

IT'S NOT TAUGHT:

why chefs don't consider nutrition, and
how to get nutritional education onto the
syllabus and into the kitchen

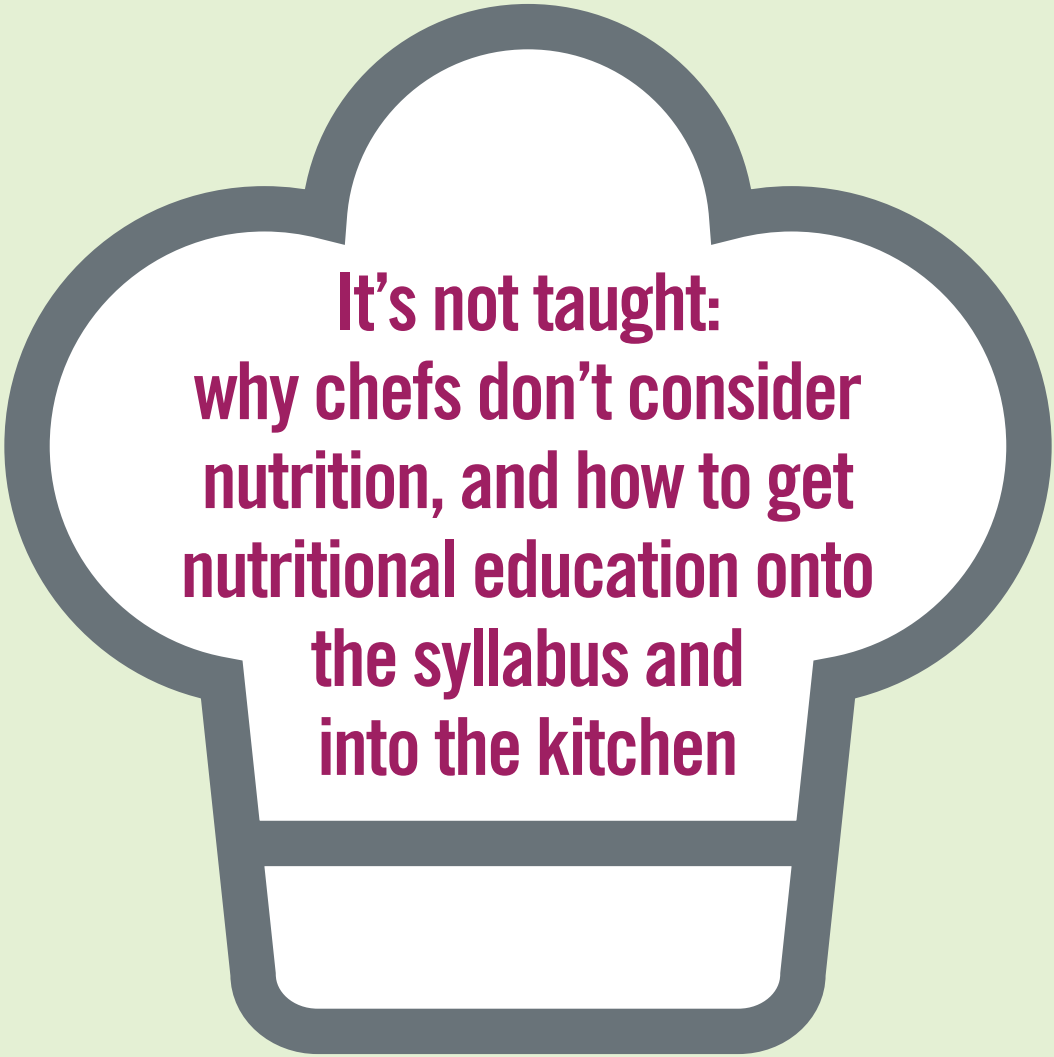


A report which identifies how to improve nutritional education in catering colleges and industry to improve public health and meet customer demand for healthier options



