

Our ref: DE-1070129

Dear Ms Button,

Thank you for your recent correspondence on behalf of the Campaign for Better Hospital Food to Jeremy Hunt about hospital food standards. I have been asked to reply.

The Department appreciates that you and your co-signatories are so committed to improving hospital food standards. Ministers agree that the provision of high quality and affordable food is of critical importance to patients, visitors and staff in the NHS and must be a priority going forward.

All functions relating to policies and operational performance of the NHS Estates and Facilities transferred to NHS Improvement (NHSI) from 1 February. The primary reason for this transfer is that these functions will be better managed and delivered in an organisation that is directly responsible for improving performance in the NHS. NHSI is responsible for overseeing foundation trusts, NHS trusts and independent providers and offers the support these providers need to provide patients with consistently safe, high quality, compassionate care within local health systems that are financially sustainable. By holding providers to account and, where necessary, intervening, NHSI will help the NHS to overcome its short-term challenges and secure its future.

Prior to this transfer, hospital food was one of the non-clinical aspects of patients' experience of healthcare where the elements of quality and efficiency have been the responsibility of different organisations. The bringing together of all of these responsibilities in a single organisation whose mission is to improve the NHS, signals a renewed commitment to tackle these longstanding challenges and will continue to drive forward improvement.

Mr Hunt will ask the NHSI to meet Diane Jeffrey, Chair of the Hospital Food Standards Panel, and discuss the most appropriate way to take this forward to ensure this key area will continue to be taken forward appropriately.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Miles  
Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries  
Department of Health