

Nick Ramsey AM
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

17 October 2016

Dear Nick

Petition P-04-663 Food in Welsh Hospitals.

You may be aware that the Petitions Committee have been considering the above petition, full details of which can be found at the link below:

<http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Id=14311&O=0>

We considered the petition again at our meeting on 27 September and agreed that I should write to you to ask that you take the petition into account as part of your planned inquiry into hospital catering and patient nutrition. We would be grateful if you could feedback your findings and any recommendations to the Petitions Committee in due course.

I would be grateful if you could send your response by e-mail to the Clerking Team at SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales.

Yours sincerely



Mike Hedges AC/AM
Cadeirydd/ Chair



P-04-663 Food in Welsh Hospitals

This petition was submitted by Rachel Flint having collected 40 signatures

Text of the Petition

We the undersigned call on the Welsh Government to examine the standards of food in hospitals in Wales. Each health board's provision must be investigated to ensure it is fit for purpose for patients, those with dietary needs and medical conditions, and impose standards across the whole of the Welsh NHS. Hospital food should be nutritious, fresh and be a major part of a patient's care package and road to recovery – not make things worse. Dietary needs must be catered for – such as gluten free, lactose intolerant, Celiac, vegetarian and vegan – experience shows this is not currently the case and patients are often made to feel awkward. Food tailored for medical conditions – including those who suffer from bowel conditions or have had surgery – must be standardised, to ensure patients are getting the right nutrition at all times. Currently patients on some wards are being fed all the same food regardless of their conditions, weight and dietary needs – this is not acceptable and can be upsetting and potentially damaging. Hospitals should not rely on relatives to bring in food, eat the same bland meal every day, or allow patients to waste away if they can't have any of the food on offer. Nutrition must be a key part of every patient's care package. We are not asking for Michelin Star quality, just meals that help rather than hinder.

Additional Information

My experiences of food in the NHS have shown that the standards vary across wards, hospitals and departments, as well as between England and Wales. The problem is not in Wales alone – as I find providing meals for those on low res or with dietary conditions is something the NHS as a whole struggles to deal with. But my experience in Wales recently showed that the standards are not up to scratch. There were no menus (as in Chester and other English hospitals) and patients were all fed the same regardless of their condition, weight or dietary needs. On one ward people who had just had bowel surgery were offered curry, lentil soup and tuna sweetcorn sandwiches which was totally inappropriate – and potentially damaging. At times the situation was that if you couldn't eat anything on the trolley or were not at your bed, you simply didn't eat, unless a nurse made some toast. This has to change; without the right nutrition I believe people are in hospital longer.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff South and Penarth
- South Wales Central