

# Nottinghamshire County **LINK**

## Nutrition and the red tray report

January 2011





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## Origination of Issue

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All issues raised to the Nottinghamshire County LINK are analysed by the Issues Panel (a group of LINK participants). Set questions are used to score or prioritise the issues. The same questions are used for every issue, as approved by the Nottinghamshire County LINK Executive Board in April 2009.

Concerns around the nutritional needs of inpatients were expressed at the Nottinghamshire County LINK work planning workshops during January and February 2010. LINK members from across the county expressed concern that during hospital stays, patients are not always provided with appropriate food and assistance when needed.

There has been much publicity in the press during 2010 about the risk of malnutrition during hospital stays. Age UK published the *Still Hungry To Be Heard* booklet in 2010 which sets an aim for all hospital trusts.

**“When we go into hospital we should not have to worry about whether or not we will be able to eat our meals. We should be confident that every hospital ward will provide us with food we can eat and the help we may need at mealtimes.”**

The group agreed with this statement.

The concerns LINK received were not exclusive to any age group or specific dietary requirement, the concerns spanned these areas. Becoming malnourished and eating unsuitable/ contaminated foods leads to serious consequences:

- Anaphylactic shock
- Additional medical needs
- Longer stays in hospital
- The need to take more medications
- Increased risk of suffering from infections
- Death.

The direction of the study therefore needed to address the seriousness of this issue. According to the Age UK report malnutrition costs the NHS £7.3 billion every year.

## Participants and Partners involved in the group:

Participant Name	Organisation (If applicable)
Shirley Inskip	LINK Executive Board Member
John Kerry	LINK Executive Board Member
Emma Pryor	Group lead and LINK Member
Jane Stubbings	LINK Executive Board Member
Glen Swanwick	LINK Executive Board Member
Tom Turner	LINK Executive Board Member
Julia Karoly	LINK Support Team
Kerry Burrows Specialist Dietitian	Sherwood Forest Hospitals Foundation Trust
Angie Hill Nutritional Nurse Specialist	Sherwood Forest Hospitals Foundation Trust
Zoe Hooley Clinical Lead Dietitian	Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust
Alex Mckee Non exec board member	Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust
Dr Gillian White Therapy Services Manager, Dietetics and Nutrition	Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust
Vera Todorovic Consultant Dietitian in Clinical Nutrition	Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

## Activities

The Task and Finish group members decided on the following focus for the work:

**To establish if systems are in place in Nottinghamshire hospitals to identify those patients who are nutritionally at risk and assist with feeding if needed. If these systems are in place, are they carried out?**

The focus was chosen taking into account the original referrals made to the LINK.

The task and finish group spoke to specialists in nutrition from Sherwood Forest Hospitals Foundation Trust, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust and Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. From these meetings the group established the protocols for nutritional screening at each of the hospital trusts.

In order to gather further information to ascertain the extent of the issue the group conducted Enter and View's at Sherwood Forest Hospitals Foundation Trust, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust and Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. The aim of the visits was to observe if the protocols which were in place were followed and suggest areas for recommendations. The Enter and Views were pre-arranged with the hospital trusts.

### **Structure of Enter and View visits**

Before the Enter and Views the group decided on the format which they wanted to follow during the visits.

<b>Item no</b>	<b>Structure of visit</b>	<b>Time</b>
1	<p><b>Speak to ward lead</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Introduction.</b> The LINK is made up of local volunteers from across the County who use health and social care services and represent other service users in their area. The LINK is independent and the people who volunteer for the LINK contribute their time because they are interested in making changes and improvements to the health and social care services in Nottinghamshire, not to criticise.</li> <li>• The aim of the group is to establish if systems are in place in Nottinghamshire hospitals to identify those who are nutritionally at risk and assist with feeding if needed. If these systems are in place are they carried out?</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions to ward lead</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are patients nutritional needs assessed on admittance to the ward?</li> <li>• Which screening tool do you use 'MUST' or other?</li> <li>• Does the protocol for nutritional screening work in your experience?</li> <li>• How many people on the ward today are using red</li> </ul>	10 mins

	<p>trays, need assistance feeding or are using adapted eating aids?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there enough red trays available for all the patients who need them?</li> <li>• If this ward ran out where would it get more from?</li> <li>• How do staff refer patients to occupational therapists?</li> <li>• Are there feeding aids available for those who need them?</li> <li>• does everyone who needs a red tray receive one?</li> <li>• are volunteers used on this ward to assist with feeding?</li> <li>• Are protected mealtimes enforced?</li> <li>• Is out of hours food available for patients (snack box)</li> </ul>	
2	Observe mealtime	30-60 mins
3	<p>Speak to patients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were you asked about any special dietary requirement you have when you were admitted? e.g. allergies, assistance eating or told about adapted eating aids that the occupational therapist could provide?</li> <li>• Is there anything else you would like to tell me about meal time in this hospital?</li> </ul>	30 mins
4	Group review of enter and view (away from ward)	20 mins

Six Enter and View's were carried out at the hospital trusts across Nottinghamshire.

