

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE : 20 MAY 2004

BEST VALUE REVIEW – COMMUNITY MEALS

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform elected members of potential options for the future service delivery of Community Meals arising from the Best Value Review process.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The provision of and charging for community meals in East Ayrshire, in common with many other local authorities, has developed historically into the present pattern of subsidised service provision including:

- Lunch clubs;
- Meals delivered to people's homes (meals on wheels); and
- Meals delivered to those attending day services.

- 2.2 At present, meals delivered to people's homes are delivered in a traditional way which is service rather than needs led. As a consequence there is little, if any choice of meal and no choice of when the meal can be eaten. There is no evening or weekend provision of meals and no service on public holidays.

- 2.4 As a consequence, Social Work Committee of 29th January 2004 agreed to the establishment of a Member/Officer Working Group to undertake a Best Value Review of Community Meals.

- 2.5 The scope of the review was identified as being:

- To detail the current service
- Consider quality issues
- Consider the flexibility of the service
- Benchmark with other authorities
- Consult with service users and other stakeholders
- Consider cost issues
- Identify the efficiency of the current service
- Consider and make recommendations for future service delivery

- 2.6 At its meeting of 7th April 2004 the Member/Officer Working Group agreed to the presentation of a draft report to Social Work Committee for consideration.

3. THE BEST VALUE REVIEW

3.1 The Review was carried out in accord with the Council's guide to carrying out a Best Value Review.

3.2 As such the process was structured around the "4 C's" of Best Value:

- Challenge
- Consult
- Compare
- Consider

3.3 The Member/Officer Working Group identified the challenges that are being faced by existing service provision.

3.4 The process included consultation with service users.

3.5 A benchmarking exercise was undertaken with a range of partners.

3.6 An Option Appraisal process was undertaken.

4. FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW

4.1 The review identified the following:

- Benchmarking with other local authorities would suggest that the Council could improve both the quality of service whilst achieving better value for the public pound.
- There are potential models of service delivery for group meals (lunch clubs and day services) where such can be provided offering more choice and quality.
- There are models of meals delivery to people's homes that are more flexible, offer more choice and potentially offer better value for money than our current model.

5. OPTIONS

5.1 The Review process identified the following options for the Council:

- Retain the existing pattern of service delivery
- Enter into a procurement process to test the market and identify potential future options for service delivery in light of the findings of the Review.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS OF REVIEW GROUP

6.1 The recommendation of the Review Group is that a procurement process be undertaken to identify future options for service delivery and that in principle the present subsidy to Lunch clubs, Day Care and the Meals on Wheels service be reviewed in the light of the results of the propose procurement exercise.

6.2 Should the in-house provider (On-Site Services) not secure any of the contracts there will be implications for the Council in its role as employer. It is recommended that this issue be remitted to the Director of Educational and Social Services for further consideration prior to the commencement of any procurement exercise.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Any financial implications would be subject to the outcome of the tendering process.

8. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The provision of community meals is not a statutory obligation

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Any personnel matters would be identified by the Director of Educational and Social Services and be subject to the outcome of the tendering process. Issues would be reported to a future committee.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 It is recommended that Social Work Committee:-

- (i) request the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services to consider the implications for in-house services;
- (ii) approve the entering into thereafter of a procurement process for the future provision of community meals; and
- (iii) otherwise note the content of this report.

John Mulgrew
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services
17 May 2004

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

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EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL
SERVICES**

BEST VALUE REVIEW OF COMMUNITY MEALS



2004

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The provision of and charging for community meals in East Ayrshire, in common with many other local authorities, has developed historically into the present system of direct meals subsidy for all services including;

- Lunch clubs (Community based service)
- Meals on Wheels (meals delivered to people's homes)
- Day Service Meals (meals provided to service users attending day services.)

1.2 Meals provided to people at home and in day services are included in the Council's non-residential charging policy.

1.3 In the lead up to the introduction of free personal and nursing care in July 2002, detailed consideration was given, at national level, to what services should be free and what would still incur a charge. The outcome is summarised in the Scottish Executive report, 'Fair Care for Older People' published in September 2001.

"We see a clear distinction between the state paying for costs associated with ill health or frailty which involve close or intimate contact with an older person and costs associated with the day to day tasks of daily living with which everyone is confronted. It is particularly important that it is clearly understood that living costs and domestic care costs do not come within the scope of personal care and that people will still be required to pay a proportion of their care costs."

