

# Case Study

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## Background

Tayside Contracts has been the community Meals on Wheels service provider in Dundee for more than 16 years. Its purpose-built central production unit, Tay Cuisine, opened in 2003 when increased demand called for larger premises.

## About the service

- 900 meals delivered every day

The Meals on Wheels service is available 365 days a year.

Approximately 900 meals are delivered 'hot' over two daily deliveries (lunch and dinner) and all menus are nutritionally analysed to ensure compliance with the Caroline Walker Trust guidelines for the elderly.

The Dundee City Council Social Work team and NHS Tayside discharge teams identify those in the community that need the service – for example, someone who is unable to prepare a meal independently. Individuals or family members can also refer themselves or a relative via social services. At present, an older person that has been in hospital for 24 hours receives the service free of charge for 28 days (however the criteria hospital discharge is currently under review).

The Meals on Wheels service is currently subsidised by Dundee City Council and the level of local authority support remains the same, despite the ever-present budgetary pressures. Service users pay £3.20 for a two-course meal.

Meals are packed into preheated insulated boxes and delivered to people's homes, lunch clubs and sheltered housing complexes. All used cardboard, paper, plastic, metal and left-over food is recycled.

## How the service is run

Meal preparation and delivery is carried out by Tayside Contracts and Dundee City Council Social Work Department employees. The number of staff involved in the production, portioning and packing of the meals has increased since Tayside Contracts took over the service.

Prior to 2003, the service was delivered by volunteers. However, this changed in 2003 when drivers and attendants were recruited by Dundee City Council Social Work department to fulfil this function.

The results of an annual service user survey are used to influence menu development and service delivery. Lunch club and sheltered housing service users also have an opportunity to give their feedback.

## Local partnerships

To raise awareness and promote the Meal on Wheels service, a brochure has been distributed across Dundee. 'Taster sessions' are also offered to professionals working in the home care sector, and service representatives attend relevant professionals' meetings, such as nurses' forums.

The service works closely with local partners to ensure specific groups of Meals on Wheels customers are catered for. For example, it worked with the NHS Tayside Speech and Language Therapy team to develop its textured modified meals offer and train staff to better understand the needs of people with dysphagia.

The service also provides placements at Tay Cuisine for students at the local university and college, and once a month, it donates one-pot meals to Graham's Meals, a homeless charity in Dundee.

## Added value

In addition to providing hot meals, Dundee City Council and Tayside Contract offers its customers enhanced services, including:

- Community alarm, shopping and handyman services provided by local partners.
- A monthly events calendar, with the option of a themed menu for one week each month. This fosters greater social inclusion within lunch clubs and sheltered housing complexes.

## Hopes for the future

Dundee City Council is in the process of introducing afternoon tea for service users in lunch clubs or sheltered housing.

*"The Meals on Wheels Service is a life line to one of the most vulnerable groups within our communities. The impact of removing this essential service and the potential for increased malnutrition and social isolation within this very vulnerable group would be catastrophic, not only for the service users but also for their families and other services providers within our communities."*

**For more information about Tayside Contracts and Dundee City Council Meals on Wheels Service or speak to a representative please contact [info@thenacc.co.uk](mailto:info@thenacc.co.uk)**



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