

	<h2>Adults and Safeguarding Committee</h2> <h3>12 November 2015</h3>
<p style="text-align: right;">Title</p>	<p>Home Meals Service</p>
<p>Report of</p>	<p>Adults and Health Commissioning Director / Director of Adult Social Services</p>
<p>Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p>Urgent</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Key</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix A – Home Meals Consultation Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment</p>
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<h3>Summary</h3>	
<p>Home Meals services (meals-on-wheels) are currently provided under a contract with Sodexo which expires on 31 March 2016. Barnet Council along with a number of local authorities have traditionally provided a Home Meals service. However, in the recent past there has been a decline in numbers of people in Barnet choosing the service. There has also been a reduction in Councils commissioning or providing Home Meals services. This trend reflects a number of factors including: wider societal changes e.g. availability of ready meals / internet shopping; meals provided in the community through voluntary organisations; the national policy direction for personal budgets and a move away from block contracts; and financial challenges to local authority budgets.</p> <p>This report sets out details on the use of the service; highlights the alternative meals options available in the community; and presents a detailed analysis of the needs of users gained through individual face to face reviews with professional social work staff.</p> <p>The report recommends that the Sodexo meals contract is not renewed; and that Adults and Communities instead works with existing and new clients to adult social care to signpost and support them to find suitable alternatives which meet their needs. Under the Care Act 2014, in some exceptional cases, the Council will have a duty of care to support clients’ nutritional needs and the proposed approach will enable the Council to discharge its statutory responsibilities.</p>	

Recommendations

- 1. Adults and Safeguarding Committee agrees that from 1st April 2016, on expiry of the Sodexo Home Meals Contract, that the Council does not enter into a further contract for the provision of a Home Meals Service and therefore by default that the Council discontinues it's Home Meals Service.**
- 2. Subject to recommendation 1, existing and new clients are immediately signposted and supported to find suitable alternative meals options.**
- 3. Where any existing or new clients are considered to have a nutritional need as part of an assessment and support plan under the Care Act 2014, that the Council arranges this through the most appropriate means, with client contributions in line with the published fees and charges for Adult Social Care.**

1.0 WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

Context

- 1.1 Home Meals services (sometimes also referred to a “community meals” or “meals on wheels”) are provided by a commercial provider, Sodexo, to eligible service users. Eligible users are those who meet Care Act 2014 eligibility criteria for council adult social care support. The provision comprises a home-delivered hot meal to 157 service users across the borough, 7-days a week between 12pm and 2pm. An estimated 50,000 meals are delivered annually (2014–15 data). The range of meals includes standard / vegetarian option, Asian vegetarian / Halal, kosher and gluten-free. In the event that the service user does not respond to a door call and the delivery driver is unable to contact the individual or their family (depending on what details they have on record), the driver contacts the Council to inform them of a ‘no response’. This triggers the next process for the Council to investigate.
- 1.2 The current contract period with Sodexo runs from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2016 (this includes a one-year extension). Currently there are 157 people in receipt of Home Meals in Barnet. User numbers have reduced significantly over the recent past. The approximate contract spend in 2014/15 was £465k gross and £274k net after client contributions. It should be noted that the contract spend does not include Council overheads, for example relating to procurement and recovery of client contributions. The Council charges service users a flat rate of £4.15 per meal, billed monthly, although actual meal costs range from £7.26 for a standard meal to £11.71 for a kosher meal. The service is not means tested and users are charged the same rate regardless of personal income.
- 1.3 The majority of London Boroughs (52%) do not have a Home Meals service, instead signposting service users to alternatives in the community. Of those that do provide a service, this is usually via a commercial provider like Sodexo.
- 1.4 The decline in Barnet user numbers is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of meals recipients in Barnet over 5-year period

Period	No. of recipients at the end of each financial year	Year on year % decrease	% decrease since 2010-11
2010-11	326	-	-
2011-12	280	14%	14%
2012-13	281	nil	14%
2013-14	255	9%	22%
2014-15	216	15%	33%
@ Oct 2015	157	--	52%

1.5 This decline can be attributed to a number of factors, including: wider societal changes e.g. availability of ready meals / internet shopping; national / sector policy agenda; meals provided in the community through voluntary organisations; and financial challenges to local authority budgets.