1.4 The Council has fully implemented this policy to ensure that older people requiring personal care do so free of charge. The Council has also implemented fully, CoSLA guidance on charging. More care hours are provided to vulnerable people than at any time in the Council's history.

1.5 The Council has not however addressed historical issues in relation to charging policies that result in subsidies to what could be considered day to day living costs, i.e. the provision of meals.

1.6 Social Work Committee of 29th January 2004 therefore decided that a Best Value Review of Community Meals be undertaken.

1.7 The review has been undertaken in line with the Councils 'Guide to carrying out a Best Value Service Review'.

1.8 The membership of the Member/Officer Working Group is detailed in Appendix 1.

2. SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

2.1 It was agreed that the remit of the Member/Officer Working Group would be to address the following issues:

- Consider financial aspects of the service (including unit cost and income recovery);
- Detail the current service;
- Consider the quality of the service;
- Consider how the service was meeting assessed needs;
- Bench mark with other local authorities;
- Establish the views of service users;
- Consider service efficiency;
- Consider options for the future of the service.

3. POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

3.1 Social Work services are delivered within the context of a complex statutory framework.

3.2 The primary underpinning pieces of legislation in relation to adult Social Work services are the Social work (Scotland) Act 1968 and the NHS and Community Care Act 1990.

3.3 There is no statutory obligation upon the Council to specifically provide community meals and any provision as such is made under the general 'promotion of social welfare' clause - Section 12. of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968

4. CHALLENGE

4.1 This section comprises descriptions of the service and the financial framework within which it operates and identifies key challenges for the review to consider.

4.2 Service Descriptions

Meals on Wheels

- 4.3 Meals on Wheels are the delivery of hot meals to older people in their own homes. This is an assessed service but not a statutory obligation.
- 4.4 At present meals on wheels are delivered in a traditional way which is service rather than needs led. There is little, if any, choice of meal and no choice of when the meal can be safely eaten.
- 4.5 The service is generally provided over five days, Monday to Friday, although this is limited in some, predominantly rural, areas with availability between two and four days only. A small part of the council area is not currently covered by the service at all.
- 4.6 There is no evening or weekend provision of meals and no service on public holidays.
- 4.7 Meals are generally delivered between 11.30 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. There are currently a total of 575 service users receiving Meals on Wheels. The majority, 446, receive a five day service with the remaining 129 receiving a service between two and four days per week.
- 4.8 The menu is based on a single daily option for service users.
- 4.9 Currently there are two providers delivering the Meals on Wheels Service as detailed below:

On Site Services:

Producing 67% of the annual total number of meals: 92,040.

On Site produces meals from a range of source kitchens across East Ayrshire. They are supported by the council transport section and volunteers for delivery to service users.

Buchanan Centre:

Producing 33% of the annual total number of meals: 44,980.

The Buchanan Centre, a voluntary organisation, also produce meals from several source kitchens, delivering predominantly to the Kilmarnock and Fenwick areas of the authority. Production and delivery is exclusively by volunteers.

- 4.10 Between the two providers the average cost per meal is £2.08. Recovery of charges for Meals on Wheels is through the non-residential service charging policy.
- 4.11 The maximum recovery for each meal is £1.50. This is often however not realised as charges for meals are considered along with charges for other care services, and an income-based charge is applied. This can result in those who receive meals on wheels having a financial advantage over other older people, who purchase and prepare their own food, or have it prepared by family or care services.
- 4.12 A total of 137,020 meals on wheels are produced on average per annum. An average rate of subsidy of £1.76 per meal including transport costs equates to an overall total subsidy of £242,246 .

Lunch Clubs

- 4.13 Community based lunch clubs provide a setting where older people can socialise with their peers and purchase a hot meal.
- 4.14 Lunch clubs are a non-statutory, non-assessed service. A total of 51,532 meals are produced for lunch clubs per annum.
- 4.15 Any older person can be a member of a lunch club and take advantage of its benefits irrespective of their financial situation. Many older people achieve similar benefits from other settings.
- 4.16 All older people receive an allowance for their food within the state pension.
- 4.17 The role of Social Work in lunch clubs is historical, and essentially as a third party between the provider On-site Services and the service user.
- 4.18 On Site Services is the principal source of the meals and typically charge £2.30 per meal.
- 4.19 The current financial arrangement is that older people pay a contribution of £1.50 per meal and the remaining £0.80 per meal is paid for through subsidy by Social Work. The annual subsidy for this aspect of the lunch club service is approximately £40,000 per year.

