

PE1708/B

NHS Lothian submission of 29 July 2019

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the recent public petition relating to the availability of vegan diets in the public sector. Having read the report of the evidence, the key comments we would make are that:

1. We are not aware that the promoting a specific diet aligns with public health policy in particular to the design, of hospital menus. We are required to comply with the national 'Food in Hospitals' nutritional specification and introducing more vegan dishes will make it more difficult, and possibly more costly, to ensure we achieve this.
2. We need to provide as wide a choice of dishes to patients and staff as possible to cater for the whole population. In cases where patients make their dietary preferences known to us, we can offer a variety of dishes on request. We are aware of the promotional drive around veganism and will look at enhancing the understanding of vegan needs within our catering departments so that we can provide a good range of these when required. We will also seek to better promote the availability of 'a la carte' meals to suit all tastes to the wards.
3. We do address our responsibilities relating to environmental sustainability in all forms including, in this case, our catering services, through the whole area being included in all procurement contract specifications.
4. Finally, our national and draft regional catering strategies are intended to accommodate the dietary needs of the whole population as well as enhancing the environmental sustainability of the service.