## Results

### Nottingham University Hospital Trust

Queens medical centre site. Derby Rd Nottingham NG7 2UH

**Date of visit:** 29th September 2010.

**Time of visit:** Lunchtime visit to B49

**The ward lead was asked about protocol on this ward.**

#### **Are patients nutritional needs assessed on admittance to the ward?**

Within 24 hours patient is weighed and measured.

#### **Which screening tool do you use, 'MUST' or Other?**

'MUST' is used to assess patients.

#### **Does the protocol for nutritional screening work in your experience?**

Yes it alerts nurses to an issue. If nurses notice patients are not eating as much as they should be then they are put on a food chart for 3 days if the situation does not improve they are referred to a dietician.

#### **How many patients are using a red tray on the ward today?**

4 patients using a red tray.

#### **Are there enough red trays available for all the patients who need them?**

Everyone who needs a red tray gets one.

#### **If the hospital ran out where would it get more from?**

We could borrow some trays until we can order some.

#### **How do staff refer patients to occupational therapists?**

Unanswered question.

#### **Are feeding aids available for those who need them?**

Adapted cutlery is available at ward level.

#### **Are volunteers used on this ward to assist with feeding?**

1 volunteer comes on a Tuesday more volunteers would be useful especially at teatime.

#### **Are protected mealtimes enforced?**

Protected mealtimes enforced most of the time unless patient is acutely ill.

**Is out of hours food available for patients?**

Snack boxes available at any time. There are a choice of snack boxes.

**Observation of mealtime****Questions for patients**

Three patients were asked the following two questions

Patient	1	2	3
Were you asked about any special dietary requirements you have when admitted onto this ward?	No	Yes	Yes

Is there anything else you would like to say about mealtimes in this hospital?

- Patient 1; good service.
- Patient 2; nurses help the patients who need assistance feeding.
- Patient 3; was given the help they needed with feeding.

**Other information**

- The nurses are responsible for feeding, however relatives are allowed to encourage patients to eat.
- Day room is available if needed.
- 30 minutes before mealtime patients are prepped for the meal.
- Fortisip is kept on the ward.
- Patients are weighed every weekend.
- Food arrives in canteen style trays but there is a limited number of portions allowance for each ward.
- Ward has a chart in the canteen area to show patients nutritional needs.

**Nottingham University Hospital Trust**

Queens medical centre site. Derby Rd Nottingham NG7 2UH.

**Date of visit:** 29th September 2010

**Time of visit:** Teatime visit to Ward C32

**The ward lead was asked about protocol on this ward.**

**Are patients nutritional needs assessed on admittance to the ward?**

Yes within 24 hours.

**Which screening tool do you use 'MUST' or Other?**

'MUST' tool is used.

**Does the protocol for nutritional screening work in your**

**experience?***Unanswered question.***How many patients are using a red tray on the ward today?**

1 patient using red tray.

**Are there enough red trays available for all the patients who need them?**

There are enough red trays for those who need them.

**If the ward ran out where would it get more from?**

The wards share a kitchen so we would borrow the red trays from adjacent wards.

**How do staff refer patients to occupational therapists?**

This is done on the hospitals NOTIS referral system

**Are feeding aids available for those who need them?***Unanswered question.***Are volunteers used on this ward to assist with feeding?**

No

**Are protected mealtimes enforced?**

Protected mealtimes are enforced 95% of the time.

**Is out of hours food available for patients?**

Snack boxes are available.

**Observation of mealtime****Questions for patients**

Four patients were asked the following two questions

Patient	4	5	6	7
Were you asked about any special dietary requirements you have when admitted onto this ward?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Is there anything else you would like to say about mealtimes in this hospital?

- Patient 4; not enough of popular dishes.
- Patient 5; food is sometimes cold.
- Patient 6; no additional comments.
- Patient 7; no additional comments.

**Other information**

- Red and green indicators are used above a patient's bed to indicate their level of nutritional need.
- Limiting the amount of portions available limits patient choice.
- Protected mealtimes were advertised on the entrance door to the ward.
- Day room available.

**Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

King's Mill site. Mansfield Road, Sutton-In-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, NG17 4JL

**Date of visit:** 30th September 2010.

**Time of visit:** Lunchtime visit to ward 12 trauma and orthopaedic.

**The ward lead was asked about protocol on this ward.**

**Are patients nutritional needs assessed on admittance to the ward?**

Yes on admission then weekly.

**Which screening tool do you use 'MUST' or Other**

Will start using 'MUST' on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

**Does the protocol for nutritional screening work in your experience?**

*Unanswered question.*

**How many patients are using a red tray on the ward today?**

9 people on the ward are using red trays. 4 need assistance. Red trays kept on the ward.

**Are there enough red trays available for all the patients who need them?**

The ward has never run out.

**If the ward ran out where would it get more from?**

Red trays can be ordered and borrowed if needed.

**How do staff refer patients to occupational therapists?**

The staff refer patients to occupational therapy on our electronic system JONAH, which produces a working list for the therapists. We also use the VOCERA communication system to be able to contact them directly. This happens on admission if appropriate, if not on admission when being assessed for implementing discharge preparation plans but it is completed within a few days of surgery.

**Are feeding aids available for those who need them?**

One set of adapted cutlery available on the ward. Occupational therapist can recommend patients use these.

**Are volunteers used on this ward to assist with feeding?**

No. Relatives are invited to come in and encourage patients to eat if needed.

**Are protected mealtimes enforced?**

Try to enforce protected mealtimes on the wards, activity is allowed in the corridor. No visitors are allowed at mealtimes.

**Is out of hours food available for patients?**

Snack boxes are difficult to access. Patients can be offered toast, fruit, yogurts, sandwiches, jelly and cereal.

Fortisip is offered between meals.

**Observation of mealtime****Questions for patients**

Four patients were asked the following two questions

Patient	1	2	3	4
Were you asked about any special dietary requirements you have when admitted onto this ward?	yes	no	yes	no

Is there anything else you would like to say about mealtimes in this hospital?

- Patient 1; there are enough staff to help with feeding and a good variety of food.
- Patient 2; not weighed or measured.
- Patient 3; no other comments
- Patient 4; have been weighed since they have been on the ward. All food brought at the same time so pudding is cold by the time you eat it.

**Other information**

A day room is available on the ward for those patients who want to use it.

**Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

King's Mill site. Mansfield Road, Sutton-In-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, NG17 4JL

**Date of visit:** 30th September 2010

**Time of visit:** Teatime visit to Ward 42 gastroenterology

**The ward lead was asked about protocol on this ward.**

**Are patients nutritional needs assessed on admittance to the ward?**

Yes and on a weekly basis.

**Which screening tool do you use 'MUST' or Other?**

Use a nutritional screening system, not aware of 'MUST'.

**Does the protocol for nutritional screening work in your experience?**

Yes on this ward.

**How many patients are using a red tray on the ward today?**

3 using red tray, 1 needs assistance feeding

**Are there enough red trays available for all the patients who need them?**

Sometimes run out.

**If the ward ran out where would it get more from?**

Housekeeping can get more.

**How do staff refer patients to occupational therapists?**

Patients are referred on admittance to the ward on a system called JONAH on the hospital website.

**Are feeding aids available for those who need them?**

*Unanswered question.*

**Are volunteers used on this ward to assist with feeding?**

No volunteers used on this ward.

**Are protected mealtimes enforced?**

Try to protect mealtimes however consultants are not always obliging.

**Is out of hours food available for patients?**

Food is available in the ward fridge sandwiches and yogurts.

**Observation of mealtime**

## Questions for patients

Four patients were asked the following two questions

Patient	5	6	7	8
Question				
Were you asked about any special dietary requirements you have when admitted onto this ward?	yes	yes	no	yes

Is there anything else you would like to say about mealtimes in this hospital?

- Patient 5; patient asked if they could see the dietician. Portion size is intimidating and does not look attractive.
- Patient 6; nurses are about to feed those who need help. Food does not look attractive.
- Patient 7; food is not warm enough. There is a good choice.
- Patient 8; good choice of hot food however there should be more fruit available.

### Other information

A day room is available on the ward for those patients who want to use it.