- National / sector policy agenda: the Personalisation agenda has influenced policy and sector thinking; for example moving away from block purchasing to individual or spot purchase arrangements and the promotion of self-reliance amongst individuals and communities, often with local authorities taking an enabling or facilitating role; for example through signposting and the provision of information and advice.
- Community options for meals (“click” [meals options hyperlink](#)) – contains food and meal options available in the Borough, compiled by the Prevention and Wellbeing Team in Adults & Communities. This information is publicly available via the Council’s website and also used by the Council’s Customer Contact Centre for signposting customers and by professional staff when assessing or reviewing clients.
- The Adults and Safeguarding Committee commissioning plan 2015/16 – 2019/20 sets out the context for managing the key changes required by the Care Act 2014 and health and social care integration at a time of rising demand, increased expectations and shrinking resources. On the latter point, Adults and Safeguarding Committee has been required to identify £18.597m of savings (a 21% reduction of budget) through to 2020 as part of its share of corporate budget reductions to allow the Council to live within its means. In this context, any decision to not make savings in Home Meals would require substitute reductions elsewhere in adult social care.

1.6 The legal position is that local authorities do not have a statutory duty to provide a Home Meals service (see also paragraph 7 for detailed Legal comments). However, under the Care Act 2014 (The Act), Councils must ensure that the nutritional needs of an adult are met if this requirement is established as an eligible need based on a qualifying assessment and support plan.

2.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 As part of reviewing the current Home Meals provision a thorough analysis of data was undertaken, revealing that there has been a 52% reduction in service users in receipt of Home Meals, from 326 at the end of 2010/11 to 157 service users in October this year (Table 1 refers).

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@ Oct 2015	157	-- (not full year)	52%

Overall the analysis suggests that demand will continue to decline due to alternatives available. The decline in numbers has an on-going impact on the value for money of the service i.e. reduced volume results in a higher unit cost and related contract price paid by the Council.

Proposed new model

- 2.2 The Adults and Safeguarding Committee commissioning plan 2015/16 – 2019/20 sets out how the Council will manage the key changes required by Government relating to the Care Act 2014 and joined-up health and social care at a time of rising demand, increased expectations and shrinking resources. These two significant changes will lead to an increased demand for adult social care support over and above the increased levels of demand from demographic pressures. The key priorities and outcomes contained in the commissioning plan reflect the underpinning corporate principles of **fairness**, **responsibility** and **opportunity**. This implies focusing resources on those most in need whilst supporting people to help themselves as much as possible and make the most of appropriate services available in the community. In some cases users will be required to pay more for certain services as the Council prioritises the resources it has available.

- 2.3 Subject to approval by Committee, the proposed new model is:

- a) From 1st April 2016 there will be no Home Meals service; meals will not be commissioned, provided, or subsidised by the Council for existing or new customers except for (c) below.
- b) All customers will be signposted to commercial providers (including established providers like Sodexo and Wiltshire Farm Foods); and alternatives within the community (including established services like the Casserole Club, Silver Service and luncheon clubs). For existing service users, there will be a managed process to support them to access their

preferred alternative, including supporting them to contract directly with a commercial provider.

- c) The Council has a duty of care and any support for nutritional needs will be considered as part of an assessment and support plan under the Care Act 2014; or in other exceptional circumstances, for example where service users do not have the means to pay, source or cook a meal; or where it may be part of a time-limited enablement pathway.

2.4 The new model will ensure that people are provided with information and advice about a range of options available to them that provide them with choice and control over what they eat, and support them to stay independent within the community. There are several benefits of the proposed approach to the home meals service including:

- People will have the opportunity to choose what they eat from a wide range of options available to them (and these choices are not limited to those provided by the Council).
- People are empowered to make their own decisions about their meals.
- People have the opportunity to mix and match between different services for example choosing to have lunch at a lunch club on some days and using the shopping service on other days of the week.
- Supporting the local community, particularly lunch clubs, voluntary and community services by promoting their services through various channels.
- Targeting a wider audience in Barnet, and not just those that the Council supports.
- Making best use of the Council's resources by encouraging service users to use services that are currently available and that the Council fund e.g. befriending schemes.

