

THE NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

GOVERNORS' VISIT TO CATERING SERVICES DEPARTMENT,
ROYAL VICTORIA INFIRMARY, 27th MARCH 2008

Six Governors attended the visit, which involved a presentation followed by a tour of the RVI Catering Services Department at the RVI. Wayne Reed, Catering Services Manager, focused his presentation on 'Providing a Quality Service to achieve the ultimate Patient Experience'. His Department produces an average of 1,100 meals per day, which requires close working with several disciplines including dieticians and clinical staff. The Catering Department carries out regular testing and tasting of all its products. In addition, there are numerous food tasting inspections by other groups e.g. PPIF¹, and Governors. The Department ensures the highest levels of Hygiene and Quality of service and carries out regular customer care ward visits. Wayne emphasised the importance of the latter and commended Ward 15 as 'Gold Star' for its food service within the RVI because of the support and cooperation of the Ward Sister and nursing staff. The aim is to have all wards meeting this standard.

He outlined the following achievements:

- 5 star Hygiene Award
- Paediatric Menu Development
- Improved Customer care
- NVQ training
- Focus on Local procurement
- In-House Food Production (Phase 1)

He described the constraints and challenges of the current system with traditional kitchens sited only at the Freeman Hospital and the 'regeneration' (Burlodge) system operating at the RVI. A recent development is the in-house (Phase 1) production of fresh soups, roasted meats, and desserts. Future developments (Phase 2) will have the Freeman Kitchens providing and transporting all food to RVI and NGH.

There were many questions and discussion points arising from the presentation and Governors were impressed with Wayne's enthusiasm and commitment to high standards of service and customer care. We were assured that his department has addressed all of the concerns raised by Governors from their food tasting visits, and he has agreed to deal with the Breakfast menu changes reported by Governors at the last Members Council meeting.

Wayne and his Deputy (Frank Dobson) accompanied Governors on the Tour. We observed catering staff in the Cold Room, completing the preparation of the 1100 lunch trays for the Regeneration Trolleys. We were impressed with the efficiency of the operation. The quality of protective clothing, use of gloves, head covering,

¹ Patient and Public Involvement Forum

and tools for lifting food from containers (pie lifters) were raised as discussion points by Governors. We were informed that plans were in hand for new protective clothing and in response to questions about regularity of cleaning, were assured that measures were in place to ensure cleanliness standards. We observed the dishwashing room and were pleased to note that more effective and eco-friendly dishwashers will replace the current machines. We visited the diet kitchen room and were informed of the system for allocating special dietary requirements (assessed by Dieticians) for individual patients. We were shown the food storage and defrosting rooms and introduced to a member of staff who has made significant improvements to the organisation of food stores.

Governors were very impressed with the organisation and operation of systems, which ensure the highest quality of health and safety standards. The Department has received the 5 Star Hygiene Food Service award.

In terms of areas requiring improvement, Wayne identified non-return of cutlery from the wards, and the need for more ward staff to copy Ward 15 RVI and take more responsibility for ensuring a satisfactory patient experience.

Our thanks to Wayne and colleagues for a most interesting and enjoyable visit.

Jean Potts
Public Governor
7th April 2008