**Doncaster and Bassetlaw NHS Foundation Trust**

Bassetlaw Hospital site, Blyth Road, Worksop, Nottinghamshire  
S81 0BD

**Date of visit:** 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010

**Time of visit:** Lunchtime visit to Stroke ward A4

**The ward lead was asked about protocol on this ward.**

**Are patients nutritional needs assessed on admittance to the ward?**

Yes

**Which screening tool do you use 'MUST' or Other?**

'MUST' tool is used to assess the patients nutritional needs by ward staff on admittance and then every 7 days.

**Does the protocol for nutritional screening work in your experience?**

'MUST' works, it gives clear indicators to staff. There is informal 'MUST' training for those who request it.

**How many patients are using a red tray on the ward today?**

11 using red tray, 4 needed assistance feeding.

**Are there enough red trays available for all the patients who need them?** (question was answered by Catering Manager)

There are enough red trays available for the patients who need them. Trays are looked after by main kitchen not ward.

**If the hospital ran out where would it get more from?** (question was answered by Catering Manager)

The hospital could get more within 48 hours if needed.

**How do staff refer patients to occupational therapists?**

All patients on A4 have a blanket referral to occupational therapists, they are all discussed in the multi disciplinary meeting.

**Are feeding aids available for those who need them?**

Feeding aids are kept on the ward for patient use at any time i.e. plate guards, shaped cutlery etc.

**Are volunteers used on this ward to assist with feeding?**

Volunteers are not used regularly on this ward, when they are it is in an encouragement capacity to help patients take food.

**Are protected mealtimes enforced?**

Protected mealtime are enforced for 30 minutes.

**Is out of hours food available for patients?** (question was answered by Catering Manager)

Food is available out of hours in the form of various "packed lunch" type meals. These are kept in fridges outside of the wards and are kept locked. The key being available from one ward so that the system is not open to abuse. Various other items are also kept in this fridge such as biscuits and snacks which may be required by many categories of patient such as diabetics.

**Observation of mealtime**

**Questions for patients**

Four patients were asked the following two questions

Patient	1	2	3	4
Question				
Were you asked about any special dietary requirements you have when admitted onto this ward?	yes	yes	yes	yes

Is there anything else you would like to say about mealtimes in this hospital?

- Patient 1; was given the help they needed with their meals and felt no improvements were needed.
- Patient 2; was given the help they needed with their meals.
- Patient 3; said the food arrived at a good temperature.
- Patient 4; there is a good choice of food available.

**Other information**

- All catering is done on site.
- Patients nutritional need is shown on boards outside the bays.
- Diet chef works 7 days a week. The dietary staff can be contacted out of hours.
- Individual bays are used when preparing food for patients with special dietary requirements.

**Doncaster and Bassetlaw NHS Foundation Trust**

Bassetlaw Hospital site, Blyth Road, Worksop, Nottinghamshire  
S81 0BD

**Date of visit:** 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010

**Time of visit:** Teatime visit to general surgery ward B6

**The ward lead was asked about protocol on this ward.**

**Are patients nutritional needs assessed on admittance to the ward?**

Yes a risk assessment is done on admittance to the ward.

**Which screening tool do you use 'MUST' or Other**

Not sure which screening tool is used.

**Does the protocol for nutritional screening work in your experience?**

Yes.

**How many patients are using a red tray on the ward today?**

1 using red tray

**How do staff refer patients to occupational therapists?**

*Unanswered question.*

**Are feeding aids available for those who need them?**

*Unanswered question.*

**Are volunteers used on this ward to assist with feeding?**

*Unanswered question.*

**Are protected mealtimes enforced?**

Protected mealtimes are difficult to enforce on acute ward.

**Observation of mealtime**

**Questions for patients**

Four patients were asked the following two questions

Patient	5	6	7	8
Were you asked about any special dietary requirements you have when admitted onto this ward?	yes	yes	yes	yes

Is there anything else you would like to say about mealtimes in this hospital?

- Patient 5; would like starter to be warmer but there is a good choice. A lot happens on the ward at mealtime.
- Patient 6; soup is cold.
- Patient 7; very busy at mealtimes. The soup starter is cold.
- Patient 8; starter was cold. Good choice of meals and good portion size. A tea machine in the day room would be good for when patients can not sleep at night.

**Other information**

- Transfer patients are at risk of missing out on nutritional screening.
- A board displayed behind the nurses station displays the nutritional needs of patients.
- Signs above beds to show diabetes or nil by mouth but not nutritional needs.
- A day room is available on the ward for those patients who want to use it.