FOOTPRINT
INTELLIGENCE





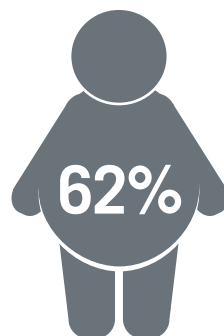
**It's not taught:
why chefs don't consider
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into the kitchen**



meals are
eaten outside
of the home



proportion of calories
that come from food
eaten out of home



of adults in the
UK are now
overweight or obese



the annual economic
impact of obesity
on the UK



- Diet related illnesses are forecast to cost the National Health Service (NHS) £6.3bn by 2015¹, whilst the annual economic impact of obesity on the UK is estimated at being £46bn²
- With one in 6 meals eaten out of home³ and ¼ of food calories consumed out of home⁴, chefs have huge impact on the nation's health
- Yet awareness of nutrition is poor amongst chefs, who are typically taught to use salt, fats and sugars to create flavour



- Customers and clients are demanding healthier food, with greater transparency and higher standards over its content, provenance, quality and health attributes as part of an overriding health and wellbeing trend. Providing this increases commercial opportunities
- Making out of home food healthier would improve the nation's health, wellbeing and happiness, reducing the burden on the NHS and the economy and increasing productivity
- Chefs want to gain knowledge and extra qualifications, both to improve their career prospects and to increase motivation in their working life



- Nutrition must be incorporated into chef qualification curricula so that chefs instinctively consider nutrition when planning and preparing food
- Operators must prioritise giving existing chefs the time and resources to undertake nutritional training
- Lecturers must be engaged, educated and inspired to incorporate nutrition into teaching

This white paper identifies attitudes to the health agenda in catering colleges and how the subject is managed through the syllabus. It identifies the challenges and opportunities for increasing the nutritional content, and sets out a series of proposed solutions.

It's ultimate objective is to change the culture amongst the cooking fraternity so that nutrition, health and wellbeing becomes integral to the food preparation thought process. This will enable out of home options to have a more positive impact on the health of the nation into the future.



- 1. Nutrition must become a mandatory part of chefs' educational training.** The most effective way to ensure this is through change to government policy. Lobbying effort to change government policy is required, with pilots and industry action needed to support this.
- 2. Innovation code funding must be used to pilot a nutritional training module.** This module should then be funded by industry or other funding bodies once the pilot is successfully completed and until government policy makes nutritional training mandatory.
- 3. Lecturers must be engaged, educated and inspired to incorporate nutrition into their course content.** Existing structures like the PACE forum and learning app must be harnessed to disseminate information and to motivate the teaching fraternity.
- 4. Operators and manufacturers must support the agenda.** This is two pronged, and includes committing to mandatory training for working chefs, as well as sponsoring specific nutritional education for trainees.





Background - the case for action

Diet in crisis

Diet-related illnesses are forecast to cost the NHS £6.3bn by 2015⁵. 62% of adults in the UK are now overweight or obese⁶. This is expected to rise with research by Cancer Research UK and the UK Health Forum⁷ predicting that three in four adults will be obese or overweight by 2035, leading to 700,000 new cancer cases, and millions of new cases of type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease and stroke.

Foodservice – a vital part of the national diet

With one in 6 meals⁸ and $\frac{1}{4}$ of calories coming from food eaten out of home⁹, chefs have huge responsibility for keeping the nation healthy. Yet awareness of nutrition is poor amongst chefs. Trainee chefs at catering colleges are still encouraged to load recipes with salt, sugar and cream because that is the culture amongst their trainers.

Nutrition, health and wellbeing are not mandatory components of qualifications for trainee chefs at catering colleges. If nutrition and wellbeing are mentioned at all, they are mentioned incidentally alongside other skills training, and the amount and quality of nutritional information shared is hugely dependant on the quality, commitment and interest of the teacher.

A classical style of cooking using salt, fat and sugar for flavour may be appropriate for chefs who end up in high-end restaurants where meals are typically consumed fairly irregularly. Yet only a small number of trainees will end up in these establishments. The bulk will head for the high street, the corporate or the public sector where greater attention to nutrition, health and wellness is essential because these out of home food experiences contribute significantly and regularly to national diets.

Alongside this, the industry is facing a massive shortage of good quality chefs. Chefs are often drawn to the profession because they are attracted by the creative appeal of designing menus and meals. Educating students on the link between their food and their diners' health could

help motivate and inspire by giving them the tools to channel their creativity into the challenge of creating healthy meals that are full of flavour.

