

# Sustainable Change in NHS Catering

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## The Royal Marsden Catering Journey

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# Contents

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1. Why does this matter
2. Choosing to Champion Sustainability
3. Our journey so far
4. More recently...
5. Coming Soon...
6. Overcoming Challenges
7. Thank you for listening!



# Why Does This Matter?

# 1



# Why this matters

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- NHS Net zero targets
- NHS = 4% of UK emissions (Source: *NHS England - Greener NHS (Net Zero)*)
- Catering's Carbon footprint
  - From source to disposal
  - Supply Chain miles
- Small changes can make big impact



# Choosing to Champion Sustainability

# 2



# Small changes everyday = big difference

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- It's in our Green Plan! (Food & Nutrition)
- Every choice made in catering has an impact
- Health and wellbeing are the heart of what we do.
- It felt right to make our service move in a direction that helps protect our environment



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# Our Journey so far..

# 3



# Making changes... one step at a time

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## About The Royal Marsden Catering Service...

- Largely elective patient cohort
- On-site food production

## Over the years...

- Compostable takeaway packaging
- Using organic milk 16 years
- Food for Life Accreditation
- Wooden cutlery replacing plastic
- Crockery at ward level - no paper or plastic
- Electronic patient ordering





# More recently...

## Tackling Single Use Items

# 4



# Reducing single use sauce sachets



## The problem

- Over 800k sachets of ketchup, mayonnaise, mustard and BBQ sauce per annum
- They seemed small but the waste was huge.



## The change

- We removed them completely and switched to dispensers and Tetra packs
- Customers can still enjoy sauces without the single use plastic.



## The impact & benefit

- Significant % reduction in waste from sauce sachets.
- Cost savings
- Simple to use
- Well received from visitors and staff.



# Patient Meals - Disposable to Reusable



## The problem

- Patient meal production were being served in single-use plastic containers.
- Convenient, yes but they created a constant stream of waste every day.



## The change

- Introduced reusable stainless-steel gastronomes (small portion size) Durable, cleanable.
- In year cost recovery for capital outlay



## The impact & benefit

- Reduced single use containers by '000's.
- More sustainable
- Revenue savings est. £30k
- Reduced ordering of disposables



# Coming soon...

# 5




# Retail - Reusables only

## (Sept/Oct 2025)

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### Go Big or Go Home!

- Taking a bold step to remove all reusable cups and takeaway meal boxes from all outlets
- Benefits: Est. £20k  Waste Reduction + Procurement
- 3 options -
  - bring your own (that's the main push!)
  - purchase a reduced-price reusable (small £ outlay for initial stock)
  - eat in and have a break from the office!
- Patient engagement is key - as a largely elective hospital, we think we can do it!
- Communication and marketing strategy is key



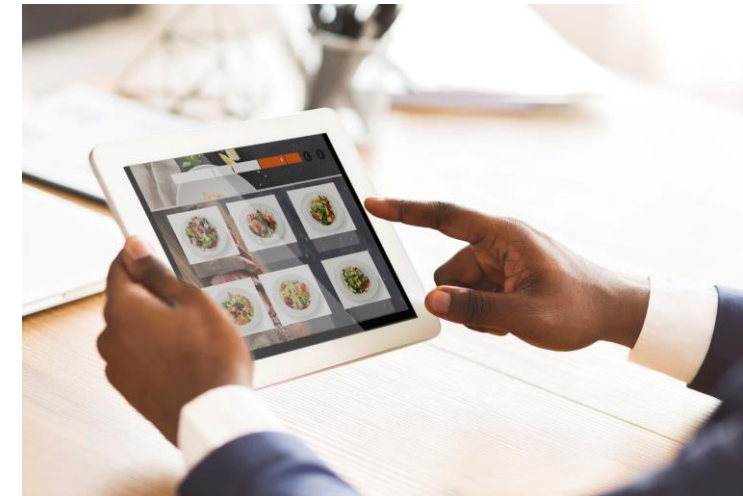
# Patient Meals - Digital Ordering System

## (Sept/Oct 2025)



### Bedside to kitchen

- Ward staff input on tablets
- Integrated with our EPR system (for allergens/special diet info)
- Orders straight to kitchen-
- Benefits:
  - Efficiency (Staff time)
  - Integration with patient record
  - Reduced menus and paper
  - Accurate ordering (anticipated less wastage)



# Menu Review (Sept 2025)



## More sustainable, less wasteful

- 4 week menu to 3 week menu
- More sustainable: Pea protein + venison introduced, increased seasonal ingredients
- Move from Silver to Gold FFL
- Benefits:
  - Reduce production waste
  - Increase sustainability
  - Reduced menus and paper
  - Est. £20k savings through efficiencies