4.20 In addition there is also under recovery of charges in this service due to meals wastage. For 2003/04, this is estimated at £17,000 (e.g. 20 meals provided to a lunch club, 2 people attended).

4.21 The total annual subsidy for this non statutory, non assessed service paid from social work resources was approaching £57,000 for the last financial year.

Day Services.

4.22 Community meals are provided to all older people who attend social work day services as part of an individual care package based on their assessed need. There are currently 187 individual service users attending day services in East Ayrshire.

4.23 The introduction of Free Personal Care for Older People in July 2002 made a clear distinction between personal care services that were no longer to be charged for and other practical supports that could still incur charges.

4.24 From July 2002 in East Ayrshire no charges have been levied in relation to care provided at day services.

4.25 The Councils policy on non residential charges does however make allowance for charges to be levied for meals and this is in line with national policy (Fair Care for Older People).

4.26 In practice, implementing recovery of these charges has proved ineffective. There is an approximate annual recovery of £8,400 against a gross cost of £46,000.

4.27 The subsidy for meals in day services for the financial year 2003/ 2004 was

£38,136.

4.28 Costs

4.29 The tables below detail overall subsidy costs and transport costs in relation to community meals.

	Average Cost per Meal	Subsidy to full Charge per Meal	Subsidy due to Non-Recovery per Meal	Total Subsidy per Meal	Annual Direct Subsidy
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Meals on Wheels	£2.08	58p	91p ⁽¹⁾	£1.49	£204,160 ⁽³⁾
Lunch Clubs	£2.30	80p	30p ⁽²⁾	£1.10	£56,685
Day Services	£2.30	80p	£1.10 ⁽¹⁾	£1.90	£38,136
TOTAL					£298,981

Explanatory Notes:

The above expenses relate directly to Social Work.

- (1) This relates to non-recovery of income due to inclusion in non-residential charging policy.
- (2) This relates to non recovery of income due to meals wastage.
- (3) For Meals on Wheels there are additional costs of £38,086 for transport delivery:
 - i) £6,700 of this cost is to Buchanan Centre for volunteer driver expenses paid for from Social Work resources.
 - ii) £31,386 of this cost is for `On-Site Services` delivery cost and is met through the councils general transport budget.
 - iii) Average transport costs for meal delivery are 27p per meal

Meals on Wheels Transport Costs

Provider	Number of meals Per Annum	%	Overall Annual Cost	Cost Per Meal
* Onsite	92,040	67	£31,386	34p
** Buchanan Centre	44,980	33	£6,700	15p
TOTALS	137,020	100	£38,086	27p

* Onsite service information based on fuel costs incurred.

** Buchanan Centre information based on volunteer driver expenses claimed through social work.

Total Meals Production:

Average production for each part of the service based on 2003/04 figures is as follows:

- Meals on Wheels 137,020 meals
- Lunch Clubs 51,532 meals

Total Subsidy Costs:

The total cost to the Council to subsidise the complete Community Meals Service for financial year 2003 / 2004 was **£337,067**.

4.30 Challenges

EQUITY

- 4.31 There is no equity in subsidies paid by the Council in relation to meals. For example, if an older person prepares their own meal at home they pay for food and fuel costs from their own resources and benefits.
- 4.32 If they have a meal delivered to their home (Meals on Wheels) the Council currently subsidises this meal somewhere between £1.49 and £1.76 (depending on whether transport costs are included.)
- 4.33 The situation is further complicated by a lack of equity in the charging policy where those service users with high support packages pay nothing towards their meal provision as the maximum charge for supports introduces a ceiling on charges.
- 4.34 At lunch club level the Council's subsidy is awarded regardless of need and is neither a statutory nor assessed service. Again there is no equity in who accesses such services as it is non-assessed.
- 4.35 The Council therefore finds itself in the position that:
- (i) It is directing substantial resources at non-statutory and, in the case of lunch clubs, non-assessed services at a time when there is pressure on resources and a requirement to target the most vulnerable.
 - (ii) There is no equity or fairness in the level of charges or subsidies in operation as they have become inextricably linked with and tempered by the Council's current charging arrangements.

