



March 2011

Community Meals Service Overview

Community Meals Service – also referred too as Meals on Wheels; Meals at Home; Home Meals Service;

A Community Meals Service, can be provided by a local authority, third sector or a private company, and is so much more than solely delivering food to the door.

Many delivery staff will do whatever is required and necessary to help and support the customers / service users. These can be such daily tasks as taking their outgoing post, reading letters, picking up the post off the floor so the service user doesn't fall, bringing in the milk, loosening tops on bottles or medication. They can also provide advice on suitable meals or liaise with carers or relatives. They regularly provide a safe and well check on the person and raise the alarm if there is an issue with the person's health or well being.

Community Meals Services directly support and facilitate communication and feedback into the customers / service users individual care plan. The service often raises the alarm when the clients personal well being or environment is creating additional pressure or impacting on their safety.

In addition to the role of the delivery staff, there are dedicated office and managerial staff working very closely with all levels of healthcare professionals, from senior hospital staff, through discharge teams, community based workers, to carers working in both the public and private sector, with the primary aims of identifying people who may benefit from good nutrition and ensuring that this is delivered in a manageable and dignified fashion to the customer / service user.

Time is also spent working with other associated agencies, such as the Third sector i.e. - Age UK, WRVS or the Stroke Foundation, plus other areas of local government, such as schemes to drive out rogue traders, as well as the police and fire brigade.

In some areas the Community Meals Service is embraced as a preventative service, therefore reducing pressures elsewhere in the social and healthcare system, but alas not all authorities are seeing the service in this light.