"Chefs are artists, they want to create – fire up their passion for nutrition and they'll be inspired to take on the challenge of creating healthy but delicious meals."

Geoff Booth, chairman, PACE



30%

of UK CO² emissions
from food production
and distribution

COP21 commits us to healthier diets

Healthier eating is also a crucial component of sustainable living, and diets must be addressed in order to reach the climate change targets set at COP21 in Paris in December 2015. This is because food production and distribution, along with deforestation and land-use change for agriculture, are responsible for 30% of the UK's CO² emissions. COP21 also stressed the vital role the private sector must play in converting to a low carbon economy¹⁰.

Two of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals are also specifically focussed on improved nutrition and healthier lives. Healthier diets also reduce the carbon and financial burden that diet-related diseases put on the NHS and the economy. Thus, in addition to nutrition, chefs urgently need more education on low carbon diets.



90%

of people believe chefs
should take an interest
in the nation's health


Strong health and wellbeing trend

While the Responsibility Deal appears to have been sidelined, the out-of-home sector is being transformed by the health and wellbeing trend. Customers and clients are becoming more discerning in their food eating habits. They are demanding healthier food, with greater transparency and higher standards over its content, provenance, quality and health attributes. This trend is reflected in research by Footprint¹¹, Euromonitor¹², Nielsen, Mintel¹³ and others.

Chefs are being held responsible for enabling consumers to eat more healthily. CASH research has shown that 90% of people believe chefs should take an interest in the nation's health. 70% think chefs should be more responsible for helping consumers to eat less salt¹⁴.

Industry is trying to make menus healthier, often driven by client demand. Yet colleges and tutors are often removed from these trends.

There are pockets of effort behind the scenes, with some product reformulation, menu/recipe redesign, and the communication of health and nutrition at an operational, customer level. But not enough is being done to make foodservice healthier across the board.



"The whole industry has gone out of its way to have less fried food and less butter because clients are asking for it. But the colleges and tutors can be removed from these trends. We need to get operators into colleges to talk about what they are doing and why."

**Robert Strachan, director of curriculum,
Basingstoke College of Technology.**

Make healthy the norm - health by stealth



sustainable meals served by Sodexo so far, giving diners
1 tonne of extra veg and pulses, and 600kg less meat

Sodexo's Green and Lean pilot of healthy, sustainable meals in eight independent schools showed it's possible to take crowd-pleasing favourites like lasagne and make them healthier (and more sustainable) without affecting customer enjoyment and satisfaction. It just requires imagination and the time to carefully redesign the recipes.

The Royal Brompton Hospital also succeeded in making food much healthier by dramatically reducing fat and salt whilst making the menu much more nutritious. And the patients loved it, with high satisfaction ratings. The higher standard of food enabled the hospital to raise more money in catering outlets as they were serving premium products. This income could then be ploughed back into continually improving food quality and sustainability credentials.

Healthier food does need careful promotion. Consumers are notoriously fickle, and while the health and wellbeing trend does appear strong, marketing dishes on the basis of their health attributes can be a turn off. Better nutritional knowledge for chefs would enable changes in product and recipe formulation without affecting taste so that menus and options are changed to be healthier, without the consumer having to consciously choose a healthier option.

Caterers like Compass work hard to make things as "nutrition dense as possible, whilst not moving away from the customer" according to Nicky Martin, head of nutrition, Compass Group UK and Ireland.

"If we don't give them what they want they will find someone who will," explains Martin. "I'd prefer them to eat with me because if they want fish and chips, we can give them better quality fish, and chips fried for as little time as possible. Promoting something as a healthier 500 calorie meal turns people off - they think 'it's a small portion size', 'it won't be value for money', or 'I'm not gonna like it'. Chefs are already great at making food look and taste amazing. If we give them the nutritional knowledge, we can combine that with making food nutritionally sound as well, and we'll be on to a winner."

