

Planning and preparation are vital steps when commencing the *Healthy Choices* journey and meeting the Victorian Government's *Healthy choices: policy directive*



AlfredHealth

The Healthy Eating Advisory Service would like to acknowledge Alfred Health as the author of this information.

Planning and preparation are vital steps when making changes within your health service. The following steps may assist your health service in commencing the *Healthy Choices* journey and meeting the Victorian Government's *Healthy choices: policy directive*.

Checklist – getting started

- **Familiarise yourself** with the Victorian Government's [Healthy Choices framework](#) and the [Healthy choices: policy directive for Victorian public health services \(Policy directive\)](#)
- **Identify whether your organisation has existing policies or guidelines** in place that include requirements for healthy foods and drinks to be offered or encouraged, or policies that will support the implementation of the *Healthy Choices* guidelines. Examples may include food safety/food procurement policy, staff health and wellbeing policy, catering/vending/retail policy, healthy eating policy, fundraising policy, food service guideline or nutrition policy. The Healthy Eating Advisory Service (HEAS) has resources to help you develop a healthy eating policy in your organisation – [click here to access our free resources](#).
- **Liaise with your direct manager to assist in identifying a lead for this work** and any other departments within your health service that will be able to support planning, decision making and implementation. For example, departments that oversee contract management, fundraising, staff wellbeing, health promotion and nutrition may be considered
- **Nominate appropriate employees to complete online training with HEAS.** Modules include securing management support, understanding the Healthy Choices guidelines for chefs, cooks and managers, and understanding the Healthy Choices guidelines for point-of-sale staff. [Access free training modules](#). HEAS also has resources to help educate key staff on the requirements of the *Policy directive* - [click here to access our free resources](#).
- **Identify key internal stakeholders for this work.** These could be other departments who have a shared interest in healthy eating or health and wellbeing. For example, health promotion, nutrition and dietetics, food services, human resources and people and culture. Executive and senior management buy-in is also key. HEAS has a free e-learning module tailored to '[Getting management on board](#)'.
- **Map the food environment within your organisation.** Include retail, food provided via inpatient/residential menus, vending, internal/external catering across all sites and activities such as fundraising. Mapping may include any contract arrangements currently in place, method of food service operation (internally vs



privately operated), suppliers used, stock management and display, sales data systems (e.g. electronic POS vs stocktake methods) and key contacts. NB: As part of meeting the *Policy directive* all public hospital and health services must complete an environment scan on the way they provide food and drinks to their staff and visitors.

- **Liaise with your procurement team** to review any tenders, lease documents or contracts that relate to food and drink suppliers. Connect with relevant contract managers and look out for lease or contract expiry dates and any existing requirements that these suppliers may have for providing and encouraging healthy food and drinks. For support in implementing *Healthy Choices* into your organisation's tenders, lease documents and contracts [visit the HEAS website for free resources.](#)
- **Develop relationships with food services' key contacts** including managers, chefs and frontline staff. Their support is essential in making sustainable changes to the food environment. You could set up regular meetings, site visits and/or informal check-ins.
- **Obtain baseline data** in accordance with the *Healthy Choices* policy guidelines by assessing retail, vending and/or catering providers and products. This can be done using the HEAS online [Food Checker](#) tool. You may also choose to gather sales data as this is particularly relevant if there are concerns regarding potential profit/loss from providers. Ensure you track this data before, during and after implementing any changes. This will mean you can react quickly to any unexpected fluctuations in sales.
- A benchmark assessment can be helpful in establishing baseline data and identifying changes needed and next steps. [The Achievement Program](#) has a benchmark assessment tool that looks at healthy eating environments within your workplace.
- You can also seek support or advice from other health services, including Alfred Health.

Useful links

Policy directive resources:

- The Victorian Government's [Healthy choices: policy directive for Victorian public health services \(Policy directive\)](#)
- Healthy Choices Policy Framework: [Healthy choices: policy guidelines for hospitals and health services.](#)
- Healthy Eating Advisory Service [Healthy choices: policy directive for Victorian public health services \(Policy directive\) overview](#)
- Healthy Eating Advisory Service Policy directive [sugary drinks resource](#)
- Healthy Eating Advisory Service [vending plan-o-grams to meet the Policy directive](#)
- [Healthy choices: Policy directive frequently asked questions](#)
- Healthy Eating Advisory Service Policy directive [infographic for food service staff](#)

Healthy choices resources:

- Healthy Choices Classification Guide: [Healthy choices food and drink classification guide](#)
- Healthy Eating Advisory Service [traffic light system](#)

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