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Tickling the tastebuds; RUH food is healthy for patients and the environment

The RUH is working with local farmers and food suppliers to increase the amount of sustainable produce it uses. Using more assured foods from fairly traded and organic sources will result in healthier meals for patients, staff and visitors as well as benefiting the environment and the local economy.

Mike Newport, Hotel Services Manager at the RUH, says: "We want to serve food that not only tastes good but also does little harm to the environment.

"Offering meals made with fresh ingredients from local suppliers not only has numerous health benefits, but will also help us to minimise waste, reduce our carbon footprint and contribute to the local economy."

It's not only patients who are benefiting; staff and visitors can enjoy more assured foods from fairly traded and organic sources, such as free range Lion quality eggs, free range organic chicken, Rainforest alliance coffee, and organic ice cream, in the hospital restaurant.

The hospital now frequently buys from smaller suppliers, giving local businesses the opportunity to provide good quality, fresh local food to the hospital at a competitive price. Meat and poultry comes from Bristol Butcher John Sheppards Ltd., fruit and veg from Bristol Fruit Market, cakes and bread from Bath Bakery and farm assured milk from Wellington, Somerset.

Some of the patient 'cook freeze' meals are supplied by Apetito, a local firm committed to environmental sustainability and reducing waste. Using local suppliers in this way also helps to cut down on the distances food has to travel and contributes to the local economy.

The hospital's catering department is using Department of Health guidance contained in a national policy 'Sustainable Food: A guide for Hospitals', which aims to improve the sustainability of the food hospitals provide for patients, staff and visitors and advises on how hospitals can assure the sustainability of their food provision.

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Notes for Editors:

The Department of Health is currently developing a voluntary Healthier Food mark for the public sector. The aim is to ensure that food reaches a standard that will make a positive contribution to a nutritionally balanced diet and improve the sustainability of food procurement. It will be launched in 2010 and organisations will be able to achieve Bronze, Silver or Gold awards. The RUH will be an early implementer.