



Supply Chain

The new Multi-Temperature Food Solutions framework

Zoe Dowell, Buyer for NHS Supply Chain: Food's Multi Temperature Food Solutions framework, provides some expert insights into its relaunch.

From this month, NHS Trusts have a new range of multi-temperature products available to order through NHS Supply Chain. The Multi Temperature Food Solutions (MTFS) framework, which lasts for a minimum of 24 months, has been designed to complement the existing Multi-Temperature Distribution (MTD) framework, offering Trusts a truly extensive product list and access to big savings, plus enabling goods that require storage at different temperatures to be delivered in the same truck.

The overarching benefits involve streamlining the delivery process by decreasing the number of deliveries, and improving the ordering system by making a wider selection of products available through just one avenue.

With eight small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and, for the first time,

a major supermarket chain, as well as other market-leading suppliers, we have added to the range of products available and increased the flexibility in our offer.

An unparalleled product range

The expansive choice of products available has been compiled following thorough engagement with NHS Trusts across the country to better understand their needs.



Zoe Dowell.

Both frameworks offer customers the chance to easily order chilled, frozen and ambient food from one supplier framework, which will then all arrive in one delivery slot.

The process also involved input from NHS Supply Chain Food's in-house culinary and nutrition teams. Categories were reviewed and relevant dietetic standards were included.

The range includes options for specific dietary or nutritional needs – for instance gluten, allergen or dairy-free options and vegan products – while also containing products that represent the latest nutritional trends and innovations.

We've made efforts to meet the individual and varied needs of NHS Trusts, and to suit the recommendations made in the 'Independent Review of NHS Hospital Food 2020'. Expanding the food offer from the base set by the MTD framework was a challenge, but it was overcome by diversifying the mix of national and local suppliers we use.

Complementing the Multi-Temperature Distribution framework

The new MTFS framework sits alongside the MTD framework, both offering customers the chance to easily order chilled, frozen and ambient food from one supplier framework, which will then all arrive in one delivery slot. The MTD framework, however, also offers a guaranteed and stable national price that is only refreshed every six months, whereas



the MTFS framework offers a more extensive range of products from a wider range of suppliers.

A further advantage of the MTFS framework is the ability to host mini-competitions, which can be run by NHS Supply Chain on behalf of an NHS Trust purchasing through the MTFS framework. These mini-competitions involve re-opening certain products to tender to get a result that better matches the needs of a Trust or several Trusts, and at a better price.¹

Sustainable, nutritional and social values

The MTFS framework was developed in line with a vigorous set of social and environmental values and requirements, according to both Government Buying Standards for Food (GBSF) and our own requirements.

The framework utilised quality criteria from the Defra balanced scorecard, as highlighted in the 'Independent Review of NHS Hospital Food 2020', to assess suppliers – from their supply chain assurance, health and wellbeing commitments, environmental sustainability and socio-economic initiatives, and the quality of their service.

For example, we know that of the 18 suppliers on this framework, 17 have active environmental policies combatting energy inefficiency and use of single-use plastic, as well as factoring in health and wellbeing trends into their product range. This means customers understand the suppliers' quality of service in addition to their commercial offering.

Further to these standards, NHS Supply Chain: Food has taken steps to enhance the social value of the framework itself. During the tender process, focus on adding social value accounted for 10 per cent of the final selection process. We are also pleased that seven new suppliers have come on board, taking the number of SME suppliers on the framework to eight. At its very heart, the process of moving the transport of ambient, chilled and frozen products into one delivery can also drastically reduce food miles, and the size of the supply chain's overall carbon footprint.



The MTFS framework is just one option from a range of routes to market available to NHS Trusts from NHS Supply Chain: Food. For more information about MTFS and to view the full range of frameworks visit www.supplychain.nhs.uk/categories/food

If you are thinking of switching to an NHS Supply Chain: Food framework, please contact your regional Food Account Manager. Details can be found at www.supplychain.nhs.uk/contact/category-contacts

¹ Opportunities for mini competitions can be discussed with the NHSSC: Food team. This is just one of a host of services offered across NHS Supply Chain's food frameworks.