- 4.36 In determining the parameters of 'free' personal care at both national and local level it was clearly determined that older people would pay for their own food whilst preparation of food could form part of an assessed service depending on need.
- 4.37 The state pension is made up of various elements including an allowance for food. The Council could be considered to be providing a 'double subsidy' to some service users whilst other older people rely on their pensions and savings for day to day living expenses.

THE NEED FOR FLEXIBLE SERVICES

- 4.38 Client choice and flexibility are at the heart of modern social work services.
- 4.39 At present meals on wheels are delivered in a traditional way which is service led rather than needs led. As a consequence:
- There is little, if any, choice of meal and no choice of when the meal can be safely eaten.
 - Some areas have either no service or a reduced service.
 - There is no evening or weekend provision of meals and no service on public holidays.
- 4.40 There is a requirement to modernise social services to reflect increased public expectations and national policy initiatives promoting person centred services.
- 4.41 A local example of this is the change achieved through the implementation of the Home Care Review where services increasingly fit round the person rather than the other way round (e.g. vulnerable people can be helped to go to bed later at night/can rise later in the morning, can choose to live at home longer because of our increasing ability to deliver intense supports.

5. CONSULTATION – SERVICE USER VIEWS

- 5.1 A survey consisting of 120 Meals on Wheels Service Users (20% sample) was undertaken on a face to face basis between the 3rd and 6th April 2004. 82 Surveys were successfully completed with the remaining 38 service users either declining to participate or being unavailable to do so at the point of contact.
- 5.2 The survey indicated a level of satisfaction with the existing service, however in respect of the key areas of choice, flexibility and cost to the service user there is clear indication of both desire for improvement and a willingness to pay for a better service.
- 5.3 The survey, particularly in relation to general comments, highlights the individuality of the service user and reinforces the importance of ensuring that increasing levels of need should not result in decreasing levels of choice for vulnerable individuals in our community.
- 5.4 A copy of the questionnaire incorporating numerical responses is attached as appendix 2. A summary of comments is attached as appendix 3.

6. COMPARISON:

BENCHMARKING – SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 6.1 To establish a broader perspective a benchmarking exercise was undertaken with other Scottish local authorities.
 - 6.2 Indications are that many authorities have found themselves in similar circumstances to East Ayrshire with services that have evolved into general subsidy and do not take into consideration funding priorities within local government, assessed needs, or the personal financial resources of individual service users.
- 6.3 Several Councils have their subsidy for meals on wheels linked to either Home Care or non residential charging policies. There are indications that councils who have reviewed their service are moving towards systems that rely less on subsidy. Many councils are still in the process of establishing or completing reviews.
- 6.4 The level of response has indicated that the issue of developing more effective and responsive Community Meals services is a common concern for local authorities.
- 6.5 Findings from the benchmarking exercise are attached as appendix 4.

SITE VISIT

- 6.6 A site visit was undertaken by the Member/Officer Working Group to East Lothian to see at first hand alternative models of service delivery.

- 6.7 The site visit demonstrated an example of a contracted out frozen meals service with costs of the meal met by the service user and set up and management costs maintained by the Council.
- 6.8 This service is proving popular as it offers a wide choice to the service user and allows absolute flexibility in terms of the number of meals purchased and the time of eating.

7. OPTION APPRAISAL

- 7.1 The review process identified that:
- (1) The provision of community meals is not a statutory obligation.
 - (2) The Social Work service was subsidising the provision of community meals to a significant extent.
 - (3) In some cases the provision of subsidised community meals represented a 'double subsidy'.
 - (4) The existing provision of meals, particularly the meals on wheels sector was inflexible.
 - (5) Community meals were not consistently provided on the basis of assessed need.
 - (6) There is inequity in service provision.

Recommendation 1. of the Member/Officer Working Group is that despite the issues identified with community meals they formed a valuable 'social welfare' provision that could contribute an important part of the support necessary to enable individuals to remain in their own homes and that the council should continue to provide or arrange the provision of community meals.

