



The NACC champions innovative Meals on Wheels models to protect the future of Meals on Wheels services

The National Association of Care Catering (NACC), in collaboration with the charity Sustain and the Sustainable Food Cities Network, has produced a series of case studies that champions innovative, alternative models for Meals on Wheels services that remove dependency on continually shrinking social care budgets and could help secure the currently threatened service for future generations.

The four inspirational Meals on Wheels services from across the UK showcase positive approaches to sustaining services in an economic climate that has seen an alarming number of services close.

Research* conducted on behalf of the NACC for Meals on Wheels Week 2016 (November 2016) confirmed that the non-statutory Meals on Wheels service is under immense pressure across the UK because of continual funding cuts. The number of councils providing Meals on Wheels to vulnerable and older people living independently in their own homes dropped below 50% for the first time, with just 48% of authorities providing a service compared with 66% only two years prior.

This rapid downward trend highlighted an urgent need for local authorities to think differently and creatively about how their Meals on Wheels services are delivered to avoid further closures and protect the vital service that provides a nutritional, physical, emotional and social lifeline for many elderly and vulnerable people across the country.

From creating social enterprises and forging partnerships with relevant local services, to adopting a more business-focused approach or combining Meals on Wheels with school meals production to keep overheads and costs down, the four case studies – from Hertfordshire Independent Living Service and CATERed in Plymouth, England, Tayside Contracts, Scotland and Gwent Blaenau, Wales – are great examples of successful modern service models that prove that closing services is not the only option for local authorities when funding is reduced or removed.

As part of its ongoing campaign to protect the Meals on Wheels service, the NACC has shared the case studies as widely as possible with decision makers in local authorities to highlight the positive alternative approaches and encourage them to follow suit and adopt similar innovative models.

The case studies can be viewed at

www.thenacc.co.uk/resources/mealsonwheelsbestpractices

Neel Radia, the national chair of the NACC, explains: “We have seen a most disturbing pattern of Meals on Wheels services being shut down as a short-term solution to budget cuts. In addition, where a Meals on Wheels service is no longer available, some local authorities have been signposting the elderly and vulnerable to inappropriate alternatives, such as websites and fast food outlets, which really is a great cause for concern.

“However, in these challenging economic circumstances we have seen inspirational examples of opportunity and innovation from local authorities determined to sustain their Meals on Wheels services. We believe that this could be the solution to protecting the service for future generations and this is why we have produced the case studies to share with as many decision makers and influencers as possible.

“Funding for Meals on Wheels is not going to magically reappear, but the case studies clearly show that there are positive, sustainable alternatives to the traditional service model. We are urging all local authorities to take inspiration and consider new approaches in their localities in order to save the valuable service that enables our older population to live safely in their own homes and communities for longer.”

Simon Shaw, Food Poverty Campaign Coordinator at Sustain, adds: “Working across the UK, we know local areas are very concerned that older people and other vulnerable groups face barriers in accessing nutritious affordable food. These four case studies are very positive examples of how different areas have developed Meals on Wheels services which ensure access to good food, provide additional benefits, for example by reducing loneliness and isolation, and benefit the wider community, such as with jobs and apprenticeships. We hope these examples energise and inspire local commissioners to develop services fit for the 21st century.”

For more information about the NACC and the Meals on Wheels case studies visit www.thenacc.co.uk/resources/mealsonwheelsbestpractices

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Notes for Editors:

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* Research carried out by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) on behalf of NACC for Meals on Wheels Week 2016 (7-11 Nov)

The NACC

The National Association of Care Catering (NACC) is a progressive organisation representing professionals providing catering to the care industry. They are recognised by Local Authorities, independent providers, the charitable sector and Government departments as a prime source of information and opinion on all aspects of catering within the care sector and whose primary aim is to improve standards.

The NACC works with a number of partners to:

- Promote and enrich the standard of catering within the care sector, whether that catering be provided by Social Care Departments or other Caring Agencies
- Provide a forum for debate among individuals, companies and organisations of all kinds involved in catering for the care sector
- Facilitate the exchange of information, experience and expertise
- Promote the development of professional standards among those involved in catering for the care sector
- Commission research into matters relating to catering for the care sector
- Publish guidelines, policy papers and authoritative statements on all aspects of catering for the care sector

www.thenacc.co.uk

Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming

Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming advocates food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment, enrich society and culture and promote equity. We represent around 100 national public interest organisations working at international, national, regional and local level, and work with hundreds more on local initiatives to improve the food system.

Sustain works at both a local and a national level to encourage action to reduce long-term food poverty. Working with other charities, local commissioners and providers we aim to revolutionise the meals on wheels programme to not only address health needs, but also help to reduce the isolation experienced by far too many older people in our communities.

www.sustainweb.org

Sustainable Food Cities

Sustainable Food Cities is a network of cross-sector partnerships in towns, cities, boroughs and counties that are using food as a vehicle for driving positive change. The Network helps people and places to share challenges, explore practical solutions and develop best practice in all aspects of healthy and sustainable food. Sustainable Food Cities programmes work across six key areas:

1. Promoting healthy and sustainable food to the public
2. Tackling food poverty, diet-related ill health and access to affordable healthy food
3. Building community food knowledge, skills, resources and projects
4. Promoting a vibrant and diverse sustainable food economy
5. Transforming catering and food procurement
6. Reducing waste and the ecological footprint of the food system

www.sustainablefoodcities.org