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Tillery Valley and Kealth approach a decade of delivering specialist meals

Gwent-based food production company Tillery Valley have renewed an annual contract with Merthyr-based specialist food firm Kealth Foods as they approach a decade of business partnership. Tillery Valley will provide more than 300,000 specialist meals supplied by Kealth, to hospitals, care homes and houses across the UK over the next year. The carefully prepared meals cater for a range of health conditions which present problems for patient mealtimes.

Tillery Valley supply up to 600,000 prepared meals a week to the healthcare and education sectors and local authorities. The company's expert in-house dietitians and product development team design varied menus that match both dietary requirements and specific budgets. They are assisted in this task by the expert knowledge of specialist suppliers such as Kealth.

Hospital catering must accommodate a variety of conditions which affect patient mealtimes in many complex ways. One of these is dysphagia – the impaired ability to swallow. It may develop as a result of conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's and Dementia, and 73% of stroke patients will experience problems swallowing. While it can be a permanent condition, some patients' swallowing will improve as recovery continues. Their diet will progress from pureed to soft foods, to eating normally again. Caterers must provide foods in a variety of textures to suit this spectrum of needs.

Kealth Foods specialise in dysphagic meals, and have developed an extensive range that includes favourites like Roast Beef with Mashed Potatoes, Pork and Thyme Casserole and Fish in Parsley Sauce. A choice of hot and cold desserts and breakfast options are also available. Meals are available in all the required textures, graded B to E by the National Patient Safety Agency. Kealth also provide Halal, allergy aware, and low sodium meals, particularly beneficial to patients with kidney problems.

Jane Stobie, Kealth, said:

"Dysphagia is a complex condition, and each patient has different needs. This inspires us at Kealth to consistently develop our innovative range. We have developed recipes

and presentation methods that provide patients with both nutritious meals and a positive, flavoursome eating experience.

“We have an excellent working relationship with Tillery Valley and have received some excellent customer feedback from their customers. We aim to continually develop our product offering and we look forward to working closely with Tillery Valley over the next year and beyond.”

Julie Lardie, Food Service Development Dietitian at Tillery Valley, said:

“When catering for dysphagic patients, safety when eating is as important as nutrition. It can be very dangerous for patients with a highly impaired swallow reflex to be given food that has not been pureed, as any lumps could trigger choking. Being unable to eat their meals can slow recovery and even lead to malnutrition.

Dignity is another important concern for dysphagic patients, and the range that Kealth supplies fulfil vital health necessities while ensuring meals are presented in appetising ways. We are delighted to continue our partnership with Kealth and will soon be celebrating ten years of working together. We really value their expertise in supplying bespoke meals for specific conditions and I am sure we will continue to work together for many years to come.”