2.5 The work to develop the Home Meals proposal has examined the arrangements in place across neighbouring boroughs. Enfield Council for example through its website publicises Sodexo, Appetito and Wiltshire Farm Foods as home meal providers, with Sodexo offering for an additional charge a 'checking' service which will advise carers or social care agencies if there are any concerns. Meals are arranged directly between the provider and the service user / carer.

Consultation

2.6 The development of the Home Meals proposal involved extensive consultation with stakeholders commencing 3rd August to 30th September 2015 as set out in Appendix A. In addition it was recognised that each user of the Home Meals service would require a formal review of their needs and support plan. This was undertaken by professional staff in adult social care over the period August to October 2015. Of 157 service users, 153 were reviewed. The remaining users were not available for a formal review. The purpose of these reviews was to ascertain the level of need in relation to nutrition and to also identify customers' preferred alternative options to the current Home Meals service, should this proposal be agreed by Committee.

2.7 Overall feedback from the survey and other communications (excluding reviews) based on 23 responses to the on-line consultation via the Council's consultation e-portal, Barnet Engage and 35 other communications, detailed below, is against the proposal to discontinue the Home Meals service. The top four concerns were:

1. Concern for vulnerable people.
2. Individuals have no other way / would find it difficult to source or obtain a meal.
3. Individuals have no other care and support services other than the Home Meals service.
4. Not happy with / against the proposal.

23 people responded anonymously to the on line survey on Barnet Engage comprising:

- 17 people were Barnet residents
- 1 represented a voluntary sector / community organisation
- 1 represented a public sector organisation
- 4 categorised as 'other' (people who act as representatives for carers, & those with disabilities; and relatives of service users)

35 letters / e-mails / telephone calls were received comprising:

- 14 people categorised as current service users
- 15 people categorised as carer / family / friend / next of kin / guardian
- 4 people represented a provider / care home (this includes 1 Sodexo driver)
- 1 person was a member of the public
- 1 response was received from a political party

Reviews of users of Home Meals

2.8 Individual face to face reviews of 153 service users were undertaken. These reviews have highlighted a relatively low number (16) of clients with current needs requiring the traditional home meals service (in these cases Adults and Communities staff will make the necessary arrangements to ensure continuity of service and continued safeguarding of clients). At the same time the results suggest that there are alternative options and professional staff will follow up these cases and agree the outcomes with clients subject to this proposal being agreed. There is a sufficiently strong case for not continuing the Home Meals service beyond the term of the current Sodexo contract and instead signposting people to alternative options available in the community. In a minority of cases i.e. subject to The Act, the Council may need to provide an appropriate level of support.

Financial Impact

2.9 Table 2 sets out the costs of the current meals service. If the proposed approach is implemented, the projected savings to the Council are approximately £274,000 (based on 2014/15 net spend). Note that the contract spend does not include Council overheads, for example relating to procurement and recovery of client contributions.

Table 2: Annual costs and savings for the Council (2014/15 prices)

Option	Contract cost	Client contribution (£4.15 per meal)	Net cost to the Council	Saving
Discontinue Home Meals	£465,077	£190,611	£274,466	Full Savings of £274,466

2.10 Table 3 sets out the financial impact to customers based on directly purchasing meals (including the standard 2-course Sodexo meal). Note that options are not exhaustive; there are other ways people can access meals e.g. on-line shopping, the Casserole Club (free), support through family and other networks.

Table 3 – Costs to Customers (2014/15 prices)

Option	Cost per meal purchased directly
Meals through Wiltshire farm foods: frozen standard 2-course meal	£5.82
Meals through Wiltshire farm foods: frozen kosher 2-course meal	£10.60
Meals through Wiltshire farm foods: frozen Asian Halal 1-course meal	£6.15
Meals through Sodexo: hot 2-course meal (Note: this is the standard meal currently provided through Barnet's Home Meals Service. Service users pay a flat rate contribution to the Council of £4.15 per meal)	£6.25
Meals through Silver Service (Ageing Well Programme): 2-course meal	£5.00
Lunch clubs	£3.50

3.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

3.1 A number of options were considered as part of the initial scoping and development of the business case, however, after detailed appraisal these were rejected, as detailed below:

Option	Key Reasons Rejecting Option
Option 1 – Continue the service as is and run an OJEU tender to appoint a supplier for community meals.	The decline in numbers of clients in receipt of meals has an on-going impact on the value for money of the service i.e. reduced volume results in a higher unit cost and related contract price paid by the Council.