*"It's really important that chefs use healthier kitchen practices.
It's part of our responsibility in foodservice."*

**Beth Hooper, nutrition manager,
Nestlé Professional**



The status quo - trainees are not taught about nutrition

The crux of the issue is that explicit nutritional training is not a mandatory component of hospitality and catering training. The mandatory section of the course is set by Ofqual. In the core syllabus, nutritional issues such as salt, fat and allergens are referenced, but only lightly, without regular, dedicated time set aside to provide detailed nutritional education.

"We have to learn to cook in a different way - reducing salt, fat, sugar automatically, and putting the healthy option on menu instead of traditional, heavy meals."

**Mike Duckett, former catering manager,
Royal Brompton Hospital**

Funding and time squeeze

Funding cuts have led the content of existing courses to be reduced, reducing the amount of hours that colleges can afford to teach. The legal requirement to provide tuition in maths and English to students who have not achieved grade C or above, has usually been incorporated at the sacrifice of vocational training and study.

There are colleges which try and incorporate more nutritionally focussed course elements, such as the competition run at Westminster Kingsway College to create healthy ready meals. However, the lack of funding, resources and teaching time, and its absence from the core curriculum, make it very hard for even those colleges who are passionate about nutrition to prioritise it adequately, especially as the insight from educators and operators indicates that a nutritional module would require a minimum of eight hours, but more likely 35 or more hours of dedicated course time to cover it effectively. Such a module should also be complemented by ensuring

"The nutritional training of chefs is vitally important. Food is all about nutrition and health is a big trend in the eating out sector now. There's growing awareness amongst the public, and greater expectations, which creates commercial opportunity."

Sue Dibb, coordinator, Eating Better

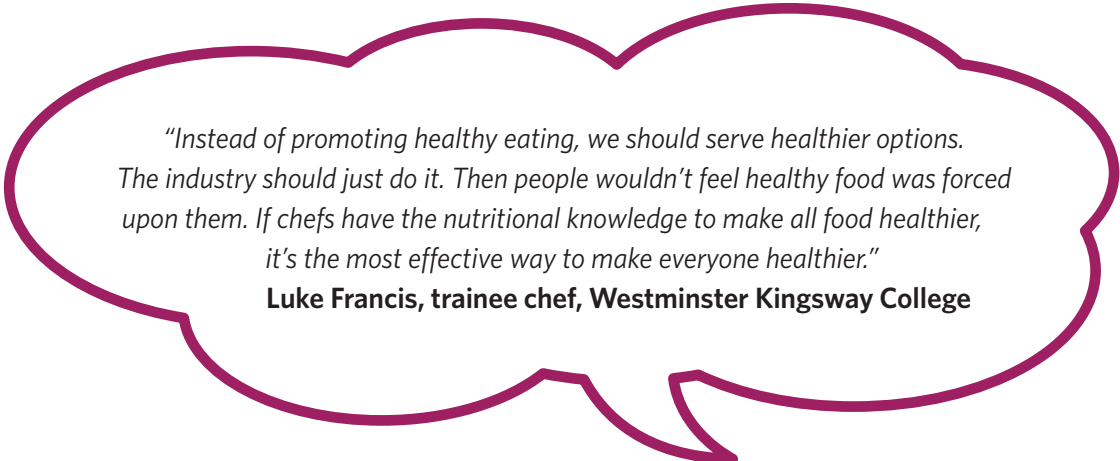
nutrition is explicitly embedded throughout the rest of the training so that nutrition becomes something that those in catering automatically consider when cooking and menu planning.

Chefs' nutritional knowledge is poor

This research revealed that those who recruit chefs tend to agree with Tom Allen, executive development chef, Independents by Sodexo, that "chefs' knowledge on nutrition is pretty poor... and often, any knowledge they do have appears to have been gleaned from the media, not their course".

