

GETTING EVERYONE AROUND THE TABLE: SWALLOW AWARENESS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Partnership working to
improve the experience





Public Health
Agency

WHAT WERE OUR AIMS?



To make it as common for staff to ask if someone has a swallowing difficulty as it is to ask if they have allergies

For staff to have greater awareness and access to information they need to support people with dysphagia

For people living with dysphagia to have enjoyable experiences when accessing hospitality

WHY DOES THIS PROJECT MATTER?

Equity

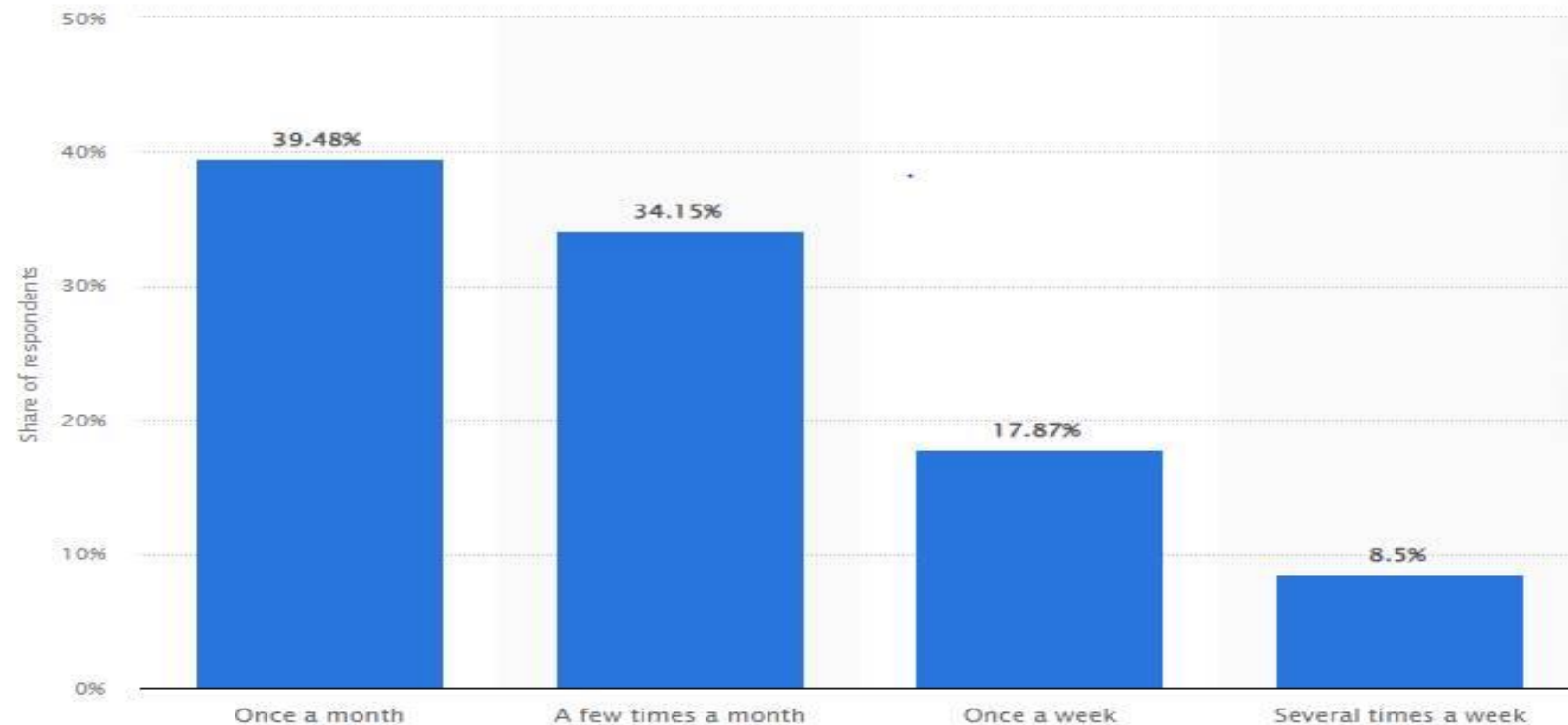
Inclusion

**Quality of
Life**

**Awareness
of
dysphagia**

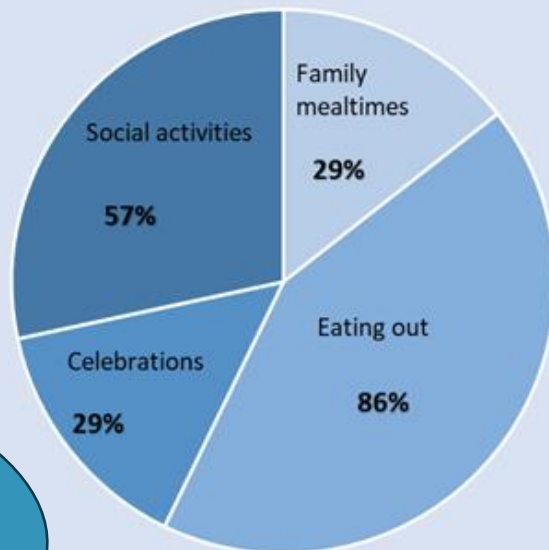
HEALTH INEQUITY

How often do people in UK dine out? (UK Dining out habits (2019): Statista



STAGE I PRE-PROJECT ENGAGEMENT WHAT MATTERS TO YOU?

What challenges to you face?



“I use specialist cutlery when eating and drinking, I bring it with me when going to a restaurant, it would be good if staff were more aware of this” (Mark)

“Eating out used to be so enjoyable but I just find it a chore now so tend to avoid social situations” (Lesley)

“Sometimes I feel self conscious when I am in a restaurant or café especially when it is busy, if I am offered a table in a quiet corner helps ease this feeling” (Stephen)

“I need small snack-like meals as I can’t manage large meals and the food goes cold quickly anyway, I ask for smaller portions but sometimes have to pay the full price” (Mary)

STAGE 2
STAKEHOLDER EXPERTS



**Community &
Voluntary Groups**

- Brain Injury Matter
- Mencap
- Dementia NI
- Head and Neck
Cancer Group
(Queens University,
Belfast)
- Stroke Association

Community and Voluntary Sector Groups - Lived experience experts

Public Health Agency - Public Health experts

Hospitality Ulster - Hospitality experts

HSC Trust Dysphagia Support Teams - Clinical experts

STAGE 3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE HOSPITALITY FACTSHEET

Help improve the experience for people with swallowing difficulties

