

Review of Caritas Dietetic out-patient service in St. Vincent’s University Hospital

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Introduction: In July 2024, the dietetic department established a new out-patient clinic to meet the needs of the dietetic service within the Caritas Day Hospital. This service is facilitated by a staff grade dietitian fortnightly, undertaking nutritional assessments with service users of the Caritas Day Hospital who previously would have relied on same day referrals and assessments.

Aim & Objectives: The purpose of this audit is to review the productivity of the new service and the effectiveness of dietetic interventions implemented by assessing weights pre and post dietetic intervention.

Methodology: Data was collected retrospectively commencing on 16/02/2026 and was completed on 01/03/2026. Administrative data on referrals and attendance were reviewed, and the DMF Stats system was used to analyse dietitian hours allocated to the clinic. 18 patients were identified using department-maintained clinic lists. Patient information was collected retrospectively from healthcare records and nursing assessments, including the CGA Tool. Data were compiled and analysed using Microsoft Excel

Results: Referrals increased by 13% in 2025 compared to 2024 (n=43)(Table 1). Following introduction of the structured outpatient clinic, referrals rose by 18% (n=27), with a further 56% increase (n=83) after implementation of a letter-based referral system (Table 2). Service uptake remained stable (19% in 2024 and 2025) (Table 1). Dietitian hours dedicated to the clinic increased by 20.8% in 2025. Among 18 patients reviewed (16 female, 2 male), 61% (n=11) maintained or gained weight, with an average change of +0.16 kg (range –10.6 kg to +4.5 kg).

Table 1. Overview of referrals to dietetic clinic and percentage uptake

	2024		2025	
	N	%	N	%
Number of referrals	324		367	
Uptake on dietetic appointments	61	18.80%	71	19.30%

Table 2. Overview of referrals an uptake pre-and-post the introduction of an opt-in letter system

	N	%
Number of referrals pre-letter introduction (6-month period)	148	
Uptake on dietetic appointments	22	14.80%
Number of referrals post-letter introduction (6-month period)	231	
Uptake on dietetic appointments	34	14.70%

Conclusion:
The structured outpatient clinic was associated with increased referrals and positive patient anthropometric outcomes. Further evaluation across a larger cohort, including cancellations and time allocation analysis, is recommended.

- Key Recommendations:**
- 1. Transition to prospective data collection for improved accuracy
 - 2. Expand future audits to include a larger patient cohort
 - 3. Conduct a patient satisfaction survey for service users and/or their families as appropriate
 - 4. Ensure accurate recording of non-attendance and non-patient-facing activities in workload assessments
 - 5. Continue effective practices, including the structured clinic model and referral system