

Making Mealtimes Matter IOS Overview

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Making Mealtimes Matter

What worked well:

- Information gathered
- Menus providing variety and choice.
- Feedback systems in place to gather the views about food and drink from their residents, families and friends.
- The everyday mealtime environment was viewed as a positive one and many residents were supported to enjoy the social opportunities available at mealtime.
- In most homes residents enjoyed their food and gave lots of positive feedback.
- We noted the availability of everyday food and drink throughout the whole day in most homes



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What worked well:

The opportunities to create 'something special' were enhanced where:

- Homes understood the importance of creating a variety of special events as a regular part of care home life
- Homes demonstrated good communication between the kitchen staff, the Activity Coordinator and other staff.
- Staff demonstrated they were always looking for ways to 'make an occasion'
- Family and friends were included to create a social aspect to food and drink activities fundamental to people's wellbeing, personal identity and to provide personalised care



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What needs to improve:

- Information collected should be interpreted to menus that reflect what the residents need and want
- Menus are not consistently available in a range of formats that residents can access.
- Feedback systems don't always use methods that support all residents to give their views.
- Not all homes can demonstrate how feedback is used to inform future menus and improve practice.
- Increasing opportunities for residents to exercise choice and control, for example in terms of portion sizes, condiments.



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What needs to improve:

- For some the experience varied across the homes. Some practices at mealtimes were impersonal and did not focus on the residents' experience.
- Principles of protected mealtimes & relatives support
- Some homes lacked consistency in the quality and substance of food. The appearance of meals across the home was not consistent for all residents.
- Residents were usually reliant on staff. Provide opportunity for choice and control.
- Disparity in providing 'something special' to support resident's emotional wellbeing through food and drink.



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Recommendations for care home providers

Homes need to:

- Develop and implement a range of techniques and systems to engage residents, families and friends in feedback and planning.
- Review meals and the mealtime experience to assess their status as a meaningful 'activity' for residents rather than a functional routine or task to provide nutrition.
- Address : any disparity in the standard of dining accommodation throughout the home, the social experience, staffing levels at meal times, the experience for those dining in their own rooms



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Recommendations for care home providers

Homes need to:

- Review the quality and presentation of meals for all residents
- Contribute to resident wellbeing through the regular provision of a variety of 'special' occasions complemented by food and drink.
- provide opportunities for cooks or Nutrition Champions to network across the borough to share good practice around food and drink.



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Recommendations for commissioners

- Strengthen the care home contract specification and monitoring tool - to emphasise resident choice, engagement, feedback and planning.
- Publish information for residents, family and friends about what they should expect from food and drink in care homes (including the mealtime experience)
- Audit of spend per bed across care homes to ensure that adequate provision is being made for people.

Recommendations for the Care Quality Commission (CQC)

- Inspections consider the mealtime experience - social participation and inclusion.



Feedback to Healthwatch on your thoughts on the Enter and View Process

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