	Consider offering alternative seating arrangements, such as a quiet corner or table with fewer distractions. When a customer lets you know their requirements in advance, consider offering a longer booking slot as some people may need more time to finish their meal.
	When asking about specific needs such as allergens, include swallowing difficulties in this. For example, "Do you have any allergies or swallowing difficulties?"
	Answer specific questions, like 'could the dish be mashed easily'? This will help the customer decide what they can eat.
	Where possible, offer a variety of dishes on the main menu and the children's menu, for example creamed potato, fish in sauce or rice dishes. Consider offering to blend food if requested.

Consider offering alternative seating arrangements such as a quiet corner table with few distractions

	Some customers may have specific requirements that will make it easier for them to eat and enjoy their food. This may include the need for extra sauce or gravy with their food or extra water to accompany their meal.
	Some customers with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties may need smaller portions or may request a starter as a main course.
	Be aware that customers may need to bring some of their own specialist equipment such as cups, cutlery, bowls or plates.
	Some people may need to add a thickening powder to their drinks. They may ask for cutlery to help them to do this.
	Always check when the food is served if your customer needs any further assistance.
	Encourage happy customers to provide feedback.

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STAGE 4
TEST/FEEDBACK/AMENDMENTS



**RESTAURANT
OWNERS /CHEFS**



**PEOPLE WITH LIVED
EXPERIENCE**

STAGE 5 DEVELOPMENT OF SWALLOW AWARE WALLET CARD

For tips on how you can support me
in your café, bar or restaurant, go to:



<http://pha.site/hospitality-factsheet>

Improving experience for customers with swallowing difficulties - top tips for hospitality

Wednesday, 13 March 2024 - [Allied Health Professions](#)

Eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties (dysphagia) can affect people with a range of medical conditions, including cancer, dementia, mental health conditions, Parkinson's and learning disabilities.