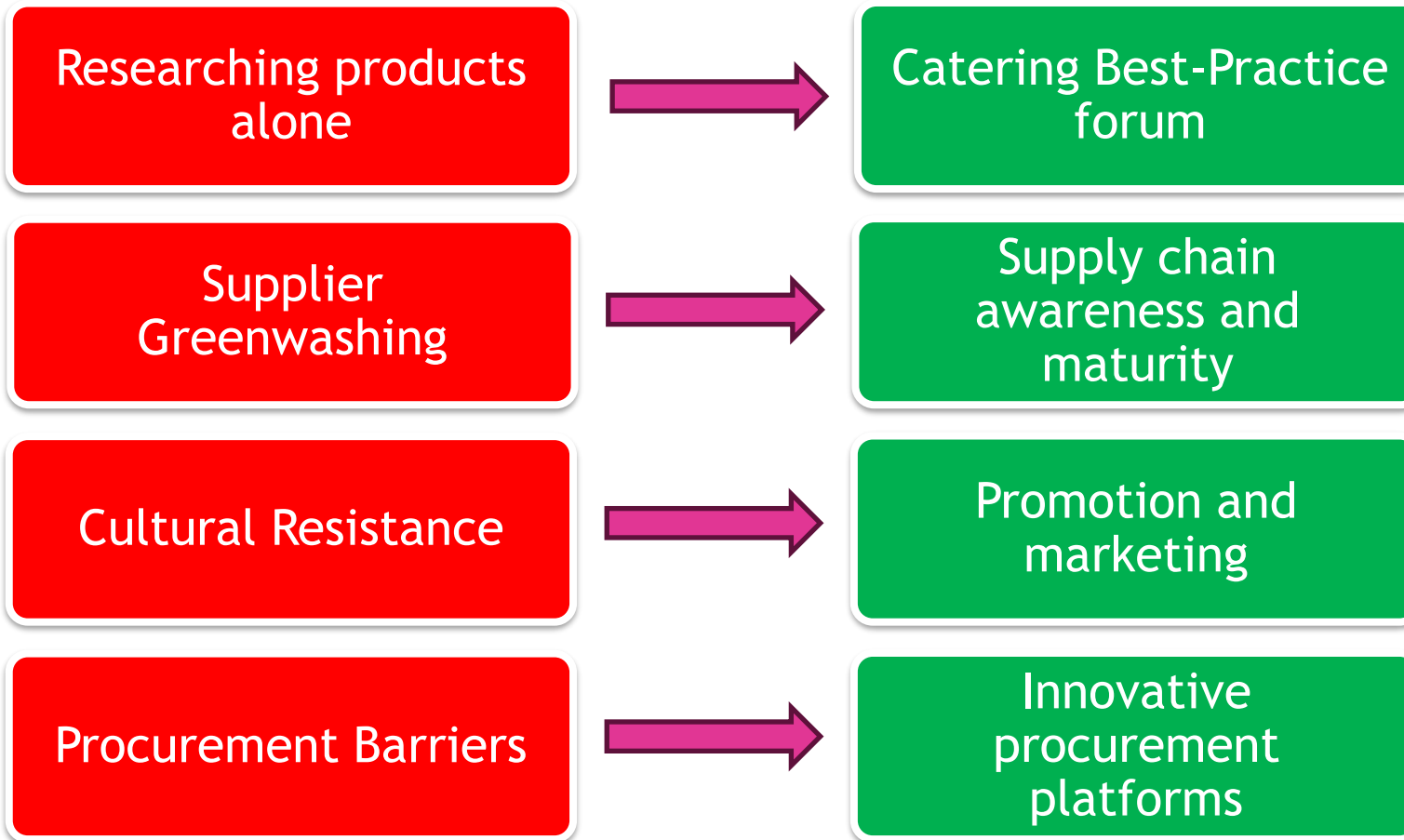
# Overcoming Challenges

6





# Shifting the dial



- How do we learn from each other
- How do we influence our supply chains



# Engagement is key

## Leadership

On-side and engaged  
Setting example  
Driving change top down

## Research & Learning

What are others doing  
What does our data tell us  
What innovations are there

## Communication

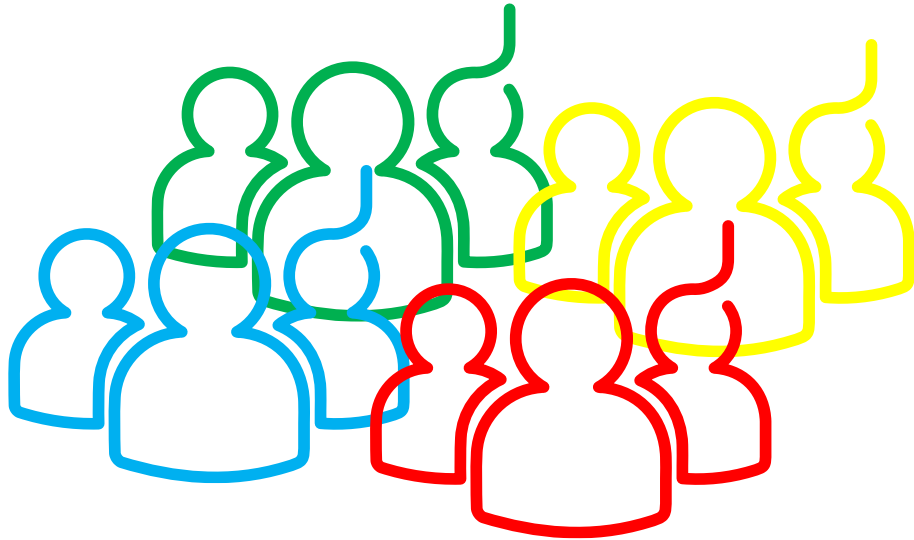
Promotion & Events  
Create interest and excitement  
Loyalty & Incentives

## Staff Groups

What are their concerns  
Can we adapt to get buy-in  
Can they champion ideas



# Connecting as NHS Trusts



## Things to think about...

- Key Sustainability leadership
- Central resources
- Key supply partners
- Regional Collaboration
- Sharing Case Studies



# Thank You for listening!

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