- 7.2 If recommendation 1. Is accepted, the continued provision of community meals requires the Council to consider options for continued service delivery. These are:

- (1) Retain the status quo with existing subsidies, inequities and inflexibility.
- (2) Review subsidy from lunch club and day service provision.
- (3) Re-evaluate current subsidy.
- (4) Revise the charging arrangements for community meals to ensure full recovery of costs.
- (5) Redesign the service in house with a view to ensuring more flexible and equitable service delivery arrangements.
- (6) Contract out all community meal service provision.
- (7) Undergo a market testing exercise to identify potential service delivery options.

Recommendation 2. of the Member/Officer working Group is that option 7. be progressed via a procurement process.

Recommendation 3. of the Member/Officer working Group is that in principle the present subsidy to Lunch clubs, Day Care and the Meals on Wheels service be reviewed in light of the results of the proposed procurement exercise.

- 7.3 It is noted that progression of this option will have potential implications for in house service provision in the potential eventuality that On-Site services fails to bid successfully for any of the service provision.

Recommendation 4. of the Member/Officer Working Group is that the potential implications for future in house service delivery be remitted to the Director of Educational and Social Services for further consideration.

8. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: The Council should continue to provide community meals.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That the Council enters into a market testing exercise via a procurement process to identify potential service delivery options for a flexible, modernised service providing a choice of meals seven days a week, throughout the year,

including making available any necessary support for service users to facilitate the preparation of meals.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The present subsidy to Lunch clubs, Day Care and the Meals on Wheels service be reviewed in light of the results of the proposed procurement exercise.

RECOMMENDATION 4: The potential implications for in house service provision should be remitted to the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services for further consideration.

9. SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN		
COMMUNITY MEALS		
Issue	Improvement	Timescale
The Council should continue to provide community meals.	Subject to identification of alternative options for service delivery via a procurement exercise which reflects a person centred needs led approach within revised cost framework.	2004/05
The Council should enter into a procurement exercise.	Work in partnership with Procurement section to develop outline service specification and tender documentation.	2004/05
The potential implications for in house service provision should be remitted to the director of educational and social services for further consideration.	Executive Director to liaise with appropriate heads of service, Personnel and trade unions.	2004/05.

APPENDIX 1 – MEMBER OFFICER WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

Eric Jackson, (Chair);
Ray Murray;
Jim O'Neill;
Robert McDill

Officers

Jackie Donnelly, Executive Head of Social Work
Eddie Fraser, Community Care Manager;
Gus Harrison, Service Manager, Community Care;
John Clayton, Head of Corporate Development and Communication;
James Lally, Senior Officer, Corporate Development and Communication;

Administration

Melanie Anderson, Administrative Officer.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES

4 MARCH 2004

COMMUNITY MEALS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

East Ayrshire Council Social Work Service is currently undertaking a review of its Community Meals Service.

This is a customer survey form which gives you the opportunity to comment on the existing level of service and how it may be shaped for the future.

Your participation is appreciated. Please remember all questions are optional and all surveys will be treated as confidential.

Please respond to the following questions:

1. What is your age?82 Average.....

2. Gender Female 61.4 % Male 37.3% *Please tick box*

3. Your Town / AreaN/A.....

4. Do you receive any other Social work services? Yes 69.9% No 28.9%

5. On how many days do you receive a service?5 days...Average.....

6. How long have you been receiving a meals service? ...28 months (2 years 4 mths)
Average

7. How satisfied are you with the quantity/portion? *Please tick box*

Good 66.25% Average 28.75% Poor 5%

8. How satisfied are you with the meal presentation? *Please tick box*

Good 57.5% Average 38.8% Poor 3.8%

9. How satisfied are you with the meal taste? *Please tick box*
Good Average Poor
10. How do you rate the standard of cooking? *Please tick box*
Good Average Poor
11. How do you rate the meal serving temperature? *Please tick box*
Good Average Poor
12. How do you rate the variety of meals? *Please tick box*
Good Average Poor
13. Does the meal cater for your cultural and dietary needs? *Please tick box*
Always Sometimes Never
14. Do you consider the meal to be value for money? *Please tick box*
Always Sometimes Never
15. Are you meals delivered on time? *Please tick box*
Always Sometimes Never
16. Does the delivery time suit you? Yes No *Please tick box*
17. Would you be interested in an alternative delivery time? (e.g. afternoons/evenings)
Yes No *Please tick box*