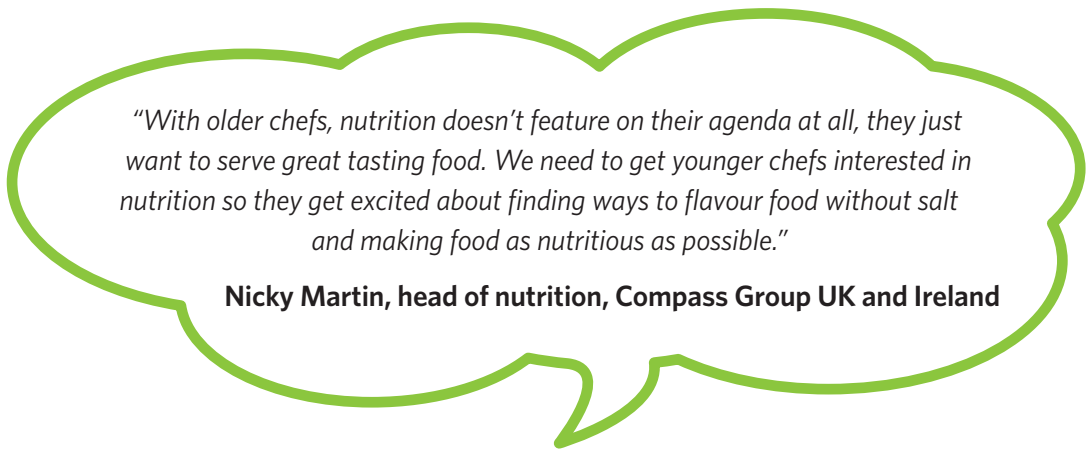
This can lead to misunderstandings and misconceptions about what actually constitutes healthier eating. For example, Wan Mak, head of nutrition and dietetics, Sodexo, notes that when it comes to chefs, unless they've had specific nutritional training, "years of service can have no impact on nutritional knowledge. And even if chefs are passionate about nutrition, if they have never been engaged with a professionally qualified dietician, then the knowledge they have can be inaccurate". For example, Mak notes how some chefs believe in nutritional myths, such as sea salt being lower sodium than table salt or that using honey instead of sugar would make the dish healthier.

Current trainees report that they are taught to consider mainly how menus fit together, and not the nutritional content.



"Instead of promoting healthy eating, we should serve healthier options. The industry should just do it. Then people wouldn't feel healthy food was forced upon them. If chefs have the nutritional knowledge to make all food healthier, it's the most effective way to make everyone healthier."

Luke Francis, trainee chef, Westminster Kingsway College



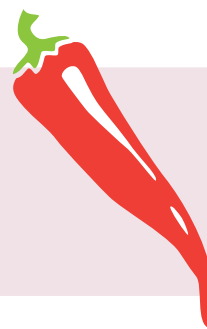
"With older chefs, nutrition doesn't feature on their agenda at all, they just want to serve great tasting food. We need to get younger chefs interested in nutrition so they get excited about finding ways to flavour food without salt and making food as nutritious as possible."

Nicky Martin, head of nutrition, Compass Group UK and Ireland

THE NEED...

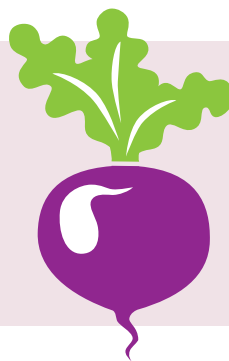
POOR DIET = ILL HEALTH

62% of adults in the UK are overweight or obese. Diet related illnesses are forecast to have cost the NHS £6.3bn in 2015.



IT'S FOODSERVICE'S RESPONSIBILITY

With one in 6 meals eaten out of home, chefs have a huge impact on the nation's health.



CHEFS AREN'T TAUGHT

Nutrition is not core to catering college syllabuses, with chefs typically taught to use fat, salt and sugar to create flavour.



WELLNESS IS ON TREND

Wellness is on trend with customers and clients demanding healthier food, creating commercial opportunities.



It's not
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THE SOLUTIONS...



GET IT ON THE SYLLABUS

Nutrition must become core to the syllabus so chefs instinctively consider nutrition when planning and preparing food.



CHANGE GOVERNMENT POLICY

Pilots must be launched to prove the need and potential to push policy change to make nutritional training mandatory for catering qualifications.



ENGAGE LECTURERS

Lecturers must be engaged, educated and inspired to incorporate nutrition into teaching.



GET OPERATORS TO TRAIN CHEFS

Operators must prioritise giving existing chefs the time and resources to undertake nutritional training.

