

HSC Nutritional Standards: foreword

People are increasingly eating meals and snacks outside of their homes. We now consume an estimated quarter of our overall calories while out. Settings such as restaurants, coffee shops and takeaway businesses can impact on the quality of the food we eat and how much we eat through the food choices they offer.

A PDF version of [Nutritional Standards for catering in Health and Social care settings](#) is available for download.

Foreword

Workplace restaurants are clearly an important setting where staff and visitors can consume their main meal regularly during their working life and it is therefore vital that we make the healthier choice the easy choice. By helping staff and visitors to make healthier choices, we can improve their health and wellbeing and also improve productivity and reduce staff absences.

The Obesity Prevention Framework for Northern Ireland, “A fitter future for All”, committed to ensuring that Nutritional Standards are in place for staff and visitors in Health and Social Care settings, including guidance on procurement and provision. The Public Health Agency, the Food Standards Agency and safefood, alongside other partners, were tasked with delivering this outcome by 2019. However, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 this work was delayed.

Work has now restarted and, in order to achieve this, the three organisations, through the Regional Obesity Prevention Implementation Group and a targeted consultation, have jointly produced these Nutritional Standards for implementation in Health and Social Care settings, which include private retail and vending machines. I believe the implementation of these Nutritional Standards in Health and Social Care settings will be an important step forward and also provide the opportunity to lead by example for others in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. It is anticipated that these Standards will be implemented across local Government and the wider public sector in due course and I would encourage other sectors to look at these and begin to implement them in their own settings – improving the health and wellbeing of their staff and, ultimately, of our population.

Professor Sir Michael McBride Chief Medical Officer for Northern Ireland.