

Case Study

1 of 1



Background

In 2014, the in-house kitchen at Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council was decommissioned and the Meals on Wheels service was outsourced to an external provider. The average number of meals served decreased to fewer than 100 per day.

Following a review by the Corporate Management Team, the Meals on Wheels service was brought back in house in July 2015. It was relocated to a kitchen facility in Blaenau Gwent and a more business-focused delivery model was introduced.

The meal numbers have started to increase steadily to 124 meals served per day over a five-day period. With the appropriate marketing and changes to the menu choices, the team is committed to building client numbers over the next 6-18 months.

About the service

- 124 meals a day served over a 5 day period

The Meals on Wheels service delivers hot, tasty and nutritional meals in the Blaenau Gwent area. Anyone can apply for the service; a referral from social services or a GP is not required.

A choice of healthy meals is offered over a three-week menu and customers are encouraged to recycle packaging. The meal cost is £4 for a two-course lunch.

The service is quality assured through annual customer surveys and feedback received directly through the delivery drivers.

In March 2015, a detailed analysis was undertaken to assess the impact of the Meals on Wheels service on Social Services care provision. This found that:

- Approximately 40 customers had both a hot meal delivered and a carer visiting during the lunchtime period, which provided an opportunity to review the overall care package.
- Over 20 clients had a care package but no lunchtime call, so this could incur an additional cost if the Meals on Wheels service is withdrawn.
- Over 110 clients had no other form of care support and their principal interaction was with the Meals on Wheels service.

This provided a clear evidence base for the impact and need for the service.

How the service is run

The Meals on Wheels service is available five days a week.

The current structure includes nine staff, eight drivers and a cook supervisor. Delivery drivers are DBS-checked and trained in first aid to ensure that they can handle emergency situations.

The Meals on Wheels service works closely with the Local Health Board, the community connector's initiative, local supermarkets, district nurses, voluntary sector organisations, GP surgeries and apetito, the meals supplier.

Added value

Staff carry out vital welfare checks whilst they are visiting customers:

- The member of staff delivering the meal will encourage the client to eat and can help them with small tasks, such as fetching cutlery, removing lids and cutting up meals.
- Visual checks will also be completed each time a meal is delivered, to ensure clients are comfortable.
- If staff think there may be a problem, the administration office is contacted and appropriate procedures will be followed, including contacting the family or doctor.

The Meals on Wheels service also offers lunch time services to luncheon clubs and associations.

Hopes for the future


The council is looking at introducing a 'tea tray' service. A questionnaire will be distributed to customers to identify the demand for this.

Subject to the number of customers wanting an extended service, the council is also looking at increasing the service to seven days a week, including bank holidays.

For more information about Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council or speak to a representative please contact info@thenacc.co.uk



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