Option	Key Reasons Rejecting Option
Option 2 – Stop new enrolments in the service, identify a list of suppliers and publish their details on the Council's website to sign post new residents.	Implemented in isolation this option would mean that the Council would risk not complying with its duty under the Care Act 2014.
Option 3 – Home and Community and Enablement care workers to enable individuals to prepare meals.	This option would not achieve savings and would require additional capacity (and cost) within the Home and Community Support contract.
Option 4 – Catering team (run by Children's Services on a trading account basis) to prepare the meals and deliver directly or via the transport team.	<p>The Catering Team does not have a distribution network and the Council's transport team does not have the resource (drivers, fleet and equipment) to deliver the meals therefore transport would need to be outsourced.</p> <p>Whilst the Catering Team are able to produce freshly cooked meals, certain types of meals e.g. Asian Vegetarian or Halal would need to be sourced elsewhere.</p>
Option 5 – Voluntary and community groups prepare and deliver the meals	Previous research by the Corporate Procurement Team revealed that this sector is not well developed to provide a comprehensive and sustainable service.

4.0 POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Should Committee agree the proposal, a number of activities will be actioned subsequently. These include informing current service users and the public about the decision; working with service users to implement alternative options for them; and working with the current provider to follow the appropriate processes in preparation for the ending of the contract.
- 4.2 Where reviews of existing service users have identified an on-going need for meals e.g. on grounds of nutrition or as part of a time-limited enablement pathway, then these will be followed up on an individual basis to ensure the welfare and wellbeing of service users.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1 The Council's vision that "health and social care services will be personalised and integrated, with more people supported to live longer in their own homes" and "by 2020 social care services for adults will be remodelled to focus on managing demand and promoting independence, with a greater emphasis on early intervention. This approach, working with housing and health services, will enable more people to stay independent and live for longer in their own homes".

5.2 This proposal therefore promotes choice and independence by supporting people to live longer in their own homes whilst recognising the duty towards those with assessed needs and a support plan under the Care Act 2014.

6.0 **Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

6.1 Paragraphs 2.9 and 2.10 (Tables 2 and 3), respectively set out the potential saving to the Council and the potential cost to service users of not procuring a Home Meals service on expiry of the current contract, representing a saving of £274,000 to the Council. If on cessation of the service there are a number of existing service users needing on-going support to have their needs met, a contribution would be sought from the user.

6.2 There is a risk that with continuing declining numbers of service users receiving meals, any re-procurement with a commercial provider such as Sodexo will result in a higher unit price and therefore a higher contract value paid by the Council.

7.0 **Legal and Constitutional References**

7.1 Terms of Reference for the Adults and Safeguarding Committee are set out in the Council's Constitution (Responsibility for Functions, Appendix A). The Adults and Safeguarding Committee has the following responsibilities:

- Promoting the best possible Adult Social Care services
- To ensure that the Council's safeguarding responsibilities are taken into account

7.2 The Council has a number of specific and general duties owed to all adults. The Care Act 2014 (The Act) sets out a number of those duties, including:

- Section 1 provides a general duty to promote an individual's well-being and under s2 there is a duty to prevent needs for care and support.

Although the Council is not under any statutory duty to provide or commission a community meals service, it must give proper consideration as to whether any changes or cessation in service will have any effect on its ability to fulfil its statutory duties. If it does then it will have to consider alternatives to ensure compliance with those duties.

- Section 9 of the Care Act 2014 sets out a duty on the Council to assess an adult's needs for care and support where it appears that the person may have needs for care and support.
- Section 10 sets out a duty to assess whether a carer has needs for support where it appears that a carer may have needs either currently or in the future.
- Section 18 provides that the Council must meet an adult's need for care and support which meet the eligibility criteria, subject to provisions on residence, costs and charging.