This factsheet for the hospitality sector explains what is meant by dysphagia and how you can help your customers in restaurants, cafes and pubs to have a better experience.

Details

Format

A4 2 page factsheet, PDF only

Target group

Hospitality sector





STAGE 6 LAUNCH

**The launch took place on 6th June 2024 in a local
restaurant in Belfast**



**The Public Health Agency
have been working**

**LAUNCH
VIDEO**



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06/06/2024

New Campaign To Raise Awareness Of Dysphagia In Hospitality Sector

A new campaign has been launched to raise awareness of dysphagia in the hospitality industry. This web site uses cookies to improve your experience and by viewing our content you accept their use. Click here to remove this notice.

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News Letter

BREAKING

Health

Health and hospitality team up to improve lives of Northern Ireland people with swallowing difficulties

By Helen McGurk

Comment

Published 11th Jun 2024, 14:53 BST
Updated 11th Jun 2024, 14:53 BST



Health and hospitality improving lives of people with

The Public Health Agency (PHA) and Hospitality Ulster have joined forces to launch a new campaign to help the food and drink industry understand and improve the lives of people with swallowing difficulties.

Dysphagia is the medical term for eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties and it can affect people at any stage of their lives. It can often occur alongside a range of medical conditions, including dementia, cancer, stroke, some mental health conditions, Parkinson's disease and learning disabilities.

Dysphagia can impact people's quality of life and their experience of socialising in restaurants, cafes and pubs. Going out to eat can be a stressful and challenging experience and for some people, potentially unsafe.

Aidan Dawson, Chief Executive at the PHA, said: "Many social occasions revolve around food and drink, such as going out for a coffee with friends or attending family events in restaurants. People who live with dysphagia are at higher risk of food or drink going into their airway. This can lead to excessive coughing and even choking. They often have to think about how they will be able to eat or drink at these events and venues, sometimes they will avoid them entirely.

"The hospitality sector can play a vital role in helping to improve the quality of life for people living with dysphagia, by providing a good quality experience for those who go to eat and drink. The PHA and Hospitality Ulster have worked in partnership to develop a new factsheet to help the food and drink industry understand and improve the lives of people with swallowing difficulties. The factsheet explains what dysphagia is and outlines the ways the hospitality sector can help those who have swallowing difficulties to have a better dining experience and reduce the risk of choking and aspiration pneumonia.

The PHA and Hospitality Ulster have also developed a new factsheet to help the food and drink industry understand and improve the lives of people with swallowing difficulties. The factsheet explains what dysphagia is and outlines the ways the hospitality sector can help those who have swallowing difficulties to have a better dining experience and reduce the risk of choking and aspiration pneumonia.



News / Voice / HEALTH AND HOSPITALITY TEAM UP TO IMPROVE LIVES OF PEOPLE WITH SWALLOWING DIFFICULTIES

HEALTH AND HOSPITALITY TEAM UP TO IMPROVE LIVES OF PEOPLE WITH SWALLOWING DIFFICULTIES

20 June 2024



or, Hospitality Ulster



HSC Public Health Agency

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Thursday, 06 June 2024 - Allied Health Professions

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"The hospitality sector can play a vital role in helping to improve the quality of life for people living with dysphagia, to provide a good quality experience for them and their families. We hope the factsheet will help to alleviate some of the anxiety for those who experience dysphagia who want to eat and drink outside their homes, helping to improve their quality of life and reduce the potential of social isolation and poorer health outcomes."

LAUNCH PUBLICITY

**STAGE 7
EMBED / MONITOR /
EVALUATE**

- Ongoing stakeholder engagement (including celebration event)
- Scale and spread (planned roadshows across the region)
- Follow up survey to measure impact for people living with dysphagia
- Follow up survey with hospitality industry to measure impact and awareness



**CELEBRATION
EVENT
29TH AUGUST
2024**





**HUGE THANKS TO ALL OUR PARTNERS – WE
COULDN'T HAVE DONE THIS WITHOUT YOU**