

Case Study: Collaborative working delivers food savings for University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust



Key Achievements

- £30,000 annual savings generated on ambient products
- Developed a strategic approach to generating savings through a 'best value working group'
- Increased compliance by switching to purchasing ready prepared meals via NHS Supply Chain

Overview

University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust is one of the largest trusts in the UK. It consists of three large hospitals and provides treatment and care for more than 1 million patients every year. The trust is responsible for food procurement across three acute hospitals, as well as Leicester Partnership NHS Trust which consists of a further 14 community sites. NHS Supply Chain: Food works alongside the trust's catering and procurement teams to deliver savings and improve the quality of food for patients, staff and visitors.



The challenge: Improving compliance and delivering savings

Every year, the trust spends around £3.2 million on food. Previously, just 4% of its food spend was placed with NHS Supply Chain. The trust is keen to increase its compliance to NHS Supply Chain to help drive savings, leverage the collective scale of the NHS and achieve added assurance over the integrity of its supply chain. The team at University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust have been working with NHS Supply Chain to make this happen.

The solution: A collaborative approach to food procurement

Each NHS trust in England is aligned to an NHS Supply Chain: Food Account Manager, and also supported by a regional Senior Account Manager. Laura Jurczak (Account Manager) and Miranda Reading (Senior Account Manager) have been working closely with the trust to understand their food procurement needs, challenges and aspirations to produce a workplan to deliver value. The first phase included a price comparison on ambient food products; looking at the current trust pricing compared with the prices available via NHS Supply Chain and this demonstrated a significant saving. Following discussions and engagement to ensure the products met the needs of the catering department and other stakeholders, operational changes were made to support the switching activity.

“ It's been a pleasure working with Miranda and Laura over the past few months. The time they have dedicated to working with us has been amazing and we are extremely grateful for the savings they have identified. It's like having additional members in our team! ”

Tony Roost, Category Specialist - Hard & Soft FM,
University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust



The result: £30,000 annual savings generated on ambient products

We have already generated savings of more than £30,000 on ambient products for the trust. By switching to the NHS Supply Chain: Food framework, the team was able to deliver savings of more than 15% compared to the trust's previous supplier, with more potential savings to follow. This was achieved without compromising on the quality of food, which was of great importance to the trust during the switching process.



“ We have recently switched to purchasing ambient products through NHS Supply Chain. With the support of our Account Manager, the process of switching was simple. I didn't realise numerous products were cheaper to purchase through the NHS Supply Chain. I always thought we had secured the best deals by going direct to the supplier. ”

Tony Roost, Category Specialist - Hard & Soft FM, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust

Best practice: Best value working group

We identified that by setting up a regular working group with all relevant stakeholders we could enable robust discussions and speed up the decision-making process. Our working group includes representation from catering, retail, facilities, dieticians, speech and language therapists and procurement. This has streamlined the product switching process by gaining signoff from everyone at the same time, reducing the time spent waiting for approvals. We will continue to use this working group to identify further savings opportunities across all food categories.

Next steps: The workplan to deliver further savings

We've identified significant potential savings for the trust on ambient goods, simply by switching to buying via the centrally managed NHS Supply Chain offer. Working in collaboration, both the trust and NHS Supply Chain have agreed a phased workplan to deliver savings across three key switching exercises:

- Phase 1 – Simple switches where an exact match is available via NHS Supply Chain
- Phase 2 – Switches to like-for-like or similar products, i.e. different brands or pack sizes
- Phase 3 – More complex switches involving higher levels of change, but with larger savings.



The total estimated savings across the three-phase plan amounts to more than £160,000 per year.

Contact

If you'd like to understand how we can support your trust to deliver food savings, please email food@supplychain.nhs.uk or speak to your NHS Supply Chain: Food Account Manager.