18. What would be your preferred delivery time? *Please tick box*
12.00 – 1.00 p.m. 84.4% 2.00 – 4.00 p.m. 9.4% 5.00 – 6.00 p.m. 6.3%

19. Would you be interested in a seven day service? *Please tick box*
Yes 40.8% No 59.2%

20. Do you receive information about your meals service? *Please tick box*
Yes 10.3% No 89.7%

21. To improve standard of choice and service, would you accept pre-prepared frozen meals? (Where required heating appliance would be provided) *Please tick box*
Yes 26% No 74%

22. Would you like to be able to order your meals in advance from a multiple choice menu? *Please tick box*
Yes 62% No 38%

23. Would you consider ordering more than one meal a day?
Always 13% Sometimes 87% Never *please tick box*

24. Would you be willing to pay more for your meals to improve standards? *Please tick box*
Yes 62.5% No 37.5%

25. Please include any additional comments you may have in the box below.

Thank you for completing this survey. Your assistance will help inform the review process.

APPENDIX 3.

COMMUNITY MEALS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY: GENERAL CUSTOMER COMMENTS

The following comments reflect the views of survey respondents. While a general level of satisfaction is noted, there is clear indication that a more flexible individualised meals service would meet the needs of service users more effectively.

- Quite satisfied with the service.
- Good to be able to rely on the service takes burden off family.
- Overall happy with service but would prefer more sweets on offer.
- Don't pay for meals so this does not affect me.
- Meal portions are alright for me as I am not a big eater but some people may find them small.
- Meals are excellent, they are warm, tasty and good portions.
- Dislikes battered fish, no objections to frozen meals. Satisfied with service.
- Service user has no way of contacting the service. Feels a contact number would be useful. Finds one particular meat dish too difficult to chew.
- No contact number for service. Too many peas.
- Has difficulty chewing the food, too many peas served on too many days, feels the meals are not suitable for older people- would prefer a delivery between 4.00pm and 5.00pm when home help is present.
- Very satisfied with present service.
- Some meals not to service users taste.
- Completely satisfied with service at present.
- Meals stopped in November 2003 due to not being customers taste. Would consider restarting if menu choices offered.
- Very please with quality and quantity of meals at present. Too many peas on too many days. Change supplier of meals and has seen a massive improvement.
- Feels service is average. Fish and chips are soggy. Never sure of delivery time, No contact number for delivery service.
- I do not like frozen foods so meals on wheels is a service I rely on. There are some meals I do not like so a multiple choice would be good.
- Particularly enjoys the soups which are served daily. Meals arrive at 11.30am which means that they have to be reheated for which is time consuming.
- Portions are not big enough. Service user is diabetic and unable to eat fried food. Despite some chips being delivered with the meal expressed dissatisfaction.

- Quite happy with meals, portions and people who deliver - are very cheerful. On the days when broth is delivered barley can be a bit hard.
- Quite happy with meals. Does not pay
- Problems arise as door has to be left open - venerable. If door is not left open meal is left on doorstep - beneficial if home carer delivered meal.
- I think it would be good to have meals 7 days.
- Satisfied with current arrangement.
- I do not like my meals being delivered too early.
- The soup is very watery. More vegetables with main course. Better to have sweet than soup.
- Service user would like meals started again; contact user to arrange restart – asap.
- Prefer more choice of meals, do not like to take what is there. Meals are generally good quality and would benefit from 7 day service.
- Does not like pork.
- They do their best - quite happy.
- No other information on sheets.
- Do not get enough soup, cannot chew meat, chicken is tasteless, broccoli over cooked brussel sprouts soggy.
- I enjoy the meals that are provided for me.
- Would prefer a pudding rather than soup.
- Service user finds meals totally satisfactory and cannot imagine they could improve.
- Would prefer more variety.
- Variety is the main problem.
- Very good - happy with service at present.
- Good service multiple choice menu would be excellent idea.
- Quite happy with service at present time meal choice could be improved.
- Enjoy meals and the times they are served would like 7 day service.
- Better choice of meals on Friday as I do not like fish. Menu would help me choose my meals better.
- Service user needs help to reheat food would prefer to have a choice e.g. soup and main meal.
- Prefers a change at weekends but content with meals on wheels 5 days a week.
- Would like more choice of vegetables.
- Enjoyable but does not like chicken - would like a sauce.
- Same meal on the same day can be boring, more variety.
- Use to receive meals on wheels Monday - Friday, due to poor quality of meat receives only 2 days per week.
- No complaints about current service.
- Not told when meals will be delivered, service user should receive notice when meals will not be delivered.
- Sometimes vegetables are over cooked.
- Sometimes beans on top of pies, peas on top of fish put service user off.

