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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Cwm Taf
University Health Board

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17TH March 2016

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Chair & Chief Executive

Mr William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff, CF99 1NA

Dear Mr Powell

Initial response to Hospital Food petition, 8.3.16

Thank you for your letter dated the 29th February 2016, regarding the above.

Cwm Taf University Health Board is proud to have led the way as the initial campaigners for the development of a standardised approach to nutritious, high quality food for our patients within our own Health Board and across Wales. We acknowledge the importance of food as a vital part of overall patient care and patient food and nutritional well being has been and remains high on the organisation's agenda. Cwm Taf has had an active multidisciplinary Nutrition and Catering Group, including patient representatives for many years. The work of this group is reported to Board level through the Quality and Safety Committee to ensure the standards and good service is recognised throughout the organisation.

NHS Wales, leading the way in many respects with the following developments ensuring high quality food provision that meets the range of different requirements of our patient population groups.

1. Mandatory nutrition and catering standards for food and fluid for hospital inpatients (Welsh Government, 2011)
2. All Wales Menu Framework and development of standardised recipes to meet the nutrition standards (2012)
3. National Lead Dietician role for NHS Food Procurement - development of nutrition specifications for food contracts.

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Return Address: Ynysmeurig House, Unit 3, Navigation Park, Abercynon, CF45 4SN

Cwm Taf University Health Board Dieticians and Catering staff were instrumental in driving forward the All Wales Menu Framework. This framework has ensured:

- Standardised nutritionally analysed menu items with recipes developed by hospital cooks and chefs from across Wales
- Ingredients and foods that meet nutrient specifications and are bought on an all Wales contract
- A dedicated web based database accessible to all Health Boards including recipes and full nutritional analysis
- A range of compliant snacks procured through All Wales contracts
- Development of nutrient specifications for All Wales contracts produced by Lead Dietician within All Wales Procurement Services
- Therapeutic menu coding developed to ensure appropriate use of dishes for all patients

This has resulted in:

- Improved adherence to All Wales contracts, use of the standardised recipes from All Wales Menu Framework (AWMF) by Health Boards, awareness raising of staff, patients and visitors through nutrition and hydration week campaign every year and local Public Relations.
- This year at Cwm Taf UHB we are promoting Nutrition and Hydration Week by celebrating with afternoon tea for all of our patients in community hospital settings.

In order to monitor both compliance with the standards and the patient /customer experience Cwm Taf participates in the AWMF All Wales Patient Menu survey.

Key findings from this second National Patient Survey for Cwm Taf UHB are as follows:

- Rating overall satisfaction of food and drink provision, **85%**
- An average of **77%** of patients surveyed said they **always** had a choice offered at each meal.
- **91%** of patients surveyed rated the overall quality of food as average or better
- Presentation & Appearance, 90% rated food average or better than average
- Flavour & taste, 88% average or higher
- Over 95% of patients said they had received the correct food whilst receiving a specialist diet
- Even though families are culturally used to bringing food in for their loved ones (66%), of visitors bring in food of any description, only 8% of stated the reason being due to "don't like the food". We endeavour to support families who want to bring in something special from home for their loved ones whilst in hospital as we understand that this is considered important to relatives, often more so than to patients.
- Cwm Taf UHB has the lowest patient food waste in Wales (WAO October 2015)

The petition received expressed some specific concerns that as a Health Board we would like to respond to specifically, for the reassurance of our patients and also in recognition of the excellent working relationships between our nursing, dietetic and catering staff.

Menu choice

Cwm Taf has developed a series of seasonal menus for our patients that include a wide range of breakfast choices and over 40 choices, which are available at lunch and evening meal. These choices are all clearly coded for suitability with special diets and every patient menu advises patients, or their families to speak to a nurse or their ward caterer if they need a larger portion size, help to choose, have a query or want something that isn't shown on the menu.

Availability of Specialist diet for medical conditions

Diets related to specific medical conditions are available. They are coded separately on our menu, according to All Wales Nutrition and Catering Standards (November 2011). Where specific requirements are needed and/or to meet individual patient preferences these are identified on admission by nursing staff and reported to catering staff on bed plans, ensuring clear communication so that every patients needs are known and met.

Cwm Taf would like to challenge the assertion made in the petition that:

'currently patients on some wards are being fed all the same food, regardless of their conditions, weight and dietary needs . . .'

Throughout our Health Board there is ward based catering with caterers being core members of the ward clinical teams. Every patient has a bedside menu from which to choose at each meal time. The ward based caterers are able to offer a variety of portion sizes and to advise and discuss the patient's choice of meal with their extensive knowledge of ingredients. The menu is large and varied and available throughout the day so that families are also able to support their loved ones with their food choices. We do not offer food based on a patients weight, however all of our patients have a nutritional care plan which identifies those who may have individualised nutritional needs. Those at risk of malnutrition are identified on admission via nutritional screening. The intervention offered varies according to need, but may include additional snacks, energy dense meals, or milky drinks but an increase in portion size is not often tolerated by those with a reduced appetite.

The petition calls for an investigation at every Health Board in Wales to ensure its food is fit for purpose. At Cwm Taf UHB we are continually monitoring food quality and patient satisfaction and therefore feel that with these robust systems that are in place and with our reporting mechanisms that there is no need for a one off investigation into food quality at this time.

Cwm Taf's results as part of the Wales Audit Office Hospital Catering and Patient Nutrition Review (October 2015) are available for the public and evidence Cwm Taf's ongoing commitment and achievement of the standards.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allison Williams'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Mrs Allison Williams
Chief Executive/Prif Weithredydd