

## **REVIEW OF MEALS ON WHEELS CONTRACT**

### ***Executive Summary***

*The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the meals-on-wheels contract provided by ICARE since 1st July 2008.*

### **1 Background**

- 1.1 An initial progress report on the Meal on Wheels contract was presented to Social Care, Health and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2008. Members requested a further progress report be presented after six months. In providing this progress report the results of two quarterly customer satisfaction surveys which the provider is required to undertake as part of their contract are also considered.

### **2 Meals on Wheels Contract Monitoring / Quality Assurance Results**

- 2.1 ICARE assumed full responsibility for the Meals-on-Wheels (MOW) service on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008. Since the contract commencement the service has been robustly monitored by analysing 4 weekly activity returns and quarterly service review meetings. For the remaining four years of the contract performance will continue to be monitored using the four weekly returns, customer satisfaction surveys undertaken every six months and annual contract review meetings. This quality assurance approach will be applied to ensure the service continues to meet the contract specification and the needs of people who use our services.
- 2.2 When the contract was tendered it was estimated that the successful provider would need to deliver 155,000 meals per annum. However the actual volume of meals during the first two four week periods was 13% below this figure (135,000 meals). This resulted in the Department of Adult Social Services invoking clause 10.4 of the contract with ICARE which states "Should the number of meals delivered on more than two consecutive four week periods be more than 10% below the contracted average four weekly volume, the Service Purchaser reserves the right to reduce the four weekly payment pro rata". Payments to ICARE were therefore adjusted accordingly.
- 2.3 ICARE performance against the contract monitoring framework for the period 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008 to 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2009 was as follows:

Average number of people receiving meals under the contract	431
Average number of new starters (per 4 week period)	37
Average number of leavers (per 4 week period)	45
Number of hot meals delivered to people who use services	141,456
Number of frozen meals delivered to people who use services	1,655
Number of any religious, cultural and special dietary meals provided	27,810
Cultural	0
Pureed	72
Soft Diets	1,547
Vegetarian	3,152
Gluten Free	168
Low Salt	384
Low Fat	2,275
Diabetic	20,212
Number of non-deliveries or returns	2,215
The collective number of meals delivered 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2008 to 2 <sup>nd</sup> August 2009	143,111

Number of Complaints, comments and compliments 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2008 to 2 <sup>nd</sup> August 2009	
Complaints	13
Comments	0
Compliments	8

The above results confirm that ICARE is operating within the current contractual parameters in terms of volume and supports significant numbers of people with specific dietary needs. Further work to profile the ethnicity of the people supported and their cultural needs is to be undertaken with the provider and the contracts team.

### **3 Customer Satisfaction Surveys**

Two customer satisfaction surveys have been undertaken to date.

- 3.1 The MOW contract requires ICARE to undertake satisfaction surveys at least every six months and share the findings with the Council. The customer satisfaction survey is designed to test organisational competencies from a consumer perspective. Two surveys have been completed since the last report to members. In order to compare the two surveys this report considers the results in terms of percentages although the survey data appended is reported as a count of responses.
- 3.2 For the period 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2008, ICARE dispatched 320 customer surveys and received 213 replies which represent a high return

rate of 67%. Overall survey results for this period were positive and the full survey results are available Appendix 1. Significantly 99% of respondents stated they were satisfied with the service provided by delivery staff, 94% confirmed that the driver wore an ID badge and 66% of people stated that their meals were always hot on arrival with a further 29% confirming that their meals were hot most of the time. Although the existing questionnaire establishes at what time meals are delivered it does not confirm if they are delivered at a convenient time that ensures they are hot when eaten and this issue will be explored in further surveys. People who use the service confirmed that the meals they received were enjoyable with 49% of people stating this to be most of the time and a further 42% stating this to always be the case. In total 90% of people felt that there was enough variety in the meals they received but only 50% of people were aware of how to make a complaint about a meal should they wish to do so.

- 3.3 For the period 1st November 2008 to 30th April 2009, ICARE dispatched 295 customer surveys and received a lower but good return rate of 47%. Again the results overall were positive and consistent with those received in the previous quarter. The full survey results are available Appendix 2. One question relating to staff wearing uniforms was dropped from the previous survey and three new questions were added. One of the new questions asked if a regular monthly bill was received by those paying by account to which only 38% responded yes. It is not clear if this result is significant and discussions are planned with ICARE to seek clarification and possible questionnaire design improvements. Results in relation to the variety of meals improved with 62% of people saying they were happy all of the time compared to 44% in the previous survey. The number of people who said they knew how to complain about a meal also improved from 50% to 57% but 30% clearly stated they did not. Improving performance in this area is to be targeted for the next quarterly report with assistance from DASS. The other new questions included in this survey aimed to establish if the people using the service would welcome the drivers who deliver the meals spending more time with them, making them a drink or undertaking other tasks. In each case 90% of those who gave a response replied no.

### **3 Financial and Staffing Implications**

It is estimated that amendments made to the number of meals provided under the contract against the original specification will result in a reduced revenue commitment of £52,000.

### **4 Equal Opportunities Implications**

The low take up of 'cultural' meals requires further examination see Para 2.3 above. Officers will review this issue in the context of both the assessment process and the meals provided. Initial contact will be made with Wirral Multi cultural organisation and Wirral's Older Peoples Parliament.

## **5 Community Safety Implications**

There are no direct community safety implications.

## **6 Local Agenda 21 Implications**

The efficient delivery of the meals on wheels service relates to Strategic Issue 4 - Healthy people - safer places and Strategic Issue 5 - A caring environment for everyone, by promoting the health and well being of Older People in Wirral

## **7 Planning Implications**

There are no planning implications in this report.

## **8 Anti Poverty Implications**

There are no direct anti poverty implications in this report.

## **9 Social Inclusion Implications**

Older People and People with Physical and/or Sensory Disabilities are among the most excluded members of society and the meals on wheels service can provide regular social contact.

## **10 Local Member Support Implications**

There are implications for members in that meals on wheels are consumed by vulnerable people in all wards.

## **11 Health Implications**

Meals on wheels make an important contribution to the health and well being of Older People in Wirral.

## **12 Background Papers**

None.

## **13 Recommendations**

That Members note the contents of the report .

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