

Progress in Practice

Cornwall's NHS Food Project

The NHS Trusts in Cornwall are working together to purchase more food from local suppliers and develop more jobs locally

Summary

The five NHS Trusts in Cornwall work together as a healthcare community. They have achieved national recognition for their work on sustainable food procurement and the Government's Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative was launched by Lord Whitty, the farming and food Minister, at the Royal Cornwall Hospital in August 2003.

The Trusts believe that high-quality food for patients, staff and visitors is crucial to the provision of health care. Between them they spend about £1.5 million per annum on food products. Bringing this expenditure back into Cornwall and the South West would significantly improve the wealth, and the social and physical health, of the local community. It would also reduce carbon dioxide emissions through minimising food transportation.

The Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust has placed business with local suppliers, for sandwiches, fruit and vegetables, cheese and ice cream. It is currently considering the local procurement of milk. The Trust has worked with local suppliers to provide assistance and has secured the support of the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency.

The NHS Trusts are now at the planning stages of a Central Production Unit (CPU) which will source local food and employ local labour, to provide meals for patients and staff in all healthcare establishments in Cornwall.



Jonathon Porritt, Chair of the Sustainable Development Commission, said:

"This work is so commendable. It is exactly what is needed to support local economies, reduce the pollution from long distance transport and agricultural chemicals and develop a healthier diet."

Mike Pearson, Catering Services Manager at the Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust, said:

"NHS purchasing at a local level has a pivotal role to play in the sustainable development of its local community."

Links and organisations involved: Central Cornwall Primary Care Trust (www.cornwall.nhs.uk/centralpct/), Cornwall Partnership Trust (www.cornwall.nhs.uk/cornwall_partnership_trust/), North & East Cornwall Primary Care Trust (www.cornwall.nhs.uk/necornwall/), Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust (www.cornwall.nhs.uk/rcht/), West of Cornwall Primary Care Trust (www.cornwall.nhs.uk/westcornwall/), Government Office for the South West (www.gosw.gov.uk), DEFRA (www.defra.gov.uk), Soil Association (www.soilassociation.org), Sustain (www.sustainweb.org), NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency (www.pasa.nhs.uk).

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