HEALTHCARE RETAIL STANDARD – Q&A

Q. What is the Healthcare Retail Standard?

A. The Healthcare Retail Standard (HRS) is a set of criteria developed for retail outlets in all healthcare settings across Scotland. These criteria require the retail outlet to have at least 50% of their products from a healthier range. They also restrict what can be actively promoted in these stores.

Q. Why introduce the Healthcare Retail Standard?

A. The Scottish Government and NHS Scotland is committed to making our health service health promoting through all the services it provides – this includes any food that staff, patients and visitors buy from outlets across the NHS. We have already made significant improvements to catering provision by introducing the Healthyliving Award in all NHS-run restaurants and café bars and many voluntary and private sector caterers are following suit.

It is now time for retailers to match this. Poor diet is the biggest single cause for ill health\(^1\) and the public sector, and especially the NHS needs to be at the forefront to change that for the better.

Q. Who is affected by the Healthcare Retail Standard?

A. All retail outlets in a healthcare setting are affected, whether they are public, private or voluntary sector establishments. This includes any trolley service, pop-up or mobile store and any community food outlet.

Catering outlets, including café bars, restaurants and vending machines must continue to meet the Healthyliving Award, moving to Healthyliving Award Plus as soon as possible.

Q. How will the Healthcare Retail Standard be implemented?

A. Health boards will need to incorporate the HRS criteria into any retail contract going forward. After that it will be up to the retailer to meet the criteria using guidance that will be produced by the Scottish Grocers Federation’s Healthy Living Programme. Officials from the Programme will visit stores to provide on-site advice and ultimately perform an assessment to ensure criteria are met.

Q. What is the timescale for retailers meeting the Healthcare Retail Standard?

A. We appreciate this will be a significant challenge for retailers so have set a due date of 31 March 2017 for the voluntary and public sector. This date was agreed after speaking to those responsible for around three-quarters of retail provision in healthcare settings. Private sector retailers will be expected to make the change as soon as their contract comes up for renewal.

\(^1\) The Lancet, 2013.
Q. **What resources and support will be available?**

A. The Scottish Grocers Federation Healthy Living Programme (HLP) will produce guidance on how to meet the new standard. The guidance will be developed and refined alongside the implementation of the HRS into a few pilot stores. Officials from the HLP will also be available to provide hands-on advice on request.

Where a significant number of retail outlets belong to a national chain, NHS NSS in collaboration with the HLP, and supported where necessary by the Scottish Government, are prepared to hold meetings with company head offices to facilitate the adoption of the HRS.

Q. **What difference will customers notice?**

A. This depends on what the store currently sells but trials show that in some cases it could be quite significant. Customers should gain more real choice: instead of a choice between 200 lines of confectionery (as is the case in some stores now), they might be able to choose nuts, dried fruit or fresh fruit instead of chocolate.

Q. **What will be the cost to businesses?**

A. This is the first time that such a system has been introduced, however, the HRS has been designed to mirror the Healthyliving Award (HLA), which operates in catering sites. The HLA has proved to have little long-term effect on profits. We are introducing this across all retail outlets in healthcare settings so all businesses will operate on a level playing field.

Any cost to business needs to be set against potential long-term savings for the NHS thanks to the improvements staff, patients and visitors can make to their diet.

Q. **How are we informing customers of the change/requirements**

A. This will be a big change for customers as it is for retailers. We will take advice from retailers on the best way to communicate the changes to their customers and this will be included in the guidance that the Scottish Grocers Federation will produce.