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The benefits of nutritional training for:



Industry

- **Addresses skills shortage.** Foodservice is experiencing a huge shortage of skilled chefs. Increased knowledge, creativity and control could help to attract and retain talent.
- **Increases value and opportunity.** The more nutritionally qualified chefs are, the more value they present to employers. Increased qualifications can increase tendering opportunities by demonstrating eligibility for contracts with specific nutritional criteria. It also allows operators and manufacturers to respond to customer and client demands for healthier meals more readily.

"If chefs arrived trained in wellness and nutrition from college, it would change things dramatically. It would be a huge plus. It would save months of intensive training to share our knowledge and expertise. Sponsoring a new qualification would also drive sales as it would improve our skill set and allow us to pitch for a wider range of contracts."

Tom Allen, executive development chef, Independents by Sodexo

Students

- **Increases employment and promotion opportunities.** Extra nutritional qualifications would be likely to make graduates more employable, give them more career flexibility, and speed their promotional prospects. There is also an appetite amongst students to pay a small fee for additional courses or modules if they feel these will improve their prospects, or if the subject ties in to their interests.

- **Facilitates engagement and job satisfaction.** Understanding how their food impacts on their customers' health and wellbeing could also create a sense of ownership and responsibility. Knowledge creates power and the nutritional challenge of creating healthy yet delicious and popular menus would be likely to engage and inspire working chefs, providing motivation and job satisfaction.

"I want to know, as a chef, what kind of impact I can personally have on the nation's health; I want data. That would be meaningful and motivating – to understand that I can make a difference."

**Charlotte Crudgington, trainee chef,
Westminster Kingsway College**

"Extra certificates might not lead to a graduate being paid more money, but they'd be more likely to get a better job. It also wouldn't limit their options, so they could try opportunities outside of the kitchen, like working for some of the food giants such as Nestlé and Unilever. If I had had a nutritional certificate on my CV, it might have speeded up my career."

Tom Allen, executive development chef, Independents by Sodexo

1%

reduction in people
who are overweight
or obese could save
NHS £300m p.a.

Society

- **Improving health, wellbeing and the economy.** Small changes in our diet can lead to massive health benefits. Research by Cancer Research UK and the UK Health Forum found that a one per cent shift in the number of people going from the overweight or obese category to the healthy weight category every year could prevent more than 64,000 cancer cases over the next 20 years and save the NHS £300 million in 2035 alone.



Getting nutrition onto the syllabus

End goal: To change UK law to make nutritional education a mandatory component of all catering course syllabuses.

"We've been trying to improve nutrition for the last 25 years. It won't change unless we make it legislative. Allergen legislation ensured businesses invested and changed their knowledge and practices – most wouldn't have done it if they hadn't needed to."

Geoff Booth, chairman, PACE

How do we make this happen?

**ACTION
POINT**

Component 1: pilot and promote

Demonstrate demand, support and benefits of nutritional education in action by piloting and promoting nutritional modules

- 1 Colleges must apply for innovation code funding to launch pilot nutritional modules to scope out the best format and content for a nutritional module. This could be up and running in six to nine months.
- 2 Industry or other funding bodies must step forward to fund the nutritional module once the pilot is complete and the innovation code funding has ended.
- 3 A successful innovation code pilot and resulting industry or other sponsor-funded course can be used as supporting evidence to apply for a government funded food-based nutritional curriculum qualification that is accredited by an awarding body. This would be expected to take a minimum of two years from application to implementation.
- 4 Lecturers must be engaged, educated and inspired to incorporate nutrition into their course content. Existing structures like the PACE forums, regional and national meetings and learning app must be harnessed to disseminate information and to motivate the teaching fraternity.
- 5 Operators and manufacturers must support the agenda. This is two pronged – and includes committing to mandatory training for their working chefs, as well as sponsoring specific nutritional education for trainees.

