

The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU
United Kingdom

30 November 2020

IFST Response to The Hospital Food Review October 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

Institute of Food Science and Technology is the UK professional body for food science and technology professionals, supporting the advancement of food science and technology for public benefit.

We would like to add our support to the recommendations of the NHS Hospital Food Review, published by the Department of Health and Social Care on 26 October 2020.

In particular, we strongly support the recommendation for every NHS Trust to have a nominated food safety specialist and a named board member responsible for food and the need for national professional standards with mandatory continuing, career-long professional development, including appropriate compulsory food hygiene and allergen training.

We would suggest extending these recommendations to apply not only to NHS Trust catering, but to every Food Business Operator.

We positively support the need for competent food technical professionals and high standards of food risk management and verification in food supply chains to give confidence that safety, legal and contractual requirements are being met.

Effective compliance with robust food safety procedures in place that are understood, enacted and verified should be routinely expected at all levels in all food business operations. Senior management and Board commitment are essential to uphold and ensure delivery of safe and legal food provision to all.

IFST already has in place an active Register of Food Safety Professionals, underpinned by a Food Safety Competency Framework. This is widely applied by UK food enforcement professionals for such roles as meat hygiene inspectors and by UK food industry for food safety roles across their operations.

IFST proposes that the nominated food safety specialist for an NHS Trust would be expected to be competent to the level of a Food Safety Principal as described in our Food Safety Competency Framework (see Appendix). Similarly, every hospital chef should at least be competent to the level of a Food Safety Practitioner. Their competency could be formally assessed and recognised through our already existing Register of Food Safety Professionals and would establish a requirement for continuing professional development.

We recommend that every food business operator, including NHS trusts, should have food technical professional staff engaged who have received compulsory food hygiene, food safety and food allergen risk management training, with a nominated food safety specialist to lead them and Board level commitment to ensuring food is safe and legal.

IFST also welcomes the Hospital Food Review recommendations as an opportunity to put in place a more joined-up approach to food in healthcare settings. It is critical to address not just food safety, but also food quality to provide appropriate and accessible positive nutrition for those staying in hospital and other healthcare settings, to support recovery from illness and avoid further morbidity.

IFST looks forward to supporting these recommendations to ensure we have competent food safety professionals across our NHS but also the UK-wide food sector.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance or provide more details.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jon Poole', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Jon Poole, Chief Executive, IFST

Email: j.poole@ifst.org

cc:

Hard copy to Rt Hon Matt Hancock at DHSC address

And email to:

Heather Hancock - Chair of Board, Food Standards Agency

Emily Miles - Chief Executive, Food Standards Agency

Prof. Robin May - Chief Scientific Adviser, Food Standards Agency

David Kennedy - Director General for Food, Farming and Biosecurity, Defra

Prof. Gideon Henderson - Chief Scientific Adviser, Defra

Appendix: [IFST Food Safety Competency Framework](#)