

ACS Fact Sheet - New Community Meals Service

What is changing about the meals service and why are these changes being made?

The Council has evaluated the current service carefully and has come to the decision to tender for a new contract to deliver its Community Meals services. *The new contract will be for frozen meals only.* We believe that frozen meals are not only better in quality but there is in fact a much greater selection of meals to choose from, while continuing to cater for all your dietary, health and cultural needs. *The decision to discontinue the hot meals service is in line with our strategy to move towards enabling people to direct their own support and care arrangements.* One of our most important objectives is to promote your independence and give you the freedom to manage your needs around what suits you best. The frozen meal service allows you to have this freedom as you can decide when to have your meal and what type of meal that will be, and can plan your day more flexibly.

When will these changes happen?

The new contract will start in May 2009. However, we need to plan for the transition from the current meals service to the new one. *In order to ensure a smooth transition we need the current hot meals clients to move to the frozen meals service over the next few months. We have stopped offering the hot meals service to new service users as of September 2008.* If you currently have hot meals delivered to you, we will telephone you in the coming months to talk to you about your meals service. *We will be asking you to change over to a frozen meals service.* If you need help to make this change or you feel your needs have changed, we will arrange for you to be visited by a member of the social services care staff based in your local Health & Social Care Team.

How do these changes affect me?

We understand that you might feel anxious about the changes to your meals service and our main concern is to make this change as easy as possible for you. *When we telephone you, we will agree when you would like to start receiving frozen meals.* We will then arrange a delivery of nutritious frozen meals to you every fortnight from your chosen date. You will receive your delivery every alternate Monday at around the same time of the day. The driver will help you store your frozen meals appropriately on delivery and make sure you have enough meals to get you through until your next delivery.

What if I do not have a freezer to store my frozen meals or no oven to heat the meal?

You may need a freezer to store some if not all your meals. Our Meals Service provider will provide you with a small, tabletop freezer that will be on loan to you as long as you need the meals service. You may also need a microwave or a servotherm heating device to reheat your meals. This can also be provided for you. All the equipment is free on loan to you and you will be shown how to use it safely by one of the drivers who deliver the meals to you. We will discuss your option with you and make sure any appliances are in place before you receive your first frozen meal.

What if I need help to heat up my meal every day?

If you are not able to reheat your meal yourself, we will discuss your options with you. We could arrange for a care worker to come and help you reheat your meal or you might want a relative to help you out sometimes. Whatever you decide to do, we will help you put these arrangements in place and we will make sure you get the help you need at a time that suits you to have your meal.

Who do I talk to if I have concerns or questions about the changes to the meals service?

We suggest you talk any questions or concerns through with your Social Care team when they telephone you to discuss your meals plan or if they come to see you at your home to make an assessment.

If you require help in the meantime please contact Adults Social Services on:

Telephone: 020 8891 7971

Text: 07800 002439

Email: adultsocialservices@richmond.gov.uk