- Service user would pay more in order for meals to taste better.
- Would be much better if service user could pick from menu in advance.
- Considering starting meals again but would like to get one meal per day.
- Son of service user interviewed. Son very concerned re changes advice given re attendance allowance claim.
- Service user established quite happy with meals but does not like beef.
- Service user very happy with meals - cabbage overcooked.
- Very happy with meals.
- Quite happy and satisfied with service at present.
- It would be nice to have a variety and change the menu each week.
- Less peas.
- Less smash and less peas. It would be nice to have more variety each week.

APPENDIX 4.

BENCHMARKING RESPONSES

COUNCIL	SERVICE TYPE (E.G. FROZEN/ HOT MEAL)	IN HOUSE	OUT SOURCED (PROVIDER DETAILS)	LEVEL OF SERVICE 1-7 DAYS	COST TO SERVICE USER	SUBSIDY
Aberdeen City Council	Frozen		Apetito	7days	Charge per meal £2.15	n/a
Angus Council	Frozen		Apetito	7days 2 meals per day	£1.50 per meal	n/a
Argyll & Bute	Hot Meals (Fresh)		WRVS – Helensburgh Cardross and surrounding area. Primary schools within Oban / Kintyre delivered by Volunteers	2 days	£2.33	38p
Dumfries and Galloway	Hot Meals (Fresh) Frozen	Yes	Volunteers Volunteers	3 days 7 days	£1.55 £1.65 (May)	n/a
East Dunbartonshire Council	Hot Meals (Fresh)	School Kitchen	Volunteers WRVS	2 days per week	£1.78	94p
East Renfrewshire Council	Hot meals (Fresh)		Volunteers WRVS	2 days per week	£1.50	n/a
Falkirk	Hot Meal (Fresh)	Catering Service	Home care staff employed drivers and using WRVS volunteers	Grangemouth 5 days Other areas either 3 days or 2 days a week	£1.30 per meal	n/a

Fife Council	Frozen		Appetito	7 days	£2.55 from 3 rd May 2004	Encorporated within additional service package
Glasgow City Council	Frozen meals at Home delivery service	Meals prepared by Direct and Care service	WRVS do deliveries	Deliveries twice a week meals for 7 days	Within Home Care charging – singleton service charge £8.25 pw	n/a
Highland	Frozen		Apetito (exclusive main meal provision)	7 day	£2.10	n/a
Moray	Hot Meal (Fresh) 2 course		WRVS	3 days	£2.00 approx	
North Ayrshire	Hot meal	In house	NAC catering sevice	5days	£1.50	70p
North Lanarkshire	Hot meals but frozen meals service in some areas	Catering Service	WRVS	In most areas this service is available two or three days per week.	£1.30 per meal	n/a
East Lothian	Frozen		Apetito	7 days	Set up costs met by Council. Full cost of meals by service user direct to provider.	n/a

Perth and Kinross	Hot Meals (Fresh) and Frozen	Yes	Wiltshire Frozen Food Service	7 days (Rural Areas 3 days)	£1.70 per meal	n/a
Renfrewshire	Hot Meals (Fresh) and Frozen		WRVS / Pilot frozen Apetito	7 days + evening service	Main course £1.28 2 course £1.43 or part of Home Care Charging Policy	n/a
South Ayrshire	Hot Meals (Fresh)	Meals prepared by internal meals service	WRVS do deliveries	Operate 5 days a week Mon-Fri	£1.55 per meal	Meal cost by service user. Administration costs by council
Stirling Council	Hot Meals (Fresh)	School kitchens		5 days	£1.50	n/a
West Lothian	Frozen		Apetito	7days	£1.40 per meal	Currently negotiating new contract