with catering staff and managers to update and address any concerns, this year has included requirements for Community Meals, staff training, updates from the National Association of Care Caterers, promotional information, and information regarding eating well with dementia.

3. Labelling & food allergens

As a result of new legislation on food allergens brought in at the end of 2014, new labelling regulations were introduced. We are exploring whether this will have any impact within the service (we believe not but need to confirm).

It is important that staff follow the set recipes and menus so that we are confident which allergens are contained in each meal plan. Following on from training and information packs provided to staff, this message is reiterated regularly through meetings and newsletters. Training sessions were arranged for Catering staff to reiterate this message, and information packs distributed accordingly.

4. Procurement

When procuring food, we have to ensure our suppliers meet certain standards, with full traceability, particularly important to ensure food safety.

The way in which most food products are procured by public sector organisations is due to change in the foreseeable future with contracts awarded under frameworks established by the National Procurement Service for Wales (NPS). This is intended to deliver better value, although some concerns exist in light of experience with other NPS arrangements.

Appendix B

We are monitoring the situation closely with colleagues in the corporate Procurement Team.

5. Food Hygiene Ratings

We continue to see positive results from the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, with nearly all homes and centres scoring the highest level 5 (Very Good) and none below 4 (Good). More information can be found at <http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/hygieneratings>.

6. Promotional Activities

In addition to traditional occasions we promoted the Nutrition and Hydration week (14th – 20th March 2015), encouraging the use of jelly (free samples provided) and being creative to increase fluid intake.

Two new leaflets were produced and distributed to the cooks: 'A Food Texture Guide for Caterers' and 'Eating Well: Providing Support for Older People'.

It is noteworthy that the Cook in Charge at Y Plas has made it to the UK Care Cook of the Year 2016 finals, which takes place on 8th June.

7. How is the service viewed?

Every year we undertake surveys with residents in order to gain valuable feedback on the service. The following questions are asked:

- How satisfied are you with the catering service?
- How would you rate the quality of food?
- Do you feel there is sufficient choice and variety at meal times?
- Are the portion sizes adequate for your needs?
- Do you have any special diets? How do you rate they are catered for?
- What meal do you enjoy the most?
- What meal do you least enjoy?
- Is there anything you would like to see on the menu?
- Do you have any suggestions as to how to improve your eating experience?

The most recent results from a sample of some 60 residents across 9 settings early in 2016 were very positive, with average scores across all sites for each question ranging from 8 out of 10, to 10 out of 10. Some of the feedback included:

- Very happy with everything
- Staff are helpful & caring
- Plenty of choice