



For over 70 years Meals on Wheels has embedded itself in British culture and we believe it should also be established in law. The essential service provides a raft of benefits for the elderly, disabled and most vulnerable citizens in our communities, combating a range of physical and mental illnesses and enabling individuals to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible.

For Meals on Wheels Week 2015 (9-15 November) the National Association of Care Catering (NACC) is calling for the Meals on Wheels service to be protected and made a statutory responsibility for local authorities across the UK.

Recent research has highlighted that over one third of top tier councils has shut down their Meals on Wheels service to save money and we fear another round of spending cuts will mark the end of the valuable service.

Meals on Wheels is an essential preventative service that plays a key role in tackling the big issues facing older people in society today:

- **Good nutrition:** A regular hot meal seven days a week may be the only meal that a person will eat all day.
- **Isolation:** Meals on Wheels drivers offer a lifeline that reduces loneliness and isolation. They can provide essential help when they come across someone who is weak, sick, cold or distressed with no-one else to turn to. For many service users the human interaction they get through Meals on Wheels is the only interaction they have.
- **Independent living:** The service is part of the health and social support necessary to enable elderly people to continue living in their own homes and be socially independent in line with current Government policy.
- **Saving the NHS money:** Meals on Wheels plays an integral part in preventing emergency admissions to hospitals and care homes and provides part of the framework needed to support the elderly on leaving hospital, saving billions of the NHS budget.

Keeping the elderly at home, both nourished and hydrated, is vital in reducing malnutrition-related admissions to hospital that cost the tax payer considerably more than Meals on Wheels. Malnutrition costs the UK a staggering £19 billion a year (NHS England 2015). The average cost of one NHS bed, not including treatment, is £255 per night; the average cost of a meal served at home at £3.62 per day.

We want the government to consider making Meals on Wheels and community meals provision a statutory service for Local Authorities to supply.

Please [click here](#) to view a list of all the councils who no longer provide Meals on Wheels services

We believe it is short sighted for the Government and Councils to cut Meals on Wheels services, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you and brief you fully on the issues surrounding Meals on Wheels and community care for the elderly.