

Progress in Practice

Bedford Hospital catering

Bedford Hospital NHS Trust is promoting sustainable development through its catering, by providing healthy, seasonal meals with organic and fair trade options

Summary

Bedford Hospital's Catering Department provides a high quality service to patients, staff and visitors, whilst promoting health and sustainable development. The hospital has an in-house catering team consisting of about 50 staff, and the service is delivered to 1500 patients daily, from the main kitchen, with staff and visitors catered for at the Swannery Restaurant and Le Bistro coffee shop.

Patients, staff and visitors are offered a variety of meal options. These are prepared by trained chefs using fresh ingredients, and they are adapted according to customer needs (such as cultural preferences). Where possible, seasonal ingredients are used and these are sourced locally.

The availability of healthy options helps to educate those who use the hospital catering facilities about healthy eating, and the provision of organic and fair trade products also promotes sustainable development messages.

The staff and visitor service generates over £1.2 million every year. Some of this is ploughed back into the catering department, whilst the rest is used to fund other services in the hospital.

The catering department has won local and national recognition for its high standards and the variety of food it offers. The local council has consistently awarded the department its highest standards for healthy eating and safe catering, and in 2001 it beat many top class restaurants to win Radio 4's Best Caterer Award.

"The success of the catering facilities at Bedford Hospital is based on providing freshly cooked, quality food in an excellent dining environment for all our customers. The restaurant is seen as a community resource and the catering services a major quality asset to the Trust"

Steve Morgan Director of Support Services, Bedford Hospital



Catering in Bedford Hospital is seen not just as a service that the hospital has to provide, but as something which can really make life easier for patients, staff and visitors. The fact that local people come to the hospital restaurant for their Sunday lunch clearly shows that the catering department is playing a much wider role in the community.

Links and organisations involved: More information about Bedford Hospital is at www.bedfordhospital.nhs.uk, and details of Radio 4's Food and Farming Awards are at www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/factual/foodawards2001.

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