

Nutrition and Hydration Policy

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1. Background

“Proper nutrition and health are fundamental human rights.” (World Health Organisation)

“Food, fluid and nutrition are fundamental to health and well being and therefore to quality and safety in healthcare” (Healthcare Improvement Scotland, 2014).

- 1.1 Food and fluid are necessary for life and represent basic human rights. What we eat and drink affects our health and well-being and reflects our culture and beliefs.
- 1.2 A person’s nutritional needs vary over time depending, for example, on their age or their level of physical activity. Illness may produce profound changes in an individual’s nutritional requirements and may alter appetite, ability to eat and to communicate needs. Older people and those who are ill are more at risk of malnutrition which in turn may delay their recovery and increase the risk of complications.
- 1.3 Nutrition and Hydration play a key role within healthcare and require a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of food and fluid by different health care staff. This policy views the patient as an individual with needs and preferences.
- 1.4 Effective nutritional care follows a person’s progress through an illness by responding to changing nutritional requirements. It involves the monitoring and reassessment of nutritional status at regular intervals, referral for specialist care when appropriate and good communication with services in the community.

2. Standards for Nutritional Care

- 2.1 In September 2003 (reviewed 2014) NHS Quality Improvement Scotland (now Healthcare Improvement Scotland – HIS) issued “Clinical Standards for Food, Fluid and Nutritional Care in Hospitals.” These are the standards by which the food, fluid and nutritional care provided by NHS hospitals in Scotland is judged and provide the overarching framework and principles for nutritional care.
- 2.2 There are six standards, which address nutritional care in hospital and community settings and throughout a patient’s journey of care. The standards cover:

Standard 1

- Policy and Strategy

Standard 2

- Assessment, Screening and Care Planning,

Standard 3

- Planning and Delivery of Food and Fluid in hospital settings

Standard 4

- Provision of Food and Fluid to Patients in hospital settings

Standard 5

- Patient Information and Communication, and

Standard 6

- Education and Training for all Staff

2.3 In addition Healthcare Improvement Scotland published Complex Nutritional Care (CNC) Standards in 2015 supporting the care of people through their changing nutritional needs and where their nutritional requirements cannot be met through the usual route. These standards cover the following areas and, whilst there is some overlap with the overarching standards, there are specific requirements within them:

Standard 1

- Policy and Strategy

Standard 2

- Assessment and plan of care

Standard 3

- Enteral tube feeding

Standard 4

- Parenteral Nutrition

Standard 5

- Supporting Patients

Standard 6

- Staff education and training

3. Policy and Strategy

- 3.1 Against this background NHS Dumfries and Galloway recognises the importance of nutrition in the provision of health care for patients.
- 3.2 NHS Dumfries and Galloway will seek to deliver nutrition and hydration in ways that comply with Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) standards. These standards will be used as a framework to achieve best practice in nutritional care wherever care is provided.
- 3.3 NHS Dumfries and Galloway Nutrition & Hydration Strategic Group (NHSG) will oversee the development, implementation and review of nutrition and hydration policy and plans for the organisation.
- 3.4 The NHSG and any related sub groups will be multidisciplinary and involve interested members of the public.
- 3.5 The NHSG will assess the nutritional implications of new service developments before implementation.

4. Assessment Screening & Care Planning

- 4.1 All in-patients must have documented assessment of their nutritional status and risk of malnutrition on admission and regularly throughout their hospital stay.
- 4.2 Clinical areas and community teams must have appropriate equipment to assist in the assessment of nutritional status.
- 4.3 All patients admitted to a community caseload must have documented assessment for their nutritional status and risk of malnutrition on admission and regularly whilst they remain on the caseload.
- 4.4 All at risk patients on community caseloads will be referred or signposted to appropriate services.

5. Planning & Delivery of Food & Fluid in hospital settings

- 5.1 The Menu & Delivery Sub-Group will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the planning and delivery of food and fluid to patients.
- 5.2 The Menu & Delivery Sub-Group will be responsible for developing, implementing and reviewing appropriate protocols for the provision of food and fluid for patients.
- 5.3 Patient Groups will be consulted about changes to the service before they are introduced

6. Provision of Food & Fluid in hospital settings

- 6.1 Food and fluid will be provided in a way that is acceptable to patients
- 6.2 Patients will have a choice for all food and fluid options as well as a choice of portion size.
- 6.3 Patients will make their menu choices at a time most appropriate for the patient group.
- 6.4 Where required, patients will be given assistance with eating and drinking while food/ fluid is at the correct temperature
- 6.5 Food quality audits will be carried out on a regular basis to ensure that food is being served at the correct temperature and consistency is attractively presented and is of good quality.

7. Patient information and communication

- 7.1 NHS Dumfries and Galloway will work towards the implementation of the Healthcare Improvement Scotland standards through an action plan that is published openly and accessibly by the Board and reviewed at regular intervals.
- 7.2 Patient information is made available in different formats and regularly updated.

8. Education and training for staff

- 8.1 All staff should receive nutrition training and education commensurate with their duties and responsibilities.

9. Associated documents

9.1 NHS Dumfries and Galloway documents

- Supported Mealtimes Protocol
- Nutrition and Hydration Protocol
- Clinical Guideline on Hydration

9.2 National Documents

- Food in Hospitals (2016) – National Catering & Nutrition Specification
- Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Fluid & Nutritional Care Standards 2014
- CNC Standards, 2015 (3)