- 7.3 The Council must therefore ensure that the nutritional needs of an adult are met if this requirement is established based on a Care Act 2014 assessment and support plan. All adults currently in receipt of community meals will therefore need to be assessed to ascertain their nutritional needs and whether there is an on-going requirement for the Council to commission the provision of a meal or some other service to meet this need. All potential users of adult services will be assessed under the same provisions of the Care Act 2014 to ascertain their care and support needs and their eligibility for services.
- 7.4 In accordance with s13 of the Care Act 2014 all adults who have care and support needs but do not meet the eligibility criteria and therefore are not eligible for a service must be given written advice and information on how to meet or reduce needs. This should include signposting to other services where appropriate.
- 7.5 There is also the more general duty on the Council to maintain a service providing advice and information relating to care and support for people and it must have regard to the importance of identifying adults in their area who would benefit from financial advice and ensure that all information and advice is accessible. This will include advice on access to benefits and alternative sources for the provision of and assistance with meals.
- 7.6 The Council has safeguarding duties under s42 of the Care Act 2014 whereby, if the Council has reasonable cause to suspect an adult has needs for care and support and is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect and as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves the Council must make/cause to be made enquiries. This would include abuse or neglect suffered as a result of inadequate nutrition.

8.0 **Risk Management**

- 8.1 The face to face reviews of current recipients of the Home Meals service are compliant with the Care Act 2014 and include an individual assessment of risk. The risk relating to individuals (who might have dementia for example) not having daily contact with, say a Sodexo delivery person is considered very low based on reviews of clients. In such circumstances, however, various options are available to mitigate this risk – for example telecare.

9.0 **Equalities and Diversity**

- 9.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
 - advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups.
 - foster good relations between people from different groups (protected characteristics i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day-to-day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services.

9.2 An EIA for this proposal is attached as Appendix B and the key points summarised below:

There are 157 people receiving a home meals service of which:

- 57% are older people aged 85 and over and this group will be negatively impacted.
- 50% (79 people out of 157 people) are classified as people with 'physical disability – frailty' and this group are likely to be negatively impacted.
- In relation to Ethnicity 79% of 157 service users are white (including white British and Irish). There are few service users (13%) of BME backgrounds. However, any changes or withdrawal of service will have an impact on customers from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Jewish people who receive the home meals service are over represented compared to Barnet's overall Jewish population which accounts for 18% of the population. Therefore there will be a negative impact on this group.
- 68% of service users are female; while the majority of recipients are female, there will be no disproportionate impact on them. People will not be affected any differently from other groups by virtue of their gender / sex.
- Carers of those receiving the service will be impacted by the proposed change. It may result in an increase in their responsibility for their cared for.
- A public consultation was held between August 2015 and September 2015 and also service users (153 out of 157) have had face to face reviews to ascertain their level of need and identify if there are alternative options for home meals available for service users, if the proposal to not have the service is agreed. Details of the findings can be found in Appendix A of this report.
- The public consultation and feedback from the reviews suggest that people are not in favour of the proposal. Furthermore the EIA has demonstrated that if the proposal to not have a home meals service in the future is agreed, it will have a negative impact for some. There are a number of mitigating actions that have been identified to minimise the negative impact on customers as well as reducing any reputational impact on the Council.
- It is important to note that that while the proposal is to not have a home meals service in the future, the Council will signpost people to alternative options available in the community. The Council recognises that it has a duty to meet assessed eligible needs and have a duty to safeguard vulnerable adults. Where people are assessed as having an assessed

eligible need, the Council will provide the appropriate level of support.

10.0 Consultation and Engagement

10.1 As noted in paragraphs 2.6, this proposal was subject to wider stakeholder consultation from 3 August to 30 September 2015. In addition face to face reviews of service users in receipt of Home Meals were undertaken by professional staff in the Adults & Communities Delivery Unit. The consultation and review results are attached as Appendix A to the report.

11.0 Insight

11.1 This proposal is not specifically or directly impacted by the analysis presented in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2015 – 20. Insight from the aforementioned face to face reviews will be used to inform the next steps (paragraph 4.2 refers), subject to the decision of Committee.

12.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 Alternative Meals Options in Barnet (publicised on the Adults & Communities web page).

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/adult-social-care/support-at-home/meals-at-home.html>