## Recommendations

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### **Sherwood Forest Hospitals specific**

- Gravy and sauces should be served in separate microwavable pots to be added to main meals by patients so they have a choice.
- The starter, main course and desert should not be served together. This would allow patients to have all courses at the correct temperature at the time of eating them. This would be in line with patient's habit at home where courses are not normally served together.

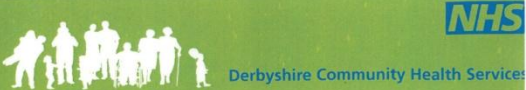
### **Nottingham University Hospitals specific**

- Portions of popular dishes should not be limited to 8 or 12 per ward, as this reduces patient choice.

### **Recommendations to all trusts**

- The spoons used for stirring the tea and coffee were used repeatedly and dipped in a glass of water between use. Cross contamination would be minimised if patients were given single use stirrers for their drinks.
- Hot food should be available at weekends as well as weekdays for people who have multiple food allergies and special dietary requirements. Friends and relatives of these patients should not be relied upon to bring food into the hospitals.
- All wards should clearly display a protected mealtime notice on the entrance doors, and make checks to ensure it is visible to all.

Please see example of best practice from Derbyshire PCT which they display on the doors to wards.




## This Ward Operates a Protected Mealtimes Service

At Lunch from  to

At Supper from  to

Please avoid entering the ward or visiting during mealtime

Please speak to the nurse in charge for more information



- All primary care trusts should produce a leaflet to explain the importance of protected mealtimes to patients, families and carers. This leaflet should be available at the entrance to hospital wards.

Please see the example of best practice from Derbyshire PCT.

## Protected Mealtimes

*What does that mean?*

### Introduction

The presentation, colour, aroma, taste and texture of food in hospitals are all important to ensure that meals are tempting even to those with the poorest of appetites. The only true measure of success is how much food is eaten. We have introduced a protected mealtime service to help get the most of the food provided

### What is a protected mealtime service?

This is a period of time over lunch and supper, when all activities on the wards will stop. The nurses, catering staff, and volunteers will be available to help serve the food and give assistance to patients who may need help. This will prevent unnecessary interruptions to mealtimes.

### Why is it a good idea?

Patients themselves say they would prefer to eat their meals with less distraction on the ward. Other hospitals have already introduced the service and found that patients eat better and recovered more quickly. It creates a more relaxed and calm atmosphere giving patients time to socialise and digest their food.

### Who will be on the ward then?

As well as the patients the only people on the ward will be nursing staff, catering staff, domestics and volunteers, all with the same aim, to help, encourage, and monitor the patients food intake during their meal time and make it an enjoyable experience.

However, all emergency treatments will still be dealt with.

### What can Relatives or visitors do to help?

If you are visiting a ward displaying a Protected Mealtime Poster, please respect this and try to visit outside the registered times.

If you normally visit at mealtimes in order to help your relative or friend to eat or just to give encouragement, we are happy for you to continue to do this. Please ask the nurse in charge how you can help out.

If possible please try to avoid telephoning the ward for information during these times, so the staff can concentrate on helping the patients.

***If you have any worries or concerns about this then please speak to the nurse in charge***

- Protected mealtimes should be enforced for 60 minutes to enable all patients to prioritise their food.
- All patients should be offered the opportunity to wash their hands prior to mealtimes. If patients are not mobile hand wipes or another solution should be offered.
- Red and green indicators should be used above a patient's bed to indicate their level of nutritional need.
- Staff who assess and provide care for patients should be trained on how to use the 'MUST' tool.
- Staff who assess and provide care for patients should be trained on the practical ways to ensure patients consume food and drink, this includes providing specialist crockery and cutlery, presentation, the eating environment, physical position, importance of protected mealtimes, availability of snacks, support and encouragement.
- The nutritional needs of patients should be added to the barcode on their personal wrist band to ensure the nutritional information follows patients during their stay in hospital.

- Specialist crockery and cutlery should be available to patients who request it and those who are assessed by the occupational therapist to need it.
- Patients should be asked if they want the lids taken off food pots and drinks containers when they are served.
- The selection of food available needs to suit the needs of older people.

## Monitoring

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Nottinghamshire County LINK has carried out this piece of work to highlight community concerns and existing good practice around patient's nutrition and dietary requirements during hospital stays.

We are keen to receive feedback from the organisations who we have made recommendations to. We will monitor the outcomes from this work during June 2011. Following the results from the monitoring we may then conduct additional Enter and Views. The results from this monitoring will be included in the September 2011 LINK newsletter and feed back to the community and relevant organisations. As a follow up the group may conduct further Enter and Views if they believe it is needed.