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**Economy and Fair Work Committee**

T3.60  
 The Scottish Parliament  
 Edinburgh  
 EH99 1SP

Date 27 March 2024  
 Your Ref GB/AA  
 Our Ref FWC 0603224

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Responses provided on behalf of Gordon Beattie, Director of National Procurement, NHS National Services Scotland, further to attendance at the recent Economy and Fair Work Committee, 06 March, 2024.

**Query 1: Do we monitor and record our use of Fairtrade products?**

Mr Beattie advised that NSS build ethical procurement into their food purchases. He also highlighted the need for impartiality with ethical requirements rather than rely solely on branded standards like 'Fairtrade'.

*Additional information:*

It is important to note that Fairtrade sits among a body of similar trading movements such as 'Rainforest Alliance', 'ethical trading' etc. NSS embeds ethical procurement standards in our contract specification however NHSScotland requirements are such that it is not always possible to only buy Fairtrade. Availability of these products can also be an issue.

We can highlight some recorded use of the ethical procurement of products spend last year including:

| Product         | Total Spend | 'Branded' as fair trade or rainforest |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| Bananas         | £100,000    | £85,000                               |
| Sugar products  | £127,000    | £48,000                               |
| Coffee products | £220,000    | £76,000                               |

It's important to point out that these decisions are based on both NHS requirements and availability. We will list 'fair trade' products on contracts if they are available. The final purchase decision is made by the local NHSScotland health board ordering department.



Chair Keith Redpath  
 Chief Executive Mary Morgan  
 Director Gordon Beattie

*NHS National Services Scotland is the common name of the Common Services Agency for the Scottish Health Service*

**Query 2:**

**We were asked about the use of food not produced in Scotland and transported in from Wales.**

Mr Beattie clarified to the committee that the focus of National Procurement is on the creation of national contracts to meet catering departments' needs. However, he noted that decisions regarding the delivery strategy of catering services are made at local level within each NHSScotland territorial board, indicating that this is more a question of catering strategy than one of procurement.

*Additional information:*

After conducting additional research, we couldn't find the Wales example within our national frameworks.

*To also note:*

There has been a growing demand for frozen ready meals across NHS Scotland.

Meals are purchased due to various types of patient needs, for example religious beliefs, texture modified foods and dysphagia diets.

In such circumstances, boards may buy in specific kinds of meals to meet these requirements. Often as frozen ready meals.

Currently, despite ongoing engagements with the market to understand what is available in Scotland in relation to frozen meals, including working in partnership with Scottish Enterprise and Scotland Food and Drink to keep abreast of this, we remain unaware of any Scottish manufacturers of frozen ready meals able to meet NHSScotland needs.

NHSScotland regularly tenders its requirements and will keep this under review.

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