ACTION POINT

Component 2: lobby and drive for change

To support and drive the momentum for policy change, the following organisations should also be lobbied:

- 1 Ofqual - to incorporate mandatory, good quality, explicit nutritional training into catering qualifications.
- 2 Ofsted - to ensure the provision of good quality nutritional training is measured during school and college inspections and assessments.
- 3 Awarding bodies - to collectively incorporate nutrition into catering qualification syllabuses.
- 4 Government procurement bodies - to ensure there are minimum standards for everyone in the public sector, as there are with school meals. This would drive nutritional standards and knowledge for operators and level the playing field so all operators have to adhere to the same standards. The standard would also have a ripple affect across the rest of industry.
- 5 Government - to request that a basic nutritional education is incorporated into mandatory food safety training.

CAVEAT

To succeed, new qualifications on nutrition must be credible and robust with nutritional information/course design based on credible sources.

"A new qualification on nutrition mustn't be a tick-box exercise. It must be credible and robust if it is going to solve anything."

**Terry Tinton, programme director,
Westminster Kingsway College**

"Nutrition should be tackled as a separate subject but also embedded in other catering modules."

**Gary Hunter, head of faculty for hospitality and culinary arts,
Westminster Kingsway College**

Component 3: Engaging other stakeholders

Engaging operators and manufacturers to back chefs' nutritional training

Operators and manufacturers have a key role. They can drive the nutrition education agenda in several key ways:

- 1 Demanding better nutritional education from catering college courses. Operators must be connected to colleges to communicate the message directly that industry has changed and colleges need to adapt to catch up.
- 2 Sponsoring nutritional training modules and the embedding of nutrition into general catering course content.
- 3 Making nutritional training mandatory for working chefs, supported by dedicated time and money for chefs' training, with support from senior management to ensure it happens.
- 4 Lobbying government to make nutritional education a mandatory component of catering course requirements. Manufacturers are particularly important as, unlike the colleges, their ability to generate corporation tax income gives them greater government influence.

Nutrition has increased in importance in foodservice with 88% of the industry reporting that they are training chefs/others on healthy eating¹⁶. Yet there is a sense that this is more an indication of the availability of nutritional education than a true reflection of how many chefs have actually undertaken such training. Mandatory training is rare, and it is hard to gauge how many chefs have actually completed nutritional training.

The quality of in house training can also vary widely. To tackle this, the Association for Nutrition recently launched a "Workforce Competence Model in Nutrition for Catering Guide". This should enable caterers/operators to define and advance their own, in-house training modules to improve standards and provide consistency. For those without their own internal training, the British Nutrition Foundation launched the "Catering for health online' course in 2015 which takes 5-7 hours for £35.

Food and Service Management companies are typically further ahead when it comes to ensuring chefs have access to nutritional training and that nutrition is incorporated into their menus. Operators such as Compass have an e-learning module that all food handlers have to do which includes a basic foundation to nutrition. They also have an online recipe book which enables chefs to plan menus but also tells them the qualities of those menus, labelling those dishes high in fat, sugar and salt in red so they can ensure a good balance of red options across each day, and the number of red options chosen per day is restricted.

Others, such as Sodexo, have similar systems with clear nutritional guidelines for their recipes and menus. The company has also created fairly detailed online nutritional training which can be completed in around a day, although it is not yet compulsory.

These kinds of efforts must be built upon to ensure operators support and mandate nutritional training for chefs across the foodservice industry.

Engaging working chefs

Whilst attention must be focussed most intensively on operators to ensure they provide time and funding for nutritional training, mechanisms like local chefs clubs can be used in the short term to improve knowledge and drive momentum and change.

Engaging consumers

Demand drives change, so consumers and clients must also be encouraged to request healthier options, healthier cooking practices and healthier recipe formulation. If customers demand it, restaurants will begin to demand it of colleges in turn, which would force them to adapt.

Engaging primary and secondary education

Nutritional education should not be limited to catering qualifications, but should instead be incorporated throughout primary and secondary education, so that all people have an understanding of the how food and nutrition interact with health.

Driving change

**ACTION
POINT**

Ensuring chefs have better nutritional knowledge is key to enable foodservice to help tackle the dietary-related pandemic within its sphere of influence. This white paper has set out that pathway to changing the status quo.

Now the solutions have been identified, the question is this: are you or your organisation going remain part of the problem, or be a vital and valuable part of the solution?

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